



2021 - 2022

ANNUAL REPORT

**Leading positive
change by working in
partnership to make
Oxfordshire a greener, fairer
and healthier county.**



FOREWORD

Welcome to Oxfordshire County Council's annual report, providing an overview of our performance and key achievements, from April 2021 to March 2022.

Following the elections in May 2021, the Oxfordshire Fair Deal Alliance formed to provide new leadership for the county council. We want to make sure that everyone in Oxfordshire can take advantage of the opportunities that our vibrant, diverse and innovative county has to offer. To do this we set out our vision: to lead positive change by working in partnership to make Oxfordshire a greener, fairer and healthier county. To achieve this ambition, we are focused on tackling inequality and disadvantage; working with our partners locally and nationally; investing in people; using our resources wisely; speaking up for Oxfordshire; and being inclusive and open.

Including everyone lies at the heart of our ambitions. This means providing inclusive services with equal access for all, working with communities to tackle disadvantage and providing an inclusive workplace with equality of opportunity.

Tackling climate change underpins all we do. The climate emergency is the biggest challenge the planet faces and we are committed to not only reaching our own net zero target as a council by 2030 but to enabling Oxfordshire to be carbon neutral by 2050 at the latest.

To deliver our vision and these commitments, we have developed a strategic plan 2022 - 2025 that sets out our nine cross-cutting priorities (see page five). We are only at the beginning of delivering against our strategic plan supported by a responsible budget set in February 2022 that will allow us to both invest in our priorities and meet our demand pressures for the year ahead. This annual report provides an insight into our initial progress.

As your council, it is our job to provide services such as fire and rescue, highway maintenance, social care for adults and children, libraries, registration (births, deaths, and marriages), education and trading standards. Social care accounts for around half of our spend at the county council and we continue to work hard to enable older and disabled people to live

independently while caring for those in the greatest need. Over the past two years, we have also been working hard to manage local impacts from the COVID-19 pandemic – from creating new services to support vulnerable people to providing public health guidance through the various stages of the pandemic. Our annual report highlights examples of this important work.

Thank you for taking the time to learn more about what we deliver for you and the many ways we have been supporting you, your families and our communities over the past year. We will continue to look forward, and review our strategic plan annually, to ensure

that we continue to provide the greatest opportunities possible for every resident to live their best life.



Councillor Liz Leffman
Leader of Oxfordshire County Council

RESPONDING TO THE PANDEMIC

COVID-19 continued to have a significant impact on the services we delivered and how we delivered them throughout 2021/22. The county council played a key role in co-ordinating and supporting the operational delivery of COVID testing programmes as well as reinforcing partner communications about vaccinations.

We continued to work with the NHS and local authority colleagues to communicate information and guidance as widely as possible, focusing our efforts on those groups less likely to respond to national messages.

- We raised awareness of the benefits of vaccination, which contributed to 1.3 million COVID-19 vaccinations being delivered to people across Oxfordshire. This included ensuring our care home residents were fully vaccinated and receiving their boosters.
- We co-ordinated the vaccination of the health and social care workforce, achieving high levels of compliance prior to the government withdrawal of the legal requirement.
- We supported the care market in ensuring high standards of infection prevention and control, deploying the IPC Grant and working closely with partners across adult social care, public health and the NHS.
- The Oxfordshire Local Contact Tracing service successfully traced 15,379 people during 2021-22.
- 500,000 meals for Oxfordshire pupils, prepared by the county council's catering team, were delivered during the COVID-19 pandemic.

- Working in partnership with the city and district councils, we set up and ran symptom-free testing sites across the county. A self-isolation information pack was developed to help provide individuals who tested positive with advice and sources of support.
- In July 2021, we responded to rapidly rising cases in Oxford by securing three mobile testing units to offer all 18 to 29 year-olds a free PCR test. 4,000 people attended over a two-week period.
- Our cross-county regulatory teams won a Regulatory Excellence Award from the Office for Product Safety and Standards (OPSS) which included recognition for supporting businesses to comply with new regulations and aiding recovery by helping them reopen.
- Working with partners, we awarded £256,000 to 26 local voluntary and community sector organisations who were supporting local communities to minimise the transmission of COVID-19.



OUR NINE PRIORITIES

Our vision:

To lead positive change by working in partnership to make Oxfordshire a greener, fairer and healthier county.



3. Prioritise the health and wellbeing of residents

7. Create opportunities for children and young people to reach their full potential



4. Support carers and the social care system



8. Play our part in a vibrant and participatory local democracy



1. Put action to address the climate emergency at the heart of our work

5. Invest in an inclusive, integrated and sustainable transport network



2. Tackle inequalities in Oxfordshire

6. Preserve and improve access to nature and green spaces



9. Work with local businesses and partners for environmental, economic and social benefit

THE CLIMATE EMERGENCY



Our strategic priority → Putting action to address the climate emergency at the heart of our work

- We launched a pilot for Britain's first **zero emission zone** in Oxford city centre. Petrol and diesel vehicles pay a daily charge while electric and exempt vehicles circulate for free.
- Nine **School Street trials** were delivered, restricting motorised traffic at school drop off and pick up times. 518 residents and parents told us about their experience, and 59 per cent supported them.
- We're investing £40 million over six years to convert **streetlighting to LEDs**, resulting in a 70 per cent reduction in CO2e emissions and £75m savings. 45 per cent of lights have been converted to date.
- We helped residents **recycle and compost** 59.5 per cent of all household waste – putting us the top county in England for the eighth year in a row.
- Working with contractor Milestone Infrastructure, we delivered the council's first **diesel-free construction project**, saving 875 tonnes of carbon in one year.
- We worked with partners to install **EV chargers** in 20 council-owned car parks across the county to provide overnight charging for residents without off-street parking.

- Working with local council and university partners, we set out a pathway to a **net zero economy** in Oxfordshire.

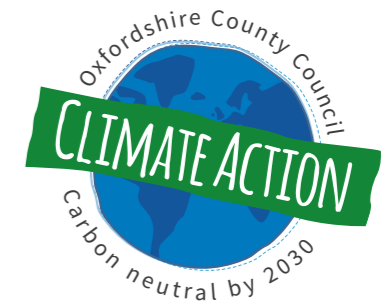


THE CLIMATE EMERGENCY



Our strategic priority → Putting action to address the climate emergency at the heart of our work

- Insulation, air source heat pumps, solar panels and other energy saving improvements have been made to 142 homes as part of the **Green Homes Grant**. Funding has also been secured for another 330 homes.
- We are investing in **zero emission public transport**, with 159 new electric buses set to serve Oxford and its surrounding areas.
- We made information on flood risk available to the public in our online **flood risk assets toolkit** oxfordshirefloodtoolkit.com
- Our Fire and Safety Service inspectors cover the areas closest to their homes and have access to electric vehicles based at strategically positioned new **hub stations** – therefore reducing the environmental impact of visits.
- We secured £71,000 funding to expand the number of **e-cargo bikes**, managed by Pedal & Post, used to deliver goods in an ultra-low emission way.



INEQUALITIES



Our strategic priority → Tackling inequalities in Oxfordshire

- We were one of the lead sponsors for **Oxford's Virtual Pride** in 2021.
- We were one of 150 organisations to achieve a **Stonewall Bronze Award** for our work promoting LGBTIQ+ inclusion in our workplace.
- We launched the **Domestic Abuse Safe Accommodation Strategy**, supported by £1.14 million of funding from the government. This will ensure victim-survivors from any background can access safe accommodation to escape domestic abuse.
- We were nominated in the 2021 **LGC Awards** for the innovative initiatives in our equalities, diversity and inclusion framework.
- We joined the **Sunflower Scheme**, demonstrating our commitment to the promotion of the awareness and acceptance of visible and invisible disabilities.
- We completed a **reverse mentoring scheme** which enabled senior managers and staff from our race equality and cultural heritage network to meet, discuss and find solutions to the challenges that colleagues face in their daily lives.

- We worked with partners to resettle and **support Afghan refugees**, including access to healthcare and education and support with employment. Our fire service also provided safety advice.



INEQUALITIES

Our strategic priority → Tackling inequalities in Oxfordshire

- We delivered the **Breaking Barriers project**, aimed at increasing the uptake of sexual health services by South Asian, African and Caribbean communities and reducing the stigma associated with HIV (and HIV testing). The project promotes the need to talk about and take care of our sexual and reproductive health.
- We set up a **pilot scheme** to address the housing needs of residents living in poor quality private sector homes and conducted 52 home visits in the first quarter of its operation.
- **Drug and alcohol treatment services** for rough sleepers in Oxford were enhanced, providing additional community based and residential treatment.
- We used money from a **new health inequalities fund** to gather insight in areas of greatest socio-economic deprivation – ensuring residents' views are central to our plans to tackle health inequalities.
- In partnership with the NHS, we delivered **home monitoring blood pressure kits** to support people in the 10 most deprived wards in Oxfordshire.

- We launched a new support service, in partnership with the city and district councils, health services and the voluntary and community sector, to reduce and prevent the number of people in fuel poverty. **Better Housing Better Health** completed 749 assessments and delivered £93,410 in lifetime energy savings.



HEALTH AND WELLBEING



Our strategic priority → Prioritise the health and wellbeing of residents

- We launched a new **Stop Smoking Service** to further support residents and Oxfordshire’s ambition to become Smokefree by 2025.
.....
- We published a **Mental Wellbeing Health Needs Assessment** and continued leading a partnership that works to improve mental wellbeing in Oxfordshire and prevent deaths from suicide.
.....
- 733 people participated in our **Move Together programme**, which provides support for people to improve their physical and mental health and which is delivered together with Active Oxfordshire and local authority partners.
.....
- A **Lived Experience Advisory Group** was created to enable survivors of domestic abuse to influence the work carried out by the council and its providers and ensure that the services delivered best reflect the needs of those who use them.
.....
- The county’s efforts to improve food sustainability were recognised with a **Bronze Sustainable Food Places Award** – the first two tier county to achieve this. This recognised our partnership-led, holistic approach to food and our efforts to change a range of key food issues.
.....
- Our emergency planning and highways teams dealt with the impact of **Storm Eunice** and **Storm Franklin** when high winds caused damage across the county. Crews received more than 260 calls to incidents in one weekend.
.....

HEALTH AND WELLBEING

Our strategic priority → Prioritise the health and wellbeing of residents

- Oxfordshire’s **Street Tag**, a family-friendly game app that rewards primary school pupils, communities and schools for physical activity, had the highest sign-up rate for Street Tag in Britain.
.....
- Trading standards participated in **Operation CeCe**, a national initiative to disrupt the illicit tobacco trade.
.....
- Our fire and rescue service delivered over 3,000 **safe and well visits**, supporting some of the county’s most vulnerable residents. Over two thirds of these were due to a referral from partner agencies, supporting our collaborative approach.
.....
- We delivered 488 **fire safety audits** of commercial premises, which is 20 per cent higher than any previous year – protecting communities from the risk of fire and ensuring compliance when needed.
.....



CARERS AND SOCIAL CARE



Our strategic priority

Support carers and the social care system

- We achieved a 44 per cent reduction in the number of people waiting for social care assessments, by working closely with the voluntary sector to deliver a new way of working known as **The Oxfordshire Way**.
.....
- Our **Live Well at Home services** are supporting adults in their own homes with a new network of four strategic providers and 26 care providers, driving forward our Home First ethos.
.....
- Our hospital teams completed 2,820 assessments to support people with their **discharge from hospital**.
.....
- In partnership with Community Catalysts, who offer an alternative to traditional social care services, we helped **create 77 jobs, welcomed 112 volunteers** and supported over 800 people in the community.
.....
- We worked with Age UK to provide support to people immediately after leaving hospital as part of the wider **Home First network**.
.....
- We launched our **new reablement service** ensuring that people leaving hospital or at risk of admission receive the right assessment and support in their own homes.
.....
- 93 per cent of people who experienced an adults **safeguarding** enquiry were able to define their own outcomes, with 98 per cent satisfied or partially satisfied with the outcome achieved.
.....
- Together with partners, we launched the first **Oxfordshire homelessness and rough sleeping strategy 2021-2026**, going beyond homeless legislation to intervene early, whether there is a statutory duty or not.
.....
- Two of our Shared Lives carers received recognition at the **Oxfordshire Care Awards** for making an exceptional difference to dignity in care.
.....

CARERS AND SOCIAL CARE

Our strategic priority

Support carers and the social care system

- We recommissioned **care contracts** at 11 existing extra care housing schemes for older people, and set up one new scheme (Willow Gardens).
.....
- County Print Finishers celebrated **75 years of supporting people** into work along with the Oxfordshire Employment Service, and also launched an apprenticeship scheme supporting people aged 16-21 with additional health needs.
.....
- We partnered with homeless agencies, jointly allocating £3.8m a year to **support people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness**. This is with an ambition to end rough sleeping in the county by 2025.
.....
- We ensured that the voices of people who have experienced homelessness are heard, through a successful partnership with the **Lived Experience Advisory Forum (LEAF)**.
.....
- Young people (16-25) who previously lived in hotel-type accommodation, can now live in shared houses in the community thanks to our new **young people supported accommodation service**.
.....
- We invested £5m to increase the supply of **supported housing for people with learning difficulties and/or autism** with an agreement with Resonance.
.....



TRANSPORT



Our strategic priority

Invest in an inclusive, integrated and sustainable transport network

- A new vision for transport in Oxfordshire was unveiled with the **Local Transport and Connectivity Plan**. Amongst other targets, the plan aims to cut a quarter of car journeys by 2030 and by a third by 2040.

- We invested £5.8m in the **Science Vale Cycling Network routes**, which link a number of science and research centres. We were awarded a **Bronze International Green Apple Environmental Award** for route 1 in recognition of its positive environmental impact. Over 34 tonnes of CO2 were saved during construction of the route.

- Our **e-scooter hire scheme** has been used for 210,000 journeys, travelling more than 310,000 miles. These journeys, avoiding the car, have saved 130 tonnes of carbon emissions.

- Our work to improve conditions on the A361 between Banbury and Chipping Norton, previously classed as one of the 50 most dangerous sections of road in the UK, won a **Prince Michael International Road Safety Award**.

- We launched a new initiative offering communities across the county the chance to apply to **cut local speeds to 20mph**. 70 applications have been received so far.



TRANSPORT

Our strategic priority

Invest in an inclusive, integrated and sustainable transport network

- As part of a pioneering **pilot project**, an app allows parents to see where school transport is and check estimated arrival times. It also records vehicle emissions, helping us put plans in place to make reductions.

- We added over **50 drivers to our crews of lorry drivers** to keep our gritter lorries moving whenever the freezing weather struck. An extra 15 drivers were trained, in case crews were forced to self-isolate.

- We supported 905 residents to take part in a range of activities to enable them to cycle or walk more – all part of the wider **cycling and walking activation programme**.



NATURE AND GREEN SPACES



Our strategic priority → Preserve and improve access to nature and green spaces

- We delivered biodiversity initiatives, engaged over 350 people across 20 events and expanded our volunteering programme as part of our **Lower Windrush Valley Project**.
.....
- We **secured funding from Natural England** to run a community project with teenage girls in East Oxford to understand how we need to improve local parks to make them more attractive and accessible.
.....

- We worked with partners Milestone to clear bankside vegetation on Standlake Common Nature Reserve – **improving habitats for wading birds**.
.....
- We continued to survey, provide advice on and work to **improve the management** of the **32 Road Verge Nature Reserves** in the county. These hold locally or nationally rare plant species.
.....

- We played an active part in the formation of a **new local nature partnership** – a group who will play an important role in informing and monitoring efforts to increase biodiversity.
.....
- We supported the **Oxfordshire Treescapes Project** in developing a mapping tool which allows users to understand more about how trees can be used to create benefit in Oxfordshire.
.....

NATURE AND GREEN SPACES

Our strategic priority → Preserve and improve access to nature and green spaces

- Our Thames Valley Environmental Records Centre has now **collected four million species records**, as well as completing one thousand data requests – information vital to protecting and conserving our most sensitive species and habitats.
.....
- The University of Oxford recognised the Thames Valley Environmental Records Centre as a **gold standard micro-internship** host, highlighting the support it gives students interested in the field.
.....

- Our countryside access team **replaced 83 wooden bridges and repaired a further 40**.
.....
- 210 kilometres of vegetation were cleared to **improve access to green spaces**.
.....



CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE



Our strategic priority → Creating opportunities for children and young people to reach their full potential

- We maintained an **OFSTED rating of good** for all three of the council’s children’s homes.
.....
- We opened three **new properties**, providing 37 unaccompanied asylum-seeking children and young adults with a safe home, education and support.
.....
- We delivered the first year of the **Pause project**, designed to improve the outcome for women who have had repeated removal of children from their care.
.....
- We managed 28,000 enquiries about 16,500 children to the **Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH)**.
.....
- We provided 42,000 **free holiday activity** and **food places** for children aged 5-16 and who were eligible for free school meals.
.....
- We delivered **new interventions** to support parents affected by domestic abuse, mental health issues and drug and alcohol misuse (approx. 350 parents at any time).
.....
- We launched the **Life Long Links programme**, enabling children in our care to build strong, long-term connections with family and friends.
.....
- We **supported Carterton School**, the only council-owned secondary school in the county, to come off special measures and receive a good OFSTED rating.
.....
- Our new **Moving Into Adulthood** team has provided support to 386 16-18 year-olds in Children’s Social Care.
.....

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

Our strategic priority → Creating opportunities for children and young people to reach their full potential

- We launched a **SEND strategy consultation** with parents and carers – collecting a view of service need across the county.
.....
- We opened a **new school in Witney**, providing education for 354 local children.
.....
- We **opened a rebuilt** and **expanded Orion Academy** and completed expansions or replacements of temporary accommodation at eight other schools. This provided an additional 385 primary, 140 secondary and 124 SEND places.
.....
- We published a **new interactive dashboard** which brings together data from different sources to help partners involved in early years understand the health needs of children and deliver the services that best support them.
.....
- Our fire service supported Active Oxfordshire with their **bike library**, by providing cycle training to families with children who previously had no access to a bike.
.....



LOCAL DEMOCRACY



Our strategic priority

Play our part in a vibrant and participatory local democracy

- We introduced a new digital engagement and consultation platform - **Let's Talk Oxfordshire** - which now has over 10,000 residents registered.
- We launched a **consultation and engagement strategy** for 2021-2025, which outlines how we will put residents at the heart of decision-making to support strong, active and inclusive communities.

- A broad range of public and stakeholder engagement informed the **development of the new strategic plan**, including a residents' survey, public and stakeholder workshops, and five discussion groups with children and young people.
- Active promotion of the 22/23 budget consultation resulted in 1,390 completed **budget consultation surveys**.

- We partnered with a team of researchers at Oxford University to organise a **Citizens' Jury** to help answer important questions about how people can travel where they need to in Oxford in a climate-friendly way that promotes health.



LOCAL DEMOCRACY



Our strategic priority

Play our part in a vibrant and participatory local democracy

- The **council's scrutiny function was restructured**, with the aim of achieving greater public accountability. A trio of new committees has been established — people, place and performance — each of which is chaired by opposition councillors to ensure robust challenge.



LOCAL BUSINESSES AND PARTNERS



Our strategic priority → Work with local businesses and partners for environmental, economic and social benefit

- We provided £100,000 to **Oxfordshire Community Foundation** to top up their loneliness and isolation funding. This helped fund 25 local voluntary and community sector organisations to provide mental health support and offer help to those self-isolating.
.....
- We supported Oxford Brookes University in securing £153,667 of government funding to provide **one-to-one energy support to local businesses.**
.....

- The Westgate Central Library became home to the **face-to-face customer service teams** of both Oxford City Council and Citizens Advice — providing greater convenience for residents and more opportunities for effective coordination between services.
.....



- Working with Good Food Oxfordshire, local businesses, the voluntary and community sector and local authorities, we developed an **Oxfordshire-wide food strategy** to address food poverty, inequality and accessibility.
.....



LOCAL BUSINESSES AND PARTNERS

Our strategic priority → Work with local businesses and partners for environmental, economic and social benefit

- In partnership with the voluntary and community sector, we held a range of public and stakeholder workshops to develop a **digital inclusion strategy** and a voluntary and community sector strategy for Oxfordshire.
.....
- We worked with five local communities to explore how technology and new commercial models can create opportunities for a fair local energy marketplace. This is part of **Project LEO**, one of the most ambitious, wide-ranging and innovative smart grid trials in the UK.
.....

- Trading standards officers conducted over 1,400 **interventions with Oxfordshire businesses**, including visits to provide advice and support, along with testing products, procedures and measuring equipment.
.....
- We worked with partners to launch the **Oxfordshire Inclusive Economy Partnership**, a county-wide collaboration which aims to grow prosperity that both reduces inequality and is sustainable.
.....

- Our fire service developed a new approach to engagement with the local business community in order to deliver **preventative safety advice** – with one initiative seeing 130 businesses visited in person by specially trained fire crews.
.....



2021/22 IN FIGURES



We registered
5,766 births,
4,997 deaths and
2,257 marriages and
civil partnerships.

More than
2,560
inspections
of businesses were
carried out.

Our
fire service
provided cycle
training for over
4,300
children.

Oxfordshire History
Centre had
1,303 visitors and
9,428 archive
documents were viewed
by the public.

6,514
children and
young people
had access to
music services.

Our
customer service
team managed
1,253 customer
appointments,
453 of which were
face-to-face, and
handled 104,374 customer
contacts by phone.

93 per cent
of parents were
offered their
first choice
of infant and
primary school.

Our digital
infrastructure
team has helped ensure over
98 per cent
of homes and businesses across
Oxfordshire have access to
superfast broadband.

We
welcomed
20 new
foster carers.

Oxfordshire's
gritters covered
more than
1,200 miles
each time they were
called out to salt
the whole county.

Our libraries loaned
2,827,379
books, DVDs, CDs,
e-books and
audio books.

**Her Majesty,
The Queen's**
Long Service and
Good Conduct medals
were awarded to
nine firefighters,
who have a combined
service total of nearly
600 years.

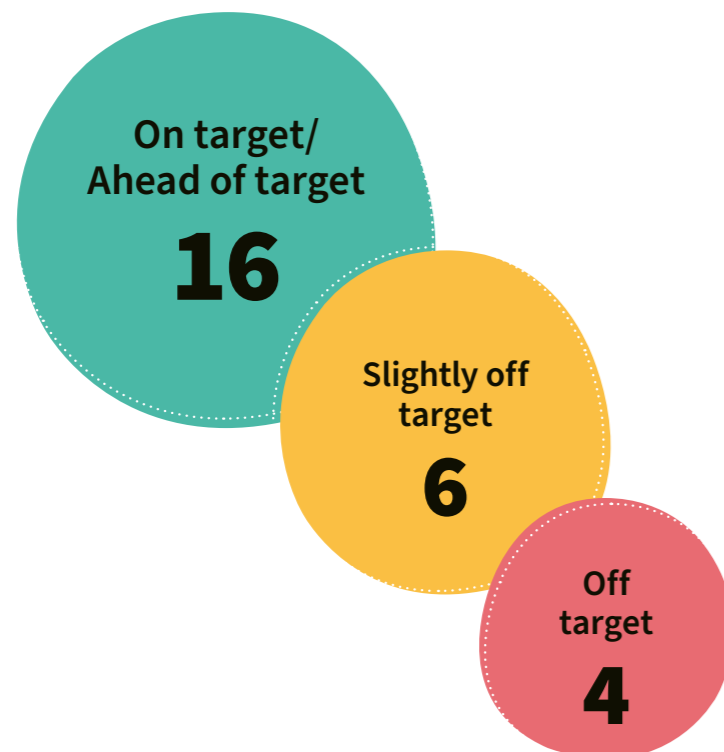
1,019,629
people visited
our libraries

We
filled
33,541
potholes

PERFORMANCE AND FEEDBACK

PERFORMANCE SUMMARY

This summarises the progress we have made delivering against the activities, tasks and projects outlined in our business plan under each of the nine strategic priorities. We use a red – amber – green system, where green refers to a target wholly met, amber to a target narrowly missed and red to a target missed by 10 per cent or more.



LISTENING AND LEARNING

Throughout the year we provided and continue to provide opportunities to our residents to have their say. Whether it is through customer satisfaction surveys, consultations on budgets, new projects and services, talking to local business organisations or feedback via our website; we are keen to listen to what you like and what needs to be improved.

CONTACT US

[oxfordshire.gov.uk/contact-us](https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/contact-us)

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To find out more about how you can take part in local democracy by asking questions or making statements at council meetings, visit: [oxfordshire.gov.uk/council](https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/council)

LET'S TALK

Have your say in consultations about changes to council services or policies at: [letstalk.oxfordshire.gov.uk](https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/letstalk)

SIGN UP

For monthly news and updates from across the county, sign up to Your Oxfordshire and get the latest direct to your inbox. [oxfordshire.gov.uk/newsletter](https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/newsletter)

You can apply, book, find, report and pay for a range of services on the county council's website: [oxfordshire.gov.uk](https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk)

