

# South Oxfordshire District Council

## CORPORATE PLAN 2012-2016: SHAPING A PROSPEROUS FUTURE FOR SOUTH OXFORDSHIRE

### Foreword

By Leader of the Council, Councillor Ann Ducker

I am delighted to present South Oxfordshire District Council's plans for the next four years. I think that they are both exciting and challenging. We will concentrate on continuing to deliver high quality services in those areas that we have prioritised after consulting with residents – services like refuse collection, street cleaning, benefits and economic development, whilst at the same time keeping our running costs as low as possible.

This year we have reduced the amount of council tax we ask you to pay us, one of just a handful of councils nationally who have done this. Through sound financial management we have reduced our costs and it is only right that we share that benefit with our residents. I hope that we will be able to do the same again in future years.

Our joint working with the Vale of White Horse council goes from strength to strength. Not only have we cut out a lot of back office costs by eliminating duplication, we have also been able to improve the quality of services we provide. Most notable is waste collection where we have the highest recycling rates in the country.

Despite the difficult economic times we have ambitious plans in place for further regeneration of Didcot, including a state of the art leisure centre. The designation of the Science Vale area as an enterprise zone presents us with a unique opportunity to make Didcot one of the most vibrant and exciting places to live and work in the South East. We do not want to miss that opportunity.

Finally, we will continue to support our various communities in every way we can. Our popular grants schemes will continue, as will our work to maintain the vibrancy of our market towns.

This corporate plan sets out the council's strategic objectives and corporate priorities.

We consulted widely with residents and stakeholders to help us to develop this plan. The corporate plan does not seek to cover everything the council does but instead focuses upon those issues and services that we have identified, with the help of residents and service users, to be the most important issues and top priorities. We will include the detail of the action the council will take to deliver the priorities in our annual service plans.

We have identified some key measures to enable us to track our progress in delivering the corporate plan priorities. For some performance measures we have set a four year target to be achieved by the end of the period covered by the plan. For others, we have set an annual target for 2012/13 and at the end of that year we will set a new target to be achieved by the end of the plan. Where a performance measure requires us to collect new data, we will collect benchmark data during 2012/13 and then set a target covering the remaining three years of the plan.

We will report back annually on the progress we are making.

The council is operating in conditions of unprecedented change and uncertainty, this level of change and uncertainty is likely to continue for some time in the context of government changes to how local government is funded. This means that budgets are, and will continue to be, under enormous pressure. The corporate plan reflects these conditions and will be important in helping to guide our decisions on how we invest our financial and staffing resources over the next four years.

## **Partnership working**

We have direct responsibility for a number of public services and when we identify these as a priority within the corporate plan we can allocate resources to reflect this. In addition to the services that we are directly responsible for delivering, a number of public, private and voluntary organisations provide services to our residents; many of these link with our services or contribute to the overall objectives that we are trying to achieve for the area and we work closely with these partners to ensure that through joint working residents receive the best service possible.

Our work with partners takes place both locally to address local issues and also through some formal partnerships, which may be either service specific or more broadly strategic. Some of the key formal partnerships include:

- the South Oxfordshire Partnership (SOP) – this is the local strategic partnership (LSP) and is made up of relevant councils and a number of

other public, private and voluntary sector organisations. SOP is responsible for developing a sustainable community strategy for the district. The council is also a member of the Oxfordshire Partnership, which is the LSP for the county of Oxfordshire

- the Community Safety Partnership (CSP), which has a similar range of partners to the LSP and focuses on joint working to reduce crime and the fear of crime, and address broader community safety issues
- Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership – this is the local enterprise partnership (LEP) for Oxfordshire This is a voluntary body made up of representatives from business, academia and the wider public sector. The Partnership’s overarching aim is to be the catalyst for realising Oxfordshire’s economic and commercial potential. The Oxfordshire LEP is responsible for delivering the Science Vale UK enterprise zone.
- Oxfordshire Waste Partnership – this is a partnership of the county and district councils of Oxfordshire who are working together to continuously improve waste management services within the county.

The corporate plan distinguishes between priorities that the council can deliver directly, and those where by working with partners it seeks to encourage and influence others, and play its part, but cannot directly control the outcome.

## Other plans and strategies

The corporate plan should be read alongside, and in the context of, other key objectives, plans and strategies that guide the council’s business and the way its works, including:

### THE SOUTH OXFORDSHIRE SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY STRATEGY

The sustainable community strategy (SCS) is a partnership strategy developed by SOP (see above) and sets out the contribution that the council and its partners can make to delivering an overarching and long term vision for the district. The SCS vision is for South Oxfordshire to be an “attractive, successful, vibrant and safe place where people choose to live, work and visit.” It will be a place where everyone can enjoy:

- a good quality of life
- a good sense of community where diversity in people and place is respected and valued
- access to the services and facilities they need to support good health and social and economic well-being

## THE LOCAL PLAN AND LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAME WORK

The South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2011 sets out policies and proposals for development such as housing and employment, and determines how the land in the district will be used. Our Local Plan will gradually be replaced by a group of documents known as the Local Development Framework (LDF). A key document within the LDF is the Core Strategy, which sets out how the council will help deliver much needed housing, opportunities for high quality jobs and thriving town centres across the district. We plan to have the Core Strategy in place by the middle of 2012

For further information please visit [www.southoxon.gov.uk](http://www.southoxon.gov.uk) or contact [planning.policy@southoxon.gov.uk](mailto:planning.policy@southoxon.gov.uk)

## CORPORATE EQUALITY ACTION PLAN

The council has set equality objectives in line with the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 and to support the delivery of the councils' Corporate Plan priorities. The objectives are:

- provide equality of access to services and our employment opportunities
- support projects to tackle hate crime and foster good relations between different groups of people in South Oxfordshire
- seek to improve access to major new developments and town centres in South Oxfordshire, including Phase II Orchard Centre Didcot for people with disabilities, carers and older people

For further information, please contact our corporate strategy team at [corporate.strategy@southandvale.gov.uk](mailto:corporate.strategy@southandvale.gov.uk).

## MARKET TOWN ACTION PLANS FOR HENLEY, THAME AND WALLINGFORD

Partnership working is the key theme behind South Oxfordshire District Council's plans to boost its three market towns of Henley, Thame and Wallingford. The South Oxfordshire market towns action plan brings together new ideas alongside ongoing projects, as the council continues to work with Henley Partnership, 21<sup>st</sup> Century Thame and the Wallingford Partnership, as well as the three respective town councils and various local groups, to help strengthen the local economy and bring more people to the towns. The action plan is designed to support the council's objectives of building the local economy, creating vibrant market towns, and promoting business growth.

For further information contact [economic.development@southandvale.gov.uk](mailto:economic.development@southandvale.gov.uk)

For further information about the Corporate Plan, please contact [corporate.strategy@southandvale.gov.uk](mailto:corporate.strategy@southandvale.gov.uk)

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## EXCELLENT DELIVERY OF KEY SERVICES

Delivering high quality services and customer satisfaction are at the heart of what we do. This applies to all of the services we provide and everything we do, but in the corporate plan, we have focussed on the services that people tell us are most important to them.

We have identified a range of measures to help us track how well we are doing and which enable us to:

- compare our own year on year performance
- compare our performance against national benchmarks
- take into account the views of residents, service users and other stakeholders on the quality of services and customer experience.

<b>What we will do</b>	<b>How we will measure success</b>
Put residents at the heart of service delivery and seek to provide an excellent customer experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• increase the percentage of people satisfied with the way the council runs things from 73 per cent to 78 per cent by 2016</li> <li>• increase the percentage of people who agree with the statement that the council does a good job for people like me from 64 per cent to 70 per cent by 2016</li> <li>• increase the percentage of people satisfied with the way the council dealt with their enquiry (all methods of contact) from 67 per cent to 71 per cent by 2016</li> </ul>
Keep residents and other stakeholders informed about our services, activities and spending and ensure we take their views into account before making key decisions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• increase in the percentage of people who say they feel informed by the council about the services it provides from 73 per cent to 77 per cent by 2016</li> <li>• increase in the percentage of people who agree that they can influence decisions affecting their local area from 34 per cent to 39 per cent by 2014 and to 42 per cent by 2016</li> </ul>
Deliver high performing services with particular emphasis on achieving excellent levels of recycling, keeping streets and	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• increase the percentage of people who say they are satisfied with the cleanliness of the streets and pavements where they live from 72</li> </ul>

<p>public spaces clean and attractive and ensuring good quality sports and leisure provision</p>	<p>per cent to 77 per cent by 2016</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• increase the percentage of people who say they are satisfied with the waste collection service overall from 85 per cent to 88 per cent by 2016</li> <li>• increase the percentage of people who are satisfied with provision of sports and leisure facilities from 64 per cent to 68 per cent by 2016</li> <li>• increase the recycling rate to 75% by 2016</li> <li>• one of the top ten councils nationally for recycling</li> <li>• maintain the average number of hours taken to remove fly-tips in accordance with our service standards</li> <li>• achieve ratings of good or excellent for overall satisfaction in sports centre user satisfaction surveys(all centres)</li> </ul>
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## EFFECTIVE MANAGEMENT OF RESOURCES

Protecting the quality of services during difficult economic and financial conditions is a central concern for the council and we know that our residents and service users expect value for money.

Over the past two years we have introduced a 'fit for the future' programme to look closely at everything we do to identify and reduce waste and unnecessary costs. We have also developed and extended our partnership working and shared services with Vale of White Horse District Council to achieve efficiencies in service delivery that have delivered significant savings.

The Council will continue this work to ensure that lower costs come from improved efficiency rather than service cuts.

<b>What we will do</b>	<b>How we will measure success</b>
<p>Keep our share of council tax as low as possible whilst continuing to deliver high quality services</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• reduce the district council's council tax by 2.5 per cent in 2012/13</li> <li>• keep council tax for district services in the lowest 20 nationally and work towards being in the lowest 10</li> </ul>
<p>Agree prudent and sustainable medium term financial strategy and plans</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• no adverse comment from external auditors in governance report</li> </ul>
<p>Reduce energy usage throughout the council's operations</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• reduce energy usage throughout the</li> </ul>

	<p>council's operations (collect baseline data in 2012/13)<sup>1</sup></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• reduce business mileage (collect baseline data in 2012/13)</li> </ul>
<p>Continue to work in partnership with Vale of White Horse District Council to extend the sharing of services, and all resources</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• examples of services improving through joint working</li> <li>• opportunities for further savings, through extending sharing of resources with Vale of White Horse District Council, reviewed and proposals brought forward</li> </ul>

## MEETING HOUSING NEED

The Council plays a vital role in ensuring that people in the district have access to good quality, affordable homes whilst ensuring that development is carried out sensitively in a way which enhances the area. We also recognise that new housing is essential to economic success and that the provision of essential infrastructure that supports housing growth is vitally important.

Through our core strategy, we identify the most appropriate locations for housing development in the district and set targets for affordable housing. We process planning applications so that development can go ahead and have a role to play in ensuring that developers contribute an appropriate amount of funding to support additional infrastructure required to make their developments successful for the people living in them.

A wide range of other agencies and organisations are involved in ensuring that housing development takes place and the corporate plan, therefore, includes a focus on facilitating development in partnership with others, recognising that whilst the council cannot directly control many elements of housing development it has a key role to play in influencing others to act.

What we will do	How we will measure success
<p>Set housing targets and identify land supply to meet future housing need</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• adopt core strategy</li> <li>• regular monitoring of performance against targets</li> <li>• ensure we have a rolling five year housing land supply</li> </ul>
<p>Process planning applications for housing promptly</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 70 per cent of major planning applications determined within the period of the initial planning performance agreement target</li> <li>• 75 per cent minor planning applications</li> </ul>

<sup>1</sup> In 2012/13 we will complete the fifth year of our current energy saving programme, which includes a 30% energy reduction target over the 5 years of the programme



	agreed within eight weeks
Secure sufficient financial contributions from development to deliver essential infrastructure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• community infrastructure levy (CIL) charging schedule in place by December 2013</li> <li>• secure 100 per cent of CIL financial contributions by the due date</li> <li>• demonstrate annually that we have achieved necessary facilities and infrastructure to support development</li> </ul>
Ensure that new developments deliver the levels of affordable housing stipulated in the core strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• target percentage achieved</li> </ul>
<b>What we will facilitate in partnership with others</b>	<b>How we will measure success</b>
Work with developers to overcome obstacles to development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• sites with potential problems identified and action plans to overcome these agreed</li> <li>• number of new developments started</li> </ul>
Work with local communities to identify suitable sites for community led housing schemes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• annual report setting out the council's contribution towards bringing major development sites forward in response to community led and neighbourhood plans</li> </ul>

## BUILDING THE LOCAL ECONOMY

Oxfordshire has one of the strongest economies in the South East and relatively low unemployment but in common with the rest of the country faces considerable economic challenges. Supporting the local economy continues to be a priority and we will develop our work with partners to support market towns to retain their viability and improve infrastructure that businesses need to be successful.

Last year, the Science Vale UK (SVUK) area was successful in achieving enterprise zone status. This area extends into South Oxfordshire where Didcot is the major population centre in SVUK and Culham a key science centre. The Council is committed to working with its partners to ensure that maximum benefit is obtained from the opportunity presented by the SVUK enterprise Zone.

<b>What we will do</b>	<b>How we will measure success</b>
Continue to invest to improve the viability and attractiveness of our towns	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• market town action plans reviewed and updated</li> <li>• progress against market town action plans</li> </ul>



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>percentage of vacant retail units in the main retail areas of the three market towns is less than national rate (annual)</li> </ul>
Enter into a commercial partnership to secure phase two of the Orchard Centre, Didcot	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>key milestones in the development project plan for phase two met</li> <li>phase two under construction by the end of the corporate plan period</li> </ul>
Bring forward proposals for building a new leisure centre in Didcot that meets the needs of the expanding town	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>site for new leisure centre identified and agreed</li> <li>facility mix agreed</li> <li>funding and planning permission secured</li> <li>leisure centre under construction by the end of the corporate plan period</li> </ul>
Support business growth in appropriate locations across the district, whilst protecting the character of our towns and villages	<p>Number of local units in VAT and/or PAYE based enterprises: Baseline 2011= 8015</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>measure: percentage increase each year is above England level percentage increase</li> </ul>
<b>What we will facilitate in partnership with others</b>	<b>How we will measure success</b>
Work with partners to improve broadband services across the district	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>annual survey of businesses to understand extent of problem and measure perception of improvement</li> <li>percentage of exchanges enabled with ADSL2 (up to 20Mbps) and how many homes/businesses this covers in district(s) (4 yr target)</li> <li>Broadband Delivery UK (BDUK) funding spending achieved in the district</li> </ul>
Support the Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership delivery of Science Vale UK jobs, infrastructure and housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Science Vale UK business plan delivered</li> </ul>
Improve infrastructure to support business growth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>strategy for investment for enterprise zone business rates growth agreed with Oxfordshire Local Economic Partnership</li> <li>strategy implemented and progress confirmed in annual report</li> </ul>
Maintain low levels of crime and anti social behaviour	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>at least 97 per cent of people feel safe walking alone in their community in daytime</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• at least 79 per cent of people feel safe walking alone in their community after dark</li> <li>• monitor performance against objectives in community safety strategy.</li> </ul>
Increase the value of the visitor economy in South Oxfordshire	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• achieve an increase of five per cent per year in the value of the visitor economy</li> </ul>

## SUPPORT FOR COMMUNITIES

The council recognises the enormous amount of work that volunteers - from community, voluntary or faith organisations or individually – do to improve their communities and the quality of life of people living and working in them. The huge range of services and facilities provided by the community, voluntary and faith sectors bring enormous benefit. Supporting communities and volunteers to continue to identify solutions for their local issues and implement them is a priority for the council.

Our aim is to work with a range of partners in the community, voluntary and faith sectors to help them to take action to provide and improve services and facilities in response to identified local need.

<b>What we will do</b>	<b>How we will measure success</b>
Work with local communities and their representative bodies to create opportunities to localise service delivery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• examples of localised service delivery</li> </ul>
Offer grants to voluntary and community organisations who are delivering projects and services that support our objectives or those in need.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• amount of grant awarded and number of projects funded and number of projects completed</li> <li>• annual report on key grant aided projects setting out benefits to local community.</li> </ul>
Support rural communities to identify local issues and needs, and solutions available to meet them.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• support at least four new communities to begin to develop a community-led plan each year</li> <li>• number of actions in community-led plans progressed with the support of the council each year</li> </ul>
Encourage communities to consider developing neighbourhood plans as a means of shaping their local environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• local neighbourhood groups provided with information and advice about developing neighbourhood plans</li> </ul>