

3.6.4 Improving Services – Further develop and implement the Council’s equality policy

This priority for improvement links to:

- The Council’s strategic priority to dialogue and consultation
- The Community Strategy theme for a vibrant and inclusive economy

Oxford is widely accepted as a diverse multi-cultural community. We live, work and play together and the incidence of race-related crime is low. This can sometimes lead us to be complacent and assume that everybody is getting equality of opportunity regardless of his or her background. Unfortunately this is not always the case. The Council intends to ensure that it provides services on which all sectors of the community are consulted and can readily access and it will also demonstrate its commitment to equality of opportunity through its own employment policies.

There is an agreed national Equalities Standard for local government to ensure equality of access, service delivery and representation. This was developed jointly by the Commission for Race Equality, the Disability Rights Commission, the Equal Opportunities Commission and the Employers Organisation for local government. We are implementing the Equalities Standard as it provides a framework for us to ensure we deliver positive changes in a comprehensive and consistent manner. Progress against the standard is measured through five levels:

- Level 1 – Demonstrated commitment to a comprehensive equality policy
- Level 2 – Assessment and consultation
- Level 3 – The setting of equality objectives and targets
- Level 4 – Information systems and monitoring against targets
- Level 5 – Achieving and reviewing outcomes

We have:

- Achieved our target of reaching Level 1 of the Equalities Standard by March 2005

We will:

- Achieve Level 2 of the Equalities Standard by March 2006
- Achieve Level 3 of the Equalities Standard by March 2007
- Achieve Level 4 of the Equalities Standard by March 2008
- Work to ensure that by March 2008 the employee profile of the Council better reflects that of the local community

The majority of the work on these commitments is carried out by the Business Units listed below. More information on the work of these units and the resources allocated to their work can be found in the relevant sections of the Budget Book

- Human Resources
- Strategy and Review

Want to find out more about equality at Oxford City Council?

- Visit <http://www.oxford.gov.uk/council/diversity-and-equality.cfm>
- Phone 01865 249811 and asking to for our Diversity Co-ordinator

3.6.5 Improving Services – Improve the quality of our environment

This priority for improvement links to:

- The Council's strategic priority to improve the environment where we live and work
- The Community Strategy theme of a better living environment

Oxford is one of Europe's most beautiful cities. We are proud of our parks and open spaces. The quality of our public spaces was recognised by our recent Comprehensive Performance Inspection and by the numerous awards many of them have received. For example, Wolvercote has twice been voted cemetery of the year, we have won Britain in Bloom three times and are a regular winner of the regional category. Our allotments have long been recognised for their success and we have even had two of our public toilets voted Toilet of the Year 2003! Our performance for recycling is in the top 25% in the country and a recent Audit Commission report acknowledged our good work in tackling litter, fly tipping and air quality. However, the people of Oxford have told us how important these issues are to them and we intend to maintain and build upon our successes and enhance the Oxford environment.

We have:

- Reconfigured services to provide single teams for all aspects of street cleansing in each area of the city so that we can provide a co-ordinated, local approach
- Replaced the Lord Mayor's car with dual fuel car to minimise environmental impact

We will:

- Seek to influence the development of the County Council Local Transport Plan for 2006-2011 to provide more cost-effective and less environmentally-damaging ways of promoting increased numbers of journeys into and within the city by public transport, cycling and walking in order to improve air quality, reduce traffic congestion and parking pressures and promote a healthy lifestyle.
- Make the running of the Council's parks and green spaces more responsive to local communities by rolling out a fully area-based working through Area committees
- Carry out a full review from 2005/2006 of the existing methods of recycling and refuse collection as preparation for the full implementation of an expanded kerbside recycling scheme in 2007/2008

The majority of the work on these commitments is carried out by the Business Units listed below. More information on the work of these units and the resources allocated to their work can be found in the relevant sections of the Budget Book.

- City Works
- Transport and Parking
- Leisure and Parks
- Neighbourhood Renewal

3.6.6 Transforming the way we work – Embed performance management and effective governance

To succeed, we need our staff to be well trained and motivated, our processes to be inclusive and responsive and our systems to be efficient. The priorities for transforming the way we work and building capacity (sections 3.6.6 to 3.6.10) are about ensuring we have efficient business practices and that staff skills are kept up-to-date in order to deliver service improvements and provide efficiency savings wherever possible. The people of Oxford have told us quite clearly through consultation that this is something they expect us to do and their view is supported by the findings of the Comprehensive Performance Assessment inspection.

For these reasons we have identified the following key areas for improving how we work:

- Performance management and corporate governance
- Staff capacity
- Financial capacity
- Activities to increase our customer focus
- Long-term goals for the city

This priority for improvement links to:

- The Council's strategic priority to transform the way we work and build capacity
- The Community Strategy objective of supporting sustained economic development and a skilled and employable workforce, part of its theme of a vibrant and inclusive economy.

We have:

- Developed a risk management strategy so that we understand the risks to the Council's business which will be implemented during 2005/2006 and reviewed annually
- Extended use of our performance management software and offered training for all Councillors and staff at operational management level and above to help drive performance improvement through evidence-based management
- Worked with Councillors, the Executive Board, Scrutiny and Area Committees and Housing Revenue Account Management Board to make performance information more readily available to them. This work will continue in the coming year
- Made performance data available to the public via our website*
- Improved business planning processes and business plan format and we will continue to develop this in line with best practice
- Established better-defined procedures for the collection of performance information to ensure that it is accurate
- Achieved a Best Value Performance Plan for 2004/2005 agreed as fit for purpose by the Audit Commission.

*(*outcomes expected by March 2005)*

We will:

- Deliver training in tools and techniques for continuous improvement throughout the Council during 2005/2006
- Continue development of our performance monitoring software – CorVu – to permit individual staff and their managers secure access to their personal development plans on our intranet by March 2006.
- Establish capacity and skill levels in business units for performance management, governance and provide training or on-site support where needed by March 2007
- Reduce the number of Council policy and strategy documents to a manageable level by March 2008, making sure that all policies have a 'review by' date.

The majority of the work on these commitments is carried out by the Business Units listed below. More information on the work of these units and the resources allocated to their work can be found in the relevant sections of the Budget Book.

- Performance and Improvement Team
- Strategy and Review

3.6.7 Transforming the way we work – Build capacity by investing in our staff and councillors

This priority for improvement links to:

- The Council's strategic priority to transform the way we work and build capacity
- The Community Strategy objective of supporting sustained economic development and a skilled and employable workforce, part of its theme of a vibrant and inclusive economy.

When staff are recruited we spend time and money training them to be as effective as possible in doing their job. We want to make sure that having invested in staff they remain fulfilled and motivated to continue in their work with the Council, helping us deliver good quality services. We are therefore working to update our Human Resources policies and demonstrate commitment to our staff through training and development.

The nature of our work changes over time as the needs and expectations of the people of Oxford change and we need to develop our staff so that they can keep their skills up to date and gain new skills. For instance, a decade ago only the managers of the Council worked with a computer but now the majority of staff use one every day as the main tool of their job. Whilst our investment in new technology provides benefits for service delivery it does require further investment in training.

When Councillors are elected they bring with them expertise from their own careers and they are often very familiar with large areas of the Council's work. However, we need to make sure they are given the opportunity to find out about all the areas of work of the 1400 Council employees, that they have the opportunity to learn about the legislation that governs and restricts many of the diverse aspects of the Council's work and that they have the opportunity to strengthen their political and leadership skills so that they can best represent the views of the people of Oxford and drive the improvements and changes people expect to see.

We have:

- Developed a new Human Resource Strategy to be implemented from April 2005
- Introduced new ways to share learning across the Council such as our Trainers' Network and free lunchtime seminars
- Together with Trades Unions, secured funding and opened a Learning Centre giving access to PCs for staff who would not normally have this facility in their day-to-day work so that we can help them develop their computer skills
- Together with Trades Unions, secured funding for a Home Computing Initiative to help staff purchase their own PC and develop their computer skills further. The first computers were delivered to staff in January 2005.
- Reduced days lost at work due to illness to less than 11 per employee per year*
- Developed new grievance and disciplinary procedures to be implemented from 2005/2006
- Improved internal communications with the staff newsletter – Oxford Accents – and information from across the organisation through Team Brief
- Had confirmed our Investors in People status for City Works at a recent review.

(* outcomes expected by March 2005)

We will:

- Deliver a programme to develop the leadership and performance management capabilities of senior officers and Councillors by March 2006
- Extend our shared learning programme to include mechanisms to share best practice and provide peer support from external public and private sectors during 2005/2006
- Develop and embed Investors in People principles in all business units. Aim to be at liP standard by December 2006
- Reduce days lost at work through sickness to an annual average of less than eight per person by March 2006.

The majority of the work on these commitments is carried out by the Business Unit listed below. More information on the work of this unit and the resources allocated to its work can be found in the relevant sections of the Budget Book.

- Human Resources

3.6.8 Transforming the way we work – Enhance customer focus

This priority for improvement links to:

- The Council's strategic priority to transform the way we work and build capacity
- The Community Strategy objective of supporting sustained economic development and a skilled and employable workforce, part of its theme of a vibrant and inclusive economy.

Councillors and Council employees are here to deliver services to the people of Oxford. We have a responsibility to prioritise what we do and the way we do it according to the needs and expectations of the people of Oxford. One of the ways in which people express their opinions and priorities is by voting. However, being customer focused means much more than taking a sounding of people's priorities every few years through the ballot box. We have to build an awareness of customer needs into all aspects of our work and continually ask ourselves how our actions affect our service to customers:

- Planning change:** What did customers tell us they want to change?
Are these things that we can change?
- Before change:** Have we consulted customers on how we intend to make changes?
Have we considered all the options?
- During change:** Does what we are doing meet identified customer needs?
What does the customer have a right to expect from us?
- After change:** Do customers feel their needs have been met by the changes made?
Have we given feedback on what we have or have not done and why?

This process is cyclical and helps establish a means for achieving continuous improvements to our services.

Customers have told us how much they value the service they receive from our Customer Service Officers and we intend to maintain a high quality face-to-face service. However, there is also clear customer demand for improvements to the way we handle customer phone calls and we are working hard on a key project to help us deliver improvements to our phone service. We are also making big changes to our website to make it easier to use and increase the services available by the internet. This is all part of our implementation of the electronic government agenda.

We have:

- Consulted the people of Oxford during the period September 2004 to January 2005 on the Council's budget priorities for 2005/2006
- Carried out a major part of the Council's e-government policy to improve access to Council services, including upgrading and redesign of our website
- Improved functionality of our website so people can pay council tax, rent and parking fines to the council using the internet as well as by phone
- Carried out extensive consultation with tenants to ensure that their opinions are considered in deciding on the future management of Council housing stock
- Implemented Community Cohesion and Community Development Action Plan
- Published for consultation our Leisure Facilities Strategic Assessment
- Developed and adopted a consultation strategy incorporating work with hard to reach groups and services with low satisfaction
- Developed and implemented a communication strategy based on our communications audit in order to improve internal and external communications
- Re-established our panel of residents and service users, Talkback, in partnership with police and PCT to provide a deeper understanding of our customers' expectations
- Established our Economic Forum and started implementation of the Oxford Futures recommendations to engage more with businesses and the universities.

We will:

- Provide our new Customer Relationship Management software across the whole Council and deliver training to staff using it by March 2006. This will allow us to quickly access all the information we need to answer queries when our customers phone us, removing the need to pass customers from one department to another.
- Embed and further develop our telephone contact services based on just two Council telephone numbers, making it easier for the public to know the correct number to call in order to speak to somebody with the skills and knowledge to help them.
- Increase customer satisfaction for telephone contact with the benefits service to 73% by March 2007.
- We believe that a unitary authority would best serve the people of Oxford and we will consult them on this to decide whether we should work with partners to lobby national government to achieve this.
- Maintain and enhance our face-to-face customer enquiry service.

The majority of the work on these commitments is carried out by the Business Units listed below. More information on the work of these units and the resources allocated to their work can be found in the relevant sections of the Budget Book.

- Customer Services
- Strategy and Review

3.6.9 Transforming the way we work – Develop in partnership a long-term vision for the city on which to base future plans

This priority for improvement links to:

- The Council's strategic priority work with others to deliver shared goals
- The support and further development of our Community Strategy

If we are to work in an efficient and co-ordinated way we need to have a long-term view of what we want to achieve for the city. We also need to ensure that we work in partnership with other organisations towards the same long-term goals. This includes both city-wide partnerships and those that reach beyond the city boundaries, such as the waterways partnership, which addresses river management issues both within and beyond the city.

Partnership working is increasingly important in local government, and is playing a larger role in how we deliver our services.

The Oxford Strategic Partnership is one of the key partnerships in the city as the vision of the partnership feeds into those of its partners, including ours. The OSP will be revising its vision in 2005-06 to provide a crisper and clearer sense of direction, and all the individual partner organisations and theme groups that focus on specific issues like health or the environment, will need to ensure that they continue to contribute to the overall goal.

We have:

- Set up delivery groups for each theme group within the Community Strategy to help achieve the agreed outcomes
- Produced the Oxford Plan to reflect our Community Strategy priorities and our Council's vision and inform business unit plans for the coming year.

We will:

- Revise the Community Strategy by July 2005 to incorporate a longer-term vision for the city with outcome-based targets
- Further strengthen the links between the Oxford Plan, the Community Strategy and the Council vision and ensure that the 2006-2009 Oxford Plan is drafted by September 2005. This will then inform business plans, with the final plan agreed in February 2006. The plan will then be reviewed annually.

The majority of the work on these commitments is carried out by the Business Units listed below. More information on the work of these units and the resources allocated to their work can be found in the relevant sections of the Budget Book.

- Strategy and Review
- Performance and Improvement Team

3.6.10 Transforming the way we work – Continue to improve financial capacity and improve financial performance

This priority for improvement links to:

- The Council's strategic priority to transform the way we work and build capacity

However well focused and co-ordinated our plans are they can only be achieved if we have a sound financial base. The Council has made great strides in stabilising its finances over the last four years but we still have more to do if we are to achieve all that we want to do. As one of the few Councils which still has its housing stock we face a big challenge in finding the £31 million needed to meet the minimum housing standards required of us by 2010.

In addition, many of our activities are funded externally, for example through grant awards. External funding is usually available for a set period of time only, or to complete a specific project. Where activities need to continue beyond the duration of the funding, we need to find alternative means of meeting the resource requirements. This may include mainstreaming funding through our own budgets as efficiencies give rise to savings, or by sharing the funding requirements with other organisations.

We have:

- Reviewed our capital programme to ensure money is available for the agreed priorities to 2007. We will review the programme every six months to ensure money is available for a minimum three-year advance period
- Delivered basic financial training to third-tier managers to continuously improve financial management techniques and financial control at business unit level.
- Achieved our target to improve the number of invoices that are paid within 30 days from 87.9% to above 90%*
- Increased our Council Tax collection rate from 95.4% to 96.5%. This is just below our target of 97%. Additional resources may be needed to maintain momentum in this area*
- Decreased rent arrears in homelessness by 24%, a reduction of more than £300,000 in money owed
- Set up arrangements for payment of over 50% of overpaid benefit (£1.5 million). However, people on low incomes can only make repayment in small amounts so recovery is slow. Although we did not achieve our target of increasing repayments to 50% of money owed, we have raised our performance to the national third quartile
- Developed a best practice Procurement Strategy and action plan that meets the National Framework Milestones. This was done with the support of the IDeA and the plan has been commended by them
- Saved £80,000 through e-procurement of stationery
- Set up a best practice the Strategic Procurement Partnership to provide joint working arrangements with other Oxfordshire public bodies to gain value for money and develop projects as appropriate.

*(*outcomes expected by March 2005)*

We will:

- Carry out three Best Value Reviews each year between 2005 and 2008
- Improve invoices paid within 30 days to 92% by March 2006 and 94% by March 2007
- Provide a structure of supporting documents to our revised financial regulations by March 2006
- Deliver basic financial training to all Business Managers and interested Councillors by March 2006
- Spend only according to our budgets in order to maintain the General Fund balance at £3 million.
- Following the outcome of our Housing Stock Options Appraisal we will set a funding strategy to deliver the Decent Homes Standards required by government by 2010. If the options outcome makes it possible to fund higher than this very basic standard we will do so.
- Pledge only to increase Council Tax when needed to pay for services, not when it would increase reserves already considered adequate by the District Auditor.

The majority of the work on these commitments is carried out by the Business Units listed below. More information on the work of these units and the resources allocated to their work can be found in the relevant sections of the Budget Book.

- Finance and Asset Management
- Revenues and Benefits

3.7 Monitoring

This, Oxford's corporate plan, is a forward-looking document on which we base our plans for the next three years. In order for us to successfully plan and budget for the next three years we need to have the Oxford Plan in place some time before this. It cannot therefore include reporting of achievement until its second publication after the end of the preceding year. This will coincide with our legal duty to publish a Best Value Performance Plan by 30 June each year. The second publication of the Oxford Plan will incorporate these requirements.

Although annual achievements cannot be reported until the end of the financial year, various forms of monitoring, checking and reporting are happening all the time. Indeed, in the areas of the Council where performance management is firmly embedded, performance information is used on a daily basis to allocate resources and meet fluctuations in workload. This is the key to staying on track and meeting our targets. Some examples of the more formal monitoring and reporting we do are given below.

- Performance is reported to the Executive Board and Finance Scrutiny Committee of the Council every three months. Many aspects of performance are monitored monthly by managers, our Performance and Improvement Team and our Portfolio Holder for Performance and Review.
- Staff and Councillors can access live performance information at any time via our performance management software on the intranet. This provides much greater scope for monitoring and scrutiny of their areas of responsibility, leading to better performance management at a corporate and service level. We will be developing this to include the Personal Development Plans of each member of staff so that they and their manager can have secure access to this on-line.
- In June 2005 we will publish this plan again with data at Appendix 2 showing how we performed during 2004/2005. Data will then be checked by the Audit Commission to make sure that we have measured our performance fairly.
- In order to help drive our priorities for improvement, and provide external challenge and expertise to how we approach our work, we have established an Improvement Board. This includes officers and political members of the Council and external advisors from Government Office for the South East, the Audit Commission, the Said Business School and Unipart. The Improvement Board does not take decisions on behalf of the Council, but it does advise it through the portfolio holder for performance and review to the Executive Board.

In addition to our own monitoring there are a number of inspections, audits and reports to which local authorities are subjected by central government and other external bodies. Some examples are outlined below:

- We receive an annual audit report from the Audit Commission, which highlights areas of weakness; for example, we have recently been advised that we must improve how we manage our finances, how we monitor performance, how we make decisions and how we manage risks.
- The Audit Commission's Comprehensive Performance Assessment Team monitor our progress with Improvement Plan Priorities and have asked us to report on this during March 2005.
- We are also subject to a range of service-based inspections and audits to ensure that priority services are managed and delivered efficiently and effectively. We expect the housing inspection, due in September 2005, to highlight the areas on which to improve if we are to deliver better services in the future.

Would you like more information about the Council's performance?

Performance information is available from various sources:

- Data on our performance against local and national indicators will be available on our website from March 2005
- Performance against local and national indicators is reported quarterly to our Executive Board. These reports are available on our website at <http://www.oxford.gov.uk/council/meeting-diary.cfm/detail/2>
- Additional progress reports on our improvement priorities are made to the Improvement Board and are available on our website at <http://www.oxford.gov.uk/council/meeting-diary.cfm/detail/41>
- Our Best Value Performance Plan 2004/2005 shows our performance for 2003/2004 and is available at <http://www.oxford.gov.uk/council/bvpp.cfm>

To obtain a paper copy of any report:

- Phone us on 01865 249811 and ask for the Performance Improvement Team
- E-mail us at improvement@oxford.gov.uk

3.8 Corporate Risk Assessment

We recognise that this is an area on which we have focused insufficiently in the past and we have therefore been carrying out work during 2004/2005 to remedy this.

High-level corporate risks are currently being identified and discussed by the Strategic Management Board. It is anticipated that a corporate risk assessment based on best practice methodologies will be developed and cascaded by May 2005.

KEY IMPROVEMENT ACTIVITIES – 2005-2008

The following tables show key improvement activities for the next three years. They are structured around the same headings and objectives as our approved Improvement Plan. As actions on the Improvement Plan are achieved we will need to consider which actions from the following tables the Improvement Board may wish to focus on as the Improvement Plan evolves.

AIM: TO IMPROVE SERVICES

OBJECTIVE ONE: Increase the quantity and quality of affordable housing in all sectors

Ref	Action, Outcomes and Timescales	Lead Officer
1.1.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote an urban extension as a sustainable option to meet housing need via regional/local policies 	Michael Crofton-Briggs
1.1.2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use Council powers to bring empty private sector homes back into use 	John Copley
1.1.3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) and Capital Programme can fund housing improvements to bring the entire stock up to decent homes standard by 2010 	Michael Lawrence
1.1.5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Extend the discretionary homes in multiple occupation licensing regime as an adjunct to forthcoming mandatory licensing to increase registration to 1,000 properties and thereby increase the number of homes improved 	John Copley
1.1.6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Carry out a Registered Social Landlord and housing procurement review with a view to increasing capacity and partnership working in order to facilitate the provision of 150 social housing units for the next 2 years. (Target will be reviewed subsequent to outcome of review) 	Val Johnson
1.1.7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Achieve a one star with prospects of improvement Housing Inspection rating by September 2005 and two star Housing Inspection rating by 2007/2008 	Graham Stratford Graham Bourton Karen Ravenhill
1.1.8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complete a comprehensive review of the options for the future of our housing stock by July 2005 to determine the best way to ensure the ongoing provision of good quality homes 	Karen Ravenhill
1.1.11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Decrease the proportion of local authority homes that are non-decent homes from 38.3% to 32% by March 2006, 25% by March 2007 and 20% by March 2008 (BV184) 	Graham Bourton

OBJECTIVE TWO: Reduce crime and anti-social behaviour

Ref	Action, Outcomes and Timescales	Lead Officer
1.2.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reduce crime and anti-social behaviour (ASB) through Together Action Area status; by April 2005 commence a rolling programme with the Oxford Safer Communities Partnership and the Home Office ASB Unit to work with 50 of the most challenging cases 	Val Johnson
1.2.2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We will carry out our duties under the Licensing Act 2003 and related enforcement. We will use our licensing powers liaising with our Planning staff for future premises to regulate them and their hours of operation 	John Copley Michael Crofton Briggs
1.2.3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Extend the Street Warden Scheme to Barton and Wood Farm by March 2006 and thereafter to identified crime and ASB hotspots. To achieve this we will fund increased numbers of wardens to the totals listed below and part-fund Police Community Support Officers numbers to the totals shown below <p style="margin-left: 40px;">2005/2006 Wardens 15 PCSO 6 2006/2007 Wardens 18 PCSO 8 2007/2008 Wardens 25 PCSO 11</p>	Val Johnson

OBJECTIVE THREE: Reduce poverty and social exclusion

Ref	Action, Outcomes and Timescales	Lead Officer
1.3.2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reissue all concessionary passes for pensioners and then introduce free concessionary fares for some pensioners over a certain age as possible within the existing budget 	Graham Smith
1.3.3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement a co-ordinated Council approach to tackling poverty and social exclusion, linked to the Local Strategic Partnership by March 2006 	Janet Banfield Val Johnson
1.3.7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review provision of leisure services through the emerging Leisure Strategy and seek ways to provide a more cost-effective, higher quality service to the people of Oxford 	Tony Stephens
1.3.10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complete the investment in the Ferry Leisure Centre and Barton Pool projects so the projects are finished by April and December 2005 respectively 	Tony Stephens
1.3.11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement the results of the Community Centre Review to improve quality of facilities by March 2008 	Val Johnson

OBJECTIVE FOUR: Further develop and implement the Council's equalities policy

Ref	Action, Outcomes and Timescales	Lead Officer
1.4.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement the 2004/2005 Corporate Equalities Action Plan to achieve Level 1 of the Equalities Standard (BV002a) by March 2005 and Level 2 by December 2006 	Caroline Bull
1.4.2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work to ensure that by March 2008 the employee profile of the Council better reflects that of the local community 	Anne-Marie Scott

(Also see 1.3.3 which includes implementation of the Council's Equality Strategy)

OBJECTIVE FIVE: Improve the quality of our environment

Ref	Action, Outcomes and Timescales	Lead Officer
1.5.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expand resources for street cleaning and washing to improve cleanliness and increase customer satisfaction 	Glen Wooldrige
1.5.4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Broaden kerbside recycling to include green waste and cardboard. Scheme to cover 100% of the city by March 2008 	Glen Wooldrige
1.5.5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improve anti-litter campaign and education on protecting the local environment with new strategy implemented by March 2006 	Glen Wooldrige
1.5.7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase participation rates in the existing recycling scheme by use of publicity campaigns, in order to assist achievement of PSA recycling targets 	Glen Wooldrige
1.5.8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Seek to influence the County Council as part of the Local Transport Plan Review to develop more cost-effective and less environmentally damaging ways of promoting increased numbers of journeys into and within the city by public transport, cycling and walking by September 2005 	Michael Crofton Briggs
1.5.9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a strategy for using fines/legal powers to combat littering, graffiti, fly-posting and other "environmental crimes" by September 2005 	Glen Wooldrige Val Johnson
1.5.10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consult on the desirability of a public smoking ban in Oxford by March 2006, seeking resources to assess practicality and cost implementation in 2006/2007 should consultation conclude this is called for 	Jan Banfield
1.5.11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review the provision of play areas and develop a specific improvement plan by July 2005 	Tony Stephens

AIM: TO TRANSFORM THE WAY WE WORK AND BUILD CAPACITY

OBJECTIVE SIX: Embed Performance Management and effective governance across the organisation

Ref	Action, Outcomes and Timescales	Lead Officer
2.6.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to work closely with councillors – Executive Board, Scrutiny and Area Committees – to improve their skills and make performance information more readily available 	Mark Luntley
2.6.2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to develop our performance management framework to integrate the Council's corporate plan with business plans and Personal Development Plans by March 2006 so as to drive performance improvements 	Mark Luntley
2.6.6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue work with business managers to improve target setting and benchmarking, with training completed by March 2006 	Mark Luntley
2.6.7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improve engagement of executive and scrutiny chair members with corporate performance 	Caroline Bull

OBJECTIVE SEVEN: Build capacity by investing in our staff and Councillors

Ref	Action, Outcomes and Timescales	Lead Officer
2.7.2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop and embed liP principles in all business units and aim to be at an Investors in People standard by December 2006 	Anne-Marie Scott
2.7.3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitor improvements in staff morale via MORI staff survey during the first quarter of 2005 & the first quarter of 2007 	Anne-Marie Scott
2.7.4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reduce average days lost at work to fewer than 8 by March 2006 (BV012) 	Anne-Marie Scott
2.7.6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review recruitment and retention policies in order to reduce staff turnover in priority areas. Revised policy to be in place by October 2005 and to include agreed measurement and monitoring of staff turnover in order to establish meaningful targets 	Anne-Marie Scott
2.7.10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop and implement a new learning and development plan, integrating the findings of the Capacity Building Fund diagnostic stage, by April 2005 	Anne-Marie Scott
2.7.11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deliver a prioritised programme of Councillor training and development based on the systematic assessment of needs from the Capacity Building Fund diagnostic 	Anne-Marie Scott

OBJECTIVE EIGHT: Enhance customer focus

Ref	Action, Outcomes and Timescales	Lead Officer
2.8.3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish annual consultation planning process. Seek to secure Council-wide budget for service-based focus group consultation. Implement focus group work in key service areas to reflect Council priorities/need 	Janet Banfield
2.8.7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with resident and tenant focus groups to increase understanding of how improvements in satisfaction with cleanliness standards can be achieved 	Glen Wooldrige
2.8.8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop with business units a corporate-wide customer complaint follow-up form to help us gather feedback to improve complaints handling efficiency and improve customer satisfaction. To encourage use of the form and to develop with the Consultation Officer guidelines on appropriate use. By March 2006 	Mike Newman
2.8.10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure Area Action Plans include how hard-to-reach groups will be involved in the further development of those plans 	Area Co-ordinator
2.8.18	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improve customer service by continued implementation of the corporate Customer Contact Strategy agreed in September 2003 for all front-facing service provision. Redesign service delivery to meet customer need according to proposals and costings agreed by SMB by May 2005 	Ian Barrett
2.8.19	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a Young Persons Strategy to be adopted by July 2005, to cover all services provided by the Council with connections to young people and to be co-ordinated with Oxfordshire County Council 	Val Johnson

OBJECTIVE NINE: Deliver and implement with partners a shared long-term vision for the city

Ref	Action, Outcomes and Timescales	Lead Officer
2.9.3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Revise the Community Strategy by July 2005 to incorporate a longer-term vision for the city with outcome-based targets 	Janet Banfield
2.9.4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue roll-out of West End project including consideration of Westgate proposals as they come forward 	Sharon Cosgrove

OBJECTIVE TEN: Continue to improve financial capacity and financial performance

Ref	Action, Outcomes and Timescales	Lead Officer
2.10.5	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Implement a more ambitious and integrated external funding approach and, subject to resources, implement during 2005/2006 to increase income to match our priorities	Janet Banfield
2.10.6	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Maintain and roll forward a robust and sustainable Medium Term Financial Strategy each year	Mark Luntley
2.10.11	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Implement the Council's Procurement Strategy in accordance with the agreed national framework milestones	Jane Lubbock

BEST VALUE PERFORMANCE INDICATOR TABLES

BVPI tables will be available after the data is collected at the end of the financial year. We will publish this information annually by 30 June.

GLOSSARY

Affordable Housing	Low cost / subsidised housing available to people who cannot afford to rent or buy homes on the open market.
Alternative Energy	Energy derived from renewable sources that do not use up natural resources or harm the environment.
Audit Commission	An independent public body responsible for ensuring that public money is spent economically, efficiently, and effectively in the areas of local government, housing, health, criminal justice and fire and rescue services. For more information visit www.audit-commission.gov.uk
Best Value	The duty of Best Value applies to all Local Authorities, the Police, and Fire Brigade. It is a central government initiative designed to ensure that local authorities provide efficient, cost effective services to the public.
Best Value Performance Indicators	Statutory performance indicators that all Best Value authorities must collect and publish annually.
Best Value Performance Indicator Surveys	Customer satisfaction surveys carried out in all Best Value authorities
Best Value Performance Plan	Annual service plan reporting on council's performance and setting targets for coming years.
Best Value Review	Model for reviewing provision of local authority services to establish areas for improvement.
Britain in Bloom	National competition organised annually by the Royal Horticultural Society to encourage local communities to take an active interest in caring for their local environment.
Budget Book	Annual publication of council budget figures.
Business Plan	Document outlining a business's: structure; product or service; customer base; growth potential and financial plan.
Business Process Re-engineering	The strategic analysis of business processes and the planning and implementation of improved business processes.
Business Rates	Contribution made by businesses towards the cost of the services that the Council provides. The Council collects all monies and pays them in to the National Non-Domestic Rating Pool. The government then returns the money to local councils by way of a grant per head of population.
Capacity Building Fund	Funds set aside by central government for local governments to use in order to improve their capacity to effectively deliver services.

Capital Programme	List of spending on major infrastructure projects.
Commission for Racial Equality	A publicly funded, non-governmental body set up to tackle racial discrimination and promote racial equality. For more information visit www.cre.gov.uk/
Community Strategy	Document created by key local players outlining plans to promote and improve the economic, social and environmental well being in Oxford.
Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA)	A framework to measure the overall performance of a local authority, using best value performance indicators, best value inspection reports and audit reports. For more information visit www.audit-commission.gov.uk
Constitution	Document setting out how the Council operates, how decisions are made and the procedures which are followed, to ensure that these are efficient, transparent and accountable to local people. Some of these processes are required by law, while others are optional.
Corporate Governance	Structures, checks and balances put in place to ensure that Council business is conducted in the appropriate manner.
Corporate Plan	A statement of the Council's vision, purpose, aims, objectives and values, setting the direction for all services. Oxford City Council's Corporate plan is called 'The Oxford Plan'.
Council Tax	System of local taxation on domestic property collected by local authorities.
Councillors	Local residents elected every 4 years to represent local people in the council's decision-making process. Oxford City Council has 48 councillors – 2 for each of its 24 wards.
County Council	Administrative body of a county. For more information about Oxfordshire County Council visit www.oxfordshire.gov.uk
Customer Relationship Management (CRM)	The methodologies, software, and Internet capabilities that help a company / organisation manage customer relationships in an efficient and organised manner.
Decent Homes Standard	A commitment made by central government to bring all public sector homes up to a decent standard by 2010. For more information visit www.odpm.gov.uk
Disability Rights Commission	An independent body established to stop discrimination and promote equality of opportunity for disabled people. For more information visit www.drc-gb.org
District Council	The administrative body governing a district.
Economic Forum	A group of bodies/individuals able to focus and advise on matters relevant to the local economy and its constituent business community. Also responsible for helping with the development and delivery of economic development strategy.

Electoral Register	List containing the names and addresses of everyone who has registered to vote.
Electronic Government (e-gov)	Delivering local government service through electronic means. Electronic means include telephone and fax, and increasingly the internet (whether accessed through a PC, digital TV, phone or other device). Electronic access may be direct, or mediated through call centres or front offices in which the operator has access to information electronically and can seek information or complete transactions on behalf of members of the public who prefer to conduct business face to face or by telephone.
Employers' Organisation for Local Government	Organisation providing support to local authorities, in their role as employers, to deliver quality services. For more information visit www.lg-employers.gov.uk
Environmental Health	Council Business Unit that provides a range of services aiming to protect and enhance the health and environment of the people of Oxford.
Equal Opportunities Commission	Public body working to remove unlawful discrimination on grounds of sex, and to promote equal opportunities for women and men. For more information visit www.eoc.org.uk
Fly Tipping	The illegal dumping of waste.
Focus Groups	Small discussion group designed to obtain perceptions on a defined area of interest.
Fuel Poverty	The inability of individuals or families to heat their homes adequately because of low income, poor building or expensive heating systems.
General Fund	Council fund for day-to-day spending on non-housing activities.
Government Office for the South East (GOSE)	GOSE represents central government in the South East. GOSE works to influence and develop government programmes and initiatives at a regional and local level, by working in partnership with relevant organisations to meet local needs. For more information visit www.go-se.gov.uk
Homes in multiple occupation	A house or flat that is occupied by persons who do not form a single household.
Housing Advisory Board	Board with responsibility for controlling and monitoring Housing Revenue Account (HRA) spending. Formally known as Housing Revenue Account Management Board (HRAMB)
Housing and Council Tax Benefit	Scheme to help people on low income to pay their rent or Council Tax bills.
Housing Inspection Star Ratings	Rating system used by the Audit Commission to reflect how well a housing service is currently serving local people and how likely it is to improve in the future. Housing services are awarded 0-3 stars where 0 is poor and 3 excellent.
Housing Revenue Account	The HRA records the financial transactions relating to the council's role as a social landlord. The HRA is ring-fenced

	meaning it can neither subsidise nor be subsidised by any other account in the authority.
Housing Stock Options Appraisal	Consultation process with tenants and leaseholders about the future of ownership and management of council homes.
Human Resources Strategy	A framework for the development of human resources strategies in line with the council's corporate planning processes.
Human Resources	Council Business Unit responsible for (amongst other things) the hiring of personnel and skills development among existing staff.
IDeA	The Improvement and Development Agency aims to support self-improvement from within local government. For more information visit www.idea.gov.uk
Improvement Board	Board that challenges and monitors the delivery of the council's improvement programme.
Improvement Plan	Document developed, following the 2004 CPA inspection, to demonstrate how the council will deliver improvement in identified areas of weakness.
Investors in People	The Investors in People Standard is a business improvement tool designed to advance an organisation's performance through its people.
Learning Centre	A joint Oxford City Council, UNISON and Transport and General Workers Union venture to provide centre in which Oxford City Council staff can develop life skills such as literacy, innumeracy and basic IT.
Licensing Committee	Committee responsible for issuing licences for taxis, public entertainment venues etc.
Local Improvement Finance Trust (LIFT)	Government initiatives to supplement investment in primary health care and social care premises.
Local Plan	The Local Plan sets out detailed policies to guide development in the Oxford City Council area. It allocates particular areas as suitable for housing, industry, shopping or other uses such as recreation. The Local Plan is also used as the basis for making decisions on all types of planning applications ranging from household extensions to applications for major development.
OX1 city centre management group	Group of local businesses working together to make central Oxford better for business and visitors.
Oxford Accents	An internal magazine containing council news and announcements that is produced on a monthly basis for Oxford City Council employees.
Oxford City Primary Care Trust	Trust responsible for improving the health of the local population by planning and securing appropriate health services. For more information visit www.oxfordcity-pct.nhs.uk/
Oxford Futures	Consultancy group which provides information on the economic future of Oxford.

Oxford Safer Communities Partnership	A partnership of agencies working together within Oxford city to reduce crime and disorder. Previously called ATMOSPHERE. For more information visit www.saferoxford.org.uk
Oxford Strategic Partnerships	Cross-agency partnerships of local organisations that work together at a strategic level to improve quality of life in the area.
Oxford Tenants Panel	Panel of elected council tenants and leaseholders that meet on a monthly basis with council officers and Councillors to ensure that tenants' and resident leaseholders' opinions are central to Council services.
Parish Council	The administrative body of a parish.
Performance Management	Process of setting objectives and monitoring performance against them in order to ensure that it achieves its goals and enable continuous improvement.
Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs)	Police authority employed support staff who focus predominantly on lower level crime, disorder and anti-social behaviour.
Policy Framework	Major plans and strategies of the council.
Portfolio Holder	A Councillor who sits on the Executive Board and provides leadership on a range of related issues.
Registered Social Landlord (RSL)	Managers of public housing stocks who are not local authorities, i.e. Housing Associations who are registered with The Housing Corporation.
Risk Management	The process of assessing the risks that might threaten successful delivery of objectives in order to minimize and manage those risks.
Saïd Business School	World-renowned business school based in Oxford that is currently working with the Council on the Improvement Programme.
Social Housing	A general term including rented housing owned by local authorities, housing associations, housing co-ops and Housing Action Trusts.
Staff Capability	Knowledge and skills of staff to meet requirements of job efficiently and effectively.
Statutory Duties	Council's duties as required by law.
Strategic Management Board (SMB)	SMB is a board consisting of the Chief Executive and the Strategic Directors at the council.
Strategic Procurement Partnership	Agreement between local Oxfordshire authorities made with the intention of facilitate the development of strategic and collaborative procurement.
Street Wardens	Council employees who work within designated areas of city to help on a range of neighbourhood issues.

Talkback	Formal consultation forum used across Council services.
Team Brief	Regular team meeting to discuss Council and business unit issues.
Together Action Area Status	The TOGETHER campaign is a central government initiative designed to tackle anti-social behaviour. A number of communities across the country have been designated as TOGETHER Action Areas and are set to get extra help to tackle anti-social behaviour. In these neighbourhoods local authorities and the police will work with local people to take swift and effective action against local problems such as intimidation, nuisance neighbours, vandalism, graffiti and rubbish dumping.
Toilet of the Year Competition	Annual competition organised by the British Toilet Association which assesses the standard of public toilets throughout the UK.
Trainers' Network	A pooled resource of Council staff trained to deliver training and help spread learning throughout the Council.
Unipart	World-renowned logistics company with recognised expertise in change management and continued improvement. Currently working with the Council on the improvement programme.
Urban Extension	Proposal to develop land and expand the city beyond its present administrative boundary.
Vision statement	Document expressing the purpose and destination of an organisation / company in a way that builds commitment to it.
Wards	The spatial units used to elect local government Councillors in metropolitan and non-metropolitan districts. Oxford City has 24 wards each with 2 elected Councillors.
West End Renaissance	Plans for the redevelopment and regeneration of Oxford city centre's western quarter.

Appendix 4

COUNCIL POLICY AND STRATEGY DOCUMENTS

Policy or Strategy Name	Status
Advice Strategy	In preparation
Affordable Warmth	In preparation
Arts Strategy	EB approved (11/04)
Audit strategy	In preparation. Due April 2006
Best Value Performance Plan	Complete
BME Housing Strategy 2006-2010	In preparation.
Capital strategy and asset management plan	EB approved
Communication Strategy	In preparation.
Community Strategy	EB approved (3/2004)
Community Centre Strategy	In preparation
Consultation Strategy 2005-2008	EB approved (11/2004)
Contaminated Land Register	Active from 2003
Crime and Disorder Strategy 2002-2005	EB approved (02/2002)
Cultural Strategy -- Making the Difference 2002-2005	EB approved (5/2004)
Customer Care and Contact Strategy	EB approved (9/2003)
Economic Development Strategy	EB approved (11/04)
e-govt Statement	In place
Equalities Policy	Out to consultation
Homelessness Strategy 2003-2008	EB approved (7/03)
Housing Strategy 2005-2008	Draft approved by EB Nov 2003. In prep
HR Strategy	In preparation
HRA business plan 2004-2007	Complete
Leisure Strategy	Consultation draft to EB (11/04)
Licensing Policy	In place
Local Plan 2004-2015	In place
Older People's Housing Strategy 2005-2006	In preparation
Open Spaces Strategy	In preparation
Oxford Plan 2005-2008	In preparation
Private Sector Housing Strategy 2005 onwards	In preparation
Procurement Strategy 2004-2007	EB approved (1/05)
Risk Management Strategy	In preparation
SRB Forward 2004 onwards	EB approved (9/2003)
Supporting People Strategy 2004-2009	EB approved (8/2004)
Swimming Pools Strategy	In preparation
Tourism Strategy 2003-2005	EB approved (3/2004)
Treasury Strategy 2004-2005	EB approved (11/04)
Waste management Strategy	In place
Young persons Strategy	In preparation

Document	The Oxford Plan 2005-2008
Owner	Caroline Bull
Author	Helen Rowlands
Date	18/02/05
Review due	Annually
Version	4.5
Notes	The Oxford Plan fulfils the role of a corporate plan for Oxford City Council. A second publication of the plan will be made on June 30th, providing performance reporting data for the previous financial year and setting out BVPI targets for the next three years. At this point the document will also form the Council's Best Value Performance Plan.