

**To:** Cabinet  
**Date:** 15 March 2023  
**Report of:** Head of Corporate Strategy  
**Title of Report:** Oxford City Council Corporate Business Plan 2023/24

<b>Summary and recommendations</b>	
<b>Purpose of report:</b>	Approval of Oxford City Council's Corporate Business Plan priorities 2023/24
<b>Key decision:</b>	Yes
<b>Cabinet Member:</b>	Cllr Susan Brown, Leader and Cabinet Member for Inclusive Economy and Partnerships
<b>Corporate Priority:</b>	All Council Strategy priorities
<b>Policy Framework:</b>	Council Strategy 2020-2024

<b>Recommendations:</b> That Cabinet resolves to:	
1.	<b>Agree</b> the draft Oxford City Council Corporate Business Plan priorities 2023/24, which set out the Council's priority work for the next financial year;
2.	<b>Delegate</b> authority to the Head of Corporate Strategy in consultation with the Council Leader to make further minor amendments to the draft Business Plan priorities before implementation; and
3.	<b>Note</b> the progress made in delivery against the actions set out in the current year's Corporate Business Plan 2022/23.

<b>Appendices</b>	
Appendix 1	Oxford City Council's Draft Corporate Business Plan priorities 2023/24
Appendix 2	Oxford City Council Corporate Business Plan 2022/23 update
Appendix 3	Oxford City Council Corporate Strategy 2020-24
Appendix 4	Equalities Impact Assessment

## **Introduction and background**

1. Oxford City Council's Business Plan 2023-24 is an annual document that sets out publically the Council's priority work programme activities for the year.
2. The Draft Business Plan 2023-24 sets out the fourth year of activity toward achieving the outcomes specified in our Council Strategy 20-24.
3. The Business Plan was developed in conjunction with, and is supported by, the Council's annual budget and medium term financial plan (MTFP) that will allocate resources against the agreed priorities.
4. The Business Plan will inform the actions laid out in each department service plan.
5. Progress in delivery of the actions set out within the Business Plan will be tracked through the year, alongside the existing corporate key performance indicators.

## **Development of the Business Plan 2023/24**

6. The Business Plan sets out key actions that typically take the form of projects or new initiatives rather than 'business as usual'. It is not an exhaustive list of such actions. It should be noted therefore that there are many important areas of activity that are not captured within the Business Plan, but will nonetheless be identified within individual departmental Service Plans.
7. A number of the important work strands under the Council's Change Programme – our internal transformation programme - don't sit neatly under any of the Corporate Priority areas, and so a fifth priority 'Ensure Council service delivery is fit for the future' has been added.
8. The process for development of the Draft Business Plan 2023-24 has included two workshop sessions with Directors and Heads of Service.

## **Document structure**

9. The Business Plan activities sit against our four Council Strategy 20-24 priorities: Enable an Inclusive Economy; Deliver More, Affordable Housing; Support Thriving Communities and Pursue a Zero Carbon Oxford. With the addition of Priority 5 Ensure Council service delivery is fit for the future for the Business Plan 2023-2024.
10. Many activities within the Business Plan are cross cutting in their nature, however each activity has been allocated against one of the four strategic priorities to avoid repetition.

## **Business Plan 2022/23 update**

11. Significant progress has been made in delivery of the current year's Business Plan.
12. Key achievements include:
  - a. Social value was increased to 10% in all standard procurement template documents early in 2022 and is a cornerstone of the new procurement strategy approved in November 2022.
  - b. The percentage of staff in workforce from minority ethnic groups increased. An Equalities Steering Group was created to oversee a number of activities within the workforce and Equalities and Recruitment specialists appointed to develop a more inclusive culture.
  - c. The Oxfordshire Inclusive Economy Charter was launched on 24 January 2023 with over 100 organisations in attendance.

- d. Planning permission is now granted for redevelopment of Standingford House on Cave Street. We are working with contractors to cost the scheme ahead of commencement and demolition and strip out are underway.
- e. City Council Cabinet agreed in December 2022 to a local funding package for the full business case phase of work relating to the Cowley Branch Line. This decision relies on entering into funding contracts with three local landowners, as well as a memorandum of understanding with County and then a development services agreement with Network Rail. Subject to contract, work commences in February 2023.
- f. Over 100 Oxford Living Wage self-certified organisations are now in place. The scheme is linked with the OIEP Inclusive economy charter and further growth in the scheme is expected.
- g. The draft Housing, Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 23-28 was consulted upon and an Action Plan has been developed. The final Strategy and Action plan is due to go to Cabinet in March for final approval before implementation.
- h. Oxford City Council continues to increase the supply of affordable housing. 318 affordable homes have been completed in Oxford so far in 2022/23, of which 144 are social rented homes. OX Place developments account for 89 of these units. A further 97 units are expected before the end of 2022/23.
- i. This year OX Place delivered its greenest council homes to date with eight new bungalows that are nearly zero carbon. These are being let at social rent and are adapted for people with specific mobility and social needs. Other examples of high quality schemes include 26 flats at Cannons Court which are on average 89% more energy efficient than 2013 building regulations.
- j. The bid to Government for citywide Selective Licensing was approved and the scheme commenced on 1 September 2022. To date over 7,600 applications have been made with several thousand more due from letting agents. Nearly 800 premises have been issued with a draft licence and over 300 with a full licence. The "early bird" offer ended at the end of November and enforcement activity is being planned.
- k. Service Integration phase one was successfully completed with Locality Managers in each of the four quadrants in the city working as locality teams with staff from across the Communities and People Directorate.
- l. £13million of Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme funding has enabled three of Oxford's leisure centres and the seasonal outdoor pool to implement decarbonisation schemes helping to reduce the carbon impact of these facilities, and support their future sustainability for Oxford communities. These projects alone are anticipated to deliver an average 86.4% reduction in gas consumption, and 56% reduction in carbon emissions.
- m. The Council engaged with more than 200 people, strategic partners, stakeholders and community representatives across city-wide conversations to help develop a Thriving Communities Strategy for Oxford for 2023/2027. Council has agreed the new Strategy, which brings together leisure, culture, and work with communities to tackle inequalities. An easy read-version and videos have been created to help explain what the Council is trying to achieve.
- n. 16 GP surgeries are actively referring into Move Together with over 540 referrals received over the course of the pathway. Over 170 people are participating in sustained physical activity for a period of more than 3 months. 92 participants have taken up the 5 gyms for £5 offer at Fusion Lifestyle. We

have also been awarded funding for You Move, a programme to support families in receipt of benefits-related Free School Meals to access free and low cost physical activity. To date over 180 families and more than 670 individuals have signed up to You Move.

- o. The Housing Needs restructure has been implemented with homelessness teams divided between Prevention and Rapid Rehousing. The new prevention team will focus on reducing homelessness from the private rented sector and increase partnership working to prevent homelessness from hospitals, prisons and supported accommodation. The Rapid Rehousing Team will focus on reducing stays in temporary accommodation by creating a coordinated response to rehousing households into social and private rented accommodation.
- p. Oxford City Council recruited an Anti-Slavery Coordinator to bring agencies together to identify, prevent and disrupt modern slavery and exploitation across Oxfordshire.
- q. A Sustainability Strategy was not commissioned. Instead we have published a Net Zero Roadmap which sets out steps for city to be net zero by 2040, which has been signed up to by all Zero Carbon Oxford Partnership (ZCOP) partners. Scoping work for a Biodiversity Strategy is currently taking place.
- r. An energy efficiency project utilising government LAD1b funding was completed at the end of 2022 improving 60 properties. A bid has been submitted for Social Housing Decarbonisation wave 2.1 funding and if successful will deliver improvements to over 300 properties from March 2023.
- s. An Oxford Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Strategy has been published and an implementation plan is being developed currently. Alongside this we continue delivery of grant funded projects which are delivering the objectives of the strategy.
- t. There is ongoing work to support Environment Agency delivery of the Oxford Flood Alleviation Scheme.
- u. In July 2022, the Climate Action Oxfordshire website [www.climateactionoxfordshire.org.uk](http://www.climateactionoxfordshire.org.uk) and associated campaign was created in partnership between Oxfordshire County Council, Oxford City Council, Cherwell, South Oxfordshire, West Oxfordshire, and the Vale of White Horse district councils, and OxLEP. The website offers practical advice for people in Oxford city and Oxfordshire wanting to reduce their carbon footprint and save energy.

### **Financial Implications**

- 13. The Business Plan 2023-24 sets out the high level activities and milestones that are supported in the Council budget 2023-24. It does not contain additional or specific expenditure commitments.

### **Legal Implications**

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

### **Level of Risk**

- 15. Delivery of the Business Plan 2023-24 is linked with the Budget 2023-24 and the financial and operational health of the Council. This is a high level strategic

document that doesn't include risks associated with each of the measures it sets out, however failure to deliver the Business Plan carries a reputational risk to the Council.

### **Equalities Impact**

16. The Business Plan 2023-24 is concerned with high level activities and milestones. It contains specific actions that will support the delivery of the Council's strategic objectives.
17. Equality, diversity and inclusion are together a key focus for all the Council's work. They form a core part of all our policies and partnerships, for our residents, staff and elected members. As part of delivering the actions through the Business Plan 2023-24, we will, *inter alia*:
  - a. Work with key partners to tackle health inequalities and help underpin our leisure and community services – Primary Care Networks, Integrated Care Systems, using momentum from our Active Lifestyles Commissioning Group.
  - b. Embed Oxford's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion and Thriving Communities Strategy's and delivery action plans.
  - c. Enable arts, culture, sport, community activities and grants to provide and promote opportunities for everyone, and foster a sense of pride and belonging in Oxford's leisure, cultural and community assets.
  - d. Embed our Anti-Racism Charter and review our Anti-Racism Quality Mark
  - e. With the County Council, which is now investing in youth service provision in Oxford, review our Youth Ambition programme and seek closer partnership working to achieve a more efficient and effective joint approach to support children and young people.
  - f. Increase participation, inclusivity and accessibility of Oxford's three leisure centres, seasonal heated outdoor pool and ice rink, and community centres, arts venues and parks, ensuring they work for everyone.
  - g. Explore opportunities to improve the inclusivity and sustainability of Oxford's community facilities, and review opportunities as they arise through a business case.
  - h. Embed healthy place shaping by integrating health prevention into neighbourhoods, helping to create more connected neighbourhoods with cycle and walking routes and providing affordable public transport, particularly focusing on areas with the greatest health inequalities.
  - i. Chair the Oxford Safer Communities Partnership to tackle the city's community safety priorities - modern slavery, serious violence, disruption of organised crime, violence against women and girls, and anti-social behaviour.

### **Environmental Implications**

18. The Business Plan 2023/24 sets out the fourth year plans for delivery of the Council Strategy 2020-24 corporate priority: Pursue a Zero Carbon Oxford. It sets out a number of key actions that act on the clear message from Oxford's Citizens' Assembly on Climate Change to continue to take a lead in reducing emissions and increasing biodiversity.
19. Planned actions to achieve these objectives include:

- a. Deliver a programme of Carbon Literacy training for relevant Council staff and elected members.
- b. OX Place housing development at design and planning stage will meet 40% below national standards, be electrically heated with a fabric first approach; using an energy quality assurance service to ensure energy standard are met, where appropriate.
- c. Deliver SHDF retrofit programme (if our bid is successful), develop retrofit plans for void properties and trial new zero carbon technologies in HRA stock.
- d. Promote investment in energy efficiency for the owner occupier and privately rented sectors. Use the Selective Licencing Scheme to support compliance with minimum energy efficiency standards (MEES) regulations. Prepare to extend MEES into commercial premises and work with County Trading Standards to agree a regulatory approach.
- e. Deliver Phase 2 of the GULO electric vehicle charging infrastructure programme, installing up to 150 additional on- and off-street charge points. Agree an implementation plan to deliver further EV infrastructure in line with the 2022 EVI Strategy. Work with ODS to develop a business case that supports this delivery and determines 'best value' to Oxford.
- f. All new OX Place developments currently in design stage will have EV chargers.
- g. Commission a Biodiversity Strategy for the Oxford which addresses the environmental crisis and supports delivery of biodiversity net gain implementation.
- h. Take further action aligned with the Carbon Management Plan, to reduce or mitigate increases in the Council's energy and water utility costs, consumption and related carbon emissions.
- i. Work with neighbouring authorities through the Future Oxfordshire Partnership to support collaborative delivery of ZCOP and Pathways to a Zero Carbon Oxfordshire (PaZCO) Action Plans, to achieve a zero carbon city, and county.
- j. Provide guidance in welcome pack provided to all new commercial tenants including building and supply chain energy efficiencies. Use relationship with commercial tenants to encourage reduction of usage of single use plastics.

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**Background Papers:** None