

To: Cabinet
Date: 15 March 2023
Report of: Scrutiny Committee
Title of Report: Oxford City Council Corporate Business Plan 2023

Summary and recommendations	
Purpose of report:	To present Scrutiny Committee recommendations for Cabinet consideration and decision
Key decision:	No
Scrutiny Lead Member:	Councillor Dr Christopher Snowton, Scrutiny Committee Chair
Cabinet Member:	Cllr Susan Brown, Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Inclusive Economy and Partnerships;
Corporate Priority:	All
Policy Framework:	Council Strategy 2020-24
Recommendation: That the Cabinet states whether it agrees or disagrees with the recommendations in the body of this report.	

Appendices	
Appendix A	Draft Cabinet response to recommendations of the Scrutiny Committee

Introduction and overview

1. The Scrutiny Committee met on 07 March 2023 to consider a report on the Corporate Business Plan 2023. The annual update of the Business Plan recommends that Cabinet agrees the draft Council Corporate Business Plan priorities for 2023/24; delegates authority to the Head of Corporate Strategy in consultation with the Leader of the Council to make further minor amendments before implementation; notes the progress made in delivery against the actions set out in the Corporate Business Plan 2022/23.

Summary and recommendations

2. The Committee was grateful to Cllr Susan Brown, Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Inclusive Economy and Partnerships, for attending to present the report as well as to Mish Tullar, Head of Corporate Strategy, for

attending to answer the Committee's questions.

3. Cllr Brown introduced the report and explained to the Committee that this was the fourth year of the four year business plan and, given its scope, it covered a vast amount of activity on the Council's part. Cllr Brown emphasised that there were a number of interconnected priorities that could sit under different headings. Cllr Brown advised the Committee that the Corporate Business Plan was a coherent strategy for the City and this update was about ensuring that the Council was delivering it.
4. Cllr Brown reminded the Committee of a number of successes the Council was proud of, including 318 affordable homes completed this year so far, and that OX Place was delivering its greenest homes yet. She explained that these were an example of overlapping priorities in that they could sit under Zero Carbon Oxford as well as under More Affordable Homes.
5. Given the breadth of the Corporate Business Plan, the Committee had a wide-ranging discussion veering from the macro to the micro. One concern raised by the Committee was that, with the update focusing in some areas on long-term achievements, it could be difficult for members to be assured of clear progress against the more strategic ambitions. The Committee considered that future iterations of the Corporate Business Plan would benefit from having some high-level targets which could be tracked in a more holistic way.

Recommendation 1: That the Council, in future four year Corporate Business Plans, should include higher-level key performance indicators to enable Members to track strategic ambitions more easily.

6. Recognising that the Council adopted the Urban Forest Strategy after the adoption of the four year plan, the Committee questioned the Urban Forest Strategy's absence from the progress update. The Committee accepted the complexities in delivering the strategy and also the funding challenges that had hindered progress. The Committee was pleased to hear of ambition to potentially move forward. However, given the importance to the Council of the Strategy, the Committee considered that it should be reported on and monitored as an ongoing action.

Recommendation 2: That the Council reports on, and monitors progress of, the implementation and outworking of the Urban Forest Strategy.

7. The Committee noted that bathing water status was mentioned in the table of priorities. The Committee also noted Council's resolution of 30 January 2023 relating to Thames Water. The Committee was pleased to hear that progress had been made in seeking meetings between Members and representatives of Thames Water and considered that it would be appropriate to make explicit reference in the update to partnership working with Thames Water.

Recommendation 3: That the Council makes explicit reference in the report to working with Thames Water in seeking to improve the situation with water in the City.

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