What you told us in 2008...
Spring Survey 2008

Equality and Service Provision

You told us...

The Council’s efforts towards accessibility (access to buildings for wheelchair users, meeting other specific needs and providing for those whose first language is not English) were recognised.

- 12% of panel members had experienced some difficulty communicating with us and most of this was due to the telephone system. The main problems were phone messages not being returned and calls being directed to the wrong departments.
- The majority of respondents felt there were adequate opportunities to give feedback on Council services, 6% felt there were not.

We did...

The results have been used to help shape the Corporate Equalities Scheme Action Plan for 2008-11. This Action Plan sets out our priorities for the next 3 years and will be regularly monitored to ensure we are meeting our residents needs.

Leisure Services

You told us...

- Around half of respondents had used Council-run sports facilities in the past year. Ferry Sports Centre and Temple Cowley Pools were the most popular facilities. A third of the panel had used privately run sports facilities with David Lloyd and Esporta being the most popular.
- Lack of time and cost were the most popular barriers to use, cost was a significant factor for 17-24 year olds and the disabled. Trial membership, flexible hours and better quality facilities were the top three incentives to use facilities more often. Users wanted clean and well-maintained facilities, adequate provision for families (including space and privacy in the changing areas) and reasonable prices.

We did...

✔ Fusion Lifestyle is now managing the Sport & Leisure Centres in partnership with the Council. This will helped us to improve our value for money and increase investment in the sport and leisure facilities.
✔ Fusion have brought in contract cleaners to improve the cleanliness of the facilities.
✔ Pricing has been reviewed across the Leisure service and new prices put in place from April 2009. Fusion are also looking at how they can improve value for money for customers through the pricing and membership schemes available.
✔ The opening times of the Sport and Leisure centres have increased in line with customer feedback.
✔ Temple Cowley Pools & Fitness Centre’s gym was developed and brand new equipment put in place.
Website

You told us...

- Just over a third of the panel had visited the website.
- The majority of panel members were unaware of the improved accessibility features but those who rated them found them to be ‘good’ or ‘excellent.’
- Comments about the website called into question the search facility as several users had problems accessing the information they wanted.
- Some respondents also thought the website would benefit from more events being listed on the web pages.

We did...

- We have upgraded the search facility on our website to make it easier to find the information you are looking for. We have also changed the home page so it is easier for you to find information.
- We have launched a new Events section on our website which includes details, photos and maps of events.
- The Text2Speech facility on our website is proving popular especially to those with visual impairments.
- We have produced an Introduction to Housing film to help make the housing application process easier. It includes subtitles to ensure it is accessible to as many people as possible.
- We have continued to talk to residents about the website, and have run focus groups to ensure we are meeting the needs of our residents.

Summer Survey 2008

Community Safety

You told us...

- The “top 3” crime types which worry you the most are domestic burglary, theft from a vehicle and being pestered / insulted in a public place.
- 41% of respondents thought that the presence of Neighbourhood Policing teams had increased in their area over the last 12 months, compared to 28% in 2007. However Only 10% knew how to find out about their local Neighbourhood Action Group (NAG) priorities.
- The “Top 3” types of antisocial behaviour that you think are the biggest problems in your area are: rubbish and litter on the street, cars parked illegally and speeding vehicles.
- 37% of respondents felt that alcohol-related antisocial behaviour was a very big problem in Oxford City Centre at night, compared to 31% in 2007.
- A higher proportion of panel members had heard of the Nightsafe scheme compared to 2007 (28% in 2008 compared to 17% in 2007).
We did…

✔ In order to deal with concerns around domestic burglary we have continued to run the Target Hardening scheme which offers increased security measures to those who have been burgled, or who are vulnerable and at risk of being burgled.  
   (For further information please visit: www.saferoxford.org.uk)

✔ We have rolled-out our Neighbourhood Policing Scheme across the city and we have our full compliment of Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs).

✔ Our Neighbourhood Policing teams are working closely with Environmental Enforcement teams, Street Wardens and Park Rangers to address your environmental concerns such as litter, graffiti and dog fouling.

✔ Your feedback has been used by the twelve Oxford Neighbourhood Action Groups (NAGs) to help improve the ways in which the police and other partners respond to highlighted community safety issues. They have been analysed in conjunction with the public consultations that the NAGs run every 6-12 months. This means the NAGs can react to overarching neighbourhood concerns as well as more localised issues. Area Action Plans have now been set up by all of the NAGs and are reviewed every 6-8 weeks.

✔ Neighbourhood Policing teams will be using local Neighbourhood Engagement Plans, which provide a formal process for the Police teams to link more closely with local residents, neighbourhood groups, and local service providers. This is a long-term project, and combined with further development of the monthly Neighbourhood Policing surgeries, will lead to stronger community links for local Police teams.

✔ We have raised awareness of local Police teams and how to contact them - via poster campaigns and the Thames Valley Police website - www.thamesvalley.police.uk/yournh.htm

✔ We have continued to operate the Nightsafe scheme – a high visibility policing operation in the city centre and East Oxford that runs on Friday and Saturday nights and has had success in decreasing common assault and serious violent crime.

✔ To tackle your concerns about alcohol-related antisocial behaviour in Oxford, Nightsafe continues to work to address low level antisocial behaviour, through issuing Fixed Penalty Notices. (For further information, please visit www.nightsafe-oxford.org.uk)

✔ We are working towards “Purple Flag” accreditation from the Civic Trust, which is awarded in recognition of the way city centres are managed at night.
Autumn Survey 2008

Waste and Recycling

You told us...

- 26% found the current system complex—chiefly relating to confusion over collection days and which items could be recycled. 31% had difficulty storing their current containers, while 43% found that their current containers did not provide sufficient capacity for their waste and recycling needs.

- Around half of respondents used a composter, but only 25% of these respondents found that it catered for all garden waste.

- 10-15% of respondents were dissatisfied with waste services, recycling banks, green and blue boxes and garden waste sacks. However, a number of issues were raised in relation to the frequency of collections, the state of recycling banks, capacity of and damage to boxes and the durability of garden waste sacks.

- The top ranked priorities were more frequent collection for refuse and recycling that could cause sanitation issues, a greater range of items that could be recycled and more information about the service and what happens to waste and recycling materials.

- 65% supported the idea of one bin for all dry recycling.

We did...

✔ We are market testing the most cost effective way of delivering the Waste and Recycling service. The results have helped us specify what we need to market test. The results from the market testing will be available in Spring 2010 and the implementation of any changes, which market testing indicates will make the service better for you, will occur in autumn 2010.

✔ We have agreed to introduce a food recycling service in the autumn subject to us receiving an external grant to pay for the setting up costs.
Winter Survey 2008

Priorities

You told us...

More housing, better housing for all:
Services for homeless people were heavily supported with four fifths of the panel considering them very or quite important.
There was support for extending the licensing scheme aimed at improving accommodation standards in the private rented sector.

Stronger and more inclusive communities:
The provision of Leisure Centres and free bus travel to pensioners received the most support.
61% of respondents felt that work to support the promotion of healthy lifestyles was ‘very’ or quite ‘important.
Community Centres were considered to be ‘very’ or ‘quite important’ by 68% of respondents.

Improve the local environment, economy and quality of life:
Street cleaning and public health were considered to be a high priority by most respondents.
87% of respondents considered the maintenance of parks and green areas to be ‘very’ or ‘quite important’.
Public health was also a priority for the panel with 75% considering this to be ‘very’ or ‘quite important’.

Reduce crime and anti-social behaviour:
Work with the police to combat anti-social behaviour received a high level of support with 91% of respondents considering this to be ‘very’ or ‘quite important’.
The reduction of environmental crime was also well supported with 79% considering this to be of above average importance.
Street Wardens were well supported with 73% of respondents considering them to be ‘important’.

Tackle climate change and promote environmental resource management:
Provide fuel poverty grants for insulation and home improvements.
Fuel Poverty Grants were considered to be particularly important by residents in the south east of the city and Cowley.
The most important services according to the panel were waste collection and recycling, which were rated above average importance by 91% and 90% respectively.
Transform Oxford City Council by improving value for money and service

Performance:

The collection of Council Tax was considered to be ‘very’ or ‘quite important’ by 70% of respondents.

Managing the Council’s property portfolio was rated as above average importance by 59% of respondents.

The importance of good customer services was also highlighted by the panel.

The majority of the panel felt that influencing behaviour through charging and differential charging were acceptable. However, qualitative comments revealed a significant minority of respondents who were strongly opposed to any form of ‘means testing’.

We did…

✔ We have proactively prosecuted rogue landlords, publicising these prosecutions and lobbying Government to extend the rental housing licensing scheme city-wide.

✔ We have developed a target in our Corporate Plan to ensure 200 new affordable properties are built in Oxford each year.

✔ We have a target to extend Green Flag status from 3 to 5 parks (Green Flag is a national standard for parks and green spaces in England and Wales).

✔ We have a target to reduce the Council’s carbon footprint by 8% by 2010 and 28% by 2012.

✔ We are working in partnership to reduce the number of children in primary schools categorised as obese, and aim to raise the levels of adult participation in sport by 4% by 2012.

✔ We are working closely with the Primary Care Trust on schemes around health promotion.

✔ We have a proactive programme of joint working including jointly funded Police Community Support Officers.

✔ The Waste and Recycling service is undergoing a fundamental service review. This includes finding the most cost effective way of delivering this service to you, whilst also ensuring you receive a high quality service.
Thank you to everybody that took part in Talkback in 2008. We look forward to hearing more of your views in 2009.

To read the reports that accompany any of the Talkback surveys please go to our website at: www.oxford.gov.uk/consultationresults