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To Members of the Value and  
Performance Scrutiny Committee

21 March 2012

Our ref:

Your ref:

Dear Councillor

**VALUE AND PERFORMANCE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - MONDAY 26 MARCH 2012**

I attach the following report which was not available when the main agenda was dispatched.  
Please bring this document to the meeting

**Agenda No    Item**

5.     **Equalities (Pages 1 - 92)**

Yours sincerely

Alec Dubberley, Democratic Services Officer  
Encs



INVESTORS  
IN PEOPLE



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**To:** Value and Performance Scrutiny Committee

**Date:** 26 March 2012

**Report of:** Simon Howick  
Head of People and Equalities

**Title of Report:** Equalities & Diversity: Update report

## Summary and Recommendations

### **Purpose of report:**

The purpose of the report is to provide an update on the Councils recent external Peer review and successful accreditation at the “Achieving” level under the Equalities Framework for Local Government (EFLG) and to report on progress against equalities objectives for 2011/12.

**Report approved by:** Cllr Bob Price

**Finance:** Nigel Kennedy  
**Legal:** Jeremy Thomas

### **Recommendation(s):**

### **Members are asked to:**

- 1. Note the successful Peer Review accreditation for the Council as an “Achieving” authority under the EFLG and the recommendations made by the Peer Review team to assist the Council to move towards “Excellence”**
- 2. Note the summary of equalities objectives for 2011/12**

## **1. Introduction**

- 1.1 The Head of People & Equalities submitted positive progress reports on Equalities and Diversity to VAP Scrutiny in September and November 2010. A further report was presented in April 2011 that outlined the position of the Council in final preparation for an external Peer Review in October 2011 which was subsequently postponed until January 2012.
- 1.2 The Council's EFLG submission document (Appendix 1) presented the Council's evidence against the key areas and was tested by an external group of two expert equalities officers and one Councillor in a series of in depth interviews held over two days on site. Interviews included the Leader of the Council, Chief Executive, lead councillors, senior officers, middle managers, front-line staff and representatives from community groups.
- 1.3 The Peer team delivered a brief presentation of their findings at the end of the second day (Appendix 3). This confirmed that the Council had been successful in reaching the standards required for the "Achieving" level of the EFLG framework. It also introduced a summary of the respective areas of strength and those for which further consideration would be useful. A full report (Appendix 2) with more detailed feedback and recommendations has been analysed by the People & Equalities Head of Service and is currently being reviewed by the Leader of the Council and Chief Executive.

## **2. Summary of the EFLG Peer Review process and findings**

- 2.1 The feedback report presented a recognisable picture of Oxford
- 2.1 The Council's key areas of strength were:
  - An ambitious and clear corporate vision around a "world class city for everyone" with strong executive leadership;
  - The Council has been innovative in looking for "economic headroom", additional earning capacity and moving into new areas of work to tackle inequalities;
  - Systematic data collection, analysis and benchmarking used to target services;
  - Councillors well connected with residents, with Area Forums as an "active citizenship" opportunity also attended by Directors and Heads of Service;
  - Oxfordshire Strategic Partnership;
  - Community and neighbourhood involvement at different levels across the city;
  - "Bending the spend" in service delivery;
  - Equalities a key part in new developments such as the competition pool;
  - Leadership of the Procurement Hub and procurement training sessions with potential suppliers;
  - Transparency around grant allocations;

- Involving relevant partners in planning discussions early on
- Interactive diversity training and staff involvement with scoping future training;
- Oxford Living Wage seen as groundbreaking;
- Active engagement of scrutiny process & commitment to use peer challenge to direct future work programmes; and
- Tackling educational inequalities and other new budget proposals will keep the momentum going

2.2 The report suggested the following areas as those for consideration:

- More effective cross service strategic working through the use of accurate & up-to-date information, e.g. tenant profile data/ vulnerable list;
- Consider the value an internal equalities group could bring to the strategic overview;
- Community involvement in EqlAs and ensuring that EqlAs sit at the start of the policy development process;
- How representative/ diverse are community representatives;
- Are we clear about our external equalities objectives;
- Working to attract and develop a more diverse workforce at all levels of responsibility; and
- All about consistency and the ability to measure outcomes

2.3 The Peer team added the following observations:

- Good narrative contained within the submission and Oxford Key Facts profile;
- E&D is built into the day-to-day service delivery and is normal for Oxford;
- Not frightened to get partners on board;
- Must continue to communicate & celebrate innovative practice at OCC;
- “Punching well above our weight”;
- Important to keep an eye on the “Achieving” journey documentation as we monitor progress towards “Excellence”;
- and
- Interviewees were refreshingly honest

### **3. Equality Objectives 2011/ 2012**

3.1 As reported to the VAP Scrutiny Committee in April 2011, the Council focused on 10 key equalities objectives for 2011/2012 (Appendix 4) in service planning. This document includes an update from Heads of Service as at March 2012.

3.2 Progress against these respective objectives has been favourable and, the period at the end of March will be important in terms of drawing breath and scoping well defined objectives for 2012/ 2013 as part of the rolling action plan contained in the Corporate Equality Scheme 2012/ 2015.

#### **4. Equality Actions 2012 - onwards**

4.1 Following the peer review and in the context of the issues we face, the themes of the Council's equalities actions in the short to medium term (as will be outlined in the Corporate Equality Scheme Action Plan for 2012/13) will include themes around five broad objectives:

- Increasing the diversity of our workforce – e.g. targeting recruitment of apprentices at minority groups and applicants living and educated in the City;
- Promoting the Council as an employer of choice by further work going out to communities to understand and overcome any potential barriers to employment with us;
- Revamping the Equalities Impact Assessment process to move it to the first stages of developing policies, strategies and projects so that community impact is a key consideration early on;
- Doing more work to understand the profile of our service users and taking more targeted action as a result; and
- Working more with diverse community groups to address their needs

#### **5. Financial Implications**

5.1 There are no additional financial implications arising from this report. Much of the work is done as business as usual or e.g. bespoke funding arrangements such as £50k budget provision on apprentices

#### **6. Legal Implications**

6.1 The Council needs to ensure it meets the Public Sector Equality Duty and this continues to be reflected in the Corporate Equality Scheme

#### **7. Conclusion**

7.1 Reaching the EFLG "Achieving" level is a great achievement for the Council but the work needs to continue so that the diverse needs of the community are reflected in day-to-day service delivery.

**Name and contact details of author: Jarlath Brine**

**List of background papers:**

**Appendix 1: EFLG Submission Document**

**Appendix 2: EFLG Peer Review Feedback: Full Report**

**Appendix 3: EFLG On-site feedback presentation slides**

**Appendix 4: Equality Objectives 2011/ 2012 & Action Plan**

**Version number: 1**



**Our People  
in Focus**

**Oxford City Council**

**Equality Framework for Local  
Government Achieving Level:**

**Self-Assessment Narrative**

**Peer Review: 18/19 January 2012**

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## **1.0 Introduction**

**1.1** Oxford is a wonderful city – diverse, vibrant, known across the world as a seat of learning, a base of high-tech manufacturing and a major car production hub. It is home to two world-class universities, some tremendous cultural facilities, with an incredible richness of architecture and attractive open spaces. Yet at the same time, it is a city of gross inequalities: life expectancy in poorer parts of the city is eight to ten years shorter than in the more prosperous areas, educational attainment is disgracefully low, and there are several areas amongst the most deprived in the region.

**1.2** This submission illustrates clearly the extent to which the Council's corporate priorities are characterised by its core commitment to tackling the inequalities that exist across the city community in income, life chances, housing, education and health. Our vision is “to build a world-class city for everyone”, and this is intended not just to be an element of a corporate brand, but rather to provide a clear statement of the Council's driving ambition: we want all sections of our city to share in its prosperity. For Councillors across different parties and for Council staff, confronting social injustice and tackling inequality is what gets us out of bed in the morning, and drives everything we do.

**1.3** The Council wants to lead the way as an employer: for instance, we pay a living wage (which from January 2012 will increase from £7.19 to £8.01 per hour) to all our staff, and this is also insisted upon for contractors and suppliers. We pride ourselves on developing our workforce and we are about to launch an additional programme of apprenticeships on top of 11 who already work for the Council.

**1.4** But we also want to make a real difference to inequality across the whole City, and especially the most vulnerable in it, and are working in constructive partnerships through the Oxford Strategic Partnership (County Council, health authorities, private and voluntary sectors) to deliver regeneration, a reduction in crime and anti-social behaviour and to tackle the root causes of low educational attainment.. That's why we are tackling poor-quality housing in the private rented sector (which accommodates many of the most vulnerable, such as migrant workers), why we are campaigning for a living wage for all workers in Oxford, why we have increased support to advice agencies (one of very few Councils to do so) to ensure that people can access benefits in times of hardship, and why we are about to launch an ambitious programme to repair damage to the youth service by county Council cuts, especially in deprived areas, and to play our part in raising educational attainment.

**1.5** As this submission makes clear, the task ahead is substantial but the Council's commitment to pursue its policy agenda is very strong, and the way in which the reduction in the government grant has been handled is evidence of our determination to deliver on our objectives through clear policy priorities for equality.

**Councillor Bob Price (Leader) & Councillor Ed Turner (Deputy Leader)**

## **2.0 The City of Oxford**

**2.1** Oxford is one of the most photographed, filmed and written about cities in the world. Contemporary Oxford continues to be a world renowned University City and is the largest town in Oxfordshire, occupying a total area of about 46 sq km (17.6 sq miles) and with an estimated population of 154,000 in 2010 having grown 10% in the previous decade. Some 27% of Oxford is in the Green Belt, with much of this land being flood plain. The historic city parks and nature conservation areas (including a Special Area of Conservation and several sites of special scientific interest) create pockets and corridors of green within the City boundary, so that while parts of the urban area are very densely developed, 52% of the city is actually open space.

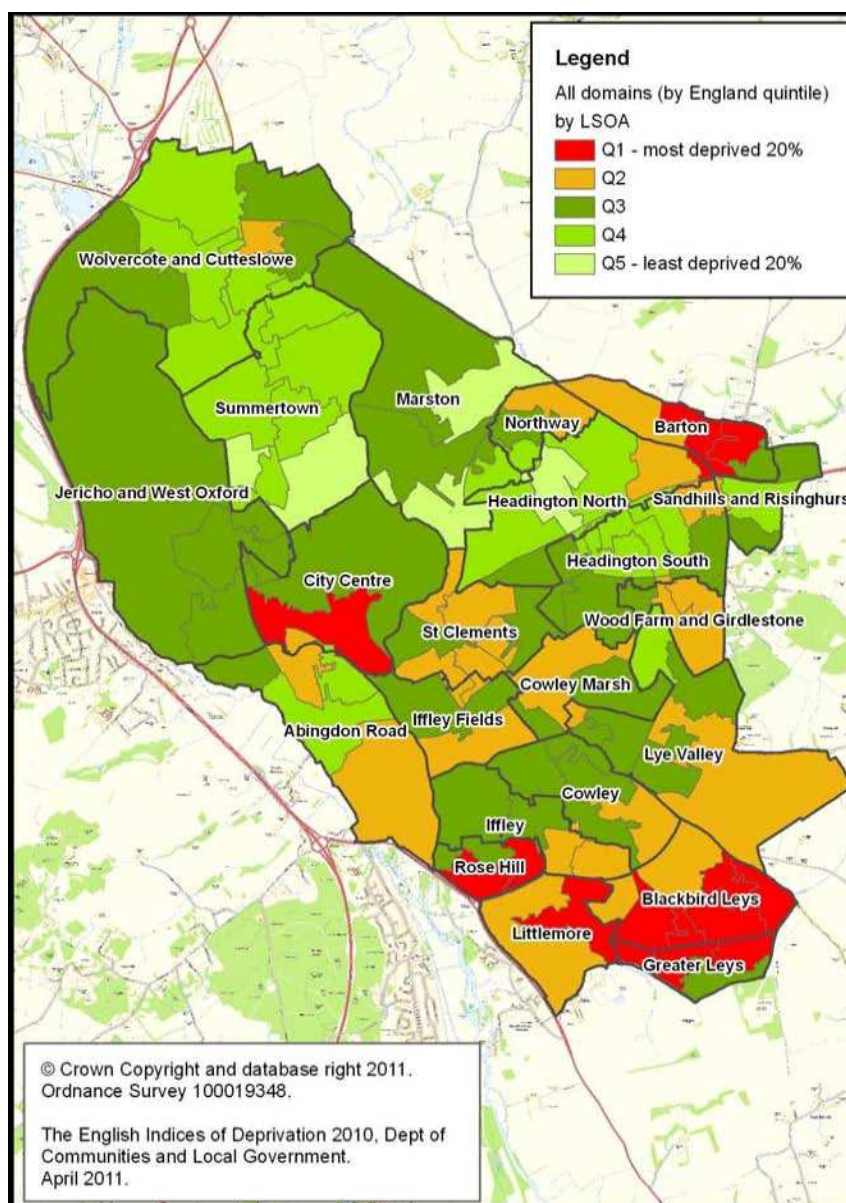
**2.2** It is also an economic hub and cultural centre of the region, home to around 3,500 businesses providing 107,000 plus jobs. Oxford has a large number of people employed in universities and the public sector, at around 46%, but also has significant jobs in other sectors including publishing, tourism, hospitality and a growing hi-tech sector fuelled by the highly-qualified workforce. Approximately 40,000 non-residents travel to work in Oxford, boosting the daytime population by approximately 26,000. Oxford has a higher than average proportion of working age people, but a lower than average economic activity rates, both of which are direct consequences of the large student population. In common with the rest of the UK, there has been a sharp increase in the number of people claiming unemployment benefit, from 1,600 people claiming Job Seekers Allowance (JSA) in October 2008 to nearly 2,900 in August 2011. The proportion of people claiming in Oxford is lower than the national average (due to the large number of full-time students who are not eligible for JSA).

**2.3** In marked contrast to other parts of the county, Oxford is ethnically and culturally diverse, with the second highest minority ethnic population in the south east. In 2011 the non-white population was 19.6%, with the largest non-white ethnic groups represented being Indian, Pakistani and Chinese. The diversity of the City is being increased by migration from new European Union countries, with 3,850 migrants applying to work in the Oxford area in the six years following April 2004, the majority from Poland.

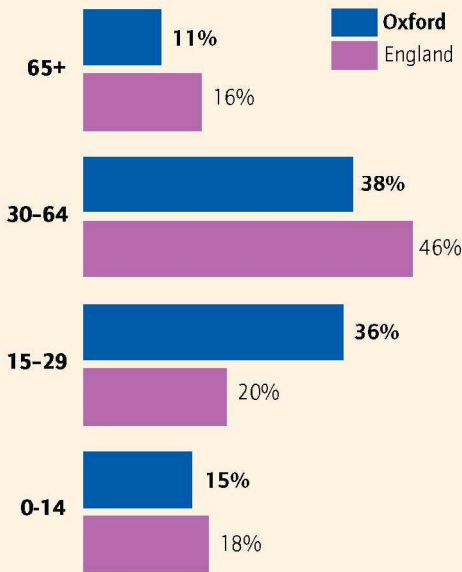
**2.4** There are major inequalities in life chances and in life expectancy within the city and Oxford has high levels of deprivation. The Indices of Deprivation 2010 (see map under 2.5) placed Oxford in the top half of most deprived Local Authorities in England. Twelve of Oxford's neighbourhoods were calculated to be among the 20% most deprived areas in England, with one in Northfield Brook ward being among the 10% most deprived. The city has become relatively more deprived, moving from the 155<sup>th</sup> most deprived to the 131<sup>st</sup> most deprived. All of the areas score badly in barriers to housing and services, primarily due to the imbalance of house prices to average earnings, with the average Oxford house now costing £370,356 and prices at around 11 times average earnings. The percentage of owner-occupiers is relatively low in Oxford - 53.7% compared with the south-east (73.2%) and England (68.1%). The percentage of private rented accommodation is high; 17.5% in Oxford compared with 8.8% in the south-east and England. There are

currently nearly 6000 people on our housing waiting lists.

**2.5** Around 23% of Oxford's under-16 year-olds live in low-income households and child poverty is a key concern in eight neighbourhoods which feature among the 10% worst affected in England. In some areas, half of all adults have no qualifications and this is linked to lower incomes, poor health and child poverty. Oxford has over 10,000 working age residents claiming benefits – the highest percentage in the county. Citizens in the most deprived areas could live up to ten years less than those in the wealthiest areas. The areas with the greatest deprivation (including income, employment, education, skills and training, health and disability, access to services and amenities) tend to be concentrated in the south and east of the city. Parts of Blackbird Leys, Greater Leys, Littlemore, Rose Hill, Barton and the City are considered to be amongst the 20% most deprived in England.

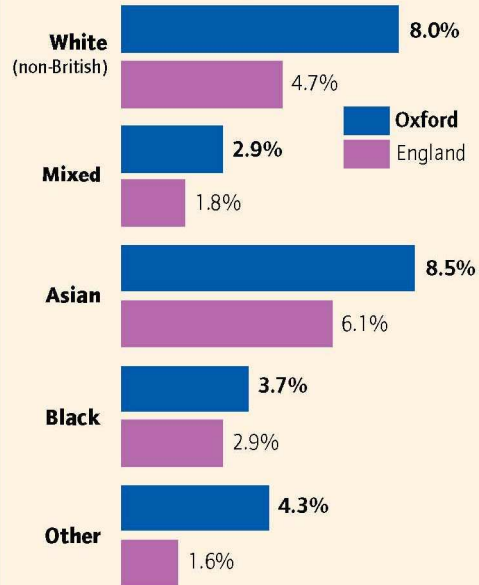


### Population by age 2010, Oxford and England



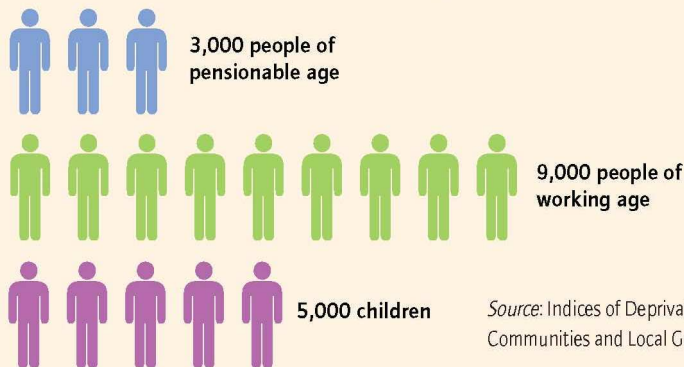
Source: Office for National Statistics

### Population by non-white British ethnic group 2009, Oxford and England



Source: Office for National Statistics

### People living below the poverty line in Oxford

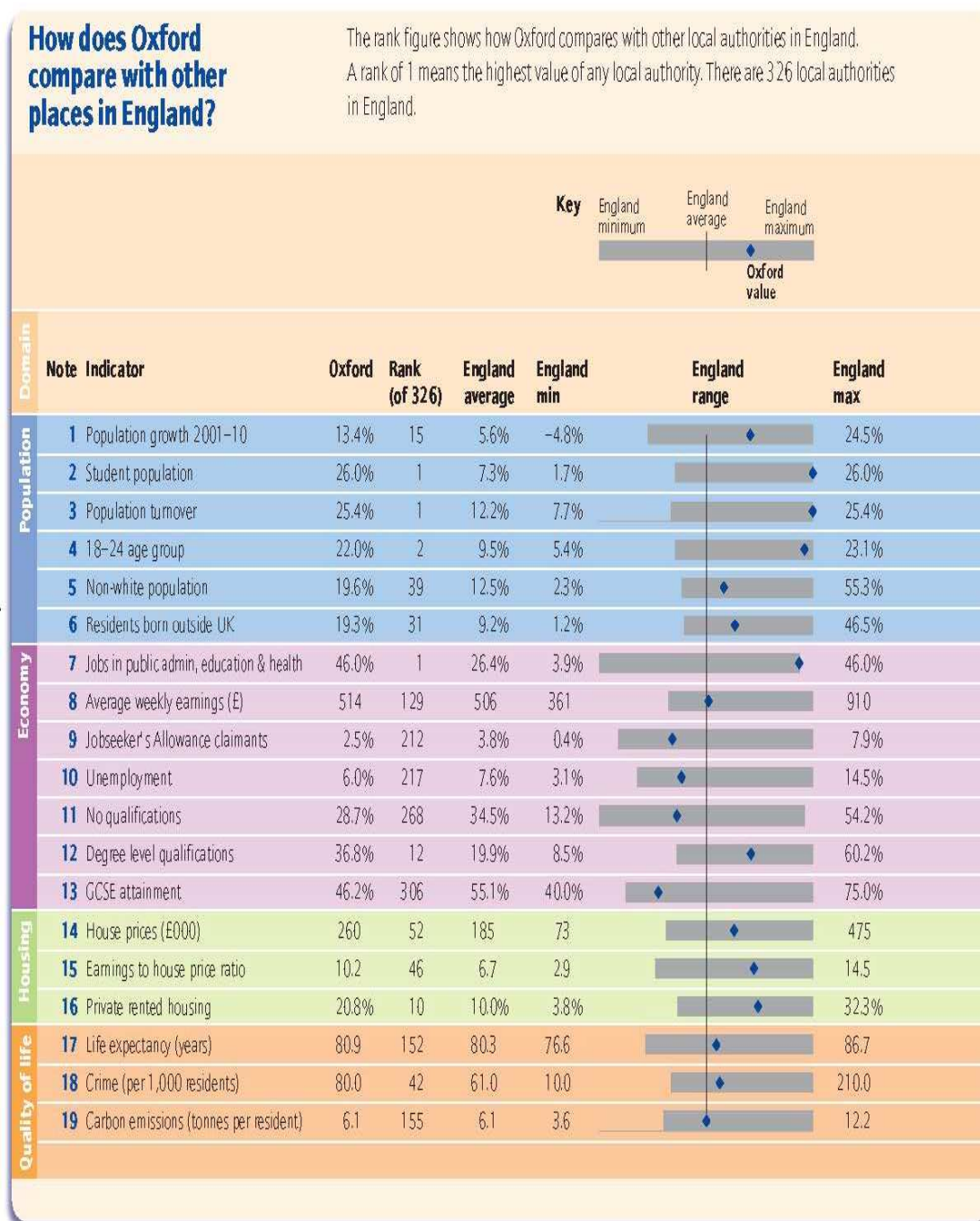


Source: Indices of Deprivation 2010, Department for Communities and Local Government

**2.6** Oxford is the sixth most visited city in the UK by international visitors, the twentieth by UK residents, and is the tourism gateway to the rest of Oxfordshire. We attract approximately 9.5 million visitors per year, generating £770 million of income for local Oxford businesses. Over 8 million of these visitors only visit for one day while over 40,000 readers of Conde Nast's Traveller magazine voted Oxford the cleanest City ([www.visitoxfordandoxfordshire.com](http://www.visitoxfordandoxfordshire.com))

**2.7** Oxford has the highest proportion of students in its population (26% of working age residents). 32,000 students studied full time at the two universities in 2009/10. 10,000 students come from overseas, of which 3,000 come from within the EU. As a result one in five residents are aged between

18 and 24 years, and the population turnover is the highest in England at around 25.4%.



## 2.8 The 2008 Place Survey found the following key satisfaction levels:

- 85% satisfied that we treat people fairly
- 61% satisfied that we act on their concerns
- 58% satisfied that we promote the interests of local residents
- 82% agreed that people from different backgrounds get on well
- 81% satisfied that we are making areas safer
- 29% agreed that they can influence decision making
- 79% were informed about how to vote

### **3.0 Oxford City Council: who we are and what we do**

**3.1** Oxford City Council is a District Council, with responsibility for running local planning, housing, Council Tax collection, housing benefits, business rates, environmental health, licensing, electoral registration, refuse and recycling collection, leisure services and parks, economic development, social inclusion, community cohesion, street wardens and park rangers, markets and fairs, tourism and cemeteries.

**3.2** The Full Council is composed of 48 Councillors representing 24 wards, with 26 Labour, 16 Liberal Democrat, 5 Green Party and 1 Independent Working Class Association. City Executive Board is the main decision-making body and scrutiny committees provide challenge to Council officers. The Council has a Chief Executive, three Directors responsible for City Regeneration, City Services and Finance & Efficiency, and twelve Heads of Service.

**3.3** The Council's vision is to build a world-class city for everyone and the Corporate Plan 2011-2015 reaffirms this ambition. The Council has produced a positive four year budget and refocused its priorities to embrace;

- A vibrant and sustainable economy
- Meeting housing need
- Strong and active communities
- A Cleaner, greener Oxford
- An efficient and effective Council

**3.4** Our guiding principles are to protect vulnerable communities (by improving the quality of Council housing, houses in multiple occupation in the private rented sector and reducing the numbers in temporary accommodation), invest in Oxford's future (by building new houses and improving leisure facilities) and embed the principles of sustainability, strengthen community participation (by developing area committees into more inclusive neighbourhood forums) and to provide leadership to the city (by supporting proactive partnership initiatives such as Oxford Strategic Partnership and the Local Enterprise Partnership).

**3.5** Oxford benefits from vibrant Local Strategic Partnerships which take a lead on flagship issues that include affordable housing, health and social inclusion, a safer, stronger and more cohesive city and the economy of the city. We also work with the Oxford Safer Communities Partnership to reduce crime, anti-social behaviour and domestic abuse, the Oxfordshire Stronger Communities Alliance which aims to strengthen the role of the voluntary and community sectors, the Oxford Inspires cultural development agency, and have supported the creation and development of the Destination Management Organisation "Visit Oxford" to improve the value, management and marketing of the cultural offer and experience of visitors to the City. Targets for the new organisation are to increase the length of stay of tourists and the spend per head of each in order to grow the tourism economy. The Council has been a lead partner in developing the Oxford Black Scholars walking tour and has given financial support to the creation of the Queer Oxford Guide and walking tour.

## 4.0 Mapping the journey to an “Achieving” Council

**4.1** The main driver and catalyst for this equalities journey is simply that Oxford City Council continues to strive to provide high quality public services against the difficult and challenging socio economic context of a large and diverse urban population (see analysis under section 2). So while in general Oxford is an affluent city, this masks high deprivation with 12 areas having deprivation that ranks among the worst 20 per cent of areas in England.

**4.2** The Audit Commission carried out an equalities review in 2009, because although the Council had a strong track record for promoting social inclusion, it needed to do more to maximise its overall impact on equality and diversity. The Council’s position was acknowledged as moving quickly and its corporate priorities for 2008-2011 had set out a commendable vision of “building a world class city for everyone”. Within this was a strong central theme of supporting the development of strong, cohesive communities, social and economic regeneration (particularly in deprived neighbourhoods), and an increasing responsibility for community leadership in partnerships as well as in the delivery of fully accessible local services. The key conclusions from the audit were that the Council was generally in good equalities health:

*“The Council has achieved real improvements for vulnerable communities over the last five years, with a range of physical, economic and social projects. Leadership is effective in promoting equalities and diversity externally. It provides long term financial support to voluntary groups to build capacity and there are positive examples of engagement with the local community which work well. The Council promotes community cohesion and gives commitment and support to events in the City which help the understanding and engagement of differing sectors of the community.”*

*“Social integration works well across the city and the percentage of people who think that people from a different background get on well is high. However, there are key longstanding challenges in the parts of the city that have high levels of deprivation, low social mobility and educational attainment. The leadership of the Council are clear that multiple deprivation in specific locations is its greatest challenge.”*

*“Improvement in the Council's strategic approach to equality and diversity is evident, moving from a low base of attainment in this area. The new corporate plan 2008 to 2011 incorporates specific themes that focus on vulnerable people and disadvantaged communities. Good baseline knowledge about the community is used to influence strategic planning and service delivery.”*

*“Overall, the Council is demonstrating good and improved leadership in promoting equalities and diversity. Equalities and diversity are higher profile. For example, the Council's new corporate plan 2008 to 2011 incorporates specific themes that focus on vulnerable people and disadvantaged communities. The leadership of the Council are clear that multiple deprivation in specific locations is its greatest challenge. Equalities sections are included in service planning. There are gaps in the strategic approach to equalities and diversity and in particular the approach that ensures that service delivery is consistent. The Council has a low level of achievement against the Local*

*Government Equalities Standard. The Council now needs to ensure that all managers across the organisation are working with their teams to achieve understanding and commitment at all levels and in all services.”*

**4.3** The Council has acted on these recommendations to identify and focus on the areas where it needed to make progress and as a base to implement steps such as making stronger relationships between strategic plans and frontline actions, including deliverable equalities objectives in all service planning, agreeing a programme of equality impact assessments (cemented in the City Executive Board forward plan), developing a “Customer First” strategy and rolling out a customer relationship management system (CRM) across the Council, undertaking a three year review of its Corporate Equality Scheme, and a full audit of its people management policies to ensure compliance with public sector legal duties and responsibilities. The results have seen an:

- Improved customer experience and service outcomes through refining customer service standards and developing a “Customer First” strategy;
- Improved understanding of community and customer needs by finalising a consultation strategy and evaluating the outcomes from our investment in capacity building with the voluntary sector and reporting these outcomes publicly;
- Improved strategic approach to equality and diversity by the regular monitoring of strategic action plans, widely publicising the 2008-2011 Corporate Equality Scheme, and ensuring full compliance with the CRE code of practice in racial equality in housing; and
- Improved approach to workforce planning and HR by reviewing current HR policies (including implementation of a fair employment and equal pay policy), developing workforce planning and baseline knowledge about the workforce against the protected characteristics under the new Equality Act 2010, and improving the merit based recruitment and selection process to attract a wider group of appropriately qualified applicants.

**4.4** We are clear that it is vital to maintain this momentum and we believe we have made substantial progress over the last two years. An example of the quality and further external validation of this progress can be most visibly seen in the achievement of Stonewall Diversity Champion (with a Workplace Equality Index placing in their top 378 employers), “Two Ticks” and Investor in People accreditation, all of which have been awarded to the Council since 2010 (2011 for liP). We are confident that we have realistic and deliverable objectives, robust action plans and the resources in place that will genuinely make a positive difference in meeting the diverse needs of the community and to take the Council through to 2015.



**4.5** The remaining sections of this submission mirror the 5 performance areas of the Equalities Framework for Local Government and provide an appropriate commentary on each aspect including case studies.

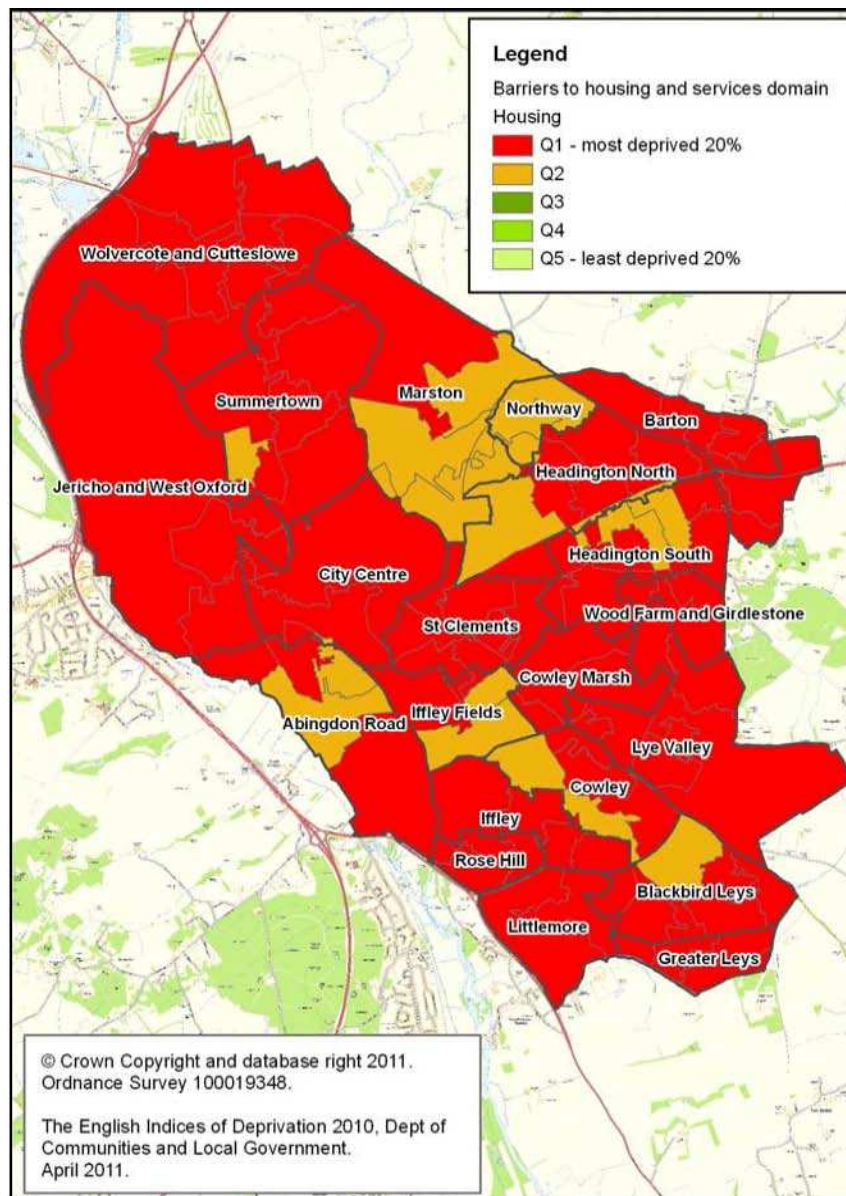
These areas are:

- Knowing our communities and equality mapping;
- Place shaping, leadership, partnership and organisational commitment;
- Community engagement and satisfaction;
- Responsive services and customer care;
- A modern and diverse workforce

## **5.0 Knowing our Communities and equality mapping**

**5.1** The City Council produces an Annual Profile key facts report that highlights a variety of core indicators, including how we compare against other places in England (see page 7). We work closely with the Oxfordshire Data Observatory to update statistics and to utilise the Experian/ Mosaic data sets to help plan regeneration initiatives.

Some parts of the City continue to suffer from stubborn deprivation and a significant number of people struggle to afford a home or get a job. Equality mapping has been used to provide service areas, strategic partners and the public with comprehensive data about local communities and trends. The following example indicates the barriers to accessibility to housing, amenities and services and the extent of areas at risk of housing overcrowding and homelessness.



**5.2** In 2009 the Audit Commission assessed Oxford City Council regeneration and Housing services as providing a ‘good’, two-star service that has promising prospects for improvement. The Service has achieved a wide range of physical, economic and social outcomes and it has improved the quality of life in its priority regeneration areas, focussing regeneration resources on its three priority neighbourhoods, by:

- Providing new housing to improve and broaden local housing opportunities and create more diverse communities which have higher aspirations and greater capacity for self improvement;
- Improving community facilities, including community and leisure centres, health centres, new schools and nurseries, sports and recreation areas;
- Improving public areas, and using art projects to enhance to image of the priority neighbourhoods;
- Promoting new employment opportunities, including proposals for the physical regeneration of the western end of the city centre;

- Working in partnership to provide training and other support to help people in the priority neighbourhoods compete for new employment opportunities and tackle other problems which affect their quality of life;
- Working effectively through the Oxford Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership to tackle crime and disorder; and
- Promoting sports and arts in the priority neighbourhoods to extend the skills and experience of local people, particularly young people

**5.3** From 1996 to 2006 Oxford benefited from £6.7 million national Single Regeneration Budget funding for community regeneration projects. This focussed on the south and east of the City, particularly the neighbourhoods of Barton and Blackbird Leys. It was extended from 2005 to 2008 by the £2 million Oxford Area Programme, funded by SEEDA and the City Council. The Council has now bid successfully for £6.8 million Growth Point funding. See the Meeting Housing Need case study on pages 13/ 14 for fuller details.

**5.4** Oxford City Council has introduced new area meetings that are providing a strong local focus on neighbourhoods across the city and the issues which are of particular concern to those respective communities. The Area Forums are taking place quarterly across the six areas of the city; East, North East, South East, Cowley, North and Central, South and West. Local Councillors are also convening neighbourhood level meetings in some areas between the forums. The quarterly meetings consist of invited community representatives and Councillors and are open to all members of the public. They will focus on the communities within the area, profiling some topical local issues raised by members of the community, with City Council Officers and local Councillors able to offer their views and suggest how these can best be addressed. A member of the Council's Corporate Management Team sponsors each forum to help progress actions arising from each session. Meetings are publicised on the Oxford City Council website, community notice boards and e-invites to local groups and individuals who have registered their interest. A forward planner for future meetings is posted on the Council website.

On developing the forums, the Council Leader commented:

*"We are seeking to develop the new forums as an open source way of increasing the level of involvement and accessibility and providing a place where local problems and gripes can be raised and solutions identified. The aim is to improve community engagement, with forums looking at specific issues and working with local people and partners towards a resolution."*

**5.5** The City Council has drawn up a Regeneration Framework to 2026 that focuses on strengthening the economy as a whole and providing training and jobs, regenerating particular geographical areas both physically and socially, and targeting and improving mainstream services so that they meet the needs of disadvantaged groups and communities. Delivery against the Framework is supported by our work with partners to 'Break the Cycle of Deprivation in Oxford': an ongoing commitment aimed at supporting vulnerable families, improving employability and reducing health inequalities in the county.

**5.6** We have identified a number of different case studies that support the achievement of the Council's corporate priorities in adapting our services to

the needs of our communities (case studies appear under each EFLG heading and will also reference our corporate plan priorities).

### **Case Study A – Meeting housing need/ Affordable housing**

There are over 6,000 over-crowded households living in Oxford and of 713 lettings made to social housing in 2009/10 only 155 were for homes with 3 or more bedrooms. There are over 165 households living in temporary accommodation and over 170 people living in hostels in the city. Half of homeless persons are aged under 25. At a snapshot count in July 2010 there were 18 rough sleepers. To address these housing issues we;

- Targeted super output areas of deprivation in the bottom quartile nationally to deliver the first new Council homes in over 20 years, working with housing associations to build at least 400 new affordable homes in the period 2010-12, with 256 of these units being developed in Rose Hill in partnership with Oxford Citizens Housing Association as part of the regeneration of three sheltered blocks and 97 “Orlits” (900 new affordable homes have been built in the city between 2005/06 and 2009/10);
- Achieved a 100% Decent Homes standard across our 8,000 retained housing stock by December 2010;
- Launched Choice Based Lettings giving people more choice of where they live and worked jointly with housing associations to let homes quickly;
- Worked with voluntary sector organisations to provide a range of services to support homeless people (such as hostels, move-on accommodation and return to work and training schemes) and we are committed to reducing the number of households in temporary accommodation from 130 in 2011/ 2012 to 50 in 2014/ 2015;
- Have been awarded the role of Regional Single Homelessness Champion, with £120k of additional funding in recognition for the work being carried out in the field of single homelessness, rough sleeping and youth homelessness: and
- We have also committed to an exciting new £18 million project to build 109 new homes (with 50% being developed as affordable housing) and two new community centres in Northway and Cowley designed to be flexible community spaces. This will be delivered through developing effective consultation and partnerships with third party providers Green Square and Hab Oakus. The Barton project (with Grosvenor as our secured partner investing £35 million) will deliver 40% affordable housing of up to 360 social housing units from 800-1000 new units.

### **Case Study B – Strong & Active Communities/ Social inclusion**

Positive Futures is a national social inclusion programme using sport and other activities to engage with disadvantaged and ‘at risk’ young people referred by partner services. The programme aims to have a positive influence on young people's lives by engaging with them and providing access to new opportunities within a familiar environment.

Using sport and other activities as a catalyst to encourage project participation, young people are steered away from Crime, Anti-Social Behaviour and Drug/Alcohol Misuse and supported into Education, Training and Employment. We aim to mentor young people and work with them to improve their character and remove the obstacles that may be holding them back. Positive Futures have involved over 500 young people in the programme. ([www.positivefuturesoxon.org.uk](http://www.positivefuturesoxon.org.uk))

Running successfully in Oxford it has created real life chances for those who have engaged with the programme. One person who has seen the Oxford PF programme change their life chances commented:

*“Now nearly nine years on I am still involved in Positive Futures. I now mentor other young people and they look up to me in the same way. That makes me feel great and to be a professional football coach and youth worker is what I want to do. I have just finished my national diploma in football coaching at Oxford City College to make this possible”.*

This area has now grown an apprentice post and has the potential to develop as a social enterprise in 2012/ 2013 to deliver sports services such as summer camps (see [www.posfutures.org](http://www.posfutures.org) for Oxford success stories). It is also expanding to recruit sessional staff to work with the Active Communities Partnership Manager and Positive Futures Co-ordinator to develop, implement and review the delivery of sports based intervention programmes, and develop and maintain effective links with local agencies and community groups. Current sessions include:

Mon 6pm – 8pm, Oxford Spires School Sport based (14 – 18yrs)  
Sun 3pm – 5pm, Blackbird leys Leisure Centre (10 – 13yrs)

### **Case Study C – Meeting housing need/ targeting benefit take up**

The Council collected data on all people who were claiming Council benefits at the end of January 2010. This data was used alongside a dataset called Mosaic Origins which estimated the number of adults living at that address and the ‘Origins type’ of each adult. The types in the Origins dataset estimate the family origin – in terms of religion, culture and/or country of origin - of each adult by analysis of their names. This analysis provided the Origins type of each adult in households claiming Council benefits.

The analysis showed that people of Bangladeshi origin are most likely to be claiming Council benefits – the claim rate is more than twice the city average. This is followed by people of Pakistani, ‘Other Muslim’ and Black African origins.

The people least likely to be claiming Council benefits are those in the Hispanic, Chinese, Other East Asian and Western European Origins groups. There were two possible reasons for different claim rates among different population groups:

- (i) The proportion of people eligible to claim benefits may vary; and
- (ii) The proportion of eligible people making and receiving a claim may vary

In case (i), there is no need for any action to improve benefit take-up; in case (ii) there would be a case for doing so. In order to understand which of these two causes is operating among each Origins group, we looked at national data on household income by ethnic group, which although not directly comparable to Origins types do have some overlap and can give a broad indication of the income levels in each Origins type.

This showed that the percentage of individuals in low-income households is higher than average across all non-white ethnic groups, but particularly high amongst people in Pakistani, Bangladeshi and Black non-Caribbean ethnic groups. This explains the high benefit claim rate amongst people from these groups. People of 'Chinese or Other' ethnic group are 1½ times more likely to be in low income households, which would lead us to expect a higher than average benefit claim rate. However, people of Chinese and Other East Asian Origins types have one of the lowest benefit claim rates. This suggests that people in Chinese and Other East Asian Origins types might be under claiming benefits to which they are entitled. We then used this data to target key under claiming groups and as a basis for a Corporate Equality objective for 2012 to cover the usage and access to Housing benefit/ Council tax benefit by using mosaic data sets and revalidating previous pilot data to target community groups and the take up of benefit entitlements.

As part of a fundamental benefits service review it is an aim that claimants will be able to access the Benefit Service more easily, by increasing the channels available, making the process quicker by removing some of the barriers to processing applications, and examining options for Housing Associations and Advice Centres to be enabled to work in partnership with the Benefits Service and help the claimant.

#### **Case Study D – Vibrant, sustainable economy/ Youth Job Fair**

Targeting youth unemployed aged 16-25, but not exclusively, the Council ran Oxford's first ever Youth Job Fair in August 2011. The YJF was jointly project managed by the P&E Apprentice (currently in year two of an NVQ 2 Business Administration) with six students from Oxford and Cherwell Valley College who were mentored and led by the P&E Projects Manager. The YJF saw over 350 attendees engage with twenty four local businesses and training providers with real apprenticeship, training and job vacancies to offer. The YJF enjoyed high profile coverage from the BBC and ITV as well as the local press. The feedback has been hugely enthusiastic, with formative plans now in development to run a monthly Work Club: again with the involvement of local business partners across all sectors but with a refined remit to focus on more specific market areas for each work club.

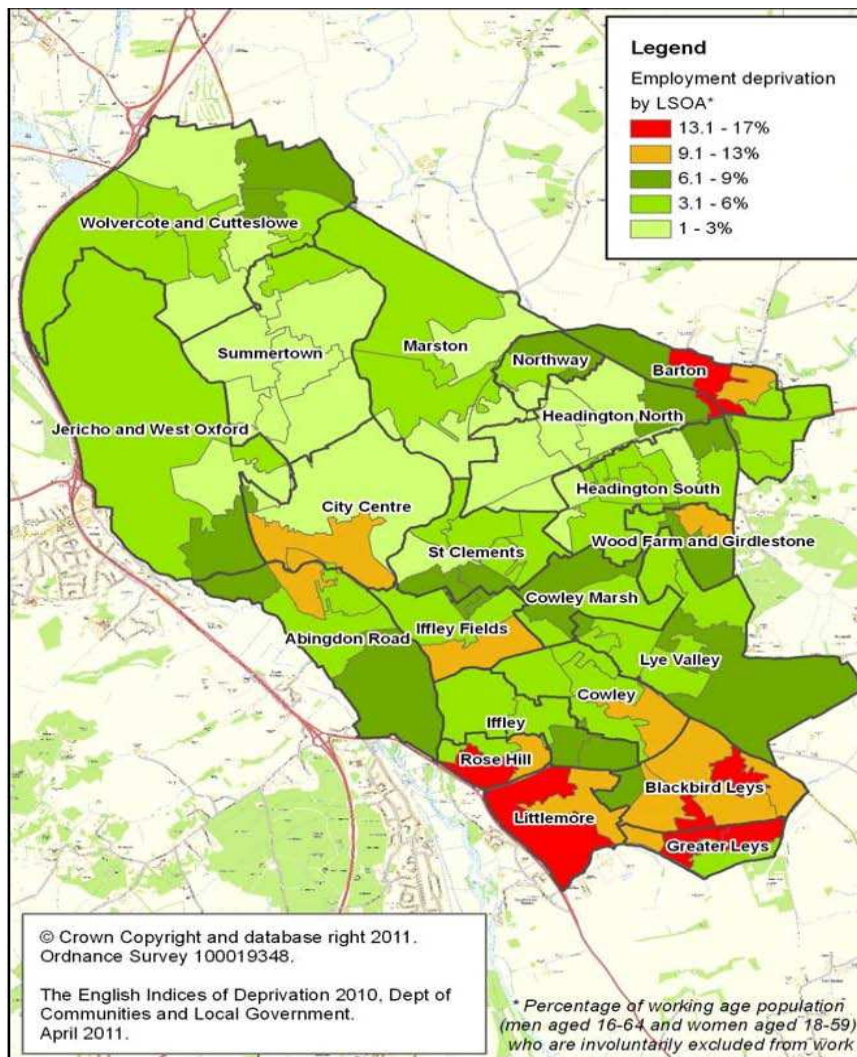
The Oxford Work Club will be coordinated by the Council and involve local employers, education providers such as the next steps initiative, an Oxford

City Council Customer Services or Housing & Council Tax benefits advisor, and Jobcentre Plus. Although based mainly from a static location, the intention is to run additional work clubs on an ad hoc basis to different community venues around the city in order to target the most vulnerable communities (see map below) and try to address the issues faced by the 17% of the working age population in Littlemore, 16% in Blackbird Leys and 15% in both Barton & Sandhills and Rose Hill considered to be employment deprived. Oxford is linked to the national work clubs network at [www.nationalworkclubs.net](http://www.nationalworkclubs.net) and launches in December 2011.

**5.7** These relationships have also stimulated further work and partnership building around planned work experience trials (in conjunction with Jobcentre Plus) and employee supported volunteering initiatives in partnership with Oxfordshire Community and Voluntary Action (OCVA), with briefings given to the Council's Corporate Management Team.

The Value and Performance Scrutiny Committee have been given regular progress reports around how work programmes have been making a difference in using innovative ways to engage with the community and where the space might be to develop future equalities work. There has been significant support from the committee for recent initiatives in the area of coaching and mentoring, back to work help and the hugely successful groundbreaking Youth Job Fair which acted as the springboard to launch the Oxford Work Club.

The employment deprivation map below has been used as supporting evidence by the Council to target employment initiatives to focus on its most deprived areas (Barton, Rose Hill, Littlemore, Blackbird Leys and Greater Leys) and this includes plans to run additional Work Club sessions in the locality of those areas.



**5.8** The Sports Development Team within the City deliver a wide range of projects and activities to get the residents of Oxford involved in sports, physical activity and to improve their health and well-being. These include [Get Oxfordshire Active \(GO Active\)](#), [Active Women](#) and [Street Sports](#).

**5.9** To ensure that we deliver an effective sports development service and meet our priorities and objectives, the sports development team work with a variety of key partners and stakeholders including:

- [Oxfordshire Primary Care Trust](#)
- [Oxfordshire Sports Partnership](#)
- [Fusion Lifestyle](#)
- [Thame and Oxford School Sports Partnership](#)
- [Oxfordshire Community and Voluntary Action](#)

**5.10** We have signed a 10-year management contract with Fusion Lifestyle (a not for profit organisation) which will deliver improvements to our leisure centres and reduce the overall cost of the service, resulting in better value for money for the people of Oxford. We have continued with an extensive leisure Slice Card scheme to enable families (whether waged or unwaged) to access our leisure facilities at competitive and discounted rates, keeping fees fixed at the same levels for the last three years.



For August 2011 there were in the region of 14,000 members across a number of different categories including student, aqua, active, bonus and reward. 33% of all memberships were held by those in receipt of benefits and helped us support inclusivity and offer affordable participation. We saw visits rise by 98,000 over the last year and we have developed and implemented an action plan to increase levels of participation in leisure activities by under-represented groups, with a 27% increase by those with a disability, 15% for older people, 12% for BME groups and an 8% increase for women and girls. Initiatives to increase uptake and participation by those currently in receipt of JSA also form part of the Oxford Work Club's approach to supporting 'wellbeing'.

We now have the second highest activity rate in the county, with around 27.6% of adults taking part in 30 minutes of moderate intensity activity sport or active recreation three days a week; a 6.9% increase is evident since 2005. We are now one of the top ten performing districts within the Active People Survey and we also continued to offer 50 hours per week free swimming for U17s living in the City.

**5.11** Please use the links to the following pages on our website to find comprehensive details of our Corporate Plan 2011-2015, Oxford Profile key facts, a summary of the indicators of deprivation across the city, our Regeneration Framework and access to monthly statistical releases on a variety of social issues:

<http://www.oxford.gov.uk/Direct/CorporatePlan201115.pdf>

<http://www.oxford.gov.uk/Direct/OCCKeyfacts2012.pdf>

<http://www.oxford.gov.uk/Direct/ID2010OxfordSummary.pdf>

<http://www.oxford.gov.uk/Direct/RegenerationFramework.pdf>

<http://www.oxford.gov.uk/PageRender/decC/ChartoftheMonth.htm>

## **6.0 Place Shaping, Leadership, Partnership and Organisational Commitment**

**6.1** The Council has made good progress in developing the connections between its strategic plans and front line actions. Our Corporate Plan 2011-2015 demonstrates active leadership and has continued our full commitment to providing long term funding to support sustainable development. Commissioning has a strong focus on local sustainability and supporting local businesses, and we have built in equality and diversity principles. Over the next four years we will invest around £68 million into the local economy, building new houses and improving the City's leisure offer, leading to the creation of around 900 new jobs. We will be leading on the delivery of a £300m regeneration programme resourced by over 250 staff, responsible for delivering Housing Strategy, our Housing Services, Community Engagement, Asset Management & Planning. We have a long standing commitment to small and medium sized businesses and will be aiming for 40% of the Council's total spend to be with this sector. We are committed to increasing the number of apprenticeships, training places and jobs created through

Council investment projects and other activities from 47 in 2011/ 2012 to over 900 across the City by 2014/ 15.

**6.2** The Equality Impact Assessment process is starting to develop real outcomes in a growing number of front line service areas. The EqIA process informed the critical reasoning behind the Council's 2011-2015 Budget and has been mainstreamed into the forward plan for the City Executive Board, where the Equalities and Diversity Business Partner acts as a critical friend and resource support for service areas as they undertake an assessment. A full training toolkit is available on the staff intranet for all managers and the initial screening template has been simplified after consultation with report and policy writers to make it more user-friendly. Following the successful implementation of Single Status across the Council in 2009, an Equal Pay review is scheduled for 2012 and will be subject to an impact assessment.

**6.3** The money available for grant allocation in 2011/2012 has been protected at £1.4 million. It has been agreed to prioritise allocation to advice and homelessness organisations (c £900k) while retaining c £248k for arts/ cultural projects. The Council has protected funding to address domestic violence, OSARCC funding (positive gender impact), the Oxford Friend funding (positive sexual orientation impact), Asylum Welcome (positive BME impact) and Parasol (positive disability impact). The Council has also protected the Disabled Facilities Grant (currently £390k per annum) and allowed for future rises in inflation. In response to the likely impact of the recession on an increasing level of personal debt within low income groups, there is also a funding increase for the Citizens Advice Bureau (total £200k) and debt counselling/ financial providers will be supported (e.g. the Agnes Smith and Rose Hill & Donnington advice centres). We will maintain the level of grants to key bodies providing welfare rights and money management advice.

**6.4** The Council has good relationships with the local voluntary sector and shows a strong commitment to supporting it. Councillors and senior managers have taken the decision to continue the sector's funding. They increased the level of financial investment in 2008/09, as part of a clear strategic approach to support its community and voluntary partnerships, and are clear that the Council needs to provide for a sustainable third sector and voluntary groups in order to deliver its strategic priorities. This active approach to commissioning demonstrates good understanding of the role of local partnerships in contributing to the Council's value for money. Elected members are keen to promote the employee supported volunteering scheme backed by the Council.

**6.5** There is a Strategic Equality Officers Lead Group, a forum for the respective equality lead officers from across public sector organisations (including the PCT, TVP, Oxfordshire County, Oxford City and all local district Councils) and this has worked to discuss the development of ideas around public sector responses to the Equality Act 2010 and publishing equality objectives, mutually supported events such as Holocaust Memorial day and IDAHO day, and sharing processes and templates around EqIAs and diversity awareness training. This group has the flexibility to meet on an ad hoc basis to respond to emerging issues. The group feeds into the Oxford Social

Inclusion Group and is a partner with the Oxfordshire Homophobic Action and Liaison Team in meetings and at Oxford Pride.

### **Case Study A – Strong & active communities/ Old Fire Station**

The redevelopment of the Old Fire Station presented a one-off opportunity to create a high quality, multi-disciplinary arts and community resource by providing a mix of multi-use spaces to operate alongside a social enterprise café and Crisis Skylight.

We reopened the Old Fire Station in November 2011 after a successful application for Places for Change funding in strategic partnership with Crisis Skylight Oxford. Crisis is the national charity for single homeless people, dedicated to ending homelessness by delivering life-changing services and campaigning for change. They will provide a wide range of arts and practical workshops, formal learning, well-being and advice services and a café which will train people in catering and hospitality skills.

We regard this ground-breaking initiative as an exciting and unique opportunity for the Council to work in a fully integrated way with Crisis to bring the arts to marginalised sectors of the community, and in doing so meet our corporate priorities of strengthening communities and improving the quality of life of Oxford's citizens; enabling people to meet, learn, network, participate and ultimately move forward in their lives.

We will also work with Crisis to offer ongoing partnership support through human resources policy expertise and with volunteers.

[www.oldfirestation.info](http://www.oldfirestation.info)



## Case Study B – Strong and active communities/ Blue Sky project



Blue Sky Development & Regeneration is a not-for-profit company established by the charity Groundwork Thames Valley. It was set up to give paid work to people coming out of prison, to enable them to move successfully into long-term employment.

Over the 5 years since it was set up, Blue Sky has employed nearly 500 ex-offenders - that's greater than the entire inmate population of some of Britain's prisons. And of these, less than 15% have re-offended - that's a quarter of the national average.

Blue Sky's mission is to help break the cycle of re-offending and achieve long-term benefits for society.

Our Parks services team supported a Blue Sky team for over 12 months.

*"We are grateful for the opportunity this gave us to work in some extremely high quality parks. Through your support we have made a significant difference and our partnership is an exemplar social/public sector model. The Blue Sky team gained from the considerable knowledge and skill of the Oxford Parks staff and were particularly grateful for the trust they were given."*

This demonstrates the success that can be achieved, and the potential for the development of a mutually beneficial approach.

It is regularly cited at meetings with the Ministry of Justice and the Cabinet Office. Through our relationship, Oxford and Blue Sky have achieved real results, with outstanding and highly valued social impact.

In just over 12 months, 11 individuals were employed within the Oxford supply chain, 45% completed the full 6 months of their contract, with 20% gaining full time employment. The re-offending rate is under 10% - well below a quarter of the national average.

**6.6** The main purpose of our Cultural Services is to identify, nurture and develop partnerships to enable Oxford's cultural organisations to make links with internal and external service providers, to produce and manage projects for our local communities, particularly those in deprived areas of the city. The service currently core funds 7 organisations as delivery partners for specific projects and activities aimed at Oxford's disadvantaged communities and supporting excellence in the arts; Oxford Inspires, Oxford Playhouse, Pegasus Theatre, Oxford Contemporary Music, Modern Art Oxford, Film Oxford and Fusion Community Arts. The City Council also awards grants to specific arts projects via the community & voluntary annual grant programme.

### **Case study C – Strong and active communities/ Cultural Partnerships**

#### **Dancin' Oxford:**

The City Council's own dance festival, now in its 6<sup>th</sup> year and attracting on-going financial support from the Arts Council, incorporates the following:

- Mixed month-long programme of international, national and local dance, supported and hosted by Pegasus Theatre, Oxford Playhouse, the Old Fire Station and the New Theatre, the Castle, Film Oxford and others;
- Specific projects such as Urban Dance, Get Movin', youth dance and others aimed at older people, younger people and excluded groups, working alongside our community centres and community groups to target local communities;
- Christmas dance stage, showcasing local groups as part of Oxford's celebrations;
- Leading on Oxford Dance Forum, who successfully bid for funding from the Arts Council this year for a professional development programme.

#### **Oxfordshire Museums Partnership:**

The City Council is part of the museums partnership led by the University Museums and the County Museums Service, and the Museum of Oxford is a core delivery partner. Two community Engagement Officers, paid for by the University of Oxford, work with the Museum to deliver:

- Reminiscence work, working alongside the NHS Hospitals Trust, Age Concern and others to provide sessions and activities with key themes;
- Targeted projects working with people with learning difficulties, homeless people and others to produce exhibitions i.e. the Mini project;
- Collaborative exhibitions working alongside other cultural providers such as Pegasus Theatre.

#### **Cowley Road Carnival:**

The Carnival is the city's culturally diverse event and draws together different communities and providers, including Ark-T, Pegasus Theatre, Fusion Community Arts and individual artists to produce an annual festival and

procession celebrating Oxford's diverse communities. The Carnival attracts external sponsorship from BMW and other commercial companies and offers opportunities for local schools and groups to contribute and participate.

### **Case Study D – Strong & active communities/ inclusive sport**

The shared vision of the Oxfordshire Sports Partnership is “Everyone more active and achieving their potential through sport” and this firmly applies to disability sport within the partnership. James Craggs, the Disability & Inclusive Sports Officer, promotes sporting opportunities for people with disabilities and works closely with Local Authorities, National Governing Bodies, special and mainstream schools and other partners.

OSP put on a wide range of events for people of all ages with disabilities last year and these included:

- An All Abilities Golf day at Hinksey Heights Golf Club;
- A “Have a Go” sports day at Horspath Athletics Track for adults with learning disabilities;
- A Parallel Youth Games for secondary aged special school pupils; and
- A County Assessment day identifying talented young disabled athletes

Events have been really well received by participants who have been able to pursue the sport (s) further after the event, with the following examples of customer satisfaction from the Have a Go sports day being typical:

*“It was brilliant day and very enjoyable. I think everyone had great fun and the football and running were my personal favourites.”*

Clare Davis, tutor at Abingdon and Witney College, said: *“It was a really nice idea and great that our students could take part and let loose and enjoy the day on the running track. I think they will take a lot back from the event.”*

Edward Parker, a volunteer at the event, said *“It was a really good opportunity to showcase a whole range of sports some people had never played before”*

The OSP also supports carers and coaches with key events covering:

- A County Disability Sport Information Fair so that people could find out about disability sports sessions and opportunities in Oxfordshire; and
- Disability sport training for coaches

A list of all opportunities can be found on the disability pages of the partnership website:

<http://www.oxfordshiresport.org/landingpage.asp?section=980&sectionTitle=Adaptive%2C+Disability+and+Inclusive+Sport+in+Oxfordshire>

## **7.0 Community Engagement and Satisfaction**

**7.1** The City Council has been a national leader in terms of the innovative ways in which it engages local people in the decisions that impact on their lives. We introduced Area Committees – six across the city – in 2001. We have developed our Area Committees into Neighbourhood Forums to encourage more community participation. Neighbourhood Forums, attended

by representatives of key service providers and charities relevant to the neighbourhood, will enable problems in the area to be identified and effective solutions developed. The Localism Act includes measures to strengthen the role of neighbourhoods in helping to plan new developments in their areas. The City Council will take advantage of these new opportunities for community engagement where it can and will support local residents who wish to get involved. Consultation with the community is also at the heart of our approach to tackling crime and the fear of crime and Thames Valley Police in Oxford has been a national leader in its approach to community policing through the Oxford Safer Communities Partnership. We will continue to build on the successes of the Neighbourhood Action Groups through a continuing partnership with the Thames Valley Police Authority.

**7.2** The Council has a strong track record in promoting community cohesion well. For example, it collaborates effectively with the police to prevent violent extremism. The Community Response Team is a city-wide service where Community Wardens undertake scheduled patrols across the city, identifying and reporting all forms of anti-social behaviour to improve the local environment. The Council also has a Crime and Nuisance Action Team (CANACT) a team of specialist investigators and family/ witness support working in partnership with many organisations including social housing providers, health trusts and local Neighbourhood Policing Teams. Our commitment to responding effectively to harassment, domestic violence (DV) and hate crimes is strong, and it has been achieving some good outcomes. A domestic violence co-ordinator is employed at the city Council and ongoing funding is provided for a rape crisis centre, and to a hate crime multi agency group (MANTRA). This provides a framework of prevention tools and actions to address the needs of vulnerable sectors of the community. The work of OSCP has had a significant impact upon crime and disorder in Oxford since its inception in 1998.

For example between 1998/99 and 2009/10 there were:

- 71% fewer domestic burglaries;
- 80% fewer car crimes;
- 6% fewer violent crimes;
- 12% fewer robberies.

#### **Case Study A – Strong & active communities/ Safer Communities**

- The Domestic & Sexual Abuse Co-ordinator developed a multi-agency training package for approximately 100 front line professionals to enable better understanding of the dynamics of honour based violence and/ or forced marriage and to improved identification and appropriate responses to victims. Training is ongoing and will reach a further 50 professionals;
- The Council adopted a multi agency approach to support the Respect Agenda for social housing and were a key partner with the Elmore Team anti-social behaviour project working with 38 individuals and families with mental health problems, drug or alcohol, homelessness or ex offender issues to effect a reduction in the number of Anti Social Behaviour Orders and Acceptable Behaviour Contracts being issued.

The team were awarded the Guardian Public Services Award for Complex Needs in November 2010;

- Tenancy services posted regular briefings released by the Thames Valley Police ([oxford@tvpcommunitymessaging.org](mailto:oxford@tvpcommunitymessaging.org)) covering ASB and other crime warnings
- The Council developed a Building Resilience Strategy to support the national strategy to tackle violent extremism which was cited as good practice by GOSE
- We recently supported Oxford Human Trafficking Group in marking the UK Anti-Slavery Day and the EU's Anti-Trafficking Day by raising awareness through '*Open your eyes to human trafficking – the truth isn't sexy*' campaign to tackle and prevent all forms of human trafficking in Oxfordshire and support those affected.

**7.3** In addition, our annual Talkback Citizen's Panel Survey tells us that in 2008, 38% of respondents were satisfied that the Police and local Councils were dealing with crime and antisocial behaviour issues in their area; by 2010 this had risen to 50%.

**7.4** Over the next 12 months, the City Council will be diversifying the ways in which it communicates with our communities. By making effective use of social media we aim to encourage more interaction with people, not just about their service needs but also around issues of wider concern. We facilitated a social media conference in September 2011 and for full access to the key note presentation see:

<http://blog.public-i.info/2011/09/oxford-social-media-conference/>

**7.5** The Council produces a twice yearly external "Your Oxford" ([www.youxford.gov.uk](http://www.youxford.gov.uk)) twenty page newsletter with a circulation of 62,000. The Council's website has been reviewed and developed to make it easier to navigate, and the Access Officer tested the Equalities & Diversity pages and made changes to ensure that the site was both fully accessible and up to date.

**7.6** During 2010/ 2011 the Council developed a new Communities & Neighbourhoods team as part of the Housing & Communities Service, with a remit to engage with local communities, encourage democratic participation, develop social regeneration initiatives and create a dialogue that helps us as an organisation better understand the needs of our communities and how we can best meet those needs in the services we provide. This team works in partnership across the 6 areas of the city, to deliver some real and lasting improvements, involving residents in shaping the areas in which they live. They are currently working on some major regeneration projects: more housing and new community facilities in Northway and Cowley; a new combined school, children's centre, community and youth facility in Wood Farm and also the community involvement in the proposals for the new housing development in Barton. They are also building greater capacity into the team by bringing in Tenants Participation and part of the Housing Estate Managers role related to the community. Their aim is to consult, involve, listen and respond to communities through developing constructive ongoing relationships ([communities@oxford.gov.uk](mailto:communities@oxford.gov.uk))



### **Case Study B – Strong & active communities/ Community Engagement**

- Inviting Community Matters to run a Community Association Clinic with representatives from our City's 20 active community centres. The purpose of the day was to share experiences; with guidance on how to make community centres more accessible, signposting ways to run more cost effectively and looking at how centres could ensure they were best serving their local community;
- Supporting Blackbird Leys Youth and Community Centre to establish a new Community Association so that local residents can get involved in running their centre again;
- Supported community consultation in Rose Hill to decide how to use funds from the regeneration programme to improve community facilities. This has led to a plan for improving sports and leisure facilities, refurbishing the community centre and making it a more vibrant hub offering a range of activities that local residents have asked for;
- Working with local residents in Blackbird Leys, service providers and community groups to set up a Neighbourhood Management Partnership. Their role will be to ensure that regeneration activities and on-going local services in the area are responsive to the needs of the local community;
- Coordinated the redecoration of Jubilee 77 and Littlemore Community Centre, involving the Community Payback Service, to modernise and refresh the community facilities;
- Supporting four of the five community centres in the area to achieve and maintain their Community Matters VISIBLE accreditation and set high standards for the people they serve; and
- Supporting the newly formed community bus co-operative in the North Oxford area to help vulnerable and isolated people to access services.

### **Case Study C – Strong & active communities/ Tenant engagement roadshows**

The aim of the events was to promote tenant and leasehold involvement across the City Council, gain feedback from our customers on the HRA budget, local offers and how tenants and leaseholders want to be more involved in the future. This was an opportunity for us to meet our customers by showcasing information and it was also a chance to gain feedback from our customers on our services covering:

- What sort of housing service you want to receive?
- What our budget priorities are and how we should spend available funds to improve your home or community?
- How you want to be involved in working with us or monitoring our performance.
- Suggesting improvements and changes in your local area.

Roadshows took place at five city locations:

Wood Farm Children's Centre, Thursday 17 November, 2 - 6pm

Oxford Town Hall, Tuesday 22 November, 5 - 8pm

Barton Neighbourhood Centre, Thursday 24 November, 2 - 6pm

Rose Hill Community Centre, Friday 25 November, 2 – 6pm

Blackbird Leys Leisure Centre, Tuesday 29 November, 2 - 6pm

They offered the opportunity for a “hot issue” help-desk where any issues could potentially be raised; with specialist housing, tenancy management, health and wellbeing, anti social behaviour, street scene and HR officers available to help with wider issues, including advice on benefits and getting back into work.

Councillor Joe McManners, Board Member for Housing Needs and Ward Councillor for Churchill Ward, said: *“They give us the chance to base ourselves in local communities and speak to people about how they want to get more involved.”*

*“We have some excellent teams who work hard to deliver the best possible service to our residents, but we want to find out what we can do to make this even better for you.”*

Views can also be shared via the consultation ‘Tenant and Leaseholder Involvement – How do you want to get involved?’

Visit [www.oxford.gov.uk/consultation](http://www.oxford.gov.uk/consultation) to complete the survey online or contact the team on 01865 252662 or at [communities@oxford.gov.uk](mailto:communities@oxford.gov.uk) to request a copy by post.

Find out more about getting involved [www.oxford.gov.uk/getinvolved](http://www.oxford.gov.uk/getinvolved)

**7.7** We have supported three elected tenant representatives through a Chartered Institute of Housing Active Learning for Residents Level 2 Award in Community Action in Housing Programme which resulted in recognised housing qualifications being gained.

**7.8** We have also facilitated the delivery of Chartered Institute of Housing (CIH), Tenant Participation Advisory Service (TPAS) and Council equalities training to elected tenant representatives in 2010 and 2011 and will develop an ongoing programme of refresher training for 2012 to support effective scrutiny and the development of local offers.

**7.9** We operate a Monday-Friday duty officer service, providing informal planning advice available for up to a maximum of 15 minutes to all customers visiting our St Aldate's Customer Service Centre. The planning portal has also undergone an overhaul to make it more interactive (see the following link: <http://www.oxford.gov.uk/PageRender/decP/Planning.htm>.)

### **Case Study D – Strong and active communities/ Planning Portal “Hot Topics”**

The Planning Portal was overhauled to facilitate more effective ease of access and awareness raising for major applications and politically “hot” applications likely to draw a lot of local interest and publicity

#### **New planning application for 20-24 St Michael's Street**

PLANNING CONTROL - We have received a Planning and Listed Building Application for 20-24 St Michael's Street to change the use to a boutique hotel. To find out more search for the planning references 11/02404/FUL and 11/02410/LBC in our [Public Access system](#).

#### **New planning application for Fox and Hounds public house, Abingdon Road**

PLANNING CONTROL - We have received a Planning Application for Fox And Hounds Public House, Abingdon Road. To find out more search for the planning reference 11/02594/FUL in our [Public Access system](#).

#### **Upcoming changes to HMO legislation**

PLANNING CONTROL - Oxford City Council is planning to introduce planning control measures so that landlords will have to apply for planning permission if they want to establish a new House in Multiple Occupation (HMO). [Find out more](#).

#### **Jericho designated as a conservation area**

CONSERVATION - There is now a new Article 4 Direction for the Jericho area of Oxford. This will affect any planning application submitted within Jericho. [Find out more](#).

#### **Barton Area Action Plan progressing**

PLANNING POLICY - Following consultation on the Barton AAP in May and June, we are now drafting the next stage of the document which will be published for consultation in January 2012. [Find out more](#).

#### **Sites and Housing Development Plan Document progressing**

PLANNING POLICY - We consulted on the Sites and Housing DPD in June and July and will be now producing the next stage of the document which will be published for consultation in January 2012. [Find out more](#).

#### **Community Infrastructure Levy**

PLANNING POLICY - The City Council has been chosen as one of the lead authorities to bring forward a charging schedule in 2012 that will be applied to new development to help deliver new infrastructure in Oxford. A draft will be produced in April 2012. [Find out more](#).

## **Case Study E – Strong and active communities/ Corporate consultation**

<http://consultation.oxford.gov.uk/inovem/consult.ti/system/calendar?>

### **Current consultation:**

We are introducing a new wayfinding system for Oxford city centre which will replace the existing 'finger posts' with a range of signs that provide directional and map information. The proposed system also includes state-of-the-art smartphone technology that enables the user to access useful and interesting information about Oxford. The aim is to enhance the experience of visiting, working or living in Oxford by improving people's sense of orientation and providing a better understanding of what the city has to offer. To ensure people get a good understanding of what the wayfinding scheme is about, we have installed two prototype signs in the city centre - one adjacent to Bonn Square at the top of New Inn Hall Street, and the other at the Queen Street end of St Ebbes Street. The prototypes will be in place from 7 October to 7 November (the duration of the consultation)

An Environmental Development Taxi Licensing satisfaction survey. The taxi licensing office has recently introduced many changes to the taxi licensing systems with the aim of improving efficiency and making it more straightforward for you to renew your licence. We would value your feedback around these changes with consultation open from 08/08/11 to 31/03/12 (results from 30/04/12)

### **Key consultation undertaken in 2010/ 2011:**

- Corporate Plan 2011-2015
- Budget 2011-2014
- Grants Prospectus Programme 2011-2015
- Council Tax and Benefits Survey
- Community Centre Satisfaction survey
- Changes to decision making arrangements
- Housing Strategy 2011-2014
- Talkback Citizens Survey Panel

### **Previous consultation:**

The Sustainable Communities Act 2007 provides a statutory framework for Councils, working with local people and community groups, to put forward proposals on sustainable improvements to economic, environmental and social wellbeing to improve the quality of life and wellbeing in their local areas. Oxford City Council is one of the 117 Councils that have opted to use the Act by identifying local priorities that will inform proposals for improving communities. More information on the act can be found by visiting [www.unlockdemocracy.org.uk](http://www.unlockdemocracy.org.uk) The "What really matters to you?" consultation ran in June/ July 2009

<http://consultation.oxford.gov.uk/gf2ti/f/17098/2888869.1/pdf/-/Sustainable%20Communities%20Report.pdf>

## 8.0 Responsive Services and Customer Care

8.1 The Council monitors the grants that it provides to the voluntary sector and identifies the numbers of groups that have benefitted from the grants process. It has improved its mechanisms to publicise outcomes more effectively and an annual report is scrutinised by the CEB. A recent review of the grant application forms saw more detailed guidance added to them to further facilitate applicants to make good quality submissions. This extra guidance has been added to the website.

The financial year 2010/2011 saw 93 community and voluntary organisations awarded a grant through Oxford City Councils grant programme and funding supported the delivery of a variety of projects from small community events to welfare benefits advice, the arts and community safety projects. The total number of people benefiting from projects and activities funded through the open bidding programme last year was estimated at 168,440.

### **Case Study A - Strong & active communities/ Grants commissioning**

£10k grant to support the Ethnic Minority Business Service to deliver a project offering pre entry level training to disadvantaged ethnic minority groups in Oxford. 84 learners were assessed as pre entry, 24 completed training and 14 went onto further education.

Grant support of £42K for the Elmore Team to provide practical help, emotional support, advocacy and outreach for people who have complex needs and who are not picked up through other services available. The service also provides training for colleagues in the health and social services network. The team provided support to 90 individuals during the year that had complex needs. The support provided helped these people maintain their tenancies.

£38k grant for ASPIRE, a social enterprise offering training and work opportunities to homeless and previously homeless people in the Oxford area. Aspire's central focus is to facilitate the transition from homelessness through the experience of supported, paid employment. All Aspire employees work within a directed employment plan, with a view to move on to permanent full time work within 6-12 months. and many of them were supported to move into work placements and employment, 27 were employed by the City Council.

£42K grant for One Step Forward, a hostel offering accommodation for young people aged between 16- 25 years old as well as helping young homeless people develop their life skills and providing a day service, including structured activities targeted towards sustainable living, food, information and support. The project also provides a base from which resettlement work may be undertaken. This project worked with 163 young people under 25 years old linking them with external agencies to support their needs, also linking them into workshops to give them life skills such as budgeting & cooking. 86 of these young people accessed education and training facilities, 11 into paid work and 2 into voluntary/work placements

£10k funding awarded to support the Oxford Sexual Abuse & Rape Crisis helpline which provides support for women who have experienced sexual violence either in childhood or as adults. This organisation has again seen an increase from previous year. From the 529 people supported in 2010-11, 36% were rape related, 36% were historic child abuse issues, 13% were sexual assault, 5% were domestic sexual assault & 10% unknown.

£8k funding awarded to Asylum Welcome to work with young people aged between 16-25 years old who are unaccompanied asylum seekers. Regularly working with 40 young people who are unaccompanied asylum seekers, responding to their needs at a time when they are emotionally volatile and unsettled. Football training is used as a way to engage with them and a total of 95 participants attended sessions last year.

£58k grant to OCVA to support the development of voluntary and community organisations so that they deliver consistently high quality activities and services to their beneficiaries, ensuring groups at risk of exclusion are empowered to develop their own solutions

Supported “My Life, My Choice” a self-advocacy charity for adults with learning disabilities, to win a tender for a community cafe in West Oxford. It opened in March 2010 and is run by people with learning disabilities. "We're building support from the community too. The people in that cafe are seen all the time at the centre of that community, not on the periphery". A travel buddy scheme, which enables independent and confident people with learning difficulties to accompany others until they can do it for themselves, has encouraged more people to participate. My Life, My Choice was a Guardian Charity Award winner in 2010.



**8.2** The Council continues to improve access to services (with translation and Language Line options for customers) and is developing its social media. All Council owned buildings are fully audited and generally accessible, with 86%

of facilities accessible while the remainder are subject to major refurbishment plans or waiting for financial decisions on these proposed work programmes. Hearing induction loops have been installed in key meeting rooms and a portable hearing loop is available for all services. We have almost completed a self-financing substantial refurbishment of St Aldate's Chambers which will have an extremely positive benefit for the customer experience (costing £4 million) and the new "Customer First" one number contact centre opened on 12<sup>th</sup> September 2011. We nevertheless recognise that more work can be done to make contacting the Council easier for customers and that the development of a CRM system across all service areas will inevitably reduce the duplication of data collection and speed up the response to queries so that we can meet our commitment to resolve queries at the first point of contact. A restructure of the Customer Services team has created the opportunity to push forward the culture of service delivery so that staff are equipped with the necessary cross cutting skills to act as advocates for our customers.

**8.3** The Housing Options service has developed innovative ways of helping people solve their housing, work and money problems through a more holistic approach. Although homelessness is broadly the symptom, underlying causes such as debt, the need for benefit advice, and access to education or training are big influences. Advisors deal with two to three thousand customers each year, up to 40% of whom will require this enhanced element. Advice includes giving out 'On Your Feet' guides which identify customer needs, signpost appropriate agencies, and discuss referral arrangements for benefits and debt/ childcare advice with CAB and other advice providers. A higher percentage of BME and young people need to access the enhanced options service.

#### **Case Study B – Strong & active communities/ "On Your FEET"**

The "On Your FEET" (Finding Employment Education or Training) guide has been produced as part of Oxford City Council's Enhanced Housing Options service as a pocket-sized reference guide for anyone in Oxford who would like to get into or back into work, education or training.

It also includes information about support that might help you get into work, education or training:

- Where to go to get help about the benefits or grants you might be able to claim;
- Where you can get advice about problems with debt or managing your money;
- Getting online;
- Volunteering or starting your own business; and
- Where you can find suitable childcare and the help you might get to pay for childcare.

More than 4,500 'On Your Feet' guides have been distributed, with additional information available from [www.oxford.gov.uk/workandtraining](http://www.oxford.gov.uk/workandtraining) enabling online searches for employment, education and training, or childcare advice needs. Customers at St Aldate's completed a Housing Options Duty questionnaire (25-29<sup>th</sup> October 2010) and results from the 66 forms returned indicated that a

snapshot of the two highest priority needs were claiming benefits and dealing with stress. Following an 'On Your FEET' event in Blackbird Leys in May 2010, the Project Co-ordinator has planned two more community based events, with Barton and Rose Hill scheduled in before March 2011. The People & Equalities team also attended to provide advice and guidance on getting back into work and to signpost potential training providers. This is a core target as the level of NEETs amongst 18 year olds in Oxford is estimated to be as high as 1:10 (with youth unemployment mirroring the national 1:5 figure).

**8.4** The Council retains a dedicated Access Officer post that has a mentoring role for the embryonic development of Oxfordshire Unlimited, an access forum working with providers of employment, goods, facilities and services to ensure the inclusion of people with physical difficulties in all parts of that provision. An important part of their role is early involvement with monitoring major planning applications to flag up any accessibility implications. They also coordinate and deliver disability awareness training briefings and run events such as a successful International Disability Day event in December 2010 which saw briefings on Disability and the Equality Act 2010 and presentations from local employers such as Oxford Brookes University on employing disabled employees. The 2012 Disability Information Fair will have a photo competition with a theme around "Challenging Images"; images that challenge people's perceptions of disability or older age in relation to sport or other activities in an Olympic year. The post also filters into a cross service strategic consultation group.

**8.5** The Council builds equality and diversity categories into its Procurement Strategy (<http://oxford.gov.uk/Direct/ProcurementCommissioning>) and it monitors the achievement of these, with penalty payments applying to contractors who do not achieve the targets set. We undertake to help suppliers develop their approach to equality issues and monitor improvements through contract review meetings, and the corporate equalities policy forms an appendix to all tenders. We put on "meet the buyer" events for prospective new suppliers and the procurement team holds tendering workshops aimed at smaller local suppliers that cover equalities requirements and guidance on where they can get specialist advice if needed. Feedback to unsuccessful tenders on equalities and diversity issues has resulted in improvements in suppliers procedures in these areas. The Council has been the lead partner in the Oxfordshire Procurement Hub, supplying a specialist officer for this group, and works proactively with Business Link, the Federation of Small Businesses, and Thames Valley Chamber of Commerce to encourage better engagement with the public sector. We are committed to doing all we can to place orders for goods and services with local businesses and organisations - as demonstrated by our first place ranking in the South East region survey by the Federation of Small Businesses. Currently over 30% of all Council business is with local suppliers. The Council also co-funds a City Centre Manager to help develop the City commercially and work with a strong stakeholder group.



*"Understanding and securing business from Local Authority departments is often a lengthy and difficult process. The proactive approach Oxford City Council is taking to Sub Contractor working relationships is a refreshing sign and key in supporting the growth of local businesses" (Cotswold Structural Services)*

**8.6** We have invested over £2.5 million to improve the quality of the majority of our play areas. By April 2011 we had successfully refurbished 50 of these. There has also been a significant investment of £2.2 million to revamp some of our leisure centres and this has been partly responsible for around a 5% increase in leisure memberships in the last year. The centre at Blackbird Leys has just received a QUEST rating as "good" and we are proud to have achieved Green Flag accreditation for four of our parks.

**8.7** We have reduced waiting times for assessments and completed work for a full disabled adaptations programme for socially housed tenants to meet the top quartile under Housemark sector benchmarking. This was reduced from 60.8 weeks in 2007/2008 to an average of 11 weeks for 2009/2010 partly through the appointment of an in-house Occupational Therapist. All new affordable homes being built with partners will be to sustainability criteria at levels 4 and 5. We also continue to deliver free recycling and other refuse collection services for 2,400 residents currently in receipt of benefits, accounting for 23.5% of service users, and maintain and review annually an assisted collection service for over 1000 residents.

#### **Case Study C – Meeting housing needs/ Landlord Accreditation**

Oxford City Council's Landlord Accreditation Scheme is a voluntary scheme that private residential Landlords and Letting Agents are encouraged to join.

We have now launched the scheme following a consultation period and are promoting it to Landlords and Letting Agents across the City.

#### **Aims of the scheme**

The aims of the scheme are to improve the condition and management of the private rented sector in Oxford. We will encourage, acknowledge and actively promote good standards of privately rented accommodation with the aim of assisting Landlords, Letting Agents and tenants to undertake their respective responsibilities to each other.

We will be pleased to give guidance to Landlords and Letting Agents about the standards required by the scheme.

The scheme comprises an element of self-regulation and accordingly relies on a degree of goodwill and trust on the parts of Landlords, Letting Agents, tenants and the Local Authority.

The scheme applies to the private rented sector only and not to Local Authority owned or Housing Association properties where other Service Level Agreements apply.

It is a requirement of the scheme that:

- (a) the Landlord or Letting Agent is a “Fit and Proper” person
- (b) the Landlord and a suitable representative of the Letting Agent attends a training course run by the Council
- (c) the physical condition of all the properties they own or manage meet minimum legal standards
- (d) that management practices are fair and reasonable and meet the management code of practice requirements
- (e) community relations are maintained

Compliance with the scheme will ensure that:

- Landlords, Letting Agents, tenants and local residents enjoy the benefits of good property conditions, competent management standards and considerate neighbourly behaviour;
- Misunderstandings and disputes are reduced; and
- Where problems do occur they are promptly resolved.

### **Case Study D – Vibrant, sustainable economy/ “Scores on the Doors”**

To support the enforcement of food safety legislation in Oxford for 1,400 food businesses from greengrocers to university college kitchens we provide an extensive training and advice programme. As one of 122 contributing Councils we are part of the national Scores on the Doors 5 star food hygiene rating scheme



[www.scoresonthedoors.org.uk](http://www.scoresonthedoors.org.uk)

### **Food Safety Training Programme 2011-2012**

Environmental Health Officers at Oxford City Council have been successfully delivering food hygiene courses for over 27 years and are highly experienced for meeting the training needs of the catering community.

In February 2009, the Chartered Institute of Environmental Health (CIEH) audited our training, we were rated “*very good*”. Comments included “*The training team are very conscientious and make every possible effort to meet candidate needs*”.

Our courses are tailored to suit all abilities including those with learning difficulties and candidates who do not have English as their first language. We offer a range of exam papers in other languages and can also provide oral

exams to assist candidates if requested.

We can make provision for disabled candidates and those with a variety of special needs. The qualifications are awarded by the CIEH and accredited by Ofqual (Office of Qualification and Examinations Regulation). More information about the CIEH is available at [www.cieh.org](http://www.cieh.org)

- Monday 4 April 2011      Monday 31 October 2011
- Friday 20 May 2011      Monday 21 November 2011
- Tuesday 14 June 2011      Wednesday 7 December 2011
- Monday 18 July 2011      Wednesday 18 January 2012
- Monday 8 August 2011      Thursday 2 February 2012
- Tuesday 13 Sept 2011      Wednesday 7 March 2012

### **Case Study E – Vibrant, sustainable economy/ Accessible Oxford**

Our Shopmobility Scheme was used by 2400 people in 2009 and is open 8am-6.30pm seven days per week with free parking for service users, equipment bookable in advance (outside hours coverage can be arranged) and RADAR keys for access to 7000 toilets across Oxfordshire can be purchased

- In partnership with Oxfordshire County Council and the Oxfordshire Learning Disability Partnership Board, Shopmobility houses the only “Changing Places” facility in Oxfordshire, providing vitally needed facilities for disabled people and their carers in a way that standard accessible toilets (disabled toilets) do not meet, through the provision of a height adjustable changing bench and a hoisting system;
- In partnership with Oxford Brookes and Oxfordshire County Council, produced an Oxfordshire Disability Directory listing all disability related organisations and benefits. There is also a Disabled Guide to Oxford <http://www.oxford.gov.uk/Direct/AccessibleOxfordGuide> ;
- In partnership with English Heritage we installed a platform lift in Oxford Town Hall to enable access to the Gallery Café, Gallery and training rooms
- Held a successful Disability Information Fair in May 2009 and are planning another for May 2012;
- Assimilated the Two Ticks criteria as an integral part of the recruitment policy and have successfully achieved reaccreditation in 2011;
- Hosted a county wide event for International Disability day on December 3rd 2010;
- Administer Disabled Facilities Grants of up to £25,000 to provide or improve access to the bedroom, kitchen, toilet, washbasin and bathroom facilities, e.g. by installing a stair lift or providing a downstairs bathroom. Between 2008-2010, 128 jobs were completed, £611,000 spent and a “very good” customer satisfaction rate achieved;

• Offer a Summer Garden Scheme with a budget to cater for a monthly visit for up to 250 tenants who are physically incapable of maintaining their own gardens, a Repairs Exemption scheme where 500 tenants are currently eligible under DLA and DDA criteria, reduced garage rents for disabled tenants, and employs an in house Occupational Health officer who has enabled a range of adaptations ranging from level access showers (roughly 100 installed per year) through to handrails and access ramps to be actioned within an average waiting time of 9 - 11 weeks; and offer reduced rents for garages for disabled tenants

•We are also planning to install a new pedestrian wayfinding system in the city centre

## **9.0 A Modern and Diverse Workforce**

**9.1** Communications across the Council have improved significantly, keeping employees regularly and comprehensively up to date. Initially through a series of “road shows” for all staff, this has been refined and expanded and is now a programme including an internal Council Matters weekly news update covering all key activities and breaking news stories, an internal monthly “Diversity Matters” newsletter focussing on key equalities themes and using best practice examples from service areas, a twice yearly Corporate briefing giving all staff the opportunity for a face to face meeting with the Chief Executive and an open questions session, and a quarterly Management Practice Group involving up to 150 staff (this is also used as a development opportunity for potential managers). Service areas have also started to produce their own newsletters.

**9.2** The Council works closely with the Oxfordshire County Council Workforce Initiatives and Apprenticeship Manager and is a key signatory to the Oxfordshire Apprenticeship Pledge to create 100 apprenticeships in 100 days. We currently employ eight apprentices and have two current apprentice vacancies but will be expanding these numbers at every opportunity via effective workforce planning. The People & Equalities team have also implemented an automatic e-mail group that includes local community centres and groups with job vacancy updates in order to increase its local coverage and target awareness of the City as an employer that offers a wide range of professional development and career opportunities. All recruitment managers have the opportunity for refresher training support and a useful practice guide has been produced to further equip managers with critical recruitment skills.

### **Case Study A – A vibrant and sustainable economy/ Apprenticeships**

The purpose of the pledge is to increase the number of apprenticeships by showing there is joint commitment to strengthening and building apprenticeship opportunities within Oxfordshire. This is intended to show leadership across the wider business community in all sectors.

## Oxfordshire Apprenticeship Pledge

*We recognise that apprenticeships represent a tremendous opportunity to meet our present and future skills needs and the employment needs of our local community. We pledge:*

- To actively promote and develop apprenticeship opportunities within our workforce, the community and our supply chain*
- To increase provision of apprenticeships across Oxfordshire by sharing our best practice and employment opportunities*
- To provide a programme of pre-apprenticeship support and encouragement to key target groups including young people and unemployed residents*

In 2011 Direct Services has already taken on three apprentices (as pictured below) and is currently seeking to fill two further apprenticeships. All three are following a four year course and working towards NVQ Level 3 in order to become skilled in their chosen trades.



Josh has said “this apprenticeship offers great prospects”, Mike has said “I am learning a wide range of skills” and Danny has said “this is a fantastic opportunity”.

**9.3** The Council has invested significantly in staff learning and development opportunities and is fully committed to “growing its own” talent. It rolled out a full Equipping Managers for Change (EMFC) training programme between 2009/ 2010 (with each cohort attending ten days of sessions) covering 226 staff. The EMFC programme focuses on developing the people management skills of managers, to get the job done and grow the people. It operates over three levels and all workshops link to the Council’s Behavioural Standards Framework. We have followed this up with a series of five action learning sets to encourage cross service reflection and problem solving as well as a compressed version of the full EMFC course. As part of this package the Council also offers staff the chance to access independent coaches. There is also a comprehensive corporate programme open to all staff which covers a raft of courses (Basic Communication skills, Dealing with Stress, Problem

Solving, Coaching Techniques, Dealing with Change, and Get better organised) to equip staff to be better equipped to deliver excellent services. This critical investment has enabled managers to demonstrate better leadership and be more inclusive and proactive in conducting effective six month interim and annual appraisals and regular 1-2-1s; critical factors in the Council being awarded with liP accreditation for the whole organisation in 2011.

*“In Oxford City Council, the Assessor found an organisation that values its people extremely highly, and which values learning and development similarly highly. The Assessor experienced an organisation made up of people who are proud of their jobs, their teams, their Council and their city, and who are committed to performing at a consistently high level and to delivering outstanding service to the residents, workers and visitors of Oxford. Further, the Assessor found an organisational infrastructure that supports these endeavours through considered and well-ordered policies and processes designed to support effective people management and skills development in all parts of the Council. Continued improvement will be attained essentially through better and more consistent application of these processes and policies throughout all parts of the Council.”*

**9.4** The groundwork for the current suite of corporate courses was laid by an externally commissioned three year programme of “Embracing Diversity” awareness training where all staff attended half day workshops delivered by the Garnett Foundation from 2008-2010. We also simultaneously delivered a service area wide “Rapido” diversity awareness programme of 90 minute tool box talks targeted at our in house repairs and maintenance DSO. The content of all training was designed after consultation with staff from all service areas, but particularly front line services, and refined so that the last round of Garnett Foundation workshops were focused on “Delivering Excellent Customer Service: Getting it right first time”. All workshops involved forum theatre principles and were fully interactive, with groups heavily involved with discussions around the scenarios. This has built the capacity and confidence of staff to challenge others on equality, be more intelligently informed about the needs of equality target groups locally and therefore to be in a better position to both improve the outcomes for customers as well as to embed equalities into service planning and future personal development. To maintain the impetus of diversity awareness and after post course evaluation and staff feedback, we are currently developing a dual training programme (“Fair, Aware and Right”) to cover both managing and developing a diverse workforce through “developing a fair working environment for all employees and understanding the diversity of the community”. This will be piloted from December 2011, rolled out in 2012 and will provide an opportunity to develop the training capacities of internal staff members.

**9.5** The Council is proud to be a Stonewall Diversity Champion and has used this as a springboard to achieve a scoring in their Workplace Equalities Index equating to a ranking inside their top 378 employers nationally. This was a creditable achievement for the Council’s first attempt. Ongoing engagement with Stonewall workplace associates has been invaluable in developing a year two action plan and we are confident of seeing proportionate improvements in our performance in the 2011 index. The action plan reflects the fact that there

is still work to do to establish LGBT staff groups and improve monitoring. However, we have a strong sponsorship link with Oxford Pride, support an independent LGBT counselling advice group through our grants commissioning programme, have committed to an annual advertising campaign in the local LGBT press through Fyne Times and are a key partner in the Oxfordshire Homophobic Awareness Liaison Team (HALT) which provides a safe third party reporting and advice opportunity for the LGBT community.

**9.6** A dedicated Access Officer acts as an advisor for managers and staff in terms of adapting the workplace, liaising with Access to Work and consulting with the Organisational Health and Safety Advisor over issues such as personal evacuation plans and making reasonable adjustments to the workplace. There is a clear process for purchasing DDA equipment, FAQs covering disability are posted on the staff intranet, while dyslexia and other forms of DDA testing have been facilitated to help staff and managers find constructive ways to manage long term conditions as well as phased return to work. An important part of their role is involvement with monitoring major planning applications and for short listing as part of the Two Ticks guarantees to interview all candidates with a disability recognised under the Equality Act 2010 providing that they meet the essential minimum criteria for the vacancy. The Council is proactively managing the well being of its staff and employs the services of an Occupational Health Advisor through a contract with the RPS group. The Access Officer will have an advisory input as part of the referral process and discussions on appropriate phased return to work agreements. The Council currently employs 8% of staff with a declared disability. We have also implemented some positive action initiatives, developing a good working relationship with Mencap that saw the Equalities & Diversity Business Partner conduct a series of mock interviews to help prepare clients for live vacancies. As result of this support four people secured jobs.

**9.7** The Council has embedded coherent governance of the equality and diversity process into its mainstream governance and audit processes through a risk register on its CorVu reporting system. This is updated monthly and overseen by the Head of People & Equalities. We have also reviewed and refreshed the Corporate Equalities Scheme for 2012/ 2015, with an action plan within it that will be reviewed annually. Key areas within the action plan link closely with the Annual Workforce Equalities Report and the CES will deliver the Council's 10 headline Equality Objectives.

**9.8** We have an accurate picture of our workforce and produce an Annual Workforce Equalities Report that feeds directly into the Corporate Equalities Scheme annual action plan. Our analysis shows the following key results:

- The average pay gap between men and women at Oxford is 2% (craft grades are traditionally male dominated, account for a large proportion of the workforce and are still paid on a productivity scheme so are not direct comparators with other service areas). Note that Oxford City Council is committed to paying a minimum Oxford Living wage of £7.19 which will rise to £8.01 in January 2012
- More women joined the Council in the last 12 – 24 months and proportionally women have a better chance of being appointed;

- The Council has been successful in attracting and appointing younger applicants;
- The proportion of BME candidates receiving offers of posts has risen from 0.49% of all BME applicants in 2008 to 4.2% in 2010. The comparative figure for White British applicants receiving offers was 3.4% in 2010 compared with 7.9% in 2008. Note that application figures for all groups were down in 2010 – 2011;
- The Step Up management training programme reveals an improving gender balance in front line management roles;
- There is a clear gap in terms of BME staff developing into managerial roles, with only 7.7% of all BME staff currently involved in at least first line management roles; and
- 46% of all male, 53.8% of all female, and approximately 50% of all BME staff undertook training

**9.9** The AWER has enabled us to identify any under represented groups and put in place an appropriate and proportionate action plan to address any disadvantage, to continue to assess and evaluate the fairness and consistency of our recruitment and retention policies, processes and practices, and demonstrate the Council's commitment to equality of opportunity for all employees and potential employees.

**Case Study B – An efficient and effective Council/Review of employment policies and introduction of new policies**

The suite of Council employment policies have been updated and a number of new policies have been introduced during 2009-2011 including:

- Recruitment & Selection Policy & Procedure
- Dignity at Work Policy
- Fair Employment Policy
- Additional Employment
- Home Working Policy
- Leave Policy & Procedure

All policies were Equality Impact Assessed and training delivered to managers to enable them to manage within the appropriate framework thus ensuring equality of opportunity and fair treatment.

The process involved a number of stakeholders including internal HR professionals, employment lawyers, trade union colleagues, service heads, CMT and elected members. This enabled wide ranging consultation and the delivery of a suite of policies that are fit for purpose, fully compliant and thus enable managers to effectively deliver their people management responsibilities.

**The suite of policies that were reviewed include:**

- Grievance Policy & Procedure
- Disciplinary Policy & Procedure
- Attendance Policy & Procedure



- Organisational Change Policy & Procedure
- Discretionary Payments Policy
- Pay Protection Policy
- Working Hours Policy & Procedure
- Secondments Policy & Procedure

Regular monitoring and quarterly reporting for CMT is undertaken with regard to employee relations cases to ascertain whether there are any trends relating to management capability, or any need for additional diversity awareness training, so that this can be addressed via early intervention.

### **Case Study C – An efficient and effective Council/ Employee Charter**

The Employee Charter was introduced in 2010 to clearly set out the expectations of all employees and managers in their day to day work.

#### **I will:**

- Do my best to understand and meet the needs of all our customers
- Strive to improve my performance and become more effective
- Show initiative and adopt a 'can do' attitude
- Engage proactively in my personal development by taking full advantage of learning opportunities
- Maintain high ethical standards and honesty
- Treat all people with respect and courtesy
- Contribute to team working across the Council, seeking opportunities to work with colleagues in pursuit of common corporate goals
- Use constructive feedback to and from managers and colleagues to improve performance
- Work creatively with my line manager and keep them informed
- Safeguard my own and others' safety to achieve our health and safety objectives

#### **Managers will:**

- Provide training and resources to help meet customer needs
- Recognise and celebrate improved staff performance
- Encourage employees to show initiative and implement new ideas
- Promote the personal development of staff according to abilities, aspirations and service needs
- Demonstrate high ethical standards of honesty and trust, personally and professionally
- Create an environment that challenges discrimination and where people are treated with respect and courtesy
- Promote team working across the Council
- Communicate effectively and openly and accept and respond to constructive feedback
- Provide visible leadership and direction
- Promote and maintain a safe and healthy working environment/culture

## **Case Study D – An efficient and effective Council/ Annual Workplace Equality Report Action Plan (AWER)**

There are well established opportunities promoting awareness of broad issues around race/ ethnicity, disability, gender, sexual orientation, religion and belief or age discrimination. Alongside the monthly “Diversity Matters” there are regular news items posted on the staff intranet, with a weekly “Council Matters” bulletin headlining all key issues breaking in the local and national press, while equality briefings will be fed back via the Council’s wider leadership team, management practice group and manager briefings to respective teams.

The AWER action plan details our 2011-2012 key priorities, including:

### **Diversity Champion:**

- To reinforce and improve on the Council’s first year ranking as a Stonewall Diversity Champion within their Workplace Equality Index

### **Two Ticks:**

- To produce a Two Ticks review and initiate regular short listing sampling to ensure that all disabled candidates meeting the essential criteria are interviewed. To further explore linking in with both the Oxfordshire County Council sponsored website [www.disabledworkers.org](http://www.disabledworkers.org) for disabled job seekers, as well as building on the Council’s relationship with Mencap in terms of providing interview coaching for job seekers, with reciprocal training for OCC managers being made available

### **Equipping Managers for Change:**

- Run a condensed version of the Equipping Mangers For Change programme for e.g. new managers – which includes references to diversity

### **New induction:**

- Finalise the new induction process with a focus on equalities and diversity

### **Communicating Diversity:**

- Audit and update all staff intranet and external website equalities pages where required, including adding a guide to assist applicants with making more effective applications using the Council’s standard application form. Launch new “Diversity Matters” internal publication

### **Workforce planning:**

- Develop a simpler Workforce Planning Matrix to assist with the Council’s business planning process and to help managers identify current and future workforce issues

### **Living Wage:**

- Review uplifting mechanism and rate
- Employer of choice

- Promote the Council as a potential employer and encourage applications from under-represented groups (e.g. women in senior roles, BME applicants, etc)

#### **Apprenticeships:**

- Push the number of apprenticeships across the organisation (& Apprenticeship Pledge) visible community coaching and interview workshops, reaching into schools and colleges (to focus on targeting key areas of deprivation within Oxford), as well as monitoring the career development opportunities available between service areas. Directorate teams will be encouraged to discuss exchange training and staff swaps, mentoring and internship opportunities where students can bring a clear related discipline to add value to the respective service areas

#### **Focus on disability:**

- Continue to emphasise the importance that staff self declare any disabilities under DDA (reinforced by the Equality Act 2010) in order that it can take all reasonable and proportionate steps to ensure full access to work, training, development and promotion opportunities as well as performance management. The Access Officer will conduct an analysis of the current spend on adaptations and make recommendations for future funding provision

#### **Employer of choice:**

- Promote the Council as a potential employer and encourage applications from under-represented groups (e.g. women in senior roles, BME applicants, etc)  
Promote the Council as an employer at the annual Oxford Careers Fest providing those in final year of secondary school with information available on typical roles and career paths

## **10.0 Areas for improvement: What's next for Oxford?**

**10.1** We recognise that there is always room for improvement and intend to strive to achieve our core ambition of building a world-class city for everyone and to work towards becoming an “excellent” authority under the EFLG by 2015. We will endeavour to do this through:

- Continuing to prioritise and protect access to core services for the most vulnerable groups in Oxford and to communicate our high profile successes;
- Continuing to value and develop visible local strategic partnerships to ensure the delivery of effective and accessible services to all sectors of the community in a socio political climate of severe financial constraints;
- Continuing to invest in and develop the most skilled and diverse workforce possible;
- Continuing to apply consistent EqIAs to embed these processes more fully, and to challenge services to get it right to ensure services are genuinely accessible to all communities;
- Continue to engage with Oxford's communities to ensure we fully understand what their needs are and can respond appropriately;

- Continue to support awareness days and promotional events across the city

**10.2** The “Achieving” level of the Equality Framework for Local Government is an important corporate priority, and our self-assessment submission both outlines the demonstrable progress we have already made towards reaching this target and our actions to continue to make a real difference and improve as a Council.

**10.3** Oxford is a great city - but inequality is evident, and Oxford City Council is striving hard to change that. We believe the work set out in the preceding pages testifies to our deep and absolute commitment to tackling inequality, and we welcome all suggestions and support which will help us in making a real difference, an equalities legacy starting with the 2012 Olympic year.

### **Case Study A – Strong & active communities/ Oxford’s Olympic Legacy**

#### **Community sports facility receives London 2012 Inspire Mark**



<http://www.communityarena.co.uk>

A new £2 million Community Arena opening this year at Oxford City Football Club has been awarded the London 2012 Inspire mark – after receiving funding through Sport England’s Places People Play Olympic legacy programme.

Sport England awarded the project £350,000 of Lottery funding through its Iconic Facilities fund, which supports multi-sport, state-of-the-art facilities that will help increase participation and deliver a sustainable sporting legacy beyond the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games.

Sport England’s Chair, Richard Lewis, said:

*“We want to make sure that people who are inspired by the Games will have some really great facilities where they can go and play sport, ensuring we deliver a lasting legacy beyond the Games. The Inspire mark will be a permanent celebration of the link to the Games for all those using this facility. The Community Arena will offer high-quality sporting opportunities that will encourage people to get involved and, crucially, to keep on playing sport*

*regularly.”*

Councillor Mark Lygo, Oxford City Council Board Member for Parks and Sports, commented:

*“It is fantastic news that this arena has been recognised for the work it will be carrying out in the community to promote and provide sporting opportunities for people in and around the city.”*

The Arena will consist of a third generation full size artificial floodlit football pitch, six floodlight netball courts, brand new pavilion with six dressing rooms, a physio room and lounge area, as well as improved parking facilities. The project has been mainly funded through the Football Foundation, Sport England, England Netball, Oxford Sports Council, and Oxford City Council.

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# Diversity Peer Challenge

## Oxford City Council

18<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup> January 2012

Report



**EQUALITY**  
FRAMEWORK  
FOR LOCAL  
GOVERNMENT

## 1. Background

This report is a summary of the findings of a Diversity Peer Challenge organised by the Local Government Association and carried out by its trained peers. The report satisfies the requirements of the Equality Framework for Local Government for an external assessment at the Achieving level. The Peer Challenge is designed to validate a council's own self-assessment at the Achieving Level by considering documentary evidence and by carrying out a series of interviews and focus groups with employees and other stakeholders.

The basis for the Peer Challenge is a benchmark against five areas of performance. They are:

- Knowing your communities and equality mapping
- Place shaping, leadership, partnership and organisational commitment
- Community engagement and satisfaction
- Responsive services and customer care
- A modern and diverse workforce

The Peer Challenge is not an inspection; rather it offers an external assessment of a council's own judgement of itself against the Equality Framework benchmark, by critical friends who have experience of delivering an equality/diversity agenda in their own councils.

The team was:

Cllr Bryony Rudkin – Ipswich Borough Council  
 Alima Qureshi – London Borough of Hackney  
 Rex Webb - Wiltshire Fire & Rescue Service, Wiltshire Police  
 Becca Singh – Local Government Association

The team appreciates the welcome and hospitality provided by the council and would like to thank everybody that they met during the process for their time and contributions.

## 2. Executive summary and recommendations

Following this Diversity Peer Challenge, we have reached the following conclusion:

**Oxford City Council has completed a satisfactory self-assessment against the criteria for the 'achieving' level of the Equality Framework for Local Government.**

Oxford is a hub for the local area. Surrounded by very rural district councils, it is a vibrant and thriving city, with a diverse range of residents, and those that visit and work in the city. Oxford City Council is aware of the need to meet these varied and sometimes competing needs and is using various partnerships and its assets (including its staff) to identify ways to address the issues raised imaginatively.

Partnership working appears to be strong, with the neighbouring district councils, the county, and other public sector partners.



OCC is involving communities in decision making, particularly the housing developments, considering how communities might be affected in different ways by physical changes around them. There is a dedicated team to ensure communities' diverse needs are accounted for, and a model for local involvement by the council with groups and individuals.

The council is using its power as a planning authority to influence development, looking to the future needs of the city and approaching landowners and asset owning partners early in the thinking process.

OCC has identified key priorities to work on, which include areas that they do not directly provide services. For example, one priority is to improve educational attainment in schools, despite the fact that it does not directly provide education services to its residents.

To help the council improve we have made some recommendations. These are:

1. Equality Impact Assessments (EqIA): the team heard mixed reports as to the quality and benefit of EqIAs. The team saw only one EqIA, and only found two published on the website. This could be because OCC is building equalities into all new developments (policy, practice or delivery) and therefore does not need to do a separate EqIA; if this is the case however, it would be good practice to make this clear. The relevant page of the website should include information about EqIAs, their role, benefits and how communities can get involved in assessing the performance of Oxford City Council. EqIAs remain the clearest way to demonstrate that councils have paid due regard to addressing inequalities and promoting equality of opportunity. Without clear demonstration of this, OCC could find that it is difficult to prove that it has complied with equality law.
2. In order to be sure that the work OCC does is not discriminating against particular groups, equality data needs to be routinely collected on staff and service users. OCC should make clear that this is essential to service improvements, explain how the information will be used, and remind people that answering questions about identity is always optional. In particular, there is a general lack of confidence and understanding on the importance of collecting and analysing data around sexual orientation
3. OCC could benefit from establishing a clearer structure for ensuring that diverse staff views are taken on board, and that there is a clear mechanism for quality assuring all equality work such as EqIAs. An internal equality forum could provide this, with a forum available for communities to be involved in monitoring equality in service provision. Alternatively, OCC needs to demonstrate more clearly how communities are involved in monitoring equality objectives, commenting on EqIAs, and ensuring that it is meeting its equality obligations.
4. Ensure that the action plan arising from the validation as a Stonewall Champion is implemented as soon as possible. The team saw little evidence on progress against this action plan, but suggest that it uses Stonewall's recommendations in future equality work.

### **3. Impact of challenge**

The Council made the following observations upon the impact the peer challenge has had:

- External validation of the progress we have made in reflecting the diverse needs of the community in service provision;
- Useful exercise which provides a focus for future improvements;
- Reinforced a view that equalities and diversity should be inherent and implicit within everything we do – not a separate consideration or something late in a process;
- We aim to consider the impact of services in a variety of ways much earlier in developing policy, equalities being one such consideration; and
- The process gave us an opportunity to realise how much we have achieved and something which we could celebrate organisation-wide and to promote even more effective communication and ongoing engagement with our customers and wider strategic partnerships

## 4 Detailed findings

### 4.1 Knowing your communities and equality mapping

#### Strengths:

1. Data is collected and analysed in a systematic fashion by the Policy and Partnership Team. This work began a few years ago with extensive research to establish a base line and this information is now routinely used by services to design and manage their work (e.g. leisure services and contact centre development). The older data is now being refreshed. This information is routinely and regularly cascaded throughout the organisation and shared with partners, including sharing an officer with neighbouring District Councils in order to ensure good quality data locally.
2. OCC officers and members understand the significance and complexities of Oxford, particularly:
  - the inequalities in educational attainment (some of the lowest performing schools in the country and the highest number of PhDs in the country)
  - the inequalities in wealth (some of the wealthiest people in the country and some of the most deprived neighbourhoods and estates in the country)
  - Oxford's position as an urban hub for a wide rural area (there are small market towns in the outlying areas but few cities until Coventry or Reading; Oxford is also part of the commuter belt with a large number of residents commuting every day into London, or coming into the city from the villages to commute)
  - the importance of tourism and the contrast between the elegant much-visited city centre and the housing estates where some residents don't come into the city or use its facilities.
  - the impact of the different skills needed and provided by local industry and the higher and further education sector (there are examples of industry having to look elsewhere for staff because the skills needed are not available locally, whilst the city has some of the most educated people in the country living in it)
3. OCC recognises the importance of understanding who communities are before designing services, for example the housing development at Barton (see Section 4 "Innovative Practices" for more details)
4. Community mapping of East Oxford Area:
  - acknowledgement that the community is fluid
  - identifying ways to be more responsive
  - schools being a good test for changing communities

- Using data to “bend the spend”, for example health putting money into local GP surgeries to target particular patient groups and projects to tackle educational under-achievement with investment in schools. These are examples where OCC has identified potential areas of rising need and rising cost and targeted money where it can have most benefit.

#### **Areas for consideration:**

- There is a lack of understanding about the importance and value of collecting data about people’s sexual orientation. The team saw little evidence of how the Stonewall Action Plan has progressed since the assessment in summer 2011. Managers were not clear about the relevance or value of collecting that data.
- Client-base information should be more consistently used and shared across all services. There may be a need to have a central point for owning and distributing the data council-wide. Some teams are collecting and using the data very well (for example, Community and Neighbourhoods Team) but this does not appear to be universal, for example in Parks and Open Spaces. This team has anecdotally identified that increasingly diverse groups and individuals use the parks but at present this is not routinely captured or shared with other services.
- It was not clear whether data on wider issues of vulnerability, rather than inequalities was collected or used to improve services, for example, data on employment or poverty levels.
- There was a keenness to ensure that the new census data is robustly interrogated and used, particularly around migrant communities. Some concerns were expressed that this could be missed.

## **4.2. Place shaping, leadership, partnership and organisational**

### **Strengths:**

- Senior management and elected members are ambitious and clear about what they want to achieve and are committed to equality. They have a visible presence locally (e.g. attending Area Forums and Neighbourhood Partnership meetings). It uses its assets and commercial income to enable it to address inequalities imaginatively (e.g. the partnership of housing development and investment in education to tackle under achievement).
- Members are involved actively locally (e.g. Rose Hill Christmas Tree ceremony) and build equality into scrutiny arrangements.
- OCC sees Oxford as a regional centre or hub for many areas. It takes a proactive approach to regeneration and works with a variety of partners, such as major landowners and neighbouring district councils. It uses partnerships as vehicles for influence and has taken the lead where others have made cuts, even where they don’t run something e.g. education, youth work.
- Partnership working: There is effective partnership working with various organisations and sectors. For example, with the Neighbourhood Policing teams, which meant little anti-social activity during summer 2011 when many cities and towns experienced riots. The police directed council staff to remove rubbish that could have been used as weapons (as happened in London). Oxford Voluntary Sector Forum is held twice a year, using workshop and interactive learning and sharing. Key speakers include OCC’s Chief Executive. The role of partnership officer is part paid for by other district councils and the officer is well connected in Oxfordshire County Council as well.

5. The “World Class City for Everyone” strapline, originally developed for the city council, is widely accepted and adopted, including by partners. This includes Fusion, a leisure services provider, adapting it on the front of their own leaflets

#### **Areas for consideration:**

1. There are equalities leads in each directorate, but it was not clear where these leads report to, and how they share information on performance. OCC could benefit from an internal equalities group that can set, monitor and review equality targets as there is not currently a system that takes on this role.
2. OCC recognises a variety of challenges, including the effect that the “Right to Buy” council property could have on their house building programme, e.g. Barton Northway development recognising this could be a barrier to inclusive community development.
3. There is a risk of programmes stalling if resources are not allocated. Partner agencies may need to contribute to the Area Forum plans in order to ensure that they address all issues needed. .
4. Top level partnerships such as the local strategic partnership, do not have a diverse membership. There may be a need to ensure that alternative methods are used to ensure that diverse views are heard, valued and used to influence decision making.

### **4.3 Community engagement and satisfaction**

#### **Strengths:**

1. Customer satisfaction rates are high where they are measured in Essential Repairs Grants team; surveys are distributed quarterly, results are monitored and built into service improvements. It is not clear if this is the case for all services.
2. There are different levels of involvement for communities:
  - locally it is mostly with small community groups and individuals
  - at neighbourhood level it is with larger community groups, voluntary sector service providers and some partner providers and officers
  - city-wide working with Oxford Council for Voluntary Action providing two forums a year for voluntary and community organisations, Oxford Stronger Communities Alliance
3. Area Forums have replaced Area Committees which has led to an improvement in engagement and active citizenship. There is confidence that area partnerships are building confidence for individuals and groups to influence area forums but it is too early to demonstrate long term influence.
4. OCC understands the importance of capacity building in communities, although some services inevitably find it frustrating that this takes time. For example, the Barton Housing development and the Active Citizens programme.
5. OCC is thinking about existing communities before developments begin. The housing development at Barton is a good example of this. OCC is working with existing communities in advance of the development and using the development as a method of freeing up some housing in other estates.
6. There is a Citizen’s Talkback Panel comprising 1000 residents who are statistically chosen to reflect the diverse communities in the city. This panel comments on policy and strategy.
7. The establishment of the Community & Neighbourhoods team brought contact with communities together from across the council as a team approach. This made the work more focused and there is much more work about how the council supports

communities in a joined up way. However, individual services conduct their own community engagement, and so a more co-ordinated approach to managing engagement and involvement may be needed. A strategy to sharing and using this information would also be beneficial.

8. There are examples of how the Community and Neighbourhoods team have worked differently with different communities to encourage more active involvement in decision making. This includes building community capacity in some areas (see section 5) and work on community-led planning in different areas of the city. There is a clear understanding of the need to build capacity before handing over responsibilities.
9. There are examples of the Community and Neighbourhoods Team working with diverse community groups including the Oxford Civic Society, Parish Councils and parish councillors, the Sikh Foundation and Chinese community groups. However it was not clear how the whole council engaged with diverse communities or with the Community and Neighbourhoods team to maximise the intelligence gathered.
10. The new swimming pool demonstrates engagement with communities and groups from an early stage and throughout the process. As a result they have introduced a flexible blind system to ensure that although lots of glass is used in the design, privacy is still possible for sessions in the pool such as women only sessions. The council believes there has been a wider use of hoists and access points than would otherwise have been the case.

#### **Areas for consideration:**

1. The governance arrangements of resident and tenant groups should be more robust, for example with the Leys' residents groups. However, this is being tackled by the Community and Neighbourhoods team through capacity building projects (see section 5).
2. There may be some possibilities of low cost (or no cost) 'quick-wins' in places where engagement has been difficult, for example dealing with parking issues and garages in specific local areas.
3. Residents don't always have the capacity to engage with a high end economy e.g. skills gap and poor schools. OCC is tackling this through the capacity building projects and working with schools to improve educational achievements.
4. There are inconsistencies across the council about community engagement, and an apparent lack of central co-ordination. For example, community involvement in East Oxford is good and diverse despite changing population. Some managers were not able to give examples of how community engagement had influenced services or policies and others were able to list a number of examples. There was a lack of systematic community engagement in the EqlA process, and the team did not see a consultation or engagement strategy which would bring all the work together. We heard some reports of 'consultation fatigue' on the part of some community groups, and a clearer strategy and co-ordination of all the council's engagement would help to monitor and limit this.

## **4.4 Responsive services and customer care**

#### **Strengths:**

1. The initial focus for improved work on equality was internal. Within the last eighteen months there has been a big change to focus now on external issues in order to improve service delivery across the council.

2. Work Club: this monthly session has been run twice in the Customer Service Centre (see section 5)
3. The Museum of Oxford is being redeveloped to display a history of Oxford looking particularly at the industrial history and migration including an appreciation of different communities' history.
4. The Policy and Partnership team is aware of equality issues and cascades information through the central communication mechanisms. All departments are encouraged to use the data to inform service delivery. However, this may need to be more proactively monitored and promoted in order to ensure that all services are using the data.
5. Essential Repairs Grants: this discretionary grant is flexible and can and is being used to respond quickly to requests for repair to criminal damage and graffiti, or for extra security (e.g. for domestic violence situations). This as a result of good relationship with Thames Valley Police.
6. The leisure contract is such that it can focus on issues the council wants to concentrate on such as health and educational attainment. This includes increasing work on providing sporting opportunities for young people, such as a forthcoming national archery tournament in Oxford and increased participation in cycling.
7. There is corporate representation on the county-wide Procurement Hub. There are plans to roll this out across the Thames Valley which would offer challenges as well as opportunities.

#### Procurement

8. All procurement staff have done equality training, and equality is built into the training that is offered to all staff dealing with tenders over £100,000.
9. There are elements of both achieving equality and valuing diversity included in the Pre-Qualification Questionnaire and throughout the tendering process. Training is offered to smaller organisations.
10. Monthly training sessions are held with suppliers to encourage more local and smaller organisations to bid for tenders. Workshop leaflets also went out to another 500 suppliers. This has led to an increase in local and smaller organisations bidding for contracts, for example, for a recent printing contract, six out of the eight organisations who bid were local firms.

#### Community & Neighbourhoods Team

11. The Community and Neighbourhoods team was allowed to develop its own structure with support from senior management. This enabled it to develop structures that met the needs of the communities it works in.
12. There has been a move to an open and transparent process of grant allocation. All applicants are asked to demonstrate how they further social inclusion or tackle inequalities. This has led to some difficult decisions about projects that had been traditionally funded, but OCC is now more confident that it is using grants as a method of tackling the inequalities that exist locally.
13. Many community centres across the area are run by community associations. Assistance is given to sustain and support community associations in this role.
14. Tenants' Associations in all areas of the city were involved in last year's tenants' disability conference. Access was a main talking point.

#### **Areas for consideration:**

1. Although equality is built into business process (such as contracts with partner providers) and the Corporate Plan has included equality throughout, there was little

evidence of staff and managerial engagement with EqlAs. Published EqlAs were not easy to find and were not consistently at the start of a planning or decision making process. There was also little evidence of involving communities in the EqlA process.

2. The current financial situation and cuts can be stalling partnership working. There was some evidence of partners being reluctant to involve the council because they believe OCC won't have the capacity, when this may not be the case. OCC may need to be more proactive about being involved in decisions and service delivery across partnerships.
3. Although some equality data about service users is collected systematically, there is little or no information given about service users' sexual orientation. There appeared to be a lack of understanding of the benefits of this information and how it can improve service delivery. Acting on the action plan arising out of the Stonewall Champion accreditation could help to improve staff understanding.
4. There was little evidence that relevant voluntary and community sector groups, or members of the local community have been involved in equality processes such as setting targets and achieving on those targets. The team did not meet with any voluntary and community sector groups whilst on-site. Some staff members were able to explain how they work in partnership, but this was not evident across all the different services.
5. While there was strong data collection around mapping communities, little was mentioned about mapping customer needs and identifying gaps. For example are all sections of the community able to access all services? How is this information gathered and shared?

## 4.5 A modern and diverse workforce

### Strengths:

1. Equality training for all staff has moved away from being very prescriptive and directive to being more about awareness and positive reasons for working on equality. The training uses a theatre company to bring to life the issues. A third of staff are trained each year, although the team were not aware of the arrangements for monitoring the impact of this training. Some feedback indicated that the training was not always pitched at the right level, and not always relevant to participants' needs. An impact analysis on this training and an understanding of training needs may help to pitch this at the right level in future. A suggestion could be to provide relevant briefings in team meetings where a more bespoke approach could be taken, as well as continue with the basic equality training to ensure a good baseline knowledge of all staff.
2. Systems are in place first to ensure staff understand equality processes and have developed to ensure that this happens in practice. For example, equality is embedded within the performance framework, and simplified the framework and raised awareness with staff to ensure compliance through appraisals and one to ones with managers. Regular appraisals are completed to look at how staff are performing against a behavioural framework which includes a section on equality. Equality objectives are set and monitored. Managers confirmed that all staff have annual appraisals and six-monthly reviews. There has also been significant investment in developing management skills of middle and senior managers in recent months which has led to increased confidence of managers to use performance management constructively and positively with staff and support them through periods of change and an uncertainty.

3. Key Human Resources initiatives include completing the implementation of equal pay, providing basic equality training to all staff, holding the disability two ticks standard, Investors in People accredited and being a Stonewall champion.
4. OCC held two 'work clubs' with the job centre plus community groups to get people interested in working for the council. The work clubs offered coaching skills building and interview techniques. 30-40 people attended the two sessions, but it is too early to measure the impact that these sessions are having.
5. An annual workforce equalities report breaks down information on staff leavers, new recruitment, grievances, disciplinaries and is used for setting workforce planning and priorities ie recruiting more black and minority ethnic (BAME) staff
6. Total grievances reduced over the last three years from 30-40 to 10-15 suggests that a strong relationship with trade unions and investment in developing staff behavioural framework has worked.
7. There is a commitment to a 'Living Wage' for all OCC staff and contractors. This has recently been increased despite there being a pay increase freeze.
8. Communication works well in OCC with staff feeling that they are kept in touch and also feeling that they have the opportunity to give feedback to the Council and be heard. There is a range of media used including weekly bulletins, monthly staff newsletters, regular team meetings as well as all staff emails. All staff emails are prefaced with an instruction to print the information off to ensure that staff who don't have access to computers or emails get the information.
9. The Community Neighbourhood Team was allowed to develop its own structure and support was given from senior management, not imposed from the top.

#### **Areas for consideration:**

1. There is a lack of diversity within the workforce, including a lack of progression of BAME people and disabled people within OCC. However, the Scrutiny committee is looking at this in detail and is planning work around this area. There is an appetite for improving diversity across the whole council, not just at the top 5% of earners, and this is monitored. However, more positive action may be needed in order to encourage and enable people from diverse groups to progress, especially when there are few recruitment opportunities. There is little proactive work to increase the understanding of the importance of monitoring sexual orientation. This may have an effect on staff declaring their sexual orientation. More work may need to be done to increase understanding of the importance of this.
2. There are good examples of flexible working with home working and compressed hours encouraged and supported. However, this is not universally applied. Some directorates (for example Direct Services) don't allow staff to work flexibly. This can lead to dissatisfaction and low morale, and can inhibit service delivery. Managers need to work out how to balance or improve service needs with flexible working as it can prove to widen service accessibility for customers, for example, one council introduced flexible working into its Pest Control service very reluctantly, but discovered that it meant that they could have extended operating hours, and their customer satisfaction ratings improved as a result of providing early morning and evening services as well as normal office hours. This could also help to improve the diversity of staff at different grades.
3. Feedback from Work Club shows that young people see OCC as an 'older people's' employer. Consideration could be given to images used, diversity in ages of frontline staff and increasing student placements in order to break down any potential barriers that may exist for young people looking for work.



4. Improve the image of the council through the website. The website was sometimes difficult to navigate and hard to find information about equality. The website could be used to promote an image of a progressive and diverse workforce, monitoring the images used.
5. Monitor current equality training provided and assess how useful it has been and what the future training needs are. Move to incorporating equality and diversity training into other training programmes like recruitment training for managers on how to encourage diverse applications and interview fairly.
6. Consider establishing clearer structures for quality assurance on equality work. This could involve setting up a staff equality steering group which acknowledges that there are a variety of staff with expertise and knowledge in this area, as well as the directors. Consideration could also be given to how communities are involved in EqlAs, perhaps through a specific external equality advisory group.

## **5. Examples of innovative projects and initiatives**

- Planning and development: There are lots of examples where OCC has used its role as a planning authority to ensure that new developments are appropriate and imaginative. Using its potential to maximise its income from its assets, developments have been or will be self-financing (e.g. the Westgate Shopping Centre development and the development of the new customer service centre on St Aldates). OCC approaches major landowners early in the process of considering developments which helps to ensure that they come on board. Residents are involved when planning new housing developments, and work is done across council boundaries to ensure that the work is beneficial to as wide an audience as possible.
- Barton Housing Development: This is an example where OCC has used its own land, and have got external financial backing whilst maintaining control over the development. OCC has worked with local residents to involve them in the process, and help to think about who will move to the new homes when they are built. This is a large development of 800 homes and could potentially ease some of the issues on other estates. The council is looking at ways to ensure that homes are allocated fairly, but also considering the value of mixed occupancy and ensuring that there is different types of housing for different types of resident (such as owner-occupier, council property, shared ownership).
- Oxfordshire Unlimited – disability lead organisation with 180 members felt that they were engaged with by OCC (one officer in particular). They have been involved in 'Shopmobility' and 'Changing Places'. Also OCC used them to visit restaurants to judge how accessible they were. OCC wrote to ones that needed to improve and gave certificates for good ones.
- Old Fire Station: OCC worked with interested parties to support and help develop this city centre location. It is now a centre for supporting homeless people, as well as a centre supporting art, music, dance and drama. There are public classes, a café, drop-in support sessions and links between the people who use the centre.
- The Partnership Officer role is part paid for by the other districts two days a week she is paid for by Oxfordshire district councils to work on partnership with them and the county council. This gives the officer an Oxfordshire County Council pass, which gives access directly into the county council as well as the District Councils.
- Community & Neighbourhoods team holds workshops with community groups to help them develop business plans which will enable them to bid for more grants. Also encouraging smaller organisations to work with each other to enable them to bid for larger pots of money together to help an area.

- Active Citizens project with Reachability and the British Council: this is giving training and support to individuals who have not traditionally been involved or engaged with the democratic process or with influencing public sector decisions. Involves training and development and capacity building.
- Community led planning in non-regeneration areas – this is working across a variety of neighbourhoods so that the positive impacts of regeneration are shared and the negative impacts are mitigated.
- Low Carbon Oxford: work in West Oxford has led to community cohesion success and is to be replicated in Barton and North Oxford with help from money from central government to work on community based energy saving initiatives.
- Brookes University have funded two Police Community Support Officers to work on their campus and work with any issues or situations that occur on campus, which is within OCC's boundaries.
- Children's Safeguarding is taken seriously by OCC even though it doesn't deliver children's services. There is an OCC officer sitting on the County's Children' and Young People's Board and an OCC Board member with responsibility for children's safeguarding.
- Work Club: OCC has set up monthly work clubs in partnership with the Job Centre and community groups. These include coaching skills and interview practice. Although this is a new initiative, it has already reached around 40 people in just two sessions. There are plans to take it into community areas to reach a more diverse range of people.

## **6. Signposting to areas of good practice**

- Wolverhampton Homes: Good work on resident, tenant and leaseholder involvement
- Preston City Council: equality built into Parks & Open spaces, particularly use of cemeteries
- Diversity in the work place: Leeds City Council have been proactive in improving diversity in a number of work areas, not just as a direct employer but works with other employers to improve their diversity too. This includes supporting the organisation Nari-Ekta who support Asian young women to get work placements in a variety of settings. Leeds City Council also has various leadership and development programmes aimed which help to improve diversity in the workplace.
- Migration impact: research conducted by Leeds University and Nottingham University looked at migrant communities and the impact on the local area. This demonstrated some good work done by Leeds City Council
- Nottingham City Council has worked in partnership with the private sector to assess the impact of the recession on BME communities. This has led to an increase in finding jobs and apprenticeships for young people. Community Development Officers work to find young people who are provided with interview skills and supported to find jobs. The private sector is empowered to employ young people through positive action measures from areas of high employment and social deprivation, primarily BME communities.
- Using customer service data from one service to inform other services: Barrow Borough Council has used its data from Revenues and Benefits to help target support services and improve the lives of local citizens. They also use customer data from Leisure Services to help identify diverse communities. Cheshire West and Chester Council have also good examples of how Benefits data can help to improve the knowledge of local communities.
- Equality mapping: Barrow-in-Furness Borough Council has excellent examples of mapping equality data available to all through its website. This gives very good visual

representations of large amounts of data including equality data to highlight areas of needs on specific issues or services. The Mapping and Data Officer identified variants in colour schemes that improve user compatibility. Barrow BC also ensure that the mapped data is used to facilitate EqlAs.

- Understanding importance and relevance of sexual orientation: Stonewall's "What's it got to do with you" leaflet: [http://www.stonewall.org.uk/at\\_home/3460.asp](http://www.stonewall.org.uk/at_home/3460.asp) explains the importance of collecting the information. Leeds City Council have been good at improving support to its LGB staff through a county-wide mentoring scheme and establishing a staff forum.
- Good guidance on Equality Impact Assessments is also available on the Nottingham City website: <http://www.nottinghamcity.gov.uk/CHttpHandler.ashx?id=21374&p=0> . For staff, this guidance is available as interactive web pages; with background information provided at the click of a button should the reader want it. This link takes you to an online word document.
- Use of open source software to improve customer service and equality - Barrow BC uses as much open source (and therefore free) software as it can identify as useful. For example, it uses Google Translate on its website. This allows resident (or other website visitor) access to council information in a whole variety of languages at the click of a mouse. This enables current residents and groups to support migrant workers and visitors to Barrow BC's information which encourages and supports cohesion.
- Sexual orientation monitoring and influence in service delivery: Cumbria County Council supports an Equalities Consortium which comprises county-wide community groups (such as those supporting LG&B people, disability groups and groups supporting older people). This consortium is funded jointly by the County and all six District Councils, who have a Service Level Agreement (SLA) with it. Within this, the consortium provides advice as well as an engagement mechanism for councils to use where they may not be able to identify individuals or groups locally to advise them on particular issues. This is particularly useful when considering the needs of lesbian, gay and bisexual people who may not feel comfortable sharing their sexual orientation with a council, as a larger group, who works locally, can take on board issues that arise and ensure that their needs are fed into councils' planning processes. This example may be useful in Oxfordshire.

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# Oxford City Council Diversity Peer Challenge

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19/11/2012

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

# The Challenge

- Designed to assess Oxford City Council's own self assessment
- Not an inspection but an external assessment by critical friends

# The challenge

The equality framework for accreditation as an achieving authority focuses on 5 themes:

- knowing your communities and equality mapping
- place shaping, leadership, partnership and organisational commitment
- community engagement and satisfaction
- responsive services and customer care
- modern and diverse workforce

**The detail.....**





## knowing your communities and equality mapping

### strengths:

- Data is collected, analysed and distributed systematically
- Oxford Profile 2012 Key Facts distributed and used by partners as well as OCC
- Use of data to ‘bend the spend’

## knowing your communities and equality mapping

### areas for consideration:

- Develop an understanding of the use of monitoring data around sexual orientation
- All departments to collect good quality data on users
- Using client information to inform other services
- Ensure new Census data is used as productively as possible, particularly around migrant communities

## **place shaping, leadership, partnership and organisational commitment**

### **strengths:**

- Senior management & elected members are ambitious and clear about their vision
- Council using income and assets imaginatively to tackle inequalities
- ‘World class city for everyone’ strapline
- Equalities absolutely key in new developments
- Joint Partnership Officer

## **place shaping, leadership, partnership and organisational commitment**

### **areas for consideration:**

- Keep the momentum going on work tackling educational inequalities
- Consider what value an internal equalities group could bring to the strategic overview of equalities in the council.

## **community engagement and satisfaction**

### **strengths:**

- Councillors well connected with residents
- Area Forums
- Citizens' Talkback Forum
- Community and Neighbourhood team
- Involvement and engagement at different levels across the city

# **community engagement and satisfaction**

## **areas for consideration:**

- Community involvement in EqlAs
- Strategic overview and management of consultation and engagement
- How representative and diverse are community representatives?
- How does the council manage the capacity gap where people do not engage?

## **responsive services and customer care**

### **strengths:**

- Essential Repairs Grant
- ‘Bending the spend’ in service delivery
- New pool provision
- Involving relevant partners in planning discussions early on
- Procurement training sessions with potential suppliers
- Transparency around grant allocations

## **responsive services and customer care**

### **areas for consideration:**

- Understanding of need to monitor sexual orientation of service users
- No checklist for vulnerable residents
- Is the authority clear about its equalities targets?
- Equality Impact Assessments



## **modern and diverse workforce**

### **strengths:**

- Diversity training using theatre
- External accreditation used to further equality
- Use of the 'Living Wage'
- Active engagement of scrutiny process in using this peer challenge to direct future work on workforce diversification

## **modern and diverse workforce**

### **areas for consideration:**

- Perception that OCC is an ‘older people’s employer’
- Lack of diversity within the workforce currently
- Encouraging diversity at all levels of responsibility
- Flexible working policy not consistently applied across the authority
- Need to monitor impact of equality and diversity training

# Overall conclusion



# CONGRATULATIONS

Oxford City Council

Has completed a satisfactory self assessment against  
the criteria for an

**‘Achieving’ authority**

as set out in the  
Equality Framework for Local Government

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#### 4.2 The Equalities Action Plan 2011-2012 (reviewed annually)

<b>Corporate Priority</b>	<b>Equalities Objective 1</b>	<b>Expected Outcome</b>	<b>Lead</b>	<b>Date of review</b>	<b>Progress quarter 4</b>
Vibrant and sustainable economy - To drive forwards the spatial and economic regeneration of the City, building upon its special character and vitality	Usage and access to planning services/ application outcomes: to involve the Council's Access officers in the determination of all major planning applications	To enable all community groups to have fair access to the planning process and to ensure that major developments are accessible to people with a disability and meet the needs of diverse communities	Michael Crofton-Briggs (Head of Service)	Quarterly updates and an annual case study report	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Access Officer e-mailed weekly lists for screening and comments</li> <li>2. Case officer to engage Access Officer at an early pre application stage</li> <li>3. Developing process mapping from BPI "majors".</li> </ol>
<b>Corporate Priority</b>	<b>Equalities Objective 2</b>	<b>Expected Outcome</b>	<b>Lead</b>	<b>Date of review</b>	<b>Progress quarter 4</b>
Meeting housing need - To provide high quality Property Services that meet the needs of our stakeholders in the way that they want and in the best corporate interests of the Council	<p>To increase the delivery of affordable housing, the re-provision and regeneration of community centre facilities, and the relocation of the Emmaus shop</p> <p>Targeting super output areas of deprivation in the bottom quartile nationally</p>	50% + affordable housing from 109 new units in Northway & Cowley Barton project (with Grosvenor) to deliver 40% affordable housing of up to 360 social housing units from 800 new units. Developing effective consultation and partnerships with third party providers Green Square and Hab Oakus	Steve Sprason (Head of Service)	Quarterly updates and an annual case study report	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The Council has achieved more than the planning policy guidelines in securing 60% socially rented housing for the Northway and Cowley development and has signed off the conditional development document.</li> <li>2. The Council entered an LLP with Grosvenor in October 2011 and will deliver 40% socially rented properties (reflecting a mix of property sizes in compliance with current local need). The Council is on track to start the building in January 2014</li> </ol>

<b>Corporate Priority</b>	<b>Equalities Objective 3</b>	<b>Expected Outcome</b>	<b>Lead</b>	<b>Date of review</b>	<b>Progress quarter 4</b>
Meeting housing need - To lead in the coordination and delivery of social, physical and economic regeneration in the City, with a particular focus on reducing inequalities and breaking the cycle of deprivation (concentrating on the wards with the worst ratings in the indices of deprivation)	Reduce homelessness: to undertake a fundamental service review of the homelessness service and to test the CRE Code of Practice	Prevention and reduction of homelessness in all its forms, and to ensure equality of access to housing and housing services by BME groups	Graham Stratford (Head of Service)	Quarterly updates and an annual case study report	The Homelessness strategy is very much in the early stages of planning, with issues based on evidence being scoped with a view to having a consultation document approved in July 2012. The Housing Needs Team will continue to seek to identify housing applicants within BME groups and with disabilities that are in high housing need. Effective monitoring systems will ensure any shift in allocations do not indirectly discriminate against BME groups and/or applicants with disabilities. Currently, around 23% of the households on the Housing Register state they are in a BME group, although 19% of the General Register list have not stated their ethnicity, based on those that have stated their ethnicity the number of households in BME groups is similarly reflected across all three housing lists. A detailed Annual Lettings Plan is sent to CEB.
<b>Corporate Priority</b>	<b>Equalities Objective 4</b>	<b>Expected Outcome</b>	<b>Lead</b>	<b>Date of review</b>	<b>Progress quarter 4</b>
Meeting housing need - To protect and sustainably transform the environment for all people living, working or visiting the City	Protecting the current levels of the Disabled Facilities Grant and HIA services	Thorough analysis of the recipients of the DFG and HIA and establish mitigating actions to address or explain any gaps to enable applicants to remain in their home for as long as possible, through the carrying out of essential repairs, adaptations and improvements.	John Copley (Head of Service)	Quarterly updates and an annual case study report	1. Surveys are sent out monthly and analysed quarterly. Current satisfaction levels are at 93% for the completion of works and around 99% for overall customer satisfaction. 2. Monitoring information is broken down for BME and Age as part of the reporting process to the County Council partners. 204 people received repairs ranging from

		Identify issues where an applicant's medical condition has deteriorated during the process and given rise to a further shortfall in provision that might result in unmet need.			major to small. 8.3% were from BME communities.
<b>Corporate Priority</b>	<b>Equalities Objectives 5 &amp; 6</b>	<b>Expected Outcome</b>	<b>Lead</b>	<b>Date of review</b>	<b>Progress quarter 4</b>
Meeting housing need - To provide the best level of service to our tenants and the diverse communities we serve, and to provide value for money services that improve the environment, quality of life, health and wellbeing of people who live, work and visit the City	Usage and access to the housing repairs service	Highlight/ monitor equalities issues via the complaints processes already in place to determine any future mitigating actions. Expectation that satisfaction surveys/ responses continues to run at extremely high levels, consistently well above 90%. The Council will continue to invest to ensure that "Decent Homes" (and any subsequent standards) are maintained. Continue to offer online access and a free phone number for all tenants.	Graham Bourton (Head of Service)	Quarterly updates and an annual case study report	1. Noted that repairs satisfaction surveys/ responses continue to run at extremely high levels, consistently well above 90%. 2. No trends have been identified in terms of dissatisfaction with access to services. The disabled adaptations scheme continues to be fully funded, although there will be a review of the repairs exemption scheme in the light of the Equality Act 2010 to determine whether there might be an element of age discrimination built into the scheme
Cleaner greener Oxford	Usage and access to waste and recycling services	To continue to review the assisted collections service in order to maintain a universal and free service wherever possible and to minimise the impact of any charging to notional or zero levels for those in receipt of benefits	Graham Bourton (Head of Service)	Date of review  Quarterly updates and an annual case study report	1. There are a range of options available for customers, from disposable sacks to containers of different sizes. There will have to be work undertaken to affect some cultural change around disposal habits in some sectors in order that communal bin areas are used more effectively. The assisted collection scheme (covering over 1000 residents) is subject to an annual review.

					2. Built in protections with c. 2400 residents (accounting for 23.5% of all service users) receiving free garden waste services
<b>Corporate Priority</b>	<b>Equalities Objective 7</b>	<b>Expected Outcome</b>	<b>Lead</b>	<b>Date of review</b>	<b>Progress quarter 4</b>
Strong and active communities - To provide world class parks, open spaces and leisure opportunities to improve the quality of life of everyone living in, visiting or working in Oxford	Usage and access to leisure services	Improving links to the Leisure Facilities Strategy through increased participation and access of targeted groups to build on the 98,000 per annum increases in visits to leisure centres. Provide leisure facilities of private sector quality at public sector prices and maintain and improve on current satisfaction levels of at least 95% Continue to seek a year-on-year uplift of up to 5% in participation by key users from BME, disabled and age groups (e.g. over 50 and U17 junior free swimming) NI8 corporate measure	Ian Brooke (Head of Service)	Quarterly updates and an annual case study report  CorVu reports	1. 2011/12 baseline participation is to be confirmed in April 2012. April 2011 to January 2012 actual participation is 316,000. 2. A 27% increase by those with a disability, 15% for older people, 12% for BME groups and an 8% increase for women and girls. Initiatives to increase uptake and participation by those currently in receipt of JSA also form part of the Oxford Work Club's approach to supporting 'wellbeing'. 3. Currently 97% satisfaction levels at leisure centres.
<b>Corporate Priority</b>	<b>Equalities Objective 8</b>	<b>Expected Outcome</b>	<b>Lead</b>	<b>Date of review</b>	<b>Progress quarter 4</b>
An efficient and effective council - To provide corporate co-ordination and challenge in relation to policy, culture and communications and driving forward cultural partnerships and	Communication accessibility	Improving and remodeling cross-group initiatives to establish and manage an educational/ cultural events programme embracing different aspects of different communities in Oxford  Encourage and facilitate participation in cultural activities and organisations for diverse community groups	Peter McQuitty (Head of Service)	Quarterly updates and an annual case study report	The Council worked closely with a range of community groups throughout 2011/ 2012. Part of the strategy was to encourage groups to share their experiences. However, due to organisational and budgetary pressures key cultural events were cancelled (e.g. Cowley Road Carnival and the Summer Mela). The new Cultural Strategy will place cross community initiatives at its heart, with the new Culture Team Leader playing a lead role in developing face to



regeneration within the city, building upon and enhancing the special character and vitality of the city's communities					face engagement as part of the initial consultation around the strategy. Important events are scheduled such as the Lord Mayor's celebrations linking with the Jubilee and focusing on multi faith street parties. Cultural initiatives will continue to be supported from grants commissioning and bidding for external monies for agencies such as the Arts Council.
<b>Corporate Priority</b>	<b>Equalities Objective 9</b>	<b>Expected Outcome</b>	<b>Lead</b>	<b>Date of review</b>	<b>Progress quarter 4</b>
An efficient and effective council - To drive and deliver a world class customer first culture throughout the Council and with our partners to the community with an ethos of accessibility (always, everything and everywhere), quality (right first time) and value for money services	Usage and access to Housing Benefit and Council Tax benefit	Using Mosaic and other data sets to revalidate previous pilot data to target community groups and the take up of benefits and to improve the understanding of local communities' needs. Ensure under represented groups are taking up entitlements to benefits	Helen Bishop (Head of Service)	Quarterly updates and an annual case study report	1.Customer and Stakeholder consultation & feedback workshops with Housing Associations and Advice Centres to examine options for Housing Associations and Advice Centres to be enabled to work with the Benefits Service and help the claimant. 2. Benefits caseloads are going up (from 10,500 to roughly 13,000 claimants) so the amount of capacity for take up work has been reduced. Culturally, older people and some BME communities do not claim, with families taking the responsibility for support. However, there is a good deal of anecdotal evidence across front line teams to suggest that there is now the need for external support in some traditional communities where third generation relatives are unable to speak their parents/ grandparents language (e.g. Chinese)

<b>Corporate Priority</b>	<b>Equalities Objective 10</b>	<b>Expected Outcome</b>	<b>Lead</b>	<b>Date of review</b>	<b>Progress quarter 4</b>
An efficient and effective council - To lead and support the Council in the management of its' people and playing a leading role in promoting and progressing equalities and diversity issues – both across the workforce and in service provision	Developing the diversity of the workforce	Employer of choice, with a strong commitment to equal pay and striving to achieve liP silver by 2015  Workforce more representative of local communities  Ongoing review of action plans from the Annual Workforce Equalities Report and public sector duties under the Equality Act 2010	Simon Howick (Head of Service)	Quarterly updates and an annual case study report  Annual Workplace Equalities Report	Strategic workforce planning in place, positive action being utilised for recruitment of apprentices.
An efficient and effective council	Staff Survey (December 2011)	Assess employee satisfaction and to link with the liP action plan	Melanie Magee	December 2013	Survey results being analysed at CMT/service head level with action plans to follow (linked to OD strategy)
An efficient and effective council	Equalities Framework for Local Government Peer Review	To reach "Achieving" level accreditation following an external review	Simon Howick	January 2012	Achieved successfully after the 18/ 19 January on site review
An efficient and effective council	liP Gold - Continue liP journey and draw out / focus on diversity themes	Improve the diversity of the workforce	P & E/OD Board	2012/2013	"Good to Great" and "GOLD" objectives set out by Chief Executive supported by an OD Board. Corporate Briefings in March 2012 will further embed the challenges ahead.
An efficient and effective council	Using iTrent to maximise input of equalities data and to use this to inform strategic workforce planning. Transfer and update all training data into the I Trent system to establish training records for all staff	Ensure accurate data held to help determine our baseline, produce reports, inform actions as part of workforce planning, ensure equality of opportunity and access to development for the benefit of employees/customers	P & E/OD Team	2012	Developed quarterly HR metrics reports presented to CMT.

An efficient and effective council	Implement new e-recruitment software to reduce administration and increase resources to be able to focus on advertising & selection	To release more time to focus on increasing diversity of applicants / new hires e.g. targeted campaigns, widen pool of candidates via more informed short listing and selection methods	P & E	2012	To be implemented in September 2012 (managed by P&E initially). Management training post September
An efficient and effective council	Scope and develop a series of Action Learning Sets to follow up Equipping Managers for Change – to ensure diversity forms a part of the programme	To share best practice in dealing with diversity issues, highlight the benefits of a diverse organisation and how this can improve the delivery of service to customers	P & E	2011/2012	Over 30 cohorts have been set up. The first 50% of cohorts are completed and with full feedback sessions given to the Chief Executive and Directors. Looking into how to fund/ deliver future ALS
An efficient and effective council	Equipping Managers for Change - Run a condensed version of the Equipping Managers For Change programme for both existing and new managers	To provide training that amongst other things, considers diversity issues in people management, recruitment and selection, and to positively inform how an understanding of diversity can be beneficial in informing how services can be delivered	P & E/OD Team	2011/2012	Condensed version of the EMFG workshops is available for all new managers, changed roles or where refreshers are necessary. P&E in ongoing liaison with service heads to identify need.
An efficient and effective council	Corporate training plan available on the staff intranet that will enable all service areas to link in with training being corporately provided and to ensure access to all employees	To provide an appropriately resourced corporate training programme and promote equality of access to it across all service areas and grades	P & E/OD Team	July 2011	Completed. Staff can book via self service
An efficient and effective council	Re launch "Exit" interviews to ensure all leavers are encouraged to give feedback about working for the Council and their experience	To gain useful feedback for managers, service areas on diversity (and other) issues and consider any action which might be appropriate	P & E Team	September 2011	Exit interviews highlighted to all leavers and P&E have the opportunity to target key areas with high turnover rates
An efficient and effective council	Apprenticeships and community projects - Extend the number of apprenticeships across the organisation (in conjunction with the Apprenticeship Pledge) visible community coaching and	To increase the diversity of the workforce, enable succession planning and career development and provide community leadership in promoting opportunity for others not working	P & E Team	2011/2012 Monthly Work Clubs	1.Oxford Work Club launched in December 2011 2. Averaging around 30 visitors per session and with c. 50% BME 3. Evidence of successes are being fed back to the team via testimonials

	interview workshops, reaching into schools and colleges (to focus on targeting key areas of deprivation within Oxford), as well as monitoring the career development opportunities available between service areas. Directorate teams will be encouraged to discuss exchange training and staff swaps, mentoring and internship opportunities where students can bring a clear related discipline to add value to the respective service areas.	for the Council. Seek to support employability skills for job seekers in the City and to maximise initiatives to benefit the community as a whole. Establishing and launching an Oxford Work Club to support jobseekers in Oxford City in partnership with Job Centre Plus and other community partners, and initiatives to support the community using internal and external resources			
An efficient and effective council	Focus on disability - Continue to emphasise the importance that staff self declare any disabilities under DDA (reinforced by the Equality Act 2010) in order that the Council can take all reasonable and proportionate steps to ensure full access to work, training, development and promotion opportunities as well as performance management. The Access Officer will conduct an analysis of the current spend on adaptations and make recommendations for future funding provision	To ensure we are supporting employees appropriately and making adjustments to enable those with disabilities to work effectively. To ensure our statistics are correct so as we can focus our efforts appropriately.	P & E Team	2011/2012	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Two Ticks successfully reaccredited after review in September 2011</li> <li>2. Key P&amp;E staff attended a specialist managing Disability Sickness Absence and Performance seminar in early 2012 and training slides are being produced</li> <li>3. A central budget and policy has been established for managing disabled adaptations for staff workplaces</li> </ol>
An efficient and effective council	New induction - Finalise the new induction process with a focus on equalities and diversity enable this via e-learning so those joining understand our commitment before joining	To promote our diversity values with new starters from post recruitment, and to ensure that our inclusive culture is embedded at the outset	P & E Team	2011/2012	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. New induction process continues to be rolled out for all new staff and the Access Officer and E&amp;D Business Partner are working with the OL&amp;D team to develop the diversity elements for 2012</li> <li>2. An E-learning authoring package</li> </ol>

					license has been purchased by the Council and training delivered to P&E officers. This enables the Council to access a pre existing bank of e-learning courses and the facility to develop its own learning bank
An efficient and effective council	Communicating Diversity - Audit and update all staff intranet and external website equalities pages where required, including adding a guide to assist applicants with making more effective applications using the Council's standard application form. Develop new "Diversity Matters" internal monthly publication and continue to achieve Two Ticks and Stonewall Workplace Equality Index national accreditation	To promote our diversity values and embed a culture of inclusivity  To prepare for and undertake annual external reviews in order to achieve Jobcentre Plus Two Ticks and Stonewall Workplace Equality Index re-accreditation as part of our commitment to disability and LGBT protected characteristics	P & E Team	September 2011	1.Two Ticks reaccredited in September 2011 2.The Stonewall WEI ranking improved from 353 to 305 (49 places). Described as a great effort against more stringent criteria in year 2
An efficient and effective council	Workforce planning - Launch a simpler Workforce Planning matrix to assist with the Council's business planning process and to help managers identify current and future workforce issues that have diversity as a fundamental part	To encourage managers to consider diversity issues in workforce planning to ensure opportunities exist for all, and that we strive to achieve a workforce that reflects our customer base	P & E Team	2011	Implemented but needs more work to be embedded.
An efficient and effective council	Living Wage - Review uplifting the mechanism and rate	To increase our minimum wage in the interests of improving income for individuals working for the Council directly or via contractors	P & E Team	2011/2012	Confirmed by CEB: Oxford Living Wage is £8.01
An efficient and effective council	Employer of choice: Promote the Council as a potential employer encouraging applications from under-represented groups (e.g. women in senior roles, BME)	To increase the diversity of the workforce through targeted recruitment promotion via a greater range of automatic e-mails to community groups	P & E Team	Immediate	Whilst we are doing work at entry levels ,e.g. apprentices, there are still things that need to be done in terms of attracting a diverse range of applicants to the various career routes available across all service areas.

An efficient and effective council	"What its like to work here" self assessment. Testing the experiences of protected characteristic groups	To build our reputation as an employer of choice regarding diversity. Ensure any issues that arise are addressed	P&E Team	April-June 2012	To follow on from analysis of Staff Survey results and linked to the Annual Workplace Equalities Report.
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