

# Chief Executive's Office Business Strategy

Incorporating Registration & Coroner's, Music Service, and Cultural Services

2015/16 – 2017/18

# Introduction

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2015/16 is the second year of the four-year directorate business strategies agreed by Council in February 2014. These build on the previous strategies agreed in 2011.

Sustained reductions in Government funding combined with pressure to restrict Council Tax increases have resulted in a significant squeeze on Council resources over recent years, at a time when demand for services has been increasing. The Corporate Plan for 2014/15 sets out that taken together over the period 2010/11 to 2017/18 the Council plans to save £265m to offset funding reductions and to meet additional expenditure pressures.

In September 2014, Cabinet agreed that given the uncertainties over future levels of government funding due to the forthcoming General Election, the medium term planning period would not be extended beyond 2017/18 with limited adjustments made to the existing Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) to reflect any changes to spending assumptions or new pressures arising in 2014/15.

On-going expenditure pressures that were not anticipated when the 2014/15 to 2017/18 Medium Term Financial Plan was agreed have been highlighted in the Financial Monitoring and Business Strategy Delivery reports to Cabinet throughout 2014/15. Taken together with other future corporate and directorate pressures these total £23m over the period 2015/16 to 2017/18. Additional savings of £27m over that period are planned to manage these pressures. This updated strategy reflects those additional pressures and explains the additional savings that will be required to manage those.

## Chief Executive's Office Directorate Overview

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The focus of the Chief Executive's Office is on working with members to set the direction of the council and support the organisation through a period of significant change. Registration & Coroner's, Music Service and Cultural Services also form part of the Directorate's responsibilities.

# Delivering the Council's corporate priorities

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The Chief Executive's Office provides a number of key support functions to enable directorates to achieve the council's overarching goal of '**A Thriving Oxfordshire**'. This includes:

- working closely with the Leader and Chief Executive on the strategic direction and priorities of the council;
- providing the governance framework for the council and supporting members to make democratic decisions;
- supporting service delivery through provision of HR, legal, finance services and providing policy trouble-shooting capacity and data when required;
- delivering internal audit and setting the risk and performance management framework for the council
- communicating key messages through the local media and within the council;
- working in partnership with local and national stakeholders, and ensuring that we position the county council effectively.

Registration & Coroner's, Music Service, and Cultural Services (including Libraries, Museums and the History service), along with our work with the voluntary and community sector play an important role in the delivering **Thriving People and Communities, and Thriving Economy**:

- Attracting wedding business into Oxfordshire and providing citizenship ceremonies to welcome our new citizens
- Undertaking Coroner's investigation and inquiries into sudden or unexplained death and providing support to families through this difficult time.
- Individuals, their families and communities have the opportunity to enhance the lives, wellbeing and educational attainment of those involved through music education and those who attend performances
- The music service will be a recognised Business Unit which can operate more commercially, building upon the entrepreneurial approach which has become a feature of the service.

- Targeting work to support and increase children's, young people's and families' literacy and learning; connecting people to information, online resources and learning and employment opportunities
- Contributing to cultural tourism, creative educational programmes, music involvement, and connecting communities to their heritage

## Services and Priorities

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The Chief Executive's office consists of four small units, (Corporate Finance, Corporate HR, Law and Governance and Policy) plus Registration & Coroner's, the Music Service and Cultural Services (which includes Library, Museums and History Services).

The **Policy Team**'s current service activity includes:

- Working with the Cabinet and County Council Management Team to articulate the council's strategic direction
- Providing policy and trouble-shooting support to council directorates to support delivery of key priorities and support the service and resource planning process
- Working with external stakeholders to support delivery of the council's priorities
- Cabinet and County Council management team support and forward planning
- Setting the framework for the council's approach to working at a local level in communities
- Leading work with the voluntary and community sectors
- Research and intelligence team, providing key evidence to support service delivery
- Performance management
- Service and resource planning (with finance)

- Supporting scrutiny and cabinet advisory groups
- Chief Executive's personal office, including support to the Chairman of the Council and the Oxfordshire Lieutenancy

**Corporate Finance (including Internal Audit and Insurance)** lead on the council's key financial processes including working with members to set the budget, Medium Term Financial Plan and capital programme. The service provides support, advice and challenge to high risk areas, projects and programmes, together with a lead advisor on financial matters for each directorate. As part of our statutory requirement we are required to have an officer responsible for the arrangements for the proper administration of its financial affairs, this is the Chief Financial Officer. Internal Audit provides a level of assurance by managing the internal governance and reporting, this also includes managing risk.

**Corporate HR** ensures that the council complies with employment legislation and has a skilled, motivated and well informed workforce. Current service activity includes:

The **County HR** team which defines, develops and communicates a comprehensive employment framework for all major aspects of work and employment. Key areas are policy development, professional advice, employee relations and workforce information and analysis together with the provision of business partner support for each directorate.

The **Organisational Development** team drive organisational effectiveness by supporting effective change management ensuring the council has a skilled workforce capable of fulfilling statutory duties. Key areas are strategic leadership, performance management, workforce planning, employee engagement, learning & development and Investors in People

The **Communications** team agree a communication strategy with County Council Management Team and Cabinet who are the decision making body of the council at the start of each year. Key areas are media and public relations, internal communications, marketing, consultation and digital.

**Legal Services** provides comprehensive legal advice, representation and assistance to the council and all directorates. This includes:

- Attendance and representing the council in the Supreme Court, Court of Appeal, High Court and all other lesser courts (including Magistrates and Tribunals)
- Provide legal advice on contracts, developer agreements, highways and property matters, employment related matters, child protection, adult safeguarding, debt recovery, consumer protection and trading standards matters, inquests, and possessions.

The **Governance** team provides support and advice to Councillors and co-opted members; and electoral support for the Returning Officer who has to oversee the electoral process. The team are also responsible for:

- Professional clerking of the Council's main democratic decision-making bodies (Council, Cabinet, Scrutiny and Council Committees), preparation of the formal 'Forward Plan', agendas and minutes; advice to managers on procedure and reports; advice to councillors about Constitutional rules and rights relating to formal decision-making meetings
- Effective and compliant governance arrangements including compliance with all public law requirements and Member/Officer codes of conduct
- Oversight of the Council's constitution policies and procedures
- Managing the proper administration of Schools admissions appeals, exclusions appeals, and transport appeals.
- Providing specialist advice to managers on handling Freedom of Information and Environmental Information Requests; and for reporting to the Monitoring Officer on, compliance with these statutory requirements.
- Leading on Local Government Ombudsman complaints (the 'Link Officer' role) for the Monitoring Officer; and advising managers on the application of the complaints policy, including commenting on the adequacy of all second stage responses; providing management information on the Council's compliance with Ombudsman and other best practice standards.

**The Registration and Coroner's Service** provide a statutory service that serves people at key times of their lives including:

- Full Registration Service for all births, deaths, marriages and civil partnerships within Oxfordshire. This service also:
- Delivers civil partnerships, citizenship ceremonies, Nationality Checking Services, Settlement Checking Service, and additional celebratory services such as naming ceremonies.
- Delivers the national Tell Us Once service to the bereaved
- Investigates deaths that appear violent, unnatural, sudden, of unknown cause, or occurring in legal custody; as well as military repatriations through the Coroner's Service.

**The Music Service** provides music teaching support to schools, as well as instrumental and vocal tuition to children and adults, and opportunities for making music together.

**Cultural Services** provide opportunities for people of all ages to participate in and enjoy cultural activities, to acquire new skills and knowledge and access learning and employment opportunities through:

- **The Library Service** provides access to books, information and knowledge to support the recreational, cultural and educational needs of those who live, work and study in Oxfordshire.
- **The Museum Service** enables the long term care and preservation of the County's archaeology and history material. Through its permanent displays, temporary exhibitions and in partnership with others, it inspires an interest in the history and culture of the County.
- **The History Service** preserves and makes available the historic documents, photographs, and printed resources necessary for the public to understand the history of Oxfordshire and develop a sense of place and identity.

## How our services are changing

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The Chief Executive's Office is changing to reflect the needs of the organisation. We are reducing the number of staff, reducing the internal spend along with reducing the services we provide to the rest of the organisation and reducing some of the grant funding. This means in the future we will be providing a more flexible and responsive service looking at self-service approaches. We will also be reviewing statutory and non-statutory services and the charges we make for these.

## Managing our performance

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A series of performance indicators will be used to assess our performance in delivering the priorities set out in this strategy. Performance Indicators are currently being developed and will be published on the Council's website

The successful delivery of the business strategy will be monitored on a quarterly basis by the Performance Scrutiny Committee and Cabinet. Progress will also be published on the Council's website.



## Chief Executive's Office - Budget Changes

Budget Book Line	Reference	Type of Budget Change	Detail	2015/16 £'000	2016/17 £'000	2017/18 £'000	Total £'000
			<b><u>Chief Executive's Office &amp; Business Support</u></b>				
CEO1	14CEO7a	S	Reduce staffing and office costs from Chief Executive's Office	-100	-100		-200
CEO1	15CEO14	S	Take out military and local grants (Locality Grant to Choose Abingdon and Refugee Resource Grant)	-30	-15		-45
CEO1	16CEO6	NS	Remove Councillor Community Budgets	-315			-315
CEO1	16CORP2	NS	Supplies & Services	-1			-1
<b>CEO1</b>			<b>Total Chief Executive's Office &amp; Business Support</b>	<b>-446</b>	<b>-115</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>-561</b>
			<b><u>Human Resources</u></b>				
CEO2	15CEO3	S	Reduce Human Resources establishment by 2 full time equivalents		-42		-42
CEO2	16CEO5	NS	One-off Learning & Development reduction	-250	250		0
CEO2	16CORP4	NS	Reduce the use of agency & contracted staff and introduce a vacancy factor	-51			-51
CEO2	16CORP2	NS	Supplies & Services	-5			-5
<b>CEO2</b>			<b>Total Human Resources</b>	<b>-306</b>	<b>208</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>-98</b>
			<b><u>Corporate Finance &amp; Internal Audit</u></b>				
CEO3	16CORP4	NS	Reduce the use of Agency & Contracted staff and introduce a vacancy factor	-76			-76
CEO3	16CORP2	NS	Supplies & Services	-7			-7
<b>CEO3</b>			<b>Total Corporate Finance &amp; Internal Audit</b>	<b>-83</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>-83</b>

## Chief Executive's Office - Budget Changes

Budget Book Line	Reference	Type of Budget Change	Detail	2015/16 £'000	2016/17 £'000	2017/18 £'000	Total £'000
			<b><u>Law and Culture</u></b>				
CEO4-1	16CEO4	NS	Legal Services - additional income from external and internal clients	-200			-200
CEO4-2	16CEO1	NP	Members' Allowances	160			160
CEO4-3 and 4-4	16CEO2	NS	Registration and Coroners Service - Increase charges and renegotiation of contract	-32			-32
CEO4-5	15CEO9	S	Withdrawal of grant to the Mill Arts Centre			-80	-80
CEO4-5	15CEO10	S	Increased efficiencies to be achieved by Library Service through further review of management support, book procurement & supplies and services	-63	-187		-250
CEO4-5	16CEO3	NS	Libraries/Cultural Services - Review of management support, supplies and services, including book fund	-95			-95
CEO4-6	15CEF3	S	Make Music Service self financing by increasing income and reducing free tuition.	-70	-70	-182	-322
CEO4	16CORP4	NS	Reduce the use of agency & contracted staff and introduce a vacancy factor	-307			-307
CEO4	16CORP2	NS	Supplies & Services	-5			-5
<b>CEO4</b>			<b>Total Law and Culture</b>	<b>-612</b>	<b>-257</b>	<b>-262</b>	<b>-1,131</b>

## Chief Executive's Office - Budget Changes

Budget Book Line	Reference	Type of Budget Change	Detail	2015/16 £'000	2016/17 £'000	2017/18 £'000	Total £'000
			<b><u>Policy</u></b>				
CEO5	15CEO13b	S	Remove 4fte (vacant posts) and reduce Communications spend	-17	-17	-16	-50
CEO5	16CORP4	NS	Reduce the use of agency & contracted staff and introduce a vacancy factor	-19			-19
CEO5	16CORP2	NS	Supplies & Services	-2			-2
<b>CEO5</b>			<b>Total Policy</b>	<b>-38</b>	<b>-17</b>	<b>-16</b>	<b>-71</b>
			<b>Total Chief Executive's Office</b>	<b>-1,485</b>	<b>-181</b>	<b>-278</b>	<b>-1,944</b>

### Type of Budget Change

O - Previously agreed one-off investment

P - Previously agreed pressure

S - Previously agreed saving

NS - New saving agreed February 2015

NP - New pressure agreed February 2015