

Oxford City Council’s Draft Corporate Plan 2014-18

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Introduction: Foreword from the Leader and Chief Executive

Welcome to Oxford City Council's Corporate Plan 2014–18. The Corporate Plan is Oxford City Council's key strategic document. The Corporate Plan 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.

Oxford appears to be a thriving city with many opportunities for work and leisure and - for many residents - this is the daily reality of their lives. However, there are 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. 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.

The Corporate Plan 2014–18 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 by delivering five corporate priorities:

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

Background

Local government across the country has been subject to substantial on-going government spending cuts as well as the impact of the recession. This has led to increased pressure on services (particularly those dealing with people on low incomes and working families who rely on benefits). Between 2010 and the end of the 2015/16 financial year, we will have lost around 47% of our government grant and further cuts are anticipated in the future. Consequently, we have faced challenges identifying new efficiencies and income streams in order to protect and improve services.

Despite these challenges, the Council is still aiming to improve services for the people of Oxford. The Council's policy commitment is 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 workforce.

We have been able to make progress in turning this ambition into reality because the Council is increasingly an efficient and effective organisation. Over the past four years the Council has generated approximately £8 million in efficiency savings with a further £3.7million planned over the next four years.

What this budget means for the city

The City Council's high level of efficiency means that we are:

- able to fund over £134 million of capital investment over the next four years. This investment will improve the city's infrastructure and create over 1000 new jobs by:
 - building a new community of nearly 900 homes at Barton West, including a new primary school, community recreation facilities and parks and 113 new homes on other sites in the city
 - improving our leisure facilities, including completing the new competition-standard pool at Blackbird Leys
 - implementing urban broadband to ensure that ultrafast broadband is available to most businesses and residents
 - upgrading our tower blocks
 - improving environmental and parking measures on Oxford's estates as part of the Great Estates Programme
- able to provide a further £6 million of new investment over the next four years to invest in services that impact on the daily lives of our citizens. These include:
 - more proactive enforcement of standards in the private rented sector in order to improve the quality of houses in multiple occupation and family homes
 - improving the life-chances of our young people, and the city's skills base, by delivering a step change in educational attainment in a group of Oxford's primary schools
 - improving activities for young people in areas of the city where need is greatest
 - rolling out the successful food waste collection service to 15,000 flats in the city not currently covered by the scheme
 - expanding the successful door-to-door campaign to improve recycling and street cleanliness throughout the city
 - continuing to provide free swimming for under 17s, particularly for those in areas of greatest need
 - supporting local young people to get experience and qualifications by providing apprenticeships at Oxford City Council
 - implementing flood alleviation measures at Northway and Marston, in partnership with the Environment Agency.

Working with others

Many of the challenges that face Oxford cannot be solved by Oxford City Council on its own. Partnership working is at the heart of the Council's approach and we work with the County Council and other organisations at many levels to deliver and enable services for the residents of Oxford.

The City Council provides leadership to the city by working proactively within the key local partnership organisations such as the Oxford Strategic Partnership, Low Carbon Oxford, the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) and the Spatial Planning and Infrastructure Partnership (SPIP). An Oxford Economic Growth Strategy for the Oxford City Region has been adopted by the Oxford Strategic Partnership and is being implemented.

A significant outcome of this partnership working has been the signing of a City Deal for Oxford and Oxfordshire. Oxford City Council has been 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 deliver 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. It should also mean that more decisions will be made locally.

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
- bring a very high number of new jobs in high-tech industries and related construction projects and around 500 new apprenticeships
- accelerate the delivery 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.

We are also working with our communities – through Area Forums and Neighbourhood Boards, voluntary and community associations, and other networks – to build community capacity and cohesion and to ensure that Oxford moves forward confidently as one city.

Planning for the future

There are significant challenges ahead. 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. The timescale for the government's Universal Credit roll-out has still to be confirmed and there appears to be slippage on new claims to 2016 with full implementation of all claims in 2017. Additionally, the County Council's service cuts are certain to have knock-on effects for the City Council.

Where possible these issues have been factored into the assumptions that underpin the budget through which the Corporate Plan 2014-18 will be funded.

The budget has been structured so that it is in balance for the next four years. We are investing 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 the priorities set out in this Corporate Plan will play a very important part in this.

The Council's drive for greater efficiency will continue and the Corporate Plan sets out areas on which we will be focusing our attention. These include:

- consulting with staff about ways of rationalising administrative support across the organisation, and encouraging generic working and further automation of systems and procedures
- reviewing our assets to make sure that we are getting best value from them
- increasing off-street car parking capacity across the city.

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 continue to serve us well in the coming years.

Bob Price
Leader
Oxford City Council

Peter Sloman
Chief Executive
Oxford City Council

Chapter 1 – A 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 120,000 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. The most commonly quoted figure for measuring economic growth is Gross Value Added (GVA) - a measure of the value of goods and services produced in an area. Latest estimates show that while Oxfordshire's GVA stagnated (but did not fall) between 2007 and 2009 as a result of the recession, between 2010 and 2012 it grew by £2 billion to £16.5 billion – a rate of growth which compares favourably with other areas of the country. The city economy is estimated to be worth £5.3bn of this. The Centre for Cities has calculated that in 2012 Oxford had the eleventh-highest UK GVA per worker of any UK city.

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, but during 2013 it declined sharply to 1,750 - nearing the pre-recession average of 1,600 claimants. While this - along with national data - 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. 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 austerity measures. A large number of jobs in Oxford that are directly or indirectly linked to public spending are likely to 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.

Implementing the City Deal

Oxford City Council has been 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 deliver 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. It should also mean that more decisions will be made locally. 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 delivery 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:

- investing over £134 million over the next four years into the local economy. This investment will improve the city's infrastructure and create over 900 new jobs
- in an innovative joint venture with Grosvenor Estates to build a new community of nearly 900 homes at Barton West, including a new primary school, community recreation facilities and parks and 113 new homes on other sites in the city
- contracting with GreenSquare to build 100 new homes and two new community centres 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. There has been consultation over the summer on the Oxpens site and a Master Plan is being prepared to replace the existing Oxford station with a new integrated station and office/retail development

- 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. 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 recently adopted 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
- supporting business start-ups and enabling 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 will be able to build 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 will also enable 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, including completing the new pool at Blackbird Leys
- upgrading the Council's tower blocks
- improving environmental and parking measures on Oxford's council estates as part of the Great Estates Programme
- 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 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.

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 are committed to 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.

Supporting local businesses

Oxford City Council is:

- supporting small business by appointing a specialist manager who will work with the Covered Market traders to deliver improvements and investment. This will cost £150,000 in the first year and £50,000 ongoing
- 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 sector 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 an additional £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
- implementing the Green Deal Plus, where businesses offer customers energy-efficiency improvements to their homes, community spaces and businesses at no upfront cost. Customers will repay the cost of improvements through savings on their energy bills.
- stimulating the local market for biomass energy production through the installation of biomass boilers in our own buildings, and through supporting local research and information.

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 are increasing 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, and attainment levels of pupils in state schools remain lower than the regional and national averages.

In 2012-13, Key Stage 2 results showed 71% of Oxford pupils achieving level 4 and above in English and Maths compared to 78% in Oxfordshire. This is a decrease of 9 percentage points upon the previous year's results. .

In 2012-13 only 55.9% of Oxford pupils gained five or more A* to C grade GCSEs, including English and Maths, compared to a 60.4% national average. Although this is an improvement on last year the gaps in attainment between pupils in the city and the rest of the county are still significant, especially in the more deprived areas of the city.

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

including teenage mothers, young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, young people who have offended and young people leaving care.

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 is:

- investing £400,000 annually on coordinated initiatives to drive improvements in educational attainment and leadership, particularly in the more deprived neighbourhoods. While the impact of the City Council's attainment programme is not expected to be seen until late 2014 progress so far is encouraging. In 2013, 41 middle and senior leaders in twelve Oxford primary schools took part in a leadership programme delivered by Oxford University Education Department and Oxford Brookes University. A new cohort of leaders from thirteen schools will start the second round in January 2014. An intensive training programme that assists in the teaching of reading, writing, spelling and mathematics is showing promising results. Some of the fastest gains are being seen in children with special educational needs or who have free school meals. The scheme also involves:
 - a digital inclusion project. The City Council is working with the schools, Oxford University Education Department and the Internet Institute to offer a laptop and broadband to all students in year 9 without internet access. All the secondary schools in the city have engaged with the project. The project will provide the students with support and also monitor the impact of home access on their self-esteem and educational attainment
 - an assisted housing scheme to improve recruitment
- 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. The GreenSquare project in

Northway and Cowley will create a minimum of 12 new apprenticeships during the construction stage through its '4ward2work' programme

- allocating £150,000 annually to provide apprenticeships at Oxford City Council which will support local young people 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
- working with the Department for Work and Pensions to improve opportunities for low-income households to increase their hours of work in the light of changes to the welfare system.

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 27,200m² of employment space available. The Business Park has a further capacity of 29,400m²
- negotiating about future development with partners outside the city's constrained boundaries.

Measuring progress

Measures	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18
The percentage of council spend with local business	45%	45%	45%	45%
The number of jobs supported by City Council investment projects and other spend	400	550	700	900
The number of Council apprenticeships created through Council investment for those who live in Oxford	22	24	26	26
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%	86%	86%

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 has been a long-term housing shortage in Oxford. Demand is high and availability is scarce, as a result of the city's constrained boundaries and other issues. This results in very high house prices.

According to *Cities Outlook 2014*, Oxford had the 5th highest house price growth in 2012-2013 of any UK city and has overtaken London as the UK's least affordable city in terms of housing. In 2013 the average house price in Oxford was £388,000 while the average salary was £30,000. 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.

This low level of affordability puts severe strain on social housing provision. Oxford City Council is a landlord responsible for 8,000 homes. As a result of changes by central government to the way in which social housing is financed, the Council now has full financial responsibility for its housing stock.

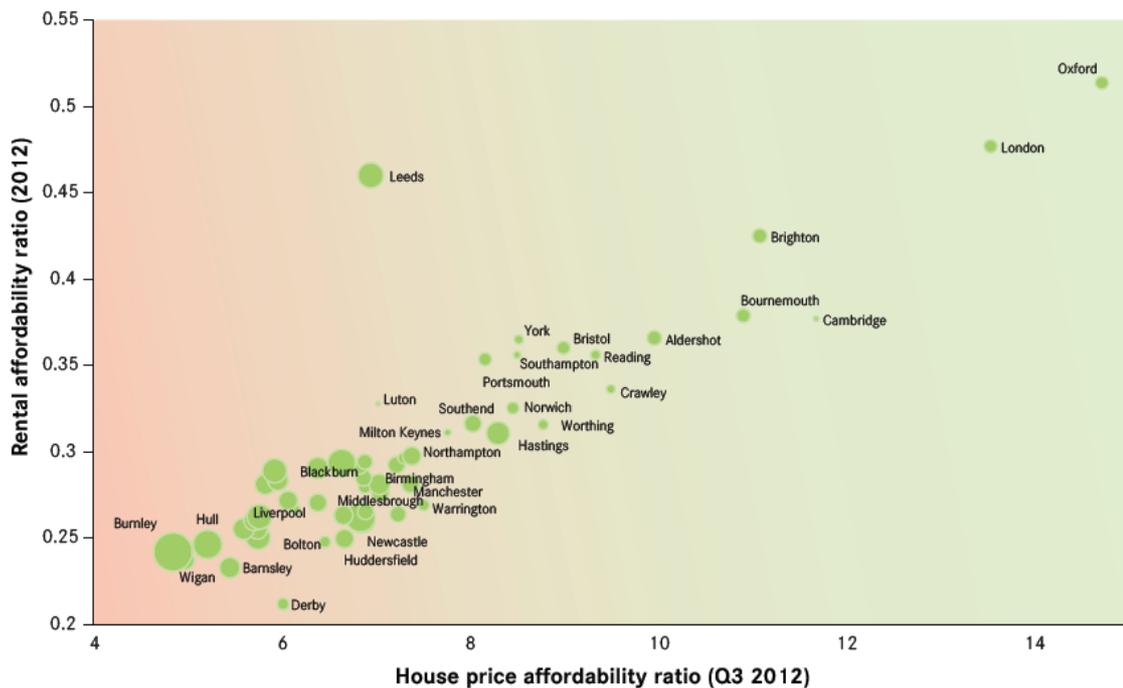
Around 4,000 households are on the Housing Register for social housing. In spite of our work to prevent homelessness and reduce the use of temporary accommodation for homeless households, demands on our service are high.

Oxford residents spend a large proportion of their income on housing costs.

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.

Figure 7:
Housing and rental affordability and vacant properties across UK cities



Source: DCLG 2012, Live Table 581 and Live Table 584, Q3 2012 data; VOA 2012, Rental Data (Sep2011-12); ONS 2012, Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings 2012; DCLG 2012, Housing Strategy Statistical Appendix, 2011 data.
 Note: Data available for English cities only.

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 – will reduce 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 and increased 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

Oxford faces serious challenges with regard to housing in the coming years.

The economic situation and 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.

We have 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.

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

1. Building new homes
2. Providing great estates
3. Improving standards in the private rented sector
4. Reducing homelessness
5. Piloting Direct Payments and Universal Credit

1. Building new homes

The Strategic Housing Market Assessment in 2007 showed that 1,700 new homes per year would have to be built in the city if demand is to be met. A new Strategic Housing Market Assessment for Oxfordshire is expected to be completed in early 2014 and this is likely to indicate that housing need remains very high.

Oxford City Council - in the light of the constraints imposed by the city's boundaries and other factors such as flood plains and areas important for bio-diversity has, through its Core Strategy, committed to building 8,000 new homes over the 20 years from 2006. Most of the homes built over the last five years have been one- or two-bedroom properties.

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. We are also proactive about bringing empty homes back into use. Despite a reduction in house building following the recession, we are currently on course to meet our new homes target. A large proportion of the homes built in the next five years will result from the Barton West development.

Oxford City Council is:

- significantly increasing 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
- committed to using its own resources to provide new affordable housing wherever possible
- 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. Outline planning permission has been granted for this project. The first homes should be ready for occupation by 2015. This will account for most of the homes built over the next five years
- building 112 new homes on Council-owned sites throughout the city, supported by around £2.5 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, two new community centres, and a new home for the Emmaus Furniture Store, which recycles good-quality furniture while giving training and accommodation to formerly homeless people
- seek 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.

2. Providing great estates

The Council aims to provide high-quality estates and landlord services.

Oxford City Council is:

- maintaining all its own homes at or beyond the national Decent Homes Standard
- investing £17 million to upgrade the external and communal areas in our five tower blocks, extending their lives for a further 30 years. The apartment interiors are already at Decent Homes Standard
- investing £13.6 million over the next four years to upgrade kitchens and central heating
- investing £3.8 million over the next four years 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.

3. 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:

- revising HMO Licence Fees so that accredited landlords will see a significant reduction in their fees while charges will increase 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
- investing £68,000 per year to enable 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
- investing £640,000 every year over the next three years to fund adaptations to private dwellings to make them suitable for those with disabilities.

4. 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:

- reducing the number of people living in temporary accommodation

- investing £10million to purchase dwellings for the temporary accommodation of homeless people
- 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
- investing £250,000 per annum to set up a new rolling fund for the compulsory purchase of empty properties as a last resort.

5. Piloting Direct Payments and Universal Credit

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.

Oxford City Council is:

- working with the Department for Work and Pensions on a pilot project to test the effects of paying monthly Housing Benefit payments direct to tenants. The project took place from June 2012 to June 2013 and tested how claimants manage monthly payments, and the kinds of safeguards needed to prevent them from falling into arrears
- seeking ways to improve the financial awareness of tenants and minimise the financial risks of direct payments for landlords
- using findings from the demonstration project to supplement and improve existing income management policies, and inform our work 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 prime aim of helping them move into work. So far:
 - 613 customers have been supported or referred for advice
 - 163 customers have been supported on an on-going basis
 - 24 of these customers have moved into work
- investing £75,000 to mitigate the impact of the bedroom tax by assisting people to downsize
- investing a further £29,000 annually to support 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.

Measuring progress

Measure	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18
The number of individual HMOs subject to agreed licence provisions	3,500	3,750	4,000	4,250
The number of new rough sleepers spending more than one consecutive night on the streets each year	10	10	10	10
The number of households in Oxford in temporary accommodation	120	120	120	120
Number of affordable homes for rent delivered	180	150	150	150
Tenant satisfaction with their estates	83%	84%	85%	86%

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.

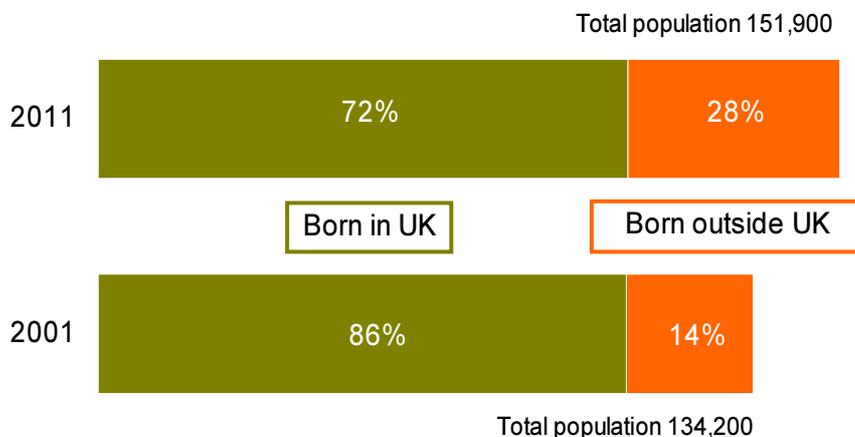
Some facts

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 birth being Poland, USA, India, Germany and Pakistan.

Growth in Oxford's international diversity, 2001–11



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 up to ten 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 which have been denied to 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 with our communities
4. Promoting healthy living
5. Building safe communities
6. Celebrating One City Oxford

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.

Oxford City Council is:

- investing £400,000 annually over the next four years so that we can play our role in improving educational attainment in the city, particularly in the more deprived neighbourhoods
- 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 to review the needs of the older population of Oxford. 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. We co-ordinate the Ageing Successfully Partnership, which provides a

partnership approach to improving wellbeing, addressing isolation, and increasing engagement with older people.

The Council works 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.

The Council is:

- working with other agencies – Oxfordshire County Council, Age UK and the Over 50s Group – to improve services for older people
- 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
- supporting the development of extra care and supported housing for older people.

3. Engaging with our communities

Our guiding principle

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, which is set out in the Corporate Plan and the budget approved by Council.

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 Neighbourhood 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 Neighbourhood 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.

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

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 has the potential to benefit those who volunteer as well as the wider community.

Oxford City Council is:

- investing £4 million to build a new community centre in Rose Hill
- 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
- increasing the budget for small grants to community organisations by £25,000 per year
- 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.

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 West
- promoting a 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 will be hosting the Queen's Baton Relay Event.

Oxford City Council is:

- Continuing to improve our leisure provision by:
 - building a new competition-standard swimming pool in Blackbird Leys. This facility will help increase participation in swimming, as well as providing a competition-standard venue. 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 the popular ice rink, a regional facility
 - investing £600,000 to build a new football pavilion and community centre at Quarry Recreation Ground. We are investing just under £1 million to refurbish sports pavilions across the city, including those in Blackbird Leys and Barton. We are also building a new pavilion at Grandpont
 - investing more than £300,000 over four years to encourage cycling, with more cycle lanes and better signage
 - continuing to provide free swimming for under 17s, particularly for those from areas of greatest need at a cost of £28,000 per year
 - investing £33,000 per year to further develop 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
 - investing £40,000 to improve drainage at the Rose Hill Recreation Ground.
- 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.

Over the last twelve months, total crime fell by 14%, compared to the same period in 2012, bringing the total number of recorded crimes down to less than 16,000. 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 Citizens' Panel to survey people's opinions on a range of anti-social behaviour issues. The results, along with information from the Police and other partners 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 investing £24,000 for two years to provide a coordinated approach to the delivery of safeguarding services for vulnerable children and adults.

6. Celebrating One City Oxford

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.

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
- 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 35,000 people last year. We are contributing £20,000 annually to support the Alice Day celebrations. Around 100,000 people attended our three-day Christmas Light Festival. The Lord Mayor's Celebration continues to be a popular event in the city.

Measuring progress

Measures	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18
The number of young people accessing youth engagement projects and activities outside school hours	5,250	5,400	5,500	5,700
The percentage of adults participating in sport (as measured by the Annual Sport England Active People Survey)	27.5%+	28%+	29%+	30%+

Chapter 4 – A Cleaner, Greener Oxford

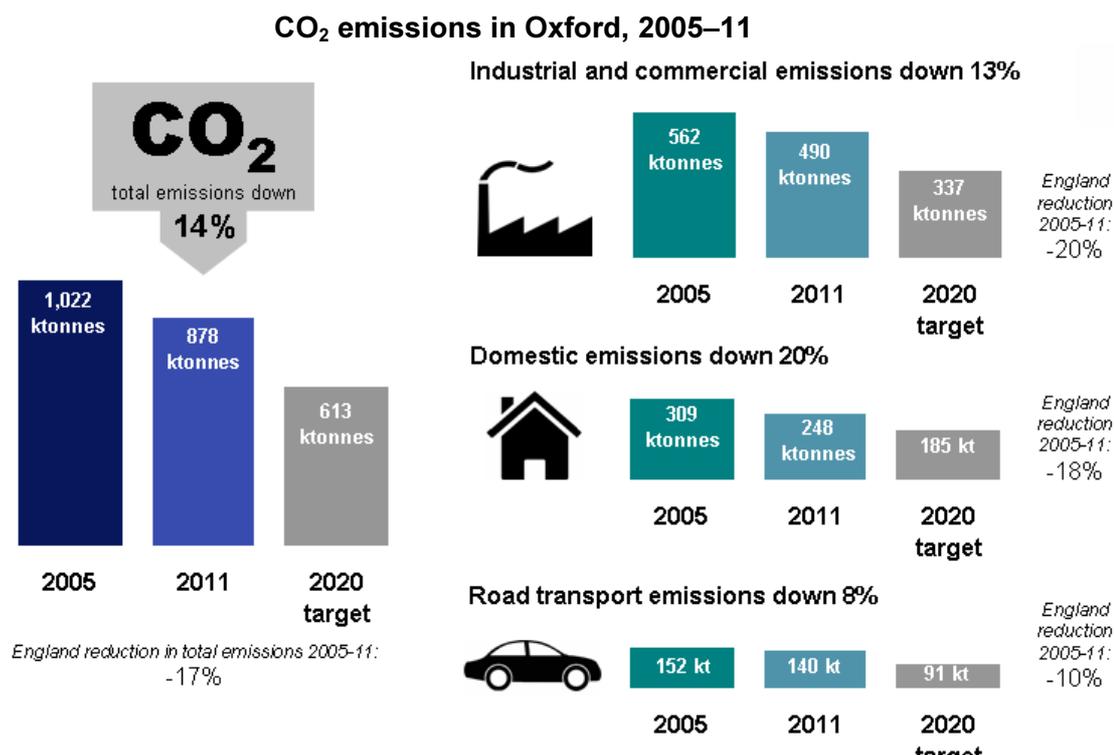
Our ambition: a cleaner, greener Oxford – in the city centre, in our neighbourhoods and in all public spaces.

Some facts

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.

There have been reductions in each of these three emissions sources over the period from 2005 to 2011, resulting in a reduction in the total level of emissions from 1,022 kilotonnes (kt) in 2005 to 878 kt in 2011. Domestic carbon emissions have fallen despite a rise in the total population and number of dwellings over the period.



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

Oxford City Council's approach

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

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. However, they particularly impact on 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 and investing £666,000 in capital and on-going revenue funding of £100,000 per year to extend the food waste collection 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 12,000 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 45% currently. This makes us one of the top-performing city areas. We will continually reduce the amount of waste sent to landfill year on year
- working in partnership with OxClean to clean up ‘grot spots’ and carry out the annual spring clean.

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
- 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 city centre and other retail centres around the city
- using new powers to control litter caused by leafleting
- targeting rolling clean-up campaigns in our neighbourhoods enabling the Community Response Team to play a bigger role in environmental enforcement
- 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 £2,000 per annum to improve cleanliness in the city centre by providing a new low-emission litter picking vehicle which will remove side-waste from around bins more effectively
- 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 reduced carbon dioxide emissions from our buildings and operations by 25% by March 2011. The

Council is now delivering 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 an additional £600,000 to implement energy efficiency measures in council buildings
- 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
- the first UK local authority to achieve the new British Standards Kitemark for Energy Reduction Verification
- recognised as a leader in this field, e.g. Highly Commended in the Low Carbon Council category, 2012 LGC awards; The Carbon Trust; The Energy Saving Trust; Guardian Public Service Award; 2012 Green Apple Environment Award, for the Council's ReFashion event.

4. Reducing the city's carbon footprint

A key element in reducing carbon emissions 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 such as buses and trains. 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 expand the Warming Barton pilot project, which is helping to save energy and create warmer homes in the city's most deprived area
- leading the Low Carbon Oxford initiative for the city and investing an additional £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 £6,000 per year to improve flood protection by clearing watercourses, ditches and streams through a social enterprise programme
 - working with partners to lobby the government to fund the Environment Agency's Western Conveyance Plan. This plan is well developed and would provide a viable long-term solution to the

flooding problems that the city and neighbouring villages have experienced in recent years

- 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 West
- 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 by bicycle and we will promote these forms of travel further. More Oxford residents cycle or walk to work than those who drive.
- There is also 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 promote carbon reduction.

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
- implementing a Low Emission Zone (LEZ) from 2014, which will place restrictions on the types of engines that can be used in buses operating within central Oxford, leading to reductions in emissions of nitrogen dioxide
- 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.

Measuring progress

Measure	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18
Satisfaction with our street cleansing	75%	76%	76%	77%
The reduction in the Council's carbon footprint	5% reduction	5% reduction	5% reduction	5% reduction
The number of enforcements carried out as a result of environmental offences (e.g. noisy parties, dog fouling, littering)	900	800	700	600
The amount of waste sent to landfill per household	430kg	428kg	426kg	424kg
The percentage of household waste sent for reuse, recycling, composting or anaerobic digestion	45%	46%	47%	48%

Chapter 5 – An Efficient and 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 and is on track to make a further £1.3 million savings this year, 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 2012–13 we achieved or exceeded more than 75% 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.

Investors in People accreditation for the whole Council has been achieved, as has Customer Excellence accreditation. The Council has 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 significant 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.

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

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

1. 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 and 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’, thereby 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
- using a new call-handling system, which includes customer call-back facilities, to deal with customer calls more efficiently
- investing £35,000 for two years 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.

2. Improving our processes

Oxford City Council’s Performance Improvement Framework sets out how 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.

We have rationalised and centralised our back-office functions by bringing together finance and ICT staff from across the Council into centralised teams.

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:

- consulting with staff about ways to rationalise administrative support across the organisation, and encourage more generic working and systems automation
- implementing 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
- 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
 - more use of IT systems to help visualise and interpret design
- rationalising and improving our ICT systems architecture and reviewing the Council's licensing arrangements.

3. 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.

Oxford City Council is:

- reviewing management of our assets in order to generate on-going revenue savings
- planning to increase off-street car parking capacity across the city in order to generate income
- reviewing our investments in property funds in order to achieve higher overall returns while establishing sufficient provisions to protect the Council from adverse variations in value
- exploring the option of extending the current leisure facilities contract for a further five years beyond 2019
- 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.

4. 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 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.

5. 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 to support performance improvement.

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 set us apart and enable us to succeed.

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, encourage healthy lifestyles and develop a better work/life balance in order to improve staff attendance
- aiming to achieve IIP Gold in 2014
- 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
- increasing the Oxford Living Wage from £8.13 per hour to £8.36 per hour.

Measuring progress

Measure	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18
The percentage of customers satisfied at their first point of contact	77%	79%	80%	80%
The delivery of the Council's savings and income targets	£1.887m (TBC)	£1.183m (TBC)	£0.906m (TBC)	(TBC)
The level of self-service transactions that are carried out using the Council's website	5% increase	5% increase	5% increase	5% increase
Achievement and retention of IIP Gold	Gold	Gold	Gold	Champion

**Chapter 6 Spending Plans 2014–18 (to be inserted
once the budget is approved)**

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