Division(s): All

CABINET – 25 JANUARY 2011

CORPORATE PLAN 2011/12 – 2015/16

Report by Assistant Chief Executive (Strategy)

Introduction

1. This report introduces a draft of the Corporate Plan 2011/12 – 2015/16. The plan will be submitted to Council on 15 February 2011 as one of the plans and strategies that form the policy framework and so require full Council approval.

Corporate Plan

2. The Corporate Plan 2011/12 – 2015/16 is split into two parts. The first (Annex A) summarises the council's broad strategic direction and the second (Annex B) sets our short and medium term delivery commitments.

3. The emphasis in the plan is very much on the challenges we face responding to the financial pressures and transforming the organisation. It has been drafted with strong links to the directorate business strategies, and will be updated if and when proposals are amended or agreed.

4. The plan is still in a draft format and further work is required in finalising targets for each priority. As such, the delivery plan (Annex B) will be submitted as part of the schedule of addenda. In many cases we will be merely signposting existing strategies/delivery plans (e.g. the business strategy) and the actions and targets will be finalised ahead of the Council meeting in February.

5. A summary of the key elements of the Medium Term Financial Plan will be included following approval by Council, and the financial plan will form an annex to the Corporate Plan.

6. The Corporate Plan will be supported by a refreshed version of 'This is Oxfordshire', the evidence base of research, data and perception information produced by the Oxfordshire Data Observatory.

Financial and Staff Implications

7. These are contained within the Medium Term Financial Plan.

Communications

8. The Corporate Plan aligns closely with other communication activity about the budget proposals and future direction of the council, rather than requiring a

separate communications plan for internal and external stakeholders. It has been drafted with this in mind and links closely to directorate business strategies.

9.   Hard copies of the final plan will be provided to a small number of key stakeholders, including members and the Senior Management Group, otherwise dissemination will be done electronically.

RECOMMENDATION

10.   **The Cabinet is RECOMMENDED, subject to the inclusion of consequential and editorial changes in the text as agreed by the Chief Executive in consultation with the Leader of the Council, to RECOMMEND the Council to approve the Medium Term Corporate Plan 2011/12-15/16.**

Stephen Capaldi
Assistant Chief Executive (Strategy)

Background papers: None

Contact Officer: Ben Threadgold, Senior Policy Officer, 01865 328219)

14 January 2011

Corporate Plan 2011/12 – 2015/16

Foreword

From Leader / Chief Executive

- To be added to final document

About Oxfordshire

Oxfordshire is home to around 640,000 people. The number of people living in Oxfordshire has increased rapidly in recent years and is forecast to continue, but it remains the least densely populated county in the South East region.

The county has tremendous assets which make Oxfordshire a place that people like to live and work in, including: good links to other parts of the country; a successful economy built around the universities and related high tech industries and businesses; a high quality built and natural environment; and a population that is healthier and more prosperous than virtually any other county in the UK.

However challenges remain:

- More than 30% of the county's workforce is currently employed in the public sector, making us particularly vulnerable to the impact of budget cuts;
- Traffic congestion and pollution is growing;
- Housing availability and affordability remain a problem despite the recent dip in house prices;
- There are an increasing number of older people and people with disabilities leading to increased demand for public services, including social care and health care.
- There are pockets of disadvantage and a cycle of deprivation in some areas of the county, which needs to be broken;
- There are skills shortages and particular concerns about young people aged 16-25 years who are not in education, employment or training.
- Higher than average domestic energy and water use and emissions of carbon dioxide, and the need to reduce further the amount of household waste sent to landfill

More information about the strengths and challenges in the county is available in 'This is Oxfordshire', the key facts about Oxfordshire produced by the Oxfordshire Data Observatory:

www.oxfordshireobservatory.info/aboutoxfordshiredata

Context

Oxfordshire County Council has identified that we need to make savings of £119 million over the next four years. This has come about for a number of reasons:

- a very significant reduction in the money we receive from the Government - Oxfordshire County Council receives 65 per cent of its annual budget direct from Government grants and these are being cut by up to 30 per cent to 2015;
- increasing demand for our services, particularly from rapidly increasing numbers of older people who require our support, and ensuring that we are able to care safely for vulnerable children and adults;
- inflation in our costs, particularly affecting energy, fuel and transport services.

Oxfordshire County Council has been planning for reduced financial circumstances since 2009. We saved £35m in 2010/11 through efficiency savings, a pay freeze and driving down the costs of contract with suppliers over a large range of services.

However we are faced with difficult decisions in finding the remainder of the savings needed. Given the scale of cuts and the previous savings already identified we will not be able to make cuts in back office functions and find further efficiencies to an extent that will protect front line services completely. However the situation would have been far worse for Oxfordshire County Council without the responsible forward planning we have done in recent times.

This Corporate Plan is in two parts:

Part 1 – summarises our broad strategic direction in response to the challenges we face and within the context set out above

Part 2 – sets out examples of our short and medium term delivery commitments.
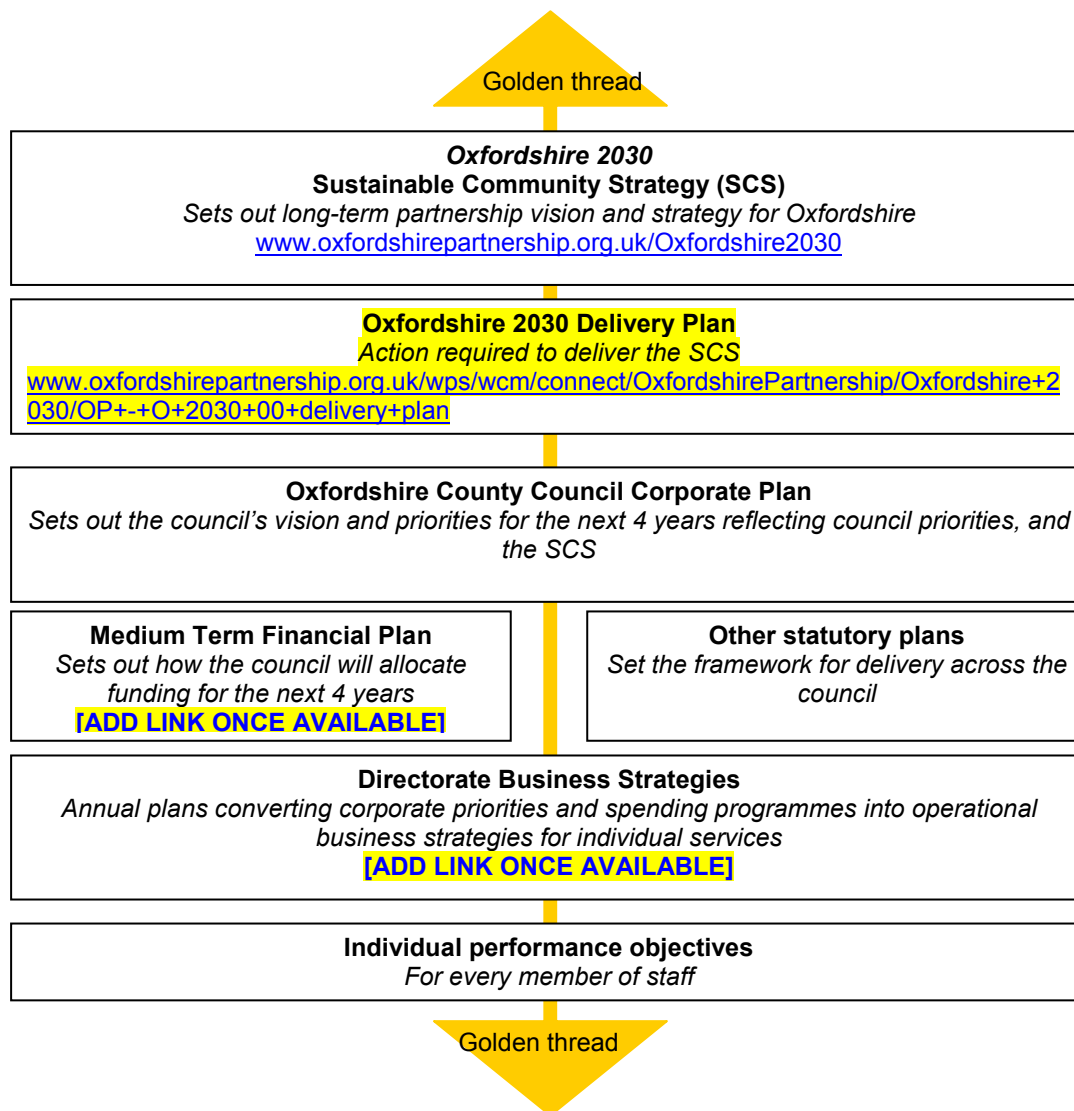
Strategic Objectives

The Council will work towards the following strategic objectives:

Efficient Public Services	World Class Economy	Healthy and Thriving Communities	Environment and Climate Change
Breaking the Cycle of Deprivation (cross-cutting theme)			

Although our strategic objectives remain broadly the same as previous years, our role in helping to achieve them will change considerably over the next four years. This is explained further on pages XX to XX, and more detail about how specific services will be delivered can be found in service business strategies at www.oxfordshire.gov.uk

Figure 1: Oxfordshire's Golden Thread

Golden thread

Oxfordshire 2030
Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS)
Sets out long-term partnership vision and strategy for Oxfordshire
www.oxfordshirepartnership.org.uk/Oxfordshire2030

Oxfordshire 2030 Delivery Plan
Action required to deliver the SCS
www.oxfordshirepartnership.org.uk/wps/wcm/connect/OxfordshirePartnership/Oxfordshire+2030/OP+-+O+2030+00+delivery+plan

Oxfordshire County Council Corporate Plan
Sets out the council's vision and priorities for the next 4 years reflecting council priorities, and the SCS

Medium Term Financial Plan
Sets out how the council will allocate funding for the next 4 years
[ADD LINK ONCE AVAILABLE]

Other statutory plans
Set the framework for delivery across the council

Directorate Business Strategies
Annual plans converting corporate priorities and spending programmes into operational business strategies for individual services
[ADD LINK ONCE AVAILABLE]

Individual performance objectives
For every member of staff

Golden thread

The Corporate Plan objectives fit into a wider picture as shown in figure XX. This 'golden thread' links all of our work from top level objectives through to service delivery and ensures that as a Council we take a coordinated approach to the challenges we face.

Our strategic objectives are consistent with Oxfordshire 2030, the county's long term plan which has been agreed with partners following extensive public and stakeholder engagement. Details of Oxfordshire 2030 can be found at:
www.oxfordshirepartnership.org.uk

Principles

We are committed to:

- **Low taxes** – reducing year-on-year the annual increase in council tax to ease the burden on local people, including a freeze in 2011/12.
- **Real choice** – ensuring residents receive the services they need, in ways that best suit the varying needs of different people and communities. This means more and more services will be delivered by providers other than Oxfordshire County Council and we will increasingly put power in the hands of individuals and communities to purchase the services they need or to run services themselves.
- **Value for money** – we will have an absolute focus on ensuring services are efficient and delivering value for money for local people.

Values

We will continue to be guided by these six underpinning values:

- **Customer focus** – putting the needs of our customers at the heart of everything we do and improving opportunities for local people to have their say and get involved with council decision-making.
- **Honesty** – being open and transparent about how we operate, prepared to admit where we need to do better and communicating the reasons if we are not able to meet the needs of local communities.
- **One team** – working collectively as a county council and valuing and developing our staff to perform to the best of their abilities.
- **Involvement** – providing opportunities for our communities, our stakeholders and our staff to help shape the services they receive and feeding back so that people know how local views influence decision-making.
- **Can-do** – seeing problems and issues as opportunities and looking for solutions, rather than viewing difficulties as obstacles to what we want to achieve.
- **Efficient and effective** – making the best use of our reduced financial resources by harnessing the skills and experience of our staff to help individuals and communities access or arrange the services they need, learning from our successes and constantly challenging ourselves to do better.

Efficient Public Services

We have an excellent track record of delivering value for money and were 'ahead of the game' in preparing for the difficult times we now face. We delivered £35 million savings in 2010/11 and almost £100 million in year-on-year savings since 2007. We are also implementing an ambitious Business Strategy that is changing the way we operate as a Council.

Although the current financial situation presents many challenges, it is also an opportunity to radically rethink the way we do business and to look again at how we provide value for money for local people. Our focus is on transforming the Council and developing a new approach to how services are provided in Oxfordshire, working to protect the front line as far as possible.

Given the scale of the budget reduction we will have to stop providing some services that we believe are lower priorities for spending when times are tough. We will focus on fewer priorities and are radically redesigning some of our services, to ensure they are affordable and meet resident's needs. In some areas this will include shifting from directly delivering services ourselves to commissioning others to provide services, based on the key outcomes we need to achieve for Oxfordshire.

We are committed to the development of the Big Society and will support others to build and maintain strong local communities in Oxfordshire, avoiding a 'one-size fits all' approach and seeking community ownership of locally important priorities. Where appropriate we will devolve decision making and service delivery to local levels, and ensure that our Councillors are supported to have a strong voice as community leaders.

The coalition government has announced radical changes to funding, policy and regulation for education, policing and health (including public health). Our joint working arrangements with the Oxfordshire National Health Service are already among the best in the country in terms of pooled budgets to achieve shared goals and we are involved in innovative partnerships such as the Oxfordshire City-Region Enterprise Partnership and Science Vale UK. However the Council needs to join up more effectively with other public sector organisations, and expand our relationships with the private and voluntary sectors, to deliver services more effectively.

Our Priorities for Action

- **Delivering our savings target -** delivering our challenging but achievable programme of scaling back some services and redesigning others to meet our savings target of £119 million by 2015/16.
- **Business Strategy –** building on our previous efficiency programmes and recognising that delivering value for money is not just about savings, but also about how we use research and evidence of what provides best value for money and how that informs the way we do things. Our business strategy reflects this and includes actions to:
   - o Change the way we work, including re-engineering staff working practices and processes;

- o Improve our use of technology to support new ways of working and customer interactions;
- o Rationalise our property and encourage the co-location of public sector services, and define our policies for disposing of assets to assist community groups in developing proposals for delivering local services themselves;
- o Streamline the organisational structure, including reducing the number of managers by 25%.
- o Give priority to key vital services and ensure they have the support needed to operate effectively
- o Exploit internal and external opportunities to find savings by moving more functions into our 'shared service' centre, and exploring ways to increase the benefits through joint service delivery and partnering arrangements

- **Community leadership –** emphasising the role of local members as community leaders, including an innovative pilot scheme to develop their ability to act as social entrepreneurs and local champions. We will ensure that members and managers work together effectively, and work with local organisations and individuals to explore different ways to deliver services.
- **Customer focus –** delivering excellent customer service by putting our customers at the heart of everything we do, expanding the range of services offered online and the ability of our customer service centre to handle internal and external enquiries efficiently and effectively.
- **Collaborative Working –** identifying opportunities to work with others to deliver services more effectively and develop innovative approaches to common issues, and reviewing existing partnership arrangements to maximise the benefit we receive for the investment we make in them.

World Class Economy

Oxfordshire has one of the strongest economies in the South East and continues to have one of the lowest rates of unemployment in the region. The county is the hub of Britain's knowledge economy with the largest concentration of research and development activity in Western Europe, driven by Science Vale UK, two universities and their many spin-out research centres and start-up businesses. However, more than 30% of Oxfordshire's workforce is currently employed in the public sector making us particularly vulnerable to the impact of budget cuts.

Figure 2: Employment by broad sector, 2008
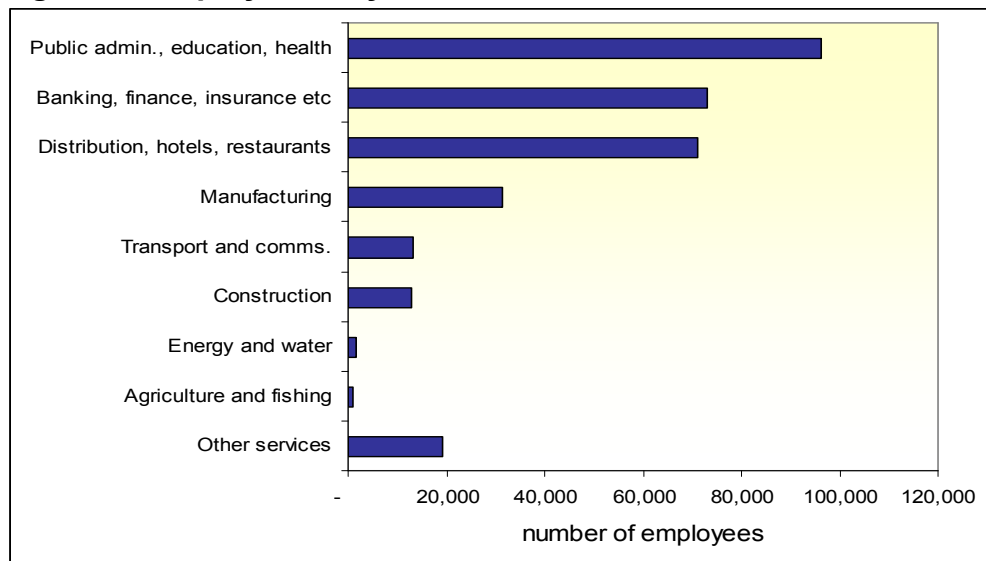
Source: Annual Business Inquiry

The Oxfordshire City-Region Enterprise Partnership (our Local Enterprise Partnership) was one of the first to be approved by the Government. This business-led partnership will provide the strategic leadership needed to remove the barriers to sustainable economic growth. Its focus will be on encouraging innovation and wealth creation in the key employment sectors for the future.

The partnership will play an important role in improving the coordination of investment in economic development, transport and infrastructure, housing and skills in the county. In this way it will support the creation of additional sustainable private sector jobs and help reduce Oxfordshire's dependency on the public sector for longer-term growth and prosperity.

The county's population is expected to continue to grow rapidly, and although the gap between earnings and house prices has fallen slightly since the start of the recession housing affordability remains a problem. Ensuring an adequate supply of affordable housing remains a key factor in encouraging economic growth, so although housing development has slowed in the short term our ambition remains to see planned major developments around Banbury, Bicester (including the North West Bicester eco-town), Didcot, Oxford and Wantage realised.

Traffic congestion continues to be a problem in some parts of the county, and the withdrawal of Government funding for improvements to the A34, Oxford's ring road and in central Oxford will make tackling this more difficult.

Although some areas in Oxfordshire are already benefiting from next-generation, superfast broadband, other parts of the county, particularly in rural areas, still do not have an acceptable level of standard broadband service. We will need to work with closely with public and private sector organisations and with individual communities to develop the right solution for Oxfordshire.

Figure 3: showing NEETs trend over time to be added

There are skills shortages in the county and despite low levels of unemployment overall there are particular concerns about young people aged 16-25 years who are not in education, employment or training. The good levels of attainment in Oxfordshire schools at A-level have been maintained, together with our best ever GCSE results and largest rise in 2010. We continue to be above national average in these areas and also now compare more favourably against our statistical neighbours, but there remains room for continued improvement.

Our Priorities for Action

- **Oxfordshire City-Region Enterprise Partnership –** we will support the partnership and through it work with the private and academic sectors to create the conditions that enable Oxfordshire's economic potential to be realised.
- **Infrastructure –** we will work across the public sector locally and with central government agencies to prepare an infrastructure plan, and through this will align investment priorities and decisions to achieve our shared ambitions for Oxfordshire and meet local needs. We will adopt a new approach to securing contributions to infrastructure from developers, and develop proposals that encourage innovative ways of using funds available to deliver necessary infrastructure in a timely way.
- **Broadband –** we will work with network providers to develop and implement a strategy for the roll out of Next Generation Broadband across the county, to improve access and support business growth.
- **Tackling congestion –** we will ensure that transport strategy supports the needs of the local economy and realises the opportunity to develop the potential of alternatives to car use where appropriate and suitable. We will reduce spending on public and community transport subsidies and non-essential areas of highways maintenance. However we will support communities through the Area Stewardship Maintenance Fund to enable them to help us address local priorities (such as replacement of non-priority road signs or grass verge cutting).

- **Young people –** we will work with schools in their lead role in improving educational attainment, and manage relationships in response to shifts in national policy. We will continue to focus on reducing the number of young people that need to be taken into care and will create an innovative early intervention service based in seven hubs across the county, designed to provide real focus on those children, young people and their families in most need.
- **Skill levels –** we hope to work with others to link adult skills provision to the needs of the local economy, reducing the number of people not in education, employment or training (NEET). We will also expand apprenticeship provision, particularly among public sector organisations and local businesses.

# Healthy and Thriving Communities

Most people in the county think Oxfordshire is a good place to live, and people generally feel safe in their local areas. Levels of crime and anti-social behaviour in Oxfordshire are low, although perception of crime does not always reflect this.

Overall levels of deprivation in Oxfordshire are low and have decreased, but areas in Oxford City and Banbury still fall within the 20% most deprived areas in the country. There is still a need to address inequalities in life expectancy, health, outcomes for young people, levels of unemployment, access to services and housing in these areas.

Oxfordshire has a strong voluntary sector with over 3,500 community and voluntary groups and an above average number of regular volunteers so the county is well-placed to respond to the Big Society agenda. An increasing number of Oxfordshire communities are becoming involved in their future development by preparing community-led plans. However more needs to be done to encourage this in the more deprived areas of the county.

Oxfordshire residents enjoy above average life expectancy and the proportion of older people in the population is increasing, particularly in rural areas. This presents opportunities, as older people are more likely to be actively involved in their communities, carrying with them a wealth of knowledge and experience. However it will also increase demand for public services, including care (both in supported accommodation and in the wider community) and health care, and we will need to work across the public sector to meet this need effectively.

Figure 4: Oxfordshire population by age group, 2008 to 2033
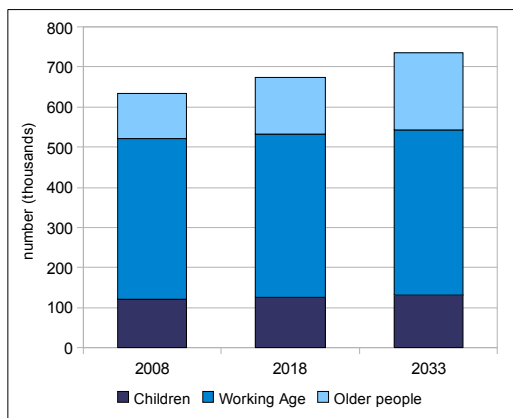
Source: Office for National Statistics, 2008-based sub-national population projections.

We will continue to support and protect the vulnerable by effectively targeting resources to those most in need, including young people, older people and those with disabilities. We will, as far as possible, continue to invest in prevention as a cost effective approach leading to better outcomes for people of all ages, by preventing

their needs escalating until they require more expensive and specialist service delivery.

We want to help people to maintain their independence, and encourage people to choose options in the community to meet their long term needs as opposed to a care home. We will prioritise investment in supporting the people who need it most and the people who care for them, and will work with colleagues in health to prepare for transfer of responsibility for public health to local authorities in 2013.

We continue to use intelligence about the way people access services and information to make sure the way they are provided reflects their needs and preferences where possible. Within the wider context of finding more efficient ways to deliver services, mapping patterns of usage has helped inform significant changes to our services for young people and our library services to focus on hubs in key areas of population in the county. We are keen to promote community-led models and alternative provision of services where viable, and will work with the organisations and groups to stimulate interest and support the development of these.

**Figure 5: Deprivation in Oxfordshire compared with the rest of England**
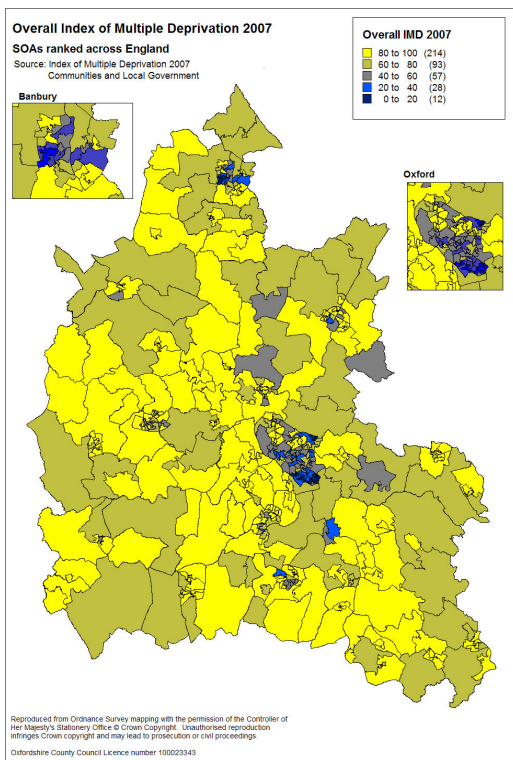
Our Priorities for Action

- **Big Society –** we will work with partners and voluntary organisations to encourage individuals and communities to take more responsibility, and will establish a Big Society Fund that will support local communities and organisations who wish to take on the running of local services. We will also focus on reducing barriers that prevent people doing more for themselves.

- **Closer to Communities –** we will develop our locality-focused approach to service planning and delivery, piloted in six priority localities during 2010/11.This will include reviews in each of 14 localities (see fig 6) to understand the overall impact of budget changes on local communities, find effective ways to mitigate the impact of service losses, promote community self help and identify opportunities to reduce duplication of property and services in an area.

Figure 6: Oxfordshire's Fourteen Localities
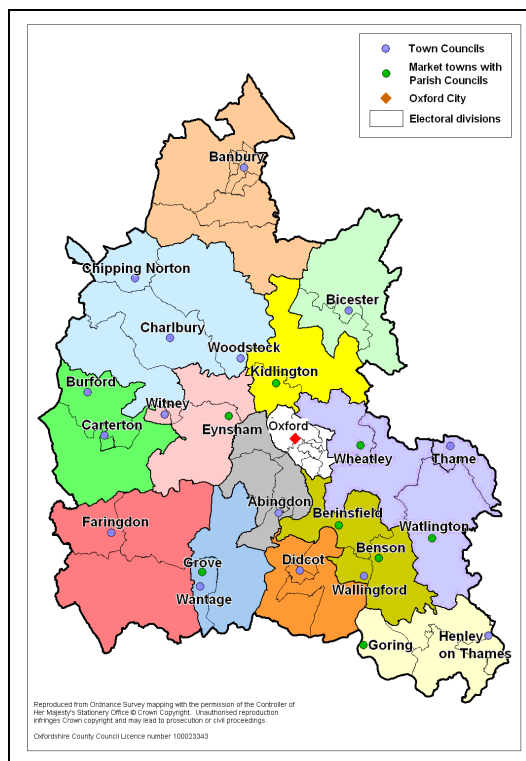
- **Breaking the Cycle of Deprivation –** we will continue to work in partnership to improve the quality of life in the most deprived areas of the county by promoting better engagement in education, employment and training; supporting the vulnerable and those with multiple and enduring problems; promoting healthy lifestyles and reducing health inequalities; reducing and mitigating the effects of child poverty.
- **Prevention –** we will continue to focus on preventing the need for more specialist services through early identification of problems and early intervention in adult and children's services. This will reduce the number of people who need support, the amount of support they need or delay when they need it. We will also focus on giving people choice in the way they lead their lives and how they secure the services they need to support them.
- **Safeguarding –** we remain committed to providing a high-quality, focused safeguarding service for vulnerable children and adults who either live or visit Oxfordshire. We will work closely with others to ensure the multiagency approach to protecting and safeguarding our most vulnerable is maintained to its current high standard.
- **Demographic change –** we will support the increasing number of older people and people with disabilities to live in their own home rather than a care home, by

increasing the availability of extra care housing and assistive technology to reduce the need for support staff. We will change the way day services for older people are provided, maintaining services in major towns but focusing on community initiatives and local decision-making about how best to support older people in their community. We will also introduce a mobile centre designed specifically meet the needs of older people living in rural Oxfordshire.

Environment and Climate Change

Oxfordshire has an attractive environment with beautiful and accessible countryside, including many areas of outstanding natural beauty and many places which are nationally or internationally important for biodiversity. The county also has outstanding architecture, including the Blenheim Palace world heritage site near Woodstock and over 1,000 listed buildings. The quality of Oxfordshire's natural and built environment makes it an attractive place to live and work and is important to Oxfordshire both as an economic activity in its own right and as part of the wider tourism offer, supported by an extensive public rights of way network.

**Figure 7: Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty**

Carbon dioxide emissions from Oxfordshire remain higher than the South East and national average, but there have been overall reductions in recent years. We will continue working with partners to build on the behavioural change achieved so far in reducing, recycling and reusing household waste, thus further reducing the amount sent to landfill and minimising our financial liabilities.

We are embedding energy saving and carbon reduction into our business processes across the council, as reducing our energy consumption will also result in financial savings. We will continue to invest in energy efficiency measures in our buildings, including schools, and introduce measures to reduce our demand for energy. We will also continue to support the development of the eco-town to the north west of Bicester, focusing on extending the benefits and influencing changes in behaviour across the town.

Since the flooding across the county in July 2007 a range of mitigation measures have been put in place, but with around 12% of the county lying within the floodplain

there will always be a significant number of properties at risk of flooding in Oxfordshire.

Figure 8: Total carbon dioxide emissions, 2005 to 2008
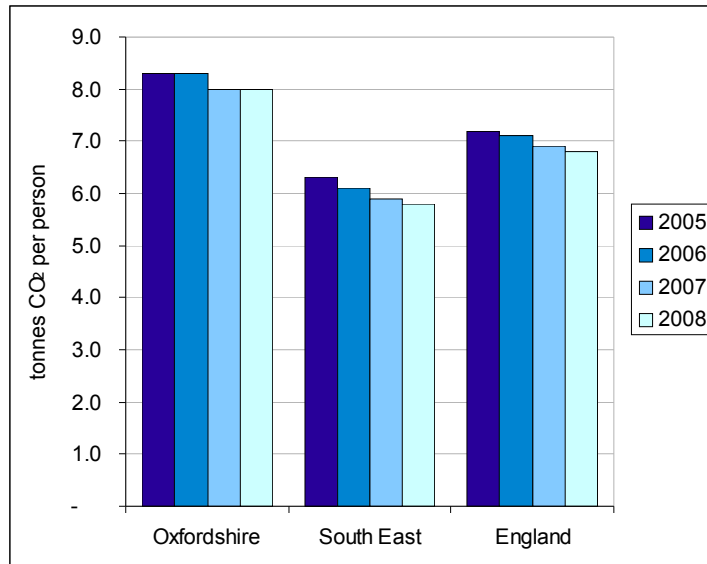
Source: Department for Energy and Climate Change

Our Priorities for Action

- **Increase energy efficiency and reduce emissions –** we will realise the financial benefits of reducing the council's emissions, in the process reducing the impact of energy tax. We will turn off nearly half of our streetlights between 12.30am and 5.00am, but will not adversely impact on safety for the community or road users. We will explore the income generating potential of installing equipment to produce renewable energy on council sites and buildings, and will encourage others to follow our example in reducing energy use and emissions.
- **Waste management –** we will work across the public sector to increase rates of recycling and reduce the amount of household waste sent to landfill. We will invest in new household waste recycling centres close to the major urban areas, and close those that have reached the end of their permissions. We will invest in new disposal facilities to convert waste to energy, and work with our partners to ensure our investment is complemented by other councils investing in improved kerbside collection schemes.
- **Protecting the environment –** we will make sure Oxfordshire's natural resources are used as effectively as possible and minimise the impact of economic growth on the environment. We will implement a climate change adaptation action plan to manage the impact of extreme weather events, and ensure planning applications for mineral extraction reflect the needs of the local economy. We will work with partner organisations, volunteers, community groups and local communities to protect and enhance the natural environment, and maintain the rights of way network as an important part of the rural economy.

Measuring our progress

For each priority identified in this plan we have included some specific actions that we intend to take and measures of success for each target (see pages XX to XX). We will report progress against these to the Cabinet on a quarterly basis to monitor how well we are doing in delivering our priorities and take action to improve performance where needed.

Our quarterly performance management process and the management of the Council's significant risks are now part of a single process, ensuring they are being handled appropriately and that action is being taken where necessary. This allows us to challenge our thinking so that our strategic and service priorities continue to be both ambitious and deliverable.

Finance

To be added following budget sign-off in February – to include detail of:

- Spending plans
- Where money comes from
- Capital
- Link to Medium Term Financial Plan