Section 2

Corporate Plan

OXFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

AMBITION FOR OXFORDSHIRE

Oxfordshire County Council's role in delivering a Thriving Oxfordshire

Oxfordshire County Council
Corporate Plan 2016-2020

1. My Ambition for Oxfordshire

Reductions in central funding to councils combined and rising demand for our care services mean that our new corporate plan must focus on targeting resources at vulnerable people while becoming more efficient.

However Oxfordshire County Council remains a substantial organisation, providing a range of services used by all residents, including some of the most vulnerable people in our society.

Government plans to change the way councils are funded also provide an opportunity to reshape the nature of local government. So let me set out clear priorities for the council in the coming years.

First, we will work to support Oxfordshire's thriving economy. That means helping the private sector create high quality new jobs and securing government and developer funding for key infrastructure.

We are rolling out superfast broadband across the county to meet the needs of a digital economy, and supporting the local enterprise partnership and education providers create a skilled workforce. As more funding for local services is raised locally, this growth in jobs is needed so we can meet our responsibilities towards those who cannot support themselves.

Second, we will protect vulnerable people - in particular vulnerable children at risk of abuse and neglect and adults who can't look after themselves. We will always look after those people with eligible care needs.

Where we can intervene early to help people avoid or delay life’s problems we will, because prevention is better than cure. It is also cheaper in the long run.

Third, while doing all this we will be efficient. We have already stripped out layers of management, and rooted out duplication and inefficiency. This next step will require us to be even leaner, modernising the way the council runs and provides services.

More transactions will be digital. We will dispose of properties we do not need or generate an income from them. Our own staff will work more flexibly so we need less office space, and where possible we will share buildings with other organisations. We will also work with partners and central government to join up local services so that more decisions about Oxfordshire are made in Oxfordshire.

That said, I want to ensure we don't forget Oxfordshire's strengths. Most notably we are the fastest growing part of the country since the recession - outpacing even Greater London in economic growth. For this reason we have the lowest unemployment on record in the county, with only one person in every 200 claiming unemployment benefit.

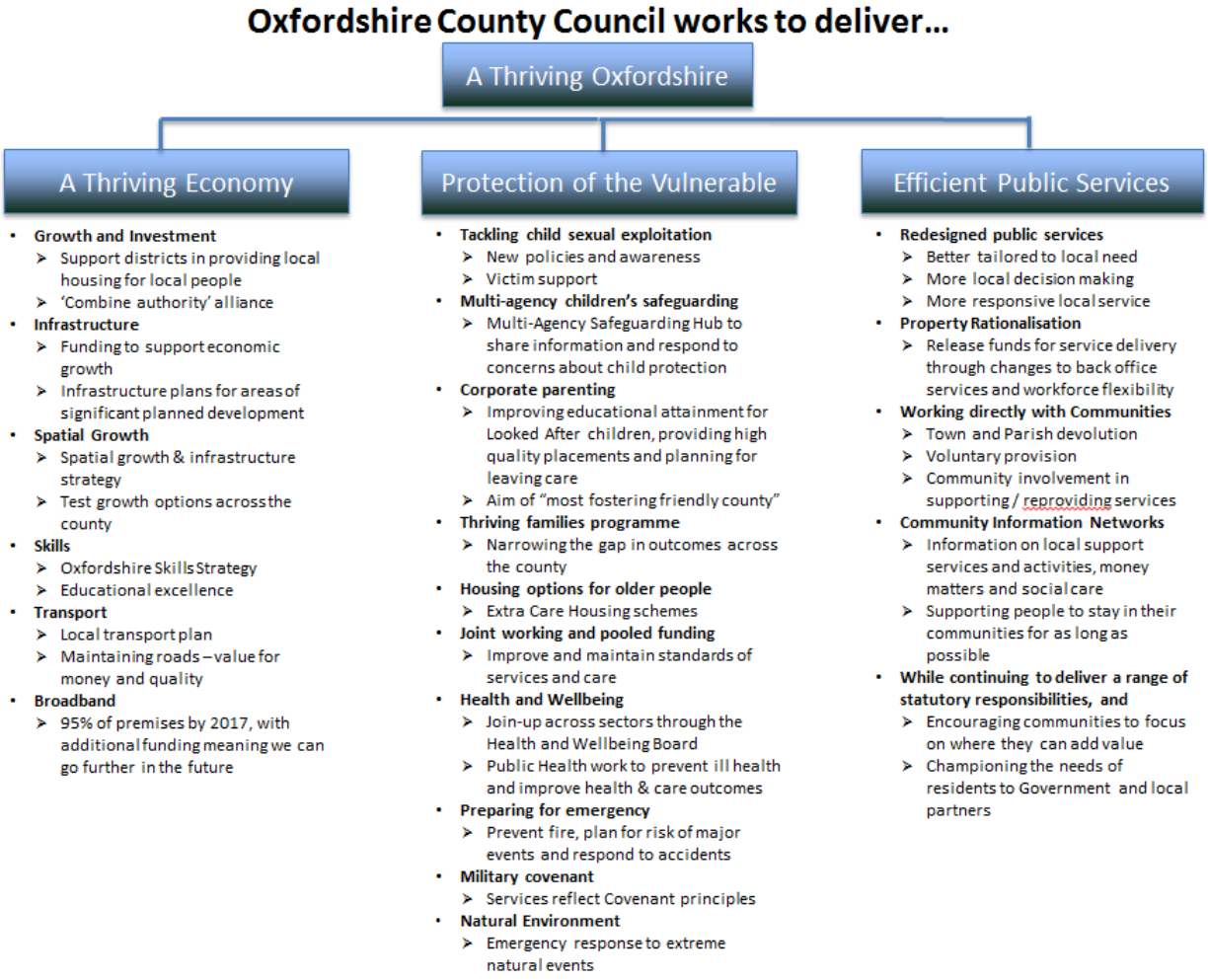
Another of our greatest strengths is the resilience of our people and communities. While helping vulnerable people is the priority for many of our services, it is my hope

that we can enable other services to continue and indeed deliver better outcomes by working in new ways, in partnership with local people, other parts of the public sector, and with private companies - and all at less cost to the taxpayer.

This is my ambition for Oxfordshire.

Cllr Ian Hudspeth
Leader, Oxfordshire County Council

2. Your Council



Tighter budgets in a shrinking public sector

In contrast to the rapid growth in Oxfordshire's private sector economy, the public sector is required to make savings year on year - nowhere more so than in local government. As central government reduces funding to local government, the county council has to continue to bear down on spending. While we work to make our services as efficient as possible, this will also result in 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 most intensive users of our services make up around 2% of the population, but account for around half our spending, and this proportion is growing. 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. At the end of March 2015 there were 6,494 adults in Oxfordshire receiving long-term social care funded by the county council. There were 515 looked after children, and 569 children who were the subject of a child protection plan

We also have to maintain a range of other services we are required by law to provide.

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, which will require radical new thinking about how we raise income and how we spend it.

Targeting resources at the most vulnerable

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

While we will continue to meet our statutory responsibilities, increasingly we will not be able to provide universal services beyond that core. 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 spent around £575m, and around half of this is being 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. In many cases those savings have been required to meet rising demand for our provision to the most vulnerable, as well as addressing our falling funding.

We now expect that we will need to save up to £72 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 not expect significant increases in council funding from central government, and indeed believe that Oxfordshire may effectively be 'fiscally independent' by the end of the plan period.

Therefore in addition to managing our cost base as efficiently as possible, and reducing some of the services we provide, we need to support growth in our local economy to maximise the council's income from local taxpayers, devolved business rates, and central government growth incentives.

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. Less money means that we must use our influence as effectively and efficiently as possible in order to deliver our priorities.

1. A 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 enable the private sector create new high quality jobs, particularly those which make the most of the county's world-famous expertise in science, technology, and innovation
- Secure government and developer funding towards the costs of the infrastructure which enables and supports that growth, including transport infrastructure, superfast broadband, and other infrastructure such as new schools for growing communities
- Support the LEP in working to ensure a skilled workforce, including the right staff for the public sector, in the context of a growing private sector which generates more, and better paid, jobs, and
- Maximise the funding to public services from a growing local economy, ensuring that developers pay their fair share towards infrastructure, and making the most of business rate devolution. As government withdraws central funding the only way to sustain vital public services in Oxfordshire will be for a thriving economy to generate local resources.

2. Protection for vulnerable people

We will safeguard vulnerable children and adults and meet their eligible care needs, including through:

- Stopping abuse and neglect, and giving children in our care a good start in life
- Backing evidence-based early interventions which prevent more challenging problems arising in the future
- 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

3. Efficient public services

There are two aspects to this:

Firstly to enable the council to target services at those in greatest need, the Council needs a more efficient business operating model, which will involve consolidation across the council, leaner processes, modernisation and rationalisation of our functions, and other innovation to drive a cross-cutting approach to ensure services are as efficient and effective as possible. As part of this we will be:

- 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 reviewing our asset management, disposing of properties where appropriate, and 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, and working with local partners to share property.
- Supporting people and communities to help themselves including by making it as easy as possible for people to volunteer in their communities, and ensuring that their work is valued.
- Taking a more commercial approach to managing our business. This will include generating income where this can be done in a way which makes a net contribution to the savings required - not least from using our remaining property assets in more efficient and innovative ways.

Secondly we recognise that we are part of the broader landscape in the county and that we must work effectively with our local partners to deliver the best possible outcomes for our communities and ensure that residents receive joined up and value for money services. This work includes:

- Working with partners to ensure decisions about services and spending in Oxfordshire are as far as possible made in Oxfordshire, based on local evidence and local accountability. At the time of publication of this plan we, with other local partners, are in discussion with government to seek significant devolution of powers and funding to the county. Current areas of focus for our devolution deal include:
    - Building on the strength of our local economy and the opportunity to drive further economic growth through seeking greater local freedoms in infrastructure provision, housing delivery, skills and business support;
    - Developing a single approach for health and social care in Oxfordshire, bringing together organisations and budgets to create a system that will deliver the care that our residents need as well as better value for money for tax payers.
- Where we are no longer able to fund services we will discuss with communities and other partners (for example local councils, the voluntary sector and community support organisations) how they might be able to develop new and financially sustainable models of service provision, where

the council no longer provides services directly but supports the a community solution.

We will work closely with district councils to support planning for the growth in our economy and in housing, to plan ahead to meet our infrastructure needs, and to ensure growth is delivered in a way which supports Oxfordshire's heritage and quality of life.

Our statutory responsibilities

We will 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:

- Providing universal services without clear evidence 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 where this can be done in a financially sustainable way.
- Spending money on roads and other highway assets where it does not contribute to our objective of maintaining them safely and cost-effectively.
- Making 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 its council meeting.

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.

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 considering deprivation and geographic factors affecting rural or urban communities.

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

Managing Performance

The priorities set out in this Corporate Plan shape all activities and services conducted across the Council. The Directorates will use these to develop their Directorate Business Strategies.

Directorate Business Strategies set out the strategic priorities for their service areas, including making budget savings. They ensure all areas of their business are managed (not solely focused on savings and pressures) and areas of underperformance/concern are escalated when appropriate.

The priorities and activities set out in the Directorate Business Strategies will cascade right down to individuals so that everyone is clear about what their priorities are to ensure we collectively deliver our agreed Plan.

We will measure our success through performance information and benchmarking (how we are performing against other similar authorities, value for money/financial information, customer survey results) and a set of outcome performance measures.

We will report these back to our Performance Scrutiny Committee and Cabinet throughout the year. In addition, we will publish a range of transparency data, available here: https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/content/open-information

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.

5. Working in partnership

The Council already works in partnership with a range of 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.

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.

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 Partnerships (at countywide and district level)**:** 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.

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 directly 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
- Collaboration with Oxford City Council to support counter-fraud measures.
- 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.
- 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.

NHS Oxfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group

Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership

Vale of White Horse District Council

Oxford & Cherwell Valley College

Cherwell District Council North Oxfordshire

community first oxfordshire Helping communities help themselves

GOV.UK

Oxford Brookes University

University of Oxford

Thames Valley Police

West Oxfordshire District Council

Community Covenant

Oxford City Council

OSCA

South Oxfordshire District Council

OCVA Oxfordshire Community and Voluntary Action

Environment Agency

6. 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 the best possible outcomes for patients / service users.

The money funds community health and social care services and recent examples of the benefits of the pooled budget arrangements 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.

7. 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 ageing population and the increasing number of people with complex health and social care needs in the County.

The council is working closely with providers of social care services to develop the skills and knowledge of staff, and promote the use of values in recruitment, to help ensure they feel valued and 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.

Assessment 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.

Science Transit – connecting growth areas

Science Transit is a fresh approach to planning and delivering local transport is needed if the council is to successfully, and sustainably, connect the places in Oxfordshire where the majority of people will live and work over the coming 20 years. Science Transit is designed to improve connectivity within, to and from the Oxfordshire Knowledge Spine (Bicester – Oxford - Science Vale UK).

8. Having Your Say

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 – a 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, currently delivered on our behalf by Healthwatch Oxfordshire

You can view our current and most recent consultations online at https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/public-site/consultation

Managing growth, protecting vulnerable people

COUNTY

Fastest economic growth outside London*

2010
2,595
new businesses

2013
3,515
new businesses

*between 1997-2013 ONS GVA figures

Housing growth

280,000
homes exist now

100,000
more homes by 2031

More children need protection

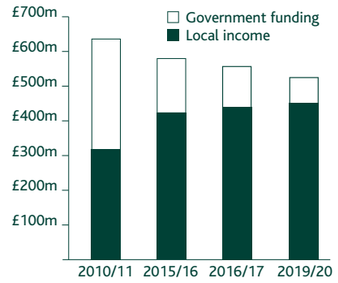
Children on a **protection plan** (per 10k)

2010 19

2015 44

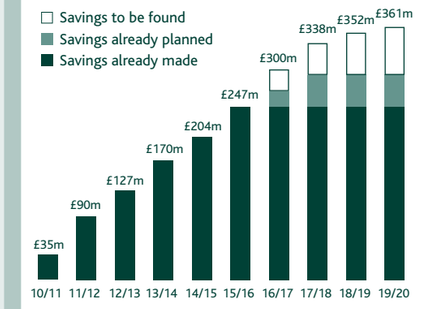
£49k is the **average annual cost** of caring for a child. We currently have **577**.

Government funding and overall council budget reduce*



*Forecast real terms reduction

Ten years of council savings



Now we need to find another **£69m**

Rising demand for adult care

Number of hours of home care support has risen by

63%
in four years

Health and care

£330m
is spent jointly with the NHS

GROWTH

PUBLIC SERVICES

FUNDING

Growing and aging population

2001 population	2031 population
600,000	**800,000**
7% aged 75+	**10%** aged 75+

Infrastructure

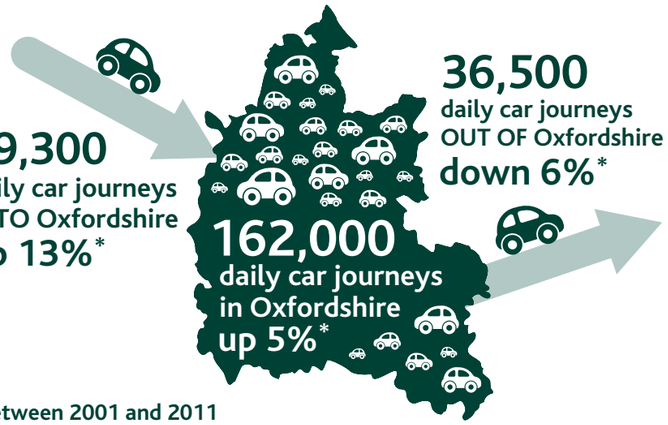
Highway maintenance

2800 miles of road to maintain

Connecting Oxfordshire

£150m
Government funded highways improvements over the next **5** years

Traffic growth



49,300
daily car journeys INTO Oxfordshire
up 13%*

36,500
daily car journeys OUT OF Oxfordshire
down 6%*

162,000
daily car journeys in Oxfordshire
up 5%*

*between 2001 and 2011

Rising demand for care

OXFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL