

Draft Scope: ‘Supporting businesses in the City Centre’ Scrutiny Panel

Review Topic	Supporting businesses in the City Centre
Lead Member Review Group	Councillor James Fry
Other Panel Members	Councillors Elise Benjamin, Roy Darke and Mike Gotch
Officer Support and allocate hours	Scrutiny Officer approx. 2-4 days per month. Additional support from the Town Centre Manager.
Rationale (key issues and/ or reason for doing the Review)	Scrutiny Members are keen to understand what the City Council already does to support the local economy, particularly small businesses, and what more could be done. The Scrutiny Committee prioritised this review when agreeing its work programme for 2014-15
Purpose of Review/Objective (specify exactly what the Review should achieve)	To identify how the City Council currently supports small and medium sized businesses in the city centre and what further support is possible. Key lines of inquiry are: 1. What can the City Council do to mitigate disruption to the city centre economy while major developments are taking place? How can communications be improved for lasting benefit to residents and visitors? 2. What scope does the City Council have to minimise the time shop units are left empty, and to improve the appearance of empty units? A third line of inquiry was identified by the panel but this will only be considered in so far as it relates to 1 because it is likely to require a separate scrutiny review: 3. What could feasibly be done to improve transport in and around the City Centre? To engage with officers and stakeholders and produce evidence based recommendations to the City Executive Board.
Indicators of Success (what factors would tell you what a good Review should look like)	Good Quality engagement with stakeholders that delivers a range of opinion. Broad agreement on recommendations amongst Panel Members, Officers and stakeholders. The majority of recommendations are agreed by the City Executive Board and implemented.
Out of scope	The Covered Market

Methodology/ Approach (what types of enquiry will be used to gather evidence and why)	Evidence gathering to include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Evidence sessions with officers and witnesses - Document and Policy review - Considering what could be learnt from other Local Authorities 		
Specify Witnesses/ Experts (who to see and when)	Evidence sessions to be held with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Laurie-Jane Taylor, City Centre Manager - Michael Crofton-Briggs, Head of City Development - Members of the Town Team, including those representing SMEs - Two city centre landlords <i>Other witnesses and experts to be identified</i>		
Specify Evidence Sources for Documents (which to look at)	The following documents may be used as evidence: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Town Centre Manager report - Oxford City Council's Corporate Plan - Discretionary Rate Relief Policy - Other City Council policies 		
Specify Site Visits (where and when)	A visit to meet the Town Team TBA		
Projected start date	January 2015	Draft Report Deadline	April-May 2015
Meeting Frequency	TBA	Projected completion date	May-June 2015

Draft outline of meetings (Not in necessarily in chronological order and some meetings may be combined)

Meeting one
7 January 2015 – Meeting held with Michael Crofton-Briggs and Laurie-Jane Taylor to consider the Town Centre Manager Report and identify how the City Council currently supports small and medium sized businesses in the city centre. Lines of inquiry identified.
Meeting two
TBA – Meeting with two city centre landlords to discuss issues around empty properties.
Meeting three
TBA – Meeting with members of the Town Team to understand their views relating to both lines of inquiry.
Meeting four
TBA – Meeting with the Town Centre Manager to discuss how other local authorities have handled major development projects and about their policies on other topics covered by the Town Team.
Meeting five
TBA – Meeting to consider evidence gathered and agree recommendation areas.