



**Our People
in Focus**

Oxford City Council

**Equality Framework for Local
Government Achieving Level:**

Self-Assessment Narrative

Peer Review: 18/19 January 2012

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1.0 Introduction

1.1 Oxford is a wonderful city – diverse, vibrant, known across the world as a seat of learning, a base of high-tech manufacturing and a major car production hub. It is home to two world-class universities, some tremendous cultural facilities, with an incredible richness of architecture and attractive open spaces. Yet at the same time, it is a city of gross inequalities: life expectancy in poorer parts of the city is eight to ten years shorter than in the more prosperous areas, educational attainment is disgracefully low, and there are several areas amongst the most deprived in the region.

1.2 This submission illustrates clearly the extent to which the Council's corporate priorities are characterised by its core commitment to tackling the inequalities that exist across the city community in income, life chances, housing, education and health. Our vision is “to build a world-class city for everyone”, and this is intended not just to be an element of a corporate brand, but rather to provide a clear statement of the Council's driving ambition: we want all sections of our city to share in its prosperity. For Councillors across different parties and for Council staff, confronting social injustice and tackling inequality is what gets us out of bed in the morning, and drives everything we do.

1.3 The Council wants to lead the way as an employer: for instance, we pay a living wage (which from January 2012 will increase from £7.19 to £8.01 per hour) to all our staff, and this is also insisted upon for contractors and suppliers. We pride ourselves on developing our workforce and we are about to launch an additional programme of apprenticeships on top of 11 who already work for the Council.

1.4 But we also want to make a real difference to inequality across the whole City, and especially the most vulnerable in it, and are working in constructive partnerships through the Oxford Strategic Partnership (County Council, health authorities, private and voluntary sectors) to deliver regeneration, a reduction in crime and anti-social behaviour and to tackle the root causes of low educational attainment.. That's why we are tackling poor-quality housing in the private rented sector (which accommodates many of the most vulnerable, such as migrant workers), why we are campaigning for a living wage for all workers in Oxford, why we have increased support to advice agencies (one of very few Councils to do so) to ensure that people can access benefits in times of hardship, and why we are about to launch an ambitious programme to repair damage to the youth service by county Council cuts, especially in deprived areas, and to play our part in raising educational attainment.

1.5 As this submission makes clear, the task ahead is substantial but the Council's commitment to pursue its policy agenda is very strong, and the way in which the reduction in the government grant has been handled is evidence of our determination to deliver on our objectives through clear policy priorities for equality.

Councillor Bob Price (Leader) & Councillor Ed Turner (Deputy Leader)

2.0 The City of Oxford

2.1 Oxford is one of the most photographed, filmed and written about cities in the world. Contemporary Oxford continues to be a world renowned University City and is the largest town in Oxfordshire, occupying a total area of about 46 sq km (17.6 sq miles) and with an estimated population of 154,000 in 2010 having grown 10% in the previous decade. Some 27% of Oxford is in the Green Belt, with much of this land being flood plain. The historic city parks and nature conservation areas (including a Special Area of Conservation and several sites of special scientific interest) create pockets and corridors of green within the City boundary, so that while parts of the urban area are very densely developed, 52% of the city is actually open space.

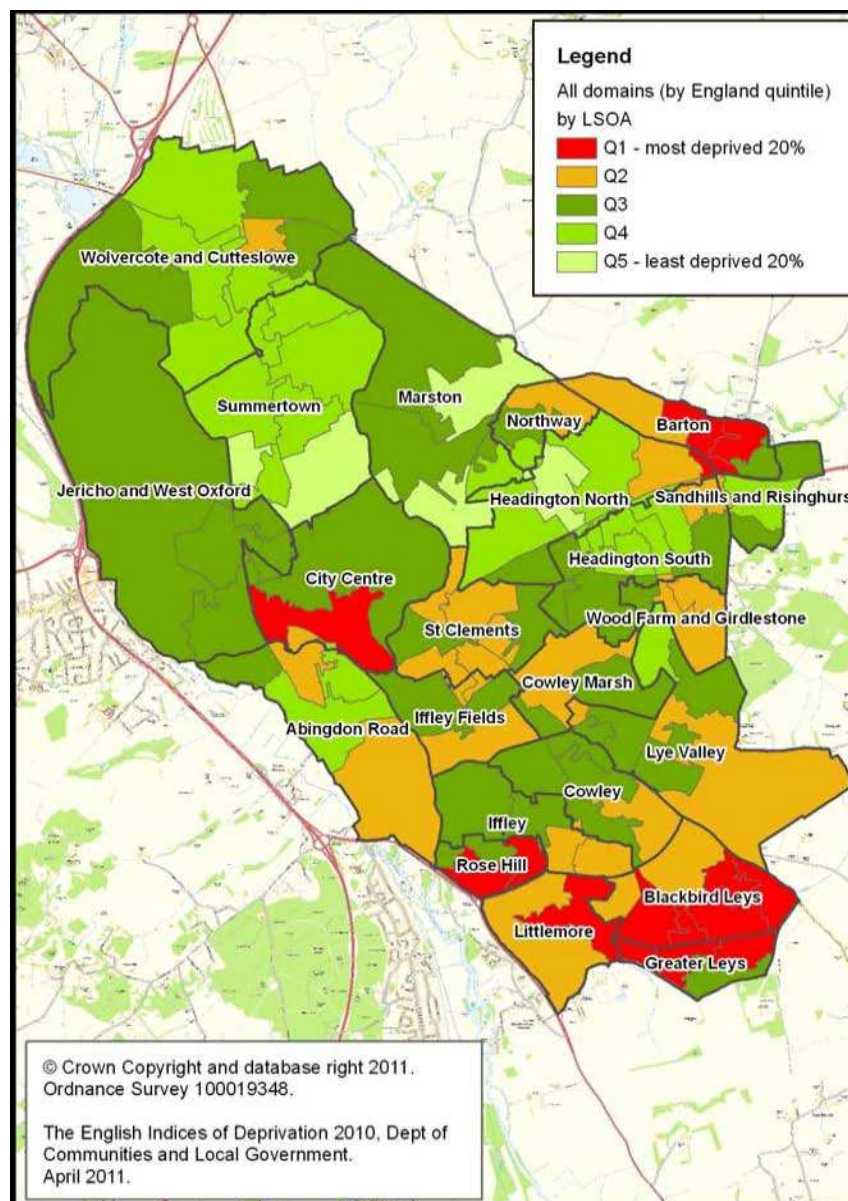
2.2 It is also an economic hub and cultural centre of the region, home to around 3,500 businesses providing 107,000 plus jobs. Oxford has a large number of people employed in universities and the public sector, at around 46%, but also has significant jobs in other sectors including publishing, tourism, hospitality and a growing hi-tech sector fuelled by the highly-qualified workforce. Approximately 40,000 non-residents travel to work in Oxford, boosting the daytime population by approximately 26,000. Oxford has a higher than average proportion of working age people, but a lower than average economic activity rates, both of which are direct consequences of the large student population. In common with the rest of the UK, there has been a sharp increase in the number of people claiming unemployment benefit, from 1,600 people claiming Job Seekers Allowance (JSA) in October 2008 to nearly 2,900 in August 2011. The proportion of people claiming in Oxford is lower than the national average (due to the large number of full-time students who are not eligible for JSA).

2.3 In marked contrast to other parts of the county, Oxford is ethnically and culturally diverse, with the second highest minority ethnic population in the south east. In 2011 the non-white population was 19.6%, with the largest non-white ethnic groups represented being Indian, Pakistani and Chinese. The diversity of the City is being increased by migration from new European Union countries, with 3,850 migrants applying to work in the Oxford area in the six years following April 2004, the majority from Poland.

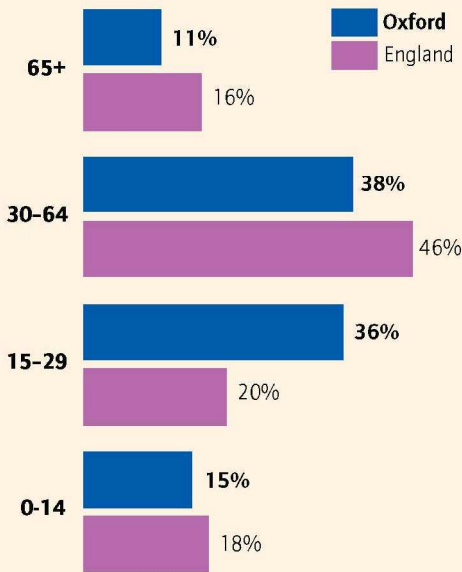
2.4 There are major inequalities in life chances and in life expectancy within the city and Oxford has high levels of deprivation. The Indices of Deprivation 2010 (see map under 2.5) placed Oxford in the top half of most deprived Local Authorities in England. Twelve of Oxford's neighbourhoods were calculated to be among the 20% most deprived areas in England, with one in Northfield Brook ward being among the 10% most deprived. The city has become relatively more deprived, moving from the 155th most deprived to the 131st most deprived. All of the areas score badly in barriers to housing and services, primarily due to the imbalance of house prices to average earnings, with the average Oxford house now costing £370,356 and prices at around 11 times average earnings. The percentage of owner-occupiers is relatively low in Oxford - 53.7% compared with the south-east (73.2%) and England (68.1%). The percentage of private rented accommodation is high; 17.5% in Oxford compared with 8.8% in the south-east and England. There are

currently nearly 6000 people on our housing waiting lists.

2.5 Around 23% of Oxford's under-16 year-olds 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. The areas with the greatest deprivation (including income, employment, education, skills and training, health and disability, access to services and amenities) tend to be concentrated in the south and east of the city. Parts of Blackbird Leys, Greater Leys, Littlemore, Rose Hill, Barton and the City are considered to be amongst the 20% most deprived in England.

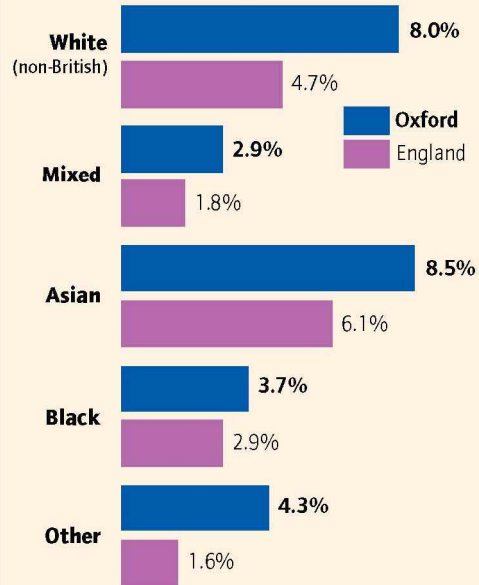


Population by age 2010, Oxford and England



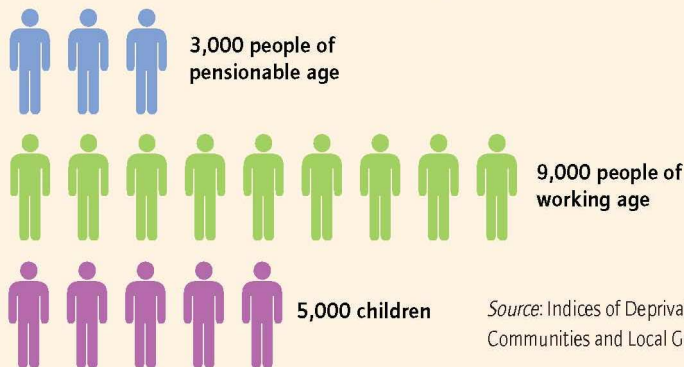
Source: Office for National Statistics

Population by non-white British ethnic group 2009, Oxford and England



Source: Office for National Statistics

People living below the poverty line in Oxford

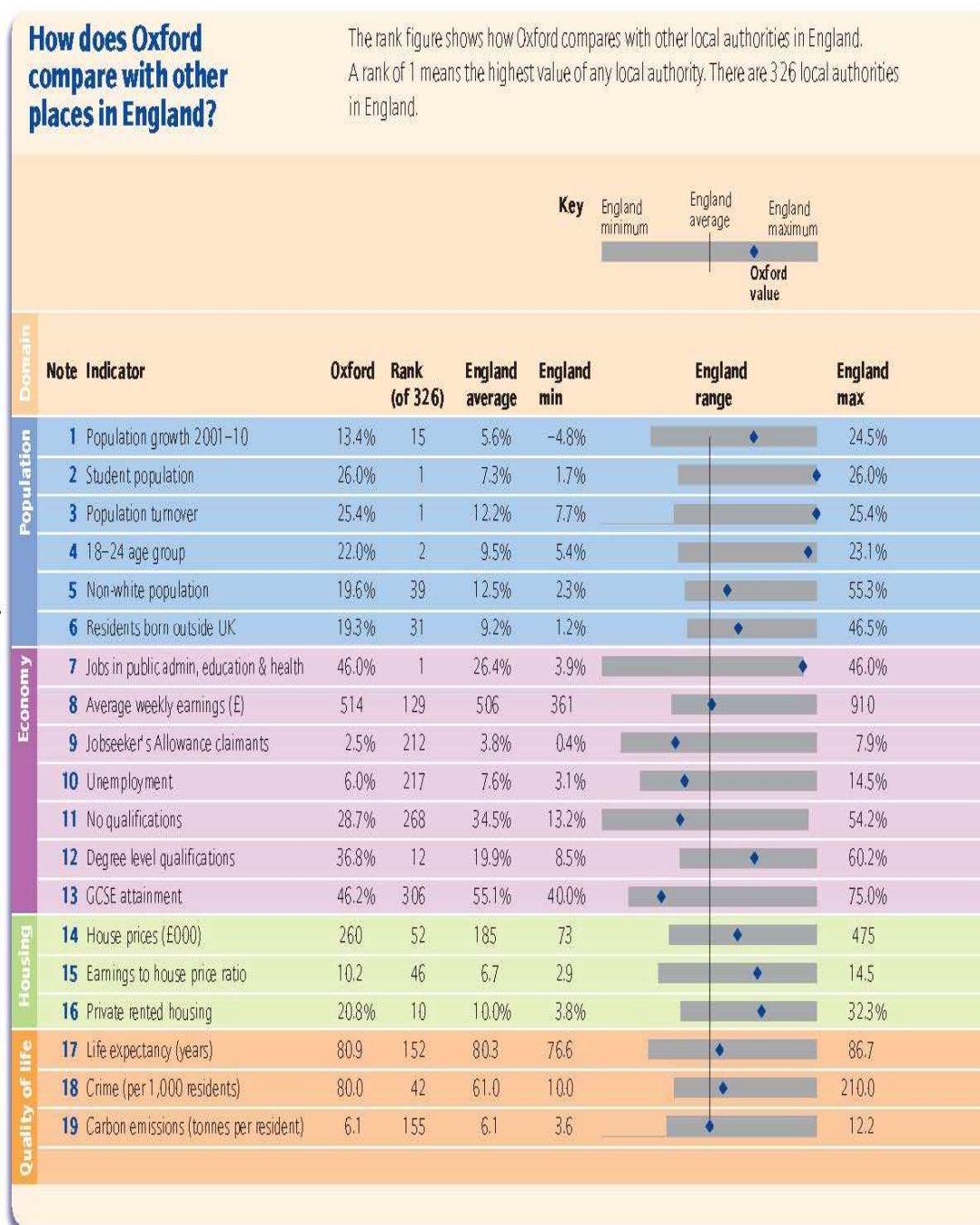


Source: Indices of Deprivation 2010, Department for Communities and Local Government

2.6 Oxford is the sixth most visited city in the UK by international visitors, the twentieth by UK residents, and is the tourism gateway to the rest of Oxfordshire. We attract approximately 9.5 million visitors per year, generating £770 million of income for local Oxford businesses. Over 8 million of these visitors only visit for one day while over 40,000 readers of Conde Nast's Traveller magazine voted Oxford the cleanest City (www.visitoxfordandoxfordshire.com)

2.7 Oxford has the highest proportion of students in its population (26% of working age residents). 32,000 students studied full time at the two universities in 2009/10. 10,000 students come from overseas, of which 3,000 come from within the EU. As a result one in five residents are aged between

18 and 24 years, and the population turnover is the highest in England at around 25.4%.



2.8 The 2008 Place Survey found the following key satisfaction levels:

- 85% satisfied that we treat people fairly
- 61% satisfied that we act on their concerns
- 58% satisfied that we promote the interests of local residents
- 82% agreed that people from different backgrounds get on well
- 81% satisfied that we are making areas safer
- 29% agreed that they can influence decision making
- 79% were informed about how to vote

3.0 Oxford City Council: who we are and what we do

3.1 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.

3.2 The Full Council is composed of 48 Councillors representing 24 wards, with 26 Labour, 16 Liberal Democrat, 5 Green Party and 1 Independent Working Class Association. City Executive Board is the main decision-making body and scrutiny committees provide challenge to Council officers. The Council has a Chief Executive, three Directors responsible for City Regeneration, City Services and Finance & Efficiency, and twelve Heads of Service.

3.3 The Council's vision is to build a world-class city for everyone and the Corporate Plan 2011-2015 reaffirms this ambition. The Council has produced a positive four year budget and refocused its priorities to embrace;

- A vibrant and sustainable economy
- Meeting housing need
- Strong and active communities
- A Cleaner, greener Oxford
- An efficient and effective Council

3.4 Our guiding principles are to protect vulnerable communities (by improving the quality of Council housing, houses in multiple occupation in the private rented sector and reducing the numbers in temporary accommodation), invest in Oxford's future (by building new houses and improving leisure facilities) and embed the principles of sustainability, strengthen community participation (by developing area committees into more inclusive neighbourhood forums) and to provide leadership to the city (by supporting proactive partnership initiatives such as Oxford Strategic Partnership and the Local Enterprise Partnership).

3.5 Oxford benefits from vibrant Local Strategic Partnerships which take a lead on flagship issues that include affordable housing, health and social inclusion, a safer, stronger and more cohesive city and the economy of the city. We also work with the Oxford Safer Communities Partnership to reduce crime, anti-social behaviour and domestic abuse, the Oxfordshire Stronger Communities Alliance which aims to strengthen the role of the voluntary and community sectors, the Oxford Inspires cultural development agency, and have supported the creation and development of the Destination Management Organisation "Visit Oxford" to improve the value, management and marketing of the cultural offer and experience of visitors to the City. Targets for the new organisation are to increase the length of stay of tourists and the spend per head of each in order to grow the tourism economy. The Council has been a lead partner in developing the Oxford Black Scholars walking tour and has given financial support to the creation of the Queer Oxford Guide and walking tour.

4.0 Mapping the journey to an “Achieving” Council

4.1 The main driver and catalyst for this equalities journey is simply that Oxford City Council continues to strive to provide high quality public services against the difficult and challenging socio economic context of a large and diverse urban population (see analysis under section 2). So while in general Oxford is an affluent city, this masks high deprivation with 12 areas having deprivation that ranks among the worst 20 per cent of areas in England.

4.2 The Audit Commission carried out an equalities review in 2009, because although the Council had a strong track record for promoting social inclusion, it needed to do more to maximise its overall impact on equality and diversity. The Council’s position was acknowledged as moving quickly and its corporate priorities for 2008-2011 had set out a commendable vision of “building a world class city for everyone”. Within this was a strong central theme of supporting the development of strong, cohesive communities, social and economic regeneration (particularly in deprived neighbourhoods), and an increasing responsibility for community leadership in partnerships as well as in the delivery of fully accessible local services. The key conclusions from the audit were that the Council was generally in good equalities health:

“The Council has achieved real improvements for vulnerable communities over the last five years, with a range of physical, economic and social projects. Leadership is effective in promoting equalities and diversity externally. It provides long term financial support to voluntary groups to build capacity and there are positive examples of engagement with the local community which work well. The Council promotes community cohesion and gives commitment and support to events in the City which help the understanding and engagement of differing sectors of the community.”

“Social integration works well across the city and the percentage of people who think that people from a different background get on well is high. However, there are key longstanding challenges in the parts of the city that have high levels of deprivation, low social mobility and educational attainment. The leadership of the Council are clear that multiple deprivation in specific locations is its greatest challenge.”

“Improvement in the Council's strategic approach to equality and diversity is evident, moving from a low base of attainment in this area. The new corporate plan 2008 to 2011 incorporates specific themes that focus on vulnerable people and disadvantaged communities. Good baseline knowledge about the community is used to influence strategic planning and service delivery.”

“Overall, the Council is demonstrating good and improved leadership in promoting equalities and diversity. Equalities and diversity are higher profile. For example, the Council's new corporate plan 2008 to 2011 incorporates specific themes that focus on vulnerable people and disadvantaged communities. The leadership of the Council are clear that multiple deprivation in specific locations is its greatest challenge. Equalities sections are included in service planning. There are gaps in the strategic approach to equalities and diversity and in particular the approach that ensures that service delivery is consistent. The Council has a low level of achievement against the Local

Government Equalities Standard. The Council now needs to ensure that all managers across the organisation are working with their teams to achieve understanding and commitment at all levels and in all services.”

4.3 The Council has acted on these recommendations to identify and focus on the areas where it needed to make progress and as a base to implement steps such as making stronger relationships between strategic plans and frontline actions, including deliverable equalities objectives in all service planning, agreeing a programme of equality impact assessments (cemented in the City Executive Board forward plan), developing a “Customer First” strategy and rolling out a customer relationship management system (CRM) across the Council, undertaking a three year review of its Corporate Equality Scheme, and a full audit of its people management policies to ensure compliance with public sector legal duties and responsibilities. The results have seen an:

- Improved customer experience and service outcomes through refining customer service standards and developing a “Customer First” strategy;
- Improved understanding of community and customer needs by finalising a consultation strategy and evaluating the outcomes from our investment in capacity building with the voluntary sector and reporting these outcomes publicly;
- Improved strategic approach to equality and diversity by the regular monitoring of strategic action plans, widely publicising the 2008-2011 Corporate Equality Scheme, and ensuring full compliance with the CRE code of practice in racial equality in housing; and
- Improved approach to workforce planning and HR by reviewing current HR policies (including implementation of a fair employment and equal pay policy), developing workforce planning and baseline knowledge about the workforce against the protected characteristics under the new Equality Act 2010, and improving the merit based recruitment and selection process to attract a wider group of appropriately qualified applicants.

4.4 We are clear that it is vital to maintain this momentum and we believe we have made substantial progress over the last two years. An example of the quality and further external validation of this progress can be most visibly seen in the achievement of Stonewall Diversity Champion (with a Workplace Equality Index placing in their top 378 employers), “Two Ticks” and Investor in People accreditation, all of which have been awarded to the Council since 2010 (2011 for liP). We are confident that we have realistic and deliverable objectives, robust action plans and the resources in place that will genuinely make a positive difference in meeting the diverse needs of the community and to take the Council through to 2015.

4.5 The remaining sections of this submission mirror the 5 performance areas of the Equalities Framework for Local Government and provide an appropriate commentary on each aspect including case studies.

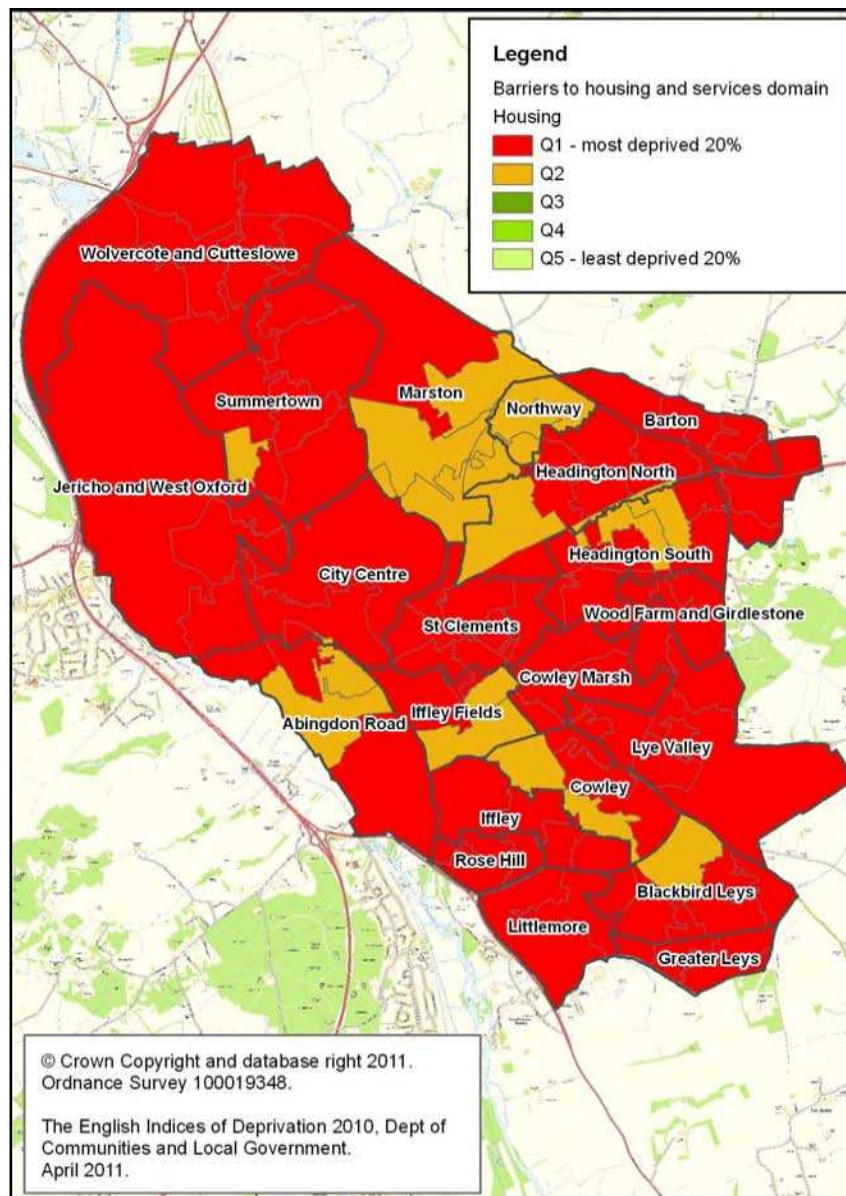
These areas are:

- Knowing our communities and equality mapping;
- Place shaping, leadership, partnership and organisational commitment;
- Community engagement and satisfaction;
- Responsive services and customer care;
- A modern and diverse workforce

5.0 Knowing our Communities and equality mapping

5.1 The City Council produces an Annual Profile key facts report that highlights a variety of core indicators, including how we compare against other places in England (see page 7). We work closely with the Oxfordshire Data Observatory to update statistics and to utilise the Experian/ Mosaic data sets to help plan regeneration initiatives.

Some parts of the City continue to suffer from stubborn deprivation and a significant number of people struggle to afford a home or get a job. Equality mapping has been used to provide service areas, strategic partners and the public with comprehensive data about local communities and trends. The following example indicates the barriers to accessibility to housing, amenities and services and the extent of areas at risk of housing overcrowding and homelessness.



5.2 In 2009 the Audit Commission assessed Oxford City Council regeneration and Housing services as providing a ‘good’, two-star service that has promising prospects for improvement. The Service has achieved a wide range of physical, economic and social outcomes and it has improved the quality of life in its priority regeneration areas, focussing regeneration resources on its three priority neighbourhoods, by:

- Providing new housing to improve and broaden local housing opportunities and create more diverse communities which have higher aspirations and greater capacity for self improvement;
- Improving community facilities, including community and leisure centres, health centres, new schools and nurseries, sports and recreation areas;
- Improving public areas, and using art projects to enhance to image of the priority neighbourhoods;
- Promoting new employment opportunities, including proposals for the physical regeneration of the western end of the city centre;

- Working in partnership to provide training and other support to help people in the priority neighbourhoods compete for new employment opportunities and tackle other problems which affect their quality of life;
- Working effectively through the Oxford Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership to tackle crime and disorder; and
- Promoting sports and arts in the priority neighbourhoods to extend the skills and experience of local people, particularly young people

5.3 From 1996 to 2006 Oxford benefited from £6.7 million national Single Regeneration Budget funding for community regeneration projects. This focussed on the south and east of the City, particularly the neighbourhoods of Barton and Blackbird Leys. It was extended from 2005 to 2008 by the £2 million Oxford Area Programme, funded by SEEDA and the City Council. The Council has now bid successfully for £6.8 million Growth Point funding. See the Meeting Housing Need case study on pages 13/ 14 for fuller details.

5.4 Oxford City Council has introduced new area meetings that are providing a strong local focus on neighbourhoods across the city and the issues which are of particular concern to those respective communities. The Area Forums are taking place quarterly across the six areas of the city; East, North East, South East, Cowley, North and Central, South and West. Local Councillors are also convening neighbourhood level meetings in some areas between the forums. The quarterly meetings consist of invited community representatives and Councillors and are open to all members of the public. They will focus on the communities within the area, profiling some topical local issues raised by members of the community, with City Council Officers and local Councillors able to offer their views and suggest how these can best be addressed. A member of the Council's Corporate Management Team sponsors each forum to help progress actions arising from each session. Meetings are publicised on the Oxford City Council website, community notice boards and e-invites to local groups and individuals who have registered their interest. A forward planner for future meetings is posted on the Council website.

On developing the forums, the Council Leader commented:

"We are seeking to develop the new forums as an open source way of increasing the level of involvement and accessibility and providing a place where local problems and gripes can be raised and solutions identified. The aim is to improve community engagement, with forums looking at specific issues and working with local people and partners towards a resolution."

5.5 The City Council has drawn up a Regeneration Framework to 2026 that 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 in Oxford': an ongoing commitment aimed at supporting vulnerable families, improving employability and reducing health inequalities in the county.

5.6 We have identified a number of different case studies that support the achievement of the Council's corporate priorities in adapting our services to

the needs of our communities (case studies appear under each EFLG heading and will also reference our corporate plan priorities).

Case Study A – Meeting housing need/ Affordable housing

There are over 6,000 over-crowded households living in Oxford and of 713 lettings made to social housing in 2009/10 only 155 were for homes with 3 or more bedrooms. There are over 165 households living in temporary accommodation and over 170 people living in hostels in the city. Half of homeless persons are aged under 25. At a snapshot count in July 2010 there were 18 rough sleepers. To address these housing issues we;

- Targeted super output areas of deprivation in the bottom quartile nationally to deliver the first new Council homes in over 20 years, working with housing associations to build at least 400 new affordable homes in the period 2010-12, with 256 of these units being developed in Rose Hill in partnership with Oxford Citizens Housing Association as part of the regeneration of three sheltered blocks and 97 “Orlits” (900 new affordable homes have been built in the city between 2005/06 and 2009/10);
- Achieved a 100% Decent Homes standard across our 8,000 retained housing stock by December 2010;
- Launched Choice Based Lettings giving people more choice of where they live and worked jointly with housing associations to let homes quickly;
- Worked with voluntary sector organisations to provide a range of services to support homeless people (such as hostels, move-on accommodation and return to work and training schemes) and we are committed to reducing the number of households in temporary accommodation from 130 in 2011/ 2012 to 50 in 2014/ 2015;
- Have been awarded the role of Regional Single Homelessness Champion, with £120k of additional funding in recognition for the work being carried out in the field of single homelessness, rough sleeping and youth homelessness: and
- We have also committed to an exciting new £18 million project to build 109 new homes (with 50% being developed as affordable housing) and two new community centres in Northway and Cowley designed to be flexible community spaces. This will be delivered through developing effective consultation and partnerships with third party providers Green Square and Hab Oakus. The Barton project (with Grosvenor as our secured partner investing £35 million) will deliver 40% affordable housing of up to 360 social housing units from 800-1000 new units.

Case Study B – Strong & Active Communities/ Social inclusion

Positive Futures is a national social inclusion programme using sport and other activities to engage with disadvantaged and ‘at risk’ young people referred by partner services. The programme aims to have a positive influence on young people's lives by engaging with them and providing access to new opportunities within a familiar environment.

Using sport and other activities as a catalyst to encourage project participation, young people are steered away from Crime, Anti-Social Behaviour and Drug/Alcohol Misuse and supported into Education, Training and Employment. We aim to mentor young people and work with them to improve their character and remove the obstacles that may be holding them back. Positive Futures have involved over 500 young people in the programme. (www.positivefuturesoxon.org.uk)

Running successfully in Oxford it has created real life chances for those who have engaged with the programme. One person who has seen the Oxford PF programme change their life chances commented:

“Now nearly nine years on I am still involved in Positive Futures. I now mentor other young people and they look up to me in the same way. That makes me feel great and to be a professional football coach and youth worker is what I want to do. I have just finished my national diploma in football coaching at Oxford City College to make this possible”.

This area has now grown an apprentice post and has the potential to develop as a social enterprise in 2012/ 2013 to deliver sports services such as summer camps (see www.posfutures.org for Oxford success stories). It is also expanding to recruit sessional staff to work with the Active Communities Partnership Manager and Positive Futures Co-ordinator to develop, implement and review the delivery of sports based intervention programmes, and develop and maintain effective links with local agencies and community groups. Current sessions include:

Mon 6pm – 8pm, Oxford Spires School Sport based (14 – 18yrs)
Sun 3pm – 5pm, Blackbird leys Leisure Centre (10 – 13yrs)

Case Study C – Meeting housing need/ targeting benefit take up

The Council collected data on all people who were claiming Council benefits at the end of January 2010. This data was used alongside a dataset called Mosaic Origins which estimated the number of adults living at that address and the ‘Origins type’ of each adult. The types in the Origins dataset estimate the family origin – in terms of religion, culture and/or country of origin - of each adult by analysis of their names. This analysis provided the Origins type of each adult in households claiming Council benefits.

The analysis showed that people of Bangladeshi origin are most likely to be claiming Council benefits – the claim rate is more than twice the city average. This is followed by people of Pakistani, ‘Other Muslim’ and Black African origins.

The people least likely to be claiming Council benefits are those in the Hispanic, Chinese, Other East Asian and Western European Origins groups. There were two possible reasons for different claim rates among different population groups:

- (i) The proportion of people eligible to claim benefits may vary; and
- (ii) The proportion of eligible people making and receiving a claim may vary

In case (i), there is no need for any action to improve benefit take-up; in case (ii) there would be a case for doing so. In order to understand which of these two causes is operating among each Origins group, we looked at national data on household income by ethnic group, which although not directly comparable to Origins types do have some overlap and can give a broad indication of the income levels in each Origins type.

This showed that the percentage of individuals in low-income households is higher than average across all non-white ethnic groups, but particularly high amongst people in Pakistani, Bangladeshi and Black non-Caribbean ethnic groups. This explains the high benefit claim rate amongst people from these groups. People of 'Chinese or Other' ethnic group are 1½ times more likely to be in low income households, which would lead us to expect a higher than average benefit claim rate. However, people of Chinese and Other East Asian Origins types have one of the lowest benefit claim rates. This suggests that people in Chinese and Other East Asian Origins types might be under claiming benefits to which they are entitled. We then used this data to target key under claiming groups and as a basis for a Corporate Equality objective for 2012 to cover the usage and access to Housing benefit/ Council tax benefit by using mosaic data sets and revalidating previous pilot data to target community groups and the take up of benefit entitlements.

As part of a fundamental benefits service review it is an aim that claimants will be able to access the Benefit Service more easily, by increasing the channels available, making the process quicker by removing some of the barriers to processing applications, and examining options for Housing Associations and Advice Centres to be enabled to work in partnership with the Benefits Service and help the claimant.

Case Study D – Vibrant, sustainable economy/ Youth Job Fair

Targeting youth unemployed aged 16-25, but not exclusively, the Council ran Oxford's first ever Youth Job Fair in August 2011. The YJF was jointly project managed by the P&E Apprentice (currently in year two of an NVQ 2 Business Administration) with six students from Oxford and Cherwell Valley College who were mentored and led by the P&E Projects Manager. The YJF saw over 350 attendees engage with twenty four local businesses and training providers with real apprenticeship, training and job vacancies to offer. The YJF enjoyed high profile coverage from the BBC and ITV as well as the local press. The feedback has been hugely enthusiastic, with formative plans now in development to run a monthly Work Club: again with the involvement of local business partners across all sectors but with a refined remit to focus on more specific market areas for each work club.

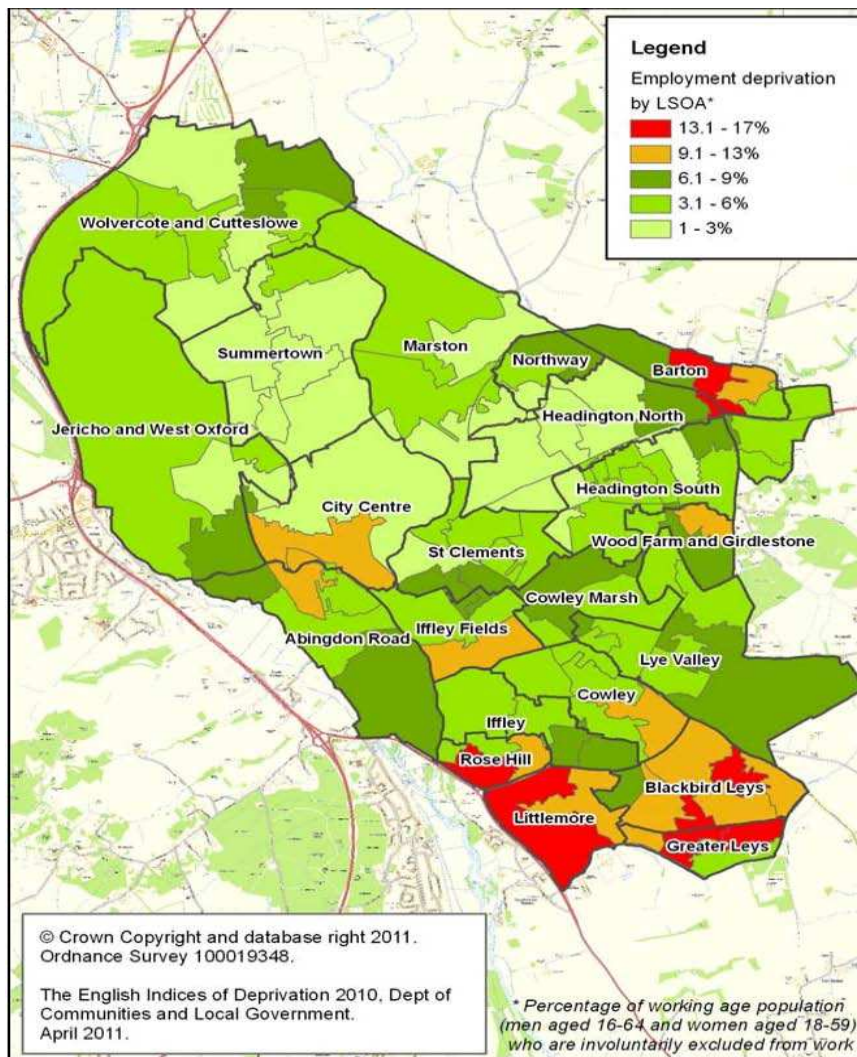
The Oxford Work Club will be coordinated by the Council and involve local employers, education providers such as the next steps initiative, an Oxford

City Council Customer Services or Housing & Council Tax benefits advisor, and Jobcentre Plus. Although based mainly from a static location, the intention is to run additional work clubs on an ad hoc basis to different community venues around the city in order to target the most vulnerable communities (see map below) and try to address the issues faced by the 17% of the working age population in Littlemore, 16% in Blackbird Leys and 15% in both Barton & Sandhills and Rose Hill considered to be employment deprived. Oxford is linked to the national work clubs network at www.nationalworkclubs.net and launches in December 2011.

5.7 These relationships have also stimulated further work and partnership building around planned work experience trials (in conjunction with Jobcentre Plus) and employee supported volunteering initiatives in partnership with Oxfordshire Community and Voluntary Action (OCVA), with briefings given to the Council's Corporate Management Team.

The Value and Performance Scrutiny Committee have been given regular progress reports around how work programmes have been making a difference in using innovative ways to engage with the community and where the space might be to develop future equalities work. There has been significant support from the committee for recent initiatives in the area of coaching and mentoring, back to work help and the hugely successful groundbreaking Youth Job Fair which acted as the springboard to launch the Oxford Work Club.

The employment deprivation map below has been used as supporting evidence by the Council to target employment initiatives to focus on its most deprived areas (Barton, Rose Hill, Littlemore, Blackbird Leys and Greater Leys) and this includes plans to run additional Work Club sessions in the locality of those areas.



5.8 The Sports Development Team within the City deliver a wide range of projects and activities to get the residents of Oxford involved in sports, physical activity and to improve their health and well-being. These include [Get Oxfordshire Active \(GO Active\)](#), [Active Women](#) and [Street Sports](#).

5.9 To ensure that we deliver an effective sports development service and meet our priorities and objectives, the sports development team work with a variety of key partners and stakeholders including:

- [Oxfordshire Primary Care Trust](#)
- [Oxfordshire Sports Partnership](#)
- [Fusion Lifestyle](#)
- [Thame and Oxford School Sports Partnership](#)
- [Oxfordshire Community and Voluntary Action](#)

5.10 We have signed a 10-year management contract with Fusion Lifestyle (a not for profit organisation) which will deliver improvements to our leisure centres and reduce the overall cost of the service, resulting in better value for money for the people of Oxford. We have continued with an extensive leisure Slice Card scheme to enable families (whether waged or unwaged) to access our leisure facilities at competitive and discounted rates, keeping fees fixed at the same levels for the last three years.

For August 2011 there were in the region of 14,000 members across a number of different categories including student, aqua, active, bonus and reward. 33% of all memberships were held by those in receipt of benefits and helped us support inclusivity and offer affordable participation. We saw visits rise by 98,000 over the last year and we have developed and implemented an action plan to increase levels of participation in leisure activities by under-represented groups, with a 27% increase by those with a disability, 15% for older people, 12% for BME groups and an 8% increase for women and girls. Initiatives to increase uptake and participation by those currently in receipt of JSA also form part of the Oxford Work Club's approach to supporting 'wellbeing'.

We now have the second highest activity rate in the county, with around 27.6% of adults taking part in 30 minutes of moderate intensity activity sport or active recreation three days a week; a 6.9% increase is evident since 2005. We are now one of the top ten performing districts within the Active People Survey and we also continued to offer 50 hours per week free swimming for U17s living in the City.

5.11 Please use the links to the following pages on our website to find comprehensive details of our Corporate Plan 2011-2015, Oxford Profile key facts, a summary of the indicators of deprivation across the city, our Regeneration Framework and access to monthly statistical releases on a variety of social issues:

<http://www.oxford.gov.uk/Direct/CorporatePlan201115.pdf>

<http://www.oxford.gov.uk/Direct/OCCKeyfacts2012.pdf>

<http://www.oxford.gov.uk/Direct/ID2010OxfordSummary.pdf>

<http://www.oxford.gov.uk/Direct/RegenerationFramework.pdf>

<http://www.oxford.gov.uk/PageRender/decC/ChartoftheMonth.htm>

6.0 Place Shaping, Leadership, Partnership and Organisational Commitment

6.1 The Council has made good progress in developing the connections between its strategic plans and front line actions. Our Corporate Plan 2011-2015 demonstrates active leadership and has continued our full commitment to providing long term funding to support sustainable development. Commissioning has a strong focus on local sustainability and supporting local businesses, and we have built in equality and diversity principles. Over the next four years we will invest around £68 million into the local economy, building new houses and improving the City's leisure offer, leading to the creation of around 900 new jobs. We will be leading on the delivery of a £300m regeneration programme resourced by over 250 staff, responsible for delivering Housing Strategy, our Housing Services, Community Engagement, Asset Management & Planning. We have a long standing commitment to small and medium sized businesses and will be aiming for 40% of the Council's total spend to be with this sector. We are committed to increasing the number of apprenticeships, training places and jobs created through

Council investment projects and other activities from 47 in 2011/ 2012 to over 900 across the City by 2014/ 15.

6.2 The Equality Impact Assessment process is starting to develop real outcomes in a growing number of front line service areas. The EqIA process informed the critical reasoning behind the Council's 2011-2015 Budget and has been mainstreamed into the forward plan for the City Executive Board, where the Equalities and Diversity Business Partner acts as a critical friend and resource support for service areas as they undertake an assessment. A full training toolkit is available on the staff intranet for all managers and the initial screening template has been simplified after consultation with report and policy writers to make it more user-friendly. Following the successful implementation of Single Status across the Council in 2009, an Equal Pay review is scheduled for 2012 and will be subject to an impact assessment.

6.3 The money available for grant allocation in 2011/2012 has been protected at £1.4 million. It has been agreed to prioritise allocation to advice and homelessness organisations (c £900k) while retaining c £248k for arts/ cultural projects. The Council has protected funding to address domestic violence, OSARCC funding (positive gender impact), the Oxford Friend funding (positive sexual orientation impact), Asylum Welcome (positive BME impact) and Parasol (positive disability impact). The Council has also protected the Disabled Facilities Grant (currently £390k per annum) and allowed for future rises in inflation. In response to the likely impact of the recession on an increasing level of personal debt within low income groups, there is also a funding increase for the Citizens Advice Bureau (total £200k) and debt counselling/ financial providers will be supported (e.g. the Agnes Smith and Rose Hill & Donnington advice centres). We will maintain the level of grants to key bodies providing welfare rights and money management advice.

6.4 The Council has good relationships with the local voluntary sector and shows a strong commitment to supporting it. Councillors and senior managers have taken the decision to continue the sector's funding. They increased the level of financial investment in 2008/09, as part of a clear strategic approach to support its community and voluntary partnerships, and are clear that the Council needs to provide for a sustainable third sector and voluntary groups in order to deliver its strategic priorities. This active approach to commissioning demonstrates good understanding of the role of local partnerships in contributing to the Council's value for money. Elected members are keen to promote the employee supported volunteering scheme backed by the Council.

6.5 There is a Strategic Equality Officers Lead Group, a forum for the respective equality lead officers from across public sector organisations (including the PCT, TVP, Oxfordshire County, Oxford City and all local district Councils) and this has worked to discuss the development of ideas around public sector responses to the Equality Act 2010 and publishing equality objectives, mutually supported events such as Holocaust Memorial day and IDAHO day, and sharing processes and templates around EqIAs and diversity awareness training. This group has the flexibility to meet on an ad hoc basis to respond to emerging issues. The group feeds into the Oxford Social

Inclusion Group and is a partner with the Oxfordshire Homophobic Action and Liaison Team in meetings and at Oxford Pride.

Case Study A – Strong & active communities/ Old Fire Station

The redevelopment of the Old Fire Station presented a one-off opportunity to create a high quality, multi-disciplinary arts and community resource by providing a mix of multi-use spaces to operate alongside a social enterprise café and Crisis Skylight.

We reopened the Old Fire Station in November 2011 after a successful application for Places for Change funding in strategic partnership with Crisis Skylight Oxford. Crisis is the national charity for single homeless people, dedicated to ending homelessness by delivering life-changing services and campaigning for change. They will provide a wide range of arts and practical workshops, formal learning, well-being and advice services and a café which will train people in catering and hospitality skills.

We regard this ground-breaking initiative as an exciting and unique opportunity for the Council to work in a fully integrated way with Crisis to bring the arts to marginalised sectors of the community, and in doing so meet our corporate priorities of strengthening communities and improving the quality of life of Oxford's citizens; enabling people to meet, learn, network, participate and ultimately move forward in their lives.

We will also work with Crisis to offer ongoing partnership support through human resources policy expertise and with volunteers.

www.oldfirestation.info



Case Study B – Strong and active communities/ Blue Sky project



Blue Sky Development & Regeneration is a not-for-profit company established by the charity Groundwork Thames Valley. It was set up to give paid work to people coming out of prison, to enable them to move successfully into long-term employment.

Over the 5 years since it was set up, Blue Sky has employed nearly 500 ex-offenders - that's greater than the entire inmate population of some of Britain's prisons. And of these, less than 15% have re-offended - that's a quarter of the national average.

Blue Sky's mission is to help break the cycle of re-offending and achieve long-term benefits for society.

Our Parks services team supported a Blue Sky team for over 12 months.

"We are grateful for the opportunity this gave us to work in some extremely high quality parks. Through your support we have made a significant difference and our partnership is an exemplar social/public sector model. The Blue Sky team gained from the considerable knowledge and skill of the Oxford Parks staff and were particularly grateful for the trust they were given."

This demonstrates the success that can be achieved, and the potential for the development of a mutually beneficial approach.

It is regularly cited at meetings with the Ministry of Justice and the Cabinet Office. Through our relationship, Oxford and Blue Sky have achieved real results, with outstanding and highly valued social impact.

In just over 12 months, 11 individuals were employed within the Oxford supply chain, 45% completed the full 6 months of their contract, with 20% gaining full time employment. The re-offending rate is under 10% - well below a quarter of the national average.

6.6 The main purpose of our Cultural Services is to identify, nurture and develop partnerships to enable Oxford's cultural organisations to make links with internal and external service providers, to produce and manage projects for our local communities, particularly those in deprived areas of the city. The service currently core funds 7 organisations as delivery partners for specific projects and activities aimed at Oxford's disadvantaged communities and supporting excellence in the arts; Oxford Inspires, Oxford Playhouse, Pegasus Theatre, Oxford Contemporary Music, Modern Art Oxford, Film Oxford and Fusion Community Arts. The City Council also awards grants to specific arts projects via the community & voluntary annual grant programme.

Case study C – Strong and active communities/ Cultural Partnerships

Dancin' Oxford:

The City Council's own dance festival, now in its 6th year and attracting on-going financial support from the Arts Council, incorporates the following:

- Mixed month-long programme of international, national and local dance, supported and hosted by Pegasus Theatre, Oxford Playhouse, the Old Fire Station and the New Theatre, the Castle, Film Oxford and others;
- Specific projects such as Urban Dance, Get Movin', youth dance and others aimed at older people, younger people and excluded groups, working alongside our community centres and community groups to target local communities;
- Christmas dance stage, showcasing local groups as part of Oxford's celebrations;
- Leading on Oxford Dance Forum, who successfully bid for funding from the Arts Council this year for a professional development programme.

Oxfordshire Museums Partnership:

The City Council is part of the museums partnership led by the University Museums and the County Museums Service, and the Museum of Oxford is a core delivery partner. Two community Engagement Officers, paid for by the University of Oxford, work with the Museum to deliver:

- Reminiscence work, working alongside the NHS Hospitals Trust, Age Concern and others to provide sessions and activities with key themes;
- Targeted projects working with people with learning difficulties, homeless people and others to produce exhibitions i.e. the Mini project;
- Collaborative exhibitions working alongside other cultural providers such as Pegasus Theatre.

Cowley Road Carnival:

The Carnival is the city's culturally diverse event and draws together different communities and providers, including Ark-T, Pegasus Theatre, Fusion Community Arts and individual artists to produce an annual festival and

procession celebrating Oxford's diverse communities. The Carnival attracts external sponsorship from BMW and other commercial companies and offers opportunities for local schools and groups to contribute and participate.

Case Study D – Strong & active communities/ inclusive sport

The shared vision of the Oxfordshire Sports Partnership is “Everyone more active and achieving their potential through sport” and this firmly applies to disability sport within the partnership. James Craggs, the Disability & Inclusive Sports Officer, promotes sporting opportunities for people with disabilities and works closely with Local Authorities, National Governing Bodies, special and mainstream schools and other partners.

OSP put on a wide range of events for people of all ages with disabilities last year and these included:

- An All Abilities Golf day at Hinksey Heights Golf Club;
- A “Have a Go” sports day at Horspath Athletics Track for adults with learning disabilities;
- A Parallel Youth Games for secondary aged special school pupils; and
- A County Assessment day identifying talented young disabled athletes

Events have been really well received by participants who have been able to pursue the sport (s) further after the event, with the following examples of customer satisfaction from the Have a Go sports day being typical:

“It was brilliant day and very enjoyable. I think everyone had great fun and the football and running were my personal favourites.”

Clare Davis, tutor at Abingdon and Witney College, said: *“It was a really nice idea and great that our students could take part and let loose and enjoy the day on the running track. I think they will take a lot back from the event.”*

Edward Parker, a volunteer at the event, said *“It was a really good opportunity to showcase a whole range of sports some people had never played before”*

The OSP also supports carers and coaches with key events covering:

- A County Disability Sport Information Fair so that people could find out about disability sports sessions and opportunities in Oxfordshire; and
- Disability sport training for coaches

A list of all opportunities can be found on the disability pages of the partnership website:

<http://www.oxfordshiresport.org/landingpage.asp?section=980§ionTitle=Adaptive%2C+Disability+and+Inclusive+Sport+in+Oxfordshire>

7.0 Community Engagement and Satisfaction

7.1 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. We have developed our Area Committees into Neighbourhood Forums to encourage more community participation. Neighbourhood Forums, attended

by representatives of key service providers and charities relevant to the neighbourhood, will enable problems in the area to be identified and effective solutions developed. The Localism Act includes measures to strengthen the role of neighbourhoods in helping to plan new developments in their areas. The City Council will take advantage of these new opportunities for community engagement where it can and will support local residents who wish to get involved. Consultation with the community is also at the heart of our approach to tackling crime and the fear of crime and Thames Valley Police in Oxford has been a national leader in its approach to community policing through the Oxford Safer Communities Partnership. We will continue to build on the successes of the Neighbourhood Action Groups through a continuing partnership with the Thames Valley Police Authority.

7.2 The Council has a strong track record in promoting community cohesion well. For example, it collaborates effectively with the police to prevent violent extremism. The Community Response Team is a city-wide service where Community Wardens undertake scheduled patrols across the city, identifying and reporting all forms of anti-social behaviour to improve the local environment. The Council also has a Crime and Nuisance Action Team (CANACT) a team of specialist investigators and family/ witness support working in partnership with many organisations including social housing providers, health trusts and local Neighbourhood Policing Teams. Our commitment to responding effectively to harassment, domestic violence (DV) and hate crimes is strong, and it has been achieving some good outcomes. A domestic violence co-ordinator is employed at the city Council and ongoing funding is provided for a rape crisis centre, and to a hate crime multi agency group (MANTRA). This provides a framework of prevention tools and actions to address the needs of vulnerable sectors of the community. The work of OSCP has had a significant impact upon crime and disorder in Oxford since its inception in 1998.

For example between 1998/99 and 2009/10 there were:

- 71% fewer domestic burglaries;
- 80% fewer car crimes;
- 6% fewer violent crimes;
- 12% fewer robberies.

Case Study A – Strong & active communities/ Safer Communities

- The Domestic & Sexual Abuse Co-ordinator developed a multi-agency training package for approximately 100 front line professionals to enable better understanding of the dynamics of honour based violence and/ or forced marriage and to improved identification and appropriate responses to victims. Training is ongoing and will reach a further 50 professionals;
- The Council adopted a multi agency approach to support the Respect Agenda for social housing and were a key partner with the Elmore Team anti-social behaviour project working with 38 individuals and families with mental health problems, drug or alcohol, homelessness or ex offender issues to effect a reduction in the number of Anti Social Behaviour Orders and Acceptable Behaviour Contracts being issued.

The team were awarded the Guardian Public Services Award for Complex Needs in November 2010;

- Tenancy services posted regular briefings released by the Thames Valley Police (oxford@tvpcommunitymessaging.org) covering ASB and other crime warnings
- The Council developed a Building Resilience Strategy to support the national strategy to tackle violent extremism which was cited as good practice by GOSE
- We recently supported Oxford Human Trafficking Group in marking the UK Anti-Slavery Day and the EU's Anti-Trafficking Day by raising awareness through '*Open your eyes to human trafficking – the truth isn't sexy*' campaign to tackle and prevent all forms of human trafficking in Oxfordshire and support those affected.

7.3 In addition, our annual Talkback Citizen's Panel Survey tells us that in 2008, 38% of respondents were satisfied that the Police and local Councils were dealing with crime and antisocial behaviour issues in their area; by 2010 this had risen to 50%.

7.4 Over the next 12 months, the City Council will be diversifying the ways in which it communicates with our communities. By making effective use of social media we aim to encourage more interaction with people, not just about their service needs but also around issues of wider concern. We facilitated a social media conference in September 2011 and for full access to the key note presentation see:

<http://blog.public-i.info/2011/09/oxford-social-media-conference/>

7.5 The Council produces a twice yearly external "Your Oxford" (www.youxford.gov.uk) twenty page newsletter with a circulation of 62,000. The Council's website has been reviewed and developed to make it easier to navigate, and the Access Officer tested the Equalities & Diversity pages and made changes to ensure that the site was both fully accessible and up to date.

7.6 During 2010/ 2011 the Council developed a new Communities & Neighbourhoods team as part of the Housing & Communities Service, with a remit to engage with local communities, encourage democratic participation, develop social regeneration initiatives and create a dialogue that helps us as an organisation better understand the needs of our communities and how we can best meet those needs in the services we provide. This team works in partnership across the 6 areas of the city, to deliver some real and lasting improvements, involving residents in shaping the areas in which they live. They are currently working on some major regeneration projects: more housing and new community facilities in Northway and Cowley; a new combined school, children's centre, community and youth facility in Wood Farm and also the community involvement in the proposals for the new housing development in Barton. They are also building greater capacity into the team by bringing in Tenants Participation and part of the Housing Estate Managers role related to the community. Their aim is to consult, involve, listen and respond to communities through developing constructive ongoing relationships (communities@oxford.gov.uk)

Case Study B – Strong & active communities/ Community Engagement

- Inviting Community Matters to run a Community Association Clinic with representatives from our City's 20 active community centres. The purpose of the day was to share experiences; with guidance on how to make community centres more accessible, signposting ways to run more cost effectively and looking at how centres could ensure they were best serving their local community;
- Supporting Blackbird Leys Youth and Community Centre to establish a new Community Association so that local residents can get involved in running their centre again;
- Supported community consultation in Rose Hill to decide how to use funds from the regeneration programme to improve community facilities. This has led to a plan for improving sports and leisure facilities, refurbishing the community centre and making it a more vibrant hub offering a range of activities that local residents have asked for;
- Working with local residents in Blackbird Leys, service providers and community groups to set up a Neighbourhood Management Partnership. Their role will be to ensure that regeneration activities and on-going local services in the area are responsive to the needs of the local community;
- Coordinated the redecoration of Jubilee 77 and Littlemore Community Centre, involving the Community Payback Service, to modernise and refresh the community facilities;
- Supporting four of the five community centres in the area to achieve and maintain their Community Matters VISIBLE accreditation and set high standards for the people they serve; and
- Supporting the newly formed community bus co-operative in the North Oxford area to help vulnerable and isolated people to access services.

Case Study C – Strong & active communities/ Tenant engagement roadshows

The aim of the events was to promote tenant and leasehold involvement across the City Council, gain feedback from our customers on the HRA budget, local offers and how tenants and leaseholders want to be more involved in the future. This was an opportunity for us to meet our customers by showcasing information and it was also a chance to gain feedback from our customers on our services covering:

- What sort of housing service you want to receive?
- What our budget priorities are and how we should spend available funds to improve your home or community?
- How you want to be involved in working with us or monitoring our performance.
- Suggesting improvements and changes in your local area.

Roadshows took place at five city locations:

Wood Farm Children's Centre, Thursday 17 November, 2 - 6pm

Oxford Town Hall, Tuesday 22 November, 5 - 8pm

Barton Neighbourhood Centre, Thursday 24 November, 2 - 6pm

Rose Hill Community Centre, Friday 25 November, 2 – 6pm

Blackbird Leys Leisure Centre, Tuesday 29 November, 2 - 6pm

They offered the opportunity for a “hot issue” help-desk where any issues could potentially be raised; with specialist housing, tenancy management, health and wellbeing, anti social behaviour, street scene and HR officers available to help with wider issues, including advice on benefits and getting back into work.

Councillor Joe McManners, Board Member for Housing Needs and Ward Councillor for Churchill Ward, said: *“They give us the chance to base ourselves in local communities and speak to people about how they want to get more involved.”*

“We have some excellent teams who work hard to deliver the best possible service to our residents, but we want to find out what we can do to make this even better for you.”

Views can also be shared via the consultation ‘Tenant and Leaseholder Involvement – How do you want to get involved?’

Visit www.oxford.gov.uk/consultation to complete the survey online or contact the team on 01865 252662 or at communities@oxford.gov.uk to request a copy by post.

Find out more about getting involved www.oxford.gov.uk/getinvolved

7.7 We have supported three elected tenant representatives through a Chartered Institute of Housing Active Learning for Residents Level 2 Award in Community Action in Housing Programme which resulted in recognised housing qualifications being gained.

7.8 We have also facilitated the delivery of Chartered Institute of Housing (CIH), Tenant Participation Advisory Service (TPAS) and Council equalities training to elected tenant representatives in 2010 and 2011 and will develop an ongoing programme of refresher training for 2012 to support effective scrutiny and the development of local offers.

7.9 We operate a Monday-Friday duty officer service, providing informal planning advice available for up to a maximum of 15 minutes to all customers visiting our St Aldate's Customer Service Centre. The planning portal has also undergone an overhaul to make it more interactive (see the following link: <http://www.oxford.gov.uk/PageRender/decP/Planning.htm>.)

Case Study D – Strong and active communities/ Planning Portal “Hot Topics”

The Planning Portal was overhauled to facilitate more effective ease of access and awareness raising for major applications and politically “hot” applications likely to draw a lot of local interest and publicity

New planning application for 20-24 St Michael's Street

PLANNING CONTROL - We have received a Planning and Listed Building Application for 20-24 St Michael's Street to change the use to a boutique hotel. To find out more search for the planning references 11/02404/FUL and 11/02410/LBC in our [Public Access system](#).

New planning application for Fox and Hounds public house, Abingdon Road

PLANNING CONTROL - We have received a Planning Application for Fox And Hounds Public House, Abingdon Road. To find out more search for the planning reference 11/02594/FUL in our [Public Access system](#).

Upcoming changes to HMO legislation

PLANNING CONTROL - Oxford City Council is planning to introduce planning control measures so that landlords will have to apply for planning permission if they want to establish a new House in Multiple Occupation (HMO). [Find out more](#).

Jericho designated as a conservation area

CONSERVATION - There is now a new Article 4 Direction for the Jericho area of Oxford. This will affect any planning application submitted within Jericho. [Find out more](#).

Barton Area Action Plan progressing

PLANNING POLICY - Following consultation on the Barton AAP in May and June, we are now drafting the next stage of the document which will be published for consultation in January 2012. [Find out more](#).

Sites and Housing Development Plan Document progressing

PLANNING POLICY - We consulted on the Sites and Housing DPD in June and July and will be now producing the next stage of the document which will be published for consultation in January 2012. [Find out more](#).

Community Infrastructure Levy

PLANNING POLICY - The City Council has been chosen as one of the lead authorities to bring forward a charging schedule in 2012 that will be applied to new development to help deliver new infrastructure in Oxford. A draft will be produced in April 2012. [Find out more](#).

Case Study E – Strong and active communities/ Corporate consultation

<http://consultation.oxford.gov.uk/inovem/consult.ti/system/calendar?>

Current consultation:

We are introducing a new wayfinding system for Oxford city centre which will replace the existing 'finger posts' with a range of signs that provide directional and map information. The proposed system also includes state-of-the-art smartphone technology that enables the user to access useful and interesting information about Oxford. The aim is to enhance the experience of visiting, working or living in Oxford by improving people's sense of orientation and providing a better understanding of what the city has to offer. To ensure people get a good understanding of what the wayfinding scheme is about, we have installed two prototype signs in the city centre - one adjacent to Bonn Square at the top of New Inn Hall Street, and the other at the Queen Street end of St Ebbes Street. The prototypes will be in place from 7 October to 7 November (the duration of the consultation)

An Environmental Development Taxi Licensing satisfaction survey. The taxi licensing office has recently introduced many changes to the taxi licensing systems with the aim of improving efficiency and making it more straightforward for you to renew your licence. We would value your feedback around these changes with consultation open from 08/08/11 to 31/03/12 (results from 30/04/12)

Key consultation undertaken in 2010/ 2011:

- Corporate Plan 2011-2015
- Budget 2011-2014
- Grants Prospectus Programme 2011-2015
- Council Tax and Benefits Survey
- Community Centre Satisfaction survey
- Changes to decision making arrangements
- Housing Strategy 2011-2014
- Talkback Citizens Survey Panel

Previous consultation:

The Sustainable Communities Act 2007 provides a statutory framework for Councils, working with local people and community groups, to put forward proposals on sustainable improvements to economic, environmental and social wellbeing to improve the quality of life and wellbeing in their local areas. Oxford City Council is one of the 117 Councils that have opted to use the Act by identifying local priorities that will inform proposals for improving communities. More information on the act can be found by visiting www.unlockdemocracy.org.uk The "What really matters to you?" consultation ran in June/ July 2009

<http://consultation.oxford.gov.uk/gf2ti/f/17098/2888869.1/pdf/-/Sustainable%20Communities%20Report.pdf>

8.0 Responsive Services and Customer Care

8.1 The Council monitors the grants that it provides to the voluntary sector and identifies the numbers of groups that have benefitted from the grants process. It has improved its mechanisms to publicise outcomes more effectively and an annual report is scrutinised by the CEB. A recent review of the grant application forms saw more detailed guidance added to them to further facilitate applicants to make good quality submissions. This extra guidance has been added to the website.

The financial year 2010/2011 saw 93 community and voluntary organisations awarded a grant through Oxford City Councils grant programme and funding supported the delivery of a variety of projects from small community events to welfare benefits advice, the arts and community safety projects. The total number of people benefiting from projects and activities funded through the open bidding programme last year was estimated at 168,440.

Case Study A - Strong & active communities/ Grants commissioning

£10k grant to support the Ethnic Minority Business Service to deliver a project offering pre entry level training to disadvantaged ethnic minority groups in Oxford. 84 learners were assessed as pre entry, 24 completed training and 14 went onto further education.

Grant support of £42K for the Elmore Team to provide practical help, emotional support, advocacy and outreach for people who have complex needs and who are not picked up through other services available. The service also provides training for colleagues in the health and social services network. The team provided support to 90 individuals during the year that had complex needs. The support provided helped these people maintain their tenancies.

£38k grant for ASPIRE, a social enterprise offering training and work opportunities to homeless and previously homeless people in the Oxford area. Aspire's central focus is to facilitate the transition from homelessness through the experience of supported, paid employment. All Aspire employees work within a directed employment plan, with a view to move on to permanent full time work within 6-12 months. and many of them were supported to move into work placements and employment, 27 were employed by the City Council.

£42K grant for One Step Forward, a hostel offering accommodation for young people aged between 16- 25 years old as well as helping young homeless people develop their life skills and providing a day service, including structured activities targeted towards sustainable living, food, information and support. The project also provides a base from which resettlement work may be undertaken. This project worked with 163 young people under 25 years old linking them with external agencies to support their needs, also linking them into workshops to give them life skills such as budgeting & cooking. 86 of these young people accessed education and training facilities, 11 into paid work and 2 into voluntary/work placements

£10k funding awarded to support the Oxford Sexual Abuse & Rape Crisis helpline which provides support for women who have experienced sexual violence either in childhood or as adults. This organisation has again seen an increase from previous year. From the 529 people supported in 2010-11, 36% were rape related, 36% were historic child abuse issues, 13% were sexual assault, 5% were domestic sexual assault & 10% unknown.

£8k funding awarded to Asylum Welcome to work with young people aged between 16-25 years old who are unaccompanied asylum seekers. Regularly working with 40 young people who are unaccompanied asylum seekers, responding to their needs at a time when they are emotionally volatile and unsettled. Football training is used as a way to engage with them and a total of 95 participants attended sessions last year.

£58k grant to OCVA to support the development of voluntary and community organisations so that they deliver consistently high quality activities and services to their beneficiaries, ensuring groups at risk of exclusion are empowered to develop their own solutions

Supported “My Life, My Choice” a self-advocacy charity for adults with learning disabilities, to win a tender for a community cafe in West Oxford. It opened in March 2010 and is run by people with learning disabilities. "We're building support from the community too. The people in that cafe are seen all the time at the centre of that community, not on the periphery". A travel buddy scheme, which enables independent and confident people with learning difficulties to accompany others until they can do it for themselves, has encouraged more people to participate. My Life, My Choice was a Guardian Charity Award winner in 2010.



8.2 The Council continues to improve access to services (with translation and Language Line options for customers) and is developing its social media. All Council owned buildings are fully audited and generally accessible, with 86%

of facilities accessible while the remainder are subject to major refurbishment plans or waiting for financial decisions on these proposed work programmes. Hearing induction loops have been installed in key meeting rooms and a portable hearing loop is available for all services. We have almost completed a self-financing substantial refurbishment of St Aldate's Chambers which will have an extremely positive benefit for the customer experience (costing £4 million) and the new "Customer First" one number contact centre opened on 12th September 2011. We nevertheless recognise that more work can be done to make contacting the Council easier for customers and that the development of a CRM system across all service areas will inevitably reduce the duplication of data collection and speed up the response to queries so that we can meet our commitment to resolve queries at the first point of contact. A restructure of the Customer Services team has created the opportunity to push forward the culture of service delivery so that staff are equipped with the necessary cross cutting skills to act as advocates for our customers.

8.3 The Housing Options service has developed innovative ways of helping people solve their housing, work and money problems through a more holistic approach. Although homelessness is broadly the symptom, underlying causes such as debt, the need for benefit advice, and access to education or training are big influences. Advisors deal with two to three thousand customers each year, up to 40% of whom will require this enhanced element. Advice includes giving out 'On Your Feet' guides which identify customer needs, signpost appropriate agencies, and discuss referral arrangements for benefits and debt/ childcare advice with CAB and other advice providers. A higher percentage of BME and young people need to access the enhanced options service.

Case Study B – Strong & active communities/ "On Your FEET"

The "On Your FEET" (Finding Employment Education or Training) guide has been produced as part of Oxford City Council's Enhanced Housing Options service as a pocket-sized reference guide for anyone in Oxford who would like to get into or back into work, education or training.

It also includes information about support that might help you get into work, education or training:

- Where to go to get help about the benefits or grants you might be able to claim;
- Where you can get advice about problems with debt or managing your money;
- Getting online;
- Volunteering or starting your own business; and
- Where you can find suitable childcare and the help you might get to pay for childcare.

More than 4,500 'On Your Feet' guides have been distributed, with additional information available from www.oxford.gov.uk/workandtraining enabling online searches for employment, education and training, or childcare advice needs. Customers at St Aldate's completed a Housing Options Duty questionnaire (25-29th October 2010) and results from the 66 forms returned indicated that a

snapshot of the two highest priority needs were claiming benefits and dealing with stress. Following an 'On Your FEET' event in Blackbird Leys in May 2010, the Project Co-ordinator has planned two more community based events, with Barton and Rose Hill scheduled in before March 2011. The People & Equalities team also attended to provide advice and guidance on getting back into work and to signpost potential training providers. This is a core target as the level of NEETs amongst 18 year olds in Oxford is estimated to be as high as 1:10 (with youth unemployment mirroring the national 1:5 figure).

8.4 The Council retains a dedicated Access Officer post that has a mentoring role for the embryonic development of Oxfordshire Unlimited, an access forum working with providers of employment, goods, facilities and services to ensure the inclusion of people with physical difficulties in all parts of that provision. An important part of their role is early involvement with monitoring major planning applications to flag up any accessibility implications. They also coordinate and deliver disability awareness training briefings and run events such as a successful International Disability Day event in December 2010 which saw briefings on Disability and the Equality Act 2010 and presentations from local employers such as Oxford Brookes University on employing disabled employees. The 2012 Disability Information Fair will have a photo competition with a theme around "Challenging Images"; images that challenge people's perceptions of disability or older age in relation to sport or other activities in an Olympic year. The post also filters into a cross service strategic consultation group.

8.5 The Council builds equality and diversity categories into its Procurement Strategy (<http://oxford.gov.uk/Direct/ProcurementCommissioning>) and it monitors the achievement of these, with penalty payments applying to contractors who do not achieve the targets set. We undertake to help suppliers develop their approach to equality issues and monitor improvements through contract review meetings, and the corporate equalities policy forms an appendix to all tenders. We put on "meet the buyer" events for prospective new suppliers and the procurement team holds tendering workshops aimed at smaller local suppliers that cover equalities requirements and guidance on where they can get specialist advice if needed. Feedback to unsuccessful tenders on equalities and diversity issues has resulted in improvements in suppliers procedures in these areas. The Council has been the lead partner in the Oxfordshire Procurement Hub, supplying a specialist officer for this group, and works proactively with Business Link, the Federation of Small Businesses, and Thames Valley Chamber of Commerce to encourage better engagement with the public sector. We are committed to doing all we can to place orders for goods and services with local businesses and organisations - as demonstrated by our first place ranking in the South East region survey by the Federation of Small Businesses. Currently over 30% of all Council business is with local suppliers. The Council also co-funds a City Centre Manager to help develop the City commercially and work with a strong stakeholder group.

"Understanding and securing business from Local Authority departments is often a lengthy and difficult process. The proactive approach Oxford City Council is taking to Sub Contractor working relationships is a refreshing sign and key in supporting the growth of local businesses" (Cotswold Structural Services)

8.6 We have invested over £2.5 million to improve the quality of the majority of our play areas. By April 2011 we had successfully refurbished 50 of these. There has also been a significant investment of £2.2 million to revamp some of our leisure centres and this has been partly responsible for around a 5% increase in leisure memberships in the last year. The centre at Blackbird Leys has just received a QUEST rating as "good" and we are proud to have achieved Green Flag accreditation for four of our parks.

8.7 We have reduced waiting times for assessments and completed work for a full disabled adaptations programme for socially housed tenants to meet the top quartile under Housemark sector benchmarking. This was reduced from 60.8 weeks in 2007/2008 to an average of 11 weeks for 2009/2010 partly through the appointment of an in-house Occupational Therapist. All new affordable homes being built with partners will be to sustainability criteria at levels 4 and 5. We also continue to deliver free recycling and other refuse collection services for 2,400 residents currently in receipt of benefits, accounting for 23.5% of service users, and maintain and review annually an assisted collection service for over 1000 residents.

Case Study C – Meeting housing needs/ Landlord Accreditation

Oxford City Council's Landlord Accreditation Scheme is a voluntary scheme that private residential Landlords and Letting Agents are encouraged to join.

We have now launched the scheme following a consultation period and are promoting it to Landlords and Letting Agents across the City.

Aims of the scheme

The aims of the scheme are to improve the condition and management of the private rented sector in Oxford. We will encourage, acknowledge and actively promote good standards of privately rented accommodation with the aim of assisting Landlords, Letting Agents and tenants to undertake their respective responsibilities to each other.

We will be pleased to give guidance to Landlords and Letting Agents about the standards required by the scheme.

The scheme comprises an element of self-regulation and accordingly relies on a degree of goodwill and trust on the parts of Landlords, Letting Agents, tenants and the Local Authority.

The scheme applies to the private rented sector only and not to Local Authority owned or Housing Association properties where other Service Level Agreements apply.

It is a requirement of the scheme that:

- (a) the Landlord or Letting Agent is a “Fit and Proper” person
- (b) the Landlord and a suitable representative of the Letting Agent attends a training course run by the Council
- (c) the physical condition of all the properties they own or manage meet minimum legal standards
- (d) that management practices are fair and reasonable and meet the management code of practice requirements
- (e) community relations are maintained

Compliance with the scheme will ensure that:

- Landlords, Letting Agents, tenants and local residents enjoy the benefits of good property conditions, competent management standards and considerate neighbourly behaviour;
- Misunderstandings and disputes are reduced; and
- Where problems do occur they are promptly resolved.

Case Study D – Vibrant, sustainable economy/ “Scores on the Doors”

To support the enforcement of food safety legislation in Oxford for 1,400 food businesses from greengrocers to university college kitchens we provide an extensive training and advice programme. As one of 122 contributing Councils we are part of the national Scores on the Doors 5 star food hygiene rating scheme



www.scoresonthedoors.org.uk

Food Safety Training Programme 2011-2012

Environmental Health Officers at Oxford City Council have been successfully delivering food hygiene courses for over 27 years and are highly experienced for meeting the training needs of the catering community.

In February 2009, the Chartered Institute of Environmental Health (CIEH) audited our training, we were rated “*very good*”. Comments included “*The training team are very conscientious and make every possible effort to meet candidate needs*”.

Our courses are tailored to suit all abilities including those with learning difficulties and candidates who do not have English as their first language. We offer a range of exam papers in other languages and can also provide oral

exams to assist candidates if requested.

We can make provision for disabled candidates and those with a variety of special needs. The qualifications are awarded by the CIEH and accredited by Ofqual (Office of Qualification and Examinations Regulation). More information about the CIEH is available at www.cieh.org

- Monday 4 April 2011 Monday 31 October 2011
- Friday 20 May 2011 Monday 21 November 2011
- Tuesday 14 June 2011 Wednesday 7 December 2011
- Monday 18 July 2011 Wednesday 18 January 2012
- Monday 8 August 2011 Thursday 2 February 2012
- Tuesday 13 Sept 2011 Wednesday 7 March 2012

Case Study E – Vibrant, sustainable economy/ Accessible Oxford

Our Shopmobility Scheme was used by 2400 people in 2009 and is open 8am-6.30pm seven days per week with free parking for service users, equipment bookable in advance (outside hours coverage can be arranged) and RADAR keys for access to 7000 toilets across Oxfordshire can be purchased

- In partnership with Oxfordshire County Council and the Oxfordshire Learning Disability Partnership Board, Shopmobility houses the only “Changing Places” facility in Oxfordshire, providing vitally needed facilities for disabled people and their carers in a way that standard accessible toilets (disabled toilets) do not meet, through the provision of a height adjustable changing bench and a hoisting system;
- In partnership with Oxford Brookes and Oxfordshire County Council, produced an Oxfordshire Disability Directory listing all disability related organisations and benefits. There is also a Disabled Guide to Oxford <http://www.oxford.gov.uk/Direct/AccessibleOxfordGuide> ;
- In partnership with English Heritage we installed a platform lift in Oxford Town Hall to enable access to the Gallery Café, Gallery and training rooms
- Held a successful Disability Information Fair in May 2009 and are planning another for May 2012;
- Assimilated the Two Ticks criteria as an integral part of the recruitment policy and have successfully achieved reaccreditation in 2011;
- Hosted a county wide event for International Disability day on December 3rd 2010;
- Administer Disabled Facilities Grants of up to £25,000 to provide or improve access to the bedroom, kitchen, toilet, washbasin and bathroom facilities, e.g. by installing a stair lift or providing a downstairs bathroom. Between 2008-2010, 128 jobs were completed, £611,000 spent and a “very good” customer satisfaction rate achieved;

• Offer a Summer Garden Scheme with a budget to cater for a monthly visit for up to 250 tenants who are physically incapable of maintaining their own gardens, a Repairs Exemption scheme where 500 tenants are currently eligible under DLA and DDA criteria, reduced garage rents for disabled tenants, and employs an in house Occupational Health officer who has enabled a range of adaptations ranging from level access showers (roughly 100 installed per year) through to handrails and access ramps to be actioned within an average waiting time of 9 - 11 weeks; and offer reduced rents for garages for disabled tenants

•We are also planning to install a new pedestrian wayfinding system in the city centre

9.0 A Modern and Diverse Workforce

9.1 Communications across the Council have improved significantly, keeping employees regularly and comprehensively up to date. Initially through a series of “road shows” for all staff, this has been refined and expanded and is now a programme including an internal Council Matters weekly news update covering all key activities and breaking news stories, an internal monthly “Diversity Matters” newsletter focussing on key equalities themes and using best practice examples from service areas, a twice yearly Corporate briefing giving all staff the opportunity for a face to face meeting with the Chief Executive and an open questions session, and a quarterly Management Practice Group involving up to 150 staff (this is also used as a development opportunity for potential managers). Service areas have also started to produce their own newsletters.

9.2 The Council works closely with the Oxfordshire County Council Workforce Initiatives and Apprenticeship Manager and is a key signatory to the Oxfordshire Apprenticeship Pledge to create 100 apprenticeships in 100 days. We currently employ eight apprentices and have two current apprentice vacancies but will be expanding these numbers at every opportunity via effective workforce planning. The People & Equalities team have also implemented an automatic e-mail group that includes local community centres and groups with job vacancy updates in order to increase its local coverage and target awareness of the City as an employer that offers a wide range of professional development and career opportunities. All recruitment managers have the opportunity for refresher training support and a useful practice guide has been produced to further equip managers with critical recruitment skills.

Case Study A – A vibrant and sustainable economy/ Apprenticeships

The purpose of the pledge is to increase the number of apprenticeships by showing there is joint commitment to strengthening and building apprenticeship opportunities within Oxfordshire. This is intended to show leadership across the wider business community in all sectors.

Oxfordshire Apprenticeship Pledge

We recognise that apprenticeships represent a tremendous opportunity to meet our present and future skills needs and the employment needs of our local community. We pledge:

- To actively promote and develop apprenticeship opportunities within our workforce, the community and our supply chain*
- To increase provision of apprenticeships across Oxfordshire by sharing our best practice and employment opportunities*
- To provide a programme of pre-apprenticeship support and encouragement to key target groups including young people and unemployed residents*

In 2011 Direct Services has already taken on three apprentices (as pictured below) and is currently seeking to fill two further apprenticeships. All three are following a four year course and working towards NVQ Level 3 in order to become skilled in their chosen trades.



Josh has said “this apprenticeship offers great prospects”, Mike has said “I am learning a wide range of skills” and Danny has said “this is a fantastic opportunity”.

9.3 The Council has invested significantly in staff learning and development opportunities and is fully committed to “growing its own” talent. It rolled out a full Equipping Managers for Change (EMFC) training programme between 2009/ 2010 (with each cohort attending ten days of sessions) covering 226 staff. The EMFC programme focuses on developing the people management skills of managers, to get the job done and grow the people. It operates over three levels and all workshops link to the Council’s Behavioural Standards Framework. We have followed this up with a series of five action learning sets to encourage cross service reflection and problem solving as well as a compressed version of the full EMFC course. As part of this package the Council also offers staff the chance to access independent coaches. There is also a comprehensive corporate programme open to all staff which covers a raft of courses (Basic Communication skills, Dealing with Stress, Problem

Solving, Coaching Techniques, Dealing with Change, and Get better organised) to equip staff to be better equipped to deliver excellent services. This critical investment has enabled managers to demonstrate better leadership and be more inclusive and proactive in conducting effective six month interim and annual appraisals and regular 1-2-1s; critical factors in the Council being awarded with liP accreditation for the whole organisation in 2011.

"In Oxford City Council, the Assessor found an organisation that values its people extremely highly, and which values learning and development similarly highly. The Assessor experienced an organisation made up of people who are proud of their jobs, their teams, their Council and their city, and who are committed to performing at a consistently high level and to delivering outstanding service to the residents, workers and visitors of Oxford. Further, the Assessor found an organisational infrastructure that supports these endeavours through considered and well-ordered policies and processes designed to support effective people management and skills development in all parts of the Council. Continued improvement will be attained essentially through better and more consistent application of these processes and policies throughout all parts of the Council."

9.4 The groundwork for the current suite of corporate courses was laid by an externally commissioned three year programme of "Embracing Diversity" awareness training where all staff attended half day workshops delivered by the Garnett Foundation from 2008-2010. We also simultaneously delivered a service area wide "Rapido" diversity awareness programme of 90 minute tool box talks targeted at our in house repairs and maintenance DSO. The content of all training was designed after consultation with staff from all service areas, but particularly front line services, and refined so that the last round of Garnett Foundation workshops were focused on "Delivering Excellent Customer Service: Getting it right first time". All workshops involved forum theatre principles and were fully interactive, with groups heavily involved with discussions around the scenarios. This has built the capacity and confidence of staff to challenge others on equality, be more intelligently informed about the needs of equality target groups locally and therefore to be in a better position to both improve the outcomes for customers as well as to embed equalities into service planning and future personal development. To maintain the impetus of diversity awareness and after post course evaluation and staff feedback, we are currently developing a dual training programme ("Fair, Aware and Right") to cover both managing and developing a diverse workforce through "developing a fair working environment for all employees and understanding the diversity of the community". This will be piloted from December 2011, rolled out in 2012 and will provide an opportunity to develop the training capacities of internal staff members.

9.5 The Council is proud to be a Stonewall Diversity Champion and has used this as a springboard to achieve a scoring in their Workplace Equalities Index equating to a ranking inside their top 378 employers nationally. This was a creditable achievement for the Council's first attempt. Ongoing engagement with Stonewall workplace associates has been invaluable in developing a year two action plan and we are confident of seeing proportionate improvements in our performance in the 2011 index. The action plan reflects the fact that there

is still work to do to establish LGBT staff groups and improve monitoring. However, we have a strong sponsorship link with Oxford Pride, support an independent LGBT counselling advice group through our grants commissioning programme, have committed to an annual advertising campaign in the local LGBT press through Fyne Times and are a key partner in the Oxfordshire Homophobic Awareness Liaison Team (HALT) which provides a safe third party reporting and advice opportunity for the LGBT community.

9.6 A dedicated Access Officer acts as an advisor for managers and staff in terms of adapting the workplace, liaising with Access to Work and consulting with the Organisational Health and Safety Advisor over issues such as personal evacuation plans and making reasonable adjustments to the workplace. There is a clear process for purchasing DDA equipment, FAQs covering disability are posted on the staff intranet, while dyslexia and other forms of DDA testing have been facilitated to help staff and managers find constructive ways to manage long term conditions as well as phased return to work. An important part of their role is involvement with monitoring major planning applications and for short listing as part of the Two Ticks guarantees to interview all candidates with a disability recognised under the Equality Act 2010 providing that they meet the essential minimum criteria for the vacancy. The Council is proactively managing the well being of its staff and employs the services of an Occupational Health Advisor through a contract with the RPS group. The Access Officer will have an advisory input as part of the referral process and discussions on appropriate phased return to work agreements. The Council currently employs 8% of staff with a declared disability. We have also implemented some positive action initiatives, developing a good working relationship with Mencap that saw the Equalities & Diversity Business Partner conduct a series of mock interviews to help prepare clients for live vacancies. As result of this support four people secured jobs.

9.7 The Council has embedded coherent governance of the equality and diversity process into its mainstream governance and audit processes through a risk register on its CorVu reporting system. This is updated monthly and overseen by the Head of People & Equalities. We have also reviewed and refreshed the Corporate Equalities Scheme for 2012/ 2015, with an action plan within it that will be reviewed annually. Key areas within the action plan link closely with the Annual Workforce Equalities Report and the CES will deliver the Council's 10 headline Equality Objectives.

9.8 We have an accurate picture of our workforce and produce an Annual Workforce Equalities Report that feeds directly into the Corporate Equalities Scheme annual action plan. Our analysis shows the following key results:

- The average pay gap between men and women at Oxford is 2% (craft grades are traditionally male dominated, account for a large proportion of the workforce and are still paid on a productivity scheme so are not direct comparators with other service areas). Note that Oxford City Council is committed to paying a minimum Oxford Living wage of £7.19 which will rise to £8.01 in January 2012
- More women joined the Council in the last 12 – 24 months and proportionally women have a better chance of being appointed;

- The Council has been successful in attracting and appointing younger applicants;
- The proportion of BME candidates receiving offers of posts has risen from 0.49% of all BME applicants in 2008 to 4.2% in 2010. The comparative figure for White British applicants receiving offers was 3.4% in 2010 compared with 7.9% in 2008. Note that application figures for all groups were down in 2010 – 2011;
- The Step Up management training programme reveals an improving gender balance in front line management roles;
- There is a clear gap in terms of BME staff developing into managerial roles, with only 7.7% of all BME staff currently involved in at least first line management roles; and
- 46% of all male, 53.8% of all female, and approximately 50% of all BME staff undertook training

9.9 The AWER has enabled us to identify any under represented groups and put in place an appropriate and proportionate action plan to address any disadvantage, to continue to assess and evaluate the fairness and consistency of our recruitment and retention policies, processes and practices, and demonstrate the Council's commitment to equality of opportunity for all employees and potential employees.

Case Study B – An efficient and effective Council/Review of employment policies and introduction of new policies

The suite of Council employment policies have been updated and a number of new policies have been introduced during 2009-2011 including:

- Recruitment & Selection Policy & Procedure
- Dignity at Work Policy
- Fair Employment Policy
- Additional Employment
- Home Working Policy
- Leave Policy & Procedure

All policies were Equality Impact Assessed and training delivered to managers to enable them to manage within the appropriate framework thus ensuring equality of opportunity and fair treatment.

The process involved a number of stakeholders including internal HR professionals, employment lawyers, trade union colleagues, service heads, CMT and elected members. This enabled wide ranging consultation and the delivery of a suite of policies that are fit for purpose, fully compliant and thus enable managers to effectively deliver their people management responsibilities.

The suite of policies that were reviewed include:

- Grievance Policy & Procedure
- Disciplinary Policy & Procedure
- Attendance Policy & Procedure

- Organisational Change Policy & Procedure
- Discretionary Payments Policy
- Pay Protection Policy
- Working Hours Policy & Procedure
- Secondments Policy & Procedure

Regular monitoring and quarterly reporting for CMT is undertaken with regard to employee relations cases to ascertain whether there are any trends relating to management capability, or any need for additional diversity awareness training, so that this can be addressed via early intervention.

Case Study C – An efficient and effective Council/ Employee Charter

The Employee Charter was introduced in 2010 to clearly set out the expectations of all employees and managers in their day to day work.

I will:

- Do my best to understand and meet the needs of all our customers
- Strive to improve my performance and become more effective
- Show initiative and adopt a 'can do' attitude
- Engage proactively in my personal development by taking full advantage of learning opportunities
- Maintain high ethical standards and honesty
- Treat all people with respect and courtesy
- Contribute to team working across the Council, seeking opportunities to work with colleagues in pursuit of common corporate goals
- Use constructive feedback to and from managers and colleagues to improve performance
- Work creatively with my line manager and keep them informed
- Safeguard my own and others' safety to achieve our health and safety objectives

Managers will:

- Provide training and resources to help meet customer needs
- Recognise and celebrate improved staff performance
- Encourage employees to show initiative and implement new ideas
- Promote the personal development of staff according to abilities, aspirations and service needs
- Demonstrate high ethical standards of honesty and trust, personally and professionally
- Create an environment that challenges discrimination and where people are treated with respect and courtesy
- Promote team working across the Council
- Communicate effectively and openly and accept and respond to constructive feedback
- Provide visible leadership and direction
- Promote and maintain a safe and healthy working environment/culture

Case Study D – An efficient and effective Council/ Annual Workplace Equality Report Action Plan (AWER)

There are well established opportunities promoting awareness of broad issues around race/ ethnicity, disability, gender, sexual orientation, religion and belief or age discrimination. Alongside the monthly “Diversity Matters” there are regular news items posted on the staff intranet, with a weekly “Council Matters” bulletin headlining all key issues breaking in the local and national press, while equality briefings will be fed back via the Council’s wider leadership team, management practice group and manager briefings to respective teams.

The AWER action plan details our 2011-2012 key priorities, including:

Diversity Champion:

- To reinforce and improve on the Council’s first year ranking as a Stonewall Diversity Champion within their Workplace Equality Index

Two Ticks:

- To produce a Two Ticks review and initiate regular short listing sampling to ensure that all disabled candidates meeting the essential criteria are interviewed. To further explore linking in with both the Oxfordshire County Council sponsored website www.disabledworkers.org for disabled job seekers, as well as building on the Council’s relationship with Mencap in terms of providing interview coaching for job seekers, with reciprocal training for OCC managers being made available

Equipping Managers for Change:

- Run a condensed version of the Equipping Mangers For Change programme for e.g. new managers – which includes references to diversity

New induction:

- Finalise the new induction process with a focus on equalities and diversity

Communicating Diversity:

- Audit and update all staff intranet and external website equalities pages where required, including adding a guide to assist applicants with making more effective applications using the Council’s standard application form. Launch new “Diversity Matters” internal publication

Workforce planning:

- Develop a simpler Workforce Planning Matrix to assist with the Council’s business planning process and to help managers identify current and future workforce issues

Living Wage:

- Review uplifting mechanism and rate
- Employer of choice

- Promote the Council as a potential employer and encourage applications from under-represented groups (e.g. women in senior roles, BME applicants, etc)

Apprenticeships:

- Push the number of apprenticeships across the organisation (& Apprenticeship Pledge) visible community coaching and interview workshops, reaching into schools and colleges (to focus on targeting key areas of deprivation within Oxford), as well as monitoring the career development opportunities available between service areas. Directorate teams will be encouraged to discuss exchange training and staff swaps, mentoring and internship opportunities where students can bring a clear related discipline to add value to the respective service areas

Focus on disability:

- Continue to emphasise the importance that staff self declare any disabilities under DDA (reinforced by the Equality Act 2010) in order that it can take all reasonable and proportionate steps to ensure full access to work, training, development and promotion opportunities as well as performance management. The Access Officer will conduct an analysis of the current spend on adaptations and make recommendations for future funding provision

Employer of choice:

- Promote the Council as a potential employer and encourage applications from under-represented groups (e.g. women in senior roles, BME applicants, etc)
Promote the Council as an employer at the annual Oxford Careers Fest providing those in final year of secondary school with information available on typical roles and career paths

10.0 Areas for improvement: What's next for Oxford?

10.1 We recognise that there is always room for improvement and intend to strive to achieve our core ambition of building a world-class city for everyone and to work towards becoming an “excellent” authority under the EFLG by 2015. We will endeavour to do this through:

- Continuing to prioritise and protect access to core services for the most vulnerable groups in Oxford and to communicate our high profile successes;
- Continuing to value and develop visible local strategic partnerships to ensure the delivery of effective and accessible services to all sectors of the community in a socio political climate of severe financial constraints;
- Continuing to invest in and develop the most skilled and diverse workforce possible;
- Continuing to apply consistent EqIAs to embed these processes more fully, and to challenge services to get it right to ensure services are genuinely accessible to all communities;
- Continue to engage with Oxford's communities to ensure we fully understand what their needs are and can respond appropriately;

- Continue to support awareness days and promotional events across the city

10.2 The “Achieving” level of the Equality Framework for Local Government is an important corporate priority, and our self-assessment submission both outlines the demonstrable progress we have already made towards reaching this target and our actions to continue to make a real difference and improve as a Council.

10.3 Oxford is a great city - but inequality is evident, and Oxford City Council is striving hard to change that. We believe the work set out in the preceding pages testifies to our deep and absolute commitment to tackling inequality, and we welcome all suggestions and support which will help us in making a real difference, an equalities legacy starting with the 2012 Olympic year.

Case Study A – Strong & active communities/ Oxford’s Olympic Legacy

Community sports facility receives London 2012 Inspire Mark



<http://www.communityarena.co.uk>

A new £2 million Community Arena opening this year at Oxford City Football Club has been awarded the London 2012 Inspire mark – after receiving funding through Sport England’s Places People Play Olympic legacy programme.

Sport England awarded the project £350,000 of Lottery funding through its Iconic Facilities fund, which supports multi-sport, state-of-the-art facilities that will help increase participation and deliver a sustainable sporting legacy beyond the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games.

Sport England’s Chair, Richard Lewis, said:

“We want to make sure that people who are inspired by the Games will have some really great facilities where they can go and play sport, ensuring we deliver a lasting legacy beyond the Games. The Inspire mark will be a permanent celebration of the link to the Games for all those using this facility. The Community Arena will offer high-quality sporting opportunities that will encourage people to get involved and, crucially, to keep on playing sport

regularly.”

Councillor Mark Lygo, Oxford City Council Board Member for Parks and Sports, commented:

“It is fantastic news that this arena has been recognised for the work it will be carrying out in the community to promote and provide sporting opportunities for people in and around the city.”

The Arena will consist of a third generation full size artificial floodlit football pitch, six floodlight netball courts, brand new pavilion with six dressing rooms, a physio room and lounge area, as well as improved parking facilities. The project has been mainly funded through the Football Foundation, Sport England, England Netball, Oxford Sports Council, and Oxford City Council.

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