



Oxford's Community Strategy

Building a city where
everyone is valued

Published in 2004 by the
Oxford Strategic Partnership
www.oxfordpartnership.org.uk



Oxford
Strategic
Partnership





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part of this document,
please contact us.**

communities | partnership | vision | equality | energy
diversity | creativity | quality | success | future

Foreword

Welcome to Oxford's first Community Strategy. It has been prepared by the Oxford Strategic Partnership - established one year ago - to highlight priorities for the city and build on a range of consultations with partners and local communities. Our main aims are to build more effective partnership working, create a co-ordinated vision for the city, and deliver extra improvements to local quality of life. Or more simply, to improve the quality of life in Oxford.

Oxford is alive with great ideas and diverse communities actively working to improve life in the city, and people from outside the city are often surprised by some of the major challenges we face.

There is already a huge range of successful partnership working going on. By working even more closely we are confident we can tackle today's challenges more effectively and make better use of limited resources. As partners in the future success of Oxford, we are all committed to doing justice to the diversity, creativity, history, and energy of our unique city.

Arranged around an introduction and five key themes, this document reflects the priorities of local communities and opportunities for the whole city. It highlights some of the main partnership projects currently being prepared and delivered. Over the coming year, we will use this document to engage with a much wider range of organisations, groups, and individuals across the city. We will then begin preparing a longer-term plan for improving life in the city.

We will review and publish our progress regularly - it is our responsibility to ensure that we are improving Oxford and its communities. We hope you will join us in building an achievable yet challenging vision for our future

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'David McWhirter', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Chief Supt David McWhirter
Chair, Oxford Strategic Partnership

Oxford - Setting the Scene

Oxford is a major centre for education, tourism, business, culture, and healthcare, and plays an important role in the southeast region of England. It is internationally renowned for its unique heritage and as a centre of learning and innovation. Alongside this, it is seen as an icon of excellence and a source of inspiration in both industry and the arts, providing jobs for almost 100,000 people and welcoming over 7.6 million visitors each year.

We are fortunate in our diversity and have a broad spectrum of communities and cultural influences which have become part of the vibrant, everyday life of the city. Our rich heritage and cultural life has been recognised by the awarding of Centre of Culture status for 2008.

Oxford began its modern life as a frontier settlement between Wessex and Mercia kingdoms - though there is evidence of an earlier Bronze Age settlement and burial sites in Port Meadow - and in the Middle Ages it gained significance as a trading and military town. The colleges were founded from an earlier cluster of monasteries and abbeys, and as trade grew, the office of Mayor was created in 1122 and self-government granted in 1199.

With its cathedral at Christ Church, Oxford was granted city status in 1542. It has often found itself at the centre of key national events, and became the royal capital - and the most strongly-defended town in England - during the Civil War from 1642-46. The arrival of the canal and railway provided commercial incentives for growth and Oxford continued its expansion as an early tourist economy and regional car-making centre.

The pressures of success continue to challenge the city and its communities today. With a population of around 140,000 living in high density at nearly 30 people per hectare, providing affordable housing, for example, has become an acute challenge. The city has the lowest level of owner-occupied housing in the southeast. There are 33,000 students, boosting our 16-29 year old group to 32% of the population - over twice the national average.

There are ambitious plans for promoting a renaissance in Oxford by developing the

unrealised potential of the city's West End, with significant opportunities to add housing, leisure, cultural, and retail capacity to this part of the town centre. The importance of enhancing the celebrated quality of Oxford's historical built environment is paramount, along with the need to complement existing architecture with challenging design and public art.

Incorporating improvements to the transport infrastructure will also be a key ingredient of any major urban development. The city is at the centre of important national road and rail networks and managing transport pressures is a challenge as it is to all historic towns. Local bus services are a vital means of transport for many in the city, with 33% of households not owning a car, compared with 20% in the region. The first Park and Ride scheme in the country was established here in 1973 and has expanded to play a major part in managing travel into the city.

The city is prosperous but there remain challenging pockets of deprivation. Oxford has the highest percentage of people claiming low income and unemployment benefits in the county of Oxfordshire. Of its 24 political wards, the city has one that is among the 10% most deprived wards in England and Wales in terms of multiple deprivation. It also has 7 wards among the 10% most deprived wards for housing. Several regeneration schemes tackle some of these problems including, for example, a highly successful Sure Start scheme for pre-school children and parents; a city-wide regeneration partnership; a range of community-led regeneration projects; and street warden initiatives.

We recognise that many of the challenges that face us in bringing together a successful city and its citizens are interlinked - housing to mental health, education to the economy and so on - and we will work to respond to those connections more effectively in future. The often overlooked inequalities across the city are also reflected in education and training. Oxford is comfortably in the top 5% of areas in England and Wales for people with degree level qualifications or higher, yet has the lowest rate of successful university applicants in the county.

There are increasing pressures on the urban environment and on the balance between

providing buildings and enhancing open public spaces. Demands for growth and expansion have, however, always been a feature of life in Oxford and the city has, perhaps uniquely, managed to balance this with a preservation of the natural environment.

We have distinctive areas of natural beauty such as the River Thames, Port Meadow, Wolvercote Common, and Shotover Park, all with an outstanding range of wildlife and biodiversity. The city is surrounded by a green belt and has 12 SSSIs (Sites of Special Scientific Interest) protected through designation by English Nature. Our waterways and flood meadows are especially important for wildlife, with parks, domestic gardens, and cemeteries providing other valuable habitats. Access to these green spaces and the biodiversity they support significantly improves the quality of life for those who live in, work in, and visit the city.

Significant work is well under way to provide better primary care facilities across the city, initially in East Oxford and Blackbird Leys. These new buildings symbolise a move to more joined-up, accessible and higher-quality services with the potential to locate public, private, and community facilities within the same space. Work is also in progress to concentrate hospital services further, along with medical research and training facilities, in the Headington area. Oxford has lower than average rates of the major causes of premature death such as strokes, lung cancer or coronary heart disease yet there remain significant inequalities in health between different areas and communities in the city.

We need to ensure that the success of Oxford as a globally recognised city is translated into tackling inequalities on our own doorstep and that we are responding to the diverse needs of local individuals and communities.

Further information on Oxford's demography, housing, economic activity, and education - primarily based on data from the 2001 Census - has been compiled in a city profile, available online at www.oxford.gov.uk/cityprofile.

Introduction:

The Oxford Strategic Partnership

Oxford is a key player in the nation's cultural and economic life. To help provide direction for the city's future, respond to priorities, and engage more effectively with local concerns, the Oxford Strategic Partnership has been established. This umbrella partnership for the city promotes an open and progressive environment and enables us to access funding and share resources more easily. It is the first time such a range of partners has come together to co-ordinate their work and it will enable us to tackle challenges that require a much more joined-up approach.

Currently, the partnership contains several key organisations and individuals, all with a specific interest or experience in improving quality of life across the city. The steering group members have also taken on roles as champions for each of the five themes, to ensure delivery of key objectives.

Our first step has been to develop this Community Strategy to reflect both local and city-wide needs, and promote a broader vision for Oxford's future.



Key Aims

To develop a bold vision for the future of Oxford, developing its environmental, economic, and social life, and contributing to a positive and sustainable future.

To improve quality of life in Oxford, actively supporting and learning from the needs and aspirations of our diverse local communities. We will add value across the city, promoting participation and a sense of belonging.

To develop a framework that encourages closer partnership working between local agencies and delivers more responsive services and improvements across the city.

We will seek to maximise the positive impact of our work on the environment, the local economy, and our communities. We will strive for the following principles of sustainability in delivering the targets in this strategy:

Maintenance of high and stable levels of economic activity and employment. We will work with local employers and employees to create a sustained and sustainable economy.

Social progress that recognises the needs of everyone, and promotes equity and diversity. We will work towards a fair and inclusive society, challenge unlawful Discrimination, and promoting social justice.

Effective protection of the natural and built environment, and prudent use of natural resources. We will meet statutory environmental requirements, exceeding minimum standards wherever possible, and work to reduce our impact on the environment.

Steering group membership:

David McWhirter (Chair)
Area Commander, Oxford Police

Peter Couchman
Manager, Cooperative Sector & Chair, East Oxford Action

Margaret Godden
Deputy Leader, Oxfordshire County Council

Barbara Hayes
Director, Industrial Chaplaincy & Chair, Oxfordshire Social Enterprise Forum

Caroline Bull
Chief Executive, Oxford City Council

Alex Hollingsworth
Leader, Oxford City Council

David Holmes
Registrar, University of Oxford

Robert Hutchison
Chief Executive, Oxford Inspires

Bill McCardle
Chief Executive, OX1 City Centre Management Company

Liz McSheehy
Area Director, South East England Development Agency

Mark Norman
Manager, Government Office for the South East

Mike O'Regan
Chair, Hamilton Trust

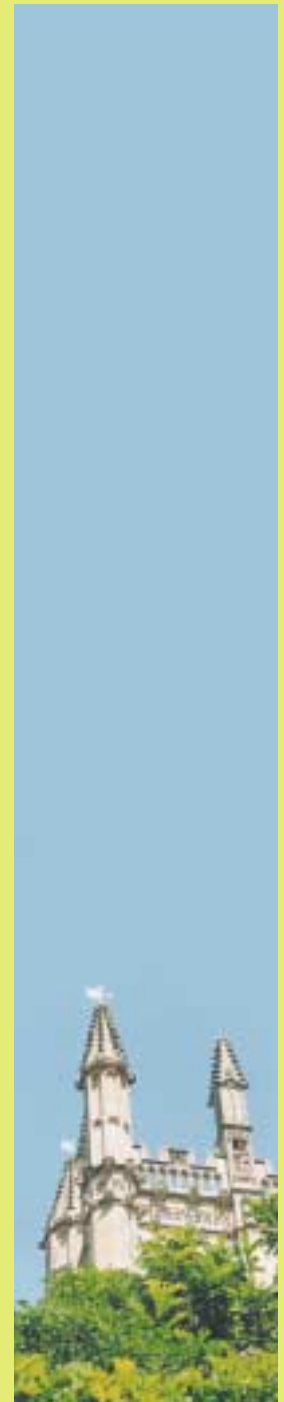
Liz Winders
Director of Academic and Student Affairs, Oxford Brookes University

Andrea Young
Chief Executive, Oxford Primary Care Trust

The following specialists also provide specific advice and guidance:

Janet Mace (Disability Advisor)
Coordinator, Oxfordshire Council of Disabled People

John Sailsman (Diversity Advisor)
Director, Oxfordshire Racial Equality Council



The Partnership will influence and adopt positions on matters of public interest, and will seek to access new funding opportunities. A set of guiding principles - based on the Nolan principles for public life - will guide the actions of all partners when acting on behalf of the Partnership.

Selflessness. Partners should serve only in the public interest.

Integrity & Honesty. Partners should not place themselves in any situation where their integrity may be questioned. They must also declare relevant private interests.

Respect & Equality. Partners should actively promote equality and anti-discriminatory practice.

Objectivity. Partners should make decisions based solely on merit.

Accountability. Partners should be accountable to the public for their actions and decisions when carrying out their partnership duties. They should co-operate fully with any scrutiny appropriate to their role in the Partnership.

Transparency & Accessibility. Partners will ensure that information relating to their Partnership work is as accessible as possible to the public.

Openness & Personal Judgement. Partners should be as open as possible whilst taking into account the wider public interest and have the freedom to make and justify personal decisions.

Stewardship. Partners should nurture and promote the successful development of the Partnership, ensuring that it applies its resources appropriately and operates in accordance with the law.

Leadership. Partners should promote and support these principles by example, and act in a way that preserves public confidence.

The Community Strategy

This document provides a foundation and framework for developing more effective partnership working in the city. It is part of an ongoing process to link resources and capacity in Oxford across the public, business, voluntary, and community sectors. Local authorities also have a new duty to improve local quality of life and promote well being.

Much of this work is being co-ordinated by the Oxford Strategic Partnership. Members of this group (see previous page) have conducted a range of research with local residents and communities in recent years to determine priorities for improvement, and we have grouped our response to these priorities into five themes. Within each theme are partnership targets - some will be delivered over the next year, others over a longer period, and we will review these in one year as part of a broader consultation process. These targets are not comprehensive, but are designed to reflect the breadth of current work and opportunities across the city.

We have also linked to the city's Talkback Panel to make sure our priorities reflect those of our communities. With 1,000 local people involved, representing a cross-section of the city, this effective consultation tool is supported by the City Council, the Oxford Police, and the Oxford Primary Care Trust. We will seek a range of perspectives and advice from across the city's communities, including those traditionally excluded from, or with limited access to, decision-making. We will also strengthen our links to the work of the Oxfordshire Community Partnership and neighbouring districts, to make the best use of available resources and share good practice.

To deliver the objectives, we are linking with existing organisations and partnerships in the city; for example, covering housing, health, and crime. These partnerships help to pool expertise and resources, exchange information and avoid duplication, recommend funding, and develop policies and projects according to local needs and priorities. Further work to establish an effective delivery structure will take place over the coming year.

Getting Involved

The Community Strategy provides an overall vision and a focused set of objectives on city-scale projects. The Partnership welcomes ongoing feedback and new ideas, and will create specific opportunities to contribute to the work programme as it develops. Community engagement and effective consultation will form a core part of our work as we respond to local priorities, and will be critical to our success.

Area Action Plans are being developed by the six Area Committees in the city and will help to address more local-level concerns and priorities. These Committees meet regularly and are open to the public. They are run by the City Council and have developed strong links to both the police and health-care services in Oxford. We also encourage communities to develop their own ideas for improving life in their local area.

Measuring Our Impact

All the targets published with this strategy are measurable in themselves. We will monitor our progress over the year, culminating in a more thorough annual review. We are also collecting a set of indicators that will help to monitor trends in local quality of life and promote debate and interest in the 'liveability' of the area for our citizens and communities. They reflect the positive side of living in, working in or visiting Oxford but also the challenges we face together as a city.

These indicators help us to see the "bigger picture" and understand complex links across society, the economy, and the environment.

They also foster partnership working and build links between different agencies, organisations, and local communities. We will be publishing these indicators for Oxford online at www.oxfordpartnership.org.uk.

Planning & Land Use

The Adopted Local Plan 2001-2011 provides the current planning and land-use framework for the city. The Council is well advanced in completing a new Local Plan to guide development to 2016. Changes are currently being introduced to the way local planning decisions are taken. By March 2007, local authorities should have a set of documents in place, making up a Local Development Framework or Adopted 'Saved' Local Plans. These should include a statement on how we will continue to involve local communities in the planning process.

Local Development Frameworks will become the way we achieve objectives relating to land use and development within the Community Strategy. The Framework will link closely to the new Spatial Strategy being produced at a regional level, and to other plans covering mineral extraction and waste management. The Oxford Strategic Partnership is already working with planners in the city for the benefit of local communities.

Oxford is at the heart of one of the most distinctive city-regions in the south-east of England. The Oxford Strategic Partnership is involved in a number of projects with key regional partners, including the preparation of a sub-regional study for Central Oxfordshire.

Further Information

Your local Councillors can discuss your priorities and concerns with you, and are elected to represent all members of their constituency of whatever age or political leaning. You can search by postcode for your local representatives at www.oxford.gov.uk, under "Your Council", or contact Oxford City Council on 01865 249811.





THEME 1: A Vibrant and Inclusive Economy Vision Statement

Oxford has a thriving and diverse economy, from community enterprises to manufacturing industry, and from a cultural and creative sector to high-tech science parks. We wish to encourage strength, diversity, and social inclusion across the city's economy in its broadest sense, covering both paid and unpaid work, in workplaces, out in the community, or in the home. We will promote genuine opportunities and a fair reward for all and sustainable growth that recognises the pressures and needs of our communities.



Theme 1: Scene Setting

Oxford has a buoyant economy with relative economic stability and a low overall level of unemployment. The city makes a significant contribution to the economy of the southeast region and provides almost 100,000 jobs, one third of the county's total, accommodating around 3,800 businesses. The largest sectors are education and health, with particular strengths in hi-tech and research activity. The impact of the two universities (Oxford and Oxford Brookes) is significant, with strong sectors based on creative and intellectual energies, such as publishing, scientific innovation, and medical research. There is a wide range of successful service industries, and a well-established, skilled manufacturing base, with Oxford host to a major BMW plant - the only one in the world producing the globally successful Mini brand.

Other prominent sectors include life sciences, retail, charitable and non-governmental organisations, and telecommunications. Growth opportunities are primarily provided for at the Oxford Business Park and Oxford Science Park - and despite limited land supply, Oxford continually attracts inward investment.

Despite this prosperity, there are challenging - and often hidden - pockets of deprivation, and Oxford has the highest percentage of people claiming low-income and unemployment benefits in the county. There is significant income inequality across the city and research suggests a higher rate of temporary employment than the national average. There are also employment inequalities relating to gender and ethnicity.

Oxford is one of the most expensive places to live in the UK, and the sharp rise in house prices between 1998 and 2003 has had a direct effect on the ability of employers to attract and retain suitable staff. Around half of the workforce commutes into the city every day. Vacant posts in key public service positions are of particular concern and any significant expansion in employment opportunities should consider its wider effects.

There is a thriving community and voluntary sector in the city - with a range of committed but often unpaid individuals sustaining important local projects. There is scope for significant development within the social enterprise and co-operative sector. A number of regeneration schemes, funded by the Government's Single Regeneration Budget (SRB) programme, have worked hard to empower local communities to take pride and action in their local areas. We see successful regeneration schemes as an opportunity to create local and community wealth, be it social, personal, or financial.

The City Council is working with the County Council and the South East England Development Agency (SEEDA) to bring about an urban renaissance in Oxford's West End. This ambitious project will help deliver a vision of enlarged and enhanced cultural, leisure, and retail opportunities. The full vision for the West End encompasses the relocation of the railway station, improvements to the bus infrastructure, and a significant increase in the quality and economic performance of the area. We plan to deliver a greater sense of civic pride in our public spaces and also to deliver more housing. The full effects of such a development on life in the city need to be considered thoroughly, and opened up to public consultation, before future decisions are taken.



A Vibrant & Inclusive Economy

Safer Communities

A Better Living Environment

Opportunities For Life

Active & Healthy Communities

THEME 1

Theme 1 Objectives

1.1 Support sustained economic development and a skilled and employable workforce

Oxford has a buoyant but stable economy with low unemployment at 2.4%. The total number of jobs has changed little in recent decades but a shift has occurred, reflecting national changes, from manufacturing to services, with 87% now employed in the latter sector. To create a sustainable economy, strengthening over time, we will develop a more co-ordinated and strategic approach towards the economy by:

Commissioning and completing a study on Oxford's economy by August 2004, enabling key partners to reassess the role they play in the local economy and helping to identify how existing support and links can be strengthened.

Building on the economic study to establish an economic partnership for the city by November 2004 that promotes a diverse and sustainable local economy and enhances Oxford's role within the region.

**Lead Agency: Oxford City Council
Partners: Business Link, Oxfordshire County Council, Oxfordshire Economic Observatory**

The way we purchase goods and services has a major impact on the environment, society, and the economy. Local businesses, social enterprises, and the voluntary sector add specific value to the Oxford area and contribute to social cohesion. We will:

Promote the purchasing of local goods and services to achieve maximum community benefit and seek to protect the environment. All major public sector partners and the universities will include appropriate criteria in their procurement strategies by July 2005. These same partners will also investigate the purchase of renewable energy and contribute towards Oxford's goals as a Fairtrade City by April 2005.

Lead Agencies: Oxford City Council and Oxfordshire County Council



Oxford is a prosperous and well-educated city, with the highest number of people in the south-east holding degree-level education, yet there are significant challenges beneath this surface. Training and support for both employers and employees is vital, and developing a coordinated approach to accessing these opportunities will give greater choice to local people in their working lives. By August 2005, we will:

Map current service provision, promote the development of a single access point for information, target growth areas such as social enterprise, and investigate improved access for disadvantaged groups by July 2005.

Lead Agency: Oxford Strategic Partnership
Partners: Learning & Skills Council, Business Link, Enterprise Development Centre (Oxford Brookes), Further Education sector, Oxfordshire Social Enterprise Forum, Co-operative Futures, Oxford Swindon & Gloucester Co-op



A Vibrant & Inclusive Economy

Safer Communities

A Better Living Environment

Opportunities For Life

Active & Healthy Communities

THEME 1

1.2 Support key regeneration proposals across Oxford

To unlock the potential in the western side of the city centre, we have been consulting partners on major regeneration proposals for the area, including the provision of enhanced cultural, leisure, and retail opportunities.

Building on the Oxford West End Project report completed in 2003, we will:

Complete a Development Framework, including a master planning exercise, consultation with local communities, and the establishment of a delivery agency by October 2004.

Complete a feasibility study by December 2004 on moving the rail station to the Oxpens site.

Lead Agencies: Oxford City Council, Oxfordshire County Council, South East England Development Agency

A number of city regeneration schemes have been funded by the Government's Single Regeneration Budget (SRB) programme - currently those in Barton, Blackbird Leys, and East Oxford. This funding is now coming to an end and it is important to provide a voice for communities in these areas and others with similar challenges. We also need a structure to help channel new funding more effectively and fairly into the areas that need it most. To this end, we will:

Support the creation of an umbrella group for local regeneration schemes across the city, initially focusing on the development of 'exit strategies' for the SRB project areas. To be completed by December 2004.

Lead Agency: Oxford Regeneration Arc
Partners: East Oxford Action Ltd, Leys Linx, Barton SRB, Oxford City Council, Sure Start, Cutteslowe Community Project, East Oxford Healthy Living Initiative

1.3 Support the community and voluntary sector, and encourage a social enterprise culture in the city

The local voluntary and community sector has a very strong presence in Oxford. It is a major employer and delivers an enormous range of frontline services across the city. We will support this by:

Completing an agreement by December 2004 between public sector bodies and the voluntary and community sector - known as a "Compact" - agreeing principles for joint-working.

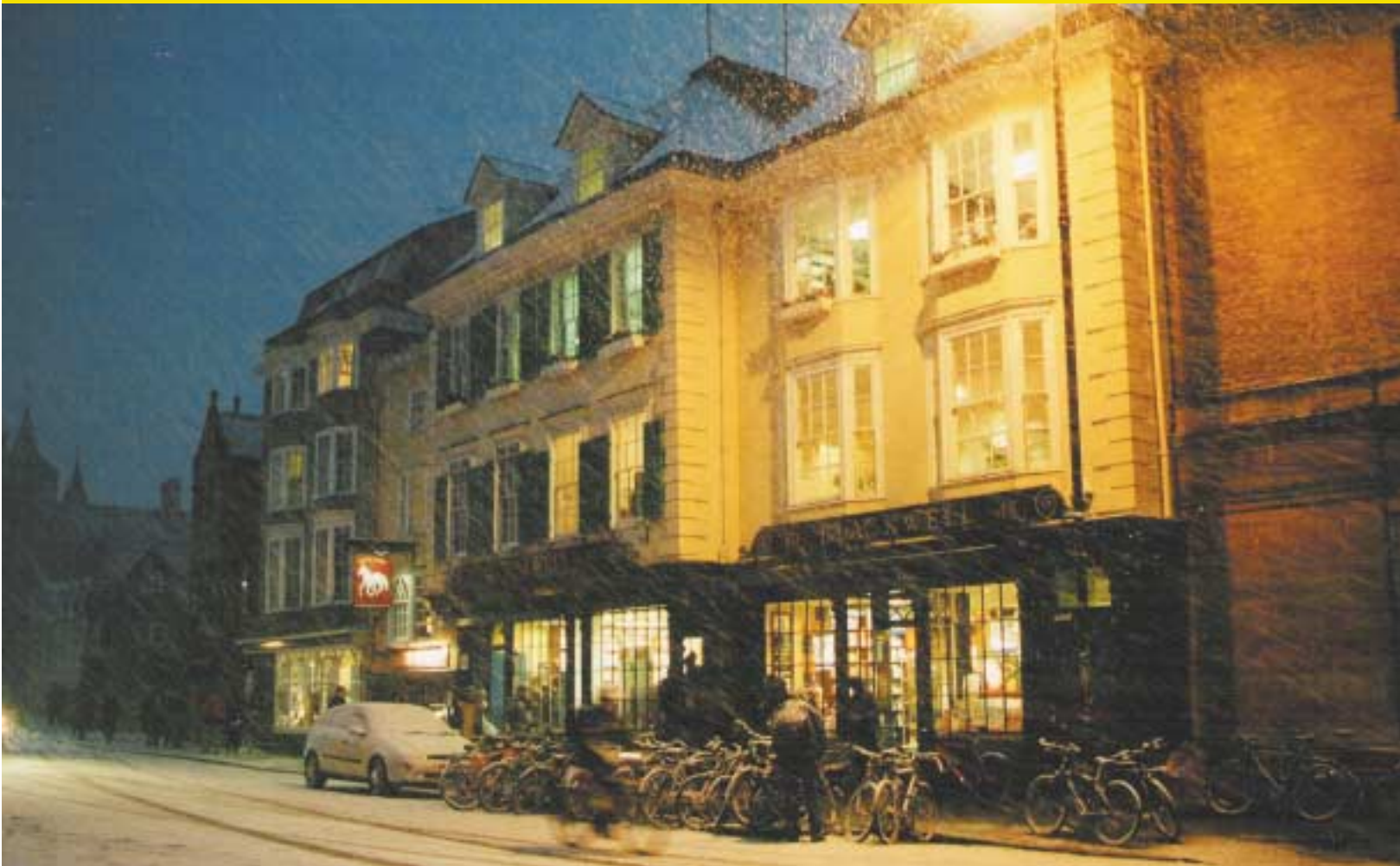
Lead Agency: Oxfordshire County Council
Partners: Churches Together in Oxfordshire, Oxfordshire Rural Community Council, Banbury Council of Voluntary Services, Oxfordshire Council for Voluntary Action, Oxfordshire Council of Disabled People, Age Concern, Oxford City Council, Vale of White Horse DC, South Oxfordshire DC

There is a significant opportunity to encourage growth in the social enterprise sector across the city. This includes organisations that are competitive businesses owned and trading for a social purpose. We will:

Support the development of a city-wide credit union by December 2005. This project will increase access to appropriate and fair financial services, enabling people to tackle debt and improve their quality of life.

Lead Agency: Oxford Credit Union Development Group
Partners: Oxford City Council, Hamilton Trust, Citizens Advice Bureau, Oxfordshire Money Advice Project, Age Concern, Oxfordshire Council for Voluntary Action, Co-operative Futures, Leys Linx, Oxford Diocese, Oxford Citizens Housing Association





THEME 2: Safer Communities Vision Statement

Crime and the fear of crime have an adverse effect on all our lives. Tackling these is critical to improving our overall quality of life, and we will build on current successes to ensure that Oxford is a safe, friendly environment for residents, workers and visitors.





Scene Setting

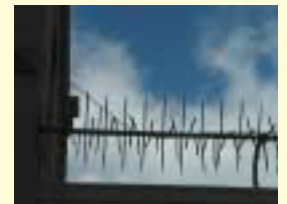


Oxford has a strong regional reputation for tackling crime and disorder through OSCP, its Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership. In our key priority areas - burglary, robbery, and car crime - incidents have steadily fallen since the partnership was established in 1998.

We have successfully introduced nine estate-based street wardens to help reduce the fear of crime and tackle local concerns such as graffiti and anti-social behaviour. Alcohol-free zones have also been established in the city centre to reduce anti-social behaviour, particularly after pub closing times. We have also taken a proactive and preventative approach to reducing criminal activities by targeting prolific offenders through the IRIS project, providing better facilities for young people, including skateboard parks, StreetSport sites, and youth shelters, and by working alongside the Youth Service.

Key Delivery Partnership OSCP (Oxford Safer Communities Partnership)

OSCP is a partnership of organisations working to reduce crime and disorder. The steering group involves Oxford City Council, Oxford Police, Oxfordshire Fire and Rescue Service, Oxfordshire County Council, Thames Valley Police Authority, Thames Valley Probation Service, Oxfordshire Youth Offending Team, Oxfordshire Drug and Alcohol Action Team and the Oxford Primary Care Trust. It prepares the Crime and Disorder Reduction Strategy, allocates funds, and continually audits levels of crime and disorder in Oxford. The partnership includes a wide range of organisations responsible for delivering key priorities within the strategy and a range of sub-groups tackling anti-social behaviour, violence (including domestic violence), burglary, drugs, and car crime.



Theme 2 Objectives

2.1 Continue to engage with our communities in reducing crime and the fear of crime

Responding to local needs and concerns is a key part of tackling crime. By April 2005, we will:

Complete a Crime and Disorder Audit through consultation with our communities, and use the data to develop the next Crime and Disorder Strategy for 2005-2008. This will include continuing to build links between our communities and the police via Oxford's six Area Committees.

Lead Agency: OSCP Steering Group

2.2 Respond to anti-social behaviour

We will tackle the rise in anti-social behaviour - an issue of national concern - by:

Reviewing the role of the nine street wardens on Blackbird Leys, Rose Hill and Littlemore and investigating options for sustaining the project into the future by April 2005.

Continuing to successfully tackle aggressive begging in the city centre and monitor public satisfaction levels by April 2005.

Investigating a more coordinated approach to related youth scheme funding in Oxford by July 2005.

Lead Agency: OSCP
Partners: OSCP Steering Group, CANACT (Crime and Nuisance Action Team), Anti-Social Behaviour Taskforce, Magistrates Courts, Youth Service



2.3 Reduce violent crime in the city

We will continue to tackle violent crime and its impacts on individuals by:

Continuing to increase the safety of, and support for, those experiencing domestic violence. This requires appropriate service provision and includes raising awareness of the effects of domestic violence and targeting offenders by April 2005.

Working with licensees as part of a new scheme by July 2005 to reduce alcohol-related violence.

Lead Agency: OSCP
Partners: OSCP Steering Group, Violence Sub-Group, Oxford Multi-Agency Group on Domestic Violence, Domestic Violence Casework Group

2.4 Reduce burglary of people's homes

We will continue the significant reductions in local burglary over the last five years by:

Targeting hotspot areas of the city that have a higher rate of burglary for crime-reduction measures, including target hardening of premises and improved lighting schemes by December 2005.

Developing the role of the IRIS Prolific Offenders project in targeting the most prolific offenders in the city.

Lead Agencies: OSCP Steering Group, Burglary Sub-Group, IRIS Steering Group

2.5 Reduce car crime

We will continue to target theft of and from vehicles in the city, focusing on hotspot areas by:

Continuing an awareness campaign to reduce car crime, and targeting areas that have a high level of car crime by December 2005.

Lead Agencies: OSCP Steering Group, Auto-crime Sub-Group



THEME 3: A Better Living Environment Vision Statement

The protection and enhancement of our city's high-quality natural and built heritage is important for the citizens of today and for future generations. We acknowledge the urgency of meeting the city's need for high-quality, affordable housing, particularly for key workers and the homeless. We will work towards an attractive, healthy, and varied living environment, including safe and accessible public spaces. Oxford also has a unique and celebrated natural heritage that needs protecting and enhancing, and we will work to reduce our impact on the wider environment.





Scene Setting

Housing in Oxford is characterised by high prices and a shortage of affordable housing, with a large proportion of the population unable to access the market. Property prices are more than 10 times the average annual income, and 33% higher than the regional average. There may be a severe impact on local networks if young people are unable to afford to live locally in a home of their own.

There are 52,000 homes in the city, housing a population of 140,000, and standards are generally fair. Of the total, 54% are owner-occupied and 16% of households live in council stock. At 24%, the city has a significant private rented sector - one of the largest in the country and nearly double the national average. This is generally expensive and poorly maintained. The Council's own housing stock of 8,300 homes is basically sound but needs upgrading. There is particular concern about those areas with high concentrations of houses in multiple occupation, which are often in a poor state of repair.

The high cost of housing - primarily affecting those with low to middle-income jobs - also has a direct effect on the ability of local employers to attract and retain suitable staff, and around 50% of the workforce travel in from outside the city boundaries, generating congestion and air pollution. Similar pressures, many arising outside the city, have led to one of the highest levels of homelessness in the country, with 19 out of every 1,000 households in temporary accommodation. The vast majority of these are families, and considerable resources go into supporting and dealing with their needs. Tackling Oxford's housing challenges will require imaginative and innovative solutions.

Oxford's built environment, particularly in the city centre, is of significant interest. The city has 11 scheduled monuments (including Castle Mound and St. George's Tower), around 1,500 listed buildings of which 12% are Grade 1 (including The Ashmolean, Britain's oldest public museum), and conservation areas covering 17% of the city. Successfully managing the increasing pressures of traffic within the medieval street pattern at the heart of the city is one of our greatest challenges.

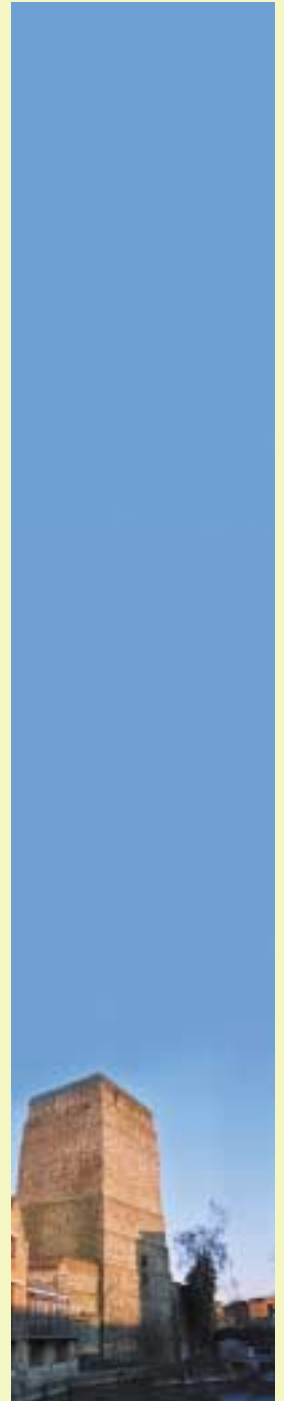
From an environmental perspective, Oxford is in a relatively strong position. Current recycling levels are slightly higher than the UK average, with challenging targets set for future improvement. Kerbside collection is available for all houses and a free bulky waste collection service is run to reduce flytipping. Successful schemes, such as Operation Cubit, have been run by the police and local authorities to remove over 200 abandoned vehicles. Cleanliness of streets and public spaces is an important element of civic pride and affects the quality of the local environment. Around 60% of Oxford residents are satisfied with the cleanliness standard in their area, and schemes are under way to improve on this.

The implementation of the Oxford Transport Strategy since 1999 has improved air quality in the city centre, but levels of pollution are still high in certain areas, and meeting national air-quality standards will be a challenge. Oxford has distinctive areas of natural beauty such as Port Meadow, Wolvercote Common, and Shotover Country Park, all with an outstanding range of wildlife and biodiversity. The colleges also provide important green spaces and habitats though these are often not widely accessible.

The city is surrounded by a green belt and has 12 SSSIs (Sites of Special Scientific Interest) protected through designation by English Nature. Our waterways and flood meadows are especially important for wildlife, with parks, domestic gardens, and cemeteries providing other valuable habitats. Access to these open green spaces and the biodiversity they support significantly improves quality of life for those who live in, work in, and visit the city. Protecting our valuable natural environment under significant development pressures is a key challenge for the city.

Key Delivery Partnership SHOP (Strategic Housing in Oxford Partnership)

The core purpose of SHOP is to create a strategic link between partners to promote and respond to housing-related issues in Oxford. The core group includes Oxford City Council, the Chairs of the five sub-groups (including a Registered Social Landlord representative), Oxfordshire County Council, Oxfordshire Community Partnership, and the Oxford Primary Care Trust. Members develop and monitor progress on the local housing and homelessness strategies, and respond to broader changes at the regional and national level. The core group also co-ordinates the following sub-groups: Single Homelessness, Housing Management, Social Housing Planning & Development, Private Sector Housing, and Family Homelessness and Mobility.



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▲
THEME 3

Theme 3 Objectives

3.1 Improve the supply and condition of affordable housing in Oxford

We will meet the need for decent quality, affordable housing in the city by developing closer relationships with partners. This will allow us to more thoroughly investigate broad and innovative solutions to Oxford's housing needs, including the possibility of an urban extension at Grenoble Road.

Lead Agency: Strategic Housing in Oxford Partnership (SHOP)

Promote further land release for affordable and key worker housing within Oxford from public sector landowners, by working with partners to access previously unidentified sites by April 2006.

Encourage and support the development of an effective Landlords' Forum by April 2005 to improve housing quality and living standards in the private sector.

3.2 Tackle and reduce homelessness in the city

A Homelessness Strategy was produced in 2003 by a special taskforce to develop a new and coordinated approach to tackling homelessness and supporting homeless people across the city. We will support the implementation of this strategy, including targets to:

Lead Agency: Strategic Housing in Oxford Partnership (SHOP)

Reduce the average time spent by homeless households in temporary accommodation by 50% by 2008.

Maintain levels of rough sleeping at a level two-thirds below the number in 1998.



3.3 Protect and enhance the natural environment

To improve air quality and reduce pollution in the city centre, an Air Quality Management Area was originally declared in 2001. We will:

Lead Agencies: Oxfordshire County Council and Oxford City Council

Develop an air quality action plan by December 2004. This will integrate with the forthcoming Local Transport Plan and enable us to target nitrogen dioxide levels in line with National Air Quality Strategy objectives. National recommendations are to achieve an annual mean level of 40mg/m³ by December 2005.

Complete an assessment of particulate levels based on High Street monitoring; and examine specific hotspot areas in more detail, for example, around Donnington Bridge and Green Road roundabout, by April 2005.

We will work to minimise waste and increase recycling, and implement the Joint Household Waste Management Strategy signed in 2001 by the six local authorities in Oxfordshire to manage our waste more effectively. We will:

Lead Agencies: Oxford City Council and Oxfordshire County Council

Achieve a domestic waste recycling rate of 16.5% in Oxford by April 2005, and work towards 18% by April 2006.

In partnership, work towards an overall household waste recycling target for the county of 33% by April 2006.

We will work to conserve, enhance, and increase access to the natural environment in Oxford by:

Lead Agencies: Oxford City Council and Oxfordshire Nature Conservation Forum

Supporting the development of a partnership action list with local and community conservation groups by April 2005 to improve the protection and quality of biodiversity and the natural environment across the city. This will include the development of guidance for developers on protecting and promoting biodiversity.



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THEME 3

3.4 Protect and enhance the built environment

We will promote and support improvements to public spaces across the city by:

Promoting a more consistent approach to installing and integrating public and community art into the urban landscape across the city by April 2006.

Developing a longer-term design for Broad Street by December 2005.

Supporting work to maintain street appearance and cleanliness across the city, including the city centre and neighbourhood centres at Cowley Centre, Cowley Road, Headington, and Summertown by December 2005.

Lead Agency: Oxford Strategic Partnership
Partners: Artpoint, Arts Council England, Oxford City Council, Oxford Preservation Trust

Lead Agencies: Oxfordshire County Council, Oxford City Council, OX1 (City Centre Management Company)







THEME 4: Opportunities for Life Vision Statement

We believe strongly in improving equality of access to life opportunities, whether at home, work, or play. Access to skills, learning, and personal development in all walks of life will be promoted for everyone, from young people to senior citizens. This includes access to services and support via new technology, while recognising human contact and mobility as the cornerstone of society. We will also build opportunities for people to lead their lives independently and engage actively in local decision-making.



Scene Setting

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THEME 4

Oxford has two first-class universities, both with world-class reputations in key areas of research, contributing significantly to the economy, culture, and social life of the city. Oxford University has a truly global reputation and is seen as the most entrepreneurial in the UK. Oxford Brookes University has been recognised as the best new university in the UK for the seventh year running. We have a successful further education college, numerous English language schools, and a strong independent school sector, but performance at key stage level and GCSE in its state schools is a cause for concern. Six of the ten most “educationally deprived wards” in Oxfordshire are within the boundaries of the city.

Oxford attracts many people to its services, leisure and cultural facilities, and employment opportunities. The city's long history, architecturally unique city centre and strong literary connections result in a thriving tourist industry, with more than 7.6 million visitors spending over £250 million annually.

Access to opportunities of any kind in the city requires a decent transport infrastructure and Oxford has significant pressures and challenges to keep people moving both into and across the city. In addition to tourists and other day visitors, about half of the city's working population commutes inward each day. Local bus services are vital for many city residents as 33% of households do not own a car, compared with 20% across the south-east of England.

The city has a medieval street pattern that brings extra challenges to tackling and balancing 21st century traffic pressures - both pedestrian and vehicular. The Oxford Transport Strategy was first endorsed by the City and County Councils in 1993. Between then and 1999, improvements were made to the Park

and Ride service, bus-priority measures were introduced, and new cycle routes were developed through the city. In 1999, a bus-priority route was introduced through the city centre, allowing Cornmarket to be pedestrianised. This has led to improvements in city centre air quality and improved the general pedestrian environment. Bus use in the city has also increased by around 15% since 1999 and the number of private cars in the centre during the day has fallen significantly.

Oxford has one of the first and most advanced Park and Ride systems in the country and had the first pre-signal gates giving priority to buses outside London. There are now five Park and Ride sites running services 17 hours a day, 7 days a week. There are bus links between Oxford and neighbouring towns such as Witney and Abingdon. Census data shows that more than twice the number of residents use the bus, cycle or walk to work than the national average. 15% of people walk to work in the city compared with 10% nationally.

Longer-distance transport links are excellent with the A34 providing access to the south coast and Midlands as well as the A40/M40 corridor to London. Train services from the city run frequently to London and Birmingham, although some services to destinations such as Bristol are now the subject of potential cuts by the Strategic Rail Authority.



Theme 4 Objectives

4.1 Support improvement of local educational achievement

A good education and learning environment - from the earliest age - is the main means of providing the city's young people with good life opportunities. We will:

Establish and monitor attainment levels at two stages within the 0-18 year old range for young people within the city, alongside comparable local and national figures by July 2005. The two stages are:

Key Stage 1 (for English and Maths)
GCSE (5 A*-Cs including English and Maths)

Encourage the take-up of free nursery places for 3 and 4 year olds in the city by July 2005.

Help parents get involved in their children's education. This includes investigating opportunities for the expansion of the PEEP scheme to other areas in the city by July 2005. This is a scheme providing support and education for the parents and carers of pre-school children.

Support local programmes to encourage reading and tackle the causes of illiteracy across the city by April 2006.

We will encourage increased applications to further and higher education from low-income group students and neighbourhoods with low participation rates, by:

Supporting the Aimhigher: Partnerships for Progression programme in targeting Peers School, Oxford Community School, and St Gregory the Great VA Catholic School by December 2005. This aims to raise aspirations and participation in higher education from 34% to 43% by 2010.

Working to increase participation in further and higher education from minority communities, including the Outreach programme (targeting black and ethnic minority communities), and the public programmes of the Continuing Education department (including provision of educational support to asylum seekers) by December 2005.

Lead Agency: Oxford Strategic Partnership



Lead Agencies: Oxford University, Oxford Brookes University
Partners: Oxford & Cherwell College and other education institutes, the Learning & Skills Council, Connexions, local schools, Local Education Authority, and Local Learning Partnerships



4.2 Promote greater participation in local decision-making

Promoting greater public participation in local decision-making is particularly important in developing community ownership and providing responsive and accountable services. Effective local democracy is about people working together to improve things in their communities.

We will encourage all partners to continually improve their consultation by sharing good practice, integrating techniques and ensuring consultation leads to delivery. We will update our Talkback forum by September 2004, involving 1,000 local people from a cross-section of our communities.

We will improve levels of consultation with young people and their participation in decision-making, particularly in communities that are traditionally not included by July 2005.

Lead Agency: Oxford Strategic Partnership
Partners: Oxford Youth Council, Oxford City Council, Oxford University, Oxford Brookes University



4.3 Improve access to services by encouraging joined-up working across the city

Most people in the city have a connection with a local service but may be unaware of other services that could be critical to their well-being. We will promote a culture of joined-up working through our partnerships. We will:

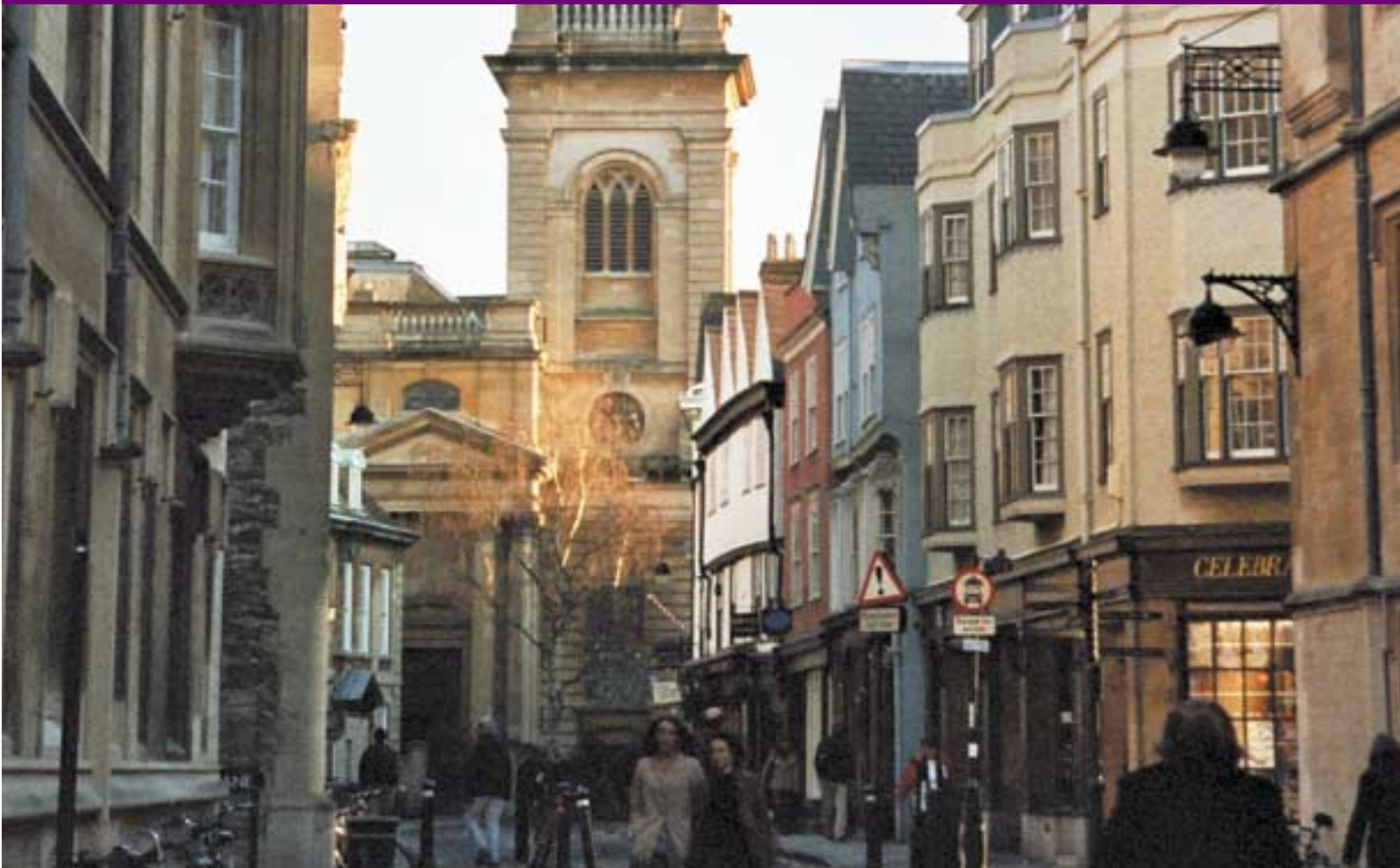
Investigate opportunities to sustain and expand the Benefits in Practice project beyond its current lifespan by December 2005. This project gives people access to benefits advice in health settings, increasing incomes and reducing debt-associated stress. To date, the project has helped users to claim over £100,000 in benefits.

Lead Agency: Oxford City Primary Care Trust
Partners: Oxford City Council, Citizens Advice Bureau, Legal Services Commission, The Pensions Service

Use existing communication channels to promote access to local services and activities, for example, via websites and publications. We will also encourage greater interaction and participation via the web, with partners increasing electronic access to all major services by December 2005.

Lead Agency: Oxford Strategic Partnership





THEME 5: Active and Healthy Communities Vision Statement

Good physical and mental health, and a sense of well-being, require a healthy lifestyle and access to social, cultural, and leisure activities. We will promote these across Oxford, and help to channel health services where they are most needed, and develop new preventative approaches. We will work in partnership to identify and reduce the main causes of ill health in the community, tackle inequalities in health, and provide responsive and appropriate health services across the city according to need.



Scene Setting



When compared with the national average, Oxford has lower rates of the major causes of premature death such as strokes, lung cancer, or coronary heart disease. There are, however, significant inequalities in health between different areas and communities in the city. The City Council works closely with the Primary Care Trust and local hospital trusts to tackle this inequality.

There are critical links between living and working conditions and health, and we are building similar links between our health objectives and those relating to, for example, housing and homelessness, and community safety.

The city has a vibrant and diverse cultural life, and has been designated a Centre of Culture for 2008. It is internationally famous for its heritage and has over 1,500 listed buildings and 16 conservation areas. It is home to the UK's first public museum, botanical garden, and athletics club. Oxford remains one of the country's foremost cities for overnight visitors from both the UK and abroad. The city also sustains a very diverse local culture with a huge range of sports clubs, a vibrant music scene, restaurants, cafes, theatres, and over 160 licensed bars and pubs.

We recognise that participation in physical activity and sport has a positive impact on personal well-being - both physical and mental - at all ages, and promotes social interaction and a sense of community. It also reduces other costs across the city - mainly those associated with healthcare and sickness absence, but also, in some cases, in relation to crime.



Theme 5 Objectives :

5.1 Support a socially inclusive approach to health work

The first stage of a healthy community begins with the individual, and there are several projects across the city concerned with targeted support at this level, particularly among vulnerable and hard-to-reach groups. We will:

Support the development and implementation of improved services for asylum seekers and refugees by April 2006.

Ensure that information is available to all health professionals and officers in contact with the public to recognise fuel poverty and make referrals to energy efficiency and affordable warmth schemes by July 2005.

Support work with 15-17 year old women to achieve a 15% reduction by 2004 and 45% by 2010 in conception rates.

Improve access to sexual health services, engage young people more innovatively, and improve sexual health promotion activities for target groups by December 2005.

Lead Agency: Oxford Strategic Partnership
Partners: Oxford City Primary Care Trust, Oxford City Council, Oxfordshire County Council, Oxfordshire Mental Health Trust, Citizens Advice Bureau, Oxford City Council, The Pensions Service, Terence Higgins Trust

5.2 Encourage healthy lifestyles

The way we choose to live our lives has a huge impact on our health, and we will encourage healthy lifestyles across the city by:

Supporting the Healthy Living Initiative to improve diets, reduce malnutrition, tackle food poverty, and encourage healthy lifestyle habits for disadvantaged and isolated groups living in East Oxford and Blackbird Leys by December 2005.

Lead Agencies: Oxford City Primary Care Trust, Oxford City Council, Healthy Living Centre, East Oxford Community Association

Encouraging the take-up of healthy living options by December 2005. This includes implementing the "Exercise on Prescription" scheme; providing comprehensive and

accessible services for smoking cessation; Health Walks; and promoting activities such as use of allotments.

Lead Agency: Oxford City Primary Care Trust
Partners: Primary Care Teams, Oxford City Council

Helping to tackle substance misuse by improving services for young people involved in substance misuse, including the development of a pooled budget by April 2006.

Lead Agency: Oxfordshire Drug and Alcohol Action Team (DAAT)
Partners: Oxford City Drugs Reference Group, Oxford City Primary Care Trust, Oxford City Council, other NHS Trusts, Oxfordshire County Council



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THEME 5

5.3 Support improved cultural and recreational activities & increased opportunities for participation

We will work to widen participation in cultural, leisure, sporting, and related learning activities, and support the development of celebratory and educational events across the city. We will focus on:

Working to secure a future for the Cowley Road Carnival, to strengthen a culture of community-led, celebratory events in Oxford by April 2006.

Working towards a major 2007 festival year, with a range of key events and activities taking place in the run-up.

Lead Agencies: Oxford Regeneration Arc, Oxford Inspires, East Oxford Action, Oxford City Council, Oxford Pride, Oxford, Swindon & Gloucester Co-op



5.4 Deliver improved health and leisure services in our communities

The Local Improvement Finance Trust (LIFT) project is a 20-year programme of investment, planned and developed between partner agencies. The vision is to bring together health and social care services around patient and user needs, integrate primary care provision, and achieve the same high quality of services across the city. We will:

Begin construction work on two new Primary Care Resource Centres in East Oxford (Manzil Way) and Blackbird Leys (Dunnock Way), and run further consultations in areas where future development is planned, including the central Radcliffe Infirmary site by April 2005.

Lead Agency: Oxford City LIFTCo.
Partners: Oxford City Primary Care Trust, Oxford City Council, Oxfordshire County Council, Oxfordshire Mental Health Trust.

Supporting the delivery of new sporting facilities, including the completion of two further StreetSport sites (outdoor multisports facilities) in areas of social deprivation by December 2004, and reviewing plans for a new swimming pool at Barton by July 2005.

Running a conference to explore the opportunities for disabled people to engage in sport and physical activity by December 2005.

Lead Agencies: Oxford City Council, Oxford City Primary Care Trust





Your input

Which objectives in this document do you strongly support?

Are there any other priorities you feel should be considered in future work?

The Oxford Strategic Partnership will be arranging further consultations on current and future priorities for the city. If you would like to be included in any of these, please complete the boxes below.

Name

Organisation (if relevant)

Contact address

Telephone

Email

Many thanks

This form is also available online at www.oxfordpartnership.org.uk

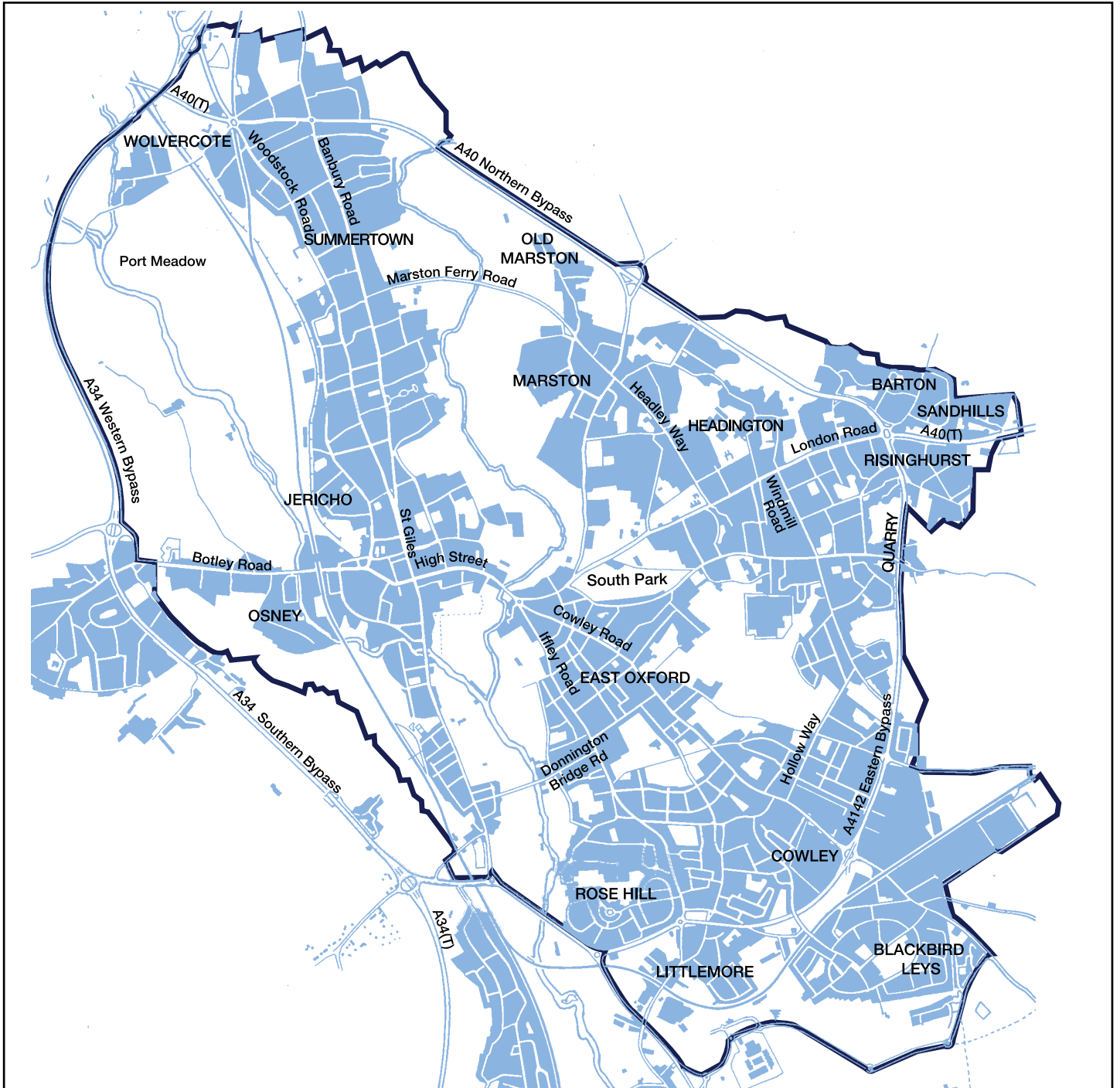
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