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# OXFORD CITY COUNCIL

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# PERFORMANCE IMPROVEMENT FRAMEWORK

# 2011 to 2015

# Contents

# 1    Executive Summary

Effective performance management is vital to delivery of the Council's priorities and vision and it is therefore essential that the Council's approach to performance management is robust, embedded and understood across the organisation.

Many organisations have a documented approach to managing performance; however, Oxford is committed to delivering the vision of providing world class services to everyone and as such, recognises that our approach must be underpinned by transformational improvement.  This document has therefore been written intentionally as a "Performance Improvement Framework" to reflect the Council's ongoing transformational journey: its aspiration to provide services that deliver excellent value for money and recognising that to deliver our vision we need to constantly reflect on what and why we do what we do, rethink how we go about it and ensure our staff are clear about expectations and equipped to deliver them.

The framework demonstrates how the Council has created an integrated and structured approach to managing and improving its services from corporate planning through to each individual understanding how, supported by individual development plans, they contribute to the delivery of excellent services.  The framework includes an improvement model which requires all services to have an embedded service improvement plan that is informed by benchmarking against "best in class" providers both within and outside the public sector, as well as using customer feedback to design service improvements.

The framework is designed to underpin the efficiencies and improvements we have committed to in our Corporate Plan and our Medium Term Financial Strategy, as well as provide a methodology for identifying and delivering future service improvements and efficiencies.  It is proposed that this framework is known as the Oxford Improvement Model (OIM).

Key changes introduced by the Framework will require all services to:

- to carry out at least one benchmarking exercise within our own sector and where there is the potential to benchmark outside of the sector to seek to carry out a benchmarking exercise with that sector (see section 6.5);

- upload and share benchmarking data and good practice using LG Inform (see section 6.5);

- gather market intelligence on their sector to inform service development (see section 6.8); and

- carry out either a survey or have in place arrangements to obtain customer feedback biannually (see section 6.6).

## 2  Vision

The Council's vision is to build a world class city for everyone.

The vision is underpinned by the Council's 5 priorities, set out below and the 20 key corporate targets as set out in our Corporate Plan 2011/15.

- Meeting Housing Needs
- Stronger Communities
- A Vibrant Economy
- A Cleaner Greener City
- An Efficient and Effective Council

Over the next 4 years the Council aspires to build over 900 new homes at Barton, build a new competition standard swimming pool and deliver a further £7.6 million in savings to manage budget pressures.  The Council has challenging targets and aspirations, however, and these are supported by detailed plans and major projects, and improvements are overseen by the Council's corporate boards which are sponsored and overseen by the Corporate Management Team.

The Council has a mandatory programme and project management methodology based on Prince2 which has been assessed as reflecting best practice.  Our approach can be seen at http://occweb/intranet/approvalguidance.cfm


## 3  Background

Over the last three years the Council has achieved major savings as a result of reviewing and market testing some of its core services and undertaking restructuring to streamline the way in which they are delivered.  Notable achievements include:

- Transferring the management of our leisure facilities to Fusion Lifestyle resulting in annual savings of £750k, an increase in the number of users (12% in 2010/11) and achieving top quartile performance for adult participation in sports activity.

- Market testing our refuse and recycling service against the best private sector operators through a competitive tender process resulting in the in-house team completely streamlining their method of service provision to an innovative 4-day a week service and co-mingled recycling service.  This is achieving an annual saving of over £1million a year and has increased our recycling rate from 37% to over 45%.

- Transferring our ICT infrastructure delivery to the County Council to provide improved business continuity and service development opportunities as part of a larger function as well as achieving savings of £700K a year.

We have come a long way in delivering our agreed performance targets. In 2008 the Council achieved 49% of it performance targets. At the end of 2010/11 this had increased to 84%, with 62% of the targets having been exceeded.

The Council has an ambitious portfolio of improvement programmes focused on delivering service improvements and efficiencies in the way we work and which supports our Medium Term Financial Strategy. To date these improvements have been overseen by the Council 2012 Board, which acts as the sponsoring group and is made up of members of the Corporate Management team. This board has overseen savings of £899K in the last two years. Following a review of the board structure the Council 2012 board will be closed down at the end of 2011 and all of the Corporate Boards will report directly to the Corporate Management Team.

Our current programme structure is available at:
http://occweb/files/seealsodocs/93121/Corporate%20Programmes%20and%20Strategic%20Priorities%20v.doc

The Council's savings and efficiency programme is also documented in the Council's Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFS) and monitored as part of the Council's budget management procedures.

Our current savings plan is shown below.
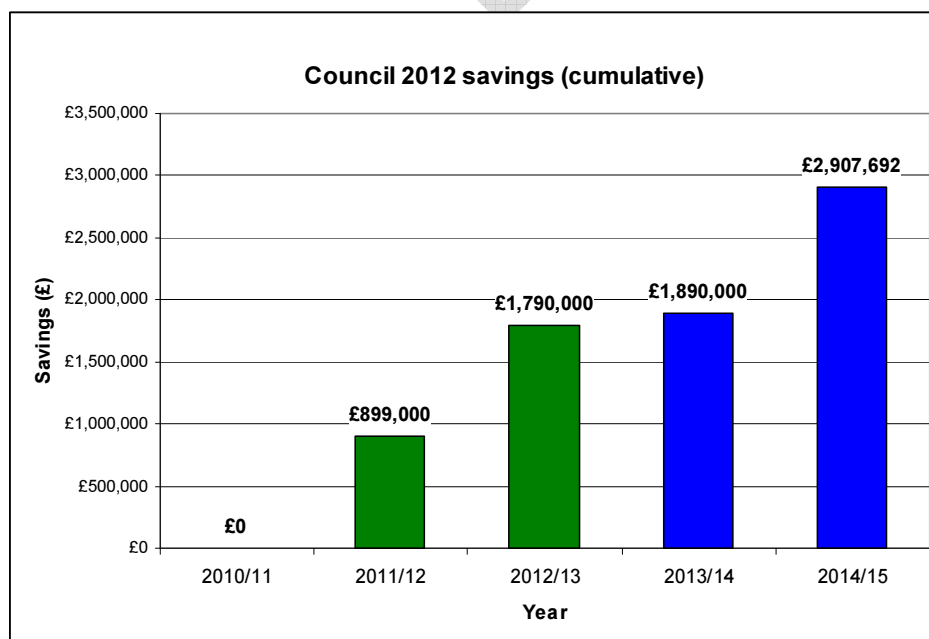


# 4   Why Have A Performance Improvement Framework?

The aims of the performance framework are twofold:

1.  To provide a coherent methodology within which to manage delivery of the Council's vision and aspiration; and

2. To enable a strategic focus on outcomes and the management of risk.

More specifically the benefits of having a Performance Improvement Framework are that we can:

- Focus on delivery of our priorities – understanding what we plan to do, the benefits of doing it, and manage the resources required to deliver.

- Assess whether we are successfully achieving our objectives, identifying and rectifying poor performance at an early stage, learning from past performance and so can improve for the future.

- Validate that we are providing value for money through comparing our performance within our own sector and beyond.

- Ensure we are listening to our customers and increasing satisfaction by putting our customers at the heart of service re-design and focusing on outcomes.

- Motivate staff by actively engaging them in service improvement planning, ensuring they know how they contribute to Council priorities and are supported to deliver them.

- Ensure that our improvement planning and delivery forms an integrated part of the whole of the Council's planning cycle.

- Enable accountability through transparent reporting of performance to our customers and the Executive.

- Demonstrate through the achievement of national external accreditations that we are committed to achieving performance standards that compare well with the "best in class".

- Ensure that our policies and strategies are developed to support performance improvement.

- Deliver real and sustained service improvements.

Fundamental service reviews carried out so far have been used to focus on service areas that have been considered high cost compared with other comparable authorities. Benchmarking has to date been carried out on an ad hoc basis by individual services and not been captured in a co-ordinated or transparent way across all services to inform the organisation corporately.

By developing a more structured and holistic approach to managing, recording performance and benchmarking data, both qualitative and quantitative, the Council will be better able to manage its resources and focus its improvement activity across all its services.

The environment in which we operate is becoming increasingly pressured, not only as a consequence of funding reductions but also as a consequence of increasing customer

demand and raised expectations, increasing scrutiny and challenge as a result of the Transparency Agenda, as well as the implications of the Localism Bill.

Focusing on improving our service offer and our effectiveness in delivering those services will be vital in protecting frontline delivery going forward.

**Improving service delivery to our customers and demonstrating VFM, in the design and delivery of our services is our guiding principle in improving service performance.**

The Improvement Framework is therefore intended to support:

- Accountability and decision making.

- Improved understanding of customer segmentation and demand.

- Improved business intelligence to inform planning and delivery modelling.

- Proactive challenge to VfM and performance management.

- The embedding of continuous improvement and benefits realisation.

- A holistic approach to service improvement encompassing risk and finance.

As the framework is developed, this document will be reviewed and refined to reflect changes as required.

# 5   PRINCIPLES OF THE FRAMEWORK

## 5.1  Creating an Integrated Approach to Performance

The Improvement and Development Agency (I&DeA) definition of performance management is:

> '*Taking action in response to actual performances to make outcomes for users and the public better than they would otherwise be*'.

Put simply, this is about knowing:

a)  what objectives based on resident feedback and stakeholder needs we are trying to achieve,

b)  developing effective ways to deliver those outcomes,

c)  monitoring how well we are doing during the journey, and

d)  adjusting resources and learning to improve in the future.

In many authorities this has been developed into an established model known as "plan, do, review". This approach whilst well used, can result in an approach that focuses on processes without ensuring that the improvements deliver our strategic aims or how the cost of the service, processes and people can deliver the best possible service to the customer. The Council has for this reason chosen to create its own framework based on a balanced scorecard approach.

The Council is keen to incorporate recognised good practice into its own model and ensure there is structured analysis and learning back into the organisation as a whole. Hence the Council's framework adopts an integrated approach that ensures that performance improvement feeds into service and financial planning and aligns it to the Corporate Plan priorities.

An annual review and refresh of corporate, service and financial plans is carried out each year, commencing in earnest each September and continuing through to February with the approval by Council of the annual Budget, Medium Term Financial Strategy and Corporate Plan. Service Improvement Plans and Individual Development Plans are subsequently signed off in March.

A copy of the annual planning cycle is shown at Appendix 1.

Ultimately the Performance Improvement Framework supports the delivery of the Corporate Plan targets. The diagram below sets out how the Council will use the framework in a practical context.

The diagram contains the following labels:

**Operational**

**Strategic**

**Analyse** — Research, consultation and lessons learned

**Plan** — Prioritisation, business, financial planning and service improvement

**Report & Revise** — Monitor progress and performance manage change

**Do** — Delivery and management of business as usual and improvement plans

**Vision and priorities**

Consult with community and service users

Develop service and team plans

Use Talkback

Corporate programme structure

Document lessons learned

Use of Data Observatory & LG Forum Knowledge Hub

Sustainable Community Strategy

Set performance indicators and targets

Analyse cross sector market intelligence

Programme benefits review

Corporate Plan

Identify and assess risks

Peer review

MTFS

Reports to Executive and Committee

Produce annual report

Monitor data quality

Manage strategic risks

Manage service budgets

Reports to programme boards

Report corporate performance & budget to CEB

Monitor Council budget

Manage service risks

Manage and learn from complaints

Undertake service reviews

Undertake peer reviews and customer surveys

Benchmark against others

Undertake appraisals and 1:1s

## 5.2 Embedding a Performance Improvement Culture

**Personal responsibility for improvement**

In order for the Council to embed a culture of continuous performance improvement, all officers need to:

- Engage with and actively support the Council in delivering its objectives and key performance measures which support the delivery of the Council's priorities and our One Council approach.

- Take responsibility for their own performance and support colleagues and team members in delivering shared objectives, whether they are Team, Service or Corporate in nature.

- Understand the impact of their role on their immediate team and the work of the wider Council.

- Operate in accordance with the Council's Employee Charter and challenge unacceptable behaviour that would undermine a performance improvement culture and "can do" approach.

- Feel empowered to offer ideas and suggestions for improvements within their own team or through the corporate efficiency board and that these will be constructively considered.

This is underpinned through our appraisal system, 121s, team meetings, the Employee Charter, and active engagement of all staff in the development of annual service improvement plans.

## Personal targets for improvement

From March 2012 iTrent will hold all of the service improvement plan objectives. When appraisal targets are set for each individual, an action or activity relating to the service plan target can be recorded as an appraisal target for the individual. This will enable staff to see how their personal appraisal targets support the delivery of the service and corporate plan targets. All staff will have access to their own appraisal in iTrent.

## Encouraging ideas and innovation

The Council has established a Corporate Innovation and Efficiency Board which meets monthly to review new ideas for savings and improvements. The Board is made up of senior officers, innovation champions and Unison representatives. The Board has an annual budget of £50k available to fund "spend to save" improvements/initiatives put forward by staff members. Each service area has at least one Innovation Champion and a Unison Innovation Champion. The champions receive ongoing support and training, including external speaker events to help them motivate their service areas. Events are arranged for this group two to three times a year. The group has facilitated a range of new ideas across the Council.

Since the Board was set up in April 2011, 60 new ideas have been received and on average the Board considers about 10 new ideas each month. Examples of ideas that have come to the Board and have been implemented are:

- Use rechargeable batteries.

- Food waste bins in all of the office kitchen and rest room areas.

- Pool bikes for staff to reduce the need for catching buses or using cars to get around the city.

- Scrap metal collection of spare materials from repairs to Council houses.

- Red Fuel to be used in fleet not used on the road.

The Council's recent achievement of IIP and the feedback report received is testament to the Council's commitment to staff engagement and management.

**Reinforcing delivery of Corporate Plan priorities**

The diagram below shows the golden thread running from an individual's appraisal targets through to delivery of the Corporate Plan objectives and demonstrates the importance of individual employees in achieving the Corporate Plan objectives.
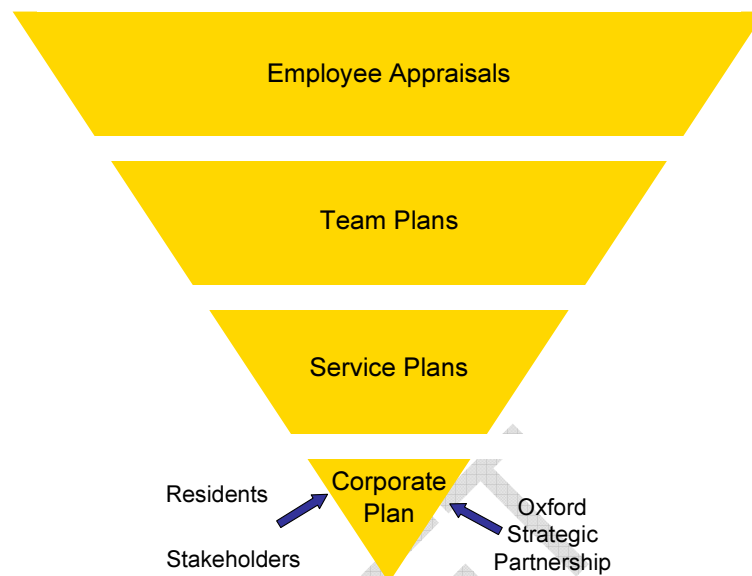


The increased use and visibility of performance data via CorVu will add a new dimension to the visibility and scrutiny to our performance reporting by officers, Councillors and members of the public.  All officers are being trained and encouraged to use the system which defaults to the Council's corporate performance as the first screen on entering the system, so all staff have a very visible and holistic picture of how the Council is performing against its Corporate Plan objectives.

# 6   COMPONENTS OF THE FRAMEWORK

Demonstrating that our services provide value for money and are of comparable quality and cost to those of other highly regarded organisations across both the public and private sectors needs an approach that is able to recognise the value of historic data, (benchmarking), market intelligence to understand the market and sectors that we operate within, as well as customer intelligence.  The combination of all of this information should provide us with the information necessary to design effective service delivery models.

The Oxford Improvement Model (OIM) comprises a range of components which, put together and used in a structured way by all of our services, enables the Council to demonstrate that every service is testing and reviewing how it delivers its services against others.

Details of how the OIM operates, the components that make up the framework together with the Council's approach to using them is provided below.

## 6.1  National Targets

The coalition government abolished the National Indicator Framework in early 2011.  This has been replaced by a "single data list" of performance reporting information that is required by central government departments.  This revised list continues to be reviewed, with the current version requiring the Council to submit 74 data lines via a number of government returns.

Despite this relaxation in the amount of performance information to be gathered, the Council has chosen to retain some of the previous BVPIs and NI within Service Improvement Plans as they support the business in managing its performance.

## 6.2  Corporate Targets

The Council has twenty corporate performance targets which align to the Council's five key priorities and reflect the Council's ambitions for delivering the high quality services and improvements that meet our residents' needs.

These key targets are reported on monthly and are available online via CorVu to all officers and members.

It is hoped that in the future this information will be available to the public in real time via our website.

## 6.3  Service Targets

Each service area has identified up to 20 key service performance targets which form part of its Service Improvement Plan.  These targets include a range of measures that provide an effective gauge as to how each service area is performing.  The measures include a mix of KPIs and service improvement objectives.

All service measures are captured and monitored in CorVu.  The development of service targets is done annually by each Head of Service involving all staff to ensure that everyone has a full understanding of the direction of their own service.  The service plan targets are both informed by and inform the appraisal targets for all members of the team.

## 6.4  Data Quality of Performance Measures

Data Quality means the "fitness for purpose" of data, particularly around its accuracy, reliability, timeliness, validity, relevance of the data for its intended use and completeness of the data.  It isn't just about how accurate the data is, but how useful it is and how it is used.

The Council recognises that good data quality is an essential component of performance reporting and decision making.  All corporate and service improvement plan measures have a data quality procedure which is viewable via CorVu.  The procedure is owned by

the updater and has to be reviewed annually and is subject to a rolling review of data quality audits by the Corporate Performance Improvement Officer (two each month) to ensure that the stated procedures and controls are in place and working effectively.

Each service has a designated CorVu Super User who is also the recognised Data Quality Champion for the service.  This group of officers meet quarterly.

## 6.5  Benchmarking, Best Practice Forums and LG Inform

Benchmarking is an important mechanism to compare how well services perform against their local government peers, or against similar bodies in other sectors.

The Council is keen to use benchmarking as a tool to compare its current performance and approach to service delivery against that of others.  We already use APSE, CIPFA, IRRV, Audit Commission and family grouped informal benchmarking clubs within our own sector.  We recognise that there are inherent difficulties in benchmarking and at times it can be difficult and frustrating to fully understand the differences between the reported comparative data or to draw useful conclusions.  However, it provides a useful guide to where service improvements and efficiencies might be made and which can be explored more fully as part of service improvement.

The LGA is developing a hosted portal 'LG Inform', which will effectively provide a database enabling councils to upload their performance data and share and compare this with others.  The service is still in development but should be available later in 2011.

The portal will enable officers, members and interested parties to;

- access existing performance and contextual data, including national sources such as from the Office for National Statistics.

- upload their own data.

- compare and share relevant, meaningful data through customisable queries and reports.

- share good practice, and provide insights to drive improvement across the sector.

- deal proactively with transparency and open data requirements.

The Corporate Management Team is committed to using LG Inform as a tool to share knowledge and best practice.  The portal provides the option of uploading and sharing our performance data with others in our sector.  As soon as this service is available, the Performance Improvement Team will engage with all service managers and demonstrate how the portal can be used.

There are also an increasing number of websites which provide service managers with the ability to complete a short survey on their service and then provide pointers on areas of improvement.  These currently include:

- IESE
- CIPFA
- APSE
- IDeA

The Performance Improvement team will proactively research new sites as part of their role in supporting all services and promote the use of these portals where there is evidence that these will add value.

Currently there are two fundamental points that the Council needs to address to improve our approach to collecting and using benchmarking data.

- To date benchmarking has almost solely been carried out within our own sector. It is also accepted that even within structured arrangements for ensuring like-for-like information is compared, the results from comparator organisations can vary greatly. Although this can discourage users, this is still useful information and where benchmarking data received is varied follow-up work must be taken to understand the make up of the data behind it so that awareness of how others operate can be built up.

- Secondly some of our services are provided by the private and voluntary sector and useful benchmarking and comparator data is difficult to obtain. In future, areas where there is a developed market sector that also operates comparative benchmarking data needs to be collected, in the same way that market intelligence about competitor organisations would be a key requisite of any sustainable business.

Prior to CorVu being re-implemented benchmarking data has been held and used within service areas. This has resulted in a lack of corporate visibility of our performance against others.

From 2011/12 **all** services will be required to carry out at least one benchmarking exercise within our own sector and where there is the potential to benchmark outside of the sector to seek to carry out a benchmarking exercise with that sector.

All benchmarking information obtained will be held and accessible via CorVu and used to inform subsequent service improvement planning rounds.


## 6.6  Customer Feedback, Talkback, Complaints and Compliments

There are many ways to integrate public involvement and performance management, including at the most basic level ensuring the latest survey results are taken into account in performance planning and decision making. A customer focused performance improvement framework is essential if we are to understand what our customers feel and think about our services and we are to be sufficiently informed to design improved outcomes which better meet their needs.

Through active listening and staying in touch with our residents, service users, and partners the Council can use this feedback to help shape the future delivery of our services.

Effective consultation will enable the Council to:

- Compare and challenge existing services
- Identify unmet needs
- Shape the way services are delivered to improve the customer experience
- Measure satisfaction
- Prioritise future spending
- Set service targets and service level agreements
- Identify quality improvements

A high proportion of our services already interact directly with our customers and it is essential that these services seek and use feedback from customers to improve the service.  The main Customer Contact Centre has introduced a customer feedback system that is quick and easy to use by face to face customers.

The Council has had an established Talkback panel for several years.  Each year the Council undertakes three surveys with the panel.  In addition, the Council will carry out a number of service specific surveys via our website and encourages feedback through a range of media.

There is no 'one size fits all' approach to obtaining feedback.  For example, some services may combine their feedback surveys to prevent consultation fatigue and ensure better returns.  There may also be informal channels that are more appropriate to use than questionnaires, or through qualitative research with representative groups.

The Council records and manages complaints and compliments through the documented workflow within the Council's CRM system, Lagan.  The number of complaints and compliments plus our effectiveness in handling complaints is one of the Council's corporate measures of internal performance and this is reported on monthly.

The Council takes part in mystery shopping reviews which involve the use of trained evaluators to act as customers and objectively report back on their experience.  This can provide useful feedback about a user's experience of their first point of contact.  Where the Council carries out this type of activity the findings will be shared with staff and depending on the outcome developed into an improvement plan.

Our support units, Business Improvement, Finance, ICT, People & Equalities, Law and Governance, Corporate Assets need to ensure that the services provided are designed to deliver the most effective solution.  It is a requirement that all support service units carry out internal satisfaction surveys.

## 6.7 Peer Reviews and External Challenge

A Peer Review in its simplest form is a structured review agreed, scoped and carried out by peers who assess our performance against what might be expected as the standard that the Council should expect to be operating at either strategically or within a specified service area. It is designed to be a supportive process undertaken by "critical friends".

The Council will commit to Peer reviews where it feels there is an opportunity to:

- identify strengths and weaknesses and identify areas for suggested performance improvement.

- review governance structures and speed of progress on specific change programmes or projects.

- generate a broader spectrum of ideas from an experienced peer group.

The Council is currently considering the option of undergoing a peer review with the LGA in 2012. The review is likely to focus on our performance improvement journey. The review has not yet been fully scoped or agreed.

The Council will also seek to enable staff to join in other peer reviews as reviewers subject to operational needs and development requirements. The Council sees this as a development opportunity particularly for long service staff to help them bring new insight into their substantive roles.

## 6.8 Using our Networks to Gather Market Intelligence

In the private sector market intelligence is key to understanding your competitors and building your strategy to increase market share. This has always been recognised as a key differentiator between the public and private sector. Since the CCT outsourcing era, the private sector has developed expertise in a range of service functions and in some services such as waste collection and disposal manages a significant share of the market.

The Localism Bill provides the opportunity for the development of new groups to challenge the ongoing delivery of services provided directly and put forward a request to take over the service. If such an event came about, the Council would need to consider the option of opening this service up to a competitive tendering process and, in any event, would need to review why another organisation considered it could provide a more effective service.

There are many sources of market intelligence already in the public domain, from case studies, marketing materials and annual reports. Some private sector organisations will also share data as long as it does not compromise their commercial competitive advantage. The Business Improvement team will help services carry out research to assist understanding of how other sectors provide similar services and support and assist with designing soft market testing activities.

## 6.9  Fundamental Service Reviews (FSRs) and Market Testing

### Background

Carrying out benchmarking, acquiring market intelligence and understanding our customers is fundamental to helping each service understand its position as a service provider, how the service design might need to be improved, and what opportunities there could be in reducing waste from our internal processes or through utilising technology.  We will use these tools to drive our Fundamental Service Review (FSR) Programme.

As their name suggests, the reviews will be 'fundamental' in that they will look in depth at how we deliver services, what they cost to deliver and how well they perform, and redesign them to be higher performing and at lower cost.

### Formulating the FSR Programme

The Council has already had significant success in its FSR programme.  In the last three years Leisure and Refuse and Recycling have been reviewed, and during 2011/12 the Benefits and Homelessness services will undergo similar reviews.

An initial approach used to help identify the next round of Reviews is set out in Appendix 3.  This has used two differing methods.  Both are useful for illustration but have limitations;

- Performance and relative budget comparison using RA (revenue estimate) data for 2012: This uses service groupings determined by the national RA return form which allows comparisons with the Council's CIPFA nearest neighbours, but is restricted in scope in that it doesn't adequately cover internal services or all those provided by Direct Services.

- Performance and priority comparison using 2011/12 gross budget data: This covers all services across the Council but uses subjective judgements for relative priority to the Council.

In both cases the availability of reliable comparative performance data is currently limited.  This will be resolved by the development of detailed benchmarking data by all services (see section 6.5) to help us build a reliable comparative base of information and good practice which will;

- Be supported and coordinated by the Performance Improvement Team
- Act as a catalyst for determining the future FSR programme
- Be shared with other councils

To identify the priority order for services to undergo a review the Performance Improvement Team will use the benchmarking information and produce a VFM analysis of each service based on national comparator information taking into account:

- The size of Council budget needed to provide the service;

- The cost of service compared to the 16 nearest neighbouring authorities based on CIPFA analytics and using 2011/12 budget, and also with the wider all-district group

where relevant;

- Performance based on the last available performance quartile reporting data.

The report will provide CMT with a snapshot of the latest overall VFM position of each service and from this the Fundamental Service Review Plan will be updated to reflect any changes.

Such reviews will be managed through a project board using the Council's project management methodology and will be fully scoped and designed prior to commencement by a member of the Business Improvement Team. Each review will involve external challenge and a review of the design of the service against others who are recognised as high performers both within and outside our own sector.

## FSR Principles

The principles behind any FSR are for the review to;

- Be inclusive, involving staff in all aspects of the process;

- Explore and understand the real costs of the service and make a judgment about where they ought to be;

- Specify a future direction for the service in terms of a specification for service delivery;

- As part of the service redesign, aim to improve performance by 20% as well as reducing costs by 20%;

- Be project managed by the Business Improvement Team;

- Arrive at a project plan to take the service from its current state to its desired future state, which will be monitored through Corvu.

## Approach to Managing FSRs

The Performance Improvement Manager and Business Improvement Partners will provide the first line of support to each review and external specialists will be brought in where required.

The Council recognises that these reviews can create capacity issues for staff trying to also carry out the day job and can be potentially unsettling. All service reviews will be planned so that they are completed in a maximum of 9 months.

The Council will ensure that all priority services are subject to a fundamental service review over a four year period as part of its corporate FSR programme.

The Council has an approved approach, ratified by CEB in March 2010 whereby services will only be subject to formal market testing in the event that the service is unable to

deliver the agreed improvement plan and achieve the deliverables by the agreed dates following a fundamental service review.  When an improvement plan is agreed the service will be provided with support to achieve the improvement plan.  If the service is unable to deliver the level of improvement agreed, CEB will be asked to approve that the service is formally market tested.

During the market test the service will have the opportunity to put forward a robust comparator bid to retain the service in-house.


# 7    THE PERFORMANCE IMPROVEMENT FRAMEWORK

## 7.1  The Oxford Improvement Model (OIM)

The Council is committed to ensuring that our assessment of our performance provides internal context, sector context as well as cross sector context so as to demonstrate to our customers that we provide services that compare with the best in the marketplace.

The model requires all services to have in place a number of improvement delivery targets within their Service Improvement Plans and carrying out benchmarking activities (see section 12) on a regular basis.

Customer satisfaction is one of the key quadrants of our model, and all services (frontline and support) must carry out either a survey or have in place arrangements to obtain customer feedback biannually.  In addition, mystery shopping activities will be carried out on a periodic basis.  This work programme is co-ordinated by the Communications team.

All performance, benchmarking and customer feedback reports will be made available via CorVu.

The OIM model will enable us to identify and prioritise services that should be subject to a service review or a more detailed fundamental service review.

The model is based on a performance scorecard which encompasses;

- Customer service satisfaction
- People, process and systems
- Performance results
- Size of budget/cost

The model provides a multi layered approach to assessing the current performance standard of each service.  Within each of the 4 quadrants (based on a balanced scorecard) a number of factors are assessed to come up with an overall ranking for the service.

**The Oxford Improvement Model:**

# OXFORD IMPROVEMENT MODEL

**Financial Assessment**
- Achievement of financial savings
- Financial benchmarking/unit costs
- Fundamental Service Reviews

**Customer View**
- Customer Satisfaction Surveys
- Talkback
- Working towards external accreditation such as the Institute to Customer Excellence
- Mystery Shopping
- Complaints and Compliments

**Strategic Overview**
- Delivery of Corporate Plan
- Delivery of budget and MTFS
- National recognitions
- Single Data list comparisons
- Corporate Improvement Programmes
- Staff and customer feedback

**Performance Standards**
- Service Performance Targets
- Benchmark
- Fundamental Service Review
- Standard Operation Process Review
- Lexcel
- ISO9000 in some services
- ITIL

**Learning and Capacity for Development**
- IIP
- Appraisals
- 1-2-1's
- Learning & Development Plans
- Peer Reviews
- Use of market intelligence beyond our own section to drive improvements
- Secondments
- Staff Surveys

# 8  PERFORMANCE REPORTING, SUPPORT AND EXTERNAL RECOGNITION

## 8.1  Recording Our Performance Journey - CorVu

The Council has re-implemented CorVu as the corporate performance management reporting tool.  This system has been set up as a single corporate database to provide all our corporate performance reporting requirements.

CorVu will also provide a single repository for all of benchmarking and comparator performance data for the Council.  It is essential that all officers record all data within the system but also ensure that the information is robust and reflects the most up to date performance information available.

Our Corporate performance will be available in real time via CorVu to officers and members from September 2011 and will be available online to the public by March 2012. To ensure that data held is accurate where possible the data will be uploaded direct from the core system holding the information.

The recording and reporting of our own performance data and comparator information from this system will enable the Council to utilise, share, track and report our performance journey.

## 8.2  Reporting and Scrutiny

Performance results and improvement actions should be part of any corporate performance reporting framework and be able to be scrutinised by elected Members and the Corporate Management Team (CMT).

Within this framework key performance reporting requirements for 2011/12 will include:

- Bi monthly reporting to CMT
- Quarterly reporting to CEB
- Quarterly reporting to Performance and Improvement Scrutiny Panel

In addition all Members and Officers will have real time access to the Corporate Performance information within CorVu.

## 8.3  Role of the Business Improvement Team

The Council has a small Business Improvement Unit specifically set up to support the Council in achieving its Corporate Improvement and Efficiency Programme, delivering procurement savings and efficiencies and delivering timely management information to support the delivery of this performance framework.

The three teams include:

**Business Improvement -** Responsible for supporting the delivery of the Council's corporate programmes and providing a single programme office. The team also manages the Council's corporate BPI programme. The team are all trained Prince2 project managers, BPI experts able to train, facilitate and manage individual BPI reviews plus support fundamental service reviews alongside the Performance team.

**Performance Improvement -** Manages the Council's corporate performance reporting tool, supports the delivery of the Council's Fundamental Service Review programme through its project management (see FSR Methodology), provides challenge and advice and guidance to bring in an alternative perspective to the status quo. The team is responsible for reporting on the Council's performance improvement programme to the internal boards and the Executive. The team also manage the Council's corporate service planning process.

**Procurement and Contract Management -** The team manages the Council's tendering programme and is seeking to introduce a category management approach. The Council has a procurement savings target which the team is responsible for delivering on. The Council is introducing an E-tendering and E-quoting system. The system will be mandatory for all staff by December 2011. The system will provide transparency for all expenditure that is not through a corporate contract or framework. The team is developing a more structured approach to contract and demand management to ensure that the benefits of good supply contracts are realised.

## 8.4  Developing Internal Capacity

It is essential that this framework supports and embeds a performance culture that is part of the "day job".

The three teams within Business Improvement have annual work plans that support the Council's improvement journey and these cut across the services and programme structures.

The team actively work alongside the internal teams and chair a number of specialist interest groups. The service group members are known as "champions" and are trained to provide a first point of contact in each service area. The champions' network meet quarterly.

A list of all of the champions is available at: http://occweb/intranet/innovation-oxford.cfm

The team also recognise that the key to supporting improvements is to "be out there". Many authorities run Performance Clinics where officers can call in with specific queries. The Business Improvement Partners will work out in the service areas as part of their role. In addition the service managers will advertise specific dates each month when they and staff will not book meetings and hot desk within a service area and be available to deal with any Business Improvement related queries.

Beyond this, the Council aspires to bring the excellent learning from other authorities and organisations delivering similar services back into the Council. All staff will be encouraged

to visit and network with other organisations to avoid the Council developing an inward looking approach.  Staff will be encouraged to use the LG Knowledge Hub and network and we will use all opportunities to share our learning with others.

The Council may wish to consider developing opportunities for shared learning through secondments.


## 8.5  External Recognition and Awards

External recognition of our achievements builds confidence in the organisation internally and externally.  The Council was awarded IIP in May 2011, however, is keen not just to own the "badge".  The Council is keen to ensure that our officers are involved and developed in all aspects of planning and developing our services so that there is shared ownership and officers are able to maximise their contribution to delivering excellent services.

The IIP award recognises our commitment to people.  The Council has now commenced a corporate project to establish that all of our key processes are owned, documented, regularly reviewed and updated.  Each key process (there are over 1500 identified to date) will be retained on the Council's intranet to ensure that all staff have access to the processes and the Council has a consistent approach to key tasks.

The project will result in the Council being able to identify suitable processes for review and where possible utilise technology to streamline the process.  The first phase of this project will be completed by February 2012.  The Council will consider at this point whether to seek IS0 9000 as a corporate award.  The Council already has this award for our Direct Services unit and our Legal Services team has Lexcel.

The Council's Customer First programme may lead to the Council applying for accreditation from the Institute of Customer Excellence.

By obtaining each of these awards the Council will achieve validated external recognition of its high service delivery and operational standards for people, processes and customers.

This focus will result in the Council having nationally recognised awards covering all parts of our service delivery:
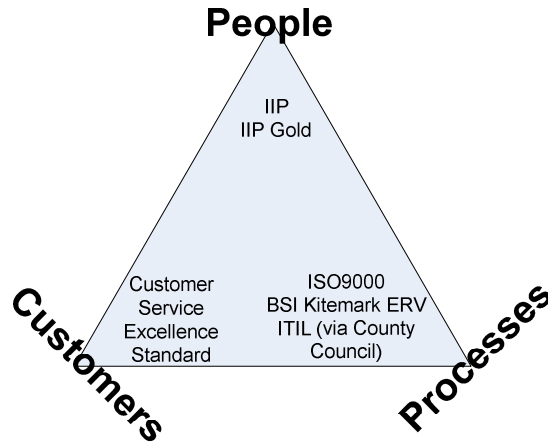
**People** - IIP achieved, aspiring to obtain IIP gold accreditation.

**Processes** - ISO 9000 where best fits service delivery.
ITIL through the County Partnership
BSI Kitemark for Energy Reduction Verification

**Customers** - Institute of Customer Excellence to be achieved.


# 9   Conclusion

Managing our Performance effectively is fundamental to the Councils' improvement and efficiency journey, facilitating the delivery of the Council's Corporate Plan and commitment to improving and streamlining the delivery of our services to meet our customers' needs both now and in the future.

It is intended that through this framework, performance improvement activities will become embedded into everyone's way of working and a part of "the day job".

The activities set out in Appendix 2 set out what each service needs to deliver and in Appendix 4 a draft prioritisation timetable for Fundamental Service Reviews is provided. These activities alongside our portfolio of Corporate Improvement Programmes, ambitious performance targets plus, our drive to achieve internationally recognised accreditations provides our customers and stakeholders with evidence of both our ambition and our delivery of transformational improvements that cut across all of our services.

All performance improvement will be mapped and recorded via CorVu, savings delivered as a result of fundamental service reviews will feed into each MTFS update and the improvement targets and activities will form a core part of annual service improvement plans.

The framework thereby supports and demonstrates to our customers and external partners our commitment and delivery of our corporate priority, to be an efficient and effective Council and our ambition to provide world class services to everyone.

# 10  APPENDICES

Appendix 1:  Council's Corporate Planning Cycle

Appendix 2:  Performance Improvement Framework – Service Level

# Appendix 1

**Service Planning Timetable for 2011/12**

Timeline header: 2011/12 — Jul (25); August (1, 8, 15, 22, 29); September (5, 12, 19, 26); October (6, 13, 20, 27); November (4, 11, 18, 25); December (5, 12, 19, 26); January (2, 9, 16, 23, 30); February (6, 13, 20, 27); March (5, 12, 19, 26)

| # | Activity | Resource (name) | Timeline notes |
|---|----------|-----------------|----------------|
| | **Budget preparation** | | |
| 1 | Budget packs issued by Finance | Nigel Kennedy | Jul 29th |
| 2 | Head of Service / Finance Business Partner 1-2-1s | Heads of Service/ Business Partners | early August |
| 3 | Preparation of budget submission together with papers supporting Labour Group proposals | Jackie Yates/ Nigel Kennedy | August |
| 4 | Finalise budget preparation with Business Partners/ Management Accountant | Nigel Kennedy | 1st - 8th |
| 5 | All templates and draft papers to be returned to Finance for consolidation | Heads of Service | 9th |
| 6 | Support service charge templates issued | | 12th |
| 7 | CMT review of submissions | CMT | September |
| 8 | Member engagement | | |
| 9 | CEB/ Group challenge of submissions | Jackie Yates/ Nigel Kennedy | September/October |
| 10 | Provisional settlement and Housing Subsidy Determination Announced | Jackie Yates/ Nigel Kennedy | December |
| 11 | Consultation budget to CEB | Jackie Yates/ Nigel Kennedy | December |
| 12 | Scrutiny of budget consultaton | Jackie Yates/ Nigel Kennedy | January |
| 13 | Budget consultation | Jackie Yates/ Nigel Kennedy | January |
| 14 | Final settlement and Housing Subsidy Determination announced | Jackie Yates/ Nigel Kennedy | January |
| 15 | Recommended budget to CEB | Jackie Yates/ Nigel Kennedy | February |
| 16 | Recommended budget to Council | Jackie Yates/ Nigel Kennedy | February |
| | **Service Plans** | | |
| 16 | Review by Wider Leadership of Service Plan template | Jane Lubbock | August; November |
| 17 | Service Plan template and guidance issued to Service Heads and update put in Council Matters | Jane Lubbock/ Rachel Byrom | 19th |
| 18 | CMT to review with Leader and Deputy Corporate Targets for 2012/13 | CMT | |
| 19 | Support Services to arrange meetings with all client departments to discuss future support requirements, changes to service delivery channels and key projects | Simon Howick, Jane Lubbock, Jeremy Thomas, Nigel Kennedy | September/October |
| 20 | Services to arrange team meetings to discuss their service priorities and areas for improvement and development. Draft service and team targets to be developed for review by CMT | | By 15th November |
| 21 | CMT to review 2012/13 Service Plan targets and develop Corporate Plan targets | CMT | November |
| 22 | Service Plans to be submitted to directors for review | Heads of Service | 23rd |
| 23 | Service Plan – Meetings with Portfolio Holder (individual sessions will be arranged) | Heads of Service | January |
| 24 | Deadline for Service Improvement Plans to be submitted to CMT | Heads of Service | 28th |
| 25 | Finance and P& E to input additional data into the Service Improvement Plans | Finance & HR Business Partners | February |
| 26 | Corporate and Service Measures, data quality sheets plus Corporate and Service Improvement Plans added to CorVu | Rachel Byrom | February |
| | **Corporate Plan** | | |
| 27 | Develop Corporate Plan 2012-17 | Peter McQuitty | September/October |
| 28 | Draft Corporate Plan to CEB (with budget) | Peter McQuitty | December |
| 29 | Consultation on Corporate Plan (with budget) | Peter McQuitty | January |
| 30 | Amendments to Corporate Plan | Peter McQuitty | February |
| 31 | Corporate Plan to CMT (with budget) | Peter McQuitty | February |
| 32 | Corporate Plan to Value and Performance Scrutiny Committee (with budget) | Chair of VAP Panel | February |
| 33 | Corporate Plan with performance targets to CEB (with budget) | Jackie Yates/ Peter McQuitty | February |

## Appendix 2

## SERVICE LEVEL – PERFORMANCE IMPROVEMENT FRAMEWORK

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Level 1 - Annual | Service Improvement Measures | All Services※ in Service Plans |
| Level 2 - Annual | Benchmarking | All Services ※ with at least one other comparative organisation (own sector and different sector if available) |
| Level 3 – Bi-Annual | Customer Survey Data | All Services |
| Level 4 – Bi-Annual | Mystery Shopping or 360° feedback internal services | All Services |
| Level 5 | Peer Reviews | Comparative or Selected Service |
| Level 6 | Full Service Review | As per agreed Corporate Programme |

※ All information to be stored in CorVu

| Title: | **Performance Improvement  Framework 2011/ 2015** |
|---|---|
| **Status:** | Draft for CEB Approval |
| **Current Version:** | v1.5 |
| **Author:** | Jane Lubbock Head of Business Improvement |
| **Approved by:** | Corporate Management team |
| **Approval Date:** | September 2011 |
| **Review Frequency:** | Every 2 years |
| **Next Review:** | 2 years from approval date |
| **Related Documents**<br><br><br>Corporate Plan 2011-2015<br>Service Plans<br>Medium term Financial Strategy<br>Risk Management Strategy<br>Corporate Programme | |