

A Thriving Oxfordshire

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

Update for 2015/16

Contents

- 1. Leader's Foreword**
- 2. The Financial Challenge**
- 3. About this Plan; Measuring Progress**
- 4. Our County**
- 5. About Oxfordshire County Council; The Strategic Role of the County Council**
- 6. Our Vision for a Thriving Oxfordshire**
- 7. The County Council's role in a Thriving Oxfordshire – Community Leadership and Partnership**
- 8. A Thriving Economy**
- 9. Thriving People and Communities**
- 10. A Safety Net**
- 11. Our Values; Equalities**
- 12. The Finances**
- 13. Further information**

1. Leader's Foreword

Last year I introduced the Corporate Plan by setting out the scale of the challenge faced by the county council, in particular around reducing budgets, and preparing for growth in our economy and population. If anything, both those challenges have become even starker over the last twelve months.

We are in the second year of a four year budget cycle and this year we have needed to find an additional £27m in budget savings, bringing the total amount delivered through savings, efficiency and, yes, sadly some cuts, close to £300m. This has involved hard work with staff and partners in challenging times, and I would like to thank them for their efforts and understanding.

Every year the decisions we need to make to meet the ambitious austerity challenge get harder, particularly as we are expected to reduce our spending at a much faster rate than other parts of the public sector, and due to the inexorably rising cost of protecting and caring for our most vulnerable residents.

Looking further ahead, there seems little cause to believe that the clouds will lift. The latest budget projections from central government suggest that austerity will need to continue, under any party or group of parties, throughout the next Parliament. Ultimately we will have to get used to the public sector being permanently smaller than we have been used to in our lifetimes. It is quite likely in my view that by 2020 local councils will receive no funding from national government, spending only what we can raise locally.

In happier news, while the public sector has contracted, Oxfordshire's private sector continues to thrive, meaning that we have the lowest unemployment rate on record - below 1% - and are delivering consistent economic growth, more than paying our way in terms of the national accounts. We have moved beyond the City Deal, with the Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership, and signed a successful Local Growth Deal.

Of course, planning for the growth involved in maintaining our reputation as "Thriving Oxfordshire" cannot be left to the private sector alone, and takes hard work. We have come together with district councils to establish the Oxfordshire Growth Board, and are putting plans in place to deal with the housing and infrastructure needs of our growing population.

This includes significant investment in transport improvements. While this inevitably causes disruption in the short-term, I am working hard to minimise that, and maximise the contribution made by private developers to the infrastructure needs resulting from the houses they build.

In summary, these remain hard financial times for the county council, and require efficiency and tough decisions. However, while we will be unable to sustain the kind of services we have provided in the past, life is getting better for most of Oxfordshire's people; the economy is recovering at pace, and we are ready to step up and help deliver growth.

Section 2.0

I have actively campaigned, including speaking directly to national Government, for greater devolution of powers over skills, transport, and housing. This would help us deliver growth, and also alleviate the cost burden by allowing Oxfordshire to keep more of the tax revenue generated by a growing economy and population, rather than paying more than our fair share into the national pot.

I remain optimistic about the role of democratic local institutions in finding a path through these difficult times, about Oxfordshire County Council's ability to rise to the challenge, and about the future of the county we serve.

Cllr Ian Hudspeth *Leader of Oxfordshire County Council*

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2. The Financial Challenge

Unprecedented reductions in funding for local government, coupled with increasing demand, present a huge challenge for Oxfordshire County Council.

We know that between 2010 and 2018 the grant we receive from government will be cut by a total of 40%. And there may be further cuts to come.

We are already one of the worst funded local authorities. Average government funding per head every year is £571. In Oxfordshire this amount is £286.

The government cap on annual Council Tax increases means that in real terms we will receive the same amount of money from Council Tax in 2017 as we did in 2009.

All of this means that by 2018 our annual budget will have reduced by £285m compared with 2010.

So far we have worked hard to deliver efficiencies which have contributed annual savings of £200million. But we still have a further £85m worth of annual savings to make. It is clear that these savings are not achievable through efficiencies alone and that cuts to services are necessary.

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 address the pressures resulting from a growing number of children coming into the care system
- We need to manage a changing relationship with key public sector partners in health, education, and policing
- 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.

We also need to adapt to changing financial arrangements. In many instances funding that in the past came direct to the county 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.

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%
- increasing productivity
- reducing the number of councillors
- reducing the number of offices
- making more services easier to use online
- sharing services with other councils
- centralising and outsourcing back office services
- tighter contracts, getting better value for money
- reducing our spend on discretionary services, focussing on those in greatest need
- using volunteers wherever possible to supplement our permanent staff
- supporting the transfer of services to the voluntary sector

But there is still a lot more to do.

3. About this Plan

The Corporate Plan sets out the County Council’s strategic priorities. The Plan drives the work of all our services and feeds into each directorate’s business strategy.

It is a four year plan covering the years 2014/15 to 2017/18. This update is for the second of the four years.

The Plan is a ‘golden thread’ that links our very high level, long term, strategy called ‘Oxfordshire 2030’ with our day-to-day working priorities.

Figure 1: The Golden Thread



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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4. 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 £19.2 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 Gross Value Added data, December 2014

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

Section 2.0

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

5. 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 9 councillors.

The day-to-day management and operations of the council are carried out by the County Council Management Team.

There are three scrutiny committees at the council, made up of non-Cabinet councillors. They question how key decisions have been made and take up issues of concern to the community. Scrutiny aims to achieve greater public accountability, to ensure that decision-making is transparent, and to help the council and other agencies and public bodies to deliver services that are sensitive to local needs. The principles of public scrutiny and public accountability are fundamental to the running of the council.

In 2014/15 we:

- fixed 45,500 highways defects
- assessed the care needs of 5,543 vulnerable adults
- allocated 13,500 primary and secondary school places
- investigated 2,400 trading standards complaints
- safely managed 307,500 tonnes of municipal waste
- received 11,157 emergency calls to our Fire and Rescue Service, resulting in 5,505 incidents attended
- registered 16,682 births, deaths, marriages and civil partnerships

and much more...

The Strategic Role of Oxfordshire County Council

In 2015/16, Oxfordshire County Council's gross expenditure is £837.9m.

51% of our funding is from council tax. Central government grants make up another 25% 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
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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6. 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.

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

Connecting Oxfordshire

Connecting Oxfordshire is the council's vision for a thriving Oxfordshire supported by a 21st century transport system. It takes account of the planned £800m of transport investment planned over the next 20-30 years and looks ahead to future challenges and opportunities facing the county.

With a predicted 85,000 new jobs and over 100,000 potential new homes in the county by 2031, pressure on transport will continue to rise. If Oxfordshire is to continue to prosper, we need to think creatively to improve transport connections and capacity, and Connecting Oxfordshire was developed to start the debate on what this means in practice.

Connecting Oxfordshire was launched by the Leader of the Council in Spring 2014. During the summer, the council raised the profile of Connecting Oxfordshire around the county and hosted seven public meetings attended by more than 600 people. At these events the Leader of the Council set out the planned transport improvements for specific areas and explored with the audience the county's transport challenges and some more visionary options that could be used to solve them, such as mass transit systems, re-opening branch lines, new pedestrianised areas in town centres and monorails.

Highways improvement schemes under the Connecting Oxfordshire banner include the:

- A423 Kennington/Hinksey Roundabout
- A40/A420 London Road
- Frideswide Square transformation in Oxford
- A34 Milton interchange
- A34 Chilton slip roads
- Plain roundabout in Oxford
- A40 Wolvercote and Cutteslowe roundabouts

Feedback received via the Connecting Oxfordshire public meetings and through social media is being used to guide the development of the council's new Local Transport Plan, which will be called Connecting Oxfordshire, and will be adopted in 2015.

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 Oxford and Oxfordshire City Deal** – We worked alongside the Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership, district and city 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 continue 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. Our safeguarding processes have been identified as notable practice with the UK fire sector and demonstrate our integrated approach within the county council. Trading Standards continues to provide protection to people who may be vulnerable to consumer frauds, including supporting a national initiative tackling postal scams.
- **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 December 2015. Through the same partnership with BT we are working with district and city councils and the LEP on plans to extend coverage further to achieve a minimum of 95% coverage by 2017 in South Oxfordshire, Vale of the White Horse, Cherwell, and Oxford City.
- **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. To facilitate closer working, the Director of Adult Social Services at the county council also holds the post of Director of Strategy & Transformation at the Oxfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group.
- **Public Health** – The Public Health Directorate is now fully embedded in the work of the council. Health improvement work, prevention of illness and some treatment services are delivered through a series of contracts.

These include an integrated service for sexual health, a strengthened school health nursing service and transition to new ways of delivering alcohol and drug treatment services and smoking cessation services. The team also influence the broader social determinants of health by working with partners on housing, community safety, healthy weight and mental wellbeing initiatives.

- **Tackling Child Sexual Exploitation: The Kingfisher Team** – Kingfisher is a joint social work, police and health team focused on preventing, protecting and prosecuting cases of child sexual exploitation in Oxfordshire. The team provides a response to concerns about exploitation as well as support to children, families and other professionals to reduce the risk to children through awareness raising, training, disruption activity and, where required, gathering evidence and achieving prosecutions. In 2014 the team won two national awards for its work.
- **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 have rolled out across the county with clear locality plans supporting the development of local strategies. We will continue the development of outcomes for this and ensure that there is a coherent all age strategy linked to Care Act implementation throughout 2015.
- **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 January 2014 Oxfordshire had turned around 778 troubled families, the 10th highest out of 152 authorities and we are now an Early Starter for Phase 2 of the expanded programme, which runs through to 2020.
- **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. In 2014 work began on the 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 work from offices at the Clinical Commissioning Group and hospitals across Oxfordshire. 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.
- **Schools** – We have completed the redevelopment and construction works of 12 schools in 2014, and works are progressing to 15 schools which will

Section 2.0

be completed in 2015. This work underlines our commitment to a thriving Oxfordshire, supporting growth and wellbeing.

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

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A selection of our key partners



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 to deliver the 'Strategic Economic Plan' which provides a basis for future Oxfordshire bids to the Local Growth Fund. As of 2015 this Fund is 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 in 2012 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. We will also explore, along with Buckinghamshire and Northamptonshire County Councils, the potential for a tri-county council alliance. This 'combined authority' alliance will focus on innovation, science, technology and creative industries in order to unlock further economic growth and significantly build on the £45 billion (GVA) that the tri-counties area already generates.
- **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.

- **Spatial Growth** - we will develop a Spatial Growth and Infrastructure Strategy. The work will involve looking at options for delivering the future growth needs of the county and in particular, the unmet housing need for Oxford. The strategy will test possible growth options across the county against their ability to deliver infrastructure in the most sustainable way. The work will look at infrastructure needs including transport, schools, health and leisure and will involve close working with the district and city councils, as well as other major infrastructure stakeholders such as Network Rail and The Highways Agency.
- **Skills** – we will continue to support the Oxfordshire Skills Board to implement the Oxfordshire Skills Strategy, which aims to: create a more responsive skills system aligned to the needs of our employers; increase the availability and take-up of apprenticeships; and to up-skill people who have few or no formal qualifications bringing them closer to the labour market. We will also work wherever we can to promote educational excellence for all children and young people and improve educational attainment in the county, including by brokering higher levels of business engagement with schools and education through our new 02i – Opportunities to Inspire initiative. 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 and city 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

Section 2.0

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.

Oxfordshire is home to 654,000 people and over 30,000 businesses.

Oxfordshire contributes £16.5bn to the UK economy – more than many core cities including Bristol, Nottingham, Sheffield and Liverpool.

The council maintains almost 3,000 miles of road. Through our surface dressing programme in the summer of 2014 we improved 500,000m² of road across Oxfordshire. That's roughly 75 times the area of Wembley stadium.

40 per cent of Oxfordshire's businesses (12,000) operate in the science, technology, engineering and mathematics sectors.

The County is fast on its way to being super connected. Through the Better Broadband for Oxfordshire project, the council and our delivery partner BT will have connected 90 per cent of homes and business in the county to fibre broadband by the end of 2015.



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. Our Energy from Waste facility is now in operation and, will generate enough electricity for 38,000 homes. 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. In early 2015 five new Extra Care Housing schemes will open providing a 50% increase in this service, giving 768 apartments in total.
- **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. These have rolled out across the county with clear locality plans supporting the development of local strategies. We will continue the development of outcomes for this and ensure that there is a coherent all age strategy linked to Care Act implementation throughout 2015. We will continue working in partnership with the circles of support project with Age UK, providing a link between hospital and community networks and assisting with timely discharge.
- **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 focus on the services delivered through our core libraries and develop our Universal Library Offers – reading, information, health, learning and digital - which our customers see as being integral to a 21st century library service. We will begin to implement the outcomes of our review of mobile library services and we will continue to promote community and stakeholder involvement 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 are developing proposals for using the Better Care Fund – a pot of £37m – with health partners, which means more money being used in social care to help to people stay independent and reduce emergency admissions to hospital. 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 Better Care Fund is to achieve a reduction in the number of patients delayed for transfer or discharge from hospital. We are currently performing at 1% over the Better Care Fund target and are determined that Oxfordshire's performance will improve in this area.
- **Public Health** – the council will continue to work with the Oxfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group and other partners to ensure effective commissioning arrangements are in place to prevent ill health and improve health and social care outcomes for all Oxfordshire residents. We will also address health inequalities and prioritise areas of local need. The Director of Public Health's most recent annual report highlights the long term challenges to health in Oxfordshire set out by life stages. The importance of giving children the best start in life through good health visiting, school health nursing and other services is emphasised. The prevention of long term conditions and early mortality in the adult population is set out and includes continuing to help people quit smoking, maintain a healthy weight, promoting mental wellbeing and moderating alcohol intake. Reducing health inequalities across the county remains a priority, with some particular vulnerable groups highlighted, including people suffering social and economic disadvantage, those with deafness and hearing loss, young carers and the growing number of people from Black and minority ethnic communities. The danger of infectious and communicable diseases requires on-going vigilance.
- **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 agree 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

Section 2.0

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 has completed its move into County Hall, bringing it closer to the centre of service delivery.

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

A total of 58.6 per cent of Oxfordshire students gained five A* to C graded GCSEs including English and Maths in 2014. The national state-funded school average for the same measure was 56.1 per cent.

Reading ages in Oxfordshire are improving. Through our Reading Campaign, the average reading age improvement of pupils taking part was 13 months (achieved over a four-month period), with some pupils achieving nearly 20 months.

Oxfordshire has an excellent recycling record – the highest for any county in the country with 60% of the 300,000 tonnes of waste produced per year either composted or recycled.

Oxfordshire is one of only 13 county councils in the country with Fire and Rescue Service responsibilities and we celebrated its 40th anniversary in summer 2014. Through its 365alive campaign, Oxfordshire Fire & Rescue Service saved £135m and 386 lives in eight years – two years ahead of the challenging target we set.

Success Stories

Oxfordshire County Council is proud of the services and support we offer to the citizens of Oxfordshire. We have seen a great many successes over the past 12 months, including winning a number of national awards. These include:

- **SaBRE Award** – Oxfordshire County Council was presented with a SaBRE (Supporting Britain’s Reservists and Employers) Award for its outstanding support to the Armed Forces.
- **Defence Employer Recognition Scheme** - Oxfordshire County Council was awarded the Silver Award under the Defence Employer Recognition Scheme, which recognises employers’ positive commitment to support the defence community. This is for our commitment to supporting reservists, and for our pledge to ensure that no member of the armed forces should ever face disadvantage in the provision of public and commercial services.
- **Spirit of Fire Awards** – Oxfordshire’s Fire and Rescue Service won the Team of the Year Award after raising £14k for the Firefighters’ Charity with a sponsored bike ride. We were also shortlisted for Corporate Supporter of the Year and Fire Service of the Year.
- **Alarm Awards** – Kingfisher, a joint initiative between Oxfordshire County Council and Thames Valley Police, won an Alarm Award for showing innovative and dedication to managing people risk. The Kingfisher Team is a multi-agency team working to tackle child sexual exploitation in Oxfordshire.
- **MJ Awards** – Kingfisher also won the MJ Award for innovation and creativity in Children’s Services. This was in recognition of the team’s effective partnership working and its responsiveness to those children most at risk.
- **NMC Music Education Awards** – Oxfordshire Music Education Partnership won the Paritor Award for its commitment to new music and composition across the range of activities.

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. 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 are committed to providing early help in order to avoid problems escalating and family needs becoming more complex.

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 delivering 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. The council will begin

working with more than 400 new families by the end of March 2015. As an 'early starter' area, the results from Oxfordshire will also inform and influence the national roll-out of the expanded programme in April 2015.

- **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 continuing to develop the recently established Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) that co-locates staff from across these agencies so they can work closely together to share information and respond to the needs of vulnerable young people at the earliest possible opportunity.
- **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. We will deliver our placement strategy, increasing our capacity to support children to remain in family settings wherever possible whilst extending our pool of foster carers and residential capacity. We will work with community partners to make Oxfordshire "the most fostering friendly county in the country".
- **Adult safeguarding** – we continue to work with partners in health, the police and others so that adults in need of care and support can live a life free from both abuse and the fear of abuse. This includes working with partners in the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub and areas such as trafficking and exploitation. We continue to review our procedures for investigating concerns of abuse to ensure that outcomes reflect the wishes of the victim.
- **Refocus on neglect** – Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic needs and the numbers of children affected by neglect are increasing. Tackling neglect requires strong partnerships and we will build on the success of the Thriving Families programme to pilot the introduction of better ways of working that provide effective help to families and children. Working in partnership across social care, early intervention, health, education, Thames Valley Police, youth justice and adult services we will initially work with families in north Oxfordshire where children are on child protection plans for neglect. This will include working across traditional service boundaries to provide intensive, targeted support to the whole family. This, along with an analysis of the extent of neglect in Oxfordshire, will help inform the future shape of our services.

More children are entering care across the UK and like other councils Oxfordshire has seen more referrals into care following high profile cases. There are approximately 500 looked after children in Oxfordshire. The average cost of supporting a child is £34,000.

People are living longer, creating a greater need for social care.

By 2031 we predict there will be 90,000 people aged 75+ in Oxfordshire. The average weekly cost of a care package for an older person is £200.

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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

(revenue figures are draft and need to be updated)

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 2015/16 to 2017/18 is available online at www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/mtfpsummary (currently 2014/15 - 2017/18 MTFP) and sets out how resources are allocated in accordance with the council's priorities.

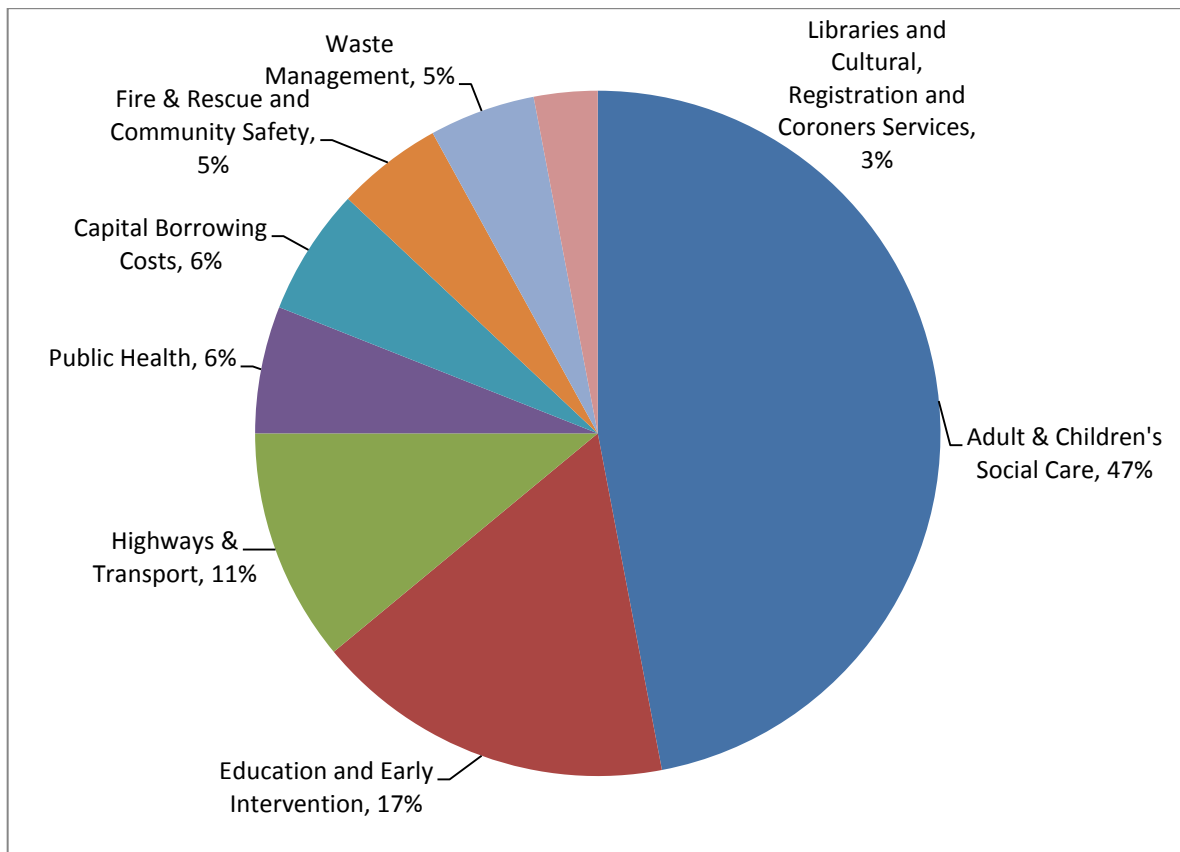
Our financial planning reflects:

- 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 plan to spend £575.1m in 2015/16 on services (excluding schools). In addition, spending by schools maintained by the council is funded by a specific government grant of £262.8m.

What we spend on services (excluding schools)

- Adult & Children's Social Care 47%
- Education and Early Intervention 17%
- Highway & Transport 11%
- Public Health 6%
- Capital Borrowing Costs 6%
- Fire & Rescue and Community Safety 5%
- Waste Management 5%
- Libraries & Cultural Services 3%

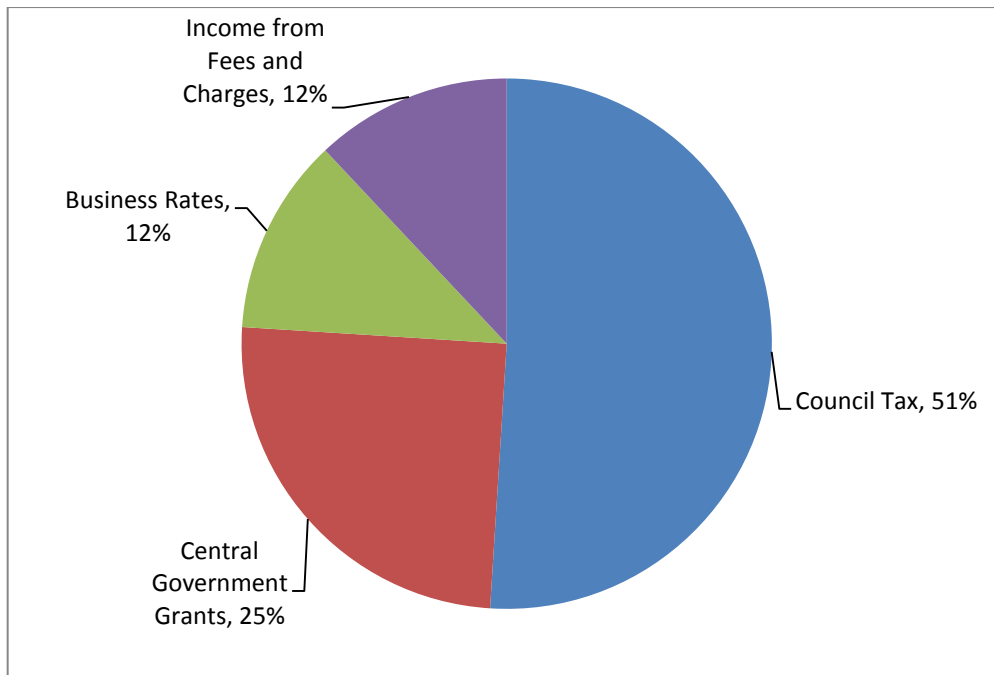


Our funding (excluding for schools)

Our funding comes from a number of sources, including government grants and business rates, with just over 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.

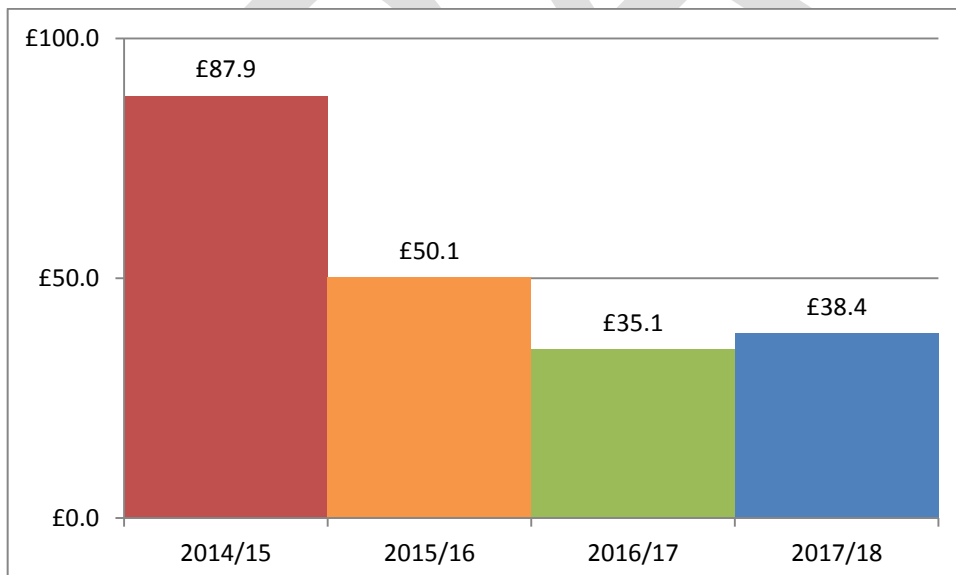
Where the money comes from

- Council Tax 51%
- Central Government Grants 25%
- Income from Fees and Charges 12%
- Business Rates 12%



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 £87.9m at the start of 2015/16 to £38.4m by the end of 2017/18.



Capital

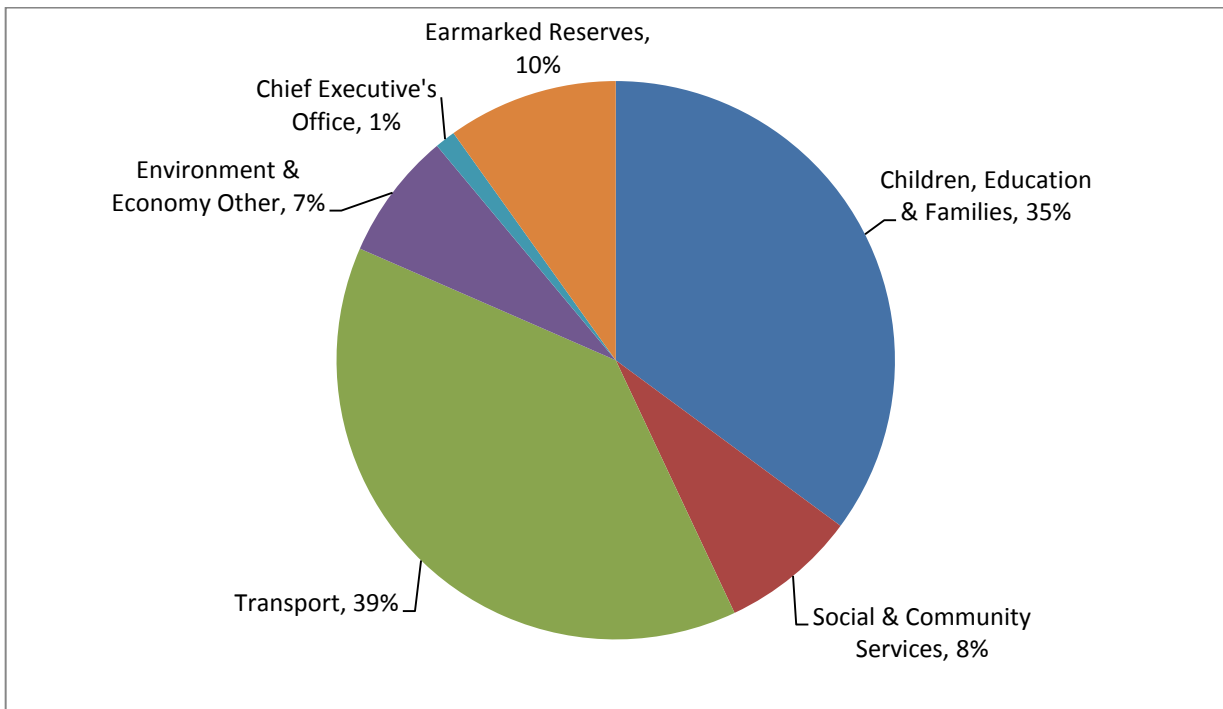
The capital element of our financial strategy provides a framework for ensuring the use of limited capital resources supports the achievement of the priorities set out in this plan. Our principles for prioritising capital investment are to:

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

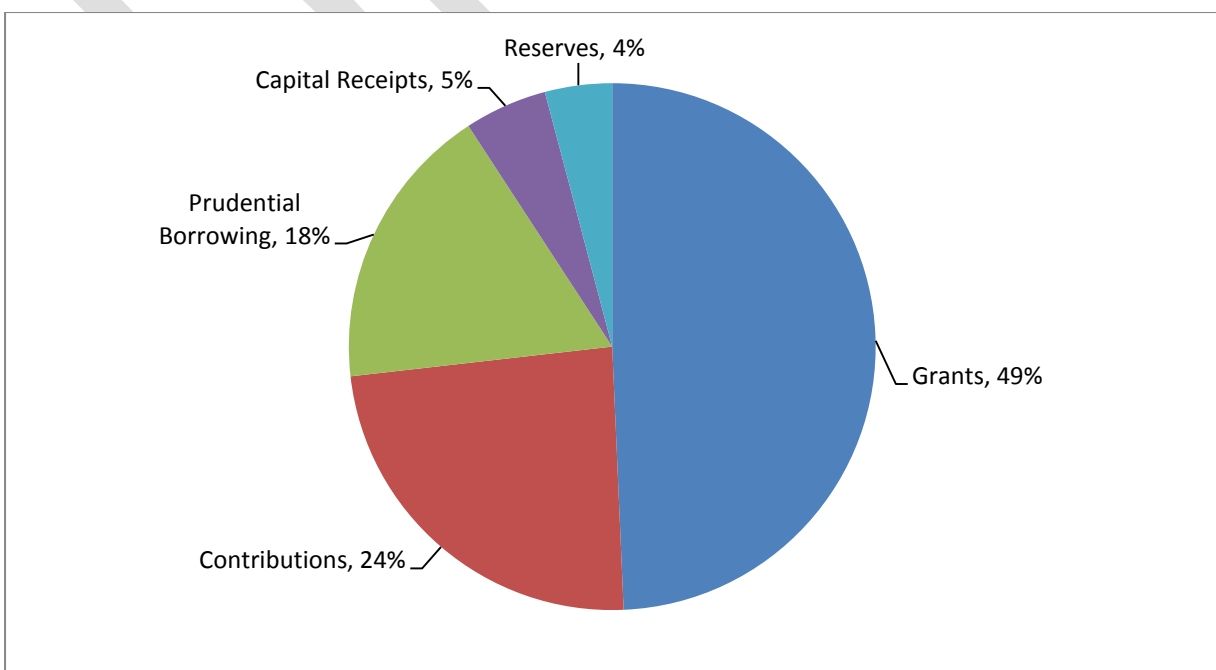
- Promote economic growth

We intend to spend £470.9m on capital investments in Oxfordshire between 2014/15 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 \[url\]](#)


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[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**