



South Oxfordshire District Council

Corporate Plan 2016 – 2020





Foreword

Welcome to our corporate plan for 2016 – 2020. We have a bold plan for the future of our district. Through many years of careful financial planning we are able to meet the challenges of local government funding changes while introducing new schemes to improve our area.

We believe in the value of home ownership. We want to ensure that there are homes for everyone and affordable specialist housing so young people can own their own home. We need to balance this with our ambition to protect everything that is special about the natural environment and make sure that the green belt and other protected sites are here for future generations to enjoy.

We believe that we live in a part of the country where anyone who wants a job should be able to find one. We will build on the district's strengths in terms of already internationally renowned science and technology businesses. We will create the conditions that make South Oxfordshire a great place to do business, attract more high value jobs into the district, and help existing businesses to grow. We will create the infrastructure, including good broadband and mobile phone networks, businesses need to be successful.

We will help build thriving communities that people want to be proud of, and seek to improve the lives of residents. We know that one thing that has hurt rural communities is the loss of their last bus services, and we are looking at what we can do to help those communities to maintain vital transport links. We want to help people to lead full and active lives through extending leisure

activities. We will invest in the volunteers who, in turn, invest so much in their communities.

Our grants schemes have already supported many communities to provide new facilities. Through new initiatives such as individual councillor budgets we will increase this support; we will also look at more creative ways to help increase funding for local communities and local voluntary groups.

We believe in localism. We will commit to providing more opportunities for local people to influence local issues. We will do this through consultation with residents on issues, services or projects which affect them, by giving local people a say on how their communities develop through neighbourhood plans, and working more closely with town and parish councils. Our council will seek to be at the cutting edge of hyperlocal decision making.

We know that most of our residents are proud of their communities and want to do their best to protect their local environment. But there is a small minority who don't play by the rules, and this affects the lives of the majority. We will be tougher on those who perpetrate environmental crimes such as fly tipping, dog fouling and littering, and continue to be proactive on planning enforcement.

Looking to our longer term ambitions, we believe that local government could serve residents better and achieve further financial savings through a unitary council arrangement, and we will continue to pursue proposals to achieve this.

A good council is one that reduces taxation, builds homes, supports communities and protects our natural environment. This is what we will do.



John Cotton
Leader of the Council



Will Hall
Cabinet member for the Corporate Plan

Invest in the district's future

We will create the right conditions for economic growth, so that businesses, residents and workers can prosper, by:

- Directly addressing matters in our control which fetter growth, such as housing supply and provision of affordable housing. We will work with partners to seek to overcome infrastructure bottlenecks that impact adversely on business competitiveness.
- Supporting the creation of an environment that allows enterprising small and medium sized businesses to grow.
- Championing our small and medium sized businesses in South Oxfordshire.
- Seeking to build on the strengths of our internationally renowned hydrology base at Howbery Park and the nuclear fusion and renewable energy research and prototyping at Culham. Our aim is to accelerate the commercial application of these world leading facilities to create high value knowledge economy jobs.
- Supporting the Thame Farmers Auction Market to relocate to an alternative site within the district, thereby freeing up the Thame cattle market site for redevelopment.
- Seeking to support the market towns as places to visit and places to live.



We will seek to further improve Broadband and mobile phone coverage. We will:

- Aim for all businesses and residents to have access to superfast Broadband.
- Encourage mobile phone providers to improve mobile phone reception, including use of council-owned sites to improve coverage.

We will provide new leisure facilities by:

- Building a new leisure centre at Didcot.
- Planning for future leisure needs in the district.
- Following adoption of the Local Plan and housing allocations, and agreement on facilities at the new Didcot leisure centre, considering the need for a new indoor leisure facility elsewhere in the district.

We will secure our financial future

- While recognising the challenges of changing local government finance we will maintain our strong financial position through innovation, efficiency and careful management.



Unlock the potential of Didcot

Through the garden town initiative we will:

- Develop the Orchard Centre phase two to deliver excellent retail and leisure facilities and exemplar homes.
- Regenerate the gateway to Didcot around the station to provide a landmark entrance to science vale.
- Attract infrastructure funding that enables traffic to flow through and around the town.
- Create welcoming green neighbourhoods throughout the residential and business quarters.
- Master plan the wider town centre to develop a transformational change programme that meets garden town objectives.
- Involve local residents in all aspects of the garden town initiative.







Homes and jobs for everyone

Through an ambitious housing strategy we will:

- Deliver the right balance of types and tenure of new homes to meet housing need and support economic growth.
- Develop starter home and low cost home ownership initiatives.
- Ensure a good supply of affordable rented homes for those unable to buy.
- Promote self-build and custom build initiatives, and ensure that land is made available for this purpose.

We will facilitate sustainable communities by:

- Encouraging exemplar housing design through our planning policies.
- Working with developers and other partners to develop a protocol that will ensure high quality, sympathetic design across our district.
- Strongly supporting the development of neighbourhood plans for our towns and villages.
- Undertaking comprehensive regeneration of Berinsfield.
- Ensuring our environmental assets such as the green belt, the Chilterns AONB and Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSIs) are protected for future generations.
- Directly undertaking development where we see market failure or a gap in provision, creating delivery vehicles as required.



We will reduce homelessness by:

- Assisting households to remain in their homes through mediation and enforcement of their rights to occupy.
- Providing a holistic housing advice service, in partnership with other agencies, to maximise the housing options for all households.
- Helping low income families to access affordable rented accommodation through deposit bonds, rent-in-advance loans and tenancy support.

We will optimise employment opportunities by:

- Ensuring a good supply of appropriate employment land across the district.
- Working with delivery partners to ensure a good supply of appropriate business premises for start-ups and small and medium enterprises.
- Ensuring that the skills needs of our employers are identified and that training programmes are in place to provide a skilled labour force.
- Encouraging local apprenticeship and local workforce schemes that benefit our young people.
- Supporting the Government's objective of achieving full employment.



Build thriving communities

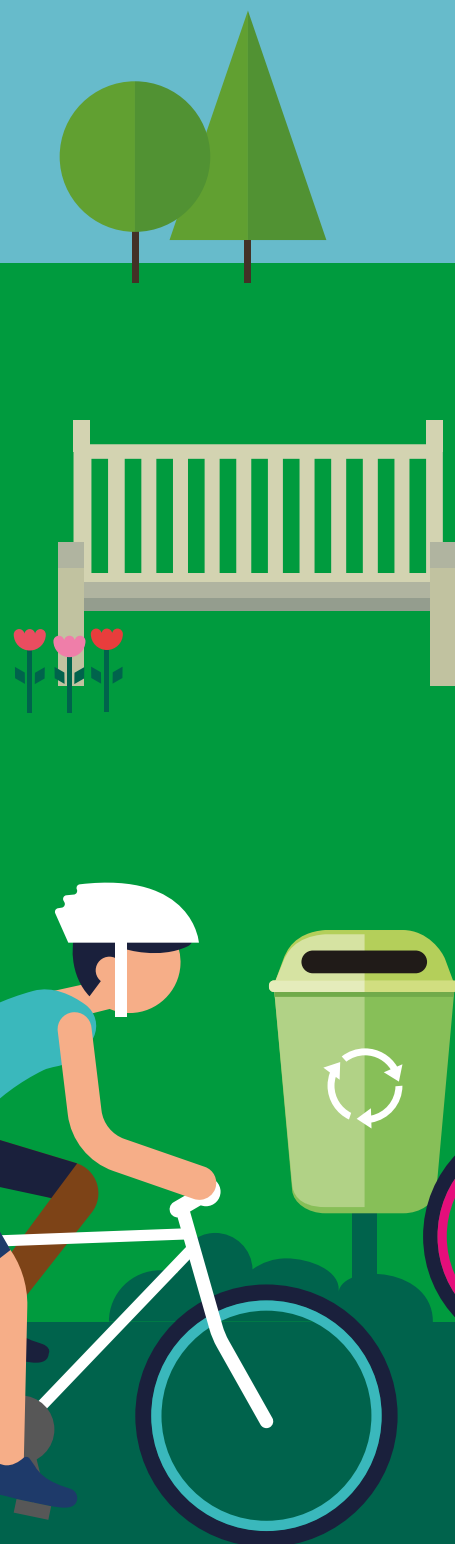
We will make communities clean and safe by:

- Delivering new and ambitious air quality action plans to improve air quality across the district, and specifically tackle poor air quality in Henley, Wallingford and Watlington.
- Working with partners as part of the South and Vale Community Safety Partnership (CSP) to deliver the CSP annual plan aimed at reducing crime, tackling antisocial behaviour and supporting vulnerable people.
- Maintaining the number of people who say they feel safe during the day/at night.
- Continuing the annual South Oxfordshire deep clean programme.
- Increasing the recycling rate to 70 per cent and maintaining our position

as one of the top 10 authorities for recycling.

We will help people to be healthy and active by:

- Increasing the number of people using leisure centres.
- Supporting the government drive to increase sport and activity in schools.
- Working with Sustrans to improve provision of cycle routes in the district.
- Piloting the introduction of a cycle hire scheme in one of our market towns.
- Increasing participation in activity and sport to improve health.





We will support communities to help themselves. We will:

- Introduce individual councillor budgets through which councillors can support small community projects in their area.
- Consider the business case for introducing a local lottery scheme to fund community projects.
- Provide additional support to voluntary and community groups to help them to find the volunteers they need, to provide vital services to residents, including a website to link potential volunteers with volunteering opportunities.
- Increase the number of people volunteering in the district.
- Promote, create and support volunteer roles and opportunities for sports volunteering within the local community.
- Support rural communities with maintaining their transport links by working with bus operators to look at options to continue some of the bus services previously supported directly by Oxfordshire County Council.
- Investigate opportunities for increasing the role of parish councils in hyperlocal issues.

Services that reflect residents' needs

We will engage with residents and service users to ensure that services and facilities reflect their needs. We will:

- Maintain high levels of resident satisfaction with the council and with key services such as waste and cleanliness.
- Engage with residents on issues, services or projects which affect them, and consider their views in making decisions.
- Maintain a close dialogue with town and parish councils in order to understand the issues they face, and where possible work with them to find solutions.
- Hold two parish and town forums a year so that parishes can be a part of the District's work.
- Hold a parish councils briefing before each budget.
- Work to broaden understanding of public opportunities to contribute to council meetings.
- Support the democratic process through innovative IT solutions as part of the new IT Strategy.





Be tough on enforcement

We will continue to take action on flytipping, dog fouling and litter. We will:

- Achieve a year on year reduction in the number of fly tips in the district.
- Clear 90 per cent of fly tips from high intensity areas within 12 hours.
- Implement the issuing of fixed penalty notices for dog fouling and litter by the council's environmental wardens in town centres.

We will take a proactive approach to planning enforcement by:

- Achieving an overall reduction in enforcement intervention through increased engagement with developers at all stages of the planning process.
- Offering support and guidance to applicants throughout the planning process in order to mitigate breaches of planning control that might otherwise lead to enforcement action.



The background is a dark blue sky with several stylized white clouds. On the left, a construction crane is lifting a grey building block into place on a multi-story building under construction. The building has orange and grey sections. In the foreground, a blue fast-food truck is parked on a green field. The truck has a red sign on its side that says 'FAST FOOD' with a large burger icon. A menu board on the side of the truck lists five items with fish icons. A red and white striped barrier is next to the truck.

We will maintain high standards in food safety

- Through a risk based inspection and enforcement programme we will ensure that food businesses comply with food safety legislation.
- 96 per cent of businesses will be broadly compliant by 2020.

In delivering on the commitments in this Corporate Plan we will:

- Provide fair and accessible services and employment opportunities that meet the needs of everyone, and positively promote inclusion, in line with the Equality Act.
- Provide value for money for residents and where relevant ensure that services pay for themselves.







The Council's equality objectives are to:

- Continue to improve physical access to council owned or leased buildings or land.
- Ensure new projects, policies or strategies, changes to services, and communication take account of the needs of all users.
- Increase our understanding of the communities we serve, through consultation, engagement and using existing evidence (e.g. census data) to inform the decisions we make.
- Continue to monitor the impact of our employment policies and practices to ensure all groups have access to employment opportunities.
- Support communities to deliver better outcomes for disadvantaged groups and encourage community cohesion.
- Seek to improve access to major new developments and town centres in South Oxfordshire for people with disabilities, carers and older people.



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