The Oxford Plan

Oxford City Council's Corporate Plan 2006/2009

Proposed Consultation Draft

Foreword

This is the second year that Oxford City Council has produced a Corporate Plan outlining its objectives and priorities for the next three years. The Council will review and revise its Plan each year, in the expectation that it will eventually provide a clear and concise guide to the key activities of the Council.

This is a time of change for the Council, as we recognise the need for rapid improvement, and it is intended that the Plan will in future play a key part in that improvement.

It is also a time of change because the Council is presently in No Overall Control, with a minority Administration. It is important that the Plan is larger than any one political party and recognises how the Council may develop in the coming years. For that reason, this Plan includes proposals from all the major political groups on the Council, to be pursued as soon as budgets allow. It is not the Administration's document alone, but is owned by the whole Council.

This document sets out Oxford City Council's objectives and priorities for 2006 to 2009 based on public priorities, local and central government priorities and audit and inspection advice. It brings together the Council's ambitions for Oxford and for the Council as an organisation. It also brings together and prioritises the higher level aims from within other key documents:

- Our Vision
- Our Improvement Plan
- Our Community Strategy

We want the Oxford Plan to provide one central access point to the plans of the Council and act as an introduction to them for the public, our stakeholders and every member of our staff. The plan also provides the basis for the rest of our business planning and budget process. The key partner document to this plan is the Budget Book. The Budget Book provides details of the resources allocated to deliver the statutory duties of the Council and the priorities outlined in this plan, it also includes a summary of the business plan for each of our Business Units.

To help minimise the number of planning documents that we have, the Oxford Plan is also our Best Value Performance Plan for 2006/2007. As soon as our end of year performance dada is available for 2005-2006 we will publish the plan again including this information.

The Oxford Plan for 2006-2009 is only our second corporate plan and the process of drafting it has itself proved to be a learning opportunity for the organisation. In future years we intend to build on what we have learned from this experience, developing our business planning processes to establish a robust, timely review of our direction and performance and building an open structure around which we can review the Oxford Plan next year and in years to come.

Building Pride in Our City

We believe that democratic local government can and should make a positive difference to people's lives. We want to work with all our communities to build a city that all our people can be proud of.

The Oxford Plan

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1.0 A Statement by the Leader of the Council

This will be written nearer the time of publication

2.0 Your City, Your Council – How it works

2.1   Your City

Oxford City Council is a district Council covering only 17.6 square miles. It is the county town of Oxfordshire and has historic assets of international significance. It is a world-class educational centre, an international business hub, a global tourist destination and a world-renowned centre for medical science.

Few cities contain more magnificent buildings, gardens and open spaces within such a small area. Watercourses, including the River Thames or Isis, add to the attraction of the city and provide ecological value and opportunities for leisure. This is all part of the distinctive character of Oxford. It is an affluent city but contains pockets of severe deprivation. Oxford is, however, undergoing evolutionary change to deliver urban regeneration, such as the work of East Oxford Action and the West End Renaissance programme, which will help unlock the city's economic potential.

During recent consultation the people of Oxford told us they feel a strong sense of community and of the city's history and identity. Across all ages, people feel the city is cosmopolitan, are proud of the universities, our parks and open spaces and generally feel the city is comfortable and safe.

2.2   What your Council does

In partnership with other agencies (public, private and voluntary) we provide a wide range of services for our 134,600 residents, the 100,000 people who work in Oxford and the additional 7.6 million people who visit the city every year.

As a city within a shire county, Oxford has two tiers of council: Oxfordshire County Council and Oxford City Council, each with different responsibilities.

Services provided by Oxford City Council include:
- Local planning
- Housing
- Environmental Health
- Electoral Registration
- Refuse collection
- Provision of leisure facilities
- Management of public parks
- Management of markets
- Events such as fairs
- Provision of Tourist Information
- Management of cemeteries
- Collection of Council Tax
- Collection, on behalf of central government, of Business Rates

Services provided by Oxfordshire County Council include:

- Schools
- Social services
- Fire service
- Roads
- Libraries and museums
- Trading standards
- Transport planning
- Waste disposal
- Planning and monitoring land use

## 2.3   Funding Council Services

Oxford City Council spends over £113 million a year providing services. Some of this we receive in subsidies and grants from central government and some through the fees, charges and rents we levy, but £9 million has to be funded locally from a share of the Council Tax. Not all of the Council Tax comes to us: most goes to the County Council and some to Thames Valley Police. A significant increase in the funding required for County and police services has resulted in a high rate of increase to Council Tax in Oxford over the last few years. To help pay for the services the people of Oxford receive from the City Council we get only 17p of every pound of Council Tax we collect. For a band D Council Tax payer, that came to £215 of a £1,261 bill for 2004/2005, or £17.92 per month.

2.4   Representing the people of Oxford – political structure of the Council

The Council is composed of 48 councillors representing the 24 wards that make up our city. Every two years half the Council seats come up for election. Councillors are democratically elected by residents of their ward and, whilst the overriding duty of councillors is to the whole community, they have a special duty to those who live in the ward they represent. The elected Council also represents the interests of the people of Oxford to the County Council, the South East Region government office and to national government. Councillors are responsible for setting the policies and priorities of the council and have made a commitment to listen carefully to all points of view in the city and to defend the rights of Oxford citizens.

Following the 2004 local elections, the Council's political makeup is as shown in Figure 1 on the following page.

Figure 1 – Political representation of Oxford City Council as at May 2005

Number of Council Seats by Political Party

IWCA 3

Green 7

Labour 20

Lib Dem 18
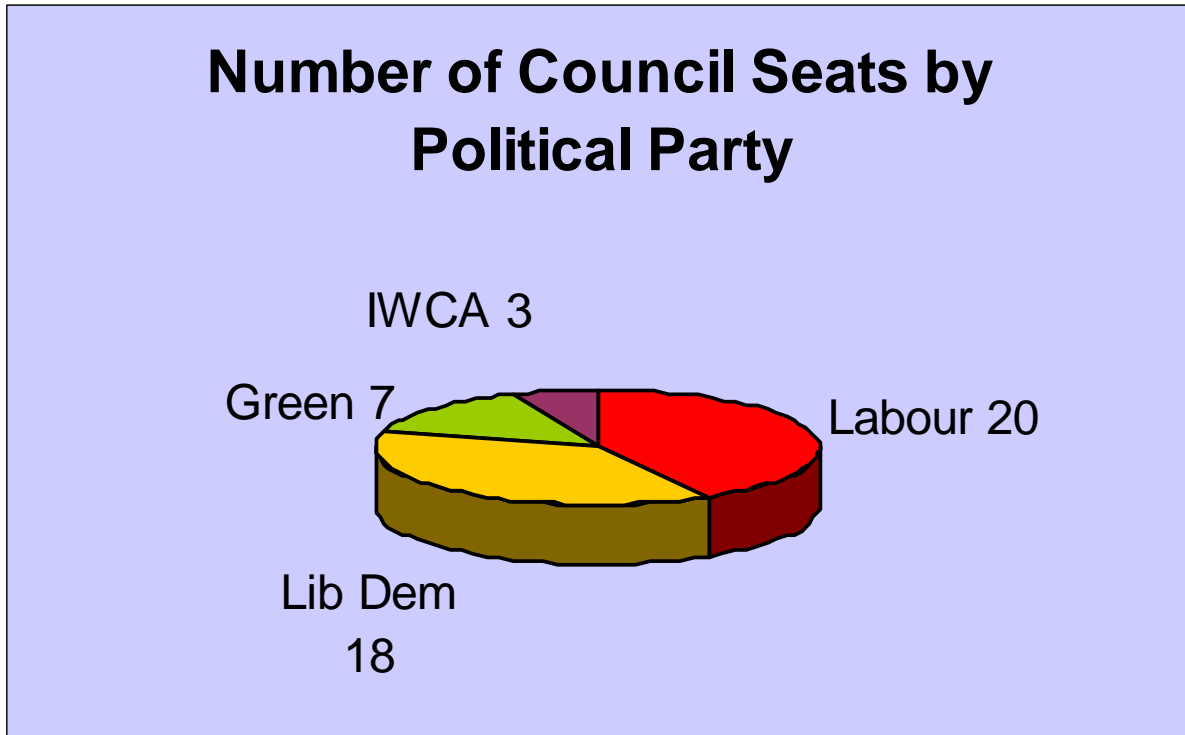
[1] IWCA is the Independent Working Class Association

Make sure you can vote for the Councillor you want.
Did you know that you can now register to vote at any time of the year? We still carry out a citywide registration process every autumn but if you miss this or change address you can contact us at any time to make sure that you get a voting card for elections.

Too busy to get to the polling station? Register to vote by post.
If it would be easier for you to vote by post let us know.

Find out more:
- Visit our website at http://www.oxford.gov.uk/council/community-54.cfm
- E-mail us at elections@oxford.gov.uk.
- Phone 01865 249811 and asking for the Electoral Registration Office.

2.4.1 The Decision-Making Structures of the Council

The Council's decision-making structures are based on four key elements supported by additional committees charged with making decisions on some specific issues, such as the Licensing Committee. There are also advisory boards such as the Improvement Board and the Housing Advisory Board.

The four main elements in the decision-making structures are:

- **Full Council** which is made up of all the elected members of the Council and it decides on policies, priorities and budgets and elects the Executive Board members.
- The **Executive Board** which is a cabinet of councillors and a leader who aims to provide clear and accountable leadership.
- Six **Area Committees** with some devolved powers and budgets providing focus on community issues.
- **Scrutiny Committees** which examine and review the decision-making of the Council.

Figure 2 – The decision-making structure of Oxford City Council

Want to know who your Councillors are and how to contact them?
Details of all your councillors, the above boards and committees and their roles can be found as follows:
- Visit our website at http://www.oxford.gov.uk/council/who-represents.cfm
- E-mail jskip@oxford.gov.uk.
- Phone 01865 249811 and asking for Committee Services.

2.4.2 More about the Executive Board

The Executive is the decision-making body of the Council. Whilst the majority of its members are from the Labour Party, this being the political party with the largest number of seats on the Council, there are two councillors from opposition parties.

Figure 3 – The members of the Executive Board as at May 2005

Member	Portfolio
Alex Hollingsworth (Chair)	Improvement, Customer Focus and Strategic Finance
Bill Baker (Vice Chair)	Corporate Governance and Procurement
Susan Brown	Crime and Community Safety
Mary Clarkson	Leisure and Culture
John Tanner	Environment
Dan Paskins	Social Inclusion
Rick Muir	Delivery of Community and Capital Projects
Ed Turner	Strategic Planning, Housing, Transport and Economic Development
Alan Armitage	Liberal Democrat Opposition
Sushila Dhall	Green Opposition

2.4.3 More about Area Committees

Since November 2001 Area Committees have been meeting on a regular monthly basis. There are six Area Committees each covering several wards of the city as shown in Figures 4 and 5.

Figure 4 – The Area Committee Chairs for each Ward with reference numbers for the map at fig. 5

Area Committee	Name of Chair	Wards Represented
North	Jim Campbell	Summertown (23), Wolvercote (24), St. Margaret's (21) and North (16)
North East	Tony Gray & David Rundle	Marston (15), Headington Hill & Northway (8), Headington (7), Barton & Sandhills (1), Quarry & Risinghurst (18) and Churchill (4).
East	Craig Simmons	St. Clement's (20), St. Mary's (22) and Iffley Fields (11)
South East	Gill Sanders	Rose Hill & Iffley (19), Littlemore (13), Blackbird Leys (2) and Northfield Brook (17)
Central, South & West	Susanna Pressel	Jericho & Osney (12), Carfax (3), Holywell (10) and Hinksey Park (9)
Cowley	Bryan Keen	Cowley Marsh (6), Lye Valley (14) and Cowley (5)

Figure 5: Political wards within Oxford City grouped by Area Committee
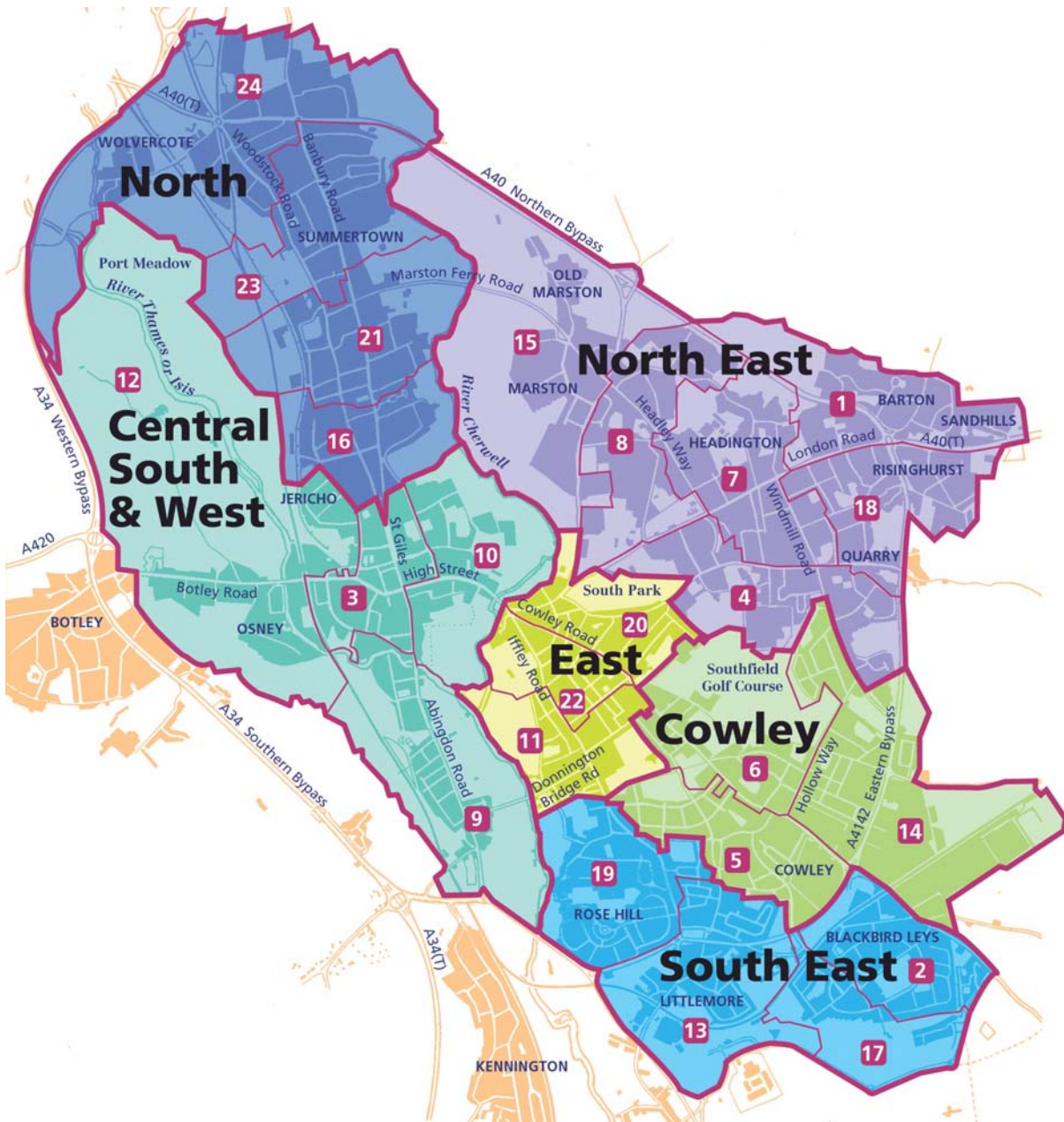
Each Area Committee is made up of the ward councillors for its area. The county councillors for the area and parish Council representatives are also members but on a non-voting basis. Partnerships are being developed with the police and the Oxford City Primary Care Trust who can choose to be present at the Area Committees too. Each Area Committee appoints its own Chair and Vice-Chair and is supported by an Area Co-ordinator.

The Area Committees form part of Oxford City Council's democratic structure and are responsible for the following services in their areas:

- Planning applications
- Street cleaning
- Abandoned vehicles
- Public toilets
- Parks, play areas and countryside/green spaces

- Off-street car parking
- Dog wardens
- Community centres
- Ditches and streams

Each area has an Area Plan to shape and improve services in their area. Copies of area plans may be obtained by contacting the Area Committee Co-ordinator.

When and where does your Area Committee meet?

Find out which is your area committee, when and where it meets and more about how to have your concerns heard:

- Visit our website at http://www.oxford.gov.uk/council/area-committees.cfm
- Phone 01865 249811 and asking for Area Committee Co-ordinators

2.4.4 More about Scrutiny Committees

The City Council has five Scrutiny Committees. These hold the Executive Board to account by reviewing their decisions, reviewing the policies of the Council and helping develop emerging policies.

Each committee has nine councillors. To avoid any conflict of interest none of these councillors can be members of the Executive Board. Committee members are drawn from the political parties that make up the full Council.

There are 5 scrutiny committees that focus on different aspects of the Council's work:

- Finance
- Housing
- Community
- Environment
- Health

The meetings are open to the public. Anyone attending may address the committees, either on an item already on the agenda or on any other matter within the remit of that particular committee.

2.4.5 The Council's Constitution

Oxford City Council agreed a new constitution in 2001 that has recently been revised and updated. This sets out procedures for how the Council operates and how decisions are made to ensure that these are efficient, transparent and accountable to local people. Some of these processes are required by law, while others are chosen by the Council.

The constitution is grouped into sixteen parts or 'Articles'. These set out the rules governing the Council's business. More detailed procedures and codes of practice are provided in separate rules and protocols.

Want to know more about the constitution?

The constitution and attached rules and protocols can be obtained as follows:

- Visit our website at http://www.oxford.gov.uk/council/constitution.cfm
- Phone 01865 249811 and ask for Democratic Services Team.

2.4.6 Details of Council Meetings

The Council publishes details of the dates for meetings for the forthcoming four months, including information on the key decisions expected to be made. Nearer the date of the meeting, the agenda is published. The Council also publishes a record of what was discussed and the decisions taken.

Want to know more about what is happening at Council meetings?
All meetings that form part of the Council's decision-making process are open to the public. You are entitled to attend any of them that you wish to. You may even be entitled to speak at the meeting. Find out more:
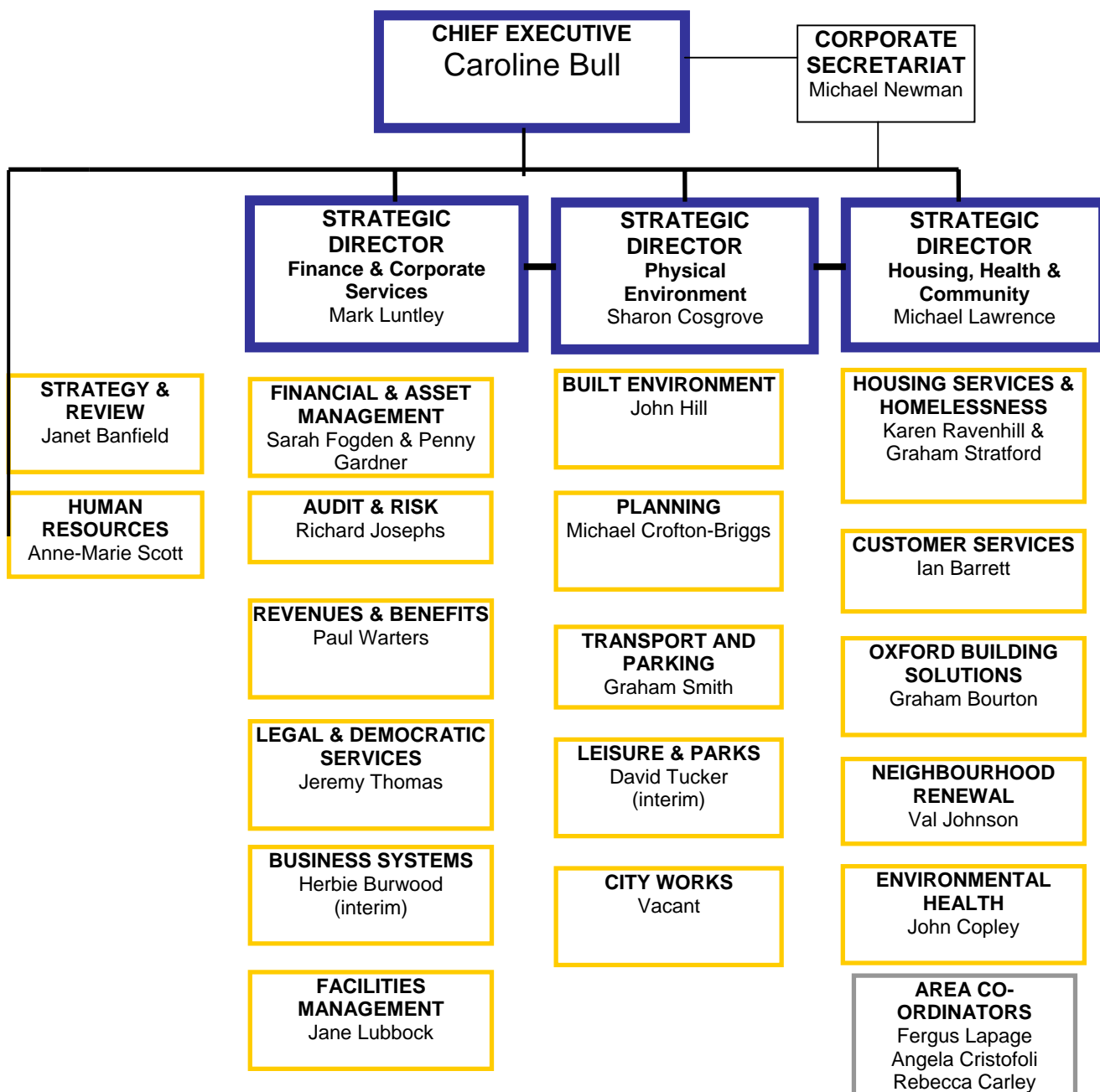
- Visit our website at http://www.oxford.gov.uk/council/meeting-diary.cfm
- Phone 01865 249811 and asking for Democratic Services Team.
- Copies of agendas and minutes can also be found at libraries, the Town Hall, Local Services Shops and a range of community organisations.

2.5 Delivering Services to the people of Oxford – officer structure of the Council

As described above, elected councillors ('members') set the policies and priorities of the Council; Council officers are charged with carrying them out. In total we have 1400 staff bringing professional knowledge and expertise to advise councillors and working hard to deliver Council services to the people of Oxford.

The work of the Council is currently divided into eighteen different service areas that we call Business Units. Each unit has a Business Manager, sixteen of which report to one of the three Strategic Directors and two directly to the Chief Executive. The following diagram shows you who these people are and what they are responsible for managing. Further details of the work of each Business Unit and what it aims to do to achieve the Council's vision for Oxford can be found in the Council Budget Book 2005/2008.

Figure 6 – Oxford City Council's Senior Officer Structure

CHIEF EXECUTIVE Caroline Bull	CORPORATE SECRETARIAT Michael Newman

STRATEGIC DIRECTOR Finance & Corporate Services Mark Luntley	STRATEGIC DIRECTOR Physical Environment Sharon Cosgrove	STRATEGIC DIRECTOR Housing, Health & Community Michael Lawrence

STRATEGY & REVIEW Janet Banfield	FINANCIAL & ASSET MANAGEMENT Sarah Fogden & Penny Gardner	BUILT ENVIRONMENT John Hill	HOUSING SERVICES & HOMELESSNESS Karen Ravenhill & Graham Stratford
HUMAN RESOURCES Anne-Marie Scott	AUDIT & RISK Richard Josephs	PLANNING Michael Crofton-Briggs	CUSTOMER SERVICES Ian Barrett
	REVENUES & BENEFITS Paul Warters	TRANSPORT AND PARKING Graham Smith	OXFORD BUILDING SOLUTIONS Graham Bourton
	LEGAL & DEMOCRATIC SERVICES Jeremy Thomas	LEISURE & PARKS David Tucker (interim)	NEIGHBOURHOOD RENEWAL Val Johnson
	BUSINESS SYSTEMS Herbie Burwood (interim)	CITY WORKS Vacant	ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH John Copley
	FACILITIES MANAGEMENT Jane Lubbock		AREA CO-ORDINATORS Fergus Lapage Angela Cristofoli Rebecca Carley

Part 3.0 Your Priorities, Our Priorities – Vision into Action.

When deciding what the Council will be doing over the next three years, councillors must weigh up the relative importance of several factors, including:

- Those things that we, as a Council, are obliged to deliver (our statutory services). Government tells us that we must provide housing, we must process benefit claims and we must collect domestic waste, for example.
- Those things that we, as a Council, want to achieve for the people of the city. We may want to achieve these things because local people tell us that they are important, or because research has highlighted a particular problem.
- Those things that we are told we must improve. This may cover direct service provision, such as the quality of the housing stock, or process improvements, such as reducing our sickness absence levels.

In determining how best to balance these needs, councillors also consider other factors:

- The financial resources that are likely to be available to enable us to deliver these objectives
- External pressures and drivers that the authority faces and to which it must respond. Currently these include rising expectations of quality of life, environmental and financial implications of climate change, changes in the nature of the household, and an increasing range of communication channels through technological means that provide new opportunities for service delivery.
- The significance of external assessments; success in some assessments can bring with it additional resources or freedom from certain monitoring and reporting requirements, while failure can lead to increased external intervention in the running of the council.
- The likely direction and focus of future assessment and inspection programmes;, if we know what the focus is going to be in the months and years to come, we can work now to make sure we succeed in those future assessments. We already know, for example, that the CPA regime will be focusing on value for money and our use of partnerships for delivery of our services will have a larger role to play in determining our CPA score.
- The political environment at the time. As the time of elections draws nearer, there is increasing pressure on members to deliver actions that are popular with the electorate, to increase their chances of being re-elected.

Members are tasked with making decisions and setting priorities within a complex set of aims and objectives, within a context of limited financial resources, a changing assessment regime and sensitive political relationships.

The first section of Part 3 outlines the different sources from which our priorities have emerged, including Oxford's Community Strategy, our own consultation on priorities within the city, our most recent inspections and assessments and the pressures that the authority faces both now and in the future. Sections in 3.2 then outline the priorities that the Council has adopted for the coming three years in relation to service delivery, and Sections under 3.3 outline the priorities that the Council has identified in terms of internal process improvements to ensure that we become increasingly efficient and effective.

3.1 Deciding what we want to achieve, recognising what we must improve

3.1.1 Oxford's Community Strategy

The Council works in partnership with other organisations delivering services in the area such as the County Council, Thames Valley Police, Oxford Primary Care Trust, both universities and OX1 (the city centre management company). These organisations and others form the Oxford Strategic Partnership. Working together we can make a greater difference to the lives of the people of Oxford. To help all the organisations in the Oxford Strategic Partnership work together we have agreed on a Community Strategy for Oxford. Our common goals are based on a wide range of research conducted by the partnership with residents and local communities. These goals are grouped into five themes:

- **A vibrant and inclusive economy**
- **Safer communities**
- **A better living environment**
- **Opportunities for life**
- **Active and healthy communities**

Oxford City Council's plans for Oxford have influenced the content of the Community Strategy, as have the plans of other members of the partnership. This is a two-way process and the Community Strategy has also influenced our plans. Some aspects of the Community Strategy are influenced by what Oxford City Council does, more than others,: for example, housing issues are a key area of responsibility for Oxford City Council. Other aspects are more strongly influenced by the work of other organisations in the partnership, for example Oxford City Primary Care Trust encouraging healthy lifestyles. Whatever influence our work has, we want to make sure that we are working towards the same aims. The Community Strategy therefore plays an important role in how Oxford City Council plans and prioritises its work.

Like to know more about the Oxford Strategic Partnership?
You can find out more about the strategic partnership by visiting the website,
http://www.oxfordpartnership.org.uk/

Like to see a copy of the Community Strategy?
Phone us on 01865 249811 and ask for our Strategy and Review Team

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3.1.2 The Council's Vision Statement

In 2002 the Council agreed the following Vision Statement:

Building Pride in Our City

We believe that democratic local government can and should make a positive difference to people's lives. We want to work with all our communities to build a city that all our people can be proud of.

The Council has agreed to review the vision statement during 2005/2006 in order to make sure we are sensitive to the changing needs and priorities of the people of Oxford. We will also ensure that any updated vision reflects changes agreed to our Community Strategy when it is reviewed in 2005.

Want to know more about our vision for Oxford?

- Visit our website at http://www.oxford.gov.uk/council/vision.cfm
- Phone us on 01865 249811 and ask for our Media and Communications Team

We intend to achieve our vision by working with others to deliver shared goals and improve the Council's performance. We recognise we will only be successful if we:

- Have well trained staff who feel valued and are motivated
- Have sound financial management
- Aspire to improve whilst accepting that we must prioritise
- Are open and responsive to our customers' needs.

We have developed seven priorities based on our consultation with the people of Oxford. People told us their priorities were**:**

- Housing
- Safety
- Environment
- Prosperity
- Consultation
- Leisure
- Transport

3.1.3 What type of organisation do we want to be?

Oxford City Council is determined to be an organisation where the people of Oxford and our staff are treated fairly. We aspire to make our services accessible to all and to offer staff equal opportunity to succeed and develop. The values for the culture of the organisation have recently been developed through consultation with all staff which was led by the Chief Executive.

Our ambition is to transform the culture of Oxford City Council by developing and demonstrating the following values:
- Customer focus - the customer is the focus of service delivery. We will be open and creative in responding to customer needs and improving efficiency of services
- Responsibility - staff are empowered to act within a clear governance framework
- Respect - we work closely in partnership with others to ensure the needs of our citizens are met and treat everyone both within and outside the Council with respect and courtesy
- Commitment - council staff are committed to providing continually improving services and we will provide the training and development staff need to do their jobs efficiently and reach their full potential.

3.1.4 Balancing our own ambitions with external factors

The paragraphs above outline what we as a Council, both individually and as a member of the Oxford Strategic Partnership, want to achieve for the city of Oxford. However, there are also external factors that influence what we prioritise.

There are several external social pressures that influence what we do and how we do it. They are beyond our control but they influence the environment in which we work and if we are to make effective decisions we must take them into account. Currently they include:

- The changing nature of households in the city, which may affect housing need, with an increase in single-people households, delayed families and an increase in same sex partnerships.
- Technological advances which bring increasing opportunities for communication and a wider range of options for people to access our services, so we must be flexible in how our services are delivered.
- Increasing environmental and financial implications from our impact on global climate. For a city with so many waterways, an increased flood risk and the resultant insurance issues can have significant implications.
- Rising expectations over quality of life and service standards places more pressure on local authorities to deliver more services of a higher quality for the same cost.

There are also several pressures on local authorities to change or improve the way in which they run their services. These include:

- An increasing expectation that councils will join forces with private sector companies to deliver services.
- An increasing focus within inspection regimes on efficiency and value for money.
- The uncertain future of local government, with the possibility of district and county councils being replaced with single tier authorities (all services delivered by one council). At present it is not clear whether this will happen or what form it would take.

Regardless of what the Council may want to deliver for Oxford, the Council must also ensure that it is able to respond well to external challenge and assessment. It must therefore balance the desire to achieve its own ambitions with the need to respond to external social changes and government assessment.

The Oxford Plan outlines how we intend to set about realising our ambitions to achieve the best balance of those things we must do, those things we want to do, and those things that we have to improve.

3.1.5 Deciding on priorities

We recognise we cannot change everything at once and that we have to decide what is most important and what we will do first by agreeing on priorities. Our first priorities must always be making sure we provide those services for which we have a legal obligation, such as providing housing and dealing with Housing and Council Tax Benefit claims, We also aim to make sure our other priorities reflect those of the people of Oxford. Councillors must therefore balance the need to do the things they are obliged to do, and the desire to do the things that reflect local needs and aspirations. To help us decide what is most important we carry out research through surveys and consultation. We survey users of particular services and every three years carry out a general satisfaction survey. For specific projects, we also conduct more in-depth research: for example, through Talkback, our panel of residents.

Our 2003 customer survey helped us to identify what the people of Oxford would most like to change and in September 2004 we asked citizens what they thought our budget priorities should be. Last year's Oxford Plan reflected the key messages from both of these surveys. In developing this year's Oxford Plan we have conducted further consultation to gain a more detailed understanding of the relative importance of the priorities that were agreed last year. For example, when we asked business representatives to prioritise our services more people thought that improving community activities was less importance, but at workshops for elected members and representatives from partner organisations, community activities were universally seen as of high importance. Oxford City Council's elected members must make a judgement as to the importance that will be placed on that priority. This Oxford Plan reflects the results of that consultation and the political decisions that have been made in response to it.

> **Want to find out more about consultation?**
> To access more information on consultation, and how the Council responds to it:
>
> - Visit our website at http://www.oxford.gov.uk/council/consultation-vision.cfm
> - Phone 01865 249811 and asking for our Consultation Officer
> - E-mail consultation@oxford.gov.uk

3.1.6 Linking Priorities to Plans

One of the ways to make sure we can deliver services efficiently and stay focused on what we must do better is to set and agree our priorities not just in consultation with the public but also with other public service organisations and businesses in the area. Our agreed priorities are set out in several key documents. These key documents are:

- **Oxford's Community Strategy** – this contains the objectives and priorities that we have agreed for the area in partnership with other organisations in the city.

- **The Oxford Plan –** this is the document you are reading; it is an annually-reviewed three-year plan setting out the objectives and priorities for Oxford City Council based on our statutory duties, public priorities, local and central government priorities and audit and inspection advice. Sometimes we need to provide more details about how we are going to approach service delivery either corporately or in a specific service area. These additional details are contained in the supporting policies and strategies of the Council, which are listed in the relevant sections of this plan. Further details of them can be found on our website or from our Strategy and Review Business Unit.

- **Business Plans** – each of our service areas or Business Units produces an annually-reviewed three-year business unit plan. This gives more detailed information on what the Business Unit is setting out to do in the coming years, how much it will cost and whether goals for the previous year have been achieved. The objectives of these Business Plans are based on the statutory duties of the Council and the Council's priorities as set out in the Oxford Plan.

- **Area Plans –** plans based on local areas have now been developed and are being consulted on. They will be integrated into the planning process of the Council as they outline how corporate activities affect specific areas and also identify key issues of concern locally rather than city-wide.

- **Personal Development Plans** – as a Council it is only through our staff that we can achieve what we set out to do. We evaluate how well we are all performing to see how we might do even better the next year. We do this to make sure we give staff the training they need to succeed and we agree a personal development plan for every staff member, every year. The PDP is based on the skills each individual needs to do their job well so that they can best help us work towards achieving the Council's objectives.

All these documents help us translate our Vision Statement into practical plans of action for Oxford and allow our staff to see how the work that they do contributes to achieving the goals of the Council and its partners to make Oxford a city we can all be proud of. In order to deliver improvements to services and to the way we work all these plans must flow together. This is a two-way process; we monitor our performance at every level and feed this information back into the business planning process as we seek to continually improve. We recognise and support best practice and we also learn from our mistakes by evaluating our progress. In this way we intend to improve the quality and efficiency of the services we deliver.

The rest of this document outlines the progress made so far and our objectives for the future for each of our improvement priorities.

The following diagram illustrates how the Council's key planning documents relate to our Vision Statement and to each other to form the business planning and performance management framework.

Oxford City Council Business Planning Framework

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Community Strategy          The Vision

                     The Oxford
                        Plan

Area Plans                              Supporting Plans,
                                        Policies and
                                        Strategies

                     Business
                     Unit Plans

                     Personal
                     Development
                     Plans
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The Community Strategy is developed with the Oxford Strategic Partnership

The Vision is set by the political administration and agreed by Full Council

The Oxford Plan is developed by Senior Managers and the Executive Board to deliver the Vision and agreed as part of the Council's Policy Framework

The Business Unit Plans are developed by Business Managers and agreed by Directors and Portfolio Holders so that all staff teams know what they need to achieve

The Personal Development Plans are agreed with all staff to ensure training needs are met and targets achieved

3.1.7 Plans into action

Our priorities, agreed through public consultation on the vision and the Community Strategy, demonstrate what we want to achieve. The Comprehensive Performance Assessment carried out in February 2004, and subsequent assessments by the Audit Commission have also guided us. Unlike all previous inspections of the Council these assessments look not just at the services we provide but also how we go about our business. The report told us that whilst we continue to make significant improvements in some areas, standards of service are patchy and we need to make substantial further improvements to how we work and prioritise. As a result of this the Council developed a set of priorities for improvement. The Council's response was agreed in 2004 and is based around two key aims:

- **Improving services** is a key aim of the Council as our very reason for being here is to provide services to the people of Oxford. We want the services we provide to be efficiently run, good quality services that meet the needs of our citizens. We recognise that an important way to improve our services is to listen to the people of Oxford and to increase their participation in decisions that affect them.

- **Transforming the way we work** is a key aim because we know that people expect the services they receive to be delivered efficiently, without waste. To ensure that we can do this we need to look at how we go about our business and make sure our staff, our processes and our systems co-ordinate, have focus and are the best they can be.

These are linked to the vision with an underlying group of key objectives and supporting set of actions. This Oxford Plan outlines what the Council will be focusing on in the next three years in order to deliver the vision and to achieve these two improvement aims.

The following pages outline how these different sets of priorities link together:

- The diagram on the following page illustrates how the aims and objectives within our Improvement Plan link to the Council's vision.

- Sections 3.6.1 to 3.6.5 deal with service-based areas targeted for improvement.

- Sections 3.6.6 to 3.6.10 deal with internal processes within the council that have been targeted for improvement in order to aid overall service improvements.

- Section 3.7 describes how we will monitor and report our performance against these targets.

Our Budget Book includes details of the business of all units of the Council, many of which are recognised by the public and external inspection as providing a good quality of service. Those services that are already considered higher quality may not be a priority for improvement activity but we aim to maintain these and make further improvements to them where we can.

OUR VISION

Improving Performance

&

Working With Others To Deliver Shared Goals

LINK TO IMPROVEMENT AIMS

Improving Services

Transforming the Way We Work & Building Capacity

OUR IMPROVEMENT PRIORITIES

Increase the quantity and quality of affordable housing in all sectors

Reduce crime and anti-social behaviour

Reduce poverty and social exclusion

Further develop and implement the Council's Equality Policy

Improve the quality of our environment

Embed Performance Management and effective governance across the Council

Build capacity by investing in our staff and Councillors

Enhance customer focus

Develop in partnership a long-term vision for the city on which to base future plans

Continue to improve financial capacity and improve financial performance

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3.2   Priorities to Improve our Services

These priorities outline those areas of Council services that we most want to improve. Some of the priorities relate to things that we must do (statutory services) while others involve activities that we as a council want to achieve. They do not refer to all of the council's activities; for example, there are many statutory services that are already delivered to a high standard. The priorities contained within this section are those that the Council feels need to be improved, whether on the basis of consultation feedback, inspection and assessment results, or political preference.

The service priorities included are:

1. **Increase the quantity and quality of affordable housing in all sectors**
2. **Reduce crime and anti-social behaviour**
3. **Reduce poverty and social exclusion**
4. **Further develop and implement the Council's Equality Policy**
5. **Improve the quality of our Environment**

3.2.1 Improving Services – Increase the quantity and quality of affordable housing in all sectors.

> **This priority for improvement links to:**
> - The Council's strategic priority to provide more affordable housing
> - The Community Strategy objective to improve the supply and condition of affordable housing in Oxford, part of its theme for a better living environment

Oxford City Council's role as landlord is one of our major functions and the Council has this year committed to retain management of its housing stock following consultation with residents which showed overwhelming support for the Council's landlord function to continue. We spend £40 million on social housing and homelessness every year. House prices and rents in Oxford are amongst the highest in the country outside London. Indeed, housing costs in Oxford often exceed those in parts of the capital.

High housing costs can threaten the sustainability of communities and result in the break-up of extended families. They also impact on the cost of delivering public services as they contribute to the difficulties public services have in recruiting and retaining staff. In addition to the pressures on general housing the city has a greater challenge in dealing with homelessness; the scale of our challenge is in fact similar to that faced by the centres of large conurbations when, despite our city status, we are in character more akin to a large market town. The recent consultation on the priorities for the Oxford Plan revealed that the quantity and quality of housing were deemed to be of the greatest importance across all the audiences that were consulted. This is supported by previous consultation exercises.

> **We have:**
>
> - Provided 150 new social housing units during 2005/2006*
> - 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 at least 150 social housing units next year
> - Increased the proportion of local authority homes that meet government decent homes standard from 43% to over 70%%*
> - Completed a comprehensive review of the options for the future of our housing stock and in response to tenant demand agreed to keep our housing stock managed and owned by the council
> - Achieved a Housing Inspection standard of 'one star with prospects of improvement'. **
> - Secured planning requirements in the adopted Local Plan, by March 2006, of 50% affordable housing on new developments to help increase provision of affordable housing in the city. *
>
> *March 2006 target outcome*
> *** September 2005 target outcome*

We will:

Commitments to be developed from outcomes of priority setting and Oxford Plan consultation work

- Encourage additional housing of all kinds, to meet current and future needs, in central Oxfordshire, as far as possible on existing brownfield sites. Initiate the urgent investigation and implementation of what should be the most sustainable solutions to Oxford's housing needs.**
- Increase the proportion of local authority homes that meet the decent homes standard to over 77% by March 2007 and 84% by March 2008
- Achieve a Housing Inspection standard of 'two star' by September 2008
- Increase rent collected in housing to 98% by March 2007 to increase income due to the Council and reduce arrears
- Extend the discretionary homes in multiple occupation licensing regime to a registration of 750 properties by March 2006, increasing the number of homes improved
- Continue to encourage and improve home energy efficiency to meet our obligation under the Home Energy Conservation Act 1995, reduce fuel poverty and mitigate our contribution to climate change.**

**Proposal currently unbudgeted

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.

- Housing Services
- Planning
- Oxford Building Solutions
- Environmental Health
- Neighbourhood Renewal

The strategic documents of greatest relevance to this priority are:

- BME Housing Strategy 2006-2010
- Capital Strategy and Asset Management Plan
- Community Strategy
- Homelessness Strategy 2003-2008
- Housing Strategy 2005-2008
- HRA Business Plan 2004-2007
- Local Plan 2004-2015
- Older People's Housing Strategy 2005-2006
- Private Sector Housing Strategy 2005 onwards

3.2.2 Improving Services – To reduce crime and anti-social behaviour

This priority for improvement links to:
- The Council's strategic priority to make Oxford a safer city
- The Community Strategy theme for safer communities

Although crime figures show that Oxfordshire is one of the safest areas of the country, we know that in Oxford we have pockets where crime and particularly anti-social behaviour cause concern and distress. Each of the consultation exercises conducted so far on the priorities for this Oxford Plan has identified tackling crime and antisocial behaviour as one of the most important priorities that we can deliver in partnership with others. We will continue to work in partnership with local communities, Oxford Safer Communities Partnership and the Home Office to provide a city where all our people are confident that they can safely enjoy all it has to offer.

We have:

- Secured a further XXX** signatories to the Oxford Nightsafe campaign to reduce binge drinking and violent crime in the city centre
- With the Oxford Safer Communities Partnership we have worked with an ongoing caseload of around 50 of the most challenging anti-social behaviour cases to help individuals change their behaviour. *
- Extended the powers of the street wardens to help tackle anti-social behaviour such as littering and graffiti
- Completed a three-year audit and of crime and antisocial behaviour and have developed a new strategy to tackle the primary areas of concern, which we will be implemented with the Oxford Safer Communities Partnership
- Helped empower local communities with increased funding for local projects such as XXXXX**

We will:
Commitments to be developed from outcomes of priority setting and Oxford Plan consultation work

- Extend the existing Street Warden scheme, increasing numbers of wardens to 25 by March 2008 and help fund an increase to 11 Police Community Support Officers by March 2008.
- Implement the new three-year Community Safety Strategy with the Safer Communities Partnership to achieve our targets for crime reduction.

* March 2006 target outcome
** Data o be supplied as soon as available at end of year

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.

- Neighbourhood Renewal
- Planning
- Environmental Health
- Strategy and Review

The strategic documents of greatest relevance to this priority are:

- Community Strategy
- Community Safety Strategy 2005-2008
- Licensing Policy
- Young Person's Strategy?

3.2.3 Improving Services – Reduce poverty and social exclusion

> **This priority for improvement links to:**
> - The Council's strategic priority to create local prosperity and sustain full employment
> - The Council's strategic priority to improve transport and mobility
> - The Council's strategic priority to dialogue and consultation
> - The Council's strategic priority to provide improved and affordable leisure facilities
> - The Council's strategic priority to provide more affordable housing
> - The Community Strategy theme for a vibrant and inclusive economy

Oxford City Council seeks to secure economic prosperity for the city as a whole and for all of its residents. A strong and sustainable local economy means good long-term job prospects for the people of Oxford, increasing standards of living and health. It can help provide jobs, enhance our status as a centre for tourism and increase our trade as a major shopping centre. We also want to encourage business and investment in a world-class local economy, ensuring that big businesses continue to want to invest in Oxford while at the same time providing opportunities and support for local, independent and small-scale companies.

We want to make sure that economic prosperity improves for those less well-off within our community, and to regenerate less well-used areas of the city centre. Levels of unemployment are low in Oxford but the cost of living is high and people in low-paid jobs often cannot access housing, services and facilities. Oxford City Council has a role to play in reducing the inequalities that exist in our society and supporting people within our communities. Many of our services contribute to this work, for example Housing and Homelessness Service, Benefits Service and Neighbourhood Renewal Service often work with individuals or groups experiencing a difficult time in their life. Our leisure and transport services provide discount schemes to remove financial barriers to accessing facilities. We are focusing considerable attention on education, skills and training as a means of increasing skill and wage levels while also working with under-represented groups to ensure that people from all sections of our multi-cultural and diverse city can access our services.

> **We have:**
>
> - Achieved our target for 2006 to improve processing of new benefits claims to less than 30 days. *
> - Achieved our target to improve processing of changes in circumstance for benefit claimants less than 12 days. *
> - Agreed a new Economic Development Strategy to identify key issues for the business community of Oxford and to help us meet the needs of large and small businesses in the city
> - Committed funding over three years to reduce the inequality in income and skill levels between the most and least well off areas of the city.
>
> ** March 2006 target outcome*

We will:

Commitments to be developed from outcomes of priority setting and Oxford Plan consultation work

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
- Transport and Parking
- Neighbourhood Renewal
- Revenues and Benefits
- Leisure and Parks

The strategic documents of greatest relevance to this priority are:

- Advice Strategy
- Affordable Warmth Strategy
- Communication Strategy
- Community Strategy
- Community Centre Strategy
- Consultation Strategy
- Cultural Strategy – Making the Difference 2002-2005
- Customer Care and Contact Strategy
- Economic Development Strategy
- e-govt statement
- Equalities Policy
- Leisure Strategy
- SRB Forward 2004 onwards
- Supporting People Strategy
- Tourism Strategy
- Young Person's Strategy

3.2.4 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 that reflect the needs of all sectors of the community and that are accessible to all. 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 Equalitites Standard as it provides a framework for us to ensure we deliver positive changes in a comprehensive and consistant 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 3 of the Equalities Standard. *
>
> **We will:**
> *Commitments to be developed from outcomes of priority setting and Oxford Plan consultation work*
> - 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
>
> ** March 2006 target outcome*

> 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://occweb/council/social-issues.cfm
> - Phone 01865 249811 and asking to for our Diversity Co-ordinator

The strategic documents that are of greatest relevance ot this priority are:

- BME Housing Strategy 2006-2010
- Communication Strategy
- Community Strategy
- Consultation Strategy
- Cultural Strategy – Making the Difference 2002-2005
- Customer Care and Contact Strategy
- Equalities Policy
- HR Strategy
- Procurement Strategy 2004-2007

3.2.5 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 in 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. The consultation undertaken to date on the priorities for this year's Oxford Plan has revealed that the quality of parks and green spaces is already generally seen to be high and the priority here is more one of maintenance than improvement. The consultation also showed consistently high levels of support for doing more to increase recycling.

> **We have:**
> - Make the running of the Council's parks and green spaces more responsive to local communities by moving to area-based teams working through Area Committees*
> - Carried out a full review from of our recycling and refuse collection in preparation for an expanded kerbside recycling scheme in 2007/2008. *
> - Provided financial support to an international conference on renewable energy, to be held in Oxford in 2006.
>
> *March 2006 target outcome*

We will:
Commitments to be developed from outcomes of priority setting and Oxford Plan consultation work

- 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
- Work towards the implementation of a 'zero waste strategy' for Oxford.**
- Expand kerbside recycling to include cardboard, plastics and green waste.**
- Finalise the Climate Change Action Plan and implement its proposals as fully as resources will allow.
- Ensure that a programme of new tree planting begins as soon as possible and is integrated into the ongoing investigations into the use of Oxford's public spaces. **

**Proposal currently unbudgeted

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
- Environmental Health

The strategic documents of greatest relevance to this priority are:

- Capital Strategy and Asset Management Plan
- Community Strategy
- Contaminated Land Register
- Leisure Strategy
- Open Spaces Strategy
- Waste Management Strategy

3.3   Transforming the Way we Work

Whereas the first set of priorities related to the services that we deliver, this set is focused on improving the way in which we operate: as well as focusing on what we do, we are looking at how we do it to make sure that our services become increasingly efficient and effective.

Oxford City Council has been aware of the need for improvements to its internal systems for some time, and this has been highlighted by external assessments and inspections. 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 priorities in this section are:
- Embed performance management and effective governance
- Build capacity by investing in our staff and councillors
- Enhance customer focus
- Develop in partnership a long-term vision for the city on which to base future plans
- Continue to improve financial capacity and improve financial performance

These factors will become increasingly important in the future, as the Comprehensive Performance Assessment regime for local government is set to place more emphasis on value for money, efficiency and governance. Getting our internal processes right is important both because it affects the quality of service that our customers receive, and because it helps to determine how the Council is rated through external assessments.

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

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 and of supporting sustained economic development and a skilled and employable workforce, part of its theme of a vibrant and inclusive economy.
- The Community Strategy objective of improving access to services by encouraging joined-up working across the city, part of its theme of a vibrant and inclusive economy.

Effective performance management is crucial if we are to improve our services. It is not just about monitoring and measuring what we do, but about analysing why and how we have achieved certain results. At present our performance is patchy, with some service areas being of a high quality and improving, while others are performing poorly or to a decreasing standard. It is only by identifying the causes of poor performance that we can prevent the same poor performance in the future, and if we can identify the factors that triggered excellent performance we can focus on them to achieve excellence consistently. We are making progress to ensure that performance management is part of daily life in the Council, but more needs to be done to make sure it is consistently applied and gives continual improvement.

We have:
- Developed a single monitoring framework that brings together progress against our corporate plan priorities and our business plan targets
- Significantly strengthened performance management with pilot projects in two of our front-line services (City Works and Housing), with a view to applying the lessons learnt across the Council
- Enhanced the role of performance management and governance arrangements in our business planning processes to ensure that they are managed effectively throughout the year and across the authority
- Delivered training in tools and techniques for continuous improvement throughout the Council. *
- Developed our performance monitoring software – CorVu – to permit individual staff and their managers secure access to their personal development plans on our intranet. *

* March 2006 target outcome

We will:
Commitments to be developed from outcomes of priority setting and Oxford Plan consultation work
- 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.
> -
> - Strategy and Review

The strategic documents that are of greatest relevance to this priority are:
- Audit Strategy
- Best Value Performance Plan
- Capital Strategy and Asset Management Plan
- HR Strategy
- Procurement Strategy
- Risk Management Strategy
- Treasury Strategy

3.3.2 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.

Our staff are our greatest asset. We want to make sure that 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.

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:**
>
> - Reduced days lost at work through sickness to an annual average of less than 8.93 per person. *
> - Embarked upon an ambitious development programme to enhance capacity and skills among managers at all levels of the Council.
> - Positively worked to enhance cross-party dialogue on contentious issues to help decision-making continue to run smoothly.
> - Started a process of job evaluation to ensure that our staff are paid at a level that is comparable with those of other authorities.
> - Significantly increased staff satisfaction with the Council as an employer.
>
> ** March 2006 target outcome*

We will:

Commitments to be developed from outcomes of priority setting and Oxford Plan consultation work

- Develop and embed Investors in People principles in all business units. Aim to be at IiP standard by December 2006
- Continue to work to improve staff satisfaction with the Council as an employer and will encourage business units to share good practice to ensure that satisfaction is consistent across the authority.

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

The strategic documents that are of greatest relevance to this priority are:

- Communication Strategy
- HR Strategy

3.3.3 Transforming the way we work – Enhance customer focus

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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.
- The Community Strategy objective of improving access to services by encouraging joined up working across the city, part of its theme of a vibrant and inclusive economy.

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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.

While different groups of consultees felt differently as to whether a single authority for Oxford would be better than the current City/County council split, our consultation on the priorities for the Oxford Plan did reveal two key difficulties, both of which we are working to address:
- Not knowing which public body is responsible for which services
- Not getting through on the phone to someone who can answer the enquiry first time (being passed from department to department before finding someone who can help).

We have:
- Provided Customer Relationship Management software across the whole Council and delivered training to staff using it to allow us to quickly access all the information we need to answer queries when our customers phone us and removing the need to pass customers from one department to another. *
- Developed our telephone contact services based on two numbers to make it easier for people to know the number to call in order to speak to somebody with the skills and knowledge to help them. *
- Published an A-Z guide of services provided by us and other major service providers in the city to raise awareness of who provides each service.
- Adopted customer focus as one of our underlying values at the heart of everything we do.
- Run a series of meet-the-buyer events to help small and local businesses to access public sector markets by increasing their understanding of how the public sector procures goods and services.

* March 2006 target outcome

We will:
Commitments to be developed from outcomes of priority setting and Oxford Plan consultation work
- Increase customer satisfaction for telephone contact with the benefits service to 73% by March 2007
- Continue to work with focus groups to identify the causes of low satisfaction with certain services and work to resolve the issues

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

The strategic documents of greatest relevance to this priority are:

- Communication Strategy
- Consultation Strategy 2005-2008
- Customer Care and Contact Strategy
- e-govt statement
- Equalities Policy
- Procurement Strategy 2004-2007

3.3.4 Transforming the way we work –In partnership, develop a long-term vision for the city on which to base future

This priority for improvement links to:

- The Council's strategic priority work with others to deliver shared goals
- All of the 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. It is also a key area for inspection in the new Comprehensive Performance Assessment regime.

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 reset its vision in 2005-2006 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:

- Worked with the Local Strategic Partnership to revise our Community Strategy so that it provides a clear long-term vision for the city and long-term goals for the LSP. *
- Engaged with the County Council, Oxfordshire district councils, and other major agencies in the County to agree a Local Area Agreement, which sets ambitious targets for key priority areas.
- Begun a programme to improve the governance arrangements for our involvement in major partnerships

We will:
Commitments to be developed from outcomes of priority setting and Oxford Plan consultation work
- Ensure that any elements of the Local Area Agreement to which Oxford City Council signs up are given due focus to ensure that the targets are met.
- Work with our partners on LIFT to improve health care provision in the city.
- Strengthen our approach to partnership working and ensure that our involvement in partnerships helps to deliver our own vision for the city and that of our partners.

The strategic documents of greatest relevance to this priority are:

- Community Strategy
- Community Safety Strategy 2005-2008

3.3.5 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 five years but resources will always be limited and funding everything that we want to achieve will always be a challenge. Now that the Council's decision to retain its housing stock has been formalised, a large proportion of our funds has already been committed 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.

One important area of work in the coming year will be to act on the Audit Commission's recommendations about how we compile our financial statements, securing Council access to legal advice and ensuring procedures are in place to document that legal advice is given due consideration.

This had been removed from council version but was hiding under box still!

> **We have:**
>
> - Achieved our target to improve invoices paid within 30 days to over 92%. *
> - Set up a best practice Strategic Procurement Partnership to provide joint working arrangements with other Oxfordshire public bodies to gain value for money and develop projects as appropriate.
> - Successfully met the revised (shorter) deadline for the publication of our accounts by 30th June 2005
> - Identified opportunities to meet the 2.5% efficiency savings set by the Government as part of the Annual Efficiency Statement
> - Carried out xxx** Best Value Reviews expected to achieve £XXX** of savings
> - Provided our officers with a structure of supporting documents to our revised financial regulations. *
> - Delivered basic financial training to all Business Managers and interested Councillors. *
> - Spent only according to our budgets in order to maintain the General Fund balance at £3 million.
>
> ** March 2006 target outcome*
> *** Data to be added as soon as available at end of year*

We will:

Commitments to be developed from outcomes of priority setting and Oxford Plan consultation work

- Carry out three Best Value Reviews this year and each following year
- Improve invoices paid within 30 days to 94% by March 2007
- Maintain our improved financial standing and performance
- Meet our target of 2.5% efficiency savings as part of the Annual Efficiency Statement
- Use value for money information to identify possible areas for service improvement or efficiency savings?
- Set a funding strategy to deliver the Decent Homes Standards required by government by 2010.

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

The strategic documents of greatest relevance to this priority are:

- Capital Strategy and Asset Management Plan
- Procurement Strategy 2004-2007
- Treasury Strategy

4.0   Performance Monitoring and Review

Setting and agreeing our priorities is an important first step, but to ensure that we achieve our ambitions we must remain alert to:
- Any potential risks that may affect our ability to deliver our aims, or that may result from our activities. These include financial and legal risks, and threats to the Council's reputation.
- The possibility that our activities do not bring the intended results. If performance is lower or higher than expected, we need to identify why that is so that we can address any barriers to performance and secure high performance consistently in the future.

This chapter outlines how we monitor our past performance and manage our activities to improve future performance. It also details our reporting mechanisms and highlights our risk management practices.

4.1 Monitoring Systems

Various forms of monitoring are happening all the time. In 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 Scrutiny Committees of the Council every three months.

- Staff and Councillors can access live performance information at any time via our performance management software on the intranet. This provides greater scope for monitoring and scrutiny of their areas of responsibility, leading to better performance management at a corporate and service level.

- The second (June) publication of the Oxford Plan each year will include data at Appendix 2 showing how we performed during the previous financial year. This data will be checked by the Audit Commission to make sure that we have measured our performance fairly. Around December the Audit Commission will publish our audited data along with that for all the other local authorities in the UK and we will be able to establish how well we have performed when compared to others.

- To help drive our improvement priorities and provide external challenge and expertise 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 the Executive Board.

- We will continue to use cost and Value for Money (VFM) analysis to inform selection of areas for Best Value Reviews in future years.

In addition to our own monitoring there are a number of inspections, audits and reports to which local authorities are subjected:

- 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 monitors our progress with Improvement Plan Priorities.

- We are also subject to a range of service-based inspections to ensure that priority services are managed and delivered efficiently and effectively. The housing inspection in September 2005 highlighted areas for improvement to help us deliver better housing services in the future.

4.2 Past Years Performance

Since our CPA report, released June 2004, performance has improved across the range of Best Value Performance Indicators, (BVPIs). We now have only 7 indicators are in the worst quartile and no indicators have dropped down into this quartile. The CPA report highlighted that the last audited figures for the council showed that we had nearly 70% of indicators where our performance was in the bottom two groups when compared against other district councils. The comparison is based on splitting all district councils into four different groups for each performance measure according to how well they perform. The table below shows how we have improved the percentage of reported BVPIs since the CPA report.

District Council Performance Groups	% of audited indicators in category as per CPA report	% of indicators in category for 2004/2005
Best	20	22
Above average	11	39
Below Average	38	24
Worst	31	15

4.2.1 Some of the areas where performance has improved

Paying Our Bills on Time

Average performance during 2004/2005 was that we had paid 90.55% of invoices within 30 days of receipt. This is clear improvement on the 2003/2004 result of 87.92%. Much of this improvement was seen in the second part of the year due to process improvements and additional staff training. We aim to further improve our performance in this area during 2005/2006 and some of the action we are taking to ensure we achieve this is outlined below.

- Piloting the use of purchasing cards from May 2005. Cardholders fill a simple transaction log, which is reconciled against the bill and paid by direct debit
- E procurement with a purchasing module
- Further training for existing staff
- Training on invoice handling for all new staff as part of their induction process
- An extra member of staff to concentrate on monitoring invoice payment data and purchasing cards.

Collecting Council Rent

Rent collection achieved in 2004/2005 is 97.40%, exceeding our target and a clear improvement on the 2003/2004 figure of 95.85%. This is the best result we have ever achieved and this is one of the indicators where our performance has moved out of the worst category when compared to other district councils. The target we have set ourselves for 2005/2006 is to further raise our performance so that we are better than most other councils for this performance indicator. We hope to ensure continued improvement through further media campaigns, particularly raising the profile of direct debit payments.

How quickly we Deal with New Housing and Council Tax Benefit Claims
There has been a 40% improvement on the 2003/04 results; the performance during 2004/2005 of 33.5 days easily exceeded our target. Our performance in this area is now above average when compared to other councils but we aim to further improve on this during the coming year to an average of only 30 days.

How quickly we Deal with Changes of Circumstances for Housing and Council Tax Benefit Claimants
The overall result for 2004/2005 of 16.9 days showed a 40% improvement in performance when compared with the 2003/04 results of 28.3 days. To help us achieve even better results for next year we are currently taking advice on best practice from the Department of Work and Pensions, DWP.

How quickly we Deal with Planning Applications
All three of the Planning applications performance indicators have achieved better results than were set as targets for 2004/2005. Particular improvements have been with the percentage of minor applications determined in 8 weeks, the year-end result of 73% means that we are now among the best councils for this.
The percentage of major applications determined in 13 weeks has also seen continuous improvement throughout the year. It has met the Government target this June. A 2004/2005 year-end result of 51% will still mean the Council will have targets imposed by the ODPM in 2005/06 as this is based on performance from July 2003 to June 2004.

On-Line Access to Services
Our performance is improving against the government target for local authorities to have as many of their services as possible accessible via the Internet or other paperless methods. We are confident we will remain amongst the best district authorities for performance against this indicator and our performance compares favourably against that of other Oxfordshire districts:

- West Oxfordshire District Council 86%
- Oxford City Council 76.12%
- South Oxfordshire District Council 76%
- Cherwell District Council 73%
- Vale of the White Horse District Council 69%
- Oxfordshire County Council 58.3%

The Government target is for local authorities to have achieved 100% by December 2005; research suggests very few authorities will meet this. To ensure our performance rapidly improves we will use the government recommended toolkit to highlight where each business unit can improve their performance and our Business Systems team will offer each unit help to achieve these improvements.

Achievements Against the Equality Standard for Local Government
We have achieved our target of reaching Level 1 of the Equalities Standard for 2004/2005 and increased our earlier published target of Level 2 for 2005/2006 to Level 3. We have a new Corporate Equalities Policy outlining our commitment to: developing a representative workforce; engagement with, and responsiveness to, all of Oxford's communities; and an eradication of discrimination and harassment. We have backed up this commitment by conducting assessments for each business units outlining actions that should take to address equalities issues. Training on equalities issues has been provided to business managers and been included in the induction programme for all council staff. Training on racial incident reporting has also been delivered.

Reducing Days Lost Due to Sickness Absence
Our 2004/2005 result of an average of 10.16 days absence per member of staff is an improvement on recent years and puts our performance as better that average when compared to other district local authorities. There has been increased Occupational Health intervention, more proactive management of long-term absence, and training for managers and supervisors particularly in areas high in absenteeism. We are required by the ODPM to set a target to be amongst the best local authorities for this indicator. Last year this meant setting our performance target at 8.00 days. Since then more recent data has been released showing that whilst Oxford City Council improved its performance in this area the best district councils have experienced a drop in performance. We still aim to achieve the performance of the best councils and to do so would currently need to meet a target of 8.93 days or less. To achieve the further improvement we seek we are:

- Improving our software for gathering, monitoring and analysing absenteeism
- Extending our work with the Occupational Health Manager reviewing all absences
- Reviewing what support we can give to employees to enable them to return to work sooner
- Continuing training for all managers and supervisors
- Increasing staff awareness of our policies for managing absence by holding discussion sessions and issuing updated leaflets and guidelines

Improved Sports Facilities
Ferry Sports Centre was closed for major refurbishment from the beginning of April 2004 until the end of March 2005. The people of Oxford have shown their appreciation for the improved facilities by flocking to join the new membership scheme. Pre-sales of slice cards from the end of March to April 20th show 672 new members joining the scheme.

4.2.2 Areas where we have not achieved the standard we would like

How quickly we Deal with Land Charge Searches
In 2004/2005 we carried-out 83.39% of searches within the target time of ten days. This is disappointing when set against our target. We have therefore decided to monitor our performance in this area much more closely during 2005/2006. To help achieve improvements in performance we will:

- Map the processes involved in dealing with searches to identify potential blockages so that they can be addressed.
- Accelerate our work to capture land charges data electronically and allow us to offer a service at National Land Information Service (NLIS) level 3 – giving us the facility to receive and despatch searches electronically

Council Tax Collection
We have collected £4m more in council tax during 2004/2005 than in the previous year and increased the number Direct Debit payers by 1,521. Despite this our year-end result was disappointing at 94.87%. An improvement plan for 2005/2006 has been drawn up to address this and other issues in Council Tax

Recovery of Housing Benefit Overpayments
Our recovery team was strengthened in 2004/2005 and the amount of money we are collecting is higher than ever, with arrangements in place to recover approximately £1.5m of the debts outstanding. In 2004/2005 we were able to collect 42.9% of the overpaid housing benefit owed to us. Collection rates are by necessity slow as many of the people owing money to us are on low incomes and we can only recover small weekly payments from them. We believe this indicator on its own does not properly reflect the work carried out by our recovery team and are pleased that the ODPM has recently announced changes to it from 2005/06.

How much of the City's Waste we Recycle
In 2004/2005 the amount of waste we collected that was recycled was less than we had hoped at 14.82%; however we remain better than most councils at recycling. To help us achieve the national targets of 21% of waste composted or recycled we will:
- Pilot green waste and cardboard collection from March 2005 in some areas of the city
- Seek ways to increase usage of collection sites such as bottle banks with greater capacity for plastics
- Seek to develop new recycling initiatives

We are pleased with the improvements that we have made so far and recognise that there are challenges ahead of us to secure further improvement. Staff at Oxford City Council are working hard to deliver improvements to the services that the people of Oxford receive and we look forward to reporting further improvements in the years to come as a result of their continuing hard work and dedication.

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

Performance information is available as follows,
- At Appendix 2 of this report
- On our website there are quarterly performance reports to our Executive Board at http://www.oxford.gov.uk/council/meeting-diary.cfm/detail/2
- Phone us on 01865 249811 and ask for the Performance Improvement Team
- E-mail us at improvement@oxford.gov.uk

4.3   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. A corporate risk assessment based on best practice methodologies has been developed. Comments of the Executive Board will be sought in July 2005 and the assessment will be cascaded following their approval of the assessment.

Mark's due to report to EB in September, so we can get something for this. Then can add:

Risk management has also been incorporated into the business planning process, through which Business Managers plan their services for the coming three years. For each primary objective in a business plan, the manager identifies any key risks associated with it. The most significant risks for each business unit and then prioritised and the steps necessary to manage those risks are identified and planned by the Business Manager and their Director. The achievement of business plan objectives and the management of those key risks are kept under review by both business managers and directors on a quarterly basis.

MONITORING FRAMEWORK FOR OUR COMMITMENTS 2006-2009

Tables based on the monitoring framework for the Oxford Plan will be developed for inclusion here as soon as consultation and political agreement is reached on the Council's priorities and commitments in the current business planning round.

BEST VALUE PERFORMANCE INDICATOR TABLES

BVPI and Description	Results 02/03	Results 03/04	Results 04/05	Target 04/05	Performance Relative to Other Councils	Target 05/06	Target 06/07	Target 07/08	Best Districts Nationally
BV 001a (DELETED 05/06) Does the authority have a community strategy developed in collaboration with the local strategic partnership, for improving the economic, social and environmental well being in a way that is sustainable? [If the answer is YES, answer b&c. No, answer 1d]	No	Yes	Yes	Yes					82% answer YES
BV 001b (DELETED 05/06) When will a full review of the strategy be completed?		March 05	Note[2]						
BV 001c (DELETED 05/06) Has the authority reported progress towards implementing the community strategy to the wider community this year?		No	No	Yes					55% answer YES
BV 001d (DELETED 05/06) When does the authority plan to have such a strategy in place?	March 03								
BV 002a **The level (if any) of the Equality standard for local government to which the authority conforms**	**Level 1**	**None**	**Level 1**	**Level 1**		**Level 3**	**Level 3**	**Level 4**	

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[2] No review carried out during 2004/2005. Review underway in 2005/2006 and due for completion December 2005

BVPI and Description	Results 02/03	Results 03/04	Results 04/05	Target 04/05	Performance Relative to Other Councils	Target 05/06	Target 06/07	Target 07/08	Best Districts Nationally
BV 002b The duty to promote race equality (Score against checklist)		16%	46%	15%	**Above Average**	60%	75%	100%	55%
BV 008 **Invoices for commercial goods and services which were paid by the authority within 30 days of such invoices being received by the authority**	**89.37%**	**87.92%**	**90.55%**	**90.00%**	**Worst**	**93.08%**[3]	**94.49%**	**96.74%**	**96.74%**
BV 009 **Council Tax collected**	**94.69%**	**95.41%**	**94.87%**	**97.00%**	**Worst**	**98.50%**	**98.50%**	**98.50%**	**98.50%**
BV 010 **Non-domestic rates due for the financial year, which were received by the authority**	**98.31%**	**98.74%**	**98.79%**	**99.00%**	**Above Average**	**99.12%**	**99.12%**	**99.12%**	**99.12%**
BV 011a The percentage of top 5% earners that are women	34.30%	29.89%	29.19%	29.89%	**Best**	29.89%	29.89%	29.89%	26.69%
BV 011b (AMENDED 05/06) The percentage of the top paid 5% of Local Authority staff who are from an ethnic minority	1.50%	1.17%	0.00%	3.00%	**Above Average**	1.48%	2.20%	3.00%	2.20%
BV 012 **The number of working days/shifts lost due to sickness absence**	**11.74**	**11.71**	**10.16**	**8.00**	**Above Average**	**8.93%**	**8.93%**	**8.93%**	**8.93**
BV 014 Employees retiring early (excluding ill-health retirements) as a percentage of the total work force	1.00%	0.07%	0.49%	0.00%	**Below Average**	0.14%	0.14%	0.14%	0.14%

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[3] ODPM require us to set the current top quartile performance as our target for this BVPI regardless of whether this is realistic for the authority given its current performance and resources

BVPI and Description	Results 02/03	Results 03/04	Results 04/05	Target 04/05	Performance Relative to Other Councils	Target 05/06	Target 06/07	Target 07/08	Best Districts Nationally
BV 015 Employees retiring on grounds of ill health as a percentage of the total workforce	0.05%	0.07%	0.07%	0.14%	**Above Average**	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
BV016a The percentage of local authority employees declaring that they meet the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 disability definition	1.26%	1.51%	1.37%	3.00%		3.00%	5.00%	7.00%	4.11%
BV 016b[4] Percentage of the economically active disabled people in the local authority area	10.45%	10.45%	10.45%						15.09%
BV 016a*100/BV 016b **Proximity of disabled community representation within employees to that of local community**	**12.06%**	**14.45%**	**13.11%**		**Worst**	**28.7%**	**34.6%**	**48.4%**	**39.33%[5]**
BV 017a (AMENDED 05/06) The percentage of local authority employees from ethnic minority communities	6.4%	6.4%	6.4%	8.0%		7.0%	8.0%	9.0%	2.4%
BV 017b[6] (AMENDED 05/06) The percentage of the economically active (persons aged 18-65) population from ethnic minority communities in the local authority area	12.8%	12.8%	12.8%						3.4%
BV 017a*100/BV 017b (AMENDED 05/06) **Proximity of economically active minority ethnic community representation within employees to that of the local community**	**50.12%**	**50.04%**	**49.76%**		**Best**	**54.8%**	**62.7%**	**70.5%**	**26.56%[7]**

[4] This data is based on the 2001 Census
[5] Figures based on top quartile authority for BV16a against the Oxford City population for 16b
[6] This data is based on the 2001 Census
[7] Figures based on top quartile authority for BV17a against the Oxford City population 17b

BVPI and Description	Results 02/03	Results 03/04	Results 04/05	Target 04/05	Performance Relative to Other Councils	Target 05/06	Target 06/07	Target 07/08	Best Districts Nationally
BV 062 (DELETED 05/06) The proportion of unfit private sector dwellings made fit or demolished as a direct result of action by the local authority	1.90%	2.47%	2.80%	2.00%	**Above Average**				3.75%
BV 063 (AMENDED 05/06) Energy Efficiency – the average SAP rating of local authority-owned dwellings	64	66	67	66	**Best**	68	69	70	65%
BV 064 The number of private sector dwellings that are returned into occupation or demolished during 2002/03 as a direct result of action by the local authority	0%	0%	0%	1.4%		1.4%	2.8%	2.8%	
BV 066a (AMENDED 05/06) Local authority rent collection (percentage)	**94.77%**	**95.85%**	**97.39%**	**96.90%**	**Below Average**	**98.20%**	**98.70%**	**99.00%**	**98.60%**
BV 074a Percentage satisfaction of LA tenants with overall service of landlord	(77% +/- 3.2% in 2000/01)	639 73% +/- 4%			**(Worst)**		78%		85%
BV 075a Percentage of council tenants satisfied with opportunities participation in decision-making in relation to housing services	(56% +/- 3.5% in 2000/01)	533 50% +/- 4%			**(Worst)**		63%		70%
BV 076a[8] The number of claimants visited, per 1,000 caseload		112.11	176.00	191.99	**Below Average**	179.03	179.03	179.03	304.00
BV 076b The number of fraud investigators employed, per 1,000 caseload		0.28	0.38	0.41	**Above Average**	0.38	0.38	0.38	0.48

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[8] Targets for this BVPI are dependent on annually set DWP targets and only the first year can be confirmed at this stage

BVPI and Description	Results 02/03	Results 03/04	Results 04/05	Target 04/05	Performance Relative to Other Councils	Target 05/06	Target 06/07	Target 07/08	Best Districts Nationally
BV 076c The number of fraud investigations, per 1,000 caseload		58.62	57.18	63.86	**Above Average**	62.20	62.20	62.20	61.70
BV 076d The number of prosecutions and sanctions per year, per 1,000 caseload		3.29	5.32	4.62	**Above Average**	5.26	5.26	5.26	5.83
BV 078a **Speed of processing new claims to HB/CTB (Average number of days)**	**77.2**	**55.6**	**33.5**	**40.0**	**Above Average**	**30.0**	**28.0**	**28.0**	**31.0**
BV 078b **Speed of processing changes of circumstance in HB/CTB (Average number of days)**	**40.7**	**28.3**	**16.9**	**15.0**	**Worst**	**12.0**	**10.0**	**8.0**	**7.2**
BV 079a **Accuracy of processing HB/CTB claims**	**86.80%**	**93.20%**	**93.40%**	**95.00%**	**Worst**	**95.00%**	**96.00%**	**97.00%**	**99.00%**
BV 079b (DELETED 05/06) **Recovery of Housing Benefit overpayments (percentage of recoverable overpayments recovered in year)**	**57.74%**	**48.05%**	**42.92%**	**55.00%**	**Below Average**				**55.60%**
BV 79b(i) (NEW 05/06) The amount of Housing Benefit overpayments (HB) recovered during the period being reported on as a percentage of HB deemed recoverable overpayments during that period		95.52%	98.23%			98.50%[9]	98.75%	99.00%	

[9] Targets for the new BV79b are provisional as these are new measures and although we have been able to calculate baseline data from previously held information we are not yet familiar with how all the influencing factors will affect results

BVPI and Description	Results 02/03	Results 03/04	Results 04/05	Target 04/05	Performance Relative to Other Councils	Target 05/06	Target 06/07	Target 07/08	Best Districts Nationally
BV 79b(ii) (NEW 05/06) HB overpayments recovered during the period as a percentage of the total amount of HB overpayment debt outstanding at the start of the period plus amount of HB overpayments identified during the period		45.52%	40.94%			45.00%	47.50%	50.00%	
BV 79b(iii) (NEW 05/06) Housing Benefit (HB) overpayments written off during the period as a percentage of the total amount of HB overpayment debt outstanding at the start of the period, plus amount of HB overpayments identified during the period		2.15%	6.50%			4.00%	3.50%	3.00%	
BV 082a(i) (AMENDED 05/06) Household waste recycled (percentage of total tonnage)	**13.50%**	**14.72%**	**14.06%**	**16.50%**	**Above Average**	**18.00%**	**19.00%**	**21.00%**	**16.86%**
BV 082b(i) (AMENDED 05/06) Household Waste composted (Percentage of total tonnage)	0.00%	0.00%	0.75%	0.00%	Below Average	4.00%	4.00%	10.00%	5.14%
BV 084a (DELETED 05/06) Household waste collected (kg per head)	326.0	333.6	323.0	338.0	Best				371.7
BV 084a (NEW 05/06) Household waste collected (Tonnes per head)	0.33	0.33	0.33	0.34		0.34	0.34	0.34	0.37
BV 084b (NEW 05/06) Percentage change in household waste collected (tonnes per head)						0.00	0.00	0.00	
BV 086 Cost of waste collection (£ per household)	£37.20	£42.92	£55.13	£37.20		£54.00	£54.00	£54.00	Average LA £39.18

BVPI and Description	Results 02/03	Results 03/04	Results 04/05	Target 04/05	Performance Relative to Other Councils	Target 05/06	Target 06/07	Target 07/08	Best Districts Nationally
BV 091a & b (AMENDED 05/06) Percentage of population resident in the authority's area which are served by a kerbside collection of recyclables	98.0%	97.2%	99.0%	99.0%	**Above Average**				100.0%
BV 106 New homes built on previously developed land (Percentage of total new builds)	93.00%	95.00%	99.85%	90.00%	**Best**	90.00%	90.00%	90.00%	86.00%
BV 109a Percentage of planning applications determined in line with the government's new development control targets to determine 60% of major applications in 13 weeks	**26.00%**	**29.00%**	**51.00%**	**48.00%**	**Below Average**	**57.00%**	**60.00%**	**60.00%**	**63.58%**
BV 109b Percentage of planning applications determined in line with the government's new development control targets to determine 65% of minor applications in 8 weeks	68.00%	68.00%	73.00%	72.00%	**Best**	70.00%	70.00%	70.00%	71.00%
BV 109c Percentage of planning applications determined in line with the government's new development control targets to determine 80% of other applications in 8 weeks	73.00%	81.00%	80.00%	80.00%	**Above Average**	82.00%	82.00%	82.00%	86.00%
BV 126 Domestic burglaries (Per 1,000 households)	24.00	25.70	18.40	19.90		21.21[10]	19.96	18.71	
BV 127a (DELETED 05/06) Violent crimes per 1000 population – Violent offences committed by stranger per 1000 population	12.90	14.50	Note[11]	12.20					

[10] Figures based on agreed Safer and stronger communities fund statement of agreed outcomes 2005/06 -2007/08
[11] Thames Valley Police are unable to provide data on this performance indicator

BVPI and Description	Results 02/03	Results 03/04	Results 04/05	Target 04/05	Performance Relative to Other Councils	Target 05/06	Target 06/07	Target 07/08	Best Districts Nationally
BV 127a (NEW 05/06) Violent crimes per 1000 population						23.25[12]	20.93	18.60	
BV 127b (DELETED 05/06) Violent crimes per 1000 population – Violent offences committed in a public place per 1000 population	15.3	17.00	Note[13]	14.42					
BV 127b (NEW 05/06) Robberies per 1,000 population						0.18[14]	0.17	0.15	
BV 127c (DELETED 05/06) Violent crimes per 1000 population – Violent offences committed in connection with licensed premises per 1000 population	1.5	1.7	Note[15]	1.41					
BV 127d (DELETED 05/06) Violent crimes per 1000 population – Violent offences committed under influence per 1000 population			Note[16]						
BV 128 (AMENDED 05/06) The number of vehicle crimes per year, per 1,000 population in the Local Authority Area	22.40	19.20	15.50	18.20		16.80[17]	15.54	14.45	
BV 156 Building accessibility (As percentage of LA public buildings)	20.00%	43.00%	75.75%	60.00%	**Best**	91.00%	100.00%	100.00%	67.00%

[12] Figures based on agreed Safer and stronger communities fund statement of agreed outcomes 2005/06 -2007/08. SSCF data does not include sexual offences although this BVPI does however this represents a very small fraction of the whole figure
[13] Thames Valley Police are unable to provide data on this performance indicator
[14] Figures based on agreed Safer and stronger communities fund statement of agreed outcomes 2005/06 -2007/08
[15] Thames Valley Police are unable to provide data on this performance indicator
[16] Thames Valley Police are unable to provide data on this performance indicator
[17] Figures based on agreed Safer and stronger communities fund statement of agreed outcomes 2005/06 -2007/08

BVPI and Description	Results 02/03	Results 03/04	Results 04/05	Target 04/05	Performance Relative to Other Councils	Target 05/06	Target 06/07	Target 07/08	Best Districts Nationally
BV 157 **The percentage of interactions with the public, by type, which are capable of electronic service delivery and which are being delivered using internet protocols or other paperless methods**	**55.00%**	**69.00%**	**76.12%**	**88.00%**	**Best**	**100.00%**	**100.00%**	**100.00%**	**72.00%**
BV 164 Commission for Racial Equality's code of practice in rented housing	No	No	No	Yes		Yes	Yes	Yes	32% answer YES
BV 166a Environmental health best practice score	62.0%	62.0%	70.0%	68.0%	**Below Average**	70.0%	76.0%	76.0%	90.00%
BV 170a (AMENDED 05/06) Usage of museums (per 1,000 of population)	592	610	500	605	**Above Average**	605[18]	605	605	670
BV 170b (AMENDED 05/06) Visits in person to museums (per 1,000 of population)	147	163	148	156	**Above Average**	160	160	160	427
BV 170c (AMENDED 05/06) Number of pupils in organised visits to museums	1,196	2,056	2,131	2,146	**Above Average**	2,146	2,146	2,146	2,754
BV 174 Racial incidents (per 100,000 of population)	6.70	7.90	20.37	20.00		24.58	35.12	45.66	
BV 175 Racial incidents with further action (As a percentage of total incidents)	89.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	**Best**	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%

[18] All museums targets are subject to change as a result of the options review being carried out during 2005/2006

BVPI and Description	Results 02/03	Results 03/04	Results 04/05	Target 04/05	Performance Relative to Other Councils	Target 05/06	Target 06/07	Target 07/08	Best Districts Nationally
BV176 (REPLACED BY BV225 05/06) Number of domestic refuge places funded by the authority per 10,000 of the population	2.01	0.22	0.13	0.22	**Above Average**				0.64
BV 179 **Percentage of standard searches carried out within 10 days**	**69.45%**	**89.60%**	**83.39%**	**92.00%**	**Worst**	**90.00%**	**92.00%**	**94.00%**	**100.00%**
BV 180a i (DELETED 05/06) The energy consumption per sq.m of local authority operational property compared with comparable buildings in the UK as a whole - Electricity	104%	Note[19]							74%
BV 180a ii (DELETED 05/06) The energy consumption per sq.m of local authority operational property compared with comparable buildings in the UK as a whole – Fossil Fuels	75.00%	Note[20]							63%
BV183a[21] The average length of stay in a Bed & Breakfast accommodation of households which include dependent children or a pregnant women and which are unintentionally homeless and in priority need (Weeks)	17	14	12	<6	**Worst**	<615	<6	<6	1

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[19] Reporting suspended with AC permission

[20] Reporting suspended with AC permission

[21] BV183a and BV183b are measures of how long the people permanently housed during this year spent in bed & breakfast and hostels respectively. However, the pressure on housing in Oxford means that those granted permanent housing this year may have spent several years in a different house waiting for a suitable permanent tenancy to become available. This means that the time spent in B&B or emergency hostel accommodation was usually some years ago. The council ensures that it meets the current statutory requirement for this period to be less than 6 weeks and it will continue to do so, however the aforementioned difficulties make this PI difficult to set targets for in Oxford and a poor measure of current performance in this area

BVPI and Description	Results 02/03	Results 03/04	Results 04/05	Target 04/05	Performance Relative to Other Councils	Target 05/06	Target 06/07	Target 07/08	Best Districts Nationally
BV 183b The average length of stay in Hostel accommodation of households which include dependent children or a pregnant women and which are unintentionally homeless and in priority need (Weeks	16	15	11	<6	**Below Average**	<6	<6	<6	0
BV 184a **The proportion of local authority homes which were non-decent at start of financial year**	**75%**	**51%**	**43%**	**38%**	**Below Average**	**30%[22]**	**23%**	**16%**	**15%**
BV 184b Change in the proportion of non-decent local authority homes from the start to the end of the financial year	0.0%	15.5%	12.4%	14.9%	**Below Average**	13.2%	10.0%	9.0%	26.6%
BV 185 (DELETED 05/06) Responsive (not emergency) repairs during 2004/05, for which the authority both made and kept an appointment	4.1%	30.2%	49.8%	50.0%	**Above Average**				83.2%
BV199a **Street and environmental cleanliness – litter & detritus**		**24.5%**	**24.0%**	**25.0%**	**Below Average**	**30.0%[23]**	**27.0%**	**24.0%**	**12%**
BV 200a (AMENDED 05/06) Do you have a development plan that has been adopted in the last 5 years and the end date of which has not expired?		No	No	No					42% say YES-
BV 200b (AMENDED 05/06) If 'No' to BV 200a are there proposals on deposit for an alteration or replacement, with published timetable for adopting within 3 years?		Yes	Yes	Yes					40% say YES

[22] Due to increased capital allocation to this work we have been able to increase our targets for the next three years since the first publication of The Oxford Plan
[23] Targets revised due to changes in the definition of this BVPI making it more difficult to achieve

BVPI and Description	Results 02/03	Results 03/04	Results 04/05	Target 04/05	Performance Relative to Other Councils	Target 05/06	Target 06/07	Target 07/08	Best Districts Nationally
BV 202 (New 04/05)[24] **The number of people sleeping rough on a single night within the area of the local authority**	**(9)**	**(7)**	**5**			**8**	**8**	**8**	
BV 203 (NEW 04/05) **The percentage change in the average number of families placed in temporary accommodation**			**+13.90%[25]**			**-8.00%**	**-8.00%**	**-8.00%**	
BV 204 (NEW 04/05) **The number of planning appeal decisions allowed against the authority's decision to refuse on planning applications, as a percentage of the total number of planning appeals against refusals of planning applications**			**35.3%**	**35.0%**		**33.0%**	**33.0%**	**30.00%**	
BV 205 (NEW 04/05) The local authority's score against a 'quality of planning services' checklist			94.0%			94.0%	94.0%	100.0%	
BV 226b (AMENDED 05/06) Percentage of monies spent on advice and guidance services provision which was given to organisations holding the CLS Quality Mark at 'General Help' level and above	95.90%	95.90%	100.00%	100.00%	**Best**	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%

Shaded boxes indicate years that odpm did not require measurement against a performance indicator or target-setting for an indicator because it was a new measure.

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[24] Although this is being introduced as a national PI from 2004/2005 the council does hold historic data on this which it can therefore report

[25] This BVPI was new in 2004/2005 but relies in data kept in 2003/2004 in order to calculate it. The historic data is not considered robust and we therefore have a low confidence in the accuracy of the end of year result for 2004/2005

The terms 'Best', 'Above Average', 'Below Average' and 'Worst' have been used in order to give a sense of our performance against that of other councils to non-statisticians however, they refer to the 1st, 2nd, 3rd and 4th quartiles respectively. Consequently where 'average' has been used this actually refers to the statistical median.

GLOSSARY

Term	Explanation
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-commision.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.

Term	Explanation
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-commision.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

Term	Explanation
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	Inability to heat 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)

Term	Explanation
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) recruitment and skills development af 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	Plan 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.

Term	Explanation
Oxford Accents	An internal magazine containing council news and announcements that is produced on a monthly basis for Council staff.
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	A partnership 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 goals are realised 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 may threaten delivery of objectives in order to minimize and manage those risks.
Said Business School	World-renowned business school based in Oxford that is currently working with the Council on the Improvement Programme.
Social Housing	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.

Term	Explanation
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 to facilitate 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 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.

Document Control

Document	**The Oxford Plan 2005-2008**
Owner	**Caroline Bull**
Author	**Helen Rowlands**
Date	**24/08/05**
Review due	**Annually**
Version	**0.2**
Notes	**First draft preparation**

Version No.	Date	Notes
0.1	22/08/05	Text update for 2006-2008
0.2	24/08/05	Document re-structured
0.3	31/08/05	Values section updated following consultation with OMG Culture group