



WEST OXFORDSHIRE
DISTRICT COUNCIL

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Name and date of Committee	CABINET: WEDNESDAY 15 JANUARY 2020
Report Number	AGENDA ITEM No. 6
Subject	DRAFT COUNCIL PLAN 2020-2024
Wards affected	ALL
Accountable member	Cllr James Mills, Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Policy Framework and Corporate Plan Email: james.mills@westoxon.gov.uk
Accountable officer	Giles Hughes, Chief Executive Tel: 01993 861658 Email: giles.hughes@westoxon.gov.uk
Summary/Purpose	To consider and recommend approval of the final draft Council Plan 2020-24 for adoption by Council at its January 2020 meeting.
Annexes	Annex 1 : Draft Council Plan 2020-24 Annex 2 : Comments resulting from the Overview and Scrutiny consideration of the draft plan and the response developed to address the issues raised.
Recommendation	<i>That the Cabinet approves the final draft Council Plan 2020-2024 and recommends its adoption by the Council.</i>
Corporate priorities	ALL
Key Decision	YES
Exempt	NO
Consultees/ Consultation	Internal consultation with officers and Cabinet members.

I. BACKGROUND

- I.1.** The Council's extant corporate plan (the Council Plan) covered the period 2016-19. As the current work directed through this plan comes to an end, effort has been directed to developing a new Council Plan to cover the forthcoming period.
- I.2.** The development of a new Council Plan that addresses issues and challenges facing the District is an essential piece of work that will result in a high level Plan that can direct the Council's efforts. The Plan will direct action both within the Council and through collaborative work with partner organisations to improve the quality of life in West Oxfordshire.
- I.3.** The initial work to develop a new Council Plan has been informed through learning derived from recent review work. A key part of this background evidence has been the findings and recommendations resulting from the Local Government Association's (LGA) Corporate Peer Challenge undertaken in October 2018. The resultant action plan has been informed and endorsed through consideration in the Council's Finance and Management Overview & Scrutiny Committee and finalised through approval at Cabinet in April 2019. The Peer Review highlighted and made a recommendation around the significant potential of the new Council Plan in terms of the scope it offers to align strategic objectives and strengthen community engagement. The new draft Plan is brought forward in this context.

2. MAIN POINTS

- 2.1.** As part of the information assembled to inform the background to the new Council Plan, a range of evidence has been reviewed and summarised in a supporting Evidence Paper reported to the Overview and Scrutiny Committees and previously to the Cabinet's meeting on 16 October 2019. The evidence paper provided a set of background evidence to set a context for the emerging new Council Plan.
- 2.2.** The early preparatory work towards developing a new Council Plan has included a liaison meeting in March 2019 convened between Council's Leader/ Cabinet Members (supported by the Head of Paid Service) and West Oxfordshire's Town and Parish Councils/ Meetings. The meeting focused on challenges and opportunities facing West Oxfordshire's communities. One of the points emerging from the session was a strong interest in further communication and engagement on key issues. The Council Plan has sought to take account of this entreaty. A further consultative session with Towns and Parishes was held on 10 October 2019 and this has provided additional information on local priorities and concerns and on this occasion it gave a particular focus to the environmental theme that will develop through Council Plan directed action.
- 2.3.** Following the Cabinet's informal consideration of future priorities for the Council Plan (supported by the Head of Paid Service and other officers) in June 2019, a draft statement of the vision and priorities that should form the core of the new Council Plan was formed. A draft Council Plan was then submitted for Overview & Scrutiny Committee review towards producing a final version of the Plan.

- 2.4. The current draft Council Plan at [Annex 1](#) (beginning on [page 5](#)) has been adapted to address the comments and insight arising through the Overview and Scrutiny process and it is presented now in a revised, more developed state for Cabinet to recommend approval and adoption by Council. Once adopted it can start to provide the strategic policy framework that directs Council action.
- 2.5. A compendium of Overview and Scrutiny Comments is included at [Annex 2](#) (beginning on [page 15](#)), together with an officer response on the points raised that has been drawn from specialist inputs from across a range of relevant Council functions. In some cases the Overview and Scrutiny comments have resulted in a modified wording in the revised Council Plan, in other instances points will be further taken into account as the follow-on work on the Council Plan themes is developed through supporting action plans etc. In some cases an explanatory commentary is given in [Annex 2](#) to develop the response to policy issues.
- 2.6. A particular thrust of the Overview and Scrutiny comments was focused on the need to have measures so that progress in addressing priorities can be evaluated. This has been addressed in the revised, more developed version of the draft Council Plan and will be developed further through key supporting action plans (e.g. the planned Climate Change Strategy and Carbon Action Plan). There will be annual updates to the Council Plan and these will report on progress – aligning our Local Plan Annual Monitoring Report with the Council Plan progress commentary so that the changes in key economic, social and environmental indicators can be reviewed.
- 2.7. The Council Plan sets out a Council vision that is "to support West Oxfordshire to be fit for the future" through action across a set of priority themes:
1. **Climate Action** - Leading the way in protecting and enhancing the environment by taking action locally on climate change and biodiversity.
 2. **Healthy Towns and Villages** - Facilitating healthy lifestyles and better wellbeing for everyone.
 3. **A Vibrant District Economy** - Securing future economic success through supporting existing local businesses and attracting new businesses to deliver the economic ambitions of the Oxfordshire Local Industrial Strategy.
 4. **Strong Local Communities** - Supporting and building prosperous and inclusive local communities.
 5. **Meeting the Housing Needs of our Changing Population** - Securing the provision of market and affordable housing of a high quality for the wide range of householders making their home in West Oxfordshire.
 6. **Modern Council Services and Sustainable Finance** - Delivering excellent modern services whilst ensuring the financial sustainability of the Council.
- 2.8. The draft Council Plan gives rise to significant new areas of focus and project activity that will be further defined as the work develops. There will be subsequent Councillor involvement in key areas of strategy development (e.g. in connection with the environment). The Plan will also set a context for Publica's Business Plan and service planning so that service activity can relate to and help achieve progress against the Council's corporate policy priorities.
3. **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**
- 3.1. None directly arising from this report. Any financial implications arising from the adoption of the final version of the Council Plan will be built into the Council's financial strategy and budget setting process over the lifetime of the Plan.

4. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

4.1. None.

5. RISK ASSESSMENT

5.1. The purpose of the Council Plan is to direct effort towards priority issues and this should help to ensure that resources are focused on delivering what is most important to the Council. Any significant actions will be subject to the Council's corporate risk management approach and will, therefore, be tested in terms of risk likelihood, potential impact and identification of mitigation steps.

6. EQUALITIES IMPACT

6.1. The pursuit of a new Council Plan as outlined in the proposed draft should have a positive effect in terms of its equalities impact. The new Council Plan has been informed through a supporting evidence paper that has helped to focus on policy themes and guide an approach that is intended to deliver an inclusive corporate plan. It will be appropriate to undertake appropriate further assessment of equalities issues, at the appropriate time, where new supporting policy or strategic action is formed.

7. CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS

7.1. None arising directly from this report. Addressing the climate change agenda through protecting and enhancing the environment by taking local action on climate change and biodiversity is one of the priorities in the draft Plan.

8. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

8.1. Not relevant.

9. BACKGROUND PAPERS

None.

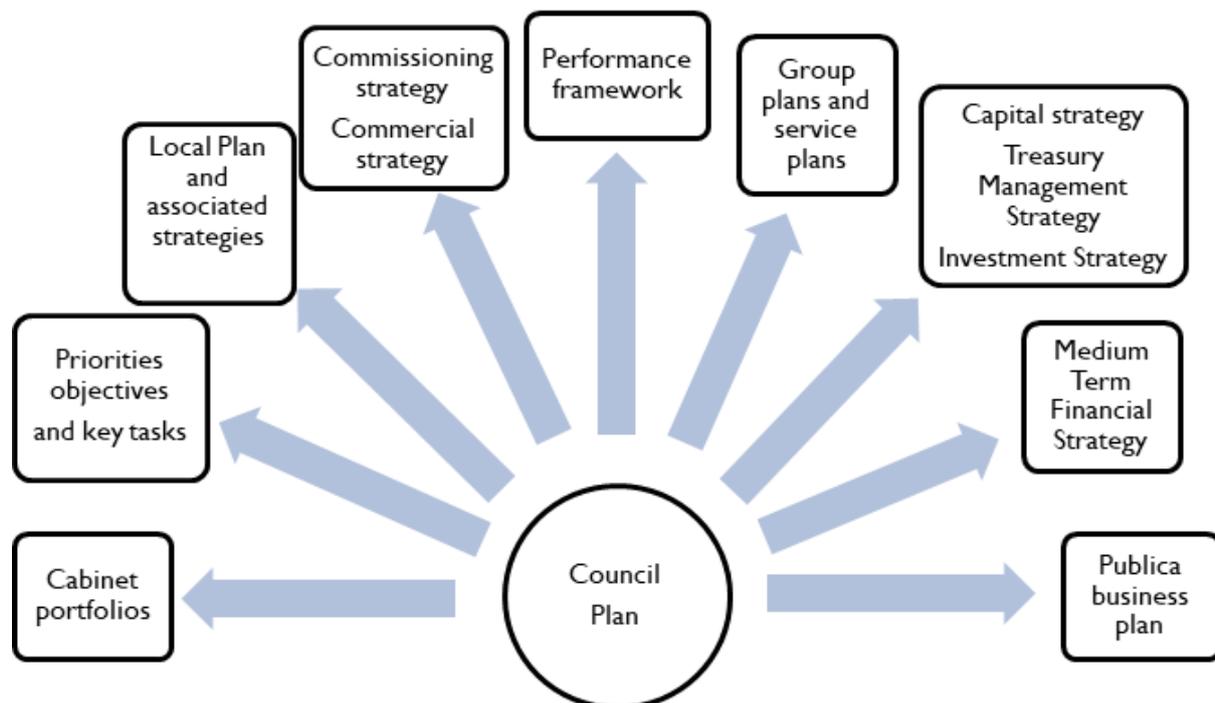
Council Plan 2020-2024

Introduction

This document sets out the Council's key priorities, areas which require particular focus, and shows how the Council intends to achieve its ambitions for supporting local communities and the delivery of local services.

We are proud of the distinctive and special place that is West Oxfordshire and want to do everything we can to ensure it continues to be a great place to live, work and visit.

It is vital that the District maintains its special character as its economy flourishes and we work to support the future growth and opportunities that lie ahead. The Council Plan sets a direction that will help with this commitment and it sits at the centre of a range of related strategies, illustrated in the diagram below.



The Local Plan is a key document which supports the Council Plan and its adoption (September 2018) was a significant step as it provides a framework to help grow a successful and sustainable economy, building much needed new homes and securing infrastructure, whilst enhancing and conserving West Oxfordshire's environment. It details the strategic objectives for the district and the geographical locations prioritised for development.

In 2018, we invited the Local Government Association (LGA) to conduct a Corporate Peer Challenge - an external review of a Council's functioning and its ability to deliver on its plans. Its report outlines a range of positive factors in the Council's leadership and performance but it also provides some helpful pointers for improvement.

Our Peer Review found that the new Council Plan is an opportunity to:

- Align strategic objectives
- Make good use of community inputs – building on work in the Local Plan process
- Set out our economic ambitions as part of Oxfordshire's successful local economy
- Consider the scope to support future community development.

We are keen to take the initiative on this opportunity and this new Council Plan is a start, but to make sure we continue to develop this work, we need to work with our partner organisations and local communities, to secure their contributions to our action plan.

We will work in a variety of ways, leading by example, in support of our place-making role and advancing the future strength and sustainability of local communities. A key part of this will be our community leadership role working with partners and local areas.

Whilst taking a strategic lead to help create the future for West Oxfordshire, we plan to listen to and engage in joint work with our local communities. Our regular Town and Parish Forums are an example of this commitment.

We recognise that sometimes it will be a town or parish that takes a lead on a particular issue and the District Council and other partners will need to act in support of this initiative and enable improvements where possible. An example of this might be town partnership work that seeks to enhance the vitality of a market town.

Alongside our community leadership role, we will continue to ensure that we provide efficient value for money services. Our financial strategy is positioned to plan for and stay ahead of future challenges, such as changes to Government funding, service demand and other emerging risks. We are developing a Commissioning Strategy and Commercial Strategy which aim to ensure the Council retains its current healthy financial position whilst becoming less reliant upon volatile central government funding. Our planned Commissioning Strategy will cover everything we do and is focussed on meeting local needs and delivering excellent and efficient services in support of the Council Plan.

Vision

Our vision is to support West Oxfordshire to be fit for the future through:

1. **Climate Action** - Leading the way in protecting and enhancing the environment by taking action locally on climate change and biodiversity.
2. **Healthy Towns and Villages** - Facilitating healthy lifestyles and better wellbeing for everyone.
3. **A Vibrant District Economy** - Securing future economic success through supporting existing local businesses and attracting new businesses to deliver the economic ambitions of the Oxfordshire Local Industrial Strategy.
4. **Strong Local Communities** - Supporting and building prosperous and inclusive local communities.
5. **Meeting the Housing Needs of our Changing Population** - Securing the provision of market and affordable housing of a high quality for the wide range of householders making their home in West Oxfordshire.
6. **Modern Council Services and Sustainable Finance** - Delivering excellent modern services whilst ensuring the financial sustainability of the Council.

1. Climate Action

Leading the way in protecting and enhancing the environment by taking action locally on climate change and biodiversity.

We will foster our strategic approach to securing a low carbon future, taking steps to mitigate and adapt to climate change and deliver a net gain in biodiversity.

- The District Council will develop and implement a Climate Change Strategy for West Oxfordshire with key actions to include:
 - A Climate Action Plan developed to identify and implement the action and projects required to become a Carbon Neutral Council by 2030.
 - Work across functions and disciplines, with partners both in the Council and outside of the Council, to drive forward climate action across the District. This will address i) meeting carbon reduction targets; ii) improving air and water quality; iii) a natural environment increasing in value for biodiversity and people; iv) a landscape adapted to the pressures of flood risk; and v) the design and building of sustainable, low-carbon communities.
 - Identifying initiatives towards preparing for and adapting to climate change, including enabling residents to adapt to extreme weather events, informed through engagement with local communities and partners.
 - Piloting initiatives through the Oxfordshire Cotswolds Garden Village and considering roll out to other new areas of development.
 - Increasing residential and commercial reuse and recycling and encouraging composting.

- Enhance our natural environment and boost biodiversity. Our overarching goal is to establish robust, resilient, well-functioning ecological networks which will require:
 - Ongoing support for key local projects and initiatives, including the Lower Windrush Valley Project, the Wychwood Project, Thames Valley Environmental Records Centre (TVERC) and the Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire Wildlife Trust (BBOWT).
 - Managing the Council's land and assets for biodiversity, including the restoration of priority habitats, the recovery of priority species populations and opportunities for tree planting in suitable locations.
 - Seeking to implement and maintain recommendations contained in the 'Windrush in Witney' Landscape Management Strategy.
 - Continuing to support Oxfordshire's Conservation Target Areas and Local Wildlife Sites Project.
 - Supporting the preparation and delivery of a Nature Recovery Strategy for Oxfordshire (including the mapping of a Nature Recovery Network).
 - Using the Council's planning powers to ensure that new developments deliver a net gain in biodiversity.

The Council will report annually on the implementation of key actions, indicative measures of progress include:

- Achievement of targets within the Climate Action Plan for a Carbon Neutral Council by 2030.

- Establishing a Climate Change Strategy in 2020 and use this to then chart improvement in measurable environmental and biodiversity enhancements.
- Production and delivery of a Green Infrastructure Strategy, incorporating the use of Building with Nature principles.
- The successful delivery of a Nature Recovery Strategy for Oxfordshire.
- The implementation of a Biodiversity Net Gain mechanism in Development Management.

2. Healthy Towns and Villages

Facilitating healthy lifestyles and better wellbeing for everyone.

We will pursue a place-based approach, working collaboratively with the health and voluntary sector and local communities, to enhance the health and wellbeing of West Oxfordshire's residents.

Key actions to include:

- Working with the health sector (especially the Clinical Commissioning Group and Public Health) and other partners to establish a comprehensive network of healthcare facilities and services including creative approaches.
- Adopting a 'healthy place-shaping' approach in new and existing developments, ensuring that the necessary green and blue infrastructure, and the public realm, is provided to encourage healthy lifestyles and tackle physical inactivity; and that these link with established communities so that both new and existing residents benefit.
- Working closely and creatively with residents to understand needs and co-produce sustainable community-led solutions to tackle health and wellbeing challenges, for example tackling rural isolation and loneliness.
- Reviewing and delivering the Council's grants programme to ensure that it facilitates the enhancement of community facilities and the provision of activities which promote health and wellbeing.
- Working proactively and in partnership to ensure residents benefit from effective large scale countywide or national health and wellbeing programmes.
- Producing an Asset Management Plan to maximise the community benefits of the Council's estate.
- Challenging the stigma around mental health and using creative interventions to help improve services especially for young people.
- Working with communities on healthy living initiatives in partnership with our leisure contractor, GLL.

The Council will report annually on the implementation of key actions, indicative measures of progress include:

- Review of the position shown in updates to the health and wellbeing measures that inform the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment, Health and Wellbeing Strategy; and Director of Public Health's Annual Report.
- Submission of Health Impact Assessments with all strategic planning applications and implementation of the findings through the development scheme to which it relates.
- Production of a Leisure Strategy for West Oxfordshire, incorporating wide-ranging health, wellbeing and community benefits.

3. A Vibrant District Economy

Securing future economic success through supporting existing local businesses and attracting new businesses to deliver the economic ambitions of the Oxfordshire Local Industrial Strategy.

Key actions to include:

- Working with business groups and partners including the Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership (OxLEP) to ensure there is a comprehensive range of support available for businesses.
- Creating an environment where businesses can grow through ample, high quality land/ sites for employment purposes, including key hubs at Carterton, Witney, Chipping Norton and the new Garden Village.
- Working with partners to secure new and upgraded infrastructure, including short and long-term enhancements to the A40 and the Cotswold railway line.
- Identifying and pursuing creative solutions for the provision of housing for key workers (in partnership with main employers in the district).
- Developing an approach to secure the future vitality and viability of our town centres that adapts to the specific challenges and opportunities faced in individual towns (key actions need to include the promotion of towns as destinations).
- Promoting the development of successful tourism enterprises in appropriate, sustainable locations in accordance with Local Plan Policy.
- The development of public realm improvement projects, electric vehicle charging points and policies to allow town centres to evolve to meet changing shopping and leisure habits.
- Where opportunities present, the Council can pursue investment opportunities that can stimulate development to deliver both an economic gain and a revenue return.
- Work with OxLEP to expand opportunities to engage and inspire young people and create pathways into vocational work and skills in the local economy.
- Supporting the rural economy through appropriate planning and economic development policy and Government programme assistance where applicable.

The Council will report annually on the implementation of key actions, indicative measures of progress include:

- Economic indicators including activity rates; employment/ unemployment levels; tracking the position in business formation/ survival rates; and the quality of local jobs over time - work-place versus resident wage levels.
- New employment space and jobs created as a result of strategic site development and the reporting of agglomeration gains linked to Oxfordshire's developing Local Industrial Strategy.
- Business land / premises availability.
- Tourism related development schemes permitted - Local Plan Annual Monitoring Report.
- Town centre retail and business occupancy rates.

4. Strong Local Communities

Supporting and building prosperous and inclusive local communities.

We will work with partners to strengthen the local communities across West Oxfordshire in order to enhance residents' quality of life. Key actions to include:

- Creating new places that provide for a strong, vibrant, inclusive and connected community. The emphasis will be on 'place-making' rather than just buildings and spaces.
- Providing shared, accessible buildings, facilities and spaces that can help promote social integration and cohesion. In particular, initiatives such as parks with interactive features, community notice boards, and flexible spaces for local clubs and home workers that will help build a strong community.
- Directing our management of property assets through a new Asset Management Plan to achieve improvements in the joint use of sites through the One Public Estate programme.
- Working with local businesses in the villages and countryside in order to raise awareness of the opportunities for diversification (e.g. community hubs; pub walks and railway station opportunities).
- Working with partners to promote West Oxfordshire as a visitor destination whilst protecting its essential character.
- Helping build resilience in communities with more effective joint working and intelligence sharing.
- Amplifying the voice of residents especially those who have been heard less and take a strengths based approach to create inclusive communities.
- Developing our relationship with towns and parishes through regular Parish Forums and encouraging local areas to engage with their residents to articulate and address local priorities.

The Council will report annually on the implementation of key actions, indicative measures of progress include:

- Reviewing change in West Oxfordshire through aligning our Local Plan Annual Monitoring Report with the Council Plan so that we can assess changes in key economic, social and environmental indicators.
- A periodic look at how the District scores against comparative analyses shown in for example: the Thriving Places Index; and the Sustainable Growth Index.
- Increased engagement with towns and parishes to address priority community concerns.

5. Meeting the Housing Needs of our Changing Population

Securing the provision of market and affordable housing of a high quality for the wide range of householders making their home in West Oxfordshire.

We will secure the range of housing that is needed by our local communities. Key actions to include:

- Ensuring an adequate overall supply of housing to meet identified needs including those in need of affordable housing.
- Measures to increase the number of affordable housing units delivered annually, including the promotion of innovative housing solutions, so that we can reduce the housing waiting list.
- The promotion and delivery of self-build and custom build plots and opportunities to meet the needs of those on the Council's self-build register.
- Investigating a new West Oxfordshire living rent to ensure that affordable homes are truly affordable for local people and key workers.
- Using the planning system to ensure that new developments provide a range of housing products, including low-cost home ownership models, and the right size and flexibility of properties and property types to meet the current and future needs of our residents.
- Increasing the rate of delivery on larger strategic sites through proactive planning and the use of appropriate mechanisms (planning performance agreements and planning conditions), work with infrastructure providers, and sustainable methods of construction where appropriate.
- Exploring and developing new partnerships (for example the Blenheim approach) to deliver on: modern methods of construction to reduce carbon footprints, more landowner provided housing and genuine community-led housing opportunities.
- Identifying and enabling opportunities to meet the accommodation needs of travelling communities.

The Council will report annually on the implementation of key actions, indicative measures of progress include:

- The Council's annual monitoring will include: five-year housing land supply measurement; total numbers of new dwellings; additional affordable housing units constructed; number of self and custom build opportunities delivered; number of new pitches and plots to meet the needs of the travelling community.
- Number of new homes built to accessible and adaptable standards in accordance with optional Part M4(2) of the Building Regulations.
- Our performance against meeting the housing needs of our communities: number of successful affordable housing allocations; number of temporary accommodation units available to the Council; number of empty homes within the District.

6. Modern Council Services and Sustainable Finance

Delivering excellent modern services whilst ensuring the financial sustainability of the Council.

We will continue to ensure that we provide efficient, value for money services whilst modernising Council services to ensure that they meet the evolving needs of customers and the area.

Key actions to include:

- Working with Publica, Ubico and other partners, to improve services by maximising accessibility, simplicity and quality.
- Engaging with service users to inform future service redesign.
- Introducing a new Council website that enables improved service access.
- Developing a property strategy/ asset management plan to outline how the Council can use its own property to deliver Council Plan objectives.
- Refreshing the Medium Term Financial Strategy to incorporate financial targets and setting a policy on the level of Council Tax which facilitates the Council's financial sustainability.
- Developing a Commissioning Strategy and Commercial Strategy which aim to ensure our financial position remains healthy whilst becoming less reliant upon volatile central government funding.
- Looking for opportunities through the One Public Estate programme to ensure that the public estate meets local needs and provides efficiencies.
- Using our investments, where appropriate opportunities present, to deliver on multiple objectives that deliver Council Plan priorities.
- Identifying, targeting and securing appropriate funding opportunities with external agencies.
- Referencing our Council Plan priorities as the context for assessing grant funding applications in support of community projects.

The Council will report annually on the implementation of key actions, indicative measures of progress include:

- More residents transacting with the Council through self-service channels.
- Improvements in measures of customer satisfaction.
- An updated Medium Term Financial Strategy which includes the impact of changes to central government funding, incorporates realistic and achievable actions to mitigate reductions in government funding, and plans to achieve a balanced budget within the next five years.
- Council tax level within lowest five shire districts in the country.

EXTRACTS FROM OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE MINUTES AND FOLLOW-ON COMMENTS FROM INDIVIDUAL COUNCILLORS	Officer comment on points raised/ how addressed
ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - 19 SEPTEMBER 2019	
<p>The Committee received and considered the report of the Business Manager – Insight and Intelligence which sought comment on the draft Council Plan 2019-2023.</p> <p>Councillor Coul expressed her disappointment that the draft Plan failed to include specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and time scaled objectives. Whilst she agreed with its emphasis, she felt that the content was not strong enough and that more robust, specific outcomes were required.</p> <p>Councillor Beaney indicated that the key priorities did not match the Plan’s vision and Councillor Acock questioned how the Plan would link to the Publica Business Plan. In response, Christine Gore, the Executive Director – Commissioning, advised that the Council Plan addressed wider areas.</p> <p>Councillor Coul felt that the six items in the Vision should reflect the Key Priorities.</p>	<p>Point addressed in the revised draft Council Plan. Indicative measures of progress are now better defined. There is an expectation that there will be an annual progress report. The Local Plan Annual Monitoring Report will be aligned with the progress report on the Council Plan so that changes in key economic, social and environmental indicators can be assessed.</p> <p>Point about the match between the Plan’s vision and priorities has been addressed in the revised draft Plan.</p> <p>The Council Plan will inform the new Publica Business Plan.</p> <p>Point addressed - vision statement and priorities now match.</p>
<p>Whilst endorsing the Plan’s Vision, Councillor Rylett considered that it should incorporate a wider range of priorities. He believed that the priority of Climate Change and Ecological Emergency should incorporate measures such as improving sustainability, tackling pollution, improving resilience,</p>	<p>Point noted and addressed.</p> <p>It is proposed that Biodiversity should form a key part of the climate change mitigation agenda with regard to the ability of the natural</p>

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<p>encouraging the circular economy and creating well-connected ecological networks. Measures of success should include the provision of a higher proportion of housing constructed to environmental standards.</p>	<p>environment to provide ecosystem services such as carbon storage, flood alleviation, air quality and water quality, as well as health and wellbeing benefits for local people.</p> <p>The management of land owned by the council that enhances its biodiversity value would therefore help to meet climate change mitigation targets, but also deliver on a number of other issues. The role of the Estates Team is significant in this work.</p> <p>The Nature Recovery Network (NRN) could also form a big part of this, particularly with regard to ecological networks. NRN is being mapped in Oxfordshire for the Oxfordshire Plan 2050 and maps need to be refined. Wild Oxon and the Biodiversity Action Group are relevant to this work. The Oxon Plan - mapping - national plan policy and draft environment bill are relevant factors here.</p> <p>The coherent approach to supporting Green Infrastructure should also be an important factor here. This can be designed using Building with Nature as a means of ensuring high quality for water, wildlife and wellbeing.</p> <p>The Council will need to quantify what we intend to achieve through our climate action. A report to Council in January is intended to make clear that there are a number of different strands associated with the Climate Emergency work - these include biodiversity, air quality and other considerations.</p> <p>In terms of the pursuit of a higher proportion of housing constructed to environmental standards, the following note is relevant. It is</p>

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	Government's intention to raise the energy and design standard of new homes and non-residential buildings over time. Implementing the highest possible standard will need to be a planning priority, coupled with the provision of Guidance on how that can be carried out.
Councillor Beaney pointed towards the appointment of Councillor Harvey as Cabinet Member with responsibility for Climate Change.	Noted. The Cabinet Portfolio Holder and Climate Change Working Group will be key to our strategy development work.
Councillor Coul suggested that improvement to air quality should be added as a measure of success. Dene Robson, the Business Manager – Insight and Intelligence, explained that the current report to the Overview and Scrutiny Committees did not identify specific measures of success but was intended to set out the Council's priorities. There was a lot of work in the course of development in relation to those areas flagged as matters of concern but, as yet, this had not been fully developed. More clearly defined action plans would be developed. Councillor Coul maintained that the current document was too imprecise.	Air quality will continue to be a key part of the Council's monitoring and the performance at Air Quality Management Areas will be assessed. There are key reference points for the Council's Air Quality monitoring work - these include the Government's Clean Air Strategy 2019 and the work towards introducing a new Environment Act. The planned Environment Act will encompass the consideration of air quality issues and the Council will stay abreast of developments.
Councillor Graham indicated that he found some of the phraseology employed to be unclear. He felt that there was a danger that the Council's focus would be too introspective and believed that it should look outside as well as within West Oxfordshire. Councillor Graham considered that the measures of success should be more extensive and suggested that the establishment and increase of recycling centres should be included.	It is accepted that the measures of success should be more extensive. Recycling centres provide one tool but are not necessarily a good measure of success - materials are now collected kerbside. We can pursue innovative approaches to enhancing waste recycling. For example, the pursuit of sustainability standards within the Area Action Plan for the Garden Village and Supplementary Planning Documents for strategic sites to encourage the adoption of innovative solutions eg for waste - require solutions that reduce waste at source and minimize need for transporting/ disposal of

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	resulting waste thus minimizing environmental impact. Where good practice/ innovative solutions can be demonstrated as effective, the Council can look at more widespread implementation and retrofitting opportunities.
Councillor Coul suggested that the intention to make District Council services Carbon neutral by 2030 should extend to other areas such as its investments.	In taking forward climate action within West Oxfordshire, two priorities will emerge: 1) action needed to become a carbon-neutral Council by 2030 and 2) a wider Strategy on climate action, extending the reach, partnership working across disciplines (e.g. biodiversity and land management, air quality, transport, waste, managing flood risk, water efficiencies) where the Council can influence, rather than have direct control over, positive steps to becoming a carbon-neutral District. By implementing step 1, the Council can lead by example in delivering and/or facilitating step 2.
Councillor Leverton suggested that the environmental and ecological objectives related to the Garden Village should be extended to all developments.	<p>Planning Policy response - Environmental and ecological objectives for the main strategic site allocations are able to be addressed to an extent through the proposed supplementary planning documents for each site, although this is not an opportunity to 'create' new policy as such. Anything more significant (e.g. requirement to achieve zero carbon) and/or intended to apply to all development 'across the board' would need to be addressed through a review of the Local Plan.</p> <p>A quicker sustainability checklist will be sought - Planning Policy staff are meeting the climate change working group to propose a sustainability checklist to sit alongside planning applications from next</p>

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	<p>year. It is also being suggested that Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) tease out what we can do now and in the near future as a standalone SPD or review of the Design Guide. Longer term, these considerations are relevant to the Garden Village Area Action Plan and then the review of the Local Plan.</p> <p>Appropriate funding is in place for a project that will provide guidance on reduced / zero carbon development to advise developers.</p> <p>Biodiversity net gain is being introduced as a mechanism for ensuring all developments make a contribution towards enhancing the natural environment, as in accordance with Policy EH3 of the Local Plan. The garden village should be an exemplar development in this regard.</p> <p>The creation of new green infrastructure that is attractive and useable for local people to access services such as schools, town centres, doctors, etc. is vital in some areas. This incorporates the creation of new habitats for biodiversity. The council needs to produce a Green Infrastructure (GI) Strategy. A GI strategy - will be a Supplementary Planning Document.</p> <p>The Council's Climate Change Working Group is looking at the Planning and Building Control role in achieving progress on this issue.</p>
<p>Councillor Bull expressed concern that the measures of success did not identify the means by which they would be achieved. In response, the Business Manager – Insight and Intelligence advised that the Plan was a high level working document that would be supported by other more detailed</p>	<p>The revised draft Council Plan sets out more detail on appropriate strategy development; measures of success; and how progress will be reported.</p>

EXTRACTS FROM OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE MINUTES AND FOLLOW-ON COMMENTS FROM INDIVIDUAL COUNCILLORS	Officer comment on points raised/ how addressed
<p>work. Councillor Bull felt that it was inappropriate for the Cabinet to present a report with too many targets that did not show how they would be measured.</p> <p>The Executive Director – Commissioning advised that the Cabinet had been keen to seek the views of the Overview and Scrutiny Committees and would welcome the observations Members made.</p>	
<p>Given the extent of new and existing development, Councillor Acock questioned how the Council would improve congestion on the A40, suggesting that the reinstatement of a rail link from Witney to Oxford was a solution. The Business Manager – Insight and Intelligence, advised that work was ongoing in other areas in conjunction with other bodies. Councillor Acock suggested that this could perhaps be a way in which to measure success.</p>	<p>The District Council recognises that the A40, which is the main east-west transport route in the District, suffers from severe congestion and acts as a potential constraint to economic and housing growth.</p> <p>Oxfordshire County Council is committed to a long term strategy to help alleviate congestion on the A40 and have prepared a package of measures, including the proposed new Park & Ride to the north of the A40 near Eynsham together with the provision of a new eastbound bus lane.</p> <p>Longer term solutions to the A40 have also been explored by the County Council, including a west-bound bus lane and £102m of Housing Infrastructure Fund investment has recently been awarded. This will deliver an extension of the A40 dual carriageway from Witney to the proposed Park and Ride near Eynsham, an extension of the A40 westbound bus lane from west of Duke’s Cut Canal and railway bridges near to the proposed Park and Ride, along with other improvements to widen pinch points.</p> <p>Park and ride is the immediate proposition to assist in tackling</p>

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	congestion, but other contributions to tackling the problem come from home working, mixed use development - reducing the need to travel on the A40. The Hanborough rail station is also significant in acting as a hub - with better connections targeted (particularly cycling/ walking and bus connections).
Councillor Ashbourne made reference to the health related issues identified in Annex 2 to the report and suggested that these should be included in the key priority of working towards healthier communities.	This area of the revised draft Council Plan has been further developed. There is an intention to look at our changing position in relation to key health indicators over time (as set out in the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment and other key monitoring resources).
Councillor Coul felt that it was inappropriate to include reference to improvements to the Carterton Leisure Centre as this work had already been completed.	Point noted and addressed.
Councillor Rylett suggested that the measures of success should include improving health indicators. Councillor Beaney reminded Members that, whilst it undoubtedly had a part to play, not all such issues were under the Council's direct control and the Business Manager – Insight and Intelligence confirmed that the Authority would work with its partners to achieve this aim.	<p>Within Oxfordshire there are excellent examples of the implementation and monitoring of healthy place-shaping principles. We can embed the healthy place-shaping approach into all that we do, both through new developments and enhancing existing areas, benefiting our population's physical and mental health.</p> <p>The review of relevant health indicators is recognised in the revised version of the Council Plan.</p>
Councillor Ashbourne questioned whether the replacement of the Windrush Leisure Centre in Witney was a firm commitment. The Business Manager – Insight and Intelligence advised that this had been identified by the Council as a recognised objective and the Executive Director –	The Leisure Facilities Action Plan (adopted by Council in 2011) states that options require investigating and recommendations made for the future of the Windrush Leisure Centre. A feasibility study has been completed which considers the facility mix. A further piece of work has been commissioned to identify site options for the new facility

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<p>Commissioning indicated that this formed part of the Council's leisure management contract.</p>	<p>that are suitable in planning terms. Officers are due to report back to Council in Autumn 2020 following the investigations and options appraisal so that the Council can make an informed decision regarding the feasibility, options and costs. Our future Leisure Strategy will inform the Council as to demand and the future mix of provision.</p>
<p>Turning to the priority to maintain a vibrant economy, Councillor Graham emphasised the importance of maintaining the vitality and viability of town centres. He suggested that the Council should work with other districts to promote tourism and felt that, in view of the extent of planned and recent development, there was a need to review tourism, culture, arts and heritage.</p>	<p>The Council's tourism function works very closely with other districts to promote tourism - we lead Cotswolds Tourism: a grouping of five districts (WODC, Cotswold DC, Stroud, Tewkesbury & Cheltenham) managing the main tourism website for the Cotswolds (www.cotswolds.com) with 1.3m unique users yearly, Cotswolds social media channels with c100k followers and a fortnightly consumer newsletter to 40k people plus various publications and guides.</p> <p>The significance of tourism, culture, arts and heritage in terms of contributing to town centre vitality and viability is recognised. It is considered that the best approach in supporting towns is one that adapts to the strengths and particular context of given settlements.</p> <p>OxLEP on behalf of Oxfordshire is producing an Arts and Culture strategy to be prepared in the event of infrastructure funding coming forward into the county. We are being consulted to help inform this work.</p>
<p>Councillor Acock considered that more concrete measures of success were required. Councillor Coul felt that there was nothing to reflect the changing nature of the high street and suggested that the Council should support the change from traditional retail to a service based economy.</p>	<p>The suggested performance measures have been revised across the Council Plan themes. The Local Plan Annual Monitoring Report and Council Plan reporting will be brought into alignment to support progress reports.</p>

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	<p>The challenge of addressing the changing nature of the high street is recognised. Our approach to economic development and business support acknowledges that all the towns are different and the issues are subtly different. It is considered that a single plan would not be effective. The Council will need to work with the Town Councils and business groups / stakeholders on an approach for each of the towns.</p>
<p>Whilst endorsing the objective, Councillor Leverton pointed out that there was no suitable land available in Carterton to accommodate commercial development.</p>	<p>This point is recognised. A longer term discussion with businesses will need to feed into the review of the Local Plan. The Council is working with OxLEP regarding the longer term delivery of employment land. The Council is looking to take a more active role in facilitating delivery.</p>
<p>With regard to developing stronger local communities, with reference to the development at Shilton Park, Councillor McBride questioned how the Council would seek to integrate new development with existing communities.</p>	<p>The revised draft Council Plan has been adapted in light of the comment raised.</p> <p>The approach taken to address this issue has to be one that is cross cutting - from numerous parts of the Council and wider partners. Our contribution in Healthy Communities is to work with services which exist already and develop their connections so as to maximise the offer for residents. There is an intention to be more focussed on place and work with residents directly to find out what is needed and what skills are present.</p> <p>Our suggested approach is now more fully developed in the revised Council Plan. The suggested future activity includes seeking shared, accessible buildings, facilities and spaces that can help promote social integration and cohesion and a more effective joint use of sites.</p> <p>The creation of new places should aim to provide a strong, vibrant,</p>

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	inclusive and connected community. To create this, the emphasis should be on 'place-making' rather than just buildings and spaces. The provision of shared, accessible buildings, facilities and spaces can help promote social integration and cohesion. In particular, initiatives such as parks with interactive features, community notice boards, flexible spaces for local clubs and home workers will help build a strong community.
Councillor Ashbourne asked what was meant by multi agency working and made reference to asset based community development projects operating in Gloucestershire. The Business Manager – Insight and Intelligence advised that similar projects were under consideration in West Oxfordshire.	Our community development work has sought to learn from asset based approaches and welcomes Cllr Ashbourne's interest. We do deliver this approach in part but do not use this phrase. Building on the existing strengths and provision in a community is key as are enough people on the ground. Multi-agency working is about a 'whole system' working in partnership and is used a lot in the context of health care.
Councillor Coul considered that rural isolation and loneliness should be highlighted as a specific objective.	Point accepted - the draft Council Plan has been revised to incorporate this concern. Much of our work recognises this issue and it is helpful to express it in the Council Plan paper.
Councillor Graham found the proposals poor and believed that these were things that the Council should have been doing directly. He asked which partners promoted West Oxfordshire as a visitor destination and questioned the merit of the pilot project to promote local pubs. The Business Manager – Insight and Intelligence explained that the Cabinet was keen to build upon and strengthen existing relationships with local councils and wished to hold more Town and Parish Council Forum meetings. With regard to tourism, he advised that the destination management organisation promoted the local area and the intention was to connect with local	<p>As noted earlier, the Council leads Cotswolds Tourism - a grouping of five districts (WODC, Cotswold DC, Stroud, Tewkesbury & Cheltenham) managing the main tourism website for the Cotswolds (www.cotswolds.com)</p> <p>Cotswolds Tourism always tries to work with local projects/ towns/ villages/ groups - especially where the Tourism function can bring local businesses/ groups together.</p> <p>Pubs are the main focal point for many smaller communities and a</p>

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<p>projects. The pub walk project was an attempt to enhance the viability of local pubs.</p>	<p>major attraction for visitors to the area, so projects that can help sustain them should be worthwhile.</p>
<p>Councillor Beaney considered this to be a good plan and Councillor Carter indicated that she did not share the negative opinions expressed by some Members of the Committee. She felt that it was good to be creative and welcomed the difference between the draft Plan and its predecessor document.</p> <p>The Business Manager – Insight and Intelligence suggested that Members might be judging the Plan too early as it had only recently emerged and was to guide the Council’s path over the next four years. The current draft was designed to offer Members the opportunity to engage in the Plan’s development.</p>	
<p>Councillor Rylett suggested that an additional priority to promote place making and community building in areas of new housing should be incorporated and questioned how it was intended to improve communication and engagement with town and parish councils. The Business Manager – Insight and Intelligence reiterated that this was a high level document and that specific measures would come forward in the associated action plans.</p>	<p>Point accepted. The promotion of place making and community building has been strengthened in both the Healthy Towns and Villages and the Strong Local Communities themes in the revised draft Council Plan. Our work in this area is still being developed.</p> <p>West Oxfordshire is part of a successful countywide bid to Sport England around Place Shaping which will see us in receipt of a post for 9 months to assist the early stage of this work area. We are looking at how this type of work can be taken forward over the medium term.</p> <p>The Council is looking at Healthy Place Shaping activity jointly with Public Health in 2020. This work will learn from work underway elsewhere in the County.</p>

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	<p>The focused work on the Garden Village Stewardship and maintenance arrangements will result in replicable learning that will be transferable to other strategic development areas.</p> <p>There is a commitment to enhanced working with Towns and Parishes that is reflected in the Council Plan.</p>
<p>In terms of meeting housing need, Councillor Coul reiterated the need for temporary accommodation within the District. Councillor Bull emphasised the need for more bungalows.</p>	<p>The Housing Team is working closely with the Property Manager and a number of our partners to source additional temporary accommodation in the area. This is a long term process and is dependent on having the right resources - both financial and staffing - to make this sustainable in the long term. Funding is available to purchase an additional temporary unit.</p> <p>In terms of the need for more bungalows, the garden village Area Action Plan (AAP) and other strategic sites SPDs provide an opportunity to seek a balanced mix of housing types. We need to support a wide range of housing typologies.</p> <p>Some of the demand for given property types is being met by the requirement for developers to provide a percentage of adaptable homes. People often want an adaptable and flexible property that enables them to “age in place”. Some caution from registered providers about taking affordable bungalows. However, some bungalows are being built eg Stanton Harcourt, Minster Lovell including affordable. It should be borne in mind that Bungalows are land-greedy and registered providers view them as more expensive to build than can be recouped from the affordable rents.</p>

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<p>Councillor Graham considered that the provision of new pitches and plots to meet the needs of the travelling community should be identified as a key action as well as a measure of success and Councillor Acock suggested that this ought not to be restricted to fixed sites but also address the needs of those who travelled.</p>	<p>Point noted. Whilst already addressed in the Local Plan it is agreed that this is also now recognised in the revised draft Council Plan.</p> <p>This issue will also be addressed through the Oxfordshire Plan 2050 (complete 2020).</p>
<p>Councillor Carter stressed the need for more truly affordable housing.</p>	<p>The phrase 'truly affordable' is often used but it is relative as what is affordable to one person may not be affordable to another. Most people accept that 'social rents' in the region of say £500pcm are affordable compared to other tenures such as affordable rent. The Local Plan however expresses a preference for affordable rent and intermediate housing but makes no reference to social rent. Housing officers are undertaking further work to establish what a 'living rent' for the District might be. Options for developing the Council's approach include the work on strategic sites.</p> <p>There is work in progress towards 'living rent'. There are a small amount of social or lower rent properties coming forward (Blenheim, Platform @ Milestone Rd, Mears @ Stanmore Cres funded by Growth Deal). Introducing different types of intermediate housing (Garden Village and Milestone Road) not just shared ownership.</p> <p>There is an opportunity for Social Rents (SR) via the Growth Deal and Oxfordshire Cotswolds Garden Village, plus WODC owned land can be brought forward for affordable housing to include SR as well.</p>
<p>With regard to the Council's Services and Finance, Councillor Acock considered maintaining a low level of Council Tax to be a political choice</p>	<p>Point noted. A political ambition of maintaining a low Council Tax is known and a measure of success when achieved. There are other measures set alongside which will give a more rounded view of</p>

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rather than a measure of success.	Council performance - modernisation of service delivery and achieving sustainable finance.
<p>Councillor Ashbourne noted that, on occasion, there had been a significant underspend in previous years and suggested that there should be a commitment to spend to budget. Councillor Coul suggested that this could give rise to unnecessary expenditure and waste and the Executive Director – Commissioning advised that expenditure should be driven by the Council’s Performance Indicators. The Business Manager – Insight and Intelligence indicated that original budgets could be underspent as a result of external funding being secured to support the Council’s activities.</p>	<p>Our new Commissioning Strategy should assist in focusing our spending in meeting the Council’s priority aims.</p> <p>In a period of austerity, areas of savings will be examined. The Council seeks to maintain a focus on delivering to our objectives. We will continue to learn from our budgeted spending and use resources to deliver against our priorities. Acting prudently, the Council is not in a position to budget for things using finance that is at risk.</p> <p>The Council controls decisions on the use of funds resulting from underspend that can then be re-directed at priority objectives.</p>
<p>Councillor Graham considered that the Plan should include a caveat that the Council would not compromise its commitment towards green priorities and climate change and suggested that this be included at this point.</p> <p>RESOLVED: That the comments set out above be conveyed to the Cabinet and Council.</p>	The Climate Action section of the revised Council Plan has been strengthened.

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<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Comments Received from Members of the Finance and Management Overview and Scrutiny Committee</u> <u>2 October 2019</u></p>	
<p>The Chairman, Councillor Cotterill, queried one of the actions relating to Key Priorities listed under 'Stronger Local Communities' in Annex A. The action was described as:</p> <p>“Encouraging towns and parishes to engage with their residents in order to articulate local priorities and support them to address these.”</p> <p>Councillor Cotterill did not feel that many parish council’s communicated, interacted or received support from the District Council on any matters unless they related to highways or planning. In his experience, the District Council simply did not feature in their meetings.</p> <p>Councillor Postan queried whether the Salesforce system could be linked in with parishes and suggested that it could be useful to flag up the parish clerk’s details in the system.</p>	<p>The Council has made a commitment to engage with Towns and Parishes through regular forums. Opportunities will also be taken to engage on particular topics.</p> <p>There may well be merit in supporting liaison meetings with given towns that would support the reporting of issues from both sides. This issue is under consideration.</p> <p>These actions should, in part, address the point made. It should also be noted that the ward District Councillor plays a significant role in maintaining the relationship and facilitating communication.</p> <p>This issue has been lodged and requires further follow-up to see what potential it offers.</p>

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<p>Follow-on Comments:</p> <p>Councillor Cotterill</p> <p>“My main concern was lack of emphasis on working with Town and Parish Councils. Publica has the appearance of WODC as an entity drifting away from the towns and parishes. They are remote and do not feature in council discussions as they used to. Planning is the only liaison now operative on a frequent basis. OCC Highways and other OCC activities are more evident.”</p>	<p>See commentary in response to the earlier related point on this issue.</p>
<p>Councillor Levy</p> <p>“Vision.</p> <p>What are “unique opportunities” for businesses?</p> <p>“Creating both high quality market and affordable housing” capable of being read as meaning affordable housing is not high quality. Suggest rewording to “creating market and affordable housing of a high quality”.</p> <p>“Delivering excellent services” must be a standalone objective.</p> <p>Ensuring financial sustainability should be a separate objective.</p> <p>Key priority: Climate and Ecological Emergency.</p>	<p>This area of the Council Plan draft has been reworded to reflect that we seek business development that is consistent with achieving the gains targeted in the Oxfordshire Local Industrial Strategy.</p> <p>Point noted. Wording of revised draft strategy document changed to incorporate this clarification.</p> <p>Ensuring financial sustainability is a cross cutting theme and it relates to areas across the Council Plan’s themes. However, it is considered to sit comfortably in the current section as there is a significant interplay between the pursuit of modern Council Services and the achievement of a sustainable finance position.</p>

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<p>Add: ensure that car use in West Oxfordshire reduces by promoting active travel, public transport and the provision of facilities close to residents' homes.</p> <p>Key Priority: working towards Healthier Communities.</p> <p>Add "increase the use of bicycles and other active travel methods".</p>	<p>This area of work is well established in Planning Policy work. The commitment to specific work on Eynsham is underway and there has been significant work with Oxfordshire County Council in relation to Witney. The work on strategic development sites will look at the provision for alternative modes of travel as part of the master planning.</p> <p>A part of the Local Plan is the commitment to a Green Infrastructure Strategy. The pursuit of Nature Recovery Networks is a related area of work. There is a strong link between green infrastructure, provision for active travel and health and wellbeing and this is now recognised in the Healthy Towns and Villages section of the Council Plan.</p>
<p><u>Councillor Poskitt</u></p>	
<p>Going through the document, the aspirations are for the most part fine but they remain aspirations. I see little in the way of specific actions. There needs to be more actual action particularly over the climate emergency measures. I would suggest the following need to come out more strongly: Climate and ecological emergency: What about the things we should encourage (enforce?) when dealing with developments? Egg: solar panels; electric car charging points; recycling water ie. using grey water for purposes which do not require potable water. Is it possible to think about introducing them into local design policies?</p>	<p>Point noted.</p> <p>The Council will seek relevant actions that assist the achievement of our priority policies. This will include reviewing relevant policy. For example, the Local Design Guide will encompass a look at sustainable design and construction.</p> <p>Our proposals for a Climate Change Strategy will address a couple of core objectives:</p> <p>1. Carbon Neutral Council by 2030. 2 Climate Change Strategy - wider reaching work with district partners etc. A proposal and report</p>

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	<p>is being developed to present to Full Council on how this can be achieved and the steps required to deliver the Council's commitment.</p> <p>The Council will need to look at its own land management - what we do with our own assets and how we can manage land more effectively.</p>
<p>Working towards healthier communities. There is nothing here about air quality which is an important issue and something about which measures can fairly readily be taken to try to improve this.</p>	<p>Air quality will form part of the approach directed through our Climate Change Strategy. The Council will also consider the role of biodiversity improvements in contributing to the positive impact on this issue - trees, hedgerows, scrub and woodland should form part of any air quality strategy.</p>
<p>Vibrant economy. What prohibits even thinking of many of the things which could lead to a vibrant economy is, and Woodstock is not alone in this, lack of sufficient parking. People will not come to go to shops if they know they are unlikely to be able to park their car. It is easy to talk about buses and walking but neither of these are easy for a rushed mother with, for example, two children under five who she has to take with her with sometimes the best part of a mile's walk into the town centre. Yet, unless we can get residents from new developments on the edges of towns/large villages to come into the centre and participate in community life, even that only involves in shopping, our communities will not benefit from the residents in new developments and the renewed vigour they may bring to a community, perhaps previously with an above average demographic.</p>	<p>The Council's adopted Local Plan recognises that our town centres face a number of challenges such as changing consumer behaviour and increasing competition from the Internet, although this is not unique to our District. As such, strategies which support our high streets are vital and these include parking, accessibility, publicity, security and improved public realm.</p> <p>The Council has prepared a District-wide Parking Strategy in recognition that car parking is nearing capacity in the town centres and this investigates whether parking provision meets current needs and will meet future parking requirements. Whilst the availability of car parking provision will remain important, opportunities to increase car parking in town centres are limited.</p> <p>The Council recognises that opportunities to reduce the reliance on the private car should also be explored to help tackle congestion, vehicle emissions, promote healthy lifestyles and to help tackle climate change. This change in travel behaviour could also have many</p>

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	social and community benefits.
<p>Meeting the housing needs of our changing communities. It is widely recognised we need more two and three bedroom houses on new developments yet we seem to allow developers to build four and five bedroom homes for vast prices (which may not sell) and to deliver fewer 'affordable' homes than they perhaps originally promise or our Local Plan 2011-31 indicates. Planners must show their teeth</p>	<p>Housing comment - Three bed properties are currently quite hard to let through the waiting list and with Blenheim Estates - 1 and 2 bed properties remain our most sought after property size type. The stats below demonstrate low demand for 3 bed or larger from the waiting list.</p> <p>Homeseeker Plus current applicants data show that 1 bed properties are in most demand at 51% of all applications - 2 beds second at 32% and then 3 beds at 12% with 4bed+ making up the final 5%. Demand and affordability is the challenge for 3 - 4 bed plus.</p> <p>Planning Policy comment - The Local Plan seeks to ensure the provision of a good, balanced mix of property types and sizes (Policy H4). The supporting text to the policy includes an indicative mix for market housing of 4.8% 1-bed, 27.9% 2-bed, 43.4% 3-bed properties and 23.9% 4+bed. For affordable housing, the plan suggests 65% 1-bed and 2-bed and 35% 3 and 4-bed homes. Now the policy is adopted, officers should be ensuring that development schemes achieve a good mix of property types and tenures.</p> <p>The garden village Area Action Plan (AAP) and other strategic site SPDs provide an opportunity to further consider the issue of housing type and tenure at those particular sites.</p> <p>Strategic Housing comment - We are seeing a couple of instances where developers are moving away from larger market homes, although presumably a more market led change (eg. Ph 3A at west Witney, early feedback from Grosvenor for GV). A significant majority of schemes are delivering affordable housing at levels that</p>

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	<p>meet policy. Platform bringing forward all-affordable sites and other RP's looking to develop in this way. Our information on affordable rental demand shows a high demand for 1 bedroom homes as well as 2 & 3 bedroomed.</p> <p>Where developers are providing fewer affordable homes it is due to viability as in Long Hanborough where a £2million new doctors surgery was provided.</p> <p>The demand for larger family homes for affordable housing has not diminished, merely the affordability of these homes. The inclusion of Social Rents could help to address this.</p>
<p>We need to promote schemes which make 'affordable' homes more affordable and which keeps them as homes for shared purchase or low rental indefinitely otherwise we shall never keep up with the need for social housing.</p>	<p>Planning Policy comment - see response above in relation to the issue of 'truly affordable housing'. The ability to ensure affordable properties remain affordable in perpetuity will presumably depend on the tenure involved. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) defines several categories of affordable housing including affordable housing for rent, starter homes, discounted market sales housing and other affordable routes to home ownership including shared ownership. For the latter category it may not be possible to ensure such properties remain affordable in perpetuity e.g. as someone in a shared ownership property 'staircases' up to 100% ownership.</p> <p>Housing Strategy comment - A significant majority of schemes brought forward meet the policy requirement for shared ownership homes (approx. 1/3 of affordable provision).</p> <p>The Blenheim affordable housing approach allows for the buyback of</p>

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	<p>homes that are stair cased to 100% ownership when they come up for sale so that they can be recycled as affordable and kept in perpetuity.</p> <p>It should be noted that people who live in homes developed by housing associations have a statutory right to buy their home.</p> <p>Whilst it is difficult to address the issue, the Council can seek to maintain affordable housing stock at current levels or enhanced.</p> <p>As a part of our approach, there is a prospect of promoting Community Led Housing working in partnership with Registered Social Landlords (RSL's).</p>
<p>Infrastructure concerns underlie many of the community worries about new developments. Is it not possible to get infrastructure modifications before the housing or insist it must be in place before homes are occupied.....and this infrastructure is not just bus stops and the splays at the entrance to main roads from developments but actual changes in the feeding roads where there is already congestion?</p>	<p>Planning Policy comment - The Council's Local Plan makes clear that new development should be coupled with appropriate and timely investment in supporting infrastructure which is a key element of sustainable development. As such, the Council will ensure that all new development delivers or contributes towards the delivery of supporting infrastructure. On larger sites, phasing of development will be required and later phases may be contingent on essential infrastructure, including highway improvements, already being in place. This infrastructure will be delivered through Section 106 Agreements and/ or Community Infrastructure (CIL) once adopted as well as other funding mechanisms.</p> <p>The early provision of infrastructure is often a key concern raised in relation to new development and often this focuses around transport provision. In support of the West Oxfordshire Local Plan, the Council prepared an Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) which</p>

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	<p>identified a range of infrastructure needed to support planned growth to 2031. It is currently in need of updating but provides a useful basis for discussions with developers. Further, specific work is underway to identify in more detail the infrastructure needed to support planned growth at Eynsham. The phasing of infrastructure provision is often tied in with phases of development to enable developers to achieve a satisfactory cash flow. In some instances, it may be possible to forward fund key infrastructure with money repaid by a developer at a later date.</p> <p>Perhaps a session/ workshop on development viability might help councillors understand the economics and cash flow profile for developments.</p>
<p>It is concerning that regularly (and the supporting papers show this) West Oxfordshire has above average rates of death or serious injury resulting from road traffic accidents – doubly concerning when one considers how much the average driver in West Oxfordshire spends sitting in a slow moving queue or not moving at all in his car.</p>	<p>Point noted. See further comment below extracted from the most recent Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA).</p> <p>The JSNA 2019 shows that across Oxfordshire road casualties are reducing, but remain high compared to statistical neighbours.</p> <p>Over the long term there has been a downward trend in reported accidents and injuries in Oxfordshire.</p> <p>When compared to statistical neighbours, Oxfordshire continues to be among poorer performers. However, a more detailed analysis of the data taking account of traffic flows suggests actual risks faced by road users are very similar to other parts of the country.</p>

EXTRACTS FROM OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE MINUTES AND FOLLOW-ON COMMENTS FROM INDIVIDUAL COUNCILLORS	Officer comment on points raised/ how addressed
Extract from Minutes of the meeting of the Environment Overview & Scrutiny Committee, Thursday 10 October 2019	
<p>Councillor Al-Yousuf did note however, that in response to the section advising that the plan was currently presented as ‘flat text’ that this may be an opportunity to make the document less verbose. He felt that this may assist in reducing its length and would make it easier to digest. Members agreed that the plan needed to be more action orientated and aspirational, with clearer numbers and dates for the implementation of actions.</p> <p>Councillor Postan reiterated his comment that the Salesforce system could be developed to create a ‘dashboard’ for Councillors to assist in their work and help officers work more efficiently alongside them.</p>	<p>Revised Plan now presented for approval. The new paper is more action oriented with a more developed commitment to measuring progress.</p> <p>See note in relation to earlier comment. This issue will need to be taken up in the Salesforce development work</p>
<p>Follow-on Comments</p> <p>Comments from: Cllr Harry St John</p>	
<p>I think the dates may need to be 2020 to 2025 rather than 2019 /24.</p> <p>An executive summary with bullet points would be good.</p> <p>Current draft seems very wordy and long.</p>	<p>Dates in revised draft Plan now set at 2020-24 (period deemed a suitable framework for the development and completion of strategic actions.</p> <p>The vision statement and priority themes now reworded to match. The vision statement can be taken as a summary of the Plan’s key areas.</p>
<p>Key priority – climate change – no specific mention of dealing with surface water / flooding and foul drainage issues and river quality.</p>	<p>This issue will be relevant to our Climate Strategy work. The use of natural flood management must be included in any consideration of flood defence - support for our catchment partnerships, e.g.</p>

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	Evenlode, should continue and be increased. River corridors are a key part of any ecological network.
<p>Why not raise Code requirement for all dwellings – better insulation, airtightness, air/ground heat exchange etc. as part of planning condition - if builders want to build in W/O they must do it to better standard and not leave it to be retro fitted later.</p>	<p>The Council’s Climate Change Working Group is looking at the Planning and Building Control role in achieving this.</p> <p>A Government consultation is now out and proposes a new Future Homes Standard from 2025 which is estimated to reduce carbon emissions by 75/80% when compared to current Building Regulations, 2013. Part L Building Regulations are also due to be updated in 2020 and this will raise the energy performance standard of new homes as a step change towards the new Future Homes Standard. Government proposals for AD L 2020 include CO2 emission reductions that are 30% above current standards, i.e. this far exceeds the energy equivalent of a Code 4, CfSH standard for example which has been commonly referenced across the UK within the context of planning and represents a 19% reduction over AD L 2013. We can expect to see new and better standards.</p> <p>There is therefore opportunity to 1) respond to the Government consultations in order to lobby for earlier implementation of a Future Homes Standard and 2) push for the design of new homes, particularly in the strategic sites, to meet emerging standards as opposed to designing to Building Regulations 2013 which are widely accepted as being out of date and in need of an update.</p>
<p>No specific mention of promoting/delivering new pollinator and other wildlife friendly habitats via the planning system and not just in the Garden Village although that can be flagship exemplar. Cross reference wellbeing</p>	<p>A Biodiversity net gain mechanism should be supported by the Council to ensure that there is an uplift in the amount of biodiversity in the district to tackle the continuing decline (e.g. see State of</p>

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aspect in Healthier communities priority.	<p>Nature for Oxfordshire report). Biodiversity net gain encourages developers to do more on-site (mitigation hierarchy), but where a certain level (e.g. 10%) cannot be achieved, then a financial contribution for biodiversity is paid that delivers projects close to the site and at least within the district. This is a mechanism that should deliver a positive change for biodiversity and should be viewed positively as a result. Any mitigation and compensation requirements would need to be effectively dealt with (on or off-site), so the financial contribution is actually for positive change - a net gain in biodiversity for the district.</p> <p>The production of a Green Infrastructure Strategy that incorporates the use of Building with Nature principles is now incorporated as a key measure under the Climate Action theme. The importance of green infrastructure is also now reflected in the key actions set out in the Healthy Towns and Villages theme.</p>
In climate change KP, 70% recycling /composting target - add “or better”.	Point noted. Although this issue does not now feature as one of the progress measures for reporting on the Council Plan. However, it is a measure that is reported in performance indicators.
Vibrant economy - no specific mention of RURAL part of the District’s economy and Tourism might be given more prominence given its size in WO.	Point noted. Adjusted wording in the revised Council Plan addresses this point.
Local communities- last action needs rewording into plain English! Its gobbledegook!	The section has been reworded in the revised draft Council Plan.

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<p>More should be done to help community bus services in rural areas as that key service for a successful District economy.</p>	<p>Accepted that rural access is a significant issue. The District should look to work in partnership with the strategic transport authority (the County Council) where opportunities arise. A town and locality approach is taken in looking at accessibility.</p>
<p>Housing section – Cannot see any mention of elderly housing provision in the mix...a significant part of the demographic in WO.</p>	<p>The strategy does not at present differentiate the provision of housing for the elderly - it is couched in terms of meeting the overall supply to meet the range of community needs. This approach is consistent with our Local Plan's commitment to ensure provision of a balanced mix of property.</p> <p>Housing Strategy comment - There are proposals for retirement complexes at Freeland and the Garden Village (GV). There is also the quest for the supply of adaptable homes. Grant funded Extra Care / over 55's schemes are being brought forward in Chipping Norton and Witney.</p> <p>It is intended that the GV site can also offer integrated care with nursery / other amenity provision. Still subject to masterplan discussions.</p>
<p>Reduce the 300 houses empty for over two years by half might be a worthwhile target. See also page 15 – no mention of this and no mention of av. affordable rent and social sector is quoted per week rather than pcm - muddling?</p>	<p>Work is being undertaken by the Housing team (recent press release) to get empty homes back into circulation.</p> <p>Affordable rent and social rent is expressed as weekly (based on frequency of pay / benefits?) whilst market housing is typically expressed per calendar month. These are conventions in how data is presented.</p>

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Reducing emergency gold and silver bands to almost zero leaving bronze band the only significant number in the List.	Housing Team comment - The current waiting list comprises of 16.5% of those in Emergency, Gold and Silver bandings with 83.5% in Bronze. Therefore this already provides a good balance. The waiting list continually changes as people are housed and others apply and therefore reducing this to almost zero would not be possible.
Page 3 - housing stats – which 2031 forecast is correct OCC or ONS?	<p>Both forecasts are valid in their own terms though different due to the alternative forecasting methods that are being used.</p> <p>The key difference between the Office for National Statistics (ONS) projections and Oxfordshire County Council (OCC) forecasts is that ONS uses data on past trends (only) whereas OCC's model includes assumptions about future housing completions. These housing assumptions are provided by District Council planning teams. For West Oxfordshire, housing developments were included that were in the draft local plan as of January 2018.</p> <p>Most of the other assumptions used in the OCC model are the same as those used by ONS. For West Oxfordshire, we use ONS data for the base (starting) population, ONS births, deaths, internal and international migration and ONS predicted change in fertility.</p> <p>One difference (other than using assumptions on future housing growth) is that the OCC model uses slightly different assumptions on household occupancy to ONS. This is the explanation from our population forecasting expert...</p> <p>We deviate from the ONS 'position' about future Representative Rates (or Headship Rates as they used to be known) – we've used</p>

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	the Local Plans Expert Group trajectory for the past few forecast series, and they incorporate mild recovery in household formation following the 2008 recession (i.e. we are actually assuming slightly fewer people over time for a given stock of housing than the latest ONS projections of Representative rates). ONS population projections don't relate to housing stock so they don't relate to any Representative Rate data.
23 and page 24/25- no mention of water quality and sewage storm surcharging from STWs. – aim to raise EA and TW standards in licences for STWs.	It is recognised that water quality will be an issue that is addressed through West Oxfordshire's Climate Change Strategy.