

Annex 2: Updating the Corporate Plan for 2021/22

Executive summary

1. This paper provides a progress report on updating the council's corporate plan for 2021/22 and sets out proposed key themes and issues to be included within the annual refresh of the plan.

Background

2. Oxfordshire County Council's Corporate Plan sets out the council's strategic priorities and key programmes of work for the period 2020-2024. It describes the council's vision for thriving communities for everyone in Oxfordshire and outlines how that vision will be achieved, based around three 'thriving' themes: people, communities and economy.
3. The Oxfordshire 2020-24 Corporate Plan is refreshed annually in line with the budget-setting process. Following public consultation and the formal setting of the budget, an outcomes framework – comprising performance measures and key activities – is developed. This outcomes framework is supported by service plans and strategies. Progress is thereafter reported on a monthly basis.
4. In light of the ongoing coronavirus pandemic and the government's Spending Review 2020, which saw a one-year financial settlement for local authorities rather than a three-year settlement, the council has identified a number of changes and developments to be included within the corporate plan and to be reflected within the outcomes framework for 2021/22.

Core priorities

5. The six core priorities set out in the current corporate plan are listed below. These will be refined for 2021, taking into account the key themes and developments identified in paragraph 6 of this annex.
 - i. We listen to residents so we can continuously improve our services and provide value for money.
 - ii. We help people live safe and healthy lives and play an active part in their community.
 - iii. We provide services that enhance the quality of life and protect the local environment.
 - iv. We strive to give every child a good start in life and protect everyone from neglect.
 - v. We enable older and disabled people to live independently, and care for those in greatest need.
 - vi. We support a thriving local economy by improving transport links to create jobs and homes for the future.

Key themes and developments for the 2021/22 refresh of the corporate plan

6. In addition to Oxfordshire County Council's commitment to these six core priorities, it is proposed that four themes are strengthened within the corporate plan to reflect local priorities and the national context:

- a) **Climate action:** the 2020 Climate Action Framework, which was approved by Cabinet in October 2020, describes how the council will become a climate active council; operate at net-zero carbon by 2030; support maintained schools to decarbonise their estate; work with our suppliers to green our supply chain; and enable a net-zero Carbon Oxfordshire by 2050. It is proposed that the ambitions in the framework should be more clearly articulated within priority 3 of the corporate plan, and the plan should reflect the commitment to this agenda across all services.
- b) **Youth offer:** the impact of the pandemic has been particularly significant on the mental health and emotional wellbeing of young people. The council is proposing to expand its youth offer in 2021, with additional investment in the provision of sustainable long-term approaches, and a review of how the wider partnership of the voluntary, community and public services can best provide support. It is proposed that priority 4 of the corporate plan should be amended to reflect this work.
- c) **Addressing inequalities:** COVID-19 has shone a cruel spotlight on the health, social and economic inequalities that exist in the county. The corporate plan should reflect the council's enhanced focus on reducing inequalities and providing greater support to the most vulnerable in our society in the wake of the pandemic. It should also reflect the council's commitment to providing inclusive services, workplaces and communities, equitable access to services, and equality of opportunity, as set out in the Equalities, Diversity and Inclusion framework, *Including Everyone*, which was approved in October 2020.
- d) **COVID Recovery Strategy:** the Restart, Recover, Renew Strategy outlines the council's approach to post-COVID planning and recovery. It is proposed that priority 6 of the corporate plan should be amended to reflect the council's commitment to supporting local economic recovery from the pandemic as expressed in the recovery strategy. It is recognised that recovery and renewal will encompass more than the local economy; as such the social, health, community and cultural themes associated with recovery will be recognised within the various corporate plan priorities and the outcomes framework.

Service and workforce planning

- 7. The action plans contained within the Climate Action Framework and Including Everyone Framework will be captured within service plans for 2021/22, demonstrating the commitment and golden thread approach to these key programmes. The Insight, Policy and Climate Action teams are working together to develop the 2021/22 service plans and translate them into SMART measures and outputs, which will be captured as part of the outcomes framework.
- 8. In addition to departmental service plans and strategies, the council remains committed to its redesign, transformation and modernisation plans. As such, the proposed budget includes savings targets associated with modernisation and planned investments in areas such as digital transformation and IT to underpin improvement and development. The council recognises that its workforce is its greatest asset and during 2020 embarked upon an ambitious organisational development and employee engagement programme called 'Delivering the Future Together'. These programmes of work underpin the delivery of the council's priorities and objectives, supported by learning and workforce development.

Outcomes framework and performance management reporting

9. The six overarching priorities and the proposed four key themes and developments will be reflected in the outcomes framework for 2021/22, which will set out the performance indicators and measures to enable us to assess and report on our performance against these priorities.
10. The council will continue to report on the extent to which we are meeting our targets in our monthly business management and monitoring reports. Any revisions to the outcomes framework will also be communicated via those reports in the usual way. A quarterly workforce report is received by Cabinet and covers matters relating to organisational development programmes and staffing matters.
11. The business management and monitoring reports are joint reports containing the progress made against the corporate measures, leadership risk updates and finance reporting. These reports are reviewed by the council's senior management team, Performance Scrutiny Committee and Cabinet on a monthly basis.
12. In the final quarter of 2020/21, the council's strategic risks will be reviewed in line with the new budget and corporate plan and an updated leadership risk register will be published in April 2021.