Agenda

Scrutiny Committee

Date: **Tuesday 7 June 2016**

Time: **6.00 pm**

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

For any further information please contact:

Catherine Phythian, Committee Services Officer

Telephone: 01865 252402

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As a matter of courtesy, if you intend to record the meeting please let the Contact Officer know how you wish to do this before the start of the meeting.

Scrutiny Committee

Membership

Councillor Jamila Begum Azad

Councillor Craig Simmons

Councillor Nigel Chapman

Councillor Tom Hayes

Councillor Van Coulter

Councillor James Fry

Councillor Andrew Gant

Councillor David Henwood

Councillor Marie Tidball

Councillor Jennifer Pegg

Councillor Ruth Wilkinson

Councillor Sian Taylor

The quorum for this Committee is four, substitutes are permitted.

AGENDA

1   APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

2   ELECTION OF CHAIR FOR THE COUNCIL YEAR 2016/17

The Committee is asked to elect a Chair for the Council year 2016/17.

The Chair must be a Scrutiny Councillor from one of the opposition groups.

3   ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIR FOR THE COUNCIL YEAR 2016/17

The Committee is asked to elect a Vice-Chair for the Council year 2016/17.

The Vice-Chair must be a Scrutiny Councillor and can be from any political group.

4   DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

5   SCRUTINY COMMITTEE OPERATING PRINCIPLES 2016/17   9 - 12

Contact Officer: Andrew Brown, Scrutiny Officer Tel: 01865 252230 abrown2@oxford.gov.uk

Background Information
The Council's Constitution sets out the role and procedures of the Scrutiny Committee but is not prescriptive about how the scrutiny function will be organised and managed. Previous Scrutiny Committees have voluntarily agreed operating principles to govern key aspects of the scrutiny function that are not covered by the Constitution.
Why is it on the agenda?
For the Scrutiny Committee to agree a set of operating principles for the 2016/17 Council year which will provide clarity as to how the scrutiny function will be organised and managed. No substantial changes are proposed for this year.
Who has been invited to comment?
Andrew Brown, Scrutiny Officer will present the operating principles and support the Committee in its decision making.

| 6 | **WORK PROGRAMME AND FORWARD PLAN** | |

Contact Officer: Andrew Brown, Scrutiny Officer Tel: 01865 252230
abrown2@oxford.gov.uk

Background Information
The Scrutiny Committee operates within a work plan which is agreed annually and reviewed at every meeting so that it can be adjusted to reflect the wishes of the Committee and take account of any changes to the latest Forward Plan (which outlines decisions to be taken by the City Executive Board or Council).
Why is it on the agenda?
The Scrutiny Committee is asked to set a work plan for the 2016/17 Council year and in particular to consider: - Which items from the 2015/16 work plan to carry forward;   - Which items from the list of new suggestions to include;   - Whether any salient issues or topics are missing;   - Which items should be prioritised for detailed scrutiny.   Having set the content of the work plan, the Committee is asked to agree the remit and membership of two standing panels. It is recommended that the Committee appoints to a Finance Panel (4 members) and a Housing Panel (6 members). The Scrutiny Officer will advise the Committee which members have been nominated. The Committee is also asked to select which Forward Plan items to pre-scrutinise based on the following criteria (a maximum of three items for pre-scrutiny will normally apply):   *Is the issue controversial / of significant public interest?*   *Is it an area of high expenditure?*   *Is it an essential service / corporate priority?*   *Can Scrutiny influence and add value?*
Who has been invited to comment?
• Andrew Brown, Scrutiny Officer

| 7 | **PLANNING AND REGULATORY SERVICE PLAN (6.15PM)** | |

Contact Officer: Patsy Dell, Head of Planning & Regulatory Services
pdell@oxford.gov.uk

Background Information
The Scrutiny Committee considered the Council's Statement of Community Involvement in June 2015. Officers resolved to report back to members on progress against the action plan elements. Following a service restructure, these actions have been taken in to the Planning & Regulatory Service Plan.
Why is it on the agenda?
For the Scrutiny Committee to consider the Service Plan for the new Planning & Regulatory service. The Committee is asked to note the report and to provide any feedback on the Service Plan and draft Service Improvement plan and identified actions.
Who has been invited to comment?
• Councillor Alex Hollingsworth, Board Member for Planning & Regulatory;
• Patsy Dell, Head of Service - Planning & Regulatory

8   PLANNING ENFORCEMENT (6.40PM)   73 - 84

Contact Officer: Ian Wright, Service Manager Environmental Health
iwright@oxford.gov.uk

Background Information
The Scrutiny Committee requested a report on planning enforcement in order to consider how compliance is monitored, what enforcement action is taken and whether Planning Committees are made aware of breaches of conditions.
Why is it on the agenda?
For the Scrutiny Committee to consider a review of planning enforcement activity. The Committee is asked to note the report and may wish to request a progress update report in 12 months time.
Who has been invited to comment?
- Councillor Alex Hollingsworth, Board Member for Planning & Regulatory;   - Ian Wright, Environmental Health Service Manager.

9   WESTHILL FARM (7.00PM)   85 - 162

Contact Officer: David Edwards, Executive Director City Regeneration and
Housing Tel: 01865 252394 dedwards@oxford.gov.uk

Background Information
In 2015/16 the Chair of Scrutiny requested a report on the proposed demolition of a Council-owned former-farmhouse building at Westhill Farm in Shotover Country Park.
Why is it on the agenda?
For the Scrutiny Committee to consider the proposed demolition of Westhill Farm. The Committee is asked to note the report and provide any feedback on the proposed demolition.
Who has been invited to comment?
- Councillor Linda Smith, Board Member for Leisure, Parks & Sport,   - David Edwards, Executive Director for Regeneration & Housing.

10   APPRENTICES (7.20PM)   163 - 212

Contact Officer: Jarlath Brine, OD & Learning Advisor jbrine@oxford.gov.uk

Background Information
The Scrutiny Committee requested a briefing on how many apprentices have been taken on by the Council and in which departments, as well as tasks undertaken and opportunities for career progression.
Why is it on the agenda?
For the Scrutiny Committee to consider the employment of apprentices by the Council. The Committee is asked to note the report and may wish to provide comment to the Board Member and officer and/or make recommendations to the City Executive Board.
Who has been invited to comment?
- Councillor Pat Kennedy, Board Member for Education & Skills;   - Jarlath Brine, OD & Learning Advisor.

11	**SAFEGUARDING REPORT 2015-2016 (7.45PM)**	213 - 240

Contact Officer: Val Johnson, Policy Team Leader Tel: 01865 252209
vjohnson@oxford.gov.uk

Background Information
The Scrutiny Committee has asked for this item to be included on the agenda for pre-decision scrutiny.
Why is it on the agenda?
The City Executive Board will be asked to note progress and agree the Self-Assessment Action Plan (appendix 1) at its meeting on 16 June 2016. This is an opportunity for the Scrutiny Committee to make recommendations to the City Executive Board.
Who has been invited to comment?
• Councillor Dee Sinclair, Board Member for Community Safety; • Caroline Green, Assistant Chief Executive.

12	**REPORT OF THE EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY REVIEW GROUP**	241 - 268

Contact Officer: Andrew Brown, Scrutiny Officer Tel: 01865 252230
abrown2@oxford.gov.uk

Background Information
The Scrutiny Committee commissioned the Equality & Diversity Review Group to consider issues of equality and diversity in the Council workforce and in particular: • What barriers are faced by under-represented groups in recruitment and career progression at the City Council; • How does the Council prevent and address discrimination, including specifically discrimination against LGBT employees.
Why is it on the agenda?
For the Scrutiny Committee to review and comment on the report of the Equality & Diversity Panel before it is submitted to the City Executive Board on 16 June 2016.
Who has been invited to comment?
• Councillor Tom Hayes, Chair of the Equality & Diversity Review Group.

13	**PERFORMANCE MONITORING - 2015/16 QUARTER 4**	269 - 276

Background Information
The Scrutiny Committee has a role in monitoring Council performance. In 2015/16 the Committee received quarterly reports on a selection of service indicators chosen by the Committee.
Why is it on the agenda?
For the Scrutiny Committee to note and comment on Council performance at 2015/16 year-end.
Who has been invited to comment?
No officers have been invited for this item. Any comments or requests for further information will be relayed to the relevant officers after the meeting.

14 REPORT BACK ON RECOMMENDATIONS

Contact Officer: Andrew Brown, Scrutiny Officer,
Tel 01865 252230, abrown2@oxford.gov.uk

Background Information
The Committee makes a number of recommendations to Council decision makers, who are obliged to respond in writing.
Why is it on the agenda?
This item allows Committee to see the results of recent recommendations. Since the last meeting the following items have resulted in recommendations to the City Executive Board:
• Tenant involvement • Low Carbon Hub • Council Tax and Business Rates exemptions and discounts • Security in communal areas of tower blocks • Tackling isolation • Discretionary Housing Payment Policy – 2016 Revision
Who has been invited to comment?
• Andrew Brown, Scrutiny Officer

15 MINUTES

Minutes from 5 April 2016.

Recommendation: That the minutes of the meeting held on 5 April 2016 be APPROVED as a true and accurate record.

16 DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

Contact Officer:

Meetings are scheduled as followed:

Scrutiny Committee

 4 July 2016
 5 September 2016
 6 October 2016
7 November 2016
6 December 2016

All meetings start at 6.00 pm.

Standing Panels
Housing Standing Panel – 7 July 2016
Finance Standing Panel – 30 June 2016

DECLARING INTERESTS

General duty

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

What is a disclosable pecuniary interest?

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

Declaring an interest

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

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

Members' Code of Conduct and public perception

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

*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.

Scrutiny Committee Operating Principles 2016/17

Operating Principle	Comment
10 Committee meetings are provided during the year to fit with the City Executive Board cycle.	Meetings are provided in this way to allow Scrutiny to pre-scrutinise reports/issues before they go to the City Executive Board for decision. The Committee does not have to meet on all occasions provided and is able to add meetings at different times if this proves necessary.
Standing Panels and Review Groups will be commissioned to conduct more detailed scrutiny work.	The Scrutiny Committee will hold the Executive and Senior Officers to account publicly at committees but will also set Standing Panels and Review Groups to consider selected issues in more detail. Standing Panels will be set each year to consider items and decisions that fall within a specified remit. The organisation has capacity to support 2 Standing Panels that each meet 5 times per year. Review Groups will be established for a limited period of time (typically 3-4 months) to consider a specific topic or issue over a series of meetings before reporting back to the Committee. The organisation has capacity to support 3 Review Groups per year.
Standing Panels and Review Groups do not have to be politically balanced but the Committee will use the following guide for appointment. All Standing Panels and Review Groups should have between 3 and 6 members: • 3 members – 1 from each party or 2 from the administration plus 1 other. If a party does not want to take a place then committee agree on the allocation of that place. • 4 members – 1 from each party plus another administration member. If a party does not	The membership of Standing Panels and Review Groups will be drawn from all non-executive members. No substitutions will be allowed on Standing Panels or Review Groups.

want to take a place then committee agree on the allocation of that place. • 5 members – 1 from each party plus another administration member. Committee agree the 5th member. If a party does not wish to take a place the committee agrees on the allocation of that place. • 6 members - 1 from each party plus another administration member and another opposition member. Committee agrees the 6th member. If a party does not wish to take a place the committee agrees the allocation of that place.	
Detailed scrutiny work will be led by committee members.	Chairs of Standing Panels will be elected at the first meeting of the Standing Panel in the municipal year and must be a member of the Scrutiny Committee. In the event that a Standing Panel is unable to elect a Chair, this decision will be referred to the next committee. The Scrutiny Committee will appoint Chairs of Review Groups and where possible, these should also be members of the Scrutiny Committee. Chairs of Standing Panels, Review Groups and any other themed Lead Members appointed by the Scrutiny Committee will report back to the Committee on progress and outcomes.
Standing Panels may have a degree of autonomy from the Scrutiny Committee.	The general principle is that the Scrutiny Committee commissions and scopes the work of Standing Panels and Review Groups and therefore has final agreement on their recommendations. There may be occasions where this is not possible and reports will go directly to decision makers, for example where a Standing Panel is pre-scrutinising reports/issues on their way to the City Executive Board for decision. Recommendations from Standing Panels that go directly to decision makers will be circulated to all committee members for comment.

	All scrutiny reports to the City Executive Board that do not relate to a decision on the Council's Forward Plan and are not time critical will go to the Scrutiny Committee for final approval, unless the Committee agrees otherwise.
As a first principle all scrutiny will be done in public.	Standing Panel meetings will be open to the public in the normal way. Review Groups will meet in public or private as the subject matter dictates.
The scrutiny work plan will consist of a number of issues for consideration informed by consultation with all councillors and Senior Officers. A criteria agreed by the Committee will be used as a guide to prioritise consideration.	Items will be taken forward as resources allow and scoped before Review Groups are commissioned.

The scrutiny work plan will be reviewed at every meeting so that it can be adjusted to reflect the wishes of the Committee and take account of any changes to the latest Forward Plan. |
| The management of the scrutiny work plan will be with the whole Committee with the Chair and Vice-Chair taking an "organisational role" between meetings. | The Forward Plan will continue to be used as a tool to select items for pre-scrutiny.

Scrutiny Members or any 4 other members will be able to put an item on the agenda of a Scrutiny Committee and all Councillor Calls for Action and Call Ins will be considered at a public meeting of the Scrutiny Committee.

Members of the public can also suggest a topic for inclusion in the scrutiny work plan. |
| Residents and other specialists will be co-opted onto the Committee, Standing Panels and Review Groups as the subject matter dictates. | If the Committee feel that a Standing Panel, Review Group or Committee debate will benefit from the advice or views of a citizen or expert these individuals will be appointed as non-voting members.

Residents and experts can also be invited to provide evidence to scrutiny. |
| Communication | The Scrutiny Chair will report regularly to Council on the work of the Scrutiny Committee. The Committee may also wish to produce an annual report. |

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SCRUTINY WORK PLAN
May 2016 – July 2016

Published on: 27/5/16

The Scrutiny Committee agrees a work plan every year detailing selected issues that affect Oxford or its inhabitants. Time is allowed within this plan to consider topical issues as they arise throughout the year as well as decisions to be taken by the City Executive Board. This document represents the work of scrutiny for the remainder of the 2016/17 Council year and will be reviewed monthly by the Scrutiny Committee.

The work plan is based on suggestions received from all elected members and senior council officers. Members of the public can also contribute topics for inclusion in the scrutiny work plan by completing and submitting our suggestion form.

The following criteria may be used by the Scrutiny Committee to evaluate and prioritise suggested topics:
- *Is the issue controversial / of significant public interest?*
- *Is it an area of high expenditure?*
- *Is it an essential service / corporate priority?*
- *Can Scrutiny influence and add value?*

Some topics will be considered at Scrutiny Committee meetings and others will be delegated to two standing panels. Items for more detailed review will be considered by time-limited review groups.

The Committee will review the Council's Forward Plan at each meeting and decide which executive decisions it wishes to comment on before the decision is made. The Council also has a "call in" process which allows decisions made by the City Executive Board to be reviewed by the Scrutiny Committee before they are implemented.
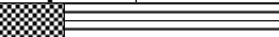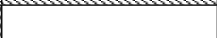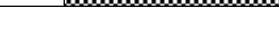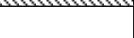
Scrutiny Committee and Standing Panel responsibility and membership
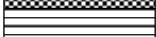
Committee	Remit	Nominated councillors
Scrutiny Committee	Overall management of the Council's scrutiny function.	Cllrs Azad, Chapman, Coulter, Fry, Gant, Hayes, Henwood, Pegg, Simmons, Taylor, Tidball, Wilkinson.
Finance (TBC)	Finance and budgetary issues and decisions	TBC
Housing (TBC)	Strategic housing and landlord issues and decisions	TBC

Current and planned review groups

Topic	Scope	Nominated councillors
Budget Review 2016/17	To review the Council's 2016/17 draft budget and medium term financial plan	Finance Panel Members
Equality & Diversity	To review barriers faced by under-represented groups in employment and anti-discrimination practices.	Cllrs Hayes (Chair), Altaf-Khan, Taylor & Thomas

Indicative timings of 2016/17 review panels

Scrutiny Review	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	March	April	May
Review 1 (TBC)	Scoping	Scoping / Evidence gathering	Evidence gathering	Reporting	Reporting					
Budget Review 2016/17		Scoping	Scoping			Evidence gathering	Evidence gathering / Reporting	Reporting		
Review 2 (TBC)				Scoping	Scoping			Evidence gathering	Evidence gathering / Reporting	Reporting

Legend:
- Scoping
- Evidence gathering
- Reporting

4 July 2016 – provisional reports

Educational Attainment	Scrutiny item	To consider an independent report on the Council's educational attainment investments produced by Oxford Brookes University.	Councillor Pat Kennedy – Young People, Schools & Skills	Tim Sadler, Executive Director for Community Services
Graffiti prevention	Scrutiny item	To consider the appreciative inquiry and focus group around graffiti and other initiatives to solve the issues long term.	Councillor John Tanner – Climate Change & Cleaner Greener Oxford	Daryl Edmunds, Anti-social Behaviour Investigation Team Leader
Fusion Lifestyle performance	Scrutiny item	To monitor an annual Fusion Lifestyle contract performance dashboard.	Councillor Linda Smith – Leisure, Parks & Sport	Lucy Cherry, Leisure Performance Manager
Fusion Lifestyle's 2016/2017 Annual Service Plan	Forward Plan item	The report will recommend that the City Executive Board endorse Fusion Lifestyle's Annual Service Plan for the management of the Council's leisure facilities for 2016/17.	Councillor Linda Smith – Leisure, Parks & Sport	Lucy Cherry, Leisure Performance Manager
Grant Allocations to Community & Voluntary Organisations	Forward Plan item	To consider a report on the allocation of grants to the community and voluntary organisations for 2017/2018.	Councillor Christine Simm – Culture & Communities	Julia Tomkins, Grants & External Funding Officer
Sustainable Energy Action Plan (SEAP) for Oxford	Forward Plan item	This report will request approval of our aims, objectives and emisson reduction target for the City and adoption of the action plan attached to the Sustainable Energy Strategy.	Councillor John Tanner – Climate Change & Cleaner Greener Oxford	Mairi Brookes, OxFutures Programme Manager

5 September 2016 – provisional reports

Planning Annual Monitoring Report	Forward Plan item	To consider the effectiveness of planning policies contained within Oxford's Local Development Plan.	Councillor Alex Hollingsworth, Planning and Regulatory Services	Rebekah Knight, Planner
Review of Oxford City Council's Tree Management Policy	Forward Plan item	The Tree Management Policy was adopted in 2008 and last reviewed in 2011. If the Tree Management Policy needs to be reviewed then a report will be submitted to CEB.	Councillor Linda Smith – Leisure, Parks & Sport	Stuart Fitzsimmons, Parks and Open Spaces Manager
Transfer Station for Recycled Material	Forward Plan item	Proposal to create and operate a Council managed Transfer Station for City collected co-mingled recyclate, green waste, street arisings and engineering works spoil.	Councillor John Tanner – Climate Change & Cleaner Greener Oxford	Roy Summers, Deputy Head of Direct Services
Recommendation Monitoring – Inequality	Scrutiny item	To monitor progress and implementation following the recommendations of the Inequality Panel.	Councillor Bob Price – Corporate Strategy & Economic Development	Val Johnson, Policy & Partnership Team Leader

Other 2016-17 Scrutiny Committee meeting dates: 7 June, 4 July, 5 September, 6 October, 7 November, 6 December, 30 January, 28 February, 27 March & 2 May

Provisional 2016-17 standing panel meeting dates: 30 June, 8 Sept, 8 Dec, 16 Jan, 1 Feb and 29 March (Finance); 7 July, 5 Oct, 9 Nov, 1 March, 3 May (Housing)

Outstanding items from 2015/16 work plan

These are items from the previous work plan that have not been considered. When selecting and prioritising items for the scrutiny work plan, members are asked to apply the following criteria:

- *Is the issue controversial / of significant public interest? (P)*
- *Is it an area of high expenditure? (F)*
- *Is it an essential service / corporate priority? (E)*
- *Can Scrutiny influence and add value? (I)*

To assist the Committee in its decision making the Scrutiny Officer has provided some suggested scores against these items:
2 = Yes / High 1 = Moderate / Some constraints   0 = None / Little

Items included in the 2015/16 work plan that have not been completed

Agenda item	Description	Comment	Lead Officer	P	F	E	I	Total
Complaints received by the City Council	To monitor complaints made about the City Council.	Lower priority item for the Committee. Complaints to be included in 2016/17 performance reports	Mike Newman, Corporate Affairs Lead	1	1	2	2	6
Heritage listing process	To receive an update on the heritage listing process now that heritage assets are given more prominence in planning decisions	Lower priority item for the Committee. Reports to CEB not selected for pre-decision scrutiny.	Sarah Harrison, Principle Planner	2	1	1	1	5
Member involvement in HR policy, appeals, hearings	To consider whether the Council would benefit from having a different arrangement in place (e.g. a Personnel Committee).	Higher priority item for the Committee. Would require a review group or one-off panel.	Simon Howick, Corporate Lead – HR/OD	0	1	2	2	5
Public Communications	To receive an update on changes to the Council communications and reputation management.	Lower priority item for the Committee.	Gerry Mcilwaine, Communications Manager	1	1	1	1	4
Maintenance of roads and pavements	To consider contracting arrangements, the quality of sub-work and how this is monitored.	Lower priority item for the Committee. Little opportunity to influence.	Shaun Hatton, Highways & Engineering Manager	2	1	1	0	4

Decisions listed on the Forward Plan that have previously been selected for pre-decision scrutiny

Agenda item	Description	Lead Officer	P	F	E	I	Total
Review of Oxford City Council's Tree Management Policy	The Tree Management Policy was adopted in 2008 and last reviewed in 2011. If the Tree Management Policy needs to be reviewed then a report will be submitted to CEB.	Stuart Fitzsimmons, Parks and Open Spaces Manager	2	2	2	2	8
Youth Ambition Strategy	The Youth Ambition Strategy will be renewed in 2017 following a needs assessment.	Hagan Lewisman, Active Communities Manager	2	2	2	2	8
Grant Allocations to Community & Voluntary Orgs	To consider a report on the allocation of grants to the community and voluntary organisations for 2017/2018.	Julia Tomkins, Grants & External Funding Officer	2	2	2	2	8
Planning Annual Monitoring Report	To consider the effectiveness of planning policies contained within Oxford's Local Development Plan.	Rebekah Knight, Planner	2	2	2	2	8
Waterways PSPO	The report will contain a proposal to the CEB to introduce a Public Spaces Protection Order for certain behaviours on Oxford waterways.	Richard Adams, Community Safety & Resilience Manager	2	2	2	2	8
Transfer Station for Recycled Material	Proposal to create and operate a Council managed Transfer Station.	Roy Summers, Deputy Head of Direct Services	1	2	2	2	7

The following review groups have concluded but the Committee may wish to monitor progress:

Guest Houses Review Group - Recommendation monitoring	To monitor progress and implementation following the recommendations of the Guest Houses Review Group.	Richard Adams, Community Safety & Resilience Manager
Cycling Review Group – Recommendation monitoring	To monitor progress and implementation following the recommendations of the Cycling Review Group	Mai Jarvis, Environmental Quality Team Manager
Inequality Panel - Recommendation monitoring	To monitor progress and implementation following the recommendations of the Inequality Panel.	Val Johnson, Policy & Partnerships Team Manager

Long list of suggestions for 2016/17 scrutiny work plan

These are new suggestions that have been made by Councillors. When selecting and prioritising items for the scrutiny work plan, members are asked to apply the following criteria:

- *Is the issue controversial / of significant public interest? (P)*
- *Is it an area of high expenditure? (F)*
- *Is it an essential service / corporate priority? (E)*
- *Can Scrutiny influence and add value? (I)*

The Scrutiny Officer has provided some suggested scores against these items. Members may wish to review and re-prioritise these:

2 = Yes / High
1 = Moderate / Some constraints
0 = None / Little

Items for Scrutiny Committee meetings

Agenda item	Description	Lead Officer	P	F	E	I	Total	Suggested approach
Devolution plans for Oxfordshire	To monitor the progress of devolution proposals for Oxfordshire.	Caroline Green, Assistant Chief Executive	2	2	2	2	8	Scrutiny item / Review Group
Council Tax support scheme	To consider spend and impacts of the Council's discretionary Council Tax support scheme.	Tanya Bandekar, Revenues and Benefits Service Manager	2	2	2	2	8	Scrutiny / Finance Panel item
Discretionary Housing Payments	To monitor Discretionary Housing Payments spend mid-way through the year.	Paul Wilding, Revenue & Benefits Programme Manager	2	2	2	2	8	Scrutiny item
Public Spaces Protection Orders	To monitor the impacts of PSPOs in the city, including the numbers and types of early interventions and enforcement actions.	Richard Adams, Community Safety and Resilience Manager	2	2	2	2	8	Scrutiny item
Oversight of HMO planning permissions	To consider member oversight of HMO planning decisions (currently delegated) including the numbers of rooms HMOs in the street etc.	Patsy Dell, Head of Planning and Regulatory	2	2	2	2	8	Scrutiny item / consider in other items

Corporate Performance	To monitor quarterly performance against a set of service measures chosen by the Committee.	N/A	2	2	2	2	8	Scrutiny item
Local Plan	To consider one or more aspects of the Local Plan which is subject to review	Patsy Dell, Head of Planning and Regulatory	2	2	2	1	7	Scrutiny item
Fusion Lifestyle performance	To monitor an annual Fusion Lifestyle contract performance dashboard.	Ian Brooke, Head of Community Services	2	2	2	1	7	Scrutiny item
Assessing disabled impacts in planning	To consider how the Council fulfils its duty to assess the impacts on disabled people of new developments and changes of use, including for businesses and private and social sector housing, and whether conditions are enforced.	Patsy Dell, Head of Planning and Regulatory	2	1	2	1	6	Scrutiny item / Review Group
Cycling	To consider how the Council can work better with the County Council to encourage cycling.	Mai Jarvis, Environmental Quality Team Manager	2	1	2	1	6	Combine with cycling update
Graffiti prevention	To consider the appreciative inquiry and focus group around graffiti and other initiatives to solve the issues long term.	Daryl Edmunds, Anti-social Behaviour Investigation Team Leader	2	1	1	2	6	Scrutiny item
Air quality	To consider ways of improving air quality in the worst areas (e.g. the city centre)	Mai Jarvis, Environmental Quality Team Manager	2	1	2	1	6	Scrutiny item
ICT update	To consider lessons learned and issues faced by elected members following the recent IT migration.	Paul Fleming, Chief Technology and Information Manager	0	2	2	1	5	Scrutiny item
Design Review Panel	To consider the work and effectiveness of the Oxford Design Review Panel.	Sarah Harrison, Principle Planner	1	1	1	2	5	Scrutiny item
Disabled Students' Allowance	To consider the impacts of cuts to Disabled Students' Allowance on disabled students in the City.	N/A	2	1	2	0	5	Scrutiny item
Oxfordshire Growth Board	To monitor agendas and minutes published by the Board.	Paul Staines, Growth Board Programme Manager	2	1	1	1	5	Scrutiny item / circulate paperwork

Health and Wellbeing Board	To receive an update on the work of Oxfordshire Health and Wellbeing Board by the Council's representative on the Board	Andrew Brown, Scrutiny Officer	2	1	1	1	5	Scrutiny item
Health scrutiny update	To receive an update on health scrutiny activities from the Council's representative on Oxfordshire Joint Health Overview & Scrutiny Committee (HOSC).	Andrew Brown, Scrutiny Officer	2	1	1	1	5	Annual HOSC report to be circulated
Police and Crime Panel update	To receive an update on police and crime scrutiny activities by the Council's representative on Thames Valley Police and Crime Panel (PCP).	Andrew Brown, Scrutiny Officer	2	1	1	1	5	Scrutiny item / annual PCP report to be circulated
Workplace parking levies	To consider the pros and cons of workplace parking charges in Oxford.	N/A	2	1	1	0	4	Refer to County Council

Items for Housing Panel meetings

Housing performance	Quarterly reports on Council performance against a set of selected housing measures.	N/A	2	2	2	2	8	Housing Panel item
Response to national policy changes	To receive a briefing on the City Council's responses to Government housing and welfare policy changes.	David Edwards, Executive Director of Regeneration and Housing	2	2	2	2	8	Housing Panel item
Homelessness prevention funding	To receive an update on homelessness prevention funding from April 2017, including the expected impacts of County Council funding cuts and plans to mitigate these.	Ossi Mosley, Rough Sleeping & Single Homelessness Officer	2	2	2	2	8	Housing Panel item
Rough Sleeping	To consider how the Council deals with rough-sleepers including those with no recourse to public funds.	Ossi Mosley, Rough Sleeping & Single Homelessness Officer	2	2	2	2	8	Scrutiny / Housing Panel item
Tower block refurbishment	To receive a progress update and consider lessons learned following the increase in the budget for the tower block refurbishment project.	Stephen Clarke, Head of Housing & Property	2	2	2	2	8	Housing Panel item

Great Estates	To receive an update on progress made in developing masterplans for estates and working up and delivering a rolling programme of priority improvement schemes.	Martin Shaw, Property Services Manager	2	2	2	2	8	Housing Panel item
A Housing Company for Oxford	To monitor progress of the Housing Company for Oxford in its first year of operation.	David Edwards, Executive Director of Regeneration & Housing	2	2	2	2	8	Housing Panel item
Rents performance	To monitor the Council's rents performance including current and former tenant arrears.	Tanya Bandekar, Revenue & Benefits Service Manager	2	2	2	2	8	Housing Panel item
Empty Property Strategy	To consider a refresh of the Empty Property Strategy 2013-18, including the numbers of empty homes, rates of under-use of second homes and policies to discourage under-use.	Mel Mutch, Empty Residential Property Officer	2	1	2	2	7	Housing Panel item
Tenant satisfaction	To monitor tenant satisfaction survey results.	Bill Graves, Landlord Services Manager	1	2	2	2	7	Housing Panel item
Leaseholder relationships	To consider Council relationships with leaseholders including the views of individual leaseholders.	Bill Graves, Landlord Services Manager	1	2	2	2	7	Housing Panel item
Energy Strategy – Housing & Property	To consider past, current and future work around energy in Housing, and Housing & Property's approach to Energy and fuel poverty in its own domestic housing stock.	Deborah Haynes, Energy Efficiency Projects Officer	1	2	2	2	7	Housing Panel item
Service charges	To consider the scope for raising service charges on Council housing to mitigate reduced rental income.	Stephen Clarke, Head of Housing & Property	1	2	2	2	7	Housing Panel item
Under-occupation in Council housing	To receive an update on the levels of under-occupation in the Council's housing stock and measures to reduce under-occupation.	Bill Graves, Landlord Services Manager	1	2	2	2	7	Housing Panel item
Choice Based Lettings refusal reasons	To receive a briefing on reasons given by applicants for refusing properties, including requests for minor adaptions.	Tom Porter, Allocations Manager	1	2	2	2	7	Housing Panel item

Items for Finance Panel meetings

Credit Union Services	To consider the Council's response to the Evaluation of Credit Union services in Oxford report.	Paul Wilding, Revenue & Benefits Programme Manager	2	2	2	2	8	Finance Panel item
Capital Strategy 2017-18	To consider the Council's Capital Strategy for 2017-18.	Nigel Kennedy, Head of Financial Services	2	2	2	2	8	Forward Plan item
Budget monitoring	To monitor the Council's finances at the end of each quarter.	Nigel Kennedy, Head of Financial Services	1	2	2	2	7	Finance Panel item
Gross budgeting	To consider external income and gross budgeting year-round.	Nigel Kennedy, Head of Financial Services	1	2	2	2	7	Finance Panel item
Capital controls	To consider an update on the capital gateway process and the scope for better capital planning.	David Edwards, Executive Director, Regeneration & Housing	1	2	2	2	7	Finance Panel item
Treasury Management Strategy 2017-18	To consider the Treasury Management Strategy 2017-18 and monitor Treasury performance.	Anna Winship, Management Accountancy Manager	1	2	2	2	7	Forward Plan item

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FORWARD PLAN
May 2016 - April 2017

Published on: 18/05/16

What is the Forward Plan?

The Forward Plan gives information about all the decisions (key and non-key) that the City Executive Board (CEB) is expected to take over the next year. For completeness, the Forward Plan also includes important decisions which will be taken by the full Council.

The Forward Plan provides an indicative date for matters to be considered by CEB. Where possible, CEB will keep to the dates shown, however, it may be necessary for some items to be rescheduled.

The Forward Plan is published on the Council's website on the first working day of the month. However, it is subject to regular revision and new issues or changes to existing issues will be posted on the website as soon as they are known.

The Forward Plan includes:
- a short description of the decision to be made
- who will make the decision
- when the decision will be made
- details of the planned consultation with local people and other stakeholders
- contact details for further information

What is a Key decision?

A key decision is an executive decision which is likely:
- to result in the council incurring expenditure of more than £500,000; or
- to be significant in terms of its effects on communities living or working in an area comprising of two or more wards.

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 decision is made.

Inspection of documents

The agenda papers (including the reports and background papers) for CEB meetings are available 5 working days before the meeting on the council website:

http://www.oxford.gov.uk

The Forward Plan is available to view at the Town Hall.

Private meetings

The majority of the decisions taken by the CEB are made in the "open session" of a meeting when the press or public have the right to attend. However, some or all, of the information supporting decisions in the Forward Plan may be confidential and as such it will be taken in the "private session" a meeting when the press or public are excluded. Items that will be taken in "private session" are marked in this plan and the reason for doing so given.

If you object to an item being taken in private, or if you wish to make representations about any matter listed in the Forward Plan, then please contact Committee & Member Services at least 7 working days before the decision is due to be made:

T: 01865 252191
Email: cityexecutiveboard@oxford.gov.uk

The Council's decision-making process
Further information about the Council's decision making process can be found in the Council's Constitution, which can be inspected at the Council's offices or online at

http://www.oxford.gov.uk

City Executive Board Members and Senior Officers

City Executive Board Member	Portfolio
Bob Price, Council Leader	Corporate Strategy and Economic Development
Ed Turner, Deputy Leader	Finance, Asset Management and Public Health
Susan Brown	Customer and Corporate Services
Alex Hollingsworth	Planning and Regulatory Services
Pat Kennedy	Young People, Schools and Skills
Linda Smith	Leisure, Parks and Sport
Mike Rowley	Housing
Dee Sinclair	Community Safety
Christine Simm	Culture and Communities
John Tanner	Climate Change and Cleaner Greener Oxford

Senior Officers	Job Title
Peter Sloman	Chief Executive
David Edwards	Executive Director, City Regeneration and Housing
Tim Sadler	Executive Director, Community Services
Jackie Yates	Executive Director, Organisational Development and Corporate Services
Caroline Green	Assistant Chief Executive
Helen Bishop	Head of Business Improvement
Ian Brooke	Head of Community Services
Graham Bourton	Head of Direct Services
Nigel Kennedy	Head of Financial Services/Section 151 Officer
Stephen Clarke	Head of Housing and Property
Jeremy Thomas	Head of Law and Governance / Monitoring Officer
Patsy Dell	Head of Planning and Regulatory Services

KEY EXECUTIVE DECISIONS DELEGATED TO OFFICERS

ITEM 1:	HOUSING IMPROVEMENT AGENCY CONTRACT AWARD ID: I011842
On 9 July 2015 the City Executive Board resolved to GRANT delegated authority to the Executive Director of Regeneration and Housing, in consultation with the Head of Financial Services and Head of Law and Governance to enter into an appropriate contract for the provision of a Home Improvement Agency.	
Is this a Key Decision?	Yes It is likely to result in the Council incurring expenditure which is greater than £500,000
Is this item open or exempt to the public?	Part exempt - Commercially Sensitive
Will this decision be preceded by any form of consultation?	None
Decision Taker	Executive Director for Regeneration and Housing
Executive Lead Member	Housing
Lead Executive Director	Executive Director for Regeneration and Housing
Report Contact	Ian Wright, Service Manager Environmental Health iwright@oxford.gov.uk

ITEM 2:	ARRANGEMENTS TO FACILITATE THE FITTING OF SOLAR PANELS ON COUNCIL-OWNED HOUSING STOCK ID: I012328

May 2016: Decision on hold due to changing national policy on Feed In Tariffs. The position will be review in February 2017 following an EU decision on solar panel import tariffs which may favourably impact the viability of the scheme.

A solar panel installation programme for council properties funded through a community-benefit model.

On 15 October 2015 the City Executive Board resolved to:

1. **Grant project approval** to fit solar panels on Council-owned housing stock in the manner described in this report;

2. **Delegate authority to the Chief Executive, in conjunction with the Head of Finance, to enter into an Agreement to Lease with the Low Carbon Hub IPS (on the basis that this would permit leases to the roof space of individual Council properties to be drawn up and executed if required) plus any ancillary agreement required; and to submit an appropriate VEAT notice to the EU; and**

3. **Agree** that on the basis of the matters set out in this report, the proposed arrangement with the Low Carbon Hub IPS represents best value to the Council.

Is this a Key Decision?	Yes It is likely to result in the Council incurring expenditure which is greater than £500,000
Is this item open or exempt to the public?	Open -
Will this decision be preceded by any form of consultation?	N/A
Decision Taker	Chief Executive
Executive Lead Member	Climate Change and Cleaner, Greener Oxford
Lead Executive Director	Executive Director for Regeneration and Housing
Report Contact	Mairi Brookes, OxFutures Programme Manager Tel: 01865 252212 mbrookes@oxford.gov.uk

REPORTS TO CEB AND COUNCIL

CEB 19 MAY 2016 - REPORTS

ITEM 3:	COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE LEVY (NEIGHBOURHOOD PORTION) – AGREEING THE PROCESS FOR CONSULTING AND SPENDING ID: I013505
This report aims to seek the agreement of the geographical boundaries of the neighbourhood areas. This would take into account the Parishes boundaries, and the boundaries of the Neighbourhood Forums who are preparing Neighbourhood Plans. The rest of Oxford will be split into sensible areas to reflect the development expected to take place. The report also sets out the process for involving the local communities in the decision on how the 15% Neighbourhood portion of CIL within those geographical areas will be spent.	
Is this a Key Decision?	Yes It is significant in terms of its effect on communities living or working in an area comprising two or more wards
Is this item open or exempt to the public?	Open -
Will this decision be preceded by any form of consultation?	No consultation
Decision Taker	City Executive Board
Executive Lead Member	Planning, Transport and Regulatory Services
Lead Executive Director	Executive Director for Regeneration and Housing
Report Contact	Lorraine Freeman, Development Funding Officer lofreeman@oxford.gov.uk

ITEM 4:	OLD MARSTON CONSERVATION AREA APPRAISAL ID: I013444
CEB is being asked to endorse a conservation area appraisal for Old Marston Conservation Area appraisal. The appraisal will be used to inform development changes that may affect the special interest of the conservation area. A draft conservation area appraisal for Old Marston that defines the special interest and character of the conservation area was drafted in 2012, following extensive participation with the local community and a formal consultation. It was, however, never amended to take on board the comments received, and was not taken to Members for endorsement. The draft appraisal has been refreshed to take account of the comments received in 2012 as well as any changes which have taken place to the conservation area's character from developments or other changes during the intervening three years. This was carried out in November-December 2015, with the informal engagement of key local stakeholders. The refreshed draft appraisal is now ready for formal endorsement, prior to final publication.	
Is this a Key Decision?	Yes
Is this item open or exempt to the public?	Open -
Will this decision be preceded by any form of consultation?	Local community involvement and a formal consultation took place in 2012. Key stakeholders were involved again during Nov-Dec 2015. The changes made to the 2012 draft appraisal are minor to ensure that the appraisal is factually correct at the time of its publication.

Decision Taker	City Executive Board
Executive Lead Member	Planning, Transport and Regulatory Services
Lead Executive Director	Executive Director for Regeneration and Housing
Report Contact	Ian Marshall, Team Leader Design, Heritage and Specialist Services Tel: 01865 252332 imarshall@oxford.gov.uk

ITEM 5:	EVALUATION OF OXFORD CITY COUNCIL'S WELFARE REFORM TEAM EUROPEAN SOCIAL FUND PROJECT ID: I009907

To ask the City Executive Board to note the evaluation of the project. The evaluation includes contributions from Oxford University, external stakeholders and a customer survey.

Original project brief:
The project being undertaking is funded by the European Social Fund (ESF) and the aim is to engage with 600 tenants renting privately in Oxford City who aren't working to determine what support they would need in order to either gain employment or undertake work related training. The project builds on the success of the Local Authority Led Pilot undertaken by OCC during 2013 by identifying a new customer base which will in turn provide more learning on what a Local Support Service Framework (LSSF) could look like once Universal Credit is introduced in Oxford. The report aims to highlight the activity that will be undertaken during the ESF Project.

Is this a Key Decision?	Yes It is likely to result in the Council incurring expenditure which is greater than £500,000
Is this item open or exempt to the public?	Open -
Will this decision be preceded by any form of consultation?	No consultation
Decision Taker	City Executive Board
Executive Lead Member	Customer Services and Corporate Services
Lead Executive Director	Executive Director for Organisational Development and Corporate Services
Report Contact	Paul Wilding, Programme Manager Revenue & Benefits Tel: 01865 252461 pwilding@oxford.gov.uk

CEB 16 JUNE 2016 - PROVISIONAL REPORTS

ITEM 6:	APPOINTMENT TO OUTSIDE BODIES 2016/17 ID: I012458

To appoint Council representatives to outside bodies and charities.

Is this a Key Decision?	Not Key
Is this item open or exempt to the public?	Open -
Will this decision be preceded by any form of consultation?	No consultation
Decision Taker	City Executive Board
Executive Lead Member	Corporate Strategy and Economic Development
Lead Executive Director	Executive Director for Organisational Development and Corporate Services
Report Contact	Pat Jones, Committee and Member Services Manager phjones@oxford.gov.uk

ITEM 7:	COMMUNITY CENTRE STRATEGY 2015-2020 (POST CONSULTATION) ID: I010564

The strategy will reflect the current position on Community Centres, detail what world class community facilities, delivery and access will look like in 2020, with a clear action plan developed. The draft strategy went to CEB in December 2015. Adoption after public consultation in spring 2016 – scheduled for CEB in May 2016.

Is this a Key Decision?	Yes It is significant in terms of its effect on communities living or working in an area comprising two or more wards
Is this item open or exempt to the public?	Open -
Will this decision be preceded by any form of consultation?	Yes
Decision Taker	City Executive Board
Executive Lead Member	Culture & Communities
Lead Executive Director	Head of Community Services
Report Contact	Ian Brooke, Head of Community Services Tel: 01865 252705 ibrooke@oxford.gov.uk

ITEM 8:	OXFORD CITY COUNCIL SAFEGUARDING REPORT 2015-2016 ID: I013632

To note the progress made on Oxford City Council's Section 11 Self-assessment Action Plan 2015-2016 and to approve the Action Plan for 2016-2017.

Is this a Key Decision?	Yes It is significant in terms of its effect on communities living or working in an area comprising two or more wards
Is this item open or exempt to the public?	Open -
Will this decision be preceded by any form of consultation?	Yes. There has been consultation with all service areas in the city council through the Named Safeguarding Officers Group. The Action Plan has been informed by Key Stakeholders on the Oxfordshire Safeguarding Board, Oxford Community Partnership and others.
Decision Taker	City Executive Board
Executive Lead Member	Crime, Community Safety and Licensing
Lead Executive Director	Executive Director for Community Services
Report Contact	Val Johnson, Policy Team Leader Tel: 01865 252209 vjohnson@oxford.gov.uk

ITEM 9:	INTEGRATED PERFORMANCE REPORT Q4 2015/16 ID: I011045

These reports detail the Council's finances, risk and performance as at the end of each financial quarter for 2015/16 and may present budgetary amendments in the light of that information:
- Q1, 30 June – report in September 2015
- Q2, 30 September - report in December 2015
- Q3, 31 December - report in March 2016
- **Q4, 31 March 2016 - report in June 2016**

Is this a Key Decision?	Yes
Is this item open or exempt to the public?	Open -
Will this decision be preceded by any form of consultation?	N/A
Decision Taker	City Executive Board

Executive Lead Member	Finance, Corporate Asset Management and Public Health
Lead Executive Director	
Report Contact	Nigel Kennedy, Head of Financial Services Tel: 01865 252708 nkennedy@oxford.gov.uk

ITEM 10:	LEISURE INVESTMENT OPTIONS ID: I014058
This report requests CEB to consider potential leisure investment options to improve the city's leisure offer for tennis, football and facilities across the city.	
Is this a Key Decision?	Yes It is significant in terms of its effect on communities living or working in an area comprising two or more wards
Is this item open or exempt to the public?	Part exempt -
Will this decision be preceded by any form of consultation?	No public consultation. The Council is in discussion with interested parties.
Decision Taker	City Executive Board
Executive Lead Member	Leisure, Sport and Events
Lead Executive Director	Executive Director for Community Services
Report Contact	Ian Brooke, Head of Community Services Tel: 01865 252705 ibrooke@oxford.gov.uk

CEB 14 JULY 2016 - PROVISIONAL REPORTS

ITEM 11:	SUSTAINABLE ENERGY ACTION PLAN (SEAP) FOR OXFORD ID: I011844
On 29 September 2014 Council agreed to support the Covenant of Mayors initiative and authorised the Lord Mayor to sign the Covenant adhesion form. By signing up to the Covenant of Mayors the Council committed to submit a Sustainable Energy Action Plan (SEAP) for the City of Oxford. The SEAP does not set any new targets but estimates our baseline emissions in 2005 and captures the actions and policies that the Council and its partners are implementing to reduce carbon emissions. These actions will help to meet the Council's target of reducing carbon emissions by 40% by 2020 across the whole city. This report will request approval of our aims, objectives and emission reduction target for the City and adoption of the action plan attached to the Sustainable Energy Strategy.	
Is this a Key Decision?	Yes
Is this item open or exempt to the public?	Open -
Will this decision be preceded by any form of consultation?	Yes - Stakeholder workshops took place in February 2016
Decision Taker	City Executive Board
Executive Lead Member	Climate Change and Cleaner, Greener Oxford
Lead Executive Director	Executive Director for Community Services
Report Contact	Mairi Brookes, OxFutures Programme Manager Tel: 01865 252212 mbrookes@oxford.gov.uk

ITEM 12:	GRANT ALLOCATIONS TO COMMUNITY AND VOLUNTARY ORGANISATIONS 2015/2016 ID: I009804
This report is for the City Executive Board to make decisions on the allocation of grants to the community and voluntary organisations for 2015/2016. This report will be submitted in February 2015.	

A further monitoring report on the reported achievements resulting from those grant allocations will be submitted to the City Executive Board in June 2016.

Is this a Key Decision?	Not Key
Is this item open or exempt to the public?	Open -
Will this decision be preceded by any form of consultation?	N/A
Decision Taker	City Executive Board
Executive Lead Member	Culture and Communities
Lead Executive Director	Head of Community Services
Report Contact	Julia Tomkins, Grants & External Funding Officer Tel: 01865252685 jtomkins@oxford.gov.uk

ITEM 13:	FUSION LIFESTYLE'S 2016/ 2017 ANNUAL SERVICE PLAN ID: I013721

This report presents Fusion Lifestyle's 2016/ 2017 Annual Service Plan for the management of the council's leisure facilities. The report will recommend that the City Executive Board endorse Fusion Lifestyle's Annual Service Plan for the management of the Council's leisure facilities for 2016/17.

Is this a Key Decision?	Yes It is significant in terms of its effect on communities living or working in an area comprising two or more wards
Is this item open or exempt to the public?	Open -
Will this decision be preceded by any form of consultation?	
Decision Taker	City Executive Board
Executive Lead Member	Leisure, Sport and Events
Lead Executive Director	Executive Director for Community Services
Report Contact	Lucy Cherry, Leisure and Performance Manager Tel: 01865 252707 lcherry@oxford.gov.uk

ITEM 14:	HEADINGTON NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN ID: I012135

To approve submission of the draft Headington Neighbourhood Plan for 6 week consultation

Is this a Key Decision?	Yes It is significant in terms of its effect on communities living or working in an area comprising two or more wards
Is this item open or exempt to the public?	Open -
Will this decision be preceded by any form of consultation?	6 week consultation
Decision Taker	City Executive Board
Executive Lead Member	Planning, Transport and Regulatory Services
Lead Executive Director	Executive Director for Regeneration and Housing
Report Contact	Richard Wyatt rwyatt@oxford.gov.uk

ITEM 15:	REVIEW OF LORD MAYORS DEPOSIT GUARANTEE SCHEME ID: I013807

To agree changes to the Lord Mayors Deposit Guarantee Scheme in order to update the scheme approach in light of expected changes to legislation and to boost positive outcomes for vulnerable persons.

Is this a Key Decision?	Yes It is significant in terms of its effect on communities living or working in an area

	comprising two or more wards
Is this item open or exempt to the public?	Open -
Will this decision be preceded by any form of consultation?	None.
Decision Taker	City Executive Board
Executive Lead Member	Housing
Lead Executive Director	Executive Director for Regeneration and Housing
Report Contact	David Rundle drundle@oxford.gov.uk

ITEM 16:	**PRIVATE SECTOR HOUSING POLICY** **ID: I010352**

The policy will set out the future priorities and areas of intervention in the private rented and owner occupied residential sectors in Oxford and will clarify the regulatory approach to be taken by the Council.

The policy will be considered at the following meetings:
- CEB – February 2016 for pre-consultation
- CEB – July 2016 post-consultation

Is this a Key Decision?	Yes It is significant in terms of its effect on communities living or working in an area comprising two or more wards
Is this item open or exempt to the public?	Open -
Will this decision be preceded by any form of consultation?	Public consultation for 6 weeks from January to March 2016.
Decision Taker	City Executive Board
Executive Lead Member	Corporate Strategy and Economic Development
Lead Executive Director	Head of Planning and Regulatory Services
Report Contact	Ian Wright, Service Manager Environmental Health iwright@oxford.gov.uk

ITEM 17:	**APPROVAL FOR INITIATION OF CPO PROCEEDINGS UNDER THE APPROVED EMPTY HOMES STRATEGY 2015-2018.** **ID: I013219**

Approval for the initiation of CPO proceedings under the approved Empty Homes Strategy and subsequent disposal options in order to bring property into use.

Is this a Key Decision?	Yes
Is this item open or exempt to the public?	Part exempt - commercially sensitive
Will this decision be preceded by any form of consultation?	No
Decision Taker	City Executive Board
Executive Lead Member	Housing
Lead Executive Director	Executive Director for Regeneration and Housing
Report Contact	Melanie Mutch, Empty Property Officer (Private Sector) mmutch@oxford.gov.uk, Mike Scott, Senior Asset Manager (Contractor) Tel: 01865 252138 mwscott@oxford.gov.uk

COUNCIL - 25 JULY 2016

To include any reports from CEB

ITEM 18:	CONSTITUTION REVIEW 2016 ID: I004734
An annual report to propose any required changes to the constitution.	
Is this a Key Decision?	Not Key
Is this item open or exempt to the public?	Open -
Will this decision be preceded by any form of consultation?	No consultation
Decision Taker	Council
Executive Lead Member	Corporate Strategy and Economic Development
Lead Executive Director	Head of Law and Governance
Report Contact	Emma Griffiths, Lawyer Tel: 01865 252208 egriffiths@oxford.gov.uk

CEB 15 SEPTEMBER 2016 - PROVISIONAL REPORTS

ITEM 19:	WATERWAYS PUBLIC SPACE PROTECTION ORDER ID: I013240
The report will contain a proposal to the CEB to introduce a Public Spaces Protection Order for certain behaviours on the waterways within Oxford City's local authority boundary. • It was submitted to CEB in March 2016 for approval pre-consultation. • It will be submitted to CEB in September 2016 for approval post-consultation.	
Is this a Key Decision?	Yes It is significant in terms of its effect on communities living or working in an area comprising two or more wards
Is this item open or exempt to the public?	Open -
Will this decision be preceded by any form of consultation?	Yes - public consultation spring 2016. Specific groups include Riparian owners and waterways users.
Decision Taker	City Executive Board
Executive Lead Member	Crime, Community Safety and Licensing
Lead Executive Director	Head of Community Services
Report Contact	Richard J Adams, Community Safety & Resilience Manager Tel: 01865 252283 rjadams@oxford.gov.uk

ITEM 20:	ANNUAL MONITORING REPORT (AMR) 2015/16 ID: I012651
This is the City Council's twelfth AMR to assess the effectiveness of planning policies contained within Oxford's Local Development Plan.	
Is this a Key Decision?	Not Key
Is this item open or exempt to the public?	Open -
Will this decision be preceded by any form of consultation?	No consultation. This is a factual report.
Decision Taker	City Executive Board
Executive Lead Member	Planning, Transport and Regulatory Services
Lead Executive Director	Executive Director for Regeneration and Housing

Report Contact	Rebekah Knight, Planner Tel: 01865 252612 rknight@oxford.gov.uk

ITEM 21:	TRANSFER STATION FOR RECYCLED MATERIAL ID: I012199

Proposal to create and operate a Council managed Transfer Station for City collected co-mingled recyclate, green waste, street arisings and engineering works spoil.

Is this a Key Decision?	Yes It is significant in terms of its effect on communities living or working in an area comprising two or more wards
Is this item open or exempt to the public?	Part exempt - Commercially Sensitive
Will this decision be preceded by any form of consultation?	None
Decision Taker	City Executive Board
Executive Lead Member	Climate Change and Cleaner, Greener Oxford
Lead Executive Director	Executive Director for Community Services
Report Contact	Roy Summers, Deputy Head of Service Tel: 01865 253608 rsummers@oxford.gov.uk

ITEM 22:	DESIGN SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENT - DRAFT ID: I011613

The Design SPD will set out planning guidance for the design of new buildings in Oxford considering particularly local context. This meeting will be to approve the draft for public consultation.

Is this a Key Decision?	Not Key
Is this item open or exempt to the public?	Open -
Will this decision be preceded by any form of consultation?	Yes- public consultation
Decision Taker	City Executive Board
Executive Lead Member	Corporate Strategy and Economic Development
Lead Executive Director	Head of Planning and Regulatory Services
Report Contact	Sarah Harrison, Senior Planner Tel: 01865 252015 sbharrison@oxford.gov.uk

ITEM 23:	QUARTERLY INTEGRATED PERFORMANCE 2016/17 - Q1 ID: I013537

These reports detail the Council's finances, risk and performance as at the end of each financial quarter for 2016/17 and may present budgetary amendments in the light of that information:
- Q1, 30 June 2016 – report in September 2016
- Q2, 30 September 2016 - report in December 2016
- Q3, 31 December 2016 - report in March 2017
- Q4, 31 March 2017- report in June 2017

Is this a Key Decision?	Yes It is likely to result in the Council incurring expenditure which is greater than £500,000
Is this item open or exempt to the public?	Open -
Will this decision be preceded by any form of consultation?	No consultation
Decision Taker	City Executive Board
Executive Lead Member	Finance, Corporate Asset Management and Public Health
Lead Executive Director	Executive Director for Organisational

	Development and Corporate Services
Report Contact	Nigel Kennedy, Head of Financial Services Tel: 01865 252708 nkennedy@oxford.gov.uk

ITEM 24:	REVIEW OF OXFORD CITY COUNCIL'S TREE MANAGEMENT POLICY ID: I013628

The Tree Management Policy was adopted in 2008 and last reviewed in 2011. The current Tree Management Policy will be the subject of discussions at the Parish Council Forum and the Scrutiny Committee in the spring of 2016. If as a result of those discussions the Tree Management Policy needs to be revised then a report will be submitted to the CEB

Is this a Key Decision?	Yes It is significant in terms of its effect on communities living or working in an area comprising two or more wards
Is this item open or exempt to the public?	Open -
Will this decision be preceded by any form of consultation?	Yes - The Tree Policy will be reviewed at the Parish Council Forum in March and Scrutiny Committee in April.
Decision Taker	City Executive Board
Executive Lead Member	Leisure, Sport and Events
Lead Executive Director	Executive Director for Community Services
Report Contact	Stuart Fitzsimmons, Parks and Open Spaces Manager sfitzsimmons@oxford.gov.uk

ITEM 25:	REVIEW OF BUILDING CONTROL FEES AND CHARGES 2016 ID: I013441

This report details the conclusions of a review of Building Control Fees and Charges.

Is this a Key Decision?	Yes
Is this item open or exempt to the public?	Open -
Will this decision be preceded by any form of consultation?	N/A
Decision Taker	City Executive Board
Executive Lead Member	Planning, Transport and Regulatory Services
Lead Executive Director	Executive Director for Regeneration and Housing
Report Contact	Patsy Dell, Head of Planning & Regulatory Services pdell@oxford.gov.uk

COUNCIL - 29 SEPTEMBER 2016

To include any reports from CEB

CEB 13 OCTOBER 2016 - PROVISIONAL REPORTS

ITEM 26:	NORTH OXFORD VICTORIAN SUBURB CONSERVATION AREA APPRAISAL- ADOPTION ID: I011611

To recommend adoption of the North Oxford Victorian Suburb Conservation Area Appraisal.

Is this a Key Decision?	Yes
Is this item open or exempt to the public?	Open -
Will this decision be preceded by any form of consultation?	Public consultation in summer 2016.

Decision Taker	City Executive Board
Executive Lead Member	Planning, Transport and Regulatory Services
Lead Executive Director	Head of Planning and Regulatory Services
Report Contact	Ian Marshall, Team Leader Design, Heritage and Specialist Services Tel: 01865 252332 imarshall@oxford.gov.uk

CEB 17 NOVEMBER 2016 - PROVISIONAL REPORTS

ITEM 27:	DEVELOPMENT OF NEW CEMETERY SITE ID: I011508
Update on options for new cemetery site within South Oxfordshire Council boundary.	
Is this a Key Decision?	Yes It is likely to result in the Council incurring expenditure which is greater than £500,000
Is this item open or exempt to the public?	Open -
Will this decision be preceded by any form of consultation?	None
Decision Taker	City Executive Board
Executive Lead Member	Leisure, Sport and Events
Lead Executive Director	Head of Community Services
Report Contact	Trevor Jackson, Cemetries Manager / Registrar Tel: 01865 252363 tjackson@oxford.gov.uk

CEB 15 DECEMBER 2016 - PROVISIONAL REPORTS

CEB 19 JANUARY 2017 - PROVISIONAL REPORTS

CEB 9 FEBRUARY 2017 - PROVISIONAL REPORTS

TO INCLUDE REPORTS RELATING TO THE BUDGET, MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN AND CORPORATE PLAN

COUNCIL - 6 FEBRUARY 2017

To include any reports from CEB

COUNCIL (BUDGET) - 20 FEBRUARY 2017

TO INCLUDE REPORTS RELATING TO THE BUDGET, MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN AND CORPORATE PLAN

CEB 9 MARCH 2017 - PROVISIONAL REPORTS

CEB 6 APRIL 2017 - PROVISIONAL REPORTS

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OXFORD CITY COUNCIL

To: **Scrutiny Committee**

Date: **7 June 2016**

Report of: **Head of Planning & Regulatory Services**

Title of Report: **Planning and Regulatory Services: Service Plan and Improvement Plan 2016/17**

<u>**Summary**</u>

Purpose of report: To update the Scrutiny Committee on the Service Plan and draft Service Improvement Plans for Planning and Regulatory Services

Key Decision: No

Executive lead member: Cllr Hollingsworth, Board Member for Planning & Regulatory Services

Report author: Patsy Dell, Head of Planning and Regulatory Services

Policy Framework: Corporate Plan

Appendices to this report:
- Appendix A: summary of actions from previous service improvement plans,
- Appendix B: Planning and Regulatory Service Plan 2016 – 2019,
- Appendix C: Planning and Regulatory Service Draft Improvement Plan 2016 - 2017

Background

1   The Scrutiny Committee has requested a report to update them on the Planning and Regulatory Service Plan 2016 - 2019. This is attached at Appendix B. The latest working draft of the associated service improvement plan is also attached at Appendix C. The service improvement plan will be further informed by feedback from Member, service user, staff and customer focus group sessions being planned for June and July.

Planning and Regulatory Service Plan and draft Improvement Plan 2016: Service Overview

2   The Planning and Regulatory Services department was established in 2015 following the most recent corporate restructure. The new department brings together all of the planning and regulatory functions and was formed from the previous City Development and (Environmental Health part of) Environmental Development departments. A new Head of Planning and Regulatory Services joined the council in December 2015, replacing the two previous service heads that have both left the council. An interim head of service was in post from July to December 2015.

3   The two service plans covering the old service areas have now been replaced by a single service plan for planning and regulatory services (attached at Appendix B). This plan is accompanied by a service improvement plan (attached at Appendix C). The improvement plan is still a working document yet to be informed by customer, member and service user feedback from focus groups planned for mid-June.

4   The Planning and Regulatory Services (P&R) includes a range of statutory and discretionary frontline services that directly or indirectly contribute to the Council's corporate ambition to make Oxford a world-class city for all its citizens. Some parts of the service are dictated by mandatory national legislative requirements and performance targets whereas others are discretionary and locally set.

5   The services help to ensure the health and wellbeing of residents and visitors; the provision of housing, employment, social and recreational facilities to provide a strong and sustainable economy and active communities whilst protecting and improving the natural and built environment of the city.

6   The service is being restructured in 2016 which will alter some of the management arrangements but the key components of the service are unaltered. The service teams within Planning and Regulatory Services comprise the following (this is set out in full in the service plan but summarised here):

7   **Business Regulation Team** – this team's purpose is to protect public health and the environment through regulation and includes food safety, investigation and control of case of infectious disease; control of noise and other nuisance from commercial premises, regulation of street trading; environmental permitting of nearly 30 polluting industries and processes and coordination of the Oxford City Safety Advisory Group.

8   **Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO) Enforcement Team** - helps to manage and improve the health, safety and welfare of residents living in HMOs.

9   **Private Sector Safety and combined Planning and Private Sector Safety Enforcement Team** – the primary role is the protection of the health and

wellbeing of those who live in the private rented sector and the investigation and enforcement of breaches of planning control.

10 **Home Improvement Agency** – the maintenance, improvement or adaptation of housing for the over 60s, the disabled and those with long term illnesses through the provision of repairs, minor works, improvement loans, grants and key safe installations.

11 **Building Control** – the purpose is to ensure the health and safety of persons in or around buildings, energy conservation and access to buildings for all persons.

12 **Planning Policy, Design, Heritage and Trees** – prepares the statutory planning policy framework (new Local Plan) which guides development in Oxford in order that the area's housing, employment, social needs are met whilst preserving and/or improving the quality, character and appearance of the city. Also provides specialist advice and expertise on urban design, in respect of the historic environment, trees, archaeology. Also implements the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) which secures developer contributions towards infrastructure in order to address the needs of new development.

13 **Development Management** – implements the Council's policy set out in the development plan and manages development within the City by assessing and determining a wide variety of planning and other applications and consents.

14 The Planning and Regulatory Service departmental restructure is looking to address a number of key issues and drivers for change through the restructure, service plan and service improvement plan. These reflect the needs from the service over the short to medium term as well as the issues that need to be addressed to move the service forward to meet the council's ambition for it to be a national best in class performer.

15 These drivers can be summarised as:
- To put in place the service structure and leadership to deliver the councils ambition for a top performing, high quality national exemplar planning and regulatory service.
- To improve the current resilience and sustainability of the Building Control (BC) function, consolidate the business offer and create an agreed and sustainable BC service business model for the future
- To improve current customer confidence in some key parts of the planning service and deliver customer service excellence in the performance, productivity, resilience, quality, value for money and customer experience of the planning development management function
- To address current recruitment and retention issues within some key roles,
- To enhance the specialist skills and experience supporting the planning functions, particularly adding urban design capacity, skills and experience,
- To improve resilience and capacity in the enforcement functions, developing a single focussed enforcement team across the planning and regulatory service, as part of the Private Sector Safety team

- To increase focus on the delivery of key action plans and specific improvement projects across the service
- To increase service resilience through appropriate external funding models such as direct developer funding and Planning Performance Agreements;

16   The draft service improvement plan at Appendix C is being developed to address these drivers for change.

Other service improvement plans

17   Various actions were identified in previous improvement plans aligned to the planning service. Two such improvement plans remain extant; the first related to the 2013 Independent Review of the planning service in association with the development at Roger Dudman Way (RDW) and the second relates to the Statement of Community Involvement approved in 2015. A summary of actions derived from those improvement plans are attached to this report at Appendix A.

18   The work on the RDW action plan was carried out in 2014/15 with a wide range of actions, grouped under six broad categories, developed and implemented. These have improved the quality, standard and consistency of the planning service and have addressed a number of the issues raised in the Vincent Goodstadt report (the link to the original report is set out below). The majority of the actions have now been embedded into the service but they too, will require on-going monitoring and review to ensure they continue to be relevant and embedded into the service. The 2016 improvement plan provides the opportunity to undertake that monitoring and review.

http://mycouncil.oxford.gov.uk/documents/s16562/RDW%20INDEPENDENT%20REVIEW%20FINAL%20REPORT%20140107%2017th%20Jan.pdf

19   The council's Statement of Community Involvement was updated in 2015 and various actions were identified as needing progressing following that review. The summary table set out in Appendix A below outlines the key actions identified and completed, remaining actions are to be incorporated in the new service improvement plan.

Next steps

19   The service plan and draft service improvement plan have been structured around delivering the key outcomes expected from the service for the coming years but with a primary focus in the next year. They identify the performance indicators and targets that flow from the Corporate Plan and national and agreed local performance standards and indicators. The service plan also identifies a number of key projects that the service is responsible for delivering such as the new local plan for Oxford. The service will use the service plan to monitor and manage its progress against priorities over the coming year. The Executive Board member and Head of Service will monitor progress on the delivery of the service plan.

20   The service improvement plan is still being worked upon but also seeks to ensure the ambitions for the service are delivered and that the issues and actions that need to be addressed are picked up. It will be informed by feedback from a wide range of stakeholders and service users. An update on progress will be produced in 12 months and this can be reported back to Scrutiny committee if that would be of interest to members.

21   Scrutiny Committee is asked to **note** the report and to **provide any feedback** on the Service Plan and draft Service Improvement plan and identified actions.

Name and contact details of author:

Name: Patsy Dell
Job title: Head of Planning and Regulatory Services
Service Area / Department: Planning and Regulatory Services
Tel: 01865 252356 e-mail: pdell@oxford.gov.uk

Version number: 1.0
Background papers: None

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Appendix A

A1   Table 1 below sets out a summary of the actions from the Roger
       Dudman Way Improvement Plan.

http://mycouncil.oxford.gov.uk/documents/s16562/RDW%20INDEPENDENT
%20REVIEW%20FINAL%20REPORT%20140107%2017th%20Jan.pdf

Table 1: Roger Dudman Way Review Action Plan 2014	
Action	**Status**
Planning Procedures: Improving the clarity of the informal and formal liaison arrangements and the documentation of the pre-application process; Providing a clearer auditing regime of the submitted documents against the requirements in the published guidance in the registration process on major applications; A review of the EIA-related procedures to be undertaken	Original actions implemented, now need to be reviewed as part of new service improvement plan
Consultation Processes: 1.Allow more time between project inception and the proposed commencement date 2.Engage other appropriate parties (including members) in pre-application discussions, and not just officers; 3.Provide opportunities for presentations and briefings to members; 4.Encourage a two-stage consultation on major applications; and 5. Set down clearer guidelines on the desired documentation.	Original actions implemented, now need to be reviewed as part of new service improvement plan
Post-application guidance on planning processes. 1. A more structured approach to the weekly lists to enable the ready identification of major developments; 2.A more effective provision of Site Notices; 3.Additional means for communicating the scale and massing of major developments; 4.Consultation on revised drawings; 5.The provision of feedback to respondents on planning decisions; and 6. The planning processes to be more integrated with other regulatory processes.	Original actions implemented, now need to be reviewed as part of new service improvement plan
Committee Reporting: It recommended that the presentation of the planning issues of major applications to committee should be strengthened by systematic documentation of the policy evaluation including	Original actions implemented, now need to be reviewed as part of new service improvement plan

Table 1: Roger Dudman Way Review Action Plan 2014	
Action	**Status**
clarification of the extent and nature of any departure (non-compliance) from policy	
Planning Conditions: • It is recommended that enforcement procedures and coordination (on conditions) should be strengthened through an auditable process for determining the appropriate enforcement action, a review of the use of standard planning conditions, and updating of them where necessary. • Inter-agency co-ordination and efficiencies in dealing with enforcement matters should be maximised.	Original actions implemented, now need to be reviewed as part of new service improvement plan Changes to teams in planning and regulatory services are also looking to address this
Wider Planning Issues: • Enhancing the planning service in terms of planning process, policy and strategy • Progressing and formalising a more strategic approach to the future development needs and engagement with the Universities and Colleges	Original actions implemented, now need to be reviewed as part of new service improvement plan. Delivery of best in class ambition will provide a direction of travel for the service

Statement of Community Involvement Action Plan (SCIAP)

A2   The Statement of Community Involvement and action plan was presented to Scrutiny Committee and City Executive Board in July 2015.

http://mycouncil.oxford.gov.uk/documents/s24640/Adoption%20of%20Statement%20of%20Community%20Involvement%20in%20Planning%202015%20-%20Report.pdf

A3   The recommendations from the Scrutiny committee are set out below:

Summary of the discussion in July 2015 and recommendations to CEB:

1. *The Committee supported the Adoption of the Statement of Community Involvement in Planning (2015) and commended officers on the Statements tone and the way it was written.*

2. *The Committee noted the statutory nature of the document and the need to refrain from designing a planning toolkit whilst considering it.*

3. *Members noted that the Planning Review Committee and Area Forums were not mentioned in the Statement.*

4. *The Committee supported developers using visualisation tools to make planning applications more visual, and suggested that this should be made more explicit in the Statement, with a link to the help-sheet added. The Committee heard that this was not been covered in more detail in the main document because it was an evolving area but officers looked to keep up with best practice.*

   Recommendation 1 - We endorse the draft Statement of Community Involvement in Planning and recommend that this is amended to include references to the Planning Review Committee, Area Forums and external guidance on the use of visualisation tools.

5. *The Committee asked whether resident groups were able to register an area of interest and receive auto-notifications. The Committee heard that the Council's IT systems did not currently enable this but that it was not technically difficult to do. Officers were looking to achieve wider involvement through methods such as the Council's app, and are exploring whether local groups could play a role in making planning documents available in paper form.*

   Recommendation 2 - We recommend that the City Council continues to explore new and improved ways of informing residents and community organisations of local planning issues, using both on-line and off-line communication methods. In particular, enhancements to ICT systems should be prioritised so that individuals and groups that have signed up can receive automatic notifications when specific planning applications are progressed or amended.

6. *The Committee discussed whether, in addition to site notices, printed letters should be sent to neighbours to inform them of planning applications. Members noted that the cost of issuing notification letters for the 2,000 planning applications processed each year was £45k and that this cost had not been budgeted for. Not all the committee agreed on the need to reinstate planning notification letters but as there was considerable interest in this, lower cost approaches should be explored (for example, simply putting copies of planning notices through nearby letterboxes at the same time as they are publicly posted), and costings for this brought forward as an option for the next budget round.*

   Recommendation 3 - We recommend that the City Council explores whether there is a lower cost means of informing local residents of planning applications as an alternative to "neighbouring property notification letters". We suggest that proposals are brought forward in the next budget round.

A4   Table 2 summarises progress with the SCI action plan since July 2015:

Table 2: Progress with the SCI action plan since July 2015

Action	Status
Effective Engagement and Customer Service Criteria: • Standardising operating procedures for the planning authority, customers and communities • Pre-application guidance notes • Visualisations to help assess the impact of new development • Explore commissioning a 3D model for the city • Consultation checklists • Verification of consultation procedures • Structure of Committee reports • Use of on-line consultation methods • Working with Public Involvement Board and the City Council consultation toolkit	Some progress on short-term actions. Others remain outstanding and will be picked up in new action plan: • ISO9001 accreditation secured for Planning late 2015 • Customer Service Excellence secured summer 2015
Working with Community Forums/Groups as a channel for hearing views and sharing information	Some progress on short-term actions. Others remain outstanding and will be picked up in new action plan: • New website launched, • Local plan communication strategy to identify engagement and consultation approach across City communities, stakeholders and groups
IT systems to support engagement	Some progress on short-term actions. Others remain outstanding and will be picked up in new action plan: • Internal ICT 'Intelligent Client 'group to be set up within Planning and Regulatory Services, including ensuring regular webpage content updates • On-going e-engagement and dialogue approach for the local plan being investigated
Effective use of social media to share information and raise awareness amongst a wider audience and reaching a wide audience	Some progress on short-term actions. Others remain outstanding and will be picked up in new action plan: • Local Plan (LP) key project area for mass engagement approach. LP communications plan identifies approach including hard to reach groups
Effective roles for elected members	Some progress on short-term actions.

	Others remain outstanding and will be picked up in new action plan: • Member training on planning being provided May/June 2016 • Best in class approach to supporting member development in planning to be benchmarked as part of service improvement plan
Regular electronic planning update newsletter	Some progress on short-term actions. Others remain outstanding and will be picked up in new action plan:
Establish a reference group/user group for major consultation events	Some progress on short-term actions. Others remain outstanding and will be picked up in new action plan:
Supporting best practice in applicant-led consultations	Some progress on short-term actions. Others remain outstanding and will be picked up in new action plan:
Raise awareness of the new SCI and the commitment it makes	Completed – all those who participated were notified. SCI update on the website

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Oxford City Council

Planning and Regulatory Services

Service Plan 2016/17 – 2017/18

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Contents

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1. Service Overview

1.1 Description of Current Service

The Planning and Regulatory Services (P&R) includes a range of statutory and discretionary frontline services that directly or indirectly contribute to the Council's corporate ambition to make Oxford a world-class city for all its citizens. Some parts of the service are dictated by mandatory national legislative requirements and performance targets whereas others are discretionary and locally set.

The services help to ensure the health and wellbeing of residents and visitors; the provision of housing, employment, social and recreational facilities to provide a strong and sustainable economy and active communities whilst protecting and improving the natural and built environment of the city. Underpinning the service is the need to ensure all customers receive a timely and constructive response, especially in the case of service delivered to the most vulnerable sections of the population.

The P&R service is being restructured in 2016 which will alter some of the management arrangements but the key parts of the service will remain and comprise the following:

Business Regulation Team - delivers a broad range of proactive and reactive regulatory services and programmes connected with commercial activities in the City. The purpose is to protect public health & the environment through regulation and includes food safety intervention in about 1300 premises; investigation and control of case of infectious disease; control of noise and other nuisance from commercial premises – with a focus on dealing with noise and vibration issues from rail and other major developments; regulation of street trading; environmental permitting of nearly 30 polluting industries and processes; coordination of the Oxford City Safety Advisory Group. The team also delivers a food hygiene training programme, offering accredited courses for different levels of ability and in different languages.

Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO) Enforcement Team - helps to manage and improve the health, safety and welfare of residents living in HMOs. The private rented sector accounts for 25 percent of the city's housing stock providing essential accommodation for key workers, students and others. About 1 in 5 persons live in HMOs.

Private Sector Safety and Combined P&R Enforcement Team – the primary role is the protection of the health and wellbeing of those who live in the private rented sector and the investigation and enforcement against breaches of planning control. Services include interventions and enforcement to deal with poor dwelling conditions or energy performance, unlawful dwellings, licensing of caravan/mobile home parks, burials, the Landlords/Agents Redress Scheme, the Oxford City Landlords Accreditation Scheme and landlord/agent training. Planning enforcement seeks to ensure unauthorised buildings, uses and other works do not cause unacceptable harm and that planning conditions imposed on planning permissions are complied with. The work of the team contributes to raising private sector housing standards, preventing homelessness, reducing inequalities, promoting wellbeing, protecting the living conditions of nearby occupants and protecting the built and natural environment.

Home Improvement Agency – the maintenance, improvement or adaptation of housing for the over 60s, the disabled and those with long term illnesses through the provision of repairs, minor works, improvement loans, grants and key safe installations. Such works enable residents to remain in their own home, prevent hospital admission and /or allow hospital discharge.

Building Control – the purpose is to ensure the health and safety of persons in or around buildings, energy conservation and access to buildings for all persons. Parts of the service can be provided by others through the Approved Inspectors. There are two elements of the service: fee earning and non-fee earning. The fee earning part focuses on ensuring compliance with Building Regulations by assessing plans and carrying out site inspections at the notifiable stages of the building process. The non-fee earning part includes statutory or necessary functions relating to dangerous structures, demolitions, enforcement of the Regulations, processing disabled person applications and the provision of advice in respect of the regulations and safety.

Planning Policy and Design, Heritage and Trees – prepares the statutory planning policy framework which guides development in Oxford in order that the area's housing, employment, social needs are met whilst preserving and/or improving the quality, character and appearance of the city. The section protects and manages change to the city's built and historic environment, archaeology and forest resources, and undertakes community consultation to inform the development and neighbourhood plans, supplementary planning documents and other documents. It also implements the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) which secures developer contributions towards infrastructure in order to address the needs of new development.

Development Management – implements the Council's policy set out in the development plan and manages development within the City by assessing and determining a wide variety of planning and other applications and consents. It also advises and makes recommendations to Councillors for those applications determined by a planning Committee. Development Management also provides advice and guidance to help ensure development proposals comply with the Councils policies and standards and to improve the quality of development in the city.

Service customers

The P&R services are provided to a wide range of customers who may live, work, visit, study or wish to develop in Oxford. Some of the services, such as the Home Improvement Agency, specifically address the needs and welfare of the most vulnerable members of the population. Others, such as Planning Policy and Development Management serve those living in the city, running businesses or wishing to build and customers may include a wide range of residents, local and national developers. In addition, the service contributes to the health and safety of all who are in the City and protects and manages the built and natural environment which contributes to Oxford's economic, historic and educational importance and quality of life.

Demographic and other factors that affect the services

Whilst Oxford offers residents a high quality of life and visitors many opportunities there are, however major inequalities in the city. The Index of Multiple Deprivation 2010 places Oxford in the top half of the most deprived local authority areas in England with twelve areas of the city being among the 20% most deprived areas in England. Oxford's population is estimated to be growing by about 6,000 persons a year which makes it the eleventh fastest growing city in the UK. A third of the population is aged 18-29 with about 32,000 students enrolled in full-time education in the two universities. The percentage of over 65s is increasing faster than other age groups.

Oxford has a growing economy with about 114,000 jobs provided primarily in the knowledge intensive industries. There are more jobs within the city than residents and approximately 46,000 people commute into Oxford for work. As a tourist destination the city attracts around 7 million visitors annually which support over 13,000 jobs.

The city is facing a housing crisis and according to Cities Outlook 2015, Oxford is now the least affordable city in terms of housing. This is causing hardship with poor and overcrowded housing and increasing numbers of 'beds in sheds'. This is adversely affecting the most vulnerable in the city and a number of P&R services specifically seek to improve the quality and safety of housing and close down illegal or dangerous accommodation. The housing problems are also impacting on the local economy with employers finding it difficult to attract people to the city. This threatens Oxford's position as a world class knowledge economy and it's concentration of high value businesses.

As a result of these factors there is a growing demand for the services to ensure the quality and availability of suitable housing, including affordable housing in the city. The state of the national economy and factors such as taxation also influence the number of developments proposed and those being constructed which affects the demand for planning and building control services.

1.2   Summary of Service's Future Direction

The P&R service faces a number of challenges which will influence the level of demand for its services and future direction   The P&R restructure will put in place the service structure and leadership to deliver the Councils ambition for a top performing, high quality national exemplar planning and regulatory service. It will also improve the resilience of the service, customer satisfaction, enhance capacity and the provision of specialist skills to enable it to be better placed to address the challenges it faces. The future direction of and demand for the P&R Service is or could be influenced by the following:

- The Growth Agenda including Oxford and Oxfordshire City Deal to deliver significant growth including businesses, housing and infrastructure;

- Government and County Council funding changes and cuts – reductions in public expenditure and the assumed loss of government grant by 2018-19 will mean the Service will need to deliver greater efficiencies;

- The Devolution Deal for Oxfordshire – budget pooling, changes to service delivery and the potential for significant investment in the city's infrastructure;

- Housing and Planning Act - proposed changes in regulatory and planning responsibilities, legislation and reform.

- Demographics - growing population with increasing percentage over 65 years

The implementation of this Service Plan will be underpinned by operational team plans and the associated service improvement plan. Monitoring of the plan will be undertaken at intervals with the Executive Board member and an annual update will be produced and incorporated as part of each year's service planning process.

1.3 Key Service Objectives and targets for 2016/17:

Objectives	Owner	Dependencies	Timeline	Measures of Success
Corporate Plan Targets for Planning and Regulatory Services				
• Increase Employment Floorspace delivered in the City	Patsy Dell	• Implementation of available planning permissions	Annual	• Employment floorspace being delivered
• New homes granted planning permission – target is 400 in 2016 and 2017	Patsy Dell	• Suitable sites being granted planning permission	Annual	• Numbers of new homes being granted planning permission
• Improve the living conditions and wellbeing of those living in the private rented sector and Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) by reducing the number of unlicensed HMOs	Ian Wright		Annual	• Percentage of identified HMOs that are licensed

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Objectives	Owner	Dependencies	Timeline	Measures of Success
Service Specific Objectives and targets				
1. Restructure the Planning and Regulatory Service to deliver the structure, leadership and improvement plans and actions to start to move the service to national 'best in class' 2. Produce and implement service improvement plan by end July with steps to move the service onto a 'best in class' direction of travel by the end of 2016 - 2017.	Patsy Dell Patsy Dell	• Recruitment • Staff retention	Started Timeline for individual actions set out in service and team action plans.	• New P&R structure fully in place by Autumn 2016 • Vacancies recruited to permanent posts, agency staffing numbers reduced • Performance improvement in Development Management • Development of clear service and team improvement plans by August 2016 • Implement team moves so planning enforcement is part of Private Sector Safety Team and Building Control is line managed by the Environmental Health Service Manager by June 2016 • Review Building Control and develop sustainable business model for 2016/17 by Autumn 2016
Planning and Regulatory Services - Team Specific Objectives and targets				
Business Regulation				
1. Develop and implement Council's strategy for street trading to ensure it supports the regeneration of the city and improves consumer and business satisfaction	Ian Wright	Emerging City Centre Strategy Emerging Local Plan Emerging Market Strategy	March 2017*	New Street Trading Strategy adopted (*subject to compatibility with other city centre strategies having been agreed)

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	Objectives	Owner	Dependencies	Timeline	Measures of Success
2.	Protect the health and wellbeing of people who work, live and visit by dealing with occurrences of pollution and nuisance generated from rail and major development project	Ian Wright	Network Rail Planning Performance Agreement	Annual	95% of s61 Consent Applications and Notifications processed within 30 days.
3.	Improving standards in food businesses through food hygiene intervention programme	Ian Wright		Annual	Reduction in number of food premises rated 0 or 1 by 50 %
Private Rented Sector					
4.	Education and training of landlords and agents	Ian Wright		Annual	30 No of landlord and agents training places delivered per year\n\n90 % positive satisfaction feedback
5.	Targeted improvements to reduce fuel poverty and improve energy efficiency	Ian Wright		Annual	Influencing increased number of property energy performance ratings of 'F or G' to 'E' or higher.
HMO Enforcement Team					
6.	Improve living conditions and the management of Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) by:\na) Reducing the number of unlicensed HMOs in the City	Ian Wright		Annual	Percentage of identified HMOs that are subject to licensing provisions\n\nThe number of unlicensed HMOs identified by the HMO enforcement team that will be required to be licensed with a finders/ category A fee applied.

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Objectives	Owner	Dependencies	Timeline	Measures of Success
b) Educating and training landlords and agents	Ian Wright		Annual	3 Landlord Information Exchanges per year
c) Prevention and reduction of Homelessness	Ian Wright		Annual	The percentage of Tenancy Relations Officer service requests responded to within 5 working days
Home Improvement Agency				
7. Increase the number of elderly, the disabled and those with long term illnesses able to remain in their home through property adaptation, maintenance and improvement	Ian Wright	Customers, direct services, Small Repairs Technician	Ongoing	Number of properties maintained, improved or adapted enabling occupant to remain living Percentage of DSG grant spent - target 100% Customer satisfaction – 100%
Development Management				
8. Deal with planning and other applications efficiently and effectively meeting agreed targets and quality of outcome	DMSM	Recruitment and retention	Ongoing	Percentage of applications and other matters determined or substantive response given: • Major applications* – 70% in 13 weeks, (including agreed extension of time cases(EOT) and planning performance agreement cases (PPA)) • Minor applications – 70% in 8 weeks or within agreed EOT • Other applications – 80% in 8 weeks or within EOT * Where an application is subject to an EIA 70% in 16 weeks.

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Objectives	Owner	Dependencies	Timeline	Measures of Success
				• For all types of application (other than those where EOT agreed) which have not been determined in accordance with above - 100% in 26 • Prior Approvals and other similar applications – 100% within the statutory response time limit.
9. Deliver high quality new development and excellent customer service	DMSM		On-going On-going Number On-going measure, review outcomes annually	• Maintain ISO9001 approach and accreditation as a minimum service level • Maintain Customer Service Excellence approach and accreditation as a minimum service level , reduce complaints from 15/16 base year level • No. of external compliments and/or design awards won by new developments in the City • Percentage of major app decisions overturned at appeal – target less than 20%
Building Control				
10. Deliver an efficient and effective Building Control service	Paul Smith	Building Control Team Applications Team	On-going On-going	Issue 95% of plan check decisions within 8 weeks. Complete 85% of plan -check assessments within the internal target time of 15 working days.
Planning Policy and Design, Heritage and Tree Team				
11. Preparation and	Mark		In accordance	• All project milestones met in year

Objectives	Owner	Dependencies	Timeline	Measures of Success
adoption of the Oxford Local Plan 2036	Jaggard		with milestones set out in Local Development Scheme (adoption October 2019)	• Agreed engagement approach, governance and communications delivered successfully, high levels of engagement and response/participation achieved • Submission of the OLP36 to the Planning Inspectorate for examination at end 2018
12. Oxford Growth Strategy – maximise likelihood of achieving strategic site allocations or outline permissions for urban extensions through effective partnership working	Mark Jaggard		On-going	Housing allocation provision for Oxford's unmet housing needs confirmed by neighbouring Oxfordshire Councils Responses submitted in accordance with deadlines to all Local Plan consultations by neighbouring councils and to Government consultations.
13. Provision of infrastructure through collection, management and spending of CIL and S106 developer contributions.	Mark Jaggard		Ongoing Ongoing Annual	Receiving 100% of CIL and S106 (financial and in kind) contributions due Preparation and updating of policy and a programme of projects to be funded by CIL/S106 Publication of the required information as part of the Annual Monitoring report
14. Protection and management of the built and natural environment by:	Mark Jaggard			Consultation and adoption of Design Supplementary Planning Document by end of 2016/17

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Objectives	Owner	Dependencies	Timeline	Measures of Success
a) Ensuring development conserves or enhances the heritage and built environment			Jan 2017	

1.4 Chart: Planning and Regulatory Services management structure 2016/17

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                    │  Head of Planning and Regulatory Services │
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│ Environmental Health  │ │ Planning Policy and   │ │ Development           │
│ Service Manager       │ │ Specialist Services   │ │ Management Service    │
│                       │ │ Manager               │ │ Manager               │
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│ Building Control Team │ │ Planning Policy Team  │ │ Development           │
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│ Business Regulation   │ │ Specialist Services   │ │ Development           │
│ Team                  │ │ Advisory Team         │ │ Management Team West  │
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│ HMO Enforcement Team  │                           │ Development           │
│                       │                           │ Management Team       │
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┌───────────────────────┐
│ Private Sector Safety │
│ and combined P & R    │
│ Enforcement Team      │
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│ Home Improvement      │
│ Agency Team           │
└───────────────────────┘
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Financial Health

1.5   Detailed Budget for 2016/17

Service Budget 2016/17

Expenditure/Income	Employees £	Premises £	Transport £	Supplies & Services £	External Income £	SLA's and Capital £	Total Net Budget £
Development	1,038,698	-	7,810	45,980	(1,457,000)	406,429	41,917
Support Services	134,282	-	440	15,255	(10,000)	329,709	469,686
Information Services	(100)	8,720	600	12,045	(213,650)	115,656	(76,729)
Spatial Development	804,129	-	790	732,010	(103,000)	230,347	1,664,276
Environmental Health	961,286	-	7,300	45,326	(730,000)	587,489	871,401
Total Net Budget	**2,938,295**	**8,720**	**16,940**	**850,616**	**(2,513,650)**	**1,669,630**	**2,970,551**

1.6   Budget Projections 2016/17 to 2019/20

	2016-17 £000s	2017-18 £000s	2018-19 £000s	2019-20 £000s
Functions				
Development	42	32	(18)	(28)
Support Services	470	470	470	470
Information Services	(77)	(77)	(77)	(77)

26/05/2016

Spatial Development	1,664	1,104	1,104	1,104
Environmental Health	871	826	826	826
Totals	**2,971**	**2,356**	**2,306**	**2,296**

1.7   Savings and Efficiency Targets to Achieve the Budget

Savings & Pressures 2016/17

Reference	Description	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20
		£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s
17PR1101	NEW - pressure as external income has not been possible to be raised	70			
14EF1202	Extension of fee charging proactive work across private rented sector (moved back a year)	(45)	(45)		
16PR1101	ADJUSTED - Re-base budget income estimate for Building Control.			(40)	
17FC1101	NEW - Pre-application planning advice	(15)			
17FC1102	NEW - Pre-application householder developments	(10)			
17FC1103	NEW - Pre-application listed buildings	(20)			
17FC1104	NEW - Planning Performance Agreements		(10)	(10)	(10)
15NI1101	Planning design and review panel - Reversal of previous years bid	(25)			
16NI1104	Oxford Growth - Local Plan work - Reversal of previous years bid	(170)			
16NI1105	Oxford Growth - Housing Growth Work - Reversal of previous years bid	(80)			
17NI1101	NEW - Preparation work in readiness of the production of a new Local Plan	100			

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17NI1102	NEW - Grenoble Road Planning application fee	560	(560)		
17NI1106	NEW - Planning Enforcement-Unauthorised Dwellings	34			
Total Savings & Pressure		**399**	**(615)**	**(50)**	**(10)**

2. Performance and Value for Money

2.1 Evidence of Current Value for Money

P&R undertakes a variety of benchmarking and customer feedback although it is not clear that all the information obtained has, in the past, always been used to review and improve service performance, efficiency, effectiveness and customer satisfaction. This year the new service improvement plan (attached at Appendix C) will capture feedback and actions drawn up in response. Focus groups are being planned for June and July with planning service users and customers to seek detailed feedback on the service. All service areas will seek benchmark data to identify best in class performance for P&R service areas, as part of the service ambition to move to best in class service delivery. These action and improvement plans will be monitored so the achievement of the agreed direction of travel for the service can be measured.

2.2 Plan for delivering and improving Service Standards

A number of actions are proposed to maintain and improve the service. The P&R restructure will provide enhanced leadership and delivery of the key objectives set out in the Service Plan and Service Improvement Plan will be supported by individual team plans that provide more detail. Actions will include:

- A restructure of P&R
- Filling vacant posts with permanent staff
- Measures to improve staff recruitment and retention
- Creation of two apprentice posts in planning and building control
- Training of staff and creation of career graded posts
- Review of processes and procedures to identify efficiencies/opportunities for improvement
- Improved use of performance information
- Learning from customer/stakeholder feedback to inform and improve service delivery.

- Proactive action – e.g. tracking down and securing the licensing of unlicensed HMOs
- Greater use of internal capacity and skills to thereby reducing use of external consultants to where it is essential
- Careful scoping of work and negotiation of fees to minimise costs of externally provided services
- Bidding for external funding where available, systematic development of use of planning performance agreements and charges for enhanced planning services.
- Refreshing ISO9001

3. Workforce Planning

3.1 Workforce planning themes

There are a number of common challenges that are affecting the capacity and effectiveness of the services with P&R

- Increasing demand for services;

- Difficulties in attracting and recruiting staff

- A considerable number of posts are filled by agency staff;

- Some posts grading/salary non-competitive with other councils;

A number of actions have, or are being implemented to address the above issues as part of the ambition to deliver a top performing, high quality national exemplar planning and regulatory services.

Communications and Consultation Plan

3.2 Anticipated Community, Stakeholder and customer consultation and engagement in 2016/17

P&R undertakes a wide range of stakeholder and consultations. Some are dictated by legislation whilst others are in relation to specific services, projects or preparation of policy and strategies. The list below includes anticipated one off and regular consultation and engagement activity to be undertaken in 16/17.

	Contact team	Brief description of consultation	Purpose of consultation	Consultation method	Target audience	Date of consultation
External						
Business Regulation Team	Street Trading Strategy	Consultation on new strategy for street trading in the city	Identify opportunities, options and potential impact	Web based survey	Public and Stakeholders	Jan 2017
Occupational Therapy	Various	Determine client's needs	Meet client's needs	Verbal, written, email	Disabled Facilities Grants (DFG) Applicants	
Housing Associations	Various	Following application for grant assistance	Permission to carry out works	Written, email	DFG Applicants	
Loan providers	Various	To determine monies owed on properties and permission to register mortgages	Ensure sufficient equity in properties before loans are offered	Written	FHIL applicants	
Clients of Home Improvement Agency	Various	Determine satisfaction with service	Agreed method in contract	Written survey forms	Customers	Following use of HIA service
Private Sector Safety Team	Private Sector Safety Team	Public and stakeholders views on Private Rented Property Policy	Policy Development	Web based questionnaire Landlords Forum Landlords Newsletter	Landlords/tenants/residents	February-March 2016
Local Plan	Planning Policy	Call for Sites	To feed into the Local Plan evidence base not strictly	Mail out to interested parties, use of website	Landowners and developers	March 2016

			consultation			
	Planning Policy	Local Plan Issues	To gain views of the community to feedback and shape the LP	Exhibitions; events; mailouts; website; social media; press etc.	Stakeholders and general public	June/July 2016
	Planning Policy	Design SPD draft document	To gain views of the community to on the draft SPD	mailouts; website; social media; press etc.	Stakeholders and general public	Summer 2016?
	Planning Policy	Headington Neighbourhood Plan draft document	not strictly our consultation but we're hosting it	mailouts; website; social media; press etc.	Stakeholders and general public	Anticipated Autumn 2016
	Planning Policy	Local Plan Preferred Options	To gain views of the community to feedback and shape the Local Plan (LP)	Exhibitions; events; mailouts; website; social media; press etc.	Stakeholders and general public	June/July 2017
	Planning Policy	Local Plan Proposed Submission	To gain views of the community to feedback and shape the LP	Exhibitions; events; mailouts; website; social media; press etc.	Stakeholders and general public	June/July 2018
Design, Heritage and Trees	Various	Local residents, statutory consultees	To gain views regarding proposed works to listed buildings, protected trees, as well as proposed TPOs	Email, mailouts, website, press, site notices	Property owners, stakeholders and general public	Ongoing
	Various	Conservation area appraisals	To gain views of the community to feedback and shape the appraisal	Exhibitions, events, mailouts, website, social media, press	Stakeholders and general public	When needed
Development Management		Local residents, statutory consultees	To gain views regarding development proposals	Email, mailouts, website, press, site notices	Property owners, stakeholders and general public	Ongoing

4. Infrastructure Requirements

4.1 ICT

P&R currently uses a range of software applications including:
- UNIFORM - for efficient processes and data capture in the development management service area
- IDOX- for document management
- Enterprise - for case management
- Microsoft Access - for data analysis and report
- LAGAN - for quality management system
- EXEGISIS – for the management of historic environment data

Future service working would be enhanced by:
- Improved management reporting tools
- Urban design package allowing 3D modelling of the city, sites and areas
- Stakeholder consultation and response management software (Local Plan consultations)
- Development/procurement of mobile working solutions
- Increasing customer self-service

4.2 Office Accommodation

Offices for the future 3 project (OFTF3). This project may result in reduction in number of hot desks in St Aldate's chambers leading to staff working from home more often. Reliable remote access to corporate systems therefore will become more important. Reduction in number of meeting rooms may limit the ability to host meetings with external customers.

Planning and Regulatory Services Improvement Plan 2016 – 17

Service Improvement Area	Service Improvement Action	Action, Targets or Milestones	Team and Action Owner	Notes on progress
Service Restructure Actions	Service Leadership	• Selection process for Service Managers against revised job descriptions April 2016. • Revised Job descriptions for Team Leaders and other roles and recruitment to vacancies	Head of Service - Patsy Dell	• New head of Service in post • Two Managers confirmed in post with new job descriptions, • Vacancy for Development Management Service Manager to be recruited to.
	Best in Class (BiC) service ambition and direction of travel	All Service teams developing team improvement plans setting out what BiC looks like for that service area: • External BiC service providers will be identified and comparative benchmarking undertaken; • Teams to audit themselves against BiC and identify actions to move teams to BiC • Team plans to be in place by 1 September 2016 • Undertake proactive service feedback approaches using focus groups and direct survey each year. • Review operation of the Development Management User Group (DMUG) with participants through focus groups. July 2016 • Implement new customer feedback process for all planning applications and pre-application discussions • Actions from Planning and Environmental Health ISO9001 and Customer Service Excellence (CSE) accreditations to be implemented, as a priority review of all existing Standard Operating Procedures (SPO's) to ensure all Development Management and enforcement activities are as lean and efficient as possible by December 2016 • Reduce the number of complaints received regarding customer service matters by 25% pa – 2015/16 taken as the baseline. • Promoting high quality development: enhance urban design skills and capacity across the planning service • Review operation of the current Oxford Design Review Panel/CaBE contract, seek feedback from members/service users and others and pick up and implement any actions arising from the review – July 2016 • Agreed programme of member and officer development - on-going	Patsy Dell and Service Managers	• Service restructure, service plan and service improvement plan all underway. • Best in Class ambition communicated to all staff and engagement on delivery of that ambition being discussed with teams as part of preparing team plans nad identifying actions • ISO9001 and Customer Service Excellent accreditations awarded in 2015
	Recruitment and retention of permanent staff	• Ambition for the service and its future direction of travel now clear. Recent period of uncertainty and change now settling down. • New service management structure agreed, new manager for Development Management being recruited through a national campaign • All current staff vacancies to be recruited to or filled by permanent staff by September 2016 • Establish career grades across the service on a priority basis to improve recruitment and retention, work with staff and Human Resources to develop a	Patsy Dell and Service Managers Patsy Dell and new task and finish group	• Recruitment underway for DM Manager, Team Leaders and Officer vacancies • Career Grade task and finish group to be established by June 2016

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Service Improvement Area	Service Improvement Action	Action, Targets or Milestones	Team and Action Owner	Notes on progress
		new career grade scheme for implementation by August 2016 • Establish and recruit to new Apprentice posts in Planning and Building Control, begin process of 'growing own staff' in service areas where recruitment and retention is an issue. Thereafter use apprentices/career grades/staff development and workforce planning to improve the supply of newly qualified staff available to the service.	from across the service Patsy Dell and Service Managers	• First Apprentice posts agreed April 2016 • Career grades being introduced mid-2016 • Recruitment to vacancies underway • Reputation of Oxford City Council as employer of choice being strengthened by restructure actions • Recruitment to Apprentice posts underway May 2016.
	Review service income targets	• Analysis of income targets and potential in areas where income targets have not been met to be discussed with Finance team ahead of the start of 2017/2018 budget working paper process (by July 2016)	Patsy Dell and Service Managers	• Initial meeting held with Finance to scope out the issues
	Service funding and resilience	• Develop model working approach using Planning Performance Agreements and contracts for enhanced planning service/directly funded posts by July 2016. Ensure full cost recovery for pre-application and other charges.	Patsy Dell and Service Managers	• PPA in place with Network Rail
Implement Team moves and agreed new line management changes	Building Control (BC) team management under Environmental Health Service Manager responsibility following restructure.	• Enhancing the Resilience of the Building Control Service through undertaking service review and developing a BC improvement plan by August 2016 (including full review of service costs, charges and recharges, recruitment to vacancies and market analysis). Improvement plan to be implemented once actions and timescales agreed with Board Member. • External marketing of BC service to increase, improved opportunities for working across the council on OCC construction activities with Direct Services to be pursued • Establish a customer/Service User feedback Forum – by August 2016, to meet twice yearly as a minimum	Patsy Dell, Environmental Health Service Manager (Ian Wright) and BC Team Leader.	
	Planning Enforcement responsibilities moving to a combined enforcement team with the Private Sector Safety Team (PSST) in Regulatory Services.	• Planning Enforcement activities to be integrated in a combined enforcement team • Team improvement plan and standard operating practices for the planning investigations to be developed, • Recruitment to all vacancies by September 2016. Improvement plan to be implemented once agreed. • Develop an enforcement policy and review of service standards for planning enforcement by December 2016	Patsy Dell, Environmental Health Service Manager (Ian Wright) and PSST Team Leader.	
Improved Management information and reporting and exploration of Digital/mobile working capabilities across the service	• Development Management • Building Control • Food safety • Private Sector Safety • HMO Enforcement	• Review current use of access reports for management information and investigate alternatives with greater functionality • Teams to investigate available mobile/digital solutions in use by others across these service areas by December 2016 • Appraisal of costs and benefits and any business cases for investment in new technology upgrades to be produced by March 2017	Service Managers and Team Leaders	

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OXFORD
CITY
COUNCIL

To: Scrutiny Committee

Date: 7 June 2016

Report of: Head of Planning & Regulatory

Title of Report: Review of Planning Enforcement Activity

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Summary

Purpose of report: To update the Scrutiny Committee on the current position regarding the Planning Enforcement function and the future plans for the service.

Key Decision: No

Executive lead member: Councillor Alex Hollingsworth, Board Member for Planning and Regulatory Services

Report author: Ian Wright, Environmental Health Service Manager

Policy Framework: Efficient and Effective Council

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Appendices to report:
Appendix 1 – Service Request Priority
Appendix 2 – Investigation outcomes
Appendix 3 – Enforcement action by Top 10 district councils in England

Background

1. The Scrutiny Committee requested a report to update them on the planning enforcement function and how the service is delivered.

National position

2. The Government's view is that the integrity of the planning system depends on the readiness of Local Planning Authorities to take effective enforcement action. The main national objectives of the planning enforcement process are to:

   - tackle breaches of planning control which would otherwise have unacceptable impact on the amenity of the area;

- maintain the integrity of the decision-making process;
- help ensure that public acceptance of the decision-making process is maintained.

3. However, Planning compliance and enforcement is a very complex area of planning law and carrying out development without planning consent is generally not a criminal offence (unless in relation to making changes to listed buildings, protected trees and advertisements which operate under separate regimes).

4. Enforcement action is discretionary and this is an important aspect of planning enforcement. Just because something is a breach of planning control is not, in itself, a reason to take enforcement action or to seek to punish the individual concerned. Even when it is technically possible to take action the council is required by policies and legislation set by central Government, to first decide if such formal action would be "expedient". Expediency is a test of whether the unauthorised activities are causing harm having regard to the Development Plan policies and other material planning considerations such as amenity.

5. This means that formal enforcement action is discretionary and all the relevant planning circumstances of each case must first be considered. Central Government advice is that ordinarily formal action should be a last resort and that councils are expected to give those responsible the chance to put matters right before serving a formal notice. However, when the breach of planning control is causing unacceptable serious harm or nuisance to public amenity formal action will not be delayed by protracted negotiation. Enforcement action will therefore always be commensurate with the seriousness of the breach of planning control. The enforcement regime also includes the right of appeal where enforcement notices are served and this can add time to the overall period that it can take to resolve even the most serious breaches of planning control.

6. These factors have resulted in a national planning enforcement regime that is often slower to achieve results with formal action than most other regulatory areas enforced by local authorities.

The position in Oxford

7. There are 2 FTE officers carrying out purely planning enforcement work.

8. Due to the resource levels the planning enforcement service is primarily reactive and the main proactive work in recent years has been with regard to Unlawful Developments, where funding from DCLG resulted in a significant amount of proactive visits taking place and elevated levels of enforcement action.

9. The number of complaints dealt with by the Planning Enforcement Service over the last 6 years is provided in the table below. The 25% drop in complaints in 2015/16 has occurred because there has been a change in the way that cases are recorded.

	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16
Cases	673	659	639	685	610	465

10. Cases reported may or may not require a site inspection and may be referred to other departments or agencies as appropriate. Because of the often lengthy and complex nature of planning investigations and staff resources available, priority is given to those cases where the greatest harm is being caused, such as unauthorised development having a widespread impact in an area or that directly contravenes local planning policies or national guidance.

11. When complaints are first received they are assigned a priority dependent upon the nature of the alleged breach. This initial assessment will be dependent upon the information provided at the time and the harm that is identified, such as possible harm to the environment or public and/or planning significance. Complaints are prioritised as high, medium or low depending on the nature of the issue and the criteria for priorities are contained in appendix 1.

Response times & performance

12. Complaints about planning contraventions are responded to in accordance with their priority. High priority complaints are responded to within 2 days, medium within 2 weeks and low priority within a month. The time taken in 2014/15 to the first action is provided in the table below:

High	Medium	Low
2 days	2.5 weeks	2 weeks

13. Whilst some cases are quick to resolve, the majority are complicated and the timescales involved mean that many cases take a considerable time before an application is approved or formal action is taken. The average time in weeks to resolve all cases by priority for the last 6 years is given below:

	High	Medium	Low
2010-11	18	24	13
2011-12	11	21	10
2012-13	29	22	13
2013-14	22	21	10
2014-15	15	16	10
2015-16	11	9	7

Investigation outcomes and enforcement activity

14. There are a number of potential outcomes following an investigation into an alleged breach of planning legislation, ranging from no action to the service of legal notices. The possible outcomes are contained in appendix 2. The approach taken will depend on the circumstances of each case.

15. All local authorities are required to submit regular data to the government on planning functions and this includes enforcement activity. It is therefore possible to compare the level of enforcement in Oxford with all the other district councils in England. The latest data up to December 2015 showed that Oxford City Council

ranked 7th out of 201 district councils for overall levels of planning enforcement. See appendix 3. When compared with every local planning authority in England, including London Boroughs and Unitary Councils, Oxford was ranked 37th. This indicates that, despite the perceptions, Oxford City Council has one of the strongest enforcement regimes in England based on the numbers of legal notices served.

Restructure of Planning and Regulatory Services and future service delivery

16. The service has recently been restructured and a number of changes have been introduced. Planning Enforcement has been moved out of Development Management and located as part of a new combined enforcement team with the Private Sector Safety team in Environmental Health. The changes will deliver greater resilience through restructuring the activities into a single team approach.

17. This change will enable an improved focus on pro-active work as well as a wider sharing of knowledge, skills and experience amongst members of the team. Environmental Health Officers are often involved in the same cases as Planning Enforcement Officers and so they will be able to provide evidential support to increase capacity. Planning Enforcement Officers will no longer deal with cases once a planning application has been made and the application will transfer to Development Management with all other planning applications.

18. An Internal Audit was carried out in March 2016 on enforcement in regulatory services including planning enforcement. The report gave the enforcement function a moderate rating (the second highest rating) and concluded that, in the main, there are appropriate procedures and controls in place to mitigate the key risks reviewed albeit with some that are not fully effective.

19. The report made the following recommendations which will be used to improve the Planning Enforcement Service2016/17:

Recommendation	Action
A separate and more detailed Planning Enforcement Policy should be created in line with the guiding principles of the Council's Corporate Enforcement Policy	An enforcement policy will be developed to go to CEB by December 2016
Consideration should be given for each area and how they can become more proactive; subsequent actions then need to be taken to implement such initiatives	A proactive approach will be developed to identify appropriate complex developments that may benefit from proactive compliance work.
Discussion should be had to set out the KPI's for all enforcement areas and these should then be reported and monitored by the Head of Planning and Regulatory Service at agreed intervals	Improve the reporting mechanism for planning enforcement actions: • Time take to respond to a complaint/potential breach • Breaches analysed by the type and/or location • Time taken to close a case.

Next steps

20. The Committee is asked to note the report and request an update on progress report in 12 months time.

Name and contact details of author:-

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Job title Environmental Health service Manager
Service Area / Department: Planning and Regulatory Services
Tel: 01865 252553 e-mail: iwright@oxford.gov.uk

List of background papers: *None*
Version number: 1.0

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Appendix 1 – prioritisation of cases

High Priority

- Significant and permanent damage to the environment where works are potentially irreversible e.g. unauthorised demolition or significant alteration to a listed building or loss of significant protected trees.

- Breaches of statutory planning notices such as Enforcement Notices.

- Building works commencing without compliance with pre-commencement conditions or legal agreement which is fundamental to or goes to the heart of the planning permission and without which the development would not be acceptable. This may include conditions/legal agreements relating to provision of affordable housing or to details of land contamination or possibly slab levels.

- Unauthorised development/activity that results in widespread harm to local amenity or serious harm to policies in the Development Plan and conflict with Central Government Guidance.

- Non–compliance with planning permissions where there is significant harm to amenity in planning terms. This would not include works where it is alleged there is a boundary encroachment - this would be a civil matter.

- Breach of a condition which results in serious demonstrable harm or danger to amenity in the neighbourhood.

- Unauthorised development where it is known the time-limit for taking action is imminent.

- Demolition or works unlikely to approved without substantial modification (e.g. over-large extensions or significant alterations to an unlisted building in Conservation Area).

3. Medium priority

- Development likely to cause general harm to public amenity, in particular residential amenity, the setting of a listed building or character and appearance of a conservation area. For example the erection of buildings close to neighbouring properties.

- Breaches of condition attached to a planning permission where there is likely to be general harm to public amenity, in particular residential amenity, e.g. windows, materials, landscaping, boundary treatment.

- Changes of use causing general harm to the amenity of an area, for example commercial uses in residential properties such as child minding or working from home.

- Advertisements causing harm to amenity or public safety.

4. Low Priority

- Unauthorised development which would be likely to receive planning permission/approval (e.g. if a planning application were to be submitted) or would not result in formal enforcement action being instigated.

- Development that is unlikely to require planning permission.

- Advertisements which do not case harm to amenity or public safety.

- Complaints with only very limited details.

- Pro-active condition monitoring/plan checking.

Appendix 2 - Investigation Outcomes

No breach established

After a site visit there is found to be no breach of planning control; for example the development is permitted development or is not within the control of planning legislation.

Breach but not expedient to pursue

The council has discretionary powers and is not required to take enforcement action just because there has been a breach of planning control. If a technical breach has taken place, for example a house extension that is only marginally over permitted development limits then it is not normally worthwhile taking lengthy and expensive enforcement action over something that causes minimal public harm.

Development is lawful

This is where there has been a breach but the activity has been going on for so long or the structure has been substantially complete for such a long time that the breach is immune from any enforcement action and the development has become "lawful" (for planning purposes). The following table shows the time scales:

Activity	Immune after
Operational development (e.g. building works, new access points, fences)	Substantially completed for more than 4 years.
Change of use of a building to a single dwelling house / flat	Continuous occupation for 4 years or more.
Change of use	Continuous occupation at the same intensity for 10 years or more.
Breach of a condition on a planning permission / consent	Continual non compliance for 10 years or more.

Attempt to negotiate a resolution

In accordance with government guidance, the first priority is to try to resolve a breach of planning control through negotiation. This could be by the relevant party agreeing to cease an unauthorised use, remove an unauthorised development or submit a retrospective planning application (see below). Any such negotiation will include a timescale for whatever action is agreed or required. However, the council will not allow negotiations to hamper or delay formal enforcement action that may be required to make the development more acceptable on planning grounds or to make it cease.

Invite a retrospective application

In some cases the most appropriate way to rectify a breach of planning control is to invite the relevant party to make a retrospective planning application for the development or change of use that has occurred. This approach is likely to be taken

where planning officers consider there is a reasonable likelihood that a planning application will be successful in light of the relevant planning policies. The council invites the submission of retrospective planning applications when appropriate but will only pursue submission if there is a need to control the breach of planning control through conditions. Minor and technical breaches of planning control are unlikely to be pursued to the submission of a retrospective planning application.

Formal action

If negotiation does not secure compliance with what the council considers acceptable then it has the power to take formal action against any breach. The nature of the breach will dictate what route the council chooses to pursue. Depending upon what action is taken the person responsible may get a criminal record.

Ultimately the owner or persons responsible may be required to remove a building work and / or cease an activity and remove from the site, at their own expense, everything associated with the activity. In the event of non-compliance, the responsible persons are open to the risk of prosecution; alternatively the council may take direct action to undertake the appropriate works and recover the costs from the responsible person(s). Where there is a habitual breach of planning control the council can, as a last resort, compulsorily purchase the land so as to stop the activity.

Types of formal action

The council has a range of formal powers under the Town and Country Planning Act that it can use to remedy breaches of planning control. Some of these are listed below. Additional powers exist to serve injunctions, to take direct action and to prosecute when it is deemed expedient to do so.

- Planning Contravention Notice – Section 171(c) provides the power to serve a notice requiring persons to divulge information in respect of land and activities.
- Breach of Condition Notice – Section 187(a) provides the power to serve a notice to secure compliance with conditions specified within a planning permission.
- Enforcement Notice – Section 172 provides the power to serve a notice which details the steps required to remedy the situation. This notice can also be served in conjunction with a stop notice (below).
- Stop Notice / Temporary Stop Notice – Section 183 / 171(e) provides power to serve a notice requiring unauthorised activities to cease.
- Section 215 Notice – Provides the power to secure the proper maintenance of land and buildings.

Appendix 3 – Enforcement action by Top 10 district councils in England

Year ending December 2015

	Planning authority	Enforcement Notices issued	Stop Notices issued	Temporary Stop Notices issued [2]	Breach of Condition Notices served	Planning Contravention Notices served	Enforcement injunctions granted by High Court or County Court [3]	Enforcement injunctions refused by High Court or County Court	Total Enforcement actions
1	South Oxfordshire	3	4	-	12	76	4	-	99
2	Vale of White Horse	-	12	-	32	53	-	-	97
3	Stratford-on-Avon	8	-	1	29	40	-	-	78
4	East Lindsey	24	1	1	11	37	-	-	74
5	Wycombe	14	1	3	2	53	1	-	74
6	North Kesteven	13	-	1	1	56	-	-	71
7	Oxford	24	-	-	1	41	-	-	66
8	King's Lynn and West Norfolk	24	-	-	8	32	-	-	64
9	Wealden	30	-	-	1	33	-	-	64
10	Sedgemoor	29	-	1	6	27	-	-	63

Source: Table P130 – district planning authorities: enforcement action by local planning authority (yearly)
https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/live-tables-on-planning-application-statistics

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**OXFORD
CITY
COUNCIL**

To: Scrutiny Committee

Date: 7th June 2016

Report of: Executive Director, Housing and Regeneration

Title of Report: Westhill Farm

Summary

Purpose of report: To update the Scrutiny Committee on the proposed demolition of a derelict building at Westhill Farm

Key decision: No

Executive lead member: Linda Smith, Board Member for Leisure, Parks and Sport

Report author: David Edwards, Executive Director, Housing and Regeneration

Policy Framework: Leisure Strategy, Asset Management Plan

Appendices to the report
Appendix 1: Location Plan
Appendix 2: Planning Correspondence
Appendix 3: Westhill Farm Business Plan
Appendix 4: Westhill Farm Business Plan Review

Background
1. Westhill Farmhouse is a derelict building located in Shotover Country Park. The property is in a remote location approximately 0.6 mile from the main car park and accessed along a disused track which connects to The Ridings, a private road (Appendix 1: Location Plan). The farmhouse is burnt out with only the gable ends remaining. Following engineering reports and concerns for public safety the Council intends to demolish the remains of the structure and make good the site. The Council recently received planning permission to demolish the structure (South Oxfordshire District Council is the Local Planning Authority), but there was a procedural challenge by a third party, and a duplicate application has been submitted. Oxford Preservation Trust, which has restrictive covenants on the Country Park, has no objection to the demolition.

2. The demolition has been deferred following a request through the Scrutiny Committee by a permaculture group. The group approached the Council in 2014 with a proposal to develop a permaculture business on the site. The Council agreed to consider the proposition subject to the receipt of a robust business plan. The Council made clear at the outset that it would not support residential use on the site and the creation of a residential tenancy, nor would it fund the business.

3. The group's business plan was inadequate. The Council agreed to give the group a further year to develop and submit a robust business plan for consideration. In the interim it granted the group a licence on the site for a year, which expressly excluded residential use. The group now argues that residential use is essential to its business proposition.

4. The group initially objected to the demolition of the farmhouse as they wished to rebuild it. More recently the group is advocating the replacement of the existing with a new structure at a lower cost. South Oxfordshire as the local planning authority has made clear to the group that whilst the current structure remains it cannot withhold planning permission for rebuilding the farmhouse, which is the reason given for the group seeking to block the demolition of the property. However, the local planning authority has also made it clear it would oppose any additional use (for example café, teaching, retailing, corporate events) or an increase in the intensity of use or access to the site. (Appendix 2: Letter to South Oxfordshire District Council). These additional uses are central to the group's business case. The County Council Highways Department has also advised that access is unsatisfactory for any intensification of use.

5. A second business plan has recently been submitted by the group (Appendix 3: Westhill Farm Business Plan) and this has been reviewed by the Council's independent internal auditors, BDO. The independent review concludes that: 'we have identified eight critical issues that serve to undermine the information that has been included within the plan. Consequently we conclude that the Plan is not fit for purpose.' (Appendix 4: Westhill Farm-Business Plan Review). The auditors' advice is that the Plan is fundamentally unsound.

6. The Council also has significant concerns as to the accuracy of some of the assertions made in this business plan, for example:

   - The Council has not given its support to the proposals in the plan, which include residential use, and there are no plans for the Parks and Leisure team to use the facilities;
   - Local residents have concerns and are unwilling to see any increase in the current usage of the access, The Ridings, which is a private road.
   - Both the planning and highway authorities have made clear that any intensification of use would not be acceptable. Oxford Preservation Trust has advised it will enforce all the covenants on land use.

7. The Council management policy for its property assets, including parks, is to exclude residential or service tenancies, outside its Council housing. This is because the management risks and the legal protection which apply to residential

tenancies make effective control limited compared with commercial property. The Council does not support the creation of new residential tenancies in this context and the group knew this at the outset.

Next steps

8. In conclusion, the Council proposes to continue with the demolition of the derelict farmhouse on the grounds of public safety and make good the site.

Name and contact details of author:-

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Version number: 1.0
List of background papers: None

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OXFORD CITY COUNCIL

Ms K Gould   3rd May 2016
Planning Department
South Oxfordshire District Council
135, Eastern Avenue
Milton Park
Milton OX14 4SB

Dear Ms Gould

FORMER WESTHILL FARMHOUSE

I am writing to confirm the points we discussed at our meeting on 26th April 2016.

Application for Demolition of the Former Farmhouse

Planning permission was granted for the demolition of the farmhouse in April 2016 in accordance with the planning officer's recommendation. However, the planning authority subsequently received an objection to the process because a copy of the site notice had not been submitted and the full consultation period had not expired before determination. No other objection has been received. A new application will be made this week, and we understand that the officer's report and the recommendation to permit demolition remain unchanged.

Previous Planning Advice

South Oxfordshire planning officers were approached in 2014 by members of a permaculture group to discuss the development of the site. Officers confirmed that permaculture use was consistent with the Green Belt planning designation which applies to the site. No other points were raised in relation to the future of the site, for example the issues of site access, residential use, educational use, retail, café or leisure uses, or use for corporate events.

Development on the Site

The former farmhouse was previously occupied as staff accommodation by a park ranger as an Oxford City Council employee. The building has remained vacant following the re-organisation of the parks service, until being extensively damaged by fire and is now incapable of occupation.

We understand that South Oxfordshire's planning policies and the national planning policies for Green Belt would not allow new residential or other development in this location unless there were exceptional grounds to justify a departure from policy. However, whilst residential use subsists the planning authority would allow redevelopment of the existing structure for residential use alone. It would not permit educational or institutional uses, retail, café or formal leisure uses on the site. The buildings are approximately three quarters of a mile by trackway from the Country Park car park and the planning

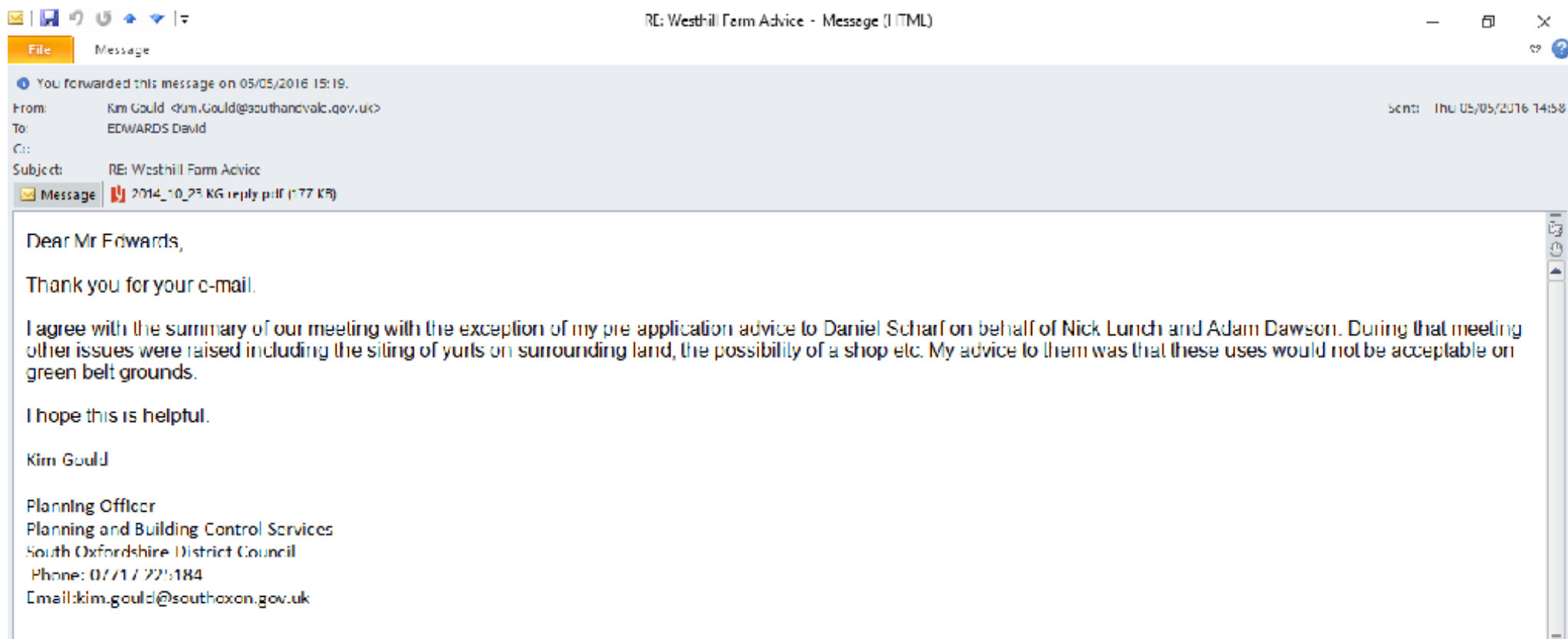authority would not support any intensification or extension of the existing access.

I should be grateful if you would confirm the position as set out above. Please would you call me if it is helpful to discuss.

Yours sincerely

David Edwards
Executive Director

File   Message

From: Kim Gould <Kim.Gould@southandvale.gov.uk>   Sent: Thu 05/05/2016 14:58
To: EDWARDS David
Cc:
Subject: RE: Westhill Farm Advice

Message   2014_10_23 KG reply.pdf (177 KB)

Dear Mr Edwards,

Thank you for your e-mail.

I agree with the summary of our meeting with the exception of my pre application advice to Daniel Scharf on behalf of Nick Lunch and Adam Dawson. During that meeting other issues were raised including the siting of yurts on surrounding land, the possibility of a shop etc. My advice to them was that these uses would not be acceptable on green belt grounds.

I hope this is helpful.

Kim Gould

Planning Officer
Planning and Building Control Services
South Oxfordshire District Council
Phone: 07717 225184
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Planning

Head of Service: Adrian Duffield

South Oxfordshire
District Council

Listening Learning Leading

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Benson Lane, Crowmarsh Gifford
Wallingford OX10 8ED

27 October 2014 **Ref: P14/S2999/PEM**

Dear Mr Scharf,

Re: Proposed re-use of site for agriculture and forestry.
At: Westhill Farm, The Ridings, near Headington, OX3 8TB

I refer to your request for pre-application advice and to our meeting on site on 17 October with Nick Lunch and Adam Dawson to discuss the above proposal.

I understand that you wish to obtain an officers' view on whether a proposal to convert the outbuildings, repair the fire damaged farm house and to run a permaculture operation on the site would be supported.

During our meeting Nick and Adam set out their aspirations for the site which involved a large range of planning issues. I have asked for them to submit clarification on what their priorities are and some form of time line which corresponds to these priorities.

I am aware that your clients wish to receive some feedback from me prior to the meeting with the City Council early in November. I therefore intend to respond in very broad terms.

The assessment of this proposal has to be considered in the context of the relevant policies of the Development Plan and government advice which are set down below:

South Oxfordshire Core Strategy 2027 (SOCS)

CSS1   Overall Strategy
CSEN2   Green Belt
CSR2   Employment in rural areas
CSQ2   Sustainable Design and Construction

South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2011 (SOLP)

G2   Protection and enhancement of the environment

INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

G4   Development in the countryside
C8   Species protection
C9   Landscape features
GB4   Visual amenity of the green belt.
D10   Waste management
R4   Recreation in the countryside
E8   Re-use of rural buildings
A3   Diversification of the agricultural industry
T1/2   Transport requirements of new developments

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

The National Planning Policy Framework Planning Practice Guidance (NPPFPPG)

In assessing this proposal, the main broad issues which need to be considered are:

- Is the principle of permaculture appropriate in the green belt?
- The principle of repairing the farmhouse and using it for residential use.
- Is the conversion of the existing barns to workshops/classroom uses and basic temporary residential accommodation acceptable?
- Is the replacement or repair of the existing barn for uses associated with the permaculture/ educational use acceptable
- Highways
- Ecology/Forestry
- Other issues

The fundamental aim of green belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open; the essential characteristics of green belts are their openness and permanence. Inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the green belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances. It is within this context that the proposal has to be considered.

Permaculture/nature conservation

In general terms, the principle of these practices are appropriate uses within the green belt as they would not adversely affect the openness or visual amenity of the green belt. Agriculture and forestry uses are listed in the NPPF as being appropriate uses in the green belt. It is therefore my opinion that the principle of these uses is acceptable.

Reparing the farmhouse and using it for residential use.

It is my understanding that the farmhouse has been used for residential use by park rangers until approximately 2008 when a change in policy by the City Council resulted in the rangers being relocated and the farmhouse being vacated and subsequently damaged by an arson attack. The repair to the building would not be contentious as it would not adversely affect the openness or visual amenity of the green belt and would bring the building back into residential use which is in accordance with government advice which seeks to bring into use empty housing.

Conversion of outbuildings for use as classrooms/ancillary agricultural buildings/ temporary residential use

The NPPF advises that that the re-use of buildings in the green belt is not inappropriate providing the buildings are of permanent and substantial construction. Policy E8 of the SOLP allows for the re-use of rural buildings provided that a number of criteria are met.

During our meeting I saw a range of barns to the north of the main farmhouse which appeared to be of permanent and substantial construction. Suggested uses for these included a classroom/visitor information facility, temporary residential accommodation during the repair of the main farmhouse and general ancillary agricultural uses. It is necessary to consider the proposal to convert these within the context of policy E8.

Policy E8 of the SOLP states that proposals for the re-use of rural buildings will be permitted provided that the following criteria are met:

- **they are of permanent and substantial construction and are capable of conversion without major or complete reconstruction.** I am of the view that the outbuildings northwest of the farmhouse are in a relatively good condition and could meet this criterion.
- **Their form, bulk and general design are in keeping with their surroundings.** It is unlikely that the design or form of these buildings would change materially with any conversion.
- **The fabric and essential character of the buildings are maintained.** If the buildings were converted to the uses referred to above it is my opinion that this could be done in a way which did not adversely affect the fabric or essential character of the buildings.
- **If the buildings are in the green belt, the proposed use does not have a materially greater impact than the present use on the openness of the green belt and the purpose of including land within it.** The suggested uses which I have referred to above would not, in my opinion, have a greater impact than the present/previous use on the openness of the green belt.
- **There are no overriding amenity, environmental or highway objections.** Given the isolated nature of the site, I do not consider that the proposed conversion of the outbuildings would result in amenity issues. I have consulted the Council's countryside officer, Dominic Lamb, who I understand is meeting Nick Lunch on site soon to look at the proposal from an ecology/environmental perspective. As a general comment, he is supportive of the re-use of the site as a permaculture centre as these types of facilities are based on the premise of low impact living and by nature would be appropriate to the site. I have also consulted the County Highway Authority in relation to access and am awaiting their comments. I understand from our meeting that vehicular movements to the site would typically involve a mini bus to the Shotover Hill car park once a day plus a delivery using The Ridings access in frequently.
- **In the case of B1 or B2 uses, the floorspace in the building or in the complex of buildings does not exceed 500 square metres.** The suggested

proposed uses may include a B1 use (office/light industrial) but this would not exceed 500 square metres.

- **In the case of proposals for residential use, other uses have been explored and found to be unacceptable in planning terms.** One of the suggested uses is for temporary residential accommodation to provide on - site presence and security once tools and equipment are stored on the site, during the repair of the farmhouse. If this is the case, it is my view that an argument could be put forward to justify why a temporary residential use is appropriate and necessary. In addition, the most recent permitted development regulations relating to the conversion of agricultural buildings are generally more permissive and these would be a material consideration in the determination of any planning application for the use of these buildings.

Replacement or repair of outbuilding for uses associated with permaculture practices

During our meeting, I was shown a building which lies to the south west of the farm building and which appeared to be in a reasonable state of repair. It was suggested that this building would be needed in association with the permaculture practice which is intended for the site but may require some alteration or maybe replaced altogether. The NPPF advises that the replacement of a building in the green belt is not inappropriate providing the building is in the same use and not materially larger than the one it replaces. In addition it advises that the alteration of a building is not inappropriate provided that it does not result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original building. Therefore, it is my view that this building could be converted and altered to suit your clients' requirements providing it complies with this guidance and policy E8 criteria.

Highways

I understand from our meeting that students to the permaculture centre would walk to the venue from the Shotover Hill car park north of the site and would be brought there by mini bus. (approximately 1 per day) As such, the amount of vehicular movements generated by this proposed use would not be great. Other visitors could be members of the general public who are visiting the park for recreational purposes and will have either walked from home or parked in the car park. The only vehicular movements to the site will be by delivery vehicles which would use the predominantly tarmac road from The Ridings and would be very infrequent. I have consulted the County Highway Authority for their views and will forward their response once I have received it.

Ecology / Forestry

The site lies outside but adjacent to an SSSI. The proposal involves works to buildings which may be used by bats or other protected species. Dominic Lamb, the Council's countryside officer is meeting with Nick Lunch on site soon to assess the likely impact on protected species and to advise on any surveys which may need to be undertaken prior to any planning application being submitted and to advise on any mitigation measures which may have to be incorporated into the design of any conversion or repair of buildings. I will forward his consultation response once I have received it.

With regards to trees, any planning application should include a survey drawing showing existing trees on the site and information confirming which trees will be removed or retained as part of the proposal. A formal consultation will then be carried out with the Council's forestry team.

Other issues
I have sought to address what I consider to be the main considerations with this proposal in order to assist your clients in their discussions with the City Council regarding the future of this site. During our meeting, other issues were mentioned which included the use of the orchard for camping which involved the erection of yurts. It is my opinion that this proposed use would not be acceptable as it has the potential to adversely affect the openness, character and visual amenity of the green belt and should not be included in any formal planning application. The idea of a small scale café and/or shop was also mooted. It is my opinion that these uses would not be acceptable as they would not be an essential part of the permaculture use of the site and would have the potential to escalate and, in my opinion, is likely to be contentious with local residents. It is my view that such, non essential uses of the site should not be included in any initial planning application and that the focus of any formal submission should be on securing the use of the site for permaculture and the conversions and other works essential for that.

I hope the advice in this letter is helpful. You will appreciate that the views expressed are my own which are not binding on the Council. If you wish to obtain a formal view, you should submit a formal planning application with the necessary forms, plans and fee which will take approximately 8 weeks to determine.

Yours sincerely,

Kim Gould
Planning Officer

Westhill Farm
SHOTOVER PARK COMMUNITY PROJECT

DRAFT

Business Plan

Contents

1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Westhill Farm is located on the edge of a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) which is both environmentally unique and near to several areas of deprivation in Oxford City.

We propose to improve the current derelict site to become a thriving centre for community land based activity. The farm will be restored with the site developed in a way that demonstrates the value and potential of a community managed enterprise within an urban hinterland.

The project has three key strategic objectives which together aim to demonstrate the value of nature and permaculture to the Oxford City community.

1. LEARN – To provide people with opportunities to learn and evolve their expertise and confidence through participation in land and team building/life skills courses and activities such as growing food, bush craft, beekeeping, and permaculture.

2. HEAL – To create an environment within which people can be healthier in body and mind; access the natural amenities and classes, treatments and healing activities such as mentoring, nutrition, ecotherapy, mindfulness classes, and creation of a place of sanctuary.

3. GROW – To restore the farm as a going concern, inherently demonstrating the viability of permaculture. Growing food for own consumption on the site and for sale to the local food market, and the provision of space and support to incubate social enterprises.

There is a huge body of support for the project, which substantiates the ambition and viability of the WHF project:

- Over 500 followers from the City community, with individuals and agencies, local residents and schools, councillors and the Shotover Park Management team all prepared to be involved with time and from some, with finance.

- Support comes from prospective users of the farm, course and service providers, social enterprise tenants, agencies and charities involved in supporting our target customers, and grant issuers.

The plan supports all four of Oxford City Council's corporate objectives, with particular synergy around supporting stronger and more active communities, a cleaner and greener Oxford and a vibrant and sustainable economy.

The plan also fully enables the fulfilment of the development and management plan of the Shotover Country Park; all of Natural England's priorities (three of which are made possible only by this site); and supports much of the Oxford Strategic Partnership Programme.

The site will be developed to enable activities and services over five phases culminating in the opening of a new eco-build fit for purpose educational facility/farmhouse by 2019.

- This approach allows space for fundraising, reflection and for refining the business model according to local priorities and demand.

- Phased delivery enables effective project management with review of progress and learning ahead of decisions to move to the next phase of investment and activity.

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The commercial case outlines a business model that seeks to use both income and grants to support socially excluded groups. Other activities come free to all as they are either gifted by volunteer support, or as a result of the site's location and development.

Delivery of the activities and services is financially self-sustaining after a 3-year period, with rollout of our activities phased over a 4-year period.

- The project will be supported during its start-up period by various funding streams, with a crowd fundraiser as central.

- The project will be primarily sustained by income from the running of courses related to sustainable and healthy living, the sale of produce, as well as rent from social enterprises.

- Other costs will be offset by securing grants to enable courses and apprenticeship schemes. These will be run on-site alongside local charities for the benefit of disadvantaged sections of the local community

Risks to the Project's success have been identified and assessed in terms of likelihood and impact to identify the sub-set that requires highest priority to address.

Failure to secure long-term lease from Oxford City Council (OCC)

- Creation of a detailed Business Plan to enable OCC feedback and input to strengthen plan and support collaborative delivery.

- OCC have confirmed their main resistance to the project is due to management of a farmhouse tenancy being incongruent to their current strategy and worries over excessive traffic to site.

The Project therefore proposes to constitute as a Community Interest Company (CIC). This enables it to assume ownership of the properties and thereby assume full responsibility for the cost of building, renovation and on-going maintenance of the properties. It is believed that by WHF assuming this responsibility; it significantly removes the tenancy management implications for OCC.

A traffic management plan will be inherent to the planning application. Our permaculture ethos will ensure minimum environmental impact to the site and Park due to vehicles.

- The phased approach and strong governance structure will ensure that the health and progress of the project will be managed in a professional and timely manner. OCC (e.g Parks Dept.) representation on the WHF Advisory Board would be invaluable.

Failure to secure residential status for farmhouse new build

- Residential status is important to provide on-site security.

- A limited area of accomodation is deemed necessary for a stockman/farm manager for livestock husbandry.

- The current residential status of the derelict house will enable residential status for the new build to be secured if the application is made before its demolition. The Project Team are prepared to pay for this.

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- South Oxford District Council has communicated their support for the WHF project through the numerous discussions on the development of the WHF project and appreciates the value of on-site security.[1]

- The WHF CIC ownership of liability for the risks, costs and management of the site and farmhouse are designed to mitigate OCC concerns over administering its tenancy management responsibilities.

- Delivery of this plan's benefits has significant synergy with delivery of OCC's corporate priorities.

Failure to secure sufficient funds as planned

- The site has minimal on-going costs, with the phased approach enabling lack of funds to extend current phases until desired funds are in place.

- We have a track record and experience at managing social enterprises and have factored in volunteer fatigue and potential delays within the plan.

- We have experienced fundraisers on the Steering Group and already have a number of funding bids identified and crowd funding ideas. We will be active in trying to also secure in-kind business support. Funding bids must show evidence of a long lease agreement.

2 PROJECT CONTEXT

2a Wider context to project within Oxfordshire

There are a number of relevant strategies, policies and trends that create a supportive context to this Business Plan.

There is a growing interest among policy makers and local authorities in smaller-scale and sustainable forms of agriculture, and in reconnecting urban dwellers to the land management processes that support them. There is therefore much scope for a model farm near the city to demonstrate techniques and host trainings.

From evidence presented by MIND (*Feel Better Outside Feel Better Inside Report, 2013*) and Natural England (*A Review of Nature-based Interventions for Mental Health Care Report, 2016*), it is clear that 'Ecotherapy', or 'Green Care', has a role to play in building and supporting our wellbeing and resilience, and keeping us all healthy. Through referrals from the NHS, schools, probation services and other statutory bodies, we see opportunities for Westhill Farm as a thriving hub for physical and mental wellbeing, through the production of local food, conservation education and practice, and training in land-based skills.

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[1] E.G Pre-application advice letter from South Oxford District Council Planning Department dated 27th October 2014.

2b Academic case supporting Westhill Farm Project

There exists an abundance of international academic research detailing the positive social, economic and environmental impacts of agriculture and food production in and around towns and cities, frequently termed urban/peri-urban agriculture.

Food production in and around towns and cities can contribute significantly to process of community building and strengthening, particularly for marginalised groups (see for example, Cabannes & Raposo, 2013; Saldivar-Tanaka & Kransey, 2004; Smit, Bailkey, & Van Veenhuizen, 2006), and reconnects urban consumers with processes of food production (Kneafsey et al., 2008).

Significant research has also established the contribution of urban/peri urban agriculture to the health of urban inhabitants (Bellows, Brown, & Smit, 2003; Brown & Jameton, 2000; Hodgson, Caton Campbell, & Bailkey, 2011), as well as the therapeutic impact of food growing (O'Brien, 2010). The significant potential of peri-urban agriculture to create jobs, provide skills training and generate livelihoods (Mougeot, 2005; Redwood, 2008), is also well documented.

Productive urban/peri-urban farms are also notable for their capacity to foster diverse communities (Holland, 2004), for engaging children and young people in community-oriented projects (Hung, 2004), and for putting women at the centre of decision-making processes (Hovorka, de Zeeuw, & Njenga, 2009; Slater, 2001).

The environmental case for urban/peri-urban food production is also clear, for its ability to absorb 'grey water' and other waste materials produced within the city (Pinderhughes, 2004); for reducing 'food miles', and in terms of "closing the nutrient loop" (Mougeot, 2006).

(Details of references available on request).

2c Background to Westhill Farm

Westhill Farm is located in beautiful ancient woodland near a meadow and stream, overlooking the city. Being just three miles from some of the most densely populated areas of Oxford, it is much loved and valued by the 600,000 users who visit Shotover Country Park every year, and it is close to areas in the City of highest social deprivation.

Shotover Country Park is a designated Site of Special Scientific Interest. Oxford Preservation Trust, with the help of benefactors, acquired the freehold to cover 180 acres of land on the southern slopes of the hill at Shotover. In 1952 Trustees conveyed the land (which includes Westhill Farm) to the Mayor Aldermen and Citizens of Oxford (now Oxford City Council) to keep and manage it in its natural state as an open space or park to which the public would be allowed access. Shotover Park Rangers lived at Westhill farm from 1938 to 2011. Following an arson attack a few months after the property was vacated in 2011, the property has been left derelict and without a roof, and what is left of the farmhouse has deteriorated further. The site has become a liability and a health risk, and is due to be demolished. However, Westhill Farm is vital to the future of Shotover as it is the only existing facility in the country park.

Long before it was used as a tied cottage for an OCC Countryside Ranger to live on site, it was a viable farm, and the potential for restoring that former function to the site, and meeting the obligations of the OPT Covenant, through a permaculture model farm is a core objective.

2d Westhill Farm project creation and the journey so far

Our group approached Oxford City Council in 2013 to take on the site, to renovate it and return it to agricultural use, with additional benefits to the community. In 2014, the Social Investment Business awarded our group a pre-feasibility grant to help us deliver a proposal to Oxford City Council to take on the management of the site. On the strength of this proposal Oxford City Council awarded our group a licence to occupy land at Westhill Farm and the barn; but which excluded the farmhouse. On approval of a business plan, Oxford City Council have agreed to award the team a long term, peppercorn lease and to give us time to raise funds to realise our vision.

3 STRATEGIC CASE

3a Project Vision and Values

Our vision for Westhill Farm is to be a living demonstration of a community managed permaculture land space that will support our goal of learning, healing and growing.

Our core values

Participation and opportunity - To provide opportunities for socially excluded groups to access growing activities –from agriculture to horticulture and gardening; and growing people as they deepen their connection with nature. Emphasis will be on physical and mental wellbeing and outdoor education.

Learning and educational experiences - To provide a facility and participatory activities for the benefit of learning through experience.

Building collaboration – through teamwork and taking this spirit back into the community

History and heritage - To create an historic working farm sympathetic to the history of the site, and re-establish farm activities replicating heritage crafts and traditional skills.

Embody Exemplary design - To create a pioneering learning environment demonstrating the most innovative design methods of agro-ecology, eco buildings and designing for biodiversity; applied with the highest ethical standards.

3b Project objectives and offer

There are 3 objectives which together enable the vision to be realised:

LEARN; to give people opportunities to learn and evolve their expertise and confidence through participation in growing and nature based courses and activities e.g. apprenticeships, food production, bee keeping, team building, and bush craft.

HEAL; to create an environment within which people can be healthier in mind and in body:

- Fully realise the benefits of eco-therapy, or 'green care', from use of nature, the WHF amenities and from classes, treatments and events.

- To create a place of sanctuary and peace

GROW; to restore the farm as a going concern, inherently demonstrating the viability of permaculture and inspiring others to use these skills and approach-

- Planning and growing crops on the managed land for private and external sale.

- Enabling growth of social enterprise providing mentorship, space and support.

The business plan will show how, over five phases, diverse activities and income streams will be developed to deliver each of these objectives.

3c Target users of Westhill farm activities and services

Our primary user groups are:

- Charitable groups and community services looking for a 'venue' or operation where engaging activities can be sourced for their clients.

- The local community seeking to take part in practical land-based activities as well as courses related to health and wellbeing.[2]

- Schools, students and local residents seeking skills, a healthier way of living, access to nature and a chance to support community activities.

- One of the principal roles provided by the farm will be to improve accessibility for disadvantaged sections of the city, and the disabled, in order to reach out to people who do not currently use Shotover Park.

- Potential customers include other social enterprise schemes that are looking for office space in an area where office space is at a premium.

3d Strategic benefits to Oxford City Council - A shared vision

It is valuable to note that the vision and values of the Westhill Farm Project synergise very well with the long-term vision for the Council, and of the Oxford Strategic Partnership whose aim is *'That Oxford should be a city in which all our citizens feel happy to live and experience a high quality of life'*.

- Fundamentally, the Westhill Farm Project is a community project, which seeks to play an important part in the shared stated aim to *'develop strong communities that break the cycle*

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[2] [2] The New Economics Foundation report; 5 ways to well-being describes; connection, keeping active, taking notice, learning and giving as the essential ingredients to wellbeing and resilient mental health – all of which are at the heart of WHF.

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of deprivation which cause some families and communities to suffer poverty, poor education and reduced life expectancy'.

- Its work will play a part in the preservation and enhancement of Oxford's natural environment and bio-diversity, another key aim of the Oxford Strategic Partnership.

- A complementary asset to Shotover country park by enabling deeper and different engagement with the park in addition to other activities

There are a number of important ways in which the Westhill Farm Project supports and enables delivery of the five City Council's corporate priorities.

Priority 1: a vibrant and sustainable economy
Improve the skills of the workforce – in particular with young people

- We will offer mentoring, training and apprenticeships for young people that will help prepare youth for work. This benefit will also extend to those who are out of work, and include those who are ex-offenders.

- We will create a unique and needed space for different social service providers to meet and where greater collaborative working can be facilitated.

Promote growth of enterprise – in particular by growing a low-carbon economy and supporting an ethical economy

- We will offer unique and high-quality training in environmental skills that:
  – build a lower carbon Oxford
  – support a better, more sustainable farming and horticultural capability

- We will nurture social enterprise by:
  – providing an affordable base for social enterprise businesses
  – offering mentoring and training support

Priority 2 - meeting housing needs and strategy for land management
The Westhill Farm Project will NOT provide a housing asset for any Oxford citizen (other than for the onsite security guardian). However, it can help contribute to a couple of Council Housing priorities. The project also uniquely addresses seven of the eight requirements of Natural England Advisory Board and is a major enabler of the Management plan for the Shotover Country Park SSSI.

Reducing homelessness

- Skills training and mentoring can be targeted towards those who are homeless helping to build confidence and wellbeing as well as developing skills to improve work capability.

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Build homes that are environmentally low in carbon impact

- We wish to renovate the barn and build the educational facility/farmhouse using exemplar eco-design and innovative approaches and uses of materials. This could be of national interest and provide a centre of excellence for other builds in the City to reference.

Strategic use of agricultural land and offset local food security concerns

- We will enable strategic use of agricultural land:
  – encouraging young people into rural-based livelihoods and agricultural jobs
  – restore the land to its agricultural potential and grow foods for local consumption
- Work with university and others to enhance techniques and understanding of more sustainable means of production

Priority 3 - strong and active communities

Delivery of our plan will help to address five of the six key issues outlined in Oxford City Council's priority – it is therefore the area of greatest synergy with the Council's strategy for the City.

Being located close to three of Oxford's most socially deprived areas (Barton, Blackbird Leys and Wood Farm), the Westhill Farm Project will create new and unique activities and support services that are right on the doorstep of many who will really benefit from them. It will also provide an enhanced leisure space that will increase the health and wellbeing of all who visit, including the elderly.

Reduce the extent of inequality and improve the lives of the most vulnerable – particularly to help young people open the doors to positive life opportunities

- We will offer volunteering, education, and apprenticeships to those from the most deprived social groups in Oxford.

- We will support 'back to work' and meaningful livelihoods initiatives for youth and other target groups, including those living in the nearby, deprived communities.

Support older people to have improved wellbeing

- This project provides a purpose, watching and participating, for older people to engage with.

- It offers the benefits of being outdoors and mixing with others.

- The site amenities and activities will be designed to be accessible to the elderly and disabled offering an inclusive environment to support the whole community.

Promote and improving healthy living for all

- Westhill Farm and Shotover Country Park are an important focus of leisure in the area that is free and accessible. We will nurture environmental awareness and connection with nature, which, in turn will help strengthen social cohesion and increase numbers valuing and accessing green space.

- We will promote, educate through courses and ecotherapy, embody the benefits of healthy living, and nurture a value and desire to build personal and collective wellbeing through stronger and happier communities.

Build a safer community in Oxford

- We will help ex-offenders transition better into society and to working life through the 'Band of Brothers' courses and mentoring.

Celebrate culture and community events

- We will actively seek to host a wide range of arts and cultural events on-site that will energise those attending and help to achieve our vision of a sustainable, land-based community facility. Ideas include:
  – fringe literacy and arts festival
  – eco-sculpture national competition
  – corporate 'away-days' and organisational change retreats

- We will host a comprehensive plan of events that will bring together people from all walks of life, helping to overcome social barriers and build a stronger sense of local identity and belonging.

Priority 4 - cleaner and greener Oxford
Reduce the amount of waste sent to the energy recovery facility and increase the amount of re-cycling, re-use, composting and anaerobic digestion of waste

- We will play an active part in the education and empowerment of citizens to lower their personal waste carbon footprint.

Actively promote use of public transport, cycling and walking

We will promote the local bus service as it is adequate to bring people from the nearby communities if they prefer. However, the remaining distance will be by foot. Disabled access is right up to the farmhouse by car and will be permitted via The Ridings road but this is not anticipated to be significant.

Cycling will be encouraged and measures to support this introduced. Walking the last km from the Old Road car park will be central to the mindful introduction of Westhill farm to users.

Enable delivery of Natural England Priorities that help to protect England's nature and landscapes for people to enjoy and for the services they provide

- The Westhill Farm Project fulfils all eight priorities including three, which are yet to be met by anyone else.

- Natural England support the proposed grazing of the scrubland on Shotover Park by having Dexter cattle on the hill, as recommended to the City Council by their ecology consultants, but not yet acted upon.

Priority 5 – efficient and effective Council
Prudent long term planning

- The site will be secure and, with this project, be maintained as an asset for the people of Oxford into the future

- We will deliver the project using strong governance with regular reviews with the key stakeholders (which include the City Council), to ensure all are aware of progress and ongoing health of the organisation.

- A plan will be developed and agreed with key stakeholders for contingency action in the event of project failing to continue as planned. In this scenario, it is envisaged that all liabilities will be managed and covered by the organisation, with the land returning to the leaser in a better condition that at present.

Managing through austerity

- We will develop the site and offer community enriching activities and services that will considerably enhance the Council's social reach without incurring additional costs

Investment to improve city leisure and retail offer from Oxford

- We will play an important part in the delivery of the Shotover Country Park Management and Development plan:
  – we have full support of park rangers
- – we will be the only facility in the park
  – we will be an ideal storage location

- Our location offers the nearby communities and all citizens' access to beautiful natural green and woodland space.

- We will grow and maintain the farm to harvest produce that will feed into the local Oxfordshire food economy, a growing and as yet to be fully met, demand.

3e Key dependencies

Securing the long term lease and planning permission for use of the site as outlined is central to our plan's vision and delivery plan. This includes ensuring effective 24-hour security for the site, achieved by an on-site guardian residing temporarily in the barn, moving to the educational facility/farmhouse once built.

To ensure this critical dependency can be successfully managed we will

- Constitute the organisation to become a CIC limited by guarantee. As a CIC the management of WHF can assume the responsibility and ownership of the costs of building works and maintenance. This significantly reduces the tenancy management requirements OCC would have for the site.

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- Ask for a representation from OCC Parks Department to join our Advisor Board who will support the CIC's director group. Through this strong and proven governance structure, OCC can be assured of involvement and timely updates of plan delivery progress and key decisions.

- Continue our positive discussions with South Oxford District Council to apply for detailed planning permission for the site in its entirety.

3f Critical success factors

There are number of factors that we will successfully manage to deliver the project.

- Recruiting and keeping the management team
- Structuring and managing the fund raising as well as ensuring the financial management is effective and sustained
- Working effectively with key stakeholders and partners
- Securing enough volunteers and gifts in kind to support
- Ensuring the land is well managed to enable growth of produce
- Securing an onsite guardian to provide 24 hour security

4 COMMERCIAL CASE

4a Outline of commercial model

We will deliver our objectives of 'Learn, Heal and Grow' through delivery of a portfolio of activities. The portfolio is composed of activities and services which either generate profit, have costs offset by grants, or can be offered free as they can be either delivered by gift of volunteer involvement or are made possible inherently from the on-going exiting of the Westhill Farm project. A further source of income will be from friends of Westhill Farm.

Profit generating activities and services

- Crops with known profitability
- Courses competitively priced and with known demand
- Rental space to social enterprises with confirmed tenants and rental figures discussed
- Therapy treatments
- Venue hire
- School study trips

Grant supported activities and services

- Mentoring
- Forest school and other educational activities
- Courses and training
- Gardening services

Free activities and services

- Disabled and elderly access
- Therapy
- Interpretation centre
- Seasonal events

Activities and services will be implemented in a phased approach. The phases take into account the stages to develop the site. They also allow the team and the project's key stakeholders' time to manage resources, fundraise and realise the potential of the site.

	PHASE 1	PHASE 2	PHASE 3	PHASE 4	PHASE 5
Timing	Jan to Oct 2016 Business Planning and capability build	Nov 2016 - May 2017 Restoration of the barn - Preparation and build	June 2017 Launch Barn based activities and services	Aug 2018 Rebuild Farmhouse Barn enabled activities and services optimised	Jan 2019 Launch Farmhouse activities and services
Capability build	* Secure stakeholder support * Resolve tenancy issues * CIC incorporation & management in place * Crowd funding initiated * Premises lease and planning secured * Farmhouse demolished	Funds raised - Barn restored with volunteers	Establish barn as a venue to host courses, work and growing space Review farmhouse plan Fundraise for Farmhouse build	Optimise activities enabled by the Barn and outdoor facilities	Activities enhanced through access to dedicated and purpose build inside facilities Onsite guardian moves to farmhouse, as does the catering facility Revised use of barn space
Offer - Learn	Courses; Permaculture, bushcraft, growing, hedgelaying	Some outdoor based training and classes - basic	Interpretation Centre Adult courses: Permaculture, Apprenticeships, Mentoring Child Learning: Bushcraft and forest school	Have established courses with people from our target groups More ambitious and effective event hosting	New services enabled: * Residential Courses * Larger lecture rooms * Bigger wider scale events Improved Interpretation Centre
Offer - Heal		Outdoor therapy classes Mentoring and apprenticeships for barn renovation Begin growing activity to pilot/learn best methods Early social enterprise tenants	Targetted courses to build confidence and team skills Open Ecotherapy Centre First harvest of produce for own use Experiment with produce sales	Optimise actvities enabled by the Barn and outdoor facilities More confident crop/farm management	Activities enhanced through access to dedicated and purpose build inside facilities More space for social enterprise rent
Offer - Grow	Land preparation				

4b Competition

There are several other land-based facilities in Oxon. Together they evidence the demand for land based educational facilities. Rather than competition, we see many opportunities for collaboration, and regard these projects as inspiring allies in a growing agroecology movement.

Oxford City Farm, Cowley, is the only farm-based site located in the City area (comparable to Westhill Farm). However, their site does not have facilities to offer the range and type of therapy and learning.

Hill End Outdoor Education Centre, Eynsham, is a great outdoor activities centre primarily targeted at selling residential courses targeted to under 18's, mainly school groups. It is hard to reach in a rural location with no connection to a local community.

Earth Trust, Wittenham, is an established charity offering heritage skills and land-based events. There is contact with livestock, and their heritage courses are very popular. The site is relatively far from the City and hard to get to without a car.

Farmability, Wytham: a popular day service for adults with learning disabilities and autism. They practice the empowerment model: adults with learning disabilities are regarded as co-farmers. Provision is limited to just this target group.

L.O.V.E. operates at various sites in Oxfordshire. A land-based social enterprise, which aims to empower communities to take responsibility for their own wellbeing. The project demonstrates how strong ethics and bonds come out of a voluntary-based community. We see opportunity for collaboration -project does not have a permanent base, but is dependent on being granted access to various sites across the county.

Barracks Lane Community Garden, once a derelict Oxford City Council owned site attracting anti-social behavior; a local group transformed this place into a thriving hub supporting stronger communities.

4c Demand for offer substantiated

The team have conducted numerous public consultations since 2013, hosting well-attended events in Cowley, Horspath, at local festivals, and through door-to-door conversations with local residents. Our proposals have been met with universal support. With minimal promotion to date we already have a database of 500 followers, and 50 active volunteers attending weekly work-days.

The first course, a four-day immersion in permaculture design, was fully subscribed. The income enabled us to offer five free places to low waged volunteers to take the course and take a lead implementing the design.

There is much scope for a model farm near the city to demonstrate techniques and host courses and trainings.

The government has asked local councils in England to research demand for self-build plots in their area and to prioritise sales of brownfield sites to self-builders. Westhill Farm could offer apprenticeships and accredited training in eco-build techniques.

The concept of urban gardening and edible cities has attracted much interest in recent years. For example, many local schools have introduced raised beds, small vegetable plots and herb gardens into their playgrounds; but these could often be better utilised. A subsidized gardening service that improves the work prospects of local residents through the provision of free training will be something that will attract almost all housing associations and charitable trusts within the area. Other customers would be those in advance years with gardens and those concerned with the management of their residential environments including communal or private gardens. The long-term unemployed will form the majority of participants taking part in gardening courses.

Area of demand	Numbers
Charities	Six letters of support from leading charities with excellent fundraising records have been received
Local Schools	Five schools that have been approached so far would use the site for forest school activities and are keen to look at partnership for a site of alternative education through Pupil Referral Units.
University of Oxford, Brookes University, Ruskin College, College of Further Education, etc.	Success working with architect students at Brookes University and Oxford Hub; we have also had discussions with art and ecology departments. Rycotewood Furniture college, Ruskin College and others will be approached.
Probation services	A Band of Brothers are a charity contracted to take 35 young men over the next 3 years from the Thames Valley area through a mentoring scheme; which could be based at Westhill Farm.
Social enterprises	2 organisations want to rent office space and run several trainings a year from Westhill Farm.
NHS	MIND research confirms the intent to offer ecotherapy (including Mindfulness) to build and support wellbeing and personal resilience.
General public	600,000 visitors a year to Shotover, yet no public amenities. 50 volunteers turn up regularly for workdays at Westhill Farm. We currently have 500 supporters on our database. We were fully booked for our first permaculture course held in March.
Tourists	This is an under exploited market. Tolkein and C.S Lewis based their books on walks in Shotover woods, and Oxford attracts large numbers of visitors thanks to its literary heritage. Many of the popular Oxford festivals could run "fringe" events hosted by Westhill Farm e.g. Oxford Literary Festival.

4d Provision of offer substantiated

The Council's Parks department fully support our project, and will use the farm as a base from which to deliver restoration and biodiversity work set out in their management plan for Shotover Park.

Our Pre-Feasibility report included a letter from the Planning Department of South Oxford District Council outlining support for our development plans.

We will attract the support of investors and donors. The following organisations are willing to partner with us, because they see value in developing a stake in the project. All of them have the skills, resources and expertise to deliver the vision. While the project is in start-up phase, it will be important to work with these organisations, and the team of people listed. Each one has a strong track record of delivering projects.

Social Enterprise Partnerships

- Insightshare – established social change catalyst with 16-year track record, world-class training supplier, and international reach with firm roots in Oxford.
- Gaia Veda – established landscaping business and permaculture design courses
- A Band of Brothers – charity delivering probation services for Thames Valley
- Permaculture Association – UK national organisation and charity
- Archetype Design – ethical design consultancy

Partnering Academic Institutes

- Centre for Agroecology and Water Resilience (CAWR) Coventry University
- Brookes University
- Oxford University

Partner charities and schools

- The Blackbird Academy Trust
- Oxford Spires Academy
- Lark Rise School
- MIND
- Refugee resource
- Restore
- Aspire Oxford
- Crisis
- Oxfordshire Youth
- Ark-T
- Nature Effect

A large pool of volunteers has been established and good links with local and national organisations has resulted in organisations such as 'Vodafone' providing volunteers and well developed links with Oxford Brookes University.

Local Suppliers, Builders, Roofers, and Joinery firms have pledged support through in-kind and subsidised work, and this will have significant potential to reduce building costs if fully realised.

To address OCC's genuine concerns over managing a tenancy that is incongruent with it other properties, Westhill Farm will constitute as a Community Interest Company (CIC). This will enable it to assume ownership of the properties and to thereby assume full responsibility for the cost of building, renovation and maintenance.

- A long term (ideally 40-60 year) lease from OCC, paying a peppercorn rent and zero rates is sought to support the project and minimise the costs and liability between the 2 parties.

- In the event of the project's failure, disposal of the farmhouse asset would be the responsibility of the CIC who would put contingency plans in place for this eventuality.

- For us to enable an onsite guardian in residence, both OCC and SODC must approve our proposal.

5 FINANCIAL CASE

5a Cost and revenue profiles over the phases

Outline costs to develop the facilities

It is our belief that the decision to demolish and rebuild the farmhouse is the correct one. Although a renovation fits with the objectives of the project overall, the risk the current structure poses to the public and the compromises its renovation would impose on the finished building prevent this being a practical solution.

There is a far cheaper option to a historic renovation, which also offers fewer risks to Oxford City Council and Westhill Farm project. We have a professional quote from a local firm, Sylva, to rebuild the farmhouse like-for-like, using a sustainable new-build timber-frame approach, which delivers an environmentally efficient building at a cost of £35,000 plus interior fittings. Much of the finishing work such as exterior cladding, will be undertaken by volunteers, and we expect some sponsorship for materials and in-kind work to be offered by local firms.

We believe this to be a time efficient solution which minimises risk to Oxford City Council, the project and the public. What is left of the structure will be taken down to a level slab; leaving the project team free to focus immediately on running activities on site without risk to the users; and thus able to deliver benefits to the city, whilst developing sustainable income streams from the outset.

The costs of a conversion of the barn to temporary living quarters, office and workshops are estimated at around £50,000. It is necessary to secure the site and any future capital investments from vandalism[3], as soon as possible. The fundraising team will be able to stagger efforts to raise the capital required; initially to cover the barn renovation in Phase Two; and then to cover the farmhouse rebuild in Phase Four.

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[3] Vandalism of a toilet facility occurred in summer 2015, which along with the arson attack is indicative of the high likelihood of further damage without on site security that a resident would bring.

Revenue

A lease agreement and strong business case will reassure investors and donors.

The business plan does not assume any financial support nor depend upon any seed funds from Oxford City Council. As the cashflow forecast shows, our target is to raise capital investment of £100,000 in Phases One and Two from grants and a crowd funding campaign, and a further £100,000 in Phase Three and Four. Growth of trading income across the phases is substantiated by the development of improved facilities.

Renovating the barn in Phase Two will secure the site from further vandalism, and allow us to get some of the income generating activities under way. At that stage our projections show a quarterly income in excess of £10,000 (excluding grants) generated from hiring the space to partner organisations, running our own courses, and renting space in the barn. Phase Four will see the farmhouse/educational facility rebuilt, and the provision of larger and improved facilities to enable us to run residential courses and some corporate events, raising our quarterly income in Phase Five to £30,000 (excluding grants). By Phase Five we will be relying less on grant income, but making a healthy surplus – enabling us to reinvest in the project mission to serve socially deprived sectors of the community.

Income and expenditure

Phase/Year	Cost	Income
Pre-feasibility 2014-15: Build team Planning advice Pre-feasibility study Market research Governance Public liability insurance Community consultation Site design Business Plan	£10,000	£10,000 -Received as a SIB grant in 2014 plus private donations. Over £50,000 worth of people hours has been invested developing the business plan, project vision, in consultation processes, and overseeing site works to date.
Phase One 2016: Sign lease Incorporation and Governance Planning permission Reconnect services Communications and outreach Fundraising for stables	£3,500 plus (£50,000 in kind skilled volunteer hours)	We expect to raise over £5,000 from fundraising events, and acquiring small local grants to support set up costs. Over £50,000 worth of people hours has been pledged by Management team, advisors and volunteers.

Phase Two (2016-17):	£100,000 plus (£30,000 in kind skilled volunteer hours).	£100,000 will be raised from grant applications, some income generating activities, crowd funding and other community fundraising efforts towards renovating the barn.
Crowd funding campaign		
Renovate stables		
24 hour security		
Launch Membership Scheme		
Promotion and marketing		
Strategic partnerships		An additional £30,000 worth of people hours has been pledged.
Land works -implement designs		
Tools and equipment		
Phase Three (2018):	£100,000 We will also begin to pay some core staff costs.	Raise £100,000
Fundraise for farmhouse		
First sales from produce		By Phase Three we have £10,000/quarter income from rent, courses, sales from produce, membership fees, events, etc. Rising to £40,000/quarter once farmhouse is furnished. Supplemented by grant funding for specific projects.
Open Interpretation Centre and café		
Rent office space		
Public events		
Ecotherapy Hub		
Phase Four (2018):	Annual running costs of around £75,000	The project is breaking even.
Build farmhouse		Average of £40,000/quarter income from rent, courses, sales from produce, membership fees, events, etc.
		Supplemented by grant income.
Phase Five (2019)	Annual running costs of around £130,000	The project is making a small surplus from courses and other activities. The project could now invest in a part-time fundraiser.
Residential courses		
Oxford Literary Festival Fringe		
Theatre, arts and sculpture events		
Nationally established Sustainability Centre		
Corporate Events		
Professional fundraiser		

5b Cashflow Forecast

	2016				2017	
Year						
Quarter	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2
Phase	1	1	1	2	2	2
INCOME						
(Starting Balance)	£1,000					
Funding						
Investment funding/donations		£1,000	£2,000		£500	£1,000
Grant income				£35,000	£35,000	£5,000
Fundraising events		£500	£1,500	£500	£500	£500
Big Charity Event				£5,000		
Membership Fees						
Solar/heating grants						£5,000
Interest free loans				£5,000		
Trading Income						
Produce sales						£1,000
Corporate Events						£500
Festival Events						£500
Venue Hire fees charged				£500	£500	£1,000
Course fees charged				£1,000	£1,000	£1,000
Ecotherapy/Green Care activities	£1,000					
Rental Income						
Rent of Offices						
Manager's accommodation						
TOTAL INCOME	£2,000	£1,500	£3,500	£47,000	£37,500	£15,500

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EXPENDITURE

Start-up Costs

Item	Year 2016 Q1 (Phase 1)	2016 Q2 (Phase 1)	2016 Q3 (Phase 1)	2016 Q4 (Phase 2)	2017 Q1 (Phase 2)	2017 Q2 (Phase 2)
Design costs						
Planning Application, advice, drawings	£1,000					
Governance set-up costs						
Meetings			£800	£50	£50	£50
Legal expenses			£100			
Risk Assessment			£50			
Health &Safety Expenditure			£250			£500
Implementation of permaculture design				£500	£500	£500
Fencing			£250		£250	£500
Stable Block Renovation						
stove connection				£250		
services reconnection				£4,000		
Repair of roof					£12,000	
renovation of offices \ kitchen						£35,000
Heating System						£3,000
Solar PEV						£2,000
Farmhouse Build						
Farmhouse						
Farmhouse fittings						
External cladding						
Project management						
Improvements to access track						£500
Storage unit (Shipping container)						£1,000
Tools				£250	£250	£250
Contingency				£250	£250	£500

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	2016				2017	
Year						
Quarter	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2
Phase	1	1	1	2	2	2
Running Costs (Overheads)						
Insurance						£500
Marketing / Fundraising costs		£500	£100	£1,000	£100	£500
Rates / Council tax						£250
Heat, Light, Water Rates and power				£100	£100	£100
Phone / Internet						£250
Accountant						
Maintenance			£100	£100	£100	£100
loan repayment						£100
Direct Costs of Trading						
Produce						£500
Corporate events						
Hospitality/events						
Courses Direct Costs			£200	£200	£200	£400
Ecotherapy/Green Care activities						
Outreach			£100	£100	£100	
Travel Expenses					£100	£150
Stationery						£50
Staff Wages						
farm manager					£2,000	£2,000
course manager					£2,000	£2,000
communications					£1,000	£1,000
NICs on the above					£183	£183
Freelance Fees (expansion phase)						
Operations support					£183	£183
Youth work					£45	£45
Professional fundraiser						
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	£3,017	£601	£1,951	£6,702	£21,129	£51,912
Surplus (Deficit)	-£1,017	£899	£1,549	£40,298	£16,371	-£36,412
CUMULATIVE Surp / Def		-£118	£1,431	£41,729	£58,100	£21,688

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INCOME

	2018						2019			
Year										
Quarter	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Phase	3	3	3	3	4	4	5	5	5	5
(Starting Balance)										
Funding										
Investment funding/donations	£15,000									
Grant income				£10,000	£50,000	£5,000	£5,000	£5,000	£5,000	£5,000
Fundraising events	£500	£500	£500	£500	£500	£500	£2,000	£2,000	£2,000	£2,000
Big Charity Event		£5,000				£5,000		£5,000		£5,000
Membership Fees	£1,250	£1,250	£2,000	£2,000	£2,500	£3,000	£3,500	£4,000	£4,000	£4,000
Solar/heating grants										
Interest free loans										
Trading Income										
Produce sales	£2,000	£2,000	£2,000	£3,000	£3,000	£4,000	£4,000	£4,000	£4,000	£4,000
Corporate Events	£1,000	£1,000	£1,000	£1,000	£1,000	£1,000	£3,000	£3,000	£3,000	£3,000
Festival Events	£1,000	£1,000	£1,000	£1,000	£2,000	£2,000	£2,000	£2,000	£2,000	£2,000
Venue Hire fees charged	£2,000	£2,000	£1,500	£2,000	£2,000	£2,000	£3,000	£3,000	£3,000	£3,000
Course fees charged	£2,000	£2,000	£2,000	£4,000	£4,000	£4,000	£8,000	£8,000	£8,000	£8,000
Ecotherapy/Green Care activities	£1,000	£1,000	£1,000	£1,000	£1,000	£1,000	£3,000	£3,000	£3,000	£3,000
Rental Income										
Rent of Offices	£1,000	£1,000	£1,000	£1,000	£1,000	£1,000	£3,000	£3,000	£3,000	£3,000
Manager's accommodation	£500	£500	£500	£500	£500	£500	£2,000	£2,000	£2,000	£2,000
TOTAL INCOME	£27,250	£17,250	£12,500	£26,000	£67,500	£29,000	£38,500	£44,000	£39,000	£44,000

EXPENDITURE

Start-up Costs

			2018				2019			
Quarter	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Phase	3	3	3	3	4	4	5	5	5	5
Design costs										
Planning Application, advice, drawings										
Governance set-up costs										
Meetings	£50	£50	£50	£50	£50	£50	£100	£100	£100	£100
Legal expenses										
Risk Assessment										
H&S Expenditure										
Implementation of permaculture design	£500			£500		£1,000		£500		£1,000
Fencing										
Stable Block Renovation										
stove connection										
services reconnection										
Repair of roof										
renovation of offices \ kitchen										
Heating System										
Solar PEV										
Farmhouse Build										
Farmhouse						£35,000				
Farmhouse fittings						£20,000				
External cladding						£3,000				
Project management					£2,000	£3,000				
Improvements to access track						£1,000				£1,000
Storage unit (Shipping container)										
Tools										
Contingency	£250	£250	£250	£250	£250	£500	£750	£750	£750	£750

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Financial projection — Running Costs, Direct Costs, Staff Wages and Freelance Fees

Year			2018				2019			
Quarter	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Phase	3	3	3	3	4	4	5	5	5	5
Running Costs (Overheads)										
Insurance					£500				£500	
Marketing / Fundraising costs	£250	£1,000	£250	£250	£250	£250	£250	£250	£250	£250
Rates / Council tax	£250	£250	£250	£250	£250	£250	£500	£500	£500	£500
Heat, Light, Water Rates and power	£100	£100	£100	£100	£100	£100	£150	£150	£150	£150
Phone / Internet	£100	£100	£100	£100	£100	£100	£150	£150	£150	£150
Accountant					£500				£500	
Maintenance	£1,000	£1,000	£1,000	£1,000	£1,000	£1,000	£1,500	£1,500	£1,500	£1,500
loan repayment									£5,000	
Direct Costs of Trading										
Produce	£500	£500	£500	£500	£500	£500	£500	£500	£500	£500
Corporate events	£500	£500	£500	£500	£500	£500	£1,000	£1,000	£1,000	£1,000
Hospitality/events	£500	£500	£500	£500	£500	£500	£500	£500	£500	£500
Courses Direct Costs	£1,000	£1,000	£1,000	£1,000	£2,000	£2,000	£3,000	£3,000	£3,000	£3,000
Ecotherapy/Green Care activities	£500	£500	£500	£500	£500	£500	£1,000	£1,000	£1,000	£1,000
Outreach							£3,000	£3,000	£3,000	£3,000
Travel Expenses	£150	£150	£150	£150	£150	£150	£500	£500	£500	£500
Stationery	£50	£50	£50	£50	£50	£50	£100	£100	£100	£100
Staff Wages										
farm manager	£3,000	£3,000	£3,000	£3,000	£3,000	£3,000	£5,000	£5,000	£5,000	£5,000
course manager	£3,000	£3,000	£3,000	£3,000	£3,000	£3,000	£5,000	£5,000	£5,000	£5,000
communications	£2,500	£2,500	£2,500	£2,500	£2,500	£3,000	£3,000	£3,000	£3,000	£3,000
NICs on the above	£321	£321	£321	£321	£321	£321	£597	£597	£597	£597
	£321	£321	£321	£321	£321	£321	£597	£597	£597	£597
	£252	£252	£252	£252	£252	£321	£321	£321	£321	£321
Freelance Fees										
operations						£3,000	£3,000	£3,000	£3,000	£3,000
youth work	£1,500	£1,500	£1,500	£1,500	£1,500	£2,000	£2,000	£2,000	£2,000	£2,000
Professional fundraiser							£2,000	£2,000	£2,000	£2,000
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	£16,496	£16,746	£18,014	£17,496	£19,247	£88,868	£36,888	£36,369	£39,869	£36,869
Surplus (Defecit)	£10,754	£504	-£5,514	£8,504	£48,253	-£59,868	£1,612	£7,631	-£869	£7,131
CUMULATIVE Surp / Def	£32,442	£32,945	£27,431	£35,935	£84,188	£24,320	£25,932	£33,563	£32,694	£39,824

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Rent

In return for taking on the full running and maintenance costs for the site and to reassure our funders and partners, we request Oxford City Council to provide a long lease on Westhill Farm, including the farmhouse, at a peppercorn rate. Our lease should allow us to generate an income from sub-letting, and hiring space.

With these agreements in place, based on our assumptions of the popularity of Shotover among the citizens of Oxford and the willingness of the public to support and donate to the project, by Phase Four we can achieve a surplus to enable us to reinvest in the site and activities benefitting the city.

Supporters donating regular income

In the long term, a tiered membership scheme comprising of, say, 500 "partners" paying £50/year, and 1000 "friends" paying £20/year could bring an income of £45,000 annually. In addition to feeling satisfaction at supporting a good cause, members could be offered benefits such as access to courses or special events at discounted rates, occasional use of the site for private functions such as birthday parties. This way people are participating in producing stronger, safer communities and a cleaner, greener Oxford.

The farmhouse/educational facility will be equipped with dormitories and improved facilities for hosting groups, including occasional corporate hospitality events. Income from residential trainings, corporate events and wellbeing retreats will rise year on year to create a surplus to reinvest in the project. Community membership fees will provide an annual income of unrestricted funds, also giving the wider community a stake in the project.

Evidencing income projections

A first round of funding applications has been completed. £12,000 funding has been received which included a Locality grant through SIB for an initial pre-feasibility study, and personal donations.

A further 12 potential funders have been identified comprising grant giving bodies and private businesses. These include WREN, TOE2, European Social Fund, Esmee Fairbairn, Heritage Lottery Fund, Tolkein Trust, Wates Foundation, Garfield Weston Foundation, Vodaphone, BMW, Unipart, W Lucy & Co. and Grundys.

Local support to save the farm from dereliction or demolition must not be underestimated, as shown on our Facebook page following local news articles. There is every chance a campaign could help successfully raise all or most of the capital funds required from the Oxford community. Looking at similar cases across Oxfordshire, such as £300,000 raised by community in Horspath to buy the village chapel, now known as Horspath Hub; we believe a crowd-funding campaign would generate funds towards the costs of renovating the stables and rebuilding the farmhouse/educational facility.

Local charities have been contacted. Of these 6 have shown some genuine interest in providing funding opportunities and requested further information. Oxfordshire Aspire are part of the Local Enterprise Partnership; and have agreed to apply with us to a new community grants programme for Oxfordshire funded by the European Social Fund later this year for a

grant of £50,000. A Band of Brothers and Refugee Resource are two other well-established charities keen to apply for funding to run projects at Westhill Farm.

Research of local market rent indicates that an annual income of around £10,000 may be raised from rent fees for the barn. A site guardian is willing and able to move in as soon as possible. At least two social enterprises are interested in renting small office space and running trainings on the site.

Rental income from any of the existing buildings as premises for providing educational activities may also provide an income within the region of £500 per month. However this requires initial seed funding to renovate the barn and to provide a kitchen area.

6 MANAGEMENT CASE

6a Marketing plan

Phase One

- Develop and strengthen existing network of support partners and links to outreach social service partners
- Build awareness and support for Westhill Farm project. This will be in the form of newsletters, a new website, and events promoted primarily online and on Daily Info.

Phase Two

- Create and deliver the crowd funding campaign. All individuals who give money will become 'friends' of the Westhill Farm project organisation. The campaign will use a mix of media including social media, use of own and partner websites, video, press and events. A mailing list will be created, building on our existing 500-follower list. We have been offered advice on crowd fundraising from other successful organisations including Cultivate and The City Farm project.
- Deliver an on-going series of campaigns to attract volunteers to be involved in the barn renovation.
- Fund raising activities will continue, primarily via events on site or by social media.

Phase Three

- Launch the opening of the barn and its facilities with an event and associated on and offline marketing activity including press.
- Promote the activities, services and courses now available. Fliers, posters as well as online and social media marketing activity planned. Create a course booking system that links to subscriber and membership databases
- Develop a calendar of events and courses at the Westhill Farm and promote these effectively across the county and City. Identify potential annual events that can be hosted on site.
- Deliver a Lottery bid for farmhouse build.

Phase Four

- Consolidate activity and funding base
- Build funds and momentum for the rebuild of the farmhouse.

Phase Five

- Launch opening of farmhouse – National press as well as local, with an event
- Promote new and larger activities in farmhouse and on site
- Revise promotional material to include residential activities and any other new and changes services available.

Marketing costs will be closely managed and minimised where possible by the wonderful support of volunteers and support partners. The Westhill Farm website and use of social media will be the primary marketing communications tools, as well as promotion through support network websites and events.

6b Site development plan

Planning permissions

- A letter of support for our development plans has been given by the planning department of South Oxford District Council; this was included in the Pre-feasibility report.
- We have received further advice from the Planners that a planning application to replace the current building should be submitted before demolition takes place. Otherwise the plot becomes "vacant" and may not be granted planning permission in future. We have requested permission to apply for planning permission, to replace the building with like-for like: a low impact eco-building of the same footprint.

Phases of site development

Phase 1

- Sign Lease
- Submit planning applications to rebuild farmhouse/educational facility and temporary accommodation for a site manager
- Reconnect water, electricity and telephone services
- Community communications and outreach
- Fundraise for stables and workshops

Phase 2

- Improvements to access
- Renovate stables and workshops
- Complete temporary accommodation for a site guardian
- Establish 24 hour security
- Rental income from on-site guardian living in barn
- Community consultation meetings on designs
- Promotion, volunteering events, pilot courses, permaculture design
- Launch Membership scheme
- Implement land designs

Phase 3

- Consolidate programme of activities.
- Additional rental income from social enterprises
- Establish an annual calendar of specialist courses
- Annual calendar of seasonal events
- Harvest first produce
- Open Interpretation Centre
- Open Café and farm shop
- Second wave of fundraising through crowd funding and membership campaign
- Establish Ecotherapy hub
- Maintenance of access

Phase 4

- Build educational facility on site of old farmhouse

Phase 5

- Residential courses
- Significantly raise income from produce, and venue hire
- Market specialist products e.g. shitake mushrooms, organic Elderflower and Rose cordial

6c The Steering Group – key members

Nick Lunch, project co-founder, has a keen interest in indigenous rights, the environment and climate change, and has channeled this passion into establishing numerous successful local, national and international environmental campaigns and social inclusion projects. Nick was the founder in 1996 of RAP Community Action, a local charity that inspired local volunteers and trained staff to support marginalised youth in Oxford through Local Agenda 21 youth-led eco-clubs. He also founded Insightshare in 1999, an organisation that is one of the global leaders of participatory video running projects for the United Nations, Oxfam, CARE, PLAN, DfiD in over 50 countries.

Matt Morton, project co-founder, is Director of Gaia Veda, a successful landscaping company, and has an impressive range of skills and experience related to the environment and permaculture, working with communities, councils, schools and nature. He worked at the Permaculture Institute from 1996; a passion he's continued via gardening work at Barrack's Community Garden; was Green Oxford City Councillor from 2008-2012; and an Environmental Management and Science teacher at Oxford Montessori School.

Adrian Hicks has over 25 years' experience as Managing Director and Financial Director in a number of companies. He has recently resigned his commercial directorships to concentrate on creative projects, and to advise and participate in social enterprises and community projects.

Dominic Woodfield is Director of Bioscan (UK), an environmental consultancy specialising in applied ecology. Dominic brings a huge amount of expertise in business management, ecology, SSSI management, environmental and planning policy and law.

Clare Ridley is director of Unite Ignite; a change management consultancy. She has extensive senior management experience, and was awarded an MBE in recognition of her work in Japan. Her recent work within the social enterprise arena, notably with Cultivate Oxford, leverages her commercial skills to support and enable focus to enable community benefit.

Alison Noel had a portfolio career as a manager and consultant in learning and development, specialising in employability skills, and training evaluation mainly for individuals with few or no qualifications. More recently she was working part-time in the field of charity management and community development, including as manager of Cutteslowe Community centre –where she was highly successful in raising funds.

Conroy Harris has a Certificate in Counselling, is an experienced Mental Health practitioner, CBT Group worker and Workshop Leader within the Oxford Mental Health community. He is an accredited trainer with the Oxford Mindfulness Centre. Since the late 1990s, he has worked as a Mental Health advocate, a Mind Mental Health Day Centre Manager, BME out-reach worker and Fathers Development worker with Oxfordshire County Council and Oxfordshire Parenting Forum. He is currently in the process of setting up 'A Band of Brothers' group in Oxford, supporting and mentoring young men within the Criminal Justice system.

Michael Phillips is director of the Oxford-based design consultancy, Archetype Design. He has experience of organisation and management, most notably as Chair of the Governing Body of a Steiner School.

Christopher Yap is currently working towards his PhD on community-managed urban agriculture at the Centre for Agroecology, Water and Resilience at Coventry University. He previously worked as a researcher at University College London, where he was involved in a range of action-research projects relating to urban development planning and urban governance.

Richard Luff is an independent Oxford based disaster management consultant having worked with Oxfam, DFID and the UN over a period of 27 years, and is a trustee of Bridewell Organic Gardens.

Cliff Jordan set up a small Social Enterprise and led several small Charities, as founding Trustee, Chair and CEO.

6d Governance

The West Hill farm project (A Model Farm. For the community, run by the community[4]) has to date been run through a Ltd company with 2 directors; Nick Lunch and Matt Morton. Now is the right time to choose a different organisational and legal entity that better reflects the aspirations of the not for profit social enterprise nature of the endeavour and that gives greater confidence to a wide variety of potential supporters. A small meeting of key individuals[5] agreed that a Community Interest Company (CIC) would the best organisational entity at this stage to move forwards as it both represents the social purpose of the endeavour and is simple to set up. This is envisaged as an intermediate entity for a period of up to 18-24 months before potentially evolving into another social organisation structure that can accommodate a much bigger active group of supporters that will be brought together as momentum is built.

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[4] http://westhillfarm.weebly.com/
[5] Meeting on 23rd March 2016 Nick Lunch, Clare Ridley, Cliff Jordan, Christopher Yap and Richard Luff

Skills and experience requirement

Among them, Directors ideally will have experience and skills in (*essential):

- Governorship/directorship*
- Finance*
- Project management*
- Volunteer management*
- Permaculture*
- Business management
- Social Enterprise management
- Horticulture
- Construction
- Marketing
- Fundraising (both from grants and individual donors)
- Education
- Academia

Where directors don't collectively have all this experience, it will be complemented from advisory support, much on a pro bono basis, along with some on a paid basis where required.

Other Westhill Farm supporters

The directors will need to build and work with a much bigger supporter base. The categories of supporters envisaged are set out below. Individuals and organisations may fall within one or more of these categories.

- Advisors. Committed individuals who will provide supplementary specialist expertise and time (pro bono unless otherwise agreed).

- Volunteers; individual, groups and organisations, who will provide pro bono time to assist on both regular and ad hoc basis.

- Friends. Envisaged as a category of individual and organisations who will be willing to provide regular financial contributions to the project.

- Stakeholders; such as potential farm user groups, Councils (City and South Oxfordshire), local resident's association and others as required.

- Patrons; high profile individuals who will be champions of the Westhill farm project.

As noted above the Community Interest Company may be replaced by a different organisation entity in due course, which would allow for more democratic control by all those contributing to the project. Until then the Directors are not formally accountable to supporters, although they depend on goodwill and support, so will seek to take decisions that they can demonstrate are in the interests of WHF and/or its aims.

The key areas of work that currently require a Director to take a lead on include:

- Finance (keeping a handle on the money, and on financial planning)

- Volunteers (keeping our pool of volunteers connected and informed)

- Project Planning (keeping an updated chart of what has to happen when, by who, with what etc)

- Lobbying/campaigning (talking to all the right people to ensure we secure a lease and Planning Consent to do all we want on site)

7 RISK MANAGEMENT

The table below outlines the 11 key risks that would affect the success of the Westhill Farm Project, together with a summary of the key strategies and actions planned to mitigate their possible outcome. An assessment of each risk in terms of the likelihood and potential impact of the risk taking place is mapped in the subsequent matrix. This enables the team to ensure it has prioritised its efforts to manage risk. Reviews of risk will be an inherent discipline of the Steering Group and be reviewed regularly and as a part of the critical path of the plan implementation.

Risk 1 - Management of the project cannot be delivered

- The set up team leaves: Matt or Nick either burn out or re-locate. Risk is for Phase 1 in particular

- We cannot attract and retain people with the right skills or experience to the management team and advisory board

- We are unable to attract and sustain sufficient numbers and/or appropriately talented volunteers

Mitigation

- A Steering Group led the development of the business plan and developed the phases. Others with necessary skills have joined to lead Phase 1.

- Engagement in the project has been consistent for 3 years. There are 50 people regularly turning up to Sunday work sessions and occasional events at the farm. We've built up a database of over 500 supporters, growing daily (e.g. Facebook page has 451 likes).

- We currently have 10 qualified people on a Steering Group; nobody has required for payment for services to the project. People are happy to be in-service to the greater vision.

- There is a high level of talent and qualification being offered. We will conduct a proper recruitment drive for volunteers once the lease is secured; and we intend to cover much of the running of the site with volunteers through to Phase 3.

Risk 2 - Insufficient funding during the implementation phases

- To develop the site, capital investment

- To run the on-going operations

- To offer free-to-user facilities and events

Mitigation
- The site has minimal on-going costs (e.g. no rent); with few or no overheads Phase 1 can be extended until funding targets are reached.

- The 5 phases of project development are realistic, and take account of natural volunteer fatigue and anticipated delays.

- We have the track record and experience in setting up successful social enterprises and charities in Oxford; we have the skills, partnerships and support necessary to succeed.

- We have a fundraiser on board identifying funders and we have agreements with existing charities.

- Funding bids for 2016 with A Band of Brothers, Refugee Resource, Coventry University, and an opportunity to bid for Skills Funding Agency money (£50,000) with Oxford Aspire.

Risk 3 - Partner organisations (agencies and charities) decide not to support the project

- Harder to find customers, secure grants, administer courses

Mitigation
- There is no shortage of organisations willing to partner with us. It is a unique site and we have consulted with Oxford's leading charities to ensure our services meet real needs in the city.

- We have prioritised working with those organisations which dovetail with our vision and which enable us to deliver on the strategic benefits to the City.

- Our competitor analysis shows the unique selling points of Westhill Farm, particularly in terms of proximity to the 3 most socially deprived areas of Oxford, and we can offer meaningful participation and a genuine stake in the project.

Risk 4 - Oxford City Council will not grant residential status or use of the farmhouse

Mitigation

- We believe this position works against the needs and desires of Oxford City Council, and the terms of the covenant since it affects the future sustainability and security of the site. It affects the potential benefits of the site to the public, and places a barrier to our vision to bring the land back into use as a working farm.

- In sympathy with Oxford City Council's concerns around public safety and liability, we support the demolition of the farmhouse. This streamlines the process for Oxford City Council to grant us a long lease on the whole site; freeing us to talk to investors and donors.

- We require the residential status to be upheld to allow an on-site guardian– and for this a planning application must be submitted before demolition takes place. We are willing to cover the cost of this.

- Without residential status we will struggle to secure the site from vandalism or arson, and will not be able to keep animals safely on site.

- Financial sustainability of the project could also be affected. The impacts and strategic benefits to Oxford City Council and the citizens of Oxford, could be compromised by losing the residential status. We don't require seed investment from Oxford City Council to restore the barn, the land, or rebuild the farmhouse/educational facility, but we do need rental and hire income from the farmhouse. We are able to show we can generate a surplus by Phase Five to sustain the project and invest in our charitable objectives.

Risk 5 - Fail to secure planning permission for the farmhouse (including its continued residential status)

Mitigation

- We have had on-going communication with South Oxford District Council Planning Department since 2014 and most recently consulted them about the proposed demolition. We have received advice stating that a planning application must be submitted while the building is still standing. On this basis we anticipate to be granted planning permission to replace like-for-like residential premises for a farm guardian, and educational facility.

Risk 6 - Damage to site due to vandalism

Mitigation
- We plan to install a live in guardian who will provide 24 hour security and be a consistent point of contact for the Project. SODC has agreed to allow temporary residential use of the barns for the onsite guardian to reside in until the farmhouse is built.

- Once the lease has been awarded we plan to install CCTV cameras and lighting. We will erect signboards and mend the boundary fence.

- Replace our compost toilet, which was burned down last summer.

Risk 7 - Resistance to the project by near local residents

Mitigation
- For over 3 years we have communicated with local residents, published bi-annual newsletters through Shotover Preservation Society, and organised annual meetings in Horspath.

- We are now meeting local Councillors, who are very supportive. We are confident we have a great majority of people on board. We have held the licence for nearly a year and had no complaints; just support.

Risk 8 - Overload to local roads due to increased visitors to the park to attend Westhill Farm activities

Mitigation
- Staff and volunteers travel to the farm on bicycles via Brasenose Woods, or walk down the hill from the car park on Old Road. We are committed to not increasing traffic on The Ridings beyond previous usage by the resident park warden. We will make the *last km walk* into WFH from Old Road car park as part of a key mindfulness experience for able-bodied users as a key experiential aspect of Westhill farm, which will also reduce traffic on The Ridings.

- Our plans to replace the farmhouse with a timber frame construction ensure we will minimise weight and mass of building materials entering and leaving the site. We can save the Council having to clear the site fully by reusing much of the demolished farmhouse on site, for example, to mend boundary walls.

Risk 9 - Key stakeholders object to the project

Oxford City Council, Oxford Preservation Trust, South Oxford District Council, Shotover Preservation Society, Shotover Wildlife Preservation Group, Natural England, local residents

- Block the creation of the project

- Create significant challenges to operational management of the project plan

Mitigation

- All key stakeholders are strategic partners and integral to the vision. We will create a stakeholder group to engage in regular consultation.

- Our vision and actions are entirely in keeping with the covenant to maintain the farm for public benefit and agricultural use.

- Oxford City Council Parks Department are liaising with Oxford Preservation Trust and Natural England around the Westhill Farm project – since the farm is the only amenity left in Shotover Country Park. They support the idea of an interpretation centre, management of a herd of cows to graze and re-establish acid grasslands; a place to store tools, coordinate volunteers, and attract new groups to visit the park.

Risk 10 - Westhill Farm liabilities and assets are not managed properly if the project fails

Mitigation

- We are setting up a Community Interest Company, a not for profit entity with an asset lock on the buildings and other assets being developed. In case the project fails all assets will be transferred to a not for profit organisation with similar charitable aims.

- We propose a lease agreement, granting a long-term lease to the project (to provide us and our funders with security), with a break clause inserted at around 5 years. If we do not raise the capital to renovate the barn and before rebuilding the farmhouse/educational facility, we will be able to give up the site at that point. At that stage, Oxford City Council can reclaim the site, the barn could be demolished or put to use by the Parks Department, or the site returned to nature.

- We are willing to look at all possible strategies to minimise risk and liability to Oxford City Council. We believe our proposal minimises all risk and gives the management team a good chance to establish the project within 4 to 5 years.

- We are the licence holders, and as the current guardians/tenants we have already substantially improved the site, improved the barn and secured it from vandalism, and put the land to positive community use. We have proven our worth over the past 10 months. We already have all the necessary public liability insurance in place.

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Oxford City Council

Audit 20. Westhill Farm – Business Plan Review

May 2016

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FINAL

BDO

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REPORT STATUS	
Auditors:	Gurpreet Dulay – Audit Manager David Harvey – Assistant Manager Angela Mitchell – Audit Senior
Dates work performed:	26 April – 9 May 2016
Draft report issued:	12 May 2016
Final report issued:	**19 May 2016**

DISTRIBUTION LIST	
David Edwards	Executive Director, Regeneration and Housing
Julia Castle	Regeneration and Major Projects Officer
Nigel Kennedy	Section 151 Officer

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

OVERVIEW

Background

Westhill Farm (the Farm) is located within Shotover Country Park (the Park) in Oxfordshire, which was given to Oxford City Council (the Council) in 1952 by the Oxfordshire Preservation Society (the Society). The covenant between the Council and the Society for the Park requires that the Council maintain the Park in its natural state and for it to be open to the public without restriction. The site of the Farm borders an area that has been designated a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), which restricts the activities that can be performed within the Park.

The Farm was previously occupied by Council Rangers, however following their relocation the site was seriously damaged by an arson attack. A study commissioned by the Council and the Society in 2014 as to the potential uses for the site found that, out of three options, the demolition of the site and the building of an interpretation centre was the course of action most likely to be accepted by both parties (we have recorded the three options in Appendix II of this report).

The Westhill Farm Group (the Group), which is a locally based organisation, has put forward a Business Plan to restore the site, re-establish a working farm based on the principles of permaculture and offer educational services to the local community and local charities. The Farm will be established as a Community Interest Company (CIC) and all revenue generated will be invested into the site.

Purpose and objective of the review

The purpose of our review is to provide independent advice as to the sustainability and robustness of the Westhill Farm Shotover Park Community Project Business Plan (the Plan) so that a decision can be made as to whether to grant the lease to Shotover Permaculture Farm Ltd. In order to assess the sustainability and robustness of the Plan, we have sought to answer eleven questions based on the information contained within it:
- Are the objectives of the project clear and achievable?
- Is the capital programme accurate and fundable?
- Are the income and revenue forecasts robust, deliverable and include appropriate reserves?
- Are the cost forecasts accurate and comprehensive, including staffing, operational costs, tax, rates and other liabilities?
- Is there clear evidence and analysis, including market and competitor analysis, to underpin income and revenue forecasts?
- Has an assessment of sensitivity and stress testing been performed in order to understand the robustness of the business plan?
- Does the Plan include evidence of relevant skills and experience of the group?
- What are the implications for the Council as landlord for a CIC tenant?
- Are there potential requirements for guarantees, financial or otherwise, or bonds?
- In a case of insolvency can the Council recover the lease?
- Are recovery options available if the project fails to meet either its financial or social objectives?

In addition to these questions, we have identified any claims made within the Plan that we have been unable to substantiate based on the information provided to the Council (we have recorded these findings in Appendix I of this report). Please note that this was a review and not a full audit or due diligence exercise.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

From our review we have identified the following weaknesses with regards to the Plan submitted to the Council:

- Whilst the Group has, at a high level, defined the objectives of the Project, it has not defined measurable targets and the respective key performance indicators for each objective (*Question 1*)

- The Group does not have a defined governance structure in place, nor have roles and responsibilities been defined (*Question 1*)

- The Group has not provided sufficient evidence as part of its Plan with regards to how it has determined the cost and accuracy of the capital programme (*Question 2*)

- The Group has not provided sufficient evidence as part of its Plan to determine how its revenues and costs have been calculated (*Question 3 and 4*)

- Market analysis indicates that the Project has local support, but does not indicate whether the demand would be sufficient to support the Project as a financially viable organisation (*Question 5*)

- The Group has not subjected its financial calculations to either a sensitivity assessment or stress test in order to determine if it is robust (*Question 6*)

- The Plan does not provide evidence that the Group have the relevant skills and experience necessary to make the Project a success (*Question 7*)

- The Plan does not adequately assess the impact and potential consequences for the Group, the Council and the Society of the proposed transfer of ownership of the farmhouse and the barns to the CIC (*Questions 8, 9, 10 and 11*).

Conclusion

The Group have presented the Council with a Plan that proposes to use the Farm in a manner that would serve the local community. However, from our review of the Plan we have identified eight critical issues that serve to undermine the information that has been included within the Plan. Consequently, we conclude that the Plan is not fit for purpose.

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Business Plan Review

Q1	Are the objectives of the project clear and achievable?

The Business Plan presented to the Council by the Group sets out its core values, the vision for the site and the objectives for the Project. The three primary objectives of the Project are:
- Learn – The provision of an environment where local people can learn both practical and personal skills through participation. This objective will be achieved through engagement with the local community and local charities.
- Heal – The second objective of the project is to create a *place of sanctuary and peace*, which will help people to be *healthier in mind and in body*.
- Grow – The third objective of the Project is to restore the farm as a *going concern* operating on the principles of permaculture. By 2019, based on the Group's cashflow projections, the produce on the farm will account for 9.7% of income.

The Group have further identified six critical success factors that will be managed in order to deliver the Project:
- Recruiting and keeping the management team
- Structuring and managing fundraising as well as ensuring the financial management is effective and sustained
- Working effectively with key stakeholders and partners
- Securing enough volunteers and gifts in kind to support
- Ensuring the land is well managed to enable growth of produce
- Securing an onsite guardian to provide 24 hour security.

Whilst the Group has, at a high level, defined the objectives of the Project, it has not defined measurable targets and the respective key performance indicators for each objective. Without clear, realistic and measurable metrics it will be difficult to assess the success of the Project, which may result in disagreements between Stakeholders at a later date.

Furthermore, the Plan does not include a clearly defined governance structure for the CIC following its incorporation. Whilst a Steering Committee is in place, the Plan does not define:
- The governance and management structure of the CIC
- The roles and responsibilities of individuals, present and future, involved in the CIC
- The process for identifying and engaging with project stakeholders e.g. the Council and the Society
- The procedure for reporting on the status of the Project to all key stakeholders.

We also observed that the Group has not identified or appointed a Director(s) with responsibility for: Finance, Volunteering, Project Planning, or Lobbying/Campaigning. The absence of a defined governance structure increases the risk of the Project being unable to achieve its objectives as a result of ineffective management.

Without addressing these issues we are unable to provide assurance that the objectives of the Project are achievable.

Business Plan Review

Q2	Is the capital programme accurate and fundable?

The success of the Project is predicated on the rebuilding and/or renovation of the onsite Farmhouse and Barn, which have estimated costs of £64,000 and £56,250 respectively (these estimates have been taken from the Cashflow Forecast submitted by the Group as part of the Plan). The Group are proposing to absorb the costs of the capital programme on the basis that the Council transfers ownership of the buildings to the newly incorporated CIC (see question 8).

The Farmhouse
At this time the Farmhouse is in a state of disrepair and a survey commissioned by the Council and the Society in 2014 included a recommendation to demolish the building at a cost of £22,000. Please note that we are aware that he Council will not be providing the Group insurance monies expected to be received for the site in relation to the project. Furthermore, the amount of the insurance money has not been settled and continues to be negotiated between the Council and its insurers. In the original Plan the cost of this demolition was stated as being in-part recovered from the insurance monies received by the Council.

The Group has obtained a quote from a local building group, Sylva Group, to rebuild the Farmhouse at a cost of £35,000. Fittings and cladding for the Farmhouse would cost an additional £23,000 and a further allowance of £6,000 has been allocated to additional costs. This quote is substantially less than the £100,000 - £150,000 initial estimate for rebuilding that was provided by the Group and the reasons for the savings have not been clearly articulated as part of the Plan. Furthermore, the Group has not provided the Council with a copy of the quote obtained by the Group. Our research indicated that the Sylva Group has a charge registered against it from HSBC regarding an outstanding debt.

The Group must provide the Council assurance that the quote provided by Sylva Group is valid until 2018, when the building is scheduled to take place, and that adequate contingencies are in place in the event of a change in cost. Furthermore, given that the rebuilding of the Farmhouse is fundamental to the success of the Project, the Group must provide assurance that funding for the rebuild will be appropriately ring-fenced so that building works can be completed.

Barn Conversion
The Plan estimates the cost of the barn renovation and conversion at £50,000. However, our review of the Cashflow Forecast indicated that the cost is expected to be £56,000. A breakdown of the costs was provided in a previous proposal submitted to the Council, but does not include the relevant evidence to demonstrate how the costs have been determined or whether they have been reassessed following the initial proposal.

Site Access
The Plan commits £2,500 to maintaining the upkeep of the main access link to the site, to be spread out over the next three years. The Plan sets out the Group's intention to minimise traffic going to and from the site, however it is unlikely that there would be anything other than an increase in traffic to both the Farm and the car park on Old Street. The Group has not included a professional assessment of the road in order to determine whether, in its current state, it would be able to withstand an increase in its use. Therefore, we are unable to provide assurance as to whether the £2,500 earmarked for road improvements is sufficient.

The staggering of the costs of the Farmhouse and the Barn allows for the Group to raise the necessary £100,000 of funding through donations, fundraising activities and grants as well as income generated from the site as it starts to come on-line. The Plan, however, does not provide a detailed strategy for how the £100,000 target will be achieved or the contingencies required in the event that grants are not obtained or fundraising targets are missed.

Business Plan Review

Q2	Is the capital programme accurate and fundable? (cont.)

There has been a marked contraction in the grant funding that is available, whilst competition between organisations for the funding has continued to increase. Achieving the £100,000 target is fundamental to the success of the Project as, based on the Group's Cashflow Forecast, it is expected to operate at a loss of £6757 in 2017 and £6594 in 2018. We would therefore expect to see how the Group intends to respond to a decrease in grant funding.

All estimates for the capital expenditure are predicated on the assumption that volunteers will be available to assist with the delivery of the farmhouse build and the barn conversion. We would expect, and have not been provided with, costings in the event that anticipated volunteer levels cannot be achieved.

The Plan does not include information as to how the costs of the Project have been determined or the contingency arrangements that are in place, which is necessary to be able to provide assurance that the capital programme is accurate and fundable.

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Business Plan Review

Q3	Are the income and revenue forecasts robust, deliverable and include appropriate reserves?

The Farm will generate income and revenue from a number of sources, which have been defined within the Plan and the associated Cashflow Forecast.

Grants and Fundraising
The Plan forecasts that from Q3 2017 the Farm will be generating income of £10,500 per quarter, rising to £28,000 per quarter by Q4 2019 (excluding grants and fundraising). The Business Plan makes the assertion that by 2019 the Farm will be less reliant on grants and will be generating a surplus. Based on our review of the Cashflow Forecast submitted by the Group, we identified that:
- Grants will account for 12% of overall income generated by the Farm in 2019, which is up from 11% in 2018
- Excluding grants, the Farm projects a loss of £2457 in 2019.

The Plan does not include evidence of the award or promise of grants for the Project nor has consideration been given as to the conditions that may be attached to grant monies.

Trading Income
The Plan sets out an ambitious programme to generate income at the site, which will mean that there are a high number of events taking place at the Farm including the sale of farm produce, regular festivals and corporate events. However, from our review of the forecast it is not clear as to whether the following issues have been taken into account:
- How produce generated by the site will be sold?
- Seasonal variations in the demand for produce and/or services, particularly the potential impact on the Group's cashflow?
- The logistics involved in arranging festivals on a quarterly basis?
- The impact of building works taking place on the Farmhouse and Barns on the sites ability to generate revenue?

The Plan does not include evidence of market research or testing in order to determine potential trading income, nor does it include an assessment of the farmland in order to determine potential crop yields in order to support the projected produce revenues. Furthermore, whilst the Plan raises the possibility of opening an onsite shop and café a letter dated 27 October 2014 from South Oxfordshire District Council regarding planning permission states that it would be unlikely for permission to be granted for either of these ventures, or under any other uses outside the established residential use. Our review of the Plan identified that the Group has not include contingency plans for events that could impact on the Project's ability to generate income such as adverse weather conditions or natural disasters. Given the location of the Farm in the middle of the Park it is expected that it would be sensitive to fluctuations in a number of variables such as the weather and this has not been reflected within the Plan.

Rental Income
Rental income is initially forecast to generate £1500 per quarter, rising to £5000 per quarter by 2019. From our review of the Plan, we have two concerns regarding how these figures have been calculated:
- There is an assumption that the onsite managers/guardians will pay rent for their accommodation. Live-in arrangements are typically provided for free as a payment in kind
- Of the five social partners that have been identified within the Plan and could act as tenants at the site, four are led by members of the Project's Steering Group. The Plan does not set out how the rent valuations have been calculated or demonstrate that they are at or close to market rate.

Business Plan Review

Q3	Are the income and revenue forecasts robust, deliverable and include appropriate reserves? (cont.)

Rental income is predicated on the terms and conditions of the lease from the Council allowing for the Group to sublet the properties.

Reserves
The Cashflow Forecast establishes that the Group will maintain a reserve of funds following the initial fundraising activity, which will be supplemented through fundraising and donations, grants and membership fees. We observed that the Cashflow Forecast includes an interest free loan of £5,000 that has not been recorded within the Plan. We are unable to determine who has provided the loan, the purpose of the loan and the associated terms and conditions of the loan. This must be documented and the terms and conditions of the loan must be presented to the Council.

The Plan does not include the information necessary to support the Group's assertions regarding the income and revenue that would be generated by the site. The forecasts included within the Plan only allow for a small profit of £17,543 to be generated by the site and do not clearly set out how the monies raised would be reinvested into the site. Further information is required in order to provide assurance that the income and revenue forecasts are robust and deliverable.

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Business Plan Review

Q4	Are the cost forecasts accurate and comprehensive, including staffing, operational costs, tax, rates and other liabilities?

The Plan sets out the anticipated costs that are expected to be incurred by the Project.

Staff Costs
As previously stated, the Plan is predicated on the number of volunteer hours that will be provided. The Plan allows for the hiring of three permanent members of staff, as well as the funding for three contractors by 2019. The three permanent positions are:

* A Farm Manager, who would be paid £10,000 in 2017 rising to £20,000 per annum by 2019. Based on the National Careers Service guidance, this would be £3,000 beneath the national average for a new Farm Manager, whilst an experienced Farm Manager would expect £25,000 - £30,000
* A Course Manager, who would be paid £10,000 in 2017 rising to £20,000 per annum by 2019. Based on a survey of agency websites, we estimate that the salary offered for this role would be beneath the market rate
* A Communications Officer, who would be paid £7,000 in 2017 rising to £12,000 per annum by 2019. We have assumed that this figure is pro-rata based on part-time hours. There is a risk that the figure quoted for this role could breach the law regarding the national minimum wage.

The salaries paid to the Farm Manager and the Course Manager do not include the potential cost of rent that would be charged if they were to live onsite.

The Plan includes the opening of an on-site café by 2018, however the costs of staffing a café have not been included within the Plan. In the event that the café is staffed fully by volunteers, there would be associated costs for training the volunteers and meeting all relevant Health and Safety requirements.

Operating a residential training site may also result in additional costs being incurred i.e. cleaning or laundry, however these have not been included within the Plan. Furthermore, the Plan does not set out how corporate events, venue hires or festivals would be staffed. The Plan places a significant burden on volunteers without demonstrating how volunteers would be found for specific roles such as catering, events and/or festivals. It is unlikely that the Project would be financially viable if temporary staff were required to be hired. Also we assess that none of the propose commercial activities are consistent with the local planning plans for the site.

At this time we are not able to provide assurance that the Group has accurately or comprehensively forecast its staffing costs.

Rents, Rates, and Utilities
The Plan assumes that the Farm will only be required to pay the Council a peppercorn rent in order to secure a long term lease. If the Council were not to agree to this then it is unlikely that the Project would be viable. The Plan further assumes that the Farm would not be liable for Council Tax or Business Rates until 2019, which would also need to be agreed with the Council. The Cashflow Forecasts does not include adequate reserves in the event that the forecast Council Tax and Business Rates liability has been miscalculated.

As a CIC, the Project would still be liable for corporation tax, although it may be able to apply for business rate relief owing to its status and agricultural land and buildings.

Business Plan Review

Q4	Are the cost forecasts accurate and comprehensive, including staffing, operational costs, tax, rates and other liabilities? (cont.)

Access and Transportation
As previously observed, the Plan allocates £2,500 for access improvements between 2017 and 2019. The Group has not included a professional assessment of the road in order to determine whether, in its current state, it would be able to withstand an increase in its use.

Marketing
The marketing efforts for the Project will primarily utilise volunteers and social media to raise awareness of the Project. Fewer than 500 people have engaged with the Project's Facebook page at the time of this review. The Cashflow Forecast sets out a marketing budget of, on average, £250 per quarter and the Group has prepared a marketing strategy within the Plan.

Based on the evidence submitted and our analysis of the costs we are unable to provide assurance that the costs forecasts are accurate and comprehensive.

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Business Plan Review

Q5	Is there clear evidence and analysis, including market and competitor analysis, to underpin income and revenue forecasts?

The Plan submitted by the Group includes a defined outline of the existing projects within the local community and how the Group's offering is distinct from these. It is anticipated that these organisations would work together rather than be in competition, however there is a risk that an over-saturated market place could result in a lack of public engagement with the project. The competitor analysis does not include businesses in the area that offer similar services to those proposed by the Project i.e. training courses or venue hire.

A pilot training course offered by the Group was fully subscribed, however the Plan does not include a full breakdown of how the Group would charge for courses offered at the Farm and the costs involved. Demand for all of the services has been implied throughout the Plan, however it has not been substantiated.

The Group have identified a number of potential social partners and organisations that expressed an interest in utilising the services offered at the Farm, however the letters of interest that have been provided are not firm commitments. The potential partnerships that have been identified are themselves charitable or not-for-profit organisations and will operate under the same funding constraints as the Farm.

From the Plan submitted by the Group it is apparent that there is a local interest in the Project and that local organisations would be interested in using the services provided. It is not possible, however, to identify that this level of demand supports the income and revenue forecasts that have been included within the Plan.

Q6	Has an assessment of sensitivity and stress testing been performed in order to understand the robustness of the business plan?

The Plan submitted to the Council by the Group, including the Cashflow Forecast, does not include an assessment of the sensitivity of the Plan or a stress test in order to understand its robustness. The Plan does not include an assessment of the project's variable costs and the potential impact of a change in these to the Project, nor does the Plan include the cost of inflation. We assessed that a 10% reduction in income from 2016 to the end of 2019 would result in a reduction of the Project's cash reserves to £2,743 from £47,943.

Our review identified that the Plan does not include contingency arrangements in the event that a revenue source cannot be exploited or the cost of business rises. Of particular concern is the analysis that has been performed regarding the sales of the produce generated by the Farm. The Plan does not take into account seasonal variations and South Oxfordshire District Council have expressed their concerns regarding the use of the site as a farm shop. It is not clear from the Plan as to where the produce generated at the site would be sold in the event that a farm shop cannot be built.

At this time, the absence of either a stress test or a sensitivity analysis of the Group's Plan means that we are unable to provide assurance regarding the viability of the Plan.

Business Plan Review

Q7	Does the Plan include evidence of relevant skills and experience of the group?

Our review of the Plan indicated that the members of the Project's Steering Committee are committed to the Project and have a desire to improve the Farm in accordance with the stated permaculture ethos. From our research it was identified that a member of the Board is the director of a company that has an *active proposal to strike off*, which is procedure for liquidating a limited company, recorded against it by Companies House. In addition to being a member of the Steering Group, the company in question is recorded within the Plan as being one of the Group's Social Partners.

Furthermore, we identified that the Steering Committee does not include representatives from the Council, the Society or South Oxford District Council.

The Group currently has two Directors, Nicholas Lunch and Matthew Morton, and is in the process of appointing a Director with responsibility for the following areas:
- Finance
- Volunteering
- Project Planning
- Lobbying/Campaigning.

Each of these areas are critical to the success of the Project and we would expect to see a recruitment strategy that sets out how the Group intends to fill this vacancy in a timely manner. As previously stated, the Group must take action to ensure that the roles and responsibilities of its Directors and governance team are defined.

At this time, due to the existing knowledge and skills gap, we are unable to give assurance that the Plan includes evidence of relevant skills and experience of the Group.

Business Plan Review

| Q8 | What are the implications for the Council as landlord for a Community Interest Company tenant? |

The primary implication of the Council becoming the landlord for the newly incorporated CIC is that the Group is proposing that ownership of the buildings at the Farm be transferred to the CIC. Both buildings would be considered assets of the CIC and would be protected under law by an asset lock. There are specific restrictions on how CIC assets are controlled, however the Group would not be prevented from using the assets as collateral for future financing. Whilst the Plan does not set out the need for financing within the first three years of the Project, there is no guarantee that this situation would not change. Furthermore, given the complex nature of the ownership of the Property, the Council would need to liaise with the Society in order to determine whether ownership of the farmhouse and barns could be transferred to the CIC.

The Plan implies that the structure of the Group may change in the future, which could have implications for the Council both as a landlord and with regards to the use of the farmhouse and barns. This would need to be considered in any tenancy agreement that was put in place between the two parties.

Whilst not directly linked to the Group becoming a CIC, the Plan assumes that the Council would only charge the Group a peppercorn rate for the tenancy. This, combined with the transfer of ownership of the properties, would restrict the income that the Council would be able to generate from the site. However, given the restrictions that currently exist governing the use of the site, it is unlikely that any use of the site would generate significant rental income for the Council.

Further discussions must be held between the Council, the Group and the Society in order to determine the implications of the transfer of ownership of the existing properties on the site. It is expected that the Council and/or the Society would require specific guarantees regarding the use of the properties and how they can be used with regards to obtaining funding.

| Q9 | Are there potential requirement for guarantees, financial or otherwise, or bonds? |

The Plan does not include the requirement for guarantees or bonds to be provided or obtained in order to deliver the Project. As a CIC, the Group would be eligible to apply for funding and financing from the same sources as any other organisation.

As with the previous question, we recommend that all parties agree how the existing properties on-site can be used in the future to obtain funding and/or financing.

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Business Plan Review

Q10	In a case of insolvency can the Council recover the lease?

This would be dependent on the terms of the lease between the Council and the Group. We would recommend that the tenancy agreement between the two parties includes a provision for the recovery of the lease in the event of the insolvency of the CIC.

With regards to the proposed asset lock, the Council must obtain assurance as to how it would recover the farmhouse, the barns or both in the event of an insolvency. The Plan proposes that, in the event of the failure of the Project, the assets are transferred to a *not for profit organisation with similar charitable aims*. Any such transfer would be subject to approval from the Office of the Regulator of Community Interest Companies. Again, in the event that financing is secured against the on-site properties, the transfer of assets to the CIC may impede the Council's ability to recover the farmhouse and the barns.

As with questions 8 and 9, we recommend that all parties agree how the onsite properties can be used with regards to obtaining future funding and how they would be returned to the Council in the event of the Project failing. Based on the information contained within the Plan, we are unable to provide assurance that the Council would be able to recover the lease in the event of insolvency.

Q11	Are recovery options available if the project fails to meet either its financial or social objectives?

The Plan proposes that a break clause after five years be included within the lease agreement, which would allow the Council to reclaim the site in the event of the Group being unable to obtain funding to renovate the barn and rebuild the farmhouse. The Plan does not include any other recovery options that would be utilised in the event that the project fails to meet either its financial or social objectives. As indicated in question 1, the criteria for success or failure for the Project have not been clearly defined and this could result in future disagreements between the Council and the Group.

We are unable to provide assurance that there are adequate recovery options available if the project fails to meet either its financial or social objectives.

Appendix I – Analysis of Claims Made

Ref.	Plan page no.	Area	Outline of Internal Audit Observation	Priority
1	7 - 12	Project Objectives	The objectives do not have associated targets that can be measured and reported on in order to determine the success of the Project.	Medium
2	7 – 12	Stakeholder Engagement	The Plan refers to the Project having support from a number of key stakeholders, which includes but is not limited to local residents and local charitable organisations, however there is no evidence of this support included within the Plan.	Medium
3	8	Users of Westhill Farm	The use of the farm will inevitably result in increased traffic on both the Ridings and the Old Road. The Group have not provide evidence to demonstrate that: the local residents are agreeable to this; or that the Group has the finances available to support the maintenance of the roads. The site itself is not sign posted within the Park and the Plan does not include details as to how they would improve access to the site for all visitors.	High
4	9	Courses offered	The Plan does not include a fully costed break-down of the sites that it proposes to offer. Furthermore, the Plan does not include how it intends to charge for the courses offered.	Medium
5	9	Produce generated	The Plan references the production of crops that have a *known profitability*. However, the Plan does not include what these crops are nor whether an analysis has been performed to determine whether they could be grown on the Farm in the quantity required to generate a regular income.	Medium
6	10	Activities and support services close to deprived areas	The Plan does not include an assessment of the number of visitors that would be required in order to make the Farm a viable concern.	High
7	11	National England priorities	The Plan states that it fulfils all eight of National England's priorities. However, from our review of the Plan and the eight priorities we are unable to see how this has been achieved.	Low
8	13	Known demand for services	The Plan does not include market analysis to substantiate the known demand for any of the services proposed as part of the Plan.	High

Appendix I – Analysis of Claims Made

Ref.	Plan page no.	Area	Outline of Internal Audit Observation	Priority
9	14	Phases of site development	Whilst building works have been staggered across five phases, the Plan does not include proposed project plans or quotations from builders that demonstrate that the work can be completed in the desired timescale. Further, given the reliance on volunteers we would expect to see contingencies in place in the event that labour is unavailable.	High
10	15	Letters of Support	The Plan indicates a number of organisations that it lists as being supportive of the Project. However, the Plan does not include letters of support to substantiate this claim. Previous letters of support should be attached to the current Plan.	Low
11	17	Social Enterprise Partnerships	Of the five social enterprise partnerships proposed by the Group, four are run by members of the Group's Steering Committee. We also found that one, Archetype Design, is subject to an active proposal to strike off by Companies House.	Medium
12	18	Business Rates	The Group has not provided the basis upon which the Council should be offering zero business rates and council taxes, nor for how long the zero rates would be required. Based on the Cashflow Forecast zero rates would apply until at least 2019.	Medium
13	18	Cost of farmhouse renovation	The Plan does not include a copy of the quote from Sylva Group, nor how the long the quote would be valid for. Furthermore, the £35,000 cost recorded in the Plan excludes the additional £28,000 to cover fittings, cladding and project management. The additional costs are included in the Cashflow Forecast.	High
14	18	Cost of the barn renovation	The Plan quotes the cost of the barn conversion as being £50,000. However, based on the Cashflow Forecast, the cost is £56,000. The Plan does not include a quotation for the works necessary to renovate the barn.	High
15	19	Interest Free Loan	The Cashflow Forecast includes an interest free loan for £5,000 in Quarter 4 of 2016. The reason for this loan has not been recorded, nor have the terms and conditions or the provider of the loan.	High

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Appendix I - Analysis of Claims Made

Ref.	Plan page no.	Area	Outline of Internal Audit Observation	Priority
16	19	Phase Five Revenue Projections	The revenue projection of £30,000 per quarter by 2019 is predicated on: • A 100% increase in revenue from courses offered • A 200% increase in revenue from eco-therapy • A 333% increase in rental income, which includes £2,000 per quarter from the rental of the Managers accommodation. Any surplus generated during 2019 is based on the provision of £20,000 in grants. Without this, the Project would be operating at a loss. The salaries proposed for the Farm Manager and the Course Manager are up to £3,000 beneath the average salaries for these roles. The cost of additional staff, i.e. temporary staff for festivals, events or venue hire, have not been included in the Business Plan or the Cashflow Forecast. The Group has not provided a strategy that demonstrates how volunteer hours would be secured and utilised to avoid the need for paid staff.	High
17	19	Volunteer Hours	The Group has not demonstrated how they have calculated the value of volunteer time to be £50,000. Furthermore, there is not a strategy that demonstrates how this level would be maintained and, where necessary, increased, to meet the level of demand expected for the site.	Medium
18	20	Project Breaking Even	The Plan asserts that the Project would be breaking even by Phase Four. As previously noted, this is predicated on the site obtaining a number of substantial grants. The Plan does not include the Trust's strategy for targeting and winning grants. In this environment, funds available from grants have significantly declined, whilst there is increased competition amongst organisations in trying to obtain them.	High
19	20	Phase Five Running Costs	The Plan sets out that, by Phase Five (2019), the Project's running costs will be £130,000. Based on our analysis of the Cashflow Forecast, the Project's running costs would be £147,957. Furthermore, as a CIC, the surplus generated in 2019 (which includes grants) would be liable to corporation tax. This has not been recorded on the Cashflow Forecast or Business Plan.	High

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Appendix I – Analysis of Claims Made

Ref.	Plan page no.	Area	Outline of Internal Audit Observation	Priority
20	27	Membership Scheme	The tiered membership scheme has not been sufficiently costed to be included within the Plan. The benefits of membership, as either a 'Partner' or a 'Friend' have not been defined, nor has the impact of these benefits on the Project's revenues been determined. As a comparison, membership of the National Trust is £63 and grants: • Unlimited access to 500 nationwide parks (access to Shotover is already free) • Unlimited parking at National Trust carparks (parking at Shotover is already free) • A National Trust Handbook • A National Trust magazine printed three times a year • Regular email newsletters.	Medium
21	27	Potential Sources of Funding	The Plan identifies 12 organisations and business as being potential sources of funding. However, the Plan does not include letters of support or expressions of interest from these companies. Furthermore, there is not a strategy for approaching/targeting these organisations and business in order to obtain support.	Low
22	28	Rental Income	The Plan does not include market analysis to support the assertion that the site could generate £10,000 in rental income per annum.	High
23	28	Marketing Budget	The Plan does not include a detailed marketing strategy that demonstrates how interest in the Project will be generated. Social media should be seen as a tool for engaging with persons that have already expressed an interest in the Project rather than a means of generating new interest in the Project.	Medium
24	29	24/7 Security	The Plan asserts that an on-site guardian has been identified and is ready to occupy the site. The on-site guardian would be paying rent to the site. It is not clear whether the responsibilities of the on-site guardian have been formally defined and agreed to by both parties. Furthermore, it is not clear how absences and holidays would be covered.	Medium

Appendix I – Analysis of Claims Made

Ref.	Plan page no.	Area	Outline of Internal Audit Observation	Priority
25	29	Improve Site Access	The Plan includes £2,500 towards the cost of improving access, to be spent in instalments between 2017 and 2019. The Plan does not include an assessment of the existing access routes in order to determine whether this would be sufficient. Further, there is not a written agreement in place between the Project and the local residents as to whether both parties are satisfied with this arrangement.	High
26	30	Café and Farm shop	The Plan includes the opening of a café and farm shop on site. However, it does not include: • How the Project would overcome the objection of South Oxfordshire District Council • The licensing and health and safety requirements that would need to be arranged • Where the experience of running either of these operations would come from • The potential staffing costs for running either a full time or part time café and farm shop.	High
27	30	Specialist Produce	The Plan includes the production and sale of specialist produce, such as shitake mushrooms and elderflower cordial. From the Plan it is not clear who has the experience with regards to commercial production or the increased costs that would be incurred.	Medium
28	31	Transition to a CIC	The Plan sets out the intention to incorporate as a CIC following approval of the Plan by the Council. However, this decision was taken by a minority of the Group's Steering Group and the Plan does not demonstrate that this decision is approved by all members.	High
29	31	Future Structure of the Group	The Plan implies that the Group being a CIC is a temporary measure. A change in structure is likely to have significant impact on the relationship with the Council and Society, particularly with regards to ownership of the Farmhouse and Barns, and this must be fully documented.	High
30	33	Director Recruitment	The Plan identifies the need to appoint a Director with responsibility for: finance; volunteer management; project planning; and lobby/campaigning. However, the Plan does not include the Group's recruitment strategy or contingency arrangements for filling this critical vacancy.	High

Appendix I - Analysis of Claims Made

Ref.	Plan page no.	Area	Outline of Internal Audit Observation	Priority
31	N/A	Natural Disasters / Vandalism / Acts of God	The Plan, including the Cashflow Forecast, does not take into account the effects of events or incidents that would be outside of the Group's immediate control. The Group has not included any contingency planning as to how it would operate in the event of: • Adverse weather disrupts crop production and/or visitors to the site • Seasonal variations result in reduced cashflow • Funding targets cannot be achieved now or in the future • The withdrawal of support for one or multiple social partners Given the narrow operating margins that have been forecast, any disruption to the Group's ability to trade would likely have a significant impact on the success of the Project.	High

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APPENDIX II – Summary of Options Presented in 2014

In 2014, the Council and the Society commissioned a report to determine the potential options for the Farm following the arson attack. We have included them here for reference (the options have been taken verbatim from the report and do not reflect the opinion of BDO):

There are three options with quite different outcomes, depending on which one is seen as having the most appropriate link with the public benefit.

1. The insurance money could be used to rebuild the farm house, which could then be sold on the open market and the receipt used for improvements in the park, which might include an interpretation centre. However, this will be unacceptable to Oxford Preservation Trust.

2. Alternatively, the farm house could be demolished and the insurance money used directly for improvements in the park which might include an interpretation centre. This option might be acceptable to Oxford Preservation Trust.

3. Finally, the farm house could be rebuilt with the insurance money in conjunction with a charity set up to develop Westhill farm house as an environmental/permaculture smallholding, with educational facilities. It is anticipated that this could take some time and input to come to fruition, even if all of the fundamental technical problems could be overcome, which might not be possible. Even if they were, the long term viability might not be as robust as other options, due to the dependency on volunteering input, which might not always be dependable. This option is unlikely to be acceptable to Oxford Preservation Trust.

APPENDIX III – Photos from BDO site visit May 2016

In May 2016, BDO visited the site to better understand the proposal and any potential challenges that may be faced.

To the left of the picture are the Barns, which have an estimated renovation cost (per the Plan) of £56,000.

This picture shows the current state of the Farmhouse, which has an estimated restoration cost (per the Plan) of £63,000.

APPENDIX III – Photos from BDO site visit May 2016

In May 2016, BDO visited the site so as to better understand the proposal and any potential challenges that may be faced.
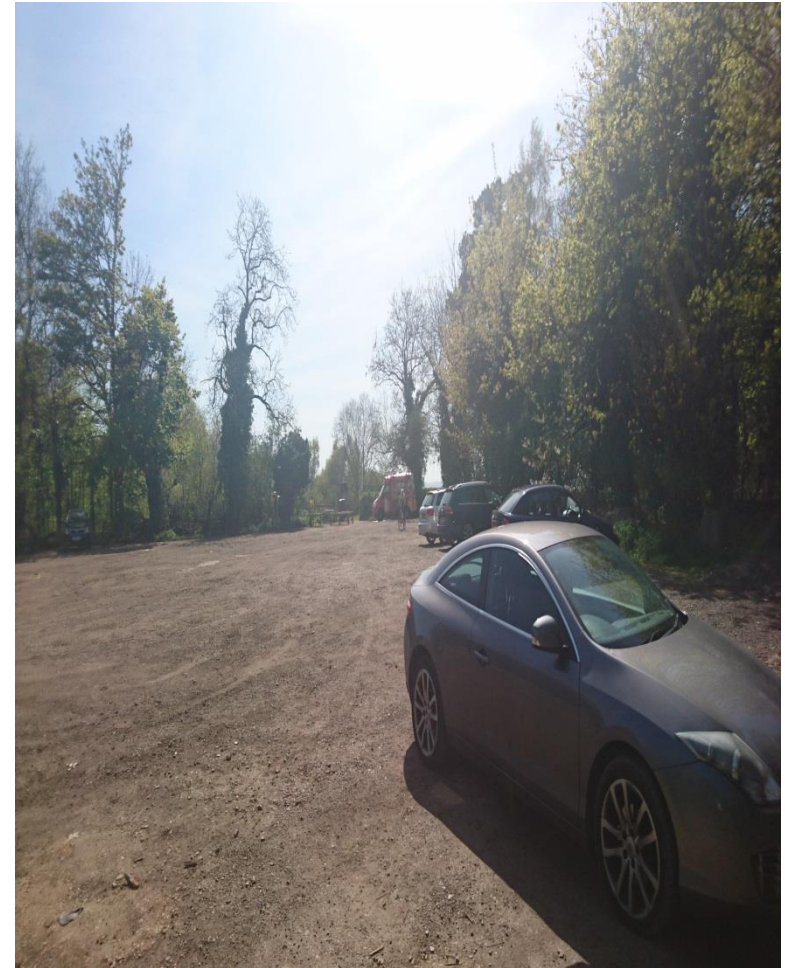
The Old Street Car Park.

APPENDIX III – Photos from BDO site visit May 2016

In May 2016, BDO visited the site so as to better understand the proposal and any potential challenges that may be faced.

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This picture shows an example of the current condition of the access road to the site. To make this road functional, lay-bys would need to be created. Maintenance costs for the access road are estimated in the Plan to be £1,000 per year.

This picture shows an example of the potholes that are found on the access road to the site. Maintenance costs for the access road are estimated in the Plan to be £1,000 per year.

www.bdo.co.uk

To: Scrutiny Committee

Date: 7 June 2016

Report of: Corporate Lead - Organisational Development

Title of Report: Apprenticeships

Summary

Purpose of report: To set out the Council's current position regarding the employment of apprentices, local labour market conditions and the potential impacts on the Council of emerging legislation

Executive lead member: Cllr. Pat Kennedy, Young People, Schools and Skills

Report author: Jarlath Brine, OD & Learning Advisor

Policy framework: Young People, Schools and Skills

Background

The Scrutiny Committee requested a report to update them on the Council's current position regarding the employment of apprentices, local labour market conditions and pressures, the potential impacts on the Council of emerging legislation changing the way apprenticeships are funded and new government apprenticeship targets. This report will cover the way the Council currently recruits and develops its apprentices, how these opportunities fit with the core skills in demand for the wider local labour market, what the likely challenges and implications of recent legislative changes are and what else can the Council do to lead and influence the apprenticeship agenda across the City.

Appendices
Appendix 1 - Centre for Cities briefing: apprenticeships in cities (January 2016)
Appendix 2 - Oxfordshire LMI, Spring 2016
Appendix 3 - OCC Work Experience guidance master
Appendix 4 - Apprenticeship Levy briefing note

1. The Council has an active apprenticeship programme and has a current target of employing 26 apprentices. Performance against the target is generally good although due to the apprenticeship lifecycle the number in post at any one time can fluctuate (i.e. some have completed their apprenticeship with just short of 70% moving into full time careers with the Council). Nationally 3 in 10 fail to complete their apprenticeships. In order to ensure the fullest support for each Council apprentice there are stringent learning plans in place (with regular reviews) and additional workplace buddies and mentors to assist with their transition/ all managers and mentors receive bespoke training. The headline figures for our apprentices are:

   - 88% of apprentices live in Oxford; and
   - 68% (17/ 25) were succession planned between 2013-2015, with the remainder entering full-time employment externally

2. Apprentices are typically recruited by the Council in small cohorts every two years (with some exceptions where the cycle of trades' apprenticeships falls differently). Contracts range from two year fixed term (mostly for Business Administration focused roles) up to four years for skilled trades.

3. Currently there is an active recruitment campaign for 21 apprenticeships, with the majority due to start in September 2016, which represents the largest single recruitment campaign undertaken by the Council for apprentices and reflects the appetite across services to grow our own talent.

4. As in previous years, we are focussing recruitment on OX1 to OX4 postcodes. However, it should be noted that in the past this has reduced the number of applicants with some living outside the area wishing to apply and unable to. Posts are co-funded: in part from a budget of £100k per annum and from service area contributions of £10k per annum per apprenticeship.

The local labour market and apprenticeship challenges

5. The local market for apprenticeships is a complex. Although there has been a 17% increase in new apprenticeships since 2013 across the County, Oxford was revealed as the city with the lowest level in the UK even though the local economy was ranked top for job density (*Centre for Cities briefing – apprenticeships in cities 2016*). For example, during the week 23-27 May 2016 there were 150 employers looking for 224 apprenticeship vacancies across the County but in Oxford there were only 34 employers offering 53 vacancies.

6. The low level of new apprenticeship starts is not just down to availability, and the report highlighted the primary factor of low take-up rates from groups who have other immediate routes into paid employment (specifically retail). We also know that over 80% will be looking to continue in further/ higher education. The report also noted regional variations and that there was generally weaker demand for apprentices in the South of England.

7. Labour market information (*Oxfordshire LMI, spring 2016*) supports evidence that Oxford has a vibrant economy, with growth sectors including advertising / market

research, building construction, warehousing/ logistics, health care and nursing (www.o2i.org/content/lmi). We also know that there are unique characteristics to our economy which mean that there are current skill shortages in "higher" skilled areas required to support buoyant areas like life sciences, space technology and advanced engineering (including cryogenics) which the Council cannot either directly influence or offer apprenticeships in.

8. However, through the provision of advice to developers and land owners about the value of Community Employment Plans (CEP's) the Council can help to positively drive forward economic growth and encourage a better alignment between the new jobs being created from major development, the local labour market and skills providers. Local Planning Authorities can pro-actively work together with the Local Enterprise Partnership, the Skills Board and partners to ensure the maximum benefits in terms of new jobs, apprenticeships, traineeships, sector-based work academies, work experience and local supply chains are achieved and the opportunities for the local workforce in Oxfordshire are fully realised.

9. Three significant emerging concerns which have a direct impact on supporting a vibrant and sustainable economy are:

- Key regeneration partners are reporting a lack of basic technical skills or suitably qualified candidates for their construction apprenticeship vacancies;
- There are proportionately fewer advanced and higher apprenticeship starts which raises questions about how effective intermediate (NVQ 2/ equivalent to 5 GCSEs) apprenticeships are in preparing people for higher-skilled jobs; and
- BME apprentices are under-represented and have also decreased year-on-year to a position where only approximately 6% come from BME communities

What have we done to increase the visibility, awareness and quality of our apprenticeships?

10. Since 2012, the Council's apprentice recruitment drives have seen low response rates typical of that experienced by other employers. This has been frustrating and we believe in part down to schools not fully understanding apprenticeships, apprenticeships not being 'sold' and inconsistent careers advice. Our lead relationship with the 'Business in the Community' initiative has helped us develop stronger relationships with schools which have undoubtedly made a positive difference as we have been able to deliver a series of apprenticeship workshops, mentoring and other career development activities.

11. In March 2016 a Business in the Community "Earn While You Learn" apprenticeship event was a significant first-step in raising awareness, educating and motivating students across all City schools about the apprenticeship routes available locally. Over 100 students attended and 75% responded to give the following positive feedback:

- 99% clearly understood what an apprenticeship is;
- 85% understood where apprenticeships are being advertised and where they can look to find vacancies;

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- 85% were more likely to consider an apprenticeship;
- 85% were more motivated to find out about apprenticeships;
- 79% felt more confident to talk to an employer about their scheme

12. Using the available labour market information to inform an internal review, the range of apprenticeships we offer has increased and includes Building Surveyor/ Estimator, Mechanical and Electrical Engineering and Planning Technician/ Planner roles. Apprenticeships now include "higher" opportunities for the first time, e.g. ONC/ HNC routes equivalent to undergraduate study that will lead to full professional qualifications. These higher routes will give our apprentices the transferable skill sets anticipated as essential in the future job market.

13. Using the feedback from the workshops run in schools we have designed a new apprenticeship web page. This includes details of all vacancies, short and catchy summaries designed to capture the imagination of applicants, myth busting information, FAQs and top tips on how to apply and what examples to include. It shows a video project managed and made by our Apprentice Ambassadors which they have screened in schools and at the recent event where they were the only apprentices who took full responsibility for leading a presentation. Members are invited to visit www.oxford.gov.uk/apprenticeships

14. We held a recruitment open evening at Cowley Marsh depot in April that enabled us to launch the apprenticeship campaign (alongside a press release in the Oxford Mail) and advertise other permanent entry level vacancies. It attracted over 200 visitors of whom at least 40% were interested in apprenticeships, many coming because of the work we had done in engaging schools. Attendees were also given the opportunity of help in making applications on the night. The evening was filmed by a local television channel and the resulting video can be seen on the apprenticeship web page. A similar event will be held at Rose Hill Community Centre on 1 June 2016 and hope that it is equally successful.

15. In anticipation of the expansion in our apprenticeship recruitment we reviewed our work experience offer for schools. We offered specific placements in food hygiene (including the chance to gain a nationally recognised Level 2 qualification), commercial property/ surveying, tenant involvement, housing and a range of trades within Direct Services. Take-up hasn't been high so we are working with schools to increase interest and participation.

The challenges posed by the Apprenticeship Levy and public sector apprenticeship targets

16. The Enterprise Bill sets out how from April 2017 funding to support apprenticeship training costs will be covered through the application of an Apprenticeship Levy (0.5% of an employer's pay bill above £3 million less a £15k allowance) collected via PAYE. For the Council this is estimated at approximately £175k per annum. The money will credit a Digital Apprenticeship Service (DAS) account which the Council can then use to pay for training for apprentices. The service will also support employers to identify a training provider, choose an apprenticeship training course and find a candidate but not to fund apprentices' wages.

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17. Precise details are still emerging but it is still possible that we might be able to use the levy on other training activities (assuming that these activities are accredited). So far we understand that '*employers can spend their levy on either existing staff or new recruits as long as the training meets an approved standard or framework and the individual meets the apprentice eligibility criteria'.* As part of our "growing our own" commitment we have previously invested in Environmental Health and Housing degree studies for staff as well as Chartered Institute of Personnel and Spatial Planning masters level qualifications. It may be that we could use the AL to cover this type of career development training in the future.The Enterprise Bill sets out apprenticeship start targets for all public sector bodies with a minimum headcount of 250 employees. Targets have been set at 2.3% of headcount which would mean approximately 28 new apprentices each year. More details are yet to emerge but whilst the legislation will be tough on ensuring that the term "apprentice" is not abused, we may include a number of other trainee posts where there is a formal qualification route e.g. Customer Service Officers who study for NVQs.

18. Meeting the target will be a challenge and we need to understand precisely what constitutes an 'apprenticeship' under the legislation – we may have many more in scope. Generally though recruiting to typical apprenticeships is tough as previously outlined. The consequence for the Council of not meeting targets is an unknown at the moment but we can speculate that there will be some enforcement of targets as guidance becomes clearer.

19. However there are some things we can do which become easier if the final definition of apprentice and what the levy can be spent on are favourable. Making some positive assumptions about this:

Action	Potential Outcome
Review all trainee/career graded roles (i.e. anyone receiving off the job training for a formal qualification)	Include in apprentice 'new starts' figure
Ensure every service area workforce plan includes apprentices / trainee / career graded roles as part of existing establishment	This will only be feasible in some areas if turnover occurs at the right level over time
More work with training providers to widen the applicant pool for relevant roles	More candidates interested in roles / to select from

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Briefing: apprenticeships in cities

What does the data show?

January 2016

Executive Summary

Apprenticeships are increasingly regarded by both policymakers and employers as providing an important pathway from education into employment, as well as an effective means of plugging the skills gaps that exist in the national economy.

As a result of this focus the number of people starting apprenticeships has grown considerably over the last decade. This briefing shows how the take-up, nature and quality of apprenticeships varies across 56 English cities. It finds that:

- **Number of apprenticeships** - In 2013/14, the top three cities for apprenticeship starts per thousand of working-age population were Sunderland, Barnsley and Middlesbrough. Oxford, Cambridge and London were the bottom three cities.

- **Age of apprentices** - Across all cities, 38 per cent of apprenticeships were undertaken by those aged 25 and over, 35 per cent were undertaken by those aged 19 to 24 years old and 27 per cent were undertaken by young people aged 19 and under. In some cities apprentices tended to be younger. Those aged 19 and under accounted for 33 per cent of all apprenticeship starts in Barnsley, Derby and Sheffield.

- **Level of apprenticeships** – The majority of apprenticeship starts in cities were Intermediate apprenticeships (see Box 1). One in three starts in cities were Advanced apprenticeships and only 2 per cent were Higher apprenticeships. With 4 per cent of all apprenticeship starts, Blackpool was the city with the highest share of Higher apprenticeships, while less than 1 per cent of all starts in Swindon were at that level.

- **Occupation of apprenticeships** - In 40 out of 56 English cities most apprenticeship starts were in business, administration and law (on average 31 per cent of all starts). In Blackburn 43 per cent of all apprentices trained in these subjects. Fewer than one in five apprentices in cities started in engineering, construction, maths and science. These subject areas were the most common choice of apprentices in Reading (42 per cent), Portsmouth and Chatham (30 per cent), and Plymouth (27 per cent).

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- **Success rates of apprenticeships** – In 2013/14 across all Enigsh cities, 68 per cent of apprentices successfully completed their training. The success rate was highest in Barnsley (77 per cent) and lowest in Milton Keynes (59 per cent). Success rates were also high in Blackburn (76 per cent) and Portsmouth (76 per cent).

Efforts to create new pathways into employment are much needed and apprenticeships will continue to be important in upgrading the skills of young people and filling local skills gaps. But if apprenticeships are to provide a viable alternative pathway into employment for those young people who choose a vocational rather than an academic route, further efforts are needed to improve the quality of apprenticeships across different cities.

Box 1: **Types of apprenticeship**

There are three levels of apprenticeship:

- **Intermediate level** is equivalent to five GCSE passes.
- **Advanced level** is equivalent to two A level passes.
- **Higher level** can lead to NVQ Level 4 and above, or a foundation degree.

Introduction

Apprenticeships, which offer practical on- and off-the-job training, are increasingly seen by both policymakers and employers as providing important pathways from education into employment for those young people not taking the traditional academic route, as well as an effective way of plugging the skills gaps that exist in the national economy. There is evidence that apprenticeships can have a positive effect on employment and wages and improve the skills of the workforce.[1]

Although the tradition of apprenticeships dates back hundreds of years, the number of those undertaking apprenticeships in England has been growing in recent years. At the peak in 2011/12, the number of people starting an apprenticeship in England (515,000) was nearly three times higher than in 2005/06 (172,600).[2] In 2013/14, over 430,000 people in England started an apprenticeship.

This reflects their increasing popularity with policymakers. A key policy for the Conservative government is to create 3 million new apprenticeships by 2020. And the establishment of 'Apprenticeship Hubs' has also been a key feature in City Deals, while several cities gained more control over the Apprenticeship Grant for Employers[3] with the aim to fill gaps in the local economy and equip people with skills that make them more employable.

Alongside the increasing popularity of apprenticeships, there have also been **a number of concerns raised about the nature and quality of apprenticeships more generally.** These include:

- The relatively low number of 16 to 24 year olds starting apprenticeships possibly signifying that existing jobs were being rebranded;[4]
- The relatively low number of Higher apprenticeships raises questions about how effective apprenticeships are in preparing apprentices for working in higher-skilled jobs;

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1   What Works Centre For Local Economic Growth (2015) Evidence Review 8: Apprenticeships – September 2015
2   Unless otherwise stated all data in this briefing is from BIS (2015). There is a break in the data from 2011/12 onwards owing to the introduction of Single Individualised Learner Record (ILR) data collection, which replaced the multiple ILR data collection in earlier years. The new collection system led to a removal of duplicate learners and means that the pre-2011 figures overstate the actual number of apprentices.
3   Clayton, N. and McGough, L. (2015) City deals and skills: How have City and Local Growth Deals supported the development of employment and skills policies that reflect local demand? London: Centre for Cities
4   http://www.theguardian.com/education/2011/oct/27/jobs-rebranded-apprenticeships-government-report

- Most apprentices choose business, administration and law apprenticeships, despite the shortage of technical skills in the labour market;[5]

- The need to improve the success rates of apprenticeships when more than three in 10 apprentices fail to complete their training.[6]

This short briefing explores these issues from a city perspective, focusing first on how the take-up of apprenticeships varies between cities. The paper then examines the age profile of individuals starting apprenticeships, explores the link between the types of apprenticeship being undertaken and skills demand in cities, and looks at the variation in success rates. The aim of the briefing is to provide an analytical basis for further research on the role that policymakers can play in driving up demand for and the quality of apprenticeships in cities.

Where are people most likely to undertake an apprenticeship?

While the last few years have seen an unprecedented number of people starting apprenticeships, across England this has varied between cities.

Figure 1: Apprenticeship starts by city

Source: BIS, 2015

5   http://www.theguardian.com/business/2015/feb/10/uk-plumbers-builders-engineers-skill-crisis-economy
6   http://www.theguardian.com/careers/careers-blog/higher-apprenticeships-for-engineering-science-technology
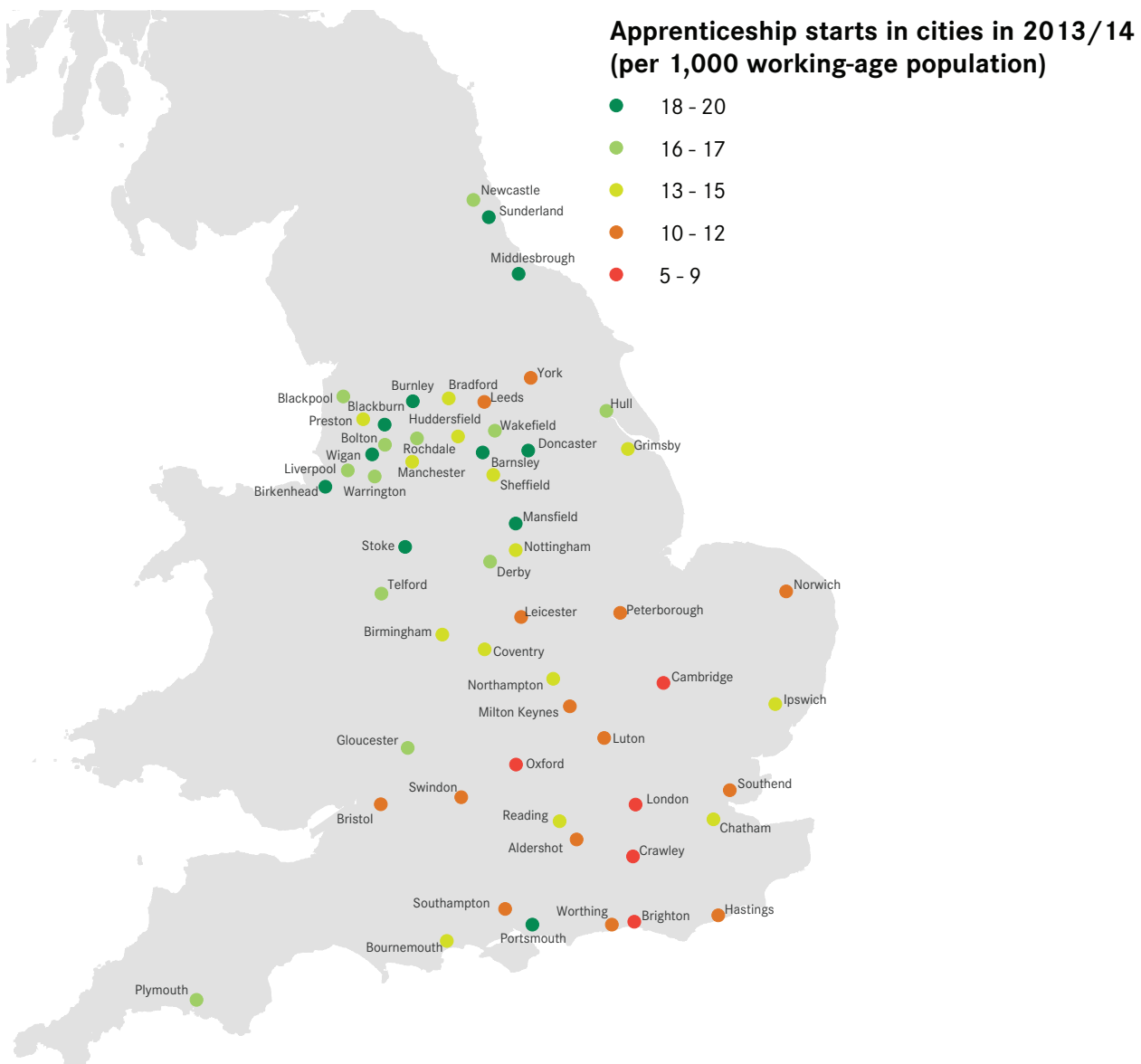
In 2013/14, the city with the highest apprenticeship take-up was Sunderland, where for every 1,000 of resident working-age population, 20 started an apprenticeship (Table 1). Immediately behind were Barnsley and Middlesbrough with 19 starts for every 1,000 of working-age population.

Table 1: Top 10 cities for apprenticeship starts per 1,000 of working-age population, 2013/14

Rank	City	Apprenticeship starts per 1,000 working age population, 2013/14
1	Sunderland	20
2	Barnsley	19
3	Middlesbrough	19
4	Blackburn	19
5	Birkenhead	18
6	Stoke	18
7	Wigan	18
8	Doncaster	18
9	Mansfield	17
10	Portsmouth	17

Source: BIS, 2015

At the other end of the spectrum, **people were almost four times less likely to start an apprenticeship in Oxford and Cambridge than in Sunderland** – only five and six out of 1,000 working-age residents, respectively.

Table 2: Bottom 10 cities for apprenticeship starts per 1,000 of working-age population, 2013/14

Rank	City	Apprenticeship starts per 1,000 working age population, 2013/14
47	Swindon	11
48	Leicester	11
49	Milton Keynes	11
50	Norwich	11
51	York	10
52	Crawley	8
53	Brighton	8
54	London	7
55	Cambridge	6
56	Oxford	5

Source: BIS, 2015

The data on the number of employers offering apprenticeships at the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) level and on young people in higher education suggests that **the low take-up of apprenticeships in cities such**

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as Oxford, Cambridge, London and Brighton is a result of both low take-up from individuals who have other routes into employment, and low levels of demand from employers who are therefore offering fewer apprenticeships.[7]

Job density is an indicator of the demand for labour and therefore a measure of the health of a local labour market. Whilst it would seem intuitive that cities that have the highest job density should also have the highest take-up of apprenticeships per working-age population, as employers are more willing to take on extra staff, this is not reflected in the data. There actually appears to be **an inverse relationship between job density and apprenticeship take-ups** (Figure 2).

In 2013, Cambridge and Oxford were ranked top for job density but lowest for apprenticeship starts per 1,000 of working-age population. Barnsley, which had the second highest rate of apprenticeship starts, had the third lowest job density. Wigan was seventh for apprenticeship starts, although it had the lowest job density among all 56 English cities.

Figure 2: **Apprenticeship starts and job density in cities, 2013**

Source: BIS, 2015 and NOMIS, 2015

Data from the 2014 Employer Perspectives Survey looking at the geographical variation of apprenticeships offered at the LEP level, suggests that **there is generally weaker demand for apprentices in the south of England**. For example, the employers in the Coast to Capital and London LEPs took on fewer apprentices than the England average, contributing to low take-up in London, Brighton and Crawley. Meanwhile, the employers in Oxfordshire LEP were not only less likely to report taking on an apprentice, but were also less likely to be planning to offer an apprenticeship in the future.

This low level of demand for apprentices from employers may reflect a low level of interest among young people in pursuing an apprenticeship. The Department for Education's data on the education destination of Key Stage 5 pupils in 2012/13 showed that eight out of ten local authorities with the highest proportion of pupils going to a higher education institution were located in Greater London, which provides an explanation for the low level of starts in London.

7   Data sources are UK Commission's Employer Perspectives Survey 2014 and Higher Education Funding Council for England.

Who undertakes apprenticeships in cities?

The age profile of those taking up apprenticeships in England has shifted away from 16 to 24 year olds towards those aged over 25. Between 2009/10 and 2010/11, the number of apprentices aged 25 and over nearly quadrupled (Figure 3).

Figure 3: Apprenticeship starts by age in England, 2005/06-2013/14
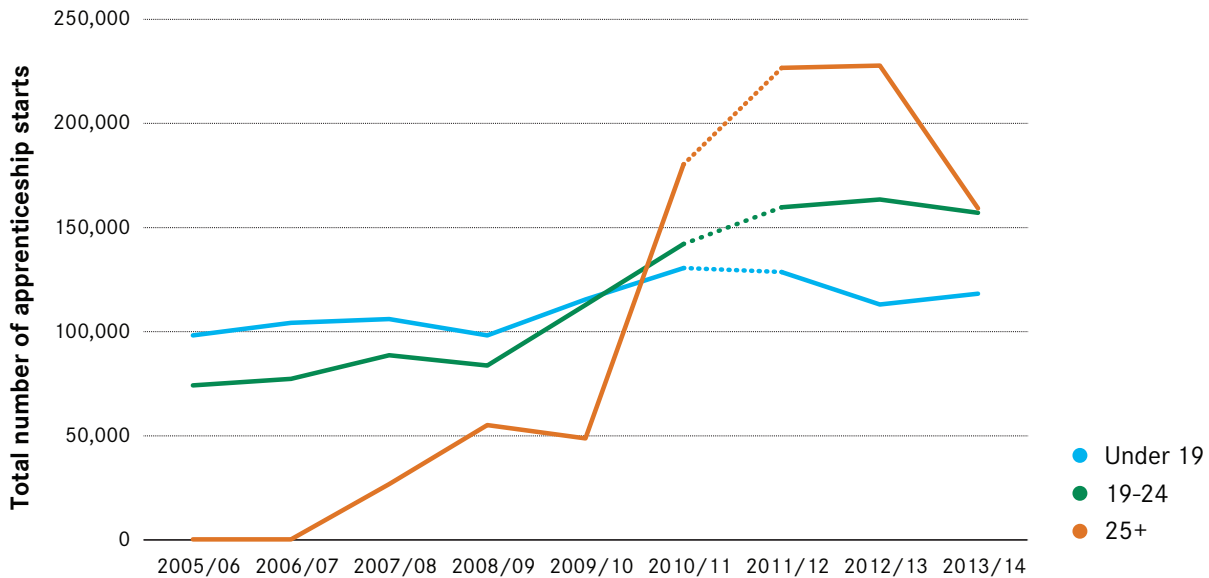
Source: BIS, 2015. Note: There is a break in the series owing to the introduction of the Single Individualised Learner Record (ILR) data collection in 2011/12.

This shift has raised questions as to the role of apprenticeships as a pathway from education into employment. **There are concerns that apprenticeships are in fact operating as a training subsidy to employers, where existing jobs are rebranded as apprenticeships.** Wolf (2015) explains that when this happens, "providers 'sell' apprenticeships to employers by offering some additional training that will be free; or offering to provide, for free, training that the employer was already paying for", resulting in deadweight.[8] The statistics on apprenticeship starts are then inflated by the take-ups among existing employed adults.

Figure 4: Apprenticeship starts in cities by age (% of all starts), 2013/14
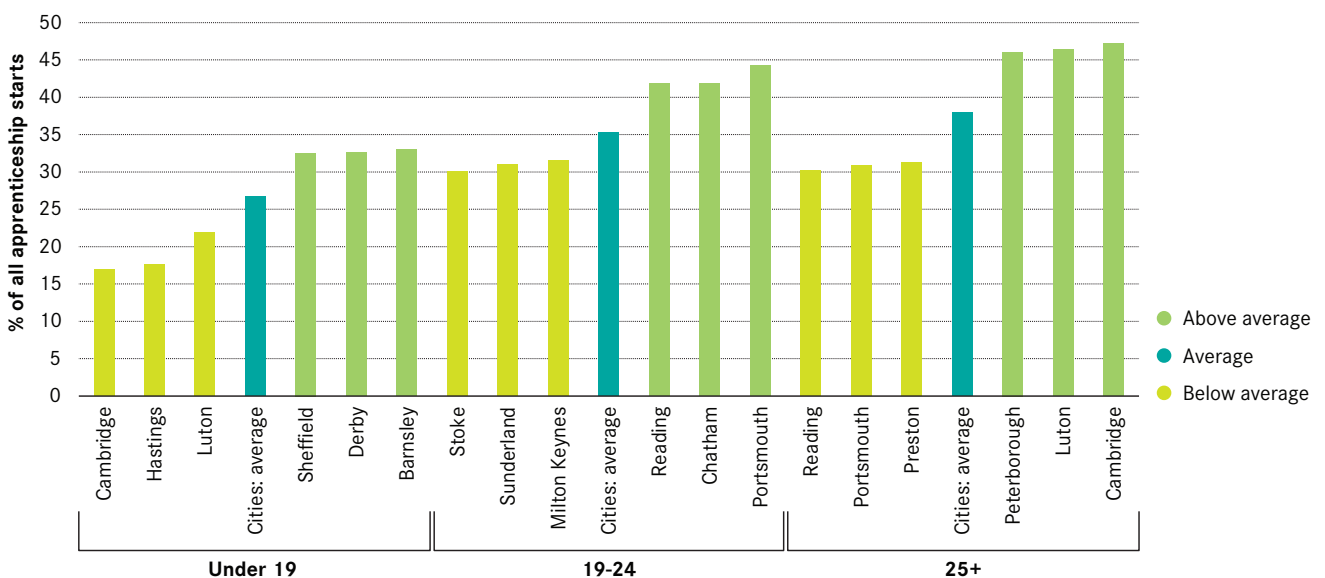
Source: BIS, 2015

8   Wolf, A. (2015) Fixing a Broken Training System: The Case for an Apprenticeship Levy. Social Market Foundation.

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In line with national trends, most apprenticeships in cities were undertaken by people aged 25 and over (38 per cent) or by 19 to 24 year olds (35 per cent), and far fewer apprenticeships were taken up by those aged 19 and under (27 per cent) (Figure 4). Several cities stand out as having a relatively young apprenticeship profile, however. There was a higher than average representation of young people (under 19) starting apprenticeships in Barnsley (33 per cent), Derby (33 per cent) and Sheffield (33 per cent) (Figure 4),[9] while people aged 19-24 were most widely represented among apprentices in Portsmouth (44 per cent), Chatham (42 per cent) and Reading (42 per cent).

In other cities, the age profile of someone undertaking an apprenticeship was older. A larger share of apprenticeships was taken-up by those aged 25 and over in Cambridge (47 per cent), Luton (46 per cent) and Peterborough (46 per cent) compared to the city average (38 per cent).

What is the level of apprenticeships undertaken in cities?

The low number of Higher apprenticeships being undertaken has also attracted criticism. Critics have suggested that the incentives surrounding apprenticeships has led to training providers offering short, low-level and low-quality apprenticeships rather than longer, more rigorous and high-quality training.[10] And this means that few apprenticeships are preparing people to work in a high-knowledge economy.

Figure 5: Apprenticeship starts in cities by level, 2012/13 and 2013/14

- Intermediate Level Apprenticeship
- Advanced Level Apprenticeship
- Higher Apprenticeship
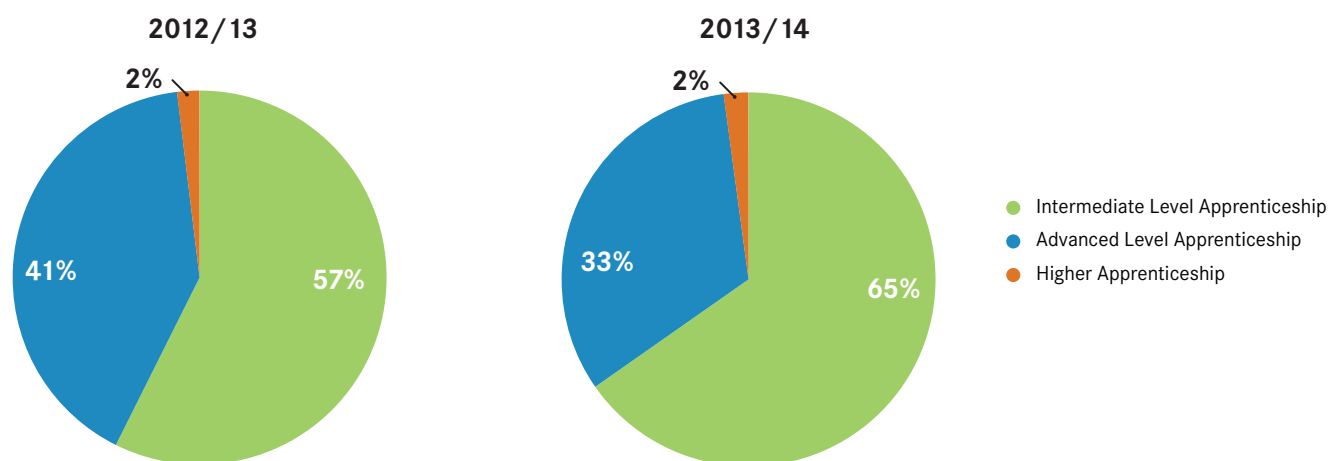
Source: BIS, 2015

Apprenticeship can be one of three levels: Intermediate, Advanced and Higher.[11] **Nearly two thirds of all apprenticeship starts in cities in 2013/14 were Intermediate, and only 2 per cent were Higher** (Figure 5). While the proportion of Higher apprenticeship starts in cities has increased marginally between 2012/13 and 2013/14 (from 1.9 to 2.1 per cent), the proportion of Advanced apprenticeships fell from 41 per cent in 2012/13 to 33 per cent in 2013/14. Intermediate apprenticeships increased from 57 per cent to 65 per cent between those two years.

Cities that in 2013/14 had proportionally more Intermediate apprenticeships included Chatham, Leicester, Northampton, Norwich and Oxford, where they made up more than 70 per cent of all starts compared to the city average of 65 per cent. These cities also had proportionally fewer Advanced apprenticeship starts relative to the city average of 33 per cent.

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9   Those aged 19 and under were not the dominant group among apprentices in any city as the shares never exceeded 33 per cent.
10 Wolf, A. (2015) Fixing a Broken Training System: The Case for an Apprenticeship Levy. Social Market Foundation.
11 Intermediate apprenticeship is equivalent to 5 GCSE passes, Advanced apprenticeship is equivalent to 2 A level passes and Higher apprenticeship can lead to NVQ Level 4 and above, or a foundation degree.

Reading stands out – unlike other cities, the majority of apprenticeship starts there in 2013/14 were Advanced apprenticeships (56 per cent of all starts).

Across all cities, the share of Higher apprenticeships is low. At 4 per cent, the share of Higher apprenticeships in all starts in 2013/14 was highest in Blackpool. In Swindon, on the other hand, an apprentice in 2013/14 was least likely to start a Higher apprenticeship (0.6 per cent).

How is the industrial profile of cities reflected in apprenticeships?

Fewer than one in five apprentices train in engineering, construction, maths and science, and fewer still (2 per cent) complete Higher apprenticeships. This has sparked claims that the provision of apprenticeships is largely unable to address the shortage in technical and highly skilled occupations.

Figure 6: Apprenticeship starts in cities by subject area, 2013/14

- Business, Administration and Law
- Engineering, Construction, Science and Maths
- Health, Public Services and Care
- Retail, Leisure, Travel and Tourism
- Humanities
- Agriculture, Horticulture and Animal Care
- Information and Communication Technology
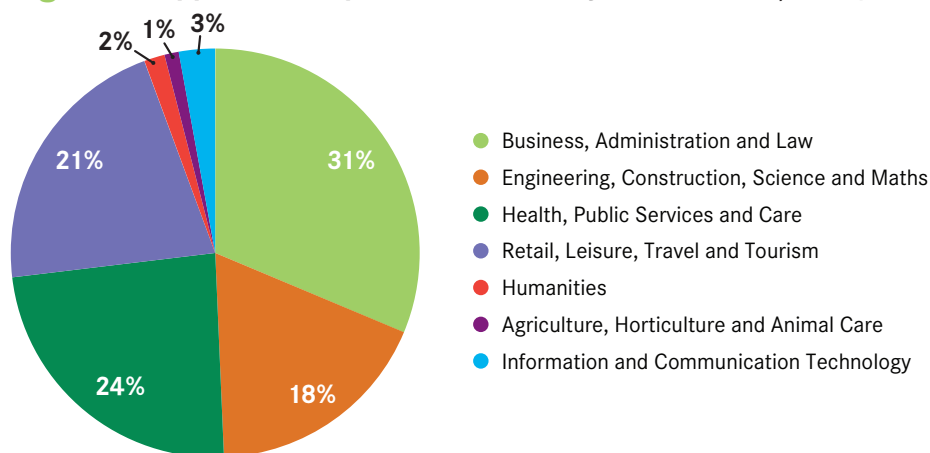
Source: BIS, 2015

In general, the shift in the makeup of the UK economy away from manufacturing and towards services is reflected in the distribution of the apprenticeship starts by subject area (Figure 6). **In 2013/14, business administration and law made up the largest proportion of apprenticeship starts in English cities (31 per cent). The second most popular were apprenticeships in health, public services and care (24 per cent)**, which reflects growing demand for health and care staff due to an ageing population and existing shortages in the health and care workforce. **The third most popular subject areas were retail and commercial enterprise, together with leisure, travel and tourism (21 per cent).**

The overall tendency for apprentices to choose business, administration and law is also evident at the city level: in 40 out of 56 cities, most apprenticeship starts in 2013/14 were in these sector areas (Figure 7). In Blackburn 43 per cent of all apprentices started training in these sector areas.

In Blackpool, Bournemouth, Bristol, Gloucester Hastings, Southampton and Worthing, the most popular subjects were healthcare, public services and care. In Cambridge, Oxford and York, apprentices tended to choose retail, leisure, travel and tourism. Engineering, construction, science and maths were the most common choice of apprentices in four out of 56 cities: Reading (42 per cent), Portsmouth and Chatham (30 per cent), and Plymouth (27 per cent).

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Figure 7: **Most popular apprenticeship subject areas by city, 2013/14**

Most popular apprenticeship subject in cities in 2013/14

- ● Business, Administration and Law
- ● Engineering, Construction, Science and Maths
- ● Health, Public Services and Care
- ● Retail, Leisure, Travel and Tourism
- ● More than one

% of apprentices that chose the subject area

- ● 41 - 43
- ● 37 - 40
- ● 33 - 36
- ● 29 - 32
- · 24 - 28
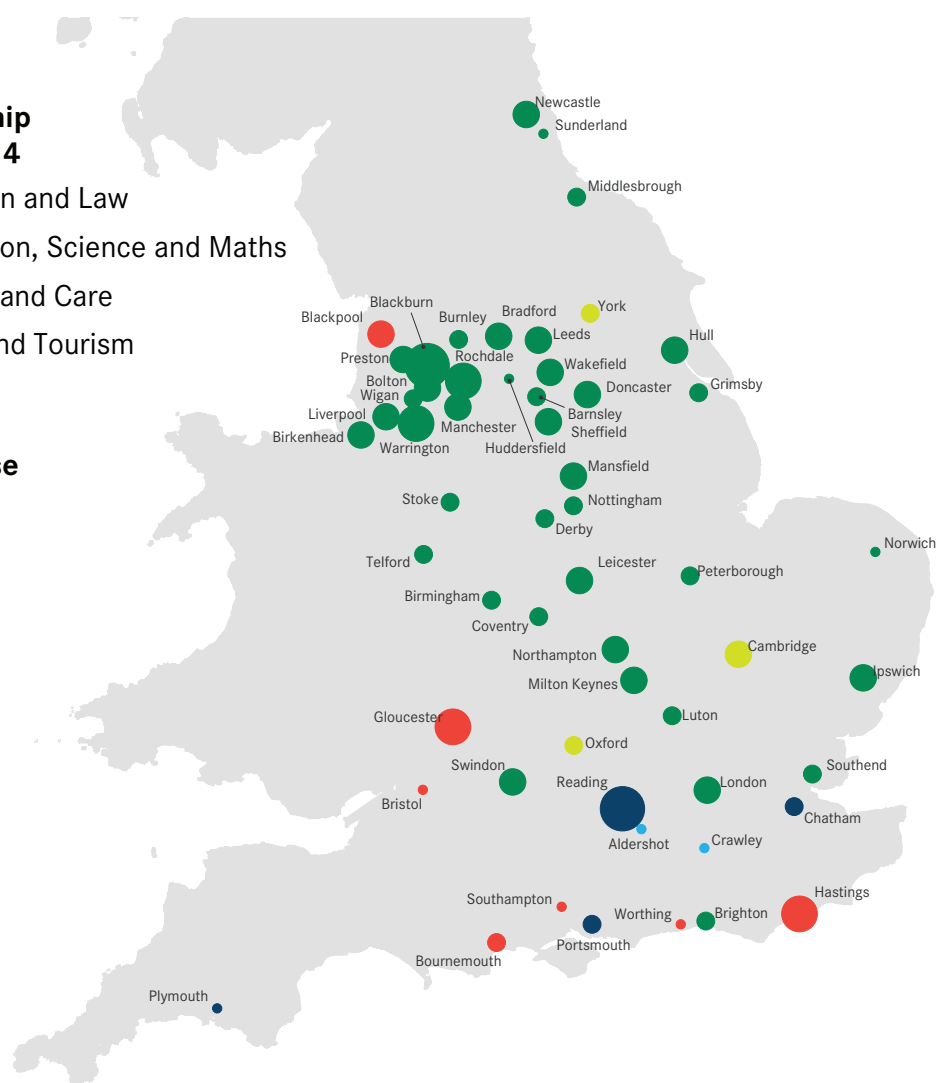
Source: BIS, 2015

Success rates of apprenticeships: how do they vary across cities?

The increase in apprenticeship starts may indicate a general positive trend, but does not say anything about completion rates. Apprenticeship success rates measure the proportion of apprentices that enrolled and successfully completed all elements of the apprenticeship programme and provide some indication of the quality of apprenticeships.[12]

In 2013/14, 68 per cent of apprentices who started an apprenticeship across all English cities successfully completed their training.[13] But the chances of successfully completing an apprenticeship varied considerably between different cities. The success rate was highest in Barnsley (77 per cent), which was 18 percentage points higher than in Milton Keynes (59 per cent), where it was lowest (Figure 8). Success rates were also high in Blackburn (76 per cent) and Portsmouth (76 per cent) but they were low in Aldershot (60 per cent) and Leicester (62 per cent).

12   Overall success rates are reported as either Learner Local Authority Success Rates, which are based on the apprentices' home postcodes, or Delivery Local Authority Success Rates, which are based on the postcode of the institution's delivery locations. To provide a comparative overview of how the quality of apprenticeships differs between cities, this briefing discusses the variation in Delivery Success Rates, which link the learning outcomes to where the learning is delivered.

13   This success rate is a mean value of delivery success rates across all institution types (general further education and tertiary colleges, other public funded institutions, private sector public funded institutions, schools, sixth form colleges and specialist colleges), all apprenticeship types (Intermediate, Advanced and Higher) and all age categories (under 19, 19-24 and 25+) of the participants. Delivery success rates measure the completion rates of apprenticeships based on the delivery location postcode, rather than the learner's home postcode (learner success rates).

Figure 8: **Apprenticeship starts and success rates in cities, 2013/14**

Source: BIS, 2015

Across all cities, there appears to be a positive relationship between success rates and apprenticeship starts (Figure 8). Sunderland, which had the highest number of apprenticeship starts per thousand of working-age population, had a high success rate (74 per cent). The success rate of apprenticeships in Oxford, which had the lowest number of apprenticeship starts, was lower than in Sunderland (69 per cent).

On average, cities with the largest share of apprenticeship starts in engineering, construction, science and maths also had high success rates. In this group of cities, Portsmouth had the third highest success rate among the 56 English cities (76 per cent). Blackburn, which had the highest concentration of starts in business, administration and law, had the second highest success rate (76 per cent).

This variation in success rates suggests that some cities could do more to support young people to complete their apprenticeships. Although some variation between places is to be expected, it is essential that young people right across the country are given appropriate support to develop their skills and to make the transition from education into employment.

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Figure 9: Success rates of apprenticeships in cities, 2013/14

Success rates of apprenticeships
in cities in 2013/14 (%)

- 74 - 77
- 71 - 73
- 68 - 70
- 64 - 67
- 59 - 63
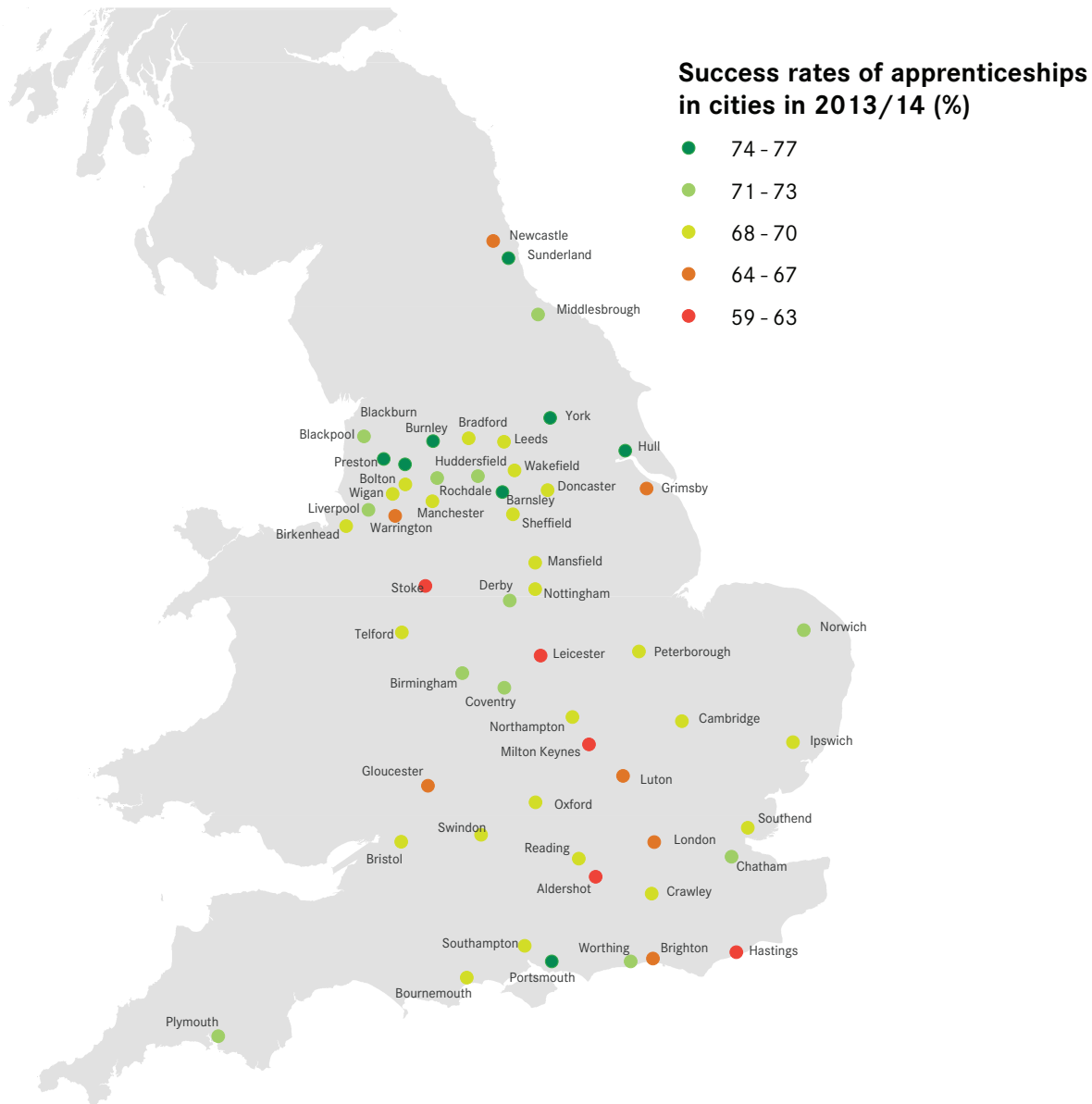
Source: BIS, 2015

Conclusions

Efforts to create new pathways into employment are much needed and apprenticeships will continue to be important in upgrading the skills of young people and filling local skills gaps. But if apprenticeships are to provide a viable alternative pathway into employment for those young people who choose a vocational rather than an academic route, further efforts are needed to improve the quality of apprenticeships across different cities.

While apprenticeships are intended to provide an additional route into employment for young people not taking the traditional academic routes, **take-up has shifted away from those aged 16-24 years old towards those aged 25 and over**. The shift in the age profile of apprentices has led to **concerns that existing jobs are being rebranded as apprenticeships**. In 2013/14 those aged 25 and over accounted for 38 per cent of all apprenticeship starts in cities, while those aged 19-24 and under 19 years old made up 35 per cent and 27 per cent of all starts respectively. The age profile of apprentices in Barnsley, Derby and Sheffield, however, tended to be younger.

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There are also concerns about the level of apprenticeships undertaken, and the extent to which they are preparing people for work in the knowledge economy. The majority of all apprenticeship starts in cities in 2013/14 were Intermediate apprenticeships. One in three starts were Advanced apprenticeships and only 2 per cent were Higher apprenticeships. But with 56 per cent of all starts being Advanced apprenticeships, the nature of take-ups was significantly different in Reading.

The most popular subject areas chosen by apprentices in cities were business, administration and law, with fewer apprenticeships undertaken in science, technology, engineering and maths (STEM) subjects, despite the reported skills shortages in these areas – Reading, Portsmouth, Chatham and Plymouth were the exception. Business, administration and law were chosen by 43 per cent of apprentices undertaking their training in Blackburn, for example.

The completion rates of apprenticeships is also an area of concern as more than three in ten apprentices in cities failed to complete their training. But the success rates of apprenticeships also differ significantly between different cities, suggesting an issue of variable apprenticeship provision in some cities. The success rates were some 18 percentage points higher in Barnsley (77 per cent) than in Milton Keynes (59 per cent). And although some variation is expected, the worst performing cities could do better to support the apprentices towards the completion of their training.

The government target to create 3 million new apprenticeships by 2020 is welcome but for apprenticeships to provide a viable route into employment for young people, **it is essential to focus on the quality of provision, by ensuring Higher apprenticeships are created, and in a broad range of subjects, such as STEM, that will equip people with skills the labour market needs.**

Endnote

This briefing analyses data on Apprenticeships starts for the period 2005/06 – 2013/14. During the course of drafting this briefing paper, data on Apprenticeship starts by local education authority 2014/15, have been made available. More detailed data series, including Apprenticeship starts by sector subject area by local education authority 2014-15, and Apprenticeship starts by age and level by local education authority 2014-15, will not be made publicly available until May 2016. We plan to update this briefing paper when the full set of data on Apprenticeship starts 2014/15 is released.

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Current jobs

O2i
Business ⊖⊖ Education

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Produced by the Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership

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OxLEP
driving economic growth

Oxfordshire
Skills Board

Introduction

> **Oxfordshire employees have no shortage of job opportunities. This highly-skilled and engaged workforce is spoilt for choice.**

There are challenges to the labour market however. With low unemployment there is a limited market for new jobs within Oxfordshire. There are skills shortages in professional, caring and skilled trades and conversely many are not working to their full potential.

This section looks primarily at Oxfordshire's current labour market and job opportunities. It considers the current employee and employer structure of Oxfordshire. It uses vacancy data from *Labour Insight* to assess online job postings and summarises the current apprenticeship position.

Oxfordshire's employee structure[1]

Sectors	Count of employees	% of employees
Education	51,000	14.9
Professional, scientific & technical	41,200	12.1
Health	40,200	11.8
Retail	32,000	9.4
Accommodation & food services	24,800	7.3
Manufacturing	24,200	7.1
Business administration and support services	24,200	7.1
Construction	17,700	5.2
Information & communication	16,600	4.9
Wholesale	13,200	3.9
Transport and Storage	11,300	3.3
Public Administration and defence	10,600	3.1
Arts, entertainment, recreation, other services	7,300	2.1
Other service activities	6,800	2
Motor Trades	6,600	1.9
Financial and Insurance	5,100	1.5
Real estate activities	5,300	1.6
Water supply, sewage and energy	2,700	0.8
Agriculture, forestry, mining	400	0.1

[1] ONS BRES, 2015

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Employee breakdown

The majority of employees work in the Education sector despite the number of business enterprises in education only making up 2% of all enterprises in Oxfordshire. In fact higher education teaching professional are four times more concentrated here than nationally. There is a large Professional, Scientific and Technical sector, above the national average, with 41,200 employees and scientists are over three times more likely to be found in Oxfordshire. The health sector has the third largest proportion of employees with the two big hospitals, John Radcliffe and Churchill, at its heart.

The following table shows the top sub-sectors that have seen the most growth over the past five years.

Advertising and market research has seen the most growth in Oxfordshire rising by 134%. Building construction employees have almost doubled with 98% growth and Warehousing and support for transportation also almost doubled at 94%.

Sub-sectors that have seen most growth in employees, 2014[2]
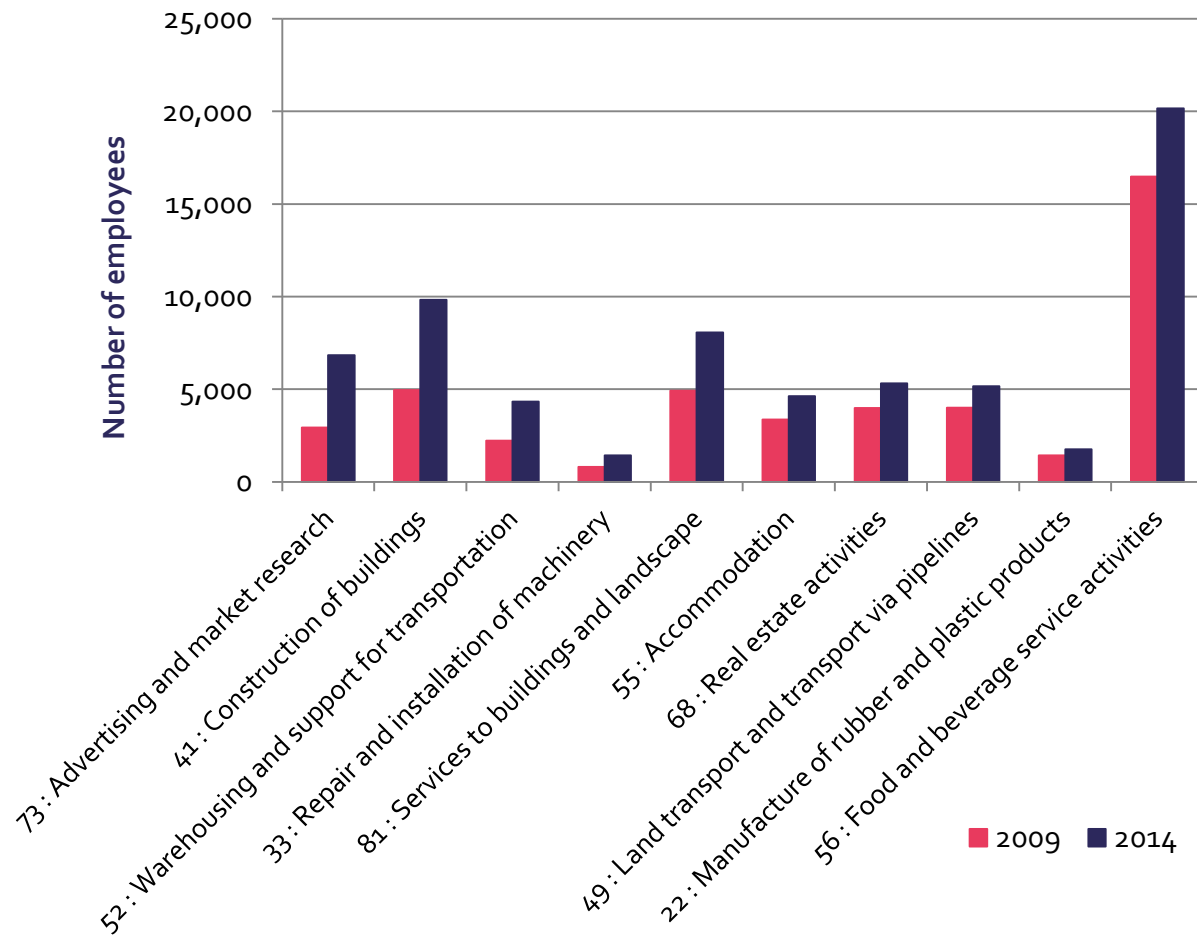
2 ONS Business Register Employment Survey (BRES), 2014

Job specialisms

While the occupation with most employees in Oxfordshire is 'Sales and Retail Assistants' (see box below), there are concentrations of job specialisms that make Oxfordshire unique[3] i.e. occupations that are more prevalent locally than the national average. Oxfordshire has a science, education and creative specialism.

The specialism table shows the occupations in which there are predicted to be a relatively high number of future job openings across the area.

Many of the jobs identified are high-skill roles that require higher level qualifications, such as at degree level or above.

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Oxfordshire's largest occupations: Top 5

Occupations	No. of jobs
Sales and retail assistants	14,400
Other administrative occupations n.e.c.	9,100
Cleaners and domestics	8,200
Nurses	7,200
Care workers and home carers	7,100

Source: EMSI Analyst, Q1 2015

Job specialisms
Biological scientists and biochemists
Laboratory technicians
Natural and social science professionals
Physical scientists
Research and development managers
Senior professionals of education
Higher education teaching professionals
Further education teaching professionals
Graphic designers
Authors, writers and translators
Photographers, audio-visual and broadcasting equipment operators
Journalists, newspaper and periodical editors
Market research interviewers
Clergy

Key:

Science	Education
Creative	Other

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[3] EMSI Analyst, 2015

Largest employers[4]

Rank	Company name	Total UK employees 2012	Employees in Oxon 2012	Nature of business	Head Office Location
1	University of Oxford (incl. OUP)	16,500	16,200	Education/Publishing	Oxford
2	Oxfordshire County Council	15,902	15,902	Local authority	Oxford
3	Ministry of Defence	257,000	11,280	Armed forces	Various sites
4	Oxford University Hospitals	10,732	10,732	NHS Trust	Oxford
5	Oxford Health NHS Foundation Trust	6,233	5,164	NHS Trust	Oxford
6	BMW (UK) Manufacturing	8,000	3,700	Motor manufacturer	Oxford
7	Thames Valley Police	7,847	3,167	Police	Kidlington
8	Oxford Brookes University	2,823	2,823	Education	Oxford
9	Midcounties Co-op	9,000	2,200	Retail/consumer business	Leamington HQ
10	Waitrose	48,400	1,400	Retailer	Bracknell
11	STFC	1,650	1,200	Research Council	Didcot
12	Oxford City Council	1,100	1,100	Local authority	Oxford
13	Fresh Direct	1,036	1,036	Vegetable wholesaler	Bicester
14	Royal Mail	176,242	1,000	Postal services	London
15	Unipart Group	9,253	967	Logistics	Oxford
16	RM plc	1,662	956	Technology	Milton Park
17	Oxfam UK	2,245	900	Charity	Oxford
18	Activate Learning	1,410	850	Education	Oxford
19	Abingdon & Witney College	750	750	Education	Abingdon
20	Stagecoach	32,906	750	Transport	Oxford

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[4] The Oxford Times Top 100 Employers, 2012, http://www.oxfordtimes.co.uk/ N.B. this is the most up-to-date information on largest employers.

Largest employer vacancies

While most job postings online are posted via recruitment agencies (especially small companies looking for finance, marketing, administration and human resource positions to be filled), the table on the right gives an indication of the type of employers that were recruiting in quarter 4 2015, directly and online.

Did you know?

In 2016, three companies with Oxfordshire headquarters were recognised in the Sunday Times best 100 companies to work for. These were:
Connect Catering *in Wallingford;*
Bibby Financial Services *in Banbury;*
Audley Travel *in Witney.*

They have happy and motivated workforces.

Current Jobs: Working in Oxfordshire

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Largest employers from online job postings, Q4 2015

Rank	Company name	No. of job postings	Nature of business
1	University of Oxford	955	Education
2	National Health Service	746	Health
3	STFC	124	Research - Science and Engineering
4	Travelodge	121	Hotelier
5	Reed Elsevier	104	Publisher
6	Oxford Brookes University	95	Education
7	Sophos	67	Cyber security
8	Carillion	61	Facilities management
9	Amey plc	51	Infrastructure support services
10	Greenwich Leisure	44	Leisure centre operator
11	Sodexo	42	Facilities management
12	Mitchells & Butlers	40	Restaurant, pub and bar operator
13	Diamond Light Source	40	Synchrotron science facility
14	Compass Group	38	Food service, cleaning and property
15	HS Marston Aerospace	33	Aerospace products

Source: Labour Insight, Burning Glass Technologies

Did you know?

73% *of employers in Oxfordshire recruited in the last two years.*

32% *of these employers recruited someone to their first job from leaving school, college or university.*

Source: UKCES ESS, 2013

NOW HIRING

5

Job vacancies

Job vacancies data gives a good indication of the current labour market in Oxfordshire; showing what employers are looking for, as well as which occupations are potentially hard-to-fill.

Labour Insight is an online labour market tool that scans and collates online job postings. However, it should be noted that the data is limited to web based postings and therefore may not be representative of all vacancies – a good number of vacancies are filled informally but it does provide a broad overview of the job market.

Number of job vacancies posted online, 2012-15, Oxfordshire
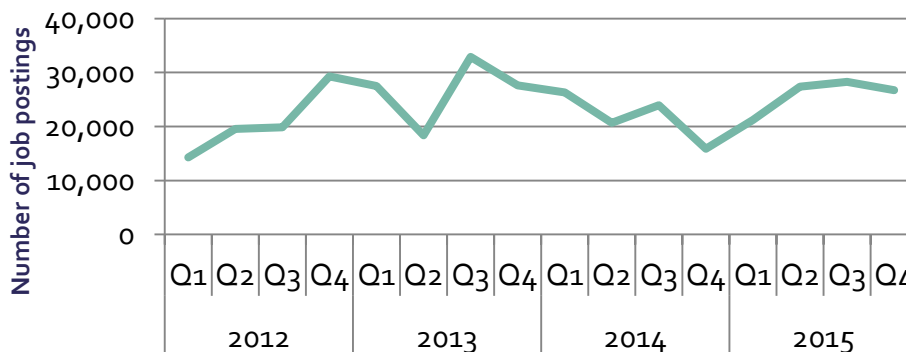
Source: Labour Insight, Burning Glass Technologies

Did you know?

The three occupations most in demand in 2015 in Oxfordshire were:

1. **Programmer and Software Development** *professionals, with top programming languages being Java, C#, C++, Asp.Net, Python and SQL;*

2. **Nurses,** *with registered and staff nurses most sought after; and*

3. **Other administrative** *occupations, with administrative clerks and assistants in demand*

- Job postings averaged 20,800 per quarter through 2012; rising to 26,600 in 2013, 21,700 in 2014 and rising again to 26,000 in 2015.

Current Jobs: Working in Oxfordshire

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What occupation groupings are currently most in demand?

In the 4th quarter 2015, 26,700 postings were advertised online via employer sites, job boards and staffing agencies for jobs in Oxfordshire.

Top 15 of occupation groups most in demand, 4th quarter 2015, Oxfordshire[5].

Rank	Occupation	No. of Job Postings	Broad sector	ONS Skill level[6]
1	Programmers and software development professionals	2,063	ICT	4
2	Nurses	1,061	Health	4
3	Other administrative occupations n.e.c.[7]	1,020	Office Admin	2
4	Web design and development professionals	626	ICT	4
5	Business sales executives	609	Retail	3
6	IT business analysts, architects and systems designers	567	ICT	4
7	Chefs	518	Recreation, culture, sports, media	3
8	Managers and proprietors in other services n.e.c.	476	Legal, financial, property, other business services	3
9	Managers and directors in retail and wholesale	473	Retail	4
10	Human resources and industrial relations officers	433	Legal, financial, property , other business services	3
11	Design and development engineers	423	Engineering	4
12	Information technology and telecommunications	393	ICT	4
13	Sales accounts and business development managers	392	Legal, financial, property , other business services	3
14	Customer service occupations n.e.c	370	Retail	2
15	Management consultants and business analysts	367	Legal, financial, property , other business services	4

Source: Labour Insight, Burning Glass Technologies

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[5] 4th quarter, 1 October 2015 to 31 December 2015.
[6] Skill levels are explained in further detail in the LMI Skills and Qualifications section pdf
[7] n.e.c – not elsewhere classified

Current Jobs: Working in Oxfordshire

The occupation groups listed previously fit into employment sectors. What follows is the sector breakdown for all job postings in Q4 2015:
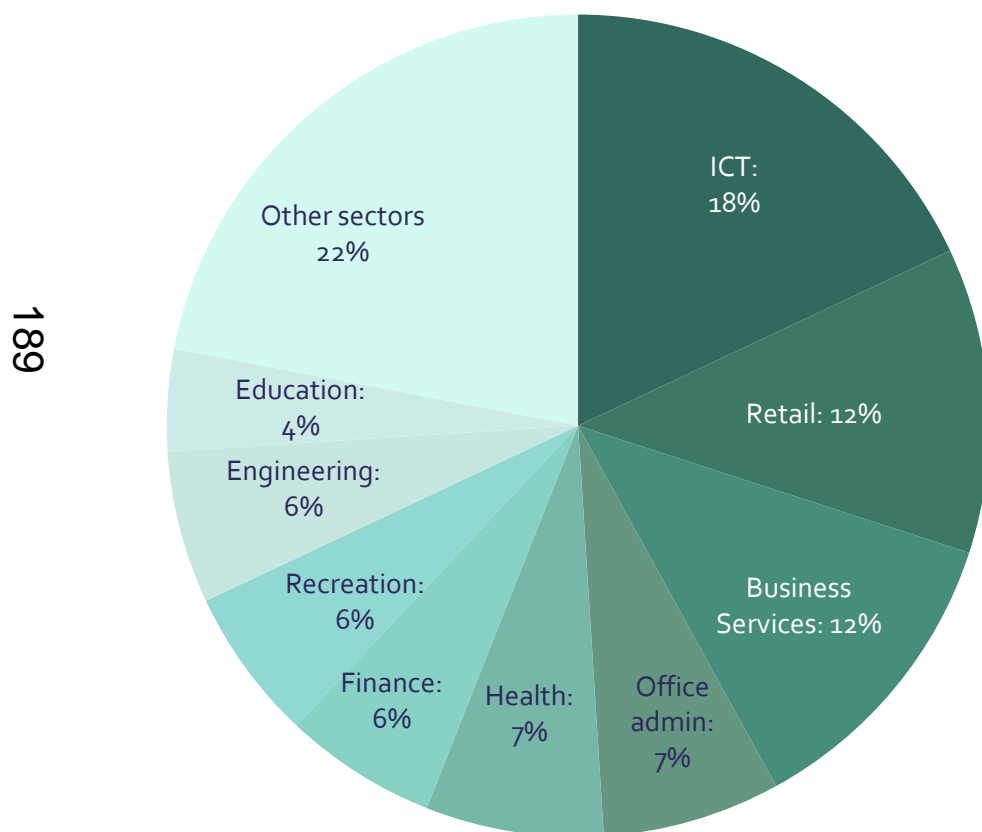
- Nearly one in five of all job postings in this quarter are ICT jobs. Vacancies for Programmers and Software Development professionals have consistently topped the occupational chart in Oxfordshire.

- 12% of jobs are in Retail and Sales and 12% are in 'Other Business Services' (e.g. administration, business managers)

- The top 3 broad sectoral groups for job postings consistently top in Oxfordshire over the past four years are 'ICT'; 'Legal, Financial, Property and Other Business professionals'; 'Retail and Sales'.

Did you know?

Higher education teaching professionals *are four times more concentrated in Oxfordshire than nationally.* ***Scientists*** *are, on average, three times more concentrated.* ***Publishin****g success means* ***authors, publishers, translators, journalists*** *and* ***editors*** *all have a higher concentration in Oxfordshire.*

EMSI Analyst, Q1 2015

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What job titles lead demand in job vacancies?

It is job titles, and not occupation groupings, that head the job advert.

In this analysis for example, it is evident that in the ICT sector, the occupation group Programmers and Software Developers, encompass a number of varied job titles.

In fact, there can be numerous titles for similar types of jobs due to the specificity of the work being reflected in the title and many job titles straddle sectors – Assistant Manager for example. Job titles also change over time as the nature of the work involved also changes.

The table to the right shows the top 20 job titles in Oxfordshire to give an indication of the standardisation and popularity of job titles.

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Number of postings for job titles, 4th quarter 2015, Oxfordshire

Rank	Title	Broad Sectoral Group	Job Posts
1	Registered Nurse	Health	360
2	Software Development Engineer	ICT	284
3	Software Developer	ICT	235
4	Business Analyst	ICT	229
5	Recruiting Consultant	Other Business Services	226
6	Assistant Manager	Recreation; Health; Other Business Services; Retail and Sales	204
7	Chef	Recreation, Leisure	204
8	Staff Nurse	Health	186
9	Java Software Developer	ICT	174
10	Account Manager	Other Business Services; Retail and Sales	173
11	Store Manager	Retail and Sales	168
12	Web Developer	ICT	165
13	Mechanical Design Engineer	Engineering	150
14	Sales Executive	Retail and Sales	148
15	Solutions Architect	ICT	142
16	Sous Chef	Recreation, Leisure	135
17	Sales Manager	Retail and Sales	126
18	Administrative Clerk	Office Admin	114
19	.Net Developer	ICT	112
20	Social Worker	Care	106

Source: Labour Insight, Burning Glass Technologies

Job vacancy salary

Distribution of advertised salary, 2015, Oxfordshire
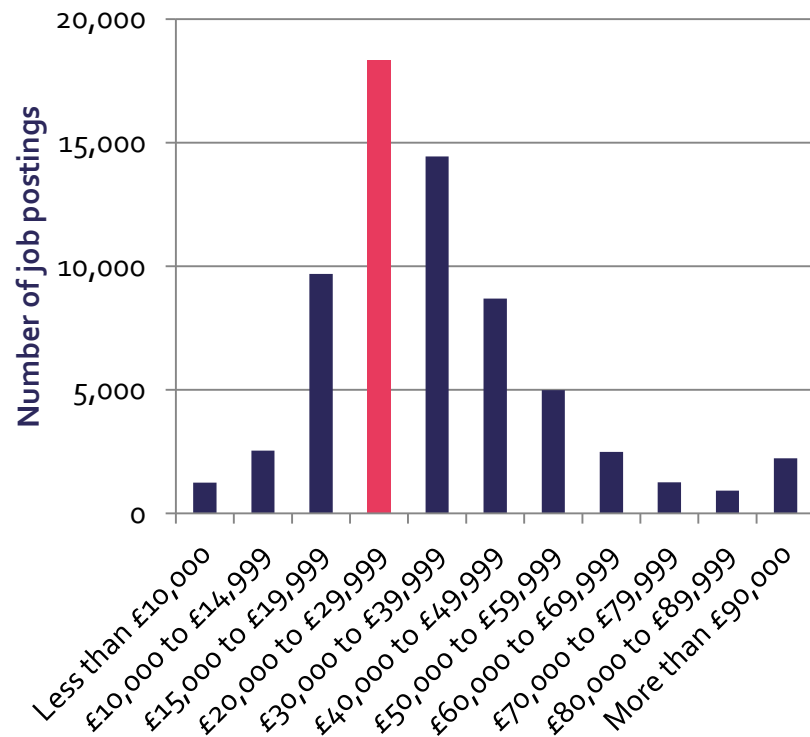
Source: Labour Insight, Burning Glass Technologies

- About a third of online jobs advertised a salary between 20,000-£40,000 - these include posts like nurses, other IT and business professionals, technicians and managers.

- Occupations in the higher salary brackets are IT professionals with specialised knowledge, management consultants and business analysts and medical consultants.

- Occupations found in the lower salary brackets tend to be customer service based, such as those in sales and retail, hospitality, child care and administration assistants.

Did you know?

£££££

£35,343: *The mean real-time average salary for job vacancy postings in 2015.*

Labour Insight, Burning Glass Technologies

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Apprenticeships

Apprenticeships provide an opportunity for young people to start paid work in an occupation of their choosing while receiving on and off the job training. A successful apprentice will receive a nationally recognised qualification on completion of their contract.

Apprenticeships, and vocational training generally, have been given a big boost with significnt annoncements from the Chancellor in his summer Budget 2015 . These include:

- A pledge to create three million apprenticeships by 2020 across the UK
- Give the term 'apprenticeship' legal protection to strengthen its reputation and to ensure the same legal status as university degrees.

Also high on the agenda are new funding mechanisms aimed at driving more apprenticeships and the creation of higher apprenticeships.

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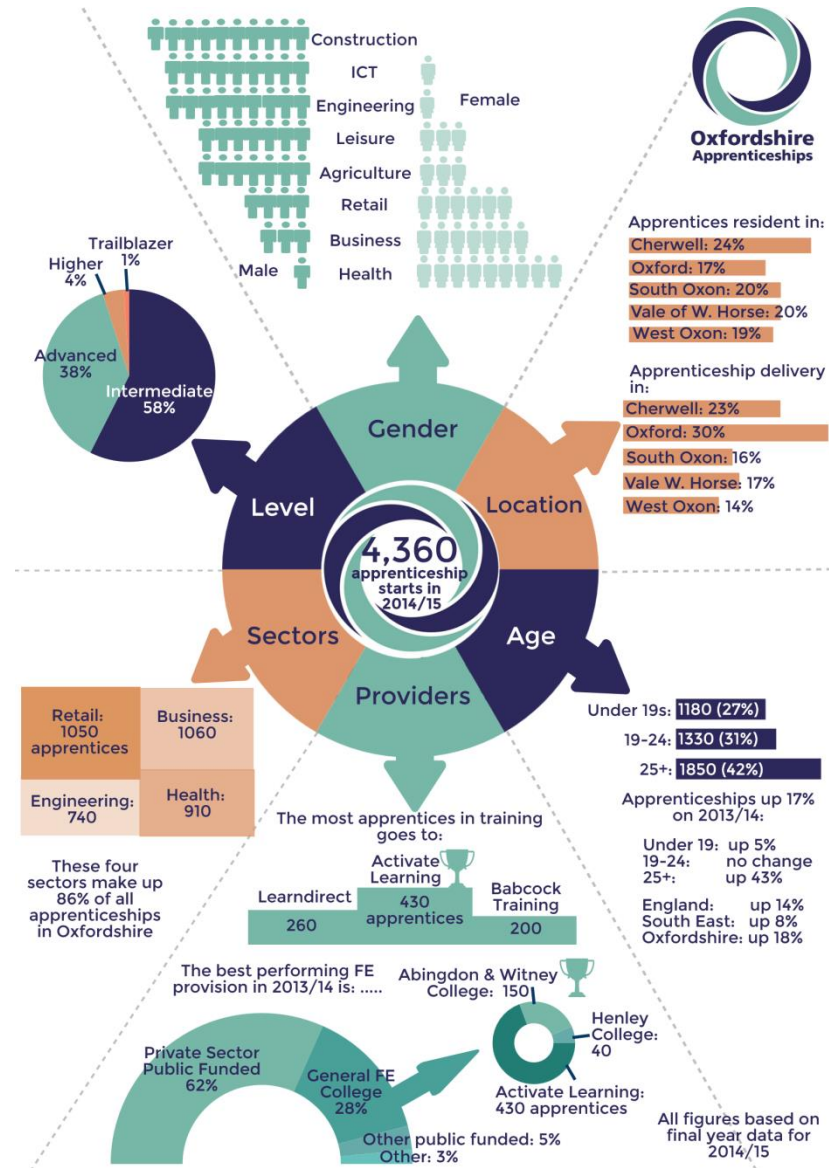
Oxfordshire Apprenticeships Average wages per week

£120 Arts, Media and Publishing
£124 Education and Training
£132 Construction, Planning and the Built Environment
£156 Agriculture, Horticulture and Animal Care
£156 Retail and Commercial Enterprise

£148 Engineering and Manufacturing Technologies
£158 Health, Public Services and Care
£165 Information Communication Technology
£165 Leisure, Travel and Tourism
£175 Business Administration and Law

Did you know?
The national minimum wage for apprentices rises by 10 pence to £3.40 an hour on 1 October 2016, which gives a 37 hour weekly wage of £125.80.

oxfordshire Apprenticeships

Where will the new apprenticeships be created?

Developments in the pipeline (Westgate Shopping Centre redevelopment, new housing at Barton, residential developments in Bicester, and warehousing at Didcot) indicate construction and logistics are key areas for growth for apprenticeships. With the growth in higher apprenticeships, we aim is to see more high tech industries offering apprenticeship opportunities.

In his recent budget statement the Chancellor also said public bodies will be given targets to boost apprenticeships so we shall see more opportunities across the sector including health, police, prisons, defence, the care sector and more.

Did you know?

- *Apprentices are likely to **earn more** during their lifetime than contemporaries with fewer qualifications;*
- *Just **5%** of apprentices are unemployed a year after starting their job hunt compared with 16 per cent of graduates and 13 per cent of those with A-levels*
- *Over **1/3** of apprentices who found employment were working **in the skilled trades** in jobs such as electrician or plumber.*

Source: UK labour market insights - the entry-level dilemma. A Totaljobs.com report

Current apprenticeship opportunities

In December 2015, there were 212 unique apprenticeship postings advertising 271 vacancies that were open to applications[8]

Top 12 with most apprenticeship job vacancies by framework tier 2, December 2015, Oxfordshire

Apprenticeship framework	No. of vacancies
Catering and Professional Chefs	35
Business and Administration	23
Customer Service	18
IT, Software, Web & Telecoms Professionals	18
Hospitality	17
Children and Young People's Workforce	17
Hairdressing	15
Health and Social Care	8
Retail	6
Warehousing and Storage	4
Health - Optical Retail	4
Accounting	4

Source: National Apprenticeship Service for Oxfordshire,
https://apprenticeshipvacancymatchingservice.lsc.gov.uk/)

- Retail and commercial enterprise apprenticeships lead demand with posts as chefs, front of house assistants and hairdressing top.

- 81% of vacancies were at intermediate level, 18% were advanced, 1% higher.

- Weekly wages ranged from £99 to £289, with the median average at £161. The pay goes up as the level goes up[9]. Intermediate level can expect a weekly average wage of £158, whilst higher level commands £204.

- A third of apprenticeships were based in Oxford City; Banbury was the next highest location of vacancy with 12% and Witney third with 10%.

The Oxfordshire apprenticeships website (www.oxfordshireapprenticeships.co.uk) provides a live vacancy feed for the current apprenticeship vacancies in Oxfordshire.

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[8] These figures are all based on those vacancies posted to the National Apprenticeship Service website by training providers and may not include all vacancies.

[9] Intermediate level is the educational equivalent to 5 GCSE passes at grades A*-C; Advanced level is equivalent to 2 A level passes; Higher level is equivalent to a Foundation degree and above.

Programmers/ software developers
Occupation with most job vacancy postings 2015

3 X
more scientists and lab technicians than national average

17%
Increase on apprenticeship starts 13/14 to 14/15

TO WORK

Education
Sector with largest share of Oxfordshire resident employees

Advertising and Market Research
Sub-sector that has seen most growth (2009-2014)

Current Jobs: Working in Oxfordshire

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Work Experience for Schools/ students: summary guidance for managers

Objectives:

The Council is already committed to supporting young people into work through its successful apprenticeship schemes. The Council's Corporate Plan 2014-2018 includes a measure to increase the wider number of apprenticeships, training places and jobs created through Council investment projects and other activities.

This new work experience framework will now provide a structured programme to give young people a good flavour of what the Council does, the career opportunities available, and the practical experience to improve their job readiness skills so that they can be better placed to make an effective transition into work.

The Council's work experience placements will be an effective way of developing links with the local community and an essential part of being a socially responsible employer. They will not be paid and will be restricted to the age groups/ eligibility criteria specified below.

Key messages:

- A great chance to give an excellent work experience opportunity to young people attending schools/ living in OX1-OX4 postcodes or from City regeneration areas but attending schools outside the City (e.g. Wheatley Park or Gosford Hill*);
- Focus on Year 10s to 13s (15-18 year olds);
- A clear structure and organised response to requests for our work experience offering;
- Raise the quality of work experience through facilitating placements in areas of career interest for students wherever this is possible;
- Each service will be asked to consider hosting at least one place per year;
- We'll ask for a service co-ordinator to support the management of each placement:
- A clear outline programme of what the experience should cover;
- Will aim to link hands on work experience with key STEM (science, technology, engineering and maths) subject skills wherever possible;
- Assist candidates with CV development, interview, customer service, employability skills and feedback on their placements with the Council, i.e. would you give them a job?

How the programme will be managed:

The Council will primarily look to provide work experience placements to students from schools in the Oxford City Business in the Community cluster group or who are resident in the City OX1-OX4 postcodes (see Appendix 1: BiTC cluster schools work experience weeks for 2015 table) or from City regeneration areas but attending schools outside the City.

The Council has a preference for a work experience placement to normally consist of one continuous week but may extend this offer to two weeks if this is appropriate and where there may be a possibility to link in with Youth Ambition/ Positive Futures initiatives. Placements

will generally follow the designated weeks set aside by each school (see sample calendar under Appendix 1) but the Council will have some flexibility to explore placements during the Easter and summer holiday breaks.

The Council will deal with all additional requests for work experience on a case-by-case basis where these are sustainable, although these will not generally be encouraged, as the purpose of this strategy is to formalise a process and provide consistent, transparent procedures open to all based on the eligibility criteria outlined above and organised through work experience relationship managers at each school. (Note: HR BPs will assist service areas to consider non-school based requests for work experience placements or work shadowing in conjunction with organisational requirements). The Council will continue to support and develop its existing links with Oxford Brookes University and other key local partners wherever possible when these align with strategic objectives. This might include:

- Tackling NEETs;
- Opening opportunities for underrepresented communities within our workforce;
- Providing the chance to pilot a new initiative; or
- Pursuing an undergraduate research project within a relevant professional service or where the Council and local communities will derive a measurable mutual benefit from a social enterprise project

All individual requests from Schools must be flagged to the OD&L Advisor/ Equalities (with support from members of the HR administration team). These will be passed directly to service area HR Business Partners for their appropriate professional guidance and to hold planning conversations with service co-ordinators in order that expectations/ placements can be managed sensibly through each co-ordinator, be genuinely inclusive and open to all, and follow all employment law best practice standards: ensuring that students receive constructive feedback, have the chance to develop valuable workplace diaries, and gain an intelligent insight into the working world.

The OD&L Advisor/ Equalities will further support HR BPs by collating/ monitoring information covering gender/ ethnicity/ disability to ensure that placements are fairly available to all applicants and are having a positive impact for underrepresented communities and across all City schools.

Once the arrangements are confirmed the individual will be sent a work experience agreement to sign, which will include a confidentiality statement. This form will also ensure the Council gains all the information it needs e.g. about the interests and skills of the potential placement. A letter of confirmation of the placement will be sent by the hosting manager once it has been agreed. This will give reporting instructions such as a contact name, the start time, length of the placement and service location. Service areas might also consider meeting the student/ parents in person and to finalise details of the week via e-mail so that everyone is absolutely clear about expectations.

A suggested timetable for work placements is outlined in Appendix 2, but the aspiration of the Council is that all placements receive an "Employability Skills" session as part of the placement offer in some relevant form to the placement.

At the end of the placement:

- Students will understand the importance of organisational Values and Behaviours in work environments, how teams work and other insights;
- Students will be able to think through their experience and summarise their achievements/ skills development in a paragraph to use in their CV and through a short feedback presentation to the relevant host service team or to take away in a work place diary; and
- The Council will ensure that students who have completed work experience receive feedback and where the placement has been successfully completed provide a reference at the end of the placement

Appendix 1: BiTC cluster schools work experience weeks for 2016 template circulated by Oxfordshire County Council:

School	Dates for 2015/ 2016	Type of placement (what job areas are available to shadow)	Numbers of placements
Cherwell School	5th – 9th October 2015 TBC - June 2016		
Cheney School	20th - 24th June 2016		
Oxford Spires	29th Feb - 4th March 2016		
The Oxford Academy	27th June – 1st July 2016		
St Gregory the Great	4th – 8th July 2016		
Matthew Arnold School	14th – 18th March 2016		
Gosford Hill*	18th – 22nd April 2016		

NB: Please be realistic about what placements you are able to offer, and what you are not

Appendix 2: Sample work experience timetable

Week	Morning	Afternoon

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Monday	Mini corporate welcome from line managers to introduce students to our business. A clear outline of the standards we expect from them e.g. our house rules, the acceptable/ unacceptable behaviours, & what we will send them home immediately for Walk around tour of St Aldate's/ Town Hall/ Cowley Marsh/ Horspath (Direct Services will include a comprehensive H&S induction) Note that arrangements for a trade based work experience timetable will differ Note: All placements should receive an "Employability Skills" session, e.g. including interview and presentation tips. Front line work experience students will inevitably have the opportunity to become familiar with customer care standards Direct Services will support students to compile work experience diaries and encourage the use of photo evidence where this is possible/ appropriate	Service specific inductions/ meet the teams including a discussion of the day-to-day duties that the individual will be responsible for (matching opportunities with the skills or experience the student has previously indicated they are keen to develop) Service areas to be responsible for temporary IT permissions/ allocating a laptop to use where necessary Allocate dedicated w/e buddy/ mentor
Tuesday	Introduce a proportionate mini-project to be worked on at points of the placement, e.g. contributing to research for a presentation, designing presentation slides or putting together a service away day agenda, compiling a practical work experience diary or evidence for a school project	Day-to-day tasks
Wednesday	Day-to-day & projects	Day-to-day & projects
Thursday	Day-to-day & projects	Day-to-day & projects
Friday	Presentation of mini-project findings to the team/ mentor (where relevant), debrief and two-way feedback	Closing the placement: What have you learned and how have you developed during this work experience? OCC to provide a detailed 'summary of experience' to both help them focus on their own key achievements and learning, and also to use to help promote themselves to potential employers. Feedback for us: how well the w/e was run, any improvements we could make?

Appendix 3: Guidance for managers

Oxford City Council will be frequently asked to provide young people with work experience. These guidelines provide information to help those managing the process.

The aim of providing work placements:

- Provide an understanding of the world of work;
- Raise awareness of what types of career are available;
- Develop self-confidence;
- Improve transferable employability and soft communication skills; and
- Strengthen links between the Council, schools and the local community

Placements are organised directly with Schools, supported by HR BPs and service work experience co-ordinators. Work experience students are typically aged between 15 and 18 years old.

Safeguarding, risk assessments and employment law best practice:

- People on work experience are classed as employees for the period of the placement under the Health and Safety (Training for Employment) Regulations 1990, and are therefore covered by the Council's insurance;
- The School and Council are required by law to carry out a risk assessment to reduce the possibility of any accidents;
- The host manager responsible for supervising the placement must be aware of their Child Protection responsibilities: guidance is set out in the Safeguarding Policy (first intranet link below) which includes advice on whether a DBS would be appropriate for any staff acting as "buddies" or mentors. Direct Services managers should refer to their existing work experience map (second intranet link below). If in doubt, contact HR BPs for advice.

http://occweb/intranet/documents/safeguarding-children-and-vulnerable-adult-policy

http://occweb/intranet/people-and-learning/health-safety/at-a-glance-guides-maps/young-people-work-experience-map

Hours of Work:

Work experience students should usually work the hours expected of any apprentice, up to a maximum of 37 hours a week (7.24 hours a day excluding breaks). Note: Students of compulsory school age should not normally work on Bank Holidays or between 10.00 p.m. and 6.00 am. Provision should be made for appropriate breaks and The *Working Time Regulations 1998* apply to work experience students.

Payment and Expenses:

Work experience is part of a student's education and the Council will make **no payment** for the work performed. However, we may agree to help out with travel or meal expenses at our discretion, e.g. where a student might be in receipt of the Pupil Premium and normally eligible for free school meals or travel passes

Practical considerations:

- Inform colleagues/reception of the work experience participant's arrival before their first day, and to set up computer login details for any programs they may be using;
- Prepare a shortened version of your normal induction for staff, giving the essential information they need to get started;
- Introduce them to the whole team and show them around the work space, kitchen/ eating areas, the location of toilets and where to put personal items. Please be clear about all break times;
- Go through a checklist of health and safety issues, especially fire drill, first aid and any hazardous areas e.g. working depots;
- Give them a short 'job description' of the tasks they will cover during their placement;
- It is possible that they have a very limited experience of working, so make sure you ask open questions, using 'what, when, why, where', when discussing the tasks. This will allow the student to give a better picture of their understanding;
- Encourage them to ask questions whenever they are in doubt about anything. It will be helpful to allocate a 'buddy' to allow them to ask questions more informally;
- It is also useful to provide a fully briefed and dedicated mentor for the placement period;
- Students are expected to dress smartly and appropriately (for the placement) and to understand the importance of promoting a professional image;
- Give them some useful documents such as the Values and Behaviours Framework and a short list of contacts and telephone numbers of people they are likely to have to phone or e-mail;
- You should have regular conversations, reflecting on their progress and attitude;
- The student will often have to complete a log of their placement, so services will be asked to provide a summary of the skills and performance of the student which may be used to complement their CV. At the end of the placement it is good practice to arrange a final review meeting with them to discuss what they have learned and achieved

Note: Standard Oxfordshire County Council work experience agreement

Employer Agreement: This agreement MUST be signed in advance of taking students:

- I understand that I will be contacted by OCC in relation to work experience processes and may be visited by the team for health and safety purposes.
- I agree to OCC holding information regarding work experience placements on their database systems and sharing this information with schools, students and parents.
- I will follow guidance at http://www.hse.gov.uk/youngpeople/workexperience/placeprovide.htm
- I understand I will be notified of student name/s and placement information prior to the placement start date. I understand the student will also contact me prior to starting.
- I confirm I will have appropriate Employer Liability Insurance to cover work experience students in place for the placement duration (and have notified my brokers if necessary)
- I am aware of the requirement on employers to complete a suitable and sufficient risk assessment and to provide information to a parent/guardian for a child of compulsory school age in accordance with the *Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 (as amended).*
- I will undertake to provide induction training, including Health and Safety and emergency arrangements.
- I will undertake to have due regard for the welfare of the young people in the workplace and understand that it may be necessary to undergo a Criminal Records Bureau Check in line with the 'Safeguarding of Children in Education' [D*f*ES Guidance September 2004]
- I will notify the school in the event of any absence, early termination of placement, injury, or any other difficulties regarding the student, or should an incorrect student appear.

Signed: Date:
Return of this form from the email address to which this was sent will be accepted as your signature. Therefore this form can be returned by email.

Chapman, Debbie - Environment & Economymailto:Debbie.Chapman@Oxfordshire.gov.uk

Appendix 4: Standard response letter for applicants not eligible for work experience

Thank you for your expression of interest in a work experience placement with Oxford City Council.

The Council has a structured programme of work experience which focusses on schools; to give young people a good flavour of what the Council does, the career opportunities available, and the opportunity to improve their job readiness skills so that they can be better placed to make an effective transition into work or the next stage of their education/ training.

We are, therefore, primarily committed to providing work experience placements to students from schools in the Oxford City Business in the Community cluster group or who are resident in the City OX1-OX4 postcodes in order to support and develop strong links with and meaningful opportunities for the diverse communities we deliver our services to.

The Council will still, wherever possible, consider all separate requests for work experience on a case-by-case basis when these align with our strategic objectives and derive a measurable benefit for local communities or innovative service development.

We would like to wish you well in your career development, but on this occasion cannot offer you a work experience placement.

Appendix 5: National best practice guidelines for work experience

High quality and effective work experience should be just that – a real life experience of the world of work, rather than just trying to keep someone occupied for a week or two.

Learners should complete the placement having had the chance to develop a range of transferable skills, gain useful contacts for networking, explore career options and make a positive choice about next steps into employment, as well as enhancing their CV.

Consider the agenda in advance, and the points you may wish to cover which could include:

- Progress against an overall objective and short-term goals;
- Which aspects of the placement are going well?
- Which aspects of the placement are more challenging, and is there anything which can be done to assist in this area?
- Review of expectations, if required;
- Feedback to the learner on both practical skills and general employability skills;
- Opportunity for the learner to feedback on practical or wider organisational topics which may be of interest;
- Opportunity to ask the learner to review a specific area of interest, e.g. their opinion of a key service from a young person's point of view;
- How to attract and recruit more young people with the skills and aptitudes required by the organisations, etc.
- Create a varied placement role, with opportunities to develop a number of areas of skills knowledge, to try and avoid monotony;
- Show a direct link from the work placement role to the wider business, to give some context to the role and show the learner how they fit in with the overall success criteria for the organisation;
- Try and build in a level of autonomy, giving the learner responsibility for a particular piece of work. Agreeing an overall objective and a series of tasks is helpful with this;

- Ensure that the activities within the placement challenge the learner. All learners will have unique needs, and the level of challenge will vary for different learners, requiring a tailored approach to placement planning

Review checklist:

- Review the learning points while they are still fresh;
- Reflect on the skills and abilities learned and ensure that these are highlighted within the CV;
- Consider whether career aspirations have changed in light of the placement;
- Identify any gaps in skills or knowledge needed to pursue the next step into a career of their choice (where this is possible);
- Encourage the learner to provide their own feedback, both on the work experience placement design and management, to assist with future placements, and also on areas of the organisation which would benefit from their view point;
- Write a reference, highlighting skills and knowledge they have learned whilst on placement within the organisation, and any transferable skills they have demonstrated;
- Provide assistance with CV writing, interview preparation and networking opportunities;
- Make available any information on opportunities within the organisation, such as Apprenticeships or other vacancies, and assist the learner in the application process; and
- Highlight positive achievements and thanking them for their time;

.

Appendix 6: 7 traits of successful placements

A brilliant work placement - one that works for you and the student - is easier to put together than you might think. Just keep it simple with a series of tasks that are within the student's abilities. You want them to leave with a sense of achievement and a few useful insights into the world of work. This is what you're aiming for: Work experience opportunities can vary in length, but for 14-16 year-olds typically take place over a taster day, a week or a fortnight. It may be more suitable for a busy business to offer a taster day to a student rather than a full week, and similarly some students may find a taster day an easier introduction to the workplace.

1. **More than admin.** Tea making and administration are both important - and we've all done them - but they're not enough to fill a meaningful work placement. The student needs to be involved with the day-to-day tasks performed in your business.

2. **Variety.** A placement that allows the student to meet people across the business or see a range of tasks performed will be a lot more interesting than one that doesn't.

3. **Teamwork.** Whatever you can do to make the student feel part of the team will be time well spent.

4. **What it's like to be the boss.** Even the most democratic business structures have bosses. Help the student understand how to behave around them by allowing them to sit in with someone senior for a period of time.

5. **Customers.** As learning exercises go, there's nothing quite like meeting customers and seeing first-hand what they expect when they hand over their cash.

6. **The bigger picture.** Help the student understand that your business is just one element of a network that includes suppliers, the local community and the national economy.

7. **Careers advice.** Once you've had a chance to size up the student and their skills, help them achieve their ambitions by sharing your experience and advice.

POLICY BRIEFING

Apprenticeships - Update

Date	15 March 2016
Author	Toby Hill
	LGiU/CSN Associate

Summary

This briefing provides a broad overview of the government apprenticeship reforms to date, providing key information and analysis of the changes.

The reforms, begun under the Coalition government, have gathered pace and complexity under the majority Conservative administration. A pledge to deliver three million new starts by 2020 has been accompanied by a raft of new standards and assessment procedures, tailored to each sector and occupation, and a levy on business to spread the costs of apprenticeship provision. However, concerns exist that improvements in quality are failing to keep pace with the quantity of new apprenticeships. This briefing outlines how the government's latest proposals address these criticisms, and what challenges continue to lie ahead.

This briefing will be of interest to members and officers with responsibility for education, skills training and economic development.

Overview

This briefing considers both the changes that the government has made to the apprenticeship system, and the criticisms and problems that have been highlighted along the way.

In its manifesto, the Conservative government pledged to create three new million new apprenticeships by 2020. Alongside a drive to increase the numbers undertaking apprenticeships, a number of changes have been implemented with the aim of improving their quality. These include:

- A new business tax known as the apprenticeship levy applied at a rate of 0.5% of an employer's paybill where it is in excess of £3 m, with one allowance of £15,000;
- A new, simpler and more rigorous system of standards and assessments, to be designed by employers known as Trailblazers;
- A new law requiring that staff from colleges and apprenticeship providers visit schools to provide careers guidance;
- A new duty in the Enterprise Bill which will require public sector organisations with more than 250 employers to include a minimum of 2.3% apprenticeships among new starts;
- The creation of a new Institute for Apprentices, intended to verify the quality of new standards and assessments, and monitor the quality of the apprenticeships being created.

Early results of the Government's apprenticeship reforms met with some criticism from Ofsted, as well as the CBI, Engineering Employers Federation (EEF) and Chambers of Commerce. There was concern that the rush to create apprenticeships was diluting their quality, and that they were not being created in the technical apprenticeships. Concomitantly, industry representatives argued that the new apprenticeships were not being created in industries which have the greatest need,

particularly in STEM industries. This briefing's comment considers how far the changes outlined above go towards overcoming these concerns.

Briefing in full

Background to the Reforms

Reforming the apprenticeship system was a central ambition of the Coalition government from the start of their time in office. Level 3 was positioned as the standard qualification that students and employers should aim for, while progression routes from Level 3 upward were smoothed and signposted. The government also endeavoured to increase the number of people undertaking apprenticeships across all age groups.

This initial strategy became more focused with the publication of the Richard Review of Apprenticeships in 2012, which was quickly followed by a government consultation on its proposals. This brought in goals to improve the quality of apprenticeships and to simplify the model through which they are funded. The 2015 Conservative manifesto tied this together with the promise to provide three million new apprenticeships before 2020.

Underlying these changes was a fundamental drive –not new, but to be pursued with renewed vigour - to place vocational education on a level footing with academic education. The most clear examples of this are new super apprenticeships, which provide a qualification equal to a Bachelor's degree and are intended to provide an equally or more effective route into the workplace.

Economically, effective vocational education is seen as key to meeting the UK's future skills needs. UK productivity currently stands at 20% lower than the rest of the G7, a fact due at least in part to low levels of skills in the workforce. There is also a pressing need for new technical and skilled workers to fill critical roles over the next decade, particularly in STEM industries.

The rest of this briefing looks t the government's strategy for achieving these goals, which encompasses changes ranging from the provision of careers guidance in schools to the funding of apprenticeships in the workplace. It also presents some of the criticisms that have been made of elements of this strategy, and considers the government's response to these criticisms.

Careers advice and guidance

The government's most recent intervention aimed at elevating the status of vocational education was the announcement of a new law concerning careers guidance in schools. While details are yet to be released, a January press release stated that apprenticeship providers and staff from colleges will be required to visit schools from the start of secondary education, as part of careers advisory services.

These practitioners will talk to students about the potential advantages of apprenticeship or technical and professional education (TPE) routes. The new law aims to counter concerns of a "two tiered system of careers advice" in which a university education is always seen as the preferred option over a more vocational route.

More details on the new law will be included in a government strategy on careers advice and guidance, to be published in 2016.

Finally, from September 2016, the highest level 'super apprenticeships' will be posted on UCAS. It is hoped that this will signal their equal value to an academic degree.

Traineeships

Another reform intended to bring more young people into apprenticeships was the introduction of traineeships. Brought in alongside the reform of the apprenticeship system, they are aimed at young people who need more support with the transition from school to work.

A traineeship lasts for up to six months and is delivered as a partnership between employers and training and education providers. Core elements include work-preparation training, a work placement, and English and maths.

Since their introduction in 2013, almost 30,000 young people have completed a traineeship. In two-thirds of cases, according to government statistics, doing so has enhanced the career prospects of trainees. They remain an integral part of the government's strategy to boosting the number of young people between 16 and 19 in apprenticeships

New Standards and Assessments

Among the main changes announced in the government's response to the Richard Review on apprenticeships was a redesign of the system of standards and assessments within apprenticeship programmes.

The new standards and assessment plans are being designed by groups of employers known as Trailblazers. The first eight Trailblazers launched in October 2013; there are now over 140 which have delivered over 350 new standards. All new frameworks will include end-point assessments to test the skills, knowledge and behaviours outlined in the standards.

Initially, the government had intended all new apprenticeship starts to be on the new standards by 2017/18. But this aim has now been delayed, in part due to the additional complexity created by of the introduction of the apprenticeship levy (see below). A December 2015 document announced the government's intention for a "migration from apprenticeship frameworks to standards over the course of the Parliament, with as much of this to take place in 2017/18 as possible."

Not all previous assessment plans have been translated into new standards, and the Government anticipates that there are occupations not yet associated with apprenticeships that could benefit from being so. It therefore continues to ask for groups of employers to make bids to design the new standards. The latest guidance for trailblazers was published in December 2015 and can be seen here.

Finally, the December 2015 document Apprenticeships: Vision for 2020 outlined a plan to establish a new independent body – the Institute for Apprenticeships – which will be led by employers, and will regulate the quality of apprenticeships. This body will put in place mechanisms for the approval of apprenticeship standards, to ensure only those valued by employers are approved and funded. The standards and assessment plans submitted by employers will be reviewed by "a small number of experts". The Institute is expected to be fully operational by 2017.

Targets

Increasing the number of students starting an apprenticeship was a goal taken up by the Coalition government. Between 2009-10 and 2013-14, there was a 3% increase in people under 19 starting an apprenticeship, a 40% increase in people between 19-24, and a 229% increase in those aged

25 and over. In their election manifesto, the Conservatives announced an acceleration of this process, promising to create three million new apprenticeships by 2020.

It remains an ambitious target. In order to meet it, the government has asked the public sector to make a substantial contribution. Public sector organisations in England will now be required to employ apprentices and will be set targets to increase the number of apprenticeship starts. Provisions to amend the Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Act 2009 in order that the Secretary of State can prescribe apprenticeship targets to public sector bodies is included in the Enterprise Bill.

The target will be a minimum of 2.3% new apprenticeship starts based on the headcount of employees working for a body in England. In order to be practicable, the duty will apply to public bodies that have 250 or more employees in England.

To make it easier for employers to take on new apprentices, the government is rolling out a new Digital Apprenticeship Service. This online tool will enable employers to select the most appropriate apprenticeships, choose a training provider, and pay for apprenticeship training and assessment.

Apprenticeship Levy

As well as designing the new apprenticeship standards, employers will also be drawn on to fund them, through a new business tax known as the apprenticeship levy. The measure was first announced in the July 2015 budget, which was followed by a consultation document. Further details were released in the government response to the consultation and in the 2015 Autumn Statement and Spending Review.

The levy will be applied at a rate of 0.5% of an employer's paybill. There will be an allowance of £15,000, meaning that only firms with paybills of more than £3 million will pay it – anticipated to be less than 2% of the firms in the UK. It will also be applied to public sector organisations which meet the requirements.

The levy will come into force in April 2017; by 2019-20, it is intended to have generated £3 billion for apprenticeship training. The Spending Review claimed that by this time, government spending on apprenticeships will have doubled in comparison to 2010-11 levels. It will be paid through the Pay as You Earn System (PAYE).

Challenges and Criticisms

Renovating the status of vocational education has been a perennial political promise in recent decades. But with their pledge to deliver three million new apprenticeships while simultaneously overhauling assessment and financing procedures, the Government has approached it with particular vigour.

However, there have been some signs that the speed and ambition of these changes could be damaging the quality and efficacy of the final product. These concerns were most succinctly summarised in an Ofsted report, based on a survey of 45 apprenticeship providers conducted in early 2015. The report concluded that, rather than a simultaneous expansion and improvement of apprenticeship provision, the rush to create new starts had diluted their quality.

Among their main criticisms were:

- Quality of apprenticeship provision is too variable, and often poor;

- The majority of new apprenticeships starts were in the retail and service sectors, and often took the form of simply accrediting pre-existing skills;
- Correspondingly, there were still insufficient apprenticeships providing the advanced, professional level skills needed in specific sectors with shortages;
- Employers are not making sufficient contributions to the cost of apprenticeships, undermining their quality;
- The number of 16 to 18 year olds starting in apprenticeships is still as low today as it was a decade ago. This is partly put down to schools and colleges failing to effectively promote apprenticeships.

The government has taken steps to address these concerns. The apprenticeship levy, outlined above, aims to enforce a meaningful contribution to the cost of apprenticeships from the largest employers. This income can then be used to boost the quality of the apprenticeship system across the board.

Secondly, a new law – also outlined earlier in this briefing - will require apprenticeship providers and staff from colleges to visit schools as part of careers advice from early secondary school. This is hoped to encourage more 16 to 18 year olds to start apprenticeships. It's also hoped that it will channel more students towards sectors with specific shortages, where there are good opportunities for a secure career, for example in the STEM industries.

The Government also intends to legislate for the term apprenticeship to be protected in law, to prevent its abuse by unscrupulous employers. And finally, the new Institute for Apprenticeships is intended to regulate the quality of new apprenticeships in the context of the three million new starts before 2020.

Comment

The aim of elevating the status of vocational education has been undertaken, largely without success, by a succession of governments. By now, it is clear that this involves changing cultural perspectives as much as it does amending a structural or institutional bias. And with 52% of young people still choosing paths other than university, and with tuition fees building a vertiginous tower of debt to greet students at the end of their years of study, a renewed attempt to dislodge this prejudice is very welcome. In such a context, there is no doubt that making it easier for young people to earn while they learn meaningful and challenging new skills is a very positive goal.

Amid the rush to fulfil eye-catching pledges, however, a range of voices have warned that quality has not been matching quantity as apprenticeship provision expands. This was most thoroughly demonstrated by the Ofsted survey summarised in the briefing above, but it was also a call echoed by the CBI, the EEF, and the British Chambers of Commerce.

In light of these criticisms and concerns, over the past eight months the government has implemented a number of changes to their original programme of reform. The introduction of an Apprenticeship Levy is intended both to ensure employers provide sufficient funding to support quality apprenticeships, and that those that contribute little to training the UK's workforce share the cost burden of those that do.

But the levy was immediately treated with scepticism. The CBI warned that there was no reason to assume this extra money would "equate to higher quality or deliver the skills the UK needs". Indeed, as Andrew Jones writes in a previous LGiU briefing focused on the apprenticeship levy, a 1963 Act introduced a very similar mechanism. It quickly proved unpopular with industry, and was

gradually wound down over the subsequent two decades. Things may have changed since then, but employer responses have so far been similarly sceptical. Furthermore, with the public sector included within the levy's requirements, extra strain is likely to be placed on local authority budgets that are already under a great deal of financial pressure.

In a similar fashion, the announcement of a new Institute for Apprenticeships shows an awareness of concerns over the quality of the apprenticeships that are currently being generated. But whether a small board of employers overseeing the creation of three million new apprenticeships can make much of an dent on what is widely acknowledged to be a critical issue remains to be seen.

Elsewhere, action is being taken on the issue of the persistent small take-up of apprenticeships among 16 to 18 year olds. A new careers guidance strategy is due out shortly, and is expected to emphasise improving advice on apprenticeships. The Government is also looking to use legislation to protect the term apprenticeships, mirroring what is already in place for degrees. In terms of tackling the aforementioned attitudes to vocational education, schools must play a crucial role, so these changes are worth watching closely.

But while these tweaks and changes are welcome recognitions that more needs to be done, there is continuing concern both over the quality of apprenticeships that are being created, and the extent to which new apprenticeships are matching the technical skills that will promote the UK's future economic success.

External links

BIS Apprenticeships Website

BIS The Future of Apprenticeships in England: Guidance for Trailblazers – from standards to starts

Ofsted Apprenticeships: developing skills for future prosperity

DfE Press Release: New law will end 'outdated snobbery' towards apprenticeships

Skills Funding Agency New Apprenticeship Standards

BIS/DfE Public Sector Apprenticeship Targets (consultation closed on 4 March 2016)

BIS Apprenticeships (in England): vision for 2020

Related briefings

The Future of Apprenticeships in England: What is Known So Far (January 2016)

Apprenticeships: Delivering Skills for Future Prosperity – Ofsted Survey (November 2015)

Post-16 Education and Training Institutions: BIS Guidance of Area Reviews (October 2015)

Solving the Productivity Puzzle (July 2015)

The Future of Apprenticeships in England: Implementation Plan – HMG (November 2013)

The Future of Apprenticeships in England: Next Steps from the Richard Review (April 2013)

For further information, please visit www.lgiu.org.uk or email john.fowler@lgiu.org.uk

OXFORD
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To:	**City Executive Board**
Date:	**16 June 2016**
Report of:	**Executive Director, Community Services**
Title of Report:	**OXFORD CITY COUNCIL, SAFEGUARDING REPORT 2015-2016**

Summary and recommendations	
Purpose of report:	To report the progress made on the Council's Safeguarding Action Plan and to recommend the Action Plan for approval for 2016-2017.
Key decision:	Yes
Executive Board Member:	Cllr Dee Sinclair, Executive Board Member for Crime, Community Safety and Licensing
Corporate Priority:	Strong and Active Communities
Policy Framework:	Corporate Plan.
Recommendation(s):That the City Executive Board resolves to:	
1.	**To note the progress and development of the Council's safeguarding work 2015-2016**;
2.	**To agree the Action Plan' as set out in Appendix 1**;

Appendices	
Appendix 1	Oxford City Council's Safeguarding Action Plan 2016-17
Appendix 2	Equalities Impact Assessment
Appendix 3	Risk Register

Background

1. Safeguarding children is the role of Oxfordshire County Council and it is overseen by the Oxfordshire Safeguarding Children's Board (OSCB). Oxford City Council is a key partner in ensuring safeguarding and in promoting the health and wellbeing of children and it strives for best practice in the services and support that it offers.

2. The Council must demonstrate that it complies with the Oxfordshire Safeguarding Children Board's policies and procedures and an annual safeguarding review is undertaken to ensure that this happens. This year the review looked in depth at:

- Senior management commitment to the importance of safeguarding and promoting children's welfare.
- A clear statement of the agency's responsibility towards children is available to all staff.
- A clear line of accountability within the organisation for work on safeguarding and promoting welfare.
- Service development takes into account the need to safeguard and promote welfare and is informed, where appropriate, by the views of children & families.
- Training on safeguarding & promoting the welfare of children for all staff working with or, depending on the agency's primary functions, in contact with children & families.
- Safer recruitment procedures including vetting procedures and those for managing allegations are in place.
- Effective inter-agency working to safeguard & promote the welfare of children.
- Effective information sharing.
- Safe transportation of children.

3. The Council has also extended this review to included safeguarding of adults at risk as well as children.

4. A full copy of the safeguarding review is available on the Oxford City Council Web site:
   https://www.oxford.gov.uk/info/20101/community_safety/348/keeping_people_safe

5. As a result of the safeguarding review, a Draft Action Plan 2016-17 has been developed for the City Council. This is provided in Appendix 1.

Safeguarding Action Plan 2015-16: Areas of best practice and achievements

6. The Council's 2014 -15 Safeguarding Review was considered as part of a peer review exercise in April 2016. The Council was awarded blue ratings in 5 of 7 areas. Blue ratings are awarded as evidence of best practice. In the remaining 2 areas, the Council received green ratings. There were no amber or red ratings. (Although we are waiting to receive this information in writing). Some examples of best practice are set out below.

Clear accountability

7. The Council has clear and effective lines of accountability in place. It has a Safeguarding Officers Group which meets every three months to review progress and development of the Council's safeguarding work. This group includes representatives across all service areas. There are also quarterly review meetings with the City's portfolio holder and the Chief Executive.

Services which support safeguarding and the promotion of health and well being

8. The Council provides a wide range of services which help to safeguard children and promote their health and wellbeing. City Council officers take a lead on the Oxford Community Safety Partnership's action plans for human trafficking, CSE, sex working, sexual abuse, domestic abuse, Preventing extremism, FGM and honour-based violence.

9. Some services directly contribute both to care plans for children and to early help and intervention work, such as the:

    - Housing Sustainability Team
    - Domestic Abuse, Drug, Human Trafficking and Child Sexual Exploitation work
    - Positive Futures Programme

10. The Council also works with the County Council's Occupational Therapists to help children and adults at risk to access disabled facilities grants. There are also other funding streams available such as the affordable warmth programme, flexible home loan and essential repairs grants.

Working within communities

11. The Council, along with the Thames Valley Police, is having discussions with the City's various language schools around the schools' safeguarding responsibilities.

12. The Council has a number of teams which have a role in identifying, preventing, and disrupting various types of exploitation: Community Safety, Customer Services, Direct Services, Environmental Health, Housing, Licensing (taxis, HMOs), Parks & Leisure, Waste & Recycling. Front line staff in all these teams have been trained to be aware of their safeguarding responsibilities and are supported when either raising concerns or making referrals.

13. The Council is working jointly with the Thames Valley Police in running a version of the 'Say Something If You See Something' scheme for hotels and guesthouses.

14. Working with communities will remain a priority in the action plan for 2016- 17.

Working with the other Oxfordshire District Councils

15. The Council is keen to develop and share best practice in safeguarding with other district councils in Oxfordshire**.** The Council attends and participates in a number of meetings on behalf of the other Oxfordshire district councils including the quarterly Performance and Quality Assurance meetings run by the OSCB and OSAB and the training sub groups.

16. The Council has been leading on the development of a Single Framework for Taxi Licencing, which includes all the district councils and the county council. The Framework includes standard training for all taxi drivers in the county and better training information sharing across authorities. The Framework has been agreed and is now being implemented. The Council will be monitoring the impact of improved information sharing.

Extensive and comprehensive training programme

17. The City Council has developed a comprehensive range of training. This includes safeguarding awareness training being provided as a part of the compulsory Conduct training for all new councillors.

18. Every member of staff has been assessed for the safeguarding training required for their particular role. An annual programme of training is developed to address any identified training needs. The completion of this training is tracked by HR using the City Council's internal IT system ('iTrent').

19. Training is also provided to particular teams including anti-social behaviour, community safety and housing. Examples of this include: sexual exploitation, domestic violence, human trafficking, mental health. There has also been Prevent (i.e. anti-radicalisation) training for Council officers and councillors. Further training needs have recently been identified relating to safeguarding offenders/perpetrators and the emerging issue of young carers.

Measuring the impact of training

20. As part of its annual safeguarding review, an online questionnaire was circulated to all staff who had been identified as requiring safeguarding training as part of their role. There were over 150 responses to this questionnaire. The results indicate that 100% of staff know how to report safeguarding concerns to either a line manager, safeguarding officer or the MASH, and 97% are aware of the procedures to use when raising a safeguarding concern. 85% of staff are either quite confident or very confident in raising a safeguarding concern. 70% know the name of at least one of the Council's four Designated Safeguarding Officers.

21. Of those responding, 93% had completed training in the past 3 years, with 50% having completed training in the past 12 months. Of the 7% who have not completed training, 4% were booked in to complete their first safeguarding training at the time the questionnaire was administered.

Information sharing

22. The Council chairs the Oxford Community Safety Partnership and is represented on the Oxfordshire Safeguarding Boards and the Children's Trust Board. The Council is also represented on the OSCB and OSAB Executive Boards. This ensures that there are clear links and information sharing across the boards

23. The Council fully cooperates with all OSCB serious case reviews, providing information where relevant and attending review meetings when required. The Council has also participated and led on Domestic Homicide Reviews.

24. The Council continues to review the types of prevalence of exploitation across the City through the Oxford Community Safety Partnership which meets quarterly. The Oxford Community Safety Partnership has a multi-agency risk assessment and action plan for each area of identified significant risk in the city.

Receiving feedback and escalating concerns

25. A going issue has been the need to ensure that there are clear processes for escalating concerns and receiving feedback on actions that have been taken. As a result the Council now keep a central record of all concerns raised. There is a review every three months of where feedback has been received and where escalation has been required. However, this is still a relatively new process and requires to be further embedded. As a result this remains a priority for improvement and action in 2016-17.

Priorities to focus on in 2016-17

26. There is a need for ongoing vigilance and to further develop and embed safeguarding services. The Action Plan for 2016-17 recognises the need to:
   - Regularly review safeguarding policy and procedures, training requirements and materials.
   - Continually improve our response to new and emerging priorities.
   - Remain vigilant to reports of CSE and other forms of exploitation.
   - Recognise the importance of all service areas in preventing and disrupting CSE and other forms of exploitation.
   - Ensure proactive and routine information and intelligence sharing and joint operations to combat CSE and other forms of exploitation
   - Ensure that there are effective escalation processes in place
   - Engage with communities to raise awareness, change perceptions and challenge behaviours

Financial Implications

27. There are no immediate financial implications related to the Safeguarding Action Plan 2016-17.

28. In its 2016/17 budget process, the Council agreed to invest in a part time Safeguarding Policy Officer position to support the Council's work around safeguarding children and vulnerable adults and support the safeguarding review process. This work was initially being carried out by the Safeguarding Coordinator on a fixed contract which comes to an end in May 2016. The Council has agreed that this role will continue as a permanent post on 3 days per week.

29. The Council makes a £20,000 annual contribution to the joint running costs of the OSCB and OSAB.

Legal implications

30. Section 11 of the Children Act 2004 places duties on a range of organisations and individuals to ensure their functions, and any services that they contract out to others, are discharged having regard to the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. Oxford City Council is one of the organisations to which the requirements in Section 11 apply.

31. Working Together 2015 (the statutory guidance) elaborates further:

Organisations should have in place arrangements that reflect the importance of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, including

- A clear line of accountability for the commissioning and/or provision of services
- Senior board level lead to take leadership responsibility for the organisation's safeguarding arrangements
- A culture of listening to children and taking account of their wishes and feelings, both in individual decisions and the development of services
- Clear whistleblowing procedures and a culture that enables issues about safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children to be addressed
- Arrangements which set out clearly the processes for sharing information, with other professionals and with the Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB)
- A designated professional lead for safeguarding
- Safe recruitment practices for individuals whom the organisation will permit to work regularly with children
- Policies on when to obtain a criminal record check
- Appropriate supervision and support for staff, including undertaking safeguarding training

32. The OSCB is the relevant LSCB for the City Council and is responsible for evaluating the degree to which each partner organisation fulfils its responsibilities under Section 11.

33. With regard to adults at risk, the Care Act 2014 imposes duties on local authorities, including district councils. The over-arching duty in the 2014 Act is to promote an individual's well-being. As a 'relevant partner' of the County, the City Council is under a duty to co-operate and share information when required.

34. The City Council is required (under section 7) to share information when the County suspects that an adult in its area:

- Has needs for care and support;
- Is experiencing, or at risk of, abuse or neglect and
- As a result of those needs is unable to protect himself/herself against the abuse or neglect or the risk of it. (section 42).

35. The City Council is also required (under section 45) to share information with the Oxfordshire Safeguarding Adults Board (OSAB) to enable or assist OSAB to exercise its safeguarding function in relation to vulnerable adults.

36. The duty to share information is not an unqualified one. The City Council must cooperate with any enquiries relating to adult safeguarding except when it considers that doing so:

- would be incompatible with its own duties, or
- would otherwise have an adverse effect on the exercise of its function.

37. Oxford City Council has its own duties under the Data Protection Act 1998, which includes the principles that :

- Personal data shall be obtained only for one or more specified and lawful purposes and shall not be further processed in any manner incompatible with that purpose or those purposes;
- Personal data shall be adequate, relevant and not excessive in relation to the purpose or purposes for which they are processed. (Schedule 1).

Climate change/environmental impact

38. There are no climate change or environmental impact issues related to this report.

Risks

39. Oxford City Council will have to decide which of the information we hold is likely to be relevant to safeguarding and be careful not to provide anything more than what is required. This means that requests for such information should be considered carefully, balancing information sharing and data protection duties.

40. The County Council restructure of Social Care and Early intervention is likely to significantly impact on services available to children and families and adults at risk. The City Council is working with the County Council and other agencies to see how this risk can be mitigated.

41. A risk register is set out at Appendix 3.

Equalities Impact Assessment

42. An Equalities Impact Assessment is set out at Appendix 2. There are no negative impacts related to this report.

Report author	Val Johnson
Job title	Policy and Partnerships Team Leader
Service area or department	Assistant Chief Executive
Telephone	01865 252209
e-mail	vjohnson@oxford.gov.uk

Background Papers:	
1	**Oxford City Council Section 11 Self Assessment Audit 2015**
2	Oxford City Council Safeguarding Action Plan 2016

Please note in the table below the version number of your report that was finally cleared at each stage

Oxford City Council Section 11 Self-Assessment Action Plan 2016-17

Oxford City Council Section 11 Self- Assessment Action Plan 2016-17
Including all learning points arising from:
- The Section 11 Self-Assessment Audit
- The Oxford Safeguarding Children Board Bullfinch Serious Case Review
- Oxford City Council Learning and Development Action Plan following the Bullfinch Serious Case Review
  Updated 3rd May 2016

  B-Blue Action completed
  G-Green Action on target to be met
  A-Amber There is a risk that the action may not be completed on time
  R-Red There is a high risk that the action will not be completed and remedial action is required.

Learning Points	Action	Evidence	Completion date	Lead	Progress	Status (RAG rating)
Learning Point 1 The need to regularly review Oxford City Council safeguarding procedures to ensure that we are adhering to our safeguarding responsibilities	Regularly review the Safeguarding Programme and Action Plan and ensure that Policy and Procedures are kept up to date.	Named Safeguarding Officers meeting minutes. Annual Section 11 Self-Assessment and Action Plan Bi-annual Assessment of the Safeguarding Action Plan Annual report to CEB and Council Quarterly Portfolio Holder meeting Review of Policy and Procedures, Keeping	June 2016 On-going Oct 2016 October 2016 /June 2016 June 2016 June 2016 quarterly On-going	Val Johnson Jennifer Kotilaine		G-Green

		People Safe Leaflet, Updating Keeping People Safe Intranet Page and Web site page			
		Review Data Sharing Protocols		FOI Officer	
Learning Point 2 We need to continually improve our response to new and emerging priorities with Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults	Annual review of training needs and content	Named Safeguarding Officers meetings.	June 2016, quarterly.	Val Johnson	G-Green
	To identify appropriate training for staff working with perpetrators who are also vulnerable and with young carers	Review of Employee Assistance completed	June 2016	Jennifer Kotilaine	
	To promote the support available to staff through the Employee Assistance Programme 'Work Well' and to develop further support where required	Oxford City Council representation on OSCB/OSAB training subgroup	June 2016	Val Johnson	
	Work with the OSCB and OSAB Training Groups to develop training programme appropriate to our staff		June 2016 On-going	Val Johnson/Jennifer Kotilaine	
		To increase the number of respondents to the Annual Survey OSCB Questionnaire in preparation for the Section 11 Self -Assessment	October/November 2016		
	Measure training outcomes in practice and assess effectiveness of training staff.	Circulate OSCB Newsletter and information on learning events to all		Jennifer Kotilaine	

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Oxford City Council Section 11 Self-Assessment Action Plan 2016-17

	Review and reflection of new and emerging risks	Named Safeguarding officers and advertise events in Council Matters	June 2016 on-going	Val Johnson/Jennifer Kotilaine		
		Minutes from the Oxford Safety Community Partnership Minutes of Oxfordshire Safeguarding Board	On-going			
		Minutes from the Oxford Safety Community Partnership				
	Clarify roles and responsibilities in respect of adult safeguarding		October 2016			
				Tim Sadler		
Learning Point 3 We have developed our understanding of CSE and the models of exploitation used in the city. We need to remain vigilant and responsive to reports of CSE and other forms of exploitation.	Make routine the review of prevalence and action planning by the Oxford Community Safety Partnership (OCSP)	Minutes of the Oxford Community Safety Partnership Executive Group	June 2016 On-going	Tim Sadler		G-Green
	Joint intelligence sharing on organised crime and sexual exploitation undertaken by TVP and the Anti-Social Behaviour Investigation team (ASBIT)	Regular attendance at meetings	June 2016 On-going	Richard Adams		

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Oxford City Council Section 11 Self-Assessment Action Plan 2016-17

Learning Point 4 Recognising the important role Oxford City Council functions have in identifying, preventing and disrupting CSE and other forms of exploitation: • Community safety activities (ASBIT) • Hackney Carriages and Private Hire • HMO Licencing • Environmental Health • Parks • Recycling and refuse 224	Seek harmonisation of licensing standards across the County for Hackney Carriages and Private Hire vehicles, drivers and operators, by comparing policies and approaches across the five licensing authorities and working toward greater consistency. To implement recommendations following the Review Panel on Guesthouses. Ensure that staff and Members are trained in safeguarding as required by their roles	Oxfordshire Chief Executives meeting minutes. Taxi licencing Task Group District meeting notes Minutes of the City Community Safety Partnership Executive Group meetings HR records on iTrent	June2016 –on-going June 2016 and on-going Ongoing	Richard Adams/Tim Sadler Val Johnson Angela Bowman		G-Green
Learning Point 5 That proactive and routine information and intelligence sharing and joint operations are vital to combatting CSE and other forms of exploitation	Review of referral and escalation statistics Ensure that there are effective protocols for working with the Multi-agency Safeguarding Hub, Community Safety,	City Council Safeguarding Review meetings with Chief Executive and Portfolio Holder for Safeguarding Named Safeguarding officer meeting notes Case Conference Notes MASH Case Audits	June 2016 and then quarterly On-going	Val Johnson Val Johnson		Green

	Anti-Social Behaviour Investigation Team, Housing and other district council level services for working on individual cases. Cooperate with other agencies to disrupt CSE and other forms of exploitation	Joint disruption operations with TVP and County Council	Ongoing	Tim Sadler		
Learning Point 6 It is important to have effective escalation processes and strong relationships between the Oxford Community Safety Partnership and Oxfordshire Safeguarding Children Board and Oxfordshire Children's Trust Board.	Revised TOR have been agreed by the Health and Wellbeing Board to record relationships, escalation processes and accountability between Oxford Safer Community Partnership, Oxfordshire Safeguarding Children's Board and Oxfordshire Community Safety Partnership	Regular reports to Oxford Community Safety Partnership, Oxfordshire Safeguarding Board and Oxfordshire Community Safety Partnership.	April 2016 and on-going	Tim Sadler	G-Green .	G-Green
				Val Johnson and Jennifer Kotilaine		G-Green
	To ensure that relevant Members and Officers are briefed on papers going to the OSCB and Children's Trust Board and any decisions made.	Regular Briefings circulated prior to and following all OSCB and Children's Trust Board meetings.	June 2016 and on-going	Val Johnson and Jennifer Kotilaine		
		To regularly review the use of escalation at the Named Safeguarding Officers meetings (6 monthly).	June 2016 and on-going	Jennifer Kotilaine		
		To regularly Review at City	June 2016 and			

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	Ensure that any multi-agency meetings managed by Oxford City Council have clear ownership and consistency of titles.	Council Safeguarding Review meetings with Chief Executive and Portfolio Holder for Safeguarding	quarterly	Jennifer Kotilaine		
	To review and promote the use of the Escalation Procedures internally and ensure that they are clearly understood.	To regularly Review at City Council Safeguarding Review meetings with Chief Executive and Portfolio Holder for Safeguarding	June 2016 and quarterly			
Learning Point 7 CSE is not an isolated one off event. It is important to engage with communities to raise awareness, change perceptions and challenge behaviours	Working with the OSCP Executive Group to identify an on-going, coordinated programme between the City Council, County Council and police working in communities and with young people at risk.	Notes of the OSCP, and Executive Group meetings	On-going	Richard Adams		G-Green
	To develop effective community engagement to promote safeguarding and awareness of issues such as CSE, Human Trafficking and Prevent	Consideration of Prevalence Reports at CSE sub group of OSCB, attended by City Council	Ongoing	Tim Sadler		
	To monitor the feedback from children to test the effectiveness of safeguarding policies and	Feedback from	June 2016 and on-going	Val Johnson/Jennifer Kotilaine		

	plans on the ground and to identify blockages	consultation on activities undertaken by the Youth Ambition Engagement Officer (with a special focus to feed into the section 11 Review in September/ October 2015)				

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Document Control

Document	Oxford City Council Safeguarding Action Plan 216-17
Owner	Tim Sadler, Executive Director, Community Services
Author	Val Johnson *Policy Culture and Communications* *vjohnson@oxford.gov.uk* *01865 252209*
Date last reviewed	3rd May 2016
Next Review Date Due	Review following CEB comments
Version	2

Name: 'Oxford City Council Safeguarding Action Plan'

File Location: M:\Policy, Culture and Commmunications\Policy\Safeguarding\Action plans\Safeguarding Action Plan 2016-17 - April 2015 vs 2.docx

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Form to be used for the Full Equalities Impact Assessment

Service Area:		Section:	Date of Initial assessment:	Key Person responsible for assessment: Val Johnson	Date assessment commenced:
ASC		Policy			18.02.16

Name of Policy to be assessed:	Safeguarding Children, Young People and Vulnerable Adults		
1. In what area are there concerns that the policy could have a differential impact Other strategic/ equalities considerations	*Race* **Yes, positive**	*Disability* **Yes, positive**	*Age* **Yes, positive**
	Gender **Yes, positive**	*Religion or Belief* **Yes, positive**	*Sexual Orientation* **Yes, positive**

2. Background	In October 2013 the City Council commissioned an independent review of its Section 11 Safeguarding Children arrangements. Although there had been no specific complaints, a number of serious case reviews and domestic homicide reviews had identified a number of actions for the City Council and other local agencies. The subsequent policy review involved consultation with all key officers and included consultation on the need to place a greater emphasis on vulnerable adults, the need to review the content of training to include child sexual exploitation, and the need to support front line staff working with vulnerable adults and children. The self-assessment and action plan has since been reviewed on an annual basis.

Statistical evidence indicates that Oxford City is very different to other parts of Oxfordshire. There are issues in Oxford which have a direct and indirect impact on the well-being and welfare of children, young people and vulnerable adults. These include differences in the demographic make-up of the city, including population age groups, ethnicity and relatively high levels of deprivation in some areas of the city. Of particular concern are educational attainment, child poverty (at rates higher than the national average), homelessness and overcrowding.

https://www.oxford.gov.uk/downloads/file/2248/indices_of_deprivation_2015_oxford_report

https://www.oxford.gov.uk/info/20125/education_and_skills/455/education_and_skills_in_oxford

https://www.oxford.gov.uk/info/20131/population/497/poverty_and_deprivation

The majority of services for children, young people and vulnerable adults are provided by other agencies such as education, health and social care. But the City Council needs to play a strong leadership role and influence other agencies if the needs of vulnerable groups in the city are to be understood and met.

The City Council has a Children and Young People's Plan which sets out all the services provided by the Council and the work it undertakes with partners to safeguard and promote the wellbeing of children and young people. In particular these services include the Housing Sustainability, Housing Adaptations, Domestic Abuse, Drug, Human Trafficking and Child Sexual Exploitation work and the |

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	Youth Ambition/ NEET intervention and support services. The primary aim of the Safeguarding Policy is to set out how the City Council will comply with its safeguarding functions in 2016-2017. The objectives of the policy are: - To ensure that the City Council's policies and practices fulfil its duty to safeguarding and promote the welfare of children and young people - To improve opportunities for children and young people who lives in areas of deprivation and/or who experience poverty and disadvantage - To ensure that the City Council's policies and practices fulfil its duty to safeguarding and promote the welfare of adults at risk of harm. The City Council's safeguarding plan is intended to benefit all children, young people and adults in Oxford, particularly those who are most excluded and at risk of harm.
3. Methodology and Sources of Data: The methods used to collect data and what sources of data	A statutory annual safeguarding audit ('Section 11') is completed by the City Council and is assessed by the Oxfordshire Safeguarding Children's Board. This is coordinated and led by the Policy & Partnership Team Leader. This audit includes a peer assessment of the City Council's Safeguarding Policy & Procedures and Action Plan. The most recent peer assessment was held in April 2015. This showed that the City Council has been rated either blue or green in all areas that were measured. Blue ratings are awarded as evidence of best practice, whilst green ratings are awarded when all points are met and most points are evidenced (i.e. 75% met). http://occweb/intranet/documents/keeping-people-safe-section-11-template-and-action-plan-2015 Additional detailed information can be found in: Oxfordshire Safeguarding Children's Board meetings, data and reports

	• Oxfordshire Safeguarding Adults Board meetings, data and reports • PAQA performance data and reports • Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) performance data and reports Other documents that provided data and identified potential gaps in provision included Joint Needs Evidence, Oxford City Children and Young People's Plan and Oxford City Older People's need Assessment. Supporting performance and monitoring information is available through the Health and Wellbeing Board.
4. Consultation This section should outline all the consultation that has taken place on the EIA. It should include the following. • Why you carried out the consultation. • Details about how you went about it. • A summary of the replies you received from people you consulted. • An assessment of your proposed policy (or policy options) in the light of the responses you received. • A statement of what you plan to do next	The Safeguarding Policy has been developed and implemented by City Council Officers across all service areas and with the input from Members. As part of the Council's most recent annual safeguarding audit, a questionnaire was circulated among all staff that have been identified as requiring safeguarding training as part of their role. There were over 150 responses to this questionnaire. The results indicate that 100% of staff know how to report safeguarding concerns to a line manager, safeguarding officer, or the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub; and 97% are aware of the procedures to use when raising a safeguarding concern. 85% of City Council staff are either quite confident or very confident in raising a safeguarding concern. Although the audit ratings and questionnaire responses are very good, the City Council wants to ensure that it continues to develop its policies and procedures as required.
5. Assessment of Impact:	The 2015 the Safeguarding Review highlighted that there have been 23 referrals from the City

Provide details of the assessment of the policy on the six primary equality strands. There may have been other groups or individuals that you considered. Please also consider whether the policy, strategy or spending decisions could have an impact on safeguarding and / or the welfare of children and vulnerable adults	Council service areas to the County Council in 2015: 9 relating to adults, 14 relating to children. The nature of referrals in order of prevalence are: • Sexual abuse/CSE: 6 • Homelessness (including children sleeping in cars): 4Mental health (including suicide threats): 3 • Neglect: 3 • Domestic violence: 2 • Financial abuse: 2 • Physical health: 2 • Self-neglect: 2 • Parental substance misuse: 1 (Some referrals are made for more than one reason. This is why the number of referrals does not match the number of different concerns raised in the referrals.) There were 12 corporate safeguarding referrals that were made in 2015: 7 of these have been in relation to adults; 5 in relation to children. By contrast, in the first quarter of 2016, 14 corporate referrals and 1 escalation have been made during this three month period alone. The referrals related to 9 adults and 5 children. The escalation related to a family comprising of children and adults. The concerns raised in relation to children related to child cruelty/abuse by a parent (3), intra sibling abuse (2) and neglect (1). The concerns raised in relation to adults related to mental health (5), self neglect (3) threats to kill (2), and financial abuse (1). With the implementation of the MASH, the Council has been able to analyse data relating to referrals, which indicates that it is 'outstanding' in sharing relevant information in a timely fashion. Despite progress in the use of data analysis the Council is mindful not to make assumptions around groups with protected characteristics who may be a higher risk of being vulnerable. However, both national and local statistics do indicate that: **Race:** Culture, ethnicity and family background can have significant impact on child attainment and

well-being. BME groups in particular are over represented in child protection, with a higher number on Child Protection plans (DCSF, 2009). Evidence also suggests that African Caribbean and Pakistani children are in general terms at greater risk of academic underachievement (DfE, 2015: https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/439861/RR439A-Ethnic_minorities_and_attainment_the_effects_of_poverty.pdf),

Disability: Disabled children and adults are more at risk of harm and abuse. They are over-represented as subjects of safeguarding cases and suffer disproportionately from bullying (NSPCC 2014: https://www.nspcc.org.uk/globalassets/documents/research-reports/right-safe-disabled-children-abuse-summary.pdf). Greater social difficulties are faced in terms of accessing opportunities for education, play and leisure. There is also a greater likelihood of developing mental health problems in children with learning difficulties: 36% of children and young people with learning disabilities will have a mental health problem, compared with 8 % of non-disabled children. (Emerson and Hatton (2007): http://bjp.rcpsych.org/content/191/6/493.).

Age: The City's safeguarding policy is specifically targeted at safeguarding children, young people and their families. It also covers adults at risk. It should therefore impact positively on all age groups.

Gender: Girls are more at risk of forced marriage, and female genital mutilation. They are more likely to victims of cyber bulling and are less likely to be happy with their health and self-image.(HSCIC, 2015: http://www.hscic.gov.uk/catalogue/PUB19244).

More females than males are Not in Education, Employment or Training (House of Commons Library, 2016: http://researchbriefings.files.parliament.uk/documents/SN06705/SN06705.pdf) Oxford City NEET figures are found at https://www.oxford.gov.uk/downloads/file/2325/february_2016_chart_of_the_month_jsa_claimants_and_neet_statistics.
All of these factors make individuals more vulnerable to exploitation and abuse.

Religion or Belief: There is an emerging national issue of radicalisation and the Government has developed a Prevent' Strategy to help with the prevention of extremism (Note that groups/ individuals at risk of extremism or being radicalised are not uniquely identifiable by this

characteristic.)
https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/97976/prevent-strategy-review.pdf

The Muslim Council of Great Britain monitors the level of Islamophobia in Britain today. The state that in the last year there have been attacks against mosques, physical abuse against Muslims, anti-Muslim graffiti , a rise in verbal abuse, hate mail and reports of s of Islamophobia in schools.
http://www.mcb.org.uk/islamophobia/

Sexual Orientation Due to the stigmatisation attached to different sexual orientation it can have a significant impact on a child, young person or adult's mental well-being. There can be a greater risk of self-harming. (DoH, 2011:
https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/213764/dh_124514.pdf)

Homophobia has also been identified as an area of concern for children in schools (DoH, 2011).

6. Consideration of Measures: This section should explain in detail all the consideration of alternative approaches/mitigation of adverse impact of the policy	A number of the activities set out in the Children and Young People's are aimed at reducing inequalities through positive action and targeting resources at particular groups. The actions contained in the Safeguarding Action Plan are aimed at: • Ensuring regular review of the Policy and Procedures • To improve our response to new emerging priorities for safeguarding • Develop our understanding of CSE and other models of exploitation • Recognise the important role that the Council's functions have in identifying and safeguarding • To work closely with partners to proactively share information and intelligence • To ensure effective escalation procedures are in place. Oxford City Council has a strong record of supporting people who are vulnerable and at risk, e.g. of becoming homeless, and of being proactive in the implementation of new public safety

	initiatives
6a. Monitoring Arrangements: Outline systems which will be put in place to monitor for adverse impact in the future and this should include all relevant timetables. In addition it could include a summary and assessment of your monitoring, making clear whether you found any evidence of discrimination.	We will continue to complete our statutory annual safeguarding audit. Our Action Plan and Training Programme are continually reviewed to ensure that they address emerging issues, including those issues that are identified at Serious Case Reviews. and other emerging issues. The Action Plan is monitored on a quarterly basis by the Director of Community Services and the Portfolio Holder. It is also reviewed regularly (every three months) by the Named Safeguarding Officers Group to capture any emerging issues from the community. Data analysis from MASH referrals and case studies will be an important aspect in monitoring the impact of the effectiveness of the policy and the improved outcomes as a result of interventions. It is also hoped that new reporting features of the MASH will act as a better mechanism for the Council to keep track of and learn from the outcomes of its referrals (including accountability for relevant agreed response rates from social services).
7. 12. Date reported and signed off by City Executive Board:	
8. Conclusions: What are your conclusions drawn from the results in terms of the policy impact	Safeguarding and promoting well-being is a priority for the City Council. We have a robust policy and procedures in place which are regularly monitored. We continue to develop our Action Plan to address emerging issues. There has been an increase in referrals made by service areas and also made at a corporate level. We believe that this is due to the programme of awareness-raising that we have undertaken with these service areas, encouraging staff to share any concerns that they might have. City Council officers will continue to lead on the Oxford Community Safety Partnership's action plans for Human trafficking, CSE, sex working, sexual abuse, domestic abuse, Preventing extremism, FGM and honour-based violence. Some key Council services directly contribute both to care plans for children and to help early

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intervention work, such as:

- Housing Sustainability Team

- Domestic Abuse, Drug, Human Trafficking and Child Sexual Exploitation work

- Youth Ambition/ NEET intervention and support

Full information of contact details, key partnerships and safe reporting channels can be found at : https://www.oxford.gov.uk/info/20101/community_safety

9. Are there implications for the Service Plans?	YES	NO	10. Date the Service Plans will be updated	April 2017	11. Date copy sent to Equalities Officer in HR & Facilities	24/05/16
.13. Date reported to Scrutiny and Executive Board:			14. Date reported to City Executive Board:	16th June 2016	12. The date the report on EqIA will be published	

Signed (completing officer)   Signed (Lead Officer)

Please list the team members and service areas that were involved in this process:

Organisational Development & Learning Advisor/ Equalities

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Title	Risk description	Opp/ threat	Cause	Consequence	Date Raised	Owner	Gross I	Gross P	Current I	Current P	Residual I	Residual P	Comments	Control description	Due date	Status	Progress %	Action Owner
Safety and wellbeing of children, young people and adults at risk	Children young people or adults may be at risk of abuse or harm or suffering neglect.	O	Children , young people or adults at risk may be subject to various forms of exploitation or abuse by people they should be able to trust. They may also be subject to neglect. In the case of adults, some of this neglect may	Children, young people and adults may experience abuse or neglect, including self neglect.	19.02.16	Val Johnson	3	3	3	3	3	2		Regularly review policy and procedures to ensure they are fit for purpose. Intensive training available for all staff and members as required. Adequate resources to implement and develop safeguarding programme	ongoing	ongoing		Val Johnson
Reputational	The City Council is seen not to have acted to safeguard children, young people or adults at risk that have suffered harm	T	City Council staff may not have adequate training to identify a safeguarding concern or may not know how to raise a safeguarding concern. It may not have sufficient resources to deal with safeguarding concerns,	The City's reputation would be at risk	19.02.16	Val Johnson	3	3	3	3	3	2		Regularly review policy and procedures to ensure they are fit for purpose. Intensive training available for all staff and members as required. Adequate resources to implement and develop safeguarding programme	ongoing	ongoing		
Legal	The City Council is not compliant with legislation relating to safeguarding and information sharing. It does not follow statutory guidance.	T	The City Council may not comply with statutory duties in promoting the safegurding of children and well being of adults. It may not follow ongoing developments in legislation and therefore may be unaware of	The City may be in breach of its statutory duties.	19.02.16	Val Johnson	3	3	3	3	3	2		Regularly review policy and procedures to ensure they are fit for purpose. Intensive training available for all staff and members as required. Adequate resources to implement and develop safeguarding programme	ongoing	ongoing		
Financial	The City Council is found not to have acted to safeguard children, young people or adults at risk that have suffered harm	T	City Council staff may be found to have failed to identify a safeguarding concern or not known how to raise a safeguarding concern	The City may be liable for breach of statutory duty which would incur financial damages	19.02.16	Val Johnson	3	3	3	3	3	2		Regularly review policy and procedures to ensure they are fit for purpose. Intensive training available for all staff and members as required. Adequate	ongoing	ongoing		
Operational	The City Council is expected to act outwith its statutory responsibility in relation to children, young people and adults at risk.	T	The restructure of County Council Social Casre and Early Intervention is likely to significantly impact on the services available for children and families and	The City may have increased demand on its services.	03.05.16	Val Johnson	3	3	3	3	3	2		The City Council is currently working with other agencies to see how how this risk can be mitigated.	ongoing	ongoing		

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Equality and diversity in the Oxford City Council workforce

Report of the Equality and Diversity Review Group

Commissioned by Oxford City Council's Scrutiny Committee

May 2016

Contents

Foreword

Equality and diversity aren't just nice things to have in a workplace. They matter because a person's sexuality, gender, ethnicity, and disability matter to them. When our Council gets diversity right and looks more like the communities we serve, our Council gets more things right and delivers the best possible value for money for local taxpayers.

Britain is a more equal society, if we look at the strides forward our historically most discriminated against communities have taken in the last twenty years. For some communities, here and around the country, the speed and scale of social change has felt like a sharp break with the intolerance of the past. For others, the wins they've racked up can feel smaller.

This review delves deep into the latest data to find out how our Council is reflecting these changes across all Oxford's communities. As importantly, this review looks at whether more could be done to make our Council more inclusive and diverse. Like the social progress we've seen here in Oxford and across the country, the situation is the same: A lot has changed, but there's more to do to complete the longer march to equality.

The data shows that the LGBT workforce is very small and unwilling to disclose their sexuality. The Council has the largest ever BME workforce, but the workforce is clustered in the lower wage jobs and almost non-existent in senior roles. Women are under-represented in senior leadership roles.

The Council's workforce has been changing to look more like the diverse communities that it serves. Good policies currently in place have helped to bring this about and tackle discrimination. However, further improvements are possible, and we offer concrete accounts of the gaps that need filling and our thinking on the measures that can best fill them.

Reaching potential employees from diverse backgrounds involves a gear-shift. The Council shouldn't be putting out job adverts on the channels we prefer; we should be putting out job adverts on all the channels and in all the forms most easily accessed by the communities we want to work for the city.

Monitoring matters. In the case of the issues discussed here, monitoring matters even more than an employee's natural desire to feel protective about personal information. The Council doesn't ask for such personal information because it's nosey or box-ticking to comply with regulations. Information matters because it helps to make things better, and the Council could make that plainer to staff.

Clearly the Council needs to build confidence in the monitoring that it does. Otherwise employees will go on declining to disclose and the Council will keep on facing under-reporting.

In particular, the Council can take practical steps to build a workplace that's friendlier to transgender employees, and how we gather together personal information on employees is central to that.

I want to thank the councillors on this review panel and the council officers – in particular Scrutiny Officer Andrew Brown – for their time, commitment, and energy in developing this review.

Special thanks go to the Trade Unions who campaign for dignity and respect in Oxford City Council's workplace, and whose contributions on behalf of LGBT, black, women, and disabled members were fundamental to the scoping, investigating, and writing of this review.

I trust the review will meet with the backing of the Scrutiny Committee and the City Executive Board, and hope that it forms the basis for promoting equality and diversity within the Council workforce.

Councillor Tom Hayes
Chair of the Equality and Diversity Review Group

Summary of recommendations

Recommendation 1 – That the Council undertakes accessibility audits of its employment premises at appropriate intervals. Consideration should be given to how frequently these audits should take place at each workplace premises and to the setting of maximum intervals between audits.

Recommendation 2 – That the Council reviews recruitment branding to better target any vacancies at under-represented groups and young people, including utilising settings or channels that are less traditional to local government but more inclusive.

Recommendation 3 – That the Council continues to promote itself as an inclusive employer through outreach activities including continuing to hold open recruitment sessions in community settings, reaching out in schools through the Business in the Community partnership, and attending job fairs and community meetings.

Recommendation 4 – That the Council investigates opportunities to advertise multiple vacancies in community settings at low cost, which could include making use of community newspaper social media platforms, as well as community newspapers and, as long as those running them are willing, community centres.

Recommendation 5 – That the Council makes use of its assets to promote itself as an inclusive employer, including Streetscene vehicles.

Recommendation 6 – That the Council reviews its Talent Management Framework and researches whether the inclusion of a more targeted talent management programme would appeal to under-represented groups, as well as what such a programme would include.

Recommendation 7 – That the Council emphasises the value it attaches to the ability to speak a second language by including this skill in the desirable criteria for selected customer-facing job vacancies, such as Tenancy Management Officers and Customer Service Officers.

Recommendation 8 – That the Council undertakes a workforce skills audit with the purpose of identifying priority competencies and hidden talents that aren't currently being utilised but would benefit to the organisation, including the ability to speak a second language.

Recommendation 9 – That the Council considers the feasibility of having staff who are known to speak a second language 'on call' to communicate with customers who speak little or no English, and whether these staff could be rewarded with a small pay supplement.

Recommendation 10 – That all Council employees are reminded of the Council's Fair Employment Statement and employment policies at least annually. These documents should also be prominent and easily accessible on the Council's Intranet.

Recommendation 11 – That all Council employees are at least annually made aware of their responsibility to challenge discriminatory language and behaviour in the workplace, wherever that may be, as matter of course.

Recommendation 12 – That unconscious bias training is provided to the Council's most frequent recruiting managers and HR Business Partners. Ideally this would be followed up with annual refresher courses in order to maintain awareness and compliance with good practice.

Recommendation 13 – That the Council seeks to obtain better value from its status as a Stonewall Diversity Champion and, failing that, considers whether the small membership fee would be better invested in other means of tackling discrimination.

Recommendation 14 – That the Council continues to ask employees to review and complete their personal details, including sensitive information such as their sexual orientation, on at least an annual basis, as well as continuing to target identified data gaps. Explanation should be provided as to why sensitive personal information is held by the organisation and the wider benefits of doing so.

Recommendation 15 – That the Council maintains a watching brief on good practice in workforce equalities monitoring and continues to keep its own monitoring arrangements under review, including how questions are asked and the language used as well as the continued inclusion of a 'prefer not to say' option.

Recommendation 16 – That consideration is given to whether the sensitive personal data of applicants and employees requested and held by the Council should be more inclusive of transgender people. For example, the Council should consider consulting with appropriate individuals and Trade Unions on adding an appropriately worded gender identity field to its monitoring forms, with the clear purpose of building equality and identifying discrimination.

Recommendation 17 – That the Council adopts gender-neutral terms on forms as part of its ongoing work to be as inclusive as possible, for instance, giving consideration to adding the title Mx in addition to the more established gendered titles such as Mr, Mrs, Miss and Ms.

Recommendation 18 - That consideration is given to whether there is merit in phasing out the use of titles on Council forms and databases over the medium term if this would be supported by the Trade Unions.

Appendices

Appendix 1 – Project scope - Equality and Diversity Review Group
Appendix 2 – Analysis of workforce equalities data

Introduction

1. The Equality and Diversity Review Group is a cross-party working group established by Oxford City Council's Scrutiny Committee during the 2015/16 Council year. The Review Group was asked to look at whether more can reasonably be done to promote equality and diversity within the Council's workforce. The members of the Review Group are Councillors Hayes (Chair), Altaf-Khan, Taylor and Thomas.

Background

2. Oxford is an ethnically and culturally diverse city, with the third highest minority ethnic population in the South East of England. Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) and other European communities across Oxford account for 28% of the population and 36% of residents are of non-white British ethnic origin[1].

3. Oxford City Council is an employer committed to increasing the diversity of its workforce and providing an inclusive work environment with equality of opportunity for all employees.

4. Unlike many local authorities, the Council has retained a large manual workforce within its Direct Services operation, which accounts for approximately half of the total Council workforce.

5. The Council produces Annual Workplace Equalities Reports which include statistics and commentary on the diversity of the Council workforce as well as recruitment activity, the gender pay gap and disciplinary and grievance cases. These reports show that groups with protected characteristics (under the Equality Act 2010) tend to be under-represented on the Council workforce.

6. The Council has targets in place for increasing employment amongst BME groups and disabled people, and regularly monitors the following 'Corporate Health' indicators (results as of March 2016):
   - The percentage of employees with a disability - 8.2% (target 10%);
   - The percentage of black and minority ethnic employees - 7.6% (target 9%).

7. The Scrutiny Committee has previously focused on the employment of black and minority ethnic (BME) groups on the Council's workforce and in 2014 made five recommendations aimed at increasing the number of employees from BME groups. At that time BME employees made up 6.9% of the workforce but following a number of initiatives (including some improvements recommended by the Scrutiny Committee), this figure increased to 7.8% in December 2015. While

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[1] Annual Workplace Equalities Report 2014-15, Oxford City Council, 2015

this figure is the highest ever recorded, the figure remains low compared with the population of the city.

Terms of reference

8. The Review Group considered the annual workforce equalities report for 2014/15, and took advice from Council Officers when scoping this review and agreed that it's key lines of enquiry would be:
   - *What barriers are faced by under-represented groups in recruitment and career progression at the City Council?*
   - *How does the Council prevent and address discrimination, including specifically discrimination against LGBT employees?*

Methods of investigation

9. The Equality and Diversity Review Group met four times from October 2015 to April 2016. The Review Group's findings and recommendations have been informed by evidence provided by Council Officers and Trade Union representatives, as well as workforce equalities data, a literature review and desk research. All meetings were held in private to ensure a full and frank debate.

Profile of the Council workforce

10. The Review Group looked in detail at the workforce equalities data held by the Council. This section provides statistics and commentary on the composition and profile of the Council workforce in terms of ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, disability and age (the Review Group did not look at religion). The equalities data is presented in a series of charts which are included below. Larger versions of figures 1-9 are also included in Appendix 2.

   Ethnicity
11. The Review Group dug deeper into the data presented in the workforce equality reports by examining gender and ethnicity data at service area level and at each pay grade. The Review Group also compared workforce equalities data from December 2015 with census data from 2011, which is not a perfect comparator but provides a reasonable picture of the population served by the Council. This enabled the Review Group to make a number of observations about the ethnic profile of the Council workforce and identify where under-representations of different groups are most prevalent.

12. Figure 1 presents a comparison of workforce ethnicity data with census data for Oxford, excluding some 4,000 short-term international migrants who are not usually resident in the City. The grey bars show the degree of representation that different ethnic groups have on the Council workforce as a proportion of the size of these groups in the local population. These grey bars would all be at 100% if the ethnic composition of the Council workforce exactly mirrored the profile of Oxford. However, the Review Group identified a number of reasons why this would not be expected to be the case, as explained in paragraphs 15-18.

13. The Review Group found that all groups with significant local populations are under-represented on the Council workforce with the exception of the *White British* group, which is particularly over-represented, and the *Black Caribbean* Group, which is slightly over-represented. The *Other Mixed* group is the only other ethnic group that has something approaching the level of representation that could be expected based on the profile of the local population.

14. Of the remaining ethnic groups, the *Asian / Asian British* groups appear to be particularly under-represented on the Council workforce. For example the number of *Pakistani* employees is about one quarter what could be expected based on the number Oxford residents who identify as being of Pakistani origin. The proportion of *Bangladeshi* employees is lower still. No employees describe their ethnic origin as *Arab* but this is one of the smallest ethnic groups in the local population, with fewer than 1000 Arabs resident in Oxford. There is also a small but not insignificant number of staff (5.6%) who have declined to provide their ethnic origin. It is therefore likely that the figures for at least some of the BME groups are slightly understated.

Figure 1: The degree of representation of different ethnic groups on the Council workforce based on the Oxford population
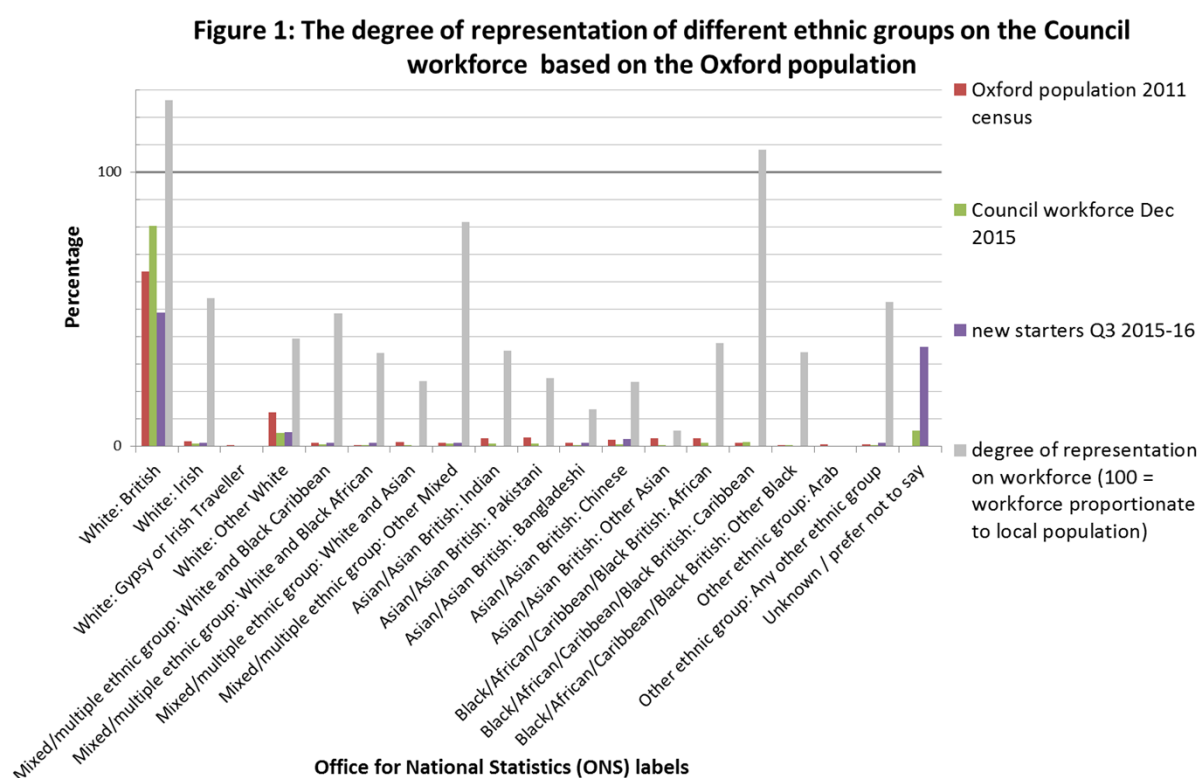
15. The Review Group note that it would be unrealistic to expect the profile of the Council workforce to fully reflect the profile of the area it serves (one of the most diverse populations in the region) for a number of reasons.

16. Firstly, the diversity of the local population has increased quite considerably in recent years. Population growth in Oxford between 2001 and 2011 was entirely attributable to the increase in residents who were born outside the UK. By 2011 Oxford had 43,000 foreign-born residents making up 28% of the population. The recruitment of many longer-serving employees will have pre-dated these

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demographic changes and many positions on the Council workforce won't have become available in that time. Population turnover in the City is relatively high at 25% and significantly higher than the employment turnover rate on the Council workforce, which is about 10%.

17. The Oxford population contains groups of people that positively influence the diversity of the City but are not necessarily part of the workforce or seeking employment at the Council. For example, full-time students account for 24% of Oxford's adult population and approximately one third of these students were born outside the UK[2].

18. Another factor is that the Council does not exclusively employ people who live in the City. The Council is a regional employer with employees who commute to work from as far away as Cheshire, Lincolnshire and Norfolk. The Council's employment catchment area is therefore less diverse in terms of ethnicity than the City it serves. One distinct reason why a large proportion (53.9%[3]) of Council employees commute is the lack of affordable housing in the City.

19. Conscious that over half of Council employees live outside the City boundaries, the Review Group compared workforce ethnicity data with the census information for Oxfordshire, which includes but has a less ethnically diverse population than Oxford. Figure 2 shows that the ethnic profile of the Council workforce is more consistent with the profile of Oxfordshire than it is with Oxford. In this comparison a number of groups remain under-represented on the Council workforce but to a lesser extent than when compared with the population of the City.

20. The Review Group looked at the ethnicity of new starters who joined the Council workforce in the 3 months to December 2015. This was a particularly large cohort of new starters due to high recruitment in Community Services. The new starter figures also include electoral staff who are employed on a one-off temporary basis during elections. The ethnic origin of about one third of new starters is unknown but these data gaps may be explained by the inclusion of electoral staff. Either way, Figure 2 shows that the proportion of new starters is higher than the proportion of existing employees for a number of ethnic groups, including some of the most-under-represented groups, such as the *Chinese* and *Bangladeshi* groups. This would appear to indicate that the workforce is gradually becoming more diverse.

21. Figure 3 provides a breakdown of ethnic groupings by pay grade. The Review Group found that the majority of BME employees are clustered around grades 4-6 and none are higher in the organisation than range 9. Clearly a focus of the Council's ongoing work must be finding ways to ensure the BME workforce are not clustered in the lowest wage jobs and almost non-existent in senior roles. There are also obvious discrepancies between the different BME groupings in terms of pay grade. The *White – all other* grouping has some representation up to and including Service Head level but there are very few if any employees from any minority groups in the most senior positions.

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[2] Students in Oxford, Oxford City Council
[3] Annual Workplace Equalities Report 2014-15, Oxford City Council, 2015

Figure 2: Minority ethnic groups on the Council workforce compared with the Oxford and Oxfordshire populations
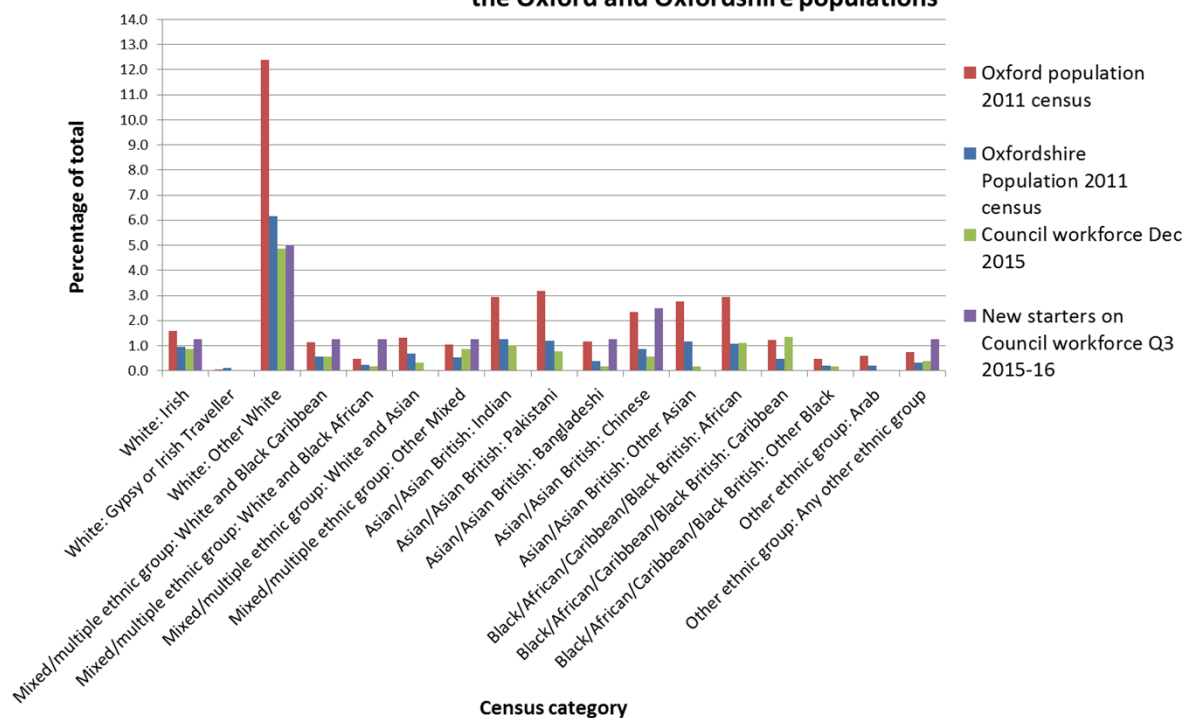
Figure 3: Ethnic groupings on the Council workforce by pay grade
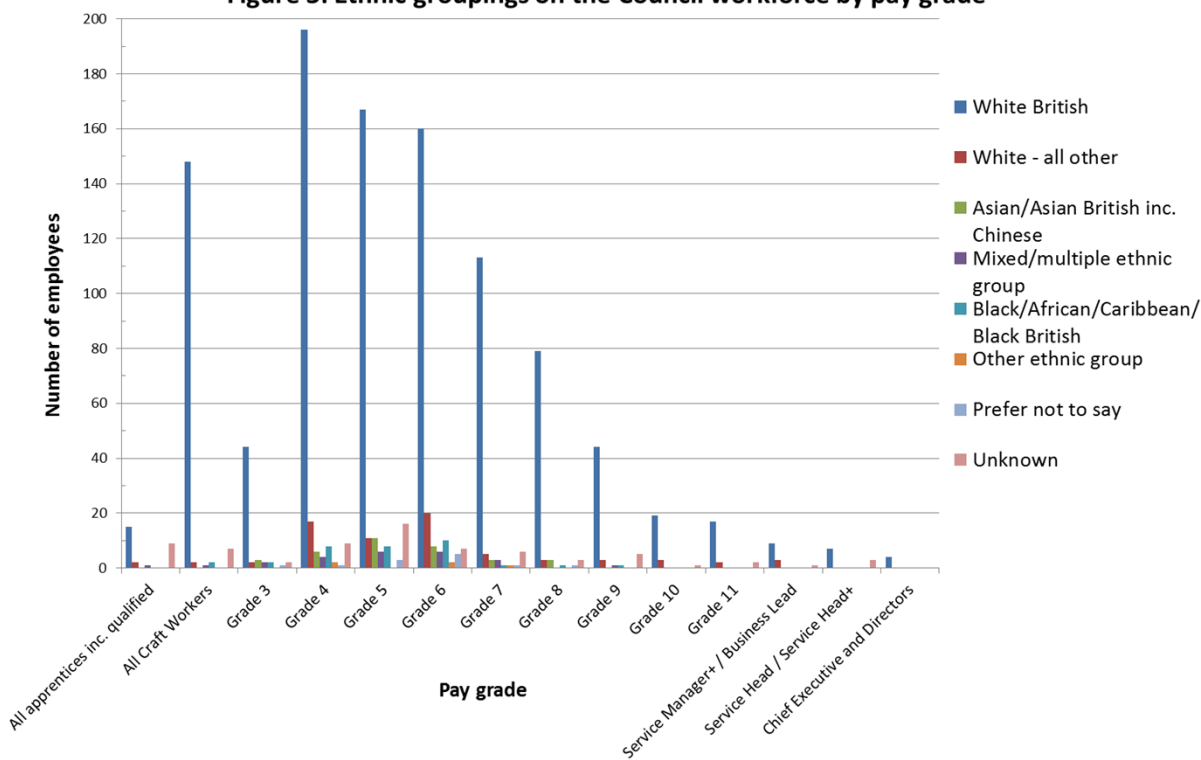
22. The Review Group also looked at ethnicity data across the different Council services and Figure 4 provides a breakdown of BME and *White Other* employment by service area. The Review Group observed that no service area has a workforce that is as ethnically diverse as the population of Oxford. The most ethnically diverse service area is Assistant Chief Executive but this service only has fourteen employees. Of the larger service areas Business Improvement (which includes IT and Customer Services) is the most diverse, with 22.1% of employees identified as being non-*White British*. This compares with figures of 34.7% for Oxford and 15.4% for Oxfordshire. In contrast, the proportion of non-*White British* employees in Direct Services, which accounts for approximately half of the Council workforce, is a lot lower at 9%.

23. Figure 4 shows that the total Council workforce is less diverse than the populations of both Oxford and Oxfordshire. Excluding Direct Services, the proportions of BME and *White Other* employees are consistent with the population of Oxfordshire. It should also be noted that the numbers of non-*White British* employees on the Council workforce are likely to be slightly under-stated because there are some data gaps and a small of employees have selected their ethnic origin as *Prefer not to say*.

Figure 4: The proportion of BME and White Other employees in each Council service area
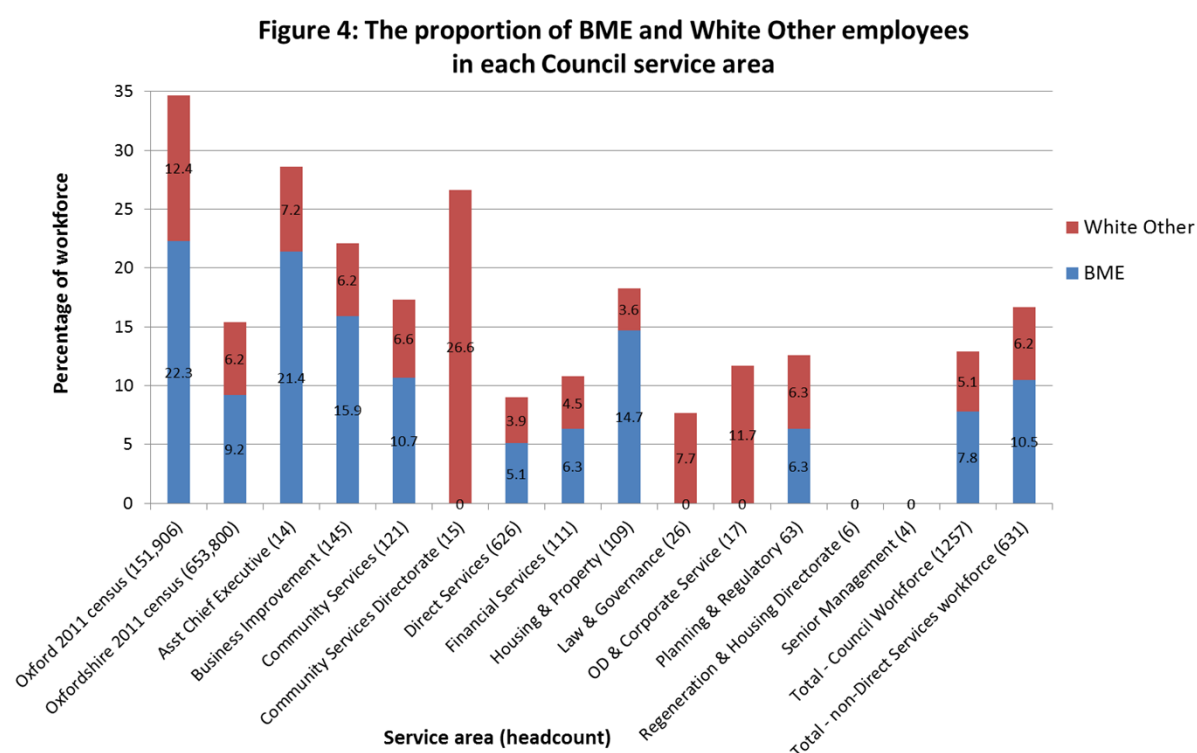
24. The Review Group believe that recent increases in the ethnic diversity of the Council workforce are encouraging but that further progress is needed towards achieving a workforce that better reflects the diversity of the population that it serves. The Review Group recognise that progress may be slow and uneven in the short term and that, for the reasons discussed in earlier paragraphs, it would

be unrealistic to expect the ethnic composition of the Council workforce to fully reflect the ethnic profile of the City any time soon.

Gender

25. The Review Group examined workforce gender data including the gender balance of each service area and at different pay grades, and make a number of observations about the gender profile of the Council workforce.

26. Figure 5 provides a breakdown of male and female employees on the Council workforce as a whole, as well as in the Direct Services workforce and the non-Direct Services workforce. In total just over one third (34%) of all Council employees are female. Within this overall figure, Direct Services has a very low proportion of female workers at 12% and this significantly skews the overall figure. Excluding this largely manual workforce, females are actually in the majority, accounting for 57% of the remaining employees. This is considered to be in line with national patterns of employment within local government.

27. The Review Group note that the Council has had some successes in increasing female employment in Direct Services. For example, a number of women are now employed as drivers of heavy goods vehicles (HGVs). The proportion of female new starters in Direct Services (22%) is slightly higher than the proportion of females in Direct Services as a whole (12%), which may signify a slight shifting in the gender balance of this service area. However, it is expected that there is little scope to alter the gender balance of the workforce in higher employment areas such as street cleaning in the foreseeable future.

Figure 5: Gender composition of the Council workforce
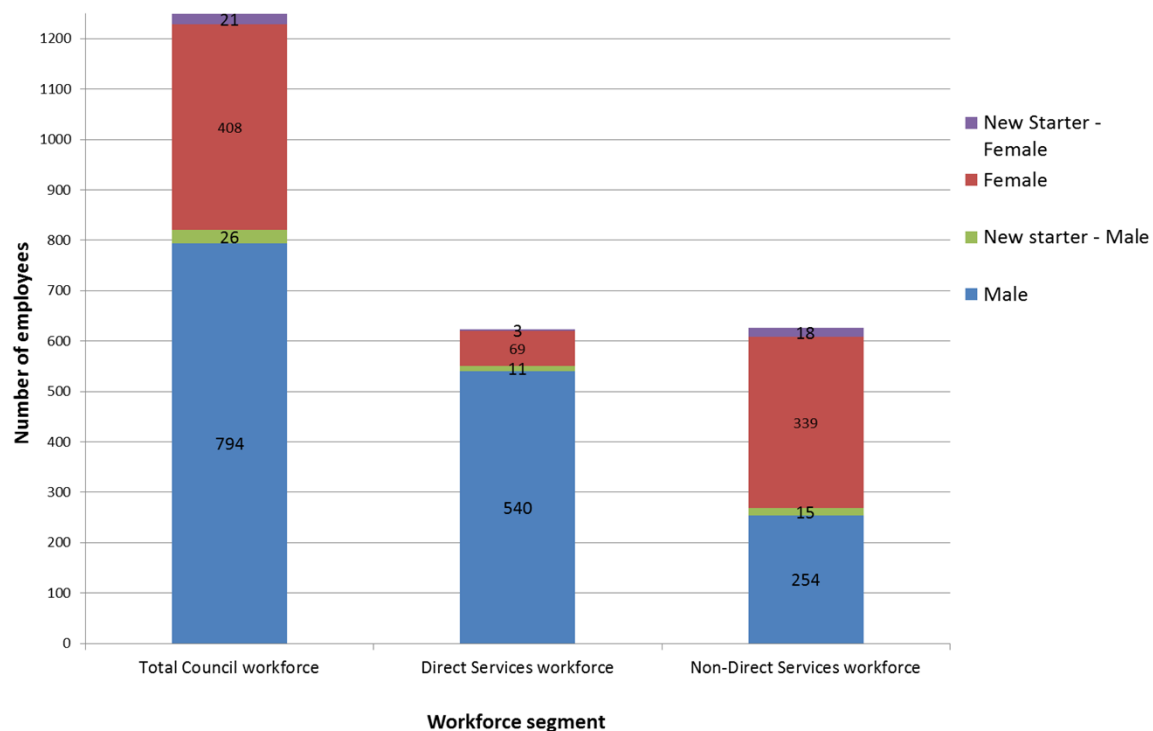
28. Figure 6 presents a breakdown of male and female employment in the remaining service areas. It shows that most service areas have a fairly even gender profile or in some cases a majority of female employees. Business Improvement has the highest proportion of female workers at 67%. Male employees are in the majority in two service areas, Senior Management Team and Regeneration and Housing Directorate, both of which have very small numbers of employees.

Figure 6: Gender balance of Council service areas (excluding Direct Services)
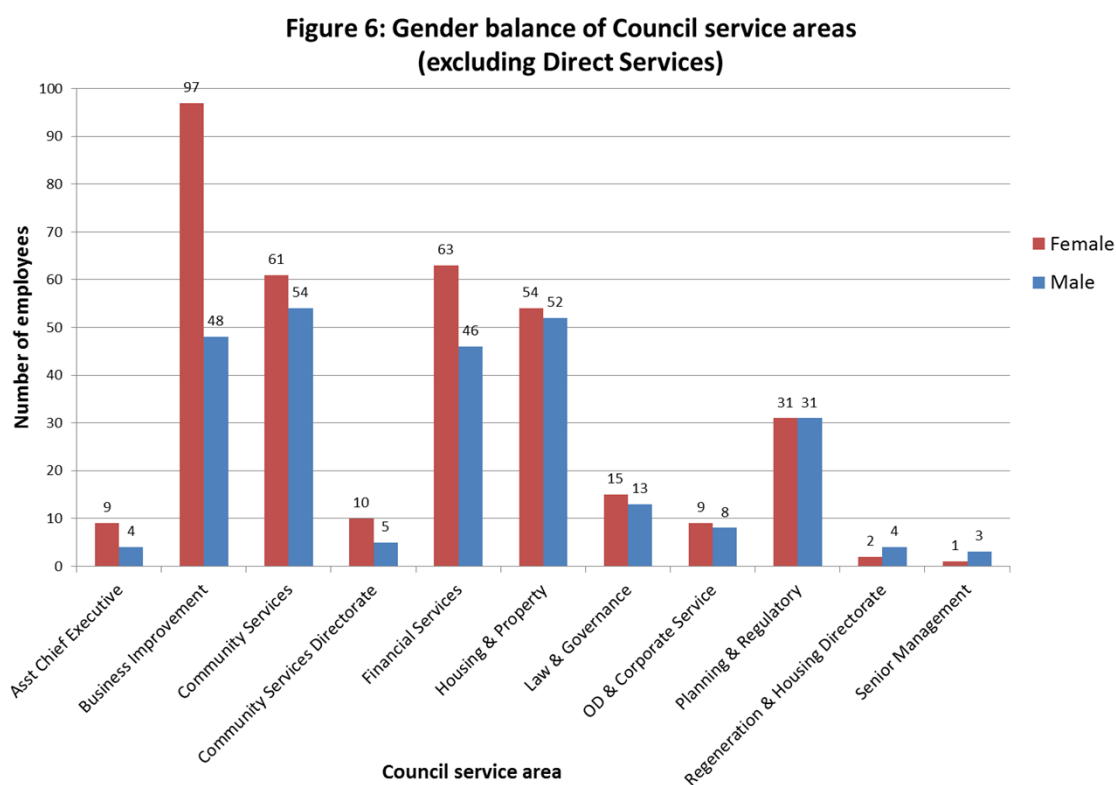
29. The gender profile of new starters is broadly consistent with existing patterns of employment in the different service areas, with a notable high proportion of female new starters in Business Improvement and a notably high proportion of male new starters in Direct Services, as shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Male and Female new starters by service area

Service Area	Gender	Employee Count
Asst Chief Executive	Female	1
Business Improvement	Female	7
Business Improvement	Male	2
Community Services	Female	4
Community Services	Male	6
Direct Services	Female	3
Direct Services	Male	11
Electoral Staff (2012)	Female	18
Electoral Staff (2012)	Male	15
Financial Services	Female	2
Financial Services	Male	2
Planning & Regulatory	Female	2

30. The numbers of male and female employees at each pay grade is set out in Figure 7. This shows that males outnumber females at every Council pay grade and most notably at the lower Council pay grades (3 and 4) and Craft Worker pay grades, which are Direct Services pay grades linked to productivity. Only one quarter of employees at the lowest two Council pay grades are female, which reflects the large number of Direct Services staff employed at these pay grades. Similarly, one quarter of employees in senior management positions (Service Manager and above) are female. The mid-ranking Council pay grades (5-9) tend to have a more even gender balance.

Figure 7: Gender balance of the Council workforce by pay grade
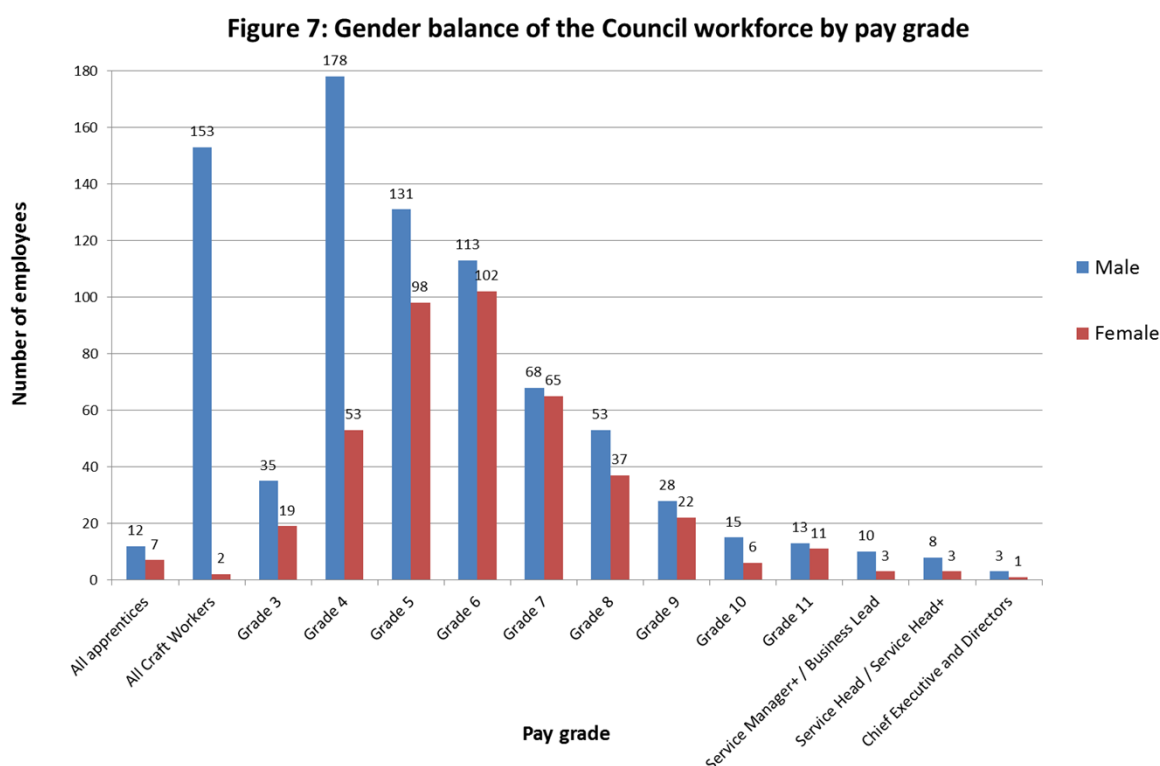
31. The Review Group looked at the average hourly pay for males and females within each service area, as well as for the workforce overall. This information is presented in Figure 8, which shows that average hourly pay is higher for men than for women in most service areas. The three exceptions are relatively small teams that have women in senior positions and no more than fifteen employees. High male employment in the lowest paying service area, Direct Services, would appear to even out the average pay rates of men and women at an aggregate level. The net effect of male and female employment patterns is that overall, hourly pay rates for males and females are almost identical. Among full time employees there is a small negative gender pay gap, with average hourly pay for females (£15.69) about 2% higher than it is for males (£15.36).

Figure 8: Average hourly pay by gender and service area
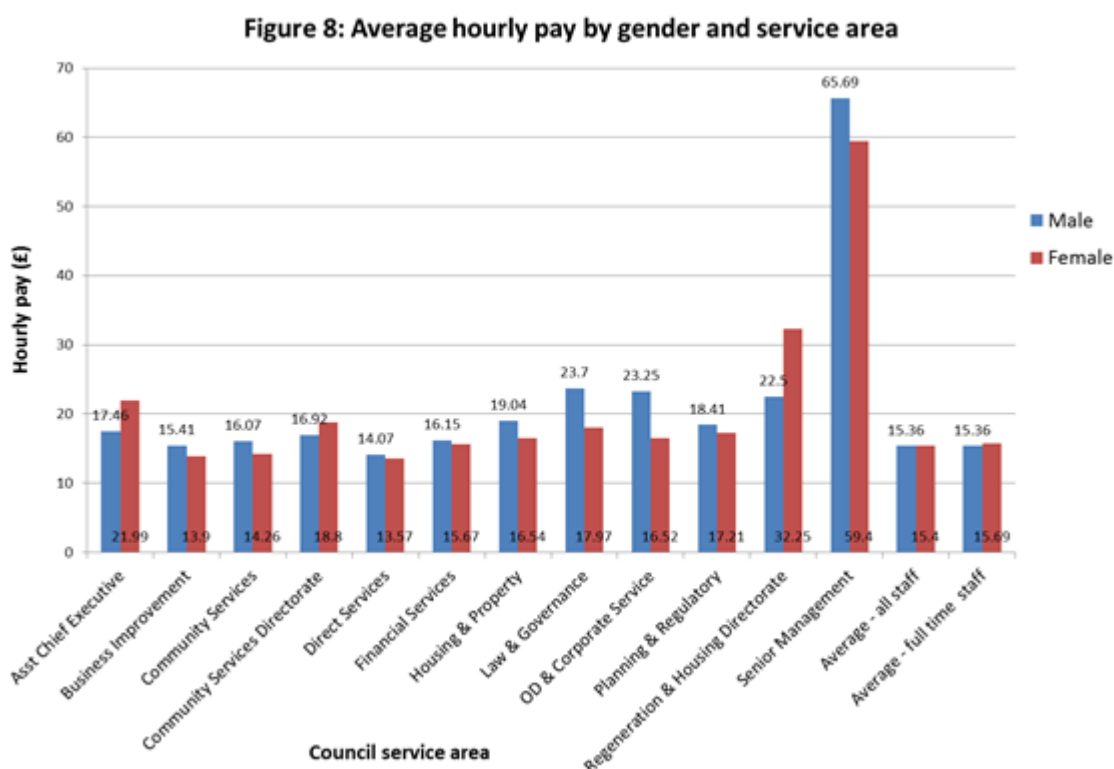
32. Table 2 and Table 3 show the numbers of male and female new starters at each pay grade. Most new starters were recruited at pay grades 3-8. A small number of new starters joined at higher pay grades, including a female at Service Manager level. This was the highest post recruited to during the three month period of October to December 2015.

Table 2: Female new starters by pay grade

Gender	Grade	Employee Count
Female	Grade 03	6
Female	Grade 04	4
Female	Grade 05	3
Female	Grade 06	4
Female	Grade 07	2
Female	Grade 09	1
Female	Service Head	1

Table 3: Male new starters by pay grade

Gender	Grade	Employee Count
Male	Craft Worker Band B	2
Male	Craft Worker Band D	1
Male	Grade 03	3
Male	Grade 04	5
Male	Grade 05	5
Male	Grade 06	5
Male	Grade 08	3
Male	Grade 10	1
Male	Not Defined	1

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33. The Review Group requested statistics to see the gender of breakdown of minority ethnic groups on the Council workforce and this data is presented in Figure 9. It shows that there are more males than females in most minority groups, most notably in the *Black* groups. There are more females than men in two ethnic groups; the *Indian* and *Chinese* groups. However, there are also more females in the *Prefer not to say* category, so overall the numbers of male and female employees are likely to be fairly even in most groups.

Figure 9: Gender balance of minority ethnic groups on the Council workforce
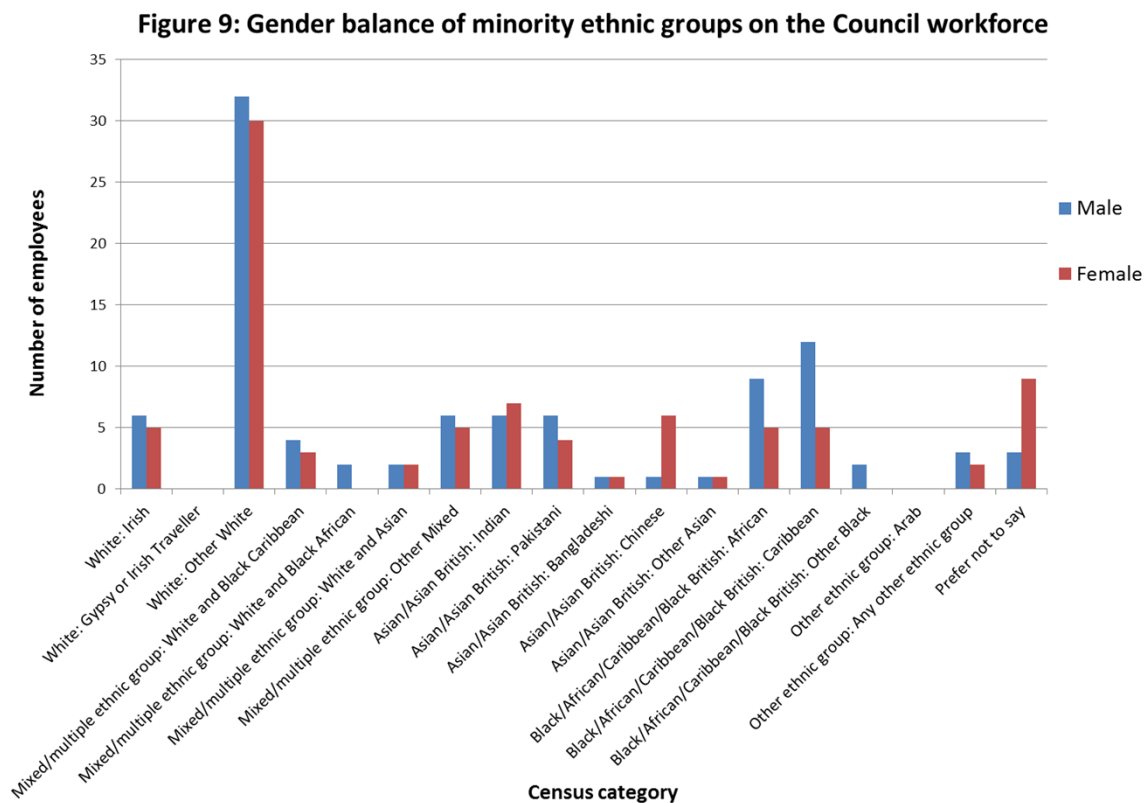
Sexual orientation

34. The Review Group found that the numbers of Council employees who have declared their sexual orientation to be something other than *Heterosexual/straight* are very low, at around 1% of the total workforce, as shown in Table 4. This number is likely to be understated because there are significant data gaps, with 40% of the workforce either *Unknown* or *Prefer not to say*.

35. The relatively high number of *Prefer not to say* responses may reflect employees taking the view that this is private information their employer does not need that does not affect their job. However, assuming that there is not a problem in disclosing sexual orientation may mean the Council misses a problem, namely that LGBT employees do not feel comfortable being out in their workplace. Assuming that there is not a problem in disclosing sexual orientation may in effect exacerbate any problem that did exist.

36. Of the 60% of employees who have provided their sexual orientation, 98% responded that they are *Heterosexual/straight*. Given the small numbers of non-heterosexual returns, the Review Group did not see much value in analysing this data by service area or pay grade and would encourage efforts to obtain a more complete dataset.

Table 4: Sexual orientation of the Council workforce

Sexual Orientation	Employee Count
Bisexual	1
Gay man	6
Gay woman/lesbian	5
Heterosexual/straight	736
Prefer not to say	70
Unknown	439

37. Amongst new starters, the number of unknowns is the same as the number of new electoral staff. This could be a coincidence or it could be that new electoral staff had not been asked to declare their sexual orientation while all other new starters declared their sexual orientation to be *Heterosexual/straight*. Either way, the new starter sexual orientation returns shown in Table 5 are broadly consistent with (and do little to alter) the profile of the Council workforce as a whole.

Table 5: Sexual orientation of new starters

Sexual Orientation	Employee Count
Heterosexual/straight	47
Unknown	33

38. Without more complete data it is very difficult to know the extent to which LGBT groups are actually under-represented on the Council workforce, although the available data would suggest that they are.

Disability

39. Table 6 shows that as of the end of January 2016, 103 Council employees had declared a disability, which equates to 8.2% of the workforce, against a target of 10%. The Council cannot require staff to declare a disability and the actually figure is thought to be slightly higher as the data gaps include staff known to have a registered disability who are being supported at work.

40. The proportion of employees declaring a disability is lower than the 12% of people who said they suffered from a limiting long-term illness or disability in the 2011 Oxford census[4]. Disability is strongly related to age so this population figure will include disabled people who are retired, as well as 3,100 people aged 16-74 who are economically inactive due to being permanently sick or disabled.

41. Relatively few employees have declined to specify whether they have a disability but it may be that amongst the *Not known* group includes people who do not wish to provide this information to their employer or do not see the value in doing so.

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[4] Disability, Oxford City Council, 2016

Table 6: Disability data for the Council workforce

Disability Type: People	Employee Count
Declined to specify	9
Disabled	103
Not disabled	1072
Not known	73

42. Amongst the new starter cohort the proportion of staff declaring a disability is lower at only 5%. The new starter figures shown in Table 7 include temporary electoral staff but even excluding these staff the proportion of new starters declaring a disability is not high enough to positively impact performance against target. Indeed, the proportion of employees declaring a disability fell from 8.45% in December 2015 to 8.2% in January 2016. Performance against this measure will be affected by small numbers of disabled staff leaving the organisation, or by a lower rate of new starters declaring a disability. It should therefore be expected that this figure may go up or down slightly in the short term but the Review Group would expect that over a longer period the trend should be for a steady increase in the number of employees declaring a disability.

Table 7: Disability data for new starters

Consider Disabled?	Employee Count
No	75
Not Known	1
Yes	4

Age

43. Figure 10 shows the age profile of the Council workforce, which ranges from 16 to 85. The age profile peaks in the early 50s age group, with the most common ages of Council employees being 51 and 52. The 10 most common ages all range from 43 to 58, which includes the tail end of the baby boomer generation.

44. This data includes some 373 electoral staff, which may explain some of the 33 staff aged 70+. However, the default retirement age has been phased out, so most people can now remain in work for as long as they want to[5].

45. There are reasonable numbers of employees in the mid-twenties to mid-thirties age groups but employment numbers then dip significantly, with relatively few employees aged 36-41. This may reflect the challenges around the unaffordability of housing in the city and the fact that many young professionals tend to house-share in their twenties and early thirties but are ultimately unable to buy a home and settle in the area long-term.

46. The Review Group heard that the aging workforce presents a number of challenges to the organisation. These include the need to recruit from younger age groups and potentially the need to support larger numbers of employees with disabilities as working lives, including manual working lives, are extended.

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[5] Retirement age, Gov.uk, 5 February 2016

Figure 10: Age profile of the Council workforce (including electoral staff)
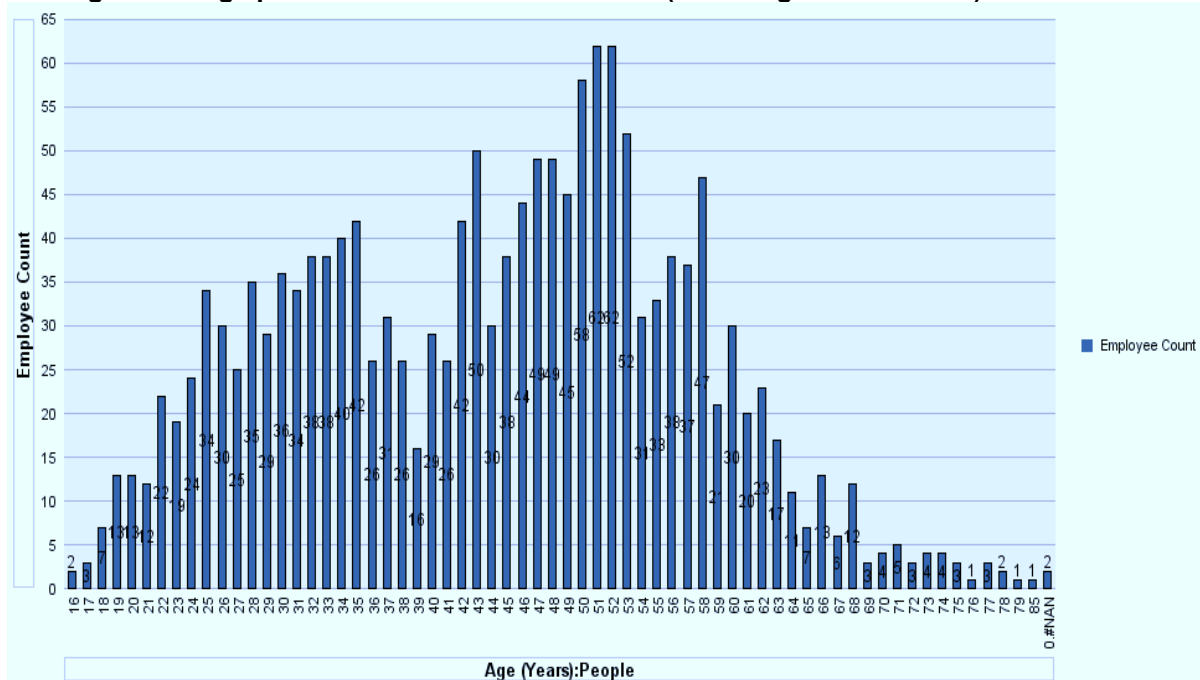
Barriers to recruitment and career progression

47. The Review Group identified a number of barriers that are potentially faced by under-represented groups in recruitment and career progression at the Council. These include relatively low rates of staff turnover in parts of the organisation, recruitment processes, access to qualifications, skills and experience, and possibly the culture of the organisation and how the Council is perceived by different groups. Some under-represented groups will face other more-specific barriers. For example, women are more likely than men to take career breaks in order to raise children and disabled people are more likely to face barriers to do with accessibility.

48. The Council has a relatively high workforce turnover at 10% per year, which equates to some 20-30 new recruits joining the workforce in a typical quarter. This is not necessarily high enough to keep pace with demographic changes in a city with a 25% annual population turnover, particularly given that half of new recruits come from areas outside the city that are generally less diverse. Despite this, the Review Group heard that the proportion of job applications received from BME applicants is at its highest ever level at around 22%. The conversion rate drops off during the recruitment process and the proportion of new starters from BME groups is significantly lower only around 14%. The reasons for this are unknown but there are likely to be several factors. The Review Group heard that some BME applicants are not credible applicants, for example because they do not have a visa to work in the UK. Skill sets including language skills and interview performance may also be factors.

49. Some positions at all levels in the organisation will be held by long-serving employees and will become available very infrequently, such as when the post-

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holder retires or dies. Many of these employees will have been recruited prior to recent demographic changes. This factor is known as 'dead man's shoes' and it is a barrier to the recruitment and career progression of people who are looking to be appointed to these roles. High turnover rates among younger employees would indicate that they are willing to leave the organisation to pursue their careers elsewhere if opportunities do not become available, particularly given the very high cost of living in the city.

50. Opportunities for under-represented groups to reach the highest levels of the organisation are particularly limited due to the very small number of these posts and the fact that they become available infrequently. When higher-paid roles do become vacant, successful applicants are likely to be recruited from within the local government sector, where BME groups are generally under-represented. The profile of the Council's senior management team would therefore not be expected to change significantly in the short to medium term. Ethnic groups that are newer to the population will take time to gain the equivalent skills and experience necessary to be successfully recruited to these types of roles. Indeed, the Review Group heard that over one third of applicants for the lowest paid range 3 positions are qualified to degree level or higher, so a lack of qualifications is likely to be a barrier at various levels of the organisation.

51. Some roles that the Council recruits such as Lawyers and Chartered Surveyors require professional qualifications that are not always inclusive and accessible to under-represented groups. The Council has little or no control over access to qualifications yet the pool of professionals it recruits from will in many cases be less diverse than the population it serves.

52. Similarly, the Council has little influence on young people's career choices, which are much more likely to be influenced by information provided by parents and social media. Many lower-paid roles on the Council workforce such as manual roles in Direct Services may be seen as traditionally jobs for white working class men. These roles, which make up a significant proportion of the Council workforce, may not be desirable to under-represented groups such as women and ethnic minorities. Questions around what routes into employment people in different communities want and whether the Council is seen as an attractive employer need to be better understood. While the Council has had some success at recruiting female HGV drivers, there is little scope to significantly alter the gender balance of the Direct Services workforce in the medium term.

Reducing barriers

53. The Council has already sought to ensure that the profile of its workforce better represents the local community. The Council pays an Oxford Living Wage, offers flexible working and has employment policies and practices in place that are aimed at achieving equality of opportunity for all. The Council is legally able to use positive action in certain circumstances to help people with protected characteristics to overcome their disadvantage[6] and has done so in a variety of ways. It also has specific targets in place for the employment of BME and people with disabilities. The Review Group support this positive action.

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[6] Discrimination at work - positive action, Citizens Advice, 2016

54. The Council has taken a number of steps to make its recruitment processes more flexible and accessible to different under-represented groups. Improvements include reviews of job descriptions and the placement of job adverts, the provision of online advice and guidance to applicants and basing recruitment decisions on more than just an interview. Feedback is now offered to all applicants who are unsuccessful at the interview stage. The Council has also trialled anonymised shortlisting for a period of time but this was found to make no difference to recruitment outcomes.

55. The Council's workplace premises, which are currently in the process of being rationalised, need to be safely accessible to people with disabilities and compliant with disability equality laws. The Review Group understand that advice has been sought on all design standards for workplace refurbishments and new build projects and that fire risk and evacuation plans are in place. The Review Group suggest that the Council undertakes or organises accessibility audits on an ongoing basis to continue to ensure compliance and identify reasonable adjustments. Accessibility is about more than getting into buildings, it's also about employees easily accessing reasonable adjustments in the workplace and online resources. These audits should also cover issues of public accessibility. Consideration should be given to how frequently accessibility audits should take place at each workplace premises and the Council could look at setting maximum intervals between accessibility audits.

Recommendation 1 – That the Council undertakes accessibility audits of its employment premises, public-facing information (for instance, on the website) and externally available application forms, at appropriate intervals. Consideration should be given to how frequently these audits should take place at each workplace premises and to the setting of maximum intervals between audits.

56. The Review Group noted in discussion that millennial workers (those born after 1979) look for different things from a job and from an employer than older demographics and questioned whether more traditional adverts for local government vacancies would appeal to these groups. The Review Group heard that there is a need to understand what younger people want but that officers need time to be proactive rather than reactive in these sorts of areas. The Review Group support the review of recruitment which is already underway and suggest that the Council should continue to explore ways of making its recruitment processes more appealing and accessible to young people and other under-represented groups. This should include looking at the way job adverts are presented and branded as well as where they are placed, with a view to making them more inclusive.

Recommendation 2 – That the Council reviews recruitment branding to better target vacancies at under-represented groups and young people, including utilising settings or channels that are less traditional to local government but more inclusive.

57. The Review Group heard that BME employees had been encouraged to contribute to focus group discussions about what the Council was seen as standing for and what prevented these groups from applying for vacancies at the Council. There have also been a number of outreach activities to encourage under-represented groups to apply for jobs at the Council, including at job fairs and other events in community settings. The Council is also able to reach out to young people in schools through the Business in the Community partnership. The Review Group heard that attendance at community events had been poor amongst target groups and while the Council's Communities Team is working to build relationships with different communities in the City, progress is slow. The Review Group encourage and support continued efforts to reach out and build relationships with under-represented communities in a variety of ways.

Recommendation 3 – That the Council continues to promote itself as an inclusive employer through outreach activities including continuing to hold open recruitment sessions in community settings, reaching out in schools through the Business in the Community partnership, and attending job fairs and community meetings.

58. The Review Group considered whether the Council could extend its reach further into communities by placing job advertisements in community settings. This would need to be done at low cost and is likely to be most effective when the Council recruiting in bulk to multiple vacancies. The Review Group support moves to utilise community centres and potentially community newspapers and social media platforms.

Recommendation 4 – That the Council investigates opportunities to advertise multiple vacancies in community settings at low cost, which could include making use of community newspaper social media platforms, as well as community newspapers and, as long as those running them are willing, community centres.

59. Similarly, the Review Group also suggest that the Council could make use of its own assets, such as Streetscene vehicles, in promoting itself as an inclusive employer around the city.

Recommendation 5 – That the Council makes use of its assets to promote itself as an inclusive employer, including Streetscene vehicles.

60. The Review Group questioned what arrangements the Council has in place to manage and promote talent within the organisation and whether any support is specifically targeted at under–represented groups. The Review Group heard that talent management within the organisation is not specific to succession planning or to helping to further the careers of employees from under-represented groups. The Review Group suggest that officers explore whether there would be an appetite amongst employees from under-represented groups for a more targeted talent management system and seek ideas for what types of support such a programme would include.

Recommendation 6 – That the Council reviews its Talent Management Framework and researches whether the inclusion of a more targeted talent management programme would appeal to under-represented groups, as well as what such a programme would include.

61. The Review Group noted that language can be a barrier to some under-represented groups in accessing Council services and heard that customer-facing employees who could speak a second language did utilise these skills in assisting customers. The Review Group suggest that when the Council is recruiting to certain customer-facing roles it could include the ability to speak a second language as a desirable criterion in the role profile. This should be limited to languages spoken by communities based in the city and to roles that are likely to come into contact with members of these communities. Recognising the ability to speak a second language as a useful skill may help to encourage applicants from under-represented communities to apply successfully for roles on the Council workforce.

Recommendation 7 – That the Council emphasises the value it attaches to the ability to speak a second language by including this skill in the desirable criteria for selected customer-facing job vacancies, such as Tenancy Management Officers and Customer Service Officers.

62. The Review Group questioned whether the Council could make more use of language skills of employees across the organisation in assisting customers. It is suggested that the Council should identify priority skills that may not currently be utilised (such as the ability to speak a second language) and undertakes a skills audit with the aim of finding and utilising these skills within its workforce.

Recommendation 8 – That the Council undertakes a workforce skills audit with the purpose of identifying priority competencies and hidden talents that aren't currently being utilised but would benefit to the organisation, including the ability to speak a second language.

63. The Review Group also suggest that there may be an opportunity to actively utilise employees with the ability to speak a second language by asking to have them 'on call' to speak with customers. If this would address a business need then consideration should be given to rewarding these staff with a small pay supplement, similar to than give to fire wardens for example.

Recommendation 9 – That the Council considers the feasibility of having staff who are known to speak a second language 'on call' to communicate with customers who speak little or no English, and whether these staff could be rewarded with a small pay supplement.

Preventing and addressing discrimination

64. The Review Group considered how the Council deals with discrimination and found that instances of conscious or subconscious discrimination are not showing through in the Council's reporting. There are perhaps 3-4 grievance cases each year and these tend to relate to issues of care of property. Occasional cases of

discrimination or bullying have been dealt with effectively and a small number of employees have been dismissed in recent years as a result. The Review Group considered whether there may be a macho culture in parts of the organisation that was exclusive of under-represented groups, and whether this type of culture may be present in a more subconscious sense in office based environments.

65. The Review Group questioned what types of information the Council gathers in employee surveys and exit interviews and what the results indicate in terms of employees' experiences and perceptions of the culture of the organisation. Previous staff surveys have included questions around discrimination but not since 2013, so no recent and useful staff survey data is available. Exit interviews are offered to all leavers but many leavers appear to lack the motivation to take these up and are thought to move on for a range of internal and external factors. The Review Group heard that exit interviews tend to produce low quality data and this may be because many leavers wish to keep their options open for the future, or possibly to draw a line under any negative experiences they may have had.

66. As would be expected from a public sector organisation, the Council has robust anti-discrimination policies and reporting procedures in place and also benefits from strong trade unions and the work of HR Business Partners. The Review Group suggest that the Council's policies around anti-discrimination should have a high profile within the organisation, including on the Council Intranet, as part of efforts to maintain an inclusive culture.

Recommendation 10 – That all Council employees are reminded of the Council's Fair Employment Statement and employment policies at least annually. These documents should also be prominent and easily accessible on the Council's Intranet.

67. The Review Group note the importance of regularly getting the right messages across to staff in order to help them to recognise and prevent instances of discrimination. The Review Group expect that senior employees lead by example in challenging discriminatory language and behaviours and suggest that all staff should be made aware and reminded of their responsibilities to do so as a matter of course.

Recommendation 11 – That all Council employees are at least annually made aware of their responsibility to challenge discriminatory language and behaviour in the workplace, wherever that may be, as matter of course.

68. The Review Group questioned whether employees are provided with training to help them to tackle discrimination and suggest that training on recognising unconscious bias should be prioritised and focused on the Council's HR Business Partners and the managers across the organisation most regularly involved in recruiting cohorts of new starters. The Review Group heard that this training could be delivered in house or sourced at a relatively modest cost. The Review Group also suggest that once this training has been delivered it should be followed up with refresher courses, perhaps annually.

Recommendation 12 – That unconscious bias training is provided to the Council's most frequent recruiting managers and HR Business Partners. Ideally this would be followed up with annual refresher courses in order to maintain awareness and compliance with good practice.

Being inclusive of LGBT employees

69. Specific consideration was given to whether the Council is inclusive of LGBT people generally and transgender people in particular. The Review Group has recommended that further consideration should be given to why the LGBT workforce is small and less willing to disclose.

70. The Council pays a sum each year to show that it is an LGBT inclusive employer and acquire advice on being more inclusive by being a Stonewall Diversity Champion. The Review Group questioned the value for money of retaining this status given that the only benefit to the Council, as reported by officers, is use of the Stonewall's Diversity Champion logo. The Council must be mindful of the financial investments it makes and if there is no tangible evidence to suggest that being a Stonewall Diversity Champion has made or is making a positive difference in attracting and retaining LGBT staff, consideration should be given to obtaining better value from Stonewall and, failing that, dedicating the funding to other means of tackling discrimination, such as training recruiting managers.

71. Bearing in mind that the LGBT workforce is small and less willing to disclose, consideration should be given to the tension between the message that might be sent out by declining to continue as a Stonewall Diversity Champion and the quite strong practical benefits that could accrue to recruitment and better rates of disclosure from better spending that sum of money.

Recommendation 13 – That the Council seeks to obtain better value from its status as a Stonewall Diversity Champion and, failing that, considers whether the small membership fee would be better invested in other means of tackling discrimination.

72. As discussed in paragraphs 34-36, there are significant gaps in the sexual orientation data held by the Council, as well as to a lesser extent the disability and ethnicity data. Evidence shows that sexual orientation is considered to be more private than other equalities data that is routinely monitored[7]. The Review Group suggest that the Council should continue to encourage employees to provide this data, explaining why this data is held by the organisation and how it can help ensure fairness and equality at work.

Recommendation 14 – That the Council continues to ask employees to review and complete their personal details, including sensitive information such as their sexual orientation, on at least an annual basis, as well as continuing to target identified data gaps. Explanation should be provided as to why sensitive personal information is held by the organisation and the wider benefits of doing so.

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[7] Improving sexual orientation monitoring, Equality and Human Rights Commission, 2010, p. 5

73. Consideration was given to the inclusion of the *Prefer not to say* option for sexual orientation on the Council's monitoring form. The inclusion of this option may send a signal that this data is something that should be considered private. It also produces data that can be difficult to use and analyse and some employers such as IBM and Brighton and Hove Council do not provide this option[8]. At the same time the *Prefer not to say* option provides individuals with the choice not to disclose their personal data and recognises that this information is shared on a voluntary basis. The Unison guidance on LGBT workforce monitoring advises employers that 'questions on sexual orientation and gender identity should always include a 'prefer not to select' option'[9]. The Equality and Human Rights Council report Improving Sexual Orientation Monitoring includes case study examples of good practice. These examples include how an employer significantly increased sexual orientation disclosure rates and how another employer has effectively communicated why personal data is monitored. The Review Group suggest that the Council should continue to keep national good practice and its own monitoring arrangements under review.

Recommendation 15 – That the Council maintains a watching brief on good practice in workforce equalities monitoring and continues to keep its own monitoring arrangements under review, including how questions are asked and the language used as well as the continued inclusion of a 'prefer not to say' option.

74. The personal information the Council holds on employees is not currently inclusive of transgender people because being transgender is not a form of sexual orientation, it is a matter of gender identity or gender history. The Review Group suggest that consideration should be given to monitoring the gender identity of employees in addition to sexual orientation. This would need to be done in accordance with good practice, which would include consulting with staff, and with the purpose of identifying discrimination and building equality. If done with care and confidentiality, the monitoring of gender identity would over time help to demonstrate that the Council is committed to building an LGBT friendly workplace. The Unison factsheet on LGBT workforce monitoring provides useful guidance including dos and don'ts that the Council should follow.

Recommendation 16 – That consideration is given to whether the sensitive personal data of applicants and employees requested and held by the Council should be more inclusive of transgender people. For example, the Council should consider consulting with appropriate individuals and Trade Unions on adding an appropriately worded gender identity field to its monitoring forms, with the clear purpose of building equality and identifying discrimination.

75. The Review Group also considered the use by the Council of gendered titles such as Mr and Mrs, which are not inclusive of transgender people, to address employees and customers. The Review Group note that the use of the gender-neutral title Mx is inclusive of transgender people and is gradually becoming more

[8] Improving sexual orientation monitoring, Equality and Human Rights Commission, 2010, p. 20
[9] LGBT workforce monitoring, Unison, p. 4

widely used and accepted in the UK, including on government forms[10].
Consideration should be given to including Mx alongside the more established
titles on Council forms and databases.

*Recommendation 17 – That the Council adopts gender-neutral terms on
forms as part of its ongoing work to be as inclusive as possible, for
instance, giving consideration to adding the title Mx in addition to the more
established gendered titles such as Mr, Mrs, Miss and Ms.*

76. Consideration was given to the extent to which the continued inclusion and use of
titles on Council forms and correspondence will be necessary in future. The
Review Group suggest that, with Trade Union support, these could ultimately be
phased out on some or all Council forms over the coming years.

*Recommendation 18 - That consideration is given to whether there is merit
in phasing out the use of titles on Council forms and databases over the
medium term if this would be supported by the Trade Unions.*

Conclusion

77. The Review Group conclude that the Council has good policies and measures in
place aimed at helping to overcome barriers faced by under-represented groups
and to tackle discrimination. As a result, steady progress has been made over
recent years in ensuring that the Council workforce is gradually becoming more
representative of the diverse communities it serves. The Review Group welcome
the progress made and encourage further improvements, particularly in relation
to ensuring that the Council's employment practices are more inclusive of
transgender people.

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[10] Gender neutral honorific Mx 'to be included' in the Oxford English Dictionary alongside Mr, Ms and Mrs and
Miss, The Independent, 3 May 2015

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Performance Summary
Scrutiny Committee

Green = target met
Amber = within tolerance
Red = outside tolerance

Trends compare relative performance with
Prd: previous month
Prev Year End: previous March

Mar-2016

Year on Year: the same period from the previous year

Measure		Owner	Result 2014/15	Latest Data		Year End Target 2015/16	RAG	Trends			Comments
Ref	Description			Target	Result			Prd	Prev Year End	Year on Year	
Cleaner Greener Oxford											
ED003	ED003: The number of enforcements carried out as a result of environmental offences	Richard J Adams	1,406 Number	100 Number	28 Number	100 Number	G	↗	↗	↗	Year end achieved and exceeded target.
ED004	ED004: The % of OxFutures programme milestones met	Jo Colwell	100%	100 %	100%	100 %	G	⇒	⇒	⇒	Primary target is investments leveraged. We are currently at £4m out of £18m targeted. This is monitored by a joint city/county council's project board.
NI195b	NI195b Percentage of streets with detritus levels falling below Grade B (YTD)	Geoff Corps	2.10%	3.00%	0.42%	3.00%	G	↗	↗	↗	Year to date 4 out of 946 streets inspected were below grade B. In March none of the 79 streets was below grade B
Corporate Health											
BIT021	BIT021: Number of authorised procurement practitioners in Service Areas	Caroline Wood	15 Number	25 Number	22 Number	25 Number	R		↗	↗	Cohorts 1 and 2 have been completed with 22 officers remaining. Cohort 3 is underway with 9 delegates continuing with the course and 8 on Cohort 4.
BIT022	BIT022: Level of efficiency savings, income generation identified through service reviews and process/system improvement projects	Jan Heath	£758,951	£330,000	£375,439	£330,000	G	↗	↘	↘	Outturn includes efficiencies from a range of technology-based projects including the new website, increased mobile working and replacement/upgrades of key applications. Significant savings are also attached to the new unified telephony project that commenced roll-out in

						270					January. The outturn excludes efficiencies realised through Admin Review in 15/16 and significant cost avoidance identified through implementation of the new Fraud Detection system.
CH001	CH001: Days lost to sickness	Simon Howick	7.90 days	6.00 days	6.81 days	6.00 days	R	↘	↗	↗	The outturn for 15/16 is the best the Council has achieved despite missing the target. Given the profile of the Councils workforce with many working in manual jobs, achieving 6 days per FTE on average is always a challenge. That being said we are increasingly doing more work on proactive management of well-being to help prevent sickness in the first place which we hope will assist. We are also working on some further revisions to the Attendance Management Policy which we hope will have a positive impact on absence rates
BV016a	BV016a: Percentage of employees with a disability	Simon Howick	8.52%	10.00%	8.20%	10.00%	R	↘	↘	↘	Numbers have remained the same for a settled period but the overall percentage has dropped slightly due to a small move upwards in the total staff headcount at the end of the year.
BV017a	BV017a: Percentage of black and ethnic minority employees	Simon Howick	7.2%	9.0%	7.6%	9.0%	R	↘	↗	↗	Application rates from BME candidates were at 21.21% for the year. BME staff numbers reached their highest ever level of 7.9%during the year and finished slightly below this at 7.6% due to a larger staff headcount ay tear end. BME and White other staff now

					271						comprise 12.9% of the workforce. The corporate target requires sensible reassessment as the more radical measures that could lead to a shift in recruitment numbers from underrepresented communities are less likely to be implemented and the current target is therefore one that it is difficult to have control over.

Empowerment

LG002	LG002: Achieve the electoral registration household registration rate	Jeremy Thomas	96.60%	96.00%	96.90%	96.00%	G	→	↗	↗	This is a result of the 2015 canvass and it relates to the percentage of Household Enquiry Form's returned. The result is no longer comparable to previous years because of the introduction of Individual Electoral registration.

Great Customer Contact

CS001	CS001: The % of customers satisfied at their first point of contact	Helen Bishop	84.95%	80.00%	81.95%	80.00%	G	↗	↘	↘	Our overall customer satisfaction results remained strong in March even though we dropped slightly by 0.76%. Our Customer Service Officers continued to focus well on offering surveys and our high performance on telephony has really helped us achieve an overall customer satisfaction score of 81.95% for the year, 1.95% over target. March's face to face results dropped slightly by 1.62% and Web results dropped by 2.99%. Overall a good result for the

								🟩			year.
📊 PC027	PC027: Increase the Number of people engaging with the Council's social media accounts	Chris Lee	72,587 Number	62,895 Number	2,500 Number	62,895 Number	**R**	↘	↘	↘	I am unable to provide a council wide figure as the Communications Team do not have access to all corporate social media accounts. since the last report the corporate account Twitter account 24,648 followers, Instagram 656 followers, Periscope 274 followers,
📊 CS003	CS003: Customers getting through first time on Councils Main Service lines	Helen Bishop	95.45%	95.00%	91.50%	95.00%	**R**	↘	↘	↘	In the Contact Centre we were offered 243372 calls in the year 2015/16, a reduction of 30096 calls compared to the previous year. We answered 227364 of them (93.42%) which was the same performance as 2014/15. We have had 3 main challenges to face this year. Firstly we have seen a number of our staff move to other positions within the Council which has affected our available resource whilst we have recruited replacements. Typically we have been around 5 FTE under our budgeted resource for the last 6 months of the year. Secondly in January we successfully switched off Capita who were taking between 2500-3000 Council Tax and Benefits calls and brought all of these calls back into the Contact Centre. Finally we have more recently experienced a number of system issues where our staff

						273					have either been unable to log on or have not had access to particular systems. In March we had 1 day where we had no calls coming in and had to invoke BCP by moving staff to Horspath. These system issues have affected our ability to handle the inbound call traffic. In general we are pleased with our performance in the Contact Centre. As well as the speed of answer, our customers have told us that the quality of service delivered has been strong.
CS004	CS004: Enquiries resolved by customer service centre without hand off	Helen Bishop	91.60%	90.00%	93.74%	90.00%	G	↗	↗	↗	We have been actively encouraging CSOs to resolve calls first time within the Contact Centre throughout the year and as a consequence, we achieved 93.74% of calls resolved first time against a target of 90%. The overall performance for the year was also strong as we achieved 92.06%. The consequence of this strong performance ensures that we reduce repeat contact as well as ensuring we provide a high quality service to our customers which is backed up by our strong quality feedback scores.

Improve Recycling

NI191	NI 191: The amount of non-recyclable waste produced in the city per	Geoff Corps	415.30 kgs	425.00 kgs	409.74 kgs	425.00 kgs	G	↘	↗	↗	Result is provisional. lots of work is being carried out to reduce refuse waste and increase recycling across the city

	household decreases each year										
NI192	NI192 Household waste recycled and composted (YTD)	Geoff Corps	45.85%	46.50%	46.86%	46.50%	G	↗	↗	↗	Result is provisional. lots of work is being carried out to reduce refuse waste and increase recycling across the city

Participation in Healthy Activities in the most deprived wards

NI008	NI008 The % increase in the number of adults taking part in sport as measured by Sport England's Active People Survey	Ian Brooke	31.3%	31.5%	31.5%	31.5%	G	⇨	↗	↗	Sport England's Active People survey is an annual survey (December) that measures the percentage increase in numbers of adults taking part in regular sport, an interim result is also published in June. The result shown is the full result of 31.5% which places Oxford City in the top 14 of all Councils within the Country, top within the County which is a phenomenal result and is a 10.4% increase from the baseline figure of 20.7 which was recorded in 2005/6. This measure is soon to be replaced as Sport England are reviewing their KPIS.
LP106	To increase participation at our leisure centres by target groups	Ian Brooke	17%	3 %	40%	3 %	G	↗	↗	↗	Fusion asked to check year-end figures. 605,842 visits reported.

Reduce Emissions

ED002	ED002: Implementation of measures to reduce the city council's carbon footprint by 5% each year	Paul Robinson	800 Tonnes	454 Tonnes	637 Tonnes	454 Tonnes	G	↗	↘	↘	completion of Horspath Depot PV installation – est. 22tCO2/year Avoided energy spend through utility bill validation work carried out by Energy and Natural Resources

								G				team- total Closed queries during 2015/16 £76,527.28
LP008	To reduce the use of utilities in Leisure facilities	Ian Brooke	2 Kgs CO2	2 Kgs CO2	2 Kgs CO2	2 Kgs CO2	**R**	↗	↗	↗	Slightly below target Y-T-D but within tolerance levels.
Youth Ambition											
BI002a	BI002a: The number of training places and jobs created as a result of Council investment and leadership	Nigel Kennedy	432 Number	550 Number	466 Number	550 Number	**R**	↗	↗	↗	We continue to look for opportunities to deliver social value under our contracts. Under the Tower Block project 6 apprenticeships, the creation of more than 50 FTE opportunities for local students, and 4 new jobs will be created as part of the circa £1m social value offered under the contract which will have a positive effect on the statistics going forward. The reduction in the capital programme will undoubtedly have a knock on effect on the Councils aims here but social value is considered for every services related contract in addition to works, and so we are continually exploring how we can help the Council to achieve its targets through other markets. Work to encourage this further through the development of a social value toolkit will commence in the new fiscal year.
BI002b	BI002b: The number of Council apprenticeships created through Council investment for those who live in Oxford	Simon Howick	21 Number	26 Number	22 Number	26 Number	**R**	↗	↗	↗	7 associated with Beard and Leadbitter and Willmott Dixon.
	LP119: The	Ian	6,033	5,400	6,640	5,400	**G**	↗	↗	↗	The programme has

LP119	number people taking part in our youth ambition programme	Brooke	Number	Number	Number	Number					exceeded its year end target to achieve 6640. Youth Voice - 196 YA Funding - 963 Holiday Funding - 1337 YA Delivery - 441 CSAF Delivery - 1295 Free swimming lessons- 55 Free swimming card holders - 1987 Streetsports - 366
PC004	PC004: Grow level of active participation in dance through programme of events	Claire Thompson	8,788 Number	7,200 Number	9,485 Number	7,200 Number	G	↗	↗	↗	March:- Dance for Parkinsons 74 Dancin Oxford 3429 - (Audience 3429 / Participants 335 / Artists 169) Oxford Dance Forum 21 TOTAL = 4028 Cumulative total = 9485

Scrutiny Recommendation Tracker - June 2016

Tenant Involvement – Housing Panel 11 April				
Recommendation	*Agreed? (Y / N / In part)*	*Comment*	**Lead Member & Officer**	**Implemented Y/N / due date**
1. That elected members are asked to approach or suggest tenants who may wish to contribute to tenant involvement.	Y	Agreed	Cllr Rowley & Bill Graves	April 2017
2. That the Tenants in Touch newsletter continues to include some content (e.g. one page) specifically aimed at leaseholders.	Y	This has been in place for the last two editions and apart from the forthcoming issue where it was not possible, will continue in future editions. Members are encouraged to read the newsletter.	Cllr Rowley & Bill Graves	April 2017
3. That consideration is given to exploring opportunities to offset some of the costs of producing Tenants in Touch through paid sponsorship or advertising, as well as promoting local charities and support groups.	Y	We will give consideration to this, with the agreement of the tenants involved in editing the newsletter	Cllr Rowley & Bill Graves	April 2017
4. That Tenants in Touch is fully accessible using the Council's mobile app.	In part / provisionally	We support in principle and will look to incorporate into the IT work programme if feasible.	Cllr Rowley & Bill Graves	April 2017
5.That tenants using the repairs portal are signposted to reporting other things, such as incidents of anti-social behaviour.	In part / provisionally	As above	Cllr Rowley & Bill Graves	April 2017
6. That the Tenant Involvement Team continues to support and link with local IT training (such as the Blackbird Leys	Y	This builds on the excellent work already done in this area	Cllr Rowley & Bill Graves	April 2017

Information Technology Zone) and facilitate trials of new online services.				
7. That tenants are involved in future procurement processes from the early stages through to selection, perhaps on a rotating basis from within a pool of tenants who have expressed an interest.	Y	As above	Cllr Rowley & Bill Graves	April 2017
8. That tenant involvement in recruiting to housing posts is mainstreamed with involved tenants having a full and equal say in the process of recruitment.	Y	As above – for key housing posts.	Cllr Rowley & Bill Graves	April 2017
9. That joint partnership working opportunities continue to be provided, enabling the sharing of best practice and ideas with other local authorities and housing associations.	Y	As above	Cllr Rowley & Bill Graves	April 2017
10. That elected members are invited to the annual Tenant and Leaseholder Conference in future years.	Y	All members are welcome. Notification of events are provided through Tenants in Touch	Cllr Rowley & Bill Graves	April 2017
11. That a training matrix is created to assist in keeping track of which tenants have attended the basic and non-compulsory training courses.	Y	This should allow us to suggest things involved tenants could do to contribute more fully	Cllr Rowley & Bill Graves	April 2017
12. That consideration is given to inviting non-residents to organised activities within	Y	The Council has been considering how to publicise our sheltered accommodation better, and this is a valuable suggestion	Cllr Rowley & Bill Graves	April 2017

Recommendation	Agreed? (Y / N / In part)	Comment	Lead Member & Officer	Implemented Y/N / due date
sheltered blocks, where it is appropriate and safe to do so.				
13. That consideration is given to the involvement of tenants in regeneration projects at Blackbird Leys and Barton, possibly as part of the Tenant Involvement Team's improvement focus for 2016-17.	Y	We are determined to ensure maximum participation in the regeneration programmes in BBL and Barton, and it would be very helpful for the Tenant Involvement Team to make this a focus for the coming Council year.	Cllr Rowley & Bill Graves	April 2017
14. That consideration is given to opportunities to involve and seek the views of potential future tenants who are currently on the Housing Register.	Y	Although this is more difficult than involving existing tenants for obvious reasons, the input would be valuable and we will look at ways of doing this, in conjunction with the Tenant Involvement Team.		April 2017

Low Carbon Hub – Finance Panel 7 April

Recommendation	Agreed? (Y / N / In part)	Comment	Lead Member & Officer	Implemented Y/N / due date
1. That the Council promotes the Low Carbon Hub's call for capital.	Y	The Council will assist with the promotion of Low Carbon Hubs for capital where it can	Cllrs Turner & Tanner	Oct 2016
2. That the Council considers making an investment in the Low Carbon Hub.	Y	An investment in the low carbon hub will count as an unspecified investment for the purposes of treasury management. Such investments are limited to 25% of the councils total investment portfolio since these types of investments are considered inherently more risky and are longer in duration. Additionally the Council will be undertaking prudential borrowing to fund its capital programme over the next few years which will reduce the availability of surplus funds for investment. The Council will however keep the issue under review.	Cllr Turner	Oct 2016
3. That the Council lobbies Government to make	Y	The Council supports the principle of making installations of solar panels viable and can make	Cllrs Turner &	Oct 2016

installations of solar energy systems viable again following recent changes to feed-in tariffs, perhaps by the Leader of the Council writing to the appropriate government minister.		appropriate representations to Government.	Tanner	
4. That Council continues to support Low Carbon Hub projects where appropriate, including potentially by assisting with a bid to fund the installation of solar electricity systems on Council housing, and identifying a suitable location for an energy efficiency project in the City.	Part	Previous discussions between the Council and LCH were based on the Council leasing roof space on council houses at nil cost and LCH funding the installation and receiving the Feed In Tariff (FIT) returns. Reductions made in the FIT tariff before Christmas, made this unviable for street property but there remained a possibility to make it work on flat blocks. The Council could assist in determining suitable properties but is unlikely to provide funding unless viability is proven.	Cllrs Turner & Tanner	Oct 2016

Council Tax and Business Rates Exemptions and Discounts – Finance Panel 7 April

Recommendation	*Agreed? (Y / N / In part)*	*Comment*	Lead Member & Officer	Implemented Y/N / due date
1. That a cost benefit analysis takes place at an appropriate time to determine what level of Fraud Investigation resources would maximise Council revenues.	Y	The Investigations Team establishment consists of 6 staff (4.7 fte). The award of a grant from DCLG last year has allowed the employment of an additional 2 full time staff which are funded up to March 2017. As such this level of staffing is considered sufficient to provide resources for investigation work on council activities such as council tax and business rates collection as well as discounts and exemptions which the team will be undertaking this year. In addition the team undertake work for other local authorities' which provides additional contribution towards overheads. On the expiry of the grant monies a cost benefit analysis will be undertaken to determine the level of	Cllr Brown & Tanya Bandekar	April 2017

Recommendation	Agreed? (Y / N / In part)	Comment	Lead Member & Officer	Implemented Y/N / due date
		permanent resource required going forward on the basis of the return to the council.		
2. That consideration is given to whether resources can be increased in the Revenues Team a temporary basis in order to manage peaks in workload such as during the annual student turnover.	In Part	The service currently has a Resilience contract with Capita in place which allows the team to pull on additional resource when needed throughout the year. This has been used in previous years to assist with the workload associated with the new student year and is felt to be adequate currently.	Cllr Brown & Tanya Bandekar	April 2017

Security in communal areas of tower blocks – Housing Panel 9 March / Scrutiny Committee 5 April

Recommendation	Agreed? (Y / N / In part)	Comment	Lead Member & Officer	Implemented Y/N / due date
1. That door-knocking to seek views from residents on the behaviour of groups of young people in communal areas takes place at other tower blocks.	Y	This will be conducted between communities, CRT, ASBIT, TVP and Housing	Cllr Sinclair & Daryl Edmunds	Oct 2016
2. That if anti-social behaviour is identified as a problem within a tower block consideration should be given to the temporary use of CCTV coverage at entrances to identify the perpetrators so that the appropriate council officers can engage with them.	Y	CCTV is in place in most tower blocks and we now have a temporary system we can deploy if necessary	Cllr Sinclair & Daryl Edmunds	Y
3. That local police teams are asked to undertake occasional patrols of tower blocks, and where necessary given the means to access internal communal areas, as they can at the Blackbird Leys tower blocks.	Y	The local beat teams have been provided with Fob access to the towers. In addition the can gain access through a radio communication with their control room. Each neighbourhood team works with ASBIT/CRT to develop hotspot patrolling based on actionable intelligence.	Cllr Sinclair & Daryl Edmunds	Y

Recommendation	Agreed? (Y / N / In part)	Comment	Lead Member & Officer	Implemented Y/N / due date
4. That the Council continues to look at ways of integrating youth engagement activities with other forms of resident and community engagement.	Y	ASBIT/CRT/Communities/Housing and Youth Ambition are continuing to develop youth Appreciative Inquiries, Youth Focus groups and Youth Forums.	Cllr Sinclair & Daryl Edmunds	Oct 2016
Tackling Isolation – Scrutiny Committee 5 April				
Recommendation	*Agreed? (Y / N / In part)*	*Comment*	**Lead Member & Officer**	**Implemented Y/N / due date**
1. That the Council continues to provide funding for projects aimed at tackling isolation.	Y	The Council grant programme continues to be available for projects which will reduce older person isolation. A number of organisations were successful in 15/16 in applications to the City Council for grants, such as Cutteslowe Seniors, Friendleys and the Clockhouse project.	Cllr Simm & Luke Nipen	Y
2. That opportunities to involve older people in contributing to the community through isolation projects, such as supporting older people to volunteer for things that will deliver wider social value, are maximised and evaluated.	Y	As part of 'Investors in Volunteers' the community service are identifying more ways to support volunteers in the city. Also, Oxford City Council Commission OCVA to increase volunteer opportunities which will deliver increase social value.	Cllr Simm & Luke Nipen	Oct 2016
3. That the Council looks to develop a more programme-based approach to isolation projects with a view to attracting external funding, as well as looking to draw on external funding and resources in developing a social value assessment that can be used to demonstrate the social impact of isolation projects.	Y	Oxford City Council work with key partners to develop increased support for projects focused on reducing isolation. Working with local organisations and partners to increase opportunities for external funding.

The Communities team is working with Public Health, Oxfordshire CCG and oxford Brookes university on work experience projects where students can help demonstrate the importance of Older Peoples groups and their social benefits / impact on isolation. | Cllr Simm & Luke Nipen | Oct 2016 |

Recommendation	Agreed? (Y / N / In part)	Comment	Lead Member & Officer	Implemented Y/N / due date
4. That consideration is given to whether the Council can more effectively target funds for tackling isolation at an older age profile given that the 'older people' group is defined as being the over 50 population.	In part	The Council will continue to work with partners within 50+ networks. We do acknowledge that this may not be an entirely helpful construction of older people and our resources will be targeted at groups experiencing need, in particular, social isolation.	Cllr Simm & Luke Nipen	Y
5. That housing models for elderly people are considered as part of the Local Plan review.	Y	Agreed. The needs of all groups, including the elderly, will be reviewed and taken into account as we develop the new Local Plan.	Cllr Hollings-worth	Y
Discretionary Housing Payment Policy – 2016 Revision – Scrutiny Committee 5 April				
Recommendation	*Agreed? (Y / N / In part)*	*Comment*	**Lead Member & Officer**	**Implemented Y/N / due date**
1. That consideration is given to inviting people who were refused a Discretionary Housing Payment in 2015-16 to reapply in light of the proposed policy change and any changes in their personal circumstances.	N	The Council already receive repeat applications from customers previously turned down; indicating people are not dissuaded from reapplying for DHP's. Additionally DHP's are widely promoted through organisations that come into contact with those likely to require support, as well as frontline teams in the Council.	Cllr Brown & Paul Wilding	N/A
2. That the Council keeps a watching brief on the legal position with regards to Discretionary Housing Payment spending limits and on the approaches being taken by other local authorities.	Y	A number of staff in the Welfare Reform Team belong to professional institutes which provide regular updates on changes to regulations and case law as well as best practice elsewhere. The DWP also provide advice in this area and we participate in a couple of local authority forums which include consideration of DHP practice and policy. As such we are well positioned to keep up to date in this area.	Cllr Brown & Paul Wilding	Y

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MINUTES OF THE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Tuesday 5 April 2016

OXFORD
CITY
COUNCIL

www.oxford.gov.uk

COUNCILLORS PRESENT: Councillors Simmons (Chair), Hayes (Vice-Chair), Coulter, Darke, Fry, Gant, Henwood, Smith, Taylor and Pegg.

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT: Councillor Kennedy (Young People, Schools and Skills) and Councillor Simm (Culture and Communities)

INVITEES AND OTHER MEMBERS PRESENT: Councillor Sanders (Older Person's Champion) and Councillor Fooks.

OFFICERS PRESENT: David Edwards (Executive Director City Regeneration and Housing), Graham Bourton (Head of Direct Services), Ian Brooke (Head of Community Services), Andrew Brown (Scrutiny Officer), Stuart Fitzsimmons (Parks and Open Spaces Manager), Hagan Lewisman (Active Communities Manager), Doug Loveridge (Streetscene Services Manager), Craig Morbey (Youth Ambition Manager), Luke Nipen (Communities Specialist Officer), Laurie Jane Taylor (City Centre Manager), Paul Wilding (Programme Manager Revenue & Benefits) and Catherine Phythian (Committee Services Officer)

108. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Hollick.

Apologies were also received from Councillor Tanner in respect of agenda item 5.

109. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

110. YOUTH AMBITION

The Board Member for Young People, Schools and Skills introduced the report. The Youth Ambition Manager and Active Communities Manager were present to answer the Committee's questions.

In discussion the Committee noted that a new female member of staff had been appointed to a permanent post in the Youth Ambition team to focus on work with disadvantaged young women. The gender balance amongst casual staff had also been addressed and the programme now included more activities that should appeal to young women such as such as games, arts and crafts, as well as competitive sports. Officers were confident that participation amongst young women would continue to increase.

The Committee noted concern about the availability of mental health support services for young people in schools and elsewhere, and an increase in referrals to the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS). Youth Ambition team was targeting mental health and well-being and building capacity in that area. Session leaders were able to signpost young people to support.

The Committee NOTED the contents of the report and made the following observations:

1. That the Scrutiny Committee welcomed and supported the prioritisation of mental health issues in the Youth Ambition Strategy.

2. Officers should be mindful of the risks of reinforcing stereotypes when developing / supporting particular projects.

3. Officers should explore additional ways to evaluate the projects (e.g. outcomes, long term targets, impacts on school attendance and attainment, take up levels from the target groups and sustained involvement).

4. Councillors should be provided with regular information on the number and range of projects and participation levels within their Wards.

5. That more details and data on inclusivity should be provided to all councillors.

6. That the presentation of the social return on investment in Appendix 1 was confusing and should be revised in future documents.

7. Officers should circulate details of the existing Youth Ambition Strategy.

8. That officers should circulate details on the Bungee app including about the number of downloads, value for money and why the Bungee app is not integrated with the main Oxford City Council app.

The Committee confirmed that it would wish to pre-scrutinise the revised Youth Ambition Strategy at a future meeting.

111.   TACKLING ISOLATION PROJECTS

The Communities Specialist Officer introduced the report and highlighted the main outcomes of the different projects. The Board Member for Culture and Communities welcomed the positive results from a relatively modest investment and said that she would like there to be more emphasis and analysis around opportunities for older people to make positive contributions to the community

through these projects in future. The Older Person's Champion said that the £40k had been well spent and that she hoped this funding could continue, noting the importance of personal contact to people who were digitally excluded.

The Committee observed that the £40k of council funding for elderly isolation projects did represent good value for money by improving outcomes and making a difference to the lives of isolated older people.

The Committee noted that older people could be very active citizens and this group shouldn't necessarily been seen just as one that needed support but also one that could contribute positively to the community in different ways. The Committee suggested that more could be done to facilitate and evaluate these positive contributions through funded isolation projects.

The Committee questioned how the longer term impacts of small-scale isolation projects were evaluated and whether an economic multiplier model could be used, similar to the social return on investment model used to evaluate the much larger Youth Ambition programme. The Committee heard that evaluating community development projects was key and that there were plans to involve university student volunteers in seeking to demonstrate and quantify the social impacts of these projects.

The Committee questioned the rationale for defining older people as the 50+ population, noting that many people in their 50s did not have the same needs as elderly people and that their involvement could result in other people feeling they were too old to participate in the projects. Members heard that the definition of older people had previously been extended to include people in their 50s in response to demand. Some people in their 50s had similar needs to elderly people and others were often thinking ahead to the future. The Committee suggested that consideration should be given to whether the Council could more effectively target funds at an older age profile, without interfering with the work of those like the 50+ network.

The Committee questioned whether the Council was looking to new models in terms of providing housing for elderly people and noted that a review of older people's housing had recently taken place. The Committee suggested that housing models for the elderly should also be considered as part of the Local Plan review.

The Committee AGREED to make five recommendations to the City Executive Board:

1. That the Council continues to provide funding for projects aimed at tackling isolation.

2. That opportunities to involve older people in contributing to the community through isolation projects are maximised and evaluated.

3. That the Council looks to draw on external funding and resources in developing a social value assessment that can be used to demonstrate the social impact of isolation projects.

4. That consideration is given to whether the Council can more effectively target funds for tackling isolation at an older age profile given that the 'older people' group is defined as being the over 50 population.

5. That housing models for elderly people are considered as part of the Local Plan review.

112. GRAFFITI UPDATE

The Street Scene Manager introduced the report which detailed the latest position on graffiti removal from private properties in the city and responded to questions from the Committee.

The Committee was concerned that the Council did not make full use of its powers of legal enforcement under the 2003 Act. The Street Scene Manager explained that enforcement was the responsibility of the Community Response Team and that there was a need to balance the resources available between clean-up activities and legal action.

The Committee NOTED the report and made the following observations:

1. the appointment of the Grafitti Removal Supervisor as a permanent member of staff was welcome.

2. that the Council should take a stronger stance on enforcement for persistent offenders in the city.

3. Officers should explore the possibility of sharing graffiti removal equipment with individuals or community organisations where it was safe and appropriate to do so.

4. Officers should provide all councillors with monthly data on graffiti incidents within their ward.

113. DISCRETIONARY HOUSING PAYMENT POLICY - 2016 REVISION

The Revenue and Benefits Programme Manager introduced the report. The Committee heard that the lowering of the benefit cap would take place mid-way through the current year and was expected to affect 350-400 people in Oxford, many of whom were expected to apply for a Discretionary Housing Payment (DHP). Following a 50% cut last year, the Council's funding allocation had been increased for the current year (2016/17) to take account of the lowering of the benefit cap and was expected to increase further next year.

The Committee were concerned that despite the clear housing need in the City (as evidenced by the high number of refused cases), the Council was again giving back some of the grant funding to the Government and had not used any of the additional £150k set aside in the budget. The Committee questioned whether the changes to the DHP policy would ensure that no money would be returned to government at year end next time, and whether there was a strategy

for balancing spend over the year. The Committee heard that DHP was used as a tool to effect longer term changes by helping people to become more financially independent while sustaining tenancies. The Council's focus was on applying these principles rather than on spending a set amount of money.

The Committee questioned why households with children were no longer being prioritised for DHP and heard that this prioritisation had been added last year but was no longer considered to be necessary given that the grant funding had increased. No groups were precluded from being awarded a DHP. The Committee supported this change to the policy and questioned whether people who had been refused a DHP when the policy was tighter would be invited to re-apply.

The Committee noted that in addition to the DHP grant allocation, £150k of homelessness prevention funding had been made available and there was an overall spending ceiling of 2.5 times the grant allocation. The Committee questioned how spend was managed and what the legal position was given that councils cannot place undue restrictions on DHP awards such as using spending caps as a refusal reason. The Committee heard that the Council's approach of ensuring that DHPs delivered improved outcomes, rather than passively awarding funding, offered some protection.

The Committee AGREED to make two recommendations to the City Executive Board:

1. That consideration is given to inviting people who were refused a Discretionary Housing Payment in 2015-16 to reapply in light of the proposed policy change and any changes in their personal circumstances.

2. That the Council keeps a watching brief on the legal position with regards to Discretionary Housing Payment spending limits and on the approaches being taken by other local authorities.

114. RECOMMENDATION MONITORING - LOCAL ECONOMY REVIEW GROUP

The Executive Director for Regeneration and Housing and the City Centre Manager were present to answer questions. They said that the Council had offered Business Rates support to businesses in Frideswide Square and would offer support and signposting to all City Centre businesses. Communication was largely an issue for individual services rather than the Corporate Communications Team but the message to business was that the Town Team was their single point of contact. A long term strategy for the City Centre was being developed and there were already a number of strategies for specific locations but the Local Plan review would be a major piece of work and there may not be capacity to progress other priorities.

Councillor Fry, Chair of the Local Economy Review Group spoke on behalf of the Review Group and in discussion the Committee made the following observations:

- that additional resources were needed to support the Events team

- that there was merit in the Council maintaining a list of empty properties in order to facilitate the temporary uses of these spaces for things like pop-up shops and social enterprises, short of taking an agency-role

- that the idea of encouraging "local quarters" as part of a long term strategy for the City Centre should not be overlooked

- that the Town Team could have a greater focus on external outreach

The Committee NOTED the progress update on the recommendations of the Local Economy Review Group.

115. REVIEW OF OXFORD CITY COUNCIL'S TREE MANAGEMENT POLICY

The Head of Direct Services and the Parks & Open Spaces Manager presented the report and explained that the Council was undertaking a light touch review of the current Tree Management Plan which had been written in 2008, and updated in 2011. They said that the review was an opportunity for the Council to introduce new examples of best practice.

In discussion the Committee considered the importance of providing timely responses to enquiries from Ward Councillors and the public; the problems caused by known "nuisance trees", fruit bearing trees and older, larger trees; the need for a more positive tone and constructive information in the revised Tree Management Plan.

Officers welcomed the suggestions made by the Committee and said that they would take these into account in the revised document. They said that they would also include proposals for an arbitration process involving residents, ward councillors and officers to resolve "nuisance tree" cases.

In conclusion the Committee proposed that the Tree Management Plan should be revised to:
- present a more positive and constructive tone to address the views and concerns of local residents and ward councillors
- encourage the use of native tree species for planting
- where possible plant more than one tree to replace any felled trees
- provide more detail on the Council's approach to dealing with and replacing damaged trees (for example, what do we do about stump grinding)
- information on what options are available to for dealing with "nuisance" trees (alternatives to pruning or felling)
- include details of the proposed arbitration meetings with officers, ward councillors and residents

- that officers should send the revised Tree Policy and details of the agreed response times for public enquiries to the local MPs

The Committee NOTED the report and thanked officers for their contribution to the discussion. The Committee confirmed that it would wish to pre-scrutinise the revised Tree Management Plan at a future meeting.

116. REPORT OF THE HOUSING PANEL - SECURITY IN TOWER BLOCKS

Councillor Smith, Chair of the Scrutiny Housing Panel, said that the Panel had considered an officer report on security issues in communal areas of tower blocks at the meeting on 9 March 2016. To inform the discussion the Panel had also canvassed the views of Block Representatives using a brief survey.
She thanked the Scrutiny Officer for his support to the Panel in developing the resident survey and preparing the Panel's report.

Councillor Smith said that temporary CCTV has also been used successfully to identify perpetrators of anti-social behaviour in internal communal areas at Evenlode Tower. Once identified, the young people involved were visited at home and asked to sign Acceptable Behaviour Contracts and signposted to local positive activities on offer.

The Committee AGREED to submit the report and the following recommendations to the City Executive Board:

1. That door-knocking to seek views from residents on the behaviour of groups of young people in communal areas should be rolled out to other towers.

2. That if anti-social behaviour is identified as a problem within a tower block consideration should be given to the temporary use of CCTV coverage at entrances to identify the perpetrators so that the appropriate council officers can engage with them.

3. That the local police teams should be asked to undertake occasional patrols of tower blocks, and where necessary should be given the means to access communal areas other towers, as they can at Blackbird Leys.

4. That the Council should continue to look at ways of integrating youth engagement activities with other forms of resident and community engagement.

117. WORK PROGRAMME AND FORWARD PLAN

The Committee reviewed the work programme and Forward Plan and AGREED to include the following items on the work programme for 2016/17:

CEB reports for pre-scrutiny:
- Annual Safeguarding Report

- Sustainable Energy Action Plan
- Tree Management Plan
- Youth Ambition Strategy

Long List
- Role and contribution of the Design Panel

Housing Scrutiny Standing Panel (if applicable)
- Energy Strategy – Housing & Property.

118. REPORT BACK ON RECOMMENDATIONS

The Scrutiny Officer presented the report noting that since May 2015 Scrutiny has made 176 recommendations to CEB, of which 123 (70%) have been agreed and a further 27 (15%) agreed in part.

He then read out the following City Executive Board comment on the recommendations of the Guest Houses Review Group:

A code of conduct for guest houses seems likely to make a useful contribution if it is widely respected and publicised. The Board will discuss with senior officers the serious resource implications of the agenda set out in the Scrutiny report and seek to identify the how to effectively deliver the actions proposed within current administrative resources.

The Committee NOTED the contents of the report.

119. MINUTES

The Committee resolved to APPROVE the minutes of the meeting held on 7 March 2016 as a true and accurate record.

120. DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

The Committee NOTED the dates of the future meetings.

The Chair closed the meeting by thanking all members of the Committee for their work and support during the year.

On behalf of the Committee the Vice-Chair thanked the Chair for his leadership and contribution to the work of scrutiny during the year.

The meeting started at 6.15 pm and ended at 8.20 pm

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