

Report to: Executive Board – 10th January 2005

The Oxford Plan – The Corporate Plan of Oxford City Council

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Summary and Recommendations

This report re-introduces the council's corporate plan (The Oxford Plan) that was first considered by the Executive Board at its meeting in November since when a cross-party group of councillors have met on three occasions to discuss its content and reach consensus where possible.

The aim of the plan is to:

1. Set a clear direction for the council; linking our vision with the main actions that flow from the recent CPA inspection and Members' proposed objectives.
2. Act as a single reference point so that everyone can see what we seek to achieve, and a framework against which budgetary choices can be made.
3. Provide a link with individual business plans.

Executive Board is RECOMMENDED to:

1. Consider and (if necessary) amend the attached draft plan prior to releasing it for consultation and particularly consider those issues in the plan signified by square brackets where consensus between the party representatives could not be reached. Square brackets are found as follows:
 - 3.6.1 page 26 Housing
 - 3.6.3 page 28 Taxi tokens
 - 3.6.3 page 28 Establishment of a leisure trust
 - 3.6.5 page 30 The recycling of plastics
 - 3.6.8 page 36 Promoting a unitary authority for Oxford City and the establishment of a mobile customer enquiry centre

2. Instruct officers to follow the Corporate Plan in developing their detailed business plans and budgets.

1. Background and Context

1.1 The Executive Board considered the first draft of this plan at its last meeting and referred it to a cross-party group to consider its contents and try to achieve consensus. Representatives from the Labour, Liberal Democrat and Green parties met three times since then.

1.2 We have also undertaken preliminary consultation with Business Managers and incorporated their views such that a revised draft of the Oxford Plan is now attached to this report for consideration. This plan is still in its development stage and the consultation – both externally and internally – will be necessary to shape the final document.

2. Issues raised by the Cross-Party Group

2.1 The council has an approved vision for Oxford that sets out the two underpinning objectives of improving performance and working with others to deliver shared goals. The cross-party group indicated that as a result of the 'concordat' following the election this vision needed to be reviewed.

2.2 A large number of changes and enhancements have been suggested and incorporated within the plan, as attached, with square brackets for those items where all three groups could not agree. The Executive Board are asked to consider those items where consensus was not possible. These are found in the following sections:

3.6.1	page 26	Housing
3.6.3	page 28	Taxi tokens
3.6.3	page 28	Establishment of a leisure trust
3.6.5	page 30	The recycling of plastics
3.6.8	page 36	Promoting a unitary authority for Oxford City and the establishment of a mobile customer enquiry centre
3.6.10	Page 39	Incentives for council tax payment

2.3 They also recognised that there was a parallel process that was setting the council's corporate agenda – namely the budget process. Whilst this was accepted for the current year - given that this was the very first corporate plan – there was agreement that the budget should be driven by the corporate plan in future years.

2.4 The opposition representatives hoped that the introductory statement currently drafted by the leader could be a statement from all four political group leaders. The Labour representative felt that the Leader's statement was on behalf of the whole Council

2.5 Where there has been a consensus the changes have been made and incorporated in this latest version. The plan has also recognised that the Housing is not likely to achieve a 2 star service in their inspection next September – as was set out in the current Improvement Plan. The plan therefore aims for a one star service by September 2005 and a 2 star service by March 2007.

3. The Future Development of the Oxford Plan

3.1 It was recognised that the process for the development of the plan still needs refining for future years and it requires more internal consultation before it reaches the Executive Board.

3.2 It was also agreed that the initial draft of the corporate plan needs to be available before the budget process starts in earnest so that it can guide the budget decisions. A review of the process and that of the budget and business plans was suggested this year so that improvements can be made in future years. Officers will conduct this review after the Plan is approved in February.

4. Consultation on the Plan

4.1 The council's budget book will form an appendix to the Oxford Plan and this will include a summary of every Business Unit's individual business plans. This year the plan, up to now, been driven by the improvement agenda and does not necessarily include all the core business of the council. Consultation over the next four weeks will include internal consultation as well as external so that the plan can reflect the key, corporate issues that emerge from the drafting of the business plans that will be finished later this month.

4.2 For any business, the corporate plan is both an internal document for the organisation and its key stakeholders and an external document on which we have to consult as it is in the policy framework of the council. Obviously, copies will go to the Area Committees and to Scrutiny and also to the key partners and organisations with whom we work. We will also lodge this on the web site and indicate it is out for consultation seeking responses from citizens of the City. But it is unlikely that a business document of this size is going to attract a significant response.

5. Conclusion

5.1 The report returns a draft of the corporate plan to the Executive Board for consideration seeking their comments and to approve a version that will go out to consultation. The consultation will be for four weeks and a final version of the Plan will return to the Board and to Council in time for the budget making.

This report has been seen and approved by:

Portfolio Holder - Cllr John Tanner

Sarah Fogden – Business Manager, Finance and Asset Management
Lindsey Cane – Legal and Democratic Services

Background papers: The Oxford Plan (draft)