

Oxfordshire County Council

Corporate Plan 2007/08 to 2010/11

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Foreword by Keith R Mitchell, Leader of the Council

Text to be drafted

Keith R Mitchell
Leader of the Council

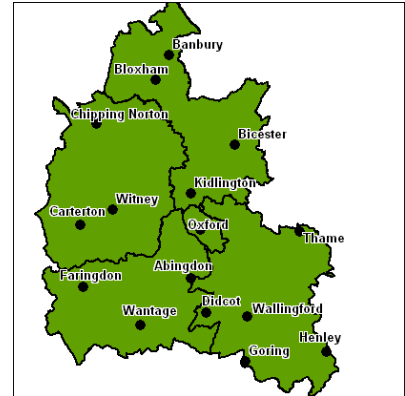
1. Introduction by Joanna Simons, Chief Executive

Text to be drafted

If you would like more detail or clarification on any aspect of this report, please contact the Corporate Performance Team on 01865 815307.

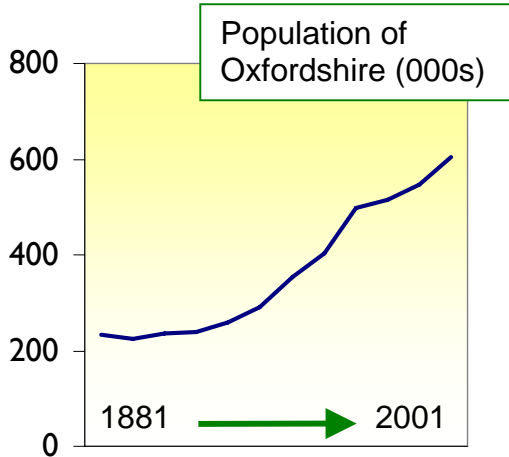
2. Oxfordshire in Context

- As of mid-2005, an estimated 626,900 people lived in Oxfordshire.
- Oxfordshire is the most rural county in the South East region - over 50% of people in Oxfordshire live in settlements of less than 10,000 people.
- Our largest settlement is Oxford City with a population of 135,000.
- Around one-quarter of the population live in our market towns.
- Our key challenges over the life of this plan include:
 - The economy:
 - Supporting sustainable economic growth
 - Improving education and skills
 - Enhancing our infrastructure
 - The environment:
 - Promoting clean and green
 - Urban renaissance
 - Protecting our environment
 - Stronger communities:
 - Developing our diverse communities
 - Promoting opportunity and independence
 - Bringing Government closer to people
 - Value for money:
 - Low taxes
 - Efficiency and effectiveness
 - Customer responsiveness



Population growth

- The population of Oxfordshire has more than doubled since the 1940s.



- Our recent estimates predict that, between 2001 and 2011 an additional 27,800 (4.5%) people will be living in the county.

	mid 2001	mid 2011
Oxfordshire	607,300	635,100
Cherwell	131,900	140,600
Oxford	135,500	140,000
South Oxfordshire	128,300	131,000
Vale of White Horse	115,800	120,200
West Oxfordshire	95,700	103,400

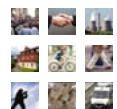
- The proportion of people from non-white ethnic groups in Oxfordshire

Oxfordshire's environment

- 78% of the land in Oxfordshire is under agricultural management and almost a quarter of the land is designated an area of outstanding natural beauty.
- The number of cars owned by people living in Oxfordshire increased from 175,000 to over 300,000 (+78%) between 1981 and 2001.
- Traffic on Oxfordshire's road increased by around 1.5% per year between 1995 and 2005.
- Consumption of water, electricity and gas per person in Oxfordshire are above national averages.



Need more data? Visit the Oxfordshire Data Observatory at www.oxfordshirepartnership.org.uk



Oxfordshire in Context

Oxfordshire is a county alive with enterprise, beauty, learning and history. It has become internationally renowned as a place of architectural and natural beauty, a centre of excellence for higher education, research and innovation and is a designated European Centre of Culture.

Environment

The county is bordered by three areas of outstanding natural beauty: the Cotswolds, the Chilterns and the North Wessex Downs and crossed by the River Thames and its tributaries. The internationally famous city of Oxford is at the hub of the county, surrounded by numerous historic towns and villages set in beautiful countryside. Oxfordshire is at the north-western edge of the South East region and, with its central location in England, has strong links to London and the Midlands, as well as west to the Cotswolds and along the M4 corridor.

Economy

It is the most rural county in the South East of England but also a county with one of the highest levels of GDP (gross domestic product) per head in the UK, with consistently high levels of employment, economic participation and many high-tech businesses notably in biotechnology, car manufacture and motorsport. Despite the flourishing economy, there is a lack of opportunity in some rural areas together with pockets of deprivation in Oxford City, Banbury and other parts of the county which have an impact on the health, wellbeing and life expectancy of individuals as well as having significant implications for the economy and public service providers.

Economic prosperity and the quality of the environment make Oxfordshire an attractive place in which to live and work. However, Oxfordshire is not without its problems. In an ever more competitive world economy Oxfordshire businesses need to be more and more innovative and productive. In this respect workforce skills, housing costs and availability and transport difficulties are potential obstacles to success and need to be addressed over the long-term.

Despite its academic reputation, Oxfordshire has a fifth of its adult population without qualifications who, as a result, are inadequately equipped to maximise their contribution to businesses operating in an increasingly competitive global market.

Infrastructure

Oxfordshire's principal road network is already operating at near capacity and there is a backlog on infrastructure development both in road and rail. This is likely to be a growing problem both for businesses and individuals. The resultant traffic congestion will also add to pollution.

Housing costs more than doubled in the period from 1998 to 2004, well above the rise in average salaries. In consequence, people find it increasingly difficult to afford a home within easy reach of their employment. This impacts on the economy as wage pressures feed into prices but also adds to traffic congestion as more and more people commute significant distances to work.

Crime and anti-social behaviour are also growing concerns in all parts of the county, highlighted by the recent MORI survey.

Within this context there are a number of clear strategic challenges facing the County over the life of this plan and beyond. Countywide solutions, particularly in relation to the economy, environment and transport will be essential if we are to maintain and increase our prosperity and competitiveness. Our focus for the period of this plan will be:

- The economy
- The environment
- Safer and stronger communities
- Value for money

3. Our Vision for Oxfordshire

Our vision for Oxfordshire:

To increase social capital for Oxfordshire by improving the quality of life of those living and working in the County while improving the cost effectiveness of the County Council's services and reducing the rate of Council tax increase. We will measure quality of life in relation to economic growth, improving social cohesion and our ability to sustain and improve the environment.

We recognise that we cannot achieve our goal without effective partnership with other agencies in the public sector, the voluntary and community sector and the business sector. Through the Oxfordshire Partnership, the Public Service Board and the related thematic partnerships we will work to align priorities and work effectively together.

The County Council and each of its elected members also have an important community leadership role in engaging and galvanising local people to work with the public, private and voluntary sectors to achieve positive outcomes for their communities and for the county.

4. Our key corporate objective and values

Corporate Objective

Our corporate objective is designed to define the principles we follow throughout our strategic planning process.

Our objective is:

"low taxes, real choice, value for money"

This objective forms the cornerstone of our approach to service delivery. In particular, we are committed to **low tax** by reducing year-on-year the annual increase in council tax. This commitment is incorporated in the projections in our medium term-financial plan.

We are dedicated to providing **real choice** in our services whether this is through choices for our customers at the point of use or by providing alternative solutions which best suit the differing circumstances of the various parts of our diverse county.

We are committed to delivering **value for money** to our council tax payers and service users. We will achieve this by finding new ways of delivering services, by tackling waste and inefficiency and by ensuring we provide cost-effective support services to reduce expenditure and maximise the resources available for front-line service delivery. To do this we will need to be less risk averse and aim for high quality understanding of the risks and rewards that underpin our decisions and actions.

Our Values

Our values are integral to our behaviours in pursuing our objectives. They are:

Customer focus
Honesty
One team
Involvement
Can-do
Efficient and effective

Our values form an acronym to ensure they are easily remembered by all and reinforce our commitment to provide 'real choice'. We have set out below how these values guide our work.

Customer Focus

This means we are accessible, accountable, courteous and efficient; we understand and represent the needs of the people and communities that we serve and we enable them to influence how we deliver our services and to value local government.

Honesty

This means we listen to people and communities and respond to their needs with understanding, honesty, integrity and professionalism.

One Team

This means we work collectively as a County Council, putting the needs of our customers as a whole above political, professional or other interests. It means we value our staff and enable them to develop and perform to the best of their abilities; we recognise that our staff are key to delivering excellent services and we seek to build pride in working for Oxfordshire County Council.

Involvement

This means we involve our communities, our stakeholders and our staff in shaping our services. We work actively in partnership with others to achieve common goals.

Can-do

This means we look for solutions to problems rather than viewing difficulties as obstacles to what we want to achieve

Efficient and Effective

This means we aim to obtain the very best service outcomes for our citizens from the resources we spend.. It means we strive to find new and better ways of delivering services to our communities.

5. Challenges and Priorities

Our priorities have been developed in direct response to the challenges we face in the county and the views of Oxfordshire residents and other stakeholders. In particular our priorities reflect:

- the political vision of the Cabinet and the manifesto commitments endorsed by the people of Oxfordshire in the County Council elections in May 2005
- consultation with our residents and service users through a variety of consultative mechanisms including:
 - our residents' survey conducted for the Council by MORI in 2005
 - our Citizens' Panel: a representative group of over 3,000 Oxfordshire residents who complete up to four postal questionnaires each year, covering a wide range of subjects
 - consultation with children, young people and families as part of the arrangements for developing our Children and Young People's Plan
- the views of key stakeholders including District, Parish and Town Councils and Area Committees, Police, SEEDA, GOSE, Learning & Skills Councils, NHS and voluntary agencies through various fora, including the Oxfordshire Partnership and our Public Services Board
- the economic and demographic needs of the county drawn from the work of the Oxfordshire Data Observatory and other key trends data.
- the shared priorities of central and local government

We identify below our major challenges and the key targets which we regard as our highest priorities. These are set out within four themes:

- The Economy
- The Environment
- Safer and Stronger Communities
- Value for Money

Our directorate and business plans set out our strategic priorities and are supported by detailed action plans, milestones and targets. Key corporate strategies include our:

- Communities Strategy
- Social Inclusion Strategy
- Local Area Agreement
- Partnership Framework

Funding our priorities

We have a strong commitment to value for money and innovation. We strive to deliver improved services within existing budgets or at reduced cost. Our integrated service and resource planning processes are designed to ensure we have the appropriate levels of resource in place to deliver our key priorities and statutory obligations on the one hand and to meet our council tax pledge

on the other. As a consequence, our service and resource planning processes differentiate between priorities for improvement and priorities for investment. We expect all services to find efficiency savings but protect certain areas to ensure service provision will not be damaged. As a result we have invested in the following service areas:

- X
- X
- X
- X

To be completed on finalisation of the budget

In addition to core services, we also invest in cross cutting initiatives designed to build our organisational capacity through our Change Fund. All services are subject to a Fundamental Service Review over a five year period and designed to ensure they are fit for purpose and deliver value for money.

Theme 1 – The Economy

Oxfordshire has a strong economy with low unemployment and rapid growth in science and information-based sectors. Despite this solid foundation we share many of the challenges faced by the economy nationally:

- Global competition
- Maintaining growth
- Achieving prosperity and sustainability

Our specific challenges are:

- Improving our skills base and widening labour market participation
- Investing in Infrastructure - roads, schools, affordable housing
- Tackling social exclusion

We are addressing these challenges in a number of ways:

- the Local Area Agreement provides a focus for working with our partners to deliver important targets relating to educational attainment, skills, affordable housing and tourism
- our new Local Transport Plan provides a basis for tackling the problems of congestion and improving accessibility
- the creation of Oxfordshire Highways will improve the efficiency and responsiveness of road improvements. We continue to lobby Government for the infrastructure investment we need.
- Our Children and Young Peoples Plan promotes educational success to ensure young people from all our communities achieve their potential and leave school with the skills required for further education, employment and training. By increasing access to good quality childcare it also enhances opportunities for families to make choices about work or training.
- Our work with the Oxfordshire Economic Partnership to support the Oxfordshire Economic Strategy 2006 – 16 to create sustainable long-term economic growth and support local business.
- Using our planning powers to leverage investment in infrastructure (through section 106 agreements). We received contributions of more than £5million in 2005/6.

There is an increased emphasis on developing regional solutions to the problems of growth and infrastructure. The South East Plan will highlight investment priorities for improving transport and other infrastructure and identify the number and strategic location of new houses to be provided. The development of the Oxford to Cambridge Arc is an ambitious project to develop the largest and most successful knowledge based economy in Europe. We will lobby hard for improved transport links to support this project including the east-west rail link between Oxford and Cambridge.

Theme 2 – The Environment

We are privileged to enjoy an exceptional environment with beautiful countryside and exceptional architecture. We recognise our important role as custodians of the environment now and for future generations. We face significant challenges if we are to maintain and improve our environment in the face of an increasing population, a growing economy and the pressures of waste and pollution.

Our specific challenges are:

- Making our contribution to the global challenge of climate change
- Improving the street scene and enhancing the environment
- Dealing with the environmental impact of population growth while maintaining our Green Belt
- Urban renaissance
- Potential challenge of the proposed new reservoir
- Rationalising waste management to reduce the environmental and economic impact

We are addressing these challenges in a number of ways:

- Working with partners and the Carbon Trust to reduce our carbon footprint and make our contribution to minimising the long-term effects of carbon change
- Designing streets with cleaner lines and less clutter
- Reducing congestion through parking regulation and by improving the air quality in our town centres
- Working with partners to make public transport faster, more reliable and more user friendly
- Preserving our rural environment by concentrating our housing growth on brown field sites where possible and outside the Green Belt where not
- Building on the success of the Oxford Castle development by creating an urban renaissance of Oxford's West End.
- Working with our partners through the Oxfordshire Waste Partnership to reduce the amount of landfill and improve levels of recycling
- Supporting nature conservation and enhancing public rights of way

Theme 3 - Stronger and Safer communities:

Oxfordshire is a diverse county. We are the most rural county in the south east of England with half the population living in rural areas; a quarter living in the city of Oxford with the remainder residing in our market towns. We are experiencing significant demographic change with substantial growth in the proportion of the population aged 85 and over and those with learning disabilities. The black and minority ethnic community is 5% for the County overall and 13% in the city of Oxford with sizeable populations in Banbury and Didcot. European Union expansion has resulted in significant inward migration from eastern Europe. These diverse communities share many of the same aspirations: influence over the shaping of their communities; a safe and secure environment; access to good quality schools and social care; and independence in old age. However, different solutions are needed if we are to be successful in meeting these aspirations. We face challenges in securing local involvement and participation in developing the priorities for our county and localities. We recognise the need to provide tailored approaches to service delivery if we are to meet the needs of our customers and communities effectively. This is a key driver for our objective of 'real choice'.

Our specific challenges are:

- Reducing crime and anti-social behaviour
- Maintaining the energy and vibrancy of our market towns and rural communities
- Supporting older people to maintain their health and independence
- Reducing gaps in health inequality
- Engaging with the public, private and voluntary sectors to deliver joined up, responsive public services that meet local needs

We are addressing these challenges in a number of ways:

- Working with our partners (notably the police, district councils and the voluntary sector) to reduce re-offending rates
- Acting to reduce the harm caused by substance misuse
- Working closely with health partners to provide services which meet the needs of all communities and promote healthy living
- Working with partners to meet the needs of children and young people through the Children and Young Peoples Plan
- Developing rural and market town strategies to provide these communities with fresh vitality
- Enabling the urban renaissance of the West End of Oxford
- Involving the voluntary and community sector in our planning and in delivering action
- Working with our partners through the Community Partnership and Public Services Board to deliver the Local Area Agreement

Theme 4: - Value for money

Our commitment to our customers is to deliver quality services at low cost. Demographic changes, increased demand for services and a reduction in the amount of money provided by central government inevitably puts pressure on the resources available. This creates significant opportunities and challenges to find new and more effective ways of delivering services that maximise the benefits and minimise the cost while ensuring that services are delivered in a customer focussed way.

Our specific challenges are:

- Reducing the burden of Council Tax
- Providing what customers want
- Maintaining and improving the quality of our services

We are addressing these challenges in a number of ways:

- Reducing the year-on-year rate of Council Tax increase
- Our CharterMark programme ensures we deliver quality, customer-focussed services across the Council
- Delivering an ambitious change programme to improve our organisational capacity and ensure we are equipped to meet the challenges that lie ahead
- A rolling 5 year programme of fundamental service reviews to ensure they are fit for purpose and deliver value for money
- Benchmarking our costs and service quality against comparable organisations

6. Role and Structure of the County Council

Local government is changing. Oxfordshire County Council is a substantial business with important responsibilities for many key local services. However, we are much more than a service provider. Each year we spend over £800 million of public money delivering or commissioning services for Oxfordshire's people.

We have an important role as a community leader and recognise our responsibilities as the only body elected by, and accountable to, the whole of Oxfordshire. This gives us a wide remit to pursue our vision for the county. Public services are delivered most effectively when statutory and voluntary organisations work together to achieve common goals. To this end, we are a provider, an enabler and a commissioner of services. We are proactive in forming partnerships which bring together relevant organisations to deliver better, more joined-up services to the public.

Our responsibilities include the following service areas:

- schools
- social services
- fire and rescue service
- roads
- libraries and museums
- trading standards
- registration
- land use
- transport planning
- waste management
- emergency planning

Local Government in Oxfordshire

There are three tiers of local government in Oxfordshire. In addition to the County Council, there are five District Councils which are responsible for specific services. The District Councils are:

- Cherwell District Council
- Oxford City Council
- South Oxfordshire District Council
- Vale of White Horse District Council
- West Oxfordshire District Council.

The geographical areas they cover are shown in the map on the next page.



All areas of the county, with the exception of the majority of Oxford City, also have parish or town councils. There are a total of 317 town or parish councils with responsibility for various local amenities.

Our Political Structure and Governance Arrangements

The County Council has 74 elected councillors. The full Council is elected every four years and is the ultimate governing body. The political composition of the Council is as follows:

- 44 Conservative
- 16 Liberal Democrat
- 9 Labour
- 5 Green

The Council has adopted the Leader and Cabinet model of governance with a separation between decision-making and scrutiny. A written constitution governs relationships between Council, Cabinet and Scrutiny. The Conservative group has an overall majority on the Council and forms the Cabinet. The Liberal Democrats are the main opposition and form the Shadow Cabinet. The next elections will be held in May 2009.

The full **Council** is our overall policy and decision-making body. It meets six times a year to debate important issues and sets a budget and policy framework for the council. Meetings are open to the public.

The **Cabinet** leads the County Council and is responsible for most functions. It meets in public every month and makes all the council's key decisions. The Cabinet is drawn from the controlling group and comprises 10 members each with specific portfolio responsibilities. Members of the Cabinet and their respective portfolios are shown on page 12.

Council Committees are responsible for functions which cannot be carried out by Cabinet. Membership of these committees is proportional to the political composition of the council.

Scrutiny is a process which enables the council to look at its own performance and that of other public sector services to assess how well they are serving Oxfordshire. County Councillors who are not members of the Cabinet sit on scrutiny committees. The aims of scrutiny are:

- to hold the Cabinet, as political managers of the council, to account
- to assist the Cabinet in ensuring the continuous improvement of services in Oxfordshire, with a particular focus on outcomes for the community
- to ensure that the experience and knowledge of businesses, community groups, service providers and service users are used to develop the County Council's services
- to help the council better fulfil its community leadership role by looking beyond services provided by the council to consider issues affecting the wider community, e.g. health services.

The council has five scrutiny committees and a joint committee (with the five district councils) covering health.

The political structure of the council is shown in a diagram overleaf.

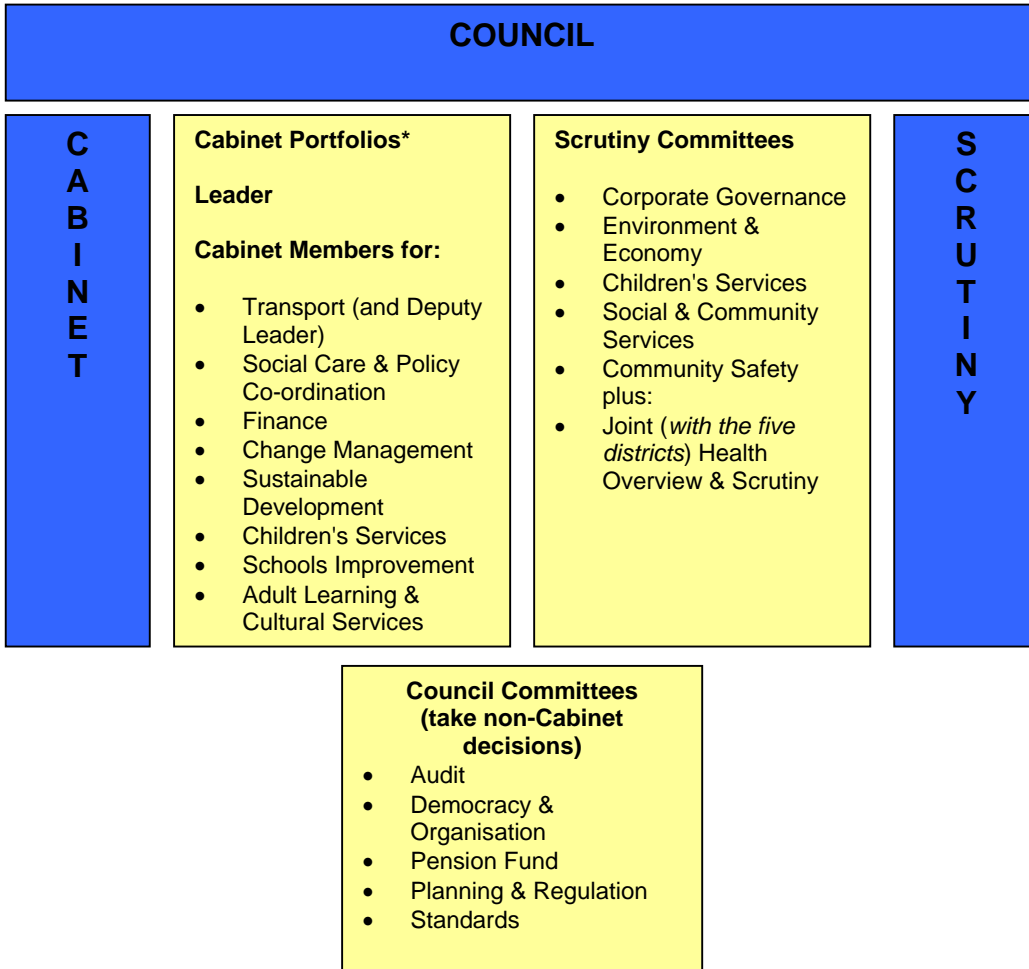


Table 1: Cabinet portfolios, Scrutiny and Council Committees
 *Full details of Cabinet members and portfolio responsibilities are shown on page 21

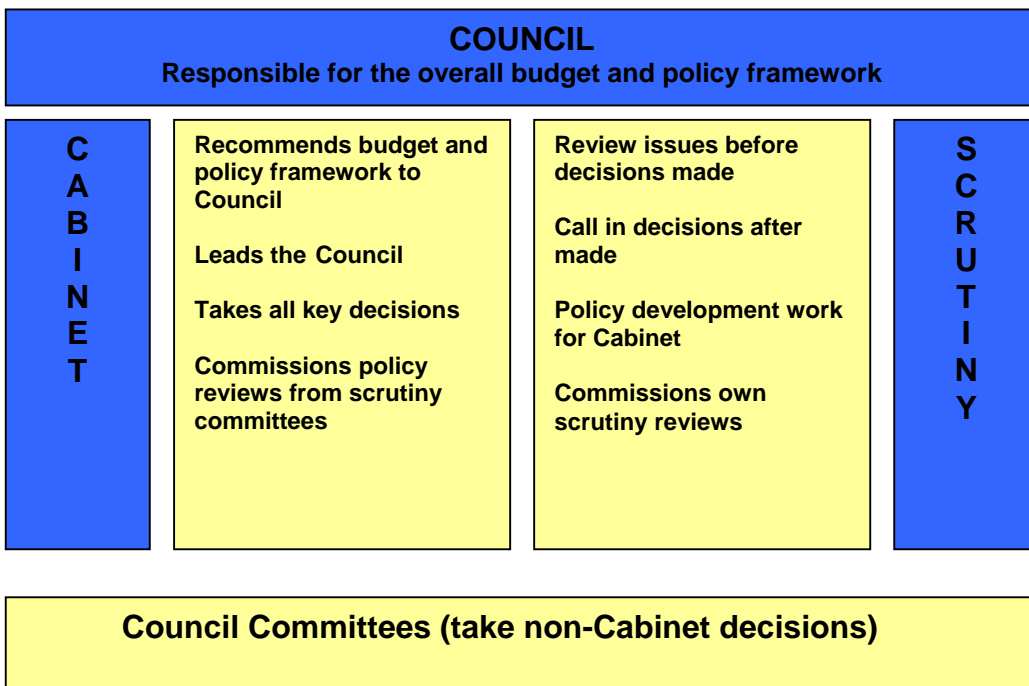


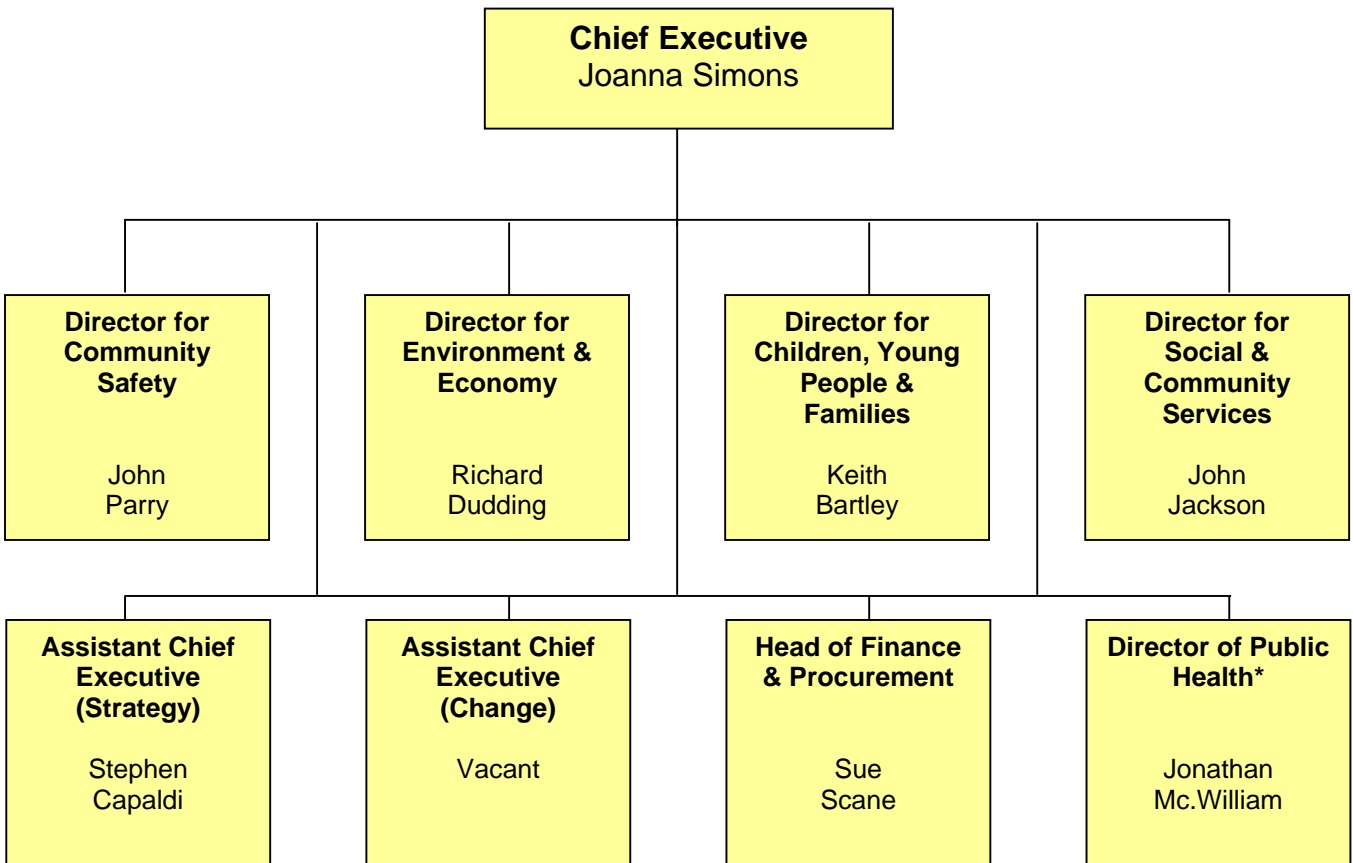
Table 2: Responsibilities within the Council's Governance Framework

Cabinet Members and Portfolio Responsibilities

Cabinet member	Main areas of responsibility
Leader of the Council: Councillor Keith R Mitchell	Corporate and community leadership; corporate strategies; regional issues; Oxford City liaison and local strategic partnership
Cabinet Member for Social Care and Policy Co-ordination: Councillor Jim Couchman	Adult social services; health issues; social inclusion & equality; Cabinet business management; services for members; Vale of White Horse liaison and local strategic partnership; voluntary and community sector
Cabinet Member for Finance: Councillor Charles Shouler	Finance; procurement; property; Cherwell liaison and local strategic partnership
Cabinet Member for Change Management: Councillor John Howell	Culture change and customer focus; human resources; communications strategy; information and communications technology; South Oxfordshire liaison and local strategic partnership
Cabinet Member for Transport (and Deputy Leader): Councillor David Robertson	Transport; highways; traffic and parking; road safety; public passenger transport; West Oxfordshire liaison and local strategic partnership
Cabinet Member for Sustainable Development: Councillor Roger Belson	Regional planning and local development framework; economic development; waste management; environmental management; archaeology; access to the countryside; tourism
Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Families: Councillor Louise Chapman	Services for children, young people and families including lead responsibility for educational policy; preventative services; child protection; family support, youth service
Cabinet Member for Schools Improvement: Councillor Michael Waine	Primary and secondary schools; special education; pupil services; school transport; music service
Cabinet Member for Adult Learning and Cultural Services: Councillor Don Seale	Adult learning; libraries; museums and heritage; the arts; archives; leisure and recreation
Cabinet Member for Community Safety: Councillor Ray Jelf	Fire and rescue; consumer protection; emergency planning; police issues; trading standards; registration service; coroner's service; travellers; drugs and alcohol awareness; youth justice

Management Arrangements

The County Council's services are delivered through four directorates each led by a strategic director. The County Council Management Team (CCMT) comprises the Chief Executive, four directors, the Assistant Chief Executives, the Head of Finance and Procurement and the Director of Public Health. CCMT meets on a weekly basis and takes a strategic approach to the management of the council. The members of CCMT are shown in the diagram below. Each directorate comprises a number of services, each of which is led by a head of service.



* joint appointment with Oxfordshire Primary Care Trust

Community Leadership

Throughout this plan we have emphasised the importance of our community leadership role. We have been proactive in developing partnerships which have brought together a variety of stakeholders to meet the needs and priorities of our communities. We will continue to act as a catalyst for joint working in the years ahead.

Key examples of partnership work in action are explained below.

Oxfordshire Partnership

The Oxfordshire Partnership is the over-arching strategic partnership for the county, bringing together organisations from the public, private, voluntary and community sectors to focus their efforts on those things that are important to people who live, work and visit the county and, more importantly, to do something about it. The Partnership, through a Partnership Board, is responsible for developing a Sustainable Communities Strategy which will provide a vision for Oxfordshire.

Local Area Agreement

Our Local Area Agreement (LAA) is a three-year agreement between the council and central government. LAAs are structured around the key national and local priorities shared by central and local government. Oxfordshire was successful in its bid to secure an LAA for 2006/09. The County Council has the lead role in brokering the LAA. The LAA allows us to work collaboratively with other public sector and voluntary organisations by pooling resources and achieving joint delivery arrangements.

The LAA is important because it:

- gives the opportunity to deliver more effective local action
- allows better use of resources
- provides more funding for local services.

Our Public Services Board oversees the implementation of the LAA. This is chaired by Cllr Keith Mitchell, Leader of Oxfordshire County Council. Key decision-makers from the public services are members, including the District Councils, Thames Valley Police, South East England Development Agency, Government Office for the South East, the Learning and Skills Council and the NHS.

The LAA provides financial incentives through a pump-priming grant which is awarded to help achieve step-change in performance and a reward grant which is payable if stretching performance targets are met.

The LAA focuses on five themes:

- children and young people
- safer and stronger communities
- environment
- healthier communities and older people
- economic development and enterprise.

Children and Young People's Plan

The County Council has led the development of the Children and Young People's Plan for Oxfordshire. This plan encompasses all services for children and young people in the county. The plan is designed to improve the lives of all Oxfordshire's young people in terms of education, health, social care, reducing offending, drugs and alcohol misuse, housing and leisure. The plan identifies joint agency priorities for improving outcomes for all children and young people and, under the new Children Act, all statutory agencies have a duty to co-operate in its implementation.

Our three-year plan has been developed in collaboration with a wide range of agencies including Health Services, District Councils, Police, Early Years Development & Childcare Partnerships, Learning & Skills Councils, Connexions, Youth Offending Team, Drugs & Alcohol Teams, Children's Fund and voluntary agencies and takes account of feedback received from children, young people and families.

Working in Partnership with the NHS

The County Council has developed a number of important partnership arrangements with the NHS which include pooling our respective budgets for a range of client groups. Under these pooled budgets, the partners agree joint priorities and the range of services that need to be developed and/or commissioned to provide the best outcome for service users. Through working together we are able to make the most effective use of joint resources and provide cost-effective services.

For example, with the Primary Care Trust, we have pooled significant resources to purchase placements in care homes and other community-based services for older people and adults with a physical disability. The County Council has lead commissioning responsibilities under this agreement and purchases designated services on behalf of the NHS.

7. Strategic Planning and Performance Management

Strategic Planning

The County Council's responsibilities are many and varied. As a community leader, we work with a significant number of statutory and voluntary agencies and within a multiplicity of national and regional frameworks. Our work is governed by a variety of plans some of which we own, some we develop in partnership with others and some to which we contribute. To make sense of this complex framework, we have adopted a 'bookcase' approach. This creates a hierarchy of plans based on the concept of a bookcase. Our bookshelf is shown in the diagram below. It is not intended to be fully comprehensive but shows the most important elements of the overall planning framework.

Planning Level	Plans					
Regional/ Partnership Plans	Community Strategy	Local Area Agreement		Children and Young People's Plan		South East Plan
Corporate Plans	Oxfordshire Corporate Plan incorporating Medium Term Financial Plan					
Statutory Plans	Crime and Disorder Strategies		Local Transport Plan		Emergency Plan	
Strategic Plans	Econ. Develop't. Plan		Asset Mgmt. Plan		Customer Strategy	Organisational Development
Directorate Plans	Community Safety	Environment & Economy	Children, Young People & Families		Social & Community Services	Corporate Core
Business Plans	Business Plans	Business Plans	Business Plans	Business Plans	Business Plans	Business Plans

On the top shelf sit the key regional and partnership plans which inform much of our work. The South East Plan is a key piece of work carried out by the South East Regional Assembly that sets out a vision for the region for the next 20 years. The plan focuses on the improvements necessary to ensure the region remains economically successful and a place in which people will want to work and live. It is anticipated that the plan will be approved by Government in early 2008 and will then become a statutory document that local authorities and other agencies will have to follow. The other plans on this shelf identify important priorities we develop and pursue in partnership with key stakeholders in Oxfordshire. A key aspect of our community leadership role is in providing leadership and facilitating agreement and focus across a variety of diverse organisations.

On the next shelf sits our Oxfordshire Corporate Plan which sets out the vision, objectives, key priorities and targets of the County Council and places our financial strategy in context. It identifies how we will respond to the regional and partnership agenda and provides an overall framework for the work of our directorates and services.

The third shelf comprises the statutory plans which we are required to produce and the fourth shelf includes plans produced by the council to support us in the achievement of our corporate objectives.

On the fifth shelf sit our directorate plans. These provide a link between our corporate, statutory, partnership, strategic and business plans. They set out key directorate priorities in the context of our corporate objectives.

Finally, on the sixth shelf, are our business plans which set out the key activities, outputs and outcomes for each of our service areas as well as the human and financial resources required to deliver them. These link into the detailed work of teams and individuals and ultimately into individual appraisal objectives ensuring a golden thread through all the council's plans.

Performance Management

Our performance management framework is based on the Balanced Scorecard. This provides a clear focus on the important measures which identify how well the council is doing in delivering its key priorities, managing its budget and in building the capacity of the organisation to deliver excellent services in the years ahead.

The Balanced Scorecard provides a framework for measuring our performance in relation to four key perspectives:

- customers – how we are doing in delivering our key priorities for our customers
- finance – how we are managing our finances
- people – how we are developing our people to deliver excellent services in the future
- processes - how we are developing our processes to improve efficiency and effectiveness and deliver value for money.

Our corporate Balanced Scorecard is reported to the County Council Management Team and the Cabinet on a quarterly basis. Our corporate scorecard targets for 2007/08 are shown at Annex B. From April 2007, Balanced Scorecards will support all levels of our Service and Resource Planning framework.

We place considerable emphasis on developing a strong culture of performance management throughout the council and we continue to make ongoing improvements to our performance management framework.

The table below illustrates the golden thread through our strategic planning framework from our corporate vision through to individual staff objectives.

Plan	Focus	Monitoring arrangements
Corporate Plan	Vision, objectives and key priority targets	Monitored quarterly by the County Council Management Team and Cabinet through the Balanced Scorecard
Directorate Plans	Directorate priorities and relationship to corporate objectives and strategic priorities	Performance is monitored at least quarterly by the Director and Heads of Service and reported to the lead Cabinet member
Business Plans	Service activities and relationship to corporate objectives	Performance is monitored at least quarterly by the Head of Service and service managers
Individual Plans	Individual objectives	Performance is monitored at least quarterly through one to ones and through annual appraisals and half-yearly reviews

Directorate and business plans are subjected to critical challenge and review by our Corporate Performance Team and by Cabinet members and senior officers as part of the annual budget setting process to ensure our service and spending priorities are appropriately aligned. The risks and uncertainties that could impact on the achievement of strategic and service priorities are identified in the Strategic and Service Risk Registers which are reviewed quarterly.

8. The Council's Change Programme

In the past year the Change Management Board has firmly established a Change Programme to encompass the behavioural and organisational changes needed to meet our corporate objectives.

With major projects progressing well, the focus is now on prioritising and managing change. We take a proactive approach to change management and drive the direction of change rather than being driven by it.

The Council's Change Management Board

The Council's Change Management Board, established in May 2005, has laid the foundations for cultural and behavioural change throughout the organisation. The Board comprises the County Council Management Team (CCMT) and the Cabinet Members responsible for Change Management and Finance and the Deputy Leader of the Council. The Cabinet Member for Change Management chairs the Programme Board.

The role of the Change Management Board is two fold:

- To monitor and coordinate the most important projects and programmes in the organisation
- To lead the organisation in cultural and behavioural change

The Change Programme

The Change Programme comprises of a portfolio of strategic projects which are crucial to the delivery of our corporate objectives.

Two programmes have been successfully signed off.

- **Directorate realignment** was successfully implemented in June 2006 with the creation of the Children, Young People & Families Directorate and the Directorate for Social and Community Services.
- The **SAP revitalisation** project was successfully integrated into the Shared Services programme.

The current programme consists of the following major projects:

- **CharterMark**

The aim of the CharterMark Programme is to use the Charter Mark framework to improve internal and external customer service standards across the authority in a consistent and accredited way and become a Charter Mark authority by 31 March 2009.

- **Organisational Development**

The aim of the Organisational Development Programme is to make the organisation fit for purpose by promoting the behaviours and attributes needed to improve performance and meet future challenges and by ensuring that our performance management arrangements, including service and resource planning, facilitate improvement

- **Oxfordshire Highways**

The aim of the Oxfordshire Highways Project is to work in partnership with Isis Accord, Jacobs Babtie and Buro Happold to improve the condition of local roads and pavements while achieving high standards of customer satisfaction, minimising environmental impact, achieving sustainable and demonstrable efficiency savings and delivering the council's capital programme reliably and cost-effectively.

- **Review of Property Assets**

The aim of the Review of Property Assets Programme is to provide the office accommodation necessary for the effective delivery of services while, as far as possible, meeting the project success criteria: a smaller portfolio; a more flexible portfolio; a better quality portfolio; improvements in the working environment; a reduction in the maintenance backlog to a sustainable level; increased facilities for modern workstyles; increased sharing; more effective use of space; improved accessibility to services; improved environmental performance; a reduction in travel.

- **Shared services**

The aim of the Shared Services Programme is to consolidate the activity and resources delivering Finance, Procurement and Human Resource support within the council to create a centre of excellence that will deliver more streamlined processes, improved performance, efficiency and high quality professional support to all areas of the organisation

- **Time to change**

The aim of the Time to Change Programme is to deliver the systems and processes that will enable Social & Community Services to deliver cost efficiencies and better services to clients through standardised, auditable and integrated electronic systems which support the operation of social care processes as well as performance reporting

Seven Key changes for success

The overall aims of the board have been categorised into seven key areas known collectively as the **Seven Key Changes for Success**. It is already possible to demonstrate significant progress towards meeting these aims.

1. Efficiency and Economy

We strive to be an efficient organisation which continually finds more economic ways of doing things for the benefit of our customers.

- Our Shared Services Centre will streamline the Council's support services and is predicted to save £27 million gross over eight years.
- Tighter controls have been introduced on recruitment to control staffing numbers. The first 18 months of implementation of our staffing establishment (excluding schools) has shown a drop of some 300 posts or 6%.
- A system of fundamental reviews has been introduced to challenge accepted ways of doing things and identify more efficient and economical alternatives. The first review (of home support) is under way and this has already identified savings of £600k per annum.
- Our programme of Business Process Re-engineering will streamline other services

2. Prioritisation and Hard Choices

As an organisation we need to be able to prioritise and make hard choices for the benefit of customers.

- There has been significant progress made in integrating service and resources planning. From 2007-08, business plans at service manager level will incorporate benchmarking and balanced scorecard elements, as well as bringing financial and service planning information together in one place.

3. An Implementation Culture

We strive for a 'can-do' attitude focused on solutions rather than problems. We recognise when decisions need to be made and implement them accordingly.

- Work is underway to de-clutter the corporate environment so that messages throughout the organisation are clear. Internal communications have been rationalised and focus on our key aims.

- We will be looking for opportunities to promote shorter and fewer meetings so we can focus on 'doing'. The Cabinet has already reduced its frequency of meetings.

4. Customer Focus

We strive to be a customer-focused organisation which listens to the experiences of its customers.

- We are aiming to achieve corporate Chartermark status by March 2009. To date, various services within Oxfordshire County Council have 19 Chartermarks
- Staff in Social and Community Services have worked successfully with the Department for Work and Pensions to ensure that customers are maximising benefits for which they are eligible.
- The Council's Registration Service was the winner in customer and staff care category at this year's Oxfordshire's business awards event.

5. One Team

We aim to be a 'one team' organisation. Customers should experience us as one organisation with a consistent language and common standards and working practices.

- The Workforce Planning Project (which is part of the Organisational Development Programme) includes measures to ensure that talent is harnessed for the benefit of the whole organisation and not restricted to specific services.

6. Technology

We recognise the need to use technology effectively to benefit our customers. Best practice will be developed through a comprehensive new ICT strategy

- We have already achieved government targets for electronic access and customers can now access a broad range of services online
- Our Internet site was rated best for quality of content in a customer satisfaction survey of 49 local authority sites.

7. Leadership and Performance

We strive to lead by example. We expect and reward high performance but importantly we deal with poor performance.

- The balanced score card has been used since May 2006 to monitor and manage the organisation's corporate performance. This enables

CCMT and the Cabinet to focus on key performance issues and ensures greater accountability and transparency.

- New management competencies have been introduced to reflect more closely the Council's aims and values and the appraisal system has been improved accordingly.

9. Medium-Term Financial Plan

Introduction

Our Medium-Term Financial Plan 2007/08 to 2011/12 forms Annex 1 to this Corporate Plan. The Medium-Term Financial Plan contains our detailed financial strategy and its development forms an integral component of our forward planning process to ensure resources are allocated in accordance with the Council's priorities. Relevant sections of our Medium-Term Financial Plan are incorporated in our Directorate and Business Plans.

Our financial planning reflects:

- the allocation of sufficient funding to resource our key strategic priorities
- the need to fund adequately our core service requirements
- our commitment to council tax payers
- the financial resources forthcoming from Government
- our ongoing commitment to achieve efficiency savings to ensure improved value for money and service provision

Financial Strategy

To be inserted on finalisation of the budget

Our Spending Plans

To be inserted on finalisation of the budget

Capital Expenditure

To be inserted on finalisation of the budget

Medium Term Financial Plan 2007/08 – 2011/12

Our Balanced Scorecard Targets

Our Balanced Scorecard targets for 2007/08 are shown in the table below. For the targets in our customers block, the table shows how the targets support the four key themes of our corporate plan, which of the targets are included as stretch targets in our Local area Agreement and how they support the shared priorities between central and local government.

Key Targets – Customers Block	Corporate scorecard	Corporate Plan Theme	LAA Stretch	Shared priority agreed between central government and by the Local Government Association on behalf of local government
Educational attainment: increasing the percentage of pupils achieving 5 GCSEs (A* - C) including Maths and English, from 44.6% to 51.2% by the summer of 2008.		Economy		Raising standards across our schools
Educational achievement for ethnic minorities: increase the percentage of children from these groups achieving 5 GCSEs A*-C to: Black Caribbean: from 32.3% to 42%; Bangladeshi: from 42.1% to 52% and Pakistani: from 37.7% to 48% by 2009		Economy		Raising standards across our schools
Achievement for children in the council's care increasing the percentage of looked after children leaving care achieving 1 GCSE A*-G (or equivalent) from 49% to 65% by 2009.		Economy		Improving the quality of life of children, young people, families at risk and older people
Safeguarding and family support: increasing the number of parents accessing support through Children's Centres from 2600 to 4650 by 2009; increasing the number of families accessing support through Family Group Conferences from 9 to 50 by 2009, and increasing the stability of placements for looked after children from 70% to 85% by 2009.		Economy		Improving the quality of life of children, young people, families at risk and older people
Supported living: increasing the number of people receiving intensive home care from 883 in 2004/5 to 1150 by March 2009.		Safer & stronger communities		Improving the quality of life of children, young people, families at risk and older people
Reduced crime/anti-social behaviour: reducing the number of new entrants to the criminal justice system aged between 10 and 17 from 1,226 to 1,079 by March 2009 and reduce re-offending by young offenders from 156 re-offenders to 144 re-offenders by March 2009.		Safer & stronger communities		Creating safer and stronger communities

Waste management: increasing the recycling and composting rate from 33% to 38% by March 2009.		Environment		Transforming our local environment.
Highways efficiency: delivering our capital programme for 2006-09 with the projects constructed to the council's quality, cost and timetable criteria.		Economy		Meeting transport needs more effectively.
Adult skills: 720 adults achieve NVQ level 1 or higher (or equivalent) by August 2009.		Economy		Promoting the economic vitality of localities
Preschool places and childcare: increasing the number of out of school and full day care places by 10% over 3 years and by developing 25 new Children's Centres, in some cases jointly with extended schools, by 2009.		Economy		Promoting the economic vitality of localities
Delayed transfers of care – target to be developed		Safer & stronger communities		
Carbon footprint – target to be developed		Environment		
Reducing the year-on-year rate of increase in the council tax from 4.375% in 2006/7 to 4% in 2009/10 and achieving efficiency savings of £5m each year from 2006/7 to 2008/9 and £4m each year in 2009/10 and 2010/11.		Value for money		
Achieving project milestones to ensure the Council becomes a Charter Mark Authority by 31 March 2009		Value for money		
Adult Social Care basket of key indicators % of key BVPIs on track to achieve year end targets		Safer & stronger communities		
Adult Social Care basket of key indicators % of key BVPIs within comparative performance thresholds		Safer & stronger communities		

Children & Young People basket of key indicators % of key BVPIs on track to achieve year end targets		Economy Safer & stronger communities		
Children & Young People basket of key indicators % of key BVPIs within comparative performance thresholds		Economy Safer & stronger communities		
Environment basket of key indicators % of key BVPIs on track to achieve year end targets		Environment		
Environment basket of key indicators % of key BVPIs within comparative performance thresholds		Environment		
Culture basket of key indicators % of key BVPIs on track to achieve year end targets		Safer and stronger communities		
Culture basket of key indicators % of key BVPIs within comparative performance thresholds		Safer and stronger communities		

Key Targets – Finance Block	Corporate scorecard
Year end revenue spending within budget (indicator for each Directorate)	
Capital programme performance -indicator to be developed.	
Achieving efficiency savings of £5m each year from 2006/7 to 2008/9 and £4m each year in 2009/10 and 2010/11.	
Reducing the year-on-year rate of increase in the council tax from 4.375% in 2006/7 to 4% in 2009/10	
Unit cost comparison indicators (with effect from 2007/08)	
Key Targets – Process Block	
Shared Services Centre project to achieve net savings of £2.4m by 2009/10	
All financial systems integrated into SAP with SAP used as the master source of financial information, budgeting and control by 30/07/07	
SAP e-procurement deployed across the Council by 30/09/07	
Key Targets – People Block	
Implementation of Organisational Development Programme (HR elements)	
The no. of working days lost due to sickness absence	
% of appraisals completed on time	
Corporate Investors in People retained	
% of staff who are proud to work for the County Council	