

**To:** Cabinet  
**Date:** 15 June 2022  
**Report of:** Scrutiny Committee  
**Title of Report:** City Centre Action Plan (Draft) – Consultation Report and Recommendations

<b>Summary and recommendations</b>	
<b>Purpose of report:</b>	To present Scrutiny Committee recommendations for Cabinet consideration and decision
<b>Key decision:</b>	No
<b>Scrutiny Lead Member:</b>	Councillor Lizzy Diggins, Scrutiny Committee Vice-Chair
<b>Cabinet Member:</b>	Councillor Imogen Thomas, Cabinet Member for Zero Carbon Oxford and Climate Justice
<b>Corporate Priority:</b>	Enabling an Inclusive Economy
<b>Policy Framework:</b>	Council Strategy 2020-24
<b>Recommendation: That the Cabinet states whether it agrees or disagrees with the recommendations in the body of this report.</b>	

<b>Appendices</b>	
<b>Appendix A</b>	Draft Cabinet response to recommendations of the Scrutiny Committee

## **Introduction and overview**

1. The Scrutiny Committee met on 08 June 2022 to consider a report concerning the City Centre Action Plan. The report, which is due for Cabinet consideration on 15 June 2022, recommends that Cabinet notes the recommended changes to the Consultation version of the City Centre Action Plan and resolves to adopt and publish the revised version of the City Centre Action Plan. The Committee would like to thank Councillor Thomas (Cabinet Member for Zero Carbon Oxford and Climate Justice), Carolyn Ploszynski (Head of Regeneration and Economy) and Matt Peachey (Economic Development Manager) for attending the meeting to answer questions.

## **Summary and recommendations**

2. Councillor Imogen Thomas, Cabinet Member for Zero Carbon Oxford and Climate Justice introduced the report. The City Centre Action Plan had been delayed due to the pandemic but there had been lots of engagement on it. The intention was that it would be a community-owned plan that encouraged feedback into the future and would add structure, momentum and ownership. Lots of the work needed to be delivered by partners.
3. The Economic Development Manager added that there had been a good consultation process with 398 responses and the SWOT analysis had been well supported. There were opportunities to improve the Castle Quarter, support arts and culture and to support the greening of the city centre. The Action Plan would be kept under regular review and there would be strong governance in place.
4. During discussion, the Committee noted that there was a need to reflect on the lack of diversity of the consultation responses and, given the City Centre Action Plan was described as a 'living document', take an adaptive approach to the Plan's development. It was suggested that diverse and representative engagement should be sought from residents annually in relation to the City Centre Action Plan.

***Recommendation 1: That the Council seeks to more effectively engage with diverse communities as part of future consultation exercises, with a focus on using different methods of engagement to get responses from a wider demographic – and in particular increased responses from minoritised groups and young people.***

***Recommendation 2: That the Council notes the diversity of consultation responses received in relation to the City Centre Action Plan going forward and uses the intelligence to adapt the Plan to ensure it reflects that diversity.***

***Recommendation 3: That the Council seeks to have diverse and representative annual resident engagement.***

5. The Committee noted that response rates to formal consultations on more specific places within the city centre, such as the Covered Market or Broad Street, tended to be much higher than engagement on strategy documents, which was why workshops had also taken place. It was suggested that feedback from residents from both formal and informal consultation and engagement should be more prominent in the report, to demonstrate that the Council is engaging with residents in a variety of ways to help ensure responses from diverse groups.

***Recommendation 4: That the Council makes reference to additional forms of engagement undertaken outside of formal consultation exercises within the consultation report.***

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