



WEST OXFORDSHIRE
DISTRICT COUNCIL

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| Name and Date of Committee | OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 4 SEPTEMBER 2024 |
| Subject | RESPONDING TO EXTERNAL CONSULTATIONS |
| Wards Affected | ALL |
| Accountable Member | Councillor Andy Graham – Leader of the Council Email: andy.graham@westoxon.gov.uk |
| Accountable Officer | Giles Hughes – Chief Executive Email: giles.hughes@westoxon.gov.uk |
| Report Author | Astrid Harvey, Strategic Policy and Partnerships Officer Email: astrid.harvey@westoxon.gov.uk |
| Purpose | The Overview and Scrutiny Committee has requested detail on how West Oxfordshire District Council assesses which external consultations it responds to. |
| Annexes | Nil |
| Recommendations | That the Committee resolves to: <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Note the content of the report;2. Agree any recommendations it wishes to submit to the Executive. |
| Corporate Priorities | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Putting Residents First• Enabling a Good Quality of Life for All• Creating a Better Environment for People and Wildlife• Responding to the Climate and Ecological Emergency• Working Together for West Oxfordshire |
| Key Decision | NO |
| Exempt | NO |
| Consultees Consultation | Cross service officer engagement to seek examples of recent responses to external consultations. |

I. EXTERNAL CONSULTATIONS

- I.1** West Oxfordshire District Council receives a wide range of consultations from a variety of bodies that deem it to be a relevant consultee. These include, but are not limited to, Central Government bodies, other Local Authorities within and beyond Oxfordshire, the Cotswold National Landscape, Thames Valley Police, Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and West Berkshire Integrated Care Board, and organisations from within the Community and Voluntary Sector.
- I.2** External bodies may send consultations directly to Senior Officers within the service that is most relevant to the matter or topic under consultation or they may be sent to the Council Leader, relevant Executive Member or Chief Executive Officer who will delegate the consultation request to the relevant Service.
- I.3** On receipt of a consultation, Senior Officers will assess the consultation against criteria in order to determine if a response is required and to undertake the consultation response. The assessment criteria include:
- The impact on and/or significance of the proposal to the District;
 - Whether the Council is statutorily required to submit a consultation response;
 - The value to be added by the Council submitting a consultation response;
 - Whether the consultation relates to a matter the Council wishes to influence;
 - How relevant the consultation is to the services the Council is responsible for; and
 - How relevant the consultation is to progressing the strategic priorities of the Council.
- I.4** In undertaking the assessment against the criteria above, Senior Officers may engage with lead Members to inform their judgement of the significance of the proposal or matter. Usually this would be the Executive Member with portfolio responsibility for the matter being consulted on.
- I.5** Consultations received by the Council fall in to three categories.
1. Operational matters
 2. Those directly relevant to an Executive Portfolio
 3. Those that require a report to the Executive for decision because the matter is so significant to the Council.
- I.6** Examples of external consultations responded to by the Council include:
- Cotswold National Landscape Management Plan, (September 2023).
 - 2024 – 25 Provisional Local Government Finance Settlement, (January 2024).
 - Proposed legislative changes to the Accounts and Audit Regulations (2015), (March 2024).

- Neighbouring authorities Local Plan consultations: Cherwell Local Plan, (November 2023), and Oxford Local Plan, (January 2024).
- Changes to the National Planning Policy Framework, (February 2023).
- Botley West Statutory Consultation, (February 2024).
- Serious Case Reviews (ad hoc) in relation to Safeguarding statutory requirements, (most recently April 2024).
- International Migration Resettlement Schemes, (January 2024).

2. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 2.1** No specific budget is allocated to support the resourcing of the Council's capacity to respond to external consultations. Careful assessment of the consultation against the criteria above allows for a judgement over the resource implications of responding to external consultations to be made.

3. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1** Where the Council is statutorily required to respond to an external consultation it will always fulfil this legal obligation.

4. RISK ASSESSMENT

- 4.1** Not applicable

5. EQUALITIES IMPACT

- 5.1** Not applicable

6. CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1** Not applicable

7. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

- 7.1** Not applicable

8. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 8.1** None.

(END)