To: Members of the Cabinet

Notice of a Meeting of the Cabinet

Tuesday, 18 June 2024 at 2.00 pm

Room 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   June 2024

Committee Officer: **Chris Reynolds**
                       Tel: 07542 029441; E-Mail: chris.reynolds@oxfordshire.gov.uk

Membership

Councillors

Liz Leffman	Leader of the Council
Dr Pete Sudbury	Deputy Leader of the Council with responsibility for Climate Change, Environment & Future Generations
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 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 26 June 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: 16 July 2024

AGENDA

1. Apologies for Absence

2. Declarations of Interest

- guidance note below

3. Minutes (Pages 1 - 6)

To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 14 May 2024 (**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 8am on Wednesday 12 June 2024. Requests to speak should be sent to committeesdemocraticservices@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 2024-2025 (Pages 7 - 18)

Cabinet Member: Leader of the Council
Forward Plan Ref: 2024/132
Contact: Colm O'Caomhanaigh, Democratic Services Manager
(colm.ocaomhanaigh@oxfordshire.gov.uk)

Report by Director of Law and Governance (**CA6**).

The Cabinet is RECOMMENDED to agree the appointments to the bodies set out in the Annex to this report.

7. Reports from Scrutiny Committees (Pages 19 - 32)

Cabinet will receive the following Scrutiny reports:-

Report of the People Overview and Scrutiny Committee on Adult Social Care CQC Assurance Update

Report of the Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee on Circular Economy Strategy

8. Oxfordshire Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) - Update for 2024 (Pages 33 - 114)

Cabinet Member: Transport Management
Forward Plan Ref: 2024/139
Contact: Dave Harrison, Public Transport Team Leader,
Dave.harrison@oxfordshire.gov.uk

Report by Corporate Director: Environment & Place **(CA8)**

The Cabinet is RECOMMENDED to

(a) **approve adoption of the updated Oxfordshire BSIP**

(b) **delegate authority for sign off on future updates of the Oxfordshire BSIP to the Director of Transport and Infrastructure in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Transport Management.**

9. Oxfordshire County Council's Productivity Plan (Pages 115 - 126)

Cabinet Member: Leader
Forward Plan Ref: 2024/137
Contact: Kathy Wilcox, Head of Financial Strategy
Kathy.wilcox@oxfordshire.gov.uk

Report by Executive Director of Resources and Section 151 Officer **(CA8)**

The Cabinet is RECOMMENDED to:

(a) **Approve the productivity plan for submission to the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities**

(b) **Approve the additional barriers to efficiency document for submission to the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities**

10. Oxfordshire County Council to become a Council of Sanctuary (Pages 127 - 142)

Cabinet Member: Leader
Forward Plan Ref: 2024/145
Contact: Robin Rogers, Programme Director (Partnerships and Delivery)

Report by Executive Director: People **(CA10)**

The Cabinet is RECOMMENDED to

a) **Agree that the Council should work towards submitting an application to become a recognised Council of Sanctuary, as proposed in the motion passed by full council on 7 November 2023 – see Annex 1 (iii);**

b) **Note the requirement for the development of a strategy or framework for migration for future decision making and integration into the Council's business and budget planning process;**

c) **Delegate the submission of an application for Sanctuary Status to the Executive Director of People in consultation with the Leader of the Council;**

d) **Note the progress made against the other resolutions in the motion passed by Council on 7 November 2023 – see Annex 1 (i and ii).**

11. Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking Statement (Pages 143 - 150)

Cabinet Member: Leader of the Council
Forward Plan Ref: 2024/002
Contact: Karina Russell, Policy Team Leader, Karina.russell@oxfordshire.gov.uk

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

Cabinet is RECOMMENDED to approve the Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking Statement for Oxfordshire County Council

12. Period Poverty Scheme Trial (Pages 151 - 158)

Cabinet Member: Leader of the Council
Forward Plan Ref: 2024/113
Contact: Karina Russell, Policy Team Leader,
Karina.russell@oxfordshire.gov.uk

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

Cabinet is RECOMMENDED to

a) **Approve the allocation of the £10,000 from the cost-of-living programme funding for a trial scheme of period products to support residents experiencing period poverty.**
b) **Note the update on progress made on the Period Poverty motion approved by Council on 12 September 2023.**

13. Annual Performance Report and Provisional Revenue Outturn 2023/24 (Pages 159 - 270)

Cabinet Member: Finance
Forward Plan Ref: 2024/061
Contact: Kathy Wilcox. Head of Financial Strategy
Kathy.wilcox@oxfordshire.gov.uk

Report by Executive Director of Resources & Section 151 Officer **(CA13)**

The Cabinet is RECOMMENDED to

a. **To note the annual Performance Report for 2023/24.**

b. **To note the summary of the provisional year - end financial position for 2023/24 along with the year-end position on general balances and earmarked reserves as explained in Annex B.**

c. **To agree that the £1.6m surplus on the On-Street Parking Account at the end of the 2023/24 financial year, that has not yet been applied to fund eligible expenditure in accordance with Section 55(4) of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984, can be carried forward to the 2024/25 financial year as set out in Annex B-3c.**

d. **To approve the creation of a new reserve to support the council's Commercial Strategy and initial contribution of £2.0m.**

e. **To approve the addition of £2.8m to the IFRS9 Reserve.**

f. **To approve the addition of £1.0m to the Budget Priorities Reserve.**

g. **To note the Digital Inclusion Action Plan progress update for 2023/24 – Annex C.**

recycled paper

h. **To note the Voluntary and Community progress update for 2023/24 – Annex D**

14. Capital Outturn Report 2023/24 (Pages 271 - 294)

Cabinet Member: Finance
Forward Plan Ref: 2024/140
Contact: Kathy Wilcox, Head of Financial Strategy
Kathy.wilcox@oxfordshire.gov.uk

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

The Cabinet is RECOMMENDED to:

a) note the performance against the capital programme for 2023/24 as set out in the report.
b) approve the creation of a new reserve to support the development of green financing and to make an initial contribution of £1.0m funded from the interest released at the end of 2023/24 (as set out in paragraph 65).

15. Capital Programme Approvals - June 2024 (Pages 295 - 298)

Cabinet Member: Finance
Forward Plan Ref: 2024/062
Contact: Natalie Crawford, Capital Programme Manager
Natalie.crawford@oxfordshire.gov.uk

Report by Executive Director of Resources and Section 151 Officer **(CA15)**

The Cabinet is RECOMMENDED to:

a. approve the inclusion of the A4130 Rowstock Roundabout to Steventon Lights scheme into the Capital Programme with an indicative budget of £1.041m to be fully funded from S106 developer contributions.
b. approve the inclusion of the Abingdon National Cycle Network Route 5 (NCN5) Missing Link scheme into the Capital Programme with an indicative budget of £1.474m funded from the Active Travel Fund Tranche 4 Extension.
c. approve a budget increase of £4.657m from £4.763m to £9.420m, to progress the expansion of Grove Church of England Primary School, funded by S106 contributions (£5.620m), Basic Need (£1.000m) and Basic Need Contingency (£2.800m).
d. approve the inclusion of Union Street Phase 1.5 & 2 into the Capital Programme, with an indicative budget of £1.450m, to be partly funded by the Asset Rationalisation Programme agreed by

Full Council in February 2022, with an initial budget of £4.700m (increased in February 2024 by £2.300m) and the Decarbonisation Programme where £8.200m funding was agreed in March 2024.

16. Forward Plan and Future Business (Pages 299 - 312)

Cabinet Member: All
Contact Officer: Chris Reynolds, Senior Democratic Services Officer, 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.

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.

CABINET

MINUTES of the meeting held on Tuesday, 14 May 2024 commencing at 2.00 pm and finishing at 2.50pm

Present:

Voting Members:	Councillor Liz Leffman – in the Chair
	Councillor Dr Pete Sudbury (Deputy Chair)
	Councillor Tim Bearder
	Councillor Neil Fawcett
	Councillor Andrew Gant
	Councillor Kate Gregory
	Councillor John Howson
	Councillor Dan Levy
	Councillor Dr Nathan Ley
	Councillor Judy Roberts
Other Members in Attendance:	Councillor Liam Walker
Officers:	
Whole of meeting	Martin Reeves (Chief Executive), Lorna Baxter (Executive Director of Resources & Section 151 Officer), Anita Bradley (Director of Law & Governance and Monitoring Officer), Stephen Chandler (Executive Director People), Ansaf Azhar (Corporate Director Public Health & Community Safety), Bill Cotton (Corporate Director Environment & Place) Lisa Lyons (Corporate Director Children's Services), 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.

62/24 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE
(Agenda Item. 1)

There were none received.

63/24 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST
(Agenda Item. 2)

There were none.

64/24 MINUTES
(Agenda Item. 3)

The minutes of the meeting held on 23 April 2024 were approved as a correct record.

65/24 QUESTIONS FROM COUNTY COUNCILLORS
(Agenda Item. 4)

There were none received.

66/24 PETITIONS AND PUBLIC ADDRESS
(Agenda Item. 5)

There were no requests received.

67/24 APPOINTMENTS
(Agenda Item. 6)

There were none to report.

68/24 REPORTS FROM SCRUTINY COMMITTEES
(Agenda Item. 7)

Councillor Kieron Mallon, Chair of the Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee, presented the report on s.106 and Infrastructure Funding Update.

Cabinet received the Scrutiny report and will respond in due course.

69/24 COST OF LIVING PROGRAMME FOR 2024/25
(Agenda Item. 8)

Cabinet had before it a report setting out the intended approach to support those residents who are most negatively impacted by cost-of-living pressures over the current financial year, assigning additional funding provided by national government after local 2024/25 budget setting processes, in the context of locally assigned funding. It provided the latest position on the impact of the cost of living, as well as providing a summary outturn report on the 2023/24 support programme. In March 2024 the government announced a fifth round of the Household Support Fund running for the first six months of 2024/25. Oxfordshire's allocation was £3,361,256.

Councillor Dr Nathan Ley, Cabinet Member for Public Health, Inequalities and Community Safety, presented the report and gave details of the proposed allocation of the funding across various services.

During discussion members made the following points:-

- The need for continued funding for free school meals during school holidays
- Concerns about the late notification of the funding from central Government
- The importance of these financial interventions in providing support to residents during cost-of-living pressures and to ensure that they were targeted appropriately
- Members commended the work by officers and proposals set out in the report but reiterated the need for the Council to tackle the underlying problem of inequality and that this should continue to be a fundamental element of the Council's strategic objectives going forward

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

RESOLVED to

a) **note the cost-of-living support measures delivered during 2023/24, as summarised in table 1;**

b) **agree to the support package for 2024/25, as summarised in table 3;**

c) **delegate authority to the Programme Director (Partnerships & Delivery) in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Public Health, Inequalities and Community Safety, to amend the programme during the year in response to changing and emerging need, within the overall programme budget.**

70/24 CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE STRATEGY
(Agenda Item. 9)

Cabinet had before it a report on the proposed Customer Experience Strategy. Improving customer experience was a key area of focus for the organisation. A wide-ranging programme of work was in place to ensure that interactions with customers were of a consistently high standard and a customer-first approach was at the heart of everything the council does.

The strategy set the direction for how the council wanted its employees to interact with customers and colleagues as well as emphasising the importance of council values and behaviours.

The aim of the strategy was to demonstrate to customers that the council was putting them first and to ensure everyone across the council understood the importance of good and consistent customer service regardless of their role. The strategy would apply to all council employees and not only the Customer Service Centre.

Councillor Neil Fawcett, Cabinet Member for Community and Corporate Services, presented the report and referred to an amendment to the introduction to the strategy which clarified its purpose to support customers, residents, local businesses, and community groups.

The Director of Customer and Culture referred to the feedback from customers and internal colleagues which had helped to shape the strategy presented to the Cabinet. He outlined the main elements of the strategy and emphasised the importance of the core values set out in the document.

During discussion members referred to the ongoing impact of the COVID 19 pandemic on the Council's services.

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

RESOLVED to:

a) **approve the council's new Customer Experience Strategy.**

b) **endorse that the annual update of the strategy and the action plan should be overseen by the Performance and Corporate Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee.**

71/24 OXFORDSHIRE COUNCILS CHARTER
(Agenda Item. 10)

Cabinet had before it a report on the proposed Oxfordshire Councils Charter. The County Council had been working in partnership with the Oxfordshire Association of Local Councils (OALC), district and city councils, town and parish councils, and parish meetings to strengthen partnership working across local councils in Oxfordshire.

Through a multi-organisational working group, an Oxfordshire Councils Charter had been developed which set out the principles and commitments to achieve stronger partnership working and enhanced local democracy.

Councillor Liz Leffman, Leader of the Council, presented the report, and explained the background to the development of the Charter.

During discussion members referred to comments made during the engagement exercise which highlighted the need for improved channels of communication between residents and councils.

Councillor Leffman moved, and Councillor Howson seconded the recommendations, and they were approved.

RESOLVED to

a)   endorse the Oxfordshire Councils Charter attached at Annex 1 to the report

b)   agree to be a signatory to the Oxfordshire Councils Charter.

72/24 FINANCIAL MONITORING REPORT (UPDATES ON FUNDING AND ANY OTHER BUDGET CHANGES FOR 2024/25 SINCE FEBRUARY 2024)
(Agenda Item. 11)

Cabinet had before it a report which set out updates to funding notified since the 2024/24 budget was agreed as well as updates and risks which would need to be managed in 2024/25 and the arrangements for monitoring progress with investments and the achievement of savings.

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

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

RESOLVED to

a)   agree the virements in Annex 1a and note the virements in Annex 1b.
b)   note the anticipated reduction in business rates funding of £0.7m in 2024/25 compared to the assumptions in the budget, and the proposed use of additional business rates income notified in late 2023/24 to replace this.

73/24 WORKFORCE REPORT AND STAFFING DATA - QUARTER 4 2023-24
(Agenda Item. 12)

Cabinet had before it a report which provided the workforce profile for quarter 4 2023/24 including an overview of headcount, agency spend, sickness, turnover and other relevant management information and performance indicators. The report also provided an update on the Council's Our People & Culture strategy which aimed to address the trends identified in the report, but importantly help the Council's ambitions to become an Employer of Choice.

Councillor Neil Fawcett, Cabinet Member for Finance, presented the report.

Members noted the excellent results achieved by the Council's apprentices which were highlighted in the performance dashboard.

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

RESOLVED to note the report.

74/24   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.

75/24   FOR INFORMATION ONLY: CABINET RESPONSE TO SCRUTINY ITEM
(Agenda Item. 14)

Cabinet noted the following response to the Scrutiny report:-

Infrastructure Funding Statement

…………………………………………….in the Chair

Date of signing …………………………………………..

Divisions: N/A

CABINET – 18 JUNE 2023

APPOINTMENTS 2024/25

Report by Director of Law & Governance and Monitoring Officer

RECOMMENDATION

The Cabinet is RECOMMENDED to agree the appointments to the bodies set out in the Annex to this report.

Introduction

1. The report asks the Cabinet to consider member appointments to a variety of bodies which in different ways support the discharge of the Council's executive functions. The report reflects the basis on which appointments to the respective bodies have been made in the past and, subject to any adjustments that may be considered appropriate, invites the Cabinet to agree arrangements for filling the councillor places on those bodies.

2. The schedule only refers to those appointments which are the direct responsibility of Cabinet to make. There are other outside body appointments that are the responsibility of the of Full Council, its committees or, in the case of local bodies, the Director of Law & Governance and Monitoring Officer following consultation with the local Member(s).

Joint Committees

3. These are formal bodies set up to exercise statutory functions jointly with other authorities. Members of joint committees exercising executive functions must be members of the Cabinet.

   The current joint committees are listed in **Section 1** of the Annex to this report.

Appointments to sub groups of the Future Oxfordshire Partnership

4. The Future Oxfordshire Partnership was established to:

   • Coordinate local efforts to manage economic, housing and infrastructure development in a way that is inclusive and maximises local social and environmental benefits;

   • Support the development of local planning policy that meets the UK Government's stated aim of net zero carbon by 2050, and contributes towards biodiversity gain whilst embracing the changes needed for a low carbon world; and,

   • Seek to secure funding in the pursuit of these aims and oversee the delivery of related work programmes delegated to it by the Joint

Committee's constituent local authority members.

Future Oxfordshire Partnership Advisory Sub Groups

5. The Terms of Reference establish advisory sub groups to the Partnership to oversee programmes to oversee specific work programmes or broader thematic areas as required, to monitor progress against the key milestones and make recommendations to the Partnership on decisions required. It is expected that the sub groups will normally meet on a quarterly basis.

6. The advisory sub groups are made up of elected member representatives from each of the constituent councils appointed by the Leader of that council and other representatives as agreed by members of the Partnership Joint Committee. The Chair of the sub-groups will be appointed by the Partnership and normally drawn from the voting membership of the Partnership acting as an independent Chair.

Local Statutory Bodies

8. The County Council is required to set up and run a number of local bodies in connection with certain of its statutory functions, typically with other organisations. County Council representation is not generally limited to Cabinet Members.

The current local statutory bodies are listed in **Section 2** of the Annex to this report.

Strategic Partnerships

9. This category comprises Partnerships which the Cabinet has designated as 'strategic' and whose membership Cabinet has agreed should be linked to the role of Cabinet Member/s and not to individually named members. An exception in the past has been the representative on the Safer Oxfordshire Partnership being the representative of the County Council on the Thames Valley Police & Crime Panel.

The current strategic partnerships are listed in **Section 3** of the Annex to this report.

Standing Advisory Bodies

10. This category comprises bodies which have been set up on a permanent basis in connection with particular functions. They do not possess executive powers but provide a forum for discussion and liaison. County Council representation is not limited to Cabinet Members.

The current standing advisory bodies are listed in **Section 4** of the Annex to this report.

Informal Member/Officer Working Groups

11. This is a diverse group of informal bodies set up from time to time to assist with the discharge of the responsibilities of the Cabinet. There is a wide variety of form and purpose, from purely internal management tools to inter-authority forums for overseeing issues of common interest. Members and officers share an equal status on these bodies, which are not subject to the access to information rules applying to formal committees and subcommittees; however, some are open to the public and may allow public address at their meetings.

12. These bodies cannot exercise executive functions themselves but provide available forum for discussion of issues outside the formal decision-making processes. Thus, where voting on such groups is permitted this can only be on the basis of an indicative view and cannot in any way bind the body responsible for the ultimate decision.

13. The Corporate Parenting Panel was previously listed in this category under the name "Guardians for Us". In May 2023, Council decided to establish a committee to undertake this work. However, Members and officers, having had informal meetings, recognised that a formal committee was not the right forum for the Council to undertake its role as Corporate Parent. Council at its meeting in April decided to remove the committee and a cross-party panel has been re-established.

The informal member / officer working groups are listed in **Section 5** of the Annex to this report.

Strategic Outside Bodies

13. The Cabinet is responsible for appointments to those outside bodies which it has identified as 'strategic' and which have been endorsed as such by the Council.

The strategic outside bodies are listed in **Section 6** of the Annex to this report.

Member Champions

14. Cabinet may appoint Member Champions under Part 1.2 of the Constitution. The current Champions are listed in **Section 7**.

Financial Implications

15. There are no financial implications for this report.

Comments checked by:
Drew Hodgson, Strategic Business Finance Partner,
drew.hodgson@oxfordshire.gov.uk

Legal Implications

16. Appointments/nominations to outside bodies are made in accordance with

the Council's Constitution There are no other specific legal implications arising from this report.

Comments checked by:
Paul Grant, Head of Legal and Deputy Monitoring Officer,
paul.grant@oxfordshire.gov.uk

ANITA BRADLEY
Director of Law & Governance and Monitoring Officer

Annex: Proposed appointments for 2024/25.

Background papers: None

Contact Officer: Colm Ó Caomhánaigh, Democratic Services Manager, colm.ocaomhanaigh@oxfordshire.gov.uk

June 2024

Category A - 2024/25 Appointments

Section 1 – Joint Committees

Organisation	Number of Reps	Status of Rep	Member	Substitute
Thames Valley Fire Control Service	2	Cabinet Member for Community Safety and another Cabinet Member	Nathan Ley	
			Neil Fawcett	
Traffic Penalty Tribunal - Outside London Adjudication Committee	1	Cabinet Member for Transport	Andrew Gant	
Future Oxfordshire Partnership (FOP)	1	Leader of the Council	Liz Leffman	Pete Sudbury
FOP Housing Advisory Group	1	Cabinet Member for Environment	Pete Sudbury	Judy Roberts
FOP Infrastructure Advisory Group	1	Cabinet Member for Infrastructure	Judy Roberts	Andrew Gant
FOP Planning Advisory Group	1	Cabinet Member for Planning	Judy Roberts	Andrew Gant
FOP Environment Advisory Group	1	Cabinet Member for Environment	Pete Sudbury	Andrew Gant
Thames Valley Collaboration Group	1	Cabinet Member for Community Safety	Nathan Ley	
Didcot Garden Town Board	1	Leader of the Council	Liz Leffman	

Section 2 – Local Statutory Bodies

Organisation	Number of Reps	Status of Rep	Member	Substitute
Adoption & Permanency Panels	3	On the nomination of the political groups according to political balance	Sally Povolotsky	
			Felix Bloomfield	
			Susanna Pressel	
Fostering Panels	2	On the nomination of the political groups according to political balance	Bethia Thomas	
			Felix Bloomfield	
Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education (SACRE)	3	On the nomination of the political groups according to political balance	Bob Johnston	
			Michael Waine	
			Imade Edosomwan	

Section 3 – Strategic Partnerships

Organisation	Number of Reps	Status of Rep	Member	Substitute
Oxfordshire Inclusive Economy Partnership Board	1	Leader of Council	Liz Leffman	Nathan Ley

			Liz Leffman	
Health and Wellbeing Board	4	Leader of Council, Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, Public Health, Children's and Family Services	Tim Bearder	
			John Howson	
			Nathan Ley	
Children's Trust Board	2	Cabinet Members for Children, Education & Young People's Services and Public Health & Equality	John Howson	
			Nathan Ley	
Health Improvement Partnership Board	1	Cabinet Member with responsibility for Public Health	Nathan Ley	
Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership	1	Leader of the Council	Liz Leffman	
Integrated Care Partnership	1	Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care	Tim Bearder	
Oxford University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust	1	Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care	Tim Bearder	
Oxford Health NHS Foundation Trust	1	Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care	Tim Bearder	
Oxford Strategic Partnership	1		Neil Fawcett	
Oxfordshire Stronger Communities Alliance	1	Cabinet Member with responsibility for local communities	Nathan Ley	

Organisation	Number of Reps	Status of Rep	Member	Substitute
Oxfordshire Environmental Partnership	1	Cabinet Member for Climate Change Delivery and Environment	Pete Sudbury	
Milestone Strategic Partnership Board	1	Cabinet Member for Highway Management	Andrew Gant	
Rural Services Network	1		Liz Leffman	Neil Fawcett
South East Employers	3		Neil Fawcett	
			Nathan Ley	
			Vacant	
Viridor Strategic Partnership Board	1	Cabinet Member for Climate Change Delivery and Environment	Pete Sudbury	

Section 4 – Standing Advisory Bodies

Organisation	Number of Reps	Status of Rep	Member	Substitute
Oxfordshire Music Hub Board	3	On the nomination of the political groups according to political balance	Dan Levy	
			Michael Waine	
			Glynis Phillips	
Schools Organisation Stakeholder Group	5	Non-executive County Council Members and 1	Andy Graham	

		observer with no voting rights - Cabinet Member with responsibility for Education	Michael Waine	
			Charlie Hicks	
			Bob Johnston	
			Ian Corkin	

Section 5 - Informal Member/Officer Working Groups

Organisation	Number of Reps	Status of Rep	Members	Substitute
Corporate Parenting Panel	9	On the nomination of the political groups according to political balance	Damian Haywood Liz Brighouse Ian Corkin John Howson Mark Lygo Judy Roberts Nigel Simpson Bethia Thomas Michael Waine	
West End Steering Group	2	Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Travel and Development Strategy	Liz Leffman	
			Judy Roberts	

Section 6 – Strategic Outside Body

Organisation	Number of Reps	Status of Rep	Member	Substitute
County Councils Network (CNN)	4	4 County Councillors - in the past this has been Leader/ Deputy Leader	Liz Leffman	
			Pete Sudbury	
			Dan Levy	
			John Howson	
Local Government Association (LGA)			Liz Leffman*	Nathan Ley
			Dan Levy	
			Pete Sudbury	
			Judy Roberts	
Oxfordshire Assocation of Local Councils	1		Sally Povolotsky	
Oxfordshire Care Partnership	1		Tim Bearder	
Oxfordshire Countryside Access Forum	1		Andrew Coles	
Community First Oxfordshire (formerly Oxfordshire Rural Community Council)	1		Ian Middleton	

*Has two votes on the LGA Assembly (others have one each).

Section 7 – Member Champions

	Number of Reps	Status of Rep	Member	Substitute
Active Travel & Cycling Champion	1		Damian Haywood	
Public Transport Champion	1		Vacant	
Future Generations Champion	1		Charlie Hicks	
Water Resources Champions	2		Andy Graham	
			Bethia Thomas	
Mental Health & Loneliness Champion	1		Mark Lygo	
Military	1	The Leader of the Council (or such other person as nominated) acts as Armed Forces Champion on behalf of the County, then each military base has a champion who acts as a point of contact	Liz Leffman	

This page is intentionally left blank

Divisions Affected – All

CABINET
18 June 2024

Adult Social Care Assurance Update
Report of People Overview & Scrutiny Committee (2023/24)

RECOMMENDATION

1.   The Cabinet is **RECOMMENDED** to **—**

   a) Agree to respond to the recommendation 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 People Overview & Scrutiny Committee requires that, within two months of the consideration of this report, the Cabinet publish a response to this report and any recommendations.

INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

3.   At its last meeting of the 2023/24 municipal year on 22 April 2024, the People Overview and Scrutiny Committee considered a report on the Council's preparations for the Assurance assessment visit of the care regulator, the Care Quality Commission (CQC). The report also provided an update on the Local Government Association (LGA) Peer Challenge.

4.   The Committee was grateful to Cllr Liz Leffman, the Leader of the Council, and Karen Fuller, Corporate Director for Adult Social Care, Victoria Baran, Deputy Director for Adult Social Care, and Alison Enever, Project Manager, for preparing and introducing the report, and for attending to answer questions.

5.   The Committee was disappointed that Cllr Bearder, the Cabinet member for Adult Social Care, had declined the Committee's invitation to attend for a second consecutive meeting.

SUMMARY

6. The Committee was reminded that, since the introduction of the Health and Care Act 2022, the CQC had a duty to assess how local authorities met their duties under the Care Act 2014. The Assurance assessment would not simply consider Adult Social Care in isolation but the Council as a whole and the Committee was advised that there were preparations afoot across the organisation.

7. Officers were commended by the Leader for their excellent work that was evident in the results of the Peer Review. The Committee was pleased to note that there was a well-evidenced culture of continuous improvement. Inevitably, as well as strengths, there were opportunities for further improvement highlighted by the Peer Review. These included the need to further embed the Oxfordshire Way into staff culture and to develop work done around co-production.

8. Given the wide-ranging nature of the report, the Committee had a similarly wide-ranging discussion. Amongst other topics, the Committee explored the purpose and value of the CQC assessment. It also discussed reassessments of service users and how it was hoped that increased use of technology would enable carers to spend more time with individuals. Members were keen to discuss the Council's ability to influence district councils' Local Plans particularly with regard to affordability of housing, especially for key workers.

9. The Committee was keen to ensure that the directorate's successes were shared more widely and so made one recommendation to that effect.

RECOMMENDATIONS

10. The success of the Oxfordshire Way has been seen in the strong performance of the Adult Social Care directorate throughout this past municipal year. The Committee has monitored and scrutinised the service but was acutely aware that the narrative around adult social care nationally is often negative owing to pressures and difficulties faced by individual councils, in contrast to the Council's own successes. The Committee was pleased to establish that the positive changes had not been the result of additional staff but, rather, a focused attention to detail with frontline staff following the Oxfordshire Way to ensure all opportunities to support service users had been fully explored.

11. There has been a reduction in the use of agency staff and a successful use of apprenticeship schemes to develop the Council's own capacity. A bespoke recruitment campaign has seen a good response for occupational therapists and for social workers. There is excellent and effective partnership working.

12. Very often, national news items relating to adult social care are reported through a lens of negativity. There are challenges in Oxfordshire and there

are opportunities for further improvement but the situation here is far more positive than the national picture might indicate. The Committee was aware that the Council does distribute 'stories of difference' which demonstrate its work and positive stories on social media and the Council's website and that they have appeared in the local press previously. However, to increase the confidence of local residents, the Committee was of the view that communications should be broadened so that more are aware of the successes of the directorate and its level of service to residents. The Oxfordshire Way is a good news story and is one which residents should know more about, as well as also being able to inform the national conversation around Adult Social Care.

Recommendation 1: That the Council should publicise the successes of Adult Social Care more widely.

FURTHER CONSIDERATION

13. It is probable that the Committee will consider CQC Assurance again in this new municipal year.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

14. 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.

15. 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 and Monitoring Officer

Annex: Pro-forma Response Template

Background papers: None

Other Documents: None

Contact Officer: Richard Doney
                                     Scrutiny Officer
                                     richard.doney@oxfordshire.gov.uk
                                     Tel: 07791 494285

June 2024

This page is intentionally left blank

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[1] 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: Adult Social Care Assurance Update

Lead Cabinet Member(s): Cllr Liz Leffman, Leader of the Council; Cllr Tim Bearder, Cabinet member for Adult Social Care

Date response requested:[2] 18 June 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 should publicise the successes of Adult Social Care more widely.		

---

[1] Date of the meeting at which report/recommendations were received
[2] Date of the meeting at which report/recommendations were received

This page is intentionally left blank

Divisions Affected – All

CABINET
18 June 2024

Circular Economy Strategy and Action Plan
Report of Place Overview & Scrutiny Committee (2023/24)

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 Place Overview & Scrutiny Committee requires that, within two months of the consideration of this report, the Cabinet publish a response to this report and any recommendations.

INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

3. The Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee considered a report on the Council's Circular Economy Strategy and Action Plan at its final meeting of the 2023/24 municipal year on 17 April 2024.

4. The Committee was grateful to Cllr Dr Pete Sudbury, Deputy Leader of the Council with Responsibility for Climate Change, Environment & Future Generations, Bill Cotton, Corporate Director for Environment and Place, Rachel Burns, Team Leader Waste Strategy and Circular Economy, and Jamie Slagel, National Management Trainee, for preparing and introducing the report, and for attending to answer questions.

SUMMARY

5.   The report before the Committee set out officers' progress to date in developing a circular economy strategy and action plan. This was intended to "go 'beyond waste'" and focussed not only on reducing waste and emissions but also sought to provide wider benefits for residents, for communities, for the economy, and for the environment.

6.   The Committee established that this was, in the first instance, an inward-looking approach principally because the Council was aware that it needed to ensure that its practices were appropriate and consistent with the vision it was keen to see implemented countywide. This would be done in partnership with a wide range of stakeholders. The draft action plan set out the proposal that there were seven priority areas for action: procurement; planning; policy; property and infrastructure; IT equipment; staff learning; measurement and monitoring.

7.   The vision for the strategy was described as being to "enable and support Oxfordshire's transition to a circular economy, reimagining how we value, produce, and use resources so they benefit our people, place, and planet." The Committee had a wide discussion and discussed various aspects of the strategy and action plan, particularly focusing on recycling.

8.   The Committee made four recommendations. Two of them are about clarifying information and improving communication; one is about ensuring that reduced costs; the other is about encouraging work with neighbouring authorities for cross-border use at Household Waste and Recycling Centres (HWRCs) for the benefit of residents.

RECOMMENDATIONS

9.   The Committee recognised that, with regard to recycling, considerable successes have been achieved in recent decades in Oxfordshire, rising from a combined recycling and composting rate of 30% in 2004/2005[1] to a current rate of 65.5% of c.40000 tonnes of waste at HWRCs being recycled. The intention to improve reuse will rely on effective communication with residents, businesses, staff, and organisations across the county. If people do not know how best to reuse, it is unlikely that they will do so.

10.   In response to a question as to whether onsite reuse sessions might be feasible, the Committee heard that the space constraints at HWRCs would render them unfeasible as the amount of space for on-site reuse is limited at most of them. However, the impression given by, for example, usable bicycles being seemingly discarded is far from ideal. The optics of such are that residents at HWRCs might labour under the misunderstanding that reuse is not actually being put into practice and that the Council is failing to do that which it is calling on others to do. Such misunderstanding could feasibly lead

---

[1] https://www.letsrecycle.com/councils/league-tables/2004-05/

to an undermining of the message the Council is seeking to spread about the importance of reuse. The Committee was clear that HWRCs should make clear to visitors that bicycles, etc., which are intended to be reused are to be reused.

11. Enquiries about opening times and what could be left, as well as how and when, were also raised and the Committee considered it appropriate to submit a recommendation surrounding improved communications more generally, for the benefit of all.

Recommendation 1: That the Council should arrange for improved communications, particularly about reuse, at Household Waste and Recycling Centres and in publicity about the same;

12. The Committee noted that the report before it stated that there is "no specific budgetary requirement for writing the strategy and action plan" and noted that "delivery of the action plan will have budgetary implications." The Committee sought clarity on this because it was the view of the Committee that part of the success of this strategy will be that it is seen to deliver cost savings to the Council. The Committee anticipated that it would have severe concerns if, instead, it were to result in increased costs and the Committee was pleased that the Cabinet member confirmed it was his expectation that savings would be achieved. The Committee, therefore, called for careful monitoring of the implementation of this strategy to ensure that savings are made as a result of it.

Recommendation 2: That the Council should ensure that the outworking of the Circular Economy Strategy results in reduced costs and can demonstrate the scale of savings achieved;

13. When the Committee considered the Household Waste and Recycling Strategy on 28 June 2023, it suggested that officers should investigate how reciprocal arrangements could be introduced for the ease of residents, particularly those who live near county borders, so that Oxfordshire residents could use HWRCs across the border in the same way that non-Oxfordshire residents can currently use Oxfordshire ones.

14. The Committee was disappointed to hear that discussions with one neighbouring authority in particular had so far proven fruitless, as that authority had asked for more money than it costs to run an HWRC for a year. The Committee recognised that would not be either reasonable or realistic. However, the Committee could point to authorities such as Hertfordshire, Suffolk, and Essex County Councils which have arrangements with neighbouring authorities. These are not fully reciprocal but do offer some flexibility. The models adopted in those places may not transfer identically to Oxfordshire but seeking advice and insight from those councils as well as others would seem to be in the best interests of residents.

15.   The Committee believed that cross-border recycling arrangements would be an important benefit for Oxfordshire residents and so called on the Council to continue pursuing this matter.

Recommendation 3: **That the Council should work to introduce cross-border arrangements with neighbouring authorities so that Oxfordshire residents can use Household Waste and Recycling Centres outside the county;**

16.   The Committee established that considerable work had been done with councils and organisations across the county and more widely to develop the foundations for an Oxfordshire-wide partnership circular economy strategy which will report into the Future Oxfordshire Partnership and has been developed with a mandate from both the Council and all five district councils. The Committee was told that this is a separate piece of work to that of the Council's own Circular Economy Strategy but there is inevitably overlap. This partnership will be key for the success of the Circular Economy Strategy internally and externally and the Committee is pleased that the Council is committed to that partnership working. In order for partnership to be fruitful, though, it is important for expectations and understandings to be shared and agreed.

17.   The Committee considered that, whilst the Council's approach was implicit in the report and in conversation with members, it would be helpful for all partners for the Council to set out explicitly its role within the Oxfordshire Partnership Circular Economy Strategy and that it should set out how it will build the partnerships it is committed to building.

Recommendation 4: **That the Council should make explicit its role in the Circular Economy Strategy as a lead partner and set out how it will build partnerships both within the county and across county borders.**

FURTHER CONSIDERATION

18.   The new Committee may return to this matter in the 2024/2025 municipal year.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

19.   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.

20.   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 and Monitoring Officer

Annex: Pro-forma Response Template

Background papers: None

Other Documents: None

Contact Officer: Richard Doney
                       Scrutiny Officer
                       richard.doney@oxfordshire.gov.uk
                       Tel: 07745 210056

June 2024

This page is intentionally left blank

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[1] 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: Circular Economy Strategy

Lead Cabinet Member(s): Cllr Dr Pete Sudbury, Deputy Leader of the Council with Responsibility for Climate Change, Environment & Future Generations

Date response requested:[2] 18 June 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)
1. That the Council should arrange for improved communications, particularly about reuse, at Household Waste and		

---

[1] Date of the meeting at which report/recommendations were received
[2] Date of the meeting at which report/recommendations were received

Overview & Scrutiny Recommendation Response Pro forma

Recycling Centres and in publicity about the same;		
2. That the Council should ensure that the outworking of the Circular Economy Strategy results in reduced costs and can demonstrate the scale of savings achieved;		
3. That the Council should work to introduce cross-border arrangements with neighbouring authorities so that Oxfordshire residents can use Household Waste and Recycling Centres outside the county;		
4. That the Council should make explicit its role in the Circular Economy Strategy as a lead partner and set out how it will build partnerships both within the county and across county borders.		

Divisions Affected - ALL

CABINET - 18 JUNE 2024

OXFORDSHIRE BUS SERVICE IMPROVEMENT PLAN (BSIP) – Update for 2024

Report by Corporate Director for Environment & Place

RECOMMENDATION

1.   **The Cabinet is RECOMMENDED to**

(i)   approve adoption of the updated Oxfordshire Bus Service Improvement Plan .

(ii)   delegate authority for sign off on future updates of the Oxfordshire Bus Service Improvement Plan to the Director of Transport and Infrastructure in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Transport Management.

Executive Summary

2.   The County Council is required by the Department for Transport (DfT) to publish an updated Oxfordshire BSIP in June 2024 in line with issued guidance. It is a condition for release of the third and final instalment of the existing BSIP funding allocation for Oxfordshire for 2024/25, approximately £7m (almost half of the overall allocation of £14.6m).

3.   In accordance with the issued Guidance, the BSIP was submitted to DfT by 12 June 2024 subject to approval by Cabinet at its meeting on 18 June 2024. BSIP funding for the financial year 2024/2025 will not be released to the Council until the BSIP has been approved by Cabinet.

4.   The key changes when compared with the existing BSIP approved in October 2021, are:
(a)   General change in structure
(b)   updating the baseline (current bus offer) to 2023/24; and
(c)   setting out ambitions and proposals for 2025 to 2030.

5.   Unlike last time the updated BSIP is not a bidding document, and no further BSIP funding has been announced, although the document *may* be used as a factor by Government to determine future levels of funding. At this stage

therefore there is no requirement to deliver any proposed schemes beyond March 2025.

6. The County Council and bus operators formed an Enhanced Partnership in January 2023, formalising a commitment to work together with regards to improving bus services. It is under this arrangement that the updated BSIP has been produced. (It is not solely a County Council document, it is a BSIP for Oxfordshire).

Key information regarding the updated BSIP

7. The updated BSIP content and structure follows guidance by the DfT. It has been produced in collaboration with bus operators taking into account public and stakeholder views particularly with relation to proposed improvements.

8. The strategic direction and priorities largely remain the same focusing on:
    - keeping buses at the heart of decision-making;
    - making buses faster and more reliable;
    - upgrading and improving bus infrastructure;
    - transforming the image of buses; and
    - making buses easier to access and understand.

9. The BSIP features a new section 'Ambitions and Proposals 2025 – 2030' which brings together existing plans for bus improvement schemes as well as a number of new proposals. Given that this is not a bidding document, these proposals will not be assessed by DfT and there is no commitment on the county council to deliver these. They do however demonstrate the continued ambition for further investment in bus in keeping with strategic priorities of the Local transport and connectivity plan (LTCP) and the County Council.

Corporate Policies and Priorities

10. The BSIP vision, aims and proposals all share the central objective of improving and growing the local bus network. This includes breaking down the barriers (real or perceived) to bus use, encouraging people to travel in a more sustainable way and enabling people to access important services (healthcare, shopping, education, employment, training). Therefore, the BSIP is closely aligned with, and directly supports, County Council priorities for an inclusive, integrated and sustainable transport network and to make Oxfordshire a greener, fairer and healthier county.

Financial Implications

11. There are no additional commitments on spend by the Council as a direct result of adopting the updated BSIP. The BSIP is proposed to form the basis of the Council's bus strategy for the next 5 years and the intention is that funding sources would be secured to take these projects forward at an appropriate time.

12. There are financial implications if an updated BSIP is not approved in June 2024 as doing so is a requirement to release the third (and final) instalment of BSIP funding, accounting for £4.1m of capital and £2.9m of revenue funds. Not receiving this funding will result in either failure to deliver existing BSIP funded schemes or will mean that the County Council must cover the deficit.

Comments checked by:
Filipp Skiffins, Assistant Finance Business Partner,
Filipp.skiffins@oxfordshire.gov.uk

Legal Implications

13. The BSIP is a public facing strategy document owned by the County Council (although it is a BSIP for Oxfordshire and not for the County Council) and therefore the usual reputational risks may apply.

14. Section 63(1) of the Transport Act 1985 places a duty on the Council to secure the provision of 'such passenger transport services as the Council considers appropriate to meet any public transport requirement within Oxfordshire which would not, in its view, be met, apart from any action taken by them for that purpose'.

15. At this stage, Cabinet is not required to approve the procurement process for any contracts involving use of BSIP funding. However, the Council will comply with all applicable legislation including the Public Contract Regulations 2015 ("PCR 2015"), the Transport Act 1985 and the Subsidy Control Act 2022 when procuring any bus related services using BSIP funding.

16. In procuring bus services, the Council utilises a mixture of competitive tenders through a Dynamic Purchasing System (DPS) procured under PCR 2015 and direct awards pursuant to the Council's powers to subsidise passenger transport services under the Transport Act 1985 (as amended), all of which comply with applicable legislation and result in best value for the Council.

Comments checked by:
Busola Akande, Contracts Lawyer, Busola.Akande@Oxfordshire.gov.uk

Staff Implications

17. The existing level of staff resources for bus within the County Council are thought to be sufficient for continuation of existing BSIP schemes and to develop and progress a good number of new improvement schemes for beyond

March 2025. Should further funding become available, particularly for large scale capital schemes, then staff resource capacities will be reviewed.

Equality & Inclusion Implications

18. An EIA has been completed and concluded that this would have a positive impact on individuals and communities more broadly. The following groups would benefit in particular: younger and older people, women, those with protected characteristics of disability, race, pregnancy and maternity, people in rural locations, and those on lower incomes.

Sustainability Implications

19. A Climate Impact Assessment (CIA) has been completed and concluded that there is a positive impact. This is due to encouraging modal shift away from private car use to more sustainable means, and in proposals to further decarbonise the bus network.

Risk Management

20. There are no significant risks identified with adopting the updated BSIP, and the proposals contained within are in line with wider Council strategies and policies. There is no commitment on the County Council to deliver any unfunded schemes. There may be some risks inherent in delivery of specific projects and programmes proposed in the BSIP. As and when funding is identified to deliver schemes, work will need to be undertaken to develop the detail. Any risks would be managed and mitigated as appropriate during this stage.

21. There is a significant financial risk to the County Council if an updated BSIP _is not_ published/approved in June 2024 as outlined in the Financial Implications section above.

Consultations

22. Due to the exceptionally tight timescales associated with production of the BSIP, the level of engagement has been proportional to the time available. It has also been carefully conducted to manage expectations - because if there is no further BSIP funding then there is a limit to what can be delivered.

23. A series of stakeholder engagement meetings were conducted in March 2024, accompanied by a public survey held online via _Let's Talk_ between 19 March and 14 April 2024 which received 1149 responses. Results from the most recent annual bus passenger surveys and the National Highways & Transport network survey (for Oxfordshire) were also considered in developing the BSIP.

24.   Similar priorities for bus-related improvements were received from stakeholders and the public, which supported the data from existing surveys. The top 5 priorities for improvements were identified as follows: 1) Faster or more direct buses, 2) more reliable buses, 3) more buses/ services in general, 4) better value fares and 5) better information before you travel. A summary of the results from the online public survey can be found in Annex 2

25.   It is notable that 'faster and more reliable buses' has now been identified as the most important factor in encouraging bus use (it was previously the third most important behind 'more frequent buses' and 'new routes'.

Bill Cotton, Corporate Director for Environment & Place

Annex 1   The updated **Bus Service Improvement Plan for 2024**

Annex 2   Engagement results and supporting data

Background papers: National Bus Strategy: 2024 Bus Service Improvement Plans. Guidance to local authorities and bus operators.

Contact Officer: Katharine Broomfield, Technical Lead for Bus Service Improvement,   07523800079, Katharine.broomfield@oxfordshire.gov.uk

June 2024

This page is intentionally left blank

Oxfordshire Bus Service Improvement Plan

Updated June 2024

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Front cover photo credit: © James Lambeth

1 OUR BUS VISION

1.1 Background

The Oxfordshire Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) has been produced by Oxfordshire County Council (the Council), in partnership with local bus operators and other stakeholders. It sets out Oxfordshire's ambition for buses and how it meets the requirements of National Bus Strategy.

The BSIP covers the county of Oxfordshire and all bus services operating within it, including cross-boundary services.

The first version of this BSIP was approved by Cabinet on 19 October 2021. It was updated in 2022. This 2024 version sets out plans to 31 March 2030, subject to annual review.

The BSIP is covered by an Enhanced Partnership Plan and Scheme which commenced in January 2023.

More information on the partnership will be made available (from the Summer of 2024) at the following website: www.mybusoxfordshire.org.uk

1.2 Our bus vision:

A transformed, modern, and environmentally friendly bus network, which supports high quality economic growth across Oxfordshire, reduces congestion and emissions, and makes our county a better place to live for a growing population.

1.3 BSIP goals

Our key BSIP goals for bus are to:

1. **keep buses at the heart of decision-making;**

2. **make buses faster and more reliable;**

3. **upgrade and improve bus infrastructure;**

4. **transform the image of buses; and**

5. **make buses easier to access and understand.**

1.4   Relationship with the Council's Local Transport and Connectivity Plan

The BSIP is a daughter document to the Council's Local Transport and Connectivity Plan (LTCP) which was adopted in July 2022. The summary of the LTCP articulates how the BSIP, and buses more generally, have priority in the delivery of transport improvements in Oxfordshire:

"The LTCP outlines a clear vision to deliver a net-zero Oxfordshire transport and travel system that enables the county to thrive whilst protecting the environment and making Oxfordshire a better place to live for all residents. We plan to achieve this by reducing the need to travel, discouraging individual private vehicle journeys and making walking, cycling, public and shared transport the natural first choice. The policies included in the LTCP are the tools that we believe are necessary to achieve this."

The BSIP sits under the LTCP alongside a number of other Council policies and strategies as shown in the below diagram. The documents marked '*' are still in the development stage, to be published later in 2024/25. Consideration will be given as to whether the 'Bus and Park & Ride Strategy' is incorporated within future versions of the BSIP.
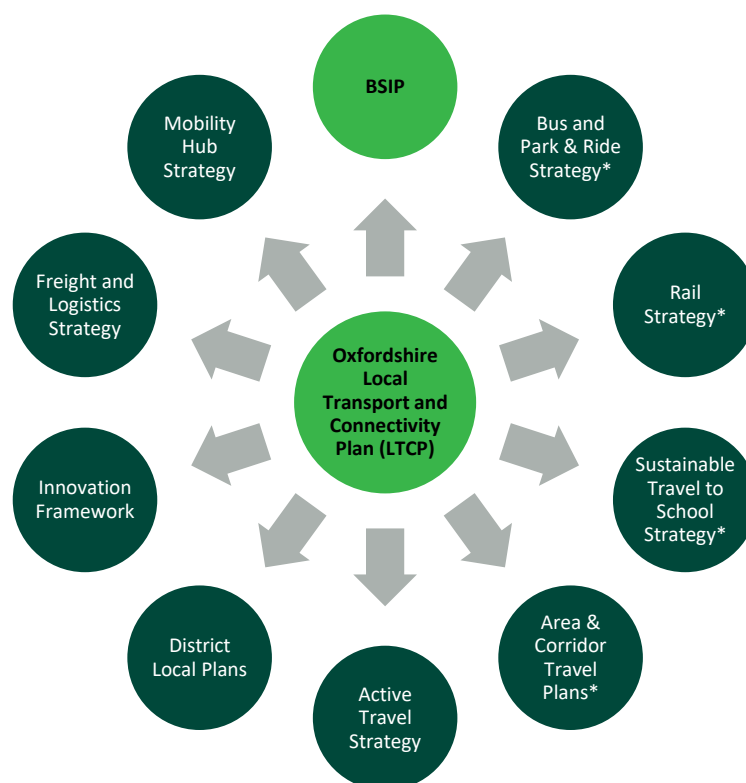

Figure 1 – Diagram showing where the BSIP sits in relation to other Council transport strategies

1.5   Why is it important to invest in buses?

1.5.1   To feed a virtuous cycle of growth

Figure 2 below demonstrates how investing in bus services and infrastructure can feed a virtuous cycle of growth for the bus network.

This has been evidenced in the case of the S6 service which runs between Swindon and Oxford where S106 developer funding was used to pump prime service enhancements. The resulting increased patronage meant that these enhancements were then able to be continued on a commercial basis and further pump primed enhancements made.
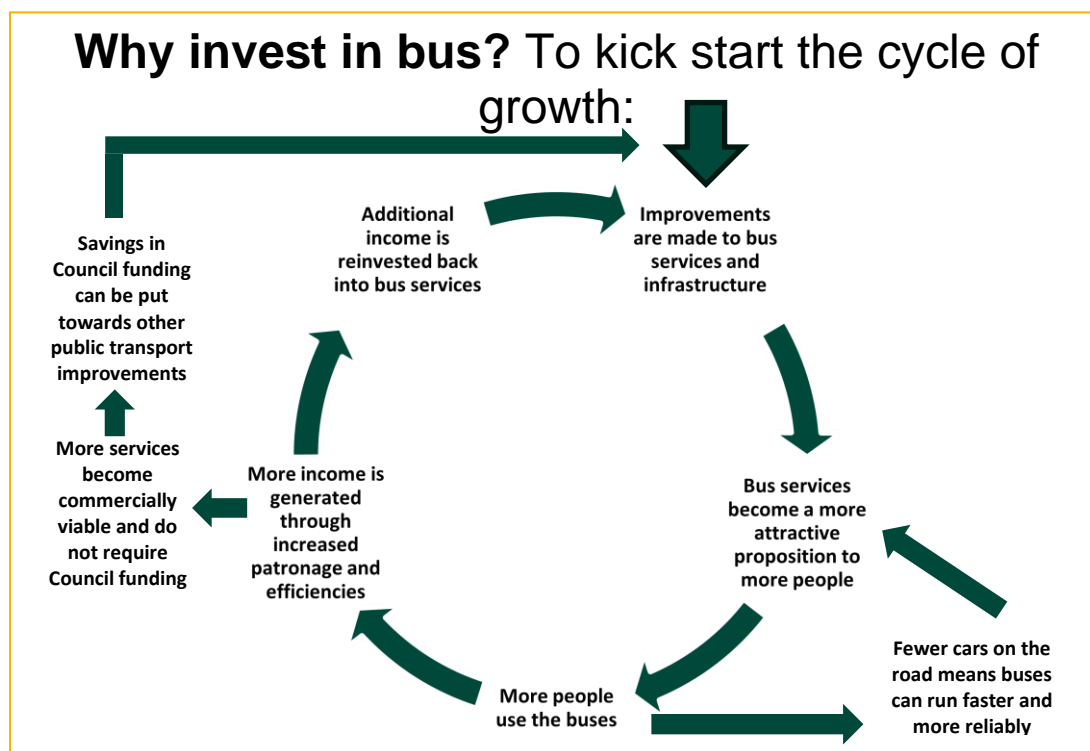

Figure 2 – The cycle of growth from investing in bus

1.5.2 People rely on buses

> *More than 1.6 billion passenger journeys were made by bus across England (outside of London) last year. People depend on buses to get them to places of work and education, to important appointments and to give them access to shops and leisure.*
>
> Your Bus Journey – 2023 Results by Transport Focus

As summed up by the above, buses are important to people particularly for those who have no other options. Lack of an accessible bus service can have detrimental effects on people and communities. This is further evidenced in the comments below from Oxfordshire residents - collected through BSIP surveys in 2021 and 2024.

"It is my lifeline as it is for many others in these villages."

"I don't drive or cycle so if my spouse is unavailable, I'm reliant on the bus system for going anywhere beyond walking distance."

"Without a car, I am now reliant on public transport, and it makes such a difference when there is a good bus service. I use buses a lot now, and I spend time planning journeys - in fact, where I choose to go (whether it's to see friends, visit an attraction etc) is now determined by whether or not that place is served by a bus."

"The lack of a bus has contributed to my feeling of social isolation and poorer mental health."

"There is no bus service here and it's too far to walk to the next village. There are other residents who are in this situation and have to rely on family to get them to places, doctors, shopping etc."

1.5.3 Buses are crucial to addressing the climate emergency

Buses can help reduce congestion, improve air quality, and enhance road safety, which are all factors that affect the quality of life and well-being of residents and visitors.

As evidenced across the Council's plans and strategies, reducing car journeys is fundamental in enabling us to achieve global climate targets of limiting the global temperature increase to 1.5 degrees. A fully loaded double decker bus can take 75 cars off the road, and even an electric car still takes up road space. In this sense all buses can be viewed as 'green' regardless of how they are fuelled or emissions levels.

1.5.4 Buses are a key enabler of economic growth

Buses are not only essential for reducing greenhouse gas emissions, but also for supporting the economic development and social inclusion of Oxfordshire. The county is forecast to grow significantly in the future and buses offer an affordable transport option for all (particularly pertinent with rising costs of living), for low income families, enabling people to access jobs, education, health care, and other services, as well as contributing to the vitality and attractiveness of urban and rural areas.

According to a report by Greener Journeys, every £1 invested in bus infrastructure can generate up to £8 of wider economic benefits, including increased productivity, employment, and consumer spending.

Therefore, investing in a high-quality, efficient, and affordable bus network is crucial for achieving a prosperous, sustainable, and inclusive Oxfordshire.

2 CURRENT OFFER TO BUS PASSENGERS

This section provides information about the current bus offer within Oxfordshire and an analysis of how it compares to the objectives of the national bus strategy.

The Council and local bus operators have a long history of working together to successfully deliver bus improvements in Oxfordshire. Since January 2023, the Council and bus operators have worked under an Enhanced Partnership arrangement, formalising the commitments on both parties.

2.1 Oxfordshire in context

Oxfordshire covers just over 1,000 square miles and has a population of 725,000 (Census 2021). It consists of five districts (Oxford City, Cherwell District, West Oxfordshire, Vale of White Horse and South Oxfordshire) and 318 town and parish councils covering much of the rural area.

Oxford is the main hub for economic and social activity in the county and is very much the main focus of the bus network, which includes many frequent local services within the city. The other key 'county towns' include Banbury, Bicester, Didcot, Witney, Carterton, Wallingford, Abingdon, Wantage, Thame and Henley-on-Thames. Most of these towns have some form of local bus service in addition to inter-urban links between these centres and with Oxford itself.

The current Oxfordshire bus map (correct as at April 2024) is shown below. All services indicated on this map are included in the scope of this BSIP and underpin the Enhanced Partnership.

In Oxfordshire, transport is the most emitting sector, accounting for over one-third (37%) of all carbon emissions – equivalent to 1,594.6 kilo-tonnes (2021). Nationally, road transport is estimated to contribute to approximately 12% of particulate emissions and approximately 28% of NOx emissions. One study estimated that a single zero-emission bus can eliminate 1,690 tonnes of carbon dioxide over its 12-year lifespan, the equivalent of taking 27 cars off the road. Further work is planned to determine the public health impacts of the new electric buses in Oxford as outlined in Section 3.

A list of existing bus priority and facilities within Oxfordshire can be found in Annex A of the Oxfordshire Enhanced Partnership Plan and Scheme.
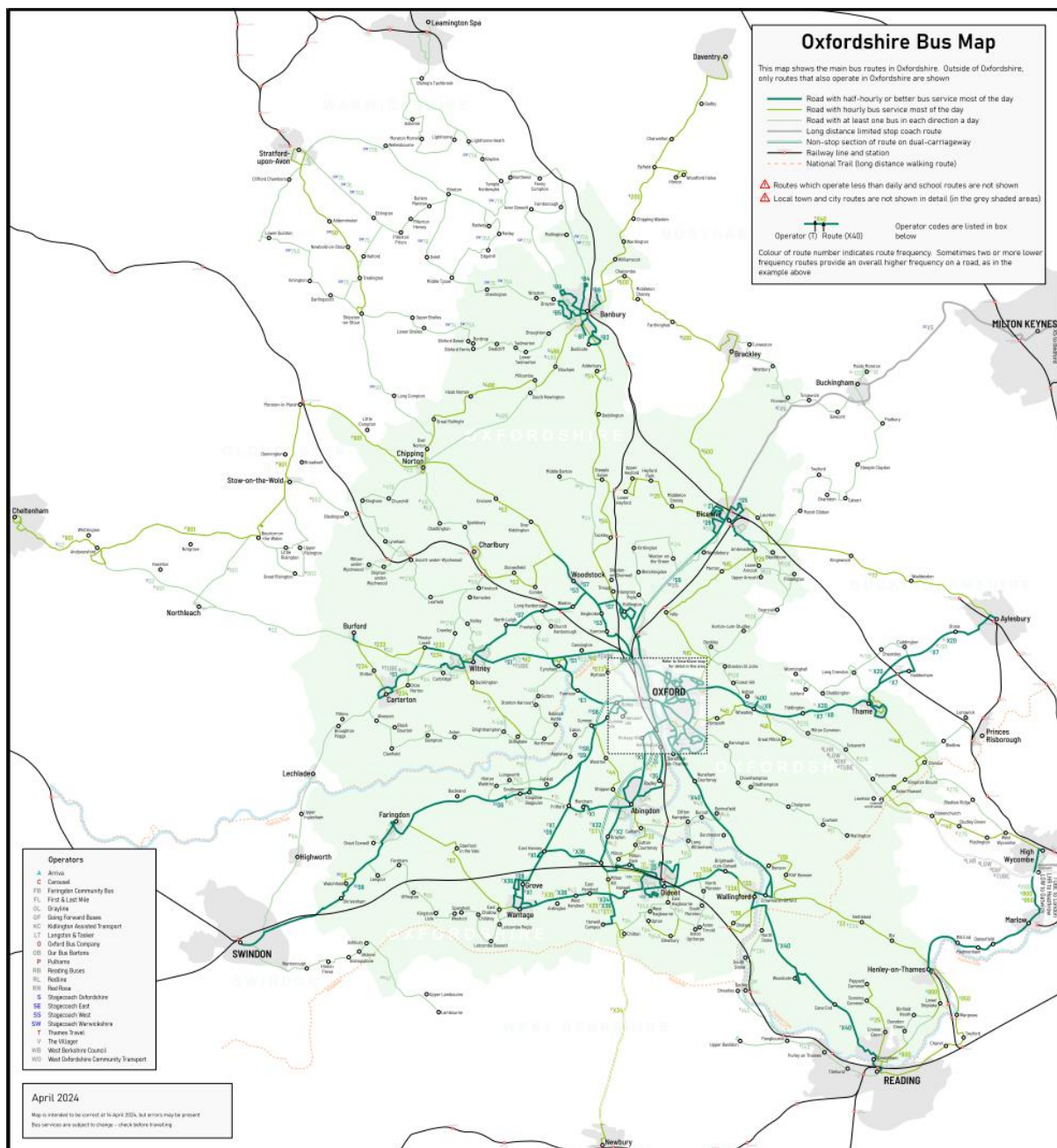
Figure 3 – Oxfordshire bus map

2.2 Current network characteristics

Historically, Oxfordshire has had a successful commercial bus network with the highest per-capita usage of local services of any shire county in England. This is largely due to very significant use of the bus for journeys to, from and within Oxford, the county's main centre.

Oxfordshire's bus use (per capita) is higher than in some metropolitan areas, but not as high as in denser urban areas without a constituent rural territory (for example, Reading). This is a significant achievement given that Oxfordshire is the most rural county in the South East, and is due to successful historical partnership working between the Council as the Local Transport Authority (LTA) and local bus operators.

8

Oxfordshire's core bus network is comprised of inter-urban routes connecting the county's towns to Oxford and frequent urban routes within Oxford itself. These routes are complemented by second-tier inter-urban routes (often connecting county towns to one another) and more locally focussed and rural routes.

Most bus routes in Oxfordshire are provided by two national groups: Go-Ahead and Stagecoach through their subsidiary companies. A smaller number of routes are provided by independent operators and by the community transport sector.

2.2.1 Frequent urban routes in Oxford City

These routes operate on a "turn up and go" level of frequency as a consequence of high demand, driven by the city's high-density urban form and demographics, with a high proportion of young people using the bus to access employment, education and entertainment. There are current frequencies of more than 20 buses per hour on some radial routes in Oxford – these bus services have historically operated on a fully commercial basis from 0500 to 2400 daily with night bus services until 0300 on many of the main corridors.

> **Progress against National Bus Strategy objectives**
>
> 🕐 *"More **frequent**, with **turn-up-and-go services** on major routes and feeder or demand-responsive services to lower-density places"*
>
> **Good Progress**
> Oxfordshire already has good provision of high frequency services; these have been maintained and some cases improved.

In 2011, on-road competition ended on these routes, with key corridors co-ordinated using Qualifying Agreements, resulting in jointly run services with inter-available ticketing. Outside of the co-ordinated corridors, the two operators have well-established operating areas, with Stagecoach operating most routes in the north of the city and Go-Ahead operating most routes in the south of the city.

2.2.2 Frequent inter-urban routes

These are frequent bus services linking Oxfordshire's main towns to Oxford, generally along fast main 'A' roads. Council policies have enabled substantial improvements to these routes over the past two decades, resulting in higher frequencies and better quality – primarily the council's "Premium routes" policy. This has led to substantial passenger growth on some routes, driven by both improved more attractive services and more potential passengers from significant developments along the routes.

These routes provide frequent services seven days a week (usually up to at least every 20 minutes, with many routes or sections of routes higher than that), from early until late (around midnight), with most routes also having later journeys on Friday and Saturday nights to 3am.

These routes are commercially operated, sometimes with pump-priming S106 (developer) funding to support increased frequencies.

2.2.3 Second-tier inter-urban routes

These routes provide links between Oxfordshire's towns or connect smaller settlements with Oxford. Generally, these services operate at least hourly during weekday daytimes, although there is some variation. Some of these routes are partially or fully financially supported.

Most routes have evening and Sunday services, although last journeys of the day are generally earlier than for the 'Premium' inter-urban routes. In recent years the Council has provided increased funding for Sunday services where there is an hourly or better commercial service on other days.

2.2.4 Local routes

Many towns support a network of local routes connecting nearby rural settlements to the town. Larger settlements also support local town routes, the most significant of which is Banbury where there is a well-developed urban route network.

There is substantial variation is service provision at this level. The highest frequencies can be found in Banbury and Didcot (up to four buses per hour on some routes) but elsewhere routes operate less frequently – often hourly or less.

Local routes offer connections to more frequent services to increase the commercial viability of both routes in addition to serving their own defined area. Most local routes are at least partially financially supported or are provided by the community transport sector.

A recent focus for the council has been to improve rural transport provision. This has led to the introduction of several new routes which has ensured that all parishes in the county with a population over 500 now have access to some level of scheduled public transport. Please see the Council's recent press release on this from March 2024.

2.2.5 Cross-boundary routes

Whilst the Oxfordshire bus network is largely self-contained, there are several important bus routes linking Oxfordshire with neighbouring areas.

The Council works proactively with its neighbours and a number of routes have been improved in recent years, both commercially and as a result of our BSIP focus on these routes. New routes have been introduced to Swindon from Witney and Carterton, Newbury (West Berkshire) from Didcot and a substantially improved route to Brackley (West Northamptonshire) from Bicester. Prior to that, the Council had also supported new or improved connections between Bicester and Aylesbury, and between Brackley and Banbury.

2.2.6 Express routes

A complementary network of fast/express bus routes enables faster inter-urban journeys for passengers. These routes primarily connect county towns to Oxford, utilising A-roads and bypassing intermediate settlements to better compete with car journey times.

Opportunity exists to expand this offer and grow the market at both peak and off-peak times. However, care is needed to not undermine other routes in the process.

> **Progress against National Bus Strategy objectives**
>
> 🚀 *"Faster and more reliable, with bus priority wherever necessary and where there is room."*
>
> **Work in Progress**
> Several schemes are in progress to prioritise and speed up buses, and our flagship Traffic Filters scheme for Oxford is due to be introduced towards the end of 2024.

Some routes are long established, such as between Abingdon and Oxford, or Didcot and Oxford. New routes have been introduced at peak times to Oxford from both Banbury and Carterton using BSIP funding.

2.2.7 Regional Bus Connectivity

As with local bus services, better regional bus connectivity can provide essential benefits not only to the residents of Oxfordshire but play a crucial role in connecting our communities with the wider region.

Improving bus journeys and increasing patronage is a key strategic ambition of the region, and England's Economic Heartland (the sub-regional transport body for the region) has been working in partnership with its local transport authorities and public transport partners, to support better regional bus connectivity, this work is ongoing and further information is available on www.englandseconomicheartland.com.

2.2.8 Demand Responsive Transport (DRT)

Oxfordshire has significant experience of demand responsive transport, notably Go Ahead's trial (without any subsidy) of on-demand minibuses to complement scheduled services in Oxford.

DRT does not at present form a significant part of Oxfordshire's bus offer, being used only by a small number of community transport operators for specific needs.

Recent experience is that DRT services do not offer a viable alternative to conventional local bus services in Oxfordshire, being unpopular with communities faced with having a conventional local bus changed to DRT provision, more time-consuming and difficult to implement and not offering any significant cost savings. As a result, some new routes for which DRT had been originally proposed have instead been delivered as conventional bus routes.

However, the Council are open-minded about where some form of DRT could have a future role, particularly where it could meet an unserved need that would be difficult to achieve with conventional services. As a result, the Council have allocated funding for a future DRT study followed by a pilot scheme if the study outcome shows a

viable proposition (see Section 3). The Council will also consider the possibility of introducing hybrid part fixed, part DRT services where appropriate.

2.2.9 Park & Ride

Oxford has a well-established Park & Ride offer, being the first city in the country to introduce Park & Ride in 1973. There are five sites around the edge of the city providing a total of 5,300 parking spaces.

There is a high level of bus service to the city centre from all sites, all on a commercial basis. Three sites also provide direct services to the main Oxford hospitals. Some sites also have a hub function for other public transport: rail services at Oxford Parkway, long-distance coach services at Thornhill and interurban bus routes to the south at Redbridge. Some Park & Ride sites can potentially also be utilised by local services as well as main inter urban routes.

Since October 2022, the Council and Oxford City Council have offered combined bus and parking ticketing in partnership with the bus operators to help rebuild demand lost following the pandemic. This is currently priced at £4 for a car and 1 adult or £5 for a car and 2 adults. Both allow up to three accompanied children under 16 to travel for free.

A further Park & Ride site is located on the edge of Bicester, providing a dual role as a facility for Bicester and a remote option for Oxford. It is also used for a private Park & Ride service for the Bicester Village shopping outlet.

An additional Park & Ride site with 850 spaces is under construction on the A40 north of Eynsham, whilst there is also an ambition to provide further facilities on the A4074 and near to Bladon roundabout on the A44. It is understood there is also an aspiration by another local authority for a Park & Ride at the southern end of the A4074 and/or A4155 to serve Reading.

2.2.10 Interchange between routes

All of Oxfordshire's main towns have a single central bus stopping area where interchange can be made easily between routes with adjacent or very close bus stops. (Bus routes are not necessarily timetabled with this in mind but there is scope to do so.) The same is not true in Oxford city centre, where the historical road layout, lack of available land and increasing demands for pedestrianisation prevent this.

A multi-operator ticket covers Oxford and its urban surrounding area (Oxford SmartZone) which ensures most journeys involving a change of bus within the area can be made without paying substantially more than an equivalent journey that doesn't involve changing. Outside of this area, journeys involving a change of bus can be more expensive, particularly if a different operator is involved. To address this, the Council are introducing a countywide multi operator bus ticket (see Section 3).

12

2.3 Recent trends in Oxfordshire's bus network

Following the pandemic, there was a period of adjustment where operators responded to changing demand by revising routes and frequencies, and removing duplication and overprovision where necessary to return to a broadly commercial network. As demand has stabilised, the network has stabilised as well, with most recent changes being focussed on supporting new and improved services.

While some parts of the commercial network are starting to show signs of growth, some challenges do remain. Bus operation continues to be subject to increasing journey times, higher journey time variability and declining reliability.

There are several reasons for this, including general growth in post-pandemic traffic levels, schemes to improve road safety and promote active travel, changed travel patterns following the pandemic and a long-term road closure of one of Oxford's major arterial routes. These conditions have increased operating costs and suppressed patronage, in turn limiting commercial viability for bus operators. As a result, commercial rates of return remain below the level required to replace the fleet on a systematic basis which has seen an increasing average age of the fleet outside Oxford.

However, the Council has worked proactively with local operators, neighbouring authorities and stakeholders to drive significant growth in the bus network through addition of new routes, extensions of existing services or increases in frequency or hours of operation. At the centre of this is our long-standing approach to securing and spending S106 developer contributions, which formed the majority of bus spending between 2017 and 2020.

Combined with the delivery of BSIP funding and the Council's introduction of new bus budgets from 2023/24 onwards, this has led to a considerable expansion of the bus network and the ability to maintain services which were previously commercial. From July 2024, all parishes with a population of 500 or more will have access to a scheduled bus service of some form – the intention will be to maintain this as a first stage and make further enhancements as and when possible.

The Council's approach to bus priority measures, including the traffic filters trial due to commence in autumn 2024 and other schemes around the city and wider county, complement these service enhancements to promote a virtuous circle of increasing patronage and better service provision for the future.

2.4 Local authority support

2.4.1 Financial support

In the 2023/24 financial year, the council provided over £8 million of financial support to Oxfordshire's bus network. Since 2021/22, the overall amount of financial support has more than doubled and follows a trend of increasing support. This increase is primarily driven by growth in S106 funded new and improved services resulting from continued growth in the county, by new and improved services funded by BSIP government grants and additional Council funding.

The below table shows baseline spend on buses by the Council (in some cases using external funding) for financial years 2022/23 and 2023/24.

OXFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL BASELINE BUS SPEND

	2022/23 Revenue	2022/23 Capital	2023/24 Revenue	2023/24 Capital
BSIP	-	£122,344	£1,119,760	£1,700,313
Zero emission buses (ZEBRA + Council contribution)	-	-	-	£11,086,886
Concessionary fares (ENCTS)	£7,876,792	-	£9,997,100	-
BSOG	£794,733	-	£794,733	-
Section 106	£5,175,231	-	£5,117,614	-
Rural and community transport	-	-	£688,000	-
Park & Ride fares reduction/integration	£232,500	-	£465,000	-
Travel information	-	-	£44,000	-
Bus stop maintenance	£102,000	-	£102,000	-
Journey Time Reliability Fund	-	£1,000,000	-	£1,000,000
Real Time Bus Information	£30,000	-	£30,000	-
Total	**£14,211,256**	**£1,122,344**	**£18,358,207**	**£13,787,199**

Please see Appendix 1 for a list of the Council's supported bus services.

2.4.2 Staff

Following a period where the LTA's public transport resource was relatively small and located in several different service areas, a dedicated public transport team is now established and relevant staff have been moved into it whereas previously they were in other service areas. The public transport team is fully staffed and consists of 6 FTE officers, although this level of resource remains below that needed to take forward several potential workstreams effectively.

2.5 Fares and tickets

Oxford and its surrounding urban areas have benefitted from multi-operator ticketing since 2011. This is branded the Oxford "SmartZone" and covers almost all bus routes operating within it, including sections of routes that come into the area from outside of it. A variety of ticket options are available including day, multi-trip and periods up to one year. Tickets are available through a variety of sales channels including individual operator's apps. Group tickets and add-ons to single operator tickets from outside the area are also available. There are also equivalent single operator tickets in the Oxford SmartZone area.

Each operator retails their own range of single operator tickets covering their routes, with the main operators providing options including multi-day and period passes, available through a number of sales channels.

> **Progress against National Bus Strategy objectives**
>
> ⑨ *"**Cheaper**, with more low, flat fares in towns and cities, lower point-to-point fares elsewhere, and more **daily price capping** everywhere"*
>
> **Work in Progress**
> The single fare price cap has brought lower, flat fares to most journeys. £1 journeys are offered on Sundays in December 2023 and 2024 within Oxfordshire. The new countywide multi operator ticket will provide simpler fare options and better value specifically for young people. However, longer term funding for these measures is not known.

The Go-Ahead group have rolled out tap-on tap-off to all their Oxford Bus Company, Thames Travel and Carousel bus routes which includes daily capping. There is potential for tap-on tap-off to offer increased passenger and operator benefits, but in areas of the county with multiple bus operators, it potentially adds a further layer of complexity. The present offer from Go-Ahead is being developed but currently is not suitable for many passengers (e.g. those making return trips, children, groups, regular travellers etc) where in most cases other ticketing methods provide best value. A challenge for Oxfordshire is that the true potential for tap-on tap-off will only come from multi operator capping, and this requires the roll out of similar on board technology across the other operators in the county, as well as an effective back office system for redistribution of revenue.

Building on the success of the Oxford SmartZone tickets, the council are working with operators to introduce a multi-operator ticket covering all of Oxfordshire, including cross-border routes (see Section 3).

Almost all Oxfordshire operators participate in the national single fare cap which has greatly simplified the fares offer for passengers.

Most operators, including some community transport providers, offer contactless payment on board buses. The main operators also have app-based ticketing. Cash remains accepted payment on board buses.

PlusBus, the convenient addition of bus travel to a train ticket, operates in Oxford, Banbury and Didcot however with rather modest promotion.

While there are a good range of tickets available, including multi-operator tickets, the combination of both multi-operator and single-operator ranges, zones, passenger types and sales channels creates a vast number of potential ticket options which can appear overly complex. This is further compounded by various tickets only being available via some sales channels (e.g. only available on app, or differing pricing on app) or only available to some passengers (e.g. adult only, no child/young person versions) and differing zone names between operators, even though the boundaries align.

More work is needed to simplify the fares offer and care is needed to ensure new multi-operator tickets or innovations like tap-on tap-off don't add even more layers of complexity. Any fares simplification should also not adversely affect existing passengers.

2.6 Information, publicity and branding

Oxfordshire has a long-established successful system of information being provided by the bus operators themselves, supported by the necessary street infrastructure being provided by the Council.

For on-street information at bus stops, this usually comprises a council installed bus stop pole/flag/timetable case unit with the information itself provided by the relevant operators. This allows operators the flexibility to present the information as they wish while maintaining an element of consistency at bus stops.

The main bus operators continue to produce printed timetable information and make this available at key points and on-board, although there can be some variation in terms of availability of printed information.

Oxfordshire was one of the first authorities to introduce Real Time Passenger Information. Branded as "Oxontime", the system has grown to encompass most routes and has a very high level of tracking and data accuracy. Data is presented to passengers through individual operator channels, but also as a single "Oxontime" source on-street and online. Go-Ahead also provides 'all operator' data in its app and website, in all the areas where it operates.

Oxfordshire does not have an overarching brand for public transport or buses. The competitive market and number of operators, together with a current lack of comprehensive multi-operator tickets makes a common brand a challenge, but it is an aspiration. A step on the way towards common branding has been taken in the Oxford Smartzone area, with both Go-Ahead's and Stagecoach's ZEBRA funded electric buses using common "Smartzone" livery with only minor differences between each company. The electric Oxford Brookes and City Sightseeing vehicles have retained their individual branding.

All roadside publicity is provided and installed by operators; an agreement is also in place for the updating of bus stop flags with route numbers. Further discussion is taking place about rolling out the Electric SmartZone branding to roadside publicity in this area.

Oxfordshire has around 4,500 bus stops, of which around 2,000 are located on routes with at least an hourly daytime bus. There are up to 1,000 shelters, and there are currently 280 Real-time information signs.

Progress against National Bus Strategy objectives

◎ *"**Better integrated** with other modes and each other, including more bus-rail interchange and integration and inter-bus transfers"*

Work in Progress
Successful bus-rail interchanges are demonstrated at Didcot Parkway, Oxford and Oxford Parkway stations. Plans are also being developed to improve the passenger experience at interchange locations more generally, with better information and better waiting facilities.

2.7 Bus fleet

Progress against National Bus Strategy objectives

🚌 *"**Better to ride in**, with comfortable, high-specification, modern buses"* AND
🌿 *"**Greener**, zero emission buses"*

Good Progress
Oxford's new zero emission buses are high specification modern vehicles which are transforming the passenger experience in Oxford. Outside of Oxford, vehicle quality is variable and there is significant improvement potential.

Oxfordshire has traditionally had a young fleet of buses, with the strong commercial market and competition driving investment, together with policies to restrict and ban more polluting buses in Oxford. More recently, average fleet ages have been rising outside of Oxford as pandemic recovery has dampened investment.

A successful ZEBRA bid has led to the largest investment in new buses in Oxford ever.

When deliveries are complete in the summer of 2024, 159 new electric buses will be in service in Oxford, covering all bus routes running wholly within the Smartzone area, which represents approximately 2/3 of bus mileage in Oxford. The new buses are high specification and feature a brand-new livery, for the first time common between both of Oxford's operators. In addition all Go Ahead buses are being charged using renewable energy (primarily wind/solar).

2.8 Transport to school

It is estimated that thousands of young people use public bus services every day in Oxfordshire to get to school which helps to support the viability of these services and thus maintain the bus network. Schools manage their own admission times but there is substantial scope to increase capacity in the system where flexibility can be introduced.

Alongside this, the Council has a statutory responsibility to transport young people to school where they meet certain eligibility criteria. The Council currently supports 6,000 young people to travel to mainstream, primary and secondary schools, under contracts with transport providers, at a cost of around £18m per annum. Working with the Council, some schools and parent groups have also made their own private arrangements with bus and transport providers to transport their young people.

In addition to this, the Council offers an Independent Travel Training scheme, supporting young people with disabilities or anxiety to use public transport safely. A related scheme that expands on this is proposed in Section 4, to offer education and/or support to certain groups of people who may find it hard to use the bus.

2.9 Minimising disruption caused by road closures

The Council has an advocate for bus within the Highways Network Coordination team whose proactive approach has seen disruptions to bus services, outside the major works at Oxford Rail station noted above, significantly reduce over the last few years. All temporary traffic regulation order (TTRO) applications, that would mean a road closure on a bus route, are routinely sent to the team. They take a strong stance to ensure that only essential works are approved and are often able to reduce the duration of road closures as a result. They coordinate the closures with the applicant, the bus operators and the Highway Authority, ensuring appropriate mitigation measures are put in place for bus. This can range from providing additional bus stops on a diversion route, all the way through to helping to arrange shuttle bus, or taxi services to move passengers from the affected bus route to the next available bus stop that the bus will be serving.

2.10 Bus User Groups and Representatives in Oxfordshire

- **Oxon4Buses**

  Oxon4Buses (O4B) is an informal association of users of bus services in Oxfordshire formed in 2022. Their members represent a wide variety of groups in the County and City, including parish representatives, who all have an interest in improving and promoting bus services. The group have representatives on two of the Oxfordshire Enhanced Partnership working groups to help shape and support delivery of bus improvement schemes. The group also act as a critical friend to the Council and local bus operators, providing feedback and lobbying for change where necessary.

  An O4B manifesto was produced in March 2024 outlining the main principles to frame decision-making on bus services within Oxfordshire which can be viewed online here. New members are always welcome and should contact info@oxon4buses.org.uk for more information.

- **Bus Users Oxford**

Bus Users Oxford is run by a small team of volunteers who also represent bus users in Oxfordshire. They post travel updates and relevant news on social media and respond to public consultations affecting bus services. More information and contact can be found on the Bus Users Oxford Facebook page.

- **Parish Transport Representatives (PTR)**

The Council hosts 3 to 4 online PTR meetings every year. Every parish or town council are encouraged to have a nominated transport representative to attend these meetings, on behalf of bus users in their area.

> **Progress against National Bus Strategy objectives**
>
> ♿ *"Accessible and inclusive network, by design, not only bus vehicles but bus stations, bus stops, and access routes to bus stops"* AND 🛡 *"A safe mode of transport which is seen as safe, addressing issues of personal safety and security on board and at stops as well as driver and vehicle safety standards"*
>
> **Work in Progress**
> An audit of the county's bus stop estate is being conducted with plans to bring them all up to a minimum standard as funding allows. A number of other schemes are proposed in Section 4 relating to these objectives.

It is an opportunity for the Council and stakeholders to provide updates on public transport matters and for PTRs to ask questions and provide feedback. PTRs can also be contacted at any time to provide local input on relevant questions.

2.11 Public and Stakeholder Engagement

Extensive engagement activity was carried out in 2021, in preparing the original BSIP, and repeated in Spring 2024 to support the 2024 BSIP update. This involved a combination of direct emails, attending and presenting at meetings with different stakeholder groups and an online public survey. Results from the most recent annual bus passenger surveys by Transport Focus, and the National Highways & Transport network survey (for Oxfordshire) were also considered in developing the BSIP.

Engagement was largely focused on determining priorities for improvement out of the key National Bus Strategy objectives. Similar priorities for bus-related improvements were received from stakeholders and the public, which supported the data from existing surveys. The top 5 priorities for improvements were identified as follows:

1) Faster or more direct buses
2) more reliable buses
3) more buses/ services in general
4) better value fares; and
5) better information before you travel.

How likely is it that these improvements would encourage you to use the bus?
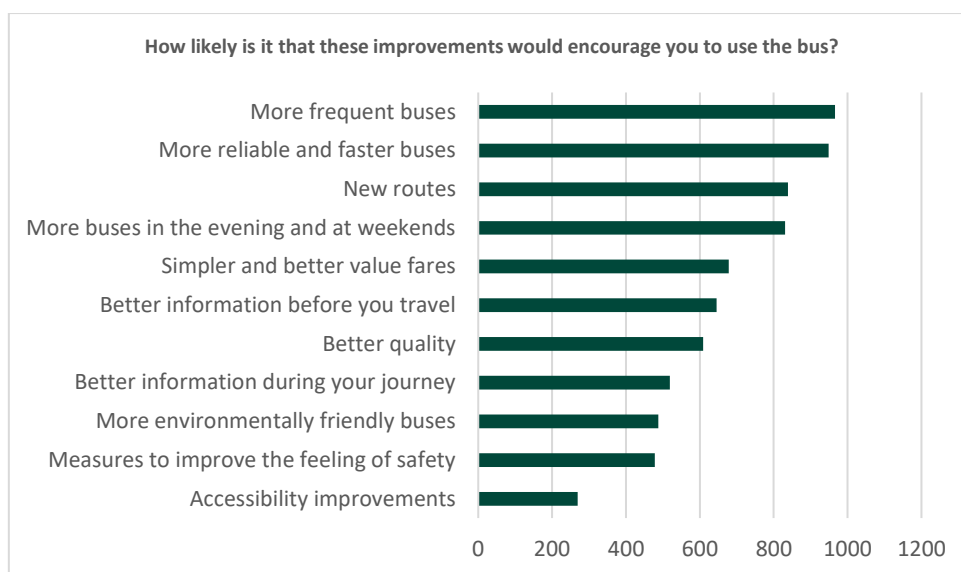
Figure 4 – Priorities for improvement from the 2024 online BSIP Survey

These results underpin the proposals set out in Section 4 of the BSIP.

In 2024, additional questions were asked to determine awareness and uptake of various initiatives that have been implemented over the last year. The results of these, as shown in Figure 5, show great awareness and take up of the £2 national fare cap, and the new electric buses, however other schemes could be better marketed in future.

Some improvements have already been made over the last 18 months. Please indicate which of the following, if any, you have heard of and /or used.

Question options
- I have not heard of this
- I have heard about / seen but not used
- I have heard about and used

*(X34) Newbury – Harwell – Didcot;
(500) Bicester – Brackley;
(64) Witney – Carterton – Swindon;
(24) Bicester – Kirtlington – Oxford;
(94/94A) Didcot – Blewbury – Upton;
(46) Cowley – Wheatley;
(63) Southmoor – Appleton – Oxford;
(X4) Banbury – Kidlington – Oxford (express service); (700)
Kidlington – JR Hospital – Churchill Hospital – Thornhill
P&R;

The £2 national fare cap (£2 single journeys throughout England): 102, 9% | 328, 29% | 694, 62%

£1 single journeys on Sundays in December 2023 within Oxfordshire: 550, 49% | 422, 37% | 146, 14%

Electric buses in Oxford: 153, 14% | 488, 43% | 483, 43%

Park & Ride combined ticket for a discounted rate of £4; 455, 40% | 451, 40% | 221, 20%

Any of the new or enhanced bus services listed below*: 567, 51% | 359, 32% | 195, 17%
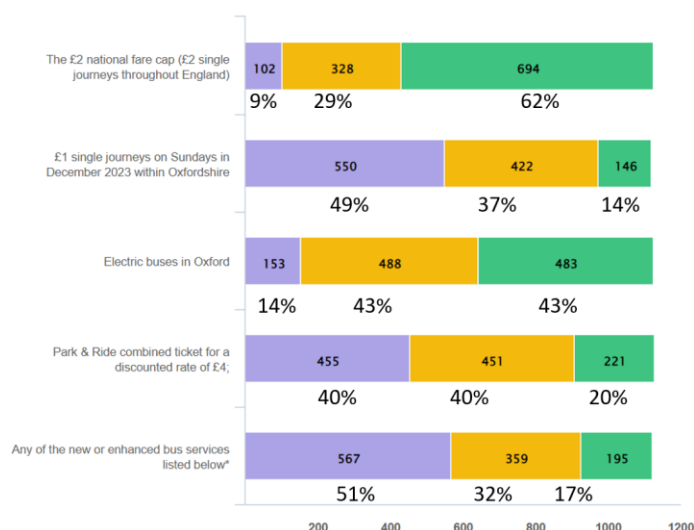
Figure 5 – Graph showing to what extent people had heard of recent bus service improvements

3   IMPROVEMENTS PROGRAMME TO 2024/25

This section summarises the progress made since October 2021 on each of the funded Oxfordshire BSIP schemes, as well as other bus related improvement schemes using alternative funding. It also sets out the delivery programme until the end of financial year 2024/25.

Icons have been added next to each scheme to indicate which of the 12 goals of the National Bus Strategy primarily apply, as set out below.

🕐	More frequent	🧿	Better integrated
🚀	Faster and more reliable	🚌	Better to ride in
💰	Cheaper	🍃	Greener
🗺️	More comprehensive	♿	Accessible and inclusive
🧭	Easier to understand	💡	Innovative
📊	Easier to use	🛡️	Safe

3.1   Bus priority infrastructure

3.1.1   Central Oxfordshire Travel Plan (COTP) Traffic Filters and complementary bus measures (BSIP Scheme Ref: OXF01COT) 🕐 🚀 🍃 💡

Figure 6 – Example of the communications and branding for the traffic filters scheme and map of locations

As part of COTP, a series of 'Traffic Filters' are to be piloted at 6 strategic points across Oxford to reduce journeys by private vehicles and make walking, cycling, public and shared transport the natural first choice. These 'Traffic Filters' will be similar to the current successful Oxford City Centre bus gates in that they will use ANPR technology backed by the appropriate back-office systems, enforcement

legislation, signage and penalties for infringement. However, they differ in that there are additional exemptions as well as permit allowances for local residents.

With funding of £4.61m from Government (£3.4m BSIP, £760k Housing and Growth Deal), and a further £1.55m of Council funding, this project represents the largest Oxfordshire BSIP capital scheme and constitutes a radical proposal to make a significant reduction in general traffic levels in the Oxford City area, within the Outer Ring Road. In peak hours it is predicted that traffic will drop by up to 50% on some of the city's main bus corridors. The traffic reductions from these filters will significantly speed up bus journeys across Oxford and will be critical to achieving targets to improve reliability, which were a key contributor to securing the significant investment in electric vehicles (requiring a 10% journey time reduction).

The filters scheme is planned to start in November 2024 after the expected re-opening of Botley Road. Modelling is underway, jointly funded by operators, to deliver improved bus timetables along with several new bus services from day one of the traffic filters being in place.

Full information on the scheme including how it will be monitored can be found at: Oxford traffic filters | Oxfordshire County Council

3.1.2   Cherwell Street, Banbury (BSIP Scheme Ref: OXF01BCB) 🚀 🛡️

This scheme constitutes measures to improve bus journey times from the current George Street / Cherwell Street Junction, into the town centre, to the Cherwell Street / Bridge Street junction, a distance of 155 metres. In addition to the £2.3m from BSIP, £500k from Section 106 (developer) funding is being used to deliver related improvements for walking and cycling at the same time.

Following an option assessment, feasibility study, stakeholder engagement and public consultation, the Council has identified a preferred scheme at Cherwell Street which is different to the original Cherwell Street bus lane scheme concept set out in the original BSIP. The original scheme for a bus lane when modelled showed disincentives for bus passengers whereas the preferred scheme has significant benefits for bus passengers as explained below.

The preferred scheme option is forecast to provide better bus journey times for passengers than the original bus lane scheme. The preferred scheme will also provide bus users walking to the bus stops and Bus Station in Bridge St (and to the train station) with safer and quicker access across the Cherwell St/Bridge St junction. This will improve public transport access and interchange for passengers.

At the time of writing this scheme is moving forward through the detailed design stage pending approval from DfT on the changes to the scope. Assuming approval is given, then the scheme is expected to be completed on or before September 2025.

3.1.3   Woodstock Road Sustainable Travel Improvements Scheme 🚀 🛡️

The Woodstock Road Sustainable Travel Improvements Scheme is a transport and connectivity project that aims to improve bus journey reliability and make Woodstock

Road (A4144) safer for pedestrian, cycling and mobility-aided access. The proposals extend between St Giles in Oxford city centre and the Wolvercote Roundabout (A40).

As part of this it is proposed to replace part of the 24-hour southbound bus lane between Wolvercote (A40) and Squitchey Lane with a like-for-like northbound bus lane on the other side. This follows consultation with key stakeholders including bus operators, and modelling for potential displacement effects once the traffic filters trial is implemented. The proposals would be implemented as a trial through an Experimental Traffic Regulation Order (ETRO). This would allow potential amendments to be made during the trial period.

Work is planned to be completed in summer/autumn 2024 before works for the traffic filters begin.

The scheme also includes a new full time bus stop clearway on the east side of the Woodstock Road just north of the junction with St Giles. This and other active travel measures could be provided between summer 2024 and March 2025, subject to formal decision.

3.1.4 Experimental Bus Lane: A420 St Clements Street/Headington Road, Oxford 🚀

An Experimental Traffic Regulation Order (ETRO) came into force in July 2023 to introduce a westbound (towards city centre) 24 hour bus lane on the A420 St Clements Street, London Place & Headington Hill. It was subsequently modified in October 2023 to avoid bus stop conflicts, such that the extent of the 24-hour bus lane has been expanded on a trial basis as follows:

- Headington Road - from a point 190 metres northeast of its junction with the B4150 Marston Road, westwards for a distance of 130 metres; and
- London Place/St Clements Street - from the junction with Morrell Avenue, westwards to a point approximately 10 metres northeast of its junction with Rectory Road.

A public consultation was carried out for people to provide their views on the scheme. This ended in April 2024 and the results are being prepared to take for formal decision later in the year on the future of this scheme.

3.1.5 A4260 Kidlington Roundabout signalisation and bus priority approach 🚀 🛡️

This scheme is part of the £28m North Oxford Corridor (NOC) project to allow easy access to Oxford City Centre to support the ongoing housing and employment developments and expected economic growth. This scheme is being funded through the Government's Growth Deal and S106 (developer) contributions.

The Kidlington Roundabout scheme primarily aims to provide priority and increased capacity for bus, reducing bus journey times along the A4260 and A4165 corridors.

The scheme includes:

- a new dedicated bus lanes on the Bicester Road (southbound) linking with the bus lane on the eastern section of Kidlington Roundabout and a revised arrangement on the Oxford Road;
- a new signalised crossing facilities on Bicester Road, Oxford Road south and Frieze Way;
- reduced speed limits to 30mph on the roundabout and its approaches (including A4260 north of the roundabout);
- a new 3m wide cycleway and 2m wide pedestrian footway, segregated from the carriageway (with buffer) and one another connect to existing infrastructure; and
- improved street and footpath lighting.

The scheme is currently being delivered and expected to be completed in Summer 2024.

3.1.6   A34/A44 Peartree Interchange 🚀

This scheme is part of the £28m North Oxford Corridor (NOC) project to allow easy access to Oxford City Centre to support the ongoing housing and employment developments and expected economic growth. This scheme is being funded through the Government's Growth Deal and S106 (developer) contributions.

The Peartree Interchange scheme involves construction of improvements to the A44 between the A34 Peartree interchange and the Loop Farm roundabout which were substantially completed in September 2023. This included new dedicated southbound bus lanes between Loop Farm Roundabout and Peartree Interchange.

The improvements at the A44 Pear Tree Park & Ride junction – which includes bus priority access to the P&R site - are currently being delivered and expected to be completed in the Summer of 2024.

3.1.7   A4130 Steventon Lights Integrated Transport Scheme 🚀

The A4130 Steventon Lights scheme aims to provide improved bus journey time savings and reliability and enhanced walking and cycling facilities, as well as support growth in both housing and employment in the Science Vale area. The scheme is planned to be built and open by March 2025.

Improvements include widening of the A4130 Abingdon Road between the Steventon lights junction and the Milton Interchange with the provision of an eastbound bus lane, and upgrading the Trenchard Avenue junction to provide increased capacity to facilitate future growth and feature quality active travel infrastructure to support journeys on foot and by cycle.

3.1.8 Countywide Traffic Signals (BSIP Scheme Ref: OXF01CSU) 🚀

With £1.24m of BSIP funding, this capital scheme will deliver smart traffic signals which detect the approach of buses to key junctions and change the signalling sequence to provide approaching buses with priority, enabling buses to run faster and more reliably.

The intelligent bus priority in Oxfordshire is being delivered by utilising Automatic Vehicle Tracking (AVL) feeds from bus operators using tracking units that send GPS locational information providing a pinpoint location of the bus vehicles within 5 metres. Bus operators have invested in installing the latest generation 5G enabled equipment on several vehicles and these have demonstrated noticeable improvements in the speed at which such updates are sent to, and processed by, the traffic signal control systems.

This is a rolling programme of installation and upgrades to the existing capability of traffic signals across various road junction sites within Oxfordshire - as identified as having the highest pinch point factors through Alchera Bus Pinch Point Analysis – subject to feasibility and cost.

The project will deliver a combination of refurbishments, hardware upgrades, configuration and revalidation exercised at 33 locations by September 2025 – 23 of which have not previously had any traffic light priority for buses.

The proposed junctions for improvements see an average of nearly 18 buses per hour during the day and suffer from high congestion levels during peak times. Therefore, the benefits to bus operation and the impact and improvements felt by bus passengers are expected to be significant.

3.1.9 Tramway Road improvements – access to Banbury train station 🚀 🗺️ ⌀

This £10.5m project aims to improve access to Banbury railway station for pedestrians, cyclists, buses, and taxis by linking the existing Tramway Road with Station Approach Road and the Banbury railway station forecourt to create an alternative route. This link will also improve bus journey time reliability from the south of Banbury into the town centre.

The proposed benefits for buses are:

- an integrated bus service that stops outside the station;
- improved bus access from other parts of south Banbury; and
- improved bus journey time reliability into Banbury town centre.

The Tramway Road project design phase has been completed with construction planned to start Summer 2024. Trial holes were dug in Spring 2023 to confirm the location of utilities and to investigate ground conditions. This work found asbestos and other contaminants on part of the route which added to costs and timescales. The construction is due to be completed by Summer 2025.

This project is funded from the Housing and Growth Deal and S106 (developer) contributions.

3.2   Other bus infrastructure

3.2.1   Countywide RTPI displays (BSIP Scheme Ref: OXF02RTI) 🕐

'Nextbus' information is available on the County's 'Oxontime' website, through electronic displays at over 280 bus stops and web/text messaging facilities. System hardware has been in operation for around 20 years and is now increasingly outdated, with increasing failures of equipment. Previous research and feedback concluded that the public values on-street real time displays as much as any on-line alternatives.

Consequently, a targeted programme of new and upgraded RTPI displays at bus stops and key public transport hubs and interchanges (including rail stations) is underway using £1.8m of Government funding.

The new thin-film-transistor liquid-crystal (TFT) screens are capable of accommodating disruption information and media (e.g. promoting new services and ticketing offers) whereas the previous LED displays can only do so in a very basic and rudimentary fashion. Bus operators have access to this advanced media and messaging capability through the fully integrated Genesis software platform.

Figure 7 – Image of one of the new RTPI displays

The new displays will also all be configured to provide at stop announcements for users of the React Access Trigger mobile phone application and are provided with the highest available brightness and contrast standards following input from local RNIB representatives and associated trials.

In the last year, approximately 75 RTPI displays have been installed or upgraded at various sites across the county excluding those within Oxford city. Sites within Oxford City are expected to be upgraded by the end of the 2024/25 financial year. This investment will ensure the availability of on-street RTPI in Oxfordshire for the next 10 years and help to restore Oxfordshire's previous reputation as a nationally recognised leading public transport authority in this field.

3.2.2   Zero emission buses 🚌 🌿 💡

In March 2022, the Council was awarded £32.8 million from the government's Zero Emission Bus Regional Areas (ZEBRA) scheme. Along with £6m from the Council itself and £43.7m from bus companies Stagecoach and the Go-Ahead Group, the scheme will deliver 159 electric buses in total, with the first buses delivered in November 2023, 79 of these are already in service (at time of writing). It has also

funded the associated charging infrastructure at both Oxford based depots. All vehicles are expected to be in service by Summer 2024.

The new buses operate on routes within the Oxford City SmartZone area and will form the largest electric fleet per capita in the country. In addition, all Go Ahead electric buses are charged using renewable energy.

There are clear decarbonisation, air quality and noise pollution impacts flowing from this. The Council has recently secured support from the National Institute of Health and Care Research to evaluate the public health impacts of the zero emission buses. The Public Health Intervention Responsive Studies Teams (PHIRST) scheme funded research aims to find out what impact this initiative has on the health and health inequalities experienced by local populations and will take place over the next 12 to 18 months.

Whilst there are no immediate plans for introducing further alternative fuel vehicles, this remains an aspiration for the future subject to available funding.

3.2.3 Autonomous bus service - Milton Park to Didcot Parkway 🚌 💡

Figure 8 – Marketing material for the autonomous bus service

The Council were partners in a MultiCAV consortium that were awarded a £3m grant from The Department for Transport's Centre for Connected and Autonomous Vehicles (CCAV) through Innovate UK in 2019. The grant enabled a trial of a multi-modal Mobility-as-a-Service (MaaS) solution in the Milton Park and Didcot area, using a range of autonomous electric vehicles. The trial aimed to understand how

Connected Autonomous Mobility (CAM) solutions, particularly in public transport, could benefit travellers in Oxfordshire in the future.

There were three phases of the project:

- **Phase one** to provide bookable e-bikes for use in Milton Park and in the surrounding area;
- **Phase two** to trial a Level 4 autonomous minibus service at slow speeds that was accessible to all users, including the disabled, around Milton Park so reducing to need to drive within the business park; and
- **Phase three** to trial a Level 4 autonomous minibus* service operating in mixed traffic at speeds of up to 40mph between Milton Park and Didcot Parkway railway station.

Phase 3 was originally to use a standard single decker bus, but problems with the electric motor (not the autonomous system) meant that it was only used for 4 days and the minibus had to be used instead.

Following Covid-related delays, the trials took place during 2023 with First Bus leading on the project from the bus operator side. Fares were not charged but human safety operators were on board at all times to assist with passenger boarding and to take control of the driving where required, for example to avoid over-cautious braking or to negotiate a particularly busy junction.

The feedback from passengers and safety operators on the autonomous vehicle was positive, with confidence in the technology growing throughout the trial. The findings support the case for buses to be equipped with greater driver-assistance technologies, with a range of passenger benefits to be gained from autonomous driving technology in partnership with human drivers.

There would be clear cost savings if the need for intervention by safety operators was removed, however that would require greater road standardisation, ideally bus only roads, and there would also have to be a reliable solution for travellers with additional needs and greater public confidence when travelling on unstaffed buses.

More information can be found at www.mi-link.uk/ including research papers.

3.2.4 Improvements to bus stops and shelters 🧭 ♿

The quality of each bus stop across Oxfordshire is of fundamental importance to the attractiveness of the public transport network to residents and visitors.

There was substantial investment in stops along the County's Premium Bus Routes between 10 and 20 years ago, but since then there has been some deterioration of quality. Since that time, stops have been provided on an ad-hoc basis for new development sites, but bus stops elsewhere on the same routes can be much older.

Due to restricted budgets and staffing levels, maintenance standards have declined in recent years with a drift away from the high standards achieved during the Premium Bus Routes programme. Staffing levels have now been addressed and

visible progress is being made with both Council and S106 (developer) funds driving improvements – over the last year around 50 improvements have been carried out and new shelters delivered.

An audit of existing bus stop infrastructure, including accessibility elements, is being planned with the assistance of Parish Councils. This information will form a master database that will subsequently help to identify locations for upgrade and improvement.

In addition to this, the Council aims to establish minimum standards for its estate of bus stops, as the quality of these bus stops varies enormously. It is proposed that bus stops could be divided into three categories, as follows:

Standard	Service specification
Premium	Stops on routes with a turn-up-and-go bus service of at least four buses per hour, currently, or expected to be as a consequence of housing/commercial development in the near future, plus an evening and/or Sunday bus service
Standard	Stops on routes with at least an hourly bus service on weekday daytimes
Minor	Stops on routes with less-than-hourly service on weekday daytime

The Premium Route stops will attract the largest numbers of passengers so these are intended to have higher standards of accessibility (kerb heights, ramp access etc), higher standards of information (wayside displays and in many cases electronic information) and higher standards of comfort (shelter, seat etc).

The Council will also strive to improve second tier and minor bus stops to minimum standards of provision, including hard-standing areas and a distinctive pole/flag/information case unit, which will advertise the stop location for bus users and provide basic timetable information.

An annual capital budget of £500,000 for three years is required for a programme to catch up with arrears of maintenance, and to upgrade infrastructure to the proposed standards. This amount will also cover the procurement of some new shelters, where these cannot be included in the proposed new advertising shelter contract. Further information on this workstream is included as part of Section 4.

3.2.5 *Making use of existing Section 106 funding* 🕐 🚀 🗺 ⌗

Now that appropriate staffing is in place as funded through the BSIP (see Section 3.5.13), the backlog of accrued S106 cases totalling around £4.1 million is being worked through.

Circa 350 individual cases have been identified and 21 have already been approved/delivered at a total value of £328,825.

Cases range from new poles, flags and timetable cases up to large new 'Sedum' living roof shelters with accompanying RTI (Real Time Information) screens.

Some delays of up to 3-4 months have been experienced mainly due to supply limitations, and it is anticipated that the backlog will be cleared within 3 years.

Figure 9 – Image of one of the new sedum roof shelters

3.3   Bus service support 🕐 🗺 🧷

The Council have substantially increased financial support for bus services over the past three years, it has more than doubled to over £8million. The increased funding includes BSIP and BSIP+ but also S106 developer funding and the allocation of new funds from the Council's own budget. The increased funding has allowed mitigation for the impact of commercial withdrawals, make significant service improvements and grow network coverage.

The Council have maintained (or improved) all supported services over the past three years, with only one exception, which was a very lightly used service and poor value for money. Most supported services have had their frequencies and operating hours maintained, with only a small number reduced to better match with demand to maintain good value for money. No communities have been left without bus services as a result of commercial withdrawals.

The predominant theme of the Council's financial support has been one of new and enhanced routes. New routes have brought about new network linkages, in particular new and improved cross-border links into neighbouring counties. Coverage is significantly improved, with many settlements now served by bus routes that had previously been without for several years – all parishes with a population of more than 500 are now served by bus, this includes around 25 parishes that benefit from new peak and off-peak Monday to Saturday services.

The Council now support around 75 bus routes (fully or partially), an increase from around 50 in October 2021. Ten routes are completely new, improving network coverage and links, a further 12 are enhancements to commercial routes (frequency and/or operating hours), 22 cover previously commercial sections of route and the remainder are long-term supported routes.

The Council are continuing to maintain and improve the network in this manner with several new and improved routes currently being tendered alongside renewal of contracts covering existing supported routes. However, longer term certainty of

Government funding is required to ensure that the current bus network can be maintained and expanded.

3.4 Fares support and ticketing reform

3.4.1 Park & Ride combined ticket 💰 🎟️ 🔗

In October 2022, Oxfordshire County Council, Oxford City Council, Oxford Bus Company and Stagecoach launched a new combined ticket for Oxford's Park & Rides which covers both parking and return bus travel to the city centre at all five sites. To coincide with the launch of the new combined ticket, the Councils have been offering the ticket at a reduced price of £4 for a car with only one adult, or £5 for a car and two adults. Both Councils have agreed budgets to extend this trial price to the end of the financial year 2024/25.

3.4.2 Countywide ticket / youth fare scheme (BSIP Scheme Ref: OXF03CMO) 💰 🎟️ 🔗

This scheme uses £1.6m of Government BSIP funding and is made up of two separate schemes which have now been combined.

Originally the BSIP proposed the provision of a discounted travel product for 16 to 18 year olds, this was postponed due to complications caused by the introduction of the national fare cap. In the meantime, a proposal for a new countywide multi operator day ticket for adults was approved.

These schemes have since been combined resulting in the following new ticket products and prices being developed:

- MyBus Oxfordshire Day ticket – Adult: £6.50 / Young Person (5-18): £3.50; and
- MyBus Oxfordshire Week ticket – Adult: £25 / Young Person (5-18): £14.50.

These tickets will enable people to travel anywhere in the county, across multiple bus operators on one ticket, providing a more attractive joined up fare offer and in the case of young people better value. The new website for the enhanced partnership will be used as a central point to house information on the tickets.

Funding is only in place for these reduced prices to be available until 31 March 2025, however it is hoped that further Government funding can be secured and/or that a commercial agreement can be reached for the tickets to continue to exist beyond this time.

3.4.3 £1 Sundays in December 2023 and 2024 (BSIP Scheme Ref: OXF061SD) 💰

£200k of Government BSIP funding is being used to offer £1 flat fares on any participating bus in Oxfordshire on Sundays in December leading up to Christmas, both in 2023 and 2024.

In December 2023 the £1 fares were valid on the four Sundays immediately preceding Christmas. Over 83,000 journeys were made using this ticket offer which is estimated to be a 7.4%* increase on what they would have been without the offer.

In 2023 the scheme cost £72,330, an underspend against the £100,000 predicted. This underspend will be carried over to 2024 and used to extend the scheme in 2024 so that it applies to all five Sundays in December 2024.

*This figure is the difference in the average number of journeys on a Sunday in November versus December 2023, compared with the same for 2022.

3.4.4 Free staff travel - for bus and Park & Ride - with large employers in Oxford 💰

Certain large employers within Oxford have self funded free bus travel and/or free use of the Park & Ride sites for their staff for a trial period of 6 months starting April 2024. Staff travel surveys undertaken by these employers indicated that the largest barrier to using public transport for their staff is cost.

These trials will remove that barrier with the aim of encouraging more people to switch to more sustainable travel modes for their commute. Not only does this support carbon emission reductions but also serves to reduce congestion within the city and ease pressures on car parking.

3.5 Other schemes & measures

3.5.1 New bus maps 🧭

The provision of clear, unbiased, and user friendly information about public transport is extremely important in attracting new users. The information provided by bus operators, particularly for the Oxford Smartzone area, is high quality but there is a need for something more comprehensive to better demonstrate to residents and visitors the full extent of journey opportunities by public transport – particularly outside Oxford.

In order to address this, the Council is procuring a suite of new bus maps showing the overall public transport network across Oxfordshire and in the county towns. These maps will be in PDF (or similar), full colour and easily printable to be used in interchanges, bus shelters and in other places for people to pick up. These are expected to be produced during 2024/25 and maintained (through regular updates) for at least 3 years.

3.5.2 Travel to work/journey planning with employers (BSIP Scheme Ref: OXF07JOP) 💰 🧭 🪧

This project focuses on researching how people could be encouraged to commute (more) by bus (or another sustainable transport mode) rather than using their personal vehicle, and then undertake targeted actions considered to have the greatest chances of success as budgets allow.

£100k of Government BSIP funding is being used to conduct research with some of Oxfordshire's employers at key towns as a means of understanding the home-to-work travel patterns at these companies, and the barriers and motivations for mode of travel. Bespoke interventions can then be identified, designed and implemented by local bus companies and other relevant parties. Such interventions would aim to increase the proportion of people travelling to work by bus.

Organisations in Banbury, Bicester and Didcot have been invited to take part, with research anticipated to take place in Summer 2024. The results will be analysed in Autumn 2024, as time and budgets allow, by the roll out of any interventions. The impact of any interventions would be monitored to gauge success and together with the key learnings from the project could be applied to other areas.

3.5.3   A new Enhanced Partnership (EP) website 🕗

A new website is being developed by EP working groups. The purpose of the website is:

1. to be a central point of information and signposting on bus travel in Oxfordshire for members of the public, and
2. to provide a shopfront for EP work, a repository for information about the partnership and its projects, for stakeholders, partners and interested members of the public.

The website is expected to go live in Summer 2024 and will be available at www.mybusoxfordshire.org.uk

3.5.4   Supporting recruitment and retention of bus drivers and other key staff

During 2024/25, the new partnership website (see above) will be further developed to include a section specifically promoting careers and work in the bus industry. This will include links to local bus operator jobs pages.

A new communications campaign is also proposed in Section 4 for this purpose.

3.5.5   Oxford ZEZ extension 🕐 🚀 🌿

In February 2022, the Council and Oxford City Council introduced a Zero Emission Zone (ZEZ) pilot in Oxford to improve air quality, cut carbon emissions, and move towards zero emission travel in the city. All petrol and diesel vehicles, including hybrids, incur a daily charge if they are driven in the zone between 7am and 7pm unless they have a 100 per cent discount or exemption. Local bus services are exempt from the charge.

The Council proposes to expand the ZEZ to a wider area as shown in the map below. The wider ZEZ will be subject to further assessments, stakeholder engagement, consultation and funding. If approved it is expected to be implemented from 2026.

Figure 10 - Map of existing and proposed Zero Emission Zone
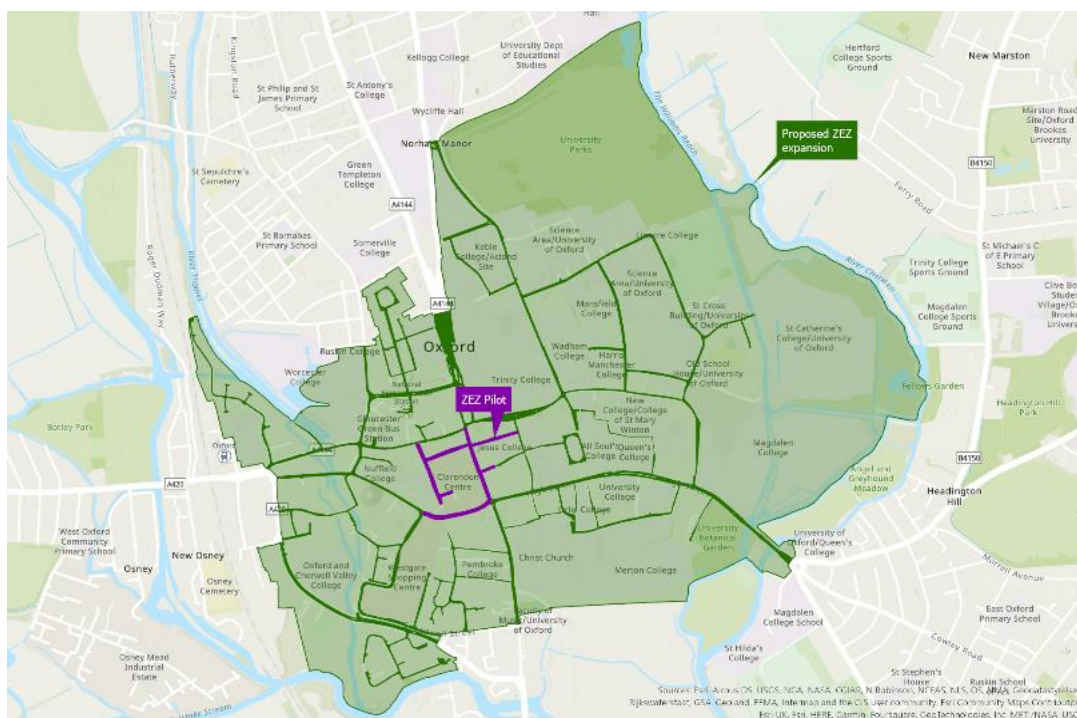
It is expected that the introduction of the ZEZ will reduce private car traffic in the city centre and its immediate environs, and it forms an important part of the plans to improve bus speeds as required within the Enhanced Partnership.

3.5.6 A4074 corridor study 🚀

The Council is working on a A4074 Corridor Strategy looking at the whole of the A4074 from Oxford to Reading – including the needs of Reading at the southern end. It considers the future use of the corridor by all modes of transport, potential interventions such as bus priority and proposed / potential mobility hubs (see below) and takes into account the Reading Local Transport Plan aspirations for a northern Park & Ride.

The study is expected to result in recommendations for improvements which would then be added to the capital project pipeline for future delivery, subject to consultation, feasibility and funding.

3.5.7 Bus emissions standards for Oxfordshire 🚌 🌿

The Council is currently considering a new Traffic Regulation Condition (TRC) to formalise updated emission requirements for registered local bus services in Oxfordshire.

An initial consultation has been held with stakeholders on bringing all buses in Oxfordshire, including any cross-boundary services from neighbouring Local Authorities, up to minimum standards as follows:

- Any bus operating solely within the Oxford SmartZone will be zero emission;
- Buses partly operating in the SmartZone will be Euro VI for NOx with a view to zero emissions by 2030 depending on technology and funding; and
- Any other bus operating within Oxfordshire including cross-boundary services will be Euro V for NOx.

Exemptions will exist for:

- very low frequency services (passing no point in the streets affected more than 25 times a week in any one direction; not a service operated primarily for the purposes of tourism);
- non-profit community transport services operated under Section 19 or 22 of the Transport Act 1985; and
- services operated under a current contract to any local authority (new or renewed contracts will not be exempt).

Requirements will be reviewed when the Euro VII specification and implementation date is known. Compliance with these standards will be required in 2025, the exact date is to be confirmed.

3.5.8 Better disruption communications to passengers 🧭

The Council and larger bus operators are working together to trial a new technology SIRI SX, which enables all parties to input bus service disruption communications for passengers into one place, where it is then automatically disseminated across multiple channels including on RTPI screens and bus operator apps. This will enable a more streamlined back office approach and ensure that passengers receive timely and consistent messaging regardless of where it is sourced. The project is still in the early stages and will continue to be developed during 24/25.

3.5.9 Mobility Hubs strategy and programme 🗺 🧭 📎 ♿

The Mobility Hub Strategy was approved at delegated decisions by Cabinet Member for Travel and Development Strategy in July 2023. The strategy sets out principles behind mobility hubs, essential criteria which all mobility hubs in Oxfordshire must meet and the 4 different types of mobility hubs that will be developed. Bus stops and bus interchange will be an integral part.

The Council's 2023/24 budget includes funding of £0.5m for this year and a further £0.5m per annum for years 2024/25 and 2025/26 to develop mobility hub pilots in locations across Oxfordshire. Following a sifting process and engagement with stakeholders two pilot sites have been identified:

- Benson Marina on the A4074 corridor; and
- Carterton Town Centre.

Both sites have been selected for their alliance with the wider strategic policies of the Council, and their suitability in terms of interface with inter-urban and local bus networks.

35

Detailed design work is planned as part of the next stage of work but it is anticipated that for both sites the work will focus on improving bus waiting infrastructure and active travel facilities such as secure bicycle parking. It is proposed that the schemes will be moved to design and procurement in 2024/25 and delivery in 2025/26.

Alongside the pilot site work, the Council will continue to refine and develop the longer-term pipeline of mobility hub sites to inform future funding opportunities and have emerging related workstreams, such as the Area Travel Plans.

3.5.10 Rail Strategy and programme 🔗

The Council's new OxRail 2040: Plan for Rail strategy – to be considered for adoption by Cabinet in December 2024 – will propose creating an 'Oxfordshire Metro' with enhanced timetables to/from Oxford, joint branding and shared ticketing.

Bus stops and bus interchange will be a key part of this including setting out longer term plans for joint ticketing aspirations and better integration between bus/rail.

The strategy will support the creation or enhancement of Mobility Hubs at priority railway stations, with the focus initially on Didcot, Oxford, Oxford Parkway, Culham, Banbury and Hanborough.

3.5.11 The Central Oxfordshire Movement and Place Framework (COMPF) 🗺️ 🔗 🌿 🛡️

This is a joint County-City project aiming to develop a blueprint for public realm transformations across Oxford and its surrounding area. The framework will bring together existing strategies on transport, land use, climate change, air quality, innovation and public health, integrating all planned interventions that impact streets and public spaces in the area.

This will be complemented by new proposals developed in co-production with councillors, user and advocacy groups, businesses, residents and other stakeholders. The result will be a programme of transport and place-making interventions, supported by a set of strategic approaches to improve and manage public realm across Central Oxfordshire.

Phase 1 of COMPF (June 2023 to March 2025) focuses on proposals for the City Centre and North Oxford, while starting the analysis and preparation work for other areas across Central Oxfordshire. An initial list of proposals and strategic decisions will start to appear from Summer 2024.

3.5.12 Workplace Parking Levy and corresponding investment plan 🕐 🚀 💰 🗺️ 🌿

The Workplace Parking Levy (WPL) has been a concept within the Council's transport planning and vision since 2015. The WPL will be an annual charge to employers in Oxford for staff parking places at their premises. Details of the scheme such as the level of charge, where and who would be charged are subject to engagement, consultation and further assessment.

A WPL would encourage commuters to use an alternative, less polluting means to get to work, rather than travelling in private cars. This could include walking, cycling or the use of public transport. A WPL would also help reduce traffic (thus freeing up bus services) and generate funds to improve alternatives to car travel.

Alongside the scheme itself will be a corresponding investment plan for how the income generated will be spent on improvements to transport. It is also acknowledged that a package of public transport and active travel improvements will need to be in place from commencement of the WPL in order to encourage and enable modal shift away from single occupancy car use.

During 2024/25 the County Council is undertaking stakeholder engagement with a view to going out to public consultation in Summer 2025. If approved, the scheme would be implemented from 2027.

3.5.13 Additional staffing at the Council for bus (BSIP Scheme Ref: OXF05LID, OXF05LNM and OXF05LSI)

£423k of Government BSIP funding was allocated to the creation of three new staff posts to assist in delivery of the BSIP outcomes over the three year period to April 2025. These positions were for a Lead Officer – Bus Infrastructure, Lead Officer – Bus Service Improvements and Lead Officer - Network Management. All three posts were in post from September 2023.

The Council demonstrated a further commitment by recruiting to these posts on a permanent basis, thus securing increased capacity to support and deliver bus improvements for the long term.

3.5.14 Journey Time Reliability Fund 🚀 🧭 ♿

In 2020 the Council set up a 'Journey Time Reliability Fund' for small-scale works, to the value of £5m capital funding over the 5 years to March 2025.

Over previous years this funding has supported a number of different measures including:

- parking enforcement activities and technology;
- funding of a new Bus Liaison (Network) staff position;
- bus lane measures – e.g. the approach to St Clements;
- data study to support the prioritisation of BSIP Traffic Signals investment;
- increased bus stop accessibility/priority, kerbing, buildouts and lay-by repairs;
- infrastructure changes to minimise the impact of the Botley Road closure by Network Rail;
- RTPI core system development – disruption messaging, occupancy data, incorporating new operators and cross-boundary links;
- new RTPI displays e.g. in Banbury (separate from BSIP funded display hardware upgrades);

- RTPI central system maintenance;
- new Variable Message Signs (VMS) to promote use of Thornhill Park & Ride; and
- new bus shelters in various locations including Standlake, Bicester, Witney and Oxford.

In 2024/2025 the funding is planned for the following bus measures:

- Traffic Light Priority (TLP) on-bus tracking unit investment on 200+ vehicles;
- Civil engineering schemes in Cowley Road and Hollow Way to support achievement of bus journey time targets;
- VMS measures to promote the effective operation of Traffic Filter restrictions and which promote use of Park & Ride and the wider bus network;
- Maintenance finance for year 1 of the new RTPI contract; and
- Measures to support the provision of new bus stop infrastructure and accessibility measures across the county – e.g. in Grove and Bicester.

There is a projected allocation of £77k for 2025/26 – effectively carried forward due to small underspends in previous years.

3.5.15 Bus Franchising study 📖

The County Council unanimously passed a motion in September 2023 requesting that Cabinet consider funding for a study into bus franchising in Oxfordshire and the potential creation of a new municipal bus company (which is currently prohibited by the Bus Services Act 2017).

As part of the Council's 2024/25 budget, funding has been set aside for this study which will act as a 'Stage 0' precursor to the Government's set approach for development of franchising schemes. It is intended to explore the potential costs, benefits and implications of establishing a franchising scheme and municipal bus company, taking learnings from other local authorities who are pursuing these approaches.

It is currently expected that the study will be commissioned in October 2024 and will report in March 2025.

3.5.16 Demand Responsive Transport (DRT) study 📖

Alongside the funding set aside in the 2024/25 Council budget for a franchising study, a similar project will take place to identify the potential uses for a Demand Responsive Transport (DRT) pilot.

The study will report by March 2025 and funding of £250k has been set aside for a pilot scheme in the 2025/26 financial year, depending on the outcomes of the study. There will be a particular focus on areas of transport poverty and the potential for

integration with home to school transport requirements, which is a significant area of cost for the County Council.

3.5.17 Increasing bus depot capacity

By 2025 it is predicted that all Oxford based bus depots will be at full capacity in terms of vehicle space and storage, in part due to the additional space required for charging facilities as part of electrification; some of Go Ahead's vehicles are already being stored at alternative locations.

It is anticipated that improved bus speeds resulting from the Traffic Filters scheme will free up resources and ease this situation, but depot capacity remains a challenge that may restrict or hinder network growth going forward.

During 2024/25, operators and the Council will work together to develop a strategy to increase capacity at bus depots, either at existing or new locations, with both short and long-term solutions in anticipation of further network growth and in line with population growth - for example use of Park & Ride sites for overnight storage of vehicles is already being discussed.

4 AMBITIONS AND PROPOSALS FOR 2025-2030

This section of the BSIP sets out our ambitions and proposals for improvement for the period beyond March 2025. The majority of these schemes, at the time of writing, are not funded and so at this stage remain aspirations (see 'Confirmed or Proposed' columns below). However, the Oxfordshire EP Board and working groups will work to progress and deliver schemes as much as possible within existing resources and will seek opportunities to secure alternative funding and/or to deliver these as part of other wider workstreams.

More information on all schemes listed in this section can be found in Appendix 2.

4.1 Bus network planning and improvements to bus services: service level and network coverage

Scheme Name:	Confirmed (C) or proposed (P)	Page Number
BSIP supported bus services (scheme extensions)	P	51
Enhancements to service frequencies – various	P	51
Development of express networks and corridors – various	P	52
New bus services – various	P	52

Service enhancements will be linked with infrastructure provision as far as possible. In the longer term there will likely be proposals for network changes to support Cowley rail branch line implementation.

4.2 Bus priority: delivering faster and more reliable services on priority routes/corridors

Scheme Name:	Confirmed (C) or proposed (P)	Page Number
Benson Lane Crowmarsh bus only right turn to A4074	P	53
Between Towns Road / Oxford Road / Hollow Way junction improvements	C (design only)	53
Botley Road Corridor scheme (phases 4, 5 & 6)	P	54
Cowley Road Pinch Point scheme	C	54
HIF1 Didcot Garden Town Housing Infrastructure Fund	C	55
HIF2 A40 bus priority transformation programme (including Eynsham P&R)	C*	55
Horspath Driftway queue relocation	P	56
Connecting Oxfordshire – Traffic Filters with bus priority (OXF01COT)	C	56
Oxford Parkway Access (Junction Road)	P	57
Traffic signal priority for buses (scheme extension)	P	57

40

The final scope of this scheme is still being discussed as explained in Appendix 2.

In the longer term the partnership would like to consider adding bus priority around Hinksey Hill – which could take the form of traffic management measures - as well as explore the possibility for a northbound A34 bus lane between Lodge Hill and Hinksey Hill.

It is hoped that the Traffic Filters scheme will be made permanent subject to a successful trial period and consultation.

4.3   Improvements to fares and ticketing

Scheme Name:	Confirmed (C) or proposed (P)	Page Number
£1 Sundays in December (scheme extension)	P	58
Community Transport ticketing and real time app	P	58
Countywide tickets (scheme extension)	P	59
Incentivising businesses to encourage commuting by bus	P	59
Tap on Tap off (TOTO) ticketing roll out	P	60
Travelling with children - joined up ticketing	P	60

In the longer term the possibility for integrated rail and bus ticketing will be explored.

4.4   Improvements to the bus passenger experience

4.4.1   improved bus stops, bus stations and interchanges

Scheme Name:	Confirmed (C) or proposed (P)	Page Number:
Banbury Bus Station - move / redevelopment study	P	61
Countywide bus stop improvements to an agreed standard	P	61
Didcot station forecourt redesign study	P	62
Gloucester Green bus station improvements	P	62
New transport hubs – Carterton and Benson Marina	C	63

In the longer term, further transport hub locations will be explored including Lodge Hill, A4074 and the A44, as well as making improvements to existing transport hubs Thornhill P&R and Redbridge P&R.

Any recommendations arising from the Banbury and Didcot station studies would be taken forward as considered appropriate.

With regards to Gloucester Green bus station, the partnership would seek options for complete redevelopment to realise the full potential of the bus station. Some initial work has already been undertaken to identify potential short-term measures to improve the passenger experience.

4.4.2 Improved bus information and network identity

Scheme Name:	Confirmed (C) or proposed (P)	Page Number:
Mobility as a Service app trial	P	63
RTPI roll out on premium route corridors	P	64

In the longer term, the above trial could be extended or the app supported on an on-going basis if it proves successful at achieving modal shift.

4.4.3 Accessibility, inclusiveness, personal safety and security

Scheme Name:	Confirmed (C) or proposed (P)	Page Number:
Access to hospitals review and improvements (Headington sites)	P	64
AV upgrades for all buses in Oxfordshire	C	65
Demand Responsive Transport (DRT) Pilot*	P	65
Personal Safety Study	P	66
Using the bus – an education and support scheme	P	66

*the study is confirmed but the pilot itself is just proposed at this stage, as set out in Section 3.5.16.

4.4.4 Implementing the Bus Passenger Charter

The Oxfordshire Passenger Charter was first published in January 2023 as part of the Enhanced Partnership Plan and Scheme.

The Passenger Charter will be reviewed during 2024/25 in collaboration with bus user groups. This review will:

- take account of the updated DfT guidance on Bus Passenger Charters;
- check adherence with the terms, identify and action improvements needed; and
- consider how the charter could be better promoted to bus users and action where appropriate

4.5 Improvements to the bus fleet

Following successful implementation of 159 electric buses in Oxford using ZEBRA 1 funding, a number of steps will be taken over the next few years, funding dependent,

to work on further decarbonisation of the local bus network which constitutes the below scheme.

Scheme Name:	Confirmed (C) or proposed (P)	Page Number:
Decarbonisation of the bus fleet - stage 2	P	67

Our longer term aspirations are to deploy depot charging / refuelling infrastructure to all bus operating sites in the County and the rolling out of ZEBS to rural and interurban routes.

4.6   Longer term transformation of the network

Scheme Name:	Confirmed (C) or proposed (P)	Page Number:
Franchising feasibility study (phase 2)	P	67
Securing the future for network growth by increasing bus depot capacity in Oxford	P	68

Details of the franchising study to be undertaken in 2024/25 are contained in Section 3.5.15. Longer term, any recommendations arising from this study would be taken forward as considered appropriate.

Similarly, longer term plans for increasing depot capacity would need to be developed and progressed where possible, alongside operator partners.

4.7   Other

Scheme Name:	Confirmed (C) or proposed (P)	Page Number:
Be kind to your bus driver campaign	P	68
Behaviour change initiatives in line with planned large scale schemes	P	69
Concessionary pass holders marketing	P	69
Oxford Workplace Parking Levy investment plan	P	70
Oxford Zero Emission Zone expansion	P	70

5 TARGETS, PERFORMANCE MONITORING AND REPORTING

Alongside targets for the delivery of specific schemes there are a number of headline targets against which progress is monitored at least annually. These are set out in the table below.

The targets set out in the 2021 BSIP have been reviewed and in some cases been amended and/or further defined. This is to ensure that they remain appropriate in light of the current and proposed BSIP schemes and other external influencing factors.

BSIP Headline Targets	BASE 2019/ 2020	2021	2022	2023	Targets
Patronage **Total annual passenger journeys** *Source – DfT table BUS01e*	40.7m (100%)	11.7m (28.7%)	25.5m (62.6%)	33.6m (82.5%)	2025 stretch target = 43.2m 2030 stretch target = 52.8m
Journey time **Average journey speeds for the month of November on selected routes into and out of Oxford** *Source - custom third party reporting tool*	14.2 mph	13.8 mph	14.5 mph	13.2 mph	10% improvement in journey speeds by December 2025, 15% improvement by December 2030 (compared with 2019 baseline)
Punctuality and reliability **Non-frequent bus services running on time (no more than one minute early or five minutes late)** *Source - DfT table BUS09a*	78%	88%	85%	80%	85% for 2025, 95% for 2030
Satisfaction **Percentage satisfied with local bus services** *A. Source: Passenger Focus surveys (bus users)* *B. Source: National Highways & Transportation Network (NHT) surveys*	A) 93% B) 61%	A) Not measured B) 60%	A) Not measured B) 60%	A) 81% B) 57%	A) 93% for 2025, 96% by 2030 B) 61% for 2025, 70% by 2030

Bus journey times and reliability in Oxford has worsened in the short term due to a number of factors, most notably:

- significant city centre roadworks and the closure of Botley Road by Network Rail;
- the implementation of active travel infrastructure and supporting measures, including 20mph speed limits as part of the Vision Zero programme, in advance of traffic reduction and bus priority measures;

This has had consequent impacts in the wider area as many bus routes go into or through the city, as well as a negative impact on passenger satisfaction levels. However, to address these issues we have plans for significant interventions during 2024-25, notably through the Traffic Filters and Traffic Signals schemes (see Section 3).

Updates against these targets are published online [here](#).

6 APPENDIX 1 – LIST OF COUNCIL CONTRACTED SERVICES

Route #	Operator	Route	Days of operation	Hours / journeys	Notes	Procurement method
5	RACB	Chinnor – Princes Risborough	Wed, Fri	Off-peak	Whole service	De-minimis
6	Oxford Bus	Wolvercote - Oxford	Daily	Peak/off-peak	Frequency enhancement of commercial service	Tendered
11	Oxford Bus	Watlington - Oxford	Daily	Peak/off-peak	Whole service	Tendered
14	Stagecoach Oxford	Risinghurst - Northway - Oxford	Daily	Peak/off-peak	Whole service	Tendered
17	Red Rose	Bicester - Launton - Aylesbury	Mon-Sat	Peak/off-peak	Diversion of commercial route to serve Launton	Tendered
21	Grayline	Bicester town service	Mon-Sat	First journey MF, Sat service all day	Extension to commercial operating hours	De-minimis
23	Thames Travel	Didcot - Wallingford - Henley	Daily	Peak/off-peak	Frequency enhancement of commercial service and extension to add Wallingford to Henley	Tendered
24	Grayline	Bicester - Kirtlington - Oxford	Mon-Sat	Peak/off-peak	Whole service	Tendered
25	Red Rose	Heyford Park - Bicester	Mon-Sat	Peak/off-peak	Whole service	De-minimis
33	Thames Travel	Abingdon - Didcot - Wallingford	Sun		Extension to commercial operating days for Abingdon - Didcot	Tendered
33	Thames Travel	Abingdon - Wootton - Oxford	Mon-Fri	Evenings	Extension to commercial operating hours	De-minimis
33	Thames Travel	Abingdon - Wootton - Oxford	Sun		Extension to commercial operating days	De-minimis
35	Oxford Bus	Abingdon - Radley - Oxford	Daily	Peak/off-peak	Frequency enhancement of commercial service	Tendered
40	Red Rose	Thame - Chinnor - High Wycombe	Daily	Mon-Sat evenings + Sundays all day	Extension to commercial operating hours	Tendered

41	Thames Travel	Abingdon town service	Mon-Fri	Off-peak	Whole service	De-minimis
42	OCC	Abingdon – Oxford	Mon, Wed, Fri	Off-peak	Whole service	De-minimis
45	Thames Travel	Abingdon - Berinsfield - Cowley	Mon-Sat	Peak/off-peak	Whole service	Tendered
46	Oxford Bus	Great Milton - Wheatley - Cowley - Oxford	Mon-Sat	Peak/off-peak	Wheatley - Cowley section of route Mon-Sat 11 journeys	Tendered
47	West Berkshire	Lambourne - Swindon	Mon-Fri		Contribution towards West Berkshire contracted route for Oxon section of route	n/a
49	OCC	Cuddesdon – Oxford	Tue, Thu	Off-peak	Whole service	De-minimis
63	Thames Travel	Southmoor - Oxford	Mon-Fri	Peak/off-peak	Whole service	Tendered
64	Pulhams	Carterton - Swindon	Mon-Sat	Peak/off-peak	Whole service	Tendered
67	Thames Travel	Wantage - Faringdon	Mon-Sat	Peak/off-peak	Whole service	Tendered
68	Pulhams	Wantage - Uffington - Faringdon	Mon-Sat	Peak/off-peak	Whole service	Tendered
79	OCC	Hornton – Banbury	Thu	Off-peak	Whole service	De-minimis
85	OCC	Charney Bassett – Wantage	Wed	Off-peak	Whole service	De-minimis
95	Thames Travel	Didcot - Culham Science Centre	Mon-Fri	Peak only	Whole service	Tendered
97	Thames Travel	South Great Western Park - Didcot	Mon-Sat	Peak/off-peak	Whole service	Tendered
107	OCC	Oddington – Bicester	Fri	Off-peak	Whole service	De-minimis
108	Oxford Bus	Bicester - Forest Hill – Oxford	Mon-Sat	Peak/off-peak	Whole service	Tendered
121	Red Rose	Haddenham – Thame	Mon-Sat	Peak/off-peak	Whole service	Tendered
134	Going Forward	Wallingford - Goring	Mon-Fri	Peak/off-peak	Whole service	De-minimis
136	Thames Travel	Cholsey - Wallingford - Benson	Mon-Sat	Peak/off-peak	Whole service	Tendered
200	Stagecoach Oxford	Banbury - Daventry	Mon-Sat	Peak/off-peak	Whole service	Tendered
210	West Oxfordshire CT	Wychwoods - Witney	Mon-Fri	Peak/off-peak	Whole service	De-minimis
234	Stagecoach Oxford	Witney - Burford	Daily	Peak/off-peak	Whole service	Tendered
275	Carousel	High Wycombe - Oxford	Mon-Fri	Peak/off-peak	Whole service	Tendered
320	Red Rose	Chinnor - Princes Risborough	Mon-Fri	Peak only	Whole service	Tendered

411, 418	First & Last Mile	Hanborough – Eynsham – Standlake	Mon-Fri	Peak/off-peak	Contribution towards commercial service	n/a
488	Stagecoach Oxford	Banbury - Chipping Norton	Mon-Sat	Peak only	Additional journeys (rest of journeys Mon-Sat commercial)	Tendered
488	Stagecoach Oxford	Banbury - Chipping Norton	Sun		Whole service	Tendered
500	Stagecoach Oxford	Bicester - Brackley - Banbury	Mon-Sat	Peak/off-peak	Bicester - Brackley section of route (rest of route commercial)	Tendered
500	Stagecoach Oxford	Brackley - Banbury	Sun		Extension to commercial operating days	De-minimis
700	Oxford Bus	Kidlington - Headington - Thornhill P&R	Mon-Fri	Peak/off-peak	Whole service	Tendered
700	Oxford Bus	Kidlington - Headington - Thornhill P&R	Sat/Sun		Whole service	De-minimis
800	Arriva	High Wycombe - Henley - Reading	Mon-Sat	4 journeys each way	Diversion of some commercial journeys via Binfield Heath	De-minimis
800	Arriva	High Wycombe - Henley - Reading	Mon-Sat	Evenings	Extension to commercial operating hours	De-minimis
122/3/6/7	Red Rose	Watlington - Reading / Thame	Various Mon-Fri	Off-peak	Whole service	Tendered
15/19	Pulhams	Abingdon / Carterton - Standlake - Witney	Mon-Sat	Peak/off-peak	Whole service	Tendered
29/H5	Stagecoach Oxford	Bicester - Ambrosden - Headington/Bullingdon Prison	Daily	Peak/off-peak	Whole service	Tendered
4A	Oxford Bus	Elms Rise - Oxford	Daily	Evenings	Extension to commercial operating hours	De-minimis
5A	Oxford Bus	Minchery Farm - Oxford	Daily	Mon-Sat evenings + Sundays all day	Extension to commercial operating hours	De-minimis
91/92	Thames Travel	Didcot town services	Mon-Fri	Off-peak	Whole service	Tendered
94/94A	Thames Travel	Blewbury - Didcot	Mon-Sat	Peak/off-peak	Whole service	Tendered

B3	Stagecoach Oxford	Longford Park - Banbury	Mon-Sat	Peak/off-peak	Whole service	Tendered
B4	Stagecoach Oxford	Hardwick Hill - Banbury	Mon-Sat	Peak/off-peak	Whole service	Tendered
B5	Stagecoach Oxford	Bretch Hill - Banbury	Daily	Peak/off-peak	Whole service	Tendered
B7/8	KATS	Banbury town services	Mon-Fri	Afternoon journeys	Extension to commercial operating hours	De-minimis
B9	Stagecoach Oxford	Warwick Road - Banbury - Banbury Gateway	Daily	Peak/off-peak	Whole service	Tendered
H2	Stagecoach Oxford	Witney - Headington	Daily	Peak/off-peak	Whole service	Tendered
S2X	Stagecoach Oxford	Carterton – Oxford	Mon-Fri	Peak	Whole service	Tendered
S3	Stagecoach Oxford	Oxford - Woodstock - Charlbury	Mon-Sat	Peak/off-peak	Extension to commercial route to add Woodstock to Charlbury	Tendered
S3	Stagecoach Oxford	Oxford - Woodstock - Chipping Norton	Daily	Peak/off-peak	Extension to commercial route to add Woodstock to Chipping Norton	Tendered
S4	Stagecoach Oxford	Oxford - Tackley - Banbury	Daily	Peak/off-peak	Extension to commercial hours and frequency enhancement	Tendered
S6	Stagecoach West	Oxford - Swindon	Daily	Peak/off-peak	Frequency enhancement of commercial service	Tendered
S7	Stagecoach Oxford	Oxford - Woodstock - Witney	Daily	Peak/off-peak	Woodstock - Witney section of route (rest of route commercial)	Tendered
S9	Stagecoach Oxford	Oxford - Wantage	Daily	Peak/off-peak	Frequency enhancement of commercial service	Tendered
V19	Villager	Icomb - Wychwoods - Chipping Norton	Mon-Fri	Off-peak	Provision of improved service for Kingham	De-minimis
V26	Villager	Oddington - Leafield - Witney	Mon,Tue,Thu,Fri	Off-peak	Enhancement of commercial service	De-minimis

Route	Operator	Route Description	Days	Times	Nature	Type
X1/43	Oxford Bus	Wantage / Harwell Campus - Abingdon - Oxford	Daily	Peak/off-peak	Commercial enhancement of X1 between Abingdon and Oxford and whole of route 43	Tendered
X2	Thames Travel	Didcot - Abingdon - Oxford	Daily	Peak/off-peak	Frequency enhancement of commercial service	Tendered
X3	Oxford Bus	Barton Park - Oxford - Abingdon	Daily	Peak/off-peak	Extension to commercial route to serve Barton Park	Tendered
X32	Thames Travel	Didcot – Great Western Park South	Daily	Peak/off-peak	Extension to commercial route to serve Great Western Park South	Tendered/de-minimis
X34/X35	Thames Travel	Great Western Park - Didcot / Harwell Campus / Newbury / Milton Park	Daily	Peak/off-peak	Whole service	Tendered
X35	Thames Travel	Didcot - Wantage	Daily	Mon-Sat evenings + Sundays all day	Extension to commercial operating hours	Tendered
X36	Thames Travel	Didcot - Wantage	Daily	Peak/off-peak	Whole service	Tendered
X4	Stagecoach Oxford	Banbury - Oxford	Mon-Fri	Peak only	Whole service	De-minimis
X40	Thames Travel	Oxford - Wallingford - Reading	Daily	Evenings	Extension to commercial operating hours	De-minimis
X40	Thames Travel	Oxford - Wallingford - Reading	Sun		Diversion of commercial route to serve Woodcote	De-minimis
X9	Pulhams	Witney - Chipping Norton	Mon-Sat	Peak/off-peak	Whole service	Tendered

7 APPENDIX 2 - POST 2025 STRATEGIC OUTLINE CASES

BSIP supported bus services (scheme extensions):

BSIP supported bus services (scheme extensions)

Scheme Name	BSIP supported bus services (scheme extensions)	Priority Ranking (High/Med/Low)	High
Location / area	Countywide	DfT Category	Service level and network coverage
Confirmed or Proposed Scheme	Proposed	Realisation Period	Short term - 2025-2027

Overview & Purpose

Extend funding for existing BSIP supported services for another 3 years, where this is still required (i.e. excluding those expected to be commercially viable).

This therefore is likely to include:
- Newbury – Harwell – Didcot (X34);
- Bicester – Brackley (500);
- Witney – Carterton – Swindon (64);
- Bicester – Kirtlington – Oxford (24);
- Didcot – Blewbury – Upton (94/94A);
- Cowley – Wheatley (46);
- Southmoor – Appleton – Oxford (63);
- Oxford – Benson – Wallingford – Reading (X40);
- Sonning Common – Reading (25);
- Carterton – Oxford (express service) (SX1);
- Banbury – Kidlington – Oxford (express service) (X4);
- Kidlington – JR Hospital – Churchill Hospital – Thornhill P&R (700);

High Level Outcomes

- Continuation of existing BSIP supported services, where required.
- To increase the chances for:
  o longer term modal shift/behaviour change by passengers
  o services becoming commercially viable.

Expected Benefits:

For bus passengers	• Easier to use, More services
Other	• Improved stakeholder relationships • Improved customer experience, improved reputation • Increased commercial viability, secure long-term future of bus service/network

Enhancements to service frequencies – various:

Enhancements to service frequencies - various

Scheme Name	Enhancements to service frequencies - various	Priority Ranking (High/Med/Low)	Medium
Location / area	Countywide	DfT Category	Service level and network coverage
Confirmed or Proposed Scheme	Proposed	Realisation Period	Short term - 2025-2027

Overview & Purpose

Increasing the service frequencies across several bus corridors will provide passengers with a more reliable and attractive bus service between key settlements.

Possible route options could include but are not limited to:

- Oxford to Banbury
- Oxford to Woodstock
- Oxford to Chipping Norton
- Witney to Abingdon
- Oxford to Wootton and Abingdon
- Oxford to Cheltenham

High Level Outcomes

- Increasing the service frequencies across several bus corridors to provide a more attractive bus service.

Expected Benefits:

For bus passengers	• More frequent services, more reliable • Better to ride in • Accessible and inclusive network, Innovative, A safe mode of transport
Other	• Better use of resources, improved stakeholder relationships, improved performance, reduction in delays • Upskilling of workforce, improved customer experience, improved reputation • Equality and inclusion, knowledge gain, increase commercial viability, secure long-term future of bus service/network

Development of express networks and corridors:

Development of express networks and corridors

Scheme Name	Development of express networks and corridors	Priority Ranking (High/Med/Low)	Medium
Location / Area	Countywide	DfT Category	Service level and network coverage
Confirmed or Proposed Scheme	Proposed	Realisation Period	Short term - 2025-2027

Overview & Purpose

Improvement of the existing genuinely fast / express bus routes (e.g. X4) with revenue support, together with work to identify new route opportunities and work to look at barriers to introducing new routes. Where proper express routes exist (e.g. X4, X5, X20, X32, ST1) they seem popular and work well.

Additional express routes could be considered on major corridors for example:
Oxford-Wallingford-Reading
Oxford to Swindon
Oxford to Northampton
Oxford to Carterton

High Level Outcomes

- Improved bus routes
- Identification of new route opportunities
- Identification of barriers to introduction new routes
- Added express routes on major corridors

Expected Benefits:

For bus passengers	• More frequent services • Faster and more reliable • More services
Other	• Secure long-term future of bus service/network

New bus services:

New bus services

Scheme Name	New bus services	Priority Ranking (High/Med/Low)	Medium
Location / Area	Various	DfT Category	Service level and network coverage
Confirmed or Proposed Scheme	Proposed	Realisation Period	Short term - 2025-2027

Overview & Purpose

Residents are keen to see new services introduced to increase access for those currently unserved, and/or not adequately served by bus.
Such services could include but are not limited to:
- Orbital services to Eastern Arc from Redbridge / Pear Tree, including links to new transport hubs
- Commuter service Heyford Park to Oxford,
- Development of Banbury and Didcot networks as an integrated part of Area Travel Plans
- Summer Sunday Cotswold cross border services (joint initiative with neighbouring LTAs) - new summer Sunday Cotswold bus network (Options to be scoped during 24/25).

High Level Outcomes

- The introduction of new bus services
- Increased bus patronage
- Increased levels of access by public transport

Expected Benefits:

For bus passengers	• More services • Easier to use • Better integrated with other modes and each other • Accessible and inclusive network
Other	• Improved stakeholder relationships • Improved customer experience • Improved reputation • Modal shift • Reduced congestion • Equality and inclusion,

Oxfordshire Bus Service Improvement Plan, June 2024

52

Benson Lane, Crowmarsh bus only right turn to A4074:

Benson Lane, Crowmarsh bus only right turn to A4074

Scheme Name	Benson Lane, Crowmarsh bus only right turn to A4074	Priority Ranking (High/Med/Low)	Medium
Location / Area	Benson Lane, Crowmarsh	DfT Category	Bus priority
Confirmed or ProposedScheme	Proposed	Realisation Period	Short term - 2025-2027

Overview & Purpose

This scheme proposes a signalised right-turn for buses off the southbound A4074, into Benson Lane which is the 'historic' direct route from Oxford towards Crowmarsh Gifford and Wallingford.

Currently Benson Lane is one-way only between the A4074 junction and Howbery Park, which is a major employment site with many bus users travelling from Oxford. Currently these employees need to cross the fast A4074 road and walk some distance to their workplace.

The three current inter-urban buses per hour on route x40 are required to travel much further than is necessary in the Reading-bound direction, to the junction of the A4074 with the Henley Road, before turning west along The Street towards Wallingford. The North section of the Street is not ideal to serve on this route as it is not possible to return here on the same service, with Oxford-bound services using Benson Lane.

High Level Outcomes

- Creation of signalised right-turn for buses off the southbound A4074, into Benson Lane
- Potentially allow establishment of a Park & Ride facility for Wallingford at the site of former SODC offices located on Benson Lane, to reduce pressure on car parking and traffic congestion in the historic centre of the town.

Expected Benefits:

For bus passengers	• Faster and more reliable services, with reduction in unnecessary mileage Reading-bound, and reduced delay attempting to join traffic on the A4074 Oxford-bound. • Better bus access to employment site at Howbery Park • Easier to understand services, with consistent routing in both directions.
Other	• Better use of resources, improved performance, reduction in delays, • Improved customer experience, improved reputation • Reduced congestion, increase commercial viability • Secure long-term future of bus service/network

Between Towns Road / Oxford Road / Hollow Way junction improvements:

Between Towns Road / Oxford Road / Hollow Way junction improvements

Scheme Name	Between Towns Road / Oxford Road / Hollow Way junction improvements	Priority Ranking (High/Med/Low)	High
Location / Area	Cowley, Oxford	DfT Category	Bus priority
Confirmed or Proposed Scheme	Confirmed (design only)	Realisation Period	Short term - 2025-2027

Overview & Purpose

Cowley Centre in Oxford is situated within the area in which traffic filters and LTNs will or have been implemented. It is a major attractor, and interchange point on the busiest bus corridor within the city between Blackbird Leys and the city, as well as being served by frequent services to Headington hospitals, Brookes University, Oxford Science Park and nearby villages such as Horspath, Wheatley, Great Milton and Garsington. Many of the improvements to services planned to be implemented following the introduction of the Traffic Filters (for example 600, enhanced 5A) are planned to serve Cowley Centre, increasing the importance of this location as a transport hub. Presently there is very limited bus priority around this area meaning that serving the centre can involve a significant time penalty, particularly for orbital services.
As part of the Oxford LCWIP, a scheme has been set up to review this junction in order to improve facilities for walking, cycling and other sustainable travel means. The scheme is at feasibility and prelim design stage. Funding has been secured up to end of this stage after which further decisions will be made as to how to proceed.

High Level Outcomes

- Improving facilities and travel for pedestrians and cyclists and other sustainable travel means.

Expected Benefits:

For bus passengers	• Faster and more reliable services through what is one of the busiest junctions in Oxford for bus movements. In turn this will enable more frequent services on several key corridors.
Other	• Reduced delays / volatility of journeys, improved potential for modal shift

Botley Road Corridor (phases 4, 5 & 6):

Botley Road Corridor (phases 4, 5 & 6)

Scheme Name	Botley Road Corridor (phases 4, 5 & 6)	Priority Ranking (High/Med/Low)	Medium
Location / Area	Cowley, Oxford	DfT Category	Bus priority
Confirmed or Proposed Scheme	Proposed	Realisation Period	Short term - 2025-2027

Overview & Purpose

Oxfordshire County Council has completed the first three phases of major improvements to Botley Road. The improvements are aimed at enhancing bus, cycle, and pedestrian facilities along Botley Road.

Design work for the remaining sections of the road, which includes Seacourt Park and Ride to Binsey Lane and Elms parade shops to Eynsham Road, as well as delivery of the final three phases, has currently been deferred whilst funding is sought and confirmed.

The new designs will support the wider transport plans announced by the county council aimed at increasing the speed of public transport, improving safety for cyclists and pedestrians and limiting carbon emissions caused by transport.

High Level Outcomes

The proposed improvements to the Botley Road corridor aims to:
- ease congestion on the route
- reduce bus journey times by avoiding the key bottlenecks so that they have an advantage over general traffic
- provide a safer and more attractive route for cyclists and pedestrians
- reduce vehicle emissions and improve air quality.
- encourage greater use of more sustainable modes of transport such as buses, cycling and walking

It will also:
- unlock economic growth and job creation opportunities by benefiting development sites with improved access and additional capacity, including supporting further housing and growth in Oxford city centre, Botley and along the A420.

Expected Benefits:

For bus passengers	• More frequent services, Faster and more reliable • Better to ride in, Greener, • Accessible and inclusive network, Innovative
Other	• Improved performance, reduction in delays, • Improved customer experience, improved reputation • Environmental, modal shift, reduced congestion, • Increase commercial viability, • Secure long-term future of bus service/network

The Cowley Road pinch point scheme:

The Cowley Road pinch point scheme

Scheme Name	The Cowley Road pinch point scheme	Priority Ranking (High/Med/Low)	High
Location / Area	Cowley Road, Oxford	DfT Category	Bus Priority
Confirmed or Proposed Scheme	Confirmed	Realisation Period	Short term - 2025-2027

Overview & Purpose

Cowley Road is a key bus route to and from Oxford City Centre. However, often buses are held back by overhanging / protruding delivery vehicles and indiscriminate parking, causing delays to journey times. The traffic filters are forecast to reduce flows in this section by 25-30% but this may not be sufficient to resolve the blockages.

Therefore, this scheme consists of localised carriageway widening and adjustments to parking and loading bays in the area around Tesco, to reduce the edge friction that can delay buses in this section.

This scheme is to be paid from the Council's internal Journey Time Reliability budget.

High Level Outcomes

- Improve bus journey times and reliability for buses along Cowley Road

Expected Benefits:

For bus passengers	• Faster and more reliable
Other	• Improved stakeholder relationships, • Improved performance • Reduction in delays, reduced congestion

HIF1 Programme:

HIF1 Programme

Scheme Name	HIF1 Programme	Priority Ranking (High/Med/Low)	High
Location / Area	Didcot to Clifton Hampden	DfT Category	Bus priority
Confirmed or Proposed Scheme	Confirmed	Realisation Period	Short term 2025-2028

Overview & Purpose

Oxfordshire County Council has been awarded the full amount, £330m, from Homes England to design and construct the HIF1 scheme. The scheme is a major infrastructure project that spans between Didcot and Clifton Hampden is programmed to be complete in Spring 2028.

The scheme will provide more sustainable travel options in and around Didcot, as well as reducing a legacy of congestion in the surrounding villages and improving air quality and noise levels. The scheme will provide 19.2 km of high-quality walking and cycling infrastructure and connect employment sites with Didcot, surrounding villages and existing walking and cycling routes. Opportunities for more direct, faster and more reliable bus routes will also be provided by the scheme. Eighteen new bus stops will increase the accessibility and catchment of the existing bus services in the area, whilst also helping to cater for new or improved services in the future.

High Level Outcomes

- Improved transport infrastructure
- More sustainable travel options in and around Didcot
- Reduction in congestion

Expected Benefits:

For bus passengers	• More frequent services • More services • Better integrated with other modes and each other
Other	• Improved stakeholder relationships • Reduction in delays • Improved customer experience • Modal shift • Reduced congestion • Secure long-term future of bus service/network

HIF2 A40 Corridor programme:

HIF2 A40 Corridor programme

Scheme Name	HIF2 A40 Corridor programme	Priority Ranking (High/Med/Low)	High
Location / Area	A40 Corridor	DfT Category	Bus priority
Confirmed or Proposed Scheme	Confirmed (Full scope yet to be confirmed)	Realisation Period	Short term - 2025-2027

Overview & Purpose

This programme consists of 6 schemes which aim to improve the A40 between Witney and Oxford, resulting in better transport links, the creation of new jobs and housing, reduced emissions, and more sustainable travel options. It includes delivery of a new park and ride at Eynsham, an extension of the dual carriageway around Witney, new bus lanes and junction improvements.

This scheme is vital to accommodating increased demand due to new housing developments in West Oxfordshire and is key to unlocking more express bus routes going between Carterton and Witney and Oxford and Headington.

Due to economic pressures the scope of the scheme is currently being reviewed and negotiated with the funding partners Homes England and DfT. Therefore, the estimated completion dates and final costs are to be confirmed.

Eynsham Park and Ride site has been constructed and will enter a status of hiatus until such as time that it can become operational. This is dependent on the above negotiations.

High Level Outcomes

- Improved transport infrastructure
- Better access to and more sustainable transport options
- Reduction in congestion

Expected Benefits:

For bus passengers	• More frequent services, Faster and more reliable • Easier to use • Better integrated with other modes and each other
Other	• Better use of resources • Improved stakeholder relationships • Improved performance, reduction in delays • Improved customer experience, improved reputation • Environmental, modal shift, reduced congestion • Increase commercial viability, secure long-term future of bus service/network

Horspath Driftway queue relocation:

Horspath Driftway queue relocation

Scheme Name	Horspath Driftway queue relocation	Priority Ranking (High/Med/Low)	Medium
Location / Area	Oxford City	DfT Category	Bus priority
Confirmed or Proposed Scheme	Proposed	Realisation Period	Medium term - 2027-2029

Overview & Purpose

The Horspath Driftway project aims to relocate queues of cars which build up in peak hours from traffic turning from the Southern Bypass into Horspath Driftway, before turning into The Slade. The project will involve new signals and queuing lane at the junction of the Eastern Bypass and Horspath Driftway.

High Level Outcomes

- Priority for northbound buses on The Slade

Expected Benefits:

For bus passengers	• Faster and more reliable bus service
Other	• Improved performance • Reduction in delays • Improved customer experience • Reduced congestion • Secure long-term future of bus service/network

Connecting Oxfordshire – Traffic Filters with bus priority (OXF01COT):

Connecting Oxfordshire – Traffic Filters with bus priority (OXF01COT)

Scheme Name	Connecting Oxfordshire – Traffic Filters with bus priority (OXF01COT)	Priority Ranking (High/Med/Low)	High
Location / Area	Oxford	DfT Category	Bus priority
Confirmed or Proposed Scheme	Confirmed	Realisation Period	Short term 2025-2027

Overview & Purpose

Oxfordshire County Council is trialling six traffic filters in Oxford and some areas just outside the city. The traffic filters are part of the central Oxfordshire travel plan and Oxfordshire's local transport and connectivity plan.

Traffic filters are intended to:
- make walking and cycling safer and easier
- make bus journeys quicker and more reliable
- enable new and improved bus routes
- support investment in modern buses
- help reduce local air pollution and improve the health and wellbeing of our communities.

This is an existing BSIP scheme which Oxfordshire County Council will be continuing during this time period. This includes the scheme monitoring and evaluation particularly with regards to improvements in bus journey times and increased bus productivity.

High Level Outcomes

- Continuation of traffic filters trial
- Monitoring and evaluation of scheme impacts on bus journey times and bus productivity.

Expected Benefits:

For bus passengers	• Faster and more reliable • More services, • Easier to use, • Greener
Other	• Reduction in delays • Improved customer experience • Environmental • Modal shift • Reduced congestion • Increase commercial viability • Secure long-term future of bus service/network

56

Oxford Parkway Access (Junction Road):

Oxford Parkway Access (Junction Road)

Scheme Name	Oxford Parkway Access (Junction Road)	Priority Ranking (High/Med/Low)	Medium
Location / Area	North Oxford/Kidlington	DfT Category	Bus priority
Confirmed or Proposed Scheme	Proposed	Realisation Period	Short term - 2025-2027

Overview & Purpose

To investigate and propose a long-term solution to ensure that buses are able to efficiently enter and leave the park and ride site whilst also making the Banbury Road area safe for cyclist.

Up to 20 buses an hour can enter or leave the park and rider area, with another 8 buses an hour serving the main road, it's essential that a solution is found to cater for the current and future volumes of bus movements for the area as well as addressing the safety concerns for cyclists using the main road.

A permanent solution is sought to replace the temporary bollards in place on the slip road

High Level Outcomes

- Balancing bus priority and cyclist movements at the same time through innovative junction design.

Expected Benefits:

For bus passengers	• Reliable services accessing the Oxford Parkway park and ride site
Other	• Better integration of cyclist and bus movements without negative impact on bus reliability, by removing existing priority

Traffic Signal Priority for Buses (scheme extension):

Traffic Signal Priority for Buses (scheme extension)

Scheme Name	Traffic Signal Priority for Buses – (scheme extension)	Priority Ranking (High/Med/Low)	Medium
Location / Area	Countywide	DfT Category	Bus priority
Confirmed or Proposed Scheme	Proposed	Realisation Period	Short term - 2025-2027

Overview & Purpose

The current BSIP capital scheme involves configuring traffic signals for bus prioritisation, upgrades, validations ending in 2025. These are being delivered at the top 25 sites identified by the Alchera Bus Pinch Point Analysis.

Pending additional funding, this scheme could be extended to more locations as identified by the Pinch Point Analysis, of which there were 110 in total. This would enable more signals and crossings to prioritise buses, where there are clear benefits to buses and wider transport users.

High Level Outcomes

- More traffic light signal bus priority at junctions, enabling faster and more reliable bus services.

Expected Benefits:

For bus passengers	• More frequent, faster and more reliable services
Other	• Better use of resources, improved stakeholder relationships, improved performance • Reduction in delays, improved customer experience, improved reputation • Increase commercial viability, secure long-term future of bus service/network

£1 Sundays in December (scheme extension):

£1 Sundays in December (scheme extension)

Scheme Name	£1 Sundays in December (scheme extension)	Priority Ranking (High/Med/Low)	Medium
Location / Area	Countywide	DfT Category	Lower and simpler fares
Confirmed or Proposed Scheme	Proposed	Realisation Period	Short term - 2025-2027

Overview & Purpose

A 2-year extension of the existing BSIP funded scheme to offer single bus journeys for £1 on Sundays in December.

Extension would cover December 2025 and December 2026.

High Level Outcomes

- Continuation of discounted bus travel for Sundays in December

Expected Benefits:

For bus passengers	• Cheaper/ better value
Other	• Environmental, modal shift • Reduced congestion • Equality and inclusion

Community transport ticketing and real time app:

Community transport ticketing and real time app

Scheme Name	Community transport ticketing and real time app	Priority Ranking (High/Med/Low)	Medium
Location / Area	Countywide	DfT Category	Ticketing
Confirmed or Proposed Scheme	Proposed	Realisation Period	Short term 2025-2027

Overview & Purpose

Many community transport providers also run public bus services and are a much-valued part of the bus network by their users. Run on a not-for-profit basis often using volunteers, these organisations don't have the resources to offer the same level of passenger experience as commercial bus operators.

Therefore, this scheme aims to provide the county's community transport operators with a new branded app that supplies off bus ticketing and live times tracking for a period of 3 years.

High Level Outcomes

- Improved passenger experience of community transport services
- Better integration of the community transport services within the wider bus network

Expected Benefits:

For bus passengers	• Easier to understand • Easier to use • Better integrated with other modes and each other • Accessible and inclusive network • Innovative
Other	• Better use of resources • Upskilling of workforce • Improved customer experience • Equality and inclusion • Knowledge gain • Secure long-term future of services/network

Countywide tickets (scheme extension):

Countywide tickets (scheme extension)

Scheme Name	Countywide tickets (scheme extension)	Priority Ranking (High/Med/Low)	High
Location / Area	Countywide	DfT Category	Ticketing
Confirmed or Proposed Scheme	Proposed	Realisation Period	Short term - 2025-2027

Overview & Purpose

A 2-year extension of the existing BSIP funded scheme - countywide multi operator day and week tickets, for adults and young people (MyBus Oxfordshire).

The additional funding would ensure that the MyBus tickets continue to be offered, but also that they continue at affordable and discounted rates.

Extension would cover the period April 2025 to March 2027.

• High Level Outcomes

- Continuation of the countywide multi operator day and week tickets scheme
- Continuation of affordable/discounted bus travel using the MyBus Oxfordshire tickets

Expected Benefits:

For bus passengers	• Cheaper/ better value, • Easier to understand, • Easier to use, • Better integrated • Accessible and inclusive network
Other	• Improved stakeholder relationships • Environmental, modal shift, reduced congestion, • Equality and inclusion • Secure long-term future of bus service/network

Incentivising business to encourage commuting by bus:

Incentivising businesses to encourage commuting by bus

Scheme Name	Incentivising businesses to encourage commuting by bus	Priority Ranking (High/Med/Low)	Medium
Location / Area	Countywide	DfT Category	Lower and simpler fares
Confirmed or Proposed Scheme	Proposed	Realisation Period	Short term 2025-2027

Overview & Purpose

Proposed scheme involves working with major employers to offer incentives to them for encouraging bus travel and/or P&R usage. In 25/26 this would be focused on supporting those affected by the traffic filters, and in 26/27 would be focused on those affected by the Workplace Parking Levy.

High Level Outcomes

- Secure commitment from employers to encourage commuting by bus
- Greater proportions of employees travelling to work by bus

Expected Benefits:

For bus passengers	• Cheaper/ better value • Easier to use
Other	• Improved stakeholder relationships • Improved customer experience • Modal shift • Reduced congestion • Secure long-term future of bus service/network

Tap on Tap off ticketing roll out:

Tap on Tap Off ticketing roll out

Scheme Name	Tap on Tap Off ticketing roll out	Priority Ranking (High/Med/Low)	Medium
Location / Area	Countywide	DfT Category	Ticketing
Confirmed or Proposed Scheme	Proposed	Realisation Period	Medium term - 2027-2029

Overview & Purpose

This scheme builds on the successful Oxford SmartZone scheme and the new MyBus countywide multi operator tickets, in proposing the roll out of Tap On Tap Off (TOTO) contactless ticketing to all local bus services (currently only available on most Go Ahead services) with multi operator capped fares. This would enable people to travel on any bus service in the County, tapping on and off as they go, and be charged the best value fare for their journeys.

It will likely involve 2 phases:

Phase 1: Roll out Tap On Tap Off (TOTO) contactless ticketing to all local bus operators/services within the County, providing capped fares on existing single operator ticket products

Phase 2: Implement/use an effective back-office system for redistribution of revenue in order to facilitate capped fares (via TOTO) across multiple operators.

High Level Outcomes

- A more joined up integrated fare offer across the County
- Greater fares transparency and ease of payment by passengers
- Reassurance for passengers of being charged the best value fare for their journeys

Expected Benefits:

For bus passengers	• Cheaper/ better value • Easier to understand, Easier to use • Better integrated with other modes and each other
Other	• Better use of resources • Improved customer experience • Equality and inclusion • Knowledge gain, increase commercial viability • Secure long-term future of bus service/network

Travelling with children – joined up ticketing:

Travelling with children - joined up ticketing

Scheme Name	Travelling with children - joined up ticketing	Priority Ranking (High/Med/Low)	Medium
Location / Area	Countywide	DfT Category	Ticketing
Confirmed or Proposed Scheme	Proposed	Realisation Period	Medium term - 2027-2029

Overview & Purpose

Often there is no child equivalent of the best value adult ticket - which is also usually available on app only.

This scheme proposes to review the current bus ticket offering for adults travelling with children and then work with operators to ensure a more joined up and consistent offer.

The scheme seeks to make things simpler for parents and carers travelling with children as well as ensure they have equal access to the best value fares.

High Level Outcomes

- Simpler access best value joint-family/parent/carers children's tickets

Expected Benefits:

For bus passengers	• Cheaper/ better value, • Easier to understand, • Easier to use, • Accessible and inclusive network
Other	• Modal shift, reduced congestion, equality and inclusion

Banbury Bus Station – move/redevelopment study:

Banbury Bus Station - move / redevelopment study

Scheme Name	Banbury Bus Station - move / redevelopment study	Priority Ranking (High/Med/Low)	Medium
Location / Area	Banbury	DfT Category	Waiting and interchange facilities
Confirmed or Proposed Scheme	Proposed	Realisation Period	Short term - 2025-2027

Overview & Purpose

Banbury's bus station operates substantially below its capacity and provides nothing for passengers that on-street stops don't provide. Moving and redeveloping the site has been discussed on and off for several years. It is proposed to conduct a study to determine how/where buses could be accommodated elsewhere if the bus station was relocated or no longer available.

The study will need to take into consideration other bus improvement schemes taking place in this area such as the Cherwell Street scheme and Tramway Road improvements . The potential role of the train station (as a mobility hub) should also be included.

The scope could be widened to include reviewing bus routeing in the town centre and whether this could be improved (e.g. by utilising currently pedestrianised roads and/or looking at whether bus stops could be located in areas currently used for car parking).

High Level Outcomes

- Identification of alternative locations for Banbury Bus Station
- Researched options for mobility hub linked to Banbury Train Station
- Review of bus routes and bus stops

Expected Benefits:

For bus passengers	• Improved bus station access and facilities for passengers • Potentially faster and more reliable bus services • Better integrated with other modes and each other
Other	• Reduction in delays • Improved customer experience • Improved reputation • Reduced congestion • Secure long-term future of bus service/network • Equality and inclusion • Knowledge gain

Countywide bus stop improvements to an agreed standard:

Countywide bus stop improvements to an agreed standard

Scheme Name	Countywide bus stop improvements to a standard	Priority Ranking (High/Med/Low)	Medium
Location / Area	Countywide	DfT Category	Waiting and interchange facilities
Confirmed or Proposed Scheme	Proposed	Realisation Period	Short term - 2025-2027

Overview & Purpose

Follow on from the work undertaken in 24/25 (a bus stop audit and development of new county council bus stop standards), the next steps will be to identify the improvements needed, produce a plan for delivery and to then action the plan rolling out improvement as funding allows. This will then bring them up to the county standards including for accessibility.

High Level Outcomes

- Improved and consistent standard for bus stop infrastructure and accessibility across the County

Expected Benefits:

For bus passengers	• Easier to use • Accessible and inclusive network • A safe mode of transport
Other	• Improved customer experience • improved reputation • equality and inclusion

Didcot Station Forecourt Redesign Study:

Didcot Station Forecourt Redesign Study

Scheme Name	Didcot Station Forecourt Redesign Study	Priority Ranking (High/Med/Low)	Medium
Location / Area	Didcot	DfT Category	Waiting and interchange facilities
Confirmed or Proposed Scheme	Proposed	Realisation Period	Medium term 2027-2029

Overview & Purpose

The Didcot Station forecourt redesign study is a critical initiative to address the capacity concerns and frequent traffic blockages caused by buses on Station Road. The Council has worked to increase bus capacity to the forecourt by securing one or two extra stops on the other side of Station Road. However, these will not be sufficient to accommodate future new routes that will serve developments at Valley Park, Culham and elsewhere. The study's findings will be crucial in determining the extent of capacity needed and the solutions to provide it, building on the success of the bus/rail interchange at Didcot, which is noted to be more significant than at any other station in the county.

It is thought that the cost to undertake the study will be minimal. Depending on the results of the study, new BSIP schemes may emerge.

High Level Outcomes

- Identification of current & future capacity needs

Expected Benefits:

For bus passengers	• Faster and more reliable bus services to and from Didcot Station • More services due to increase capacity for buses on the forecourt • Better integrated with other modes and each other
Other	• Reduction in delays • Improved customer experience • Improved reputation • Reduced congestion • Secure long-term future of bus service/network

Gloucester Green bus station improvements:

Gloucester Green bus station improvements

Scheme Name	Gloucester Green bus station improvements	Priority Ranking (High/Med/Low)	Medium
Location / Area	Oxford	DfT Category	Waiting and interchange facilities
Confirmed or Proposed Scheme	Proposed	Realisation Period	Short term - 2025-2027

Overview & Purpose

Oxford's Gloucester Green bus and coach station is dated from 1989 and over time has developed an appearance of being tired, dirty and slowly declining. This does not make for an attractive transport gateway into Oxford for local, national and internation visitors. To realise the full potential would require a substantial investment and complete redevelopment. However, this is a longer-term ambition, in the shorter to medium time there are several interventions that could help realise this transport gateway worth of Oxford.

A review of was completed in the summer of 2023. From this several quick win interventions were identified of varying scale, that combined would go some way to improving the bus station. These include but are not limited to:
Decluttering, new signage, paving repairs, an additional pedestrian crossing, refresh street furniture, improve cycle parking, redecorate the public waiting area, reprofile the bay 1 corner and install new RTPI departure screens.

High Level Outcomes

- Improve the attractiveness and passenger useability of Gloucester Green bus station

Expected Benefits:

For bus passengers	• Easier to understand, Easier to use • Better integrated with other modes and each other • Better to ride in • Accessible and inclusive network • A safe mode of transport
Other	• Better use of resources • improved stakeholder relationships • Improved customer experience • improved reputation • Equality and inclusion • Increase commercial viability • Secure long-term future of bus service/network

New transport hubs – Carterton and Benson Marina:

New transport hubs - Carterton and Benson Marina

Scheme Name	New transport hubs - Carterton and Benson Marina	Priority Ranking (High/Med/Low)	High
Location / Area	Carterton and Benson	DfT Category	Waiting and interchange facilities
Confirmed or Proposed Scheme	Confirmed	Realisation Period	Medium term - 2027-2029

Overview & Purpose

- Following the publication of the Mobility Hub Strategy in June 2023, £1.5m of revenue funds were allocated to the Environment and Place directorate to deliver pilot Mobility Hub infrastructure at locations across the County.

- County wide studies by officers involved stakeholder engagement and strategic/spatial assessments to ascertain levels of community support for shared mobility features and to identify suitable sites for the implementation of infrastructure.

- A short list of sites were selected which could demonstrate each of the Mobility Hub typologies proposed by the 2023 Strategy. The sites were appraised against estimated project costs. The short list was reduced to two sites at Benson and Carterton, prioritised for their strategic significance and deliverable within current financial limitations of the budget

High Level Outcomes

- Support the prioritisation of sustainable transport modes
- Improve health and well-being of residents
- Support the development of an integrated public transport network
- Support the development of an inclusive transport system and help to tackle the rising cost of living
- Improved public realm

Expected Benefits:

For bus passengers	• Sites are selected where the project can maximise opportunities for switching to public transport e.g. where new and strategically significant bus services are being introduced.
Other	• The project aims to convert existing highway/land to areas where improved bus stops, cycle parking, public realm and pedestrian upgrades can be developed • By encouraging active travel, the project will deliver a range of public health benefits. • Mobility Hubs will promote a transport network that is safe, accessible, direct and affordable for all Oxfordshire residents. • The project will complement any new infrastructure with enhanced public spaces to increase the attractiveness of the sustainable transport offer.

Mobility as a Service app trial:

Mobility as a Service app trial

Scheme Name	Mobility as a Service app trial	Priority Ranking (High/Med/Low)	Medium
Location / Area	Countywide	DfT Category	Bus information and network identity
Confirmed or Proposed Scheme	Proposed	Realisation Period	Short term - 2025-2027

Overview & Purpose

In Oxfordshire there is no overarching Mobility as a Service (MaaS) app that would enable people to plan their journeys, get real time updates and purchase tickets in one place - including bringing in other travel modes. With the introduction of the MyBus countywide ticket in 2024/25, and potential introduction of a WPL in 2027, 2026/27 seems like the ideal time to trail such a software platform.

It is proposed to run a 12-month trial of a MaaS product, covering the whole of Oxfordshire.

High Level Outcomes

- Run a 12-month trial of a MaaS APP

- An evidence case for continuing support for the app longer term if proves successful at achieving modal shift.

Expected Benefits:

For bus passengers	• Easier to understand, Easier to use, • Better integrated with other modes and each other • Accessible and inclusive network • Innovative
Other	• Better use of resources, • Improved stakeholder relationships • Improved customer experience, improved reputation • Modal shift, reduced congestion, equality and inclusion

Oxfordshire Bus Service Improvement Plan, June 2024

63

RTPI roll out on premium route corridors:

RTPI roll out on premium route corridors

Scheme Name	RTPI roll out on premium route corridors	Priority Ranking (High/Med/Low)	Medium
Location / Area	Various tbc	DfT Category	Bus information and network identity
Confirmed or ProposedScheme	Proposed	Realisation Period	Medium term 2027-2029

Overview & Purpose

By March 25 it is estimated that around **10%** of Oxfordshire's bus stops will have an RTPI display. Passenger feedback has indicated that they value these displays over using an app. By rolling out more screens particularly on premium route corridors it will enhance the customer experience and encourage greater use.

High Level Outcomes

Upgrade and extension of RTPI estate to cover all areas of Oxfordshire, improving access to live travel information.

Expected Benefits:

For bus passengers	• Easier to understand • Easier to use • Accessible and inclusive network • Innovative
Other	• Improved customer experience • Encourage modal shift

Access to hospitals review and improvements (Headington sites):

Access to hospitals review and improvements (Headington sites)

Scheme Name	Access to hospitals review and improvements (Headington sites)	Priority Ranking (High/Med/Low)	High
Location / Area	Oxford	DfT Category	Accessibility and inclusion
Confirmed or Proposed Scheme	Proposed	Realisation Period	Short term - 2025-2027

Overview & Purpose

Transport to hospitals is the number one trip generator within Oxfordshire, including for people travelling into the County from outside. There is also expected to be a significant growth in demand for bus services to the hospital sites over the next few years particularly by staff. This is due to a number of external factors.

During 2025/26, it is proposed to work with the hospitals to conduct a review of the current situation and identify possible improvements. Such improvements may vary in scope and would be implemented over the following year(s) as appropriate and as funding allows.

It is expected that the review costs will be minimal but one-off revenue funding of £100k would enable a package of smaller scale improvements to be developed and implemented. Larger scale improvements could form their own BSIP schemes in the future.

High Level Outcomes

• Better information about bus services to hospitals
• Better bus access and/or bus links to the hospitals

Expected Benefits

For bus passengers	• Easier to understand • Easier to use • Accessible and inclusive network • Possible: More frequent services, Faster and more reliable, Better integrated with other modes and each other
Other	• Improved stakeholder relationships • Modal shift • reduced congestion • equality and inclusion • knowledge gain

AV upgrade for all buses in Oxfordshire:

AV upgrade for all buses in Oxfordshire

Scheme Name	AV upgrades for all buses in Oxfordshire	Priority Ranking (High/Med/Low)	Medium
Location / Area	Countywide	DfT Category	Accessibility and inclusion
Confirmed or Proposed Scheme	Confirmed (although required by law)	Realisation Period	Short term - 2025-2027

Overview & Purpose

In March 2023, the Department for Transport introduced rules that will require almost every local bus or coach to provide audible announcements and visual displays identifying the route and direction, each upcoming stop, and the beginning of any diversions.

Bus operators in Oxfordshire plan to roll out audible and visual announcements to the remainder of their fleet by October 2026 in line with Government targets. This will support disabled passengers to navigate buses with greater ease. This will also benefit non-disabled people, helping those who are travelling on an unfamiliar bus route, and giving passengers confidence that they will not be left stranded at the wrong stop late at night.

High Level Outcomes

Upgrade of bus fleet operating in Oxfordshire to meet provides audible information & visual information:

- Information about the route i.e. name, number, final destination
- Information about upcoming stops
- Information about diversions to scheduled routes

Expected Benefits:

For bus passengers	• Easier to use • Accessible and inclusive network
Other	• Improved customer experience • Equality and inclusion

Demand Responsive Transport (DRT) Pilot:

Demand Responsive Transport (DRT) Pilot

Scheme Name	Demand Responsive Transport (DRT) Pilot	Priority ranking (High/Med/Low)	Medium
Location / area	Subject to study outcomes	DfT Category	Accessibility and inclusion
Confirmed or Proposed scheme	Proposed	Realisation Period	Short term - 2025-2027

Overview & Purpose

During 2024/25 a feasibility study is being conducted to look into the introduction of new DRT bus services in urban/suburban and rural settings. Depending on the outcome of the business case, a pilot DRT service may be set up during 2025/26, the location of which is to be confirmed but is likely to be in an area of high transport poverty and/or where there are particular challenges regarding home to school transport.

High Level Outcomes

Delivery of a 12-month Demand Responsive Transport pilot scheme in an area of high transport poverty and/or where there are particular pressures related to home to school transport which could be satisfied by such a service.

Benefits

	Expected benefits:
For bus passengers	• More frequent and direct services to key travel destinations/hubs • Closer to origin and destination points • Accessible and inclusive network • Integrated with other modes
Other	• Better use of resources (in relation to home to school transport) • Innovative transport solution • Improved customer experience • Equality and inclusion, better access to services • Knowledge gain

65

Personal safety study:

Personal safety study

Scheme Name	Personal safety study	Priority Ranking (High/Med/Low)	Medium	Estimated Total Costs £	£100k
Location / Area	Various tbc	DfT Category	Bus passenger experience	Funding Ask £	£100k
Confirmed or Proposed Scheme	Proposed	Realisation Period	Short term 2025-2027	Revenue/Capital Split (of funding ask)	Revenue
Scheme Code (if existing)	N/A	Estimated Scheme Term	2 years		

Overview & Purpose

During 2026/27, it is proposed to work with bus users, residents and stakeholders to conduct a study at various locations within Oxfordshire to better understand current views around safety at bus stops and on buses, particularly by women. The study will help to identify measures for improvements. Such improvements may vary in scope and would be implemented over the following year(s) as appropriate and as funding allows.

It is expected that the study costs will be minimal but one-off revenue funding of £100k would enable a package of smaller scale improvements to be developed and implemented. Larger scale improvements could form their own BSIP schemes in the future.

High Level Outcomes

- Improved safety of perceived safety of bus travel, particularly by women

Expected Benefits:

For bus passengers	• Accessible and inclusive network • A safe mode of transport
Other	• Improved stakeholder relationships • Improved reputation • Modal shift • Equality and inclusion • Knowledge gain

Using the bus – an education and support scheme:

Using the bus - an education and support scheme

Scheme Name	Using the bus - an education and support scheme	Priority Ranking (High/Med/Low)	Medium
Location / Area	Countywide	DfT Category	Accessibility and inclusion
Confirmed or Proposed Scheme	Proposed	Realisation Period	Short term - 2025-2027

Overview & Purpose

This scheme will involve offering education and/or support to certain groups of people who may find it hard to use the bus. This could include children, older people and those with disabilities.

The scheme will be developed in collaboration with representatives from these groups to determine the best solutions. It is likely to involve supporting the groups or individuals to plan and undertake a bus journey, including developing strategies for scenarios when things don't go to plan.

The scheme could mean an extension to the Council's existing Independent Travel Training Programme, that focuses on young people with SEND, in offering it out to more groups and/or adapting it to develop the bus specific elements.

High Level Outcomes

- Remove some of the barriers to bus travel for certain user groups.
- Encourage a greater take up of bus by certain user groups.

Expected Benefits:

For bus passengers	• Easier to use • Accessible and inclusive network • Easier to understand
Other	• Equality and inclusion

Decarbonisation of the bus fleet – stage 2:

Decarbonisation of the bus fleet - stage 2

Scheme Name	Decarbonisation of the bus fleet - stage 2	Priority Ranking (High/Med/Low)	Medium
Location / Area	Various tbc	DfT Category	Bus fleet
Confirmed or Proposed Scheme	Proposed	Realisation Period	Short to Medium term 2025-2030

Overview & Purpose

Following successful implementation of 159 electric buses in Oxford using ZEBRA 1 funding, a number of steps will be taken over the next few years to work on further decarbonisation of the local bus network. This will include a TRO to formalise bus emissions standards for Oxford city and development of the business cases for further decarbonisation of the fleet which may include:
- Deploying depot charging / refuelling infrastructure to the first sites outside of Oxford city,
- Developing a strategy for hydrogen infrastructure in Oxfordshire.

Longer term our aspirations are to deploy depot charging / refuelling infrastructure to all bus operating sites in the County and the rolling out of ZEBS to rural and interurban routes.

High Level Outcomes

- Further decarbonisation of the local bus network.

Expected Benefits:

For bus passengers	• Better to ride in • Greener • Accessible and inclusive network • Innovative
Other	• Improved stakeholder relationships • Upskilling of workforce • Improved reputation • Environmental • Modal shift • Knowledge gain

Franchising feasibility study (phase 2):

Franchising feasibility study (phase 2)

Scheme Name	Franchising feasibility study (phase 2)	Priority ranking (High/Med/Low)	Medium
Location / area	Countywide	DfT Category	Longer term network transformation
Confirmed or Proposed scheme	Proposed	Realisation Period	Short term 2025-2027

Overview & Purpose

An initial feasibility study into the costs, benefits and implications of bus franchising will take place in 2024/25.

Depending on the recommendations of the study, and any potential changes to national legislation which may take place, the Council may wish to progress to Stages 1 and 2 of the franchising process as set out in national guidance. This is a large and complex piece of work and would require financial support to be undertaken.

High Level Outcomes

A franchising assessment which meets the requirements of Stage 2 of current national guidance (https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/bus-services-act-2017-bus-franchising-creation/setting-up-a-bus-franchising-scheme).

Expected benefits:

For bus passengers	The study and assessment would provide a detailed examination of the costs, benefits and implications of bus franchising, including the outcomes for bus passengers. At this stage, it is therefore not possible to quantify what these might be.
Other	The study and assessment would consider the benefits in more detail, including any wider benefits to society.

67

Securing the future for network growth by increasing bus depot capacity in Oxford:

Securing the future for network growth by increasing bus depot capacity in Oxford

Scheme Name	Securing the future for network growth by increasing bus depot capacity in Oxford	Priority Ranking (High/Med/Low)	High
Location / Area	Oxford	DfT Category	Longer term network transformation
Confirmed or Proposed Scheme	Proposed	Realisation Period	Short term - 2025-2027

Overview & Purpose

This scheme will follow on from work done by operators in partnership with the Council in 2024/25 (developing a strategy to address depot capacity constraints in Oxford). This is an important scheme to secure the future for network growth.

High Level Outcomes

- Development of solutions to increase depot capacity at sites in Oxford to enable future network growth

Expected Benefits:

For bus passengers	• Enables the potential for: More bus services
Other	• Better use of resources, improved stakeholder relationships, • Secure long-term future of bus service/network

Be kind to your bus driver campaign:

Be kind to your bus driver campaign

Scheme Name	Be kind to your bus driver campaign	Priority Ranking (High/Med/Low)	Medium
Location / Area	Countywide	DfT Category	Other
Confirmed or Proposed Scheme	Proposed	Realisation Period	Short term - 2025-2027

Overview & Purpose

To support operators with driver recruitment and retention, a new communications campaign is proposed. It will disseminate a 'be kind to your bus driver and fellow passengers' or 'pay it forward' type message to bus passengers.

The campaign will aim to change people's attitudes and behaviour towards drivers, this will in turn improve the wellbeing of drivers and thus help with recruitment and retention rates.

High Level Outcomes

- To improve bus driver recruitment and retention

Expected Benefits:

For bus passengers	• Improved perceptions of bus travel, accessible and inclusive network,
Other	• Improved bus driver recruitment and retention

Behaviour change initiatives in line with planned large-scale schemes:

Behaviour change initiatives in line with planned large-scale schemes

Scheme Name	Behaviour change initiatives in line with planned large-scale schemes	Priority Ranking (High/Med/Low)	Medium
Location / Area	Various	DfT Category	Other
Confirmed or Proposed Scheme	Proposed	Realisation Period	Short term 2025-2027

Overview & Purpose

Develop and implement behaviours change schemes which complement various large-scale schemes for example: traffic filters in 25/26, ZEZ extension and WPL in 26/27 and 27/28 and new transport hubs (various dates). These may be made up of several solutions from discounted bus travel and offers, to targeted marketing campaigns and personalised travel planning and would encourage people to use sustainable transport solutions over the private car.

High Level Outcomes

- Long term behaviour change/ modal shift to bus

Expected Benefits:

For bus passengers	Dependant on solutions but could include: • More frequent services, Faster and more reliable • Cheaper/ better value • Easier to understand, Easier to use, • Better integrated with other modes and each other • Better to ride in • Accessible and inclusive network, Innovative, A safe mode of transport
Other	• Better use of resources • Improved stakeholder relationships • Improved performance, improved customer experience, improved reputation, • Environmental, modal shift, reduced congestion, equality and inclusion, • Increase commercial viability, secure long-term future of bus service/network

Concessionary pass holders campaign:

Concessionary pass holders campaign

Scheme Name	Concessionary pass holders campaign	Priority Ranking (High/Med/Low)	Medium
Location / Area	Countywide	DfT Category	Other
Confirmed or Proposed Scheme	Proposed	Realisation Period	Short term - 2025-2027

Overview & Purpose

In Oxfordshire and elsewhere, bus use by concessionary pass holders is still not back to pre-covid levels. A targeted marketing campaign is proposed to encourage bus use by these groups, reminding and educating them on application and use of the free bus pass, and the great places they can get to by bus - for free! It may also include reminders on how to use buses and how to find out when/where to catch the bus as well as offer reassurance on safety and friendly drivers.

High Level Outcomes

- Delivery of a targetted marketing campaign encouraging bus travel by concessionary pass holders.
- Increased patronage by concessionary pass holders.

Expected Benefits:

For bus passengers	• Greater awareness • Easier to understand • Accessible and inclusive network
Other	• Environmental • Modal shift • Reduced congestion • Equality and inclusion • Increase commercial viability • Secure long-term future of bus service/network

Oxford Workplace Parking Levy Investment Plan:

Oxford Workplace Parking Levy Investment Plan

Scheme Name	Oxford Workplace Parking Levy Investment Plan	Priority Ranking (High/Med/Low)	Medium
Location / Area	Oxford urban area	DfT Category	Other
Confirmed or Proposed Scheme	Proposed	Realisation Period	Medium term - 2027-2029

Overview & Purpose

A workplace parking levy (WPL) is an annual charge paid to the local transport authority by employers for workplace parking places they provide. A WPL helps reduce traffic and generate funds to improve alternatives to car travel including more bus services and better cycle lanes.

As part of the development of a WPL an investment plan will need to be established to ensure bus improvements and funding streams can benefit from the WPL income in-time for 2027 onwards.

As part of the initial engagement, key employers had suggested that an enhanced bus network and reduced bus fares will help their staff shift towards public transport. Staff would like to see bus services which are more frequent, cheaper, faster, reliable and operate longer hours and in weekends.

High Level Outcomes

- Continued investment into improving alternatives to car travel using income generated by the levy.
- Achieve high mode shift by encouraging a switch from driving private vehicles to public transport and active travel.
- Reduce congestion in peak periods.

Expected Benefits:

For bus passengers	• **Fares & ticketing**: Cheaper and more flexible bus fares and ticketing for travel to and within Oxford, with targeted discounts for employees, jobseekers and groups facing health and economic barriers. • **Bus services**: More frequent and comprehensive bus services, serving all major employment sites and connecting with Park & Rides and the county towns. • **Bus priority:** Reliable and quicker buses, with an extensive network of bus priority including on the ring road and approaches. • **Bus infrastructure and integration:** Transforming interchange between bus services, Park & Ride and rail and active travel modes, delivering high quality transport interchanges, stations and stops and connections.
Other	• Provides a local source of funding for transport improvements in Oxford and to improve alternatives to car travel. • This results in the following wider benefits: environmental, modal shift, reduced congestion, equality and inclusion, secure long-term future of bus service/ network

Oxford Zero Emission Zone expansion:

Oxford Zero Emission Zone expansion

Scheme Name	Oxford Zero Emission Zone expansion	Priority Ranking (High/Med/Low)	Medium
Location / Area	Oxford	DfT Category	Other
Confirmed or Proposed Scheme	Proposed	Realisation Period	Medium term - 2027-2029

Overview & Purpose

Oxfordshire County Council and Oxford City Council introduced a pilot zero emission zone (ZEZ) in Oxford in 2022 to improve air quality, cut carbon emissions, and move towards zero emission travel in the city.

The Council is now working on proposals to expand the ZEZ to a wider area in the city centre. The expansion is a key action of the Central Oxfordshire Travel Plan.

This will support the reduction in traffic which will have knock on benefits for buses in terms of increasing bus speeds and reducing journey times. Oxfordshire County Council are engaging with stakeholders while developing the proposals which will come to public consultation in autumn 2024 and implementation of the ZEZ expansion is currently planned for 2027.

High Level Outcomes

- Cleaner, healthier air and lower carbon emissions
- Less congestion and more use of active travel and public transport
- Support Vision Zero: zero deaths and fewer serious injuries from road traffic collisions
- More attractive streets and spaces for the local economy and communities to thrive
- Tackle health and social inequalities

Expected Benefits:

For bus passengers	• Faster and more reliable • Greener
Other	• Reduction in delays, • Environmental, • Modal shift, • Reduced congestion, • Investment into potential future supporting measures such as EV charging infrastructure, high polluting vehicle scrappage scheme, freight consolidation/ e-cargo bike schemes, public realm improvements and walking and cycling schemes.

8 APPENDIX 3 – OXFORDSHIRE BUS PASSENGER CHARTER

The Oxfordshire Bus Passenger Charter can be found in annex E of the Oxfordshire Enhanced Partnership Plan & Scheme.

9 APPENDIX 4 – LETTERS OF SUPPORT

[To be inserted before wider publication]

72

Annex 2   Engagement exercise results – Improvement Prioritisation

This annex contains:

1. Headline results from the online public survey
2. Supporting data from 2023 bus passenger surveys
3. Supporting data from 2023 National Highways & Transport Network survey

1. Headline results from the online public survey

Summary results from online survey

- Hosted on OCCs Let's Talk platform
- Live between 19 Mar and 14 Apr 24
- 1149 responses
- 78% were regular bus users

- Previous BSIP survey in 2021
- 294 responses

Oxfordshire Bus Improvement Plan 2024

Tell us your priorities for improving Oxfordshire's bus services.

Find out more

Let's **talk** Oxfordshire

Demographics – who responded

Type of respondent	
an Oxfordshire resident	941
someone who travels to/through Oxfordshire on a regular basis	152
a business	2
a representative of a group or organisation	18
a parish, town, district, or county Councillor	28
Other	8

age	
Under 16	4
16-24	30
25-34	111
35-44	148
45-54	204
55-64	213
65-74	233
75-84	146
85 or over	15
Prefer not to say	29

sex	
Female	717
Male	377
Prefer not to say	35
I use another term	3

Concessionary bus pass holder	
Yes	393
No	727
Prefer not to say	11

Ethnic group or background	
Asian or Asian British	24
Black or Black British	4
Chinese	2
Mixed or multiple ethnic groups	14
White	995
Prefer not to say	84
Other	8

Long-term illness, health problem or disability lasting more than 12 months	
Yes - a lot	67
Yes – a little	157
No	875
Prefer not to say	35

OXFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

How likely is it that these improvements would encourage you to use the bus?

More frequent buses	966
More reliable and faster buses	949
New routes	839
More buses in the evening and at weekends	831
Simpler and better value fares	678
Better information before you travel	645
Better quality	609
Better information during your journey	519
More environmentally friendly buses	488
Measures to improve the feeling of safety	478
Accessibility improvements	269

OXFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL
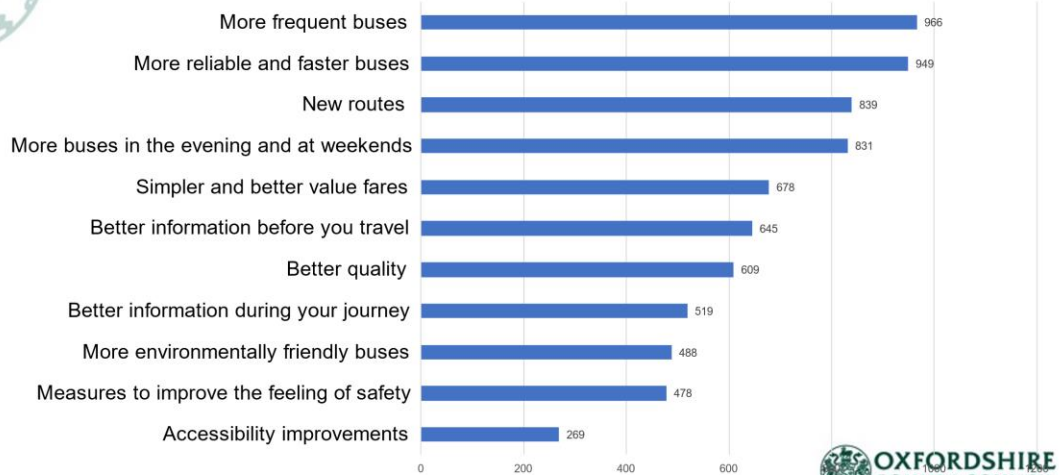
Comparison of top 5

2021	**2024**
1. More frequent buses	1. Faster /more reliable buses
2. New routes	2. More frequent buses
3. Faster /more reliable buses	3. New routes
4. More buses at evenings and weekends	4. More buses at evenings and weekends
5. Better information before you travel	5. Simpler and better value fares

OXFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

2. Supporting data from 2023 bus passenger surveys

Bus passenger surveys are conducted by Transport Focus, the independent consumer organisation representing the interests of bus passengers across England outside of London. Passengers are recruited as they make their journeys, at bus stops and on board buses. They provide their feedback about a single leg of a journey, made on the day the survey is undertaken. The structured survey questions focus initially on the essential measures of satisfaction.

The high level results for 2023 are shown in the table below and indicate three main improvement areas: value for money, punctuality and journey time.

	Total satisfied (%)		
	Oxfordshire score	Rural average	England average
Value for money	**63**	69	67
Bus stop where you caught bus	**75**	75	76
Punctuality of bus at stop (arriving on time)	**68**	72	70
Bus driver	**87**	87	85
Length of time journey on bus took	**75**	80	81

3. Supporting data from 2023 National Highways & Transport Network survey

3,300 Oxfordshire residents are selected at random each year to complete the NHT survey which includes some questions on satisfaction levels for public transport. There were 886 responses in 2023 and the results are shown below.

These results indicate that Oxfordshire are performing well against other local authorities but several areas have worsened in the last year. Key areas of focus for improvements therefore are: public transport information, bus punctuality and the reliability of electronic display information.

Result = Oxfordshire's 2023 score for satisfaction (percentage of respondents that were satisfied or very satisfied)
Trend = How the Oxfordshire 2023 score compares with the previous year.
Average = The average 2023 score for all authorities that took part in the survey.
Gap = How the Oxfordshire 2023 score compares with the Average.

Ref	Name	Result	Trend	Average	Gap
KBI06	Local bus services (overall)	57%	-3%	54%	3%
KBI07	Local bus services (aspects)	55%	-6%	47%	8%
KBI08	Public transport information	38%	-9%	33%	5%
KBI09	Taxi/mini cab services	60%	-2%	60%	0%
KBI10	Community transport	53%	-3%	54%	-1%
KQI03	Responsive transport	49%	-3%	51%	-2%
KQI05	Public transport information (aspects)	52%	-4%	50%	2%
PTBI01	Frequency of bus services	55%	-2%	51%	4%
PTBI02	Number of bus stops	68%	0%	64%	4%
PTBI03	The state of bus stops	60%	-4%	54%	6%
PTBI04	Whether buses arrive on time	51%	-9%	48%	3%
PTBI05	How easy buses are to get on/off	73%	-2%	69%	4%
PTBI06	The local bus service overall	59%	-4%	54%	5%
PTBI07	Bus fares	57%	7%	54%	3%
PTBI08	Quality and cleanliness of buses	67%	-3%	61%	6%
PTBI09	Helpfulness of drivers	71%	-1%	66%	5%
PTBI10	Personal safety on the bus	71%	-1%	65%	6%
PTBI11	Personal safety at bus stops	66%	-2%	60%	6%
PTBI12	Raised kerbs at bus stops	62%	-3%	63%	-1%
PTBI13	The amount of information	54%	-2%	50%	4%
PTBI14	The clarity of information	54%	-3%	51%	3%
PTBI15	The accuracy of information	54%	-4%	51%	3%
PTBI16	Ease of finding the right information	50%	-3%	48%	2%
PTBI17	Information about accessible buses	46%	-5%	46%	0%
PTBI18	Info to help people plan journeys	56%	-3%	53%	3%
PTBI19	Reliability of electronic display info	51%	-6%	47%	4%
PTBI20	Provision of public transport info	51%	-6%	49%	2%
PTQI08	Provision of bus stops	83%	-3%	85%	-2%

Divisions Affected - ALL

CABINET
18 JUNE 2024

Oxfordshire County Council Productivity Plan

Report by Executive Director of Resources

RECOMMENDATION

1.   **The Cabinet is RECOMMENDED to:**

   (a)   Approve the productivity plan for submission to the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities
   (b)   Approve the additional barriers to efficiency document for submission to the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities

Executive Summary

2.   As part of the 2024/25 Local Government Finance Settlement, it was announced that councils would be asked to produce a productivity plan.

3.   The Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) wrote to all councils in April 2024 to outline the process for productivity plans which has a submission deadline of 19 July 2024.

4.   Working with colleagues across the council, and with external peers for consistency in approach, a productivity plan for Oxfordshire County Council has been drafted in line with the flexible scope set out by DLUHC. This can be found in Annex A.

5.   There is no formal template for the productivity plan, only guidance that it focuses on four suggested themes around transformation, better use of technology and data, reduction in spend and barriers to efficiency.

Key Issues

6.   The high-level directive from DLUHC is to think broadly and to share current plans to transform services, therefore we have proactively focused on the positive transformation happening across the council, including Delivering the Future Together and our new People and Culture Strategy.

7.   Where applicable, financial information and governance arrangements are included to provide transparency and assurance of oversight of delivery and effectiveness.

8.   In addition to providing information on delivery, there is an opportunity to highlight areas where barriers to efficiency can be unlocked through central government intervention. We have set out our recommendations in response to this ask in a separate document to be submitted to DLUHC alongside the productivity plan. This can be found in Annex B.

9.   Councils must ensure that there is member oversight and endorsement of the plan, and we have actively engaged Political Group Leaders in its development.

10.   Following submission, DLUHC have stated they will review the plans to identify common themes and issues across the sector and will not rate or score individual plans nor create any kind of league tables.

Financial Implications

11.   There are no budgetary implications or financial risks arising directly from this report, however there are opportunities to inform government of barriers to efficiency which they have the powers to unlock, including inconsistent and short-term funding.

Comments checked by:

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

Legal Implications

12.   There are no legal implications directly arising from this report.

Comments checked by:

Paul Grant, Head of Legal, paul.grant@oxfordshire.gov.uk

Staff Implications

13.   There are no staffing implications directly arising from this report.

Equality & Inclusion Implications

14.   There are no equalities implications directly arising from this report.

Sustainability Implications

15.   There are no sustainability implications directly arising from this report.

Risk Management

16.   There are no risk management implications directly arising from this report.

Consultations

17.   There is no requirement to publicly consult on the productivity plan however it will be published on our website following submission.

Lorna Baxter
Executive Director of Resources and Section 151 Officer

Annex: Annex A – Oxfordshire County Council Productivity Plan 2024-2025

                              Annex B – Annex to Productivity Plan, Barriers to Efficiency

Background papers: NIL

Contact Officer: Emily Schofield, Head of Strategy, Emily.schofield@oxfordshire.gov.uk
                          Kathy Wilcox, Head of Corporate Finance, Kathy.wilcox@oxfordshire.gov.uk

June 2024

This page is intentionally left blank

Oxfordshire County Council

Productivity Plan for 2024/25 to 2026/27

Productivity Plan 2024/25

Introduction

1. This productivity plan has been produced in response to the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities' review of productivity in local government.

2. As requested, the following sets out our key transformational programmes, priorities and future ambitions for becoming an employer, partner and place shaper of choice.

Financial Context

3. In 2024/25 the council plans to spend £899m on day to day services. 52% will be spent on adult and children's social care and 9% on Highways Maintenance.

4. The budget for 2024/25 which was approved by Council in February 2024 includes new savings of £13.9m. Investments of £10.6m include activity expected to reduce future demand for children's and adult's social care.

5. The council has a strong track record of delivering planned savings. New savings totalling £28.2m were built into directorate budgets in 2023/24 and 84% of these were achieved during the year. Over the last five years the council has achieved savings totalling £96.9m, 79% of the budgeted total. As set out in the Financial Strategy a financial indicator tracks forecast delivery during the year. Any savings not achieved are required to be followed up in the next financial year or are considered as part of the next Business Planning process.

6. The Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) approved by Council in February 2024 has a deficit of £13.9m from 2025/26. Whilst the amount of funding from Government and that which can be raised from Council Tax for 2025/26 and beyond has not been announced, action needs to be taken to ensure that it is possible to set a balanced budget in future years.

Delivering the Future Together

7. In 2021, the Council launched Delivering the Future Together (DTFT) to help the organisation be the best it can for its people and manage organisational change. Building on the success of the programme a new phase is expected to deliver transformational change and achieve our ambition to be an employer, partner and place shaper of choice.

8. Over the next two years, our vision for a successful and sustainable council of the future is one where the council:

- is smaller; operating from fewer buildings making sure those we keep are used to their full capacity;
- embraces technology where it improves productivity and connectivity to the people we serve, helping us become more efficient;
- collaborates more closely with partners in the voluntary and community sector so it is no longer the main provider for every service; and
- exploits commercial opportunities where they deliver value for our residents.

9. This will accelerate delivery of financial and non-financial benefits and the achievement of our operating principles and also support the council's financial sustainability.

10. To support this change, we are enabling more matrix working across the organisation to share skills and encourage a growth mindset whilst addressing resourcing need to deliver transformation at pace.

11. We have established a Change Academy which will see 24 self-nominated colleagues from across the council fast tracked through a project and programme management training programme and seconded into the Transformation Programme Management Office for 12 months.

12. We have a fully established Lean six sigma apprenticeship scheme which is open to anyone across the organisation and includes a Level 4 Improvement Practitioner Qualification. The scheme enables colleagues to gain business improvement skills and implement their learning to make efficiencies and process improvements.

13. We are also in the process of establishing three communities of practice in Data, Policy and Project Management which will allow all colleagues the opportunity to matrix work on key delivery projects to increase skill levels across the organisation and deliver consistent best practice, regardless of their current role or service area.

14. Programmes and projects within the transformation programme are monitored by the monthly Transformation Delivery Board who oversee progress and benefits realisation. Progress is reported to the Strategic Transformation Board, made up of our senior leadership team, who hold ultimate accountability for setting the strategy and maintain oversight of the priority programmes.

People and Culture Strategy & Organisational Design

15. Our People and Culture Strategy agreed in January 2024 aligns with the DTFT vision of becoming an Employer of Choice, by:

- 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

16. Aligned with DTFT, the commitments in this strategy prioritise investing in our current workforce to provide resilience ahead of making the organisation smaller.

17. Savings built into the 2024/25 – 2026/27 Medium Term Financial Strategy that reflect the need to reduce the size of the organisation are:

- £1.5m saving expected to be achieved through delayering and reducing the size of the organisation so that the council is sustainable.

- Reductions in staffing costs which will increase to £4.0m ongoing from 2024/25 are already included in the budget agreed in February 2023.

18. Improving our culture is everybody's responsibility and we have a set of values designed and agreed by colleagues which are front and centre of every behaviour.

19. Our commitment to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) is part of these values and is in line with our statutory duty set out in the Equality Act 2010. We are committed to a psychologically safe working environment and inclusive services for all our residents, protecting the nine protected characteristics with the addition of ensuring our decisions have no or mitigated negative impact on rural communities. armed forces, carers and areas of deprivation. All colleagues are required to complete a one-hour online training module on EDI.

20. Our Including Everyone Strategy was adopted in 2020 and its delivery and actions are the responsibility of everyone across the organisation, with measures updated annually and oversight led by our Performance and Corporate Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee. Consequently, spend on EDI is minimal.

21. We have proactively engaged in the Race Equality Code Accreditation scheme and are developing an action plan for implementation following the findings of our review. We are committed to addressing identified areas of improvement as a priority.

22. We have a number of voluntarily run internal networks for colleagues to join, including a women's, Race Equality And Cultural Heritage, LGBTQI+, neurodiversity, disability and wellbeing, young person's, Christian and Jewish network. There is an allocated annual budget of £12k to support network activity which can be used for conference attendance, promotional material, catering costs and external speakers. In 2023/24 only £1k of the budget was spent between five of the eight networks.

23. We enable the use of Trade Unions and have membership of Fire Brigades Union, Unison, National Union of Teachers and University and Colleges Union. The annual costs for this are £281k. As we are going through significant organisational change, it is prudent to hold these memberships to support colleagues across the organisation.

Commercial Strategy

24. The Commercial Strategy sets out our commercial ambition and a pathway to embedding commercial thinking as part of our culture and governance. Our vision is to leverage Oxfordshire's unique assets and strengths to optimise organisational efficiency, generate sustainable revenue, support the development of a more inclusive local economy and enhance public services through innovative and responsible commercial activities.

25. The initial focus is enabling a commercially minded organisation with an understanding of commercial awareness, value creation, strategic thinking, resourcefulness, entrepreneurial spirit, and collaboration. Activity will include information and systems, processes, people and capability, risk appetite and monitoring and evaluation.

26. One example project is our Green Financing strategy which is being developed to underpin the decarbonisation of the council's buildings and generate funding for the future capital programme.

27. The adoption of the commercial strategy and delivery plan will support services with achieving the 2024/25 budget saving of £2.0m relating to reductions in contract and commercial spend.

28. Progress of commercial activity is overseen by a dedicated Commercial Board that will operate under the direction of senior management.

Property Strategy

29. Our Property and Assets Strategy set outs our 10-year ambition for a property portfolio driven by the need to repurpose the estate to enable new ways of delivering services, support agile working and decarbonise existing buildings. It also looks at reducing the number of leased properties.

30. We are continuing to implement the strategy to support the revitalisation of the local corridor of regeneration through the Oxford city centre programme, by completing the construction of the fire station at Rewley Road, the sale of County Hall and subsequent move of our council offices to Speedwell House. Our relocation to this other council owned site will significantly enhance an area of the city where the market alone has not led to regeneration.

SEND Improvement Plan

31. Following an Ofsted judgement, we have worked collaboratively with partners to develop and implement a Priority Action Plan for the SEND Local Area Partnership.

32. An Oxfordshire SEND Strategic Improvement and Assurance Board (SSIAB) drives the action required and the internal Transformation Delivery Board has oversight of programme delivery. Membership of the SSIAB includes representatives from the parent carer forum.

33. Four multi-organisational Task and Finish Groups have been established to deliver actions relating to their assigned area of improvement.

Oxfordshire Way

34. The Oxfordshire Way was originally co-developed by Adult Social Care and the Voluntary Community Sector as an ambitious vision and programme to support working together in a more person-centred, outcomes-focused manner.

35. Its purpose is to build greater resilience in our communities with increased independence and improved ways of working to reduce demand on formal care services through proactive and preventative community outreach.

36. There is an opportunity to explore how Oxfordshire Way can be further expanded into the system. This would include how the principles can be implemented into children's (building on work done previously) and across the wider system and organisation. This could unlock further opportunities for Oxfordshire to enable a more holistic, asset-based approach to prevention and early intervention, supporting our aim of collaborating more closely with partners in the Voluntary and Community Sector.

Data

37. We are committed to improving our data-led approach with a number of priority areas to enable data, intelligence and insight at the heart of all we do. Our Business Intelligence transformation programme aims to accelerate our ambition to becoming an insight driven organisation.

38. To achieve this, we are mobilising a data, insight and delivery hub to centralise management of data and the delivery of insights. We will maintain a consistent approach through a data strategy that puts a spotlight on continuous improvement, fosters innovation and maintains data quality and integrity, underpinned by data maturity assessments to help identify areas for improvement.

39. Performance is measured and monitored regularly through monthly business management and monitoring reports which present the councils performance, risk and financial position.

40. Accountability for performance monitoring and measurement of outcomes lies with Performance & Corporate Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Cabinet, both of which receive regular updates on delivery of savings.

41. Residents can access our performance data using our citizens portal which hosts our Key Performance Indicators and qualitative progress measures.

Digital innovation

42. We are embracing technological innovation by proactively exploring the benefits of Artificial Intelligence, rolling out Microsoft Co-pilot on a large scale trial to measure the potential efficiencies that can be achieved through its use.

43. Longer term we are looking to the future with the development of a Technology Strategy that will set out our ambition for the use of technology and innovation over the next five years.

44. Our Improved Customer Experience transformation programme aims to increase digitisation and begin discovery of technology integration to improve our customer service and 'front door' accessibility. This is underpinned by the recently approved Customer Experience Strategy which aims to provide customers with a more accessible, aligned and coherent experience when they contact the council, with a clear feedback loop to continually improve the experience across all services.

45. We have launched a Business Services Transformation programme which will deliver improvements to HR, finance, payroll and procurement functions providing consistency and reduction in duplicative administrative tasks through the investment of optimised standard solutions.

Annex B – barriers to efficiency
Productivity Plan for 2024/25 to 2026/27

Annual Local Government Finance Settlement – we have an excellent track record of delivering savings and balancing budgets in Oxfordshire however ambitions for investment in longer term solutions and strategic planning are hindered by the uncertainty of single year financial settlements. Predictable funding through multi-year settlements and a long term view on council tax referendum limits would be a welcome advantage in better preparedness for the future needs of Oxfordshire.

Competitive bidding for funding – The council has to spend time and resources to prepare bids for additional funding from central government or other sources, which often have complex criteria and short deadlines. This creates a competitive culture across local councils that distracts from core service delivery and strategic planning. Longer lead in time for funding opportunities and simplified criteria, which is consistent across all central government departments, would enable a more efficient approach to accessing funding.

This consistency is also welcomed in a policy space, with inefficiency often a result of inconsistent policy from various departments, such as introduction of new regulations without proper consultation with local authorities, which leads to diverting of resources that may not align with local need or existing government strategies. We need more consistency, integration, and a longer-term outlook from central government and a coherency across departments with more recognition of the role and potential of local government in shaping and delivering policies.

Devolution – The Council submitted an expression of interest in a Level 2 county devolution deal in December 2023, with support of our City and District Councils and the Future Oxfordshire Partnership, our strategic partnership board. Oxfordshire as a system has an ambitious agenda for inclusivity, sustainability and strategic and community infrastructure. We have solid examples, including our green finance initiative, where innovative local approaches could contribute to national and international social, environmental and economic goals. At this time our expression of interest has not been taken forward by DLUHC and we would welcome the opportunity for further discussions. Beyond the current level 2 framework, we are developing high impact proposals, for examples for long-term alternative finance to accelerate delivery and enhance productivity. However, making the most of these opportunities would require government to engage in a more open and flexible way, beyond the simple delegations set out in the current framework.

Home to school transport – the unit costs of providing home to school transport continues to increase steeply, for both mainstream and children with SEN. In Oxfordshire this costs £34m per annum, with the most significant area of growth in providing home to school transport for children with SEND. The home to school transport service in OCC is restricted to the statutory minimum duty. Guaranteed additional funding to support meeting the growth in demand would enable us to allocate resources to ensure we meet the service requirements and be better placed to maintain other vital services that support children, families and schools. However, if central government funding cannot

be increased, then a change in the legislation that requires local authorities to provide home to school transport for free to eligible children, will allow local authorities to introduce changes in eligibility criteria and charging in the system (through a means tested approach) for school age children. This would create a more effective and targeted service that is more affordable.

Social Care reform – an aging population has seen the demand for adult social care continue to grow, with the number of 65+ predicted to increase by 21% in Oxfordshire by 2031. In addition, we have seen an increase in the number of younger adults with disabilities, which now account for nearly 50% of our spend on Adult Social Care, and increasing numbers of children with disabilities who will need support in adulthood, this increased demand on social care will grow further. Clarification around the proposed reforms, especially charging reforms, and certainty around funding would enable us to better prepare for the growing need without negatively impacting on other, vital services including provision of preventative services that will reduce demand on social care services.

Resources and Waste Strategy – we are unable to plan accordingly for the significant changes set out in the Resources and Waste Strategy and other proposed legislation due to the continued delays and lack of detail. Information on the interactions between policies, potential income and obligations for Oxfordshire will be welcomed as soon as reasonably possible to enable us to plan for this provision in the long term and identify strategic opportunities to further enhance our high performing waste management service provision.

Recruitment and retention – we face a challenge in attracting and retaining diverse and high-quality staff, particularly in relation to social care. Oxfordshire not only has to compete with other councils, within the travel to work geography, but also deliver our statutory responsibilities to the independent care sector relating to workforce. The social care sector as a whole is competing with other private and commercial industries, including retail, who are often able to provide candidates with better pay and benefits. This, coupled with skills shortage across specialised roles means it's increasingly difficult to attract qualified staff, which we have experienced as a pressure in qualified social work, therapies and safeguarding. Oxfordshire has purposefully sustained a fair level of fees that we pay in the context of Fair Cost of Care (higher than most other councils) so the overall funding to Adult Social Care is really important as a means of protecting market sustainability.

The issues in recruitment are cross-organisational. Oxfordshire has an older workforce and a shortage of younger workers which means various roles across council services are difficult to fill. Central government support of the LGA's national recruitment campaign will be welcomed in boosting the profile and accessibility of working in the public sector and support for agile working will help us appeal to stronger candidates without geography being a barrier for interest in our appropriate vacant positions.

Divisions Affected - All

CABINET

18 June 2024

Oxfordshire County Council to become a Council of Sanctuary

Report of the Executive Director of People

RECOMMENDATION

1. **The Cabinet is RECOMMENDED to**

    a) Agree that the Council should work towards submitting an application to become a recognised Council of Sanctuary, as proposed in the motion passed by full council on 7 November 2023 – see Annex 1 (iii);

    b) Note the requirement for the development of a strategy or framework for migration for future decision making and integration into the Council's business and budget planning process;

    c) Delegate the submission of an application for Sanctuary Status to the Executive Director of People in consultation with the Leader of the Council;

    d) Note the progress made against the other resolutions in the motion passed by Council on 7 November 2023 – see Annex 1 (i and ii).

Executive Summary

2. In response to the Council's request that Cabinet considers joining the Sanctuary Network, this report sets out what it means to be a Council of Sanctuary, the policy implications with respect to the administration's priorities and notes the resources that would be required to meet the criteria. It goes on to recommend that the Council works towards submitting an application.

3. The report also notes that since the motion was passed, the Leader of the Council has signed the national 'Fight the Anti-Refugee Laws' pledge on behalf of Council and has written to the Home Secretary calling on government to repeal recent migration legislation.

Background

4. Migration into the UK by those seeking sanctuary from war, persecution and serious human rights violations is a long-standing feature of British life. Given

geo-political and climate uncertainty, it is expected that these trends will continue into the long-term.

5.   County Council services have a long history of engaging with migrants and those seeking asylum through its statutory and community services. Children's Services have a dedicated team working with unaccompanied asylum-seeking children, school admissions teams and schools themselves work closely to integrate migrant children into education settings. Adult social care has duties towards all residents, regardless of their immigration status.

6.   Universal services, such as libraries and registrars, regularly provide help and support to some of the most vulnerable in our communities. In recent years, the Council and its partners have been heavily involved in specific schemes supporting new cohorts of individuals, including those fleeing war in Syria, Afghanistan and Ukraine, and British Nationals formerly residents of Hong Kong who are eligible to live in the UK.

7.   On 7 November 2023 a motion was passed at full council for the Council to consider joining the network of local authorities which, promote the inclusion and welfare of people who are fleeing violence and persecution, and become a recognised Council of Sanctuary. In addition, the motion resolved that the Council should support the 'Fight the Anti-Refugee Laws' pledge and make representations to government on recent legislation.

8.   Since the motion, the council has joined the Local Authority City of Sanctuary Network which supports organisations seeking to become a Council of Sanctuary. The Network has a clear set of criteria to assist councils with achieving sanctuary status based on 3 principles: learn, embed, and share. In order to consider the feasibility and impact of obtaining Council of Sanctuary Status, the county council's migration team has undertaken a gap analysis against these criteria and developed an outline plan to apply for sanctuary status.

Council of Sanctuary

9.   The City of Sanctuary approach was founded in 2005 in Sheffield when local organisations supporting people seeking sanctuary came together to pledge their support as a network. In 2007, with the support of Sheffield City Council and over 60 community organisations, Sheffield became the first City of Sanctuary. Since then, hundreds of local councils, schools, universities, libraries, theatres and more have been awarded sanctuary status, pledging to create a culture of solidarity, inclusivity and welcome through its networks.

10.   Prior to 2020, City of Sanctuary UK ran a local-wide assessment for whole places. It has subsequently moved to an assessment of individual institutions and their role. The proposed application would therefore be for the County Council, rather than Oxfordshire as a whole, albeit considering how the Council engages with partners is an essential element of the scheme. The Local Authority Sanctuary Network is supported by City of Sanctuary and aims to support those councils that are working towards the Sanctuary vision. While the

umbrella organisation is still called City of Sanctuary, it recognises the increasing presence of migrants and asylum seekers across the whole of the UK and network members include councils covering cities, towns and more rural areas.

11. In order to gain sanctuary status, the council would need to endorse the City of Sanctuary charter 2022-2025 and the values set out in this: Inclusive, open, participation, inspire, integrity and complete the 9-step application process, this is set out in Annex Three. This includes ensuring the voices of those with lived experience are heard and developing a three-year strategy (or framework) which embeds a culture of welcome and inclusion across the organisation and in the wider community. The criteria are set out in the gap analysis in annex two.

12. There are many local authorities that have gained accreditation (Liverpool, Lambeth, Newcastle) including councils such as Lancashire, and those who are in the process of gaining accreditation such as Oxford City Council and Cambridgeshire County Council. The County Council is already working with the City Council and the wider Local Authority Network to share learning and best practice.

The Oxfordshire County Council approach

13. All councils awarded the Sanctuary Accreditation up to this point are unitary or metropolitan boroughs and therefore have responsibilities for services including housing, welfare support, wellbeing and community development which in Oxfordshire sit with city and district functions. The Council will be mindful of its role and function, and the role of other partners, in developing its approach. This will require a focus on statutory services, providing a convening role and direction through the broader Oxfordshire Migration Partnership.

14. As such, the overarching approach underpinning the draft migration strategy is to integrate migration activities into existing services so that they become business as usual. Therefore, the Council will focus significantly on internal county council processes and core service delivery. There will be wider engagement with partners, including the City/ District councils, as well as those with lived experience, so that the strategy is not developed in a vacuum.

15. The council is not starting from a zero base and has undertaken a significant amount of work already to support vulnerable migrants, through a number of core council services including: children's early help, education and safeguarding, adults and housing, public health, community safety, customer services, as well as support services such as communications, IT, finance, legal and commissioning. The central point for much of this activity is through the council migration team which is the linchpin to the Oxfordshire Migration Partnership.

16. Following discussion with the national City of Sanctuary network lead and other local authorities who have gone through the accreditation process, the migration team has undertaken a gap analysis to identify the areas that the Council needs to focus on to develop the draft strategy. An outline plan sets out a timeline for

engaging with Directorates to achieve this, under the headings of learn, embed and share – see Annex Three.

Oxfordshire Migration Partnership

17.   The Council is already undertaking a lot of activity to support refugees and asylum seekers as a key partner leading the multi-agency Oxfordshire Migration Partnership.

18.   The partnership's ambition is *to maintain an Oxfordshire refugee and asylum migration system that ensures a warm welcome for all new arrivals and embraces and supports independent living for those staying in the county.* It is chaired by the Deputy Chief Executive (Transformation and Operations) at South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse District Councils, with the County Council's Head of Migration as the Deputy Chair. Membership includes representation across the county council, plus the district/ city councils, ICB BOB[1], Thames Valley Police and local expertise from the Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS), including Asylum Welcome, Connection Support and Refugee Resource.

19.   The work of the migration partnership is overseen at the strategic level by the countywide Chief Executives Group.

20.   The partnership responds collaboratively to the myriad of government resettlement and visa schemes that have been set up over the past couple of years including Homes for Ukraine (HfU), ARAP/ ACRS[2], Hong Kong British Nationals Overseas (BNO)[3], UK Resettlement Schemes (UKRS), as well as responding to the needs of asylum seekers staying in the contingency hotels.

21.   Over the past year, the partnership has delivered significant achievements which include the following[4]:

(a)   Welcomed over 2,600 Ukrainians to the county, including delivering safeguarding and welfare checks in every host family home.

(b)   Continued to meet moral and financial obligations to support almost 1,300 hosts, including 'topping up' monthly thank you payments to £550 per host arrangement.

(c)   Created a clear pipeline for hosted HfU families to transfer into settled accommodation or rematched with new host families.

(d)   Developed a £1.2m employment investment programme which is currently being delivered to support Ukrainians into meaningful work, with wider benefits being created for other migrant groups wherever possible.

(e)   Collaborated on a partnership response to the Home Office Consultation on Safe and Legal routes.

---

[1] *ICB BOB - Integrated Care Board for Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire*

[2] *Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy (ARAP) and Afghan Citizens' Resettlement Scheme (ACRS)*

[3] *BNO – British Nationals Overseas*

[4] *Actual numbers have been removed as this is confidential Home Office data*

(f) Completed a new tender process for commissioned HfU wraparound support services.

(g) Agreed funding allocations to the end of March 2025, and created a more systematic approach to managing and monitoring funding spend.

(h) Established a new small grants scheme to support building a community network of Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) organisations supporting vulnerable migrant communities.

(i) Re-oriented the Oxfordshire migration system to include all vulnerable migrants, refugees and asylum-seekers.

(j) Ensured all migrant children are supported into schools within five weeks of arrival[5].

(k) Delivered a powerful multi-agency partnership workshop on sharing experiences of migration at the front line which is now an annual event.

(l) Managed the exit of Afghans (adults and children) from two Bridging hotels in the county.

(m) Worked with VCS to support asylum seekers staying temporarily in contingency accommodation (hotels).

(n) Supported the Home Office with the closure of Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UAS) hotel in Banbury, with all remaining children taken into the care of Oxfordshire's Childrens Social Services.

(o) Worked with the MOD to set up appropriate facilities to support Afghan families staying in Transitional/ Service Family Accommodation (TSFA/SFA), with a specific focus safeguarding and ensuring access to schools and education for children and young people.

22. A partnership outcomes framework is being finalised and allows the partnership to measure success against agreed deliverables. As part of its preventative approach, a key objective for the partnership is to prevent homelessness. By the end of Q2 last year, only 3.9% of households were accessing temporary accommodation against a target of 10% however, by Q3 this figure had risen to 10.1% - which has a significant impact on the cost[6] of homelessness across the county. A similar outcomes framework will be developed for the Council migration strategy.

Policy and resource implications

23. The values of the sanctuary criteria fit well with the Council's long-standing services to migrants and its current partnership approach. The Sanctuary Charter is well aligned with the council's ambitions for migration, as set out in the partnership vision outlined above. Working through the application criteria will provide a valuable framework for reviewing how services deliver for migrants, refugees, and asylum seekers, identifying any opportunities for improvement, gaps or barriers to service access. It would be the intended approach of the Council to undertake a review within its business planning

---

[5] This period of time has been longer for ARAP children staying in Transitional Service Family Accommodation (TSFA) as the County Council had to secure additional funding from the Home Office to provide schooling to children staying temporarily at the MOD site at Shrivenham.
6 The government's Evidence review of the cost of homelessness found that homelessness costs roughly £24,000-£30,000 per person.

framework with an additional migration lens, to ensure the specific needs of these residents are being considered within service plans and operations.

24.   No specific new resources are proposed for the application process as the migration team will engage with services, with the support of business planning and policy teams as appropriate. While it is anticipated that this process may identify the need for changed ways of working, any new resource requirement would need to be considered through the budget and business planning process alongside other priorities.

25.   By seeking sanctuary accreditation, the council would be affirming its commitment to build a refugee protection system that treats all people seeking sanctuary with dignity and compassion and ensuring that its policies and services support this commitment.

26.   This report therefore recommends that Cabinet agrees to the intention agreed at Full Council and directs officers to take forward the application process.

Developing the Draft Migration Strategy

27.   If Cabinet supports the recommendation to seek to gain Council of Sanctuary recognition, officers will engage more fully with services during May and June 2024 in order to develop the required migration strategy and to identify opportunities and gaps within directorate business plans. The draft strategy will be developed by December 2024, and supported by a clear and transparent plan to support people, including those who have no recourse to public funds (NRPF), providing the foundation for our Council of Sanctuary submission.

Further resolutions of Cabinet

28.   On the 8 February 2024 Cllr Leffman as Leader of the Council signed a fight the anti-refugee laws pledge on behalf of the council. The pledge calls on the government to repeal the Illegal Migration Act and the Nationality and Borders Act and to withdraw from the UK-Rwanda partnership.

29.   To this end, on the 9 February 2024 Cllr Leffman wrote to the Home Secretary to express concerns about the Illegal Migration Act, which became UK law in July 2023, noting this to be is a barrier to the provision of safe services that deliver the best outcomes for those seeking sanctuary and for the settled community.

30.   The Council continues to engage at officer level through the South-East Strategic Partnership for Migration and attending ministerial meetings in order inform government of the impact of their policies in practice.

Corporate Policies and Priorities

31.   Becoming a Council of Sanctuary directly supports the Council's priority of tackling inequality in Oxfordshire. Also, it indirectly addresses the prioritisation of residents' health and wellbeing. This is achieved by understanding the needs

of those seeking sanctuary who are some of the most vulnerable residents in the county, whilst also recognising the needs of the established community at a place level.

Financial Implications

32.   The financial implications of the recommendation in this report are primarily related to reviewing the extent to which migration issues are integrated into mainstream services so that they become business as usual. Officer resources to develop the strategy and support the integration of the sanctuary approach will be drawn from the grant-funded migration team. Grant funding may be available to fund any identified enabling activity, such as to meet additional training needs for staff.

33.   To date, the corporate migration team (3.0 Full Time Equivalent) has been funded using the HfU and related government asylum support funding which has been allocated to support the team until March 2025. As this funding is reducing there will be a need in future years to consider the resources required to support migration centrally within the county council. A separate business case is being developed for this purpose.

Comments checked by:
Prem Salhan, Interim Strategic Finance Business Partner
prem.salhan@oxfordshire.gov.uk

Legal Implications

34.   There are no legal implications as a consequence of approving the recommendations.

Comments checked by:
Paul Grant, Head of Legal and Deputy Monitoring Officer
paul.grant@oxfordshire.gov.uk

Staff Implications

35.   The primary aim is to integrate migration across the Council so that it becomes business as usual and therefore the impact on resources will be minimal.

36.   Additional training needs for existing staff in services that will support vulnerable migrants may be required, but it is anticipated that, in the main, migration will be integrated into existing training programmes as appropriate.

37.   As noted above under financial implications, the HfU funding is reducing and there is a need to consider the resources required to support migration centrally within the Council. A separate business case is being developed for this purpose.

Equality & Inclusion Implications

38. The migration team is supporting the review of the current Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) framework so that the draft migration strategy is aligned to the updated approach. Through identifying opportunities for improving service delivery with some of our most vulnerable residents, a strategic approach will focus on how the specific needs of vulnerable migrants can be met whilst considering how the learning can bring wider benefits by improving services for all to become an employer of choice, place-shaper of choice and partner of choice.

39. An Equality Impact Assessment will be undertaken to support the draft migration strategy.

Sustainability Implications

40. There are no significant impacts in respect of environmental sustainability in relation to the Council becoming a Council of Sanctuary.

Risk Management

41. The main risk of not integrating support for vulnerable migrants across the Council is that the needs of some of the county's most vulnerable residents are not met and the Council will not be successful in gaining accreditation to become a Council of Sanctuary.

42. A further risk is that migration continues to be viewed as a specialist area across the Council with knowledge and understanding about the needs of people seeking sanctuary not being embedded across Council services, processes and procedures.

Consultations

43. The migration team has engaged with the Oxfordshire Migration Partnership, the City Council, and wider County Council services that are most likely to be impacted.

44. The team has engaged VCS partners supporting refugees, migrants and asylum seeker across the county.

Robin Rogers, Programme Director (Partnerships & Delivery)

Annex:	Annex 1 - Motion by Councillor Andrew Gant: passed by Full Council - 7 November 2023
	Annex 2 – Outline plan for signing-off the draft migration strategy
	Annex 3 - City of Sanctuary Application Process and definitions of Learn, Embed, Share

Background papers: Nil

Other Documents: Nil

Contact Officer: Carys Alty, Head of Migration Policy and Partnerships, 07876 790244 carys.alty@oxfordshire.gov.uk

Annex 1: Motion by Councillor Andrew Gant: passed by Full Council - 7 November 2023

Oxfordshire County Council is proud of our history of welcoming people seeking safety in our county. We believe that:

- everyone has the right to seek safety, and everyone's claim for asylum should be treated equally and fairly;
- the Government's 'anti-refugee' laws undermine internationally recognized rights for people fleeing war and persecution to seek safety;
- people seeking safety should be housed as our neighbours and as a part of our communities;
- the UK needs an asylum system that empowers people seeking safety to rebuild their lives and enables communities to welcome them;

Council resolves to:

i. defend the right to seek safety from war and persecution in the UK by signing the national 'Fight the Anti-Refugee Laws' pledge;

ii. call on the UK Government to repeal the Illegal Migration Act and the Nationality and Borders Act, withdraw the UK–Rwanda partnership,

iii. request Cabinet to

- work with Local Authorities and communities to build a refugee protection system that treats all people with dignity and compassion;

- continue to lobby against any UK Government plans to build or repurpose facilities in Oxfordshire to detain or warehouse people seeking safety;

- work with local organisations and people with lived experience of the asylum system to identify ways to mitigate the effects of these measures in Oxfordshire;

- consider joining the network of cities and towns which promote the inclusion and welfare of people who are fleeing violence and persecution and become a recognised Council of Sanctuary

Annex 2: Outline plan for signing-off the draft migration strategy

Criteria	Activity required to support delivery	Date of completion
Council passes a motion to become a Council of Sanctuary (CoS)	Motion passed	7 November 2023
	Join LA City of Sanctuary Network	January 2024
Commit to working with the local City of Sanctuary group, seek their endorsement for the award	Engage other LAs to learn from their experience, especially Oxford City Council who are close to submitting their application	April 2024
LEARN - work to show the commitment of the LA to learn about what it means to be seeking sanctuary. It is important to include people seeking sanctuary in learning	Cabinet decision to approve their support for achieving sanctuary status	June 2024
	Gap analysis	April 2024
	Engage DLTs/ services in Council of Sanctuary principles	July 2024
	Support Refugee Week	June 2024
	Work with VCS to capture user voices to better understand needs Engage Universities to identify common areas of work	July 2024
EMBED - local authority is taking positive action to implement welcome, safety, and inclusion	As above, continue to work DLTs to identify areas where improvements can be made to increase welcome, safety and inclusion	July 2024
	Update council communications to reflect Council of Sanctuary ambitions and update webpages to welcome and inform all new arrivals into the county.	July 2024
	Set up project group to develop action plan	June 2024
	Engage Cllrs: provide briefing	June 2024
SHARE - evidence that the place is seeking to share experience of sanctuary and welcome with the wider community, local organisations and spreading the word	Work with Oxfordshire Community and Voluntary Action (OCVA), Oxfordshire Inclusive Economy Partnership (OIEP), Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership (OxLEP), Universities, Migration Partnership to promote and share learning and good practice	Ongoing
Commit to work with partners to identify national policy issues to make collective representation to government	To continue to gather evidence of what works/ doesn't work and evidence base and raise awareness of this through the Council of Sanctuary network locally and nationally	September 2024
Produce a written strategy which is publicly available and sets out commitment for at least 3 years	Develop draft 3-year strategy Apply for Council of Sanctuary status	September 2024

Annex 3: Application Process for Council of Sanctuary status and definitions of Learn, Embed, Share

The City of Sanctuary charter 2022-2025 can be found here.

The 9-step application process and minimum criteria for award, including the definitions of Learn, Embed, Share are as follows:

Step 1 – The council publicly commits to joining the City of Sanctuary Local Authority Network, and to work towards recognition as a 'Council of Sanctuary'. This can be via a motion at a public committee such as Council or Cabinet.

Step 2 – The council becomes a member of the Local Authority Network by signing the membership form. In joining the network the council is committing to work towards the 'Council of Sanctuary' Award and is agreeing to sign up as a Supporting Organisation (this includes an endorsement of the City of Sanctuary Charter).

Step 3 – The council engages with the City of Sanctuary local group (if one exists), local refugee organisations, and people with lived experience. Councils usually do this via existing partnership/multi-agency (Sanctuary) forums, or where such don't exist or don't undertake strategic work the council can set one up. (There is no one size fits all approach to engagement so please ask the City of Sanctuary UK officer for local authorities for good practice examples).

Step 4 - The council develops a strategy/framework for supporting people seeking sanctuary in the community by embedding 'Sanctuary' principles across council services and works to promote inclusion and welcome across the wider community. Councils usually develop Sanctuary Strategies either as a standalone or as part of an existing strategy. Councils can focus on reviewing/uplifting council services or facilitate the development of a partnership strategy which includes services provided by a wider section of local stakeholders.

Step 5 – The council reviews the LEARN, EMBED and SHARE criteria set out below and ensures it meets them, and when ready, applies for recognition by submitting the council specific Awards Application form.

Step 6 – The application will be appraised by a panel which will normally include members of the local City of Sanctuary group (if one exists), people with lived experience of seeking sanctuary, representatives from local refugee supporting organisations, and members of the City of Sanctuary Local Authority Steering Group (usually officers and/or councillors who have been through the process themselves). The panel assessment can be thought of as a peer review and usually results in a set of recommendations.

Step 7 - When a local authority is able to demonstrate that all of the minimum criteria are met, the council will be awarded a 'Council of Sanctuary' for a 3-year period, and will be given the right to use the 'Council of Sanctuary' logo to recognise their commitment accompanied by the wording:
"X….is a recognised County/District/Borough/City/Unitary/Parish/Town [delete as appropriate] Council of Sanctuary.

Step 8 – A plan should be made for the Award presentation to include an event/ media statement etc. to celebrate the achievement of the council (and local partners) in including and supporting people seeking sanctuary. Please note that the small application fee must be paid before the Award is made public.

Step 9 –The recommendations agreed during the appraisal process should be discussed and where possible taken forward during the three-year award period. This will inform a review (re-accreditation) at the end of the three years. A new application has to be submitted to renew the award after three years and if successful an updated certificate of recognition can be issued.

Minimum Criteria

This guidance aims to outline the minimum criteria required for the award. We would encourage local authorities to build on these in a way that best reflects their specific context.

Criterion 1: Pass a council motion setting out commitment to being a place of sanctuary, joining the Local authority Network and working toward the 'Council of Sanctuary' award at some point in the future.

Criterion 2: Join the City of Sanctuary Local Authority Network which includes a pledge to support the vision of City of Sanctuary and an endorsement of its charter.

Criterion 3: Commit to working with the local City of Sanctuary group (which could be via a specific local pledge) and/or other refugee supporting organisations and/or networks.

Criterion 4: Show evidence of the work with the local City of Sanctuary group (and/or other refugee organisations/networks) and receive the endorsement from those groups for the award application.

In addition to the above criteria all Sanctuary Awards follow the Learn, Embed and Share principles:

Learn: learning about what it means to be seeking sanctuary, both in general, and specifically.
Embed: taking positive action to embed concepts of welcome, safety and inclusion and ensuring this progress remains sustainable.
Share: sharing your vision, achievements, what you have learned, and good practice with other local authorities, the local community and beyond.

The 'Learn, Embed and Share' criteria specific to councils are outlined below:

Learn Criteria

The LEARN element encompasses any activity that seeks to improve awareness of the sanctuary-seeking community and the reasons why people are forced to migrate. Knowledge of the asylum system or of the many challenges and institutional barriers

which face people seeking sanctuary can help officers and members to reflect on how they might help and better focus their efforts. This is often best achieved by including people seeking sanctuary and finding ways to learn from them as well as about refugee issues more broadly. To receive an award, the local authority must meet the following LEARN criteria:

Criterion 5: Awareness raising opportunities are provided, and opportunities for discussion around the theme of welcome and sanctuary are facilitated on a community level. This can be via partnership/multi-agency forums

Criterion 6: Evidence of refugee/asylum/migration awareness raising is included into everyday business of the local authority e.g. staff induction/training.

Criterion 7: Commitment to platform and amplify the voices of people seeking sanctuary. This can be by including people with lived experience on 'sanctuary forums' or by ensuring meaningful engagement on strategy development.

Embed Criteria

For City of Sanctuary UK, 'embedding' means that the local authority is taking positive action to implement welcome, safety and inclusion within services and beyond. City of Sanctuary UK would like details on how the local authority will ensure a continuation of support for sanctuary on an ongoing basis. To receive an award, the local authority must meet the following 'embed' criteria:

Criterion 8: Produce a written strategy (either a standalone strategy or as part of a broader strategy e.g. equality, migration etc.) which is publicly available and sets out commitment of the council for at least three years. This should be co-produced as far as possible with people seeking sanctuary and organisations representing them.
As part of the strategy the council should also have a clear and transparent plan to support people with NRPF.

Criterion 9: The local authority must demonstrate how it has embedded the concepts of welcome and inclusion across the organisation. This should show how the local authority will continue to develop and sustain a culture of welcome beyond the award. Councils often develop internal officer groups bringing together heads of service (or team leads) from various service areas that oversee the delivery of the strategy.

Criterion 10: The council is able to demonstrate a commitment to being an anti-racist organisation and has policies and practice in place that align to their work to become a 'Council of Sanctuary'.

Share Criteria

City of Sanctuary UK will be seeking evidence that the council shares its experience of sanctuary and welcome with the wider community, local organisations and spreading the word about their welcoming efforts. To receive an award, the local authority must meet the following criteria:

Criterion 11: The local authority publicly highlights its work in support of welcome and inclusion by making it visible on its website and noticeboards NB. Once the sanctuary award is received, we would expect the logo and a link to the webpage on the website.

Criterion 12: Commitment to supporting initiatives that embeds welcome and fosters solidarity between receiving communities and people seeking sanctuary e.g. participation in Refugee Week or other cultural events. As well as promoting sanctuary principles among local statutory and voluntary sector partners.

Criterion 13: Commitment to on-going engagement with the City of Sanctuary Local Authority Network. This may include sharing resources, ideas and achievements via the network and City of Sanctuary UK website.

Criterion 14: Work with the national Local Authority network and local partners to identify national policy issues in order to make collective representations to the government to encourage and enable change via contributing to consultations, position statements etc.

This page is intentionally left blank

Divisions Affected - All

CABINET

18 June 2024

Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking Statement

Report by Executive Director of Resources & Section 151 Officer

RECOMMENDATION

1. **Cabinet is RECOMMENDED to**
   a) Approve the Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking Statement for Oxfordshire County Council

Executive Summary

2. The Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking Statement provides an overview of the council's commitment to prevent modern slavery in our work and supply chains, together with a summary of relevant policies, training, and risk management processes in place to support this. The council does not currently have a Modern Slavery Statement for the whole organisation.

3. The Modern Slavery Act 2015 requires commercial organisations with a turnover of over £36 million to produce a Modern Slavery Statement outlining their procedures around reducing the dangers of modern slavery in their work.[1] The Act does not require local authorities to write such a policy as a statutory duty, but many authorities have published statements to demonstrate their commitment to fair and equal procurement, and going above and beyond in limiting instances of slavery in work done by suppliers and partners.

Background

4. The Modern Slavery Act 2015 addresses issues of "slavery, servitude and forced or compulsory labour", including human trafficking (transporting or coercing people in order to benefit from their service or work). This can take various forms, such as domestic servitude, forced labour, sexual exploitation, and criminal exploitation.

5. Modern slavery and human trafficking are live issues in Oxfordshire. A recent report from Oxford City Council highlighted that there had been 379 reports of cases involving adults in Oxfordshire in 2022 and 2023. These cases were

---

[1] The Modern Slavery Act 2015 (Transparency in Supply Chains) Regulations 2015 (legislation.gov.uk)

reported to the Anti-Slavery Coordinator Oxfordshire (ASCO), based in Oxford City Council, in a role funded by the Community Safety Fund and the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner.

Location	Total Number of Cases Reported to ASCO 2022 & 2023
Oxford City	126 (101 individual; 25 business/premises)
Oxfordshire	253 (210 individual; 43 business/premises)

Oxfordshire County Council's Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking Statement

6. Whilst the Modern Slavery Act 2015 does not require local authorities to produce such a Modern Slavery Statement as a statutory duty, many councils voluntarily choose to write one to outline their commitment to ethical procurement and reducing exploitation in their work and local area.

7. Oxfordshire County Council currently addresses the risk and management of modern slavery in a range of service-specific policies, including around pay and recruitment, safeguarding vulnerable children and adults, and our procurement processes. However, we do not currently have a council-wide statement recognising all of the relevant procedures and policies in place.

8. The council-wide Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking statement has been drafted to affirm our commitment, and demonstrate work undertaken, to eliminate and prevent acts of modern slavery and human trafficking within the organisation and our supply chains and partners' procurement processes.

9. The statement will be published on Oxfordshire County Council's website and registered on the government list of relevant policies.

Corporate Policies and Priorities

10. The Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking Statement supports Oxfordshire County Council's Strategic Plan to tackle inequalities and support the health and wellbeing or residents.

Financial Implications

11. There are no financial implications arising from this report. Activity related to modern slavery and human trafficking is built into the functions of the council and as such funded as part of the council's budget.

Comments checked by:

Kathy Wilcox, Head of Corporate Finance and Deputy Section 151 Officer, kathy.wilcox@oxfordshire.gov.uk (Finance)

Legal Implications

12. There are no legal implications arising from this report.

Comments checked by:

Paul Grant, Head of Legal and Deputy Monitoring Officer, paul.grant@oxfordshire.gov.uk (Legal)

Staff Implications

13. There are no staff implications arising from this report.

Equality & Inclusion Implications

14. The Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking Statement is expected to have positive impacts on all communities and protected characteristics. The statement reaffirms and demonstrates our commitment to eliminate and prevent acts of modern slavery and human trafficking within the organisation and our supply chains, and applies equally to all groups.

Sustainability Implications

15. There are no sustainability implications arising from this report.

Risk Management

16. There are no risks arising directly from this report.

Lorna Baxter
Executive Director of Resources and Section 151 Officer

Annex: Oxfordshire County Council Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking Statement 2023/24

Contact Officer: Karina Russell, Policy Team Leader, 07917921511, karina.russell@oxfordshire.gov.uk

June 2024

This page is intentionally left blank

Oxfordshire County Council Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking Statement 2023/24

Introduction

Oxfordshire County Council has an ethical duty as an employer and service procurer to manage and reduce the impacts of modern slavery and human trafficking. We are committed to taking action on modern slavery risks across all our services, both direct and commissioned.

The Modern Slavery Act 2015 addresses issues of "slavery, servitude and forced or compulsory labour". In its wider sense, this includes:

- Sexual exploitation
- Labour exploitation
- Criminal exploitation
- Financial exploitation
- Domestic servitude
- Human trafficking
- Child slavery
- Forced or early marriage
- Offences under the Protection of Children Act 1978 or the Sexual Offences Act 2003

This statement outlines the policies and processes we have in place for managing risk, identifying occurrences, and preventing slavery and human trafficking.

Policies and procedures

Codes of Conduct – All members must comply with the Members' Code of Conduct, which sets out the ethical framework in which they must act and behave as part of the council's business. The Officers' Code of Conduct sets out the expectations and principles all employees must follow.

Working Time Regulations – We follow regulations arising from the Working Time Directive of the European Union which ensures the health and well-being of our employees by laying out the minimum appropriate conditions pertaining to weekly work hours, annual leave and rest breaks during workdays.

Pay Policy – We have nine pay schemes in operation which are agreed with trade unions, ensuring that all employees are paid fairly.

Recruitment – We ensure all new employees are properly vetted and provide guidance on pre-employment checks to hiring managers so that they verify candidates' identities, their right to work in the UK, qualifications, and possession of their own personal bank account.

Agency workforce and fixed-term contracts - We ensure that all those we employ are treated fairly, including on matters of pay and working hours. We have a policy on fixed-term contracts of employment which ensures similar terms and conditions of

permanent employees. Agency workers are hired from the council's approved agencies who carry out all necessary pre-employment checks.

Ethical Procurement Policy Statement – Our expectation is that all stages of the supply chain, including for goods and services procured from third parties, are ethically sourced and suppliers are legally compliant and respect the dignity and safety of their workers. We expect suppliers to have suitable and ethical policies in place, and concerns or reports to them must be taken seriously. We reserve the right to terminate the contract of any supplier who does not comply with these standards or take appropriate action following a challenge or disclosure.

Social Value Policy – Our Social Value Policy specifically addresses the risk of modern slavery by including three relevant measures for our bidders to disclose:
- Number of full-time equivalent (FTE) employees hired on the contract that are survivors of modern slavery.
- Initiatives taken throughout the local and global supply chain to strengthen the identification, monitoring and reduction of risks of modern slavery occurring in relation to the contract.
- Number of FTE employees in the supply chain with specific responsibility to identify and manage the risk of modern slavery occurring in relation to the contract.

These measures are prioritised during the bidding process, where eligible, to encourage prospective suppliers to select them as part of their bid offer. Contracted suppliers are required to meet the targets they set during bidding which are monitored through contract delivery.

Whistleblowing Policy – We encourage all our employees, including contractors and agency staff, to report any concerns around council activities or supply chains without fear of discrimination, victimisation, or any other negative consequence. Our whistleblowing policy aims to facilitate disclosures employees may wish to make easily and safely.

Employee training

There is a range of training available for all employees of the council to make them aware of the signs that may indicate abuse and mistreatment, and how to manage risks and suspected cases. All employees are required to complete basic training on safeguarding children and adults.

Risk management

Our Procurement Hub oversees all our procurement and tendering activities above £100,000, ensuring our process fulfils its legal obligations and appropriately manages the risk of modern slavery throughout the procurement lifecycle.

Our Quality Improvement Team works across Adult and Children's services to monitor our providers and share findings with relevant partners.

Partnership working

We are a member of the Safer Oxfordshire Partnership (also known as 'Safer Oxfordshire'), which provides strategic oversight and direction for preventing crime and anti-social behaviour. The partnership supports the four Community Safety Partnerships (CSPs) led by the district councils, which act as a single point of contact for the office of the Police and Crime Commissioner and help co-ordinate community safety priorities.

We are members of the Oxfordshire Health and Wellbeing Board, associated Health Improvement Board and The Children's Trust. We also work closely with Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West Integrated Care Board (BOB ICB) and are members of the Oxfordshire Safeguarding Adults Board (OSAB) and the Oxfordshire Safeguarding Children's Board (OSCB). These relationships allow us to work in collaboration with other key system partners.

We are part of a co-ordination group to deliver the statutory community safety requirements across the county with district councils, Thames Valley Police, the National Probation Service, the BOB ICB, and the voluntary sector.

We take our responsibilities seriously in escalating and tackling slavery and exploitation in all its forms. Our connections and broader work as a council are outlined within the Safer Oxfordshire Partnership's strategy and action plans.

Safeguarding

We are committed to safeguarding children and vulnerable adults, and we ensure that our policies and protocols protect the welfare of those with additional needs, as well as making sure we can identify and mitigate sources of harm to them.

We have established clear referral pathways around modern slavery. Referrals to Adult Social Care and Children's Social Care are handled by trained officers and details around referrals are passed onto the Oxfordshire Safeguarding Adult Board, or the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH). The Oxfordshire Safeguarding Children's Board is also informed of relevant reports.

Approval

This document constitutes Oxfordshire County Council's modern slavery and human trafficking statement, made with reference to Section 54(1) of the Modern Slavery Act 2015, and relates to all services and activities across the Council.

This policy has been approved by Oxfordshire County Council's Cabinet on the 18th June 2024.

Corporate Lead: LORNA BAXTER

Council Lead: CLLR LIZ LEFFMAN

This page is intentionally left blank

Divisions Affected - All

CABINET – 18 July 2024

Period Poverty Scheme Trial

Report by Executive Director of Resources & Section 151 Officer

RECOMMENDATION

1.   **Cabinet is RECOMMENDED to**

   a) Approve the allocation of the £10,000 from the cost-of-living programme funding for a trial scheme of period products to support residents experiencing period poverty.
   b) Note the update on progress made on the Period Poverty motion approved by Council on 12 September 2023.

Executive Summary

2.   Since the period poverty motion was approved by Council in September 2023, a cross organisational officer working group has been established to consider the scope for a trial period poverty scheme in Oxfordshire. A number of options have been considered for provision for residents for both disposable and reusable products, as well as for council employees.

3.   Cabinet is recommended to proceed with a trial using the £10,000 funding from cost-of-living work to establish the scale and uptake of period products for residents. The trial will offer both disposable and reusable products, with the aim of assessing demand and preferences for different types of period product and the most appropriate locations to access them. The trial will also collect feedback to inform future provision and understand long term budget requirements.

Background

4.   Period poverty is a term that refers to the inability of individuals to access menstrual products, due to financial constraints, limited availability, or stigma preventing them from seeking the essential products they need.

5.   In 2023, ActionAid[1] found that 21% of people who need period products were struggling to afford them, this was up from 12% in 2022. They also found that 27% of 18–24-year-olds who need them experience period poverty, making

---
[1] UK Period poverty rises from 12 to 21% | ActionAid UK

them the worst affected age group. Of those affected by period poverty, 41% kept sanitary pads or tampons in for longer, and 8% re-used disposable pads. 37% said they had used tissues or cotton wool instead of sanitary products in the last 12 months. 13% used socks or other clothing, and 9% resorted to using paper or newspaper.

6.   In September 2023, a motion on period poverty was passed unanimously by Council. The motion asked Cabinet to:
- Look into a period pant scheme, akin to reusable nappy schemes, to help with the costly purchase of more climate friendly products for all ages.
- Promote the national school period product scheme to all Oxfordshire schools and monitor gaps in uptake.
- Make free Menstrual products accessible in every council owned building in the county.

7.   A cross council working group was formed in late 2023, to consider a cohesive and coordinated response to all elements of the motion. The group is comprises representatives from Partnerships and Delivery, Public Health, Education, Facilities Management, Libraries, Waste Strategy and Circular Economy and is led by the Policy team.

8.   There are a number of council buildings that already have existing provision. Didcot and Abingdon libraries currently supply period products, however these are organised and donated by a local organisation, All Yours. The Council currently only supports this scheme in terms of hosting the boxes and handing them out when requested by residents, it has not supported the scheme financially.

9.   In May 2024, Cabinet approved £10,000 of funding from the cost-of-living programme to support the motion and allow for one off provision of period products to help assess demand for future resourcing decisions.

10.   Research has shown that most other councils across the UK that offer free period products primarily distribute them through libraries. Local authorities in Scotland and Wales have a responsibility to provide products, as well as funding from their devolved administrations, meaning their schemes are often large in scope and scale. In Northern Ireland, period products are also now available in all libraries. Local authorities in England with period poverty schemes tend to offer products on a smaller scale often at only one or two locations.

Response to the Motion - Reusable Products

11.   Prior to the motion, the Waste and Circular Economy team had already been considering best ways to promote reusable period products. They are currently working with students at Oxford Brookes University who will be trialling different reusable period products and writing blogs and articles on their experiences to promote reusables in Oxfordshire.

12. The reusable nappy scheme allows parents to borrow, trial, and then return the products, and there is no evidence that a similar scheme is desired by residents in relation to period products. Research has not found any scheme like this operating in the UK, and where trials have existed, they have given away free products rather than lending them. A loan scheme also would not help with covering the cost of purchasing the products, therefore mirroring the reusable nappy scheme is not recommended.

13. The working group and Waste Team have instead investigated options to directly distribute reusable products to those most in need. It is proposed that this element of the motion be incorporated into the approach of providing free menstrual products to residents.

Response to the Motion - Period Product Scheme for Schools

14. The national school period product scheme is currently available for schools until 'at least July 2024'. It has already been promoted to all Oxfordshire schools via the School News Newsletter. Further communication will be timed with the wider period poverty programme, so that additional resources such as access points for free period products, and any reusables schemes, can be promoted.

15. The Department for Education (DfE) has confirmed that since its launch in January 2020, 99% of secondary schools have ordered products using the scheme. A Freedom of Informtion request to DfE has confirmed that in Oxfordshire 97% of secondary schools have purchased products for their students through the scheme between September 2020 and July 2023. Data for uptake on the scheme after September 2023 is not currently available.

Response to the Motion - Free Menstrual Products in all Oxfordshire County Council Buildings

16. To run a successful trial to identify demand, it is recommended to distribute products in areas that are public facing and will be close to residents in need. It is proposed to prioritise trialling the scheme in Oxfordshire County Council buildings that serve residents in areas of deprivation, and support residents who are more likely to be experience financial difficulty. The need of council employees has also been considered.

17. Data on uptake of products, both from members of the public in other period poverty schemes and in office buildings, has been challenging to find. Other local authorities that have been spoken to either do not have data available on uptake or has used donations to fulfil products. This has at times led to the products running out and not being available to residents at times of need. Therefore, the trial is proposed to help understand what provision and need will look like in the long-term.

Providers

18. Two main provider options have been identified for suppling period products, offering the simplest and most beneficial choices for provision. An options appraisal has been undertaken on providers to recommend which one to take forward for the trial. Considering the merits of both providers, it is recommended that Hey Girls are used for the period poverty product scheme trial.

19. Hey Girls, a social enterprise, are the self-proclaimed 'experts in best practice for distribution of free products to the public sector' and supply over 80 councils. They work within a range of budgets and supply the majority of Welsh and Scottish councils with their products, and a small number of English authorities. As well as offering bespoke packages, Hey Girls offer training to employees on location where products are provided for the public via a train the trainer model – to increase confidence and education in period products. Hey Girls also offer reusable products.

Locations

20. A wide range of locations have been considered for residents, and employee provision in council buildings, these have been organised into tiers to consider different costs and levels of scale.

21. For the public provision of period products, libraries have been identified as the most suitable locations for the trial. Libraries offer a range of services to residents, they are also centrally located and scattered across the county, making them accessible and convenient for a large number of residents. Additionally, libraries have employees and volunteers who are adept at handling sensitive conversations and provide discreet and respectful services to residents in need. Children and Family Centres have also been considered as potential locations for the public provision of period products, as they cater to residents with higher needs. Products will be evenly distributed to all libraries and children and family centres initially, with the ability to redistribute products if certain locations have high uptake than others.

22. For the trial, it is recommended that the period products will be available in whole packs. This is because someone who is experiencing period poverty will need a number of products to supply them for a month, rather than a handful of products which may only last a day. To reduce stigma associated with periods and in particular period poverty, the products will be accessible on open shelves to anyone who needs them, without the need to request them. Library staff will be trained to have conversations with residents about period poverty, as well as the different products and how to use them safely.

23. It is also recommended that reusable cups, including sterilisation pots, and reusable pads are on offer as part of the trial. These reusable products have been selected as the most accessible and easy to use and offer a more one size fits all approach than period pants. Due to their cost, there will be fewer reusable products on offer than disposables, but the uptake of reusables versus disposables will be monitored as part of the trail to understand where

need is. As well as being environmentally sustainable, reusable products are financially sustainable. Whilst they do have a higher initial cost point, they are designed to last between 5-10 years, so could provide substantial support to someone experiencing period poverty, helping them through up to 130 periods.

24.   In Oxfordshire County Council office buildings, it is recommended that disposable period products are provided in larger office building bathrooms, for employees to use whilst they are at work.

25.   The below table considers the indicative costs at different locations for a trial lasting up to a year.

Tier	Public or Employee Provision	Buildings	Indicative Cost for 1 Year
Tier A	Public	8 libraries in, or serving, residents in our ten priority areas of deprivation: • Abingdon • Banbury • Barton • Blackbird Leys • Botley • Oxford Westgate • Littlemore • Woodgreen	Each library to have 240 packets of Hey Girls product to take a year, 20 packs a month – most basic option of pad and tampons: £276 per location **£2,207 total**
Tier B	Public	10 additional larger site libraries which are fully staffed: • Bicester • Cowley • Didcot • Headington • Henley • Kidlington • Summertown • Thame • Wantage • Witney	Each library to have 240 packets of Hey Girls product to take a year, 20 packs a month – most basic option of pad and tampons: £276 per location **£2,759 total**
Tier C	Public	All other 26 Oxfordshire Libraries	Each library to have 120 packets of Hey Girls product to take a year, 10 packs a month – most basic option of pad and tampons: £138 per location **£3,587 total**

Tier D	Public	8 Childrens and Family Centres: • Abingdon • Banbury • Barton • Bicester • The Leys • Didcot • Rosehill • Witney	Each Children and Family Centre to have 240 packets of Hey Girls product to take a year, 20 packs a month – most basic option of pad and tampons: £138 per location **£2,207 total**
Tier E	Employee	Significant OCC Office buildings with 100 employees/desks or more • County Hall • Samuelson House • Ron Groves House Offices & Kidlington Library	Estimated 1000-4000 products a year Hey Girls cost: 500 pads £41.25 500 tampons £77.45 **Between £119 – £475 a year**
Tier F	Employee	Significant OCC Office buildings with up to 100 employees/desks • Mount House • Holton Park Libraries • Westgate Library • Barton End Office • Rewley Road Fire Station • Union Street • Didcot Children's Centre	Estimated 250 – 1000 products a year Hey Girls cost: **Up to £119 on top of Tier E**
Tier G	Employee	78 additional buildings with fewer employees on location	Estimated 750 – 3000 products a year Hey Girls cost: **Up to £356 additional to Tier E**
Tier H	Public	Reusable products available at the 8 libraries in Tier A	100 reusable products available, 50 cups and sterilising pots, 50 packs of 5x pads. Hey Girl cost: **£1,549**

26. It is therefore recommended that provision for the period poverty product trial covers Tier A, Tier B, Tier D, Tier E, Tier F and Tier H – leading to a total initial cost of £8,960.

27. The remaining £1,040 will be spent on marketing costs and be available to replenish products during the trial if they run out.

Monitoring and Evaluation

28. The period poverty product trial will be monitored and evaluated ensuring data is collected to track the uptake of products at different locations, feedback will also be sought from residents who use the products. The data will include the number and type of products distributed, the frequency and timing of replenishment, and feedback from service users and employees. This will help to understand the level of need and demand for period products in different areas, as well as the impact of the trial on the wellbeing and dignity of those who access them. The data will also inform the long-term budget provision and planning for the continuation of the scheme beyond the trial period.

Corporate Policies and Priorities

29. The period poverty trial scheme supports Oxfordshire County Council's Strategic Plan to tackle inequalities, support the health and wellbeing of residents, put action to address the climate emergency at the heart of our work, and support children, young people and families to reach their full potential.

Financial Implications

30. The £10,000 funding from the cost-of-living programme was approved by Cabinet on 14 May 2024. The trial therefore already has funding secured and will not incur any additional costs. The trial will help the council understand period product provision for Oxfordshire and allow for a proposal to be put forward in the 2025/2026 budget for long-term provision to alleviate period poverty.

31. As set out in the Contract Procedure Rules the procurement threshold is £25,000 so this does not require a full procurement process. However, the expectation is that value for money and social value will be maximised through the chosen supplier.

    Comments checked by:

    Kathy Wilcox, Head of Corporate Finance and Deputy Section 151 Officer, kathy.wilcox@oxfordshire.gov.uk   (Finance)

Legal Implications

32. The Council will need to enter into a contract for the supply of the period products, but there are no other legal implications arising from the report.

Comments checked by:

Paul Grant, Head of Legal and Deputy Monitoring Officer, paul.grant@oxfordshire.gov.uk (Legal)

Staff Implications

33.   The trial will be delivered within existing council resources.

Equality & Inclusion Implications

34.   The trial period poverty product scheme is expected to have positive impacts on all communities and protected characteristics, as products will be accessible in public spaces to anyone who needs them. The aim of the trial is primarily to support residents who experience inequalities in Oxfordshire, and in particular to meet the needs of our most economically disadvantaged residents. Access to period products will support the dignity of residents and ensure they are not excluded from attending school, work or sport and social activities on account of period poverty.

Sustainability Implications

35.   The trial period poverty product scheme has considered sustainability implications, by ensuring provision of reusable period products. These products can reduce the amount of waste generated by single-use items and save money for users in the long term. In addition, the recommended provider uses sustainably sourced disposable products to minimise environmental impacts.

Risk Management

36.   There are no risks arising directly from this report.

Lorna Baxter
Executive Director of Resources and Section 151 Officer

Contact Officer: Karina Russell, Policy Team Leader, 07917921511, karina.russell@oxfordshire.gov.uk

June 2024

CABINET
18 JUNE 2024

ANNUAL PERFORMANCE REPORT AND
PROVISIONAL REVENUE OUTTURN 2023/24

Report by the Executive Director of Resources and Section 151 Officer

RECOMMENDATION

1. **The Cabinet is RECOMMENDED to**

   a. To note the annual Performance Report for 2023/24.
   b. To note the summary of the provisional year - end financial position for 2023/24 along with the year-end position on general balances and earmarked reserves as explained in Annex B.
   c. To agree that the £1.6m surplus on the On-Street Parking Account at the end of the 2023/24 financial year, that has not yet been applied to fund eligible expenditure in accordance with Section 55(4) of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984, can be carried forward to the 2024/25 financial year as set out in Annex B-3c.
   d. To approve the creation of a new reserve to support the council's Commercial Strategy and initial contribution of £2.0m.
   e. To approve the addition of £2.8m to the IFRS9 Reserve.
   f. To approve the addition of £1.0m to the Budget Priorities Reserve.
   g. To note the Digital Inclusion Action Plan progress update for 2023/24 – Annex C.
   h. To note the Voluntary and Community progress update for 2023/24 – Annex D.

   Executive Summary

2. This report presents the council's annual performance report and provisional year- end finance position for 2023/24.

3. The Council recognises the importance of timely, accurate and accessible performance and budget management information as part of its commitment to both transparency and demonstrating efficiency and effectiveness.

4. This annual report reflects the end of year position against the corporate priorities, and budget documents supporting the ambitions and priorities. The Strategic Plan agreed by Council in February 2022 set out the Council's ambitions for 2023/24.

5. The Strategic Plan, Medium Term Financial Plan, Outcomes Framework and previous business management reports, can be found on the council's website.

6. This report summarises the performance over the last financial year. Further information is provided in the following annexes:
   a. Annex A: Annual performance report 2023/24.
   b. Annex B: Provisional revenue outturn 2023/24.
   c. Annex C: Digital Inclusion Action Page 150ss update for 2023/24.
   d. Annex D: Voluntary and Community Strategy progress update for 2023/24.

Performance Overview

7. The Outcomes Framework 2023/24 sets out the golden thread of key performance indicators and progress measures supporting the overarching nine strategic priorities and running the business priority.

8. The bi-monthly business management and monitoring reports included progress updates supporting the nine strategic priorities, overarching indicators which comprised of 85 key performance indicators and progress measures.

End of year 2023/24 performance summary:

9. The end of financial year performance indicators are reported as follows:

Green	Amber	Red	Data Monitoring	Data Unavailable	Total
58 (68%)	10 (12%)	8 (10%)	7 (8%)	2 (2%)	85

Table 1 – End of year performance summary for 2023/2024

This represents a strong outcome of the measures and indicators supporting the overarching priorities for the financial year with:

- 80% either above target or very close to it.

- 10% below target.

The release of data required to calculate the position for OCC02.04 Inequality in life expectancy at birth (Female) and OCC02.05 Inequality in life expectancy at birth (male) indicators has been delayed by the Office for National Statistics, therefore no performance update is available for the reporting period.

10. The annual report reflects the highlights and achievements over the last 12 months against the priorities of the council. The annual report captures the response to the cost of living crisis and the migration support; the significant impact on the services we deliver; how we coordinated and supported the delivery of services.

11. Included below are some highlights that services have delivered during 2023/24. Please refer to the Annex A: Annual report 2023/24 for the full overview of how services have delivered against our nine priorities and our response to the cost of living crisis and provided migration support.

12. Through our continued commitment to the **Climate emergency**, Oxfordshire County Council won best decarbonisation initiative for its role in the partnership Project Local Energy Oxfordshire. We delivered an externally funded food waste recycling project, calling at over **13,000 households** across the county to encourage residents to recycle their food waste. We were again named the **top performing county council waste disposal authority**. In 2022/23, residents recycled, reused, or composted 57.2 per cent of their household waste, according to the latest government figures.

13. As part of our commitment to **tackling inequality across Oxfordshire** we spent **£1m** on our new Residents Support Scheme, providing over **5,000 vulnerable households** in financial crisis support with food and energy costs, and essential household items. We spent **£1.6m** making a **£450 cost of living payment** to over **3,500 people** on low incomes who were not eligible for the equivalent national payments. We spent **£3.2m** ensuring families of children entitled to free school meals received support with food costs during the school holidays.

14. **Health and Wellbeing priority**. We worked with a range of community groups and consulted **over 1000 residents** to develop a new Health and Wellbeing Strategy for Oxfordshire. Working with partners across Oxfordshire, **we trained 348 staff and volunteers to use the Making Every Contact Count** (MECC) approach to opportunistically speak to people about their health and wellbeing. A further 36 members of staff became qualified MECC trainers. Through outreach to communities to enable those residents who experience the greatest barriers to walking and cycling to actively travel more. **74% of Active Travel project participants** report having increased the frequency that they walk, cycle, or wheel after having taken part in the project.

15. Supporting **carers and the social care** system through our transformation programme – **the Oxfordshire Way** – we continued to have a positive impact on adult social care assessments and reviews, achieving a 31 per cent decrease in the number of people on waiting lists and a 46 per cent reduction on April 2021 waiting times. Between April 2023 and February 2024, **we supported 1667 Carers** with a direct payment to support them to have some time to look after their own wellbeing, an increase of 4.2% on previous year's performance.

16. We have increased the Oxfordshire Together programme to around **130 FixMyStreet (FMS) 'SuperUsers'** covering **95 parishes** across the county. Across the calendar year they reported and directly instructed repairs to **1379 defects to potholes and kerbing on county roads**. Our pilot **Flood Warden scheme** now has **11 volunteers covering two parishes and one town**.

17. Some of the achievements supporting **Nature and Green Spaces** have accomplished include **clearing 320 km of vegetation** to improve the county' s public rights of way network. We repaired 48 bridges and replaced 58 bridges across Oxfordshire. We continued our highly successful partnership with Community Action Groups, supporting over 100 groups to take grassroots action on environmental issues across Oxfordshire which was featured as best practice in a national report.

18. As part of the priority **Creating opportunities for children and young people to reach their full potential,** we completed all the phase transfers (primary to secondary) for over **500** children with EHCPs within the agreed timeframe. Thanks to DfE and Capital Funding, **five** new children's homes are due to open in Oxfordshire within the next 18 months (Aspen House, Peak House, Willowbank, Oathill Lodge, Greatmead).

19. As part of our priority **Playing a part in vibrant and participatory local democracy** we enabled people of all ages to address our council and cabinet meetings, welcoming over 115 public speakers, 97 public questions and 6 petitions. Including facilitating over **30 public speakers** at October 2023 Cabinet.
We have established the new Education & Young People Overview & Scrutiny Committee.

20. Through **Working with local businesses and partners** our trading standards Inspectors of Weights and Measures tested and verified **over 700 pieces** of weighing and measuring equipment. The trading standards team conducted over **1790 interventions with Oxfordshire businesses,** providing advice and support, testing products and procedures**.** Our small team of highly skilled fire safety professionals have engaged with existing and new build commercial premises in Oxfordshire to create a safe environment for those who live and work in the county. This includes **450 Fire Safety Audit of commercial premises** and **692 Fire Safety Building Regulations consultations**. We will take oversight for the Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership (OxLEP). It has a long and successful track record and, between 2016 and 2022, it worked with over 6,200 businesses

and provided around 18,000 hours of support and advice (worth over £28.75 million).

21. **Migration Support** Development and delivery of a **£1.2m employment investment programme** to support Ukrainians into meaningful work, with wider benefits being created for other migrant groups wherever possible. A range of county council services have worked closely with the District / City Councils to provide support and challenge to the hotel providers accommodating over **550 asylum seekers** in four contingency hotels commissioned by the Home Office to ensure their statutory safeguarding needs are being met, the children are able to attend school, and all can access our libraries.

Digital Inclusion Strategy Action plan 2023/24 – Progress updates

22. Oxfordshire County Council's [Digital Inclusion Strategy](#) (DIS)was approved by Cabinet in July 2022. The 2022-2025 Strategy sets out the council's framework to enable a digitally inclusive Oxfordshire, shaped by three key priority areas (the action plan follows the same structure):

   - Digitally Inclusive Communities
   - Digitally Inclusive Service Delivery
   - Digitally Inclusive Workforce

In autumn 2022, the Digital Inclusion Strategy was integrated with the service planning cycle, and this action plan developed in summer of 2023 included actions derived from service delivery plans from across the organisation. These actions were further developed through conversations with colleagues across services to ensure they were aligned with the strategy's commitments. All actions are aligned with one of the strategy's priority areas, though many of the actions span multiple priority areas. All actions aim to deliver benefits for the council, the sector, and residents. This action plan provides a progress update for the year 2023/24.

Long term ambition	Completed	Ongoing	Removed	Total
Digitally Inclusive Communities	7	9	1	17
Digitally Inclusive Service Delivery	6	8	N/A	14
Digitally Inclusive Workforce	2	1	2	5
Total	**15 (42%)**	**18 (50%)**	**3 (8%)**	**36**

Table 2 – End of year DIS action plan performance summary for 2023/2024

Voluntary and Community Sector Action Plan 2023/24 - Progress updates

23. The Oxfordshire County Council Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) Action Plan, which was approved by Cabinet in July 2022, exists to implement the aims and commitments as set out in the VCS 2022 – 2027 Strategy. The strategy sets out the council's framework to support a sustainable VCS through co-production and partnership working, shaped by five key priority areas:
   - Collaboration and Networking
   - Volunteering and Social Action
   - Capacity and Skills
   - Supporting a Sustainable Sector
   - Reducing Inequalities.

In autumn 2022, the VCS Strategy was integrated with the service planning cycle, and this action plan developed in summer of 2023 included actions derived from service delivery plans from across the organisation. These actions were further developed through conversations with colleagues across services to ensure they were aligned with the strategy's commitments. The actions support the strategy's aims and deliver meaningful outcomes, enhanced partnership working and alignment with our overarching strategic priorities, such as tackling inequalities and the health and wellbeing of residents. All actions are aligned with one of the strategy's priority areas, though many of the actions span multiple priority areas. All actions aim to deliver benefits for the council, the sector, and residents.

This action plan provides a progress update for the year 23-24. This update will later be taken to the Oxfordshire Stronger Communities Alliance (OSCA).

Long term ambition	Completed	Ongoing	Removed	Total
Collaborating and Networking	16	11	3	30
Volunteering and Social action	6	2	N/A	8
Capacity and Skills	2	2	1	5
Supporting and Sustainable sector	3	3	1	7
Reducing Inequality	2	3	N/A	5
Total	**29 (53%)**	**21 (38%)**	**5 (9%)**	**55**

Table 3 – End of year VCS action plan performance summary for 2023/2024

Financial Management

Summary of the Council's financial position at the end of 2023/24

24. The table below shows actual expenditure for each directorate compared to the final budget and shows the movement since the report to Cabinet in March 2024. The final directorate position was an overspend of £6.6m (+1.1%).

25. The directorate overspend was offset by an underspend of £10.9m on contingency held for risk and additional interest received on cash balances (£7.9m). The overall position for the council was an underspend of £12.3m or -2.1% of the Net Operating Budget.

Directorate Budgets	Final Net Budget	Total Spend	Year End Variance	Year End Variance	Variance Last Cabinet Reporting Month	Change in Variance
	£m	£m	£m	%	£m	£m
Adult Services	229.7	229.7	0.0	0.0%	0.0	0.0
Childrens' Services	172.3	180.0	7.7	4.5%	12.9	-5.2
Environment & Place	75.3	72.2	-3.2	-4.2%	-2.9	-0.3
Public Health	4.1	3.9	-0.2	-3.7%	0.0	-0.2
Community Safety	27.0	27.7	0.7	2.5%	0.4	0.3
Resources	73.3	74.9	1.5	2.1%	1.9	-0.4
Total Directorate Budgets	**581.8**	**588.4**	**6.6**	**1.1%**	**12.3**	**-5.7**
Budgets Held Centrally	-3.0	-22.0	-19.0	624.6%	-12.3	-6.7

Directorate Budgets	Final Net Budget	Total Spend	Year End Variance	Year End Variance	Variance Last Cabinet Reporting Month	Change in Variance
	£m	£m	£m	%	£m	£m
Net Operating Budget	**578.8**	**566.4**	**-12.4**	**-2.1%**	**0.0**	**-12.4**
Business Rates and Council Tax funding	-578.8	-578.7	0.0	0.0%	0.0	0.0
Year-End Position	**0.0**	**-12.3**	**-12.3**		**0.0**	**-12.4**

26. As agreed as part of the 2024/25 budget, £1.5m of the underspend arising from additional interest on cash balances will be used to fund a one – off revenue contribution to the Transformation Reserve in 2024/25. A further £2.2m will be used to make an initial contribution to a new reserve to manage the risk pending the end of the statutory over-ride for IFRS9 (changes in the value of Treasury Management Pooled Funds at year end) which may impact on the revenue account in 2025/26. This means that £3.7m of the underspend that will be held in balances as at 31 March 2024 is already committed in 2024/25.

27. Since the underspend is higher than anticipated as a result of the reduction in the directorate overspend it is recommended to:

   - Add a further £2.8m to the IFRS9 reserve in 2024/25, increasing the total to £5.0m. That should then provide sufficient cover for future risks.
   - Create a new Pump Priming reserve in 2024/25 to support the council's Commercial Strategy with an initial contribution of £2.0m.
   - Make a contribution of £1.0m to the Budget Priorities Reserve to be used to complete or extend schemes already agreed as part of the Cabinet's priorities including Rail Studies and an extension of the funding for efficiency loans to schools.

28. After taking account of the use of contingency and additional interest on balances, planned changes above as well as supplementary estimates agreed earlier in the year, balances would be £42.0m, £11.8m above the risk assessed level of £30.2m at year end. £9.5m of the total will be used to fund contributions to reserves in 2024/25 as set out in paragraph 26 and 27. The remaining £2.3m will be held in balances pending a decision about future use.

29. On 1 April 2023, one – off funding held in earmarked reserves totalled £202.7m. As set out in Annex B-3a this increased to £210.1m as at 31 March 2024. The increase includes budgeted net contributions to/from reserves totalling £12.8m agreed in February 2023, plus other net changes during the year which reduced reserves by £5.4m.

30. The 2023/24 deficit compared to Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) funding for High Needs was £14.7m. This is £3.6m lower than the £18.3m forecast deficit for 2023/24 approved by Cabinet in May 2023. The CIPFA code of practice currently requires negative High Needs DSG balances to be held in an unusable reserve. The deficit would increase the cumulative negative High Needs DSG balance held in this reserve from £41.1m as at 31 March 2023 to £55.8m at 31 March 2024.

31. Further details and commentary explaining both the directorate positions and variations on budgets held centrally are included in Annex B.

Financial Implications

32. This report sets out the financial position for the council as at 31 March 2024. While there is an underspend at year end as a result of additional interest on balances

and the use of contingency, the directorate position is overspent, albeit by less than anticipated earlier in the year as a result of sustained management action throughout the year.

33. The budget for contingency is lower and an increased level of interest on cash balances is already built into in the budget for 2024/25 so strong financial management and oversight will continue to be required in 2024/25.

Comments checked by: Kathy Wilcox, Head of Corporate Finance

Legal Implications

34. The Council's constitution at Part 3.2 (Budget and Policy Framework) 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.

35. 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 the performance and finance position for the Council as at 31 March 2024 as part of its fiduciary duty to implement budgetary controls and monitoring.

Comments checked by: Anita Bradley Director of Law and Governance and Monitoring Officer.

LORNA BAXTER	
Executive Director of Resources and Section 151 Officer	

Contact Officers:

Louise Tustian, Head of Insight and Corporate Programmes

Kathy Wilcox, Head of Corporate Finance

This page is intentionally left blank

Annual report

2023 - 2024

Working in partnership
to make Oxfordshire a greener,
fairer and healthier county.

Greener

Fairer

Healthier

OXFORDSHIRE
COUNTY COUNCIL

Foreword

Welcome to Oxfordshire County Council's annual report, providing an overview of our performance and key achievements from April 2023 to March 2024.

Our vision is to make Oxfordshire a greener, fairer and healthier county, and this is centred around strong local communities, healthy places to live and a zero-carbon economy that benefits everyone.

Including everyone lies at the heart of our vision. This means providing inclusive services with equal access for all; working with communities to tackle disadvantage, inequality, public health and care issues; and providing an inclusive workplace with equality of opportunity. We want to enable people across the county to be happy, healthy, safe and successful, from getting the best start in life to ageing well and remaining as independent as possible for as long as possible.

We also want to ensure that our decision-making process is inclusive, providing different opportunities for communities to make their views known on the issues that matter to them.

Tackling climate change underpins all we do as the climate emergency is the biggest challenge the planet faces. Our commitment to net zero is shown by the fact that we were ranked as the top-performing county council waste disposal authority for the tenth year running and the top county council for action on climate change according to Climate Emergency UK's 2023 council climate scorecard assessment.

Our strategic plan 2022 - 2025 sets out our nine cross-cutting priorities (see page 4) and details how we will deliver our vision and commitments.

Our budget, set in February 2024, also supports the continued delivery of our plan, which is reviewed annually, and allows us to both invest in our priorities and meet our demand pressures for the year ahead. We listened carefully to the feedback given in our residents' survey and in our budget consultation and engagement events and invested £10.6 million in the things you said we should focus on. This means we'll continue to protect those in need, while investing in

roads and improving services for children and families, particularly those with special educational needs and disabilities.

Social care services for adults and children accounts for around half our spend. We also provide services such as fire and rescue, highway maintenance, libraries, registration (births, deaths and marriages), education and trading standards. Our annual report highlights examples of this important work and progress against our priorities.

Thank you for taking the time to read this report. As we look forward to 2024 - 25, we will continue to ensure that we provide the greatest opportunities possible for every resident to live their best life.

**Councillor
Liz Leffman,**
Leader of
Oxfordshire
County Council

Our nine priorities

Our vision

To lead positive change by working in partnership to make Oxfordshire a greener, fairer and healthier county.

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

2. Tackle inequalities in Oxfordshire

3. Prioritise the health and wellbeing of residents

4. Support carers and the social care system

5. Invest in an inclusive, integrated and sustainable transport network

6. Preserve and improve access to nature and green spaces

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

8. Play our part in a vibrant and participatory local democracy

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

Greener

Fairer

Healthier

The climate emergency

Our strategic priority

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

Oxfordshire County Council
CLIMATE ACTION
Carbon neutral by 2030

- We helped residents recycle, reuse or compost 57.2 per cent of household waste, making us the **top-performing county council waste disposal authority for the tenth year running.**

- We were rated the **top county council for action on climate change** in Climate Emergency UK's 2023 council climate scorecard assessment.

- We were awarded £6.4 million by the government to provide **energy efficiency upgrades and low carbon heating** to low-income households living in fuel poverty.

- We have almost **completed our LED street lighting conversion programme**, which will cut costs and emissions by almost 70 per cent, saving 6,000 tonnes of CO2 each year.

- We were awarded £41,000 to establish **disposable vapes recycling collection points**, helping to reduce littering and ensure their safe disposal.

- We were awarded £3.6 million by the government to **triple the number of public electric vehicle chargers** in the county, which will bring 1,300 more chargers by the end of 2025.

- We secured a £2.9 million grant to support the **decarbonisation of 26 of our county council sites**, with delivery starting in 2024/25.

- We completed the **installation of electric vehicle chargers** at community support service sites in preparation for 10 new electric minibuses arriving in spring 2024.

OxonAir

- We launched a **strategy to tackle poor air quality** and together with our city and district council partners launched a new Oxfordshire air quality website, providing guidance and resources.

- We supported **over 100 community action groups** to take action on environmental issues across Oxfordshire. This was featured as best practice in a national report.

- We introduced an **online booking system** to support a change in legislation on DIY waste at our household waste recycling centres.

Greener

- We delivered a **food waste recycling project**, visiting 13,000 households across the county to encourage residents to recycle their food waste.

- Our pilot scheme for **flood wardens** now has 11 volunteers covering two parishes and one town.

- We developed a **heat health action plan** to support vulnerable residents during possible heatwaves and planning for extreme heat.

- We convened a '100 Together' conference in January 2024, bringing together policy makers, business leaders, academics and investors to discuss how we can **unlock the investment needed to deliver environmental activity at scale** in Oxfordshire.

OXFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL
Free DIY waste booking
Check your address
We must check your address is in Oxfordshire before you can book your visit.
Postcode search
OX... [Find address]
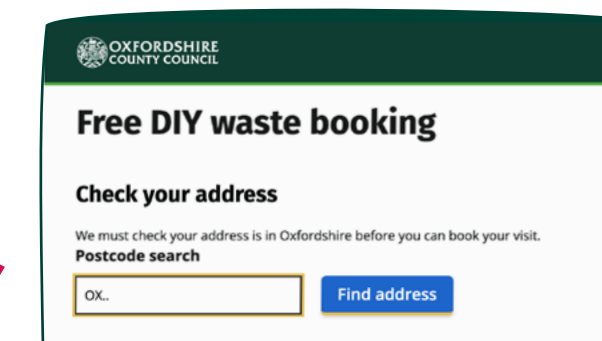
Greener
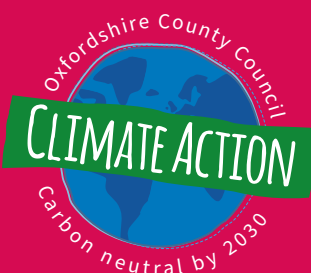
Travel and transport

Our strategic priority

Invest in an inclusive, integrated and sustainable transport network

- **20mph speed limits** were introduced in Abingdon, Thame and Wallingford, with applications from parishes topping 230. The scheme is designed to save lives, reduce congestion, improve air quality, and encourage cycling and walking.

- In partnership with bus operators, we launched **one of the biggest UK fleets of electric buses outside London**. The £83.8 million project will deliver 159 new battery buses onto the roads of Oxford.

LODGE HILL SLIPROADS

A34

A34

- We secured £17.3 million of funding from Homes England to help fund the **A34 Lodge Hill interchange scheme**. The main construction of the new south-facing A34 slip roads is due to start in autumn 2024.

- We **completed three major infrastructure programmes**, including the remodelling of the A41 Ploughley Road junction, improvements to the Oxford North highway, and work on the North Oxford Corridor between Loop Farm roundabout and Cassington Road.

- We **started construction work on several major infrastructure schemes**, including upgrading the junction of the A4095 and Banbury Road in Bicester and improvements to the Kidlington roundabout.

- We increased the number of FixMyStreet super users to 130, covering 95 parishes across the county. They **reported and instructed repairs to 1,379 defects to potholes and kerbing** on county roads.

- Together with our contractor Milestone Infrastructure, we trialled an **innovative method of road resurfacing**, which reduces carbon by 50 per cent and avoids thousands of tonnes of construction waste.

- We awarded £425,000 in grants to 12 organisations to **help improve community transport** in Oxfordshire, including funding new vehicles, expanding schemes and providing new services.

- We were awarded £2.384 million by Active Travel England to invest in projects to **improve walking and cycling infrastructure** in the county.

- 74 per cent of people who participated in our active travel outreach project reported they had **increased their frequency of walking, cycling or wheeling**.

Nature and green spaces

Our strategic priority

Preserve and improve access to nature and green spaces

- We were named by the government as a **'responsible authority' for driving nature recovery**, with accompanying funding to help us develop a nature recovery strategy to tackle habitat loss, safeguard our fragile ecosystems, and create nature-rich landscapes.

- Our countryside access team **repaired and replaced 106 bridges and cleared 320km of vegetation**.

- We secured funding to provide much needed **access improvements to the public rights of way that make up the 65 mile Green Belt Way**.

- We received 50 submissions from residents for a tree and woodland planting project and secured funding to create **20 new community orchards**.

- Our tree service team helped a group of volunteers in Wantage **plant 14 apple trees** in one day to create an orchard that will be available for the local community to enjoy for years to come.

- We created an in-house **tree aftercare and planting service**, who in their first four weeks of operation planted 150 trees.

- We inspected more than 3,700 individual or groups of trees, and arranged and completed more than **3,843 tree care operations**.

- We set up a **tree guardians scheme** – a network of volunteers to look after thousands of newly planted trees on public land across Oxfordshire.

- We transferred the lease of a council-owned meadow in Swinford to the owners of the Thames Valley wildflower meadow restoration project to help create **a nature recovery network and habitat corridor** linking a series of ancient meadows.

- Using £200,000 from developer funding, we resurfaced bridleways in Botley and Heyford Park, improved a footpath in Watchfield, and undertook improvements at Crowell to **improve access to the countryside**.

Greener

Greener

Tackling inequalities

Our strategic priority

Tackle inequalities in Oxfordshire

- We completed **community insight profiles** for the 10 areas in Oxfordshire most likely to experience health inequalities, providing an in-depth understanding of local communities to help inform support.

- We set up a **community research network**, with funding support from UK Research and Innovation, to carry out research into what makes people healthy, helping to improve health and tackle inequalities across the county.

- We scaled up our Better Housing Better Health programme by 200 per cent **to meet the needs of households facing fuel poverty**.

- We launched a new residents' support scheme and provided 3,620 vulnerable households in financial crisis with **emergency financial support** to cover food, energy and essential household costs.

- Over 3,500 people on low incomes, who weren't eligible for the equivalent national payments, benefited from our **£450 cost of living payments**.

- We provided £2.1 million through the city and district councils to **reduce council tax** bills and provide **additional housing support to people on low incomes**.

- We spent £3.5 million ensuring families of children entitled to free school meals received **support with food costs** during the school holidays.

- 9,622 people attended our **digital and information support sessions** in libraries, and library users clocked up over **87,000 hours of free access time** on library computers.

- We provided a £300,000 grant to advice agencies in the county to provide **debt and benefits advice** to people affected by the cost of living crisis.

- As a key partner in the Oxfordshire Migration Partnership - which includes local authority, health and voluntary and community sector partners - we **supported over 2,600 Ukrainian guests** staying in the county and helped **more than 100 Afghan citizens** settle into their own homes and communities.

- We developed a **£1.2 million employment investment programme** to support Ukrainians into work, with wider benefits created for other migrant groups.

- We signed a pledge to become a **council of sanctuary**, committing to provide a warm welcome for all new arrivals and support independent living for those staying in the county.

Local democracy

Our strategic priority

Play our part in a vibrant and participatory local democracy

- We supported over **360 cabinet and cabinet member decisions** in 2023 compared to 250 in 2022.

- An **Education and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee** was established following a recommendation by the Future Council Governance Group. The first meeting of the new committee was held in January 2024.

- We completed the first three phases of the **Local Government Boundary Commission for England electoral review**, which is reviewing political boundaries across the county.

- Working with town and parish councils, we **co-developed a charter** to help shape how we can work together in partnership to support better service delivery and ensure thriving local democracy across the county.

- We launched an online **citizens' portal** to share our performance data with residents in a more accessible and engaging way.

- We introduced an **online budget simulator** for our 24/25 budget consultation, with over 1,300 people using it to weigh up choices, make trade-offs and have their say on where we should focus savings and spending.

- We launched a monthly **consultations e-newsletter** to provide updates about and invitations to participate in our consultations and surveys.

- We launched a **new look homepage for our website**, designed to help people find the information they need quickly and easily.

Fairer

Local businesses and partners

Fairer

Our strategic priority

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

- We successfully transitioned the **Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership** (OxLEP) to the county council.

- As part of the Joint Oxfordshire resilience team, we distributed 1,342 community resilience bags to **make vulnerable households safer** and business continuity assessments to 513 small businesses to **help them prepare for emergencies**.

- As part of our work with the Oxfordshire Inclusive Economy Partnership, we supported the creation of an **anchor institution network**, which brings together large organisations to create a more equal and sustainable region.

- We created **over £1.9 million in social value** through our tendering activities to add value for local communities, from using local businesses in our supply chain to using local residents employed on local contracts.

- We launched **Heritage Search**, an online catalogue of more than 1 million of Oxfordshire's records, images and objects.

- Our trading standards team conducted over **1,790 interventions with Oxfordshire businesses**, providing advice and support, testing products and procedures. They also provided over **500 small businesses with quick reviews** to help improve their resilience.

- Our fire and rescue service completed **464 fire safety audits** of commercial premises and 692 fire safety building regulations consultations.

- We secured £3.8 million of government funding to help Oxfordshire **become part of a new 5G innovation region**. The money will be invested initially in two major 5G projects – East West Rail between Bicester and Bletchley, and Harwell Science and Innovation Campus.

Oxfordshire Announced as **5G Innovation Region** Today

Department for Science, Innovation & Technology

Health and wellbeing

Our strategic priority

Prioritise the health and wellbeing of residents

- Together with NHS and local authority partners and Healthwatch Oxfordshire, we developed a **health and wellbeing strategy for Oxfordshire**, working with a wide range of community groups and consulting over 1,000 residents.

- Our Good Food project worked with a retail marketing expert to develop relationships with convenience stores in priority areas to **provide healthier food options**.

- We delivered 18,506 **NHS health checks** across the county to those aged between 40 and 74.

- We distributed **39,000 condoms and 16,318 testing kits** to help prevent the spread of sexually transmitted infections.

"I SWAPPED FOR OLIVIA, 11 DAYS AGO"

FREE VAPE STARTER KIT

Swap your cigarettes for vaping

stopforlife OXON

- Our specialist stop smoking service, Stop for Life Oxon, has supported around **1,000 people to quit smoking**, providing free behavioural support and quit aids.

- Our smoke free community fund supported five projects and shared £2,850 to support a range of **smoke free initiatives**.

- We trained 545 staff and volunteers to use the **Making Every Contact Count approach** when speaking to people about their health and wellbeing. Over 8,700 conversations using this approach took place in our libraries.

- We delivered **2,702 safe and well home visits** and installed over **1,400 alarms** (981 smoke alarms, 120 heat alarms and 313 carbon monoxide alarms).

- Our fire and rescue and trading standards teams **tested 769 electric blankets**, with 35.5 per cent identified as unsafe for use.

- We fitted 28 call blockers in residents' homes to **protect them from scam and nuisance calls**. The 206 units we have fitted to date have led to 194,879 calls being blocked, with estimated savings to residents, police, social care and the NHS of over £2.9 million.

- Our public health and trading standards team **restricted children's access to vapes**, visiting over 34 retailers and seizing over 4,600 non-compliant devices.

- In partnership with Oxfordshire Mind, we rolled out five mental health and suicide prevention training courses to 40 delegates to help **support the mental health and wellbeing of our residents**.

- Our trading standards officers saved, or recovered, over £194,000 for **victims of scams, doorstep crime and other frauds**, as well as reaching 3,478 people with preventative advice and support.

Healthier

Healthier

Carers and social care

Our strategic priority

Support carers and the social care system

Together with partners, we continued to make a positive impact with **The Oxfordshire Way** - supporting people to live healthy and independent lives in their own homes for as long as possible.

In the latest round of our community capacity grants, we awarded 92 grassroots projects funding of up to £20,000 to **help isolated people stay connected, healthy and active** in their community.

Progress in timely **adult social care assessments and reviews** achieved a 46 per cent reduction on April 2021 waiting times. The longest wait time for an assessment reduced by 56 per cent.

On behalf of our partners, we secured almost £470,000 through the Accelerating Reform Fund that will be used to **scale up existing work in adult social care** throughout the region.

We funded 86 small community enterprises, who support over 1,284 people to **stay independent in their own homes**.

Working with the people we support, we co-produced **three improvements to our community support services** – opening the Cheers M'Dears pub room and Ta Da! beauty room in Banbury, as well as the Glitz & Glam salon in Witney.

Cheers M'Dears

Ta Da!

We supported more people **to live in their local communities for longer**, arranging 1,764 packages of home care.

Our reablement service supported people being discharged directly home from hospital to regain their independence, with **78 per cent achieving full reablement**.

The first tenants moved into their newly developed, specially adapted home in Witney – the first of five properties for adults with additional needs to **help them live well within their own communities**.

Our customer service centre handled 26,271 inbound phone calls about adult social care, of which **87.7 per cent were resolved at first point of contact**.

Our partnership with the Care Workers' Charity supported over 900 care and support workers with grants to **support people in a caring job** to pay for the costs of starting work.

We published an **all age unpaid carers strategy**, which was co-designed with over 200 carers, and developed action plans with partners to improve the experience of unpaid carers across Oxfordshire.

With funding from the Department for Work and Pensions, we **improved work opportunities for people with a learning disability or autism**. 89 people have signed up to the programme of support in the last year and 18 people have already successfully secured paid employment.

With the help of government funding, we supported **43 care leavers who were at high risk of homelessness**.

Three care leavers are undertaking apprenticeships as youth support workers and cultural participation officers within our services.

We co-produced a **Care Leaver Survival Guide** jointly with children who have experience of Oxfordshire's care system, to help support young people preparing for adulthood and leaving care.

We supported **1,744 carers with a direct payment** to support their wellbeing.

Over 150,000 visits were made to **Live Well Oxfordshire**, our website offering information about activities, groups and organisations for adults with a variety of needs.

Healthier

Children and young people

Our strategic priority

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

- Our **children's services were judged 'good'** following an inspection by Ofsted in February 2024. Our services were rated as good across all five areas of inspection criteria.

- Our **Glebelands assessment home was rated 'outstanding'** by Ofsted, while our children's homes The Moors and The Oaks retained their 'good' Ofsted rating following inspections.

- We **completed the phased transfers** (primary to secondary) for all 568 children with education, health and care plans **within the statutory time frame**.

- We approved £2.23 million to create **23 new places at Mabel Prichard Special School** in Oxford to increase quality local facilities and support for SEND children.

- We approved a £2.5 million programme of work to improve the infrastructure of **North Hinksey CE Primary School** and a £2.8 million programme of renovation to **Bloxham Church of England Primary School**.

- £14.4 million is being invested in a **new school in Didcot for children with special educational needs and disabilities** (SEND). The school, which has a projected opening date of September 2029, will have capacity to teach 120 children.

- An Oxfordshire **SEND Strategic Improvement and Assurance Board** was set up to drive the actions required to deliver better services for SEND children, young people and their families.

- Information and resources for SEND professionals and parents and carers were strengthened with the introduction of **e-newsletters, refreshed webpages and Q&A events**.

- Working with the BookTrust charity, our library service secured £181,489 to **support early speech and language development**, and we reached more than 90 per cent of babies with books and other resources.

- We set up a new healthy child and young person public health service, delivered by Oxford Health, to support all 4 year-olds in the county to be **ready for school**.

- Thanks to additional funding from the Department for Education's Employer Support Fund, we increased the number of **children and family social work apprenticeships** we offer from two to 10 a year.

- 7,784 children attended our **Junior Citizens Safety Centre** to find out how to keep themselves safe and respond effectively in the event of an emergency.

- We offered cycle training to 95 per cent of primary schools across the county, **delivering cycle training to over 6,100 children**.

Healthier

Healthier

Awards

We won **best climate action and decarbonisation initiative** in the 2023 Association for Public Service Excellence Service Awards for our energy insights tool and energy flexibility trials, showing the crucial role local authorities can play in moving away from the use of fossil fuels.

Together with Oxford City Council we won the **Exemplary Contribution to Net Zero Award** at the UK National Transport Awards for our collaboration on the Oxford zero emission zone scheme.

We received a commendation in the sustainability category and the technology and innovation category at the **2023 Chartered Institute for Highways and Transportation Awards** for our zero emission zone scheme.

Together with our contractor Milestone Infrastructure, we were recognised in three categories of the **2023 Highways Awards** for our collaboration on the North Oxford Corridor improvement project, including winning the Environmental Sustainability Award for decarbonisation.

Our Libraries' Business and Intellectual Property Centre team won the Children's Award in the 2023 **National Libraries Connected Awards** for introducing hundreds of children and young people to entrepreneurship.

Our schools' catering team won a 2023 Association for Public Service Excellence Performance Network Award for **most improved performer in catering services**.

The house project from the care leavers' service won **Oxford Brookes University's Celebrating Excellence in Practice Education 2023 Award** for being an outstanding placement partner, supporting social work trainees to succeed.

We received a **bronze Carbon Literacy Organisation Award** for our training programme, which has delivered carbon literacy training to 200 employees and councillors.

We won a 2023 **Chartered Institute of Public Relations PRide Award** for the launch of our internal recognition programme.

Our apprenticeship team won the Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership's **Large Apprenticeship Employer of the Year Award 2023** for our work in providing a high-quality apprenticeship experience.

Our visual impairment and access to greenspace project, funded by Natural England, won the 'Best example of research making an impact' at the 2024 **Outdoor Recreation Network Awards**.

We were shortlisted for communications campaign of the year in the **2023 LGC Awards** for a recruitment campaign for on-call fire fighters, which received 60 applications against a target of 18.

We were shortlisted for the **MJ Awards' innovation in children's and adults' services category** for our Cheers M'Dears pub room in Banbury, which provides a social space for members of our community support service.

Three of our social workers – Helen Barker, Katherine Elliott and Tatiana Lucena – won awards from the **British Association of Social Workers**.

The Oxfordshire Museum in Woodstock was nominated for the **Muddy Stilettos Best Family Attraction 2024**.

We were shortlisted for a **Comms 2.0 award for our smoking cessation communications campaign**, which resulted in a 46 per cent increase in visits to the Stop for Life website and a 42 per cent increase in referrals to the Stop for Life service.

Jamie Kavanagh, our senior policy officer for inequalities, won the **Freemen of Oxford Award for information and communication and technology** for his work on inclusion and diversity in data management.

Firefighter and LGBT+ champion Charlotte Stacey was awarded a **British Empire Medal** for her services to the community.

Will Pedley, one of our senior transport planners, won the **Transport Planning Society's Transport Planner of the Year 2023**.

Kath Hunt, our Youth Justice and Exploitation Manager, received a **Thames Valley Police Commendation** for her multi-agency work to prevent exploitation in one area of the county.

Alison Brookman, Assistant Team Manager and Violence Reduction Coordinator, was awarded the **Thames Valley Police Laycock Award for problem solving** to recognise her work responding to issues of serious violence and anti-social behaviour.

2023/24 in figures

We recorded **7,446** births and **6,494** deaths.

We conducted and registered **2,578** civil partnership and marriage ceremonies, and registered **532** religious marriages.

We spent over **£2m** repairing potholes, with more than **30,000** defects repaired.

94.59 per cent (6,613) of applicants were awarded their first choice of primary school in Oxfordshire for 2024/25.

88.24 per cent (6,492) of applicants were awarded their first choice of secondary school in Oxfordshire for 2024/25.

We currently have **300** apprentices on programmes across the council. Our apprenticeship achievement rate currently stands at **80 per cent**, exceeding the Department for Education's ambition of **67 per cent**.

We conferred British citizenship on **1,973** new citizens.

Our fire and rescue service attended **6,361** emergencies.

Our highways teams maintained **3,000** miles of road, **2,000** miles of footway, **1,200** bridges, **400,000** highway trees and **80,000** streetlights.

Our portable antiquities team, who help preserve and protect local heritage finds and treasures, saw a **25 per cent** increase in the recording of treasure cases.

1,909,185 people visited our libraries.

Our libraries loaned **3,613,485** books and other items.

We spent **£496,000** on refurbishing **15** of our libraries.

Performance and feedback

Performance summary

This summarises the progress we have made delivering against the activities, tasks and projects outlined in our strategic plan under each of the nine strategic priorities.

The bi-monthly business management and monitoring reports can be found here for further detail of achievements and action plans.

mycouncil.oxfordshire.gov.uk

On target/ Ahead of target
58

Slightly off target
10

Off target
8

Listening and learning

Throughout the year we provide opportunities to our residents to have their say. Whether through customer satisfaction surveys, consultations on our budget, new projects and services, talking to local business organisations or feedback through our website; we are keen to listen to what you like and what needs to be improved.

letstalk.oxfordshire.gov.uk

Let's Talk

Finance

What we spent on council services

In 2023/24 the council spent **£894.9m** on services – our gross expenditure budget. The chart below shows how we spent our budget on services in 2023/24.

- **51%** Adult and children's social care
- **18%** Education and learning
- **9%** Highways and transport
- **7%** Capital borrowing and other financial costs (eg contingency and reserves)
- **5%** Public health improvement and prevention services
- **4%** Waste disposal and recycling
- **4%** Fire and rescue and community safety
- **2%** Culture and customer experience

£894.9m Council services

+

In addition we spent **£238.9m** on maintained schools.

Capital programme

In 2023/24, we spent **£175.9m** on capital projects which included investment in highway improvements, new school buildings, Zero Emission Bus Regional Area (ZEBRA) electric buses and energy efficient street lighting. This money can only be used for the purpose it has been given and cannot be allocated to day-to-day council spending.

- Major infrastructure **£61.7m**
- Highways asset management plan **£53.2m**
- Pupil places plan **£36.8m**
- Property strategy **£9.6m**
- Funding passported to other bodies **£8.7m**
- IT, digital and innovation strategy **£4.9m**
- Vehicles and equipment **£1m**
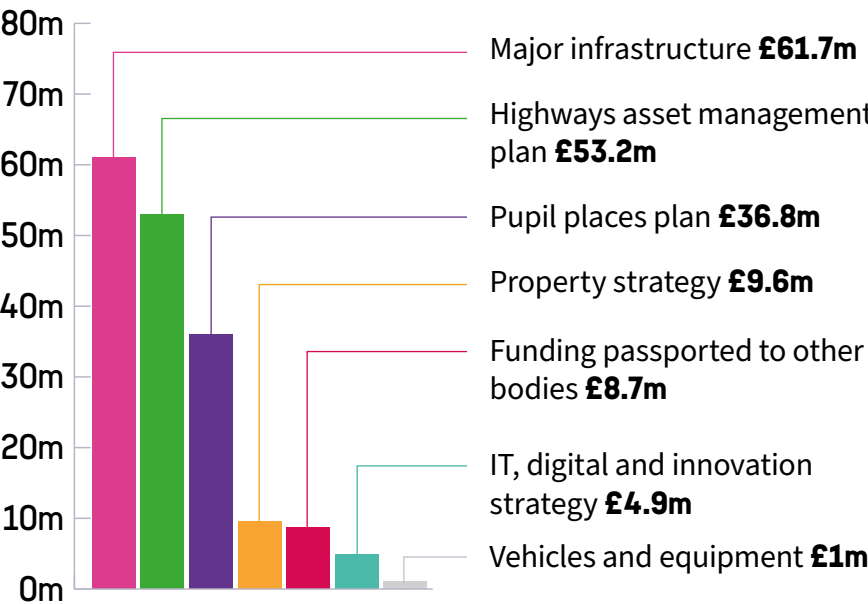
Contact us:

oxfordshire.gov.uk/contact-us

01865 792 422

Oxfordshire County Council
County Hall
New Road
Oxford
OX1 1ND

contact

details

online services

To find out more about how you can **take part in local democracy** by asking questions or making statements at council meetings, visit:

oxfordshire.gov.uk/council

Stay in touch:

𝕏 @oxfordshirecc

f oxfordshirecountycouncil

📷 @oxfordshirecc

▶ @oxfordshirecc

social

You can **apply**, **book**, **find**, **report** and **pay** for a range of services on the county council"s website:

oxfordshire.gov.uk

Let's talk

Have your say in **consultations about changes** to council services or policies at:

letstalk.oxfordshire.gov.uk

Sign up

For **monthly news and updates** from across the county, sign up to Your Oxfordshire and get the latest direct to your inbox.

oxfordshire.gov.uk/newsletter

This page is intentionally left blank

Introduction

1. This annex sets out the final financial monitoring update for the 2023/24 financial year and is based on information from 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024.

2. The budget for 2023/24 and Medium-Term Financial Strategy to 2025/26 was agreed by Council on 14 February 2023. £57m new funding to meet inflationary and demand pressures was included as part of the budget for 2023/24 along with £30m budget reductions. There was also funding for investments totalling £9.3m.

3. This is the final update for 2023/24 and sets out the final expenditure against the agreed budget as well as an update on the achievement of planned budget savings and investments.

4. The information in this report will be incorporated into the Council's Statement of Accounts for 2023/24. Both the draft and final Statement of Accounts will be published on the Council's website.

5. Under the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 regulations 9 and 15, the commencement period for the exercise of public rights to inspect the draft 2023/24 accounts and related documents, based on an account's completion date of 31 May 2024, should include the first 10 working days of June 2024, with inspection dates being between 1 June and 12 July 2024.

6. However, delays with the audit of the 2021/22 accounts and the impact of the outcome of consultation for back stop arrangements for the audit of the Statement of Accounts for 2022/23 has created challenges that have affected the council's ability to meet this deadline.

7. Work is in progress to consolidate the draft accounts for 2023/24 with an anticipated completion by the end of June 2024, following which the period for the exercise of public inspection will commence. A further notice will be published on the council's website in due course setting out the public inspection period.

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

   Annex B – 1 (a) to (e)   Detailed directorate positions 2023/24
   Annex B – 2   Virements to note
   Annex B – 3   Earmarked reserves
   Annex B – 4   Government grants
   Annex B – 5   General Balances

Overview of 2023/24 Expenditure & Funding

Directorate Budgets & Expenditure

9. The table below summarises the directorate expenditure compared to the final budget and shows the movement since the report to Cabinet in March 2024. At the end of 2023/24 there was a directorate overspend of £6.6m (1.1%).

Directorate Budgets	Final Net Budget	Total Spend	Year End Variance	Year End Variance	Variance Last Cabinet Reporting Month	Change in Variance
	£m	£m	£m	%	£m	£m
Adult Services	229.7	229.7	0.0	0.0%	0.0	0.0
Childrens' Services	172.3	180.0	7.7	4.5%	12.9	-5.2
Environment & Place	75.3	72.2	-3.2	-4.2%	-2.9	-0.3
Public Health	4.1	3.9	-0.2	-3.7%	0.0	-0.2
Community Safety	27.0	27.7	0.7	2.5%	0.4	0.3
Resources	73.3	74.9	1.5	2.1%	1.9	-0.4
Total Directorate Budgets	**581.8**	**588.4**	**6.6**	**1.1%**	**12.3**	**-5.7**

10. As explained in the Business Management & Monitoring Reports throughout the year, the final position for 2023/24 reflects the impact of financial risks which include inflation and demand pressures for Childrens' social care, as well as workforce shortages.

11. During the year there has been sustained management action to manage pressures across the council which have contributed to the position at year end. The on-going impact of increases in inflation and demand was considered through the Budget & Business Planning Process for 2024/25.

12. Adult Services expenditure was balanced to the budget at year end. Risks within the council elements of the pooled budgets have been managed by the service.

13. The overspend for Childrens' Services has reduced by £5.2m. This is mainly driven by a reduction in anticipated inflationary pressures on residential placements in the last quarter of the year in addition to measures taken by the service to reduce the need for children to go into a remain in care.

14. The underspend for Environment & Place has increased by £0.3m compared to the report to Cabinet in March 2024. The underspend reflects a reduction in energy costs from lower energy activity, a reduction in waste management costs and additional income from enforcement activity.

15. The overspend for Community Safety has increased by £0.3m mainly due to

additional staffing costs and a one-off payment made for a disabling injury/illness.

16. The overspend for Resources has reduced by £0.4m from the previously reported position, mainly due to vacancies in Communications, Strategy and Insight.

17. The final position reflects the achievement of planned savings in 2023/24. The table at paragraph 117 shows the planned savings and actual delivery for each directorate.

18. 73% of the budgeted savings of £10.2m which were not achieved as planned in 2022/23 have been delivered. 84% of the 2023/24 savings have been delivered and 16% of savings have not been delivered. Where relevant, savings that are not expected to be achieved on an on-going basis have been removed through the Budget & Business Planning Process for 2024/25.

19. The 2023/24 deficit compared to Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) funding for High Needs is £14.7m. This is £3.6m lower than the £18.3m forecast deficit approved by Cabinet in May 2023. The CIPFA code of practice currently requires negative High Needs DSG balances to be held in an unusable reserve. The deficit would increase the cumulative negative High Needs DSG balance held in this reserve from £41.1m as at 31 March 2023 to £55.8m at 31 March 2024.

Directorate Financial Positions as at 31 March 2024

Adult Services

20. Adult Services expenditure was £229.7m with no variation to the final budget. This has remained unchanged from the forecast position reported to Cabinet in March 2024.

Service Area	Final Budget Mar-24 £m	Net Expenditure Mar-24 £m	Variance Mar-24 £m	Variance Jan-24 £m	Change Since Jan-24 £m
Adult Social Care	26.3	27.0	0.7	0.6	-0.2
Health, Education & Social Care Commissioning	5.4	4.8	-0.6	-0.6	0.1
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	195.5	195.5	0.0	1.0	0.1
Total Adult Services	**229.7**	**229.7**	**0.0**	**0.0**	**0.0**

21. The final position 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.

22. The balanced position is after the transfer of £0.5m to the Budget Priorities Reserve to fund commitments within the Live Well pooled budget including repairs and refurbishment costs of supported living units and respite properties plus associated development costs.

Pooled Budgets

Age Well Pooled Budget

23. 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.

24. Budgets within the pool have been managed on an aligned basis with the Integrated Care Board (ICB) for Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire, and Berkshire West (BOB) following the agreement of the contributions and risk share arrangements for 2023/24.

25. The council elements of the Age Well pool overspent by £1.1m. Care Home activity has increased throughout the year; the number of placements has increased by 6% over a 12-month period.

26. The council's share of the Better Care Fund (BCF) that has been utilised within the pool is £29.4m. The 5.75% increase in funding compared to 2022/23 was used to support the cost of preventative services and BCF schemes as agreed within the BCF plan.

Live Well Pooled Budget

27. 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.

28. Budgets within the pool have been managed on an aligned basis with the Integrated Care Board (ICB) for Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire, and Berkshire West (BOB) following the agreement of the contributions and risk share arrangements for 2023/24.

29. The residential element of the mental health Outcomes Based Contract (OBC) with Oxford Health Foundation NHS Trust (OHFT) and BOB ICB, is continuing to be shared equally between the ICB and the council, this agreement was extended to cover the Learning Disability cohort from the beginning of 2023/24.

30. The physical disability and the acquired brain injury budgets were managed on an aligned basis. Any pressure linked to the cost of people with mental health needs falling outside of the OBC were to be split equally after the first £0.2m which was the responsibility of the council.

31. The council elements of the Live Well pool underspent by £1.1m after taking account of the following:

- A £3.0m underspend within the Higher Functioning Autism (HFA), Learning Disabilities and Acquired Brain Injury areas of the pool. This is as a result of the residential element of the S117 aftercare which is shared equally between both the council and BOB ICB where this was previously all charged to the council. There was also a lower level of HFA activity than budgeted for.

- A £1.9m overspend within Physical Disabilities related to an increase in demand for both care homes and home support during late 2022/23 creating an on-going pressure in 2023/24. Year on year, there has been an 8% increase in care home placements (10 placements) and a 13% increase in the number of homecare hours delivered per week, with the number of home support clients supported increasing by 10%.

Non-Pool Services

32. There was a breakeven position for non-pool services.

Other Services

33. An overspend of £0.7m is linked to increased costs of the provider support services team where additional investment to target improvements in the debt management and recovery team has resulted in debts being managed more effectively. Continuing into 2024/25 the aim is to continue to bring down the level of bad debt held within the council.

34. An underspend of £0.7m within the Health, Education and Social Care (HESC) and the Business Support Service was due to vacant posts held throughout the year.

Reserves

35. Earmarked reserves held by the directorate as at 31 March 2024 totalled £2.7m and have decreased by £0.4m during the financial year.

Ringfenced Grants

36. As set out in Annex B-4, ring-fenced government grants received by Adult Services in 2023/24 totalled £21.4m.

37. The Improved Better Care Fund Grant was £10.7m, with no change since 2022/23. The conditions attached to the grant funding required 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 is addressing pressures such as delayed discharges.

38. The Market Sustainability and Improvement Fund was £5.4m. This was used to enhance fee uplifts for care providers in 2023/24 in line with the terms of the grant, 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.

39. The Market Sustainability and Improvement Workforce Fund totalled £3.5m and has been used to grow 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.

40. The Adult Social Care Discharge Fund totalling £1.5m has been used to provide interventions that improve discharge of patients from hospital to the most appropriate location for their ongoing care.

41. Oxfordshire received £0.3m from the Adult Social Care Apprenticeship Fund in February 2024. This will used in 2024/25 with the aim of increasing social work capacity within adult social care. This has been transferred into the grants and contribution reserve.

Virements

42. Virements to note transacted by the end of March 2024 reflect the movement of funding held in reserve into the pooled budgets plus further reallocations of budgets relating to price increases within Adult Social Care.

Childrens' Services

43. Childrens' Services overspent by £7.7m against a budget of £172.0m. The final position has improved by £5.2m compared to the January forecast. In addition, there was an overspend of £14.7m on High Needs Dedicated Schools Grant.

44. As reported throughout the year the underlying pressures in Childrens' Services which were reflected in the overspend for 2022/23 reported to Cabinet in June 2023, have remained a significant challenge in 2023/24. These pressures were driven by a combination of care placements costs, staffing, particularly the reliance on agency staff to cover vacancies, and Home to School Transport for pupils with Special Educational Needs.

Service Area	Final Budget Mar-24 £m	Net Expenditure Mar-24 £m	Variance Mar-24 £m	Variance Jan-24 £m	Change Since Jan-24 £m
Education & Learning	40.1	43.3	3.2	4.2	-1.0
Schools[1]	0.2	0.2	0.0	0.0	0.0
Subtotal Education	**40.3**	**43.5**	**3.2**	**4.2**	**-1.0**
Early Help, Front Door & Social Care	76.0	76.1	0.1	2.9	-2.7
Provider Services & Safeguarding	44.8	48.7	4.0	5.2	-1.3
Childrens' Services Central Costs	11.2	11.7	0.4	0.6	-0.2
Subtotal Childrens' Social Care	**132.0**	**136.5**	**4.5**	**8.7**	**-4.2**
Total Children's Services	**172.3**	**180.0**	**7.7**	**12.9**	**-5.2**

---

[1] *Maintained Schools are funded by Dedicated Schools Grant

Dedicated Schools Grant	Final Budget Mar-24 £m	Net Expenditure Mar-24 £m	Variance Mar-24 £m	Variance Jan-24 £m	Change Since Jan-24 £m
Schools DSG	129.5	129.2	-0.3	0.0	-0.3
High Needs DSG	84.7	99.4	14.7	21.2	-6.5
Early Years DSG	45.2	41.9	-3.2	0.0	-3.2
Central DSG	5.0	5.2	0.3	0.0	0.3
Total DSG Funded Expenditure	**264.3**	**275.7**	**11.4[2]**	**21.2**	**-9.8**

Education & Learning

45. Education & Learning overspent by £3.2m against a budget of £40.3m. This was primarily a result of pressures within Home to School Transport and Management.

46. The £3.1m overspend for Home to School transport is £0.5m lower than the forecast reported to Cabinet in March 2024. The overspend is mainly driven by the Special Educational Needs (SEN) transport service which overspent by £4.1m, offset by a £1m underspend within mainstream school transport. This reflects higher activity in the service than was budgeted for and the impact of rolling annual tenders for bus routes. In addition, the service the service was unable to deliver planned savings of £1.0m.

Childrens' Social Care

47. Childrens' Social Care overspent by £4.5m against a budget of £132.0m. The overspend was primarily driven by a combination of care placement costs and reliance on agency staff to cover vacancies.

48. This reflects a combination of:

- The on-going effect of the overspend in 2022/23. Because activity increased in the last quarter of the financial year the on-going effect 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 children's care and support has made a significant impact on spend in the financial year and reduced the overspend at year end.

- Financial volatility in the market for care together with the impact of inflation and shortages in local capacity reduced the ability to make an impact on spend in the short-term.

49. The drivers of the pressures remained the same as in 2022/23 and included:

- Continued workload pressure, increased vacancies and recruitment difficulties within front-line services including Family Solutions Plus, Front Door and Children We Care For Teams.

---

[2] There is also a movement on the unusable reserve for the new schools fund of £0.6m

- Though the number of children in care has reduced, this has been offset by increases in underlying unit cost rates especially the growing number of very complex cases, although significant action has been taken in the year to manage these.

50. The most significant variances include:

- Children with Disabilities: £1.8m overspend within placement budgets due to a combination of an increased and more complex level of care being required and higher rates. The improvement in the overspend by £0.7m compared to the previously forecast position is due to lower activity than previously forecast for the final quarter of the year (£0.6m) and changes to care packages, including recharges from SEN (£0.1m).

- High Cost and Unregistered Placements: £3.5m overspend. The reduction of £2.0m since the last report due to is due to:

  - Assumptions about inflation requirements for residential placements which were not required due to careful management of the market and a reduction in inflationary pressures during the later part of the year.
  - A reduction in suspended placement costs, new resource panel searches. Backdated costs were lower than anticipated due to on-going activity to manage demand and cost.
  - Oxfordshire's share of the Adopt Thames Valley underspend, which had not been included in the previous forecast.

- Family Solutions Plus (FSP): £0.5m overspend mainly due to continued dependence on high-cost agency staff to cover vacancies due to shortages of staff in the marketplace. The improvement in the overspend by £0.4m compared to the previously reported position was a result of a reduction in staffing spend in the FSP Team, as well as previously prudent forecasts across the service.

- The pressures have been mitigated to some extent by:

  - Substantial underspends on staffing.

  - Underlying reductions in legal and transport costs

  - An increase in NHS Health partner joint funding for Continuing Healthcare and Mental Health (Section 117)

Childrens' Social Care: Pressures, Drivers, and Action Plan

51. Given the scale of the £19.1m overspend for Childrens' Social Care in 2022/23 the service undertook a comprehensive review of its vision and strategy in 2023/24. Plans for reducing expenditure, as well as an adjustment for risk, were considered through the Budget & Business Planning process for 2024/25.

52. During 2023/24 the service implemented organisational, governance and business process controls and market management actions to address the underlying pressures. These included:

- 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 continue to work to reduce the backlog of assessments and intervention measures.
- Development of a robust recruitment and retention policy.
- Work to reduce the number of children needing 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.

53. Evidence that the actions had an impact is reflected in the number of Children We Care For (CWCF).

	Q2 2022	Q3 2022	Q4 2022	Q1 2023	Q2 2023	Q3 2023	Jan 2024	Feb 2024	Mar 2024
Oxfordshire born children	778	755	735	709	677	651	637	632	624
Disabled Children	61	62	58	56	51	50	49	50	49
Subtotal	**839**	**817**	**793**	**765**	**728**	**701**	**686**	**682**	**673**
Unaccompanied	69	73	108	100	94	108	93	96	95
Total	**908**	**890**	**901**	**865**	**822**	**809**	**779**	**778**	**768**

54. The downward trend in the number of CWCF was 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.

55. In addition, emphasis was 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.

Childrens' Services Central Costs

56. An overspend of £0.4m relates to a claim for historic legal fees (£0.2m) and a pressure relating to significant growth in social care complaint cases dealt with by the Customer Service Centre (£0.2m) but recharged to Children's Services.

Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG)

57. Variations against the Dedicated Schools Grant blocks are summarised in the table below.

Summary of DSG funding	2023/24 Budget £m	2023/24 Outturn £m	Variance March 2024 £m
Schools block	129.5	129.2	-0.3
Central Services Schools block	4.9	5.2	0.3
High Needs block	84.7	99.4	14.7
Early Years block	45.2	41.9	-3.2
Total	264.3	275.7	11.4[3]

58. The majority of the variance relates to High Needs DSG with an in-year deficit of £14.7m. This is £3.6m lower than the £18.3m forecast deficit approved by Cabinet in May 2023. In line with national guidance the overspend on High Needs DSG will be transferred to an unusable deficit reserve. The deficit would increase the cumulative negative High Needs DSG balance held in this reserve from £41.1m as at 31 March 2023 to £55.8m at 31 March 2024

59. Some of the key issues impacting on High Needs DSG spend in 2023/24 were the cost of placements from September 2023, tribunal challenges to placement decisions, and the impact of inflation on providers' fees.

60. The overspend on the Central Block DSG relates mainly to higher staffing costs where interims have been required during the year, although the overspend is equal to the cost of accumulated underspends on this block.

62. The underspend on the Schools Block relates to the inclusion of a grant received for schools in financial difficulty.

63. Early Years DSG is underspent due to lower than anticipated hours of early years education being funded.

64. 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. In 2023/24 the funding for this was received via a specific grant but this will be subsumed within DSG from April 2024. The provisional grant is in the region of £3.0m, and the exact amount will not be known in June 2024, after the schools' census return. The council will need to pass the grant to providers in full.

Investments

65. The following budget investment was agreed by Council in February 2023 as part of the budget for 2023/24:

- £0.5m on-going funding to support additional capacity within the Special Educational Needs Team to improve service delivery was fully utilised in 2023/24.

---

[3] There is also a movement on the unusable reserve for the new schools fund of £0.6m

Reserves

66. Total directorate earmarked reserves are £18.0m and have decreased by £0.6m during the financial year. £13.0m of the total relates to school balances which have increased by £0.1m in the year. The unusable DSG reserve is holding a deficit of £45.6m after taking account of the 2023/24 deficit of £11.4m and a movement on the unusable reserve for the new schools fund of £0.6m.

67. £4.5m of the total held relates to ringfenced grants that are expected to be spent in future years.

Grants

68. As set out in Annex B-4, ring-fenced government grants received by the directorate in 2023/24 totalled £303.4m.

Environment & Place

69. Environment & Place underspent by £3.2m against a budget of £75.3m. The final position has improved by £0.3m compared to the January forecast.

Service Area	Final Budget Mar-24 £m	Net Expenditure Mar-24 £m	Variance Mar-24 £m	Variance Jan-24 £m	Change Since Jan-24 £m
Transport& Infrastructure	13.6	12.4	-1.2	-1.3	0.1
Planning, Environment & Climate Change	37.6	37.2	-0.4	-0.6	0.2
Highways & Operations	21.5	19.7	-1.8	-1.1	-0.7
Directorate Support	2.6	2.8	+0.2	+0.1	0.1
Total Environment & Place	**75.3**	**72.1**	**-3.2**	**-2.9**	**-0.3**

Transport & Infrastructure
70. Transport & Infrastructure, which underspent by £1.2m, comprises Transport Policy, Place Making and Infrastructure Delivery.

71. There was a £0.5m underspend on community transport initiatives. As set out in paragraph 89 more time is required to deliver on the on-going investment of £1.2m agreed in February 2023 due to a greater time required to plan, identify and work with providers.

72. The Infrastructure Delivery and Place Making service areas underspent by £0.5m as a result of the allocation of funding to support Programme Management Office costs and other specialist functions needed to support the delivery of the Major Infrastructure capital programme.

73. There was a £0.1m underspend on senior management costs.

74. Placemaking services broke even at year end.

Planning, Environment & Climate change

75. The Planning, Environment & Climate change service area is made up of Strategic Planning, Climate Change and Environment & Circular economy. The service area underspent by £0.5m.

76. Strategic Planning achieved a breakeven position.

77. Climate Change underspent by £0.2m due to vacancies within the team. The service anticipates being fully resourced in the next financial year.

78. Environment & Circular Economy underspent by £0.2m.

79. Waste Management overspent by £0.1m as a result of a mix of factors associated with contract costs, gate fees and transportation costs. Tonnages managed by the Energy Recovery Facility (ERF) were higher than budgeted due to more waste going through to the ERF stream rather than Recycling/Landfill. Kerbside residual waste and recycling/composting waste tonnages were lower than budgeted. Although, waste tonnages overall were less than those budgeted for, the cost of the additional tonnages managed by the ERF offset the changes in landfill and recycling activity. The table below summarises budgeted and actual waste activity.

Waste Stream	Budget				Outturn			
	Annual	Tonnage		Price/Tonne	Annual	Tonnage		Price/Tonne
	£m	K'Tonnes	%	£	£m	K'Tonnes	%	£
Recycling/Composting	8.155	158	58%	51.49	7.728	151	56%	51.04
ERF	15.392	104	38%	147.90	16.245	110	41%	148.93
Landfill	1.564	9	4%	175.19	1.122	7	3%	164.37
Total	**25.111**	**271**	**100%**	**92.66**	**25.214**	**268**	**100%**	**94.61**

*Please note that budget and outturn figures are rounded to the nearest 1000

80. A pressure of £0.2m in Countryside Operations was due to additional work associated with tree services in Oxford. This pressure has been mitigated through working with Oxford City partners by moving the works schedule to a reactive programme to reduce the level of spend. The service pressure has been offset through the underspend of £0.6m in Environment Strategy service, due to

part delivery of the Lead Local Flood Alliance initiative investment. It is anticipated that with the infrastructure in place, the full effect of the investment will be achieved in 2024/25 (see paragraph 89).

Highways & Operations

81. Highways & Operations underspent by £1.8m due to an over achievement of income through enforcement in Network Co-ordination and a reduction in energy prices and costs.

82. The Highway Maintenance service underspent by £1.0m. This reflects a 38% reduction in energy consumption for Street lighting as a result of 94% of the lamps now having been converted to efficient LED units through the LED replacement programme. In addition to the reduction in consumption, energy for street lighting is obtained through Crown Commercial Services. A price update received during the year set out a more favourable energy price per kilowatt, £0.256 lower than assumed when the budget was set. The graph below shows an approximately 50% reduction in energy usage in 2023/24 compared to 2021/22:
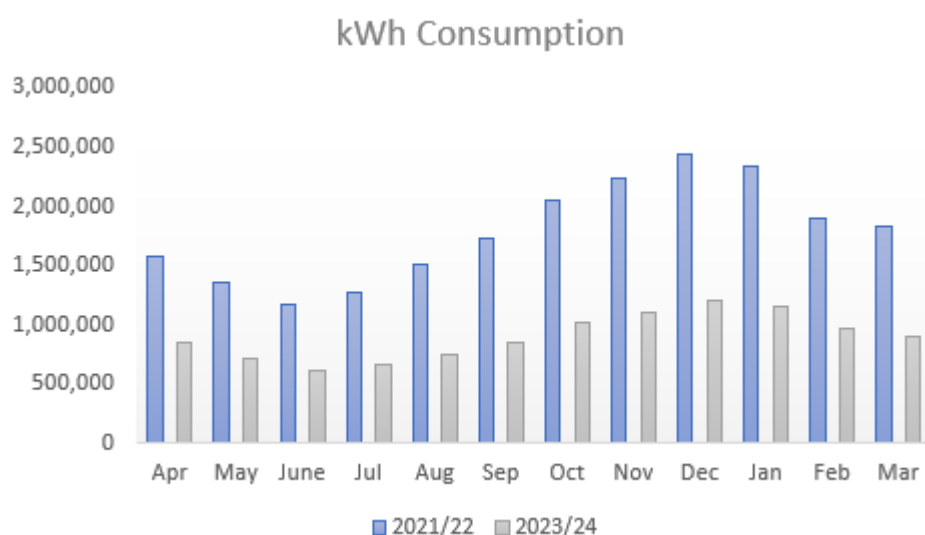
83. There was an underspend on highway operations contract costs due to inflation and material costs returning more in line with expected levels faster than anticipated though concern about volatility of costs remained throughout the year. This underspend was in part offset through a significant increase in the number highway defects throughout the year that were critical to repair and the need to deploy additional personnel to manage these.

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	77.4%
November	1,980	3,088	56.0%
December	1,840	2,837	54.1%
January	3,057	3,574	16.9%
February	3,023	3,881	28.38%
March	3,839	4,290	11.74%

84. The increase in the number of defects was driven by the impact of bad weather earlier in the year on roads that were already in a deteriorated condition and is consistent with the increase seen nationally.

85. The increase in defect numbers and the cost increase of associated repairs has been managed within the service area budgets through a reduction in other operational spend where possible.

86. Network Management underspent by £1.6m. A greater level of income was received than expected predominantly through street works (permit fees and enforcement), as well as a substantial 'late penalty' payment received in March relating to a utility operator fine. The greater levels of income were mainly attributable to compliance issues which are being robustly enforced, and as such are harder to forecast.

87. Supported transport overspent by £0.6m as a result of savings of £0.4m from 2022/23 plus a further saving of £0.2m in 2023/24 that have not been delivered. The on-going impact has been removed through the Budget & Business Planning Process for 2024/25.

Directorate Support

88. The Directorate Support service area overspent by £0.2m due to consultancy fees in respect of the Housing Infrastructure Fund (HIF) project review and the non-achievement of staffing savings.

Investments

89. The following budget investments were agreed by Council in February 2023 as part of the budget for 2023/24:

- On-going investment of £1.2m in <u>Community Transport Initiatives</u>: Countywide Community Transport Initiatives investment of £1.2m enabled the Council to provide a community transport grant scheme and provide new funding for rural transport services. In total, £0.7m was spent in the financial year 2023/24. The community transport grant scheme element was slightly overspent due to the high quality of applications. The rural transport element was significantly underspent because of the time needed to consult, design, tender and mobilise new routes – most services commenced in November 2023, with the final new route due to start in July 2024.

- <u>Park and Ride Joint Ticketing</u>: On-going funding of £0.5m was used to support the continuation of combined ticketing for parking and return bus travel in Oxford in 2023/23. The on-going funding is being used to support joint ticketing arrangements for 2024/25 as agreed with Oxford City Council.

- <u>Further Development of School Streets (Phase 2)</u>: £0.5m one - off funding from the Budget Priorities Reserve has been used to fund Automatic Number Plate Recognition cameras, signage, air quality sensors and traffic monitoring required for the implementation of a further four school streets in Oxford and one in Didcot.

- £1.0m one-off funding from the Budget Priorities Reserve was used to fund <u>improvements to existing highways, cycle-paths and pavements in Oxfordshire</u>. Works have been carried out countywide and have been co-ordinated with other works programmes / priority areas to maximise the impact / benefit. Examples include extensive refurbishment of the Marston Cycle Path in Oxford City whilst the route was closed to repair the University Parks Footbridges. Sites within or bordering Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) areas, such as Abingdon, have been prioritised to support the LCWIP outcomes.

- Following work to agree a joint plan with Children's Services, £0.3m on-going funding to improve <u>Childrens' Transport Options</u> this will be utilised from 2024/25.

- <u>Improvements to travel information</u>: Initial outputs will be a suite of bus information provision, including online and printed with potential expansion to cycle/walking routes in 2024/25. £0.06m was spent in 2023/24, with the full £0.1m expected to be spent from 2024/25.

- <u>Mobility Hubs</u> (£1.5m funding over three years): Pilot locations have been identified and it is anticipated that the schemes, which will include sites at Benson Marina and Carterton Town Centre, will be designed and procured in 2024/25 with delivery in 2025/26. A mobility hub brand will be developed and

linked to wider sustainable transport network ambitions.

- Flooding and Drainage: £0.6m on-going funding was agreed for tackling the worst areas prone to flooding & drainage. There have been some significant delays in utilising the £0.6m investment, primarily due to lack of an existing mechanism for delivering the work on the ground, flooding issues with some areas being complex in relation to landownership and asset ownership. Furthermore, it took significant time to recruit a Project manager, who is now in post to deliver the investment in a longer term, to ensure the most effective us is made of the funding available. The additional funds in year held to fund identification of projects through engagement with residents, Members, Districts, Town and Parish Councils. Some of the funding have been utilised to deliver the projects through County's Highways team and District councils.

- Resource to Develop Freight Strategy (£0.06m on-going funding): The Freight Technical Lead has been in post since April 2024 and will lead on the implementation of the Freight and Logistics Strategy.

- Further work to develop Rail Studies (£0.1m one - off funding): £0.04m was spent in 2023/24 and the outline business case for Wantage and Grove Station is expected to be completed in the first quarter of 2024/25.

Grants

90. As set out in Annex B-4, ring-fenced government grants received by the directorate in 2023/24 totalled £4.7m. Within the year the directorate received £4.0m of grant funding from various central government bodies including Department for Transport, Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs and Homes England, compared to £1.8m received in 2022/23.

Reserves

91. Total directorate earmarked reserves as at 31 March 2024 were £15.7m, an increase of £2.8m in the financial year. The increase is made up of £0.7 income relating to the Zero Emission Zone and a £1.6m increase in the Parking Account.

92. £0.5m reserve funding has been used during the year primarily to support public transport initiatives and growth deal partnership work undertaken throughout the year.

Public Health and Community Safety

93. Public Health and Community Safety overspent by £0.5m against a combined budget of £31.1m.

Service Area	Latest Budget Mar-24 £m	Net Expenditure Mar-24 £m	Variance Mar-24 £m	Variance Jan-24 £m	Change Since Jan-24 £m
Public Health Functions	37.1	36.7	-0.5	0.0	-0.5
Public Health Recharges	0.6	0.6	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	0.3	0.3	0.0	0.3
Total Public Health	**4.1**	**4.0**	**-0.2**	**0.0**	**-0.2**
Total Community Safety	**27.0**	**27.7**	**0.7**	**0.4**	**0.3**
Total Public Health & Community Safety	**31.1**	**31.6**	**0.5**	**0.4**	**0.1**

Public Health

94. There was a £0.5m underspend on Public Health functions. £0.3m of this has been transferred to the Public Health reserve at year end. The underspend was made up of:

- £0.1m overspend on the substance misuse service due to increased activity in the residential rehabilitation and detoxification treatment service which improves outcomes for people with complex treatment needs.
- £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
- £0.2m underspend within the obesity service as service delivery changes will not take place until 2024/25.
- £0.1m underspend on Sexual health services linked to activity levels.
- £0.2m underspend on staffing, linked to in-year delays in recruiting to vacant roles.
- £0.1m underspend relating to multi-year projects across healthy place shaping and wider determinants, there is a commitment for this to be spent in 2024/25.
- £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.

Community Safety

95. Community Safety overspent by £0.7m as a result of:

- The reallocation of budgeted agency staffing savings of £0.2m which it was not possible to achieve by the end of the year.

- A one-off payment of £0.1m made for a disabling injury/illness.
- £0.4m additional staff costs linked to the Botley Road closure in Oxford and the Rewley Road development.
- £0.1m linked to the impact of inflation on the cost of maintaining the service's fleet of vehicles and an increase in training costs of new recruits following staff leaving unexpectedly.
- These overspends were offset by an underspend of £0.1m within Trading Standards. This related to delays in recruitment, and the receipt of unexpected one-off income.

Ringfenced Government Grants

96. The ringfenced Public Health grant totalled £33.6m in 2023/24 and increased by £1.0m compared to 2022/23. The grant was used to support Public Health activities throughout 2023/24 with £0.3m unutilised funding transferred to the Grants and Contributions Reserve for use in future years.

97. The council received £1.4m in relation to the Firefighter's Pension Fund Grant, £0.3m Fire Protection Uplift Grant and £0.1m in total from the New Dimensions, Pension Administration and COVID-19 special grants.
.
Use of Un-ringfenced Government Grant Funding

98. Un-ringfenced grants held centrally and agreed to be used to support expenditure budgets within Public Health and Community Safety in 2023/24 were:

- £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. 2023/24 was the second year of a three-year scheme where the Office for Health Improvement and Disparities (OHID) worked 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.
- £0.1m Supplementary Substance Misuse Inpatient Detox and Rehabilitation.
- £1.2m Rough Sleeping Drug and Alcohol Grant used to provide specialist support for rough sleepers and those at risk.
- £0.1m Rough Sleeping Strategy – Care Leavers
- £0.1m Firelink Grant – This was a 40% reduction from the previous year and this grant will continue to reduce by 20% in each of the next four years.

Reserves

99. Total directorate earmarked reserves as at 31 March 2024 were £4.5m, an increase of £0.4m in the financial year.

100. Public Health funding held in the Grants and Contributions Reserve totalled £4.5m as at 31 March 2024. £1.8m is forecast to be spent in 2024/25, £1.2m in 2025/26 and £0.5m in 2026/27, and £0.4m in 2027/28, leaving a balance of £0.7m.

Virements
101. There are no virements to note.

Resources and Law & Governance

102. The services within Resources overspent by £1.5m (1.9%) against a budget of £73.3m. This is a reduction of £0.4m from the forecast reported to Cabinet in March 2024.

Service Area	Final Budget Mar-24 £m	Net Expenditure Mar-24 £m	Variance Mar-24 £m	Variance Jan-24 £m	Change Since Jan-24 £m
Corporate Services	2.3	2.3	0.0	0.0	0.0
Human Resources & Organisational Development	4.8	4.2	-0.6	-0.5	-0.1
Communications, Strategy & Insight	3.5	3.4	-0.1	0.0	0.0
IT, Innovation & Digital	10.5	11.1	0.6	0.6	0.0
Culture & Customer Experience	12.7	13.2	0.4	0.5	-0.1
Finance & Procurement	8.8	9.3	0.5	0.5	0.0
Property, Investment & Facilities Management	19.7	20.1	0.4	0.4	0.0
Law & Governance	8.0	8.3	0.3	0.5	-0.2
Delivery & Partnership	3.0	3.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Total Resources	**73.3**	**74.9**	**1.5**	**1.9**	**-0.4**

103. **Corporate Services** achieved a breakeven position.

104. **Human Resources & Organisational Development (HR&OD)** underspent by £0.6m due to delays in recruitment.

105. **Communications, Strategy & Insight** underspent by £0.1m due to a number of vacancies in the team.

106. **IT, Innovation & Digital** overspent by £0.6m, after taking account of the non-achievement of cross directorate savings agreed as part of the 2023/24 budget.

107. **Culture and Customer Experience** overspent by £0.4m. This is mainly in the Coroner's Service where the appointment of an Area Coroner has created an in-year pressure and the demand for coronial activity continues to increase year on year. There are also pressures in the Customer Service Centre where firm savings have not yet been identified in the corporate customer service consolidation programme. Additionally, increased income in Music Services has

not materialised and the re-allocation of staffing savings has also contributed to the overspend. Work continues to ensure that the Music Services and Registration Services are able to maximise their income opportunities to meet customer demand.

108. **Finance and Procurement** overspent by £0.5m due to the cost of agency staff being utilised to cover hard to fill vacancies, and an increase in staff costs following a job evaluation review.

109. **Property Services** overspent by £0.4m due to unexpected reactive repairs and maintenance. The School Catering service is overspent due to inflationary pressures, but this is partially mitigated by savings in other areas.

110. **Law and Governance** overspent by £0.3m, a reduction of £0.2m from previous report due to receipt of additional income. The overspend was due to the implementation of new structures in Governance and Legal Services resulting in higher locum costs in Legal Services.

111. **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 has achieved a break-even position.

Investments

112. The following budget investments were agreed by Council in February 2023 as part of the budget for 2023/24:

- Councillor Priority Fund: During 2023/23 each councillor has been allocated £15,000 to be spent by 31 March 2025. £0.3m had been spent as at 31 March 2024 with the remaining funding of £0.7m held in the Budget Priorities Reserve for use in 2024/25.

- Community Hubs: The pilot hub will bring together a range of council and partner services in a single location in Banbury, driven by community need and engagement. This will inform a project pipeline and business case for the roll-out of further community hubs in Oxfordshire. £0.1m of £0.5m one - off funding had been spent as at 31 March 2024. The remaining £0.4m has been held in the Budget Priorities reserve for use in 2024/25.

- Business and Intellectual Property Centre: £0.2m one-off funding from the Budget Priority Reserve enabled the continuation of the BIPC service for 2023/24 while action to seek new funding streams for 2024/25 and onwards was underway. The full £0.2m has been spent in 2023/24. As no on-going funding has been identified, this service will close in June 2024.

- Council Tax Support Schemes/Cost of Living Measures (£2.3m one – off funding). £1.6m has been passed to the City and District Councils to support Council Tax Discounts and additional Discretionary Housing Payments. £0.3m has been used to support Voluntary & Community Sector Advisory Services, £0.2m on extending accelerated Better Housing Better Health programme, and £0.2m on administration and evaluation

Reserves

113. Total directorate earmarked reserves were £22.8m as at 31 March 2024 and have decreased by £0.4m during the financial year. £11.7m of the total relates to Homes for Ukraine Grant that is expected to be used in future years.

Grants

114. As set out in Annex B-4, ring-fenced government grants received by the directorate in 2023/24 total £9.3m and included further Homes for Ukraine Grant for new arrivals during the year.

Medium Term Financial Strategy Savings

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

116. £10.2m of the 2022/23 savings were not achieved as planned in the last financial year. 73% of these savings have now been delivered, 27% have not been delivered.

117. 84% of the savings agreed as part of the 2023/24 budget have been delivered and 16% have not been delivered.

	2023/24 Planned Savings £m	Savings Delivered £m	2022/23 Savings delivered in 2023/24 £m	Delivery of 2022/23 Savings In 2023/24 £m
Adult Services	-18.4	-17.9	-4.0	-3.6
Childrens' Services	-3.9	-1.8	-1.9	0.0
Environment & Place	-1.6	-1.2	-2.3	-1.9
Community Safety	-0.4	-0.2	0.0	0.0
Resources & Cross Directorate	-3.9	-2.5	-2.0	-1.9
TOTAL	**-28.2**	**-23.7**	**-10.2**	**-7.4**
TOTAL DELIVERED		**84%**		**73%**

Adult Services
118. The 2023/24 budget included planned savings of £18.4m. 97% of these

savings have been delivered.

119. Undeliverable savings include reductions in the cost of vehicles used by council services expected to be achieved through the "One Fleet" Strategy and those which relate to managing demand, particularly in care homes.

120. The £0.3m share of the £1.5m budgeted reduction in agency costs reallocated to Adult Services during the year was delivered.

121. £4.0m of savings were brought forward from 2022/23 for delivery in 2023/24. 90% of these have now been delivered.

122. Some savings have overdelivered and offset the impact of the undelivered savings.

Childrens' Services
123. The 2023/24 budget included planned savings of £3.9m. 48% of these savings have been delivered and 52% were not delivered. The latter includes £0.5m of savings relating to agency costs reallocated to directorates during the year.

124. It was not possible to deliver £1.9m of savings brought forward from 2022/23.

125. As part of the 2024/25 Budget & Business Planning Process savings from prior years that are not expected to be achievable were restated or removed. The new savings, and risk adjustment agreed as part of the budget in February 2024 then build on that revised baseline position.

Environment & Place
126. The 2023/24 budget includes planned savings of £1.6m. 75% have been delivered. The 25% not been delivered included £0.3m relating to the Home to school contract management and the directorate's £0.2m share of the £1.5m budgeted reduction in agency costs reallocated to directorates during the year.

127. 85% of the £2.3m savings that were not achieved in 2022/23 have been delivered in 2023/24. The on-going impact of an unachieved saving relating to a home to school contract management system was removed as part of the Budget & Business Planning Process for 2024/25.

Public Health & Community Safety
128. The 2023/24 budget included planned savings of £0.2m and 55% have been delivered. The savings not delivered include the directorate's share of the £1.5m budgeted reduction in agency costs which was reallocated to directorates during the year.

Resources
129. The 2023/24 budget includes planned savings of £4.0m and 64% of these were delivered. Savings that it was not possible to deliver include the share of the £1.5m budgeted reduction in agency costs attributable to services in

Resources, catering services commercial savings and digital transformation savings that it was not been possible to achieve.

130. 95% of the £2.0m savings not achieved in 2022/23 have been delivered in 2023/24.

Debt Management

Corporate Debtors

131. The 120-day invoice collection rate was 98.6% in March 2024 and 97.1% for the year; 2.1% above target. The 120-day collection rate based on invoice value for the year was 98.3%.

132. The target level for debt requiring impairment at the end of 2023/24 was £0.3m. The final position was £0.46m and within that the top two cases account for £0.1m of the impaired balance.

133. 177 debtor write-offs were processed in 2024/23 with a combined value of £0.04m, 0.01% of the value of invoices raised in the same period. A further ten corporate write - offs were processed with a value of £0.005m.

Adult Social Care Debtors

134. The 120-day invoice collection rate was 91% in March 2024, 1% below the 92% target. The direct debit collection rate for the year was 62%.

135. The final balance of adult social care contribution debt requiring impairment as at 31 March 2024 was £4.5m. This was £0.1m lower than the 2023/24 carried forward balance which included an increase of £0.9m at the end of 2022/23. The reduction in 2023/24 is the result of the debt focus work that Adult Services ran between June 2022 and March 2024. Plans to further reduce the current level of impaired debt down to the target of £3m over the medium term are being developed and the 2024/25 budget includes a requirement to achieve a £0.150m reduction by the end of 2024/25.

136. There were 196 Adult Social care write offs processed in 2023/24 with a total value of £0.624m. This represented 1.3% of the value of invoices raised (£47.8m).

Budgets Held Centrally

137. The table below shows the final budget and variations against budgets and funding held centrally.

	Final Net Budget £m	Total Spend £m	Year End Variance £m	Year End Variance %	Variance Last Cabinet Reporting Month £m	Change in Variance £m
Budgets Held Centrally						
Capital Financing	19.0	19.4	0.5	2.4%	0.0	0.5
Interest on Balances	-7.2	-15.1	-7.9	109.6%	-2.2	-5.7
Contingency and Inflation	10.9	-0.0	-10.9	-100.1%	-8.7	-2.2
Un-ringfenced Specific Grants	-45.2	-46.5	-1.3	2.9%	0.0	-1.3
Insurance	1.4	1.4	0.0	0.0%	0.0	-0.0
Contribution from COVID-19 reserve	-7.4	-7.4	0.0	0.0%	-1.4	1.4
Contribution from Budget Priority Reserve	-2.4	-2.4	0.0	0.0%	0.0	0.0
Contributions to (+)/from (-)reserves	20.7	21.4	0.7	3.4%	0.0	0.7
Contribution to balances	7.1	7.1	0.0	0.0%	0.0	0.0
Total Budgets Held Centrally	**-3.0**	**-22.0**	**-19.0**	**624.6%**	**-12.3**	**-6.7**

138. At the end of 2023/24, there was a net underspend of £19.0m on budgets and funding held centrally. This includes an underspend of £10.9m against the contingency budget held to support the directorate pressures and £7.9m additional interest on balances received during the year as a result of interest rates being higher than assumed when the budget was set in February 2023.

Capital Financing Costs

139. The minimum revenue provision (MRP) is required to be charged on Prudential Borrowing taken to fund schemes in the capital programme and includes both repayment of the principal and interest costs. The MRP relating to borrowing supporting the capital programme is 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. After taking account of recharges to directorates the actual cost of capital financing was £0.5m above the budget in 2023/24.

Interest on Balances

140. The outturn position for in house interest receivable was £19.6m, £8.6m above the budget. Of this overachievement, approximately £2.0m has been applied to developer contributions in 2023/24 to index those in line with the relevant Section 106 agreements.

141. The additional interest is a result of higher than forecast cash balances

coupled with higher than forecast deposit rates during 2023/24. Currently, every extra £5m within the cash balance will earn approximately £0.25m of interest annually.

142. The interest payable outturn was £12.9m. This is £0.2m below budget, as a result of the early repayment of two £5m LOBOs in August and October 2023.

143. The outturn position for external fund returns was £4.8m, £1.0m above budget.

144. Taken together that means £7.9m additional interest on balances is included the outturn position for the year.

145. Cash balances for the year are £51.9m lower than they would otherwise have been as a result of negative High Needs DSG balances. The impact of this is an estimated opportunity cost of £1.5m in unearned interest during 2023/24.

146. Further information on the year end position for Treasury Management will be included in the Treasury Management Outturn report to Cabinet in July 2024.

Pay Inflation and Contingency

147. The £12.4m contingency budget for 2023/24 included £4.1m funded by one-off council tax and business rates income[4].   This was added to £8.3m on-going contingency agreed as part of the 2023/24 budget.

148. The report to the end of January set out that £2.0m contingency may be needed to fund pay inflation on vacant posts in 2023/24. This was not required to be used in 2023/24 so the underspend has increased to £10.9m at year end.

149. It is anticipated that any of the additional on-going contingency for pay inflation on vacant posts not required to be moved to directorates to support pay costs in 2024/25 can be used to help meet staffing savings built into 2024/25 budgets.

Reserves

150. On 1 April 20223, one – off funding held in earmarked reserves totalled £202.7m. As set out in Annex B-3a this increased to £210.1m as at 31 March 2024. The increase includes budgeted net contributions to/from reserves totalling £12.8m agreed in February 2023, plus other net changes during the year which reduced reserves by £5.4m.

151. The DSG reserve held a deficit balance of £33.6m on 1 April 2023. The net deficit added to the reserve in 2023/24 was £11.4m. There is also a movement on the unusable reserve for the new schools fund of £0.6m. After taking this into account the closing deficit balance was £45.6m as at 31 March 2024. This incorporates a cumulative deficit of £55.8m on High Needs DSG.

---

[4] agreed to be added as part of the Provisional Outturn Report 2022/23 to Cabinet in June 2023.

152. Reserves held by the council, including planned contributions agreed as part of the 2023/24 budget and other changes during the year are summarised in the table below. Most of the funding is being held for specific agreed purposes and will be used to support revenue expenditure, including the council's Delivering the Future Together programme, or to fund capital expenditure.

Reserves	Balance at 31 March 2023 £m	Budgeted Contributions to/from Reserves £m	Other Changes to Reserves £m	Balance at 31 March 2024 £m
Revenue Grants Unapplied				
Grants and Contributions Reserve	37.0		-3.2	33.8
COVID-19 Reserve	15.4	-7.4	-0.1	7.9
Government Initiatives Reserve	2.3		0.8	3.2
Subtotal	**54.8**	**-7.4**	**-2.7**	**44.7**
Corporate Priorities				
Budget Priorities Reserve	11.4	1.8	-2.5	10.7
Transformation Reserve	1.5	4.3	-3.9	1.8
Zero Emissions Zone	0.5		0.7	1.2
Youth Provision Reserve	0.3		-0.2	0.0
Subtotal	**13.7**	**6.1**	**-6.0**	**13.8**
Funding for Risk				
Insurance Reserve	12.9		-2.6	10.3
Demographic Risk Reserve	13.0	4.0	0.0	17.0
Council Elections	0.4		0.2	0.6
Redundancy Reserve	2.4		0.0	2.4
Trading Accounts	0.2		-0.1	0.1
Council Tax Collection Fund Reserve	3.0		0.0	3.0
Business Rates Reserve	9.5		2.2	11.7
Subtotal	**41.3**	**4.0**	**-0.4**	**45.0**
Capital & Equipment				
Capital & Prudential Borrowing Reserves	67.8	10.0	3.0	80.8
Vehicle and Equipment Reserve	3.4		0.7	4.1
Investment Pump Priming Reserve	2.0		-1.9	0.1
Subtotal	**73.2**	**10.0**	**1.8**	**85.1**
Other Reserves				
Partnership Reserves	1.9		0.2	2.1
On-Street Car Parking Reserve	4.9		1.6	6.5
Budget Equalisation Reserve	0.0		0.0	0.0
Subtotal	**6.8**	**0.0**	**1.7**	**8.6**

Reserves	Balance at 31 March 2023 £m	Budgeted Contributions to/from Reserves £m	Other Changes to Reserves £m	Balance at 31 March 2024 £m
Unusable Reserves				
Schools' Reserves[5]	12.9		0.1	13.0
Total	**202.7**	**12.8**	**-5.4**	**210.1**
DSG Reserve [6]	-33.6		-12.0	-45.6
Total Reserves	**169.1**	**12.8**	**-17.4**	**164.5**

Grants and Contributions Reserve

153. This reserve holds underspends on ringfenced grant funding which needs to be used in accordance with the relevant grant conditions in future years.

154. The net contribution from this reserve in 2023/24 was £3.2m reducing the total held to £33.8m. The balance includes £11.7m grant funding for the Homes for Ukraine scheme that has not been required to be spent by the end of 2023/24. This will be used to support the on-going costs of the scheme in Oxfordshire in future years.

155. £6.0m relates to the remaining balance of the BT Openreach Broadband Gainshare that was received in 2021/22. This will be used to fund future ICT related capital expenditure in accordance with the Gainshare agreement.

156. Public Health grant funding held in the reserve totalled £4.5m at 31 March 2024.

157. £3.8m Section 106 revenue funding for Public Transport will be used in accordance with the agreements.

158. £3.2m held in the reserve for Childrens' services includes funding for Delivering Better Value on SEND of £0.8m and Supported accommodation reform of £0.3m.

159. £2.3m is held in the reserve to fund Countryside services and developer contributions.

160. Funding of £0.5m for Adult Services includes £0.3m held in relation to the Apprenticeship Fund, to be used in 2024/25 to increase social work capacity, and £0.1m from the Accelerated Reform Fund to be used in 2024/25 to address barriers by adopting innovative practices and build capacity and capability in the adult social care market.

161. Funding relating to the Fire Uplift Grant totalled £0.4m at 31 March 2024. This

---

[5] This is made up of surpluses of £14.1m and deficits of £1.1m.
[6] The cumulative High Needs DSG deficit held within the DSG reserve total increased from £41.1m as at 1 April 2023 to £55.8m at 31 March 2024.

is being held to fund employee costs expected to be incurred over the next three to five years.

COVID-19 Reserve

162. Funding held in the COVID-19 reserve as at 1 April 2023 was £15.4m. A planned contribution of £7.4m from the reserve was made as agreed in the 2023/24 budget.

163. In addition to the planned use, £0.1m has been used to extend capacity needed within the Information Management team. £0.5m is committed to further extend capacity needed within the Customer Service Centre to support the council's ability to respond to Complaints/Freedom of Information requests and deliver a wide-ranging set of improvement actions in 2024/25.

164. The balance held in the reserve as at 31 of March 2024 was £7.9m. As set out in the 2024/25 budget and Medium-Term Financial Strategy £6.1m of that total is planned to be used to fund COVID-19 related pressures in future years. £1.4m funding not required to be used to fund pressures in Children's Social Care in 2023/24 based on the position at year end is available to support future pressures or initiatives.

Government Initiatives Reserve

165. This reserve is used to hold underspends on directorate budgets funded by un-ringfenced grants so that the funding remains available for use to support the specified purpose of the grant in future years.

166. The balance held in this reserve at the end of 2023/24 was £3.2m. £0.8m added to the reserve relates to accumulated unused balances from grant funded projects.

167. Adult Services - £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 2024/25 ahead of the revised date for charging reform in autumn 2025. £0.2m was spent during 2023/24 leaving £0.1m committed against 2024/25 spend.

168. £1.1m is being held to support the provision of accommodation-based support to victims of domestic abuse and their children and the graduate trainee programme in future years

Budget Priorities Reserve

169. This reserve is to fund the priorities of the Council. As at 31 March 2024 £10.7m was held in the reserve.

Funding for Investments in 2023/24

170. A planned contribution from the reserve totalling £1.8m to support one - off Investments set out in this report was agreed as part of the 2023/24 budget and Medium-Term Financial Strategy.

171. £0.1m of £0.5m one - off funding had been spent on Community Hubs as at 31 March 2024. The remaining £0.4m has been held in the Budget Priority reserve for use in 2024/25 (see paragraph 112).

172. £0.7m of the remaining funding for the Councillor Priority Fund is expected to be spent in 2024/25.

173. £1.8m was transferred to the Capital Reserve during 2023/24 to support the capital element of the £2.6m funding for tree replacement. £0.8m to meet the revenue costs of the Tree Aftercare & Planting Service continues to be held in the reserve. The remaining £0.4m of the £3.0m investment agreed as part of the 2023/24 budget was agreed to be released in 2024/25 to support other budget priorities as part of the budget agreed in February 2024.

174. £1.2m was transferred to the Capital Reserve to allow the council to unlock the full £5.2m grant offered by the government to fund four children's homes.

175. £1.0m will be used to support the following priorities which were agreed in 2023/24:
   - Vision Zero £0.3m
   - Food Strategy £0.3m
   - Low Traffic Neighborhoods £0.4m

Funding built into the Budget for 2024/25

176. £3.8m not required for the 20 Mile Per Hour Speed Limit Programme was returned to the Budget Priority Reserve from the Capital Reserve during 2023/24. This will be moved to the Redundancy Reserve in 2024/25 as agreed by council in February 2024.

177. As part of the 2024/25 budget £1.3m was agreed to be used to fund a one – off investment in Improvements to highways, cycle-paths and pavements in 2024/25 and a further £0.1m to support other investments.

Adult Social Care

178. £2.1m held in the reserve at 1 April 2023 was the remaining balance of contributions made by Oxfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group in previous financial years. £1.5m has been used in 2023/24 in agreement with the ICB. A spending plan or the use of the remaining £0.6m funding in 2024/25 and 2025/26 will be agreed with the ICB.

179. £0.5m added to the reserve at the end of 2023/24 relates to funding for committed pressures within the Live Well pooled budget including repairs and refurbishment costs of supported living units and respite properties plus associated development costs. A further £0.4m will be used to fund the completion of backdated (DoLS) cases within Adult Services in 2024/25.

Other

180. £0.1m will be used to fund children's center rents, £0.3m to support additional external audit fees for 2021/22 and 2022/23 and £0.2m for repair and maintenance of Joint Use Agreement Leisure facilities.

Council Elections Reserve

181. This reserve holds funds to meet the cost of the County Council elections every four years. Funding held in this reserve increased by £0.2m to fund future years election activities and totals £0.6m at 31 March 2024. £0.8m will be available to support the cost of the next County Council elections in May 2025.

Transformation Reserve

182. The Transformation Reserve has been used to support the costs of the implementation of the council's transformation programme, Delivering the Future Together.

183. £4.3m funding was transferred from the Budget Equalisation Reserve in 2023/24. £3.9m has been utilised on transformation priorities and the remaining balance of £1.8m will be used to support further priorities in 2024/25.

Zero Emissions Zone (ZEZ)

184. Surpluses generated by Network Coordination are being ringfenced for the development and expansion of the ZEZ in the future years, as well as funding the ongoing cost and maintenance of the existing scheme in Oxford. £0.7m was added to the reserve at the end of 2023/24.

Demographic Risk Reserve

185. In light of the significant pressures relating to High Needs and other budgets with demographic volatility a demographic risk reserve was created in 2019/20. The existing MTFS includes an on-going annual contribution to the reserve of £4.0m £17.0m was held in the reserve at the end of 2023/24.

Capital & Prudential Borrowing Reserves

186. The Capital Reserve holds capital receipts and other funds to meet the cost of borrowing to finance the capital programme. Funding held in the reserve is expected to be used to meet the costs of the capital programme and pipeline agreed in February 2024.

Vehicle & Equipment Reserve

187. £4.1m was held in reserves at the year-end for the renewal of fire and rescue vehicles and breathing apparatus equipment. This reflects an in-year increase of £0.7m with a larger scale of renewal expected from 2024 onwards.

188. £0.5m is being held to cover the cost of the replacement of Airwave for Oxfordshire Fire and Rescue Service and the implementation of the new Emergency Service Mobile Communications Programme.

Investment Pump Priming Reserve

189. This reserve is held to meet the costs of self-financing schemes which require pump priming until the funds are returned. Funding was drawn down fore the

following schemes:

- 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
- Investigation and development of solar panel programme £0.1m.

On-Street Car Parking Reserve

190. Expenditure and income relating to parking is required to be transacted through the parking account. In accordance with Section 55(4) of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984, the Cabinet is required to approve that any surplus from the parking account can be carried forward to support infrastructure and maintenance in future years. After taking into account net income of £4.1m and a £2.6m contribution to support the revenue budget (see Annex B-3c for further detail) a net contribution of £1.6m has been made to the reserve. This contribution is primarily to be held for the benefit of the Highways Infrastructure and Parking Account to fund future drawdowns.

Schools' Reserves

191. As shown in Annex B-3b maintained schools' balances were £12.9m at 1 April 2023 and increased to £13.1m at 31 March 2024. This is made up of surpluses of £15.9m (for 111 schools) and deficits of £2.8m (for 22 schools).

Budget Equalisation Reserve

192. This reserve was previously used to smooth the timing differences between funding changes and emerging pressures over the period of the MTFS. As part of the Business Management & Monitoring report to Cabinet in January 2024, £4.3m was agreed to be transferred into the Transformation Reserve to meet costs associated with continuous improvement and transformation programmes.

Business Rates & Council Tax Collection Fund Reserve

193. These reserves have been held to manage fluctuations in Business Rate and Council Tax income that the Council receives. £1.3m additional business rates grant funding was received during 2023/23 and transferred to the Business Rates reserve. This included:

- £0.6m relating to a Section 31 business rate relief outturn adjustment relating to the financial years prior to and including 2022/23.
- £0.6m additional funding relating to the distribution of the surplus Business Rates levy for 2023/24.
- £0.1 additional grant to offset business rates reliefs for the green plant and machinery exemption.

194. In addition, the council has received £0.8m pooling gain from the North Oxfordshire Business Rates Pool increasing the total held in the reserve at 31 March 2024 to £11.7m. £8.5m will be transferred to the Transformation Reserve in 2024/25 as part of the budget agreed in February 2024.

195. A further £3.0m is held in the Council Tax Collection Fund reserve. As agreed as part of the 2024/25 budget the two reserves will be merged into one Collection Fund Risk Reserve in 2024/25 with an opening balance of £4.0m plus the additional £2.1m income received in 2023/24. The use of this additional funding will be considered through the Business and Budget Planning Process for 2025/26.

DSG Reserve

196. Schedule 2 to the School and Early Years Finance (England) Regulations 2023, requires a deficit on the Dedicated School's Grant to be carried forward to be funded from future DSG income unless permission is sought and received from the Secretary of State for Education to fund the deficit from general council resources.

197. The total deficit transferred to the DSG reserve at the end of 2023/24 was £11.4m and increased the closing deficit balance to £45.6m as at 31 March 2024. This incorporates an overspend of £14.7m on High Needs, offset by a £3.2m underspend on Early Years, and other minor adjustments.

198. Within the overall total, which also includes positive balances held for Early Years and other purposes, the total unusable High Needs deficit has increased from £41.1m at 1 April 2023 to £55.8m at 31 March 2024.

199. The Local Authorities (Capital Finance and Accounting) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2020 (SI 2020 No 1212), made by what is now the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC), require DSG deficits to be held in a separate reserve in local authorities' accounts. These 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 the Budget & Business Planning Process for 2025/26.

Overall Financial Position

200. The table below summarises the final position compared to the Net Operating Budget for 2023/24 agreed by Council in February 2023. The Net Operating Budget is funded by council tax and business rates income.

	Final Net Budget	Total Spend	Year End Variance	Year End Variance	Variance Last Cabinet Reporting Month	Change in Variance
	£m	£m	£m	%	£m	£m
Directorate Budgets	581.8	588.4	6.6	1.1%	12.3	-5.7
Budgets Held Centrally	-3.0	-22.0	-19.0	624.6%	-12.3	-6.7
Net Operating Budget	**578.8**	**566.4**	**-12.4**	**-2.1%**	**0.0**	**-12.4**
Revenue Support Grant	-0.0	-0.0	0.0	0.0%	0.0	0.0
Business Rates & Council Tax funding	-578.8	-578.7	0.0	0.0%	0.0	0.0
Year-End Position	**-0.0**	**-12.3**	**-12.3**		**0.0**	**-12.4**

201. At the end of 2023/24 there was a combined underspend of £12.3m. This compares to an overall breakeven position reported to Cabinet in March 2024.

202. As agreed as part of the 2024/25 budget, £1.5m of the underspend arising from the additional interest on balances will be used to fund a one – off revenue contribution to the Transformation Reserve in 2024/25. A further £2.2m will be used to make an initial contribution to a new reserve to manage the potential impact of the end of the statutory over-ride for IFRS9, which removes changes in the value of Treasury Management Pooled Funds from the revenue account, from 1 April 2025. This means that £3.7m of the £12.3m underspend that will be held in balances as at 31 March 2024 is already committed in 2024/25.

203. The report to Cabinet in March 2024, noted that a decision on the use of any remaining funding to top up balances to the risk assessed level for 2024/25 and for other purposes would be made through the Provisional Outturn Report to Cabinet in June 2024 and/or the Business Management & Monitoring Reports to Cabinet in 2024/25.

204. Since the underspend is higher than anticipated as a result of the reduction in the directorate overspend it is recommended to:

- Add a further £2.8m to the IFRS9 reserve in 2024/25, increasing the total to £5.0m. That would then be expected to provide sufficient cover for likely risks around changes in the value of pooled funds if those needed to be incorporated into the revenue budget when the statutory over-ride ends in April 2025.

- Create a new pump priming reserve in 2024/25 to support the council's Commercial Strategy with an initial contribution of £2.0m.

- Make a contribution of £1.0m to the Budget Priorities Reserve to be used to complete or extend schemes already agreed as part of the Cabinet's priorities including Rail Studies and an extension of the funding for efficiency loans to schools.

General Balances

205. The risk assessed level of balances for 2023/24 was £30.2m.

206. During the year £0.2m was agreed to be used to fund a supplementary estimate for staffing costs to support development of One - Fleet approach to the council's vehicles, £0.2m has been used to fund a supplementary estimate to fund a deficit budget for a school with a forced academisation, and £0.2m has been used to fund a supplementary estimate to meet one-off ill health/injury costs incurred in Community Services in 2023/24.

207. After taking account of the use of contingency and additional interest on balances, planned changes above as well as supplementary estimates agreed earlier in the year, balances would be balances would be £42.0m, £11.8m above the 2024/25 risk assessed level of £30.2m at year end. On the basis that £3.7m of this will be used to fund contributions to reserves in 2024/25, as well as a further £5.8m as set out in paragraph 204, the remaining £2.3m will be held in balances pending a decision about future use.

Business Management & Monitoring Report
Position to the end of March 2024
Budget Monitoring

Directorate	Final Net Budget	Total Spend	Year End Variance underspend-overspend+	Year End Variance	Variance Last Cabinet Reporting Month	Change in Variance	Year End Traffic Light Red > 1.5% Amber >1.1% <1.5% Green on track
	£000	£000	£000	%	£000	£000	
Adult Services	229,727	229,727	0	0.00%	0	0	G
Children's Services	172,316	180,031	7,715	4.48%	12,954	-5,239	R
Environment and Place	75,342	72,159	-3,183	-4.22%	-2,947	-236	G
Public Health	4,076	3,925	-151	-3.72%	0.0	-151	G
Community Safety	27,024	27,699	675	2.50%	400.0	275	R
Resources	73,343	74,888	1,545	2.11%	1,930	-385	R
Directorate Total Net	**581,828**	**588,429**	**6,601**	**1.13%**	**12,337**	**-5,736**	A

Business Management & Monitoring Report
Position to the end of March 2024
Budget Monitoring

| Directorate | Final Net Budget | Total Spend | Year End Variance | Year End Variance | Variance Last Cabinet Reporting Month | Change in Variance | Year End Traffic Light |
| | | | underspend-overspend+ | | | | Red > 1.5% Amber >1.1% <1.5% |
	£000	£000	£000	%	£000	£000	Green on track
Budget held Centrally						0	
Capital Financing	18,985	19,439	454	2.39%	0	454	
Interest on Balances	-7,212	-15,116	-7,904	109.60%	-2,240	-5,664	
Contingency and Inflation	10,878	-11	-10,889	-100.10%	-8,660	-2,228	
Unringfenced Specific Government Grants	-45,169	-46,494	-1,325	2.93%	0	-1,325	
Insurance	1,436	1,436	0	0.00%	0	0	
Contribution from COVID-19 Reserve	-7,380	-7,380	0	0.00%	-1,400	1,400	
Contribution from Budget Priorities Reserve	-2,370	-2,370	0	0.00%	0		
Contributions to (+)/from (-)reserves	20,736	21,449	712	3.44%	0	712	
Contribution to (+)/from(-) balances	7,061	7,061	0	0.00%	0	0	
Total Budget held Centrally	**-3,034**	**-21,986**	**-18,952**	**624.63%**	**-12,300**	**-6,652**	
Net Operating Budget	**578,794**	**566,443**	**-12,351**	**-2.13%**	**37**	**-12,388**	
Revenue Support Grant	-30	-30	0	0.00%	0	0	
Business Rates & Council Tax Funding	-578,764	-578,735	29	-0.01%	0	29	
Forecast Year End Position	**0**	**-12,322**	**-12,322**	**0**	**37**	**-12,359**	

Business Management and Monitoring Report: Adult Services
Position to the end of March 2024
Revenue Budget Monitoring

		Final Net Budget	Total Spend	Year End Variance	Variance Last Cabinet	Change in Variance
				underspend- overspend+		
		£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
SCS1	Adult Social Care	26,316	27,040	724	600	124
SCS2	Other Adult Social Care Services	5,425	4,811	-614	-600	-14
SCS3	Housing & Social Care Commissioning	1,378	1,382	4	0	4
SCS4	Business Support Service	1,141	999	-142	-100	-42
SCS5	Pooled Budget Contributions	195,467	195,496	29	100	-71
	Total Adult Services	**229,727**	**229,727**	**0**	**0**	**0**

Business Management & Monitoring Report: Children's Services
Forecast Position at the end of March 2024
Revenue Budget Monitoring

		Final Net Budget	Total Spend	Year End Variance underspend- overspend+	Variance Last Cabinet	Change in Variance
		£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
CEF1	**Education & Learning**					
CEF1-1	Management & Central Costs	470	814	344	840	-496
CEF1-2	SEND	7,499	7,516	17	0	17
CEF1-3	Learning & School Improvement	1,345	1,291	-54	0	-54
CEF1-4	Access to Learning	30,530	33,506	2,976	3,300	-324
CEF1-5	Learner Engagement Service	282	207	-75	100	-175
	Total Education & Learning	**40,126**	**43,334**	**3,208**	**4,240**	**-1,032**
CEF2	**Early Help, Front Door + Social Care**					
CEF2-1	Family Help	10,135	8,927	-1,208	-1,086	-122
CEF2-2	Front Door	5,295	4,944	-351	-213	-138
CEF2-3	Childrens Social Care - NEW	60,167	62,197	2,030	4,294	-2,264
CEF2-9	Change - NEW	402	54	-348	-147	-201
	Total Early Help, Front Door + Social Care	**75,999**	**76,122**	**123**	**2,848**	**-2,725**

Business Management & Monitoring Report: Children's Services
Forecast Position at the end of March 2024
Revenue Budget Monitoring

		Final Net Budget	Total Spend	Year End Variance underspend- overspend+	Variance Last Cabinet	Change in Variance
		£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
CEF3	**Provider Services & Safeguarding**					
CEF3-1	Provider Services	40,855	44,756	3,901	4,927	-1,026
CEF3-2	QA Safeguarding + Recruit & Retention	3,900	3,971	71	318	-247
CEF3-3	Services for Disabled Children - OLD	0	0	0	0	0
CEF3-4	Youth Offending Service - OLD	0	0	0	0	0
	Total Provider Services & Safeguarding	**44,755**	**48,727**	**3,972**	**5,245**	**-1,273**
CEF4	**Schools**					
CEF4-1	Delegated Budgets	0	-4	-4	0	-4
CEF4-2	Nursery Education Funding (EY)	0	0	0	0	0
CEF4-3	Non-Delegated School Costs	216	188	-28	0	-28
CEF4-4	School Support Non-Negotiable Recharges	0	0	0	0	0
CEF4-5	Capitalised Repairs & Maintenance	0	0	0	0	0
	Total Schools	**216**	**188**	**-28**	**0**	**-28**

Business Management & Monitoring Report: Children's Services
Forecast Position at the end of March 2024
Revenue Budget Monitoring

		Final Net Budget	Total Spend	Year End Variance underspend-overspend+	Variance Last Cabinet	Change in Variance
		£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
CEF5	**Children's Services Central Costs**					
CEF5-1	Management & Administration	8,009	8,398	389	548	-159
CEF5-2	Premature Retirement Compensation	3,211	3,262	51	73	-22
CEF5-3	Commissioning Recharge - OLD	0	0	0	0	0
	Total Children's Services Central Costs	**11,220**	**11,660**	**440**	**621**	**-181**
	Total Children's Services	**172,316**	**180,031**	**7,715**	**12,954**	**-5,239**

MEMORANDUM: DEDICATED SCHOOLS GRANT - DSG Funded Expenditure (Gross)

		Final Net Budget	Total Spend	Year End Variance	Variance Last Cabinet	Change in Variance
	Schools DSG	129,480	129,193	-287	0	-287
	High Needs DSG	84,694	99,353	14,659	21,200	-6,541
	Early Years DSG	45,175	41,936	-3,239	0	-3,239
	Central DSG	4,992	5,243	251	0	251
	Total DSG Funded Expenditure	**264,341**	**275,725**	**11,384**	**21,200**	**-9,816**

Business Management & Monitoring Report: Environment and Place
Position to the end of March 2024
Revenue Budget Monitoring

		Final Net Budget	Total Spend	Year End Variance	Variance Last Cabinet	Change in Variance
				underspend- overspend+		
		£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
EP1	Transport & Infrastructure	13,587	12,418	-1,169	-1,300	131
EP2	Planning, Environment & Climate Change	37,600	37,140	-460	-600	140
EP3	Highways & Operations	21,530	19,738	-1,792	-1,100	-692
EP4	Directorate Support	2,625	2,863	238	53	185
	TOTAL ENVIRONMENT AND PLACE	**75,342**	**72,159**	**-3,183**	**-2,947**	**-236**

Business Management & Monitoring Report : Public Health & Community Safety
Position to the end of March 2024
Revenue Budget Monitoring

		Final Net Budget	Total Spend	Year End Variance underspend- overspend+	Variance Last Cabinet	Change in Variance
		£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
PH 1 & 2	**Public Health Functions**					
PH1-1	Sexual Health	6,440	6,328	-112	-200	88
PH1-2	NHS Health Check Programme	645	776	131	100	31
PH1-3	Health Protection	8	0	-8	0	-8
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	8,849	1	0	1
PH2-1	Obesity	1,324	1,109	-215	-100	-115
PH2-2	Physical Activity	420	412	-8	0	-8
PH2-3	Public Health General	2,536	2,371	-165	-100	-65
PH2-4	Smoking and Tobacco Control	615	622	7	0	7
PH2-5	Children's 5-19 Public Health Programmes	2,297	2,283	-14	0	-14
PH2-6	Other Public Health Services	1,734	1,539	-195	-100	-95
PH2-7	Drugs and Alcohol	10,517	10,587	70	200	-130
PH2-8	Domestic Violence	1,448	1,448	0	0	0
	Total Public Health Functions	**37,132**	**36,624**	**-508**	**-200**	**-308**
PH3	**Public Health Recharges**	**576**	**573**	**-3**	**0**	**-3**
PH4	**Grant Income**	**-33,632**	**-33,632**	**0**	**0**	**0**
	Transfer to Public Health Reserve	**0**	**360**	**360**	**200**	**160**
	Total Public Health	**4,076**	**3,925**	**-151**	**0**	**0**
CDA3	**Community Safety**	**27,024**	**27,699**	**675**	**400**	**275**
	Total Community Safety	**27,024**	**27,699**	**675**	**400**	**275**

Business Management & Monitoring Report: Resources
Position to the end of March 2024
Revenue Budget Monitoring

		Final Net Budget	Total Spend	Year End Variance	Variance Last Cabinet	Change in Variance
				underspend- overspend+		
		£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
COD1	Corporate Services	2,344	2,277	-67	0	-67
COD2	Human Resources & Organisational Development	4,797	4,252	-545	-500	-45
COD3	Communications, Strategy & Insight	3,470	3,323	-147	-100	-47
COD4	ICT & Digital	10,520	11,084	564	600	-36
COD5	Culture & Customer Experience	12,734	13,157	423	500	-77
COD6	Finance	8,820	9,333	513	500	13
COD7	Property, Investment & FM	19,689	20,157	468	430	38
COD8	Law & Governance	8,016	8,364	348	500	-152
COD9	Delivery & Partnership	2,953	2,941	-12	0	-12
	Total Resources	**73,343**	**74,888**	**1,545**	**1,930**	**-385**

Business Management Report
Position to the end of March 2024

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	Jun	Feb	Hard FM Planned Maintenance for ASPEN - 2023/24	CEF3-1	Provider Services	T	-12	0
				COD7	Property, Investment & FM	T	12	0
		Mar	Trading Standards costs for compliance activities under Offensive Weapons Act 2019	COM4-5	Trading Standards	T	30	0
				VSMMGT	Strategic Measures	T	0	-30
			Training costs Learning Tree	CEF2-9	Change	T	-5	0
				COD6	Finance & Procurement	T	5	0
			Supporting families PBR Q4 2023/24	CEF2-1	Early Help	T	173	0
				VSMMGT	Strategic Measures	T	0	-173
			Falls - PH contribution	BCFPOOL	Age Well Pool	T	200	-200
				SCS5	Pooled Budget Contributions	T	200	-200
			Accelerated Reform Grant	SCS1-8	Grants & Funding	T	470	0
				VSMMGT	Strategic Measures	T	0	-470
			Strategic Measures - budget tidy	CEF4-2	Early Years Funding Formula	T	123	0
				COM4-2	Fire & Rescue	T	159	0
				VSMMGT	Strategic Measures	T	-445	163
			Green Book pay award 2023/24 adjustments	COD6	Finance & Procurement	P	-104	0
				VSMMGT	Strategic Measures	P	104	0
			Budget tidy to correct grant budgets	CEF1-4	Access to Learning	T	152	0
				CEF4-2	Early Years Funding Formula	T	-123	0
				VSMMGT	Strategic Measures	T	0	-29
			Fire back dated pay award 2022/23 adjustment	COM4-2	Fire & Rescue	T	-887	0
				VSMMGT	Strategic Measures	T	887	0
CS	Jun	Mar	Budget - Support implementation - working together	CEF3-2	QA Safeguard + Recruit + Retention	T	47	-47
			DSG Schools block final 2023-24	CEF4-1	Delegated Budgets	T	-1,856	1,856
				CEF4-3	Non-Delegated Schools Costs	T	167	-167
AS	Jun	Feb	Price uplift budget reallocation	ACSNPOOL	Live Well Pool	P	196	-196
				BCFPOOL	Age Well Pool	P	585	-585
		Mar	ASC & PH contribution to move together	BCFPOOL	Age Well Pool	T	120	-120
				SCS5	Pooled Budget Contributions	T	60	-60
				SCS5	Pooled Budget Contributions	T	-500	500
			Health Reserve 2023/24	ACSNPOOL	Live Well Pool	T	96	-96
			Urgent Emergency Care - ICB	BCFPOOL	Age Well Pool	T	1,090	-1,090
PH&CS	Jun	Feb	Fire Pensions Admin grant 2024/25	COM4-2	Fire & Rescue	P	75	-75
			Fire Additional Pensions grant 2024/25	COM4-2	Fire & Rescue	P	1,061	-1,061
RES	Jun	Mar	Correct Transformation cost centres and reallocate budget to A23000 SLT budget	COD1	Corporate Services	P	10	0
				COD9	Delivery & Partnership	P	-10	0
SM	Jun	Feb	Un-ringfenced grant adjustments	VSMMGT	Strategic Measures	T	166	-166
		Mar	Un-ringfenced grant adjustments	VSMMGT	Strategic Measures	T	49	-49
Grand Total							2,784	-2,784

Business Management & Monitoring Report
Position to the end of March 2024
Earmarked Reserves

	2023/24			Description
	Balance at 1 April 2023	Forecast Movement	Forecast Balance at 31 March 2024	
	£m	£m	£m	
Revenue Grants Unapplied				
Grants and Contributions Reserve	37.0	-3.4	33.7	This reserve holds unspent ring-fenced grants and contributions committed to be spent in future years. This includes £4.5m Public Health ringfenced grant, £11.7m funding for the on-going cost of the Homes for Ukraine Scheme and £6.0m relating to the BT Openreach Broadband Gainshare.
COVID-19 Reserve	15.4	-7.5	7.9	This reserve was created to meet ungoing and emerging presures and longer term service demands arising from the COVID-19 Pandemic. The use of £6.1m funding from the reserve is built into the council's Medium Term Financial Plan agreed in February 2024. After taking account of the planned use of the reserve in 2024/25, £1.4m is available to meet future pressures.
Government Initiatives Reserve	2.3	0.8	3.2	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.
Subtotal Revenue Grants Unapplied	**54.8**	**-10.0**	**44.7**	
Corporate Priorities				
Budget Priorities Reserve	11.4	-0.7	10.7	This reserve is being used to support the implementation of the Council's proirities and the Medium Term Financial Strategy. £3.8m released from the 20 MPH Speed Limit Programme in 2023/24 will be moved to the Redundancy Reserve in 2024/25 as
Transformation Reserve	1.5	0.4	1.8	This reserve is needed to fund the implementation costs of the Council's Transformation programme.
Zero Emissions Zone	0.5	0.7	1.2	This reserve holds surpluses generated by Network Coordination for the development and expansion of the ZEZ in the future years.
Youth Provision Reserve	0.3	-0.2	0.0	
Subtotal Corporate Priorities	**13.7**	**0.1**	**13.8**	

Business Management & Monitoring Report
Position to the end of March 2024
Earmarked Reserves

	2023/24			Description
	Balance at 1 April 2023	Forecast Movement	Forecast Balance at 31 March 2024	
	£m	£m	£m	
Funding for Risk				
Insurance Reserve	12.9	-2.6	10.3	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.
Demographic Risk Reserve	13.0	4.0	17.0	In light of the significant pressures relating to High Needs DSG and other budgets with demographic volatility. The expectation is that this reserve will help to manage future demographic risk.
Council Elections	0.4	0.2	0.6	This will be used to fund future County Council elections. In years where no County Elections take place any underspend on the Council Elections budget will be transferred to this reserve.
Redundancy Reserve	2.4	0.0	2.4	This reserve is available to fund redundancy costs arising from Transformational Change.
Trading Accounts	0.2	-0.1	0.1	This reserve holds funds relating to traded activities to help manage volatility year to year or future investments.
Council Tax Collection Fund Reserve	3.0	0.0	3.0	This reserve holds any surplus/ deficit as a result of income from council tax being more or less than originally estimated.
Business Rates Reserve	9.5	2.2	11.7	This reserve has been held to smooth volatility in Business Rates income and to mitigate risk around future changes to Business Rates. £8.5m will be transferred to the Transformation Reserve in 2024/25 as part of the budget agreed in February 2024. £0.7m will be used to support the 2024/25 budget as set out in the Financial Monitoring Report to Cabinet in May 2024.
Subtotal Risk	**41.3**	**3.6**	**45.0**	

Business Management & Monitoring Report
Position to the end of March 2024
Earmarked Reserves

	2023/24			Description
	Balance at 1 April 2023	Forecast Movement	Forecast Balance at 31 March 2024	
	£m	£m	£m	
Capital & Equipment				
Capital Reserves	67.8	13.0	80.8	This reserve has been established for the purpose of financing capital expenditure in future years.
Vehicle and Equipment Reserve	3.4	0.7	4.1	This reserve is to fund future replacements of vehicles and equipment.
Investment Pump Priming Reserve	2.0	-1.9	0.1	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.
Subtotal Capital & Equipment	**73.2**	**11.8**	**85.1**	
Other Reserves				
Schools' Reserves*	12.9	0.1	13.0	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. 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.
Partnership Reserves	1.9	0.2	2.1	This relates to funding for the Growth Deal
On Street Car Parking Reserve	4.9	1.6	6.5	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.
Subtotal Other Reserves	**19.7**	**1.8**	**21.6**	
Total Earmarked Reserves	**202.7**	**7.4**	**210.1**	

Business Management & Monitoring Report
Position to the end of March 2024
Earmarked Reserves

	2023/24			Description
	Balance at 1 April 2023	Forecast Movement	Forecast Balance at 31 March 2024	
	£m	£m	£m	
DSG Unusable Reserve **	-33.6	-12.0	-45.6	
**DSG High Needs deficit within Unusable Reserve **	**-41.1**	**-14.7**	**-55.8**	** total exluding postive balances (eg. new schools set up fund offset by High Needs Deficit)
Total Earmarked Reserves after DSG Unusable Reserve	**169.1**	**-4.6**	**164.5**	

* This is made up of surpluses of £14.1m and deficits of £1.1m.

Business Management & Monitoring Report
Summary of Financial Position for 2023/2024
MAINTAINED SCHOOL BALANCES

1. Number of Schools with Deficit/Surplus Budgets

	Number of Schools 31 March 2023		Number of Schools 31 March 2024	
	Deficit Balance	Surplus Balance	Deficit Balance	Surplus Balance
Primary	16	113	20	109
Secondary	1	0	1	0
Special	0	4	1	3
Total	**17**	**117**	**22**	**112**

2. Balances as at 31 March 2023 and 31 March 2024

	Balances at 31 March 2023			Balances at 31 March 2024		
	Deficit Balance	Surplus Balance	Total Balance	Deficit Balance	Surplus Balance	Total Balance
	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m
Primary	1.269	-13.557	-12.288	1.572	-14.570	-12.999
Secondary	1.142	0.000	1.142	1.108	0.000	1.108
Special	0.000	-1.784	-1.784	0.142	-1.393	-1.251
Total	**2.411**	**-15.341**	**-12.929**	**2.821**	**-15.963**	**-13.142**
Schools Contingency, Closed Schools and Other Balances			0.003			0.000
School Loans and Other School Related Reserves			0.000			0.000
Schools Balance as shown in Annex 3a			**-12.927**			**-13.142**

	Balances 31 March 2024	
	Largest Individual Surplus	Largest Individual Deficit
	£m	£m
Primary	- 0.521	0.399
Secondary	-	1.108
Special	- 0.692	0.14

Business Management & Monitoring Report
Summary of Financial Position for 2023/2024
ON/OFF-STREET CAR PARKING 2022/23 - ACTUAL INCOME / EXPENDITURE AND IMPACT ON PARKING RESERVE

	ON - STREET PARKING											OFF - STREET PARKING			
	OXFORD CITY	OXFORD CITY	OXFORD CITY	VALE of WHITE HORSE	SOUTH OXFORD SHIRE	WEST OXFORDS HIRE	CHERWELL	SUBTOTAL	TRAFFIC CONTRAVENTION & BAY SUSPENSION	BUS LANE CAMERA ENFORCEMENT	TOTAL ON - STREET PARKING	WATER EATON PARK AND RIDE	THORNHILL PARK AND RIDE	BICESTER PARK AND RIDE	TOTAL OFF-STREET PARKING
	Pay & Display	Parking Contraventions	Designated Parking Places					a	f	b	a+b+f	c	d	e	c+d+e
	£	£	£	£	£			£		£	£	£	£	£	£
EXPENDITURE															
PURCHASE EQUIPMENT								0			**0**				**0**
MANAGEMENT CONTRACT	-60,434	139,458	131,517	82,435	136,968	237,896	428,903	1,096,743			**1,096,743**	9,999	-1		**9,998**
STAFF COSTS	94,601	88,808	88,866	11,586	11,586			295,447		225,930	**521,377**	28,965	28,965		**57,931**
								0			**0**				**0**
OTHER	531,478	1,324,007	384,973	1,353	5,946	23,814	29,965	2,301,536	127,435	302,063	**2,731,034**	325,331	492,792	89,489	**907,611**
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	**565,645**	**1,552,273**	**605,356**	**95,374**	**154,500**	**261,710**	**458,868**	**3,693,726**	**127,435**	**527,993**	**4,349,154**	**364,295**	**521,756**	**89,489**	**975,540**
INCOME															
TOTAL	-3,035,885	-1,038,427	-1,708,171	-94,332	-249,314	-213,280	-312,894	-6,652,303	-397,594	-1,732,073	**-8,781,970**	-354,201	-798,308		**-1,152,510**
TOTAL INCOME	**-3,035,885**	**-1,038,427**	**-1,708,171**	**-94,332**	**-249,314**		**-312,894**	**-6,652,303**	**-397,594**	**-1,732,073**	**-8,781,970**	**-354,201**	**-798,308**	**0**	**-1,152,510**
NET SURPLUS (-) or DEFICIT (+)	**-2,470,240**	**513,846**	**-1,102,815**	**1,043**	**-94,814**		**145,974**	**-2,958,577**	**-270,159**	**-1,204,080**	**-4,432,816**	**10,094**	**-276,552**	**89,489**	**-176,970**
		-588,969													

Designated parking places refer to any bay designated to a class of vehicle or specific purpose and include pay & display bays (some enforcement of rather than income from parking charges), resident's bays, business bays, disabled bays, loading bays, doctors bays, ambulance bays, etc. whether they are inside of outside of a controlled parking zone.

Parking contraventions are any other contraventions whether they be inside or outside of controlled parking zones.

Balance on Parking Reserve as at 1 April 2023 4,945,347

On-Street Parking	2,958,577	(a)
Less Net Parking Budget	-2,080,300	not included in the table above
Less P&R Ticket Offer	-469,271	
Surplus from Camera Enforcement	1,204,080	(b)
Traffic contraventions	270,159	
Surplus P&R	276,552	(d)

TOTAL CONTRIBUTION TO PARKING RESERVE 2,159,797

Deficit from Water Eaton	-10,094	(c)
Deficit from Bicester	-89,489	(e)

TOTAL CONTRIBUTION FROM PARKING RESERVE -99,583

Contribution to 2023/24 revenue budget -500,000

Balance on Parking Reserve as at 31 March 2024 6,505,561

Business Management Report
Position to the end of March 2024
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	Final Grant Received in 2023/24	Total Spent	Carried forward for use in future years
			£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
	Adult Services							
R	Improved Better Care Fund	DHSC	10,705	0	0	10,705	10,705	0
R	Adult Social Care Market Sustainability and Improvement Fund	DHSC	5,366	0	0	5,366	5,366	0
R	Adult Social Care Discharge Fund	DHSC	1,501	0	0	1,501	1,501	0
R	Adult Social Care Market Sustainability and Improvement Fund - Workforce Fund	DHSC	0	3,485	0	3,485	3,485	0
R	Adult Social Care Apprenticeship Fund	DHSC	0	0	300	300	0	300
R	Better Care Fund Regional Assurance	DHSC	0	0	0	0	0	0
R	CQC Review and Assessment Grant	DHSC	0	27	0	27	27	0
	TOTAL ADULT SERVICES		**17,572**	**3,512**	**300**	**21,384**	**21,084**	**300**
	Children's Services							
	Dedicated School Grants							
R	Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) - Schools Block	DfE	131,138	31	-1,689	129,480	129,480	0
R	Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) - Central Block	DfE	4,992	0	0	4,992	5,225	-233
R	Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) - Early Years Block	DfE	44,341	94	740	45,175	41,936	3,239
R	Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) - High Needs Block	DfE	85,288	-594	0	84,694	99,353	-14,659
	Subtotal DSG Grants		**265,759**	**-469**	**-949**	**264,341**	**275,994**	**-11,653**
	School Grants							
R	Pupil Premium	DfE	7,663	531	66	8,260	8,260	0
R	Education Funding Agency - Sixth Form Funding and Threshold	DfE	280	39	11	330	330	0
R	PE and Sport Grant	DfE	2,266	-49	-1	2,216	2,216	0
R	Universal Infant Free School Meals	DfE	3,938	109	-1	4,046	4,046	0
R	Teacher's Pay Grant	DfE	95	-95	0	0	0	0
R	Teacher's Pension Grant	DfE	274	-264	2	12	12	0
R	National Professional Qualification Grant	DfE	0	15	0	15	15	0
R	Early Career Framework - Off Timetable	DfE	0	161	0	161	161	0
R	Early Career Framework - Mentor	DfE	0	93	6	99	99	0
R	Coronavirus (COVID-19) Recovery Premium	DfE	0	462	814	1,276	1,276	0
R	Coronavirus (COVID-19) National Tutoring Programme	DfE	0	408	-328	80	80	0
R	Teacher's Pay Additional Grant	DfE	0	1,404	322	1,726	1,726	0
R	Early Year Supplement Grant	DfE	0	2,978	0	2,978	2,978	0
R	Early Years Teachers Pay Additional Grant	DfE	0	0	167	167	167	0
R	Mainstream Schools Additional Grant	DfE	0	4,285	0	4,285	4,285	0
	Subtotal School Grants		**14,516**	**10,077**	**1,058**	**25,651**	**25,651**	**0**

Business Management Report
Position to the end of March 2024
Government Grants 2023/24

Ringfenced	Directorate	Issued By	Esimate 2023/24 £000	In year Adjustments / New Allocations previously reported £000	In year Adjustments/ New Allocations reported this time £000	Final Grant Received in 2023/24 £000	Total Spent £000	Carried forward for use in future years £000
	Other Children's Services Grants							
R	Additional support for schools in financial difficulty	DfE	0	331	0	331	331	0
R	Youth Justice Grant	YJB	674	37	0	711	711	0
R	Asylum (UASC and Post 18)	HO	3,997	2,580	451	7,028	7,028	0
R	Afghan Settler Holding Hotel Fund	DfE	0	0	419	419	419	0
R	Extension of Virtual School Heads to children with a social worker	DfE	0	135	0	135	135	0
R	Extension of Virtual School Heads to Certain Previously Looked after Children	DfE	0	66	0	66	66	0
R	Hong Kong BNO Local Community Fund	DLUHC	0	0	26	26	26	0
R	Pupil Premium Plus post 16 pilot	DfE	0	45	0	45	45	0
R	Extended Personal Adviser Duty Grant - Care Leavers Staffing	DfE	103	9	0	112	112	0
R	Leaving Care Allowance Uplift	DfE	0	136	0	136	136	0
R	Staying Put Implementation Grant	DfE	288	0	0	288	288	0
R	Remand Framework	YJB	72	-36	-3	33	33	0
R	Reducing Parental Conflict Workforce Development Grant	DWP	0	48	12	60	60	0
R	Supported Internships for Young People with SEND	NDTi	54	0	-34	20	0	20
R	Holiday Activities and Food Programme	DfE	296	1,203	-69	1,430	0	1,430
R	Adopton Support Fund	DfE	0	15	66	81	31	50
R	Early Years Professional Development Programme	DfE	0	0	56	56	0	56
R	Early Years Experts and Mentors Programme	DfE	0	0	8	8	0	8
R	Intervention Delivering Better Value in SEND - Grant for Data Analysis	DfE	0	1,000	0	1,000	780	220
R	Family Group Conferences	DfE	0	54	-41	13	13	0
R	Multiply	DfE	899	0	-442	457	457	0
R	Turnaround Programme	YJB	64	63	24	151	151	0
R	Home for Ukraine Education	DfE	0	0	72	72	72	0
R	Child Decision Making Pilots (NRM)	HO	0	0	38	38	38	0
R	Strengthening Multi-Agency Leadership for reform	DfE	0	47	0	47	47	0
R	Fostering Recruitment Support Hub Mobilisation	DfE	0	0	39	39	0	39
R	Implementation of Supported Accommodation Reforms	DfE	0	299	0	299	299	0
	Subtotal Other Children's Services Grants		**6,447**	**6,032**	**621**	**13,100**	**11,277**	**1,823**
	TOTAL CHILDREN'S SERVICES		**286,722**	**15,640**	**730**	**303,092**	**312,922**	**-9,830**

Business Management Report
Position to the end of March 2024
Government Grants 2023/24

Ringfenced	Directorate	Issued By	Esimate 2023/24 £000	In year Adjustments / New Allocations previously reported £000	In year Adjustments/ New Allocations reported this time £000	Final Grant Received in 2023/24 £000	Total Spent £000	Carried forward for use in future years £000
	Environment & Place							
R	Bus Service Operators Grant	DfT	514	0	280	794	407	387
R	Natural England	DEFRA	227	0	70	297	289	8
R	Bus Service Improvement Plan Grant	DfT	0	0	2,586	2,586	1,294	1,292
R	Homes England	DEFRA	0	0	313	313	313	0
R	COVID-19 Bus Services Support Grant	DfT	0	48	49	97	97	0
R	Biodiversity Net gain Grant	DEFRA	0	27	0	27	0	27
R	Woodland Creation Accelerator Fund (WCAF)	DEFRA	0	75	0	75	65	10
R	DEFRA CHLF S31 Grant	DEFRA	0	0	76	76	26	50
R	Air Quality SSCL Grant	DEFRA	0	127	0	127	0	127
R	Capability Fund	DfT	0	260	0	260	164	96
R	Climate Action Staffing Grant	Innovate UK	0	0	3	3	3	0
R	Historic Ridegway	DfT	0	0	19	19	19	0
	TOTAL ENVIRONMENT & PLACE		**741**	**537**	**3,396**	**4,674**	**2,677**	**1,997**
	Public Health							
R	Public Health Grant	DHSC	33,632	0	0	33,632	33,632	0
R	Oxfordshire Community Research Network Grant	Innovate UK	0	0	8	8	8	0
	TOTAL PUBLIC HEALTH		**33,632**	**0**	**8**	**33,640**	**33,640**	**0**
	Community Safety							
R	Fire Fighter's Pension Fund Grant	DLUHC	1,361	0	0	1,361	1,361	0
R	Fire Protection Uplift Grant	DLUHC	0	303	0	303	303	0
R	Fire Fighter's New Dimensons Grant	DLUHC	40	0	0	40	40	0
	TOTAL COMMUNITY SAFETY		**1,401**	**303**	**0**	**1,704**	**1,704**	**0**

Business Management Report
Position to the end of March 2024
Government Grants 2023/24

Ringfenced	Directorate	Issued By	Esimate 2023/24 £000	In year Adjustments / New Allocations previously reported £000	In year Adjustments/ New Allocations reported this time £000	Final Grant Received in 2023/24 £000	Total Spent £000	Carried forward for use in future years £000
	Resources							
R	Homes for Ukraine *	DLUHC	6,503	0	-2,431	4,072	4,072	0
R	Household Support Fund	DWP	0	0	3,351	3,351	3,351	0
R	Music Service	AC	844	0	22	866	866	0
R	MaaS:CAV	Innovate UK	313	0	-120	193	193	0
R	Park & Charge	Innovate UK	206	0	-206	0	0	0
R	Virgin Park & Charge	Innovate UK	7	0	-7	0	0	0
R	Data Driven Safety Tool	Innovate UK	91	0	-91	0	0	0
R	Quantum Gravitometer	Innovate UK	69	0	-69	0	0	0
R	Resilient CAV	Innovate UK	25	0	-25	0	0	0
R	Heart Park Project	DfT	90	0	-90	0	0	0
R	GTC DfT Congestion Tool	DfT	59	0	-59	0	0	0
R	CAVL4R	DfT	11	0	-11	0	0	0
R	Skyway	Innovate UK	0	0	55	55	55	0
R	Zev Team	Innovate UK	0	0	218	218	218	0
R	Schemes Monitoring Costs	DfT	0	0	30	30	30	0
R	Designed for Ageing Medication Management	Innovate UK	0	0	110	110	110	0
R	Soteria	Innovate UK	0	0	19	19	19	0
R	GreenLog	Innovate UK	0	0	31	31	31	0
R	Future Flights & Land Infrastructure	Innovate UK	0	0	103	103	103	0
R	Vehicle to energy communities	Innovate UK	0	0	3	3	3	0
R	Hyer Project	Innovate UK	0	0	37	37	37	0
R	International Recruitment Fund	DHSC	0	0	178	178	178	0
	TOTAL RESOURCES		**8,219**	**0**	**1,047**	**9,266**	**9,266**	**0**

Business Management Report
Position to the end of March 2024
Government Grants 2023/24

Ringfenced	Directorate	Issued By	Esimate 2023/24 £000	In year Adjustments / New Allocations previously reported £000	In year Adjustments/ New Allocations reported this time £000	Final Grant Received in 2023/24 £000	Total Spent £000	Carried forward for use in future years £000
	Strategic Measures							
U	Lead Local Flood Authority	DEFRA	45	-45		0	0	
U	Extended Rights to Free Travel	DfE	278	531		809	809	
U	Firelink	DLUHC	213	-83		130	130	
U	Local Authority Delivery Support Funding	DLUHC	0	123		123	123	
U	Key Stage 2 Moderation & Phonics	DLUHC	0	21		21	21	
U	Supporting Families - previously Troubled Families	DLUHC	1,048	377	173	1,598	1,598	
U	New Homes Bonus	DLUHC	1,700		49	1,749	1,749	
U	Local Reform & Community Voices	DHSC	328			328	328	
U	Social Care in Prisons Grant	DHSC	187		-4	183	183	
U	War Pensions Disregard Grant	DHSC	0		105	105	105	
U	Social Care Support Grant (including Independent Living Fund)	DLUHC	32,669		15	32,684	32,684	
U	Services Grant	DfE	2,800		110	2,910	2,910	
U	Domestic Abuse Duty Grant	DLUHC	1,141	26		1,167	1,167	
U	Supplementary Substance Misuse Treatment & Recovery Grant	OHID	0	635		635	635	
U	Supplementary Substance Misuse Treatment & Recovery Housing Grant	OHID	0	622		622	0	622
U	Supplementary Substance Misuse Inpatient Detox & Rehabilitation	OHID	0	80		80	80	
U	Rough Sleeping Drugs & Alcohol Grant	DLUHC	0	1,370		1,370	1,370	
U	Rough Sleeping Strategy - care leavers	DLUHC	0	95		95	95	
U	Dual Running & Client Level Data	DHSC	0	20		20	20	
U	Accelerated Reform Grant	DHSC	0		470	470	323	147
U	Trading Standards costs for compliance activities under Offensive Weapons Act 2019	HO	0		30	30	0	30
U	New Burdens - Transparency	DLUHC	0		13	13	13	
U	Wraparound Provision Early Years	DfE	0		29	29	16	13
	Subtotal Strategic Measures		**40,409**	**3,771**	**989**	**45,169**	**44,357**	**812**

Business Management Report
Position to the end of March 2024
Government Grants 2023/24

Ringfenced	Directorate	Issued By	Esimate 2023/24 £000	In year Adjustments / New Allocations previously reported £000	In year Adjustments/ New Allocations reported this time £000	Final Grant Received in 2023/24 £000	Total Spent £000	Carried forward for use in future years £000
	Business Rates							
U	Section 31 Grant for Business Rate Compensation	DLUHC	14,427	4,671		19,098	19,098	
U	Business Rates S31 Grant Top-Up	DLUHC	42,662	-2,686		39,976	39,976	
	Subotal Business Rates		**57,089**	**1,985**	**0**	**59,074**	**59,074**	**0**
	Grants held on behalf of Local Enterprise Partnership							
R	Oxford Innovation Business Support	BEIS	205			205	205	
R	European Regional Development Fund		900			900	900	
R	DCLG (Local Enterprise Partnership Funding)	DLUHC	500			500	500	
	Subtotal Grants held on behalf of Local Enterprise Partnership		**1,605**	**0**	**0**	**1,605**	**1,605**	**0**
	TOTAL STRATEGIC MEASURES		**99,103**	**5,756**	**989**	**105,848**	**105,036**	**812**
	Total All Grants		**447,390**	**25,748**	**6,470**	**479,608**	**486,329**	**-6,721**

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 March 2024
General Revenue Balances

		Outturn 2023/24	
		£m	£m
	General Balances: Outturn 2022/23	22.643	
	County Fund Balance		**22.643**
	Planned Contribution to top up to 2023/24 risk assessed level (February 2023)		6.800
	Further contribution needed to top up to risk assessed level following 2022/23 year end (		0.800
	Adjusted Opening Balance for 2023/24		**30.243**
	Supplementary Estimates Agreed during 2023/24		
Cabinet May 2023	Staffing costs to support development of One - Fleet approach to the council's vehicles		-0.180
Cabinet November 2023	Supplementary estimate for a school with a forced academisation that has a deficit budget		-0.200
Cabinet March 2024	Supplementary estimate to cover the one-off ill health/injury costs incurred during 2023/24 in Community Services		-0.159
	Subtotal Supplementary Estimates		**-0.539**
	Automatic calls on/returns to balances		0.000
	Net General Balances		**29.704**
	Forecast Variation at Year End		
	Less underspend (as set out in Annex 1)		12.322
	Year End position		**42.026**
	Risk Assessed Level of Balances for 2023/24		**30.200**
	Surplus/(deficit) balances compared to risk assessed level		**11.826**
	Calls on balances agreed as part of the Budget for 2024/25		
	£1.5m of the underspend arising from the additional interest on balances will be used to fund a one – off revenue contribution to the Transformation Reserve in 2024/25 (agreed in February 2024)		-1.500
	£2.2m contribution to the IFRS9 reserve in 2024/25 to provide initial funding towards risks around the value of Treasury Management pooled funds when the current statutory over-ride ends.		-2.200
	Subtotal		**-3.700**
	Calls of balances recommended in this report		
	Further £2.8m contribution to the IFRS9 reserve in 2024/25 to provide sufficient cover for likely risks.		-2.800
	Create a new Pump Priming reserve in 2024/25 to support the council's Commercial Strategy with an initial contribution of £2.0m.		-2.000
	Make a contribution of £1.0m to the Budget Priorities Reserve to be used to complete or extend schemes already agreed as part of the Cabinet's priorities including Rail Studies and an extension of the funding for efficiency loans to schools.		-1.000
	Subtotal		**-5.800**
	Balance to be held in General Balances		**2.326**

This page is intentionally left blank

Digital Inclusion:

Oxfordshire County Council 2023-24 Action Plan Updates

This document sets out the updates to the action plan for 2023-24 that supports Oxfordshire County Council's Digital Inclusion Strategy.

The Strategy is divided into three sections.

- Section One – Digitally Inclusive Communities
- Section Two – Digitally Inclusive Service Delivery
- Section Three – Digitally Inclusive Workforce

Section One: Digitally Inclusive Communities

Long-Term Ambition	Action	Directorate and Lead Officer	Updates
Digital access is not a barrier to education in Oxfordshire.	Collaborate with holiday activity providers to implement Digital Inclusion projects as part of wider holiday delivery, including using Libraries as venues.	Children, Education, and Families (CEF)	We have completed this action, and it has been integrated into business as usual.
	Liaise with the Education Endowment Fund (EEF) for guidance on impactful research-	CEF	This action has not been completed due to competing priorities. It will be reviewed to see if it

	based approaches so the right equipment, access and programmes can be promoted to families.		is appropriate to carry this over into the 24-25 action plan.
Vulnerable children and families have access to support to raise household digital capacity and address digital disadvantage.	Continue to provide a digital offer for 0-19 services, through single point of access and e-platforms and ensuring access for vulnerable families.	Public Health	Chat Health is used by Oxford Health to provide advice and support to families. This digital offer will continue with the newly commissioned Children and Young People's Public Health Nursing Service from 1st April 2024. Public Health will also be commissioning a Children and Young Person's digital platform for emotional health and wellbeing to launch in 2024.
	Support families with making applications from charities such as 'Aspire' for laptops as part of communicating with families about their internet access and equipment, seeking to ensure families are not disempowered if they do not have these.	CEF	Work is in progress on this action and will continue in 2024-25 with more focussed efforts.
	Continue to promote the use of the Mind Of My Own (MOMO) app with children and young people to enable them to use their voice and speak their own words via a digital platform.	CEF	Work is in progress on this action and will continue into 24-25 with a focus on using data.

	Continue to support Community Action Groups (CAGs) to host repair cafes across the county potentially helping to prevent residents from becoming digitally excluded by aiming to keep electronic devices (including internet enabled devices) in use for longer. This will be measured through the number of repair cafes held each year (reported annually).	Waste	We continue to support CAGs in hosting repair cafes. The data for April 22 – March 23 is: 21 groups (including three non-CAGs, but members of the repair cafe network) ran 172 repair cafe events enabling members of the public to 'fix not bin' broken household items, from electrical appliances and bicycles to clothes. Portable Appliance Testing (PAT): CAG offered 6 subsidised spaces for volunteers from CAG repair cafes to attend a certified PAT training delivered by PlugTest and hosted by Orinoco.
	Investigate funding options for digital inclusion to get laptops or mobile interactive devices in supported housing or for those facing homelessness so people can claim benefits, apply for jobs, and stay in touch with families and friends through online chat, reducing social isolation.	Adult Social Care	Work is going on in all the Alliance services, especially for people who sleeping rough and in high risk, to ensure that people they are working with are given a mobile phone to enable contact. During Covid, the Oxfordshire Homeless Movement funded tablets for people in homeless supported accommodation and funded Aspire to install WIFI in all rooms. There is signposting from the Oxfordshire Homeless Movement to partners offering computer access including the Getting Oxfordshire Online project. Please see link for support: I need help to get online The following provision is available at the Gatehouse:

			- Approximately 2 evenings per week (5:00pm-7:00pm) – open-access, internet-connected computers available to Guests (service users) at our community café. - Weekly for one quarter per year (5:00pm-7:00pm) – facilitated drop-in IT workshops, with tutors available to provide practical help on a wide variety of IT-related topics - Investment in a new, high-quality Guest wi-fi network that can be used in and around the building during waking hours (coming soon!) - Access to data SIM cards for mobile phones, and mobile data USB dongles for PCs - Links to the "Getting Oxfordshire Online" program via Aspire, to obtain refurbished laptops for Guests. - Signposting to further training is available. Connection Support: The Housing Support Prevention Service have a dedicated digital support worker who provides support across the County to people who are digitally excluded.
No one in Oxfordshire will be isolated from essential services by digital-by-	Promote any relevant support of pillars of the strategy through our networks – e.g., Promoting laptop donation to Get Oxfordshire Online (GOO) via the Greentech network.	Climate Action	This action has been completed, and has been integrated into business as usual as part of the Circular Economy workstream
	Develop a new website for domestic abuse services in	Public Health	We have completed a review and development of the OCC public facing website which has provided

default barriers, or a lack of connectivity.	Oxfordshire to provide improved access to services, clear referral pathways including for people with protected characteristics to improve visibility and access to information, advice, and referral pathways into services.		clearer access to commissioned services. Further website developments at a system level are being explored.
	Provide advice and support to enable people to access digital opportunities safely, and avoid frauds, particularly in community engagement and education work with schools and older people.	Trading Standards	This action has been completed and is now part of business as usual.
	Deliver scam awareness training in a non-digital way, to be measured through the number of people reached through prevention activities, including information on online scams.	Trading Standards	This action has been completed and is now part of business as usual. 3478 people have been reached through Trading Standards preventative advice and support.
	Research, identify and promote support around digital literacy for carers, including young carers.	Adult Social Care	We have developed an all-age carers strategy, which includes improved identification of carers, and are improving our online offer. This will be rolled over to 24-25. Digital inclusion for young carers https://www.carersfirst.org.uk/news-and-stories/digital-champions-programme-for-young-adult-carers/

	Encourage supported housing providers to provide support and training for older people or people with a disability to access and use online services.	Adult Social Care	Work is in progress for this action, and will be reviewed for next year's action plan.
	Work with local partner to securely recycle 50 OCC devices a year to be used by residents needing laptops.	Digital and IT	We donated 200 laptops to be used by residents in 2022. This action will roll over to 24-25.
Oxfordshire businesses and organisations can recruit, train, retain and support their workforce with the necessary digital skills.	Develop digital inclusion pages on Oxfordshire County Council's (OCC) website. The webpages are to include advice, guidance and information on digital scams, Live Well Oxfordshire, and link in with online sources of information that can assist residents and businesses in Oxfordshire.	Policy	This action has been completed with our new webpages: • Digital inclusion | Oxfordshire County Council • Digital Inclusion | Digital Infrastructure Programme (digitalinfrastructureoxfordshire.co.uk) Part of this action will continue into 24-25 for the pages on Live Well Oxfordshire.
	Build on the Digital Inclusion Charter to regularly bring together local partners to avoid duplication of effort across Oxfordshire and share best practice.	Policy	This action is a work in progress and will continue into 24-25. Further collaboration with Getting Oxfordshire Online will be built upon.
Broadband connectivity across Oxfordshire is one of the	Promote social tariffs from broadband suppliers via OCC's Social Media channels and track the engagement with posts: share this information with district and	Digital and IT	The Social Tariffs campaign has been planned and arranged with OCC corporate comms and will be launched in 24-25.

Long-Term Ambition	Action	Directorate and Lead Officer	Updates
best in the country.	parish councils so they can promote widely, and with other OCC digital inclusion activities.		

Section Two: Digitally Inclusive Service Delivery

Long-Term Ambition	Action	Directorate and Lead Officer	Updates
Innovative solutions to problems of digital exclusion are collaboratively developed and delivered in our services.	Use Office for Health Improvement Disparities (OHID) grants to provide technology to substance misuse service users, supporting them to progress towards recovery e.g., with job applications, housing applications, education, and training	Public Health	Personalised budgets within the Supplemental Substance Misuse Treatment and Recovery Grant and Housing Support Grants are being utilised to purchase tablets and IT software to support people to engage in treatment, support training and employment goals, and maintain tenancies. There is a new grant for employment support starting in April 2024, and it is also planned to have a personalised budget element for this purpose. The Better Housing Better Health service offers home visits to people who may have no or limited access to digital resources and provides support to households in accessing home improvement grants and other resources which are only accessible online

Explore asking appropriate service providers to evidence their commitment to tackling inequalities in Oxfordshire through improving digital inclusion in public health commissioned services (grants, contracts, frameworks), such as outlining their approaches to addressing digital inclusion in tenders.	Public Health	Printed material providing public health advice at times of extreme weather events - both heat waves and cold weather - will be available to ensure that those households who do not have access to online advice can obtain public health information. Printed materials include bookmarks that can be handed out through the library service. The BHBH service has been evaluated to understand the impact and benefits of its home visiting and telephone services. Service users and the service provider have been involved in this evaluation which has helped to identify the importance of a home visit to people with complex needs.
Include digital inclusion in impact assessments, to ensure that policies do not increase the digital divide.	Policy	This action is a work in progress. Questions relating to Digital Inclusion will be considered for inclusion in the new impact assessment tools that are being developed, rather than as a separate impact assessment.
Promote internal collaboration around digital inclusion through restarting the Digital Inclusion Working Group, to monitor progress against the Digital Inclusion action plan.	Policy	The internal Digital Inclusion working group has been meeting and will continue to review the action plans each year.
Use any social value provision from supplier contracts within the	Digital and IT	This action is a work in progress, and will continue into 24-25.

	Digital and IT directorate to improve digital inclusion and track the total value of such contributions.		
	Ensure that all Digital and IT projects involving a procurement include the technical requirements for accessibility.	Digital and IT	This action has been completed and will be business as usual going forward, as it is now built into governance documents.
	Investigate and understand new National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) guidelines on homelessness and Digital Inclusion, to ensure that people experiencing homelessness can access online health, universal credit, and social care information and are supported to use online services.	Adult Social Care	Work is in progress for this action, and will be reviewed for next year's action plan.

Citizens of Oxfordshire are provided with a comprehensive, affordable, and accessible assistive technology offer that meets their needs.	Build on existing collaboration between Adult Social Care and iHub to develop and test innovative approaches to delivering and improving outcomes for vulnerable people, including investigating and promoting availability of Assistive Technology and technology enabled care equipment.	Adult Social Care iHub	This action is a work in progress, the innovation service sits on the Adult Social Care Digital board and input into new initiatives via this channel.
	Feature digital technology in accommodation development to increase independence.	Adult Social Care	Work is in progress for this action, and will be reviewed for next year's action plan.
Our Libraries and Heritage Service provides digital opportunities for people to connect and create, learn, and grow together.	Refresh public library IT provision (The People's Network) in all branches, to ensure local communities have high quality online access, printing facilities, and WiFi available in their local library.	Libraries	We are midway through a project to refresh our public library IT provision. We have been investigating various alternative hardware options, and are about to take that pilot phase into the public domain. We are also exploring improved printing facilities, and have completed a project to update photocopier facilities across the network. Libraries have continued to be part of the GigaHubs project, which has seenmultiple sites' connectivity markedly improved.

			We have updated staff PCs to enable swifter and more efficient customer service. We have also invested in and successfully implemented a new booking system that has allowed us to more effectively manage longer customer enquiries, especially those linked to council validations/transactions.
	Review and enhance Libraries' Makerspace and digital engagement activity offer, so that new technology and digital resources are open to all.	Libraries	We are in the process of investing in some new equipment for our Makerspaces and have also agreed to update our Coding equipment to better support our Code club activities. We have recruited a new Group Library Manager, who has a background in digital engagement and we plan to review our approach in the coming months. We have engaged in discussions with Getting Oxfordshire Online and Virgin Media to develop our digital support offer. We have continued to delivery digital helper sessions in libraries across the county.
	Continue to grow the range of content and resources (including eBooks, eAudio, eMagazines and Newspapers, and e-Learning) that	Libraries	We have increased spending on online content and the proportional allocation to digital resources, given the growing demand in this area.

	are free to access anytime at home, on the move, or through local libraries, via free library membership.		We have consistently reached new performance levels across eBooks, eAudio and eMagazines as the months have progressed – Digital loans now make c.10% of all lending activity, and we did >300k eBook and eAudio loans in 2022/23. We have marketed this material via our social media channels and have plans to further highlight this fantastic content.
	Assess the current range of support and training provided by Libraries to help customers get online and function in a digital world, and develop that offer and signposting activity as community needs and the digital landscape changes.	Libraries	Due to competing priorities we have not been able to undertake a substantial review of activity in this area to date. However, we have continued to deliver Digital Helper events at libraries across the network. We have engaged in discussions with Getting Oxfordshire Online and Virgin Media to develop our digital support offer. We have rolled out various digital training for Libraries staff to increase their knowledge and confidence (including on the subject of online safety). We have also highlighted to all libraries the recently redesigned 'Learn My Way' website from the Good Things Foundation, which provides free bite-sized learning for beginner digital skills but is

			also suitable for all levels of understanding. There is a Learn My Way desktop shortcut on every public library computer to make it easier for customers to get started.
	Develop the Heritage Search platform (launched in May 2023) to enhance access to, and understanding of, Oxfordshire's past and the wide range of heritage resources that the Council manages for future generations.	Heritage	The Heritage Search platform has proved hugely popular – in the first year, we received >20% increase in orders for copies of digital images from the site; we also registered 525k interactions in the period Oct 2022 – Aug 2023. With the addition of two new datasets (Peculiar Wills and Building Plans!) we hit the 1,000,000 figure for online catalogue records sooner than expected in November 2023. We are producing more digital content to go onto the site all the time (often with the help of volunteers) and are prioritising elements of the collection where there is the most demand. We have produced an introductory video guide to the site and done various engagement events focused on the platform. We carried out a wholesale update of the Oxfordshire School History website.

Section Three – Digitally Inclusive Workforce

Long-Term Ambition	Action	Directorate and Lead Officer Timescale	Updates
Technology that supports agile ways of working will facilitate communication and the ability to work well anywhere, any place, and at any time.	Embed digital inclusion in our facilities provision and ensure that new buildings are designed and built with the appropriate infrastructure in place for digitally inclusive service delivery and workplaces.	Property	This action is being reviewed to see if the ownership is correct and if it is appropriate to carry this over into the 24-25 action plan.
	All team leaders and business development officers to work alongside IT Business Partner when delivering, designing, on-boarding, or improving processes and services. Details should be included in the project scope document and the benefits realisation plans.	Customer Services	This action has been completed, as the programme has been running for 6 months since the end of 2022 to bring services into the contact centre.
Our staff, managers, and volunteers have the learning and	Ensure training and support for operational Facilities Management (FM) team on new IT systems rolled out within Property including frontline engineers	Property	This action is being reviewed to see if the ownership is correct and if it is appropriate to carry this over into the 24-25 action plan.

development opportunities to develop digital skills.	Work alongside Organisational Development colleagues to identify or procure relevant digital training for all Customer Service Centre staff. This should be delivered by the end of March 2024 to existing staff and included in induction for new staff.	Customer Services	This action has been completed and integrated into business as usual, as new colleagues are given digital training as part of induction.
	Investigate digital skills training for social care and frontline staff including social prescribers.	Adult Social Care	Work is in progress for this action, and will be reviewed for next year's action plan.

This page is intentionally left blank

Voluntary and Community Sector Action Plan 23/24

VCS Priority	Directorate	Service Area	Action	Update
Collaboration and Networking	People, Transformation and Performance	Children's Services	1.1 We will continue to ensure that our own workforce has the right information available to them for effective signposting and referrals to VCS organisations that can support our residents.	This action is now complete, and we have integrated it into business as usual.
	Communications, Strategy and Insight	Policy and Strategy	1.2 We will pro-actively support the Cabinet Member for Public Health and Inequalities in engaging and building relationships with the local VCS.	This action is now complete, and we have integrated it into business as usual.
	Communications, Strategy and Insight	Policy and Strategy	1.3 We will build on our relationship with the VCS sector, working with OCVA to establish regular OSCA (Oxfordshire Stronger Communities Alliance) partnership meetings.	To strengthen our relationship with the sector further, we will be looking to refresh and relaunch OSCA meetings in 24-25.
	Communications, Strategy and Insight	Policy and Strategy	1.4 We will oversee implementation of the VCS Strategy across the council and help ensure service area actions are delivered and reported on internally and to OSCA.	This action has been completed as part of the 23-24 action planning process and will become business as usual for 24-25.
	People, Transformation and Performance	Customers and Cultural Services – Libraries	1.5 We will commit to renewing our existing partnership agreements with volunteers and Friends Groups in acknowledgement of the critical support they provide to local library services. We will	We are currently in the process of completing the renewal of all existing partnership agreements. The terms of these agreements are being extended (from 1- or 2-year

Version: 7th May 2024

Voluntary and Community Sector Action Plan 23/24

			explore widening this activity across the whole branch network.	arrangements, as was, to 3 years, as the general term) to demonstrate the service's and council's commitment to working with local communities to sustain and develop local library services. We are yet to explore the possible extension of Friends group arrangements.
	People, Transformation and Performance	Adult Social Care	1.6 We will continue to develop and build upon existing partnership structures within the Oxfordshire Way, such as Communities of Practice to extend the reach and range of community-led prevention strategies.	This action is in progress and has been integrated into business as usual. With the Integrated Care Board (ICB), we have supported the delivery of the well together programme. OCVA are the provider of the 2-year scheme, which is focused on the 10 most unequal areas in Oxfordshire. Communities of practice continue to deliver great sessions across the county supporting best practice in support of the Oxfordshire way (OCVA)

Version: 7th May 2024

Voluntary and Community Sector Action Plan 23/24

	Environment and Place	Environment and Circular Economy	1.7 We will support the Community Action Group Network to deepen links with other relevant OCC teams to enhance and extend the impact of relevant projects, by holding and reporting on a minimum of two cross-departmental meetings per year.	We continue to support the CAG Network , with 3-4 big meetings each year, including colleagues from across different OCC departments (including establishing links to Circular Economy, and Community Wealth Building work).
	Public Health and Community Safety	Trading Standards	1.8 We will explore how we can best communicate and cascade consumer issues and advice to local community groups to improve resilience against fraud and consumer issues, identifying those groups or areas of the county who appear to be underrepresented in the available data we have.	This action has been completed. We have integrated this into business as usual and are currently performing above our corporate target. We have shared advice with community groups, and engagement has been carried out with community events as part of the electric blanket testing campaign. We are working closely with other partners in this space to ensure that there is not duplication.
Volunteering and Social Action	Communications, Strategy and Insight	Communications and Engagement	2.1 We will develop an external communications plan to promote the importance and benefits of volunteering in 2023/24, including events such as Volunteer Week.	This action is to be reviewed and agreed whether to roll over into 24-25 action plan.

Version: 7th May 2024

Voluntary and Community Sector Action Plan 23/24

	Communications, Strategy and Insight	Communications and Engagement	2.2 We will develop an internal communications plan, in conjunction with HR, to promote the council's volunteering policy and volunteering opportunities, and celebrate the volunteering achievements of our employees.	We have embedded volunteering opportunities into our annual internal communications plan. In June every year we celebrate Volunteers' Week (One in five people do this… | Oxfordshire County Council Intranet) and we regularly promote volunteering opportunities.
	People, Transformation and Performance	Customers and Cultural Services – Libraries	2.3 We will widen participation and strengthen volunteer voices across our Libraries by exploring new development opportunities and celebrating the key role our volunteers play in delivering services for our residents.	We celebrated Volunteers week in June, by contacting all library volunteers and thanking them for their great work; and are due to meet up with community-supported libraries' volunteers in April 2024 to mark their contribution to the service. As noted in action 1.5, we have been actively meeting with Friends/Community groups to renew partnership agreements. We are in active discussions to extend and develop digital inclusion volunteer activities and Home Library Service.

Version: 7th May 2024

Voluntary and Community Sector Action Plan 23/24

| | People, Transformation and Performance | Customers and Cultural Services – Museums and Heritage | 2.4 We will develop opportunities to broaden volunteer participation across Heritage services and work to better capture the benefits of volunteering in improving wellbeing and combatting loneliness. | As well as celebrating Volunteers week in June, we had a recognition celebration over Christmas to thank the Heritage services volunteers for their work.

We produced a regular Museum newsletter that goes out to volunteers and also actively contribute to the Friends newsletter too.

We have had positive meetings with the Swalcliffe Society, who support operations at Swalcliffe Barn, about how they can be better assisted and are developing the offer at this site.

We have regained accreditation status for all our Heritage sites (including The History Centre and The Oxfordshire Museum), and our returns detailed the work undertaken across the service by volunteers.

We still have work to do to capture the impact/benefits of volunteering. |
|---|---|---|---|---|

Voluntary and Community Sector Action Plan 23/24

				We have not yet broadened volunteer participation via digital channels, however volunteer effort is maintained at existing levels, which is vital to cataloguing and digitising output.
	Environment and Place	Environment and Circular Economy	2.5 We will further develop community volunteers through town and parish councils such as volunteer flood wardens, highways maintenance and school crossing patrols.	Work is in progress and this action is becoming business as usual. We finished the flood warden pilot at the end of March. We are currently receiving feedback, and this will be incorporated into business as usual. As of March 2024, we reached 10 volunteers for the pilot Flood wardens scheme.
Capacity and Skills	People, Transformation and Performance	Children's Services - Youth	3.1 We will offer £50,000 of our surplus apprenticeship levy to enable the development of a skilled youth workforce. 10 Youth Work Level 3 Apprenticeships will be funded through this offer.	We offered the apprenticeship levy to local VCS organisations working in the children's sector, however this was not taken up by any organisations.
	Public Health and Community Safety	Public Health	3.2 We will engage smaller VCS organisations in delivering domestic abuse training contracts	We have completed this action, with new contracts starting in April 2023.

Version: 7th May 2024

Voluntary and Community Sector Action Plan 23/24

			for professionals and expanding the champions network for professionals and in local communities.	
	People, Transformation and Performance	Partnerships and Delivery	3.3 We will deliver grant support of £300,000 to strategic VCS advisory services to provide additional capacity	This grant funding has been provided to eight advice organisations within the County. It is being primarily used to boost the provision of debt and benefits advice. Monitoring is being collected on the provision of these services. One set of data has been submitted and the second is due in April.
	Environment and Place	Highways	3.4 We will train and develop 100 new FixMyStreet Super Users and network volunteers, over the next three years, across the County with the skills to support their local network and community. We will expand our work with communities in managing biodiversity sites.	This action is complete – as of March 2024 there are a total of 117 volunteer Fix My Street Users.
	Environment and Place	Environment and Circular Economy	3.5 We will support the Community Action Groups to engage local communities across the county on environmental topics by delivering community activities, training and information sharing through the Community Action Groups network. We will report on the number of activities and events	The report on CAG's activity from 23-24 will not be available until May 24. For the project year April 22-March 23: CAG supported 4,297 activities, 84,883 participants, 97,613 volunteer hours, and £1,756,529 of

Version: 7th May 2024

Voluntary and Community Sector Action Plan 23/24

			delivered annually across our service areas including waste reduction, climate resilience, public rights of way and tree planting.	network fundraising and income generated.
Supporting a Sustainable Sector	Communications, Strategy and Insight	Policy and Strategy	4.1 We will refresh the Community Asset Transfer Policy.	Work to refresh the Community Asset Transfer Policy is in progress.
	Communications, Strategy and Insight	Policy and Strategy	4.2 We will promote the Councillor Priority Fund to the VCS and implement a more streamlined approach to administering the fund.	This action has been completed, and a LEAN review is currently underway to improve the process
	People, Transformation and Performance	Adult Social Care	4.3 We will work with NHS, District and City Council and the voluntary and community sector to develop social prescribing and community capacity and capability. This will include development of grant provision for anchor organisations and community groups to support people in the community and avoid admission to hospital or care placements.	Along with the City and Districts, Public Health, and the VCS, we have mapped the provision of "connectors" in the community. A further round of grant funding of community assets has been completed with Oxfordshire Community Foundation, OCVA and Community First Oxfordshire delivering grants to the value of 500k supporting 104 local community groups. This generated a further 120K of additional funding from local sponsors via OCF supporting

Voluntary and Community Sector Action Plan 23/24

				an additional 16 community groups. Local Area Co-ordination has been launched in two Localities (Bicester East and Chipping Norton) with support from West and Cherwell District Councils.
Public Health and Community Safety	Public Health	4.4 We will work with VCS partners to co-produce our public health research governance processes and strategy. This will include setting up a Community Research Network and support/training for Community Research Champions.		We have established a Community Research Network and associated Community Steering Group. It is anticipated that the new Head of Research will lead on the development of a research strategy and governance framework with input from the VCS and other stakeholders when in post.
People, Transformation and Performance	Partnerships and Delivery	4.5 We will partner with OCF to run a second round of VCS grants, providing a further £240,000 of funding to those groups supporting residents in the cost-of-living crisis.		We provided £110,000 to support the delivery of this £240k programme. We received an initial report following the award of grants to 32 organisations. A final report will be received in the spring of 2024 to provide feedback on delivery.

Version: 7th May 2024

Voluntary and Community Sector Action Plan 23/24

	Environment and Place	Highways	4.6 We will explore the possibility of supporting the VCS by providing parking permits for volunteers that deliver core services across the county.	This action is to be reviewed and carried over into the 24-25 action plan if appropriate.
	Public Health and Community Safety	Trading Standards	4.7 We will promote Friends Against Scams as a community-led approach to scam harm reduction. In 2023/24, we aim to train 200 'Friends' across Oxfordshire communities to increase resilience against scams, with a view to prioritising a train-the-trainer approach in future years, recruiting 'Scam Champions' to take such learning into their communities.	Work is in progress on this action. As of the end of Q3 in 23/24, we have trained 156 Friends.
Reducing Inequalities	People, Transformation and Performance	Children's Services – Youth	5.1 We will ensure that the Department for Education (DfE) grant funding allocated to us each year is used to provide our Holiday Activities and Food programme (HAF), to support children from disadvantaged backgrounds and other vulnerable groups throughout school holidays.	Work is in progress on this action as part of current business as usual. DfE grant funding should continue until March 2025.
	People, Transformation and Performance	Customers and Cultural Services – Libraries	5.2 We seek to further develop the Home Library Service (HLS) with external funding and volunteers, to better support independent living, combat loneliness and widen	We have put in a funding bid to the current round of budget planning to expand the Home Library Service and are awaiting a decision on this

Version: 7th May 2024

Voluntary and Community Sector Action Plan 23/24

			participation for residents, as well as monitor and celebrate volunteer impact and achieve improved sustainability.	front. We have continued to actively engage with our volunteers and maintained service levels at maximum capacity. We carry out a bi-annual survey of HLS customers to gauge satisfaction and identify areas for improvement.
	People, Transformation and Performance	Customers and Cultural Services – Museums and Heritage	5.3 We will work with local communities and partners to enhance engagement with heritage collections and increase participation, specifically addressing diversity, inclusion and underrepresented communities.	The History Service has worked with Film Oxford on projects focusing on highlighting under-represented community groups and their stories (e.g. African Caribbean residents, members of the LGBTQ+ community). We have restructured the Museums Team and created a Curator of Social History, and an Access and Engagement Manager post to give additional specialist capacity to work in this area. We are planning to undertake a museums collections development review, and establish a strategy for proactive collecting that will see an increase to the diversity of our heritage collections.

Voluntary and Community Sector Action Plan 23/24

				We have received Arts Council funding to assess the accessibility of our Museum services and have already started to make improvements off the back of evidence that is being generated by this review. An Accessibility Panel has been set up, and we have directly involved people with lived experience and specialist consultants.
Public Health and Community Safety	Public Health	5.4 We will support signposting to the VCS with the promotion of social prescribing and through the Better Housing Better Health service. The Better Housing Better Health service will provide training to the VCS on fuel poverty and potential solutions to residents.		Work is in progress for this action through the Better Housing Better Health service. In addition, the Community Outreach Active Travel programme is specifically targeted at supporting VCS in disadvantaged communities to address barriers people experience to cycling and walking more.
Public Health and Community Safety	Public Health	5.5 We will fund two VCS organisations to lead and deliver community insights reports to create the final two community profiles in 23/24, utilising the expertise and insight of our		This action has been completed. Oxford Glue carried out the community insight for the central Oxford profile and Community First Oxfordshire

			partners to steer this essential strategic work.	carried out the community insight for the Littlemore profile. Both were published in December 2023.

This page is intentionally left blank

CABINET – 18 June 2024

CAPITAL OUTTURN REPORT 2023/24

Report by Executive Director of Resources and Section 151 Officer

Recommendation

1. **The Cabinet is RECOMMENDED to:**

    a) note the performance against the capital programme for 2023/24 as set out in the report.
    b) Approve the creation of a new reserve to support the development of green financing and to make an initial contribution of £1.0m funded from the interest released at the end of 2023/24 (as set out in paragraph 65)
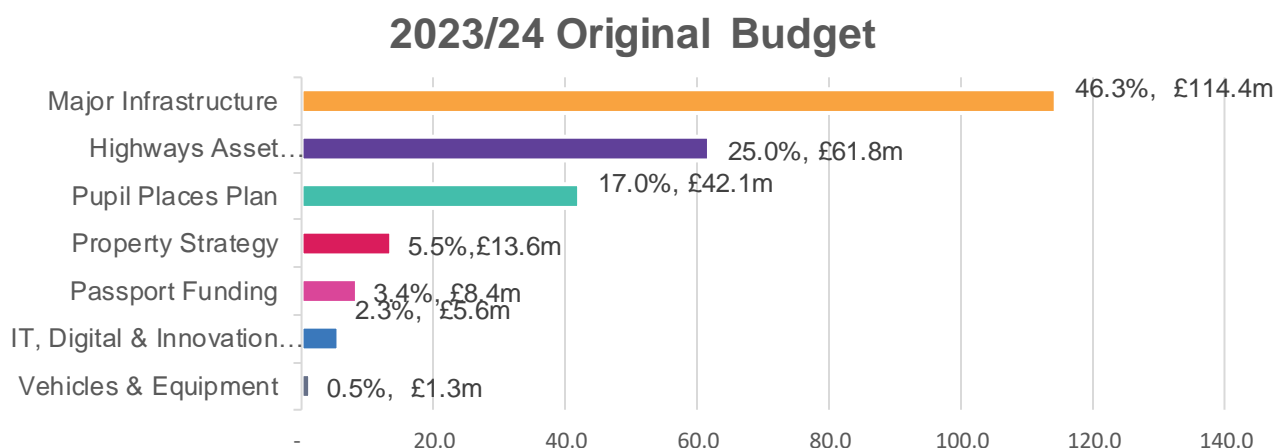
Executive Summary

2. The ten-year Capital Programme sets out the agreed capital investment to deliver the priorities identified in the council's Capital and Investment Strategy. This report updates on the performance against the programme shown in the latest monitoring report for 2023/24 and also compares back to the capital programme agreed by Council in February 2023. Figures shown reflect those to be included in the Council's Statement of Accounts for 2023/24.

3. The capital programme is updated throughout the year to reflect the latest delivery profiles and cost estimates for each programme. The last update was based on the January 2024 monitoring position, and this was agreed by Cabinet in March 2024. Planned capital spend for 2023/24 totalled £191.3m. Actual capital programme expenditure by 31st March 2024 was £175.9m. The variation between the latest programme and the actual expenditure is -£15.4m (-8%). This spend is now expected to take place in 2024/25.

4. The expenditure was funded by £83.1m of capital grants and other external contributions, £30.8m of developer contributions and Community Infrastructure Levy, £2.2m of revenue contributions, and £59.8m of prudential borrowing.

Introduction

5. Capital expenditure is defined as spending that creates an asset for the council (e.g. buildings, vehicles and equipment), and spending which meets the definition in regulations specified under the Local Government Act 2003 which includes spend on non-current assets that are not owned by the Council such as academy schools and the award of capital grants and funding agreements.

6. The council's ten-year capital programme sets out the agreed capital investment to deliver the priorities identified in the Capital and Investment Strategy. This is

agreed annually by Council alongside the revenue budget and Medium-Term Financial Strategy.

7. The capital programme is currently structured as follows:

    - **Pupil Place Plan:** including basic need (new schools and expansion), maintenance, health and safety and improvements,
    - **Major Infrastructure:** including Growth Deal Infrastructure programme,
    - **Highways and structural maintenance:** including street lighting, and bridges,
    - **Property Strategy:** including health & safety, maintenance, improvements and the Investment Strategy,
    - **IT, Digital & Innovation Strategy:** including broadband, software and equipment,
    - **Passported Funds:** including Disabled Facilities Grant and Devolved Schools Capital,
    - **Vehicles and Equipment:** including fire and rescue vehicles and equipment,

8. Each strand of the programme is underpinned by supporting strategies which set out the need for capital investment and the contribution of that planned investment towards the council's priorities. These include:

    - Pupil Place Plan and Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Sufficiency Plan
    - Local Transport & Connectivity Plan
    - Highways Asset Management Plan
    - Property & Assets
    - Household Waste Recycling
    - Libraries & Heritage
    - Climate Action Framework
    - IT & Digital

9. The original capital programme for 2023/24 was agreed by Council in February 2023 as part of the Capital and Investment Strategy and set out anticipated spend of £247.3m. This included £42.1m (17.0% of the overall programme) for the provision of additional school places and new schools in housing developments and £176.2m (71.2% of the overall programme) planned expenditure on major infrastructure projects, including large road improvement schemes, and road maintenance. Funding required to deliver the IT Strategy was £5.6m and spend on the Property Strategy of £13.6m. The chart below shows the planned spend and the proportion of the overall programme by programme area based on the original budget plans for 2023/24.

2023/24 Original Budget

Major Infrastructure	46.3%, £114.4m
Highways Asset…	25.0%, £61.8m
Pupil Places Plan	17.0%, £42.1m
Property Strategy	5.5%, £13.6m
Passport Funding	3.4%, £8.4m
IT, Digital & Innovation…	2.3%, £5.6m
Vehicles & Equipment	0.5%, £1.3m

10. As shown in the chart below it was planned to fund the planned investment of £247.3m from grants and contributions £117.1m (47.4% of the planned investment), developer contributions £37.9m (15.3%), prudential borrowing £71.6m (28.9%) and revenue contributions of £20.7m (8.4%).
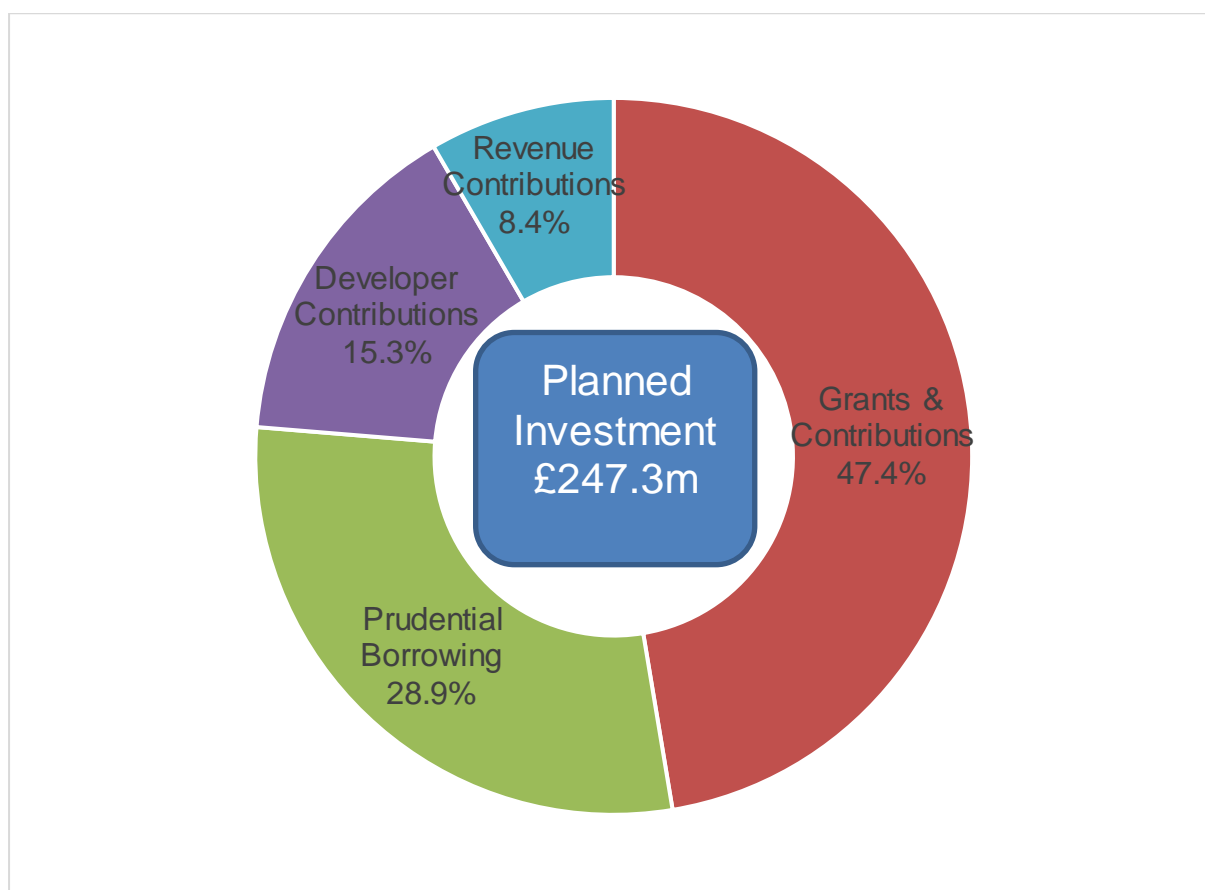
11. The capital programme is updated four times each year to reflect the latest forecast profile of expenditure. The latest updated programme was agreed by

Cabinet in March 2024 and set out anticipated investment of £191.3m in 2023/24.

12. Annex 1a sets out a summary of actual expenditure for 2023/24 by strategy area compared to both the original budget and latest budget.

Performance Summary 2023/24

13. A summary of actual expenditure compared to the latest capital programme update is set out in the table below and Annex 1a.

Strategy Programmes	Jan' 2024 Capital Monitoring (Cabinet March 2024) £m	Actual Capital Expenditure 2023/24 £m	Variation to Latest Capital Programme £m	Variation to Latest Capital Programme %
Pupil Places Plan	37,300	36,790	-510	-1
Major Infrastructure	67,461	61,711	-5,750	-9
Highways Asset Management Plan	55,190	53,217	-1,973	-4
Property Strategy	15,340	9,636	-5,704	-37
IT, Digital & Innovation Strategy	5,369	4,862	-507	-9
Passport Funding	8,389	8,686	297	4
Vehicles & Equipment	2,242	1,023	-1,219	-54
Total Strategy Programmes Expenditure	191,291	175,925	-15,366	-8

14. Actual capital programme expenditure for 2023/24 was £175.9 compared with £172.2m in 2022/23 and £173.4m in 2021/22.

Pupil Places Plan

15. Actual expenditure on pupil places was £36.8m in 2023/24. This is £0.5m lower than forecast in the report to Cabinet in March 2024. The Pupil Place Plan includes 3 main programmes:

- Basic Need - these are usually school expansion projects that are funded by central government grant and/or Section 106 developer funding to ensure there are enough school places for children within Oxfordshire.

- Growth Portfolio – these are usually new school projects within large housing sites allocated in local plans that are funded from contributions sought from developers via a Section 106 agreement towards the costs of providing community and social infrastructure.

- Schools Annual Programmes – this includes the School Structural Maintenance Programme (SSMP) which addresses the highest condition-

based priorities within the school estate enhancing the school stock condition and reducing the backlog maintenance, and the School Access Programme which ensure that mainstream buildings are accessible for pupils with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities.

16. Projects in the basic need and growth portfolio programmes are either delivered directly by the Council, delivered by a housing developer or by a third party (usually an Academy Trust or Diocese) via a funding agreement. Regardless of how they are delivered, each project brings benefits to residents living in Oxfordshire by improving the quality and facilities at existing schools; providing additional pupil places allowing greater parental choice and ensuring that housing developments have the infrastructure necessary for them to become thriving communities.

17. The Basic Needs Programme invested £9.7m during 2023/24. This has created 255 additional pupil places and 16 additional Special Education Needs & Disability (SEND) pupil places. Two temporary classrooms have also been replaced. Schemes completed in 2023/24 include:

- Glory Farm Primary School – replacement of prefabricated temporary classrooms.
- Kingfisher Special School – 16 place expansion.
- Lord Williams's School – 150 place expansion.
- North Leigh Primary School – enlargement of school and two additional classrooms.
- Radley Primary School – 105 place expansion and improvements to the hall.

18. Five projects are currently in construction and are due to be completed in 2024/25 creating further additional pupil places.

19. The Growth Portfolio programme invested £23.6m during 2023/24. Three new schools opened during 2023/24 creating 1,260 additional primary school places, 240 nursery places and 35 additional Special Education Needs & Disability (SEND) pupil places. A further school was re-built, expanded and re-located.

- Graven Hill Primary School – 420 place new school + 90 nursery places.
- Sires Academy - 420 place new school + 90 nursery places.
- St John's Academy - 420 place new school + 60 nursery places + 35 place SEN Resource Places.
- Shrivenham CofE Primary School – 315 place replacement primary + 75 place nursery places.

20. One other project, St Edburg's CE Primary School in Bicester, is currently in construction and is due to be completed in 2024/25 creating further additional pupil places.

21. The Schools Annual Programmes invested £3.3m, delivering projects mainly through the Schools Structural Maintenance Programme. There were also projects delivered aligned with the Public Sector De-Carbonisation Grant

Programme that enabled carbon reduced solutions. A total of 17 projects were completed during the year from 32 planned, with a further 8 projects on site. The remaining projects will be carried forward to be undertaken during 2024/25. A new programme of works in excess of £5m for 2024/25 has been identified and consists of 44 projects.

22. Projects were delivered via the School Access Programme which ensure that mainstream buildings are accessible for pupils with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities. In total, accessibility improvements were made to 12 primary schools and 3 secondary schools enabling disabled pupils to attend their preferred school.

Major Infrastructure

23. Spend on schemes with the Major Infrastructure Programme was £61.7m. The programme is divided into various sub-programme areas as shown in the table below.

Major Infrastructure	Latest Monitoring	Actual	Variation
	£'000	£'000	£'000
Housing Infrastructure Fund 1 (HIF1)	6,100	5,695	-405
Housing Infrastructure Fund 2 (HIF2) & A40	17,335	16,837	-498
A423 Improvement Programme	3,000	3,644	+644
Active Travel Phase 3	925	883	-42
Bicester & Banbury Locality	3,500	4,605	+1,105
Oxford Locality	14,184	12,346	-1,838
South & Vale Locality	7,771	8,066	+295
Major Infrastructure Sub-total	**52,815**	**52,077**	**-738**
Placemaking	899	727	-172
Transport Policy	13,525	8,789	-4,736
Other Programmes	222	118	-104
Major Infrastructure –Total	67,461	61,711	-5,750

24. The reduction of £5.8m compared to the forecast of £67.5m included in the March programme update reflects a mix of changes. There was better than anticipated progress on the A432 Improvement Programme (+£0.6m) and the A4095 – B4100 Roundabout scheme, Bicester (+£0.8m). £1.3m relating to Oxford Traffic Filters scheme is now expected to be spent in 2024/25.

25. Spend has also been impacted by the Zero Emissions Buses Regional Area (ZEBRA) project (-£3.2m), where the March 2024 target delivery for electric buses slipped into April 2024 due to a short pause in the programme. At the time of writing, 75 buses have been delivered in total, with 65 buses operational on routes around Oxford. The remaining 84 buses will be delivered by August 2024.

26. The majority of the Major Infrastructure programme comprises three main funding areas:

<u>HIF1 Programme</u>

27. The HIF1 programme remains in the pre-construction (Stage 2 Design & Procurement) phase awaiting the outcome and decision on the public inquiry which has taken place in early 2024. The in-year spend of £5.7m, is slightly less than previously anticipated. This is in line with the spend profile agreed with Homes England, which looks to optimise the minimum spend required to reduce the risk of programme delay. Subject to the outcome of the inquiry, this programme is expected to invest £296.2m in infrastructure around Didcot Garden Town to facilitate housing and employment growth in South and Vale districts and includes the following schemes:

- A4130 Widening
- Clifton Hampden bypass
- Culham River Crossing
- Didcot Science Bridge

28. At the time of writing, a Material Change Request (resulting from the delays as a consequence of the public inquiry) has been progressing through the decision making and approval governance process in Homes England. If approved this would see an extended programme timeline and additional funding for the programme. Updates and progress will be reported as part of the routine capital programme and monitoring reports during 2024/25.

<u>HIF2 & A40</u>

29. The HIF2 & A40 programme has spent £16.8m during 2023/24. In total, the HIF2 and Oxford Science Transit programmes will look to invest £194.2m in infrastructure along the A40 corridor. At the time of writing this report a Material Change Request had been submitted to Homes England for the HIF2 programme. It is yet unknown as to when a decision will be made. This programme will be further delayed until an approved revised timeframe, scope and funding model is agreed. The projects are at various stages of delivery.

30. The elements of the A40 Programme in construction are progressing well, with Oxford North Phase 1 scheme complete and presently progressing through the close out stage. The Eynsham Park & Ride, part of the Science Transit Phase 2 programme is 95% complete and progressing through its defect's rectification stage. While Access to Witney is progressing through its pre-construction phase, including the securing of land parcels.

- A40 – Access to Witney – stage 2, Design & Procurement
- A40 – Oxford North Phase 1 – stage 4, Close out
- A40 – Science Transit Phase 2 – stage 3, Construction & Delivery

31. The deadline for spending £142.7m[1] Capital Growth Deal funding agreed with the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) and Homes England, is 31 March 2025. Some projects have completed, and others are now progressing through the construction stage. The remaining projects are progressing through their respective optioneering, feasibility and design & procurement stages.

32. The following projects have completed construction and are currently in the Close Out stage:

- Botley Road Corridor
- Oxford Zero Emission Zone (ZEZ) Pilot
- Active Travel – Oxford schemes Tranche 2
- A4095 Underbridge and Underpass NW Bicester
- A361 Road Safety Improvements

33. The following projects have completed the construction stage:

- Access to Headington
- North Oxford Corridor – A44 Loop Farm to Cassington Rd
- North Oxford Canal towpath improvement works
- Broad Street

34. The following projects are in the construction stage:

- North Oxford Corridor - Kidlington Roundabout
- A4095 – B4100 Banbury Road Roundabout
- Benson Relief Road
- Wantage Eastern Link Road
- A4130 Steventon Lights

Highways Asset Management Plan (HAMP)

35. The annual planned target total surfacing programme (excluding patching) for 2023/24, was calculated at 2% of the network. The expectation was that this would enable the council to maintain the 4,656km of network that it is responsible for in as close as possible to a 'steady state' within the funding available. By the year end, 2% of the network had been resurfaced as follows:

a) Over 88km of the network was, either wholly or in part, reconstructed or resurfaced,
b) Approximately 23km of the network was renewed to an 'as new' condition,
c) Approximately 65km of the network's surface was treated in order to slow down deterioration, delaying the need for more extensive repairs, often by well over ten years,

---

[1] Total Growth Deal infrastructure grant funding is £150m allocated as £142.7m capital & £7.3m revenue.

d) Approximately 1km of the network prone to road traffic accidents were prioritised for works to improve and enhance the likelihood of future collisions.

36. The total spend in 2023/24 was £53.2m compared to the latest forecast of £55.2m in the report to Cabinet in March 2024. The programme is divided into sub-programme areas as shown in the table below.

Highways Asset Management Plan	Latest Monitoring	Actual	Variation
	£'000	£'000	£'000
Structural Maintenance Annual Programme	36,000	34,673	-1,327
Improvement Programme	3,680	3,739	+59
Major Schemes & Other Programmes	14,510	13,403	-1,107
Other	1,000	1,402	+402
Highways Asset Management Plan – Total	**55,190**	**53,217**	**-1,973**

37. The annual Structural Maintenance Programme invested £34.7m, -£1.3m less than last reported and delivered 97% of the planned schemes, the underspend was in the Bridges and Electrical programmes.

38. The planned and delivered activities for the main programmes are tabled below:

Project	Original Planned Schemes	Schemes/ Units Delivered	Comments on actual compared to planned delivery
Surface Treatments (schemes)	43	43	Schemes to restore the condition or prolonging the life of existing carriageways. There is also pre-works for next year's programme, however these schemes are not included in this number.
Carriageways (schemes)	17	15	Surfacing/reconstruction/strengthening of roads. 2 schemes were deferred due to cost increase
Structural Highways Improvements (schemes)	65	65	Surface inlay and minor patching schemes across the county. There will also be minor works carried out in addition to this throughout the year.
Footways (schemes)	33	34	Repair/construction of footways and cycleways.
Drainage (schemes)	130	146	Repair/renewal of existing drainage infrastructure and provision of new infrastructure to resolve known drainage issues. There is also planned reactive work which will be carried out.

Project	Original Planned Schemes	Schemes/ Units Delivered	Comments on actual compared to planned delivery
Bridges (schemes)	14	9	Strengthening/replacement/imposition of management measures on weak structures. 5 schemes were deferred to next year, due to things such as high-water levels and protracted lead-in times from external agencies for licences. Additional area bridges programme is determined during the year.
Public Rights of Way	8	6	Improved Pedestrian Access Points (delivered as planned-reactive – dependent upon need). In addition to this new/refurbished kit bridges (delivered as planned-reactive with in-house resource). Two schemes have been deferred, due mainly to delivery issues relating to high-water levels for both watercourses and ground water levels, resulting from prolonged wet weather periods.
Electrical	6,513	6067	LED Replacement units being installed this year.
20mph Speed limit (schemes)	34 84	34 72	Phase 1 – Remaining schemes reprogrammed from last year. Phase 2 - schemes this year. The remainder reprogrammed to be delivered Q1 24/25. Work involved revised speed limit orders and installing signs in towns and parishes.
Section 42 contributions (schemes)	78	56	Programme delivered by the City Council and covers all the unclassified roads and footways within the city. Over 20 schemes have been re-scheduled to the next year, due to increases in costs that exceeded the available funding.

39. The annual Improvement Programme invested £3.7m in line with latest forecasts. This includes 81 road safety and traffic improvements including road markings, cycle provision improvements, pedestrian crossings, footway improvements and speed limit alterations. The programme also includes enhancement to support journey time reliability, which also aid bus movements, and traffic signal improvement schemes.

40. The Structural Maintenance Major Schemes programme invested £13.4m, - £1.1m less than previously reported. A total of 6,067 LED replacement units were delivered in 2023/24 but this was 446 units (or 7%) less than planned. Some of the funding has been reallocated to traffic signals to be delivered in

2024/25. The total number of LED units now replaced is approximately 93%. The remaining lighting units and columns will be replaced by the end of 2024/25.

Property Strategy

41.   The total capital expenditure in 2023/24 was £9.6m, £5.7m lower than the latest monitoring report. The majority of this underspend relates to the Children's Homes Programme (£1.9m), Homes Upgrade Grant 2 (£2.0m) and contributions to the Resonance Supported Homes Fund (£1m).

42.   Corporate Estate Development spent £4.4m. The two largest projects being delivered are:

- Children's Homes Programme (£2.1m) – Children's Services successfully secured DfE match funding to purchase and refurbish four new children's homes, with programme delivery to run to March 2025. The £10.45m capital programme will increase the placement sufficiency for Children We Care For by 12 beds for 11-17 year olds. Two new properties (Chinor and Enstone) were acquired in 2023/24 and will be refurbished during 2024/25. Two further homes are expected to complete and be refurbished in 2024/25
- Aston Children's Home – this was successfully completed in December 2023 creating a new, purpose-built home for 4 children and 2 staff.

43.   Construction has also begun for a new salt barn at Deddington Highways Depot which will be ready for use in Winter 2024. Following a review and changes to the business case various options are being investigated for the future location of Banbury Library.

44.   The Corporate Estate Condition Programme spent £2.1m. This includes the Defect Liability programme (to address legacy issues arising from Carillion's liquidation, including rectification of known defects with completed projects and the treatment of latent defects) completed a further £1.0m works, the majority across various schools within the 2023/24 programme. This takes the overall programme expenditure to £10.1m.

45.   The office rationalisation & co-location programme continued. Nash Court was vacated and released, with staff moved into Union Street. Phase 1 of the closure of Knights Court also took place during 2023/24, with moves into Oxford Community Support Service, Union Street, County Hall and Ron Groves House. These works allowed the property to be vacated and released with the resultant revenue savings. Phase 2 of this project will commence in 2024/25 with £1.675m to be spent across the properties above. It is also expected to that Abbey House will be vacated during 2024/25.

46.   The total investment to date is £3.0m of the £5.0m provision under the Resonance Supported Homes Fund. At 31 March 2024, 5 properties have been purchased, four are in development and one is now occupied. The current properties are in Banbury, Bicester, Kidlington, Oxford, and Witney. Of the four properties in development, detailed property specifications are being finalised

with delivery of the remaining four properties expected in 2024. The fund will result a total of 22 new shared living options. A further payment of £1m is due at the beginning of financial year 2024/25.

47. The Climate Action Programme spent £2.7m in 2023/24, -£2.2m less than previously reported. This is predominately due to the delays relating to the Homes Upgrade Grant (HUG2). Expenditure included:

- £1.8m spent in 2023/24 on Green Homes Grant, originally awarded from the Department for Business, Energy, and Industrial Strategy (BEIS), now the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero (DESNZ), delivering 218 energy-saving retrofit measures to 129 owner-occupied and privately rented homes with D-rated energy ratings or below.

- The Capital Monitoring Report to Cabinet in December 2023 noted that £0.7m of the Home Upgrade Grant (HUG1) has not been spent within the grant timeframe and would be returned to the grant provider. This was due to the availability of accredited installers, early capacity issues and the award of funds under HUG2 which meant HUG1 could not continue once HUG2 was in operation.

- £0.8m spent in 2023/24 on the Home Upgrade Grant (HUG2) that delivered 118 retrofit measures to 65 homes. This is a two-year programme, running until the end of March 2025, and we have a target to deliver retrofit improvements to a further 150 owner-occupied properties in 2024/25.

IT, Digital & Innovation Strategy

48. The total capital expenditure on ICT schemes in 2023/24 was £4.9m compared to the forecast of £5.4m set out in the March 2024 report.

49. A further £0.4m was spent on the Children Education Systems project (overall programme budget £3.3m). The project has now completed, with some budget available for the further development of this strategic system covering both education and children's social care.

50. The Rural Gigabit Hub Sites programme which commenced during 2021/22 incurred expenditure of £1.97m in 2023/24 (Total spend £5.7m against an original budget of £8m) for build work completed under the programme. This programme has enabled fibre infrastructure to be built for county council buildings (where gigabit broadband infrastructure does not exist), other public buildings such as schools and GP practices, and a range of community hub buildings like village halls. 178 sites have been completed to date and a further 15 community hub buildings are due for completion in 2024/25. This project was funded partly by Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS), and partly out of the Gainshare payments received from BT under the completed Better Broadband for Oxfordshire project (£5m). This programme has helped to reduce the cost of connections required for the Council's buildings, help tackle inequalities in Oxfordshire (a number of schools in socially deprived areas are

included in the project), and by connecting a number of Community buildings will help provide a platform for local delivery of health and social care, facilitate a reduction in isolation, and provide the means for these important local assets to be at the heart of the community.

51. The 5GIR programme commenced in towards the end of 2023/24 and incurred £0.2m of expenditure in 2023/24 after being awarded £3.8m of grant funding by the Department for Science, Innovation and Technology (DSIT) to increase adoption of 5G connectivity focussing on regional strengths in research and development, advanced engineering and manufacturing. The programme is a regional partnership, known as England's Connected Heartland (ECH) which comprises of local bodies from Oxfordshire, Berkshire, Buckinghamshire, Bedfordshire and Cambridgeshire, with Oxfordshire as the lead authority. ECH will deploy resources from each of the participating authorities to develop joint opportunities with the wireless telecoms supply chain and the sectors to create an Advanced Wireless ecosystem. The project will do this by stacking use cases as vertical propositions that can then be lifted into other applications more widely across the region. The project plans to deploy two physical 5G infrastructure builds; the 5G Science & Innovation Campus Project at Harwell and the 5G railway project to utilise trackside fibre to deliver 5G along the East West Rail line between Bicester and Bletchley. A further workstream plans to offer a grant scheme to help drive adoption of 5G technologies by removing financial barriers to deployment and facilitating innovative applications.

52. The digital infrastructure programme (to deliver the outcomes of the ITID Strategy) incurred expenditure of £2.3m. There have been variations to the previous forecast as the costs for several projects will now be incurred in 2024/25. Project expenditure in 2023/24 includes:

   - £0.2m for network connectivity equipment to implement a secure "zero trust" network at up to 148 council sites across the county. The project has successfully completed implementation, with all sites enjoying improved connectivity at a lower cost.

   - An investment of £1.1m in improving customer kit – typically laptops and mobiles (where needed). A new contract for the supply of laptops is now in place providing up to date devices at a lower unit cost.

53. IT are working on a number of applications, these include:

   - One Fleet – enabling the vehicle asset management system to move towards carbon reduction in vehicle use.
   - Digital Post Room – supporting centralised post room function for efficiencies.
   - ATS (Applicant Tracking System) Recruitment system – improved offer for managers and potential employees to attract talent and meet our Employer of Choice as part of OCC's vision.
   - Power BI and Social Care Dashboards – to meet the provision of data driven decisions within a social care setting.

- Investment in enhancing council's digital presence with a new home page, and web content designed for specific audiences.

54. The following projects went Live in 2023/2024:

- The Council's Desk Booking system – Kadence – supports agile working and provides data for the future rationalisation of office space.
- Health & Safety Accident Reporting – enables the statutory H&S requirements of the organisation.
- Investment in enhancing the Council's digital presence with new home page, and content designed for specific audiences to improve engagement with residents.

Passported Funding

55. Disabled Facilities Grant of £7.2m, was passed to the City and District Councils in accordance with the Better Care Fund grant determination. Households are eligible to apply for the grant for home adaptations if a child or adult in the household has a substantial and permanent disability. Types of adaptations funded by the grant include stairlifts, level access showers, ground floor extensions designed around a person's needs and kitchens designed for a wheelchair user.

56. Schools Devolved Formula Capital expenditure was £1.5m for the year. This is grant funded by the Department of Education. School capital balances have decreased by £0.5m to £2.1m as at 31 March 2024.

57. Fire Control Renewal Fund incurred £0.5m of expenditure in 2023/24 towards replacing the servers as part of the hardware refresh project at the Thames Valley Fire Control Service.

Vehicles and Equipment

58. At year end, vehicles and equipment costing over £0.020m purchased for use by the Fire & Rescue Service and in-house Fleet Management have been added to the Council's asset register. The value of vehicles and equipment purchased in 2023/24 across both services was £0.5m. For the Fire & Rescue Service, the remaining revenue provision for 2023/24 of £0.5m was transferred into reserves. This has increased the balance held in reserves for the future purchase of vehicles to £2.9m.

Comparison with Original Financial Plans (agreed in February 2023)

59. The capital programme and monitoring report is submitted to Cabinet four times during the financial year. The table in Annex 1c compares the original budget for 2023/24 to actual expenditure for each programme area at each update.

60. The original budget plan for 2023/24 was £247.3m. Changes to plans set out in reports during the financial year reduced the expected outturn position to £191.3m in the report to Cabinet in March 2024. Actual expenditure for 2023/24 was £175.9m. This represents delivery of 71% (58% in 2022/23) on the original financial plan for the year agreed by council in February 2023.

61. The variations during the year were explained within the monitoring reports and can be summarised within the following areas. The variations for schemes within each programme are set out in detail in Annex 1c:

   a) Major Infrastructure: Reduction to original plan of £52.7m

   The actual outturn position is £52.7m lower than the original plan. This is made up of a reduction of £47.0m when comparing the March position with the original plan agreed in February 2023 and a further £5.7m reduction when comparing the last reported position to actual outturn. The programmes and projects which were significantly reprofiled were:

   - HIF1 Programme – delayed as a result of the public inquiry and the requirement for a final decision. Meanwhile, with approval from Homes England, a minimum level of spend is being maintained to reduce the risk of any future delays to the programme following the outcome of the inquiry.
   - HIF2 Programme – delayed as a result of a requirement to re-scope of the programme in light of cost increases. This is awaiting a decision by Homes England to approve a Material Change Request.
   - Zebra Electric Bus payments – changes to the delivery profile of the electric buses impacted on when the payments can be made. While this has slipped some buses were delivered in early 2024/25 and are now in operation around Oxford, the remaining buses will be delivered by August 2024.
   - Active Travel Phase 3 – slippage due to delays in entering into contract for the various projects within Tranche 3.
   - Benson Relief Road – there was a delay in entering the construction phase of the programme. However, this scheme is now under construction.
   - Wantage Eastern Relief Road – there was a delay in entering the construction phase of the programme. This is now underway and expected to be completed by Summer 2024.

   b) Pupil Place Plan: Reduction to original plan of £5.3m

   The report to Cabinet in January 2024 updated expenditure plans based on updates from contractors for the delivery of new schools. While some spend has slipped to 2024/25 the overall project cost remains within the approved budget with no significant impact on the delivery programme – the additional capacity is still expected to be available as planned.

   The variations during the year were explained within the monitoring reports and can be summarised within the following areas:

- Provision of School Places – Expansions (-£1.0) – Reprofiling due to commencement date of construction phase.
- New Schools (-£1.1m) – Reprofiling due to commencement date of construction phase.
- School Structural Maintenance Programme (-£3.0m) - due to schemes that have commenced in 24/25 and are not yet complete and £1.4m of schemes have not yet commenced. These schemes been included as carry forward projects into the 2024/25 programme.

   c) <u>Property Strategy: Reduction to original plan of £4m</u>

The reduction is mainly due to the timeframe needed to acquire suitable sites for the delivery of four new children's homes, the decision on the relocation of Banbury Library, the timing of the next payment due to the Resonance Supported Homes Fund, which is now expected to be made in 2024/25, and the delivery timeframe for the Decarbonisation Programme.

   d) <u>Highways Asset Management Plan: Reduction to original plan of £8.6m</u>

The reduction is mainly due to the reprofiling of the final phase of the LED Replacement programme, which is currently 93% complete. It is anticipated that the remaining replacements will be completed in 2024/25.

Capital Programme Financing

62.   The table in Annex 1b summarises the financing of the 2023/24 capital programme and compares it to the financing planned in the original and latest capital programme.

63.   Capital grants totalling £81.6m have been used towards the funding capital investment during 2023/24. These include the various funding streams to support the major infrastructure programme including £9.3m of Housing Infrastructure Funds towards the Didcot Garden Town and A40 programmes and £12.7m on A40 Oxford science Transit project. A further £20.5m expenditure has been incurred on the Growth Deal infrastructure programme and has been met from recycled funds ahead of claiming the remaining grant in 2024/25.

64.   Capital funding received from developer contributions totalled £60m in 2023/24. £30.8m developer contributions and Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) funding was used in 2023/24 to finance various capital projects with the majority of this towards the delivery of the Pupil Places Plan programme. The balance of capital developer contributions held by the council has increased to £270m as at 31 March 2024. A total of £168m of this funding (including secure funding) is built into the capital programme from 2024/25 onwards. The remainder will be used to support future schemes in line with the relevant agreements.

65.   Following a change in approach to applying indexation to developer contributions it is proposed create a new reserve to support the development of

green financing and to make an initial contribution of £1.0m funded from the interest released at the end of 2023/24.

66.   Un-ringfenced grant funding held in the Capital Grants Reserve decreased by £1.8m during the year to £146.8m as at 31st March 2024. This balance is £16.7m higher than previously reported due to £13m of new grant allocations being received in March 2024. These include Active Travel Phase 4, A420 Road Safety and additional SEN High Needs Capital Grant.

67.   Within the total there is £26.7m SEN High Needs Capital Grant, £23.4m Zero Emission Bus Regional Areas (ZEBRA) allocation towards the purchase of electric buses that is expected to be passed to the bus companies in 2024/25 and £20.7m towards the A40 Oxford Science Programme.

68.   The majority of un-ringfenced grants do not have conditions and are not time limited so can be used flexibly across the Capital Programme. Therefore, where available, other funding sources are used to fund capital expenditure before un-ringfenced grants. The balance of un-ringfenced grants is forecast to be spent over the ten-year capital programme period.

69.   The balance of unapplied ringfenced capital grants held by the Council has increased by £5.4m to £13.7m as at 31 March 2024. The balance includes £6.2m of Community Infrastructure Levy funding received towards various projects and £3.3m towards the Local Electrical Vehicle Infrastructure programme.

70.   The capital receipts and capital reserve balances are £33.1m and £47.4m respectively at 31 March 2024. The capital receipts and reserve balances are forecast to be spent over the ten-year capital programme period.

Risk Management

71.   As reported previously, there are a mix of factors continuing to impact on the deliverability and cost of capital schemes. Where those schemes are grant funded (particularly Housing & Growth Deal, HIF1 and HIF2) there is a risk that slippage could impact on the availability of grant funding as it is not possible to complete the scheme by the funding deadline. While the impact of inflation has reduced there is also a risk that costs increase further by the point the relevant schemes reach the construction phase eroding the value of the grant funding so that is insufficient to meet the revised scheme costs.

72.   These risks, including the impact of inflation where relevant, are being managed through the council's capital governance process at both project and programme level and through the Strategic Capital Board. Where necessary action is being taken to adjust scheme deliverables and to use value engineering to maintain spend within the available funding.

73.   HIF1 is a significant financial risk to the authority because the scheme cannot now be completed before the existing end date of reclaiming expenditure of March 2026. However, following the outcome of the planning inquiry a decision

will be required to stop the scheme or alternatively an extension to time/additional funding/rescoping of the scheme will need to be agreed with Homes England. As such it is expected that the financial risks will be managed through either of those routes.

74. There are ongoing negotiations with Homes England in relation to the HIF2 scheme funding and timeline which presents a potential risk if a successful resolution is not reached.

75. The council is focussed on assessing and tracking seven strategic risks in 2023/24. One of these risks is "Major Infrastructure Portfolio Schemes become undeliverable". Updates on this risk have been reported through the Business Management & Monitoring Reports to Cabinet.

Staff Implications

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

Equality & Inclusion Implications

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

Financial Implications

78. The report sets out the position at the end of 2023/24 for the planned investment and available funding for the ten-year Capital programme.

79. The following risks are inherent within the funding of the capital programme:

- Certainty over the timing and value of future capital receipts and Section 106 Contributions

- Certainty over the receipt and security of future grant funding.

- Ability to meet the deadlines for the use of grant funding.

80. If capital receipts or section 106 contributions are not received within the planned timeframe it may be necessary for the Council to temporarily fund capital expenditure through prudential borrowing. The council has a prudential borrowing reserve to help manage the revenue impact of additional prudential borrowing.

81. Where additional funding is required to fund schemes on a permanent basis this will need to be addressed by reducing investment elsewhere within the programme (reprioritisation) or by permanently funding through prudential borrowing. This would require the identification of long-term revenue funding as

the Prudential Borrowing is usually repaid over 25 years through the Minimum Revenue Provision.

82.   Since the introduction of new governance measures in 2022, there has been a commitment to continuously improve upon what is already in place. An ongoing programme of work is aiming to build upon these foundations, which will enable efficiency, transparency and effectiveness across all areas of Capital Programme governance. Central to this, is the integration of technology tools which will provide senior leaders with increased visibility and oversight of the capital programme and an enhanced capacity to make evidence-based decisions.

Comments checked by:
Kathy Wilcox, Head of Corporate Finance

Legal Implications

83.   In year changes to the capital programme must be approved by Cabinet in accordance with the Council's Financial Regulations. In particular paragraph 5.1.1(IV) sets out that where the total estimated resource allocation is above £1,000,000, then Cabinet can agree its inclusion into the Capital Programme, via the periodic Capital Report to Cabinet, based on the recommendations by Strategic Capital Board and the Section 151 Officer.

Comments checked by: Paul Grant, Head of Legal and Deputy Monitoring Officer

LORNA BAXTER
Executive Director of Resources and Section 151 Officer

Contact Officers: Kathy Wilcox, Head of Corporate Finance
                               Natalie Crawford, Capital Programme Manager

June 2024

This page is intentionally left blank

Capital Programme Provisional Outturn 2023/24　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　**Annex 1a**

Summary outturn position compared to the original capital programme and latest updated capital programme

Capital Expenditure	Original Capital Programme (Council Feb 2023) £'000	Latest Capital Programme (Council Feb 2024) £'000	Latest Forecast Position (as at end of Jan 2024) £'000	Actual Expenditure 2023/24 £'000	Variation to Original Capital Programme		Variation to Latest Reported Position	
					£'000	%	£'000	%
Strategy Programmes								
Pupil Places Plan	42,097	39,178	37,300	36,790	-5,307	-13%	-510	-1%
Major Infrastructure	114,437	79,975	67,461	61,711	-52,726	-46%	-5,750	-9%
Highways Asset Management Plan	61,792	55,954	55,190	53,217	-8,575	-14%	-1,973	-4%
Property Strategy	13,578	17,975	15,340	9,636	-3,942	-29%	-5,704	-37%
IT, Digital & Innovation Strategy	5,632	5,842	5,369	4,862	-770	-14%	-507	-9%
Passport Funding	8,408	8,389	8,389	8,686	278	3%	297	4%
Vehicles & Equipment	1,308	2,242	2,242	1,023	-285	-22%	-1,219	-54%
Total Strategy Programmes Expenditure	**247,252**	**209,555**	**191,291**	**175,924**	**-71,328**	**-29%**	**-15,367**	**-8%**
Earmarked Reserves	1,600	0	0	0	-1,600	100%	0	0%
Total Capital Programme Expenditure	**248,852**	**209,555**	**191,291**	**175,924**	**-72,928**	**-29%**	**-15,367**	**-8%**

Capital Programme Provisional Outturn 2023/24   **Annex 1b**

Summary Capital Financing Position

Capital Financing	Original Capital Programme (Council Feb 2023) £'000	Latest Forecast Position (as at end of Jan 2024) £'000	Actual Financing 2023/24 £000	Variation to Original Capital Programme £'000	Variation to Latest Reported Position £'000
Unringfenced grants	51,242	21,498	58,009	6,767	36,511
Devolved Formula Capital - Grant	1,100	1,100	0	-1,100	-1,100
Other Grants	66,388	42,797	23,615	-42,773	-19,182
Developer Contributions & CIL	37,859	41,208	30,783	-7,076	-10,425
Other External Contributions	0	20	0	0	-20
Schools Contributions	0	28	1,497	1,497	1,469
Revenue Funding	20,727	13,276	2,175	-18,552	-11,101
Prudential Borrowing	71,536	71,364	59,845	-11,691	-11,519
Capital Receipts/Reserves				0	0
Total Capital Programme Financing	**248,852**	**191,291**	**175,924**	**-72,928**	**-15,367**

Capital Balances	Balance brought forward at 1 April 2023 £'000	Latest Forecast Position (as at end of Feb 2024) £'000	Actual balance carried forward at 31 Mar 2024 £'000	Variation to Original Capital Programme £'000	Variation to Latest Reported Position £'000
Capital Reserve	43,467	39,197	47,404	3,937	8,207
Capital Receipts Unapplied	31,672	34,552	33,076	1,404	-1,476
Capital Grants Reserve	148,618	130,054	146,794	-1,824	16,740
Total	**223,757**	**203,803**	**227,274**	**3,517**	**23,471**

Capital Grants (excluding school local balances)	Balance brought forward at 1 April 2023 £'000	Balance carried forward at 31 Mar 2024 £'000
Receipts in Advance (ringfenced/eligible spend not yet incurred)	8,346	13,705
Total	**8,346**	**13,705**

Capital Programme Provisional Outturn 2023/24 - Programme Level

Strategy / Programme	Budget Council (Feb 23) For 23/24	Monitoring May 23 - Cabinet (July 23)	Monitoring Aug 23 - Cabinet (Oct 23)	Monitoring Oct 23 - Cabinet (Dec 23)	Budget Council (Feb 24) 23/24	Monitoring Jan 24 - Cabinet (Mar 24)	22/23 Outturn
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Pupil Places Plan							
Basic Need	10,750	12,230	13,600	13,600	11,600	11,600	9,750
Growth Portfolio	24,697	28,388	27,028	27,028	22,428	22,235	23,604
Annual Programmes	6,400	6,400	5,100	5,100	5,100	3,435	3,272
Early Years	250	250	250	50	50	30	163
Retentions	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Pupil Places Plan Capital Programme Total	**42,097**	**47,268**	**45,978**	**45,778**	**39,178**	**37,300**	**36,790**
Major Infrastructure							
HIF 1	11,200	19,700	6,300	6,300	5,700	6,100	5,695
HIF 2 & A40	38,500	25,592	23,631	18,525	18,525	17,335	16,837
A423 Improvement Programme	3,000	3,000	3,500	3,000	3,000	3,000	3,644
Active Travel P3	4,500	2,400	2,200	1,350	1,350	925	883
Bicester & Banbury Locality Programme Total	3,459	4,759	3,509	2,879	2,895	3,500	4,605
Oxford	10,600	15,679	16,341	16,297	15,356	14,184	12,346
South & Vale	14,259	11,321	7,771	6,871	8,321	7,771	8,066
Major Infrastructure Locality Programme Total	85,518	82,451	63,252	55,222	55,147	52,815	52,077
Placemaking	2,423	2,523	2,123	1,923	2,274	899	727
Transport Policy	25,737	25,737	24,237	22,337	22,337	13,525	8,789
Major Projects - Final Account Programme	759	47	477	217	217	222	118
Major Infrastructure Capital Programme Total	**114,437**	**110,758**	**90,089**	**79,699**	**79,975**	**67,461**	**61,711**
Highways AMP							
Structural Maintenance Programme	33,783	35,385	35,839	36,300	36,300	36,000	34,673
Improvement Programme	2,880	2,800	2,880	1,880	3,600	3,680	3,739
SM Major Schemes	24,129	15,939	15,530	15,110	15,044	14,510	13,403
Other Programmes	1,000	1,020	1,000	3,460	1,010	1,000	1,402
Highways AMP Capital Programme Total	**61,792**	**55,144**	**55,249**	**56,750**	**55,954**	**55,190**	**53,217**
Property Strategy							
Corporate Estate Programme	6,440	5,937	6,087	6,658	7,108	7,058	4,425
Climate Action	185	3,832	3,832	5,082	5,032	4,882	2,664
Structural Maintenance	3,630	2,500	2,400	3,582	3,332	1,700	2,063
Investment Strategy	2,500	5,401	5,532	2,400	2,400	1,500	392
Waste Management Programme	823	0	0	103	103	200	79
Retentions	0	0	0	0	0	0	14
Property Strategy Capital Programme Total	**13,578**	**17,670**	**17,851**	**17,825**	**17,975**	**15,340**	**9,636**

Strategy / Programme	Budget Council (Feb 23) For 23/24	Monitoring May 23 - Cabinet (July 23)	Monitoring Aug 23 - Cabinet (Oct 23)	Monitoring Oct 23 - Cabinet (Dec 23)	Budget Council (Feb 24) 23/24	Monitoring Jan 24 - Cabinet (Mar 24)	22/23 Outturn
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
IT, Digital & Innovation Strategy							
Children Services - ICT (Phase 1&2)	0	373	150	0	0	0	392
Broadband	3,700	3,700	3,700	2,100	2,100	2,000	1,972
5G Innovation Region Connected Heartland	0	0	0	0	0	0	166
Digital Infrastructure	1,932	3,054	3,292	3,742	3,742	3,369	2,724
IT, Digital & Innovation Strategy Capital Programme	**5,632**	**7,127**	**7,142**	**5,842**	**5,842**	**5,369**	**4,862**
Passported Funded							
Third Party Growth (OxLEP) & Housing Deal	0	144	-600	-600	-600	-600	-51
Passported Funding	7,758	7,758	8,339	8,339	8,339	8,339	8,736
Specialist Housing & Financial Assistance	650	650	650	650	650	650	0
Passported Funded Capital Programme Total	**8,408**	**8,552**	**8,389**	**8,389**	**8,389**	**8,389**	**8,686**
Vehicles & Equipment							
Vehicles & Equipment	1,308	2,242	2,242	2,242	2,242	2,242	1,023
Vehicles & Equipment Capital Programme Total	**1,308**	**2,242**	**2,242**	**2,242**	**2,242**	**2,242**	**1,023**
Capital Programme Total	**247,252**	**248,761**	**226,940**	**216,525**	**209,555**	**191,291**	**175,924**

CABINET – 18 JUNE 2024

CAPITAL PROGRAMME APPROVALS – JUNE 2024

Report by the Executive Director of Resources and Section 151 Officer

Recommendations

1.   The Cabinet is RECOMMENDED to:

   a.   approve the inclusion of the A4130 Rowstock Roundabout to Steventon Lights scheme into the Capital Programme with an indicative budget of £1.041m to be fully funded from S106 developer contributions.

   b.   approve the inclusion of the Abingdon National Cycle Network Route 5 (NCN5) Missing Link scheme into the Capital Programme with an indicative budget of £1.474m funded from the Active Travel Fund Tranche 4 Extension.

   c.   approve a budget increase of £4.657m from £4.763m to £9.420m, to progress the expansion of Grove Church of England Primary School, funded by S106 contributions (£5.620m), Basic Need (£1.000m) and Basic Need Contingency (£2.800m).

   d.   approve the inclusion of Union Street Phase 1.5 & 2 into the Capital Programme, with an indicative budget of £1.450m, to be partly funded by the Asset Rationalisation Programme agreed by Full Council in February 2022, with an initial budget of £4.700m (increased in February 2024 by £2.300m) and the Decarbonisation Programme where £8.200m funding was agreed in March 2024.

Executive Summary

2.   The Capital Programme was approved by Council in February 2024 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 June 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.

Major Infrastructure

<u>A4130 Rowstock Roundabout to Steventon Lights</u>
5. The Local Plan housing and commercial growth, including Evaluation of Transport Impacts (ETI) studies, demonstrated a need for capacity improvements within the Rowstock area, which is situated within the Science Vale area close to Harwell Campus, one of the County's largest employment area.

6. Approval is required to include this scheme into the Capital Programme with an indicative budget of £1.041m to be fully funded from S106 developer contributions to fund the feasibility, design and procurement stages.

<u>Abingdon National Cycle Network Route 5 (NCN5) Missing Link</u>
7. The Abingdon National Cycle Network Route 5 (NCN5) Missing Link scheme is in the heart of Abingdon Town Centre, on the Sustrans NCN5 route, and partially in an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA). The route currently requires cyclists to dismount and push for approximately 90 metres which potentially adversely affects people with reduced mobility such as elderly or people with disabilities, potentially using adapted cycles. Additionally, the current crossing provisions along this route are extremely poor or non-existent. The proposed design will address the issues for walking and wheeling in this area, giving more priority to the most vulnerable users.

8. In February 2024 Oxfordshire County Council was allocated £2.384m by Active Travel England from the Active Travel Fund (ATF) under ATF4 Extension funding. This funding is allocated to support specific projects intended to improve walking and cycling infrastructure in the county. Approval is required to enter this scheme into the Capital Programme with an indicative budget of £1.474m.

Property

<u>Grove Church of England Primary School Expansion</u>
9. Grove Church of England Primary School is managed by the Oxford Diocesan Schools Trust (ODST). The Council requires the school to expand from 1 form entry to 1.5 form entry to accommodate additional pupils from the adjacent Monks Farm Strategic Housing Development.

10. The initial business case for this scheme was drafted in 2015 and has not progressed due to the project being placed on hold until requirements of the S106 agreement had been met by the Developer, resulting in inflationary cost pressures. These factors, as well as a renewed design has resulted in a total increase of £4.657m. The scheme is now expected to cost £9.420m, to be funded from S106 developer contributions

(£5.620m), Basic Need (£1m already committed) and Basic Need Contingency (£2.800m).

<u>Union Street Phase 1.5 & 2</u>

11.   Union Street is owned by the County Council and accommodates the Children & Family Centre, supported by a satellite centre in Blackbird Leys as well as workspace provision. Phase 1 alteration works at Union Street facilitated the staff move from Nash Court and was completed in October 2022. This next phase of work will relocate Children's services staff into Union Street with internal works proposed so that all areas are enhanced to create a holistic and well-integrated family hub. Decarbonisation measures will also be implemented as part of this phase of work.

12.   Approval is required to enter this scheme of works into the Capital Programme with an indicative budget of £1.450m. £0.919m will be funded by the Asset Rationalisation Programme (£4.7m agreed by Full Council in February 2022 and a further £2.300m agreed in February 2024.) Decarbonisation measures costing £0.531m will be funded through the £8.200m Decarbonisation funding agreed in March 2024.

Financial Implications

13.   The financial implications are contained within the report. Funding for the schemes mentioned in this report is to be met from secured and held S106 developer contributions and grant funding.

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

Staff Implications

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

Equality & Inclusion Implications

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

Legal Implications

16.   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
June 2024

Division(s): N/A

CABINET –18 June 2024

FORWARD PLAN AND FUTURE BUSINESS

Items identified from the Forward Plan for Forthcoming Decision

Topic/Decision

Portfolio/Ref

Cabinet, 16 July 2024

Topic/Decision	Portfolio/Ref
▪ **Business Management & Monitoring Report - May 2024** To note the report and approve the recommendations	Cabinet, 2024/063 - Cabinet Member for Finance
▪ **Treasury Management Outturn Report 2023/24** Cabinet is asked to note the report and recommend Council to note the Council's treasury management activity in 2023/24.	Cabinet, 2024/162 - Cabinet Member for Finance
▪ **HIF1 Grant Determination Agreement** To seek approval to delegate authority to enter into an amended Grant Determination Agreement with Homes England	Cabinet, 2024/198 - Cabinet Member for Infrastructure and Development Strategy

Delegated Decisions by Deputy Leader of the Council with Responsibility for Climate Change, Environment & Future Generations, 18 July 2024

Topic/Decision	Portfolio/Ref
▪ **Proposed New Lead Local Authority Drainage and Minor Groundworks Framework** The proposal is for a new OCC Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA) Drainage and minor ground works framework. It will enable OCC to directly undertake work relating to drainage and minor ground works to reduce flood risk for communities and residents. The framework is proposed to run for an initial period of 2 years, with an option to extend for a further 2 years. The framework is for the provision of the following works across the whole of Oxfordshire on a "call-off" basis. Works will be on OCC own land and assets and (by agreement) third party land. Types of work: Lot 1) minor ground works, such as: ditch and pond creation, reinstatement and maintenance; small flood embankment construction; swale construction; infiltration device installation; and vegetation management. Lot 2) Culvert and small bridge works, such as: removal, replacement, alteration	Delegated Decisions by Deputy Leader of the Council with Responsibility for Climate Change, Environment & Future Generations, 2024/158 - Deputy Leader of the Council with Responsibility for Climate Change, Environment & Future

and repair. Lot 3) Culvert and drainage pipe maintenance, surveying, jetting/clearance. It is proposed the framework will have a total value of up to £500k per year, subject to LLFA funding. The framework will complement the current OCC Highways Term contract that is due for renewal in 2025. It is proposed the framework will also be available for use by the district and city councils within Oxfordshire.	Generations

Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for Children, Education & Young People's Services, 10 July 2024

▪ **SHAP - Supported Housing Accommodation Programme** Seek approval to procure support for a Supported Housing Scheme for young peole aged 18-25 who have experienced multiple disadvantage. This is dependent on agreement from Dept of Levelling Up Housing and Communities (DLUHC) for proposed specification and exact cost of support. Funding was granted last Oct but planning permission not granted for proposed property. New proposal now being considered by DLUHC and time critical.	Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for Children, Education & Young People's Services, 2024/147 - Cabinet Member for Children, Education & Young People's Services
▪ **Didcot Special School - Education Specification and Approval to Start LA Presumption Process** Whether to approve the education specification for a new special school, and move forward with identifying an academy sponsor	Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for Children, Education & Young People's Services, 2024/089 - Cabinet Member for Children, Education & Young People's Services
▪ **New Primary School for Valley Park - Education Specification and Approval to Start LA Presumption Process** Whether to approve the education specification for a new primary school, and move forward with identifying an academy sponsor	Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for Children, Education & Young People's Services, 2024/159 - Cabinet Member for Children, Education &

	Young People's Services

Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for Community & Corporate Services, 16 July 2024

▪ **DSIT 5G Innovation Regions project - England's Connected Heartland** DSIT have grant funded OCC with £3.8m. OCC needs to procure two contracts, each estimated at c £1.5m, using the DSIT grant. Decision will be required for award of contracts	Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for Community & Corporate Services, 2024/050 - Cabinet Member for Community & Corporate Services

Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for Transport Management, 18 July 2024

▪ **Fulbrook: Proposed 20 Mph Speed Limits** This proposal is part of the County-wide 20 Mph Speed Limit Project.	Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for Transport Management, 2024/084 - Cabinet Member for Transport Management
▪ **Souldern: Proposed 20 Mph Speed Limits** This proposal is part of the County wide 20 Mph Speed Limit Project (Phase 3).	Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for Transport Management, 2024/083 - Cabinet Member for Transport Management
▪ **Oxford City - Various Locations: Proposed New and Deleted Disabled Persons Parking Places** To seek approval for the introduction and amendments to disabled persons parking places. Following requests from the public for the introduction of disabled parking places, the county council has consulted on new locations which have met our criteria. The report will present feedback on sites where there have been objections.	Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for Transport Management, 2024/058 - Cabinet Member for Transport Management

▪ **Charlton-on-Otmoor: Proposed 20 Mph Speed Limits** Part of County-wide 20 Mph Speed Limit Project	Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for Transport Management, 2024/081 - Cabinet Member for Transport Management
▪ **Moreton (Thame): Proposed 20mph Speed Limits** Proposal is part of County-wide 20mph Speed Limit Project (Phase 3)	Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for Transport Management, 2024/106 - Cabinet Member for Transport Management
▪ **Goring Heath: Proposed 20mph Speed Limits** Proposal part of County-wide 20mph Speed Limit Project (Phase 3)	Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for Transport Management, 2024/105 - Cabinet Member for Transport Management
▪ **Crawley: Proposed 20mph Speed Limits** This proposal is part of the County-wide 20mph Speed Limits Project (Phase 3)	Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for Transport Management, 2024/104 - Cabinet Member for Transport Management
▪ **Fencott & Murcott: Proposed 20mph Speed Limits** Proposal is part of the County-wide 20mph speed limit projects.	Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for Transport Management, 2024/095 - Cabinet Member for Transport Management
▪ **Rotherfield Greys: Proposed 20mph Speed Limits** Proposal is part of the County-wide 20mph speed limit project.	Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for Transport

	Management, 2024/094 - Cabinet Member for Transport Management
▪ **Tetsworth: Proposed 20mph Speed Limits** This proposal is part of the County-wide 20mph speed limit project.	Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for Transport Management, 2024/093 - Cabinet Member for Transport Management
▪ **Benson: Preston Crowmarsh and RAF Benson - Proposed 20mph Speed Limits** Part of County-wide 20mph Speed Limits Projects	Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for Transport Management, 2024/116 - Cabinet Member for Transport Management
▪ **Woodeaton: Proposed 20 Mph Speed Limits** To consider any objections raised at formal consultation and determine speed limits to be implemented	Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for Transport Management, 2024/133 - Cabinet Member for Transport Management
▪ **Harwell: Milton Heights - Proposed 20mph Speed Limits** Part of Phase 3 Countywide 20mph speed limits project	Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for Transport Management, 2024/135 - Cabinet Member for Transport Management
▪ **Proposed 24hr Exemption for Hackney & Private Hire Vehicles through Westgate Bus Link, Oxford** On completion of Westgate development, taxis and PHVs were originally not allowed in the bus link. Following lobbying by COLTA, an ETRO was agreed to allow HCVs and PHVs to use the bus link (without pick up/drop) off 7am-7pm. This was subsequently made permanent. COLTA have continued to	Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for Transport Management, 2024/101 - Cabinet Member

lobby to allow access 24 hours a day. Cabinet Member is keen for us to consult on this proposal (permanent TRO).	for Transport Management
▪ **Proposed No waiting at anytime restrictions - Main Street, Tadmarton** To seek approval for the introduction of proposals to introduce double yellow lines	Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for Transport Management, 2024/081 - Cabinet Member for Transport Management
▪ **Kiddington with Asterleigh: Village 20mph Limit Proposals** To consider any comments arising from consultation and determine amended limits accordingly	Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for Transport Management, 2024/037 - Cabinet Member for Transport Management
▪ **Appleton with Eaton: 20mph Speed Limit Proposals** Part of County-wide 20mph Speed Limit Project	Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for Transport Management, 2024/020 - Cabinet Member for Transport Management
▪ **Berinsfield: 20 Mph Speed Limit Proposals** To determine speed limits after consideration of any formal consultation responses	Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for Transport Management, 2024/071 - Cabinet Member for Transport Management
▪ **Cherwell and West Oxon Districts - Various Locations: Proposed New and Deleted Disabled Persons Parking Places** To seek approval for the introduction and amendments to Disabled Person Parking Spaces. Following requests from the public for the introduction of disabled parking places, the county council has consulted on new locations which have met our criteria. The report will present feedback on sites where there have been objections.	Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for Transport Management, 2024/057 - Cabinet Member for Transport Management

▪ **Chesterton: 20 Mph Speed Limit Proposals** To determine speed limits after consideration of any formal consultation responses	Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for Transport Management, 2024/049 - Cabinet Member for Transport Management
▪ **North Leigh: Village 20mph Limit & A4095 40mph Limit Proposals** Part of County-wide 20mph Speed Limit Project	Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for Transport Management, 2024/031 - Cabinet Member for Transport Management
▪ **Woodstock Road Sustainable Travel** A package of works to deliver improvements for sustainable travel modes on the Woodstock Road in Oxford. Measures will include improvements to cycle lanes / paths, traffic calming features and bus priority measures.	Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for Transport Management, 2024/107 - Cabinet Member for Transport Management
▪ **Goosey: Proposed 20mph Speed Limits** Part of Phase 3 County-wide 20mph Speed Limit Project.	Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for Transport Management, 2024/127 - Cabinet Member for Transport Management
▪ **Fernham: Proposed 20mph Speed Limits** Part of Phase 3 of County-wide 20mph Speed Limit Project.	Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for Transport Management, 2024/126 - Cabinet Member for Transport Management
▪ **Appleford: Proposed 20mph Speed Limits** Part of Phase 3 County-wide 20mph Speed Limit Project.	Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for Transport

	Management, 2024/125 - Cabinet Member for Transport Management
▪ **Denchworth: Proposed 20mph Speed Limits** Part of Phase 3 of County-wide 20mph Speed Limit Project.	Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for Transport Management, 2024/124 - Cabinet Member for Transport Management
▪ **Stadhampton: Proposed 20mph Speed Limits** Part of Phase 3 County-wide Speed Limits Project.	Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for Transport Management, 2024/123 - Cabinet Member for Transport Management
▪ **Horspath: Proposed 20mph Speed Limits** Part of Phase 3 County-wide 20mph Speed Limit Project	Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for Transport Management, 2024/122 - Cabinet Member for Transport Management
▪ **Horley: Proposed 20mph Speed Limits** Part of Phase 3 of the County-wide 20mph Speed Limit Project.	Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for Transport Management, 2024/121 - Cabinet Member for Transport Management
▪ **Hornton: Proposed 20mph Speed Limits** Part of Phase 3 County-wide 20mph Speed Limit Project	Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for Transport Management, 2024/120 - Cabinet Member

	for Transport Management
▪ **Ducklington: Proposed 20mph Speed Limits** Part of Phase 3 County-wide 20mph Speed Limit Project	Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for Transport Management, 2024/119 - Cabinet Member for Transport Management
▪ **Chadlington: Proposed 20mph Speed Limits** Part of Phase 3 County-wide 20mph Speed Limit Project	Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for Transport Management, 2024/118 - Cabinet Member for Transport Management
▪ **Sibford Gower: Proposed 20mph Speed Limits** Part of Phase 3 of County-wide 20mph Speed Limit Project	Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for Transport Management, 2024/117 - Cabinet Member for Transport Management
▪ **West Hendred: Proposed 20mph Speed Limits** Part of Phase 3 Countywide 20mph Speed Limit Project.	Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for Transport Management, 2024/152 - Cabinet Member for Transport Management
▪ **Letcombe Regis: Proposed 20mph Speed Limits** Part of Phase 3 Countywide 20mph Speed Limit Project.	Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for Transport Management, 2024/151 - Cabinet Member for Transport Management
▪ **Little Wittenham: Proposed 20mph Speed Limits** Part of Phase 3 of Countywide 20mph Speed Limit Project.	Delegated Decisions by

	Cabinet Member for Transport Management, 2024/150 - Cabinet Member for Transport Management
▪ **Pusey: Proposed 20mph Speed Limits** Part of Phase 3 of County-wide 20mph Speed Limit Project.	Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for Transport Management, 2024/146 - Cabinet Member for Transport Management
▪ **Hinton Waldrist: Proposed 20mph Speed Limits** Part of Phase 3 of Countywide 20mph Speed Limit Project.	Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for Transport Management, 2024/144 - Cabinet Member for Transport Management
▪ **Hook Norton: Proposed 20mph Speed Limits** Part of Phase 3 of County-wide 20mph Speed Limit Project.	Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for Transport Management, 2024/143 - Cabinet Member for Transport Management
▪ **Banbury: 20 Mph Speed Limits Scheme** To reconsider strategic route speed limits following local concerns to original proposals	Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for Transport Management, 2024/080 - Cabinet Member for Transport Management
▪ **Bloxham: 20 Mph Speed Limit Scheme Review** To reconsider 20 mph speed limits following local concerns to original proposals	Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for Transport Management, 2024/078 -

	Cabinet Member for Transport Management
▪ **Culham: 20 Mph Speed Limit Proposals** To determine speed limits after consideration of any formal consultation responses	Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for Transport Management, 2024/073 - Cabinet Member for Transport Management
▪ **Middleton Stoney: 20 Mph Speed Limit Proposals** To determine speed limits after consideration of any formal consultation responses	Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for Transport Management, 2024/043 - Cabinet Member for Transport Management
▪ **Thame: Radial Routes & Heythrop Way - 20mph & 30mph Speed Limit Proposals** Part of County-wide 20mph Speed Limit Project	Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for Transport Management, 2024/027 - Cabinet Member for Transport Management
▪ **Wallingford: Radial routes & Hithercroft Road - 20mph Speed Limit Proposals** Part of County-wide 20mph Speed Limit Project	Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for Transport Management, 2024/018 - Cabinet Member for Transport Management
▪ **Bicester: 20 mph Speed Limit Proposals** Part of the County-wide 20mph Speed Limit Project	Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for Transport Management, 2024/013 - Cabinet Member for Transport Management

Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for Infrastructure & Development Strategy, 18 July 2024

▪ **Tramway Accessibility Improvements - Contracts and Agreements** Delegate authority to the Director of Transport and Infrastructure in consultation with the Head of Legal and Deputy Monitoring Officer to finalise the target cost and programme for Stage 2 (Construction) and issue a Notice to Proceed to Milestone Infrastructure Ltd under the existing NEC 4 Engineering and Construction Contract for the Tramway Accessibility Improvements	Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for Infrastructure & Development Strategy, 2024/096 - Cabinet Member for Infrastructure and Development Strategy
▪ **Oxford Workplace Parking Levy Scheme Development Contract** As the value of Oxford Workplace Parking Levy Scheme Development contract will exceed £500,000, this is a Key Decision and requires approval from the Cabinet Member for Infrastructure & Development.	Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for Infrastructure & Development Strategy, 2024/197 - Cabinet Member for Infrastructure and Development Strategy
▪ **Access to Witney: Shores Green Junction Approval of Contract Award of Construction** To seek delegated authority to the Corporate Directorate of Environment and Place to approve the Contract award to Milestone Infrastructure for the delivery of Engineering and Construction in relation to Access to Witney Shores Green Slip roads.	Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for Infrastructure & Development Strategy, 2024/199 - Cabinet Member for Infrastructure and Development Strategy

Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, 16 July 2024

▪ **Sanctuary (Dashwood) Re-tender of contract** Re-tender of contract. All extensions exhausted and Sanctuary are not on the Live Well Supported Services Framework. New support provider required.	Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, 2024/168 - Cabinet Member for Adult Social

	Care
▪ **Style Acre (Henley-on-Thames) Learning Disability Supported Living extension** 60-month extension of Style Acre Learning Disability Supported Living contract	Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, 2024/167 - Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care

Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for Public Health, Inequalities & Community Safety, 2 July 2024

▪ **Automatic Fire Alarm Attendance Policy** Whether the Fire and Rescue Service should implement revised automatic fire alarm mobilising arrangements following feedback to the public consultation that took place between March and May 2024.	Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for Public Health, Inequalities & Community Safety, 2024/148 - Cabinet Member for Public Health, Inequalities & Community Safety
▪ **Supplementary Substance Misuse Service Contract** Proposed contract extension of the Supplementary Substance Misuse Service The annual contract value is over £500K therefore, required to be entered in the Forward Plan, in accordance with the Access to Information Rules. This is a delegated decision consistent with overall Council policy to deliver agreed strategy/plans within the area of responsibility and within approved budgets	Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for Public Health, Inequalities & Community Safety, 2024/196 - Cabinet Member for Public Health, Inequalities & Community Safety

This page is intentionally left blank