

REPORT OF THE PRINCIPAL PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT OFFICER
TO THE EXECUTIVE
6TH FEBRUARY 2009

Corporate Plan 2009-12

1.0 Introduction and Report Summary

- 1.1 The Corporate Plan 2009-12 is a key document which details our Vision, Strategic Objectives and Corporate Priorities for the next three years. It has been developed following widespread consultation with Members, the Senior Management Team and residents. The plan clearly describes our Strategic Objectives and Corporate Priorities. For each of our Corporate Priorities key targets, actions and measures show how they will be achieved. Attached to this report (Appendix A) is a draft of key sections of the plan.
- 1.2 The contact officer for this report is Robert Woodside, Principal Performance Management Officer, telephone (01235 520202 ext 499). Email address: **robert.woodside@whitehorsedc.gov.uk**

2.0 Recommendations

2.1 *that the Council be recommended to:*

- (i) agree the six Strategic Objectives and associated Corporate Priorities, key targets, actions and measures;*
- (ii) delegate authority to the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Leader of the Council, to agree the final version of the plan; and*
- (iii) agree an amendment to the Council's Vision statement, to improve clarity and compactness, by dropping the six aims since these are largely incorporated in the body of the new Corporate Plan*

3.0 Relationship with the Council's Vision, Strategies and Policies

This report relates to the Council's Vision in that it supports all of its objectives and does not conflict with any Council Strategies. It supports all of the strands of the Vale Sustainable Community Strategy.

4.0 Corporate Plan 2009-12

- 4.1 The Corporate Plan is a key document which details our Vision, Strategic Objectives and Corporate Priorities for the next three years. It has been developed following widespread consultation with Members, the Senior Management Team and residents. The plan clearly describes our Strategic Objectives and Corporate Priorities. For each of our Corporate Priorities, key targets actions and measures show how they will be achieved. Performance against these detailed measures, including National Indicators

and Local Performance Targets, will be reported quarterly to the Executive and Scrutiny Committee.

- 4.2 The plan will use common vocabulary and terminology with South Oxfordshire District Council. This will make it easier for the shared Senior Management Team and shared services to operate across both councils.
- 4.3 In December 2008, Mori ran 3 extended discussion groups of residents looking at the proposed Strategic Objectives and Corporate Priorities of the Council. The groups were held in Abingdon, Wantage and Faringdon and gave a wide range of feedback, including residents views of the Council. Overall, there was positive support for the objectives and priorities included in the attached draft of the Corporate Plan. One of the key messages was that the Council needs to improve communication with our residents about the services that we provide and our achievements. This is now a Corporate Priority within the 'Managing our Business' Strategic Objective. The comments and views raised at these discussion groups will be used to help develop and improve the services delivered by the Council.
- 4.4 It is proposed that the Council's Vision statement is streamlined. The primary heading will be retained "Our Vision is to build and safeguard a fair, open and compassionate Community", but in the interests of clarity and compactness, the 6 detailed aims are to be dropped as they are largely incorporated in the new Corporate Plan.
- 4.5 The final version of the plan will be published in late March / early April. This will essentially be a web based document, however a limited number of hard copies will be produced.

ROBERT WOODSIDE
Principal Performance Management Officer

Background Papers: None

Value for the Vale

Providing high quality value for money services for our residents

Corporate Plan 2009-12

Foreword

by the leader and chief executive

We are pleased to present our Corporate Plan for 2009-12, which sets out our objectives and priorities for the next three years, and outlines how we intend to achieve them. It is an ambitious programme of work, but one we are sure our dedicated staff and councillors will work hard to deliver.

One of the key challenges we face is the current economic climate and addressing the many ways it will impact on residents. The plan strives to ensure that the Vale remains a sustainable and vibrant place to live and work during this period, by supporting people and the local economy where possible, and ensuring that we are ready to take advantage of the upturn when it occurs.

For the coming year we want to start tackling head-on some of the issues that people in the Vale feel are important, such as market town vitality and the problems of flooding and other issues associated with climate change. We want to make sure that there are more affordable homes, and that our towns and villages are cleaner, greener and safer communities.

One of the key challenges we face is delivering high quality and good value services with increasingly limited resources. We will continue to search for new ways of getting the best value for our council tax payers.

We are lucky that we live in a beautiful area with vibrant towns and villages and an economy that is relatively resilient in the face of economic stress. We want to continue to do what we can to improve the quality of life for everyone living and working in the Vale.



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If you want to make any comments on this Corporate Plan please feel free to email



either of us.

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Introduction

This Corporate Plan relates to the period 2009-12 and covers the current administration up to the next elections in May 2011. Following the next election, a new four year Corporate Plan will be developed.

This plan forms the link between the vision and the services that the council tax payers of the district tell us they want. It is expressed as six strategic objectives, each associated with a set of corporate priorities. We use these to help us decide how resources should be deployed, as a basis for our Community Strategy, and to determine how we work within the Local Area Partnership to achieve broader goals that benefit the residents of the Vale.

“Our Vision is to build and safeguard a fair, open and compassionate community”

The objectives and priorities described in this plan have been recently validated in user forums across the district. Feedback from these meetings has been incorporated into the plan. There will be regular opportunities for the residents and local groups of the Vale to express their views and the council will continue to respond to their needs and wishes on the performance and focus of their council. We hope you find the plan informative and we welcome any views on its content or structure.

Working in Partnership

We are responsible for delivering a wide range of services to our residents, people who work within our district and visitors. Some of these services we provide directly, but many are delivered in partnership with other organisations. These include public bodies such as the police, with private sector companies for services like waste collection and with the voluntary sector who are often used for the provision of specialist services.

Vale Sustainable Community Strategy and Local Development Framework

The council approved a Sustainable Community Strategy in November 2008 called 'Working together for a better Vale'. It was prepared by the Vale Partnership, which brings together representatives from the public, private and voluntary sectors in the Vale. This long term plan will address current issues, but will also look to improve the quality of life in the Vale in the years ahead.

Underpinning the actions in the strategy is the need for sustainability. This is generally defined as meeting the needs of the present generation without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. The partnership's vision for the future is for a sustainable Vale:

- With prosperous, inclusive and thriving communities that have good access to a range of housing, jobs and services.
- Where everyone can feel safe and enjoy life.
- Where our needs can be met without compromising the natural and built heritage or the ability of future generations to meet their needs.

The strategy is a commitment by the council and its partners to work together with available resources to provide services that will help to improve quality of life and maintain communities where people want to live and work, now and in the future. Some of the issues will be tackled through policies and proposals in the Local Development Framework (LDF). This is an important plan which will help shape the future of the Vale up to 2026. It contains a Core Strategy which sets out a long term vision and key objectives for the district up to 2026. Major new sites for housing, employment and retail development will be identified in the plan, as will the infrastructure needed to support them.

The Oxfordshire Local Area Agreement 2008-11

This is a three year agreement between the government and a wide range of key partners across Oxfordshire. The aim is to develop partnership working which will lead to improvements in service delivery. The agreement is being managed by the Oxfordshire Partnership which is the county wide local strategic partnership. The key priorities of the agreement are, in part, measured by performance against 35 National Indicators. Targets have been agreed with the government and if these are met the partnership will share reward grant at the end of the three year period. There are direct links with many of the national Indicators included in the agreement and our corporate priorities. Full details can be found later in this plan.

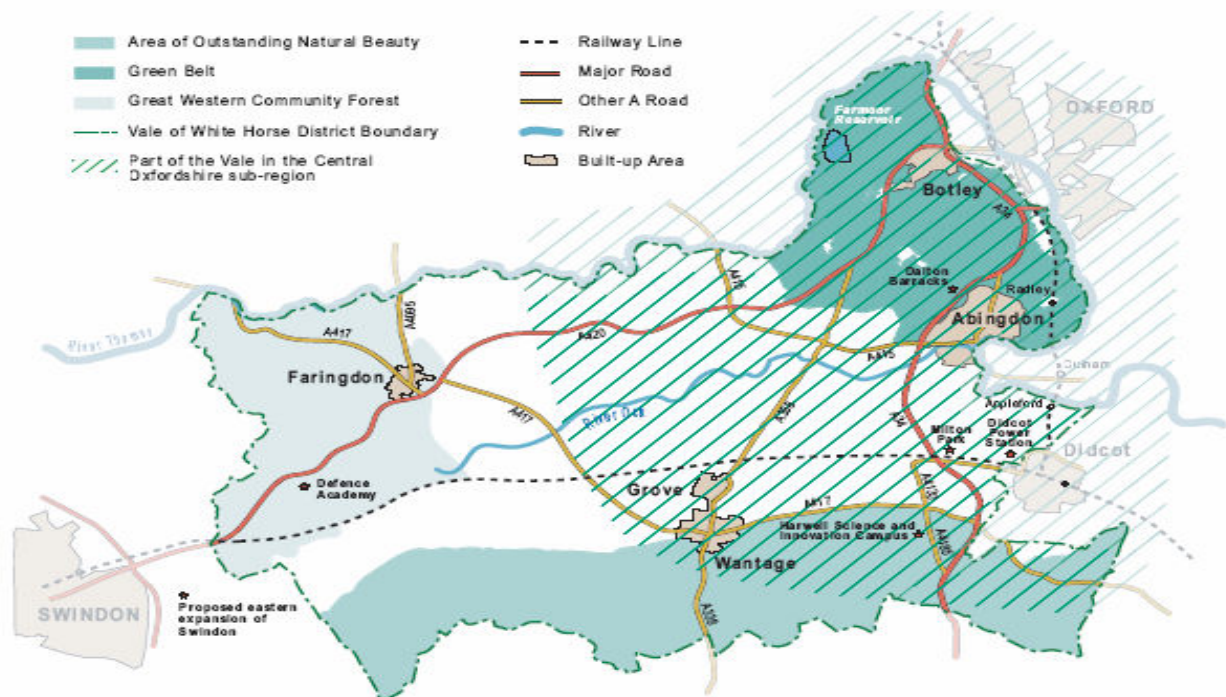
Working with South Oxfordshire District Council

The two councils have a long history of joint working together, and more recently, shared services. For example, a shared finance service has been in place since 2006. This includes a joint revenues and benefits contract with Capita and internally provided accountancy, finance client side, benefit fraud and audit services. We will be extending joint working further with the introduction of a joint waste collection and street cleaning service in 2010.

Both councils have agreed to create a shared management team. Substantial savings will arise from having a reduced number of senior managers. These savings will help both councils address budget challenges for later years identified in their respective medium term financial plans. Councils are under increasing financial pressure through reducing government grants, limits on council tax increases and increasing expectations from customers. These pressures are heightened by the Government's expectation of further efficiency savings from every council. Both councils face challenges to set balanced budgets for 2009/10 and later years whilst seeking to improve frontline services in our priority areas.

The creation of a shared management team will lead to annual joint savings of around £750,000. In addition, there are a number of non-financial benefits which are equally important. Best practise will be encouraged across both councils. Having a common senior management structure will make it easier to achieve joint delivery of services in areas where the two councils positively decide that they wish to do this where a single service delivery arrangement could deliver financial and operational benefits. Finally there is a potential set of benefits around the profile that will result from shared working. The new management team is responsible for delivering services to a population of nearly 250,000, larger than any single district council in the country.

The Vale of White Horse in context



The Vale of White Horse is located in the upper Thames Valley and is one of five districts within Oxfordshire. The council takes its name from the famous 3,000 year old monument carved on the crest of White Horse Hill, Uffington. It is the oldest of all the white horses in England. The Vale is bounded to the north and east by the River Thames and to the south by the Berkshire Downs. The district covers some 224 square miles (580 square kilometres) of country that is attractive and mainly rural in character.

The flood plains of the Thames and its tributaries cover extensive areas of the district. With some 4,500 homes that could be affected by flooding, this is a serious issue in the Vale. Flooding could become more frequent and cover larger areas as a result of climate change.

The Vale's Population

The population of the Vale was estimated as 117,000 in 2007. About half the population lives in the three historic market towns of Abingdon, Faringdon, and Wantage, plus North Hinksey (Botley) and the expanded village of Grove. The remainder is distributed in more than 60 villages and hamlets throughout the Vale. In common with much of the country the Vale has an ageing population with a little over 16% of its population over 65 years old.

The population of the Vale is projected to reach 139,000 by 2026. The proportion of the population that is over 65 will rise by 47% whereas the proportion of those 14 and under will rise by only 11.3%. In common with national trends, the Vale will see an increasingly ageing population, with growing numbers of smaller and single person households.

The Vale has a relatively small black and minority ethnic population, compared to the national average. The 2001 Census shows that 6.7% of the district population (7,765 people) describe themselves as members within ethnic groups other than white British. Of these, those most represented in the district include Irish (1,176), people from other white ethnic groups (3,821), Chinese (499) and Indian (415). The percentage of people who describe themselves as other

than white British people within the district is lower than the Oxfordshire average (10.1%) and about 2% lower than the South East as a whole (8.7%). In terms of disability, just over 13% of our residents have a limiting long-term illness / disability.

Housing

There has continued to be a sustained increase in the number of households. This reflects the national trend towards smaller and more rapidly forming households. The Vale has over 48,600 households of which nearly a quarter consist of a single person. Average private household size is expected to fall from 2.4 in 2006 to 2.29 in 2026, meaning that in 2026 there will be just over 59,000 private households, which is a rise of 24% over the 2006 figure. The level of owner occupation is 76.2% (March 2004) which is above the national average of 74.4%.

Compared with the national average the housing stock is relatively modern and in generally good condition. Between 1996 and 2007 nearly 4,000 homes were built in the Vale, of which almost 1,200 were affordable. Nevertheless, with house prices nearly nine times higher than average incomes, many local people continue to find it difficult to buy their own home or rent from a private landlord. The problem is particularly acute in the smaller communities where house prices are very high and few properties are available to rent from housing associations.

Employment and the Economy

The Vale's economy has remained strong throughout the 1990s and early years of the new century, and opportunities for employment have been good. There is an above average proportion of people who are economically active (86.6%) with above average earnings. Unemployment levels remain comparatively low. However, as with all areas in the country there are uncertainties about the economic future of the district as a result of the current credit crisis and economic down turn.

Science Vale UK in south central Oxfordshire is an area of economic growth that comprises:

- The Harwell Science and Innovation Campus. This includes the Diamond Synchrotron and the ISIS neutron source. Over 4,500 people work for around 100 companies at the site.
- Milton Park, which is one of Europe's largest multi-use business parks. It has over 160 companies employing around 6,500 people
- The towns of Wantage and Didcot
- The expanded village of Grove

The Science Vale UK Partnership has come together to ensure that the development momentum continues and that the area establishes itself as a world leading site for scientific, research and development and high technology businesses.

The Vale also has two key military related sites providing a range of jobs. These are the Defence Academy at Watchfield and Dalton Barracks on the edge of Abingdon. There are numerous rural business sites outside the main settlements and the rural economy is also supported by business activities which are directly related to the countryside, such as farming, forestry and equestrian activities. The Vale, in partnership with South Oxfordshire District Council, has secured joint grant funding in 2008 of £1.8 million to help revitalise and support rural businesses.

Strategic Objectives and Corporate Priorities

Strategic Objective: Meeting people's need for housing

Corporate Priorities

1. Enable affordable homes to be built in the district each year in line with the Vale's ambitious targets
2. Help people in housing need to resolve their housing problems

Strategic Objective: Supporting a vibrant local economy

Corporate Priorities

1. Work in partnership to sustain vibrant market towns
2. Support rural business and communities
3. Promote 'Science Vale UK' as a world leading area for science and technology

Strategic Objective: Managing our business effectively

Corporate Priorities

1. Provide value for money services that meet the needs of our residents and service users
2. Optimise access to our services
3. Improve communication about the council's activities and achievements

Strategic Objective: Rising to the challenge of climate change

Corporate Priorities

1. Minimise our impact on the causes of climate change
2. Respond to the effects of climate change, particularly flooding
3. Minimise the waste we produce and maximise recycling

Strategic Objective: Helping to maintain a safe Vale

Corporate Priorities

1. Help to maintain, or further reduce, low levels of crime and anti-social behaviour
2. Reduce the fear of crime and anti social behaviour

Strategic Objective: Keeping the Vale a clean place to live

Corporate Priorities

1. Deal effectively with litter and detritus
2. Tackle 'envirocrime', such as fly tipping, dog fouling and graffiti

Meeting people's need for housing

Enable affordable homes to be built in the district each year in line with the Vale's ambitious targets

Help people in housing need to resolve their housing problems

There are over 48,000 homes in the Vale and our housing stock is relatively modern and generally in good condition. Between 1996 and 2007, almost 4,000 homes were built, of which almost 1,200 were affordable. Affordable housing includes both low cost market housing and subsidised housing that is available to people who cannot afford to occupy houses generally available on the local market.

However, with house prices nearly nine times higher than average incomes, many local people continue to find it difficult to buy their own home or rent from a private landlord. The problem is particularly acute in the smaller communities where house prices are very high and few properties are available to rent from housing associations. The high cost of houses in the area and the fact that relatively few new houses are being built in rural locations mean that local villagers have limited access to suitable housing. A key challenge for the future will be to secure the provision of affordable housing to meet needs in the Vale's rural communities.

The council will facilitate the provision of affordable housing for people who live and work in the Vale. This will be done through the policies in the current Local Plan and in the new Local Development Framework, which will be agreed during 2009. The framework will include a target that 40% of all new housing will be affordable.

The council is committed to preventing homelessness in the district. Homeless acceptances have been reduced significantly over the last five years and, on average, over 200 households a year are prevented from becoming homeless. Our approach is prevention through early intervention using appropriate advice and a range of initiatives. We also intend to keep the number of households who are accommodated in nightly charge properties, for example in bed and breakfast, to a minimum.

The council was the first in Oxfordshire to set up a choice based lettings scheme for people on the housing waiting list. We are now working with other authorities to further increase housing mobility by setting up a scheme that enables Vale residents to apply for housing throughout Oxfordshire.

Supporting a vibrant local economy

Work in partnership to sustain vibrant market towns

Support rural business and communities

Promote 'Science Vale UK' as a world leading area for science and technology

As is seen from the context statement at the start of this plan, the Vale's mix of historic rural communities, growing urban areas, and thriving high technology centres provides a unique and buoyant mix of employment and location. We have one of the lowest unemployment rates nationally and are recognised as an attractive and safe area to live.

That said, the market towns in the district are all faced with significant competitive challenges from larger shopping complexes in nearby cities and conurbations, made worse by the increasing preparedness on the part of consumers to travel significant distances to shop. The council is determined to work with local communities to develop a strategy to support Abingdon, Wantage and Faringdon town centres in order to maintain and improve business and user confidence.

Outside the towns, rural communities in the Vale have their own challenges and this is recognised as a common issue for similar areas. The European Union has allocated £1.8 million under its rural development fund to southern Oxfordshire, including the Vale. The council will work, in partnership with South Oxfordshire District Council and others, to ensure that the funding that has been allocated is spent to the maximum benefit of rural residents. The funding will provide support to a wide range of projects and training for farmers, growers, food businesses and for improving tourism in rural areas.

The Science Vale UK project present a significant opportunity to make our area an international focus for inward investment, research and development. In 2006 the Government decided that the Harwell site should become the Harwell Science and Innovation Campus which forms a key component of the Science Vale project. The Government's aim is to develop the campus to ensure that the facilities located there are internationally competitive, support world-class science, and maximise opportunities for knowledge transfer.

Milton Park, one of the largest business parks in Europe, is also part of the project. It is a location for a cluster of knowledge based businesses employing more than 6,500 people. These two locations, together with areas earmarked for residential accommodation in Wantage and neighbouring Didcot, form the heart of the project. The council has decided that it will support the partnership developing Science Vale UK and work to increase its profile as a first choice location for business and research. We will work with our partners in the project to promote further investment.

Managing our business effectively

Provide value for money services that meet the needs of our residents and service users

Optimise access to our services

Improve communication about the council's activities and achievements

Local councils are not immune from broader economic realities. Like many households, the council is experiencing reducing income in real terms, and rising costs. However we continue to provide good quality services for one of the lowest council tax rates in the England. Against this background, we have a responsibility to ensure services are delivered effectively and efficiently, representing good value for money to the district's council tax payers. As part of this, we aim to have a sustainable financial base, captured in a five year medium term financial plan.

We work to ensure that taxes and charges are collected properly, and in a timely and equitable manner. We also continually review how our services are delivered and work to make them more efficient while maintaining and improving quality. In order to protect the local economy, we also pay our bills as soon as is practically possible. It is important residents know that we are being careful with their money.

We achieve this in a number of ways. Firstly, services are benchmarked for cost and quality against other similar authorities. This enables us to identify underperformance and to benefit from a best of breed approach to service delivery.

Secondly, we have put in place a rolling review of the business processes that support the services we deliver in order to weed out inefficiencies and redundant work. We challenge the managers of those services to reduce costs by innovation and deployment of technology, while sustaining high levels of service and set them annual targets for cost reduction.

Thirdly, we compare internal service delivery costs of service against independent external providers, outsourcing services where this makes financial sense for council tax payers.

Lastly, we look to collaborate where we can in order to take advantage of economies of scale. A clear example of this is a recent decision to form a joint senior management team with South Oxfordshire District Council. This initiative has already reduced management overheads as a percentage of total costs, and we remain confident that further significant savings will be realisable over the period of this plan as services are reviewed and combined where that makes sense. In addition, it has allowed both councils to jointly tender for waste services resulting in significant improvements in service at reduced costs. These benefits will be realised from 2009 onwards.

The council holds a number of assets, not least various civic properties based in the major towns across the district. These represent a significant cost and discussions have begun to see if a better way of managing the properties can be found. We are determined to significantly reduce the costs of sustaining them over the next few years.

The Vale is a diverse and disparate area and we work to ensure there is even handed access to services for council tax payers across the district. As part of this we are working to

increase the functionality of our website to allow residents to contact us, request and pay for services at times that suit them. That said, we recognise that care needs to be taken not to exclude residents that do not have access to this type of technology. We will review our Customer Contact Strategy during 2010 in order to ensure that a fair balance is struck between benefiting from the savings that increased use of technology offers and the quality, range and manner in which we deliver services.

The council has various statutory requirements placed upon it. Among these is a requirement to treat all employees and customers equally and fairly. We take this requirement seriously and will work to deliver an equality and diversity scheme action plan, including equality impact assessments that achieve this goal.

It is important that the council communicates effectively with residents, both in terms of consulting people about their priorities and needs, and in communicating progress that is being made. In this context, we intend to increase opportunities for local residents to comment on the council.

Rising to the challenge of climate change

Minimise our impact on the causes of climate change

Respond to the effects of climate change, particularly flooding

Minimise the waste we produce and maximise recycling

Climate change is one of the most important challenges facing society. Knowing what we do now about our effect on the climate, it is no longer possible to just hope that everything will be all right. The effects of climate change are already being felt and we have put tackling global warming at the heart of our agenda over the next four years.

The council agreed a Climate Change Strategy in October 2008. This provides the framework for the council to set about reducing the carbon footprint of its own activities and of the local community. We are working in partnership with the Carbon Trust, South Oxfordshire District Council and Aylesbury Vale Borough Council and have developed an ambitious Carbon Management Plan. The council established its carbon footprint in 2007 and we will deliver a 20% reduction in CO₂ by 2012. In delivering the Carbon Management Plan, the council will also make financial savings on its energy costs.

We also recognise that we need to respond to the effects of climate change. The devastating floods of July 2007 and 2008 are obvious examples. The council is working with local communities to ensure that they are well prepared for any future floods by providing technical advice and guidance. Already, many local community flood groups have been formed and some have been helped with grant funding.

The council has signed a new joint waste management contract with South Oxfordshire District Council and Verdant Group Plc which will be delivered from October 2010. Under the new contract the recycling rate will improve substantially. In 2008/9 a recycling rate of 37% was achieved and by 2011/12 this will rise to 46%. There will be many other benefits coming from the new contract including the weekly collection of food waste and a fortnightly collection of a wider range of recyclable materials. A modern fuel efficient fleet of vehicles will be used. The engines will be converted by a local company, Regenattec of Milton Park, to run on pure plant oil which is a sustainable biofuel. This will lead to a reduction in CO₂ of over 70%. Collection rounds will be devised to minimise the amount of fuel used and will cross the boundary between the two councils where appropriate. All of these developments will significantly reduce the amount of CO₂ produced by the council.

Helping to maintain a safe Vale

Help to maintain, or further reduce, low levels of crime and anti-social behaviour

Reduce the fear of crime and anti social behaviour

The Vale is a safe place in which to live, work and visit and overall crime levels are very low. We work with a wide range of organisations through the Vale Community Safety Partnership so that we all contribute in a co-ordinated way. Our aim is to build on the reductions in crime that have been achieved over recent years and to support a community in which people feel safe, regardless of age gender or ethnic background.

We want to reduce the fear of crime by making sure that local people are aware that the Vale has very low levels of crime. We will do this in a number of ways. For example, we will continue to develop and improve the Vale 'Nightsafe' scheme which involves working with licensees and others to reduce town centre violence. The work of neighbourhood action groups will also be important in reducing the fear of crime. A quarterly community safety newsletter will help to spread the message, as will running a number of specific crime reduction campaigns.

One of the things we will do over the next four years is to reduce irresponsible drinking and behaviour by helping to develop and implement a range of existing and new initiatives. Test purchasing exercises use 14 or 15 year olds, supported by local authority officers and the police, to see if licensed premises will sell alcohol to underage customers. If premises fail the test, fixed penalty notice fines are served on staff. For repeat offences licences to sell alcohol can be revoked. The young people's targeted alcohol project is being piloted in Wantage and it targets under 16s who are repeatedly caught drinking alcohol in public. They and their parents then have to attend an awareness raising workshop which highlights the health risks and potential safety consequences of drinking.

CCTV has a part to play in local crime reduction. We are committed to support and develop the use of CCTV in the Vale. Where the need for new cameras is identified we will develop a business case to gain funding for future developments.

Keeping the Vale a clean place to live

Deal effectively with litter and detritus*

Tackle 'envirocrime', such as fly tipping, dog fouling and graffiti

The Vale is set in an area of outstanding countryside and tourism makes a significant contribution towards the local economy. With this in mind, the cleanliness of the district plays an important part in maintaining the visual and economic well being of the area.

Our external contractor is responsible for collecting litter and detritus along roads and in public areas, the removal of fly-tipping and emptying litter bins. Over the last couple of years levels of cleanliness, as measured by national indicators, has improved significantly. It remains a priority for further improvements to be made. The Oxfordshire Local Area Agreement includes a national indicator which measures street and environmental cleanliness and there is a challenging target for improvement over the period 2008-12.

We have taken a strong stance against envirocrimes. These include offences such as fly-tipping, dropping litter and dog fouling. Vale Voice, our citizens' panel, has told us that there is widespread concern about environmental crimes generally. The two of greatest concern are litter and dog fouling. Our two environment wardens deliver a service striking an effective balance between education and awareness raising and enforcement. This is through the issue of fixed penalty notice fines or prosecution through the courts. One recent initiative has been the successful pilot in Grove of a 'dog fouling action area'. This gained widespread positive publicity in the local media and resulted in the issue of a fixed penalty notice. This scheme will now be rolled out to other towns and villages.

Our environment wardens work to raise awareness of how local people can improve environmental quality through community schemes such as local voluntary litter-picks in villages and towns. Our contractors help with this work, providing a wide range of equipment and then removing the waste at the end of the day.

* Detritus includes dust, mud, soil, grit; rotted leaf, grass cuttings and other bits of vegetation; and fragments of glass and plastics.

Our Spending Plans

Revenue Budget 2009/10

Every year balancing the budget is a challenge due to rising costs, decreasing Government grant and new requirements, for instance the free bus pass scheme for the over 60s and disabled people. This year the challenges are even greater because of the economic downturn. This means that income from investments, which usually pays for some of our services, is reducing as is income from things like planning application fees and car parking. We need about £16 million a year to run the council. About £7 million comes from the Government; the remaining amount comes from council tax, income from investments and fees and charges.

We are increasing council tax by 4.8%. Although this is an above inflation increase, we think it is necessary to avoid significant service reductions or higher fees and charges. Even with this increase, we will still be one of the lowest charging district councils in the country. It amounts to around 10p per week.

The following highlights some of the main elements in the budget.

Budget increases

Increasing costs, increasing service demands and income reduction add up to £1.1 million next year. The main reasons for this include:

- The free bus pass scheme for the over 60s and disabled people. This will cost £300,000 more than originally predicted.
- A drop in income of almost £200,000 from our land charges service, which people use when they are buying or selling houses.
- A drop of £150,000 in planning application fees as fewer developers and households apply.
- A drop of almost £100,000 in parking income with permits and pay and display parking.

Increased investment in our community

There are areas where the council wants to invest to improve the community and the services we offer. These include:

- Funding the Abingdon Partnership to improve the town centre
- Increasing disabled facilities grants to help people stay in their own home
- Increasing our support fund for organisations that apply for National Lottery and other organisations that need matched funding
- Supporting Abingdon Town Council's bid to improve the County Hall and museum
- Funding schemes to reduce the council's carbon footprint as part of our commitment to rising to the challenge of climate change

Cost reduction ideas

As with domestic budgets, we asked our officers to identify ways of saving money or increasing income. These have led to a reduction in costs of around a million pounds per year on-going. Some of the more significant items are detailed below.

- Creating a shared waste team to monitor the new waste and street cleaning contract with South Oxfordshire District Council
- Carefully reviewing whether we should fill jobs when they become vacant
- Reducing the size of internal corporate administration teams
- Transferring our out of hours service to Oxford City Council's call centre

How will we implement this plan and monitor progress?

Our Corporate Plan sets out the council's priorities and drives how resources are allocated over the lifetime of the plan. Each strategic objective is associated with a number of corporate priorities. The strategic objectives have not been ranked in any particular order to show relative importance. In order to ensure these priorities are achieved, and to allow councillors and officers to monitor progress, actions are identified, targets are set and performance is measured against these targets and then reported on. The next section describes the actions and targets associated with each corporate priority; Appendix 1 includes more details about the actual measurements and – where appropriate – when we expect them to be achieved.

There are two types of measures:

- National Indicators (NIs). These are part of a set of central government's national indicators that apply to all councils. The indicators which are included in the Oxfordshire Local Area Agreement 2008-11 have (LAA) included at the end of the indicator description.
- LPTs are local performance targets. These are described and measured locally where the officers and councillors feel there are important priorities to measure that are not covered by a national indicator.

Each of these indicators and actions are written into annual service plans that are agreed with senior officers and councillors within the council. All plans are monitored and progress is recorded in quarterly reports made to our Executive and Scrutiny Committee. These reports can be seen on our website.

Strategic Objective : Meeting people's need for housing	
Targets actions and measures	
Key targets and actions	Measures
Corporate Priority 1. Enable affordable homes to be built in the district each year in line with the Vale's ambitious targets	
Facilitate the provision of affordable housing for people who live and work in the Vale through the current Local Plan and the Local Development Framework once it has been agreed	NI 154 Net additional homes provided (LAA)
Ensure the development of new and other suitable types of affordable houses	NI 155 Number of affordable homes delivered (LAA)
Provide the right balance of rented, shared ownership and other types of intermediate housing. Use regular housing needs surveys to give an accurate picture of the district's housing requirements	LPT - Develop five rural affordable housing exception sites by the end of 2011
Provide new affordable housing in rural communities	
Corporate Priority 2. Help people in housing need to resolve their housing problems	
Provide high quality advice and support to help prevent households becoming homeless	NI 156 Number of households living in temporary accommodation (LAA)
Provide high quality temporary accommodation suitable for the needs of homeless people	NI 181 Time taken to process housing benefit/council tax benefit new claims and change events
Promote housing mobility by setting up a scheme that enables Vale residents to apply for housing throughout Oxfordshire	LPT – The number of households who are placed in temporary accommodation because they are homeless
Keep the number of households who are accommodated in nightly charge properties to a minimum	LPT – A reduction in the number of homelessness acceptances
	LPT - The average number of days that households are accommodated in nightly charge properties during the year
	Implement the sub regional Choice Based Letting Scheme by 31.5.09
	Eliminate the use of out of district bed and breakfast placements for young people by 31.12.2009
Strategic Objective : Supporting a vibrant local economy	
Targets actions and measures	

Key targets and actions	Measures
Corporate Priority 1. Work in partnership to sustain vibrant market towns	
<p>Prepare a market towns strategy for the Vale and action plans for Abingdon, Faringdon and Wantage, in collaboration with stakeholders, by the end of March 2010</p> <p>Support the creation of an Abingdon Town Partnership and part fund a partnership officer to manage an action plan</p>	<p>LPT 1 – Actions in the market towns that maintain or improve business confidence (measured by survey)</p> <p>LPT 2 – Vacant retail units - set a target for the % change year to year from a baseline date</p>
Corporate Priority 2. Support rural business and communities	
<p>Ensure that rural communities benefit from the EU rural development funding that has been allocated to southern Oxfordshire, including the Vale</p>	<p>LPT – The amount of funding allocated to projects within the Vale</p> <p>LPT – The number of jobs created / safeguarded as a result of projects delivered</p>
Corporate Priority 3. Promote ‘Science Vale UK’ as a world leading area for science and technology	
<p>Increase the profile of the area so that it is seen as a first choice location for high value added businesses and research and an attractive place to live</p> <p>Project manage the partnership developing Science Vale UK as a global hotspot for enterprise</p> <p>Promote additional investment in physical and social infrastructure for the benefit of residents and businesses</p>	<p>Co-ordinate the implementation of the agreed business plan 2008/11 which will include the following measures:</p> <p>LPT 1 – At least one new large science related enterprise employing more than 50 people locates in the area during the next four years</p> <p>LPT 2 – There is an overall growth in employment of at least 250 new jobs in the next four years</p> <p>LPT 3 – Level of business confidence (measured by survey). Over a four year period business confidence is maintained or improved.</p>

Strategic Objective : Managing our business effectively	
Targets actions and measures	
Key targets and actions	Measures
Corporate Priority 1. Provide value for money services that meet the needs of our residents and service users	
<p>Maintain the Vale's reputation for high quality services and low council tax</p> <p>Ensure delivery of the highest quality services and demonstrate VFM in all of our key services</p> <p>Agree and deliver a Business Process Improvement Programme</p> <p>Identify further joint working opportunities, principally with SODC, and deliver cashable efficiency savings</p> <p>Undertake reviews and bring forward proposals, in time for implementation in the 2010/11 budget, for a significant reduction in the costs of</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Tilsley Park ➤ Abingdon Guildhall ➤ Wantage Civic Hall ➤ Faringdon Corn Exchange 	<p>NI 179 Value for money – total net value of ongoing cash-releasing value for money gains (LAA)</p> <p>LPT – percentage of residents satisfied with the overall quality of council services</p> <p>LPT – Average sickness absence per employee per annum</p> <p>LPT – average time to pay an invoice</p>
Corporate Priority 2. Optimise access to our services	
<p>Agree a new / updated Customer Contact Strategy, which promotes moving customers to the web wherever possible, in time for implementation in the 2010/11 budget</p> <p>Deliver the Equality and Diversity Scheme Action Plan, including equality impact assessments</p>	<p>NI 140 Fair treatment by local services (LAA) (Place Survey)</p> <p>LPT – the % of payments made on line or electronically</p>
Corporate Priority 3. Improve communication about the council's activities and achievements	
<p>Use Vale Voice, our residents panel, to measure progress with our strategic objectives and priorities.</p> <p>Improve communication with our residents and customers so that the council can demonstrate that it provides high quality VFM services.</p> <p>Communicate effectively with staff to ensure that they are engaged with and motivated by the council's activities</p>	<p>NI 5 - Overall/general satisfaction with local area (LAA) (Place Survey)</p> <p>NI 4 - % of people who feel they can influence decisions in their locality (Place Survey)</p> <p>LPT – Times best council staff survey</p>

Strategic Objective : Rising to the challenge of climate change	
Targets actions and measures	
Key targets and actions	Measures
Corporate Priority 1. Minimise our impact on the causes of climate change	
<p>To reduce the carbon footprint arising directly or indirectly from the council's operations</p> <p>Implementing the Carbon Management Plan and achieving:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A reduction in carbon emissions of 20% by March 2012 (<i>baseline 2007</i>) 2. A 10% reduction in business mileage (council staff) by March 2010 <p>Investigate the purchase of renewable energy for Vale buildings in time for implementation in the 2010/11 budget</p> <p>Investigate the use of grey water schemes for Vale parks and gardens in time for implementation in the 2010/11 budget</p>	<p>NI 185 CO2 reduction from local authority operations (LAA)</p> <p>NI 186 Per Capita reduction in CO2 emissions in the LA area</p>
Corporate Priority 2. Respond to the effects of climate change, particularly flooding	
<p>Produce a Climate Change Adaptation Plan by 31.12.09 using the outcomes of the 'Profile of Climate Impacts' assessment</p> <p>Facilitate the creation of a Vale Flood Alliance of Local Community Flood Groups (as a self governing body)</p> <p>Deliver an agreed number of projects on 'ordinary water courses' (streams, brooks, ditches) which will reduce the impact of flooding</p>	<p>NI 188 Adapting to climate change (4 levels of performance)</p> <p>NI 37 Awareness of civil protection arrangements in the local area (<i>includes flooding</i>) (Place Survey)</p> <p>LPT – 100% take up of grants for capital schemes (flooding)</p>
Corporate Priority 3. Minimise the waste we produce and maximise recycling	
<p>Increase the percentage of household waste sent for recycling and composting</p> <p>Reduce the amount of waste produced per household</p>	<p>NI 192 Percentage of Household waste sent for reuse, recycling and composting (LAA)</p> <p>NI 191 Residual household waste per household (LAA)</p> <p>LPT – Consider including one measuring total waste arisings (this then gives the overall waste / recycling picture)</p>

Strategic Objective : Helping to maintain a safe Vale	
Targets actions and measures	
Key targets and actions	Measures
Corporate Priority 1. Help to maintain, or further reduce, low levels of crime and anti-social behaviour	
<p>Develop and support a range of initiatives to reduce irresponsible drinking and behaviour</p> <p>Continue to develop and support the Vale 'Nightsafe 'scheme, working with licensees to reduce town centre violence</p> <p>Develop the young peoples targeted alcohol project to reduce alcohol abuse</p>	<p>NI 20 Assault with less serious injury rate (LAA)</p> <p>NI 15 Serious violent crime rate</p> <p>NI 16 Serious acquisitive crime rate</p> <p>NI 32 Repeat incidents of domestic violence (LAA)</p> <p>NI 30 Re-offending rate of prolific and priority offenders</p> <p>LPT - Alcohol test purchasing exercises – deliver an agreed number</p>
Corporate Priority 2. Reduce the fear of crime and anti social behaviour	
<p>Reduce the fear of crime by making sure that local people are aware that the Vale is a safe place to live</p> <p>Improve the partnership approach to crime reduction by further developing neighbourhood action groups</p>	<p>NI 21 Dealing with local concerns about anti-social behaviour and crime by the local council and police (LAA) (Place Survey)</p> <p>NI 17 Perceptions of anti-social behaviour (Place Survey)</p>

Strategic Objective : Keeping the Vale a clean place to live	
Targets actions and measures	
Key targets and actions	Measures
Corporate Priority 1. Deal effectively with litter and detritus	
<p>Ensure that the Vale retains a clean environment</p> <p>Improve community satisfaction with the cleanliness of the district</p> <p>Improve co-ordination between relevant contractors and the county highways department to improve the quality of litter picking of principal roads and open spaces</p>	<p>NI 195 Improved street and environmental cleanliness (graffiti, litter, detritus and fly posting) (LAA) – also included in priority 2</p> <p>LPT – Satisfaction with street cleanliness (former BVPI 89). Vale Voice Survey</p>
Corporate Priority 2. Tackle ‘envirocrime’, such as fly tipping, dog fouling and graffiti	
<p>Improve the local environment by reducing fly tipping</p> <p>Take robust enforcement action to reduce the overall number of ‘envirocrimes’</p> <p>Designate ‘dog fouling action areas’ where a co-ordinated programme of publicity, community engagement and enforcement will be used to reduce the problem</p> <p>Develop a more robust response to graffiti in the Vale</p>	<p>NI 196 Improved street and environmental cleanliness (fly tipping) (LAA)</p> <p>NI 195 Improved street and environmental cleanliness (graffiti, litter, detritus and fly posting) (LAA) – also included in priority 1</p> <p>LPT – % of ‘Grot Spots’ cleaned up within the target number of days</p> <p>Designate four ‘dog fouling action areas’ for 2009/10</p>

Targets are to be agreed as part of the service planning process. Discussions to take place between Strategic Directors, Heads of Service and Portfolio Holders.

Appendix 1

Summary of National Indicator Targets

Future year's targets will be subject to annual review and will be included in an annual update to this plan.

Meeting people's need for housing

National Indicator		Target 2009-10	Target 2010-11	Target 2011-12
154	Net additional homes provided (LAA)			
155	Number of affordable homes delivered (LAA)			
156	156 Number of households living in temporary accommodation (LAA)			
181	Time taken to process housing benefit/council tax benefit new claims and change events			

Managing our business effectively

National Indicator		Target 2009-10	Target 2010-11	Target 2011-12
179	Value for money – total net value of ongoing cash-releasing value for money gains (LAA)			
140	Fair treatment by local services (LAA) (Place Survey)			
5	Overall/general satisfaction with local area (LAA) (Place Survey)			
4	% of people who feel they can influence decisions in their locality (Place Survey)			

Rising to the challenge of climate change

National Indicator		Target 2009-10	Target 2010-11	Target 2011-12
185	CO2 reduction from local authority operations (LAA)			
186	Per Capita reduction in CO2 emissions in the LA area			
188	Adapting to climate change (four levels of performance)			
37	Awareness of civil protection arrangements in the local area (<i>includes flooding</i>) (Place Survey)			
192	Percentage of Household waste sent for reuse, recycling and composting (LAA)			
191	Residual household waste per household(LAA)			

Helping to maintain a safe Vale

National Indicator		Target 2009-10	Target 2010-11	Target 2011-12
20	Assault with less serious injury rate (LAA)			
15	Serious violent crime rate			
16	Serious acquisitive crime rate			
32	Repeat incidents of domestic violence (LAA)			
30	Re-offending rate of prolific and priority offenders			
21	Dealing with local concerns about anti-social behaviour and crime by the local council and police (LAA) (Place Survey)			
17	Perceptions of anti-social behaviour (Place Survey)			

Keeping the Vale a clean place to live

National Indicator		Target 2009-10	Target 2010-11	Target 2011-12
195	Improved street and environmental cleanliness (graffiti, litter, detritus and fly posting) (LAA)			
196	Improved street and environmental cleanliness (fly tipping) (LAA)			

National Indicators included in Oxfordshire Local Area Agreement – not linked to a corporate priority

NI 8 Adult participation in sport (established by survey)

NI 6 Participation in regular volunteering (LAA) (Place Survey)