

# Agenda

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## Scrutiny Committee

### Informal Remote Meeting

This is an informal meeting of the members of the Scrutiny Committee to enable remote attendance. It is not being held as a committee meeting under the provisions of the Local Government Act 1972.

This meeting will be held on:

Date: **Tuesday 12 April 2022**

Time: **5.00 pm**

Place: **Remote (Zoom)**

**For further information** please contact:

Alice Courtney, Committee and Member Services Officer, Committee Services Officer

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## **Committee Membership**

Councillors: Membership 12: Quorum 4 substitutes are permitted.

Councillor Elizabeth Wade (Chair)

Councillor Nigel Chapman (Vice-Chair)

Councillor Tiago Corais

Councillor Dr Hosnieh Djafari-Marbini

Councillor Paula Dunne

Councillor James Fry

Councillor Linda Smith

Councillor Dr Christopher Snowton

Councillor Marie Tidball

Councillor Imogen Thomas

Councillor Naomi Waite

Councillor Dick Wolff

Apologies and notification of substitutes received before the publication are shown under *Apologies for absence* in the agenda. Those sent after publication will be reported at the meeting. Substitutes for the Chair and Vice-chair do not take on these roles.

# Agenda

	<b>Pages</b>
<b>1 Apologies for absence</b>	
<b>2 Declarations of interest</b>	
<b>3 Chair's Announcements</b>	
<b>4 Minutes</b>	7 - 22
<p>Minutes from 02 March 2022 and 07 March 2022.</p> <p><b>Recommendation:</b> That the minutes of the extraordinary meeting held on 02 March 2022 and the ordinary meeting held on 07 March 2022 be APPROVED as a true and accurate record.</p>	
<b>5 Domestic Abuse Review Recommendations Update</b>	23 - 36
<p>The Committee is asked to consider the updates on progress against recommendations made by the Domestic Abuse Review Group. Owing to the lack of time between Scrutiny and Cabinet it is advised that the Committee <b>NOTE</b> the report but make no recommendations..</p> <p>Cllr Louise Upton, Cabinet Member for a Safer, Healthy Oxford and Liz Jones, ASBIT Manager and Domestic Abuse Lead have been invited to present this item.</p>	
<b>6 Reports for Approval</b>	37 - 60
<p>The Committee is asked to approve the following reports and recommendations for submission to Cabinet:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Tenant Involvement and Empowerment Report (NB A number of proof-reading errors have been corrected since the previous version of the report, and an additional recommendation, number 10, has been added since the last one was issued)</li><li>• DSS Discrimination Motion Update</li></ul> <p>The Committee is also asked, following comments made at Cabinet, to decide whether it wishes to retain or dispense with Cabinet being asked to state their agreement/partial agreement/ disagreement with a</p>	

recommendation.

## **7 Report back on recommendations and from Scrutiny Panel meetings**

61 - 70

At its meeting on 16 March the Cabinet considered the following reports from Scrutiny and made responses to the recommendations:

- Climate Emergency Review Group Update
- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy
- Allocation of Preventing Homelessness Grant 2022/23
- Housing Assistance and Disabled Adaptation Policy
- Annual Update of the Council Business Plan
- Oxfordshire Recovery and Renewal Framework

Since Scrutiny's previous meeting, the following Panels have met:

- Housing & Homelessness Panel (22 March)
- Companies Scrutiny Panel (28 March and 07 April)

The Committee is asked to:

1. **Note** Cabinet's responses to its recommendations.
2. **Note** the updates from Panel Chairs.

## **8 Dates of future meetings for 2022/23**

### **Scrutiny Committee**

- 08 June 2022
- 05 July 2022
- 02 August 2022
- 06 September 2022
- 11 October 2022
- 07 November 2022
- 05 December 2022
- 16 January 2023

- 01 February 2023
- 06 March 2023
- 04 April 2023

### **Standing Panels**

Housing & Homelessness: 04 July 2022; 06 October 2022; 03 November 2022; 02 March 2023; 24 April 2023

Finance & Performance: 07 July 2022; 07 September 2022; 07 December 2022; 23 January 2023; 28 March 2023

**All meetings start at 6.00 pm.**

## **Information for those attending**

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The Chair of the meeting has absolute discretion to suspend or terminate any activities that in his or her opinion are disruptive.

### **Councillors 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; licenses 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". 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 member's spouse, civil partner or person they are living with as husband or wife or as if they were civil partners.

## Minutes of a meeting of the Scrutiny Committee on Wednesday 2 March 2022



### Committee members present:

Councillor Wade (Chair)

Councillor Chapman (Vice-Chair)

Councillor Coyne (*substitute for Councillor Corais*)

Councillor Diggins (*substitute for Councillor Tidball*)

Councillor Dunne

Councillor Humberstone (*substitute for Councillor Fry*)

Councillor Linda Smith

Councillor Snowton

Councillor Thomas

Councillor Waite

### Officers present for all or part of the meeting:

Stephen Gabriel, Executive Director for Communities and People

Ian Brooke, Head of Community Services

Becky Walker, Home Improvement Agency Team Manager

Paul Wilding, Rough Sleeping & Single Homeless Manager

Tom Hudson, Scrutiny Officer

Alice Courtney, Committee and Member Services Officer

### Also present:

Councillor Shaista Aziz, Cabinet Member for Inclusive Communities

Councillor Diko Walcott, Cabinet Member for Affordable Housing, Housing Security, and Housing the Homeless

### Apologies:

Councillor(s) Corais, Djafari-Marbini, Fry and Tidball sent apologies.

Substitutes are shown above.

## 97. Declarations of interest

There were no declarations of interest.

## 98. Chair's Announcements

The Chair advised that she, the Vice-Chair and the Scrutiny Officer had met with the Cabinet Member for Planning and Housing Delivery and the Planning Policy and Place Manager on 17 February 2022 to discuss further Scrutiny engagement around the Oxfordshire Plan 2050. It was confirmed that an All-Member briefing (hosted by the Scrutiny Committee) on the item would take place on Monday 14 March 2022, 6pm

followed by consideration of the item by the Committee and agreement of any recommendations at a meeting in the summer.

The Chair asked the Committee to send any suggested discussion items for the All-Member briefing to her and the Scrutiny Officer as soon as possible.

## **99. Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy**

*Cllrs Waite and Humberstone joined the meeting.*

Cllr Shaista Aziz, Cabinet Member for Inclusive Communities thanked the Committee for its ongoing work and provided a brief overview of the report, including that the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy:

- Was a statutory document but the Council wanted to go further to ensure equality, diversity and inclusion was at the centre of all work.
- Set out some ambitious challenges to the Council in terms of how it was working on equalities.
- Had been developed on the back of calls for change and ongoing conversations with communities and that communities across Oxford had become more vocal on equalities issues, which was welcomed.
- Reflected equalities issues that had been deepened by the pandemic.
- Aimed to strengthen oversight, accountability and scrutiny of equalities issues and promote cultural change.
- Was the overarching document for other documents including the Anti-racism Charter and the Thriving Communities Strategy.

Ian Brooke, Head of Community Services set out how the Strategy development work had been conducted, which had included the use of focus groups in order to understand communities' lived experience. Stephen Gabriel, Executive Director for Communities and People outlined the importance of governance arrangements and highlighted that he Chaired the internal Equalities Steering Group. He gave assurance that equality, diversity and inclusion was high on the agenda and the Strategy would provide the framework for driving work forward.

The Committee commended the Strategy and raised a number of points, including:

- *Proposals to improve Member oversight via the Scrutiny Committee* – the Scrutiny Officer confirmed that it was for the Committee to decide whether this piece of work was taken forward when it defined its priorities for the next municipal year.
- *Understanding and addressing the needs of faith groups* – in response to questions, Cllr Aziz felt that the Council needed to develop a far better understanding of faith-based communities in the City in order to address their needs, which would be an ongoing piece of work.
- *Facilities for community groups* – the Committee had concerns about the wording related to the fifth action point on page 20 of the agenda reports pack. Cllr Aziz advised that the point was trying to highlight the fact that there was no Council resource for new purpose-built facilities for specific groups, but agreed that the wording needed amending to better reflect that.
- *Inclusive services* – Members thought it would be good to see an action related to provision of inclusive leisure services.
- *Accountability* – the Committee wanted assurance that actions contained in the Strategy would be monitored and progress fed back to communities in a



systematic way and that Members would receive information on how things have changed over the course of the reporting period as a result of insights received from communities.

- *Free community WiFi* – the Strategy heavily referenced digitisation and the Committee noted that some groups and individuals were excluded from the process due to lack of access to WiFi. It was felt that free WiFi should be provided in Council facilities and referenced in the Strategy.
- *Reporting back* – an annual equality, diversity and inclusion report to Scrutiny on progress related to the actions contained in the Strategy was requested. This suggestion was welcomed by Cllr Aziz and officers.
- *Cashless transactions* – there were concerns about the move to completely cashless interactions with customers as this excluded some people. It was suggested that more detail was required on what people who could not access cashless services should do, along with how that linked to other information contained in the Strategy (e.g. debt work). The Executive Director for Communities and People confirmed that thinking around this work was already in train.
- *Statistics* – the statistics used were pre-pandemic and therefore outdated. The census data was due to be published in May 2022 which would aid the Council's understanding of the impact of the pandemic on inequalities and the Committee wanted to know what plans were in place to review the data in the Strategy and update it in light of the census data. The Executive Director for Communities and People confirmed there would be a corporate piece of work undertaken related to the census data.
- *Modern Slavery* – in response to questions, Cllr Aziz advised that the Council had a dedicated Modern Slavery Officer and she would ensure engagement with them so that the Council could assure itself that Modern Slavery was sufficiently represented in the Strategy. The Executive Director for Communities and People advised that there was already a lot of work going on around Modern Slavery.
- *Presenting areas of change* – it was suggested that when highlighting change, it would be useful to have a commentary on statistics and measures to show whether they were on track, making steady progress or backsliding and outlining any actions being taken as a result. It was also suggested that separation of actions in plans into things already being done versus novel actions would be helpful. Cllr Aziz said that she and officers would take the suggestions away and work on them.
- *Language* – the Committee asked for some of the language to be updated to reflect currently accepted language. Specific reference was made to the use of 'BAME' and 'non-heterosexual' on page 16 of the agenda reports pack. Cllr Aziz agreed to ask officers to update the language. The Executive Director for Communities and People added that the Equalities Steering Group was due to consider issues related to language and specifically the use of 'BAME'.
- *Black Lives Matter* – a question was asked about the actions Oxford City Council would take to address slavery reparations (e.g. Bristol City Council passed a motion related to this). Cllr Aziz advised that Oxford and Bristol had different contexts and she did not think the Strategy could go into the detail of reparations or make it a priority as there was not the capacity or expertise in the Council. She added that links needed to be made with experts in the City related to reparations.
- *Training on equality, diversity and inclusion* – a question was asked about the scope for ongoing training from people with expertise in the area. Cllr Aziz

advised there was a Member training budget and that Members could suggest ideas for training topics, but acknowledged there was limited time and resource.

Cllr Aziz thanked the Committee for its robust feedback and pointed out that equalities issues had to belong to everyone, so it was good to have so much engagement from Scrutiny.

**The Committee resolved to recommend to Cabinet that:**

- The Council provides community WiFi in all its community and leisure centres.
- The Council ensures that potential exclusionary impacts of moving towards cashless provision on relevant vulnerable residents are mitigated.
- The Council explicitly references in its policy the need for inclusive leisure provision, particularly women-only classes, crèche provision at leisure centres, and free or subsidised activities.
- The Council undertakes additional engagement with faith communities to understand their needs and support their contribution towards asset based community development.
- The Council removes bullet point 5 on page 10 of the draft Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy.

*Cllr Aziz and the Head of Community Services left the meeting and did not return.*

## **100. Housing Assistance and Disabled Adaptation Policy**

Becky Walker, Home Improvement Agency Team Manager introduced the report and outlined the proposed changes to the Housing Assistance and Disabled Adaptation Policy set out in the report. Cllr Diko Walcott, Cabinet Member for Affordable Housing, Housing Security and Housing the Homeless commended the ongoing work of officers.

The Committee raised a number of points, including:

- *Relocation grants* – in response to questions, the Home Improvement Agency Team Manager confirmed that Council tenants were not eligible for this grant, as legislation stated that Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) funding, which relocation grants were, could not be used for Council tenants. The Executive Director for Communities and People advised that Council tenants who required disabled adaptations would go through a different route. He added that work was ongoing to ensure alignment between the different adaptations policies and ODS.
- *Disabled tenants in the private sector* – the Home Improvement Agency Team Manager advised that tenants of every tenure apart from Council tenants were eligible for the £5,000 DFG funding. The Committee suggested that should be made clear in the policy summary.
- *Housing Associations and Registered Social Landlords (RSLs)* – in response to a question about why Housing Associations and RSLs were not paying the bill for their tenants' adaptations, the Home Improvement Agency Team Manager advised that Housing Associations had their own adaptations policies which set out whether they would fund disabled adaptations. She added that some Housing Associations funded adaptations directly and some made a contribution to the Council.
- *Private sector complexities* – in response to questions, the Home Improvement Agency Team Manager confirmed that there were issues nationally for private

sector tenants as the DFG funding process required landlords to give permission for adaptation works to be carried out. The Committee was advised that many private landlords refused to grant permission and the Council had attempted to counteract this by offering to use its discretionary DFG funding to undertake remedial works to return the property to its original state if a tenant moved out.

- *Communications* – the Home Improvement Agency Team Manager confirmed that the Council had a suite of leaflets available in Community Centres, libraries, GP Surgeries and the Council website. It was added that there was a specific marketing officer who ensured the information was disseminated appropriately. The Executive Director for Communities and People advised that clients were referred in to the service through a variety of pathways.

**The Committee resolved to recommend to Cabinet that:**

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

## **101. Allocation of Homelessness Prevention Funds**

Paul Wilding, Rough Sleeping & Single Homeless Manager introduced the report. He highlighted that this was an annual report which provided an overview of the allocation of funding to provide services for rough sleepers and single homeless people in Oxford in the financial year 2022/23. The provision of services was aimed at preventing and tackling rough sleeping and addressing single homelessness in the City.

The Rough Sleeping & Single Homeless Manager highlighted a number of points, including:

- There was a recommendation in the report for Cabinet related to the lease of Floyds Row, which was the homelessness engagement and assessment centre.
- Floyds Row was intended to be used as interim accommodation for homeless people while they were supported to access longer-term accommodation, but had not been used as such during the COVID-19 pandemic. The Council was looking to return Floyds Row into interim accommodation imminently, which was addressed in the report.
- The Council planned to move towards its post-pandemic model of service delivery in relation to Rough Sleeping and Homelessness.
- The new joint commissioning arrangements with partners for Homelessness services would begin in April 2022, which was a key milestone (*set out in paragraphs 13 to 17 of the report*).
- There was not much change from the previous annual report. The main change was that many of the services would now be part of the new countywide Homelessness Service.

The Committee raised a number of points, including:

- *Greater Change* – concerns were raised about the organisation's fundraising model, how many people the funding would help and how the Council was ensuring value for money. The Rough Sleeping & Single Homeless Manager said that the Council first funded Greater Change through Government funding during the pandemic and that he could share some impact analysis which had

been undertaken. He added that the £25,000 funding had supported around 30-40 people, which he felt offered good value for money.

- *The Old Fire Station* – the set-up at the Council-owned building was praised as a valuable provision. It was requested that the provision of the Old Fire Station building to Crisis on a rent-free basis by the Council be referenced and recognised in the next annual report as a grant or gift in kind. The Rough Sleeping & Single Homeless Manager confirmed that he was happy to look into doing that.

At this point in the meeting, the following declarations of interest were made:

- **Cllr Wade:** stated that she was a Trustee of The Gatehouse charity; she made the declaration for reasons of transparency; it was not a pecuniary interest and there was no decision to be taken by the Committee related to the organisation, therefore Cllr Wade was not precluded from discussion.
- **Cllr Dunne:** stated that she represented the Council on The Gatehouse Management Committee; she made the declaration for reasons of transparency; it was not a pecuniary interest and there was no decision to be taken by the Committee related to the organisation, therefore Cllr Dunne was not precluded from discussion.

The Committee made additional points related to:

- *Day Services* – the report referenced a reduction in day services and a question was raised about what was planned and how it would take effect. The Rough Sleeping & Single Homeless Manager explained that the pandemic had led to a reduction in need for Day Services and that the provision met the needs that the City had, but funding would be kept under review.
- *Number of people out on the street* – the Committee raised concern about the number of people out on the street at the moment and asked whether numbers were increasing. The Rough Sleeping & Single Homeless Manager said that numbers were lower than before the pandemic, but that this would continue to be closely monitored and work to reduce those numbers was ongoing.

**The Committee resolved to recommend to Cabinet that:**

- The Council recognises the financial value to Crisis of providing the Old Fire Station as part of its future reports on the Allocation of Homelessness Prevention Funding.
- The Council continues to monitor closely the outcomes and value for money of its grant to Greater Change.

## **102. Dates of future meetings**

The dates of future meetings were noted:

- 07 March (*Zoom*)
- 05 April (*in-person*)

**The meeting started at 6.00 pm and ended at 8.10 pm**

**Chair .....**

**Date: Tuesday 5 April 2022**

*When decisions take effect:*

*Cabinet: after the call-in and review period has expired*

*Planning Committees: after the call-in and review period has expired and the formal  
decision notice is issued*

*All other committees: immediately.*

*Details are in the Council's Constitution.*

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# Minutes of a meeting of the Scrutiny Committee on Monday 7 March 2022



## Committee members present:

Councillor Wade (Chair)	Councillor Chapman (Vice-Chair)
Councillor Corais	Councillor Coyne ( <i>substitute for Councillor Waite</i> )
Councillor Diggins ( <i>substitute for Councillor Tidball</i> )	Councillor Djafari-Marbini
Councillor Dunne	Councillor Linda Smith
Councillor Snowton	Councillor Thomas
Councillor Wolff	

## Officers present for all or part of the meeting:

Caroline Green, Chief Executive  
Tom Hudson, Scrutiny Officer  
Alice Courtney, Committee and Member Services Officer

## Also present:

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

## Apologies:

Councillor(s) Fry, Tidball and Waite sent apologies.

Substitutes are shown above.

## 103. Declarations of interest

There were no declarations of interest.

## 104. Chair's Announcements

The Chair had no announcements.

## 105. Annual Update of the Council Business Plan

Cllr Susan Brown, Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Inclusive Growth, Economic Recovery and Partnerships introduced the report, which looked ahead to year three of the four-year Council Strategy. She said that a key aim in the

development of this work had been to be realistic with objectives and ensure a narrow focus in order to achieve the Council's aims – which she felt the document did well.

Cllr Brown provided a short commentary on progress related to each of the four Council priorities and outlined key actions planned to be undertaken. Caroline Green, Chief Executive reiterated that the purpose of the Business Plan was to set out key actions that would be delivered against the Council's priorities, therefore the list of actions was not exhaustive but focused on key deliverables which resources had been identified for. She added that a number of other projects would be detailed in individual Service Plans, which sat underneath the Business Plan.

The Chief Executive highlighted that the Council delivered against the majority of its plans last year. She said that Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) were being reviewed and a separate report was due to be presented to the Scrutiny Committee's Finance and Performance Panel in the near future.

The Committee raised a number of points, including:

- *Links with other strategies/plans* – a concern was raised that there appeared to be mismatches between the Council's Business Plan and Economic Strategy. Cllr Brown advised that a number of strategies/plans fell out of the Business Plan, including the Oxford Economic Strategy and the City Centre Action Plan; these were referenced in the report. She added that in her view the Business Plan and Oxford Economic Strategy were linked and addressed the same priorities; and that the Committee would have the opportunity to consider the Oxford Economic Strategy in the not too distant future.
- *Growth* – in response to comments, Cllr Brown confirmed that Oxford was a world-leading city in a number of industries, which attracted people to the area and the Council had no power to stop that growth. She added that the Council was aiming to encourage sustainable growth by working with local partners and organisations to ensure opportunities were provided for local people; this work would be driven by the Oxford Economic Strategy.
- *Inter-priority tensions* – it was pointed out that tensions existed within the document, particularly related to priority one (*enable an inclusive economy*) and priority two (*deliver more, affordable housing*). Cllr Brown agreed that there were conflicting priorities and it was difficult to get the balance right.
- *High rent prices* – a question was asked related to whether the Council could work with landlords and universities to get some agreement around rent prices to prevent prices being so high. Cllr Brown said it was difficult and the City needed the universities to build as much purpose-built student accommodation as possible in order to make private rented homes available for families and prevent prices being pushed up, which universities were trying to do. She added that the loss of family homes to short-term lets (e.g. Airbnb) was a key lobbying issue that she raised at every opportunity, as the Council currently only had very limited planning powers. Cllr Brown also advised that the Council needed to look into the building of purpose-built affordable rent properties that was not social housing.
- *Bathing water status* – there was a comment that the section related to bathing water status was outdated as the Government had recently closed a consultation on one of the locations. The Chief Executive agreed that this should be updated to reflect the current position.



- *Oxpens* – Members asked for a more detailed briefing on Oxpens and reassurance that development would not be at the expense of the existing centre.
- *Public spaces* – there were concerns related to reconciling the reference to improving public spaces and the fact that OCHL was building on Sandy Lane Recreation Ground. It was suggested that if the Council was serious about protecting open spaces then a commitment should be laid out in the Business Plan. The Chief Executive advised that the purpose of bringing the report to the Committee was to consider progress on work to achieve the objectives set out in the Business Plan, rather than debating the objectives which were taken from the Council Strategy.
- *Citizen engagement in civic and political life* – there was a query about how an increase in active engagement in civic and political life would be achieved, as there was no detail in the Business Plan. The Chief Executive advised that there were a number of actions relevant to this objective, but they linked to other priorities so sat in a different place within the document and only appeared once to avoid duplication. She said that consideration needed to be given to how those actions were cross-referenced.
- *Road traffic* – it was suggested that the section on page 50 be fleshed out to include actions such as restricting HGVs entering the City during certain hours to improve road safety, in light of the fatal incident the previous week. It was added that recognition of the importance of community consultation on the development of LTN schemes should be included. The Chief Executive highlighted that the Business Plan set out the actions that would have the biggest impact in the coming year and in the case of transport, Connecting Oxford was the strategic focus of delivery, but other policies and interventions were not necessarily excluded.
- *Number of houses* – in response to a question related to there being no mention of a precise number of homes that the Council would build over the coming years, Cllr Brown confirmed this would be more appropriate to include in the KPIs report.
- *Urban Forest Strategy* – Members asked how far this strategy relied on external funding and whether there was a mismatch between the desire to have more trees and limited resource to maintain them. Cllr Brown advised that Cllr Arshad, Cabinet Member for Parks and Waste Reduction would be best-placed to give advice on the matter.
- *Waste Strategy* – this strategy had historically been about recycling, but in the Business Plan there was a reference to street littering. In response to a question, Cllr Brown agreed that this reference was probably in the wrong place and she would feed that back to officers. The Chief Executive added that the point was more related to the availability of bins.
- *Transport and inclusivity* – a point was raised about the need to ensure that green transport actions did not exclude certain groups of people from the City or make their businesses unviable (e.g. sole operators such as plumbers who needed to drive around the City in order to work and provide their services). Cllr Brown confirmed she had raised this point with the County Council previously.
- *Communications* – there was concern that there was no reference to public consultation related to Zero Carbon Oxford or Connecting Oxford. Cllr Brown advised that the County Council had responsibility for those consultations, but provided assurance that consultation was a key part of those strategies.

### **The Committee resolved to recommend to Cabinet that:**

1. The Council updates its Business Plan to reflect central government's possible decision to grant Wolvercote Mill Stream bathing water status, and has planned next steps for improvements in the area in the event that this status is or is not granted.
2. The Council commits to protect its parks and play areas from development.
3. The Council determines and publicises the means by which local residents can evidence that a site is valued and worthy, therefore, of protection.
4. The Council adds a commitment in the Business Plan to investigate the practicalities of establishing a youth council in Oxford.
5. The Council includes within the Business Plan a commitment to reducing road traffic accidents, and relatedly, places restrictions on HGV access to the city centre.
6. The Council continues to engage with local anchor institutions over how they can meaningfully address local needs, particularly regarding rent levels, access to leisure space, minimum wages and tree-planting.
7. The Council undertakes to review its Tree Policy as part of its Business Plan.
8. In the development of the Oxford Transport Strategy the Council is particularly mindful of the impacts on small businesses and sole traders, whose businesses depend on travelling extensively throughout the city centre, of proposals which limit vehicular access.

### **106. Oxfordshire Recovery and Renewal Framework**

Cllr Susan Brown, Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Inclusive Growth, Economic Recovery and Partnerships introduced the report. She highlighted that the Framework was very high level and was developed as a result of the joint working with other Oxfordshire councils during the pandemic. The purpose of the document was to better align the strategies being brought forward across Oxfordshire so that the councils could continue to work well together.

Caroline Green, Chief Executive added that the Framework was also proposed for adoption by other partner organisations, including OxLEP and health bodies. She said that the Framework was reflective of the close working relationships built through the pandemic, which brought multiple agencies together to focus on the response. The Chief Executive added that the Council wanted to build on the traction, which the Framework would facilitate and that consideration would be given to how the partnership reports back on the Framework.

The Committee raised a number of points, including:

- *Child poverty* – the Committee raised concerns about the fact that, despite best efforts, the child poverty statistics in the City had not changed for quite a long time. It was noted that some wards had seen improvements, but child poverty in other wards was very persistent. It was suggested that the document should include a focus on tackling child poverty and bringing other partners on board.
- *Health inequalities* – there was recognition that the document was framed as responding in a post-COVID world, but the document appeared to suggest that health inequalities did not exist before COVID-19 and the pandemic created them all. It was suggested that the document should be revised to ensure the relevant history was referenced and that COVID had exacerbated issues rather than created them.

- *NHS governance* – it was felt that the document did not demonstrate an understanding of the change taking place in the governance of the NHS after 01 July 2022 and the responsibilities of NHS bodies in tackling health inequalities.

Cllr Brown highlighted that she had sympathy with the comments made, but advised that the Framework was not a Council-owned document so there was limited opportunity to implement changes. However, she added that she was happy to try as she agreed with the comments made.

The Chief Executive added that a number of conversations had taken place related to the document and it had improved significantly from where it was. She said that it had gone to all partners, so going back to partners with lots of changes probably was not feasible. The Chief Executive pointed out that responsibility had been delegated to her and her local authority counterparts to make certain changes to the final version of the Framework and that she could probably incorporate the reference to NHS governance arrangements within the bounds of the delegated authority granted.

Cllr Brown added that the Framework described the bare minimum of what Oxford City Council was already doing, but that the Council was doing much more. She said that it was a positive step to bring partners on board and influence them to undertake work that otherwise they may not have done. It was reiterated that the monitoring mechanisms for the Framework were not yet established, but that she could report back to the Committee when those arrangements were clearer.

**The Committee resolved to recommend to Cabinet that:**

1. The Council suggests to partners that the Framework be amended so as not to focus exclusively on county-wide policies and strategies but relevant district-level ones also.
2. The Council requests that a report detailing what has happened as a result of the establishment of the Oxfordshire Recovery and Renewal Framework is written by the County Council, considered by the Health and Wellbeing Board, and also made available for Scrutiny Committee consideration.
3. The Council writes its own update report to coincide with the report requested in the recommendation above, reviewing how participation in the Framework has facilitated the Council in its ambitions to consolidate recovery, address health inequalities and support renewal.

*Cllr Brown and the Chief Executive left the meeting and did not return.*

**107. Work Plan**

The Committee reviewed the Work Plan. The Scrutiny Officer asked Members to start thinking of and suggesting items to be included on the Work Plan for the next municipal year.

The Scrutiny Officer advised that he would be circulating a self-evaluation to the Committee for completion which would help in assessing the Committee's areas of strength and weakness.

**108. Minutes**

The following amendment was requested to the recommendations contained in Minute 88:

- After (and related to) the first recommendation, insert: *The Council requests that the supplementary report referred to above identifies consultation responses by respondent type so that Members and the public can understand where particular respondents, or groups of respondents are pressing for particular policy choices.*

The Committee resolved to APPROVE the minutes of the meeting held on 01 February 2022 as a true and accurate record, subject to the above addition.

The Committee asked the Scrutiny Officer to also amend the recommendations in the report to Cabinet to reflect the above.

## **109. Reports for Approval**

The Committee approved the following reports for submission to Cabinet:

- Procurement Update
- Oxfordshire Plan 2050 (*subject to the amendment requested by the Committee in Minute 108 above*)

The Chair reminded the Committee about the briefing on the Oxfordshire Plan 2050 which was scheduled to take place on Monday 14 March, 6pm. The Chair added that the Committee would have the opportunity to consider a report on the Oxfordshire Plan 2050 and make any recommendations at a meeting in the summer.

## **110. Report back on recommendations and from Scrutiny Panel meetings**

The Committee noted the following update from the Scrutiny Officer related to the Budget Review Group recommendations and responses:

- Only one recommendation was refused and the vast majority of recommendations were agreed. Some recommendations were deemed 'not applicable' in cases where the Budget Review Group asked for clarification rather than making specific recommendations.
- Advice Centre reinstatement occurred prior to the Budget Review Group making recommendations.

The Committee made the following points:

- In relation to recommendation 6, which was refused, it was requested that the Committee monitor how much the Council spends on biodiversity consultants. The Scrutiny Officer suggested that the Committee could ask planning officers to review this as part of the budget-setting process before Christmas 2022.
- In relation to recommendation 13, concern was raised that the response was not reassuring and did not address the recommendation in the way that was intended. The Committee agreed that it would monitor progress against recommendation 13.

The Committee noted the following update from Cllr Linda Smith, Chair of the Housing & Homelessness Panel:

- The Panel met on 02 February 2022; it considered the work of the Tenant Involvement Team and heard about the Council’s preparations for the Social Housing Bill, which would place more duties on the Council in terms of tenant involvement in housing services.
- The Panel was looking to publish a report related to the Social Housing Bill which made recommendations related to the Council’s response, which it was hoping to sign-off at its next meeting on 22 March 2022 before presenting to the Committee for final approval.

The Committee noted the following update from Cllr Hosnieh Djafari-Marbini, Chair of the Child Poverty Review Group:

- The Group had engaged with a range of local groups, organisations and national experts.
- Work was developing in two parallel strands:
  - How the work of the Council and its work with the Voluntary Sector can be better coordinated to tackle the issue of child poverty.
  - How the structure is embedded so that we see some changes to child poverty levels in the next decade.

**The Committee resolved to:**

- **Ask planning officers to review spend on biodiversity consultants as part of the budget-setting process prior to Christmas 2022.**
- **Monitor progress against the Budget Review Group recommendation 13.**

**111. Dates of future meetings**

The dates of future meetings were noted:

- 05 April (*in-person*)

In response to a request from Cllr Chapman, the Committee agreed that he could ask Cllr Fry to Chair the Companies Scrutiny Panel meeting scheduled for Thursday 24 March on his behalf.

**112. Budget Review Group Report - Exempt Recommendations and Responses**

There was no discussion under this item.

**The meeting started at 6.00 pm and ended at 8.35 pm**

**Chair .....**

**Date: Tuesday 5 April 2022**

*When decisions take effect:*

*Cabinet: after the call-in and review period has expired*

*Planning Committees: after the call-in and review period has expired and the formal decision notice is issued*

*All other committees: immediately.*

*Details are in the Council’s Constitution.*

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**To:** Scrutiny Committee  
**Date:** 5<sup>th</sup> April 2022  
**Report of:** Ian Wright, Head of Regulatory Services and Community Safety  
**Title of Report:** Domestic Abuse Review Recommendations Update

<b>Summary and recommendations</b>	
<b>Purpose of report:</b>	An update report on the progress made against recommendations arising from the Domestic Abuse Review Group
<b>Key decision:</b>	No
<b>Cabinet Member:</b>	Councillor Louise Upton, Cabinet Member for a Safer, Healthy Oxford
<b>Corporate Priority:</b>	Support Thriving Communities
<b>Policy Framework:</b>	Council Strategy 2020-24
<b>Recommendation(s):</b>	
1. <b>Members note and comment on the update</b>	

<b>Appendices</b>	
Appendix 1	Recommendations Update

## Introduction and background

1. Cabinet agreed the majority of the recommendations that were endorsed by the Scrutiny Committee on 02 March 2021. Scrutiny has requested an update on the progress made against these recommendations.

## Domestic Abuse

2. The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 provides a statutory definition of domestic abuse which will be incorporated as relevant policies are reviewed and agreed by Cabinet. The Act also states a duty for local authorities to provide Safe Accommodation for victims of domestic abuse, which includes refuge provision, places of safety and sanctuary scheme. The main duty lies with the County Council with support from Oxford City Council and the other district councils. The Oxfordshire Safe Accommodation Strategy has been signed off and the Oxfordshire Domestic Abuse Strategy is currently under consultation. The strategies and action plans will be informed by a Lived Experience Group who will act as critical friends. Oxford City

Council has an excellent Sanctuary Scheme which supports all victims regardless of tenure and level of risk. The Domestic Abuse Lead represents the City Council on the DA Strategic Board and the co-commissioning of domestic abuse services.

3. Oxford City Council has signed up to the Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance (DAHA) Accreditation. In order to achieve accreditation the Council will need to demonstrate a whole council approach to domestic abuse, in 8 priority areas:
  1. Policies & Procedures
  2. Staff Development
  3. Partnerships
  4. Safety Led Case Management
  5. Victim-Survivor Led Support
  6. Intersectionality & Anti-racist Practice
  7. Perpetrator Accountability
  8. Publicity and Awareness Raising

The accreditation is at the early stages as there is significant planning and commitment needed to complete the process. To assist, the Council have contracted a 0.4 Domestic Abuse Consultant. The accreditation and the Consultant have been funded via the Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC). The County Council has also awarded the City Council funding for 2 one year posts to assist with achieving the accreditation. The Domestic Abuse Housing Link Workers came into post on 30 March 2022. They will each have a case load supporting the more complex domestic abuse cases through the housing pathway using a trauma informed and client led approach. The accreditation can take up to two years to achieve.

4. There have been a series of domestic abuse training sessions which were attended by 56 members of staff, although 90 were nominated by their managers. The feedback was very positive. Further training sessions are being arranged. There is also relevant domestic abuse training offered by the Oxfordshire Safeguarding Children's Board which is free and open to all staff. The Domestic Abuse Housing Link Workers will also be available over the next year to deliver training sessions which are team specific to improve response and working practice.
5. Supporting victims/survivors of domestic abuse is paramount however more needs to be done to prevent domestic abuse from occurring. In addition to the 3 programmes currently in place for perpetrators of domestic abuse in Oxford the DA Strategic Board is exploring the possibility of a community based programme which will be available to perpetrators who are not open to Children's Social Care or who have been reported to the police. In addition the DA Lead, working with Elmore Community Services, is producing a series of podcasts called Flipping the Narrative aimed at males to enable them to start conversations which challenge misogynistic attitudes and behaviours.

### **Financial implications**

6. The Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance Accreditation does come with costs. These costs are currently being met through the DLUHC funding given to the City Council up to end of March 2023. It is unknown if this funding stream will continue after this date. Once the City Council have achieved accreditation there is an annual cost of around £2k which will need to be found.



## Legal issues

7. No legal issues.

## Conclusion

8. There is a considerable amount of work being carried out within Oxford City Council on domestic abuse. The DAHA Accreditation will make a significant difference to the way the Council responds to domestic abuse towards residents of Oxford and members of staff.

<b>Report author</b>	Liz Jones
Job title	ASBIT Manager and Domestic Abuse Lead
Service area or department	Regulatory Services & Community Safety
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**Background Papers:** None

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**Update on the Recommendations of the Scrutiny Committee made on 02/03/2021 concerning the Domestic Abuse Review Group report, 5 April 2022**

**Response provided by Cabinet Member for a Safer, Healthy Oxford, Councillor Louise Upton**

<b>Recommendation</b>	<b>Agree?</b>	<b>Comment</b>
<b>1) That the Council formally adopts the definition of ‘domestic abuse’ included within the Domestic Abuse Bill, and reviews its usage of the phrase ‘domestic violence’ in its policies and literature to ensure correct usage.</b>	Agree	The definition is very wordy so we have adopted a Thames Valley version which includes everything but is easier to read. Part of the DAHA accreditation is to check wording and definitions in any relevant documents; the new definition will be used.
<b>2) That the Council requests from the County Council early monitoring data from the Family Solutions Plus domestic abuse perpetrator monitoring programme and includes that information within its six month review of progress made on agreed recommendations from this report.</b>	Agree	The County have extended the Elmore Community Services contract for another year to provide domestic abuse element of the Family Solutions Plus model.
<b>3) That the Council engages with Thames Valley Police and provides appropriate support for the development of a universal domestic abuse perpetrator programme.</b>	In part	The Oxfordshire DA Strategy is currently being drafted and is out for consultation. The Needs Assessment has included a review of perpetrator programmes across the country to determine which one will suit Oxfordshire. Further consideration is whether or not the new contract for the domestic abuse services in Oxfordshire, from 2023 will include a community based perpetrator programme
<b>4) That the Council works with partners for the development of additional group work programmes for victims and survivors of domestic abuse, and that these programmes be</b>	Agree	<b>Complete</b>

<p><b>embedded within the broader multi-agency framework for managing domestic abuse.</b></p>		
<p><b>5) That the Council reviews the recommendations and outcomes of the Barking and Dagenham Domestic Abuse Commission, and as part of the Review Group's six-month progress update reports on the steps it has taken to adopt and implement learning and actions from the Commission into the Council's own activity.</b></p>	<p>Not Agreed</p>	
<p><b>6) That the Council works with strategic partners to review and, if necessary, strengthen the connection between existing lived-experience groups and the Council's services.</b></p>	<p>Agree</p>	<p>The County have commissioned a specialist who has established a lived experience group to help inform strategy and operational response in Oxfordshire. SAFE will also be feeding into this by raising the voices for children.</p>
<p><b>7) That the Council trains the staff at its hubs to recognise domestic abuse and know how to respond, to know who to speak to in the event of a disclosure, and to be able to signpost appropriately to support services.</b></p>	<p>Agree</p>	<p>Some of the Locality Hub staff have already been trained. There are also 3 Domestic Abuse Champions working in the Locality Hubs. Further training will be provided in the coming year.</p>
<p><b>8) That the Council makes available training and resources to Councillors to enable them to recognise domestic abuse and know how to respond, to know who to speak to in the event of a disclosure, and to be able to signpost appropriately to support services.</b></p>	<p>Agree</p>	<p>This has not been actioned yet due to capacity but will take place over the next year</p>
<p><b>9) That the Council continues to work with ODAS and the County Council to explore the suitability of its own current or future housing stock being recommissioned as a 'place of safety'.</b></p>	<p>Agree</p>	<p><b>Complete</b></p>

<p><b>10) That the Council contacts the County Council with its concerns over the safety of vulnerable women from predatory behaviour by men at the Bullington Road Young Mothers project.</b></p>	<p>Agree</p>	<p><b>Complete</b></p>
<p><b>11) That the Council seeks that steps are taken to ensure that houses designated as ‘places of safety’ do not become well-known as such and a target for predatory behaviour.</b></p>	<p>In part</p>	<p><b>Complete</b></p>
<p><b>12) That the Council refreshes its allocations scheme to change references from ‘domestic violence’ to ‘domestic abuse’, and that when it is adopted as law, the definition of domestic abuse as included within the Domestic Abuse Bill be included as an ‘exceptional circumstance’ in relation to housing prioritisation.</b></p>	<p>In part</p>	<p>One of the priority areas for the DAHA Accreditation is policies. All relevant policies will be reviewed for the accreditation and will include the statutory definition.</p>
<p><b>13) That the Council increases the priority for move-on accommodation of women who have been facing domestic abuse for as long as the availability of refuge provision remains historically further beyond supply.</b></p>	<p>Not Agreed</p>	
<p><b>14) That in the absence of other mitigating factors, the Council will pursue a policy of seeking to remove a perpetrator from the home in situations where a perpetrator is adjudged to be a high risk to the victim.</b></p>	<p>Not Agreed</p>	
<p><b>15) That the Council reviews the strength of the clause(s) regarding anti-social behaviour and domestic abuse in Council tenancies and provides a model paragraph for inclusion in tenancies let via housing associations/private landlords with the aim to make it easier to evict</b></p>	<p>Not Agreed</p>	

<b>tenants who perpetrate domestic abuse.</b>		
<b>16) That the Council seeks DAHA accreditation for its housing services</b>	Agree	Oxford City Council will be undertaking the accreditation. We are currently working on the governance structure for the DAHA accreditation.
<b>17) That the Council, once the work of its Domestic Abuse Specialist in mapping pathways and experiences of victims who engage with the Council's work is complete, engages closely with specialist domestic abuse support providers to improve the outcomes and experience of victims in their interaction with the Council.</b>	Agree	A priority for the DAHA accreditation is partnership working. The Domestic Abuse Housing Link workers will be working closely with specialist services and ensuring there is a robust pathway.
<b>18) That the Council develops a clear domestic abuse pathway for managing housing of domestic abuse victims</b>	Agree	This will be part of the DAHA Accreditation
<b>19) That the Council takes proactive steps to ensure appropriate cultural support is available to individuals moving out of Oxford.</b>	Not Agreed	
<b>20) That the Council includes within its budget provision for the cost of the Sanctuary Scheme for the duration of the next Medium Term Financial Plan, rather than reconfirming its funding year on year.</b>	In part	The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 makes it a statutory duty to provide safe accommodation, this includes the Sanctuary Scheme.

21)That the Council runs a mapping and awareness-raising exercise of the opportunities in Oxford for ESOL classes, aimed particularly at its community centres users and grant recipients.	In part	<b>Complete</b>
22)That the Council raises with the BAED Worlds Group, including the County Council representative, the existence of 14 previously trained community interpreters, with a view to investigating whether and how their services may be used to improve access for non-native English speakers to domestic-abuse related support.	Agree	<b>Complete</b>
23)That the Leader writes to the minister at MCHLG to highlight the impact that the huge cuts to English languages classes have on domestic abuse victims.	Agree	Not actioned
24)That the Council makes a public statement confirming that it will not share immigration status information with the Home Office when individuals come forward for support with domestic abuse, and that it takes steps to publicise this amongst relevant community groups locally.	Agree	This has already happened and can be stated again when there is relevant communications sent out
25)That the Council, in the development of networks to support homeless people with no recourse to public funds, ensures that the remit is extended to ensure the specific needs of those made homeless from fleeing domestic abuse are incorporated.	Agree	<b>Complete</b>
26)That the Council contacts Manchester City Council to understand the overall cost of providing support for those with no recourse to public funds who are in destitution.	Not Agreed	

27) That the Council investigates how Slough Borough Council offer support to those with no recourse to public funds.	Not Agreed	
28) That the Council works with relevant local and national organisations to lobby government for an exemption to allow those experiencing domestic abuse with no recourse to public funds to access public support.	Not Agreed	
29) That the Council investigates the legalities and cost of implementing a Flexible Funding scheme, with a view to one being established if practicable and legal.	In part	<b>Complete</b>
30) That the Council, as part of its upcoming grant funding review, increases the funding available to domestic abuse services, particularly around BAME access to support.	In part	Due to cuts in grants and increase in demand this is not possible at the moments. However the current funding for domestic abuse and sexual violence has been ring fenced for 3 years.
31) That the Council is proactive in providing support to those organisations which provide domestic-abuse related activities but struggle to attract external funding to identify and successfully apply for external grant funding.	Agree	Community Services will be having a monthly drop in for small organisations and community groups to have assistance with applying for grants. They will have access to other funding streams both locally and nationally.
32) That the Council continues to support grant funding to 'by and for' organisations, but that for domestic abuse-related applications it is mindful of the need to situate 'by and for' support within the wider overall framework for supporting domestic abuse victims.	In part	<b>Complete</b>
33) That the Council includes within its grant funding application forms a question along the lines of "Does this funding intend to support positive family relationships? If so, how?"	Agree	



<p><b>34)That the Council identifies and requires levels of organisational awareness and capacity around domestic abuse prevention and support which is reasonable relative to the size of organisation, size of grant sought and the purpose of the grant.</b></p>	<p>In part</p>	<p>This will be considered within the DAHA accreditation process</p>
<p><b>35)That the Council includes in its guidance for grant applicants links to appropriate resources through which organisations may support positive family relationships.</b></p>	<p>Agree</p>	
<p><b>36)That the Council extends its definition of social value in procurement to include opportunities for companies to support positive family relationships.</b></p>	<p>In part</p>	
<p><b>37)That the Council uses the existing draft domestic abuse policy as its template, to be updated, for its to-be-developed Domestic Abuse in the Workplace Policy.</b></p>	<p>Agree</p>	<p>Part of the DAHA Accreditation is to ensure there are DA policies in place, both for staff and customers.</p>
<p><b>38)That the Council gives its to-be-adopted policy on domestic abuse a clearer title, such as 'Domestic Abuse Workplace Policy'</b></p>	<p>Agree</p>	<p>This will be decided when the relevant policy is completed</p>
<p><b>39)That the Council includes a section within its domestic abuse policy to provide guidance to staff if, in the course of their job, they suspect or know that someone is a victim or perpetrator of domestic abuse</b></p>	<p>Agree</p>	<p>This will be included in the policy</p>
<p><b>40)That the Council at its next review of its constitution gives consideration to the practicability of including an explicit expectation that Councillors will not perpetrate domestic abuse.</b></p>	<p>Agree</p>	

41)That the Council as shareholder of its wholly-owned companies implements domestic abuse policies in those companies	In part	This is on-going
42)That the Council, as part of its People Strategy, initiates a project to provide enhanced awareness, resources, and capability to recognise and support victims of domestic abuse, and engages with safeguarding and domestic abuse specialists to identify good practice and best resources.	Agree	<b>Complete</b>
43)That the Council improves the detail of the support it provides staff facing domestic abuse on the staff intranet.	Agree	<b>Complete</b>
44)That the Council reviews the adequacy of the internal training it provides for all staff, line managers and elected members on domestic abuse	In part	DA training has been developed and delivered to teams in the council. More training is being organised. All delegates are asked for feedback. The feedback from the first cohort has been overwhelmingly positive
45)That the Council makes domestic abuse awareness and management training mandatory for all those in the Council with line-management responsibility.	In part	We are working with the County Council on this.
46)That the Council reviews its HR processes around sickness, lateness, time off and performance management to ensure they are capable of supporting staff involved in either side of domestic abuse.	Agree	This will be part of the DAHA accreditation
47)That the Council includes within domestic abuse awareness and management training for managers training on identifying the appropriate level of training required for the staff in their team	Not Agreed	

<p>regarding domestic abuse.</p>		
<p><b>48)That Council training provided to staff and elected members on domestic abuse considers, at a level relevant to type of training, training which is sensitive to specific cultural contexts and working with a diverse range of communities, and culturally-specific issues which can increase vulnerability amongst specific minority community members.</b></p>	<p>Agree</p>	<p>This will be part of the DAHA Accreditation</p>

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# **Tenant Involvement and Empowerment: A Mini-Review**

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**Report of the Housing and Homelessness Panel**  
Commissioned by Oxford City Council's Scrutiny Committee

March 2022

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# Foreword by the Chair



Oxford City Council is deliberately unusual in that it has retained responsibility for its social housing stock rather than creating an arms-length housing association. It is responsible for 7,800 homes throughout the city. A key rationale for this decision is that retaining responsibility for these homes gives the Council control over how they are run, which gives the Council greater opportunity to ensure higher satisfaction and better outcomes for its tenants. It also provides the Council a challenge to realise that potential. On this, the Council has had reasonable success; in the recent tenant and leaseholder satisfaction survey 85% of respondees stated they were satisfied with the Council's customer service. However, this overall satisfaction masks a number of areas in which the feedback from tenants has been less positive.

The most concerning statistic is that 55% of tenants reported that their views are listened to and acted upon; almost half of all respondees fed back the view that the Council does not listen or act upon their views. For a Council which deliberately has retained control of its housing to deliver a better service to tenants, to ignore this would undermine its very rationale and prove right those who doubt that the Council listens to its tenants.

The Council's Housing function faces significant change: from government with the progress of the Social Housing white paper towards becoming law, and to its internal structure with the merging of the Housing and Communities directorates. In undertaking this review, I hope that Scrutiny can make meaningful suggestions as to how to involve and empower tenants more, and put at the centre of the structure which emerges after these changes the improved self-determination, greater dignity and higher satisfaction that true collaboration brings.

**Councillor Linda Smith, Chair of the Housing and Homelessness Panel**

# Chapter 1: Introduction

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1. Each year the Scrutiny Committee undertakes two Review Groups, one to scrutinise the proposed Budget, and the other on a topic of its choosing with a view to taking a closer look at a topic of particular interest. This report is classed as a 'mini-review' and is an innovation of the Chair of the Housing and Homelessness Panel, Councillor Linda Smith. Instead of holding a traditional Review Group - with a specific membership appointed, a wide number of external witnesses invited to contribute, and a series of dedicated meetings - this mini-review has been incorporated into the work plan of the Housing and Homelessness Panel. At each of its meetings over the past civic year the Housing and Homelessness Panel has had one or more reports and presentations on different aspects on the selected topic, with a composite report provided in response. Necessarily, therefore, it has been slimmed down relative to a full Review Group. However, it is hoped that by focusing its energy on one particular topic throughout the year Scrutiny has engaged in the area of its activity where it can add most value to the Council, deep dives into topics.
2. The topic chosen for this mini-review, tenant involvement and empowerment, is a timely one. As a social landlord, significant legislative changes are underway to recast the relationship between social landlords and their tenants, partially in light of the failings of the Grenfell tragedy. The various elements of the government's Social Housing White Paper are expected to be drafted into law through regulation and regulation over the next few years. Furthermore, the Council itself is undergoing significant organisational change, integrating the Housing and Communities directorates with a view to delivering a more joined-up service. Finally, in 2021 the Council undertook its first survey of tenant satisfaction since 2015, providing valuable feedback on the views of tenants. A key theme which unites all these changes is a concern to improve the welfare of Council tenants, which is welcome. However, the Panel's focus has been to use these changes as a vehicle to explore a more fundamental question, how can tenants become more empowered and engaged amidst these changes? After all, who is best placed to make decisions in the best interests of tenants, but tenants themselves?
3. As referenced above, this report is based on a slimmed down review process, meaning a smaller number of individuals have been involved. The Housing and Homeless Panel is comprised of:
  - Councillor Linda Smith (Chair)
  - Councillor Nadine Bely-Summers
  - Councillor Lizzy Diggins
  - Councillor Laurence Fouweather
  - Councillor Chris Jarvis
  - Councillor Liz Wade
4. The Panel heard four reports over the course of the year: one to introduce the Council's current tenant involvement work, a second to outline the main changes proposed by the Social Housing White Paper, a third to review the results of the STAR tenant satisfaction survey, and the last to review the activity of the Council in responding to both the White Paper and the tenant satisfaction survey. This report therefore welcomed the knowledge and input of the following officers:



- Stephen Gabriel, Executive Director of Communities and People
  - Stephen Clarke, Head of Housing
  - Bill Graves, Landlord Services Manager
  - Simon Warde, Tenant Involvement Team Manager
  - Wendy Hind, Tenant Involvement Team Officer
5. To ensure tenant's voices were heard and included, six tenant ambassadors from different elements of the Council's tenant involvement functions were invited to attend and participate in discussion.
- Tony Buchanan (Housing Ombudsman Residents' Panel)
  - Susan Carson (IDA-ASB Group)
  - Anthony Church (Stakeholder Interviews)
  - Geno Humphrey (Tender Evaluation)
  - Brenda Walton (Tender Evaluation)
  - Olga Siddons (Environmental Improvement)
  - Dave Simons (Great Estates)
6. The Panel would like to place on record its thanks to all of the people who contributed to the review, which has enabled the recommendations in the report to be made.
7. This report will be presented to the Council's Scrutiny Committee for endorsement on 05 April 2022, and subsequently to the Cabinet on 13 April. On the grounds that even a mini-review generates a significant number of recommendations, responses to these recommendations are not requested until the 15 June Cabinet meeting.

# Chapter 2: Findings and Recommendations

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## The Current Work of the Tenant Involvement Team

8. The Tenant Involvement Team is comprised of four permanent staff, and an apprentice. It exists to ensure compliance with the Regulator's 'Tenant Involvement and Empowerment Standard' through tenant involvement in the development, monitoring and scrutiny of Council tenant and leaseholder services. It is important to note from the outset that it is a historically successful team, holding Tenant Participation Advisory Service accreditation since 2016, being awarded Team of the Year that same year, and presenting at national conferences. Further, it is extremely apparent that all the tenant ambassadors, those tenants who take on a representative role, really value the support and enablement provided through the work of this team. It is important to recognise, however, that the Tenant Involvement Team is not the sole locus of tenant involvement, with the Consultation, Tenancy Management and Communities teams all regularly engaging tenants on different issues.
9. The work of the team is broadly split over three areas. The first is the groundwork for meaningful engagement, which is communication and relationship development. The team runs multiple communications channels, such as the (well-regarded) Tenants In Touch magazine, Facebook and tenant involvement web pages. In addition to this, the team also runs skills sessions for tenants, such as crafts, cookery and first aid. In addition to the skills developed, this provides a forum to nurture relationships with tenants, understand their concerns, and potentially identify those who want to become involved in shaping the Housing service in a more formalised way.
10. The second major area is to enable successful involvement of those who want to become more formally involved, the tenant ambassadors. Tenant ambassadors are involved a wide variety of fora:
  - *Stakeholder interviews.* Tenant ambassadors are involved in the stakeholder interviews of job candidates within the Housing directorate. To prepare them, Ambassadors are briefed beforehand - where the advert, job description and person specification are talked through – and given the opportunity for clarification. Model answers to questions are provided. During the interviews themselves, ambassadors are asked to score responses to the questions. These scores are fed back as part of the wider interview process. Ambassador involvement does not stop there, however, as chats with ambassadors also forms part of the induction process for suitable candidates.
  - *Tender evaluations.* A number of ambassadors have been trained by the Council to look at new contracts, as well as renewal tenders. When tender documentation is received by the Council it is passed on to participating tenant ambassadors, who score each one against the same matrix as Council officers. The only difference is that – at the request of the tenant ambassadors – the price is not included. Ambassadors are supported by council officers if they need help with clarification of technical issues. Having scored each tender individually, a joint meeting between ambassadors and council officers is held, where a consensus

score is reached. The procurement team subsequently add in the effect of the different prices offered to determine the favoured contractor.

- *Housing Ombudsman Residents' Panel*. This involves national level work, but also working with the Council to establish and maintain a complaints procedure in accordance with good practice recommended by the Housing Ombudsman. It also seeks to ensure that tenants are satisfied that it follows the new regulatory requirements as set out in the new Complaints Handling Code.
- *Great Estates*. Great Estates is the Council's programme to identify improvements to locality areas in need of upgrades and improvement. The level of involvement requires between two to four meetings per month with stakeholders of the Great Estates programme. The role of the ambassador is to identify areas suitable for makeovers, collecting resident views and ideas and ensuring they are put forward, and scoping proposals for upgrades. Stakeholder meetings, including ambassadors, are then held to agree priorities between different proposals.

11. The final area of focus is on service development and change. The Social Housing white paper requires much input from the Tenant Involvement team, but there are related areas of work from the Building Safety Bill and the Fire Safety Bill also. The team's major area of focus, however, is on establishing a Housing Development Working Group to involve tenants in the pre-planning stages of development sites and post-completion inspections to ensure they are of satisfactory standard, particularly in light of the acceleration of house building the Council plans to engage in over the coming decade.

## **Observations and Recommendations**

12. The first observation made by the Panel is that although there is much good work being done, it is ad hoc. Tenant involvement is not built into the processes of the Council but an extra which is included. Thus, for example, there are no guidelines as to when tenants should be consulted in relation to procurement. At the moment this consultation relies on the commitment to good practice of officers, and could easily become marginalised if capacity were to be squeezed. The ease with which tenants can be overlooked is perhaps better illustrated by the fact that neither the appointment of the Executive Director of Communities and People or the Head of Housing Services had any input from tenants. These are two missed opportunities, and show why building tenant involvement into the Council's processes is vital for it to endure. The Panel would wish to see that the Council draws up guidelines of values above which procurement ambassadors will be offered the opportunity to become involved, or job gradings within Housing Services above which they will be invited be part of the interview process.

***Recommendation 1: That the Council identifies appropriate thresholds above which procurement or interview-focused ambassadors will be invited to be involved in the respective process.***

13. A key element in establishing any cultural change in an organisation is not just the processes, but the ownership and drive to realise that change by senior individuals. At present, this appears to be lacking. Both tenant ambassadors and the Tenant Involvement team highlighted their wish to see a regular forum established with relevant Cabinet members, senior officers and tenant and leaseholder representatives to bring up issues, but also to report on progress of issues. As referenced in the Chair's foreword, if only 55% of respondees to the tenant satisfaction survey feel that their views are heard

and acted upon then there is a disconnect which requires urgent remedy. Simply putting tenant representatives and senior individuals from the Council in the same room is a good start to addressing this, and the Panel would like to see this done as a matter of priority.

***Recommendation 2: That the Council establishes a board with Cabinet member, senior officers and tenant and leaseholder representatives to meet on a regular basis to discuss tenant and leaseholder issues, and to report on progress and performance.***

14. In addition to the creation of the board, the Panel also has suggestions to make as to its composition. It is accepted that there must be a degree of pragmatism as to who is best placed to act as a tenant representative. However, the Panel does urge the Council to make strong efforts to ensure that, so far as possible, tenant representatives reflect the demographic and geographical diversity of the Council's tenants. Doing so will ensure that specific groups within the body of tenants who might face particular issues are provided the opportunity to make their voices heard.

***Recommendation 3: That the Council makes the greatest effort to ensure that tenant representatives on the board reflect the geographic and demographic diversity of the Council's tenants.***

15. As a slight aside, to the above, the Panel is keen to stress that the board should operate in addition to and above the Council's existing tenant involvement activities and should in no way be a replacement for them. This is particularly important because there are tenants who are involved with the Council and making very valuable contributions, for whom a board would not be a forum in which they would feel comfortable.

16. A further point to make is that the Panel was particularly keen in discussion about the prospects of establishing a Housing Development Working Group. In a situation where a significant minority of tenants do not feel satisfied with the quality of their own home<sup>1</sup>, giving existing tenants the power to shape council homes and check the suitability of homes for let is eminently sensible. In discussion, it was established that plans had not been to give tenants a say on internal design issues, more the big picture topics. However, in many ways, the nuts and bolts of creating a nice home are largely the issues that people care about because they can relate it to their own home. The Panel feels it is important, therefore, that interior design ideas are included within the Housing Development Working Group's scope. With this change of focus, however, the Panel does suggest a name change would be in order to more closely reflect its purpose.

***Recommendation 4: That the Council establishes the planned Housing Development Working Group as a matter of priority, that it includes within its scope issues relating to interior design of the homes built, and that a more precise name is agreed.***

17. Finally, the Panel discussed in depth the fact that all tenant ambassadors do so in a voluntary capacity. They are not paid for the time they spend as ambassadors. Whilst the Panel supports this view, it does also recognise that the effort and dedication they exhibit should be recognised if not remunerated. This wish, however, comes up against a

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<sup>1</sup> See the following section on the Tenant Satisfaction Survey for more details.

practical problem: if done incorrectly, the way that an ambassador is recognised may be considered a payment in kind, and trigger a claw back of benefits. Clearly, the Council must ensure that in trying to recognise the contribution of ambassadors it does not inadvertently cause them to be penalised. This does not mean, however, that the idea should be given up as being too difficult. The Panel considers this to be an important principle, and would like to see it implemented. The following ideas have not been tested, but arose from the Panel's discussions and are included for follow-up. They are: invitations of tenant ambassadors to civic functions such as the Lord Mayor's Ball, holding a specific thank you 'bash' for all ambassadors, long-service recognition, and free leisure centre access. It is accepted that they may not be suitable for all ambassadors, but the Panel would prefer to see some efforts made towards recognition, even if they are not universally accessible.

***Recommendation 5: That the Council implements ways to recognise the contributions of tenant ambassadors which do not incur universal credit clawback or other benefit issues.***

## Findings of the STAR Tenant Satisfaction Survey

18. From May to July 2021 the Council undertook its tenant and leaseholder satisfaction survey, the first since 2015. Given the period since the previous survey and the low response-rate previously, the Council did not consult with just a sample of tenants but made significant efforts by mail, phone, telephone and personal visits to hear from all its tenants and leaseholders. In total, 1579 tenants (23%) and 84 leaseholders (12%) responded. Though not exhaustive, this level of feedback provides reliable data on the trends found amongst the Council's tenants and, to a lesser degree, its leaseholders.
19. The responses show some clear areas of strength:
- 85% are satisfied with our customer service
  - 81% believe their rent is value for money
  - 80% feel safe and secure in their home
20. In terms of value for money, Oxford's result compares with a national figure of 43%. The Council also outperforms national average on how the Council runs things, being kept well informed, trust and acting on concerns. However, the reason the Council runs its own housing service is to outperform, and whilst the comparisons with elsewhere may be favourable, there are also areas of underperformance when the bald figures are presented. In particular:
- 76% are satisfied with the Council as a landlord
  - 67% are satisfied with the quality of the home
  - 55% believe tenants' views are listened to and acted upon
  - 49% are satisfied with the outcome of an antisocial behaviour (ASB) complaint
21. To put this another way, one in four tenants are dissatisfied with the Council as a landlord, approximately 2,000. One in three are not satisfied with the quality of their own home, 2,600. And only just over one in two believe tenants views are listened to and acted upon. It is important that some context be provided regarding the figures generally, and the lower two in particular. In surveying tenants in 2021 the Council did so at a point

where much of the population was fed up, having experienced lengthy lockdowns, including the cancellation of Christmas. These lockdowns also reduced the capability of the Council to get into tenants' homes to undertake repairs, meaning a less responsive service. Given that the single most important driver of both satisfaction and dissatisfaction is the repairs service, inevitably these factors will have hit figures. Likewise, the latter two are likely linked; the Council has a policy position over anti-social behaviour, which was endorsed by Scrutiny - that the Council's ASB approach should be about protecting victims rather than punishing perpetrators. It is clear that many of those who suffer ASB do not share the Council's views. On the face of it, this may prove problematic to the Panel's wish to see greater empowerment of tenants. However, it should be remembered that perpetrators are likely to be tenants also, who have their own vulnerabilities and who need support to change more than punishment.

22. Notwithstanding the caveats above, that barely one in two tenants believe their views are listened to and acted upon by the Council is telling. It is the view of the Panel that this statistic may flow into other areas of underperformance, such as satisfaction with the Council as a landlord, and satisfaction with the quality of the home.
23. The Council does already have an action plan to address the issues arising from the tenant satisfaction survey, as well preparing for the requirements of the Social Housing white paper. Many of the proposed changes will enable greater tenant involvement and empowerment. For example, improvements to the tracking of repairs will enable tenants to hold the Council accountable. Technological solutions to allow tenants to give feedback on key aspects of the work received will drive up standards, as will a policy to contact anybody rating the service below seven out of ten for a follow-up call. Some, such as more effective inventory management will drive up standards but without involving or empowering tenants. The Panel has reviewed this plan in detail and is supportive of its proposals, but makes the following recommendations.<sup>2</sup>

## **Observations and Recommendations**

24. An interesting sub-current to the overall figures are the level of satisfaction by age, which show a clear correlation between age and satisfaction or, to put it another way, that the younger people are, the less satisfied they are with key aspects of the Council's service. The data are as follows:

	Under 25	25 – 59	60+
Overall satisfaction	58%	70%	85%
Quality of the home	42%	57%	81%
Repairs and Maintenance	63%	71%	84%

25. Demographically, the Council's tenants skew heavily towards older people, meaning that there are many fewer younger tenants than older ones. As such, the dissatisfaction of this cohort is drowned out in the overall figures, but the difference is significant, with levels of satisfaction falling by a range of 21-39% between the youngest and oldest age

<sup>2</sup> For completeness, the results of the tenant satisfaction survey and the progress against the action plan are included as Appendix 1 and Appendix 2 to this report respectively.

groups. This is stark, and an issue of concern that a significant majority of younger tenants are dissatisfied with the quality of the home provided by the Council.

26. The Panel raised this issue with officers, and it is something they were aware of. However, no precise reason could be given. Those younger respondees who assented to be contacted for follow-ups from the survey are being contacted, to learn what the reasons are. The Panel certainly welcomes this. However, finding out something is wrong and then finding out how to fix it is a reactive solution, and a sub-optimal one. The Panel ventures to suggest that greater representation of younger tenants amongst the tenant ambassadors might be more effective in preventing issues from arising in the first place.

***Recommendation 6: That the Council recruits more tenant ambassadors from younger age groups, particularly to participate in the Housing Development Working Group and Great Estates***

27. On almost the exact flipside to the above, the Panel also identified that there is a need for help for older people. Over 3000 of the Council's properties include a tenant over 65. Although tenant services and management formed a small number of the overall comments on how the Council could improve, at just 3%, within that help for older residents and those with health issues emerged as the key concern, receiving more than twice as many comments as the next nearest. This suggests that there is an issue, and given the size of this cohort it needs to be addressed. It is important to recognise, however, that the Council does not receive funding for activities beyond issues relating to broader topics beyond the home itself. Nevertheless, it appears there is sufficient demand to require one and the Panel recommends, therefore, that a specific tenant ambassador should be recruited to represent the views and needs of older people, particularly those who are frail or in need of medical assistance.

***Recommendation 7: That the Council recruits a tenant ambassador to represent the views of older, frailer residents.***

28. The issue regarding young tenants illustrates how genuine needs amongst a minority can be crowded out when included in large populations. In Oxford, it is the case for young people. However, the Panel is concerned that it can also be the case for groups bound together by geography. The Council has the capacity to analyse responses to the survey by ward, but not more granular than that. This is still a significant improvement on a city-wide level of reporting. This is important, because the Council has Communities budgets which, to date, have been administered separately to Housing budgets. Part of the justification for joining them is to provide a more unified service; the Panel's view is that the survey is a very useful source of information on the issues experienced by individuals in a locality and would guide and enrich Communities budgets.
29. Though perhaps not strictly a tenant involvement or engagement issue, Panel members voiced the view that it was likely all members would want to know the results for their wards, but that a fuller and more complete picture would emerge if that data were to be considered alongside new census results and the views of locality workers it could provide a strong basis for understanding and planning locality-based work.

**Recommendation 8: That the Council interrogates the data at ward-level from the census (when available), and the tenant satisfaction survey, alongside the knowledge of locality workers to develop a profile of the specific needs of each ward, and that this is shared with members and used to identify priorities for work planning at community level.**

30. The following recommendation is fairly high-level, seeking to address the fact that only 55% of tenants believe the Council listens to and acts upon their comments. Council tenants have a particular relationship with the Council, which brings a lot of extra rights, obligations and expectations. At present, this special identity is not well reflected in the Council's structures. Tenants have a relationship with the Council generally, and with ODS, the Council's contractor. It is the view of the Panel that there is little for tenants to engage with when they want to engage with the Council specifically in its role as landlord. If tenants are to feel as though they are being listened to and their concerns acted upon, it is important that they know how to engage with the Council at the right level. To enable this, the Panel feels that a clearer Housing identity is developed, distinct from both the Council generally and ODS, so that tenants are clear where to make their comments to ensure they will be listened to and acted upon.

**Recommendation 9: That the Council works to develop a distinct Housing identity**

31. Concurrent to this report is a report from the Housing and Homelessness Panel on a motion relating to DSS discrimination. One of the outcomes from the motion was the establishment of a forum for private sector and Council tenants to air issues. However, as the other report suggests, it questions whether the needs of Council and private tenants are sufficiently aligned to complement each other and has recommended that the forum should be given the option to split. The Housing and Homelessness Panel is keen that should such a split occur, that given the relative numbers of private rented sector tenants and the acuteness of abuses that the needs of Council tenants are not overlooked. Notwithstanding the fact that the problems for Council tenants are less numerous or acute than those in the private rented sector, the Panel believes that an open forum, where Council tenants can raise particular issues without a long-term commitment, is a useful facility in addressing the fact only 55% of tenants believe their comments are listened to and acted upon.

**Recommendation 10: That in the event that the Tenants Forum established by the DSS discrimination motion does decide not to pursue a joint Council and private rented sector structure, that the Council ensures that a Council Tenants Forum continues to be provided.**

## **The Social Housing White Paper**

32. The tragedy at Grenfell, albeit belatedly, exposed serious deficiencies in the regulation and operation of social housing providers in relation to tenant safety. To that end, central government has put forward a white paper outlining a transformational change in the relationship between social landlords and their tenants. Whilst safety is the overriding theme, empowering tenants is a key enabler towards this end and was therefore considered by the Panel.
33. As in the preceding section, the Panel considered the impacts and readiness of the Council to implement the white paper *in total*, including those elements less directly



linked to tenant engagement and empowerment. This report, however, does not intend to provide a comprehensive introduction to the white paper and instead focuses on those relevant elements. Again, for completeness, the presentation made to the Panel is attached to this report as Appendix 3, which provides a more complete introduction to the full breadth of the changes and implications of this legislation.

34. Briefly, the white paper is a tenants' charter, outlining seven fundamental rights of a social tenant:

- *To be safe in your home.* More stringent safety requirements will be enacted, but also greater individualisation of those requirements. For example, having up to date personal emergency evacuation plans (PEEPs) based on individuals' own situations. Ascertaining this degree of individualisation will require much more contact with tenants, and significant resource has been added to the Council's budget to enable this.
- *To know how your landlord is performing.* The Council would be required to inform every tenant, at least once a year, on its performance. Proscribed information focuses on compliance with multiple safety measures, the Decent Homes Standard, success in resolving complaints promptly and fairly, management and handling of anti-social behaviour and levels of tenant satisfaction over a number of key areas such as engagement, health and safety, overall condition, repairs handling, management of communal spaces, and the wider neighbourhood. Also included within performance reporting all social landlords are required to make available information on spending, and be subject to challenge by residents if spending was thought not to be in the right place.
- *To have complaints dealt with promptly and fairly.* The biggest change, a move from a three stage to a two stage complaints procedure has already been implemented by the Council.
- *To be treated with respect.* A key foundation of the approach is that providers co-regulate with their tenants, which stresses the ongoing importance of the Tenant Ambassadors programme and the extensions identified to it in the recommendations above.
- *To have your voice heard by your landlord.* Under the proposals, social landlords would need to actively seek out best practice, including through training of staff and empowerment of tenants, of ways to improve engagement by tenants with their landlords. Practically, this will mean mandatory visits by the Council, instead of the present situation when if residents are living happily in their homes with no major life events or issues there is nothing to prompt a visit. These tenant meetings will seek to: find out what matters to each tenant; check on the general condition of the home (unreported repairs/damp); gather information on protected characteristics, contact preferences, reasonable adjustments needed and contacts; promote tenant portal to aid channel shift and effective reporting of repairs.
- *To have a good quality home and neighbourhood to live in.* A lot of work is being implemented to raise home standards, but this is an extension of an existing duty. The more novel duty is the provider's responsibility towards improving the

neighbourhood, via physical infrastructure, the tackling of antisocial behaviour and health and wellbeing initiatives. The prioritisation of this work, particularly in light of the feedback from tenants regarding antisocial behaviour, will require strong tenant involvement.

- *To be supported to take your first steps to ownership.* With Oxford's high house prices, even at a reduced rate this is a minor issue.

## **Observations and Recommendations**

35. It is perhaps useful to clarify terms at this point. There is a difference meant between tenant engagement and tenant involvement. Both are important steps towards empowering tenants and the delineation between them is not absolute, but generally speaking the focus on tenant engagement is about landlords having contact with their tenants, knowing their needs and wants. Tenant involvement focuses more on the tenant, and is about giving tenants greater say in decisions over their homes and neighbourhoods. The Social Housing white paper is heavier on tenant engagement than tenant involvement. This is welcomed by the Panel as important, but it also means there are fewer relevant issues for recommendations than might be imagined for legislation which seeks to recast the relationship between tenants and social housing providers back in favour of tenants.
36. The first set of recommendations recognises that good quality tenant involvement has as a prerequisite tenants who are informed. The Social Housing white paper outlines much more extensive reporting duties than beforehand. The Panel supports this principle, but actually feels that the Council could, and should, go further and faster than the requirements. Discussions with officers suggest that through being linked in with the QL system, live reporting is available instead of just providing the mandatory annual report. The Panel feels it is important that this should be implemented, and also that regular publicising of the Council's performance should occur, for example regularly including performance as part of the Tenants in Touch newsletter. The Panel also suggests that to provide a fuller and more balanced context to results presented, the Council should not just publish its results on their own, but should provide the data of relevant comparator social housing providers also when doing so. And finally, because this accountability and sharing of information with tenants is so important, the Panel would wish to see this implemented as soon as possible. The Housing and Homelessness Panel expects to be requesting this information to be submitted as a regular dashboard as part of its performance scrutiny of housing in the forthcoming civic year.

***Recommendation 11: That the Council prioritises the collection of the KPIs required for distribution by the Social Housing white paper.***

***Recommendation 12: That the Council publishes, in addition to the annual report required by the Social Housing white paper, live performance data on its website, and distributes performance details to tenants in each Tenants in Touch magazine.***

***Recommendation 13: That in its reporting against Social Housing white paper KPIs the Council benchmarks against relevant comparators***

37. As part of its annual report on performance, the Council must publish details of its spending, proposals which are subject to challenge by residents if they are not found to be in the right place. This is all well, but for it to be more than just a theoretical right a formal structure must be in place to enable it, and residents must know how to make use of it. Currently, tenants are provided with details of the Council's HRA spending proposals via a special edition of Tenants in Touch as part of the budget and invited to make comments. The Panel queries whether this is satisfactory. Tenants may approve of, for example, budget provision to improve energy efficiency, but may be implacably opposed to particular items of spend within that, heat pumps for example. An annual consultation on a highly complex, high level document appears to fall short. To be meaningful, communication work must be undertaken with those who want to be involved in discussions to explain the complexities of the budget, the ability to challenge spending at a level more granular than the Budget must be enabled, and the ability to raise challenge in a timely fashion.
38. As an aside, the value of communication and involvement can be seen by previous efforts made by Housing to involve interested tenants. At a time when the Council was wishing to use money within the HRA to build more social houses, tenants were supportive of the policy when the issues were presented to them. This was despite the fact it would mean both rental increases for themselves, and less spare money to invest in their homes and neighbourhoods. This is a good example of the way tenant involvement can help all parties move together to develop policy and financial priorities which have the support of all those concerned.

***Recommendation 14: That the Council reviews whether the structures to enable tenants to challenge areas of spend under the Social Housing white paper are sufficient to give tenants meaningful challenge to Council spending***

39. With the responsibility on the Council as a landlord to improve not only homes but neighbourhoods under the white paper, the £1.1m per year Great Estates programme is expected to become increasingly important. However, it was the view of members that although significant sums were involved, even experienced members did not understand the process for identifying and influencing priorities. It was surmised that if the process to influence Great Estates project priorities was opaque to council members, it would also likewise prove difficult to influence for tenants. The Panel wishes to draw attention to this issue, and ask that clarification for members and tenants on how they can be involved in the process is provided.

***Recommendation 15: That the Council implements and promotes a clearer process for councillors and tenants to influence the spending of the Great Estates programme.***

40. A lot of the changes in the Social Housing white paper are regulatory and beyond the purview of this report. However, amidst the tightening of external regulation there is also a reminder of the responsibilities of those in charge to ensure safe homes are provided. "It is the responsibility of the boards of housing associations and other private providers of social housing, or of Councillors in local authority landlords, to be assured that they comply with the outcome focused standards set by the regulator." Unfortunately, there are times when tenants are legitimately dissatisfied with the quality of their home, or the

work that has been done to it, and they are struggling to get this addressed. One important avenue to seek help is their local ward member. Panel members, however, have stated that they, unlike councillors in other authorities, do not have access to a casework management system to check on progress of activity. When this was discussed with officers it was suggested that the QL system could provide this service, the biggest difficulty to be addressed being GDPR issues. Whilst a challenge, it does not appear to be insurmountable, and the value to tenants of having a councillor know in real time the progress of an intractable issue is significant. The Panel recommends that the Council sets up such a system within the next 12 months.

***Recommendation 16: That the Council implements a councillor casework system for housing issues within QL within 12 months***

41. The tenant satisfaction survey indicated that anti-social behaviour (ASB) is a clear area of dissatisfaction amongst tenants, with only 49% satisfied with the outcome of an ASB complaint. On its own, this is a strong reason for the Panel to investigate. However, as mentioned above, under the duty in the Social Housing white paper to provide good quality neighbourhoods, the tackling of ASB is a key focus, which provides further reason to do so.
42. Reductions to police resources over the past decade have reduced the scope of police forces, including Thames Valley Police, to devote energy to non-core work. Community policing has been especially hard hit in this regard. Previously, Neighbourhood Action Groups allowed the police, council staff and members of local communities to convene to discuss issues of concern and coordinate responses.<sup>3</sup> This model was valuable. Discussions from Panel members suggests that some additional money may have recently been made available to the Police for community policing. The Panel encourages the Council to investigate the details of this further. If this is confirmed, it would wish the Council to have discussions over whether Neighbourhood Action Groups could be reinstated in priority areas.

**Recommendation 17: That the Council holds discussions with Thames Valley Police to determine whether additional resources for community policing have become available, and to propose reinstating Neighbourhood Action Groups or similar ward-based stakeholder meetings in priority areas if so.**

43. A further issue explored by the Panel was that of links between the Police and the new locality-based way of working by the Council. Feedback provided was that the Police were happy to engage with the Council on joint-working, but would be coming on board in the second stage, once the Council had established its locality-based working more fully. When this is up and running, the Panel sees strong opportunity for tenants to be able to raise ASB-related concerns at this locality level, and encourages the Council to do as much preparatory work as possible to allow this to be established at the earliest opportunity.

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<sup>3</sup> The relevant discussion was held with the sergeant in charge of the PCSOs covering the northern half of the city.

**Recommendation 18: That the Council undertakes preparatory work with the Police to enable joint-working at a locality level to be established as quickly as possible.**

Draft

## Chapter 3: Conclusion

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44. A key ongoing theme throughout this mini-review has been the importance staff place upon and commitment to achieving strong levels of tenant involvement, and the appreciation of tenant ambassadors of the efforts made by the Council to empower them. There is clear goodwill by staff and tenants to work together to improve the Council's service to tenants. It should not be forgotten that the Council is an award-winning Council in this regard. On the other hand, true joint working must involve honest listening and the results of the STAR tenant satisfaction survey were clear in that there are certain elements of the Council's offer, and certain groups of tenants, for whom levels of satisfaction are not as high as either party would wish. Key issues highlighted to the Council include the satisfaction with homes amongst younger tenants, concerns that the Council does not listen and act upon what is heard, and dissatisfaction with how ASB issues are resolved.
45. As the Council emerges from Covid, its direction of travel is not simply a return to the *status quo ante*. The success of locality based working during the pandemic has been a driver for internal restructuring, whilst from outside the Council central government's Social Housing white paper has put a large number of new responsibilities on all providers of social housing, including many steps which empower tenants. Consequently, the Housing function faces very significant change. The Panel has considered the Council's plans overall, but also specifically through the lens of tenant involvement and empowerment. Largely, the Panel finds that the Council's proposals are to be commended, with the Panel's recommendations largely seeking that existing plans are brought forward or that clarification is given of how existing work is undertaken. Only in one instance, the right of tenants to challenge spend, has a genuine mismatch between the Council's proposals and the Panel's interpretation of the Council's duties been identified. This reflects the Panel's view that overall, the Council is pushing off from a solid foundation.
46. A final word from the Panel is this. With a report such as this it is easy to focus on the recommendations made, putting them into practice and ticking them off as 'done'. Whilst the Panel stands by all the recommendations it has made, it wishes to stress the point made at the very beginning of this report – that the very purpose of the Council retaining its social housing is to have the ability to outperform other providers. Our tenants have told us that one of the deficiencies in our service relates to how much the Council listens to and acts on concerns. The Panel's recommendations largely are ways to address this issue. However, they are only suggested responses and are not the only template to do so. More than the individual recommendations themselves, the Panel wishes to commend to the Council the need to continue building on steps it has taken to date to involve and empower tenants. If the Council can really embed an approach where tenant involvement and empowerment is a lodestar, a question which is asked at every level and with every decision, the Council's ambition to provide better housing to its tenants than alternative providers will be realised.

**To:** Cabinet  
**Date:** 13 April 2022  
**Report of:** Housing and Homelessness Panel  
**Title of Report:** DSS Discrimination Motion Update

<b>Summary and recommendations</b>	
<b>Purpose of report:</b>	To present Housing and Homelessness Panel recommendations concerning the Council-requested update report on DSS Discrimination
<b>Key decision:</b>	No
<b>Scrutiny Lead Member:</b>	Councillor Linda Smith, Chair of the Housing and Homelessness Panel
<b>Cabinet Member:</b>	Councillor Diko Walcott, Cabinet Member for Affordable Housing, Housing Security, and Housing the Homeless
<b>Corporate Priority:</b>	More Affordable Housing
<b>Policy Framework:</b>	Housing and Homelessness Strategy, Council Strategy
<b>Recommendation: That the Cabinet states whether it agrees or disagrees with the recommendations in the body of this report.</b>	

<b>Appendices</b>
None

### **Introduction and overview**

1. At its meeting on 22 March 2022, the Housing and Homelessness Panel considered an update report on the progress made against actions sought by Council in a motion passed in July 2021.
2. The Panel would like to thank Ian Wright, Head of Regulatory Services and Community Safety for authoring the report, presenting it at the meeting and responding to the Panel's questions.

## Summary and recommendation

3. Ian Wright presented the report, outlining the progress taken against the actions required by the Council's motion. Of the five actions, four had been implemented in full: a revision of the OCLAS code to outlaw DSS discrimination, to raise the issue with the Welfare Reform team, to inform and train Housing Officers to recognise and refer cases of DSS discrimination to the Welfare Reform team, and to use multimedia communications to raise awareness of the issue. The latter had been particularly successful, with other Councils such as Bristol, landlord groups and national charities all enquiring for more information from the Council. The Council's website also had a specific page on recognising and responding to DSS discrimination, with links to Shelter's advice pages.
4. The one area which had not been fully completed, to establish a tenants' forum was significantly progressed, with invitations to get involved having gone out, and the first meeting expected to take place within the next month.
5. In its response the Panel raised questions over a number of areas including:
  - Landlord responses
  - Future resourcing of the forum and monitoring of the prevalence of DSS discrimination
  - The working relationship between the forum and the Housing and Homelessness Panel.
6. In addition to these, the Panel discussed and wishes to make two recommendations around broadening access to the Council's measures to prevent DSS discrimination, and potential issues around including both social and private rented sector tenants in the same forum.

## Broadening Access

7. The original motion required that the Council 'Use official communication and media activities to improve awareness, as well as denouncing discrimination against benefits claimants clearly on the Council website, with a dedicated page detailing ways to recognise DSS discrimination and what actions to take in response.'<sup>1</sup> In this it has been very successful, with articles coming out on national rental websites like Landlordzone and The Negotiator. The work was also picked up on social media and praised by Shelter. The Panel welcomes this. It understands that the Council's mission is not solely directed towards improving the lives of its immediate residents but to lead on campaigning for broader change and is pleased to see the Council having a national-level impact.
8. Thankfully, national campaigning and local-level impact are far from mutually exclusive. Indeed, the more of a difference the Council can demonstrate locally,

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<sup>1</sup>The website page can be found at:

[https://www.oxford.gov.uk/info/20267/private\\_housing\\_tenants/1515/discrimination\\_against\\_benefits\\_claimants](https://www.oxford.gov.uk/info/20267/private_housing_tenants/1515/discrimination_against_benefits_claimants)



the more weight its model carries at a national level. In discussion, the Panel identified one area where the Council could improve the reach of its messaging.

9. Locally, the Council's messaging has been primarily targeted at individuals suffering DSS discrimination: how to recognise it, to make victims aware that it is illegal, and the support that is available to them. However, to date there have been no reports made to the Welfare Reform team of discrimination. This could be interpreted as a sign that DSS discrimination is not occurring, but the more likely explanation is that the direct messaging from the Council has not reached those who need it. The Panel's suggestion is that the Council need not try to communicate with these individuals directly. There are a lot of third party organisations – advice centres, tenant unions, charities and community groups – who come into contact with individuals likely to encounter DSS discrimination. The reach of the Council's messaging on this topic would be extended greatly by making those organisations aware of the support available.

***Recommendation 1: That the Council contacts relevant third party agencies such as advice centres, unions and community groups, to make them aware of the support available to those who have faced DSS discrimination.***

#### **Composition of the Forum**

10. The exact wording of the motion passed by Council in regarding the composition of the newly-established tenants' forum is as follows, that it: 'be composed of community groups and stakeholders representing tenants, both in private and council housing'. It is the Panel's view that a forum for both private rented sector and social tenants may not be optimal. The issues faced by and remedies available to tenants in social housing and the private rented sector are very different. If the aim of a tenants' forum is to give a platform for tenant voices to be heard putting two groups with very different interests could dilute the relevance to both. The Panel wishes to see tenants from both sectors given a voice, but it does query whether this setup fully enables this goal. Indeed, in the longer run, if there is too much which is not relevant to participants then ongoing involvement by members could actually reduce, which would undermine the forum's purpose.
11. Given that this has been endorsed by Council it would be overreach for Scrutiny to suggest that this should be changed. As a critical friend to the Council, however, the Panel does raise its concerns. Its recommendation is that this issue be raised with forum members, and that they be given ownership over how, what is ultimately their forum, not the Council's, is composed and what its focus should be.

***Recommendation 2: That the Council asks forum members whether they believe the forum should seek to cover private rented sector and social tenants simultaneously.***

## Further Consideration

12. As part of its discussions over continued monitoring around the extent of DSS discrimination locally the Housing and Homelessness Panel has agreed to add this topic to its list of items for next years' work plan. It is anticipated that the report will be considered in a years' time.
13. A final issue that the Panel wishes to raise is in relation to the ongoing interaction between the forum and the Housing and Homelessness Panel. The Panel welcomes Council's suggestion to invite representatives on a bi-annual basis to discuss topics of relevance. Preparation for this is underway. However, the Panel does also feel it is necessary to underline that it, nor Scrutiny generally, is not a decision-making body. Its impact is indirect, pursuing enquiries and making recommendations. There is value to this, but the Panel considers that to ensure the full potential from the forum is realised that Council cannot rely on Scrutiny alone. Instead, it must also allow the forum to have direct influence on policy through joint-working between its representatives and relevant Cabinet members and senior officers.

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**Cabinet response to recommendations of the Housing and Homelessness Panel made on 22/03/2022 concerning the DSS Discrimination Motion Update report**

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

<b><i>Recommendation</i></b>	<b><i>Agree?</i></b>	<b><i>Comment</i></b>
<b>1) That the Council contacts relevant third party agencies such as advice centres, unions and community groups, to make them aware of the support available to those who have faced DSS discrimination.</b>		
<b>2) That the Council asks forum members whether they believe the forum should seek to cover private rented sector and social tenants simultaneously.</b>		

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Date of Cabinet Meeting:

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## Climate Emergency Review Group

<i>Recommendation</i>	<i>Agree?</i>	<i>Comment</i>
<b>1) That when the Council next updates its Zero Carbon Action Plan it provides, where possible, clarity over how far existing, allocated resources are expected to move the Council towards each goal.</b>	Yes	
<b>2) That the Council provides a clear statement of the assumptions and definitions it is applying when referencing net zero in strategies and other documents.</b>	Yes	In December 2021 Cabinet set a definition for 'net zero' in relation to the Council's work to decarbonise its own assets and the wider city: <i>Net zero can be achieved by reducing emissions as far to zero as possible, with any remaining hard-to-decarbonise emissions compensated with greenhouse gas removals.</i> We will apply this definition as a 'boilerplate' as appropriate on Council documentation concerning carbon reduction.
<b>3) That the Council makes greater efforts to ensure that climate policies and action on climate change are disability inclusive, including involving disability groups at the earliest stage.</b>	Partially	The Council have initiated a number of actions such as the creation of the Inclusive Transport and Movement Focus Group, which was initially set up during the early months of the pandemic to consider proposals to change highways and footways for the safe reopening of the high streets and to support emergency active travel measures. The Focus Group also had a longer-term objective to ensure all transport and movement measures should be accessible and inclusive for people in Oxford with disabilities. It should be noted that the legal duties in respect of delivery of Transport initiatives rest with Oxfordshire County Council, not Oxford City Council. However, the City Council are a key stakeholder – and sometimes funder – of schemes within Oxford and have guidance in place to ensure that the Public Sector Equality Duty is considered

		<p>by the Council's decision makers both at the inception and during the lifetime of projects.</p> <p>This guidance includes the Council's Initial Equalities Impact Assessment form which sets out the questions that should be asked by the Council's decision makers during the initial stages of a project, and includes a requirement to consider who the project team will consult on any new policies or projects, or on proposed changes to an existing policy or service, to minimise or eliminate the adverse equality impacts. Oxford City Council will continue to ensure that impact assessments are implemented in relation to projects concerning climate policies and action on climate change.</p> <p>The EV Strategy has been commissioned with a clear requirement to consider the needs for accessibility by disabled people in respect of electric vehicle charging infrastructure.</p>
<p><b>4) That the Council works with the County Council to prioritise the delivery of cycle greenways into the City which were paused owing to Covid.</b></p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>Oxford City Council continues to priorities the Greenways Project –jointly funded in partnership with the County Council and University of Oxford. The Project was put on hold in March 2020 at the start of the pandemic by mutual agreement, due to all officers being reprioritised to more urgent work. In February 2022, the County Council, as part of its Local Transport and Connectivity Plan (LTCP), is procuring concept design services for a county-wide Strategic Active Travel Network (SATN), which includes work on the prioritisation of active travel routes into Oxford. The SATN project is due to last approximately 12 months. The Greenways Project will benefit from awaiting the conclusion of the SATN project, so that the maximum</p>

		<p>amount of resource under the Greenways Project can be expended on creating attractive, bid-ready concept designs for the right routes rather than going back over prioritisation or doing concept drawings for implausible routes.</p> <p>Therefore, it looks like the most appropriate target for implementing the Oxford Greenways Project is during the latter part of 22-23 financial year and into the 23-24 financial year. The funds that have already been committed by all parties will remain available for this purpose.</p>
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## **EDI Strategy**

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



## Allocation of Homelessness Prevention Funding

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

## Housing Adaptation

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

## Business Plan Update

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

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

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

## Recovery and Renewal Framework

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