

Press release

For immediate release

Enough is Enough

95 days for Oxfordshire County Council to reconsider 95 budget options

An alliance of voluntary sector organisations and care providers is today launching a campaign calling on Oxfordshire County Council to reconsider its 95 Budget Options currently out for consultation.

The coalition, which includes leading voluntary sector services, information and advice services, and registered care providers, is an unprecedented coalition, which is voicing concerns about proposals to save a further £50m from Oxfordshire County Council's budgets on top of year-on-year cuts.

In 95 days' time from today, Oxfordshire County Council's Full Cabinet will meet to decide whether the 95 Budget Options totalling £52.6m, will be voted through. Before then, a reduction in the Local Government Settlement will be determined. Both decisions, if made as expected, will risk causing serious harm to the wellbeing of Oxfordshire's vulnerable residents.

The Enough is Enough alliance says that the 95 Budget Options will affect local vulnerable and elderly people in a cumulative and wide-ranging way; from the wider impact of the removal of funding for subsidised buses to the specific halting of funding for exceptionally high-quality and effective voluntary sector service providers, without whom it is simply not possible to provide social care locally.

A vulnerable person may be someone who has a life-long condition from birth, or one which has crept up over a period of months or years, or a life-changing accident which makes yesterday so much different to today or tomorrow. It could be you or me. All of these issues have a ripple effect breaking on family, friends and our Oxfordshire communities.

Rachel Coney, Chief Executive, Healthwatch Oxfordshire, said, "We are deeply concerned about the impact of this package on people in the County, especially the most vulnerable members of the community. We call on local and national politicians to work together to find an alternative solution to this budget problem."

Jamie Miller, Chief Executive Officer at Headway Oxfordshire and Chair, Oxfordshire Neurological Alliance said, "Headway Oxfordshire will at the very least be cutting its services next year and quite possibly be unable to sustain any services for people with acquired brain injury, without further investment and support from commissioners".

Paul Cann, Chief Executive, AgeUK Oxfordshire and Action for Carers Oxfordshire said, "The Comprehensive Spending Review on 25 November must recognise the parlous situation of care for vulnerable people already. These savings proposals would have a deeply damaging and counter-productive effect on the lives of unpaid carers and older people, by cutting support, which helps people stay active and out of hospitals and care homes".

Eddy McDowall, Chief Executive of Oxfordshire Association of Care Providers said, "Now is not the time to make further cuts to social care and community services when there is already

immense pressure on social care and the NHS to get people out of hospital. These cuts will cost the tax payer many millions more in the medium term and will sink our health services”.

The Campaign will inform and enable people to tell local Councillors and local MPs of the impact of the cuts on them.

More details of the campaign are at www.oacp.org.uk/features.

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NOTES TO EDITORS

The campaign involves the following organisations:

- Action for Carers Oxfordshire
- AgeUK Oxfordshire
- Alzheimer’s Society
- Citizens Advice Oxfordshire
- Elmore Community Services
- Guideposts Trust
- Headway Oxfordshire
- Healthwatch Oxfordshire
- Oxford Homeless Pathways
- Oxfordshire Association for the Blind
- Oxfordshire Association of Care Providers
- Oxfordshire Family Support Network
- Oxfordshire Mind
- South & Vale Carers Centre

More information at www.oacp.org.uk/features/enoughisenough