

To: Cabinet
Date: 16 March 2022
Report of: Head of Corporate Strategy
Title of Report: Oxford City Council Corporate Business Plan 2022/23

Summary and recommendations	
Purpose of report:	To approve Oxford City Council's Corporate Business Plan priorities 2022/23
Key decision:	Yes
Cabinet Member:	Cllr Susan Brown Leader and Cabinet Member for Inclusive Growth, Economic Recovery and Partnerships
Corporate Priority:	All Council strategy priorities
Policy Framework:	Council Strategy 2020-2024

Recommendation(s): That Cabinet resolves to:	
1.	Agree the draft Oxford City Council Corporate Business Plan priorities 2022/23, which set out the Council's priority work for the next financial year;
2.	Delegate authority to the Head of Corporate Strategy in consultation with the Council Leader to make further minor amendments to the draft Business Plan priorities before implementation;
3.	Note the progress made in delivery against the actions set out in the current year's Corporate Business Plan 2021/22.

Appendices	
Appendix 1	Oxford City Council's Draft Corporate Business Plan priorities 2022/23
Appendix 2	Oxford City Council Corporate Business Plan 2021/22 update
Appendix 3	Oxford City Council Corporate Strategy 2020-24

Introduction and background

1. Oxford City Council's Business Plan 2022-23 is an annual document that sets out publically the Council's priority work programme activities for the year.
2. The Draft Business Plan 2022-23 sets out the third year of activity toward achieving the outcomes set out in our Council Strategy 20-24. Some of the actions are expected to extend into 2024.
3. The Business Plan was developed in conjunction with, and is supported by, the annual budget and medium term financial plan (MTFP) that will allocate resources against the agreed priorities.
4. The Business Plan will inform the actions laid out in each department service plan, and cascaded down into individual employee objectives and targets for the year.
5. Progress in delivery of the actions set out within the Business Plan will be tracked through the year, alongside the existing corporate key performance indicators.

Development of the Business Plan 2022/23

6. This year, the number of key actions under each corporate priority has been significantly reduced, compared with last year – to help improve the focus and clarity of the Business Plan. Therefore, this year each section has between 11-14 key actions rather, than the 57-76 actions in each section last year. It should be noted therefore that there are many important areas of activity that are not captured within the Business Plan, but will nonetheless be identified within individual departmental Service Plans.
7. A number of the important work strands under the Council's Change Programme – our internal transformation programme - don't sit neatly under any of the Corporate Priority areas, and so these are captured in an a separate section of the Business Plan.
8. The process for development of the Draft Business Plan 2022-23 has included a workshop sessions with Directors and Heads of Service and a Cabinet Development Day.

Document structure

9. The Business Plan activities sit against our four Council Strategy 20-24 priorities: Enable an Inclusive Economy; Deliver More, Affordable Housing; Support Thriving Communities and Pursue a Zero Carbon Oxford.
10. Many activities within the Business Plan are cross cutting in their nature, however each activity has been allocated against one of the four strategic priorities to avoid repetition.

Business Plan 2021/22 update

11. Despite the continuation of the COVID pandemic throughout 2021/22, and the additional burdens and duties it placed on the Council to provide strategic and operational responses, significant progress has been made in delivery of the current year's Business Plan.
12. Key achievements include:
 - a. The creation of the new countywide Oxfordshire Inclusive Economy Partnership which has agreed to establish a social value and procurement group of anchor institutions;

- b. An extensive and ongoing programme of implementation of the Council's People Strategy across its workforce to build engagement, increase skills, , foster individual development, embed core values and, ultimately, improve the service we offer residents;
- c. Provision of £132 million of COVID Grants and Rate Reliefs to help impacted businesses and support the wider economy up to the end of December 2021. Further grants and reliefs are still being applied;
- d. Development of a new Oxford Economic Strategy and City Centre Action Plan;
- e. Delivery of a Meanwhile programme of temporary commercial and retail accommodation to support developing businesses;
- f. Launch of the ZEZ Pilot in Oxford on 28 February 2022 – the first zero emission zone in the UK;
- g. A new Oxford City Housing Ltd (OCHL) Business Plan which increases the quantum and range of development sites both within and outside of Oxford, to accelerate delivery of homes and to increase returns to the Council;
- h. ODS gained PAS2030 accreditation and is now able to undertake retrofit solutions and provide building fabric insulation measures for new build;
- i. Agreement reached with Cherwell District Council that homes delivered for Oxford unmet will be allocated through the Oxford housing register directly;
- j. Delivery of more tailored homelessness prevention support, including for those who have experienced domestic abuse, for those who need tenancy sustainment support alongside help with finding work, and assisting tenants with landlord mediation;
- k. Delivery of the Rough Sleeping Accommodation Programme to improve access to private housing for rough sleepers and new Housing First units with support delivered by A2 Dominion;
- l. Early Stage Issues Consultation on the Oxford Local Plan 2040 seeking the views of the community and stakeholders on the scope and broad content of the Plan;
- m. Submission of an application to Government for a Selective Licencing Scheme to improve housing standards across the private rented sector in Oxford;
- n. Commencement of the integration of Housing, Communities, Customer Services and Regulatory Services with two distinct community hubs acting as themed pilots to understand how more joined up services can be provided to tenants and residents;
- o. 6 monthly review and evaluation of the GO-Active Move Together programme demonstrated it is working well;
- p. An application for bathing water status for two stretches of the River Thames in Port Meadow was submitted to DEFRA. The Council awaits the Government's response;

- q. Launching a Government funded £480k programme of targeted activity across the city to increase vaccination take up among those groups that have been more vaccine hesitant;
- r. Successful bids to the Safer Streets Fund have significantly increased CCTV quality and coverage in the city and is enabling partnership working on the Violence Against Women and Girls agenda;
- s. A £14m decarbonisation programme across Hinksey Outdoor Pool, Leys Pool and Leisure, Ferry Leisure Centre and Barton Leisure Centre on course for completion across these sites between March and June 2022, which will reduce the Council's carbon footprint by 20%;
- t. Work currently progressing to retrofit 240 council homes with measures such as loft and cavity wall insulation, external wall insulation and air source heat pumps;
- u. A new OCHL carbon reduction target set of 70% below 2013 Building Regulations – which is being applied across new developments including Almonds Farm, Northfield hostel and Lanham Way;
- v. Construction of the largest public EV charging hub underway at Redbridge Park & Ride, due for completion in May 2022;
- w. An updated Asset Management Strategy that commits the Council to make future decisions around operational land and buildings that fully integrate carbon management goals and targets;
- x. Commissioning of 8 new decarbonisation workstreams through the Zero Carbon Oxford Partnership, involving BMW Mini, Oxford University, Scottish & Southern Energy, Lucy Group, Oxford Health Trust and others.

Financial Implications

- 13. The Business Plan 2022-23 sets out the high level activities and milestones that are supported in the Council budget 2022-23. It does not contain additional or specific expenditure commitments.

Legal Implications

- 14. There are no legal issues associated with the Business plan.

Level of Risk

- 15. Delivery of the Business Plan 2022-23 is linked with the Budget 2022-23 and the financial and operational health of the Council. This is a high level strategic document that doesn't include risks associated with each of the measures it sets out, however failure to deliver the Business Plan carries a reputational risk to the Council.

Equalities Impact

- 16. The Business Plan 2022-23 is concerned with high level activities and milestones. It contains specific actions that will support the delivery of the Council's strategic objectives.
- 17. Equality, diversity and inclusion are together a key focus for all the Council's work. They form a core part of all our policies and partnerships, for our residents, staff

and elected members. As part of delivering the actions through the Business Plan, we will, *inter alia*:

- a. Produce the Oxford City Council Equality and Diversity strategy in 2022;
- b. Embed the People Strategy to ensure our staff are skilled and confident in delivering services our residents want, and the workforce as a whole better reflects Oxford's diverse population;
- c. 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;
- d. Implement a new inclusive Economic Strategy to increase the opportunities for disadvantaged groups to have a fair share in the city's economy;
- e. Deliver services, grants, community and leisure facilities, parks and cultural events that help reduce inequality, increase cohesion and improve health and wellbeing across Oxford's communities;
- f. Support and enable local voluntary and community groups to take a greater role in improving the city and the lives of residents;
- g. Implement a Zero Emission Zone to cut air pollution and increase opportunities for active travel – walking and cycling - positively impacting on the health of residents across the City;
- h. Use our work with our subsidiaries ODS and OCHL to ensure the essential services they provide for us prioritise the same focus on equality, diversity and inclusion;
- i. Continue our commitment to the Oxford Anti-Racism Charter by encouraging communities, businesses and organisations to take ownership of their own contributions to anti-racism in the city;
- j. Ensure that staff employed directly or on behalf of the city council are paid at least the Oxford Living Wage, and encourage our suppliers to do the same;
- k. Implement the new Procurement Strategy that seeks to increase weighting on Social Value from 5% to 10%;
- l. Develop an Inclusive Economy Charter for the city;
- m. Work with key partners including OxLEP and the Oxfordshire Inclusive Economy Partnership to increase the sector-based higher and advanced level apprenticeship programmes delivered locally;
- n. Set out ambitious plans to increase the supply of affordable housing, including social rent and intermediate tenure types;
- o. Trial new homelessness prevention services for private rented sector tenants, establishing a "single gateway" approach to make it easier for people to get the support they need quickly;
- p. Extend the impact of social prescribing that links funding to health improvement activities delivered through the Council's leisure, wellbeing and community facilities;

- q. Implement the countywide homelessness prevention strategy to reduce homelessness and rough sleeping in Oxford;
- r. Tackle issues of isolation in our elderly communities;
- s. Deliver the Oxford Safer Communities Partnership's Violence Against Women and Girls, and Hate Crime plans;
- t. Establish a Retrofitting Champions scheme to highlight the financial and environmental benefits of Council-funded insulation measures and boost take up among tenants.

Environmental Implications

18. The Business Plan 2022/23 sets out the third year plans for delivery of the Council Strategy 2020-24 corporate priority: Pursue a Zero Carbon Oxford. It sets out a number of key actions that act on the clear message from Oxford's Citizens' Assembly on Climate Change to continue to take a lead in reducing emissions and increasing biodiversity.
19. Planned actions to achieve these objectives include:
 - a. Accelerating the rate of retrofit of Council housing stock;
 - b. Setting out plans for implementation of EV infrastructure across Oxford and the further electrification of the ODS fleet;
 - c. Strengthening our work with ZCOP partners to deliver citywide decarbonisation against the Zero Carbon Oxford Roadmap;
 - d. Increasing compliance with energy efficiency regulations among residential landlords;
 - e. Finalising plans through extensive engagement with key stakeholders, community groups and residents, for implementation of a range of transport measures that may include Connecting Oxford, the ZEZ, extension of Controlled Parking Zones and a 20mph speed limit that will improve air quality and cut carbon emissions;
 - f. Build public understanding of the importance of biodiversity and set a policy on offsetting linked to biodiversity enhancement;
 - g. Planting more street trees;
 - h. Engaging and encouraging all residents to cut their own carbon emissions;
 - i. Delivering a new Recycling and Waste Strategy for Oxford.

Conclusion

20. The Oxford City Council Business Plan 2022/23 provides a focused and high level plan for the key actions the Council intends to take over the next year to deliver its strategy across its four priorities: inclusive economy, housing delivery, thriving communities and zero carbon. The document will be key to setting service plans for all Council departments, and cascaded down into individual employee objectives and targets for the year.

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Background Papers: None

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