

Draft Corporate Plan 2016 - 20 Consultation Report

Consultation on the draft Corporate Plan 2016-20 and draft Budget 2016-20 opened on 18th December 2015 and closed on 24th January 2016.

An invitation to take part in the consultation was sent to over 3,300 email addresses via the consultation portal and an invitation from the Assistant Chief Executive was sent to key stakeholders. An advert was placed in the Oxford Mail on 22nd December, 29th December and 5th January. Paper copies were available on request from the Consultation Officer in the Town Hall.

A total of 34 people have responded to the consultation online, of which six people have provided comments on the draft Corporate Plan; additional comments have been received by email from four people.

This report covers the comments that relate to the draft Corporate Plan 2016 -20 only, and the City Council's proposed response.

Comment	Proposed Response
Housing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 'Meeting Housing Needs' is the most important of the priorities and should be listed first. The Corporate Plan recognises that economic growth is impeded by a lack of affordable housing. Increasing employment sites will increase pressure on housing and infrastructure, therefore the City should revise its plans for employment growth until housing affordability and supply improve. There should be a greater proportion of housing on potential development sites such as the 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The City Council's priorities as laid out in the Corporate Plan are not intended to be read as a priority order, and for that reason are not numbered. Instead they are positioned as being interlinked, and it is intended that the professionally designed Corporate Plan leaflet will emphasise these interdependencies, where those between housing and economic growth are recognised as being particularly important. The Council has an up to date Local Plan and Strategic Employment and Housing Land Assessments. These have been independently tested and proposals to develop housing on employment land have been dismissed by the Planning Inspectorate. In addition, the Government has confirmed further safeguards for strategic employment sites in the city.

<p>Business Park in Cowley and the Southfield Golf Course. For the least affordable city in the UK, Oxford's housing development plans are not bold enough.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Greater emphasis could be placed on the need to provide pathways out of homelessness which means building confidence, skills and resilience as well as providing housing. • Support for the commitment to further work to protect the position of private rented sector tenants in the city, and tackle poor practice amongst some private sector landlords • Support for the Corporate Plan's emphasis on tackling housing issues 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The City Council has actively promoted and is bringing forward major residential development sites for over 1,600 homes in the city, such as Barton, Oxpens and Northern Gateway. It has also identified the need for housing development adjoining the city (Oxford Growth Route Map) as it is recognised that the city cannot accommodate all its housing needs. Planning Inspectors have confirmed that the surrounding Districts need to provide for Oxford's unmet housing need. • There needs to be land for both employment and housing in the city. The universities, hospitals and high value business, such as BMW and the knowledge economy are based in Oxford. The city has unique attributes which are not replicated elsewhere in the country, and is an opportunity to attract international inward investment to support the UK economy. The continuing success of the city and its contribution to the regional and national economy require the capacity to grow. The Cowley Business Park is not an appropriate location for housing and independent assessments have confirmed that the Southfield Golf Course is not available for housing. • The City Council invests over £1m annually in supporting homeless persons, including support for organisations providing pathways out of homelessness. In addition the Council has invested funds with St Mungo's specifically to provide temporary accommodation for homeless families. We are working with the County Council and other partners to manage and mitigate the impacts of the reduction in County budgets on homelessness support services.
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<p>and for the approach outlined to deal with housing as a county issue and not just a city issue, while doing all possible within the city.</p>	
<p>Flooding</p> <p>In the light of recent flooding elsewhere in England we need to protect the flood plain and water meadows from development. Green spaces like Port Meadows protect buildings on television gravel ridges under several of the main roads in Oxford. The other aims of the plan are laudable but need to be safe from flooding.</p>	<p>The draft Plan highlights the Council's commitment both flood reduction and flood alleviation (see page 9-10). Our Local Plan policies include protection of the flood plain along the river corridors to reduce the risk of flooding. The City Council is investing in flood alleviation measures to protect businesses, households and important transport links in the western and southern parts of the city. This is outlined in the draft Medium Term Financial Strategy, which includes the City Council's plan to allocate £2.6 million to flood alleviation measures in Marston and Northway and £1.1 million to the Oxford and Abingdon Flood Alleviation Scheme.</p>
<p>Cycling</p> <p>Further attention is needed to encouraging people to walk and cycle in the city, to improve cycle safety, improve health and activity and to reduce congestion and air pollution. Suggestions include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improvement to cycle lanes and more cycle parking spaces • Traffic calming measures and 20 mph speed limits on all roads in the city. • Amend the City Centre Street Scene Manual to place more emphasis on safe cycling. • Plans for major developments in the city, including Northern Gateway, Barton, Headington, Westgate, Oxpens, Osney Mead, Oxford Rail station need to demand much greater provision for safe cycling. • More provision and effort to make cycling a transport mode of choice in the Park & Ride sites. 	<p>The provision of cycle lanes and control over speed limits is the responsibility of Oxfordshire County Council. Its plans are set out in the Oxfordshire Transport Strategy, in particular the "Active Travel" section aims to transform the walking and cycling offer through a grid of cycle routes and improvements to signage and cycle parking.</p> <p>The City Council will continue to work with the County Council to promote improvements to cycle lanes and parking and park and rides to encourage people to promote cycling and walking in the city and tackle air pollution. This is referenced in the Corporate Plan on page 9.</p> <p>The City Centre Street Scene Manual includes a clear purpose "to create a safe and attractive environment for cyclists as well as for pedestrians". The hierarchy applied to the guidelines for the design and management of streets in Oxford city centre gives priority to the needs of cyclists second only to pedestrians.</p>

	<p>The City Council seeks to ensure that provision for cycling and walking is included in plans for new development. For example, the Northern Gateway Area Action Plan states that planning permission will only be granted for new roads within the site if they are based on low vehicle speeds giving priority to provision for walking, cycling and easy access to public transport. The AAP also emphasises that strong walking and cycling links should be provided through the site to the National Cycle Route, Canal towpath and Wolvercote Village.</p> <p><i>Recommendation</i> <i>To highlight the commitment to improving cycling facilities as part of transport infrastructure investment and improvements to Park and Rides in the Vibrant Sustainable Economy section of the Corporate Plan (in addition to the reference in the Clean and Green section).</i></p>
<p>Transport and Infrastructure</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The City Council should work with neighbouring District Councils, the County Council, the LEP, transport providers and Central Government to seek funding to set up a modern sustainable public transport network for central Oxfordshire and the Knowledge spine. • The Corporate Plan should reference to the overall ambitions of the Oxfordshire Local Transport Plan as well as the Oxford Transport Strategy. • The importance of the City Council working with the County Council to deliver the city's priorities in the Oxford Transport Strategy and unlocking transport blockages. 	<p>The City Council is working with neighbouring authorities and the LEP to implement the Oxford and Oxfordshire City and Growth Deals to invest over £160 million to improve infrastructure to support housing and growth across the County and the vision set out in the Oxfordshire Strategic Economic Plan.</p> <p>We are also working together on proposals for a Devolution Deal which includes securing a government commitment to a long-term investment fund for a programme of infrastructure investment to include improving rail, rapid transit bus routes and cycle routes.</p> <p><i>Recommendation</i></p>

	<p><i>To amend the document to read</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (P4) Work with the County Council to deliver the city's priorities in the Oxfordshire Local Transport Plan and the Oxford Transport Strategy and unlock transport blockages.
<p>Planning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In the light of the future development of Oxford, the Plan should set out stronger commitment to involving communities in how their areas will change and a collaborative approach to planning. Specific point included: • Oxford is way behind the best Councils in this area and the aspirations laid out in Collaborative Planning for ALL (Civic Voice) and the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). • The Oxford Design Review Panel should be repositioned as a contributor to a public rather than a private dialogue. • The commitment to a review of the Local Plan is noted, but the update of the West End Area Action Plan should happen earlier. • Further efforts should be made in working with neighbouring councils to resolve housing and growth challenges. 	<p>Developing the new Local Plan is a corporate priority for the council in the period to 2018 and will involve extensive public engagement and consultation over the three years of its production. The plan will be fully compliant with the NPPF and using will look to be developed using best practice including on community engagement and involvement.</p> <p>The Oxford Design Review meetings are not held in public to encourage full and frank scheme critique, (as with most design review panels) however the outputs are public and the Oxford Design Review Panel advice is published by the Council. The Council's planning committees value the work of the panel and the independent advice they provide on the quality of new development proposed in the city.</p> <p>The West End Area Action Plan (and associated design code) provides a good basis for encouraging high quality development in that part of the city. It is unlikely to be practical to review the AAP in advance of the Local Plan review but the need for additional guidance to support development coming forward in that area, ahead of the local plan will be considered.</p> <p>The council is working closely with neighbouring councils on the delivery of the Oxford Growth Strategy and will continue to do so as</p>

	work progresses on the delivery of unmet housing needs.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Strong and Active Communities section should reference the value of the arts and cultural activity in bringing communities together. • Support for the use of the Cultural Partnership Group in helping diverse communities to access cultural activities. • Involvement in cultural activity should be included in the measures. • The Christmas Light Festival is an example of an opportunity to bring all of Oxford together to celebrate. 	The City Council recognises the value that the arts and cultural activities bring to communities. This is highlighted in its Culture Strategy 2015-18 which is referenced in the Corporate Plan. This strategy, developed with the support and engagement of Oxford's cultural sector and community groups, explicitly links the City Council's vision for culture and the arts to the needs of the city's communities. The Culture Strategy describes the many diverse and creative community projects led by the City Council, including the Christmas Light Festival.
<p>Working with the County Council</p> <p>Appreciation of the constructive approach the City Council has taken towards joint working to with the County Council to mitigate the County funding pressures and minimise the impact on residents when possible.</p> <p>Request for specific reference to the County Council as partner in development, regeneration and infrastructure to support new housing.</p>	<p>We will continue to work with the County Council as they implement their budget reductions with a view to minimising and mitigating the impact on services in the City. This will include urging them to consider opportunities to manage their property and assets effectively to ensure vital services can continue.</p> <p>Recommendation: To amend the Corporate Plan to include specific references to working with the County Council as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>(P4) Work with developers, local residents, the County Council and other stakeholders on development and regeneration of mixed use and employment-led sites, where possible within the city, such as the Oxford rail station, Northern Gateway...</i> • <i>(P4) Work with the County Council to deliver the city's priorities in the Oxford Transport Strategy and the Oxfordshire Local Transport Plan, and unlock transport blockages.</i>

<p>Any proposal for a planning application at Grenoble Road such application is taken forward in a joined up way, and does not prejudice the outcome of work by South Oxfordshire District Council in regard to Oxford's "unmet need" from the SHMA process."</p>	<p>The City Council is working with the Oxfordshire Growth Board to deliver solutions to meet the pressing requirement to address Oxford's unmet housing need. Grenoble Road is a strategic sustainable housing opportunity and we would hope that partners will work with us to bring this forward.</p>
<p>Other comments</p> <p>Support for the recognition in the Corporate Plan of the contribution a strong and mature partnership approach with voluntary and community organisations and for the continued financial support for the sector.</p> <p>Support for the emphasis on tackling inequality in relation to health, income and opportunity, where increasing pressure on public health budgets may lead over the life of the plan to a reduction in some currently available services.</p> <p>Support for waste compact bins and greater roll out.</p>	<p>Supportive of the Plan and no proposed changes.</p>

05 February 2016

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