**Press release**

For immediate release

**Enough is Enough**

**Local Government short-term measures are storing up long-term problems**

This afternoon, Voluntary Sector Organisations campaigning against the proposed 95 Budget Options in Oxfordshire will gather outside of County Hall, Oxford to urge Cabinet to reject the proposed way forward to balance Oxfordshire County Council’s budget.

The growing alliance, which includes a widening range of voluntary sector services, information and advice services, and registered care providers, is an unprecedented coalition, voicing concerns about proposals to save a further £73m from Oxfordshire County Council’s budgets on top of year-on-year cuts. The £73m includes the original 95 Budget Options cuts of £50m, plus a further £23m announced on 8 December.

The short-term solution that the Council are proposing will do nothing to prevent long-term damage to local services. Today’s decision by Council’s Cabinet is likely to be rubber-stamped at Full Council on 16 February, sounding the death-knell for many vital voluntary sector services and ignoring the human impact.

The Budget Options have been prompted by further national government reductions to local government funding under the Local Government Funding Settlement and a continued ideological demolition of public sector services. Despite the changes to future local government funding arrangements, including proposed retention of local business rates, both decisions, if made as expected, will risk causing serious harm to the wellbeing of Oxfordshire’s vulnerable residents and Oxfordshire’s communities.

There is a lack of care at national government about the front-line impact of its policy; the disconnect between national and local government leaders, is embodied by the widening disagreement between the Prime Minister and the Leader of Oxfordshire County Council.

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. Many of these services are prevention services, designed and delivered to stop people needing more intensive services, which cost the tax-payer more.

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.

**Eddy McDowall, Chief Executive of Oxfordshire Association of Care Providers** said, “We are now at the tipping point for public services. Coupled with year-on-year downward pressure on funding for registered social care providers, causing providers to withdraw from the market, we now have the imminent destruction of essential complementary prevention services. We are looking for leadership from local government to lead the way out of the mess created by national government. This should begin by recognising their statutory responsibility under the Care Act to properly fund and deliver prevention services. Further cuts are short-term measures that will cost the tax payer many millions more in the medium and longer term and will sink our health services”.

**Jamie Miller, Chief Executive Officer at Headway Oxfordshire** and **Chair, Oxfordshire Neurological Alliance** said, “The continued pursuit of brutal short-term cuts will cost our NHS many millions annually. These cuts will be catastrophic for voluntary sector community prevention services, such as Headway Oxfordshire, causing misery to vulnerable people and adding costs to our more expensive health services”.

**Paul Cann, Chief Executive, AgeUK Oxfordshire** and **Action for Carers Oxfordshire** said, “We urge the Council Cabinet to think long and hard about the precarious state of care for vulnerable people. By voting for these cuts, the Council is voting for social isolation; the savings proposals will cause distress and hardship for unpaid carers and older people. The Council must realise that cutting prevention services will hinder people staying active and out of hospitals and care homes”.

The Campaign informs and enables 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](http://www.oacp.org.uk/features).

- ENDS

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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
* Day-break Oxford
* Deaf Direct
* Elmore Community Services
* Guideposts Trust
* Headway Oxfordshire
* Healthwatch Oxfordshire
* October Club, Wantage
* Oxford Homeless Pathways
* Oxfordshire Association for the Blind
* Oxfordshire Association of Care Providers
* Oxfordshire Family Support Network
* Oxfordshire District Mencap
* Oxfordshire Mind
* South & Vale Carers Centre
* Unlimited Oxfordshire

More information at [www.oacp.org.uk/features/enoughisenough](http://www.oacp.org.uk/features/enoughisenough)