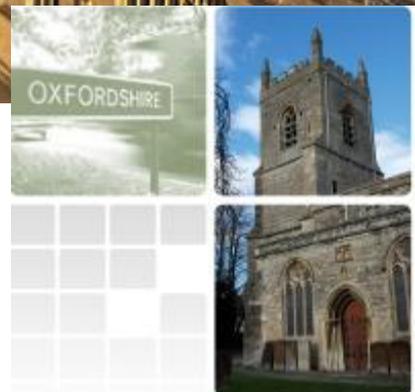
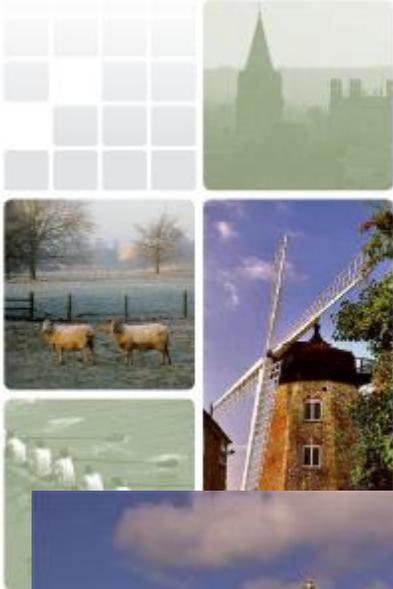




# Strategic Corporate Asset Management Plan 2013 / 2014



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## 1.0 Purpose

1.1 The Asset Management Plan (AMP) is the high level corporate strategy, approved by Cabinet, which establishes the role of the Council's property assets in meeting strategic objectives and the business strategy. The strategy is driven by corporate and service objectives.

1.2 The purpose of the AMP is to:

- Give an overview of the Council's strategic direction and objectives and the implications this has for its property;
- Describe how property needs to change and be used to help achieve those objectives;
- Describe the objectives for property that arise from this and the strategy for each service area
- Set out the action to be taken, at a high level;
- Provide a clear statement of the Council's approach to its property.

1.3 The Council's property is changing significantly in terms of its size, composition, use and cost in response to changes in the size of the organisation and the way services are delivered. The principles set out in the plan form the basis on which implementation plans will be developed.

1.4 This year's review of the plan proposes a continued shift in priorities from holding property to delivering our services, and ensuring our approach to property delivers broader objectives of the Council. The plan will continue to be reviewed and updated on a regular basis.

1.5 The benefits of good asset management are clearly set out in best practice guidance. Land and buildings are the slowest of all strategic resources to respond to change, due to legal, financial, construction, organisational and development constraints and therefore it is necessary to plan for change in a systematic, long term way. Incremental change will not be sufficient as it cannot respond to the challenges of delivering service transformation and delivery of community objectives. The AMP provides the strategic context in which to deliver a structured and programmed approach to change in assets.

1.6 The Asset Management Plan considers the 4 year period from 2013/14 to 2016/17 to allow forward planning and integration with the Council's Business

Strategy, Service and Resource Planning process and Medium Term Financial Plan. It also considers longer term business drivers and asset needs.

## 2.0 About Oxfordshire

2.1 Oxfordshire is home to around 650,000 people. The population is increasing but it remains a predominantly rural area and is the least densely populated county in the South East of England. Oxfordshire is a place that people like to live and work in, with a high quality built and natural environment and thriving economy. It is a county alive with enterprise, learning and history and has become internationally renowned as a place of architectural and natural beauty, a centre of excellence for higher education, research and innovation and a designated European Centre of Culture.

2.2 The county includes three areas of outstanding natural beauty: the Cotswolds, the Chilterns and the North Wessex Downs and is crossed by the River Thames and its tributaries. The internationally famous city of Oxford is surrounded by numerous historic towns and villages set in beautiful countryside. Oxfordshire is at the north-western edge of the South East region and, with its central location in England, has strong links to London and the Midlands, as well as west to the Cotswolds and along the M4 corridor.

- 87% of residents regard the county as a good place to live (Place Survey 2008/09).
- The population is healthier and more prosperous than most other areas.
- The economy contributes £15.4 billion to the national economy and has considerable scope for further growth, boosted by the recent announcement of a 92 hectare enterprise zone in the Science Vale area in the south of the county.
- Unemployment is amongst the lowest in the country, with fewer than 2% of residents claiming job seekers allowance (December 2011).
- Residents and businesses benefit from the county's position at the heart of the UK rail and road transport network.

2.3 As well as these positives Oxfordshire faces a number of significant challenges:

- More than 30% of the county's workforce is currently employed in the public sector, making it particularly vulnerable to the impact of budget cuts.
- Housing availability and affordability remains a problem.
- There are pockets of significant deprivation, with 18 local areas in the county within the 20% most deprived in England.
- Educational attainment at GCSE level is below the regional and national averages and 6% of 16-18 year olds are not in employment, education or training. These factors contribute to the skills gap experienced by around one in five employers in Oxfordshire.

- Positive improvements in life expectancy mean the County has a growing older population; the number of residents aged over 85 is predicted to more than double by 2033, presenting challenges to service delivery.

**2.4** Oxfordshire's economy has sustained continued growth and stability over an extended period and is recognised as an economic powerhouse within the South East and UK and also on the world stage. It has an exceptional concentration of research and development (7.9% of the workforce compared with 2.9% for the South East) with world renowned establishments such as the critical triangle of universities, hospitals and medical research leading to high technology spin offs, and the Diamond Synchrotron on the Harwell Science and Innovation Campus. The county as a whole has strong sectors in tourism, motorsports, and publishing industries.

**2.5** As global competition intensifies, maintaining growth and prosperity becomes more and more challenging and there is a need to focus on economic regeneration – particularly:

- Urban renaissance of Oxford's West End.
- Supporting delivery of Science Vale UK (in southern Oxfordshire) as an international centre for innovation and enterprise, focussed on Harwell science and innovation campus, Milton Park, Culham, Didcot and Grove.
- Developing the Bicester economy with greater emphasis on a high value, high wage, and high tech economy to keep pace with planned housing growth.
- Developing the Banbury economy by attracting mid and high-tech industries.

**2.6** Economic and population growth poses challenges for the Council's asset base and there is a need to ensure that Council's property continues to meet the requirements of growing populations and contributes where possible to objectives for regeneration.

## **3.0 Oxfordshire County Council Corporate Plan 2012/13–2016/17**

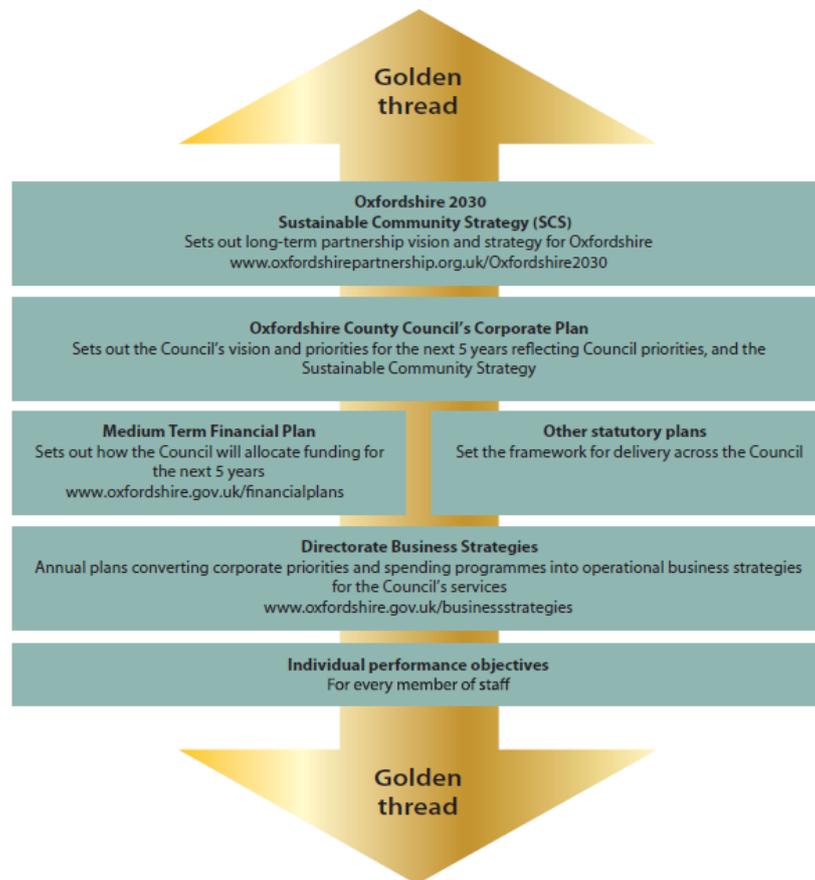
### **3.1 Thriving Oxfordshire**

**3.1.1** Oxfordshire County Council has an overall objective for a Thriving Oxfordshire. This means having fulfilled people, vibrant and active communities, and a great place; maximising economic growth whilst ensuring that the fruits of growth are enjoyed by all parts of our community and minimising any negative impact on our environment.

### **3.2 The Golden Thread**

**3.2.1** The Council’s corporate objectives fit into the ‘golden thread’ as shown below which links all of the Council’s work from top level objectives through to service delivery and ensures that the Council has a co-ordinated approach to the challenges it faces. The Council’s strategic objectives continue to be consistent with Oxfordshire 2030, the county’s long term plan which was developed with partners in 2008. Despite very significant changes to the financial and policy environment that the Council and its local partners face, they remain committed to working together to deliver the longer term ambitions for Oxfordshire.

**3.2.2**



### 3.3 Key Issues

**3.3.1** The Corporate Plan sets out the Key Issues to be addressed from April 2012:

- “We will continue to protect front line staff, in particular in those core services that support and protect the most vulnerable residents in Oxfordshire.”
- “We will achieve further savings of £37m in 2012/13.”
- “We will implement national policy changes that affect the Council and our key partners.” These include the following:

**Localism Act 2011** – a range of measures to support decentralisation including new community rights, reforms to planning processes and empowerment of local government and local communities.

**Open Public Services** – sets out the government’s intention to increase choice, decentralise power, diversify public service provision and increase accountability and transparency.

**Local Government Resource Review** – will lead to major changes to the way in which local authorities are funded, including some element of local retention of business rates (rather than the current system of formula grants based on population and need). This puts economic growth at the heart of securing quality public services in future.

**Schools** – current government policy places increasing emphasis upon school autonomy, through Free Schools and Academies, and a more specific role for local authorities in supporting those most in need, thereby changing the relationship between the Council and local schools.

**Strategic National Planning framework** – the Council will take a local leadership role to align funding streams and deliver priority outcomes for Oxfordshire.

**Health and Social Care Bill** – from April 2012 all upper tier authorities are required to lead a new statutory Health and Wellbeing Board to develop a local Health and Wellbeing Strategy and co-ordinate the commissioning of public health, clinical and social care. In addition public health functions will transfer to local authorities in 2013, with shadow funding allocations made in 2012. A Social Care Reform White Paper is expected in Spring 2012. This is likely to have significant implications for the way in which social care services are funded in future and respond to the recommendations of the Dilnot Review.

**Police and Social Responsibility Act 2011** – establishes the role of a Police and Crime Commissioner for each Police Authority area and the subsequent abolition of Police Authorities. Police and Crime Commissioners will allocate local community safety funding which had previously been provided direct to the Council.”

### 3.3.2

To deliver a Thriving Oxfordshire the Council is working towards the following strategic objectives:

Thriving Oxfordshire		
World Class Economy	Healthy and Thriving Communities	Enhancing the Environment
Efficient Public Services		

### 3.4 Financial Context

**3.4.1** The current economic conditions place higher demand on public services and have significant implications on capital and revenue resources. The council has already experienced a sharp reduction in the value of capital receipts as well as delays in delivery of the disposal programme. The Council is receiving significantly less settlement from central government from 2011/12 onwards.

**3.4.2** This makes the effective use of the Council's assets and limited capital resources of critical importance.

### 3.5 How do our Assets need to Change?

**3.5.1** The Council's strategic objectives, overall theme of breaking the cycle of deprivation and Business Strategy mean that the asset base will need to change significantly to support delivery of those objectives. The broad asset implications of the objectives are shown below:

#### 3.5.2 Efficient Public Services

- The cost and size of our assets will be significantly reduced;
- The amount of maintenance that can be carried out will reduce and available funding must be used to support the Business Strategy;
- Property assets must be treated as a corporate and community resource and their future planned with our partners;
- Investment will need to be focussed on priority services and joint asset planning with partners.

#### 3.5.3 World Class Economy

- Infrastructure will need to be provided for growth areas;
- Sufficient school pupil places will need to be provided.

#### 3.5.4 Healthy and Thriving Communities

- Changes to the provision of adult social care will mean changes to the property estate;
- Encouraging community self-help through joint and community use of assets;
- The need to improve health and well-being will require more effective working and co-location with our partners.

### **3.5.5 Environment and Climate Change**

- The environmental impact of our property will need to be reduced and the estate be made more resilient to climate change to minimise impacts on services and reduce costs;
- Appropriate facilities for recycling and waste disposal will be required.

## **4.0 Property Objectives**

**4.1** The following property objectives for 2013/14 onwards reflect changing corporate priorities in relation to asset management for the County Council:

**1. Reduce the cost of the property portfolio by 25% in line with Medium Term Financial Plan savings targets for future years.**

**Actions:**

- A Deliver the Asset Rationalisation Programme to the end of 2014/15
- B Deliver savings on property costs in line with the MTFP over the same period.
- C Identify opportunities for additional savings through Locality Reviews and working with partners.
- D Introduce a Corporate Agile Working policy to enable additional rationalisation opportunities to be realised beyond 2014/15

**2. Put in place property that is fit for purpose and is aligned and supports corporate priorities and service business strategies.**

**Actions:**

- A Identify and programme priority repair and maintenance requirements.
- B Allocate capital resources to bring forward schemes to address priority needs
- C Maximise utilisation of all property assets.

**3. Increase co-location of services and sharing with partner and community organisations within localities to improve service delivery, reduce costs and achieve broader corporate objectives.**

**Actions:**

- A Lead on the Oxfordshire Collaborative Asset Management Group.
- B Undertake ongoing programme of Locality Reviews.

**4. Use surplus property assets to contribute towards corporate objectives for regeneration in the County.****Actions:**

- A Identify potential surplus property assets through the asset rationalisation and disposal programmes
- B Explore potential regeneration or redevelopment opportunities in priority locations

**5. In working with others to realise opportunities for regeneration, if it is required, explore capital investment opportunities, including potential acquisitions, where a robust business case demonstrates there are benefits to the County Council.****Actions:**

- A Consider any site assembly opportunities to generate a subsequent enhanced disposal.
- B Work with partners to explore alternative and more beneficial uses for existing property assets including potential Local Asset Backed Vehicle arrangements.

**6. Maintain energy costs at 2010/11 levels as far as is cost-effective, whilst meeting Government carbon budgets through investment in energy efficiency and renewable energy measures.****Actions:**

- A Develop and implement a 'whole building' programme of energy investments across the estate
- B Embed a set of low energy behaviours across the organisation
- C Provide targeted feed-back to building users to help them manage energy use effectively day-to-day

The actions taken to meet the above objectives will be monitored annually.

## **5.0 Organisational Arrangements**

### **5.1 Governance**

- 5.1.1** The governance structure for asset management comprises the Capital & Asset Programme Board (CAPB) reporting into the County Council Management Team. The governance assists with:

- Changing the culture and approach to asset management to achieve a Corporate Landlord approach
- Improving planning of capital investment
- Making more effective use of assets
- Enhanced cross-service working
- Improved working and asset sharing with partners

**5.1.2** The role of Cabinet is to set the agenda for capital investment and asset planning, to put in place the next generation of infrastructure and to deal with the asset implications as part of the Budget setting process.

**5.1.3** The role of the Capital & Asset Programme Board is to provide a single point of contact for all capital and asset matters, to ensure development and delivery of the asset strategy, enhance cross-service and organisation working, develop a programme of strategic capital investment and to provide officer leadership and challenge. It acts as the Programme Board for the Asset Strategy Implementation Programme.



## **5.2 Carillion / Capita Symonds Partnership**

**5.2.1** The Council has appointed Carillion as its partner in providing a range of property and facilities management services over a 10-year period from 2012, with an option to extend the contract for a further 10 years based on performance. This contract will save the County Council £550,000 per year and support the delivery of the Property Policy Objectives outlined above. The partnership is the delivery mechanism for the Asset Management Plan.

**5.2.2** The contract has the flexibility to serve other local public bodies within Oxfordshire and the surrounding regions through a framework agreement. There is a strong commitment to improve quality by developing the skills of the people at the frontline of service delivery and by transforming the structures of service delivery, in doing so building resilience within council services to protect against future risks and build flexibility to take opportunities.

**5.2.3** The services include those previously provided by Oxfordshire County Council's in-house schools catering business (Food with Thought) and in-house cleaning service (Quest Cleaning Services). Carillion also provide property management,

facilities management, energy and resource management, and capital works services, and has appointed Capita Symonds as a key sub-consultant to deliver Strategic Asset Management, Estates Management and Multi-disciplinary Design Services.

**5.2.4** The contract includes a Framework Agreement which Participating Bodies can procure similar services from Carillion for their own estates. Participating bodies include health and public sector organisations, the district councils, schools (including academies) and further education colleges across Oxfordshire. The contract provides a single point of contact for our customers, a reduction in duplication, and an efficient and effective approach to service delivery.

## 6.0 The Council’s Property Portfolio

### 6.1 Overview

**6.1.1** The Council’s property portfolio comprises approximately 830 operational properties.

**6.1.2** The property portfolio has an asset value of approximately of £998 million as at 1<sup>st</sup> April 2012.

Property Category	Value (£’000)
Operational (Other land and buildings)	989,471
Non-operational - Investment	4,521
Non-operational – Surplus/Vacant	3,997
<b>Total Asset Value</b>	<b>997,989</b>

**6.1.3** The main property types are as follows:

- secondary schools
- primary schools
- special schools
- offices
- fire stations
- libraries
- museums
- day centres
- highway depots
- staff houses
- children’s centres
- early intervention hubs
- waste recycling centres
- Homes for older people

**6.1.4** The Council makes significant investment in the portfolio each year, through the capital programme and the repairs and maintenance programme. This has

achieved improvement in schools, offices, children's centres and early intervention hubs over the last five years. Historically the Council has identified that 45% of the portfolio was fully fit for purpose and there was a maintenance backlog of £77m in 2008/09. The challenge is to reduce the size of the portfolio and reconfigure it in a strategically driven, affordable way and enables and facilitates change to meet the Council's objectives.

## **6.2 Condition**

**6.2.1** A comprehensive condition survey of all properties for which the Council has repairs and maintenance responsibility was undertaken at the start of the new Property & Facilities contract. The surveys were undertaken between May and October 2012 to form a baseline to enable the Council plan future investment in the estate. Required maintenance was last assessed in 2008/09 when the total was estimated at £77m. The latest condition survey data is comprehensive and up to date, and will enable the Council to make informed decisions about the estate and plan future programmes of work.

**6.2.2** The recent condition survey results have identified total required maintenance of £65.8m (inclusive of schools delegated items), £23.9m of which is within the top two priority categories of urgent or essential works necessary within 2 years.

**6.2.3** Several factors have influenced the required maintenance position since 2008/09. These include:

- A reduction in the size of the estate resulting from the on-going disposal programme and asset rationalisation programme, and from academy conversions, which transfer repairs and maintenance responsibility to the academies under 125 year leases. 19 out of 34 secondary schools, and 6 out of 232 primary schools, had converted to academies by the end of 2012.
- Continued investment in the estate since 2008/09, including prudential borrowing and School Structural Maintenance grant.
- Changes in construction price indices
- Robustness of the 2008/09 condition survey data undertaken as a 5 year rolling programme resulting in a significant proportion of the survey data being out of date at any particular time.

**6.2.4** The latest required maintenance position allows for current prices and is inclusive of fees and construction overheads. Condition survey data will in future be adjusted annually to current price base in accordance with appropriate indexation and other adjustments.

**6.2.5** The condition survey data will be used to inform the development of an implementation plan, prioritising urgent/essential work as part of the annual repairs and maintenance and School Structural Maintenance programmes for 2013/14 and beyond.

## **7.0 Implementation**

### **7.1 Corporate Landlord**

**7.1.1** The Council has adopted a Corporate Landlord model for the management of its property assets through the Property & Facilities partnership. This is defined as:

- Strategic, corporate and coordinated planning and delivery of property
- Early and effective engagement with services on service strategy
- Property decisions informed by real time data on cost, use and quality of assets
- Premises budgets held and managed by Property & Facilities
- Making best use of property across Oxfordshire
- It is an approach (backed by policy, process, communication and stakeholder engagement) - but also a culture

**7.1.2** The directorates and services therefore become Notional Tenants and make use of the property in delivering a service. There are specific responsibilities that fall to both Corporate Landlord and Notional Tenant, depending on the nature of the asset and the service.

**7.1.3** A Corporate Landlord Service Level Agreement (SLA) has been developed that clearly sets out the roles and responsibilities of the Corporate Landlord and building occupiers. This will be kept under review to ensure it reflects current arrangements.

### **7.2 Asset Rationalisation**

- 7.2.1** The Medium Term Financial Plan savings for property to the end of 2014/15 are being delivered through the Asset Rationalisation Programme. The critical lease surrenders within this MTFP period are at Clarendon House, Oxford, and Windrush Court, Abingdon, both in June 2014. These properties will be vacated in line with those lease timescales, with staff accommodated within the retained estate through more efficient and effective use of office space and the implementation of an agile working policy.
- 7.2.2** Additional savings beyond the MTFP period are likely to arise from the implementation of a corporate agile working policy ensuring office space is minimised and that other significant lease surrenders can be realised beyond 2014/15. Locality reviews will also lead to other opportunities for rationalisation of the estate.
- 7.2.3** Beyond the current Asset Rationalisation Programme, the opportunity to surrender leases in future years provides a need for a medium-long term office strategy.
- 7.2.4** The Council's office strategy will be based on the following principles:
- *Minimising the size of our office portfolio* – ensuring that space requirements take account of a smaller organisation, whose staff work in a more agile way supported by technological improvements
  - *Co-location of staff and services* – proactively realising opportunities to co-locate with the districts, the health sector and other public sector bodies
  - *Using investment in the office portfolio to support the local economy* – where there is an identifiable need for investment ensuring that it supports wider economic growth priorities
- 7.2.5** The office model for Oxfordshire will comprise the following office hubs, supported by the Early Intervention Hubs:
- *A northern office hub* – based at Samuelson House in Banbury, but working with partners to explore opportunities for co-location of services as part of wider proposals for the regeneration of Banbury
  - *A southern office hub* – initially based around the existing location in Abingdon but potentially working with partners to explore opportunities that support shared ambitions for economic growth

- *A central office hub* – based around presence in Oxford, with a balance between presence in the city centre and other locations across the City, including the eastern side as well as potentially the west end.

**7.2.6** It is anticipated that there will continue to be a need for a satellite office to serve the west of the county in Witney.

**7.2.7** It is anticipated that Graham Hill House in Oxford (Trading Standards) and Signal Court in Eynsham (Countryside Services) are retained as specialist offices due to service requirements for adjoining warehouse/workshop accommodation and recent capital investment.

### **7.3 Agile Working**

**7.3.1** The development and implementation of a corporate agile working policy will provide clarity on the likely size of the organisation in the future and the extent to which changes in work styles and co-location will impact on office requirements. This work will inform the medium-long term vision for the office estate and those offices that are retained or disposed of.

### **7.4 Disposals**

**7.4.1** Land and property assets held by the Council will be considered for disposal as surplus to requirements if all of the following statements apply:

- The asset no longer makes a positive contribution to the delivery of Council services.
- The asset has no potential to contribute to regeneration and/or redevelopment.
- An alternative site can provide more cost effective and/or efficient service delivery.
- There is no adopted and resourced Council plan/policy/strategy, which will bring the asset into beneficial use in the foreseeable future.
- There is no potential for advantageous shared use with partners.

**7.4.2** The Council is required to achieve the ‘best consideration reasonably obtainable’ when it is disposing of land or buildings under s.123 Local Government Act 1972. If it seeks to dispose of land or buildings below the

market value, it must obtain the consent of the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government.

**7.4.3** However, the Council (having regard to the Crichel Down rules whereby property must in certain circumstances first be offered back to the original owners) will use its powers under the General Disposal Consent 2003 to transfer land at less than its market value, without the need to seek specific permission from the Secretary of State, provided that:

- a) The purpose for which the land is to be transferred is likely to contribute to the 'promotion or improvement' of the economic, social or environmental well-being of the area; and
- b) The difference between the market value for the land and the actual price paid for the disposal (if any) is not more than £2m (also providing that the reduction in price does not breach State Aid Rules)

## **7.5 Acquisitions**

**7.5.1** Land and property asset interests will only be considered for acquisition if the following circumstances apply:

- The acquisition will make a positive contribution to the current delivery of Council services.
- All other methods for the delivery of the service (including use of existing property and co-location with partners) have been investigated and an option appraisal has been undertaken which highlights acquisition as the most economic and efficient means of service delivery.
- The acquisition of the interest has potential for future strategic regeneration and/or redevelopment, or contributes to wider corporate objectives and appropriate funding has been identified.

## **7.6 Working with public sector partner organisations**

**7.6.1** The Council will pursue opportunities for efficient and effective collective use of the wider public sector estate through locality reviews and the Oxfordshire Collaborative Asset Management Group.

**7.6.2** The Council supports the principles of CIPFA's ONE Public Estate and place-based asset management and will adopt such an approach across Oxfordshire.

**7.6.3** The Council will pursue more informal, less adversarial and less resource intensive property occupation arrangements with partners (licence

agreements, Memorandums of Understanding, £/desk occupation charges), and is developing a *Sharing Occupation with Partners Policy*.

**7.6.4** The Council will share property asset information with partners to enable strategic asset management of the public estate

## **7.7 Development/Regeneration**

**7.7.1** In certain cases the Council will hold land and property assets, sometimes for long periods, in anticipation of potential benefit to be secured through a development or a wider regeneration proposal.

**7.7.2** Where appropriate, the Council will use its surplus land and property assets to contribute towards corporate objectives for regeneration in the County when opportunities arise

**7.7.3** The Council will pursue public/private property initiatives, including Local Asset Backed Vehicles, where there is a robust business case for doing so and where the scheme will contribute significantly to corporate objectives for regeneration in a particular locality

## **7.8 Community Asset Transfer**

**7.8.1** The Council is committed to localism and the ‘big society’ agenda and recognises the importance of providing support to voluntary organisations that provide services to the community which are compatible with the Council’s wider objectives

**7.8.2** The Council will consider the disposal of land and property assets in accordance with the Community Right to Bid provisions of the Localism Act whereby community groups will be given the opportunity to develop a proposal and raise capital to bid for an “asset of community interest” when it comes to the open market

**7.8.3** In addition to the Community Right to Bid, community interest in the transfer of property assets will be considered and assets made available for transfer unless one of the following principles applies:

- a) Property revenue savings or capital receipts from the property are needed to contribute to Council savings or to ensure the continued provision of front line Council services;
- b) There is another Council, partner co-location or school need for the property which would be difficult to meet in any other way;

- c) Grant conditions for capital expenditure on the property prevent the asset being transferred or a change of use within a specified timescale.

**7.8.4** Once it has been decided that an asset can be made available, the Council will transfer the asset to the community/voluntary organisation on terms to be agreed, if:

- a) There is no other local building from which the community/voluntary organisation could reasonably provide the same service;
- b) The proposal is financially viable and sustainable;
- c) The proposal represents good value, taking into account the expected community benefits; and
- d) The proposal as a whole, and in particular the loss of a potential capital receipt due to a discounted sale price, is affordable.

**7.8.5** The Council will consider proposals from community and or voluntary organisations for either leasing an asset or for purchasing a freehold interest.

**7.8.6** The Council's detailed policy on community asset transfer is contained in the Cabinet approved *Community Asset Transfer Policy*.

## **7.9 Academy transfers**

**7.9.1** The Council will transfer education land to Academies under 125 year leases at a peppercorn rent, consistent with the Academies Act 2010. The lease transfers all repairs and maintenance and statutory compliance responsibilities to the Academy.

**7.9.2** The Academies Act 2010 includes clear expectations that Academies should have a long leasehold interest unless the predecessor school held the freehold. A "two stage" conversion (Foundation and then Academy) could enable an Academy to obtain the freehold of the school site and is considered against the intentions of the Act. Therefore two stage conversions will be refused by the Council

**7.9.3** Where other Council services (e.g. Libraries, Children's' Centres, Adult Learning, Hearing Impairment, Autism and other Special School services) form an integral part of the school, the Council's ability to continue to provide these services will be secured by taking a 125 year "lease-back" at a peppercorn rent (paying a fair proportion of utilities and maintenance costs)

**7.9.4** The Council's detailed policy on academy transfer is contained in the *Academy Transfer Policy*.

## 7.10 Investment portfolio

**7.10.1** The Council will pursue opportunities for capital investment in surplus property to provide an income stream or enhance capital value, subject to a robust and approved business case

**7.10.2** The Council will consider strategic acquisition of investment property subject to the development of a robust business case

**7.10.3** The Council will be willing to hold a longer-term vision for use of capital funding in support of the above

**7.10.4** The Council will explore opportunities to generate additional income from its property portfolio of land and buildings, having regards to the community and neighbouring landowners, which will include:

- Telecoms and Wayleaves etc.
- Wind turbines/solar arrays/renewable energy sources
- Advertising

## 7.11 Energy Management

**7.11.1** The Council will develop and implement an energy investment programme to meet its energy and carbon objectives

**7.11.2** In general, when making decisions about the management of its property, the Council will seek to minimise energy consumption, both in its buildings and in travel to and from the buildings. It will also search for opportunities to invest in energy generation projects (for example electricity and heat) both to deliver a financial return and to contribute to the local economy.

**7.11.3** The Council follows the principles of ISO50001 *Energy Management Systems* to define and implement its detailed energy policies and processes.

## 7.12 Resilience

**7.12.1** The Council maintains a Climate Adaptation plan to manage its exposure to climate risks, such as flooding and over-heating. In general, when making decisions about the management of its property, it will seek to increase the resilience of the estate.

## 8.0 Service Delivery – Asset Implications

## **8.1 Registration Service**

**8.1.1** The Oxfordshire District Registration Office is currently based in Tidmarsh Lane in Oxford and serves the whole County. The service has other registration offices and ceremony rooms in Wheatley, Henley, Abingdon, Banbury, Didcot, Witney and Bicester. These locations provide a good geographical spread across the County and include considerable interaction with the District Councils

**8.1.2** The current model for delivery of registration services across the county is appropriate and cost effective at the present time.

## **8.2 Coroners Service**

**8.2.1** The Oxfordshire Coroner is also based in the Oxford Register Office, however the Coroners Court is accommodated within County Hall where it is anticipated it will remain. It is the duty of Coroners to investigate deaths which are reported to them and this can result in an Inquest being held.

**8.2.2** The service in Oxfordshire has had to make provision for the military repatriations from abroad but otherwise no significant changes in the service are anticipated.

**8.2.3** The Coalition Government is considering a proposal to require Local Authorities to appoint Medical Examiners to examine all causes of death that have occurred within the County. As the precise terms, remit and cost of this is not fully known, no provision can be made in the Asset Management Plan.

## **8.3 Library Service**

**8.3.1** The Council has a statutory duty to provide a comprehensive and efficient Library Service. There are currently 43 Libraries throughout the County, together with 7 Mobile Libraries that service five mobile areas as well providing services to housebound residents. The Mobile Library service is under review. A number of the existing Libraries are Community Plus Libraries and there are also 50:50 supported Libraries. The emphasis during 2013/14 will focus on expanding the Self Service facilities, assisted by looking at greater co-location opportunities due to the potential implications regarding Health & Safety and Statutory Compliance. Online services will also be expanded enhancing the

collaboration that already exists with other public services and the Colleges and Universities.

- 8.3.2** As a result of a public consultation exercise, the Council has resolved that it will fully fund and resource all of the libraries that form part of its comprehensive and efficient library service. These core libraries are currently:

Abingdon, Banbury, Berinsfield, Bicester, Blackbird Leys, Botley, Carterton, Chipping Norton, Cowley, Didcot, Eynsham, Headington, Henley, Kidlington, Littlemore, Neithrop, Oxford Central, Summertown, Thame, Wallingford, Wantage and Witney.

- 8.3.3** The Council will also continue to provide a fully supported infrastructure (building, ICT, book stock and the installation of self-service) to those libraries which fall outside of our comprehensive and efficient library service. The Council will work with each of these libraries to establish a Friends Group to enable a shift in the balance of staffing in these libraries towards volunteers over a three-year period. For Community Plus libraries, this would mean one third volunteers and two thirds paid staff. These community plus libraries are:

Chinnor, Faringdon, Grove, Wheatley and Woodstock.

- 8.3.4** For Community Libraries this would mean one half volunteers and one half paid staff. These libraries are:

Adderbury, Bampton, Benson, Burford, Charlbury, Deddington, Goring, Hook Norton, Kennington, North Leigh, Old Marston, Sonning Common, Stonesfield, Watlington, Woodcote and Wychwood.

- 8.3.5** There are also other investment issues to consider in relation to the Oxford Central Library, which is one of the busiest libraries nationally, and should be treated as a priority within proposals for the redevelopment of the Westgate Centre.

## **8.4 Cultural Services**

- 8.4.1** The Council's Cultural Service includes museums, archives and other stand-alone cultural sites. The Council has a statutory duty to collect and store documents as part of the archive service based at the Oxfordshire History Centre (St Luke's Records Office). This facility was recently refurbished but is now at capacity and as a result a potential future new alternative location may

need to be explored, perhaps in conjunction with a potential relocation of the current book store at Library HQ, Holton.

**8.4.2** The Oxfordshire Museum in Woodstock is supported from the storage facility at the Standlake Museum Resource Centre, which has recently been extended and has a countywide remit. This now provides a sufficient principal storage facility but this may need to be reviewed in light of on-going development in the county and consequent archaeological finds. Following discussions last year between the Council and the Soldiers of Oxfordshire a new museum building will shortly be completed on part of the Woodstock site. This will have a Joint Operational Agreement for the management of the site.

## **8.5 Fire & Rescue Service**

**8.5.1** The Fire & Rescue service within Oxfordshire is provided by Oxfordshire County Council. There has been a shift in capital funding from a standard formula allocation based on population, to part- funding based on reduced standard allocation and the remaining from capital bids for 2013-15. The process for allocation of capital funding post 2015 is unclear at the current time. The service is bound by legal responsibilities relating to firefighting, fire prevention, rescue and civil contingencies - and is committed to delivering against locally set response times. The existing Fire Stations are considered to be in the right areas, at this time, to serve the existing population centres, but analysis of future development across the county is currently being undertaken by the Service. Response times outside of the population centres are more challenging to achieve, given that Oxfordshire is one of the most rural counties in the South East.

**8.5.2** In addition to the local delivery of service, Oxfordshire Fire and Rescue service operates as part of a joined-up national organisation of Fire & Rescue services to better combat terrorism, extreme weather events and other national threats.

**8.5.3** The Fire & Rescue Service, as part of their Community Risk Management Plan, are looking positively towards co-location opportunities particularly with other OCC, District Councils or blue light services, which fits into the Council's wider ambition to work more closely with other public sector organisations.

**8.5.4** Asset management planning needs to consider the Fire & Rescue Service's response and workforce development strategies, particularly in relation to any new locations for fire stations. There is a need to ensure the delivery of

response standards and the availability of on-call personnel to be located within five minutes of retained fire stations.

**8.5.5** Future population growth areas in Bicester, Witney, Wantage/Grove and Carterton (where the emergency response for the latter area specifically is provided by the Bampton, Burford and Witney Fire Stations) has implications for the service going forward due to potential increased risk.

**8.5.6** There remains an aspiration to re-locate the fire station at Rewley Road in Oxford as this would release some, or all, of the site for redevelopment. There would also be the potential to co-locate a number of the functions it accommodates, perhaps as part of the Northern Gateway development. However a city centre fire station is still required due to Oxford being a major cultural and tourism centre, although a smaller site would suffice as non-emergency response functions (such as Fire Protection and Training) could be relocated elsewhere.

**8.5.7** The current capital programme includes a project to re-locate the hot fire training facility at Rewley Road. This is due to the site not meeting all the training needs of the FRS and limitations placed on the facility due to its location adjacent to residential properties. Currently this project is on hold, with no allocated funding for 2013/14. Any move of the fire station from the site would require this facility to be re-located or training provided externally at additional revenue costs.

**8.5.8** Furthermore, depending on the results of future development of the county, if suitable fire station sites can be found that can be seen to maintain or improve the Service's ability to effectively and efficiently cover the county's developing risk profile, then a business case(s) will be put forward for consideration.

**8.5.9** The Fire & Rescue Service also has responsibility for the Council's Gypsy and Traveller Service at a number of locations within the County, as well as the OCC Emergency Planning Team. These services operate effectively and there are no major asset implications.

## **8.6 Trading Standards**

**8.6.1** There is no significant change in service strategy for Trading Standards. The service is fully consolidated at Electric Avenue, Oxford, including offices as well as the laboratory and warehouse, with the accommodation operating effectively.

## **8.7 Countryside Service**

- 8.7.1** There is no significant change in service strategy for the Countryside Service. The co-located office and workshop facilities at Signal Court, Eynsham, have benefitted from recent capital investment and the facility enables effective service delivery.

## **8.8 Waste Management**

- 8.8.1** The Council has seven waste recycling centres across the County. The City and District Councils have improved recycling through kerbside collection. Every house in Oxfordshire now has a comprehensive kerbside collection that reduces the need for visits to the waste recycling centres.

- 8.8.2** In April 2011 the County Council approved a revised household waste recycling centre strategy. The strategy is based on the principle of seeking to provide facilities that are fit for purpose and well located to the main centres of population. An implementation plan designed to deliver that strategy was put in place in summer 2011.

- 8.8.3** Changes to the strategic context means that there is a need to review and update the detail of the implementation plan. Specifically, there is a need to consider the implication of significantly higher levels of planned growth in Bicester, the decision not to proceed with the proposed facility at Kidlington and the opportunities to introduce 'reuse' operations at some of the existing household waste recycling centres.

- 8.8.4** A trial of reuse facilities at two of the existing household waste recycling centres will begin in January 2013. The outcome of that trial will be a significant input into the review of the implementation plan.

## **8.9 Customer Services**

- 8.9.1** This service is split between Unipart House and Clarendon House in Oxford. The need to vacate Clarendon House by June 2014 as part of the Asset Rationalisation Programme will have implications for the future location of this service. Academy Transfers are resulting in a move away from direct services to schools over three years to 2015. The other services are currently under review. The Customer Service Centre at Clarendon House will relocate to County Hall in autumn 2013.

**8.9.2** ICT at Clarendon House will need to also be relocated and accommodated within the retained office estate. ICT infrastructure will be moved to the Cloud in 2015/16 which will remove the requirement for a physical Data Centre.

## **8.10 Property & Facilities**

**8.10.1** The recent strategic partnership with Carillion / Capita Symonds (CCS) has co-located both Council Property & Facilities and CCS staff at Cuffas Lea House on Oxford Business Park. The future office strategy for the Council in Oxford will need to consider accommodation for this service in line with the lease terms for Cuffas Lea House.

## **8.11 Highways & Transport**

**8.11.1** The Highways services within Oxfordshire are delivered through a ten year outsourcing contract to Atkins which commenced in 2010. The future office strategy for the Council in Oxford will need to consider accommodation for this service.

**8.11.2** The Highways contract allows for investment of £5m in highway depots sites, which will be funded through revenue savings. Atkins has licence agreements for the use of Deddington, Milton Common, Drayton, Chipping Norton and Woodcote depot sites. A depot strategy will be developed which will determine where capital will be invested. Feasibility studies will then be undertaken. The priorities for capital investment are:

- Office accommodation, including refurbishment of existing buildings at Drayton and replacement of temporary buildings at Deddington. This is likely to involve the relocation of some staff at Ron Groves House, Kidlington to Deddington;
- Increased salt storage capacity (Deddington, Chipping Norton, Drayton and Milton Common);
- Other operational improvements, including storage and hard-standing
- Vehicle maintenance, including possible co-location with the Integrated Transport Unit.

## **8.12 Public Health**

**8.12.1** This Service will transfer into the Council with effect from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2013 as a commissioning service for preventative health services to the public within Oxfordshire. Staff will be accommodated across County Hall and Oxfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group premises at Jubilee House. No property asset interests will transfer with the service, although opportunities for provision of services from Council property assets should be reviewed as contractual arrangements are renewed.

### **8.13 Outdoor Education**

**8.13.1** There are currently three out of county Outdoor Education Centres, and one in-county Centre in Oxfordshire at Hill End. The Council owns the freehold of the out of county centres. Hill End is a leased-in asset.

### **8.14 Children's Homes**

**8.14.1** The Council has two children's homes within the county. Thornbury House children's home for boys was re-provided in a new building on the same site in 2011 and is now known as 40 The Moors, Kidlington. Maltfield House in Headington provides accommodation for girls.

**8.14.2** Consideration is being given to increased in-county provision as this would potentially be more cost effective and enable a greater degree of control in light of current national initiatives around vulnerable children.

### **8.15 Pupil Referral**

**8.15.1** The main Pupil Referral Unit is based at Meadow Brook School with other additional units located across the county. The service strategy is developing over the next two years and there is a desire to explore potential co-location opportunities within localities.

### **8.16 Early Intervention**

**8.16.1** As part of a service restructure seven Early Intervention Hubs, (EIH) were created across the county, supported by five Early Intervention Satellites (EIS). The EIHs provide a single, integrated early intervention service for children, young people and families with additional and complex needs and the Service is provided by both Council staff and partner organisations. The EIHs/EISs also provide drop-in office accommodation for staff and support the

Council's main hub offices. There is likely to be increasing pressure on space due to closer working with partner organisations.

## **8.17 Children's Centres**

**8.17.1** The Council has now completed provision of its Phase 3 children's centre programme and there is now a children's centre accessible to all families across Oxfordshire. The Service is run by a number of different providers, including schools, the Council, private and voluntary organisations.

**8.17.2** Action for Children have a new contract for 17 buildings that were run by other external providers previously and formal property arrangements have been put in place to support the new contract.

## **8.18 Children's Social Care and Youth Offending**

**8.18.1** This service is delivered predominately from Knights Court, Samuelson House, Foxcombe/Windrush Court, Nash Court and Kingsgate. There is an anticipated increase in demand for this service which will need to be considered as part of current and future office rationalisation proposals.

## **8.19 Education**

**8.19.1** The Council has a statutory duty to ensure that sufficient school places are available within Oxfordshire for every child of school age. Since 2011, new providers of school places have been able to establish state-funded Free Schools and whilst the Council is not obliged to provide accommodation for these schools, it will consider utilising surplus property assets where appropriate. There are also a growing numbers of Academies, which are independent of local authority control and most of the secondary schools within the county are expected to convert to Academy status. It is also possible that increasing numbers of primary schools will also convert to Academy status, potentially as part of multi Academy Trusts. As part of the transfer of schools to academy status all relevant issues are taken into consideration, including matters relating to Joint Use Agreements.

**8.19.2** School places are no longer therefore solely provided by the Council. The Council's Pupil Place Plan shows local communities, and those interested in their development, how it expects school provision to change over the next few years including present and predicted future pupil numbers, together with information about birth rates, school capacity, and new housing.

**8.19.3** It is anticipated that ten to twenty new schools will be required within Oxfordshire to support proposed new housing development and the funding of

these schools will be supported by developer contributions as part of the Planning process. There are currently no planned school closures.

**8.19.4** The increased need for school places arises from a combination of increased birth rate and inward migration to existing communities (to be met, primarily, from 'Basic Need' funding) and from projected substantial housing development on a number of strategic sites.

**8.19.5** In addition, the Council plans to tackle repairs and maintenance issues in the worst condition school buildings through the Schools Structural Maintenance Programme provided that it continues to receive the capital maintenance allocation from central government and has sufficient resources available to deliver the Basic Needs Programme over the medium term.

**8.19.6** The strategy is complicated by the conversion to Academy status of schools currently maintained by the Council, as whilst this transfers the entire repairs and maintenance responsibility to the schools themselves, it leaves the Council with the statutory responsibility for ensuring sufficient places, but without the power to require Academies to expand to accommodate more pupils. The Council regularly adjusts the Schools Structural Maintenance Programme taking into account resources implications of the proposed and ongoing conversation in line with the changes made to the LA settlements figures by the DfE. In addition, where a converting school has acquired the freehold of its site and buildings, these will transfer to the Academy, leaving the Council without veto over disposals or call upon any capital receipts.

## **8.20 Special Schools**

**8.20.1** A scheme to convert the Ormerod building into a residential special school for children with Autism in Oxfordshire is underway. Opportunities for units within main stream schools will be considered and utilised where appropriate.

## **8.21 Oxfordshire Skills and Learning Service**

**8.21.1** The Oxfordshire Skills and Learning Service was formed in May 2012 from the Adult Learning service and Learning and Development, with a move towards a commissioner/provider model.

**8.21.2** The major administrative centre is in Unipart House, with three main centres in Kidlington, Cowley and Grove supporting work in centres in the north, city and south. Other centres are open when required for class provision, and tutors can arrange to make use of them to prepare work, hot desk and use photocopying facilities. Adult Learning moved into new premises at Glyme Hall in Chipping Norton in 2012.

## **8.22 Staff Housing**

**8.22.1** The general approach to vacant staff housing was agreed by the Cabinet in July 2005 and seeks to reduce the size of the staff housing estate where there is no school need for the accommodation and where the property can be easily separated from the main school site. There are currently approximately 80 staff houses. Staff houses used to support school functions, transfer to the Academy along with the rest of the school site under 125 year leases on conversion. The agreed approach is as follows:

- If the house is an integral part of the school site, the school should be allowed to decide whether it wishes to take over the building for teaching or office functions, or whether it wishes to retain it for caretaker use in which case either the responsibility for paying the rent subsidy should transfer to the school, or the school should consider whether the rent should be increased so that no rent subsidy is required;
- If the house is part of the school site, but could potentially be separated to allow a disposal, the Council should review the position with the school before making a firm decision as to whether a sale can be achieved;
- If the house is not part of the school site the Council should pursue disposal of the house, unless there are particular reasons why this is not appropriate.

## **8.23 Adult Social Care**

**8.23.1** 90% of Adult Social Care Services are provided through contracts with external service providers. The focus of the service is to support users to remain independent in their own home. This focus is assisted by closer working arrangements with health professionals and the District Councils.

**8.23.2** There is a desire to encourage more agile working within the provision of Adult Social Care through the use of smaller integrated bases with Health colleagues and more time being spent within communities.

## **8.24 Homes for Older People**

**8.24.1** Homes for Older People are all leased to the Oxfordshire Care Partnership and the Council has worked with OCP to deliver the first phase of re-providing seven of the homes that were no longer fit for purpose. This is now complete

and Phase 2 is addressing the remaining eight homes. The OCP Contract is currently being reviewed in order to deliver changes to service strategy whereby there will be a withdrawal from residential home provision to be replaced with Extra Care Housing, specialist nursing and dementia homes either on existing or new sites.

## **8.25 Day Services**

**8.25.1** As part of the Day Opportunities Strategy, traditional Older People's day centres are being replaced by Health and Wellbeing centres. This has been completed in Bicester, Oxford, Abingdon, Witney and Banbury. In addition services are provided from locations in Didcot, Wantage and Wallingford.

**8.25.2** The tendering process for the outsourcing of the Learning Disabilities day services has been stopped and will be the subject of a review in 2013.

**8.25.3** There is a drive towards local and co-located provision of community activities such as Luncheon Clubs, taking account of low travel distances but not at the expense of complex higher end needs.

## **8.26 Special Needs Housing**

**8.26.1** The strategy for the delivery of Extra Care Housing is now established. This need is considered in all Council disposals, as well as any Section 106 bids, and through working closely with District Councils and Housing Providers.

**8.26.2** An overall housing strategy is currently being prepared which will set out the need and delivery strategies for all the areas of special needs housing, including older people, as well as learning disabilities, physical disabilities and mental health. Whilst the demographic drivers are not on the same scale as for older people and Extra Care Housing, there is often a need for more specific and specialist housing that cannot be achieved through the normal affordable housing routes. The new strategy document will set out these specifics and the same principles will be applied with regard to the disposal of sites as for Extra Care Housing.

## **9.0 Conclusion**

**9.1**

The Asset Management Plan will be reviewed annually in line with Service and Resource Planning and capital planning. The Asset Management Plan is a live document and will be developed in future to include:

- On-going review of progress and actions against property policy objectives (by 2014/15)
- More comprehensive property performance information benchmarked against other local authorities (by 2014/15)
- Greater emphasis on the role of property assets in terms of growth (by 2014/15)