



County Council

1 April 2014

Agenda

Declarations of Interest

The duty to declare.....

Under the Localism Act 2011 it is a criminal offence to

- (a) fail to register a disclosable pecuniary interest within 28 days of election or co-option (or re-election or re-appointment), or
- (b) provide false or misleading information on registration, or
- (c) participate in discussion or voting in a meeting on a matter in which the member or co-opted member has a disclosable pecuniary interest.

Whose Interests must be included?

The Act provides that the interests which must be notified are those of a member or co-opted member of the authority, **or**

- those of a spouse or civil partner of the member or co-opted member;
- those of a person with whom the member or co-opted member is living as husband/wife
- those of a person with whom the member or co-opted member is living as if they were civil partners.

(in each case where the member or co-opted member is aware that the other person has the interest).

What if I remember that I have a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest during the Meeting?

The Code requires that, at a meeting, where a member or co-opted member has a disclosable interest (of which they are aware) in any matter being considered, they disclose that interest to the meeting. The Council will continue to include an appropriate item on agendas for all meetings, to facilitate this.

Although not explicitly required by the legislation or by the code, it is recommended that in the interests of transparency and for the benefit of all in attendance at the meeting (including members of the public) the nature as well as the existence of the interest is disclosed.

A member or co-opted member who has disclosed a pecuniary interest at a meeting must not participate (or participate further) in any discussion of the matter; and must not participate in any vote or further vote taken; and must withdraw from the room.

Members are asked to continue to pay regard to the following provisions in the code that *“You must serve only the public interest and must never improperly confer an advantage or disadvantage on any person including yourself”* or *“You must not place yourself in situations where your honesty and integrity may be questioned.....”*

Please seek advice from the Monitoring Officer prior to the meeting should you have any doubt about your approach.

List of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests:

Employment (includes *“any employment, office, trade, profession or vocation carried on for profit or gain”*.), **Sponsorship, Contracts, Land, Licences, Corporate Tenancies, Securities.**

For a full list of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests and further Guidance on this matter please see the Guide to the New Code of Conduct and Register of Interests at Members’ conduct guidelines. <http://intranet.oxfordshire.gov.uk/wps/wcm/connect/occ/Insite/Elected+members/> or contact Rachel Dunn on (01865) 815279 or Rachel.dunn@oxfordshire.gov.uk for a hard copy of the document.

If you have any special requirements (such as a large print version of these papers or special access facilities) please contact the officer named on the front page, but please give as much notice as possible before the meeting.

To: Members of the County Council

Notice of a Meeting of the County Council

Tuesday, 1 April 2014 at 10.00 am

Bodicote House, Bodicote, Banbury



Joanna Simons
Chief Executive

March 2014

Contact Officer: **Deborah Miller**
Tel: (01865) 815384; E-Mail: deborah.miller@oxfordshire.gov.uk

In order to comply with the Data Protection Act 1998, notice is given that Items 3, 8 and 11 will be recorded. The purpose of recording proceedings is to provide an *aide-memoire* to assist the clerk of the meeting in the drafting of minutes.

Members are asked to sign the attendance book which will be available in the corridor outside the Council Chamber. A list of members present at the meeting will be compiled from this book.

A buffet luncheon will be provided

AGENDA

1. Minutes (Pages 1 - 6)

To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 18 February 2014 (**CC1**) and to receive information arising from them.

2. Apologies for Absence

3. Declarations of Interest - see guidance note

Members are reminded that they must declare their interests orally at the meeting and specify (a) the nature of the interest and (b) which items on the agenda are the relevant items. This applies also to items where members have interests by virtue of their membership of a district council in Oxfordshire.

4. Official Communications

5. Appointments

To make any changes to the membership of the Cabinet, scrutiny and other committees on the nomination of political groups.

6. Petitions and Public Address

7. Questions with Notice from Members of the Public

8. Questions with Notice from Members of the Council

9. Report of the Independent Remuneration Panel on Members' Allowances (Pages 7 - 18)

Report of the Independent Remuneration Panel (**CC9**).

Consequent on the changes to the Council's governance arrangements which came into effect following the May 2013 elections, the Independent Remuneration Panel was asked to consider that allowances that should be payable under them. This involved consideration of:

- Special Responsibility Allowances (SRAs) - the range of SRAs and potential amendments to certain of them.
- Leader and Deputy Leader – potential merger of the SRAs available to each of these two posts.
- Index – review the currently applicable index for members' allowances which is due to expire at the end of 2014/15.

Council is RECOMMENDED to adopt the recommendations as set out in the Report of the Independent Remuneration Panel.

10. Oxfordshire County Council Corporate Plan 2014/15-2017/18 (Pages 19 - 56)

Report by the Head of Policy (**CC10**).

This report and Annex provides Council with the proposed Corporate Plan for 2014/15-2017/18. This is one of the plans and strategies that forms the policy framework and

requires full Council approval.

The Performance Scrutiny Committee submitted comments to the Cabinet, who approved the draft on 18 March 2014, subject to some minor amendments to reflect the comments from the scrutiny committee. These amendments are reflected in this draft.

The Cabinet RECOMMENDS Council to approve the Corporate Plan 2014/15-2017/18.

11. Audit & Governance Committee - Annual Report (Pages 57 - 72)

Council is RECOMMENDED to receive the report.

12. Report of the Cabinet (Pages 73 - 78)

Report of the Cabinet meetings held on 17 December 2013, 28 January, 4 February, 25 February and 18 March 2014 (**CC12**).

MOTIONS WITH NOTICE FROM MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL

WOULD MEMBERS PLEASE NOTE THAT ANY AMENDMENTS TO MOTIONS WITH NOTICE MUST BE PRESENTED TO THE PROPER OFFICER IN WRITING BY 9.00 AM ON THE MONDAY BEFORE THE MEETING

13. Motion From Councillor Arash Fatemian

“The recent flooding in our County posed very real and difficult challenges to the people of Oxfordshire. The efforts and achievements of our staff - and of our communities - in responding to those challenges was an impressive testament both to public service and to community support. Many people devoted long hours and hard work to keeping people safe and informed. It represented the best of Oxfordshire.

Consequently this Council applauds the efforts and achievements of everyone who worked so hard to alleviate the flooding this winter.”

14. Motion From Councillor Jean Fooks

“Council notes :

- Air pollution has a detrimental effect on health;
- Traffic is the main source of pollution from NOx and particulates in Oxford and other town centres in Oxfordshire.

Council recognises that transport is essential to enable people to move around the County but also recognises that Oxfordshire County Council has a duty of care to protect the health of its residents.

Council therefore recommends that:

- The Oxfordshire Health & Wellbeing Board recognises the significance of air quality as an outcome indicator in Oxfordshire, and addresses the issue by including air quality within the Oxfordshire Joint Strategic Needs Assessment;
- the impact on the health of Oxfordshire residents, from NOx and particulates, should be considered as new large developments are proposed and new transport strategies developed. This is immediately relevant in the development of LTP4, the updated Oxford Transport Strategy and the Westgate and Northern Gateway developments;
- all transport strategies should include an emphasis on the possible use of pollution-free fuels, freight consolidation strategies and alternative transport modes such as cycling to reduce health risks to residents and visitors alike.

Council further asks the Oxfordshire Joint Health Overview & Scrutiny Committee to consider Air Quality and its effects on Health as soon as possible.

15. Motion From Councillor Susanna Pressel

"The floods in January 2014 affected many Oxfordshire households very badly and caused chaos for traffic in many parts of the County. In the City alone they are estimated to have cost the country's economy about £40 million. We are told that it costs 8 times more to deal with the aftermath of flooding than it does to prevent floods, therefore Council:

- urges the Leader to write to the government, asking them to reach an urgent decision on contributing a substantial sum to the cost of the western conveyance channel/Oxford relief channel;
- urges our partners and local businesses also to contribute;
- urges Thames Water to carry out work as soon as possible to prevent or at least reduce the amount of sewage overflow that occurs when the level of the groundwater is high; and
- urges the Environment Agency and other partners to continue to carry out other projects that will help to retain water further upstream, if this can be done without flooding homes."

16. Motion From Councillor David Williams

"This Council is concerned at the level of bee colony collapse in the UK and Oxfordshire with a 60% decline over the last 10 Years and the threat to our food supply as bees provide over 80% of crop pollination. With this in view and taking into account the Councils responsibilities for conserving biodiversity this Council calls on the Secretary of State for the Environment to extend his recent moratorium on the use of neonicotinoids to an outright ban.

The Council therefore asks Cabinet to:

- (i) launch a programme that would seek to support and protect bees focused on establishing bee colonies in its green spaces and wild areas with bee friendly plants;

- (ii) establish and fund a 'Bee Friendly Wildlife Group' of officers charged with promoting bee keeping in Oxfordshire.
- (iii) encourage the use of bee hives on municipal land and in the gardens of volunteers and encourage forms of gardening and land use that support pollinating insects. The team should also visit schools to educate children about the relationship between bees and biodiversity and the problems surrounding bee mortality;
- (iv) ask the Bee Friendly Wildlife Group to commit resources to mapping Bee-lines (1) and to act in an advisory agent too local farmers on their crop planting operations. The County could also join with Berkshire and Buckinghamshire and Oxon Wildlife Trust in their Friendly Gardening Awards scheme which includes the category of a 'nectar bar' (2)."

17. Motion From Councillor David Williams

"Flooding in Oxfordshire has recently caused many millions of pounds worth of damage to homes and businesses. With the prospect of extreme weather conditions such as sustained torrential downpours being repeated on an ever increasing scale due to global warming it is imperative that the County Council not only puts in place local engineering flood defences but also accepts that it must play its part in flood prevention by contributing to the campaign to prevent climate change. With this in view the Council calls on the Cabinet to commission a full officer's report in conjunction with other authorities that illustrates the local causes of flooding in the whole County and to outline how working with other stakeholders such as the Environment Agency cost effective local measures can be introduced to mitigate the effects of increasingly freak weather episodes.

The comprehensive range of works suggested should not include measures that merely divert flood waters away from particular area of the County and relocate the flooding to other towns and villages. The report should give a reasonable estimate of the costs involved and with other authorities the County should seek such monies from Governmental sources.

In approaching the Government the County should also be clear that expensive local engineered solutions will not stop the problem and that it is now more important than ever that the Conservative/Liberal coalition actually does something to honour its pledge to be the 'Greenest Government ever'".

18. Motion From Councillor John Sanders

"This Council welcomes the decision by Cabinet to go ahead with implementing the project to ease traffic on the A40 at Shores Green, Witney, as recommended by the independent planning inspector and the Conservative Secretary of State for Transport. It now urges that the project be implemented without delay in order to ease chronic traffic congestion in the area."

19. Motion From Councillor Mike Beal

“In the light of an environmental impact report on HS2 construction traffic on Banbury, highlighted by BBC Oxford recently, will Council now look again at road infrastructure including a new south to east link road for the town before gridlock ensues for Grimsbury residents and in turn all of Banbury?”

20. Motion From Councillor Glynis Phillips

“This Council notes that significant new Public Health contracts commenced on 1 April and requests that a progress report on those contracts be brought to the November 4th meeting listing those contracts and setting out:

- (a) the numbers of customers using the service in the first 6 months of the new contract, with comparative figures for the usage of the equivalent service in the 6 months to 30 September 2013;
- (b) the training provided to staff on any new ICT systems which underpin the service to which the contact refers; and
- (c) the cost savings which were anticipated under the new contracts and the cost savings which have been realised in the first 6 months, detailing what unexpected costs if any had been incurred.”

Pre-Meeting Briefing

There will be a pre-meeting briefing at County Hall on **Monday 31 March 2014 at 10.15 am** for the Chairman, Vice-Chairman, Group Leaders and Deputy Group Leaders

OXFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

MINUTES of the meeting held on Tuesday, 18 February 2014 commencing at 10.00 am and finishing at 3.35 pm.

Present:

Councillor Tim Hallchurch MBE – in the Chair

Councillors:

Anne Purse	Patrick Greene	Zoé Patrick
Jamila Azad	Jenny Hannaby	Glynis Phillips
David Bartholomew	Nick Hards	Susanna Pressel
Mike Beal	Neville F. Harris	Laura Price
Maurice Billington	Mrs Judith Heathcoat	G.A. Reynolds
Liz Brighthouse OBE	Hilary Hibbert-Biles	Alison Rooke
Kevin Bulmer	Simon Hoare	Rodney Rose
Nick Carter	John Howson	Gillian Sanders
Louise Chapman	Ian Hudspeth	John Sanders
Mark Cherry	Bob Johnston	Les Sibley
John Christie	Richard Langridge	Roz Smith
Sam Coates	Stewart Lilly	Lawrie Stratford
Yvonne Constance	Lorraine Lindsay-Gale	John Tanner
Arash Fatemian	Sandy Lovatt	Melinda Tilley
Neil Fawcett	Mark Lygo	Michael Waine
Jean Fooks	Kieron Mallon	Richard Webber
Anthony Gearing	Charles Mathew	David Williams
Janet Godden	David Nimmo Smith	David Wilmshurst
Mark Gray	Neil Owen	

The Council considered the matters, reports and recommendations contained or referred to in the agenda for the meeting and decided as set out below. Except insofar as otherwise specified, the reasons for the decisions are contained in the agenda and reports, copies of which are attached to the signed Minutes.

1/14 MINUTES

(Agenda Item 1)

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 10 December 2013 were approved and signed.

Matters Arising

Annex 1 to the Minutes – (Question from Councillor Gill Sanders to Councillor Nimmo Smith) Councillor Nimmo Smith apologised that the question had not been answered and undertook to get a written response to Councillor Sanders.

2/14 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

(Agenda Item 2)

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Atkins, Dhesi, Mrs Fulljames, Handley and Val Smith.

3/14 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST - SEE GUIDANCE NOTE

(Agenda Item 3)

Members noted the advice of the Monitoring Officer in relation to the Declaration of Interests.

4/14 OFFICIAL COMMUNICATIONS

(Agenda Item 4)

The Chairman reported as follows:

Flooding - Council passed on sincere thanks to the large number of County Council staff who had worked very long hours – often through the night and, sometimes in extremely inhospitable weather conditions, including staff in highways, social care, fire and rescue, emergency planning, communications and many other services.

With the Commonwealth Games being held in Glasgow this year, local authorities, civic dignitaries, charity and community groups across the country would be marking the occasion with flag raising ceremonies. On Monday 10 March the Chairman would raise a flag at County Hall at 10.00 am.

Pam Johnston, who was a County Councillor for the Hinksey Division 1981 – 1993, died in January 2014 and Tony Stockford who was a County Councillor for the Blackbird Leys Division 1989 – 2001, died in January 2014. Councillors Godden, Brighouse, Purse, Johnston and Mallon paid tribute to the former County Councillors. The Council then observed a Minute's Silence in their memory.

5/14 APPOINTMENTS

(Agenda Item 5)

RESOLVED: to note the following appointments following nominations by the Leader of the Conservative Independent Alliance to:

- (i) replace Councillor Caroline Newton with Councillor Lawrie Stratford on the Education Scrutiny Committee;
- (ii) replace Councillor Caroline Newton with Councillor David Bartholomew on the Audit & Governance Committee.

6/14 PETITIONS AND PUBLIC ADDRESS

(Agenda Item 6)

The following petitions were received by the Chairman of the Council:

Ms Karen Waggott, on behalf of residents of Didcot seeking local councillors and developer Taylor Wimpey to save Didcot West's archaeological sites for future generations. The sites included Iron Age and Bronze Age villages, setting of a 9000 year old Neolithic pot, Mesolithic and Neolithic camps, pond barrow and Roman villa.

The petition was referred to the Director of Environment & Economy.

Mrs Barbara Gatehouse on behalf of the Chinese Centre expressing their extreme concern that many non-English speaking Chinese would suffer if the Oxfordshire Chinese Community & Advice Centre (OCCAC) funding ceased to bilingual advice work. They urged the County Council to rethink its position and award OCCAC their current level of funding for the Chinese Advice Centre, on the basis that should the Chinese bilingual advice service close, no other organisation within the County will be able to meet the complex and differing social and linguistic needs of this very disadvantaged group of people.

The petition was referred to the Director for Social & Community Services.

Ms Sue Tanner on behalf of the Oxfordshire Support fund asking that the County Council abandon its plan to drastically reduce funding to the Support Fund and all of its grants to Advice Centres on the basis that if this funding was cut the most vulnerable people in society would be punished and pushed into destitution.

The petition was referred to the Director for Social & Community Services.

The following public addresses were received by the Council:

Mr Fishbourne, Chair of Trustees at Refugee Resource, urged the Council not to cut to Refugee Resource funding and in particular the post trauma counselling service on the basis that refugees could not seek this support elsewhere and that the Council should give due regard to their legal duty under the Ethnic Minority Equality Act to provide thus service.

Ms Lesley Dewhurst, Chief Executive of Oxford Homeless Pathways whilst acknowledging the staggered cuts, expressed great disappointment that there had been no softening of the cuts. She urged the Council to reconsider funding as the long term impact of cuts would mean increased homelessness, drugs abuse, social disorder and purpose built hotels lying empty.

Ms Fran Bennett, Treasurer and Trustee of Agnes Smith Advice Centre, Blackbird Leys urged the Council to reject the cuts to the support funding on the basis that it was the last resort for crisis grants.

Ms Audrey Irons, Operations Manager for Connection, the floating support team spoke against the cuts to the service on the basis that the floating support team helped over 1000 people in Oxfordshire with housing related services.

Ms Gill Tishler, Oxford City Advice Bureau urged the Council not to withdraw funding for Advice Centres which provided timely advice for many disabled residents in Oxford.

7/14 REPORT OF THE REMUNERATION COMMITTEE TO OXFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL ON THE COUNCIL'S PAY POLICY

(Agenda Item 7)

The Council had before them the report of the Remuneration (CC7) on the Council's Pay Policy Statement, including the introduction of local bargaining on pay and terms and conditions for Green Book and Senior Employees.

RESOLVED: (on a Motion by Councillor Hudspeth, seconded by Councillor Patrick and carried nem con) to:

- (a) receive the report of the Remuneration Committee;
- (b) approve the revised Pay Policy Statement at Annex 2 to this report.

8/14 SERVICE & RESOURCE PLANNING 2014/15 - 2017/18

(Agenda Item 8)

The Council had before them the Report by the Chief Finance Officer (CC8) including the Leader of the Council's overview (Section 1), Budget Strategy and Capital Programme (Section 2) and the Directorate Business Strategies (Section 3). The recommendations set out in the report were made subject to the Chief Finance Officer's statutory report on the robustness of the budget estimates and adequacy of financial reserves as set out in Section 4.

The Council also had before it budget proposals in the form of: Amendments by the Labour Group to the Cabinet's Revenue Budget, Amendments by the Liberal Democrat Group to the Cabinet's Revenue Budget and Amendments by the Green Group to the Cabinet's Revenue Budget (CC8 Labour), (CC8 Liberal Democrat), and (CC8 Green) respectively (additional Papers 1).

Councillor Hudspeth moved and Councillor Fatemian seconded the Cabinet's recommendations on Service & Resource Planning 2014/15 – 2017/18 (CC8). In moving the motion, Councillor Hudspeth paid tribute to Lorna Baxter and her staff for all their work in preparing the budget.

Councillor Brighthouse moved and Councillor Hards seconded an amendment to the Cabinet's budget as set out in the Additional Papers 1 (CC8 Labour). Councillor Brighthouse paid tribute to Lorna Baxter and her team.

Following debate, the amendment was lost by 30 votes to 15, with 12 Abstentions.

Councillor Patrick moved and Councillor Roz Smith seconded an amendment to the Cabinet's budget as set out in Additional Papers 1 (CC8 Liberal Democrat). In moving her amendment, Councillor Patrick paid tribute to Lorna Baxter and the finance team.

During debate, Councillor Hoare moved and Councillor Stratford seconded that 'the Question be now put'. Accordingly, this was put to the vote and was carried by 33 votes to 5.

The amendment was then put to the vote and lost by 43 votes to 11, with 3 Abstentions.

Councillor Williams moved and Councillor Coates seconded an amendment to the Cabinet's budget as set out in the Additional Papers 1 (CC Green). Councillor Williams paid tribute to Lorna Baxter and her team for their help and support.

During debate, Councillor Cherry moved and Councillor Hoare seconded that 'the Question be now put'. Accordingly, this was put to the vote and was carried by 34 votes to 7.

The amendment was then put to the vote and was lost by 53 votes to 2, with 2 Abstentions.

During debate, the Chairman moved and Councillor Purse seconded that 'the Question be now put'. Accordingly, this was put to the vote and was carried by 26 votes to 12.

The substantive motion was then put to the vote and was carried by 30 votes to 27.

RESOLVED: to:

- (a) approve the updated Financial Strategy as set out in section 2.1;
- (b) (in respect of revenue) approve:
 - (1) a medium term plan for 2014/15 to 2017/18 as set out in section 2.2 (which incorporates changes to the existing medium term financial plan as set out in section 2.3);
 - (2) a budget for 2014/15 as set out in section 2.4;
 - (3) the planned level of balances and reserves as set out in section 2.7.2;

- (4) the council tax and precept calculations for 2014/15 set out in section 2.5 and in particular:
 - (i) a precept of £277,733,607;
 - (ii) a council tax for band D equivalent properties of £1,208.41;
- (5) the use of Dedicated Schools Grant (provisional allocation) for 2014/15 as set out in section 2.8;
- (6) virement arrangements to operate within the approved budget for 2014/15 as set out in section 2.9;
- (c) (in respect of treasury management) approve:
 - (1) the Treasury Management Strategy Statement for 2014/15 as set out in section 2.6;
 - (2) that any further changes required to the 2014/15 strategy be delegated to the Chief Finance Officer in consultation with the Leader of the Council and the Cabinet Member for Finance;
 - (3) the continued delegation of authority to withdraw or advance additional funds to/from external fund managers to the Treasury Management Strategy Team;
 - (4) the Treasury Management Policy Statement as set out at Appendix E of section 2.6;
- (d) approve the Prudential Indicators as set out in Appendix A of section 2.6;
- (e) approve the Minimum Revenue Provision Methodology Statement as set out in Appendix B of section 2.6;
- (f) (in respect of capital) approve:
 - (1) the updated Asset Management Plan in section 2.10.1;
 - (2) the Transport Asset Management Plan in section 2.10.2;
 - (3) a Capital Programme for 2013/14 to 2017/18 as set out in section 2.11;
- (g) approve the directorate business strategies as set out in section 3.1 to 3.6.

..... in the Chair

Date of signing

Division(s): N/A

COUNTY COUNCIL – 1 APRIL 2013

MEMBERS' ALLOWANCES REPORT OF THE INDEPENDENT REMUNERATION PANEL TO OXFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL, NOVEMBER 2013

SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

1. The Local Government Act 2000 provides that before any new scheme of allowances is agreed, the Council is required to take into account the advice of its duly appointed Independent Remuneration Panel on the levels and types of allowances to be paid under that scheme.
2. For this review, consequent on the changes to the Council's governance arrangements since the May 2013 elections, the Panel were requested to consider:
 - Special Responsibility Allowances (SRAs) - the range of SRAs and potential amendments to certain of them;
 - Leader and Deputy Leader – potential merger of the SRAs available to each of these two posts;
 - Index – review the currently applicable index for members' allowances which is due to expire at the end of 2014/15.
3. This review brings forward a comprehensive review that was due to be held in 2014.
4. Our recommendations are set out in more detail below (Appendix A also summarises these with an indication of the underlying basis for the calculations).

For change:

- A special responsibility allowance (SRA) of £500 be paid to each Locality Chairman.
- The level of SRAs for the Chairmen of the Planning & Regulation Committee, Audit & Governance Committee and Pension Fund Committee be increased to £5,050 (currently £2,729).
- An SRA of £2,729 be paid to the Deputy Chairman of the Planning & Regulation Committee.
- The level of SRA for the Leader of the Opposition be lowered to £12,565 (currently £14,660).
- The SRA for Shadow Cabinet Members be deleted (currently £2,456 per member).

- A SRA of £3,500 should be paid to the Council's representative of the Thames Valley Police & Crime Panel if they are appointed as the Chairman of the Thames Valley Police & Crime Panel.
- The Leader of the Council SRA and Cabinet Member SRA payable to the Leader be amalgamated into one allowance for the Leader of the Council.
- The Deputy Leader of the Council SRA and Cabinet Member SRA payable to the Deputy Leader be amalgamated into one allowance for the Deputy Leader of the Council.
- If the Leader of the Opposition is also the Chairman of the Performance Scrutiny Committee then only the highest SRA is payable.

For no change:

- All other special responsibility allowances set out in the scheme remain at the same level.
- The basic allowance remain the same level.

Indexation:

- The basic allowance, the SRAs and the Co-optees' Allowance to the Chairman of the Audit Working Group be amended annually by reference to the annual Local Government Pay Award for staff and that this should take effect from the date on which the award for staff similarly takes effect.

The Panel's Proceedings

5. The Independent Remuneration Panel for Oxfordshire County Council is:-
 - Ms Jenny Armitstead – the Voluntary Sector
 - Mr Ian Barry – the Not-for-Profit Sector (Chairman for this review)
 - Mr Steven King – the Business Sector
 - Mrs Olga Senior – the Public Sector
6. We met as a Panel and had a conference call to consider these matters.
7. Three members of the Panel initially met in May and June 2013 to consider those parts of the revised governance arrangements which were new following the 2013 elections. The current review completes this while also bringing forward the 2014 comprehensive review.
8. Sources of information used in our November review were:
 - Governance arrangements structure chart;
 - Role descriptions;
 - Terms of Reference of Committees;
 - Locality Meetings – terms of reference, agendas and notes of meetings;
 - Cabinet and Shadow Cabinet portfolios, and membership of committees appointed in May 2013;

- Comparative information of South East, neighbouring authorities and CIPFA benchmarking authorities;
- Frequency of meetings;
- Information about Panel's previous recommendations and rationale;
- Discussion with Joanna Simons (Chief Executive) and Peter Clark (Monitoring Officer).

Sources of information used in our May & June review were:

- Briefings by officers on the outcome of the election; the new governance arrangements and locality working in Oxfordshire (Rachel Dunn, Sue Whitehead, Claire Phillips).
- Discussions with the 3 main Group Leaders, Cllrs Hudspeth, Brighthouse and Patrick.
- Discussion with Cllr Kieron Mallon, the County Councillor who is the Council's representative on the Thames Valley Police & Crime Panel and who is also the Vice-Chairman of that Panel.
- Instances when deputy chairmen have had formally to stand in for the chairmen of committees.

Review of Allowances

Locality Chairman

9. The Panel first considered this matter in June 2013 and requested further information about the set-up and running of the locality meetings. We note the Council considers that locality meetings will be a key means of driving issues and of sharing the local perspective of members throughout the organisation. They are not formally part of the decision-making structure but the views, priorities and perspectives of Locality Meetings will potentially feed into scrutiny, cabinet advisory groups and Cabinet and so help shape the implementation of policy and service delivery. In particular we noted:
- there are nine localities – Oxford being one locality and two in each of the other four district areas;
 - the meetings are not formal decision making bodies;
 - the councillors for these localities will meet together quarterly;
 - the locality meetings will each elect their Chairman annually and that the chairman can be of any political party due to the representation in those localities;
 - councillors can influence services in their areas and feed in views, needs and issues into the decision making process;
 - there is an element of scrutiny at a local level and holding officers to account about council services in the locality;
 - each councillor has a £10,000 councillor community fund;
 - area stewardship fund for highways matters – an amount per councillor;
 - the locality chairmen will meet together annually;
 - chairmen will work with officers, councillor colleagues and others on forward planning/priorities and driving agendas.

10. We note that there is not a similar arrangement in other comparative councils other than area committees, which have a more decision-making role. As well as considering the role of the locality meetings, we have also looked at the role and responsibility of the Locality Chairman. We consider that some remuneration should be made to the chairmen due to the additional workload, responsibility and time commitments for preparing, leading and following up on the meetings of the locality (4 times a year) and the joint meeting of the Locality Chairmen (once a year). As locality meetings are not formal decision making bodies within the Council, we are of the view that the SRA for this role should reflect that distinction. We acknowledge that these locality meetings are still in their early stages and we will be interested to see how these develop for the benefit of the localities. We therefore recommend an SRA of £500 per chairman.

Chairman of the Planning & Regulation Committee

11. In June 2013, we considered that the level of SRA to the Chairman of the Planning and Regulation Committee should be reviewed after receipt of further information and consideration alongside the chairmen of other committees.
12. We note that the Planning & Regulation Committee is scheduled to meet more often than other committees i.e. 8 times a year and that it carries out a quasi-judicial function. We understand the highly contentious and high profile nature of the types of matters that come before the Committee e.g. minerals extraction, waste treatment/energy from waste. We are also aware of the need for the Chairman to know the planning process and framework as well as planning case law and legislation to ensure sound decision-making. All members must abide by the Planning Code of Practice and be aware of potential conflicts of interest.
13. Given the significant responsibilities of the Planning & Regulation Committee Chairman we recommend that the SRA be increased to the same level as that for the Chairman of the Scrutiny Committees i.e. £5,050.

Chairman of the Audit & Governance Committee

14. We recognise in light of the Localism Act and the new governance arrangements, that the role of this committee has expanded and, with it, the responsibilities of its chairman. The committee's role now covers a wide and significant remit, including internal audit responsibilities, work with the Council's External Auditor, and governance matters concerning the ethical standards of members. The committee complements the work of the Performance Scrutiny Committee and we note that the respective chairmen meet to discuss common issues and have standing invitations to the respective committees.
15. We recommend that the SRA for the Chairman of the Audit & Governance Committee should be increased to the same level as payable for the Chairman of Scrutiny Committees to recognise the wider remit of the

committee but also to recognise the essential dialogues and action planning with the Chairman of the Performance Scrutiny Committee i.e. £5,050.

Chairman of the Pension Fund Committee

16. We note that the work of the Pension Fund Committee is very specialised and so requires the members of it to be trained and briefed on the key issues regarding the administration of the pension fund, which is currently valued at £1.5 billion.
17. We recommend that due to the specialist nature of the work involved in chairing this meeting and in keeping abreast of pension issues, that the SRA for the Chairman of the Pension Fund Committee should be increased to the same level as payable for the Chairman of Scrutiny Committees i.e. £5,050.

Deputy Chairman of the Planning & Regulation Committee

18. We recognise that the Deputy Chairman of the Planning & Regulation Committee needs to be able to stand in for the Chairman at any time, including (potentially) partway through a meeting and in between meetings due to potential conflicts of interest under the Planning Code of Practice. This means that the Deputy Chairman needs to be up to speed on all the relevant matters in the same way as the Chairman (as set in paragraphs 9-11). Consequently we recommend that an SRA be introduced for the Deputy Chairman of £2,729.

Leader of the Opposition

19. We have looked at the level of the SRA for the Leader of the Opposition, taking account of a benchmark suggestion by the Council that non-executive members should receive no more in SRAs than a Cabinet Member. We met with the Leader of the Opposition as part of the May/June review to discuss her role and remuneration.
20. Taking account of the roles and responsibilities, we still consider that an effective Leader of the Opposition needs to invest significant time and effort in keeping abreast of the work of Cabinet, Scrutiny and the Council as a whole, which has a public benefit. The role is therefore significant, constitutional and integral to the democratic checks and balances within the Council. We are also mindful that the governance arrangements are now of a more consensual and partnership-led nature which also makes demands on the Leader of the Opposition. As such we consider that it merits a SRA comparable to that of a Cabinet Member. However, we do consider that the level of allowance should not exceed that of a Cabinet Member given the latter's decision-making responsibilities. Consequently, we recommend that this SRA be lowered to the same level as that of a Cabinet Member (£12,565).

Shadow Cabinet Members

21. In looking at all the SRAs across the Council, we consider that the payment of an SRA to Shadow Cabinet Members should be reconsidered. The changes to the governance arrangements and the introduction of more consensual, partnership-led dialogue between political groups appears to us to have altered the emphasis of the role. Under the governance arrangements we consider that the Council is achieving challenge, scrutiny and performance management in different ways. We have also looked at other comparative councils and note that most do not remunerate opposition councillors. Therefore we recommend that the SRA to shadow cabinet members should be removed.

Thames Valley Police & Crime Panel

22. As agreed by the Council in December 2012 these allowances were to be reviewed. We first looked at this matter in June 2013 and heard from the councillor carrying out these roles to see if the roles were working out as anticipated at the end of last year.
23. We note that the councillor in question is no longer the Cabinet Member for Police and Policy Co-ordination. However, the role of Police Liaison & Community Safety (including gypsies and travellers) and the link with the Oxfordshire Community Safety Partnership will be the responsibility of the Council's Police & Crime Panel representative rather than part of a Cabinet Member portfolio.
24. We consider that the level of SRAs continues to be appropriate for the roles:
- Council Member of the Thames Valley Police & Crime Panel - £1,515
 - Council Member appointed as Vice-Chairman of the Panel - £3,030
25. However, we also consider it is appropriate that we should recommend a SRA allowance if the Council's representative is appointed Chairman of the Police & Crime Panel. We recommend a SRA of £3,500.

Leader of the Council

26. We acknowledge the important role of the Leader in difficult economic times and with the changing challenges/pressures facing local government in the key areas of education, health, finance and planning. We note that the Leader works closely with the Leaders of the two main 'opposition' groups on the policy and direction of the Council, nurturing a more consensual and partnership-led form of governance, requiring emphasis on inclusion, planning and leadership.
27. At this time, we do not consider that the level of remuneration for the Leader of the Council should be amended. Nevertheless, we appreciate the significant responsibilities fulfilled by the Leader of the Council and would be

happy to consider further evidence, in future, of the role in practice within the Council's governance arrangements.

28. However, we do agree with the Council's suggestion, in the interests of transparency and comparability with other authorities, that one SRA should be payable to the Leader of the Council and that the Leader of the Council SRA and the Leader's Cabinet Member SRA be amalgamated into one allowance for the Leader of the Council (£25,131). This is in line with most other Councils' schemes.

Deputy Leader of the Council

29. At this time, we consider that the level of remuneration for the Deputy Leader of the Council should remain at the existing level. However, as with the Leader of the Council, we agree that one SRA would be paid i.e. that the Deputy Leader of the Council SRA and Cabinet Member SRA be amalgamated into one allowance for the Deputy Leader of the Council (£16,754)

Chairman of Performance Scrutiny Committee

30. We note under the governance arrangements that the Performance Scrutiny Committee is chaired by the Leader of the Opposition, which is part of the inclusive, consensual nature of leadership. As there is evident compatibility between the role of Leader of the Opposition and Chairman of the Performance Scrutiny Committee, we recommend that if the Leader of the Opposition is the chairman of the Performance Scrutiny Committee then only the highest SRA is paid. This will still allow that if the roles are carried out by different councillors then both SRAs would be paid to the respective councillors.

Cabinet Members – additional roles

31. We note that Cabinet Members carry out various other roles within the Council's governance arrangements e.g. the Leader chairs the Remuneration Committee, the Cabinet Member for Environment chairs the Transport Advisory Panel etc. As these roles are directly connected with their Cabinet Member responsibilities we support the Council's principle that no further remuneration is necessary or appropriate.

Third Group Leader

32. The Council asked us to consider whether there should be an allowance payable to the Group Leader of the third largest political party on the Council. We have considered this role in light of the new arrangements. We note that the Leaders of the three largest political groups meet together more often since the elections and consider key matters of policy and service development, rather than internal management issues. We acknowledge that these Group Leaders are working together for the benefit of the people of Oxfordshire in the current political environment of the Council.

33. Nevertheless, we make a distinction between the roles of group leaders generally and the specific roles of Leader of the Council and Leader of the Opposition which have a more integral and constitutional purpose within the Council's framework. Therefore we do not consider that the role the third group leader warrants remuneration within the current governance arrangements at this time. We would also restate our view that the organisation of party politics comes within the voluntary aspect of a councillor's commitments.

Deputy Chairmen of Scrutiny Committees

34. The Council asked us to consider whether there should be an allowance payable to the Deputy Chairmen of the Scrutiny Committees. We have considered the Deputy Chairman's role within the new governance arrangements. We remain of the view that the role of the Deputy Chairman is not evidentially onerous and we note that over the last two years they were only four occasions when the Deputy Chairman had to formally stand in for the Chairman at meetings for the previous five Scrutiny Committees.

Other SRAs

35. We currently do not see a reason to change the SRAs for the other roles and responsibilities set out in the Scheme. Therefore we are not recommending any changes to the SRAs for the roles of:
- a. Chairman of the Council
 - b. Vice-Chairman of the Council
 - c. Cabinet Members and
 - d. Chairmen of the Scrutiny Committees.

Basic Allowance

36. The Council provided no evidence that the basic allowance was in need of amendment. On balance we consider the current level to be appropriate and do not see any compelling reason for change.

Indexation

37. The Regulations¹ permit Councils to determine whether adjustments to allowances should be made by reference to an index and, if so, to decide upon the index and the length of its application (up to a maximum of four years).
38. We still consider that allowances should be linked to the annual national Local Government Pay Award for officers. We remain of the view that this is the most obvious and relevant index.

¹ The Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003

Conclusion

39. In making our present recommendations, we have taken into account the Council's new governance arrangements that were implemented following the May 2013 elections. We have also taken into account the consensual and partnership-led approach following the political outcome of the election and the budget pressures and services changes being faced by local government.
40. Clearly, if new posts are created within the governance arrangements or if any significant alterations occur to the responsibilities of existing postholders, then we would want to consider such matters. In that regard we consider the full extent of the responsibilities within the current governance arrangements will only be known perhaps a year after their commencement, in the light of further experience. The present review has been undertaken within a relatively short timescale since the commencement of the arrangements and in lieu of the planned comprehensive review in 2014. Consequently its recommendations are based on evidence thus far and should be seen in that context.

Ian Barry
Chairman
Independent Remuneration Panel for Oxfordshire County Council

November 2013

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Independent Remuneration Panel

Summary of Final Recommendations and Basis of Calculation

November 2013

Allowance	Current	Panel's Recommendations	
Basic Allowance (x63)	£8,377	£8,377	No change
Special Responsibility Allowances:			
Leader of the Council	£25,131	£25,131	No change – recognise the role and work of the Leader especially when local government undergoing financial constraints and times of change. Agreed to merge Cabinet + Leader's SRAs into one Basis: 3 times the basic allowance
Deputy Leader of the Council	£16,754	£16,754	No change - agreed to merge Cabinet + Deputy Leader's SRAs into one Basis: 2 times the basic allowance
Cabinet Member (x8)	£12,565	£12,565	No change Basis: 1½ times the basic allowance
Scrutiny Chairman (x3)	£5,050	£5,050	No change
Scrutiny Deputy Chairman (x2)	-	-	No SRA
Chairman of Audit & Governance Committee	£2,729	£5,050	Increase to level of scrutiny chairman (£5,050)
Chairman of Planning & Regulation Committee	£2,729	£5,050	Increase to level of scrutiny chairman (£5,050)
Chairman of Pension Fund Committee	£2,729	£5,050	Increase to level of scrutiny chairman (£5,050)
Deputy Chairman of Planning & Regulation Committee	-	£2,729	New allowance Basis: level of existing council committee chairman i.e. £2,729
Locality Chairman (x9)	-	£500	New allowance - £500 Basis: proportionally allocated in the context that, unlike other SRAs, these are not formal decision-making/constitutional roles
Chairman of Council	£8,377	£8,377	No change Basis: 1 times the basic allowance
Vice-Chairman of the Council	£2,094	£2,094	No change Basis: ¼ times the basic allowance

Allowance	Current	Panel's Recommendations	
Leader of Opposition	£14,660	£12,565	Reduce to Cabinet level (£12,565 - 1½ times the basic allowance) No additional SRA for chairing Performance Scrutiny
Other Shadow Cabinet (x9)	£2,456	-	Remove SRAs for all except Leader of Opposition. Note emphasis of new arrangements on consensual approach at group leader level and through Scrutiny and CAGs
Third Party Leader	-	-	Recognise additional workload at Political Group Leaders – but not convinced that this requires remuneration
Police & Crime Panel: Member Vice-Chairman Chairman	£1,515 £3,030	£1,515 £3,030 £3,500	Confirmed previous recommendations and new allowance of £3,500 if OCC chairs Panel
Indexation	Staff pay award	Staff pay award	No change – continue with this Index for next four years (unless reviewed earlier)

Division(s): N/A

COUNCIL – 01 APRIL 2014

OXFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL CORPORATE PLAN 2014/15- 2017/18

Report by the Head of Policy

Introduction

1. The Council's proposed Corporate Plan for 2014/15-2017/18 (Annex 1) is one of the plans and strategies that forms the policy framework and requires full Council approval.
2. The Performance Scrutiny Committee submitted comments on the Plan to the Cabinet, who approved the draft on 18 March 2014, subject to some minor amendments to reflect the comments from the scrutiny committee. These amendments are reflected in this draft.

Key Issues

3. The 2013/4-2017/18 Plan represents a factual update and a refreshed statement of the Leader and council's priorities.
4. Our overall ambition, as set out in the Plan, is 'A Thriving Oxfordshire', with the key priorities of 'A Thriving Economy', 'Thriving People and Communities', and having 'A Safety Net'. We will work to achieve these priorities by 'Providing Community Leadership', 'Working in Partnership' and 'Helping People to Help Themselves'.
5. The Plan will be published on the Oxfordshire County Council website and on the intranet once it has been approved by Council. A small number of copies will be printed and sent to key stakeholders, including one copy for each library.

RECOMMENDATION

6. **The Cabinet RECOMMENDS Council to approve the Corporate Plan 2014/15-2017/18.**

MAGGIE SCOTT

Head of Policy

Background papers: nil.

Contact Officer: Alison Yates, Senior Policy Officer Tel 01865 815214

April 2014

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A Thriving Oxfordshire

*Oxfordshire County Council
Corporate Plan 2014/15-2017/18*

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1. Leader's Foreword

In this, the first corporate plan since the 2013 local elections, Oxfordshire County Council set out how we are planning to respond to the tremendous challenges which face our council - primarily our growing population, and our falling budgets.

I hope though, too, that a message of optimism about Oxfordshire - its individuals, families, charities, businesses, and the communities they make up, shines through as well. Oxfordshire is a great place to live and work for the vast majority of our people, and a huge contributor to the national economy.

Nonetheless, these are tough times for many of us, and I recognise that we are shouldering at least our fair share of the burden of getting the national deficit down. Staff and councillors have risen to this challenge, and we have already delivered savings on a scale hard to imagine at the start of this journey.

While flattered by government's well-placed confidence in us to deliver, I recognise the hard choices this implies, and the justifiable unhappiness we have heard loud and clear about some of the cuts we have needed to make in our recent budget. People have every right to protest, but as I have said throughout this process, our savings target is fixed. If we shy away from some cuts, we have to find others to replace them.

I am certain that our self-reliant communities, our thriving voluntary sector, and our innovative and growing private sector mean it will be possible for the state to do less, and individuals to do more - but I am committed to the Council managing this in a fair and equitable way across the county and across our communities, and in protecting our provision for the most vulnerable whenever possible.

We also have a key strategic role in supporting the private sector growth which generates the jobs people need to live independent lives, and shaping the education which enables local people to take up those opportunities. With the City Deal this year, and the Strategic Economic Plan in gestation, we will not be losing sight of this agenda, and the need for us to speak up for Oxfordshire on the national stage, particularly important as we approach the next general election.

Even after all these savings, we will remain a large organisation, delivering 80% of local government services to over 650,000 people, and we have a leading strategic role to play. Even if we were reduced to providing only the services we are required to provide by law, we would still be spending hundreds of millions of pounds a year.

To maximise value for taxpayers, we need to be as smart in our spending as possible - in our co-operation with public sector partners, business, and the voluntary sector, and in our use of property, sharing buildings, enabling people to work on the move, and reducing those costs.

I can't promise when these tough times will end. I can promise an open and responsible approach to find a way through them, in partnership, and drawing on all of Oxfordshire's many strengths to get the best outcome possible.

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2. About this Plan

The county council produces a Corporate Plan every year. The Plan is where we set out our strategic priorities for the next four years. It drives the work of all our services and feeds into each directorate’s business strategy.

This Plan sits under the long-term plan for the county, as set out in the Sustainable Community Strategy called ‘Oxfordshire 2030’.

The Corporate Plan is described as a ‘golden thread’ that links our very high level, long term, strategy with our day-to-day working priorities.

Figure 1: The Golden Thread



3.

Measuring Progress

A series of performance indicators are used to assess our performance in delivering our priorities. These are monitored on a quarterly basis by the council's Performance Scrutiny Committee and Cabinet, and the reports are published on our website. [url]

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3. Our County

Oxfordshire is a diverse and dynamic county, home to 654,000 people¹ and over 30,000 businesses. The county has a competitive economy, where the unemployment rate is one of the lowest in the country, and the number of young people unemployed has returned to pre-recession levels. In total, Oxfordshire's economy contributes £16.5 billion a year to the national economy².

The vibrancy of Oxfordshire's economy is inextricably linked to the activities of its two universities, its teaching hospital and research trust - which is one of the largest in the UK - and the concentration of science and research activity in the south of the county. Oxfordshire's bio-technology sector has grown 14% since 2008³, while the space technology cluster located at Harwell is growing rapidly and includes the European Space Agency and the International Space Innovation Centre. Along with the neighbouring counties of Berkshire and Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire forms part of one of the highest concentrations of high-tech employment in Europe. In addition, we are home to globally recognised, prestigious, brands such as BMW Mini and Oxford University Press.

Oxfordshire is the second most rural county in the south-east of England and three Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs) fall within its borders. Thanks to this natural beauty, along with its rich cultural and historic heritage, the county attracts over 26 million visitors every year. The total value of tourism in 2011 was estimated at £1.7 billion, and the industry supports around 30,000 jobs⁴. The agricultural and forestry sector also contributes £81million to the local economy.⁵ Oxfordshire has a strong strategic location, in the heart of England, and its transport links mean many people who make their homes here enjoy a good quality of life, while having the opportunity to commute to employment opportunities both inside and outside the county. Many highly-qualified young people move here to study and work, and we also have a significant military population, including the largest station of the Royal Air Force, Brize Norton, in our county.

Notwithstanding our overall prosperity, the county faces some important challenges.– The 2011 census tells us that the population grew by 50,000 between 2001 and 2011 and is still growing, and there were 18% more people over the age of 65 in 2011 compared with 2001.⁶ The county has pockets of significant deprivation, with eighteen local areas in the county amongst the 20% most deprived in England⁷. Rural isolation affects the lives of many people living outside our major towns and city. Oxfordshire is also one of the most expensive places to live in the country, with house prices almost nine times higher than median annual earnings. House prices in Oxford City are the second highest in the country outside of London.

¹ ONS Census 2011

² ONS Regional Gross Value Added (income approach), December 2013 release

³ ONS Business Register and Employment Service, 2012

⁴ The Economic Impact of Tourism on Oxfordshire, estimates for 2011, Tourism South East

⁵ ONS Regional Gross Value Added (income approach), December 2013 release

⁶ ONS Census 2011

⁷ Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) 2010

Crucial to meeting some of these challenges, Oxfordshire is home to strong civic activism. While best known as the home of Oxfam, our county also has 3,800 other voluntary and community organisations⁸.

If you would like to know more about the make-up of the county, visit the Oxfordshire Insight website: insight.oxfordshire.gov.uk



⁸ Hidden Asset 2009, Regional Action and Involvement South East

4. About Oxfordshire County Council

Oxfordshire County Council is made up of 63 councillors who were elected by Oxfordshire residents in May 2013. The council is controlled by the Conservative Independent Alliance and its decision-making body - the Cabinet – has 10 councillors.

The day-to-day management and operations of the council are carried out by the County Council Management Team, which consists of the Chief Executive and directors who, between them, manage the delivery of public services provided by the council.

In 2012/13 we:

- filled 34,000 potholes
- assessed the care needs of 11,000 vulnerable people
- allocated 12,000 primary and secondary school places
- investigated 3,200 trading standards complaints
- served 2,000,000 school meals
- received 12,000 emergency calls to our Fire and Rescue Service
- safely disposed 300,000 tonnes of municipal waste, registered 17,500 births, deaths, marriages and civil partnerships

and much more...

The Strategic Role of Oxfordshire County Council

In 2014/15 Oxfordshire County Council’s gross expenditure is £873.6m.

49% of our funding is from council tax. Central government grants make up another 26% and the remainder is a combination of income we raise from charging for services and our share of local business rates.

With this money the county council provides 80% of local government services in Oxfordshire. We work closely with many local partners, including Oxford City Council and the four Oxfordshire district councils, but as the 'Upper Tier' authority our budget is more than double all of Oxfordshire’s district and city councils combined. The city council and district councils are responsible for local planning and housing services, but otherwise the county council delivers most of the services for Oxfordshire residents.

Our key strategic responsibilities are:

Children’s Social Services	Social Care for Adults and Older People	Highways and Transport
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Thriving Families	Fire and Rescue Service	Infrastructure Planning
Education Services, including school admissions	Emergency Planning	Waste Management
Public Health	Trading Standards	Customer Services

Respective statutory responsibilities of the county council and our city and district partners mean that there is substantial crossover in our work.

For example:

- It is widely acknowledged that Oxfordshire's economy is constrained by a lack of housing supply. Decisions about the numbers and locations of new housing rest with the city or district council and rely on the county council for provision of infrastructure.
- District councils are responsible for housing services. However if a vulnerable young person or family are made 'intentionally homeless' in some circumstances the county council has responsibility for providing housing support.

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5. Our Vision for a Thriving Oxfordshire

Our ambition is for a county where local residents and businesses can flourish - a Thriving Oxfordshire. To us this means having:

- A Thriving Economy - with small businesses starting, existing small businesses growing, and large businesses choosing to locate here, creating good jobs for local people. A strong economy makes everything else possible.
- Thriving People and Communities - where residents are empowered to help themselves and can contribute to what happens locally, and where everyone can make informed decisions about their health and wellbeing.
- A Safety Net – where we support some of the county’s most vulnerable residents, focusing on those we have a duty to consider, such as older people, disabled adults, and children. We must ensure these residents are aware of, and are easily able to access, the services and care to which they are entitled.

We will work to achieve these objectives by delivering essential core services and playing a key leadership role within the county to bring partners together to encourage the best possible outcomes for the residents of Oxfordshire. We will also, wherever appropriate, look first at how we can help people and communities to help themselves.

<p>Our ambition: A Thriving Oxfordshire</p>
<p>This means having: A Thriving Economy Thriving People and Communities A Safety Net</p>
<p>The county council’s role in delivering this ambition: Providing Community Leadership Working in Partnership Helping People to Help Themselves</p>

6. The Financial Challenge

In planning how to deliver this vision it is impossible to ignore the financial context in which we will be working over the next four years. Unprecedented reductions in funding for local government, coupled with increasing demand, present a huge challenge for Oxfordshire County Council.

We already know that between 2010 and 2018 the grant we receive from government will be cut by a total of 40%. This means that by 2018 our annual budget will have reduced by £260m compared with 2010. And there may be further cuts to come.

So far we have worked hard to deliver efficiencies which have contributed annual savings of £170million. But we are only two-thirds through our savings target - we still have a further £90m worth of annual savings to make. It is clear that these savings are not achievable through efficiencies alone and that cuts to services are now necessary.

We also need to adapt to a changing financial framework, as in many instances funding that in the past came direct to the council is now either distributed via other organisations, such as the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP), or is being pooled with partners, such as the local health service. We must change our focus to ensure we have the skills to influence and work with these partners if we are to access the money we need to deliver key projects.

Money is not the only factor we need to consider in our planning. We must also take account of the changing needs of our local population: we need to plan for the growing number of older people; we need to manage a changing relationship with key public sector partners in health, education, and policing; and we need to respond to the changing demands placed upon us by national government. We must also work within the context that Oxfordshire is an expensive place to live and that house prices in Oxford City are the second highest in the country outside of London. This presents serious challenges, including a substantial barrier to recruiting essential staff, such as care workers.

Despite all this change, we remain a county with many strengths - our world class academic and research institutions, our areas of outstanding natural beauty, our strong heritage, and our proximity to key transport links, especially access to London. The council is determined to make the most of these strengths and will work closely with local and national partners to set the agenda and create the environment in which Oxfordshire can thrive.

Making Savings

The council has made major savings since 2010, including:

- reducing the workforce by 30%
- reducing the number of managers by 40%
- pay freezes and reduced terms and conditions for remaining staff
- reducing the cost of the pension scheme
- increasing productivity
- reducing the number of councillors
- reducing the number of offices we have
- making more services easier to use online
- sharing services with other councils
- outsourcing more services to the private or voluntary sector
- tighter contracts, getting better value for money
- reducing our spend on discretionary services
- using volunteers wherever possible to supplement our permanent staff, e.g. day services, libraries
- supporting the transfer of services to the voluntary sector e.g. youth services
- introducing charging for services that were previously free, e.g. Park and Ride

But there is still a lot more to do.



Talking Oxfordshire

In the autumn of 2013 the county council ran a county-wide consultation exercise called 'Talking Oxfordshire'. This aimed to inform residents about the level of additional savings the council would have to make in 2014/15 and asked them to put forward ideas and suggestions as to how we should deal with them. Nearly 1,000 residents attended public meetings, over 400 responded to the online consultation and 600 took part in a telephone survey –here is a selection of quotes that were submitted:

- *“Preventative services are required in order to reduce the eventual need for statutory services. Very short-sighted to cut preventative services.”*
- *“The principle that people should pay (at least something) for the services they get should be practised as much as possible. Provided there is support for those on low incomes then it is right that the user is the person charged for the service.”*
- *“People in rural communities always lose out because the towns & cities are always seen as more in need.”*
- *“I regard library services as essential but payment for them should be considered, with exemption for students and anyone on public benefit.”*
- *“The Council should be doing all it can to retain those services which vulnerable people require whether they are legally required services or not.”*
- *“I was shocked to find that most children’s centre sessions asked only a £1 donation. I would happily have paid a little more, perhaps £2.50 - £3?”*
- *“I think volunteering and opportunities to contribute are valuable. However, they often need to be enabled by a paid member of staff or service - without this coordination or expert input, volunteers are often unable to operate”*

Full findings from Talking Oxfordshire can be found here:

<http://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/content/talking-oxfordshire>

7. The County Council's role in a Thriving Oxfordshire – Community Leadership and Partnership

To both respond effectively to our significant financial challenges and meet our vision for a Thriving Oxfordshire we need to fundamentally rethink the role of the county council. The council will make the transition to being an organisation that:

- prioritises work we are required to do by legislation, regulation or policy
- has a concentrated focus on prevention and early intervention
- ultimately provides a vital safety net for the most vulnerable people in our communities that we have a duty to support.

The council is actively refocusing its work, and is engaged in looking for new ways to deliver the most efficient services that provide the best outcomes for our residents. We have to be single-minded in ensuring that we use the resources we have to provide services that have the greatest impact.

We remain responsible for services that are essential to the county - supporting older people, protecting vulnerable children, and securing crucial strategic infrastructure, like roads and rail, that underpins the economy. However, wherever appropriate we will look first to:

- **Enable people and communities to help themselves** – the days when the county council could deliver all services to all people have gone. Responsibility and accountability needs to be shared throughout our communities for the county to thrive, so enabling people to become more empowered and proactive is crucial.
- **Commission and support partners** in the public, private and voluntary sectors to provide services – already, £400m of our revenue spend goes to partners to deliver services on our behalf. Our role is to ensure these arrangements have high levels of quality control and deliver the best value for money for the county. We will use our influence to encourage and facilitate a thriving market of suppliers and providers. We are paying particular attention to this in relation to social care where providers face serious challenges around recruiting and retaining care workers due to the high cost of living across the county, and particularly in Oxford City. We must also continue to build on the good relationships we have with our partners in order to deliver seamless services to residents in a way that makes sense to them and results in the best possible outcomes.
- **Take a community leadership role** – we remain extremely ambitious for the county, and we also recognise that many complex social, economic and environmental challenges can only be successfully addressed through collaboration with our partners and communities. When we are best placed to lead or co-ordinate work we will play a key role in linking up efforts, particularly where they deliver on our ambition for a Thriving Oxfordshire. We have a responsibility to provide strong and positive community leadership to encourage the best possible outcomes for our residents.

By sharpening our focus in this way we can ensure that the council remains resilient to the ongoing changes we face and that we work effectively to ensure those most in need have access to quality services. If we do this we will be best placed to ensure Oxfordshire is the Thriving County we want to see for all our residents.

We are already taking great strides towards meeting our ambition for a Thriving Oxfordshire. Examples of our work in the last year include:

- **The Oxfordshire Reading Campaign:** Working with schools, Oxford University Press, the National Literacy Trust, and local volunteers we delivered targeted support to improve reading skills for children aged 6 to 7 years in Year 2. The Campaign's annual report shows that in the first 10 months of the scheme, the average reading age of children taking part has shot up by 13.5 months.
- **The Oxford and Oxfordshire City Deal:** We worked alongside the Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership, District Councils, Universities, and scientific research institutions to win a City Deal agreement from the government. This means that around £55.5 million of government funding can now be controlled locally to boost innovation and business growth, create jobs and help secure Oxfordshire's place as a world leader in technology, knowledge and expertise. Ultimately the deal is expected to be worth over £1.2 billion when private sector investment is taken into account. The plans we have developed with our partners include the delivery of improvements to the A40 and A34, as well as a real push to drive up skills to support the accelerated development of our high-tech business sector. This means more jobs for the county and more inward investment across the board.
- **Fire and Rescue Service and Community Safety:** We are working to safeguard our communities from fire risk through the provision of advice and enforcement of fire protection, risk reduction, intervention activities and provision of information to improve community safety. We also provide (directly or with partners) preventative programmes for children and young people at risk of offending. We manage and deliver the Junior Citizen Programme countywide as well as the Consumer Challenge Quiz for children with special needs.
- **Broadband for all in Oxfordshire:** Our £25 million programme - a partnership with BT, with government support - aims to ensure that over 90 per cent of all premises across the county have access to superfast broadband by 2016. Through the same partnership with BT we are working with District Councils and individual communities on plans to extend coverage further into the remaining rural areas.
- **Working closely with the NHS:** Over £330m is currently committed to pooled budget arrangements to spend on service users of both the county council and the local Clinical Commissioning Group. This includes a significantly expanded pooled budget covering care for older people, and others to improve care and outcomes in physical disability, learning disability and mental health and wellbeing. We are developing integrated locality teams, and working towards a single point of access for health and social care. We are involved in the South East GP pilot that provides an

Adult Social Care Link Worker in six GP practices to share information, signpost and discuss appropriate care for high risk patients requiring both health and social care services. Both organisations are motivated to provide services that we would be happy for our own families to receive.

- **Public Health:** Following the return of public health responsibilities to local government in April 2013 we are working to integrate these services across our work, saving money in the long run through prevention and early intervention work, and helping our residents stay healthy.
- **Tackling Child Sexual Exploitation - The Kingfisher Unit:** This Unit is a joint social worker, police and health team focused on preventing, protecting and prosecuting cases of child sexual exploitation in Oxfordshire. The team provides a first response to concerns about exploitation and provides support to children, families and other professionals to reduce the risk to children through awareness raising, disruption activity and, where required, gathering evidence and achieving prosecutions. In 2013, over 12,000 Oxfordshire children saw the educational play 'Chelsea's Choice' to raise awareness of grooming and sexual exploitation.
- **Community Information Networks:** We have partnered with Age UK to create networks of local advisers across the county to improve the dissemination of information and advice about the range of social care and the support services available, and to support people to access them. The networks will roll out in 2014.
- **Thriving Families:** Our targeted approach continues to support troubled families – those with the most problems and who cause problems to the community around them - to make lifestyle changes and become thriving families. By July 2013 Oxfordshire had turned around 279 troubled families, the fourth highest rate in the country (out of 152 local authorities), and the approach will be extended to more families in 2014.
- **East-West Rail:** The county council provided a leadership role in achieving agreement amongst national and local partners to develop a new train route providing direct connection to London, Milton Keynes, Heathrow via Reading and all points east and west. Plans include a new 'Oxford Parkway' station at Water Eaton. The economic impact of the project is estimated to be £15m per year and is estimated to create up to 12,000 new private sector jobs.
- **Office Co-location:** The county council has been working with Vale of White Horse District Council to co-locate staff into the District offices at Abingdon. This arrangement will see property released to enable cost savings, and deliver better outcomes for staff and their clients. We have good working relationships with health, and staff are able to work from offices at the Clinical Commissioning Group and John Radcliffe Hospital. The Health and Wellbeing Resource Centres are used by health services and voluntary organisations to extend the use of the buildings and offer important support to service users. We will work closely with other public sector agencies to identify further opportunities for co-locating services as a way of improving the customer experience.

Oxfordshire County Council is responsible for 80% of local government services in the county.

DRAFT

A selection of our key partners





Safe roads, reliable journeys, informed travellers

DRAFT

8. A Thriving Economy

As the country returns to economic growth Oxfordshire is well placed to play a pivotal role in supporting the recovery - thanks to local businesses, our attractiveness as a location for investment, our skilled workforce, and our national and international transport links. A thriving economy is crucial to the wider success of the county.

The council has a key role to play in realising the potential of the county's economy but cannot drive economic development alone. Instead, we increasingly take a community leadership role to achieve these goals. For example:

- **City Deal** - we are working with partners including the Universities, research institutions, City and District Councils and the Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership to deliver the 'Oxford and Oxfordshire City Deal' – this is a deal that means £55.5 million of government funding can now be controlled locally to enable us to set ambitious policies to boost innovation and economic growth. Our aim with the Deal is to support high-tech and research industries along the 'knowledge spine' from Science Vale, through Oxford, and up to Bicester (see map), to grow into thriving businesses, and to attract similar companies to the county through providing improved road and rail links. The result will be high quality jobs and an opportunity to drive the improvement of skills of local people.
- **Strategic Economic Plan** - We are working on the development of the 'Strategic Economic Plan' which provides a basis for future Oxfordshire bids to the Local Growth Fund. From 2015 this Fund will be the primary source of Government funding for capital investment in major structural maintenance and new highway schemes, so it is essential we have a robust strategy in place that puts us in a strong position to access these funds. Work on the Plan has been led by the Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership of which the county council is a member. As a democratically accountable body, the county council has a key role to play in influencing the work of the Local Enterprise Partnership and the proposals for future development across the county.

We must be realistic in that we have significantly less money under our own control, but we will make sure that wherever alternative pots of money are available – either from central government or other partners - we are able to access them so that we can deliver this essential work. For example, we are working to ensure we have an up-to-date 'Local Transport Plan' so that we have strategies in place early to secure sufficient financial contributions from developers to fund essential infrastructure.

The county council continues to have direct control over some crucial areas, however. For example, we are the local 'Highways Authority' which means we must be consulted on planned infrastructure for all new developments and have a duty to maintain a safe highway network. Across the county we are responsible for approximately 3,000 miles of roads, 2,000 miles of footways, 2,900 bridges and structures and 59,600 street lights. We recognise this is an area of our business that

has an immediate impact on everyone's day to day lives, and we are improving public access to information through initiatives such as the 'Fix My Street' web site – where the public can report road defects. We are also responsible for network management of traffic flows, and a central part of the City Deal is to take forward much needed improvement to the highways system – particularly on the congested A34 and A40.

We are also engaged in some exciting new developments on the railways, including the East-West Rail line, which will connect to London, Milton Keynes, Heathrow via Reading and all points east and west, and will include the development of a new Oxford station at Water Eaton. There are also ambitious plans in place for Didcot station to become a 'state of the art' multi-modal interchange and gateway to the area, supporting the goal of improved connectivity for the Enterprise Zones within Science Vale. This type of work is core to our focus on supporting and enabling future growth.

More broadly, our Cultural Services team attracts wedding business into Oxfordshire, provides citizenship ceremonies to welcome our new citizens, and contributes to cultural tourism. Our Trading Standards team enable local businesses and industry to successfully compete in the marketplace, ensure their business continuity, and minimise the likelihood and impact of regulatory challenge.

The proportion of Oxfordshire GCSE students achieving at least five A* - C grades including English and Maths is at its highest ever level, and there have been significant improvements in reading, writing and mathematics for seven and eleven year olds. There has also been an increase in the number of schools rated 'good' or 'outstanding' by OFSTED. This suggests the council's education strategy launched last year is already having a positive impact, although our performance has still not reached the aspirations the council, pupils, parents and schools hold, and performance varies significantly for some groups of children. 'A Strategy for Change – Improving Educational Outcomes in Oxfordshire' sets out a clear vision for Oxfordshire to be a dynamic and forward-looking place for education and learning, providing the best quality experiences for children and young people to grow up, learn, develop and achieve.

Our priorities for action in the next 12 months are:

- **Growth and Investment** – we will continue to support the Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership and help deliver its priorities, including those of the Oxford and Oxfordshire City Deal and the Strategic Economic Plan. We will support our district colleagues to provide local housing for local people. In particular we will cooperate with district and city councils to respond to the Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA), which has indicated that that up to 106,560 additional homes are needed across Oxfordshire in the period 2011-2031.
- **Infrastructure** – we will build upon the work associated with the City Deal to set out the infrastructure required to support economic growth in the longer term. We are a key member of the Local Enterprise Partnership which has developed the Strategic Economic Plan that forms the basis of our Growth Bid to Government – we will also seek to access any funding required to support

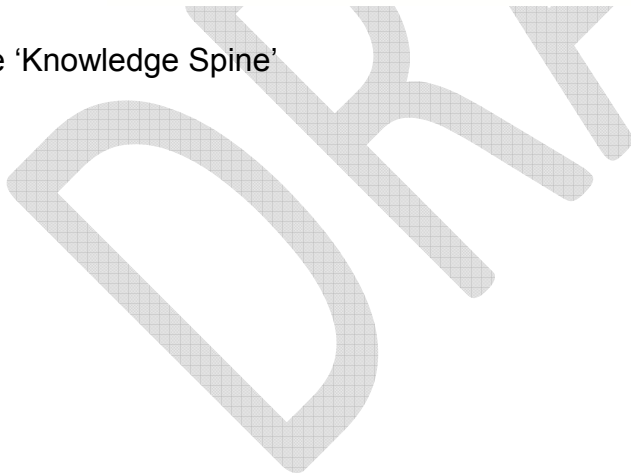
the significant growth that is planned. We will work with District and City councils to: ensure that new development pays for the infrastructure and services that are needed to support it; ensure these costs are reflected in proposals for the introduction of the Community Infrastructure Levy; and ensure the right infrastructure plans are in place for areas of significant planned development, such as Bicester, Oxford and Science Vale.

- **Skills** – we will continue to support the Oxfordshire Skills Board to implement the Oxfordshire Skills Strategy, which aims to increase the availability and take-up of apprenticeship training, and help stimulate further demand for apprenticeships in Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths subjects (known as ‘STEM’ subjects) in young people – it also seeks to up-skill people who have few or no formal qualifications. We will also work wherever we can to promote educational excellence for all children and young people and improve educational attainment in the county. Many of our schools – especially our secondary schools – are now academies, meaning they are independent from us, but we will continue to work hard to build positive relationships with our academy partners, including through the Oxfordshire Schools Forum. We still have a crucial leadership role in ensuring there is a diverse supply of strong schools for the county’s children, and a key role in continuing to improve educational attainment in the county.
- **Transport** – we will work closely with our partners to deliver funded projects, including significant improvements to Oxfordshire's road and rail infrastructure, such as Milton Interchange, Chilton Interchange, the first phase of Oxford Science Transit and phase 1 of East-West Rail. We will continue our work to update our Local Transport Plan – which sets out the long-term strategy for Oxfordshire. We will continue to respond to proposals associated with the development of HS2 to ensure local interests are protected. We will continue to work hard to maintain the county’s roads – we fix tens of thousands of potholes a year - while keeping a close eye on value for money and quality of delivery.
- **Broadband** – we will deliver high speed broadband for more than 90% of Oxfordshire premises by 2016, in partnership with BT. We will work with district council partners to help those not yet covered to identify local solutions.
- **Property Rationalisation** – we will continue the work of rationalising the county council’s property portfolio to release funds to use for direct service delivery. We will continue to make fundamental changes to our back office services and increase the flexibility of our workforce to ensure we work as efficiently as possible. Across the organisation we are focussed on ensuring that our contracts with partners deliver value for money and positive outcomes for council tax payers.

The council maintains almost 3,000 miles of road. We filled 34,000 potholes in 2012/13 and there was a 70% increase in the number of road defects reported from the same period last year. The average cost of filling a pot hole is £60.



The 'Knowledge Spine'



9. Thriving People and Communities

According to most of our residents, Oxfordshire is a good place to live. People are generally affluent and healthy, the sense of community is strong, and people feel safe in their local areas. The county council is focussed on maintaining this.

We do however have areas of acute isolation and pockets of deprivation in the county - both urban and rural – and will continue to tailor our work to meet the unique needs of these areas, working through our locality-focussed teams. More broadly, we will continue to play a key role in supporting and building resilient communities by working closely with our partners where appropriate, such as the military community and town and parish councils.

We want to play a positive role in giving all local children the best start in life – building further on our relationships with schools and academies and working with all partners, including the health service, to ensure we all have high expectations for our children’s educational attainment and future prospects.

For older people we are placing great energy into developing approaches that, wherever possible, keep people well and help them to live at home and remain active in their local communities for as long as possible. We want to continue to increase personalisation in the services we provide – increasing the numbers of people who have Self Directed Support and who receive a Direct Payment so that they have more control and choice over the care they receive. We also have a focus on waiting lists, aiming to reduce the amount of time people have to wait for an assessment or a care package. We will concentrate on joint working with colleagues in the NHS – as well as closer working between our own service teams - to drive efficiency, and join-up care for service users. Delayed Transfers of Care (sometimes called ‘bed blocking’, when people stay in hospital longer than they need to) remains a key area of concern and focus, and the only way to tackle such a challenge is through positive coordinated working between hospitals and social care.

We want to avoid, reduce and delay the need for more complex care or admission to a care home – as well as close working relationships with the NHS, our work with district council colleagues to establish more Extra Care Housing developments is a good example of this. We will continue to invest in equipment and assistive technology and we will invest in reablement – this means helping people to maintain or regain their independence by learning or relearning the skills necessary for daily living. We are also working to ensure that as many carers as possible are known and supported by us, as their role is essential in achieving our goal of seeing more people live as independently as possible in their own homes. Our Supported Transport Programme will see us working closely with bus operators and other transport providers to adapt how we support the transport needs of the communities of Oxfordshire. Underpinning all of this is our wider work to ensure that there is accessible and useful information and advice for all of our service users so that they are able to make the care choices that are right for them.

In addition, our Public Health work continues to pioneer prevention and early intervention approaches which maximise local people’s healthy lifespan – whatever their age – through, for example, supporting them in making healthy lifestyle choices

and keeping safe from diseases. This increases residents' likelihood of living longer without the need to rely on the health service or social services.

The county council has joined with the district and city councils to form the Oxfordshire Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee. This means we have a powerful role in scrutinising any matter relating to the planning, provision and operation of health services in Oxfordshire. We will continue to represent the concerns and priorities of service users in holding local health services to account.

We are the Minerals and Waste Local Planning Authority, so play a key role in ensuring household waste is disposed of efficiently and that recycling is maximised. Next year our Energy from Waste facility, which will generate enough electricity for 38,000 homes, will be in operation. We will also continue to ensure the countryside is accessible to all and that our responses to emergencies, such as flooding, remain robust and effective. Our Fire and Rescue Service has a proven track record of engaging with the community to further the message of fire prevention and will continue to have a crucial role in promoting community cohesion, while our Cultural Services team contribute to creative educational programmes and help to connect communities to their heritage.

Our priorities for action in the next 12 months are:

- **Housing options for older people** – the county council will continue to work closely with housing associations and district councils to push forward ambitious plans to develop more appropriate housing options for older people. This includes Extra Care Housing schemes which provide tailored support to allow people with care needs to live independently.
- **Community Information Networks** – we are investing in community networks to support people to stay in their communities for as long as possible by helping them access the information, advice and local services they need to make informed choices about how best to meet their own needs.
- **Libraries** – our library service provides access to books, information and knowledge to support the recreational, cultural and educational needs of those who live, work, and study in Oxfordshire. In the coming year we will be supporting the development of Community Libraries and enabling community and stakeholder involvement in the delivery of library services across the county.
- **Joint working and pooled funding** – we will relentlessly seek to improve and maintain standards of services and care, working in partnership with the NHS and providers, from across the public, voluntary and private sectors, to ensure people receiving care continue to be treated with dignity and respect. We have in place agreements to jointly manage over £300m worth of funding every year with the NHS which means better value for money for tax payers and more streamlined services for those who need them. In addition, we will be developing proposals for using the Better Care Fund – a pot of £37m – with health partners, which means more money coming across from health budgets to adult social care. Our intention is to develop plans for a Joint Commissioning Unit with health, and a single assessment process for service users. One of the key outcomes for the Fund is to achieve is a reduction in the

number of patients delayed for transfer or discharge from hospital, We are determined that Oxfordshire's performance will improve in this area.

- **Public Health** – the council will work with the Oxfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group and other partners to ensure effective commissioning arrangements are in place to improve health and social care outcomes for all Oxfordshire residents. We will work to ensure that our contracts with partners deliver value for money. We will also address health inequalities and prioritise areas of local need. The Director of Public Health's most recent annual report highlights the six main long term challenges to long term health in Oxfordshire as: an ageing population; breaking the cycle of disadvantage; mental health and wellbeing; obesity; excessive alcohol consumption; fighting killer infections. Particular emphasis is given to health in rural areas, loneliness as a health issue and the increase in residents from minority ethnic groups.
- **Preparing for Emergency** - our Fire and Rescue Service continues its crucial work to prevent fire, plan for the risk of major events such as flooding, and respond to serious road accidents. Their strategy to work jointly with other counties and other emergency services will continue, as will the council's provision of valuable regulatory services, including Trading Standards.
- **Military Covenant** – the council will continue to work in partnership with the armed forces locally to ensure our services reflect the Covenant principles so that members of the armed forces and their families do not face disadvantage. The council will support groups that apply to the MOD community covenant grant scheme for funding to run projects which encourage local communities to integrate with the armed forces community in their area.
- **Minerals and Waste** – as the Minerals and Waste Local Planning Authority we will develop and consult on a new Minerals and Waste Local Plan before submitting it for independent examination. The new Local Plan will provide the framework within which new proposals are considered. The opening of Ardley Energy from Waste facility will reduce the amount of residual waste going to landfill and provide the capacity to generate enough electricity for up to 38,000 homes.
- **Natural Environment** – we will continue to work with our partners to promote our natural environment, both as a resource for recreation and leisure activities and as a place in which our rural economy can prosper. We will work with our partners to that our response to extreme weather events – such as flooding – is robust and effective.
- **Customer Services** – our Customer Services Centre will complete its move into County Hall, bringing it closer to the centre of service delivery and helping maintain its focus on delivering solutions to customer queries.

Oxfordshire's population has grown by almost 50,000 in 10 years and is still growing.

We expect a 16% increase in the primary school populations (4-11 year olds) from 2011/12 to 2016/17. Over the next five years we expect the county will need nine additional primary schools and three additional secondary schools.

The county has an excellent recycling record, with 60% of the 300,000 tonnes of waste produced per year either composted or recycled. However this means that 40% of waste is sent to landfill. The council is taxed on waste that is sent to landfill

and in 2014/15 we will have to pay £80 per tonne.

Oxfordshire is one of only 13 county councils in the country with Fire and Rescue Service responsibilities.

Flooding in 2014

January 2014 was the wettest month in Oxfordshire since records began almost 250 years ago. The resulting flooding saw:

- 21 flood alerts established
- 168 properties flooded
- 32 people evacuated
- 45 roads closed
- One rail line closed
- 80 elderly and vulnerable clients provided with emergency transport
- One rest centre opened
- One school closed
- 500 bridges in need of inspection following the event

Our Fire and Rescue Service, Highways, Social Care, and Schools teams worked together around the clock to minimise the impact of the flooding where possible, and assist those affected.

Our priority is to assess the full impact of the flooding and to work with Government to ensure full recovery and compensation plans are in place, and that we access the funding we need to repair the damage.

We held a conference on the flooding in March 2014, attended by over 100 partners from across the county, and are applying our learning from the event to influence our new Flood Risk Management Strategy, which will go out to public consultation in 2014.

10.A Safety Net

Despite our relative affluence we do have pockets of both rural and urban disadvantage within the county, and demands on both our adult and children's social care services continue to increase significantly. As a council we are determined to face these challenges by concentrating our work on supporting these most vulnerable of Oxfordshire's residents – groups for which we have a legal duty to provide support - and ensuring they have real control over getting the care to which they are entitled.

We are focussed on embedding multi-agency working across the county in order to best protect our most vulnerable children and provide targeted support to their parents. We are committed to providing early help in order to avoid problems escalating and family needs becoming more complex. Our early intervention service remains pivotal to our targeted prevention approach. As an example of our joint working, the Fire and Rescue Service works with the early intervention hubs to mentor young people who are otherwise lacking positive influences.

We also want to start delivering our ambitious plans for children in the council's care to ensure they are placed within the county's borders, whenever appropriate. We will work to respond much more flexibly to those children on the edge of care and change the culture of always bringing children into care full time. We will be developing plans for new assessment homes to offer part-time respite alongside intensive family interventions to allow a permanent return home wherever possible.

Children's social care will continue to focus on protecting children at risk of harm or neglect and tackling, as well as preventing, cases of child sexual exploitation. We have made considerable investments in frontline children's social care services to ensure we have sufficient capacity to maintain high standards and ensure children and young people are appropriately safeguarded. The Kingfisher team has been established jointly with the police and with health partners specifically to focus on preventing child sexual exploitation and prosecuting cases if required.

We also have a critical safeguarding role for all vulnerable adults, ensuring that people live their lives free from abuse and taking action to protect people where necessary. We will continue to provide information and support to individuals and their carers to ensure people can live a life free from abuse and the fear of abuse, and can have care and support which meets their needs.

We work effectively between teams to focus work on the most vulnerable. For example, Trading Standards support and protect those at greatest risk from doorstep crime, fraud and scams.

Our priorities for action in the next 12 months are:

- **Thriving Families programme** – this programme works with the most disadvantaged and challenged families to reduce worklessness, antisocial behaviour, crime and school exclusions and to increase school attendance. The key focus is on our most resource intensive and vulnerable families with the aim of reducing the numbers needing the type of support offered by social

care. This continues to be a vital strand in the on-going work locally to narrow the gap in outcomes that exists across the county.

- **Breaking the Cycle** – we will continue to work to improve the quality of life in the most deprived areas of the county by: promoting better engagement in education, employment and training; supporting the vulnerable and those with multiple and enduring problems; promoting healthy lifestyles and reducing health inequalities; reducing and mitigating the effects of child poverty.
- **Multi-agency children's safeguarding** – we will continue to work in close partnership with the police, schools, health service and others to ensure that our vulnerable children and young people can live a life free from both abuse and the fear of abuse. This includes establishing a Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub that will co-locate staff from across these agencies so they can work closely together to respond to the needs of vulnerable young people.
- **Corporate parenting** – we act as effective and caring 'corporate parents' for looked after children, with key roles in improving their educational attainment, providing stable and high quality placements and proper planning for when they leave care. However, children being looked after by the council are currently being placed too far away from home, in many cases out of the county. We will deliver our new placement strategy that has been developed to ensure these children can live closer to home, to make it easier to keep contact with relatives and for them to move back home as soon as it is appropriate to do so.
- **Adult safeguarding** – we will undertake a comprehensive review of existing processes and procedures in adult social care, with the aim of delivering better ways of working to pressures on staff, enable quicker responses and create more capacity to cope with increasing safeguarding alerts.
- **Early intervention** - we work with partners to understand local need and secure provision of services that promote prevention and early intervention, and offer early help to children, young people and families so that emerging problems are dealt with before they become more serious. We will continue to make better links between early intervention services and children's social care to create a more cohesive all-round service that improves outcomes for children and young people. We will also be focusing on improving the experience of children and young people and their families from needing care and support to receiving it, and moving between services where necessary.

More children are entering care across the UK and like other councils Oxfordshire has seen more referrals into care following high profile cases. In 2012/13, 247 children came into the care of the council. The average cost of supporting a child in residential care is £175,000.

People are living longer, creating a greater need for social care. We also know that over the next 10 years the number of over 85s is expected to rise by 38%. The average cost of a care home place for an older person per year is £27,000.

11. Our Values

The council will continue to be guided by CHOICE, our six organisational values, in how we work with each other and with the people of Oxfordshire.

The values have been refreshed this year to reflect the fact that a lot has changed since they were first launched, and to reflect the new priorities for the council as a whole.

- **Customer focus** – understanding and prioritising the needs of our customers and improving opportunities for local people to do more for themselves.
- **Honesty** – being open and transparent about how the organisation operates. Ensuring robust governance arrangements and practice.
- **One team** – working collectively as a council and with partners to meet strategic goals.
- **Innovation** – encouraging and embracing new approaches to meet the needs of customers, enabling our staff to challenge and take risks.
- **Commercial** – being clear about our role in delivering services and what the market can offer. Focusing on getting the best value from our relationships so we can deliver quality services underpinned by robust management.
- **Enthusiasm** – being adaptable and ambitious, anticipating strategic changes, driving programmes to refresh our approach and supporting staff to perform to the best of their abilities.

Equalities

We are committed to making Oxfordshire a fair and equal place in which to live, work and visit. We are meeting the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 via a five year Equality Policy which runs until 2017 and sets out the four key objectives that guide all of our work:

- Understanding the needs of individuals and communities
- Providing accessible, local and personalised services
- Supporting thriving and cohesive communities
- Promoting a culture of fairness in employment and service delivery

If we plan to make changes to a service we will continue to consult relevant people (residents, service users, providers, partners), and will undertake Service and Community Impact Assessments ('SCIAS') to consider whether vulnerable and other sections of our communities are unfairly disadvantaged by any changes.

12. The Finances

We have had to take some tough financial decisions in order to live within our means in the face of continued reductions in central Government funding and increasing demand for our services. We have worked hard to hold down costs and deliver services in new ways to manage this challenging financial situation.

Our financial plans

The principles upon which our medium term financial plan and capital programme are based are set out in our financial strategy. Our medium term financial plan 2014/15 to 2017/18 is available online at www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/mtfpsummary and sets out how resources are allocated in accordance with the council's priorities.

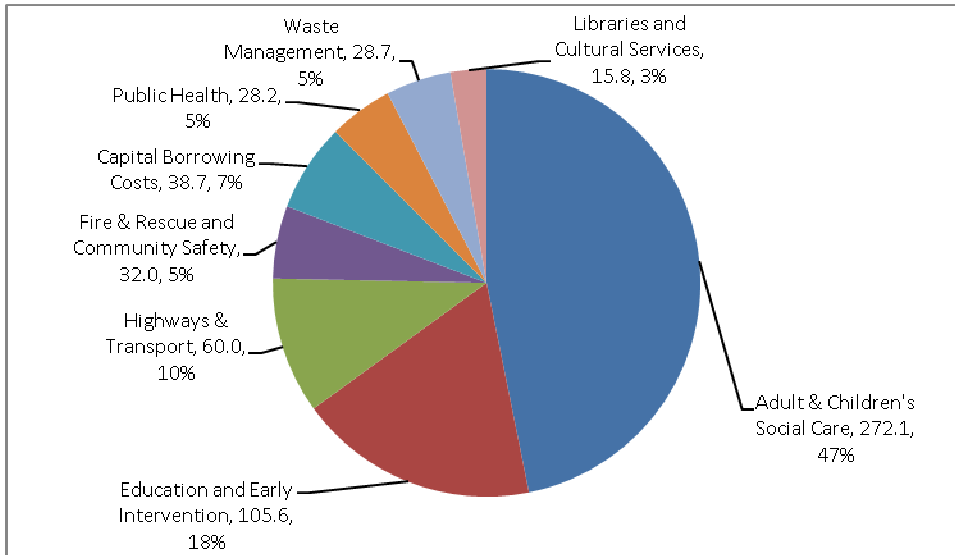
Our financial planning reflects:

- The reducing level of financial support from central Government and consequential revenue savings required over the medium term
- The allocation of resources to meet statutory service requirements and key strategic priorities
- Our commitment to council tax payers, and
- Our on-going commitment to achieve efficiencies to ensure improved value for money

We will spend £585.3m in 2014/15 on services (excluding schools). In addition, spending by schools maintained by the council is funded by a specific government grant of £288.3m.

What we spend on services (excluding schools)

Adult & Children's Social Care 47% (£273.4m)
 Education and Early Intervention 18% (£106.4m)
 Highway & Transport 10% (£61.1m)
 Capital Borrowing Costs 6% (£39.6m)
 Fire & Rescue and Community Safety 6% (£32.0m)
 Waste Management 5% (£28.7m)
 Public Health 5% (£28.2m)
 Libraries & Cultural Services 3% (£15.9m)

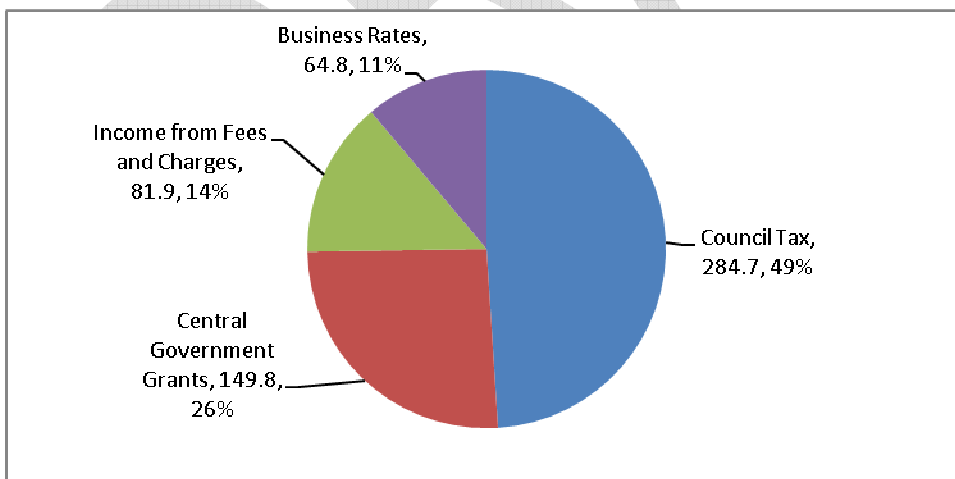


Our funding (excluding schools)

Our funding comes from a number of sources, including government grants and business rates, with just under half of our total funding coming from council tax. This means that a rise of one per cent in total spending (excluding schools) would require a council tax increase of just over two per cent, all else being equal.

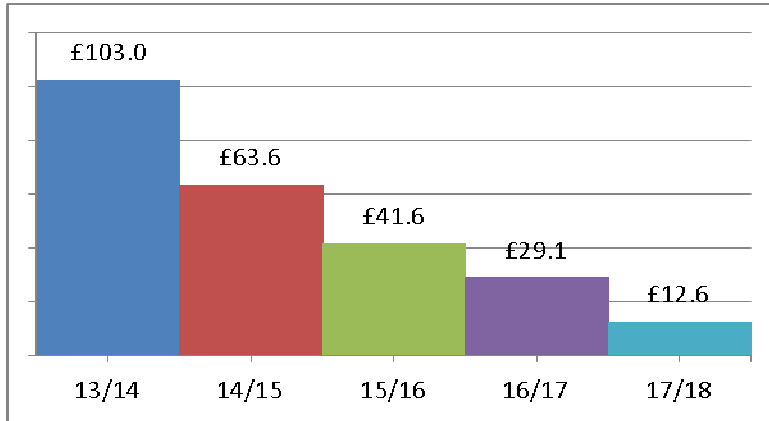
Where the money comes from

- Council Tax 49% (£284.7m)
- Central Government Grants 26% (£152.2m)
- Income from Fees and Charges 14% (£83.4m)
- Business Rates 11% (£65m)



Earmarked Revenue Reserves

Our earmarked revenue reserves are held for specified one-off projects, contractual commitments and to support the medium term financial plan. Most of the council's reserves will be used up over the next four years, with the total expected to fall from £103.0m at the start of 2014/15 to £12.6m by the end of 2017/18.



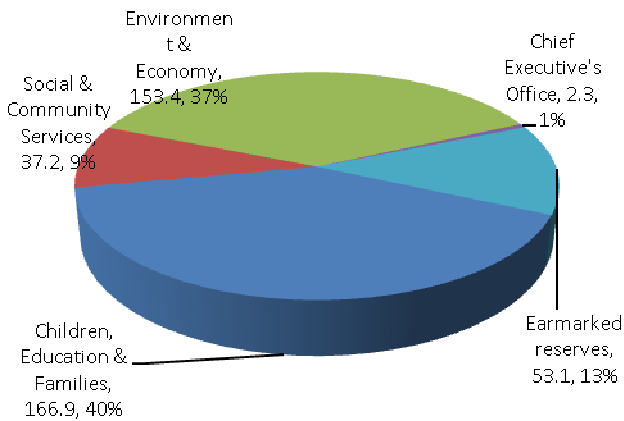
Capital

The capital element of our financial strategy provides a framework for ensuring the use of limited capital resources supports the achievement of the priorities set out in this plan. Our principles for prioritising capital investment are to:

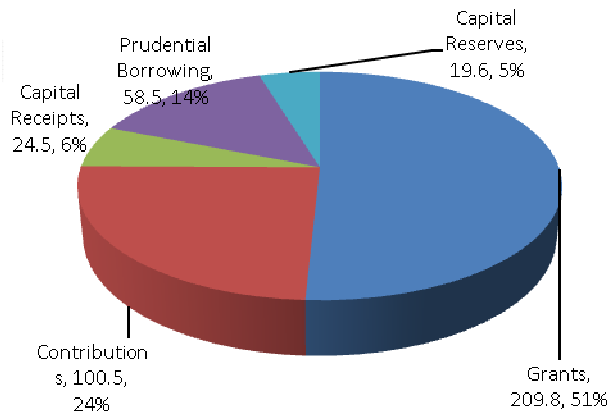
- Comply with our statutory duties
- Improve the efficient and effective delivery of our services, and
- Promote economic growth

We intend to spend £412.9m on capital investments in Oxfordshire between 2013/14 and 2017/18. The projects included in the capital programme are wide-ranging, covering all areas of the council's activity (for example on schools, roads, children's homes and fire stations) and all areas of the county.

Spending on capital investment



Funding for capital investment



13. Further Information

This Corporate Plan provides a high level summary of the strategic issues facing the council and the organisational responses planned for the medium term. If you would like more detailed information about the work of the council you may be interested in the following:

[More about Oxfordshire County Council \[url\]](#)

[The Sustainable Community Strategy 'Oxfordshire 2030' \[url\]](#)

[Our Directorate Business Strategies \[url\]](#)

[The Medium Term Financial Plan \[url\]](#)

[Oxfordshire Insight \[url\]](#)


DRAFT


[Back cover]

At a Glance

<p>Our ambition: A Thriving Oxfordshire</p>
<p>This means having: A Thriving Economy Thriving People and Communities A Safety Net</p>
<p>The county council's role in delivering this ambition: Providing Community Leadership Working in Partnership Helping People to Help Themselves</p>

What We Do

 Children, Education and Families	Social and Community Services	Public Health	Economy and Environment	Chief Executive's Office
<p>Services include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Children's Social Services Education Services Early Intervention Service/Thriving Families 	<p>Services include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Social Care for Adults and Older People Fire and Rescue Service Emergency Planning Trading Standards Safer Communities Gypsy and Traveller Service 	<p>Services include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Public Health Health Improvement, Disease Prevention and Substance Misuse Treatment Health Protection and Emergency Planning 	<p>Services include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Economy and Skills Highways and Transport Infrastructure Planning Waste Management Property and Facilities Customer Services 	<p>Services include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Legal Democratic Services HR Cultural Services - including Libraries Finance Policy Major Programmes Research

 **OXFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL**

**AUDIT &
GOVERNANCE
COMMITTEE
ANNUAL REPORT
2013**



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Chairman's Introduction

As the Chairman of the Audit and Governance Committee I am very pleased to present this annual report which sets out the role of the Audit & Governance Committee, and summarises the work we have undertaken both as a Committee, and through the support of the Audit Working Group in 2013.

The Audit and Governance Committee performs an essential role ensuring that good governance is maintained, with a strong system of internal control and risk management. These are the foundations upon which the Council can meet its challenges head on and continue to be effective in delivering good outcomes.

An important part of being effective as an Audit and Governance Committee is the relationship with both our Internal and External Auditors. We continue to have a strong working relationship with both. In my role as Chairman I meet regularly with the Chief Internal Auditor to ensure the focus of the work programme is relevant.

The Committee operates in accordance with the good practice guidance produced by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance Accountancy (CIPFA) in 2006. CIPFA have recently refreshed that guidance so the Committee will review compliance with the new standards during 2014.

Finally I should like to take this opportunity to give my personal thanks to all the officers, Geoff Jones Chairman of the Audit Working Group, my Vice Chairman Cllr Charles Mathew and without exception, all fellow Committee members who have contributed and supported the work of the Committee in such a meaningful and positive way throughout the past year.

COUNCILLOR DAVID WILMSHURST
Chairman, Audit & Governance Committee

Role of the Audit and Governance Committee

The Audit and Governance Committee operates in accordance with the “Audit Committees, Practical Guidance for Local Authorities” produced by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) in 2006. The Guidance defines the purpose of an Audit Committee as follows:

“ to provide independent assurance of the adequacy of the risk management framework and the associated control environment, independent scrutiny of the authority’s financial and non-financial performance to the extent that it affects the authority’s exposure to risk and weakens the control environment, and to oversee the financial reporting process.”

The key functions of the Audit and Governance Committee are defined within the Council’s Constitution; the relevant extract is attached as Annex 1 to this report. In discharging these functions the Committee is supported by the Audit Working Group, their terms of reference are attached as Annex 2 to this report.

Key Activities

In this section the activities of the Committee in 2013, including the Audit Working Group, are summarised under the headings of the key functions. Achievements and improvements to which the Audit and Governance Committee has contributed are highlighted.

Internal Control

The 2012/13 Annual Governance Statement was agreed by the Committee, and included seven areas for action to improve existing governance arrangements. The Committee actively monitors progress with the implementation of these actions.

In response to Internal Audit and Risk Management reports the Committee has looked in detail at the following areas:

Personal Budgets

Adult Social Care Client Charging including Fairer Charging

Property Leases

Procurement Improvement Project (including management actions arising from the Accounts Payable audit)

The Committee also reviewed the governance around the transfer of Highways operations from Atkins to Skanska.

The Committee receives regular progress reports from the Chief Internal Auditor, including summaries of the outcomes from Internal Audit work. Through the Audit Working Group, the Committee monitors the progress with the implementation of management actions arising from audit reports.

Key Achievements

- Supporting managers in implementing effective key controls where material weaknesses in internal control have been identified.
- New charging policy introduced for Adult Social Care bringing a consistency to the charging methodology.
- Review of the end to end process for Fairer Charging, addressing inefficiencies in the system, resulting in significant improvement in the timescales for completing financial assessment.
- Review of the end to end purchase to pay process with changes to improve quality and performance. Implementation of a performance dashboard with key indicators for monitoring the purchase to pay process.
- Monitoring of management actions applied by the Committee to ensure that significant weaknesses in the system of internal control are being prioritised.

Key Areas of Focus Looking Forward to 2014

- Implementation of a new management information system for Adult Social Care.
- Completion of the Lean review within Adult Social Care.

- **Impact of the Contract Management Framework and Contract Management Application.**
- **Governance and system of internal control for the design and implementation of new operating frameworks resulting from the Externalisation Programme, including the change management process/**

Risk Management

At the end of 2012, an external review of the Risk Management Framework was undertaken by Zurich Municipal. In January 2013, the Committee received and agreed the improvement plan.

The risk management annual report confirmed that good progress has been made with the system of risk management, in particular the ownership that Directorates have for the operation of the system and reporting within their own Directorate.

In October 2013, the Committee, through the Audit Working Group has undertaken to review on a cyclical basis, once a year, the risk management process in each Directorate. CEF was the first, and others have been scheduled for the first quarter of 2014.

On October 2013, the corporate lead role for risk management was transferred to the Chief Internal Auditor following a reorganisation within the Chief Executive's Office. The working group has requested quarterly reports highlighting new risks, risks where the scoring has increased, risks where mitigation has not been effective in reducing exposure to target risk levels. These reports will be used in conjunction with the annual directorate reviews to provide assurance on the adequacy and effectiveness of the system of risk management.

Key Achievements

- **Cyclical review of Directorate risk management systems**

Key Areas of Focus Looking Forward to 2014

- **Quarterly reporting on risk management by the corporate lead.**

Internal Audit

The Audit and Governance Committee with the assistance of the Monitoring Officer completed the annual review of the effectiveness of the System of Internal Audit, and concluded it was acceptable. To inform our opinion we met with the Chief Internal Auditor in a private session and were satisfied that he is able to conduct his duties effectively without restriction or undue influence.

We approved the Internal Audit Strategy for 2013/14, and the quarterly Internal Audit Plans, which gives members the opportunity to challenge and influence the plan where the Committee has identified areas of concern.

The reports of the Chief Internal Auditor to both the Audit and Governance Committee and also the Audit Working Group has enabled emerging issues arising from Internal Audit activity to be considered on a timely basis, including where appropriate working with the Senior Officers to seek assurance that matters are being dealt with promptly and effectively.

Key Achievements

- **The Internal Audit function continues to be effective within the organisation and has good engagement with Senior Management and the Committee.**

Key Areas of Focus Looking Forward to 2014

- **Compliance with the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards.**
- **Reviewing and then monitoring the resourcing strategy for Internal Audit.**

External Audit

The Council's external auditors, Ernst and Young, attended all the committee meetings in 2013, providing regular updates on their work plan and any matters arising. In addition during 2013, they have provided the Committee with sector updates for consideration that highlight key themes, issues and priorities for local government.

The external auditors have an open invitation to attend the Audit Working Group. They do not routinely attend, but do receive all the papers. They attended the Group in September 2013 to assist the Committee in reviewing Pension Scheme fraud risks.

The Committee also met with the external auditors in a private session and are satisfied they are free to carry out their duties without restrictions. We are also assured that if identified they would bring any material issues to the attention of the Committee.

Key Achievements

- **Positive audit reports, in particular the Audit of the Statement of Accounts which again identified no material issues or matters of concern.**
- **Good engagement with Ernst and Young who have supported member training, and provided sector wide updates on a regular basis for the Committee to consider.**

Key Areas of Focus Looking Forward to 2014

- **Maintaining a strong working relationship with Ernst and Young**

Anti-Fraud and Corruption

The Audit Committee receives regular updates from the Chief Internal Auditor on any matters of fraud and corruption. The Committee also approved the Counter-Fraud plan.

There has been a small increase in the number of financial irregularities that have been identified, and an increase in the instances where internal audit have identified weakness in the control of financial systems being operated within local teams. This has resulted in briefings on governance and counter-fraud to senior managers and their staff.

We received a report on Whistleblowing from the Monitoring Officer, that highlighted there have been very few cases. Overall the Council has a strong system of internal control so it is not unexpected there is very little fraud identified; however nationally statistics show that fraud is on the increase, so it is important that we all remain vigilant.

Key Achievements

- **Governance and Counter-fraud briefings to Senior Management and staff.**

Key Areas of Focus Looking Forward to 2014

- **2014/15 Fraud risk assessment and Counter-Fraud Plan**

Annual Accounts Process

The 2012/13 Accounts were prepared on time and presented to the Committee for comment. The received the External Auditors report in September 2013 when it was very pleased to note that high standards had been maintained with no material issues reported.

Key Achievements

- **Once again the Audit of the Statement of Accounts found no material issues.**

Key Areas of Focus Looking Forward to 2013

- **Maintaining the current high standards.**

Treasury Management

The Committee receives reports from the Treasury Management Team three times a year, exercising its stewardship role. The Committee:

- Reviewed the Treasury Management Strategy;
- Received the mid-term performance report; and,
- Received the annual report.

There were no material issues to note; however, the Committee did report to Cabinet a concern with the underperformance of one of the external fund managers highlighted in the mid-term review report.

Key Achievements

- **Oversight of the Treasury Management Process**

Key Areas of Focus Looking Forward to 2014

- **Treasury Management Strategy**

Governance

Committee agreed the Annual Governance Statement 2012/13 that explained how the County Council had complied with the code of corporate governance with an update on actions identified last year to be carried out during 2012/13 and new actions for 2013/14. They also agreed the updated Corporate Governance Framework

Following the governance review undertaken by the Council and approved on the 2 April the Committee jointly with Performance Scrutiny Committee considered how they would work together to complement each other's roles and responsibilities and avoid duplication. Council agreed that the new governance arrangements be reviewed after a year and the Monitoring Officer will undertake the review. To assist him, the Committee has appointed a working group of members to act as a sounding board for the Monitoring Officer and this has already met.

The Audit & Governance Committee has taken over certain responsibilities from the Council's former Standards Committee with regard to the governance and standards of conduct for elected and co-opted members. Consequently, they received the annual report of the Monitoring Officer on actions and issues in that regard that have occurred in the previous year. The Committee has not received any reports in respect of investigations into allegations of misconduct under members' code of conduct. The Committee has not granted any dispensations from requirements relating to interests as set out in the code of conduct for members.

The Committee received reports on the use of the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 (RIPA), the Fire and Rescue Service Annual Statement of Assurance and complaints to the Ombudsmen.

The Committee is responsible for the work of the Appeals & Tribunals Sub-Committee a panel of members that is chaired by a member of the Audit & Governance Committee. They carry out a range of appeals and tribunals:

Type of appeal	Number in 2013-14	Result
Member Appeals:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appeal against dismissal 	3	Two appeals not upheld. One appeal upheld and the employee was re-instated with a final written warning.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appeal against redundancy selection 	0	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Raising concerns at work appeals 	0	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disciplinary and Capability appeals 	0	

Type of appeal	Number in 2013-14	Result
Job Evaluation formal appeals	2	One post went up in grade. One post stayed the same grade.
Home to School Transport Appeals	12	8 appeals upheld (wholly or in part) 28 appeals refused 2 appeals pending

Key Achievements

- Oversight of the Corporate Governance process

Key Areas of Focus Looking Forward to 2014

- Completion of the Governance Review

Membership, Meetings & Attendance

Audit and Governance Committee

The Audit and Governance Committee comprises of nine elected members representing the three main political parties and a Co-opted Member, Dr Geoff Jones. There were changes to the membership following the elections in May 2013; Cllr Sandy Lovatt, Cllr Surinder Dhesi, Cllr Susanna Pressel and Cllr Janet Godden, replaced Cllr Jim Couchman, Cllr Ray Jelf, Cllr Roy Darke, and Cllr Larry Sanders. Membership of the Committee at the end of 2013 was as follows:

Cllr David Wilmshurst (Chairman), Cllr Charles Mathew (Vice Chairman)
Cllr Sandy Lovatt, Cllr Lawrie Stratford, Cllr Caroline Newton, Cllr Surinder Dhesi, Cllr Susanna Pressel, Cllr Roz Smith, Cllr Janet Godden, Dr Geoff Jones (Co-opted).

The Audit Working Group, chaired by Dr Jones, comprises three elected members; Cllr. Wilmshurst, Cllr. Mathew, and Cllr. Smith, plus officers. Papers for the Audit Working Group are circulated in advance to all members of the Audit and Governance Committee. All members of the Committee can attend the working group meetings.

Officers

The Audit and Governance Committee continues to be well supported by Officers, providing reports either in accordance with the Committee's work programme, or at the request of the Committee. In 2013 the Chief Finance Officer (Assistant Chief Executive and Chief Finance Office up to September 2013), the Head of Law and Governance & Monitoring Officer, and the Chief Internal Auditor routinely attended the meetings. These same officers along with the Performance and Review Officer also attended the Audit Working Group meeting.

External Audit

The External Auditors, Ernst and Young, have attended all the Audit and Governance Committee meetings.

Meetings

The Audit and Governance Committee met six times in 2013 and the Audit Working Group met six times. Work programmes are used by both the Audit Committee and the Audit Working Group to ensure requirements of the Committee are fulfilled. The programmes are reviewed with officers at each meeting and added to when appropriate to ensure ad-hoc investigations instigated by the Committee are reported.

ANNEX 1 - Audit & Governance Committee Functions

The following are the functions of the Audit & Governance Committee extracted from the Constitution – Part 2 Article 8 Section 1(a).

- (1) The functions relating to elections specified in Section D of Schedule 1 to the Functions Regulations.
- (2) The functions in relation to the designation of particular officers for certain purposes specified in Paragraphs 39, 40, 43 and 44 in Section I of Schedule 1 to the Functions Regulations.
- (3) The functions in relation to the approval of the statement of accounts etc. specified in Paragraph 45 in Section I of Schedule 1 to the Functions Regulations including the Annual Governance Statement (including Statement on Internal Control).
- (4) To monitor the risk, control and governance arrangements within the Council, together with the adequacy of those arrangements and those of others managing Council resources:
 - to ensure compliance with relevant legislation, guidance, standards, codes and best practice, whether external or internal;
 - to provide assurance on the effectiveness of those arrangements both generally and for the purposes of the Annual Governance Statement, including arrangements for reporting significant risks; and
 - to ensure coordination between internal and external audit plans to maximise the use of resources available as part of a total controls assurance framework;

and to draw to the attention of the appropriate scrutiny committee any issues which in the Committee's view would benefit from a scrutiny review or further investigation.
- (5) To consider and comment on the Council's External Auditor's annual work plan, the annual audit letter and any reports issued by the Audit Commission or the Council's External Auditor. Where issues affect the discharge of executive functions, to make recommendations as appropriate to the Cabinet, and where any issues affect the discharge of non-executive functions, to make recommendations to the appropriate Council Committee.
- (6) To systematically monitor:
 - the performance and effectiveness of Internal Audit Services processes within the Council, including undertaking an annual review using key performance indicators e.g. client satisfaction, percentage of plan completed, percentage of non-chargeable time;
 - the strategic Internal Audit Services Plan and annual work plan, advising on any changes required to ensure that statutory duties are fulfilled;
 - resourcing for the service, making recommendations to the Cabinet and Council on the budget for the service;

- arrangements for the prevention and detection of fraud and corruption; and
- the system for Treasury Management

and to draw to the attention of the appropriate scrutiny committee any issues which in the Committee's view would benefit from a scrutiny review or further investigation.

- (7) To promote high standards of conduct by councillors and co-opted members.
- (8) To grant dispensations to councillors and co-opted members from requirements relating to interests set out in the code of conduct for members.
- (9) To receive report from member-officer standards panels appointed to investigate allegations of misconduct under the members' code of conduct.
- (10) To advise the Council as to the adoption or revision of the members' code of conduct.
- (11) To implement the foregoing in accordance with a programme of work agreed by the Committee annually in advance, and to report to the Council on the Committee's performance in respect of that programme.
- (12) The Committee will appoint an Appeals & Tribunals Sub-Committee which will have the following responsibilities and membership:

Responsibilities:

- (i) The determination of appeals against decisions made by or on behalf of the authority as specified in Paragraph 2 of Schedule 2 to the Functions Regulations.
- (ii) To hear and determine appeals in cases where the relevant procedure rules require this function to be performed by a formally constituted committee or sub-committee.
- (iii) To hear and determine appeals in other cases under the relevant procedure rules.

Membership:

The Appeals & Tribunal Sub-Committee will meet as needed and its membership will be:

- (i) A member of the Audit & Governance Committee (or substitute)
- (ii) Two other members of the Council (one being a Cabinet member in the case of Fire Discipline issues)

ANNEX 2 - Audit Working Group Terms of Reference

Membership

The Audit Working Group shall comprise of:-

the independent member of the Audit and Governance Committee who will chair the Group, together with three members of the Audit and Governance Committee, one of whom shall be the Chairman of the Committee. There will also be three named members of the Audit and Governance Committee who will deputise as required.

The Chief Finance Officer, the Monitoring Officer and Head of Law and Governance, and the Chief Internal Auditor, or their representatives shall attend the Group meetings.

Members of the Group and their deputies should have suitable background and knowledge to be able to address satisfactorily the complex issues under consideration and should receive adequate training in the principles of audit, risk and control.

All members of the Audit and Governance Committee can attend Audit Working Group Meetings as observers.

Role

The Audit Working Group shall:

act as an informal working group of the Audit and Governance Committee in relation to audit, risk and control to enable the Committee to fulfil its responsibilities effectively in accordance with its terms of reference (Part 2 Article 8 Section 1a of the Constitution);

routinely undertake a programme of work as defined by the Audit and Governance Committee;

consider issues arising in detail as requested by the Audit and Governance Committee;

receive private briefings on any matters of concern;

at least annually hold a private session with the External Auditors not attended by any officers, and a further private session on Internal Audit matters with the Chief Internal Auditor only.

Reporting

The Chief Finance Officer will report to the Audit and Governance Committee on matters identified by the Group following consultation with the Chairman and members of the Group.

Meeting

The Group shall meet regularly in cycle with the Audit and Governance Committee.

The Group may invite any officer or member of the Council to attend its meetings to discuss a particular issue and may invite any representative of an external body or organisation as appropriate.

Confidentiality

The Group will meet in private to allow full and frank consideration of audit, risk and control issues.

All matters discussed and papers submitted for the meetings including minutes of the previous meeting must be treated as confidential. Papers will be circulated in advance to all members of the Audit and Governance Committee for information whether attending the Group or not.

Where any other member wishes to inspect any document considered by the Group and believes that s/he has a 'need to know' as a County Councillor, the procedure in the Council's Constitution relating to Members Rights and Responsibilities (Part 9.3) shall apply.

UpdatedFebruary 2014

Review Date.....February 2015

Officer Responsible Ian Dyson, Chief Internal Auditor
Telephone 01865 (32)3875
ian.dyson@oxfordshire.gov.uk

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Division(s): N/A

COUNTY COUNCIL – 1 APRIL 2014

REPORT OF THE CABINET

Cabinet Member: Leader

1. Oxfordshire Strategic Economic Plan
(Cabinet, 18 March 2014)

Cabinet considered a report that gave an update on the Oxfordshire Strategic Economic Plan (SEP) including the SEP executive summary which captured the key themes, geographical focus and governance of the SEP and approved it for submission to Government by 31 March subject to any further amendments agreed by the Director for Environment & Economy in consultation with the Leader..

Cabinet Member: Deputy Leader

2. Staffing Report – Quarter 2, 2013
(Cabinet 25 February 2014)

Cabinet noted a report that gave an update on staffing numbers and related activity during the period 1 October 2013 to 31 December 2013. It gave details of the agreed staffing numbers and establishment at 31 December 2013 in terms of Full Time Equivalents. In addition, the report provided information on vacancies and the cost of posts being covered by agency staff.

3. Cabinet Business Monitoring Report for Quarter 2
(Cabinet 28 January 2014)

Cabinet noted a report that provided details of performance for quarter two that enabled Cabinet to monitor the performance of the Council in key service areas and be assured that progress is being made to improve areas where performance is below the expected level. They further noted the concerns of the Performance Scrutiny Committee that, across all three Directorates, resources are stretched due to an increase in demand, which is not mirrored by funding streams, and is threatening the future performance of the Council.

Cabinet Member: Adult Social Care

4. Better Care Fund
(Cabinet, 18 March 2014)

Cabinet considered a report seeking agreement on the proposed use of the Better Care Fund in Oxfordshire, prior to submission to NHS England (as an integral part of the Oxfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group's Strategic and Operational Plans) by 4 April 2014.

The Better Care Fund will total approximately £37 million in Oxfordshire from 2015/16 onwards, and is not new money as it will be reallocated from within the health and social care system. However, a significant proportion may be newly accessible to adult social care, and can be used to protect services where it can also be demonstrated that there are benefits to health.

Cabinet agreed the Better Care Fund Plan for Oxfordshire for submission to NHS England subject to the inclusion of any necessary changes as a result of consideration by the Health and Wellbeing Board and Clinical Commissioning Group Governing Body. Cabinet further agreed the use of the Health Transfer to Social Care Funding in 2014/15, and for this to form the basis of a section 256 agreement between the County Council and NHS England as agreed by the Director for Social & Community Services following consultation with the Cabinet Member for Adult Services. It was agreed that Cabinet receive an updated plan in March 2015 prior to implementation, reflecting performance in 2014/15 and any emerging pressures and priorities.

Cabinet Member: Children, Education & Families

5. New Schools for Great Western Park, Didcot: Shortlist of Academy Trusts

(Cabinet, 17 December 2013)

The Cabinet meeting of 18 September 2012 approved a process for the identification of sponsors for new academies to meet the needs of population growth such as this in Didcot which requires 2 new primary schools and one secondary between 2015 and 2017.

Following this process providers have been identified from a group of 4 short-listed bidders which were assessed against criteria. The Cabinet considered a report setting out options and agreed to recommend GLF Academy Trust to provide the Secondary School and Primary School 2 to be run as an all through 4-16 school and to recommend GEMS Trust provides Primary School 1. These have been submitted to the Secretary of State for Education who has given final agreement to these arrangements.

6. The Proposed Home to School Transport Policy

(Cabinet, 4 February 2014)

The Council had undertaken a consultation with the public, headteachers and other interested parties upon a number of proposed changes to the Home to School Transport Policy. Cabinet had before them a report that contained an analysis of the responses to the consultation for consideration and seeking their decision on the proposed changes.

Cabinet agreed: to provide free transport to the nearest available school in Oxfordshire and to a 'split village' entitlement where at least 20% of addresses, but not all, are nearest to the catchment school and the rest are nearest to another school; in such cases free transport to be provided to the catchment school for all addresses. Cabinet further agreed the timescale and resources for implementation of the proposals and agreed increases to the charges for concessionary travel and post 16 travel.

7. Carterton Community College Extension of Upper Age Limit to Establish Post-16 Education

(Cabinet, 18 March 2014)

Cabinet considered a report seeking their views following a public consultation on a proposal by the Governing Body of Carterton Community College to alter the upper age limit of the College in order to enable it to offer post-16 education. The proposal is to implement the change from September 2014 and gradually increase the range of courses offered over a three-year period.

Cabinet supported strongly the proposal by Carterton Community College to alter its upper age limit in order to establish post-16 education.

Cabinet Member: Environment

8. Oxfordshire Minerals and Waste Local Plan - Core Strategy: Consultation Draft

(Cabinet 28 January 2014)

The County Council has a statutory duty to prepare a new Oxfordshire Minerals and Waste Plan, to provide an effective planning strategy and policies for the supply of minerals and management of waste in the county, consistent with environmental, social and economic needs. The Plan must be prepared in accordance with current government policy in the National Planning Policy Framework (March 2012) and having due regard to the emerging new National Planning Practice Guidance.

In line with the revised Oxfordshire Minerals and Waste Development Scheme (Fifth Revision) 2013, setting out the programme for preparing the Minerals and Waste Local Plan Cabinet had before them a report recommending a draft Minerals and Waste Local Plan: Core Strategy for public consultation.

Cabinet agreed the draft Oxfordshire Minerals and Waste Local Plan: Core Strategy, subject to final detailed amendment, updating and editing, as a draft for consultation.

9. Response to Westgate Planning Application

(Cabinet, 25 February 2014)

Cabinet considered and agreed a suggested response to the consultation by Oxford City Council, in their role as local planning authority on an application for re-development of the Westgate centre in Oxford together with two applications for temporary parking to manage the situation and maintain access to the city centre during the construction phase.

10. Local Transport Plan: Update

(Cabinet, 18 March 2014)

The Local Transport Plan 3 (2011-2030) was adopted by the County Council in 2011 as a 20-year strategy for Oxfordshire's transport system. Having an adopted Local Transport Plan, and keeping it under review, is a statutory

requirement on the county council, as set out in the 2000 Transport Act as amended by the 2008 Local Transport Act. It provides the framework for the county council's transport input into the Local Development Plan process and supports our ability to secure key infrastructure projects. It underpins our capital delivery programme, and the way in which we deliver our services. Owing to the long-term nature of the Plan it was agreed as part of the approval process that it would be regularly reviewed in order to keep it up to date and relevant. Cabinet considered and approved five of the area strategies within the LTP3's implementation plan which had been updated for Banbury, Bicester, Carterton, Science Vale and Witney, covering the parts of the county likely to experience significant growth to 2030.

11. Travel Plans

(Cabinet, 18 March 2014)

Travel Plans are long-term management strategies for sites, which seek to ensure that travel associated with them is sustainable. In accordance with national planning policy and local plans, Oxfordshire County Council requests travel plans from developers for sites which are expected to generate significant amounts of movement. Developers frequently ask for advice on preparing and implementing travel plans, and Cabinet had before them a draft standard guidance document to ensure consistency and efficiency. As there is effort involved in implementing travel plans, they are likely to be ineffective in achieving their targets unless they are monitored. Councils are permitted to charge fees to cover the costs of monitoring, and the draft Guidance set out proposed monitoring fees for approval.

Cabinet approved the Transport Assessments & Travel Plans Guidance Document and monitoring fee charging schedule for publication; and approved the charging of fees to cover staff costs for other non-statutory Travel Plan related services on an hourly basis by agreement.

Cabinet Member: Finance

12. 2013/14 Financial Monitoring & Business Strategy Delivery Report - October 2013

(Cabinet, 17 December 2013 and 25 February 2014)

Cabinet considered two reports that focussed on the delivery of the Directorate Business Strategies which were agreed as part of the Service and Resource Planning Process for 2013/14 – 2016/17. Parts 1 and 2 included projections for revenue, reserves and balances as at the end of October 2013 and December 2013 respectively. Changes to unringfenced grant funding were set out in Part 3 and Capital Programme monitoring was included at Part 4 of each report.

In December Cabinet approved virement requests, noted the updated Treasury Management lending list, approved the removal of a residual debt of £19,650 from the Council's accounts, agreed that the shortfall in revenue grant funding arising from recent unringfenced grant confirmations is met from the Budget Reserve in 2013/14 and approved changes to the Capital Programme and the addition of the project development budget for the A34 Chilton Junction scheme in the Capital Programme.

In February Cabinet approved virement requests and the supplementary estimate requests, and noted the updated Treasury Management lending and the changes to the Capital Programme.

Cabinet Member: Policy Co-ordination

13. Oxfordshire Fire & Rescue Service - Community Risk Management Plan - Action Plan 2014/2015

(Cabinet, 25 February 2014)

The Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004 requires the Secretary of State to prepare a Fire and Rescue National Framework to which Fire Authorities must have regard when discharging their functions. The 2012 Framework requires each Fire and Rescue Authority to produce a publicly available Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP). Within Oxfordshire Fire and Rescue Service (OFRS) we have called this our Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP) to make it more meaningful to the public. Cabinet considered and agreed the following projects to be included within the Fire Authority's CRMP for the fiscal year 2014-15.

Project 1: Implement the Training Collaboration Review carried out in 2013

Project 2: Review our aerial appliance capability and implement changes to staffing supported by that review

Project 3: Review of Light Response Vehicle Capability and implement changes to staffing supported by that review

Project 4: Review of Prevention, Protection and Response Resources to meet the expansion and changing risk profile of Banbury, Bicester, Carterton, Wantage and the South of the County

14. Oxfordshire County Council Corporate Plan - 2014/15 - 2017/18

(Cabinet, 18 March 2014)

Cabinet considered and approved a draft of the Corporate Plan for 2014/5-2017/18 in advance of consideration by Council. Cabinet also noted the proposed Indicators of Corporate Performance.

N.B The report is included for consideration elsewhere on this agenda.

IAN HUDSPETH

Leader of the Council

March 2014

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