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Introduction: Foreword from the Leader and Chief Executive

Welcome to Oxford City Council's Corporate Plan 2013-17.

The Corporate Plan is Oxford City Council's key strategic document. This plan updates and takes forward the main themes agreed by the Council in recent years. It sets out the Council's strategic direction over the next four years. It also highlights key areas of new investment.

The Corporate Plan 2013–17 reaffirms the Council's ambition – developed with our partners, including local business, community organisations, the health and education sectors and the County Council – to make Oxford a world-class city for all its citizens.

Oxford City Council is, increasingly, an efficient and effective organisation. The Council has achieved £8.5 million of efficiency savings over the last 4 years and is on track to make a further £1.3 million savings this year, without the need for compulsory redundancies.

In the last year alone the Council has:

- Achieved or exceeded 90% of its corporate targets
- Won the silver award in the Council of the Year category of the Improvement and Efficiency South East annual awards
- Been awarded £1.5million from Europe to progress our work to build a low carbon economy
- been awarded £310,000 from the Department of Energy and Climate Change to further boost energy efficiency projects in the city. The funding will help expand the *Warming Barton* pilot project which will help householders save energy and create warmer homes in the city's most deprived area
- Opened a new state-of-the-art customer service centre in St Aldate's
- Created a corporate call centre and introduced one phone number for all Council services. We answered 89% of calls received and improved the customer experience by resolving 90% of queries at the first point of contact
- Improved employee attendance and reduced sickness absence by 25% through robust performance management
- Achieved Investors in People accreditation for the whole Council, and accreditation in the Equalities Framework for Local Government

The Council's rigorous approach to efficiency is at the heart of its programme.

Increased efficiency in the Council's internal operations means that we:

- have more resources available to invest in those services that impact on the daily lives of our citizens
- have been able to agree a new, ground-breaking pay deal with Unison and Unite the Union which gives staff an annual 1.5% cost of living increase for the next five years and the opportunity for additional pay based on good performance and attendance. The new deal sets pay at a level which secures the council's budget provision. It will also enable us to manage a 30% funding cut from central government without cutting services or jobs
- have also been able to maintain our Living Wage policy for directly employed staff and contractors. The new pay deal further improves conditions for Council staff on low pay by putting our minimum wage above the living wage level.

Over the next twelve months and beyond, the Council will continue to look outward, focusing on putting in place long-term measures that will help the city to fulfil its potential.

Issues that we will be focusing on include:

- Helping to overcome some of the problems around skills that restrict access to jobs
- Creating new jobs
- Working with others.

Skills

Oxford has a highly skilled workforce, with a high proportion of residents holding degrees. However, there is also a significant proportion of residents with no educational or skills qualifications, and attainment levels of pupils in state schools are significantly lower than the regional and national average. This poor attainment at both primary and secondary levels impacts directly on access to the labour market and on economic and social life chances. For Oxford to become a world-class city for all its people, this situation must be addressed.

Oxford City Council is investing £400,000 annually over the next four years in improving educational attainment in the city, particularly in the more deprived neighbourhoods. Ten local schools have signed up to work with the City Council's improvement programme. We are working in partnership with the local schools, the university sector and the County Council.

In addition to improving educational attainment as a means of reducing inequality, we particularly want to improve outcomes for young people, to help them open the doors to positive life opportunities.

Funding cuts from central government have reduced spending on services for young people outside of the school environment. Oxford City Council believes that this has the potential to cause long-lasting damage to young people and our communities. The City Council is, therefore, significantly increasing its own investment in areas that impact directly on young people to stimulate partnership working and voluntary action.

We believe that engagement with a wide range of sporting and cultural activities from an early age can:

- offer opportunities for young people to share their experiences with others, and help to build social cohesion
- expand young people's horizons and generate a sense of ambition
- develop technical skills, discipline, and the confidence necessary for future success
- improve educational attainment
- encourage healthy living
- open up possibilities for employment of talented and committed young people, including in the creative and sports industries.

The City Council will be spending close to £500,000 per year to improve youth provision and promote the ambition of our young people.

The City Council is also using its procurement processes to help young people from the city gain apprenticeships and get access to training and employment. We require Council contractors to create apprenticeship opportunities as part of any large construction project.

Creating new jobs

The City Council is

- investing around £68million into the local economy by building new houses and improving the city's leisure facilities. This will create up to 900 jobs
- Working with the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) to build on the strengths of the knowledge economy and encourage inward investment
- encouraging commercial development on the few key locations that are available, e.g. the Northern Gateway and the Churchill site and negotiating with partners outside the city's constrained boundaries about future development
- negotiating with the Land Securities Group and the Crown Estate to redevelop the Westgate Centre
- continuing to promote the regeneration of the West End (including improvements to Frideswide Square and the railway station) in partnership with the County Council and other key stakeholders
- working through Experience Oxfordshire to improve the quality of the Oxford city region's tourism offer, in particular by maximising the role that contemporary culture and the arts can play
- working closely with local businesses and the County Council to enhance the city centre's night-time economy
- continuing its long-standing support for small and medium-sized businesses (SMEs) by committing to spend more than 40% of its budget in this sector
- working with twenty-five organisations in the Low Carbon Oxford Project - including private and public sectors bodies, the universities, and community groups - to create a sustainable, low-carbon economy in Oxford
- paying its own employees a minimum living wage and working with living-wage campaigners, low-paid workers, trade unions and employers to make Oxford a 'Living Wage City'

Working with others

Many of the challenges that face Oxford cannot be solved by Oxford City Council on its own. Partnership working is at the heart of Oxford City Council's approach and the Council works with the County Council and other organisations at many levels to deliver and enable services for the residents of Oxford. This will become increasingly important as budgets become tighter.

We are providing leadership to the city by working proactively within the key local partnership organisations such as the Oxford Strategic Partnership, Low Carbon Oxford, the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) and the Spatial Planning and Infrastructure Partnership (SPIP). We have been working with the County Council, district councils, Oxford University and Oxford Brookes University, and private sector partners to develop a new strategy for growth in the Oxford city region. The Oxford Economic Growth Strategy has now been agreed and adopted by the Oxford Strategic Partnership

In particular, we are working with our communities – through Area Forums and Neighbourhood Boards, voluntary and community associations, and other networks - to build community capacity and cohesion and to ensure that Oxford moves forward confidently as one city.

The future

The City Council's drive to simultaneously increase efficiency and investment in the city and its communities has been carried out against a backdrop of severe spending cuts by central government. There are more challenges to come.

The government's economic austerity measures have failed to meet the deficit reduction targets and austerity looks certain to continue up to 2018. The introduction of a new Universal Credit scheme in 2013 has the potential to cause disruption to the incomes of many of the most vulnerable people in our community. The Council also faces increased demand for services as a consequence of the recession and deficit reduction initiatives by other organisations.

At the heart of the Council's approach to delivering its ambitions has been: strong financial management; partnership between councillors, council managers and staff, and trade unions; focus; and a commitment not to be knocked off course by external events. We intend to maintain this approach.

This Corporate Plan sets out the City Council's proposals for ensuring a fairer and more equal city. It is about making a difference in difficult times.

Bob Price
Leader
Oxford City Council

Peter Sloman
Chief Executive
Oxford City Council.

Chapter 1 - Vibrant, Sustainable Economy

Our ambition: a strong local economy, supported by effective education and training which is accessible to all.

Some facts

Oxford is a global brand for education, health, bioscience, information technology, publishing, the motor industry and tourism.

The University of Oxford and its colleges are the largest employers in Oxford, supporting 18,000 jobs, followed by the Oxford University Hospitals Trust and the County Council.

Around 4,500 businesses provide 107,000 jobs, and seven of the ten largest employers in the Oxfordshire sub-region are within Oxford. The University of Oxford and Oxford Brookes University between them inject an estimated £800million annually into the regional economy.

Tourism plays a key part in the local economy, largely as a result of the city's rich architectural heritage and the appeal of the Ashmolean and other museums. Over nine million tourists visit the city every year, spending £602million annually and supporting around 13,000 jobs.

During the banking crisis and subsequent recession the buoyant Oxford city region economy has suffered less than other parts of the UK, but has suffered nonetheless. The most commonly-quoted figure for measuring economic growth is Gross Value Added (GVA). GVA is a measure of the value of goods and services produced in an area. Latest estimates show that while Oxfordshire's GVA declined in 2009 as a result of the recession, it has grown by £1bn in the last two years to 15.5bn in 2011 - a rate of growth which compares favourably with other areas of the country. The city economy is estimated to be worth around £5bn a year of this. The Centre for Cities in 2009 calculated that Oxford had the fifth highest UK GVA per capita, only just behind London.

The most timely indicator of the health of the economy is the number of people claiming out-of-work benefits, in particular unemployment benefit (Jobseeker's Allowance or JSA). The recession caused the number of Oxford residents claiming JSA to rise to 2,900 by May 2009, but this has fallen in recent months to 2,300 – still above the pre-recession average of 1,600. While this suggests some revival in the labour market, there is concern about people who may be unemployed but not claiming JSA, and people who may be 'under-employed'.

Oxford City Council's approach

We are addressing three key issues as we continue to build a vibrant, sustainable economy:

1. Promoting the growth of enterprise, the knowledge-based economy, and jobs
2. Improving the skills of the workforce
3. Increasing the availability of land for commercial development

1. Promoting the growth of enterprise, the knowledge-based economy, and jobs

Oxford is the only city in the UK that has more public sector jobs than private-sector jobs (where education is included in the public-sector). 46% of jobs are in public administration, education and health. The distribution of employment is a cause for concern in the light of the government's austerity measures. A large number of jobs

in Oxford that are directly or indirectly linked to public spending will be vulnerable over the next five years.

There is, therefore, a strong need to rebalance the local economy by promoting the growth of important sectors such as: manufacturing, health, scientific research, tourism, publishing, retail and the city centre, and the low carbon economy.

The City Council is doing this by:

- working with the private-sector led Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP)
- improving Oxford's infrastructure
- boosting tourism
- improving the city centre
- supporting local businesses
- growing the green economy.

Working with the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP)

The LEP is:

- Building on the unique concentration of high-tech businesses and input from the universities
- attracting more investment into the city region (e.g. large world-class businesses including Centrica and SAE have recently arrived in Oxford and BMW have committed substantial new investment into the MINI plant in Cowley)
- coordinating the activities of the various skills providers in Oxfordshire
- enabling Science Vale UK to become an Enterprise Zone.

Improving Oxford's infrastructure

The City Council is:

- investing around £68million into the local economy by building new houses and improving the city's leisure facilities. This will create up to 900 jobs
- in a joint venture with Grosvenor Estates to build 800 new homes in Barton
- contracting with GreenSquare to build 100 new homes and two new community centres in Northway and Cowley
- negotiating with the Land Securities Group and the Crown Estate to redevelop the Westgate Centre
- continuing to promote the regeneration of the West End (including improvements to Frideswide Square and the railway station) in partnership with the County Council and other key stakeholders
- working with developers, local residents and other stakeholders on a plan to develop the Northern Gateway for mixed-use employment-led development
- working with the County Council and other partners to unlock transport blockages and promote economic development. For example, we are supporting the Chiltern Railways Evergreen 3 proposals for the fast link north through Bicester to Marylebone, including a new station at the Water Eaton Park and Ride site
- enabling businesses to realise more benefit and support start-ups through the award of up to £5million from the Urban Broadband Fund in the Super Connected Cities Programme. This initiative will build on already delivered commercial upgrades in Oxford and will ensure that ultrafast broadband is available to 96% (up from 76%) of businesses and 89% (up from 84%) of residents. The funding will also enable the development of wireless broadband across the city centre. The initiative has been developed in partnership with the County Council and the universities. It includes a proposal to develop an International Hub for Online Learning, in partnership with education organisations in the city.

Boosting tourism

The City Council is:

- working through Experience Oxfordshire - a joint venture partnership with private-sector partners - to improve the quality of the Oxford city region's tourism offer. We want visitors to stay longer in Oxford and to explore areas beyond the city as well
- working with Experience Oxfordshire and partners in the cultural sector to maximise the role that culture can play in Oxford's tourism offer. Currently, cultural tourism tends to focus on historic Oxford, as represented by the University of Oxford's buildings and museums. While the magnificent heritage offer will always be a primary attraction, Oxford also has a thriving contemporary arts and music scene which is currently under-represented in the tourist offer.

Improving Oxford's city centre

The City Council is:

- working closely with local businesses and the County Council to enhance the city centre's night-time economy. We are committed to retaining the city centre's Purple Flag status which acknowledges the city centre's low crime rates, good cleanliness standards, and the quality and range of public spaces and visitor attractions
- investing capital funding of £420,000 over three years to improve the quality of toilets in and beyond the city centre
- making its business locations, tourist attractions and other places of interest more obvious to visitors and increasing footfall on less well-used routes by using a new pedestrian way-finding system.

Supporting local businesses

The City Council is:

- continuing its long-standing support for small and medium-sized businesses (SMEs) by committing to spend more than 40% of its budget in this sector
- fast-tracking payment of invoices by setting a target of ten days
- working with Business Link, the Federation of Small Businesses (FSB), Thames Valley Chamber of Commerce, and the voluntary and community sector to improve understanding of public sector tendering requirements and to encourage better engagement with the public sector.

Growing the green economy

The City Council is:

- developing the Low Carbon Oxford Project on behalf of the Oxford Strategic Partnership. Twenty-five organisations - including private and public sectors bodies, the universities, and community groups - are now collaborating to create a sustainable, low-carbon economy in Oxford. These organisations account for over half of the city's emissions
- in receipt of £1.5million from Europe to progress our work to build a low carbon economy
- allocating an additional £50,000 per year for two years to ensure that Low Carbon Oxford is able to continue its pioneering work and attract further funding
- implementing the 'Green Deal Plus', whereby businesses offer customers energy-efficiency improvements to their homes, community spaces and businesses at no upfront cost. Customers will repay the cost of improvements through savings on their energy bills.

- investing £54,000 over two years to ensure early and full take-up of the opportunities for insulation
- supporting opportunities for local skills and businesses through renewables projects, e.g. by setting up Low Carbon Barton, which led to the installation of a solar photovoltaic roof on the community centre
- stimulating the local market for Biomass energy production through the installation of biomass boilers in our own buildings and supporting local research and information.

Supporting an ethical economy

The City Council is:

- paying its own employees a minimum living wage which acknowledges the real costs of living in Oxford and which is higher than the national minimum wage. We are requiring Council contractors to do the same. This arrangement has been in place since April 2009. In January 2012, the City Council reviewed the statistical information on local living costs and set the living wage at a new level of £8 per hour
- working with living-wage campaigners, low-paid workers, trade unions and employers to make Oxford a 'Living Wage City' in which every worker will earn at least the minimum living wage
- encouraging ethical behaviour in the wider economy through Oxford's Fairtrade City status and its involvement in the Oxford Fairtrade Coalition.

2. Improving the skills of the workforce

Oxford has a highly skilled workforce, in that a very high proportion of residents hold degrees. However there is a significant proportion of residents who have no education or skills qualifications and attainment levels of pupils in state schools remain lower than the regional and national averages.

In 2011/12 Key Stage 2 results (at the end of primary school) showed 78% of Oxford pupils achieving level 4 and above in English and Maths compared to 82% in Oxfordshire. This is an improvement of 11 percentage points upon the previous year's results.

In 2011/12 only 51.8% of Oxford pupils gained five or more A* to C grade GCSEs including English and Maths compared to a 59% national average. Although this is an improvement on last year the gaps in attainment between pupils in the city and the rest of the county are still significant, especially in the more deprived areas of the city.

This poor attainment at both primary and secondary levels impacts directly on access to the labour market and on economic and social life chances. For Oxford to become a world-class city for all its people, this situation must be addressed.

The 2011 Oxfordshire Skills Needs Analysis suggested that a lack of education qualifications and 'employability' skills prevented a significant number of Oxfordshire's residents from entering the local job market - in particular certain groups of young people including teenage mothers, young people with learning difficulties and/ or disabilities, young people who have offended and young people leaving care.

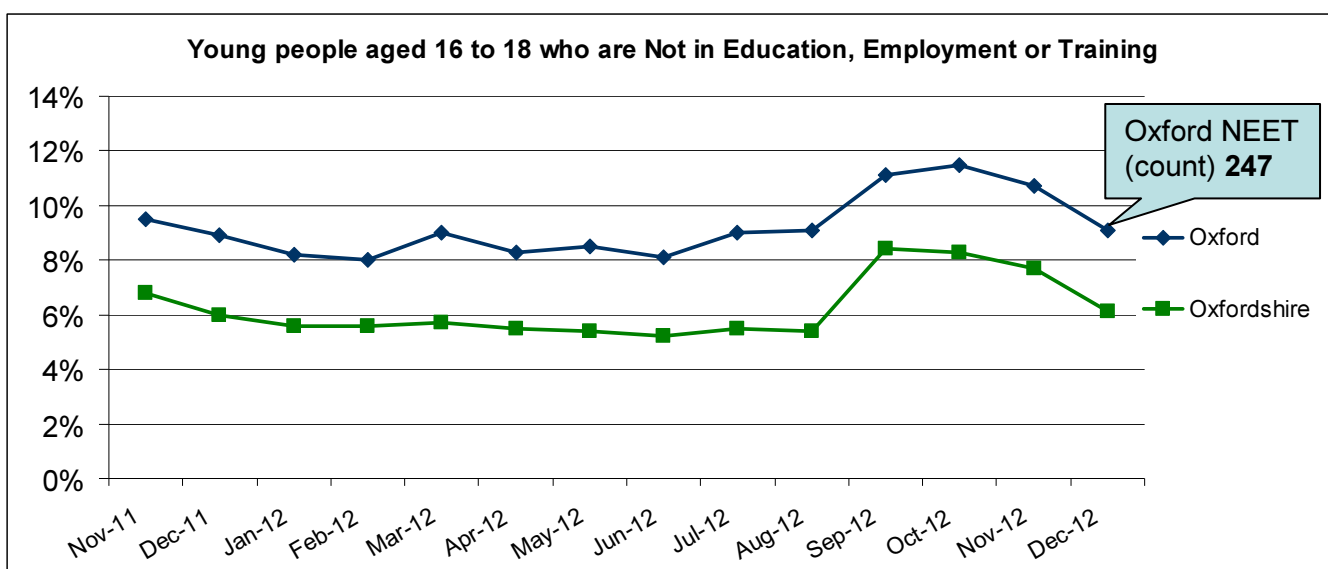
Anecdotally there are also concerns from employers that they are not able to recruit school-leavers and other people from the local workforce who have the right skills or who are 'work-ready' for entry-level jobs.

Employers report a shortage in high level skills, most challenging to businesses in the science, technology and engineering and manufacturing sectors.

Young people in many parts of the city already face significant difficulties in gaining employment because of the lower levels of educational attainment at the school leaving age. As the growth of high value jobs is increasingly driven by high-tech businesses and academic spin-off from the universities, there is a clear danger that this exclusion will deepen.

Young people between the ages of 16 and 18 who are not participating in education, employment or training (NEET) are a major source of concern. Their circumstances are predictors of future unemployment, low income, poor mental health and potential involvement in crime.

Oxford remains well above Oxfordshire's average in terms of the percentage of young people not in education, employment or training. As of December 2012, 9.1% of young people in Oxford were NEET compared with 6.1% across Oxfordshire.



Source: Oxfordshire County Council, Education and Early Intervention team. This data is adjusted to take account of "not knows".

Oxford City Council is:

- working in partnership with the County Council, Oxford University and Oxford Brookes University, on coordinated initiatives to drive improvements in educational attainment.
- investing £400,000 annually over the next four years in education and leadership programmes, particularly in the more deprived neighbourhoods. Ten local schools have signed up to these programmes.
- working with the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) to understand the skills needed by businesses in the city.
- encouraging high-tech companies wishing to make Oxford and Oxfordshire their base to create new apprenticeships and development opportunities so that young people can improve their skills and experience
- using its procurement processes to help young people from the city to gain apprenticeships and get into employment. We require Council contractors to

create apprenticeship opportunities as part of any large construction project. Our joint venture with Grosvenor on the Barton development will involve a training and apprenticeship programme. The GreenSquare project in Northway and Cowley will create a minimum of 12 new apprenticeships during the construction stage through its '4ward2work' programme

- allocating £50,000 each year for two years to provide ten new apprenticeships within the Council's own workforce and looking at ways to extend the arrangement into future years
- working with Job Centre Plus and Oxford and Cherwell Valley College to support a Work Club which will help people to find their first job, return to work, or look for a new career direction.
- Working with the Department for Work and Pensions to explore how - in the face of welfare reform reducing available benefits - local authorities can improve opportunities for low income households to increase their hours of work.

3. Increasing availability of land for commercial development

Land in Oxford is scarce, as a result of constrained boundaries, flood plains, and other issues. In particular, land for commercial uses is scarce. The desirability of Oxford as a place to live, work and study has resulted in increasing house prices, leading to transfers of land from employment to residential use and exacerbating the lack of commercial space. Between 1985 and 2004, the city lost an average of 2.5ha of employment land per year with redevelopment for residential and student accommodation purposes driving the majority of this loss. This has slowed to 2ha per annum over the last five years.

The City Council is:

- encouraging commercial development on the few key locations that are available, e.g. the Northern Gateway. The Science Park has a capacity of 27,200 sq. metres of employment space available. The Business Park has a further capacity of 29,400 sq. metres
- negotiating with partners outside the city's constrained boundaries about future development.

4. Measuring progress

Measure	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17
The percentage of council spend with local business	44%	46%	48%	48%
The number of jobs supported by City Council investment projects and other spend	586	856	856	900+
The number of Council apprenticeships created through Council investment for those who live in Oxford	20	22	24	26
The percentage of pupils in schools supported by the Council's educational attainment programme achieving level 4 in English and Math at Key Stage 2	68%	74%	80%	84%

Chapter 2 - Meeting Housing Needs

Our ambition: more affordable, high-quality housing in Oxford. This is essential for the vibrancy of the economy and the health and well-being of residents.

Some facts

Oxford's population has been growing as has the number of people requiring housing. Oxford's population reached 152,000 in 2011 and is projected to reach 161,000 by 2021.

There has been a long-term housing shortage in Oxford. Demand is high and availability is scarce, as a result of the city's constrained boundaries, the risk of flooding and other issues. This results in very high house prices.

According to *Cities Outlook 2013*, Oxford has overtaken London as the UK's least affordable city in terms of housing. The average house price in Oxford is £380,000 while the average salary is £25,800. Average Oxford house prices are now nearly fifteen times higher than average annual incomes. Owner-occupied housing is increasingly out of the reach of people on lower incomes.

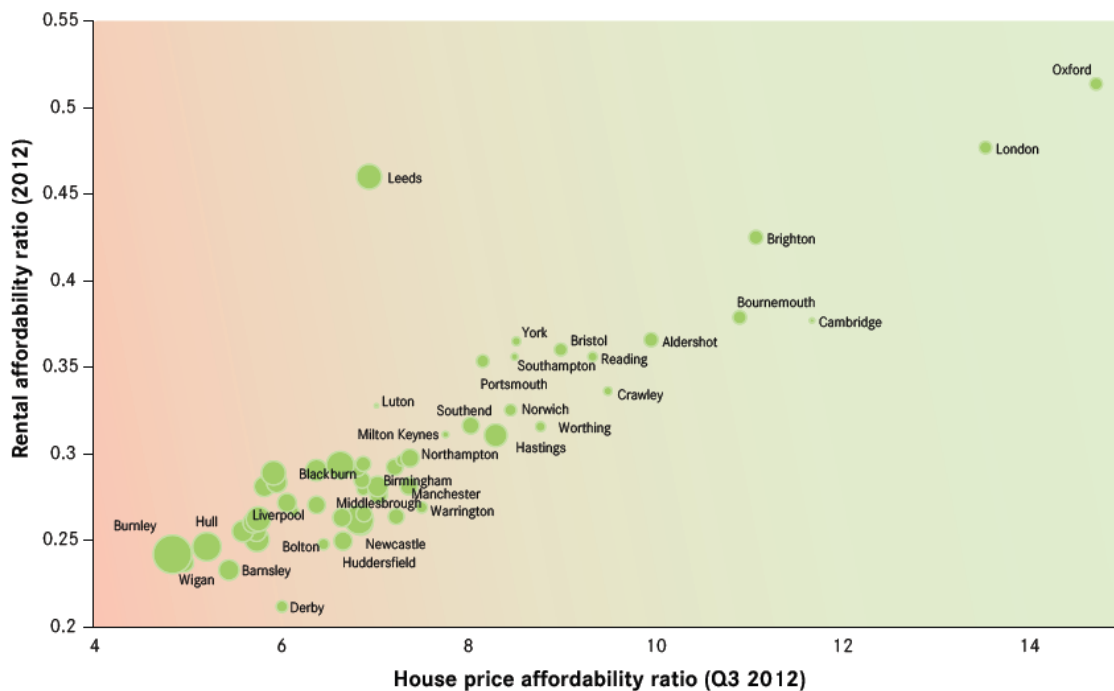
Oxford is also the least affordable city in the UK for private rented housing. Conditions in some private sector rented housing are very poor, particularly those in multiple occupation.

This low level of affordability puts severe strain on social housing provision. Oxford City Council is a landlord responsible for 8,000 homes. Over 6,000 households are on the Housing Register for social housing and, in spite of our good work in preventing homelessness and reducing the use of temporary accommodation for homeless households, demands on our service are high and likely to increase in the future.

This situation means that Oxford residents spend a large portion of their income on housing costs. It also hampers local employers from attracting people to the city.

Fifty per cent of people who work in Oxford commute from outside the city, causing significant traffic congestion issues.

Figure 7:
Housing and rental affordability and vacant properties across UK cities



Source: DCLG 2012, Live Table 581 and Live Table 584, Q3 2012 data; VOA 2012, Rental Data (Sep2011-12); ONS 2012, Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings 2012; DCLG 2012, Housing Strategy Statistical Appendix, 2011 data.
 Note: Data available for English cities only.

Oxford City Council’s approach is to promote housing development within the city wherever possible, and encourage developers to provide affordable housing. We also take action to bring empty homes back into use.

Changes to welfare policy are imposing significant additional pressures on housing and homelessness in the city. Changes to Local Housing Allowance, which came into force on a rolling basis from April 2011, mean that the maximum Local Housing Allowance can only be paid to properties in the cheapest 30% of the local market. This has severely constrained housing options in the city for many households. The 'local' housing market includes much of rural Oxfordshire, where rental costs tend to be lower. This will mean that many low-income households may be forced out of Oxford to meet their rent obligations, while the small size of the private rented sector outside the city may restrict the Council’s capacity to re-house Oxford families within the county itself. This pressure will be most severe on households needing a five-bedroom property or larger.

In addition, welfare and benefit changes – for example, reductions in benefit for those claiming Jobseeker’s Allowance for over 12 months – will reduce the available income of many low-income households. These pressures will increase over time, as the changes impact on a growing number of households, and as housing costs rise faster than benefits increase.

The changes to welfare overall are likely to increase the demand for housing and

homelessness assistance, and also debt and welfare advice services. The City Council has maintained and increased its funding for the voluntary and charitable bodies which provide this, particularly in areas of the city where need is greatest.

Oxford City Council's approach

Oxford faces serious challenges with regard to housing in the coming years.

The economic situation and the impact of austerity measures including welfare reform is putting downward pressure on real incomes and contributing to a growth in the number of homeless families across the country. We have so far limited the increase in the city to below national average levels but Oxford will not be exempt from this trend. The ability of the Council to respond to demand – for example, by assisting people into the private rental market – is likely to be further restricted. There is a strong risk that the downward trend in the number of households in temporary accommodation will not be maintained.

We are addressing five key issues to meet housing need in Oxford:

1. Building new homes
2. Providing a high quality landlord service
3. Improving standards in the private rented sector
4. Reducing homelessness
5. Piloting Direct Payments and Universal Credit

1. Building new homes

The Housing Market Assessment in 2007 showed that 1,700 new homes per year would have to be built in the city if demand is to be met. The City Council, in the light of the constraints imposed by the city's boundaries, has committed to building 8,000 new homes over the 20 years from 2006. Most of the new homes built over the last five years have been one or two bedroom properties.

Our approach is to promote housing development within the city wherever possible, and encourage developers to provide affordable housing. We are also bringing empty homes back into use. Despite a reduction in house building following the recession, we are currently on course to meet our new homes target. A large portion of the homes built in the next five years will be as a result of the West Barton development.

As a result of changes by central government to the way in which social housing is financed the City Council now has full financial responsibility for its housing stock.

The City Council is:

- significantly increasing the quantity of affordable housing. 1,300 new affordable homes were built in the city from 2004 to the end of 2010
- committed to using its own resources to provide new affordable housing wherever possible
- building on council land at Cowley and Northway, in partnership with GreenSquare Housing Association. This project will deliver new affordable and market-rate homes, two new community centres, and a new home for the Emmaus Furniture Store, which recycles good-quality, used furniture while giving skills training and accommodation to formerly homeless people
- working through a new joint-venture company, formed with Grosvenor Estates, to deliver 800 new homes, a new school and community facilities, and commercial development on land to the west of Barton
- in receipt of around £2.5million from the Housing and Communities Agency (HCA) to build 112 new homes on Council-owned sites throughout the city. HCA

funding is conditional on homes being let at 'affordable rents', with limited exceptions. The Council will fund the balance of the cost of £16 million

2. Providing a high quality landlord service

The City Council is currently responsible for around 8,000 homes and aims to build and maintain high quality estates with very high standards of service.

The City Council is:

- maintaining all its own homes at or beyond the national Decent Homes Standard
- investing £8.25million to improve the external and communal areas in our five tower blocks This will extend their lives for a further 30 years. The apartment interiors are already at Decent Homes Standard.
- investing £900,000 each year over the next three years to fund adaptations to Council homes to ensure that they are suitable for people with disabilities
- improving cleanliness on our estates as part of our cleaner, greener Oxford campaign
- working with the Tenant Participation Advisory Service (TPAS), one of the first organisations to specialise in tenant and resident involvement at a national level, to improve our arrangements for involving tenants and leaseholders in decision-making. Tenants and leaseholders exist as residents in areas of mixed tenure and problem solving, or the driving of initiatives, cannot be delivered within narrowly defined groups.

3. Improving standards in the private rented sector

The private rented sector is important in Oxford. It provides essential accommodation for key workers, young professionals, students and people who are unable to access social housing or to purchase homes on the private market. It accounts for 26% of the city's housing stock, with one in five of Oxford's population living in a house in multiple occupation (HMO). The combination of exceptionally high demand and high rental values has created an environment where landlords can charge high rents for poorly managed and badly maintained properties.

The City Council is:

- improving the management and condition of HMOs by requiring every HMO in the city to be inspected and licensed
- investing £60,000 per year to enable more proactive enforcement of standards in the private rented sector
- managing the impact of private rented housing on communities and neighbourhoods by implementing planning controls requiring planning permission for the change of use from a family or single unit dwelling into an HMO. There is a presumption against new HMOs in areas which already have a significant concentration
- working with Oxford Brookes University and the University of Oxford to tackle issues relating to student housing, particularly in East Oxford
- using more targeted and effective use of noise enforcement as part of a programme of assistance for neighbourhoods whose character is being adversely affected by HMOs and entertainment venues
- using our Home Improvement Agency to improve private homes of the elderly and vulnerable
- investing £640,000 every year over the next three years to fund adaptations to private dwellings to make them suitable for those with disabilities.

4. Reducing homelessness

Oxford has historically had a problem with homelessness. The Council has been recognised as a centre of excellence in homelessness work, and is proud of its

innovative work in this area. Over the last decade we have been able to substantially reduce the number of homeless families living in temporary accommodation. We have done this through prevention work based on advising families about the housing options available to them. We have also worked in partnership with others, including private landlords, to help secure accommodation for those threatened with homelessness. However, changes to the benefit system and increasing high demand and costs of housing in Oxford may increase the number of people at risk of homelessness over the next five years

The City Council is:

- reducing the number of people living in temporary accommodation
- funding services to assist single and rough-sleeping homeless people
- supporting the Crisis Skylight centre which gives single homeless people access to training and other opportunities
- investing over £150,000 into funding that will allow tenants in private rented properties to meet the cost of their rent where Housing Benefit levels are too low.
- supporting the 'No Second Night Out' campaign.

5. Piloting Direct Payments and Universal Credit

The proposed introduction of the Universal Credit in October 2013 will replace a number of existing sources of welfare benefit, including Housing Benefit, with a single payment to individuals and families. Currently Housing Benefit is paid directly to the landlord. There is a risk that - if Housing Benefit is paid directly to tenants who are then responsible for making rental payments - arrears and bad debts could rise.

The City Council is:

- one of a small number of local authority and housing associations who are working with the Department for Work and Pensions on a demonstration project to test the effects of paying monthly Housing Benefit payments direct to tenants in social housing. The project is taking place from June 2012 to June 2013 and will test how claimants manage Housing Benefit monthly payments and the kinds of safeguards needed to prevent tenants from falling into arrears
- seeking ways to improve the financial awareness of tenants and minimise the financial risks of direct payments for landlords
- using findings from the demonstration project to supplement and improve existing income management policies and inform our work in providing advice and support to vulnerable people.
- maintaining its funding for the voluntary and charitable bodies which provide debt and welfare advice services, particularly in areas of the city where need is greatest.
- Working with the County Council to address the consequences of welfare changes, in particular the relationship between the county council's social care responsibilities and homelessness.

5. Measuring progress

Measure	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17
The number of individual HMOs subject to agreed licence provisions	2,950	3,540	3,890	4,100

The number of new rough sleepers spending more than one consecutive night on the streets each year	0	0	0	0
The number of households in Oxford in temporary accommodation	120	120	120	120
The number of affordable homes for rent delivered	4	200	100	150
Capital investment in Council housing	£17.15m	£19.12m	£12.88m	£20.12m
Tenant satisfaction with their estates	75%	77%	79%	81%

Chapter 3 - Strong, Active Communities

Our ambition: communities that are socially cohesive and safe, and citizens who are actively engaged in pursuing their own well-being and that of their communities.

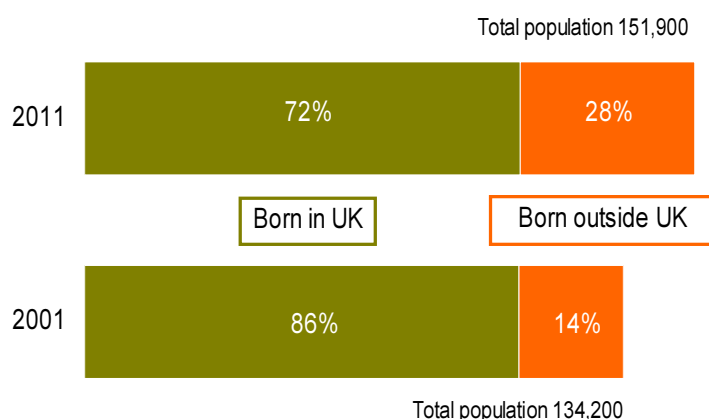
Some facts

In contrast to other parts of the county Oxford is ethnically and culturally diverse, with the third highest minority ethnic population in the south east. In 2011, 22% of the population were from black and minority ethnic backgrounds, compared with an England average of 15%. The largest non-white ethnic groups represented are of Indian, Pakistani and Black African origin. There are also large numbers of people of white non-British ethnic origin, including increasing numbers of new migrants from EU accession countries. This means that newer communities tend to be made up of many diverse groups rather than a small number of larger blocks.

Oxford's population is constantly changing. People come to Oxford to live, to study and to work, coming from both within the UK and from other countries. There are over 30,000 students studying full-time at the two universities. Around 6,000 people arrive from overseas to live in Oxford each year, about half of these being students and a quarter migrant workers.

More than one in four of our residents were born outside the UK – the most common countries of birth being Poland, USA, India, Germany and Pakistan.

Growth in Oxford's international diversity, 2001-2011



There are major inequalities in life chances and life expectancy in our city. Relative to the rest of Oxfordshire, Oxford has high levels of deprivation. The Index of Multiple Deprivation 2010 ranks Oxford 131 out of 354, placing it in the top half of the most deprived local authority areas in England. Of 85 areas in Oxford, 12 are among the 20% most deprived areas in England, with one area in Northfield Brook ward among the 10% most deprived.

Around 23% of Oxford's under-16s live in low-income households, and child poverty is a key concern in eight neighbourhoods which feature among the 10% worst affected in England.

In some areas, half of all adults have no education or skills qualifications and this is linked to lower incomes, poor health and child poverty. Oxford has over 10,000 working-age residents claiming benefits – the highest percentage in Oxfordshire.

Life expectancy in the most deprived areas is up to ten years less than in the wealthy areas.

Oxford City Council's approach

There are major inequalities in life chances and life expectancy in our city. The City Council is using its own powers and its partnerships with others to open up access to those opportunities which have been denied to people living in the most deprived areas of our city.

We are addressing six key issues as we continue to develop strong, active communities:

1. Promoting youth ambition
2. Supporting older people
3. Involving our communities
4. Promoting healthy living
5. Building safe communities
6. Celebrating One City Oxford.

1. Promoting youth ambition

As part of its commitment to building a world class city for everyone, Oxford City Council aims to reduce the extent of inequality and to improve the lives of the most vulnerable members of our society. We particularly want to improve outcomes for young people, to help them open the doors to positive life opportunities.

Funding cuts from central government have resulted in reduced direct spending on services for young people outside the school environment. It has also reduced local government budgets and the capacity of local government to spend in these areas. In the light of these challenges, Oxford City Council believes that there is a need for a significant coordinated response to prevent long lasting damage to our young people and our communities. Oxford City Council is therefore significantly increasing its own investment in areas that impact directly on young people. We want to stimulate partnership working and voluntary action around this important agenda.

We believe that engagement with a wide range of sporting and cultural activities from an early age can:

- offer opportunities for young people to share their experiences with others, and help to build social cohesion
- expand young people's horizons and generate a sense of ambition
- develop technical skills, discipline, and the confidence necessary for future success
- improve educational attainment
- encourage healthy living. The UK has the highest rate of obesity in Europe. In Oxford, 19.8% of year six children are classified as obese
- open up possibilities for employment of talented and committed young people, including in the creative and sports industries.

The City Council is:

- working with partners such as Fusion Lifestyle, the Cultural Partnership, Oxfordshire County Council, Oxfordshire Sports Partnership, the voluntary sector, Oxford University, Experience Oxfordshire and Public Health Oxfordshire. We are coordinating an innovative and inspiring programme to encourage our young

people to expand their opportunities by participating in sporting and cultural activities

- investing £400,000 annually over the next four years so that we can play our role in improving educational attainment in the city, particularly in the more deprived neighbourhoods
- investing £500,000 over the next four years to improve youth provision generally. We will strengthen the links between improved educational attainment, access to positive life choices, and engagement with cultural and sporting experiences. Our focus will be on areas with the lowest levels of provision and the highest levels of need. This level of investment in positive activities should be contrasted with the cost of negative activities. Placing one young person in custody for a year costs £45,000 and the national cost of responding to anti social behaviour is £3.4 billion per year. The health cost of inactivity in Oxford is £2.1 million per year
- encouraging more active, engaged young people - by developing diverse, high quality cultural and sporting activities, with clear pathways into clubs and organisations.
- diverting young people from crime and antisocial behaviour by engaging them in positive, creative activities which broaden their horizons
- helping to get young people into work by developing confidence, skills and opportunities, and an awareness of positive life chances rather than life limitations.

2. Supporting older people

Despite its youthful age profile, Oxford has more pensioners living alone than any of the surrounding districts. Of 7,500 single pensioner households in Oxford, 3,500 were people who reported suffering from a limiting long-term illness. One thousand of these were more than 85 years old.

Oxford City Council aims to respond more effectively to the needs of vulnerable older people and is exploring ways in which they can be supported to live in their homes and local communities for as long as possible.

The City Council is:

- Investing £20,000 per year for the next two years to encourage new initiatives to support isolated older people in the community
- initiating a £10,000 per year project with Age UK Oxfordshire to promote home sharing by older and younger people
- Working with other agencies – Oxfordshire County Council, Age UK and the Over 50s Group - to improve services for older people
- Involved in ongoing discussion with GPs on the Oxford Clinical Commissioning Group, the new Shadow Health and Well Being Board, the Adult and Social Care Board and the Health Improvement Board to improve the quality of life for older people in the city.
- Supporting the development of extra care and supported housing for older people.

3. Involving our communities

Communities take many forms. They can be:

- communities of place: people living in geographically distinct areas of the city
- communities of identity: people from black and ethnic minority groups, older people, younger people, people with disabilities, religious groups, and gay and lesbian groups. The Council has prioritised the communities of identity of Black and Minority Ethnic communities, young people and older people to be the focus of its work in the current year.

- communities of interest: people involved in groups which might cut across other communities like council tenants, allotment holders, cyclists, theatre goers – or people who come together to use services such as parks, roads, communities buildings, transport.

While people often see themselves as belonging to one community of place, but more than one community of interest, we aim to engage with communities primarily through the following routes:

- communities of place – through Area Forums and Neighbourhood Partnerships
- communities of identity – through the work of our community development team
- communities of interest – through the services they best relate to, e.g. friends of parks and friends of the Museum of Oxford.

The City Council has developed a range of innovative ways in which local communities can become directly involved in decisions that affect their local communities. These include:

- Consultation and other forms of public involvement
- Area Forums and Neighbourhood Partnerships
- Resident involvement
- Supporting the community and voluntary sectors
- Community development

At the heart of the City Council's approach to community involvement is our commitment to being clear about how decisions are made.

Clarity about how decisions are made

The City Council believes that most services are best designed, delivered and reviewed on a city-wide basis. Services will, of course, reflect the different demographics and needs of areas across the city and resource allocation will vary accordingly. For example, street cleansing outcomes require greater inputs in busier areas. However, these variations should be seen in the context of the Council's vision for the whole city which is set out in the Corporate Plan and the budget approved by Council.

Community involvement is about ensuring that elected councillors are aware of the views – often very strongly held - of individuals and community groups. It is not intended to enable minority interests to overrule what is in the best interests of the wider community and the city as a whole. Local involvement and participation supports and underpins decision-making. It does not replace it. The final decision on any issue rests with the city's elected councillors.

Consultation and other forms of public involvement

The Council has a formally approved process which sets out how and when views will be sought from individuals and communities. The term 'consultation' is often loosely used to cover a wide range of public involvement activities. Technically, consultation only occurs when the Council is seeking the views of members of the public in order directly to influence options, alternatives and/or decisions.

The City Council also involves members of the public by:

- Providing balanced and objective information to assist members of the public in understanding an issue
- seeking views from members of the public for market research purposes.

Area Forums and Neighbourhood Partnerships

The Council has formed Area Forums consisting of all ward councillors in any given area of the city. These are informal meetings sponsored and supported by the Council to engage with the communities in their area. Each area is free to adapt their arrangements to best meet the needs of their area.

Neighbourhood Partnerships exist in those areas of the city which have been identified as being in greatest need. Area Forums and Neighbourhood Partnerships are not decision-making bodies but provide a focus for local action and engagement on local issues.

The Area Forums:

- Identify key issues and priorities to feed into city wide service and budget planning processes
- enable local councillors to play a central role in drawing up neighbourhood plans linking service planning more closely with local needs and aspirations
- provide a space in which residents and community groups can work with mainstream service providers – health, education, police, businesses and the voluntary sectors – to ensure that local services are responsive to community needs
- Comment on planning policy documents and proposals that affect the area
- Monitor service standards in the area.

The City Council is:

- Providing each Councillor with an annual budget of £1,500 for small projects that link to the priorities emerging from forum discussions and other local consultations
- Exploring ways to ensure that all of our communities, including the more ‘hidden’ groups, have the opportunity to engage with them

Resident Involvement

The City Council’s work with the Tenant Participation Advisory Service (TPAS) has been referred to earlier in this report. Tenants and leaseholders exist as residents in areas of mixed tenure and problem-solving or new initiatives cannot be delivered successfully without involvement of all groups concerned.

The City Council is:

- creating a structure which enables broad involvement opportunities across all demographics and geographical areas of the city
- enabling varied involvement opportunities which allow tenants, residents and leaseholders to be involved in ways that suit their needs
- developing training and support opportunities and encouragement to the widest audience
- ensuring that structures do not allow one group, issue or process to become dominant
- ensuring transparency so that tenants, residents and leaseholders are able to see the difference that has been made as a result of their engagement.

Supporting the community and voluntary sectors

The Council is keen to support the community and voluntary sectors, as well as individual volunteering activity. Volunteering has the potential to benefit those who volunteer as well as the wider community.

The City Council is:

- Building a new community centre in Rose Hill and looking at ways to improve community centres across the city

- using its membership of the Oxfordshire Stronger Communities Alliance to strengthen the role of the voluntary and community sectors and to increase the number of volunteers in the city. We work with Oxfordshire Community and Voluntary Action to promote partnership working between the City Council and the voluntary sector
- using its grants programme to invest £1.4million annually into a wide range of voluntary and community organisations that collectively make a significant contribution to the life of the city. The grants programme has two elements:
 - open bidding, where community and voluntary organisations can apply for one-off grants
 - commissioning, where funding is provided for activities that have been identified by the Council as contributing to the achievement of our corporate priorities
- encouraging its own staff to volunteer and working with its partners to increase the quality, quantity, and accessibility of volunteering. The City Council hosts the annual volunteers' awards and Volunteers' Fair where different groups publicise their work.
- ensuring high quality community centre provision across the city with a focus in our priority areas. The City Council supports well managed community centres which provide open access to all sectors of the community and encourage involvement.

Community Development

Community development involves changing the relationships between ordinary people and people in positions of power, so that everyone can contribute to decisions take that affect their lives. It starts from the principle that, within any community, there is a wealth of knowledge and experience which can be channelled into collective action to achieve desired goals.

The City Council is:

- supporting community development through its own activities and through working with voluntary groups and local communities
- targeting its work in the priority areas of the city and advising other communities who want to engage in community planning
- applying community development principles to projects such as the community centre refurbishment programme and the development at Barton
- promoting a partnership with voluntary managers of local allotments, through regular meetings with the Oxford and District Federation of Allotment Associations.

4. Promoting healthy living

The City Council is responsible for a range of functions that affect people's health and well-being. Some of these – planning, housing, social cohesion, and employment – have already been referred to in this plan. The City Council will use its powers to improve these and the other wider determinants of health, such as environmental health, air quality, and green spaces.

Our ambition for our leisure services is to deliver the quality of service found in many private clubs, at an affordable price. Over the last four years we have invested over £4 million in improving our facilities. These improvements have been funded from the increased income resulting from a management partnership for leisure facilities between the City Council and Fusion Lifestyle, a charitable trust. Over the same period we have received a quarter of a million more visits annually and are predicting 1.4 million visits in total this year. Oxford is now in the top quartile for adult activity in Oxfordshire, from being the second least active area in 2006. Blackbird Leys Leisure

Centre, Ferry Leisure Centre, and Hinksey Outdoor Pool – Oxford’s public heated outdoor pool – have all achieved a rating of ‘good’ from Quest, the national quality award for sport and leisure.

We will use the legacy of the 2012 Olympic and Paralympic programmes to encourage people of all ages and levels of fitness to embrace healthy and physically active lifestyles.

The City Council is:

- Continuing to improve our leisure provision by:
 - progressing plans to build a new competition-standard swimming pool in Blackbird Leys. This facility will help increase community participation in swimming, as well as providing a venue where county-standard competitions can be held. The new pool will replace Temple Cowley Pools and Blackbird Leys Pool, both of which are in poor condition, very costly to run, and major contributors to the Council’s carbon footprint. The large savings in running costs over the facilities that it will replace will substantially meet the cost of the capital investment involved
 - refurbishing the popular Ice Rink, a regional facility
 - investing just under £1million over the next year to refurbish sports pavilions across the city to encourage further participation in sport
 - Investing more than £300,000 capital over four years to encourage cycling with more cycle lanes and better signage
 - investing £174,000 to improve tennis courts across the city
- working in partnership to deliver GO Active to get more people active in the city. The Oxford HealthWalks scheme, which encourages walking – particularly in the city’s beautiful parks – is exercise for those unaccustomed to physical activity. This accredited scheme provides health professionals with another avenue to promote healthy living through the Exercise on Referral scheme.
- Improving the quality of the outdoor sports offer in the city. The Council’s StreetSports programme has achieved the prestigious StreetMark accreditation, a national recognition of quality
- Providing opportunities to improve mental and physical well-being, encourage physical activity and encourage better diets by supporting 36 vibrant allotments across the city
- working in partnership to deliver the Active Women programme within the city
- protecting public health by carrying out over 700 inspections of food premises a year and displaying the results of food hygiene inspections on the ‘Scores on the Doors’ website
- acknowledging the diversity of Oxford’s communities by delivering food hygiene training courses in different languages as well as providing foreign language exam papers. Nearly 50% of all the people trained on our food hygiene training courses do not have English as their first language.

5. Building safer communities

Crime and the fear of crime have an adverse effect on the well-being of our communities. As a leading member of the Oxford Community Safety Partnership, Oxford City Council has made a significant contribution to the reduction in levels of crime and anti-social behaviour in the city.

Over the last twelve months, total crime fell by 10%, compared to the same period in 2011. The total number of stealing offences (including domestic burglary, theft of or from a vehicle, and robbery) fell by 10.1%. There has also been great success in reducing violent crime. Violence against the person decreased by 19.5% compared to the same period last year. The relatively low level of crime in the city is no

consolation for victims and the partnership remains committed to maintaining tight control on crime. The Oxford Community Safety Partnership is also committed to protecting young people from sexual abuse, sexual exploitation and trafficking.

The newly-elected Police and Crime Commissioner will now take responsibility for funds to support community safety partnerships that previously came to local authorities. This could impact on local neighbourhood programmes.

The City Council is:

- participating in the NightSafe scheme to tackle alcohol-related disorder in the night-time economy. Its success helped enable Oxford to obtain its Purple Flag accreditation
- improving coordination between our Community Warden service and our Crime and Nuisance Action Team, specialists in the investigation of antisocial behaviour
- using our citizens' panel to survey people's opinions on a range of antisocial behaviour issues. In our 2008 survey, young people "hanging about around the streets" were cited as an important concern by respondents. This issue has dropped from second to seventh in terms of people's concerns.
- Investing in the Positive Futures Programme to offer alternative activities to young people who might otherwise be drawn into various forms of antisocial behaviour
- Engaging with the community on safety issues, through the successful Neighbourhood Action Groups (NAGS).
- Applying resources specifically to tackle abuse and trafficking.

6. Celebrating One City Oxford

The City Council and its partners believe that access to high quality cultural experiences is the right of all our citizens. It can play a vital role in enriching and energising the lives of individuals and regenerating communities.

Culture, the arts and community festivals have the potential to bring together people from all areas of life, breaking down barriers and increasing our sense of local identity and belonging, celebrating what unites us as well as our differences. The popular events staged in the city to celebrate the Olympics and our local torch-bearers brought people from all of the city's communities together in a common cause.

The City Council is:

- Leading a partnership-based approach to developing and improving the cultural life of the city so that more people can have access to quality cultural experiences, more often
- Improving opportunities for young people to participate actively in high quality cultural activities. Active participation is a means of developing young people's technical skills, discipline, and building confidence. It can also expand their horizons and generate ambition
- Improving opportunities for the diverse range of communities and faith groups in the city to participate actively in high quality cultural activities that reflect their own identities and that can be shared with the whole community.

7. Measuring progress

Measure	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17
The number of young people accessing youth engagement projects and activities outside school hours	5,250	5,500	5,775	6,000
The percentage of adults participating in sport (as measured by the Annual Sport England Active People Survey)	26%+	27%+	27%+	27.5%+
Satisfaction with our neighbourhoods	89%	90%	91%	92%

Chapter 4 – Cleaner, Greener Oxford

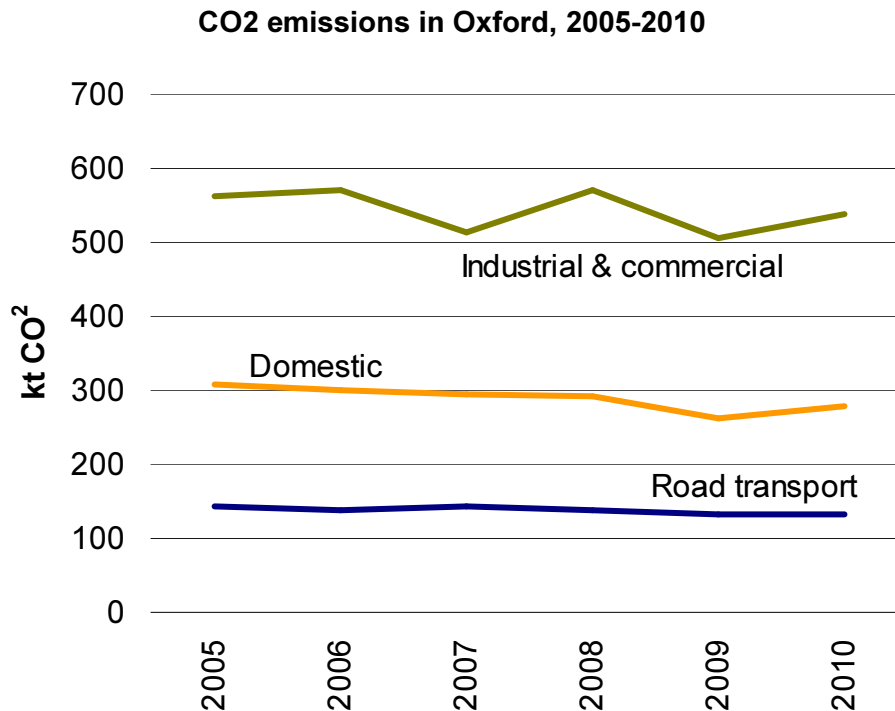
Our ambition: a cleaner, greener Oxford – in the city centre, in our neighbourhoods and in all public spaces.

Some facts

Around one million tonnes of carbon dioxide are emitted as a result of activity in Oxford every year. This equates to 6.2 tonnes of carbon dioxide per person, slightly below the national average of 6.6 tonnes per person.

Carbon emissions generated by industrial and commercial uses account for over half the total emissions, followed by domestic uses at a little over a quarter. Compared to the national averages Oxford has lower per capita emissions from households and transport but higher emissions from industry and commerce.

There have been reductions in each of these three emissions sources over 2005-2010, resulting in a reduction in the total level of emissions from 1,013 kilotonnes (kt) in 2005 to 949 kt in 2010. Domestic carbon emissions have fallen despite a rise in the total population and number of dwellings over the period.



Road travel within the city accounts for 14% of total carbon dioxide emissions.

Four of the city's parks have achieved Green Flag status.

Oxford City Council's approach

The need to improve and maintain the cleanliness of our city is an issue of abiding concern for Oxford's citizens. The City Council is addressing five key issues as we continue to make Oxford cleaner and greener:

1. Recycling and refuse collection
2. Improving cleanliness in streets, neighbourhoods and open spaces
3. Reducing the Council's carbon footprint
4. Reducing the city's carbon footprint.

5. Transport.

1. Recycling and refuse collection

The city presents particular challenges due to the diverse nature of its population, its high population churn (25% per annum), and the large number of houses of multiple occupation and self-contained flats, around 19,500 in total.

These challenges apply across the range of issues important to the cleaner, greener campaign in that there is a continual need to reinforce positive attitudes and behaviours in relation to the public realm. However, they particularly impact on recycling and refuse collection.

The City Council is:

- Operating a recycling and waste service which, as a result of a market testing exercise, is highly efficient and committed to improving customer satisfaction
- Operating a weekly food-waste recycling programme across the whole city
- Giving householders choice about containers: wheeled bins, boxes and sacks are all available in order to reflect the different kinds of housing stock in the city
- making recycling easier by enabling nearly all recycling materials to be placed into one container
- providing recycling bins in the city centre and ring road
- providing a garden waste collection service to which over 12,000 customers subscribed in its first six months of operation
- providing a new textile and clothes recycling bank
- investing £270,000 per year over the next three years to extend recycling to flats by improving the provision of commingled recycling facilities and bin stores
- recycling or re-using 100% of the green waste from our parks and countryside sites
- improving refuse collection on the more densely populated estates with limited or no front gardens
- consistently improved its recycling rate from 20% in 2005/06 to nearly 50% currently. Our longer-term goal is to reduce landfill waste to zero.

2. Improving cleanliness in streets, neighbourhoods and open spaces

Achieving permanent improvements in cleanliness levels also requires continual reinforcement of positive public attitudes and behaviours. Ongoing education is at the heart of the campaign for cleaner streets, neighbourhoods and open spaces, but this is backed by the use of environmental enforcement notices where appropriate.

The City Council is:

- tackling inappropriate refuse disposal, fly-tipping, littering, dog-fouling, and graffiti
- continuing to target resources so that we can keep the city centre clean and retain our Purple Flag accreditation.
- spending an additional £2,000 per year for the next three years on a new low-emission litter-picking machine which will remove side-waste more effectively from around bins in the city centre
- using new powers to control litter caused by leafleting
- Targeting rolling clean-up campaigns in our neighbourhoods, e.g. East Oxford, Blackbird Leys and Jericho
- Enabling the Community Wardens Team to play a bigger role in environmental enforcement
- working in partnership with the *Oxford Mail* on an ongoing publicity campaign
- spending an additional £12,000 per year for the next three years on a door-to-door campaign of encouragement and enforcement

- investing an additional £15,000 per year for three years to improve litter picking and maintenance in our parks, reflecting the increased use of these facilities in recent years
- investing £1.1million on a major refurbishment of parks pavilions including those on Blackbird Leys, Barton and Quarry Fields.
- completing a £3.1 million programme to improve the quality of the majority of our 92 play areas
- using dog control orders across the city to prevent dog fouling and control dogs accessing parks' play areas

Reducing the City Council's carbon footprint

Reducing the Council's own carbon footprint has been a high priority over the past four years through the "Getting our own house in order" programme. We put measures in place to reduce carbon dioxide emissions from our buildings and operations by 25% by March 2011. The Council is now planning 5% year-on-year reductions through a new, expanded carbon management plan called "Carbon reduction is at the heart of everything that we do".

The City Council is:

- improving energy efficiency in our housing stock by installing efficient gas boilers, improving insulation, and installing water-saving devices
- applying external cladding to our tower blocks, which will improve thermal efficiency in over 400 homes
- using solar photovoltaic panels to provide cheaper electricity and feed surplus electricity into the national grid
- requiring a 20% on-site renewable energy production for all large developments
- drawing on a revolving loan fund through Salix which provides £405K to spend on energy saving technologies e.g. by installing pool covers in our leisure centres. This has reduced energy loss and saved around £250,000 per year
- including electric vehicles in its fleet
- using tracker and telematics systems which re-route operational vehicles to save mileage and report on vehicle emissions and fuel consumption
- using route optimisation software to plan the most efficient routes for our waste and recycling rounds
- reducing energy consumption in the St Aldate's Chambers offices. Energy efficiency measures such as improved lighting and motion sensor controls have improved the building's energy performance rating from an E to a C
- using our procurement strategy to support suppliers who are taking actions to reduce their environmental impact. This means, for example: using local suppliers, buying only recycled paper, using only FSC certified wood as building material
- the first UK local authority to achieve the new British Standards Kitemark for Energy Reduction Verification
- recognised as a leader in this field, e.g. 2012 LGC awards Highly Commended in the Low Carbon Council category; The Carbon Trust; The Energy Saving Trust; Guardian Public Service Award; 2012 Green Apple award for Refashion event.

3. Reducing the city's carbon footprint

Key organisations in the city are reducing the city's carbon footprint by joining Low Carbon Oxford's groundbreaking work to embed a green economy. Low Carbon Oxford consists of 31 organisations including private and public sectors bodies, the universities, and community groups. These organisations have agreed to work collaboratively towards the creation of a sustainable, low-carbon economy in Oxford and to reduce its carbon footprint. These organisations account for over half of the city's emissions. The Low Carbon Oxford charter commits its signatories to

collaborate to reduce their carbon footprints in Oxford by a minimum of 3% average, every year, for at least the next ten years.

Low Carbon community groups from around the city are also part of the Low Carbon Oxford initiative

The City Council is:

- progressing our work to build a low carbon economy through a £1.5million European grant
- using £310,000 which has been awarded by the Department of Energy and Climate Change to help expand the *Warming Barton* pilot project, which aims to help householders save energy and create warmer homes in the city's most deprived area
- Leading the Low Carbon Oxford initiative for the City
- Investing an additional £50,000 per year to ensure that Low Carbon Oxford is able to continue its pioneering work
- investing £54,000 over two years to ensure early and full take-up of the Green Deal opportunities for home energy efficiency improvements, particularly households on low incomes
- working through strategic partnerships to combat the adverse effects of climate change, including the increased incidence of flooding within the city
- implementing a sustainability strategy in order to deal more effectively with the management of natural resources
- continuing to support allotments, recognizing their contribution to reducing Oxford's carbon footprint by producing an estimated 500 tonnes of vegetables to the value of £1,250,000 each year.

Low Carbon Oxford is:

- running a number of Pathfinder Projects organised around the four themes of industrial and commercial, domestic, transport and food. These include:
 - Energy Efficiency Forum – led by MINI Plant Oxford, a network for sharing best practice and expertise across partner organisations on new technologies relating to lighting, renewable energy, and heat transfer
 - Eastern Arc – led by Oxfordshire County Council working with local bus companies to explore the possibility of improving transport networks in the busy eastern arc of the city.
 - Foodprinting Oxford - quantifying the resource requirements of the food consumed by the city in terms of land, water, energy and fuel. The project will identify resilience and security issues in relation to a supply chain which procures only 0.5% of food for the city from its surrounding rural areas in the county.

4. Transport

The transport network is highly constrained, with very limited potential to increase traffic on roads in particular. Operational capacity has already been reached or exceeded on much of the road network, resulting in frequent congestion and delays. The limited platform and line capacity of Oxford's railway station results in a significant bottleneck on the rail network.

There are a number of future pressures to consider. The city's population will continue to grow, both within existing settlements but also at new developments such as West Barton. The role of Oxford as a workplace – one-third of the county's jobs are in the city – is important in supporting economic growth, but leads to a high level of in-commuting and therefore congestion at peak times. Compared to most cities,

Oxford has particularly high proportions of people travelling by bus and by bicycle and we will promote these forms of travel further. There is also a need to reduce the environmental impact of travel, and to promote health and safety, put into stark relief by the recent rise in cycling deaths.

The City Council is working proactively with the County Council and other partners to deliver the Oxford Transport Strategy and planned development across the city to reduce traffic congestion and promote carbon reduction.

The City Council is:

- using its Economic Development and Growth Strategy to encourage new housing developments and other growth initiatives in areas already linked to Oxford's transport infrastructure
- implementing a Low Emission Zone (LEZ) from 2014 which will place restrictions on the types of engines that can be used in buses that operate within central Oxford leading to reductions in emissions of nitrogen dioxide
- supporting joint bus ticketing and other partnership initiatives which will reduce congestion, including:
 - Oxford-Marylebone rail link including Water Eaton station
 - Oxford railway station development
 - East-West rail extension
 - Frideswide Square redevelopment
- Investing more than £300,000 over four years to encourage cycling by providing more cycle lanes and better signage as part of the Oxford Cycle City initiative.

5. Measuring progress

Measure	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17
Satisfaction with our street cleansing	73%	75%	76%	77%
The reduction in the Council's carbon footprint	5% reduction	5% reduction	5% reduction	5% reduction
The number of enforcements carried out as a result of environmental offences (e.g. noisy parties, dog fouling, littering)	1,000	1,100	1,200	1,300
The amount of waste sent to landfill per household	445kg	430kg	430kg	430kg
The percentage of household waste sent for reuse, recycling, composting or anaerobic digestion	50%	50%	51%	51%

Chapter 5 - Efficient and Effective Council

Our ambition: a flexible and digitally enabled organisation, delivering high quality, value for money services.

Some facts

The City Council has achieved £8.5 million of efficiency savings over the last 4 years and is on track to make a further £1.3 million savings this year, without the need for compulsory redundancies. Our ability to continually improve the way we do things means we have been able to invest in new projects and infrastructure which is critical to delivering the Council's vision of building a world class city for everyone.

In 2011/12 we achieved or exceeded 90% of our corporate targets, a considerable improvement over our previous year's achievement of 78%.

The City Council won the silver award in the Council of the Year category of the Improvement and Efficiency South East annual awards.

A new state-of-the-art customer service centre in St Aldate's has been opened

A corporate call centre and one phone number for all Council services has been established. We answered 89% of calls received and improved the customer experience by resolving 90% of queries at the first point of contact.

Sickness absence has been reduced by 25% as a result of robust performance management.

Investors in People accreditation for the whole Council has been achieved and the Council has been awarded Equalities Framework for Local Government accreditation.

Oxford City Council's approach

The financial constraints which government has imposed on local authorities present us with the significant challenge of doing more with less while still ensuring that our residents receive a world class service. In spite of the financial constraints within which we operate, our ambition is to take the Council from being good to great – through GOLD (Greater Outcomes, Leaner Delivery). We will do this through our ongoing efficiency programme and by delivering new and increased income streams, requiring a more commercial and innovative approach from all employees.

The Council is focusing on five key areas to drive further efficiency:

1. The Customer First programme
2. Improving our processes
3. Better procurement and contract management
4. Trading and Business Development
5. Organisational Development

1. The Customer First programme

Our Customer First programme has been successful in creating a single approach to managing customer contact through telephone, face to face and online channels. A multi-skilled workforce resolve the majority of enquiries at the first point of contact without hand-over to the back office, using a customer relationship management system to capture these enquiries and integrate with our key IT systems. This has resulted in greater consistency in standards of service, improving levels of customer satisfaction and greater efficiencies through improved business processes.

We now need to build on this success and achieve even higher standards of performance - seeking to get more customer contact 'right first time' thereby reducing the need for customers to contact us more than once about the same issue. We also need to encourage customers to use more convenient and lower cost channels such as the website.

The City Council is:

- Improving our website to better enable residents to carry out more transactions on line at their convenience. We will continue to expand the range of services that can be provided or paid for online, and integrate these with our back-office systems to improve efficiency and reduce cost
- Continually testing customer satisfaction and using customer feedback to inform how we deliver our services and learn from our customers' experiences
- Carrying out a major survey of our residents to gain insight into their views of council services and Oxford as a place to live to help us meet customer needs in future years
- Seeking to gain Customer Excellence accreditation during 2013/14 as a reflection of the improvements we have made to our customer services
- Installing a more modern call handling system to ensure customer calls are more efficiently dealt with and which includes customer call-back facilities
- Re-locating our customer service centre at Templars Square into fit-for-purpose premises that offer a welcoming environment for customers

2. Improving our processes

The Council's Performance Improvement Framework sets out how the Council plans to review and improve service delivery both through fundamental, whole-service reviews (such as waste collection and housing benefits) and smaller, process reviews within services following benchmarking activity. We have rationalised and centralised our back office functions by bringing together finance and ICT staff from across the Council into centralised teams. The Council has introduced a single integrated performance reporting tool, CorVu which captures risk, performance and finance data at both a corporate and service level in an accessible and user-friendly way. The iTrent system is providing similar benefits for human resources management processes.

The City Council is:

- Introducing a quality management system (ISO:9001) into our Corporate Property team and using the learning from this pilot to roll out quality systems more widely across the council
- Implementing the outcomes of our review into Housing Benefits to enable people to make their claims online from the comfort of their own home, or with assistance from our customer service staff (by telephone or in person), rather than using lengthy and confusing paper forms. We are also introducing a new risk-based verification approach to determine claims which will significantly reduce the amount of additional information the majority of claimants are required to provide and speed up processing times, as well as deliver efficiency savings of £110,000 per year.
- Implementing a major review of our housing repairs and maintenance service to improve how requests for repairs are dealt with, reviewing our standards and policies to ensure they are fit for purpose, and comparing our costs and processes with other local authority housing providers to ensure we use best practice and reduce our costs

- rationalising and improving its ICT systems architecture and reviewing the City Council's licensing arrangements.

3. Procurement and contract management

Currently, £23 million of the City Council's £40million annual supplier spend is covered by corporate contracts. The Council manages a collaborative procurement hub that operates across all the councils in Oxfordshire. A dedicated procurement officer ensures that the majority of procurements undertaken benefit all the partners in the hub.

We are shifting from a focus on individual procurement exercises to better management of our contracts to deliver the maximum value from them through improved supplier relationships. We are also introducing new technology to improve the way we place orders and pay for goods and services to make them more efficient.

The City Council is:

- Implementing a 'purchase to pay' system to ensure that orders take advantage of existing corporate contracts, eliminate the need for most paper orders and streamline invoice authorisation
- Developing a corporate approach to managing contracts and developing supplier relationships
- Developing a greater commercial focus
- Supporting and developing effective contract management through the introduction of training for key officers within the Council's service areas enabling them to become accredited with a professional procurement qualification
- Delivering contract savings through supplier development and offering services to other Councils beyond the Oxfordshire Hub initiative.

4. Trading and Business Development

In an environment of reducing central government funding it is vital that the Council does all it can to grow external sources of revenue to support provision of existing services rather than be at the whim of national funding decisions. Good progress has already been made through establishing markets for the Council's building services, engineering, motor transport, commercial waste, grounds maintenance/landscaping and legal services, and these are expected to bring in around £5m in 2012/13. There is a requirement to deliver new and increased income streams that will require a more commercial and innovative approach to be adopted

The City Council is:

- Implementing a strategy and framework to support the Council's aspirations to grow external revenue
- Seeking to bring in additional revenue in the years 2013/14 to 2015/16 from the provision of services to other external organisations.

5. Organisational Development

The Council's ambitions are high. We are moving the Council from good to great by producing greater outcomes through leaner delivery (GOLD) and we are doing this in a climate of significant financial constraint. The Council's staff are its key asset and ensuring they are equipped to undertake the roles we require them to fulfil is vital. To this end the Council is investing not only in a new performance management scheme, but also in a variety of development and well-being initiatives to support performance improvement.

The challenges that the Council faces and its high ambitions mean that the attitudes, skills and competencies of its employees need to continue to develop.

Effective people management skills driving high performance, sound project and programme management methodologies, and business improvement tools will continue to play an important role. However, new skills will also be necessary: leadership, coaching and team building skills, business acumen (including the ability to interpret and respond to customer intelligence) plus the ability to 'think outside the box' will be critical. High levels of employee engagement, where employees 'connect' with exactly what the Council is trying to achieve for the city, will set us apart and enable us to succeed.

The City Council is:

- Restructuring its services to integrate and align teams with a similar purpose, providing a flatter management structure with a maximum of five tiers and identifying career and development pathways to facilitate succession planning
- Implementing an organisational development strategy which will;
 - define our organisational values and shape our behaviours framework
 - develop, retain and attract a high performing and motivated workforce, where excellence in people management and development is recognised
 - ensure our values are aligned closely with corporate objectives and that staff are clear about how they contribute to the delivery of the Council's vision
 - champion innovative thinking and proactive engagement with staff and customers in service redesign
 - deliver a comprehensive learning and development programme to bridge any gaps in employee capability
- Training managers in more effective recruitment
- Develop a talent management strategy that enables career growth, workforce and succession planning
- Piloting an employee well-being programme to improve fitness, encourage healthy lifestyles and develop a better work/life balance in order to improve staff attendance
- Aiming to achieve IIP Gold in 2014.

6. Measuring progress

Measure	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17
The percentage of customers satisfied at their first point of contact	75%	80%	85%	85%
The delivery of the Council's savings and income targets	£3.195m	£1.887m	£1.183m	£0.906m
The level of self-service transactions that are carried out using the Council's website	18%	23%	28%	37%
Achievement and retention of IIP Gold	Standard	Gold	Gold	Gold

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