Agenda

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OXFORD CITY COUNCIL

Scrutiny Committee

Date:	**Tuesday 3 December 2013**
Time:	**6.00 pm**
Place:	**St Aldate's Room, Town Hall**

For any further information please contact:

Pat Jones

Telephone: 01865 252275

Email: lstock@oxford.gov.uk

Scrutiny Committee

Membership

Chair	**Councillor Mark Mills**	Holywell;
Vice-Chair	**Councillor Gill Sanders**	Littlemore;
	Councillor Mohammed Abbasi	Cowley Marsh;
	Councillor Mohammed Altaf-Khan	Headington Hill and Northway;
	Councillor Jim Campbell	St. Margaret's;
	Councillor Van Coulter	Barton and Sandhills;
	Councillor Roy Darke	Headington Hill and Northway;
	Councillor James Fry	North;
	Councillor Ben Lloyd-Shogbesan	Lye Valley;
	Councillor Craig Simmons	St. Mary's;
	Councillor Val Smith	Blackbird Leys;
	Councillor Louise Upton	North;

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AGENDA

Pages

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

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

2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members are asked to declare any disclosable pecuniary interests they may have in any of the following agenda items. Guidance on this is set out at the end of these agenda pages.

3 WORK PROGRAMME AND FORWARD PLAN

1 - 28

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

Background Information
The Scrutiny Committee operates within a work programme which has been set for the year 2013-2014. The programme will be reviewed at every meeting so that it can be adjusted to reflect the wishes of the Committee.
Why is it on the agenda?
This report allows Committee to: • Hear updates from Lead Members. • Consider forward agendas and issues. • Review the Forward Plan In particular the Committee is asked to: • The Capital Bid related to Food Waste collection was requested at the last meeting and its release agreed at City Executive Board. This is not available at the time of writing. • That an outline of the scope for the Flooding review has been circulated outside of the meeting. • Councillor Brett is attending, as requested, to support the Committee in their debate on the Public Engagement Strategy and also during this to begin discussions on the Council's use of social media.
Who has been invited to comment?

Pat Jones, Principal Scrutiny Officer, will present the work programme, answer questions and support the Committee in its decision making.
What will happen after the meeting?
The work programme will be updated and republished.

4 REPORT BACK ON RECOMMENDATIONS 29 - 38

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

Background Information
The Committee makes a number of recommendations to Officers and decision makers. This item allows Committee to see the result of recommendations since the last meeting and the cumulative results of all its recommendations.
Why is it on the agenda?
The results of recommendations on: • Waste and Recycling Strategy • Riverside Land Acquisition • Oxpens Master Plan • Qtr.2 Treasury Management
Who has been invited to comment?
Pat Jones, Principal Scrutiny Officer.
What will happen after the meeting?
Any comments or follow up from the Committee will be included in the work programme.

5 ENFRANCHISEMENT AND EMPOWERMENT - FINAL PANEL REPORT 39 - 60

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

Background Information

The Committee set a Panel consisting of Councillors Darke, Jones and O'Hara to consider issues around enfranchisement and empowerment amongst established, emerging and newly arrived communities in Oxford. An interim report was presented to the former Communities and Partnership Scrutiny Committee in April 2013 which provided an update on the progress of the Panel and its next steps.
Why is it on the agenda?
To allow the Panel to present its findings and recommendations to the Committee. The scrutiny Committee is asked to decide how it wishes to proceed. In particular: • Agree the recommendations to go forward to the City Executive Board. • Consider the request of the panel to continue their work.
Who has been invited to comment?
The Panel Members, Councillors Darke, Jones and O'Hara who will present the report.
What will happen after the meeting?
Any agreed recommendations will be submitted to the City Executive Board for consideration.

6 DISCRETIONARY HOUSING PAYMENTS - MONITORING REPORT 61 - 70

Contact Officer: Paul Wilding, Benefit Operations Manager.
Tel: 01865 252461
Email: pwilding@oxford.gov.uk

Background Information
In June the Scrutiny Committee considered the Discretionary Housing Payments Scheme and made recommendations to the City Executive Board which were accepted. The Committee appointed Councillor Coulter as the Lead Member for this item.
Why is it on the agenda?
One of the accepted recommendations was for a monitoring report to

be presented quarterly to the Scrutiny Committee showing at least: • The amount awarded and total spend • Claimant and property profiles • Any issues and knock on effects The first monitoring report was considered at the 5th. September meeting and Committee asked to see more detailed information to support their scrutiny. Councillor Coulter was asked to meet with officers and the Board Member to agree this. The Committee agreed that their aim in reviewing this: • Is our current policy placing pressure on other vulnerable groups. • Is there an in met need either now or for the future. • What are the profiles (human and geography) of those people we help, those we used to help and those we turn away. • Potential additional costs and the likelihood of overspending either now or in the future. • What is the real effects of conditionality both in financial and behavioural or circumstance change • Where should our priorities lie should a rethink be necessary. The report attached provides the additional information agreed by Councillor Coulter.
Who has been invited to comment?
Councillor Brown, Board Member for Benefits and Customer Services, and Paul Wilding (Benefits Operations Manager) will attend to answer the Committee's questions.
What will happen after the meeting?
Any recommendations will be presented to the Board Member or City Executive Board at the next available meeting.

7 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY (2014-2017) DRAFT FOR CONSULTATION - PRE-SCRUTINY 71 - 148

Contact Officers: Angela Cristofoli, Neighbourhoods and Communities Manager, Tel: 01865 252688 email: acristofoli@oxford.gov.uk

Sadie Paige, Policy Officer, Tel: 01865 252250, email: spaige@oxford.gov.uk

Background Information
The City Council has a long track record of working with local people

to build strong and active communities, and its commitment to community engagement predates, outlives and goes further than legislative requirements. The purpose of the new Community Engagement Strategy is to provide a framework for how the Council engages with its residents and communities to develop a greater understanding of their needs, and to increase the level and quality of involvement in the decisions that affect their lives.
Why is it on the agenda?
The Committee asked to consider this report before decisions are made by the City Executive Board. This is a draft Strategy for Consultation and is expected to return to the Board in March 2014. The next item on the agenda is "How the Council Uses Social Media". This is a line of inquiry suggest for scrutiny by Councillors and accepted into the Work programme by the Committee. Members decided to consider this alongside the pre-scrutiny of the Community Engagement Strategy and asked Councillor Brett to support them in this.
Who has been invited to comment?
Peter McQitty, Head of Policy, Culture and Communications, Sadie Paige, Policy Officer, (Policy, Performance and Communications) and Angela Cristofoli, Communities and Neighbourhoods Manager. Steve Curran, Board Member Youth and Communities
What will happen after the meeting?
Any recommendations will be submitted to the City Executive Board for consideration.

8 USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA BY THE COUNCIL

Contact Officer: Pat Jones, Principal scrutiny Officer
Tel: 01865 252191
Email: phjones@oxford.gov.uk

Background Information
Councillors suggested that the Scrutiny Committee consider the Council's use of social media. Committee agreed to accept this in their Work Programme.
Why is it on the agenda?

The Committee decided to consider this line of inquiry when they pre-scrutinised the Community Engagement Strategy which appears at the item above. Councillor Brett will support the Committee in this debate.
Who has been invited to comment?
Officers supporting the Committee on the Community Engagement Strategy.
What will happen after the meeting?
Any recommendations will be presented to the City Executive Board or further inquiries included in the Work Programme.

9 REPORT BACK ON PERFORMANCE INDICATORS BI002A, CH001 AND BV017A 149 - 158

Contact Officer: Jane Lubbock, Head of Business improvement and Technology.
Tel: 01865 252218
Email: jlubbock@oxford.gov.uk

Contact Officer: Jarlath Brine, Organisational Development & Learning Advisor, Equalities and Apprenticeships.
Tel: 01865 252341
Email: jbrine@oxford.gov.uk

Background Information
The Committee review a set of performance indicators every quarter and at quarter 2 asked to see further details on 3 indicators.
Why is it on the agenda?
Information is presented on: **BI002a – The number of training places and jobs created through Council investment projects and other activities. This indicator showed RED.** The Chair asked to understand the clauses in contacts and other agreements that underpinned this work and how they are monitored. **BV017a – Percentage of Black and ethnic Minority Employees. This indicator showed RED.** The Chair asked for further details on the current position including for this group:

• the percentage of applicants • the percentage on shortlists • the percentage appointed • the percentage appointed of those applying. For this information to be provided in comparison to the majority group. Any areas of good outcomes we can learn from. **CH001 – Days lost to sickness. This indicator showed GREEN.** Councillor Simmons asked to see the breakdown across service areas and long and short term sickness. Details of why we have set a target for the year that is worse than the outcome from the previous year and any areas for particular focus.
Who has been invited to comment?
Jarlath Brine, Organisational Development and Learning Advisor, Equalities and Apprenticeships. Jane Lubbock, Head of Business Improvement and Technology.
What will happen after the meeting?
Any recommendations will be made to Officers or the City Executive Board.

10 MINUTES 159 - 164

Minutes of the meeting held on 5th November 2013.

11 DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

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

Tuesday 14th January 2014
Tuesday 4th February 2014
Tuesday 4th March 2014
Tuesday 1st April 2014

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 mater 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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Scrutiny Committee Work Programme 2013 - 2014

This programme represents the work of the Scrutiny Committee. It is divided between those items to be considered at:

- Full Committee Meetings – Agenda schedules at the end of this document.
- Standing Panels
- Review Panels in progress
- Potential Review Panels

Potential Review Panel items will only come forward for consideration as resources allow.

The programme also lists:

- Decisions called in.
- Councillor calls for action.
- New items suggested for scrutiny by councillors or residents.

Full Committee Meetings

Topic	Area(s) for focus	Progress	Lead and other Councillors
Thames Water investment to improve flooding and sewage issues in the City.	To consider the experience of Swindon Council in influencing Thames Water.	Committee agreed to extend the Panel membership to allow a group of councillors to meet officers in October to take a brief on: • The amount of investment already made by TW. • What further investment is needed. • Advice on our priorities for this	Lead: Councillor Darke Councillors Pressel, Hollick and Jones.

		investment. • What are the City Council responsibilities as riparian owners and what money is available to deliver on these responsibilities. • Any lessons that can be learnt from Swindon. This Group will then advise the committee on the best focus for this item. Briefing meeting set for 30th. October.	
Discretionary Housing Payments	Quarterly updates on spending, claimant/property profiles, and issues and knock on effects.	Report to September meeting. Committee asked for more information in subsequent reports. Councillor Coulter to pursue. Meeting with Board Member and Head of Service 8th. October. New framework agreed for presentation to December meeting.	Lead: Councillor Coulter.
Performance monitoring	Quarterly report on a set of Corporate and service measures chosen by the Committee.	Councillors met and agreed 2 performance sets: • Scrutiny Committee • Housing Panel	Councillors Campbell, Simmons, Coulter and Darke.

		Qtrly meetings scheduled. 5/9/2013 meeting – clarification on LP106 requested – Information reviewed Panel asked for 5% target to be increased. 5/11/2013 meeting – more details on CH001, BV017a and BI002a called for to the 3/12/13 meeting.	
Council Tax exemption for students. Is this being applied consistently and managed.	Two councillors to talk to officers about the process and report back to the committee if there is an issue to follow up on.	January meeting to take issues.	Lead: Councillor Simmons.
Fusion Leisure Contract	Leisure centre usage and the engagement in all leisure activities across the City with a particular focus on engagement of residents from our most deprived wards.	April meeting.	Lead: Councillor Coulter. Councillor Fry has expressed an interest in this item.
Community Safety	Issue to be decided on after consultation with the Board Member.	Discussion with Board Member at the October meeting. Asked Board Members to express concern to the Local Commander about the operation of NAGs since transfer of	All Committee. Councillor Jones has expressed an interest in this issue.

		administrative responsibilities. Asked to see outcomes from the new ASB process in a year's time. Scheduled for April 2014. No further issues	
The method by which the scale of new buildings and extensions is indicated in planning applications, in particular an evaluation of the agreed pilot scheme based on the practice in Swiss Cantons.	Evaluation of the pilot in City development.	Date check needed	Lead: Councillor Fry. Councillor Jones has expressed an interest in this issue.
Use of Social Media by the Council	Review proposals within the Public Engagement Strategy.	December meeting alongside the Public Engagement Strategy	Lead: Councillor Brett.
Any item called from the Forward Plan for pre decision scrutiny.	To consider and comment on issues to be decided by the City Executive Board.	The following have been considered by the Committee: • Discretionary Housing Payments Scheme – **Recommendations made to CEB.** • End of year integrated report – Issues raised for inclusion in the scrutiny programme. • Corporate Debt Management Policy – No actions. • Appointment of the main	Lead: Councillor Mills.

		contractor for the Affordable Homes Programme – No actions. • Youth Ambition Strategy – **Recommendations made to CEB.** • Low Emissions Strategy and Air Quality Action Plan – **Recommendations made to CEB.** • Riverside Land Acquisition – **recommendations to CEB 13th. November.** • Customer Contact Strategy – September meeting – **recommendations made to CEB on the 11th. September.** • Oxfordfutures Fund – (item delayed indefinitely). • Grants Programme Commissioning Review – October meeting – **recommendations to CEB on the 9th. October.** • City Deal – October meeting – **recommendations to CEB on the 9th. October.**. • Community Engagement Strategy – October meeting	

		(delayed to December meeting). • Oxpens Master Plan consultation outcome – **recommendations to CEB on the 13th. November**. • Waste and Recycling Strategy – Panel – **recommendations to CEB on the 13th. November.**	

Standing Panels

Topic	**Area(s) for focus**	**Progress**	**Nominated councillors**
Housing – All strategic and landlord issues considered within the Scrutiny Function.	Issues: • Allocation Policies and how we communicate, give advice and take account of feedback. • Decent Homes Standard – where do we go next in investment in our stock? • Regeneration on estates – what are our ambitions and how do we deliver and engage communities. Items for pre decision scrutiny: • Housing Strategy Action Plan periodic review – September meeting • Housing Strategy refresh –		**No substitutions allowed.** Lead: Councillor Smith. Co-opted Member – Linda Hill Councillor Hollick, Sanders and McCready.

	September meeting. • Long term affordable housing for homelessness prevention – September meeting. • Allocations review and changes to the Allocations Policy – September meeting.		
Finance Panel – All finance issues considered within the Scrutiny Function.	• Quarterly budget monitoring. • Medium Term Financial Strategy and budget review. • "Proper Body" for scrutiny of the Treasury Management Strategy and Function.		**No substitutions allowed.** Lead: Councillor Simmons. Councillors Fry, Darke and Fooks.

Review Panels in progress

Topic	**Scope**	**Progress**	**Nominated councillors**
Covered Market Strategy and Leasing Strategy.	Scope: • Pre-scrutiny and engagement with the developing Covered Market Strategy and Leasing Strategy. • Independent engagement with the Covered Market Traders	The Group is currently observing the Covered Market Stakeholder engagement. Alongside this: • Face to face consultation with Market Traders has taken place.	**No substitutions allowed.** Lead: Councillor Campbell. Councillors Fooks ,

	Association. • Review of the leasing decision for the unit formerly occupied by Palm's Delicatessen. • Consideration of comparative data from similar markets.	• Visits to 4 London markets and Bristol market have happened. • Interviews with Officers and Board Members have taken place. Interim findings to the October Scrutiny Committee. Final report expected in November. Programmed to finish in November Delayed awaiting Strategy expected December/January..	Van Nooijen (resigned), Clarkson and Benjamin Councillor van Nooijen resigned from the Panel. Labour members asked if they wished to replace him.
Recycling Rates – Are our targets ambitious enough.	Scope: • Consider our current policies and their effects. • Review with service officers barriers to improvement alongside best practice and new initiatives.	The Group have identified a number of areas for potential improvement and are currently working with officers to explore these. The Group has agreed to focus its efforts around reward and penalty schemes taking in a broad range of suggestions. Data gathering is underway. • Information has been gathered on the incentives currently used	**No substitutions allowed.** Lead: Councillor Fry. Councillors Simmons and Jones

		by the Council and the effects of these. • Information is being gathered from WRAP and other authorities on incentives and outcomes. Panel asked and it was agreed that they pre-scrutinise the Waste and Recycling Strategy expected at CEB in November. Programmed to finish no later than December.	
Enfranchisement and Empowerment.	Scope: As census data is published we begin to see the diverse and changing nature of Oxford and the number of people who failed to complete details without a least 1 reminder. Alongside this there are a number of properties with no one registered to vote. • What effect does this have on our understanding of Oxford's communities? • Do we understand why some households/communities choose not to engage? • What is the extent of this	Planning is underway for the Group to run 3 focus groups talking to the Somali, Pakistani and Polish communities to understand the extent of their knowledge of public services and issues they have with engagement. These will happen in October 2013. Programmed to finish in December. 3 focus group dates agreed towards the end of October one more date still to secure. Delayed finish to December to accommodate this.	**No substitutions allowed.** Lead: Councillor Darke. Councillors Jones and O'Hara.

	democratic deficit? • What does this mean for communities, services and funding?		
The effects and value of the City's investment in educational attainment at primary level.	Scope: To partner with a participating school to: • See the on the ground effects of the KRM model. • Understand the effects for children of all ability types. • Hear and see how the school copes with the cultural and professional challenges. • See how school inspectors respond. • Understand the targets set by the school management team and the part KRM plays in this. Latterly the group has also decided to look at absenteeism.	The Group has agreed continuing discussions with its partner school which will happen in July. Recent membership changes to the Group have slowed progress. Work with the school will continue for a third term.	**No substitutions allowed.** Lead: Not nominated Councillors Campbell, Jones, Coulter, Paule and Khan.
Mutual Exchanges between Council Tenants.	Scope: To consider the under occupancy in the Council's stock and the potential for mutual exchanges to support those tenants affected by the changes to	Interviews with tenants who are at various stages of the Mutual Exchange process have been completed. Interviews with scheme administrators	**No substitutions allowed.** Housing Panel with Linda Hill (Lead)

	benefits and in particular the "bedroom tax". To consider what changes and support is needed to make mutual exchanges a more useful tool for tenants. • Interview a range of tenants who have just registered to move. Interview a range of tenants at the point of swap within the mutual exchange system.	have been completed. Observation of mutual exchange events is underway.	tenant.
Budget Review	Scope: Review of the budget and Medium Term Financial Plan – focus to be agreed.	Meeting set to outline scope timetable for the 14th. October. Scope and timetable outlined by Chair for discussion and agreement at the Finance Panel 7th. November.	Members of the Finance Standing Panel.

Potential Review Panels – to be taken when resources allow (no particular order)

Topic	**Area(s) for focus**	**Nominated councillors**
Tracking the experience of a few families affected by benefit changes to record the affects in a holistic way.	Initial scoping with Lead Councillor	Lead: Councillor Smith

Items Called in and Councillor Calls for Action

None

New suggestion from Councillors or Residents
None

Committee Agenda Schedules

Each agenda will have 2 standing items:

- Work programme and recommendation progress
- Forward Plan

Date	Agenda Item
4th. June	1. Scrutiny operating arrangements. 2. Forward Plan. 3. Pre-scrutiny – Discretionary Housing Payments. 4. Pre-scrutiny – End of Year Integrated Report. 5. Pre-scrutiny – Corporate Deb Management Policy. 6. Pre-scrutiny – Appointment of Main Contractor for Affordable Homes Programme.
2nd. July	1. Work programme selection and set up. 2. Fusion Contract End of Year Performance 2012 - 2013. 3. Pre-scrutiny – Emissions Strategy and Air Quality Action Plan. 4. Pre-scrutiny- Youth Ambition Strategy.
5th. September	1. Performance Monitoring – Qtr. 1. 2. Discretionary Housing Payments – Monitoring Report. 3. Pre-scrutiny - Riverside Land (item delayed at CEB). 4. Pre-scrutiny -Customer Contact Strategy. 5. Pre-scrutiny -Oxfutures Fund (item delayed indefinitely) 6. Pre-scrutiny – City Deal (item delayed at CEB)) 7. Pre-scrutiny -Grants Programme Commissioning Review (item delayed at CEB).
1st. October	1. Community Safety issues – Board Member. 2. Interim Covered Market – Panel report. 3. Pre-scrutiny – City Deal. 4. Pre-scrutiny – Review of the Community and Voluntary Organisations Grants Programme.
5th. November	1. Performance Monitoring – Qtr. 2. 2. Pre-scrutiny - Oxpens Master Plan – consultation outcome. 3. Councillor Calls for Action 4. Pre-scrutiny – Riverside Land 5. Recycling – Panel update and pre-scrutiny of the Waste and Recycling Strategy.
3rd. December	1. Panel advice on Thames Water investment. 2. Enfranchisement and Empowerment – Panel

	report. 3. Pre-scrutiny - Community Engagement Strategy. 4. Use of Social Media by the Council. 5. Discretionary Housing Payments – Monitoring Report. 6. Report back on performance Indicators- BI002a, CH001 and BV017a.
14th. January	1. Student Council Tax Exemptions – issues. 2. Final Covered Market Report. 3. Recycling Incentives – Panel Report.
4th. February	1. Discretionary Housing Payments – Monitoring Report. 2. Performance Monitoring – Qtr. 3. 3. Public Involvement Strategy (consultation outcome).
4th. March	1. Education Attainment Panel report.
1st. April	1. Leisure centre usage and the engagement in all leisure activities across the City with a particular focus on engagement of residents from our most deprived wards. 2. Progress and outcomes from revised Anti-Social Behaviour structure and processes.

Finance Standing Panel

Dates	Agenda Items
6th. September 5.00pm.	1. Quarter 1 spending against budget. 2. Treasury Management outturn 2012 – 2013. 3. Quarter 1 2013 – 2014 Treasury Management performance. 4. Panel work programme.
7th. November 5.30pm	1. Quarter 2 spending against budget. 2. Quarter 2 2013 – 2014 Treasury Management performance. 3. Budget review scope and timetable. 4. Contingencies detail 2008 to date. 5. Modelled effects of the agreed transfer of assets from the Housing Revenue Account to the General Fund.
6th. February 2014 at 6.00pm.	1. Quarter 3 spending against budget. 2. Quarter 3 Treasury Management performance. 3. Draft Treasury Management Strategy 2014 - 2015

Housing Standing Panel
Outline –issues still to be developed by Panel
The Scrutiny Committee has asked that this Panel also take issues from the Forward Plan related to the Housing theme. Addition dates have been reserved to allow this to happen if necessary, these are:

- 3rd. October.
- 5th December (used).
- 15th. January 2014.
- 6th. March 2014.
- 3rd. April 2014.

Dates	Agenda Items
3rd. September	1. Housing Strategy Action Plan.

5.00pm.	2. Long term affordable housing for homelessness prevention. 3. Allocations review and changes to the Allocations Policy. 4. Performance monitoring – Housing Measures – Qtr. 1. 5. Allocation Policies and how we communicate, give advice and take account of feedback. 6. Panel work programme.
3rd. October 5.00pm.	Provisional – not used.
4th. November at 5.00pm.	1. Performance monitoring – Housing Measures- Qtr. 2. Item to include a report back on performance against CS002 and CS005 2. Follow up on benefits performance indicators.
5th. December at 5.00pm.	1. Housing Strategy refresh. 2. Estate Regeneration – Scope 3. Management arrangements – Temporary Accommodation? 4. Communications Strategy for the Allocations Scheme 5. . 6. STAR survey benchmarks and methodology. 7. Programme details producing results for PIs HC016, NI154 and NI155. 8. Current rent arrears profiles.
15th. January 2014 at 5.00pm.	Provisional 1. Possible Asset Management Strategy – Oxford Standard. 2. Management arrangements – Temporary Accommodation? 3. Outcome from review of the Mutual Exchange process 4. No second night out detailed performance information. (confirmed)

	5. Improving quality in the private rent sector – a City Council Letting Agency. 6. Satisfaction with Parks details of survey results.
7th. February at 5.00pm.	1. Performance monitoring – Housing Measures – Qtr. 3. 2. Possible Asset Management Strategy – Oxford Standard
6th. March at 5.00pm.	Provisional
3rd. April at 5.00pm.	1. Tenants and Residents Involvement Strategy – Implementation and opportunities for influence for tenants.

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FORWARD PLAN FOR THE PERIOD DECEMBER 2013 - MARCH 2014

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 is £500,000.

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 RESPONSIBILITES

Bob Price (Leader)	*Corporate Governance, Strategic Partnerships and Economic Development*
Ed Turner (Deputy Leader)	*Finance, Efficiency and Strategic Asset Management*
Susan Brown	*Benefits and Customer Services*
Colin Cook	*City Development*
Steve Curran	*Youth and Communities*
Pat Kennedy	*Education, Crime and Community Safety*
Mark Lygo	*Parks, Sports and Events*
Mike Rowley	*Leisure Services*
Scott Seamons	*Housing*
John Tanner	*Cleaner Greener Oxford*

NOTE: Key decisions can also be taken by Council officers.

DECEMBER

ITEM 1:	**FINANCE, PERFORMANCE AND RISK - QUARTER 2 PROGRESS 2013/14**
Target Date:	11 Dec 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:	Executive Director Organisational Development and Corporate Services
Contact:	Nigel Kennedy Tel: 01865 252708 nkennedy@oxford.gov.uk, Jane Lubbock Tel: 01865 252708 jlubbock@oxford.gov.uk
Consultation:	
Scrutiny Committee Responsibility:	

ITEM 2:	TREASURY MANAGEMENT - MID-TERM REVIEW 2013/14
This report will present the mid-term review of the Council's treasury management function.	
Target Date:	11 Dec 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:	All Scrutiny Responsibility

ITEM 3:	MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY 2014/15 - 2017/18 AND BUDGET 2014/15 - CONSULTATION
The Strategy and Budget will be presented to the Board for approval to go out to public consultation.	
Target Date:	11 Dec 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:	All Scrutiny Responsibility

ITEM 4:	CORPORATE PLAN 2014-17 - CONSULTATION
This report will present a draft Corporate Plan for 2014-17 for consultation.	
Target Date:	11 Dec 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:	
Scrutiny Committee Responsibility:	All Scrutiny Responsibility

ITEM 5:	TOWN HALL STRATEGY
This report will contain recommendations for changes to Town Hall fees and charges.	
Target Date:	11 Dec 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 Human Resorces and Facilities

Contact:	Simon Howick Tel: 01865 252547 showick@oxford.gov.uk
Consultation:	
Scrutiny Committee Responsibility:	

ITEM 6:	**AIR QUALITY ACTION PLAN - CONSULTATION OUTCOME AND ADOPTION**
This report presents the outcome of consultation on a draft Air Quality Action Plan issued for consultation by the City Executive Board in July and will recommend adoption of an Air Quality Action Plan.	
Target Date:	11 Dec 2013
Decision Taker	City Executive Board
Is this a Key Decision?:	Yes
Executive lead member:	Executive Board Member for Cleaner, Greener Oxford
Is this item to be taken in public?	Yes
Report of:	Head of Environmental Development
Contact:	Roger Pitman rpitman@oxford.gov.uk
Consultation:	
Scrutiny Committee Responsibility:	

ITEM 7:	**JERICHO CANALSIDE SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENT - ADOPTION**
This report will present the outcome of consultation on this Supplementary Planning Document and recommend approval of it.	
Target Date:	11 Dec 2013
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:	Laura Goddard lgoddard@oxford.gov.uk
Consultation:	
Scrutiny Committee Responsibility:	

ITEM 8:	**COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY - DRAFT FOR CONSULTATION**
To approve a Public Involvement Strategy for public consultation.	
Target Date:	11 Dec 2013
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
Report of:	Executive Director Community Services
Contact:	Peter McQuitty Tel: 01865 252780 pmcquitty@oxford.gov.uk
Consultation:	
Scrutiny Committee Responsibility:	

ITEM 9:	**HOUSING STRATEGY REFRESH**
Target Date:	11 Dec 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 and Property
Contact:	Dave Scholes Tel: 01865 252636 dscholes@oxford.gov.uk
Consultation:	
Scrutiny Committee Responsibility:	All Scrutiny Responsibility

ITEM 10:	**HOUSING STOCK - ENERGY EFFICIENCY IMPROVEMENT**
This report will seek funding approval for a project to improve the energy efficiency of the Council's hard to treat housing stock utilising Energy Company Obligation funding.	
Target Date:	11 Dec 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 and Property
Contact:	Deborah Haynes dhaynes@oxford.gov.uk
Consultation:	
Scrutiny Committee Responsibility:	

ITEM 11:	**LIVING WAGE**
Target Date:	11 Dec 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 Human Resorces and Facilities
Contact:	Simon Howick Tel: 01865 252547 showick@oxford.gov.uk
Consultation:	
Scrutiny Committee Responsibility:	All Scrutiny Responsibility

JANUARY

ITEM 12:	**FUSION LIFESTYLE - FEES AND CHARGES 2014/15**
This report will ask the City Executive Board to approve for 2014/15 fees and charges for leisure facilities operated by Fusion Lifestyle.	
Target Date:	22 Jan 2014
Decision Taker	City Executive Board
Is this a Key Decision?:	Yes
Executive lead member:	Executive Board Member for Leisure Services
Is this item to be taken in public?	Yes
Report of:	Head of Leisure, Parks and Communities
Contact:	Lucy Cherry Tel: 01865 252707 lcherry@oxford.gov.uk
Consultation:	
Scrutiny Committee Responsibility:	

ITEM 13:	NEIGHBOURHOOD FORUM DESIGNATIONS
This report will seek Board approval formally to designate neighbourhood forums in Wolvercote, and Summertown/St Margarets. Designated neighbourhood forums are the bodies able to produce neighbourhood plans.	
Target Date:	22 Jan 2014
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:	Sarah Harrison sbharrison@oxford.gov.uk
Consultation:	
Scrutiny Committee Responsibility:	

FEBRUARY

ITEM 14:	COVERED MARKET STRATEGY
This report will deal with the development of a Covered Market Strategy which will outline the strategic development and management of the Covered Market for the next 5-10 years. The intention of the Strategy is to build the profile of the Market as a destination retail facility with a growing commercial performance.	
Target Date:	12 Feb 2014
Decision Taker	City Executive Board
Is this a Key Decision?:	Yes
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:	Gordon Reid Tel: 01865 252164 greid@oxford.gov.uk
Consultation:	
Scrutiny Committee Responsibility:	

ITEM 15:	FINANCE, PERFORMANCE AND RISK - QUARTER 3 PROGRESS 2013/14
Target Date:	12 Feb 2014
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:	Executive Director Organisational Development and Corporate Services
Contact:	Nigel Kennedy Tel: 01865 252708 nkennedy@oxford.gov.uk, Jane Lubbock Tel: 01865 252708 jlubbock@oxford.gov.uk
Consultation:	
Scrutiny Committee Responsibility:	All Scrutiny Responsibility

ITEM 16:	BUDGET AND MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY 2014/15 TO 2017/18 AND 2014/15 BUDGET
This report will present the Council's Budget for 2014/15 and the Medium Term Financial Strategy for recommendation to Council.	
Target Date:	12 Feb 2014
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:	All Scrutiny Responsibility

ITEM 17:	COMMUNITY AND VOLUNTARY ORGANISATIONS - GRANT ALLOCATIONS 2014/15
This report will set out the recommendations from the officer grants panel for the allocation of grant funding to the community and voluntary sector for 2014/15.	
Target Date:	12 Feb 2014
Decision Taker	City Executive Board
Is this a Key Decision?:	Yes
Executive lead member:	Executive Board Member for Young People, Education and Community Development
Is this item to be taken in public?	Yes
Report of:	Head of Leisure, Parks and Communities
Contact:	Julia Tomkins jtomkins@oxford.gov.uk
Consultation:	
Scrutiny Committee Responsibility:	

ITEM 18:	HORSPATH ROAD SPORTS PAVILION - REMODELLING OPTIONS
This report will review the options for remodelling the Horspath Road sports pavilion and for improving sports provision at Horspath Road.	
Target Date:	12 Feb 2014
Decision Taker	City Executive Board
Is this a Key Decision?:	Not Key
Executive lead member:	Executive Board Member for Leisure Services
Is this item to be taken in public?	Yes
Report of:	Head of Leisure, Parks and Communities
Contact:	Ian Brooke Tel: 01865 252705 ibrooke@oxford.gov.uk
Consultation:	
Scrutiny Committee Responsibility:	All Scrutiny Responsibility

ITEM 19:	LEISURE FACILITIES DEVELOPMENT AND MANAGEMENT CONTROL - REVIEW
Some information in relation to this report will form a not for publication annex to this report.	
Target Date:	12 Feb 2014
Decision Taker	City Executive Board
Is this a Key Decision?:	Not Key
Executive lead member:	Executive Board Member for Leisure Services

Is this item to be taken in public?	Yes
Report of:	Executive Director Community Services
Contact:	Tim Sadler Tel: 01865 252101 tsadler@oxford.gov.uk
Consultation:	
Scrutiny Committee Responsibility:	All Scrutiny Responsibility

MARCH

ITEM 20:	**COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY - CONSULTATION OUTCOME - ADOPTION OF STRATEGY**
Target Date:	12 Mar 2014 14 Apr 2014
Decision Taker	City Executive Board Council
Is this a Key Decision?:	Not Key
Executive lead member:	Executive Board Member for Corporate Governance and Strategic Partnerships Executive Board Member for Corporate Governance and Strategic Partnerships
Is this item to be taken in public?	Yes
Report of:	Executive Director Community Services
Contact:	Peter McQuitty Tel: 01865 252780 pmcquitty@oxford.gov.uk
Consultation:	
Scrutiny Committee Responsibility:	

ITEM 21:	**PARKING ON HRA LAND**
This report will present options for the control of resident parking on HRA land.	
Target Date:	12 Mar 2014
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 and Property
Contact:	Alison Dalton adalton@oxford.gov.uk
Consultation:	
Scrutiny Committee Responsibility:	

ITEM 22:	**GRANT ALLOCATION - PREVENTING HOMELESSNESS AND HOMELESSNESS SERVICES**
This report will recommend the allocation of grants from the Government under the Preventing Homelessness programme and the City Council's own grant funding for homelessness services.	
Target Date:	12 Mar 2014
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 and Property
Contact:	Nerys Parry nparry@oxford.gov.uk
Consultation:	
Scrutiny Committee Responsibility:	All Scrutiny Responsibility

BEYOND THE LIFE OF THIS PLAN

ITEM 23:	**FUSION LIFESTYLE - ANNUAL SERVICE PLAN 2014/15**
This report will ask the City Executive Board to endorse Fusion Lifestyle's 2014/15 Annual Service Plan for the management of the Council's leisure facilities.	
Target Date:	9 Apr 2014
Decision Taker	City Executive Board
Is this a Key Decision?:	Yes
Executive lead member:	Executive Board Member for Leisure Services
Is this item to be taken in public?	Yes
Report of:	Head of Leisure, Parks and Communities
Contact:	Lucy Cherry Tel: 01865 252707 lcherry@oxford.gov.uk
Consultation:	
Scrutiny Committee Responsibility:	All Scrutiny Responsibility

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Scrutiny Recommendation 2013 – 2014

All recommendations

Treasury Management – Qtr. 2 **Scrutiny Finance Panel – 7th. November 2013.**		
Recommendation	**Outcome**	**Considered by**
The Finance Scrutiny Panel has serious concerns about the Co-operative Banks current position and their recent statements. The Panel wishes to see an urgent review of their position as the Council's in-house bank to allow for more informed choices to be made.	Awaiting	City Executive Board 11th. December 2013.
Should a change of in house bank prove prudent or necessary; to ensure that ethical standards and investment remain part of the specification.	Awaiting	City Executive Board 11th. December 2013.
To provide to the Panel in 6 months time a review of the performance of the Council's non specified investments considering in particular, diversity and mix, returns and a benchmark across the public sector for the percentage of funds allocated to this type of investment.	Awaiting	City Executive Board 11th. December 2013.

To provide options based on this to increase returns. □		
Oxpens Site Master Plan **Scrutiny Committee 5th. November 2013.**		
Recommendation	**Outcome**	**Considered by**
To support the Oxpens Site Master Plan noting the concerns made by some committee members.	Agreed with amendment. The Board commented that this an outline Master Plan and these concerns will be considered in more detail as we move forward through the planning process.	City Executive Board 13th. November 2013.
Riverside Land Aquistion **Scrutiny Committee 5th. November 2013**		
Recommendation	**Outcome**	**Considered by**
To support the proposals in the report and ask the City Executive Board to note the offer of residents.	Agreed. Officer will talk directly to residents about their offer.	City Executive Board 13th. November 2013.
Waste and Recycling Strategy **Scrutiny Committee 5th. November 2013**		

Recommendation	Outcome	Considered by
That the strategy reflects in its vision the view that waste is a resource and a commodity from which the Council can generate income, and that the Council should continually be looking for further opportunities to benefit financially from the waste that the City produces.	Agreed	City Executive Board 13th. November 2013.
That CEB investigate and cost opportunities to pre-sort and divert recyclables from household waste collection before sending it to landfill.	Refused The Board Member agreed that this was needed within the County but the County Council has decided on incineration. Any consideration of an MRF provided by the City would be unaffordable. We are tackling these issues using other solutions.	
That the City Executive Board provide to the Scrutiny Committee more detailed information on the costing and feasibility for the options to recycle food from flats that have been considered alongside the details of the current capital bid	Agreed	
That CEB more actively use the penalty at its disposal to convince residents who do not present waste in the manner required.	Agreed	
That CEB investigate, through the Oxfordshire Waste Partnership, local opportunities to reduce excess packaging and reduce the use of plastic bags.	Agreed	

That CEB take all opportunities to promote the benefits of food waste separation to commercial customers and investigate opportunities to offer incentives to new business customers.	Agreed	
Performance Indicator LP106 **Scrutiny Committee – 1st. October 2013**		
Recommendation	**Outcome**	**Considered by**
The Committee is pleased to see improvements in participation amongst target groups and looks forward to reviewing this data in more detail at the end of the year. The overall target improvement of 5% is consistently overachieved so the Committee want to see a more challenging target set to ensure that we are challenging the provider to do the best they can in this important community development area. The target should be at least that achieved in the previous year.	Refused RESPONSE: "While leisure usage by target groups continues to increase, we'd like to do better still. We're looking at why the increase in usage by target groups appears to have slowed down last quarter, including the way usage is measured, the effect of weather conditions, and the deteriorating state of Temple Cowley Pool, as well as what more we could do to publicise what's available and make it more attractive. "The Council and Fusion remain detemined to meet and exceed the 5% target, as we have in previous years. However, until the reasons for	Board Member for Leisure Services. Recommendation sent 8th. October 2013.

	last quarter's performance have been determined and we have a slightly longer indication of trend to work with, I don't think it would be helpful to adjust the target. We will of course keep this under review."	
Operation of Neighbourhood Action Groups (NAGs) **Scrutiny Committee – 1st. October 2013**		
Recommendation	**Outcome**	**Considered by**
As a follow up, I have been asked to remind you that members of the Scrutiny Committee would be very grateful if you could reflect their views when next you contact the local Police Commander; and in particular if you could ask the Commander where he/she sees the role of NAGS – what is their priority in Police work?	Agree. Response from Cllr. Kennedy on the agenda.	Board Member for Education, Crime and Community Safety. Recommendation sent 2nd. October 2013.
Grants Commissioning Review **Scrutiny Committee – 1st. October 2013**		
Recommendation	**Outcome**	**Considered by**
That a member of the Scrutiny Committee has a seat on the Welfare Reform Members Panel. This would be Councillor Coulter until May 2014.	Agreed with amendment. Scrutiny Councillor to have observer	City Executive Board 9th. October

	status on the Welfare reform Members Panel.	
City Deal Bid **Scrutiny Committee – 1st. October 2013**		
Recommendation	**Outcome**	**Considered by**
For the expected future reports (recommendation 4 in the report) to establish the principle of public scrutiny through Local Authority Scrutiny Committees and discuss how this might work.	Agreed	City Executive Board 9th. October
In developing the ambitions and programmes within the "Skills " heading for Joint Committee Members to ensure that education, training and apprenticeship programmes are accessible to all through local schools and other educational bodies with an emphasis on early advice and guidance to young people so they are "work ready" for real jobs. For the emphasis of these programmes to be in areas of highest deprivation.	Agreed	
Customer Contract Strategy **Scrutiny Committee – 5th. September 2013**		
Recommendation	**Outcome**	**Considered by**

To ensure that separate arrangements for consultation with the Business Community are included in the information gathering to inform the final Strategy.	Agreed	City Executive Board 11th. September
To explore the use of Skype as a communication tool within this Strategy.	Agreed with Amendment Will explore Skype as a communication tool along with other methods rather than in isolation.	
To ensure that any service developments are evaluated financially around clear value for money principles.	Agreed	
Budget Spending – Qtr. 1 **Finance Scrutiny Panel – 6th. September 2013**		
Recommendation	**Outcome**	**Considered by**
To express concern about the availability of resources to deliver the Capital Programme.	Noted – arrangements already being considered	City Executive Board 11th. September
To reconsider the reporting of the Commercial Property rental measure using dates that align to produce a more accurate picture of performance.	Agreed	
That the City Executive Board bring forward their strategy for the provision of contingencies with the forthcoming medium Term Financial Strategy to the next meeting of the Panel in November.	Noted – will happen as part of the MTFS in December	
Treasury Management – Qtr. 1		

Finance Scrutiny Panel – 6th. September 2013		
Recommendation	**Outcome**	**Considered by**
To raise the non-specified investment limits from their currents levels and redefine what is grouped in this area to manage risk, in an effort to encourage investment diversity and higher rates of return.	Refused	City Executive Board 11th. September
Wherever it provides for good value for money to consider using investment funds for internal borrowing in order to avoid prudential borrowing.	Noted this is already done	
Allocation Scheme Review **Housing Scrutiny Panel – 3rd. September 2013**		
Recommendation	**Outcome**	**Considered by**
A Communication Strategy should be in place to explain the scheme as agreed, what it means for applicants alongside some general information on the likelihood of being housed. Communication should include the opportunity for feedback on the scheme itself and the understandability of it.	Agreed	City Executive Board 11th. September
Youth Ambition Strategy **Scrutiny Committee – 2nd July**		

Recommendation	**Outcome**	**Considered by**
To provide now a set of concrete outcome measures focused on the direct effects on the ambitions and pathways of the young people involved in this work.	Agreed	City Executive Board 10th. July
To monitor and revisit regularly the type of activity provided to ensure that it is flexible, contemporary and engaging the right numbers, in the right place, at the right time.	Agreed	City Executive Board 10th. July
To express the need for the provision of safe spaces for young people to express themselves as an overarching priority for all the schemes, actions and outcomes within this Strategy.	Agreed	City Executive Board 10th. July
Low Emission Strategy and Air Quality Action Plan **Scrutiny Committee – 2nd. July**		
Recommendation	**Outcome**	**Considered by**
To support the setting of the Low Emissions Strategy and ambitions but for the City Executive Board to require early reference of the document to the Carbon and Natural Resources Members Board so that gaps on data, resources and financing can be discussed and a robust action plan produced.	Agreed	City Executive Board 10th. July
Discretionary Housing Payments		

Scrutiny Committee – 4th. June 2013		
Recommendation	**Outcome**	**Considered by**
To organise a general campaign of clear advice through as many agencies, partnerships and offices as possible making it clear the temporary nature of Discretionary Housing Payments and the requirements to engage in more sustainable solutions.	Agreed	City Executive Board 12th. June 2013
To extend current out reach work to include benefit take-up to maximise benefits to current and potential claimants.	Agreed with amendment. Clarity in some aspects of Welfare reform is needed.	City Executive Board 12th. June 2013
To keep the Discretionary Housing Payment Policy under review and in particular to revisit it once regulations on further Welfare Reform are clear.	Agreed	City Executive Board 12th. June 2013
For the Scrutiny Committee to be included in the monitoring arrangements for this policy in both financial and outcome terms. To see this at the September Scrutiny Committee.	Agree	City Executive Board 12th. June 2013

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OXFORD CITY COUNCIL

To: The Scrutiny Committee

Date: 3rd December 2013

Report of: Enfranchisement and Empowerment Scrutiny Panel

Title of Report: Enfranchisement and EmpowermentFinal Report

Summary and Recommendations

Purpose of report: To present findings and recommendations from the Scrutiny Committee Enfranchisement and Empowerment Panel.

Scrutiny Panel Lead Members: Councillors Roy Darke, Graham Jones and Helen O'Hara

Executive Lead Member: Councillor Bob Price, Corporate Governance and Strategic Partnerships.

Recommendations:

(1) Given the importance of social cohesion for Oxford's future, that the Enfranchisement and Empowerment Panel continue its work into 2014 to:

- extend the Focus Group discussions to other recently arrived communities
- explore options for raising awareness across the city of the extent and character of its diversity
- inquire into social cohesion strategies developed in other local authority areas
- review the effectiveness of ESOL support from the Social Inclusion Fund
- evaluate officers' proposals to maximise IER
- take evidence on the number of, and means to empower, those adult residents not entitled to take part in elections

(2) That the Principal Electoral Services Officer presents:

- anupdate to members on the progress towards the implantation of IER in 2014 and how funding, following a successful bid to the Cabinet Office to increase voter registration within IER was to be spent.

- an update on the current annual update (canvass) of the electoral register, which will be published on 17th February 2014.

(3) To provide better communication and engagement, officers investigate how on-going dialogues can be established with as many of the larger communities as possible. Exploring what information would be most useful to them and in what form i.e. leaflets, website information in various languages etc.

(4) Officers should discuss partnership and joint/co-ordinated activities between Electoral Services and Communities and Neighbourhoods, with the introduction of IER to provideopportunities for outreach and engagement not only with in-migrants but also with other hard to reach groups such as young people. It provides an opportunity to communicate and inform about the democratic process and the need to sustain the vitality of civic engagement. All efforts should be made to maximise available funds from Government and other sources to produce the widest possible outcomes.

(5) City Executive Board is asked to renew the Council's Social Inclusion Fund in 2014/15 and to actively seek bids which meet the aspirations of extending the engagement and support work with new and emerging communities

(6) To support the consideration of bids within the Social Inclusion Fund Officers should be asked to draw up a "wish-list" of resources needed to take this work further. Working to make Oxford a welcoming, diverse and integrated community is an important aim.

(7) That Officers report to the Panel how the integration of recent in-migrants communities has been encouraged in other local authority areas.

Introduction

(1) This report outlines the findings from the Enfranchisement and Empowerment Scrutiny Panel since it last reported to the former Communities and Partnership Scrutiny Committee in April 2013, and makes recommendations from these findings.

(2) At the April 2013 meeting of the Communities and Partnership Scrutiny Committee, it was agreed to extend the life of the Panel into the 2013/14 Council Year. This was to enable the Panel to arrange focus groups to consult with Oxford residents from 3 minority communities: Polish; Somali and Pakistaniaround themes and questions detailed later in this report. The Panel was also asked to continue to analyse Census results as they became available.

Context

(3) The core purpose of the Panel this year has been to provide insight into the views of the chosen communities in an effort to widen understanding and encourage and improve empowerment of recent in-migrant communities. Approximately 29% of Oxford's population was born outside of the UK.

(4) A significant number of over-18sin Oxford who contributed to the city's economy, paid tax and used services are not eligible to vote. These are nationals of countries outside the European Union and the Commonwealth. Those from EU member states can vote in local and European Parliament elections but not in UK General Elections.

(5) Since reporting in April the national context of a broad sense of disenchantment with politicians and the political process prevails with some commentators reporting a deepening of these views. The celebrity Russell Brand wrote anarticle as guest editor of The New Statesman in October 2013 concluding that voting in elections was a waste of time. These views have been highlighted by traditional and social media as a major issue. Russell Brand appeared on BBC 'Newsnight' a few days after the article appeared and Jeremy Paxman agreed that he found it hardly worthwhile to turn out and vote. There has been an expanding debate in the media with bodies such as the Electoral Reform Society making the obvious point that participation is the cornerstone of a democratic society and that not voting is a counsel of despair and even nihilism.

(6) General alienation from the democratic/political process adds to the problem facing the Panel when seeking to expand civic engagement and may take many years to diminish. It is not an auspicious moment to be advocating civic engagement. The move from household to individual registration for the electoral register therefore presents an even greater challenge and there is a danger that significant numbers of people will either choose not to register or will not make the effort.

Scope

(7) The Panel's overarching scope:

As Census data was published we began to see the diverse and changing nature of Oxford and the number of people who failed to complete details without at least one reminder. Alongside this there were a number of properties with no one registered to vote.

- What effect did this have on the understanding of Oxford's communities, within the Council and more widely across the city?

- Did we understand why some households/communities chose not to engage?

- What was the extent of the democratic deficit?

- What did this mean for communities, services and funding?

Methodology

(8) The Panel used a mix of observations, discussions and visits to gather evidence. These methods allowed for a better understanding of the issues affecting residents. The Panel has:

(a) Analysed statistical information available from the 2011 Census and the 2013 Register of Electors provided by Mark Fransham and Martin John.

- 2011 Census, namely what was classed as the 'usually resident' population by age whose main address was Oxford on Census Day in 2011, though not people living in the city for less than 12 months**(Appendix A)**

- 2013 Electoral Register broken down by ward detailing number of properties, population, eligible electors, under 19s, annual canvass return rates and voter turnout in the May 2012 City Council elections **(Appendix B)**

(b) Met with officers from Communities and Neighbourhoods (Luke Nipen), Electoral Services (Martin John) and Policy, Culture and Communications (Mark Fransham).

(c) Focus Groups - Met with representatives from the Asian Women's, Polish and Somali communities as follows:

- 24th October 2013 met with the Asian Women's Lunch Club at the Rose Hill Community Centre
- 28th October 2013 met with members of the Polish community at the Blackbird Leys Community Centre
- 31stOctober 2013 met with members of the Somali community at the Blackbird Leys Community Centre

The Panel decided to formulate questions **(Appendix C)**that would not be prescriptive but which would act as an aide-memoire and be a starting point for discussions. The questions were divided into four main areas: **(results at Appendix D)**

- **Why Oxford?** – to explore what attracted people to Oxford in the first place and find out if it has fulfilled any expectations they may have had;

- **Your Community** – to explore what a community's experience is, and what, if any difficulties it has experienced in work and places to live;

- **Your services** – to find out what services different communities chose to use, and if there are any barriers to their use. To try to discover where their "trusted places" are;

- **Voting and democracy** – to find out what people knew about voting, and to touch on their experiences of the democratic process.

Findings

Census 2011 and Electoral Registration

(9) The Panel noted that the 2011 Census information and data sets were already out-of-date. During the period since the Censusthere had been two complete annual canvass updates of the electoral register (autumn 2011 and summer 2012) and a further one is underway which commenced on 15th October 2013, for the 2014 Electoral Register, to be published on 17th February 2014.

(10) The most recent annual canvass update of the electoral register (summer 2012, published on 16th October 2012) achieved a property response rate of 96.2%. Despite best efforts this still left 3.8% of properties from which the Council was unable to obtain a reply. However for an all-urban authority like Oxford this was an encouragingresult. For comparison, according to the Electoral Commission's latest report on electoral registration rates (The Completeness and Accuracy of Electoral Registers in England 2010 – Electoral Commission), the average for English authorities was 92.7%. Towns like Cambridge, Canterbury, Nottingham and Warwick, all university towns and all fell below 90%. Oxford's result compares well within these benchmarks.

(11) During the annual canvass update in the summer of 2012, the churn rate for Oxford was 53.2% i.e. 53.2% of properties had some changes to the details held on the electoral register at the start of the canvass. Cambridge had a churn rate of 47.4%, Southampton was 34.3%, Exeter was 33.9%, Haringey was 19.7% and West Oxfordshire was 17.3%.

Focus Group Discussions

(12) The Panel was supported in this work by the Community Specialist Officer (CSO). This is a new position in Oxford City Council's Communities and Neighbourhoods Team. The CSO builds and maintains links to 'communities of interest' in Oxford while also

providing specialist advice on engagement with these communities to other service areas and partner agencies. Oxford is ethnically diverse with approximately 29% of the population born outside the UK. Part of this role is to work with established and emerging communities to achieve their aims and build effective links with council services.

(13) The CSO spends a significant amount of time building relationships and trust with communities who previously may have had little or no contact or perceived poor relationships with the Council. This is a long term project but will ultimately improve communication and the City Council's capacity to engage effectively. There is often a feeling of suspicion within some recent communities when the City Council tries to engage with them. By building effective engagement through the CSO, this is reduced. The provision of expert advice on who to speak to and best practise when engaging communities, enables other service areas to be more effective with their consultation.

Common comments from all three groups

(14) Discussion Point - Why they chose Oxford?

- To be with relatives.
- Employment was easy to find.
- Its reputation and the education system.
- The small size of the city.
- Considered a safe place.

Additional comment: The Polish community also felt that Oxford as an old city reminded them of towns and cities back in Poland.

(15) All three groups were happy in Oxford, had gained employment and had accessed education and medical services. They understood the issues around housing such as the lack of supply of affordable accommodation etc.

(16) All would welcome additional funding to support their respective groups and translator services when accessing the Council.

Discussion Point - Your communities

(17) All three groups said that they sought advice primarily within their communities as the most trusted source. They all raised language as a barrier. They welcomed ESOL, which provided language courses etc. though some concerns were raised on its delivery. Some felt that previous language courses provided under "English as a Foreign Language" were more intense and included tests and a qualification.

(18) There was some apprehension that they would experience racism and prejudice, but this had not happened in Oxford. The Asian Women and the Polish communities did feel that some newspapers, some

politicians,some members of the public and some ill-informed neighbours, fostered perceptions such as all Muslims are terrorists and the Polish only come to take British people's jobs.

(19) All three groups felt that their children were their most important concern with a concernparticularly of a growing "culture" gap between the generations. The older generation was concerned that the younger generation did not necessarily consider that their community's language, history and culture, was important/relevant to them.

Discussion Point - Services and accessing information

(20) All three groups were happy to access public services. All again raised the issue of language and felt that translators were required. Education was very important to all three communities as was housing. They were all aware of the housing crisis in Oxford.

(21) Some members of the Somali community said they felt disadvantaged. Specifically they perceived their housing needs were passed over in favour of other in-migrants, as they did not know how to access the system for services. Almost none knew the identity of their Ward Councillors.

(22) All three groups welcomed the support received fromLuke Nipen, the Community Specialist Officer. The Panel also welcomed this appointment as a welcome step towards better communications and mechanisms for participation.

Discussion Point - Voting and democracy

(23) All three groups understood the electoral process,however there was some distrust raised by each of the groups. For example, one group felt that politicians promised a lot at election time but did not always deliver once elected. Two of the groups specifically said they felt that they only saw politicians at election time.

(24) All those that were eligible had participated in voting and were aware of the 2014 electoral registration canvassforms currently being delivered to every residential property in the city. All groups felt that it was important to vote.

Conclusions

Voter Registration

(25) The Panel felt that it was encouraging that Oxford was achieving a high rate of return on its annual update of the electoral register. It considered whether or not there is value in pursuing further the missing responses, but on balance understood the limit of what could be achieved with the available funding and resources.The introduction of

Individual Electoral Registration (IER) whilst fitting well with the drive for personal responsibility does pose some serious risks and has the potential to reduce voter registration in Cities and places with particular characteristics. The Panel would like to see all efforts to maximise available funds and knowledge to deliver IER to maximise voter registration.

Focus Groups - Empowerment

(26) For recent arrivals to Oxford there is some engagement with civic society but there is also unfamiliarity with: access to services; democracy (local councillors)/ governance; places to seek help and advice; and electoral registration and democratic processes. The Panel discussed a number of factors that could explain this. For those who are not EU or commonwealth citizens the value of electoral registration and wider engagement in civic affairs is low unless they need specific services which require a record of registration, for example credit. Community groupings and associations have the value of providing a secure place to find out about the locality and local services and these safe havens, are the first port of call for inquiries and needs.For whatever reason this reluctance to engage has a marginalising effect and to encourage new communities through dialogue need to continue with real outcomes.

(27) The Panel did not want to engage with the broader debate about assimilation vs. multiculturalism as being beyond its brief and a somewhat sterile dichotomy in any case. It is however an obvious conclusion from the meetings with recent in-migrants that productive and valued engagement with a host society takes time,familiarity and experience. The Panel saw evidence of what can be called 'second generation effect'. The parent of a teenager from Poland said that her son was still seen (and felt) as an 'incomer' when among his school friends, yet felt a growing distance from the cultural heritage of his parents when among groups of older generation compatriots. Members of the Panel saw this differently depending on their own experiences, and agreed this signified the challenge for second generation in-migrants, and for all the community, to enable young people to reconcile positively the range of cultural experiences to which they are exposed, in a way that enriches and contributes to local democracy, rather than divides.

(28) The Panel recognised and would like to highlight that recent migrants areindividuals and families who are taking a major step whencoming to Oxford. That step may either have been forced on them by circumstances at home or chosen as a freshstart and direction. The predominant age of the groups spoken to by the Panel was 20 to 40 years and they had families and needed work and a home, the common challenges for all regardless of background.There is reason to believe that amongst the indigenous population the ‘peak’ of civic engagement tends to be in later years when issues of career- and

family-building are more settled and therefore less of an influence onlifestyle and behaviour. Given this it should come as no surprise that recent migrants do not prioritise civic and general community engagement,they are more likely to do as all do and focus on jobs, family building and housing.

(29) Another significant issue for many in-migrantsis language. The Panelheard many grumbles about ESOL and the dwindling opportunities to get classes in English language. Taking the specific concerns about reforming current practice is beyond the brief for the Panel but is a possible area of future work for the Scrutiny Committee/Communities & Neighbourhoods. Scrutiny might wish, for example, to track the use and outcomes of the £10k (doubled from external source) won from the Council's Social Inclusion Fund for continued coordination of ESOL by Oxfordshire Community and Voluntary Action (OCVA).

(30) All three discussions were clearly helpful and could have lasted longer. All three groups asked for dialogue to be on-going. How this could be done needs to be explored.

(31) The Panel were aware that it had only met three of Oxford's 60 or so in-migrant communities. It is concerned that the exercise should be widened out to at least the largest of the other 57. Again, how this could be done needs to be explored.

(32) The Panel would like to thank officers, especially Mark Fransham, Martin John, Luke Nipen, Mathew Metcalfe and Lois Stock for their invaluable assistance during this review.

Recommendations:

(33) Given the importance of social cohesion for Oxford's future, that the Enfranchisement and Empowerment Panel continue its work into 2014 to:

- extend the Focus Group discussions to other recently arrived communities
- explore options for raising awareness across the city of the extent and character of its diversity
- inquire into social cohesion strategies developed in other local authority areas
- review the effectiveness of ESOL support from the Social Inclusion Fund
- evaluate officers' proposals to maximise IER
- take evidence on the number of, and means to empower, those adult residents not entitled to take part in elections

(34) That the Principal Electoral Services Office presents:

- an update to members on the progress towards the implementation of IER in 2014 and how funding, following a successful bid to the Cabinet Office to increase voter registration within IER was to be spent;
- an update on the current annual update (canvass) of the electoral register, which will be published on 17th February 2014.

(35) To provide for better communication and engagement,officers investigate how on-going dialogues can be established with as many of the larger communities as possible. Exploring what information would be most useful to them and in what form i.e. leaflets, website information in various languages etc.

(36) Officers should discuss partnership and joint /co-ordinated activities between Electoral Services and Communities and Neighbourhoods with the introduction of IER to provide opportunities for outreach and engagement not only with in-migrants but also with other hard to reach groups such as young people. It provides an opportunity to communicate and inform about democratic process and the need to sustain the vitality of civic engagement. All efforts should be made to maximise available funds from Government and other sources to produce the widest possible outcomes.

(37) City Executive Board is asked to renew the Council's Social Inclusion Fund in 2014/15 and to actively seek bids which meet the aspirations of extending the engagement and support work with new and emerging communities

(38) To support the consideration of bids within the Social Inclusion Fund officers should be asked to draw up a "wish-list" of resources needed to take this work further. Working to make Oxford a welcoming, diverse and integrated community is an important aim.

(39) That officers report to the Panel, how the integration of recent in-migrants communities has been encouraged in other local authority areas.

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APPENDIX A

Population by ward, 2011 Census

Source: National Statistics

This data refers to the 'usually resident' population in Oxford on Census day 2001 and 2011

The usually resident population is, broadly speaking, people whose main address is in Oxford and who have stayed or intend to stay for 12 months or more

University students are counted at their term-time address; people living in the city for less than 12 months are not counted

Ward Name	All Ages	0-4	5-9	10-14	15-19	20-24	25-29	30-34	35-39	40-44	45-49	50-54	55-59	60-64	65-69	70-74	75-79	80-84	85-89	90+
Barton and Sandhills	7,202	672	543	440	418	511	739	619	532	480	458	373	337	315	239	176	134	88	78	50
Blackbird Leys	6,077	547	444	474	400	420	471	415	395	431	436	349	245	236	220	220	181	122	49	22
Carfax	6,361	63	50	66	1,284	2,617	876	433	193	146	142	118	86	92	63	47	31	32	12	10
Churchill	7,303	447	314	295	801	1,460	759	617	464	345	300	248	248	232	177	162	127	165	96	46
Cowley	6,562	509	368	373	375	454	735	639	494	471	427	325	275	262	187	186	148	148	112	74
Cowley Marsh	6,977	455	346	257	524	1,014	1,168	843	493	402	356	240	229	174	123	122	89	88	38	16
Headington	5,764	311	266	209	245	729	631	532	402	327	348	292	233	279	215	178	187	154	138	88
Headington Hill and Northway	6,224	335	274	316	1,041	961	563	419	343	311	292	262	209	212	183	125	127	129	88	34
Hinksey Park	5,944	364	280	221	252	592	879	671	474	389	375	262	258	264	184	147	119	107	63	43
Holywell	5,425	22	19	22	1,525	2,905	479	149	55	51	42	40	42	27	22	12	3	5	4	1
Iffley Fields	5,713	376	267	235	322	817	723	575	373	390	366	303	274	235	143	93	107	61	38	15
Jericho and Osney	6,820	322	239	176	387	1,087	1,200	769	503	360	355	292	263	247	208	147	101	75	54	35
Littlemore	6,441	497	400	313	290	417	695	598	454	483	475	390	310	294	236	185	151	126	91	36
Lye Valley	7,372	573	406	361	497	745	974	700	505	450	419	395	325	258	198	218	137	115	69	27
Marston	6,259	385	362	344	321	421	564	476	450	432	408	331	277	354	283	253	231	198	117	52
North	5,809	191	213	378	533	1,174	692	445	306	276	300	238	249	260	194	119	84	71	54	32
Northfield Brook	6,991	789	575	534	532	423	578	597	597	562	505	315	226	171	193	143	111	73	46	21
Quarry and Risinghurst	6,308	487	343	268	302	469	572	510	484	458	409	356	347	372	271	202	155	147	106	50
Rose Hill and Iffley	6,500	532	420	381	368	388	661	561	426	416	451	398	293	294	251	235	195	114	75	41
St Clement's	5,952	171	130	126	359	2,008	816	465	288	239	228	243	223	205	139	112	73	42	52	33
St Margaret's	5,497	265	301	266	672	508	511	420	316	355	336	287	276	257	210	157	111	114	70	65
St Mary's	5,330	195	130	90	401	1,859	796	471	288	213	180	165	149	134	71	54	48	33	31	22
Summertown	7,209	405	399	659	696	361	681	566	430	438	439	386	360	337	288	202	176	154	147	85
Wolvercote	5,866	338	317	310	367	214	333	373	358	429	447	419	414	413	285	274	240	164	114	57

APPENDIX B

EMPOWERMENT AND ENFRANCHISEMENT - POPULATION AND ELECTOR ANALYSIS

WARD	PROPERTIES(1)	POPULATION (2)	ELECTORS (3)	UNDER 19'S (4)	CANVAS NON-RETURN (5)	VOTER TURNOUT CITY ELECTIONS
Barton &Sandhills	2899	7202	5187	2073	79 = 2.73%	22.54%
Blackbird Leys	2351	6077	4225	1865	48 = 2.04%	20.81%
Carfax	1509	6361	4380	1463	26 = 2.03%	20.27%
Churchill	3858	7303	5068	1857	212 = 7.66%	21.62%
Cowley	2514	6562	4608	1625	81 = 3.23%	26.84%
Cowley Marsh	3054	6977	4998	1582	64 = 2.37%	27.77%
Headington	2909	5764	4446	1031	212 = 7.30%	41.35%
Headington Hill & Northway	3383	6224	4693	1966	83 = 4.29%	25.24%
HinseyPark	2727	5944	4620	1117	73 = 4.09%	32.34%
Holywell	305	5425	3627	1588	11 = 5.95%	21.82%
Iffley Fields	2279	5713	4110	1200	149 = 6.58%	42.49%
Jericho &Osney	3192	6820	4993	1124	237 = 8.01%	30.53%
Littlemore	2846	6441	4827	1500	79 = 2.78%	24.44%
LyeValley	2922	7372	5101	1837	136 = 5.08%	22.86%
Marston	2562	6259	4717	1412	32 = 1.25%	40.41%
North	2049	5809	4598	1315	71 = 3.78%	34.82%
Northfield Brook	2705	6991	4477	2430	27 = 1.21%	17.51%
Quarry &Risinghurst	2706	6308	4858	1400	83 = 3.08%	36.56%
Rose Hill &Iffley	2649	6500	4518	1701	79 = 3.04%	31.58%
St. Clement's	2340	5952	5019	786	102 = 4.51%	26.29%
St. Margaret's	2122	5497	4167	1504	83 = 4.09%	31.89%
St. Mary's	1935	5330	4025	816	115 = 6.14%	27.88%
Summertown	3086	7209	4985	2159	151 = 5.17%	36.34%
Wolvercote	2710	5866	4663	1332	50 = 1.85%	41.91%

(1) Figures taken from the summer 2012 Electoral Register update
(2) Figures taken from the 2011 Census
(3) Figures taken from the 2013 Electoral Register published on 16th October 2012
(4) Figures taken from the 2011 Census
(5) Figures taken from the 2013 Electoral Register update process, completed on 15th October 2012 (These figures do not include college and care home properties (5798))

City Elections, May 2012 – Overall turnout – 29.37%
Electoral Register Annual Update (Canvass) City wide non-return rate of 2283 properties = 3.71%

APPENDIX C

Questions

Section 1: Why did you choose Oxford?

Purpose: To find out what attracted people to Oxford in the first place.

What encouraged you / your family to come to Oxford?

Now that you are here, can you tell us if Oxford is as you expected it to be?

What are your hopes (and fears) for living in Oxford?

Now that you have been here for a while, can you see yourself staying here for the long term and putting down roots in Oxford? If not, can you tell us why not?

Section 2: Your Community

Purpose: To explore community experience

Do you think that Oxford is an attractive place for your community generally? Do you think your community in Oxford will grow?

Can you tell us how your community helps newcomers to settle in and feel at home? What are the first things that people want to do?

Are you aware of any particular difficulties experienced by members of your community when they first come here?

Oxford is an expensive place to live. Does the cost of living here have an effect on people in your community and what they want to do?

Are you able to tell us where people in your community work? What are their main jobs, do you think?

Section 3: Your services and accessing information

Purpose: To find out what services people use, and if there are any barriers to their use.

What services do you know about, and do you find them easy to use?

Do you know where to go to get help and information when you need it?

Where are your trusted places for help and information and for your community in general?

What do you think “the Council” in Oxford does for you? Would you consider the Council to be a trusted place for help and information?

Section 4: Voting and democracy

Purpose: To find out how much is known about democracy

Do you know about voting and is this something you do, or want to do?

Do you know what the electoral register is, and what it is for? Do you think it’s something useful?

Do you feel that anything is stopping you from voting or going on the electoral register?

Did you know about the Census in 2011, and did you complete it? [if here at that time].

Final wrap up questions

If you’ve been here a while, and want to stay here, do you feel part of the Oxford community overall? What makes you feel that way?

If not, or if you are still thinking about making a future in Oxford, are you able to tell us 2 things that would make you feel more a part of the Oxford community in which you live and work?

Appendix D

Asian Women's Club – Thursday 24th October 2013

The Asian Women's Club met every Thursday at the Rose Hill Children's Centre. The reasons for attending varied but included being able to participate in activities such as knitting, cooking, taking language courses, meeting others and generally having the opportunity to learn. Being housewives, they said they appreciated the opportunity to get out of the house.

Some women felt that they had lost their confidence and skills previously gained before coming to Oxford. The Club allowed them to regain confidence and to mix with others and learn new skills.

The attendees all lived locally to the Centre. Some had been in the UK for little more than 3 months, while the longest had been here for 25 years. Countries of origin included India, Pakistan, Bangladesh and Afghanistan.

Section 1: Why did you choose Oxford?

During the discussion reasons/attractions for coming to Oxford included:

- To be with their husbands.
- Followed other relatives.
- Heard the name Oxford and its reputation and wanted to come.
- The University, medical facilities and the education system in general.
- If others had done well in Oxford, they felt Oxford was a good place.

Section 2: Your community

The discussion revolved around what they felt was attractive about Oxford, the growth of their community, difficulties experienced, work opportunities and the cost of living, with responses as follows:

- Liked the mixed communities in Oxford and the smaller size of the city compared to places such as London, Birmingham and Manchester.
- Language was a barrier, but the Centre offered courses in this through ESOL.
- They found that "British" people had been very helpful, especially with language issues, being tolerant etc. which was not the case in other countries.
- Concerned that following recent incidents nationally and internationally, the perception by some people that being a Muslim made you a terrorist, not a problem in Oxford, but in the larger cities they felt it was.
- Concerned on the economy and especially the proposed cuts in the number of Children Centres.
- Some had experienced local prejudice and could not understand why.
- Family members worked or were in education.

Section 3: Your services and accessing information

The purpose of this discussion was to discover what services were used, if they knew who provided these services, and what barriers there were to accessing them, with responses as follows:

- Most did not realise that the Children's Centre building was funded by the County Council, but they were aware that the Centre's services were funded by the Council.
- They came to the Centre because they trusted the staff and knew the other women that attended and felt at ease in finding the help information they needed.
- All accessed medical services, but realised there were issues with increasing demand and resources not necessarily matching that demand and increased expectations.
- They felt that with language being a barrier, having language courses available in the local area was a great benefit especially as they were free of charge.
- Appreciated that information from the Council was available in other languages, but felt that there should be more translators available.

Section 4: Voting and democracy

The discussion was to establish what was known about the democratic process and how to be part of this. Responses included:

- Most had voted in elections in their "birth" countries and in the UK if they were eligible.
- Most were aware of the current Register of Electors 2014 forms that were being delivered to all residential properties in the City to update the register.
- Felt that if you had the vote, you should use it and were comfortable in encouraging this.
- Most discussed politics and elections at home with their families.
- Comments were made that some felt that they only saw politicians at election time when they wanted their votes.

General comments

The Group were very concerned that due to funding cuts the Centre could be closed and that if this was too happen to the Rose Hill Children's Centre, then the Asian Women's Club would fail. The Club needed this support to continue to encourage women to come out of the home and meet other women and learn new skills.

Many families taught their children their mother tongue first and English second. It was felt that they would learn English when they went to school. They felt that this tended to put their children at a disadvantage.

Oxford Polish Community – Monday 28th October 2013

The Oxford Polish Association (OPA) has 35 members who meet twice a month at the Blackbird Leys Community Centre. The Association provides advice to its members and holds events such as a Children's Day and Christmas events to raise money for the Association and local charities.

Some of the attendees had been in the UK for around 2 years, while the longest had been here for over 10 years. Some had lived in other parts of the UK before coming to Oxford, for example Devon and London.

Section 1: Why did you choose Oxford?

During the discussion reasons/attractions for coming to Oxford included:

- To be with family already in Oxford.
- Employment was easy to find compared to other cities in the UK.
- The city had an old culture and traditions which reminded them of the cities back in Poland and a good education system.
- Oxford was considered a safe place to live and raise children.

Section 2: Your community

The discussion revolved around what they felt was attractive about Oxford, the growth of their community, difficulties experienced, work opportunities and the cost of living, with responses as follows:

- Liked the smaller size of the city compared to places such as London, Birmingham and Manchester. Felt that Oxford was also a multicultural city.
- Language was a barrier, especially if trying to gain employment in the profession you had back in Poland.
- Felt that ESOL classes were very good, but concerned that the number available had been reduced. Welcomed that the Polish School in Oxford provided language courses at a low cost.
- Some had felt apprehensive that they would experience problems when they first arrived in Oxford, but problems had tended not to arise.
- Some had experienced prejudice in other parts of the country, before coming to Oxford.
- Employment was easy to find, however in order to have a job in the profession they were qualified in, they had to gain the British equivalent, without this "registration" you had for example qualified teachers taking cleaning jobs.
- Some concerns raised that there was a perception, especially in the media, that Poles were coming to the UK and taking jobs from English

people, which they felt was not the case as the jobs were there for anyone to take.

- Single people tended to go to where they could gain employment, and so for example would move from Oxford to Swindon for jobs in the car industry.
- Those with families were more likely to settle and stay in Oxford so that their children's education would not be disrupted by moving on.

Section 3: Your services and accessing information

The purpose of this discussion was to discover what services were used, if they knew who provided these services, and what barriers there were to accessing them, with responses as follows:

- Housing was an issue and some had come to the Council for advice. They understood that Oxford had a housing problem, but that this was not exclusive to Oxford.
- All accessed medical services, but realised there were issues with increasing demand and resources not necessarily matching that demand and increased expectations. Easy to make comparisons between UK and Polish healthcare services.
- They felt that people tried to solve problems themselves in the first instance, though knew that they could approach the Citizens Advice Bureau and the Council for advice.
- Experiences of using the Council was generally good and welcomed the support the Council gave the OCVA.
- Would welcome translators being available when they approached the Council for advice etc.
- Aware of the Council's website, but did not always find it easy to navigate - for example to find how they could contact their local Councillor.

Section 4: Voting and democracy

The discussion was to establish what was known about the democratic process and how to be part of this. Responses included:

- All were aware that they were eligible to go on the electoral register in the UK.
- Most had voted in local elections and were aware of the European Parliamentary elections in May 2014.
- All were aware of the current Register of Electors 2014 forms that were being delivered to all residential properties in the city to update the register.
- They found the voting process easy in the UK and had been happy to approach councillors on various issues.

General comments

The Group were concerned that the retention of a Polish identity could be a problem, especially for the younger generation. They felt that the children would become more "English" and their spoken Polish would deteriorate as they would prefer to speak in English. They felt that in order to integrate some put a huge effort into learning and speaking English and because of this had not appreciated how fast Polish as a language spoken on a day-to-day basis would reduce.

Oxford Somali Community – Thursday 31st October 2013

The Somali community in Oxford is a new emerging community and not located in one geographical area of the city. Some of its members had been in the UK for around 2 years, while the longest had been here for 29 years. Some had lived in other parts of the UK before coming to Oxford, for example London. The community was extremely proud of its heritage.

Section 1: Why did you choose Oxford?

During the discussion reasons/attractions for coming to Oxford included:

- To be with family already in Oxford.
- Employment was easy to find compared to other cities in the UK.
- The reputation of Oxford internationally and its education system.
- Oxford was considered a safe place to live and raise children.
- A goal to come and study in Oxford.

Section 2: Your community

The discussion revolved around what they felt was attractive about Oxford, the growth of their community, difficulties experienced, work opportunities and the cost of living, with responses as follows:

- Liked the smaller size of the city compared to places such as London. Felt that Oxford was also a multicultural city.
- Language was a barrier especially when applying for a British passport. They were aware of ESOL, but concerned that the service offered while welcomed was not as in-depth as it used to be under "English spoken as a foreign language" when studying, for example, for the certificate necessary for UK citizenship, and the current system did not take into account the different learning needs between young and old.
- As an emerging community, felt that it needed a physical hub, where people could come for advice and regularly meet, but funding was an issue.
- They tended to go to trusted people within the community in the first instance for advice though wanted to build relationships with the Council.

- Felt that Oxford was a safe place. No one had experienced racism or crime.
- All left Somalia because it was unsafe, but the older generation would like to return to Somalia if the situation there was stable with a stable economy and Government etc., while the younger generation wanted to stay in the UK.

Section 3: Your services and accessing information

The purpose of this discussion was to discover what services were used, if they knew who provided these services, and what barriers there were to accessing them, with responses as follows:

- Housing was an issue and some had come to the Council for advice, but felt that this advice had not always been as helpful as it could. They understood that Oxford had a housing problem.
- Rents in the private sector were high and the accommodation was not always good. Concerned that some landlords gave little or no notice when they wanted their properties back.
- Felt that they were being treated differently to other more established communities. They felt that they did not receive the same amount of support as others. They needed to know how as an emerging community they could access the "system" for help.
- Would welcome translators being available when they approached the Council for advice and this could be provided by members of the Somali community.
- Aware of the Council's website.

Section 4: Voting and democracy

The discussion was to establish what was known about the democratic process and how to be part of this. Responses included:

- All were aware that once they become a British citizen they were eligible to go on the electoral register in the UK.
- Most knew of their MP (Andrew Smith) but not who their local councillors were.
- Felt that politicians promised a lot but tended not to always deliver.
- Did not have complete faith in the democratic process as they felt that they only got 50% of what they saw other people and communities getting.

General comments

The Group felt that the process to become a British citizen was more complicated and expensive, but that to have an English test was good. However older people tended to find the tests more difficult.

The Group felt that their children and their futures were extremely important and that was why they came to the UK and Oxford.

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OXFORD CITY COUNCIL

To: Scrutiny Committee

Date: 3 December 2013 **Item No:**

Report of: Head of Customer Services

Title of Report: A report on the monitoring of Discretionary Housing Payments

Summary and Recommendations

Purpose of report: To provide an update on the monitoring and expenditure of the Discretionary Housing Payments budget

Policy Framework: Efficient, Effective Council

Recommendation(s): To note the monitoring arrangements in place, and expenditure to date.

APPENDICES:
Appendix 1 – Summary of DHP Expenditure
Appendix 2 – Demographics of DHP applicants
Appendix 3 – Case Studies

INTRODUCTION

1. On 12 June 2013 The City's Executive Board agreed a new Discretionary Housing Payment (DHP) policy. This policy was inspected by the Scrutiny Committee at its meeting of 4 June 2013. One of the recommendations of the Committee was that they be involved in the on-going monitoring arrangements re the implementation of the DHP policy, and that reports be brought back to the Committee on a quarterly basis. This report provides the second update on DHP activity under the new policy.

2. Discretionary Housing Payments (DHP's) are monies allocated by local authorities under legislation set out in the Child Support, Pensions and Social Security Act 2000 and The Discretionary Financial Assistance Regulations 2001 (SI2001/1167). In summary, the funds can be used to meet eligible rent for people already in receipt of Housing Benefit. The customer must make an application for the payment, and the

Council must consider the applicants financial need if an award is to be made. In effect, the fund allows some local discretion to meet the needs that are not covered by the national Housing Benefit Scheme.

3. DHP is not a sustainable solution for people who have a shortfall between their Housing Benefit and rent costs. To this end the policy provides for awards to be: a) limited to three months in duration in most cases and b) for conditionality to be applied to the majority of awards.

4. The policy also makes provision for awards to be withdrawn if conditionality is not met. It is intended that any conditionality is designed to promote effective financial management, help support people into work, and or assist with reducing rent liability. Examples provided in the policy include attending work related coaching and seeking assistance to manage debts.

DHP PROCESS

5. The key determination in making a DHP award is whether someone is able to afford their HB shortfall, and this is done with reference to a detailed income and expenditure form which the customer fills in. The person assessing the application will go back to the customer with any queries about the income and expenditure before making a decision.

6. When making an award, one or more conditions will usually be applied requiring the customer to take some specific actions in order to find a sustainable solution to their problem. The conditionality will relate to finding work, finding affordable accommodation and/or reducing expenditure.

7. Conditionality related to finding work usually requires engaging with one of our partners to deal with the barriers to work, provide access to training or ultimately find work. Our main partners are Skills (Training) UK, Jobcentre Plus, Aspire, Crisis Skylight and the CAB. They are helping customers overcome barriers of debt, security of tenure, lack of skills, perceived lack of employability and access to affordable childcare.

8. Conditionality relating to finding affordable accommodation involves registering on the housing list and bidding for properties, or actively participating in the mutual exchange scheme. Conditionality relating to reducing expenditure will involve obtaining debt advice, or taking action to reduce specific items of excessive expenditure identified on the Income & Expenditure form.

9. Customers are made aware that awards are for a short, defined period and may be cancelled if the agreed actions are not undertaken and that repeat awards will not be made if conditionality has not been met. Awards are normally made for three months but each case is determined on its own merits.

10. Repeat applications may be made but will only be awarded if the conditions attached to the first award have been met. Customers requesting a repeat award must also attend an interview with the person assessing their application.

11. Consistency is achieved in two ways. Firstly there is a limited number of staff dealing with DHP applications and they are encouraged to discuss the more complicated cases with each other, or with a manager. Secondly a 10% check of cases is made by a manger to ensure the DHP policy is being followed.

DHP EXPENDITURE

12. As at the end of October forecast expenditure to the 31.3.14 is £567,395 compared to a budget of £625,369 (including assumptions around repeat awards and benefit cap claimants). Appendix 1 attached provides further details.

DATA ANALYSIS

13. Appendix 2 provides a demographic breakdown of DHP applications. When taken with the data in Appendix 1, this provides a detailed picture of the type of people applying for assistance.

14. When looking at the demographic data it is encouraging to note that there is no significant divergence between the number of people who are successful or unsuccessful in any given group. This demonstrates a consistent approach to decision making based on the DHP policy and an individual's circumstances. The only exception to this is the number of standard cases that have made unsuccessful applications. However the reason for this is that such claims are likely to be above minimum income levels, and more likely to be able to afford the shortfall.

15. As can be seen, over half of all applications being made cite the Under Occupancy Regulations as the reason for the application. Approximately a third of residents (256) impacted by the Regulations have made a claim for DHP. In comparison, there have only been 167 applications due to the reduction in LHA rates, from a potential claimant population of 3,500. This may indicate a need for improved signposting for private sector tenants.

16. Analysis of applications by tenancy type (shown in Appendix 2), shows that we have received 165 applications from Housing Associations, compared to 113 from Council tenants. Given that approximately two thirds of claimants affected by the Bedroom Tax are Council tenants, this suggests that Housing Associations are being more effective at

promoting DHP. The Welfare Reform team will work with Landlord Services to plan take up work to our own tenants.

17. The average award period has increased during October to 16 weeks. This is largely as a result of backdating some awards to people applying for help who have been impacted by the Bedroom Tax, i.e. they have been trying to manage the additional payment themselves since April, but have not coped successfully.

18. There are more repeat awards being made now as initial awards start to expire. As at the end of October there are 60 cases where repeat awards have been made.21 repeat applications have been unsuccessful. In addition there are 17 cases where two repeat awards have been made. This means in total there are 98 customers who have made repeat awards. The case studies in Appendix 3 provide examples of both successful and unsuccessful repeat awards.

19. Since the new DHP policy was approved in June this year, conditionality has been applied to nearly every successful DHP application. So far there have only been five cases where we have not been able to provide further support due to conditionality not being kept.

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Background papers:

Version number: 0.2

Appendix 2 - Breakdown of DHP Data

The following tables provide a breakdown of applications for DHP from claimants this year. The data is taken from the end of October and includes 331 successful applications and 172 unsuccessful applications. The numbers differ from the total number of applications made at the end of October due to the fact that the total number includes repeat applications. Percentages have been included as well as actuals for ease of comparison.

Household	Successful Awards	%	Unsuccessful Awards	%
Couple	68	20.5	41	23.8
Single Female	209	63.1	108	62.8
Single Male	54	16.3	23	17.4

Age of Claimant	Successful Awards	%	Unsuccessful Awards	%
Under 25	23	6.9	12	7.0
25-34	89	26.9	36	20.9
35-44	65	19.6	36	20.9
45-54	88	26.6	56	32.6
55-64	61	18.4	30	17.4
Over 65	5	1.5	2	1.2

No. of Children	Successful Awards	%	Unsuccessful Awards	%
0	156	47.1	75	43.6
1	69	20.8	34	19.8
2	36	10.9	33	19.2
3	20	6.0	12	7.0
4	15	4.5	10	5.8
5	20	6.0	3	1.7
6	9	2.7	3	1.7
7	5	1.5	0	0
8	1	.3	1	0.6
9	0	0	1	0.6

Tenancy Type	Successful Awards	%	Unsuccessful Awards	%
Local Authority	74	22.4	39	22.6
Housing Association	104	31.4	61	35.5
Private Rented Sector	153	46.2	71	41.7
Temporary	0		1	0.6

Claim Type	Successful Awards	%	Unsuccessful Awards	%
Income Support	82	24.8	38	22.1
Pension Credit	3	0.9	2	1.2
Jobseekers Allowance	65	19.6	22	12.8
Standard Case*	76	23.0	60	34.9
Employment & Support Allowance	105	31.7	50	29.1

*A standard case will normally be a claim from someone who is working.

Appendix 3 – DHP Case Studies

The following case studies have been grouped thematically. They are intended to provide an insight into the process of making a decision about whether to support someone in this way.

Successful Initial Applications

1. Claimant is a single mum on Income Support and affected by the Benefit Cap. She has 6 children with the youngest aged one, and rents from a Housing Association. She hasn't worked in 20 years but has been working with Skills UK to get work ready. She has participated in training courses, completed her CV and has a voluntary position lined up for work experience.
2. Claimant is a single mum with 5 children renting privately. She is affected by the Benefit Cap case and has a £266.98 per week shortfall in rent. A DHP was awarded as since the customer was told about the cap she has been working with Skills UK to try to find work, completed her Maths GCSE and started an English GCSE. She's currently looking for jobs in care and wants to qualify as a nurse.
3. Claimant is losing £130.94 as a result of the Benefit Cap. She is working with Women's Aid who are helping her secure a property and she is interested in becoming a child minder. She is looking for a course in child care.

Unsuccessful Initial Applications

1. Claimant is a couple on ESA with two children, affected by a 14% under-occupancy charge. They have applied three times but have been turned down due to excess income and also excessive spending. They are losing £15.01 per week, and their weekly income is nearly £500.
2. Claimant is a single mother with 4 children in a Housing Association property hit with a 14% under occupancy charge. Income and expenditure information showed that she has the money to afford to pay the shortfall herself. Furthermore during phone interview customer said she wasn't too worried about the award as her ex-partner would pay for it if we refused the award. She also refused to agree to any conditions saying she didn't want to move or find work.
3. Claimant is a couple affected by a 14% under occupancy charge. The wife due to give birth within next few weeks. Their Income and Expenditure showed excess income and they are in credit on their rent account. They have paid the 14% shortfall since July and only recently applied for DHP but there are no signs of hardship.

Successful Repeat Applications

1. Claimant is a single mum on Income Support with 6 children (the youngest aged 4) and is affected by the Benefit Cap. She rents from the council and hasn't worked for a long time as she has been looking after her children. A DHP was awarded initially for 13 weeks based on the condition that she would work with Skills UK to ultimately find work. In the first 13 weeks she has completed her CV, she has successfully attended training courses (a communication course is one that she attends weekly). She is really keen to find work as long as it fits in around childcare for the children and Skills are now helping her to apply for jobs. As such we have made a subsequent award.
2. Claimant is a single mother with 2 children hit by a 14% under occupancy charge in a Housing Association property. The DHP award was renewed for a further 3 months after initial 3 months as she is working with Skills UK to find work. She has started a placement at a local school and will be getting a qualification for working with children. She has also been working with Littlemore Job Club and with a CAB debt advisor to clear her catalogue debts with a debt relief order.
3. Claimant has been awarded another DHP as she is working successfully with Skills Training UK. She has visited Learn Direct to look at some higher qualifications and had a job interview this month for an administrative position. An application for disability living allowance has been completed for her daughter and has met the CAB for debt advice

Unsuccessful repeat awards

1. Claimant is a single person in a 2 bed property, on Employment and Support Allowance, and affected by a 14% under-occupancy charge. A DHP was awarded for 13 weeks but they were on the Direct Payment project and she never paid it in to her rent account so when she reapplied we didn't re-award. She has now moved to a one bed anyway so is now not facing a Housing Benefit shortfall.
2. Claimant is a single adult who was awarded an initial 6 month DHP and agreed to seek to downsize to a one bedroom property. He got a successful mutual exchange but swapped into another 2 bedroom property. Before the swap was completed he was called and warned that he will still be under occupied if he moved and that we could not carry on paying DHP in that event. He went ahead with the swap regardless of this information. Two months later he reapplied for DHP, this was turned down for failed conditionality as hasn't pursued downsizing.

DHP Summary

	Pre-April	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December	January	February	March	Total
Applications & Awards														
Applications Processed	68	81	57	86	51	75	69	66						553
Awards Made	58	60	43	57	30	46	41	43						378
Value of Awards	£33,523.78	£29,327.15	£26,332.75	£23,318.49	£12,934.31	£43,346.06	£27,430.54	£29,602.40						£225,815.48
Highest Weekly Award	£115.26	£108.80	£102.69	£144.11	£276.42	£299.50	£299.50	£292.12						£299.50
Lowest Weekly Award	£4.01	£4.61	£5.77	£3.25	£4.61	£6.00	£12.79	£7.47						£3.25
Mean Weekly Award	£21.11	£21.09	£29.90	£26.07	£27.29	£80.26	£66.84	£65.00						£40.46
Mean Award Period (weeks)	27	22	20	17	13	14	12	16						18
Conditionality														
Engage with work related support	0	0	2	10	8	29	23	17						89
Reduce spending	0	1	0	7	4	6	5	7						30
Seek debt advice	0	0	0	2	1	9	5	4						21
Look for smaller accommodation	0	0	8	16	12	14	10	15						75
Look for a lodger	0	0	0	2	0	0	1	2						5
Apply for another benefit	0	0	0	0	0	9	3	1						13
Reason for App														
Benefit Cap	0	0	1	0	1	37	19	18						76
Bedroom Tax	27	30	27	65	36	30	25	25						265
LHA	38	48	24	14	10	4	14	15						167
Combination of above	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0						1
Other	3	3	5	7	4	4	10	8						44

BUDGET POSITION	
DWP Grant	£525,369.00
Additional from Housing	£100,000.00
Total Budget	**£625,369.00**
Total Awarded	£225,815.48
Estimated spend on Benefit Cap	£188,643.25
Potential Repeat Awards*	£152,972.73
Remaining Budget	**£57,937.54**

* Repeat awards are calculated as follows:

The caseworker makes a judgement about the likelihood of a repeat award (Very Unlikely, 50/50, Very Likely)

This converts to a mutiplier (0,0.5,1)

The number of weeks remaining after the customer's current award ends are multiplied by the weekly award, and the mutiplier above.

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OXFORD CITY COUNCIL

To: City Executive Board

Date: 11th December 2013

Report of: Head of Policy, Culture and Communications.

Title of Report: Community Engagement Plan (2014 – 2017) – Draft for Consultation.

Summary and Recommendations

Purpose of report: To seek approval from the City Executive Board to consult with the public on the Draft Community Engagement Plan 2014 -17.

Key decision? No

Executive lead member: Cllr Steve Curran, Executive Board Member, Youth and Communities

Policy Framework: Corporate Plan, Strong Active Communities

Recommendations:
To comment on the Draft Community Engagement Plan 2014 -2017

To approve the Draft Community Engagement Plan 2014 -2017, subject to any specified amendments, for public consultation.

Appendix 1: Draft Community Engagement Plan 2014 – 17
Appendix 2: Community Engagement Toolkit
Appendix 3: Draft Community Engagement Plan – Consultation Project Brief
Appendix 4: Risk Assessment
Appendix 5: Equality Impact Assessment Screening

Introduction

1. Oxford City Council has a long track record of working with local people to build strong and active communities, and its commitment to community engagement predates, outlives and goes much further than legislative requirements.

2. The purpose of this new Community Engagement Plan is to provide a framework for how the Council engages with its residents and communities to develop a greater understanding of their needs, and to increase the level and quality of involvement in the decisions that affect their lives.

3. This framework includes:
    a. an analysis of how demographic and technological factors impact community engagement;
    b. the principles underpinning the Council's community engagement activities; and
    c. methods of community engagement.

4. Using this framework the Plan presents the different activities involved in community engagement, the purpose of these activities, progress to date on their implementation and our plans for the future.

5. This plan does not address the ways in which we engage residents and service users in improving specific Council services (they are covered by other strategies); nor does it address consultation on planning applications.

Development of the strategy

6. The Community Engagement Plan supports the Council's Stronger Communities priority as set out in the Council's Corporate Plan 2013-17. It references principles and methodologies that were included the Council's Consultation Strategy and Toolkit 2010-2013, and it takes account of the significant developments that have occurred in neighbourhood working.

7. Benchmarking was carried out across nine local authorities, which informed the content of this Plan and re-affirmed the use of the ladder of participation as key component of the framework.

8. The Community Engagement Plan has been developed by Consultation Officers and the Communities and Neighbourhoods Manager, with input from service areas' Consultation Officers, and the Lead Member for Youth and Communities.

Key Elements of the Framework

9. Using data from the Index of Multiple Deprivation 2010 and Census 2011, the Community Engagement Plan includes an analysis of demographic and socio-economic characteristics of the residents of Oxford together with developments in the use of technology. This helps us to understand the community that we want to engage.

10. The principles of community engagement include inclusiveness and accountability, as well continuous improvement and value for money aspirations. The principles will drive our improvement plans and will be used to measure the success of this Plan.

11. Oxford City Council's Community Engagement Plan is based on the widely accepted 'ladder of participation' model, which shows an increasing level of community involvement as one "moves up" the five rungs of the ladder. Recognising that one size does not necessarily fit all, the Plan presents a model that can be used to segment and target the community using the most cost effective method.

12. The Plan describes the Council's community engagement practices using the ladder of participation: informing, researching, consulting, collaborating and empowering. From a decision making perspective most of the activities are focussed on the middle rungs, reflecting the Council's position: decision-making is neither wholly centralised, nor wholly devolved.

Managing and Monitoring

13. An action plan is being written in parallel with the development of the Community Engagement Plan. This will be prioritised and incorporated into Service Plans for Policy Culture and Communications and Leisure, Parks and Communities, and will be managed through routine processes. The action plan will be presented alongside the proposed Plan at the City Executive Board in March 2014.

14. Key success indicators of the Community Engagement Plan will be developed, based on principles such as, but not limited to, inclusiveness and accessibility. The key success indicators will be presented alongside the proposed Plan at the City Executive Board in March 2014.

Consultation Plan

15. The draft Community Engagement Plan will be put out for public feedback via the Council's eConsult system from 12th December 2013 until 23rd January 2014. Stakeholder groups will be notified and will be able to request paper copies if required. See Appendix 3 Public Involvement Brief for more details.

16. The Autumn 2013 Talkback Panel survey will seek views on methods of informing residents.

Level of Risk

17. See Appendix 4 for the Risk Register.

Climate Change/ environmental impact

18. The Community Engagement Plan offers an opportunity for the City Council to reduce its carbon footprint and consumption of paper by encouraging the use of digital technologies.

19. It is recognised that this needs to be balanced with our principles of inclusiveness and accessibility, which will require that some people will require non-digital methods of engagement.

Equalities impact

20. The Community Engagement Plan is based upon our principles of engagement, which includes inclusiveness. This is defined as: "the participation of all stakeholders who have an interest in or who would be affected by a specific decision, including groups that are sometimes difficult to engage such as young people, older people, minority groups, and people with disabilities".

21. See Appendix 5 for the Initial Equalities Impact Assessment.

Financial Implications

22. There are no immediate direct financial implications of the Community Engagement Plan as it reflects programmes that are funded within existing budgets. Same applies to the consultation activity.

Legal Implications

23. While there is not a statutory requirement to have a community engagement strategy, there is new guidance from the Cabinet Office on Consultation Principles. Local Authorities should adopt those principles to engage stakeholders in policy and legislative developments. The Guidance is intended to improve the way public bodies consult by emphasising a more “proportionate and targeted" approach, so that the type and scale of engagement is proportionate to the potential impacts of the proposal under consideration.

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Community Engagement Plan 2014 - 2017

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1. Executive Summary

This document is a statement of intent: it describes how Oxford City Council engages its communities in decision making. It builds on and supersedes the Consultation Plan and takes account of the significant developments that have occurred in neighbourhood and partnership working in recent times. It develops the "Involving Our Communities" themes already set out in the Council's Corporate Plan 2013-17, and while the Plan describes what we intend to do in support of this priority, the Community Engagement Plan sets out the framework for how we will do it.

2. Introduction

Oxford City Council is committed to building a world-class city for all its citizens. Working with our communities to build channels for dialogue and engagement is a key part of the Council's plan to enhance the relationship between citizens, their local communities and those who they elect to represent them. We want everyone to have the opportunity to understand and, where appropriate, contribute to decisions that affect their lives.

3. Purpose of this plan

The purpose of this new three-year Community Engagement Plan is to provide a framework for how the Council engages with its residents and communities to develop a greater understanding of their needs, and to increase the level and quality ofinvolvement in the decisions that affect their lives.

This planaims to clarify:

- how demographic changes in Oxford impact on our community engagement plans for the future;
- the principles underpinning the Council's community engagement activities;
- the terms of debate i.e. how consultation and other forms of community engagement relate to formal decision-making;
- the different activities involved in community engagement and the purposes of these activities; and
- progress that has been made so far in different areas of community engagement and our plans for the future.

This plan does not address:

- the ways in which we engage residents and service users in improving specific Council services - this is addressed in detail in the Council's Customer Contact Strategy 2014-18;
- consultation on planning applications - these are specified in the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) Order 2010.

4. Understanding our communities

The Council's Corporate Plan describes the different forms that communities can take:communities of place, identity, and interest. People often see themselves as belonging to one community of place and more than one community of interest, so the Council will need to determine the appropriate method of engagement.

Oxford appears to be a thriving city with many opportunities for work and leisure and, for many residents,this is the daily reality of their lives. However, there are major inequalities in life chances and life expectancy in our city, which will have implications for our Community Engagement Plan.

The Index of Multiple Deprivation 2010ranks Oxford 131st out of 354, placing it in the top half most deprived local authority areas in England. Of 85 areas in Oxford, 12 are among the 20% most deprived areas in England. These areas, in the south and east of the city, experience multiple levels of deprivation - low skills, low incomes and high levels of crime; the majority of the Council's 7,800 tenants live in these areas. Men and women from the more deprived areas can expect to live six years less than those in the more affluent areas.While 43% of Oxford residents have degree-level qualifications or above 14% have no qualifications at all.

Many Oxford residents are highly articulate and very skilled at getting their points of view heard and their voices are always welcome. However, in areas of deprivation where challenges are greatest, the capacity for community involvement is lower; in more affluent areas, the capacity for community engagement is high. This plan describes how Oxford City Council will address this imbalance, by working hard to open up more opportunities for engagement with people living in the more deprived areas of the city whose voices otherwise might not so easily be heard.

An additional layer of complexity is added when the demographics of the residents of our communities are analysed.

Oxford's high house prices make it one of the least affordable places in the country. The percentage of households who own their home is relatively low in Oxford - 47% compared to 63% in England. The percentage of households renting their home in the private sector is high - 28% in Oxford compared with 17% in England. Over the last decade the number of households renting their home in the private sector rose by almost 50%, from nearly 11,000 households in 2001 to nearly 16,000 households in 2011. One in five Oxford residents lives in a house of multiple occupation. More than 6,000 people are on our waiting list for social housing.

Oxford's annual population churn of 25%, around 5,000 houses of multiple occupation, and a culturally diverse population present challenges in terms of sustained and effective community engagement. However, a thorough understanding of the city's demographics – city-wide and at ward and neighbourhood level –is the obvious starting point and it lies at the heart of our approach.

In terms of ethnicity, Oxford has a diverse population. In 2011, 22% of the population were from black or minority ethnic backgrounds, compared to an England average of 13%. An additional 14% of residents were of white but non-British backgrounds. The largest non-white ethnic groups represented are Pakistani, Indian, Black African, 'other Asian' and Chinese ethnic groups. The child population is considerably more ethnically diverse than the older population and as a result the population is expected to become more ethnically diverse in the future.

In 2011, 16% of Oxford residents said their main language was not English; this is twice the national average. After English, the most common main languages were Polish and Chinese languages, followed by French, Portuguese and Spanish. South Asian languages - Urdu, Bengali and Panjabi –also made up a large proportion.

A significant proportion of the population is youthful. This is in part because of the student population; 24% of the city's adult population are students compared to an England average of 6%. Overall, 32% of the city's population are aged between 18 and 29 compared to an England average of 16%.

The methods of engaging with residents of Oxford have changed considerably in the past three years (since our last Consultation Strategy was written) as a result of the increase in internet access, changes in the way of accessing the internet as well as how digital technology is used. For example, by 2012, 80% of all UK households had internet access, with 67 per cent of adults in Great Britain using a computer every day; this rises to over 80% amongst people under 45 years of age. Access to the Internet using a mobile phone more than doubled between 2010 and 2012, from 24% to 51, and in 201232% of adults accessed the Internet using a mobile phone every day.

The Council has responded to this by increasing the use of social media such as Facebook and Twitter, by main-streaming the use of eConsult, the on-line survey tool, and encouraging customer contact with the Council via the internet.

Statistics about the level and type of internet use in Oxford are not available. However, as the city a very young population due to the large number of university students, we can expect that internet usage in Oxford is higher than the national average.

5. Principles of community engagement

Oxford City Council believes that the majority of services are best designed, delivered and reviewed on a city-wide basis. Services will, of course, reflect the different demographics and needs of areas across the city and resource allocation will vary accordingly; they will reflect the principles of proportionate universality where:

"….programs, services, and policies that are universal, but with a scale and intensity that is proportionate to the level of disadvantage." [1]

However, these variations should be seen in the context of the Council's vision for the whole city, which is set out in the Corporate Plan and the budget approved by Council.

The Counciloperates within the context of a representative democracy. Community engagement is about ensuring that elected councillors are aware of and engaged with the views of individuals, community groups, and other stakeholders. It is not intended to enable minority interests to overrule the best interests of the wider community and the city as a whole; the opportunity to lobby needs to be balanced with wider views on an issue.

Engagement supports, informs and improves decision-making by elected councillors; it does not replace it. The responsibility for the final decision on any issue that involves the Council's resources rests with the city's elected councillors – even where that decision involves a high degree of collaboration and empowerment.

Within this context, the principles underpinning community engagement are as follows.

1. **Commitment**: giving engagement sufficient priority, space, time and resources and demonstrating that it is a genuine attempt to understand and incorporate other opinions even when they conflict with the existing point of view. Resource planning is done through the development of an annual consultation plan.
2. **Inclusiveness**: the participation of all stakeholders who have an interest in or who would be affected by a specific decision, including groups that are sometimes more challenging to engage such as young people, older people, minority groups, and people with disabilities.
3. **Accessibility:** providing different ways for people to be engaged and ensuring that people are not excluded through barriers of language, culture or opportunity.

[1] The concept of proportionate universality was introduced by Sir Michael Marmot. Source: Policy Brief 2011. http://earlylearning.ubc.ca/documents/70/

4. **Transparency and clarity**: ensuring that all stakeholders are given the information they need, told what they can or cannot influence by responding to engagement and what the next steps will be.
5. **Accountability:** after the engagement process ensure that participants receive feedback of how and why their contributions have or have not influenced the outcome. Also ensure that there are routes for follow-up including reporting on final decisions and/or implementation plans.
6. **Responsiveness:** those doing the engagement must be open to the idea that their existing plans may need to be changed, improved or even deleted. For those being consulted they must believe that their voice will be taken seriously, and that things can be changed if there is support for change.
7. **Willingness to learn**: encouraging both those carrying out the consultation and the participants to learn from each other. This means a style of process that is as interactive and as incremental as possible to build increasing layers of mutual understanding and respect.
8. **Productivity**: establishing from the outset how the engagement process will make something better. Maximise the benefit of the engagement activity by effectively sharing data and information
9. **Quality assurance:** all community engagement projects are carefully planned and approved by the Public Involvement Board to ensure that they meet legal and quality standards.

In October 2013 the Cabinet Office issued its guidance on Consultation Principles, which sets out the principles that public bodies should adopt for engaging stakeholders when developing policy and legislation. It replaces the Code of Practice on Consultation issued in July 2008. The guidance is intended to improve the way public bodies consult by emphasising a more “proportionate and targeted" approach, so that the type and scale of engagement is proportionate to the potential impacts of the proposal under consideration.

6. Methods of community engagement

In 2011, the government scrapped the Duty to Involve. The Duty, which came into force in April 2009, required local councils to inform, consult and involve citizens in decision-making where appropriate and to ‘embed a culture of engagement and empowerment’. It was the underpinning of the Consultation Strategy 2010 – 2013, and now, as then, the Council’s commitment to community engagement goes much further than legislative requirements.

Oxford City Council has a long track record of working with local people to build strong and active communities - community engagement is at the heart of how the Council does business. For example, working in the 1990s to regenerate east Oxford; engaging with the Prince’s Foundation and the people of Blackbird Leys to improve the quality of life there; working with local people to remodel play areas across the city and engaging local people in Rose Hill to develop a new community centre; and working with Cowley Road Works to revive the popular Cowley Road Carnival.

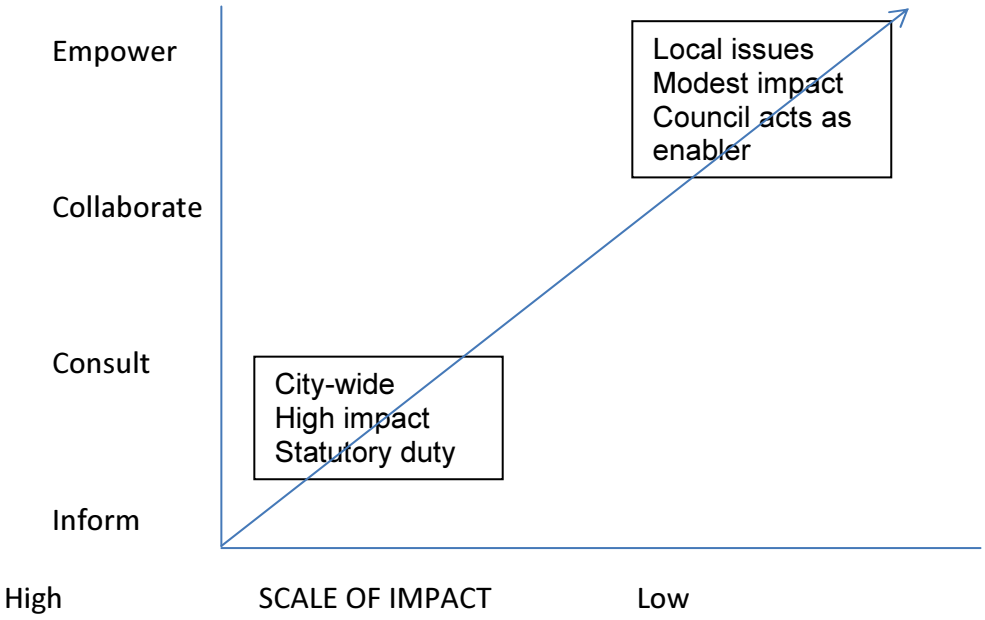
Oxford City Council's Community Engagement Plan is based on the widely accepted 'ladder of participation' model, which shows an increasing level of community involvement as one moves "up" the ladder from left to right, as shown below.[2]

Inform	Research	Consult	Collaborate	Empower
To provide the public with balanced and objective information to assist them in understanding the problem, alternatives, opportunities and solutions.	To gather and collate information to help in the understanding of key issues.	To obtain public feedback on analysis, alternatives and decisions.	To partner with the public in each aspect of the decisions including the development of alternatives and the identification of the preferred solution.	To place final decision-making in the hands of the public.

When deciding on how the community might be involved, i.e. which level of engagement to deploy, local authorities must carefully consider the nature, scale and impact of a particular function or issue, and must promote equal opportunities for people to engage and get involved.

Engagement requires a range of mechanisms which build and sustain a conversation with the community, with a broad or narrow audience as the issue requires. Broad principles and general ideas could be consulted on across a wide audience while the details of implementation might require input from a much smaller group. Effective engagement means identifying the kinds of audience that need to be involved at each stage of the process on any given issue. This requires a good understanding of the networks of interest and expertise in the area. The model below shows how the type of engagement varies according to the scale of impact, the role of the council and the nature and scale of the communities impacted by the issue.

[2] Adapted from David Wilcox, Guide to Effective Participation, 1994. http://www.partnerships.org.uk/guide/



7. Inform

This level of community engagement aims to provide the public with balanced and objective information to assist the understanding of issues. The residents of Oxford receive information through a variety of media channels, as shown in the table below.

Method	Frequency
Your Oxford	2 per year
City Briefing	3per year
Facebook and Twitter	>daily
Oxford City Council website	> daily
Media releases	>daily
Service specific briefings	>Bi-monthly
Television and radio	Ad hoc

Within the framework of the Community Engagement Plan, Oxford City Council seeks to improve accessibility by engaging local communities through communication channels best suited to their needs. This means using new channels such as social media alongside the more traditional press releases and publications. In addition, we seek to improve inclusiveness through the development of local newspapers, such as *Leys News.*

Informing residents is also achieved through Neighbourhood Forums and Community Partnerships, which are described in more detail under Collaborate.

8. Research

The Council carries out research through both its social research functions (statistical analysis) and as part of its consultation function (opinion and perception research). The social research function delivers high quality quantitative data to support policy development, service delivery, and project implementation.This is carried out by a central service within the Policy, Culture and Communications service area, and includes:

- Finding and sourcing data that can inform particular research questions.
- Researching and analysing data to informstrategies and plans.
- Making research data available internally across service areas and externally to the public and communities, to enable them to understand the needs of their areas. The data can be used to help groups to develop funding bids, for example the social inclusion fund. This is done through the annual summary leaflet, website, monthly statistical publication and general statistics enquiry service.
- Providing research data that advocates the city's needs to other agencies that provide services.
- Providing links to national research.

Through our consultation function we carry out surveys which seek to understand the experiences, opinions and perceptions of our residents and service users. This research is carried out through a variety of methods including a citizen's panel, postal surveys and focus groups. This is described in more detail under Consult.

A specific challenge that the new Community Engagement Plan seeks to address is the opportunity to increase productivity by more effectively sharing information gathered by or available to, the Council.It would involve the routine use of both qualitative and quantitative data in strategy and plan development and decision-making.

9. Consult

Consultation sits on the middle rung of the ladder of community involvement and it can only be successful with the active participation of the public.It is an appropriate method of public engagement when the community has a high level of interest and, or a high level of influence over a decision. Consultation seeks public feedback on analysis, options and plans in order to inform decision making. These decisions are critical to the successful development of council policy and strategy, service design and service delivery.

Oxford City Council has a well-established consultation process that is managed as a central service by Consultation Officers within the Policy, Culture and Communications service area. The process is documented in the Consultation Toolkit, which also includes methods of

consultation, and pre- and post- consultation activities. It can be found at http://occweb/intranet/consultation-toolkit.cfm.

All consultation activities are managed through eConsult, which is an externally hosted on-line system that supports the creation of surveys, the management of registered users and the creation and posting of reports from survey results. This can be found at http://consultation.oxford.gov.uk/consult.ti/system/userHome.

The Consultation Office is responsible for the Citizens' Talkback Panel of approximately 1000 local residents. Recruitment of the panel and administration of the twice yearly survey is out-sourced to a specialist market research company, currently Ipsos MORI. From 2014 the Council will participate in a postal satisfaction survey, called LG Inform, which will enable benchmarking with other local authorities across the UK.

The Consultation Office is a member of the County Consultation Group, a forum for sharing best practices across local authorities and for the co-ordination of county-wide consultation activities, when required

There are several challenges that this new Community Engagement Plan seeks to address. First, there is a need to improve inclusiveness and accessibility to the consultation process. It should involve a more diverse and thus a more representative cross section of Oxford's communities, which may require changes to the way in which residents are involved in decision making and specifically how they are consulted.

Second, there is a need to improve accountability and responsiveness by ensuring that results of consultations and action plans are routinely posted and made available to the public. This will form one strand of a new service level agreement that we will be developed with service areas.

Lastly, we aim to increase productivity by "driving to digital" in our consultation methods. Many aspects of consultation are more cost effective if they are done on-line, and indeed may be more attractive to the younger age-groups. However, driving to digital should not be done at the expense of our inclusiveness and accessibility principles.

10. Collaborate

Collaboration with the public includes the development of alternatives and the identification of the preferred solution.It requires a higher level of involvement by the community, but they are not decision making forums. They include the following:

10.1 Area Forums

The Council has formed Area Forums consisting of all ward councillors in any given area of the city. These are informal meetings, sponsored and supported by the Council, to engage with the communities in their area. Each area is free to adapt its arrangements to best meet its own needs. The purpose of Area Forums is to:

- identify key issues and priorities to feed into city-wide service and budget planning processes
- enable local councillors to play a central role in drawing up community plans, which provides an opportunity to link up service-planning more closely with local needs and aspirations
- provide a space in which residents and community groups can work with mainstream service providers – health, education, police, businesses and the voluntary sectors – to ensure that local services are responsive to community needs
- comment on policy documents and proposals that affect the area
- enable local issues and interests to be discussed with local members.

Oxford City Council is:

- providing each Councillor with an annual budget of £1,500 for small projects that link to the priorities emerging from forum discussions and other local consultations
- exploring ways to ensure that all of our communities, including the more 'hidden' groups, have the opportunity to engage with them
- providing an Area Support Officer to arrange and publicise meetings, and Senior Management support for each Area Forum

10.2 Community Partnerships and Plans

Community Partnerships exist in those areas of the city which have been identified as being in greatest need. They are not decision-making bodies but provide a focus for local action and engagement on local issues.

A neighbourhood management approach is being implemented in these areas to engage and actively involve local communities, and to develop a stronger sense of community. Neighbourhood management involves residents working in partnership with mainstream service providers, the local authority, businesses and the voluntary and community sectors to address local priorities and make local services more responsive to the needs of their area. It is a process which recognises the uniqueness of each place; allowing the people that live, work or provide services in it to build on its strengths and address its specific

challenges. These areas are most likely to see collaboration and empowerment to tackle local systemic problems and issues.

Community Partnerships are established in the key regeneration areas: Barton, The Leys, Rose Hill, Wood Farm, Northway, Cutteslowe and Littlemore with members on each partnership representing:

- residents
- public service providers, e.g. the police, health services, council services
- councillors
- community/voluntary groups
- businesses

Community plans are being developed in these areas so that there is co-ordinated action to address local issues and services can respond more effectively to local needs. Community development starts from the principle that, within any community, there is a wealth of knowledge and experience which can be channelled into collective action to achieve desired goals.

Oxford City Council is:

- Providing a Neighbourhood Locality Officer who supports and develops the partnership approach and co-ordinates bi-monthly or quarterly meetings and sub-groups to work on specific topic areas e.g. young people, housing and environment.
- Providing Community Development Officer support to engage with residents and develop local projects and support capacity building .
- Grant funding to Oxfordshire Community and Voluntary Action (OCVA) to support greater involvement of the voluntary sector within the partnerships
- Senior Management support for each partnership

These resources will primarily be focused on tackling the issues identified in the community plan.

10.3 Resident Involvement

Oxford City Council's work with the Tenant Participation Advisory Service (TPAS) involves the tenants and leaseholders of the council's 8,000 flats and houses who co-exist in areas of mixed tenure. Here problem solving and the driving of initiatives cannot be delivered successfully without the involvement of all groups concerned.

Oxford City Council is:

- creating a structure which enables broad involvement opportunities across all demographics and geographical areas of the city
- enabling varied involvement opportunities which allow tenants, residents and leaseholders to be involved in ways that suit their needs
- developing training and support opportunities and encouragement for the widest possible audience
- ensuring that structures do not allow one group, issue or process to become dominant
- ensuring transparency so that tenants, residents and leaseholders are able to see the difference that has been made as a result of their engagement.

10.4Youth Voice

The City Council's Youth Ambition Strategy details the Council's approach to engage young people in positive activities and its aim to more fully involve young people in how we develop and deliver services. Youth Voice is a programme to support the children and young people of Oxford City between the ages of 15 and 21 (25 where there are special educational needs) to have influence and power over services that affect their lives.

The Youth Voice plan will work towards the following outcomes:

- For Oxford City Council to have a more pro-active approach to gaining, listening to and acting on the feedback of young people and to influence partners to do the same;
- To engage young people in activities that allow them to make the positive changes they feel are needed in their community;
- For young people to have increased access to decision makers in their local community, the city, regionally and nationally, allowing them to have influence and power over decisions, processes and services that will affect their transition into adulthood;
- To provide more and better personal and professional development opportunities to young people enabling them to effectively engage with decision makers;
- To create a legacy of participation across the city and for young people to become role models and ambassadors for change now and in their adult lives.

10.5Older People

Oxford City Council co-ordinates the Ageing Successfully Partnership to provide a partnership approach to addressing the needs of Older People in the City to improve wellbeing; address isolation and increase engagement with older people.

An Older People's Needs Assessment has recently been carried out to review the needs of the older population of Oxford. This work will help inform the City Council of the longer term support for older people in the city.

The City Council work closely with the 50+ Network which is a volunteer run community group whose aim is to engage with older people on relevant issues and increase involvement. This group have a representative on the Ageing Successfully Partnership.

10.6Neighbourhood Planning

The Localism Act has introduced new rights and powers for communities and individuals to enable them to get directly involved in spatial planning for their areas. Neighbourhood planning will allow communities to come together through a parish council or neighbourhood forum and produce a neighbourhood plan. Neighbourhood plans are about allocating land for development and being able to say where new houses, businesses, shops and so on should go and what they should look like. The council's preference is to start with Community Planning to identify issues and needs, and then translate this spatial planning as the mechanism for developing and delivering solutions.Once plans are adopted they will become an important consideration when making decisions on planning applications.

Three local groups have asked Oxford City Council to formally designate their proposed neighbourhood areas. Designating a neighbourhood area is the first step towards producing a neighbourhood plan. The proposed neighbourhood areas are:

- Wolvercote
- Jericho
- Summertown and St Margaret's

The details of the neighbourhood area applications and comments received will be considered at a meeting of the City Executive Board, where the final decision on whether to designate each of the proposed neighbourhood areas will be made.

10.7Oxford Strategic Partnership

The Oxford Strategic Partnership was formed in 2003 in response to central government directive to set up a local strategic partnership. It is a testament to the success of the partnership and the on-going need for partnership working that it has continued to exist and develop, although no longer a statutory requirement.
The Partnership comprises key city stakeholders who develop and deliver on a range of long term priorities through themed working groups. The work is overseen by the OSP board.

From a community engagement perspective, it has been acknowledged that programme delivery would be more effective if there was a coherent approach to participation and engagement with Oxford residents and communities. This will be achieved through the development and implementation of a participation and engagement framework by the OSP and its working groups. The opportunity to share information related to community contacts and groups across the working groups has also been identified.

As a member of the Oxford Strategic Partnership, the city council is in a position to contribute to and benefit from the identification of community networks and improvements to partnership and engagement practices.

In this context a specific challenge that this Community Engagement Plan seeks to address is the opportunity to improve productivity by more effectively coordinating and linking up the Council's consultation work with that of its OSP partners.

11. Empower

Empowerment, in the context of the ladder of involvement, means that decision-making is put in the hands of the community or groups. Devolved decision making is relatively unusual but where it is practiced, it is placed within guidelines that have been determined by the Council.

Empowerment is best suited to situations where it affects well-defined and well-understood groups, the implications are modest, and it is not the clear statutory responsibility of any one party. For example, youth grants and some arts funding, where voting by "expert" panels can decide how money is spent.

Empowerment of the community requires that the community understands the decision-making process and how and when it can engage.The difficulty of balancing the interests of different types of communities (of place, identity and interest) or groups means that this form of community engagement is the exception rather than the rule. Where it is not clear the members' role is to balance interests and make decisions in the best interests of wider communities.

12. Next steps

When the results of consultation have been analysed, the system for evaluating community engagement activities will be developed. In addition an action plan will be written and incorporated into service plans.

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Community Engagement Toolkit

A Guide to Effective Community Engagement

Oxford City Council
Updated: October 2013

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1 Introduction

1.1 Introduction to community engagement

Local authorities have a statutory duty to involve individuals, groups, businesses or organisations likely to be affected by their actions. This is set out in Section 3a of the Local Government Act 1999. The duty is wide-ranging and applies to the delivery of services, the development of policy, and decision making, and applies to both routine functions, as well as significant one-off decisions.

Community engagement is a vital part of a modern, representative democracy. It is the process by which people can influence policies and services that affect them.

Public services that are based on an understanding of citizens' needs are crucial and consultation is one way of delivering this.

Community engagement should be a dialogue - an on-going exchange of views - and councils, the police and health authorities have statutory duties to consult the public on a range of issues. However, we should not engage just because we have to - effective engagement can inform decision-making in the Council and ensures that we are meeting the needs of our citizens.

1.2 Here to help:

For advice and guidance on community engagement projects, you should contact the consultation team. The consultation post is split between Sadie Paige on Monday and Tuesday and Hamera Plume on Wednesday, Thursday and Friday.

Sadie Paige – spaige@oxford.gov.uk / 01865 252250
Hamera Plume – hplume@oxford.gov.uk / 01865 252057

1.3 Purpose

This purpose of this toolkit is to help us deliver effective community engagement projects across Oxford City Council.

2 The Engagement Process

There is a defined process to follow for carrying out community engagement projects across the Council.

The table below summarises the process these projects should follow.

			✓
PLAN	1	Discuss your idea for community engagement with the Consultation Officers[1]	
	2	Complete the Project Brief and send it to the Consultation Officers. The brief will then be reviewed at the Public Involvement Project Board.	
	3	Once you have been notified that your community engagement exercise has been approved you should inform the councillors whose wards will be involved and wider groups of councillors if appropriate.	
IMPLEMENT	4	Record the project on the City Council's consultation portal (eConsult) at www.oxford.gov.uk/consultation. If you require training on how to use the portal please contact the Consultation Officers. NB this is a requirement whether or not it involves an online survey	
	5	Develop your project with the support of the Consultation Officers	
	6	Pilot the questions you are proposing to ask.	
	7	Revise your questions if necessary following the pilot.	
	8	Run your engagement exercise	
REPORT	9	Collate and analyse the results	

[1] Hamera Plume hplume@oxford.gov.uk or Sadie Paige spaige@oxford.gov.uk 01865 252057

	10	Produce a report including: • The response rates • The groups that responded • The main findings • How you intend to use the results	
	11	Produce a newsletter summarising the main results. This should be sent to everybody who took part in your engagement project and also made available to the wider public on the portal at www.oxford.gov.uk/consultation. You must state how you intend to report all the findings back to those that participated in your consultation. The newsletter should also state how you intend to use the results.	
REVIEW	12	Carry out an evaluation. The completed evaluation form should then be sent to the Consultation Officers no later than 6 weeks after the closing date.	

3 Community Engagement Project Brief Template

The project brief document, as highlighted in step 2 of the engagement process, must be completed before any work on your project begins. All community engagement activities must follow the processes outlined below:

1. A project brief must be completed for all public involvement exercises. See below for the template that must be filled in, as well as guidance about public involvement. The template can also be found on the Intranet, under 'Processes and Procedures' and 'Consultation Process.'

   Public Involvement Project Brief Template

2. The completed project brief must then be approved by the Public Involvement Board. The board is chaired by Tim Sadler and includes Jeremy Thomas, Peter McQuitty, Hamera Plume and Sadie Paige. The board meets on a monthly basis.

3. Internal staff surveys do not normally need to be approved by the Public Involvement Board and a lighter version of the project brief template is available.

   Project Brief Light Template

The full process must be completed before any consultation or public involvement project can begin. The only exemptions from this requirement are individual development control and licensing consultations.

Public Involvement Project Brief

Please complete pages 1 to 4 and return to Hamera Plume at hplume@oxford.gov.uk and Sadie Paige at spaige@oxford.gov.uk

Title:	[Insert title of your public involvement activity]
Type of activity	[Identify type of activity, e.g. informing, researching, consulting]
Date of this brief:	[insert date document issued]
Planned dates of activity:	[insert dates you would like the exercise to be live]
Project Manager:	[Insert name of manager of this project]

Service area: [Insert name of your service area]

Head of Service: [Insert name of your Head of Service]

Approvals:

Public Involvement Project Board

Other

Plan for Public Involvement

Purpose and deliverables

This is the most important section of the project brief. Please provide as much detail here as possible.

1. Why is the project needed?	
2. How will the results be used and by whom?	
3. What will change as a result of the project?	
4. *Does it contribute to a wider programme of involvement and, if so, how?*	
5. Have you considered alternatives forms of public involvement and, if so, what?	
6. Has any preparation work been carried out to date? What has been stated publicly?	
7. What would you like to have at the end of the process? List the	

project deliverables..	
8. Does your public involvement project fulfil a statutory requirement? *If "yes" please explain in detail how you are following legal guidance*	YES / NO

Constraints and risks

Describe the constraints within which the project must operate, e.g. statutory requirements, restrictions on time, resources, funding and/or the eventual outcome, dependencies on other projects etc.

Set out any risk(s) and how you plan to mitigate them.

Involvement

List with as much detail as possible who you would like to be involved. For example:

- *The whole community or a representative cross-section of the community;*
- *Specific geographical areas or common interest groups:*
- *Professionals, experts, and organisations that may or may not have a statutory right to be involved*

Target group (who you would like to respond)	Size of target group (rough estimate)

If your consultation relates to a specific area of Oxford, the relevant Councillors must be informed and invited to take part in the consultation before it is broadly communicated.

Does your consultation relate to a specific area? Y/N
If yes, which ward(s):
Who are the relevant Councillors?

Data Protection Act 1998

Does your public involvement activity include contacting individuals using personal data (which includes contact details such as address, phone number and email address) that they have provided to Oxford City Council?	YES/NO
If yes, have you checked that the individual(s) have given consent for their personal data (which includes contact details) to be used for the purpose of your public involvement activity?	YES/NO
Does your public involvement activity include collecting personal information that will be shared with another organisation?	YES/NO
If yes, how will you ensure that individual(s) have given consent for their personal data (which includes contact details) will be shared with another organisation?	

Note that this is applicable whether the contact is being made by Oxford City Council or by a third party.

Method

For guidance on methods please see the consultation toolkit available on the intranet.

1. <u>How</u> you are planning to involve. *Options include online/paper questionnaire*, telephone or face-to-face interviews, Citizen's panel. The eConsult system should be used wherever possible to run consultations.*	
2. How will you make sure people know about your project? Eg advertising in local media, consultation portal, emails, leaflets etc	
3. If you are developing a questionnaire, how do you plan to test it?	
*4. When do you plan to open and close your project?***	
5. How will you analyse the responses?	
6. How will you report the findings	

back to those that were involved?	
7. How will the results be used?	

** NOTE: If you will be creating a paper version of the questionnaire that includes a request for personal information, you will need to get approval from the responder to that information to contact them in the future. The following statement should be added to your paper questionnaire:*

"Please tick here if you do NOT want your name and contact details to be used by Oxford City Council for future consultations."

***NOTE: In line with national guidance in the Code of Practice on Consultation, consultations should normally last for 12 weeks. For smaller scale consultations a minimum of 6 to 8 weeks is required.*

When timing is tight - for example when dealing with emergency measures or fitting into fixed timetables - then the consultation document should be clear as to the reasons for the shortened consultation period. **Managing the project**

Who will be involved in delivering your project – list all names and roles

Name	Role	Service area / organisation	Role in this consultation

Costs

Describe what internal (staff time) and external (printing, advertising etc) costs will be incurred.

4 Evaluation

All public engagement projects should be evaluated after they have closed.

At the end of each public involvement exercise we should evaluate how things have gone. The evaluation criteria below, provides a set of questions that you should use. It is useful to think about these evaluation questions before you develop your project plan.

Purposes	■ What were the purposes? ■ Were they achieved? ■ If not, why not?
Methods	■ What methods were used? ■ Did they achieve the desired results in terms of levels of participation and type of response? ■ Which methods worked best for which types of people? ■ Did the process go according to the intended timetable?
Participation	■ How many people participated? ■ Did all key stakeholders participate? ■ If participation was intended to be representative, was this achieved? ■ If it was intended to reach several different groups, was this achieved? ■ What efforts were made to reach commonly underrepresented groups? ■ What methods were used to encourage participation? ■ Did they work?
Results	■ Were the results – in terms of enough people responding usefully – satisfactory? ■ How easy were they to analyse and interpret? ■ What form did any final report of the results take? ■ How were results communicated to participants?
Outcomes	■ What were the results of the exercise? ■ What has changed or will be changed as a result of the exercise?
Participant comments	■ What comments were made by participants about the engagement process?
Cost	■ What did the process cost? ■ Were the results worth the money?

5 Community Engagement

5.1 Community Engagement definitions

Community engagement can be defined in several different ways, the table below defines the different levels of engagement.

Inform	Research	Consult	Collaborate	Empower
To provide the public with balanced and objective information to assist them in understanding the problem, alternatives, opportunities and solutions.	To gather and collate information to help in the understanding of key issues.	To obtain public feedback on analysis, alternatives and decisions.	To partner with the public in each aspect of the decisions including the development of alternatives and the identification of the preferred solution.	To place final decision-making in the hands of the public.

5.2 Key Principles of Community Engagement

1 **Inclusiveness**: the involvement of all people who are interested or would be affected by a decision. It is important to include groups that are often difficult to engage in public engagement such as young people, black and minority ethnic groups and people with disabilities.

2 **Transparency:** ensuring that all stakeholders are given all the information they need to make an informed decision.

3 **Commitment:** providing the appropriate priority and resources.

4 **Accessibility:** providing a range of ways for people to be engaged and ensuring that people are not excluded through barriers of language, culture or opportunity.

5 **Accountability**: ensuring participants receive regular updates of how their contributions are being used.

6 **Responsiveness:** ensuring we remain open to new ideas and are willing to change existing ideas if necessary.

7 **Respect:** ensuring the views of participants are respected and people taking part in consultations are treated with respect.

8 **Openness**: demonstrate an open mind and a willingness to change where appropriate.

5.3 Stakeholders

For all community engagement projects, it is important to consider who your stakeholders are and how you intend to involve them. Stakeholders are by definition people who have a 'stake' in a situation. Identifying your stakeholders is key to carrying out any engagement exercise successfully. The main groups usually consist of:

- The whole community: If you are talking about engaging 'the public' then you are probably thinking in terms of seeking public opinion about something, so you will want to run a process that involves a representative cross-section of your target population.

- A representative cross-section of the community: It may not be the public in general you want to involve, but people from a certain community, or even from a particular street.

- Specific groups in the community: These may be people of a particular ethnic community, people with special needs, or people with a common interest in a shared concern.

- Professionals, experts, and the organisations that have a statutory right to be involved: These are people and organisations who have to be involved in engagement and consultation either by law (hence 'statutory') or by virtue of the positions they hold, for example organisations such as the Environment Agency and local councils, and individuals such as Members of Parliament.

5.4 Identifying Stakeholders – Who should be involved and how do I reach them?

- The purpose of your engagement process should determine who you involve.

- If you are engaging stakeholders rather than just the public at large, it is better to involve too many than to miss out some who are crucial.

- Beware of 'consultation fatigue' caused by engaging the same people too often. There is a limit to the number of times that most people will respond to random enquiries. If you want to engage the same people repeatedly you would be well advised to ask them to join some sort of panel or group that meets regularly.

- Equally, beware of engaging the 'wrong' people. For example, some 'community leaders' are self-appointed or so designated by the media, but in reality have no mandate to speak on behalf of the local community. Ensure you do not solely rely on such people for your engagement process.

- Who is or will be affected, positively or negatively, by what you are doing or proposing to do? For example, communities, employees, customers, contractors, suppliers, partners, trade unions and shareholders.

- Who holds official positions relevant to what you are doing?

- Who runs organisations with relevant interests?

- Who has been involved in any similar issues in the past? For example, regulators, Government agencies and politicians at regional or national levels, non-Government organisations and other national interest groups.

6 Key Considerations when Selecting Your Community Engagement Audience

6.1 Representativeness

Representative audiences are important in community engagement. A representative sample is of crucial importance when you need to gather the views of the public at large, e.g. when a new development has been proposed. However, it is less important if you are carrying out engagement relevant to a particular group, e.g. wheelchair users.

6.2 Sampling

If your consultation method does need to be representative, then it would be useful to understand a bit about sampling. Sampling involves engaging a small number of people and, provided that the sample is representative, you can extrapolate the results and work out what a much larger number think about a certain issue. The larger your sample, the more accurate your results will be.

There are three basic methods you need to know about: 'random sampling', 'stratified sampling' and 'quota sampling'.

Random sampling: To do this you need a list of the people you need to sample, then you simply pick say, 10% of them by choosing every tenth name.

Stratified sampling: This involves a bit more work, but the results will be more accurate. You begin by dividing the target population into sub-categories – say, single women, or people living in a certain area. Then you pick a random selection of that group, and combine all the random selections so that eventually your random selection reflects the composition of the total population.

Quota sampling: This involves finding a quota of people representing certain sub-categories of the target population – so you might ask an interviewer to stop and talk to 150 men under the age of 25, or 100 people over 60 and so forth.

6.3 Inclusiveness

It is vital that your consultation avoids the ‘usual suspects’ and reaches the ‘hard to reach’

The 'usual suspects'

People should not be excluded because they regularly attend meetings and get involved. However, we should also ensure we do not rely on them as our sole audience for consultation. Often useful ideas and observations on an issue come from those who are less familiar with the issues as they can bring different

perspectives.

Therefore it is worth making efforts to go beyond the 'usual suspects' and thinking of people whose contribution could be valuable because of their viewpoint or expertise, or who could be excluded unless special efforts are made to include them (e.g. minority black and ethnic groups, special needs groups).

The 'hard to reach'

The flip side of the 'usual suspects' point is that you have to make special efforts to ensure that certain sections of the population are included in any engagement exercise. These are often designated as the 'hard to reach'. These groups include minority ethnic groups, the disabled and young people. But also consider other groups such as commuters, young professionals and parents with young children.

To ensure all engagements that are carried out are fully inclusive we must ensure the following conditions are met:

- There is accessible and targeted information about the community engagement.
- There is assistance with transport to the meeting where needed.
- There is an accessible building with accessible lavatory facilities.
- There is communication support; e.g. induction loop, interpreters.
- There is accommodation for personal assistants/helpers.
- There is supporting documentation in accessible formats.
  We must also:
- Check access needs at the start.
- Ask the right questions, i.e. about barriers faced rather than about impairments.
- Ensure people speak one at a time at a pace to suit other participants and interpreters.
- Allow additional time for communicating with people who have sensory or learning impairments.
- Use appropriate and respectful language.
- Allow enough time for breaks.

6.4 Matching methods to people

Think, early on, about the engagement methods that you can use in relation to certain types of stakeholder. For example, if you are speaking to people with low levels of literacy a questionnaire may not be a good idea and there is no point in having a public meeting designed to attract parents with children of school age during the school holidays.

6.5 Pilot

What is a Pilot?

A Pilot is a way to test your engagement method to make sure it works before you carry it out for real. It is also a good way to measure what works and doesn't work with your engagement method so that you can make any changes necessary to it to ensure it works well.

A Pilot usually involves getting a small group of people to test your engagement under the same conditions in which the real consultation will take place.
The group are then asked for their feedback and the engagement method is revised accordingly.

Why is it important to Pilot?

By carrying out a Pilot you will limit your chances of missing something key in your consultation. A Pilot will throw up any issues with the consultation such as poor wording of questions, spelling errors or unclear instructions.

When is the best time to carry out a Pilot?
The best time to carry out a Pilot is as soon as your consultation method is ready to test. By carrying out your Pilot as early as possible you will be leaving enough time to make any necessary changes should the Pilot identify problems with your engagement method.

7 Common Questions to Consider Ahead of Community Engagements

- What is the purpose of the community engagement?
- Why would you like to carry out the community engagement?
- Who is going to carry out the community engagement?
- What has happened in the past around this situation?
- What is important to different people?
- What has been stated publicly about the situation?
- What are people's assumptions on the issues?
- What are different stakeholders' concerns?

8 Community Engagement Methods

Finding new and interesting ways to engage people is essential but can also be challenging. To find the best method for you it would be worthwhile bearing the following questions in mind before embarking on a consultation exercise.

- What is the purpose of the engagement process?
- What would you like to have at the end of the process?
- Which particular stakeholder groups would you like to involve and what special needs do they have, if any?
- How interactive would you like your process to be?

8.1 Comparison of Community Engagement Methods

Method	Advantages	Disadvantages	Cost
Survey (face-to-face)	Useful for benchmarking against previous findings. • Statistically sound, you can ensure it is representative of the population.	Respondents cannot talk freely if the structure of the survey is too rigid. • There is little time for respondents to think about their answers. • Time consuming.	£££
Survey (website)	Cheap. Allows consultation with a large number of people. Can be used to access views from people that don't take part in traditional consultation methods such as attending public meetings.	• Will miss those that do not use our website. • Can be unrepresentative unless you include a monitoring form. No control over who completes the survey.	£
Survey (postal)	Can access a large number of people. • Good when dealing with a sensitive subject. Can target groups which are often excluded.	Tightly structured surveys can constrain responses. • Can have a poor response rate. • No control over who completes the survey.	££
Focus Groups	. Enables participants to discuss topics in detail. • In groups	• It is not statistically reliable as the numbers involved in a group are	££

	participants can use each other to springboard ideas off one another. • Not prescriptive. . Can be useful for complex issues. . Can help to include people that are sometimes 'hard to reach'	quite small. . Some members of the group may be more vocal than others and try to take over the group.	
Leaflets	A good method when you want to inform people about a particular issue. Relatively inexpensive to produce	May not be read by all that receive it. Not suitable for those who cannot read or have visual impairments	£
Citizens' Jury	• Enables participants to make an informed judgement. • Encourages active citizenship. • Empowers participants by encouraging them to make decisions based on the information that has been presented to them. • A small number of citizens are involved, usually 12. •	• Participants' views may become unrepresentative of the community as a result of being more informed than others that have not been part of the Jury.	£££
Citizens Panel	• A cost-effective resource for all types of consultation. • A good way of building relationships with members of the community. • Encourages active citizenship. Regular refreshment Of the panel can keep it representative of the community.	Large amount of maintenance and administration involved. If the panel is not refreshed regularly it could become unrepresentative of the community	££

Public Meeting	Can engage with a large group of people in one setting	Low turnout can lead to poor results	££
Exhibition	• Displays can be clearly set out.	• People that are unable to attend will be excluded.	££
Media • Press release • Radio • Television • Website	• Useful when you need to give information to a large number of people. • Quick way to get out information.	• Only goes to people that read certain newspapers, or listen/watch particular radio and TV stations. • Media can put their own slant on a story.	Varies

8.2 Questionnaires and Surveys

Questionnaires and surveys and are one of the most popular consultation methods. They can be used to gather public views to proposals or find out what people think of certain services.

It is always a good idea to run a few pilot interviews to test how the questions work in practice and to ensure the questions you are asking will produce the information you want.

They can be used when consulting with a large number of people and are an excellent way of collecting quantitative data. They are also useful for benchmarking, if you would like to compare results over time. Also, the fact that there are several potential delivery methods make surveys a flexible way to get responses. However, it is harder than it looks to write a good questionnaire and a poor format can lead to misleading results.

Method

1. Decide which type of questionnaire or survey you want to use:
- Deliberative: gives people information before asking their opinion
- Qualitative: asks people to respond in their own words
- Quantitative: asks people to react to various propositions by ticking boxes or marking answers against a scale.

2. Decide the delivery method:
- Telephone: people are telephoned at home and the interviewer completes the form
- Interview on the street: interviewer with a clipboard approaches people and asks questions
- Interview at home: interviewer arranges to visit
- Postal: form completed by householder and returned
- Online: form completed online

3. Decide how you will manage, collate, analyse and use the responses.

4. Draft the survey or questionnaire taking your answers to the above into account.

5. Ask at least five people to complete it. Consider whether your questions have provoked the type of responses that you want.

6. Issue the questionnaire.

7. Receive responses and thank respondents (if you asked for contact details).

8. Collate, analyse and publish the results, and tell people how you will use them.

Hints for drafting questions for surveys and questionnaires

1. Try to keep questions as short as possible. A few carefully focused questions usually produce more useful responses than a larger number of general ones

2. Use simple words: people will not answer questions they don't immediately understand

3. Start by asking relatively straightforward questions and then those requiring more complex answers

4. Group together questions investigating similar themes

5. If you are using tick boxes, vary the question format so that people have to think about each response rather than just ticking the same box throughout. You should also alert people to the fact that the format changes

6. If you give people a number of alternatives, ensure you give them enough choice to ensure they think about the answer

7. If you give people a scale on which to score something, tell them which end is high and which low

8. Guard against phrasing questions in such a way that they reflect your own presuppositions or biases

9. Be careful not to lead people in particular directions either through the wording of the question or through any examples you use

10. Avoid composite questions such as “What are the advantages and disadvantages of public transport?” Separate them

11. Where possible avoid questions including words that need defining, such as 'regularly'

12. Avoid questions that are likely to have predictable answers. For example, “Is a safer neighbourhood important to you?”

13. Always put a closing date on questionnaires.

8.3 Focus Groups

Focus groups are groups of 6–12 people carefully selected to be representative of a designated part of the population. They are used primarily for intensive research designed to tease out the depths, subtleties and nuances of opinion. They need to be carefully facilitated.

Focus groups can explain what lies behind an opinion, or how people approach an issue. But they should not be used as a substitute for engaging directly with actual stakeholders in situations where merely knowing who thinks what is not enough.
A warning: the term 'focus group' is coming to be used to describe any small meeting of people, regardless of whether they are representative and of the purpose for which the group has been convened.

Interaction between participants, enabled by the small size of the group and the skill of the facilitator, can be very productive. Members can be carefully recruited to fit specific profiles. Focus groups enable a facilitator to design a very precise process that will examine the issues in the way required.

The smallness of the group allows the facilitator to get to the heart of difficult issues. Focus groups can obtain opinions from people who would not respond to other methods because they are not comfortable with writing or because of other constraints.

Some people have more confidence to participate in groups than others. This may result in an imbalance in discussion. Variations of ability and articulacy within the group may inhibit some members.

Method

1. Decide exactly how a focus group process will contribute to your overall engagement process and what specifically you want the use of them to achieve.
2. Identify groups of 8–12 people to form focus groups, ensuring they are representative of either the whole community or of the particular groups with whom you want to engage (or hire a market research company to do the work for you).
3. You will probably have to offer an incentive to attend. It needs to be enough to be attractive but be careful it does not tend to distort the representativeness of participation.
4. Engage a skilled facilitator to run the groups and work with him/her to devise questions and prompts, ground rules and briefing materials if required, and a co-facilitator to be responsible for recording the process.
5. Book venue(s), catering and childcare arrangements if necessary.
6. Produce a report of the process and the results, ensuring participants receive copies.

8.4 Newsletters

Newsletters provide the opportunity to set out plans or options and give feedback to stakeholders on the progress of a project. They are often used when an on-going process requires regular updating and they are one of the cheapest and most effective methods of keeping people informed. Newsletters are most useful when they are used in addition to other forms of consultation activities and are a good way to give people regular updates on a project's progression.

They should consist of key findings, be of a high quality and kept brief and to the point. It is also useful to include other local information in the newsletter that the recipient may find interesting.

It is a relatively cheap way of reaching a large number of people and is an excellent way to benchmark changes over time. It also allows you to control the flow of information that stakeholders will receive.

The drawbacks are that newsletters can be seen as impersonal and so will be discarded by some as soon as they receive them.

Method

Variable depending on the numbers of newsletters to be produced and the quality used. If professionally written and produced they can become expensive.

Using this method:

1. Call a meeting to decide the purpose of the newsletter and who it is aimed at.
2. Research methods and costs of production and distribution.
3. Produce a 'dummy' to give you a clearer idea of the work involved and the practicalities.
4. Draw up a realistic schedule for producing and distributing it, and a list of the topics the first few issues should cover.
5. Call another meeting with the results of the above to decide whether to go ahead.
6. Produce and distribute your first newsletter.
7. Evaluate reactions and tweak the next one accordingly.

8.5 Using the Media

The media – press, radio, television and internet – is an important channel for disseminating information to the community at large or to target audiences.

Television and radio in particular offer a means to communicate with groups of people who might not otherwise seek information or who have difficulties with written material. The media can target information at transport users; for example, the radio can be used to reach commuters travelling by car.

The use of the media is useful when public awareness about a proposal or issue needs to be raised and local debate promoted. The media is also an excellent way to promote dates of roadshows/exhibitions/public meetings or telephone numbers.

The media can be used alongside other public involvement methods to raise awareness of events or services. Staff should receive training before dealing with the media. Any communication with the press must go via the Press Office. You should not make any direct contact with the press without agreement from the Press Office.

Method

1. Contact the Press Office to decide on the most appropriate form of media – if it requires an interview and explanation then a radio interview may be best. If it's to let people know of dates and venues of an event then a press article may be better.

2. If you plan to feature in a local newspaper, draft a press release about your consultation event and submit it to the press office. For advice on how to write a press release contact the press officer.

3. If you plan to feature on the radio ensure you have received media training and are prepared for the interview. Contact the Press Office if you require media training.

8.6 Citizens Panel

A Citizens' Panel uses a representative sample of the public to obtain their views in order to ascertain what the community, as a whole, thinks about a particular issue. To ensure Panels do not become the same people giving us their views over time, it is important to refresh the Panel on a regular basis.

'Talkback' is our Citizens Panel in Oxford. It is made up of 1,000 residents over the age of 16 that are representative of the city's population. The panel are sent 2 surveys per year on a range of topics in either postal or online format. If you would like to submit a topic to a Talkback survey you should contact the Consultation Officers.

Talkback provides an immediately available means to assess opinion on specific issues. It overcomes the problem of having to recruit for each separate exercise. The response rate from Talkback is usually much higher than from the population as a whole as Panel members have expressed an interest in getting involved in consultation exercises, so tend to respond when they are asked.

Talkback can be used in a variety of ways, from questionnaires sent to all members when a sense of local opinion is required, to small numbers being recruited to attend a focus group meeting. Questionnaires are sent electronically as well as via the post, a variety of delivery methods increases the chances of receiving a high response

rate. Panels are an excellent way to ensure there is a regular means of communication with a cross-section of opinion.

Results can deliver valuable trend information based on the survey being repeated over time which makes them an excellent benchmarking tool.

To maintain citizens' interest in the process it is important to give them feedback. Newsletters are used for this. In addition it is possible to use samples from the Panel for Citizens' Juries or other forms of discussion groups. Also at the end of each year, an annual newsletter is produced which highlights all the changes that have been made as a result of the Talkback surveys during that particular year.

Method

1 Contact the Consultation Officers if you would like to submit a topic to a Talkback Survey or if you would like to use members of the panel for a focus group.

2 The Consultation Officers will work with you to develop your questions for the Talkback survey.

3 Once the questions have been developed, a Pilot will take place to test your questions.

4 Any necessary changes will be made to the Talkback survey questions as a result of the pilot.

5 The Consultation Officers will run the Talkback survey.

6 The survey results will be analysed.

7 A Talkback report will be produced and circulated to the relevant Service Areas

8.7 Mystery Shopping

There are many organisations that offer mystery shoppers to organisations to 'test' their services. The general format of the exercise is someone who is unknown to the Council would try out a service and they report back on their experience as a way of testing service quality. If the 'shopper' is properly briefed they can test, for instance, whether correct advice and information is being given out or whether standards or service provision have been adequately met.

Before embarking on this method it is important to ensure that the right questions are being asked and that shoppers are familiar with services and understand the responses they might receive. The use of trained mystery shoppers can provide precise and detailed feedback.

This is a useful method to use when you are testing the clarity of signing and directional advice, when different aspects of service quality are to be measured and compared or when services involve a strong person to person (or subjective) aspect such as issues of courtesy, knowledge, assistance etc.

Method

1. Decide on the service that you would like to be mystery shopped.
2. Design a brief that you would like the mystery shopper to test, e.g.
3. housing advice service or making an enquiry at a leisure centre.
4. Appoint the mystery shopper.
5. Design the questions/scenario you would like the mystery shopper
6. to test.
7. Organise a date/time to carry out the mystery shopper test.
8. Once the test has been carried out evaluate the results.
9. Feedback the results to the service that has been evaluated.

8.8 Exhibitions and Roadshows

Exhibitions are used to take the message about plans and schemes of work to dispersed audiences. Apart from the desire to reflect the interests of different geographical areas, another reason for travelling around with the exhibition material is that it increases the number of different people that get to see it. They can be taken out to where people are, such as schools, shopping centres and housing estates, rather than having to attract people to them, and they can appeal to groups, such as young people, who may not respond to document or meetings-based methods.

Care must be taken to ensure that the exhibition material is readable, interesting and easy to understand. Visual displays are particularly useful when you are consulting on proposed design or planning issues. These displays help give people a clear sense of what is involved and show how schemes would look and function.

Exhibitions can also be used to gather immediate reactions from those who see them. They are also good when access to local knowledge or concerns is required.

Exhibitions involve a significant amount of research around venues and the best times to hold the exhibition. To ensure maximum attendance they must be held in the right places at the right times. They are particularly useful when the audience would be more responsive to a visual image rather than written material, for example young children, older persons and those whose first language is not English.

Roadshows and exhibitions are time-consuming for staff that are attending and there must be a sufficient number of staff that are fully briefed for the exhibition/roadshow to be effective.

Exhibitions also allow you to get feedback from those attending, although you must treat this with caution as the people attending may not be fully representative of their community.

Method

1. Decide if an exhibition or roadshow is a good way to explain your project e.g. is it something that can be best explained visually?

2. If it is, establish the availability and suitability of venues, how long it will take to produce materials, and when staff will be available.

3. As soon as the materials are available, gather as many people as possible and ask them to study all the materials. Then go over each item in depth asking if the meaning is clear, if it explains issues at the right level of detail, and if the materials are visually attractive.

4. Edit and test the materials again.

5. Pick the staff who will attend and brief them on the questions they may be asked and how to answer them.

6. Arrive at the venues in good time to set up the exhibition and test equipment.

7. Welcome visitors and try to be as open as possible about all aspects of the project. If a question is asked that cannot be answered immediately, take the person's contact details and respond to them as soon as you can.

8. If you are running a sequence of exhibitions, hold a debrief session at the close of each to record questions asked and answers given to establish some consistency of responses.

8.9 Public Meetings and Workshops

Public meetings are normally large meetings where information about plans, decisions taken and options available are presented to the public. They are a conventional way of involving the public in discussions about schemes of work and

projects.

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To make the meeting more interactive a meeting can, after the initial presentation, be split into smaller discussion groups. The groups can then report back their discussion to the meeting, This encourages those that are not confident speaking in public to still get involved.

Good design and preparation, an experienced facilitator and a suitable venue at a suitable time can all help to make a successful public meeting.

A good public meeting enables all participants to say what they want to without feeling intimidated or inhibited. It also leaves people knowing what will happen as a result of it and how the results will be used.

Workshops are similar to public meetings in that they involved members of the public with the main difference being they are usually invited to attend the meeting and are usually asked to carry out some actions during thr meeting. The method that applies to public meetings can also be used when holding workshops.

Method

1. Decide what you want your public meeting to achieve, and therefore who should come to it.

2. Identify a series of steps from beginning to end that will achieve these purposes.

3. Ask yourself what the participants will want from the meeting, and whether your steps will meet their needs as well as yours.

4. Book a suitable venue, estimating the likely number of participants. Check heating, lighting, ventilation, electrical equipment, coffee/lunch break arrangements and house rules, e.g. emergency exits.

5. Identify a chair or facilitator and speakers.

6. Send out invitations and/or advertise the meeting.

7. Prepare background materials.

8. Hold the meeting, record key points visibly during it and provide participants with comment sheets so that those who are unable or too inhibited to speak can still make their points.

9. After the meeting report the results to participants and thank them for attending.

10. De-brief and evaluate.

8.10 Conferences and Seminars

Conferences and Seminars differ from both public meetings and workshops. While public meetings are primarily information-oriented, and workshops action-oriented, the primary purposes of most conferences and seminars are analysis and discussion.

The format of such events tends to be presentations followed by discussion, sometimes with specialist breakout sessions (which may be referred to as 'workshops') for informal discussion.

This method tends to appeal more to professionals and experts as opposed to 'ordinary' people. Therefore it might be useful if you are trying to consult with a group of professionals but not if you would like a representative sample of people from the local community. It's a good forum for bringing a range of experts together to discuss issues in detail

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Method

1. If you are intent upon using this method as part of an engagement strategy, decide what it is going to achieve, who will participate and how it contributes to your other engagement objectives.
2. If you are sure that it is the right thing to do, draft invitations and an outline programme that will achieve your objectives.
3. Issue a call for papers and abstracts (usually in parallel with invitations to attend).
4. Book an appropriate venue.
5. Assess abstracts, identify speakers and invite them.
6. Draft publicity material and mail-shot possible participants.
7. Invite someone to chair the event, or facilitate if it is relatively informal.
8. Produce a report of the event, including all the papers delivered, and distribute among participants.

8.11 Open Days and Drop-In Sessions

Open days and drop-in sessions offer opportunities for people to talk to staff, seek information, discuss local issues or proposals, or simply chat about the things that concern them. The essence of this approach is that it is informal.

From the organisation's point of view it provides an opportunity to give information, show an interest in people's concerns, answer questions, and generally show people what goes on behind the public face of the organisation. It's a good way of reaching out to the community and seeking informal contact and it can fit into people's personal timetables.

Staff need to be briefed and some sort of introductory exhibition is usually a good idea. It is also a good idea to collect as many names and contact details as possible: the people who come may well be prepared to respond positively to other opportunities for engagement.

Open days can be quite time intensive so you need to ensure staff have sufficient time to allocate to them. It is also difficult to predict attendance so you should market and promote the days to ensure as many people as possible are aware of them.

Method

1 Decide how holding an open day or drop-in session will contribute to your overall engagement activities.

2 Identify whether there are particular sections of the community who might welcome this opportunity, or who would respond to this method of engagement. Think about what this might mean in terms of which of your staff should be involved.

3 Identify general staffing requirements, where visitors will be welcomed, and assess impact on other duties.

4 Decide what information should be available to visitors, and in what languages to produce it.

5 Decide what you will seek in return and draft questionnaires or feedback sheets accordingly.

6 Publicise dates, times, purposes and attractions.

7 Organise refreshments and/or childcare.

8 Brief staff.

9 Meet and greet visitors.

!0 De-brief, evaluate and decide how to follow up.

8.12 Using the Internet and Our Website

Community engagement is possible via our website. We have an online consultation system, eConsult, that allows all consultations to be stored in one area of our website at www.oxford.gov.uk/consultation.

Web based consultations offer a number of advantages: people can participate without having to travel to meetings, they save paper, they enable people to focus on the issues that particularly interest them and they work well for people who feel worried by speaking in public or for those that find writing English is easier than speaking it.

In order to run successful online consultations It is important that our website is easily navigable, the information is understandable and of relevance to users.

It is also vital that the needs of particular groups (e.g. visually impaired, black and minority ethnic groups) are considered and addressed. When there are particular needs to be addressed, e.g. visual impairments, facilities such as Text to Speech on our website, which reads web pages aloud, can address this.

Our eConsult system lets us present issues to stakeholders and the public easily and clearly, encouraging high levels of participation and response. It also lets us manage all our consultation needs through a single, flexible system.

On our website we can create and carry out large or small, private or public public engagement exercises easily and quickly. The eConsult system is designed to offer a wide range of feedback mechanisms, including interactive questionnaires, online discussions and commenting on specific sections in consultation documents.

It also lets us convert documents, questionnaires, communications and processes into hard copy form, to ensure that offline consultation can be managed in tandem.

Through our online consultation system we can:

- improve coordination of all our consultation activities, avoid unnecessary duplication and maintain an electronic record of all consultation activity
- provide a framework for best practice and consistency across our organisation
- enhance communications with participants, before, during and after each consultation activity
- build up a self-maintaining stakeholder database that can be used to profile and target interested parties
- save time in assembling evidence on which to base a decision
- automatically analyse feedback and increase efficiency in data processing
- quickly and efficiently publish summaries, formal responses and individual responses as required
- decrease errors and costs normally associated with data take-on and validation
- dramatically reduce costs on print production and posting, and improve your sustainability rating

8.13 Social Media

Essentially, social media incorporates the online technology and methods through which people can share content, personal opinions and swap different perspectives. Social media website content can come in many shapes and forms:

- Text - text is used to put across opinions or write blog posts.
- Images - images and photos can be used to convey information in illustrative form.
- Audio - social media lets you create podcasts (Podcasts are audio files that are automatically delivered directly to your desktop computer, and can be transferred to your iPod or other MP3 player) for users to download. Podcasting has now become popular as an alternative way of providing 'radio' type content that can be listened to whenever, wherever and as many times as the listener wants.
- Video - video sites mean that you'll be able to record a video and then then allow people all over the world to see it.

- The most popular types of social media websites are huge at the moment. A few examples of these social media websites are:
- Social networking - websites that allows you to create a personal profile about yourself then chat, discuss and share information with others such as friends and family. Prime examples of social networking sites are Facebook and Twitter.
- Wikis - wikis are websites that allow you to create, edit and share information about a subject or topic. Wikipedia, for instance, is one of the world's most popular wikis.
- Video sharing - video-sharing sites allow you to upload and share your personal videos with the rest of the web community. A perfect example of a video sharing website is YouTube.
- Photo sharing - photo-sharing websites allow users to upload pictures and images to a personal account which can then be viewed by web users the world over. Flickr acts as a great example of a successful photo-sharing site.
- News aggregation - news aggregators provide a list of the latest news stories published by users from a range of different websites. Digg, for instance, is one of the web's largest news aggregators with one of the most dedicated communities.
- Social bookmarking - social bookmarking sites allow users to publicly bookmark web pages they find valuable in order to share them with other internet users.
- Microblogging - these websites allow you to post micro blog-like posts to announce what you are currently doing. Twitter is a good example of a presence app.

This list is by no means exhaustive and there are many more types of social media sites available on the internet. The social media front is moving very fast and new and more innovative social media sites are springing up all the time.

What to do if you want to use Social Media

If you would like to use a form of social media such as set up a Facebook page or Twitter account, you should contact the Website Manager (Chris Lee,

clee@oxford.gov.uk) in the Policy, Culture and Communications department to discuss your request.

Before you request access to use any social media you must ensure you have adequate resources to manage the process. This includes regularly monitoring the content of all messages that you receive in response to your consultation, managing the expectations of those participating, responding to messages where required and recording all consultation information on the City Council website.

Any messages from participants that contain offensive language, incorrect information or are vexatious must be removed. Social media sites must be regularly monitored in order to prevent this from happening wherever possible.

Online methods are a cost-effective way of hearing people's views on issues and they are also useful as they allow people to say what they want on a subject at any time of the day or night. They are good when it is important that participants have access to information on a regular basis to ensure effective participation. They are also a good way of potentially involving large numbers of people.

However, online methods should be used in addition to other methods rather than instead of otherwise you risk excluding people who don't have access to the internet from your consultation. Participation can also be confined to the very dedicated and may therefore be unrepresentative. This should also not be a substitute for meeting and talking to people face to face.

8.14 Incentive Guidelines

Introduction

These guidelines have been put together to ensure consistency across the organisation in the incentives we offer residents when participating in consultation. The document also outlines some conditions under which free prize draws must be operated at Oxford City Council.

Free prize draws

There is no specific legislation governing free prize draws but there are common law principles such as:

- Transparency
- Equity
- Fairness

All these must clearly be incorporated into the administration of free prize draws by those researchers who organise them as an incentive for survey participation.

Respondents should not be required to do anything other than agree to participate in a consultation exercise or return a questionnaire to be eligible for entry in to a free prize draw.

No incentive should be offered that requires respondents to spend any money.

Respondents should not be offered price discounts as incentives because claiming the incentive would involve the respondents paying the balance after the discount.

The offer of monetary vouchers is permissible because this does not necessitate expenditure on the part of the respondents.

The use of incentives to stimulate response must not be used as a means of collecting respondents' personal details. These should be kept separate from the completed questionnaires or response forms.

Permission to use a respondent's details must be specifically sought and must not be linked or be a condition of entry to a free prize draw. Failure to fully complete a free interview or questionnaire should not disqualify a respondent from entry to a free prize draw. Respondents should be clearly informed before participating of the following facts:

- The closing date for receipt of entry.
- The nature of the prizes.
- If a cash alternative can be substituted for any prize.
- How and when winners will be notified of results.
- How and when winners will be announced.

Unless otherwise stated in advance, prize winners should receive their prizes within six weeks after the draw has been held.

Winners in a free prize draw should be selected in a manner that ensures fair application of the laws of chance. The process by which winners will be selected must involve a clear audit trail and an independent draw. This process will not be made public but can be explained to individual respondents when specifically requested.

A poor response or an inferior quality of entries is not an acceptable basis for extending the duration of a free prize draw or withholding prizes unless the draw organisers have announced their intention to do so at the outset.

Incentives

As above for free prize draws:

- No incentive should be offered that requires the respondent to spend any money.
- Respondents should not be offered price discounts as incentives because claiming the incentive would involve the respondents paying the balance after the discount.
- The offer of monetary vouchers is permissible because this does not necessitate expenditure on the part of the respondents.

Suggested guidelines

Some research has been done which looks at the impact of incentives and whether it improves response rate. The following points are worth considering when deciding on whether to use an incentive or not.

1 Think carefully before offering an incentive. We are a public sector organisation and there are discussions going on about the appropriateness of offering incentives to take part in consultation.

2 It is recommended that those who attend a focus group are offered an incentive. You can offer the incentive after the event as this allows those who do not wish to have one to opt out. It is also an opportunity to send it with feedback from the session.

3 Offering an incentive, e.g. entering a prize draw for completing a survey is becoming more and more popular. However, there is debate as to how much of an impact this has on the response rate. It is recommended to always enclose a prepaid addressed envelope and if the survey is long (15–20+ questions) to offer something. For smaller surveys it is less important and perhaps offer something which is related to the survey, e.g. for a fitness survey – a free exercise class.

4 Where possible try and offer an incentive from a service we provide, e.g. a Slice card.

Table 1: Some examples of the type of incentive you might offer

Engagement Method	Example of an incentive (if needed/required)
1–2 hour focus group/workshop	£10–20 high street vouchers
2 hour+ workshop	£25+ high street vouchers
Questionnaire prize draws	Related to survey, e.g. free Slice card, game of tennis, free exercise class etc. Or £25+ high street vouchers
Consulting with young children	Stickers/Balloons

What not to do

Support individual retail outlets.

Offer food. There are always concerns over allergies, healthy eating policies, supporting fair trade etc.

Transport costs

It is advised that as an organiser of a consultation event, e.g. a focus group, you need to offer to cover travel expenses.

Useful tips

Enclose a free stamped addressed envelope.

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OXFORD CITY COUNCIL

Public Involvement Project Brief

Please complete pages 1 to 4 and return to Hamera Plume at hplume@oxford.gov.uk and Sadie Paige at spaige@oxford.gov.uk

Title:	Community Engagement Plan 2014 – 2017 Draft for Consultation
Type of activity	Consultation
Date of this brief:	30/10/13
Planned dates of activity:	12th Dec to 2013 to 23rd Jan 2014
Project Manager:	Sadie Paige, Hamera Plume
Service area:	Policy, Culture and Communications
Head of Service:	Peter McQuitty
Approvals:	
Public Involvement Project Board	
Other	

1. Plan for Public Involvement

1.1 Purpose and deliverables

This is the most important section of the project brief. Please provide as much detail here as possible.

1. Why is the project needed?	The current Consultation Strategy expires at the end of 2013 and will be replaced with a Community Engagement Plan. The scope is being expanded to include the implementation of commitments and statements from the Corporate Plan 2013. It is very important to understand the views of the residents of Oxford as we develop the new Plan.
2. How will the results be used and by whom?	The results will be used to inform the final version of the Community Engagement Plan.
3. What will change as a result of the project?	We will analyse the feedback and use it to develop the final Community Engagement Plan.
4. *Does it contribute to a wider programme of involvement and, if so, how?*	Yes, as part of the Stronger Communities Board
5. Have you considered alternatives forms of public involvement and, if so, what?	We assessed the use of a range of consultation methods.
6. Has any preparation work been carried out to date? What has been stated publicly?	We have looked at past consultations to see if there are any particular issues around community engagement that need to be addressed in the Plan.
7. What would you like to have at the end of the process? List the project deliverables.	A Community Engagement Plan that meets the needs of our residents and other stakeholders.
8. Does your public involvement project fulfil a statutory requirement? *If "yes" please explain in detail how you are following legal guidance*	No

1.2 Constraints and risks

Describe the constraints within which the project must operate, e.g. statutory requirements, restrictions on time, resources, funding and/or the eventual outcome, dependencies on other projects etc.

Set out any risk(s) and how you plan to mitigate them.

1.3 Involvement

List with as much detail as possible who you would like to be involved. For example:

- *The whole community or a representative cross-section of the community;*
- *Specific geographical areas or common interest groups:*
- *Professionals, experts, and organisations that may or may not have a statutory right to be involved*

Target group (who you would like to respond)	Size of target group (rough estimate)
Residents of the city	200
Business Community	50
Other stakeholders such as cultural, faith and disability groups. Representatives of younger and older people.	30

If your consultation relates to a specific area of Oxford, the relevant Councillors must be informed and invited to take part in the consultation before it is broadly communicated.

Does your consultation relate to a specific area? No, it is citywide
If yes, which ward(s):
Who are the relevant Councillors? Cllr Steve Curran as portfolio holder and all members.

(New section added 9/10/13 to comply with Member Officer Protocol – published October 2013.)

1.4 Data Protection Act 1998

Please see flow diagram in Annex 2 of this document for help.

Does your public involvement activity include contacting individuals using personal data (which includes contact details such as address, phone number and email address) that they have provided to Oxford City Council?	YES
If yes, have you checked that the individual(s) have given consent for their personal data (which includes contact details) to be used for the purpose of your public involvement activity?	YES
Does your public involvement activity include collecting personal information that will be shared with another organisation?	NO
If yes, how will you ensure that individual(s) have given consent for their personal data (which includes contact details) will be shared with another organisation?	

Note that this is applicable whether the contact is being made by Oxford City Council or by a third party.

1.5 Method

For guidance on methods please see the consultation toolkit available on the intranet.

1. <u>How</u> you are planning to involve. *Options include online/paper questionnaire*, telephone or face-to-face interviews, Citizen's panel. The eConsult system should be used wherever possible to run consultations.*	eConsult survey, this will be online but also available in paper form for those that request it. Talkback survey – selected questions. Involving community groups through the Community and Neighbourhoods team.
2. How will you make sure people know about your project? Eg advertising in local media, consultation portal, emails, leaflets etc	External : Press release, email to key stakeholders and organisations, article on our website homepage, community newsletters, posters in communal areas e.g. SAC reception area, Templars Square one stop shop etc. Internal: Intranet message, Council Matters
3. If you are developing a questionnaire, how do you plan to test it?	This will be tested on colleagues and a representative sample of community members.
*4. When do you plan to open and close your project?***	12th Dec 2103 to 23rd Jan 2014
5. How will you analyse the responses?	Via eConsult
6. How will you report the findings back to those that were involved?	The findings will be collated and developed into a consultation report which will be submitted to CEB in March and then go on to Full Council.
7. How will the results be used?	The results will be used to inform the final version of the Community Engagement Plan.

** NOTE: If you will be creating a paper version of the questionnaire that includes a request for personal information, you will need to get approval from the responder to that information to contact them in the future. The following statement should be added to your paper questionnaire:*

"Please tick here if you do NOT want your name and contact details to be used by Oxford City Council for future consultations."

***NOTE: In line with national guidance in the Code of Practice on Consultation, consultations should normally last for 12 weeks. For smaller scale consultations a minimum of 6 to 8 weeks is required.*

When timing is tight - for example when dealing with emergency measures or fitting into fixed timetables - then the consultation document should be clear as to the reasons for the shortened consultation period.

1.6 Managing the project

Who will be involved in delivering your project – list all names and roles

Name	Role	Service area / organisation	Role in this consultation
Sadie Paige	Consultation Officer	PCC	Joint Project Manager
Hamera Plume	Consultation Officer	PCC	Joint Project Manager
Angela Cristofoli	Communities and Neighbourhoods Manager	Leisure and Parks	Stakeholder liaison
Peter McQuitty	Head of service	PCC	Project Manager
Louisa Dean	Communications Team Lead	PCC	Communications liaison

1.7. Costs

Describe what internal (staff time) and external (printing, advertising etc) costs will be incurred.

ANNEX 1 – Public Involvement

Duty to involve

Local authorities have a statutory 'duty to involve' service users on changes to services. Users are "individuals, groups, businesses or organisations likely to be affected by our actions".

The duty to involve as set out in Section 3a of the Local Government Act 1999 imposes a duty on all local authorities and best value authorities to involve local representatives when carrying out "any of its functions" by providing information, consulting or "involving in another way" where they consider it appropriate to do so. This means that the Council can determine if and how local representatives should be involved.

The duty is wide ranging and applies to the delivery of services, policy, and decision making and applies to both "routine functions, as well as significant one-off decisions". Guidance to local authorities in interpreting the duty to involve was contained within the 2008 CLG publication Safe Strong and Prosperous Communities.

Oxford City Council (like other best value and local authorities) must consult a **"balanced selection of the individuals, groups, businesses or organisations the authority considers likely to be affected by, or have an interest in, their actions and functions**."

As part of the duty, Oxford City Council must consider carefully who might be affected by, or interested in, a particular function and **must not discriminate** in the way it informs, consults or involves local people. The Council must promote equal opportunities for people to engage and get involved.

Further guidance on public involvement is available from:

- Oxford City Council's Consultation Toolkit available on the intranet.
- HM Government Code of Practice on Consultation.

Oxford City Council and public involvement

Oxford City Council involves members of the public on a wide range of issues - corporate and service plans, plans for local areas, service performance (public satisfaction) and proposed changes to service delivery.

The term 'consultation' is often loosely used to cover a wide range of public involvement activities. However, in planning our public involvement exercises, we need to be clear about what these different activities involve and manage public expectations accordingly. There are three main kinds of public involvement.

Informing: providing members of the public with balanced and objective information to assist in understanding an issue or set of issues.

Researching: seeking information from members of the public about their views on an issue or set of issues.

Consulting: seeking the views of members of the public in order directly to influence options, alternatives and/or decisions.

Consultation therefore is only one way of securing the involvement of local representatives and the Council will not always consider that consultation is appropriate. When consultation is considered to be appropriate we are required to:

- Consult when proposals are still at a formative stage, before we are committed to a particular course of action;
- Give adequate and sufficient reasons for any proposal to enable consultees to properly respond;
- Allow adequate time for a consideration and response to the proposal;
- Ensure that the decision-maker gives conscientious consideration to the response to the consultation.

Sometimes our duty to consult will arise directly from a statute, when the legislation itself will specify the duty and also sometimes those people that should be consulted. Sometimes a question arises as to whether the duty can be implied, if it is not expressly stated in the statute. As this is not always clear, legal advice should be sought as to whether consultation is statutorily required on any particular issue.

In future, all public involvement projects being planned by Oxford City Council must have a signed off Project Brief as part of the approval process before the start of the project.

Activities requiring a project brief are those involving:

- Online and/or paper questionnaires/surveys;
- Telephone or face to face interviews;
- Focus groups;
- Consultations with the public, organisations or staff.

The Project Brief must be signed of by the Public Involvement Project Board and the Chief Executive before the project can begin. The Corporate Consultation Officer will advise as to the timing of Board meetings.

Individual development control and licensing consultations are the only involvement processes that are excluded from this requirement.

Process

As set out in the consultation toolkit (available on the intranet) all public involvement exercises should follow the process set out below:

1. Discuss your idea with the consultation officer.

2. Complete the Project Brief and send it to the consultation officer. The brief will then be reviewed by the Public Involvement Project Board and forwarded to the Chief Executive for approval.
3. Once you have been notified that your public involvement exercise has been approved you should inform the 3 group leaders to let them know about your project. Also inform councillors whose wards will be involved and wider groups of councillors if appropriate.
4. Record the project on the City Council's consultation portal (eConsult) at www.oxford.gov.uk/consultation. If you require training on how to use the portal please contact the Consultation Officer.
5. Develop your project with the support of the consultation officer.
6. Pilot the questions you are proposing to ask.
7. Revise your questions if necessary following the pilot.
8. Run your involvement exercise
9. Collate and analyse the results.
10. Produce an evaluation including:
    - The response rates
    - The groups that responded
    - The main findings
    - How you intend to use the results
11. Produce a newsletter summarising the main results. This should be sent to everybody who took part in your consultation and also made available to the wider public on the portal at **ww.oxford.gov.uk/consultation**. You must state how you intend to report all the findings back to those that participated in your consultation. The newsletter should also state how you intend to use the results.
12. Carry out an evaluation (see below). The completed evaluation form should then be sent to the Consultation Officer no later than 6 weeks after the closing date.

Think about evaluation from the start.

At the end of each public involvement exercise we should evaluate how things have gone. The evaluation criteria below, provides a set of questions that you should use.

It is useful to think about these evaluation questions before you develop your project plan.

1. Purposes

   What were the purposes? Were they achieved? If not, why not?

2. Methods

   What methods were used? Did they achieve the desired results in terms of levels of participation and type of response? Which methods worked best for which types of people? Did the process go according to the intended timetable?

3. Involvement

   How many people were involved? Were all key stakeholders involved? If involvement was intended to be representative, was this achieved? If it was intended to reach several different groups, was this achieved?

   What efforts were made to reach commonly underrepresented groups?

   What methods were used to encourage involvement? Did they work?

4. Results

   Were the results – in terms of enough people responding usefully – satisfactory? How easy were they to analyse and interpret? What form did any final report of the results take?

   How were results communicated to participants?

5. Outcomes

   What were the results of the exercise? What has changed or will be changed as a result?

6. Participant comments

   What comments were made by participants about the consultation process?

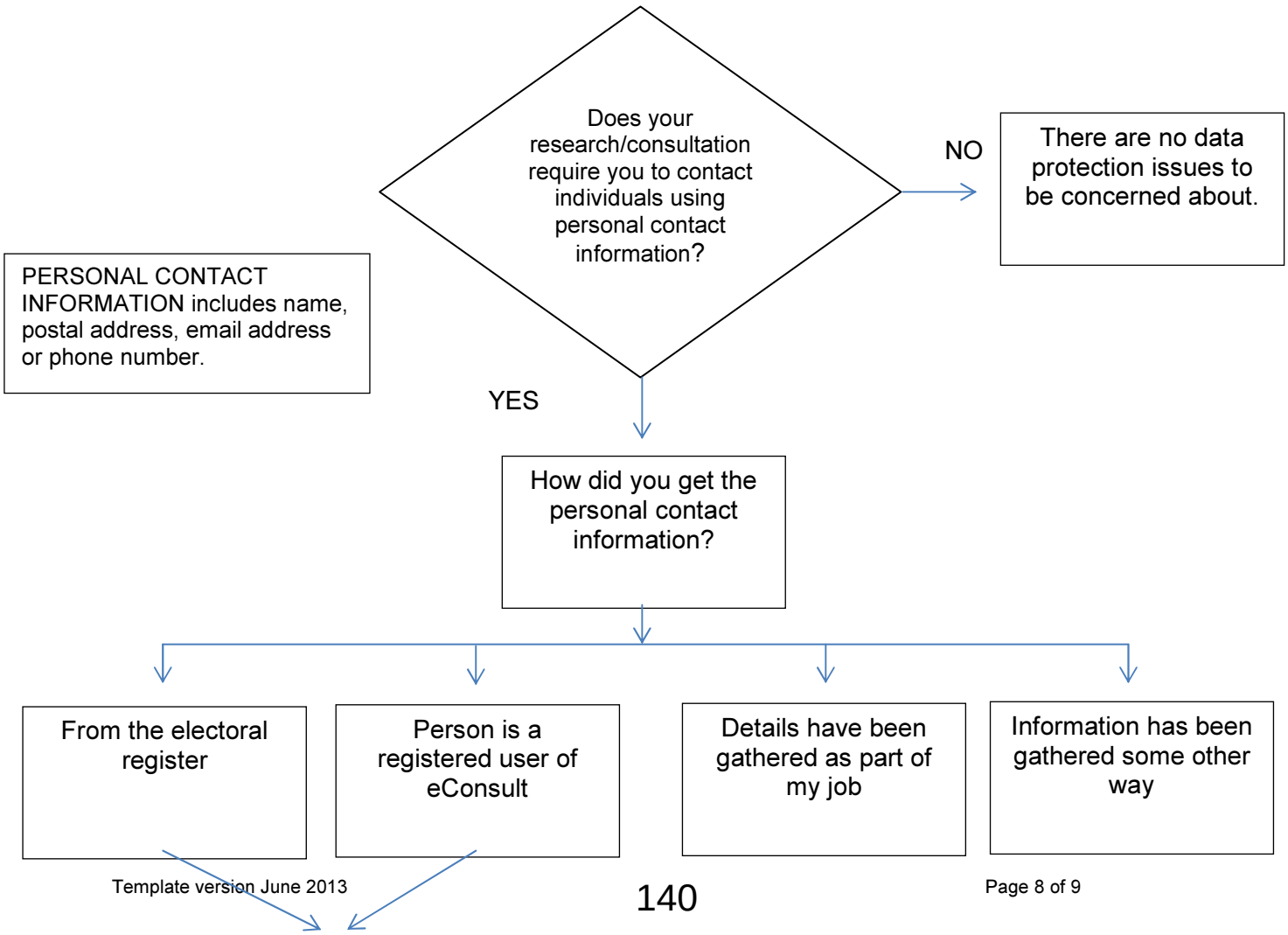
7. Cost

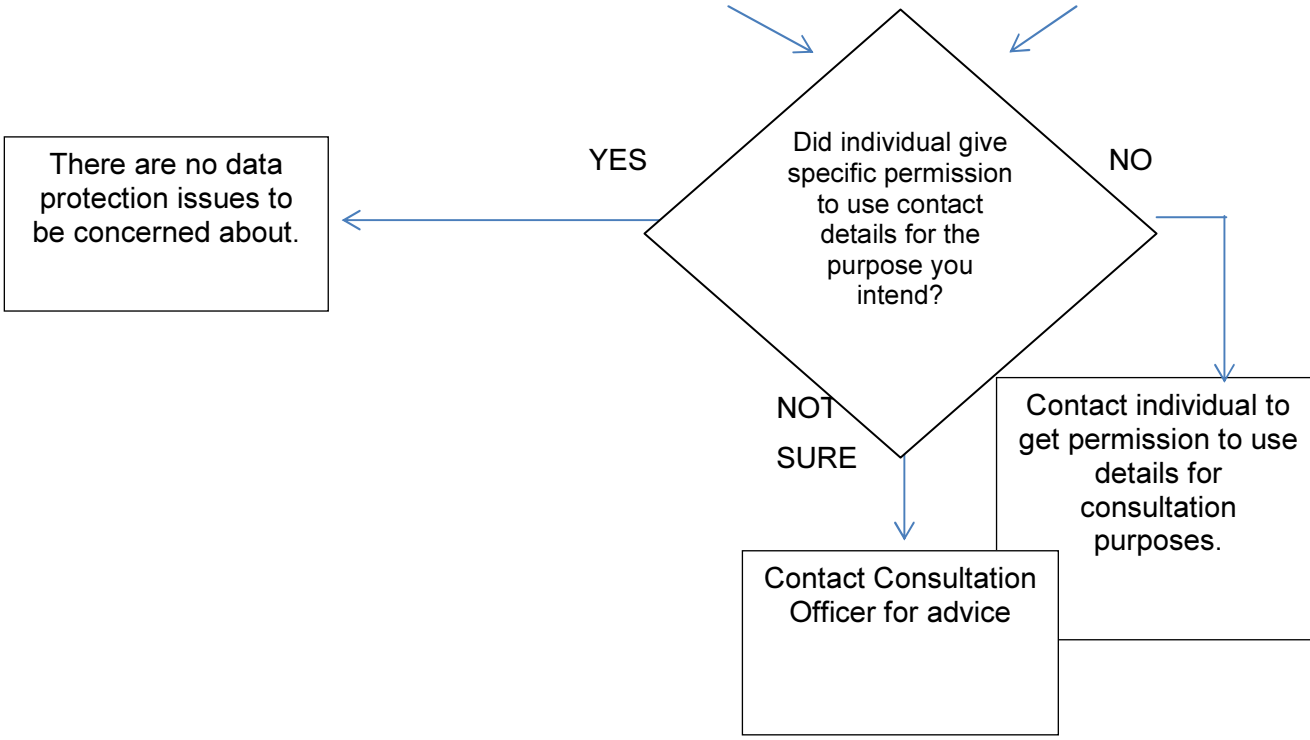
   What did the process cost? Did the process represent value for money?

8. Learning points for the future

   What should be done differently next time?

ANNEX 2 – Data Protection decision tree.




Did individual give specific permission to use contact details for the purpose you intend?
YES
NO
NOT SURE
There are no data protection issues to be concerned about.
Contact individual to get permission to use details for consultation purposes.
Contact Consultation Officer for advice

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Appendix 4 – Risk Register

Risk ID	Risk						Corporate Objective	Gross Risk		Residual Risk		Current Risk		Owner	Date Risk Reviewed	Proximity of Risk (Projects/ Contracts Only)
Category -000- Service Area Code	Risk Title	Opportunity/ Threat	Risk Description	Risk Cause	Consequence	Date raised	1 to 6	I	P	I	P	I	P			
PCC 001	Budget	Threat	That City Council Budget 2014 – 2018 cuts affect service delivery	Need to reduce budget.	Resources are not available to carry out public engagement activities described in the draft Plan	4/11/13	3	3	2	3	1	3	2	Angela Cristofoli/ Hamera Plume	4/11/13	
PCC 002	Legal	Threat	That there is a legal challenge to a Community Engagement Activity			4/11/13	3	4	2	4	2	4	2	Angela Cristofoli/ Hamera Plume	4/11/13	
PCC 003	Resources	Threat	That there are insufficient resources to execute to this plan	Resource estimates are under-called	Stress	4/11/13	3	2	3	2	1	2	3	Angela Cristofoli/ Hamera Plume	4/11/13	
LPC 001	Failure to engage appropriately with communities of identity.	Threat	Following implementation of Plan, services do not engage effectively with Communities of Interest	Lack of understanding or commitment by services of how to engage	Communities feel issues not being addressed and are isolated	4/11/13	3	4	3	4	1	4	3	Angela Cristofoli	4/11/13	
LPC 002	Increase in	Opportunity	Currently few residents	Lack of active targeted	Does not address	4/11/13	3							Angela Cristofoli	4/11/13	

	numbers engaged through collaborating.		actively engaged in deprived areas and amongst young people	engagement and dedicated resources	council's priority to encourage community engagement										

Risk ID	Risk Title	Action Owner	Accept, Contingency, Transfer, Reduce or Avoid	Details of Action	Key Milestone	Milestone Delivery Date	%Action Complete	Date Reviewed
PCC 001	Budget	AC/HP/SP	Reduce	Await Budget approval. Develop priority list.	April 2014	Feb 2014 (CEB for this Plan)		4/11/13
PCC 002	Legal	AC/HP/SP	Avoid	Ongoing participation of Legal Service Head at Public Involvement Board		Feb 2014		4/11/13
PCC 003	Resources	AC/HP/SP	Avoid	Review 2014/15 Service Plans for consultation activities. Develop Annual Plan and estimate resource. Develop service level agreement with service areas. Organise eConsult training.	April 2014	Feb 2014		4/11/13
LPC 001	Failure to engage	AC/HP/SP	Avoid	Ensure training programme for services and regular updates. Consultation Officers group to share best practice and audit engagement. Public Involvement Board to review PIDs to ensure address Communities of Identity	Training and updates timetabled after Plan implemented			4/11/13

				Set annual targets for young people's engagement and also for residents in areas of deprivation	6 month review			

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Appendix 5 Initial screening Equalities Impact Assessment for the draft Community Engagement Plan 2014 – 2017.

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

The Community Engagement Plan is underpinned by our principles of engagement, which requires the participation of all stakeholders who have an interest in, or are impacted by, a decision, regardless of age, disability, race, or language We strive to engage with a representative sample of stakeholders and will use information from the Census 2011 to define that goal. This will involve increased engagement with young people, and people from minority ethnic groups. It will be important that the methods used to engage new audiences do not alienate existing audiences – for example through the use of digital technology.

2. In brief, what changes are you planning to make to your current or proposed new or changed policy, Plan, 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

In order to minimise the adverse equality impact we will continue to enforce the use the Public Involvement Project Brief which requires that external consultation projects define their target groups, as well as the means of reaching the target groups. We will continue to segment our communication channels to ensure that the most appropriate means are used to reach the community. We will consult on this Plan, and we will keep a watching brief on the adoption of technology.

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

The draft Community Engagement Plan will go out for consultation in December 2013 for four weeks. The following groups will be consulted: residents of the city; representatives of younger and older people; the business community; and other stakeholders such as cultural, faith and disability groups.

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

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

The principles that underpin this Plan include inclusiveness and accessibility and any adverse impacts will be managed as part of the community engagement activities.

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

We will track the demographics of people in the community who are involved or engaged with City Council as a key indicator for this Plan.

Lead officer responsible for signing off the EqIA:

Role:

Date:

Note, please consider & include the following areas:

- Summary of the impacts of any individual policies
- Specific impact tests (e.g. statutory equality duties, social, regeneration and sustainability)
- Post implementation review plan (consider the basis for the review, objectives and how these will be measured, impacts and outcomes including the “unknown”)
- Potential data sources (attach hyperlinks including Government impact assessments where relevant)

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OXFORD CITY COUNCIL

To: The Scrutiny Committee

Date: 3rd December 2013

Report of: Head of Human Resources & Facilities

Title of Report: Absence and Recruitment Data

Summary and Recommendations

Purpose of report: To report various recruitment and absence data

Scrutiny Lead Member: Councillor Mark Mills

Executive Lead Member: Councillor Bob Price

Recommendation(s) or major points for consideration: To note the performance indicator data and the actions taken / to be taken

Appendix 1 – Absence statistics at October 2013

Introduction

1 The Scrutiny Committee have selected a group of performance indicators from the Council's corporate and service sets which they consider quarterly and this includes the following:

BV017a – Percentage of black and ethnic minority employees
CH001 – Days lost to sickness absence.

Percentage of black and minority ethnic (BME) employees

2 Table 1 (overleaf) shows the current workforce profile, which includes the percentage of BME employees. This currently shows just over 7% of the workforce from a BME background.

3 This is low in comparison with the wider community (2011 census figures show BME communities in Oxford at 22%, 14% from white non-British and 28% overall born outside the UK). Unemployment stands at roughly 5.7%, with 30% of those unemployed coming from BME communities (an 8% unemployment rate from 14, 542 economically active, compared with a 4% rate for white British from 60,821), however we are progressing and embedding a number of initiatives

which are having a positive impact in the employment areas we can directly influence (see paragraph 5 below)

4 Table 2 (overleaf) shows the following over the last 12 months

- the percentage of applicants
- the percentage on shortlists
- the percentage appointed
- the percentage appointed of those applying

5 The number of job applications from BME candidates has doubled from 400 in 2011/12 to over 800 in 2012/13. Whilst it is difficult to attribute this increase precisely to specific actions, we are routinely undertaking the following positive steps:

- Advertising all vacancies at Job Centre Plus
- Advertising all vacancies with various community groups and through Community Work Clubs (these resources are also being highlighted in automatic e-mails sent to unsuccessful candidates)
- Encouraging applications from BME candidates by stating we are under-represented in this area and welcome applications from these applicants
- Working with the Communities (CAN) team to identify BME community groups actively wanting support in understanding what employers are looking for, filling out application forms and interview skills
- Running, supporting and signposting job seekers to Job Clubs which is helping to improve the broader skills of applicants in job searching
- We ran an unconscious bias workshop for all managers in September 2013 which challenged managers to reflect on the impact that biases could have in recruitment and people management
- Specifically targeted certain recruitment campaigns at ethnic minority groups e.g. the recent cohort of apprentices (where 50% of appointed candidates were from BME groups)
- Running internal HR and service area BME focus groups to further identify potential areas where new initiatives might be tried
- Sending HR Metrics “workforce/ recruitment” reports (using a raft of newly developed iTrent workforce reports) monthly to all Heads of Service and Directors

6 The statistics show that whilst there are an increasing number of applicants from BME candidates, we still need to do more in terms of shortlisting and appointing more staff from these groups. There are examples of positive trends within the Council (see table 3 for recent recruitment successes in Housing which has 14.4% BME staff in a service with front line teams engaging directly with diverse and vulnerable communities and customers) but continued focus is required in order to make a sustainable difference to the workforce profile. Further work is underway which includes:

- Expanding the campaign in the community to promote the Council as a great place to work for all people and in particular BME candidates (e.g. visiting community leaders to present our desire to hire more BME staff)
- Developing an “employer of choice” video
- Anonymising application forms
- Ensuring all interview and stakeholder panels are fully trained on best practice recruitment techniques with a particular emphasis on promoting diversity
- Highlighting the importance of valuing diversity as part of every staff appraisal and broader management leadership and effectiveness under IiP GOLD and in the day-to-day business as usual for the Council

Table 1 – Workforce profile

Workforce Summary as at 31/10/2013

Gender	Count	Percentage
Female	411	34.34%
Male	786	65.66%
Total	1,197	

Age (Years)	Count	Percentage
<20	14	1.17%
20-29	146	12.20%
30-39	266	22.22%
40-49	383	32.00%
50-59	293	24.48%
60-65	86	7.18%
65+	9	0.75%
Total	1,197	

Ethnicity	Count	Percentage
BME	84	7.02%
White	1,113	92.98%
Sum:	1,197	

Disability	Count	Percentage
Declined to specify	2	0.17%
Disabled	109	9.11%
Not disabled	1,075	89.81%
Not Stated	11	0.92%
Total	1,197	

Table 2 – Recruitment statistics

Recruitment Management Report for 14/11/2012 to 13/11/2013

Count of Ethnic Origin	BME	White	Sum:
Application Received	892	3,793	4,685
Percentage	19.04	80.96	
Application Shortlisted	169	954	1,123
Percentage	15.05	84.95	
Appointed	22	163	185
Percentage	11.89	88.11	

Comparison Percentages	BME	White	Sum:
Total Applied	892	3,793	4,685
Total Shortlisted	169	954	1,123
Percentage Shortlisted (Shortlisted / Applied * 100)	18.95	25.15	
Total Appointed	22	163	185
Percentage Appointed (Appointed / Shortlisted * 100)	13.02	17.09	

Count of Disability	Declined to specify	Disabled	Not disabled	Not known	Not Stated	Sum:
Application Received	70	122	4,170	88	235	4,685
Percentage	1.49%	2.60%	89.01%	1.88%	5.02%	
Application Shortlisted	21	44	995	14	49	1,123
Percentage	1.87%	3.92%	88.60%	1.25%	4.36%	
Appointed	2	7	159		17	185
Percentage	1.08%	3.78%	85.95%		9.19%	

Table 3 – Recruitment statistics for Housing

Recruitment Management Report for 01/08/2013 to 31/10/2013

Count of Ethnic Origin	BME	White	Sum:
Application Received	210	838	1,048
Percentage	20.04	79.96	
Application Shortlisted	49	218	267
Percentage	18.35	81.65	
Appointed	6	26	32
Percentage	18.75	81.25	

Count of Disability	Declined to specify
Application Received	13
Percentage	1.24%
Application Shortlisted	1
Percentage	0.37%
Appointed	
Percentage	

Comparison Percentage	BME	White
Total Applications Received	210	838
Total Applications Shortlisted	49	218
Percentage Shortlisted	23.33	26.01
Total Appointed	6	26
Percentage Appointed	12.24	11.93

Days lost to sickness absence

7 The October 2013 sickness statistics are shown at appendix 1. This table includes split between short and long term absence and the overall position as at the same time last year.

8 The corporate target 2013/4 was set at 8 days as part of the new 5 year pay deal (because increments and partnership payments are in part linked to achieving good attendance levels); this reduces to 7 days and then 6 days over the next 2 years.

9 During 2013 /14, whilst there has been some excellent improvement in some areas, the statistics are showing an outturn of 7.73 days (almost a whole day increase on 12/13) without yet reflecting the likely adverse impact of the winter months. On this basis we can expect the 13/14 outturn to be around 8 days.

10 Two Service Areas will exceed the 8 day target, Human Resources and Facilities and Direct Services. Being a small Service Area the high level of absence in Human Resources and Facilities is not significantly impacting the total and is caused by some long term absence skewing the figure because of the small number of staff. The area of concern is Direct Services which includes 45% of the workforce and has increased by 2 ½ days per FTE compared with last year. Management are aware of this increase and are taking further steps to manage sickness absence. It can be more difficult to implement early return to work because of the physical nature of the work.

11 Three other Service Areas currently have an absence rate in the region of 6 days and therefore may be close to or exceed the 8 day target at the end of the year. These are Customer Services, Finance and Housing and Property. Both Customer Services and Housing and Property have improved significantly compared with recent years and Finance is only slightly worse.

12 There is approximately a 50/50 split between short and long term absence. This compares with a 40/60 split in 2011/12. Both short term and long term absences have reduced. Short term absence is, however, a larger proportion of all absences. This is likely to be reflection of the change to the trigger system for managing absence and more robust management of long term absences. As such discussions are on-going with trade unions to reduce the trigger thresholds for short term absences so that we can address any potential sickness issues earlier.

13 HR will run further sessions in the next couple of months on good practice attendance management, which will again cover some ‘must dos’ and pick up other points which can increase attendance (e.g. Occupational Health advice, getting people back to work as soon as possible, how they can work whilst under cover of a doctors’ note, FAQ’s, etc.).

Name and contact details of author:-

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Service Area: HR & Facilities
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List of background papers:

Version number:

Appendix 1 - October 2013 Absence Statistics

Service Area	Available Hours in Period	Hours Lost in Period	Average FTE in Period	Lost Hours per FTE in Period	Lost Standard Days Per FTE in Period	Short Term Absence (%)	Long Term Absence (%)	Year End Projection of Absence per FTE	Year End Projection at same time last year	Comparison of year end projection with last year
Across all Service Areas	**1288647.69**	**38039.20**	**1139.24**	**33.39**	**4.51**	**47**	**53**	**7.73**	**6.75**	↑
Business Improvement and Technology	31460.74	60.10	27.81	**2.16**	**0.29**	**100**	**0**	**0.50**	**0.84**	↓
City Development	74532.14	1074.50	65.89	**16.31**	**2.20**	**53**	**47**	**3.77**	**1.44**	↑
Regeneration & Major Projects	14155.57	259.00	12.51	**20.70**	**2.80**	**60**	**40**	**4.80**	**n/a**	**n/a**
Customer Services	140021.23	3530.06	123.79	**28.52**	**3.85**	**50**	**50**	**6.60**	**8.57**	↓
Direct Services	589225.71	24624.23	520.91	**47.27**	**6.39**	**45**	**55**	**10.95**	**8.35**	↑
Environmental Development	90899.03	977.00	80.36	**12.16**	**1.64**	**72**	**28**	**2.81**	**3.41**	↓
Finance	41321.51	1004.35	36.53	**27.49**	**3.72**	**45**	**55**	**6.38**	**5.62**	↑
Housing & Property	92140.13	2133.70	81.46	**26.19**	**3.54**	**50**	**50**	**6.07**	**8.4**	↓
Human Resources and Facilities	51337.31	2081.30	45.39	**45.86**	**6.20**	**31**	**69**	**10.63**	**6.22**	↑
Law & Governance	30117.00	487.50	26.63	**18.31**	**2.47**	**38**	**62**	**4.23**	**1.75**	↓
Leisure, Parks & Communities	108049.20	1589.87	95.52	**16.64**	**2.25**	**90**	**10**	**3.86**	**6.46**	↓
Policy Culture & Communications	20863.54	217.60	18.44	**11.80**	**1.59**	**0**	**100**	**2.73**	**0.22**	↑
Senior Management	4524.57	0.00	4.00	**0.00**	**0.00**	**0**	**0**	**0.00**	**0**	→

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SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Tuesday 5 November 2013

COUNCILLORS PRESENT: Councillors Mills (Chair), Sanders (Vice-Chair), Abbasi, Altaf-Khan, Campbell, Coulter, Darke, Fry, Lloyd-Shogbesan, Simmons, Smith and Upton.

OFFICERS PRESENT: Geoff Corps (Cleaner Greener Services Manager), John Copley (Head of Environmental Development), Pat Jones (Principal Scrutiny Officer) and Sarah Claridge (Trainee Democratic and Electoral Services Officer)

42. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies for absence.

43. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations were made.

44. WORK PROGRAMME AND FORWARD PLAN

Pat Jones, Principal Scrutiny Officer, introduced the current work programme and Forward Plan to the Committee, and provided some background and context.

Cllr Campbell updated the Committee on the timeline for the completion of the Covered Market Panel.

- The Retail Group's report is out for consultation and there is an opportunity for the public to comment on the strategy on the council website. He asked that ward Councillors circulate the line to any constituents so that as many people could comment on the strategy as possible.
- The draft Covered Market Strategy and results of the consultation will likely go to CEB in January 2014. The Panel's final report will be presented to the Scrutiny Committee on 14 January and (if members are willing) will be presented to CEB at its January meeting.
- The Panel will also pre-scrutinise the consultation process in a separate report to be presented in January.

The Committee reviewed the Forward Plan but had no new items they wished to pre-scrutinise.

45. REPORT BACK ON RECOMMENDATIONS

Pat Jones, Principal Scrutiny Officer introduced the report back on recommendations from the Scrutiny Committee to CEB. The performance indicator LP106 on participation in leisure amongst target groups was the only scrutiny recommendation that was refused by CEB. Scrutiny queried why the

Council was maintaining a target that was constantly met, however the Board Member sighted that until more analysis on the overall trend of participation levels could be determined it would be unhelpful to change the target.

The Committee resolved to note the recommendations and their outcome as shown in the report.

46. COUNCILLOR CALLS FOR ACTION OPERATING PROTOCOL

Pat Jones, Principal Scrutiny Officer, introduced the report on Councillors Call to Action operating protocol.

The Committee resolved

1. To amend the referral form to direct councillors to provide more specific information and officers to clarify any current debates, reviews or projects related to the issue.

2. To leave the factual judgement around a CCfA falling within an excluded category with the Monitoring Officer but to place any further validation with the Chair and Vice Chair of the Scrutiny Committee.

3. To require the instigating councillor to attend the scrutiny meeting that discusses the CCfA.

4. To add to the list of considerations for the scrutiny committee when considering a valid CCfA:

- What priority the CCfA investigation should have within the current agreed work programme.

  To make it clear that this list is not exhaustive.

5. To require the Chair and Vice Chair to take advice from officers when CCfA raise issues outside of the direct control of this Council.

6. To include the guarantees included in the report in the protocol.

47. PERFORMANCE MONITORING - QUARTER 2

Pat Jones, Principal Scrutiny Officer, introduced the report on Performance Monitoring- Quarter 2 to the Committee, and provided some background and context.

The Committee resolved to note the report and requested more information of the following indicators:

- CH001- sickness: would like a commentary on performance
- BV017a: percentage of black and ethnic minority employees: further commentary on progress
- LP106: increase participation in leisure centres by target groups: further commentary on progress

- B10002a: training places created through Council's investment projects: further commentary on progress

48. RECYCLING - PANEL REPORT

Councillors Fry, Jones and Simmons introduced the pre-scrutiny report on the draft Waste and Recycling Strategy and went through the Panel's recommendations.

Treating Waste as a Commodity
Councillor Jones explained the importance of treating waste as a commodity and the desire of the panel to pre-sort the waste before it goes to landfill. Any materials that are diverted from the waste stream, saves the County Council money in landfill tax, and reduces the City's total waste amount which increases the overall recycling rate. The Cleaner Greener Services Manager would like to see a waste transfer station to pre-sort waste within the city.

Collecting Food Waste from Flats
The Council does not currently own enough vehicles which can collect the larger communal food waste bins to allow for a full roll out of the food waste collection to all flats across the city. Purchasing two specially equipped vehicles and the staffing costs of 6 people (3 per vehicle) would cost over £900,000 over 3 years.

Collecting Garden Waste
The Cleaner Greener Services Manager explained that the city was currently at a tipping point for collecting garden waste. The City has nearly 14,000 garden waste customers and the city needs another vehicle to expand the service.

Food Waste Bid
The Cleaner Greener Services Manager has made a funding bid to roll out food waste collection across the city. The bid is to fund the purchase of 2 new 'fit for purpose' vehicles and staffing costs. The Council will know in December whether it's been considered as part of the budget setting process. The Committee would like to see the Food Waste bid as soon as it's made public.

Commercial Waste collection
The Council does not have any corporate targets for commercial waste and is consequently missing out on opportunities to expand its commercial waste collection in the city.

Penalty Notices
The Panel felt that the Council needed to be more forceful in pursuing people who don't recycle. However there were concerns raised that strict enforcement policies can lead to more people dumbing rubbish in other people's bins which can lead to higher contamination rates. The Council should therefore focus on positive programmes to encourage recycling rather than negative enforcement campaigns.

The Cleaner Greener Services Manager outlined that Council can only penalise householders for failing to put their waste out for collection not for failing to recycle.

Reducing Packaging

The Cleaner Greener Services Manager expressed concern about the Panel's packaging recommendation and suggested that the Oxfordshire Joint Waste Partnership was the more appropriate body to recommend this to as they have more scope in there remit to work with businesses to reduce packaging. The Committee agreed.

The Committee resolved:

1. To see the Food Waste bid as soon as it's been made public,

2. That the Finance Panel sees the long list of officer bids for capital and revenue projects proposed for the budget 2014/15, as soon as they are available.

Recommendations to CEB on 13 November

The Committee resolved to make the following recommendations:

Recommendation 1

That the strategy reflects in its vision the view that waste is a resource and a commodity from which the Council can generate income, and that the Council should continually be looking for further opportunities to benefit financially from the waste that the City produces.

Recommendation 2

That CEB investigate and cost opportunities to pre-sort and divert recyclables from the household waste collection before sending it to landfill.

Recommendation 3

That the City Executive Board provide to the Scrutiny Committee more detailed information on the costing and feasibility for the options to recycle food from flats that have been considered alongside the details of the current capital bid.

Recommendation 4

That CEB more actively use the penalties at its disposal to convince residents who do not present waste in the manner required.

Recommendation 5

That CEB investigate, through the Oxfordshire Waste Partnership, local opportunities to reduce excess packaging and reduce the use of plastic bags.

Recommendation 6

That CEB take all opportunities to promote the benefits of food waste separation to commercial customers and investigate opportunities to offer incentives to new business customers.

49. RIVERSIDE LAND - PRE SCRUTINY

John Copley, Head of Environmental Services introduced the report on Riverside Land to the Committee. The report will be decided by CEB in November and was called in to the Scrutiny Committee by Cllr Simmons.

The Head of Environmental Services outlined that the acquisition of the land would allow Council to control the mooring of boats along the strip. Unauthorised moorings have damaged the bank and some boat owners have engaged in antisocial behaviour which has impacted on the residents of Abbey Road. However if Council acquires the land, up to 6 short term/ visitor moorings (not residential mooring which is contrary to Council Policy) would be created.

There is also concern about the weakening of the bank as people mooring, have driven pegs into the ground. However if the Council owned the land, a maintenance programme will be established and rings will be inserted for boaters to use.

Cllr Simmons was concerned about the future on-going management of the strip of land. The Environment Agency is currently piloting a new way of managing mooring which treats moorings similar to car parking with fines for overstaying. This pilot has been very successful and it had been agreed in principle, that if the pilot is made permanent that the scheme will extend to this strip of land (if the title is granted to the Council).

The proposed acquisition and management of the land has local resident support. Julian Levay spoke on behalf of Abbey Road residents and indicated that residents were prepared to assist with routine maintenance, enforcement and even financial support.

<u>Recommendations to CEB on 13 November</u>

The Committee resolved to make the following recommendation:

To support the proposals in the report and ask the City Executive Board to note the offer of residents.

50. OXPENS MASTERPLAN CONSULTATION OUTCOME - PRE-SCRUTINY

The Committee commented on the merits of the proposed Oxpens masterplan going to CEB in November. The plan is a guideline for development and each part will require planning permission before development can begin.

The following comments were made:

- The plan should include more housing and less retail. This site is an opportunity to create 600 homes rather than the proposed 300
- Not convinced about the need for a hotel
- Chance to create a new community, reduce traffic and congestion
- 300 homes and 1000 new jobs is great for the city.

The Board Member for City Development responded that the site is more suitable for student accommodation rather than family homes because of its

proximity to the railway lines. By building more purpose built student accommodation it frees up housing elsewhere in the city for families.

There was a concern that the masterplan identified issues such as transport links, flooding, energy use but did not include a framework to deal with these issues.

The Board Member stated that the council will have an opportunity to see more detail of the development when it determines the planning applications for this scheme.

Recommendations to CEB on 13 November

The Committee resolved to make the following recommendation:

To support the Oxpens Site Master Plan noting the concerns made by some committee members.

51. MINUTES

The Committee resolved to confirm as a correct record the minutes of the meeting held on 1 October 2013.

52. DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

The Committee noted the next meeting was scheduled for 3 December 2013.

The meeting started at 6.00 pm and ended at 7.45 pm