

The logo consists of a green speech bubble with a white outline. Inside the bubble, the words "Talking" and "Oxfordshire" are written in white, stacked vertically. The bubble has a tail pointing downwards and to the right.

Talking  
Oxfordshire

**Talking Oxfordshire**  
**Report of the public consultation**  
**December 2015**



# 1. Background and approach

## Introduction

1. This is the report on the consultation exercise called Talking Oxfordshire run by the council before taking difficult decisions about making further budget savings. The public were able to comment on savings options via the council's website, at public meetings and in writing. Several stakeholder groups and partner organisations also took part.
2. All the submissions were read and analysed. This report summarises the responses to show strength of feeling on different saving options, and the concerns raised. The analysis is grouped by council directorate – children's services, adult care etc.
3. The report is provided to members of the council for consideration at the key points in the decision making process: scrutiny of the budget options by Performance and Scrutiny Committee; Cabinet when it agrees its budget saving proposals, and Council when it sets the budget.
4. It is notable that virtually all the comments received expressed concerns about the impact of savings options. This is in line with most consultation on service changes, where people generally only respond if they have strong views about a proposal.

## About Talking Oxfordshire

5. The council has to set a budget every year. As part of this process, residents, services users and stakeholders are consulted, with their views formally reported upon and taken into account by all councillors as part of the budget setting process.
6. The 2015 Talking Oxfordshire budget consultation was designed to inform people about the council's financial situation and to seek public and stakeholder opinion at an early stage in the 2016/17 service and resource planning cycle and to inform the service changes that might flow from that. The consultation was set against the following backdrop:
7. As government reduces funding to local government, the county council has to continue to make budget savings. At the same time demand for our services is increasing, partly due to our ageing and growing population, and increasing demand for social care

8. The council has already saved – or has plans to save – a total of £292 million between 2010/11 and 2017/18. We now think we will need to save up to £50 million more in the four years between 2016/17 and 2019/20. As a result, county council services will be reduced and some may stop altogether. The services left will be targeted at those who really depend on them – particularly children at risk of abuse and neglect and adults who cannot look after themselves.

### **Consultation approach**

9. The Talking Oxfordshire consultation ran between Tuesday 20 October and Monday 30 November 2015, and comprised of:
  - Explaining the council's financial situation and budget pressures using a consultation document, budget savings options document and feedback form that was made available in all public libraries and from council offices on request . A summary leaflet was also produced and handed out at all the public meetings.
  - An online consultation comprising written background information, video content, a presentation, and a structured feedback form.
  - Three public meetings held in south, central and north of the county, including live tweeting from the meeting to give people who could not attend a taste of the proceedings.
  - One stakeholder meeting for parish and town council delivered by Community First Oxfordshire (formally Oxfordshire Rural Community Council) focussing on rural issues.
  - Giving people other opportunities to engage in writing via email, letter, petition or social media.
  - Raising the profile of the consultation through a range of direct and indirect communications to ensure as many people of possible were aware of the exercise and how to have their say
10. People were asked to give their views on one or more of the 95 savings options identified across all areas of the council (excluding public health, which has a ring-fenced grant from government). They were also invited to comment on the future priorities for the council and council tax levels.

### **Analysis and reporting**

11. All the responses to this consultation have been read and the online data has been cleaned to remove duplicate responses and incomplete responses. The table below summarises the response pattern across all channels. It should be noted however, that as the council sought to make Talking Oxfordshire an open and inclusive process, and as such we did not place any limitations on

how people could respond. With this in mind, it is likely that many people will be double counted in this table.

<b>Activity</b>	<b>Number</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Online responses including data entered forms</li> <li>• Letters/emails/hard-copy forms, including those received after 30 November from service users/members of the public               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Including formal responses from stakeholder organisations</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	3,631 (across all three online forms, including those data entered by the council) 480 86
<b>Petitions</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Proposed closing of the health and well-being Centres in the County (16 November 2015)</li> <li>• Everyone Deserves a Chance (Proposed closure of health and wellbeing centres)</li> <li>• Don't cut care (Age UK Love later life, part of a national campaign)</li> <li>• The Elms health and wellbeing centre Witney</li> </ul>	204 signatures 964 signatures 1,100 signatures 64 signatures
<b>Public meetings</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Booked a place at Oxford public meeting event</li> <li>• Booked a place at Banbury public meeting event</li> <li>• Booked a place at Wallingford public meeting event</li> </ul>	126 people 102 people 120 people
<b>Attended parish and town council event</b>	106 people attended representing 75 councils

12. As this consultation was predominantly qualitative in nature, undertaking a detailed analysis of what people have said is a lengthy process. In the time allowed, a high level analysis has been undertaken, which aims to give a summary of the potential impacts of the savings options for those which were felt to be most important to people and the general strength of opinion on specific issues. In parallel to this process, an indexed deposit of consultation responses is being collated for all councillors to review. This will ensure that all councillors can read at first hand all the comments and representations being made.

13. Following the publication of this report, officers will continue to analyse the data at a directorate level to inform Service and Community Impact Assessments (SCIAs) and to support the continued development of the budget proposals.

## **Supporting communications**

14. Talking Oxfordshire was publicised throughout the county via posters in council buildings, digital communications (website and social media), paid for advertising in local newspapers (paper and online), free listing services, and PR (media releases etc.).

15. In addition the council also directly informed representatives from the following stakeholder groups about the consultation:

- All county councillors
- All district council Chief Executives and Leaders for them to cascade
- All parish and town councils
- All Oxfordshire's MPs
- All public sector partners within Oxfordshire
- Department for Communities and Local Government
- Key voluntary sector partners
- Service delivery partners
- Infrastructure organisations in the voluntary and charity sector
- Lord Lieutenant for Oxfordshire
- All members of the council's Oxfordshire Voice Citizens' panel

16. Below is a broad summary of the communications activity and reach it achieved:

### **Website**

- The main budget consultation landing page had 4,667 page views
- The Talking Oxfordshire news page had 908 page views

### **Twitter**

- 121 tweets, including replies to conversations
- 418 clicks to the consultation pages
- 157 retweets from residents and organisations
- @OxfordshireCC received an average of 6.3k impressions per day during the consultation period, and is followed by 18.2k twitter users.

### **Facebook**

- 4 Facebook posts, including 3 which received advertising
- Total reach (including paid promotion) – 21,114 accounts
- 22 likes, 20 comments and 29 shares

### **Media**

- Briefing on the budget attended by three media outlets, and covered by six media outlets

## 2. Main Findings: Written consultation responses

1. This section of the report provides a summary of the comments expressed via the consultation forms, letters, emails and petitions at a directorate level. It makes reference to responses from stakeholders, which are summarised in more detail in part 5 of this report.
2. The two key questions were asked:
  - How do you think these savings options might impact on people using the service and communities?
  - What level of Council Tax rise you would accept if it helped to protect front line services?
3. A third question was asked about the purpose and priorities of the council. This data is currently being analysed and will be used to inform the ongoing development of the 2016/17 Corporate Plan and will be reported on separately to this document.
4. In total 95 savings options presented by the council. 25 of these were identified by council officers as having no direct or immediate impact on the public and one was identified as having a positive benefit.
5. The council received over 3,000 representations from residents and services users in response to the 95 savings options presented. The table below summarises the number of savings options put forward by each directorate and a count of responses received in response to each. The clear majority of responses were negative in tone, objected to savings being made or expressing concern about the impact.

<b>Service area</b>	<b>Savings option</b>	<b>Count</b>
Adult social care	31	1,892
Children, Education & Families	13	373
Environment & Economy	27	609
Fire & Rescue Service	8	79
Libraries and Culture	2	599
Corporate Services	8	89
Corporate Measures	6	46

6. The most frequently commented on savings options (> 50 submissions) are presented in the table below. Many people chose to submit comments on a single savings option rather than several. This table is followed by a summary of the main themes arising for each council directorate. These have been written as standalone summaries that can be used by councillors at Scrutiny meetings in December.

<b>Reference</b>	<b>Savings option</b>	<b>Count</b>
LCS2	Cease funding of arts centres	385
SCS 21b (was SCS22)	Health and Wellbeing Centres	303
SCS22 (was SCS24)	Housing related support	278
SCS 21a (was SCS21)	Tier 2 Day Services	254
LCS1	Library Savings	214
SCS18	Planned support (known as warden control schemes)	198
CEF12	Early Intervention and Hubs/Children's Centres	96
EE23	Subsidised bus consultation proposals	89
SCS1	Prediction of demand for service	63
EE27	New household waste recycling centre strategy	62
SCS13	Intervention and prevention service - HIV	60
EE22	Rights of way	59
EE1	Patching work	55
SCS2	Land and Property	58
CEF13	Services for disabled children and families	53
SCS27	Intervention and preventative services	52
SCS15	Intervention and preventative services - Aphasia	51



## Adult Social Care

### Introduction

1. Oxfordshire County Council currently spends 32% of its budget on adult social care and this is the biggest individual area of spend excluding schools.
2. The council has a good track record over the last decade of investing in adult social care to cover increased demand.
3. Our future strategy will focus on our safeguarding responsibilities and on targeting services on adults who cannot look after themselves and those who cannot afford to pay for their own care. We will always support adults with an eligible care need and their carers and meet our legal obligations.
4. The strategy is to work ever more closely with the NHS and other partners to mitigate any savings that are adopted during the budget process. The council aims to build on a good track record of working closely with the NHS and others.

### Consultation

5. As part of the consultation feedback was sought on 31 saving options from the adult social care budget. The key question people were asked was: *How do you think these savings options might impact on people using the service and communities?*
6. The table below presents the title of the 31 savings options and the total number of comments received in response to these. Three options (SCS1, SCS3 and SCS23) were identified by the council as having 'no direct impact on the public' and one option SCS25, was described as having a 'likely positive' impact.

Savings Option	No. commenting
Prediction of demand for service	63
Land and Property	58
Care Homes	39
Prescription/retail model for equipment	29
Intervention and preventative services - Falls Service	35
Adult social care support for prisoners	13
Emergency response - redesign emergency response services	15
Carers - Carers Oxfordshire	27
Information and advice	22

Carers - respite	37
Extra care housing staffing and strategy - revised model of care	18
Extra care housing staffing and strategy – change in admission criteria	11
Intervention and preventative services –HIV	60
Land and property – print unit buildings	12
Intervention and preventative services – aphasia	51
Review of funding allocations to meet eligible care needs	47
New models of delivering care – social impact bond	26
Planned support (known as warden schemes)	198
Oxfordshire Support Fund	29
Review of contracts – Healthwatch	17
Tier 2 Day Services (Voluntary Sector provided day services)	254
Tier 3 Day Services (Health and Wellbeing Centres)	303
Transport to day services	27
Housing related support	278
Intermediate care beds	44
Intermediate care - Discharge Pathway	23
Intervention and preventative services	52
Adult Social Care Money management	18
Intermediate care	11
Carers – Carers charging	47
Carers – Carers grants	28
<b>Total comments</b>	<b>1,892</b>

7. Overall, 1,432 comments were received via the online form or on a hard copy form by the closing date and of these around 80% (1,147) were objecting or in opposition to the proposed saving option. In addition to this 460 emails/letters/hard copy forms were received an near majority of which were objecting to one or more savings options. The council also received four petitions.

8. Nearly all the comments were from service users and their relatives. A small number of stakeholder organisations responded specifically to the adult social care savings options.
9. The council's public sector partners (district councils, health and police) expressed concerns/raised points about the following options:
- **Cherwell District Council:** Tier 2 Day Services , Tier 3 Day Services and Transport to Day Services, Transport to day services, and Housing related support
  - **Oxford City Council:** Tier 2 Day Services , Tier 3 Day Services and Housing related support
  - **South Oxfordshire District Council:** Housing related support  
Emergency response - redesign emergency response services, Intervention and preventative services, Extra Care Housing
  - **Vale of White Horse District Council:** Housing related support
  - **West Oxfordshire District Council:** Tier 2 Day Services , Tier 3 Day Services, Transport to Day Services and Housing related support, Prescription/retail model for equipment, Intermediate care
  - **Oxfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group:** Tier 2 Day Services , Tier 3 Day Services, Falls Prevention Service, Intervention and preventative services, Equipment Review, Care Homes, Extra Care Housing Support and Land &Property and Intermediate Care
  - **Thames Valley Police:** Housing related support and Adult Social Care for Prisoners
10. The four most commented on savings options for adult social care with over 150 representations respectively were:
- SCS 21: Tier 3 Day Services (Health and Wellbeing Centres)
  - SCS 24: Housing related support
  - SCS 22: Tier 2 Day Services (Voluntary Sector provided day services)
  - SCS 18: Planned support (known as warden control)

**SCS 22: Tier 3 Day Services (Health and Wellbeing Centres), and**

**SCS 21: Tier 2 Day Services (Voluntary Sector provided day services)**

11. Taking into account signatures on petitions, the savings option relating to Tier 3 Day Services (Health and Wellbeing Centres) this was the most frequently commented on savings option across the entire budget consultation and was galvanised by active campaigning around individual centres. This includes three petitions with 1,368 signatures.

12. The Tier 2 Day Services Savings option (Voluntary Sector provided day services) also received a high volume of representations (254 in total) again as a result of active campaigning around some of the day services provided.
13. Comments on these savings options focussed on the potential negative impact of the day services being withdrawn, many giving a very personal view, including words on the value of the centres to themselves or their relatives. This included the role of day services in enabling people to stay independent for longer.
14. It was felt that this savings option would impact negatively on the general health well-being of vulnerable people including older people, people with physical and/or learning disabilities, people with long-term health conditions such as dementia, and carers. Many people agreed with the impacts identified by the council, especially the risk of increased social isolation (loneliness), increased hospital admissions, with falls being frequently cited and increased care home placements.

#### ***Illustrative quotes relating to Tier 3 Day Services***

*'...I had a stroke last year since then I have unable to leave my home without assistance. My weekly visit to the health and wellbeing centre is usually the only time I leave my four walls...'*

*..... 'If you shut this centre, most of the clients will see no-one, will not be able to go out, have nobody to talk to: Their health will deteriorate, they will be distressed and unhappy without seeing their friends. It's my opinion that it will cost a damn sight more money for extra hospital beds and carers etc. to cope with these people than it would to keep the centres open, plus the redundancy money for the staff!....'*

*"....Day Centres are a lifeline to those who attend. This is also two sided as it also offers respite/support to the Carer who care 24/7. If Centres were to close, the impact on Health and Social Services would triple. The money is well spent on a generation we owe much to....."*

### **Illustrative quotes relating to Tier 2 Day Services**

*'...Without the support of the October Club for the few hours my life and my father's would fall apart. It provides rest and care for the both of use. He would have to go into care permanently and my own health would deteriorate, the stress would be too much if it wasn't for the October Club....'*

*'...The Limes Club is very important to us. Because of our age many of us usually lead very isolated lives..... It is somewhere people can come who find things increasingly difficult, and who will for the rest of their life, who aren't going to get better; it is unique in that respect. It is very supportive'...*

*....'This service is an essential lifeline for my mother and we're sure that's true for others who attend.....'*

15. With many of these potential negative impacts in mind, around a quarter of respondents questioned the cost effectiveness of either savings option in the long-term to the council.

*'... increased number of hospital admissions and care home placements would, in the long run, cost more! (Moving costs from budget to budget!)...'*

16. With regard to Tier 3 Day Services, for the most part people did not focus on the council assisting the current services to become financially independent, ensuring people are aware of information and advice options or working with the voluntary sector to look at options. Where they did, this was with scepticism.

*'...This proposal rests on some heroic assumptions, that OCC can find other organisations able to run the services to the same standard. Or to lose the facilities, imperilling the mental and physical wellbeing of users and their carers. A good day centre offers re-ablement plus physical and emotional care; it encourages sociability and assuages loneliness. With Oxfordshire's growing population, and the particular increase in the numbers of the very old, I doubt the rationale. Loss of the splendid modern purpose-built Bicester Day Centre and its imaginative ethos would be a particular tragedy.....'*

### **SCS 24: Housing related support**

17. Housing related support was the third most commented on option for adult social care. The council received 278 representations about the housing related support savings option.

18. The comments received focussed on the potential negative impact of the funding being withdrawn. It was felt that this savings option would impact on the health and well-being of vulnerable people from a wide range of demographics. Comments were wide ranging and included cascading

pressures elsewhere to other statutory services such as to health and housing (as identified by the council) and in particular A&E admissions and mental health services. It was also felt that another negative impact may be a general increase homelessness and the visibility of homelessness in the county, in particular in Oxford. Prevalent mention was also given to the likely increase in the rates of antisocial behaviour and crime rates.

### ***Illustrative quotes***

*... 'these are vital services for people that need support. Without them people are much less likely to have and access better health and also enjoy and achieve in their lives. Without this support people are less likely to be successful in finding work and less able to deal with addiction issues. These services support the statutory sector especially where our clients have Mental Health issues. As a professional, it saddens me to see the struggles for people escalating and fearing that we will not be there to help...'*

*... 'These cuts will have a huge impact on people in Oxford; more vulnerable people will be on the streets, and less able to access support, meaning they will live more chaotic lives leading to more deaths, particularly in the winter months. There will be a big impact on the crime rate within the city and a vast increase in the visibility of homelessness within the city which will also impact the day to day lives of everyone.' ....*

*.... 'Removal of support from hostels and floating support services is in danger of turning the clock back 20 years or more with more people on the streets and fewer workers available to provide support, referrals and signposting. This, in turn, is likely to increase anti-social behaviour as well as pose a real threat to the health and wellbeing of very vulnerable adults. It seems counter-productive to be removing support from homeless people at exactly the point when housing is so difficult to access and homelessness is likely to increase.....'*

### **SCS18: Planned support (known as warden control schemes)**

19. The council received 198 representations about planned support savings option (known as warden control schemes). The significant majority of comments were received from service users or their carers on the back of direct communications from Housing organisations such as Sovereign Housing who actively informed customers of the consultation and encouraged them to respond using the online survey of a hard copy form that they provided.
  
20. It was felt that this saving option would impact negatively on the general health well-being of users of the service including older people and people

with physical and/or learning disabilities. People responded giving their personal experiences of the benefits they receive from their service.

***Illustrative quotes***

*'...The support officer calls on me weekly. I live on my own I look forward to the visits. The visitor is always cheerful and helpful with forms and advice. I would miss the visits very much....'*

*'...I find my support officer helps me no end and I think this is a very good service and do not want to see it end. No matter who visits me they are helpful and friendly and always give me help and advice. With my mental illness, I find it gives me peace of mind that someone is coming once a week and I can talk things over if I need to....'*

21. The impacts identified included the risk of increased social isolation (loneliness) and general sense of loss of something they have come to rely upon. A small number people questioned the cost effectiveness of this saving option, feeling that it could cascade pressures elsewhere on other health and social care services.

***Illustrative quotes***

*'The support officer is the only other human being I see on a weekly basis and is very helpful'*

*...'I am an elderly widow and welcome visits from the wardens. I feel that this would leave many of us, like myself, very vulnerable and lacking support if this did not continue'*

*'...cost should not be the only issue here, the impact on individuals and knock-on effect for care has to be considered....'*

22. Other savings options that received at least 55 representations were:

- SCS 1: Prediction of demand for service
- SCS13: Intervention and prevention services – HIV
- SCS 2: Land and property



## **SCS 1: Prediction in demand for services**

23. Sixty-three representations were captured in response to this savings option and despite it having been identified by the council as having *'no direct impact on the council, and that eligible care needs would continue to met in all cases'* a clear majority of the comments were negative. People were sceptical about the increase in demand not being as high as currently predicted or felt that demand it too difficult to predict, whilst others felt it unrealistic that a savings could be made.

### ***Illustrative quote***

*'...The stringent eligibility criteria now in place do not allow for accurate prediction of real and significant need or the fluctuation in an individual's condition and therefore I suspect that the prediction of need is probably unrealistic. ...'*

## **SCS13: Intervention and prevention services – HIV**

24. Sixty representations were captured on the online consultation form in response to this savings option, with 14 of these being from service users or their carers and a further 13 being from elected representatives or stakeholder organisations, most notably the Terrance Higgins Trust who are contracted by the council to provide HIV day services.

25. A large number of the comments received were negative with concern expressed about impact on people with HIV who may feel stigmatised and marginalised if services were integrated into adult social care services.

### ***Illustrative quote***

*...'This is a retrograde step. Stigma of HIV people is a massive problem...'*

## **SCS 2: Land and property**

1. Fifty-eight representations were captured on the online consultation form in response to this savings option, of which the significant majority of people positively supported it or supported it with caution. This savings option was identified by the council having a positive benefit by increasing choice and the range of how to meet care and support needs.



## Children, Education and Families

### Introduction

1. The Children Education and Families (CEF) budget options involve redesigning services so that they are focused on those who are most in need. The suggested strategy is to save money from other services within CEF and other parts of the council to fund the most vital services for vulnerable young people. The particular focus would be on children at risk of abuse and neglect. As such the strategy would focus resource on children's social care.
2. The educational landscape in Oxfordshire has changed dramatically in recent years. By the end of 2015 more than 80 per cent of secondary schools will be academies. The council's suggested strategy is to focus on the legal responsibilities it retains in school organisation, admissions and special educational needs and to present options for new ways of providing other support services to schools.

### Consultation

3. As part of the consultation feedback was sought on 13 saving options from the children, education and families directorate budget. The key question people were asked was: *How do you think these savings options might impact on people using the service and communities?*
4. The table below presents the title of the 13 savings options and the total number of comments received in response to these.

Ref	Savings Option	No. commenting
CEF1	Management and Central costs	25
CEF2	Non-delegated schools costs	10
CEF3	Schools, education and learning	33
CEF4	Youth offending service	9
CEF5	School organisation and planning team	22
CEF6	Early years SEN inclusion teachers	37
CEF7	Special educational needs (SEN)	31
CEF8	SEN support services (SENSS)	14
CEF9	School organisation and planning – early years sufficiency and access	13
CEF10	School organisation and planning team	9
CEF11	School organisation and planning – admissions and transport	21
CEF12	Early Intervention Hubs/Childrens Centres	96
CEF13	Services for disabled children and families	53
	<b>Total comments</b>	<b>373</b>

5. Four of these options were identified by the council as having 'no direct impact on the public', totalling £574,000 in savings:

- CEF1: Management and central costs
- CEF 2: Non-delegated school costs
- CEF8: SEN support services (SENS)
- CEF10: School organisation and planning team

### **Feedback**

6. Overall, 373 comments were received.

7. Two thirds all the comments were from residents, or service users and their relatives. The remainder were professionals, a small number staff and stakeholder organisations.

8. Across all 13 options there roughly a ratio of 3 to 1 in terms of those who commented in opposition to the proposals and those who commented in support of the options proposed. The remainder offered comments that were not directly relevant to the savings options being considered or required more information.

9. The council's public sector partners (district councils, health and police) expressed concerns/raised points about the following options:

- **Cherwell District Council:** Early Intervention Hubs and Children's Centres
- **Oxford City Council:** Early Intervention Hubs and Children's Centres
- **South Oxfordshire District Council:** Early Intervention Hubs and Children's Centres
- **West Oxfordshire District Council:** Early Intervention Hubs and Children's Centres
- **Oxfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group:** Early Intervention Hubs and Children's Centres, Services for disabled children and families and Special Educational Needs
- **Thames Valley Police:** Early Intervention Hubs and Children's Centres

10. The two most commented on savings options for children, education and families with over 50 representations respectively in descending order were:

- CEF 12: Early Intervention Hubs/ Childrens Centres
- CEF 13: Services for disabled children and families

## CEF 12: Early Intervention Hubs/ Childrens Centres

11. The council is currently undertaking a major consultation which sets out a proposed new model for children' services in Oxfordshire by combining the current early intervention hubs with current network of children's centres to create a new 0-19 service based around eight Children' and Family Resource Centres. This consultation started prior to Talking Oxfordshire on the 14 October 2015 and closes on the 10 January 2016. The savings option proposed in Talking Oxfordshire was to save £2 million in addition to the proposal that is currently out to consultation.
12. In total, 96 people made representations about this proposal and everyone who responded was against this making the saving. It was felt to impact adversely on families and in particular vulnerable families. Many extolled the value of the service, including some who shared the personal benefit of the existing service to them.

### ***Illustrative quotes***

*'...The drop-in services at children's centres are vital for new parents to get support and advice, both from the centres themselves and from other parents. As a new Mum in 2010 a visit to my local centre would often be the only adult conversation I would have all day. To lose them would mean that many women would BECOME vulnerable to isolation, and at worst post-natal depression. To access these services only if identify yourself as vulnerable would lead to a stigma being associated with using them and mean that you don't benefit from meeting and getting support from other mums who are 'coping' - albeit while being able to confess to the occasional emotional meltdowns that sleep deprivation provides. If cuts must be made then surely it's better to better/fully utilise a proportion of the current centres so that women still have an option, and are not left literally out in the cold. As my 2nd baby is due next week I will miss these services if they are lost completely....'*

13. Concern was expressed that this saving would cascade pressure onto other public services, including from other who felt they would be expected to fill the gap. Other cited the potential cost of re-opening the centres either for council or community use.

### ***Illustrative quotes***

*....'It is so short sighted to close children's centres. It is well known that the early years are most important for building a foundation to life. Parents and children are able to get help without having been identified as in need of*

*intervention, so before they need intervention. Taking money away from these early years services will just heap cost onto other areas of social care...'*

*'...The removal of this support will lead to more children ending up in care and more families needing statutory services and may indeed result in more spending by the County. Once closed these centres will be expensive to re-open when as a result of increasing council tax base and devolution of business rates the county is better off in years to come. They should therefore be funded out of reserves for the next 5 years as at present reserves are higher than necessary. The situation could then be re-assessed in the light of the funding situation at the time.....'*

### **CEF 13: Services for disabled children and families**

14. Overall, 53 people made representations about this proposal, including 20 service users. Everyone who responded was against this making the saving. It was felt that this savings option would impact negatively on the health and well-being of families and as the council identified in the consultation document, increase pressure upon them. People responded giving concerns if it was to be withdrawn. A number of people felt that this would cascade pressure elsewhere and not result in an overall saving to the council.

#### ***Illustrative quotes***

*'...The feedback we've been given by users of this service is that if short break services for disabled people are reduced it will have a profoundly detrimental effect on both children and young people and their families. It is highly probable that reducing services will not save money but increase costs. Carers have told us they would need to decrease their hours working or give up working altogether and start to claim more benefits. Some parents have said that without respite support from the County Council they would be unable to cope with their caring responsibilities. ....'*

*'...We would be concerned about the potential reduction in any residential respite for those children with the highest levels of need. The population of children with learning disabilities with profound and multiple learning disabilities is increasing year on year or with highly complex medical needs.*

*Removing or reducing respite care simply increases the pressure on very stressed families still further and could lead to family breakdown, or children being placed in public care or expensive residential schooling.....'*

15. Of the options that were identified as having 'no direct impact on the public', the small number of people who gave comments endorsed savings on '**non-delegated schools costs**' (CEF2) and agreed to save on **Management and**

**central costs (CEF 1)**, although for some this was with a caveat about how this should be taken forward, whereas other put forward suggestions for smarter working to reduce unnecessary expenditure.

*'I would be greatly concerned if the reductions in managerial posts were not balanced; for example we have a Director for Children's Services, along with Deputy Directors for both Social Care and for Education. If Education was removed and adjusted in the underlying hierarchy it would give those of us working in schools a very damaging message and would put the educational development of vulnerable learners at risk if the focus feel heavily onto their social needs alone.'*

16. **Partial support was shown to saving on SEN support services (SENSS) (CEF8)**, as some felt this would cascade pressure onto schools budgets or has the potential to create a two-tier system. People appear to have misunderstood the saving relating to the **School Organisation and Planning Team (CEF10)** and object on grounds not directly related to the savings option tabled.

## Environment & Economy

### Introduction

1. Oxfordshire County Council currently spends 28% of its budget on a wide array of Environment & Economy services including highways and transport planning, waste disposal, strategic planning and countryside access.
2. The council's focus in this area would be on providing a safe highway despite having to make savings and on delivering a viable waste disposal service despite the pressures of financial savings and projected population increases.
3. The council would seek to emulate other local authorities in using capital budgets in some areas previously financed through day to day revenue budgets. There would be a focus on working with stakeholders to facilitate the economic growth that will protect the future of the county
4. There would also be an intention to work more closely with district councils and town and parish councils in delivering key services.

### Consultation

5. As part of the consultation, feedback was sought on 27 saving options from the Environment & Economy budget. The key question people were asked was: *How do you think these savings options might impact on people using the service and communities?*
6. The table below presents the title of the 27 savings options and the total number of comments received in response to these.

Ref	Savings Option	No. Commenting
EE1	Patching works	55
EE2	Highway drainage	34
EE3	Increased income from legal agreements	7
EE4	Increase fee income from Oxford strategic transport model	7
EE5	Incident response	4
EE6	New innovation and research partnership	5
EE7	Streetworks events management	12
EE8	Maintenance of street lighting	19
EE9	More effective working with supply chain and external partners	12
EE10	Grass cutting and tree maintenance	27
EE11	Traffic signals maintenance	6

EE12	Property contract	6
EE13	Sharing expertise and joint county-level planning services	7
EE14	Closer partnership working between Economy and Skills and the OxLEP	9
EE15	Winter maintenance	40
EE16	Locality team co-location	6
EE17	Utilisation of assets and income generation	11
EE18	Real time information	43
EE19	Safety fence repair and maintenance	9
EE20	Reduce policy and strategy capacity	9
EE21	Joint working and minor operational budget reductions	9
EE22	Public rights of way	59
EE23	Subsidised Buses Consultation Proposals	89
EE24	Survey and Other Works	21
EE25	Area Stewardship	17
EE26	Gully Emptying	24
EE27	New Household Waste Recycling Centre (HWRC) Strategy	62
	<b>Total Count</b>	<b>609</b>

7. Eight of these options were identified by the council as having ‘no direct impact on the public’, totalling £1,205,000 in savings:

- EE3: increased income from legal agreements
- EE4: Increase fee income from Oxford strategic transport model
- EE6: New innovation and research partnership
- EE9: More effective working with supply chain and external partners
- EE16: Locality team co-location
- EE17: Utilisation of assets and income generation
- EE20: Reduce policy and strategy capacity
- EE21: Joint Working and minor operational budget reductions

### Feedback

8. Overall, 609 comments were received via the online form or in hard copy.
9. A majority of the comments were from residents, services users and their relatives and professionals, staff and stakeholder organisations.



10. The council's public sector partners (district councils, health and police) expressed concerns/raised points about the following options:
- **Cherwell District Council:** Subsidised buses consultation, Grass cutting and tree maintenance, and new household waste recycling centre strategy
  - **Oxford City Council:** Highways drainage and gully emptying, Subsidised bus services consultation (cites separate response)
  - **South Oxfordshire District Council:** Subsidised bus services consultation (cites separate response), Maintenance of street lighting, Highways drainage and gully emptying, Household waste recycling centre strategy, Subsidised buses consultation, Streetworks and events management, and Public rights of way
  - **Vale of White Horse District Council:** Highways drainage and gully emptying, Household waste recycling centre strategy, Winter Maintenance proposals, and Subsidised buses consultation
  - **West Oxfordshire District Council:** Grass cutting and tree maintenance, Household waste recycling centres

11. Across all 27 options there was roughly a ratio of 3 to 1 in terms of those who commented in opposition to the proposals and those who commented in support of the options proposed.

12. Of all the savings options which were identified as having 'no direct impact on the public' only 'EE20: Reduce Policy and Strategy Capacity' did not have a majority of comments supporting the option.

Of the savings options not identified as having 'no direct impact on the public' five had a majority of comments supporting the option. These were:

- EE8: Maintenance of Street Lighting
- EE13: Sharing expertise and joint county-level planning services
- EE14: Closer partnership working between Economy and Skills and the Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership (OxLEP)
- EE19: Safety Fence Repair and Maintenance
- EE25: Area Stewardship
- Those who commented in support of saving options largely explained their support as due to one of three reasons; Believed savings should be made in mentioned area to protect funding for social services, believed the option would have minimal direct impact on the public, or believed efficiencies could be made in this area.

13. The four most commented on savings options for Environment & Economy were (in descending order):

- EE23: Subsidised Buses Consultation Proposals



- EE27: New Household Waste Recycling Centres (HWRC) Strategy
- EE22: Public Rights of Way
- EE1: Patching Works

### **EE23 – Subsidised Buses Consultation proposals**

14. This saving option was the most frequently commented on saving option within Environment & Economy saving options proposed. The option received a total of 89 comments, of which the very significant majority were in opposition.
15. Comments in opposition to this option frequently mentioned the potential disproportionate impact this option would have on rural communities. Many respondents believed the option would leave rural communities isolated and unable to reach key services.
16. Respondents on this option also often mentioned the potential impact the option would have on the elderly, with many stating this saving option would lead to elderly residents, who can no longer drive, becoming isolated which may then have an adverse impact on their mental and physical wellbeing. Several respondents mentioned this option would in particular affect the elderly living in rural communities.

### ***Illustrative quotes***

*“...Although this would make a substantial saving, the impact on remote parishes would be extreme. Many residents living in villages would become isolated, especially elderly people often without access to a car who rely on a local bus service to enrich their lives with visits to towns, markets and places of interest. I am totally against removing this subsidy.”*

*“...Further reductions in bus services will lead to further isolation of bus users including older people. It is important that older people continue to have access to health services, shops, and opportunities to be involved in social activities - they cannot do this if they cannot reach the local town.”*

*“...The impact on rural services is obvious and should not need explaining. The subsidised Bus service to a rural community is not a luxury but a necessary lifeline. It means Doctor's and Hospital appointments can be travelled to by people without cars or other means of transport.”*

## **EE27 – New Household Waste Recycling Centres (HWRC) Strategy**

17. This saving option was the second most frequently commented on option within Environment & Economy saving options proposed. The option received a total of 62 comments, of which nearly all were in opposition.
18. Those who commented in opposition to the option stated a potential impact of the option would be increased levels of fly-tipping, as was identified in Oxfordshire County Council's consultation public briefing report. However, those who mentioned fly-tipping as a potential impact believed the increased occurrence of this would be far greater than suggested in the council's report. This echoes the response given in the recent public consultation about the proposed new strategy.
19. Respondents who commented in opposition to the option also stated another potential impact of the option would be increased overall costs to the council because of clearing up having to take place as a result of the increased levels of fly-tipping.

### ***Illustrative comments relating to New Household Waste Recycling Centres (HWRC) Strategy proposal***

*"I disagree with closure of waste disposal sites especially within the context of the many new homes being built in Oxfordshire. I fear this measure will only lead to an increase in fly-tipping which will be costly to clear up..."*

*"For the relatively small saving (£200,000) the knock on impacts are likely to have a more significant effect and the councils end up spending more money collecting fly-tipping"*

*"I think that this just has to be one of the stupidest things that you have ever thought of. People will not travel to the sites I know I will not so it will go into the bin and other people will just dump it on the roadside causing unsightly mess and more money for you to clear it up..."*

## **EE22 - Public Rights of Way proposals**

20. This saving option was the third most frequently commented on option among the Environment & Economy saving options proposed. The option received a total of 59 comments, of which 55 were in opposition to the proposal, none in support and 4 were of no clear opinion.
21. Many of those who commented in opposition to the option believed the option could potentially have a negative impact upon public health. It was often cited

that this would occur as the option would lead to a decline in the accessibility and attractiveness of Public Rights of Way, which would then discourage their use by members of the public.

22. A further potential impact of the option which was frequently identified by respondents was that the option may lead to current volunteers becoming discouraged from further supporting the maintenance of the Public Rights of Way, as identified in Oxfordshire County Council's consultation public briefing report. This potential discouragement was largely attributed to that if there was a reduction in council-employed staff servicing Public Rights of Way then some tasks which volunteers are unable to conduct would be left undone.

### **Illustrative quotes**

*"I feel very strongly about this one. There are things that volunteers cannot do e.g formal liaison with landowners. Cutting the relevant staff would make volunteer effort impossible which is a waste of free resource. Walking is important for health and reduces air pollution if it avoids car journeys. An overgrown path can become impassable if left too long."*

*"...The loss of access to the countryside for many people by implementing this proposal will be detrimental to their health and general well-being."*

*"...The volunteer network around ROW is substantial and relies on the service to provide the legal and operational support. If this is reduced it is likely that this volunteer network will become dispirited and fall apart. The service would then end up with very little support..."*

### **EE1 – Road Patching Works**

23. This saving option was the fourth most frequently commented on option within Environment & Economy saving options proposed. The option received a total of 55 comments, of which 29 were in opposition, 11 in support and 15 were or no clear opinion.
24. Those who commented in opposition to this saving option frequently based their opposition upon what they believed to be the already poor condition of roads in Oxfordshire. For this reason, they felt there should not be any further savings in this area, as this could potentially lead to a decline in the condition of roads in Oxfordshire.
25. Some respondents also commented this potential decline in the quality of the roads could lead to further accidents. This was one reason why respondents felt this option would not be cost effective in the long run, another reason was that it

would lead to more expensive repairs in the future if repairs took longer to take place.

### ***Illustrative quotes***

*“If holes were patched properly in the first instance then longer term savings would be made”*

*“Changes will lead to greater problems in the future by lack of investment/maintenance. Will lead to greater demand for emergency services/admissions/more insurance claims or injury...”*

*“...If the assumption is that pot holes and poor roads will take longer to fix or not be fixed. Then the facts are road will Fail and car wheels will be damaged thus meaning compensation claims increasing to the council or worse still accidents to car users or even bikes. If you look at the facts that Oxfordshire alone need £165 million to bring roads up to standard. I can't envisage how any more saving can be made to highways maintenance.”*

## **Libraries/Cultural Services**

### **Introduction**

1. Oxfordshire County Council currently spends 2% of its budget on Libraries/Cultural Services.
2. The council's focus in setting a suggested future strategy for the library service is on the retention of all 43 Oxfordshire libraries while still making financial savings in this area.
3. It is hoped that there can be an increased focus on the role of libraries in helping local people access council services more generally. This would be integral to the delivery of the council's wider digital agenda.
4. The council is considering an option to close the mobile library service and the home library service to be expanded to mitigate this.

### **Consultation**

5. As part of the consultation we sought feedback on 2 detailed saving options for Libraries and Cultural Services, with both of these being split into multiple parts:

#### **Libraries**

- Reduction of book fund
- Closure of all mobile libraries; 4 general services library vehicles and 2 children's service vehicles
- Library management and staffing organisation in conjunction with the Council's Customers Services Centre and ICT function over two years
- Retendering of the Library Management System

#### **Cease funding of arts grants**

- Pegasus Theatre
- Oxfordshire Youth Arts Project (OYAP)
- Oxfordshire Visual Arts Design Agency (OVADA)

6. Multiple impacts were identified across both areas. It was noted in the document that Arts Funding was non-statutory. The table below presents the title two savings options and the total number of comments received in response to these via the online form (or written correspondence entered into this by the closing date).

Ref	Savings Option	No. commenting
LCS1	Library Savings	214
LCS2	Cease funding of arts grants	385
	<b>Total</b>	<b>599</b>

### **LCS1: Library Savings**

7. 214 representations were made about the library savings options, of which on the online form 117 mentioned the mobile library service and 14 cited the reduction in the book fund, which was described by many as 'regrettable'.
8. The consultation responses echoed the consultation document in terms of the potential negative impact of the closure of the mobile libraries on rural communities, old people, young people and people with disabilities.
9. Many responses gave a very personal view about the value of the service, including for some, its role in mitigating against social isolation.

#### **Illustrative quotes**

*... 'Discontinuing Mobile Library Service - In villages where there is no bus service people who have no transport of their own (primarily the elderly retired who have time to read) rely on the mobile library, as they cannot get to town libraries. To withdraw this service would take away their right to use the county's library....'*

*'.....mobile library provides a safe space where they can interact with their peers and meet new people. After the recent review all the mobile library customers who lost their stop were offered the Home Library Service. This offer does not apply to the current proposal - this is neither fair nor equitable. In mitigation the library service is pinning its hopes, on the doubtful premise, that volunteers will be able to provide this service to 'some' of these customers. With some 200+ stops being lost & assuming 5 customers at each stop this will have a major NOT minimal impact on the service these customers have previously enjoyed....'*

### **LCS2: Reduce Funding of Arts Grants**

10. In total, 385 representations were made in response to the savings option for the council to cease funding cultural activities from 2018/19 relating to Pegasus Theatre, Oxfordshire Youth Arts Project and Oxford Visual Arts Design Agency, none of which were supportive of the council making this savings. Overall, this savings option received the largest volume of responses via the online form, of which 265 specifically galvanised in support

of Pegasus Theatre and 30 specifically cited Oxfordshire Visual Arts Design Agency (OVADA) in their response.

11. With regard to impact, this saving option was considered to impact adversely on young people. As with other savings options, people took the opportunity to share the value of these services both to them personally, their families or to the local community.

### **Illustrative quotes**

*'...OYAP is a vital service and has a hugely positive impact on some of the county's most vulnerable young people.....'*

*'.....It is hard to quantify the benefits that theatre brings to children and adults locally, in particular in areas like East Oxford, which are deprived in other ways. Pegasus is a wonderful institution locally which gives a lot of good experiences to people who might not otherwise have them.....'*

*'....These organisations are key to nurturing art at the grass roots, growing our artist community, generating opportunities for artists within and beyond the organisation and for educational purposes. ....My own career as an artist has been established through working with OVADA. Through starting off with opportunities at a local level I have gone on to establish a career making work that is rooted in community engagement. It is so important that Oxford has a cultural community who can contribute to the life of the city.....'*

12. The council identified a key impact could be to jeopardise the long-term sustainability of the organisation and this was referenced by many in their response.



## Fire & Rescue and Trading Standards

### Introduction

1. Oxfordshire County Council currently spends 5% of its budget on Fire & Rescue and Trading Standards. The Fire and Rescue Service has already delivered savings through greater collaboration with other blue lights services and increased integration with Oxfordshire County Council.
2. The suggested strategy looking forward is to maintain the current network of Fire and Rescue stations to serve Oxfordshire. The council is proposing to reduce the number of operational management positions as a result of reduced incidents and would seek further collaboration with other Fire and Rescue Services in the future.
3. In trading standards if such budget options were to be implemented, trading standards enforcement work would focus more on providing a safety net for vulnerable consumers with a reduction in our response to consumer complaints, prevention work and business support.
4. The suggested strategy would mitigate the impact of these changes by building on existing volunteering to assist staff – something that is already happening elsewhere in the county – and working more closely with the Fire and Rescue Service. Work that requires qualified and authorised officers would continue to be provided by people employed by Oxfordshire County Council.

### Consultation

5. As part of the consultation, feedback was sought on 8 saving options from the Fire & Rescue and Trading Standards budget.
6. The table below presents the title of the 8 savings options and the total number of comments received in response to these.

Ref	Savings Option	No. Commenting
FRS1	Thames Valley Fire Control Service efficiencies	6
FRS2	Trading Standards Management and Enforcement review	22
FRS3	Chipping Norton Fire Cover Review	7
FRS4	Fire and Rescue Service strategic leadership team review	7
FRS5	Management Review – Station Managers	12
FRS6	Management Review – Group Managers	7



FRS7	On-call Budget	8
FRS8	Financial funding arrangements for Fire and Rescue Service cadet schemes	10
	<b>Total</b>	<b>79</b>

7. Three of these options were identified by the council as having ‘no direct impact on the public’, totalling £385,000 in savings:

- FRS5: Management Review – Station Managers
- FRS6: Management Review – Group Managers
- FRS7: On-call budget

### Feedback

8. Overall, 79 comments were received.

9. The council’s public sector partners (district councils, health and police) expressed concerns/raised points about the following options:

- **Vale of White Horse District Council:** Trading Standards
- **Thames Valley Police:** Trading Standards

10. Across all 8 options the number of comments in support (26) and opposition (22) of the options proposed were roughly even.

- a) Of the savings options which were identified as having ‘no direct impact on the public’ only saving option FRS4: Management Review – Group Managers received a majority of comments in opposition.
- b) Of the savings options not identified as having ‘no direct impact on the public’, two had a majority of comments supporting the option. These were:
  - FRS3: Chipping Norton Fire Cover Review
  - FRS4: Fire and Rescue Service strategic leadership team review
- c) Those who commented in support of saving options largely explained their support as due to one of two reasons; Believed efficiencies could be made in this area, particularly in management costs, and if the option would result in no direct impact on the public.

11. The most commented on saving option for Fire & Rescue Services and Trading Standards was FRS2: Trading Standards Management and Enforcement review. As there were no other options which received a high amount of comments in opposition to the option, FRS2 will be the only saving option which shall be looked at further below.

## FRS1 – Trading Standards Management and Enforcement review

12. This saving was the most frequently commented on within this area. The option received a total of 16 comments, of which 14 were in opposition, 1 in support and 1 of no clear opinion.
13. Those who commented in opposition to this option frequently mentioned that they believed a potential impact of the option would be an increase in fraudulent practices among traders and residents and consumers would fall victim to fraudulent practices more often.
14. Those who commented in opposition to this option, also frequently stated that they felt the service should not be provided by volunteers as it could undermine the effectiveness and long-term sustainability of the service.

### ***Illustrative quotes***

*“...with reduced pro-active work targeting e.g. rogue traders and business support residents and businesses in Oxfordshire will be disadvantaged and left more open to fraudulent practices.....”*

*‘....Your own impact assessment says it all. Increasing number of scams particularly on the elderly and vulnerable make this an area that needs to be protected. Volunteers cannot replace expertise.....’*

## A) Directorate Summary for Corporate Services

### Introduction

1. Oxfordshire County Council currently spends 3% of its budget on Corporate Services including finance, HR, legal policy, communications and other support functions.
2. Large parts of HR and finance have already been outsourced to the Hampshire Integrated Business Centre. The council's strategy would be to continue to seek to make savings in all of these areas to protect frontline services while at the same time allowing services to continue to provide the necessary levels of support to allow those frontline services to focus fully on their central roles.
3. As part of the consultation we sought feedback on eight saving options, three of which were identified as having no direct impact on the public, totally savings of £61,000
  - CS6: Unison – reduce budget
  - CS7: Change administrative arrangement for locality meetings for councillors
  - CS8: Reduce chairman's budget as previous underspent
4. The table below presents the title of the eight savings options and the total number of comments received in response to these.

Ref:	Savings Option	No. commenting
CS1	Senior management review	18
CS2	Organisational development	13
CS3	Finance and internal audit	4
CS4	Communications – reduce campaigns and consultations	12
CS5	Reduce senior HR staff	8
CS6	Unison – reduce budget	14
CS7	Change administrative arrangements for locality meetings for councillors	6
CS8	Reduce chairman's budget as previously underspent	14
	<b>Total comments</b>	89

5. Generally, the savings in this area were accepted. Senior management review was the most frequently commented on option in this section and people were supportive of the review, particularly for some, if it was supportive of maintaining more frontline services. Nobody identified any significant adverse impact of this. More people than not disagreed with the

proposed savings to organisational development, with the view that this would be a retrograde step.

## B) Summary for Corporate Measures

### Introduction

1. Corporate measures account for 5% of the council's budget.
2. It has proved possible for financial assumptions made as part of medium term financial planning in previous years to be adjusted and updated.
3. Areas such as lower than predicted pay awards, better than predicted returns on investments, the ending of the national insurance rebate on the state pension and successful contract negotiations reducing the cost of insurance each release finance to partially lower the impact on the frontline.

### Consultation

4. As part of the consultation we sought feedback on six saving options for corporate measures, all of which were identified as having 'no direct impact on the public', totalling 13,400,000. The key question people were asked was: *How do you think these savings options might impact on people using the service and communities?*
5. The table below presents the title of the six savings options and the total number of comments received in response to these.

Ref	Savings Option	No. commenting
CM1	Increase in Council Tax base	18
CM2	Local Pay Award	15
CM3	Contract Inflation	3
CM4	Strategic measures	4
CM5	Ending of national insurance rebate on State Pension	3
CM6	Insurance contract	3
	<b>Total comments</b>	46

6. The most frequently commented on options were local pay award (15 mentions) and increase council tax base (18 mentions). Where comments were directly relevant, on the whole people were supportive of the corporate measures. A small number of others used this section as an opportunity to make suggestions for how the back office improvements could be made, to

comment that councillor allowances should be frozen and to raise points in relation to housing growth.

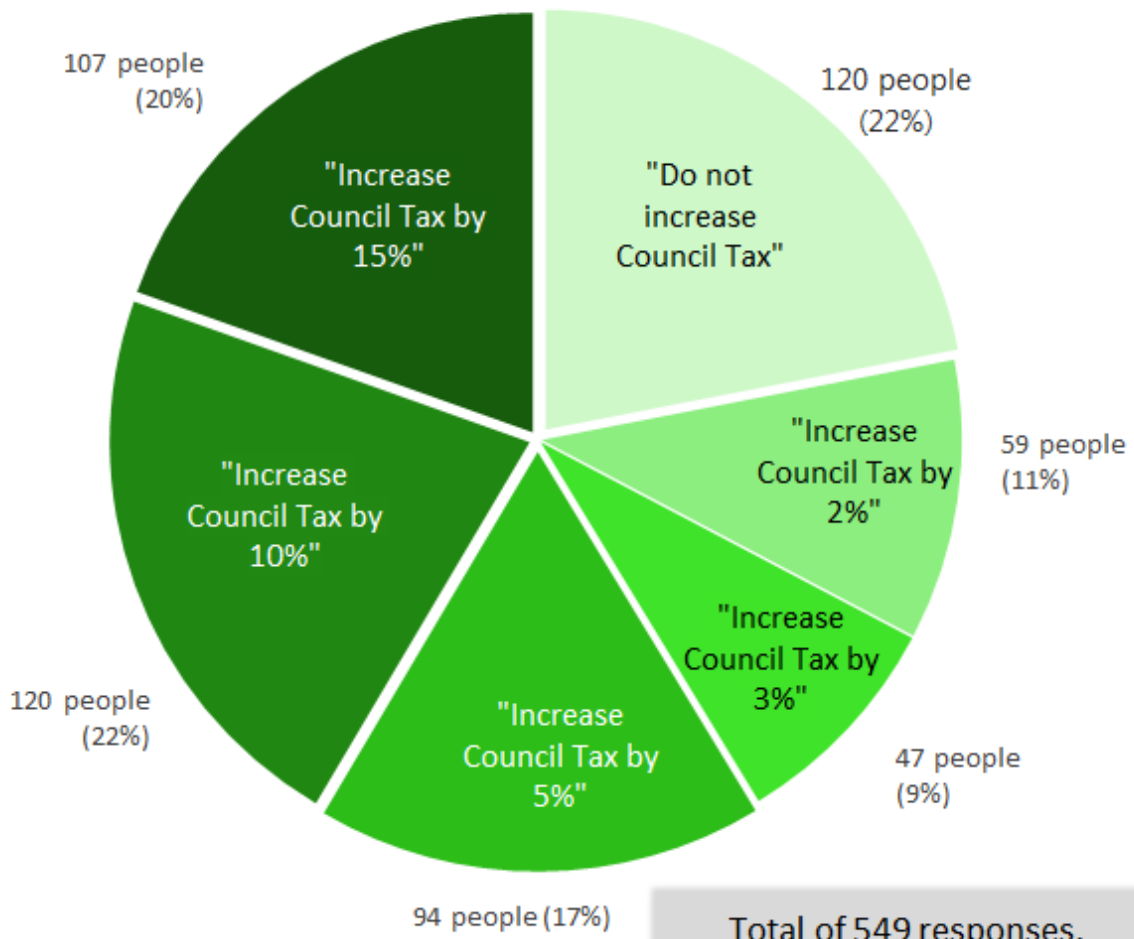
### **Attitudes towards Council Tax responses**

1. As part of the consultation people were asked about their attitudes about Council Tax levels and the council set the scene in the consultation document as follows:

Another way of protecting frontline services is to increase Council Tax levels. Council Tax was increased last year by 1.99% and our budget plan assumes that we will raise it by 3% in 2016/17. However, in recent years, any council that wants to increase Council Tax by 2% or more was required by government to hold a local referendum. This is a public vote on the proposed Council Tax level and would cost up to £800,000. The council would have to pay for the referendum and its result is final. In practice no other council has done this.

We have not yet been told if the referendum limit will be applied this year. If it is the same as previous years, we would have to meet the shortfall from additional savings – which are included in the estimated £50m savings we will need to make.

2. Taking this into account, people were asked what level of Council Tax rise they would accept if it helped to protect frontline services. In total, there were 549 responses including two don't know answers. The pie chart below summaries their preferred council tax increases. There was equal support (c. 20%) for a council tax freeze and a 15% rise, with the majority (59%) supporting for a rise of between 5-15%



Total of 549 responses, including 2 "Don't know"

## Part 3: Talking Oxfordshire public meetings

1. This section of feedback sets out the key themes from the Talking Oxfordshire Public Meetings. During October, the Leader of the Council, Head of Paid Services and the Chief Finance Officer took part in three public meetings to explain the council's financial situation, to hear local views and to answer questions. A public meeting was organised in the north, south and central areas of the county as set out the table below.

Date	Venue and Area
7:00 – 8:30pm , Tuesday 27 October 2015	County Hall, Oxford (Central)
7:00 – 8:30pm , Monday 2 November 2015	Town Hall, Banbury (North)
7:00 – 8:30pm, Thursday 5 November 2015	Regal Centre, Wallingford (South)

2. These events were publicised using posters, press releases, social media, web content, event listings, and press advertising. The council wrote to a wide range of stakeholders and asked them to publicise the meetings to their contacts.
3. As it was anticipated that interest in attendance at these meetings would be high, a mandatory pre-registration process was put in place to manage the capacity at each venue. People could register directly via an online portal or contacting the council's customer service centre. In total:
  - 126 people pre-booked a place at the Oxford meeting
  - 102 people pre-booked a place at the Banbury meeting
  - 120 people pre-booked a place at the Wallingford meeting

Space was also offered to people who turned-up without a booking on a first come, first served basis until the venue reached its capacity. At County Hall, the meeting was broadcast to a small number of people in an overall spill room.

### Meeting format

4. The format for each meeting followed a set-agenda, which was adjusted after the first session. Each participant was provided with an leaflet and a summary of the savings options for each directorate
5. The meeting agenda then ran as follows:

**Peter Clark**, Head of Paid Services welcomed participants and went on to explain the purpose of the event and to introduce other council representatives and the **independent chair of the meeting Nick Duffin**, from the Consultation Institute.

**Lorna Baxter**, Chief Finance Officer, then ‘set scene’ in term of the financial context the council is operating within. Her presentation titled ‘why does the county council have to money included

- The budget squeeze and factors contributing to this
- Savings made or already planned by the council
- Potential to increase council tax or keep business rates

**Cllr. Hudspeth**, Leader of Oxfordshire County Council, then provided further contextual information with slides on:

- Pressures
- What the council is doing, already done to make savings and make its services more efficient
- Big Society in Oxfordshire
- The role of consultation in the budget setting process
- The budget setting timetable

6. A **Question and Answer** session followed led by Nick Duffin. Time was allocated to each directorate to ensure that people had the opportunity to debate any of the savings options. A more detailed note has been taken of all the questions and points explored at each meeting. This will be published online and forms part of the deposit of consultation responses for councillors.

7. The following table summarises the questions and talking points from each meeting. It should be noted that discussions about early intervention hubs/children’s centres dominated the Oxford meeting, which was heavily attended by local campaigners. The topics that were raised at two or more meetings were:

- The need to protect the most vulnerable in society
- Concern on many fronts about the possible closure of children’s centres, including negative impact on families, risk of missing early warning signs, cascading pressures to other service
- Concern about the closure of health and well-being centres, including negative impact on service users and their carers, cascading pressures to others services
- the need to lobby/challenge government and make representations about the council’s financial situation



## Summary of questions, point and comments from the Talking Oxfordshire public meetings

	Oxford	Banbury	Wallingford
<b>Question:</b> Has the council explored income generation?		*	
<b>Question:</b> What happens if the council does not set a balanced budget?		*	*
<b>Question:</b> Is there a cumulative service and community impact assessment across all savings options?		*	
<b>Question:</b> Cost of councillors, the number of councillors and councillor allowances		*	
<b>Question:</b> Why has the meeting format changed?		*	
<b>Question:</b> How many procurement staff are there and what are the reduction targets for procurement.	*	*	
<b>Question:</b> Cluster models for Parish Councils		*	
<b>Question:</b> Can capital funds (e.g. money spent on highways scheme be spent elsewhere)	*		
<b>Question: Does Oxford University pay Council Tax?</b>	*		
<b>Concern:</b> Impact of the savings options on most vulnerable – need to protect the most vulnerable	*	*	*
<b>Consultation:</b> No real options if have to save £50 million			*
<b>Consultation:</b> Concern that emphasis on electronic engagement (event registration, online form) is a barrier to participation for vulnerable people			*
<b>Consultation:</b> Concern that timing of the meeting is a barrier to participation (families, carers, older people, vulnerable people etc.)	*		*
<b>Direct political point:</b> relating to Conservative Policy	*	*	*
<b>Request:</b> To change the language being used, cuts not savings options		*	
<b>Request:</b> For the council to speak to Government and its financial situation	*	*	*

<b>Adult social care:</b> Tier 3 Day Services (Health and wellbeing centres)		*	*
<b>Adult social care:</b> Planned support (known as warden schemes)		*	
<b>Adult social care:</b> Carers			*
<b>Adults and children's social care caseloads (not a savings option)</b>	*		
<b>Corporate Services:</b>		*	
<b>Environment &amp; Economy:</b> Subsidised buses consultation proposals		*	
<b>Environment &amp; Economy:</b> Concessionary bus passes (not a savings option)		*	
<b>Environment &amp; Economy:</b> Grass cutting and tree maintenance			*
<b>Environment &amp; Economy: Highways drainage</b>	*		
<b>Environment &amp; Economy: Household waste recycling centres</b>	*		
<b>Fire &amp; Rescue:</b> Response times (not a savings option)		*	
<b>Fire &amp; Rescue:</b> Emergency response (not a savings option)			*
<b>Trading Standards:</b> Management and enforcement review	*		
<b>Libraries &amp; Cultural Services:</b> Volunteering		*	
<b>Libraries &amp; Cultural Services:</b> Mobile library services	*		
<b>Children, Education &amp; Families:</b> Early Intervention Hubs/Children's Centres		*	*
<b>Children, Education &amp; Families:</b> Services for disabled children			*

## Council Tax Referendum

8. At the end of two of the meetings, Nick Duffin explored whether or not people would be prepared to pay more council tax to save frontline services and Peter Clark invited the audience to take part in a Straw Poll. The audience at the Banbury meeting chose not discuss this issue, on the basis that a structured survey not a straw poll was required. The audience in Wallingford supported a council tax increase to save front line services.

## Part 4: Full report of meeting organised by Community First Oxfordshire

The County Council commissioned Community First Oxfordshire to run an event for parish and town councils to focus on the impact of the savings options on rural communities. This is their report on the meeting.

### 9 November, Talking Oxfordshire – meeting of Parish and Town Councils with Oxfordshire County Council held at the Matthew Arnold School.

In total, 106 people attended the meeting, representing 75 Parish and Town Councils across the county.

**Jon Bright**, CEO of Community First Oxfordshire (formerly ORCC) welcomed participants.

He then explained the purpose of the event which was for

- the County Council (OCC) to summarise proposed budget reductions and the explain need for changes to OCC's service delivery; and
- Town and Parish Councils to discuss the impacts for their communities and possible responses.

Parish Clerks had been sent documents in advance including one which summarised the County Council's 95 budget saving options (all documents can be found on the county council's website: <https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/public-site/budget-201617>)

**Peter Clark**, Head of Paid Service, OCC introduced himself and his County Council colleagues who were available to answer questions and join in the group discussions.

**Lorna Baxter**, Chief Finance Officer, then 'set the scene', explaining the County Council's financial predicament. Funds were squeezed by

- Reduced Government spending
- An ageing population and growing demand for care
- More children at risk of abuse and neglect
- New responsibilities (e.g. concessionary bus passes)
- Council tax effectively capped.

£204m had been saved since 2010/11. Now OCC expect there will be a need to save in the region of another £50m (subject to the local government finance settlement in December).

**Cllr Ian Hudspeth**, Leader of OCC, then spoke about the importance of engaging Town and Parish Councils. He noted examples of where communities had maintained services affected by earlier budget reductions (e.g. libraries and youth

services) and asked if the same might be done now for children's centres. He suggested a new, more strategic role for Parish and Town councils.

A **Question and Answer** session followed. There was clear concern about the possible impacts of budget reductions. The main points raised were on:

- holding a referendum to increase the council tax.
- enquiring into why the County Council focuses on making savings as opposed to increasing revenue.
- understanding the negative knock-on effects to communities and individuals if non-statutory services are reduced or withdrawn.
- the need for the County Council to communicate budget savings in plain English and to being clear what the changes will mean to communities and individuals.

The meeting then broke into **group discussions**. Each group was asked to consider:

- **Impacts:** What are most important issues and impacts for Town and Parish Councils? Which service changes are you most concerned about?
- **Responses:** Ways forward. What are you doing now? What else could you do on your own or with others? Any new ideas? How best can we all work together?

OCC officers circulated between the groups.

**Jon Bright then summarised the main points raised:**

**The following impacts and responses were put forward by some parish and town councils.**

### **Impacts**

#### Loss of preventive services:

- Children: children's' centres
- Adults: day care, transport, mobile libraries
- Bus subsidies
- Road maintenance and gritting; maintenance of footpaths

Concern that reducing expenditure on these services may actually cost the County Council and NHS more in the long run.

#### Growing resistance to Government budget cuts

Taking on services – not all parish councils are willing or experienced enough to take on services from the County Council

More rural isolation of the elderly with associated health consequences

Over-reliance on the same, small number of volunteers without adequate support

Closing Waste/recycling centres – increase in fly-tipping

Drainage and flooding problems may increase in some areas

## **Responses**

The vulnerable must be protected

Challenge Government policy with other councils and the LGA

Income generation should be a priority. OCC should consider:

- Holding a referendum to increase Council tax above 2%; schedule it at the same time as other elections to reduce costs
- Consider drawing on investments, not reserves
- Charge for services; many people are prepared to pay more for some services (buses, waste centres etc.)
- Concessionary bus passes: a voluntary scheme should be set up so only those that need them use them
- Cut councillors' allowances

Lengthsmen OCC should support Lengthsmen – share across parishes

Parish councils should survey residents on raising precept – this will need to be done quickly if they are to factor an increase into the next year.

New Homes Bonus- use for key infrastructure

Volunteers need more training and professional support. Strengthen arrangements for recruiting younger volunteers so the responsibility is shared. Scope for using local volunteer labour on some tasks such as grass cutting.

Deliver services more cost effectively:

- Understand the full cost of services and assess their benefits
- Insist on more efficient, outcome based commissioning
- Consider delivering profitable services in house or via not for profit bodies
- Devolve services to parishes and incentivise accordingly
- Bring bus providers together with communities to improve viability of rural routes
- Promote unitary government: there are too many tiers of government
- Explore delivering some services at a sub-regional level
- Sell local authority assets.

Support enterprise: help villages or clusters of villages develop social enterprises such as 'Village Companies'

Transitional funding must be made available

Community transport Support volunteer car schemes properly

Resource sharing website: car sharing / furniture / time

### **Closing remarks**

The comments and ideas put forward in the meeting will be taken into account as part of the Talking Oxfordshire, County Council budget saving options for 2016. This consultation is open for comments until 30 November 2015. Parish and Town Councils, and all Oxfordshire residents, can put forward their independent views (including views on council tax) via the online portal:

<https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/content/purpose-and-priorities-council>.

## Part 5: Summary of the main points from public sector partners

1. Each partner approached their response to the consultation differently. Some wrote letters, whilst others completed the consultation grid. Below is a high level synopsis of each response.

### A) Cherwell District Council

Precis of the response from Cherwell District Council:

- Recognises the financial pressure facing the County Council
- Assumes that the County Council will look to increase by up to 3.99% to meet shortfall and not progress all proposed reductions

#### **Expresses concern over 8 budget options**

- Believes the **Subsidised Buses Consultation** would have a disproportionately high negative effect in the Cherwell District
- Urges the County Council to ensure that any further service and budget cuts as part of the **Gross cutting and Tree Maintenance** budget options are not targeted at the urban area highways
- Expresses concern over the **New HWRC Strategy** and believes the District's geography requires two sites rather than one, is prepared to collaborate to find solutions but requires more time.
- Urges an inclusive approach collaborative approach regarding **Tier 2 Day Services, Tier 3 Day Services and Transport to Day Services** to avoid missing opportunities to collaborate on alternative delivery models
- budget options
- Would like to work collaboratively to mitigate the impact of **Housing Related Support** budget options
- Expresses real concern over the budget option relating to **Early Intervention Hubs/Children's Centres**, believes it to be short sighted and analysis of the effectiveness of current service. Rationalisation could be delivered but not wholesale closure of all centres. Prepared to use landlord status and asset to assist.

#### **Other**

Is happy to have further dialogue and work collaboratively to protect or mitigate the impact of service reductions to residents.



## **B) Oxford City Council**

Precis of the response from Oxford City Council:

- Recognised demographic and social pressures and expressed grave concerns
- Highlighted consequential cost pressures for NHS, Police and District Council's
- Urged the county council to adopt a whole systems approach to find service delivery models to avoid or minimise transfer of costs to other public bodies

Oxford City Council noted serious concerns in four areas.

- Impact of further £2m cut in funding for **Children's Centres and Early Intervention**
- Withdrawal of further £1.5m in **Housing Related Support**
- Impact on vulnerable elderly residents of removing all funding for **Tier 2 and 3 Day services (£3.7m)** and cutting support for carers (£0.6m)
- The assumption that the third sector has the capacity and resilience to adjust

The city council also raised the following issues:

- Urged the council to undertake risk assessments on proposals to reduce **Highways Drainage and Gully Emptying**
- Notes that it has responded separately to **Subsidised Bus Services and Dial-A-Ride consultation**

## **C) South Oxfordshire**

Precis of the response from South Oxfordshire District Council:

**Expresses concern over the following proposals**

- **Subsidised Buses Consultation Proposals** (Cites separate response )
- Highlights community safety implications of the reduction in **Maintenance of Street Lighting** and increased perception of crime
- Suggests reduction in **Highway Drainage and Gully Emptying** and potential flood risk contrary to OCC role in the flood risk strategy, and feels less proactive approach to cleaning drains etc could exacerbate the detritus on the highway and subsequent costs
- Suggests a fresh look at the new **HWRC strategy**
- Believes **Streetworks/events management** proposals will incur increased costs for District Councils
- Warns of the impact of withdrawal of **Housing Related Support** on rough sleepers and move-on accommodation and notes impact on domestic abuse services

- Warns of negative impact of reductions to **Intervention and preventative services – Dementia**
- Is concerned that the redesign of **Emergency Response Services** does not impact on the 24/7 response
- Warns that the balance of the community within **Extra Care schemes** will change significantly and will become less available and/or attractive to the elderly and families
- Expresses concern over impact of **Early Intervention Hubs and Childrens Centre** withdrawal in areas of significant new development (Didcot North East, Valley Park Harwell and East Hagbourne) and cites increases in antisocial behaviour in Didcot.
- Is not clear on the impact on young offenders of and calls for clarity on whether further consultation will take places around educutions to **Youth offending service contributions to multi-agency Youth Offending Service**

#### **Other**

- Suggests that funds around **Public Rights of Way** be prioritised to support mobilising volunteers in the community who have already identified plans
- Notes that option 2 of the **Early Intervention Hubs and Childrens Centre** proposals provides some limited universal services, option 3 is preferred as it provides partnership working through grant funding and community sector

### **D) Vale of White Horse District Council**

Precis of the response from Vale of White Horse District Council:

#### **Expresses concern over 6 Budget proposal options**

- **Subsidised Buses Consultation Proposals** (Cites separate response )
- Reduction in **Highway Drainage and Gully Emptying** and potential flood risk contrary to OCC role in the flood risk strategy, and feels a less proactive approach to cleaning drains etc could exacerbate the detritus on the highway and subsequent costs
- New **HWRC Strategy** and draws attention to previous submission on this topic
- **Winter maintenance proposals** which could lead to rural isolation for vulnerable residents, with a knock on effect on the local economy of people who live in rural villages not being able to access employment, as well as recycling/waste
- The impact of **Housing related support** proposals

#### **Other**

Expresses cautious optimism on closer collaboration with TVP around cyber crime as part of Trading standards proposals but concern as to levels of expertise re cybercrime

## **E) West Oxfordshire District Council**

Precis of the response from West Oxfordshire District Council:

- Some potential budget saving options will have significant consequences in terms of the demands placed on the voluntary and community sector.

### **Expresses particular concern over a number of savings options**

- **Tier 2 Day Services (30), Tier 3 Day Services (31), Transport to Day Services (32)** and suggests that more should be done to explain the impact on voluntary and community sector and potential rural impacts
- **Housing Related Support (34)** states that this will cause additional pressure on District services
- **Prescription/ retail model for equipment (38)** highlights need for County Council to ensure that changes still deliver clients eligible needs.
- **Intermediate care (44)** concern that service will not be able to act quickly or organisations Reablement – possible link to district services
- Sees areas of potential savings where there will be implications for District Services and parish councils (**Grass Cutting and Tree maintenance**) and **New HWRC proposals**
- Potential budget saving in connection with **Early Intervention Hubs and Children's Centres** is significant (item 59)

### **Other**

- Welcomes approach toward shared services in a number of areas but is concerned that this is not used to

## **F) Oxfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group**

Precis of the response from Oxfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group:

- Recognises severe cuts and unpalatable choices OCC is facing
- Suggests that across many of the areas proposed for budget cuts, they need to work with OCC to find a system wide solution
- Highlight the impact of many of the proposals on demand for NHS services
- Raise concerns about long term harm and costs of reducing intermediate care and preventative services
- Highlight desire to increase joint working and therefore increase efficiency savings across the two organisations
- Ask for an opportunity to meet with the Cabinet to discuss the implications of the proposed cuts prior to the Cabinet making their final decisions.

Notes serious concerns in the following areas

- Major impact of reducing funding for **intermediate care beds and reablement** (OCCG cannot accept this proposal)
- Impact of stopping funding to **Tier 3 Day Services (Health and Wellbeing Centres)**
- Acknowledges potential for more integrated falls prevention service but cannot support wholesale cutting because it saves the system more money than it costs
- Risks of stopping funding for **Tier 2 Day Services** in combination with proposals to cut bus subsidies in terms of impact on users and capacity of voluntary sector to respond
- Counterproductive impact of reducing funding for **Dementia care support**
- Highlights significant concern about the impact of **Children's Centres** proposals
- Concern about proposed reduction in **respite support to disabled children and families**
- **Children SEN**, etc – don't support approach because they do not seem to consider wider system or joint outcomes we're working towards

Other comments

- Notes that there is potential to explore **intermediate care discharge pathway** and using residential care beds for intermediate care
- Agree review of individual funding allocations should drive savings, however urges an outcome based approach
- Notes potential for savings in **money management of adult social care** services and community health services
- **Equipment review** and move to a retail model - wish to work with OCC on solution to waste in this area, however, full costs for rehabilitation or maintaining a person at home rather than in a bed need to be available for true cost comparison.
- Highlights implication of reducing **adult social care support for prisoners** may increase demand on this budget for support on discharge.
- **Care homes** - supports move to new model of purchasing but seeks assurance on potential impacts on homes and quality of staff and care.
- Notes that OCCG has similar proposals to the changes to social impact bond
- Information and advice - notes that the services people might be signposted to in CIN may no longer be there.
- **Extra care housing support** – highlights this as another area for joint working.
- Would like to see more work done on **assistive technology** and other alternatives to care agencies to deliver help at home
- Supports proposal for **Print Unit**, providing impact on employment for people with learning difficulties is mitigated.
- **Land and property** – thinks it's a good idea to utilise council-owned land to increase extra care housing and specialist residential care but emphasises need for ECH to be designed in considered way for users

- Highlight impact of subsidised buses consultation proposals on people's access to services and wellbeing

### **G) Thames Valley Police**

Precis of the response from Thames Valley Police:

- Recognises the difficult decisions faced by council in face of decreasing budgets and increase in demand for services
- Highlights importance of integrating public services at local level
- Interested in opportunities for police to be included in joint delivery model for services, such as those which support the most vulnerable

Notes serious concerns in the following areas.

- Highlights the impact that proposed changes to adult social care will have on partner services, including the police. Highlights issues police already face in resolving problems which have mental health of personality disorder component but do not meet threshold for support from other services, and that these incidents are likely to rise, increase demands on police services.
- Notes the role that **Early Intervention Hubs and Children's Centres** play in stopping harm escalating in the home and that future support will need to focus on most vulnerable. Identifies opportunity to compare locations of centres with the vulnerable localities work the police is carrying out.
- Highlights importance of support for prisoners and asks that and changes support the reducing reoffending strategy.
- Notes importance of **Youth Offending Service** and urges caution at reducing to ineffective level.
- Raises concern about proposed **Reduction in Housing Related Support** that it will impact the most vulnerable in society and could lead them to crime or becoming victims of crime.
- Concern about any reduction in funding that might affect mental health, noting the significant challenge this already causes to current services.

Other comments

- Supports council in building small number of children's homes and requests involvement of police at an early stage to manage risk to and from residents of these premises.
- Wants to ensure any reduction in **Trading Standards** does not impact on tackling rogue traders, noting current successful joint working with the police.
- Suggests libraries could be used to co-host other council services, and potential for co-location with other service providers, such as Thames Valley Police public information points.

## **Annex A: Full list of stakeholder responses**

A large number of stakeholders responded to the consultation. Submissions from these have all been considered and included as part of the analysis of the consultation and included in the deposit for review by all councillors.

### **Public sector partners**

- Cherwell District Council
- Oxford City Council
- South Oxfordshire District Council
- Vale of White Horse District Council
- West Oxfordshire District Council
- Oxfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group
- Thames Valley Police

### **Oxfordshire County Council**

- Councillor Mark Cherry
- Councillor Jenny Hannaby

### **District Councils**

- Oxford City Council: Councillor Bev Clack, St Clements
- Oxford City Council: Councillor Mike Rowley, Barton and Sandhills and Board Member for Housing

### **Town and Parish Councils**

- Aston, Cote, Shifford and Chimney Parish Council
- Banbury Town Council
- Benson Parish Council
- Bodicote Parish Council
- Clifton Hampden Parish Council
- Duns Tew Parish Council
- Hampton Gay and Poyle Parish Meeting
- Harwell Parish Council
- Minster Lovell Parish Council
- North Hinksey Parish Council
- North Leigh Parish Council
- Kirtlington Parish Council
- Shrivenham Parish Council
- Stanford in the Vale Parish Council
- South Stoke Parish Council
- St Helen's Without Parish Council
- Stonesfield Parish Council
- Swyncombe Parish Council
- Watchfield Parish Council

- Witney Town Council
- Woodstock Town Council

### **Representatives groups or organisations**

- Acquired Brain Injury
- Age UK Oxfordshire and Action for Carers
- Alzheimer's Society
- Ambrosden Village Preschool
- Artwork
- Barnardos Oxfordshire Childrens Services
- Bicester Good Neighbour Scheme
- British Horse Society Oxfordshire
- Bubbles Pre-school
- Carers Oxfordshire
- Charlbury Day Centre
- Chiltern Society
- Chipping Norton Health Centre
- CPRE
- Crisis Skylight
- Cropredy Cluster Care Group
- Cropredy Surgery
- Cyclox
- Daybreak Oxford
- Equity Oxford Branch
- Family Support Network
- Fire Brigades Union
- Friends of Charlbury Library
- Friends of the Elms, Witney
- Friends of Wantage Health and Wellbeing Centre
- Friends of Watlington Library
- GreenSquare 55 plus Forum
- Headway Oxfordshire
- Justice in Motion - Physical Theatre Company
- Ladygrove Park Primary School
- Leonard Cheshire Disability
- Mandala Theatre Company
- Oxford Brookes University
- Oxford Malayalee Club
- Oxfordshire Carehomes Association
- Oxfordshire Family Support Network
- Oxfordshire Governor's Association
- Oxfordshire Healthwatch
- OXPIP - Oxford Parent Infant Project Oxfordshire
- OYAP Trust



- Paper Balloon Theatre Company
- Ramblers Oxfordshire
- Rotary Club of Witney
- Royal National Institute of Blind People
- South Oxfordshire Sustainability
- South West Oxfordshire Mencap Society
- Sunningwell Primary School
- Thameside Primary School
- The Elderberry Club
- The October Club, Wantage
- The Salvation Army
- The Willows Pre-school
- Vale House
- Wantage Health & Wellbeing Association
- Watlington Age Concern
- Wheatley Park School
- Worcestershire Literary Festival and Fringe
- Yellow Submarine

# Annex 1 Talking Oxfordshire Handout (Real size A3)

## What are we asking people to consider?

The council is consulting on 95 savings options that we have identified across all areas of the council (excluding public health, which has a ring-fenced grant from government).

Overall, the total savings contained in this long list of options probably adds up to more than we think we will actually have to save. However we will not know the final savings target until government has told us about our funding for next year.

## Can you raise council tax?

Council Tax was increased last year by 1.99% and our budget plan assumes that we will raise it by 3% in 2016/17.

However, in recent years any council that wants to increase Council Tax by 2% or more has been required by government to hold a local referendum. This is a public vote on the proposed council tax level and would cost up to £800,000 to administer. In practice no other council in the country has yet held a referendum.

We have not yet been told if the referendum limit will be applied this year. If it is the same as previous years, we would have to meet the shortfall in reducing the council tax from 3% to 2% from additional savings – which are included in the estimated £50m savings we will need to make.

We are asking people if they would prefer rises of 0%, 2%, 3%, 5%, 10%, 15%.

## What about business rates?

The Chancellor recently announced plans to allow councils to keep business rates collected in their area by 2020. At the moment, business rates are collected by councils but passed on to government, which returns some of the money as a grant to pay for local services.

We do not know the details of how this would work, or the impact it would have on the county council – if any. However the Chancellor has said the plan would be 'fiscally neutral', which means overall there will be no new money for local government.

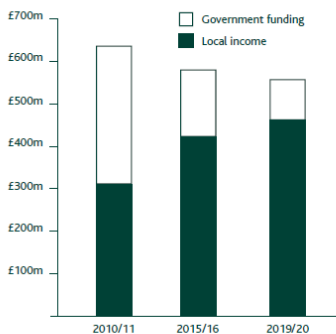
Until further details are provided, the county council will continue to plan its budget on the same basis as before – which includes the assumption that the government grant will continue to reduce each year.

## About the county council

Oxfordshire County Council provides more than three-quarters of the local government services in the county. They include:

- children's services and some education services
- roads and transport
- supporting vulnerable adults and older people
- waste disposal and recycling
- fire and rescue and trading standards
- libraries and museums
- public health

As government reduces funding to local government, the county council has to continue to make budget savings. At the same time demand for our services is increasing, partly due to our ageing and growing population, and increasing demand for children's social care services.



## Have your say

The savings options have been published online at [www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/budget](http://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/budget). Printed information is also available in all libraries and county council offices.

Please take the time to read through the savings options and feedback your thoughts in the context of the budget limitations the council is facing. You can comment on any or all of them. You can also give us your view on our overall priorities.

We are strongly encouraging people who can submit comments online to do so, however we recognise that not everyone has access to the internet or has computer skills. Comments can be submitted in writing to:

Budget consultation  
FREEPOST OXFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL  
(No further address details required)

The consultation finishes at 9am on 30 November 2015.

Budget consultation starts	Tuesday 20 October
Budget consultation ends	Monday 30 November, 9am
Government Spending Review	Wednesday 25 November
OCC Performance Scrutiny Committee considers savings options & consultation responses	Thursday 17 December
Local Government Finance Settlement	Monday 14 or 21 December (week commencing)
Cabinet agrees budget proposals	Tuesday 26 January 2016
Council agrees budget	Tuesday 16 February 2016

## Any questions?

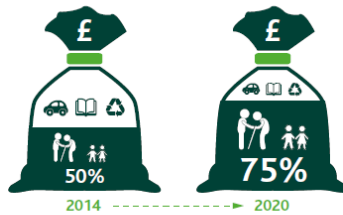
Visit [www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/budget](http://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/budget)

[/OxfordshireCountyCouncil](https://www.facebook.com/OxfordshireCountyCouncil)  
[#talkoxon](https://twitter.com/OxfordshireCC)

## Supply and demand

Adult and children's social care currently accounts for half of the council's budget. We expect this to take up 75% of total council funding by 2020.

The council must protect and meet the needs of Oxfordshire's most vulnerable people. To meet these growing and unavoidable demands, savings must be made in other areas.



## Financial summary

This year (2015/16), the council is due to spend £830 million on services, of which £257 million goes straight to schools.

Between 2010/11 and 2014/15, we saved £204 million per year and have plans in place to save a further £88 million per year by 2017/18.

Based on the government's summer budget and by making some prudent financial assumptions, we estimate that we will have to save a further £50 million per year between 2016/17 and 2019/20.

The savings options that we are publishing for public consultation are being considered to meet the new £50 million per year savings target.

## Tough decisions ahead

Since 2010, the council has continually looked for ways to make savings and make its services more efficient including:

- reducing our workforce
- getting better deals when we buy goods and services
- sharing services with other councils
- using volunteers if appropriate
- making services easier to use online

This has helped, but it's no longer enough.

The savings options that we are publishing for public consultation are being considered to meet this new £50 million savings target.

Since 2010 we now employ a third fewer people **-37%**



## What does this mean?

Some county council services will be reduced significantly, or will stop. However, despite the need to cut back our services to save money we remain focussed on our ambitions for the county. This can only be achieved by:

- Attracting investment and planning for growth
- Encouraging people to volunteer
- Helping parish and town councils respond to local needs
- Delivering services more efficiently

Children on a protection plan (per 10k)



People receiving home care has risen by



The amount of savings required:

