What you told us in 2007...
Climate Change

82% of respondents considered climate change to be as a result of human behaviour. Therefore we have created a booklet entitled 'Oxford is my World' which provides lots of energy saving advice to help people reduce their impact on the environment.

61% of respondents stated they would like more information about what they can do to reduce their impact on the environment. As a result we have sent our 'Oxford is My World' booklet to them. For more information, go to www.oxfordismyworld.org

Parks

Of the 48% of respondents that answered the question about using more natural materials when designing play equipment, the majority thought this was a good idea. This will influence the way we design play areas in the future.

The most important improvement respondents thought should be made to playgrounds was improving safety and updating play equipment. With this in mind when we installed a new play area in Wood Farm at the end of last year we used new state of the art play equipment. The play equipment is fully interactive and we ensured bollards were put around the site for safety.

Community Relations

When we asked residents if they felt they belonged to their local area, 63% of respondents stated they did while 37% felt they didn’t. As a result of this we and our partners are in the process of developing a 'Community Cohesion Strategy.' This strategy is aimed at building a strong and inclusive community where there is a common sense of belonging for all our residents.

We are also supporting the work of various Interfaith/Faith groups in the city to set up an Oxford Council of Faiths, which will help promote cohesion and integration by working with local schools and other organisations.

We have also successfully delivered a ‘Community Champions' training programme to enable Oxford’s Black and Minority Ethnic communities to widely participate in local democracy. By doing this we hope to increase much needed participation from our BME residents in local democracy.

Crime

We asked for your views on crime and antisocial behaviour. You told us that domestic burglary continued to be of concern and that you thought that several types of antisocial behaviour were a problem where you live. A third of you thought that police visibility in your area had increased over the past year, but only a small proportion knew who their Neighbourhood Policing Team were, or how to contact them.

To tackle your concerns, we will continue to work with partners to reduce the crimes of most concern to you and complete the roll out of our Neighbourhood Policing programme across Oxford. We need to improve on residents' knowledge of their local policing teams, so will distribute information posters and leaflets across the city, providing details of your local team.
Foodbank

87% of respondents thought having a food bank was a good way to redistribute surplus food. This level of support has ensured the continued development of the project.

72% said they would support a food bank and 20% said they might support it, showing significant support for the project.

We have used these results during presentations to the public and to potential trustees and they will be invaluable when we start applying for funding for the project.

Culture Strategy

We asked you what you thought about the Culture Strategy we had drafted. The main improvements supported by the panel were the promotion of parks and public spaces for cultural events, more ‘world class’ cultural events and the extension of cultural facilities to those areas that lack them.

The main aspects of culture in Oxford that were particularly commended by the panel were the museums and art galleries, the parks, and the mix of people in the city. The panel felt that culture improved the quality of life for those in the city and boosted the tourist economy.

Your views have been used to amend the strategy which will now be presented to the Council’s Executive Board for approval.

Housing & Homelessness Strategies

The results will be used when creating the new housing and homelessness strategies, especially in terms of creating new objectives for improving housing services in the city.

The results of the survey will be added to the others we collected and put into a consultation report. This will be an appendix to the strategies and will be available on our website when the strategies are published in July.

Licenses for Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO)

40% of panel members had reported experiencing considerable problems (i.e. dumped refuse and poor condition of properties and gardens) with privately rented homes. Two thirds of respondents stated additional licensing would have a positive effect on private rented houses in their areas. While 92% of respondents stated poorly managed and/or maintained properties can have a negative effect on the areas where properties are let or managed.

These results have informed a report that went to the Council’s Executive Board asking for approval to submit an application to the Government to extend HMO licensing to more properties across the city. The results will also be used as part of the submission to Government if this goes ahead.
Tourism

80% of respondents thought the income to the economy was the main benefit of having tourists in Oxford. While the main drawback according to 76% of panel members was overcrowding.

We also asked about the frequency of having guests stay with you in Oxford with 39% stating they have visitors to stay 2 to 3 times a year and 24% have visitors staying once a month. These results will be used in developing the Tourism Strategy for Oxford 2008-13, which is the Council’s plan for managing visitors in the future.

Leisure

36% of respondents had not heard of the Slice Card which offers discounts on city council run leisure facilities, while 45% stated they would be interested in hearing about the Slice Card. As a result we are undertaking a full review of the Slice Card, which will take into account a review of the pricing policy.

We are also updating the advertising and promotional plan for this year to ensure the Slice Card is promoted more widely amongst residents.

Website

We listened to your views about our website (www.oxford.gov.uk). As a result we have launched a new website which we hope you will find easier to navigate and use.

- Our website is now more accessible for people who have visual impairments or have difficulty reading web pages. We have introduced a new system called Text to Speech, which means that text on our site can be read aloud.
- You can also make more payments online (see www.oxford.gov.uk/payments).

Your priorities

We asked about the things that are important to you and your priorities. Some common themes that emerged were:

- Spend more on affordable and good quality housing
- Reduce crime – ensure different groups work well together e.g. street wardens and the Police.
- Improve measures to prevent flooding
- Improve leisure facilities and ensure they offer value for money
- Improve street cleaning and increase recycling

The results will be used in our business planning process and in key documents such as the Corporate Plan, which is the document we develop that sets out the direction in which we propose to move and change over the next three years.

Thank you to everybody that took part in Talkback last year and we look forward to hearing more of your views in 2008.