

Strategic plan

2023 - 2025

Leading positive change
by working in partnership
to make Oxfordshire a
greener, fairer and
healthier county.



ABOUT THIS PLAN

Our strategic plan 2023 - 2025 sets out our vision to lead positive change by working in partnership to make Oxfordshire a greener, fairer and healthier county.

Oxfordshire is a county full of ideas, innovation, inspiration and an ambition to deliver. It is a great place to live, work, learn and raise a family.

The county has many strengths: It is home to world-class academic and research institutions; we have one of the strongest economies in the UK, with over 400,000 jobs and 30,000 businesses; and our vibrant rural and urban communities are supported by an active voluntary and community sector. These make Oxfordshire a very special place.

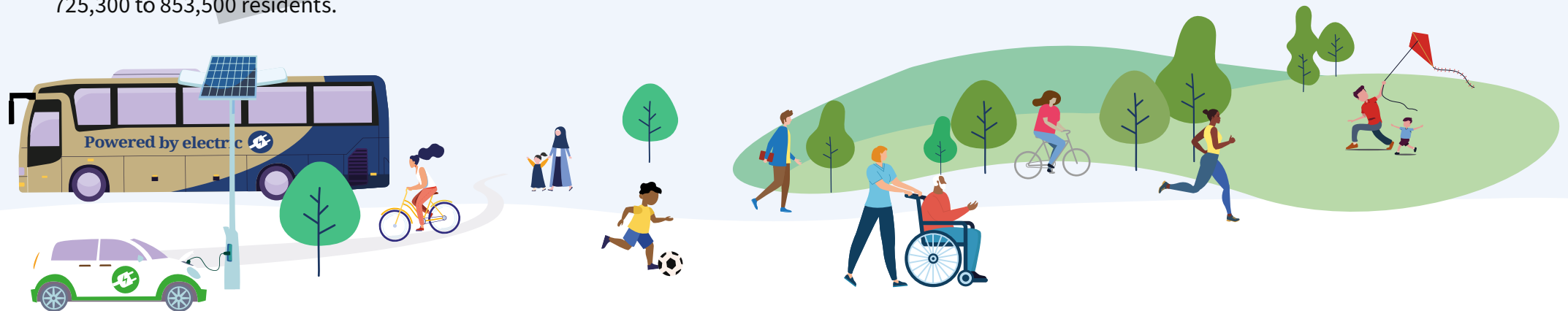
However, the county does face challenges, which our strategic plan needs to address. It has a growing population, which puts pressures on our services. Oxfordshire's population grew by 71,500 (10.9 per cent) since the last census in 2011, when it stood at 653,800 residents. This level of increase was above the growth seen across England (6.6 per cent).

Between now and 2030, Oxfordshire's population is expected to rise from 725,300 to 853,500 residents.

Oxfordshire's strong economy has also led to it becoming one of the most expensive places to live in the country. There is a shortage of affordable and social housing, and the growth in population has led to increasing congestion on our roads. The county includes ten neighbourhoods that fall within the 20 per cent most deprived in England.

We want to make sure that everyone in Oxfordshire can take full advantage of what the county has to offer. Our strategic plan sets out our vision and the nine cross-cutting priorities that we are committed to, and describes how we will deliver them.

A separate measures framework accompanies our strategic plan to help monitor and measure our progress. Both will be reviewed on an annual basis to ensure we are continuing to meet the needs of our residents.





LEADER'S FOREWORD

We want to make sure that everyone in Oxfordshire can take advantage of the opportunities that our vibrant, diverse and innovative county has to offer.

We have a vision to lead positive change by working in partnership to make Oxfordshire a greener, fairer and healthier county. This means working closely with our residents, partners and wider communities to make Oxfordshire the very best place it can be. Our vision for the county is centred around strong local communities, healthy places to live, and a zero-carbon economy that benefits everyone. Oxfordshire is a place focused on equality and inclusivity – it has to work for everyone.

Tackling climate change underpins all we do. The climate emergency is the biggest challenge the planet faces and we are committed to not only reaching our own net zero target as a council by 2030 but to enabling Oxfordshire to be carbon neutral by 2050 at the latest.

Investing in an inclusive, integrated and sustainable transport network is also key to driving climate action and tackling inequality. We understand that cars still have a role to play in our transport system, but we want to make it quicker, cheaper and safer for residents across the county to leave their cars at home and travel actively by walking or cycling or by using alternative sustainable modes of transport, such as buses. This will make our streets cleaner, safer, and less congested and help those who need to use cars to make their essential journeys.

We are focused on tackling inequality and disadvantage; working with our partners locally and speaking up for Oxfordshire nationally; investing in people; using our resources wisely; speaking up for Oxfordshire; and being inclusive and open.

Including everyone means providing inclusive services with equal access for all; working with communities to tackle disadvantage, inequality, public health and care issues; and providing an inclusive workplace with equality of opportunity. We want to enable people across the county to be happy, healthy, safe and successful, from getting the best start in life to ageing well and

remaining as independent as possible for as long as possible.

We also want to ensure that our decision-making process is inclusive and open to scrutiny. We are making it easier for communities to make their views known on the issues that matter to them so that as many voices as possible are heard.

This strategic plan is by no means the end of the process – it is just the beginning. We will review it annually, including our supporting policies, service plans and ways of working, to ensure that we deliver our priorities in line with our principles and the needs of our residents.

With our ambitious plans for climate action and tackling inequality, change is inevitable, which will mean doing things differently. That is why we need to build the foundations for positive change and action by working closely with our partners and our residents. This will enable us not only to protect the Oxfordshire that we all love, but to provide the greatest opportunities possible for every resident to live their best life.

Councillor Liz Leffman
Leader of Oxfordshire County Council


OUR NINE PRIORITIES

Our vision:

To lead positive change by working in partnership to make Oxfordshire a greener, fairer and healthier county.



1. Put action to address the climate emergency at the heart of our work



2. Tackle inequalities in Oxfordshire



3. Prioritise the health and wellbeing of residents



4. Support carers and the social care system



5. Invest in an inclusive, integrated and sustainable transport network



6. Preserve and improve access to nature and green spaces



7. Create opportunities for children and young people to reach their full potential



8. Play our part in a vibrant and participatory local democracy



9. Work with local businesses and partners for environmental, economic and social benefit



THE CLIMATE EMERGENCY

Our strategic priority

Put action to address the climate emergency at the heart of our work

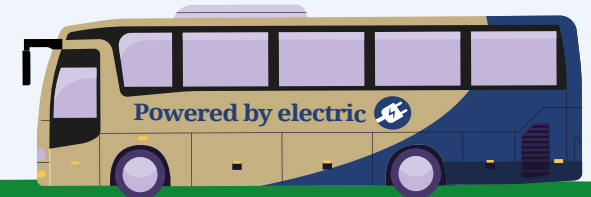
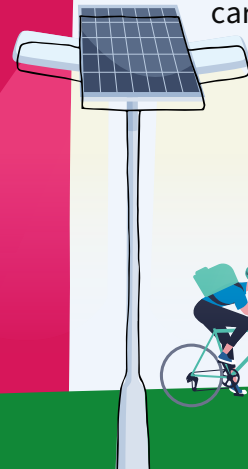
Our commitments

We will lead by example, setting ambitious targets to reduce our own carbon emissions and aligning our carbon net zero commitments to the principles of the Climate and Ecology Bill. Our environmental and planning ambitions will prioritise climate action and community resilience.

GREENER

Our objectives

- Implement together with partners the county's 'pathways to zero carbon' route map, a comprehensive plan for decarbonising Oxfordshire.
- Bring our own buildings, operations and supply chains to net zero by 2030, and support the retrofit of residential homes to improve energy efficiency.
- Accelerate work on supporting biodiversity and nature recovery in parallel with adaptation to climate change, including potential impacts of extreme weather and supply chain disruption.
- Support community and business activity to cut carbon emissions and accelerate a shift to a resilient and locally focused zero carbon economy.
- Support and promote a shift towards active travel (walking, cycling and use of public transport), reducing the need for private cars and accelerate the transition to electric vehicles by expanding charging capacity across the county.
- Work with partners to continue to build a greener, more resilient and fairer renewable energy network.
- Deliver our LED street lighting replacement programme to further reduce the energy, visual and environmental impacts of street lighting.



Our strategic priority

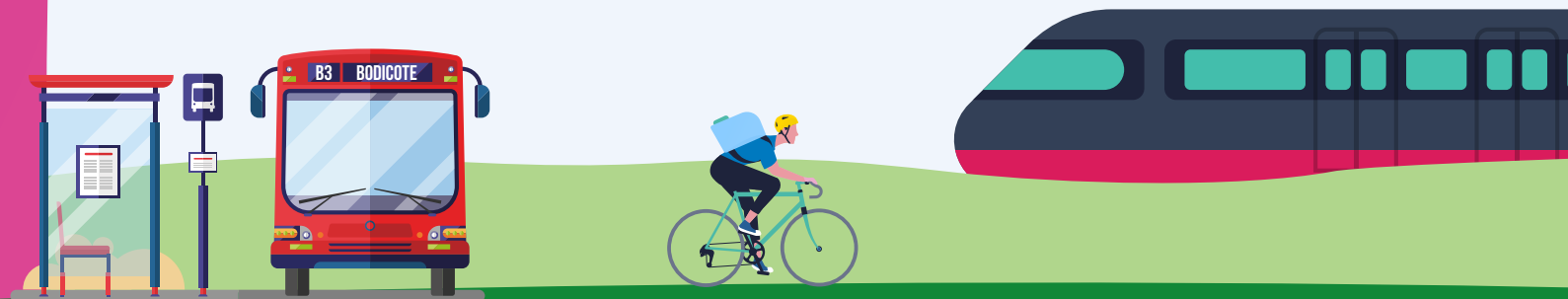
Invest in an inclusive, integrated and sustainable transport network

Our commitments

We will create a transport network that makes active travel the first choice for short journeys and invest in public transport to significantly reduce our reliance on car journeys. In areas of planned housing growth, we will prioritise active and public transport over road capacity for cars.

Our objectives

- Prioritise active travel and public transport on the existing and planned highway network to support healthy lifestyles and address inequalities in transport.
- Develop and approve priority local transport and connectivity plan part 2 — area travel plans.
- Deliver our commitments within the bus service improvement plan and enhanced bus partnership.
- Develop and implement a plan for improved strategic routes for freight, including exploring rail and reducing large vehicle movements on non-strategic roads.
- Deliver the countywide 20mph programme in line with our agreed policy.



NATURE AND GREEN SPACES

Our strategic priority

Preserve and improve access to nature and green spaces

Our commitments

We will work with partners to provide safe, clean and green spaces across the county that support the physical and mental wellbeing of our residents. We will take action to protect and increase biodiversity, supporting nature recovery, in both rural and urban environments.

GREENER

Our objectives

- Support and enable the activities from Oxfordshire's community action groups to improve local environments and make nature more accessible.
- Develop a countywide nature recovery strategy, including a tree and woodland plan that involves taking part in the Queen's Green Canopy programme, and support the development of a new local nature partnership for Oxfordshire.
- Improve the amount and distribution of accessible and safe natural green space within Oxfordshire in conjunction with partners.
- Ensure our public rights of way network is safe and effectively maintained.



INEQUALITIES

Our strategic priority

Tackle inequalities in Oxfordshire

Our commitments

We will work with our partners and local communities to address social, economic, health and educational inequalities focusing on those in greatest need. We will seek practical solutions for those most adversely affected by the pandemic. We will support digital inclusion initiatives that give our residents the skills, connectivity and accessibility to our services and provide alternative options for those who cannot access our services digitally.

Our objectives

- Address the drivers and impact of disadvantage through practical plans delivered with partners to create a more inclusive and sustainable Oxfordshire.
- Work with those communities most at risk of poor health, gathering insight to understand the causes of poor health and developing funded action plans to improve residents' health.
- Implement the delivery plan for Oxfordshire's digital inclusion strategy together with partners, including how assistive technology can support vulnerable groups to access services and lead a better quality of life.
- Provide technology to improve processes around signposting, self-assessment and information about sources of help for local residents.
- Deliver support programmes to help mitigate the impact of ongoing rises to the cost of living, including launching a crisis fund to support those in most financial need.
- Address local health inequalities through the establishment of a Health Inequalities Forum for Oxfordshire within the new integrated care system.



LOCAL DEMOCRACY

Our strategic priority

Play our part in a vibrant and participatory local democracy

Our commitments

We are committed to taking decisions in an open and inclusive way. We will engage and listen to Oxfordshire residents. We will be open to scrutiny and regularly provide progress updates. We will put the impact on the climate and future generations at the heart of decision making. We will manage our own resources carefully.

Our objectives

- Build greater confidence in our consultation and engagement processes by clearly describing how residents' feedback will be used and where it has helped shape policy or decision-making.
- Provide regular opportunities for residents to engage in open dialogue with cabinet members, including Oxfordshire Conversation Q&A events.
- Improve our approach to equality and climate impact assessments, ensuring that we set out the effects of our decisions on particular groups of residents.
- Demonstrate the contribution of each scrutiny committee to the development of policy and decision-making through the publication of an annual report.



FAIRER

LOCAL BUSINESSES AND PARTNERS

Our strategic priority

Work with local businesses and partners for environmental, economic and social benefit

Our commitments

We will help Oxfordshire become a recognised centre of innovation in green and sustainable technologies. We will use our purchasing power for environmental, social and economic benefit and ensure that our pandemic recovery planning supports sustainable job creation.

Our objectives

- Work with partners, including the Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership (OxLEP), to enable long-term job creation for local businesses through apprenticeships and business support.
- Promote career pathways in health and social care for local people and encourage those who are looking to change their careers to start their own enterprises in the sector.
- Work with suppliers to maximise additional social and environmental value, as part of our progressive procurement policy and development planning processes, which will benefit local communities.
- Facilitate research and collaboration between businesses, the universities, OxLEP and our health and local authority partners to maintain Oxfordshire as a centre of innovation, turning ideas into real-life solutions in areas including transport, climate, energy and healthcare.

FAIRER



HEALTH AND WELLBEING

Our strategic priority

Prioritise the health and wellbeing of residents

Our commitments

We will work with the health and wellbeing board and our partners to deliver and support services that make a vital contribution to our residents' physical and mental wellbeing. We will support the wellbeing of those in our communities who have been affected, physically and mentally, by COVID-19 and will continue to support our volunteers and the voluntary sector.

HEALTHIER

Our objectives

- Lead on an update to the Oxfordshire health and wellbeing strategy, which includes: implementing the domestic abuse strategic action plan, combatting the harm caused in local communities from illicit drug use, making Oxfordshire smoke free by 2025, promoting better mental wellbeing and preventing self-harm and suicide.
- Maximise access to the opportunities provided by libraries, museums, nature and green spaces and other services to support the health and wellbeing of residents.
- Provide a long-term support offer for our voluntary and community sector partners through the implementation of the voluntary and community sector strategy, enabling a strong, diverse and vibrant voluntary and community sector in Oxfordshire.
- Address worsening rates of unhealthy weight in Oxfordshire, including addressing a range of underlying factors that cause this trend.



CARERS AND SOCIAL CARE

Our strategic priority

Support carers and the social care system

Our commitments

We will engage nationally to push for a fair deal for the funding of social care. Locally, we will support carers, including young carers, and help those who want to live independently. We will work with communities, in collaboration with the health and social care system and voluntary sector to explore new ways to provide services. We will focus on preventative services, helping people to stay active and supported at all stages of their lives.

HEALTHIER

Our objectives

Champion strengths-based approaches across the health and social care system to reduce demand and ensure resources are used as effectively as possible:

- Invest in assistive technology and apps which promote independence and enable self-assessment where appropriate.
- Work with service users and providers to find new ways to promote self-directed support, increasing choice and control for individuals.
- Help people to live independently and support themselves through personal and local facilities, using the Oxfordshire Way approach.
- Facilitate access to resources across communities through social prescribing and other referral routes that divert demand away from statutory services.
- Focus resources on areas of high deprivation to tackle social isolation and reduce health inequalities.
- Co-produce with carers a refreshed all-ages carers strategy for the health and social care system, which improves carers' wellbeing, and invest in practical solutions to help carers maintain their caring roles.
- Co-produce a refreshed workforce development strategy that addresses challenges around recruiting and retaining social care workers, focusing on outcomes for our residents, evaluating what we do well and what we can continue to improve.
- Prepare for care quality commission assurance, working with residents and partners to triangulate evidence and further embed continuous improvement.



CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

Our strategic priority

Create opportunities for children and young people to reach their full potential

Our commitments

We will support all our children and young people, and their families, to achieve their very best and to prepare them for their future. This includes safeguarding and supporting those more vulnerable and with additional needs. We will continue to work with partners to provide help early so children and families are less likely to be in need.

Our objectives

- Support the emotional mental health and wellbeing of children and young people by increasing the number of interventions in schools and places which young people frequent.
- Expand the range of provision for young people and increase take-up in areas of high deprivation.
- Deliver our children's home programme to provide more places in Oxfordshire.
- Increase activity that supports pupils with special educational needs and disabilities to have their needs met in mainstream school settings and deliver our special school capacity expansion programme.
- Work with partners to increase early help, ensuring that children's needs are met earlier.
- Support families to care for their children at home where it is safe to do so, integrating assessments and support in the community to prevent children needing to come into the care system.
- Respond to the findings of our newly established Education Commission.

HEALTHIER



WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP

Ways of joint working developed during the COVID-19 pandemic are helping the council and its partners to respond swiftly and comprehensively to complex and urgent new challenges facing our communities.

Tackling the cost of living crisis

Working with our local authority partners and the voluntary and community sector, we will continue to bring forward new initiatives to support our most vulnerable residents during the ongoing cost of living crisis. By ensuring that funding is used as close to communities as possible and collaborating with our partners, we are making our money go further and maximising the benefit for residents.

Welcoming displaced Ukrainian families

We will continue to support those who have sought refuge from the war in Ukraine and help them integrate into our communities. We will also continue to support the many local households who have so generously opened their doors to those in need. With partners, we have established a dedicated joint team to oversee our response to the government's Homes for Ukraine programme and are working to ensure that those who wish to remain in Oxfordshire in the long term can do so.

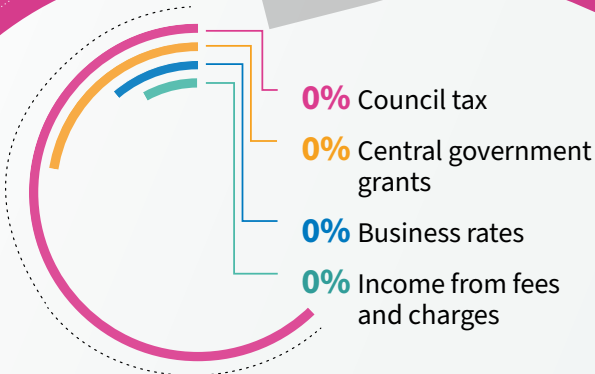


COUNCIL FUNDING AND SPENDING

Where the money comes from

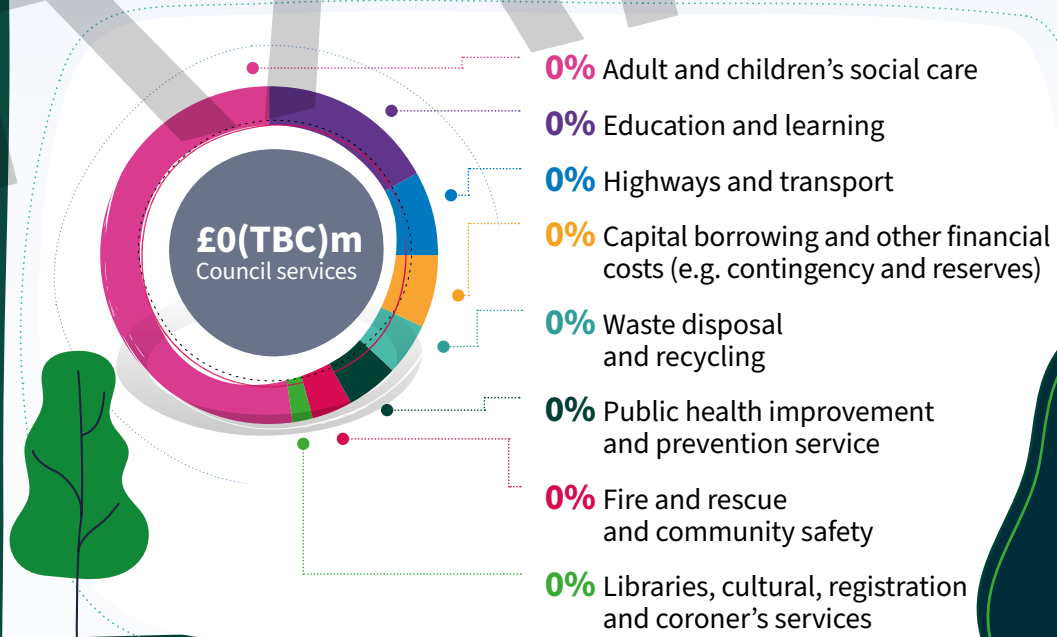
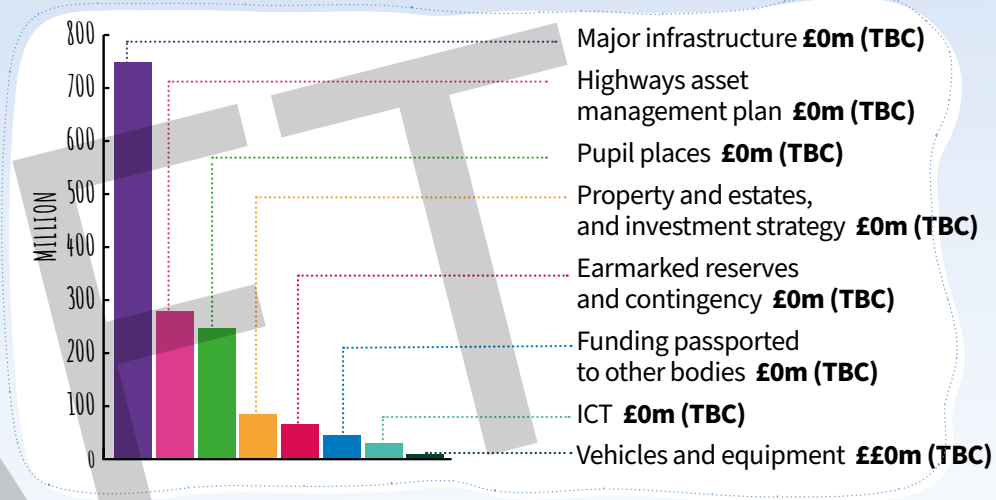
For 2023/24, xx per cent of the county council's funding for services will come directly from council tax, with the rest coming from charging for services and government grants.

This has increased steadily over the last ten years as central government has cut grants to local government. In 2010/11, 28 per cent came from council tax.



What we spend on council services

In 2023/23, the council will spend £0(TBC) million on services – our gross expenditure budget. In addition, we will also spend £0(TBC) million on maintained schools, which covers teachers and running costs, and comes directly from the government.



The figures below show broadly how we will spend our budget on services in 2023/23.

All data to be updated as part of Council tax leaflet 2023/24 prep – mid Feb 2023

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To find out more about how you can take part in local democracy by asking questions or making statements at council meetings, visit: oxfordshire.gov.uk/council

You can apply, book, find, report and pay for a range of services on the county council's website: oxfordshire.gov.uk

LET'S TALK

Have your say in consultations about changes to council services or policies at: letstalk.oxfordshire.gov.uk

SIGN UP

For monthly news and updates from across the county, sign up to Your Oxfordshire and get the latest direct to your inbox. oxfordshire.gov.uk/newsletter

