Appendix 1

DRAFT
Oxford City Council Corporate Strategy 2024-28

Our ambition
For Oxford to continue to be a city that is a world-leading centre of research, innovation and science and a thriving place for independent businesses. We will nurture strong, inclusive communities and be a welcoming and supportive place for people from all backgrounds to work, live and visit.

Areas of focus

- **Good, affordable homes:** we will improve existing housing and increase the number of new homes for social rent and to buy, and speed up housing for homeless people and rough sleepers in the city.

- **Strong, fair economy:** we will support economic growth, including significant new business and housing developments that provide good quality jobs for people in Oxford.

- **Thriving communities:** we will focus on areas of highest inequality to improve health, wellbeing, skills and employment opportunities and equal access for everyone.

- **Climate action:** we will prioritise climate change goals to cut carbon emissions from buildings, and cut traffic pollution by facilitating more electric vehicle infrastructure and promoting active travel.

- **Efficiency and stability:** we will be more efficient with our resources by offering better digital services, prioritising our activities and balancing spending with income growth.

Cross cutting issues

We have four core priorities that provide the focus for our work, and to deliver these effectively we must also prioritise being a well-run council. There are some issues that cut across more than one area of work and require joined up thinking by different teams and partnerships to achieve overarching goals:

- Enabling more sustainable transport and active travel helps achieve our goals for health, sustainability and economic activity
- Increasing the amount of affordable housing opens up more economic opportunities, lifts families out of poverty, benefits health and helps create thriving communities
- Providing safe, accessible and enjoyable public spaces supports local businesses, leisure and community wellbeing

Good affordable homes

- Good quality affordable housing is one of the foundations of a good local economy, strong communities and good health.
- Oxford has long been one of the least affordable places to live in the UK, with a chronic housing shortage reflected in a waiting list of over 3,000 people for council houses.
- Unaffordable housing increases the risk of homelessness, forces people into hardship, overcrowded or substandard conditions, or drives them out of Oxford altogether.
- To address Oxford's housing issues we must drive up standards for existing housing alongside a focus on providing new homes, working in partnership across the housing sector.

Strengths – the Oxford Model where OX Place build and ODS maintain council homes; we have kept ownership of our council housing
Challenges – narrowing the affordability gap; securing suitable sites for new housing within the city; improving standards; rising homelessness
Opportunities – housebuilding combined with net zero standards; improve and retrofit quality of housing to meet landlord and net zero standards; selective licensing powers

Priorities:

- Delivering more affordable homes
- Preventing and tackling homelessness
- Good quality homes for all

Commitment	Deliver ourselves	In partnership	influence
Deliver more affordable homes, including Council housing, through our own building programmes and setting clear expectations of private developers	**X**	**X**	
Work to increase standards in Oxford's private rented housing, using our regulatory powers and property licensing for the whole private rented sector	**X**	**X**	
Put the prevention of homelessness at the heart of Council services and our work with partners	**X**	**X**	
Work to reduce the numbers of people sleeping rough, providing safe accommodation with access to support services to help with complex issues	**X**	**X**	

Be a good landlord and continue to invest in improving the quality of Council homes	x		
Continue our work with neighbouring councils to enable people on our housing list access to new housing developments adjacent to Oxford's administrative boundary	x	x	
To lobby central government for local authority powers to introduce rent controls and controls around the short-term let market, to address spiralling unaffordability in the private rented sector	x		x
As part of the planning process, secure funding from major developments that can go towards improving infrastructure and benefitting the community	x		

Strong, fair economy

- Oxford plays a significant role in some of the world's most important economic sectors and technologies.
- Our aim is to support sustainable economic development, ensuring that our city remains an attractive and thriving place for everyone, whether they live, work, or visit here.
- Growth is already underway in many local businesses, both small and large, as well as new and established ones.
- Our challenge and opportunity lie in strategically harnessing this growth for the benefit of all.

Strengths – world leading science research base, particularly in medical science; innovation particularly in tackling climate change; highly educated population
Challenges – ensuring valuable jobs for the 40% non-graduate workforce; creating the space for entrepreneurial businesses
Opportunities – Large regeneration projects; international investment in medical and biotech research; our own local spending power

Priorities
- Secure, fairly paid, local jobs for Oxford's residents and access to skills and reskilling training
- Using Oxford's unique strengths in a global economy to attract high quality investment
- Supporting regeneration to boost economic activity and deliver benefits for all

Commitment	Deliver ourselves	In partnership	influence
Harness Oxford's economic growth from science and innovation to create valuable local jobs and make sure everyone in the city has better opportunities	x	x	x
Focus efforts on the needs of the most disadvantaged places, through local economic development and connecting to citywide opportunities and skills training	x	x	
Increase the number of people paid the Oxford Living Wage to improve the minimum standard of living	x	x	
Use Council spending, and work with major employers (anchor institutions) and trade unions to support local businesses, strengthen local supply chains and provide wider social value such as apprenticeships, better public spaces	x	x	
Help local people to access training, education and apprenticeships so they can make the most of new job opportunities being created in the city	x	x	
Enable high quality and sustainable business development on land already designated for employment, with a focus on supporting life sciences, low carbon, technology and knowledge driven businesses	X	x	

Maximise the local benefit from investment in a new station for Oxford, and continue to work for the Cowley Branch line extension	x	x	x
Support all forms of businesses, including start-ups and small and medium sized businesses, and help them grow by signpost training and resources and using vacant business space and Council-owned markets	x	x	

Thriving communities

- Thriving communities are built on the foundation of good health, strong social connections, embracing diversity, and active community involvement, including volunteering.
- Despite its many strengths, Oxford is one of the least equal places in the UK, and we must collectively address this issue.
- Working together with partners and communities is vital to maximize our resources, with a special focus on households facing the greatest need.

Strengths – strong voluntary sector; resilient community cohesion; investment in leisure and community centres, a welcoming city
Challenges – financial pressure on council, the public and voluntary sector and local families; connecting people with opportunities through active travel/good public transport
Opportunities – locality focused approach; integrated health prevention approach

Priorities

- Working in partnership with communities, organisations, and agencies to reduce inequalities and create thriving communities
- Championing diversity and inclusion in our own work and community partnerships
- Helping people live healthily by providing services, support, and facilities to prevent and manage physical and mental health conditions

Commitment	Deliver ourselves	In partnership	influence
Make Oxford a fairer city where everyone feels welcome, included and connected by working with partners at all levels to tackle inequalities, champion diversity and inclusion and support access to jobs, skills and cultural activities	x	x	x
Reduce health inequality by working with health services and communities to help residents identify and prevent health problems or manage them well	x	x	
Provide sustainable leisure services, linking with community facilities where possible, that support health and wellbeing	x	x	
Help people to move around the city more easily by supporting walking and cycling as healthier ways to travel, and advocating for better, more affordable public transport	x	x	x
Continue and expand our community wellbeing programmes targeted at those who are most inactive or in need	x		

Manage public places and green spaces to support health and wellbeing, where people feel welcomed, safe and inspired	**x**	**x**	
Support partners and community groups in arts, culture, sport and community activity to promote opportunities for everyone, using our facilities, grants and external funding	**x**	**x**	
Manage and reduce anti-social behaviour, domestic abuse and drug dealing, by working with the police and community partners and using our statutory powers	**x**	**x**	
Enable Oxford to play its part in supporting refugees in the UK, which includes work to achieve Local Authority of Sanctuary status by 2025	**x**	**x**	

Zero carbon Oxford

- Achieving net zero will require a citywide effort, involving local and national government, businesses, institutions and citizens.
- While Oxford City Council itself is responsible for around 1% of the city's emissions, it has the potential to influence up to 66% of all emissions in Oxford
- We have set ambitious targets for ourselves to be a zero carbon council by 2030 and a net zero city by 2040.

Strengths – pioneering approaches/UK firsts; partnership working
Challenges – encouraging behaviour change and investment from residents, businesses and institutions; scale of investment needed
Opportunities - retain beacon status to attract additional funding streams

Priorities
- Decarbonising homes and other buildings
- Enhance parks, green spaces, biodiversity and access to nature
- Develop low carboninfrastructure and support households, businesses and institutions to save energy and cut emissions

Commitment	Deliver ourselves	In partnership	influence
Ensure all new homes and other buildings are built to high standards with good energy efficiency, to meet Oxford's 2040 net zero targets and reduce energy costs.	x	x	
Secure external funding to retrofit Council houses and other council buildings	x		
Actively engage our communities, promote grants and use planning and licencing powers to help others adapt their homes and buildings to use less energy and cut carbon emissions	x	x	x
Enhance our green spaces and access to nature in the city, and ensure building projects support biodiversity by providing land for OX Place and other developers to use for Biodiversity Net Gain[1] locally when exceptional circumstances mean it cannot be delivered on the building site itself.	x	x	
Work with partners to deliver a Local Area Energy Plan for Oxford to support decarbonisation and infrastructure development.	x	x	

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[1] Biodiversity net gain is an approach to development, and/or land management, that aims to leave the natural environment in a measurably better state than it was beforehand.

Continue to design and deliver pioneering projects in Oxford that take action on climate change, leading the way for the UK	**x**	**x**	**x**
Work with communities and organisations to increase the levels of reuse and recycling and make Oxford a clean, litter-free city	**x**	**x**	
Support design and delivery of a countywide climate adaption plan, including the Oxford Flood Alleviation Scheme (OFAS), water infrastructure and actions on living with higher temperatures.	**x**	**x**	
Work with businesses of all sizes to support their net zero transition	**x**	**x**	**x**

Enabler

Well run council

- In order to deliver these priorities for the city we must also be a well-run organisation. We will improve the ways we work, recruiting the right people, providing the right tools and training, and delivering services efficiently for residents.
- As a well-run council, we will deliver the maximum benefit for all Oxford's residents, businesses and communities within the resources available.
- We will harness technology to deliver better services for local residents, to work more effectively across teams and in external partnerships.
- We will focus on the experience people have when they interact with us, and always aim to make that easy and effective.
- To achieve this, we need a diversity of experiences and ideas and financial resilience. This will require securing new funding to keep our high service levels, and robust technology to meet residents' needs effectively and efficiently

Strengths – Oxford Model[2]; high staff commitment
Challenges – financial risks; working with fewer resources and becoming a smaller council
Opportunities – digitisation; citizen-centred approach

Priorities
- Be easy, engaging and efficient to deal with
- Support citizens through value of money services
- Maintain good, accountable governance
- Recruit and retain a motivated and diverse workforce that reflects the city it serves

Commitment	Deliver ourselves	In partnership	influence
Support and encourage residents to use digital first for our services, so we can prioritise our non-digital help for people with most need	**x**		
Balance our budget through a focus on efficiency, maintaining and developing funding streams, and making difficult decisions on service prioritisation when needed	**x**	**x**	
Set clear priorities and ensure we have the right skills and resources to deliver on them	**x**	**x**	

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[2] The Oxford Model refers to the Council's policy of buying services from its wholly-owned companies ODS and OXPlace, using the earnings from these companies to help pay for other council services

Recruit and retain an effective, highly skilled and diverse workforce so we can deliver the right services in the right way	**x**		
Work in partnership with Trade Unions to provide a good employment offer and experience, to recruit, motivate and support a strong local workforce	x	x	
Give elected members the tools to provide clear political and community leadership	**x**		
Understand the aspirations and needs of residents and communities, by working together with communities and using the right data, to continually improve the services we offer	x	x	
Ensure staff, partners and service users are clear about responsibilities and accountability within the council and have clear standards of behaviour	**x**		
Take appropriate opportunities to provide residents with support that goes beyond immediate issues	**x**	**x**	
Use the Oxford Model to bring in money that can fund services, to reduce the impact of government cuts funding on residents	x		
Improve how we work with anchor institutions and communities to have open and honest conversations about shared aspirations for Oxford's future		x	x

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