



**To: Members of the Cabinet**

## ***Notice of a Meeting of the Cabinet***

**Tuesday, 23 January 2024 at 2.00 pm**

**Rooms 2&3 - County Hall, New Road, Oxford OX1 1ND**

If you wish to view proceedings online, please click on this [Live Stream Link](#).

Martin Reeves  
Chief Executive

January 2024

**Committee Officer: Chris Reynolds**

*Tel: 07542 029441; E-Mail: [chris.reynolds@oxfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:chris.reynolds@oxfordshire.gov.uk)*

### **Membership**

#### *Councillors*

Liz Leffman	Leader of the Council
Dr Pete Sudbury	Deputy Leader of the Council (inc. Climate Change Delivery & Environment)
Tim Bearder	Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care
Neil Fawcett	Cabinet Member for Community & Corporate Services
Andrew Gant	Cabinet Member for Transport Management
Kate Gregory	Cabinet Member for Special Educational Needs & Disabilities (SEND) Improvement
John Howson	Cabinet Member for Children, Education & Young People's Services
Dan Levy	Cabinet Member for Finance
Dr Nathan Ley	Cabinet Member for Public Health, Inequalities & Community Safety
Judy Roberts	Cabinet Member for Infrastructure & Development Strategy

*The Agenda is attached. Decisions taken at the meeting will become effective at the end of the working day on 31 January 2024 unless called in by that date for review by the appropriate Scrutiny Committee.*

*Copies of this Notice, Agenda and supporting papers are circulated  
to all Members of the County Council.*

*Date of next meeting: 30 January 2024*



## **AGENDA**

### **1. Apologies for Absence**

### **2. Declarations of Interest**

- guidance note below

### **3. Minutes (Pages 1 - 8)**

To approve the minutes of the meeting held on (**CA3**) and to receive information arising from them.

### **4. Questions from County Councillors**

Any county councillor may, by giving notice to the Proper Officer by 9 am two working days before the meeting, ask a question on any matter in respect of the Cabinet's delegated powers.

The number of questions which may be asked by any councillor at any one meeting is limited to two (or one question with notice and a supplementary question at the meeting) and the time for questions will be limited to 30 minutes in total. As with questions at Council, any questions which remain unanswered at the end of this item will receive a written response.

Questions submitted prior to the agenda being despatched are shown below and will be the subject of a response from the appropriate Cabinet Member or such other councillor or officer as is determined by the Cabinet Member, and shall not be the subject of further debate at this meeting. Questions received after the despatch of the agenda, but before the deadline, will be shown on the Schedule of Addenda circulated at the meeting, together with any written response which is available at that time.

### **5. Petitions and Public Address**

*Members of the public who wish to speak at this meeting can attend the meeting in person or 'virtually' through an online connection.*

*To facilitate 'hybrid' meetings we are asking that requests to speak or present a petition are submitted by no later than 9am four working days before the meeting i.e., 9am on Wednesday 17 January 2024. Requests to speak should be sent to [chris.reynolds@oxfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:chris.reynolds@oxfordshire.gov.uk)*

*If you are speaking 'virtually', you may submit a written statement of your presentation to ensure that your views are taken into account. A written copy of your statement can be*

*provided no later than 9am 2 working days before the meeting. Written submissions should be no longer than 1 A4 sheet.*

## **6. Appointments**

## **7. Reports from Scrutiny Committees (Pages 9 - 38)**

Cabinet will receive the following Scrutiny reports:-

Performance & Corporate Services Overview & Scrutiny Committee reports on:-

Employee Engagement Survey  
Capital Asset Disposal Process  
Social Value Policy

## **8. Future Council Governance Group - Final Report (Pages 39 - 54)**

*Cabinet Member:* Community & Corporate Services

*Forward Plan Ref:* 2023/364

*Contact:* Simon Harper – Head of Governance,

[simon.harper@oxfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:simon.harper@oxfordshire.gov.uk)

Report by Director of Law and Governance and Monitoring Officer **(CA8)**

**The Cabinet is RECOMMENDED to:-**

- a) **To note the work undertaken by the Future Council Governance Group including the following recommendations for consideration by the Cabinet:**
- b) **To review the inter-relationship between the Cabinet and Scrutiny and introduce an integrated forward plan which brings together the individual work plans of the Cabinet and Overview and Scrutiny Committees.**
- c) **To evaluate the cost and processes for a citizens' panel with a view to selecting one topic in 2024-25 for review by a citizens' panel and review its success or otherwise before committing to any future panels.**
- d) **To reinvigorate locality meetings by inviting local stakeholders as necessary and undertake a wider review of locality working including the practicalities of delegating some budgets and allowing recommendations to be made to the Cabinet and Cabinet Members.**
- e) **To take steps to embed 'futures planning' across the Council and for it to become integral part of the decision-making process and scrutiny work plans.**



## **9. People and Culture Strategy (Pages 55 - 72)**

*Cabinet Member:* Community & Corporate Services

*Forward Plan Ref:* 2023/360

*Contact:* Cherie Cuthbertson – Director of Workforce and OD,  
Cherie.cuthbertson@oxfordshire.gov.uk

Report by Executive Director of Resources and Section 151 Officer **(CA9)**

1. **The Cabinet is RECOMMENDED to approve “Our People and Culture Strategy” annexed to this report outlining four priority areas of focus:**
    - a. **Attracting, recruiting, and retaining talented people**
    - b. **Enabling our people to thrive and perform.**
    - c. **Enabling our people to grow and evolve for the future.**
    - d. **Enabling our people to lead and transform for the future.**
  2. **The Cabinet is asked to note the programme in place to support the delivery of the strategy.**
- 10. Report on the Authority's Policy for compliance with the regulation of the Investigatory Powers Act 2000 , the use of activities within the scope of this act and the recent inspection by the Investigatory Powers Commissioner's Office (Pages 73 - 78)**

*Cabinet Member:* Community & Corporate Services

*Forward Plan Ref:* 2023/323

*Contact:* Jody Kerman, Head of Trading Standards  
jody.kerman@oxfordshire.gov.uk

Report by Director of Law & Governance and Monitoring Officer **(CA10)**

**Cabinet is RECOMMENDED to**

- a) **Consider and note the use of activities within the scope of the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act by the Council, and**
  - b) **Approve the revised Policy for Compliance with the Investigation of Regulatory Powers Act 2000 included in the annex of this paper**
  - c) **Note the comments provided by the Investigatory Powers Commissioner's Office regarding assurance of ongoing compliance with RIPA 2000 and the Investigatory Powers Act 2016 and that a further inspection is not required until 2026.**
- 11. Business Management & Monitoring Report - October/November 2023 (Pages 79 - 162)**

*Cabinet Members:* Corporate Services and Finance

*Forward Plan Ref:* 2023/229

Contact: Louise Tustian, Head of Insight and Corporate Programmes,  
[louise.tustian@oxfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:louise.tustian@oxfordshire.gov.uk) / Kathy Wilcox, Head of Financial Strategy,  
[kathy.wilcox@oxfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:kathy.wilcox@oxfordshire.gov.uk)

Report by Executive Director of Resources and Section 151 Officer (**CA11**)

**The Cabinet is RECOMMENDED to**

- a) note the report and annexes.
- b) note the virements in Annex 2b

## **12. Capital Programme Approvals - January 2024 (Pages 163 - 166)**

*Cabinet Member:* Finance

*Forward Plan Ref:* 2023/233

Contact: Natalie Crawford, Capital Programme Manager,  
[natalie.crawford@oxfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:natalie.crawford@oxfordshire.gov.uk)

Report by Executive Director of Resources and Section 151 Officer (**CA12**).

**The Cabinet is RECOMMENDED to:**

- a) approve the inclusion of 'Great Mead', a Children's Residential Home, into the Capital Programme, releasing £3.1m of funding agreed by Council in February 2023.
- b) approve the inclusion of 'Willow Bank', a Children's Residential Home, into the Capital Programme, releasing £1.8m of funding agreed by Council in February 2023.
- c) approve the inclusion of a new Special Educational Needs & Disabilities (SEND) School for Social and Emotional High Needs (SEMH) and Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD), located in Didcot, into the Capital Programme, with an indicative capital budget of £14.4m to be met by section 106 funds and High Needs grant 2021/22 to 2023/24.

## **13. Freehold Disposal Chilterns End Former Care Home, Henley on Thames (Pages 167 - 170)**

*Cabinet Member:* Finance

*Forward Plan Ref:* 2023/359

Contact: Henry White, Senior Strategic Assets Officer  
(07513703546), Michael Smedley, Head of Estates, Assets and Investment (07543 509690)

Report by Director of Property Services (**CA13**)

**The Cabinet is RECOMMENDED to:**

- a) Approve, as a key decision, the freehold sale of land comprising the former elderly persons home at Chilterns End to a named purchaser in consideration of the Council receiving a capital receipt.
- b) Delegate authority to the Executive Director of Resources, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Finance, to consider officer recommendations and agree the final purchaser and sale price.

## **EXEMPT ITEM**

It is **RECOMMENDED** that the public be excluded during consideration of the following item since it is likely that if they were present during that item there would be disclosure of exempt information as defined in Part I of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended) and specified below in relation to those items and since it is considered that, in all the circumstances of the case, the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

**THE ANNEXES TO THE ITEM HAVE NOT BEEN MADE PUBLIC AND SHOULD BE REGARDED AS 'CONFIDENTIAL' BY MEMBERS AND OFFICERS ENTITLED TO RECEIVE THEM.**

**THIS ALSO MEANS THAT THE CONTENTS SHOULD NOT BE DISCUSSED WITH OTHERS AND NO COPIES SHOULD BE MADE**

### **14. Oxford City Centre Accommodation Strategy (Pages 171 - 336)**

*Cabinet Member: Finance*

*Forward Plan Ref: 2023/324*

*Contact: Chris Dyer, Operational Manager & Senior Project Lead (Major Projects),  
Property Services*

*chris.dyer@oxfordshire.gov.uk*

Report by Executive Director of Resources & Section 151 Officer **(CA14)**

**The Cabinet is RECOMMENDED to:**

- a) progress Option 2: 'Consolidation in Speedwell House and disposal of County Hall' as the preferred option and progress the project through the Council's capital governance and reporting processes, noting the financial position.
- b) To engage the market to assess interest in both New and Old County Hall to inform a final decision on Old County Hall's future.

### **15. Delegated Powers Report for October to December 2023 (Pages 337 - 338)**

Cabinet Member: Corporate Services  
Forward Plan Ref: 2023/230  
Contact: Colm Ó Caomhánaigh, Democratic Services Manager,  
[colm.ocaomhanaigh@oxfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:colm.ocaomhanaigh@oxfordshire.gov.uk)

Report by Director of Law & Governance (CA15)

To report on a quarterly basis any executive decisions taken under the specific powers and functions delegated under the terms of Part 7.2 (Scheme of Delegation to Officers) of the Council's Constitution – Paragraph 6.3(c). It is not for Scrutiny call-in.

## **16. Forward Plan and Future Business (Pages 339 - 342)**

Cabinet Member: All  
Contact Officer: Chris Reynolds, Senior Democratic Services Officer,  
[chris.reynolds@oxfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:chris.reynolds@oxfordshire.gov.uk)

The Cabinet Procedure Rules provide that the business of each meeting at the Cabinet is to include "updating of the Forward Plan and proposals for business to be conducted at the following meeting". Items from the Forward Plan for the immediately forthcoming meetings of the Cabinet appear in the Schedule at **CA16**. This includes any updated information relating to the business for those meetings that has already been identified for inclusion in the next Forward Plan update.

The Schedule is for noting, but Cabinet Members may also wish to take this opportunity to identify any further changes they would wish to be incorporated in the next Forward Plan update.

***The Cabinet is RECOMMENDED to note the items currently identified for forthcoming meetings.***

## **17. For information only: Cabinet response to Scrutiny item (Pages 343 - 344)**

SEND and Staffing Changes

## **Councillors declaring interests**

### **General duty**

You must declare any disclosable pecuniary interests when the meeting reaches the item on the agenda headed 'Declarations of Interest' or as soon as it becomes apparent to you.

### **What is a disclosable pecuniary interest?**

Disclosable pecuniary interests relate to your employment; sponsorship (i.e. payment for expenses incurred by you in carrying out your duties as a councillor or towards your election expenses); contracts; land in the Council's area; licenses for land in the Council's area; corporate tenancies; and securities. These declarations must be recorded in each councillor's Register of Interests which is publicly available on the Council's website.

Disclosable pecuniary interests that must be declared are not only those of the member her or himself but also those member's spouse, civil partner or person they are living with as husband or wife or as if they were civil partners.

### **Declaring an interest**

Where any matter disclosed in your Register of Interests is being considered at a meeting, you must declare that you have an interest. You should also disclose the nature as well as the existence of the interest. If you have a disclosable pecuniary interest, after having declared it at the meeting you must not participate in discussion or voting on the item and must withdraw from the meeting whilst the matter is discussed.

### **Members' Code of Conduct and public perception**

Even if you do not have a disclosable pecuniary interest in a matter, the Members' Code of Conduct says that a member 'must serve only the public interest and must never improperly confer an advantage or disadvantage on any person including yourself' and that 'you must not place yourself in situations where your honesty and integrity may be questioned'.

### **Members Code – Other registrable interests**

Where a matter arises at a meeting which directly relates to the financial interest or wellbeing of one of your other registerable interests then you must declare an interest. You must not participate in discussion or voting on the item and you must withdraw from the meeting whilst the matter is discussed.

Wellbeing can be described as a condition of contentedness, healthiness and happiness; anything that could be said to affect a person's quality of life, either positively or negatively, is likely to affect their wellbeing.

Other registrable interests include:

- a) Any unpaid directorships

- b) Any body of which you are a member or are in a position of general control or management and to which you are nominated or appointed by your authority.
- c) Any body (i) exercising functions of a public nature (ii) directed to charitable purposes or (iii) one of whose principal purposes includes the influence of public opinion or policy (including any political party or trade union) of which you are a member or in a position of general control or management.

### **Members Code – Non-registrable interests**

Where a matter arises at a meeting which directly relates to your financial interest or wellbeing (and does not fall under disclosable pecuniary interests), or the financial interest or wellbeing of a relative or close associate, you must declare the interest.

Where a matter arises at a meeting which affects your own financial interest or wellbeing, a financial interest or wellbeing of a relative or close associate or a financial interest or wellbeing of a body included under other registrable interests, then you must declare the interest.

In order to determine whether you can remain in the meeting after disclosing your interest the following test should be applied:

Where a matter affects the financial interest or well-being:

- a) to a greater extent than it affects the financial interests of the majority of inhabitants of the ward affected by the decision and;
- b) a reasonable member of the public knowing all the facts would believe that it would affect your view of the wider public interest.

You may speak on the matter only if members of the public are also allowed to speak at the meeting. Otherwise you must not take part in any discussion or vote on the matter and must not remain in the room unless you have been granted a dispensation.

# Agenda Item 3

## CABINET

**MINUTES** of the meeting held on Tuesday, 19 December 2023 commencing at 2.00 pm and finishing at 3.05pm.

### Present:

**Voting Members:** Councillor Liz Leffman – in the Chair  
Councillor Dr Pete Sudbury (Deputy Chair)  
Councillor Tim Bearder  
Councillor Neil Fawcett  
Councillor Kate Gregory  
Councillor John Howson  
Councillor Dan Levy  
Councillor Dr Nathan Ley  
Councillor Judy Roberts

### Other Members in Attendance:

Councillors David Bartholomew Ted Fenton, Donna Ford, Jenny Hannaby, and Kieron Mallon

### Officers:

Whole of meeting Martin Reeves (Chief Executive), Stephen Chandler, Executive Director (People, Transformation and Performance, Lorna Baxter (Executive Director of Resources & Section 151 Officer), Anita Bradley (Director of Law & Governance and Monitoring Officer), Ansaf Azhar (Corporate Director Public Health & Community Safety), Bill Cotton (Corporate Director Environment & Place) Karen Fuller (Interim Corporate Director Adult Social Care), Chris Reynolds (Senior Democratic Services Officer)

*The Cabinet considered the matters, reports and recommendations contained or referred to in the agenda for the meeting, together with a schedule of addenda tabled at the meeting, and decided as set out below. Except insofar as otherwise specified, the reasons for the decisions are contained in the agenda, reports and schedule, copies of which are attached to the signed Minutes.*

### 150/23 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

(Agenda Item. 1)

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Andrew Gant.

### 151/23 MINUTES

(Agenda Item. 3)

The minutes of the meeting held on 21 November 2023 were approved and signed as a correct record by the Chair.

## **152/23 QUESTIONS FROM COUNTY COUNCILLORS**

(Agenda Item. 4)

There were none received.

## **153/23 PETITIONS AND PUBLIC ADDRESS**

(Agenda Item. 5)

9 Department for Science, Innovation and Technology (DSIT) 5G Innovation Region Funding

Cllr Glynis Phillips

## **154/23 APPOINTMENTS**

(Agenda Item. 6)

Cabinet noted the change of title for the Deputy Leader with Responsibility for Climate Change, Environment and Future Generations and the following changes to responsibilities: -

Climate Change **Mitigation**

**Climate Adaptation and Resilience**

Lead Flood Authority incl Oxford Flood alleviation

**Planetary Boundaries and Circular Economy**

**Ecology, Nature Recovery and Enhancement**

**Future Generations**

Minerals Strategy, Waste Disposal and Recycling centres

Countryside Operations and Volunteers

**Ecology/Archaeology/Heritage**

Water Strategy incl TW Reservoir

Energy Strategy

Tree Strategy

Highways Verge **and Vegetation** Management Strategy

## **155/23 REPORTS FROM SCRUTINY COMMITTEES**

(Agenda Item. 7)

Councillor Jane Hanna, Chair of the Oxfordshire Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee, presented the report and recommendations on Emotional Wellbeing and Mental Health of Children.

Councillor John Howson, Cabinet Member for Children, Education and Young People's Services, welcomed the report but referred to the importance of early intervention by GPs in cases where children were being excluded from school and the impact of the funding settlements for schools and the NHS on providing adequate services.



Councillor Nigel Simpson, Chair of the People Overview & Scrutiny Committee, presented the report and recommendations on the Oxfordshire Education Commission report.

Councillor Howson referred to the establishment of the Education and Young People's Overview and Scrutiny Committee which would consider the range of issues raised in the Commission's report.

Councillor Kieron Mallon, Chair of the Place Overview & Scrutiny Committee, presented the report and recommendations on the Infrastructure Funding Statement 2022/23.

Councillor Judy Roberts, Cabinet Member for Infrastructure and Development Strategy, welcomed the report and, in particular, confirmed that the Council would be monitoring that its policies were being incorporated into local plans in the County.

Cabinet received the reports and will respond in due course.

## **156/23 AWARD FOR ALL AGE ADVOCACY CONTRACTS**

(Agenda Item. 8)

Cabinet had before it a report recommending an approach for the procurement of the future provision for the All-Age Advocacy contracts.

Advocates were independent professionals who are qualified to help people understand their rights, communicate their needs and preferences, and ensure that their voices are heard in decisions about their care and support. They provide help and guidance to people who are experiencing difficulty accessing or using social care services. Local Authorities had a duty to provide independent advocacy under the Care Act 2014, the Mental Capacity Act 2005 and The Advocacy Services and Representations Procedure (Children) (Amendment) Regulations 2004. The statutory elements of these contracts were:

- a) Independent Mental Capacity Advocacy for Children & Adults (IMCA)
- b) Independent Mental Health Advocacy (IMHA)
- c) Independent Care Act Advocacy (ICCA)
- d) NHS Complaints Advocacy
- e) Children's Advocacy
- f) Regulation 44 Reviews
- g) Independent Visitors Service

Councillor Tim Bearder, Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, presented the report.

During discussion members referred to the importance of ensuring face to face provision of advocacy services for those residents not able to use digital applications.

Councillor Bearder move and Councillor Howson seconded the recommendations, and they were approved.

**RESOLVED to:**

- a) agree the approach for the procurement of the future provision for the All-Age Advocacy contracts.**
- b) delegate authority to the Corporate Director of Adult Social Care in consultation with the Corporate Director of Children's Services following the end of the stand still period to award the All-Age Advocacy contracts**
- c) delegate authority to the Corporate Director of Adult Social Care in consultation with the Corporate Director of Children's Services and the Head of Legal and Deputy Monitoring Officer to finalise and complete the contract documentation to deal with the contract award of the All-Age Advocacy service**

**157/23 DEPARTMENT FOR SCIENCE, INNOVATION AND TECHNOLOGY (DSIT) 5G INNOVATION REGION FUNDING**

(Agenda Item. 9)

Cabinet had before it a report regarding the successful bid for 5G Innovation Region funding.

The Department for Science, Innovation and Technology (DSIT) was the central government department responsible for improving the nation's fixed and mobile connectivity. Under the broad category of the £5bn Project Gigabit, was a sub-section focussing on 5G Connectivity. As part of that, a competitive funding bid for setting up ten 5G Innovation Regions was submitted and for which Oxfordshire had been successful in being awarded the maximum grant of £3.8m. Oxfordshire County Council would be the lead authority with Buckinghamshire, Central Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire, & all Berkshire councils forming the Region. 5G Innovation Regions focus on developing innovative commercial models withing specific targeted sectors and 'England's Connected Heartland' will deliver outputs in two sectors - Rail Connectivity and Research & Development/Science Parks. The project would deliver outputs described in the report.

Councillor Glynis Phillips addressed the Cabinet on this report and congratulated officers on their work in securing the funding for Oxfordshire. She expressed concerns about the financial risks to the Council should the grant funding be insufficient to cover all the staffing costs in relation to the project, and the need to understand the contributions from other partners to the Digital Infrastructure Gainshare Fund will would serve as a means of underwriting the project such that if there were to be any financial exposure that has not been forecast, the project will not require any financial support from OCC treasury.

The Director of Digital and IT explained the funding arrangements and the uses to which the Gainshare funding would be put.

Councillor Neil Fawcett, Cabinet Member for Community & Corporate Services presented the report.

During discussion members welcomed the award of grant funding and the benefits that would be achieved for public services as a result of improved connectivity within Oxfordshire and across the country as a whole.

In response to a question, the Corporate Director: Environment & Place confirmed that there would be minimal requirements for planning permission as a result of the provision of additional 5G infrastructure and planning applications would be considered by the relevant district councils where required.

Councillor Fawcett moved and Councillor Ley seconded the recommendations, and they were approved.

**RESOLVED to**

- (a) **approve the acceptance of £3.8m of Department for Science, Innovation and Technology (DSIT) 5G Innovation Region funding pursuant to Oxfordshire County Council implementing a project to be known as 'England's Connected Heartland'.**
- (b) **approve the use of Gainshare funding previously awarded for Digital Infrastructure projects in the event of deliverability issues to the 'England's Connected Heartland' project or to fund further development of the project.**

**158/23 INFRASTRUCTURE FUNDING STATEMENT 2022/23**

(Agenda Item. 10)

Cabinet had before it a report on the Infrastructure Funding Statement. This was a statutory statement of fact to be reported annually, by 31 December 2023 on developer contributions secured, spent or received during the previous financial year, 1 April 2022 – 31 March 2023.

Councillor Judy Roberts, Cabinet Member for Infrastructure & Development Strategy presented the report.

During discussion, members welcomed the improved processes outlined in the report, and in particular, increased liaison with district council processes.

Councillor Roberts moved and Councillor Levy seconded the recommendations, and they were approved.

**RESOLVED to**

- a) consider the content of the Infrastructure Funding Statement 2022/23**
- b) approve the publication of the report onto the Oxfordshire County Council website**
- c) note the current work underway to review S106 expenditure and governance arrangements.**

**159/23 CAPITAL PROGRAMME UPDATE AND MONITORING REPORT**

(Agenda Item. 11)

Cabinet considered the third capital programme update and monitoring report for 2023/24 which set out the monitoring position based on activity to the end of August 2023. The report also provided an update to the Capital Programme approved by Council in February 2023 taking into account additional funding and new schemes. The updated programme also incorporated changes agreed through the Capital Programme Approval Reports to Cabinet during the financial year as well as new funding.

Councillor Dan Levy, Cabinet Member for Finance, presented the report.

During discussion, members highlighted the range of social, environmental and economic benefits for Oxfordshire arising from the initiatives within the capital programme and, in particular, the rollout of 20mph speed limit schemes across the County.

Councillor Levy moved and Councillor Gregory seconded the recommendations, and they were approved.

**RESOLVED to:**

**Capital Programme**

- 1. Accept the latest capital monitoring position for 2023/24 set out in Annex 1.
- 2. Approve the updated Capital Programme at Annex 2 incorporating the changes set out in this report, noting the return of £3.8m corporate funds from the 20mph Programme (paragraph 58).

**Additions to the Capital Programme**

3. Approve a budget increase of £5.965m to £13.959m for the new primary school in Wallingford (St Nicolas Church of England Primary School). The additional budget will be met from s106 contributions and from basic need (paragraph 55).
4. Approve the inclusion of the capital grant of £17.330m towards the A34 Lodge Hill scheme (paragraph 59).
5. Approve the acceptance and inclusion of £3.8m from the Department for Science, Innovation and Technology (DSIT) 5G Innovation Region funding to implement a project to be known as 'England's Connected Heartland' (paragraph 64).
6. Approve the use of Gainshare funding previously awarded for Digital Infrastructure projects in the event of deliverability issues to the 'England's Connected Heartland' project or to fund further development of the project (paragraphs 65 and 66).

## **160/23 WORKFORCE REPORT AND STAFFING DATA - QUARTER 2 - JULY TO SEPTEMBER 2023**

(Agenda Item. 12)

Cabinet had before it a report providing the workforce profile for quarter 2 including an overview of headcount, agency spend, sickness, turnover and other relevant management information and performance indicators set out in Annex A. The report also set out some of the actions being taken to address the trends identified.

Councillor Neil Fawcett, Cabinet Member for Finance, presented the report and referred, in particular, to some of the trends shown in the report and the favourable comparisons to other similar authorities.

Councillor Fawcett moved and Councillor Leffman seconded the recommendation, and it was approved.

**RESOLVED to note the report.**

## **161/23 FORWARD PLAN AND FUTURE BUSINESS**

(Agenda Item. 13)

The Cabinet considered a list of items for the immediately forthcoming meetings of the Cabinet together with changes and additions set out in the schedule of addenda.

**RESOLVED:** to note the items currently identified for forthcoming meetings.

.....in the Chair

Date of signing .....

## **Divisions Affected – All**

### **CABINET 23 January 2024**

#### **Employee Engagement Survey Report of Performance and Corporate Services Overview & Scrutiny Committee**

### **RECOMMENDATION**

1. The Cabinet is **RECOMMENDED** to —
  - a) Agree to respond to the recommendations contained in the body of this report, and
  - b) Agree that relevant officers will continue to update Scrutiny for 12 months on progress made against actions committed to in response to the recommendations, or until they are completed (if earlier).

### **REQUIREMENT TO RESPOND**

2. In accordance with section 9FE of the Local Government Act 2000, the Performance and Corporate Services Overview & Scrutiny Committee requires that, within two months of the consideration of this report, the Cabinet publish a response to this report and its recommendation.

### **INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW**

3. The Performance Overview and Scrutiny Committee considered a report on the results of and response to Employee Engagement Survey at its meeting on 29 September 2023.
4. The Committee would like to thank Cllr Calum Miller, then-Cabinet portfolio holder for Finance, Lorna Baxter, Director of Finance, Cherie Cuthbertson, Director of Workforce and Organisational Development, and Karen Hopwood, Head of Organisational Development, for preparing and introducing the report, and for attending to answer questions.

## SUMMARY

5. Cllr Miller introduced the survey, which had been undertaken in February 2023 and promoted to all staff members. The survey met with a response rate of 55%, which was believed to be the highest in the organisation's history. Its purpose was to develop a baseline of data on workforce attitudes to enable the tracking of future change, and to understand current issues, particularly in light of the Council's development of the Delivering the Future Together programme. The results highlighted areas of strong performance and areas for development. In response to the results, a corporate action plan was being developed, but data and feedback was also being looked at from a directorate level to determine whether specific interventions and actions needed to be implemented within parts of the Council.
6. Karen Hopwood, Head of Organisational Development, was invited to present the key findings. At 55%, the response rate was over double internal staff surveys, which typically met with responses of 20-25%. This increase was achieved through significant promotion and communication, including writing to staff individually, but also through the employment of competition within directorates.
7. Having used an external provider to deliver the survey and analyse the results provided the Council the ability to benchmark itself against other employers. The Council scored within the 'good' category overall, but there were areas on which it could improve. All questions asked could be traced to eight overriding areas, such as 'my team' or 'leadership'. The Council scored net-positively in all areas.
8. Respondees were also given the opportunity to provide free-text responses to a number of questions, with over 1000 comments registered. Some of the key findings from these were that staff felt very supported by their managers, and that there was a lot of opportunity for development within the Council overall, albeit that they did not always see those opportunities personally. One particular barrier to development was the lack of time available to take up development opportunities. Areas for improvement identified included the visibility of leadership and clarity of messaging. This had been identified as a priority area for action.
9. The intention, having established a baseline data set, was to run a streamlined follow-up survey in February 2024, with a further full survey in 2025. These surveys would be augmented by very short, one-question 'pulse' surveys on the intranet to take the temperature of staff on a particular issue at a particular point in time. Work would also be undertaken to analyse the responses of those with protected characteristics to see if any specific issues were identified, though from an initial scan no major outliers were present. The results of the entire survey were also to be housed within the Data and Insight team, to enable the learning to be used in conjunction with other sources of data to inform future work.



10. In response to the presentation the Committee raised few issues, exploring whether the response rate and level of dissatisfaction were connected, the clarity of the questions posed, whether the emphasis on communication of policies was the cause of dissatisfaction with leadership or the content of the policies themselves, the shape and structure of the organisation, the support for raising issues outside the staff line management structure, concerns over the health and wellbeing of staff, and the degree to which leadership scores related arise primarily from political or operational leadership.
11. Unusually, the Committee makes multiple recommendations directly to the officer corps of the Council. This reflects the fact ultimate responsibility for staffing matters lies with the Head of Paid Service and not the Cabinet. However, the Committee does wish to see the Cabinet taking an interest in the progress against these measures and makes one recommendation accordingly, and another in relation to issues within the political sphere.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

### To the Head of Paid Service:

**Recommendation 1: That the Head of Paid Service, along with other relevant officers, undertake the following:**

- a) **That the staff engagement survey is repeated, in full, on an annual basis**
12. The stated intention at Committee for next steps over the medium term was to repeat the 2023 survey in a slightly truncated form in 2024, and repeating the full survey in 2025. The Committee does not support this. The Committee welcomes the high response-rate to the survey, but it recognises that this level of response did not come without significant corporate effort. The Committee suggests that, if the primary cost to the Council is encouraging staff to participate, a cost which will not diminish with a smaller survey, then the marginal cost of upgrading from a truncated to a full survey will be low. The Committee notes the deep value of the NHS staff survey, which is undertaken annually and with minimal change between iterations.
13. The Committee views the opportunity cost of not repeating the survey in full – more reliable data, quicker identification of trends, normalisation amongst staff – to be too great to justify the small saving of running a smaller survey in 2024.
- b) **That fuller comparative data is requested from Best Companies of the Council's performance against other local authorities and report against this data accordingly in future**
14. The Committee's view is that, whilst it is useful to be able to compare against companies participating in the Best Companies survey on a general basis, it should be recognised that there are very significant differences in the nature of

those companies and the environments in which they work. This is illustrated by the fact that the Council's score amongst all companies lies in the low end of the 50-75% quartile whereas, when asked in committee, it was confirmed that the Council was within the 'upper middle' of local authority participants.

15. It is a fairer judgement of the Council's performance if it can be compared to closer comparators. This could, also, be useful in assessing the degree to which issues of dissatisfaction are within the ability of the Council to address. For instance, were future jointly-agreed pay awards to fall significantly below inflation for an extended period this would likely be reflected in staff satisfaction. However, it would also be reflected at a sectoral level. The greater nuance of data would enable the Council to focus its attention on those areas where it holds the primary levers to improve staff satisfaction.

**c) That future staff engagement surveys are able to differentiate between responses from full and part time staff**

16. Although incomplete at the time of Committee, the news that initial sifting of the engagement results along the lines of protected characteristics do not show any significant outlying experiences amongst these groups is welcome. However, the Committee does not see a justification for looking at particular subsets of staff only through the lens of equality, diversity and inclusion. One very significant group of workers, who have different needs to others, are those who work part time. Clearly there are significant overlaps between part time working and those with protected characteristics, but the Committee sees value in recognising part-time workers as their own group, identifying their particular needs and taking efforts to address them. In the most recent iteration of the survey, full-time and part-time workers could not be differentiated.

**d) That questions be added to future surveys over whether staff consider their work to be of value, and whether they feel it is valued.**

17. One of the key strategic workforce challenges for the Council is retention of staff. Having a high turnover does not allow the Council to make use of growing experience which comes with spending a long time at an organisation, it is inefficient having to recruit and induct new staff regularly, and it can impair the level of service delivery. Levels of pay are clearly a contributor to retention, but perhaps not as much as might be expected, as illustrated in the BBC article below.
18. 'A 2020 McKinsey & Company surveyed showed **82% of employees believe it's important their company has a purpose**; ideally, one that contributes to society and creates meaningful work. And when a company has purpose, its people do, too. Separate McKinsey research from 2022 showed **70% of employees say their personal sense of purpose is defined by their work**, and when that work feels meaningful, they perform better, are much more committed and are about half as likely to go looking for a new job.

... In 2018, a survey of American professionals showed nine out of 10 workers would **trade a percentage of their earnings for work that felt more meaningful**. This drive for meaning is especially true of the newest generation to enter the workforce; in a survey of Gen Z workers from jobs site Monster, **70% of respondents ranked purpose as more important than pay**.<sup>11</sup>

19. The Committee is gladdened by the fact that approximately two thirds of staff feel they are proud of and love working for this organisation, an organisation which a majority of staff recognise as being a difference-maker. However, given the importance of this metric, the Committee would like to see questions which measure whether staff feel their work is valuable and valued are added to future surveys to measure this directly.
20. The recommendations above relate to what the Committee wishes to be done in relation to future iterations of the survey. The following focus on issues which the Committee wishes to see undertaken in response to some of results and discussion.

**e) That work is undertaken to convey the inherent value of staff's work, and the value the organisation places on it.**

21. Linked to the above, whilst 61% of staff confirming that the Council has a strong social conscience, other areas of the survey show significantly higher positive response-rates. The Council's efforts around Delivering the Future Together show positive results at over 80% for around the theme of line management. This shows what can be achieved when the Council focuses on an issue. The Committee welcomes, for example, the implementation of measuring and conveying to social care staff the human impact of their work but it would like to see this taken more broadly and hopes that similar positive results can be achieved on measures of staff feeling their work is valued and valuable.

**f) That the Council develops measures to understand whether it is achieving its intention to become less hierarchical and more of a matrix-working environment**

22. Of the eight themes in the survey, the worst-performing was 'leadership' and the most dissatisfied strata were so-called middle managers. The Committee's conclusion was that this was likely due to be down to middle managers holding significant responsibilities whilst not necessarily having the autonomy to address them. It was suggested that this indicated a notably hierarchical organisation. In response, it was agreed that this had been noted by the Chief Executive and that the plan was to move away from the current model of working, hierarchical (and often siloed), towards a matrix-working environment. This corresponds to the Committee's wishes, but when the question was asked 'how will you know how that change is going?' the answer was not known. The Committee seeks that a measure or set of measures is

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<sup>11</sup> [The search for 'meaning' at work - BBC Worklife](#)

developed so that the Council can get an accurate sense of the progress being made.

**g) That mechanisms are developed to support and develop psychological safety, whereby junior staff feel enabled to challenge senior staff respectfully or pose alternative courses of action in safety without fear of repercussions and that an additional question is added to the survey relating to this**

23. The results of the leadership theme deserve greater consideration. A majority of staff did not feel able to express agreement with the statement 'I have confidence in the leadership skills of the Senior Leadership Team'. The same is true for 'Senior managers truly live the values of this organisation.' Almost half of respondents showed some degree of agreement with the statement that 'senior managers of this organisation do a lot of telling but not much listening.' This sits in contradistinction with the high degree of positivity expressed towards direct managers; 72% of respondents disagreed with the statement.
24. The first two of these results indicates that there is a likelihood that junior staff are not necessarily of the same mind with senior staff as to what the Council should be doing and how it does it, and the latter is suggestive of a culture where communication is top-down. The Committee fully recognises that senior staff are there to lead, not follow, their staff. Nevertheless, the Committee is concerned that communication is insufficiently two-way, and that corporate culture give staff an insufficient sense of psychological safety to challenge or suggest alternative courses of action to their seniors. The Committee wishes to see this changed in the future, but also to see it directly monitored through the addition of a question to the survey directly relating to the confidence of staff to challenge senior staff.

**h) That solutions are developed to address the twin needs of moving to a hybrid working model whilst also ensuring that relationships are developed between more junior and senior staff**

25. Like many organisations, Covid-19 has wrought significant shifts in the way the organisation operates, with a major increase in hybrid working. Clearly, a change of this magnitude throws up challenges, which need to be overcome. Some of those challenges the Council has not, as yet, fully resolved.
26. One of those challenges was identified in Committee to be the consequence of remote-working: making staff outside an employee's regular interactions seem more remote, including senior staff. It was not that senior staff simply needed to be *visible* (as suggested to the Committee by officers) to more junior staff, presenting at meetings and such-like, but they needed to be more *available* to junior staff; there needed to be the opportunity for relationship-development and two-way communication. One possible suggestion is to ensure that senior leaders have perhaps a couple of one hour blocks in their diaries where junior staff can achieve the five-minute chats they need to move their work forward but are struggling to get. This, however, is merely a suggestion, and the Committee is really concerned that the outcome of

making senior staff more available to junior staff within a hybrid working environment is achieved.

**i) That means are developed to allow work which does not deliver value to be dropped, rather than consistently adding to expectations on staff**

27. The Committee was deeply concerned that more than one in three staff agreed to some extent with the statement 'My health is suffering because of my work'. When raised at Committee, it was explained that the feedback provided at listening sessions with staff had been that staff were experiencing increasing demands as new requirements were passed their way, but that concomitant reductions in other work were not communicated.

28. The Committee fully agrees that the Council must adapt, meaning what staff do and how they do it must also change. However, there is a limit to staff capacity and already over one in three staff say they are under too much pressure to do their job well. To adapt to become more efficient the Council needs to internalise not only the question 'what do we need to be doing?' but also 'what do we need to stop doing?' For the sake of staff welfare, but also Council efficiency, the Committee wishes to see it become easier for low-value work to be scrapped and that steps are taken to enable this to be achieved.

**j) That stronger steps are taken to clarify expectations of staff members around working outside standard office hours**

29. A specific piece of feedback was raised in relation to staff health and wellbeing, namely that hybrid working also enabled more flexible working. It is now possible to open your laptop at the weekend, whereas before the office would be locked and there would not be the opportunity to work until it reopened. Feedback was received that staff felt that if they received an e mail outside standard working hours the expectation was that they should respond to it because often somebody would be relying on their response. A number of senior managers are already taking steps to make clear that e mails sent outside standard working hours do not require responses also to be made outside those times. However, the fact it was raised in feedback during the post survey listening sessions indicates that this good practice has not yet permeated far enough and the Committee would like to see it do so.

**k) That further work is taken to understand and unlock the skills which the staff members believe are not being utilised**

30. One final area of concern relates the staff feedback to the statement 'I have skills my organisation could use but doesn't'. Significantly more staff felt they agreed with the statement than disagreed with it (44% vs 30%). The response provided at Committee was not particularly fulsome in this area. Likewise, the Workforce Strategy has significant focus on developing leadership within the organisation, but less recognition is given to understanding how the Council can deliver greater value from the staff it has by using their skills better. If the Council is to become more streamlined and efficient it is imperative that it

makes the most of what it has and the Committee's sense is that understanding and addressing this is a lower priority than is needed.

## **To Cabinet**

31. Whilst direct responsibility for staffing matters rests with the Head of Paid Service, the Committee hopes that the Cabinet will take on ongoing interest in the delivery of actions taken in response to the actions above. One suggestion, though not a recommendation, is that details are included in the Cabinet's regular staffing update reports.

**Recommendation 2: That the Cabinet monitors the actions and progress made in relation to the measures requested of the Head of Paid Service above.**

32. At an operational level, staffing is not a Cabinet responsibility. However, that is not to say that there is no engagement or responsibility for it at all. The results of the survey showed a relative weakness in the organisation within its leadership. The Committee would like to see that the Cabinet has been proactive in providing a level of political leadership around clarifying objectives and values to ensure that staff have a solid understanding of the direction they and the Council are supposed to be travelling in.

**Recommendation 3: That the Cabinet provides to the Committee as part of its response to this recommendation a statement outlining the actions they are taking from a political perspective to align the Council's objectives, values and priorities with the Cabinet's strategic objectives.**

## **FURTHER CONSIDERATION**

33. The Committee is likely to seek an update when the next survey has been undertaken; whether that is in the current civic year or next will depend on the availability of the data.

## **LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

34. Under Part 6.2 (13) (a) of the Constitution Scrutiny has the following power: 'Once a Scrutiny Committee has completed its deliberations on any matter a formal report may be prepared on behalf of the Committee and when agreed by them the Proper Officer will normally refer it to the Cabinet for consideration.
35. Under Part 4.2 of the Constitution, the Cabinet Procedure Rules, s 2 (3) iv) the Cabinet will consider any reports from Scrutiny Committees.

Anita Bradley  
Director of Law and Governance

Annex: Pro-forma Response Template

Background papers: None

Other Documents: None

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January 2024

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## Overview & Scrutiny Recommendation Response Pro forma

*Under section 9FE of the Local Government Act 2000, Overview and Scrutiny Committees must require the Cabinet or local authority to respond to a report or recommendations made thereto by an Overview and Scrutiny Committee. Such a response must be provided within two months from the date on which it is requested<sup>1</sup> and, if the report or recommendations in question were published, the response also must be so.*

*This template provides a structure which respondents are encouraged to use. However, respondents are welcome to depart from the suggested structure provided the same information is included in a response. The usual way to publish a response is to include it in the agenda of a meeting of the body to which the report or recommendations were addressed.*

### Issue: Employee Engagement Survey

**Lead Cabinet Member(s):** Cllr Neil Fawcett, Cabinet Member for Community and Corporate Services

**Date response requested:**<sup>2</sup> 23 January 2024

### Response to report:

*Enter text here.*

### Response to recommendations:

Recommendation	Accepted, rejected or partially accepted	Proposed action (if different to that recommended) and indicative timescale (unless rejected)

<sup>1</sup> Date of the meeting at which report/recommendations were received

<sup>2</sup> Date of the meeting at which report/recommendations were received

## Overview & Scrutiny Recommendation Response Pro forma

<b>That the Cabinet monitors the actions and progress made in relation to the measures requested of the Head of Paid Service. <sup>3</sup></b>		
<b>That the Cabinet provides to the Committee as part of its response to this recommendation a statement outlining the</b>		

<sup>3</sup> These are:

That the Head of Paid Service, along with other relevant officers, undertake the following:

- a) That the staff engagement survey is repeated, in full, on an annual basis
- b) That fuller comparative data is requested from Best Companies of the Council's performance against other local authorities and report against this data accordingly in future
- c) That future staff engagement surveys are able to differentiate between responses from full and part time staff
- d) That questions be added to future surveys over whether staff consider their work to be of value, and whether they feel it is valued.
- e) That work is undertaken to convey the inherent value of staff's work, and the value the organisation places on it.
- f) That the Council develops measures to understand whether it is achieving its intention to become less hierarchical and more of a matrix-working environment
- g) That mechanisms are developed to support and develop psychological safety, whereby junior staff feel enabled to challenge senior staff respectfully or pose alternative courses of action in safety without fear of repercussions and that an additional question is added to the survey relating to this
- h) That solutions are developed to address the twin needs of moving to a hybrid working model whilst also ensuring that relationships are developed between more junior and senior staff
- i) That means are developed to allow work which does not deliver value to be dropped, rather than consistently adding to expectations on staff
- j) That stronger steps are taken to clarify expectations of staff members around working outside standard office hours
- k) That further work is taken to understand and unlock the skills which the staff members believe are not being utilised

## Overview & Scrutiny Recommendation Response Pro forma

actions they are taking from a political perspective to align the Council's objectives, values and priorities with the Cabinet's strategic objectives.		
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## **Divisions Affected – All**

### **CABINET 23 January 2024**

## **Capital Asset Disposal Process Report of Performance and Corporate Services Overview & Scrutiny Committee**

### **RECOMMENDATION**

1. The Cabinet is **RECOMMENDED** to —
  - a) Agree to respond to the recommendations contained in the body of this report, and
  - b) Agree that relevant officers will continue to update Scrutiny for 12 months on progress made against actions committed to in response to the recommendations, or until they are completed (if earlier).

### **REQUIREMENT TO RESPOND**

2. In accordance with section 9FE of the Local Government Act 2000, the Performance and Corporate Services Overview & Scrutiny Committee requires that, within two months of the consideration of this report, the Cabinet publish a response to this report and its recommendation.

### **INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW**

3. The Performance Overview and Scrutiny Committee considered a report on the Council's Capital Asset Disposal Process at its meeting on 29 September 2023.
4. The Committee would like to thank Cllr Calum Miller, then-Cabinet portfolio holder for Finance, Lorna Baxter, Director of Finance, and Michael Smedley, Head of Assets, Estates and Investment, for preparing and introducing the report, and for attending to answer questions.

## SUMMARY

5. Cllr Miller introduced the topic by explaining that the mere existence of the Council's capital asset disposal process marked significant progress; two years previously the Council's asset register had been out of date, having fallen into disrepair following the integration of Carillion staff into the Council. It was noted that there had been much discussion about the role of members in decisions around disposals of property, particularly given public interest in some sites, and that the aim of the process was to provide clarity over how such disposals would be undertaken, keeping in mind its legal obligations around best value. Whilst 'disposal' was the term used to describe the process of determining capital assets to be surplus to Council requirements, engaging with local communities to determine demand for the asset, and going out to market if none arose, did not mean there was either a fire-sale, or that market sales were the only avenue considered. Furthermore, such disposals formed part of a wider strategy in relation to the Council's assets, where decisions on both sales and purchases were made with the Council's long-term financial stability in mind, as well as current and future service requirements.
6. In response to the presentation, the Committee discussed a number of points, including the reasons for there being no policy outlining the Council's priorities when making capital asset disposals, the particular value of cooperative housing, the political shape of the Council and the adequacy of current governance arrangements around disposals, and the learning from other councils over decarbonisation.
7. The Committee makes three recommendations, focusing on clarifying and achieving the outcomes the Council seeks through capital asset disposals, and member communication.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

8. Sitting above any decision to dispose of a capital asset and its potential future uses are the six strategic objectives outlined in the Council's Property and Asset Strategy: 1) Facilitating service delivery, 2) Supporting Oxfordshire communities, 3) Decarbonising our corporate buildings, 4) Enabling agile working and rationalisation of the estate, 5) Maximising our potential investments, and 6) Investing in our schools. What the Council does not have is a policy sitting between individual potential asset disposals and high-level strategic objectives outlining the Council's priorities when making disposals, including who, how the Council would consult, for what purpose assets would be preferred to be disposed of and how different strategic priorities would be weighted.
9. The Committee takes on board the response provided to this challenge, that the best way to get most out of sites, each with their unique characteristics, is to remain completely flexible. This enables it to avoid being fettered by a policy which may not completely align with or appreciate the specific characteristics of the site, nor might it be equipped to include the impact on

the Council of outcomes of other disposals on a particular decision. On the other hand, this approach does have some downsides.

10. Notably, given the different tiers of governance, lower-value but still potentially important assets for residents might be disposed of with only the remote member input of having agreed the strategic priorities. This lacks democratic accountability. Furthermore, allowing officers to make decisions on asset disposals with little steer as to how to weight different priorities is also not particularly transparent. Finally, the Committee is in disagreement with the idea that a policy might be susceptible to making good decisions at an individual level, but that the sum of decisions made under it may not be optimal.
11. To make good decisions it is necessary to be clear on the outcomes you wish to achieve, to know what you are aiming for and to measure possible courses of action against. The Committee considers that the Strategic Priorities are too high level to be meaningful in this regard and the Committee argues that a policy is necessary to develop a vision of the place it wishes to develop and objectives it wishes to achieve through its asset disposals.

**Recommendation 1: That the Council develops a more detailed framework or policy around the outcomes it wishes to see when disposing of capital assets**

12. Strategic Objective 2 of the Council's Property and Asset Strategy is 'Supporting Oxfordshire's Communities'. More specifically, this involves 'working closely with our community and voluntary sector stakeholder to maintain facilities in key locations closer to our residents' and 'focussing on social impact and leveraging the role of our assets and activities in supporting community resilience'. Though more specific, these remain very broad.
13. The Committee's view is that one of the keenest pressures on communities in the county is housing availability and affordability. This pressure merits being recognised specifically. As an illustration of the usefulness of having an picture of what the Council wishes to achieve through its capital asset disposals, the Committee suggests that housing cooperatives are a particularly socially advantageous means through which to address housing availability and affordability.
14. The Committee would like to see the promotion of these, either as part of the policy referenced above, or within the Council's Property and Asset Strategy, as a stated aim of the Council when disposing of assets. As such, it also wishes to see the Council engaging in discussions with local cooperative housing providers to explore opportunities and interest at an early stage.

**Recommendation 2: That the Council amends the strategic objectives it seeks to achieve through an asset disposal to include cooperative housing within objective 2, and that the Council undertakes to engage with cooperative housing providers.**

15. A further (or alternative) means of mitigating the Committee's concerns over passing decisions over asset disposals over to officers, who are not usually part of the community in which the asset sits, is earlier involvement of members. This is felt to be a particular issue for opposition members, given the ongoing interest and updates the Cabinet Member for Finance will have in all capital asset disposals and the expected internal discussions within the administration.
16. Members are elected to represent their divisions. They are better placed than a small team of officers tasked with making decisions across the whole county to understand what the needs of a specific locality are, what opportunities exist, and whom officers might need to speak to in order to explore these opportunities further. If the Council is to engage with local communities to determine demand for assets to be disposed of before going to market, the local knowledge of members is vital in ensuring opportunities are not missed.
17. The Committee encourages much earlier discussion with members to take place as a matter of course to ensure opportunities to achieve the Council's strategic objectives through capital asset disposals are maximised.

**Recommendation 3: That the Council conveys information about potential asset disposals to opposition parties at an earlier point and consults with them over potential uses and helpful community contacts.**

## **OBSERVATION**

18. Strategic objective 3 of the Property and Asset Strategy concerns the decarbonisation of the Council's estate. Whether or not the Council decides to move away from County Hall or not it would do well to learn from other authorities which have significantly decarbonised their municipal buildings. Hampshire County Council is relatively nearby and has recently undertaken a significant programme of decarbonisation, including at their County Hall. The Committee sees value in the Council organising a site visit for relevant staff and interested councillors to see and learn from what has been achieved in Hampshire so as to inform the Council's own decarbonisation efforts.

**Observation 1: The Committee sees value in learning from Hampshire County Council's decarbonisation efforts and encourages the Council to consider arranging a site visit.**

## **FURTHER CONSIDERATION**

19. The Committee is not anticipating it will look at this issue directly again in the medium term, but by the time of Cabinet it will have considered specific



instances of potential disposals through the City Centre Accommodation Strategy. This will likely be how this issue will be addressed into the future.

## LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

20. Under Part 6.2 (13) (a) of the Constitution Scrutiny has the following power:  
'Once a Scrutiny Committee has completed its deliberations on any matter a formal report may be prepared on behalf of the Committee and when agreed by them the Proper Officer will normally refer it to the Cabinet for consideration.
21. Under Part 4.2 of the Constitution, the Cabinet Procedure Rules, s 2 (3) iv) the Cabinet will consider any reports from Scrutiny Committees.

Anita Bradley  
Director of Law and Governance

Annex:	Pro-forma Response Template
Background papers:	None
Other Documents:	None
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January 2024

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## Overview & Scrutiny Recommendation Response Pro forma

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### Issue: Capital Asset Disposal Process

**Lead Cabinet Member(s):** Cllr Dan Levy, Cabinet Member for Finance

**Date response requested:**<sup>2</sup> 23 January 2024

### Response to report:

*Enter text here.*

### Response to recommendations:

Recommendation	Accepted, rejected or partially accepted	Proposed action (if different to that recommended) and indicative timescale (unless rejected)
That the Council develops a more detailed framework or policy around the outcomes it		

<sup>1</sup> Date of the meeting at which report/recommendations were received

<sup>2</sup> Date of the meeting at which report/recommendations were received

## Overview & Scrutiny Recommendation Response Pro forma

wishes to see when disposing of capital assets		
That the Council amends the strategic objectives it seeks to achieve through an asset disposal to include cooperative housing within objective 2, and that the Council undertakes to engage with cooperative housing providers.		
That the Council conveys information about potential asset disposals to opposition parties at an earlier point and consults with them over potential uses and helpful community contacts.		

## **Divisions Affected – All**

### **CABINET 23 January 2024**

## **Social Value Annual Report Report of Performance and Corporate Services Overview & Scrutiny Committee**

### **RECOMMENDATION**

1. The Cabinet is **RECOMMENDED** to —
  - a) Agree to respond to the recommendations contained in the body of this report, and
  - b) Agree that relevant officers will continue to update Scrutiny for 12 months on progress made against actions committed to in response to the recommendation, or until they are completed (if earlier).

### **REQUIREMENT TO RESPOND**

2. In accordance with section 9FE of the Local Government Act 2000, the Performance and Corporate Services Overview & Scrutiny Committee requires that, within two months of the consideration of this report, the Cabinet publish a response to this report and its recommendation.

### **INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW**

3. The Performance Overview and Scrutiny Committee considered a report on the Council's Social Value Annual Report 2022/23 at its meeting on 29 September 2023.
4. The Committee would like to thank Cllr Calum Miller, then-Cabinet portfolio holder for Finance, Lorna Baxter, Director of Finance, and Melissa Sage, Head of Procurement and Contract Management, for preparing and introducing the report, and for attending to answer questions.

## SUMMARY

5. Cllr Miller began the presentation noting that, whilst the results showed successes though its social value policy, the first year of reported results meant that the Council was still leaning towards its pilot stages and refinements would be welcomed. Weightings for social value considerations within tenders were a balance between social value and commercial value, but the Council's weightings had been deemed by The Social Value Portal as sitting in the 'sweet spot' where social value was maximised without increasing prices.
6. Given the ongoing reporting, the Head of Procurement and Contract Management was able to provide an updated figure on the value of social value delivered - £900,745. This was an increase from the reported £534k. Seeing promised value begin to be delivered at scale was very welcome. Responsibility for tracking the delivery of promised social value was the responsibility of the Council's partner, the Social Value Portal. Commitments made by companies were a contractual obligation, and failure to deliver the promised value would leave the Council with the standard remedies for breaches of contract.
7. In response to the presentation the Committee discussed the flexibility of the Council to target its social value requirements in a more bespoke way, whether the weighting for social value within tenders was optimal, whether there was value in extending social value weightings to lower-value contracts, definitions of specific Themes Outcomes and Measures (TOMs), and ways of providing support to Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs). The Committee makes four recommendations, all of which seek to help the Council clarify how it might improve and develop its work thus far.

## RECOMMENDATION

8. Given the early-stage development of the Council's social value policy the Council has adopted a broad spectrum of TOMs, thereby allowing suppliers to have a range of avenues through which they might provide social value. However, this is a fairly passive approach. Whilst clearly all social value is welcome, that is not to say that it is all social value is equal. The monetary value of TOMs is not set at a local level, but at a national one. It is possible, therefore, that the value a particular TOM provides is less – or more – valuable in Oxfordshire than elsewhere. For instance, in a county with low levels of unemployment, creating local jobs may be less of a concern than removing car and lorry journeys from the road. This fact is supported by the fact that the Council's intention that a specific 4% weighting on contracts should be applied to environmental TOMs.
9. The Committee sees an opportunity to influence behaviour further in a more socially desirable way by being more selective and targeted in the TOMs it chooses. As a precursor to this, it is necessary that it clarifies what its

objectives and priorities are, before selecting and weighting specific TOMs in a way which would best contribute towards those goals.

**Recommendation 1: That the Council clarifies the objectives it wishes to achieve through its social value policy, choosing measures and weightings which support those objectives.**

10. Further to the above, the Committee also expresses doubts as to whether the TOMs which are available through the Social Value Portal are all effective in delivering significant social value, or that the Social Value Portal's list is exhaustive. For instance, two environmental TOMs are NT64 'Contributions made to certified carbon offset funds (compliant with UKGBC guidance)' and NT53 'Innovative measures to safeguard the environment and respond to the Climate Emergency'. The Committee is critical of the efficacy of these, with offsetting now being considered an option of last resort and of relatively low environmental benefit. Equally, the second – a TOM which the Council has adopted – is highly speculative. The truth is that much innovation does not fully realise its claims. As such, firms may deliver on their promises to do these things but not actually deliver on-the-ground social value.
11. The Committee also suggests that there are sources of social value which are not included within Social Value Portal's list. For example, it is felt that the cooperative model of ownership is itself a social good, and yet that is not an option within the list.
12. The Committee recognises that there are practical benefits to using the Social Value Portal's list – other local organisations also use the same TOMs, which reduces the administrative burdens on local organisations, and the value accorded to each one has already been signed off by government, allowing them simply to be picked up and used. However, this does also mean that the Council has to work with what it is given by an external provider, rather than maximising the value it can garner from its contracts. The Committee suggests that this is insufficiently ambitious, and that it would be preferable if the Council were to develop its own bespoke measures of social value.

**Recommendation 2: That the Council investigates how it might develop a more bespoke model of social value, to include consideration of: how it might support cooperatives to tender for contracts, and selecting TOMs which truly drive climate action benefits.**

13. The Committee is keen to see SMEs undertaking work on behalf of the Council. The benefits are many; jobs are likely to be created for local people, local suppliers are more likely to be used, jobs will likely involve less travel, profits are more likely to re-circulate within the local economy, and local businesses will be contributing towards business rates, all of which are of value to local residents. Although local government outperforms other parts of the public sector in this regard, in 2022 only 38% of procurement spend was

with SMEs.<sup>1</sup>

14. The Committee explored in its meeting multiple avenues to try and make it easier for SMEs to tender for Council contracts, such as breaking up contracts, and joint-procurement. However, it was advised that the former is not legal, and the latter has the tendency to increase the size of contracts, which has the consequence of making them less accessible for SMEs to deliver. The main area of support available for SMEs from the Council was reported to be in the pre-engagement phase of a contract. If this is the primary area with potential to improve the ability of SMEs to bid for Council contracts then the Committee encourages the Council to look more closely at how it can deliver more of this, and how it can legally reduce the barriers they face.

**Recommendation 3: That the Council investigates how it can undertake greater pre-engagement with SMEs and cooperatives to understand the issues faced in securing contracts**

15. Whether or not the Committee's recommendations are agreed, the Council's social value policy remains in its early stages. As such, it is likely that it will require additional tweaks and refinements to make it more effective and/or efficient. The Committee is keen to see the potential of the Council's powers under the Social Value Act realised and is keen to know, and to hold the Cabinet accountable for, its forthcoming plans to improve its social value policy further.

**Recommendation 4: That the Council provides as part of its response to this recommendation a written outline of the next steps it intends to take develop and finesse its social value policy.**

## **FURTHER CONSIDERATION**

16. There has been some expression of interest within the Committee to consider this work further, but the precise shape and timing is as yet undetermined.

## **LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

17. Under Part 6.2 (13) (a) of the Constitution Scrutiny has the following power: 'Once a Scrutiny Committee has completed its deliberations on any matter a formal report may be prepared on behalf of the Committee and when agreed by them the Proper Officer will normally refer it to the Cabinet for consideration.'
18. Under Part 4.2 of the Constitution, the Cabinet Procedure Rules, s 2 (3) iv) the Cabinet will consider any reports from Scrutiny Committees.

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<sup>1</sup> [SME Procurement Tracker 2022 - British Chamber of Commerce & Tussell](#)



Anita Bradley  
Director of Law and Governance

Annex:	Pro-forma Response Template
Background papers:	None
Other Documents:	None
Contact Officer:	Tom Hudson Scrutiny Manager <a href="mailto:tom.hudson@oxfordshire.gov.uk">tom.hudson@oxfordshire.gov.uk</a> Tel: 07519 667976

January 2024

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## Overview & Scrutiny Recommendation Response Pro forma

*Under section 9FE of the Local Government Act 2000, Overview and Scrutiny Committees must require the Cabinet or local authority to respond to a report or recommendations made thereto by an Overview and Scrutiny Committee. Such a response must be provided within two months from the date on which it is requested<sup>1</sup> and, if the report or recommendations in question were published, the response also must be so.*

*This template provides a structure which respondents are encouraged to use. However, respondents are welcome to depart from the suggested structure provided the same information is included in a response. The usual way to publish a response is to include it in the agenda of a meeting of the body to which the report or recommendations were addressed.*

### Issue: Social Value Annual Report 2022/23

**Lead Cabinet Member(s):** Cllr Dan Levy, Cabinet Member for Finance

**Date response requested:**<sup>2</sup> 23 January 2024

### Response to report:

*Enter text here.*

### Response to recommendations:

Recommendation	Accepted, rejected or partially accepted	Proposed action (if different to that recommended) and indicative timescale (unless rejected)
That the Council clarifies the objectives it wishes to achieve through its social value		

<sup>1</sup> Date of the meeting at which report/recommendations were received

<sup>2</sup> Date of the meeting at which report/recommendations were received

## Overview & Scrutiny Recommendation Response Pro forma

<b>policy, choosing measures and weightings which support those objectives.</b>		
<b>That the Council investigates how it might develop a more bespoke model of social value, to include consideration of: how it might support cooperatives to tender for contracts, and selecting TOMs which truly drive climate action benefits.</b>		
<b>That the Council investigates how it can undertake greater pre-engagement with SMEs and cooperatives to understand the issues faced in securing contracts</b>		
<b>That the Council provides as part of its response to this recommendation a written outline of the next steps it intends to take develop and finesse its social value policy.</b>		

**Divisions affected – All**

**CABINET**

**23 JANUARY 2024**

## **FUTURE COUNCIL GOVERNANCE GROUP – FINAL REPORT**

### **Report of the Director of Law & Governance and Monitoring Officer**

#### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

1. To note the work undertaken by the Future Council Governance Group including the following recommendations for consideration by the Cabinet:
  - 1.1 To review the inter-relationship between the Cabinet and Scrutiny and introduce an integrated forward plan which brings together the individual work plans of the Cabinet and Overview and Scrutiny Committees.
  - 1.2 To evaluate the cost and processes for a citizens' panel with a view to selecting one topic in 2024-25 for review by a citizens' panel and review its success or otherwise before committing to any future panels.
  - 1.3 To reinvigorate locality meetings by inviting local stakeholders as necessary and undertake a wider review of locality working including the practicalities of delegating some budgets and allowing recommendations to be made to the Cabinet and Cabinet Members.
  - 1.4 To take steps to embed 'futures planning' across the Council and for it to become integral part of the decision-making process and scrutiny work plans.

#### **Background**

2. The final report of the Future Council Governance Group is attached at Annex 1. It was presented to the Audit and Governance Committee on 29 November 2023 by Cllr Stefan Gawrysiak, chair of the cross-party group. Members of the committee welcomed the findings and recommendations of the Future Council Governance Group.
3. The group's recommendation relating to the formation of the Education and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee was supported at the full Council meeting on 12 December 2023. The terms of reference for the new committee were developed ahead of Council and were approved at the meeting.

4. The other recommendations made by the group, including the inter-relationship between Cabinet and Scrutiny, participatory process, locality working and futures planning, will need to be taken forward by the Cabinet, Leader of the Council and individual Cabinet Members.

### **Governance model**

5. There is no consensus amongst members of the group for changing from leader with cabinet to a committee system. It is too late in the current council cycle, with the next election in May 2025, to consider a governance change. Changing to a different governance model at the present time would provide an unnecessary distraction from critical service issues.

### **Improving the current governance arrangements**

6. Members of the group note that the recent change to the Administration at the Council and note that this has had an impact on how political groups operate and the wider governance arrangements. They are anxious that any changes are robust enough to deal with future changes, irrespective of how many political groups sit inside or outside the Administration. A critical element is giving backbench members more opportunities to engage in policy development with influence decision-making.

### **Integrated forward plan**

7. The Scrutiny process needs to be reviewed to ensure that the timing of items fits with the Cabinet decision-making process. Whenever possible, Cabinet Members should present reports to Overview and Scrutiny Committees and be accompanied by the relevant senior officers.

### **Deputy Cabinet Members**

8. The appointment of Deputy Cabinet Members would allow more members to engage in the decision-making process and spread the workload. It is noted that the power to appoint Deputy Cabinet Members rests with the Leader of the Council.
9. There should not be an expectation that Deputy Cabinet Members are appointed for every portfolio but they could be useful where the Leader, following consultation with the relevant Cabinet Member, believes they would be of value to lead on a topic or help in managing the workload associated with a particular portfolio.
10. It is not envisaged that these positions will attract a special responsibility allowance as part of the Councillor Allowance Scheme.

## **Cabinet Advisory Groups**

11. Cabinet Members are already able to set up and chair Cabinet Advisory Groups on a time-limited basis to focus on individual policy areas. Cabinet Advisory Groups allow backbench members with an interest or expertise in particular areas to help with policy development. Deputy Cabinet Members could chair these groups when required to allow the workload to be shared.

## **Participatory process and deliberative democracy**

12. One of the core ingredients for deliberative democracy is that it should be able to plug into existing democratic structures and fit into policy making. It should not be seen as a separate process for it to be successful.
13. The approach works best when it looks at particular issues where there is not a clear way forward. A citizens' panel provides an opportunity to consider priorities and acceptable trade-offs.
14. Citizens' panels should complement existing member arrangements and care is required in choosing the right topics. Run well, citizens' juries provide opportunities for a more people to get involved in local democracy and influence things that matter to local people. Oxford University's Kellogg College ran a particularly successful process that had empowered local people.
15. There is, however, divided opinion amongst members of the group on the value of citizen's panels. Some members believe that they provide an opportunity for wider public engagement on issues where there are a range of options open to Council. By engaging more widely views are likely to become less polarised and solutions can be co-produced with community representatives and other stakeholders.
16. It is recognised that the Council's financial position is becoming extremely challenging and it may be difficult to provide adequate resources for a citizen's panel to undertake an effective review of a particular issue.
17. Other members of the group did not support a citizen's panel as they feel that it undermines the democratic accountability of councillors and to be effective would require committing significant resources. They believe that a 'deep dive' led by Scrutiny with expert witnesses is a better way to look at a particular issue and can be undertaken with significantly less resources.

## **Locality working**

18. Members value the meetings which allow them to meet with members from neighbouring divisions and Council officers. They note that members bring a wealth of local knowledge which the Council often fails to tap in to and locality meetings provide an opportunity to utilise that knowledge in decision-making. Locality meetings have the potential to be a key source of information for the

Council in understanding the needs of individual communities but they are currently under-utilised.

19. Local stakeholders could be invited to meetings as necessary and there might be an opportunity for some budgets to be delegated to a local level. It is also suggested that locality groups should be able to make recommendations to the Cabinet or Cabinet Member.
20. There are already good examples of members from different political groups working well together in particular localities. It is hoped that this good practice can be extended throughout the county.

### **Future and foresights policy-making**

21. Intergeneration fairness (IGF) is a way to negotiate needs between people alive today and those who will live in the future. In reality, it is 'easy to say but harder to do'. It is often difficult to relate to the issues that are likely to impact on future generations.
22. The IGF Framework has three essential elements: policy assessment, national dialogue and institutional ownership. Work undertaken in Japan shows that people could adopt a different mindset of looking towards the future and the results are very different. The National Assembly for Wales is legislating for future generations including sustainable development.
23. Cllr Charlie Hicks has been appointed as the Champion for Future Generations. His role is to make sure that young people's voices were heard, including those not yet born.
24. Members of the group are anxious that 'futures planning' is embedded across the Council and becomes an integral part of policy making in the same way as climate change considerations.

### **Corporate policies and priorities**

25. The Council has a stated priority to ensure a vibrant participatory democracy

### **Financial implications**

26. Additional costs may arise depending on the evaluation of the citizens' panel and the review of localities including the practicalities of delegating some budgets. These will need to be addressed as part of the outcome of those pieces of work and upon future recommendations to Cabinet.

*Comments checked by – Lorna Baxter, Executive Director Resources and Section 151 Officer*



## **Legal implications**

27. There are no direct legal implications from the recommendations in this report as they all relate to operating within the current governance model of Leader and cabinet as included in Section 9B of Part 1A of the Local Government Act 2000.  
*Comments checked by – Anita Bradley, Director of Law & Governance and Monitoring Officer*

## **Staff implications**

28. The actions identified by the Future Council Governance Group will require the involvement of staff across the organisation, most notably Democratic Services and Scrutiny, in helping to facilitate some of the recommendations.

**Anita Bradley**

**Director of Law & Governance and Monitoring Officer**

Annex 1 – Future Council Governance Group final report

Background papers:

- a) Report to full Council on 12 December 2022 – Review of Council Governance Arrangements
- b) Report to Audit and Governance Committee on 20 September 2023 – Future Council Governance Group
- c) Report to the Audit and Governance Committee on 29 November 2023 – Future Council Governance Group
- d) Report to full Council on 12 December 2023 – Future Council Governance Group
- e) Centre for Governance and Scrutiny paper: Rethinking Council Governance

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Head of Governance

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January 2024

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## AUDIT AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

29 November 2023

### Future Council Governance Group final report

#### Report of the Director of Law & Governance and Monitoring Officer

#### RECOMMENDATIONS

1. To note the work undertaken by the Future Council Governance Group including the findings and recommendations at paragraphs 35 to 40 of the report.

#### Council motion – 1 November 2022

2. The Council debated and agreed the following motion proposed by Cllr Charlie Hicks and seconded by Cllr Judy Roberts on 1 November 2022:

*This Council has considered a change of Governance in the past from Leader and Cabinet to having a more inclusive Committee structure. The Oxfordshire Fair Deal Alliance wishes to review the decision-making structures of the County Council, with the aim of operating in a much more inclusive way that can involve all the talents of the Council.*

*The Council now requests the Director of Law and Governance to institute a Full Governance Review of the County Council as soon as practicable, with any recommended changes to the Council's Executive and Governance structure to be decided by Full Council and fully implemented by May 2024.*

3. In response to the motion, the Director of Law and Governance prepared a report for the Council meeting on 13 December 2022 setting out the process for undertaking a governance review. At that meeting, it was agreed that a Future Council Governance Group would be established that reports to the Audit and Governance Committee which will make any recommendations to Council.
4. Following the meeting, the members nominated to the group were:

Liberal Democrat Green Alliance(4)	Cllrs Robin Bennett, Andrew Gant, Judy Roberts and Roz Smith
Conservative Independent Alliance(3)	Cllrs Yvonne Constance, Ted Fenton and Eddie Reeves (Cllr Kieron Mallen has replaced Cllr Ted Fenton)
Labour and Cooperative Party Group(2)	Cllrs Brad Baines and Charlie Hicks
Non-aligned Independent(1)	Cllr Stefan Gawrysiak

5. At the same meeting on 13 December 2022, the following motion proposed by Cllr Michael Waine and seconded by Cllr Eddie Reeves was supported:

*This Council welcomes the changes to its scrutiny function generally and the creation of dedicated People, Place and Performance & Corporate Services committees offering more targeted scrutiny of specific workstreams.*

*Notwithstanding the successes of the People Scrutiny Committee in providing effective scrutiny of the very significant challenges facing Adult Social Care and Children's Services, Education and Schools issues have, at times, appeared to be marginalised.*

*Accordingly, Council resolves to ask the Audit and Governance Committee to consider the question of whether the Education Scrutiny Committee should be re-established as part of its review of the Council's scrutiny function in any governance review so as to ensure that Education policy issues can be more fully addressed by members on a deliberative and cross-party basis.*

6. At the Council meeting on 28 March 2023, Cllr Charlie Hicks proposed and Cllr Robin Bennett seconded a motion on 'Future Generations' which included the following request:

*That the Future Council Governance Group, as part of its remit, develop recommendations on how to structure political decision-making in the council in a way which best considers the impact of decisions on future generations, including exploring the role of deliberative and participatory processes (including citizens' assemblies) as part of routine council governance and decision making.*

### **Future Council Governance Group**

7. At its first meeting the Future Council Governance Group (the Group), members elected Cllr Stefan Gawrysiak as the chair. Six meetings of the Group have been held: 12 May, 30 May, 29 June, 7 July, 21 September and 27 November 2023.
8. The parent committee for the Group is the Audit and Governance Committee. The committee received a report on progress with the review on 20 September 2023 and a position statement is included with the agenda pack for the meeting on 29 November 2023. This is the final report of the Group and is presented to the committee with recommendations, as appropriate, going forward to full Council on 12 December 2023.
9. The Centre for Governance and Scrutiny (CfGS) has been engaged to work with the Group as they have particular expertise in undertaking local authority governance reviews. Their work has focused on the following areas:

- Current governance framework, including strengths and weaknesses
- Purpose and drivers for changes and improvements to the governance framework.
- Design principles to inform any possible change
- Alternative ways of working and different structural solutions

## **Changing Governance**

10. The Council has operated the leader and cabinet model of executive arrangements since 2002 in line with the requirements of the Local Government Act 2000.
11. Local authorities must operate one of three governance models:
  - a) Executive arrangements including leader and cabinet or directly elected mayor and cabinet.
  - b) Committee system broadly similar to the governance arrangements operated by councils prior to the Local Government Act 2000.
  - c) Submit a different form of governance for consideration by the Secretary of State. It is understood that none have been submitted to date.
12. There are two ways for local authorities to change their governance arrangements:
  - a) Through a Council resolution and the new arrangements become effective at the following Council Annual Meeting. After which the Council is locked into new governance arrangements for five years.
  - b) Through a referendum. After which the Council is locked into new governance arrangements for 10 years and can only be changed again via another referendum.
13. The perceived benefits of the leader and cabinet model are quicker decision-making. By contrast, the committee system is usually viewed as more consensual.
14. In reality, a governance change to a committee system was unlikely in itself to rebalance decision-making in favour of members. The committee system may allow more discussion among members at a meeting ahead of a decision but the outcome is often the same. It did not automatically mean a change in how a local authority operates.
15. A parallel channel of work is needed to bring about change in behaviours around how members relate to each other and how members relate to officers. Discussions often coalesce around particular issues that have the potential to be incorporated within current structures.
16. Some local authorities have changed governance model to committee system and later reverted back to leader and cabinet.

17. Reviews usually aim to be cost neutral but there is always a cost to change. A great deal of work is involved in changing governance arrangements. Most aspects of the constitution have to be changed including procedural rules and schemes of delegation.
18. A stream-lined committee system can be run at no extra cost in terms of officer support but arguably a well-run committee system with strong member engagement requires more officer support.
19. The work involved in a governance review is rarely wasted as it allows the Council to reflect on its current operating arrangements and introduce improvements even if the governance model stays the same.

### **Design principles**

20. The Group discussed the principles that could be used to determine which features of a governance system were most important. The following areas were highlighted:
  - a) Clear relationships between members and officers – it is important to people that there be clarity about member and officer roles, as part of a culture of strong member leadership.
  - b) Cost neutrality - members felt that the costs of any new arrangements should be the same or lower than the costs of the existing system, recognising that there is inevitably a cost associated with any transition itself.
  - c) Transparency and access to information - members wanted to have the confidence that they would obtain the right information, presented in the right way, at the right time, in order to support them to carry out their roles.
  - d) Provision for better public engagement and more effective area working
  - e) Sufficient flexibility to account for no overall control
21. It was recognised that meaningful involvement from a large number of members in policy development is a challenge in any governance system. Some key questions were worked through:
  - a) What kind of briefing do members need and expect on forthcoming decisions?
  - b) Is there a need for more active involvement in decision-making alongside briefings?
  - c) What might your expectations be around involvement in policy-making?
  - d) What do you think some of the limits or constraints might be?
22. Space needs to be built for member oversight of performance, finance and risk issues. There is always a risk, in any governance system, that such important management activity is squeezed out. At the same time, oversight should be proportionate and not hinder the Council undertaking business as usual.

23. Mechanisms for public engagement and locality working were identified by members and this fed into discussions around participatory democracy and 'Future Generations'.

### **Participatory process and deliberative democracy**

24. The Group received a presentation via MS Teams by Claudia Chwalisz, Founder and Chief Executive Officer of Democracy Next. She highlighted the key aspects relating to participation, representation and deliberation. She provided examples of success including the French Citizens' Assembly on 'end of life' which heard from more than 60 subject matter experts over 27 days. The result was 92% consensus on recommendations for change.
25. One of the core ingredients for deliberative democracy is that it should be able to plug into existing democratic structures and fit into policy making. It should not be seen as a separate process for it to be successful.
26. The approach works best when it looks at particular issues where there is not a clear way forward. Urban planning is a good example where it is unlikely that one approach would be supported by everyone. A citizens' panel provides an opportunity to consider priorities and acceptable trade-offs.
27. Citizens' panels should complement existing member arrangements and care is required in choosing the right topics. Run well, citizens' juries provide opportunities for a more people to get involved in local democracy and influence things that matter to local people. Oxford University's Kellogg College ran a particularly successful process that had empowered local people.
28. Panels could not be run on a shoestring and funds are required to compensate the individuals involved along with fees for subject matter experts. It is also important for proper officer support arrangements to be in place.

### **Futures and foresights policy-making**

29. The Group received a presentation via MS Teams by Darja Vrščaj from the School of International Futures. She explained that the main principle of the approach was considering the well-being of both future and living generations.
30. Intergeneration fairness (IGF) is a way to negotiate needs between people alive today and those who will live in the future. In reality, it is 'easy to say but harder to do'. It is often difficult to relate to the issues that are likely to impact on future generations.
31. The IGF Framework has three essential elements: policy assessment, national dialogue and institutional ownership.

- 32. Cllr Charlie Hicks had been appointed as the Champion for Future Generations. His role is to make sure that young people's voices were heard, including those not yet born. He has joined the Future Pioneer's Network which is an international special interest group around future generations.
- 33. Work undertaken in Japan shows that people could adopt a different mindset of looking towards the future and the results are very different. The National Assembly for Wales is legislating for future generations including sustainable development.
- 34. There may be opportunities for the Council to use futures planning as part of scrutiny work planning.

## **Findings and recommendations**

### **35. Governance model**

- 35.1 There is no consensus for changing from leader with cabinet to a committee system. It is too late in the current council cycle, with the next election in May 2025, to consider a governance change. Changing to a different governance model at the present time would provide an unnecessary distraction from critical service issues.

### **36. Improving the current governance arrangements**

- 36.1 Members note the recent change to the Administration at the Council and note that this has had an impact on how political groups operate and the wider governance arrangements. They are anxious that any changes are robust enough to deal with future changes, irrespective of how many political groups sit inside or outside are in the Administration. A critical element is giving backbench members more opportunities to engage in policy development with influence decision-making.
- 36.2 The Scrutiny process needs to be reviewed to ensure that the timing of items fitted with the Cabinet decision-making process. Whenever possible, Cabinet Members should present reports to Overview and Scrutiny Committees and be accompanied by the relevant senior officers.
- 36.3 More meetings of the Overview and Scrutiny Committees may be required to provide sufficient coverage of Council services. The Council Constitution provides for this as it states that there will be a minimum of four committee meetings each year. Scrutiny committee dates have been published up until May 2024 and extra meetings can be arranged before then. For the 2024-25 Civic Year, the number of scheduled meetings can be increased as required.
- 36.4 More scrutiny focus is required on Young People and in particular Education. A Young People and Education Overview and Scrutiny Committee will provide that focus, and allow coverage of critical areas such as Special Educational Needs.



### **a) Integrated Forward Plan**

**Recommendation 1** – To review the inter-relationship between the Cabinet and Scrutiny and introduce an Integrated Forward Plan which brings together the individual work plans of the Cabinet and Overview and Scrutiny Committees.

**Recommendation 2** – To establish an Education and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

- 36.5 The terms of reference of the People Overview and Scrutiny Committee to be adjusted as necessary. There is an expectation that Scrutiny Committee Chairs will work together to ensure that Scrutiny of areas relating to the transition into adult life are undertaken effectively and avoid duplication. The Council Constitution already includes a requirement for Scrutiny Committee Chairs to liaise with each other to avoid the same issue being considered by more than one committee.

### **b) Deputy Cabinet Members**

- 36.6 The appointment of Deputy Cabinet Members would allow more members to engage in the decision-making process and spread the workload. It is noted that the power to appoint Deputy Cabinet Members rests with the Leader of the Council. There should not be an expectation that Deputy Cabinet Members are appointed for every portfolio but they could be useful where the Leader, following consultation with the relevant Cabinet Member, believes they would be of value to lead on a topic or help in managing the workload associated with a particular portfolio.
- 36.7 Cabinet Members are already able to set up and chair Cabinet Advisory Groups on a time-limited basis to focus on individual policy areas. Cabinet Advisory Groups allow backbench members with an interest or expertise in particular areas to help with policy development. Deputy Cabinet Members could chair these groups when required to allow the workload to be shared.
37. **Participatory process**
- 37.1 There is divided opinion on the value of citizen's panels. Some members believe that they provide an opportunity for wider public engagement on issues where there are a range of options open to Council. By engaging more widely views are likely to become less polarised and solutions can be co-produced with community representatives. It is recognised, however, that the Council's financial position is becoming extremely challenging and it may be difficult to provide adequate resources for a citizen's panel to undertake an effective review of a particular issue.

- 37.2 Other members do not support a citizen's panel as they feel that it undermines the democratic accountability of councillors and to be effective would require committing significant resources. They believe that a 'deep dive' led by Scrutiny with expert witnesses is a better way to look at a particular issue and can be undertaken with significantly less resources.

**Recommendation 3** – To evaluate the cost and processes for a citizen's panel with a view to selecting one topic in 2024-25 for review by a citizens' panel and review its success or otherwise before committing to any future panels.

**38. Locality working**

- 38.1 Members value the meetings which allow them to meet with members from neighbouring divisions and Council officers. They note that members bring a wealth of local knowledge which the Council often fails to tap in to and locality meetings provide an opportunity to utilise that knowledge in decision-making. Locality meetings have the potential to be a key source of information for the Council in understanding the needs of individual communities but they are currently under-utilised.

- 38.2 Local stakeholders could be invited to meetings as necessary and there might be an opportunity for some budgets to be delegated to a local level. It is also suggested that locality groups should be able to make recommendations to the Cabinet or Cabinet Member.

- 38.3 There are already good examples of members from different political groups working well together in particular localities. It is hoped that this good practice can be extended throughout the county.

**Recommendation 4** – To reinvigorate locality meetings by inviting local stakeholders as necessary and undertake a wider review of locality working including the practicalities of delegating some budgets and allowing recommendations to be made to the Cabinet and Cabinet Members.

**39. Future and foresights planning**

- 39.1 Member are anxious that 'futures planning' is not just seen as the remit of the Education and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee. It should be embedded across the Council and form part of the work plans for all of the Scrutiny Committees.

**Recommendation 5** – To take steps to embed 'futures planning' across the Council and for it to become integral part of the decision-making process and scrutiny work plans.

## **Corporate policies and priorities**

40. The Council has a stated priority to ensure a vibrant participatory democracy

## **Financial implications**

41. There will be additional costs associated with the recommendations included in the report, in particular participatory process, expanding the remit of locality meetings and embedding 'futures planning' across the Council. These have not yet been assessed in any detail.

## **Legal implications**

42. Governance arrangements are included in the Local Government Act 2000 (LGA 2000), as amended by the Localism Act 2011. Section 9B of Part 1A of the LGA 2000 sets out the three governance models: executive arrangements, committee system or prescribed arrangements. Section 9BA sets out the power of the Secretary of State to prescribe additional permitted governance arrangements.  
*Comments checked by – Anita Bradley, Director of Law & Governance and Monitoring Officer*

## **Staff implications**

43. The actions identified by the Future Council Governance Group will require the involvement of staff across the organisation, most notably Democratic Services and Scrutiny, in helping to facilitate some of the recommendations.

**Anita Bradley**

**Director of Law & Governance and Monitoring Officer**

Background papers:

- a) Report to full Council on 12 December 2022 – Review of Council Governance Arrangements
- b) Report to Audit and Governance Committee on 20 September 2023 – Future Council Governance Group
- c) Report to the Audit and Governance Committee on 29 November 2023 – Future Council Governance Group
- d) Centre for Governance and Scrutiny paper: Rethinking Council Governance

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November 2023

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## **CABINET** **23 January 2023**

### **Our People and Culture Strategy**

**Report by Executive Director of Resources and Section 151 Officer**

#### **RECOMMENDATION**

1. **The Cabinet is RECOMMENDED to approve “Our People and Culture Strategy” annexed to this report outlining four priority areas of focus:**
  - a. Attracting, recruiting, and retaining talented people
  - b. Enabling our people to thrive and perform.
  - c. Enabling our people to grow and evolve for the future.
  - d. Enabling our people to lead and transform for the future.
2. **The Cabinet is asked to note the programme in place to support the delivery of the strategy.**

#### **Executive Summary**

3. The report introduces “Our People and Culture Strategy” which sets out the vision that ‘we develop and maintain a high performing, innovative, highly engaged, and agile teams, employing the best people, and reflecting the communities we serve. We nurture an environment that supports diversity, equality, and inclusion, and allows all our employees to bring their whole selves to work to deliver great services for our Oxfordshire residents.’
4. The strategy focuses on four priorities:
  - (a) Attracting, recruiting, and retaining talented people
  - (b) Enabling our people to thrive and perform.
  - (c) Enabling our people to grow and evolve for the future.
  - (d) Enabling our people to lead and transform for the future.

#### **Background**

5. In July 2023, a draft Workforce Strategy was shared with Performance & Corporate Services Overview & Scrutiny Committee. At that time, it was agreed that the strategy would be reviewed by the new Director of Workforce and Organisational Development starting in September 2023.
6. Following the arrival of the new Director a review of the draft has taken place. It was concluded that the organisational context had moved significantly since the early part of 2023 and some of the items had been delivered.

7. With the organisation focusing on being an employer of choice, partner of choice and place shaper of choice the Our People and Culture Strategy needs to underpin our ambition to meet these priorities.
8. Therefore, a decision was taken to redraft the strategy and create Our People and Culture Strategy which considers our philosophy about our relationship with our employees.
9. The strategy outlines ways to improve how our employees carry out their roles by assessing and nurturing employees' capabilities, as well as managing the relationship between the employees and the organisation. This puts skilled people in the right position to deliver what it takes to achieve the business goals.
10. Having a strategy with this focus has benefits in that it:
  - a. **Support and alignment for long-term business strategy** – Focusing on Our People and Culture Strategy and knowing how we want to support our teams will equip us to change more easily within our business.
  - b. **Builds Employee empowerment** – People are at the heart of achieving the organisation's vision. They will thrive when they are set up for success with the tools they need and a positive environment in which to work.
  - c. **Demonstrates our commitment to employees** – By publishing Our People and Culture Strategy we demonstrate the organisations commitment to our employees and how they benefit. It is also an important part of our employer value proposition (or our 'offer' to employees) and employer branding to support our recruitment and retention efforts.
  - d. **Supports a better response to uncertainty and changes** – When our employees feel empowered and supported, they are also more likely to be agile and innovative in finding solutions for new or unexpected circumstances and to support our organisational ambitions.
11. Our strategy is a living ethos underpinning what we do but more importantly how we do it. The culture of the organisation, how we act and behave, and our Values are the most important facet of success. The new strategy document has been designed to be digestible and easy to read. The intention is that the strategy is a corporate strategy not a work plan for Human Resources. As such stakeholders from across the business have been consulted on its contents.

## Key issues

12. The vision for Our People and Culture Strategy is that 'we develop and maintain a high performing, innovative, highly engaged, and agile teams, employing the best people, and reflecting the communities we serve. We nurture an environment that supports diversity, equality, and inclusion, and allows all our employees to bring their whole selves to work to deliver great services for our Oxfordshire residents.
13. The strategy focuses on 4 priorities:
  - (a) Attracting, recruiting and retaining talented People - it is essential that we are able to attract, recruit and retain our talented People to deliver excellent services for the residents of Oxfordshire.

- (b) Enabling Our People to thrive and perform - creating a positive and inclusive work environment built on fairness, trust and transparency will allow our People to thrive and perform.
  - (c) Enabling Our People to grow and evolve for the future - providing growth opportunities both on and off the job to build our knowledge, skills and behaviours will help us all deliver the future together.
  - (d) Enabling Our People to lead and transform for the future - empowering our leaders to embrace the skills and behaviours needed to achieve high performance and effective outcomes.
14. A number of significant programmes of work have been identified to deliver to these priorities. These have been prioritised for year one:
- (a) Attracting, recruiting, and retaining talented people.
    - (1) Move to a new applicant tracking system to speed up recruitment.
    - (2) Create an in-house resourcing team (moving away from the Integrated Business Centre).
    - (3) Define our employer value proposition and developing our employer brand to raise our employer profile.
  - (b) Enabling Our People to thrive and perform.
    - (1) Give managers the tools and skills to effectively manage performance, absence, and change.
    - (2) Improve the speed of response to issues raised by our people.
    - (3) Enhance our wellbeing services through corporate wellbeing initiatives to improve people's resilience and reduce cost of living impact.
    - (4) Develop modern, simple to follow toolkits, policies, and digital systems to support our ambitions.
  - (c) Enabling our People to grow and evolve for the future.
    - (1) Continue to embrace the 12.3.2 performance management tool.
    - (2) Enhance our early careers offer to improve our talent pipeline specifically to increase numbers of graduates and apprentices.
    - (3) Develop skills and learning to support transformational change.
  - (d) Enabling Our People to lead and transform for the future.
    - (1) Introduce a range of people management controls to enable the organisation to operate within the budget envelope.
    - (2) Resize the organisation to deliver our ambitions within our budget envelope.
    - (3) Support our leaders to have the tools, skills, and resilience to lead transformational change.
15. The strategy aims to work with leaders, managers, and employees on the 'How' we do our work, as much as 'what' work we are doing. Helping people to be more empowered to be responsible and accountable, moving from a 'parent-child' relationship to an 'adult- adult' relationship and providing psychological safety for people to be innovative and try new things.
16. The strategy also aims to develop a positive work environment that is conducive to promoting high performing teams.

17. An example of a work programmes that might achieve this includes early resolution for issues to reduce grievances and absence. We know that early conversations and addressing issues before they escalate can be hugely beneficial and creates a more positive environment for people to thrive.
18. Several Key Performance Indicators have been identified to track progress. These include:
- (a) Time To Hire
  - (b) Agency Spend Reduction
  - (c) Voluntary turnover rate
  - (d) Employee FTE
  - (e) Employee Demographics
  - (f) Average Days lost to sickness per employee
  - (g) Apprenticeship levy optimisation
  - (h) Internal movement and promotion
  - (i) Gender & Ethnicity pay gap (yearly)
  - (j) Employee engagement index (yearly)

## **Corporate Policies and Priorities**

19. Our People and Culture Strategy aligns with the Delivering the Future Together vision of becoming an Employer of Choice, by ensuring we have the right people, with the right skills, attitude and behaviours, in the right place, at the right level and at the right cost to support the delivery of organisational ambitions.

## **Financial Implications**

20. It is anticipated that any cost of delivering the programme that cannot be met from the existing budget for Human Resources will be funded by the Transformation Reserve. Further work to confirm these costs is being undertaken.

The financial benefits anticipated as a result of implementing the Our People and Culture Strategy are expected to reduce the need for spend on agency workers, reduce the cost of sickness and support the achievement of the council's Medium Term Financial Strategy.

Comments checked by:

Kathy Wilcox  
Head of Corporate Finance  
Kathy.wilcox@oxfordshire.gov.uk

## **Legal Implications**

21. There are no legal implications of any outcomes detailed within this report.

Comments checked by:



## **Staff Implications**

22. This is an ambitious programme and will require some of the current HR/OD team to be redirected to focus on the priorities outlined. There will also be a requirement to bring in additional specialist resource to support the programme of work outlined.

## **Equality & Inclusion Implications**

23. Our People and Culture Strategy has inclusion at the heart of its intention. It is intentional that EDI is not an individual thread within the strategy with the aim of embedding the importance of EDI in all that we do.
24. An EIA has been completed and has shown a positive impact on all protected characteristics, additional community impacts and relevant additional wider impacts through: the improvements that will be made to our resourcing and reward practices, supporting teams to build local responses to people data and insight, creating a talent development programme for underrepresented groups, identifying and develop diverse leaders of the future through a future leader programme, a reciprocal mentoring scheme and enhancing our early careers offer.

## **Sustainability Implications**

25. A climate impact assessment has been completed. Our People and Culture Strategy has positive impacts on transport and connectivity through our employees' benefits and rewards which promote active travel, use of public transport and electric vehicle use. It also has positive impacts for promoting health and well-being through wellbeing initiatives such as the employee assistance programme.

## **Risk Management**

26. Risk assessments have been completed and the key risks associated with Our People and Culture Strategy programme relating to the HR OD team include limited project management support and expertise and team capacity to deliver alongside business as usual. Risks relating to the wider organisation include limited capacity, which could affect engagement with the programme and participation in initiatives, and potential lack of buy in if this is perceived to be a HR OD team programme.
27. To minimise these risks additional project management support is being sought (a senior project manager joined the team in January) and coaching and training in project management will be provided to the HR OD team. Work within the Programme has been prioritised and some will be delivered by external

consultants. A stakeholder engagement plan will be developed and the capacity of managers and employees will be taken into account when scheduling initiatives and existing meetings will be used where possible.

## **Consultations**

28. Key stakeholders across the business have contributed to the strategy. The strategy was considered by Informal Cabinet on 9<sup>th</sup> January 2024

### **Lorna Baxter, Executive Director of Resources and Section 151 Officer**

Annex: Our People and Culture Strategy

Background papers: Nil

Other Documents: Nil

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**January 2024**

# Our people and culture strategy

Delivering the Future Together

2024-2026

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# Introduction

**Our people are our most valuable asset. The last few years have been unprecedented and our people have risen to the challenges showing resilience and strength to push through and deliver for the residents of Oxfordshire.**

**With the arrival of our new Chief Executive, Martin Reeves the new Delivering the Future Together vision for 2023-2026 has been agreed.**

**We will be focus on becoming an employer of choice, a partner of choice and a place shaper of choice. We will need to manage this within our financial envelope, becoming even more commercially astute.**

## Our future challenges

As we move into the future, the nature of the challenges we face and how we respond will be very different. Having leaders that can create and lead an organisation that is innovative, collaborative and inclusive, which embraces continuous improvement and holds itself to account will be important in addressing these challenges.

It is essential that we adopt a change mindset and continuously strive for improvement by looking up and out for innovative ideas – using insight from our own internal sources to deliver change in these challenging times.

We need to be confident and work at pace and we need to support each other by creating a trusted, transparent and inclusive environment where people feel safe to grow and innovate.

We need to work collaboratively and innovatively with each other and with partners across Oxfordshire and beyond. Working beyond our walls with volunteers, commissioned services, maintained schools and academies, and the employees of our strategic partners will create better solutions and experiences for the residents of Oxfordshire.

## Oxfordshire County Council Delivering the Future Together

### Employer of choice

**All our colleagues recommend working here. People aspire to work for us and proactively seek employment.**

### Partner of choice

**We choose the right organisations to develop purposeful relationships to deliver the best outcomes for our residents.**

### Place shaper of choice

**We convene public, private and community groups to shape the county. Our residents take pride in where they live and are happy with the facilities and services available to them.**

# Our key opportunities

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# Leading through our values and behaviours

**Our values are at the heart of all we do here at Oxfordshire County Council. We all share a common purpose to deliver excellence for the residents of Oxfordshire.**

Our values act as a guide to how the organisation and our people should approach everything we do.

Leading through our values every day, putting them front and centre of every behaviour, decision and action will unite us as we strive to deliver this excellence together.

By doing this we will attract and retain great talent, we will reward great performance, we will create a positive environment where people can thrive and grow, we will nurture talent and create excellent leaders for now and the future.



# Our vision and priorities

## Our vision

**We develop high performing, innovative, highly engaged and agile teams – employing the best people and reflecting the communities we serve.**

We nurture an environment that supports diversity, equality and inclusion, and allows all our employees to bring their whole selves to work to deliver great services for our Oxfordshire residents.

## Our priorities

### ATTRACT

**Attracting, recruiting and retaining talented people**

- It is essential that we are able to attract, recruit and retain our talented people to deliver excellent services for the residents of Oxfordshire.

### THRIVE

**Enabling our people to thrive and perform**

- Creating a positive and inclusive work environment built on fairness, trust and transparency will allow our people to thrive and perform.

### GROW

**Enabling our people to grow and evolve for the future**

- Providing growth opportunities both on and off the job to build our knowledge, skills and behaviours will help us all deliver the future together.

### LEAD

**Enabling our people to lead and transform for the future**

- Empowering our leaders to embrace the skills and behaviours needed to achieve high performance and effective outcomes.

# Attract Attracting, recruiting and retaining talented people

## We want to nurture and develop talented people with the skills we need for the future, alongside welcoming new colleagues who can fill skills gaps and bring new ideas.

We are mindful that how we recruit is changing rapidly. Candidates' expectations about ways of working and organisational culture are important, alongside health and wellbeing and good pay and benefits, so we need to take a different approach to attract talented candidates and ensure our organisation reflects the demographics of the people we serve.

We need to strengthen our attraction as an employer and develop a strong brand for Oxfordshire County Council so that we create a desirable place to work that is diverse, inclusive and promotes equality.

## We will:

- Raise our employer profile so we become an employer of choice.
- Reimagine our recruitment processes so they are quick, effective and offer a great experience for all involved.
- Be fair and equitable in our resourcing and reward practices to ensure diversity and inclusion.
- Deliver dynamic and digitally enabled onboarding and induction.
- Enhance our rewards and benefits offer so that it is valued by our people, as well as being competitive and attractive in the market.

## What success will look like:

- Quick and effective recruitment processes.
- Increased retention rates.
- Our organisational diversity profile is reflective of the people of Oxfordshire.



# Thrive Enabling people to thrive and perform

**We want highly engaged people, who enjoy coming to work and feel challenged by, and appreciated for, what they do.**

People work at their best when there is strong and effective leadership, as well as a positive, encouraging and inclusive work environment. We will create opportunity for people to connect and make sure their voices are heard, to create an environment of trust, inclusivity, fairness and transparency.

We want employees to use their skills and ideas to help us provide better services and adopt innovative strategies as we become leaner, more efficient and higher performing.

## We will:

- Promote a positive and inclusive working environment where people can have open discussions to create a culture of trust, collaboration and ambition where we can all belong and thrive.
- Offer wellbeing services to support our people.
- Manage change well.
- Develop modern, simple to follow toolkits and policies.
- Train and support managers to manage and achieve early resolution of people related matters.

## What success will look like:

- High employee engagement and a positive organisational culture.
- High performing teams.
- Well managed absence supported by wellbeing services.
- Strong people management skills to seek early resolution.

## Grow

# Enabling people to grow and evolve for the future

**We already have highly skilled and committed people working here. Looking ahead, we know the way we work and deliver services is changing and many employees need new skills both now and for the future.**

We want to foster an environment where employees lead their own areas of learning and development based on the role they do, the needs of their team and their individual career goals.

We aim to create a culture of learning, where everyone can continuously develop new skills and find career paths within the organisation so that we retain the best talent.

### We will:

- Evolve our mindset and behaviours so people are empowered to lead their own learning and development.
- Enhance our early careers offer to attract diversity and develop our skills for the future.
- Enable our people to develop their professional and technical skills to support high performance and embrace innovation.
- Support people to grow, move forward and develop their careers with us.
- Develop skills and learning to support transformation.

### What success will look like:

- Our people have the skills they need to do their jobs well.
- We grow our own talent.
- We are an innovative organisation, embracing new practices.
- Effective workforce and succession planning to support our organisation to flex and change to the environment in which it exists.

# Lead Enabling people to lead and transform for the future

## **We want our leaders to be role models, championing our values consistently and adopting working practices that are sustainable and supportive.**

We will invest in the development of our existing and future leaders so they can achieve high performance and effective outcomes and support employees through transformational change.

We want to bring more diversity to our leadership and management roles so that we have a broader wealth of knowledge and varying perspectives to meet our challenges.

## **We will:**

- Identify and develop the skills and behaviours of our leaders and future leaders.
- Identify and develop diverse leaders of the future.
- Equip our leaders to lead transformational change.
- Resize the organisation to deliver our ambitions within our budget envelope.
- Empower our leaders to make decisions and have greater accountability.

## **What success will look like:**

- Our leaders are high performing and achieve effective outcomes.
- A diverse pool of future leaders are identified and developed.
- Our leaders are confident to lead the organisation through change.

# Our people and culture strategy focus: Year 1 – 2

Attracting, recruiting and retaining talented people	Enabling our people to thrive and perform	Enabling our people to grow and evolve for the future	Enabling our people to lead and transform for the future
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Move to a new applicant tracking system to speed up recruitment*</li> <li>● Create an in-house resourcing team (moving away from the Integrated Business Centre)*</li> <li>● Define our employer value proposition and develop our employer brand to raise our employer profile*</li> <li>● Develop our recruitment marketing strategy and deliver targeted recruitment campaigns</li> <li>● Ensure equality, diversity and inclusion in our recruitment processes</li> <li>● Make our onboarding and induction engaging and streamlined</li> <li>● Understand why people exit and address any issues that are highlighted</li> <li>● Complete a strategic review of reward to support being an employer of choice</li> <li>● Improve our job evaluation process</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Give managers the tools and skills to effectively manage performance, absence and change*</li> <li>● Improve the speed of response to issues raised by our people*</li> <li>● Enhance our wellbeing services through corporate wellbeing initiatives to improve people's resilience and reduce cost of living impact*</li> <li>● Develop modern, simple to follow toolkits, policies and digital systems to support our ambitions*</li> <li>● Support teams to build local responses to people data and insight to create a positive and inclusive work environment</li> <li>● Enhance how we recognise our people</li> <li>● Embrace and evolve our agile working culture</li> <li>● Review how we engage and manage our volunteers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Continue to embrace the 12.3.2 performance management tool*</li> <li>● Enhance our early careers offer to improve our talent pipeline specifically to increase numbers of graduates and apprentices*</li> <li>● Develop skills and learning to support transformational change*</li> <li>● Create a talent development programme for underrepresented groups</li> <li>● Launch a reciprocal mentoring scheme</li> <li>● Embed a personal responsibility approach to learning and development</li> <li>● Embrace workforce and succession planning techniques at local level to support skills development</li> <li>● Support services to develop career development pathways so our people can grow and move forward with us</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Introduce a range of people management controls to enable the organisation to operate within the budget envelope*</li> <li>● Resize the organisation to deliver our ambitions within our budget envelope*</li> <li>● Support our leaders to have the tools, skills and resilience to lead transformational change*</li> <li>● Equip our leaders with the skills and tools they need to lead an inclusive and high performing organisation</li> <li>● Introduce 360 feedback for managers to support the identification of development requirements</li> <li>● Identify and develop diverse leaders of the future through a future leader programme</li> <li>● Adopt empowering and inclusive leadership practice that allows people to grow and deliver</li> </ul>

Priorities marked with \* will be the main focus for year 1 ( 2024/25)

# Organisational people and culture KPIs

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<b>Time to hire</b> Reduce our time to hire to secure new talent quickly and reduce backfill costs	<b>Agency spend</b> Reduce the spend and usage of agency workers across the organisation	<b>Voluntary turnover rate</b> Improve retention rates to keep our talented and skilled people	<b>Employee FTE</b> Track FTE numbers to keep within the budget envelope	<b>Employee demographics</b> Ensure diversity is represented appropriately in all tiers of our organisation
<b>Average days lost to sickness per employee</b> Reduce the number of sickness days per employee	<b>Apprenticeship levy spend</b> Spend the apprenticeship levy to support OCC and partners	<b>Internal movement and promotion</b> Track promotions and internal movement to show talent growth	<b>Gender and ethnicity pay gap (yearly)</b> Ensure fairness of pay across our organisation	<b>Employee engagement index (yearly)</b> Track overall improvement in OCC engagement

# High level plan - next 6 months

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	December	January	February	March	April	May
Attracting, recruiting and retaining talented people	Building In house resourcing team					
	Employer value proposition, branding, recruitment marketing strategy					
	Ensuring equality, diversity and inclusion in recruitment					
	Use of honorariums and market supplements				Induction process	
		New applicant tracking system				
Enabling our people to thrive and perform	Case management review and relaunch					
	Corporate HR policy review (6 priority policies 23 – 24)				Corporate HR policy review (24 – 25 priority policies)	
	Improving attendance management (training, toolkit and data)					
	Occupational health employee assistance				Managing disciplinary well (training, toolkits)	
		People data dashboard				
			Volunteer management			
Enabling our people to grow and evolve for the future	12.3.2 refresh					
	Management trainee programme				Early careers network	
	Reciprocal mentoring scheme				Work experience scheme	
Enabling our people to lead and transform for the future	360 feedback and development senior leaders				360 feedback and development managers	
	People management controls					
			Resize the organisation			
					Future leaders programme	

## **Divisions Affected - All**

**CABINET – 23<sup>rd</sup> January 2024**

### **REPORT ON THE AUTHORITY'S POLICY FOR COMPLIANCE WITH THE REGULATION OF INVESTIGATORY POWERS ACT 2000, THE USE OF ACTIVITIES WITHIN THE SCOPE OF THIS ACT AND RECENT INSPECTION BY THE INVESTIGATORY POWERS COMMISSIONER'S OFFICE**

**Report by the Director of Law and Governance and Monitoring Officer**

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

1. Cabinet is RECOMMENDED to
  - a) Consider and note the use of activities within the scope of the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act by the Council, and
  - b) Approve the revised Policy for Compliance with the Investigation of Regulatory Powers Act 2000 included in the annex of this paper
  - c) Note the comments provided by the Investigatory Powers Commissioner's Office regarding assurance of ongoing compliance with RIPA 2000 and the Investigatory Powers Act 2016 and that a further inspection is not required until 2026.

## **Executive Summary**

2. The Council may occasionally need to carry out covert surveillance. The Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 ('the Act') and supporting Codes of Practice provide the legal framework under which public bodies may lawfully undertake covert surveillance. Compliance with the Act and the supporting Codes of Practice provides protection to the Council in the event that an individual challenges the actions of the Council on the basis that those actions were an infringement of the individual's human rights. It also reduces the likelihood that any evidence obtained through covert surveillance and used in legal proceedings is ruled inadmissible.
3. Codes of Practice under the Act require that elected members review the Authority's use of activities within the scope of the Act periodically and review the Authority's Policy annually. This report provides a summary of the covert activities undertaken by the council between April 2022 and March 2023 for review by Cabinet.
4. The Council's existing Policy for Compliance with the Investigation of Regulatory Powers Act 2000 ('the policy') is updated annually but has not been

subjected to a full refresh since 2017. Since that time the authority has been subject to three inspections by the Investigatory Powers Commissioner's Office (IPCO). Responding to feedback from the IPCO, a complete refresh of the policy has been undertaken. The report provides cabinet with an opportunity to review and approve the council's Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act Policy. The policy requires Cabinet approval in the absence of a delegation in the Constitution to another body or committee for approval.

## **Exempt Information**

5. None

## **Report**

### **Introduction**

6. The Act regulates the use of covert investigatory activities by local authorities. It creates the statutory framework by which covert surveillance activities may be lawfully undertaken. Special authorisation arrangements need to be put in place whenever a local authority considers commencing covert surveillance or seeks to obtain information by the use of informants or officers acting in an undercover capacity.
7. Under the Act local authorities may only carry out covert surveillance where it is necessary for the prevention or detection of crime. In addition, local authorities can only authorise surveillance activities within the framework created by the Act if it meets one of the following tests – criminal offences which attract a maximum custodial sentence of six months or more or criminal offences relating to the underage sale of alcohol, tobacco or nicotine inhaling products (the 'seriousness' threshold). Covert surveillance for other matters, such as for the investigation of minor criminal offences not meeting the 'seriousness' threshold cannot be authorised under the Act.
8. Codes of Practice under the Act require that elected members review the Authority's use of activities within the scope of the Act periodically and review the Authority's policy annually. This paper provides a summary of the activities undertaken by Oxfordshire County Council that fall within the scope of this Act for the period from April 2022 to March 2023. The Authority's Policy for Compliance with the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 is attached in Annex 1 for consideration.

### **Investigatory Powers Commissioner's Office Inspection**

9. As part of the legislative regime, the Investigatory Powers Commissioner's Office (IPCO) carry out three-yearly inspections to examine an authority's policies, procedures, operations and administration. In 2020, the Council was subject to a desktop, telephone-based inspection, since the IPCO did not carry



out physical inspections during the pandemic. Following a review of how the IPCO conducts its oversight of local authorities, they now no longer undertake routinely an inspection as has previously been the case. Instead, the Investigatory Powers Commissioner (IPC) has agreed that each local authority should provide a written update, in the first instance, on its compliance with the legislation. In June, the Council provided a written response to the IPCO and the Director of Law and Governance and Monitoring Officer, Head of Legal and Head of Trading Standards met with an inspector to provide further information. In July, the IPC informed the Council that they were satisfied that the Council had demonstrated ongoing compliance with the Act and that the Council will be due its next inspection in 2026.

### **Use of the Act by Oxfordshire County Council**

10. Within the Council, covert surveillance is mainly carried out by the Trading Standards Service as part of investigations into suspected contraventions of consumer protection legislation. Between April 2022 and March 2023 the Council authorised covert surveillance on 4 occasions.
11. Of the authorisations for surveillance granted in the last year, all related to investigations concerning the sale of illegal tobacco. Illegal tobacco refers to cigarettes, hand-rolling tobacco or other smoking products that have been smuggled into the UK without tax being paid on them, or which are counterfeit. They can be attractive to children and young people as they are often sold at “pocket money prices” by unscrupulous sellers. The importation, distribution and supply of illegal tobacco is often linked with other forms of criminality.
12. The County Council’s Trading Standards team is working with retailers and partner organisations to raise awareness of the problem of illegal tobacco and carries out enforcement action when required, including against those selling online and via social media. Investigations of suspected supplies of illegal tobacco normally involve a covert test purchase. The purpose of the test purchase is to obtain a sample of the product being sold in order to ascertain whether it is legal to sell in this country and to identify the persons involved in the sale. Covert test purchases also assist in identifying where stocks of the product are being stored since illegal tobacco is frequently hidden in or around the premises from which it is sold. Covert test purchases are undertaken only where there are grounds to suspect the person or business concerned is involved in the supply of illegal tobacco products.
13. Covert test purchases are an essential operational tactic in the efforts to tackle the sale of illegal tobacco. These test purchases must be authorised under the Act and require the careful consideration of whether the intrusion is necessary for the purpose of prevention and detection of crime and proportionate to the outcome being sought.
14. Whilst legal proceedings are still ongoing in relation to the substantive investigations that included the recent authorisations of covert surveillance activities, authority to prosecute has been given of 3 individuals, for criminal

offences including Trade Marks Act, money laundering and tobacco labelling and packaging requirements.

### **Magistrate's Oversight**

15. From October 2012 the Protection of Freedoms Act 2012 required Judicial oversight of authorisations of covert surveillance activities. All authorisations for covert surveillance activities falling within the scope of the Act granted by local authorities now need Magistrate's approval before they take effect. All applications made to Magistrates between April 2022 and March 2023 were approved.

### **Updating of the Council's RIPA Policy**

16. The Council's existing Policy for Compliance with the Investigation of Regulatory Powers Act 2000 ('the policy') is updated annually but has not been subjected to a full refresh since 2017. Since this time the IPCO has provided feedback to local authorities of the need to provide clearer guidance to council staff and better reflect the council's position on monitoring social media, and to outline the importance of clear document management processes for the product of surveillance. In addition, when the annual report on the Council's use of RIPA and the RIPA policy was taken to the Audit and Governance Committee in 2022, the committee asked that more emphasis to be placed on safeguarding young people in the policy. As a result, a complete refresh of the policy has been undertaken.
17. This new policy reflects the recommendations following previous IPCO inspections and the comments of the Audit and Governance Committee. It provides more clarity on how RIPA applies when looking at social media, ensures there is early reference to the importance of safeguarding young people and strengthens the expectations in relation to records retention and information management.
18. The policy requires Cabinet approval in the absence of a delegation in the Constitution to another body or committee for approval. It is recommended that this new Policy is adopted by the Council.

### **Corporate Policies and Priorities**

19. This RIPA policy is an internal policy setting out governance arrangements for operational activity within the scope of the Act. It has no direct implications on Council priorities. However, compliance with the Act is important to manage risk for the Council and to ensure successful outcomes of operational activity undertaken by a number of council services.

### **Financial Implications**

20. This is a procedural matter and there are no direct financial implications arising from the adoption of the new policy.

Comments checked by:

**Stephen Rowles, Assistant Finance Business Partner,**  
[Stephen.rowles@oxfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:Stephen.rowles@oxfordshire.gov.uk)

## **Legal Implications**

21. In using the investigatory powers which are available to it, the Council must comply with the provisions of the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000, together with Codes of Practice issued by the government and other regulations. The revised policy draws together relevant powers and duties into this document. Legal Services have reviewed and commented on the revised policy, and it is appropriate for adoption.

Comments checked by:

**Paul Grant, Head of Legal and Deputy Monitoring Officer**  
[paul.grant@oxfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:paul.grant@oxfordshire.gov.uk)

## **Staff Implications**

22. There are no staffing implications arising from the policy. It is a replacement of the existing policy, introducing no new staffing requirements. It will be published on the Council's Intranet.

## **Equality & Inclusion Implications**

23. There are no equality and inclusion implications arising from the policy.

## **Sustainability Implications**

24. There are no sustainability implications arising from the policy.

## **Risk Management**

25. The policy is important in order to ensure there is appropriate governance over activities that fall within the scope of the Act and as such assists in managing risks to the council.

## **Consultations**

26. No consultation is required. This policy replaces the existing policy and does not introduce any new requirements and has no direct impact on Oxfordshire residents and businesses.

NAME

Anita Bradley

Director of Law and Governance and Monitoring Officer

Annex: Draft Policy on Compliance with Investigation of Regulatory Powers Act 2000.

Background papers: None

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January 2024

## 23rd January 2024 CABINET REPORT

### BUSINESS MANAGEMENT AND MONITORING REPORT

November 2023

Report by the Executive Director of Resources & Section 151 Officer

#### RECOMMENDATION

**1. The Cabinet is RECOMMENDED to**

- a) note the report and annexes.
- b) note the virements in Annex 2b

#### Executive Summary

- 2. The business management reports are part of a suite of performance, risk and budget documents which set out the council's ambitions, priorities, and financial performance. The [2022 – 2025 Strategic Plan](#) sets out the Council's ambitions. It also shows our priority activities for the current financial year.
- 3. This report presents the November 2023 performance, risk, and finance position for the council.
- 4. Further information is provided in the following annexes to the report:

Annex A: Performance as at November 2023

Annex B: Finance as at November 2023

- 5. The performance section of this report concentrates on performance exceptions (measures reporting Red (off target), or Amber, (slightly off target, Amber for the last two consecutive months or more). The full performance report is included at Annex A.

#### Performance Overview

- 6. The Outcomes Framework for 2023/2024 reports on the council's nine strategic priorities. A further priority relates to running the business and includes the customer contact centre and measures included in the council's Financial Strategy. The Outcomes Framework which sits underneath the strategic priorities comprises monthly, quarterly, termly, six monthly and annual measures which may change as we progress through the year. At the appropriate period, relevant measures will be included in the report.

- 7. As at the end of November 2023 the indicators were rated as follows:

November 2023	Green		Amber		Red		Monitoring Only/Data Unavailable		Total
Monthly	30	64%	5	11%	7	15%	5	10%	47

Annual (Nov)	0	0%	0	0%	1	100%	0	0%	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>63%</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>10%</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>17%</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>10%</b>	<b>48</b>

Table 1: Summary of November 2023 performance for all measures. RAG = Green = meets or exceeds target, Amber = misses target by narrow margin and Red = misses target by significant margin.

8. A total of 48 measures reported in November 2023 (Table 1) 47 monthly measures and one annual measure OCC05.07 Public satisfaction in the condition of highways.
- 30 (63%) of the measures were reported as Green (meeting or exceeding target) in November.
  - 5 (10%) were rated as Amber (misses target by narrow margin), of which were Amber or Red for 2+ months.
  - 8 (17%) were rated as Red (misses target by a significant margin).
9. This bi-monthly Cabinet report is the fourth of 2023/2024. The table (Table 2) below compares monthly measures for the 2023/2024 reporting year, please note the numbers of reported measures fluctuates throughout the year.

Reporting Month	Green		Amber		Red		Monitoring Only/ Data Unavailable		Total
April 2023	12	38%	5	16%	4	12%	11	34%	32*
May 2023	27	61%	6	14%	4	9%	7	16%	44
June 2023	17	52%	6	18%	4	12%	6	18%	33*
July 2023	27	57%	8	17%	7	15%	5	11%	47
August 2023	18	56%	4	13%	4	13%	6	19%	32
September 2023	26	60%	6	14%	5	3%	6	19%	43
October 2023	19	59%	5	16%	2	6%	5	16%	32
<b>November 2023</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>64%</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>11%</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>15%</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>10%</b>	<b>47</b>

Table 2: Comparison of monthly reporting measures for Financial Year 2023/2024. \*April, June, August and October 2023 do not include measures from priority OCC11 (finance).

10. Table 3 lists the eight measures reporting as Red at the end of November 2023. Full details can be found in Annex A.

Performance measures reporting Red for November 2023 (Eight Measures)
OCC05.07 Public satisfaction in the condition of highways
OCC07.03 Number of multi-agency strength and needs assessments completed in Oxfordshire
OCC07.04 Increase the % of children in foster care
OCC11.02 Achievement of planned savings
OCC11.03 General balances are forecast to remain at or above the risk assessed level
OCC11.04 Directorates deliver services and achieve planned performance within agreed budget

OCC11.06 Total Outturn variation for DSG funded services (high needs)
OCC11.11 Debt requiring impairment - ASC contribution debtors

Table 3: Red RAG Status Measures November 2023 Reporting Period.

11. This table indicates the direction of travel of measures compared to October (monthly) 2023.

Status changes – October 2023 to November 2023	
Red to Green	N/A
Amber to Green	N/A
Red to Amber	N/A
Green to Amber	N/A
Amber to Red	OCC07.03 Number of multi-agency strength & needs assessment completed in Oxfordshire
Green to Red	OCC11.06 Total Outturn variation for DSG funded services (high needs)

Table 4: Change in Performance across October 2023 to November 2023.

## Performance Exceptions

12. This section of the report details all measures reporting Red or Amber status (*consecutive for two months or more*) with extracted supporting commentary from the Directorate, the full commentary can be seen at Annex A. The exception report focusses on the 14 exceptions, nine measures that have a Red rating and the five measures that have reported an Amber rating for 2+ months.

**13. Priority OCC01: Put action to address the climate emergency at the heart of our activities.**

This priority has two measures being reported in November 2023: one Green and one Amber.



Figure 1: Priority OCC01 Monthly performance for 2023/2024 financial year

Measure:	August Status:	November Status:	Director:
OCC01.07 Total % of household waste which is reused, recycled or composted	Amber	Amber	Bill Cotton

Table 5: Priority OCC01 Measure Exceptions - November 2023

**OCC01.07:** This month's figure of 57.43% is small decrease from October's 57.52%. The measure has fluctuated between an amber and red rating for the entire reporting year. The decline in recycling rates has been attributed to a lack of cooperation between the district councils and OCC. Government waste policy changes which could have a significant impact on this measure are anticipated, but Defra has repeatedly delayed these. This is a national issue affecting all local authorities.

*In these circumstances local authorities nationally have been unable to commit investment in significant changes in collection services. Locally, campaign work to inform residents and encourage behaviour change is continuing. For example, our*

*Christmas campaign this year is focussing on food waste reduction based on the principles of 'plan, shop, store, eat.'*

#### **14. Priority OCC04: Support carers and the social care system**

This priority has eight measures being reported in November 2023: four Green, two Amber and two monitoring only.



*Figure 2: Priority OCC04 Monthly performance for 2023/2024 financial year*

Measure:	August Status:	September Status:	Director:
OCC04.04 % of residents aged under 65 receiving ASC who manage their care by using a direct payment	Amber	Amber	Karen Fuller
OCC04.05 % of older residents who receive long term care and are supported to live in their own home	Amber	Amber	Karen Fuller

*Table 6: Priority OCC04 Measure Exceptions - November 2023*

**OCC04.04:** *There has been an increase of 0.03% compared to last month's figure. Although this has been amber for two consecutive months, the service reports that only 6 people would need to transfer to direct payments in the year to be on target.*

*There are 3 key actions to stabilise this measure:*

- 1. Review of individual team performance at the monthly performance board*
- 2. The Adult Social Care forum asks if a Direct Payment has been considered for each new service recipient and we use this data to understand barriers to uptake of direct payments.*
- 3. Increased communications to teams to actively promote direct payments.*

**OCC04.05:** *A minor increase of 0.10% from last month having faced three months of minor decreases. The measure remains amber, as it has been for every reporting month this year.*

*The service reports that the number of older people supported to live at home continues to increase, as does the number of hours of support provided overall. The number of older people supported to live at home is 1.3% more than 12 months ago, compared to a 0.65% increase in people in care homes.*

*Performance is marginally below the 60% target, but the service expresses this is not a significant concern as some fluctuation is expected.*

#### **15. Priority OCC05: Invest in an inclusive, integrated and sustainable transport network.**



This priority has two measures being reported in November 2023: one Green and one Red.



Figure 3: Priority OCC05 Monthly performance for 2023/2024 financial year

Measure:	October Status:	November Status:	Director:
OCC05.07 Public satisfaction in the condition of road surfaces.	N/A	Red	Bill Cotton

Table 7: Priority OCC05 Measure Exceptions - November 2023

**OCC05.07:** This is a new annual measure for 2023/2024. The service advised Maintaining public satisfaction in the condition of road surfaces has been challenging due to historic and past scale of investment. Oxfordshire's score of 18% satisfaction, is 7% lower than the national average of 25%. Of the 111 authorities surveyed, it is relatively close to its average of the 30 County Council peer group survey score of 20%. It is also of note that although public satisfaction may have fallen in this area, the actual overall condition of the network has not declined to the same extent. A level of customer satisfaction improvement is likely to be able to be achieved through enhancements to communications and innovating through service delivery. Service improvements have recently been made to improve how we communicate with the public and we are also trialling new repair materials and techniques which should hopefully result in improved durability and quality of repairs.

## 16. Priority OCC07: Create opportunities for children and young people to reach their full potential.

This priority has seven measures being reported in November 2023: two Green, one Amber, two Red, and two monitoring only.



Figure 4: Priority OCC07 Monthly performance for 2023/2024 financial year

Measure:	October Status:	November Status:	Director:
OCC07.03 Number of multi-agency strength & needs assessment completed in Oxfordshire	Amber	Red	Anne Coyle
OCC07.04 Increase the % of children in foster care	Red	Red	Anne Coyle
OCC07.05 The percentage of children in residential care	Amber	Amber	Anne Coyle

Table 8: Priority OCC07 Measure Exceptions - November 2023

**OCC07.03:** This measure has moved from green to red across the past three months. The service has explained that there is a lag with reporting the data. This is

*a partnership measure, so we are reliant on colleagues submitting their data to us.*

*We are in the process of changing the reporting pattern for this measure so that we have a more complete picture of the data when submitting it to Unity and the BMMR.*

**OCC07.04:** *This measure remains red, having moved to this status for the first time this reporting year last month. It remains at its lowest percentage of 61%. In the past three months it has moved from green to red. Foster care rates remain below the national average. 61% of Oxfordshire children are looked after in foster placements whereas nationally the figure is 68%.*

*A targeted campaign is in place to increase internal foster care looking at specific locality areas where we need to recruit foster carers. You will see adverts for foster carers on the sides of buses. The new South Central Independent Fostering Agency Framework is now in place to provide additional external foster placements.*

**OCC07.05:** *This measure has been an exception for the entire 2023/2024 reporting period. The figure of 16% for November represents a 1% increase from last month.*

*The service reports that the total number of cared for children has fallen from 881 at the start of the year to 815 at the end of October, a fall of 7%. The number of children supported in residential care has fallen from 143 at the start of the year to 128 at the end of September, a fall of 10%.*

*The reduction in the overall numbers of cared for children is hiding the picture of performance improvement in terms of reducing children in residential care.*

*The service reports that currently around 70% of residential placements are spot purchased which suggests that current frameworks and block contracts are not able to provide the number of placements required.*

*Part of our financial plan is to ensure that we maximise the use of internal and block contract beds - by managing and reducing vacancies in Oxfordshire homes for Oxfordshire children.*

*We are increasing the number of in-house children's homes from 4 homes to 9 by March 2025 with the support of the DFE capital grant and council capital resource.*

*We currently have a block contract for 16 residential beds in Oxfordshire or within 10 miles of the border. We have access to up to 15 beds as part of the Cross Regional Contract which offers a therapeutic model of care for children with more complex needs and includes education provision at an inclusive price.*

*The South Central residential framework is due to be recommissioned by October 2024 and the issues identified with the current framework such as the uplift controls will be addressed which should increase the number of providers who join which should reduce the level of spot purchasing.*

## **17. Priority OCC11: Running the business - Finance.**

This priority has 15 measures being reported in November 2023: nine Green, one Amber and five Red.



Figure 7: Priority OCC11 Monthly performance for 2023/2024 financial year

Measure:	September Status:	November Status:	Director:
OCC11.02 Achievement of planned savings	Red	Red	Lorna Baxter
OCC11.03 General balances are forecast to remain at or above the risk assessed level	Red	Red	Lorna Baxter
OCC11.04 Directorates deliver services and achieve planned performance within agreed budget	Red	Red	Lorna Baxter
OCC11.06 Total Outturn variation for DSG funded services (high needs)	Green	Red	Lorna Baxter
OCC11.10 Debt requiring impairment - Corporate Debtors	Amber	Amber	Lorna Baxter
OCC11.11 Debt requiring impairment - ASC contribution debtors	Red	Red	Lorna Baxter

Table 11: Priority OCC11 Measure Exceptions - November 2023

Please refer to 'Financial Position' Section and Annex B for additional information relating to OCC11: Running the business - Finance.

## Performance Highlights

18. This section of the report concentrates on several highlights achieved this period in delivering our strategic priorities.

### Put action to address the climate emergency at the heart of our work.

Link: [Zero emission zone wins at National Transport Awards show](#)

Oxfordshire County Council and Oxford City Council celebrated after picking up another award for their work on the Oxford zero emission zone (ZEX) pilot.

On 5 October the two councils won the 'Exemplary Contribution to Net Zero' award at the 20th UK National Transport Awards show for their collaboration on the Oxford ZEX. The two councils introduced the Oxford ZEX pilot in February 2022. The first of its kind in the UK, the ZEX pilot covers all or part of nine streets in the heart of the city centre, restricting polluting vehicles from entering streets between 7am and 7pm every day. The project was praised for the technical planning, collaboration and political will required to introduce the ZEX in Oxford.

The two councils worked closely together on planning for the project and on engagement with residents and partners. Last year, both councils were also awarded the prestigious clean air award for their work on the ZEX.

### Tackle inequalities in Oxfordshire

Link: [Oxfordshire's Gigahubs project showcased to government minister](#)

The county council recently showcased the benefits of its Gigahubs project at Milton-Under-Wychwood Library, near Burford. There will be £26.5m of new investment to extend upgrading of digital infrastructure across the county.

The Gigahubs project has already provided 171 public buildings – including many of the county's libraries – with access to next generation full fibre broadband. A further 22 sites are expected to be upgraded by 2024. The project is jointly funded by the county council and Building Digital UK (BDUK).

### **Prioritise the health and wellbeing of residents.**

Link: [New programme launches in Oxfordshire to help patients leave hospital on time](#)

Patients who are ready to leave hospital will be supported to return directly home, more quickly, following the launch of a new programme.

A new "Discharge to Assess" programme in Oxfordshire will change the process and speed in which patients are offered social care support after a stay in hospital, helping people to leave hospital sooner and supporting them to recover safely in the place they call home.

The approach brings together teams from health, adult social care, therapy and reablement to plan a patient's best route out of hospital as well as a more joined up way to receive support once at home.

A pilot of the programme has been running in Oxford and north Oxfordshire since July and has already supported 116 people to leave hospital more quickly, enabling them to recover at home, supported by social workers arranged by the county council.

The system is now being rolled out across the county from Wednesday 15 November.

### **Support carers and the social care system**

Link: [New book written for care leavers ... by Oxfordshire care leavers](#)

Care leavers in Oxfordshire now have access to a new source of information to help them navigate the challenges of adulthood, thanks to a book written by those who have experienced the process themselves.

'A Care Leaver's Survival Guide', designed by former children in care from Oxfordshire, is now ready for use by Oxfordshire County Council as a new and valuable resource for young people preparing to leave care.

The interactive and informative book includes practical advice on subjects such as education, writing a CV, preparing for a job interview, paying bills, housing options, and tips around mental wellbeing.

The book is being published by Oxfordshire social enterprise, the Office of Care Leaver Advocacy (OCLA). It will be re-released each year, regularly updated to cover new policies and legislation, in addition to feedback from care leavers.

Collaborations between Oxfordshire County Council and OCLA have included consultation on the council's local offer for care leavers, peer mentoring, a young inspectors programme to help quality assure children's homes, training for social care staff and joint drop-in sessions to support care leavers with education, employment

and training.

### **Invest in an inclusive, integrated, and sustainable transport network.**

Link: [North Oxford corridor improvements win national sustainability award \(oxfordshire.gov.uk\)](https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/news/north-oxford-corridor-improvements-win-national-sustainability-award)

Oxfordshire County Council and its long-term contractor Milestone Infrastructure have been recognised in three categories of the [Highways Awards](#) for their collaboration on the north Oxford corridor improvement project.

The north Oxford corridor project allows for easier access into Oxford city centre, improved bus journey times, better walking and cycling routes, and supports the ongoing local housing and employment growth.

At a ceremony on 11 October, the project won the Environmental Sustainability Award for de-carbonisation and was highly commended in the Major Project category.

Another high commendation came in the Highway Partnership category for the Oxfordshire Highways Alliance which is made up of the county council, Milestone Infrastructure and subcontractors Aggregate Industries, Colas, Drayton Construction, Hazell and Jefferies, and MJ Titchmarsh.

The winning award entry highlighted how Milestone Infrastructure and the county council share ambitious carbon targets. The north Oxford corridor project is making a significant contribution towards those targets.

The project has so far achieved significant carbon reduction on baseline: 37 per cent, or 2,388 tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent (tCO<sub>2</sub>e). To illustrate, it would take over 14,300 mature trees to absorb this amount of carbon dioxide.

This success was achieved using baseline calculations, carbon workshops and events, and the development and implementation of a bespoke carbon estimating tool.

### **Preserve and improve access to nature and green spaces.**

Link: [Libraries Week goes green for 2023 | Oxfordshire County Council Intranet](#)

During Libraries Week, [libraries across the UK](#) celebrated their commitment to sustainability and climate change.

Our own libraries have been leading the way. At Abingdon Library, outside spaces have been transformed with planting for bees and butterflies. Elsewhere (for example, Faringdon and Banbury), our libraries have been promoting [hubs](#) for GroWet, where communities are invited to nourish young wetland plants which are then planted in Oxfordshire wetland areas.

Some are also lucky enough to have growing spaces and are working in partnership with either library friends' groups or [Incredible Edibles](#) (Benson and Wallingford libraries) to get their communities involved with growing and eating a variety of vegetables.

To affirm our commitment, we've recently signed the [Green Libraries Manifesto](#), coordinated by the Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals.

Reflecting our strategic vision to create a greener, fairer and healthier county, our libraries will continue to deliver core practices in as sustainable a way as possible. This includes the promotion of book and audio-visual lending services and ensuring our supply chain from publisher to library shelf supports a greener operation. For

example, library suppliers are exploring suitable and robust alternatives to the protective plastic jackets that cover our books and enable books to be re-issued time after time.

### **Creating opportunities for children and young people to reach their full potential.**

*Link: [Oxfordshire foster carer highlights crucial role black women play in supporting children and young people](#)*

The theme of this year's Black History Month was 'saluting our sisters', highlighting the crucial role that black women play in inspiring change and building communities. People across Oxfordshire, from a range of different backgrounds, are being encouraged to consider becoming foster carers by Oxfordshire County Council. Oxfordshire resident Eileen Momanyi, 48, talks with pride about the difference she has made to the lives of 13 children she has fostered over the last four years.

**Eileen** explains: "It is personally rewarding to see a child 'come out of their shell' as they begin to feel safe. Watching their confidence grow living under my roof".

### **Work with local businesses and partners for environmental, economic, and social benefit**

*Link: [Oxfordshire residents are urged to recycle their vapes](#)*

Three Oxfordshire councils today unveiled their plans for new recycling services for vapes.

Oxfordshire County Council, Cherwell District Council and Oxford City Council will together provide new vape recycling services across the county. They want to prevent the disposal of single use vapes in litter bins, general waste or mixed recycling where they can contaminate other recycling and, in some instances, cause fires in bin trucks or waste facilities.

New vape recycling points in public spaces offer convenient and easy access for recycling vapes. This is one of more than 40 UK projects funded by Material Focus, the not for profit leading the Recycle Your Electricals campaign who have provided over £40,000 for Oxfordshire to be one of the first county councils to lead the way by recycling vapes. The funding is part of a wider initiative to make it easier for 10 million UK residents to recycle their electricals.

The Recycle Your Vapes campaign will:

- Add up to 60 new recycling collection points for vapes at small retailers, shopping areas, bars and cafes across Oxford, Banbury, Bicester and Kidlington. Look out for the three-feet high, clear plastic tube vape recycling collection points. The tubes have bright pink recycle your vapes posters and images of vapes on the posters.
- Provide new public recycling bright pink bins at each of the seven household waste recycling centres (HWRCs) in Oxfordshire.
- And introduce a new separate kerbside collection for vapes in Cherwell.

The new household waste recycling centre (HWRC) bright pink vape bins will be installed on Wednesday 29 November, which will also start the roll out of collection



points in other locations.

In all other areas of Oxfordshire, vapes can be recycled at the kerbside with other small electrical items. How they are collected in each district council area varies, residents should check the [Waste Wizard](#) or their district council's website to check the local area's collection service.

Residents will also be made aware of how and where they can recycle their vapes through information on leaflets, and on posters featuring HypnoCat. Keep an eye out for HypnoCat, the Recycle Your Electricals mesmerising pink, fluffy mascot, he is on a mission to hypnotise local residents into recycling their vapes.

The Material Focus Electricals Recycling Fund is making it easier for consumers to recycle their electricals. The projects that have been funded by Material Focus include a variety of recycling methods, from kerbside collections to more drop-off points in schools, community centres and bring banks. Overall, there will be over 400 new collection points plus kerbside collections for 5.5 million UK residents.

## Strategic Risk Management Overview

**19.** A strategic risk is a risk to the council's strategic priorities or long-term outcomes; or a risk with a significance that has an impact at the corporate level.

**20.** The table below provides an overview of the current strategic risk position. Strategic risks are reviewed on a monthly basis as part of the Business management and monitoring process. Risks can be added and escalated at any time during the year.

Risk Name	Risk Description	30 Nov 2023				
		Inherent Score	Previous Residual Risk Score	Current Residual Risk Score	Current Residual Risk Rating	Direction of Travel
01. Financial Resilience	The council is not financially sustainable in the immediate/medium term.	25	20	12	●	✓
02. Cyber security	A successful and significant Cyber-attack leading to disruption, damage or compromise of any of the council's computer services, information systems, infrastructure or data.	25	15	15	●	➡
03. HIF1&HIF2	HIF1 and HIF2 become undeliverable and/or potential financial risk to the council	16	12	12	●	➡
04. Managing Demand across Adult's and Children's Services	Fluctuating demand of community across Oxfordshire can result in varying requirements in resource.	15	12	12	●	➡
05. Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND)	Local area SEND partnership inspection outcomes found widespread systemic failure. Delay for children having their SEND needs met. Reputational damage (locally, regionally, and nationally).	25	25	16	▲	✓
06. Oxford Core Schemes	Failure to deliver Oxford Core Schemes (Traffic Filters, Workplace Parking Levy, Zero Emissions Zone and associated city area schemes such as Low Traffic Neighbourhoods) with public support.	20	16	16	▲	➡
07. Strategic Workforce Planning	A risk that the county council's workforce does not have capacity, capability or resilience to deliver key functions, statutory services or transformational changes required to ensure the councils objectives and long-term priorities are met. Further, that the diversity of the workforce satisfies statutory requirements.	16	12	12	●	➡
08. Policy & Budget	Inability to seek agreement in relation to the policy and budget framework from a minority administration.	25	20	20	▲	➡
09. Delivering the Future Together	Failure to deliver organisation wide transformation.	25	16	16	▲	➡

Table 12: Strategic Risk Overview for November 2023. Please note that a strategic risk regarding resilience in the face of climate change will be forthcoming early in 2024.

## Financial Position

21. As shown below directorates are forecasting an overspend of £14.4m (2.5%). After taking account of an increase in interest receivable on balances held by the council and the use of funding held in contingency and the COVID-19 reserve, the overall forecast expenditure is £4.2m higher than the net operating budget.

	Latest Budget Nov-23 £m	Forecast Spend Nov-23 £m	Forecast Variance Nov-23 £m	Forecast Variance Nov-23 %	Forecast Variance Sept-23 £m	Change Since Sept-23 £m
Adult Services	227.3	227.3	0.0	0.0%	0.0	0.0
Children's Services	169.1	181.9	12.8	7.6%	11.8	1.0
Environment & Place	73.9	73.0	-0.8	-1.2%	-0.4	-0.4
Public Health	4.1	4.1	0.0	0.0%	0.0	0.0
Community Safety	27.6	28.1	0.5	1.8%	0.0	0.5
Resources	70.0	71.9	2.0	2.8%	2.2	-0.2
<b>Directorate Total</b>	<b>571.8</b>	<b>586.3</b>	<b>14.4</b>	<b>2.5%</b>	<b>13.6</b>	<b>0.8</b>
<b>Budgets Held Centrally</b>						
Capital Financing	28.4	28.4	0.0	0.0%	0.0	0.0
Interest on Balances	-16.6	-18.5	-1.8	11.1%	-1.0	-0.8
Inflation <sup>1</sup>	6.5	6.5	0.0	0.0%	0.0	0.0
Contingency	12.4	5.4	-7.0	-56.5%	-7.0	0.0
Un-ringfenced Specific Grants	-43.7	-43.7	0.0	0.0%	0.0	0.0
Insurance	1.4	1.4	0.0	0.0%	0.0	0.0
Contribution from COVID-19 reserve	-7.4	-8.8	-1.4	19.0%	-1.4	0.0
Contribution from Budget Priority Reserve	-2.4	-2.4	0.0	0.0%	0.0	0.0
Contributions to reserves	20.7	20.7	0.0	0.0%	0.0	0.0
Contribution to balances	7.6	7.6	0.0	0.0%	0.0	0.0
<b>Total Budgets Held Centrally</b>	<b>6.9</b>	<b>-3.3</b>	<b>-10.2</b>	<b>-148.2%</b>	<b>-9.4</b>	<b>-0.8</b>
<b>Net Operating Budget</b>	<b>578.8</b>	<b>583.0</b>	<b>4.2</b>	<b>0.7%</b>	<b>4.2</b>	<b>0.0</b>
Business Rates & Council Tax funding	-578.8	-578.8	0.0	0.0%	0.0	0.0
<b>Forecast Year End Position</b>	<b>-0.0</b>	<b>4.2</b>	<b>4.2</b>		<b>4.2</b>	<b>0.0</b>

22. The overall forecast overspend of £4.2m has remained unchanged since September 2023.. As noted in previous reports inflation and demand pressures for children's social care, as well as workforce shortages, have increased the financial risk for the council and made it much more challenging to forecast

<sup>1</sup> Virements to allocate inflation and contingency from budgets held centrally to directorates to fund the impact of the 2023/24 Green Book pay award were transacted at the end of December 2023. The Business Management & Monitoring Report to Cabinet in March 2024 will reflect the updated position.



activity and expenditure.

- 23.** £1.5m of cross directorate agency staffing savings (24CC13) agreed as part of the 2023/24 budget in February 2023 were originally held in Resources pending agreement about how to allocate these. These are now included in directorate totals and action will need to be taken to achieve these in the longer run.
- 24.** The forecast for Adult Services remains break even. £0.3m of reallocated staffing savings are expected to be managed within that position.
- 25.** The forecast overspend for Children's Services has increased by a further £1.0m since the report to Cabinet in November 2023. This is mainly driven by an increase in Home to School transport activity of £0.5m plus a £0.5m pressure relating to the reallocation of staffing savings. Other on-going underlying pressures in Children's Services are driven by a combination of increased care placements costs, and reliance on agency staff to cover vacancies. Children's Services have implemented a number of organisational, governance and business process controls as well as market management actions to address the underlying pressures but it is taking time for these to have an impact.
- 26.** There is now a forecast overspend of £0.5m for Community Safety. This reflects a one-off payment made for a disabling injury/illness, the reallocation of £0.2m budgeted staffing savings, and an increase in training costs.
- 27.** The forecast underspend for Environment & Place has increased by £0.4m compared to the September 2023 position and is now £0.8m after taking account of £0.2m reallocated staffing savings. The underspend includes underspends on transport community initiatives, a reduction in energy cost prices, and additional income from income through enforcement activity.
- 28.** The forecast overspend for Resources has reduced by £0.2m from the September forecast after taking account of the reallocation of budgeted agency savings of £1.1m to directorates. £ 0.4m of the total needs to be managed by services in Resources.
- 29.** 73% of the 2022/23 savings of £10.2m which were not achieved as planned in the last financial year are currently assessed as delivered or are expected to be delivered in 2023/24 and 27% are still assessed as amber or red. 72% of the 2023/24 savings are assessed as delivered or are expected to be delivered and 28% are still assessed as amber or red. Action is continuing to be taken to ensure that the delivery of both existing planned savings and new budget reductions is maximised in 2023/24. The anticipated achievement of savings is incorporated into the forecast directorate position.
- 30.** The forecast 2023/24 deficit compared to Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) funding for High Needs is £21.2m. This has increased by £2.9m compared to the £18.3m forecast deficit approved by Cabinet in May 2023. The CIPFA code of practice requires negative High Needs DSG balances to be held in an unusable reserve. The forecast deficit would increase the cumulative negative High Needs DSG balance held in this reserve from £41.1m as at 31 March 2023 to £62.3m at 31 March 2024.

31. £3.0m of the £12.4m contingency budget has been used to meet the cost of additional pay inflation in 2023/24. Funding will continue to be held in contingency to meet the cost of pay inflation for vacant posts if they are recruited to.
32. After taking account of the use of £7.0m contingency, additional interest, and funding from the COVID-19 reserve to support the overall forecast position, the remaining net £4.2m overspend against the operating budget would reduce balances to £25.6m, £4.6m under the £30.2m risk assessed level for 2023/24. The risk assessed level of balances for 2024/25, and funding for any top-up to that level after taking account of any one – off funding in 2023/24, is included in the Budget and Business Planning report elsewhere on the agenda.
33. The Council's Management Team are continuing to work with directorates to identify actions to manage expenditure so that any overspend by year end is mitigated as far as possible and does not require any call on balances.
34. Annex B sets out further details and commentary on the Finance position.

### **Financial Implications**

35. This report includes an update on the forecast financial position and risks for the council along with action being taken to manage the budget within the position agreed by Council in February 2023. Strong and sustained financial management, collective action and oversight continues to be required to ensure that services are managed within budgets for 2023/2024.

Comments checked by: Lorna Baxter, Executive Director of Resource and Section 151 Officer.

### **Legal Implications**

36. The Council's constitution at Part 3.2 (Budget and Policy Framework) and Part 3.3 (Virement Rules) sets out the obligations and responsibilities of both the Cabinet and the Full Council in approving, adopting and implementing the council's budget and policy framework.
37. The Council has a fiduciary duty to council taxpayers, which means it must consider the prudent use of resources, including control of expenditure, financial prudence in the short and long term and the need to act in good faith in relation to compliance with statutory duties and exercising statutory powers. The report sets out as at November 2023 performance, risk and finance position for the Council as part of its fiduciary duty to implement budgetary controls and monitoring.

Comments checked by: Anita Bradley, Director of Law and Governance

**LORNA BAXTER**

Executive Director of Resources & Section 151 Officer

**Contact Officers:**

Louise Tustian, Head of Insight and Corporate Programmes

Kathy Wilcox, Head of Corporate Finance

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# Annex A - Performance - November 2023

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## Key



Status Indicator	Status Description
	Misses target by significant margin
	Misses target by narrow margin
	Meets or exceeds target
	Data missing
n/a	Monitoring only

Put action to address the climate emergency at the heart of our work

We will lead by example, setting ambitious targets to reduce our own carbon emissions and aligning our carbon net zero commitments to the principles of the Climate and Ecology Bill. Our environmental and planning ambitions will prioritise climate action and community resilience.

Status of Indicators	30/11/2023
OCC01 - Put action to address the climate emergency at the heart of our work	★

Measure	Director	Portfolio Holder	Period Actual	Period Target	Status	Comment	Finance Impact	Risk Impact	YTD Actual	YTD Target	YTD
OCC01.02 Total No. of streetlights fitted with LED Lanterns	<div><div>▪ Bill Cotton</div><div>▪ Paul Fermer</div></div>	Cllr A Gant	223	125	★	We have exceeded our target for the month.			2,630	3,700	▲

Measure	Director	Portfolio Holder	Period Actual	Period Target	Status	Comment	Finance Impact	Risk Impact	YTD Actual	YTD Target	YTD
OCC01.07 Total % of household waste which is reused, recycled or composted	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Bill Cotton</li> <li>Rachel Wileman</li> </ul>	Cllr P Sudbury	57.43%	61.50%		<p>Waste performance is reported a month in arrears and the figure reported is the forecast end of year performance for 2023/24. Defra's most recent published statistics for Waste Disposal Authorities for 2021/22 confirmed Oxfordshire first for the overall percentage of waste reused, recycled or composted with a recycling rate of 58.2%, compared to Devon in second place at 55.1%, and Surrey 3rd at 54.4%. Waste forecasts are variable and may go up or down. The indicator is below target because recycling rates have plateaued for some time despite continued behavioural change campaigns and encouraging residents to use the exiting recycling collections better. The trend so far this year reflects increased residual waste and reduced recycling being collected at kerbside from residents and through the HWRCs. It is difficult to establish the reasons for this but it could be due to a number of factors in combination, for example lighter weight packaging materials, new housing growth, and changing behaviours due to the current economic conditions.</p> <p>A step change is needed to meet Oxfordshire Joint Municipal Waste Management Strategy targets, which can only be made by the district councils and OCC acting together. Government waste policy changes are expected that could have a significant impact, but these have been repeatedly delayed by Defra. In January 2023 Defra published its consultation response on introducing a Deposit Return Scheme (DRS) for drinks containers from October 2025. In July Defra then announced the delay of Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) for packaging until October 2025 to avoid the risk of causing inflationary pressures. Defra also confirmed the deferral of implementation of consistent collections changes until after the introduction of EPR, and published its consultation response on this, now named Simpler Recycling, in October 2023. While the response provides clarity in some areas, others are open to further consultation. In these circumstances local authorities nationally have been unable to commit investment in significant changes in collection services. Locally, campaign work to inform residents and encourage behaviour change is continuing. For example, our Christmas campaign this year is focussing on food waste reduction based on the principles of 'plan, shop, store, eat.'</p>	<p>The financial cost of waste disposal can be reduced by increasing reuse, recycling and composting. The main way of mitigating increased costs is through encouraging behavioural change to make more effective use of kerbside and HWRC recycling facilities until a step change can be achieved through partnership working and national waste policy changes. Payments to local authorities for managing packaging waste under the EPR scheme will now not be received until after October 2025.</p>	<p>Target of recycling and composting at least 65% of household waste by 2025 in the Oxfordshire Joint Municipal Waste Management Strategy is unlikely to be achieved. The continued lack of clarity in some areas from Government about some elements of Simpler Recycling, the Government's response to the consultation on consistent collections published in October 2023, continues to make investment decisions by local authorities in significant service changes very difficult. This is a national issue.</p>	57.15%	61.50%	

## Tackle inequalities in Oxfordshire

We will work with our partners and local communities to address health, social and educational inequalities focusing on those in greatest need.

We will seek practical solutions for those most adversely affected by the pandemic.

We will support digital inclusion initiatives that give our residents the skills, connectivity and accessibility to our services and provide alternative options for those who cannot access our services digitally.

Status of Indicators	30/11/2023
OCC02 - Tackle inequalities in Oxfordshire	★

Measure	Director	Portfolio Holder	Period Actual	Period Target	Status	Comment	Finance Impact	Risk Impact	YTD Actual	YTD Target	YTD
OCC02.01 Digital Inclusion through libraries (number of hours of use of library public computers)	Mark Haynes	Cllr N Fawcett	7,741	6,000	★	This figure remains well above target and demonstrates a clear demand for access to free public computers and internet.			58,116	46,500	★
OCC02.03 Number of physical visits to Libraries	Mark Haynes	Cllr N Fawcett	161,210	110,000	★	The number of physical visits to Libraries remains well above target. This continuing success is a result of the high number of activities (including school visits) that library staff have organised, and may also be a reflection of the growing demand on library services as the cost of living crisis deepens and customers seek free reading materials, free computers/internet access, and warm spaces (plus the full range of other library services).			1,283,995	970,000	★



## Prioritise the health and wellbeing of residents

We will work with the health and wellbeing board and our partners to deliver and support services that make a vital contribution to our residents' physical and mental wellbeing.

We will support the wellbeing of those in our community who have been affected, physically and mentally, by the COVID-19 pandemic and will continue to support our volunteers and the voluntary sector.

Status of Indicators	30/11/2023
OCC03 - Prioritise the health and wellbeing of residents	★

Measure	Director	Portfolio Holder	Period Actual	Period Target	Status	Comment	Finance Impact	Risk Impact	YTD Actual	YTD Target	YTD
OCC03.09 No of people contacted via Making Every Conversation	Mark Haynes	Cllr N Fawcett	886	400	★	This figure remains significantly above target. This highly successful partnership with Public Health has seen training for library staff in order to facilitate informal and accessible discussions with customers about health issues, including recommendations, signposting, and referrals as part of libraries' Health and Wellbeing offer (Books on Prescription, healthy living, Reading Well for mental health etc). Anecdotally, this programme has also had an extremely high impact on a small number of individuals, with one customer reporting that he had sought a GP appointment as a direct result of his conversation with library staff, following which was diagnosed with (and successfully treated for) early stage cancer.			5,919	3,550	★

## Support carers and the social care system

We will engage nationally to push for a fair deal for the funding of social care.

Locally, we will support carers, including young carers and help those who want to live independently.

We will work with communities and the voluntary sector to explore new ways to provide services and focus on preventative services, helping people to stay active and supported at all stages of their lives.

We will support intergenerational programmes to build strong and resilient communities.

We will work in collaboration across the health and social care system.

Status of Indicators	30/11/2023
OCC04 - Support carers and the social care system	★

Measure	Director	Portfolio Holder	Period Actual	Period Target	Status	Comment	Finance Impact	Risk Impact	YTD Actual	YTD Target	YTD
OCC04.01 No of people supported with on-going care	Karen Fuller	Cllr T Bearder	6,528		n/a				6,528		n/a
OCC04.02 % of residents 18-64 with Learning Disability support who live on their own or with family	Karen Fuller	Cllr T Bearder	87.70%	86.00%	★				87.70%	86.00%	★
OCC04.03 % of residents aged 65 plus receiving ASC who manage their care by using a direct payment	Karen Fuller	Cllr T Bearder	18.31%	15.50%	★				18.31%	15.50%	★
OCC04.04 % of residents aged under 65 receiving ASC who manage their care by using a direct payment	Karen Fuller	Cllr T Bearder	38.17%	38.40%	●	<p>Performance remains in line with the national position. 6 people would need to transfer to a direct payments in the year to be on target.</p> <p>There are 3 key actions to stabilise this measure</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Review of individual team performance at the monthly performance board</li> <li>2. The Adult Social Care forum asks if a Direct Payment has been considered for each new service recipient and we use this data to understand barriers to uptake of direct payments</li> <li>3. Increased communications to teams to actively promote direct payments</li> </ol>	There is no financial risk associated with this measure.	Increasing use of direct payments is seen as improving performance by the Care Quality Commission. Falling numbers could reflect a reputational risk	38.17%	38.40%	●
OCC04.05 % of older residents who receive long term care and are supported to live in their own home	Karen Fuller	Cllr T Bearder	58.40%	60.00%	●	<p>The number of older people supported to live at home continues to increase, as does the number of hours of support provided overall. Performance is marginally below the 60% target but this is not a significant concern as some fluctuation is expected. The number of older people supported to live at home is 1.3% more than 12 months ago, compared to a 0.65% increase in people in care homes</p>	The financial risk associated with this would be placing people in more expensive care home placements. There is no evidence of this, but current levels of activity across the service are creating financial pressures.	This increase in the number of people supported at home is monitored closely in conjunction with the number of people entering care and contributes to our overall management of the risk related to demand.	58.40%	60.00%	●

Measure	Director	Portfolio Holder	Period Actual	Period Target	Status	Comment	Finance Impact	Risk Impact	YTD Actual	YTD Target	YTD
OCC04.06 No of residents who have received a formal assessment of their role as a Carer	Karen Fuller	Cllr T Bearder	742	197	★				5,027	1,576	★
OCC04.07 No of Carers who have received a direct payment	Karen Fuller	Cllr T Bearder	1,199		n/a				1,199		n/a
OCC04.08 No of visits to Live Well Oxfordshire	Karen Fuller	Cllr T Bearder	13,642	6,000	★	Now using new GA4 for analytics. Alongside the number of sessions on Live Well Oxfordshire for November (13,642), there were 32,258 page views and 7,920 users on Live Well Oxfordshire.			101,999	48,000	★

## Invest in an inclusive, integrated and sustainable transport network

We will create a transport network that makes active travel the first choice for short journeys and invest in public transport to significantly reduce our reliance on car journeys. In areas of planned housing growth, we will prioritise active and public transport over road capacity for cars.

Status of Indicators	30/11/2023
OCC05 - Invest in an inclusive, integrated and sustainable transport network	▲

Measure	Director	Portfolio Holder	Period Actual	Period Target	Status	Comment	Finance Impact	Risk Impact	YTD Actual	YTD Target	YTD
OCC05.03 91 KM (2%) of the highway to be treated	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Bill Cotton</li> <li>Paul Fermer</li> </ul>	Cllr A Gant	2.10	2.10	★	The annual plan target for 2023/24 total surfacing programme has been firmed up as 2% of the network (excluding patching). As of 30th November, 86.7 km have been treated as programmed. This is on track against the target of 2%.			86.75	88.30	★
OCC05.07 Public satisfaction in the condition of Highways	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Bill Cotton</li> <li>Paul Fermer</li> </ul>	Cllr A Gant	18.00%	32.00%	▲	<p>Maintaining public satisfaction in Condition of road surfaces has been challenging due to historic and past scale of investment. Oxfordshire's score, 18%, is 7% lower than the national average 25%, of the 111 authorities surveyed. but note it is relatively close to its average peer group score of 20% , of the 30 County Councils surveyed. It is also of note that although public satisfaction may have fallen in this area, the actual overall condition of the network has not declined to the same extent.</p> <p>A level of customer satisfaction improvement is likely to be able to be achieved through enhancements to communications and innovating through service delivery. Service improvements have recently been made to improve how we communicate with the public and we are also trialling new repair materials and techniques which should hopefully result in improved durability and quality of repairs.</p>	Lower Customer Satisfaction, could lead to an increased number of complaints, resulting in an increased revenue burden through staff time.	Low Customer Satisfaction could lead to reputational damage of the council.	18.00%	32.00%	▲

## Preserve and improve access to nature and green spaces

We will work with partners to provide safe and clean green spaces across the county that support the physical and mental wellbeing of our residents.  
We will take action to protect and increase biodiversity, supporting nature recovery, in both rural and urban environments.


Status of Indicators	30/11/2023
OCC06 - Preserve and improve access to nature and green spaces	?!





Measure	Director	Portfolio Holder	Period Actual	Period Target	Status	Comment	Finance Impact	Risk Impact	YTD Actual	YTD Target	YTD
OCC06.02 Percentage of newly planted trees still alive on land OCC own & manage	<div><div></div><div>Bill Cotton</div><div></div><div>Rachel Wileman</div></div>	Cllr P Sudbury	93.60%		n/a	No further losses recorded and this figure will not change between now and April 2024 because the trees will not be surveyed because of winter dormancy.	None identified	None identified	93.60%		n/a

## Create opportunities for children and young people to reach their full potential

We will support all our children and young people, and their families, to achieve their very best and to prepare them for their future, including safeguarding, and supporting those more vulnerable and with additional needs.

We will continue to work with partners to provide help early so children and families are less likely to be in need.

Status of Indicators	30/11/2023
OCC07 - Create opportunities for children and young people to reach their full potential	

Measure	Director	Portfolio Holder	Period Actual	Period Target	Status	Comment	Finance Impact	Risk Impact	YTD Actual	YTD Target	YTD
OCC07.03 Number of multi-agency strength & needs assessment completed in Oxfordshire	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Anne Coyle</li> <li>Stephen Chandler</li> </ul>	Cllr J Howson	334	808					3,503	3,962	
OCC07.01 Total number of children with an Education, Health and Care Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Anne Coyle</li> <li>Stephen Chandler</li> </ul>	Cllr K Gregory	6,335		n/a				6,335		n/a
OCC07.02 No of children we care for who are Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Anne Coyle</li> <li>Stephen Chandler</li> </ul>	Cllr J Howson	110		n/a				800		n/a
OCC07.04 Increase the % of children in Foster Care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Anne Coyle</li> <li>Stephen Chandler</li> </ul>	Cllr J Howson	61.00%	65.00%		495 children are currently supported in foster care out of a total of 815 cared for children (including unaccompanied asylum seeking children) – 61%. The vast majority of occasions where we seek a foster care placement result in the child being placed in foster care. A targeted campaign is in place to increase internal foster care looking at specific locality areas where we need to recruit foster carers. You will see adverts for foster carers on the sides of buses. The new South Central Independent Fostering Agency Framework is now in place to provide additional external foster placements. 61% of Oxfordshire children are looked after in foster placements whereas nationally the figure is 68%	The average cost of an external residential placement is around £5700 a week; the average cost of external foster care is around £950 per week. If people are placed in residential care because of a lack of foster care (as opposed to it being the placement that is in the best interests of the child/young person) then there is a pressure on the budget.		61.00%	65.00%	

Measure	Director	Portfolio Holder	Period Actual	Period Target	Status	Comment	Finance Impact	Risk Impact	YTD Actual	YTD Target	YTD
OCC07.05 The percentage of children in residential care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Anne Coyle</li> <li>Stephen Chandler</li> </ul>	Cllr J Howson	16%	14%		<p>The total number of cared for children has reduced from 881 (including unaccompanied children and young people) at the start of the year to 815 at the end of October a reduction of 7%. The number of children supported in residential care has reduced from 143 at the start of the year to 128 at the end of September, a fall of 10%. The reduction in the overall numbers of cared for children masks the improvement in terms of reducing the number of children in residential care. We are increasing the number of in-house children's homes from 4 homes to 9 by March 2025 with the support of the DFE capital grant and council capital resource. In addition, we currently have a block contract arrangement for 16 residential beds in Oxfordshire or within 10 miles of the border. We also have access to up to 15 beds as part of the Cross Regional Contract which offers a therapeutic model of care for children with more complex needs and includes education provision at an inclusive price. Currently around 70% of the residential placements we use are spot purchased which suggests that current frameworks and block contracts are not able to provide the number of placements required. The South Central residential framework is due to be recommissioned by October 2024 and the issues identified with the current framework such as the uplift controls will be addressed which should increase the number of providers who join which should reduce the level of spot purchasing. Part of our financial plan is to ensure that we maximise the use of internal and block contract beds - by managing and reducing vacancies in Oxfordshire homes for Oxfordshire children</p>	<p>The average cost of an external residential placement is around £5700 a week; the average cost of external foster care is around £950 per week. If people are placed in residential care because of a lack of foster care (as opposed to it being the placement that is in the best interests of the child/young person) then there is a pressure on the budget. We would always avoid considering residential for any child that should or could be cared for in family based care.</p>		15%	14%	
OCC07.06 Number of Oxfordshire children we care for	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Anne Coyle</li> <li>Stephen Chandler</li> </ul>	Cllr J Howson	705	770	★				705	770	★
OCC07.07 % of Education Health & Care Plans completed within 20 weeks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Anne Coyle</li> <li>Stephen Chandler</li> </ul>	Cllr J Howson	73.00%	50.70%	★				63.40%	50.70%	★

Play our part in a vibrant and participatory local democracy

- We are committed to taking decisions in an open and inclusive way.
- We will engage and listen to Oxfordshire residents.
- We will be open to scrutiny and regularly provide progress updates.
- We will put the impact on the climate and future generations at the heart of decision making.
- We will manage our own resources carefully.

Status of Indicators	30/11/2023
OCC08 - Play our part in a vibrant and participatory local democracy	?!

This report does not contain any data

This priority has no measures to report in this reporting period



## Work with local businesses and partners for environmental, economic and social benefit

We will help Oxfordshire become a recognised centre of innovation in green and sustainable technologies.

We will use our purchasing power for environmental, social and economic benefit and ensure that our pandemic recovery planning supports sustainable job creation.

Status of Indicators	30/11/2023
OCC09 - Work with local businesses and partners for environmental, economic and social benefit	★

Measure	Director	Portfolio Holder	Period Actual	Period Target	Status	Comment	Finance Impact	Risk Impact	YTD Actual	YTD Target	YTD
OCC09.02 Participation in innovation funding bids or new projects in support of Living Oxfordshire	Tim Spiers	Cllr N Fawcett	3.00	2.50	★				23.00	20.00	★

## Running the Business - Customer Experience

Status of Indicators	30/11/2023
OCC10 - Customer Service	★

Measure	Director	Portfolio Holder	Period Actual	Period Target	Status	Comment	Finance Impact	Risk Impact	YTD Actual	YTD Target	YTD
OCC10.03 Overall customer satisfaction rate for the Customer Service Centre – telephony	Mark Haynes	Cllr N Fawcett	99%	80%	★	Latest satisfaction survey – November 6% of calls answered were surveyed. 99% customers surveyed were satisfied or very satisfied, whilst 1% were unsatisfied			99%	80%	★
OCC10.04 First contact resolution for customer enquiries received by the Customer Service Centre	Mark Haynes	Cllr N Fawcett	75%	75%	★	8,955 of inbound phone contacts were resolved at first point of contact, with 5.7% of inbound phone contacts deemed avoidable			75%	75%	★
OCC10.05 The percentage of customer telephone calls abandoned at the Customer Service Centre	Mark Haynes	Cllr N Fawcett	8%	10%	★	<p>For the second month running, abandonment rate is below 10%. This is due mainly to the Communities and Neighbourhood side of the CSC being well under which compensates for the Adult Social Care rates.</p> <p>The number of calls offered in November decreased by 1.0% compared to October. Compared to October 2022, they are up 13.1%. The abandonment rate decreased by 12.8% to 8.1%.</p> <p>A total of 33,661 contacts was received during November, which is a decrease of 5.0% compared to October (35,246). This consists of 6,012 outbound calls, 10 webchat, 10 social media enquiries, and 15,828 emails.</p> <p>Abandonment rate for Blue Badge has dropped from 12% in October to 6% in November, this is the best performance reached since April 2023.</p> <p>Contacts for Residential Parking have reduced by 15.8% compared to the previous month with an abandonment rate reduction of 6%</p> <p>Contacts to Household Support have seen a peak in November (1070) compared to October (13). The last peak was in March (2433), this decrease of 56% is due to the introduction of an online option for applicants.</p> <p>Abandonment rate for Adult Social Care is on the same level of the previous month (20%). Throughout November, we have prioritized reducing the number of assessments we have which has resulted in higher abandonment rates. This is to ensure we have low numbers in the assessment trays as we approach our busiest time over the Xmas/New Year Period</p> <p>Abandonment rate for childhood support services has increased slightly in November (5%) compared to the previous month (2%)</p>			12%	10%	●













Measure	Director	Portfolio Holder	Period Actual	Period Target	Status	Comment	Finance Impact	Risk Impact	YTD Actual	YTD Target	YTD
OCC10.06 Overall customer satisfaction rates for standard Registration Service	Mark Haynes	Cllr N Fawcett	100%	95%	★	<p>The Registration service was delighted to have retained 100% customer satisfaction for November 2023. A snapshot of customer comments are below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The whole procedure from start to finish was well handled, friendly, and helpful, which meant that the ceremony and subsequent reception was a most memorable success.</li> <li>Oxfordshire Country Council marriage registry services are truly outstanding, professional and personable. All ceremony logistics and legal material were clearly communicated and attended to. Thank you for making our special day absolutely perfect.</li> <li>Deputy registrar was very kind and welcoming and very polite</li> <li>Very straightforward process from start to finish with super helpful people. All ran to time.</li> <li>The lady we saw was very kindly without being over the top.</li> <li>I took my friend to register the death of her long term partner the registrar put her at her ease and carefully explained everything. Very professional but with empathy</li> <li>The appointment was simple to set up. On the day we were actually seen before our appointment time and the deputy registrar who dealt with us could not have been more helpful, professional and kind.</li> </ul>			100%	95%	★
OCC10.07 Overall customer satisfaction rate for Coroners Inquest Service	Mark Haynes	Cllr N Fawcett	100%	99%	★	<p>Some examples of feedback received in November include:</p> <p>Last week I, along with other family members, attended the inquest into the death of my nephew, Sammy Phillips. I feel I need to reach out and express extreme gratitude to each and every person that I came into contact with and thank them for their kindness and compassion. This is a place we never thought we would find ourselves in, however, your sympathy and empathy made this nightmare situation all the more bearable. THANK YOU!</p> <p>Considering the limitations of the building, I was very happy with how the inquest was handled. Staff at the Coroner's Office - Helen (Volunteer) and Stuart (Coroner's Officer) were both very calming, kind and compassionate. They treated us with dignity and explained things clearly. We felt very looked after and are grateful for their efforts to assist on a difficult day. David Freeman was kind and courteous when we spoke on the phone and in our email exchanges too.</p> <p>Jerry McGlynn was extremely helpful throughout and always willing and able to answer any questions I had. Thank you.</p>			100%	99%	★



## Running the business - Finance

Status of Indicators	30/11/2023
OCC11 - Finance	▲

Measure	Director	Portfolio Holder	Period Actual	Period Target	Status	Comment	Finance Impact	Risk Impact	YTD Actual	YTD Target	YTD
OCC11.01 Overall forecast revenue variance across the Council	Lorna Baxter	Cllr D Levy	0.70%	0.00%	★	Overall forecast for the November position is £5.650m overspend.			0.76%	0.00%	★
OCC11.02 Achievement of planned savings	Lorna Baxter	Cllr D Levy	72.00%	95.00%	▲				62.86%	95.00%	▲
OCC11.03 General balances are forecast to remain at or above the risk assessed level	Lorna Baxter	Cllr D Levy	£25,620,000	£30,200,000	▲	Balances are forecast to be £23.790m in the November position, which is £6.410m below the risk assessed level			£25,620,000	£30,200,000	▲
OCC11.04 Directorates deliver services and achieve planned performance within agreed budget	Lorna Baxter	Cllr D Levy	2.5%	0.0%	▲	Directorates overspend is £15.050m for the November forecast			2.2%	0.0%	▲
OCC11.05 Total Outturn variation for DSG funded services (schools/early years)	Lorna Baxter	Cllr D Levy	0.00%	0.00%	★				0.00%	0.00%	★
OCC11.06 Total Outturn variation for DSG funded services (high needs)	Lorna Baxter	Cllr D Levy	3.40%	0.00%	▲	Forecast year end position has increased from £18.3m target to £21.2m in November.			0.43%	0.00%	★
OCC11.07 Use of non-DSG revenue grant funding	Lorna Baxter	Cllr D Levy	95.00%	95.00%	★				95.00%	95.00%	★
OCC11.08 % of agreed invoices paid within 30 days	Lorna Baxter	Cllr D Levy	95.43%	95.00%	★	This measure tracks invoices paid within 30 days of receipt and includes invoices paid via the self-service purchase order system, as well as invoices processed via social care finance systems. Currently the Education Finance system is not included. Invoices paid on time in November was 95.4%, invoice paid by purchase order were under target at 94%, Social Care invoices were above target. The number of late invoices was 160 out of 2662 processed. Property within Resources accounts for 54% of the late invoices. Work is planned in Q4 to review the approach to invoice management.			95.29%	95.00%	★
OCC11.09 Invoice collection rate - Corporate Debtors	Lorna Baxter	Cllr D Levy	96.57%	95.00%	★	This measure identifies the percentage of invoices issued that have been paid within 120 days. In this period, we are measuring invoices issued in August 2023. The collection rate was 96.57%, above the target of 95%.			97.06%	95.00%	★

Measure	Director	Portfolio Holder	Period Actual	Period Target	Status	Comment	Finance Impact	Risk Impact	YTD Actual	YTD Target	YTD
OCC11.10 Debt requiring impairment - Corporate Debtors	Lorna Baxter	Cllr D Levy	£551,882	£300,000		Debt requiring impairment is the value of invoices with potential to become unrecoverable, the potential loss requires recording in the accounts at year end. If at year end there is an overall increase in the value of invoices at risk, we are required to top up the impairment balance, consequently this figure is tracked through the year. Debt requiring impairment this month is £0.552m. The top four cases account for 49% of the total bad debt and is being actively worked on. The top debtor is £0.158m and has gone into liquidation. A claim has been placed with the liquidators.			£551,882	£300,000	
OCC11.11 Debt requiring impairment - ASC contribution debtors	Lorna Baxter	Cllr D Levy	£5,102,441	£3,500,000		The 2022-23 year-end adults care contribution impairment for bad debt was £4.60m, bad debt at the end of November is £5.1m, £0.5m higher. As reported previously wider economic factors have had a significant effect on means tested social care contribution debt levels, as have delays with the court of protection and related activity, this tracks with other local authorities' experience. A bad debt task team has been operational since July 2022 with the objective to resolve £3.7m of historic debt. Resourcing challenges within both the debt task group and business as usual teams impacted performance during 2022-23. The service have implemented additional performance oversight and are tracking team performance.	In relation to the debt focus work the Adults' plan was to fund temporary income collection staff via a reduction in the bad debt impairment, to achieve this the ASC bad debt level needs to finish the year below the 2022-23 year end position. If the impairment is not reduced by year end there will be additional staffing pressures as well as a cost to top up the impairment, the return on investment will not be realised.		£5,102,441	£3,500,000	
OCC11.12 Average cash balance compared to forecast average cash balance	Lorna Baxter	Cllr D Levy	£499,230,000	£480,000,000					£469,757,000	£480,000,000	
OCC11.13 Average interest rate achieved on in-house investment portfolio	Lorna Baxter	Cllr D Levy	3.72%	3.00%					3.30%	3.00%	
OCC11.14 Average annualised return achieved for externally managed funds	Lorna Baxter	Cllr D Levy	3.75%	3.75%					3.75%	3.75%	
OCC11.15 Invoice Collection Rate - ASC contribution debtors	Lorna Baxter	Cllr D Levy	90.65%	92.00%		The 120-day invoice collection rate remains at 91% this period, just below the 92% target and above the average for 22-23, 89%. A development to redesign reminder letters went live in October 23 and is expected to drive an improvement in collection rates by the end of the year. The target is to reach 92% by the end of the FY 23/24.			90.40%	92.00%	



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## Introduction

1. This annex sets out the fourth financial monitoring update for the 2023/24 financial year and is based on information to the end of November 2023. Key issues, as well as risks relating to inflation, demand and other factors, plus any areas of emerging pressure are explained below.

The following additional information is provided to support the information in this Annex:

Annex B – 1 (a) to (e)	Detailed directorate positions
Annex B – 2b	Virements to note
Annex B – 3	Earmarked reserves
Annex B – 4	Government grants
Annex B – 5	General Balances

## Overall Financial Position

2. As shown below directorates are forecasting an overspend of £14.4m (2.5%). After taking account of an increase in interest receivable on balances held by the council and the use of funding held in contingency and the COVID-19 reserve, the overall forecast expenditure is £4.2m higher than the net operating budget.

	Latest Budget Nov-23 £m	Forecast Spend Nov-23 £m	Forecast Variance Nov-23 £m	Forecast Variance Nov-23 %	Forecast Variance Sept-23 £m	Change Since Sept-23 £m
Adult Services	227.3	227.3	0.0	0.0%	0.0	0.0
Children's Services	169.1	181.9	12.8	7.6%	11.8	1.0
Environment & Place	73.9	73.0	-0.8	-1.2%	-0.4	-0.4
Public Health	4.1	4.1	0.0	0.0%	0.0	0.0
Community Safety	27.6	28.1	0.5	1.8%	0.0	0.5
Resources	70.0	71.9	2.0	2.8%	2.2	-0.2
<b>Directorate Total</b>	<b>571.8</b>	<b>586.3</b>	<b>14.4</b>	<b>2.5%</b>	<b>13.6</b>	<b>0.8</b>
<b>Budgets Held Centrally</b>						
Capital Financing	28.4	28.4	0.0	0.0%	0.0	0.0
Interest on Balances	-16.6	-18.5	-1.8	11.1%	-1.0	-0.8
Inflation <sup>1</sup>	6.5	6.5	0.0	0.0%	0.0	0.0
Contingency	12.4	5.4	-7.0	-56.5%	-7.0	0.0
Un-ringfenced Specific Grants	-43.7	-43.7	0.0	0.0%	0.0	0.0
Insurance	1.4	1.4	0.0	0.0%	0.0	0.0
Contribution from COVID-19 reserve	-7.4	-8.8	-1.4	19.0%	-1.4	0.0

<sup>1</sup> Virements to allocate inflation and contingency from budgets held centrally to directorates to fund the impact of the 2023/24 Green Book pay award were transacted at the end of December 2023. The Business Management & Monitoring Report to Cabinet in March 2024 will reflect the updated position.

	Latest Budget Nov-23 £m	Forecast Spend Nov-23 £m	Forecast Variance Nov-23 £m	Forecast Variance Nov-23 %	Forecast Variance Sept-23 £m	Change Since Sept-23 £m
Contribution from Budget Priority Reserve	-2.4	-2.4	0.0	0.0%	0.0	0.0
Contributions to reserves	20.7	20.7	0.0	0.0%	0.0	0.0
Contribution to balances	7.6	7.6	0.0	0.0%	0.0	0.0
<b>Total Budgets Held Centrally</b>	<b>6.9</b>	<b>-3.3</b>	<b>-10.2</b>	<b>-148.2%</b>	<b>-9.4</b>	<b>-0.8</b>
<b>Net Operating Budget</b>	<b>578.8</b>	<b>583.0</b>	<b>4.2</b>	<b>0.7%</b>	<b>4.2</b>	<b>0.0</b>
Business Rates & Council Tax funding	-578.8	-578.8	0.0	0.0%	0.0	0.0
<b>Forecast Year End Position</b>	<b>-0.0</b>	<b>4.2</b>	<b>4.2</b>		<b>4.2</b>	<b>0.0</b>

3. The overall forecast overspend of £4.2m has remained unchanged since September 2023.. As noted in previous reports inflation and demand pressures for children's social care, as well as workforce shortages, have increased the financial risk for the council and made it much more challenging to forecast activity and expenditure.
4. £1.5m of cross directorate agency staffing savings (24CC13) agreed as part of the 2023/24 budget in February 2023 were originally held in Resources pending agreement about how to allocate these. These are now included in directorate totals and action will need to be taken to achieve these in the longer run.
5. The forecast for Adult Services remains break even. £0.3m of reallocated staffing savings are expected to be managed within that position.
6. The forecast overspend for Children's Services has increased by a further £1.0m since the report to Cabinet in November 2023. This is mainly driven by an increase in Home to School transport activity of £0.5m plus a £0.5m pressure relating to the reallocation of staffing savings. Other on-going underlying pressures in Children's Services are driven by a combination of increased care placements costs, and reliance on agency staff to cover vacancies. Children's Services have implemented a number of organisational, governance and business process controls as well as market management actions to address the underlying pressures but it is taking time for these to have an impact.
7. There is now a forecast overspend of £0.5m for Community Safety. This reflects a one-off payment made for a disabling injury/illness, the reallocation of £0.2m budgeted staffing savings, and an increase in training costs.
8. The forecast underspend for Environment & Place has increased by £0.4m compared to the September 2023 position and is now £0.8m after taking account

of £0.2m reallocated staffing savings. The underspend includes underspends on transport community initiatives, a reduction in energy cost prices, and additional income from income through enforcement activity.

9. The forecast overspend for Resources has reduced by £0.2m from the September forecast after taking account of the reallocation of budgeted agency savings of £1.1m to directorates. £ 0.4m of the total needs to be managed by services in Resources.
10. 73% of the 2022/23 savings of £10.2m which were not achieved as planned in the last financial year are currently assessed as delivered or are expected to be delivered in 2023/24 and 27% are still assessed as amber or red. 72% of the 2023/24 savings are assessed as delivered or are expected to be delivered and 28% are still assessed as amber or red. Action is continuing to be taken to ensure that the delivery of both existing planned savings and new budget reductions is maximised in 2023/24. The anticipated achievement of savings is incorporated into the forecast directorate position.
11. The forecast 2023/24 deficit compared to Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) funding for High Needs is £21.2m. This has increased by £2.9m compared to the £18.3m forecast deficit approved by Cabinet in May 2023. The CIPFA code of practice requires negative High Needs DSG balances to be held in an unusable reserve. The forecast deficit would increase the cumulative negative High Needs DSG balance held in this reserve from £41.1m as at 31 March 2023 to £62.3m at 31 March 2024.
12. £3.0m of the £12.4m contingency budget has been used to meet the cost of additional pay inflation in 2023/24. Funding will continue to be held in contingency to meet the cost of pay inflation for vacant posts if they are recruited to.
13. After taking account of the use of £7.0m contingency, additional interest, and funding from the COVID-19 reserve to support the overall forecast position, the remaining net £4.2m overspend against the operating budget would reduce balances to £25.6m, £4.6m under the £30.2m risk assessed level for 2023/24. The risk assessed level of balances for 2024/25, and funding for any top-up to that level after taking account of any one – off funding in 2023/24, is included in the Budget and Business Planning report elsewhere on the agenda.
14. The Council's Management Team are continuing to work with directorates to identify actions to manage expenditure so that any overspend by year end is mitigated as far as possible and does not require any call on balances.

## Directorate Forecasts

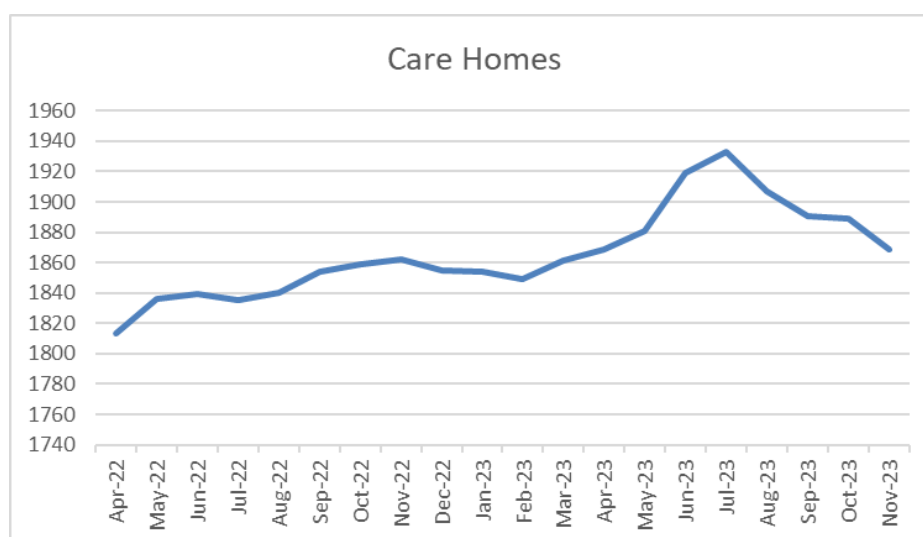
### Adult Services

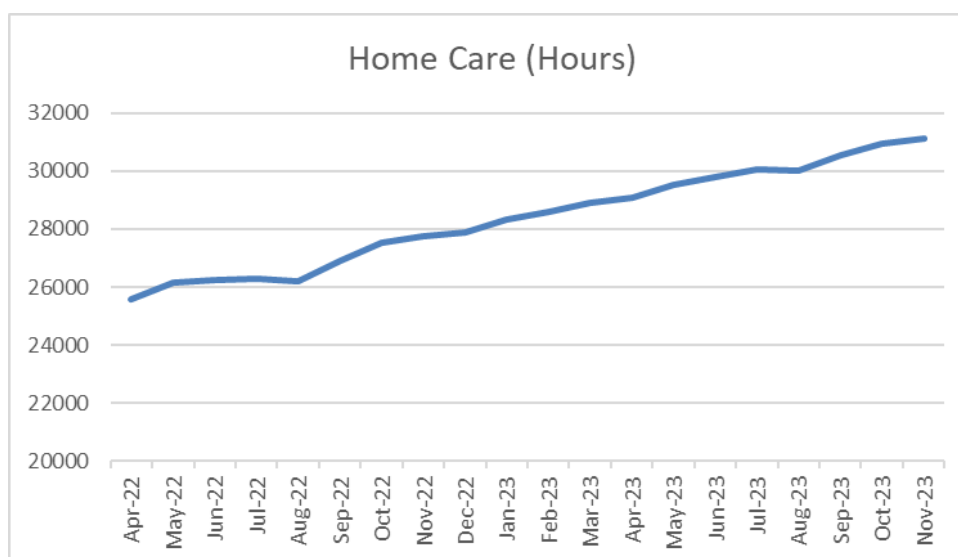
15. Adult Services is forecasting a breakeven position against a budget of £227.3m. This is unchanged from the September 2023 position and is after taking account of reallocated staffing savings of £0.3m.

Service Area	Latest Budget Nov-23 £m	Forecast Spend Nov-23 £m	Forecast Variance Nov-23 £m	Forecast Variance Sept-23 £m	Change Since Sept-23 £m
Adult Social Care	24.4	25.2	0.8	0.8	0.0
Health, Education & Social Care Commissioning	5.2	4.5	-0.7	-0.7	0.0
Housing & Social Care Commissioning	1.4	1.4	0.0	0.0	0.0
Business Support Service	1.1	1.0	-0.1	-0.1	0.0
Pooled Budgets	195.3	195.3	0.0	0.0	0.0
<b>Total Adult Services</b>	<b>227.3</b>	<b>227.3</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>

16. The forecast reflects an agreement on the sharing of costs for adults with Section 117 aftercare support under the Mental Health Act with the Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West Integrated Care Board, bringing the health and social care system funding more in line with other local authorities and care boards.

17. Care homes and home support activity is shown in the graphs below.





18. To address demand pressures, a number of actions have already been taken. These include ensuring that all spend is aligned to the “Oxfordshire Way” approach through supporting people to remain in their own homes for as long as possible and the result of this is beginning to be seen in the care home graph above since July 2023.

### **Pooled Budgets**

#### Age Well Pooled Budget

19. The Age Well pool combines health and social care expenditure on care homes, activity relating to hospital avoidance and prevention and early support activities for older people.
20. Budgets within the pool are managed on an aligned basis with the Integrated Care Board (ICB) for Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire, and Berkshire West (BOB).
21. The council elements of the Age Well pool are forecast to breakeven in 2023/24, on the assumption that all savings are delivered. This position is after using the Market Sustainability and Improvement Fund (MSIF) grant of £3.4m.
22. The council’s share of the Better Care Fund (BCF) being utilised within the pool is £29.4m in 2023/24, an increase of 5.7% from 2022/23.
23. There are significant risks within the forecast where certainty is not possible at this stage, these include:
- Delivery of £2.1m savings through continued implementation of the Oxfordshire Way and changes to the unit cost of services. These will be delivered through commissioning, and service user reviews looking at opportunities for prevention, technology, and increased independence.
  - Growth in placements, particularly residential, through the remainder of the year. Although there is a seasonal trend, it is difficult to predict accurately how activity will move. There is also a risk relating to improvements in the timeliness

of assessments which may increase the number of new placements in the remaining months of the year.

Live Well Pooled Budget

24. The Live Well pool supports a combination of health and social care needs for adults of working age with learning disabilities, acquired brain injury or mental health needs and adults with physical disabilities.
25. Budgets within the pool are managed on an aligned basis with the Integrated Care Board (ICB) for Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire, and Berkshire West (BOB).
26. The council elements of the Live Well pool are forecast to breakeven after taking account of the following:
  - A £2.7m underspend within Learning Disabilities, partially offset by a £0.5m overspend relating to the cost of people with mental health needs falling outside the scope of the Outcome Based Contract with Oxford Health Foundation Trust. £3.8m additional Section 117 aftercare funding is now included in the forecast.
  - A £2.2m overspend within Physical Disabilities relates to an increase in demand for both care homes and home support during late 2022/23 creating a pressure in 2023/24. Over the last 12 months, up to November 23, there has been a 12% increase in care home placements (10 placements) and a 6% increase in the number of homecare hours delivered per week (240 hours).

Risks or uncertainties in both service groups relate to:

- £2.1m savings yet to be delivered through the continued implementation of the Oxfordshire Way and changes to the unit cost of services throughout the rest of 2023/24. These will be delivered through commissioning, and through service user reviews looking at opportunities for prevention, technology, and increased independence.
  - Growth in care packages, particularly for supported living and home support, through the year. Although there is a seasonal trend it is difficult to predict accurately how activity will move throughout the remaining months of the year. There is also a risk relating to the timeliness of assessments which may increase the number of new packages made in year.
27. Having overspent in 2022/23 it is anticipated that following changes to the budget and contracts for 2023/24, the Mental Health services provided through the Outcome Based Contract with Oxford Health will spend in line with budget this year.

### **Non-Pool Services**

28. A breakeven position is forecast across all other services.

### **Reserves**

29. £0.4m held in the Budget Priorities reserve for Adult Social Care as at 31 March 2023 is being used to fund intensive support costs and the wider directorate position in 2023/34.

30. Most of the £2.1m held as a result of additional contributions made by Oxfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group over the last three financial years is also committed to be used in 2023/24. £0.2m is committed against spend in 2024/25 and 2025/26. The ICB are working through a spending plan to utilise this funding.

31. £0.3m added to the Government Initiative Reserve in 2022/23 related to charging reform, reflecting elements of the Trailblazer programme where costs will continue to be incurred in 2023/24 and 2024/25 ahead of the revised date for charging reform in autumn 2025.

### **Ringfenced Grants**

32. As set out in Annex 4, ring-fenced government grants expected to be received by Adult Services in 2023/24 total £21.1m.

33. The Improved Better Care Fund Grant is £10.7m in 2023/24, with no change since 2022/23. The conditions attached to the grant funding require it to be used for the purposes of meeting adult social care needs, including contributing to the stabilisation of local care markets and supporting the NHS in addressing pressures such as delayed discharges.

34. The Market Sustainability and Improvement Fund is £5.4m and is being used to support the provider fee uplift in 2023/24 in line with the terms of the grant, to enhance the uplift, and to maintain uplifts from 2022/23 funded through the Market Sustainability and Fair Cost of Care grant which now forms part of this grant.

35. The Market Sustainability and Improvement Workforce Fund is £3.5m and is being used to increase social care capacity through increasing social care workforce capacity and retention, reducing social care waiting times and increasing fee rates paid to social care providers.

36. The Adult Social Care Discharge Fund is £1.5m. This will be used to provide interventions that improve discharge of patients from hospital to the most appropriate location for their ongoing care.

### **Virements**

37. Virements to note reflect budget movements within the pools and the realignment of staffing budgets with Adult Social Care.

## **Children's Services**

38. Children's Services is forecasting an overspend of £12.9m against a budget of £169.1m.

39. As reported throughout the year the underlying pressures in Children's Services highlighted in the overspend in 2022/23 reported to Cabinet in June 2023 remain a significant challenge in 2023/24. These pressures are driven by a combination of care placements costs, staffing, particularly the reliance on agency staff to cover vacancies, and Home to School Transport.

Service Area	Latest Budget Nov-23 £m	Forecast Spend Nov-23 £m	Forecast Variance Nov-23 £m	Forecast Variance Sept-23 £m	Change Since Sept-23 £m
Education & Learning	38.9	42.6	3.6	3.1	0.5
Schools <sup>2</sup>	0.2	0.2	0.0	0.0	0.0
<b>Subtotal Education</b>	<b>39.1</b>	<b>42.8</b>	<b>3.6</b>	<b>3.1</b>	<b>0.5</b>
Early Help, Front Door & Social Care	75.2	77.3	2.2	2.0	0.2
Provider Services & Safeguarding	43.3	49.4	6.0	5.9	0.2
Children's Services Central Costs	11.5	12.5	1.0	0.8	0.2
<b>Subtotal Children's Social Care</b>	<b>130.0</b>	<b>139.3</b>	<b>9.3</b>	<b>8.7</b>	<b>0.6</b>
<b>Total Children's Services</b>	<b>169.1</b>	<b>182.0</b>	<b>12.8</b>	<b>11.8</b>	<b>1.0</b>
<b>Overspend on High Needs DSG that will be transferred to unusable reserve</b>	<b>265.3</b>	<b>286.5</b>	<b>21.2</b>	<b>18.3</b>	<b>2.9</b>

### **Education & Learning**

40. Within Education & Learning, the Home to School Transport and the Special Educational Needs (SEN) service continue to be high risk in terms of budget variance.

41. Home to School transport is now forecast to overspend by £3.6m. The £0.5m increase compared to the position reported in September 2023 reflects higher activity in the service than was budgeted for and the impact of rolling annual tenders for bus routes. In addition, the service has reviewed a planned saving commitment of £0.5m and confirmed that it will not be delivered in year.

42. Additional unbudgeted expenditure of £0.3m is required to fund temporary senior management posts within Education.

43. The service is continuing to work on the implications of the new attendance regulations in September 2023. In addition, the Department for Education (DfE) has announced additional Early Years funding from September 2023.

44. Within the Special Education Needs (SEN) service there are considerable ongoing

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<sup>2</sup> \*Maintained Schools are funded by Dedicated Schools Grant



pressures on the SEN casework team and Educational Psychologists due to the continued high number of Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) requests. An additional on-going investment of £0.5m was included in the 2023/24 budget to fund additional staff to manage demand for EHCPs.

### **Childrens' Social Care**

45. Pressures within Childrens' Social Care continue to be driven by a combination of care placement costs, staffing, particularly the reliance on agency staff to cover vacancies and the emerging gap relating to joint funding with Health Partners. A £0.5m pressure relates to the reallocation of budgeted agency staffing savings that were originally held in the Resources directorate.
46. Underlying pressures remain despite additional budget added in 2023/24 and actions to prevent and reduce costs. This is due to a combination of:
  - The 2022/23 overspend increased in the last quarter of the year so was not fully anticipated in the Budget & Business Planning process for 2023/24.
  - Changes in practice, interventions to prevent unnecessary referrals and reduce the number and cost of cases is taking more time to impact on expenditure than anticipated.
  - The financial volatility in the market for care together with the impact of spiralling inflation and shortages in local capacity are undermining the service Sufficiency Strategy to manage the market. As a consequence, the service continues to experience an accelerating increase in placement fees especially 'Spot' rates.
47. The drivers of the pressures remain the same as in 2022/23 and include:
  - Continued workload pressure, increased vacancies and recruitment difficulties within front-line services especially Family Solutions Plus.
  - Though the number of children in care is reducing the rate of decrease is slower than anticipated and is being offset by increases in underlying unit cost rates especially the growing number of very complex cases.
48. The most significant variances include:
  - Children with Disabilities - £3.0m forecast overspend due to £2.7m pressures on placement budgets (a combination of an increased more complex level of care and higher rates) and £0.3m pressures on team budgets. The £0.4m increase compared to the previously reported position is due to a combination of new placements and increased level of care in existing placements.
  - Unregistered Placements – £2.5m forecast overspend including a reduction of £0.5m in the period due to:
    - the anticipated impact of the introduction of a new framework contract to ensure compliance, standardise fees and deliver better value.
    - additional arrangements to monitor, track, control and forecast placements.
  - There is an emerging pressure and financial risk relating to joint funding

where a number of requests have been declined as not meeting the health threshold. These include unregistered placements with requests for up to £0.5m health funding and a current joint funded care package where the funding has been withdrawn (up to £0.5m in a full year).

### **Children Social Care: Pressures, Drivers, and Action Plan**

49. Given the scale of the £19.1m overspend for Children's Social Care in 2022/23, the time needed for the actions taken to date to have an impact and the urgent need to address the shortfalls in market capacity, the service has undertaken a comprehensive review of its vision and strategy. The Financial Strategy sets out a new baseline and financial investment, cost reduction and timeline to bring spend within current budget and recover the overspend. The on-going impacts of the strategy are being considered through the Budget & Business Planning process for 2024/25.

### **Actions to Turn the Position around and Evidence of Improvement**

50. The service has implemented a number of organisational, governance and business process controls and market management actions to address the underlying pressures. These include:

- Continued scrutiny of spend by senior management and the leadership team.
- Streamlining of referrals at the 'front door' (MASH) - revising thresholds & practices.
- The Family Solutions Plus (FSP) teams are working to reduce the backlog of assessments and intervention measures.
- Development of a robust recruitment and retention policy.
- Reducing the number of children in care and tracking those where care placements are due to cease.
- Ongoing reduction in the number of children living in high-cost placements.
- Brokerage action plan to ensure timely, suitable, cost-effective placements are sourced.
- A 'LEAN' review of the placement process and identification of efficiencies.
- Move to the target number of Unaccompanied Children and Young People.

51. Evidence that the actions are having an impact is reflected in the downward trend in the number of Children We Care For (CWCF). The numbers are set out in the table below.

	Q1 202 2	Q2 202 2	Q3 202 2	Q4 202 2	Q1 202 3	Aug 202 3	Sept 202 3	Oct 202 3	Nov 2023
Oxfordshire born children	757	778	755	735	709	687	658	653	655

Disabled Children	61	61	62	58	56	49	49	49	51
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>818</b>	<b>839</b>	<b>817</b>	<b>793</b>	<b>765</b>	<b>736</b>	<b>707</b>	<b>702</b>	<b>706</b>
Unaccompanied	66	69	73	108	100	91	99	107	110
<b>Total</b>	<b>884</b>	<b>908</b>	<b>890</b>	<b>901</b>	<b>865</b>	<b>827</b>	<b>806</b>	<b>809</b>	<b>816</b>

52. While the number of CWCF increased to 706 at the end of November 2023, continuing actions mean the expectation is that the total will stabilise at around 700. This is lower than the council's statistical neighbors and national average. This is due to the above actions and in particular the use of strengths based proportionate assessment, resulting in a greater number of families and their children being supported in their own homes and fewer children becoming children we care for.

53. In addition, emphasis is also being placed on permanence planning and finding other more suitable (and usually more cost-effective) placements, including re-unification to the family home and adoption.

54. Though the activity has reduced the underlying costs of care placements continue to rise and are offsetting and undermining the improvement in activity.

55. The focus of the Financial Strategy is to ensure the improvements are continued and grown while also applying the same rigor and focus to managing the market, the escalation in rates, the challenge of greater complexity and encouraging joint partnership work to address Continuing Healthcare (CHC) needs and resource.

### Children's Services Central Costs

56. £0.3m increase relating historic legal fees claim.

### Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG)

57. The current position on the DSG is a forecast deficit of £21.2m, an increase of £2.9m from the £18.3m forecast approved by Cabinet in May 2023.

Summary of DSG funding	2023/24 Budget £m	2023/24 Projected Outturn £m	Variance November 2023 £m
Schools block	131.2	131.2	0.0
Central Services Schools block	5.0	5.0	0.0
High Needs block	84.7	105.4	21.2
Early Years block	44.4	44.4	0.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>265.3</b>	<b>286.5</b>	<b>21.2</b>

58. Key issues impacting on spend that are impacting on and being managed as part

of the forecast for the High Needs Block are the cost of placements from September 2023, tribunal challenges to placement decisions and the impact of inflation on providers' fees.

59. There is no change forecast on Central and Schools DSG.

60. The Chancellor announced significant changes to childcare arrangements in the Spring Budget 2023. This included:

- an uplift to rates payable for the period September 2023 to March 2024. The funding for this is received via a specific grant which will be subsumed within DSG from April 2024. The grant is in the region of £3m, and the exact amount will be known in June 2024, after the schools' census return. The council will need to pass the grant to providers in full.
- New Grant of £0.332m for Schools in Financial Difficulty. The grant was recently announced and has just been received. There is no criteria other than schools in financial difficulty for the allocation of this grant which must be spent in year. The service is considering the options for investing with the schools.

61. The DfE have announced support for the September 2023 Teachers Pay Award via the Teachers Pay Additional Grant. Of the 6.5% pay award, the DfE are providing 3%, based on the assumption that there is 3.5% within school budget. The grant will be passed on in full to establishments and will be subsumed within the DSG from 2025/26.

## **Environment & Place**

62. Environment & Place is forecasting an underspend of £0.8m against a budget of £73.9m after taking account of £0.2m staffing savings reallocated from Resources.

Service Area	Latest Budget Nov-23 £m	Forecast Spend Nov-23 £m	Forecast Variance Nov-23 £m	Forecast Variance Sept-23 £m	Change Since Sept-23 £m
Transport & Infrastructure	13.3	12.7	-0.6	-0.6	0.0
Planning, Environment & Climate Change	37.3	37.4	0.1	0.6	-0.5
Highways & Operations	20.8	20.4	-0.4	-0.4	0.0
Directorate Support	2.5	2.5	0.1	0.0	0.1
<b>Total Environment &amp; Place</b>	<b>73.9</b>	<b>73.0</b>	<b>-0.8</b>	<b>-0.4</b>	<b>-0.4</b>

### **Transport & Infrastructure**

63. Transport & Infrastructure comprises Transport Policy, Place Making and Infrastructure Delivery. An underspend of £0.6m is forecast mainly due to a £0.5m underspend on community transport initiatives. More time is required to deliver on the on-going investment of £1.2m agreed in February 2023 due to a lack of interested operators for the new transport services in rural areas. The service is currently exploring other options for the provision of these services and are

engaging with stakeholders on proposed schemes. There is also a £0.1m underspend relating to staffing vacancies resulting in delays in delivering some of the rail studies.

64. The Infrastructure Delivery and Place Making service areas are currently forecasting a breakeven position.

#### **Planning, Environment & Climate change**

65. The Planning, Environment & Climate change service area is made up of Strategic Planning, Climate Change and Environment & Circular economy. The service area is forecasting an overspend of £0.1m.

66. Strategic planning are reporting a breakeven position, the previously identified overspend position has now been mitigated through an overachievement of income by the service.

67. Climate Change is forecasting an underspend of £0.3m due to vacancies within the service.

68. Waste Management is forecasting an overspend of £0.4m, mainly due to:

- Tonnages at the Energy Recovery Facility are continuing to increase over and above historic trends and there are further pressures resulting from an increase in the volume of green waste due to a warmer than usual autumn. Kerbside residual waste recycling levels have also decreased due to a decline in household recycling mirroring the national trend. The outcome of actions being taken to mitigate this will be reported in greater detail in the next monitoring report.
- Implementing the new legislative requirements for the Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs) waste stream where a change in the law means the council needs to fund the cost of storing, shredding, and burning soft furnishings, as an alternative to landfill. An additional budget allocation of £0.2m to support this was included in the budget for 2023/24 but this is costing more than anticipated.
- Legislative changes around DIY charges will create an additional pressure in the last quarter of the year which will be mitigated by the service.

69. There is a further pressure of £0.4m due to additional work associated with tree services in Oxford City. The service is working to mitigate the pressure through working with Oxford City partners by moving the works schedule to a reactive programme to reduce the level of spend, as well as better utilisation of directorate reserves to alleviate the pressure.

70. A pressure within Public Rights of Way has been previously managed within the existing budget. However, market prices inflation has resulted in an increasing pressure. Teams are currently exploring how the pressures can be mitigated within existing budgets.

71. The Waste team is continuing to work on waste prevention campaigns with the district and city councils. They are also monitoring the market particularly around POPs to ensure current prices are the best achievable and is planning as far as possible with the information available to mitigate the increased costs arising from changes to DIY charges.

### **Highways & Operations**

72. Highways & Operations is forecasting an underspend of £0.4m due to continued over achievement in income through enforcement in Network Co-ordination and a reduction in energy cost baskets provided by Crown Commercial Services.
73. Within the Highway Maintenance service there was a significant increase in highways defects that needed repair in the first quarter of the financial year. This was primarily attributable to the consequence of the bad weather on roads that are not in particularly good condition and is similar to higher levels of activity seen across the country. The number of defects reduced in the summer but has increased in October and November and remains higher than the same month in 2022.

Month	Defects 2022/23	Defects 2023/24	% Increase
April	3,320	4,143	24.8%
May	2,927	4,944	68.9%
June	2,212	4,695	112.2%
July	1,979	4,134	108.9%
August	1,888	2,553	35.1%
September	1,715	2,363	37.8%
October	1,650	2,927	77.39%
November	1,980	3,088	55.96%

74. Additional personnel continue to be deployed to manage the current defect volumes. The increase in defect numbers and the cost increase of associated repairs is currently being managed within the service area budgets through reduction on other operational spend where possible, though there remains a risk if activity increases further over the winter.
75. A reduction in energy prices means energy cost pressures are now lower than anticipated when the budget was set resulting in a forecast £0.7m underspend for street lighting.
76. Network Management is currently reporting a £0.6m underspend due to income achieved through the enforcement on the network and staff vacancies. It is anticipated that there may be a greater level of underspend if the volume of utility works on the network continues at the current rate. A further underspend is anticipated as a result of additional enforcement income on the network.

77. Supported transport is currently forecasting a £0.6m overspend. The key drivers of the pressures within the service are savings of £0.4m from 2022/23 plus a further saving of £0.2m in 2023/24 that are not expected to be delivered. Both savings relate to the anticipated use of technology and changes to processes to reduce costs and effort required and the implementation of automated processes for home to school contract management. The on-going impact is being considered through the Budget & Business Planning Process for 2024/25.

### **Directorate Support**

78. The Directorate Support service area is currently forecasting an overspend of £0.1m due to the reallocation of budgeted agency savings from Resources.

### **Budget Virements**

79. Cabinet is asked to note virements relating to the allocation of transformation savings in line with the revised structure.

### **Public Health and Community Safety**

80. Public Health and Community Safety are forecasting a £0.5m overspend, increased from the breakeven position reported in September. This includes £0.2m staffing savings reallocated from Resources.

Service Area	Latest Budget Nov-23 £m	Forecast Spend Nov-23 £m	Forecast Variance Nov-23 £m	Forecast Variance Sept-23 £m	Change Since Sept-23 £m
Public Health Functions	37.8	37.8	0.0	0.0	0.0
Public Health Recharges	0.6	0.6	0.0	0.0	0.0
Other Income	-0.7	-0.7	0.0	0.0	0.0
Grant Income	-33.6	-33.6	0.0	0.0	0.0
Transfer to Public Health Reserve	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
<b>Total Public Health</b>	<b>4.1</b>	<b>4.1</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>
<b>Total Community Safety</b>	<b>27.6</b>	<b>28.1</b>	<b>0.5</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.5</b>
<b>Total Public Health &amp; Community Safety</b>	<b>31.6</b>	<b>32.1</b>	<b>0.5</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.5</b>

### **Public Health**

81. A break-even position is forecast for services funded by the Public Health grant after taking account of the following offsetting forecast variations:

- £0.3m overspend on the substance misuse service due to increased activity in residential rehabilitation and detoxification treatment service which improves outcomes for people with complex treatment needs. This is a £0.3m reduction from the previously reported overspend as the budget now reflects the virement from other public health services as noted in the previous report.
- £0.1m overspend on National Health Service health checks because of the

high level of activity in primary care which is in line with the national trend post COVID-19; offset by

- £0.1m underspend reported within the obesity service as service delivery changes will not take place until 2024/25.
- £0.2m underspend on Sexual health services linked to activity levels.
- £0.1m underspend within other public health services due to delayed implementation of access to nature programmes and the change in estimated costs of Better Housing Better Health work. This is a £0.3m reduction from the previous report as the budget has been moved to partly offset the financial pressure within the substance misuse services.

### **Community Safety**

82. Community Safety Service are forecasting a £0.5m overspend as a result of the following:

- The reallocation of budgeted agency savings from Resources of £0.2m
- a one-off payment of £0.2m made for a disabling injury/illness.
- £0.1m linked to the impact of inflation on the cost of maintaining the services fleet of vehicles and an increase in the cost of training resulting from the need to provide training to new recruits following staff leaving unexpectedly. There is an expectation that there will be an increase in the firefighters' pensions grant for 2023/24, that would offset this pressure but no confirmation on any increase has yet been received. An update will be provided as part of the next report.

### **Ringfenced Government Grants**

83. The ringfenced Public Health grant totals £33.6m in 2023/24 with an indicative 1.4% uplift expected for 2024/25.

### **Use of Un-ringfenced Government Grant Funding**

84. Un-ringfenced grants held centrally and agreed to be used to support expenditure budgets within Public Health and Community Safety include:

- £1.2m Domestic Abuse Duty Grant supporting the provision of accommodation-based support to victims of domestic abuse and their children.
- £0.6m Substance Misuse Treatment & Recovery Housing Grant being used to deliver the Government's aim that by 2024/25 there will be more people recovering from addiction in stable and secure housing.
- £0.6m Supplementary Substance Misuse Treatment and Recovery grant. This is the second year of a three-year scheme where the Office for Health Improvement and Disparities (OHID) is working alongside other government departments to support a process of investment in a whole system approach to tackling illicit drug use, including enforcement, diversion and treatment and recovery interventions.
- £1.2m Rough Sleeping Drug and Alcohol Grant is being used to provide specialist support for rough sleepers and those at risk. This includes an increase of £0.1m for inpatient detox and residential rehabilitation.
- £1.3m Firefighter's Pension Fund Grant and £0.1m from the New Dimensions Fund



- £0.1m Firelink Grant - The council has been notified of a 20% reduction in this grant from the previous year and that this grant will continue to reduce by 20% in each of the next four years.

### **Reserves**

85. £5.9m unspent grant funding was held in Public Health reserve at 1 April 2023. £2.0m is forecast to be spent in 2023/24, £1.8m in 2024/25 and £1.2m in 2025/26, leaving a balance of £0.9m. Options to utilise all the funding by 2026/27 in line with the grant requirements are being considered.
86. £2.7m is held in reserves for the renewal of fire and rescue vehicles and breathing apparatus equipment. A fleet replacement strategy is being agreed which will require the use of this funding.
87. £0.9m is being held to cover the cost of the replacement of Airwave for Oxfordshire Fire and Rescue Service and the implementation of the new national Emergency Service Mobile Communications Programme.
88. £0.5m is being held in the Fire Uplift Grant reserve to fund employee costs expected to be incurred over the next three to five years.
89. £0.2m is being held to expand the Making Every Contact Count work programme in Oxfordshire; £0.5m is being held to fund employee costs expected to be incurred over the next three to five years.
90. £0.1m of the Community Outbreak Management Fund (COMF) allocated to Public Health will be used to part fund the healthy homes

### **Virements**

91. Cabinet is asked to note the virements accounting for the increase in the rough sleeping and alcohol grant, the funding of community capacity grants within Adult Social Care and two trading standards posts linked to tobacco control from the public health reserve.

### **Resources and Law & Governance**

92. The services within Resources are forecasting a combined overspend of £2.0m (3.0%) against a budget of £70.0m. This is a reduction of £0.2m from the September forecast and is after taking account of the reallocation of staffing savings of £1.1m to directorates, £0.4m of the saving will need to be managed by services within Resources.

Service Area	Latest Budget Nov-23 £m	Forecast Spend Nov-23 £m	Forecast Variance Nov-23 £m	Forecast Variance Sept-23 £m	Change Since Sept-23 £m
Corporate Services	2.9	2.9	0.0	0.0	0.0
Human Resources & Organisational Development	3.2	2.9	-0.3	0.6	-0.9

Service Area	Latest Budget Nov-23 £m	Forecast Spend Nov-23 £m	Forecast Variance Nov-23 £m	Forecast Variance Sept-23 £m	Change Since Sept-23 £m
Communications, Strategy & Insight	3.3	3.3	0.0	0.0	0.0
IT, Innovation & Digital	10.2	10.9	0.7	0.4	0.3
Culture & Customer Experience	12.0	12.4	0.4	0.2	0.2
Finance & Procurement	8.6	9.0	0.3	0.3	0.0
Property, Investment & Facilities Management	19.2	19.6	0.4	0.3	0.1
Law & Governance	7.7	8.2	0.4	0.4	0.0
Delivery & Partnership	2.9	2.9	0.0	0.0	0.0
<b>Total Resources</b>	<b>70.0</b>	<b>71.9</b>	<b>2.0</b>	<b>2.2</b>	<b>-0.2</b>

93. **Corporate Services** are forecasting a breakeven position.

94. **Human Resources & Organisational Development (HR&OD)** is now forecast to underspend by £0.3m, following the reallocation of the £1.5m budgeted reduction in agency costs to directorates with the expectation that action will need to be taken to achieve this through reductions in employee costs.

The Our People and Culture Strategy elsewhere on the Cabinet agenda will support action being taken across the organisation to achieve these savings. Whilst reduced costs and improved efficiencies are anticipated through the introduction of new ways of working, improved candidate and employee experiences, this is a three-year strategy where benefits will take time to be realised.

95. **Communications, Strategy & Insight** are forecasting break even. The service is taking mitigating action where required in order to absorb additional costs and respond flexibly to new requests.

96. **IT, Innovation & Digital** are forecasting an overspend of £0.7m, an increase of £0.3m relating to non-achievement of cross directorate savings agreed as part of the 2023/24 budget. Action to achieve these is at risk, due to the nature of the work and time taken to realise benefits. Half of the savings are currently forecast to be delivered but this may not be achievable and will be updated in the next report. Work continues to ensure that the Music Services and Registration Services are able to maximize their income opportunities to meet customer demand.

97. **Culture and Customer Experience** are forecasting an overspend of £0.4m. This is mainly in the Coroners Service where the appointment of an Area Coroner is an in-year pressure and the demand for coronial activity continues to increase year on year, and in the Customer Service Centre where firm savings have not yet been identified in the corporate customer service consolidation programme. Discovery work is ongoing across a number of directorates. Work continues to ensure that the Music Services and Registration Services are able to maximise their income

opportunities to meet customer demand.

98. **Finance and Procurement** are forecasting a £0.3m overspend due to increased costs in agency staff being utilised to cover hard to fill vacancies, and an increase in staff costs following a job evaluation review.

99. **Property Services** are forecasting an overspend of £0.4m. The School Catering service is forecasting to overspend due to inflationary pressures, but this will be mitigated by savings in other areas. This forecast also includes a budget of £0.5m funding for the Community Hub Strategy which is assumed to be fully utilised this year. Anticipated savings from vacating one of the council's office buildings will be offset by estimated dilapidation costs in 2023/24.

100. **Law and Governance** are forecasting an overspend of £0.4m. 2023/24 is a transition year for the new structures which, subject to consultation, are planned to be implemented in Governance in the second quarter of 2023/24 and Legal in quarter four of 2023/24. As a result, higher locum costs in Legal Services are still expected to be incurred for most of the year.

101. **Delivery & Partnership** includes the delivery of cost-of-living measures and the council's migration and asylum programmes, including Homes for Ukraine. The budget is mainly funded from earmarked reserves and specific government grants and is forecast to break even.

### **Medium Term Financial Strategy Savings**

102. After taking account of new and previously agreed savings the 2023/24 budget agreed includes planned directorate savings of £28.2m.

103. £10.2m of the 2022/23 savings were not achieved as planned in the last financial year. 73% of these savings are assessed as delivered or are expected to be delivered. 27% are still assessed as amber or red. Any planned savings not delivered in 2022/23, where the on-going impact was not adjusted through the 2023/24 Budget & Business Planning Process, need to be achieved in 2023/24 as well as new savings agreed in February 2023.

104. 72% of the 2023/24 savings are assessed as delivered or are expected to be delivered. 11% are currently assessed as amber and 12% are assessed as red. Work is continuing to ensure that these savings are achieved.

	2023/24 Planned Savings	Forecast Delivery of 2023/24 Planned Savings	2022/23 Savings that need to be delivered in 2023/24	Forecast Delivery of 2022/23 Savings In 2023/24
	£m	£m	£m	£m
Adult Services	-18.1	-15.6	-4.0	-3.4
Children's Services	-3.4	-1.7	-1.9	0.0
Environment & Place	-1.4	-1.2	-2.3	-1.9
Community Safety	-0.2	-0.2	0.0	0.0
Resources & Cross Directorate	-5.1	-1.6	-2.0	-1.9
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>-28.2</b>	<b>-20.4</b>	<b>-10.2</b>	<b>-7.4</b>
<b>TOTAL DELIVERED</b>		<b>72%</b>		<b>73%</b>

### Adult Services

105. The 2023/24 budget included planned savings of £18.1m. 77% of savings have been delivered and 9% are expected to be delivered, giving a total of 86% forecast to be delivered by the end of the year. 2% are forecast as undeliverable at this stage, although further work is being undertaken to look for alternative savings. 12% are currently unconfirmed and further work is being undertaken on these.

106. The unconfirmed savings relate to the result of implementing the Oxfordshire Way through care reviews where the opportunity for increased independence is possible, and those which relate to managing demand, particularly in care homes.

107. There are also £4.0m of savings brought forward from 2022/23 to be delivered in 2023/24. 90% of these are expected to be delivered, but 10% of the savings are proving very challenging to deliver.

### Children's Services

108. The 2023/24 budget includes planned savings of £3.4m. 51% of these savings are forecast to be delivered. 49% of the savings are assessed as red and include £0.5m relating to service reviews of non-statutory / non-case holding areas, and £0.4m relating to reduction in agency staffing spend.

109. There are also £1.9m of savings brought forward from 2022/23 that need to be delivered in 2023/24. All of these savings are assessed as red and include Home to school transport savings of £1m. The on-going impact is being considered through the Budget & Business Planning process for 2024/25.

### Environment & Place

110. The 2023/24 budget includes planned savings of £1.4m. 83% are expected to be achieved. 18% are assessed as red relate to savings on the use of technology

to reduce costs relating to the home to school contract management. The on-going impact is being considered through the 2024/25 Budget & Business Planning process.

111. Whilst the directorate is currently working to deliver all savings, due to the timing of service transformation taking place partway through the financial year some of the savings will not be fully realised. Any pressures are being managed within the overall E&P budget.
112. £0.2m income associated with the Part 6 civil enforcement is currently not on track to be achieved. Although approval of powers by the DfT has now been granted there are issues with the installation of enforcement cameras due to equipment shortages. This pressure, along with the underachievement of Part 6 income from 2022/23 will be mitigated through overachievement in other enforcement income.
113. 85% of the £2.3m savings not achieved in 2022/23 is expected to be delivered in 2023/24. 16% are at risk of not being delivered in 23/24. There is a £0.6m pressure relating to a home to school contract management system. The on-going impact is being considered through the Budget & Business Planning Process.

#### Public Health & Community Safety

114. The 2023/24 budget includes planned savings of £0.2m. All savings are expected to be achieved.

#### Resources and Cross Directorate

115. The 2023/24 budget includes planned savings of £5.0m. 32% of these savings are forecast to be delivered. 47% savings assessed as red include a £1.5m saving from a reduction in agency staff that was originally held in Resources pending agreement about how to allocate this. This has been moved to directorates in this report with action expected to be taken to achieve this in the longer run.
116. 95% of the £2.0m savings not achieved in 2022/23 has been delivered in 2023/24.

### **Debt Management**

#### **Corporate Debtors**

117. The combined collection rate, based on invoice volumes, for October and November 2023 was 97.4%, 2.4% above the 95% target. The collection rate based on the value of invoices for the same period was 99.4%.
118. Debt requiring impairment is currently £0.5m, £0.2m above the year-end target of £0.3m; the top five debt cases account for 52% of all bad debt. The highest debt, (29% of the total), is owed by a company in administration and recovery is not expected at this stage. The remaining four cases relate to overpayments of care costs where the council is in the process of commencing formal recovery activity and reviewing disputes raised by the debtors.

### **Adult Social Care Debtors**

119. The combined 120-day invoice collection rate for October and November 2023 was 90.6%, compared to the target collection rate of 92%. As reported changes to automated reminders were implemented in October and improvement to collection rates is expected by the last quarter of the year. The service continues to develop plans for improvements to business process and operations; scope for an improvement project is being developed.
120. The 2022/23 year-end adults care contribution impairment for bad debt was £4.6m. Projected bad debt as at the end of November is £5.1m, £0.5m higher than the current impairment balance. As reported previously the on-going impacts of COVID-19 and wider economic factors have had a significant effect on means tested social care contribution bad debt levels since 2020/21. In addition, delays with the court of protection are contributing to the overall levels of debt; this is consistent with other local authorities' experience. A bad debt task team has been operational since August 2022 with the objective of resolving £3.7m historic debt. A review of this group is underway to assess the return on investment and options going forward.

### **Budgets Held Centrally**

121. After taking account of the use of one – off funding and contingency to support the forecast directorate overspend, there is a combined underspend of £10.2m against budgets held centrally.

#### Capital Financing Costs

122. The borrowing costs and minimum revenue provision (MRP) for capital projects funded by Prudential Borrowing are either recharged to directorates where savings arising from the scheme are expected to meet them or met corporately from the budget for capital financing costs. It is anticipated that after taking account of recharges to directorates the actual costs of the capital financing will be broadly aligned with the budget in 2023/24.

#### Interest on Balances

123. The current forecast outturn position for in house interest receivable is £1.6m above budget after taking account of the assumed need to fund interest on developer contributions. The additional interest is a result of higher than forecast cash balances coupled with higher than forecast deposit rates. Currently, every extra £5m within the cash balance forecast will earn approximately £0.25m of interest annually. Depending on the year end position it is anticipated that further additional interest on balances would be used to top up balances to the risk assessed level for 2024/25.

124. Interest payable is currently forecast to be £12.9m. This is £0.2m below budget, as a result of the early repayment of two £5m LOBOs<sup>3</sup> in August and October 2023.
125. The forecast outturn position for external fund returns is £4.0m, which is £0.2m above budget.
126. Cash balances for the year are forecast to be £51.9m lower than they would otherwise have been as a result of negative DSG balances as per paragraph 57 of this report. The impact of this is an estimated opportunity cost of £1.5m in unearned interest during 2023/24.

#### Pay Inflation and Contingency

127. The contingency budget for 2023/24 totals £12.4m. This includes £4.2m one-off council tax and business rates funding agreed to be added to contingency as part of the Provisional Outturn Report 2022/23 to Cabinet in June 2023.
128. The agreed budget for pay inflation included funding for an estimated pay award equivalent to 4.5% in 2023/24. After taking account of the number of staff employed on different points on the pay scale the current pay offer equates to an overall estimated increase equivalent to 5.5%, 1.0% more than budgeted.
129. After using the remaining £6.4m budgeted funding for inflation that is available to allocate after funding the Fire pay awards agreed earlier in the year, the remaining on-going cost of £3.0m has been met from contingency.
130. The pay award virements were actioned at the end of December 2023 with backdated payments to 1 April 2023 made to staff at that point. Budgets will be updated in the next Cabinet report and further virements will be transacted to add funding for the pay award to vacant posts when those are recruited to.
131. Cabinet is asked to note the virement to reallocate the budgeted reduction in agency costs of £1.5m across directorates.

#### **Reserves**

132. As set out in Annex B - 3 Earmarked Reserves are forecast to be £168.0m at 31 March 2024.
133. An unusable reserve was created in 2020/21 to hold **negative High Needs DSG balances** in line with a change to the CIPFA code of practice on DSG High Needs deficits. The net deficit of £21.2m for 2023/24 will increase the total High Needs deficit held in the reserve to £62.3m as at 31 March 2024. The regulations which require the negative balance to be held in an unusable reserve will come to an end on 31 March 2026. The impact of the unusable reserve on the council's ability to set a balanced budget over the medium term will need to be considered through

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<sup>3</sup> LOBO (Lender's Option/Borrower's Option) Loans are long-term loans which include a re-pricing option for the bank at predetermined intervals

the Budget & Business Planning Process for 2024/25.

### **Grants**

134. As set out in Annex B - 4 government grants totalling £470.9m are expected to be received by the Council during 2023/24. This includes £15m in schools grants for additional mainstream funding, early years funding and pupil premium, plus Adult Social Care Market Sustainability and Improvement Fund - Workforce Fund (£3.5m).

### **Homes for Ukraine**

135. At the end of 2022/23 £16.9m unspent grant funding for the Homes for Ukraine scheme and £2.1m unspent funding for education costs relating to the scheme was held in the Grants & Contributions Reserve.
136. Funding was initially provided as a one-off payment of £10,500 per guest and then reduced to £5,900 for arrivals from 1 January 2023 onwards. For eligible minors the tariff will continue at £10,500.
137. The quarter 1 claim was submitted at the end of June 2023 with grant funding of £0.7m received in November 2023. The quarter 2 claim for 2023/24 for £1.1m was submitted in October 2023 and the funding is yet to be received.
138. £12.4m of the tariff funding received to date had been spent at the end of November 2023, with a further £4.2m expected to be spent (or passed to the district councils) by 31 March 2024. After taking account of £2.3m of commitments in 2024/25, £5.5m remained available to be used to support future costs associated with the scheme.

### **General Balances**

139. The risk assessed level of balances for 2023/24 is £30.2m. During the year £0.2m has been agreed to be used to fund a supplementary estimate for staffing costs to support development of One - Fleet approach to the council's vehicles. A further £0.2m has been used to fund a supplementary estimate to fund a deficit budget. for a school with a forced academisation.
140. After taking account of the use of contingency and funding from the COVID-19 reserve to support the overall forecast position, the remaining net £4.2m overspend against the operating budget would reduce the £29.8m risk assessed level of balances to £25.6m. The risk assessed level of balances for 2024/25, and funding for any top-up to that level after taking account of funding any overspend in 2023/24 is being considered through the Budget and Business Planning process for 2024/25.



**Business Management & Monitoring Report**  
**Position to the end of November 2023**  
**Budget Monitoring**

Directorate	Net Budget (Latest Estimate)	Projected Full Year Spend	Projected Year End Variance underspend- overspend+	Projected Year End Variance	Variance Last Cabinet Reporting Month	Change in Variance	Projected Year End Traffic Light
	£000	£000	£000	%	£000	£000	Red > 1.5% Amber >1.1% <1.5% Green on track
Adult Services	227,251	227,251	0	0.00%	0	0	G
Children's Services	169,117	181,935	12,818	7.58%	11,802	1,017	R
Environment and Place	73,863	73,016	-847	-1.15%	-400	-447	G
Public Health	4,065	4,065	0	0.00%	0.0	0	G
Community Safety	27,584	28,069	485	1.76%	0.0	485	R
Resources	69,965	71,941	1,976	2.82%	2,200	-224	R
<b>Directorate Total Net</b>	<b>571,845</b>	<b>586,277</b>	<b>14,432</b>	<b>2.52%</b>	<b>13,602</b>	<b>831</b>	<b>R</b>

**Business Management & Monitoring Report**  
**Position to the end of November 2023**  
**Budget Monitoring**

Directorate	Net Budget (Latest Estimate)	Projected Full Year Spend	Projected Year End Variance underspend- overspend+	Projected Year End Variance	Variance Last Cabinet Reporting Month	Change in Variance	Projected Year End Traffic Light
	£000	£000	£000	%	£000	£000	Red > 1.5% Amber >1.1% <1.5% Green on track
<b>Budget held Centrally</b>						0	
Capital Financing	28,402	28,402	0	0.00%	0	0	
Interest on Balances	-16,629	-18,450	-1,821	10.95%	-1000	-821	
Inflation	6,472	6,472	0	0.00%	0		
Contingency	12,400	5,400	-7,000	-56.45%	-7,000	0	
Unringfenced Specific Government Grants	-43,679	-43,679	0	0.00%	0	0	
Insurance	1,436	1,436	0	0.00%	0	0	
Contribution from COVID-19 Reserve	-7,380	-8,780	-1,400	18.97%	-1,400	0	
Contribution from Budget Priorities Reserve	-2,370	-2,370	0	0.00%	0		
Contributions to (+)/from (-)reserves	20,665	20,665	0	0.00%	0	0	
Contribution to (+)/from(-) balances	7,600	7,600	0	0.00%	0	0	
<b>Total Budget held Centrally</b>	<b>6,918</b>	<b>-3,303</b>	<b>-10,221</b>	<b>-147.75%</b>	<b>-9,400</b>	<b>-821</b>	
<b>Net Operating Budget</b>	<b>578,763</b>	<b>582,974</b>	<b>4,211</b>	<b>0.73%</b>	<b>4,202</b>	<b>9</b>	
						0	
Business Rates & Council Tax Funding	-578,763	-578,763	0			0	
<b>Forecast Year End Position</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>4,210</b>	<b>4,211</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>4,202</b>	<b>9</b>	

**Business Management and Monitoring Report: Adult Services**  
**Position to the end of November 2023**  
**Revenue Budget Monitoring**

		Net Budget (Latest Estimate)	Projected Full Year Spend	Projected Year End Variance	Variance Last Cabinet Reporting Month	Change in Variance
		£000	£000	underspend- overspend+	£000	£000
SCS1	Adult Social Care	24,356	25,156	800	800	0
SCS2	Other Adult Social Care Services	5,207	4,507	-700	-700	0
SCS3	Housing & Social Care Commissioning	1,369	1,369	0	0	0
SCS4	Business Support Service	1,068	968	-100	-100	0
SCS5	Pooled Budget Contributions	195,251	195,251	0	0	0
<b>Total Adult Services</b>		<b>227,251</b>	<b>227,251</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>

**Business Management & Monitoring Report: Children's Services**  
**Forecast Position at the end of November 2023**  
**Revenue Budget Monitoring**

		Net Budget (Latest Estimate)	Projected Full Year Spend	Projected Year End Variance	Variance Last Cabinet Reporting Month	Change in Variance
		£000	£000	underspend- overspend+	£000	£000
<b>CEF1</b>	<b><u>Education &amp; Learning</u></b>					
CEF1-1	Management & Central Costs	-201	33	234	212	22
CEF1-2	SEND	7,261	7,262	1	1	0
CEF1-3	Learning & School Improvement	1,279	1,279	0	0	0
CEF1-4	Access to Learning	30,322	33,622	3,300	2,800	500
CEF1-5	Learner Engagement Service	264	363	99	116	-17
<b>Total Education &amp; Learning</b>		<b>38,925</b>	<b>42,559</b>	<b>3,634</b>	<b>3,128</b>	<b>506</b>
<b>CEF2</b>	<b><u>Early Help, Front Door + Social Care</u></b>					
CEF2-1	Family Help	9,363	8,551	-812	-98	-714
CEF2-2	Front Door	4,468	4,578	110	296	-186
CEF2-3	Childrens Social Care - NEW	59,910	62,791	2,881	1,823	1,058
CEF2-9	Change - NEW	1,413	1,413	0	0	0
<b>Total Early Help, Front Door + Social Care</b>		<b>75,154</b>	<b>77,333</b>	<b>2,179</b>	<b>2,021</b>	<b>158</b>

**Business Management & Monitoring Report: Children's Services**  
**Forecast Position at the end of November 2023**  
**Revenue Budget Monitoring**

		Net Budget (Latest Estimate)	Projected Full Year Spend	Projected Year End Variance	Variance Last Cabinet Reporting Month	Change in Variance
		£000	£000	underspend- overspend+	£000	£000
<b>CEF3</b>	<b><u>Provider Services &amp; Safeguarding</u></b>					
CEF3-1	Provider Services	40,075	45,765	5,690	5,896	-206
CEF3-2	QA Safeguarding + Recruit & Retention	3,266	3,598	332	-43	375
CEF3-3	Services for Disabled Children - OLD	0	0	0	0	0
CEF3-4	Youth Offending Service - OLD	0	0	0	0	0
	<b>Total Provider Services &amp; Safeguarding</b>	<b>43,341</b>	<b>49,363</b>	<b>6,022</b>	<b>5,853</b>	<b>169</b>
<b>CEF4</b>	<b><u>Schools</u></b>					
CEF4-1	Delegated Budgets	0	0	0	0	0
CEF4-2	Nursery Education Funding (EY)	0	0	0	0	0
CEF4-3	Non-Delegated School Costs	216	216	0	0	0
CEF4-4	School Support Non-Negotiable Recharges	0	0	0	0	0
CEF4-5	Capitalised Repairs & Maintenance	0	0	0	0	0
	<b>Total Schools</b>	<b>216</b>	<b>216</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>

**Business Management & Monitoring Report: Children's Services**  
**Forecast Position at the end of November 2023**  
**Revenue Budget Monitoring**

		Net Budget (Latest Estimate)	Projected Full Year Spend	Projected Year End Variance	Variance Last Cabinet Reporting Month	Change in Variance
		£000	£000	underspend- overspend+	£000	£000
<b>CEF5</b>	<b><u>Children's Services Central Costs</u></b>					
CEF5-1	Management & Administration	8,270	9,133	863	799	64
CEF5-2	Premature Retirement Compensation	3,211	3,331	120	0	120
CEF5-3	Commissioning Recharge - OLD	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Total Children's Services Central Costs</b>		<b>11,481</b>	<b>12,464</b>	<b>983</b>	<b>799</b>	<b>184</b>
<b>Total Children's Services</b>		<b>169,117</b>	<b>181,935</b>	<b>12,818</b>	<b>11,802</b>	<b>1,017</b>
<b>MEMORANDUM: DEDICATED SCHOOLS GRANT - DSG Funded Expenditure (Gross)</b>						
	Schools DSG	131,169	131,169	0	0	0
	High Needs DSG	84,724	105,924	21,200	18,300	2,900
	Early Years DSG	44,435	44,435	0	0	0
	Central DSG	4,992	4,992	0	0	0
<b>Total DSG Funded Expenditure</b>		<b>265,320</b>	<b>286,520</b>	<b>21,200</b>	<b>18,300</b>	<b>2,900</b>

**Business Management & Monitoring Report: Environment and Place**  
**Position to the end of November 2023**  
**Revenue Budget Monitoring**

		Net Budget (Latest Estimate)	Projected Full Year Spend	Projected Year End Variance	Variance Last Cabinet Reporting Month	Change in Variance
		£000	£000	underspend-overspend+	£000	£000
EP1	Transport & Infrastructure	13,265	12,665	-600	-600	0
EP2	Planning, Environment & Climate Change	37,335	37,435	100	600	-500
EP3	Highways & Operations	20,807	20,407	-400	-400	0
EP4	Directorate Support	2,456	2,509	53	0	53
<b>TOTAL ENVIRONMENT AND PLACE</b>		<b>73,863</b>	<b>73,016</b>	<b>-847</b>	<b>-400</b>	<b>-447</b>

**Business Management & Monitoring Report : Public Health & Community Safety**  
**Position to the end of November 2023**  
**Revenue Budget Monitoring**

		Net Budget (Latest Estimate)	Projected Full Year Spend	Projected Year End Variance	Variance Last Cabinet Reporting Month	Change in Variance
		£000	£000	underspend- overspend+	£000	£000
<b>PH 1 &amp; 2</b>	<b>Public Health Functions</b>					
PH1-1	Sexual Health	6,440	6,240	-200	-200	0
PH1-2	NHS Health Check Programme	645	745	100	100	0
PH1-3	Health Protection	8	8	0	0	0
PH1-4	National Child Measurement Programme	150	150	0	0	0
PH1-5	Public Health Advice	150	150	0	0	0
PH1-6	0 - 5 year olds	8,848	8,848	0	0	0
PH2-1	Obesity	1,324	1,224	-100	-100	0
PH2-2	Physical Activity	420	420	0	0	0
PH2-3	Public Health General	2,536	2,536	0	0	0
PH2-4	Smoking and Tobacco Control	615	615	0	0	0
PH2-5	Children's 5-19 Public Health Programmes	2,297	2,297	0	0	0
PH2-6	Other Public Health Services	1,734	1,634	-100	-400	300
PH2-7	Drugs and Alcohol	10,517	10,817	300	600	-300
PH2-8	Domestic Violence	1,437	1,437	0	0	0
	<b>Total Public Health Functions</b>	<b>37,121</b>	<b>37,121</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>PH3</b>	<b>Public Health Recharges</b>	<b>576</b>	<b>576</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>PH4</b>	<b>Grant Income</b>	<b>-33,632</b>	<b>-33,632</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
	<b>Transfer to Public Health Reserve</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
	<b>Total Public Health</b>	<b>4,065</b>	<b>4,065</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>



**Business Management & Monitoring Report : Public Health & Community Safety****Position to the end of November 2023****Revenue Budget Monitoring**

		<b>Change in Variance</b>	<b>Variance Last Cabinet Reporting Month</b>	<b>Projected Year End Variance</b>	<b>Projected Full Year Spend</b>	<b>Net Budget (Latest Estimate)</b>
		£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
				underspend- overspend+		
<b>CDA3</b>	<b>Community Safety</b>	<b>485</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>485</b>	<b>28,069</b>	<b>27,584</b>
<b>Total Community Safety</b>		<b>485</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>485</b>	<b>28,069</b>	<b>27,584</b>

**Business Management & Monitoring Report: Resources**  
**Position to the end of November 2023**  
**Revenue Budget Monitoring**

		<b>Net Budget (Latest Estimate)</b>	<b>Projected Full Year Spend</b>	<b>Projected Year End Variance</b>	<b>Variance Last Cabinet Reporting Month</b>	<b>Change in Variance</b>
		<b>£000</b>	<b>£000</b>	<b>underspend-overspend+</b> <b>£000</b>	<b>£000</b>	<b>£000</b>
COD1	Corporate Services	2,859	2,859	0	0	0
COD2	Human Resources & Organisational Development	3,154	2,881	-273	600	-873
COD3	Communications, Strategy & Insight	3,315	3,340	25	0	25
COD4	ICT & Digital	10,225	10,882	657	400	257
COD5	Culture & Customer Experience	11,982	12,384	402	200	202

**Business Management & Monitoring Report: Resources**  
**Position to the end of November 2023**  
**Revenue Budget Monitoring**

		<b>Net Budget (Latest Estimate)</b>	<b>Projected Full Year Spend</b>	<b>Projected Year End Variance</b>	<b>Variance Last Cabinet Reporting Month</b>	<b>Change in Variance</b>
		<b>£000</b>	<b>£000</b>	<b>underspend- overspend+</b> <b>£000</b>	<b>£000</b>	<b>£000</b>
COD6	Finance	8,616	8,963	347	300	47
COD7	Property, Investment & FM	19,179	19,550	371	300	71
COD8	Law & Governance	7,705	8,152	447	400	47
COD9	Delivery & Partnership	2,930	2,930	0	0	0
<b>Total Resources</b>		<b>69,965</b>	<b>71,941</b>	<b>1,976</b>	<b>2,200</b>	<b>-224</b>

**Business Management Report**  
**Position to the end of November 2023**

**CABINET IS RECOMMENDED TO APPROVE THE VIREMENTS AS DETAILED BELOW:**

Directorate (CD = Cross Directorate)	Month of Cabinet meeting	Month of Directorate MMR	Narration	Budget Book Line	Service Area	Permanent / Temporary	Expenditure + increase / - decrease £000	Income - increase / + decrease £000
Grand Total							0	0

**Business Management Report**  
**Position to the end of November 2023**

**NEW VIREMENTS THAT HAVE BEEN ACTIONED FOR CABINET TO NOTE**

Directorate (CD = Cross Directorate)	Month of Cabinet Meeting	Month of Directorate MMR	Narration	Budget Book Line	Service Area	Permanent / Temporary	Expenditure + increase / - decrease £000	Income - increase / + decrease £000
CD	Jan	Oct	Supporting Families PR Q2 23.24	CEF3-2	QA Safeguarding + Recruit + Retention	T	176	0
				VSMMGT	Strategic Measures	T	0	-176
			Allocation of the Dual running of client level data and Short and Long Term funding.	COD3	Communications, Strategy & Insight	T	20	0
				VSMMGT	Strategic Measures	T	0	-20
			Soulbury Officers Pay Award 2022 and 2023	CEF	Children	P	88	0
				VSMMGT	Strategic Measures	P	-88	0
			Green Book Pay Award 2023/24 - adjustments to Directorate allocations eg grant funded posts	SCS	Adults	P	-28	0
				CEF	Children	P	-505	0
				EP	Environment & Place	P	-33	0
				COD	Resources	P	-10	0
				VSMMGT	Strategic Measures	P	576	0
			Allocation of £1.5m budgeted reduction in agency costs held in Human Resources for 2023/24, across all directorates.	SCS	Adults	P	-317	0
				CEF	Children	P	-468	0
				EP4	Environment & Place	P	-153	0
				PH1&2	Public Health	P	-1	0
				CDA3	Community Safety	P	-185	0
				COD2	Human Resources and OD	P	1,473	0
				COD3	Comms, Strategy & Insight	P	-25	0
				COD4	IT, Innovation & Digital	P	-57	0
				COD5	Culture & Customer Experience	P	-102	0
				COD6	Finance & Procurement	P	-47	0
				COD7	Property, Investment & FM	P	-71	0
				COD8	Law & Governance	P	-47	0
CS	Jan	Oct	Set income/expenditure budgets SCE204	CEF3-1	Provider Services	P	1,049	-1,049
			SCT100 Temp budget for unregistered 23/24	CEF3-1	Provider Services	P	19	-19
			Create recharge budget for the YPSA NTS staff	CEF2-3	Childrens Social Care	P	30	0
				CEF3-1	Provider Services	P	0	-30
			Create recharge budget for the YPSA NTS	CEF2-3	Childrens Social Care	P	30	0
				CEF3-1	Provider Services	P	0	-30
			Service Manager budgets to new cost centres	CEF2-1	Family Help	P	161	0
				CEF2-2	Front Door	P	92	0
				CEF2-3	Childrens Social Care	P	-252	0
			Create income & expenditure budget for NTS Grant	CEF2-3	Childrens Social Care	P	461	-640
				CEF2-4	Childrens Social Care	P	83	0
				CEF2-5	Childrens Social Care	P	13	0
				CEF3-1	Provider Services	P	82	0

**Business Management Report**  
**Position to the end of November 2023**

**NEW VIREMENTS THAT HAVE BEEN ACTIONED FOR CABINET TO NOTE**

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Directorate (CD = Cross Directorate)	Month of Cabinet Meeting	Month of Directorate MMR	Narration	Budget Book Line	Service Area	Permanent / Temporary	Expenditure + increase / - decrease £000	Income - increase / + decrease £000	
AS	Jan	Oct	ASC Inflation Budget Reallocation 23/24	ACSNPOOL	Live Well Pool	P	205	-205	
				BCFPOOL	Age Well Pool	P	17	-17	
				SCS5	Pooled Budget Contributions	P	0	0	
			Transfer of temporary staffing saving.	SCS1	Adult Social Care	T	250	0	
				SCS2	Other Adult Social Care Services	T	-250	0	
			Funding for clinics admin post	SCS1	Adult Social Care	P	-32	0	
				SCS4	Business Support Service	P	32	0	
			equipment/albany and telecare contract increase 23/24	BCFPOOL	Age Well Pool	T	226	-226	
				SCS5	Pooled Budget Contributions	T	0	0	
			Add Exp & Income Lines For Seconded MH Staff	SCS1	Adult Social Care	T	117	-117	
			ASC Inflation budget reallocation	ACSNPOOL	Live Well Pool	P	2,349	-2,349	
				BCFPOOL	Age Well Pool	P	2,389	-2,349	
				SCS5	Pooled Budget Contributions	P	-40	0	
			Wardington House uplift adjustment	ACSNPOOL	Live Well Pool	P	40	-40	
				BCFPOOL	Age Well Pool	P	-40	0	
				SCS5	Pooled Budget Contributions	P	40	0	
			Nov	ASC Inflation Budget Reallocation 23/24	ACSNPOOL	Live Well Pool	P	184	-184
				Wardington House uplift adjustment reversal	ACSNPOOL	Live Well Pool	P	-40	40
					BCFPOOL	Age Well Pool	P	40	-40
					SCS5	Pooled Budget Contributions	P	0	0
		ECH uplifts		BCFPOOL	Age Well Pool	P	99	-99	
				SCS5	Pooled Budget Contributions	P	0	0	
		2024-25 - Adjust MSIF Grant 2023/24 Allocation out of budget		BCFPOOL	Age Well Pool	P	-3,485	3,485	
				SCS5	Pooled Budget Contributions	P	0	0	
		EP1-3 Transformation Budget Tidy		EP1-2	Place Making	P	-433	433	
		Funding LLFA Posts. Moved to EP2		EP1-2	Place Making	P	-210	0	
				EP2-3	Environment & Circular Economy	P	210	0	
		Individual budget tidies in EP3		EP3-1	Highway Maintenance	P	225	-225	
				EP3-2	Network Management	P	0	0	
				EP3-3	Supported Transport	P	0	0	
		Nov	Budget Tidy EP4	EP4-1	Records & Systems	P	107	0	
				EP4-2	Directorate Other	P	-164	0	
				EP4-3	EP Business Support Unit	P	57	0	
			budget tidy EP1-3, to fund pressure in IDT001	EP1-3	Infrastructure Delivery	P	-335	335	
Grand Total							5,828	-5,828	

**Business Management & Monitoring Report**  
**Position to the end of November 2023**  
**Earmarked Reserves**

	<b>2023/24</b>		
	Balance at 1 April 2023	Forecast Movement	Forecast Balance at 31 March 2024
	£m	£m	£m
<b>Revenue Grants Unapplied</b>			
Grants and Contributions Reserve	37.0	-19.2	17.8
COVID-19 Reserve	15.4	-9.3	6.1
Government Initiatives Reserve	2.3	-0.5	1.8
<b>Subtotal Revenue Grants Unapplied</b>	<b>54.8</b>	<b>-29.1</b>	<b>25.7</b>
<b>Corporate Priorities</b>			
Budget Priorities Reserve	11.4	-9.6	1.8
Transformation Reserve	1.5	6.1	7.6
Zero Emissions Zone	0.5	0.0	0.5
Youth Provision Reserve	0.3	-0.3	0.0
<b>Subtotal Corporate Priorities</b>	<b>13.7</b>	<b>-3.8</b>	<b>9.9</b>

<p>This reserve holds unspent ring-fenced grants and contributions committed to be spent in future years. This includes the Public Health ringfenced grant and funding for the on-going cost of the Homes for Ukraine Scheme.</p> <p>This reserve is set up to meet ongoing and emerging pressures and longer term service demands arising from the COVID-19 Pandemic. The use of £13.4m funding from the reserve is built into the council's Medium Term Financial Plan agreed in February 2023. After taking account of the additional £1.6m use of the reserve in 2023/24 £0.4m remains uncommitted.</p> <p>This reserve is used to hold underspends on budgets funded by unringfenced grants held that relate to specific agreed outcomes or the implementation of Government initiatives.</p>
<p>This reserve is being used to support the implementation of the Council's priorities and the Medium Term Financial Strategy.</p> <p>This reserve is needed to fund the implementation costs of the Council's Transformation programme.</p> <p>This reserve holds surpluses generated by Network Coordination for the development and expansion of the ZEZ in the future years. Funding for locality based youth provision</p>

**Business Management & Monitoring Report**  
**Position to the end of November 2023**  
**Earmarked Reserves**

	<b>2023/24</b>		
	Balance at 1 April 2023	Forecast Movement	Forecast Balance at 31 March 2024
	£m	£m	£m
<b>Funding for Risk</b>			
Insurance Reserve	12.9	0.0	12.9
Demographic Risk Reserve	13.0	4.0	17.0
Council Elections	0.4	0.2	0.6
Redundancy Reserve	2.4	0.0	2.4
Trading Accounts	0.2	-0.2	0.0
Council Tax Collection Fund Reserve	3.0	0.0	3.0
Business Rates Reserve	9.5	0.0	9.5
<b>Subtotal Risk</b>	<b>41.3</b>	<b>4.0</b>	<b>45.4</b>

<p>This reserve covers the County Council for insurance claims that, based on the previous experience of the County Council, are likely to be received, as well as a number of insurance related issues.</p> <p>In light of the significant pressures relating to High Needs DSG and other budgets with demographic volatility. This reserve will help to manage demographic risk.</p> <p>This will be used to fund future elections. In years where no County Elections take place any underspend on the Council Elections budget will be transferred to this reserve.</p> <p>This reserve is available to fund redundancy costs arising from Transformational Change.</p> <p>This reserve holds funds relating to traded activities to help manage volatility year to year or future investments.</p> <p>This reserve holds any surplus/ deficit as a result of income from council tax being more or less than originally estimated</p> <p>This reserve is to smooth the volatility of Business Rates income and to mitigate risk around future changes to Business Rates. The use of the reserve will be considered through the Budget &amp; Business Planning Process for 2024/25.</p>



**Business Management & Monitoring Report**  
**Position to the end of November 2023**  
**Earmarked Reserves**

	<b>2023/24</b>		
	Balance at 1 April 2023	Forecast Movement	Forecast Balance at 31 March 2024
	£m	£m	£m
<b>Capital &amp; Equipment</b>			
Capital Reserves	67.8	-3.1	64.7
Vehicle and Equipment Reserve	3.4	0.3	3.7
Investment Pump Priming Reserve	2.0	-1.8	0.2
<b>Subtotal Capital &amp; Equipment</b>	<b>73.2</b>	<b>-4.6</b>	<b>68.7</b>
<b>Other Reserves</b>			
Schools' Reserves	12.9	0.0	12.9
Partnership Reserves	1.9	-1.6	0.3
On Street Car Parking Reserve	4.9	0.2	5.1
<b>Subtotal Other Reserves</b>	<b>19.7</b>	<b>-1.4</b>	<b>18.4</b>
<b>Total Reserves</b>	<b>202.7</b>	<b>-34.8</b>	<b>168.0</b>

<p>This reserve has been established for the purpose of financing capital expenditure in future years. Drawdown will be confirmed later in the year.</p> <p>This reserve is to fund future replacements of vehicles and equipment.</p> <p>Funding held to meet the costs of self-financing schemes which require pump priming until the funds are returned. Agreed to be used to support the following schemes as part of the 2023/24 budget: Low Carbon Business Travel Project (grey fleet) £0.8m, Energy Efficiency Recycling Fund for OCC Maintained Schools £0.8m, Initial funding to develop plans for the workplace charging levy £0.2m.</p>
<p>In accordance with the Education Reform Act 1988, the scheme of Local Management of Schools provides for the carry forward of individual schools surpluses and deficits. These reserves are committed to be spent on schools.</p> <p>Other School Reserves cover a number of miscellaneous education activities, including amounts loaned to individual schools against school reserves, and School Partnership Accounts which are operated in respect of inter-school activities.</p> <p>This relates to funding for the Growth Deal</p> <p>This surplus has arisen under the operation of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 (section 55). The purposes for which these monies can be used are defined by statute.</p>

**Business Management Report**  
**Position to the end of November 2023**  
**Government Grants 2023/24**

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Ringfenced	Directorate	Issued By	Estimate 2023/24 £000	In year Adjustments / New Allocations previously reported £000	In year Adjustments/ New Allocations reported this time £000	Latest Allocation £000
	<b>Adult Services</b>					
R	Improved Better Care Fund	DHSC	10,705	0	0	10,705
R	Adult Social Care Market Sustainability and Improvement Fund	DHSC	5,366	0	0	5,366
R	Adult Social Care Discharge Fund	DHSC	1,501	0	0	1,501
R	Adult Social Care Market Sustainability and Improvement Fund - Workforce Fu	DHSC	0	3,485	0	3,485
	<b>TOTAL ADULT SERVICES</b>		<b>17,572</b>	<b>3,485</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>21,057</b>
	<b>Children's Services</b>					
	<b>Dedicated School Grants</b>					
R	Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) - Schools Block	DfE	131,138	31	0	131,169
R	Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) - Central Block	DfE	4,992	0	0	4,992
R	Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) - Early Years Block	DfE	44,341	94	0	44,435
R	Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) - High Needs Block	DfE	85,288	-564	0	84,724
	<b>Subtotal DSG Grants</b>		<b>265,759</b>	<b>-439</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>265,320</b>
	<b>School Grants</b>					
R	Pupil Premium	DfE	7,663	531	0	8,194
R	Teacher's Pension Grant	DfE	274	-264	0	10
R	Teacher's Pay Grant	DfE	95	-95	0	0
R	Coronavirus (COVID-19) National Testing Programme	DfE	0	0	0	0
R	Coronavirus (COVID-19) Alternative Provision Y11 Transition	DfE	0	0	0	0
R	Coronavirus (COVID-19) Education Recovery NQT	DfE	0	0	0	0

**Business Management Report**  
**Position to the end of November 2023**  
**Government Grants 2023/24**

Ringfenced	Directorate	Issued By	Esimate 2023/24	In year Adjustments / New Allocations previously reported	In year Adjustments/ New Allocations reported this time	Latest Allocation
			£000	£000	£000	£000
R	Coronavirus (Covid-19) Schools Fund	DfE		0	0	0
R	National Professional Qualification Grant	DfE	0	15	0	15
R	Early Career Framework - Mentor	DfE	0	93	0	93
R	Early Career Framework - Off Timetable	DfE	0	161	0	161
R	Education Funding Agency - Sixth Form Funding and Threshold	DfE	280	39	0	319
R	Coronavirus (COVID-19) Recovery Premium	DfE	0	462	0	462
R	Coronavirus (COVID-19) School Let Tutoring Grant	DfE	0	408	0	408
R	PE and Sport Grant	DfE	2,266	-49	0	2,217
R	Teacher's Pay Additional Grant	DfE	0	1,404	0	1,404
R	Universal Infant Free School Meals	DfE	3,938	109	0	4,047
R	Early Year Supplement Grant	DfE	0	2,978	0	2,978
R	Mainstream Schools Additional Grant	DfE	0	4,285	0	4,285
	<b>Subtotal School Grants</b>		<b>14,516</b>	<b>10,077</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>24,593</b>
	<b>Other Children's Services Grants</b>					
R	School Improvement Monitoring & Brokering Grant	DfE	0	0	0	0
R	Youth Justice Board	YJB	674	30	0	704
R	Asylum (USAC and Post 18)	HO	3,997	1,531	1,049	6,577
R	Afghan Resettlement Education Grant	DfE	0	0	0	0
R	Afghan Settler Holding Hotel Grant	DfE	0	0	0	0
R	Extension of Virtual School Heads - children with social worker	DfE	0	135	0	135
R	Extension of Virtual School Heads - previously looked after children	DfE	0	66	0	66
R	Pupil Premium Plus Post 16 pilot	DfE	0	45	0	45
R	Extended Personal Adviser Duty Grant	DfE	103	9	0	112
R	Staying Put Implementation Grant	DfE	288	185	-185	288

**Business Management Report**  
**Position to the end of November 2023**  
**Government Grants 2023/24**

Ringfenced	Directorate	Issued By	Esimate 2023/24	In year Adjustments / New Allocations previously reported	In year Adjustments/ New Allocations reported this time	Latest Allocation
			£000	£000	£000	£000
R	Remand Framework	YJB	72	-36	0	36
R	Reducing Parental Conflict Workforce Development Grant	YJB	0	0	48	48
R	Supported Internships for Young People with SEND	DWP	54	0	0	54
R	Holiday Activities and Food Programme	DfE	296	1,203	0	1,499
R	Attach ASF	DfE	0	0	15	15
R	Intervention Delivering Better Value in SEND - Grant for Data Analysis	DfE	0	0	0	0
R	Fam Grp Conferences	DfE	0	0	54	54
R	Multiply	DfE	899	0	0	899
R	Home for Ukraine Education	DfE	0	0	0	0
R	Turnaround Programme	YJB	64	0	63	127
	Subtotal Other Children's Services Grants		<b>6,447</b>	<b>3,168</b>	<b>1,044</b>	<b>10,659</b>
	<b>TOTAL CHILDREN'S SERVICES</b>		<b>286,722</b>	<b>12,806</b>	<b>1,044</b>	<b>300,572</b>
	<b>Environment &amp; Place</b>					
R	Bus Service Operators Grant	DfT	514	0	0	514
R	Natural England	DEFRA	227	0	0	227
R	Energy Mapping	DEFRA	0	0	0	0
R	COVID BSSG	DFT	0	48	0	48
R	Biodiversity Net gain Grant	DEFRA	0	27	0	27
R	Woodland Creation Accelerator Fund (WCAF)	DEFRA	0	75	0	75
R	Air Quality SSCL Grant	DEFRA			127	127
R	Capability Fund	DFT			260	260
R	Zero Emission Zone Pilot	DEFRA	0	0	0	0
	<b>TOTAL ENVIRONMENT &amp; PLACE</b>		<b>741</b>	<b>150</b>	<b>387</b>	<b>1,278</b>

**Business Management Report**  
**Position to the end of November 2023**  
**Government Grants 2023/24**

Ringfenced	Directorate	Issued By	Estimate 2023/24 £000	In year Adjustments / New Allocations previously reported £000	In year Adjustments/ New Allocations reported this time £000	Latest Allocation £000
R	<b>Public Health</b> Public Health Grant <b>TOTAL PUBLIC HEALTH</b>	DHSC	33,632	0	0	33,632
			<b>33,632</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>33,632</b>
R	<b>Community Safety</b> Fire Fighter's Pension Fund Grant	DLUHC	1,361	0	0	1,361
R	Fire Protection Uplift Grant	DLUHC	0	0	303	303
R	Fire Fighter's New Dimensions Grant	DLUHC	40	0	0	40
	<b>TOTAL COMMUNITY SAFETY</b>		<b>1,401</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>303</b>	<b>1,704</b>
R	<b>Resources</b> Homes for Ukraine *	DLUHC	6,503	0	0	6,503
R	Music Service	AC	844	0	0	844
R	MaaS:CAV	Innovate UK	313	0	0	313
R	Park & Charge	Innovate UK	206	0	0	206
R	Virgin Park & Charge	Innovate UK	7	0	0	7
R	Data Driven Safety Tool	Innovate UK	91	0	0	91
R	Quantum Gravimeter	Innovate UK	69	0	0	69
R	Resilient CAV	Innovate UK	25	0	0	25
R	Heart Park Project	DfT	90	0	0	90
R	GTC DfT Congestion Tool	DfT	59	0	0	59
R	CAVL4R	DfT	11	0	0	11
	<b>TOTAL RESOURCES</b>		<b>8,219</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>8,219</b>

**Business Management Report**  
**Position to the end of November 2023**  
**Government Grants 2023/24**

Ringfenced	Directorate	Issued By	Esimate 2023/24	In year Adjustments / New Allocations previously reported	In year Adjustments/ New Allocations reported this time	Latest Allocation
			£000	£000	£000	£000
	<b>Strategic Measures</b>					
U	Lead Local Flood Authority	DEFRA	45	123		168
U	Extended Rights to Free Travel	DfE	278	531		809
U	Firelink	DLUHC	213	-83		130
U	Local Authority Delivery Support Funding	DLUHC	0			0
U	Key Stage 2 Moderation & Phonics	DLUHC	0	21		21
U	Supporting Families - previously Troubled Families	DLUHC	1,048	204		1,252
U	New Homes Bonus	DLUHC	1,700			1,700
U	Local Reform & Community Voices Grant	DfE	515			515
U	Social Care Support Grant (including Independent Living Fund)	DLUHC	32,669			32,669
U	Services Grant	DfE	2,800			2,800
U	Domestic Abuse Duty Grant	DLUHC	1,141		26	1,167
U	Supplementary Substance Misuse Treatment & Recovery Grant	OHID	0	635		635
U	Supplementary Substance Misuse Treatment & Recovery Housing Grant	OHID	0	641	-19	622
U	Supplementary Substance Misuse Inpatient Detox & Rehabilitation	OHID	0	80	-80	0
U	Rough Sleeping Drugs & Alcohol Grant	DLUHC	0	1,235	-15	1,220
U	Dual Running & Client Level Data	DHSC	0	20		20
	<b>Subtotal Strategic Measures</b>		<b>40,409</b>	<b>3,406</b>	<b>-88</b>	<b>43,728</b>
	<b>Business Rates</b>					
U	Section 31 Grant for Business Rate Compensation	DLUHC	14,427	4,671		19,098
U	Business Rates S31 Grant Top-Up	DLUHC	42,662	-2,686		39,976
	<b>Subtotal Business Rates</b>		<b>57,089</b>	<b>1,985</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>59,074</b>

**Business Management Report**  
**Position to the end of November 2023**  
**Government Grants 2023/24**

Ringfenced	Directorate	Issued By	Estimate 2023/24 £000	In year Adjustments / New Allocations previously reported £000	In year Adjustments/ New Allocations reported this time £000	Latest Allocation £000
R	<b>Grants held on behalf of Local Enterprise Partnership</b>	BEIS	205			205
R	Oxford Innovation Business Support		900			900
R	European Regional Development Fund	DLUHC	500			500
	DCLG (Local Enterprise Partnership Funding)					
	<b>Subtotal Grants held on behalf of Local Enterprise Partnership</b>		<b>1,605</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1,605</b>
	<b>TOTAL STRATEGIC MEASURES</b>		<b>99,103</b>	<b>5,391</b>	<b>-88</b>	<b>104,407</b>
	<b>Total All Grants</b>		<b>447,390</b>	<b>21,832</b>	<b>1,646</b>	<b>470,869</b>

R Ringfenced grant  
 U Un-ringfenced grant

Issued by

HO Home Office  
 DHSC Department of Health & Social Care  
 DfT Department for Transport  
 DfE Department for Education

DLUHC Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities  
 BEIS Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy  
 OHID Office for Health Improvement and Disparities  
 DEFRA Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs  
 AC Arts Council  
 YJB Youth Justice Board  
 NDTI National Development team for Inclusion

**Business Management & Monitoring Report**  
**Position to the end of November 2023**  
**General Revenue Balances**

	<b>Forecast 2023/24</b>	
	£m	£m
General Balances: Outturn 2022/23	22.556	
County Fund Balance		<b>22.556</b>
Planned Contribution to Balances (February 2023)		6.800
Planned Contribution from Balances (June 2023)		0.844
<b>Original forecast outturn position 2023/24</b>		<b>30.200</b>
<b>Additions</b>		
		0.000
<b>Calls on balances deducted</b>		
Staffing costs to support development of One - Fleet approach to the council's vehicles (Supplementary Estimate agreed May 2023)		-0.180
Supplementary estimate for a school with a forced academisation that has a deficit budget		-0.200
		-0.380
<b>Automatic calls on/returns to balances</b>		
		0.000
<b>Additional Strategic Measures</b>		
Forecast Strategic Measures Overspend /Underpend		0.000
<b>Net General Balances</b>		<b>29.820</b>
<b>Calls on / returns to balances requested in this report</b>		
		0.000
<b>Forecast Variation at Year End</b>		
Less forecast overspend (as set out in Annex 1)		-4.211
<b>Forecast Outturn position</b>		<b>25.609</b>
<b>Risk Assessed Level of Balances for 2023/24</b>		<b>30.200</b>
<b>Surplus/(deficit) balances compared to risk assessed level</b>		<b>25.229</b>



## CABINET – 23 JANUARY 2024

### CAPITAL PROGRAMME APPROVALS – JANUARY 2024

Report by the Executive Director of Resources and Section 151 Officer

#### Recommendations

1. The Cabinet is RECOMMENDED to:
  - a) approve the inclusion of 'Great Mead', a Children's Residential Home, into the Capital Programme, releasing £3.1m of funding agreed by Council in February 2023.
  - b) approve the inclusion of 'Willow Bank', a Children's Residential Home, into the Capital Programme, releasing £1.8m of funding agreed by Council in February 2023.
  - c) approve the inclusion of a new Special Educational Needs & Disabilities (SEND) School for Social and Emotional High Needs (SEMH) and Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD), located in Didcot, into the Capital Programme, with an indicative capital budget of £14.4m to be met by section 106 funds and High Needs grant 2021/22 to 2023/24.

#### Executive Summary

2. The Capital Programme was approved by Council in February 2023 and updated during the year through the capital programme and monitoring reports. This report sets out change requests requiring Cabinet approval that will be incorporated into the agreed programme and included in the next update to the Capital Programme in March 2024.

#### Introduction

3. The Capital Programme sets out how the Council will use Capital expenditure to deliver the Council's priorities as set out in the Strategic Plan 2022-25. The Capital Programme is updated quarterly and fully refreshed annually as part of the Budget and Business Planning Process to ensure that it remains aligned to the latest priorities, reflects the latest cost projections and profile for delivery, and incorporates the current funding position.
4. On occasion, variations to the Capital programme are recommended to Cabinet. There are no variations included in this report.

#### Property

5. 'Great Mead', East Hagbourne  
To support the sufficiency strategy for placements for Children We Care For, Children's Services plan to deliver four children's homes. A property, 'Great Mead', has been identified by the service as meeting their needs as

a Autistic Spectrum Disorder children's home, giving children the opportunity to live and thrive within a settled and safe rural community, within easy reach of universal amenities. The property meets the requirements for the Large Autistic Spectrum Disorder Home set out in the Business Case proposal for 50:50 joint funding approval by DfE and Cabinet (5 December 2022).

6. Approval is required to release £3.1m of funds, agreed by Council in February 2023, to purchase Great Mead and to fund the cost of refurbishment and adaptations.
7. 'Willow Bank', Sutton  
Another property, 'Willow Bank', has been identified to support the delivery of the four children's homes agreed in February 2023. This property meets the requirements for the Small Solo Children's Home set out in the business case proposals for 50:50 joint funding approval by DfE and Cabinet (5 December 2022).
8. Approval is required to release £1.8m of funds, agreed by Council in February 2023, to purchase Willow Bank and to fund the cost of refurbishment and adaptations.
9. New Special Educational Needs & Disabilities (SEND) School, Didcot  
Approval is required to enter a new SEND School, located in Didcot into the Capital Programme. Oxfordshire's SEND Sufficiency Delivery Strategy identifies the need for two new special schools in the south-east of Oxfordshire, one for Social, Emotional & Mental Health and/or Autistic Spectrum Disorder (SEMH/ASD) needs and one for other categories of need.
10. The £14.4m capital cost of the new school will be met from section 106 funds and High Needs grant 2021/22 to 2023/24.

## **Financial Implications**

11. The financial implications are contained within the report. Funding for these schemes can be met from previous identified grant funding, funding provisions and held/secured S106 developer contributions.

Comments checked by:  
Lorna Baxter, Executive Director of Resources and Section 151 Officer

## **Staff Implications**

12. There are no staffing implications arising directly from the report.

## **Equality & Inclusion Implications**

13. There are no equality and inclusion implications arising directly from this report.

## **Legal Implications**

14. In year changes to the capital programme must be approved by Cabinet in accordance with Financial Regulation and in particular paragraph 5.1.1(iv) permitting Cabinet to agree resource inclusion into the capital programme via a periodic Capital Report to Cabinet, based on the recommendation of the Strategic Capital Board (chaired by the Chief Executive). Comments checked by:

Anita Bradley, Director of Law & Governance and Monitoring Officer

### **LORNA BAXTER**

Executive Director of Resources and Section 151 Officer

Background papers: none

Contact Officers:

Natalie Crawford, Capital Programme Manager  
January 2023

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## **Divisions Affected – Henley on Thames**

**20 December 2023**

### **FREEHOLD DISPOSAL CHILTERN'S END FORMER CARE HOME, GREYS ROAD, HENLEY ON THAMES, RG9 1SQ**

#### **Report by Director of Property**

## **RECOMMENDATION**

### **The Cabinet is RECOMMENDED to:**

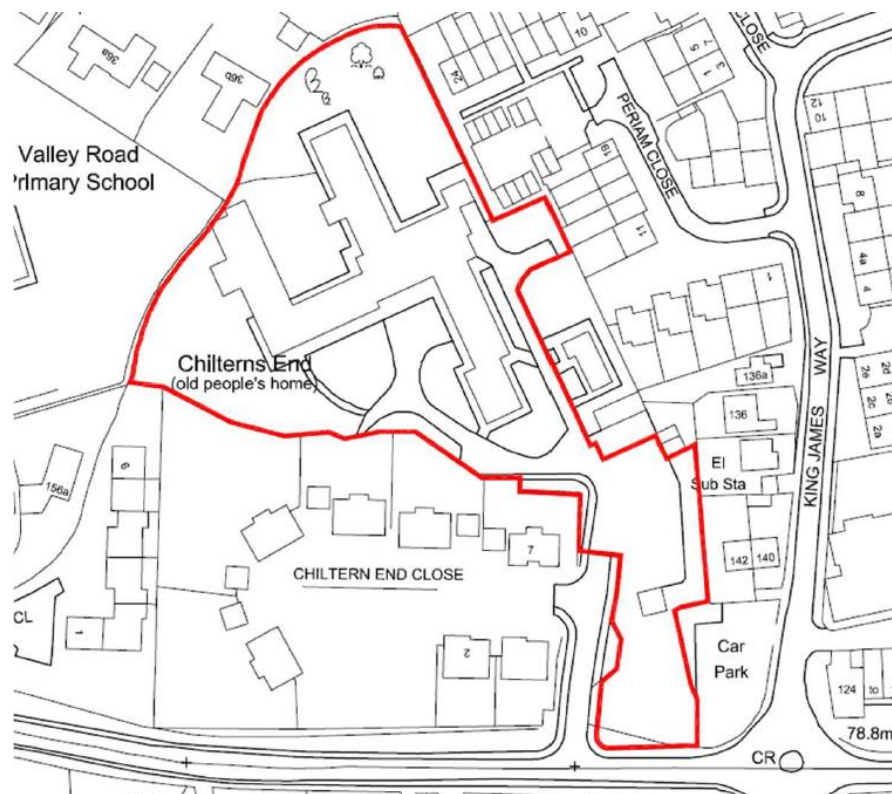
- a)* Approve, as a key decision, the freehold sale of land comprising the former elderly persons home at Chilterns End to a named purchaser in consideration of the Council receiving a capital receipt.
- b)* Delegate authority to the Executive Director of Resources, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Finance, to consider officer recommendations and agree the final purchaser and sale price.

## **Executive Summary**

1. Chilterns End was let to the Oxfordshire Care Partnership under a project agreement dated 20 December 2001, for a term of 60 years, for use as an elderly person's home. The property has been empty since 2016 when the residents moved to a new facility elsewhere in Henley. Oxfordshire County Council (OCC) took back occupation in October 2019.
2. The property has been considered for several uses within OCC since late 2019, but with no viable business case forthcoming.
3. The property has been allocated in the Henley on Thames Neighbourhood Plan for a mix of open market and affordable housing.
4. The property has been formally declared surplus and has been marketed for sale for the last two months.

## Detail

5. OCC own the freehold of the site at Chilterns End as shown on the plan below edged red. The site extends to 2.37 acres (0.96 hectares), with the single storey building, built in the 1970s, extending to 18,384 sq ft (1,708 sq m).



6. The property was historically used as an elderly persons care home and let to the Oxfordshire Care Partnership. As demand for the service fell away, the home closed in late 2016. OCC and the Oxfordshire Care Partnership entered negotiations to surrender the lease, which concluded in October 2019 with OCC taking back occupation.
7. At that point the property was placed on the Capital Programme list as a future disposal. At the same time, OCC submitted the site for inclusion in the Henley on Thames Neighbourhood Plan call for sites and the site was successfully allocated for a minimum of 25 residential units.
8. There has been some service interest in the property in the years following the lease surrender, with both the Adults and Childrens service declaring an interest. However, the demand for this sort of accommodation in Henley never materialised and the finances for a business case did not stack up.

9. Services were given a final opportunity to submit interest in July 2023, with no further interest coming forward by the deadline in August 2023. The property has now been formally declared surplus to the operational requirements to the council's needs.
10. OCC has instructed agents to market and sell the property. An officer report detailing our recommendations will be presented for approval to Property Capital Board and Strategic Capital Board

### **Risk Management**

11. The Council must ensure that all capital payments received come from the client account of a firm of solicitors acting for the purchaser, which has taken responsibility for money laundering checks. The Council may wish to conduct independent checks on the source of the funds and must reserve the right to withdraw from the transaction at any stage in the event that these are not completed to its satisfaction.

### **Corporate Policies and Priorities**

12. The sale of the site supports the agreed Property and Asset Strategy agreed in November 2022, by maximising the value of investments to support the long-term financial sustainability of the Council land and supporting the local community by the provision of land for social housing.

### **Staff Implications**

13. There are no staff implications.

### **Equality & Inclusion Implications**

14. There are no equality and inclusion implications.

### **Financial Implications**

15. The Capital & Investment Strategy for 2023/24 agreed by the Council in February 2023 sets out the principle that capital receipts should be treated as a corporate resource and used across the capital programme flexibly.
16. The eventual sale would provide a capital receipt as set out in the disposals programme.. The disposal will need to be compliant with the best value requirements as set out in section 123 of the Local Government Act 1972.
17. The funding for the Capital Programme already assumes a capital receipt, any difference between the actual and estimated capital receipt will need to be reflected in the Capital Programme in due course.

Comments checked by:

Prem Salhan - Finance Business Partner (Resources & E&P)

### **Legal Implications**

18. The Council has power to dispose of its land assets pursuant to Section 123(1) of the Local Government Act 1972, subject to its duty to ensure it receives best value for them. The Council owns the freehold to the site.

Comments checked by:  
Richard Hodby, Solicitor, Law and Governance  
[Richard.hodby@Oxfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:Richard.hodby@Oxfordshire.gov.uk)

### **Sustainability Implications**

19. There are no sustainability implications

**Vic Kurzeja, Director of Property Services**  
[vic.kurzeja@Oxfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:vic.kurzeja@Oxfordshire.gov.uk)

### **Contact Officers:**

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21 December 2023



## **Divisions Affected - All**

### **CABINET 23 JANUARY 2023**

## **OXFORD CITY CENTRE ACCOMMODATION STRATEGY**

### **Report by Executive Director of Resources**

## **RECOMMENDATION**

**1. The Cabinet is RECOMMENDED to:**

- a) progress Option 2: 'Consolidation in Speedwell House and disposal of County Hall' as the preferred option and progress the project through the Council's capital governance and reporting processes, noting the financial position.
- b) To engage the market to assess interest in both New and Old County Hall to inform a final decision on Old County Hall's future.

## **Executive Summary**

- 2. In November 2022 Cabinet approved the Property and Assets Strategy which set out Oxfordshire County Council's (OCC) 10-year ambition for its property portfolio driven by the need to repurpose the estate to enable new ways of delivering services, support agile working and decarbonise existing buildings.
- 3. The Strategy confirmed the continued need for a core central office and democratic facilities in Oxford city centre based on its central location, historical significance, strong public transport links, access to a larger workforce and the range of facilities in the city.
- 4. Following approval of the Strategy, the Oxford City Centre Accommodation Strategy project was established to drive forward the future of office accommodation and the Council's workplace in the city centre, giving consideration to available options and identifying a preferred option.
- 5. A cross party Cabinet Advisory Group (CAG) was established in February 2023 to provide guidance and feedback to the Cabinet Member for Finance, on the development of options and a business case to deliver the objectives set out in the Property and Assets Strategy, specifically in relation to the city centre accommodation options under the Oxford Accommodation Strategy.

6. An Initial Business Case was developed (the definition of which is a commitment to investigate) including the case for change and the rationale for the shortlisted options and was considered by the CAG in June 2023. The shortlisted options were:
  - (a) **Option 1 - Consolidation in County Hall** following major refurbishment, with the release of Speedwell House. This option would involve a temporary decant of County Hall to Speedwell House to enable the refurbishment of County Hall.
  - (b) **Option 2 - Consolidation in Speedwell House** following redevelopment and extension of the existing building, with the release of County Hall.
7. The CAG supported progressing further technical appraisal of these two options to inform an appraisal of the socioeconomic benefits of the options, and to test and confirm the preferred option in an Outline Business Case (the definition of which is a commitment to invest).
8. The Outline Business Case recommends Option 2 (consolidate in Speedwell house and Dispose of County Hall). This Option demonstrates the greatest alignment with the Council's Spending Objectives and Critical Success Factors, whilst avoiding a complex decant of County Hall and associated costs, having a shorter delivery programme, and maximising the Council's role in place shaping and social value in the city.
9. The CAG considered the Outline Business Case in December 2023 and supported the recommendation of the OBC, to proceed with Option 2.
10. Annex 1 sets out a summary of the Outline Business Case.  
**Confidential** Annexes 2 and Annex 3 set out the full Outline Business Case and supporting information. Given the commercially sensitive nature of both the costs and potential value of capital receipt, these two annexes are **exempt from the public**.

## Strategic Case for Change

11. The Council is at a critical decision-making stage with regards to its city centre estate. There has been a cumulative lack of investment for over a decade in the city centre assets which has resulted in buildings that are either mothballed, or require significant mechanical and electrical and Net Zero investment to comply with modern safety and compliance standards. This lack of investment has resulted in major assets such as County Hall and Speedwell House now requiring unaffordable amounts of investment if they are to be considered fit for purpose and compliant with modern standards. Added to this, and following an increase in more agile working patterns as a part of the Delivering the Future Together Programme (DTFT) in a post pandemic world, it is no longer justifiable or sustainable to retain offices that, at their peak, are only 35% occupied at any given time.

12. There is now an unavoidable priority to take a decision on the future of the Council's city centre office accommodation, as well as a key window of market opportunity to maximise the Council's assets to support its financial sustainability and the wider economic and social development of the city centre. To do nothing is no longer an option, the city centre assets do not reflect the organisation that OCC aspires to be - an employer, partner and placeshaper of choice - nor do they comply with modern safety and compliance standards. The Council has a once in a generation opportunity to use its assets, covenant and influence to be the 'place shaper of choice' in the city centre and at the heart of economic and social regeneration.
13. A high-level space assessment has been undertaken which estimates a total 4,500m<sup>2</sup> of space is required to house necessary democratic functions and the corporate workforce, taking into account improved space efficiency and a change in working patterns. Details are set out in Annex 1, Appendix 2.
14. Strategic Objectives and Critical Success Factors were identified by the project team and agreed with the Cabinet Advisory Group (CAG) at IBC stage, and were reconfirmed for the OBC. These are set out in Annex 1, Appendix 2. They reflect the aims of the programme and the city centre project itself. Spending Objectives consider the rationale and drivers for intervention and the key outcomes and benefits that are being sought, whilst the Critical Success Factors are attributes essential to the successful delivery of the project. Together the Spending Objectives and Critical Success Factors provide the framework against which options have been assessed and appraised in order to recommend a preferred option.

## **Initial Business Case (IBC)**

15. In accordance with the Council's capital governance procedures, an Initial Business Case (IBC) was developed in the first half of 2023 to establish a case for change, consider a long-list of potential options and identify short-listed options. The IBC was developed through engagement with the Cabinet Advisory Group and provided a provisional budget for assessed and shortlisted options, with a commitment made to investigate options further.
16. The IBC was considered by the Cabinet Advisory Group in June 2023, with support for the shortlisted options identified be further appraised to confirm a preferred option.
17. The success criteria for the project were identified as required to achieve:
  - (a) Strategic fit and business requirements
  - (b) Value for money
  - (c) Contribution to regeneration
  - (d) Affordability
  - (e) Deliverability/achievability
18. The IBC considered city centre accommodation options across the following in scope assets:

- (a) County Hall
- (b) Speedwell House
- (c) Rewley Road site
- (d) Westgate Library Offices

19. The IBC determined that based on achievement of the success criteria, the following options should be appraised further within the OBC:

#### **Option 1 - Consolidate in County Hall**

20. Option 1 consolidates OCC's city centre workforce in a refurbished County Hall. This option assumes that Speedwell House would either be:
- (a) Released for disposal with or without outline planning consent.
  - (b) Retained and refurbished by the Council before being leased out for income generation purposes
  - (c) Retained under a ground lease enabling the Council to realise a capital receipt/share of the income

#### **Option 2 - Consolidate in Speedwell House**

21. Option 2 consolidates OCC's city centre workforce in a refurbished and extended Speedwell House. New County Hall and the Link building would be disposed of, with the option to either retain or release Old County Hall.
22. Following the refurbishment of Speedwell House, this option assumes that New County Hall and the Link building would either be:
- (a) Released for disposal with or without outline planning consent
  - (b) Retained and refurbished by the Council before being leased out for income generation purposes
  - (c) Retained under a ground lease enabling the Council to realise a capital receipt/share of the income



















23. The preferred way forward following the qualitative and quantitative appraisal within the IBC was Option 2: Consolidation in Speedwell House. However, this decision was subject to further technical and financial appraisal of both shortlisted options described above as part of this OBC to determine the preferred option.

#### **Option 0 – Do Minimum**

24. A Do Minimum option was also carried forward from the IBC for further appraisal but only for comparison purposes. Under the Do Minimum option there is a base capital investment need of £26.3m across the retained city centre assets. This base need comprises major refurbishment, investment in mechanical and electrical systems, and investment to support Net Zero to enable continued long-term occupation in County Hall (and assumes Speedwell House remains mothballed).

## Outline Business Case (OBC)

25. Following the recommendation from IBC stage that the two shortlisted options be further appraised, the OBC undertakes a more detailed options appraisal and establishes the feasibility of the project, with a commitment to invest to a final budget. The OBC includes:
- The reaffirmed strategic case for change and the anticipated outcomes of the investment (including a data-driven evidence base that demonstrates the need to invest).
  - A refreshed option appraisal based on a detailed cost benefit analysis of each short-listed option following technical feasibility work.
  - An agreed procurement strategy.
  - An implementation plan and final budget for the preferred option.
26. Following the appraisal of the shortlisted options, Option 2 shows the greatest alignment with the Council's Spending Objectives and Critical Success Factors for the project and provides the Council with a new, fit for purpose, agile office space and democratic centre. It also releases key surplus assets in a prime city centre location that can therefore contribute to the social and economic development of Oxfordshire for future generations. This option also reduces the Council's city centre footprint by 43% as opposed to 33% under Option 1. There is also an associated programme benefit under Option 2 by avoiding the need to decant County Hall allowing the Council to deliver the programme within a shorter timeframe than Option 1. This saves the Council around 18 months and a considerable decant cost.
27. An appraisal of the Options against the spending objectives which has informed the assessment against the Critical Success Factors is set out below.

Option Assessment		 Likely to meet the CSF  Potential to meet the CSF  Not likely to meet the CSF			Comments
Critical Success Factors(CSFs)	The preferred option must...	Option 0 Do Minimum	Option 1 Consolidate in County Hall	Option 2 Consolidate in Speedwell House	
Strategic fit and business requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Be consistent with Spending Objectives, service requirements, and customer and workforce needs</li> </ul>				Option 2 is likely to meet the Council's Spending Objectives, and workplace and customer requirements. Option 1 meets the Spending Objectives to a lesser extent as its contribution to the local economy and community is lower. Option 0 does not meeting the Spending Objectives.
Value for money	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Demonstrate optimal public value in terms of potential costs, benefits and risks</li> <li>Make net revenue savings on property running costs through a reduction in floor space</li> </ul>				Options 1 and 2 both release surplus assets for reinvestment, however the value of County Hall exceeds that of Speedwell House so Option 2 will release higher receipts overall. Option 2 delivers a greater reduction in floor area compared to Option 1.
Contribution to Regeneration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Contribution to regeneration and economic development</li> <li>Enhance social value in the city and countywide</li> </ul>				Given County Hall's greater floor area (5,500m <sup>2</sup> ) compared to Speedwell House (4,000m <sup>2</sup> ) and prime location, Option 2 shows the greatest contribution to regeneration through socio-economic benefits, and would deliver these more quickly.
Affordability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Be cost neutral or net positive</li> <li>Demonstrate minimum reliance on public borrowing</li> </ul>				Option 2 has the lowest net capital requirement and could provide the opportunity to achieve a cost neutral project without reliance on borrowing.
Deliverability / Achievability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Viability in planning, legal, third party and other terms</li> <li>Can match the level of available resource required for successful delivery</li> <li>Match the ability of potential suppliers to deliver the required services</li> </ul>				Option 2 has some planning risk in extending Speedwell House but avoids the need for a complex decant and brings a surplus asset to market more quickly than Option 1.
		Discount	Discount	Preferred Option	

## Regeneration and Socio-economic Benefits

28. The Council has a once in a generation opportunity to use its assets, covenant and influence to be the '*placeshaper of choice*' in the city Centre and at the heart of social regeneration:
- The city centre masterplan is incomplete without a reimagining of the County Hall site as part of a corridor of regeneration, also comprising the redevelopment of the Rewley Road site. This creates a unique opportunity to provide real community and social benefit by encouraging innovation and investment, improving wellbeing, and creating a sustainable and greener future.
  - The redevelopment of Speedwell House for the Council's long term occupation will comprise improvements to the surrounding public realm, including open space and a potential cafe opposite the magistrates court, and will significantly enhance an area of the city where the market alone has not led to regeneration. This also links to wider aspirations to create a public sector quarter in this part of the city, alongside the crown court and police station.
  - Not only are there opportunities to work along side the ongoing rejuvenation of Oxford Castle Quarter but there is the potential to better link the city centre to the wider West End redevelopment (Oxpens, Osney Mead and Oxford station), opening up significant underutilised areas close to the bustling heart of a world-renowned city. Regenerating this area creates opportunities through modernising and improving existing employment sites in a central area that can be reached by people living close by, on foot, bike or public transport, minimising car journeys, with new homes incorporated into the overall master plan contributing to housing need in the city.
29. For these reasons Option 2: Consolidation in Speedwell House will provide most socio-economic benefit, beyond any commercial transaction, with the Council leading regeneration in a part of the city where the market has not, and releasing County Hall for alternative uses close to other areas of regeneration. Option 2 also releases a greater floor area than Option 1 for alternative uses with proportionate socio-economic benefits in terms of Gross Value Added (GVA), driven by the future use.
30. At this stage, Option 2 also delivers the most in terms of total quantifiable direct and indirect benefits over Option 1. It will also enable the Council to take the fullest placeshaping role and enable socio-economic benefits through:
- (a) Leading on redevelopment of public sector quarter around Speedwell House with improvements to the public realm
  - (b) Releasing County Hall to contribute to further regeneration of the West End and the city centre masterplan.

## **Stakeholder Engagement**

31. A stakeholder engagement plan has been developed for internal stakeholders including elected councillors and colleagues across service areas, as well as external stakeholders such as Oxford City Council and potential One Public Estate partners. There will be a potential impact to the workforce, although deemed to be immaterial given any change to base office will be to another city centre location. The impact on colleagues, the environment and equality will continue to be addressed as the project progresses.

## **Next Steps and timescales**

32. Subject to the recommendations being approved, the project to redevelop Speedwell House will progress to a Full Business Case and a commitment to spend through the Council's capital governance processes.
33. Subject to the recommendations being approved, New County Hall will be registered on the Disposal List. Following the market engagement exercise, a decision will be required on the disposal of new County Hall alongside a decision on the future of Old County Hall.
34. Current timelines anticipate that Speedwell House would be ready for occupation by March 2027, with a sale of New County Hall prior to this. These timescales are indicative and are commensurate with the current level of design and stage of the project, and are dependent on planning approval timelines.

## **Financial Implications**

35. As set out in the report there is no option that does not result in additional investment being required. However, Option 1 and 2 generate receipts which it is expected would enable the associated costs to be funded.
36. Option 0, remain in County Hall with refurbishment, is expected to be the highest cost of the options in the OBC.
37. The expectation is that the costs of Option 2 can be met from the release of new County Hall. Consideration will need to be given to the approach for Old County Hall once a market engagement exercise has been undertaken.
38. Under Option 2 County Hall would continue to be utilised ahead of moving to Speedwell House saving any cost of additional accommodation required while work progresses. The capital receipt would need to be generated through a forward sale so that the property continues to be available for use until it is possible to move into Speedwell House.
39. The actual costs and capital receipts for Option 2 will become clearer after the completion of the market engagement exercise. Once this information is available, a decision can then be made on whether to proceed with the project and how it will be financed.

It currently costs £1.05m per annum to run the council's city centre estate. Both Option 1 and Option 2 show a marginal revenue efficiency compared to this baseline. However, when compared to the Do Minimum Option 0, Option 2 shows a slightly greater saving per annum saving, than Option 1. Given the relatively small difference in running costs across Options 1 and 2 this is not considered a key differentiator in the options appraisal.

Comments checked by:  
Kathy Wilcox, Head of Corporate Finance  
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## **Legal Implications**

40. There are no immediate legal implications for the Committee's consideration of the preferred option and the Council is entitled to determine how best to use its own property. However, the reorganisation of the Council's estate will require appropriate legal documentation to set out the transaction, consultancy and construction arrangements.

Comments checked by:  
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January 2024



# Annex 1

## Oxford Accommodation Strategy

### Outline Business Case - Summary

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CABINET - SUMMARY DOCUMENT

January 2024

- There is now an unavoidable priority need to take a decision on the future of the Council's city centre office accommodation, as well as a key window of market opportunity to maximise the potential of the Council's assets to support its financial sustainability and the wider economic and social development of the city centre. **To do nothing is no longer an option**: city centre assets do not reflect the organisation OCC aspires to be - *an employer, partner and placeshaper of choice* - or comply with modern building and environmental standards.
- Compared to Option 1: Consolidation in County Hall, **Option 2: Consolidation in Speedwell House** shows the **greatest alignment** with the Council's Spending Objectives and Critical Success Factors whilst **avoiding** a complex decant of County Hall and associated costs, having a **shorter** delivery programme, and **maximising the Council's role in place shaping** and social value in the city.
- **Option 2 performs best in financial terms**, predominantly as a result of its lower net capital requirement. Also we see, under Option 1, an annual revenue benefit compared to the Do Minimum option, although based on the latest capital receipt and cost estimates, it is not cost neutral at the OBC stage. However, it could provide the opportunity to be cost-neutral, primarily through the **avoidance of or reduction in expenditure** at Old County Hall.
- Given the above, **both** New County Hall and Old County Hall should be **included in market engagement** better to understand potential market interest in Old County Hall and inform a final decision on its future.
- Current timelines anticipate that Speedwell House will be ready for occupation by the **end of FY26/27**, with a forward sale of New County Hall at the end of 2025.

**The Committee is asked to comment on the proposal outlined in the report to progress Option 2: Consolidation in Speedwell House and disposal of County Hall.**

- Cabinet approved the overarching Property & Asset Strategy in November 2022. This established a move towards a community hub model and also **confirmed the continued need for a core central office and democratic facilities in Oxford city centre** based on its central location, historical significance, strong public transport links, access to a larger workforce and the range of facilities in the city.
- At the meeting on 30th June 2023, CAG considered an **Initial Business Case (IBC)** for the Oxford City Centre Accommodation Project including the case for change and the rationale for the shortlisted options.

**Option 1 - Consolidation in County Hall** following major refurbishment, with the release of Speedwell House. This option would involve a temporary decant of County Hall to Speedwell House to enable the refurbishment of County Hall.

**Option 2 - Consolidation in Speedwell House** following redevelopment and extension of the existing building, with the release of County Hall.

- CAG supported **progressing further technical appraisal** of these two options to i) inform an appraisal of the socioeconomic benefits of the options, and ii) test and confirm the preferred option in an **Outline Business Case (OBC)** in late 2023.
- Since June, **further feasibility work** has been undertaken on the redevelopment of Speedwell House for the Council's own occupation to inform Option 2, including conceptual design, revised costings and estimated programme. A market appraisal of County Hall has also been undertaken by Savills to assess alternative use potential and the associated market, values and planning considerations.
- The Outline Business Case is **summarised** in this paper.

There is an **unavoidable priority to take a decision on the future of the Council's city centre office accommodation**, as well as a **key window of market opportunity** to maximise the potential of the Council's assets to both support its financial sustainability and the wider economic development of the city centre for the benefit of future generations. A decision on the future of County Hall and Speedwell House has not been taken in over a decade, with a resultant postponement of any significant investment to date.

- Page 182
- It is **no longer justifiable or sustainable** to retain offices that are at their peak only 35% occupied at any given time. The move to Agile working demands a **new, more responsive and collaborative workplace** designed to meet the long term needs of the workforce and objectives of DTFT.
  - The Council has for too long postponed any decision on the future of County Hall and Speedwell House to the point where **investment needs are now unaffordable without more fundamental change** to the asset base and **longer term ambition**.
  - Building mechanical and electrical systems are **at the end of their life** which poses a risk to building operation and ultimately health and safety. The ability for these key assets to contribute to Net Zero Carbon targets in their current configuration is also **severely limited**.

**Doing nothing is therefore not an option** given the scale of investment needed.

- The city centre's central location, historical significance, strong public transport links, access to a larger workforce and the range of facilities in the city will mean it **continues to be the best location for corporate and democratic services** into the future.
- The potential for the Council's main city centre assets to contribute to regeneration and economic development **cannot continue to be ignored**. In the meantime they **do not reflect the organisation OCC aspires to be**.
- However, any future city centre estate option **must be cost neutral to the Council**, whilst also **maximising the contribution of the Council's assets to the economic development and regeneration** of the city centre.

# Regeneration & Socio-economic Benefits

The Council has a **once in a generation opportunity** to use its assets, covenant and influence to be the **'placeshaper of choice'** in the city centre and at the **heart of social regeneration**:

- The city centre masterplan is **incomplete without a reimagining of the County Hall site** as part of a **corridor of regeneration**, also comprising the **redevelopment of the Rewley Road site**. This creates a unique opportunity to provide real community and social benefit by creating jobs, encouraging innovation and investment, improving wellbeing, and creating a sustainable and greener future.
- The **redevelopment of Speedwell House** for the Council's long term occupation will comprise **improvements to the surrounding public realm**, including open space and a potential cafe opposite the magistrates court, and will significantly enhance an area of the city where the **market alone has not led to regeneration**. This also links to wider aspirations to create a **public sector quarter** in this part of the city, alongside the crown court and police station.
- Not only are there opportunities to rejuvenate the Oxford Castle Quarter but there is the potential to **better link** the city centre to the wider West End redevelopment (Oxpens, Osney Mead and Oxford station), opening up significant underutilised areas close to the bustling heart of a world-renowned city. Regenerating this area creates opportunities through modernising and improving existing employment sites in a central area that can be reached by people living close by, on foot, bike or public transport, minimising car journeys, with new homes incorporated into the overall master plan contributing to housing need in the city.

For these reasons **Option 2: Consolidation in Speedwell House will provide most socio-economic benefit**, beyond any commercial transaction, with the Council leading regeneration in a part of the city where the market has not, and releasing County Hall for alternative uses close to other areas of regeneration. Option 2 also **releases a greater floor area** than Option 1 for alternative uses with proportionate socio-economic benefits in terms of Gross Value Added (GVA), driven by the future use.

Proposed Speedwell House scheme, with enhancement of public realm



Redevelopment of OCC assets as part of wider regeneration of the West End



# Sustainability & Net Zero Carbon Ambitions

The Council's workplaces need to support CSR (Corporate Social Responsibility) and the Council's commitment to be a zero carbon organisation, adhering to the **Council's Environmental Design Guide 2021**. The new public realm created as a result of current and proposed developments will create a destination and gateway into Oxford which is sustainable in the following ways:
















- The **new fire station at Rewley Road**, which forms part of the wider regeneration of the West End, is currently being designed to be **net zero carbon in operation**.
- Any future redevelopment of the **County Hall site** will have to adhere to the Council's current planning and net zero policies (as mentioned above).
- The **redevelopment of Speedwell House will play a huge part in achieving some of the Council's net zero ambitions** and contribute to a circular economy by **reusing** the existing frame, structure and facade where possible, aiming for a reduction in the total embodied carbon to be net zero.
- Other targets for the Speedwell House redevelopment include:
  - Increasing the building insulation with new high performance windows and increased wall and roof insulation
  - Achieving BREEAM Outstanding
  - Adopting an all electric energy strategy, maximising the benefits of grid decarbonisation
  - Targeting a higher EPC rating
  - Using sustainable technologies such as Solar PV panels and air source heat pumps
  - Considering the use of green walls and green and blue roofs



# Option Assessment

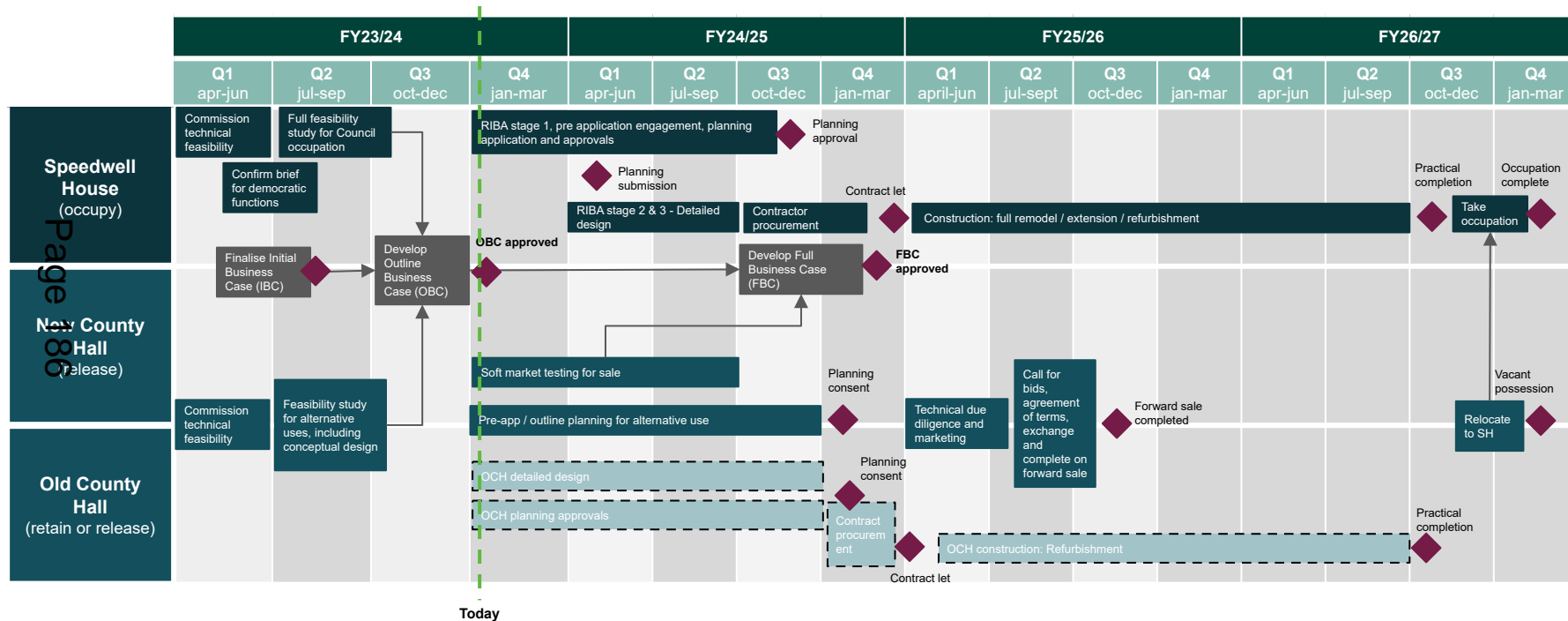
 Likely to meet the CSF
  Potential to meet the CSF
  Not likely to meet the CSF

The qualitative appraisal of the options against the Spending Objectives is set out in **Annex 3** and informs the assessment against the CSFs below:

Critical Success Factors(CSFs)	The preferred option must...	Option 0 Do Minimum	Option 1 Consolidate in County Hall	Option 2 Consolidate in Speedwell House	Comments
<b>Strategic fit and business requirements</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Be consistent with Spending Objectives, service requirements, and customer and workforce needs</li> </ul>				Option 2 is likely to meet the Council's Spending Objectives, and workplace and customer requirements. Option 1 meets the Spending Objectives to a lesser extent as its contribution to the local economy and community is lower. Option 0 does not meeting the Spending Objectives.
<b>Value for money</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Demonstrate optimal public value in terms of potential costs, benefits and risks</li> <li>Make net revenue savings on property running costs through a reduction in floor space</li> </ul>				Options 1 and 2 both release surplus assets for reinvestment, however the value of County Hall exceeds that of Speedwell House so Option 2 will release higher receipts overall. Option 2 delivers a greater reduction in floor area compared to Option 1.
<b>Contribution to Regeneration</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Contribution to regeneration and economic development</li> <li>Enhance social value in the city and countywide</li> </ul>				Given County Hall's greater floor area (5,500m2) compared to Speedwell House (4,000m2) and prime location, Option 2 shows the greatest contribution to regeneration through socio-economic benefits, and would deliver these more quickly.
<b>Affordability</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Be cost neutral or net positive</li> <li>Demonstrate minimum reliance on public borrowing</li> </ul>				Option 2 has the lowest net capital requirement and could provide the opportunity to achieve a cost neutral project without reliance on borrowing.
<b>Deliverability / Achievability</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Viability in planning, legal, third party and other terms</li> <li>Can match the level of available resource required for successful delivery</li> <li>Match the ability of potential suppliers to deliver the required services</li> </ul>				Option 2 has some planning risk in extending Speedwell House but avoids the need for a complex decant and brings a surplus asset to market more quickly than Option 1.
		<b>Discount</b>	<b>Discount</b>	<b>Preferred Option</b>	



# Implementation Plan







## **Appendix 1:**

- Summary case for change
- Option shortlisting at Initial Business Case stage

There is an **unavoidable priority to take a decision on the future of the Council's city centre office accommodation**, as well as a **key window of market opportunity** to maximise the potential of the Council's assets to both support its financial sustainability and the wider economic development of the city centre for the benefit of future generations. A decision on the future of County Hall and Speedwell House has not been taken in over a decade, with a resultant postponement of any significant investment to date.

- It is **no longer justifiable or sustainable** to retain offices that are at their peak only 35% occupied at any given time. The move to Agile working demands a **new, more responsive and collaborative workplace** designed to meet the long term needs of the workforce and objectives of DTFT.
- The Council has for too long postponed any decision on the future of County Hall and Speedwell House to the point where **investment needs are now unaffordable** (estimated £20m for County Hall alone) **without more fundamental change** to the asset base and **longer term ambition**.
- Building mechanical and electrical systems are **at the end of their life** which poses a risk to building operation and ultimately health and safety. The ability for these key assets to contribute to Net Zero Carbon targets in their current configuration is also **severely limited**.

**Doing nothing is therefore not an option** given the scale of investment needed.

- The city centre's central location, historical significance, strong public transport links, access to a larger workforce and the range of facilities in the city will mean it **continues to be the best location for corporate and democratic services** into the future.
- The potential for the Council's main city centre assets to contribute to regeneration and economic development **cannot continue to be ignored**. In the meantime they **do not reflect the organisation OCC aspires to be**.
- However, any future city centre estate option **must be cost neutral to the Council**, whilst also **maximising the contribution of the Council's assets to the economic development and regeneration** of the city centre.

# Option Shortlisting at IBC (1/2)

Option	Description	Decision	Rationale
<b>Do Nothing - Baseline</b>	In this option, no investment over and above routine 'mend and repair' costs will be made on any of the assets, and all assets will be retained	Carried forward as the <b>do nothing baseline</b> only	Doing nothing is not considered a viable option given it would not achieve any of the project's Spending Objectives or Critical Success Factors. However, in line with HMT Green Book guidance, this option has been carried forward as the baseline against which to compare the 'do something' options
<b>Option 0 - Do Minimum</b>	This option assumes that in scope assets are retained and invested in to bring them up to a suitable condition and standard for long-term use, including required Net Zero and Mechanical and Electrical works. Speedwell House remains mothballed.	Carried forward for comparison only	Whilst the Do Minimum option is deliverable the current estate will require significant levels of investment so would therefore not satisfy the affordability Critical Success Factor. This option does not meet the objectives of the Property and Assets Strategy, does not release any assets and does not meet the project Spending Objectives. However, in the absence of a decision on the future of the Council's city centre offices, this option reflects the investment needed over the next few years and therefore has been carried forward for comparison against the baseline and 'do something' options.
<b>Option 1 - Consolidate in County Hall</b>	This option consolidates OCC's city centre workforce in a refurbished County Hall. Speedwell House would be used as a decant space whilst refurbishment works took place before being released for disposal. The Register Office would move into Old County Hall and be sold. Westgate Library would be subject to required investment and retained.	Shortlisted for further appraisal	This option meets each of the programme Critical Success Factors and Spending Objectives to some degree and has been shortlisted as it: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>releases surplus assets for capital reinvestment and alternative use;</li> <li>creates less revenue pressure than Options 3 and 4;</li> <li>supports the Council's ambition to have assets that enable agile ways of working; and</li> <li>has the potential to achieve cost neutrality or generate future revenue savings.</li> </ul> It should be noted that to enable the refurbishment of County Hall staff and functions would need to decant to Speedwell House, which would require some limited investment and extend the programme period.
<b>Option 2 - Consolidate in Speedwell House</b>	This option consolidates OCC's city centre workforce in a refurbished and extended Speedwell House. New County Hall would be released for disposal. The Register Office would move into Old County Hall and be sold. Westgate Library would be subject to required investment and retained.	Shortlisted for further appraisal	This option meets each of the programme Critical Success Factors and Spending Objectives to some degree and has been shortlisted as it: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>releases surplus assets for capital reinvestment and alternative use;</li> <li>creates less revenue pressure than Options 3 and 4;</li> <li>supports the Council's ambition to have assets that enable agile ways of working; and</li> <li>has the potential to achieve cost neutrality or generate future revenue savings.</li> </ul> No decant of staff and functions is required under this option as Speedwell House is currently vacant.

## Option Shortlisting at IBC (2/2)

Option	Description	Decision	Rationale
<b>Option 3 - Consolidate in Rewley Road Office</b>	This option consolidates OCC's city centre workforce in a new Rewley Road development to include the construction and fit-out of a new two-bay fire station. Under this option OCC has the potential to either a) lease the new office from a developer/investor following grant of a ground lease or b) the Council developing the site itself for its own occupation. Speedwell House and New County Hall would be disposed of. The Register Office would move into Old County Hall and be sold. Westgate Library would be subject to required investment and retained.	Discounted	This option fails to meet some of the project Critical Success Factors and Spending Objectives. It places a significant revenue pressure on the Council should it decide to lease the new Rewley Road office due to prime city centre rents close to the station. If the Council decided to self develop the site, there would be internal capacity/capability challenges with delivery risk. The Council would forgo any potential capital receipt from the release of any surplus area of the site if it were to occupy the whole site. Furthermore, continuing to occupy such a prime city centre site close to the station instead of releasing the site for wider economic development could create reputational risk and
<b>Option 4 - New Council HQ in city centre</b>	Option 4 involves the Council either i) developing a new HQ office on a new site in the city centre or alternatively ii) leasing a new HQ office building in the city centre, to accommodate the consolidated workforce and democratic functions. Under this option the Council would sell all current in-scope assets, with the exception of Westgate Library office, which would be subject to required investment and retained.	Discounted	This option fails to meet some of the project Critical Success Factors and Spending Objectives. It would incur significant land and development costs. Following preliminary market analysis there is no obvious site availability to make this a viable option for the Council. Option 4 also involves the disposal of all of the Council's existing in-scope office assets rather than leveraging the current asset base, which may be subject to some political resistance.



## **Appendix 2:**

- Strategic Objectives
- Critical Success Factors
- Space requirements

## Spending Objectives

- |              |   |
|--------------|---|
| <b>SO.01</b> | To consolidate corporate and democratic functions in a single HQ in the city centre by 2028 in line with the Property & Assets Strategy and Community Hubs Programme                                      |
| <b>SO.02</b> | To provide work spaces that support a more agile and collaborative way of working, enabled by technology, to drive productivity and cultural benefits   |
| <b>SO.03</b> | Support the DTFT Programme and workforce strategy to enhance the employee experience and value proposition to drive improved recruitment and retention within the first operational year                  |
| <b>SO.04</b> | Support the ESG agenda and the Council's 'Climate Action for a Thriving Oxfordshire' commitment to be a zero-carbon organisation by 2030, through the decarbonisation of the estate and other initiatives |
| <b>SO.05</b> | Release surplus assets for regeneration purposes and to support the local economy and community   |
| <b>SO.06</b> | Optimise retained assets by addressing under-utilisation and reducing backlog maintenance   |
| <b>SO.07</b> | Maximise opportunities to co-locate our services with our partners  |

Critical Success Factors		
<b>CSF.01</b>	<b>Strategic fit and business requirements</b>	<p>The preferred option must...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• be consistent with spending objectives, service requirements, and customer and workforce needs</li> </ul>
<b>CSF.02</b>	<b>Value for money</b>	<p>The preferred option must...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• demonstrate optimal public value in terms of potential costs, benefits and risks</li> <li>• make net revenue savings on property running costs through a reduction in floor space</li> </ul>
<b>CSF.03</b>	<b>Contribution to Regeneration</b>	<p>The preferred option must...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Contribute to regeneration and economic development</li> <li>• Enhance social value in the city and countywide</li> </ul>
<b>CSF.04</b>	<b>Affordability</b>	<p>The preferred option must...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• be cost neutral or net positive</li> <li>• demonstrate minimum reliance on public borrowing</li> </ul>
<b>CSF.05</b>	<b>Deliverability/Achievability</b>	<p>The preferred option must demonstrate...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Viability in planning, legal, third party and other terms</li> <li>• It can match the level of available resource required for successful delivery</li> <li>• An appropriate level of risk transfer through any delivery model</li> </ul>

# Space Requirements

Recent workforce data provided by the HR BPs has been compared to previous workforce and space assumptions from last year below. Democratic areas have been estimated using CAD plans. This indicates an estimated floor space of 3,500 + 1,000 = **4,500m<sup>2</sup> net**

Workforce - March 2023	Headcount	FTE	Workpoints	WP:FTE	m <sup>2</sup>
Adult Social Care	156	137.3	27.5	0.20	247.2
Children's Services	169	145.3	25.2	0.17	227.2
Customer, Culture & Corporate Services	556	503.3	204.3	0.41	1,838.6
Environment & Place	384	370.2	81.1	0.22	730.2
Finance	73	60.2	17.7	0.29	159.2
Law & Governance	101	81.4	48.1	0.59	342.8
<b>Oxford City Total</b>	<b>1,439</b>	<b>1,298</b>	<b>394</b>	<b>0.30</b>	<b>3,545</b>



Democratic / Other Spaces	m <sup>2</sup>
1st floor meeting rooms, lounge and offices (link)	255.8
Council Chamber	125.6
Coroner's Court	195.4
Meeting rooms (1-3 plus Grand Jury room)	302.9
Basement - storage / lab	199.5
Basement - other	178.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,257</b>

Workforce - March 2022	Headcount	FTE	Workpoints	WP:FTE	m <sup>2</sup>
<b>Oxford City Total *</b>	<b>1,858</b>	<b>1,542</b>	<b>542</b>	<b>0.34</b>	<b>4,881</b>

\* included Knights Court headcount

1. Knights Court headcount for city centre not material
2. 9m<sup>2</sup> per workpoint assumed
3. Assumption of reduction in storage in basement of County Hall plus further efficiency on democratic space through more efficient use (~25% efficiency)





## **Appendix 3:**

- Qualitative Appraisal of Shortlisted Options
- Key risks

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Reduced backlog maintenance and goes some way to addressing Net Zero Carbon at County Hall</li> <li>● Part addresses requirement to support a carbon neutral estate and essential maintenance, although this Do Minimum investment will not achieve full carbon neutral given the age and condition of existing assets and reliance on significant carbon off-setting is still expected</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Does not deliver on the Property &amp; Asset Strategy's ambition for the city centre in terms of a single corporate/democratic HQ and reduced footprint</li> <li>● Does not deliver on Spending Objectives</li> <li>● Retains significant surplus space by not reducing the overall footprint in the city centre</li> <li>● Speedwell House continues to be mothballed with associated holding costs</li> <li>● Does not release surplus assets for wider contribution to economic development in the city</li> <li>● Does not support Community Hub Programme and Agile working</li> <li>● Does not significantly enhance employee experience and aims of DTFT</li> </ul>
Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Retains significant surplus capacity for future growth / occupation by partners (e.g. at Speedwell House)</li> <li>● Opportunity to create a collaborative, agile working environment at County Hall could be taken alongside wider investment in maintenance, building mechanical and electrical systems and Net Zero Carbon</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Requires significant capital investment to address mechanical and electrical systems at end of life, plus Net Zero Carbon, just to retain existing assets</li> <li>● Decant of County Hall likely to be needed to enable even baseline investment in the asset, with associated costs and disruption</li> <li>● No decant space available in the city centre, using Speedwell House as a decant would require a light refurbishment to provide a fit for purpose building and an extension to the timeline</li> <li>● Political/reputation risk of continuing to occupy surplus space in the city centre</li> </ul>

## Strengths

- Deep refurbishment and remodelling of County Hall would address current backlog maintenance and Net Zero Carbon issues for the long term
- Delivers a collaborative, agile working environment at County Hall
- Delivers a larger overall footprint than Speedwell House in terms of future occupation
- Retains the seat of the Council and democratic decision making in the county at County Hall with likely less political aversion
- Enables the release of Speedwell House and the Tidmarsh Lane building for disposal/alternative uses and income/receipts

## Weaknesses

- Does not release County Hall for alternative uses in support of economic development and further regeneration of the west end of the city
- Potentially retains more floor space than the Council needs in future
- Net Zero Carbon potential of County Hall limited to some extent by the existing asset
- Footprint of County Hall is somewhat unconventional and less optimal for agile/collaborative working than a new build solution

## Opportunities

- Opportunity to bring County Hall in line with wider development of the West End for long term occupation by the Council
- Opportunity to optimise the use of old County Hall and consider wider civic/ceremonial functions and potential income generation
- Opportunity to relocate Oxford Register Office to Old County Hall
- Opportunity to use Speedwell House as decant solution
- Any surplus space in County Hall could potentially be occupied by partners

## Threats

- Decant of County Hall will be needed to enable even major refurbishment/remodelling, with associated costs and disruption
- Investment in Speedwell House to enable it to be used as a decant solution for two years is ultimately abortive cost
- Public perception of the Council continuing to sit on a prime site in the city centre surrounded by commercial land uses

## Strengths

- Optimises Speedwell House through infilling / potential additional floor and commits to long term occupation by the Council in the city centre, whilst also enhancing the immediate area
- Creates a collaborative/agile working environment at Speedwell House with potential to accommodate democratic functions as well
- Releases the County Hall site (new and/or old) for alternative uses to maximise the contribution of the site to regeneration and economic development, whilst also releasing a potential significant capital receipt and/or income for the Council. Market appraisal work undertaken has determined that there would be a healthy market appetite for New County Hall across a range of different alternative uses, which can provide potential significant capital receipt and/or income for the Council.
- Avoids the need for a decant solution as the Council would stay in occupation at County Hall until such time as the refurbishment of Speedwell House concludes
- Enables the release of the Tidmarsh Lane building for disposal/alternative uses and capital receipt if Old County Hall is retained

## Weaknesses

- The maximised floor area likely to be achievable at Speedwell House is slightly smaller than at County Hall, especially if democratic functions are relocated
- Net Zero Carbon potential of Speedwell House is limited to some extent by the existing asset
- If Old County Hall is retained the Council's continued occupation sits somewhat awkwardly between other commercial developments
- Market appraisal work identified that interest in acquiring Old County Hall on its own would be limited













## Opportunities

- Opportunity to retain Old County Hall and consider wider civic/ceremonial functions and potential income generation
- Opportunity to dispose of Old County Hall with New County Hall for hotel use, as identified in the market appraisal
- Speedwell House's layout once remodelled can provide a more optimal environment for agile/collaborative working than other existing city centre assets
- Opportunity to relocate Oxford Register Office to Old County Hall
- Opportunity to consider a forward sale of County Hall whilst staying in occupation
- Opportunity to influence/control future use of the County Hall site for the benefit of the city centre, whilst meeting market demand

## Threats

- If Old County Hall is released there is likely to be some political resistance
- If Old County Hall is released there will be the need to provide alternative accommodation for the Coroner's Court / Register Office
- There is some planning risk to securing consent to optimise the Speedwell House footprint, although it is expected that this can be managed through careful design and the pre-application process
- Likely to be limited ability to accommodate any future growth in the workforce at Speedwell House in the long term given the maximum footprint achievable

# Key Risks - highest scoring at OBC (pre-mitigation)

	Risk	Severity	Mitigations	Mitigated Severity
1	Estimating future space requirements for the city centre is challenging based on available workforce data with potential to impact on space planning assumptions. Additional space requirements for the City Centre project from dependent projects such as Rewley Road are not yet defined.		Assumptions on space requirements made at IBC stage will remain in place, further engagement with dependent project leads on anticipated extra requirements is ongoing and any changes to future needs will be reflected in the FBC.	
2	Proposals for retained/new assets are dependent on securing planning consent which if not granted could constrain the site opportunity.		Following the approval of this OBC, planning work for Speedwell House and any other planning work associated with the preferred option can be progressed to inform future business cases. OCC can pursue early engagement with the City Council and a Reg 3 application/s may be appropriate for some of the required development at Speedwell House.	
Page 34 199	Risk of political divergence of opinion on a preferred option, and in particular on the future of County Hall.		Engagement with the Cabinet Advisory Group as the project progresses, as well as engagement with Councillors and other key stakeholders as part of the ongoing communications strategy for the project.	
	Lack of internal / service directorate buy-in to the preferred option		Clearly defined benefits that help colleagues understand how the changes will improve things for them. Formal communications and engagements plan being developed and aligned to the Delivering the Future Together programme to ensure meaningful dialogue with colleagues throughout. There is an intention to hold "all staff briefings" at regular intervals throughout the OBC and FBC development to update on progress and to ensure staff are made aware of any key changes that may be made. Work is ongoing to improve the Council's change management process and engagement on the City centre accommodation strategy will be included in those developments.	
5	A delay in internal governance processes may form a constraint on project timelines.		Early engagement with the relevant governance groups and establishing required governance at each stage to ensure project timelines can be met.	
6	Depending on the preferred option, insufficient work has been undertaken to date to understand the viability of splitting Old County Hall, New County Hall and the Link Building, in particular in terms of shared services (e.g. M&E), which may cause delays to the implementation of the preferred option.		There may be a requirement to undertake further works to understand the viability of splitting out the premises for differing future uses.	

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By virtue of paragraph(s) 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A  
of the Local Government Act 1972.

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Divisions: N/A

## CABINET – 23 JANUARY 2024

### DELEGATED POWERS – QUARTERLY REPORT

Report by the Director of Law & Governance

#### RECOMMENDATION

1. Cabinet is **RECOMMENDED** to note the executive decision taken under delegated powers, set out in paragraph 4.

#### Executive Summary

2. Under the Scheme of Delegation in the Council's Constitution (Part 7.2, paragraph 6.3 (c)(i)), the Chief Executive is authorised to undertake an executive function on behalf of the Cabinet. Cabinet receives a quarterly report on the use of this delegated power in relation to such executive decisions; that is, decisions that might otherwise have been taken by Cabinet.
3. This report refers to executive decisions taken during the period October to December 2023 inclusive.

#### Executive decisions – October to December 2023

4. The following executive decision was taken during this period:

Date	Subject	Decision	Reason
8 November 2023	Adult education "Multiply Math" services	An exemption to secure an adult education provider (Abingdon and Witney College) with immediate effect to deliver against the Oxfordshire County Council multiply math plan in this financial year.	<p>While there was an appropriate route to market, the procurement exercise would take at least three months to conclude. Consequently, this approach would mean that any adult education provider procured in this way would have been unlikely to commence training activity until March 2024.</p> <p>Delays had put at risk £449,000 in lost grant to Oxfordshire communities in 2023/24. Combined with the previous financial year, Oxfordshire County Council was at risk of losing £1.2m in grant funding for people who lack basic math skills.</p>

Date	Subject	Decision	Reason
			Furthermore, delays had already resulted 1,360 people not being provided opportunities to engage in math interventions. Any further delay would have resulted in as many as 1,800 people not being provided access to numeracy support since September 2022.

## Legal Implications

5. There are no legal implications arising from this report. It is a requirement of the Council's Constitution (Part 7.2, paragraph 6.3(c)) that "any exercise of these functions shall be reported to the Cabinet or other relevant committee or sub-committee and shall be published on the website as soon as possible". The decision was published on the website at this [link](#).
6. The decision was undertaken in the context of a legal appraisal.

Comments checked by: Anita Bradley, Director of Law & Governance and Monitoring Officer [anita.bradley@oxfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:anita.bradley@oxfordshire.gov.uk)

## Financial Implications

7. There are no financial implications arising from the recommendations in this report. It is a procedural item reporting on a decision previously taken. The decision reported was undertaken in consultation with the Director of Finance.

Comments checked by: Prem Salhan, Finance Business Partner (Resources), [prem.salhan@oxfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:prem.salhan@oxfordshire.gov.uk)

### ANITA BRADLEY

Director of Law & Governance

Background Papers: Nil

Contact Officer: Colm Ó Caomhánaigh, Committee Officer: 07393 001096

January 2024

Division(s): N/A

## CABINET – 23 JANUARY 2024

### FORWARD PLAN AND FUTURE BUSINESS

Items identified from the Forward Plan for Forthcoming Decision

Topic/Decision

Portfolio/Ref

#### Cabinet, 27 February 2024

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) Integration</b> To note the latest announcements from government regarding LEP integration and approve the approach for the integration of LEP functions.</li> </ul>	Cabinet, 2023/346 - Leader, Cabinet Member for Infrastructure and Development Strategy
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Capital Programme Approvals - February</b> Report on variation to the capital programme for approval (as required).</li> </ul>	Cabinet, 2023/266 - Cabinet Member for Finance
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Vision Zero Strategy</b> To seek approval of the Vision Zero Strategy</li> </ul>	Cabinet, 2023/317 - Cabinet Member for Highway Management

#### Delegated Decisions by Deputy Leader of the Council with Responsibility for Climate Change, Environment & Future Generations, 22 February 2024

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Cessation of Household Waste Recycling Centre Summer Thursday Late Night Opening</b> There has been a long-standing arrangement that during the summer months (April – September) sites will remain open to 8pm on a Thursday. In the context of wider service and usage these extended hours are not well used; repeated communications through a variety of channels have promoted the service, but it remains underutilised. As part of the corporate approach to deliver authority wide savings it is proposed that late night opening is stopped in 2024 and a saving of £27k is used to meet pressures elsewhere in the service</li> </ul>	Delegated Decisions by Deputy Leader of the Council with Responsibility for Climate Change, Environment & Future Generations, 2023/363 - Deputy Leader of the Council with
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	Responsibility for Climate Change, Environment & Future Generations
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### **Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for Children, Education & Young People's Services, 7 February 2024**

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Formal Approval of Early Years Funding Formula 2024/25</b> The local authority is required to set a funding formula for 2-year old and for 3 and 4 year old provision.</li> </ul>	Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for Children, Education & Young People's Services, 2023/267 - Cabinet Member for Children, Education & Young People's Services
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Cross Regional Project - Children's Services</b> Cross Regional Project Contract extension and additional beds</li> </ul>	Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for Children, Education & Young People's Services, 2023/260 - Cabinet Member for Children, Education & Young People's Services

### **Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for Transport Management, 22 February 2024**

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Abingdon - B4017 Bath Street - proposed no waiting at any time restrictions and cycle lane</b> Proposal is being put forward to improve the safety and amenity of pedal cyclists to encourage active travel - the proposal is being funded by major residential development in north Abingdon.</li> </ul>	Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for Transport Management, 2023/287 -
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	Cabinet Member for Transport Management
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Cowley Centre East CPZ amendments - 2023</b> To seek approval for minor changes to the permit scheme implemented in 2021</li> </ul>	Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for Transport Management, 2023/ 341 - Cabinet Member for Transport Management
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Cowley Centre West CPZ amendments - 2023</b> To seek approval to make a number of minor amendments to the Parking Zone implemented in 2021</li> </ul>	Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for Transport Management, 2023/340 - Cabinet Member for Transport Management
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Parking review of South Oxford (extension) CPZ Dec 2023</b> To seek approval for a number of changes to the South Oxford (Extension) CPZ which was introduced in 2022</li> </ul>	Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for Transport Management, 2023/338 - Cabinet Member for Transport Management
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Zero Emission Zone contracts procurement and award key decision</b> Key Decision required to allow procurement and award of contract(s) for the Zero Emission Zone scheme development, assessment, delivery and monitoring</li> </ul>	Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for Infrastructure & Development Strategy, 2023/363 - Cabinet Member for Infrastructure and Development Strategy

### Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, 27 February 2024

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Recommissioning Oxfordshire Social Care Partnership</b></li> </ul>	Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for Adult Social
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<p>Current contract with Oxfordshire Strategic Care Partnership expires on 31/3/2024. We have been working on the renewal of this contract, following an exemption procedure.</p> <p>Given the value of the contract, we would like to seek approval for awarding this contract to OSCP.</p>	<p>Care, 2023/350 - Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care</p>
<p>▪ <b>Financial and wellbeing advisory service</b></p> <p>To seek approval to procure a new financial and wellbeing advisory service via a competitive tender process and delegate contract award following the tender to Dir of PH, Dir of ASC and S151 Officer</p>	<p>Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, 2023/315 - Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care</p>

**Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for Public Health, Inequalities & Community Safety, 6 February 2024**

<p>▪ <b>Extension to local stop smoking service</b></p> <p>To provide a case to extend the local stop smoking service by 12 months</p>	<p>Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for Public Health, Inequalities &amp; Community Safety, 2023/353 - Cabinet Member for Public Health, Inequalities &amp; Community Safety</p>
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# Overview & Scrutiny Recommendation Response Pro forma

*Under section 9FE of the Local Government Act 2000, Overview and Scrutiny Committees must require the Cabinet or local authority to respond to a report or recommendations made thereto by an Overview and Scrutiny Committee. Such a response must be provided within two months from the date on which it is requested<sup>1</sup> and, if the report or recommendations in questions were published, the response also must be so.*

*This template provides a structure which respondents are encouraged to use. However, respondents are welcome to depart from the suggested structure provided the same information is included in a response. The usual way to publish a response is to include it in the agenda of a meeting of the body to which the report or recommendations were addressed.*

## Issue: SEND and Staffing Changes in Children's Services

**Lead Cabinet Member(s):** Cllr John Howson, Cabinet Member for Children, Education and Young People's Services;  
Cllr Kate Gregory, Cabinet Member for SEND Improvement

**Date response requested:**<sup>2</sup> 18 July 2023

**Response to report:**

**Response to recommendations:**

Recommendation	Accepted, rejected or partially accepted	Proposed action (if different to that recommended) and indicative timescale (unless rejected)
That the Council, insofar as it can within any potential restrictions relating to confidentiality, provides assurance to local parents and carers that the Council has taken significant steps to address its underperformance around SEND via	Accepted	The Council has been working since the initial report to ensure there is in place sufficient capacity and capability in all areas of OCCs education services and the broader Childrens, Young Peoples services. There is now in place a new and permanent DCS and a robust interim Deputy Director of Education and Head

<sup>1</sup> Date of the meeting at which report/recommendations were received

<sup>2</sup> Date of the meeting at which report/recommendations were received<sup>9</sup>

## Overview & Scrutiny Recommendation Response Pro forma

a press statement detailing the recent changes within the management of Children's Services.		of SEND. The response to SEND improvement including capacity is an element of the SEND Improvement Board and its work will be overseen through cabinet and scrutiny structures.
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