

**To:** Cabinet  
**Date:** 09 December 2020  
**Report of:** Scrutiny Committee  
**Title of Report:** Draft Strategic Vision for Oxfordshire

<b>Summary and recommendations</b>	
<b>Purpose of report:</b>	To present Scrutiny Committee recommendations concerning the Draft Strategic Vision for Oxfordshire report
<b>Key decision:</b>	No
<b>Scrutiny Lead Member:</b>	Councillor Joe McManners, vice-Chair of the Scrutiny Committee
<b>Cabinet Member:</b>	Councillor Susan Brown, Leader and Cabinet Member for Economic Development and Partnerships
<b>Corporate Priority:</b>	All
<b>Policy Framework:</b>	Council Strategy 2020-24
<b>Recommendation: That the Cabinet states whether it agrees or disagrees with the recommendation in the body of this report.</b>	

<b>Appendices</b>
None

### **Introduction and overview**

1. At its meeting on 01 December 2020, the Scrutiny Committee considered a report to Cabinet concerning the Draft Strategic Vision for Oxfordshire.
2. The Panel would like to thank Councillor Susan Brown, Leader and Cabinet Member for Economic Development and Partnerships for presenting the report, and Caroline Green, Assistant Chief Executive, for authoring the report and answering questions.

## Summary and recommendation

3. Councillor Susan Brown, Leader of the Council, introduced the report. As the Oxfordshire Growth Board had developed, so its members had sought to identify common themes and the ways in which they could work together. From the City Council's perspective, the importance of inclusivity and the need for sustainable growth were key. The document before the Committee already included elements which reflected the Council's input but this was not to say that further improvements could not be made.
4. Caroline Green, Assistant Chief Executive, said that the document did not seek to set out a specific vision for Oxford or places within the City and that the final version would have no statutory basis. It was, rather, a statement of collective ambition and common interests. A great deal of effort had been made to ensure that the document, as far as possible, reflected the diversity of places and, therefore, the different strategies and actions that might be needed to respond to those variations.
5. The Committee's discussion and suggestions in response to the report focused on work done by other relevant bodies, namely the Oxfordshire Growth Board Scrutiny Committee, greater prominence for issues around different types of inequality, clarifying a number of terms within the text, and the desirability of recognising active transport and payment of the Living Wage as strategic desiderata in Oxfordshire.
6. The Scrutiny Committee makes one recommendation, highlighting areas and topics it would like to see the Council press for inclusion within the agreed Strategic Vision for Oxfordshire.

## Textual Amendments

7. The Growth Board Scrutiny Committee had had the opportunity to consider and make recommendations on the Draft Strategic Vision for Oxfordshire on 21 October. Recommendations were made in relation to recognising the challenges in timescales aligning between policies and giving thought to addressing those, ensuring Councillors from relevant councils and broader networks were given the opportunity to comment on the draft text, and that young people in particular were to be particularly encouraged to take part in the consultation.<sup>1</sup> It was suggested that the Council should endorse these same recommendations.
8. Economic inequality was suggested to be the primary driver behind other forms of inequality, and that if the document were to reflect the Council's aspirations for tackling inequality in its different guises, greater emphasis would have to be paid to improving economic equality. One specific area identified by the Committee as particularly important in this was in reference to payment of the Living Wage, whether it be the national standard, or the local Oxford standard.
9. The Committee praised the recognition of health inequalities as an issue within the draft vision. However, it was suggested that too little prominence had been

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<sup>1</sup> The full meeting minutes may be found here:  
<http://democratic.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/mgAi.aspx?ID=30894>

given to mental health, and that to draw this out with the degree of thoroughness the issue deserved it would need its own dedicated section.

10. Though certain areas were felt by the Committee to require dedicated sections, inequality as a theme was suggested to be so pervasive and determinative to the outcomes of any vision for the County, that its consideration should not be relegated solely to a specific section, but that they should be woven into the substance of the document throughout. This was felt to be particularly the case for racial inequality.
11. Finally, in light of the national changes and local efforts to encourage active transport, it was suggested that the draft document underplayed the degree to which facilitating this was a strategic priority.
12. The Committee recognises that the final form of the Strategic Vision for Oxfordshire does not lie exclusively with the Council, but asks that the Council uses its best endeavours to seek that these areas are recognised and included.

**Recommendation 1: That the Council seeks in its discussions at the Oxfordshire Growth Board to have the following suggestions included within future drafts of the draft Strategic Vision for Oxfordshire:**

- ***The recommendations of the Growth Board Scrutiny Panel made on 21<sup>st</sup> October 2020***
- ***To increase the emphasis throughout the document on economic inequality***
- ***Reference within the Inclusive Economy section to the promotion of the Living Wage, either the national standard or the local standard***
- ***To create a section dedicated to the improvement of mental wellbeing***
- ***For issues of inequality, particularly with regards to race, to be embedded throughout the document rather than being treated in isolation under equality, diversity and inclusion.***
- ***To recognise the priority of increasing active transport across Oxfordshire***

### Further Consideration

13. The Committee does not anticipate any further consideration of this issue.

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**Cabinet response to recommendations of the Scrutiny Committee made on 01/12/2020 concerning the Draft Strategic Vision for Oxfordshire report**

**A verbal response will be provided by Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Economic Development and Partnerships, Susan Brown**

<b>Recommendation</b>	<b>Agree?</b>	<b>Comment</b>
<p><b>1) That the Council seeks in its discussions at the Oxfordshire Growth Board to have the following suggestions included within future drafts of the draft Strategic Vision for Oxfordshire:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>The recommendations of the Growth Board Scrutiny Panel made on 21<sup>st</sup> October 2020</b></li> <li>- <b>To increase the emphasis throughout the document on economic inequality</b></li> <li>- <b>Reference within the Inclusive Economy section to the promotion of the Living Wage, either the national standard or the local standard</b></li> <li>- <b>To create a section dedicated to the improvement of mental wellbeing</b></li> <li>- <b>For issues of inequality, particularly with regards to race, to be embedded throughout the document rather than being treated in isolation under equality, diversity and inclusion.</b></li> <li>- <b>To recognise the priority of increasing active transport across Oxfordshire</b></li> </ul>		