

Chief Executive

# The Oxford Plan 2006-2009

**Oxford City Council's Corporate Plan**

[www.oxford.gov.uk](http://www.oxford.gov.uk)



## 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 to 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.

The Council is presently in No Overall Control, with a minority Administration and it is important that the Oxford Plan is larger than any one political party and that it recognises how the Council may develop in the coming years. The Oxford Plan 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 will also form our Best Value Performance Plan for 2006/2007. As soon as our end of year performance data is available for 2005-2006 we will publish the plan again including this information. This will be done by 30<sup>th</sup> June 2006.

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.

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### **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 consultation <sup>1</sup>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:

- Housing
- Local planning and building control
- Environmental Health
- Electoral Registration
- Refuse collection and recycling
- The Shopmobility scheme
- Collection of Council Tax
- Provision of leisure facilities
- Management of public parks
- Management of markets
- Events such as fairs
- Provision of Tourist Information
- Management of cemeteries
- Collection, on behalf of central government, of Business Rates

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<sup>1</sup> The County Council has responsibility for most roads but Oxford City Council retains responsibility for side streets.

## **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**

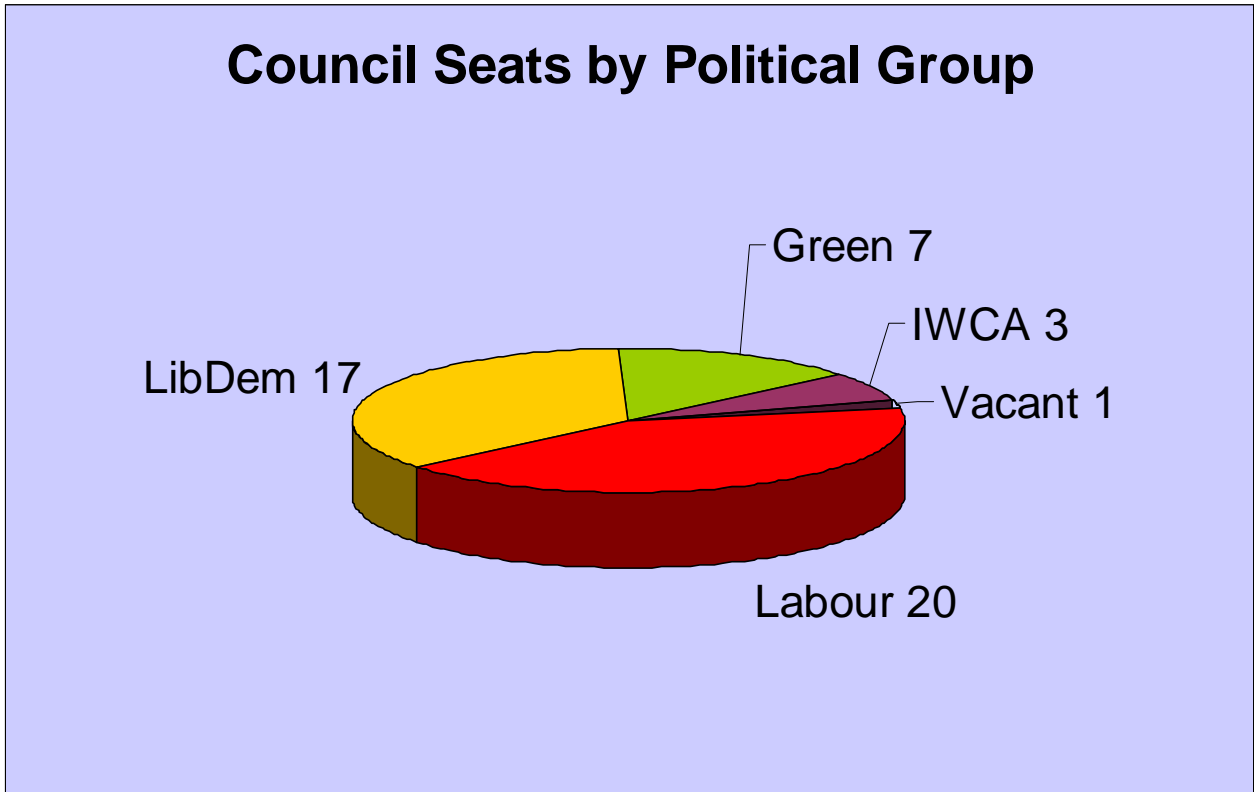
Oxford City Council spends over £113 million a year providing services. Some of this we receive in subsidies and grants from central government and some through the fees, charges and rents we levy, but £9 million has to be funded locally from a share of the Council Tax. Not all of the Council Tax comes 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 £224 of a £1,317 bill for 2005/2006, 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



<sup>2</sup> 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 register.

**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](mailto:elections@oxford.gov.uk).
- Phone 01865 249811 and ask 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 listed below. These are 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 Reference Group and the Housing Advisory Board.

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

- **Full Council** - made up of all the elected members for Oxford City. The Full Council decides on policies, priorities and budgets and elects the Executive Board members.
- The **Executive Board** - a cabinet of councillors and a leader who aim to provide clear and accountable leadership.
- Six **Area Committees** - covering different parts of the city these have some devolved powers and budgets to provide focus on community issues.
- **Scrutiny Committees** – made up of members not on the Executive Board to 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 and the above boards and committees can be found as follows:

- Visit our website at <http://www.oxford.gov.uk/council/who-represents.cfm>
- E-mail [jskip@oxford.gov.uk](mailto:jskip@oxford.gov.uk).
- Phone 01865 249811 and ask for Committee Services.



The Executive is the decision-making body of the Council. 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

<b>Member</b>	<b>Portfolio</b>
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
Ed Turner	Strategic Planning, Housing and Economic Development
Maureen Christian	Portfolio yet to be advised
Alan Armitage	Liberal Democrat Opposition
Matt Sellwood	Green Opposition

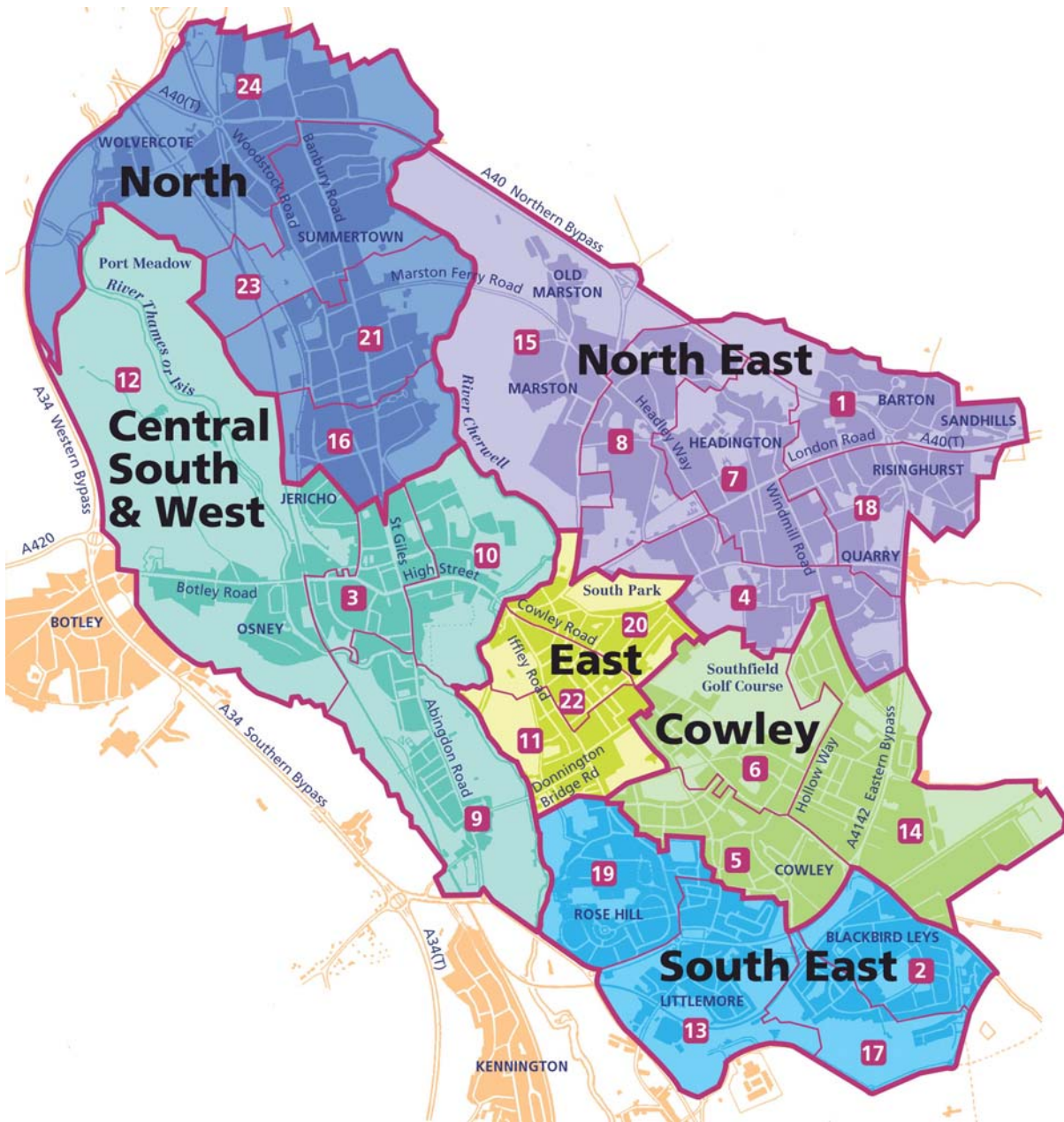
### 2.4.3 More about Area Committees

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

<b>Area Committee</b>	<b>Name of Chair</b>	<b>Wards Represented</b>
<b>North</b>	Jim Campbell	Summertown (23), Wolvercote (24), St. Margaret's (21) and North (16)
<b>North East</b>	Tony Gray & David Rundle	Marston (15), Headington Hill & Northway (8), Headington (7), Barton & Sandhills (1), Quarry & Risinghurst (18) and Churchill (4).
<b>East</b>	Craig Simmons	St. Clement's (20), St. Mary's (22) and Iffley Fields (11)
<b>South East</b>	Gill Sanders	Rose Hill & Iffley (19), Littlemore (13), Blackbird Leys (2) and Northfield Brook (17)
<b>Central, South &amp; West</b>	Susanna Pressel	Jericho & Osney (12), Carfax (3), Holywell (10) and Hinksey Park (9)
<b>Cowley</b>	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 Thames Valley 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 ask 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 four scrutiny committees and one sub-committee that focus on different aspects of the Council's work.

- Finance
- Housing
- Community
- Environment
- Health (Sub-committee)

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:

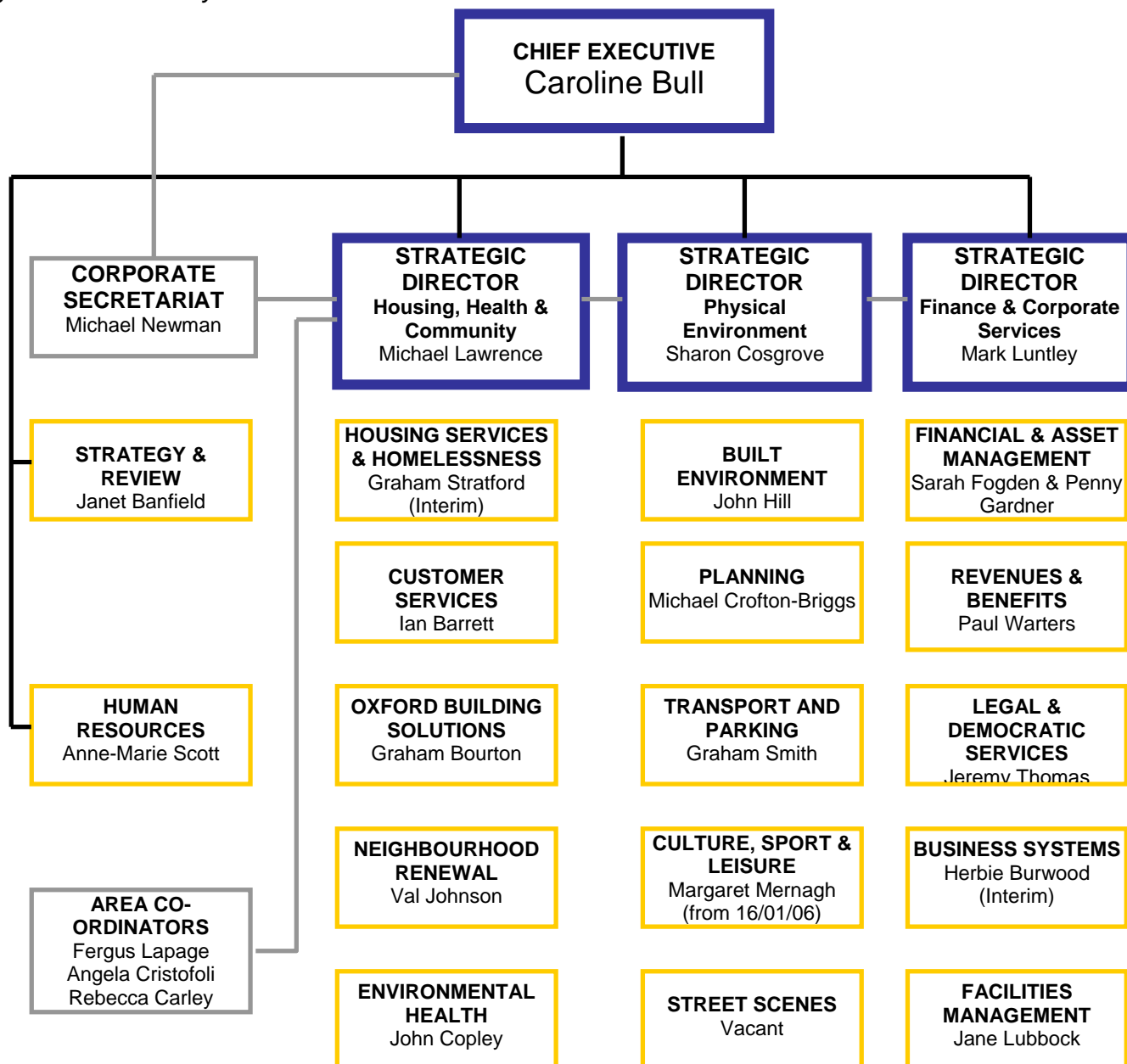
- Visit our website at <http://www.oxford.gov.uk/council/meeting-diary.cfm>
- Phone 01865 249811 and ask for Democratic Services Team.
- Copies of agendas and minutes can also be found at libraries, the Town Hall, Local Services Shops and a range of community organisations.

## 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, fifteen 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



## **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 the law says we have to deliver (our statutory services), such as providing housing, processing benefit claims and collecting domestic waste.
- Those things that we 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 improving our corporate governance arrangements.

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

- The financial resources available
- External pressures that the authority needs to respond to. Currently these include rising expectations of quality of life, the environmental and financial implications of climate change, an increase in single adult households and new technology that gives us opportunities to communicate and provide services in new ways..
- 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 as preparing well for these improves our chances of success. We know, for example, that the government's Comprehensive Performance Assessment regime will in future focus on value for money and our use of partnerships far more to determine how our Council is rated.
- The political environment at the time. When elections draw near there is increasing pressure on members to deliver actions that are popular with the electorate, to increase their chances of being re-elected.

Members have to make decision and set priorities within a complex set of aims and objectives, within limited money, a changing inspection regime and sensitive political relationships.

Section 3.1 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. Section 3.2 outlines the priorities that the Council has adopted for the coming three years in relation to service delivery and Section 3.3 outlines 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. The Community Strategy commits us to developing Oxford's environmental, economic and social life, and contributing to a positive and sustainable future by: maintaining high and stable levels of economic activity and employment; ensuring social progress that recognises the needs of everyone, and promotes equity and diversity; minimising our impact on the natural and built through maintenance, protection and enhancement and prudent use of natural resources.

This focus on sustainability has led to five key themes that underpin the actions of the Oxford Strategic Partnership. These are:

- **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

### 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 by improving 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 reviewed our priorities as a result of consultation with the people of Oxford during 2005. As a result a cross-party group of councillors met and agreed seven priorities.

#### **Our priorities are:**

- Reduce inequality through social inclusion
- More housing for Oxford, better housing for all
- Improve the quality of our environment
- Reduce and prevent crime and antis-social behaviour
- Become a leader in environmental resource management
- Ensure more efficient and improved services
- Be an open, intelligent and responsive organisation

Within these priorities, we are working to incorporate the sustainability principles of the Community Strategy.



### 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 outside pressures**

There are many things that we want to achieve for the city of Oxford, both as an individual council and as a member of the Oxford Strategic Partnership, however, there are also outside pressures that influence what we prioritise.

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

- The changing nature of households, which may affect housing need, with an increase in single-people households, people having families later in life and an increase in same sex partnerships.
- Technological advances bring new opportunities for communication and a wider range of ways for people to access our services so we must be flexible in how our services are delivered.
- The environmental and financial results of climate change. As a city with many waterways there is an increased flood risk and resulting insurance issues.
- People now expect a higher quality of life and higher service standards than in the past. This places more pressure on us to deliver more services, higher quality services and, at the same time, lower cost services.

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

- Councils are now expected to work with private business to help deliver services.
- Inspection regimes that focus 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, unitary, authorities (all services delivered by one council). At the moment we do not know if this will happen or what form it would take.

Regardless of what we may want to deliver for Oxford, we must make sure that we can respond well to external challenge and assessment. We must therefore balance the desire to achieve our ambitions with the need to respond to social changes and government assessment.

The Oxford Plan outlines how we intend to realise 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 these priorities and to help us refine them. For example, when we asked business representatives to prioritise our services more people thought that improving community activities was less importance, but the workshops for residents of Oxford, Councillors and representatives from partner organisations, community activities were universally seen as of high importance. Oxford City Council's elected members now judge the importance that will be placed on this 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 ask for our Consultation Officer
- E-mail [consultation@oxford.gov.uk](mailto:consultation@oxford.gov.uk)

### 3.1.6 Linking Priorities to Plans

Our agreed priorities are set out in several key documents. These key documents are:

- **Oxford's Community Strategy** – 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. The Community Strategy 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 Unit Plans** – each of our service areas or Business Units produce 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 in the BUPs 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. 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 citywide.
- **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



The Community Strategy is developed with the Oxford Strategic Partnership

Our current Vision was set by the political administration and agreed by Council in 2001

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 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 what we do.** 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.
- **Improving how we do it.** 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 aims 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 key improvement aims.

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**

**OUR PRIORITIES**

**Improving performance**

**&**

**Working with others to deliver shared goals**

**Improving what we do**

**Improving how we do it**

Reduce poverty and social exclusion

More housing for Oxford, better housing for all

Improve the quality of the environment

Reduce and prevent crime and anti-social behaviour

Become a leader in environmental resource management

Ensure more efficient and improved services

Be an open and responsive organisation

## **3.2 Priorities - What We Do**

The Council has many responsibilities. Some of them relate to things that we must do (statutory services) while others involve activities that we as a council want to achieve. The priorities contained within this section are those that we most want to improve. 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. Instead they highlight the priorities that the Council feels it needs to focus on in order to improve, whether on the basis of consultation feedback, inspection and assessment results, or political preference.

The priorities for what we do and the services we deliver are:

- Reducing inequalities through social inclusion
- More and better housing for all
- Improving the quality of the environment in our city's neighbourhoods
- Reducing and preventing crime and anti-social behaviour
- Becoming a leader in environmental resource management



### 3.2.1 Reduce inequalities through social inclusion

**We believe that building social inclusion is fundamental to local government work. We want to support the development of strong, cohesive communities where diversity is valued and where opportunities to engage with the community and with the Council are inclusive.**

**This corporate priority links to:**

- The Community Strategy theme of opportunities for life
- The Community Strategy theme for a vibrant and inclusive economy
- The Improvement Plan aim to reduce poverty and social exclusion
- The Improvement Plan aim to develop and implement the Council's Equality policy

We recognise the need to build strong communities and will support development of culturally and economically diverse, cohesive communities by: facilitating or supporting community based cultural and recreational activities for all age groups; promoting healthy lifestyles; life skills and basic skills; supporting projects that empower communities and engaging with communities to increase participation in Council decision-making.

Oxford City Council seeks to secure economic prosperity for the city and its residents. A strong, sustainable local economy means good long-term job prospects for the people of Oxford, increasing standards of living and improving health. It can help provide work, enhance our status as a centre for tourism and increase our trade as a major shopping centre. We also want to maintain investment in our world-class local economy, ensuring that big businesses continue to want to invest in Oxford and 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. Many of our services contribute to reducing the inequalities that exist in our society and to supporting people within our communities. 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. Through our Area Investment Plan we are also focusing attention on education, skills and training as a means of increasing skill and wage levels.

Oxford is widely accepted as a diverse multi-cultural community and our 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 their background. Unfortunately social data shows that this is not always the case. This tendency to think that equality and diversity is not an issue for Oxford was borne out by recent

consultation where most people considered equalities work low priority as they did not perceive the city to have problems of this sort. We recognise that participants in consultation are often those who are socially, economically and politically most engaged and believe that we need to be more proactive in engaging other members of our community as well. We particularly wish to engage more effectively with black and ethnic minority communities and people with disabilities.

The Council will 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 and by progressing through the nationally agreed Equality Standard for local government<sup>3</sup>.

**We have:**

- 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 for three years to the 'Closing the Gap' strategy to help provide training to people within the more economically deprived areas of the city in skills that are in high demand and low supply in Oxford. In doing this we aim to reduce the inequality in income and skill levels between the most and least well off areas of the city.
- Helped empower local communities with increased funding for local projects such as the Regeneration Arc, a community project forum
- Achieved our target of reaching Level 2 of the Equalities Standard and are ready to seek external validation of reaching Level 3. \*
- 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. \*

**We will:**

- Tackle and reduce homelessness
- Seek to sustain the city's economic status and success
- Increase the economic benefits that the city realises from visitors
- Support development of culturally and economically diverse, cohesive communities
- Progress through the Equalities Standards
- Work to improve the employee profile of the Council so that it better reflects that of the local community
- Liaise with representatives of black and ethnic minority communities and people with disabilities to find ways to better engage with them in future consultation work.

*\* March 2006 target outcome*

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<sup>3</sup> The Equalities Standard was developed by the Commission for Race Equality, the Disability Rights Commission, the Equal Opportunities Commission and the Employers Organisation for local government to ensure equality of access, service delivery and representation for all.

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
- Human Resources
- Neighbourhood Renewal
- Revenues and Benefits

The strategic documents of greatest relevance to this priority are:

- Community Strategy
- Economic Development Strategy
- Tourism Strategy
- Equalities Policy

### 3.2.2 More housing for Oxford, better housing for all

**Housing is a key priority for Oxford and we will work to secure sustainable solutions to Oxford's need for more housing. We also recognise our responsibility to work with landlords to increase the quality of private sector housing and that we must achieve improvements to our own housing stock.**

**This corporate priority links to:**

- The Community Strategy objective to improve the supply and condition of affordable housing in Oxford, part of its theme for a better living environment
- The Improvement Plan aim to increase the quantity and quality of affordable housing in all sectors

High housing costs can threaten the sustainability of communities and result in the break-up of extended families. They also impact on costs for business and delivery of public services as they contribute to local difficulties 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 much larger cities. Consultation on the priorities for the Oxford Plan revealed that achieving solutions to Oxford's housing need was of the greatest importance across all the audiences that were consulted. This finding is supported by previous consultation exercises.

Oxford City Council's role as landlord is one of our major functions and the Council has recently 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.

**We have:**

- Provided 150 new social housing units during 2005/2006\*
- Carried out a Registered Social Landlord and housing procurement review to find out how we can increase capacity and partnership working to help us provide 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 review of 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 of 50% affordable housing on new developments to help increase provision of affordable housing in the city. \*
- Extended the discretionary homes in multiple occupation licensing regime to a registration of 750 properties, increasing the number of homes improved \*\*\*
- In accordance with the Oxford Local Plan we have built 338 houses in Oxford this year \*

*\*March 2006 target outcome*

*\*\* December 2005 target outcome*

*\*\*\* Outcome now timetables for April 2006 in-line with revised government timetable*

**We will:**

- Find sustainable solutions to Oxford's need for more housing
  - Maintain and improve the provision of social housing units
  - Ensure the ongoing provision of good quality homes across all sectors
- Develop the Homes in Multiple Occupation (HMO) licensing scheme

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

### 3.2.3 Improve the quality of the environment

**We will work to improve the quality of our city centre environment and the environment in our communities and neighbourhoods. We will work to make Oxford a cleaner city and in areas where pollution is a problem we will work to reduce it. The buildings of Oxford form a key part of the city's identity and we will work to enhance the built environment in both the city centre and our community neighbourhoods.**

**This corporate priority links to:**

- The Community Strategy theme of a better living environment
- The Improvement Plan aim to improve the quality of our 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 during 2005 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 that our priority should be one of maintenance rather than further investment.

**We have:**

- Made 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\*

**We will:**

- Reduce pollution
- Improve street cleansing

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



### 3.2.4 Reduce and prevent crime and anti-social behaviour

**We will continue to work with the Oxford Safer Communities Partnership on reducing crime, anti-social behaviour and the fear of crime.**

**This corporate priority links to:**

- The Community Strategy theme for safer communities
- The Improvement Plan aim to reduce crime and anti-social behaviour

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. Consultation during 2005 on the priorities for the Oxford Plan identified tackling crime and antisocial behaviour as one of the most important priorities that we can deliver in partnership with others, with concern concentrated on anti-social behaviour. 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:**

- Signed-up 19 pubs and clubs to the Oxford Nightsafe campaign to reduce binge drinking, violent crime and anti-social behaviour around licensed premises in the city centre
- Worked with partners on 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 of crime and antisocial behaviour and developed a new strategy to tackle the main areas of concern, which will be implemented with the Oxford Safer Communities Partnership
- Reduced car crime by introducing security patrols and CCTV at car parks.
- Worked with the police to reduce crime and the fear of crime by providing increased security for victims of burglary and domestic violence in their homes
- Targeted premises being used for the dealing and consumption of Class A drugs through our CANAcT team and closed them as a result.

*\* March 2006 target outcome*

**We will:**

- Work with Thames Valley Police to implement neighborhood policing in Oxford city.
- Extend the existing Street Warden scheme
- Help fund an additional 8 Police Community Support Officers over the next three years
- Monitor and review licensing enforcement needs for 2007/2008
- Implement the new three-year Community Safety Strategy with the Safer Communities Partnership to achieve our targets for crime reduction\*

\* See below

**By 2008 Oxford's Safer Communities Partnership aims to:**

- Reduce anti-social behaviour such as drunken, rowdy behaviour, aggressive begging, conflicts between neighbours and intimidation by groups of teenagers hanging around
- Reduce violent assault by 20%
- Reduce robbery by 20%
- Increase reporting of racial, homophobic and domestic crime. Increased reporting of these crimes helps identify problem areas and trigger provision of support to victims.
- Reduce burglary of peoples homes by 25%
- Reduce repeat victims of burglary by 40%
- Reduce car crime by 20%

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
- Neighbourhood Renewal
- Planning
- Environmental Health

The strategic documents of greatest relevance to this priority are:

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

### 3.2.5 Become a leader in environmental resource management

**The Council will extend its recycling scheme, work towards greater home energy efficiency and aim to reduce both the Council's and the city's ecological footprint in order to make a positive contribution to tackling climate change.**

**This corporate priority links to:**

- The Community Strategy theme of a better living environment
- The Improvement Plan aim to improve the quality of our environment
- Oxford Local Plan 2001-2006

Oxford has the potential to become a leader in environmental resource management, through its local expertise, political drive, and compact geography. Current initiatives within the City Council, such as planning guidance, increasing kerbside recycling, promotion of energy efficiency measures, work to reduce fuel poverty, and movement towards sustainable procurement, have created an opportunity for positive environmental change within the city. However, much more can be done.

The Oxford Local Plan 2001-2016 contains policies that seek to promote energy conservation, renewable energy and use of recycled materials within new building development. The Council requires all larger planning applications to include a Natural Resource Impact Analysis (NRIA), which provides information about these issues. A Supplementary Planning Document is being produced by the City Council to advise developers on how to prepare NRIA's.

With kerbside recycling now including white goods collection and a pilot garden waste scheme, recycling rates have been increasing in Oxford. However we want to do more and consultation during 2005 showed consistently high levels of support for doing more to increase recycling.

The Oxford Solar Initiative has worked to connect residents with fuel efficiency and alternative energy information and promote its use, as well as to reduce rates of fuel poverty within the city. Local authorities have a critical role to play in energy demand management and reducing carbon footprints. Oxford City Council has recently developed an Oxford Climate Change Action Plan, which provides an emissions inventory for Oxford that will act as a benchmark against which further work can be measured. The key actions in this plan will help mitigate climate change impact both locally and globally.

The Council aims to work with others to build a sustainable and diverse local economy. One way in which it can do this is through sustainable procurement. As a provider of a wide range of services it is a significant local purchaser of goods and services. As a community leader, the Council will continue to improve its performance on sustainable procurement, working with suppliers and building awareness across the city of the impact procurement decisions have on the environment.

**We have:**

- Completed an Oxford City Council Procurement Strategy that includes recommendations on Sustainable Procurement.
- Implemented garden waste recycling in 13,500 homes across Oxford.
- Developed an Oxford Climate Change Action Plan, which includes a carbon emissions inventory for the City.
- Provided financial support to an international conference on renewable energy, to be held in Oxford in 2006.

**We will:**

- Expand kerbside recycling
- Continue efforts to reduce fuel poverty, promote alternative energy sources and maximise fuel efficiency
- Reduce energy use in our business premises and public buildings
- Produce a Supplementary Planning Guidance on Natural Resource Impact Analysis
- Work with our suppliers to help ensure sustainable practices throughout the supply chain.

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
- Planning
- Strategy & Review
- 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 Priorities - How We Do It**

The priorities outlined in sections in 3.2 related to the services that we deliver, the following focus 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 3.3.1 to 3.3.2) are about ensuring we have efficient business practices and that staff skills are kept up-to-date in order to deliver service improvements, respond to changing customer needs and provide efficiency savings wherever possible.

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.

The improvement priorities in this section are:

- Ensuring better, more efficient services
- Being an open, intelligent and responsive organisation

### 3.3.1 Ensure more efficient and improved services

**The Council will continue to work to provide improved services and to provide them more efficiently. We will manage our use of resources more effectively, make our processes more efficient and seek to achieve better value for money for the people of Oxford. Where appropriate we will work in partnership to achieve these aims. We will strengthen monitoring and management of our own performance and that of our partnerships.**

**This corporate priority links to:**

- 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
- The Improvement Plan aim to embed performance management and effective governance across the Council
- The Improvement Plan aim to develop partnerships with an agreed long-term vision for the city
- The Improvement Plan aim to improve financial capacity and performance

Effective performance management is crucial if we are to improve our services. 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. 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. We are making progress to ensure that effective performance management is part of daily life in the Council in order to drive service improvement.

Historically, local authorities have been individual providers of services, but there is an increasing expectation that local authorities should work in partnership with other organisations rather than in isolation. Partnership working is also a key area for inspection in the new Comprehensive Performance Assessment regime. Oxfordshire is a pilot for the second round of Local Area Agreements, which seek to integrate the services of various organisations to improve performance on identified common goals. The Council recognises that we can often achieve more in partnership than we can on our own, and we will work with all our partners to try to deliver seamless joined-up services.

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. Achieving efficiencies will become increasingly important to enable the Council to improve its services and take on new responsibilities.

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.

As providers of public services, it is vital for local authorities to have good systems of governance. These are the structures, processes and procedures through which we work, assigning responsibility and accountability, and cover issues such as risk management, financial systems and decision-making powers. We need to strengthen and embed our governance arrangements both internally and in terms of how we govern our involvement in partnerships.

**We have:**

- 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
- 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
- Commenced training in tools and techniques for continuous improvement throughout the Council. \*
- 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. \*
- Begun a programme to improve the governance arrangements for our involvement in major partnerships
- 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.
- Carried out xxx\*\* Best Value Reviews expected to achieve £XXX\*\* of savings
- Delivered basic financial training to all Business Managers and interested Councillors. \*

\* March 2006 target outcome

\*\* Data to be added as soon as available at end of year

**We will:**

- Establish capacity and skill levels in business units, management and council members for leadership, performance management and governance and we will provide training or on-site support where needed
- Continue training in tools and techniques for continuous improvement throughout the Council
- Use value for money information to identify possible areas for service improvement or efficiency savings
- Further develop the role of public consultation, governance and risk issues in identifying key corporate priorities and focussing resources accordingly.
- Continue to target areas of poor performance identified through government's Best Value Performance Indicators.
- Ensure that 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.
- Improve debt recovery
- Develop our performance monitoring software – CorVu – to permit individual staff and their managers secure access to their personal development plans on our intranet during 2006/2007 and in the longer term develop the system to link with ad map Learning and Development needs identified through appraisal.

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
- Finance and Asset Management
- Revenues and Benefits

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
- Community Strategy
- Community Safety Strategy 2005-2008



### 3.3.2 Be an open, intelligent and responsive organisation

**We want the Council to be an intelligent organisation that is open to changing customer needs and able to respond positively to them. We will build our capacity to do this by helping our staff and Councillors maximise their potential. Our services will be driven by the needs of the people of Oxford and we will improve consultation and opportunities for people to engage with the Council.**

#### **This corporate priority links to:**

- 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.
- The Improvement Plan aim to enhance customer focus
- The Improvement Plan aim to build capacity by investing in our staff and councillors

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 open and responsive means much more than taking a sounding of people's priorities every few years through the ballot box. As well as consulting on major issues to seek opinions to help guide our service development, we also need to be open to comment, challenge and criticism, both individually (as officers and councillors) and collectively as an authority. We need to invite people to have their say and contribute to ongoing discussion of our priorities and the way we do business. We need to listen to the points people make and we need to respond intelligently and effectively to move the authority forwards. We welcome challenge and we will respond constructively to all challenge to ensure that we become a more open, intelligent and responsive organisation.

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. We must also provide Councillors with the opportunity to learn about the legislation that governs and restricts many of the

diverse aspects of the Council's work. Councillors can best represent the views of the people of Oxford and drive the improvements and changes people expect to see if they are also given the opportunity to strengthen their political and leadership skills.

**We have:**

- Significantly increased staff satisfaction with the Council as an employer.
- 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.
- Completed the Customer Relationship Management (CRM) Pilot in City Works; allowing them to track their street cleansing work and enabling new technologies such as mobile working.
- Developed our telephone contact services 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.
- Run a series of very successful events attracting over 100 small and local businesses giving them the opportunity to meet buyers from City and County Councils, Thames Valley Police, the NHS, Ministry of Defence and other local public sector organisations to help them access public sector markets by increasing their understanding of how the public sector procures goods and services

*\* March 2006 target outcome*

**We will:**

- Develop and embed Investors in People principles in all business units
- Continue working to improve staff satisfaction with the Council as an employer in order to improve recruitment and retention of staff
- Encourage business units to share good management practice across the authority.  
E.g. through our corporate Coaching and Mentoring Programme
- Improve customer contact practices
- Increase customer satisfaction
- Continue to work with focus groups, using existing surveys and the 2006 General Satisfaction Survey when conducted, 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 this unit and the resources allocated to its work can be found in the relevant sections of the Budget Book.

- Customer Services
- Strategy and Review
- Human Resources

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

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

## **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 accurately. 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 Reference Group. 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 Reference Group does not take decisions on behalf of the Council, but it does advise the Executive Board.
- We 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, in 2004 we were advised that we must improve how we manage our finances, how we monitor performance, how we make decisions and how we manage risks. We believe that we have made good progress with these areas and await our next audit letter, which is expected in December 2005.
- The Audit Commission's Comprehensive Performance Assessment Team monitors progress with our 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

Performance is measured from one financial year to the next. That for the last complete financial year, 2004-2005, is summarised below.

Since our CPA report, released June 2004, performance has improved across the range of Best Value Performance Indicators, (BVPIs). We now have only seven indicators 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 increased the number of indicators that are above average and better and decreased the number that are below average and worse.

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

#### 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 a 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.

#### Improved - Collecting Council Rent

Rent collection achieved in 2004/2005 was 97.40%, exceeding our target and a clear improvement on the 2003/2004 figures of 95.85%. This is the best result we have ever achieved for rent collection 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.

### **Improved - 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.

### **Improved - 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.

### **Improved - 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 made minor applications determined within 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.

### **Improved - 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.

### **Improved - 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 unit outlining actions that they 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.

### **Improved - 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 than average when compared to other district 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 we 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 showed 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 20<sup>th</sup> showed 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 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](mailto:improvement@oxford.gov.uk)

### 4.3 Corporate Risk Assessment

Significant work has been undertaken to identify key corporate risks. In 2004-05 a corporate risk assessment based on best practice methodologies was developed. This has been developed in 2005-2006 to produce a Corporate Risk Register, which outlines what those risks are, the nature and scale of their potential impacts, and the likelihood of them occurring.

Risks identified in the register include:

- Failure to produce and fund a capital programme
- Failure to deliver services within budget
- Failure to deliver the CPA improvement programme
- Failure to recruit and retain appropriately skilled staff
- Failure to meet new statutory requirements

The impacts of these risks may include:

- Missed opportunities
- Management distraction
- Service disruption
- Impaired performance
- Breach of contract
- Loss of assets
- Government intervention
- Financial cost
- Damaged reputation
- Injury and/or death
- Inefficiency
- Strategy change

For each risk that has been identified the Risk Register also outlines potential causes of the risk, evaluates a series of options to manage and minimise that risk, and details the specific actions that the Council will take to minimise the chances of the risk occurring and to minimise the impact it will have if its occurrence cannot be prevented.

Actions are assigned to individual officers and elected Members and timescales, early warning indicators and monitoring systems are described.

Each action is monitored to ensure that it is done. The Risk Register is reviewed and revised quarterly, to make sure that it remains current and effective.

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 are then prioritised. The steps necessary to manage those risks are then 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.



## **Oxford Plan 2006-2009 Performance Monitoring Framework**

The existing Oxford Plan Monitoring Framework will be updated and incorporated here when conclusion of budget setting allows determines resources and therefore allows the development of specific target outcomes and delivery dates

### BEST VALUE PERFORMANCE INDICATOR TABLES

End of year results for 2005/2006 and targets for 2008/2009 will be incorporated into the table below as soon as they are available and a second publication of the plan containing them issued by 30<sup>th</sup> June 2006

BVPI and Description	Results 03/04	Results 04/05	Results 05/06	Target 05/06	04/05 Performance Relative to Other Councils	Target 06/07	Target 07/08	Target 08/09	Best Districts Nationally <sup>4</sup>
<b>BV 002a</b> The level (if any) of the Equality standard for local government to which the authority conforms	None	Level 1		Level 3		Level 3	Level 4		
BV 002b The duty to promote race equality (Score against checklist)	16%	46%		60%	Above Average	75%	100%		55%
<b>BV 008</b> Invoices for commercial goods and services which were paid by the authority within 30 days of such invoices being received by the authority	87.92%	90.55%		93.08% <sup>5</sup>	Worst	94.49%	96.74%		96.74%
<b>BV 009</b> Council Tax collected	95.41%	94.87%		98.50%	Worst	98.50%	98.50%		98.50%

<sup>4</sup> Based on latest data available at the time for UK, this is currently the 03/04 data

<sup>5</sup> 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. This target will need to be reviewed when the new national performance tables are published (usually December/January).

BVPI and Description	Results 03/04	Results 04/05	Results 05/06	Target 05/06	04/05 Performance Relative to Other Councils	Target 06/07	Target 07/08	Target 08/09	Best Districts Nationally <sup>4</sup>
<b>BV 010</b> Non-domestic rates due for the financial year, which were received by the authority	98.74%	98.79%		99.12%	Above Average	99.12%	99.12%		99.12%
BV 011a The percentage of top 5% earners that are women	29.89%	29.19%		29.89%	Best	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	1.17%	0.00%		1.48%	Above Average	2.20%	3.00%		2.20%
<b>BV 012</b> The number of working days/shifts lost due to sickness absence	11.71	10.18		8.93%	Above Average	8.93%	8.93%		8.93
BV 014 Employees retiring early (excluding ill-health retirements) as a percentage of the total work force	0.07%	0.49%		0.14%	Below Average	0.14%	0.14%		0.14%
BV 015 Employees retiring on grounds of ill health as a percentage of the total workforce	0.07%	0.07%		0.00%	Above Average	0.00%	0.00%		0.00%
BV016a The percentage of local authority employees declaring that they meet the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 disability definition	1.51%	1.37%		3.00%		5.00%	7.00%		4.11%
BV 016b <sup>6</sup> Percentage of the economically active disabled people in the local authority area	10.45%	10.45%	10.45%						15.09%

<sup>6</sup> This data is based on the 2001 Census

BVPI and Description	Results 03/04	Results 04/05	Results 05/06	Target 05/06	04/05 Performance Relative to Other Councils	Target 06/07	Target 07/08	Target 08/09	Best Districts Nationally <sup>4</sup>
<b>BV 016a*100/BV 016b</b> <b>Proximity of disabled community representation within employees to that of local community</b>	14.45%	13.11%		28.7%	Worst	34.6%	48.4%		39.33% <sup>7</sup>
BV 017a (AMENDED 05/06) The percentage of local authority employees from ethnic minority communities	6.4%	6.4%		7.0%		8.0%	9.0%		2.4%
BV 017b <sup>8</sup> (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%	12.80%						3.4%
<b>BV 017a*100/BV 017b (AMENDED 05/06)</b> <b>Proximity of economically active minority ethnic community representation within employees to that of the local community</b>	50.04%	49.76%		54.8%	Best	62.7%	70.5%		26.56% <sup>9</sup>
BV 063 (AMENDED 05/06) Energy Efficiency – the average SAP rating of local authority-owned dwellings	66	67		68	Best	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%		1.4%		2.8%	2.8%		
<b>BV 066a (AMENDED 05/06)</b> <b>Local authority rent collection (percentage)</b>	95.85%	97.39%		98.20%	Below Average	98.70%	99.00%		98.60%

<sup>7</sup> Figures based on top quartile authority for BV16a against the Oxford City population for 16b

<sup>8</sup> This data is based on the 2001 Census

<sup>9</sup> Figures based on top quartile authority for BV17a against the Oxford City population 17b

BVPI and Description	Results 03/04	Results 04/05	Results 05/06	Target 05/06	04/05 Performance Relative to Other Councils	Target 06/07	Target 07/08	Target 08/09	Best Districts Nationally <sup>4</sup>
BV 074a Percentage satisfaction of LA tenants with overall service of landlord	639 73% +/- 4%				(Worst)	78%			85%
BV 075a Percentage of council tenants satisfied with opportunities participation in decision-making in relation to housing services	533 50% +/- 4%				(Worst)	63%			70%
BV 076a <sup>10</sup> The number of claimants visited, per 1,000 caseload	112.11	176.00		179.03	Below Average	179.03	179.03		304.00
BV 076b The number of fraud investigators employed, per 1,000 caseload	0.28	0.38		0.38	Above Average	0.38	0.38		0.48
BV 076c The number of fraud investigations, per 1,000 caseload	58.62	57.18		62.20	Above Average	62.20	62.20		61.70
BV 076d The number of prosecutions and sanctions per year, per 1,000 caseload	3.29	5.32		5.26	Above Average	5.26	5.26		5.83
<b>BV 078a</b> <b>Speed of processing new claims to HB/CTB (Average number of days)</b>	<b>55.6</b>	<b>33.5</b>		<b>30.0</b>	<b>Above Average</b>	<b>28.0</b>	<b>28.0</b>		<b>31.0</b>
<b>BV 078b</b> <b>Speed of processing changes of circumstance in HB/CTB (Average number of days)</b>	<b>28.3</b>	<b>16.9</b>		<b>12.0</b>	<b>Worst</b>	<b>10.0</b>	<b>8.0</b>		<b>7.2</b>

<sup>10</sup> 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 03/04	Results 04/05	Results 05/06	Target 05/06	04/05 Performance Relative to Other Councils	Target 06/07	Target 07/08	Target 08/09	Best Districts Nationally <sup>4</sup>
<b>BV 079a</b> <b>Accuracy of processing HB/CTB claims</b>	93.20%	93.40%		95.00%	<b>Worst</b>	96.00%	97.00%		99.00%
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% <sup>11</sup>		98.75%	99.00%		
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%		
<b>BV 082a(i) (AMENDED 05/06)</b> <b>Household waste recycled (percentage of total tonnage)</b>	14.72%	14.06%		18.00%	<b>Above Average</b>	19.00%	21.00%		16.86%
BV 082b(i) (AMENDED 05/06) Household Waste composted (Percentage of total tonnage)	0.00%	0.75%		4.00%	<b>Below Average</b>	4.00%	10.00%		5.14%

<sup>11</sup> 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 03/04	Results 04/05	Results 05/06	Target 05/06	04/05 Performance Relative to Other Councils	Target 06/07	Target 07/08	Target 08/09	Best Districts Nationally <sup>4</sup>
BV 084a (AMENDED 05/06) Household waste collected (kg per head)	333.6	323.7			Best				371.7
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)	£42.92	£57.13		£54.00		£54.00	£54.00		Average LA £39.18
BV 091a & b (AMENDED 05/06) Percentage of population resident in the authority's area which are served by a kerbside collection of recyclables	97.2%	99.0%			Above Average				100.0%
BV 106 New homes built on previously developed land (Percentage of total new builds)	95.00%	99.85%		90.00%	Best	90.00%	90.00%		86.00%
<b>BV 109a</b> <b>Percentage of planning applications determined in line with the government's new development control targets to determine 60% of major applications in 13 weeks</b>	<b>29.00%</b>	<b>51.00%</b>		<b>57.00%</b>	<b>Below Average</b>	<b>60.00%</b>	<b>60.00%</b>		<b>63.58%</b>
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%	73.00%		70.00%	Best	70.00%	70.00%		71.00%

BVPI and Description	Results 03/04	Results 04/05	Results 05/06	Target 05/06	04/05 Performance Relative to Other Councils	Target 06/07	Target 07/08	Target 08/09	Best Districts Nationally <sup>4</sup>
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	81.00%	80.00%		82.00%	Above Average	82.00%	82.00%		86.00%
BV 126 Domestic burglaries (Per 1,000 households)	25.70	18.40		21.21 <sup>12</sup>		19.96	18.71		
BV 127a (NEW 05/06) Violent crimes per 1000 population				23.25 <sup>13</sup>		20.93	18.60		
BV 127b (NEW 05/06) Robberies per 1,000 population				0.18 <sup>14</sup>		0.17	0.15		
BV 128 (AMENDED 05/06) The number of vehicle crimes per year, per 1,000 population in the Local Authority Area	19.20	15.50		16.80 <sup>15</sup>		15.54	14.45		
BV 156 Building accessibility (As percentage of LA public buildings)	43.00%	75.75%		91.00%	Best	100.00%	100.00%		67.00%

<sup>12</sup> Figures based on Safer and Stronger Communities fund statement of agreed outcomes 2005/06 -2007/08

<sup>13</sup> Figures based on 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

<sup>14</sup> Figures based on Safer and Stronger Communities fund statement of agreed outcomes 2005/06 -2007/08

<sup>15</sup> Figures based on Safer and Stronger Communities fund statement of agreed outcomes 2005/06 -2007/08

BVPI and Description	Results 03/04	Results 04/05	Results 05/06	Target 05/06	04/05 Performance Relative to Other Councils	Target 06/07	Target 07/08	Target 08/09	Best Districts Nationally <sup>4</sup>
<b>BV 157</b> 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	69.00%	76.12%		100.00%	Best	100.00%	100.00%		72.00%
BV 164 Commission for Racial Equality's code of practice in rented housing	No	No		Yes		Yes	Yes		32% answer YES
BV 166a Environmental health best practice score	62.0%	70.0%		70.0%	Below Average	76.0%	76.0%		90.00%
BV 170a (AMENDED 05/06) Usage of museums (per 1,000 of population)	610	500		605 <sup>16</sup>	Above Average	605	605		670
BV 170b (AMENDED 05/06) Visits in person to museums (per 1,000 of population)	163	148		160	Above Average	160	160		427
BV 170c (AMENDED 05/06) Number of pupils in organised visits to museums	2,056	2,131		2,146	Above Average	2,146	2,146		2,754
BV 174 Racial incidents (per 100,000 of population)	7.90	20.37		24.58		35.12	45.66		
BV 175 Racial incidents with further action (As a percentage of total incidents)	100.00%	100.00%		100.00%	Best	100.00%	100.00%		100.00%

<sup>16</sup> All museums targets are subject to change as a result of the options review being carried out during 2005/2006

BVPI and Description	Results 03/04	Results 04/05	Results 05/06	Target 05/06	04/05 Performance Relative to Other Councils	Target 06/07	Target 07/08	Target 08/09	Best Districts Nationally <sup>4</sup>
<b>BV 179</b> Percentage of standard searches carried out within 10 days	89.60%	83.39%		90.00%	Worst	92.00%	94.00%		100.00%
BV183a <sup>17</sup> 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)	14.37	16.23		<6.00	Worst	<6.00	<6.00		1
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)	15.10	12.46		<6.00	Below Average	<6.00	<6.00		0
<b>BV 184a</b> The proportion of local authority homes which were non-decent at start of financial year	51%	43%		30%	Below Average	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	15.5%	13.2%		13.2%	Below Average	10.0%	9.0%		26.6%
<b>BV199a</b> Street and environmental cleanliness – litter & detritus	24.5%	22.0%		30.0% <sup>18</sup>	Below Average	27.0%	24.0%		12%

<sup>17</sup> 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

<sup>18</sup> Targets for 05/06 onwards revised due to changes in the definition of this BVPI making it more difficult to achieve

BVPI and Description	Results 03/04	Results 04/05	Results 05/06	Target 05/06	04/05 Performance Relative to Other Councils	Target 06/07	Target 07/08	Target 08/09	Best Districts Nationally <sup>4</sup>
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							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							40% say YES
<b>BV 202 (NEW 04/05)<sup>19</sup></b> <b>The number of people sleeping rough on a single night within the area of the local authority</b>	<b>(7)</b>	<b>7</b>		<b>8</b>		<b>8</b>	<b>8</b>		
<b>BV 203 (NEW 04/05)</b> <b>The percentage change in the average number of families placed in temporary accommodation</b>		<b>+13.81%</b>		<b>-8.00%</b>		<b>-8.00%</b>	<b>-8.00%</b>		
<b>BV 204 (NEW 04/05)</b> <b>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</b>		<b>41.38%</b>		<b>33.0%</b>		<b>33.0%</b>	<b>30.00%</b>		
BV 205 (NEW 04/05) The local authority's score against a 'quality of planning services' checklist		94.4%		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%	100.00%		100.00%	<b>Best</b>	100.00%	100.00%		100.00%

<sup>19</sup> Although this was introduced as a national PI from 2004/2005 the council does hold historic data on this which it can therefore report

Shaded boxes indicate years that odpm did not require measurement against a performance indicator or target setting for an indicator.

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 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> quartiles respectively. Consequently where 'average' has been used this actually refers to the statistical median.

## Appendix 3

### GLOSSARY

Term	Explanation
<b>Affordable Housing</b>	Low cost / subsidised housing available to people who cannot afford to rent or buy homes on the open market.
<b>Alternative Energy</b>	Energy derived from renewable sources that do not use up natural resources or harm the environment.
<b>Audit Commission</b>	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 <a href="http://www.audit-commission.gov.uk">www.audit-commission.gov.uk</a>
<b>Best Value</b>	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.
<b>Best Value Performance Indicators</b>	Statutory performance indicators that all Best Value authorities must collect and publish annually.
<b>Best Value Performance Indicator Surveys</b>	Customer satisfaction surveys carried out in all Best Value authorities
<b>Best Value Performance Plan</b>	Annual service plan reporting on council's performance and setting targets for coming years.
<b>Best Value Review</b>	Model for reviewing provision of local authority services to establish areas for improvement.
<b>Britain in Bloom</b>	National competition organised annually by the Royal Horticultural Society to encourage local communities to take an active interest in caring for their local environment.
<b>Budget Book</b>	Annual publication of council budget figures.
<b>Business Unit Plan</b>	Document outlining the structure, services; objectives and costs of a Business Unit.
<b>Business Process Re-engineering</b>	The strategic analysis of business processes and the planning and implementation of improved business processes.
<b>Business Rates</b>	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.



<b>Term</b>	<b>Explanation</b>
<b>Capacity Building Fund</b>	Funds set aside by central government for local governments to use in order to improve their capacity to effectively deliver services.
<b>Capital Programme</b>	List of spending on major infrastructure projects.
<b>Commission for Racial Equality</b>	A publicly funded, non-governmental body set up to tackle racial discrimination and promote racial equality. For more information visit <a href="http://www.cre.gov.uk/">www.cre.gov.uk/</a>
<b>Community Strategy</b>	Document created by key local players outlining plans to promote and improve the economic, social and environmental well being in Oxford.
<b>Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA)</b>	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 <a href="http://www.audit-commision.gov.uk">www.audit-commision.gov.uk</a>
<b>Constitution</b>	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.
<b>Corporate Governance</b>	Structures, checks and balances put in place to ensure that Council business is conducted in the appropriate manner.
<b>Corporate Plan</b>	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'.
<b>Council Tax</b>	System of local taxation on domestic property collected by local authorities.
<b>Councillors</b>	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.
<b>County Council</b>	Administrative body of a county. For more information about Oxfordshire County Council visit <a href="http://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk">www.oxfordshire.gov.uk</a>
<b>Customer Relationship Management (CRM)</b>	The methodologies, software, and Internet capabilities that help an organisation manage customer relationships in an efficient and organised manner.
<b>Decent Homes Standard</b>	A commitment made by central government to bring all public sector homes up to a decent standard by 2010. For more information visit <a href="http://www.odpm.gov.uk">www.odpm.gov.uk</a>
<b>Disability Rights Commission</b>	An independent body established to stop discrimination and promote equality of opportunity for disabled people. For more information visit <a href="http://www.drc-gb.org">www.drc-gb.org</a>

<b>Term</b>	<b>Explanation</b>
<b>Economic Forum</b>	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.
<b>Electoral Register</b>	List containing the names and addresses of everyone who has registered to vote.
<b>Electronic Government (e-gov)</b>	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.
<b>Employers' Organisation for Local Government</b>	Organisation providing support to local authorities, in their role as employers, to deliver quality services. For more information visit <a href="http://www.lg-employers.gov.uk">www.lg-employers.gov.uk</a>
<b>Environmental Health</b>	Council Business Unit that provides a range of services aiming to protect and enhance the health and environment of the people of Oxford.
<b>Equal Opportunities Commission</b>	Public body working to remove unlawful discrimination on grounds of sex, and to promote equal opportunities for women and men. For more information visit <a href="http://www.eoc.org.uk">www.eoc.org.uk</a>
<b>Fly Tipping</b>	The illegal dumping of waste.
<b>Focus Groups</b>	Small discussion group designed to obtain perceptions on a defined area of interest.
<b>Fuel Poverty</b>	Inability to heat homes adequately because of low income, poor building or expensive heating systems.
<b>General Fund</b>	Council fund for day-to-day spending on non-housing activities.
<b>Government Office for the South East (GOSE)</b>	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 <a href="http://www.go-se.gov.uk">www.go-se.gov.uk</a>
<b>Homes in multiple occupation</b>	A house or flat that is occupied by persons who do not form a single household. For example, this would include a house being shared by a group of students and large properties divided into bed-sits. The high housing costs and high numbers of young people in Oxford mean that the city has a large amount of this type of accommodation.
<b>Housing Advisory Board</b>	Board with responsibility for controlling and monitoring Housing Revenue Account (HRA) spending. Formally known as Housing Revenue Account Management Board (HRAMB)

<b>Term</b>	<b>Explanation</b>
<b>Housing and Council Tax Benefit</b>	Scheme to help people on low income to pay their rent or Council Tax bills.
<b>Housing Inspection Star Ratings</b>	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.
<b>Housing Revenue Account</b>	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.
<b>Housing Stock Options Appraisal</b>	Consultation process with tenants and leaseholders about the future of <i>ownership and management of council homes</i> .
<b>Human Resources Strategy</b>	A framework for the development of human resources strategies in-line with the council's corporate planning processes.
<b>Human Resources</b>	Council Business Unit responsible for (amongst other things) recruitment and skills development of existing staff.
<b>IDeA</b>	The Improvement and Development Agency aims to support self-improvement from within local government. For more information visit <a href="http://www.idea.gov.uk">www.idea.gov.uk</a>
<b>Improvement Reference Group</b>	Board that challenges and monitors the delivery of the council's improvement programme.
<b>Improvement Plan</b>	Plan developed, following the 2004 CPA inspection, to demonstrate how the council will deliver improvement in identified areas of weakness.
<b>Investors in People</b>	The Investors in People Standard is a business improvement tool designed to advance an organisation's performance through its people.
<b>Learning Centre</b>	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.
<b>Licensing Committee</b>	Committee responsible for issuing licences for taxis, public entertainment venues etc.
<b>Local Improvement Finance Trust (LIFT)</b>	Government initiatives to supplement investment in primary health care and social care premises.
<b>Local Plan</b>	The Local Plan sets out detailed policies to guide property 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.
<b>OX1 city centre management group</b>	Group of local businesses working together to make central Oxford better for business and visitors.

<b>Term</b>	<b>Explanation</b>
<b>Oxford Accents</b>	An internal magazine containing council news and announcements that is produced on a monthly basis for Council staff.
<b>Oxford City Primary Care Trust</b>	Trust responsible for improving the health of the local population by planning and securing appropriate health services. For more information visit <a href="http://www.oxfordcity-pct.nhs.uk/">www.oxfordcity-pct.nhs.uk/</a>
<b>Oxford Futures</b>	Consultancy group which provides information on the economic future of Oxford.
<b>Oxford Safer Communities Partnership</b>	A partnership of agencies working together within Oxford city to reduce crime and disorder. Previously called ATMOSPHERE. For more information visit <a href="http://www.saferoxford.org.uk">www.saferoxford.org.uk</a>
<b>Oxford Strategic Partnerships</b>	A partnership of local organisations that work together at a strategic level to improve quality of life in the area.
<b>Oxford Tenants Panel</b>	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.
<b>Parish Council</b>	The administrative body of a parish.
<b>Performance Management</b>	Process of setting objectives and monitoring performance against them in order to ensure goals are realised and enable continuous improvement.
<b>Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs)</b>	Police authority employed support staff who focus predominantly on lower level crime, disorder and anti-social behaviour.
<b>Policy Framework</b>	Major plans and strategies of the council.
<b>Portfolio Holder</b>	A Councillor who sits on the Executive Board and provides leadership on a range of related issues.
<b>Registered Social Landlord (RSL)</b>	Managers of public housing stocks who are not local authorities, i.e. Housing Associations who are registered with The Housing Corporation.
<b>Risk Management</b>	The process of assessing the risks that may threaten delivery of objectives in order to minimize and manage those risks.
<b>Saïd Business School</b>	World-renowned business school based in Oxford that is currently working with the Council on the Improvement Programme.
<b>Social Housing</b>	Rented housing owned by local authorities, housing associations, housing co-ops and Housing Action Trusts.
<b>Staff Capability</b>	Knowledge and skills of staff to meet requirements of job efficiently and effectively.

<b>Term</b>	<b>Explanation</b>
<b>Statutory Duties</b>	Council's duties as required by law.
<b>Strategic Management Board (SMB)</b>	SMB is a board consisting of the Chief Executive and the Strategic Directors at the council.
<b>Strategic Procurement Partnership</b>	Agreement between local Oxfordshire authorities to facilitate of strategic and collaborative procurement.
<b>Street Wardens</b>	Council employees who work within designated areas of city to help on a range of neighbourhood issues.
<b>Supplementary Planning Guidance</b>	Additional guides provided by our Planning Business Unit to those applying for planning permission.
<b>Talkback</b>	Formal consultation forum used across Council services.
<b>Team Brief</b>	Regular team meeting to discuss Council and business unit issues.
<b>Together Action Area Status</b>	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.
<b>Toilet of the Year Competition</b>	Annual competition organised by the British Toilet Association which assesses the standard of public toilets throughout the UK.
<b>Trainers' Network</b>	A pooled resource of Council staff trained to deliver training and help spread learning throughout the Council.
<b>Unipart</b>	World-renowned logistics company with recognised expertise in change management and continued improvement. Currently working with the Council on the improvement programme.
<b>Urban Extension</b>	Proposal to develop land and expand the city beyond its present administrative boundary.
<b>Vision statement</b>	Document expressing the purpose and destination of an organisation / company in a way that builds commitment to it.
<b>Wards</b>	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.
<b>West End Renaissance</b>	Plans for the redevelopment and regeneration of Oxford city centre's western quarter.

## Document Control

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<b>Author</b>	<b>Helen Rowlands</b>
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