

# Agenda

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## Council

Date: **Wednesday 18 February 2015**

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Time: **5.00 pm**

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Place: **Council Chamber, Town Hall**

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For any further information please contact:

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Officer**

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# Council

## Membership

Lord Mayor                      Councillor Mohammed Abbasi

Deputy Lord Mayor          Councillor Craig Simmons

Sheriff                              Councillor Rae Humberstone

Councillor Mohammed Altaf-Khan

Councillor Farida Anwar

Councillor Elise Benjamin

Councillor Ruthi Brandt

Councillor Susan Brown

Councillor Bev Clack

Councillor Mary Clarkson

Councillor Colin Cook

Councillor Van Coulter

Councillor Roy Darke

Councillor Jean Fooks

Councillor James Fry

Councillor Andrew Gant

Councillor Stephen Goddard

Councillor Michael Gotch

Councillor Mick Haines

Councillor Tom Hayes

Councillor David Henwood

Councillor Sam Hollick

Councillor Alex Hollingsworth

Councillor Pat Kennedy

Councillor Ben Lloyd-Shogbesan

Councillor Mark Lygo

Councillor Sajjad Malik

Councillor Chewe Munkonge

Councillor Michele Paule

Councillor Susanna Pressel

Councillor Bob Price

Councillor Mike Rowley

Councillor Gwynneth Royce

Councillor Gill Sanders

Councillor Scott Seamons

Councillor Christine Simm

Councillor Dee Sinclair

Councillor Linda Smith

Councillor John Tanner

Councillor Richard Tarver

Councillor Sian Taylor

Councillor David Thomas

Councillor Ed Turner

Councillor Louise Upton

Councillor Oscar Van Nooijen

Councillor Elizabeth Wade

Councillor Ruth Wilkinson

Councillor Dick Wolff

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## SUMMONS

A special meeting of the City Council will be held in the Council Chamber, Town Hall, on Wednesday 18 February 2015 at 5.00 pm to transact the business set out below.

*Peter Sloman*

Proper Officer

## AGENDA

### Pages

**1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

**2 DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS**

**3 RECOMMENDATION TO VARY COUNCIL PROCEDURES FOR THIS MEETING**

9 - 10

Council is invited to suspend its normal procedure rules and adopt the procedures set out in the note attached to this agenda to facilitate debate of the items on the agenda and any proposed amendments.

**4 ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Announcements relating to the business of this meeting by:

- (1) The Lord Mayor
- (2) The Leader of the Council
- (3) The Chief Executive, Chief Finance Officer, Monitoring Officer

**5 PUBLIC ADDRESSES AND QUESTIONS THAT RELATE TO MATTERS FOR DECISION AT THIS MEETING**

Public addresses and questions to the Leader or other Board member received in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 11.10 and 11.11.

The full text of any address or question must be received by the Head of Law and Governance by 5.00 pm on 12 February 2015.

Addresses and questions must directly relate to items on this agenda.

Full details of addresses submitted by the deadline will be provided in the briefing note. Full details of questions submitted by the deadline, and written responses where available, will be provided in the briefing note.

## COUNCIL DECISIONS - OFFICER REPORTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE CITY EXECUTIVE BOARD

### 6 SECTION 151 OFFICER'S BUDGET REPORT

**This report will be circulated separately prior to the meeting.**

The Head of Finance will submit a report under Section 25 of the Local Government Act 2003 which requires him to report to the Council on:

- a) The robustness of the estimates made for the purposes of the calculations of the budget, and
- b) The adequacy of the proposed financial reserves.

Council will be asked to note the report when setting its budget for 2015/16 and the indicative budgets for 2016/17 – 2018/19.

### 7 BUDGET AND MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN

**This report has been published separately as a supplement.**

The Head of Finance has submitted a report which details the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy for 2015/16 to 2018/19 and the 2015-16 Budget.

The City Executive Board will consider these reports at its meeting on 12 February and their decisions and recommendations will be reported separately.

**Officer Recommendations:** Subject to the recommendation of the City Executive Board, Council is recommended to:

1. approve the Council's General Fund Budget Requirement of £23.304 million for 2015/16 and an increase in the Band D Council Tax of 1.99% or £5.44 per annum as set out in Table 8 and Appendices 1-4, representing a Band D Council Tax of £278.97 per annum;
2. approve the continuance of the Council's Council Tax Support Scheme (formerly Council Tax Benefit)
3. approve the Housing Revenue Account budget for 2015/16 to 2024/25 as set out in Appendix 5 and 6 and an increase in average dwelling rent of 3.49% for April 2015 representing £3.59 per week an annual average rent of £105.77 as set out in Appendix 7;
4. approve the Capital Programme for 2015/16 to 2018/19 as set out in Appendix 8 and 9;
5. approve the Fees & Charges schedule as set out in Appendix 10;
6. adopt the criteria for adopting the Business Rates Retail Relief scheme as set out in paragraph 21 and transitional relief as set out in paragraphs 22 – 24; and

7. approve an increase in the 2014-15 capital budget of £550,000 in relation to the property purchase referred to in paragraph 43 and referred to elsewhere on the CEB agenda.

## 8 COUNCIL TAX 2015/16

11 - 24

The Head of Finance has submitted a report setting out the necessary calculations to enable Council to set the 2015/16 Council Tax for Oxford City, in accordance with the Local Government Finance Acts, 1988 and 1992, as amended by The Localism Act 2011.

**Officer Recommendations:** Council is recommended to approve for 2015/16:

1. The City Council's precept and Council Tax requirement of £12,072,263 (inclusive of Parish precepts) and £11,900,498 excluding Parish precepts.
2. The average Band D Council Tax figure (excluding Parish Precepts) of £278.97 a 1.99% increase on 2014/15 figure of £273.53. Including Parish Precepts the figure is £283.00, a 2.02% increase (see paragraph 3 of the report).
3. The contribution of £10,000 to the Parish of Old Marston in recognition of the additional expenditure that the Parish incurs as a consequence of maintaining the cemetery (see paragraphs 11 and 12).
4. The amount of £515,696 to be treated as Special Expenses (see paragraph 15).
5. The Band D Council Taxes for the various areas of the City (excluding the Police and County Council's additions) as follows:-

Littlemore	£301.50
Old Marston	£308.19
Risinghurst and Sandhills	£295.59
Blackbird Leys	£276.71
Unparished Area	£281.25

These figures include the Parish Precepts and special expensing amounts as appropriate in addition to the City-wide Council Tax of £266.88.

The Council is also asked to note:

6. Oxfordshire County Council's precept and Band D Council Tax as set out in paragraph 18 of the report.
7. The Police and Crime Commissioner for the Thames Valley's precept and Band D Council Tax as set out in paragraph 19, and
8. The overall average Band D equivalent Council Tax of £1,679.16 including Parish Precepts (subject to confirmation of the Band D figures for the County Council and the Police and Crime Commissioner – see paragraphs 18 and 19 of the report).

**9 TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY 15/16**

25 - 42

The Head of Finance has submitted a report which details the Treasury Management Strategy for 2015/16 together with the Prudential Indicators for 2015/16 to 2017/18.

The City Executive Board will consider these reports at its meeting on 12 February and their decisions and recommendations will be reported separately.

**Officer Recommendations:** Subject to the recommendation of the City Executive Board, Council is recommended to:

1. approve the Treasury Management Strategy 2015/16, and adopt the Prudential Indicators 2015/16 – 2017/18 at paragraphs 8 to 37, and Appendix 2 of the report;
2. approve the Investment Strategy for 2015/16 and investment criteria set out in paragraphs 23 to 37 and Appendix 1; and
3. approve the Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) statement at paragraphs 12 to 22 which sets out the Council's policy on debt repayment.

**10 ADOPTION OF THE CORPORATE PLAN 2015-19**

43 - 116

The Head of Policy Culture and Communications has submitted a report which details the consultation of the draft Corporate Plan 2015-19 and proposes its adoption.

The City Executive Board will consider these reports at its meeting on 12 February and their decisions and recommendations will be reported separately.

**Officer Recommendations:** Subject to the recommendation of the City Executive Board, Council is recommended to:

1. approve the draft Corporate Plan 2015 – 19; and
2. delegate authority to the Head of Policy, Culture and Communications to make minor textual changes to the Corporate Plan 2015 -19 in advance of formal publication.

**11 MATTERS EXEMPT FROM PUBLICATION**

If Council wishes to exclude the press and the public from the meeting during consideration of any aspects of the preceding agenda items it will be necessary for Council to pass a resolution in accordance with the provisions of Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 specifying the grounds on which their presence could involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as described in specific paragraphs of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act if and so long as, in all the circumstances of the case, the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

**(The Access to Information Procedure Rules – Section 15 of the Council’s Constitution – sets out the conditions under which the public can be excluded from meetings of the Council)**

**UPDATES AND ADDITIONAL INFORMATION TO SUPPLEMENT THIS AGENDA IS PUBLISHED IN THE COUNCIL BRIEFING NOTE.**

The Agenda and Briefing Note should be read together. The Briefing Note is available on the Friday before the meeting and can be accessed from the calendar of meetings page on the council’s website.

## **DECLARING INTERESTS**

### **General duty**

You must declare any disclosable pecuniary interests when the meeting reaches the item on the agenda headed "Declarations of Interest" or as soon as it becomes apparent to you.

### **What is a disclosable pecuniary interest?**

Disclosable pecuniary interests relate to your employment; sponsorship (ie payment for expenses incurred by you in carrying out your duties as a councillor or towards your election expenses); contracts; land in the Council's area; licences for land in the Council's area; corporate tenancies; and securities. These declarations must be recorded in each councillor's Register of Interests which is publicly available on the Council's website.

### **Declaring an interest**

Where any matter disclosed in your Register of Interests is being considered at a meeting, you must declare that you have an interest. You should also disclose the nature as well as the existence of the interest.

If you have a disclosable pecuniary interest, after having declared it at the meeting you must not participate in discussion or voting on the item and must withdraw from the meeting whilst the matter is discussed.

### **Members' Code of Conduct and public perception**

Even if you do not have a disclosable pecuniary interest in a matter, the Members' Code of Conduct says that a member "must serve only the public interest and must never improperly confer an advantage or disadvantage on any person including yourself" and that "you must not place yourself in situations where your honesty and integrity may be questioned". What this means is that the matter of interests must be viewed within the context of the Code as a whole and regard should continue to be paid to the perception of the public.

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<sup>1</sup>Disclosable pecuniary interests that must be declared are not only those of the member her or himself but also those of the member's spouse, civil partner or person they are living with as husband or wife or as if they were civil partners.



# Agenda Item 3

## COUNCIL 5.00pm 18 FEBRUARY 2015 BUDGET DEBATE –TIMINGS AND PROCEDURE

Council is invited to suspend its normal procedure rules and adopt the procedures set out in this note to facilitate debate of the items on the agenda and any proposed amendments.

### Agenda, timings and procedure:

<u>Agenda item/ event</u>	<u>Start time</u>
Welcome 1. Apologies 2. Declarations of interest, 3. Announcements 4. Agree the procedure for the meeting	5.00pm
5. Public questions and addresses relating to items on the agenda.  Allow 30 minutes for this although it may take the full 45 minutes Addresses - each 5 min  Questions - each 3 min + 3 min reply	5.10
6. Report of the Council's chief finance officer on the robustness of the 2015/16 budget	5.40
7. Medium term financial strategy (MTFS) and 2015-16 budget and financial aspects of Asset management strategy (the CEB's budget)  Cllr Turner proposes budget agreed on 12 February (10 min). Seconded (may reserve right to speak).  <b>Liberal Democrat Group Budget presentation.</b> 20 minutes for presentation and debate  Vote  <b>Green Group Budget presentation.</b> 20 minutes for presentation and debate  Vote	5.50
Tea*	6.50

7a. Conclusion of item 5	7.40
Amendment debate	Total time for amendment debate: 45 minutes
<i>Individual amendments permitted only if circulated by the Clerk. Leader/Deputy Leader to indicate before debate which amendments they will accept without a vote.</i>	
<i>Head of Finance to report on the soundness of the amendments. (3 minutes)</i>	
<i>Amendments taken as read, and taken in order as presented to the Clerk before the start of this item. Any amendments outstanding after 45 minutes will fall unless Council agrees to continue as part of the debate.</i>	
Administration budget debate – on full budget as presented and with any agreed amendments	Total time for debate: 40 minutes
Recorded vote	
Adjourn for 10 minutes	9.10
8. Council tax 2015/16	9.20
Recorded vote	
9. Treasury management strategy	9.30
10. Corporate Plan	
Close meeting	10.15

There is no Part 2 or Part 3 to the agenda for this meeting.

Timings are indicative as business may be concluded earlier than shown or Council may decide to extend the time for any section.

Depending upon outcome of the voting on the Liberal Democrat and Green alternative Budget amendments Council will either adjourn for the Administration to review their position, or proceed to Stage 6 after tea.

\*Individual amendments permitted. Amendments must be written down and handed to the Clerk for circulation to all councillors and officers before debating. Leader/Deputy Leader to indicate before debate which amendments they will accept without a vote. Only amendments handed to the Clerk more than 10 minutes before the reconvening of Council will be taken.

**Report of:** Head of Finance

**To:** Council

**Date:** 18February 2015

**Item No:**

**Title of Report:** Council Tax 2015/16

## Summary and Recommendations

**Purpose of report:** To set out the necessary calculations to enable Council to set the 2015/16 Council Tax for Oxford City, in accordance with the Local Government Finance Acts, 1988 and 1992, as amended by The Localism Act 2011.

**Key decision:** No

**Executive lead member:** Councillor Ed Turner

**Policy Framework:** None

**Recommendation(s):** Council is asked to approve for 2015/16: -

1. The City Council's precept and Council Tax requirement of £12,072,263 (inclusive of Parish precepts) and £11,900,498 excluding Parish precepts.
2. The average Band D Council Tax figure (excluding Parish Precepts) of £278.97 a **1.99%** increase on 2014/15 figure of £273.53. Including Parish Precepts the figure is £283.00, a 2.02% increase (see paragraph 3).
3. The contribution of £10,000 to the Parish of Old Marston in recognition of the additional expenditure that the Parish incurs as a consequence of maintaining the cemetery (see paragraphs 11 and 12).
4. The amount of £515,696 to be treated as Special Expenses (see paragraph 15).
5. The Band D Council Taxes for the various areas of the City (excluding the Police and County Council's additions) as follows:-

Littlemore	£301.50
Old Marston	£308.19
Risinghurst and Sandhills	£295.59
Blackbird Leys	£276.71
Unparished Area	£281.25

These figures include the Parish Precepts and special expensing amounts as appropriate in addition to the City-wide Council Tax of £266.88.

The Council is also asked to note:

6. Oxfordshire County Council's precept and Band D Council Tax as set out in paragraph 18 below.
7. The Police and Crime Commissioner for the Thames Valley's precept and Band D Council Tax as set out in paragraph 19 below, and
8. The overall average Band D equivalent Council Tax of £1,679.16 including Parish Precepts (subject to confirmation of the Band D figures for the County Council and the Police and Crime Commissioner – see paragraphs 18 and 19 below).

**Appendix 1** Statutory Calculations Required for Setting of the Council Tax

**Appendix 2** Council Tax Amounts per Band 2015/16

**Appendix 3** Risk Implications

**BACKGROUND**

1. The Localism Act, 2011 requires local authorities to calculate the amount of income to be collected from Council Tax based on the Band D charge multiplied by the Council's tax base. The City Council's calculation of this figure, the Council Tax Requirement, including the Parish Precepts is £12,072,263. The council tax requirement for the Council's own purposes is £11,900,498. The detailed calculation is shown in Appendix 1.

**CALCULATION OF BASIC AMOUNT OF COUNCIL TAX**

2. The tax bases for the various parts of the City were approved by the Audit and Governance Committee on 18<sup>th</sup> December 2014 and totalled 42,658.7. This allows 2.5% for non-collection and represents a 2.2% increase on the 2014/15 figure of 41,290.8.

3. The Basic Amount of Tax is calculated in accordance with Section 31B of the Local Government Finance Act 1992. Details are shown in Appendix 1 and summarised in Table 1 below.

**Table 1 Basic amount of Band D Council Tax 2015/16**

Requirement from Council Tax	£11,900,498
<i>(including Parishes)</i>	£12,072,263
Tax Base	42,658.7
Basic Amount of Council Tax Band D	£278.97
<i>(including Parishes)</i>	£283.00

4. The Basic Amount of Council Tax (exclusive of Parish precepts) represents a 1.99% increase on the 2014/15 figure of £273.53 and an annual increase of £5.44 or approximately 10p per week.
5. The Basic Amount of Council Tax is calculated by dividing the Council Tax Requirement by the Tax Base. This amount of tax is calculated purely to comply with statutory requirements.

**CALCULATION OF ACTUAL AMOUNTS OF COUNCIL TAX**

6. The calculation of the City Wide tax is set out below:-

**Table 2 City Wide Band D Council Tax 2015/16**

Council Tax Requirement	£12,072,263
Less Parish Precepts	£171,765
Less Unparished Area Special Expenses(see para 23)	<u>£515,696</u>
<b>City Wide Requirement</b>	£11,384,802
Divided by Tax Base	42,658.7
<b>City Wide Council Tax at Band D</b>	£266.88

The City Wide Tax is payable by all dwellings throughout the Authority's area.

7. The Parishes have issued the City Council with their precepts. These, and the respective additions for the special expenses, are as shown below.

**Table 3 Band D Parish Precept & Special Expenses Addition  
2015/16**

	Parish Precept (net of funding) £	Unparished Area Special Expenses (net of Cemeteries)	Special Expense for Cemeteries £	Total £	Tax Base Numbers	Average Band D £
Littlemore	56,754.17		828.38	57,582.55	1,663.1	34.62
Old Marston	50,436.75			50,436.75	1,220.9	41.31
Risinghurst and Sandhills	39,418.85		696.04	40,114.89	1,397.4	28.71
Blackbird Leys	25,155.23		1,341.97	26,497.20	2,694.2	9.83
Unparished Area		495,056.00	17,773.61	512,829.61	35,683.1	14.37
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>171,765.00</b>	<b>495,056.00</b>	<b>20,640.00</b>	<b>687,461.00</b>	<b>42,658.7</b>	

**Council Tax Support Grant**

8. In 2013/14 Council Tax Benefit was replaced with a system which allows local authorities to provide a discount or Council Tax Support Grant to eligible claimants. The Government partially compensates authorities through the Finance Settlement for their subsequent loss of Council Tax income.
9. However, there is no longer transparency as to the amount the Government includes in the Finance Settlement in respect of Council Tax Support Grant. Consequently, as the Council's Revenue Support Grant continues to reduce it is proposed that the Council Tax Support Grant paid to parishes is reduced by a similar percentage. This principle was discussed with Parish Councils at a meeting on December 9<sup>th</sup> 2014.
10. Table 4 below shows the proposed distribution of Council Tax Support Grant between Parishes for 2015-16. The distribution is based on the effect of the Council Tax Reduction Scheme on each parish's Tax Base, i.e. those that have been hit hardest by the changes receive the greatest proportion of funding.

**Table 4 Council Tax Support Grant  
Paid to Parishes – 2015/16**

	<b>Precept £</b>	<b>Funding £</b>	<b>Total payable to Parish £</b>
Littlemore Old	56,754.17	5,245.83	62,000.00
Marston *	60,436.75	2,128.25	62,565.00
Risinghurst and Sandhills	39,418.85	2,081.15	41,500.00
Blackbird Leys	<u>25,155.23</u>	<u>4,844.77</u>	<u>30,000.00</u>
	<b>181,765.00</b>	<b>14,300.00</b>	<b>196,065.00</b>

(\* this includes the £10,000 contribution – see paragraph 19).

**11. OLD MARSTON PARISH**

The May 2002 Guidance Note issued by Central Government (Transport Local Government Regions) on Financial Arrangements with Parish and Town Councils outlined principles that should be followed in financial arrangements between District and Parish Councils. These include:

- Fairness in the provision of services (and access to them) by the principal authority between different parts of their area
- Democratic control and accountability – to let local councils support additional services with additional expenditure

12. Old Marston Parish Council has made a successful case to the Council for a contribution to the Parish in recognition of the additional expenditure that the Parish incurs in relation to maintaining the cemetery within the Parish; this has been ongoing since 2008/09. The Parish maintains the cemetery the use of which is not restricted to residents of that Parish, hence a contribution has been made to reduce the parish precept in recognition of this fact. For 2015/16 the Old Marston parish precept has been calculated as £60,436.75 (net of funding) and a recommendation is made to Council to reduce this by £10,000 to £50,436.75.

**13. UNPARISHED AREAS OF THE CITY**

Only part of the City area is covered by parishes. In the Unparished Area the City Council itself undertakes the parish functions. Section 35 (2) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, states that 'special expenses' should be calculated when there are "any expenses incurred

by a billing authority in performing in a part of its area a function performed elsewhere in its area by .....a parish”.

14. Within the City area the services shown in the table below are currently provided by at least one Parish Council. To avoid double charging for the cost of providing these services, a special expense - equivalent to the cost of providing these services elsewhere in the City - is levied on those areas not providing them.
15. The following table sets out the Special Expenses Account:

**Table 5 Special Expenses Estimate 2015/16**

	Special Expenses for Cemeteries £	Special Expenses 2015/16 £	Total Special Expenses 2015/16 £	Total Special Expenses 2014-15 £
Community Recreation Parks Management		245,707	245,707	237,710
Grounds		11,000	11,000	11,000
Allotments		37,188	37,188	37,188
Ditches and Streams		26,680	26,680	24,669
Cemeteries	20,640	75,481	70,481	70,481
Street Furniture		20,640	20,640	19,972
		99,000	94,000	94,000
<b>Total Special Expenses</b>	<b>20,640</b>	<b>495,056</b>	<b>515,696</b>	<b>495,020</b>

16. The calculation of Special Expenses is based on an assessment of the types of work undertaken in parishes as a whole. The services are provided in at least one if not all the parishes. However, in the case of cemeteries there is only one cemetery in the parished areas, located in Old Marston. As outlined in paragraph 12 Old Marston have put forward a successful case to the Council that the cemetery is available for use by people living outside of the parish - particularly in respect of interment of ashes. The Council has previously accepted this case and approved a contribution to the Old Marston precept. The total expenditure on the three remaining cemeteries has been charged across all areas except for the Old Marston Parish.



17. Further details of the calculations, as required by the Act are shown at Appendix 1. Taxes by area and by Band are shown at Appendix 2.
18. **Oxfordshire County Council:** The County Council's likely precept figure for 2015/16 is £52,575,141.40 giving a Band D Council Tax of £1,232.46 a 1.99% increase on the 2014/15 figure of £1,208.41. The figures are due to be finalised on February 17<sup>th</sup> 2015.
19. **Police and Crime Commissioner for Thames Valley:** The precept figure for 2015/16 was confirmed on January 30<sup>th</sup> 2015 and will be £6,983,229.19 giving a Band D Council Tax of £163.70 a 1.99% increase on the 2014/15 figure of £160.51.
20. **Risk Implications:** A risk assessment has been undertaken and the risk register is attached at Appendix 3.
21. **Equalities Impact Assessment:** It is difficult to estimate the dimensions of equality risks around Council Tax increases. The Council has put in place proportionate mitigating actions such as the Council Tax Support Scheme and the work of the Welfare Reform Team to protect the most vulnerable and economically challenged communities across Oxford.
22. **Financial Implications:** These are all included within the main body of the report.
23. **Legal Implications:** The Billing Authority is required under section 30 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 to set the Council Tax before the 11<sup>th</sup> March in the preceding financial year.

**Name and contact details of author:**

Adrian Wood  
Technical Officer  
Finance  
Telephone Number 01865 252619

**Background papers:**

None

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## Appendix 1

### Statutory Calculations Required for Setting of the Council Tax

1. On December 18th 2014 the Audit and Governance Committee approved:
  - a. the Council Tax Base 2015/16 for the whole Council area as **42,658.7** (Item T in the formula in Section 31B(3) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, as amended) and,
  - b. for dwellings in those parts of its area to which a Parish precept, or Special Expenses relates as:

Blackbird Leys	2,694.2
Littlemore	1,663.1
Old Marston	1,220.9
Risinghurst and Sandhills	1,397.4
Unparished Area	35,683.1

2. The Council Tax requirement for the Council's own purposes for 2015/16 (excluding Parish precepts) is £11,900,498
3. The following amounts have been calculated for the year 2015/16 in accordance with Sections 31 to 36 of the Act:
  - (a) £184,488,186 being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 31A(2) of the Act taking into account all precepts issued to it by Parish Councils.
  - (b) £172,415,923 being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 31A(3) of the Act.
  - (c) £12,072,263 being the amount by which the aggregate at 3(a) above exceeds the aggregate at 3(b) above, calculated by the Council in accordance with Section 31A(4) of the Act as its Council Tax Requirement for the year (item R in the formula in Section 31A(4) of the Act). This figure includes the Parish Precepts.
  - (d) £283.00 being the amount at 3(c) above (Item R), all divided by item T (1(a) above), calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 31B(1) of the Act, as the basic amount of its Council Tax for the year (including Parish precepts).

- (e) £687,461 being the aggregate amount of all special items (Parish precepts and Unparished area special expenses) referred to in Section 34(1) of the Act.
- (f) £266.88 being the amount at 3(d) above less the result given by dividing the amount at 3(e) above by Item T (1a above), calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 34(2) of the Act, as the basic amount of its Council Tax for the year for dwellings in those parts of its area to which no Parish Precept/Special Expenses relates.

## Appendix 2

## Council Tax Amounts Per Band 2015/16

Page 1

<u>Littlemore</u>	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
Parish Special Expenses	23.08	26.93	30.77	34.62	42.31	50.01	57.70	69.24
City Wide Tax	177.92	207.57	237.23	266.88	326.19	385.49	444.80	533.76
<b>City Total</b>	<b>201.00</b>	<b>234.50</b>	<b>268.00</b>	<b>301.50</b>	<b>368.50</b>	<b>435.50</b>	<b>502.50</b>	<b>603.00</b>
PCC for Thames Valley	109.13	127.32	145.51	163.70	200.08	236.46	272.83	327.40
Oxfordshire County	821.64	958.58	1,095.52	1,232.46	1,506.34	1,780.22	2,054.10	2,464.92
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,131.77</b>	<b>1,320.40</b>	<b>1,509.03</b>	<b>1,697.66</b>	<b>2,074.92</b>	<b>2,452.18</b>	<b>2,829.43</b>	<b>3,395.32</b>
<b>Old Marston</b>	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
Parish Special Expenses	27.54	32.13	36.72	41.31	50.49	59.67	68.85	82.62
City Wide Tax	177.92	207.57	237.23	266.88	326.19	385.49	444.80	533.76
<b>City Total</b>	<b>205.46</b>	<b>239.70</b>	<b>273.95</b>	<b>308.19</b>	<b>376.68</b>	<b>445.16</b>	<b>513.65</b>	<b>616.38</b>
PCC for Thames Valley	109.13	127.32	145.51	163.70	200.08	236.46	272.83	327.40
Oxfordshire County	821.64	958.58	1,095.52	1,232.46	1,506.34	1,780.22	2,054.10	2,464.92
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,136.23</b>	<b>1,325.60</b>	<b>1,514.98</b>	<b>1,704.35</b>	<b>2,083.10</b>	<b>2,461.84</b>	<b>2,840.58</b>	<b>3,408.70</b>
<b>Risinghurst and Sandhills</b>	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
Parish Special Expenses	19.14	22.33	25.52	28.71	35.09	41.47	47.85	57.42
City Wide Tax	177.92	207.57	237.23	266.88	326.19	385.49	444.80	533.76
<b>City Total</b>	<b>197.06</b>	<b>229.90</b>	<b>262.75</b>	<b>295.59</b>	<b>361.28</b>	<b>426.96</b>	<b>492.65</b>	<b>591.18</b>
PCC for Thames Valley	109.13	127.32	145.51	163.70	200.08	236.46	272.83	327.40
Oxfordshire County	821.64	958.58	1,095.52	1,232.46	1,506.34	1,780.22	2,054.10	2,464.92
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,127.83</b>	<b>1,315.80</b>	<b>1,503.78</b>	<b>1,691.75</b>	<b>2,067.70</b>	<b>2,443.64</b>	<b>2,819.58</b>	<b>3,383.50</b>

**Council Tax Amounts Per Band 2015/16**

<b><i>Blackbird Leys</i></b>	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
Parish Special Expenses	6.55	7.65	8.74	9.83	12.01	14.20	16.38	19.66
City Wide Tax	177.92	207.57	237.23	266.88	326.19	385.49	444.80	533.76
<b>City Total</b>	<b>184.47</b>	<b>215.22</b>	<b>245.97</b>	<b>276.71</b>	<b>338.20</b>	<b>399.69</b>	<b>461.18</b>	<b>553.42</b>
PCC for Thames Valley	109.13	127.32	145.51	163.70	200.08	236.46	272.83	327.40
Oxfordshire County	821.64	958.58	1,095.52	1,232.46	1,506.34	1,780.22	2,054.10	2,464.92
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,115.24</b>	<b>1,301.12</b>	<b>1,487.00</b>	<b>1,672.87</b>	<b>2,044.62</b>	<b>2,416.37</b>	<b>2,788.11</b>	<b>3,345.74</b>
<b><i>Unparished Area</i></b>	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
Special Expenses	9.58	11.18	12.77	14.37	17.56	20.76	23.95	28.74
City Wide Tax	177.92	207.57	237.23	266.88	326.19	385.49	444.80	533.76
<b>City Total</b>	<b>187.50</b>	<b>218.75</b>	<b>250.00</b>	<b>281.25</b>	<b>343.75</b>	<b>406.25</b>	<b>468.75</b>	<b>562.50</b>
PCC for Thames Valley	109.13	127.32	145.51	163.70	200.08	236.46	272.83	327.40
Oxfordshire County	821.64	958.58	1,095.52	1,232.46	1,506.34	1,780.22	2,054.10	2,464.92
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,118.27</b>	<b>1,304.65</b>	<b>1,491.03</b>	<b>1,677.41</b>	<b>2,050.17</b>	<b>2,422.93</b>	<b>2,795.68</b>	<b>3,354.82</b>

## Appendix 3

### Risk Register

Council Report – Council Tax 2015-16

Date – February 18th 2015

Author – Adrian Wood (Finance)

No.	Risk Description Link to Corporate Obj	Gross Risk		Cause of Risk	Mitigation	Net Risk		Further Management of Risk: Transfer/Accept/Reduce/Avoid	Monitoring Effectiveness	Current Risk					
Risk Score <b>Impact Score:</b> 1 =Insignificant; 2 = Minor; 3 = Moderate; 4 = Major; 5 = Catastrophic Almost Certain						<b>Probability Score:</b> 1 = Rare; 2 = Unlikely; 3 = Possible; 4 = Likely; 5 =									
		I	P		Mitigating Control: Level of Effectiveness: (HML)	I	P	Action: Action Owner:  Mitigating Control: Control Owner:	Outcome required: Milestone Date:	Q 1	Q 2	Q 3	Q 4	I	P
23	<b>COUNCIL TAX BASE</b> A reduced debit (and lower tax base) would mean the City Council having to borrow to meet the Precept demands of the County Council and the Police and Crime Commissioner. Also the City Council would have less Council Tax Income to fund services.	4	3	There could be less new builds than estimated in 2015/16. In addition there could be increased numbers of exemptions/discount cases.	Assumptions used in numbers of new builds are conservative. The base for the number of Exemptions was the peak of 2014/15. Customer Services review existing exemption and discount cases to ensure these should still be granted. Assumptions are based on prior years/historical trends and take account of external impacts.	3	2	Continuing monitoring of external trends (Adrian Wood). Monthly position on actual tax base is calculated and reported to the Head of Customer Services. Significant changes to be reported to CEB (Adrian Wood). Mitigating control owner: Nigel Kennedy	Assumptions remain as accurate as possible to minimise the possibility of shortfall. Monthly reviews.						

	<p><b>COUNCIL TAX PERCENTAGE INCREASE</b> The Council has assumed a 1.99% increase on 2014/15 in the General Fund budget calculations for 2015/16.</p>	4	3	<p>Members may opt for a lower rate reduction, or indeed a freeze in the Band D Council Tax rate.</p>	<p>The financial implications would be that for each 0.5% reduction on the proposed 2015/16 Band D charge, the loss of income is approximately £58k.</p>	3	2	<p>Monthly position on the cost of service provision during 2015/16 will be monitored and reported on the CORVU system). Significant changes will be highlighted (Heads of Services). Mitigating control owner: Nigel Kennedy</p>	<p>That the cost of service provision remains in line with the agreed budget.</p>						
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**To:** City Executive Board  
Council

**Date:** 12 February 2015  
18 February 2015

**Report of:** Head of Finance

**Title of Report:** Treasury Management Strategy 2015/16

## Summary and Recommendations

**Purpose of report:** To present the Treasury Management Strategy for 2015/16 together with the Prudential Indicators for 2015/16 to 2017/18.

**Key decision:** Yes

**Executive lead member:** Councillor Ed Turner, Board Member for Finance, Asset Management and Public Health

**Policy Framework:** Sustaining Financial Stability

**Recommendations:** That the City Executive Board recommend that Council:

1. Approve the Treasury Management Strategy 2015/16, and adopt the Prudential Indicators 2015/16 – 2017/18 at paragraphs 8 to 37, and Appendix 2;
2. Approve the Investment Strategy for 2015/16 and investment criteria set out in paragraphs 23 to 37 and Appendix 1
3. Approve the Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) statement at paragraphs 12 to 22 which sets out the Council's policy on debt repayment.

### **Appendices:**

Appendix 1 – Credit and Counterparty Risk Management

Appendix 2 – Prudential Indicators

## **Executive Summary**

1. The Council's Treasury Management Strategy has been written in accordance with the CIPFA prudential code and the CIPFA treasury management code of practice. The main change to the Strategy is the inclusion of the Ethical Investment Policy set out at paragraph 39.
2. The report presents the Council's prudential indicators for 2015/16 – 2017/18. Notable indicators include capital expenditure and borrowing limits, as these are areas of significant activity.
3. Members are required to agree the Council's Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) policy, which is the charge to revenue each year for the repayment of debt.
4. The average value of investments during the financial year to date is £69.4m, they have ranged from £63.7m to £76.1m at any one time; an increase on the previous year, when average balances were £58.2m and ranged from £40.7m to £74.3m. This reflects slippage in the Council's Capital Programme.
5. The Council's external debt will reduce to £200.1m by the end of March 2015 from £200.5 at the same time last year. The debt is held at fixed rates with varying fixed periods to maturity. £198.5m relates to the Housing Revenue Account following the introduction of self-financing in April 2012.
6. The Council's General Fund Capital Programme over the next four years continues to be funded from a combination of government grants, capital receipts, revenue resources and Community Infrastructure Levy.
7. Whilst the majority of the Housing Capital Programme continues to be funded directly from Council House rents the Council's budget also allows for increased 'borrowing' (£32 million) to fund a package of Housing investments.

## **Treasury Management Strategy Borrowing and Debt Strategy 2015/16**

8. Under the prudential code, individual authorities are responsible for deciding the level of their borrowing. The system is designed to allow authorities that need, and can afford to, to borrow in order to pay for capital investment.
9. The arrangements also facilitate 'invest to save' schemes where they are affordable, prudent and sustainable.
10. The parameters for determining the level of prudential borrowing are:

- A balanced revenue budget that includes the revenue consequences of any capital financing ie: interest, debt repayment and running costs of any new project;
- That the impacts of the authorised borrowing limit on council tax or council rents is reasonable.

11. The draft Capital Programme which appears elsewhere on the Agenda; includes approximately £32m of HRA borrowing, to fund new build and estate regeneration over the next four years. This is utilising the Capital Financing Requirement (CFR) headroom available to the HRA.

### **Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) Statement 2015/16**

12. Prudential borrowing increases the Council's Capital Financing Requirement (CFR) or underlying need to borrow. Whether the Council actually borrows to finance capital expenditure is a treasury management decision unconnected to the capital financing decision. In practice the Council is unlikely to need to borrow externally in the medium term to fund the Capital Programme as it has sufficient cash balances. The Council is required to make a charge to its revenue account for internal borrowing. This charge is known as Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) and reflects the repayment of principal borrowed.

13. Regulations require Full Council to approve the Council's MRP policy on an annual basis. The following statement is recommended:

- a) For capital expenditure incurred before 1<sup>st</sup> April 2008 or which in the future will be supported capital expenditure<sup>1</sup>, existing practice, outlined in the former DCLG regulations will apply;
- b) For capital expenditure that relates to the assets transferred from HRA to GF- MRP will be based on the estimated useful life, but taking into account the number of years the assets have been in existence, and previous funding allocated to them;
- c) For all unsupported borrowing<sup>2</sup> incurred after 1<sup>st</sup> April 2008 the MRP policy will be the Asset Life Method, i.e. the MRP will be based on the estimated life of the asset and borrowing charged to the revenue account in equal instalments over the life of the asset.

14. The HRA is not required to make a MRP but is required to make a depreciation charge. Regulations allow the Major Repairs Allowance (MRA) to be used as a proxy for depreciation for the first five year of the HRA self-financing scheme. Depreciation on HRA properties is estimated at £6.3m per annum and the MRA received is in line with

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<sup>1</sup> Supported Capital Expenditure means the total amount of capital expenditure which a local authority has been notified by Government will be given as part of the grant payment

<sup>2</sup> Unsupported borrowing is any borrowing not covered by Government grants.

this. After the five year period depreciation will be a charge to the HRA with no offsetting available.

15. The S151 officer has delegated authority to determine the need for any future borrowing taking into account prevailing interest rates and associated risks. A combination of long-term and short-term fixed and variable rate borrowing may be considered. This may include borrowing in advance of future years' requirements.
16. Borrowing may be undertaken to fund the approved Capital Programme or to fund future debt maturities. The S151 officer will adopt a cautious approach and take into account the following factors:
  - The on-going revenue liabilities created, and the implications for the future plans and budgets;
  - The economic and market factors that might influence the manner and timing of any decision to borrow;
  - The pros and cons of alternative forms of funding including internal borrowing;
  - The impact of borrowing in advance on cash balances and the consequent increase in counterparty risk.
17. Council officers, in conjunction with our treasury advisors, Capita Asset Services - Treasury solutions, monitor both prevailing interest rates and market forecasts, thereby allowing the Council to respond to any changes that may impact on the timing and manner of borrowing decisions, to ensure these are optimised.
18. The Council had £200.5m of external debt as at 1<sup>st</sup> April 2014, all of which was held at fixed rates with varying maturity terms upto 2057. This debt is wholly related to housing.
19. Repayments during 2014/15 will reduce the debt to £200.1m as at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2015.
20. The Council's CFR as at 1<sup>st</sup> April 2014 exceeded the level of external borrowing, and is an indication of the Council's underlying need to borrow to fund its capital investments due to the level of internal borrowing that has been undertaken over the past few years.
21. This position is expected to continue in the short term and indicates a potential need to borrow on the external market in the medium term, if all schemes in the proposed Capital Programme go ahead.
22. In summary the main change to the borrowing strategy is to utilise the CFR headroom on the HRA to borrow a further £32m over the next four years.

## Investment Strategy 2015/16

### Interest rates

23. Average cash balances are currently £69.4m. They have fluctuated between £63.7m to £76.1m during the year to date.
24. Interest rates remain at an all-time low, with the Base Rate having been held at 0.50% since March 2009. The Council's advisors expect rates to begin to rise slowly during 2015 peaking at around 3% by 2017/18.
25. All existing investment deal terms are less than 364 days. The Strategy allows for investments beyond 364 days with high quality counterparties; however prevailing interest rates have not been attractive enough to outweigh the additional risk that a longer term investment brings.
26. Investments are made in accordance with the Council's Treasury Management Strategy such that returns are balanced against security of investment, liquidity of cash to ensure funding of day to day cash flows and yield. Consequently procedures are in place to determine the maximum periods that funds may be invested for, as well as the nature of those investments.
27. The Council works to achieve the optimum rate of return on its investments commensurate with proper levels of security and liquidity.
28. Investment instruments identified for use are listed in Appendix 1 under the specified and non-specified investment categories. Counterparty limits are set in accordance with the Council's Treasury Management Practices (TMPs).
29. The Council utilises the creditworthiness services provided by Capita Asset Services – Treasury Solutions. The model combines the credit ratings, credit watches and credit outlooks provided by the credit rating agencies - Fitch, Moody's and Standard and Poor's in a weighted scoring system which is then combined with an overlay of Credit Default Swap<sup>3</sup> (CDS) spreads and sovereign ratings for which the end product is a series of colour coded bands which indicate the relative creditworthiness of counterparties. These colour codes are used by the Council to determine the duration of investments.
30. The Council is alerted to changes to ratings by Capita Asset Services - Treasury solutions creditworthiness service and takes the following action in respect of this update:

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<sup>3</sup> A financial swap agreement that the seller of the CDS will compensate the buyer in the event of default

- If a downgrade results in the counterparty/investment scheme no longer meeting the Council's minimum criteria, it is withdrawn immediately from further use
  - If a counterparty's credit rating is placed on negative watch or negative outlook, officers carry out a review to determine whether the institution is still worthy of inclusion on the counterparty list. If there is any doubt, the counterparty is temporarily suspended pending the credit rating agency's full review.
31. As part of the creditworthiness methodology a minimum sovereign rating of AA- from Fitch (or equivalent from other agencies if Fitch does not provide) has been determined.
32. For operational purposes, the Council's counterparty list is reviewed on a daily basis taking into account market information and changes to criteria provided. The list is maintained by the Treasury Team, and reported to the S151 Officer on a regular basis.
33. The Investment Strategy provides delegated authority for the S151 Officer to determine the most appropriate form of investment dependant on prevailing interest rates and counterparty risk at the time.
34. Limits on countries and sectors are as follows:
- No more than 20% of the previous year's average monthly investment balance with any one counterparty or group (currently at £15.8m)
  - Maximum of 10% of total investments to be with institutions in other countries that meet the required criteria

### **Specified and Non-Specified investments**

35. In approving the Investment Strategy Members are approving the types of investments the Council can undertake. Investments are classified as either specified or non-specified and are show in more detail in Appendix 1.
36. A specified investment is one that is in sterling, no more than one year in duration or, if in excess of one year can be repaid earlier on request and with counterparties that meet the council's credit rating criteria. Non-specified investments are any other type of investment including property funds. Whilst generally these investments will earn a higher rate of return they are inherently more risky in nature and a maximum level of 25% of the previous year's average monthly investment balance is placed on such investments.
37. The Council placed deposits with two Icelandic banks prior to their collapse in 2009; original balances were £3m with Heritable and £1.5m with Glitnir. Heritable has repaid 94% of the initial deposit plus

interest, no further repayments have been received during 2014/15. The Council has received over 80% of the original deposit with Glitnir. The remaining balance is currently held in Iceland, under Icelandic law, and the Council is seeking advice from Bevan Brittan, our solicitors acting on behalf of all local authorities, regarding its options on this matter.

### **Ethical Investment Policy**

38. At its meeting on 14<sup>th</sup> July, Council proposed to adopt an ethical investment policy, which is set out below. This Strategy formally endorses and adopts it for the first time.
39. The Council will not knowingly invest directly in businesses whose activities and practices pose a risk of serious harm to individuals or groups, or whose activities are inconsistent with the Council's mission and values. This would include, inter alia, avoiding direct investment in institutions with material links to:
- a. Human rights abuse (eg child labour, political oppression)
  - b. Environmentally harmful activities (eg pollutions, destruction of habitat, fossil fuels)
  - c. Socially harmful activities (eg tobacco, gambling)

### **Banking Services**

40. The Council's banking services have recently been tendered following the withdrawal of the Co-operative Bank from the local authority market. Barclays won the contract and are currently working with officers on an implementation plan. The new contract will commence on the 1<sup>st</sup> April 2015.

### **Prudential Indicators**

41. The Council is required to set out a number of indicators, relating to the affordability and prudence of its treasury strategy. These indicators are detailed in Appendix 2 for the period 2015/16 – 2017/18, and should be monitored and reported on an annual basis.
42. The Council is on track to meet all of the prudential indicators for 2014/15.

### **Legal implications**

43. This report fulfils four key requirements:
- The reporting of the prudential indicators setting out the expected capital activities (as required by the CIPFA Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities). Agreeing the Council's Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) policy, which sets out how the Council will pay for capital assets through revenue

each year (as required by guidance under the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007).

- Agreeing the Treasury Management Strategy, which sets out how the Council's treasury services will support the capital decisions taken, the day to day treasury management and the limitations on activity through treasury prudential indicators. The key indicator is the Authorised Limit, the maximum amount of debt the council could afford in the short term, but which would not be sustainable in the longer term. This is the Affordable Borrowing limit required by S3 of the Local Government Act 2003. Agreeing the Investment Strategy, this sets out the council's criteria for choosing investment counterparties and limiting exposure to the risk of loss.

44. The Local Government Act 2003 and supporting regulations require the council to have regard to the CIPFA Prudential Code and the CIPFA Treasury Management Code of Practice to set prudential and treasury indicators to ensure that the Council's capital investment plans are affordable, prudent and sustainable.

45. The Constitution requires the Strategy to be reported to the City Executive Board and Full Council outlining the expected treasury activity for the forthcoming four years on an annual basis.

### **Financial Issues**

46. All financial issues have been addressed in the body of the report.

### **Environmental Impact**

47. Following the inclusion of the Ethical Investment Policy, this ensures that through our investments we will not knowingly, directly invest in businesses that undertake harmful environmental activities.

### **Equalities Impact**

48. There is no equalities impact relating to this report.

#### **Name and contact details of author:-**

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Service Area / Department: Finance

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**List of background papers:**None



### **Treasury Management Practice (TMP) 1 – Credit and Counterparty Risk Management**

The Department of Communities and Local Government (CLG) issued Investment Guidance in 2010, and this forms the structure of the Council's policy below.

The key intention of the Guidance is to maintain the current requirement for councils to invest prudently, and that priority is given to security and liquidity before yield. In order to facilitate this objective the guidance requires this Council to have regard to the CIPFA publication *Treasury Management in the Public Services: Code of Practice and Cross-Sectoral Guidance Notes*. This Council has adopted the Code and will apply its principles to all investment activity. In accordance with the Code, the Section 151 Officer has produced Treasury Management Practices (TMPs). This part, TMP 1, covering investment counterparty policy requires approval each year.

**Annual Investment Strategy** - The key requirements of both the Code and the investment guidance are that Councils set an annual Investment Strategy, as part of their Treasury Strategy for the following year, covering the identification and approval of the following:

- The guidelines for choosing and placing investments, particularly non-specified investments.
- The principles to be used to determine the maximum periods for which funds can be committed.
- Specified investments the Council will use.
- Non-specified investments, clarifying the greater risk implications, and the overall amount of various categories that can be held at any time.

**Specified Investments** – These investments are sterling investments that do not exceed a maturity period of more than one year, or those which could be for a longer period but where the Council has the right to be repaid within twelve months if it wishes. These are considered low risk assets where the possibility of loss of principal or investment income is small. These would include sterling investments which would not be defined as capital expenditure with:

1. The UK Government (such as the Debt Management Account deposit facility, UK Treasury Bills or Gilts with less than one year to maturity).
2. Supranational bonds of less than one year's duration.
3. A Local Authority, Parish Council, Community Council, Fire or Police Authority
4. Pooled investment vehicles (such as money market funds) that have been awarded a high credit rating by a credit rating agency. For category 4, this covers pooled investment vehicles, such as money market funds, rated AAA by Standard and Poor's, Moody's or Fitch rating agencies.

5. A body that is considered of a high credit quality (such as a bank or building society) meeting the minimum 'high' quality criteria where applicable.

Additionally, and in accordance with the Code, the Council has set duration and value limits as follows:

	<b>Minimum credit criteria/colour banding</b>	<b>Max % of total investments /£ limit per institution</b>	<b>Max maturity period</b>
Debt Management Office– UK Government	Not applicable	100%	364 days
UK Government Gilts	UK Sovereign rating	20%	364 days
UK Government Treasury Bills	UK Sovereign rating	20%	364 days
Bonds issued by multilateral development banks	UK Sovereign rating	20%	6 months
Money Market Fund	AAA	£20m	Liquid
Local Authorities, Fire and Police Authorities		100%	364 days
Term deposits with banks and rated building societies	Blue Orange Red Green	£15m or 20% of total investments whichever is the greater	Up to 1 year Up to 1 year Up to 6 Months Up to 100 days
certificate of Deposit or corporate bonds with banks and building societies	Blue Orange Red Green	£10m or 20% of total investments whichever is the greater	Up to 1 year Up to 1 year Up to 6 Months Up to 100 days
Enhanced Cash funds		20%	6 months
Corporate bond funds		20%	6 months
Gilt Funds	UK sovereign rating	20%	6 months

**Non-Specified Investments** – Non-specified investments are any other type of investment (i.e. not defined as Specified above). The identification and rationale supporting the selection of these other investments and the maximum limits to be applied are set out below. Overall non specified investments will not exceed more than 25% of the previous years investment

portfolio. If the Council's average investment balance increases further over the medium term decisions will need to be made on the viability of undertaking additional non specified investments. Non specified investments would include any sterling investments with:

	Minimum Credit Criteria	Max % of total investments/£ limit per institution	Max maturity period
Local Authorities, Fire and Police Authorities		15% of total investments	Up to 2 years
Fixed term deposits with variable rate and variable maturities	Orange	15% of total investments	Upto 1 year
Fixed term deposits with variable rate and variable maturities	Yellow Purple	£10m or 20% of total investments	Up to 5 years Up to 2 years
Commercial paper issuance covered by a specific UK Government (explicit) guarantee		10% of total investments	Upto 1 year
Fixed term deposits with unrated Building Societies	Asset Base over £9bn	£3m – 20% of total investments	100 days
Commercial paper other		15% of total investments	Upto 1 year
Corporate bonds		15% of total investments	Upto 1 year
Other debt issuance by UK banks covered by UK Government (explicit) guarantee		15% of total investments	Upto 1 year
Floating rate notes		15% of total investments	Upto 1 year
Housing Associations		15% of total investments	Medium to long term
Property funds		25% of total investments	Medium to long term

**The Monitoring of Investment Counterparties** - The Council receives credit rating information (changes, rating watches and rating outlooks) from Capita Asset Services – Treasury Solutions on a weekly basis, and counterparties are checked promptly. On occasion ratings may be downgraded when an investment has already been made. The criteria used are such that a minor downgrading should not affect the full receipt of the principal and interest. Any counterparty failing to meet the criteria will be removed from the list immediately by the Section 151 Officer, and if required new counterparties which meet the criteria will be added to the list.

## APPENDIX 2

### Prudential Indicators

#### Prudence

##### **A. Capital Expenditure Plans**

1. The Council's capital expenditure plans are the key driver of treasury management activity. Estimates of capital expenditure for the period 2015/16 to 2017/18 are summarised below and this forms the first of the prudential indicators. The revenue consequences of associated borrowing and any on-going maintenance costs are accommodated within the Council's revenue budgets.
  
2. Capital expenditure can be paid for immediately, by applying capital resources such as capital receipts, capital grants, external funding or revenue contributions, but if these resources are insufficient any residual expenditure will be undertaken by Prudential Borrowing and will add to the Council's borrowing need, or Capital Financing Requirement (CFR).
  
3. Estimates of resources such as capital receipts may be subject to uncertainty i.e. anticipated asset sales may be postponed or reduced due to changes in the property market or planning issues.
  
4. Elsewhere on the agenda the draft Capital Programme is recommended for approval, a summary of these figures is in the table below, showing the capital expenditure and how it will be financed. Any shortfall of financing results in a borrowing need.

**Table 1:-Capital Expenditure and Financing**

	<b>2013/14 Actual £000's</b>	<b>2014/15 Estimate £000's</b>	<b>2015/16 Estimate £000's</b>	<b>2016/17 Estimate £000's</b>	<b>2017/18 Estimate £000's</b>
<b>Expenditure</b>					
General Fund	11,121.0	30,519.3	15,820.2	8,059.3	5,371.0
HRA	10,882.0	28,309.1	21,047.3	32,339.4	35,947.4
<b>Total expenditure</b>	<b>22,003.0</b>	<b>58,828.4</b>	<b>36,867.5</b>	<b>40,398.7</b>	<b>41,318.4</b>
<b>Finance by:</b>					
Developer Contributions	470.0	1,229.6	2,544.2	3,000.0	2,240.0
Capital Grants	10,378.0	32,898.3	7,305.1	6,513.0	6,752.2
Capital Receipts	3,876.0	8,413.3	5,991.5	-396.0	-508.6
Revenue	4,538.0	13,296.0	17,758.4	17,539.3	18,979.6
Prudential Borrowing	2,741.0	2,991.1	3,268.4	13,742.4	13,855.2
<b>Total Funding</b>	<b>22,003.0</b>	<b>58,828.3</b>	<b>36,867.6</b>	<b>40,398.7</b>	<b>41,318.4</b>

**B. Capital Financing Requirement (CFR).**

5. The CFR is the total outstanding capital expenditure which has not yet been paid for from either revenue or capital resources. It is essentially a measure of the Council's underlying need to borrow. Prudential borrowing is explored in more detail below.
6. The CFR includes any other long term liabilities (eg finance leases). Whilst these increase the CFR, and therefore the Council's borrowing requirement, these types of scheme include a borrowing facility and so the Council is not required to separately borrow for these schemes.

**Table 2:- Capital Financing Requirement**

	<b>2013/14 Actual £000's</b>	<b>2014/15 Estimate £000's</b>	<b>2015/16 Estimate £000's</b>	<b>2016/17 Estimate £000's</b>	<b>2017/18 Estimate £000's</b>
General Fund	-1,746	23,578	22,570	21,563	20,555
HRA	222,297	199,384	202,653	216,395	230,250
<b>Total</b>	<b>220,551</b>	<b>222,962</b>	<b>225,223</b>	<b>237,958</b>	<b>250,805</b>

Movement in CFR	20,107	2,411	2,261	12,735	12,848
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**Affordability**

7. The Strategy also includes the Prudential Indicators, which the authority is required to consider before determining its budget and treasury management arrangements for the new financial year. These indicators are a statutory requirement and therefore have to be reported to Council each year. These indicators are split into two categories the first is affordability. The affordability indicators are listed below:

**C. Ratio of financing costs to the net revenue stream**

8. This indicator represents the estimate of the ratio of financing costs to the net revenue stream for HRA and General Fund.

**Table 3:- Ratio of financing costs to net revenue stream**

	<b>2013/14 Actual %</b>	<b>2014/15 Estimate %</b>	<b>2015/16 Estimate %</b>	<b>2016/17 Estimate %</b>	<b>2017/18 Estimate %</b>
General Fund	-0.7%	-4.4%	-5.7%	-7.4%	-8.6%
HRA	18.5%	18.1%	17.0%	16.1%	16.0%

## D. Incremental impact of capital investment decisions on Council Tax and Rents

### Council Tax

9. The estimate of the incremental impact of capital investment decisions on the Council Tax is shown below; this shows the impact of any decisions that are made on investment through the Capital Programme and how it affects the Band D Council Tax.

10. The figures in Table 4 below have been calculated by looking at those schemes that are uncommitted in the current Capital Programme and looking at the impact they will have on Council Tax after taking into account capital receipts and revenue contributions

11. The Council will not enter into any uncommitted capital scheme until the source of funding is confirmed, e.g. Capital receipts, grants, S106 or prudential borrowing. This will ensure we can avoid any unplanned revenue consequences as a result of capital expenditure.

**Table 4:- Impact of Capital Expenditure on Council Tax**

	2013/14 Actual £	2014/15 Estimate £	2015/16 Estimate £	2016/17 Estimate £	2017/18 Estimate £
Overall net impact on Council Tax Band D per week	0.26	0.70	0.36	0.18	0.12

### Housing Rents

12. The estimated incremental impact of capital investment decisions on weekly housing rents is shown in Table 5 below. The figures have been calculated by looking at those schemes that are currently in the Capital Programme and deducting alternate funding resources.

13. The key drivers for setting housing rents with effect from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2015 will be affordability and the need to cover net expenditure. Formula rent guidance states that for 2015/16 for properties not at target rent will be CPI + 1% + £2, and those at target rent CPI + 1%. At September 2014 CPI was 1.2%.

14. The expected expenditure on the HRA Capital Programme will have the following impact on council rents:

**Table 5:- Impact of Capital Expenditure on Housing Rents**

	2013/14 Actual £	2014/15 Estimate £	2015/16 Estimate £	2016/17 Estimate £	2017/18 Estimate £
Overall net impact on Weekly Housing Rents	1.34	3.48	2.59	3.98	4.42

### E. Authorised limit for external debt

15. This represents a limit beyond which external debt is prohibited. It reflects the level of external debt, which, while not desired, could be afforded in the short term, but is not sustainable in the longer term. This is the statutory limit determined under section 3 (1) of the Local Government Act 2003.

**Table 6:- Authorised Limit for external debt**

	<b>2013/14 Actual £000's</b>	<b>2014/15 Estimate £000's</b>	<b>2015/16 Estimate £000's</b>	<b>2016/17 Estimate £000's</b>	<b>2017/18 Estimate £000's</b>
General Fund	5,000	4,000	2,000	2,000	2,000
HRA	242,199	242,199	245,566	259,308	273,163
Other Long Term Liabilities	1,000	0	0	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>248,199</b>	<b>246,199</b>	<b>247,566</b>	<b>261,308</b>	<b>275,163</b>

16. Separately, the Council is also limited to a maximum HRA CFR through the HRA self-financing regime. The Council intends to utilise this headroom over the next three years to fund the Capital Programme, it is considered prudent to withhold £10m of the borrowing headroom as a contingency for potential changes in capital costs and interest charges. These limits are:

**Table 7: HRA Capital Financing Requirement**

HRA Debt Limit	<b>2013/14 Actual £000's</b>	<b>2014/15 Estimate £000's</b>	<b>2015/16 Estimate £000's</b>	<b>2016/17 Estimate £000's</b>	<b>2017/18 Estimate £000's</b>
Total	242,199	242,199	242,199	242,199	242,199

### F. Operational boundary for external debt

17. This is based on the expected maximum external debt during the course of the year, it is not a limit, and actual external debt can vary around this boundary for short times during the year.

**Table 8:- Operational boundary for external debt**

	<b>2013/14 Actual £000's</b>	<b>2014/15 Estimate £000's</b>	<b>2015/16 Estimate £000's</b>	<b>2016/17 Estimate £000's</b>	<b>2017/18 Estimate £000's</b>
Borrowing	3,000	2,000	0	0	0
Additional HRA Settlement	234,000	234,000	234,000	240,000	255,000
Other Long Term Liabilities	1,000	0	0	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>238,000</b>	<b>236,000</b>	<b>234,000</b>	<b>240,000</b>	<b>255,000</b>

### G. Net Borrowing Compared to the Council's Capital Financing Requirement

18. Table 9 below shows the Council's net borrowing position compared to its Capital Financing Requirement. As can be seen, the figures show that the Council is currently borrowing below its financing requirement which indicates a need to borrow in the short to medium term. The Council needs to ensure that its total borrowing net of any investments, does not, except in the short term, exceed the total of the CFR in the preceding year plus the estimates of any additional CFR for 2015/16 and the next two financial years. This allows some flexibility for limited early borrowing for future years.

**Table 9:- Net borrowing compared to CFR**

	<b>2013/14 Actual £000's</b>	<b>2014/15 Estimate £000's</b>	<b>2015/16 Estimate £000's</b>	<b>2016/17 Estimate £000's</b>	<b>2017/18 Estimate £000's</b>
Gross Borrowing	220,440	200,133	201,770	215,570	229,470
Other Long Term Liabilities	607	0	0	0	0
<b>Total Gross Debt 31 March</b>	<b>201,047</b>	<b>200,133</b>	<b>201,770</b>	<b>215,570</b>	<b>229,470</b>
CFR	220,551	222,962	225,223	237,958	250,805
<b>Net Borrowing v CFR</b>	<b>19,504</b>	<b>22,829</b>	<b>23,453</b>	<b>22,388</b>	<b>21,335</b>

### H. Compliance with the CIPFA Code of Practice for Treasury Management in the Public Sector

19. The Council can confirm that it has complied with this code throughout 2014/15 and will continue to do so.

### I. Upper limit on fixed and variable interest rate borrowing and investments

20. The purpose of this and the following two prudential indicators is to contain the activity of the treasury function within certain limits, thereby managing risk and reducing the impact of an adverse movement in interest rates. This indicator identifies the maximum limit for fixed interest rates based upon the debt position net of investments.



**Table 10:- Upper limit on borrowing and investments**

	2013/14 Actual %	2014/15 Estimate %	2015/16 Estimate %	2016/17 Estimate %	2017/18 Estimate %
Upper limit on fixed rate borrowing	100	100	100	100	100
Upper limit on fixed rate investments	100	100	100	100	100
Upper limit on variable rate borrowing	100	100	100	100	100
Upper limit on variable rate investments	100	100	100	100	100

**J. Upper and Lower limit for the maturity structure of borrowing**

21. These are used to reduce the Council's exposure to large fixed rate sums falling due for repayment at the same time.

**Table 11:- Upper and lower limit on borrowing maturity**

	2014/15 Estimate Upper %	2014/15 Estimate Upper %	2014/15 Estimate Upper %	2014/15 Estimate Upper %	2014/15 Estimate Upper %	2014/15 Estimate Upper %	2014/15 Estimate Upper %	2014/15 Estimate Upper %
< 12 mths	30	0	30	0	30	0	30	0
1 – 2 years	30	0	30	0	30	0	30	0
2 -5 years	80	0	80	0	80	0	80	0
5-10 years	100	0	100	0	100	0	100	0
10 years +	100	0	100	0	100	0	100	0

22. Upper limit for principle sums invested for periods longer than 364 days; this indicator is used to reduce the need for early sale of an investment, and is based on the availability of funds after each year end. This has been set at zero due to the uncertainty of the market and reducing the risk posed by longer term investments.

**Table 12:- Upper limit for investments longer than 364 days**

	2014/15 Estimate %	2015/16 Estimate %	2016/17 Estimate %	2017/18 Estimate %
Upper Limit for investments for periods longer than 364 days	20	20	20	20

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**To:** City Executive Board

**Date:** 12 February 2015

**Report of:** Head of Policy, Culture and Communications

**Title of Report:** Adoption of the Corporate Plan 2015-19

## Summary and Recommendations

**Purpose of report:** To report on the consultation on the draft Corporate Plan 2015-19 and propose its adoption.

**Key decision:** Yes

**Executive lead member:** Cllr Bob Price, Board Member for Corporate Strategy, Economic Development and Planning

**Policy Framework:** Corporate Plan 2015-19

**Recommendations:** That the City Executive Board:

1. Approves the draft Corporate Plan 2015 -19 as set out in Appendix 1.
2. Recommends that Full Council approves the draft Corporate Plan 2015 – 19
3. Delegates authority to the Head of Policy, Culture and Communications to make minor textual changes to the Corporate Plan 2015 -19 in advance of formal publication.

## **Appendices:**

- Appendix 1 Draft Corporate Plan 2015 – 19
- Appendix 2 Proposed changes to Corporate Plan Targets
- Appendix 3 Rationale for changes to Corporate Plan Targets
- Appendix 4 Equalities Impact Assessment
- Appendix 5 Corp Plan and Budget 2015 -19 Consultation Results Final Report

## **Background**

1. The Corporate Plan is the City Council's over-arching strategic document. The draft Corporate Plan 2015-19 sets out:
  - the links between the demographic needs of the city and the Council's priorities
  - progress on delivering our priorities
  - high-level details of the budget through which these priorities will be funded.
2. The City Council's corporate plans over the last few years have affirmed the Council's ambition – developed with our partners, including business, community organisations, the health and education sectors and the County Council – to make Oxford a world-class city for everyone. They have also affirmed our plans for transforming the way that the Council performs.
3. This plan updates and takes forward the corporate priorities agreed by Council in recent years. The content of the draft Corporate Plan 2015 -19 is attached in Appendix 1.

## **This year's plan**

4. We remain committed to our core ambitions of building a world- class city for everyone and continuing to transform our own performance. The City Council's priorities for the next four years are:
  - A vibrant and sustainable economy
  - Meeting housing needs
  - Strong and active communities
  - Cleaner greener Oxford
  - An efficient and effective council.
5. Performance measures and targets have been reviewed in the light of performance for the year to date and changes to the circumstances in which we work.
6. Many of the key issues that are important to the well-being of our city and its people are beyond the direct control of the City Council and the need for effective partnership working underpins all sections of the plan.

## **Legal Issues**

7. There are no direct legal implications relating to the draft Corporate Plan 2015 – 19.

### **Financial Issues**

8. The draft Corporate Plan is underpinned by the Council's Medium Term Financial Plan which outlines how the objectives within the Corporate Plan will be funded. The Council's Budget for 2015-19 is presented elsewhere on this CEB agenda.

### **Environmental Impact**

9. The commitment to make Oxford a cleaner, greener city is directly reflected in the Cleaner, Greener Oxford corporate priority and underpins all of the Council's activities.

### **Level of Risk**

10. The Corporate Plan is an overarching strategic document, which is underpinned by a series of supporting documents. Details of projects and actions which contribute to the delivery of corporate priorities will be found in the Council's service plans and other delivery plans. Risk assessments against these projects and actions will be found in those documents.

### **Equalities Impact**

11. An equalities impact assessment is attached. The City Council's overriding concern in formulating its budget and Corporate Plan has been to expand the options and opportunities available to the people of our city. We particularly aim to expand opportunities for those who live in the more deprived areas.

### **Consultation**

12. Consultation on the draft Corporate Plan and draft Budget 2015-2019 opened on 24th December 2014 and closed on Saturday 31st January 2015. The consultation was available on the Council's website and a paper version of the survey was printed in the Oxford Mail. Paper copies were available on request.
13. Over 900 individuals and key stakeholders were invited to take part in the consultation.
14. In summary, respondents were broadly supportive of the Council's priorities and their interdependence. Respondents felt that the need for the Council to be efficient and effective remained a high priority.

Oxfordshire County Council welcomed the draft Corporate Plan as "a bold vision for the future shaping of the city" and made a number of helpful comments which have been reflected in the revised draft. These include:

- actively supporting place shaping initiatives such as Barton, Westgate, Northern Gateway, Headington, Oxpens and Oxford Station
- working with the City Council in its new approach to neighbourhood management in the most deprived communities

- preferring a coordinated approach to schemes and initiatives around schools, NEETs and apprenticeships
- welcoming the City Council's interest in providing services for young people, and strongly supporting the need for a coordinated response. The County Council notes that commitment to joint working in this area is evidenced through the Working Together agreement that has recently been signed with the City and County Councils

15. The full list of responses to consultation is presented in Appendix 5.

### **Publication and Distribution**

16. The published Corporate Plan will be distributed in the following ways:

- The full-length document will be published in PDF format on our website. A link to this PDF will be forwarded to all Councillors, key stakeholders, staff and libraries.
- A summary leaflet version of the plan will be produced and distributed to all Councillors and all members of staff. Copies will be available for further distribution at Council outlets and elsewhere. A PDF of the summary version will also be posted on the website.
- A highlight summary will be included in *Your Oxford*.

#### **Name and contact details of author:-**

Peter McQuitty,  
 Head of Policy, Culture and Communications,  
 Policy, Culture and Communications,  
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**Background Papers:** None



Oxford City Council’s draft Corporate Plan 2015 – 2019  
Building a world class city for everyone

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## **Foreword from the Leader of the Council and the Chief Executive**

Welcome to Oxford City Council's Corporate Plan for 2015–2019.

The Corporate Plan is Oxford City Council's key strategic document. It sets out:

- the links between the demographic needs of the city and the Council's priorities
- progress on delivering our priorities
- high-level details of the budget through which these priorities will be funded.

As a result of the financial austerity regime, public sector organisations across the country are facing severe challenges. The Corporate Plan 2015-19 sets out how Oxford City Council is mitigating the effects of austerity and is working to shape a prosperous future for our city and its communities.

### **Introduction**

For many of its residents, Oxford is a thriving city with many opportunities for work and leisure. However, there are also major inequalities in life chances and life expectancy in our city.

The Index of Multiple Deprivation 2010 places Oxford in the top half of the most deprived local authority areas in England. Twelve areas, in the south and east of the city, are among the 20% most deprived areas in England. People from these areas can expect on average to live seven years less than those in the more affluent areas. While 43% of Oxford residents have degree-level qualifications or above 14% have no qualifications at all.

Oxford is facing a housing crisis. According to Cities Outlook 2014, Oxford has overtaken London as the UK's least affordable city in terms of housing. The city's housing crisis is causing increasing hardship for people and families. Poor and overcrowded housing - with increasing instances of 'beds in sheds' - is impacting on some of the most vulnerable in the city. The housing crisis is also threatening Oxford's position as the focus of a world-class knowledge economy and one of the most important concentrations of high-value businesses in Europe. Local employers are finding it difficult to attract people to the city.

This Corporate Plan updates and takes forward the main themes agreed by the Council in recent years. It reaffirms the Council's ambition – developed with our partners, including local businesses, community organisations, the health and education sectors and the county council – to make Oxford a world-class city for all its citizens.

We are turning this ambition into reality through five corporate priorities which directly address the needs of our city:

- A vibrant and sustainable economy
- Meeting housing needs
- Strong and active communities
- Cleaner greener Oxford



- An efficient and effective council.

### **Managing austerity**

Between 2010 and the end of the 2015/16 financial year, the City Council will have lost 47% of its government grant and further cuts are inevitable in the future. The government has decided as a matter of policy that reductions in public expenditure will now continue into the future, with the intention to deliver a “leaner, more efficient state” on a permanent basis. The Council’s Corporate Plan and Medium Term Financial Plan is based on the assumption that government grant to local authorities will disappear by 2018-19.

The City Council’s approach to financial management is based on prudent, long-term planning and a rigorous commitment to increasing efficiency year on year. Over the past four years alone we have generated approximately £8.5 million in efficiency savings. The Council’s high level of efficiency has enabled us to manage the impacts of austerity.

More importantly, it has enabled us to make progress on delivering our long-standing policy commitment to safeguard the vulnerable from cuts in the services that they require, to narrow the gap between rich and poor in our city, and to avoid compulsory redundancies in the Council’s front-line workforce. It has also enabled us to pay a Living Wage of £8.36 per hour to all our own staff and requiring the same of our contractors and suppliers.

The Council’s approach has served the city well and we will continue with it. We have reviewed our medium term financial strategy and we will achieve a further £7 million revenue expenditure reduction by 2018/19 on an annualised basis. The total savings and increased income proposed over the next four years is £22.5 million. These increased efficiencies will continue to fund the initiatives set out in this Corporate Plan.

Further efficiency savings will include:

- reducing management costs
- reducing administration costs
- increasing income from trading
- reducing annual general fund capital spend
- improving management of our assets.
- generating further efficiencies in our ICT service
- improving our procurement and business management processes
- increasing income and external funding.

### **Investing for growth**

The Council is providing long-term investment, growth and positive opportunities for our city. As a result of the Council’s initiatives, around £2 billion is being invested into Oxford’s economy.

Key investments included in the City Council's budget are:

- spending up to £101 million to implement our *Council Housing Ambition* initiative to build new council homes and improve existing housing stock over the next four years, with an additional £96 million of new investment over the next 10 years
- putting resources in place for large scale regeneration projects which will provide substantial long-term investment in Oxford:
  - building nearly 900 new homes and community facilities at BartonPark
  - developing to 500 homes and 90,000 sqm of employment space at the Northern Gateway
  - building 300 new homes and providing 1,000 jobs through the Oxpens redevelopment
  - providing 2,000 jobs plus 1,000 in the construction phase as a result of the Westgate redevelopment.
- investing £700,000 to improve our community centres and sports pavilions
- investing £500,000 to improve cycling and the public realm
- investing £200,000 in addition to the £600,000 already included in the Council's Capital Programme to fund energy saving projects which will reduce fuel bills for our tenants
- refurbishing and improving our car parks.

Taken together, these initiatives represent a radical re-shaping of our city centre and neighbourhoods. These developments will vastly improve the physical environment in which we all live and also improve the city's leisure and retail offer. In terms of physical regeneration, we are literally building a world class city for everyone.

### **Shaping the future of our city**

As the Council's capacities and capabilities have grown, so too has its realization that Oxford – if its long-term prosperity is to be secured – must increasingly become a place-shaper, able to influence county-wide and regional partnerships, strategies and plans. The Council has made good progress in partnership working in areas such as housing, physical regeneration, community safety, education, culture, and youth ambition. In recent months significant work with the two universities and with neighbouring councils has taken place to promote our vision for the city and agree the approach to implementing the City Deal for economic growth and the infrastructure which is required to support it.

Oxford is one of the oldest centres of knowledge in the world and the knowledge economy in its various manifestations - education, health, bioscience, information technology, publishing and the motor industry - underpins the prosperity of our city. However in a global economy, Oxford's continuing position as the focus of a world-class knowledge economy cannot be taken for granted.

Oxford City Council and Oxfordshire County Council have been working with the four Oxfordshire district councils, the Local Enterprise Partnership, the universities and the science facilities at Harwell and Culham, to implement a City Deal for Oxford and Oxfordshire. The City Deal builds on the research activities of the two universities and the potential of the area to deliver world-leading technology and business innovation.

As a result of the City Deal, around £95 million of public money will be invested in Oxford and the surrounding areas, creating more than 18,000 long-term jobs in high-tech areas, in addition to the likely 30,000 construction jobs needed for the area's development. It will also accelerate the delivery of 7,500 new homes by 2018. The delivery of the City Deal will underpin the continued prosperity of the Oxford city region, and make a major contribution to the wider south-east region.

At a national level the Council has met with Lord Adonis and supported the Lyons review, both of which are aimed at encouraging national support for growing cities like Oxford in terms of changes to the spatial planning framework and devolution to cities.

The Council has also joined the Key Cities alliance, working with cities such as Norwich and Cambridge to lobby for these changes and to raise our profile nationally as a key city which can contribute to national economic growth.

Growth and the benefits that arise from this has to be planned carefully and be truly sustainable. A key element of this has to be our commitment to contributing to tackling climate change both through reducing the city's use of fossil fuels and in preparing to mitigate the now inevitable impacts of climate change.

The City Council will continue to facilitate Low Carbon Oxford, a pioneering city-wide programme of collaboration involving around 35 private, public and non-profit organisations with the aim of ensuring Oxford's future as a sustainable and low carbon city. The Low Carbon Oxford charter commits its signatories to collaborate to reduce their carbon footprints in Oxford by an average minimum of 3% every year, for at least the next ten years. Community groups from around the city are also part of the Low Carbon Oxford initiative.

Flooding is the major risk for the city arising from climate change and the city council will work through strategic partnerships to combat the increased incidence of and potential impact of flooding within the city. Activities to reduce flooding include:

- implementing flood alleviation measures at Northway and Marston, in partnership with the Environment Agency at a cost of £1.7 million
- investing £100,000 to fund advice on the Thames Water catchment study. Parts of the city have major problems with the foul water network and it is essential that the Thames Water study provides a satisfactory long-term solution to these problems.
- working with partners to secure funding and implement the Oxford and Abingdon Flood Relief Scheme.

## **Shaping our neighbourhoods**

The most important place for many people is their local neighbourhood. The Council is working with local people to make our neighbourhoods and facilities among the best in the country.

### Building more affordable homes

As part of our Council Housing Ambition initiative, 485 affordable new homes will be built. This means that, with the 354 new homes already funded and approved for the Barton Park development and the 113 affordable homes being built during this 2014/15 financial year, Oxford will have a total of 952 new council homes over the next 10 years.

In addition to building more homes, the Council is also improving the quality of our estates. We will be refurbishing existing council homes to standards above the national average. This includes carrying out a free energy audit for every council tenant, to improve insulation and reduce heating bills. We will also be remodeling the city's estates to improve parking and street cleaning.

### Providing high quality community facilities

The Council spent over £3 million refurbishing play areas across the city and is committed to providing high quality community facilities that are easily accessible by people in all our neighbourhoods. We have invested heavily in improving the quality of leisure facilities and sports pavilions across the city. The new competition-standard swimming pool in Blackbird Leys will help increase participation in swimming, as well as contributing to the ongoing regeneration of the Leys.

We are investing over £4 million to build a new community centre in Rose Hill and investing significantly to ensuring high-quality community centre provision across the city, with particular focus on our priority areas. The Council supports well-managed community centres which provide open access to all sectors of the community and encourage involvement

### Investing in our young people

Oxford City Council aims to reduce the extent of inequality and to improve the lives of the most vulnerable. Many young people from our more deprived areas leave school without the levels of educational attainment or the confidence to find employment in the increasingly competitive local environment. We particularly want to help young people in our more deprived areas open the doors to positive life opportunities.

Oxford City Council has invested significantly over the last three years in a range of targeted interventions to drive up ambition and attainment in the city's schools.

The Council is also investing £240,000 annually to improve out-of-school-hours activities for young people in areas of the city where need is greatest and expand youth activity to some areas which currently have no provision. Working with partners such as Fusion Lifestyle, the City Cultural Partnership, and Oxfordshire

Sports Partnership we are co-ordinating an innovative programme to encourage our young people to expand their opportunities and build their skills by participating in high-quality sporting and cultural activities.

#### Preparing people for work

The Council is using its procurement processes to help young people from the city gain apprenticeships and employment. We require Council contractors to create apprenticeship opportunities as part of any large construction project. Our joint venture with Grosvenor on the Barton West development will involve a training and apprenticeship programme. We are providing apprenticeships at Oxford City Council which will help young people from Oxford to get experience and qualifications. We are also working with Job Centre Plus and Oxford and Cherwell Valley College to support a Work Club which will help people to find their first job, return to work, or look for a new career direction.

In 2013/14 Oxford City Council was part of a pilot to show how a local authority can support people affected by welfare reform. This work has continued and has been supported by a successful bid for European Social Fund money. This work forms an important part of our aspiration to mitigate the impact of welfare reform on local people. Up until November 2014, the Welfare Reform team had worked intensively with 266 people of whom 93 have been supported into work. In addition the team provides housing or work related advice to anyone who requires it.

#### Protecting the quality of our neighbourhoods

The private rented sector in Oxford provides essential accommodation for key workers, and others who are unable to access social housing or purchase homes on the private market. One in five of Oxford's population lives in a house in multiple occupation (HMO). We know that the private rented sector can cause problems for those who live in HMOs and for the local neighbourhood. That is why the Council has taken measures to improve standards in the private rented sector. Since the introduction in 2011 of the HMO licensing scheme around 3,000 HMOs have been improved and made safe for occupants.

Oxford City Council now requires planning permission for change of use from a family or single unit dwelling into an HMO. There is a presumption against new HMOs in areas which already have a significant concentration. We are working with Oxford Brookes University and the University of Oxford to tackle issues relating to student housing, particularly in East Oxford. We are also using targeted noise enforcement as part of a programme of assistance for neighbourhoods whose character is being adversely affected by HMOs and entertainment venues.

#### Improving community engagement

We are working with our communities – through Area Forums and community partnerships, voluntary and community associations, and other networks – so that local people can play a key role in shaping their local communities. This is particularly important in our more deprived areas, where people are sometimes less well able to make their voices heard than those in affluent areas.

The Council is piloting an approach to neighbourhood management in Rose Hill, the Leys and Barton which we hope will strengthen the abilities of local people to shape the places in which they live. The Council's Chief Executive and Directors are working directly with councillors and community organisations to help manage the challenges in our local communities. We want to ensure that:

- the quality of local services improves and the work of Council teams is co-ordinated
- an action plan for the area is developed which addresses the social, economic and environmental needs of the location, that local people are involved in its development, and that it is realistic and prioritised
- effective work is being undertaken to grow community capacity and involvement
- other agencies are fully involve in work addressing deprivation and community priorities, particularly around health, the County Council, the Police and the voluntary sector
- harder to reach groups are actively involved.

Oxfordshire County Council is happy to work with the City Council in its new approach to neighbourhood management in the most deprived communities.

### **The future**

The financial challenges that confront Oxford City Council and the public sector generally should not be understated.

In Oxford we are building on a strong base. Oxford City Council is now recognized as being one of the most efficient, effective, and ambitious councils in the country. The progress that we have made in recent years has been reflected in the high number of external awards that the Council is now winning. Winning the MJ award for Highest Achieving Council of 2014 and accreditation for Investors in People Gold were the crowning achievements of the year. However the Council is also achieving recognition for its work across a wide range of its services.

Referencing the awards that we have received should not be mistaken for self-congratulation or complacency. We hope that the external recognition that the Council is receiving will give the people of Oxford confidence that the Council's high aspirations for the city in difficult times are matched by its capacity and capability to deliver high quality results.

This Corporate Plan is underpinned by a budget that has been structured so that it is in balance for the next four years. We are continuing to invest in our communities so that we can help bring economic growth, jobs, and more decent homes to our city. Oxford City Council does all that it can to make Oxford a fairer, more equal place and delivering the priorities set out in this Corporate Plan will play a very important part in this.

Oxford City Council's approach to delivering its ambitions has been characterised by:

- strong financial management

- partnership between councillors, council managers and staff, and trade unions
- long term planning, which helps to keep us from being knocked off course by external events.

These strengths will be essential if we are to continue managing our way through the challenges facing us for the foreseeable future.

Bob Price  
Leader  
Oxford City Council

Peter Sloman  
Chief Executive  
Oxford City Council

## **Chapter 1 Vibrant, Sustainable Economy**

**Our ambition: a strong local economy, supported by effective education and training.**

### **Some facts**

Oxford is a global centre for education, health, bioscience, information technology, publishing, the motor industry and tourism.

The University of Oxford and its colleges are the largest employers in Oxford, supporting 18,000 jobs, followed by the Oxford University Hospitals Trust and the County Council.

Around 4,000 businesses provide 106,000 jobs, and seven of the ten largest employers in the Oxford city-region are within Oxford. The University of Oxford and Oxford Brookes University between them inject an estimated £800 million annually into the regional economy.

Tourism plays a key part in the local economy, largely as a result of the city's rich architectural heritage and the appeal of the Ashmolean and other museums. Oxford is the sixth most visited city in the UK by international visitors. Approximately 9.5 million visitors per year generate £770 million of income for local Oxford businesses and support around 13,000 jobs.

During the banking crisis and subsequent recession, the buoyant economy of the Oxford city region suffered less than other parts of the UK.

A frequently-used indicator of the health of the economy is the number of people claiming out-of-work benefits, in particular unemployment benefit (Jobseeker's Allowance, or JSA). The number of claimants peaked at nearly 3,000 in 2009. As of July 2014 the number was 1,100 - significantly below the pre-recession average of 1600 claimants. The most recent estimate of Oxford's unemployment rate is 5.4% for the period Apr 2013-Mar 2014; this is below the national average of 7.1%.

While this suggests a revival in the labour market, there is concern about people who may be unemployed but not claiming JSA, and people who may be under-employed. Nationally, the increase in jobs has been in the part-time and self-employed sectors. Other figures show that the number of long-term claimants and claimants aged over 50 remains relatively high.

### **Oxford City Council's approach**

We are addressing three key issues as we continue to build a vibrant, sustainable economy:

1. Promoting the growth of enterprise, the knowledge-based economy, and jobs
2. Improving the skills of the workforce
3. Increasing the availability of land for commercial development



## **1. Promoting the growth of enterprise, the knowledge-based economy, and jobs**

Half of Oxford's jobs are in the public sector, the largest proportion of any UK city, with 50% of jobs in public administration, education and health. The distribution of employment is a cause for concern in the light of the government's deficit reduction measures. A large number of jobs in Oxford that are directly or indirectly linked to public spending might be vulnerable.

There is, therefore, a strong need to rebalance the local economy by promoting the growth of important sectors such as: manufacturing, health, scientific research, tourism, publishing, retail and the city centre, and the low-carbon economy.

Oxford City Council is doing this by:

- working with the private-sector-led Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP)
- implementing the City Deal
- improving Oxford's infrastructure
- boosting tourism
- improving Oxford's city centre
- supporting local businesses
- growing a low-carbon economy
- supporting an ethical economy.

### Working with the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP)

The LEP is:

- building on the unique concentration of high-tech businesses and input from the universities
- attracting more investment into the city region (e.g. large world-class businesses including Centrica and SAE have arrived in Oxford, and BMW have committed substantial new investment into the MINI plant in Cowley)
- co-ordinating the activities of the various skills providers in Oxfordshire
- overseeing the development of a strategy to build on the advantages that the arts, culture and the creative industries bring to our area.

### Implementing the City Deal

Oxford City Council is working with the County Council, the other four Oxfordshire district councils, the Local Enterprise Partnership, the universities and the science facilities at Harwell and Culham, to implement a successful City Deal for Oxford and Oxfordshire. The City Deal is a bespoke agreement between the government, Oxford and Oxfordshire to deliver new investment and infrastructure to ensure continued growth and prosperity in our area. Around £95million of public money will be invested in Oxford and the surrounding areas to boost local growth.

The Oxford and Oxfordshire City Deal builds on the academic and research excellence led by the University of Oxford and Oxford Brookes University and focuses on the potential of the area to deliver world-leading technology and business innovation.

The City Deal aims to:

- develop four innovation hubs in Harwell, Culham, Headington and Begbroke
- create more than 18,000 long-term jobs in high-tech areas, in addition to the likely 30,000 construction jobs needed for the area's development
- create around 500 new apprenticeships, many of them in hi-tech sectors such as advanced engineering
- accelerate the building of 7,500 homes by 2018 through the combined Oxfordshire Housing Programme
- provide improvements to both local roads and public transport in order to better connect Oxford's universities with its major industrial and research areas. This includes improvements to the A34 and the A40 Northern Gateway.

### Improving Oxford's infrastructure

Oxford City Council is:

- directly investing over £134 million into the local economy. This investment will improve the city's infrastructure and create over 900 new jobs
- spending up to £101 million to deliver new council homes and improve existing housing stock over the next four years, with an additional £96 million of new investment over the next 10 years as part of its *Council Housing Ambition*
- in an innovative joint venture with Grosvenor Estates to build a new community of nearly 900 homes at Barton Park, including a new primary school, community facilities and parks. The Council is also building 113 new homes on other sites in the city
- contracting with GreenSquare to build 100 new homes and new community facilities in Northway and Cowley
- working with partners to progress the redevelopment of the Westgate Centre. It is estimated that the development will create over 2000 jobs and be open in time for the 2017 Christmas season
- continuing to promote the regeneration of the West End in partnership with the County Council and other key stakeholders. The Oxpens site Supplementary Planning Document has now been adopted and a Master Plan is being prepared to replace the existing Oxford station with a new integrated station and office/retail development. Oxfordshire County Council is actively supporting place shaping initiatives such as those at Barton, Westgate, Northern Gateway, Headington, Oxpens and Oxford Station
- working with developers, local residents and other stakeholders on a plan to develop the Northern Gateway site in north Oxford for mixed-use, employment-led development. Following extensive consultation, a draft Area Action Plan was sent to the Secretary of State in October 2014, and an Examination in Public is to be held in January 2015. This site is crucial to the growth of Oxford's knowledge economy and it is the only major site left within the city
- using its Community Infrastructure Levy to secure funding to support new growth
- working with the County Council and other partners to unlock transport blockages and promote economic development. For example, we are supporting the Chiltern Railways Evergreen 3 proposals for the fast link north through Bicester to Marylebone, including a new station at the Water Eaton Park and

Ride site (now under construction), and the preparation of an Oxford Transport Strategy by the County Council, with public consultation in Spring 2015.

- continuing to support business start-ups and enable businesses to realise more benefit by improving access to ultrafast broadband. As a result of the award of up to £5 million from the Urban Broadband Fund we are building on already delivered commercial upgrades in Oxford to ensure that ultrafast broadband is available to 96% (up from 76%) of businesses and 89% (up from 84%) of residents. The funding is enabling the development of wireless broadband across the city centre. This initiative has been developed in partnership with the County Council and the universities. It includes a proposal to develop an International Hub for Online Learning, in partnership with education organisations in the city
- continuing to improve our leisure facilities. The new competition-standard pool at Blackbird Leys will play a major role in encouraging swimming as a sport and in the on-going regeneration of the Leys
- upgrading the Council's tower blocks
  - improving environmental and parking measures on Oxford's council estates as part of the *Council Housing Ambition* initiative
  - investing £2million to extend the Seacourt Park and Ride and £87,000 to provide additional parking spaces at the Leys Health Centre
  - investing £1.3 million to resurface car parks.

#### Boosting tourism

Oxford City Council is:

- working through Experience Oxfordshire – a joint venture partnership with private-sector partners – to improve the quality of our tourism offer. We want visitors to stay longer in Oxford and to explore areas beyond the city as well
- working with Experience Oxfordshire and partners in the cultural sector to maximise the role that culture and the creative arts can play in Oxford's tourism offer. Currently, cultural tourism tends to focus on historic Oxford, as represented by the University of Oxford's buildings and museums. While the heritage offer will always be a primary attraction, Oxford also has a thriving contemporary arts and music scene which is currently under-represented in the tourism offer.
- Supporting the LEP's initiative to develop a county-wide strategy to maximize the economic value that arts, culture, and the creative industries bring to our area.

#### Improving Oxford's city centre

Oxford City Council is:

- working closely with local businesses and the County Council to enhance the city centre's night-time economy. We have been successful in retaining the city centre's Purple Flag status, which recognises the city centre's low crime rates, good cleanliness standards, and the quality and range of public spaces and visitor attractions
- investing £90,000 of capital funding to improve the quality of city centre toilets and a further £35,000 annually to extend opening hours from 5pm to 8pm
- making business locations, tourist attractions and other places of interest more obvious to visitors and increasing footfall on less well-used routes through a

web-based pedestrian way-finding system. This system has won an award from the Oxford Preservation Trust.

- working in partnership with the traders to make effective use of the findings of the Retail Group's report on the Future of the Covered Market. Our shared aim is to increase footfall in the Market, and to ensure it plays a key role in the city centre retail offer
- investing £32,000 to extend our successful City Centre Ambassadors scheme. This scheme helps keep the city centre safe and welcoming by employing wardens to patrol the city centre and police street trading, environmental enforcement, begging, anti-social behaviour and related activities.

### Supporting local businesses

Oxford City Council is:

- supporting city centre traders by appointing, jointly with the County Council, a city centre manager who is working with the newly established Town Team to strengthen the city's retail offer
- supporting the Covered Market by appointing a specialist manager who is working with the traders to deliver improvements and investment
- continuing its long-standing support for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) by committing to spend more than 40% of its budget in this sector
- fast-tracking payment of invoices by setting a target of ten days
- working with Business Link, the Federation of Small Businesses (FSB), Thames Valley Chamber of Commerce, and the voluntary and community sectors to improve understanding of public-sector tendering requirements and to encourage better engagement with the public sector.

### Growing a low-carbon economy

Oxford City Council is:

- leading the OxFutures project which is mobilising large-scale investment to develop renewable energy and energy efficiency projects across the city and county. Kick-started by a grant from Intelligent Energy Europe, OxFutures aims to leverage investment of £15 million into local energy projects over the next three years. The aim is to achieve a 40% reduction in local carbon emissions by 2020 and to mainstream low carbon economic development. The project builds on the success of the City and County Councils in carbon reduction and energy efficiency
- developing the Low Carbon Oxford Project on behalf of the Oxford Strategic Partnership. Around thirty-five organisations from private, public and non-profit organisations are now collaborating to create a sustainable, low-carbon economy in Oxford
- allocating £25,000 per year to ensure that Low Carbon Oxford is able to continue its pioneering work and attract further funding
- supporting opportunities for local skills and businesses through renewables projects, e.g. by setting up Low Carbon Barton, which led to the installation of a solar photovoltaic roof on the community centre
- encouraging local take up of government incentives schemes such as Green Deal to reduce energy and carbon from homes and businesses

- stimulating the local market for appropriate renewable and low carbon energy technologies such as solar, biomass, and heat networks energy production by:
  - installing technical solutions such as solar PV and biomass boilers in our own buildings
  - seeking funding for local feasibility studies for heat networks,
  - working with key strategic partners including the Universities
  - sharing knowledge and experience with Low Carbon Oxford partners, and across Oxford.

### Supporting an ethical economy

Oxford City Council is:

- paying its own employees a Living Wage which acknowledges the real costs of living in Oxford and which is higher than the national minimum wage. We are requiring Council contractors to do the same. This arrangement has been in place since April 2009. We have increased the Oxford Living Wage from £8.13 per hour to £8.36 per hour
- working with living-wage campaigners, low-paid workers, trade unions and employers to make Oxford a Living Wage City, in which every worker will earn at least the minimum living wage
- encouraging ethical behaviour in the wider economy through Oxford's Fairtrade City status and its involvement in the Oxford Fairtrade Coalition.

## **2. Improving the skills of the workforce**

While 43% of Oxford residents have degree-level qualifications or above 14% have no education or skills qualifications at all. Attainment levels of pupils in state schools especially in the more deprived areas of the city, remain lower than the regional and national averages.

The 2011 Oxfordshire Skills Needs Analysis suggested that a lack of education, qualifications and 'employability' skills prevented a significant number of young residents from entering the local job market.

Young people in many parts of the city already face significant difficulties in gaining employment because of the lower levels of educational attainment at the school-leaving age. As the growth of high-value jobs is increasingly driven by high-tech businesses and academic spin-off from the universities, there is a clear danger that this exclusion will deepen.

Young people between the ages of 16 and 18 who are not participating in education, employment or training (NEET) are a major source of concern. Their circumstances are predictors of future unemployment, low income, poor mental health and potential involvement in crime. As of December 2012, 7.3% of young people in Oxford were NEET compared with 4.9% across Oxfordshire. Oxford City Council welcomes the County Council's commitment to the coordination of schemes and initiatives around schools, NEETs and apprenticeships.

Oxford City Council has invested significantly over the last three years in an attempt to improve educational opportunities for our young people. Our education attainment programme includes a range of targeted interventions to drive up ambition and attainment in the city's schools.

The programme has brought about significant achievements including:

- narrowing the achievement gap for particular groups e.g. children on free school meals and children not on free school meals
- engaging 75 senior and middle leaders engaged on a year's Leadership for Learning Programme, run by Oxford University and Oxford Brookes University
- improved confidence in middle leaders in leading change in their schools, including learning the best ways of improving the teaching quality
- reaching up to 35 students in three secondary schools who did not have broadband access through a digital inclusion programme
- partnering all Oxford secondary schools with a business on the Business Class Programme.

There have, however, been difficulties in recruiting and retaining senior and middle leaders and teachers with experience of working the most challenging schools. This is linked to the poor availability of affordable housing.

Oxford City Council is:

- investing £150,000 into the educational attainment initiative in 2015/16 to fund the final contractual commitments. There will also be a modest program supporting a small number of schools, costing £43k in 2015/16 and £23k in 2016/17
- working with the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) to understand the skills needed by businesses in the city
- encouraging local high-tech companies to create new apprenticeships and development opportunities, so that young people can improve their skills and experience
- using its procurement processes to help young people from the city gain apprenticeships and employment. We require Council contractors to create apprenticeship opportunities as part of any large construction project. Our joint venture with Grosvenor on the Barton West development will involve a training and apprenticeship programme.
- providing apprenticeships at Oxford City Council which will support young people from Oxford in getting experience and qualifications
- working with Job Centre Plus and Oxford and Cherwell Valley College to support a Work Club which will help people to find their first job, return to work, or look for a new career direction.

### **3. Increasing availability of land for commercial development**

Land in Oxford is scarce, as a result of constrained boundaries, flood plains, and the need to protect green spaces. In particular, land for commercial uses is scarce.

The desirability of Oxford as a place to live, work and study has resulted in increasing house prices, leading to transfers of land from employment to residential use and exacerbating the lack of commercial space. Between 1985 and 2004, the city lost an average of 2.5ha of employment land per annum, with redevelopment for residential and student accommodation purposes driving the majority of this loss. This has slowed to 2ha per annum over the last five years.

Oxford City Council is:

- encouraging commercial development on the few key locations that are available, e.g. the Northern Gateway. The Science Park has a capacity of 27,200m<sup>2</sup> of employment space available. The Business Park has a further capacity of 29,400m<sup>2</sup>
- negotiating about future development with partners outside the city's constrained boundaries.

## Chapter 2 Meeting Housing Needs

### **Our ambition: more affordable, high-quality housing in Oxford.**

#### **Some facts**

Oxford's population has been growing, as has the number of people requiring housing. Oxford's population reached 152,000 in 2011 and is projected to reach 164,000 by 2021.

There is a housing crisis in Oxford. Demand is high and availability is scarce, as a result of the city's constrained boundaries and other factors such as flood plains and areas important for bio-diversity. This results in very high house prices.

According to Cities Outlook 2014, Oxford has overtaken London as the UK's least affordable city in terms of housing. Average Oxford house prices are now thirteen times higher than average annual incomes. Owner-occupied housing is increasingly out of the reach of people on lower incomes.

Oxford is also the least affordable city in the UK for private rented housing.

The Strategic Housing Market Assessment in 2014 estimated that between 1,280 and 1,600 new homes per year would have to be built in the city if demand is to be met. This low level of affordability puts severe strain on social housing provision. Oxford City Council is a landlord responsible for 7,724 homes. Around 2,700 households are on the Housing Register for social housing.

In spite of our work to prevent homelessness and reduce the use of temporary accommodation for homeless households, demands on our service are high. The impact of austerity measures, including changes to the welfare system, are putting downward pressure on real incomes and contributing to a growth in the number of homeless families across the country. This is exacerbated by housing shortages. Research by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation and Crisis indicates that homelessness has increased for three consecutive years with an estimated 185,000 people a year now affected in England.

The Council has so far limited the increase in the city to below national average levels but Oxford will not be exempt from this trend. The ability of the Council to respond to demand – for example, by assisting people into the private rental market – is likely to be further restricted. There is a strong risk that the downward trend in the number of households in temporary accommodation will not be maintained.

The city's housing crisis is causing increasing hardship for people and families. Poor and overcrowded housing - with increasing instances of 'beds in sheds' - is impacting on some of the most vulnerable in the city. Census 2011 data shows that 6.2% of households in Oxford are classed as overcrowded compared with an Oxfordshire average of 3.3%.



The housing crisis is also threatening Oxford's position as the focus of a world-class knowledge economy and one of the most important concentrations of high-value businesses in Europe. Local employers find it difficult to attract people to the city. More affordable housing is essential not just for the health and well-being of residents but also for the vibrancy of the local economy.

50% of people who work in Oxford commute from outside the city, causing significant traffic congestion issues.

Changes to welfare policy are imposing significant additional pressures on housing and homelessness in the city. Changes to Local Housing Allowance, which came into force on a rolling basis from April 2011, mean that the maximum Local Housing Allowance can only be paid to properties in the cheapest 30% of the local market. This has severely constrained housing options in the city for many households.

The 'local' housing market includes much of rural Oxfordshire, where rental costs tend to be lower. This will mean that many low-income households may be forced out of Oxford to meet their rent obligations. The small size of the private rented sector outside the city may restrict the Council's capacity to re-house Oxford families within the county itself. This pressure will be most severe on households needing a five-bedroom property or larger.

In addition, welfare and benefit changes – for example, reductions in benefit for those claiming Jobseeker's Allowance for over 12 months – have reduced the available income of many low-income households. These pressures will increase over time, as the changes impact on a growing number of households, and as housing costs rise faster than benefits increase.

The changes to welfare overall are likely to increase the demand for housing and homelessness assistance, and also debt and welfare advice services. The City Council has maintained its funding for the voluntary and charitable bodies which provide this advice, particularly in areas of the city where need is greatest.

#### Oxford City Council's approach

We are addressing six key issues to meet housing need in Oxford:

1. Implementing Council House Ambition
2. Working with partners
3. Reviewing the Green Belt
4. Improving standards in the private rented sector
5. Reducing homelessness
6. Changes to welfare

#### 1. Implementing Council House Ambition

Oxford City Council has committed to building 10,200 new homes over the 20 years from 2006.

The Council is committed to using its own resources to provide new affordable housing wherever possible. As a result of changes to the way in which housing finance is managed, the Council was able three years ago to take full responsibility for managing its own housing stock. Efficiency and effectiveness in the service has improved significantly and, partly as a result, the Council is now in a position to invest heavily in building new homes through its new *Council Housing Ambition* initiative, the boldest step in a generation on housing in our city.

Oxford City Council is:

- spending up to £101 million to deliver new council homes and improve existing housing stock over the next four years
- investing an additional £96 million of new investment over the next 10 years to fund the construction of 485 new homes, refurbish existing dwellings to standards above the national average, and redevelop the city's estates
- conducting a free energy audit for every council tenant, to improve insulation and reduce heating bills
- investing £17 million to upgrade the external and communal areas in our five tower blocks, extending their lives for a further 30 years
- investing £13.6 million to upgrade kitchens and central heating
- investing £3.8 million to fund aids and adaptations to council dwellings for the disabled
- investing over £1 million per year to improve environmental and parking measures on Oxford's estates
- improving our arrangements for involving tenants and leaseholders in decision-making.

## 2. Working with partners

Our approach is to promote housing development within the city wherever possible, and to use our planning policies to encourage developers to provide affordable housing.

This has resulted in a significant increase in the quantity of affordable housing. About 1,400 new affordable homes were built in the city from 2004 to the end of 2012 and planning permission was granted for a further 614 affordable homes in Autumn 2013. Despite a reduction in house building following the recession, we are currently on course to meet our new homes target.

Oxford City Council is:

- working through an innovative joint-venture company, formed with Grosvenor Estates, to build nearly 900 new homes, a new school and community facilities, and commercial development on land at Barton Park. The first homes should be ready for occupation by 2015
- building 113 new homes on Council-owned sites throughout the city, supported by around £2.4 million from the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA). The Council will fund the balance of the cost of £16 million
- building on council land at Cowley and Northway, in partnership with GreenSquare Housing Association. This project will deliver new affordable and

market-rate homes, new community facilities, and a new home for the Emmaus Furniture Store, which provides training and accommodation to formerly homeless people.

### 3. Reviewing the Green Belt

Last year, all the district councils in Oxfordshire, supported by the County Council, commissioned a technical study to determine the region's housing need between 2011 and 2031. The Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) showed that Oxford needs between 24,000 and 32,000 new homes over the same period to ensure housing demand is met.

Clearly it is not possible for all of these houses to be built within Oxford's current constrained boundaries. The City Council has published a 'Growth Strategy Route Map' summarising the planning challenges it faces in meeting housing demand to ensure economic growth. It sets out the process and strategy the Council is following to address these issues. Amongst the solutions which need to be considered and assessed are the current Green Belt boundaries.

The Council is suggesting a balanced approach to the identification of land for housing to meet Oxford's needs. An area equivalent to less than 1% of the existing Green Belt in the county might be needed, and there may be no net loss if Green Belt land is swapped or extended in areas elsewhere in the county.

We have initiated the debate about how the housing crisis affecting Oxfordshire can best be met for all of Oxfordshire's residents and businesses and we believe that locating the homes near or adjacent to Oxford is the most sustainable location. The alternative could see significant growth in towns like Thame and Henley, with large-scale commuting back into Oxford.

Oxford City Council is:

- seeking to work with neighbouring authorities under the Duty to Co-operate to bring forward sustainable locations for the homes that Oxford needs but is unable to develop within its own administrative boundaries
- demonstrating that the option of Green Belt review and urban extension would be sustainable and deliverable
- arguing that it should take no longer than 12-18 months to identify spatial options for addressing the unmet Oxford need.

### 4. Improving standards in the private rented sector

The private rented sector in Oxford provides essential accommodation for key workers, young professionals, students and others who are unable to access social housing or purchase homes on the private market. It accounts for 28% of the city's housing stock, with one in five of Oxford's population living in a house in multiple occupation (HMO).

The combination of exceptionally high demand and high rental values has created an environment where landlords can charge high rents for poorly managed and badly

maintained properties. Since the introduction in 2011 of the HMO licencing scheme around 3,000 HMOs have been improved and made safe for occupants.

Oxford City Council is:

- reducing HMO Licence Fees for accredited landlords while increasing charges for those who fail to apply for a licence. We want more landlords to sign up for the accreditation scheme so that we can continue to improve standards
- enabling more proactive enforcement of standards in the private rented sector
- managing the impact of private rented housing on communities and neighbourhoods by enforcing controls requiring planning permission for the change of use from a family or single unit dwelling into an HMO. There is a presumption against new HMOs in areas which already have a significant concentration
- working with Oxford Brookes University and the University of Oxford to tackle issues relating to student housing, particularly in East Oxford
- using targeted noise enforcement as part of a programme of assistance for neighbourhoods whose character is being adversely affected by HMOs and entertainment venues
- using our Home Improvement Agency to improve private homes of the elderly and vulnerable
- adapting private dwellings to make them suitable for those with disabilities.

#### 5. Reducing homelessness

Over the last decade the City Council has been able to substantially reduce the number of homeless families living in temporary accommodation. We have done this through prevention work, based on advising families about the housing options available to them. We have also worked in partnership with others, including private landlords, to help secure accommodation for those threatened with homelessness. However, changes to the benefit system, along with increasingly high demand and costs of housing in Oxford, may lead to an increase in the number of people at risk of homelessness.

Oxford City Council is:

- limiting the number of people living in temporary accommodation
- Investing £3.5 million in 2014-15 and 2015-16 to purchase dwellings to house families in temporary accommodation if required
- funding services to assist single and rough-sleeping homeless people
- supporting the Crisis Skylight centre, which gives single homeless people access to training and other opportunities
- supporting the No Second Night Out campaign.

#### 6. Changes to welfare

The changes that the government has made to welfare are significant. The Benefit Cap, for example, restricts the amount of money a family without work or working under 24 hours per week can receive in state benefits to £500 per week and is particularly likely to affect households with several children or in the private rented sector. As at November 2014, 193 households in total had been affected by the

## Benefit Cap.

Universal Credit will replace a number of existing sources of welfare benefit, including Housing Benefit, with a single payment to individuals and families. Currently, Housing Benefit is paid directly to the landlord. There is a risk that arrears and bad debts could increase if Housing Benefit is paid directly to tenants in social housing who are then responsible for making rental payments.

In 2013/14 Oxford City Council was part of a pilot to show how a local authority can support people affected by welfare reform. This work has continued and has been supported by a successful bid for European Social Fund money. This work forms an important part of our aspiration to mitigate the impact of welfare reform on local people. Up until November 2014, the Welfare Reform team had worked intensively with 266 people of whom 93 have been supported into work. In addition the team provides one off housing or work related advice to anyone who requires it.

The need for this support is likely to continue due to the combination of high levels of deprivation in parts of Oxford, and very high housing costs.

Oxford City Council is:

- seeking ways to improve the financial awareness of tenants and minimise the financial risks of direct payments for landlords
- providing advice and support to vulnerable people
- working with customers affected by the Benefit Cap and the under-occupancy rules, known as the 'Bedroom Tax', with the aim of helping them move into work.
- supporting funding for the voluntary and charitable bodies which provide debt and welfare advice, particularly in areas of the city where need is greatest. This will help to mitigate Government cuts to Legal Aid
- working with the County Council to address the consequences of welfare changes, in particular the relationship between the County Council's social care responsibilities and homelessness.

## **Chapter 3 Strong, Active Communities**

**Our ambition: communities that are socially cohesive and safe, and citizens who are actively engaged in pursuing their own well-being and that of their communities.**

### **Some facts**

In contrast to other parts of the county, Oxford is ethnically and culturally diverse, with the third-highest minority ethnic population in the south-east. In 2011, 22% of the population were from black and minority ethnic backgrounds, compared with an England average of 15%. The largest non-white ethnic groups represented are of Indian, Pakistani and Black African origin.

There are also large numbers of people of white non-British ethnic origin, including increasing numbers of new migrants from EU accession countries. This means that newer communities tend to be made up of many diverse groups rather than a small number of larger blocks.

Oxford's population is constantly changing. People come to Oxford to live, to study and to work, coming from both within the UK and from other countries. There are over 30,000 students studying full-time at the two universities.

Around 6,000 people arrive from overseas to live in Oxford each year, about half of these being students and a quarter being migrant workers.

More than one in four of our residents were born outside the UK – the most common countries of origin being Poland, USA, India, Germany and Pakistan. Relative to the rest of Oxfordshire, Oxford has high levels of deprivation. The Index of Multiple Deprivation 2010 ranks Oxford 131 out of 354, placing it in the top half of the most deprived local authority areas in England. Of 85 areas in Oxford, 12 are among the 20% most deprived areas in England, with one area in Northfield Brook ward among the 10% most deprived.

Around 22% of Oxford's under-16s 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 education or skills 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 Oxfordshire.

Life expectancy in the most deprived areas is around 10 years less than in the wealthy areas.

### **Oxford City Council's approach**

There are major inequalities in life chances and life expectancy in our city. The City Council is using its own powers and its partnerships with others to open up access to

those opportunities, focusing particularly on people living in the most deprived areas of our city.

We are addressing six key issues as we continue to develop strong, active communities:

1. Promoting youth ambition
2. Supporting older people
3. Engaging our communities
4. Promoting healthy living
5. Building safe communities
6. Celebrating culture and community events

#### 1. Promoting youth ambition

As part of its commitment to building a world-class city for everyone, Oxford City Council aims to reduce the extent of inequality and to improve the lives of the most vulnerable. We particularly want to help young people open the doors to positive life opportunities.

Funding cuts from central government have resulted in reduced direct spending on services for young people outside the school environment. They have also reduced local government budgets and the capacity of local government to spend in these areas.

In the light of these challenges, Oxford City Council believes that there is a need for a significant coordinated response to prevent lasting damage to our young people and our communities. We are, therefore, significantly increasing our own investment in areas that impact directly on young people. We want to stimulate partnership working and voluntary action around this important agenda.

The City Council welcomes the County Council's commitment to joint working in this area. The commitment of the two councils is evidenced through the Working Together agreement that has recently been signed.

Oxford City Council is:

- investing £240,000 annually to improve activities for young people in areas of the city where need is greatest and expand youth activity to some areas which currently have no provision. This level of investment in positive activities should be contrasted with the cost of negative activities. Placing one young person in custody for a year costs £45,000 and the national cost of responding to antisocial behaviour is £3.4 billion per year. The health cost of inactivity in Oxford is £2.1 million per year
- working with partners such as Fusion Lifestyle, the City Cultural Partnership, Oxfordshire County Council, Oxfordshire Sports Partnership, the voluntary sector, Oxford University, Experience Oxfordshire and Public Health Oxfordshire. We are coordinating an innovative programme to encourage our young people to expand their opportunities by participating in high-quality sporting and

cultural activities and providing clear pathways into clubs and organisations. We believe that engagement with these activities from an early age can:

- develop technical skills, discipline, and the confidence necessary for future success
  - expand young people's horizons and generate a sense of ambition
  - offer opportunities for young people to share their experiences with others, and help to build social cohesion
  - improve educational attainment
  - encourage healthy living. The UK has the highest rate of obesity in Europe. In Oxford, 19% of year-six children are classified as obese
  - open up possibilities for employment of talented and committed young people, including in the creative and sports industries
- developing Youth Voice – a programme to support children and young people between the ages of 15 and 21 (25 where there are special educational needs) to influence the services that affect their lives. Youth Voice will:
- develop a more pro-active approach to gaining and acting on the feedback of young people
  - provide more and better personal and professional development opportunities so that young people can engage effectively with decision makers
  - increase young people's access to decision makers in their local communities – the City and County Councils and other key stakeholders – so that they can influence decisions, processes and services that will affect their transition into adulthood.

## 2. Supporting older people

Despite its youthful age profile, Oxford has more pensioners living alone than any of the surrounding districts. Of 6,000 single-pensioner households in Oxford, 3,400 were people who reported suffering from a limiting long-term illness.

An Older People's Needs Assessment has been carried out. This work will help inform the Council about longer term support that is needed for older people. In particular, we are exploring ways in which they can be supported to live in their homes and local communities for as long as possible.

The Council is:

- co-ordinating the Ageing Successfully Partnership, which provides a partnership approach to improving wellbeing, addressing isolation, and increasing engagement with older people
- working with other agencies – Oxfordshire County Council, Age UK and the Over 50s Group – to improve services for older people
- working closely with the 50+ Network, a volunteer-run community group whose aim is to increase engagement with older people. This group is represented on the Ageing Successfully Partnership.
- involved in on-going discussions with GPs on the Oxford Clinical Commissioning Group, the new Shadow Health and Well-Being Board, the Adult and Social Care



Board and the Health Improvement Board to improve the quality of life for older people.

### 3. Engaging with our communities

#### Our guiding principles

The Council believes that most services are best designed, delivered and reviewed on a city-wide basis. Services will, of course, reflect the different demographics and needs of areas across the city and resource allocation will vary accordingly. For example, street-cleansing outcomes require greater inputs in busier areas. However, these variations should be seen in the context of the Council's vision for the whole city.

Community engagement is about ensuring that elected councillors are aware of the views of individuals and community groups. It is not intended to enable minority interests to overrule the best interests of the wider community and the city as a whole. Local involvement and participation supports and underpins decision-making. It does not replace it. The final decision on any issue rests with the city's elected councillors.

#### Defining community

Communities take many forms. They can be:

- communities of place: people living in geographically distinct areas of the city
- communities of identity: people from black and ethnic minority groups, older people, younger people, people with disabilities, religious groups, and gay and lesbian groups
- communities of interest: people involved in groups which might intersect with other communities, such as council tenants, allotment holders, cyclists, theatre-goers – or people who come together to use services such as parks, roads, community buildings or transport.

People will often see themselves as belonging to one community of place, but more than one community of interest. We aim to engage with communities primarily through the following routes:

- communities of place – through Area Forums and Neighbourhood Partnerships
- communities of identity – through the work of our community development team
- communities of interest – through the services to which they best relate, e.g. Friends of parks, Friends of the Museum of Oxford.

Oxford City Council has developed a range of innovative ways in which local communities can become engaged in decisions that affect them. These include:

- consultation, and other forms of public engagement
- Area Forums and Community Partnerships
- tenants and leaseholder engagement
- supporting the community and voluntary sectors
- community development.

### Consultation and other forms of community engagement

The Council has a formally approved process which sets out how and when it will seek views from individuals and communities. Consultation occurs when the Council is seeking the views of members of the public in order to influence decisions.

Oxford City Council also involves members of the public by:

- providing information to assist public understanding of issues
- seeking views from members of the public for market-research purposes.

### Area Forums and Community Partnerships

Area Forums consist of all ward councillors in any given area of the city. These are informal meetings, sponsored and supported by the Council, to engage with the communities in their area. Each area is free to adapt its arrangements to meet its own needs.

Community Partnerships exist in those areas of the city which have been identified as being in greatest need. Area Forums and Community Partnerships are not decision-making bodies but provide a focus for action and engagement on local issues.

The Area Forums:

- identify key issues and priorities to feed into city-wide service and budget planning processes
- enable local councillors to play a central role in drawing up neighbourhood plans, linking service-planning more closely with local needs and aspirations
- provide a space in which residents and community groups can work with mainstream service providers – health, education, police, businesses and the voluntary sectors – to ensure that local services are responsive to community needs.

Oxford City Council is:

- supporting communities to get involved in the planning process through a new process called neighbourhood planning
- providing each Councillor with an annual budget of £1,500 for small projects that link to the priorities emerging from forum discussions and other local consultations
- exploring ways to ensure that all of our communities have the opportunity to engage with issues that affect them.

As part of its commitment to neighbourhood working, the Council is piloting an approach to neighbourhood management in three areas with large social housing estates - Rose Hill, the Leys and Barton. The aim of the approach is to ensure that the Council's corporate centre – including the Chief Executive and Directors – is working directly with members and community organisations to help manage the challenges in our local communities. An officer working party for each area is chaired by a Director. We are aiming to ensure that:

- the quality of local public services improves and the work of Council teams is co-ordinated

- an action plan for the area is developed which addresses the social, economic and environmental needs of the location, that local people are involved in its development, and that it is realistic and prioritised
- effective work is being undertaken to grow community capacity and involvement
- other agencies are fully involve in work addressing deprivation and community priorities, particularly around health, the County Council, the Police and the voluntary sector
- harder to reach groups are actively involved.

#### Tenant and leaseholder engagement

Oxford City Council's model of engagement has been developed with the national Tenant Participation Advisory Service (TPAS). Tenants and leaseholders co-exist in areas of mixed tenure and problem solving, and the driving of initiatives, cannot be delivered successfully without the involvement of all groups concerned.

Oxford City Council is:

- creating a structure which provides broad involvement opportunities across all demographics and geographical areas of the city
- enabling varied involvement opportunities which allow tenants, residents and leaseholders to be involved in ways that suit their needs
- developing training and support opportunities and encouragement for the widest possible audience
- ensuring that structures do not allow one group, issue or process to become dominant
- ensuring transparency so that tenants, residents and leaseholders are able to see the difference that has been made as a result of their engagement.

#### Supporting the community and voluntary sectors

The Council is keen to support the community and voluntary sectors, as well as individual volunteering activity. Volunteering brings benefits to both Oxford and the individual volunteer. It makes important contributions, economically as well as socially. Not only does it develop a more cohesive society by building trust and respect among our residents, recent studies have shown that people who volunteer improve their health and wellbeing.

Oxford City Council is:

- investing over £4 million to build a new community centre in Rose Hill
- investing £700,000 to ensuring high-quality community centre provision across the city, with particular focus on our priority areas. The Council supports well-managed community centres which provide open access to all sectors of the community and encourage involvement
- using its membership of the Oxfordshire Stronger Communities Alliance to strengthen the role of the voluntary and community sectors, and to increase the number of volunteers in the city
- using its grants programme to invest around £1.4 million annually into a wide range of voluntary and community organisations that collectively make a significant contribution to the life of the city. The grants programme has two elements:

- open bidding, where community and voluntary organisations can apply for one-off grants
- commissioning, where funding is provided for activities that have been identified as contributing to the achievement of the Council's corporate priorities
- encouraging its own staff to volunteer and working with its partners to increase the quality, quantity, and accessibility of volunteering. Oxford City Council hosts the annual volunteers' awards and Volunteers' Fair where different groups publicise their work
- aiming for Investor in Volunteering accreditation. This will initially be undertaken as a pilot within the Leisure, Parks and Communities service area where a framework in which we will work with volunteers will be developed.

### Community development

Within any community, there is a wealth of knowledge and experience which can be channelled to achieve desired outcomes. Community development involves changing the relationships between ordinary people and people in positions of power, so that everyone has the opportunity to contribute to decisions that affect their lives.

Oxford City Council is:

- supporting community development through its own activities and through working with voluntary groups and local communities
- targeting its work in the priority areas of the city and advising other communities who want to engage in community planning
- applying community development principles to projects such as the community centre refurbishment programme and the development at Barton Park
- promoting partnership with voluntary managers of local allotments, through regular meetings with the Oxford and District Federation of Allotment Associations.

### 4. Promoting healthy living

Oxford City Council is responsible for a range of functions that affect people's health and well-being, e.g. planning, housing, social cohesion, and employment. The Council will use its powers to improve these and the other wider determinants of health, such as environmental health, air quality, and green spaces.

Our ambition for our leisure services is to deliver the quality of service found in many private clubs, at an affordable price. Over the last four years we have invested over £4 million in improving our facilities. These improvements have been funded from the increased income resulting from a management partnership between Oxford City Council and Fusion Lifestyle, a charitable trust.

Over the same period we have received a quarter of a million more visits annually. Oxford is now in the top quartile for adult activity in Oxfordshire, from being one of least active areas in 2006. Blackbird Leys Leisure Centre, Ferry Leisure Centre, and Hinksey Outdoor Pool have all achieved a rating of 'good' from Quest, the national quality award for sport and leisure.

We are continuing to build on the legacy of the 2012 Olympic and Paralympic programmes to encourage people of all ages and levels of fitness to embrace healthy and physically active lifestyles. As part of its contribution to the 2014 Commonwealth Games, the Council hosted the Queen's Baton Relay Event.

Oxford City Council is:

- continuing to improve our leisure provision by:
  - opening a new competition-standard swimming pool in Blackbird Leys. The new pool will replace Temple Cowley Pools and Blackbird Leys Pool, both of which are in poor condition, very costly to run, and major contributors to the Council's carbon footprint. The large savings in running costs from the facilities that it will replace will substantially meet the cost of the capital investment involved
  - refurbishing sports pavilions across the city
  - investing £70,000 on a new skate park in Northway
  - investing more than £300,000 to encourage cycling, with improved cycle lanes and better signage
  - continuing to provide free swimming for under 17s, particularly for those from areas of greatest need
  - further developing leisure/school partnership activities, particularly in areas of greatest need
  - investing £174,000 to improve tennis courts across the city
  - providing an annual cricket festival for players from all backgrounds in Cowley Marsh park at a cost of £2,000 per year
  - working in partnership to deliver the GO Active programme to get more people active in the city. The Oxford Health Walks scheme, which encourages walking, particularly in the city's beautiful parks, is exercise for those unaccustomed to physical activity
  - improving the quality of the city's outdoor sports offer. The Council's StreetSports programme has achieved the prestigious StreetMark accreditation, a national recognition of quality
- working in partnership to deliver the Active Women programme within the city
- providing opportunities to improve mental and physical well-being, as well as encouraging physical activity and better diet by supporting 36 popular allotments across the city
- protecting public health by carrying out over 700 inspections of food premises a year, and displaying the results of food hygiene inspections on the 'Scores on the Doors' website
- acknowledging the diversity of Oxford's communities by delivering food hygiene training courses in different languages as well as providing foreign-language exam papers. Nearly 50% of all the people trained on our food hygiene training courses do not have English as their first language.

#### 5. Building safer communities

Crime and the fear of crime have an adverse effect on the well-being of our communities. As a leading member of the Oxford Community Safety Partnership,

Oxford City Council has made a significant contribution to the reduction in levels of crime and antisocial behaviour in the city.

However, improved reporting and a national focus on anti-social behaviour has seen reported cases to the City Council increase. These range from environmental problems such as fly-tipping, waste in gardens, and litter offences to cases of neighbour dispute. The Oxford Community Safety Partnership invests a significant proportion of its resources in protecting victims from domestic abuse, sexual abuse, sexual exploitation and trafficking.

Oxford City Council is:

- participating in the NightSafe scheme to tackle alcohol-related disorder in the night-time economy. NightSafe's success helped enable Oxford to retain its Purple Flag accreditation
- providing a seamless Anti-social Behaviour Service to tackle all forms for nuisance, ranging from environmental offences to disputes between neighbours
- using our consultation processes to survey people's opinions on a range of anti-social behaviour issues. The results, along with information from the Police and other partnerships, enables us to set our priorities in our Community Safety Rolling Plan
- investing in the Youth Ambition and Positive Futures Programmes to offer alternative activities to young people who might otherwise be drawn into various forms of antisocial behaviour
- engaging with the community on safety issues, through our successful Neighbourhood Action Groups (NAGS)
- applying resources specifically to tackle abuse and trafficking.

The Council is providing a coordinated approach to the delivery of safeguarding services for vulnerable children and adults. As part of its clear ambition to improving outcomes for vulnerable children, families and vulnerable adults the City Council is also:

- seconding an officer to be part of the KingfisherTeam, the joint team set up by Thames Valley Police, Oxford Health, and Oxfordshire County Council's joint team in November 2012 to tackle child sexual exploitation
- seeking to become an integrated part of the Oxfordshire's Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) as a pilot scheme for other district councils
- raising the confidence and resilience of young people through our youth ambition and educational attainment programmes,
- working with contractors and the voluntary sector to strengthen and ensure their compliance with the Oxfordshire Safeguarding Children Board Policy and Procedures.

## 6. Celebrating culture and community events

Oxford City Council and its partners believe that access to high-quality cultural experiences is the right of all our citizens. It can play a vital role in enriching and energising the lives of individuals and regenerating communities.

Culture, the arts and community festivals have the potential to bring together people from all areas of life, to break down barriers and increase our sense of local identity and belonging. The events staged in the city to celebrate the Olympics brought people from all of the city's communities together in a common cause and we are continuing to build on this legacy.

In addition to managing the annual May Morning celebrations, the Council contributes significantly to other community festivals. We are contributing £30,000 annually to support the popular Cowley Road Carnival, attended by around 45,000 people last year. We are contributing £20,000 annually to support the Alice Day celebrations. This year's Christmas Light Festival – sponsored by the Westgate Alliance - featured an exciting programme of free events filling the entire festival weekend. Events included a Festival Hub in Gloucester Green, the Young People's Light Installation outside the Museum of Natural History and Pitt Rivers Museum, and hundreds of choral performers across the city as part of the Day of Song.

Oxford City Council is:

- leading a partnership-based approach to developing and improving the cultural life of the city, so that more people can have more access to high-quality cultural experiences
- improving opportunities for young people to participate actively in high-quality cultural activities
- improving opportunities for the diverse range of communities and faith groups in the city to participate actively in high-quality cultural activities that reflect their own identities and that can be shared with the whole community
- implementing clear service level agreements with organisations that we fund to ensure that our investment delivers maximum value for our communities

## Chapter 4 Cleaner, Greener Oxford

**Our ambition: a cleaner, greener Oxford: in the city centre, in our neighbourhoods and in all public spaces.**

### Some facts

The need to improve and maintain the cleanliness of our city is an issue of abiding concern for Oxford's citizens.

The city presents particular challenges due to the diverse nature of its population, its high population churn (25% per annum), and the large number of houses of multiple occupation and self-contained flats.

These challenges apply across the range of issues important to the Cleaner, Greener campaign and there is a continual need to reinforce positive attitudes and behaviours in relation to the public realm. This is particularly important in regard to recycling and refuse collection.

Around 900,000 tonnes of carbon dioxide are emitted as a result of activity in Oxford every year. This equates to 5.8 tonnes of carbon dioxide per person. Carbon emissions generated by industrial and commercial uses account for over half the total emissions, followed by domestic uses at a little over a quarter.

Compared to the national averages, Oxford has lower per capita emissions from households and transport but higher emissions from industry and commerce. Domestic carbon emissions have fallen despite a rise in the total population and number of dwellings over the period.

Five of the city's parks have achieved Green Flag status.

### Oxford City Council's approach

The Council is addressing five key issues as we continue to make Oxford cleaner and greener:

1. Recycling and refuse collection
2. Improving cleanliness in streets, neighbourhoods and open spaces
3. Reducing the Council's carbon footprint
4. Reducing the city's carbon footprint
5. Transport

#### 1. Recycling and refuse collection

Oxford City Council is:

- operating a recycling and waste service which, as a result of a market-testing exercise, is highly efficient and committed to improving customer satisfaction
- operating a weekly food-waste recycling programme. The first year of this programme is complete and a further £398,264 will be spent over the next two



years completing the project. On completion the food waste collection service will have been delivered to the 15,000 flats in the city currently not included in the scheme

- giving householders choice about containers: wheeled bins, boxes and sacks are all available in order to reflect the different kinds of housing stock in the city
- making recycling easier by enabling nearly all recycling materials to be placed into one container
- providing recycling bins in the city centre, around the ring road, at Templar's Square Shopping Centre and other retail locations around the city
- providing a garden waste collection service to which over 14,000 customers have subscribed to so far
- continuing to be at the forefront of new initiatives to improve recycling from waste streams such as food waste, small electrical items and batteries
- providing customer recycling sites around the city to include general recycling, textile and clothes recycling and new WEEE banks (small electrical items)
- providing a programme of recycling education and events to support individual customers, school, college and university students and local businesses
- working with social housing and private landlords to increase recycling at their flat sites
- recycling or re-using 100% of the green waste from our parks and countryside sites and from the green open spaces of our estates
- consistently improving its recycling rate – from 20% in 2005–6 to nearly 46% currently. This makes us one of the top-performing city areas. We will reduce the amount of waste sent to landfill year on year
- working in partnership with OxClean to carry out the annual spring clean of 'grot spots'

## 2. Improving cleanliness in streets, neighbourhoods and open spaces

Achieving permanent improvements in cleanliness levels also requires continual reinforcement of positive public attitudes and behaviours. Ongoing education is at the heart of the campaign for cleaner streets, neighbourhoods and open spaces, although this is backed by the use of environmental enforcement where necessary. Oxford City Council is:

- tackling inappropriate refuse disposal, fly-tipping, littering, dog-fouling, and graffiti
- investing £33k per annum to remove graffiti from private buildings
- continuing to target resources so that we can keep the city centre clean and retain our Purple Flag accreditation
- carrying out a programme of street washing and chewing gum removal at key retail locations in the citycentre and other retail centres around the city
- using powers to control litter caused by leafleting
- targeting rolling clean-up campaigns in our neighbourhoods
- working in partnership with the Oxford Mail on an on-going publicity campaign
- spending an additional £12,000 per year on a door-to-door campaign of encouragement and enforcement

- investing an additional £15,000 per year to improve litter-picking and maintenance in our parks, reflecting the increased use of these facilities in recent years
- ensuring that the city's play areas, recently improved as a result of a £3.1 million investment programme, remain in top condition
- using dog control orders to encourage responsible dog ownership, control dogs in parks and play areas, and prevent dog-fouling.

### 3. Reducing the Council's carbon footprint

Reducing the Council's own carbon footprint has been a high priority in recent years. As a result of the 'Getting our own house in order' programme, we implemented measures to reduce carbon dioxide emissions from our buildings and operations by 25% in the three years to March 2011. The Council is now implementing measures to deliver 5% yearly reductions through a new, expanded carbon management programme - *Carbon reduction is at the heart of everything that we do.*

Oxford City Council is:

- investing £800,000 to fund energy saving projects which will deliver a revenue saving on reduced fuel bills.
- reducing energy consumption in the St Aldate's Chambers offices. Energy efficiency measures such as improved lighting and motion sensor controls have improved the building's energy performance rating from an E to a C
- improving energy efficiency in our housing stock by installing efficient gas boilers, improving insulation, and installing water-saving devices
- applying external cladding to our tower blocks to improve thermal efficiency
- using solar photovoltaic panels to provide cheaper electricity and feed surplus electricity into the national grid
- requiring a 20% on-site renewable energy production for all large developments
- drawing on a revolving loan fund from Salix, a financial organisation that empowers public sector organisations to take a lead in increasing their energy efficiency. Salix have provided £405,000 to spend on energy-saving technologies, e.g. by installing pool covers in our leisure centres. This has reduced energy loss and saved around £250,000 per year
- including electric vehicles in the Council fleet
- using tracker and telematics systems, which re-route operational vehicles to save mileage and report on vehicle emissions and fuel consumption
- using route optimisation software to plan the most efficient routes for our waste and recycling rounds
- using our procurement strategy to support suppliers who are taking action to reduce their environmental impact. This means, for example: using local suppliers; buying only recycled paper; using only FSC certified wood as building material

### 4. Reducing the city's carbon footprint

A key element in reducing carbon emissions and poor air quality involves reducing the need to travel, particularly by private car, and to encourage more sustainable modes of transport such as walking, cycling, and public transport. The City Council

uses its planning policies to ensure that new development is located in areas close to existing facilities such as shops, transport hubs and bus routes.

Low Carbon Oxford is a pioneering city-wide programme of collaboration involving around 35 private, public and non-profit organisations with the aim of ensuring Oxford's future as a sustainable and low carbon city. The Low Carbon Oxford charter commits its signatories to collaborate to reduce their carbon footprints in Oxford by an average minimum of 3% every year, for at least the next ten years. Community groups from around the city are also part of the Low Carbon Oxford initiative.

Oxford City Council is:

- leading the OxFutures project which is mobilising large-scale investment in developing renewable energy and energy efficiency projects across the city and county. Kick-started by a £1.3 million grant from Intelligent Energy Europe, OxFutures aims to leverage investment of £15 million into local energy projects over the next three years. The aim is to achieve a 40% reduction in local carbon emissions by 2020 and to mainstream low carbon economic development. The project builds on the success of the City and County Councils in carbon reduction and energy efficiency
- using £310,000 awarded by the Department of Energy and Climate Change to help local low carbon community groups and develop the Warming Barton pilot project, which is helping to save energy and create warmer homes in the city's most deprived area
- investing £54k over 2 years to upgrade homes with the lowest energy efficiency standards in the city, and using this to lever in national Energy Company Obligation and external funds of about £150k for the Warming Barton pilot
- leading the Low Carbon Oxford initiative for the city and investing an £25,000 per year to ensure that Low Carbon Oxford is able to continue its successful work
- investing £54,000 over two years to ensure take-up of the Green Deal opportunities for home energy efficiency improvements, particularly by households on low incomes
- continuing to support allotments, recognizing their contribution to reducing Oxford's carbon footprint by producing an estimated 500 tonnes of vegetables to the value of £1.25 million each year
- working through strategic partnerships to combat the adverse effects of climate change, including the increased incidence of flooding within the city. Activities to reduce flooding include:
  - implementing flood alleviation measures at Northway and Marston, in partnership with the Environment Agency at a cost of £1.7 million
  - investing £100,000 to fund advice on the Thames Water catchment study. Parts of the city have major problems with the foul water network and it is essential that the Thames Water study provides a satisfactory long-term solution to these problems.
  - working with partners to secure funding and implement the Oxford and Abingdon Flood Relief Scheme.

- investing £22,000 per year to deal with the growing problem of illegal riverbank moorings by providing a targeted programme of proactive enforcement.

## 5. Transport

The transport network is highly constrained, with very limited potential to increase traffic on roads in particular. Operational capacity has already been reached or exceeded on much of the road network, resulting in frequent congestion and delays. The limited platform and line capacity of Oxford's railway station results in a significant bottleneck on the rail network.

There are a number of future pressures to consider:

- The city's population will continue to grow, not only within existing settlements but also at new developments such as Barton Park
- The role of Oxford as a workplace – one-third of the county's jobs are in the city – is important in supporting economic growth, but leads to a high level of in-commuting and therefore congestion at peak times
- Compared to most cities, Oxford has particularly high proportions of people travelling by bus and bicycle and we will promote these forms of travel further. More Oxford residents cycle or walk to work than those who drive.
- Oxford experiences high levels of air pollution in some locations and there is a need to reduce the environmental impact of travel, and to promote health and safety.
- Oxford City Council is working proactively with the County Council and other partners to deliver the Oxford Transport Strategy and planned development across the city, to reduce traffic congestion and carbon emissions.

Oxford City Council is:

- using its Economic Development and Growth Strategy to encourage new housing developments and other growth initiatives in areas already linked to Oxford's transport infrastructure
- supporting the Low Emission Zone (LEZ) launched in 2014, which places restrictions on the types of engines that can be used in buses operating within central Oxford.
- investigating jointly with the County Council how freight emissions and traffic can be reduced
- supporting joint bus ticketing and other partnership initiatives which will reduce congestion, including:
  - Oxford-Marylebone rail link, including Water Eaton station
  - Oxford railway station development
  - East-West rail extension
  - Frideswide Square redevelopment.

## Chapter 5 Efficient, Effective Council

**Our ambition: a flexible and accessible organisation, delivering high-quality, value-for-money services.**

### Some facts

Oxford City Council has achieved £8.5 million of efficiency savings over the last four years without the need for compulsory redundancies. Our ability to continually improve the way we do things means we have been able to invest in new projects and infrastructure which are critical to delivering the Council's ambition to build a world-class city for everyone.

In 2013-14 we achieved or exceeded more than 77% of our corporate targets.

Our state-of-the-art customer service centre in St Aldate's is helping more than 8,500 people each year, while the customer service centre at Templar's Square helps more than 6,670 people each year.

Our corporate call centre, with one phone number for all Council services, deals with nearly 263,000 calls annually. We answered 92% of calls received and improved the customer experience by resolving 90% of queries at the first point of contact.

Sickness absence has been reduced by 41% as a result of robust performance management.

The Council has been awarded the prestigious MJ Award for Highest Achieving Council 2014, Investors in People Gold Champion accreditation for the whole Council and Customer Excellence accreditation. The Council has also been awarded Equalities Framework for Local Government accreditation.

### Oxford City Council's approach

The financial constraints which government has imposed on local authorities present us with the challenge of doing more with less while still ensuring that our residents receive a world-class service. In spite of the financial constraints within which we operate, we are moving the Council from being good to great through our GOLD programme - Greater Outcomes, Leaner Delivery. We are doing this through our on-going efficiency programme and by working with new and increased income streams.

We are reviewing our medium term financial strategy and are committing to achieving a £7M revenue expenditure reduction by 2018/19 on an annualised basis. The total savings and increased income proposed over the next four years is £22.5M

The Council is focusing on six key areas to drive further efficiency:

1. Strong financial management

2. The Customer First programme
3. Improving our processes
4. Better procurement and contract management
5. Trading and business development
6. Organisational development.

1. Strong Financial management

The Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy sets out the assumptions on which our financial planning is based.

Key themes underpinning our financial planning are:

- Managing the implications of on-going reductions in central government funding. The Government's programme of reductions in public expenditure is now planned to continue into the next Parliament, with the intention to deliver a "leaner, more efficient state" on a permanent basis. Our future planning is based on the assumption that Formula Grant will be cut by an estimated 53.60% over the life of the strategy and that, by 1/4/2020, revenue support grant will be reduced to zero.
- Managing the implications of other central government initiatives. Changes to welfare provision, for example, are likely to lead to increased expenditure on homelessness and housing benefit.
- Managing the knock-on effects resulting from central government reductions in the budgets of other organisations and inadequate investment by other organisations in key city priorities. The Council has been investing in programmes which will improve the quality of teaching in primary schools in some of our deprived areas. The Council believes that there is a need for a significant coordinated response to prevent lasting damage to our young people and our communities as a result of reduced direct spending on services for young people outside the school environment.
- Managing the Council's capital programme. The Council has a capital strategy of disposing of underused assets and making significant revenue contributions annually. All of the new money being received has been reinvested to improve community assets such as leisure facilities, play areas, community centres and park pavilions.
- Managing the Council's Invest to Save programme. The Council has a number of areas where it plans to invest to save over the term of the MTFs, including:
  - Employing additional officers in business rates and council tax on debt recovery and appeals
  - Purchasing equipment for bin washing facility to raise external income streams
  - Spending £5 million on a new park and ride extension
  - Purchasing food waste collection vehicles in order to collect food waste from council flats.

Managing the delivery of ongoing efficiency savings. The financial strategy for 2015-19 sets new initiatives which are intended to generate significant efficiencies, as

opposed to traditional 'salami-slicing' approaches where savings can result in disabled services. These include:

- Reducing management and staffing costs in order to save £200,000 per year
- Rationalising administrative support and encouraging more generic working and automation of procedures to save £350,000 per year
- Generating further efficiencies in our ICT service to save £220,000 per annum
- Improving processes around business improvement to save a further £158,000 per year
- Improving management of assets to save £300,000 per year.

## 2. The Customer First programme

Our Customer First programme has created a single approach to managing customer contact. A multi-skilled workforce resolves the majority of enquiries – whether they are received through telephone, face-to-face or online channels – at the first point of contact without handover to the back office. A customer relationship management system captures these enquiries and integrates with our key IT systems. These improved business processes have resulted in more consistent standards of service, higher levels of customer satisfaction and greater efficiencies.

We are now building on this success to achieve even higher standards of performance – seeking to get more customer contact 'right first time', reducing the need for customers to contact us more than once about the same issue. We are also encouraging customers to use more convenient and lower-cost channels such as the website.

Oxford City Council is:

- investing £110,000 to upgrade our website to enable residents to carry out more transactions online and to improve mobile access, including an online repairs system for our housing tenants and a corporate mobile app.
- using a new call-handling system, which includes customer call-back facilities, to deal with customer calls more efficiently
- investing £35,000 to roll out our Customer Service Excellence accreditation across the organisation
- surveying our residents to gain insight into their views about council services and how they can be improved.

## 3. Improving our processes

The Council reviews and improves service delivery through fundamental, whole-service reviews (such as waste collection and housing benefits) and smaller, process reviews within services. Rigorous benchmarking is at the heart of both approaches. The Council uses a single integrated performance reporting tool, CorVu, which captures risk, performance and finance data at both a corporate and service level in an accessible and user-friendly way. The iTrent system is providing similar benefits for human resources management processes.

Oxford City Council is:

- rationalising administrative support across the organisation, and encouraging more generic working and systems automation
- using a 'purchase to pay' system to ensure that orders take advantage of existing corporate contracts, to eliminate the need for most paper orders and streamline invoice authorisation
- using a quality-management system (ISO:9001) in our Corporate Property team, and using the learning from this pilot to roll out quality systems more widely across the Council
- rationalising and improving our ICT systems architecture and reviewing the Council's licensing arrangements.
- implementing improvements in our planning service. We want all planning development in our city to be of the highest quality. We also want to expand the scope and effectiveness of our consultation arrangements and to put collaboration at the heart of our planning processes. Improvements include:
  - a clearer audit trail of information relating to planning applications
  - more systematic evaluation of applications against relevant planning policies
  - allowing more time between project inception and commencement dates as a way of improving consultation with all interested parties
  - more extensive use of external design review panels. The Council is investing £50,000 in 2014/15 and £25,000 in 2015/16 to appoint an independent panel (6 members including specialists as required) to review major applications
  - better use of IT systems to help visualise and interpret design

#### 4. Better procurement and contract management

Currently, £23 million of Oxford City Council's £40 million annual supplier spend is covered by corporate contracts. The Council manages a collaborative procurement hub that operates across all the councils in Oxfordshire. A dedicated procurement officer ensures that the majority of procurements undertaken benefit all the partners in the hub.

In order to deliver maximum value for money we are shifting from a focus on individual procurement exercises to better management of suppliers and training staff in all service areas to increase skills and knowledge to manage our large corporate contracts.

Oxford City Council is:

- reviewing management of our assets in order to generate on-going revenue savings
- reviewing our investments in property funds in order to achieve higher overall returns while protecting the Council from adverse variations in value
- developing a corporate approach to managing contracts and developing supplier relationships
- introducing training for key officers within the Council's service areas, enabling them to become accredited with a professional procurement qualification.



## 5. Trading and business development

In an environment of reducing central government funding, it is vital that the Council does all it can to grow external sources of revenue as a way of funding services and safeguarding jobs.

Oxford City Council has a clear preference for in-house provision – public enterprise - where it can match or exceed the market. Where many other councils have been entering into strategic partnerships with the private sector, this Council has been carrying out rigorous and prioritised Fundamental Service Reviews, investing to improve management competence and efficiency, and encouraging trading with external customers.

A Fundamental Service Review of our waste management service resulted in our in-house service delivering better cost and quality than private sector competitors and this service was the Council's first entry into the market. Developing a flexible, customer-focused approach has been the key to the service's success. The service operates six days a week, including an evening sack collection in the city centre. It offers a full range of containment options, and tailored solutions including pre-paid sack collection labels for cardboard collections from premises with limited space. The Council is continuing to grow its core services - now including fleet and vehicle maintenance, grounds maintenance and landscaping, and food hygiene advice

Oxford City Council is:

- exploring the most effective ways of bringing in additional revenue from the provision of services to other external organisations
- making good progress on establishing markets for some of the Council's services, e.g. building, engineering, motor transport, commercial waste, grounds maintenance/landscaping and legal services.

## 6. Organisational development

The Council's staff are its key asset and ensuring they are equipped to deliver to high standards in times of rapid change is vital. To this end the Council is investing not only in on-going performance management initiatives, but also in a variety of development and well-being initiatives.

Effective people-management skills driving high performance, sound project and programme management methodologies, and business improvement tools will continue to play an important role. However, new skills are also increasingly necessary. Leadership, team-building, business acumen (including the ability to interpret and respond to customer intelligence) and the ability to think outside the box, are all critical. Increasingly, coaching and mentoring are at the heart of our approach to management. High levels of employee engagement, where employees connect with exactly what the Council is trying to achieve for the city, will enable us to continue our success.

Oxford City Council is:

- integrating and aligning teams with a similar purpose and identifying career and development pathways to facilitate succession planning
- embedding an organisational development strategy which:
  - defines our organisational values and shapes our behaviours framework
  - develops, retains and attracts a high-performing and motivated workforce, where excellence in people-management and development is recognised
  - ensures our values are aligned closely with corporate objectives and that staff are clear about how they contribute to the delivery of the Council's vision
  - champions innovative thinking and proactive engagement with staff and customers in service redesign
  - delivers a comprehensive learning and development programme to bridge any gaps in employee capability
- improving recruitment
- implementing a talent management strategy that enables career growth, workforce and succession planning
- embedding an employee well-being programme to improve fitness, resilience, encourage healthy lifestyles and develop a better work/life balance in order to improve staff attendance
- delivering an affordable pay deal with Unison and Unite which gives staff an annual 1.5% cost of living increase for the next four years and secures the council's budget provision
- continuing the partnership payment, which enables staff to earn a bonus based on high levels of attendance and performance
- continuing to pay its staff the Oxford Living Wage of £8.36 per hour and requiring our contractors to do the same.

**Appendix 2: Proposed changes to Corporate Plan Targets**(bold text = latest amendment, ~~strikethrough~~ = amended target)

Original 2014-2018 Corporate Plan Target	Proposed Targets			
	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19
<b>Vibrant and Sustainable Economy</b>				
The percentage of council spend with local business	<del>45%</del> <b>50%</b>	<del>45%</del> <b>52%</b>	<del>45%</del> <b>54%</b>	<b>55%</b>
The number of jobs supported by City Council investment projects and other spend <b>created as a result of Council investment and leadership</b>	550	700	900	<b>1100</b>
The number of Council apprenticeships created through Council investment for those who live in Oxford	<del>24</del> <b>26</b>	<del>26</del> <b>28</b>	<del>26</del> <b>30</b>	<b>30</b>
The percentage of pupils in schools supported by the Council's educational attainment programme achieving level 4 in English and Math at Key Stage 2 <b>Target deleted</b>	84%	86%	86%	
<b>Meeting Housing Needs</b>				
The number of individual HMOs subject to agreed licence provisions <b>Target deleted</b>	<del>3,750</del>	<del>4,000</del>	<del>4,250</del>	
The number of new rough sleepers spending more than one consecutive night on the streets each year	<del>10</del> <b>45</b>	<del>10</del> <b>45</b>	<del>10</del> <b>45</b>	<b>45</b>
The number of households in Oxford in temporary accommodation	120	120	120	<b>120</b>
Number of affordable homes for rent delivered <b>in the city</b>	<del>150</del> <b>67</b>	<del>150</del> <b>180</b>	<del>150</del> <b>200</b>	<b>220</b>
Tenant satisfaction with their estates <b>Target deleted</b>	84%	85%	86%	
The percentage of estimated HMOs in the City that are licenced <b>New target</b>	<b>75%</b>	<b>80%</b>	<b>85%</b>	<b>90%</b>
The number of successful interventions with rough sleepers <b>New target</b>	<b>250</b>	<b>250</b>	<b>250</b>	<b>250</b>
<b>Strong and Active Communities</b>				
The number of young people accessing youth engagement projects and activities outside school hours	5,400	5,500	5,700	<b>&gt;5,700</b>
The percentage of adults participating in sport (as measured by the Annual Sport England Active People Survey)	29.2%	29.5%	29.8%	<b>30.1%</b>

Original 2014-2018 Corporate Plan Target	Proposed Targets			
	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19
Resident satisfaction with their area as a place to live <b>New target</b>	<b>81%</b> (No Survey)	<b>82%</b>	<b>82%</b> (No Survey)	<b>83%</b>
Number of people moved into work by the Welfare Reform Programme <b>New target</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>50</b>
<b>Cleaner Greener Oxford</b>				
Satisfaction with our street cleansing	76%	76%	77%	<b>77%</b>
The reduction in the Council's carbon footprint	5% reduction	5% reduction	5% reduction	<b>5% reduction</b>
The number of enforcements carried out as a result of environmental offences (e.g. noisy parties, dog fouling, littering) <b>Target deleted</b>	800	700	600	
The amount of waste sent to landfill per household <b>Residual waste per household sent to energy from waste plant</b>	425kg	425kg <b>423kg</b>	424kg <b>421kg</b>	<b>419kg</b>
The percentage of household waste sent for reuse, recycling, composting or anaerobic digestion	46.6% <b>46.5%</b>	47% <b>47.5%</b>	48% <b>48.5%</b>	<b>48.5%</b>
<b>Efficient Effective Council</b>				
The percentage of customers satisfied at their first point of contact	80%	81%	82%	<b>83%</b>
The delivery of the Council's savings and income targets <b>since 2014/15</b>	£2,233k <b>£3,122k</b>	£1,040k <b>£4,967k</b>	£1,035k <b>£6,426k</b>	<b>£7,525k</b>
The level of self-service transactions that are carried out using the Council's website as a percentage of total contact with the Council	±5% <b>27%</b>	±5% <b>30%</b>	±5% <b>34%</b>	<b>37%</b>
Achievement and Retention of IIP <del>Gold</del> <b>Target deleted</b>	<del>Gold</del> <b>Champion</b>	<del>Gold</del> <b>Champion</b>	Champion	<b>Champion</b>

**Appendix 3: Rationale for changes to Corporate Plan Targets**

<b>Measure</b>	<b>2014/15 target</b>	<b>Current 2015/16 target</b>	<b>Revised targets</b>	<b>Rationale for target change</b>
<b>Vibrant and Sustainable Economy</b>				
The percentage of council spend with local business	45%	45%	<b>50% (2015/16)</b>  <b>Rising to 55% (2018/19)</b>	Requirements in large capital contracts are ensuring that a greater proportion of spend is undertaken within Oxford, and this is now reflected in revised targets
The number of jobs supported by City Council investment projects and other spend	400	550	<b>1,100 (2018/19)</b>	A change in the wording of this measure is proposed to “the number of jobs created as a result of Council investment and leadership” to reflect the proactive approach the Council is taking in job creation. There is an anticipated increase in the number of jobs as a result of Westgate development.
The number of Council apprenticeships created through Council investment for those who live in Oxford	22	24	<b>26 (2015/16)</b>  <b>Rising to 30 (2017/18 onwards)</b>	The focus of this measure will change to reflect the number of apprentices created in organisations that are working with/for the Council to give indication of the activity undertaken in this area. As a result, targets have been increased
The percentage of pupils in schools supported by the Council's educational attainment programme achieving level 4 in English and Math at Key Stage 2	74%	84%	<b>TARGET DELETED</b>	The deletion of this target reflects the change in the Council's spending priorities in this area
<b>Meeting Housing Needs</b>				
The number of individual HMOs subject to agreed licence provisions	3,500	3,750	<b>TARGET DELETED</b>	It is proposed this target is deleted and replaced with a more relevant target that assesses progress against the estimated number of HMOs
The number of new rough sleepers spending more than one consecutive night on the streets each year	10	10	<b>45 (2015/16 onwards)</b>	It is proposed that this target be changed to measure the overall level of homelessness, as used by other District Councils and reported to the Health Improvement Board, rather than just new homeless cases.

**Appendix 3: Rationale for changes to Corporate Plan Targets**

<b>Measure</b>	<b>2014/15 target</b>	<b>Current 2015/16 target</b>	<b>Revised targets</b>	<b>Rationale for target change</b>
<i>The number of households in Oxford in temporary accommodation</i>	120	120	<b>120 (2018/19)</b>	<i>The target for 2018/19 stays the same despite likely increase in homelessness during this period, as prevention measures will help balance out increase in demand</i>
<i>Number of affordable homes for rent delivered in the city</i>	180	150	<b>67 (2015/16)</b>  <b>Rising to 220 (2018/19)</b>	<i>The target has been re-profiled to better reflect the anticipated numbers of new affordable homes for rent</i>
<i>Tenant satisfaction with their estates</i>	83%	84%	<b>TARGET DELETED</b>	<i>It is proposed that a new target measuring satisfaction for residents of the City is introduced to replace this one, which focuses only on Council tenants</i>
<i>The percentage of estimated HMOs in the City that are licenced</i>	N/A	N/A	<b>NEW TARGET</b>	<i>This measure has been introduced to give a better indication on progress against the (estimated) level of Houses in Multiple Occupation within the city. There are plans to refresh the estimate during 2015/16 which may impact on targets for future years and require review</i>
<i>The number of successful interventions with rough sleepers</i>	N/A	N/A	<b>NEW TARGET</b>	<i>This measure has been introduced to reflect preventative work undertaken by the Council to complement existing measures for homelessness and temporary accommodation</i>
<b>Strong and Active Communities</b>				
<i>The number of young people accessing youth engagement projects and activities outside school hours</i>	5,250	5,400	<b>5,700+ (2018/19)</b>	<i>A broad, continuation target for this measure has been added for 2018/19, although it is too early to say at this stage what a precise target will be.</i>

**Appendix 3: Rationale for changes to Corporate Plan Targets**

<b>Measure</b>	<b>2014/15 target</b>	<b>Current 2015/16 target</b>	<b>Revised targets</b>	<b>Rationale for target change</b>
<i>The percentage of adults participating in sport (as measured by the Annual Sport England Active People Survey)</i>	27.5%+	28%+	<b>29.2% (2015/16)</b>  <b>Rising to 30.1% (2018/19)</b>	<i>Targets have been adjusted to reflect the strong performance shown in this area and the Council's continued investment into leisure facilities</i>
<i>Resident satisfaction with their area as a place to live</i>	N/A	N/A	<b>NEW TARGET</b>	<i>The Local Government Association has introduced a national mechanism for collecting resident satisfaction data which will allow us to benchmark ourselves against other local authorities. This measure replaces that for tenant satisfaction and broadens the scope of satisfaction feedback</i>
<i>Number of people moved into work by the Welfare Reform Programme</i>	N/A	N/A	<b>NEW TARGET</b>	<i>This new measure will track the success of the Welfare Reform programme in getting people into work</i>
<b>Cleaner Greener Oxford</b>				
<i>Satisfaction with our street cleansing</i>	75%	76%	<b>77% (2018/19)</b>	<i>This is a continuation of the existing satisfaction target, which seeks to maintain levels of satisfaction from 2017/18 into 2018/19</i>
<i>The reduction in the Council's carbon footprint</i>	5%	5%	<b>5% (2018/19)</b>	<i>This is a continuation of the Council's existing commitment to reduce its own Carbon footprint year-on-year by 5%</i>
<i>The number of enforcements carried out as a result of environmental offences (e.g. noisy parties, dog fouling, littering)</i>	1,100	800	<b>TARGET DELETED</b>	<i>It is proposed this target for enforcement activity is deleted as it acts as an unsatisfactory proxy for improvements in the local environment.</i>

**Appendix 3: Rationale for changes to Corporate Plan Targets**

<b>Measure</b>	<b>2014/15 target</b>	<b>Current 2015/16 target</b>	<b>Revised targets</b>	<b>Rationale for target change</b>
<i>The amount of waste sent to landfill per household</i>	430kg	428kg	<b>425kg (2015/16)</b>  <b>Reducing to 419kg (2018/19)</b>	<i>Targets for this measure have been reviewed and made more challenging for future years</i>  <i>It is further proposed that the title of this measure be amended to better reflect the destination of residual waste; "Residual waste per household sent to energy from waste plant"</i>
The percentage of household waste sent for reuse, recycling, composting or anaerobic digestion	45%	46%	<b>46.5% (2015/16)</b>  <b>Rising to 48.5% (2018/19)</b>	Targets have been re-profiled to match the Council's ambitions for increasing the proportion of waste that is recycled
<b>Efficient, Effective Council</b>				
The percentage of customers satisfied at their first point of contact	77%	79%	<b>83% (2018/19)</b>	This is a continuation of the Council's existing customer satisfaction target
The delivery of the Council's savings and income targets	£2,120k	£2,233k	<b>£3,122k (2015/16)</b>  <b>Rising to £7,525k (2018/19)</b>	This target has been reviewed to reflect the Medium Term Financial Plan. In addition, it is proposed that the target is now baselined from 2014/15 to reflect cumulative savings delivered since that year.  A change of target wording is proposed to reflect this; "The delivery of the Council's savings and income targets since 2014/15"



<p>The level of self-service transactions that are carried out using the Council's website</p>	<p>5%</p>	<p>5%</p>	<p><b>27% (2015/16)</b> <b>Rising to 37% (2018/19)</b></p>	<p>Although a 5% target for increasing online transactions is challenging, it does not reflect the overall strategy of re-directing more contact away from telephone and face to face visits and more towards online channels. For this reason, it is proposed to change the target to measure the proportion of contact that is made online, with equally challenging targets to achieve</p> <p>To reflect this emphasis it is proposed that the wording be changed to; "The level of self-service transactions as a percentage of total contact with the Council"</p>
<p>Achievement and Retention of IIP Gold <b>Target deleted</b></p>	<p>Gold</p>	<p>Gold</p>	<p><b>TARGET DELETED</b></p>	<p>It is proposed that this target is deleted as the Council is already at 'Champion' status.</p>

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## Appendix 4 Equalities Impact Assessment Corporate Plan 2015-2019

### **1. Within the aims and objectives of the policy or strategy which group(s) of people has been identified as being potentially disadvantaged by your proposals? What are the equality impacts?**

The Corporate Plan is the City Council's key strategic document. This Corporate Plan updates and takes forward the themes in the plan for 2014-2018 that was agreed by Council last year. It sets out the strategic direction of the Council over the next four years.

The plan is subject to an annual review and is directly relevant to the Section 149 general Equality Duty for the public sector under the Equality Act 2010 where public bodies must specifically show due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment or victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by the Act:
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not; and
- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

The protected characteristics covered by the Equality Duty are:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Marriage and Civil Partnership (Note: only in respect of eliminating unlawful discrimination)
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race (including ethnic or national origins, colour or nationality)
- Religion or belief (including the lack of belief)
- Sex
- Sexual orientation.

The Corporate Plan responds to the significant challenges and opportunities that Oxford presents as a city, including:

- The Index of Multiple Deprivation 2010 places Oxford in the top half of the most deprived local authority areas in England. Twelve areas, in the south and east of the city, are among the 20% most deprived areas in England. These areas, experience multiple levels of deprivation - low skills, low incomes and relatively high levels of crime. People from these areas can expect to live six years less than those in the more affluent areas. While 43% of Oxford residents have degree-level qualifications or above 14% have no qualifications at all.
- In 2011, 32% of the population was aged between 18 and 29 years (compared to a UK average of 16%), and the city has the youngest median age – 29.9 years – of any place in England & Wales.

- Although Oxford is prosperous in many ways, 12 of its 85 'Super Output Areas' are among the 20% most deprived areas in England. Over one-fifth of Oxford's children – 6,000 – live in poverty.
- Oxford experienced population growth of 11% over the last decade (2003 to 2013 ONS mid-year estimates).
- People living in the north of the city can expect to live around ten years longer than people living in the south of the city (this is based on 2007 to 2011 mortality data).
- Oxford is a world-renowned education brand and over two-fifths (43%) of its adult residents have a university degree (2011 Census data). 14% of adults have no qualification.
- At the 2011 Census, 24% of the city's adult population were full-time students (30,000 people) – the highest proportion in England and Wales. 31,900 students studied full time at the two universities in 2012/13 (HESA time series).
- Oxford is an ethnically diverse city, and it is also internationally diverse. 22% of residents were from a black or minority ethnic group in 2011, compared to 13% in England. An additional 14% of residents were from a white but non-British ethnic background.
- 28% of Oxford's residents were born outside the UK.
- There is huge demand for housing, making Oxford the least affordable city in the UK. Even at the lower end of the market, house prices are ten times average earnings. 28% of households rent their home at prices which are the most expensive outside London.
- As of 1 April 2014, 2,735 households were on the social housing waiting list in Oxford (<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/live-tables-on-rents-lettings-and-tenancies>).
- The Corporate Plan 2015-2019 sets out the ways in which the Council will build upon its existing work programmes in order to address these and other challenges. It reinforces and will be supported by the Council's 2012-2015 Corporate Equality Scheme.

The Corporate Plan sets out the ongoing ambition of the Council to reduce the extent of inequality and to improve the lives of the most vulnerable members of our community. It sets out a firm commitment to:

- ensure that services are fully accessible to all community groups
- ensure that work programmes are scoped to continue to target and protect the most vulnerable people in our communities
- promote new opportunities for people living in the more deprived communities in our city, particularly through its programmes to increase apprenticeships, training and employment opportunities, especially for young people, and youth ambition.

The City Council's overriding concern in formulating its Corporate Plan and budget has been to protect and support vulnerable communities.

**2. In brief, what changes are you planning to make to your current or proposed new or changed policy, strategy, procedure, project or service to minimise or eliminate the adverse equality impacts?**

**Please provide further details of the proposed actions, timetable for making the changes and the person(s) responsible for making the changes on the resultant action plan.**

The Corporate Plan 2015-2019 sets out the Council's priorities for action over the next four years which will combine to invest in Oxford's future to create a world-class city for everyone. This ambition is undiminished.

The Plan continues to have five key priorities:

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

Our guiding principles in constructing the budget were to:

- Continue to invest in the city - for example, through our programme to build affordable new homes and to improve the city's community and leisure facilities. The delivery of this programme is already well advanced.
- Work with our partners to build on the city region's knowledge economy and attract inward investment.
- Invest in our young people by expanding the options and opportunities available to them through our Youth Ambition Programme.
- Prepare people for work through providing apprenticeships and access to training and employment opportunities.
- Provide advice and support to those affected by Welfare Reform.
- Continue to improve the quality of houses in multiple occupation (HMOs) in the private rented sector.
- Protect and improve the quality of our neighborhoods.
- Improve community engagement and the quality of local services.

[Note: update following section once measures are available.]

All stakeholders within the City (including residents, visitors, customers, businesses, strategic partnerships, and elected representatives) benefit directly from the implementation of the plan and detailed outcomes are set out in the plan itself against all the key objectives.

The respective actions noted are embedded within annual service planning and performance is monitored through directorate meetings, wider leadership team, performance boards, scrutiny committees and City Executive Board.

The Corporate Plan has specific actions around providing opportunities for

young people. The differential impact resulting from providing new opportunities reflects the need to engage more effectively, tackle social inclusion and address (as far as possible) employment through apprenticeships and other initiatives. The Council will also address issues around social marginalisation and anti-social behaviour in order to have a positive impact on the fabric of neighbourhoods.

The Corporate Plan has comprehensive actions around increasing the number of affordable homes within the city (either through rental, low cost or social housing provision). This will directly enable those who are unable to secure decent housing at an affordable cost.

**3. Please provide details of whom you will consult on the proposed changes and if you do not plan to consult, please provide the rationale behind that decision.**

**Please note that you are required to involve disabled people in decisions that impact on them.**

The consultation period began 24<sup>th</sup> December 2014. The consultation will close on 31<sup>st</sup> January 2015. A draft amended in the light of consultation will be presented to the City Executive Board on 12<sup>th</sup> February 2015.

An invitation to participate in the consultation was sent to all key stakeholders and a copy of the survey was placed in the Oxford Mail on Wednesday 7<sup>th</sup> January 2015. People were also directed to the web link from the City Council website's home page.

In addition to consultation on the draft Corporate Plan, consultation and research is carried on throughout the year as a routine part of developing policies, strategies and plans. This includes many of the significant housing investment/ regeneration projects where consultation has influenced at least some of the design and spending issues.

**4. Can the adverse impacts you identified during the initial screening be justified without making any adjustments to the existing or new policy, strategy, procedure, project or service?**

**Please set out the basis on which you justify making no adjustments.**

The changes made to the Corporate Plan as part of the review process strengthen and enhance the Council's commitment to maintaining the quality and access to its services.

Key themes in this year's plan include:

- spending up to £101 million to implement our Council Housing Ambition initiative to build new council homes and improve existing housing stock over the next four years, with an additional £96 million of new investment over the next 10 years
- putting resources in place for large scale regeneration projects which will provide substantial long-term investment in Oxford:
- building nearly 900 new homes and 102 community facilities at Barton Park
- developing to 500 homes and 90,000 sqm of employment space at the

## Northern Gateway

- building 300 new homes and providing 1,000 jobs through the Oxpens redevelopment
- providing 2,000 jobs plus 1,000 in the construction phase as a result of the Westgate redevelopment.
- investing £700,000 to improve our community centres and sports pavilions
- investing £500,000 to improve cycling and the public realm
- investing £200,000 in addition to the £600k already included in the Councils Capital Programme to fund energy saving projects which will reduce fuel bills.

**5. You are legally required to monitor and review the proposed changes after implementation to check they work as planned and to screen for unexpected equality impacts.**

**Please provide details of how you will monitor/evaluate or review your proposals and when the review will take place.**

The Corporate Plan is reviewed and updated on an annual basis. Progress on implementing the projects and work-streams will be monitored on a monthly basis through team meetings, directorate-wide meetings, programme boards, and Directors' meetings. Progress is reported to the City Executive Board on a quarterly basis.

Lead officer responsible for signing off the EqIA: Val Johnson  
Role: Policy and Partnership Team Manager, Policy, Culture and Communications  
Date: 7<sup>th</sup> January 2015.

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## Draft Corporate Plan 2015-19 and Draft Budget 2015-19 Final Consultation Report (as of 3<sup>rd</sup> February 2015)

Consultation on the draft Corporate Plan 2015-19 and draft Budget 2015-19 opened on 24<sup>th</sup> December 2014 and closed on 31<sup>st</sup> January 2015.

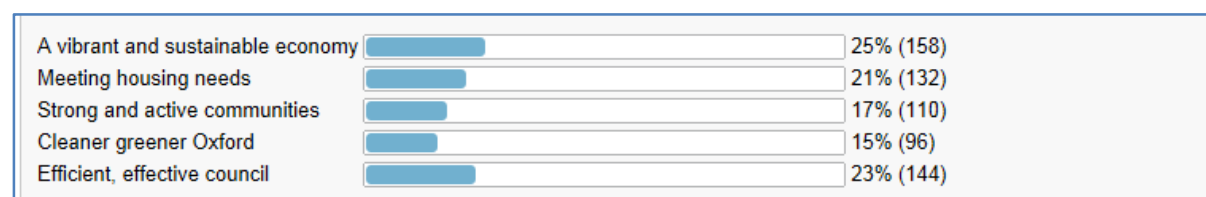
The consultation was available on our website and a paper copy was published in the Oxford Mail on Wednesday 7<sup>th</sup> January 2015. Paper copies were available on request from consultation officers in the Town Hall.

A total of 60 people responded, of which 36 online, 23 via the Oxford Mail, and one submission by email from Councillor Ian Hudspeth that is presented at the end of this report. Comments have been taken verbatim (i.e. typos have not been corrected).

### Survey responses

#### 1. Draft Corporate Plan 2015– 19.

Respondents ranked the five corporate priorities in priority order. The number in brackets is the total of the scores that respondents gave to each priority (4 for the highest priority and 0 for the lowest) – the higher the number, the higher the priority.



This was difficult to answer! What is a 'vibrant' economy? Or an 'effective' council? Terms like these mean different things to different people. I would like an economy that focusses on stability and quality of life rather than growth but cannot see how to indicate that as my top priority.

Don't see why these aims should be in competition for priority! And surely they are mutually reinforcing?

Effective budget management needs to be a key part of the plan.

The way to generate growth in the Oxford economy is to promote business. This would be greatly facilitated by sensible transport and parking policies, noticeably lacking at present. People will not come into town for any reason - shopping, work or leisure if it is impossible or prohibitively expensive to park and nor will they use the Park and Rides if the cost of doing so is too high. Charging to park at park and rides is clearly stupid if the aim is to encourage people to use them and there is an argument for free bus travel into the city from them as well. Until the Council realises this then people will continue to visit out of town locations, other towns or simply not bother to go into Oxford at all.

Yes, they are the right priorities. But it's impossible to separate these into a 0-4 ranking. They are so interlinked and it would be hard to achieve them individually and independently.

Yes, I think they are the correct priorities for the council

If 14% of the city's population leave school with no qualifications then education should be a priority, when I have done temping and part time work eg in shops I have actually been quite shocked at how some of the school leavers struggle with basic reading, writing, (and these are not people that have been diagnosed with dyslexia) not being able to collect the correct click and collect orders for customers! We also have postal staff that struggle to place the letters in the correct houses.

## 2. New and Ongoing Investment

The City Council's Corporate Plan and Budget 2015 -19 set out its support for a number of **investment proposals**— some made in previous years and some new. The most significant are listed below. Please indicate whether you agree or disagree with the proposals.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't know
Youth Ambition - £240k per annum to support youth activity groups across the city.		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>				
Food Waste Recycling for flats - £100k per annum			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			
Stronger enforcement of housing standards in the private rented sector - £68k per annum		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>				
Thames Water Catchment study - £100k to develop long term improvements to address foul water problems across the city		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>				
City Centre Ambassadors - invest £32k per year to support work with Thames Valley Police to ensure the city centre remains a welcoming space			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			
Graffiti - investing £30k per year to secure the removal of graffiti from private buildings			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			

Thames Water should be fully funding the foul water problems. That's why we pay water rates. Instead they syphon off profits rather than investing in essential public health infrastructure

Also please invest in ensuring the city centre is clear of discarded litter and 'chuggers' (charity muggers)

Use the CCTV technology available to catch and arrest those graffiti vandals. Keep a tighter surveillance on susceptible private building. It will save thousands of pounds.

Graffiti tends to appear in more derelict areas in general, perhaps trying to improve the environment through grants etc, better shop frontings could potentially reduce the need for people to want to graffiti.

The cost of removing graffiti the Council should try to recover some of the costs from prosecutions and private building owners where possible

WHY TAXPAYERS MONEY TO REMOVE GRAFFITI FROM PRIVATE BUILDINGS ??????

IS PRIVATE MONEY USED TO REMOVE GRAFFITI FROM COUNCIL BUILDINGS ? OF COURSE NOT..... IDIOCY

### 3. Capital Investment

The Council proposes capital investment in the areas shown below. Please let us know if you agree or disagree with the proposals.

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
Cycling and Public Realm - £500k on improvements		■				
Energy efficiency measures - £600k		■				
Environmental improvements to St Clements - £50k			■			
Extension to Seacourt Park and Ride - £1.6m			■			
Flood alleviation measures at Northway and Marston - £1.4m		■				
Improvements to Community and Leisure Centres - £1.3m		■				
Improvements to the Covered Market - £75k		■				
Town Hall improvements - £285k				■		
Purchasing property to assist homeless people - £2.5m		■				
Sports & Leisure Facilities - £3.4m			■			
Resurfacing of car parks - £1.3m			■			
Skatepark - invest £70k in a new skate park in Northway			■			

Energy efficiency measures must have a clear cost/benefit analysis and produce a decent return.

Also try and find some way of working with the County Council to extend Water Eaton Park and Ride ahead of the new station opening there; it would also be good to see improvements to Frideswide Square to make it more welcoming for visitors to the city

If you are planing to invest £3.4m in Sports and Leisure Facilities, then why have you shut down the Temple Cowley swimming pool?  
That swimming pool was easily accessed/used by local people and it was an asset for the community. Blackbirds Leys pool is completely out of range and it is served only by 2 buses.

Not enough leisure activities in Oxford. New pool in Blackbird Leys is a start but not enough for families. Too much has already been spent on cycling initiatives. Use the money to increase car parking and reduce car parking charges. Not everyone can or wants to cycle to live in Oxford.

You won't get much property to 'assist' the homeless for £2.5m, and housing them in better than bedsits or dormitory-like accommodation may not be the assistance they really need.

MAKE SURE WE ASSIST HOMELESS PEOPLE PRICED OUT BY GREEDY LANDLORDS HIGH RENTS.  
FAIR REGISTERED RENTS SHOULD BE BROUGHT BACK.  
A LIMIT ON HOW MANY DOMESTIC PROPERTIES THAT AN INDIVIDUAL CAN LEGALLY OWN.

Very supportive of making Oxford more accessible, with better facilities; particularly enthused by the covered market scheme

## 4. Housing Revenue Account

The following is a list of the main proposals in Oxford City Council's Housing Revenue Account. This is a ring-fenced account that provides the management and maintenance services to council house tenants. Please indicate whether you agree or disagree with these proposals.

Note that six responders are council house tenants.

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
Council Housing Ambition - £101m over the next four years to build new council homes and improving our existing housing stock		<input type="checkbox"/>				
Council Housing Ambition - A proposed additional £96m over the next 10 years on 485 new homes, the refurbishment of existing homes and redevelopment of city's estates		<input type="checkbox"/>				
Energy Saving Projects - £4.4m over the next four years to fund projects that will reduce fuel bills for council tenants		<input type="checkbox"/>				
Average rent increase of 3.49% from April 2015. This equates to £3.59 per week on an average rent of £105.77 per week		<input type="checkbox"/>				

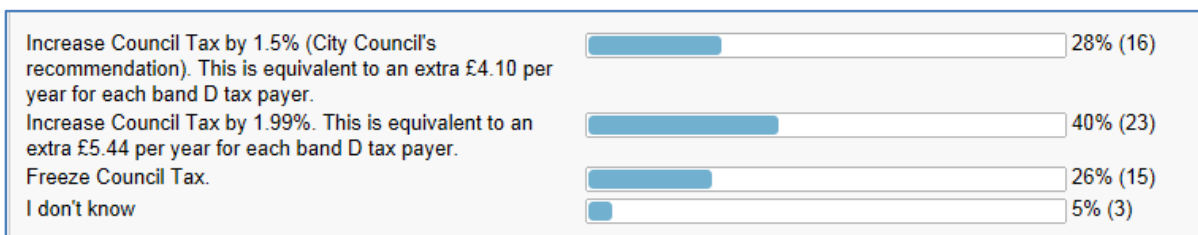
## 5. Fees and Charges

While the Council proposes that most charges such as those for garden waste, building control and planning and will remain at 2014 -15 prices, its draft Medium Term Financial Strategy does propose to increase some fees and charges over the next four years. Please indicate whether you agree or disagree with the following specific proposals:

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't know
Leisure activities, membership and use of sports facilities a proposed increases ranging from 10p to £1.20			<input type="checkbox"/>			
Annual Slice card increases range from £2 to £33 per annum (for a family)			<input type="checkbox"/>			
Pest Control increases range from 1.19%, up to 3.17%		<input type="checkbox"/>				
Cemeteries increases range from 2.38% to 3.85%		<input type="checkbox"/>				
Car Parking - increases of between 10p and 30p or 2% and 16% for the Council's off-street suburban car parks (e.g. St Clements, Summertown)				<input type="checkbox"/>		
Car Parking - freeze charges for the Council's city centre car parks		<input type="checkbox"/>				
Garages - 5% increase across the board plus an additional £2 for the most sought after sites.		<input type="checkbox"/>				
Garden Waste collection - freeze charges		<input type="checkbox"/>				

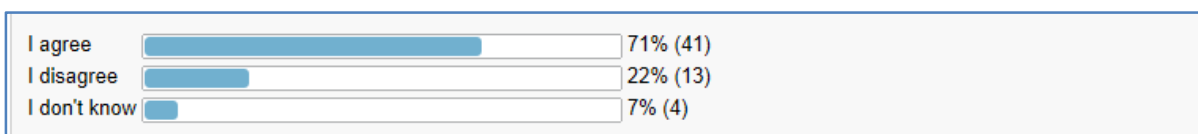
## 6. Council Tax

Income generated from Council Tax is used to pay for all services except those related to the management and maintenance of council dwellings. It covers, for example, street cleansing, refuse collection and park maintenance.



## 7. Council Tax Support Scheme

The City Council is recommending that its Council Tax Support Scheme (formerly the Council Tax Benefit Scheme) is maintained on the same basis as that introduced on 1st April 2013. It is estimated that this will cost the Council an additional £200k per annum. This means that people on very low incomes will continue to have part or all of their Council Tax paid. Do you agree or disagree with this proposal?



## 8. Other Comments

I appreciate that there are huge pressures to provide large amounts of new housing, and this seems to be 90% of the Strategy. However, there should be a corresponding emphasis on infrastructure improvement - the only significant item I can find here is Evergreen 3 but that is not enough (and will itself add to road traffic in a difficult area). Something must be done to improve access to the JR hospital before Barton Park is built. A new slip road from the A40 onto the A43 is a minimal requirement before the Northern Gateway is developed. And so on. There is also (paradoxically) the need to protect the open spaces which make Oxford a pleasant place to live, and this aspect receives only lip service in the plan. The overall effect is a kind of *fait accompli* in which there will be huge housing developments with scant regard for the negative impact on the city and its inhabitants.

investment needed into our green spaces and parks, investment to make Oxford a better place to visit, increase its vibrant look with floral displays to give a feel good factor to visitors

None of the questions above made reference to ways in which the council could become more effective and efficient, and therefore enabling a more intelligent and effective way to run the council and spend tax payers money.

small point and perhaps a bit inconsequential but I find it unjust that both Headington car parks have a minimum charge of two hours when none of the other city car parks do!

The Council Tax should be paid by the home owner and not by tenants.

The rent in Oxford is unbearable high and on top of that, we have to pay among other bills, the Council Tax. This tax should be paid by who owns the house, because if the owner is paying a mortgage to a bank, the price of a rented house is the around the double of what the owner pays to the bank. If the landlord completely owns the house, then the rent price by consequence should be lower.

Football pitches just under 3% increase is not justified to encourage active communities when inflation at 1%

In addition to these proposals may I suggest that you reduce the number of councillors both at city and county council levels. There are far too many and a major cost saving could be made

Dear Sir

Re John Prices letter in Mail. ("Can the brightest brains put drain in right place?" Oxford Mail 7/1/15) In Cassington many years ago some bright brains when relaying the pavement saw a land pipe which they could not see any use, so they smashed it, not asking local views. They then put in drains in place (of) it, but about an inch above road level so when we get some heavy rain it floods to the height of the new drains while the ditch remains dry. when you report it they send somebody to look, not in the winter, but in the summer! so no problem then.

'An efficient and effective council': there's room for improvement there and at little or no expense. For a start, how about getting the Communities, HMO Licensing and Planning staff together to come up with common standards for the change of single household dwellings to HMOs so that the advice they give the public isn't contradictory? Premises above shops that used to be occupied by families back in the 18th, 19th and early 20th centuries should not necessarily be regarded as family homes today, as they do not provide suitable family accommodation.

Only 952 new council homes? All the more reason to make sure that none of our existing council homes is being occupied/subsidised illegally.

LONG TERM SURVEYS CAN INCLUDE ALL COUNCIL TAX PAYERS BY INCLUDING SURVEY FORMS WITH COUNCIL MAIL SHOTS WITH MINIMAL COST AS THOSE MAILSHOTS ARE SENT OUT ANYWAY.

road repairs need to be escalated for mor estate roads and rural areas not just concentrating on the main routes.

Why when candidates for election as councillor come to canvass do they never talk about thsese issues?

I remain concerned by the impact of new housing upon the character and charm of Oxford. A balance must be sought, to build new homes where infrastructure already exists, or can be upgraded, vs. eating at the edges, and turning Oxford into a larger sprawl of houses. We must keep in mind the impact of more concrete on the water drainage cycle in the Oxford area - not building on flood plains is obvious, but not building in areas that will then impact water run-off and so impact housing via secondary means must also be considered.

With respect to infrastructure, the current ring road is already at maximum capacity during rush-hour, the traffic in and out of Oxford on Botley Road, London Road, etc. is high. I understand the argument that more housing will lower commuting and impact on the road systems, but the prospect that people will live sufficently close to where they work that they will not need to commute is low. The UK is a nation of house and car owners; we like to drive!

I can only commend the regenerations of, e.g., Westgate and Covered Market; this will bring more people into Oxford, make it more appealing to visit. Start there, reinforce and upgrade what exists, build extra houses on brown field sites, regenerate Barton. Then look to whether expansion is feasible, considering the environmental impacts, necessary, and desired.

I would be interested in more information on the apprenticeship schemes and the building plans for east Oxford.

## **Oxfordshire County Council Response to Oxford City Council's Draft Corporate Plan and Draft Budget 2015-19**

### **Introduction**

Oxfordshire County Council welcomes the opportunity to comment on the City Council's draft Corporate Plan and Budget for 2015-19.

As the budget proposals outline we do of course recognise that the financial outlook for Local Government continues to look very bleak and we regard the City Council's approach to future financial planning as shrewd preparation for the potential loss of government grants to local authorities.

The Corporate Plan is a bold vision for the future shaping of the city and there are a number of strategic objectives that support the county council's own ambition for a thriving Oxfordshire and we look forward to working in partnership with the City Council to develop and deliver these objectives.

In the context of shrinking financial support from central government we appreciate the commitment from the City Council to continue to safeguard the most vulnerable from cuts in services aligning with the county council's own policy position to provide a safety net.

There are some areas of the documents presented for which we would like to provide detailed feedback, we have also included suggestions for other areas of collaborative working the City Council may wish explore to help achieve the priorities set out in the Corporate Plan.

### **Specific Comments**

#### **Council Tax**

We understand that the proposals are still in draft but would note that the current assumption for a 1.5% increase in Council Tax does not line up with either the assumption made in the county council's draft Medium Term Financial Strategy 2015/16 to 2017/18 for a 1% increase, or the referendum limit of 1.99%. We will continue to liaise closely with colleagues at the city and districts councils on this matter.

#### **Oxfordshire Pool Arrangements**

On the complex issue of business rate pooling we have actively supported pooling arrangements as a means of minimising the amount of 'levy' on the business rates growth in Oxfordshire that is paid by our districts to the government. Pooling also encourages us to work together on understanding the system, on growth issues and on sharing the risks arising from localised business rate income.

For technical reasons, levy payments in Oxfordshire can be minimised by restricting the number of our districts that are in the pool. We recognise that this means some districts who might benefit from being in the pool will not benefit. Therefore we are working with the city and all of the district councils to find fair ways of distributing both the benefits, and the risks of pooling, to all our districts.

#### **Economic Growth & Regeneration**



We agree that partnership working between the two authorities and across Oxfordshire has improved considerably in recent years as a consequence of the joint commitment to economic growth that has borne fruit though the resources drawn in through the City Deal and more recently the Local Growth Deal.

Having pressed for the establishment of the joint statutory committee, now the Oxfordshire Growth Board, it is perhaps a little surprising that there is scant mention of the opportunity to elect support from this quarter for the ambition set out in the City's Corporate Plan.

The county council is committed to playing its part in the collaborative approach set out and will strive to continue to actively support those strategic place shaping initiatives detailed in the Corporate Plan: Barton, Westgate, Northern Gateway, Headington, Oxpens and Oxford Station. We are also happy to work with the City Council in their new approach to neighbourhood management in the most deprived communities where a new approach is being trialled.

#### **Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)**

There has also been strong collaborative working in the introduction of the CIL in the city and the development of a charging schedule and joint programme of investment in infrastructure. However, there is some confusion in the figures presented in the report and recently circulated to the county council. In the Budget Strategy report, the figure for county led schemes detailed in paragraph 75 is £2.1 over the four period whereas the figures under 'new bids' in Table 9 is £3.38m over the same period and figures recently presented to the county council details just £500k over the same period. We would seek some urgent clarification on the definitive figure for infrastructure investment given its key role in supporting economic growth.

#### **Meeting Housing Needs**

The county council has already provided detailed feedback on the City Council's draft housing strategy for 2015-2018 and recognise the challenge the facing the city in meeting the expectations of the Strategic Housing Market Assessment. Whilst we welcome the commitment to ensuring more affordable homes are built in the city, given the stagnation in recent years, there is a perceived over emphasis on the provision of retained housing stock. We would seek a stronger commitment from the local planning authority to encouraging affordable development that maximises net additions to overall housing stock in the city, while ensuring appropriate developer contributions to supporting infrastructure.

In the 'Reducing homelessness' section, we applaud the City's efforts on reducing the number of homeless families living in temporary accommodation, but again would welcome recognition of the well-established partnership work with the county council and this cohort in the Plan.

#### **Skills Agenda**

We share the belief that 'Improving the skills of the workforce' is an important goal. However, the role of the county council, particularly as the Local Education Authority and statutory authority for children's social services, needs to be recognised and highlighted in this Plan. To put our activity in context, in 2014/15 we spent over £100m on education and early intervention services in the county.

We are encouraged that the City Council is engaging with this cohort but would welcome recognition in the Corporate Plan of the substantial partnership working that is already happening with the county council and want to reiterate our preference for coordination of

schemes and initiatives around schools, NEETs and apprenticeships. The provision of skills and educational services for the children and young people of Oxford needs to be joined-up for optimum outcomes to be achieved.

We believe the majority of the items included in the list on page 15 ('Oxford City Council is') need the addition of 'in partnership with the county council'.

### **Strong, Active Communities**

This ambition is also an important tenet of the county council's own Corporate Plan. Enabling people to become more empowered and proactive is crucial to the city achieving its full potential. We are surprised that the facts chosen to introduce this section reflect a broadly negative picture: Oxford's population has the highest level of qualifications in the county and six times more of Oxford's population live in Lower Super Output Areas (LSOAs) ranked in the highest decile i.e. the areas least deprived in the country, than those that live in the LSOA ranked in the lowest decile in the country. While we share the aim of focussing services on the most vulnerable and deprived groups, the county council feel it is important to recognise the existing strength of our communities and make the most of the affluence and educational attainment in the city as it represents an invaluable resource through which communities can thrive.

### **Youth Ambition**

In the 'Promoting youth ambition' section the county council echoes the desire to help young people have positive life opportunities. Again, we ask for recognition of the scale of the work that the county council engages in around this ambition in the city, even where budget reductions are taken into account. We feel it is important to make clear that the county council is the lead authority for children's service and education and is the home of the Youth Offending Service and Public Health directorate. We welcome the City Council's interest around provision of services for young people, and strongly support the need for a coordinated response – this is crucial if we are to deliver the best outcomes for our young people. Our commitment to joint working is evidenced through the Working Together agreement we have recently signed with the City Council and we would ask for acknowledgment of this.

### **Schools**

The 'Strong Financial Management' section, provides a robust response to central government funding reductions and initiatives. For the county council (which is also significantly impacted), these changes serve to increase the need and importance of partnership working. The county council queries why schools are mentioned here, as schools funding has not reduced (indeed, schools funding is not part of the City Council's budget setting). We also query why 'services for young people outside the school environment' are singled out. As the lead authority for children's service and education the county council is committed to serving the needs of this cohort. If the City Council has particular concerns about these services in Oxford we welcome its feedback which we will always take it into consideration. As stated above, the county council is committed to working with all partners to improve outcomes for our young people.

### **Older People**

We are pleased that the City Council is committed to 'Supporting older people'. As the lead organisation in relation to adult care services in the city, the county council is absolutely committed to working with the City Council to deliver better outcomes for this group. This is true particularly around housing where there is a continuing need for the City Council to consider adequate Older People's Housing in plans for any new housing developments, as

well as around their provision of leisure facilities and activities around broader community engagement.

### **Collaborative Working Opportunities**

We believe the ambition for 'a clear preference of in-house provision' does not reflect the most realistic and efficient means of delivering the strategic objectives of the Corporate Plan and may constrain the opportunities to offer improved services to residents. The creation of the development partnership at Barton seems to contradict this stance and, as demonstrated there, constructive working with the private sector could bring much needed investment into the city. From our own experience, having an experienced highways delivery partner has enabled us to be fleet of foot and deliver the accelerated infrastructure investment required through City Deal.

We believe there is potential for the City Council to explore further collaborative working opportunities that could help achieve the priorities of the Corporate Plan and benefit both authorities, including:

**Asset Collaboration** - with the pressure to reduce the operational footprint and associated energy and facilities management savings, there is a real opportunity to look at co-location and use of assets in a different way, e.g. conversion of operational sites to housing, providing a saving and meeting other key objectives of the Corporate Plan.

**Recycling** - With the Ardley Energy Recovery Facility now in operation there are opportunities for the county council as Waste Disposal Authority to assist the City Council as Waste Collection Authority to increase the recycling rate in the city from the current level of 46% to be more aligned with the countywide level of 60%, reducing landfill and improving recovery levels - thus supporting further savings. We will consider joint incentives on how best to do this in the coming year.

**Voluntary and Community Sector** - we would suggest there are opportunities for stronger collaborative working with ourselves in this area through co-design and co-commissioning of services. This would reflect the county council's own policy of helping people to help themselves.

### **Conclusion**

We are encouraged that significant elements of the City's Corporate Plan reflect the priorities set out in the county council's own Plan, particularly around promoting and supporting a vibrant sustainable economy and encouraging strong, active communities. We are committed to working in partnership with the City Council to achieve these ambitions.

**Cllr Ian Hudspeth**

**Leader, Oxfordshire County Council**

**January 2015**

Sadie Paige

3<sup>rd</sup> February 2015

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