



**Chief Executive's Office**  
(incorporating Cultural Services)

**Business Strategy**

**2013/14 – 2014/15**

## Introduction

2013/14 will be the third of the four-year directorate business strategies. These were approved by Council in February 2011 and included savings of £119m to be achieved over the period 2011/12 – 2014/15. These are being achieved by reconfiguring services to establish a smarter, leaner and more cost effective operating environment, whilst at the same time reshaping services to fit the changed local and national policy environment. Funding for demographic and other agreed pressures was also built in.

While there have inevitably been some changes, the strategies are being delivered as planned with the majority of the original savings expected to be achieved. £27m remains to be delivered in 2013/14 and 2014/15 and is planned to be delivered in line with the Medium Term Financial Plan.

Changes to the funding of local government from 2013/14 and new pressures identified since the strategies were originally agreed mean there are now some changes to the savings required in 2013/14 and 2014/15. This revised strategy reflects the updated position and incorporates the £27m remaining original savings and changes that will be agreed by Council in February 2013.

New strategies will be developed as part of the Service & Resource Planning process for 2014/15 and will take into account the Government's next Spending Review.

## Directorate Statement

This business strategy document is designed to outline how the Chief Executive's Office incorporating Cultural Services intend to continue to implement their business strategy over the next two years period. The document is split into three parts:

- i.) An introduction as to the general vision, context and objectives;
- ii.) Details of the financial changes, service scope, statutory minimums and impact of service changes for the services within the Chief Executive's Office;
- iii.) Details of the financial changes, service scope, statutory minimums and impact of service changes for cultural services.

The total combined pressures/additional funding and savings include those agreed by Council in February 2011 and February 2012 as well as the proposed new pressures and savings that are listed below and also included in Annex 3.

Year on Year	2013/14 £m	2014/15 £m
Pressures & Additional Funding	0.106	-0.245 <sup>1</sup>
Savings	-1.259	-0.213

The directorate has identified the following additional pressures and savings for 2013/14 and 2014/15.

#### **Additional Budget pressures identified**

**14CEO8** – Archive Service – to comply with National Archives Office requirements

#### **Additional Savings identified**

**14CEO1** – Reduction in Audit Fee

**14CEO2** – Reduce Subscriptions

**14CEO3** – Remove budgeted contribution to Change Fund

**14CEO4** – Remove budgeted contribution for “Big Society”

**14CEO5** – Reduce Oxford Inspires Budget

**14CEO6** – Reduce Organisational development budget – recognising reduced staffing numbers

**14CEO7** – Reduce Staffing and office costs from CEO Office. Includes cessation of funding for Multi-Agency Network for Tackling Racially Aggravated Harassment Project (MANTRA).

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<sup>1</sup>This relates to one-off pressures that fall out at the end of 2012/13.

## Context

The focus of the Chief Executive's Office is on successfully delivering the Council's Business Strategy, supporting directorates through significant change.

The past twelve months has seen some teams (Cultural Services and Projects Team) move from Social and Community Services into the Chief Executive's Office which has seen it grow in size without an increase in overall staffing levels in the organisation. The focus of Cultural Services is to deliver, develop and promote services provided by the Council throughout the county.

The Chief Executive's Office has supported directorate colleagues in a number of areas where issues have arisen as a result of the scale of the changes being delivered by providing essential Finance, Human Resources, Legal and policy advice. In addition to supporting the directorate changes the Chief Executive's Office has been delivering a number of new initiatives.

The Chief Executive's Office consists of four small units (Corporate Finance, Human Resources, Law & Governance and Strategy & Communications) plus the Chief Executive's Personal Office and Cultural Services which includes library, museums and history services.

The Chief Executive's Office three primary functions remain:

- Provide a framework within which the Council can effectively manage its planning and regulatory arrangements.
- Challenge, review, and improve the organisation's effectiveness.
- Provide the organisation with specialist support functions e.g. Legal, Human Relations, Finance, Communications. Oxfordshire Customer Services is also involved in the delivery of some of these services.

The Office supports directorates to achieve the council's overarching goal to ensure 'A Thriving Oxfordshire', by maximising growth, enhancing the environment and sharing the benefits of growth as widely as possible and deliver the objectives of

- World Class Economy
- Healthy and Thriving Communities
- Environment
- Efficient Public Service

## Broad Approach

Because of the nature of the services provided most of the Chief Executive's Office budget is allocated to staffing costs, therefore the business efficiency strategy has largely focused on reducing staff numbers. However in some areas e.g. legal work for child protection, demand is increasing and it would be unwise to reduce resources in these areas. In consequence our business efficiency has been based on the following:

1. A search for improved productivity and cost effectiveness in all areas of activity. Where benchmarks exist, e.g. CIPFA's analysis of Legal Services, they demonstrate that we have effective and relatively low cost provision.
2. On-going reshaping of communications & engagement activities to bring together disparate directorate resources into a corporate unit. This is providing significant savings, which will appear in service directorate budgets rather than the Chief Executive's Office budget. It will also enable our communications activity to be better coordinated, improving its impact.
3. Recognition that the Council's business strategy will, in the short to medium term, increase the pressure on Human Resources and finance support and therefore protecting capacity and expertise in these areas will be important.
4. Recognition that support services need to meet the demands and expectations of service directorates who rely on the expertise from legal, finance, strategy, communications and human resources staff.

Further opportunities for selling services to other authorities or sharing costs will be explored over the next twelve months.

## Corporate Finance & Internal Audit

### Current Service Activity

Corporate Finance & Internal Audit provides the following functions:

- **Strategic financial planning, accounting and advice** - provide corporate leadership of the finance function, including setting the budget, Medium Term Financial Plan and Capital Programme, monitoring against these in year and reporting the outturn position and accounts within the authority and externally. Lead on corporate and professional standards, financial management processes and technical financial advice.
- **Treasury Management** – provide day to day and long term management of the Council’s cash flow and debt portfolio.
- **Finance Business Partners** – provide a strategic client role in ensuring that financial controls and processes are working effectively within directorates. Management Accounting teams in Oxfordshire Customer Services support the Finance Business Partners to carry out this role and provide challenge and support to budget holders and senior managers within directorates.
- **Internal Audit** - Provides independent assurance, opinions and advice on systems of internal control across the Council (and also to Thames Valley Police Authority and Buckinghamshire County Council).
- **Pension Fund Investment** - management of the investments of the Oxfordshire Pension Fund. The staff are funded from the Pension Fund.

### Statutory minimum

Section 151 of the Local Government Finance Act 1972 requires that every local authority should make arrangements for the proper administration of their financial affairs. The Chief Finance Officer has responsibility for the administration of those affairs. The Accounts and Audit Regulations 2011 sets out the requirement for internal audit.

**Progress to date**

Plans to deliver the savings in the Business Strategy remain on track and unchanged from that agreed in February 2011. There is an increase of 5.3 fte from the previous year as a result of restructuring. Finance Business Partners have been transferred from Oxfordshire Customer Services to the Corporate Finance team to provide greater synergy between the strategic planning, monitoring and outturn activities. In addition there has been a 0.9 fte increase in the Pension Fund Investment team to manage separate bank account for the £1bn Pension Fund.

Further restructuring savings planned in the existing Medium Term Financial Plan for the Corporate Finance team are expected to be achieved.

For Internal Audit the strategy for delivering the planned savings is through the operation of the collaborative arrangement with our existing partners operating a single internal audit function, and to re-engineer our existing processes in order to reduce the management overhead on each audit. The current Internal Audit plan is for 1,200 days on assurance based work. This will reduce in 2013/14 by a further 100 days, in line with the original strategy, so that in year four the assurance days will have reduced by 378 days, or 25%, but the total cash saving is 30%.

For 2012/13 there has been a significant reduction in external audit fees, achieved through outsourcing the Audit Commission's in-house Audit Practice and internal efficiency savings within the Commission. The scale fee has reduced by £0.097m to £0.147m (40% reduction), £0.070m more than the saving built in to the 2012/13 MTFP. These lower fees are fixed for five years.

**Impact on service users and communities:**

Reduced ability to respond to financial events, new and emerging risks and to provide support, advice and assurance.

**Impact on other council services:**

Reduced ability to respond to financial events, new and emerging risks and to provide support, advice and assurance.

**Capital implications:**

None

## Human Resources

### Current Service Activity

- **Strategic HR** - Defines, develops and communicates a comprehensive employment framework for all major aspects of work and employment. This includes:
  - **Policy development** – includes implementation in partnership with OCS
  - **Professional advice** – includes business partner role
  - **Corporate Employer role** – with key activity around employee relations
  - **Workforce analysis** - includes reporting.

Key activity continues on driving down staff numbers and costs in partnership with service managers through close management of the establishment process as we continue to deliver the people elements of the Business Strategy. Since the launch of the Business Strategy in April 2010 there has been a 25% reduction in establishment and a 23% reduction in staff employed FTE (as at 30 September 2012, excluding schools). There were also significant corporate savings achieved through a time limited local agreement to changes in terms and conditions in 2011 – including reduced redundancy compensation multiplier, freeze on increments and reduced mileage rates. This agreement comes to an end on 31 March 2013 and work is underway to negotiate a new agreement to come into effect on 1 April 2013.

- **Organisational Development** – Drives organisational effectiveness by ensuring that the Council has a skilled workforce capable of fulfilling statutory duties. This includes:
  - **Performance management** – appraisal, career development
  - **Workforce planning** – change management, key skills
  - **Learning & development** policy and planning
  - **Investors in People** – reputation, staff engagement

Key activity continues on reshaping management through assessment and on-going targeted development and change management support. In addition delivery of our senior leadership development programme ensures that the organisation has the necessary leadership in place to enable delivery of required service outcomes via an engaged and motivated workforce whilst embracing new ways of working as part of the Business Strategy.



**Statutory minimum**

The Council must comply with the following employment legislation -Employment Rights Act 1996, Equality Act 2010, Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992, Transfer of Undertaking Regulations, Safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults legislation, immigrant workers regulations, Working Time Regulations, European Directives, Statutory Instruments, Health and Safety at Work Act, various Pension Regulations. We are also bound by the variety of national conditions of service including the Green Book, the Youth and Community Workers, Teachers, Fire Fighters etc. This list is not exhaustive.

**Progress to date**

Restructuring planned in the existing Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) for Human Resources (HR) will remain. The pressure on all HR services, but particularly those dealing with employee relations and change management support, is increasing. The work we have previously done in terms of building strong relationships with the various unions puts us in a better position than some other local authorities (as evidenced by our success in delivering quickly a range of significant changes to terms and conditions) Any concerted strike action will test our resilience however.

Flexing of HR resources across the various teams has helped meet increased service demands to date and this will continue to be the approach over the coming year. Our Career Transitions Service has been further enhanced on this basis – moving to more direct resourcing activity.

There will also be significant policy and industrial relations pressures as the implications of new legislation and new ways of working roll out in the coming years and further reductions in HR numbers will need to be phased to enable sufficient support to the organisation in delivering the business strategy. Again we will look to flex numbers between (and across) the central team and Oxfordshire Customer Services to meet these demands

**Impact on service users and communities:**

There is a potential risk of failure to comply with legislation, industrial action and referrals to Employment Tribunal's may increase.

**Impact on other council services:**

Demands on HR staff are increasing so our ability to respond will be stretched over the short to medium term.

**Capital implications:**

There are none

## Strategy and Communications

### Current Service Activity

The Strategy and Communication Unit fulfils a role as the 'delivery unit' for the Council. In addition to managing corporate projects and supporting services to deliver change, the unit delivers the following key functions:

- Policy development and horizon scanning, including policy support to the Cabinet, Leader, Chief Executive and CCMT
- Corporate forward planning
- Corporate Service and Resource Planning Process
- Service Improvement Reviews
- Project Management of corporate priority projects
- Performance Management
- Voluntary Sector
- Research and Intelligence
- Oxfordshire Data Observatory
- Partnerships and localities, including the Military Community Covenant
- Change Management
- Scrutiny
- Risk Management
- Equalities
- Public Affairs and Media
- Internal Communications
- Consultation and Involvement
- Marketing

### Progress to date

The new management structure has been in place for a year and recent adjustments have seen the unit comprised of three teams; Policy, Research and Major Programmes and Communications. These teams were created to provide a series of policy and communications 'pools' to provide capacity and flexibility to deliver a broad strategy and communications function for the council at lower cost. 2012/13 has seen an increase of 11 fte from the previous year as Project Management staff have been transferred from Social & Community Services to provide project support across the whole organisation in line with strategic priorities, rather than just for Social & Community Services.

The restructure is now complete and small changes together with the cessation of the *Oxfordshire* magazine have delivered the required four year savings of £0.634m. It is proposed to continue support to the military in Oxfordshire through the Research and Major Programmes team. Stop Hate UK now provides a hate crime reporting system for Oxfordshire under a contract with the Oxfordshire Community Safety Partnership, replacing the MANTRA service in August 2012. The specific funding for MANTRA has therefore been removed.

### **Statutory minimum**

There are legal obligations in relation to:

- Ensuring the council is compliant with the Equality Act 2010
- Contributing to the Governance of the Council (scrutiny committees are supported by the Unit)
- Communication (Council tax leaflet, publicising elections, notice of meetings etc.) There is a Code of Practice governing local authority publicity.
- Use of printed materials under Copyright law

### **Pressures**

None

### **Impact on service users and communities:**

Internal service users may find that we have less capacity to support their policy development needs and project requirements. Following restructuring last year the move to 'pools' of officers means that staff work more flexibly across traditional functional boundaries. External service users are not expected to be affected. Stop Hate UK is providing a better service than the previous local project so represents an improved service for communities.

### **Impact on other council services:**

We expect to be able to manage the impact of staff reductions on other council services, but we will need to introduce stronger 'clienting' arrangements which more clearly define what support services require and for how long. Stop Hate UK, which the Safer Communities Team are involved in, has replaced the MANTRA project so the contribution from the centre is no longer required.

### **Capital implications:**

None

## Personal Office & Change and Big Society Funds

### Current Service Activity:

- Corporate Leadership (Chief Executive, Assistant Chief Executive and PA/administrative support)
- Corporate subscriptions (Local Government Association etc)
- Change Fund
- Big Society Fund
- Support for Chairman
- Support for Lord Lieutenant

### Statutory minimum

Head of the Paid Service and Section 151 officer are statutory roles

### Progress to date

The savings have been delivered through the reduction of two senior posts totalling £0.165m. It is proposed that from 2013/14 the Change fund and Big Society Funding will be removed from base budgets. Subscriptions to publications will be reviewed in 2013/14 and it is anticipated that a saving of £0.025m can be achieved with no visible impact.

### Impact on service users and communities:

Removal of the base budget for the Big Society Fund means that there is no guarantee of funding being available to communities to support local projects. Communities will be able to bid to other grant making bodies for grant funding.

### Impact on other council services:

The impact on other services is considered to be limited.

## Law & Culture

### Scope of Service Activities

#### Democratic Services

The service provides full committee and administrative support, clerking, minuting and governance advice to Council, Cabinet and relevant committee meetings. Also provides support to Councillors and Co-Opted Members, including development and training, register of interests and payment of allowances. The service also provides full electoral support for the Returning Officer and manages the proper administration of all schools' admission, transport and exclusion appeals.

#### Legal Services

Provision of a comprehensive legal advice, representation and assistance service to the Council and all Directorates on all legal matters affecting the Council, including attendance and representing the Council in the Supreme Court, Court of Appeal, High Court and in all other lesser courts including Magistrates and Tribunals. The main legal teams are Child Protection; Property; General Litigation; Contracts & Environment who work for Directorates under agreed Service Level Agreements.

#### Governance

Ensuring the Council's compliance with all public law requirements, including lawful decision making, Member and Officer Codes of Conduct, oversight of the Council's Constitution policies and procedures, Freedom of information and liaising with the Local Government Ombudsman in relation to complaints.

#### Registration & Coroner's Services

Provides a full registration service for all births, deaths, marriages and civil partnerships within Oxfordshire. The Coroner's Service investigates deaths that appear violent, unnatural, sudden of unknown cause or occurring in legal custody (including all military repatriations). The service ensures the delivery of civil partnerships, citizenship ceremonies, Nationality Checking Service and Settlement Checking Service. Delivery of a new national service called Tell Us Once to the bereaved is a new area of responsibility.

#### Cultural Services

- **Library Service** - The Library Service provides access to books, information and knowledge, to support the recreational, cultural and educational needs of those who live, work, and study in Oxfordshire. The current service provides a comprehensive countywide collection of books and other resources accessible to all to support reading, learning and literacy with targeted work to support children's and adult's reading, learning and digital skills.. The service provides and

manages the Rural Children's Centre on behalf of Children, Education and Families and two prison libraries on behalf of the Prison Service.

- **Museum Service** - The core responsibility of the Museums Service is the long term care and preservation of the County collection of Oxfordshire archaeology and history material – these collections are unique and represent the material culture of Oxfordshire over the last 5,000 years. The collections are used in a number of museums throughout Oxfordshire. There is a learning and outreach service which uses heritage and arts collections in schools and with community groups.
- **History Service** - The service preserves and makes available the historic documents, photographs, and printed resources necessary for the public to understand the history of Oxfordshire; it also forms the corporate memory of Oxfordshire County Council.
- **The Mill Arts Centre** - The Mill is a major cultural and community resource for Banbury and North Oxfordshire. As well as offering a wide range of arts and learning opportunities, the Centre is home to many groups and organisations. The Mill's operation is based upon a partnership approach including the Mill Management Committee and the District Council as well as the County Council. The Mill also has a service level agreement for Adult Learning which produces income for the County Council through the contract with the Skills Funding Agency

## **Statutory Minimum**

### **Democratic Services**

Local Government Acts 1972, 1974 (as amended) and 2000

### **Legal Services**

All legislation relating to Local Government, including children, education, social care, property, contracts and the environment.

Court Procedure Rules

Solicitors Regulation Authority Rules

Common Law

### **Governance**

Local Government and Housing Act 1989

Local Government Acts and Localism Act 2011

Data Protection Act 1998

Freedom of Information Act 2000

Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000

### **Registration & Coroner's Services**

Coroner's Act 1986 and Coroner's and Justice Act 2009

Marriage Act 1949

Marriage and Civil Partnership (Approved Premises) Regulations 2005

Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act 2002

Representation of the People Acts 1983 and 2000

Local Government & Housing Act 1989 and the Registration Services Act 1953

## **Cultural Services**

Library Service - Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964

Museums Service - Public Libraries and Museums Act, 1964

History Service -

- Public Records Act (1958)
- Local Government Act (1972). These Acts require the care of and provision of public access to public records (records of public bodies, health records and court records), and the records of local authorities (County, District and parish councils)
- Oxfordshire Records Office is the designated Diocesan Record Office for Oxfordshire under the Parochial Records and Registers Measure (1978)

The Mill Arts Centre – None



## Progress to date

### Democratic Services

Following the completion of the Local Government Boundary Commission consultation, there will be a reduction in the overall numbers of Councillors from 74 to 63 with an estimated saving of £0.068m. There will be a reduction in the members support budget due to reduced numbers.

### Legal Services

Legal Services is a trading unit and has increased the number of external clients to assist in income generation by undertaking legal work for district and city councils via the legal hub, and also other public bodies (including West Berks. Town Councils and Academies). We are using a new ICT system – IKEN to provide detailed information to our clients on the work we have undertaken for them. Reduced use of Counsel has been difficult to achieve during a period of increased reliance on specialist legal advice on key cases for the Council including Cogges Link, and a number of major Child Care proceedings and contractual contract disputes. Similarly the capacity to take on new external work has been limited in light of demand for advice on delivery on the Council's budget strategy.

### Governance

Strategy and Partnership Scrutiny Committee are undertaking a review of the governance arrangements of the Council and will be finalising its recommendations in the early spring of 2013.

### Registration & Coroner's Services

We continue to increase income generated from the registration services we provide. In the last year there has been a major change in both registration and coroners: the Registration Service started offering the 'Tell Us Once' service to the bereaved; and Coroner's is managing the repatriations of military personnel which has returned to Oxfordshire with additional government funding to cover costs..

### Cultural Services

- **Library Service** - Following a period of public consultation in 2011, the Cabinet agreed a recommendation that will see a shift in the balance of staffing in some libraries over a three year period.
    - 16 libraries have been designated Community Libraries. The County Council will reduce investment in staffing by 50%.
    - 5 libraries have been designated Community Plus Libraries. The County Council will reduce investment in staffing by one third.
- The County Council will continue to provide a fully supported infrastructure (building, ICT, book stock, qualified librarian support, self-service facility) to all 21 libraries. Implementation of self service to all community and community plus libraries

is on track to be completed by April 2013. It is assumed in the Medium Term Financial plan that full year effect savings will be achieved by 2014/15 nevertheless the library strategy approved by cabinet provides for implementation of these savings over a 3 year period and is on track to be completed by 2015/16. The Library Service are working closely with Friends Group and communities to enable the shift in the balance of staffing towards volunteer support and to enable all of these libraries to have a sustainable solution in place by the end of this period.

- **Museum Service** - The service will complete its restructure in 2013 which aims to maintain basic collection care; continue partnership arrangements with other museums throughout Oxfordshire; retain a learning and outreach service to schools and target groups and in particular in 2013 maintain/increase income for those services. The saving identified for the museum service in 2013/14 is set to come in the main from reducing the staffing in the Business Unit where the service trades its specialist curatorial, conservation and exhibition services. Income achieved in 2012/13 has put the Unit in a strong position to enable the service to continue through 2013/14. There is the potential for work from Soldiers of Oxfordshire (SofO) and through the ASPIRE partnership (see below).

The Museums Service is a partner in The Oxford ASPIRE Partnership with the University Museums which was named as one of Arts Council England's Major Grant recipients and will receive funding for a number of specified projects and a touring exhibition.

The running of The Oxfordshire Museum is now dependent upon the support of volunteers to maintain opening hours and supervise exhibition galleries.

- **History Service** - The creation of the History Service in 2011/12 brought together the Oxfordshire Record Office and Oxfordshire Studies on the one site at the History Centre in Cowley. 2013/14 will be a year of consolidation for those services as they seek to adapt working practices and complete various externally funded projects in partnership with the Oxfordshire Family History Society, Church of Latter Day Saints and Thames Valley Environmental Research Centre.
- **The Mill Arts Centre** - It is the Councils' aspiration to move to an arrangement which gives the Mill Management Committee direct control of the Centre's funding and activities, enabling a planned reduction in funding of £90,000 from April 2013 to be achieved. Consultation with OCC employed staff on the proposal which would result, if agreed, in a new staffing structure under direct management of the Mill Management Committee will be concluded early in 2013.

## **Impact of Service Changes**

### **Democratic Services**

Reduction in the number of members in the new council (May 2013) may increase work loads of members both within their communities and their Council work including attendance at meetings. The outcome of the Governance Review is not yet known so implications cannot yet be considered.

Freedom of Information (FOI) – service directorates now undertake the direct liaison and management of responses to applicants with the FOI and Complaints Team providing advice and support. The complaints policy itself has been reviewed to increase efficiency by managers, ensuring complaints are properly considered. The Monitoring Officer retains liaison responsibility with the Local Government Ombudsman. The reduced FOI Team still provide a weekly update of requests so that senior managers are informed of current requests.

### **Legal Services**

Overall savings for the Service have been achieved whilst at the same time providing an essential service to other Directorates in effecting major change to service provision and staffing.

### **Governance**

There has been a reduction in support and oversight of the FOI and complaints systems but this has not led to unacceptable delay and continues to be supervised by the Monitoring Officer. Sufficient support has remained within the team to ensure appropriate advice and monitoring of compliance is available and maintained.

### **Registration & Coroner's Services**

The Coalition Government are currently considering a proposal to require Local Authorities to appoint Medical Examiners to examine all causes of death that have occurred within the County that are not subject to Coroner's investigation. The precise terms, remit and cost of this are not fully known. Repatriations have increased workload for Coroner's and the Tell Us Once service has increased workload for Registration – but both of these are being managed within existing resources.

**Cultural Services**

- **Library Service** - A detailed Service and Community Impact Assessment was produced as part of the consideration and agreement to the Library Strategy approved by Cabinet.
- **Museum Service** - The aim of these agreed proposals has been to minimise the impact on service users and communities. This has been achieved.
- **History Service** - The aim of these agreed proposals has been to minimise the impact on service users and communities. This has been achieved with improved collections care at the History Centre.
- **The Mill Arts Centre** - This proposal for savings is not expected to have any impact on the provision of a full arts and learning nor require any changes in the other facilities that it offers community users.