

Chief Executive's Office

Business Strategy

Incorporating Cultural Services

2014/15 – 2017/18

Draft subject to Council's agreement in February 2014

Introduction

This is a new four-year business strategy for 2014/15 to 2017/18. It builds on the previous strategy agreed in 2011 which included savings of £119m for the council which have been 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.

However the hard work does not stop here as cuts in government grant and restrictions on council tax increases put further pressure on the council's budget. In addition there are new service pressures that have been identified which need to be managed. The latest financial outlook means that our Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) 2014/15 – 2017/18 that sits alongside this strategy proposes a further £64m savings in addition to the £31m already planned.

This new strategy reflects the updated position and incorporates the pressures and savings in the existing MTFP together with the new budget proposals that will be agreed by Council in February 2014. The detail of these pressures and savings is set out in the resources to deliver our priorities section.

This business strategy both drives and is driven by our strategic approach as set out in the Council's Corporate Plan and determines our performance management framework.

Chief Executive's Office Directorate Overview

The focus of the Chief Executive's Office is on working with members to set the direction of the council and support the organisation through a period of significant change. Registration & Coroner's and Cultural Services also form part of the Directorate's responsibilities.

Delivering the Council's corporate priorities

The Chief Executive's Office provides a number of key support functions to enable directorates to achieve the council's overarching goal of '**A Thriving Oxfordshire**'. This includes:

- working closely with the Leader and Chief Executive on the strategic direction and priorities of the council;
- providing the governance framework for the council and supporting members to make democratic decisions;
- supporting service delivery through provision of HR, legal, finance services and providing policy trouble-shooting capacity and data when required;
- delivering internal audit and setting the risk and performance management framework for the council
- communicating key messages through the local media and within the council;
- working in partnership with local and national stakeholders, and ensuring that we position the county council effectively.

Registration & Coroner's and Cultural Services (including Libraries, Museums and the History service), along with our work with the voluntary and community sector play an important role in the delivering **Thriving People and Communities, and Thriving Economy**:

- Attracting wedding business into Oxfordshire and proving citizenship ceremonies to welcome our new citizens
- Undertaking Coroner's investigation and inquiries into sudden or unexplained death and providing support to families through this difficult time.
- Targeting work to support and increase children's, young people's and families' literacy and learning
- Contributing to cultural tourism and creative educational programmes and connecting communities to their heritage

Services and Priorities

The Chief Executive's office consists of four small units, (Corporate Finance, Corporate HR and Communications, Law and Governance and Policy) plus Registration & Coroner's and Cultural Services (which includes Library, Museums and History Services).

The **Policy Team's** current service activity includes:

- Working with the Cabinet and County Council Management Team to articulate the council's strategic direction
- Providing policy and trouble-shooting support to council directorates to support delivery of key priorities and support the service and resource planning process
- Working with stakeholders to External Affairs
- Cabinet and County Council management team support and forward planning
- Setting the framework for the council's approach to working at a local level in communities
- Leading work with the voluntary and community sectors
- Research and intelligence team, providing key evidence to support service delivery
- Performance management
- Service and resource planning (with finance)
- Supporting scrutiny and cabinet advisory groups
- Chief Executive's personal office, including support to the Chairman of the Council and the Oxfordshire Lieutenancy

Corporate Finance (including Internal Audit and Insurance) lead on the council's key financial processes including working with members to set the budget, Medium Term Financial Plan and capital programme. The service provides support, advice and challenge to high risk areas, projects and programmes, together with a lead advisor on financial matters for each directorate. As

part of our statutory requirement we are required to have an officer responsible for the arrangements for the proper administration of its financial affairs, this is the Chief Financial Officer. Internal Audit provides a level of assurance by managing the internal governance and reporting, this also includes managing risk.

Corporate HR ensures that the council complies with employment legislation and has a skilled, motivated and informed workforce. Current service activity includes:

The **Strategic HR** team which defines, develops and communicates a comprehensive employment framework for all major aspects of work and employment. Key areas are policy development, professional advice, Corporate Employer and workforce analysis.

The **Organisational Development** team drive organisational effectiveness by supporting effective change management ensuring the council has a skilled workforce capable of fulfilling statutory duties. Key areas are performance management, workforce planning, learning & development and Investors in People

The **Communications** team agree a communication strategy with County Council Management Team and Cabinet who are the decision making body of the council at the start of each year. Key areas are media and public relations, internal communications, marketing, consultation and digital.

Legal Services provides comprehensive legal advice, representation and assistance to the council and all directorates. This includes:

- Attendance and representing the council in the Supreme Court, Court of Appeal, High Court and all other lesser courts (including Magistrates and Tribunals)
- Provide legal advice on contracts, developer agreements, highways and property matters.

The **Governance** team provides administrative support to Councillors and co-opted members and electoral support for the Returning Officer who has to oversee the electoral process. The team are also responsible for:

- Effective and compliant governance arrangements including compliance with all public law requirements and Member/Officer codes of conduct
- Oversight of the Council's constitution policies and procedures
- Managing the proper administration of Schools admissions appeals, exclusions appeals, and transport appeals.

- Co-ordination of the Freedom of information process
- Liaising with Local Government Ombudsman in relation to complaints

The Registration and Coroner's Service provide a statutory service that serves people at key times of their lives including:

- Full Registration Service for all births, deaths, marriages and civil partnerships within Oxfordshire. This service also:
- Delivers civil partnerships, citizenship ceremonies, Nationality Checking Services, Settlement Checking Service, and additional celebratory services such as naming ceremonies.
- Delivers the national Tell Us Once service to the bereaved
- Investigates deaths that appear violent, unnatural, sudden, of unknown cause, or occurring in legal custody; as well as military repatriations through the Coroner's Service.

Cultural Services provide opportunities for people of all ages to participate in and enjoy the arts, to acquire new skills and knowledge through:

- **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 Museum Service** enables the long term care and preservation of the County collection of Oxfordshire archaeology and history material.
- **The History Service** preserves and makes available the historic documents, photographs, and printed resources necessary for the public to understand the history of Oxfordshire.

How our services are changing

The Chief Executive's Office is changing to reflect the needs of the organisation. We are reducing the number of staff, reducing the internal spend along with reducing the services we provide to the rest of the organisation and reducing some of the grant funding. This means in the future we will be providing a more flexible and responsive service looking at self-service approaches. We will also be reviewing statutory and non-statutory services and the charges we make for these.

Managing our performance

The successful delivery of the business strategy will be monitored on a quarterly basis by the Performance Scrutiny Committee and Cabinet. Progress will be published on the Council's website.

A series of performance indicators will be used to assess our performance in delivering the priorities set out in this strategy. Performance Indicators are currently being developed by directorates and will be considered by the Performance Scrutiny Committee.

Once agreed directorate performance indicators will form an appendix to this strategy.

Resources to deliver our priorities

Draft Medium Term Financial Plan - Chief Executive's Office

	2014/15 £m	2015/16 £m	2016/17 £m	2017/18 £m
Base Net Budget	27.4	27.9	27.6	27.2
Virements Agreed in 2013/14	1.6			
Inflation*	0.6			
Previously Agreed Pressures	-0.6			
Previously Agreed Savings	-0.2	-0.1	-0.1	
New Savings Proposed	-1.0	-0.2	-0.3	-0.1
New Pressures Identified	0.1			
Proposed Budget	27.9	27.6	27.2	27.1

*Inflation only allocated to directorates in 2014/15

Details of Previously Agreed and Proposed Budget Changes

2013/14 Net Budget £27.387m (including Cultural Services - £13.340m)

Reference	Type of Budget Change	Detail	2014/15 £'000	2015/16 £'000	2016/17 £'000	2017/18 £'000	Total £'000
		<u>Chief Executive's Office & Business Support</u>					
13CEO5/ 14CEO9	P	Big Society Fund - In February 2013 it was agreed an additional £0.330m of one-off funding would be added to the £0.300m of one-off funding agreed in 2012/13 (for 2 years) bringing the total Big Society funding available in 2013/14 is £0.630m. The total of Big Society funding from 2011/12 to 2013/14 including base budget funding (which has been removed from 2013/14) is £1.970m	-630				-630
14CEO5	S	Reduce Oxford Inspires budget	-25				-25
14CEO7a	S	Reduce staffing and office costs from CEO Office		-100	-100		-200
15CEO1	NS	Cut funding to Oxford Inspires (retaining contribution to Experience Oxfordshire)	-25				-25
15CEO2	NS	Public Health staff costs met in full from Public Health	-25				-25
		Total Chief Executive's Office & Business Support	-705	-100	-100	0	-905
		<u>Human Resources</u>					
15CEO3	NS	Reduce Human Resources Establishment by 2fte	-42		-42		-84
15CEO4	NS	Reduce spend on Learning & Development delivery	-170				-170
		Total Human Resources	-212	0	-42	0	-254
		<u>Corporate Finance and Internal Audit</u>					
12CES7	S	Internal Audit - Collaboration with Buckinghamshire County Council	-35				-35
15CEO5	NS	Reduce Corporate Finance establishment by 1.5fte	-74				-74
		Total Corporate Finance & Internal Audit	-109	0	0	0	-109

O - Previously Agreed One-Off Investment
P - Previously Agreed Pressure
S - Previously Agreed Saving
NS - New Saving Proposal
NP - New Pressure Identified

Details of Previously Agreed and Proposed Budget Changes

2013/14 Net Budget £27.387m (including Cultural Services - £13.340m)

Reference	Type of Budget Change	Detail	2014/15 £'000	2015/16 £'000	2016/17 £'000	2017/18 £'000	Total £'000
		<u>Law and Culture</u>					
12CES11	S	Reduce number of council members from 74 to 63 following the 2013 county council elections	-11				-11
12CEP1	P	Transfer of coroners officers from Thames Valley Police - existing budgetary provision (09CC31) will be inadequate when the Council has to fully fund the Coroner's officers in 2014/15.	56				56
SCP3	P	Variation in cost of prudential borrowing	-1				-1
12COS8/ 13SCS10	S	Previously agreed Library Service savings to be implemented through community library model and reduction in vehicle replacement reserve contribution	-130				-130
12COS3	S	Efficiency savings from joint service provision at History Centre	-12				-12
15CEO6	NS	Increased Registration Charges and activity	-210				-210
15CEO7	NS	Coroners - review and renegotiate contracts and agreements	-90				-90
15CEO8	NS	Withdrawal of grant scheme for the improvement of village halls and other community buildings	-59				-59
15CEO9	NS	Withdrawal of grant to The Mill Arts Centre and phased reduction of grants to Pegasus Theatre, Oxfordshire Youth Arts Partnership and Oxfordshire Visual Arts Development Agency	-16	-31	-31	-80	-158
15CEO10	NS	Increased efficiencies to be achieved by Library Service through further review of management support, book procurement, supplies and services		-63	-187		-250
15CEO11	NS	Phased reduction in funding to Victoria County History			-10	-15	-25
15CEO12	NP	Increase in childcare court fees - volume and cost	120				120
		Total Law and Culture	-353	-94	-228	-95	-770
		<u>Strategy and Communications</u>					
15CEO13	NS	Remove 4fte (vacant posts) and reduce Communications spend	-87	-50	-50	-50	-237
15CEO14	NS	Take out military and local grants (Locality Grant to Choose Abingdon and Refugee Resource Grant)	-175				-175
		Total Strategy and Communications	-262	-50	-50	-50	-412
		Total Chief Executive's Office	-1,641	-244	-420	-145	-2,450

O - Previously Agreed One-Off Investment
P - Previously Agreed Pressure
S - Previously Agreed Saving
NS - New Saving Proposal
NP - New Pressure Identified