Oxford City Council

Our Strategy 2020-24

The following content will be added to the draft document following the public consultation
- *Foreword by Council Leader*
- *key statistics and trends from the Corporate Profile that provide a current context in respect of Oxford's economy, housing, communities and environment*
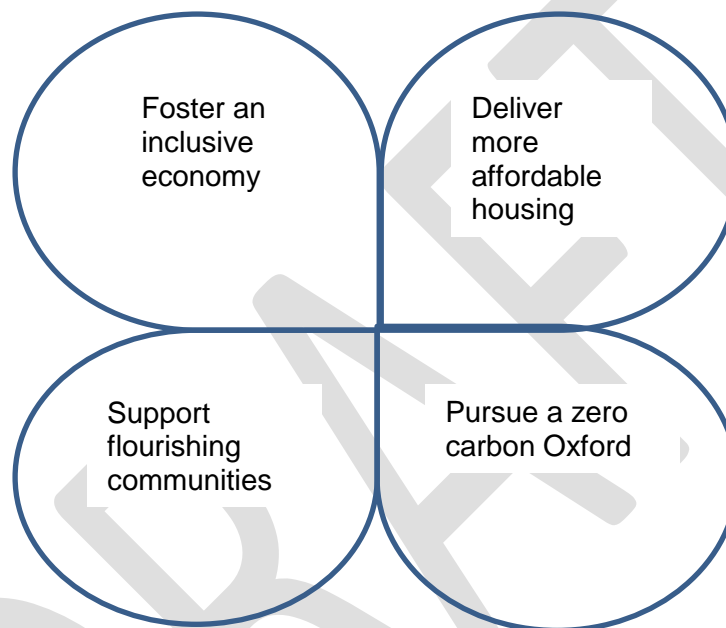
Our vision
Oxford City Council: Building a world-class city for everyone

By creating successful places in which to live and work, supporting our communities and addressing the climate emergency, we will build a fairer, greener city in which everyone can thrive

Our aims
1. Foster an inclusive economy
2. Deliver more affordable housing
3. Support flourishing communities
4. Pursue a zero carbon Oxford

How we work – a customer first approach
1. **We work innovatively and efficiently** – we are a flexible and customer-focused team offering high quality services that meet people's needs
2. **We prioritise tackling inequality** – our services, investments and policy-making are all designed to address the social and financial inequalities across Oxford. We value diversity and seek to build community cohesion. We want to ensure all Oxford's citizens have fair opportunities and a real share in the city's future.
3. **We work in partnership** – we work with other councils, business, communities, voluntary sector, universities, Government and other public sector bodies to ensure the way we shape our services and direct our investments is joined-up with others.
4. **We use our commercial assets for the benefit of local people** – our wholly owned companies and properties create jobs, support the local economy and provide additional funds that support the delivery of public services
5. **We are a campaigning organisation** – we work actively to engage and influence others to help achieve our aims

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Foster an inclusive economy

Oxford needs a more inclusive economy in which wealth is distributed across our communities and where all residents can share the benefits of growth.

Inclusive economy outcomes		
Deliver	1.	Our staff are skilled and confident in delivering services our residents want and the workforce as a whole better reflects Oxford's diverse population
	2.	Our supply chain supports more local businesses, including social enterprises and cooperatives, promoting wider benefits to the local economy
Partner	3.	Oxford's economy is stronger, with diverse sectors providing a wider range of accessible business and employment opportunities
	4.	We have secured different types of new workspace in the city to support business and employment growth
	5.	The movement of people and goods into and within the city has improved, resulting in less congestion, better air quality and faster journey times
	6.	The city centre is relevant and accessible to more of our citizens, while the impacts of tourism are better managed and more of its economic benefits retained locally
	7.	The city centre is expanding to the west, including attractive new areas emerging around the station, in Oxpens and Osney Mead
Influence	8.	Many more of Oxford's employers are socially and environmentally responsible, pay the Oxford Living Wage and consider people and planet alongside profit
	9.	Oxford is improving the workforce skills it needs through better educational attainment and more training for the jobs of the future

Headline actions that underpin these

- Implement the Oxford City Council Workforce Equalities Action Plan to boost employee diversity through recruitment and apprenticeships and expand the management opportunities for Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) staff and women
- Use Oxford City Council and Oxford Direct Services Ltd (ODS) purchasing power to increase the reinvestment of money into the local economy by placing an increased emphasis on social value, alongside quality and cost measures
- Establish a new Asset Management Strategy to guide the diversification of our commercial property investment portfolio, prioritise investment and management of Oxford City Council's non-housing assets, and how we could use our properties to help generate wealth locally and support existing and new small businesses, social enterprises and cooperatives
- Implement an new inclusive Economic Strategy to increase the opportunities for disadvantaged groups to have a fair share in the city's economy and reduce its impact on the environment; while also setting out a plan for delivering the types of different employment space needed to support a more diverse economy
- Build closer partnerships with the universities to boost productivity in the city's economy and extend economic opportunities to a wider range of Oxford's citizens

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- Work with Oxfordshire County Council to implement Connecting Oxford and improve bus and cycle routes into and around the city, better connecting key employment sites
- Attract investment to build a new Oxford Station and expand its capacity to provide greater connectivity nationally and locally, including securing commitment to the opening of the Cowley Branch line to passengers
- Create more accessible public space in the city centre for people to enjoy and reprioritise road space for pedestrians, cyclists and buses
- Implement a city centre strategy to support independent retailers, enhance the Covered Market, widen the cultural offer, support more temporary uses of empty properties, encourage longer stays by tourists and reduce the impact of coaches and overcrowded streets in the heart of the city
- Work with partners to create a new mixed housing and commercial quarter in the city centre's west end, alongside infrastructure improvements to create more sustainable transport and movement routes in the area
- Encourage investment in new skills and apprenticeships across the local economy to manage the technology challenge to existing jobs
- Promote the Oxford Living Wage and seek to double the number of Oxford employers that adopt it

Deliver more affordable housing

Intervention is needed to address Oxford's housing crisis where existing homes are unaffordable for many and demand for good quality homes outstrips what is available.

Housing delivery outcomes	
Deliver	1. We have increased the supply of high quality, energy efficient housing with a balanced mix of homes for sale and to rent at different price points
	2. Our Blackbird Leys regeneration delivers high quality homes and a better use of space
	3. More Council and private sector tenants are supported to stay in their homes where they face the prospect of eviction
Partner	4. We have created a positive planning environment so developers, housing associations and others view Oxford as a good place to build a range of different housing types
	5. With other councils we have an agreed countywide approach to meeting housing need
	6. Working with housing associations we have delivered more move on accommodation for people housed in homeless hostels
	7. Working with landlords we have improved the quality and energy efficiency of privately-rented homes in Oxford.
Influence	8. Oxford's Green Belt is expanded, with better quality land elsewhere replacing some land around the city which is freed up for housing
	9. New housing including new urban extensions are built to create strong communities with good local amenities and transport links into the city

Headline actions that underpin these

- Accelerate our housebuilding programme using Oxford City Housing Ltd (OCHL) and ODS to deliver new affordable homes at speed and scale with a range of tenures including new council housing, shared ownership and a below-market level Oxford Living Rent
- Offer enhanced planning support to developers, social landlords and community-led housing groups to encourage a faster rate of delivery of new homes, including use of factory-built housing and modular construction
- Ensure all new homes are built to high standards, including accessible design and high levels of energy efficiency consistent with Oxford's journey towards net zero carbon emissions
- Review our existing council housing stock and work with tenants to improve its condition and accessibility
- Be an exemplar landlord ourselves and strengthen our relationships with housing associations to improve the service they provide to their tenants
- Take a preventative-led approach to homelessness, working with landlords and tenants to keep them housed in their existing homes
- Implement a selective licencing scheme to improve standards in private sector housing

- Seek re-designation of some of the Green Belt land next to the city, replacing it with additional and higher quality land elsewhere
- Work with neighbouring councils to address housing need across Oxford's functional economic area to house people close to where they work and in places that enhance a sense of community and wellbeing

Support flourishing communities

Oxford's diverse communities should be equipped, supported and enabled to ensure everyone is able to play a full part in the life of our city.

Flourishing communities outcomes	
Deliver	1. Our services, grants, community and leisure facilities, parks and cultural events have helped reduce inequality, increase cohesion and improve health and wellbeing across Oxford's communities
	2. Children and young people's resilience and confidence is increased through the educational and recreational activities we offer
	3. Our public spaces remain clean, safe, well maintained and are more accessible
Partner	4. With a focus on homelessness prevention, and working with neighbouring councils and partners, we ensure nobody has to sleep rough on the streets of Oxford
	5. Homeless individuals and families in Oxford are moved more rapidly through temporary accommodation into secure housing and are helped to improve health and job prospects
	6. Local voluntary and community groups are supported and enabled to take a greater role in improving the city and the lives of residents
	7. Increasing numbers of people walk and cycle around the city
	8. Our work with Thames Valley Police keeps communities safe and has helped to reduce hate crime, human trafficking, drugs misuse and antisocial behaviour
	9. Vulnerable people are safeguarded against harm
Influence	10. Oxford's diversity is celebrated and communities are more cohesive
	11. Residents are actively engaged in civic and political life

Headline actions that underpin these

− Implement an Equalities Action Plan that shapes our services and use of our community assets to address inequalities particularly for disadvantaged and excluded groups
− Develop data sources to better understand the strengths and needs of our diverse communities and to target our work to where the gaps are
− Work with local residents to understand their needs and extend our practice to better involve them in design and decision-making in regard to Council services and facilities, and simplify the way they can engage with us
− Modernise our community assets and explore innovative approaches for their operation which encourages engagement and a sense of community ownership
− Deliver an Active and Vibrant City Strategy that sets ambitions and actions to reduce isolation and support community involvement, health and wellbeing through active lifestyles, volunteering, cultural engagement, and use of our parks and community assets
− Work with neighbouring councils and partners in the city to deliver a cross-county approach to early intervention on rough sleeping and providing wraparound to support people moving from rough sleeping to safe and stable living arrangements

- Develop a "One Council" approach to tackling homelessness, antisocial behaviour, nuisance and improving community safety
- Work with Thames Valley Police, other partners and communities to tackle the visible drugs market, challenge Antisemitism and Islamophobia, human trafficking and serious antisocial behaviour
- Use our grants programme and partnership working to enable local voluntary and community groups to provide facilities and services that improve outcomes for citizens and reduce inequalities across our communities
- Celebrate diversity by supporting and stimulating a wide variety of events and cultural activities that bring Oxford people together

Pursue a zero carbon Oxford

The clear message from Oxford's Citizens' Assembly on Climate Change is that citizens want the city to continue to take a lead in reducing emissions and increasing biodiversity

Pursue a zero carbon Oxford outcomes	
Deliver	1. Oxford City Council has made significant progress on the journey to reduce its own carbon footprint to zero
	2. All new building by Oxford City Council is progressing towards near or net-zero carbon standards
	3. Our existing council housing is being made more energy efficient
Partner	4. Oxford has taken a leading role in the adoption of electric vehicles
	5. Air quality throughout the city continues to improve
	6. All new development in Oxford is progressing towards near or net-zero carbon standards, with some examples of carbon positive development
	7. Higher energy efficiency standards set for residential and commercial landlords
	8. Our streets, neighbourhoods and open spaces are greener with more trees and other plants
	9. The city is more resilient to climate change including improved flood defences
Influence	10. Government introduces more rigorous energy efficiency standards on new build and brings forward the end of petrol and diesel vehicle sales
	11. Residents, businesses and other organisations in the city are taking action to reduce carbon emissions and increase biodiversity
	12. Residents, businesses and other organisations in the city recycle more and produce less waste

Headline actions that underpin these

- Reduce Oxford City Council's carbon footprint from its own activities zero where we pay the bill – including our buildings and fleet
- Develop and implement an action plan in response to the recommendations of the Oxford Citizens Assembly on Climate Change
- Implement a programme of retrofitting our council housing to significantly reduce emissions
- Work in partnership across the county to coordinate our response to the climate emergency
- Use our influence with government, partners, businesses and residents to lobby, inform, convene, educate and campaign to help respond to the climate emergency
- All commercial and residential landlords engaged over levelling up energy efficiency standards towards B rating, with information provided and enforcement action where necessary
- Create a citywide network of electric vehicle charging points to encourage the take-up of electric vehicles
- Implement a Zero Emissions Zone in the city to improve air quality and encourage further take up of ultralow emission vehicles

- Encourage and enable further innovation and investment in green technology in Oxford, moving from pilot to full deployment wherever possible
- Use our planning system to ensure the natural environment is enhanced and carbon emissions are reduced through all new development
- Work in partnership to increase the city's resilience to climate change, particularly flooding
- Encourage and enable public access to nature and support biodiversity and tree-planting
- Reduce amount of waste we collect and increase the proportion we recycle
- Review our people strategy, ways of working and use of technology to reduce our overall travel to work impact on the environment

Our organisation

To achieve our aims, we need to be responsible, reliable, adaptable and innovative as an organisation. We need to think and act strategically and at pace. We need a diverse workforce that is representative of Oxford and offers opportunities to under-represented or disadvantaged groups. We need the right structures in place including wholly-owned businesses, joint ventures and partnerships to maximise the resources we can bring to bear. We need strong governance, robust processes and efficient systems to ensure our people are equipped and empowered to deliver their best for Oxford.

Our vision for our organisation

A skilled and confident team, with clear roles and responsibilities, delivering flexible services for residents that respond to continuing change.

Our values for our organisation

- Take personal responsibility for our actions
- Put communities' and customers' needs first
- Embrace innovation
- Value diversity

The external context for our strategy

Like all organisations we need to be prepared for, and responsive to developing trends, new challenges and change that emerge at a local, regional, national and global level. These include both threats and opportunities for Oxford. Over the next four years we expect this to include:

- The need to significantly accelerate actions to combat climate change while managing increased risks of flooding
- Managing and mitigating the impacts of Brexit on Oxford's residents and businesses
- Opportunities to apply innovations in technology and big data to improve the productivity of public services, alongside the task of managing the disruption to jobs that is likely to accompany this
- Harnessing the Ox-Cam growth opportunity to ensure we deliver inclusive and sustainable growth for Oxfordshire
- The high cost of housing in Oxford putting ownership out of the reach of many, and insecure tenancies preventing families setting down roots
- Rising levels of obesity and an ageing population that puts increasing pressure on many public services
- The increasing impact of cybercrime

How we'll use this strategy

This strategy is designed to be used as a framework to guide our thinking and decision-making and resource allocation, and help ensure that everything we do takes us closer to achieving our vision. It succeeds Oxford City Council's Corporate Plan 2016-20 and updates our objectives, while maintaining the same overarching aims to achieve sustainable systematic change for Oxford.

The strategy is underpinned by the Mid Term Financial Strategy 2020-2024 that sets out our financial priorities and commitments over the next four years. To support the delivery of the strategy, we will produce an annual Business Plan that will set specific priorities for the year ahead and report on progress against agreed key performance indicators. In turn the Business Plan will be complemented by Oxford City Council's annual Budget that will allocate resources against the priorities set.

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