



WEST OXFORDSHIRE
DISTRICT COUNCIL

West Oxfordshire Council Plan 2016 - 2019

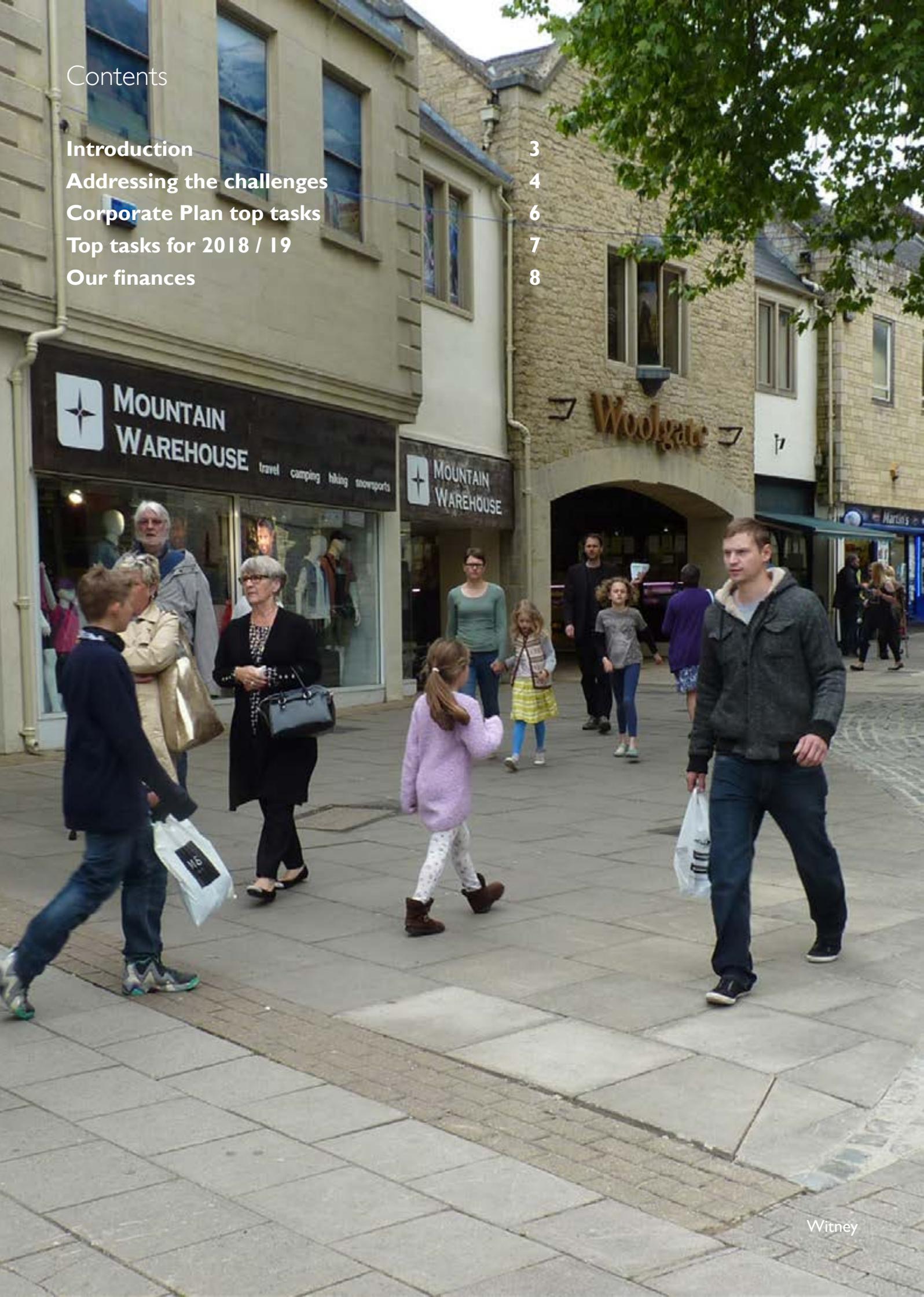
West Oxfordshire: one of the best places to live,
work and visit in Great Britain



2018 - 19
update

Contents

Introduction	3
Addressing the challenges	4
Corporate Plan top tasks	6
Top tasks for 2018 / 19	7
Our finances	8





Introduction from Cllr James Mills, Leader of West Oxfordshire District Council

Welcome to the 2018/19 update to the West Oxfordshire District Council Plan.

We are lucky enough to live in one of the most beautiful areas of the country. The District combines idyllic countryside and a thriving local economy with enviable visitor attractions.

There is high jobs growth and, despite an expanding population, rates of unemployment and crime are among the lowest in the country.

Since 2008, our enduring aim has been to maintain and enhance West Oxfordshire as one of the best places to live, work and visit in Great Britain.

This update sets out how we will continue to develop that vision. Our agreed priorities for the period to 2019 are:

- To protect the environment whilst supporting the local economy
- Working with communities to meet the current and future needs and aspirations of residents
- To provide efficient and value for money services, whilst delivering quality front line services

This update highlights the progress we have made in the last year in achieving these priorities. Key actions for the next 12 months and beyond include working with Oxfordshire partners to deliver the Housing and Growth Deal Delivery Plan which will address Oxfordshire's housing, infrastructure and economic challenges; adopting the Local Plan; engaging and working with partners on Oxfordshire One Public Estate, which will include a review of Welch Way with the aim of creating a sustainable town centre and the potential for delivering joint front line services; and ensuring the effective use of free parking through the Parking Strategy.

At the same time we must ensure the environment is protected and improved where possible. In October 2017, we implemented a new waste and recycling service designed to meet the needs of our residents which, whilst it took some time for the service to settle down, is already resulting in increased amounts of recycling materials presented.

We aim to adopt the West Oxfordshire Local Plan by summer 2018 having successfully seen it through its second phase of examination hearings. This will mean our area is better protected from inappropriate development while it will promote sustainable communities such as the new Oxfordshire Cotswolds Garden Village.

Local businesses will be supported through initiatives such as the roll-out of high speed broadband and improved mobile 'phone coverage.

All this has to be achieved in the most cost-effective way as our grant from central Government has continued to reduce. In response, over the last few years we have developed joint working arrangements with partner councils. In 2017, we, together with Cheltenham Borough, Cotswold District and Forest of Dean District Councils created a new company, Publica Group Ltd, which will employ staff and deliver council services to produce even greater savings with no reduction in service levels.

Through the actions set out in the overall Council Plan and this update, I am confident we will continue to deliver the services people expect while maintaining our economic and environmental goals.

I am fortunate and proud to live and work in this District. It is our duty to ensure it continues to be one of the best places to live, work and visit in Great Britain.

Councillor James Mills
Leader of the Council

Addressing the challenges

The Council recognises its role in protecting the environment and ensuring West Oxfordshire remains an attractive area to live, work and visit. We have produced a Local Plan which aims to protect the area's landscape and built environment as well as ensuring the provision of a mix of housing and promoting economic growth. The examination of the Plan has ended, and we are now awaiting the Inspector's final report, following which the Council should be in a position to adopt the Local Plan during the summer of 2018.

A key element of the Local Plan is the establishment of a new Oxfordshire Cotswolds Garden Village to the north of the A40 near Eynsham. The new Oxfordshire Cotswolds Garden Village will make a major contribution towards providing much needed homes and jobs in a high quality living environment. It will also unlock funds to improve infrastructure and boost the case for improvements to local transport links, including upgrades to the A40. The proposed new development will be a distinct settlement with its own amenities and a business park. So far, we have established community engagement arrangements as well as delivery arrangements with landowners, the site promoter and with Eynsham Parish Council, but now need to await the Local Plan Inspector's conclusions on the Oxfordshire Cotswolds Garden Village concept before taking forward the Infrastructure Delivery Plan alongside a proposed Area Action Plan which will set out in more detail how the new development will be implemented, what it will look like and how it will function. It is anticipated that the Area Action Plan will be adopted by October 2019.

In the Government's November 2017 Budget, Oxfordshire was offered a Housing and Growth Deal which provides £215 million of funding over five years, which includes £150 million for infrastructure, and £60 million for affordable housing. The Deal was conditional on the completion of a Housing and Growth Deal Delivery Plan, which has been agreed by all Oxfordshire Partners and central government. A number of projects that are relevant to West Oxfordshire will benefit from this funding, for example, improvements to the A40 corridor will benefit significant areas of West Oxfordshire including Eynsham, Witney and Carterton.

We are aware of the impact we can have on the environment, and continue to promote recycling whilst reducing the amount of waste sent to landfill. On the 1 October 2017, the waste and recycling collection contract was transferred to Ubico Ltd. The commencement of a new contract provided an opportunity to review and redesign the service in partnership with our residents; and the weekly kerbside sort recycling using black boxes changed to a fortnightly commingled collection with a black box for glass. We also transferred the collection of garden waste to Ubico Ltd on the 1st April 2017, and introduced a 'charged for' service. Customer take-up of licences exceeded expectation with over 30,000 licences sold. Whilst the amount of recycling presented has increased we need to work with residents to ensure materials are presented in the correct containers to minimise the amount of contamination and maximise the amount of waste that is recycled.

West Oxfordshire is known for the good quality of life that it offers, but we know that we have to work with communities to maintain that quality of life. Currently, we provide free parking throughout the District and intend to maintain that position; the Parking Strategy identifies the key parking





issues, and sets out different approaches to manage parking. It also sets out the actions to improve parking capacity including proposals for a decked car at Woolgate, Witney, and on-street reviews in a number of key locations. Consultation on the review of Corn Street and Church Green, Witney has commenced but reviews across all identified locations will take a number of years to complete. The feasibility study on the Woolgate development has commenced and if viable, a planning application could be prepared.

We recognise that affordable homes are important for a good quality of life and help people of all ages live in our communities. In 2017/2018, a total of 153 affordable units were delivered against a target of 133, including units in Chipping Norton, Kingham, Stonesfield, Witney, Carterton, Woodstock and Brize Norton. We expect to deliver a further 146 affordable homes during the next 12 months.

During 2017/18, we completed a review of emergency accommodation and considered a number of longer term solutions to increase it, including investigating the viability of purchasing accommodation and opportunities to rent suitable accommodation. We recently secured Horse Fair, Chipping Norton through negotiation with Cottsway Housing Association which will provide six units of emergency accommodation. This will provide much needed emergency accommodation and reduce the necessity of placing households in accommodation outside of the District.

We are also supporting the roll out of superfast broadband and are working with Gigaclear and other providers to ensure better broadband coverage. The roll-out is progressing well, with all the build areas in Phase 1 of the project underway (South Leigh, Tackley, Kencot, Ducklington, Aston, Church Hanborough, and Langford). The Ducklington cabinet went 'live' in May 2018 and is now ready to provide services to residents connected to it. All but one of the remaining cabinets in Phase 1 will be 'live' by the end of June 2018. Gigaclear has recently signed up another main contractor to support the roll out of the project; the new contractor has brought new techniques and plant equipment, which will help ensure the project is delivered by the end of 2019/20.

One of our objectives is to reduce the costs of services and to do this we have been working with Cheltenham Borough, Cotswold District and Forest of Dean District Councils on a project previously known as 2020 Vision. The Vision is for each of the four Councils to retain their independence and identity, but working together and sharing resources to maximise mutual benefit, which will lead to more efficient and effective delivery of local services. This approach is expected to save this Council £1.65m per annum by 2020, but we aim to ensure that the public will see no reduction in the services they receive. During 2017, the four partner Councils created Publica Group Ltd as the vehicle for delivering services on behalf of the Councils. The business plan, which sets out the key actions to deliver the transformation programme, was approved in early 2018 by the partner Councils; and a transformation team has been set up to support the transformation and re-design of our services and how we deliver them to the public over the next year. This work will include the development of digital solutions to provide 24/7 access for customers to many of our transactional services; improved collection and use of data to ensure that customers only need to contact us once to undertake multiple transactions; and designing services which respond directly to user needs.

Corporate Plan top tasks

Every year we set ourselves a number of top tasks, which are the key pieces of work we need to accomplish during the year and beyond in order to achieve our Priorities.

Since the beginning of the Corporate Strategy 2016-19, we have completed a number of tasks.

Priority 1: Protect the environment whilst supporting the local economy

- Implement a new waste and recycling contract from October 2017 and chargeable garden waste by April 2017;
- Successfully take the West Oxfordshire Local Plan 2031 through its second phase of examination hearings;
- Consult on and approve a new Parking Strategy for the District by March 2017.

Priority 2: Working with communities to meet the current and future needs and aspirations of residents

- Work with colleagues across Oxfordshire to present a devolution proposal to government to help provide infrastructure financing (Growth Deal);
- Deliver a total of 131 affordable homes in 2016/2017 and 133 affordable homes in 2017/2018;
- Work with providers to ensure better broadband and mobile phone coverage with broadband network build to commence in 2017/18.

Priority 3: To provide efficient and value for money services, whilst delivering quality front line services

- Continue to improve the use of our assets to obtain further efficiency savings, for instance income from letting office space during 2016/17 and 2017/18;
- Review emergency housing accommodation and consider options for direct provision by March 2018;
- Implement a new contract for the management of the Council's leisure facilities by 1 August 2017;
- Lead the Implementation of Anti- Fraud arrangements with partner Councils and deliver savings as planned;
- Implement a new shared Public Protection service by the end of 2016.



Top tasks for 2018/19

Priority 1: Protect the environment whilst supporting the local economy

- Introduce Electric Vehicle Charging Points for both public and council business use by the end of March 2019;
- Successfully adopt the West Oxfordshire Local Plan by the end of September 2018;
- Adopt and implement the Community Infrastructure Levy jointly with Cotswold District Council by April 2019;
- Undertake a review of the vitality and viability of our market towns in order to feed into future policy development to ensure their sustainability;
- Implement outcomes of the parking strategy;
- Establish community engagement and delivery arrangements for the Oxfordshire Cotswolds Garden Village, including the publication of the submission draft of the Oxfordshire Cotswolds Garden Village Area Action Plan by the end of March 2019.

Priority 2: Working with communities to meet the current and future needs and aspirations of residents

- Work with providers to ensure better broadband and mobile phone coverage;
- Deliver a total of 146 affordable homes in 2018/19;
- Work with colleagues across Oxfordshire to deliver the Housing and Growth Deal; by the end of March 2023;
- Deliver Phase 2 of the Carterton Leisure Centre by the end of December 2019.

Priority 3: To provide efficient and value for money services, whilst delivering quality front line services

- Work with Publica Group Ltd to deliver £1.65m per annum savings by 2020;
- Continue to improve the use of our assets to obtain further efficiency savings, for instance income from letting office space.

Our finances

The Council has prepared a ten-year financial strategy which takes into account likely reductions to its funding from central government and other changes which will have a financial impact upon the Council.

A summary of the 2018/19 Budget is set out below:

	2018/19
Net operating expenditure (including Local Council Tax Support Grant to town and parish councils and investment income)	£10,317,285
Contribution to General Fund Reserve	£199,159
Net expenditure	£10,516,444
Financed by:	
Business rates	£3,804,402
Net government grant	£372,528
New Homes Bonus	£1,599,061
Dividend from Oxfordshire Business Rates Pool	£500,000
Council Tax - Surplus from Collection Fund	£62,640
Council Tax charge for 2018/19	£4,050,857
Total financing	£10,516,444
Council tax (Band D)	£94.38



Measuring our performance

In order to measure our progress, we have compiled a set of indicators and targets to show how well we are succeeding in meeting the Council's Vision and Priorities. These are monitored on a quarterly basis and considered by the Council's Cabinet. The indicators are:

- Crime rate per 1000 population.
- Residual household waste per household (kg)
- Percentage of household waste sent for reuse, recycling and composting
- Number of affordable homes delivered (gross)
- Number of households living in emergency accommodation over 28 days¹
- Number of households living in emergency accommodation under 28 days²
- Unemployment claimant count
- Total number of leisure centre visits per annum (excl schools)
- Promoting tourism: increase in membership of Cotswolds Tourism Partnership³
- Revenue spend as % of budget
- The number of working days / shifts lost to the authority due to sickness absence per employee (full time equivalent)⁴
- Overall cost of council services per head of population (from revenue estimates)
- % of council tax collected

1 Replaces number of households living in emergency accommodation

2 Replaces number of households living in emergency accommodation

3 Replaces tourism - economic impact of tourism activity on the district per annum

4 This measure has been removed from the basket as the majority of council staff transferred to Publica Group Ltd on 1 November 2017

We are happy to provide this information in other formats.
Please contact us if this is required.

West Oxfordshire District Council

Woodgreen

Witney

Oxon OX28 1NB

Tel: 01993 861000

Email: enquiries@westoxon.gov.uk

www.westoxon.gov.uk