

To: City Executive Board/Council

Date: 18 February/20 April 2009

Item No:

Report of: Head of Policy, Performance and Communications

**Title of Report: CORPORATE PLAN 2009-12 – UPDATE OF TARGETS
AND CORE TEXT**

Summary and Recommendations

Purpose of report: To gain approval of the updates to targets and core text contained in the Corporate Plan 2009-12.

Key decision? No

Executive lead member: Cllr Bob Price

Report approved by: Cllr Bob Price

Finance: Penny Gardner

Legal: Jeremy Thomas

Policy Framework: Corporate Plan 2009-2012

Recommendation(s): 1: That the Executive Board recommends to Council that the appended text and targets for the Corporate Plan 2009-2012 be approved; that the Chief Executive be authorised to make minor editorial changes where appropriate.

CORPORATE PLAN 2009/12

This document contains the proposed message from the Group Leaders and the Chief Executive and the sections of the corporate plan 2009-12 where changes have been made to the previous Corporate Plan 2008-11.

The Corporate Plan 2009-2012 is a development of the Corporate Plan 2008-2011. The new plan retains the same corporate priorities. The priority previously referred to as 'Stronger and more inclusive communities' has been renamed 'Tackling inequalities and supporting communities' in order to more accurately describe the intention behind the priority and to emphasise our commitment to equalities. Objectives and targets have been rolled over and stretched to maintain or improve our progress against these same priorities.

This year's plan has been developed with reference to three principles:

- Targets should be strictly relevant to the priorities,
- Measures should be SMART
- Progress against priorities should be able to be captured as comprehensively as possible.

In order to fulfil this last principle, meetings were held with Service Heads, Directors and members of the Performance Team to identify new indicators relevant to the priorities.

Directors and Service Heads have approved all targets. All corporate plan objectives are included in Service Transformation Plans.

- Level of risk in adopting the new Corporate Plan 2009-12 is assessed as low as adoption does not represent a departure from current core strategies
- Climate change / environmental impact is assessed as positive since targets are included in the plan to reduce the councils environmental impact
- Equalities impact: These priorities were developed following consultation with the Oxford Citizens Panel and the Talkback panel. An Equalities Initial Impact has been carried out.

Recommendations:

1. That the Executive Board recommends to Council that the appended text and targets for the Corporate Plan 2009-2012 be approved; that the Chief Executive be authorised to make minor editorial changes where appropriate.

Name and contact details of author: Danny Woodhouse(01865 252743)/Shajaat Hussain(01865 252384).

List of background papers: None

Version number: 2

Message from Group Leaders and the Chief Executive

Welcome to Oxford City Council's Corporate Plan for 2009–2012.

Last year's Corporate Plan set out the Council's ambition, developed with partners across the city, to make Oxford a world-class city for everyone. It also set out our plans for transforming the way that the Council does business. We intend to become a world-class council, delivering high quality services and excellent value for money for all our citizens.

By sticking to the improvement plans set out in our last corporate plan, and by improving the management systems necessary to deliver these plans, we have made good progress over the last 12 months.

The Council has continued to improve service delivery and it has also become much more efficient in several key areas of activity. Overall, our efficiency drive has reduced the budget by £7.1 million over 24 months. This is equivalent to 25% of the net budget.

Our management structure is leaner and more focussed, with 14 senior posts instead of 21. We are continuing to rationalise and re-structure the Council, and one in five middle management posts have also been lost.

We have carried out a fundamental service review of our under-performing leisure service. As a result, in future we will be working in partnership with a not-for-profit trust, which we expect will deliver a much improved leisure service for the people of the City and generate annual savings of around £700k.

Our agreement with the County Council to transfer management of the Park and Ride sites and to make them free should lead to a reduction in the number of cars coming into the city and will save the Council £1m over the next five years.

We have also set up a joint management arrangement with the County Council for our IT services which will improve the quality of their services, create resources for innovation, and save £1m over the next five years.

We have changed the waste collection rounds with minimal inconvenience to customers saving some £200k per year. We are planning for significantly increased efficiency in other areas of our street scene service. The biggest area of spend in this area is waste and recycling, which are facing the twin challenges of having to increase recycling rates and satisfy rising public expectations. The Council will be market testing this aspect of our service in 2009.

We have launched a £2.5 million programme to modernise all the playgrounds across the City and have commissioned an additional £100K each year to support play schemes and leisure activities for young people.

The Audit Commission – the local government watchdog – has acknowledged the improvements that we have made in value for money by increasing our rating to Level 2. From the Council's point of view, this represents an energising start to our transformation programme, and we are now aiming to be among the most efficient local authorities in the country within the next few years.

We have been able to deliver these improvements in the face of economic circumstances that are challenging every organisation in the country.

The banking crisis and the recession have had a significant impact on the Council's budgets. Around £350K of income from planning, parking and commercial investment is at risk. Fuel costs have gone up by around £600K. We have also seen a fall in capital receipts costing upwards of £1m per year. Other external issues have compounded these challenges.

We welcome the national concessionary bus fare scheme. It is good for the people entitled to use it because it increases their mobility and quality of life. It is also good for the environment because it leads to fewer cars on the roads. However, we do not welcome the formula through which it is funded, which will cost the Council £600K over budget this year, rising to £1.4m in future years. Government advice is that the scheme and the funding regime are unlikely to change until 2011.

Reductions in interest rates are welcomed by people paying mortgages, but they are bad news for local authorities because interest on investments help to fund your services. Each percentage point reduction costs the Council around £300K per annum.

There are other issues. Grant increases have been significantly below inflation - 1.2% this year. Oxford's exposure to the collapse of the Icelandic banks at £4.5m was considerably less than some other public bodies. However, the collapse has had a disproportionate impact on district councils because of our lower levels of reserves, and Oxford's assets are currently frozen are equivalent to an entire year's capital programme.

The City Council has had two key objectives over the last twelve months: to speed up the transformation of our services and to avoid being knocked off financial course by the banking crisis and the recession, and other external issues.

We have managed to achieve both of these objectives through sound management and unity of purpose on the part of the councillors, senior management, and staff. The Council is now in a strong position to sustain current improvement levels and to fulfill our aspiration to provide excellent services to all our citizens.

The Council's Priorities 2009–2012

This Corporate Plan 2009-12 sets out the council's six strategic priorities for the next three years. These have been developed with reference to the social, demographic, economic and environmental factors extant in the city and through consultation with residents and other stakeholders. This approach has enabled the council, through detailed analysis of the evidence and the results of consultations, to develop specific, focused objectives designed to tackle the most pressing and difficult issues facing residents and other stakeholders in the city.

We have identified 33 objectives for 2009/10 and have set challenging targets for improvement against each of these. The targets for 2009/10 through to 2012 have been developed to ensure that the Council is clear about the direction in which it proposes to move, and the changes that it proposes to make, over the next three years. We will be monitoring the achievement of these—and all our objectives—on a monthly basis. Progress updates will be reported regularly to Executive Board, the Corporate Performance Board, Scrutiny and all staff. The public and employees will be kept abreast of progress in an annual report, the staff newsletter, the publication 'Your Oxford' which goes to all households in Oxford City as well as the council's website.

More housing, better housing for all

There is a housing crisis in Oxford.. The population is growing - Oxford is the second fastest growing city in the UK as measured by percentage population growth - as is the number of households requiring housing (up from 45,000 in 1991 to 55,000 in 2006).

Oxford is the least affordable city in the UK in terms of housing. Average house prices are much higher in Oxford (£340,615 in November 2008) than nationally (£158,442 November 2008) and prices have only fallen by 2% over the last year in the city. Owner occupied housing is increasingly out of the reach of people on lower incomes in the city. The ratio between the lowest quartile house price and lowest quartile annual income was 10.86 in 2006, having doubled since 1997 when it was 5.41. This poor affordability puts severe strain on the social housing sector, with over 5,000 households in need on the housing register, and homelessness, though much improved, is over twice the national average.

We are making good progress in tackling and reducing homelessness with the number of households living in temporary accommodation reduced from 1,100 in 2004 to less than 450 (December 2008) and we continue to focus on preventing homelessness occurring and helping people sleeping rough into settled accommodation. We aim to increase the quality and quantity of affordable housing that is available for families in housing need and 811 new affordable homes have been built in the city since 2004/05. Oxford has a very large private rented sector, which is a valuable housing supply for many people who are vital to our economy, including students and new arrivals to the city. We are using our powers to ensure that houses in multiple occupation are managed safely and responsibly.

By March 2010 we will:

- Ensure that 150 new affordable properties are built in Oxford
- Increase the number of Council-owned homes meeting the Decent Homes standard to 95%.
- Further improve homelessness prevention, reducing the number of people in temporary and emergency accommodation by 10%.
- Implement a stock retention strategy.
- Launch an accreditation scheme for landlords in the private rental sector to drive up standards in rental housing.

By March 2012 we will:

- Ensure that an additional 400 new affordable properties are built in Oxford between 2010 and 2012
- Fully meet the Decent Homes standard for all council owned homes
- Implement the New Growth Points programme and ensure 1,200 homes are built in Oxford from April 2008, of which at least 50% should be affordable on sites of over 10 units.
- Reduce the use of temporary accommodation for the homeless to below 150 households.
- Further develop the services for homeless people which co-ordinate housing, advice and training opportunities, and helps them into employment.

Tackling inequalities and supporting communities

Oxford gives the appearance of a thriving and affluent city with good opportunities for work and leisure. The reality is that there are major inequalities in life chances and in life expectancy within the city and ten areas of Oxford are amongst the 20% most deprived in England. In some areas, half of all adults have no qualifications and this tends to be linked to lower incomes, poor health and child poverty. Citizens living in the most deprived areas can expect to live ten years less than those in the wealthiest areas. Outside these areas, there are some population groups – notably people with disabilities, the elderly and some black and minority ethnic groups – who, on average, do worse in terms of education, employment and health. Relative to the rest of Oxfordshire, Oxford has high levels of deprivation. The Indices of Deprivation 2007 rank Oxford 154th out of 354, placing it amongst in the top half most deprived Local Authorities in England. Of the 85 Super Output Areas in Oxford, ten are among the 20% most deprived in England. Oxford is estimated to have an unemployment rate of 6.1%, which is higher than the 5.3% national average. There are geographic and demographic pockets of high unemployment in the City (including young Black Caribbean men). Oxford has over 9,000 working age residents claiming benefits – the highest percentage in the county. 26% of Oxford's under-16 year-olds are living in low-income households.

We aim to reduce the extent of inequality and to improve the lives of the most vulnerable members of our society. We want to support social and economic regeneration, particularly in deprived neighbourhoods, and ensure that the economic vitality of the city delivers benefits to all sections of the community.

By March 2010 we will:

- Continue to promote the Bus Concessionary Fare Scheme for the elderly and people with disabilities
- Commission voluntary sector organizations to provide financial and other advice to individuals and families through provision of grants totalling £500,000
- Commission arts and cultural organisations to work in and with disadvantaged and less involved sections of our community through grants of over £300,000.
- Maintain the national 'VISIBLE' standard at two of our community associations and achieve the standard for two more. (This standard recognises the quality of the associations' work in their communities.)
- Work in partnership with the Primary Care Trust to reduce the number of children in primary schools categorized as obese
- Undertake a survey of users of community centres to assess current satisfaction levels and aspirations for future developments.

By March 2012 we will:

- Increase investment in our Leisure Centres that will improve the facilities offered and secure better value for money, increased public satisfaction and increased take-up by young people and hard to reach groups.
- Demonstrate leadership in employment and service delivery best practice by achieving 'excellent' accreditation for the equalities standard.
- Raise the levels of adult participation in sport by 4% as reported by the Active People Survey undertaken by Sport England
- Maintain the national 'VISIBLE' standard for four of our community organisations and achieve the standard for another two.
- Review the usage of our community centres and community needs and increase user satisfaction by 10%
- Spend £2.5 million to refurbish the Old Fire Station for training and work creating a solid enterprise space

Improving the local environment, economy and quality of life

Oxford's citizens place a very high priority on the quality of the local environment. Citizen's panels have shown that residents want parks, play areas and green spaces to be safer and cleaner, and we have set our objective as being to ensure they are safe places for people to visit and offer a good range of leisure opportunities. To improve the condition of our streets and parks we have set challenging targets both for 2009/10 and through to

2012. We want our streets and neighbourhoods to be amongst the best in the country for cleanliness and tidiness.

Talkback Panels, and other consultations, remind us that recycling is an important priority for our residents. Between 2005 and 2006 we recycled just 20% of our domestic waste in Oxford and we land-filled over 37,000 tonnes of waste. For 2006/07 the figure for recycling was 36% and the tonnage land-filled was down to 30,500 tonnes. We are working to further reduce waste and to maximise reuse, recycling and composting, with a long-term goal of reducing land-filled waste to zero.

We are taking action to prevent fly-tipping, littering, graffiti and inappropriate development, taking enforcement action where necessary. We are seeking to promote 'home zone initiatives', a 20mph zone for the whole city, and the campaign for clean air.

We recognise that the economy is a concern for our residents and local businesses and we have set targets for a proportion of the money spent by the council to be spent with local businesses.

Over 8 million tourists visit the city each year. Together with the city's youthful population, tourism has generated a vibrant night-time culture which brings its own consequences in terms of pressures on the Council's budgets. Oxford is a global brand for education, health, bioscience, information technology, publishing, the motor industry and tourism. Around 3,400 businesses provide 108,000 jobs. Seven of the ten largest employers in the Oxfordshire sub-region are within Oxford.

However, there has been little change in the total number of jobs in Oxford over the last 30 years. As manufacturing has declined, these jobs have been replaced by employment in the health, education and service sectors. 88% of employees now work in services, including 19% in retail, hotel and catering.

By March 2010 we will:

- Increase the percentage of materials recycled or composted to 40%
- Ensure that 93% of our streets are free from litter
- Retain Green Flag Status for 3 of the main parks
- Increase the proportion of our spending with local businesses to 30%
- Conduct a satisfaction survey of visitors to the city
- Assess the percentage of our residents who are satisfied with their neighbourhood
- Create and adopt Area Action Plans based on the results findings of these surveys and other consultations, and on local members proposals
- Begin the modernisation programme for our playgrounds. We will spend £2.5 million over the next 3 years to ensure that all playgrounds are fully modernised

By March 2012 we will:

- Increase the percentage of our materials recycled or composted to 45%
- Ensure that 95% of our streets are free from litter
- Increase by 10% the proportion of local residents who are satisfied with their neighbourhood.
- Improve visitor satisfaction by 10%
- Increase spend with small local business to 40%
- Adopt an Area Action Plan for the Northern Gateway including the allocation of 1 million sq ft of employment floor space to provide 4,500 jobs

Reducing crime and anti-social behaviour

Crime and the fear of crime have an adverse effect upon all communities, and we are aiming, with our partners, to make Oxford a safer place. Our recent citizen's panel survey showed that tackling environmental anti-social behaviour and criminal damage remains a priority for Oxford residents. It also told us that people in the Cowley and South East areas feel less safe walking at night than people living in other areas, and that women, people with a disability, older people and young people feel less safe than other people. We will continue to address these concerns through the Neighbourhood Action Groups and through our partnership with the Thames Valley Police.

We seek to divert young people away from crime and anti-social behaviour by supporting projects that improve the well-being of young people in Oxford, particularly those who are at risk of offending.

Oxford has a vibrant and diverse evening economy, and we want people to enjoy the attractions that are available. Our Talkback survey showed that a fifth of people felt less safe visiting the city centre in the evening during the past year. We will work on these issues through our Nightsafe scheme to achieve the Civic Society's Accreditation for Oxford's nightlife and improve the feeling of safety for everyone who visits our city.

By March 2010 we will:

- Step up enforcement action against environmental offences by 25% to 100 cases and implement an education and public relations programme to reduce environmental problems
- Provide free holiday activities for over one thousand young people between 5–19 in the most deprived areas in Oxford
- Achieve Civic Society Accreditation for the standard to which the city centre is managed at night
- Reduce the number of assaults with injury in violent incidents by 5% and all alcohol-related crime and violence by 5%
- Work in partnership with the County Council and OX1 to improve the management of the public realm in Oxford city centre

By March 2012 we will:

- Increase the level of enforcement for environmental offences by a further 50% and continue the programme of education and public relations
- Provide free holiday activities for an additional 100 young people in the most deprived areas in Oxford
- Maintain Civic Society Accreditation relating to the standard to which the city centre is managed at night Implement an action plan to improve community cohesion.
- Increase resident's satisfaction with the methods of dealing with local concerns about anti-social behaviour and crime
- Draw up and put into action a plan to strengthen social cohesion

Tackle climate change and promote environmental resource management

As a large organisation the Council is seeking to play a major role in reducing the impact we have on the environment, tackling climate change and developing a coherent adoption strategy. In the first year of implementing our carbon reduction plan (Getting our House in Order), we have already put measures in place to reduce carbon dioxide emissions from our buildings and operations by over 800 tonnes per year (8% reduction on 2005/06 levels). We are continuing to work towards the ambitious carbon reduction targets set out in that plan. Through strategic partnerships with other agencies and organizations we will develop and implement city-wide carbon reduction initiatives. We are also planning to combat the adverse effects of climate change, such as the increased incidence of flooding.

By March 2010 we will:

- Undertake a work programme that will reduce the Council's carbon footprint by 800 tonnes per annum (8% reduction compared to 2005/06 levels).
- Improve the SAP Rating (energy efficiency standard) of council managed housing stock to 70%

By March 2012 we will:

- Reduce carbon dioxide emissions from Oxford City Council's buildings and operations by at least 28% compared to 2005/06 levels.
- Reduce carbon dioxide emissions in Oxford City by 15% compared to 2005 levels.
- Improve air quality through a jointly managed action plan with the County Council to secure a Low Emission Zone for the City Centre
- Attain level 3 accreditation for our Climate Change Adaptation Plan

Transforming Oxford City Council by improving value for money and service performance

We are aiming to be recognised by our customers, staff and auditors as an excellent Council. We want to improve the quality and accessibility of our services, improve customer satisfaction (measured at 50% in mid-2007), improve performance and offer good value for money.

In order to achieve these objectives Oxford is transforming the way in which the council works, so that it delivers better services to customers first time, and every time, and achieves better value for money. To achieve this, we have developed an ambitious 5-year programme based on 6 themes:

- Offices for the future – to enable more effective use of our offices
- Modernise corporate services - to provide services for the Council and customers which make full use of new ways of working
- Future working – to ensure we have the right structures, processes and skills to reduce waste and deliver improved services for customers
- Fundamental service reviews – to identify customers' top priorities and the areas or services which could be delivered in a different way
- Customers first – securing better access to the Council's services, for example through the implementation of a customer relationship management system
- Improve local decision making and citizen involvement, as required by government policy

Oxford City Council has demonstrated good recent progress, highlighted by an improved use of resources assessment from a level 1 (2006/7) to a level 2 (2008/9). We are on track to achieve some of our key targets, including £3.5m efficiency savings and a reduction in carbon emissions of 800 tonnes by March 2009. However, the Council faces some new challenges in 2009/10 and has set itself some ambitious targets to realise the ambition of becoming a world-class city for everyone.

By March 2010 we will:

- Implement cost and efficiency savings of £3 million from our 2008/09 base
- Develop a comprehensive asset management plan that rationalises our property holding, releases capital for investment and ensures that our buildings are properly maintained.
- Reduce the number of employees by 1% by improving performance and operational systems
- Increase staff attendance to 96%
- Ensure that 90% of our customers can reach us first time on the Council's main service lines
- Increase the number of online transactions (including financial) by 5% from the 2008 base
- Introduce a corporate approach to managing our customers and dealing with complaints.

By March 2012 we will:

- Secure formal recognition from the Audit Commission that the City Council has improved strongly.
- Achieve 10% efficiency savings overall from the 2008/09 base and be assessed as 'good for value for money' by the Audit Commission.
- Increase staff satisfaction to 75%.
- Achieve Investors in People accreditation.
- Increase public satisfaction by 10% on the baseline 2006 result.
- Develop a corporate procurement strategy that reduces costs of goods and services bought in by 1% a year.
- Increase the number of online transactions by 10% from 2008 base