

## South Corporate Plan 2024-2028 – Themes and Descriptions

THEME ONE: Action on climate change and nature recovery
THEME TWO: Inclusion, accessibility and accountability
THEME THREE: Thriving and healthy communities
THEME FOUR: Homes and infrastructure that meet local need
THEME FIVE: Financial stability and innovative transformation

### **THEME ONE: Action on Climate Change and Nature Recovery**

Preparing and adapting our communities for the impact of climate change, building resilience and restoring our natural environment are effective ways of responding to the climate and ecological crises facing us all. We can show leadership by reducing our own carbon emissions, by providing support for local projects and by setting policies which ensure development makes a positive contribution to our environment. Our priorities will be detailed in the forthcoming new Climate and Nature Recovery Action plan which is being developed in tandem with the Corporate Plan.

#### ***Example existing projects to carry forward:***

- Review and achieve our own zero carbon target and support others to achieve the district carbon target of net zero using the Pathways to a Zero Carbon Oxfordshire framework.
- Promote the circular economy (reduce, reuse, recycle), including in our waste management contracts.
- Mitigate climate change through planning and land use, enhancing biodiversity on our own land and seek to strengthen the planning system to enforce environmental standards.

#### ***Potential new projects:***

- In partnership with the Local Nature Partnership, aim to increase the amount of land protected for nature and public access.
- With partners, explore opportunities to support a home retrofit programme to enable residents to improve the energy-efficiency of their homes.
- Work towards producing and enabling the production of more renewable energy in the district

### **THEME TWO: Inclusion, Accessibility and Accountability**

We remain committed to robust governance and complete transparency in our decision-making and focused on ensuring equality of access to all the services provided by the Council. We aim to be a “Council in the Community” by engaging openly with Town & Parish Councils, local voluntary organisations and other groups representing different sectors of society. We will foster a culture of inclusion both within the Council and with external contacts, celebrating diversity and championing lesser-heard voices. Our priorities include extending the reach of our public engagement activities and supporting community-led input into our Garden Community delivery plans for Didcot and Berinsfield.

#### ***Example existing projects to carry forward:***

- Apply good governance and transparency in all our working and decision making, exploring optimal structures and mechanisms for best practice in local government.

- Engage effectively with residents, parish and town councils and other community organisations, using plain English in our communications and using appropriate methods and technologies to ensure equal and fair access for all.

### ***Potential new projects:***

- Increase engagement in all consultation projects, particularly within “lesser heard” communities, younger residents and other under-represented sections of society.

### **THEME THREE: Thriving and Healthy Communities**

Our vision for South Oxfordshire is built on shared wellbeing and prosperity, with thriving, active communities and equality of access to local resources and services. We will continue to offer information, advice and direct intervention on issues such as the cost-of-living crisis, healthy living, community safety and referrals to partner agencies. We will ensure equitable access to leisure facilities, arts & cultural programmes, recognising their contribution to wellbeing and community cohesion. We want to regenerate Didcot and Berinsfield, bringing employment opportunities, spaces for nature, new homes, community facilities and active travel infrastructure. We will continue to work with thousands of local employers to enhance skills, access funding and facilitate peer networking to enhance South Oxfordshire as an exciting place to live, work and prosper.

### ***Example existing projects to carry forward:***

- Provide advice on access to grants, training and diversification programmes, helping local businesses to build agility and resilience.
- Use our planning powers to preserve our valuable green spaces, particularly in urban areas.

### ***Potential new projects:***

- Launch a new Arts & Culture Strategy, including a sustainable future for Cornerstone.
- Strengthen support and wellbeing programmes for our more vulnerable residents.
- Implement projects as identified within the Didcot Garden Town and Berinsfield Garden Village delivery plans.

### **THEME FOUR: Homes and Infrastructure that Meet Local Needs**

A key role for the Council is to ensure that local housing needs are met with a strategic development plan that takes account of the needs of current and future generations, while minimising the impact on the environment. Our developing Joint Local Plan with Vale of White Horse Council will seek to ensure delivery of appropriate new housing and essential infrastructure until 2041, aiming to protect our precious green spaces and to encourage more sustainable lifestyles. Our Housing Delivery Strategy and Action Plan will enable us to provide more genuinely affordable homes for social rent, complementing those delivered by commercial housing developers as required by our planning policies. We will use infrastructure levy funds received from developers to build much-needed facilities to enhance quality of life and wellbeing, with a particular focus on fair distribution and equality of access.

### ***Example existing projects to carry forward:***

- Encouraging sustainable transport solutions that prioritise walking, cycling and public transport to reduce car dependency and air pollution.
- Work with our communities to optimise and allocate infrastructure funds to projects based on local need and growing demands.

### ***Potential new projects:***

- Develop a new Local Plan with Vale of White Horse Council with progressive and evidence-based policies to secure an appropriate housing mix, affordable homes and sustainable construction methods.
- Deliver new council owned homes with a focus on quality of design, affordability and local requirements.

### **THEME FIVE: Financial Stability and Innovative Transformation**

Residents in South Oxfordshire will continue to receive excellent value for money from a high-performing Council which is continually innovating to deliver high quality, user-friendly services. Our “invest to save” policy will be followed, particularly to ensure long-term financial stability, cost savings and reduced carbon emissions. Our Transformation programme will deliver efficiencies and improvements across all service areas, improving accessibility for residents and modernising our ways of working. We will achieve this by exploring options to bring more services in-house and refreshing our technology platforms to make them fit-for-purpose and adaptable as our services evolve. Our recent success in securing external funding for new programmes will continue to protect our financial viability, and we will continue to exercise strong and responsible stewardship over all public funds held by the Council.

### ***Example existing projects to carry forward:***

- Develop and implement an innovative Transformation Strategy to diversify our revenue streams, improve our effectiveness and secure our ongoing viability.
- Invest responsibly and ethically with the Climate Emergency at the heart of what we do.
- Maximise external funding opportunities to support our services and to enrich our leisure, sporting and community activities.

### ***Potential new projects:***

- Successfully transition from current contractual obligations to a new combination of internal and external arrangements that deliver best value for money and quality of service to our residents.
- Resolve medium to long-term office accommodation solution for the Council, recognising post-Covid working practices, financial viability and customer service requirements.
- Manage and utilise council assets and funds responsibly to achieve financial and community benefits.