

CONSULTATION DRAFT

Oxford City Council Corporate Plan 2012–2017

Contents

1. Foreword from Group Leaders and the Chief Executive
2. Our City
3. Your Council: who we are and what we do
4. Your Council: political structure (to be inserted)
5. Management structure (to be inserted)
6. Corporate Priorities
 - A vibrant and sustainable economy
 - Meeting housing need
 - Strong and active communities
 - Cleaner greener Oxford
 - An efficient and effective council.
7. Working with others
8. Spending plans 2012-17 (to be inserted after agreement of the budget in February 2012)
9. Conclusion.

CONSULTATION DRAFT

Foreword from Group Leaders and the Chief Executive

Welcome to Oxford City Council's Corporate Plan for 2012–2017

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

The Corporate Plan reaffirms the Council's ambition – developed with our partners, including business, community organisations, the health and education sectors and the County Council – to make Oxford a world-class city for all its citizens. It also reaffirms our plans for transforming the Council's operational efficiency. We intend to be an effective council, which delivers high quality services and excellent value for money.

Over the last three years we have made significant steps toward realising our ambitions. We have made efficiency savings of around £4m a year. Further reductions of £9.5m are planned over the period 2011/12 – 2014/15. £5.9m of the total savings relate to the delivery of further efficiencies across the organisation. A further 2% reduction will be made thereafter up until 2016/17. We have improved performance across 84% of our indicators.

Over the last twelve months, we have continued to make good progress in delivering our broader aspirations for the city, especially for its more deprived communities. We are investing in Oxford's future through a range of capital projects which will create housing, jobs, and an improved quality of life for our citizens.

In the last year we have:

- entered into a joint venture with Grosvenor Estates to build 800 new homes in Barton and contracted with Green Square to build 100 new homes and two new community centres in Northway and Cowley
- refurbished over 50 play areas as part of a £2.5m investment to improve all the city's play facilities
- progressed our plans to build a new, competition standard pool in Blackbird Leys
- opened the Old Fire Station as a combined Crisis Skylight and Arts Centre in November 2011. The facility combines a range of modern and flexible spaces for cultural and arts activities alongside training and support for employment in the creative and hospitality industries
- reduced our city centre office and carbon footprint by transforming St Aldate's Chambers into a modern, flexible working space which can accommodate most of our staff and selling our Blue Boar Street offices; the Ramsay House office space is also on the market
- improved the quality of our website so that most of our services – including payments - are now available on-line
- created a corporate call centre service with one number for all Council services
- opened a new, state-of-the art customer services centre in St. Aldate's Chambers where customers can receive answers to queries about all Council services
- achieved Investors in People accreditation for the whole Council in May 2011. This reflects the level of staff engagement with our transformation programme
- invested further in information technology through our customer relationship management and performance management systems. Investment is critical in developing more efficient and timely service delivery.
- improved employee attendance by reducing sickness absence by 25%.

CONSULTATION DRAFT

The Audit Commission's annual assessment of the City Council's performance says: "This is good performance given the economic backdrop and financial pressures". It also confirms that the Council's use of public funds secures economy, efficiency and effectiveness.

This Corporate Plan sets out details of the progress that we have made across all areas of the Council's work.

We have delivered these improvements against a backdrop of severe spending cuts by central government. The Comprehensive Spending Review for the period 2011-15 set out a major programme of public spending cuts. Local government has been hit hardest of all areas by these cuts. Oxford City Council's net budget for 2010-11 was £29.1m. As a result of the cuts required by government, the budget agreed by Council in February 2011 will reduce the Council's net annual expenditure for 2011-15 to £24.1m. During this time there will be increases that we cannot avoid in salaries, pension costs, and general inflation. As a result of these cost increases, our reduction in expenditure will amount to more than £9m by 2014-15.

It is a tribute to the strong partnership between councillors, council managers, and the trade unions that - against this background - Oxford City Council has agreed financial measures which enable us to continue investing in the city, protecting our core services - particularly those that serve the most vulnerable in our community - and minimising redundancies.

Looking to the future

There are more challenges to come. The measures the government has put in place have not achieved their deficit reduction targets. Changes to the way that council housing is funded will mean that local authorities will be responsible for financing their own housing stock while losing homes under a new discount scheme. Statements by ministers are strongly suggesting that the re-localisation of business rates may imply that the Council's General Fund will receive no central grant. The move to Universal Credit in 2013 has the potential to cause disruption for many of the most vulnerable people in our community. The Council also faces increased demand for services as a consequence of the recession and deficit reduction initiatives by other organisations.

The hallmark of the Council's approach to delivering its ambitions has been: strong financial management; partnership between councillors, council managers, and trade unions; focus; consistency; and a refusal to be knocked off course by external events. We are sticking with this approach.

We remain committed to our core ambition of building a world class city for everyone. The priorities that underpin our core ambition are unchanged:

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

The Council's key commitments in the immediate future include managing the external challenges that we face and addressing the following themes and projects:

- Investing in Oxford's future
 - delivering physical regeneration projects – Barton, Cowley and Northway, Blackbird Leys Pool – in order to deliver new housing and create jobs

CONSULTATION DRAFT

- maintaining and improving on the Decent Homes Standard in Council homes
- completing the play area improvement programme Investing in our sports pavilions so that sporting clubs are encouraged to expand
- investing in the Town Hall and Museum of Oxford in order to enhance its role as a primary community facility for the city and to provide facilities for the conference and concert markets
- protecting vulnerable communities
 - improving the quality of houses in multiple occupation in the private rented sector; and striving to reduce the numbers of people in temporary accommodation
 - challenging the cycle of deprivation by strengthening early intervention and other social programmes aimed at children and families as part of a broader campaign to enhance educational attainment
 - maintaining and increasing our funding for the voluntary and charitable bodies who provide money and other advice, particularly in areas of the city where need is greatest
 - developing an integrated programme of assistance for neighbourhoods whose character is being adversely affected by high levels of private sector renting and entertainment venues
 - Maintaining a coherent offer - including culture, sport and community activities - for young people who are at risk of becoming socially alienated
- Strengthening community engagement
 - embedding Area Forums, Neighbourhood Boards, and Councillor budgets for local projects
 - building community capacity for self-help and participation as a way of continuing to improve our neighbourhoods
 - building community cohesion by using cultural and other binding events and activities to encourage different community groups to celebrate each other
 - continuing to improve our website as a means of encouraging customers to engage with the Council in convenient and cost effective ways
 - being open and transparent in all our activities.
- Embedding the principles of sustainability and carbon reduction
 - reducing our own CO2 emissions, including in Council housing
 - working with our partners in the Low Carbon Oxford partnership to reduce carbon emissions across the city
 - expanding the reach of the cleaner, greener campaign and embedding it in the city's culture
 - continuing to encourage healthy living by improving the quality of the outdoor sports offer in the city and implementing improved arrangements for cycling
 - ensuring that sustainability principles are at the heart of everything that the Council does and that they cut across all the Council's corporate priorities.
- Providing leadership to the city
 - supporting proactive partnership initiatives such as the Oxford Strategic Partnership, Low Carbon Oxford, and the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP)
 - creating the right environment for economic growth in our area; and the transition to a low carbon economy.

CONSULTATION DRAFT

Conclusion

This Corporate Plan sets out some of the opportunities and challenges that will face our city over the next five years and our plans to ensure that Oxford continues on its path to becoming a world class city for us all.

Please let us know what you think about our plans for the future. Your views are very welcome.

CONSULTATION DRAFT

Our City

Oxford is one of the most photographed, filmed, and written about cities in the world. The enduring images are of historic Oxford and these images are vital to our flourishing tourist industry because it is historic Oxford that tourists visit in millions. It is, however, only one part of our city's story. Oxford at the beginning of the 21st century, while still with an historic core and remarkable green spaces, is a far cry from its media stereotype.

Contemporary Oxford is also an economic hub in a world-class knowledge economy in central Oxfordshire. Our sub-region underpins the prosperity, not just of Oxfordshire, but of the south east of England and beyond. In addition to being a major tourist destination, Oxford is also a centre for some of Britain's best hospitals and for medical research, a retail hub and the cultural centre of the region.

In marked contrast to other parts of the county, Oxford is ethnically and culturally diverse with the third highest minority ethnic population in the south east. It is not just diverse but also— because it has the highest proportion of students in England and Wales—youthful, mobile and self-renewing.

Dynamic urban environments provide great opportunities and also difficult challenges. Oxford is no exception. The city is a densely packed urban space— covering only 17.6 square miles—with very high levels of housing density. There are severe pressures on housing stock, with large concentrations of homes in multiple occupation and significant numbers of homeless and other vulnerable groups. The recession has increased the number of families seeking to obtain social housing from 4,500 to over 6,000. The ratio of average wages to house prices remains very near the top of the national ranking and the challenges appear set to intensify as government funding for social housing has been cut and housing benefits are being reduced. As a result more people are likely to become homeless or become at risk of homelessness.

Some areas of the city suffer multiple levels of deprivation—low skills, low incomes, and poor housing. It is also these areas which have been hit hardest by the rise in unemployment during the recession and where the cuts in public services will be felt most. Other challenges remain - central Oxford in particular suffers from traffic congestion and pollution. This dynamic mix of opportunities and challenges is at the heart of contemporary Oxford.

CONSULTATION DRAFT

Your Council: who we are and what we do

Oxford City Council is the democratically elected body for Oxford. In partnership with others, we provide a wide range of services for approximately 150,000 residents, 86,000 people who work in Oxford, and over nine million people who visit the city each year.

Oxford City Council is a District Council, with responsibility for running local planning, housing, Council Tax collection, housing benefits, business rates, environmental health, licensing, electoral registration, refuse and recycling collection, leisure services and parks, economic development, social inclusion, community cohesion, street wardens and park rangers, markets and fairs, tourism and cemeteries.

The Council is composed of 48 Councillors, representing 24 wards (two Councillors for each ward), with half elected every two years. Councillors are democratically accountable to residents of their ward. The overriding duty of Councillors is to the whole community, but they have a special duty to their Ward constituents.

Oxford City Council has a constitution that sets out how the Council operates, how decisions are made, and the procedures that are followed to ensure that the Council is efficient, transparent and accountable to local people.

Oxford City Council's current political make-up is as follows:

Party	Number of Seats
Labour	26 seats
Liberal Democrat	16 seats
Green	5 seats
Independent Working Class Association	1 seat

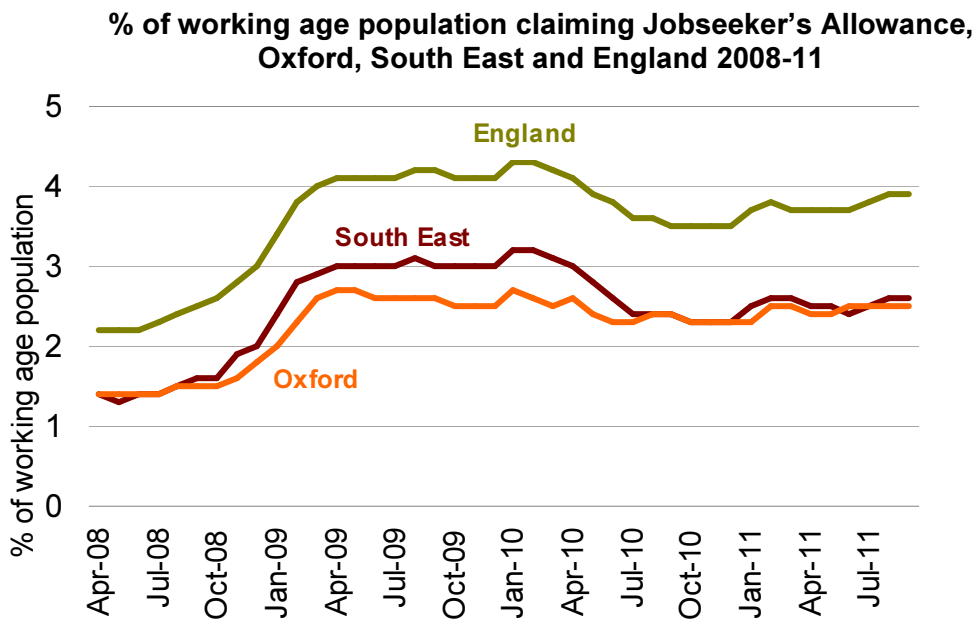
The Labour Group form the political administration on the City Executive Board.

A vibrant, sustainable economy

A strong local economy, supported by effective education and training, and accessible by all is at the heart of vibrant and sustainable communities. Oxford is a global brand for education, health, bioscience, information technology, publishing, the motor industry and tourism. Around 4,500 businesses provide 107,000 jobs and seven of the ten largest employers in the Oxfordshire sub-region are within Oxford.

Local employment

For all its strengths, Oxford did not escape the impact of the 2008/09 recession, as is illustrated by the number of people claiming unemployment benefit or Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA). The city – in common with all other English cities – is now facing the effects of the government's severe public spending cuts for the four years 2010-14.



Source: Department for Work and Pensions

Relative to other areas in the UK, the labour market in Oxford, as measured by job vacancies notified to Jobcentre Plus, looks reasonably buoyant. Oxford also has the unusual distinction of being one of the few cities where the number of new businesses created during the recession was greater than the number of business closures.

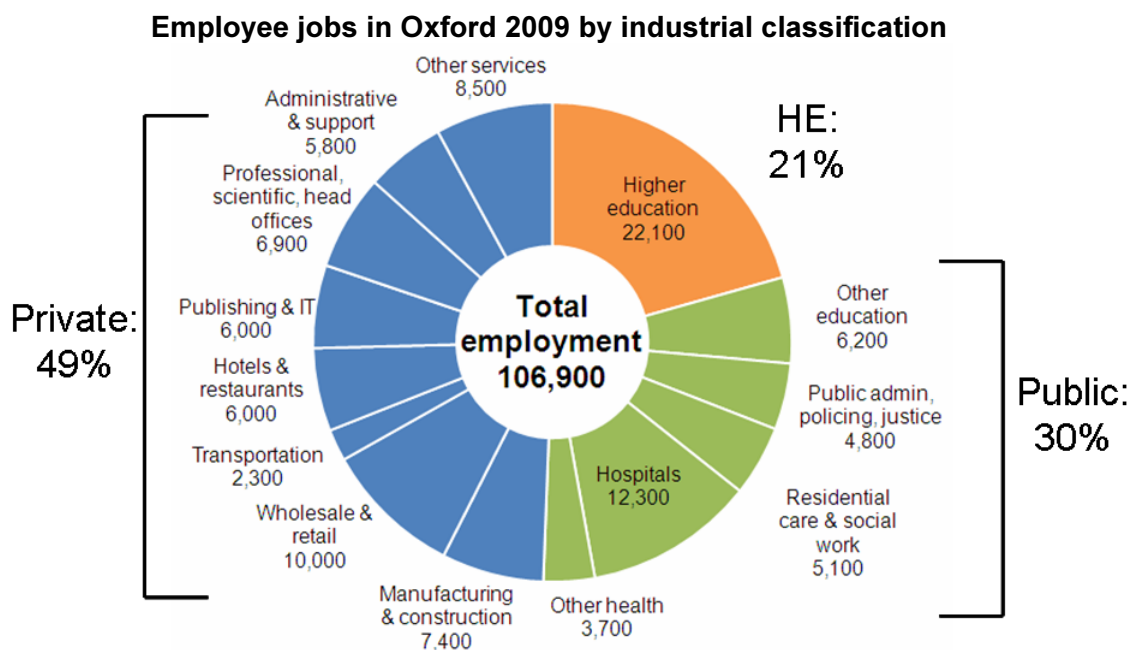
However, the number of JSA claimants in the city is rising. At the time of writing our last Corporate Plan, 2,600 people were claiming JSA in Oxford. This number had risen to 2,800 by October 2011, with recent increases in JSA claimants falling disproportionately on female workers. The national picture is showing a large

CONSULTATION DRAFT

number of part-time job losses as well as full time. This is significant because over recent years we have seen growth in part time jobs at the expense of full time jobs.

Overall, there has been little change in the total number of jobs in Oxford over the last 30 years. As the manufacturing sector has declined, its jobs have been replaced by employment in the health, education and service sectors. 89% of employees now work in services, including 46% in public administration, education and health.

The distribution of employment in Oxford is a cause for concern in the light of the government's economic policies. The policies to which they are committed mean that a large number of jobs directly or indirectly linked to public spending will be under threat over the next five years. The Labour Market Outlook, the net employment index, shows that nationally large-scale public sector job losses are currently overwhelming the slight rise in private sector jobs.



Source: Business Register and Employment Survey, Office for National Statistics

Rebalancing the local economy

The challenge for Oxford in returning to the number of pre-recession jobs, let alone generating new employment, cannot be underestimated. To achieve this there is need for significant business development and growth within our constrained boundaries and in the immediately adjacent areas. Oxfordshire local authorities are working in partnership with the business community to promote the growth of private sector jobs.

Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs) are the government's flagship vehicles for delivering private sector growth and decentralisation. The Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) for the Oxfordshire city region was formally launched in March 2011 and is built around the unique concentration of high-tech businesses and academic input from the universities. The City Council has been an active participant on behalf of its local businesses and residents.

CONSULTATION DRAFT

The LEP is developing a strategy that will attract more investment into the county and a skills development initiative that will coordinate the activities of the various skills providers in Oxfordshire. It has been successful in its bid for Science Vale UK to become an Enterprise Zone. The LEP is well placed to support business and other special interest groups who wish to lobby government - nationally and locally - regarding projects that will add to the city and county's economic health.

The delivery of physical regeneration projects to generate new housing and jobs is a key priority for the City Council and, over the next four years alone, we will be investing around £68m into the local economy – building new houses and improving the city's leisure offer – and leading to the creation of around 900 jobs. We have entered into a joint venture with Grosvenor to build 800 new homes in Barton. GreenSquare has been contracted to build 100 new homes and two new community centres in Northway and Cowley.

We will continue to promote the regeneration of the West End, in partnership with the County Council and other key stakeholders and we will continue to engage with the owners of the Westgate Centre to support an appropriate expansion. Working with the County Council, we will seek external funding to bring forward improvements to Frideswide Square and the rail station.

We are starting work – with developers, local residents and other stakeholders - on an area action plan for the Northern Gateway as a site for mixed use employment-led development. The Northern Gateway site is the last opportunity within Oxford's administrative boundary to provide significant new employment floor-space to support the local economy and employ local people.

In the last year the City Council has welcomed the arrival of world class businesses - including Centrica and SAE - bringing new jobs to the city. We have also seen substantial new investment in the BMW MINI plant in Cowley. The University of Oxford, the Oxford Radcliffe Hospitals NHS Trust and the Nuffield Orthopaedic Centre NHS Trust have confirmed closer collaboration, and with government approval have formed the University of Oxford Hospitals Trust. This further enhances Oxford's position as a centre of excellence in medical care.

The City Council supports the Chiltern Railways Evergreen 3 proposals for the fast link north through Bicester to Marylebone, including a new station at the Water Eaton Park and Ride site. We believe that this will bring positive benefits to Oxford and the wider city region.

The government's Localism Bill, as well as the White Paper on Local Growth, may provide new opportunities for councils to support their local economies. The government proposes new borrowing powers against predicted growth in locally raised business rates that could enable investment in major infrastructure and regeneration projects. It also proposes changes to business rate rules that could be used to support local businesses. We will be exploring these issues over the coming months.

Supporting young people

In June 2011 the City Council and Oxford Strategic Partnership hosted a seminar with colleagues from local primary schools and the County Council to begin developing a joint approach to tackling the low levels of educational attainment that are being achieved in Oxford's primary schools and also at GCSE level. The seminar was a very important step in focussing public and professional attention on the poor levels being achieved in education in the city, and encouraging a partnership

CONSULTATION DRAFT

approach to tackling this issue. Working with schools and other partners to enhance educational attainment and more effectively integrating our schools and communities will be a key priority for the City Council over the coming years. The Council is proposing to allocate £350k annually to this priority over the next five years.

Young people in our deprived communities already face significant difficulties in relation to education and skills. There is a strong risk, particularly as growth is increasingly driven by high-tech businesses and academic input from the universities that this exclusion will deepen. The City Council is encouraging high tech companies wishing to make Oxford and Oxfordshire their base to create additional new apprenticeships and development opportunities so that young people can improve their skills and work readiness.

The City Council is also using its procurement processes to support young people from deprived communities into apprenticeships and employment. We now require all Council contractors to create apprenticeship opportunities as part of all large construction projects. Our joint venture with Grosvenor on the Barton development will result in a training and apprenticeship programme. The Green Square project in Northway and Cowley, will create a minimum of 12 new apprenticeships during the construction stage through its '4ward2work' programme.

In August 2011, the City Council hosted a hugely successful Youth Job Fair, organised by one of our apprentices. Building on the success of this event, we are working with Job Centre Plus and Oxford & Cherwell Valley College to launch a new Work Club which will help people find their first job, return to work, or look for a brand new career.

Supporting local businesses

Oxford City Council has a long-standing commitment to small and medium-sized businesses (SMEs) and set a target of 40% spend with SMEs by March 2012. This target was exceeded by July 2011 and we continue proactively to encourage local suppliers to apply for Council opportunities. We also fast-track payment of invoices to this sector and we have set a target of 10 days.

We are working with Business Link, the Federation of Small Businesses (FSB), Thames Valley Chamber of Commerce, and the voluntary and community sector to improve understanding of public sector tendering requirements and to encourage better engagement with the public sector. Our Meet the Buyer events have been consistently well attended.

Embedding the green economy

During 2011, the City Council and its partners continued to develop the Low Carbon Oxford Project on behalf of the Oxford Strategic Partnership. Twenty-five organisations including private and public sectors bodies, the universities, and community groups have now agreed to work collaboratively to create a sustainable, low carbon economy in Oxford. These organisations account for over half of the city's emissions.

Key priorities for the coming year will be:

- Implementing the 'Green Deal', the government's flagship energy efficiency programme. Private firms will be enabled to offer consumers energy efficiency improvements to their homes, community spaces and businesses at no upfront cost. Customers will then be able to repay the cost of improvements through savings on their energy bills.
- producing our first annual report on CO2 reduction across the city

CONSULTATION DRAFT

- Attracting funding to ensure Low Carbon Oxford is self sustaining and able to support total community retrofit.

Oxford City Council will continue to reduce its own carbon footprint and seek to realise opportunities for local skills and businesses through renewables projects. For example, in the last year we have supported the setting up of Low Carbon Barton, resulting in a solar photovoltaic roof on the Community Centre. The government's decision to halve the incentives promised to home owners who install photovoltaic roof panels through the Feed-in Tariff is deeply unhelpful to the green economy.

Supporting an ethical economy

Since April 2009, Oxford City Council has been paying all its own workers a 'living' wage set at a level above the National Minimum Wage, which is calculated according to local cost of living data for housing, transport and services costs. We have required Council contractors to do the same. The living wage, unlike the minimum wage, is designed to reflect the real cost of living in this city. The City Council is committed to working with living wage campaigners, low paid workers, trade unions and employers to make Oxford a 'Living Wage City' in which every worker earns a living wage. The City Council will increase the Living Wage to a minimum of £8 in January 2012.

The City Council encourages ethical behaviour in the wider economy.

Oxford became a Fairtrade City in March 2004 and has recently been reaccredited. This means that the City Council and its partners are contributing to the Fairtrade Foundation's aim of tackling poverty by enabling disadvantaged producers from poor countries to receive a better deal. We do this by working with our partners to ensure that Fairtrade products are easily available in the city's shops and catering establishments and are used by local businesses and community organisations. The Fairtrade convention held in Oxford's Town Hall in November 2011 attracted positive media coverage and encouraged support for the campaign.

Tourism

It is estimated that over nine million tourists visit the city each year and tourism plays a key part in the local economy. We are aiming to improve the value and sustainability rather than the quantity of tourism. In order to facilitate this we have set up with partners a Destination Management Organisation, *Visit Oxfordshire*, to improve the management and marketing of our tourism offer in Oxford and throughout Oxfordshire. The new company was officially launched in August 2011.

The UK's cultural and creative industries are the most successful in Europe. They now make up 7.3% of the UK economy and are growing at 5% per year – almost twice the rate of the rest of the economy. Oxford – with its rich architectural heritage and thriving contemporary arts and music scene – is known throughout the world as a city of culture. One of the key aims of *Visit Oxfordshire* is to support culture and the arts by maximising the role that culture can play in Oxford's tourism offer.

City centre

The city centre is at the heart of Oxford's vibrant day and night-time economies and the City Council has been working with the County Council and others to improve the city centre experience. In November 2010, the Association of Town Centre Management awarded the prestigious Purple Flag to Oxford. This award - for the attractiveness of the night time economy to all people of all ages - is based on an assessment of crime rates, hygiene standards and the quality and range of public spaces and visitor attractions. It also requires evidence of a successful multi-sector

CONSULTATION DRAFT

partnership. Oxford is one of only 15 towns and cities to win the award. We have recently successfully renewed our Purple Flag status.

The City Council has recently consulted on its plans to install a new pedestrian wayfinding system in the city centre, and the responses of residents and tourists has been very positive. The wayfinding system will support the development of the city centre economy by making the many attractions in the city centre more obvious to visitors and thereby increasing footfall on less obvious routes. Destinations to be signposted will include business locations, tourist attractions and other places of interest. The new signage will be implemented during Spring 2012 and will help the large number of tourists expected to visit Oxford as part of the Olympics celebrations to make the most of the city and its businesses.

Measure	Targets				
	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17
Increase the number of apprenticeships, training places and jobs created through Council investment projects and other activities from 47 in 2011/12 to over 900 by 2014/15	261	321	900 +	900 +	900 +
Increase the percentage of top 20 employers in the city who agree that the City Council is business-friendly.	78%	82%	85%	tbc	tbc
Increase City Council spend with local businesses from 40% in 2011/12 to 42% by 2014/15.	42%	42%	42%	43%	43%
Attract 500,000 visitors annually to the Oxford Tourist Information Centre and use variations on this figure to track peaks and troughs and their causes.	500,000	500,000	500,000	500,000	500,000

Meeting housing needs

There has been a long term housing shortage in Oxford, and working to increase the provision of high quality affordable housing remains a key priority for the City Council and its partners.

In housing terms, Oxford is the least affordable area in the country apart from some areas of London. The population of the city is growing, as is the number of households requiring housing. Oxford’s current population is over 150,000 and is projected to reach 154,500 by 2020. The Housing Market Assessment 2007 showed that 1,700 new homes per year would have to be built in the city if demand is to be met.

Demand is high and availability is scarce, as a result of the city’s constrained boundaries, the risk of flooding and other issues. This results in very high house prices. Average house prices have more than doubled in the last ten years and owner-occupied housing is increasingly out of the reach of people on lower incomes. Average house prices are much higher in Oxford (£260,000 in 2010) than nationally (£185,000 in 2010). Average Oxford house prices are now more than nine times higher than annual incomes. The high price of housing drives very high private sector rents.

This low level of affordability puts severe strain on the social housing sector, with over 6,000 households in need on the housing register, and homelessness - though much improved - is over twice the national average.

Average earnings and house prices for urban areas in England, 2009/10



Source: Department for Communities and Local Government; Office for National Statistics; Centre for Cities

CONSULTATION DRAFT

Building new houses

Over recent years, we have significantly increased the quantity of affordable housing. 1300 new affordable homes were built in the city from 2004 to the end of 2010.

Oxford City Council is committed to using its own resources to provide new affordable housing wherever possible. Work has recently been completed on the first new council-owned social housing in the city for over twenty years, at Lambourn Road in Rose Hill, and Cardinal House in Littlemore, assisted by grant from the Homes and Communities Agency.

Developments on council land at Cowley and Northway, in partnership with GreenSquare Housing Association will deliver new affordable and market rate homes, two new community centres, and a new home for the Emmaus Furniture Store, which recycles good quality used furniture while giving skills training and accommodation to formerly homeless people. A new joint venture company formed with our partners, Grosvenor Estates, has begun preparatory work aimed at delivering around 800 new homes, a new school and community facilities, and commercial development on land to the west of Barton.

Following a successful bid to the HCA, in competition with many other social housing providers, we have received an indicative award of £2.5 million to build 112 new homes on Council-owned sites throughout the city. HCA funding is conditional on homes let at 'affordable rents', with limited exceptions. The Council will fund the balance of the cost of £16 million.

Future funding from the HCA to support genuinely affordable housing is likely to disappear. Future housing grant is to be targeted through Housing Associations, and will be useable almost exclusively on properties let under the government's proposed new 'affordable rent' model where rents are set at up to 80% of the local market rent and tenancies are for a set period rather than the traditional social rent/lifetime tenancies model. This is not an economic model that will meet the needs of families on the Council's waiting list, and we will be working with partners to overcome the obstacles created by government policy.

The Council has worked hard to increase the level of new affordable housing being built in the city. However, economic conditions and changes to the provision of grant for building these homes means that it is increasingly hard to attract developers willing to provide the level of affordable housing that our planning policies demand.

Improving housing standards

We are improving the quality of existing homes. The Council has brought all its own homes up to the national Decent Homes Standard and we will ensure that this standard is maintained and improved. For example, while the apartment interiors of our five tower blocks are already at Decent Homes Standard, we have programmed £8.25 million to improve their external and communal areas. This will extend their lives for a further 30 years.

We are also committed to improving housing in the private rented sector. The private rented sector is particularly important in Oxford. It provides essential accommodation for key workers, young professionals, students and people who are unable to access social housing or to purchase homes on the private market. It accounts for 26% of the city's housing stock. Oxford has the 15th highest number of houses in multiple occupation (HMOs) in the country, with one in five of Oxford's population living in an

CONSULTATION DRAFT

HMO. The combination of exceptionally high demand and high rental values has created an environment where poor landlords can exploit the sector and has led to a substantial element of poorly managed and poorly maintained HMOs.

The City Council has taken a robust approach to managing these issues in the HMO sector. We have taken advantage of new powers introduced in 2010 to launch the most ambitious HMO licensing scheme in the country. This self-funding scheme began in January 2011 and will require every HMO in the city to be inspected and licensed. We aim to improve the management and condition of HMOs and to tackle the problems for tenants and the wider community caused by poor landlords. Our strong enforcement stance will be complemented by incentives for landlords to join the accreditation scheme.

The City Council's concern is not just with the quality of private sector housing but also with the neighbourhoods in which this housing is located. As HMOs have spread across the city, their impact on the character of local neighbourhoods has generated concern amongst residents. In response to this, and in addition to our comprehensive approach to HMO licensing, the Council has introduced new planning controls that come into force in February 2012 and will require planning permission for the change of use from a family or single unit dwelling into an HMO, with a presumption against new HMOs in areas which already have a significant concentration.

HMO licensing and new planning controls are linked elements in a coherent programme of assistance that the City Council is developing with partners for neighbourhoods whose character is being adversely affected by HMOs and entertainment venues. This programme will also include more targeted and effective use of noise enforcement.

Home Improvement Agency

The Council also runs a Home Improvement Agency that provides around £700 k annually of means- tested grants for some 110 disabled or elderly house owners, and parents of disabled children who need improvements to continue living in their home. The Council also provides a Home from Hospital service for 150 people to prevent bed-blocking and a Small Repairs Service that helps nearly 400 elderly and vulnerable owner occupiers deal with minor repairs to their home.

In addition the Council provides £84,450 of means tested grants up to a maximum of £5,000 so that home owners whose houses are in poor condition can carry out essential repairs. The Council has also secured government funding for a flexible home improvement scheme to provide cheap loans for home owners over 60 who need to improve their homes. Nearly £400,000 has been invested in improving private homes in the city since the scheme began.

Reducing homelessness

We have continued to reduce homelessness. Over the last five years the number of households living in temporary accommodation in the city has fallen from almost 1,000 to under 200. We continue to focus on preventing homelessness and helping people who are sleeping rough to get into settled accommodation. New contracts have recently been awarded for the provision of improved and more robust services for single and rough sleeping homeless people in the city.

The Council has been recognised as a centre of excellence in homelessness work, and has much to be proud of in this field. Most recently, we have diverted over £150,000 into funding to allow tenants in private rented properties to meet the cost of their rent where Housing Benefit levels are too low. We are working with landlords to

CONSULTATION DRAFT

reduce the cost of renting for those on low incomes. We support the government's "No Second Night Out" campaign; we have recently opened, jointly with Crisis Skylight, a new facility which will support single homeless people in particular, giving them access to training and other opportunities. At the same time, we will seek to reconnect rough sleepers without a connection to Oxford back to their home areas.

Future challenges

We face serious challenges around housing in the coming years.

The economic situation is putting downwards pressure on real incomes and contributing to a growth in the number of homeless households across the country. We have so far limited the increase in the city to below national average levels but Oxford will not be exempt from this trend. The ability of the Council to respond to demand - for example, by assisting people into the private rental market - is likely to be further restricted. There is a strong risk that the downward trend in the number of households in temporary accommodation might not be maintained. Changes to welfare policy are imposing significant additional pressures on housing and homelessness in the city.

Changes to Local Housing Allowance, which came into force on a rolling basis from April 2011, mean that the maximum Local Housing Allowance can only be paid to properties in the cheapest 30% of the local market. This has severely constrained, housing options for many households. The 'local' housing market includes much of rural Oxfordshire, where rental costs tend to be lower. This will mean that many low income households may be forced out of Oxford to meet their rent obligations but the small size of the private rented sector outside the city may restrict the Council's capacity to re-house Oxford families within the county itself. This pressure will be most severe on households needing a five bedroom property or larger.

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

The introduction of the Universal Credit – due to come into effect from October 2013 - will replace a number of existing sources of welfare benefit with a single payment to individuals and families. Universal Credit is intended to cut costs and ensure that people who work have more money than those who are on benefits and a potential risk is that overall benefit levels will be reduced. A further risk is that Housing Benefit – even if it is ring-fenced – will be paid directly to tenants, who will then be responsible for making rental payments. Currently Housing Benefit is paid directly to the landlord. This is expected to lead to an increase in rent and service charge arrears.

Oxford City Council will help tenants avoid getting into arrears. We will encourage tenants to make direct payment to the Council and we will intervene early where arrears do occur. In terms of the Housing Benefit issue, Oxford City Council has a robust income management strategy and we will be able to minimise the negative financial affects on the Council of these changes.

The changes to welfare overall have the potential to cause disruption and distress to many people in our city and are likely to increase the demand for housing and homelessness assistance, and also debt and welfare advice services. The City Council has maintained and increased its funding for the voluntary and charitable bodies who provide this, particularly in areas of the city where need is greatest.

CONSULTATION DRAFT

The City Council will do all it can to support local people and advice agencies to make as smooth a transition as is possible to new welfare arrangements.

Changes to Council housing finance

The Housing Revenue Account (HRA) regime will end on 31st March 2012. This means that the financial control and responsibility for Council housing will revert to local authorities in exchange for a final capital settlement. The government has given a provisional assessment that Oxford City Council will be required to make a payment of around £200m.

The end of the old HRA means that, in future, the Council will run the housing arm of its activities as a separate business, relying on the income collected in rent to deliver repairs, maintenance and management of the stock.

Building sustainable houses

The Council is improving energy efficiency in its housing stock. We are installing efficient gas boilers, improving insulation, and installing water saving devices as part of our on-going stock maintenance programme. We will be applying external cladding to our tower blocks which will improve thermal efficiency in over 400 homes. We are pursuing solar photo voltaic panels and city-wide heating options as part of the Low Carbon Oxford initiative discussed earlier in this report. For example, the new Rose Hill development – bungalows, flats and townhouses – includes air source heat pumps to each home. A sheltered housing scheme in Littlemore has a biomass boiler which will supply heat and hot water to all of the sheltered units and communal areas. Both schemes use solar photovoltaic panels to provide cheaper electricity and feed surplus electricity into the national grid.

The Council will review the opportunities offered by the Green Deal in relation to its own stock when the details are announced in Spring 2012.

As part of an Energy Savings Trust study to assess the effectiveness of carbon reduction techniques on difficult to treat properties, the City Council is working with partners to transform a solid walled property in Jericho into an eco-friendly home. Brookes University is monitoring energy usage over two years to inform future projects. This project is also being used as an educational tool for local school children and the wider community.

The Council is also committed to the broader principles of sustainability in relation to housing. For example, the exciting £18m project to build 109 new homes and two new community centres in Northway and Cowley is being undertaken in partnership with companies who have a track record in developing housing based around a strong sense of community, a belief in the importance of public space, respect for cyclists and pedestrians, and a commitment to sustainable lifestyles. For example, the new community facility at Northway will include a sports hall with enhanced changing facilities, helping to meet the requirements of the football leagues based there, educational resource and learning areas, and a community cafe next to a food-growing area.

Measures	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17
Improve the percentage of Council tenants satisfied with our landlord services from 80% in	82%	84%	86%	88%	90%

CONSULTATION DRAFT

2011/12 to 86% in 2014/15.					
Increase the number of individual HMOs subject to agreed licence provisions from 1,100 in 2011/12 to over 3,500 in 2014/15.	2,180	2,950	3,540	3,890	4,100
Deliver a programme of new homes at Barton	Get hybrid planning consent and agree phase 1 sale	50	150	300	300+
Ensure that the number of households in Oxford in temporary accommodation does not exceed 175.	175	175	175	175	175

CONSULTATION DRAFT

Strong, active communities

Oxford City Council is working with citizens and community groups in the city to build strong and active communities. This means communities that are socially cohesive and safe, and citizens who are actively engaged in pursuing their own well-being and that of their communities.

Tackling inequality

In marked contrast to other parts of the county, Oxford is ethnically and culturally diverse, with the third highest minority ethnic population in the south east. In 2009, 19.6% of the population were from black and minority ethnic backgrounds, compared with an England average of 12.5%. The largest non-white ethnic groups represented are Indian, Pakistani and Black African. Diversity is one of our city's strengths and social inclusion and community cohesion are key goals for the city and the Council.

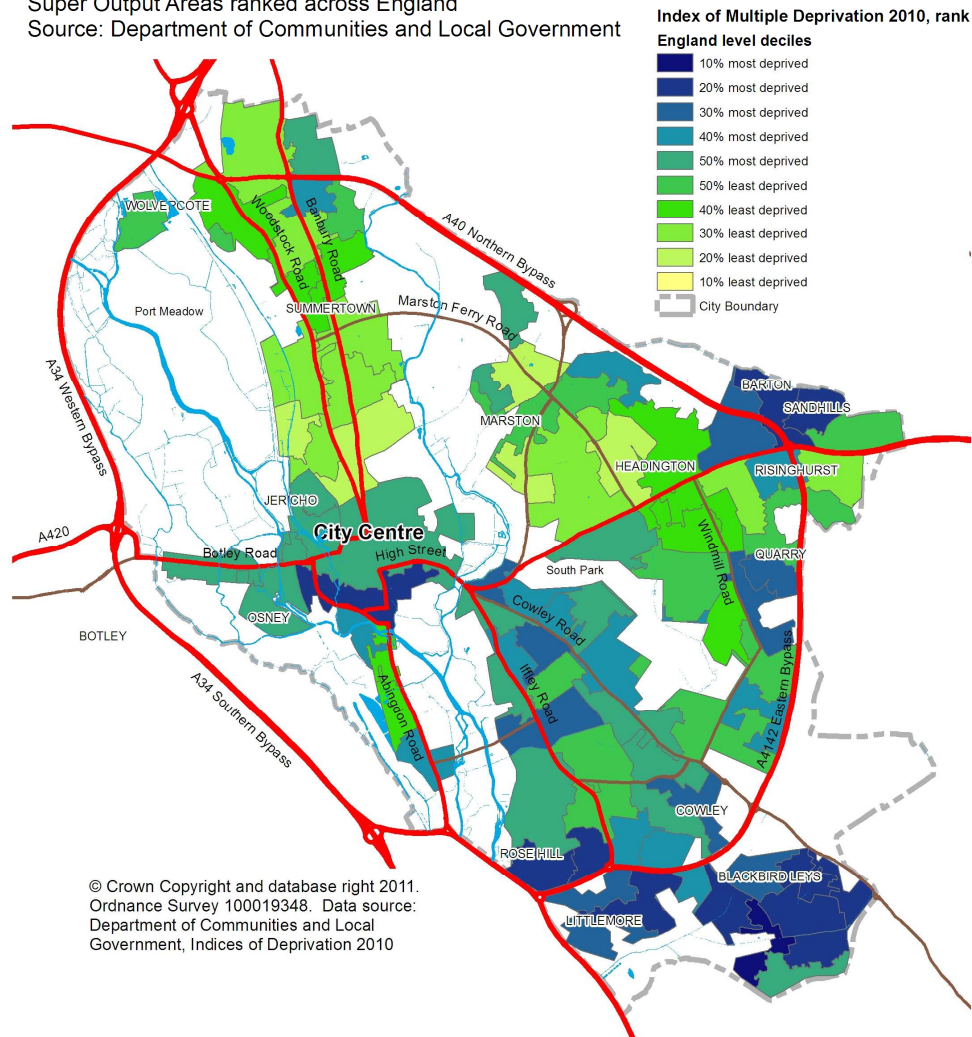
There are major inequalities in life chances and life expectancy in our city. Relative to the rest of Oxfordshire, Oxford has high levels of deprivation. The Indices of Deprivation 2010 place Oxford in the top half of most deprived Local Authorities in England. The Index of Multiple Deprivation 2010 ranks Oxford 131st out of 354, placing it in the top half most deprived local authority areas in England. Of 85 areas in Oxford, 12 are among the 20% most deprived areas in England, with one area in Northfield Brook ward among the 10% most deprived.

CONSULTATION DRAFT

Index of Multiple Deprivation 2010, rank

Super Output Areas ranked across England

Source: Department of Communities and Local Government



These areas, which are in the Leys, Littlemore, Rose Hill and Barton areas of the city, experience multiple levels of deprivation - low skills, low incomes and high levels of crime.

Around 23% of Oxford's under-16s live in low-income households and child poverty is a key concern in eight neighbourhoods which feature among the 10% worst affected in England. In some areas, half of all adults have no qualifications and this is linked to lower incomes, poor health and child poverty. Oxford has over 10,000 working age residents claiming benefits – the highest percentage in the county. Citizens in the most deprived areas could live up to ten years less than those in the wealthiest areas.

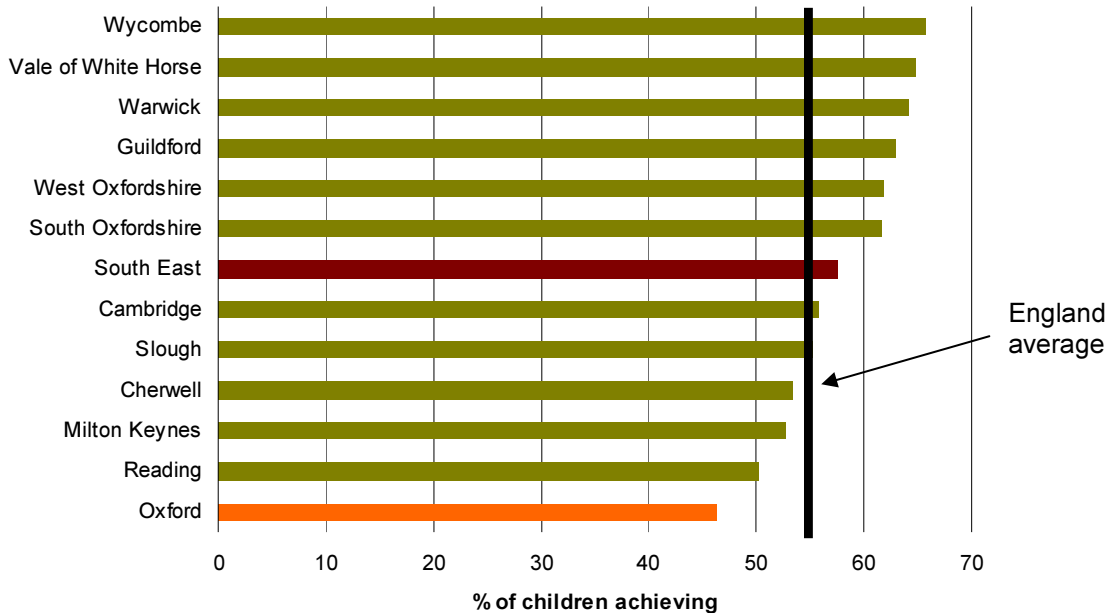
Our ambition is to reduce the extent of inequality and to improve the lives of the most vulnerable members of our society and, particularly, to improve outcomes for young people.

Improving educational attainment is at the heart of our ambition. Attainment levels of pupils in state schools are much lower than the national average. In 2009/10 only

CONSULTATION DRAFT

67% of Oxford pupils gained five or more A* to C grade GCSEs, compared to a 76% national average. This was the fifteenth worst result of any local authority area in England. Pupils living in deprived areas have particularly poor results. In the same year 46% of Oxford children achieved the benchmark of five or more A* to C grades at GCSE. This was below the national average of 55% and the lowest result among the local authority areas shown below.

All Pupils achieving 5+ A*-C including English and Mathematics, 2009/10



Source: Department for Education

The City Council will be working with schools and other partners over the coming years to enhance educational attainment of pupils in state schools and to integrate more effectively the lives of our schools and communities. We will implement the joint Oxfordshire County Council /City Council and Schools Educational Attainment Action Plan. We are exploring ways in which we can engage partners to deliver training and employment programmes on our estates, including the training and apprenticeship opportunities discussed earlier in this report.

Many of the issues that contribute to inequality in our city are beyond the remit and control of the City Council. Improving educational attainment is just one of them. Our challenge is to encourage our partners in local government, education, and health – despite the decision by the government to abolish the formal partnerships focused on these issues – to work with us in a co-ordinated way to tackle these deep-seated issues.

Social and economic regeneration

The City Council has adopted a comprehensive Regeneration Framework to drive our ambition to create a more balanced social and economic structure within the city. The Framework focuses on strengthening the economy as a whole and providing training and jobs; regenerating particular geographical areas both physically and socially; and targeting and improving mainstream services so that they meet the needs of disadvantaged groups and communities. Delivery against the Framework is supported by our work with partners to break the 'cycle of deprivation' which seems to be endemic in some parts of the city. This is a two-year programme aimed at supporting vulnerable families, improving employability and reducing health

CONSULTATION DRAFT

inequalities. While the formal project is scheduled to last only two years, we will be seeking to sustain a longer term commitment from all our partners to maintain the momentum of this project for many years to come.

The Council and its partners are currently refocusing this work by concentrating on early intervention and other social programmes aimed at children and families. We are also looking to respond more effectively to the needs of vulnerable older people and to consider how they can be supported to live in their homes and local communities for as long as possible.

More generally, we are working with other agencies to identify changes to services in our neighbourhoods and looking at ways in which we can mitigate the impact of budget reductions made by other public service providers.

Engaged communities

Area Forums and Neighbourhood Boards

The City Council has been a national leader in terms of the innovative ways in which it engages local people in the decisions that impact on their lives. We introduced Area Committees – six across the city - in 2001. Over the last twelve months we have been encouraging community participation further by developing our Area Committees into Area Forums and Neighbourhood Boards.

These local forums are encouraging residents and community groups to work in partnership with mainstream service providers - health, education police, businesses and the voluntary sectors - to ensure local services are responsive to the needs of the local community. Each Councillor has an annual budget of £1500 for small projects which could link to the priorities emerging from forum discussions.

These new arrangements have only recently been established and we are aiming to ensure that all of our communities, including the more 'hidden' groups, have the opportunity to engage with them. However, the experience over recent months has been positive and the indications are that these local forums can play a creative role in addressing emerging local issues by bringing the various agencies and organisations together in flexible and area-specific ways. In relation to the reduction of youth provision, for example, the forums are offering a more joined up approach to local needs, reflected in the Northway youth partnership, the Rose Hill Sports Development Group, and the Barton youth partnership.

The Area Forums and Neighbourhood Boards provide a good basis for the community planning processes that we are developing and will help ensure that planning is focused on achieving local needs and ambitions. Councillors will play a central role in communities wanting to prepare neighbourhood plans. Their role will involve supporting, explaining options and finding solutions. Neighbourhood planning will occur alongside city-wide local planning.

Tenants, residents and community associations

Under the Tenant and Leaseholder Compact, in place since 2007, the Council's dialogue with tenants and residents on its estates takes a number of different forms. For example, the Leaseholder Panel meets with officers every 3 months and has produced a Leaseholders' Handbook and the Leaseholder Satisfaction Survey. The Council has invested in a fit-for-purpose Tenant Resource Centre at Horspath Road.

Over the next six months the Council will be developing its financial plan to fund the £200m buy-out of its Housing Revenue Account from central government, discussed

CONSULTATION DRAFT

earlier in this report. While this is essentially a financial transaction, government will scrutinise proposals in relation to governance and tenant engagement.

We have worked with community associations to improve the management and use of community centres and to develop the governance structure for the new facilities at Wood Farm, Northway & Cowley.

The voluntary sector

The City Council is part of the Oxfordshire Stronger Communities Alliance, which aims to strengthen the role of the voluntary and community sectors and increase the number of volunteers in the city. We provide funding to a range of voluntary and community groups who help deliver the objectives set out in the Corporate Plan. We hold two City Forums annually with the Oxfordshire Council of Voluntary Associations (OCVA) to promote partnership working between the City Council and the voluntary sector.

Volunteering has the potential to benefit those who volunteer as well as the wider community. Oxford City Council has arrangements in place which encourage its own staff to volunteer. It will also work with its partners to increase the quality, quantity, and accessibility of volunteering in our city. The City Council hosted the annual volunteers awards this year and will be hosting a Volunteers' Fair in the Town Hall in 2012 where different groups will be able to publicise their work.

Over the past twelve months, the City Council has been diversifying the ways in which it engages with our communities. By making effective use of social media we are encouraging more interaction with people, about not just their service needs but also about issues of wider concern.

Healthy communities

The City Council is responsible for a range of functions that affect people's health and well being. Some of these – such as planning, housing quality, homelessness, social cohesion, and employment - have already been referred to in this report. The City Council will use its powers and duties to improve all of these and the other wider determinants of health – environmental health, air quality, and green spaces for example - to help improve the health of local people.

Our ambition for our leisure services is to deliver the quality of service found in private clubs at an affordable price. We have made significant steps in this direction over the last twelve months.

Following public consultation, our leisure centres at Barton, Blackbird Leys and Ferry have all been revamped as part of a £2.2 million pound make-over. The improvements include a new cycling spinning studio at Blackbird Leys, a brand new gym at Barton and a large extension to the gym at Ferry. The centres have also benefited from refurbished changing facilities and upgraded reception areas. These improvements have been funded from the savings created from transferring the management of leisure facilities to Fusion Lifestyle, a charitable trust. There has been an increase of around 5% in leisure centre membership over the last twelve months.

These developments have helped drive the significant improvements in adult participation in sport. Oxford now has the second highest activity rate in the county, from one of the lowest just four years ago. 27.6 per cent of adults are now taking part in 30 minutes of moderate intensity sport or active recreation three days a week

CONSULTATION DRAFT

which is a 6.9 per cent increase from 2005 when it was just 20.7 per cent. The Council's ambition is to get even more people involved in physical activity.

To further improve our leisure offer, the City Council is planning to build a competition standard pool in Blackbird Leys. Our ambition is to develop an excellent facility which will help increase community participation in swimming, as well as providing a venue where county-standard swimming competitions can be held. The new facility will include an eight lane, 25 metre pool with a moveable floor, a teaching pool, the possibility of fun water with jets and sprays, and new changing facilities. The new pool will adjoin the existing Blackbird Leys Leisure Centre. It will replace Temple Cowley Pools and Blackbird Leys Pool, both of which are in poor condition, very costly to run, and major contributors to the Council's carbon footprint.. The new pool will further improve our leisure offer, contribute to the ongoing regeneration of Blackbird Leys, and reduce out carbon footprint.

Oxford Health Walks, run by GO Active and Oxford City Council, encourage walking – particularly in the city's beautiful parks - as a form of gentle exercise for those unaccustomed to physical activity. The scheme is formally accredited for its high standards and supportive environment. The scheme will provide health professionals with another avenue to promote healthy living in Oxford through the Exercise on Referral scheme. We will continue to encourage healthy living by improving the quality of the outdoor sports offer in the city and looking at ways to use the Community Infrastructure Levy to implement a cycling strategy. We are also working in partnership to deliver the Active Women programme within the city.

Healthy living is obviously about more than just physical activity. Community understanding of environmental health issues, for example, is essential to health and safety. There are over 1300 food businesses in Oxford. The City Council carries out 700 inspections a year and displays the results of food hygiene inspections on the *Scores on the Doors* website. In order to raise industry standards and reflect the diversity of Oxford's communities, the Council has developed food hygiene training courses that are delivered in different languages as well as providing foreign language exam papers. Nearly 50% of all the people trained on our food hygiene training courses do not have English as their first language.

The government's large-scale reorganisation of the way that health services in England are managed, commissioned and delivered has prompted national debate and raised concerns about the consequences for public health that will flow from the changes. The details of the legislation are still being debated. However, the structures through which it will be delivered are becoming clear.

The Health and Social Health Care Bill will establish Health and Well Being Boards in all upper-tier authorities in order to promote integrated health care services and increase accountability. The Boards will include elected councillors, clinical commissioning groups of GPs, local Health Watch and Directors of Adult Social Services, Children's Services and Public Health. The task of the Boards is to assess local needs and develop an integrated strategy for addressing them.

In Oxfordshire a Shadow Health and Well Being Board has been established with four supporting Boards:

- Health Improvement Board
- Children and Young People Board
- Adult and Social Care Board
- Public Involvement Board.

CONSULTATION DRAFT

A member of the City Executive Board represents the City Council's interests on the Health and Well Being Board and also serves as vice chair of the Health Improvement Board. The City Council will ensure that the Health and Well Being Strategy fully reflects the needs and aspirations of Oxford's communities.

Creative communities

Oxford City Council believes that culture and the arts can be key drivers of regeneration in our city, with the potential to build community cohesion by encouraging different community groups to enjoy and have access to their different traditions. Our aim - working with our partners in the cultural sector - is to increase access for all our communities to good quality cultural opportunities and events, at affordable prices, in a range of venues and locations. We aim to provide cultural experiences befitting Oxford's world-class status.

The range of achievements over the last twelve months is impressive. The Old Fire Station – with a new Crisis Skylight Centre at its heart – opened in November 2011. The facility combines a range of flexible spaces and facilities for young people and the arts community, as well as training and support for employment in the creative and hospitality industries. Pegasus Theatre, Oxford's youth theatre in East Oxford – consolidated by a £4m rebuild - goes from strength to strength. In 2011, Pegasus initiated *Mesh*, Oxford's first International Youth Arts Festival. *Mesh* was co-planned, run and hosted by and for young people from Oxford, France, Germany, the Netherlands, Croatia, Palestine and Russia. This project complemented the work done through the City Council's own international links programme which offers opportunities for exchange projects involving young people from our twin cities. Modern Art Oxford continues to stage exhibitions of international standing. Our successful annual dance festival Dancin' Oxford continues to receive enthusiastic support from the citizens of Oxford and has just received over £55k in grant support from Arts Council England. Get Moving! – a dance project for the over-50's in Oxford has proved to be very popular. In partnership with the Poetry Centre from Oxford Brookes University, the City Council has appointed Oxford's first City Poet. Kate Clanchy is a widely published and respected poet who will use her term as City Poet to encourage people to write about life in our multi-cultural city. Kate will work with students at Brookes University, and with the help of the charity First Story, she will also have a base at the Oxford Spires Academy. Kate is aiming to visit all schools across the city and to establish partnerships and projects with community groups.

Oxford's Town Hall continues to make its own contribution to the city's cultural offer. This iconic Victorian Grade II* listed building is being successfully remarketed and is now a popular venue for concerts from a diverse range of performers, and events, including the annual Beer Festival. Oxford Philomusica's regular concerts for children have become sell-out events. In 2011, the Town Hall was the main site for Oxford's internationally acclaimed Jazz Festival.

Exciting improvements to the Town Hall are planned over the next twelve months. The City Council is investing in improvements to the Town Hall infrastructure, including an upgrade to the acoustics in the Main Hall. We are planning for the Town Hall to enhance its role as a primary community facility for the city and also to provide facilities for the conference and concert markets. We are also upgrading the Museum of Oxford and integrating it more closely with the Town Hall. Our plans for the Museum have attracted over £80k in grant support from external funders, and the Museum will reopen in Spring 2012. The Town Hall café is being refurbished with an upgraded offer and will reopen in December 2011. The Town Hall's high quality gift shop, focusing on products related to the Museum and Town Hall collection opened in early November 2011.

CONSULTATION DRAFT

Large scale events play a key role in building cohesion and celebrating life in our city. Around 20,000 people attended this year's successful May Morning celebration, organised for the first time by the City Council. Christmas Light Night and Christmas in Oxford, where cultural organisations from across the city work together to celebrate the festive season, has become so popular that this year we will be relocating the evening's main outdoor events from Broad Street to St. Giles. The Olympic Torch relay event, planned for June 9th 2012, will give people across the city the opportunity to savour the Olympic spirit.

Safe communities

Crime and the fear of crime have an adverse effect on the well-being of our communities. As a lead member of the Oxford Community Safety Partnership, Oxford City Council has made a significant contribution to the reduction in the levels of crime and anti-social behaviour in the city. Between April and October 2011, total crime fell by 6%, compared to the same period in 2010. Car crime fell by 9% and there have been great successes in reducing violent crime; total violence against the person decreased by 26% compared to the same period last year. Unfortunately burglary of people's homes, a key priority for residents in the city, rose by 17% during this period.

The NightSafe scheme tackles the problems of alcohol-related disorder in the night-time economy and its success is one of the key factors that enabled Oxford to obtain its Purple Flag accreditation. We have re-structured our Community Warden service and improved co-ordination between them and our Crime and Nuisance Action Team, specialists in the investigation of anti-social behaviour.

We use Talkback - our citizens' panel – to survey people's opinions on a range of anti-social behaviour issues. In our 2008 survey, young people hanging around the streets was cited as an important concern by respondents. This issue has dropped from second to seventh in terms of people's concerns. This is due in part to our Positive Futures Programme which aims to divert young people in deprived areas from crime and anti-social behaviour.

Creating an integrated offer - including culture, sport and community activities - for young people who are at risk of becoming socially alienated is at the heart of the City Council's approach to community cohesion. We will continue to work with partners to provide free holiday activities for up to 1,200 young people between 5–19 in the most deprived areas of Oxford. As part of our Positive Activities programme, we have delivered Streets Sports as well as a summer holiday programme including 3v3 basketball sessions and targeted free swimming sessions. We will be working more closely with schools to develop proposals drawing on the potential contributions for a more integrated service involving schools, playgrounds, and leisure and parks facilities.

Engagement with the community, through the successful Neighbourhood Action Groups (NAGS), is at the heart of our approach. Over the coming months, we will use the NAGS to explore ways of addressing anti-social behaviour resulting from the increasing number of houses in multiple occupation (HMOs) in our neighbourhoods.

The community safety partnership faces challenges in the coming years. The government has made significant cuts to a number of community safety grants. The partnership will also have to respond to the new National Crime Strategy and the introduction of directly elected police commissioners.

CONSULTATION DRAFT

Measure	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17
Improve satisfaction with our neighbourhoods from 90% in 2011/12 to 92% in 2014/15.	91%	91%	92%	92%	92.5%
Increase the percentage of Oxford's population volunteering from 27% in 2011/12 to 30% in 2014/15.	28%	29%	30%	30%	31%
Increase the percentage of adults taking part in sport as measured by Sport England's Active People Survey by 1% each year	27.7%	28.7%	29.7%	30.7%	31.7%
Increase the number of young people attending our Holiday Activity programme from 1,000 in 2011/12 to more than 1,200 in 2012/13	1,200	1,200	1,200	1,200	1,200

A cleaner, greener city

Survey after survey makes it clear that Oxford's citizens place a very high priority on the quality of the local environment. The City Council's objective is to maintain and develop a cleaner, greener Oxford – in the city centre, in our neighbourhoods and in all public spaces.

Recycling and refuse collection

The City Council has made significant improvements in recycling and waste collection in recent years. The city presents particular challenges due to the diverse nature of its population, its high population churn (25% per annum) the large number, (5000) of houses in multiple occupation, and the large number of self-contained flats. In 2009-10, we market tested our recycling and waste service in order to make the service more efficient and to improve customer satisfaction.

The City Council now offers a high quality and inclusive service. We have expanded the weekly food waste recycling programme across the whole city. We are giving householders choice about containers; wheeled bins, boxes and sacks are all available in order to reflect the different kinds of housing stock in the city. The blue wheeled bins make recycling easier for residents as nearly all recycling materials can be placed into one container. We have also introduced recycling bins into the city centre and ring road. We have introduced a new garden waste collection service with over 12,000 customers signing up to the service in its first six months of operation. We have also introduced a new textile and clothes recycling bank and we composted over 2,000 Christmas trees.

Over the next year we will implement proposals to extend recycling to flats. We will also work to enhance refuse collection on the more densely populated estates with limited or no front gardens.

Our aim is to achieve the best recycling rate for an urban authority and we are making progress in achieving this. Between 2005 and 2006 we recycled just 20% of our domestic waste in Oxford; our recycling rate is now approaching 50% and we aim to achieve 53% by 2015/16. We are working to further reduce waste and to maximise reuse, recycling and composting, with a long-term goal of reducing land-filled waste to zero.

CONSULTATION DRAFT

Clean streets, neighbourhoods and open spaces

Our Cleaner Greener Oxford campaign – a groundbreaking partnership between the City Council and the *Oxford Mail* – has delivered strong outcomes in terms of improved street cleanliness. We are tackling inappropriate refuse disposal, fly-tipping, littering, dog-fouling, and graffiti through a mix of education and enforcement. We have continued to target resources so that we can keep the city centre clean – reflected in our Purple Flag accreditation - and have also run targeted clean-up campaigns in East Oxford, Blackbird Leys and Jericho. We have introduced new powers to control litter caused by leafleting and we have reorganised the work of our Community Wardens Team so that they can play a bigger role in environmental enforcement.

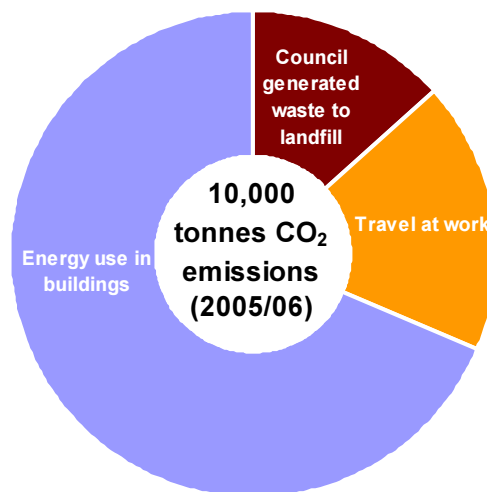
We are working to make our parks and green spaces even safer and cleaner. We have achieved Green Flag status for 4 of our parks - Bury Knowle, Hinksey, Cutteslowe and Sunnymead, and Florence Park. We are spending £2.5m to improve the quality of the majority of our 92 play areas and we have now refurbished over 50 play areas. We have introduced dog control orders across the city to strengthen our powers regarding dog fouling and discouraging dog owners from bringing dogs into play areas in the parks. We are exploring ways of further expanding the reach of the cleaner, greener campaign.

Education is at the heart of our campaign for a cleaner, greener city. However, we will not hesitate to enforce good behaviours where this is necessary. Oxford City Council now serves a higher number of environmental enforcement notices in England than any other district council.

Reducing the Council's carbon footprint

Over the past three years the Council's focus has been on its internal carbon management programme. Over the last couple of years, we have had measures in place to reduce carbon dioxide emissions from our buildings and operations by over 800 tonnes per year. This represents an 8% reduction on 2005/06 levels. By the end of March 2011 we had reduced emissions by a challenging 25% and are planning 3% reductions year-on-year thereafter. We are on track to achieve this. This will deliver potential savings to the Council of around £1.24 million over five years.

City Council carbon dioxide emissions by source, 2005-06



CONSULTATION DRAFT

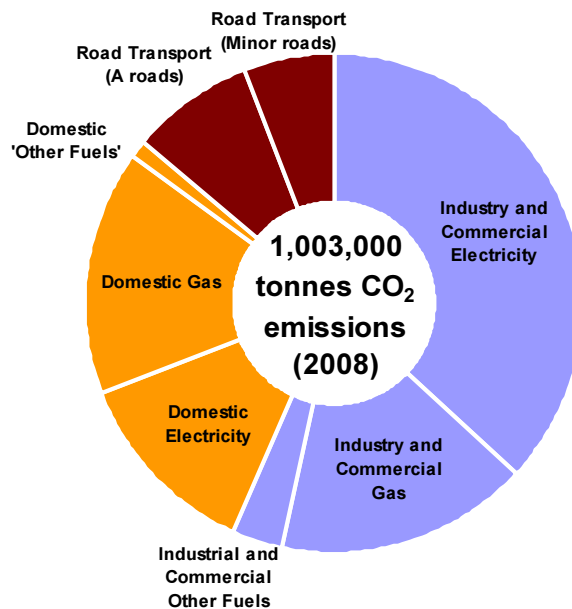
Source: Oxford City Council

The Council's innovative work on sustainable housing has been referred to earlier in this report. The City Council's fleet now includes electric vehicles and we are actively involved in the local Mini E trial. We have won the Energy Saving Trust Fleet Hero Awards for 'Smarter Driving', resulting in a 6% reduction in fuel use across our whole fleet. We won the Carbon Trust Innovation Award 2009: Innovative use of Technology (Public Sector). In 2010 we were runners-up in the Guardian Public Sector award for Innovation on sustainability issues.

Reducing the city's carbon footprint

The City Council is committed to reducing its own carbon footprint, and to leading efforts to reduce the city's footprint. Low Carbon Oxford's groundbreaking work to embed a green economy has been referred to earlier in this report.

Carbon dioxide emissions by source, Oxford 2008



Source: Department of Energy and Climate Change

From 2014, the City Council will be implementing a Low Emission Zone (LEZ) which will place restrictions on the types of vehicle engines that can operate within central Oxford. This has particular implications for public service buses. The introduction of the LEZ – along with the desire of the main bus companies to play their role in making Oxford cleaner and greener – has led the Oxford Bus Company and Stagecoach to upgrade their fleets and successfully launch a joint ticketing scheme in the city. They are replacing many of the old polluting vehicles with new diesel electric hybrid double decker buses, funded through the Green Bus Fund. These hybrids have extra low NO_x emissions.

The Council has implemented a planning requirement for 20% on-site renewable energy production for all large developments. We will be assessing the possibilities offered by the Green Deal for energy improvements in our own housing stock and, through the Low Carbon Oxford partnership, helping to roll out this programme to tenants, residents and businesses when the first Green Deals are launched in

CONSULTATION DRAFT

Autumn 2012.

We are also working through strategic partnerships to combat the adverse effects of climate change, including the increased incidence of flooding within the City. We are implementing a broader strategy for dealing with the management of natural resources through a strengthened sustainability strategy.

Low Carbon West Oxford (LCWO) was set up after the summer floods of 2007 by residents concerned about climate change and local flooding. LCWO is a community-led initiative which aims to combat climate change by cutting our community carbon dioxide emissions by 80 % by 2050, encouraging residents to live more sustainably, and contributing to a more cohesive and resilient community. LCWO volunteers have helped plant 600 new trees on the edges of Botley and Oatlands park to help absorb Co2 and reduce local flooding and attract wildlife.

We are working with partners and local communities to ensure that those who are on low incomes can benefit from low carbon opportunities.

Measures	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17
Reduce the City Council's carbon footprint by 235 tonnes (Co2) each year	235	235	235	235	235
Reduce the amount of residual household waste collected per household per annum and sent to landfill from 464kg in 2011/12 to 440kg in 2014/15.	450Kg	445Kg	440Kg	440Kg	440Kg
Increase satisfaction with our street cleaning from 70% in 2011/12 to 75% in 2014/15.	TBC after talkback results	TBC after talkback results	75%	76%	77%
Increase the number of enforcements carried out as a result of environmental offences from 660 in 2011/12 to 760 in 2014/15.	700	730	760	790	820

Efficient and effective Council

Oxford City Council aspires to be an efficient and effective Council. This means being a flexible, fit-for-purpose organisation, delivering high quality services and excellent value for money for all our citizens.

The Council's efficiency and effectiveness has improved significantly over the last three years. By the end of 2010-11, the General Fund will have seen a reduction in spend of £4.9m (16%) over a 3 year period (2008/9 – 2010/11). Further General Fund reductions of £9.5m are planned over the period 2011/12 – 2014/15 following the 28% reduction in government grant during this period.. £5.9m of the total savings relate to the delivery of efficiencies across the organisation. A further 2% reduction will be made thereafter up until 2016.17.

We have significantly improved our performance against our targets. In 2007/08 we achieved 49% of all Council targets. In 2008/09 this had increased to 53%. In

CONSULTATION DRAFT

2009/10, we were achieving 69% of our targets. In March 2009 we were achieving 59% of targets set out in our corporate plan. By year end of 2009/10, this figure had increased to 76%. We are now achieving improvements across 84% of our indicators.

In order to manage the financial constraints which government policy has imposed upon us, the Council has had two options. The first is to balance the budget through service cuts and reductions in investment, which would lead to an impoverished organisation susceptible to unplanned cuts and redundancies. The second option – the option that we have chosen – is to speed up our pace of improvement so that we can protect and improve our front-line services with reduced resources.

Council 2012

In our last Corporate Plan we set out our Council 2012 programme which has been the engine for driving the changes in the ways in which we manage our people, processes and systems.

Four principles underpinned the Council 2012 programmes:

- One Council: one vision, shared policies and procedures, no more silos.
- Rationalise our buildings and make the most of our assets: make more efficient use of our buildings and offices and dispose of those that are surplus to requirements.
- Simplify, standardise and automate our processes: Eliminate duplications in systems and processes and e-enable wherever possible, both internally and externally.
- Modern and flexible working practices: enable staff to work more flexibly and more productively in order to reduce the Council's cost and carbon footprint.

The Council 2012 programme is nearly complete and it has delivered significant achievements.

1. Customers First

We have:

- Opened a new, state-of-the art customer services centre in St. Aldate's Chambers where customers can receive answers to queries about all Council services, including planning and building control issues
- introduced one telephone number for all Council services
- combined the contact centre operations previously located within different Council departments to create one generic, corporate front of house and call centre service.
- Been implementing a customer relationship management system which holds consistent information about our services and helps us provide a 'get it right first time' service regardless of whether customers are contacting us over they web, by telephone, or face-to-face
- begun a fundamental service review of our benefits service to ensure that we get things right in this most important of services
- increased the range of services that can be accessed on-line and through the contact centre. These channels are cheaper for the Council to run and deliver better value for money to the taxpayer. We are on track to increase the proportion of online transactions by 20% by March 2013 against the 2009 baseline figures and to reduce the proportion of face-to-face contacts by 20% by 2013 against the 2009 baseline figures. We will be launching our "click, call, come in" campaign in the new year, aimed at encouraging our customers to prioritise those access channels which are cheaper and more convenient

CONSULTATION DRAFT

- significantly improved management in the contact centre. By March 2012, we want at least 90% of our customers to be able to reach us first time on the Council's main service lines.

Our aim is to resolve 80% of customer enquiries in the customer service centre and contact centre by March 2012 and 85% by March 2013. We are working to achieve customer satisfaction within the customer service centre, contact centre and website at 90% by March 2012 and 95% by March 2013.

2. Offices for the Future

We have:

- improved working conditions for our staff by transforming St Aldate's Chambers into modern, flexible office space. This has enabled us to improve staff satisfaction as well as reducing our costs and our office footprint
- made good progress on reducing our city centre office and carbon footprint. We have moved out of our Blue Boar Street offices and sold them; Ramsay House is also on the market. The aim over time is to locate most of our staff in our city centre offices and reduce the Council's office and carbon footprint by 25%.
- Put arrangements in place to increase the productivity and efficiency of the facilities management service over the coming months.

3. Corporate Services Modernisation

We have:

- Rationalised and centralised our back office functions by bringing together finance and ICT staff from across the Council into centralised teams.
- Made good progress on rationalising back office processes. For example, Finance have developed a single invoice and payment process. The Council also now has one integrated performance reporting tool, Corvu. This is enabling us to move to a self-service model whereby managers are able to access information about performance and finance directly, without reference to intermediary officers. This makes our processes more efficient and it also gives managers more ownership of the information relevant to their services. The role-out of the iTrent system is providing similar benefits in relation to human resources management.
- Significantly improved the management of our ICT service by creating a small team of experts within the Council to liaise with the County Council. A new ICT strategy will be implemented over the next twelve months. This will play a role in rationalising our ICT systems architecture, as will a major review of the City Council's licensing arrangements will also be taking place in the coming months,
- Developed a new performance management framework, which we will be embedding over the coming year. Performance management across the Council has improved significantly over the last few years, as is evidenced by our improved performance. The new framework builds on these improvements by requiring managers to look at good practice beyond the City Council. The new framework requires service managers to:
 - carry out at least one benchmarking exercise per year within our own sector and, where there is potential, outside of the sector
 - gather market intelligence on their sector to inform service development
 - have arrangements in place to obtain customer feedback biannually.

4. Direct Services

We have:

- set up a Direct Services unit which brings together front-line services previously delivered by different service areas. The unit includes: recycling and waste; street

CONSULTATION DRAFT

scene; highways and engineering; and building maintenance. All services will report through trading accounts overseen by a Commercial Services Board reporting to the Executive Director for City Services.

- agreed to move to a single depot and stores operation to support Direct Services and are currently looking at site options.
- made our asset management function more efficient by centralising all maintenance and property related functions in the corporate Asset Management team.

5. City Housing Review

We have:

- transferred the non-maintenance delivery elements of the housing landlord function to a new combined Housing and Communities Team. This is enabling us to address the changing nature of issues on our estates which are increasingly characterised by mixed tenure.

We aim to improve aggregate performance on tenancy services key performance indicators by 8% by 2012 and improve overall resident satisfaction with services by a minimum of 3% by 2013.

People and equalities

Staff are the Council's key asset and we are continuing to invest in them. We recruit good employees through an improved recruitment process and have significantly increased the number of trainee and apprenticeship roles, to help secure the long-term future of the Council's skills base. Increasing the diversity of our workforce is an important part of this. How we manage and develop people is fundamental to the delivery of better services and value for money and to do this our managers must know how to manage people well. We have provided training in this area and results are positive.

Communicating with staff, managing their performance and giving feedback are all essential parts of the employment relationship. We expect our managers to fulfil these aspects and employees also have their role to play, as laid out in our Employee Charter and Behavioural Framework. We have made good progress in driving high performance through our appraisal process, where staff and managers agree objectives – linked to delivery of Council services - and regularly review progress over the year. We have improved employee attendance by reducing sickness absence by 25% over the last twelve months and, for the first time in many years some staff have been dismissed for poor attendance. However, we have more work to do in this area.

Investors in People

We were delighted to achieve Investors in People accreditation in May 2011. Investors in People looks at all aspects of people management - setting and communicating our business strategies and including staff in those processes as well as developing our people so they are well equipped to deliver our strategies. The award reflected the contributions that people at all levels of the Council have made to improving the way that the Council does business.

The IIP assessors commended the Council for:

- its clear and ambitious vision to be "World Class"
- the clarity of its objectives at all levels, as a result of the consistency with which the planning process is implemented through team and personal plans. Every service and every team has its own plan, produced in the context of the Corporate Plan, which sets out the overall council priorities, aims and objectives that dovetail with the ambitions of the various different agencies and partnerships that exist throughout the city. Individuals, through regular team meetings and

CONSULTATION DRAFT

their individual one-to-ones with their managers, are clear of their own personal objectives and contributions, and how these link through team plans and services to help the council achieve what it sets out to do for the city and its residents.

- strong internal communications, through *Council Matters*, corporate briefings, Wider Leadership team meetings, Management Practice Group, and one-to-ones
- its well understood and managed Behaviours Framework
- people working together within teams and between teams to deliver the outcomes that the Council or the service requires
- its distinct focus on management and management behaviours that has helped to bring about some high levels of management competence and effectiveness throughout the organisation. The council has run three levels of management training, which was mandatory for all managers at the appropriate level: *Stepping On* (first line managers and supervisors), *Stepping Up* (managers of managers) and *Stepping Ahead* (senior managers).
- placing effective learning & development as a key feature of the council
- excellent use of measurable data, utilised effectively in setting clear goals and objectives, and then being used to measure progress towards objectives and to demonstrate improvements in specific areas
- an organisational ethos of honesty and openness which enables people to voice opinion, challenge practices and develop effective methods to make improvements to local and council practices.

We are planning to build on the recommendations in the IIP report to drive further improvements in preparation for a future application for IIP Gold accreditation.

Working relationships between management and trade unions remain strong and we continue to work together across a range of employment issues, including responding constructively to budget pressures. As part of the 2011 budget process, for example, Trade Unions have agreed to enter into a ground breaking partnership agreement which has suspended the incremental system in favour of a bonus payment for staff who have an acceptable performance and appraisal rating. This bonus is dependant on the Council achieving its savings targets. This agreement has helped the Council – in spite of the difficult national financial environment in which we find ourselves – to invest in the city, protect our core services - particularly those that serve the most vulnerable in our community - and to minimise redundancies.

The Council's Partnership Payment introduced as part of the 2011 budget process was an important step forward in changing the contract with staff and an explicit recognition of their fundamental role in performance delivery. We aim to create a culture in which all staff are actively encouraged to challenge accepted practice positively, suggest and pilot new approaches. Allowing risk-taking within defined parameters, actively managing talent, and engaging customers in service design will energise those individuals involved and the organisation as a whole. These are the issues with which we will be engaging in the coming months, as we take the Council to its next phase of development as an innovative, leading edge organisation.

Enterprising council

As the City Council becomes more efficient and effective, it is increasingly well placed to deliver services on behalf of others. Oxford City Council already manages a collaborative procurement hub that operates across all the councils in Oxfordshire. A dedicated procurement officer ensures that the majority of procurements undertaken benefit all the partners in the hub.

CONSULTATION DRAFT

In 2010, Legal Services entered into a shared services arrangement with the other Oxfordshire councils. The Oxfordshire Legal Hub is coordinated by the City Council. The purpose of the Hub is to share legal resource and expertise between the authorities, increasing the resilience of each partner and providing an alternative to placing work with the private sector. The partner authorities have already collaborated on the joint procurement of legal research facilities and external legal advice.

Our Direct Services team – providing services such as building maintenance, street scene, engineering, recycling and waste collection – are well placed to market a wide range of operational services to other organisations.

We are putting arrangements in place to encourage trading and business development across the Council.

Open council

Oxford City Council is committed to open government and transparency. In order to deliver this commitment we have published on our website:

- All expenditure over £500, including costs, supplier and transaction information. This information is published quarterly
- Senior employee salaries, job descriptions, responsibilities, budgets and numbers of staff. ‘Senior employee salaries’ is defined as all salaries which are above £58,200. We will also be publishing the ‘pay multiple’ – the ratio between the highest paid salary and the median average salary of the whole of the authority’s workforce
- An organisational chart. This is also published in our Corporate Plan
- Job vacancies see
- Councillor allowances and expenses
- Copies of contracts and tenders to businesses and to the voluntary community and social enterprise sector.
- Grants to the voluntary community and social enterprise sector should be clearly itemised and listed. Information related to the democratic running of the Council, including the constitution, election results, committee minutes, decision - making processes and records of decisions.

We are also planning to include on the site information commonly asked for through Freedom of Information requests.

Measures	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17
Increase the percentage of customers satisfied at their first point of contact across all access channels (web, telephone, face to face) to 90%	90%	95%	95%	95%	95%
Reduce the cost of delivering Council services per resident from £172 in 2011/12 to £162 in 2014/15.	tbc	tbc	£162	tbc	tbc
Deliver efficiency savings of £6m by 2011/12 and over £9, by 2014/15.	tbc	tbc	£9m +	tbc	tbc
Achieve IIP Gold by 2013/14	Standard	Gold	Gold	Gold	Gold

CONSULTATION DRAFT

Working with others

Many of the challenges that face Oxford – or any other major city – cannot be solved by the City Council alone. The Council, therefore, works with other organisations at many levels to deliver and enable services for the residents of Oxford. This will become increasingly important as budgets become tighter in the coming years if we are to continue to deliver effective and accessible service to the customers who depend on us.

Since coming into power the new government has made announcements on a range of policies and guidelines which affect the statutory functions of public bodies and which will impact upon how the public sector will deliver services. Of particular importance is the Localism Bill. This Bill aims to shift power from central government to local government and communities and to devolve powers and freedoms to local neighbourhoods. This Bill will augment the planning system and give communities greater influence over planning and housing decisions. The details of how changes are to be implemented are still not entirely clear.

The public sector in Oxfordshire (local authorities, police and primary care trust) have been reviewing the impact of these changes on the existing partnership arrangements. Partnerships are in a period of transition and the changes that they are going through are set out below.

Local Strategic Partnerships

There was a requirement for each local authority area to have a Sustainable Community Strategy and a Local Strategic Partnership to oversee the development and delivery of the Strategy. These partnerships bring together key organisations from the public, business, community and voluntary sectors to develop and implement long-term visions for their areas.

For each upper tier of local authority there was a Local Area Agreement (LAA) between central government and a Local Strategic Partnership. This agreement set out the priorities for the area, and targets for delivering them. In Oxfordshire the delivery of the LAA was overseen by the Oxfordshire Public Service Board. However, the Government has now abolished the Local Area Agreement and has announced that it is the choice of the local authorities whether or not they wish to maintain their Local Strategic Partnerships.

Oxford City benefits from an active and well supported Local Strategic Partnership and the members of the partnership have confirmed their intention of maintaining and strengthening it to tackle the issues which face the city over the next decade. The Partnership has taken a lead on six key issues for the City since its inception in 2002/3. These include:

- Affordable Housing
- Health and Social Inclusion
- Climate Change
- Quality of the Public Realm
- Safer, Stronger and more Cohesive City
- The Economy of the City

CONSULTATION DRAFT

More recently the Partnership has taken on the role of overseeing the delivery of the City Regeneration Framework and Breaking the Cycle of Deprivation programme as well as Low Carbon Oxford.

Oxfordshire County Council has expressed a commitment to maintaining the Oxfordshire Partnership as a county wide information sharing and consultative body that helps to set high level strategic objectives for joint action. It is proposed that the Oxfordshire Public Service Board will only meet if future circumstances require it to do so.

Spatial Planning and Infrastructure

This partnership between the Oxfordshire District Council and the County Council oversees infrastructure development, economic development spatial planning and housing development across the county.

The government has abolished Regional Development Agencies and there are no longer regionally imposed housing targets but local authorities still need to set their own five year housing targets. There are substantial changes proposed for the planning system with the possibility for neighbourhoods to prepare their own plans within certain parameters.

The government invited areas to bid to become Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEP). LEPs cover a functional economic area and are business driven. They are business led bodies aimed at setting a clear vision for the area's longer term future, removing barriers to economic growth and creating new markets and employment, particularly in hi-tech and green technologies.

Oxfordshire County Council, with the support of Oxford City Council and the other District Councils, put in a bid for Oxfordshire City-Region LEP. This bid was successful and the LEP is now supporting bids to the Regional Growth Fund to support infrastructure developments in Oxfordshire which are aimed at creating sustainable economic growth.

Environmental and Waste Partnership

This partnership currently oversees work across the county on reducing carbon, climate change and adaptation. It also oversees the waste reduction and encourages recycling, improved street cleanliness and the public realm.

The government has announced its commitment to reducing carbon and introducing the 'Green Deal', aimed at providing resources for householders to improve energy efficiency.

The delivery of waste services and waste reduction is currently under review in order to see if there are opportunities for budget savings. The partnership is in the process of reviewing its remit and functions.

The Children's Trust

The Oxfordshire Children's Trust currently oversees the delivery of the Oxfordshire Children and Young People's Plan. The Plan covers education, health and social exclusion, reduction of child poverty and the provision of play, leisure and cultural activities for children and young people. The Plan is delivered through a number of agencies, such as the county council, schools, health service and police and these agencies are all represented on the Trust.

CONSULTATION DRAFT

There is also a Central Area Children's Trust which is currently in the process of developing the priorities and a Delivery Plan for children's services in the city.

The government have announced that there is no longer a statutory requirement for an area to have a Children's Trust or Children's Plan. Schools no longer have a duty to cooperate with a Children's Trust. However guidelines on alternative arrangements are unclear and the County Council have proposed that the existing structure be maintained until government guidance is clearer.

Health and Well-Being Partnership

This partnership is aimed at reducing health inequalities and the rates of premature deaths. It encourages people to choose healthier lifestyles. It oversees the delivery of a number of strategies, including: Adult Social Care, Aging Successfully, Supporting People, Obesity and Mental Well Being.

The Supporting People Commissioning Body currently reports to the Health and Well Being partnership. This partnership provides funding for adults who need housing related support to live independently in communities, including supported and sheltered housing, community alarms and floating support. The funding for these services is expected to be significantly reduced over the next few years.

There have been a number of government announcements relating to health and well-being issues. These include abolishing the existing Primary Care Trusts with services being delivered by the National Health Service, GP Commissioning and by local authorities. There are also proposals around public scrutiny, the pooling of budgets, and the joint commissioning of services.

The announcements indicate that the existing partnership will become statutory and more formalised. It is proposed that the existing structure is maintained until government guidance is clearer.

Safer Communities Partnership

The City Council are a lead partner on the Oxfordshire Safer Communities Partnership (OSCP) whose aim is to make Oxford a more cohesive city by reducing crime, antisocial behaviour, fear of crime and domestic violence. The partnership has been identifying and tackling the city's community safety priorities for the last 10 years.

The government has made significant cuts to a number of community safety grants and, alongside a restructure of Thames Valley Police, these present significant challenges for the partnership. In addition the partnership will need to respond to the new National Crime Strategy and the introduction of directly elected police commissioners. There are currently discussions on the future functions and remits of both the Oxfordshire and Oxford City Community Safety Partnerships.

Oxfordshire Community and Voluntary Sector

The City Council is part of the Oxfordshire Stronger Communities Alliance, which aims to strengthen the role of the voluntary and community sectors and increase the number of volunteers in the city.

The City Council provides funding to a range of voluntary and community groups who help deliver the objectives set out in the Corporate Plan.

The government's 'Big Society' concept seemed to offer potential opportunities for the voluntary and community sector as deliverers of services. However, significant

CONSULTATION DRAFT

cuts in public sector funding have resulted from the government's own budget cuts and these are likely to lead to groups losing grants and/or contracts for services. The Oxfordshire Stronger Communities Alliance is analysing the potential impact of these changes and to support the development of a business plan which will prepare them for the anticipated changes ahead.

Procurement

The procurement team actively engages with Business Link, Federation of Small Businesses (FSB), Thames Valley Chamber of Commerce and the voluntary and community sector. The team regularly supports the work of these groups by giving talks to members and offering training. They also work with local professional services such as banks, solicitors and accountants who provided free advice to businesses.

Oxford City Council manages a collaborative procurement hub that operates across all the Councils in Oxfordshire. A dedicated Procurement Officer ensures that the majority of procurements undertaken benefit all of the partners in the hub.

This area of work will be of growing importance given the budget reductions required from the public sector and the potential to make savings through the joint purchasing of goods and services.

Conclusion

This draft Corporate Plan reaffirms the Council's ambition to make Oxford a world-class city for everyone. It also reaffirms our plans for transforming the way that the Council performs. We intend to be an efficient and effective council, delivering high quality services and excellent value for money for all our citizens.

The Corporate Plan sets out the significant steps that we have taken over the last few years toward realising our ambitions. We have made extensive efficiency savings and at the same time improved performance across over 80% of our indicators. We have continued to make good progress in delivering our broader aspirations for the city. We are investing in Oxford's future by using Council money to drive projects which will create housing, jobs, and an improved quality of life for our citizens.

We remain committed to our core ambition of building a world class city for everyone. The priorities that underpin our core ambition remain unchanged:

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

The Corporate Plan sets the key themes that, within the context of our corporate priorities, we will be focusing on over the next five years:

- Investing in Oxford's future
- protecting vulnerable communities
- Strengthening community engagement
- Embedding the principles of sustainability and carbon reduction
- Providing leadership to the city

CONSULTATION DRAFT

We are delivering these improvements against a backdrop of severe spending cuts by central government that, combined with other factors, will reduce our budget by more than £9m by 2014-15. There are more challenges to come, as a result of the uncertain state of the economy, and further government initiatives, including the move to Universal Credit in 2013. The Council will also face increased demand for services as a consequence of the recession and deficit reduction initiatives by other organisations.

The hallmark of the Council's approach to delivering its ambitions has been effective management, focus, consistency, and a refusal to be knocked off course by external events. We are sticking with this approach. The strong partnership that has been forged between councillors, council managers, and the trade unions will enable us to continue investing in the city, protecting our core services - particularly those that serve the most vulnerable in our community - and minimising redundancies.

We want to know your views about our plans for the future. Have we got our priorities right? What issues have we missed? Please let us know what you think.

This page is intentionally left blank