

**Oxford City Council**  
**Children & Young People's Strategy**

***“Working together to help every child &  
young person fulfil their potential”***

**2018-2022**

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## Foreword

Our City and the wider County have international significance as a result of our high concentration of human capital, knowledge and innovation. These factors drive growth in our region and mean we have an important role to play in the country's knowledge-economy – attracting investment in new industry and facilitating trade. However, this growth must be matched by services, housing and infrastructure which meet our population's needs and aspirations.

Oxford's children and young people are the future of our city. This strategy is designed to help meet their needs and to work with them to fulfil their ambitions and to achieve the best outcomes for them.

The new Children and Young People's Strategy builds on the earlier Youth Ambition Strategy by setting out what else we do across our services, to work with and support young people, and how we support partners and young people to achieve the best outcomes for them. Ready by 21 is an innovative framework, about education, families, communities and partners working together to make sure young people succeed, in order to ensure that all children and young people will be ready for college, work and life<sup>1</sup>. Preventative-led provision is central to our strategy, which focuses on using our services to achieve place-based interventions and overcome siloed practices by facilitating excellent partnership working. Consequently, it is designed to be a complimentary strategy to the Children's Trust's *Oxfordshire's Children and Young People's Plan 2018 – 2021*.

Oxford is a vibrant city but young people from disadvantaged circumstances are still more likely to experience fractured transitions from education to employment. That's why we want to ensure this is a cross-cutting strategy which enables all our services to consider the outcomes to empower children and young people in our city to thrive. Listening to the voices of a diverse range of young people, and taking your views into account, will be an essential part in helping us to achieve this.

This strategy is an exciting opportunity to respond to the many challenges faced by children and young people in Oxford and to make our city an even better place to live so that every child and young person can fulfil their potential and become happy, safe, successful, healthy and active citizens.

**Councillor Marie Tidball**  
**City Executive Board Member for Supporting Local Communities**

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<sup>1</sup> The Forum for Youth Investment: [forumfyi.org?readyby21/home](http://forumfyi.org?readyby21/home)

# Appendix 1

## Executive Summary

Our *Children and Young People's Strategy* shows how we will use our services and resources to support young people growing up in Oxford over the next five years. The strategy will influence the Council's policy framework to ensure all our services reflect the needs of young people.

To accompany the strategy we have worked with young people to produce a series of short videos and a strategy summary to simplify the key messages [\(add link\)](#).

We have developed three principles that underpin our vision for the Children and Young People's Strategy which will guide our service development and delivery, these are:

1. Preventative-led provision;
2. Equality, inclusion and engagement of young people;
3. Facilitating effective partnership working.

To deliver these principles we will pilot a new way of working that builds on the strong partnerships that we have developed. We will implement a framework called Ready by 21 that enables the structured collaboration of all the groups that support a young person's journey into adulthood such as schools, community groups, health providers, local authorities, families and young people themselves. This approach recognises our limitations and how we need to work effectively with partners and encourage them to effectively play their roles.

Using the Ready by 21 Framework we will share and scrutinise data about young people and work with our partners to gain a collective insight into the root causes of the societal problems facing young people and agree how we can work better together to have the greatest long-term impact. This is an ambitious step which is likely to require our resources to be refocused on a small number of priority issues that our [needs assessment](#) shows will have the greatest impact.

We will trial this approach alongside a zoning methodology where we will focus on certain areas of the city – this will help our learning and enable local differences to be understood.

The actions we will undertake to achieve our vision and support young people to fulfil their potential are shown in Appendix One.

# Appendix 1

## Introduction

Our vision is that every child and young person can fulfil their potential and become happy, safe, successful, healthy and active citizens<sup>2</sup>. This strategy shows how we will use our resources and work with our partners to achieve this.

The Council's Corporate Plan explains our priorities in tackling the challenges children and young people face and our commitment to ensuring this vision is fulfilled for Oxford's young people. The strategy is the Council's primary policy for children and young people. The delivery of the strategy will be monitored by the City's Youth Partnership Board and the Oxford Strategic Partnership<sup>3</sup>.

In 2013, Oxford's 'usual resident population' was 155,000. The city's population grew by 12% over the decade 2003-2013; the 2016 population is estimated to be 161,000, and is projected to continue to grow rapidly. In common with many other cities in the UK, Oxford has major social inequalities. The 2015 Index of Deprivation ranked Oxford 166 out of 326, which is just within the bottom half of the deprivation rankings for local authorities in England. The situation for young people in Oxford across health, housing, educational attainment and employment is explained in section B of the strategy.

We need a Children and Young People's Strategy because young people in Oxford face numerous pressures and challenges in various aspects of their lives. Young people face significant challenges to achieving economic independence, wellbeing, and finding support to deal with these challenges are disproportionately experienced by their age group compared to the population as a whole<sup>4</sup> (see section B). Consequently, our strategy covers young people living in Oxford, aged 0-25 for the period 2018 to 2022.<sup>5</sup>

We have learnt a lot since we launched the Youth Ambition Programme in 2013; such as, the importance of using positive language, to reinforce their involvement in activities, and that we need to be constantly learning about young people and the services they need from their engagement and feedback. The focus of Youth Ambition was prevention, this strategy builds on our preventative work and sets out what else we do across our services, to work with and support young people, and how we support partners and young people to achieve the best outcomes for them.

There is a shift in focus by the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) that sees the *Troubled Families* programme starting to involve more preventative work. This has influenced our approach to continue to focus on preventative-led provision. The *Ready by 21* Framework provides a collective impact methodology of structured collaboration with our partners. This framework will enable us to achieve population level impact on three key outcomes for children and young people: *healthy and safe; connected; and productive*. Using this framework, we will play our part to help young people reach adulthood equipped for further education, work and life.

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<sup>2</sup> This aligns with the strategic aims of the County Council's Children and Young People's Plan (2018)

<sup>3</sup> The Oxford Strategic Partnership is body that brings key individuals from the public, business, community and voluntary sectors to share a clear and ambitious vision for the city.

<sup>4</sup> See *A World of Good, the Challenge of Being Young in Modern Britain* (YMCA, 2016)

# Appendix 1

By providing high quality affordable housing, safe and inspiring parks and clean streets, we can create the best possible environment for young people to grow up in. While our services are available to everyone, we focus our grants and Youth Ambition activities on the areas of the city that have the greatest need so we can address social inequalities. That is why we are going to use a 'zoning' methodology, to increase the focus and impact of our work. 'Zoning' means we will work with partners to focus on certain areas of the city to achieve improvements in the Ready by 21 outcomes most needed by that particular area of Oxford.

All too often, when young people say there is nothing to do, the reality is that they often do not know what is available, how to access it, or have the confidence to take part. Oxford's rapidly changing and diverse population means that we have to work even harder to understand the needs of young people and to effectively communicate to them what is available for their age group. That is why our second principle focuses on equality, inclusion and engagement of young people. We will continue to improve the inclusivity of our services and ensure they are accessible to all young people.

The County Council have a statutory role in providing access to positive activities for young people aged 13 – 19 and those aged up to 25 who have learning disabilities. The City Council's role in providing services for young people is relatively small, nevertheless, we will ensure our services provide well-coordinated pathways for young people and encourage our partners to do the same. This recognises that through better aligning our activities across the public and voluntary sectors we will have a greater impact. The city has a dynamic Youth Partnership Board; it is chaired by a secondary school head teacher and attended by public, private and charitable sector organisations alongside young people themselves. The strategy shows how we will establish common goals with our partners, support the work of the Children's Trust, integrating safeguarding into everything we do and use our services to support schools.

Our Youth Ambition team undertakes an annual assessment of the needs of young people. The 2017 assessment identified young people's needs across the following areas: physical, mental and sexual health and wellbeing; crime and anti-social behaviour and employment, education and training. Section B of the strategy summarises the problems and the causes for each of these areas and sets out our plans to address them, using the Ready by 21 Framework, to enable Oxford's children and young people to be healthy and safe, connected and productive. Section C of this strategy describes the governance and the measures of success by which we will hold ourselves to account for the plans outlined in this strategy.

Oxford's children and young people are the future of our city; this strategy is designed to help meet their needs and to work with them to fulfil their ambitions. Our 2017 Working Together event provided the opportunity to discuss the principles underpinning this strategy with partners, as well as the Ready by 21 Framework and zoning. Their feedback has been used to shape this strategy. We would like to thank everyone who has helped to create this strategy, in particular our partners and the young people who have given us their views.

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## **A. Our Vision - *every child & young person is able to fulfil their potential***

***The following strategic principles show how we will play our role in achieving this vision***

### **Principle 1 - Preventative-led provision**

Research shows sport and culture positively benefit young people's physical and mental wellbeing and helps them to grow into happy and resilient adults<sup>6</sup>. Our cultural and sports services present opportunities to inspire young people. The Council often goes above and beyond what most councils offer to improve the lives of young people. Our fee concessions ensure that our services are accessible to everyone such as our free swimming for under 17 year olds. We provide world class play areas and our community and leisure centres provide a wide range of activities for people of all ages. For eight year olds and above, we also provide holiday activities, and our Youth Ambition Programme engages 11-19 year olds in positive activities. Youth Ambition grants also fund activities to support young adults aged 20-25 who have complex needs. A full list of our services for young people is shown in Appendix Two.

Oxford City Council is best placed to support the provision of universal positive activities that help children and young people to thrive in life. Our services help to prevent young people becoming vulnerable and needing specialist support. Our services are complimentary to the statutory services provided by Oxfordshire County Council and they play a vital role in supporting the delivery of the Children's Trust *Oxfordshire's Children and Young People's Plan 2018 – 2021*. At the heart of all our preventative work is the need to ensure that our services and the people delivering them are meeting the required safeguarding standards as shown in our Safeguarding Self-assessment Audit (2017).

The diagram below shows a dashboard of need. City Council services operate in the universal section, although as shown by the arrows, the circumstances and needs of young people are constantly changing. This means universal providers need to become better aware of how to identify young people when they become vulnerable and their needs become more complex and make appropriate referrals to statutory services such as the Oxfordshire Locality and Community Support Service (LCSS) and the MASH (the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub).

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<sup>6</sup> Department of Culture Media and Sports CASE programme (2012) <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/case-programme#case-programme-the-resources>

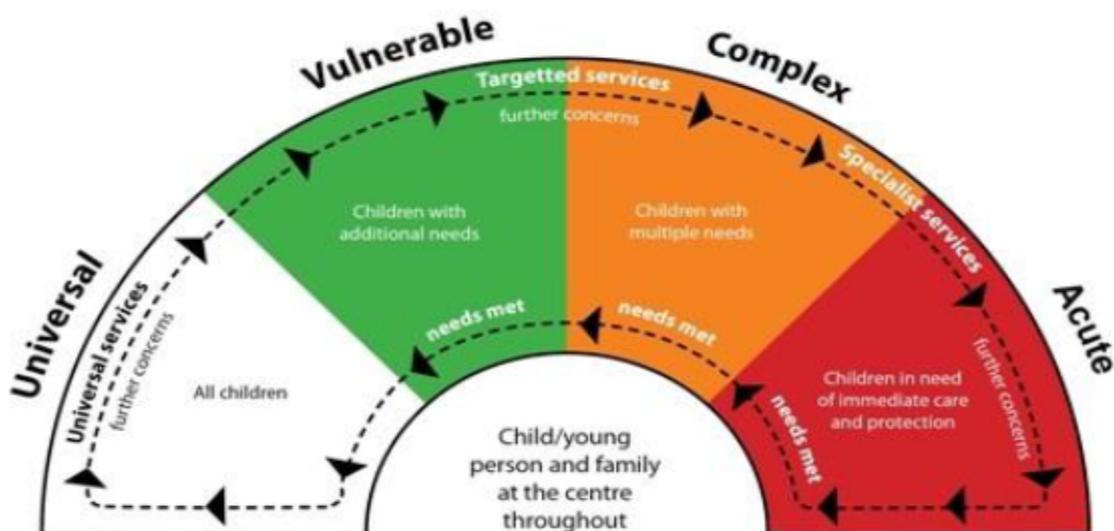


Figure 1 – the dashboard of need

## Oxford City Council’s Plans

We are motivated by the need to close the gap in social inequality and attainment faced by children and young people in our city. Research shows that the positive outcomes experienced by children and young people can be more reliably predicted by counting the number of positive and negative factors in a young person’s life. The likelihood that a young person will achieve the best outcome for them is reduced when they experience a higher number of negative influences (“risk factors”), whereas they are more likely to achieve the best outcome for them as the number of positive influences in their life (“protective factors”) increases.

Oxford City Council will focus on supporting interventions that increase protective factors, and therefore over time result in better outcomes for young people. Thus there is an opportunity to further integrate our Youth Ambition work with our related services such as housing, leisure, culture, community centres and our parks and outdoor spaces.

The Department of Culture Media and Sports CASE<sup>7</sup> website contains 12,000 case studies and data that show the value sport and culture have on our lives. The city is fortunate to have some great sport clubs and cultural organisations. The sports clubs are a huge part of Oxford and deliver a raft of social, physical and mental health benefits and are in the main delivered by volunteers. We will continue to work closely with the clubs and groups to offer them support when needed and help them to be sustainable and flourish. Our approach is detailed within our [Leisure & Wellbeing](#), [Culture](#) and [Community Centre](#) Strategies.

<sup>7</sup> Department of Culture Media and Sports CASE programme (2012) <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/case-programme#case-programme-the-resources>

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## Principle 2 - Equality, Inclusion & Engagement of Young People

The Equality Act 2010 replaced previous equalities legislation, streamlining all legal requirements on equality that the public, private and voluntary sectors need to follow, and sets out protection against discrimination on the basis of nine protected characteristics for people who use these services: age; disability; gender reassignment; marriage and civil partnership; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion or belief; sex; sexual orientation<sup>8</sup>. Oxford City Council has a duty and is committed to applying the Equality Act in all our work and we are committed to eliminating discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by this Act. In doing so, this enables us to advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it; and fostering good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it. We are committed to fulfilling these requirements and celebrating the vibrant diversity of our city.

In 2017, a third of all school students in Oxford city (5,640 pupils) had a first language other than English, with Urdu being the second most commonly spoken language (3.2% of students). Saint Gregory the Great Secondary School in East Oxford, for example, now has over 100 different languages spoken. While this diversity enhances the culture of the schools, it brings with it the need for extra resources and a renewed commitment to inclusive teaching and learning approaches and a diverse range of role models which effectively represent local communities. In 2017 there were 2,585 pupils known to be eligible for free school meals in Oxford, research shows that young people from disadvantaged circumstances are more likely to experience fractured transitions from education to employment.<sup>9</sup>

All young people have identities and life experiences shaped by several different factors. Real inclusion involves removing barriers to accessing opportunities, through iterative and adaptive processes which harness external relationships, skills and events to implement a programme of change.<sup>10</sup> That's why engaging directly with a diverse range of young people to shape our services, and other partners in the sector, is so important.

Communication is central to working with all young people. It helps build trust and maintain relationships. Effective communication extends to involving children in the design and delivery of services and in decisions that impact them. While Oxford offers a huge range of opportunities for young people, our research shows that many young people do not know what is available, how to access it, or in some cases, lack the confidence to take the first step in getting involved in the services on offer.

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<sup>8</sup> Equality Act 2010; See also, Equality and Human Rights Commission  
<https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/equality-act/protected-characteristics#pregmat>

<sup>9</sup> Yates, S., Harris, A., Sabates, R. and Staff, J (2010 pp 1-22) Early occupational aspirations and fractured transitions in Journal of Social Policy

<sup>10</sup> S.Frost, (2014), *The Inclusion Imperative*, Kogan: London, United Kingdom

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## **Oxford City Council's Plans**

Achieving real inclusion starts with what an organisation is good at, that's why we will continue to improve the inclusivity of our services and ensure they are accessible to all young people irrespective of their gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, ability or beliefs. Professionals need a broader understanding of the cultural differences across our young people if they are to keep them safe and positively engaged. Our communications with young people must also reflect the vibrant diversity of our city. In addition, continuing to improve the inclusion of diversity groups in our mainstream services, we will develop our sessions and services so they are fully accessible by producing ongoing audits that are supported by young people from underrepresented groups.

We will ensure our decisions take account of the views of young people through effective engagement and consultation and we will involve young people in relevant meetings. In 2016, the Youth Partnership Board held its first Working Together conference; the event was attended by the majority of organisations working with children and young people in the city. Attendees felt communication between partners and the promotion of services to young people needed to be more effective and joined up. Our zoning methodology will support this joined up communication and the Youth Partnership Board will develop an easily accessible activity offering that promotes shared messages to young people. To stay up-to-date with communication methods we need to increase our resource in the area of social media if we are to effectively communicate our messages. These messages need to be appropriately targeted and positive if they are to be understood and acted upon by young people. Therefore, we will expand the use of the Youth Activities App (an app that promotes positive activities for young people in Oxford, as well as key information on issues affecting them) so it is open for use by partners and young people. We will change our social media page to one page called 'Youth Activities' which will be open to all partners to use to promote activities across Oxford. The County Council have a statutory requirement to provide access to positive activities and we will work closely with them to ensure we create complementary services.

## **Principle 3 - Facilitating Excellent Partnership Working**

During the development of this strategy we looked to see what best practice we could learn from other local authorities. While we obtained some useful learning, it was clear that within the resources we have, we are already achieving significant outcomes. For example, the social value from our Youth Ambition Programme is £12 million each year. These outcomes have been achieved in the main through the productive partnerships we have established.

While the City's Youth Ambition Programme has proved very successful, we must remember its limitations and that the total budget for the programme is just £240,000 per annum. To ensure this investment has the maximum impact, we will work with the County Council and other partners to implement a shared approach to our work with children and young people.

Effective partnership working requires a good understanding of partners and their future plans. The following section describes the main partners and their responsibilities. Section B of this strategy explains how we work with them to enable young people in our city to fulfil their ambitions and to achieve the best outcomes for them.

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## **Oxfordshire County Council and County-wide Strategic Groups**

The Government places statutory duties upon the local authorities who have the responsibility for Children's Services to secure sufficient provision of leisure-time activities for young people's well-being, including youth work. Oxfordshire County Council is the local authority which has the legal obligation to fulfil this role. In recent years the County's work has shifted its focus to supporting acute need.

Over the last year, the County Council has made significant budget cuts to children's services; this has been achieved by reducing their support to children's centres and early intervention hubs. They now provide three 0-19 Children and Family Centres in the city (Rose Hill, Barton and East Oxford) with a satellite support centre in Blackbird Leys. The other children's centres are now community led and are seeking to find ways to become sustainable in the difficult financial climate.

The Children's Trust<sup>11</sup> endeavours to enable multi-agency strategic planning across the county for children and young people; the trusts priorities are:

Priority 1: Mental health and well-being

Priority 2: Domestic abuse

Priority 3: Attendance/pupils missing out on education

The Trust reports to the Health and Wellbeing Board and influences and supports the work of the Board in its purpose to improve outcomes for children and young people and their families. The Children's Trust meets four times a year and in public at least once a year.

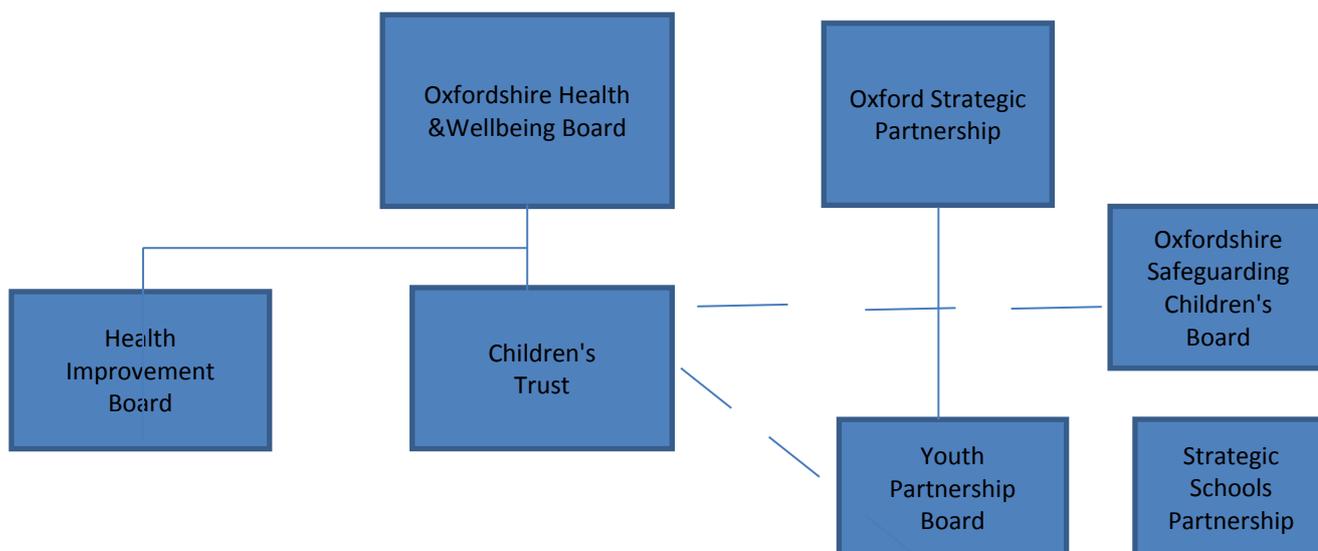
The City Council is represented on the Children's Safeguarding Board and Children's Trust which enables the effective sharing of information to protect the safety of vulnerable children and young people. The City Council's Children and Young People's strategy is highly complementary to the work of the trust and shows how we support the delivery of these priorities.

The following diagram shows the connections between the strategic partnerships for young people.

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<sup>11</sup> See *Partnership Report on the Oxfordshire Children's Trust*, (Oxford City Council, July 2017)

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## Schools

Many of the city's schools are now stand alone academies, or part of a multi academy trusts (MATs). There is no 'one size fits all' approach to academies and, as the programme has evolved, alternative models and structures have emerged. In a single academy trust, one school becomes an academy, or two schools combine to form a single academy. A multi-academy trust is where a group of schools is governed through a single set of members and directors.

The River Learning Trust is the largest MAT in the city which is led by Cherwell School. This trust has grown and contains three of the city's primaries (Wolvercote, Cutteslowe and New Marston) plus primaries in Witney, Carterton, Garsington and Horspath along with secondary schools in Chipping Norton, Wheatley and Swindon. The next largest MAT in the city is Dominic Barberi which is a company set up to lead seven Catholic Academies in Oxfordshire, St Gregory the Great (the only 4-19 year all through Academy in Oxfordshire), St Thomas More Kidlington, St John Fisher Littlemore, Our Lady's Cowley, St Joseph's Thame, St Joseph's Carterton and Our Lady of Lourdes Witney. Oxford Spires Academy is sponsored by the CfBT Education Trust which is a large Reading based organisation which provides education services in the United Kingdom and internationally. The Oxford Academy sponsors are Beecroft Trust<sup>12</sup>. Cheney School has set up the Community Schools Alliance Trust which includes Bayards Hill primary school.

Some of the primary schools are in separate trusts, and are not directly linked to a secondary school, or remain as local authority governed schools. Three of Oxford's primaries (John Henry Newman, St. Christopher's in Cowley and North Hinksey) have joined the Oxford Diocesan Schools Trust (ODST) and the three Blackbird Leys primaries are currently in the Blackbird Academy Trust but are joining United Learning.

<sup>12</sup> This is a charitable initiative of venture capitalist Adrian Beecroft, the Diocese of Oxford, and Oxford Brooks University.

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Oxfordshire County Council has a far reduced role with schools; it coordinates strategic responses to issues including Special Education Needs and Disability (SEND) and High Needs and coordinates the allocation of school places. Many schools in the city have a high proportion of High Needs and SEND students. Oxford City Council is represented on the Oxfordshire Strategic Schools Partnership and the High Needs Steering Group. We are also piloting a partnership with an individual secondary school to provide additional targeted support assistance.

## **Voluntary and community groups**

There are numerous groups working with young people in the city; the main ones are shown in appendix three. The Council's Community Centres Strategy highlights their importance and the how much the Council values their contribution to our city. The Council invests £1.4 million each year in grants and commissioning services that support the delivery of the Council's Corporate Plan. Many of these services support young people and we are also continuing to provide Youth Ambition grants.

In 2016, we worked with Oxfordshire Youth and the Student Hub to undertake an in-depth study into challenges facing voluntary groups working with young people. This study found that the main issues they were facing were finding on-going funding, effectively demonstrating their impact and finding new volunteers.

Working with voluntary and community groups will be essential for our work to achieve collective impact and we will continually explore how we can help them fulfil their potential.

## **Using the Ready by 21 Framework to improve our partnership working**

One of the objectives of the 2013 Youth Ambition Strategy was to establish an in-depth understanding of the needs of young people to ensure we were effectively targeting our resources. We have repeated this assessment every year using extensive primary and secondary research. Over the past four years, this information has been used to shape Council policy, target our grants, and has been shared with other organisations working with young people in the city.

These findings and learning will be integrated into the holistic Ready by 21 Framework, tailored for the needs and ambitions of children and young people in Oxford City. Ready by 21 is an innovative framework for structured collaboration, about education, families, communities and partners working together to make sure young people succeed, in order to ensure that all children and young people will be ready for college, work and life. We have worked with the County Council to develop a collaborative methodology, using Ready by 21 to ensure we achieve joined-up service delivery.

In order to implement Ready by 21, we will focus on the three key outcomes for children and young people: healthy and safe; connected; and productive (see Fig. 2 below).

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Fig. 2 Ready by 21 Outcomes Framework

These three key outcomes map directly to the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) outcomes for children and young people:

<b>Ready by 21</b>	Healthy & Safe	Connected	Productive
<b>DCMS</b>	Physical Health, Mental Wellbeing, Individual Development	Social Development	Economic Development

Fig. 3 DCMS - outcomes for children and young people

Ready by 21 provides clear standards to achieve collective impact, tools and solutions to help leaders make progress, and ways to measure and track success along the way.<sup>13</sup> It will be supported by our zoning methodology.

## Using a Zoning Methodology to achieve Ready by 21 Outcomes

The zoning methodology reinforces the Ready by 21 Framework’s approach of structured collaboration by focusing on partners working together on shared outcomes across a locality area. This approach is place-based, with a focus on change and improved outcomes for children and young people where many different stakeholders, people and organisations work together across the public, private, and charitable sector in a given locality area.<sup>14</sup> The partners working together in each zone will be dependent upon the issues that the data shows we need to focus on. We will focus on

<sup>13</sup> <http://www.readyby21.org/>

<sup>14</sup> For further information on this approach, see *Building impact movements Place-based systems change for children and young people in North Camden* (North Camden Zone, Winch et al, 2017)

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priority areas within the City and facilitate partnership working in these zones, bringing different sectors together, and helping partners focus on key issues. The findings from the social inequalities data from the particular locality zone may mean that we need to change how we prioritise our resources within these zones as we better understand the root causes of problems.

This zoning approach will deliver two key objectives:

- i) **Support those communities who need it most:** this will begin to address the high levels of inequality found across Oxford City. 10 of Oxford's 83 'Super Output Areas'<sup>15</sup> are amongst the 20% most deprived areas in England. These areas, which are located in the Leys, Littlemore, Rose Hill and Barton, experience multiple levels of deprivation – with low skills, low incomes and poorer levels of health. Other areas of the city also have different challenges and may benefit from this approach. Around 23% of Oxford's under 16s live in low-income households and eight neighbourhoods are within the 10% worst affected in England for child poverty.
- ii) **Deliver solutions which respond to the specific needs of the community:** different areas in the City face different challenges and have different resources and provision. A zoning approach will enable us to better target our support. Our use of zones does not need to be tied to traditional ward boundaries and likely to work better if they are wrapped around issues that transcend geographic areas.

Oxfordshire County Council and Cherwell District Council are piloting a community impact zone in Banbury. We will work with the County and local schools to set up a pilot impact zone in Oxford to focus on improving the outcomes for children and young people in that locality. At the 2017 Working Together event partners agreed that where possible we should define our zones around thematic issues such as child drug exploitation, rather than tied to specific ward boundaries. There was consensus that there should be a place-based zone in a triangular area that encapsulated part of East Oxford, Cowley and Blackbird Ley's. This area better reflects the movement of children and young people around the city to access school and other services.

This place-based multi-actor "systems change" requires effective partnership working, both across our City Council services and with other partners in a locality, to support this zoning approach.

## Oxford City Council's Plans

Effective partnership working underpins this strategy. We have made good progress over recent years and have a well-established Youth Partnership Board. The Board has a clear plan and tries to 'think big' – using the wide-ranging skills of our partner organisations to produce innovative solutions and initiatives. The Board is of strategic importance to the city as it reports into the Oxford Strategic Partnership.

Partnership working can be described in many ways. Put simply, we need a common understanding of the needs of young people and to coordinate our resources to achieve shared objectives. It is helpful to view the life journey of a young person through the lens of a system. Creating positive

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<sup>15</sup> These are geographic areas used for statistical reporting [www.ons.gov.uk](http://www.ons.gov.uk)

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change in complex systems is a challenge that is beyond the ability of individual organisations acting in isolation.

The Lankelly Chase Foundation emphasises the need to move beyond interventions that paper over the cracks and layer yet more complexity onto an already complicated and confused system. *Systems change* describes an approach towards improving outcomes that recognises the need to engage with the whole system, instead of attempting to move small parts of the system individually. Therefore, systems change requires many stakeholders operating in concert.<sup>16</sup>

A large body of practice has now developed under the banner of *collective impact*; this is the commitment of partners from different sectors to a common agenda. In *collective impact*, stakeholders develop a shared vision and joint approach around an ambitious but clearly defined goal, coordinate their activities and measurement approach, maintain communication, and share a common enabling infrastructure or ‘backbone’.

To achieve this change, the research shows two cross-cutting conditions for success emerge -

- Enabling systems change capacity and
- Continuous research and development

This strategy covers all the Council’s services that support young people. As such, there are numerous interconnections. Over the first year of the strategy we will undertake a full systems review.

In order to ensure we provide excellent coordination of City Council services for children and young people and that they are integral to our city’s 2050 Vision, we will set up a strategy steering group made up from all service areas working with young people. We will ensure we work with relevant partners to carry out the actions to implement this strategy work by playing an effective role on county-wide strategic boards and in our support of the Youth Partnership Board (see Appendix 1 - Action plan on Excellent Partnership Working).

Oxford City Council is working with agencies at a local level to ensure that there is effective joint working within the Youth Ambition Programme, with the Community-led Children’s Centres to support early intervention services and directly with schools to see what help and support we can provide to them. Whilst the City Council cannot replace these services, Oxford City Council has been actively looking to support those Community Children’s Centres that are based in the city. To that end we have invested £50,000 into supporting the network of Children’s Centres. This money has been used in a way that it will have a long-lasting effect; add capacity to the City’s Community-led Children’s Centres and to develop Oxford City Council’s vision for children aged 0-5<sup>17</sup>. We will explore how this can complement the readiness for school work that has been commissioned through the Children’s Trust.

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<sup>16</sup> Lankelly Chase Foundation (2015)

<sup>17</sup> <https://oxfordearlyyears.org>

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All of our partnership working will be informed by the *Ready by 21* Framework to fulfil our vision that every child and young person in our city can fulfil their potential and become happy, safe, successful, healthy and active citizens. To avoid any duplication and to ensure this investment has the maximum impact, we will work with the County Council and other partners to implement a shared delivery framework. Using the zoning approach in the proposed pilot zone (see above) one of our priority areas will enhance the collective impact of our partnership working and we will work with the voluntary and charity sector to effectively target the Youth Ambition Grants towards the areas outlined in our needs assessment (see above).

We will increasingly use our youth provision to help enhance young people's life skills. To deliver this approach we will review the youth partnership meetings we have in some of our priority areas and see how they can use the zoning and Ready by 21 philosophy in these specific localities. If this is successful, then over the course of the strategy we will expand the approach.

## **B. Identifying children and young people's needs and achieving the best outcomes for them**

In 2016 the YMCA report, *A World of Good, the Challenge of Being Young in Modern Britain*, identified ten challenges facing young people in Britain following their survey of 1,600 young people aged between 16 and 25. It found many young people did not have opportunities to fulfil their potential in the education system and lacked adequate access to training and employment, affordable housing, long term financial security and technology.

Young people also said they faced issues related to body image, family problems, and negative stereotyping associated with their background and protected characteristics. Additionally, they identified the pressures of materialism, 24/7 social networking, substance abuse and crime. Of these ten challenges, the research found that the emerging trends of lack of affordable housing and the stresses created by 24/7 social networking were the challenges young people felt were getting worse the quickest<sup>18</sup>.

With the needs of young people changing more quickly than ever we must evolve our services so they can best meet these needs. We must have an up-to-date understanding of the vulnerabilities and risks that young people face so we can help to keep them safe. To achieve this, we will continue to undertake a systematic assessment and analysis of young people's needs and create and publish an annual needs assessment.

A core theme of the Youth Ambition Programme was based on the National Youth Agency's publication - *Valuing young voices, strengthening democracy* (2010), which outlines the benefits of giving young people a voice.<sup>19</sup> We have worked with thirteen young people to write a participation

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<sup>18</sup> YMCA, (2016), *A World of Good, the Challenge of Being Young in Modern Britain*.

<sup>19</sup> Valuing young voices, strengthening democracy (2010) *The contribution made by youth engagement*

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plan that outlines how young people are involved within the programme. We will continue to find ways to enable young people to influence decisions that impact them and help develop them to have the confidence and capability to do so. We will also involve young people in assessing how well our services meet their needs.

The needs and interests of young people will be the starting point for all youth work delivered by Youth Ambition. Differences in need can be the result of many factors, including gender, race, disability, socio-economic circumstances and locality in which they live. Therefore, research and planning necessarily take place at a number of levels. Young people are central to the process of research, analysis and planning that leads to an effective youth work offer and we will work hard to ensure they are involved in a very real way.

Our work identifying young people's needs reflects national data. Nevertheless, going forward we need to increase our understanding of the impact of 24/7 social media, increasing our support for young people suffering from mental health problems and continue to make our activity sessions more inclusive.

The Prince's Trust youth index, the largest survey of its kind, found that young people without a positive role model of the same gender are 67% more likely to be unemployed than their counterparts who do have such a figure in their lives. Setting a good example is possibly the most valuable gift to a young person; we will continue to identify a range of diverse role models and provide opportunities for young people to be inspired by them.

Our Youth Ambition team have a workforce development plan to ensure that management, employees and volunteers have the necessary knowledge, skills, capabilities and values to effectively deliver and improve services to children and young people. We will improve the training for our workforce so they are better able to support young people suffering from mental health problems (and other issues identified within the needs analysis) and encourage other service providers to do the same. We will undertake further training on social media so we can use it more effectively to communicate with young people, alongside improving our understanding of the pressures it places on young people.

Youth Ambition is committed to providing the highest levels of service possible to young people. To continually improve the quality of our services, we will use a quality assurance process that involves young people. We will obtain the National Youth Agencies quality assurance mark 'Better Outcomes for Young People' for our Youth Ambition Programme. The quality mark will result in tangible evidence of the impact of the organisation in improving outcomes for young people. At a time of reducing resources and a sharp focus on value for money, evidence of impact is increasingly important.

As young people's needs and circumstances change they move in and out of specialist provision, such as that provided by the County Council. This means we need to be able to identify young people with greater needs so we can ensure their broader needs are also being met, this requires effective communication with our partners. As specialist provision continues to reduce, and the needs of young people increase, universal providers will continue to be placed under greater strain. This

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strategy encourages partners to work closer together around common goals to try to mitigate the impact of this reduction of resources.

## **HEALTHY - Section 1 of Ready by 21**

### **a) Mental Health & Wellbeing**

One of the greatest health concerns facing young people in our city is the sharp rise in mental health issues; referrals to the Child and Adolescence Mental Health Service increased by 34% in 2016.

Personal and social factors such as stressful life events, bullying and physical illness alongside the relentless barrage of pressure from social media are all contributing to this increase. This leads to low self-esteem and lack of confidence, anxiety, depression and eating disorders. More positively though, there is less stigma attached to mental health which contributes to increased reporting by young people.

A study by Demos (Mind over Matter, 2015) suggests that schools are failing to support the mental wellbeing of the children in their care. The study concluded that final year secondary students are half as likely to be happy with their lives as 14 year olds and considerably less likely to think their parents and teachers believe in them.

### **b) Physical Health**

A range of health inequalities are prevalent in Oxford's population; life expectancy is 7.7 years lower for men in the most deprived areas of the city compared to the least deprived areas.<sup>20</sup> Research has found that 19% of children in their last year of Primary School, Year 6, are classified as obese. Whilst this is similar to the national average of children living in urban areas, these figures are concerning as 79% of children who are obese in their teens are likely to remain obese as adults, leading to health problems including type 2 diabetes and heart disease.<sup>21</sup> Alcohol-specific hospital stays are much higher than the England average, with a rate of 74.7 per 100,000 in Oxford compared to 36.6 per 100,000 in England.

There have been significant changes in young people's lifestyles over recent decades; one notable shift is the reduction in the time children are spending outdoors. In the UK the likelihood of children visiting any green space at all has halved in a generation, which leads to a range of negative health consequences on their physical, social and emotional development.<sup>22</sup>

### **c) Sexual health & relationships**

In Oxford in the early 2000's there was a high rate of conception amongst young people aged under-18, the rate has now dropped to levels similar to, or below, the England average. However, there are still high rates in some areas of the city. There is no doubt that children are now exposed to sexual

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<sup>20</sup> Department of Health, Public Health Observatories (2014) Oxford Health Profile  
<http://www.apho.org.uk/resource/view.aspx?RID=50215&SEARCH=oxford&SPEAR>

<sup>21</sup> NICE, *Obesity in children and young people: prevention and lifestyle weight management programmes* (2017)

<sup>22</sup> Natural England. (2010) *Wild Adventure Space: its role in teenagers lives*

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images at a far younger age, across a wider range of media than ever before, including music videos, website and social media.

Therefore, it is more important than ever that young people are able to access advice and information so they are able to have happy and healthy relationships and make informed choices about protecting their sexual health.

In 2015, *The Guardian* reported child sexual abuse had risen by 60% in the last four years. At the same time the number of arrests for child sexual abuse offences in England and Wales has fallen by 9%. Vulnerable young people are at a far greater risk of being groomed and we must continue to strengthen our safeguarding practises and increase awareness of warning signs that a young person is being exploited, or at risk of exploitation.

## **Oxford City Council's Plans**

We will work with partners such as Good Food Oxford to help tackle obesity. We will promote Oxford as a Sugar Smart City and we have signed a declaration to show our commitment. This includes healthy vending machines, responsible advertising and encouraging people to drink water in our facilities and at events and encourage our partners to do the same. We will also continue to support food banks and introduce more healthy food options at our youth activities. We will continue to monitor the number of fast food premises near schools and encourage them to provide healthy options.

Over the past decade, the City Council has invested heavily into improving the lives of the city's residents and has transformed many of our services. A good example can be seen with our leisure centres, which now receive 53% more visits than in 2008.

An all Party Parliamentary Group on a Fit and Healthy Childhood recommends accessible, sustainable and informative programmes of physical activity as essential components of child health and wellbeing<sup>23</sup>. Our parks are now vibrant and active places with modernised play areas, pavilions, tennis courts and fitness trails, offering far more opportunities that encourage young people to take part in positive activities. These opportunities provide young people with far more choice on how they spend their leisure time.

When we combine this increased choice of activities with the significant increases in usage we have already achieved in our leisure centres, it is challenging to find new ways to continue to increase usage. Thus, in order to do so, we will need to continue to improve our services to encourage young people to choose to use our facilities. We will also have to work more with young people to develop new activities for us to provide to ensure our services meet their needs. We will continue to work with Fusion Lifestyle (our leisure centre operator) to ensure the activities in our leisure centres are appealing and involve young people in helping to develop what's on offer and the times we run sessions. We will work to explore innovative funding models to try to draw investment to the City such as social impact bonds<sup>24</sup> in order to improve young people's life chances.

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<sup>23</sup> All Party Parliamentary Group on a Fit and Healthy Childhood (September 2017)

<sup>24</sup> A social impact bond is a contract with the public sector in which a commitment is made by an investor/funder to pay for improved social outcomes that result in public sector savings

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We need to ensure our fantastic parks and green spaces remain safe and well maintained, and continue to improve them so they offer something for everyone. In practice, this means providing a range of exciting events, diverse and inclusive activities, well run sports clubs and encouraging young people to connect with nature and their own creativity.

New challenges have emerged where vulnerable young people are being sexually, physically and mentally exploited, there also seems to be an increase in young people being groomed to sell drugs. Local feedback echoes the problems that the Casey Review (2016) found to be a factor in the exploitation of young people, where there is a total disconnect between generations. Safeguarding young people must be everyone's responsibility. We will work with the County Council's public health team to see how we can better support their work with mental and sexual health, and look at opportunities to support this through our forthcoming Big Lottery bid and work with the Oxfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group on Health Inequalities.

***“We will help to improve the physical and mental health of children and young people, increasing their resilience to overcome life's challenges”***

## **CONNECTED - Section 2 of Ready by 21**

### **a) Access to Housing**

Young people have been hit hard by the housing crisis, the rate of homeownership has halved for 25 year olds in the last 20 years and more than 150,000 young people ask for help with homelessness every year. There were 618,000 more young adults living with their parents in 2015 than in 1996 - 3.3 million compared with 2.7 million.<sup>25</sup> There are many obstacles for young people trying to find accommodation, especially as they often have low incomes. Buying a home is too often not an option with high house prices and difficulties obtaining a mortgage. Whilst we have over 7,500 Council-owned homes, and are working with Oxfordshire Growth Board to secure funding to build more, demand for housing in Oxford continues to grow, with over 2,500 households on the [Housing Register for affordable housing](#). This means there's still not enough social rented housing to meet housing needs. Accessing private rented housing is often difficult, with high rents and deposits and many landlords unwilling to let to people in receipt of Universal Credit and young people as they are perceived to be a higher risk.

Oxfordshire's Young People's Supported Housing Pathway is commissioned by Oxfordshire County Council in partnership with Oxfordshire's five District Councils. A Joint Housing Steering Group oversees the strategic operation of the Pathway and related work. In partnership with the five District Councils in Oxfordshire, the County Council commissioned housing related support services which support the authority to both collectively meet its statutory duties and to help other vulnerable young people. As agreed by the partnership, to avoid homelessness and to achieve and sustain their independence; access education, employment or training; and to gain the knowledge

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<sup>25</sup> Local Government Association (2016)

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and skills to make informed choices about their accommodation options outside of the Young People's Supported Housing Pathway. This includes single young people and parents aged 16 to 24 years. From 18 years old, young people can also access The Single Homeless Pathway which provides supported housing for adults in Oxfordshire. Allocation and access between the two pathways is decided on a case by case basis.

## **b) Reducing crime & anti-social behaviour**

Children under 10 years old, who display challenging behaviour, may be referred to their doctor and to Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS), or they may be referred to behaviour management specialists within education. In some situations where there are particular safeguarding concerns children may be referred to Children's Social Care.

There are also a number of Government initiatives which focus on working with the families of children with behaviour problems. The 'Troubled Families' initiative is the most recent example to be funded and coordinated by the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG). A worker, or team, is assigned to co-ordinate services for a family with multiple difficulties including: children or adults who are involved in anti-social behaviour or crime, children who are truanting or absent from school, adults who are unemployed, and adults who are suffering from mental health problems. Local authorities receive a government contribution of up to £2,000 per family for getting children back into school, reducing youth crime, or getting adults into work or training. In Oxfordshire, this scheme is implemented by the County Council.

There are a number of factors that increase the likelihood young people being involved crime or antisocial behaviour. Our research shows peer pressure, a lack of positive role models, division between generations and drug dealing culture around some schools are the most prevalent.

Secondary school children in England are now more likely to have tried drugs than cigarettes, according to a national survey. The 2016 statistics, from [NHS Digital](#), found 21% of 11-15-year-olds saying they had tried recreational drugs at least once in their lives, a six percentage point rise on the 2014 survey results. In Oxford, as in many other parts of the country, there is an increase in the number of young people being targeted by organised crime gangs to participate in the use and distribution of Class A drugs, often within schools themselves. This Child Drugs Exploitation (CDE) issue is prevalent across some schools serving less deprived communities as well as those in the more deprived areas of the city.

In 2017 the NSPCC reported there were over 24,000 Childline counselling sessions with children about bullying, over half of lesbian, gay and bisexual young people experience homophobic bullying at school and more than 16,000 young people were absent from school due to bullying. This shows the need to not only address the issues, but to have a more diverse range of role models visible to young people.

## **Oxford City Council's Plans**

The Housing and Homelessness Strategy 2018-2021 includes a focus on early intervention and preventing homelessness. Both the Housing and the Communities Teams are in the process of developing new and improved ways of communicating with young people to raise their awareness of

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homelessness and the associated issues of anti-social behaviour, poor education, and poor employment opportunities. This includes increasing young people's awareness of housing issues by establishing Homeless Prevention work into the curriculum for 15/16 year olds at Oxford's Schools. We will also explore how we can target activities towards young people in social housing to make sure they are able to benefit from the broad range of services on offer.

Oxford City Council is a Trailblazer authority and part of a national two year programme which is focussed on upstream prevention. The team are working on identifying early intervention and systemic change to prevent households from becoming homeless, including joint work with partners including health, criminal justice and children's social service, using both current data and predictive modelling. Within children's social services, embedded housing workers are being trialled at the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH), Locality and Community Support Services (LCSS) and Early Help, to provide upstream housing support to stabilise families and prevent crisis presentations to the housing team and escalation through social care.

We will also continue to work hard with our partners, through the Growth Board, to increase the overall housing supply and will continue to use our licencing scheme to raise standards in private rented housing, improving the quality of housing for residents in the city. Improving access to a variety of housing options, in particular affordable housing can benefit a range of households including single people, couples and families with children and young people.

Our Community Safety Team are working with partners to protect vulnerable young people from being exploited. We use a raft of powers to protect these young people such as closure notices to protect them from being exploited in their own homes.

Our Streetwise partnership with Thames Valley Police is designed to protect vulnerable people, both those who are homeless and also from being exploited through the crime that can result from begging, such as children and young people being involved in selling and using drugs.

Some of our most successful work has been when our anti-social behaviour team have worked with our Youth Ambition Team to support young people to make positive changes to their behaviour. This is an approach we will build on within our restorative justice work, using mediation to resolve and prevent issues escalating and we will also explore how we can use positive role models within this work.

***"We will support the cultural and emotional development of children and young people so they are able to become happy, well rounded citizens"***

## **PRODUCTIVE - Section 3 of Ready by 21**

### **a) Education and training**

Oxford has some of the best private schools and world-renowned universities. This makes the widening attainment gap in our city, especially for disadvantaged students, at some of the city's schools, even more unacceptable.

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The number of school-aged children in Oxford has increased by 13% in the last six years, from 14,505 in 2011 to 16,400 in 2017. Within this, there was a 17% increase across the city's 31 primary schools; we are therefore due to see further strain on secondary school class sizes. These larger class sizes and reduced funding will place further pressure on our schools. Schools are also managing absenteeism - in 2016, 855 pupils were classed as persistently absent from Oxford's secondary and 975 from primary schools.

New secondary school accountability measures were introduced in 2016. The attainment of pupils living in Oxford City is 48 (called Attainment 8), which is below the national average of 50.1. These School attendance levels and Key Stage One writing attainment are areas of major concern, as is school funding, curriculum changes and the recruitment and retention of outstanding teachers. Progress from key stage two to key stage four was +0.05 which is above the national average.

In 2017, three schools require improvement and four are rated as inadequate.<sup>26</sup>

Poor attainment is directly linked to low income. People living in Oxford who are in their 20s are now 18% worse off financially than 20 year olds just five years ago.<sup>27</sup> A study by the Sutton Trust found, for example, that over a third of boys on free school meals, who are in the top 10% of performers at the age of 11, have fallen outside the top 25% of pupils by the age of 16.<sup>28</sup>

Oxford is one of the least affordable cities to live in the UK with house prices 16 times the average annual earnings in 2017. Affordability of living in Oxford is one of the factors affecting teacher retention rates.

The Joseph Rowntree Foundation Report Counting the cost of UK poverty (2016) shows that schools spend an additional £10 billion each year in seeking to counterbalance the negative impacts of poverty, through initiatives such as free school meals and Pupil Premium funds. This is nearly 20% of the total schools' budget.<sup>29</sup>

National changes in education have led to the arts and sport being reduced from the curriculum to enable an increased emphasis on subjects such as English and mathematics. However, the CASE evidence shows that the arts and sport subjects have far reaching benefits and are essential ingredients in helping young people reach their potential.

A survey in 2017 by the Chartered Institute of Management Accountants (CIMA) found eight out of 10 British school-leavers 'lack essential business skills' such as numeracy. More than 80% of young people require "significant training" before being put to work, according to the 4,000 finance professionals questioned. The figure is worse than last year, when 75% of school-leavers were said to need this level of help after being hired. The top areas of weakness for new recruits are people skills and business skills, followed by technical skills.

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<sup>26</sup> The Department for Education (2017) Schools census

<sup>27</sup> London School of Economics (May 2015)

<sup>28</sup> The Sutton Trust (2015) *Missing Talent*

<sup>29</sup> Heriot Watt and Loughborough Universities (2016) *Counting the cost of UK poverty*

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## b) Transition to work and employment

Although Oxford has high levels of employment and employment opportunities, parts of the city are disconnected from these opportunities and unemployment rates are three times higher for 16-25 year olds when compared with the rest of the UK population<sup>30</sup>. The world of work is changing rapidly with digitisation and automation and our young people need the skills to be able to flourish in a fast changing environment.

In January 2013, the Prince's Trust undertook a major survey of young people and found that NEET young people reported that they were depressed 'often or most of the time'.<sup>31</sup> Unemployment has been found in a number of studies to have a long term 'scarring' effect on young people, impacting upon their future health and economic well-being.<sup>32 33</sup> Once in employment, 72% of 18-21 year olds are reported to be earning less than the living wage<sup>34</sup>.

The removal of the Connexions Service has resulted in patchy careers advice in schools and colleges. This reduces the chances of young people knowing what careers exist and has resulted in young people not having the job search skills, such as knowing where to look for vacancies and how to make applications. It is hoped that the Government's new careers strategy may provide opportunities to address the issue of patchy careers advice and improve employer engagement.

The strict curriculum and heavy scrutiny placed on schools reduces the opportunities for young people to develop the soft skills and employability skills employers require, such as confidence, resilience, adaptability and an understanding of specific roles and the employment environment.

### Oxford City Council's Plans

A key focus of the Council's work with partners to break the cycle of deprivation is ensuring that young people have the skills they need to gain employment. Central to achieving this ambition is having high quality schools in the city. While there are fundamental challenges within our schools, we have shown that by working in partnership we can make a valuable difference.

In addition to our improved services, and in recognition of increasing need, we introduced Youth Ambition and Education Attainment Programmes in 2013. Youth Ambition now provides activities and services to over 6,000 less advantaged young people and delivers £12 million of social value every year. The programme is seen as best practice and has won national awards. The Council has achieved these successes by understanding local needs and effective partnership work.

While the City Council's role in improving educational attainment within schools is very limited, we believe the best way we can support schools is to use the services we provide to make their lives easier, allowing schools to spend more time focusing on attainment. Where we have started to use this approach it has worked well, and we have developed trusting and productive relationships.

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<sup>30</sup> Office for National Statistics (2016)

<sup>31</sup> The Princes Trust Youth Index (2013)

<sup>32</sup> TUC (2012) *Generation Lost: Youth unemployment and the Labour Market*

<sup>33</sup> Centrepoint (2017)

<sup>34</sup> KPMG (2015) *Six Million Brits are earning less than a living wage*

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To create our School Partnerships we, therefore, have worked with a number of the city's head teachers to create a menu of services (Appendix 4), under the following headings:

- 1) *Strategic support*
- 2) *Readiness for work*
- 3) *Sport, Recreation, Arts & Culture*

We will pilot a more formal partnership approach with schools and create a partnership plan and allocate a senior officer to a secondary school to support them with strategic issues. During the pilot we will assess the effectiveness of the approach and obtain a better understanding of the resources that are needed if we were to expand the approach to the city's other secondary schools.

All of the city's cultural organisations have outreach programmes in places targeted at young people. In addition to this we have established a Cultural Education Partnership. The partnership enables art and cultural organisations, educational institutions and the council to come together to create a joined-up art and cultural offer, to share resources and bring about a more coherent and visible delivery of cultural education. The Cultural Education Partnership reports directly into the Youth Partnership Board. This complements the governance structure and impact of the Youth Partnership, which is chaired by a secondary head teacher and has representatives from business and Local Enterprise Partnership representatives.

There is a growing need to match skills training to the needs of local employers. In turn, this can help to reduce poverty and the fractured transition from education to employment. In order to facilitate this pathway into work for young people in the city from our local schools, our Schools Partnership will support the Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership (OxLEP) to connect secondary schools with business.

A good example where we are working in partnership to support young people not in education, employment or training (NEET) is the *Unlocking Potential* project. It is a countywide project to support young people to quickly develop self-confidence, self-esteem, work readiness and employability. The project is led by Oxford City Council, working with a delivery partnership led by Aspire, and including a range of voluntary organisations and the County Council. It is funded by the Lottery and European Social Fund money. The project was commissioned by OxLEP and runs from January 2017 to December 2019. The project aims to support 220 young people aged 17-19 who have been unemployed for six months or more by engaging them in activities which lead to training and employment pathways.

We will take a leadership role with apprenticeships, encouraging our partners in the City to join us in signing the Apprenticeship Charter, and build on the positive progress we have already made across the council recruiting local apprentices and see how we can work with our partners to focus apprentices towards less advantaged young people. We will continue to build on the future leaders programme in Youth Ambition so young people are able to enter the workforce in development roles.

We will work with partners on the Youth Partnership Board to improve and expand the work experience placements we offer and encourage partners to the same. We will improve our own work

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experience offer and explore an Oxford City Award for schools for the greatest preparation for work and for students engaged in highly successful work experience.

*“As an employer we will enact a model of good practice providing meaningful opportunities for young people and use our services to support and enrich learning experiences for less advantaged young people”*

## C. Impact: Collecting Data, Measuring Quality and Sustaining Success

We are very aware that our vision need a long term focus and that there are a vast range of ever changing variables that impact how a young person develops. As such, we are very careful in our how we use data and how we link the work we undertake to improved outcomes for young people.

We will use performance indicators, case studies and our social impact methodology to demonstrate progress.

Our zoning approach will help us to continue to improve how we demonstrate the life chances of children and young people.

We will also quality assure our Youth Ambition Programme using the National Youth Agencies assurance framework. This is a detailed assessment against a range of criteria such as the governance and safeguarding of our work with young people through to how well we involve them in decisions that impact.

We have built up a range of sessions in our Youth Ambition Programme and a high level of participation. While this is very positive, we need to focus more on quality and inclusion and therefore the impact of what we do, and this is why we are targeting maintaining the same level of usage.

Alongside this, we have also developed two sets of measures to monitor the effectiveness of this strategy. The first set (C&YP 1-4) looks at the numbers and engagement of young people and the second set (C&YP 5-9) looks to show the impact and value we are making to the lives of young people living in Oxford.

### What we will achieve

Ref	Measure	2018 target	2022 target
C&YP1	Numbers of young people engaged in the Youth Ambition Programme and a representative balance of users	6,000	6,000
C&YP2	Satisfaction with the activities we provide for young people.	> 90% satisfied	> 90% satisfied > 50% excellent

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C&YP3	Young people’s voice and influence	> 80% of grant and recruitment decisions within Youth Ambition impacting young people are made with the active involvement of young people.	> 100% of grant decisions impacting young people are made with the active involvement of young people.
C&YP4	Evidence of impact for increased participation of young people in decision making.	Six examples per year.	Ten examples per year.
C&YP5	Health & Wellbeing	Stabilise the under 17s usage at our leisure centres.	Increase the under 17s usage at our leisure centres by 10% from the 2018 figure
C&YP6	Satisfaction with the support we give to schools	Set baseline	The schools we partner with say our support is outstanding.
C&YP7	Social value of the Youth Ambition Programme	>£12 million per year	>£12.2 million per year

*Fig. 4 Achieving Positive Experiences for Young People’s using our services*

## D. Conclusion

Across the County, children’s services are in a state of change and the new structures and ways of delivering services have not yet been embedded. Oxford City Council is actively engaging with the Children’s Trust and within key working groups to ensure that the needs of the city are considered at a strategic level and to monitor the impact of outcomes for children in the city.

The City Council has made positive progress with its work with young people. This strategy shows how we will continue to do so and build on the process we have made with our partners to improve the life chances of young people, and especially those in greatest need. We have developed measures where we can demonstrate the impact of our role, rather than trying to measure things where we have a limited involvement.

By taking a genuine partnership approach, trying new ways of working and ensuring we have an up to date undertaking of the issues facing young people we are well placed to play our part in making Oxford a great place for all children and young people to grow up in and have the opportunities to fulfil their potential.

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## Appendix 1 – What we will achieve

### Excellent preventative provision

What do we want to achieve?	How are we going to do it?	Milestones	Timescale for completion	Responsibility for delivery	Resources
Develop our sessions and services so they are fully accessible	<p>Audit our community facilities</p> <p>Develop ongoing audits that are supported by young people from underrepresented groups</p> <p>All activity leaders to be continually trained to work with young people with disabilities</p>	<p>Audits start 2018</p> <p>Involve young people 2019</p> <p>Training completed</p>	<p>2022</p> <p>2022</p> <p>2019</p>	<p>Youth Ambition Manager</p> <p>Youth Ambition Manager</p> <p>Youth Ambition Manager</p>	<p>Officer time</p> <p>Officer time</p> <p>£500</p>
Maximise the benefits for young people at our leisure centre	Review the leisure contract to ensure it is effectively meeting the needs of young people	<p>Commence the review</p> <p>Add new activities into the programme</p>	<p>2018</p> <p>2019</p>	Leisure & Performance Manager	Officer time
Increased usage by young people at community centres	Improved activities and promotion of these activities	<p>Develop a young person led audit programme</p> <p>Implement the findings</p>	<p>2018</p> <p>2019</p>	Community centres Manager / Young people	Officer time
Improve how we use our cultural services to support the needs of young people	Improve the current offering	<p>Review the current offering</p> <p>Launch as part of the new Culture Strategy</p>	<p>2018</p> <p>2019</p>	Cultural Development Manager	Officer time
A productive Cultural Education Partnership	The partnership enables art and cultural organisations, educational institutions and the council to come together to create a joined-up art and cultural offer.	Start our delivery programme	2018	Cultural Development Manager	£10,000 Plus £15,000 (High Sheriff) Apply for £25,000 from the Arts Council
Ensure high quality delivery of activities	Implement quality assurance process for programmes we deliver and commission and encourage other to take it up	National Youth Agency Assessment	2020	Youth Ambition Manager	Officer time

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What do we want to achieve?	How are we going to do it?	Milestones	Timescale for completion	Responsibility for delivery	Resources
Excellent coordination of City Council services for young people	Set up strategy steering group made up from all service areas working with young people	First meeting	2022	Head of Service	Officer time
A well-coordinated, sustainable offer for under 5s	Support the city's children's centres  Continued programme of play area improvements  Arts and cultural activities targeted at Early Years	Undertake social labs and fund the best recommendations  Implement a programme of support to foster sustainability  Programme agreed and reviewed annually  Programme agreed and reviewed annually	2018  2020  Rolling programme  Rolling programme	Head of Service  Head of Service  Green Spaces Manager  Cultural Development Manager	£25,000  £100,000 a year  Officer Time Paid for via Cultural Grants programme
Effectively targeted grants	Target the Youth Ambition Grants towards the four areas in the needs assessment  Make sure our broader grants and commissioning programme has the areas in the needs assessment at its heart	Review grants  Improved criteria  Review grants	Summer 2018  2019  2018	Grants officer  Youth Ambition Manager  Grants officer	£50,000    £1.45 million
Improved co-ordination of young people's activities	Develop youth partnerships (or the most suitable model) in each target area that feed into the Youth Partnership Board  Annual Working Together event  Joined up funding bids	Review meetings already in place  Pilot using the Ready by 21 Framework  Event held  Submit a bid every two years	2018  2019  Every November  First bid from the Youth Partnership Board 2018	Youth Ambition Manager  Youth Ambition Manager  Youth Ambition Manager Chair of the Youth Partners Board	Officer time  £500 a year for each group £500  Officer time
Improve schools capacity to increase attainment by offering partnership support	Pilot a more formal partnership approach with schools and create a partnership plan. During the pilot we will assess the effectiveness of the approach and obtain a better understanding of the resources that are needed if we were to expand the approach to the city's other secondary schools.	Partnership plan in place at Saint Gregory the Great  Evaluate the pilot  Start working with a second school	2018  2019  2020	Head of Service  Head of Service  Head of Service	Officer time

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		Have a partnership plan with all five secondary schools	2023	Head of Service	
Help to connect schools with supportive networks	Within the schools partnership pilot include improving enterprise links	Include within the St Gregory the Great pilot	2018	OXLEP representative	Officer time

## Excellent partnership working

### Implementing the Ready by 21 framework to support our partnership working

What do we want to achieve?	How are we going to do it?	Milestones	Timescale for completion	Responsibility for delivery	Resources
A shared framework of delivery that is shared across different partners in different sectors	Using the shared delivery framework to guide our strategic plan.  Raising awareness of the framework with our partners through the Youth Partnership Board and the Youth Ambition Grants.	Communications strategy for internal and external partners	2019	Partnerships and Policy  Head of Service	Officer time
Improved co-ordination of young people's activities	Develop youth partnerships using the Ready by 21 framework in each target area that feed into the Youth Partnership Board	Pilot using the Ready by 21 Framework	2019	Youth Ambition Manager	£500 a year for each group
Pilot the zoning approach in a local area in the City	Developing a partnership with Oxfordshire County Council and other local partners to focus on specific issues	2018 Setting up pilot zone in the City using Ready By 21 Framework	2020	Youth Ambition Manager	Officer time

### Using Social Impact Zones to support our partnership working

What do we want to achieve?	How are we going to do it?	Milestones	Timescale for completion	Responsibility for delivery	Resources
Pilot the zoning approach in a local area in the City	Developing a partnership with Oxfordshire County Council to focus on specific issues  Setting up a local youth partnership with clear goals and resources	2018 Setting up pilot zone in the City  2020 evaluation of pilot zone to date	2020  2020	Youth Ambition Manager	Officer time
Improve how we use data and information	Undertake a data collection and review exercise to continue to drive our priorities.  Ensure an annual review carries out a feedback process which responds to this data to drive the impact and outcomes of this strategy.	Coordinate Population level data mapping of Children and Young People in Oxford.  Working with partners to continually review and update our work plan	2019  2020	Data Analyst  Youth Ambition Manager	Officer time

# Appendix 1

## Equality, inclusion and engagement

What do we want to achieve?	How are we going to do it?	Milestones	Timescale for completion	Responsibility for delivery	Resources
Develop our sessions and services so they are fully accessible	Audit our community facilities	Audits start 2018	2023	Youth Ambition Manager	Officer time
	Develop on-going audits that are supported by young people from underrepresented groups	Involve young people 2019	2023	Youth Ambition Manager Performance Manger	Officer time
	Explore quality assurance linked to inclusion	Exploration 2019	If viable, 2020		Officer time
Our decisions take account of the views of young people	Effective engagement, consultation and involve young people in relevant meetings	Develop a young person's committee.	2019	Youth Engagement Officer	Officer time
		Develop 10 young people every year so they can effectively participate	2020		
Involve young people in meetings that affect them	Identify meaningful opportunities	Attendance at the Youth Partnership Board	2019	Youth engagement officers	Officer time
Effective use of social media	Review and improve how we use social media to communicate with young people	Social media review	2019	Council comms lead and the Youth Participation Officer	Budget bid in 2018
		Implement new social media plan	2020		
	A well-used App	Review progress	2021 & 2023	Youth Ambition Manager	Officer time
Relevant messages for young people	Involve young people in our communications to them	An annual review	Annual	Council comms lead and the Youth Participation Officer	Existing resources
Relevant messages for young people	Involve young people in our communications to them	Pilot a young person led communications panel	2018	Council comms lead and the Youth Participation Officer	Existing resources
Involve older people in supporting young people	Explore how we can best support intergenerational activities	A plan developed	2021	Youth Ambition and Communities Managers	To be developed
Equitable access to learning opportunities	Work with the universities to offer opportunities to less advantaged young people	Increased take up from less advantaged local people	2022	Head of Community Service / Executive Member for Communities	Officer time
Less advantaged young people are able to access support and services	Work with the County to promote free school meals	Increased take up	2022	Head of Community Service / Executive Member for Communities /	Officer time

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# Appendix 1

	Reduce the financial inclusion of less advantaged young people	Increased take up		Communications Team Revs and benefits manager	
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## Identifying children and young people's needs and achieving the best outcomes for them

What do we want to achieve?	How are we going to do it?	Milestones	Timescale for completion	Responsibility for delivery	Resources
Keep an update to date knowledge of the needs of young people	Undertake an annual review	Present the needs at the autumn Working Together Event	Annual	Youth Ambition Manager	Officer time
Improved mental and sexual health	Work with public health to see how we can better support their work with mental and sexual health	Review the inclusion of these areas into a lottery bid  Identified and implemented ways how we can support these agendas using our preventative services	2018  2018	Head of Service  Head of Service	Officer time  Officer time
Reduce childhood obesity	Become a Sugar Smart City  Targeted sessions within community facilities	Launch 2018  Review current sessions programmes Launch new sessions	Continuous  2018 2018	Sport and Physical Activity Manager	Officer time
43 Young people are safe and secure	All council staff have undertaken relevant levels of safeguarding training  A joined up approach to safeguarding	Annually review and continue to provide role specific training  Active participation on the county safeguarding boards	Rolling programme  Continuous	Safeguarding co-ordinator  Assistant Chief Executive	Officer time  Officer time
More apprenticeships	Continue our programme	Review apprentice opportunities	2023	Economic development manger	Officer time
Improved work experience	Develop more structured placements and share good practice	Review current practices	2019	Economic development Manager / HR Manager	Officer time
Fair pay for young people	Explore an Apprentice Living Wage	Undertake review	2019	HR Manager	Tba

**Appendix 2 – Oxford City Council Services for Young People (hyperlink each one)**



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**Core council services that impact a young person's quality of life**

**HOUSING / ENVIRONMENT / STREETS / PARKS / PLANNING**

***SAFEGUARDING UNDERPINS EVERYTHING WE DO***

# Appendix 1

## Appendix 3 – Where we are working with our partners on the Ready by 21 Framework

Healthy and safe	Connected	Productive	Leading	Working
Parks	Culture	Schools	National Citizens Service	Training providers
Sports development	Youth Ambition	Colleges	Princes Trust	Employers
Housing	Community Centre	Universities	Oxfordshire Youth	Oxfordshire Skills Board
Regeneration team	Play	Children centres		Employment, education and training teams
Community Safety	Community Associations	Behaviour, inclusion and attendance		Job Centre Plus
Social care	Voluntary youth organisations	Sports clubs		
Youth Offending Service		Culture		
CAMHS				
Doctors				
Police				
Culture				

# Appendix 1

## Appendix 4 - Oxford City Council's schools offer

### Strategic Support

Opportunity	Detail
City Council senior manager liaison	A member of the council's senior management team will be the school's key point of contact to provide support on all council related issues
City Council / Schools Partnership	A partnership meeting a few times a year with the council's senior manager, the Locality Officers and Local Councillors with a focus on supporting the school
Advice on external funding	Support to obtain external funding for aspects such as play areas and sports facilities
Financial reviews	A team of senior managers will take a fresh look at the school's financial positions and make recommendations on what changes could be made to improve it
Improve schools facilities and grounds	A range of high quality traded grounds and building service – we save schools money and the quality of services they receive

### Sport, Recreation, Arts & Culture

Opportunity	Detail
Cultural education partnership	Link into cultural partners who want to develop young people's creativity in partnership with schools
Forest Schools	Outdoor education at sites such as Rock Edge in Headington
Youth Voice	Students can get involved in Bungee Radio and participate in Council meetings, so their views influence decisions that affect young people e.g. grant funding panels
Create Development	A programme of positive activities that covers seven areas such as emotional and cognitive development
Sports projects	Such as skater hockey and cycling projects
Free use of the Town Hall	Schools can use this inspirational historic venue free of charge on Tuesdays

### Readiness for work

Opportunity	Detail
Work Experience	We have numerous different roles and are well set up to take placements. We will look to assist those students in the greatest need wherever possible
Apprenticeships	We have excellent apprenticeships in areas such as youth work, trades or business administration. We expect Council Apprentice Ambassadors to go back into schools to deliver awareness workshops, have conversations about their experiences and develop interest in apprenticeships which could lead to work experience or support with making applications