Thriving communities
for everyone in Oxfordshire
Corporate plan 2020-24

OXFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

About this plan

Our Corporate Plan sets out our vision for thriving communities for everyone in Oxfordshire. It explains the priorities and focus for us to achieve our vision.

We live in a diverse and dynamic county with nearly 700,000 residents. Along with the historic city of Oxford and large town of Banbury, the county has a thriving network of villages and market towns. They are home to around 40% of the population, making Oxfordshire the most rural county in the south-east.

Our population is growing and, overall, we are a healthy and wealthy county. We know there are opportunities to make sure all residents and communities in Oxfordshire have the same opportunities to thrive.

To achieve our vision, we focus on three 'thriving' themes: people, communities and economy. This plan explains how we will realise our vision and how we measure progress.

Leader’s foreword

Your county council is shaping Oxfordshire’s future – along with our partners such as the NHS, district councils, businesses, universities, voluntary groups and, most importantly, communities themselves.

We are investing in a sustainable transport system so our local economy and public services can thrive and thus reduce ill-health, neglect and loneliness. That means helping individual people and creating better places to live for all – healthier places for thriving communities.

It’s already happening in Bicester and Barton, and can happen across the county. I want to see ‘inclusive growth’ so everyone can enjoy the excellent quality of life in Oxfordshire.

Climate change is our other big priority, which influences everything we do. The county council has halved its carbon emissions since 2008; now we must get to zero by 2030. Our ambition is inspired by Oxfordshire’s strong environmental credentials, with the best recycling rates in the country.

But these changes will only happen if we work together with communities. Please join us to shape a healthier Oxfordshire for everyone!

Councillor Ian Hudspeth
Leader of Oxfordshire County Council

Thriving communities for everyone in Oxfordshire

Thriving people

We strive to give every child a good start in life, and protect everyone from abuse and neglect.

We enable older and disabled people to live independently. We care for those in greatest need.

- Support families that need extra help to thrive.
- Improve educational attainment, including for children with special needs.
- Join up social care with the NHS to keep people out of hospital.
- Work with the police and others to keep young people safe.

Thriving communities

We help people live safe, healthy lives and play an active part in their community.

We provide services that enhance the quality of life in our communities, and protect the local environment.

- Design places that encourage healthy and active lives.
- Focus on the health gap between different communities.
- Reduce carbon emissions to tackle climate change and improve air quality.
- Encourage community-run services and self-help initiatives.

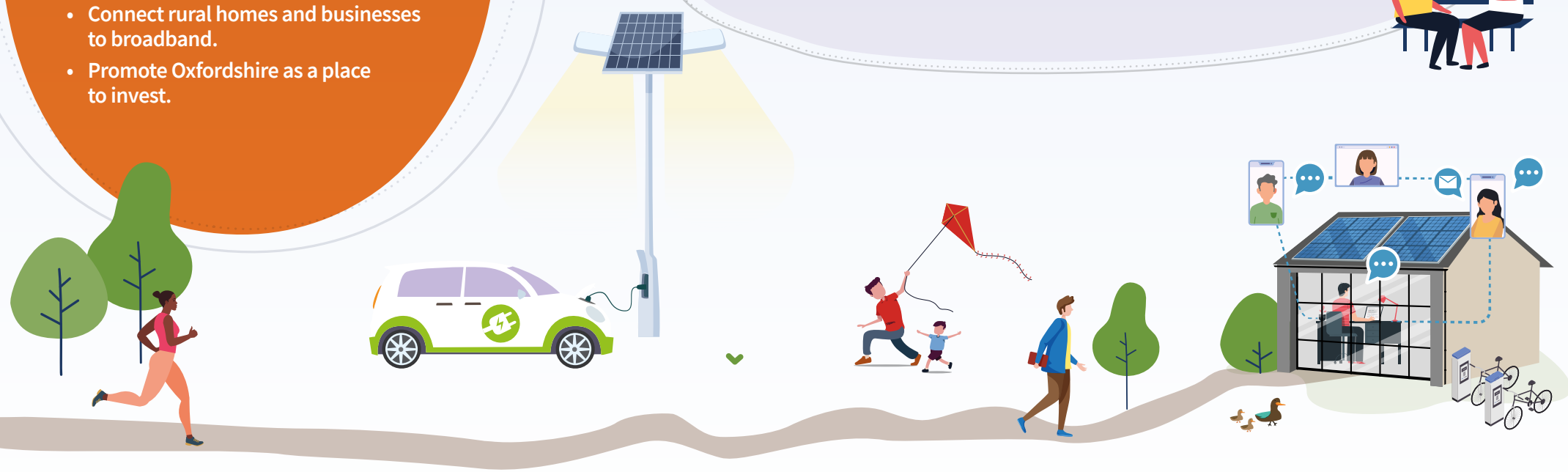
Thriving economy

We support a thriving local economy by improving transport links to create jobs and homes for the future.

- Secure government investment in transport and affordable housing.
- Maintain the county's roads and infrastructure.
- Connect rural homes and businesses to broadband.
- Promote Oxfordshire as a place to invest.

We listen to residents so we can continuously improve our services and provide value for money

- Improve customer service, particularly online.
- Involve people in designing better services.
- Work closely with our public, private and voluntary sector partners.
- Give communities more say in local services, such as libraries.



Thriving communities

We help people live safe, healthy lives and play an active part in their community

Safe, healthy and active lives in Oxfordshire

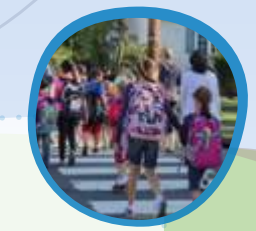
We have high life expectancy: 81.6 for men and 84.6 for women.

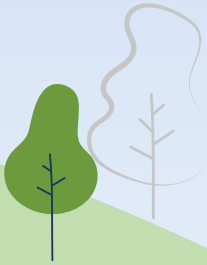
Rates of adults participating in physical exercise in Oxfordshire are higher than regional and national averages.

Smoking rates are down almost 5% to 10.7% of adults since 2013.

What we will do

- Focus on reducing the health gap between different communities.
- Encourage community-run services and self-help initiatives, amongst parish councils, town councils voluntary and community groups.
- Encourage people to live healthy lives and provide services which support healthy choices.
- Help people to stay safe and well in their own homes.





Spotlight on...

Preventing drop-offs near schools to improve air quality

The school run is known to have a major impact on air quality around schools. Now several Oxford schools are working with the county council on a pilot project to restrict traffic outside schools.

The initiative follows a Friends of the Earth event hosted by the county council on Clean Air Day in June 2019, which led to several Oxfordshire schools asking to be part of the pilot. 'School Streets' has already been successfully trialled in other parts of the country.

The challenges

- There is a life expectancy gap of 7 years for men and 5 years for women between the most and least deprived areas.
- Child poverty has increased from 9.8% in 2015 to 10.1% in 2016.
- 56% of people aged 18 or over in Oxfordshire are classed as overweight or obese.

Measuring success

- People are helped to live safe and healthy lives.
- People play an active part in their community.

Climate change commitment

Increased walking and cycling will have a positive impact on climate change.

Supporting active lifestyles is essential to improving residents' health.

Thriving communities

We provide services that enhance the quality of life and protect the local environment

Quality of life and environment in Oxfordshire

- Communities and volunteers support our 44 libraries.
- We are the highest performing local authority area in England for recycling and waste management with more than 57% of our household waste recycled, composted or re-used.
- Adults participating in active travel has increased from 40% to 44% since 2015/16.

What we will do

- Design places that encourage healthy and active lives, including cycling and walking routes.
- Provide library, cultural, museum and music services.
- Reduce carbon emissions from council buildings and activities.
- Respond to emergencies, maintain trading standards and safeguard our residents.
- Help people stay safe on our roads.
- Protect the local environment.

The challenges

- We must respond to the climate emergency.
- Pressure on the highway network caused by high use of our 2,578 miles of road.
- We have precious natural resources to protect; such as 480 sites designated for their wildlife value at local, national or international level, 146 protected species and 26% of land within an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.
- Air quality is a particular issue in Oxford city.

Measuring success

- People are helped to live safe and healthy lives.
- Our quality of life in Oxfordshire is enhanced.
- Our local environment is protected and climate change tackled.

Spotlight on...

Going electric

The drive to reduce carbon emissions stepped up a gear when the Fire and Rescue Service took delivery of a new fleet of electric cars and vans. In the longer term, the fire service expects technology will enable electric fire engines.

The county council has already taken a strong lead and committed to being carbon neutral by 2030 and is in the process of replacing its general pool cars with rechargeable models, with three already in use.

Climate action will be prioritised in decision making and we will be carbon neutral by 2030.

Climate change commitment

Addressing air quality and reducing waste will have a positive impact on climate change.

Thriving people

We strive to give every child a good start in life and protect everyone from neglect

Children in Oxfordshire

Between mid-2016 to mid-2017 there were 7,537 births.

Proportion of pupils attaining a "strong" pass in English and Maths is above national averages at 46.6% (national average 43.2%).

Compared with England, Oxfordshire had a higher proportion of people aged 0-4, 15-19 and 20-24 in 2015/16.

What we will do

- Support families that need extra help to thrive.
- Improve educational attainment, including for children with special needs.
- Work with the police, schools and others to keep young people safe in their families and communities.
- Provide children's social care, including child protection, looked after children, adoption and fostering.

The challenges

- The need for children's social care has risen. 80% rise in children in care since 2011.
- Those with special educational needs and disability support increased by 9% between 2017 and 2018.
- Census data suggests around 1,300 young people aged under 16 provide unpaid care in Oxfordshire.

Measuring success

- Children are given a good start in life.
- Children are able to reach their potential.

SPOTLIGHT ON...

Helping families keep children safer

Children's services is adopting a pioneering approach that will radically change the way children's social care operates and start to reduce the growing number of children in care.

The new family safeguarding model involves children's social workers working in small integrated teams, centred around individual families in need, alongside experts providing specialist mental health, drugs and alcohol and domestic abuse services.

CLIMATE CHANGE COMMITMENT

Enabling schools to reduce their carbon emissions will have positive impact on climate change.

Providing early help is essential for families to thrive.

Our children's services are rated 'Good' by Ofsted.

Thriving people

We enable older and disabled people to live independently and care for those in greatest need

Adults in Oxfordshire

- Rural districts have a much higher proportion of older people compared to the city, 20% compared to 12%.
- People live longer lives in good health than elsewhere in the country.
- 63,300 (15%) of people aged 16-64 have a disability that limits their ability to work.

What we will do

- Join up social care and the NHS through an 'Integrated Care System' to reduce the need for people to go to hospital, and improve their healthcare experience.
- Provide support and care services for our residents as they live independently.
- Promote healthy lives for older people and support them to stay healthy, active and well.
- Ensure care services are good quality and reliable for the future.
- Support people to access travel and transport to enable them to live independently.

Spotlight on...

Focusing on independent living

Adult social workers are taking a new 'strengths-based' approach to helping older and disabled people live independent lives. They are focusing on a person's strengths rather than starting with 'needs', while making sure not to ignore the real challenges some people face.

The approach tries to draw out the persons own strengths and capabilities, and work with them to explore how their family, social network and available community resources can support and promote their wellbeing.

Climate change commitment

Investing in community energy will have positive impact on climate change.

Measuring success

- Care services support independent living.

The challenges

- Population of over 85s is expected to increase by 34% by 2027.
- 18,071 carers reported by 66 (out of 70) GP practices in Oxfordshire in September 2019.
- Over 5,500 adults with learning difficulties and people aged 65+ supported by adult social care.
- We have challenges with recruiting and retaining staff because of the relatively high cost of living in Oxfordshire.

Tackling our workforce challenge will help us support an increasingly older population.

Thriving economy

We support a thriving local economy by improving transport links to create jobs and homes for the future

Oxfordshire's economy

Our economy generates £21.9bn of output per year from 400,000 jobs and more than 30,000 businesses.

6,830 apprenticeships started in Oxfordshire and 4,640 apprenticeships were completed in 2017-18.

Average earnings increased from £33,000 to £34,000 in 2018.

What we will do

- Secure government investment in transport and affordable housing.
- Connect rural homes and businesses to broadband.
- Promote Oxfordshire as a place to invest.
- Work with others to support skills development, business growth and employment.
- Delivery of key infrastructure for Oxfordshire including highways and housing.

Measuring success

- Everyone has access to good homes and jobs.
- Businesses are able to grow and develop.
- People and communities have excellent transport and broadband connections.

SPOTLIGHT ON...

Improved bus and cycle routes on the A40

Bus users will benefit from a major scheme to address congestion on the A40 after the government confirmed a £102 million bid by the county council. The grant from the housing infrastructure fund (HIF) will be used to extend the A40 dual carriageway from Witney to the proposed Eynsham park and ride, including upgraded cycling facilities. There will also be access at Duke's Cut canal and railway bridges, extending the eastbound and westbound bus priority lane.

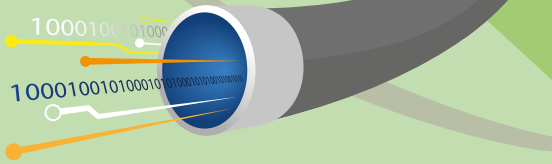
The challenges

- Average house prices in Oxfordshire increased, making Oxford the least affordable city for housing.
- Rents are high and there is a demand for affordable housing.
- Our road network is under pressure with population growth.
- The rural nature of Oxfordshire, combined with 82% of residents working within the county, means roads are still essential for people to access work, school and other services.

CLIMATE CHANGE COMMITMENT

Reprioritising road space for low carbon travel will have positive impact on climate change.

A connected Oxfordshire supports sustainable growth.



Climate Action

Taking action against Climate Change

We will take climate action:

In our Organisation

- Make Climate Action a top priority in all decision making.
- Make our corporate estate carbon neutral by 2030.
- Maximise solar generation on our buildings and land.
- Buy local green power for our estate.
- Electrify our vehicles.
- Support our staff to use zero carbon travel options.
- Challenge our suppliers to match our ambition.

In Oxfordshire

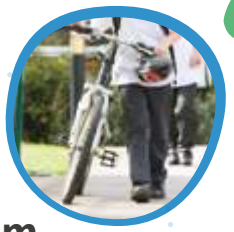
- Manage land to capture carbon.
- Enable schools to reduce their carbon.
- Reduce carbon from your streetlighting.
- Provide charging points for your electric car.
- Invest in cycle paths and safe walking routes.
- Reprioritise road space for low carbon travel.
- Invest in community energy.
- Support our communities to take Climate Action.
- Team up with innovators to test new solutions.
- Work with our partners so we all achieve more.
- Keep you informed on our Climate Action plans and progress.

So together we can:

- Be part of a zero carbon future.
- Have cleaner air.
- Be more active.
- Save money.
- Collaborate and share.
- Have more time.
- Connect with each other.
- Have comfortable buildings.
- Be more resilient.
- Have a stronger community and economy.
- Be proud.

Healthy place-shaping

Making Oxfordshire a healthier place to live

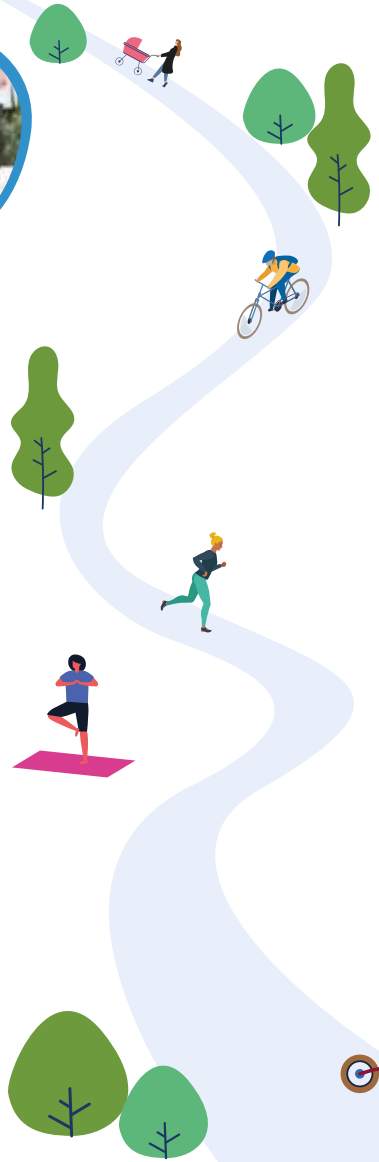


SPOTLIGHT ON...

Public Health team

The Public Health team worked with Living Streets and schools to deliver our year-round, walk to school challenge. Many more children travelled to school by foot, bike or scooter, with 5,000 pupils and their families choosing healthier and cleaner ways to travel.

Walk to School Week is an extension of the Walk Once a Week (WOW) project. In May 2019, more than 60 primary schools took part in Walk to School Week to promote exercise, improve road safety and reduce congestion. As a result of the interest generated by WOW, the Public Health team is developing more projects to increase active transport for school children.



Public Health in Oxfordshire

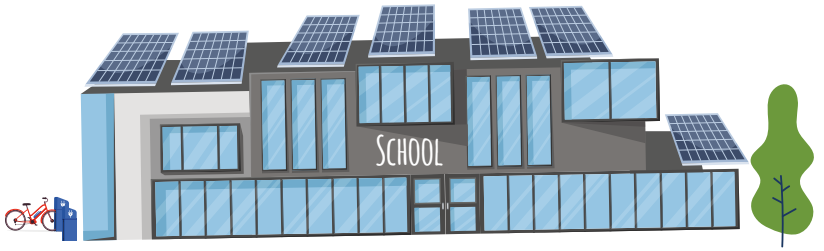
- Oxfordshire has a healthy population overall, with a few deprived areas where people have poor health.
- There is a 15 year life expectancy gap between the most deprived and least deprived areas in the county.
- "Healthy place shaping" can improve community health by redesigning areas where people live and travel; engaging residents, and in finding new ways of delivering services.

What we will do

- 'Healthy place shaping' is about designing healthy behaviours into the way places are planned and services delivered, ranging from cycling routes to opportunities for social interaction.
- The Public Health team will strengthen and develop partnership working across communities and organisations to maximise opportunities to embed healthy place shaping into everyday practice so there is a health benefit for all Oxfordshire's residents.

The challenges

- There has traditionally been a focus on changing individual's lifestyles. Partners should collaborate to create communities where people can make healthier choices.
- Meaningful change needs real community involvement, which needs collaboration to create communities people value.



Making it happen

Listening to residents and improving what we do

Spotlight on...

Councillor Priority Fund

Residents can influence local spending through their councillor. The Councillor Priority Fund enables councillors the opportunity to fund projects that matter most to their local community. The fund has successfully supported hundreds of local community projects over the last two years and is highly valued by our residents. Therefore, we have committed to continuing the fund for another year.

During 2018/19, there were over 170 different community and charity groups that received funding involving over 60 different towns and parish organisations.

What we will do

- Improve customer services, particularly online.
- Give communities more say in local services, such as libraries.
- Involve people in designing better services.
- Work closely with our public, private and voluntary sector partners.

Measuring success

- Our services improve.

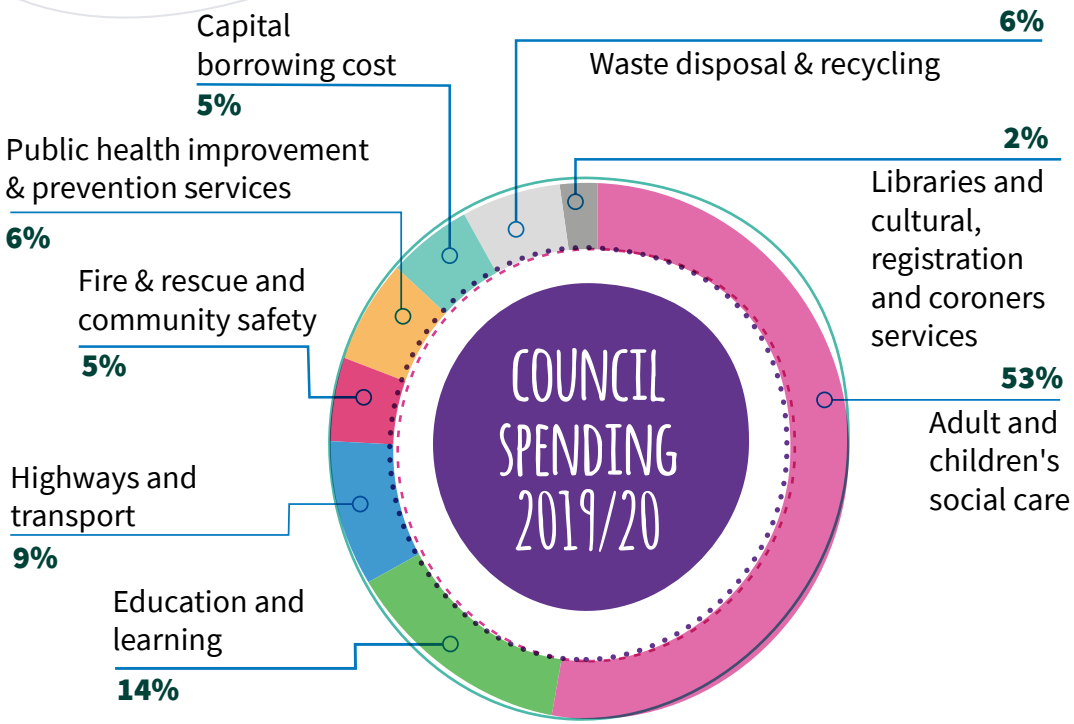
We would like to hear from you:

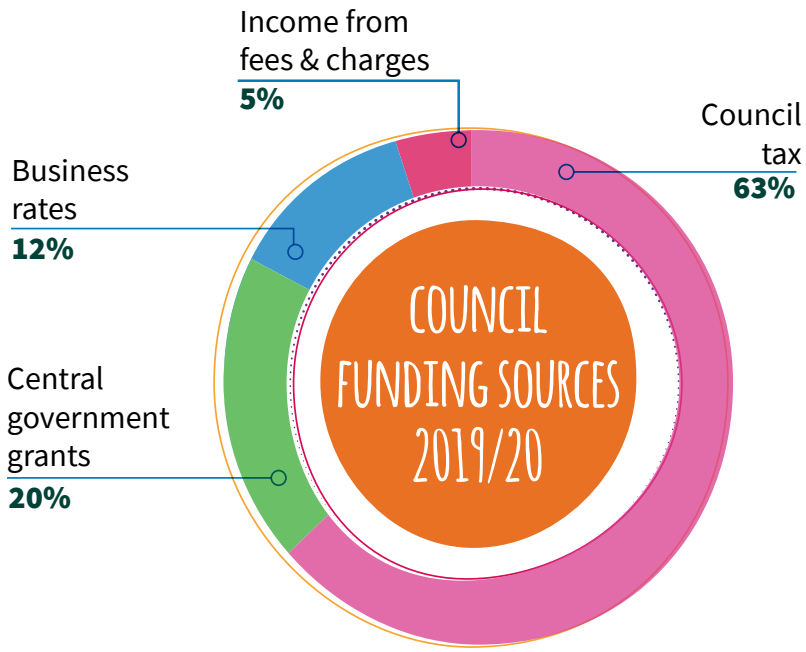
We have opportunities for you to feed in your views through our Facebook and Twitter pages, through your local councillor, in public meetings and through our consultation. Find out more by visiting our website.

Want to get more involved?

We have opportunities for volunteering and having a say in the services you receive. Contact us for more information.

Providing the best value for public money



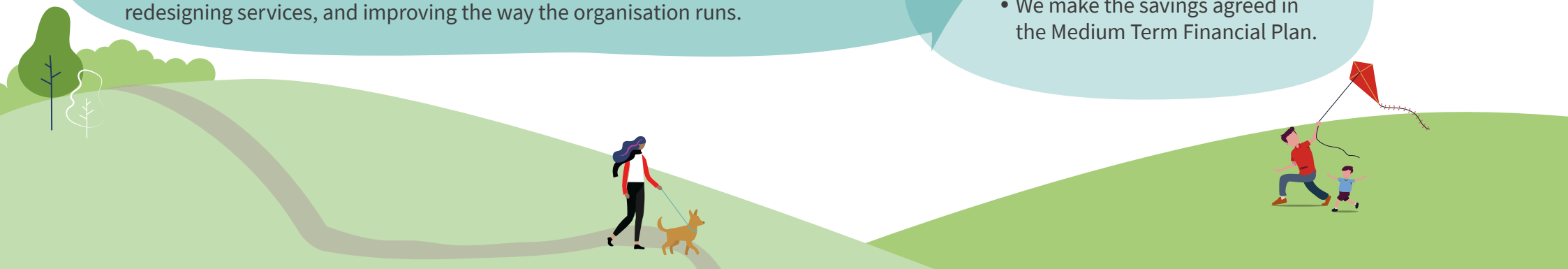


Why we are changing

The council must be ready to meet future challenges, such as long-term financial pressures and growing demand for services. That means investing in prevention; redesigning services, and improving the way the organisation runs.

Measuring success

- We deliver value for money.
- We make the savings agreed in the Medium Term Financial Plan.



Spotlight on...

Bringing customer service to communities

Oxfordshire's libraries do a lot more than simply offer books for loan. Our teams are now trained to help members of the public to access public services online, apply for a disabled parking permit and so much more. At our libraries, residents can enjoy a range of activities and events in a safe, community space. By broadening the library offer, Oxfordshire County Council can continue to operate a network of 44 libraries across the county, despite the pressure on local government finances.

Working with partners across Oxfordshire

- We work collectively with partners to achieve the best possible outcomes, including the NHS to improve health and social care; the police and probation service to keep people safe; business innovators to improve travel in the county; and the voluntary and community sector to understand and meet local needs.
- We also work with other councils across Oxfordshire, and beyond, including our unique partnership with Cherwell District Council. Staff across both councils are constantly finding new ways to improve services and reduce costs.
- We are addressing long-term challenges, from childhood obesity to supporting an ageing population. Services serving the same customers, such as leisure and libraries, and trading standards and environmental health, work more closely together than ever before.
- Savings of nearly £1m have already been made or are in the pipeline as a result of joint management arrangements.
- We want to improve partnership working with the other Oxfordshire districts to improve outcomes and customer experience.

Actions list

We will work with partners to

- ☐ Engage with local people and organisations to understand what they need and how best to support them to meet these needs.
- ☐ Work through our councillors to understand local issues and priorities.
- ☐ Develop a new approach to working in different localities across Oxfordshire that improves people's lives and addresses inequalities.

Investing in the digital future

We are investing in digital technology to reduce costs and improve services to our residents. Our new ICT strategy focuses on improving online services. Not everyone can access our services online, but those who expect to be able to do so will start to see big improvements.

A new online Blue Badge application process with credit card payments launched earlier this year. Since then, nearly 70% of applications are made online - previously it was 40%.

Contact us

oxfordshire.gov.uk/contact-us
01865 792 422
Oxfordshire County Council,
County Hall, New Road,
Oxford, OX1 1ND

Stay in touch:

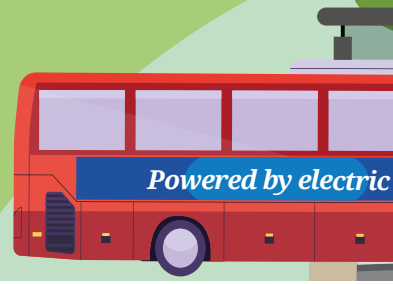
- @oxfordshirecc
- oxfordshirecountycouncil
- @oxfordshirecc
- @oxfordshirecc

To find out more about how you can take part in local democracy by asking questions or making statements at council meetings, visit:
www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/council

Have your say in consultations about changes to council services or policies at:
www.consultations.oxfordshire.gov.uk

You can apply, book, find, report and pay for a range of services on the county council website:

www.oxfordshire.gov.uk



OXFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL