Performance Scrutiny Committee – 7 January 2915

Developing the New Corporate Plan

Report of the Chief Policy Officer

Purpose

1. Oxfordshire County Council's Corporate Plan is currently revised every year, alongside the Medium Term Financial Plan, and is adopted by Council.

2. The Corporate Plan provides an overview of the Council's functions, strategy, and ambitions. Detail about service objectives and savings measures are contained in Directorate Business Strategies.

3. Last year was a 'light touch' refresh in anticipation of more significant changes for 2016. The draft plan attached as an **Appendix** is therefore a more fundamental review of priorities, with the intention that it should be a significantly shorter strategic-level document.

Background

Priorities and Performance

4. The Leader has emphasised that he wishes to see three key areas of focus in our strategy, which are reflected in the corporate plan:

   - A thriving economy
   - Efficient services
   - Protecting vulnerable people

5. With a shorter and more strategic plan, additional information may also be required in new Directorate Business Strategies. These will be developed in tandem with but on a slightly later timetable to enable them to take full account of decisions made in the Service and Resource Planning process, given the scale of change proposed.

6. Officers will also produce an internally-focused corporate business strategy setting out how the council will change as an organisation to deliver the Plan. The Directorate Business Strategies and Corporate Business Strategy will include new performance measures developed alongside them with detail on how they will be monitored and reported, and these will be brought to Performance Scrutiny.

Timetable

7th January	Performance Scrutiny
26th January	Cabinet
16th February	Adoption at Council
March	Sign-off for revised Business Strategies/Corporate Measures

Recommendation

7.   **Performance Scrutiny Committee are asked to c**omment on the draft and structure of the new Plan, considering in particular the overall message, priorities, and focus.

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AMBITION FOR OXFORDSHIRE

Oxfordshire County Council's role in delivering a Thriving Oxfordshire

**Oxfordshire County Council
Corporate Plan 2016-2020**

Contents

1. My Ambition for Oxfordshire

Leader's text will be provided in advance of Council.

Focus:

- *Thriving economy*
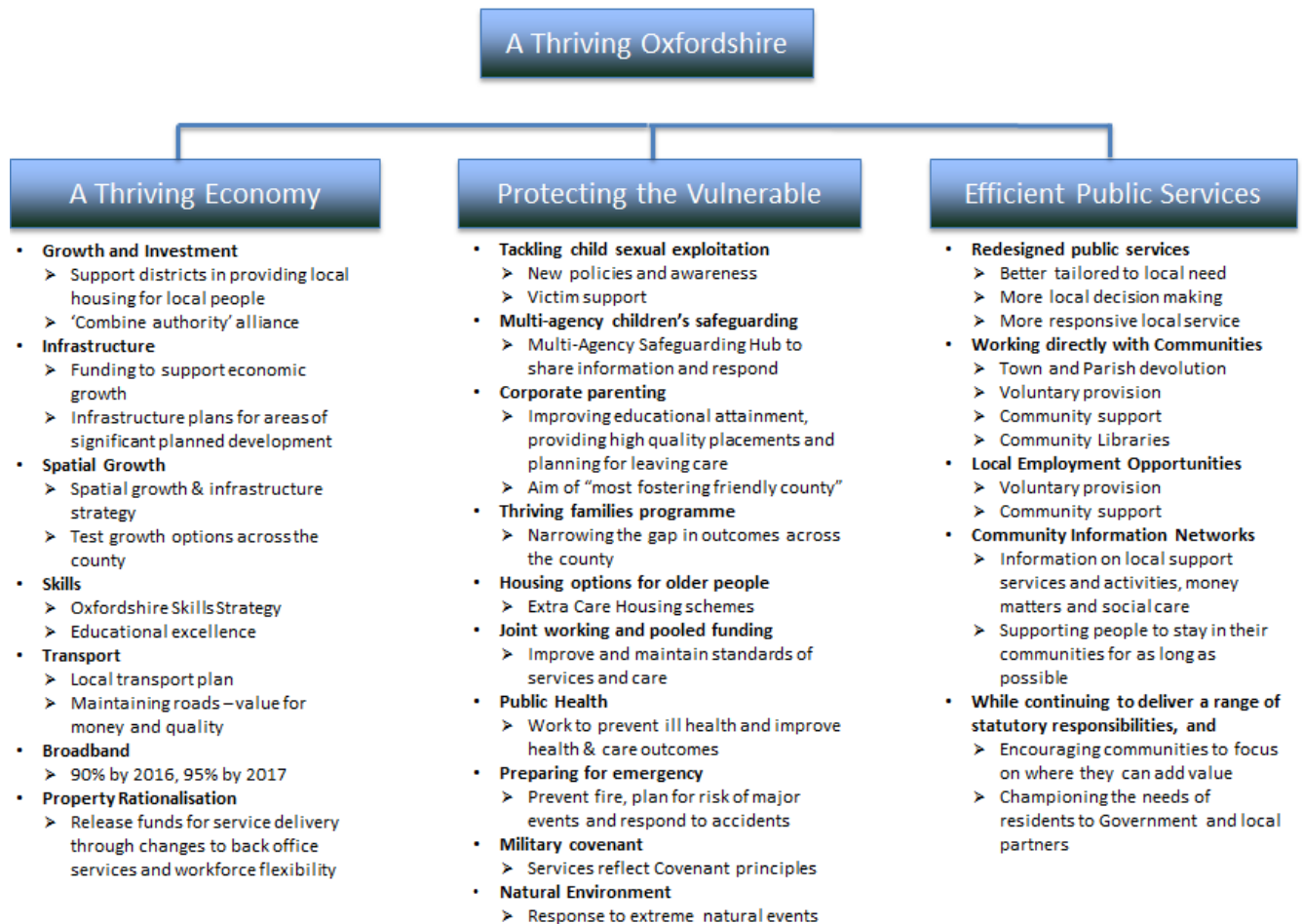- *Efficient services*
- *Protecting vulnerable people*

In the context

- *A fast-growing economy but*
- *A shrinking public sector and*
- *Rising demand for services, particularly adult and children's care*

Reference to community self-help, role of volunteers, and devolution to town and parish councils.

2. Your Council

Oxfordshire County Council works to deliver...

A Thriving Oxfordshire

A Thriving Economy

- **Growth and Investment**
  - Support districts in providing local housing for local people
  - 'Combine authority' alliance
- **Infrastructure**
  - Funding to support economic growth
  - Infrastructure plans for areas of significant planned development
- **Spatial Growth**
  - Spatial growth & infrastructure strategy
  - Test growth options across the county
- **Skills**
  - Oxfordshire Skills Strategy
  - Educational excellence
- **Transport**
  - Local transport plan
  - Maintaining roads – value for money and quality
- **Broadband**
  - 90% by 2016, 95% by 2017
- **Property Rationalisation**
  - Release funds for service delivery through changes to back office services and workforce flexibility

Protecting the Vulnerable

- **Tackling child sexual exploitation**
  - New policies and awareness
  - Victim support
- **Multi-agency children's safeguarding**
  - Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub to share information and respond
- **Corporate parenting**
  - Improving educational attainment, providing high quality placements and planning for leaving care
  - Aim of "most fostering friendly county"
- **Thriving families programme**
  - Narrowing the gap in outcomes across the county
- **Housing options for older people**
  - Extra Care Housing schemes
- **Joint working and pooled funding**
  - Improve and maintain standards of services and care
- **Public Health**
  - Work to prevent ill health and improve health & care outcomes
- **Preparing for emergency**
  - Prevent fire, plan for risk of major events and respond to accidents
- **Military covenant**
  - Services reflect Covenant principles
- **Natural Environment**
  - Response to extreme natural events

Efficient Public Services

- **Redesigned public services**
  - Better tailored to local need
  - More local decision making
  - More responsive local service
- **Working directly with Communities**
  - Town and Parish devolution
  - Voluntary provision
  - Community support
  - Community Libraries
- **Local Employment Opportunities**
  - Voluntary provision
  - Community support
- **Community Information Networks**
  - Information on local support services and activities, money matters and social care
  - Supporting people to stay in their communities for as long as possible
- **While continuing to deliver a range of statutory responsibilities, and**
  - Encouraging communities to focus on where they can add value
  - Championing the needs of residents to Government and local partners

Tighter budgets in a shrinking public sector

As central government reduces funding to local government, the county council has to continue to make budget savings. While we work to make our services as efficient as possible, this will also result in some cuts to services.

At the same time the demand for services, and therefore the cost, is increasing. This is partly due to our ageing and growing population, and increasing demand for children's social care services. The council has also taken on functions from other parts of the public sector, such as public health.

The financial challenge public services face in meeting the needs of a growing number of old people is well known. However we are also having to spend more on adults with learning and physical disabilities, and protecting vulnerable children. In less than five years we have seen a 42% increase in looked after children, and an 84% increase in child protection cases.

We have made significant savings without affecting frontline services, through efficiencies including management reductions, pay freezes, smarter contracting, better use of our property, working with the voluntary sector, and shrinking/sharing our back office services. However these will not be sufficient to meet the scale of the ongoing financial challenge we face.

Targeting resources at the most vulnerable

As a result the council will have to make some tough decisions. Some county council services will be reduced and some may stop altogether.

While we will continue to meet our statutory responsibilities, increasingly we will not be providing universal services. Instead we will target services at those who really depend on them – particularly children at risk of abuse and neglect, and adults who cannot look after themselves.

In 2015-6 we will spend around £575m, excluding schools, and around half of this will be raised from council tax. The council has already saved – or has plans to save – a total of £292 million between 2010/11 and 2017/18.

We now think we will need to save up to £70 million more in the four years between 2016/17 and 2019/20. These savings are long-term; even when the government meets its target on deficit reduction, we do net expect significant increases in council funding.

3. Our priorities

Given the financial challenge set out above, we must be clear about our priorities, and what we can and cannot afford to do in the future. Our priorities for 2016-2020 are to use our influence and reducing budget as effectively and efficiently as possible.

[see infographic attached]

Strong and thriving economy

We will support a strong and thriving economy, working with the local enterprise partnership, local universities, businesses and the five district councils in Oxfordshire, to:

- Help the private sector create new high quality jobs, particularly those which make the most of the county's world-famous expertise in science and technology
- Secure government money for transport, particularly the road and rail networks, and superfast broadband
- Seek investment needed for other infrastructure such as schools, which will be needed in growing areas of the county.
- We recognise that the growth of the economy and wages creates a challenge in securing the skilled workforce the public sector needs, and will work on plans to manage this.

Protecting vulnerable people

Safeguarding vulnerable children and adults and meeting care needs is always our priority, including:

- Stopping abuse and neglect, and giving children in our care a good start in life
- Helping and empowering troubled families, including supporting them to move off benefits and into work
- Supporting people with significant needs, including older people with substantial care needs, and meeting the eligible care needs of people with physical disabilities, learning disabilities, or mental health problems.
- Offering information and advice so people can look after themselves.
- Supporting informal carers

Delivering efficient public services

To enable us to target services at those in greatest need, we will be:

- Working in partnership with others to deliver the best possible outcomes for our communities, including by working with partners to ensure decisions about services and spending in Oxfordshire are whenever possible made in Oxfordshire, based on local evidence and local accountability.

- Working directly with communities and with other partners (for example local councils, the voluntary sector and community support organisations) to develop new, financially sustainable, models of service provision, where the council no longer provides services directly but supports the development of community solutions.
- Making it as easy as possible for people to volunteer in their communities, and ensuring that their work is valued.
- Making transactions and processes digital wherever possible, simplifying customer interaction with the council, making best use of the internet, helping people access online services, and joining up our back office processes more efficiently.
- Stepping up the pace of work on our asset management, disposing of properties where appropriate. We will use our remaining properties efficiently, including maximising income where appropriate.
- Reducing our need for office space by requiring and supporting our staff to work in an 'agile' way, with fewer office staff having permanent fixed desks.

Our statutory responsibilities

We will of course retain a range of other statutory responsibilities which we will work to deliver efficiently and effectively, including:

- Providing fire and rescue services and preventative advice
- Maintaining local roads to a safe standard
- Disposing of household waste and recycling, and
- Supporting library services in our communities.
- Helping people live healthier lives
- Targeting rogue traders

Examples of what we will not do include:

- Provide universal services without clear justification for their cost-effectiveness - this will mean some services stopping, and others being provided in a different way, e.g. being taken on by the local community or volunteers.
- Spend money on roads and other highway assets where it does not contribute to our objective of maintaining them safely and cost-effectively.
- Make judgements about who should provide a service other than on grounds of effectiveness and efficiency.

4. How the Council is run

The Council is a locally elected, democratically accountable organisation with 63 councillors. This plan, alongside other key strategic documents such as the Medium-Term Financial Plan, has to be agreed by a majority of councillors at public meetings.

The last set of elections to Oxfordshire County Council took place in May 2013, and the next elections will be in May 2017. The Council operates a Cabinet and Scrutiny model. This means that some decisions are taken by the Cabinet (a group of councillors from the majority group), which are subject to scrutiny by cross-party panels on particular issues.

Consulting people and making decisions about service change

When the Council makes significant decisions about services and funding, we are committed to making local consultation an important part of that decision-making process. This is so that local people and organisations are able to have their say about the policies which affect them.

Examples of our work on delivering this commitment include:

- Talking Oxfordshire – six-week consultation explaining need to make further savings and setting out the options we were considering; 3,631 responses online with 348 people attending three public meeting, followed by a meeting for parish representatives to talk about impact of council cuts on rural communities.
- Full consultation ahead of any significant service changes, including household waste recycling centres and children's centres
- The Big Plan – consulting service users and their loved ones on services for people with learning disabilities
- Delivering a consultation on supported transport in partnership with a respected third party to ensure a fair and balanced approach.
- Annual 'Hearsay' events about adult social care

We will also apply a number of tests in our business planning to maximise the effectiveness and efficiency of our work:

- Is what we are doing joined up with others trying to achieve the same things?
- Do we need to intervene - to help our most vulnerable residents, or because of legislation?
- Does what we are doing reward people who are doing the right thing?
- Are our decisions being made on the basis of the best available evidence?
- Are we signposting the full range of help available from all sources?

How we work

In making changes to tackle the financial challenge we face, we will ask key questions about each change, including whether it

- Contributes to our legal duties, e.g. to keep children and vulnerable adults safe
- Can be achieved without significantly increasing health and safety risks
- Makes a clear contribution to a thriving Oxfordshire
- Presents opportunities for communities to take over services themselves, or maintain services which we can no longer provide
- Reduces costs or demand for services by improving prevention
- Is an opportunity to become more efficient, e.g. through use of new technology

We will also monitor our impact on inequality, including undertaking impact assessments of service change on groups with protected characteristics required by the Equality Act 2010, as well as those on low incomes, and those in isolated rural areas.

As an organisation we will continue to work to a set of organisational values in our work with partners, the public, and colleagues.

- Customer focus
- Honesty
- One team
- Innovation
- Commercial
- Enthusiasm

5. Working in partnership

Oxfordshire County Council is playing a leading role in negotiating devolution from central government in order that more decisions which affect Oxfordshire can be made in Oxfordshire.

To agree to this, we need to persuade Government that the key elements for successful delivery are in place, not least robust partnership working.

The Council already works in partnership with other organisations and significant business is undertaken through the Council's role on formal partnership bodies including:

Oxfordshire Growth Board and Local Enterprise Partnership: Provide strategic co-ordination for our growing economy and the expected growth in housing, and support work to get the funding for the infrastructure which that growth requires - particularly transport improvements.

Health and Wellbeing Board: Brings together local government, the NHS, and other key partners, to ensure we are looking in the round at Oxfordshire residents' needs for health and social care, so that we can plan and deliver these in a joined-up and coherent way.

Children's Trust: Reporting to the Health and Wellbeing Board and involving local government, the NHS, schools, the police, the voluntary sector, and parents and young people, to recommend where resources for children and young people should be focused and holding agencies to account for delivering the priorities for children, young people and families.

Safer Communities Partnership: Involves the county and district councils, police, and others, in providing strategic oversight and direction for the prevention of crime and anti-social behaviour across Oxfordshire.

Stronger Communities Alliance: Brings together 23 members from voluntary sector support providers, faith groups, representatives of local councils, the NHS, military and police, to help build and maintain stronger communities and a thriving voluntary, community and faith sector in Oxfordshire to improve the quality of life for local people.

Oxfordshire Environment Partnership: A local government partnership which helps to coordinate shared action against broader Oxfordshire 2030 pledges relating to waste, energy, climate change, biodiversity and flooding.

Oxfordshire Safeguarding Children Board and the Safeguarding Adults' board: Enable organisations come together to agree on how they will cooperate with one another to safeguard and promote the welfare of children, or adults, at risk of harm. Both boards are independently chaired and membership includes all relevant statutory agencies.

The key countywide partnerships report to Council on at least an annual basis, and more information about their recent achievements and future plans can be found in this annual report, available online.
[http://mycouncil.oxfordshire.gov.uk/documents/s30720/CC_SEP0815R03.pdf]

We also work with a range of local and national partners. Many of the ambitions set out in this plan can only be achieved with others – ranging from local people and communities, through local public and private sector partners, to national government.

Some of our key partners are shown below. We are also involved in partnerships beyond our borders where relevant. These include;

- England's Economic Heartland, which will join up delivery of infrastructure improvements across eight council areas from Oxfordshire to Cambridgeshire
- Shared back office services (finance, HR) with Hampshire
- Joint audit function with Buckinghamshire
- Aspects of Fire protection with Buckinghamshire and Berkshire.

To get the best outcomes for Oxfordshire, we will:

- Work with local and regional partners and national government to attract new investment and new powers to help support economic growth and deliver better services. [More information about devolution will be in the final version as the position becomes clearer]
- Develop new models of joint working with better outcomes for local residents
- Facilitate and encourage communities to help themselves
- Help parishes and town councils respond to local needs including by allowing them to take on some council functions that we can no longer afford to provide ourselves.

6. How we will know we are delivering

Our track record

While we face significant challenges around the demand for our services and the funding available to provide them, we have much about which we can be positive. Here are some recent examples.

Helping troubled families thrive
The county council is helping transform the lives of more than 400 new families in the second phase of its Thriving Families project.

The scheme helps vulnerable families overcome problems such as antisocial behaviour, poor school attendance and unemployment. All 810 families identified in the first phase made real-terms improvements in their lives.

Oxfordshire is part of England's Economic Heartland
As a founder member of England's Economic Heartland strategic alliance, the county council is working with other councils including Buckinghamshire, Northamptonshire and Cambridgeshire to boost prosperity in the county by co-ordinating investment in transport infrastructure.

Already home to over 173,000 businesses, investment in England's Economic Heartland generates 40% higher return than anywhere else outside of London.

Pooled care and health budgets bring benefits
Oxfordshire County Council and the Oxfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group continue to pool budgets in excess of £330m to ensure that spending on health and social care makes best use of available resources and achieves better outcomes for patients and service users.

The money funds community health and social care services such as continuing health care - recent examples of this include the jointly-commissioned dementia support service, and our shared ongoing commitment to supporting carers in the county.

Joining up fire control services
Oxfordshire Fire and Rescue Service has joined forces with two neighbouring services to create a state of the art emergency call handling centre.

OFRS had joined Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service and Buckinghamshire & Milton Keynes Fire and Rescue Service to set a new joint control centre in Reading.

Frideswide Square – improving traffic flow and better public space

After nearly 45,000 working hours, over 400 tonnes of granite and nearly 4000m² of York Stone the new look Frideswide Square near Oxford station is complete with its shared space for pedestrians, cyclists and public transport.

Other enhancements such as the free flow arrangement for traffic, trees, planters with uplighters and decluttered space means the square is now a fitting gateway into a city which is looking forward to the Westgate shopping centre redevelopment and train station.

Firefighters watch out for vulnerable residents
The service returned 88 safeguarding alerts to Oxfordshire County Council's adults and children's social care teams for further investigation following attendance at fires or other incidents during 2014-15.

If Oxfordshire firefighters see a family or older person in need in the course of their work, they refer concerns to other parts of the council responsible for children and adult social care.

Ring road improvements to ease congestion
In the last twelve months the county council has completed major improvements on the A423 at Kennington, A420 London Road and the Plain roundabout.

These schemes are part of the Connecting Oxfordshire programme and have helped improved traffic flows, provided new road surfaces and improved safety for all road users.

Each day around 16,000 vehicles, including up to 900 buses and coaches, use London Road. It is also a key road for residents and businesses of Headington.

Managing Performance
Alongside this Corporate Plan we will develop a corporate Business Strategy, setting out how the Council will deliver change to services and our own ways of working. Directorates will also produce Business Strategies that set out the strategic priorities for their service areas, including making budget savings.

Performance - examples of specific measures but not full detail

- *Examples of performance measures but not the detail of all the individual measures - e.g. we may include reducing the number of vulnerable children we place out of county, and public satisfaction with the highways service, but not administrative data on the timeliness of child protection reviews, or the percentage of s106 funding held within 24 months of expiry - that does not mean that these are unimportant.*
- *Customer Satisfaction (tied to priorities)*

- *Performance Scrutiny - one of the most significant of the scrutiny committees mentioned above*
- *Open Public Data - what we already publish, where to find it - and Insight.*

7. Conclusion: innovation and challenges

To support its ambition for a thriving Oxfordshire in the context for rising demand for public services and reduced public spending, the county council will have to find new ways to meet the needs of the people of Oxfordshire.

Some of the challenges and innovative solutions we will be working in the coming year include:

A40 – work underway and thinking for a long-term solution continues
£100m improvement works to alleviate congestion in the short to medium term along the A40 corridor within Oxfordshire has started. Longer-term solutions for the A40 were considered as part of a public consultation held by the council in Autumn 2015 which will inform a long-term strategy for the A40.

Plans to boost adult social care workforce
The council is developing plans to grow its adult social care workforce and meet the challenges of an aging population.

The service is investing in developing the skills, knowledge and values of its staff to encourage carers to view their work as a vocation. There are also plans to boost apprenticeships in social and healthcare by funding placements with providers.

Ensuring children in care stay close to home
The council is building four new centres to look after children in care and those at risk of coming into care. This will enable more vulnerable young people to stay closer to home and help keep them safe.

Centres in Thame and Eynsham will help younger teenagers and homes in Didcot and Witney will cater for those preparing to leave care.

Growing Bicester – supporting major growth plans
Oxfordshire County Council in partnership with Cherwell District Council, Bicester Town Council and Bicester Vision, has developed a joint campaign called 'Growing Bicester'. The purpose of which is to explain how a number of transport, housing and regeneration schemes are part of a coherent, long-term development plan for the town.

Children and Family Centres for targeted early intervention
Oxfordshire County Council is developing proposals for a new integrated model of children's services. Under the proposals there would be up to eight Children and Family Centres located in areas of greatest need across Oxfordshire and an outreach service to support vulnerable children and families close to where they live.

It is also developing an offer to communities and voluntary groups to continue delivering universal services through existing children's centres.

The 'agile' county council

For Oxfordshire County Council becoming an 'agile' organisation means working in a more flexible way that makes best use of staff time, buildings and resources. We will maximise our performance by supporting teams to be more responsive, flexible and efficient.

Agile working is part of a bigger programme where the council is rationalising the use of properties to achieve savings.

Supporting school improvement

Innovative plans to create a traded school improvement service are being developed by the council.

The commercial 'arm' will contribute to a thriving Oxfordshire by helping all schools achieve a rating of 'Good' or better.

As more schools become academies, they are already buying in many services and control their own budgets.

Science Transit – connecting growth areas

The Oxford Science Transit plan aims to transform public transport along the county's 'knowledge spine', which runs from Banbury to the science and technology parks in the Vale.

The Science Transit will be a fully integrated public transport system that connects the area's centres of innovation and economic growth with the two universities.