OXFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

To: Members of the Cabinet

Notice of a Meeting of the Cabinet

Tuesday, 25 February 2025 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

February 2025

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 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: 20 March 2025

recycled paper

OXFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

AGENDA

1. Apologies for Absence

2. Declarations of Interest

- guidance note below

3. **Minutes** (Pages 1 - 22)

To approve the minutes of the meetings held on 9, 21 and 28 January 2025 (**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. 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

7. Reports from Scrutiny Committees (Pages 23 - 40)

Cabinet will receive the following Scrutiny reports: -

Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee reports on S.106 and City Centre Accommodation Strategy

8. Badger Culling (Pages 41 - 46)

Cabinet Member: Deputy Leader of the Council with Responsibility for Climate Change, Environment and Future Generations
Forward Plan Ref: 2024/374
Contact: Teresa Kirkham, Head of Countryside and Waste (Teresa.Kirkham@oxfordshire.gov.uk)

Report by Director of Environment and Highways (**CA8)**

The Cabinet is RECOMMENDED to

a) **Re-affirm the Councils opposition to badger culling**

b) **Note that a specific policy about badger culling not being permitted on Council-owned land will be presented for adoption in due course**

c) **Note that the Leader has written to DEFRA making clear the council's continued opposition to the cull and any extension in size and scope.**

9. Councils for Fair Tax Declaration (Pages 47 - 50)

Cabinet Member: Finance
Forward Plan Ref: 2024/353
Contact: Ian Dyson, Director of Financial and Commercial Services (Ian.Dyson@oxfordshire.gov.uk)

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

Cabinet is RECOMMENDED to approve the Councils for Fair tax Declaration

10. Enhanced Pathways Business Case - Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Strategic Early Intervention Team (Pages 51 - 70)

Cabinet Member: Children, Education and Young People's Services & SEND Improvement
Forward Plan Ref: 2025/020

Contact: Jane Elvidge, Interim Manager – SEND Strategic Early Intervention Team (Jane.Elvidge@oxfordshire.gov.uk)

Report by Director of Children's Services (**CA10**).

The Cabinet is RECOMMENDED to

a) **Approve Oxfordshire County Council ("the Council") continuing to fund 20 existing Enhanced Pathways to enable the Council to meet the increasing numbers and complexities of children and young people with Special Educational Needs in mainstream schools and to realise probable savings through this spend to save model.**

b) **Approve the Council to fund a further 20 Enhanced Pathways to double to reach of the project to enable the Council to offer a more equitable offer across the county to meet the increasing numbers and complexities of children and young people with Special Educational Needs in mainstream schools and to realise probable savings through this spend to save model.**

c) **Approve the Council's budgetary commitment for a period of 3 years for each Enhanced Pathway (barring significant changes to central government funding of SEND during that period).**

d) **Commit to consider and review opportunities to upscale the Enhanced Pathways programme over the coming years in line with the impact evidence provided.**

11. Oxfordshire Climate Adaptation Route Map & Oxfordshire County Council Climate Adaptation Delivery Plan (Pages 71 - 212)

Cabinet Member: Deputy Leader of the Council with Responsibility for Climate Change, Environment and Future Generations
Forward Plan Ref: 2024/365
Contact: Tom Layzell, Climate Adaptation Policy and Project Lead (Tom.Layzell@oxfordshire.gov.uk)

Report by Director of Economy and Place **(CA11).**

Cabinet is RECOMMENDED to:

a) **Note the recent endorsement of the Oxfordshire Climate Adaptation Route Map by the Future Oxfordshire Partnership (FOP).**

b) **Approve the adoption of the Oxfordshire Climate Adaptation Route Map and OCC Delivery Plan.**

12. Civil Enforcement Procurement Model (Pages 213 - 244)

Cabinet Member: Transport Management
Forward Plan Ref: 2025/007
Contact: Keith Stenning, Head of Network Management (Keith.Stenning@oxfordshire.gov.uk) and Cathy Champion, Operations Manager – Civil Enforcement (Cathy.Champion@oxfordshire.gov.uk).

Report by Director of Environment and Highways (**CA12**).

The Cabinet is RECOMMENDED to

a) Approve the preferred service model and procurement strategy (enhanced multi contractor) for the Civil Enforcement and Zero Emission Zone (ZEZ) operation.

b) Support progression to the next stage of the project, that being the development and drafting of the specification, contract, and other tender documents required for procurement.

13. Household Waste Recycling Centre Service Delivery Model (Pages 245 - 254)

Cabinet Member: Deputy Leader with Responsibility for Climate Change, Environment and Future Generations
Forward Plan Ref: 2024/331
Contact: Teresa Kirkham, Head of Countryside and Waste
Teresa.kirkham@oxfordshire.gov.uk

Report by Director of Environment and Highways (**CA13**).

The Cabinet is RECOMMENDED to

a) **Approve the commencement of work to explore and consider options for the household waste recycling centre management service delivery provision, noting that the current contract is coming to an end in September 2027.**

b) **Endorse the proposed approach for developing the options and key procurement stages as set out in this paper.**

c) **To approve the use of Extended Producer Responsibility funding for consultancy work to support the future household waste recycling centre model development.**

14. Workforce Report and Staffing Data - Quarter 3 2024-25 (Pages 255 - 270)

Cabinet Member: Corporate and Community Services
Forward Plan Ref: 2025/041
Contact: Cherie Cuthbertson, Director of HR and Cultural Change
Cherie.cuthbertson@oxfordshire.gov.uk

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

Cabinet is RECOMMENDED to note the report.

15. Capital Programme Approvals - February 2025 (Pages 271 - 274)

Cabinet Member: Finance
Forward Plan Ref: 2024/226
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 a new one-form-entry primary school - East Carterton - into the Capital Programme with an indicative budget of £10.227m, to be funded from S106 developer contributions and basic need funding.**

b) **note that £7.500m of the remaining Housing and Growth Deal funding is to be allocated to Grove Airfield School in 2024/25.**

16. Forward Plan and Future Business (Pages 275 - 280)

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.

17. For Information only: Cabinet response to Scrutiny items (Pages 281 - 292)

Local Transport and Connectivity Plan Progress Report
Flood Event Response
Community Asset Transfer Policy
Commercial Strategy Update

EXEMPT ITEM

In the event that any Member or Officer wishes to discuss the information set out in annexes 2, 3 and 4 to Agenda Item 18, the Cabinet will be invited to resolve to exclude the public for the consideration of the Annexes by passing a resolution in relation in the following terms: "that the public be excluded during the consideration of the Annex since it is likely that if they were present during that discussion there would be a disclosure of "exempt" information as described in Part I of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act, 1972 and specified below the item in the Agenda."

THE ANNEXES HAVE NOT BEEN MADE PUBLIC AND SHOULD BE REGARDED AS 'CONFIDENTIAL' BY MEMBERS AND OFFICERS.

18. City Centre Accommodation Strategy - Proposed Disposal of New and Old County Hall (Pages 293 - 350)

Cabinet Member: Finance
Forward Plan Ref: 2024/294
Contact: Michael Smedley, Head of Estates Assets and Investments
Michael.smedley@oxfordshire.gov.uk

Report by Director of Property and Assets **(CA18)**

The information in this case is exempt in that it falls within the following prescribed categories:

3. Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information)

and since it is considered that, in all the circumstances of the case, the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

Annexes 2, 3 and 4 containing exempt information under the above paragraph are attached.

The Cabinet is RECOMMENDED to

a) **Agree to the freehold disposal of New and Old County Hall, on the terms set out in exempt Annex 4.**

b) **Delegate authority to the Executive Director of Resources and Section 151 Officer, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Finance, to negotiate and agree the final heads of terms which will be substantially in accordance with the details set out in exempt Annex 4.**

c) **Delegate authority to the Executive Director of Resources and Section 151 Officer, in consultation with the Director of Law and Governance and Monitoring Officer, to conclude negotiations and complete all necessary legal documentation to implement the disposal.**

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.

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CABINET

MINUTES of the meeting held on Thursday, 9 January 2025 commencing at 12.00 pm and finishing at 1.25 pm

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 John Howson Councillor Dan Levy Councillor Judy Roberts
Other Members in Attendance:	Councillor David Bartholomew

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), Helen Mitchell (Head of Public Affairs and Strategy) 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.

1/25 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE
(Agenda Item. 1)

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Kate Gregory and Dr Nathan Ley.

2/25 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST
(Agenda Item. 2)

There were none.

3/25 PETITIONS AND PUBLIC ADDRESS
(Agenda Item. 3)

4 Devolution White Paper and Response

Dan Glazebrook

Councillor Susan Brown (Leader -Oxford City Council)

Councillor Alex Powell (Oxford City Council)

Councillor Bethia Thomas (Leader -Vale of White Horse District Council)

Councillor Andy Graham (Leader -West Oxfordshire District Council)

Councillor David Rouane (Leader -South Oxfordshire District Council)

Councillor David Hingley (Leader – Cherwell District Council)

Councillor Ian Middleton

Councillor Bob Johnston

Councillor Liz Brighouse OBE

Councillor Eddie Reeves

4/25 DEVOLUTION WHITE PAPER AND RESPONSE

(Agenda Item. 4)

The Chair welcomed members, public speakers and observers to the meeting. She began her remarks by offering the Council's congratulations to Rob MacDougall, Chief Fire Officer and Director of Community Safety, who had been awarded the King's Fire Service Medal in the New Year Honour's List.

Cabinet had before it a report setting out a proposed response to the Government's Devolution White Paper published on Monday 16 December 2024.

The White Paper set out the most significant reforms to local government since the Local Government Act 1972. A significant element of the Paper progresses the English devolution agenda which commenced in 2009, providing powers to create Combined Authorities that would enable Councils to collaborate more formally to accelerate inclusive and sustainable economic growth.

Councillor Liz Leffman, Leader of the Council introduced the report which provided an overview of the government's White Paper published on 16 December, and thanked Helen Mitchell, Head of Public Affairs and Strategy and other officers for their work in preparing the report. The Leader commented she was not of the view that Oxfordshire was in a position to be part of the Devolution priority programme as there was a need for further

discussions with neighbouring authorities on agreeing definite proposals for a strategic combined authority and local government reorganisation.

Cabinet was then addressed by a number of speakers including members of the public and the leaders of the District Councils in Oxfordshire.

The following points were made by the speakers:-

- The importance of moving forward with devolution and reorganisation, suggesting a broader geography for a mayoral combined authority and the need for a larger devolved economic powers within the Southeast of England.
- A member of the public referred the to the drawbacks of the current two-tier system of local government and concerns around the use of Growth Deal funds for the Oxpens Bridge project
- Some of the District Council Leaders were of the view that priority should be given to moving forward with the combined strategic authority first and that further detailed discussions were required on any proposals for structural reform of local government in Oxfordshire
- One member of the County Council expressed concern about the haste of the proposals, the lack of genuine consultation and the potential risks of the introduction of large unitary authorities
- Another member provided historical context on the previous reorganisation attempts in Oxfordshire, and supported the report's recommendations emphasising transparency in the decision-making process

Members then discussed the report and recommendations. The Head of Public Affairs and Strategy answered a number of questions and explained the current status of the Government's devolution process and timelines.

During discussion, several members raised concerns about the potential postponement of the County Council elections in May 2025 and the need to maintain the normal democratic processes during any period of reorganisation. There was general support for moving forward at pace with devolution and reorganisation to avoid uncertainty for all stakeholders including the Council's workforce.

RESOLVED to:

a) **Note the publication of the Devolution White Paper and the emerging impacts for Oxfordshire County Council and local government in Oxfordshire;**

b) **Agree the response to Government for issue by 10 January 2025 (as set out in Appendix 1);**

c) **Request that Government places Oxfordshire into a 'fast track' programme to progress local government reorganisation ambitions first and continue to work with partners on a future Mayoral Strategic Authority;**

d) **Express to Government the County Council's significant concerns in postponing ordinary elections in 2025, but that it would accept a postponement if it can commit to the most ambitious timescale of elections to a new shadow Council/Councils in May 2026.**

…….in the Chair

Date of signing ……..

CABINET

MINUTES of the meeting held on Tuesday, 21 January 2025 commencing at 2.00 pm and finishing at 4.05 pm

Present:

Voting Members:	Councillor Liz Leffman – in the Chair Councillor Dr Pete Sudbury (Deputy Chair) 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 Donna Ford

Officers:

Whole of meeting	Martin Reeves (Chief Executive) Lorna Baxter (Executive Director of Resources & Section 151 Officer), Stephen Chandler (Executive Directo of People, transformation and Performance), Anita Bradley (Director of Law & Governance and Monitoring Officer), 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.

5/25 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

(Agenda Item. 1)

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Tim Bearder.

6/25 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

(Agenda Item. 2)

There were none.

7/25 MINUTES

(Agenda Item. 3)

The minutes of the meeting held on 17 December 2024 were approved as a correct record.

8/25 QUESTIONS FROM COUNTY COUNCILLORS
(Agenda Item. 4)

There were none received.

9/25 PETITIONS AND PUBLIC ADDRESS
(Agenda Item. 5)

9 Citizens' Assembly Update
Robin Tucker

13 Local Flood Risk Management Strategy Update
Cllr Lois Muddiman (Oxford City Council)

14 Civil Enforcement Procurement
Danny Yee
Claire Hamlett
Robin Tucker

10/25 APPOINTMENTS
(Agenda Item. 6)

There were no appointments to report to this meeting.

11/25 REPORTS FROM SCRUTINY COMMITTEES
(Agenda Item. 7)

Councillor Jane Hanna, Chair of the Oxfordshire Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee, presented the report on Healthy Weight

Councillor Nigel Simpson, Chair of the Education and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee, presented the report on Education other than at Home Strategy (EOTAS)

Councillor Liam Walker, Chair of the Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee, presented the report on Local Nature Recovery Strategy.

Cabinet received the reports and will respond in due course.

12/25 RESPONSE TO MOTION BY COUNCILLOR REEVES ON WINTER FUEL PAYMENTS
(Agenda Item. 8)

Cabinet had before it a report recommending a response to the motion agreed at Council on 5 November 2024, on the subject of recent changes to Winter Fuel Payments (WFP). The motion sought to ensure that the Council supported low income pensioners who were losing their WFP, and that this

support was communicated both to them and those who support them such as family and friends.

Councillor Dr Nathan Ley, Cabinet Member for Public Health, Inequalities and Community Safety, presented the report. He explained that the council had implemented several measures to support low-income pensioners. The Resident Support Scheme provided crisis payments for various needs, including broken appliances, in partnership with Age UK and other organisations. A communications campaign targeted low-income pensioners to raise awareness about available support. The cost-of-living programme included funding for energy vouchers, practical support with energy efficiency, and small community organisation grants. The Low Income Family Tracker dashboard helped in the organisation of awareness campaigns for pension credit and identified those who might benefit from other support. A £90,000 contingency fund was set aside for expenditure on pensioners.

The council worked closely with district councils, NHS, and civic groups to promote available support and address fuel poverty among low-income pensioners.

During discussion, the following points were made:-

- A member commended the work of district councils and organisations such as Citizens' Advice in providing assistance to those affected by the withdrawal of winter fuel payments.
- The importance of the partnership with district councils in addressing the cost-of-living crisis

Councillor Ley moved and Councillor Roberts seconded the recommendation, and it was approved.

RESOLVED to note that the actions set out in this report to respond to the motion relating to Winter Fuel Payments approved by Council in November 2024, the wording of which is set out in Annex One

13/25 CITIZENS' ASSEMBLY UPDATE

(Agenda Item. 9)

Cabinet had before it a report providing an update on the citizens' assembly on future travel, transport and connectivity in Oxfordshire to be delivered by external agency MutualGain in February and March 2025.

Following the motion agreed at Full Council on 10 December 2024 the assembly would be extended from 30 to 45 hours to enable a dedicated focus to be given, within the wider assembly, to the council's suite of traffic

management measures in central Oxfordshire, including the traffic filters trial, the workplace parking levy, and the expanded zero emissions zone.

Robin Tucker from the Coalition for Healthy Streets and Active Travel spoke in support of the citizens' assembly on transport in Oxfordshire. He emphasised the importance of gaining input through a democratic process with better evidence and less misinformation. He expressed scepticism about the motivations behind the motion for a congestion assembly but acknowledged the need to respond to it. He highlighted the various harms caused by motor vehicles, including congestion, decarbonisation, and traffic-related injuries, and stressed the need for a comprehensive approach rather than focusing solely on congestion. He also mentioned the long history of discussions and consultations on traffic solutions in Oxfordshire, emphasising the need for decisive action to reduce traffic and improve public health.:

The Chair thanked Mr Tucker for his input and acknowledged the importance of addressing the issues raised.

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

RESOLVED to:-

a) note progress being made on the citizens' assembly, which is being held in February and March 2025;

b) note that the actions set out in this report respond to the motion agreed by Council on 10 December 2024.

14/25 CABINET RESPONSE TO MOTION ON CHANGES TO INHERITANCE TAX AND OTHER FARMING MATTERS

(Agenda Item. 10)

Cabinet had before it a report which addressed the motion agreed by Council on 10 December 2024 that related to the impact on farm businesses and farming families of measures announced in the Chancellor's autumn statement of 30 October 2024. The report summarised the council's existing and emerging policy and programme support to rural businesses and set out how the council's approach would address the issues raised in the motion that were within the influence of the County Council.

Councillor Liz Leffman, Leader of the Council, presented the report.

During discussion, members highlighted the economic and business support provided to the farming community in the Oxfordshire. They mentioned the distribution of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund, the Oxford Food Strategy, and the potential participation in the Oxfam to Fork scheme. The Leader had also

written to the Chancellor expressing concerns about the inheritance tax proposal.

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

RESOLVED to:-

a) note the council's current and planned policy and programme activity in support of the rural economy;

b) note the requests from Council to Cabinet made through the motion on Farming passed by Council on 10 December 2024 and how the council's approach will address these issues.

15/25 WARM HOMES: LOCAL GRANT CAPITAL RETROFIT PROGRAMME

(Agenda Item. 11)

Cabinet received a report regarding a funding application had been submitted to the Warm Homes: Local Grant through Department for Energy Security & Net Zero. The bid supported the Council's climate action and health agendas and followed on from a range of retrofit programmes delivered to low-income households in fuel poverty. This was a three-year scheme currently which might be extended to up to five years, subject to approval at the spending review.

Councillor Pete Sudbury, Deputy Leader with Responsibility for Climate Change, Environment and Future Generations, presented the report. He emphasised the need for long-term funding to support retrofit in low-income households. He highlighted the success in securing grants and the importance of addressing fuel poverty.

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

RESOLVED to:-

a) **note the submission of a funding request to Department for Energy Security and Net Zero to support retrofit of low-income households in, or at risk of, fuel poverty.**

b) **delegate authority to the Director of Economy & Place in consultation with the Executive Director of Resources and Section 151 Officer, to consider and conclude any agreements upon notification of a successful application for the Warm Homes: Local Grant (WH:LG).**

c) **delegate authority to the Director of Economy & Place in consultation with the Executive Director of Resources to issue**

an extension to the existing agreement for the Provision of Capital Retrofit Grant Distribution and Delivery Management Services (Home Upgrade Grant, Phase 2) for up to 24 months

16/25 FUNDING CONTRIBUTION TOWARDS A JOINTLY COMMISSIONED MENTAL HEALTH CONTRACT 2025-2035

(Agenda Item. 12)

Cabinet had before it a report on proposals for a new mental health contract which would bring together several existing mental health contracts in one place for Oxfordshire residents aged 18+ years whose mental health fell into primary, core or enhanced need in the new framework for defining mental health need. These services aimed to ensure adults with poor mental health and serious mental illness received specialist support as part of their recovery, were supported to achieve good outcomes and could live in communities with support. Bringing these elements together into a single contract would simplify the management processes and reduce bureaucracy, creating greater flexibility and clearer oversight through a Performance and Assurance Oversight Board.

In the absence of the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, Councillor Liz Leffman, Leader of the Council, presented the report.

The Director of Adult Social Services and the Commissioning Manager (Improve Enable) explained the background to the new contract and referred to the importance of the collaborative approach between the NHS and Social Services in its development. The report emphasised the need for a comprehensive approach to mental health, including prevention, early intervention, and treatment. They highlighted the focus on recovery and integration into the community and the inclusion of various sub-contracts in the new proposals.

During discussion, members referred to the challenges faced in providing mental health services, including funding constraints and the need for collaboration with various stakeholders. Members acknowledged the efforts made by the public health team and other partners in addressing mental health issues. They commented on the importance of raising awareness about mental health and reducing the stigma associated with it. There was agreement on the need for continuous monitoring and evaluation of the mental health services to ensure their effectiveness.

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

RESOLVED to:-

a) **approve the direct award of a new mental health contract between Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire, Berkshire West Integrated Care Board ("BOB ICB") and Oxford Health (NHS) Foundation Trust funded under the pooled fund arrangements of the S 75 Agreement (as defined at paragraph 30 below).**

b) agree the Council's funding contribution under the S 75 Agreement to BOB ICB for mental health services under the new mental health contract to be entered by BOB ICB for the lifetime of the contract.

c) delegate responsibility to the Director of Adult Social Services (DASS) in consultation with the Executive Member for Adult Social Care for oversight of the approval process as it progresses towards final sign off (by the contracting authority).

17/25 LOCAL FLOOD RISK MANAGEMENT STRATEGY UPDATE

(Agenda Item. 13)

Cabinet had before it a report on the revised Local Flood Risk Management Strategy (LFRMS), an overarching framework developed by Oxfordshire County Council (OCC) as the Lead Local Flood Authority. The strategy was a statutory document required by the Floods and Water Management Act 2010 and served to address flood risk within the county.

The LFRMS aimed to develop, maintain, apply, and monitor effective flood risk management practices across Oxfordshire. It encompassed flood risk from surface runoff, groundwater, and ordinary watercourses. The strategy outlined the roles and responsibilities of risk management authorities including statutory and non-statutory elements.

Councillor Pete Sudbury, Deputy Leader with Responsibility for Climate Change, Environment and Future Generations, presented the report. He emphasised the need for better communication, investment in flood prevention, and the integration of flood management with the local nature recovery strategy.

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

RECOMMENDED to approve the Local Flood Risk Management Strategy as set out in Annex 2 to the report.

18/25 CIVIL ENFORCEMENT PROCUREMENT

(Agenda Item. 14)

Cabinet had before it a report recommending a model for future civil enforcement delivery following the expiry of current contracts in March 2026.

Councillor Andrew Gant, Cabinet Member for Transport Management, presented the report. He emphasised the importance of effective enforcement in achieving the county's transport goals. He addressed the points raised by the speakers, including the need for better enforcement of parking regulations, the potential use of new technologies, and the importance of recruiting and retaining civil enforcement officers.

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

RESOLVED to:-

a) **approve the commencement of work to explore and consider options for Civil Enforcement provision for the county council due to contracts coming to an end March 2026.**

b) **endorse the proposed approach and key stages as set out in this paper.**

19/25 AFFILIATION BETWEEN OXFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL AND HMS DIAMOND

(Agenda Item. 15)

Cabinet had before it a report regarding an approach by the Royal Navy to propose an affiliation between Oxfordshire and His Majesty's Ship (HMS) Diamond. The proposed affiliation aimed to strengthen the bond and support between the Royal Navy and the local community in Oxfordshire by raising awareness of the Royal Navy and specifically of HMS Diamond. Affiliations with ships took many forms, but all aimed to provide mutual benefit. If the affiliation was pursued, a Memorandum of Understanding would be developed to outline the affiliation's intentions and commitments. Oxfordshire had a large armed forces community, and the council had a strong reputation for supporting the military and veteran communities in Oxfordshire. Therefore, it was recommended to build on this reputation by demonstrating support for the military beyond Oxfordshire's borders through the affiliation with HMS Diamond.

Councillor Liz Leffman, Leader of the Council, presented the report.

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

RESOLVED to agree to forming an affiliation between Oxfordshire and His Majesty's Ship (HMS) 'Diamond'.

20/25 BUSINESS MANAGEMENT AND MONITORING REPORT - NOVEMBER 2024

(Agenda Item. 16)

Cabinet considered a report presenting the November 2024 performance, risk, and finance position for the council. The business management reports were part of a suite of performance, risk and budget documents which set out the council's ambitions, priorities, and financial performance.

Councillor Dan Levy, Cabinet Member for Finance, presented the report. He acknowledged the efforts made by the finance team in preparing the report and providing a comprehensive overview of the council's financial health.

During discussion, members referred to the importance of regular monitoring and evaluation of the council's activities to ensure alignment with strategic goals.

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

RESOLVED to:-

a) **note the report and annexes.**
b) **approve the virement requests in Annex B-2a and note the requests in Annex B-2b**
c) **approve the creation of a new reserve to support costs associated with Local Government Devolution and Reorganisation and the transfer of £5.0m to the reserve.**
d) **approve the transfer of £3.0m from Adult Services to the Budget Priorities reserve.**

21/25 CAPITAL APPROVALS REPORT - JANUARY 2025

(Agenda Item. 17)

The Capital Programme was approved by Council in February 2024 and updated during the year through the capital programme and monitoring reports. Cabinet had before it a report which set out change requests requiring Cabinet approval that will be incorporated into the agreed programme and included in the next update to the Capital Programme in March 2025.

Councillor Dan Levy, Cabinet Member for Finance, presented the report and explained the background to the changes to the capital programme and new schemes requiring approval.

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

RESOLVED to:

a) **approve the inclusion of 'The Greenwood Centre', an 11-bed accommodation block for 16–17-year-olds in need of supported accommodation, into the Capital Programme at an indicative cost of £1.932m, to be funded from £6.000m agreed by Council in February 2024 for additional Children's Homes.**
b) **approve a budget increase of £6.39m for 'Great Western Park Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) School', to be funded from the High Needs Grant.**
c) **approve a budget increase of £1.500m to the Energy Saving Measures Programme, to be addressed through the annual Budget and Business Planning process and approval by Council in February 2025.**
d) **approve a budget increase of £11.516m to the Didcot to Culham River Crossing, part of the Housing Infrastructure 1 (HIF1) programme, to be funded through additional funds granted by Homes England and agreed by Cabinet in July 2024.**
e) **approve a budget increase of £12.537m to Didcot Science Bridge, part of the Housing Infrastructure 1 (HIF1) programme to be funded through additional funds granted by Homes England and agreed by Cabinet in July 2024.**
f) **approve a budget increase of £11.916m to the Clifton Hampden Bypass project, part of the Housing Infrastructure 1 (HIF1) programme to be funded through additional funds granted by Homes England and agreed by Cabinet in July 2024.**

22/25 DELEGATED POWERS REPORT FOR OCTOBER TO DECEMBER 2024

(Agenda Item. 18)

Under the Scheme of Delegation in the Council's Constitution (Part 7.2, paragraph 6.3 (c)(i)), the Chief Executive was authorised to undertake an executive function on behalf of the Cabinet. Cabinet received a quarterly report on the use of this delegated power in relation to such executive decisions; that is, decisions that might otherwise have been taken by Cabinet.

Cabinet had before it a report referring to executive decisions taken during the period October to December 2024 inclusive.

Councillor Liz Leffman, Leader of the Council, presented the report.

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

RESOLVED to note the executive decisions taken under delegated powers, set out in paragraph 4 of the report.

23/25 FORWARD PLAN AND FUTURE BUSINESS

(Agenda Item. 19)

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

RESOLVED to note the items currently identified for forthcoming meetings.

…….in the Chair

Date of signing ……..

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CABINET

MINUTES of the meeting held on Tuesday, 28 January 2025 commencing at 10.00 am and finishing at 11.25 am

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 John Howson Councillor Dan Levy Councillor Dr Nathan Ley Councillor Judy Roberts
Other Members in Attendance:	Councillor David Bartholomew

Officers:

Whole of meeting	Martin Reeves (Chief Executive) Lorna Baxter (Executive Director of Resources & Section 151 Officer), Stephen Chandler (Executive Director of People, Transformation and Performance), Anita Bradley (Director of Law & Governance and Monitoring Officer), 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.

24/25 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

(Agenda Item. 1)

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Kate Gregory.

25/25 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

(Agenda Item. 2)

There were none.

26/25 PETITIONS AND PUBLIC ADDRESS

(Agenda Item. 3)

5 Budget and Business Planning 2025/26 – 2027/28

Debbie Davies (Oxfordshire Road Action Alliance)
Robert Parker (Shirburn Parish Meeting)

27/25 REPORT FROM SCRUTINY COMMITTEE ON THE BUDGET AND BUSINESS PLANNING REPORT

(Agenda Item. 4)

Councillor Bob Johnston, Deputy Chair of the Performance and Corporate Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee presented the report and recommendations on the Budget and Business Planning Report.

Councillor Johnston summarised the Scrutiny Committee's recommendations on school meals, flood prevention, DIY waste charges, and active travel.

The Chair thanked the Scrutiny Committee for their work and the time they had put into scrutinising the budget proposals. The Cabinet's response to the recommendations had been published in Annex 2 to the agenda.

Councillor John Howson, Cabinet Member for Children, Education and Young People's Services referred to the government's decision to put a ceiling on school uniform prices but not on school meal prices. He agreed with the need for incremental increases in school meal prices to avoid large hikes.

Councillor Andrew Gant, Cabinet Member for Transport Management referred to the Council's commitment to prioritise active travel and the challenges posed by funding constraints and specific funding sources with parameters and deadlines.

RESOLVED to note:-

a) **the report and recommendations from the Performance Overview and Scrutiny Committee**
b) **the Cabinet's response published in Addenda 2 to the agenda**

28/25 BUDGET AND BUSINESS PLANNING 2025/26 - 2027/28

(Agenda Item. 5)

Cabinet had before it a report setting out the Cabinet's revenue budget for 2025/26, medium term financial strategy to 2027/28, capital programme to 2034/35 plus supporting policies, strategies and information.

The report set out the budget engagement and consultation 2025/26 findings, the Cabinet's proposed Revenue Budget Strategy and the Capital & Investment Strategy. Alongside this, the report also set out the Review of Charges for 2025/26.

The revenue budget proposals took into consideration the latest information on the council's financial position outlined in this report. In finalising the proposals, the Cabinet had taken into consideration feedback from the public engagement and consultation on the revenue budget proposals.

Councillor Dan Levy, Cabinet Member for Finance, presented the report. which was the culmination of the budget and business planning process for the coming financial years. He explained the background to the revenue budget for 2025/26 including service area budgets, proposed changes to Council tax, and details on reserves and balances. The capital investment strategy outlined the Council's approach to capital investment over the next 10 years, including the Treasury management strategy for 2024/25.

There were specific funding allocations included for flood prevention, active travel, and rail infrastructure.

Councillor Levy highlighted the challenges of balancing the budget, and the need for sustainable long-term financial planning.

During discussion, a number of Cabinet members referred to specific elements of the budget within their portfolios.

In response to the concerns expressed by the speakers. Councillor Gant emphasised the importance of the Watlington Relief Road for the town's development, noting that it was a crucial part of the neighbourhood plan and the local plan. He highlighted that the relief road would help remove traffic from the town centre, improving active travel, air quality, and reducing accidents on narrow streets.

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

RESOLVED:-

In relation to the Revenue Budget and Medium Term Financial Strategy (Section 4); to:

a) approve the Review of Charges for 2025/26 and in relation to the Registration Service, charges for 2026/27 (Annex A);
b) approve the changes to High Needs Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) funding and the deficit for 2025/26 (paragraph 152 and Table 15);
c) receive any recommendations and observations from Performance and Corporate Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee;
d) approve the Financial Strategy for 2025/26 (Section 4.5);
e) approve the Earmarked Reserves and General Balances Policy Statement 2025/26 (Section 4.6); and the creation of a new reserve to hold grant funding related to Extended Producer Responsibilities;

f) approve the use of retained business rates from EZ1 Science Vale Growth Accelerator and EZ2 Didcot Growth Accelerator as set out in paragraph 159 and Annex B;

g) note that following any funding changes as a result of the final Local Government Finance Settlement and information from the district and city councils in relation to business rates or council tax will be managed as set out in Paragraph 9; and

h) delegate to the Executive Director of Resources and Section 151 Officer, in consultation with the Leader of the Council and the Cabinet Member for Finance, the authority to make any appropriate changes to the proposed budget not covered by Paragraph 9.

to RECOMMEND Council to:-

i) approve a Medium Term Financial Strategy for 2025/26 to 2027/28 as set out in Section 4.1 (which incorporates changes to the existing Medium Term Financial Strategy as set out in Section 4.2);

j) agree the council tax and precept calculations for 2025/26 set out in Section 4.3 and in particular:

(i) a precept of £533,328,633;

(ii) a council tax for band D equivalent properties of £1,911.40.

k) approve a revenue budget for 2025/26 as set out in Section 4.4

In relation to the Capital and Investment Strategy and Capital Programme (Section 5), to recommend Council to:

l) approve the Capital and Investment Strategy for 2025/26 - 2035/36 (Section 4.1) including;

(i) the Minimum Revenue Provision Methodology Statement (Section 5.1 Annex 1);

(ii) the Prudential Indicators (Section 5.1 Annex 2) and

m) approve the Treasury Management Strategy Statement and Annual Investment Strategy for 2025/26 (Section 5.2); and

(i) continue to delegate the authority to withdraw or advance additional funds to/from external fund managers to the Executive Director of Resources and Section 151 Officer;

(ii) approve that any further changes required to the 2025/26 Treasury Management Strategy be delegated to the Executive Director of Resources and Section 151 Officer in

consultation with the Leader of the Council and the Cabinet Member for Finance;

(iii) approve the Treasury Management Prudential Indicators; and

(iv) approve the Specified Investment and Non - Specified Investment instruments as set out in Section 5.2.

n) approve the new capital proposals for inclusion in the Capital Programme and proposed pipeline schemes (Section 5.3)

o) approve the capital programme (Section 5.4).

…….in the Chair

Date of signing ……..

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Divisions Affected – All

CABINET

25 February 2025

Infrastructure Funding Statement and s.106 Funding Report
Report of Place Overview & Scrutiny Committee

RECOMMENDATION

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

   a) Note the recommendations contained in the body of this report and to consider and determine its response to the Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee, and

   b) Agree that, once Cabinet has responded, relevant officers will continue to provide each meeting of the Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee with a brief written update on progress made against actions committed to in response to the recommendations for 12 months, 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 Infrastructure Funding Statement (IFS) and s.106 Review. This provided the statutory statement on Infrastructure Funding which reported on developer contributions secured, spent or received during the financial year 2023-2024. It also included an update on the s.106 review project which had been commissioned after the Committee considered the 2022/2023 IFS in December 2023 and raised significant concerns about the amount of money held by the Council but not yet spent on infrastructure delivery. This project was intended to ensure that the moneys were spent on the infrastructure for which they were provided at pace and to identify and resolve those issues which hindered that.

4. The Committee would like to thank Cllr Judy Roberts, Cabinet Member for Infrastructure and Development Strategy, Robin Rogers, Director of Economy and Place, and Nicholas Perrins, Head of Strategic Planning, for attending to present the report and to answer the Committee's questions. The Committee was grateful, too, to Cllr Liz Leffman, the Leader of the Council, and Cllr Dr Pete Sudbury, Deputy Leader of the Council with Responsibility for Climate Change, Environment, and Future Generations, for also attending to answer questions.

SUMMARY

5. The Chair began by reminding colleagues that, whilst the Infrastructure Funding Statement was retrospective, the Committee had made a number of recommendations previously regarding the s.106 process and that it was likely there would be a number of questions on that review project.

6. The Cabinet Member for Infrastructure Delivery introduced the report and set out that the Council continued to be very effective at collecting developer contributions. The Council had collected £61.4m in developer contributions in 2023/24 and there was a forecast spend of c.£60m in 2024/25, mainly on large projects such as the A420 improvements. There was a recognition that complexities of s.106 contributions and using them in compliance with the initial agreements had been a concern across councils of all administrations over many years.

7. The Head of Strategic Planning outlined an update of work undertaken to analyse and assess the challenges that needed to be overcome. The Head of Strategic Planning recognised the need for urgency and he and the Director of Economy and Place emphasised the Council's commitment to identifying and achieving the changes swiftly. There had been extensive diagnostic work and the Committee heard detail of plans for implementation.

8. The Committee had an extended discussion raising a number of points, including whether there were ICT systems in place that were adequate to the Council's needs, flexibility in s.106 agreements, risk of clawback, governance and accountability, various toolkits that the Council could use, and delays in delivery of the project. Whilst the Committee was pleased that work was being undertaken, members remained frustrated by the speed with which the results of that work were coming to fruition. The Committee made a series of recommendations which the Committee considered would be of use as well as one observation.

9. The observation is that the Committee questions if the integration of the Council's IT systems are adequate to its needs for this operation. The Committee makes eight recommendations: one is about ensuring the data dashboard is available speedily; another about rating risk; two concern deadlines, transparency, and accountability; three are about using readily

available resources to improve planning and delivery and the last is about working with partners to ensure holistic planning.

OBSERVATION

10. One of the fundamental challenges for the Council is that the audit undertaken of processes as part of the s.106 review had identified significant deficiencies in how various ICT systems are configured. There are three main systems to manage s.106 funds and projects. These are MasterGov (for planning obligations), PPM (for project management), and SAP (for finance). The Committee was told that these were in and of themselves efficient but that the interplay between them was cumbersome. There is a widespread recognition that these systems need to be integrated – for a failure to integrate impacts on both data accuracy and on data speed – but the Committee was keen to explore how the Council would deliver the integration and transformation and believed that it would be useful to consider using external IT architects, if necessary, to explore how this should be done.

11. A number of concerns were raised about the adequacy of the Council's IT systems for this operation and the impact their inadequacy had on service delivery. The Committee considered that there was a pressing need for a comprehensive IT strategy to resolve widespread issues and to improve the likelihood of the s.106 project being successfully completed in a timely fashion.

Observation: That the integrations of the IT systems used for s.106 delivery of the Council are inadequate to the Council's needs.

RECOMMENDATIONS

12. A fundamental concern identified by the Committee was that there appeared to be a lack of clarity regarding what needed to be done, by whom, and by when. The audit undertaken by the service had highlighted that there were deficiencies in IT systems which meant the Council was reliant on time-consuming manual interventions which were susceptible to errors.

13. The topic of front funding projects, using Council money to start projects and then recovering the funds from s.106 contributions, was explored. The Committee was advised that the main concern with such an approach was the need for high levels of coordination and integration between services and systems to ensure proper initiation of projects and, also, the accurate tracking of funds.

14. The Committee was advised that phase 2 of the s.106 project review had begun and that it would focus on improving systems, process, and reporting so as to put in place a significantly improved s.106 delivery system.

15. In order to achieve that, though, the Committee considers that there needs to be much greater clarity over the granular response that is needed to achieve this ambition. The Committee recognises that the success of the project will be seen in efficient and effective collection and spending of money on infrastructure projects for the benefit of residents and communities across the county. This will necessarily need multi-faceted and system-wide improvement but, in order to ensure that is achieved, the Committee considers that an outline of key deliverables within the project should be published.

16. The outline of key deliverables the Council is seeking to implement should be accompanied by realistic deadlines for each of them to be met. Some aspects will take longer than others and it would be unwise to set deadlines that are implausibly optimistic but, at the same time, those things that can be changed and improved easily and swiftly should have deadlines that reflect that.

Recommendation 1: That the Council should publish an outline of the milestones identified as requirements for the success of the project with associated deadlines.

17. Aligned to the above, the success of the project will require clarity over who is responsible for each aspect of it and who is ultimately responsible for overseeing it and for implementing it. The Committee noted that, whilst there had been explicit progress on the governance around Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL), the governance structure for s.106 funds was not well-defined, with an element of uncertainty over the oversight and management of the funds. Different services have responsibilities for different aspects of the process (with the planning obligations team managing the initial collection and recording of funds and delivery teams responsible for implementing projects). There was a recognition of the need for better integration and communication to ensure efficient use of funds.

18. Whilst recognising that different teams and elements in the Council manage different parts of the process, the Committee considers that the Cabinet should identify who is ultimately responsible for driving s.106 spend and how they will be held accountable. Key deliverables and deadlines would facilitate the creation of Key Performance Indicators which would easily and transparently demonstrate whether or not the improvement project is on track. These KPIs would be of use to the Council as a whole but also to members so that they have appropriate oversight.

Recommendation 2: That the Council should identify who is ultimately responsible for driving the success of the improvement project and by what measures they will be held accountable to ensure effective utilisation of funds.

19. The Local Government Association's Planning Advisory Service published a guidance handbook on improving the governance of developer contributions as well as a self-assessment toolkit[1]. These included a number of practical

[1] https://www.local.gov.uk/sites/default/files/documents/GG-DevContributions%20-%20Self%20Assessment%20v10.1-BLANK.xlsx

steps for improvement, along with resources to support councils. The toolkit assesses current governance processes by using the 'maturity model.' The introduction to the guidance handbook[2] sets out that:

20. *In order to help you understand your current situation, and where it can be improved we have used the concept of a 'maturity model'. A maturity model can help organisations assess the current effectiveness of a delivery model, and identify ways to improve performance through measures and feedback.*

21. *It uses a scale ranging from 'ad-hoc' through to' integration' to measure the effectiveness of the different elements of the 'system' described above. 'Ad-hoc' applies to where things are done in an inconsistent or un-structured way, whereas 'integrated' describes where things are done in a managed and controlled way, and consistently across teams or the council.*

22. *We understand that good practices and behaviours vary across different parts of this system, and whilst at an organisational level this system might be operating effectively, the component parts of this system may not be operating at the same level of effectiveness. This is why we suggest considering how different parts of the system are operating when considering how and where to improve, rather than the systems as a whole.*

23. *By considering where on this scale you currently are can provide a platform on which improvement can be planned and implemented. It is important to recognise your own circumstances when considering change - improvements and changes can be incremental, or focused in certain areas. The maturity model recognises this.*

24. *The self-assessment tool is focussed around an analysis of each of the five identified parts of the system [namely, Leadership and resources, Governance, Policy and evidence, Systems and processes, and Project Delivery] and by considering it as a whole it will help you to identify where you might be performing well and where there may be areas for improvement.*

25. The Committee considers that it would be of great benefit to the Council to undertake this self-assessment as part of this project and so recommends that it does so.

Recommendation 3: That the Council undertakes the Local Government Association's Planning Advisory Service self-assessment toolkit – 'Improving the governance of developer contributions in order to evaluate and improve current practices.'

26. The Committee recognises that the s.106 system is complex and that there are considerable inflexibilities in legal agreements but notes with approval that there was a determination to build in as much flexibility as possible within all new agreements. One issue highlighted in this meeting, as well as at previous meetings of the Committee, was that the needs of communities change and

[2] https://www.local.gov.uk/pas/topics/developer-contributions/improving-governance-developer-contributions-full-guidance

develop and what was envisaged as being useful or necessary at the planning stage of a development might no longer be considered relevant at – or during – the delivery stage. Building in as much flexibility as possible is, therefore, essential and the Committee continues to encourage the Council to do that.

27. Part of that flexibility is contingent on having holistic plans for infrastructure needs ahead of time. It inevitably remains the case that the granular detail of such needs might vary but working with district councils and other partners – including elected members – at the earliest stages to consider together what is likely to be necessary will be useful in planning and delivering appropriate infrastructure.

Recommendation 4: That the Council commits to working closely with district councils and other partners to ensure there are holistic plans in place for infrastructure needs.

28. The Committee discussed the ideas contained within the book *The Planning Fallacy* as well as optimism bias and associated attitudes which impact on project delivery. If organisations are overly optimistic in their attitudes towards planning, it is more likely that their optimism will be disappointed. In a literature review by the Behavioural Insights Team for the Department for Transport in 2017, it was noted that transport infrastructure projects "seem particularly susceptible to optimistic planning, with one metaanalysis concluding that 9 out of 10 projects have cost overruns. Based on a sample of 258 transport projects around the world, actual costs were on average 28 percent higher than estimated. Rail projects incurred the highest cost overruns, with an average cost-overrun of 44.7 percent. This was followed by fixed-linked projects which averaged a 33.8 percent cost-overrun, and roads with a 20.4 percent cost-overrun.[3]"

29. The Committee considers that it would be of value for officers, and indeed Cabinet members, to take steps to correct favourability biases in their planning – specifically regarding The Planning Fallacy. In order to do that, it would be helpful for them to consider and reflect on some of the writings available, with one easily accessible overview being the one cited above.

Recommendation 5: That the Council take steps to correct any favourability biases in project planning and delivery to ensure a pragmatic and realistic approach.

30. The Committee recognises that there are constraints and complexities around infrastructure planning, particularly when they involve many stakeholders and are long-term plans. It discussed backcasting and the futures toolkit used by the Civil Service and commended them to the Council. Backcasting is "a way of connecting a given future to the present and overcoming 'present bias' in the way that we plan. It is a tool for determining the steps that need to be

[3] https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5a821602ed915d74e3401a64/lit-review-exploration-of-behavioural-biases.pdf, p25

taken to deliver a preferred future."[4] It is an approach which should result in an achievable and realistic plan by ensuring one considers all steps rather than solely focusing on the end goal. Backcasting means that one achieves an action plan with a timeline back to the present which takes account of factors that could have arisen that are outside the planner's control.

Recommendation 6: That the Council uses the Government Office for Science's* The Futures Toolkit *in order to ensure its plans and policies are robust and realistic.

31. The Committee was disappointed that the data dashboard which it had been told in April 2024 that the Council was committed to launching by autumn 2024 was still not available. The Committee was underwhelmed by the explanation that the delay was the result of a licensing issue and sought to impress upon the Cabinet members and officers the need for that licensing issue to be resolved extremely quickly.

32. Members have been repeatedly assured that they will have live access to data so that they can monitor the progress of s.106 funds and projects in their divisions. The Committee considers the launch of that dashboard to be essential and calls on Cabinet to ensure that it is launched without further delay.

Recommendation 7: That the data dashboard is launched without further delay to ensure that members can monitor s.106 funds and projects.

33. The Committee remains concerned about the risk of unspent s.106 funding being returned to developers owing to project delays and system inefficiencies. The Committee noted that the report set out that only £12k had been returned during the last three financial years. It was unconvinced that this figure was entirely accurate, noting that it had previously been told that no money had been returned. It considered it important that, next time the Committee considers this topic, it should be provided with greater detail behind those figures. Regardless of the accuracy of that £12k, the Committee considered that the Council lay itself open to considerable risk of more being clawed back.

34. The Committee considers that there should be a greater acknowledgement of the risk of moneys being returned to developers and that a risk rating for existing moneys not being spent in time should be implemented. This would identify and address potential issues proactively so that they can be addressed.

Recommendation 8: That the Council should implement a risk rating for s.106 moneys being reclaimed if they are not spent in time so that issues can be addressed proactively.

[4] https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/66c4493f057d859c0e8fa778/futures-toolkit-edition-2.pdf, p91

FURTHER CONSIDERATION

35. The Committee agreed that it should receive a progress update on s.106 and the IT project at its February 2025 meeting and intends to consider a substantive item on it in April 2025.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

36. Under Part 6.2 (13) (a) of the Constitution Overview and 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.' This power is derived from the Local Government Act 2000 (LGA 2000).

37. Under Part 4.2 of the Constitution, the Cabinet Procedure Rules, s 2 (3) (iv) the Cabinet will consider any reports from Scrutiny Committees which reflects the requirements set out in the LGA 2000

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

February 2025

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: Infrastructure Funding Statement and s.106 Funding Review Report

Lead Cabinet Member(s): Cllr Judy Roberts, Cabinet member for Infrastructure and Development Strategy

Date response requested:[2] 25 February 2025

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 publish an outline of the milestones identified as requirements for the success of the project with associated deadlines.		

[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

2. That the Council should identify who is ultimately responsible for driving the success of the improvement project and by what measures they will be held accountable to ensure effective utilisation of funds.		
3. That the Council undertakes the Local Government Association's Planning Advisory Service self-assessment toolkit – 'Improving the governance of developer contributions in order to evaluate and improve current practices.'		
4. That the Council commits to working closely with district councils and other partners to ensure there are holistic plans in place for infrastructure needs.		
5. That the Council take steps to correct any favourability biases in project planning and delivery to ensure a pragmatic and realistic approach.		
6. That the Council uses the Government Office for Science's The Futures Toolkit in order to ensure its plans and policies are robust and realistic.		
7. That the data dashboard is launched without further delay to ensure that members can monitor s.106 funds and projects.		
8. That the Council should implement a risk rating for s.106 moneys being reclaimed if they are not spent in time		

so that issues can be addressed proactively.		

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Divisions Affected – All

CABINET
25 February 2025

City Centre Accommodation Strategy – Disposal of Old and New County Hall
Report of Place Overview & Scrutiny Committee

RECOMMENDATION

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

   a) Note the recommendations contained in the body of this report and to consider and determine its response to the Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee, and

   b) Agree that, once Cabinet has responded, relevant officers will continue to provide each meeting of the Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee with a brief written update on progress made against actions committed to in response to the recommendations for 12 months, 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. At its meeting on 05 February 2025, the Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee considered a report on the City Centre Accommodation Strategy – Disposal of Old and New County Hall.

4. The Committee would like to thank all those who attended to present the report and to answer the Committee's questions. Cllr Dan Levy, the Cabinet member for Finance, Lorna Baxter, Executive Director of Resources and s.151 Officer, and Vic Kurzeja, Director of Property and Assets, as, too, did Michael Smedley, Head of Estates and Charles Butters, Strategic Property Advisor.

They were accompanied by Charles Rowton-Lee, Head of Commercial Agency, as well as Jonothan Holmes, Investment Director and Development Funding Head, and Sophie Holder, Surveyor in the Commercial Agency team from Savills.

SUMMARY

5. Cllr Levy reminded the Committee that the Council had been reviewing the city centre accommodation held by the Council. The Council had been working to reduce the number of county council buildings to reduce expenditure and to reflect contemporary working practices. In addition, the carbon inefficiency of the current estate meant that significant expenditure would be needed were County Hall to be retained.

6. The Director of Property and Assets took the Committee through a powerpoint presentation providing an overview of the background to the decision being proposed. PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC) had undertaken a strategic review of the Council's city centre accommodation and, following its assessment of options with a recommended view, a report to Cabinet on 23 January 2024 recommended that option 2 be progressed. That option was to consolidate into Speedwell House and to dispose of New County Hall and to engage the market to inform a decision on Old County Hall.

7. Savills had been engaged by the Council to engage the market and to seek bids. Nineteen bids had been received with 16 of those being for both New and Old County Hall together whilst three were for either New County Hall or Old County Hall alone. The Committee was provided with the information in draft that was expected to be before Cabinet on 25 February 2025 when it will be recommended to, inter alia, "agree to the freehold disposal of New and Old County Hall, on the terms set out in exempt Annex 4."

8. The Committee was advised that both the disposal of County Hall and the transformation of Speedwell House provided the Council with the opportunity to use its assets, covenant and influence to be the 'place-shaper of choice' in Oxford city centre and to be at the heart of social regeneration. The capital receipt from the disposal of County House would be sufficient to fund the delivery of the refurbished Speedwell House complex and would also enable the wider regeneration and placemaking initiatives envisaged in and around Speedwell Street.

9. After the presentation, the Committee resolved to exclude the public for the duration of the meeting as the information provided in Annexes 2, 3, and 4 to the Cabinet report were deemed to contain exempt information and the public interest was weighted in favour of considering the information in private as the information related to a current commercial negotiation. This means that this report cannot set out all of the detail of the Committee's discussions but topics explored included which scrutiny committee should most appropriately have considered the proposal; the assessment of alternative options; potential socio-economic benefits; redevelopment strategies for Speedwell House; market engagement and bid processes; issues related to public access and

heritage conservation; planning considerations; the implications of local government reorganisation.

10. The Committee makes two recommendations to Cabinet. The first is about the importance of maximising and safeguarding public access to Old County Hall and the second is about ensuring that councillors are clear about how and when they can engage with the development of regeneration plans for the city centre.

RECOMMENDATIONS

11. The report to Cabinet notes, at paragraph 40, that the "[recommended] developer has satisfied concerns that the heritage value of Old County Hall will be preserved and enhanced for Oxford and Oxfordshire residents." The Committee noted that the Savills marketing brochure explained that the Council welcomed "proposals for exciting new uses for Old County Hall which respect and enhance its heritage." The Committee welcomed these assurances.

12. Regardless of the nature of the repurposed New and Old County Hall, the Committee is keen that the Council works with any approved developer to ensure easy access for the public into Old County Hall. Given that a public building on a relatively large site in the centre of Oxford is being disposed of, the Committee considers it important that as much of the repurposed site as possible is of use to the community.

Recommendation 1: That the Council should work to ensure that public access to New and Old County Hall is maintained insofar as is possible.

13. The title of the report referenced the City Centre Accommodation Strategy but the Committee was conscious that its focus was on the second part of the title, namely the disposal of New and Old County Hall. The Council's ambitions around regeneration, renewal, and restoration of the city centre were mentioned but not set out in detail. The Cabinet report set outs that New and Old County Hall "were presented as a regeneration opportunity in the context of Oxford West End and the city as a whole and aimed to capture the full gamut of redevelopment, refurbishment, and re-positioning potential."

14. The Committee considered that the Council should develop and present a strategy for the city centre which would set out the Council's place making ambitions. It should describe where, when, and what changes the Council foresees and how it seeks to achieve them. It would also include the Council's commitment to the maintenance of public access as referred to in the first recommendation. The Committee would expect this to have an integrated land use and transport lens and to be written taking the Central Oxford Movement and Place Framework into account.

15. The Committee recognises that the County Council does not have sole responsibility or power for place making and that no council will have such

even after local government reorganisation. It will be for the Council and its successor body to work with partners across the city and county to regenerate the city centre. Such a strategy would set out how this is envisaged to work.

Recommendation 2: That the Council should set out its strategy and action plan for the city centre's redevelopment and regeneration.

FURTHER CONSIDERATION

16. The Committee does not intend to consider the City Centre Accommodation Strategy again during this municipal year. If accepted, it would expect to consider the strategy recommended above once it is available.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

17. Under Part 6.2 (13) (a) of the Constitution Overview and 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.' This power is derived from the Local Government Act 2000 (LGA 2000).

18. Under Part 4.2 of the Constitution, the Cabinet Procedure Rules, s 2 (3) iv) the Cabinet will consider any reports from Scrutiny Committees which reflects the requirements set out in LGA 2000.

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

February 2025

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: City Centre Accommodation Strategy – Disposal of Old and New County Hall

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

Date response requested:[2] 25 February 2025

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 work to ensure that public access to New and Old County Hall is maintained insofar as is possible.		

[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

2. That the Council should set out its strategy and action plan for the city centre's redevelopment and regeneration.		

CABINET

25 February 2025

Badger Culling

Report by Director of Environment and Highways

RECOMMENDATION

1. **The Cabinet is RECOMMENDED to**

   a) Re-affirm the Council's opposition to badger culling

   b) Note that a specific policy about badger culling not being permitted on Council-owned land will be presented for adoption in due course

   c) Note that the Leader has written to DEFRA making clear the council's continued opposition to the badger cull and any extension in size and scope.

Executive Summary

2. A motion was passed at Council on 10 December 2024 as follows;

   (a) Re-affirm the Councils opposition to badger culling which has been shown to be an ineffective control measure for bovine Tuberculosis.

   (b) Asks the Cabinet to consider a specific policy that badger culling will not be permitted on Council-owned land.

   (c) Requests that the Leader writes to DEFRA making clear our continued opposition to the cull and any extension of it in size and scope

   The constitution requires that Cabinet respond to the motion.

3. Council passed the motion on 10 December 2024 which effectively reaffirms the opposition to badger culling.

4. A policy is in development and will be presented to Cabinet for agreement in the spring 2025.

5. The Leader has written to DEFRA stating the continued opposition of the Council to the UK Governments strategy of culling badgers.

Background

6. The current UK Government policy regarding badger culling has been in place since 2012. The policy is for badgers to be culled within a given area in order to reduce bovine Tuberculosis (bTB) in cattle. The aim is to remove 70-90% of badgers in each cull area and Oxfordshire is one of these cull areas.

7. In August 2024 the new UK Government released a statement saying that they plan to end badger culling with the introduction of a new strategy which will gather badger population data, undertake surveillance to provide up to date understanding of the disease in the badger and other wildlife populations and establish a system of vaccinating.

8. The Government have indicated an aim to eliminate culling by the end of this parliament (2029) and DEFRA have stated that existing cull processes will be honoured while new measures are rolled out and take effect.

9. In July 2018 the then leader of the council, Councillor Ian Hudspeth, wrote to the then Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs Michael Gove MP, opposing the UK governments proposal that the badger cull be extended to "areas of lower risk including Oxfordshire".

Oxfordshire badger population

10. The exact number of badgers in Oxfordshire is not currently known, however following analysis of records provided by the Thames Valley Environmental Records Centre (TVERC), a total of 362 badger records (records include badger setts, field signs and sightings) were available in 2023. This is a decrease from 2022 (Figure 1) and a general decrease over the past 5 years can be observed. It is important to note that ecological records are observations that have been recorded by individuals, therefore they can only provide an indication of the badger population size in Oxfordshire.

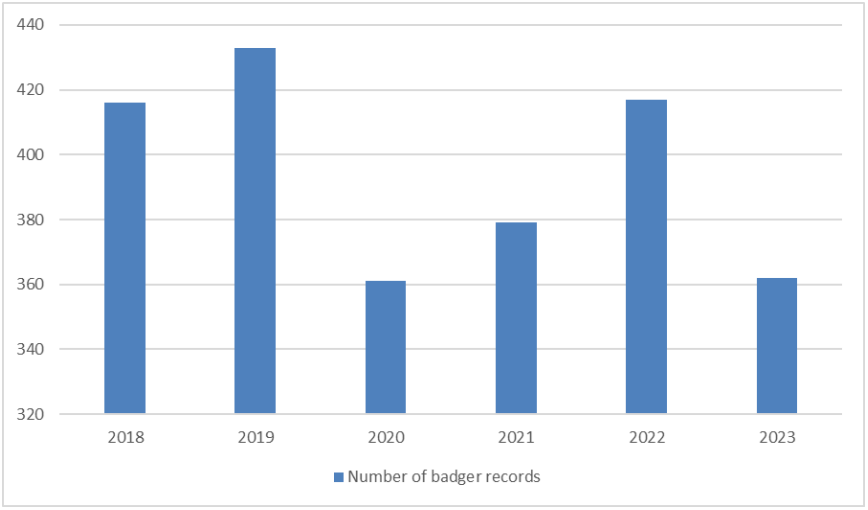

Figure 1. Number of badger records provided by TVERC between 2018 and 2023 in Oxfordshire

11. A study is currently underway to understand the population health of badgers in Britain (STATE OF THE BADGER | Badger Trust). The aim of this study is to produce a comprehensive report that answers some of the questions regarding badger population, threats, and recovery. The report will be used to assess density and distribution estimates, historical and current population changes, and badger crime statistics.

12. DEFRA reported that 33,627 badgers were culled in 2022, 1,371 of these were from within Oxfordshire which is more than 3 times the number of badger records held by TVERC for this year.

Council owned land

13. The council owns land around its operational portfolio which it has full control over and is highly unlikely to be targeted during a cull. Additionally, highways are council owned land as are some schools although officers do not consider it likely that these would be targeted during a cull.

14. The council also owns or leases an agricultural portfolio that is managed by the Estates team. There are over 1,100 acres which form a mix of arable, pasture, woodland and other areas such as allotments. Of the pastureland there is no dairy farming, but there are three tenants who keep beef cattle.

Development of the policy

15. The policy will be developed by the Landscape and Nature Recovery team in conjunction with the Estates team. It is not intended that there will be public consultation but there will be consideration during the policy development stage of how this should be communicated and managed with tenant farmers on council owned land, and clauses to be included in any future or existing tenancy agreements, leases and licences.

Corporate Policies and Priorities

16. The policy once developed will support the Council's strategic plan objective of taking action to protect and increase biodiversity, supporting nature recovery, in rural and urban environments.

17. Reducing badger culls increases biodiversity which is a strategic aim of the emerging Local Nature Recovery Strategy due for publication in summer 2025.

Financial Implications

18. There are no financial implications at this stage.

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

Legal Implications

19. Any opposition to badger culling on Council owned land will need to comply with the relevant legislation, including the Protection of Badgers Act 1992 and associated regulations.

20. Advice from the legal team will need to be obtained prior to making any amendments to, or granting, tenancy agreements, leases or licences on land that may be affected.

Comments checked by: Karen Jordan, Senior Solicitor and Team Leader (Environment Team, Legal), Karen.Jordan@oxfordshire.gov.uk.

Staff Implications

21. Development of the policy will be undertaken by existing employees.

Equality & Inclusion Implications

22. There are no equality and inclusion implications at this stage. An Equality Impact Assessment will be completed for the policy during drafting.

Sustainability Implications

23. The proposed policy will have a positive impact on biodiversity by preventing as far as is within the control of the Council, the culling of a protected species which is an integral part of England's ecosystem.

24. There are no climate action implications to this report.

Risk Management

25. There are no risks at this stage, and this will be further considered during the development of the policy.

Paul Fermer

Director of Environment & Highways.

Annex: Nil

Background papers: Nil

Contact Officer: Teresa Kirkham, Head of Countryside & Waste, Teresa.Kirkham@Oxfordshire.gov.uk

February 2025

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CABINET

25 February 2025

Councils For Fair Tax Declaration

Report by Executive Director Resources and S151 Officer

RECOMMENDATION

1. **Cabinet is RECOMMENDED to approve the Councils for Fair tax Declaration**

Executive Summary

2. At the meeting of the County Council on 5 November 2024, a motion was passed to request Cabinet to consider approving the "Council's for Fair Tax Declaration".
3. The "Councils for Fair Tax Declaration" was created by The Fair Tax Foundation Limited that operates as a not-for profit social enterprise. It was developed in collaboration with UK cities, towns and districts who believe they can and should stand up for responsible tax conduct. There are currently 63 Councils across the UK who have made the declaration.
4. The declaration would commit the council to pursuing exemplary tax conduct in their own affairs, require greater transparency from suppliers and support the call for more meaningful powers to tackle tax avoidance amongst suppliers when buying goods and services.
5. Under the same motion the Leader of the Council was requested to write to the Chancellor of the Exchequer supporting calls for urgent reform of UK procurement law to enable local authorities to better penalise poor tax conduct and reward good tax conduct through their procurement policies. A response was received from the Cabinet Office on 7 January 2025 confirming that The Procurement Act which is due to go live on 24 February 2025 will introduce new mandatory grounds for the exclusion of bidders who are found guilty of tax evasion or involvement in abusive tax avoidance schemes whether in the UK or overseas.
6. The council's existing policies and procedures underpin the values of good tax conduct, and this will be supported further by the Procurement Act. Approving the Councils for Fair Tax Declaration does not bring any additional responsibility or requirements on the council.

Councils for Fair Tax Declaration

7. A link to the full declaration can be found under “background papers” further in this report. In summary it commits the council to:

- Lead by example and demonstrate good practice in its tax conduct, right across its activities.
- Ensure IR35 is implemented robustly and contract workers pay a fair share of employment taxes.
- Not use offshore vehicles for the purchase of land and property, especially where this leads to reduced payments of stamp duty.
- Undertake due diligence to ensure that not-for-profit structures are not being used inappropriately by suppliers as an artificial device to reduce the payment of tax and business rates.
- Demand clarity on the ultimate beneficial ownership of suppliers, UK and overseas, and their consolidated profit & loss position, given lack of clarity could be strong indicators of poor financial probity and weak financial standing.
- Promote Fair Tax Mark certification especially for any business in which the Council has a significant stake and where corporation tax is due.
- Support Fair Tax Week events in the area, and celebrate the tax contribution made by responsible businesses that are proud to promote responsible tax conduct and pay their fair share of corporation tax.

8. Through the council’s Shared Services Partnership, the Integrated Business Centre (IBC) manages the council’s transactions in relation to PAYE and VAT, ensuring compliance with the latest legislation and guidance.
9. IR35 compliance is achieved through the process for contracting with agency staff. This is supported and administered through a contract with Hays, as the managed service provider for temporary staff, and includes a 6 monthly reassessment of the IR35 status.
10. The current tendering templates managed by the Procurement Team state that:

- If an organisation has been found in breach of obligations related to the payment of tax or social security contributions by a judicial or administrative decision, it may be excluded from the procurement process.
- If an organisation has been found in breach of tax obligations, it can avoid exclusion by Demonstrating that it has taken measures to rectify the situation. This includes paying the outstanding sum, including any accrued interest and/or fines
- An organisation may be excluded if it has been established that it is in breach of obligations related to the payment of tax or social security contributions.

All the relevant procurement templates are currently being reviewed and updated as guidance is released relating to the new Procurement Act.

Financial Implications

11. There are no financial implications to approving the Councils for Fair Tax Declaration

Comments checked by:

Ian Dyson, Director of Financial and Commercial,
ian.dyson@oxfordshire.gov.uk

Legal Implications

12. There are no additional legal implications in approving the Councils for Fair Tax Declaration and it is within the powers of the Council under the general power of competence in the Localism Act 2011 to do so. Comments checked by:

Anita Bradley, Director of Law and Governance and Monitoring Officer
anita.bradley@oxfordshire.gov.uk

Staff Implications

13. There are no staff implications

Equality & Inclusion Implications

14. None

Sustainability Implications

15. None

Risk Management

16. There are no material risks

Lorna Baxter, Executive Director Resources and S151 Officer

Annex: Nil

Background papers: Councils For fair Tax Declaration

Contact Officer: Ian Dyson, Director of Financial and Commercial Services,
ian.dyson@oxfordshire.gov.uk

CABINET

25 February 2025

Enhanced Pathways Business Case – Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Strategic Early Intervention Team

Report by Director of Children's Services

RECOMMENDATION

1 **The Cabinet is RECOMMENDED to**

a) Approve Oxfordshire County Council ("the Council") continuing to fund 20 existing Enhanced Pathways to enable the Council to meet the increasing numbers and complexities of children and young people with Special Educational Needs in mainstream schools and to realise probable savings through this spend to save model.

b) Approve the Council to fund a further 20 Enhanced Pathways to double the reach of the project to enable the Council to offer a more equitable offer across the county to meet the increasing numbers and complexities of children and young people with Special Educational Needs in mainstream schools and to realise probable savings through this spend to save model.

c) Approve the Council's budgetary commitment for a period of 3 years for each Enhanced Pathway (barring significant changes to central government funding of SEND during that period).

d) Commit to consider and review opportunities to upscale the Enhanced Pathways programme over the coming years in line with the impact evidence provided.

Executive Summary

2 This report is to obtain approval for the council to continue to fund and to expand the Enhanced Pathway project which forms part of the SEND Transformation Programme (Theme 1: Right Support, Right Time) and Oxfordshire's commitment to supporting early intervention. Special Education Needs & Disability (SEND) in Oxfordshire are subject to a Local Area SEND Priority Action Plan.

The SEND Strategic Early Intervention Team are working with schools to design an approach that reshapes the historic direction of how SEND/top-up funding is spent, to meet a more inclusive vision, across schools within the county.

The enhanced pathways initiative, developed within schools, provides a teacher led space to support some of the most vulnerable SEND students across local schools, offering a bespoke and specialised curriculum that meet their social, emotional, communication, sensory and academic needs whilst remaining at the local mainstream school. Thus, supporting children who may need specialist beyond the offer that the Council can typically expect in a mainstream school. The model is designed to be a cost avoided model where likely savings are made by children and young people not needing an escalation of support such as Independent Non-maintained Special School (INMSS) placements or alternative education provision (AEP).

To date the average cost to support an Enhanced Pathway in a setting per year is £55,923. The cohort size of an Enhanced Pathway is around 10 students. Therefore, the average cost of an Enhanced Pathway per child is £5,222 depending on the amount of top up of element 3 funding from their Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) (if applicable). If a student can be stabilised and maintained within mainstream despite having been agreed provision other than mainstream is needed to meet their needs, the cost avoided would range from £21,000 (maintained Special School) to £70,000 (average cost of an Independent Non-maintained Special School – INMSS placement), plus transport cost. If one pupil within a pathway avoids going onto an INMSS placement, then this offers significant value for money when this is scaled up for all pupils across the 20 current pathways.

Other costs avoided include Education Health Care Needs Assessment (EHCNA), full 32.5 hours funding requests, and tribunals and alternative education provision packages not being necessary.

Rapidly escalating need and demand on specialist services and requests for specialist placements highlight a need to further develop the mainstream offer and this forms part of the Council's sufficiency strategy. Data indicates that elevating needs will unlikely dissipate and schools and the local authority will continue to need to be increasingly innovative in meeting the needs of children and young people with SEND.

An Enhanced pathway offers a hybrid model between mainstream and resourced or specialist provision. Thus, Enhanced Pathways will allow the council to increase its capacity and therefore contribute to the continuum of provision going forward thus enriching the sufficiency strategy. The aim is to ensure that children and young people's needs are met at the earliest opportunity by doing things differently so that children and young people can thrive in their local communities.

Over time the Council should see reduced parental requests for 'provision other than mainstream' as parents will see that their children's needs are met in Enhanced Pathways from the outset.

The proposal is that the council would commit to this financial and ideological proposal for meeting the needs of children with SEND in their local mainstream school.

Background and Local Context

1. This report is to obtain approval for the council to continue to fund and to expand the Enhanced Pathway project which forms part of the SEND Transformation Programme (Theme 1: Right Support, Right Time) and Oxfordshire's commitment to supporting early intervention in order to meet the increasing numbers and complexities of children and young people with Special Educational Needs in mainstream schools. The model is designed to be a cost avoided model where likely savings are made by children and young people not needing an escalation of support such as Independent Non-maintained Special School (INMSS) placements or alternative education provision (AEP). The aim is to ensure that children and young people's needs are met at the earliest opportunity by doing things differently so that children and young people can thrive in their local communities.

2. Special Education Needs & Disability (SEND) in Oxfordshire are subject to a Local Area SEND Priority Action Plan.
This project is managed under the governance of the Local Area Partnership SEND Improvement & Assurance Board.

3. Increasing SEND needs, in both numbers and complexity, in the County's children and young people is well recognised. Specialist placements across the county are at capacity and establishing more provision is a lengthy process. The Enhanced Pathways allow children and young people's needs to be met at the right time. The Enhanced Pathway programme can be established more quickly than other sufficiency strategies underway and if agreed can be operational for the following academic year, stabilising the placement and meeting need rapidly.

4. Over the last five years, the number of EHCPs issued per year in Oxfordshire has trebled, from 232 (2019) to 706 (2024) (+204%). The percentage of pupils with EHCPs in mainstream schools has shown an increase which corresponds to the decline in the number of pupils with EHCPs in special school and INMSS placements. National figures from the latest census show that 54% of pupils with EHCPs are now educated in mainstream schools, a number that has increased year on year.

5. The Code of Practice January 2015 Section 9.49 states that the local authorities should consider reasonable steps that can be taken for mainstream schools and

mainstream post-16 institutions generally to provide for children and young people with SEN and disabled children and young people.

6. An Enhanced pathway offers a hybrid model between mainstream and resourced or specialist provision, whilst enabling the students to remain in their local community. Thus, Enhanced Pathways could form part of the Council's continuum of provision going forward.

7. The project was originally established in 2020/21 as a 3-year seed funded model but due to national funding constraints for schools, it became clear that the seed funded to self-funded model was not achievable for them. For other schools this model was a deterrent to them applying for local authority enhanced pathway funding as they knew they couldn't sustain its existence beyond 3 years based on their budget forecasts.

8. By extending the reach and duration of local authority funded enhanced pathways the Council will be able to incorporate more schools and therefore more children and young people into the programme, increasing the equitability of the offer across the county and enabling the Council to quality assure the delivery.

9. The Delivering Better Value (DBV) Programme diagnostic which took place in Autumn 2022 identified that over the next 5 years, the deficit position will increase to £167.2m. This is primarily due to an increase in spend in the following provision areas:
   - Independent Non-Maintained Special Schools (INMSS), due to moves from mainstream settings,
   - Mainstream, due to an increase in Children & Young People (CYP) with an EHCP

10. The diagnostic identified that the drivers for the increase in spend as the following areas:
   - Lack of confidence in the mainstream system from parents, especially at points of transition
   - Variation in the mainstream offer

   Case reviews with practitioners and professionals suggested that 75% of CYP in Oxfordshire could have had a more ideal outcome, with significant opportunities to support CYP in mainstream settings more often.

   This evidence confirmed the need to continue with initiatives that could:

   - improve outcomes for children in SEND,
   - increase parental confidence,
   - provide the opportunity for children with SEND to remain in mainstream, setting,
   - close the variation in the mainstream offers.

   The Enhanced Pathways initiative has been a response to these needs

11. To date the average cost to support an Enhanced Pathway in a setting per year is £55,923. The cohort size of an Enhanced Pathway is around 10 students. Therefore, the average cost of an Enhanced Pathway per child is £5,222 depending on the amount of top up of element 3 funding from their Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) (if applicable). If a student can be stabilised and maintained within mainstream despite having been agreed provision other than mainstream is needed to meet their needs, the cost avoided would range from £21,000 (maintained Special School) to £70,000 (average cost of an Independent Non-maintained Special School – INMSS placement), plus transport cost. If one pupil within a pathway avoids going onto an INMSS placement, then this offers significant value for money when this is scaled up for all pupils across the 20 current pathways.

12. In Oxfordshire, from 22/23 to 23/24 there was a 12.7% increase in the proportion of school arranged alternative education provision for pupils with EHCPs (mirrored nationally). Creating Enhanced Pathways in schools is a more cost-effective way of funding provision for a group of pupils compared to individual alternative education provision packages which will be more costly. On average the cost of alternative education provision per child, per year is £12,354.55. This model also enables the pupil to remain within and part of the school community, developing a sense of belonging and success that alternative education provision doesn't afford.

13. In academic year 2024 - 25 £1,194,718 has been spent on 20 Enhanced Pathways benefiting 260 children and young people, this would be compared to the same value potentially benefiting only 17 children placed at INMSS at an average cost of £70,000 or 96 pupils accessing alternative education provision packages at an average cost of £12,354.55.

14. Other costs avoided include Education Health Care Needs Assessment (EHCNA), full 32.5 hours of EHCP funding requests, tribunals and alternative education provision packages not being necessary. It is also anticipated that the Enhanced Pathways will also produce soft savings, such as time spent dealing with complaints by senior leaders and councillors, as well as generating a reduction in legal costs arising from tribunals.

15. Communications from mainstream schools with Enhanced Pathways indicate that if Enhanced Pathways cease it will significantly increase the risk of:
    a. Schools saying that they can no longer meet the needs of the students in their Enhanced Pathway
    b. Parents requesting provision other than mainstream be explored
    c. Parents pursuing tribunal if panel do not agree that provision other than mainstream be explored
    d. School submitting increased requests for top up funding to fund alternative education provision offsite for the students who were in the Enhanced Pathways

16. The SEND Strategic Early Intervention Team is approached regularly by schools wanting to investigate and discuss the possibility of setting up an

Enhanced Pathway in their setting and currently has a list of 21 interested schools. Therefore, the programme will be easily scalable if funding agreement is secured.

17. The funding per school will be calculated by using M6 teacher pay grade (25-26) £61,870 and TA rate of £24,818 (25-26), both including oncosts, **£86,688 minus any element 3 top up funding** pupils in the cohort are already in receipt of from their EHCPs.

18. Equity will be ensured by:
    a. An application process that is open to all Oxfordshire mainstream schools
    b. A clear threshold and criteria each application has to reach to be considered
    c. Consideration of both local needs and geographical distribution
    d. Establishing a board of professionals to decide each case based on published criteria which will include the quality of provision proposed and the likely forecasted savings
    e. Existing pathways need to reapply and undergo the same process
    f. Equality Climate Impact Assessment has been completed

Priorities

The creation, continuation and expansion of Enhanced Pathways, incorporates key priorities set out in the Council's Strategic Plan, as below:

Priorities of the Strategic Plan 2023-2025.

- Priority 2 – Tackle inequalities in Oxfordshire.
- Priority 3 – Prioritise the health and wellbeing of residents.
- Priority 7 – Create opportunities for children and young people to reach their full potential.

Priorities from the Oxfordshire SEND Local Area Partnership Priority Action Plan

- Priority area 5b – there is clear alignment between strategic thinking and operational practice that supports the partnership's ability to support transformation and make sustainable change.
- Priority area 5c – early intervention support in place to provide support to children young people and families before an EHC Plan has been produced.

The KPIs for the project are:

- Outcomes for children and young people are met
- Increased parental confidence in mainstream offer
- Child or young person's placement at school stabilises
- Child or young person's enjoyment of school increases
- Improved attendance
- The level of funding for the child or young person is stabilised

- Reduction in school requests seeking high needs funding through EHCNA and top up funding
- For the CYP without an EHCP did the school escalate to a request for an EHCNA
- For the CYP without the highest level of funding for their EHCP did the school request additional funding
- For the CYP with an EHCP did the school escalate to a request for change of placement
- For CYP where panel have agreed to "explore something other than mainstream", has the parent/carer and school pursued this?

Financial Implications

The financial implications section should be completed by a member of the finance service

19 The Enhanced Pathway project is fully funded from the Dedicated School Grant allocation, from the High Needs block.

20 The project promotes early intervention in the mainstream school sector, providing opportunities for children and young people with Special Educational Needs to reach their potential. It is evidenced in the sector that early intervention, identifying and providing effective early support enables the mainstream sector to continue to meet the needs of pupils for as long as possible. Thus, preventing increased levels of support that may be needed by a child or young person later in their education.

21 The model is designed to be a cost avoided model where likely savings are made by children and young people not needing an escalation of support such as Independent Non-maintained Special School (INMSS) placements or alternative education provision (AEP).

22 The Enhanced Pathway project funds schools on an academic year basis for the schools to commit to recruitment to align to the academic year. The cost of the pathways in place for the 2024/25 academic year are copied below (found in Annex A). The financial impact for the current year 2024/25, as well as the proposed financial year impact for 2025/26 is as follows: -

Cost per Year		Academic Year 2023-24	Academic Year 2024-25	Academic Year 2025-26		Financial Year Impact
Model 1 Enhanced Pathways	Annex A Table 1	£ 481,842	£ 874,433	£ 1,748,866		
Model 2 Enhanced Pathways	Annex A Table 2	£ 243,764	£ 245,330	£ 320,286		
Total Academic Year Cost		**£ 725,606**	**£ 1,119,763**	**£ 2,069,152**		
Termly Cost		£ 241,869	£ 373,254	£ 689,717		
Financial Year 2024/25 Cost		£ 241,869	£ 746,509			£ 988,377
Financial Year 2025/26 Cost			£ 373,254	£ 1,379,435		£ 1,752,689
Financial Year 2026/27 Cost - Part year				£ 689,717		£ 689,717
Academic Year Saving						
Model 1 Enhanced Pathways	Annex A Table 1	-£ 703,645	-£ 915,412	-£ 1,830,824		
Model 2 Enhanced Pathways	Annex A Table 2	-£ 259,814	-£ 589,283	-£ 584,741		
Total Academic Year Saving		**-£ 963,459**	**-£ 1,504,695**	**-£ 2,415,565**		
Termly Saving		-£ 321,153	-£ 501,565	-£ 805,188		
Financial Year 2024/25 Saving		-£ 321,153	-£ 1,003,130			-£ 1,324,283
Financial Year 2025/26 Saving			-£ 501,565	-£ 1,610,377		-£ 2,111,942
Financial Year 2026/27 Saving - Part year				-£ 805,188		-£ 805,188
Financial Year 2024/25 Net Saving		-£ 79,285	-£ 256,621	£ -		-£ 335,906
Financial Year 2025/26 Net Saving		£ -	-£ 128,311	-£ 230,942		-£ 359,253
Financial Year 2026/27 Net Saving - Part year		£ -	£ -	-£ 115,471		-£ 115,471

23 The Enhanced Pathways budget for 2025/26 is already set at £796k for 2025/26 financial year, with savings of £1,000k. This Enhanced Pathways proposal will increase the 2025/26 financial year commitments from the High Needs DSG block by £583k and is forecast to avoid or delay a further £610k costs, which will have a net additional saving of £27k.

24 The current and proposed Enhanced Pathways are mitigations monitored within the Deficit Management Plan for the Dedicated Schools Grant that the council is required to submit to the Department for Education each term.

25 The Council has evidence that approximately 5% of students that have been previously approved for an educational setting other than mainstream, remain in the mainstream setting due to the current Enhanced Pathway projects (see Annex C). It is expected that there is a further 5% that, had they not had access to an Enhanced Pathway, would also have been approved and gone to an education setting other than mainstream, such as alternative education provision or INMSS place.

26 The forecast savings are based on a prudent assumption that 10% more pupils accessing an Enhanced Pathway, remain in the mainstream setting than would have had they not accessed the Enhanced Pathway, thus avoiding more costly places. This may be overly prudent, and data to prove that exhaustively is not

yet available but longitudinal tracking of the cohorts continues to be collected by the service as evidence to any further future phases of this project.

27 Each pathway is required to submit data and monitoring information to the Council to ensure that the provision is delivering the objectives as intended, including the mitigations and savings as laid out above.

Comments checked by:

Thomas James, Head of Financial Services
thomas.james@oxfordshire.gov.uk

Legal Implications

28 The powers and duties of the Council in respect of children and young people with Special Education Needs & Disability (SEND) are set out in Part 3 of the Children and Families Act 2014 and associated regulations, The Special Educational Needs and Disability Regulations 2014 and The Special Educational Needs (Personal Budgets) Regulations 2014. The Council has the powers to take the actions set out in this report and should have regard to the statutory guidance.

29 The proposal is twofold. Firstly, to create a funding pot for the SEND support set out in the proposal, and secondly to distribute that funding via grant funding agreements into schools within Oxfordshire where a need has been identified. The Council is not purchasing a service here and is using grant agreements for the individual schools on a case by case basis to fund SEND support where there are needs. In that instance there is not a procurement aspect to this proposal and there does not need to be a consideration of either the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 or the Procurement Act 2023 as they do not apply. Similarly, the Contract Procedure Rules of the Council would not prevent this proposal because it will be operated as a grant funding opportunity on a case by case basis where the need arises. As such, the only considerations from a legal perspective are that a key decision has been obtained for the spend (anticipated circa £2m), and that legal are involved in supporting the subsequent individual grant funding agreements with the relevant schools.

Comments checked by:

Gareth Hale, Senior Solicitor and Team Leader (Contracts and Conveyancing), Gareth.Hale@Oxfordshire.gov.uk (Legal)

Staff Implications

30 There are no new or additional implications and staff resource is already accounted for in the budget. If the Enhanced Pathways continue to be rolled out this would need to be reviewed.

Equality & Inclusion Implications

Positive Impacts

31 Children with SEND will be able to access the right support at the right time as there will be an increase in provision within mainstream schools to meet the needs of children and young people with more complex special educational needs.

32 The proposal does not discriminate disadvantaged, disabled children and young people in Oxfordshire.

33 The option to apply for an Enhanced Pathway will be open to all of Oxfordshire's mainstream schools and the 40 most eligible cases will be progressed.

34 Equality and Climate Impact Assessment (ECIA) completed September 2022.

Sustainability Implications

35 If children and young people are enabled to attend their local mainstream school, then both transportation costs and the impact on the local climate are negated

Risk Management

	Risk	Impact 0-5	Likelihood	Mitigation
1	Budget	5	medium	Budget implications included
2.	Quality of the provision provided by the school falls below expected standards	5	low	Termly quality assurance meetings and data collection points in place. Annual quality assurance visits
3	No or limited interest from schools to set up and run enhanced pathways	5	low	All 20 enhanced pathways have expressed a desire to continue with 21 new schools expressing interest
4	Some existing pathways are unable to continue with the new funding arrangements due to capped staffing costs.	5	medium	Equity across all enhanced pathways is necessary to ensure the validity of programme
5.	Changes in central government funding	5	low	Clause included in new service level agreement to allow for any change in funding or ring-fenced use of funding

Lisa Lyons
Director of Children's Services

Annex:
A Enhanced Pathways Financial Figures – Academic Year Basis
B Enhanced Pathway pupil case studies

C Enhanced Pathways: analysis of cohort destinations to date
D Parental Confidence case study

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January 2025

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Annex A
Enhanced Pathways Financial Figures – academic year basis
260 CYP supported in total

Table 1: Model 1 Enhanced Pathways

School	Funding for 2024-25	Savings for 1 year from formula
1	£54,966.90	£34,857.14
2	£60,707.35	£86,666.67
3	£67,229.47	£61,454.55
4	£48,610.92	£80,428.57
5	£53,021.60	£48,444.44
6	£51,179.60	£34,857.14
7	£77,115.00	£92,875.00
8	£77,115.00	£117,500.00
9	£38,266.80	£27,666.67
10	£52,792.65	£1,333.33
11	£50,821.45	£48,444.44
12	£33,224.40	£41,750.00
13	£41,515.80	£92,875.00
14	£44,298.45	£34,875.14
15	£44,073.00	£34,857.14
16	£46,270.15	£34,857.14
17	£33,224.40	£41,750.00
	£874,432.94	**£915,492.37**
		£41,059.43

*Savings will vary per academic year depending on cohort in pathway and the amount of element 3 that is deducted.

Table 2: Model 2 Enhanced Pathways

School	Committed funds for 2025-26	Savings for 1 year from formula*
18	£95,948	£394,546.24
19	£121,446	£75,339.47
20	£102,892	£114,855.40
Total	**£320,286.00**	**£584,741.11**
		£264,455.11

*based on cohort size from 2024-25 as allocation for rising year 6s for 25 26 not yet known

- Estimated cost for 2025 –26 = **£874,432.94** (as £320,286.00 for model 2 secondary school pathways is already committed in the budget)

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Annex B
Enhanced Pathway pupil case studies

Enhanced Pathway pupil A case study School 15 – realised savings

Child A joined us in Year 3 in September 2022. During this year they remained in a mainstream class of 30 children and despite our best efforts to meet their needs, there were **multiple daily incidents of dysregulation** resulting in Team Teach holds being used to keep staff, pupils and Child A safe. The periods of dysregulation were so extreme that during one incident, they broke a TAs finger. From September 2023, we were able to place Child A within our Enhanced Pathway. **They have gone from being non-verbal to communicating in short sentences with staff and peers**. They are beginning to mark make and **periods of dysregulation have reduced to one or two per week and even then, Team Teach holds are rarely used**. Although it has been agreed by OCC that a specialist setting is needed, **parents are happy** with the progress Child A has made **and wish for them to remain with us until secondary school.**

- 3 years of specialist provision funding saved as parents want the pupil to remain in mainstream for primary.
- Realised savings:
    - School 15 Enhanced Pathway cost per child: £4897 per year x 3 = £14,691 vs
    - INMSS place per child £70,000 (average) x 3 = £210,000 OR
    - Maintained specialist place per child £21,000 x 3 = £63,000

Enhanced Pathway case study School 10 – realised savings

- Academic year 2023-24 the Local Authority was paying £104,324.90 in additional funding to the school for 3 pupils. The funding was top up funding for hours on the EHCPs and funding to cover bespoke alternative provision.
    - Average cost per pupil - £34,775.
- Academic year 2024 –25 the Local Authority is paying £78,218.55 to fund an Enhanced Pathway and top up funding for hours on the EHCPs.
    - Average cost per pupil - £26,072.83
- Savings £26,106.35

Enhanced Pathways case study School 9 and Enhanced Pathways pupil B case study School 15 – enabling progress and continuing placements in mainstream school

The Enhanced Pathway class has:

- **Enabled six of the eight pupils to remain in a mainstream educational setting** as they would not be able to access a mainstream classroom due to their level of learning need and/or their social and emotional needs.
- Enabled pupils to **make progress towards their outcomes.**

- Meant, most importantly, pupils appear **fulfilled and happy** in school and are **engaging well in their learning**.
- Provided a structure and routine of the class they can thrive in
- Provided a **curriculum which meets their needs and interests**.
- I have noted how quickly they have settled into the school term and are able to engage and enjoy being in school.
- Enabled **all pupils to make progress** in a curriculum which is tailored to their needs allows them to achieve and make progress in areas which they find challenging.
- Ensured **learning is embedded and consolidated** as the Enhanced Pathway class allows pupils to work towards their outcomes multiple times a day.

Child B had been with us since Nursery. In 2023-24 they moved to Year 1 and were able to join the Enhanced Pathway. At the **start of Year 1, they were non-verbal and unable to read** or write. By the **end of Year 1, they passed their phonics screener with a score of 35/40**, they sang a song at our end of year talent show, **they can make their wishes and needs known** to familiar adults and peers and is able to write in full sentences. Child B moved out of the area in August 2024, but as **no local school has stated that they can meet their need**, we are in the process of organising transport for Child B and their younger brother to be taxied to school.

Enhanced Pathway pupil C case study School 15 – enabling mainstream schools to be more inclusive of pupils with EHCPs and more complex needs

Child C joined us in September 2024. **A local primary school was unable to meet their needs**, so parents moved them to us where they **joined our Enhanced Pathway**. In their previous school, Child C had been **kept back in Reception**, was **not interacting with peers** and was **unable to follow adult instructions** without dysregulation. Since joining the Enhanced Pathway, Child C is **interacting with peers, is taking part in activities such as the Nativity and is being supported to follow the routine of the school day**. Although there are still **incidents** where Child C will hit or bite staff and children, this has **massively reduced since September.**

Annex C
Enhanced Pathways: analysis of cohort destinations to date

21/22

- Total number of pathways – 7
- Total number of students in the pathways – 60
- Remained in Mainstream – 39 (65.0%)
- Now in specialist – 16 (26.6%)
- Other – 5 (8.3%)
- Of those pupils with specialist placements agreed at Panel, 3/7 went on to specialist. Or 57% remained in mainstream.
- Total number of new INMSS placements made in this academic year: 121

22/23

- Total number of pathways – 8
- Total number of students in the pathways – 90
- Remained in Mainstream – 62 (68.9%)
- Now in specialist – 20 (22.2%)
- Other – 8 (8.9%)
- Of those pupils with specialist placements agreed at Panel 4/9 went on to specialist. Or 55.5% remained in mainstream.
- Total number of INMSS places: 108

23/24

- Total number of pathways – 9
- Total number of students in the pathways – 122
- Remained in Mainstream – 80 (65.6%)
- Now in specialist – 25 (20.5%)
- Other – 17 (13.9%)
- Of those pupils with specialist placements agreed at Panel 5/10 went on to specialist. Or 50% remained in mainstream.
- Total number of INMSS places: 129

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Annex D
Parental Confidence case study

Demonstrating that having an Enhanced Pathway in a school increases parental confidence in its mainstream education, and that parents want Enhanced Pathways to expand so their children can remain in them as they age.

Case Study – School 9

- **100%** of parents who responded agreed or strongly agreed that:
  - They had **confidence in the specialist offer** their child was receiving in the Enhanced Pathway.
  - Their child was **happy and safe attending school** (7 out of the 8 pupils in the Enhanced Pathway class have attendance of 96% or above).
  - Their child was **making progress** since attending the Enhanced Pathway.
  - They would **recommend the Enhanced Pathway to other parents.**

Case Study –School 13

- **100%** of parents who responded agreed or strongly agreed that
  - They had **confidence in the specialist offer** their child was receiving in the Enhanced Pathway
  - They were **happy with the education** their child is receiving
  - Their child was **safe** attending school
  - Their child was **making progress** since attending the Enhanced Pathway
  - The Enhanced Pathway provided information so that they are able to best support my child's development at home

Parent surveys consistently show that the absence of Enhanced Pathways in a school reduces parental confidence in the school's offer and its ability to meet their child's needs.

Statements about next steps:	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't Know
If there was no enhanced provision at ***a secondary school*** would you be happy with your child attending a mainstream class?				✔	
I would support an integrated plan to move my child into a mainstream class in preparation for being there full-time				✔	

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CABINET

25 February 2025

Oxfordshire Climate Adaptation Route Map and Oxfordshire County Council Climate Adaptation Delivery Plan

Report by Director of Economy and Place

RECOMMENDATION

1. **Cabinet is RECOMMENDED to:**

   a) Note the recent endorsement of the Oxfordshire Climate Adaptation Route Map by the Future Oxfordshire Partnership (FOP).
   b) Approve the adoption of the Oxfordshire Climate Adaptation Route Map and Oxfordshire County Council Delivery Plan.

Executive Summary

2. The risks to Oxfordshire residents, businesses and stakeholders, as well as Oxfordshire County Council (OCC) from the impacts of climate change are significant. OCC is well-placed to play a convening role and work with Oxfordshire's stakeholders to plan against these risks.

3. The draft Route Map has been co-developed with Oxfordshire stakeholders through a strong partnership approach. The key parts of the Route Map are the Priority Actions and Implementation Blueprint that identify the key actions that need to be taken by Oxfordshire's stakeholders. The actions are structured into the following themes:

   (a) **Enabling actions** - including governance and training.
   (b) **Critical Infrastructure** - including water, highways assets and wider transport considerations.
   (c) **Health, Communities and Built Environment** – including residential retrofit, schools and public health.
   (d) **Natural Environment** – including species and habitat recovery and protection.
   (e) **Business and Industry** – including support for farms and Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs).

4. The accompanying OCC Delivery Plan provides an organisational level plan for OCC to control climate risk, now included in OCC's Strategic Risk Register.

5. In January 2025, the Future Oxfordshire Partnership endorsed the Oxfordshire Climate Adaptation Route Map and committed to work with partners on its implementation.

Key Issues

Climate Risk in Oxfordshire and Inclusion on the OCC Strategic Risk Register

6. OCC is subject to operational risks from heatwaves, flooding, drought, storms and cold snaps. These risks are increasing in severity and frequency due to the carbon emissions already released into the atmosphere.

7. The latest national Climate Change Risk Assessment states that even under low warming scenarios, the UK will face costly impacts without immediate significant action. It identifies potential costly impacts including on health and productivity, affecting households, businesses and public services.

8. The 2023-24 Director of Public Health Annual Report on Climate and Health outlines climate-change induced public health risks across the county.

9. Heatwaves will affect the health and wellbeing of Oxfordshire's most vulnerable residents, impacting OCC's public health, adult and children's services. Flooding, heatwaves and drought will increasingly impact highways, property and infrastructure operations.

10. The above points provide a strong justification for the inclusion of climate risk in the OCC Strategic Risk Register. The subsequent development of the Oxfordshire Climate Adaptation Route Map and OCC Delivery Plan (as part of the wider development of an adaptation programme) represents a key control measure to reduce this identified strategic risk. These are set out at annex 2 and annex 3 respectively.

Overview of the Route Map Work Package and Key Principles

11. The Route Map is an important step in the development of the wider Oxfordshire climate adaptation programme. OCC has played a convening role to help key Oxfordshire stakeholders co-develop a countywide approach to climate change adaptation, taking a strong partnership approach in developing the Route Map.

12. In May 2024, OCC commissioned Sustainability West Midlands (SWM) on behalf of the Future Oxfordshire Partnership to:
    (a) Produce an **Oxfordshire Climate Adaptation Route Map**, emphasising nature-based solutions and actions to reduce excess deaths and ill-health as a result of climate change.

(b) Produce an accompanying **OCC Delivery Plan** to provide an organisational-level plan for building adaptation and resilience to climate change.

(c) **Build capability of stakeholders** to understand climate adaptation principles and manage climate risks for their roles and organisations.

(d) Deliver **a risk management workshop** for stakeholders as part of the capacity building approach.

(e) Demonstrate a clear **economic rationale** for implementing the identified adaptation and resilience measures.

13. SWM were commissioned due to their expertise in stakeholder engagement and experience developing local authority climate adaptation plans.

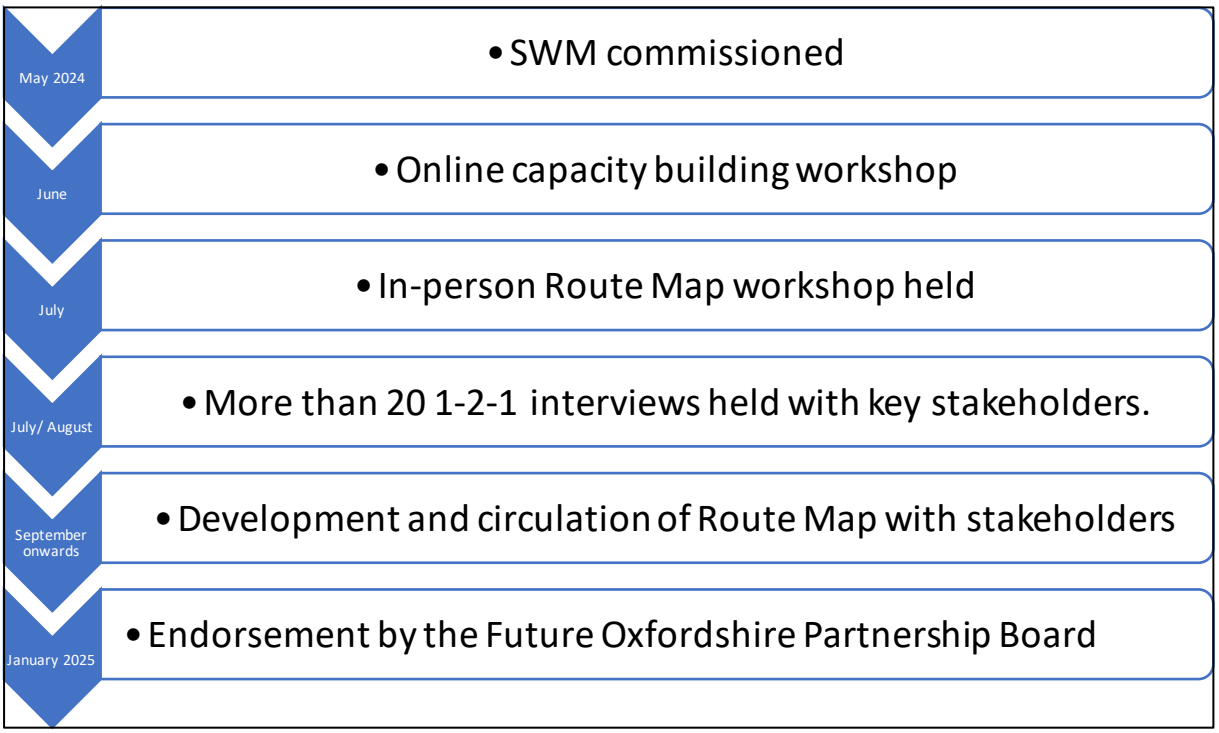

Figure 1: Engagement approach followed to develop the Route Map.

14. At the time of writing the stakeholder risk management workshop remains to be scheduled. This will take place once as part of an upcoming Oxfordshire Climate Adaptation Summit later this year, once final approval of both the Route Map and OCC Delivery Plan has been achieved.

The Route Map Priority Actions and Implementation Blueprint

15. The Priority Actions and Implementation Blueprint represent the key parts of the Route Map and have been developed based heavily on the engagement activity outlined in Figure 1. Input has been received from more than 40 of Oxfordshire's key stakeholders, including the district councils, the NHS, OxLEP, Community Action Groups, Thames Water and the Local Nature Partnership.

16. The actions are categorised into five key themes:

(a) **Enabling actions** - including governance and training.
(b) **Critical Infrastructure** - including water, highways assets and wider transport considerations.
(c) **Health, Communities and Built Environment** – including residential retrofit, schools and public health.
(d) **Natural Environment** – including species and habitat recovery and protection.
(e) **Business and Industry** – including support for farms and SME's.

17. A set of 15 priority actions have been identified as the initial focus for implementation and consist of mainly enabling actions such as governance, identifying finance opportunities and capacity building.

18. A further 67 longer term actions are included in the Implementation Blueprint in the report annex. Planning for their implementation will continue alongside and be supported by the successful implementation of the priority enabling actions.

19. The Implementation Blueprint provides a framework to guide future action in the County on climate adaptation. The Committee on Climate Change recognises that work on Climate Adaptation nationally is not yet at levels needed. As such many identified measures are not yet funded and therefore cannot be actioned in the immediate term. The document provides a blueprint against which to engage government and to work collectively to seek future funding over the medium to long term.

20. Many actions in the Route Map have been categorised as 'no-regrets', meaning they will be required no matter what direction future climate change takes. A few actions will need to be re-assessed as climate change scenarios and the scientific consensus evolves.

21. Route Map actions are focussed on what Oxfordshire's stakeholders have the agency and/or influence to implement and do not provide detail on measures to be taken by national infrastructure providers.

22. A shorter 7-page summary document has been developed for the Route Map to support engagement, which focusses on the priority actions and next steps for stakeholders (see Annex 1).

OCC Delivery Plan

23. An OCC Delivery plan has been developed to accompany the countywide Route Map and focuses on deliverables at the organisational level.

24. There are 10 additional OCC actions included in the OCC Delivery Plan that are not appropriate to include in the countywide Route Map.

Corporate Policies and Priorities

25. The impacts of climate change on Oxfordshire residents, communities and business are expected to be widespread and can be expected to particularly impact the most vulnerable members of society.

26. Nature and biodiversity will struggle to adapt to rapid changes in climate and the highways network along with other infrastructure will increasingly be exposed to climate conditions they are not designed for.

27. The actions included in the proposed Route Map and Delivery Plan therefore support a range of Council priorities outlined in the OCC Strategic Plan 2023-25.

Financial Implications

28. The Route Map development has been funded with a contribution from FOP.

    OCC is designated as having lead responsibility (cutting across different council functions) for implementing several actions in the Route Map. The priority enabling actions (actions 1, 2, 4-7, 15) which utilise the council's convening role, will be funded through use of existing staff time, within the current adaptation policy workstream.

29. Many of the actions outlined in the wider Implementation Blueprint are not currently resourced and will require additional funding/ resourcing to effectively implement. This would be requested through separate business case proposals/ cabinet papers.

30. The 100 Together conference is one route to help identify funding opportunities for actions identified in the Route Map and OCC Delivery Plan. Significant funding will also need to come from the public sector.

31. Failure to adapt to climate change will increase the cost burden for OCC due to increasing demand for its services from vulnerable residents and the impacts to infrastructure owned and maintained by OCC.

    Filipp Skiffins, Asst Finance Business Partner
    Filipp.Skiffins@oxfordshire.gov.uk

Legal Implications

32. The statutory power of the Council to take a specific action as a consequence of adopting the Route Map and Delivery Plan will need to be assessed on a case by case basis but in the absence of applicable specific legislation is likely to sit within the Council's general power of competence pursuant to section 1 of the Localism Act 2011. No other legal implications are identified at this stage.

    Jonathan Pool, Solicitor (contracts) Jonathan.pool@oxfordshire.gov.uk

Staff Implications

33. The initial implementation of the priority set of actions in the Route Map will be led by officers in the Climate Service, including the Climate Adaptation Policy and Project Lead.

34. The Route Map and Delivery Plan identifies a wide range of further actions that will need to be implemented over a long-term horizon, requiring involvement from a range of different OCC services and by other Oxfordshire stakeholders.

35. Many of the wider set of actions in the Route Map annex are currently not resourced. One of the key initial priority actions is to begin the process to identify the resourcing opportunities to enable the Route Map and Delivery Plan to be taken forward. Actions identified in the Route Map will only be implemented when appropriate resourcing has been secured

Equality & Inclusion Implications

36. The impacts of climate change on Oxfordshire residents, communities and business are expected to be widespread and can be expected to particularly impact the most vulnerable members of society.

37. Heatwaves and flooding will particularly impact the elderly, very young, those with certain disabilities and many living in deprived communities who have limited ability and resources to adapt to increasingly severe and frequent weather events. Failure to adapt to climate change can be expected to disproportionately impact Oxfordshire's vulnerable residents, including those with disabilities, the young and elderly and those in areas of deprivation.

38. The Zero Carbon Oxfordshire team conducted a multi-stage participatory research project on climate action at the community level to inform the council's upcoming Engagement Route Map. The research involved a commissioned piece of work to understand barriers faced by ethnic minorities and people living with disabilities.

39. The actions included in the proposed Route Map and Delivery Plan therefore support the council's equality and inclusion objectives. The council's adaptive actions to date such as the heat health plan is focused specifically on supporting vulnerable residents.

40. An Equalities Impact Assessment (see Annex 4) has been completed alongside the Route Map and Delivery Plan to identify possible positive and negative impacts on communities and residents with protected characteristics. No negative impacts were identified in the assessment.

Sustainability Implications

41. Oxfordshire's long-term climate adaptation programme will prioritise nature-based solutions to maximise co-benefits.

42. The climate adaptation workstream aligns closely with key council strategies including the Local Nature Recovery Strategy, Director of Public Health's Annual Report (Climate and Health) and Local Flood Risk Management Strategy. It is also closely linked with the Local Nature Partnership's work on nature-based solutions.

Risk Management

43. A Climate Vulnerability Assessment has been commissioned by OCC to identify key risks and vulnerabilities for Oxfordshire.

44. An Extreme Value Analysis commissioned by OCC estimates the probability and spatial variation of future extreme heat and rainfall events across Oxfordshire.

45. Climate risk has been added to OCC's strategic risk register due to the wide-ranging risks posed by climate change. The Route Map and Delivery Plan outlined in this report represent key risk control measures for this strategic risk.

Consultations

46. The Route Map has been co-developed with several Oxfordshire stakeholders.

47. Oxfordshire stakeholders have been kept up to date on the development of the Route Map through consultation during Route Map development (see Figure 1), regular items in Zero Carbon Oxfordshire Partnership (ZCOP) meetings, updates to FOP and via informal meetings with the city and district council sustainability leads.

48. Key OCC teams have been kept up to date on progress and invited to input via OCC climate adaptation working group meetings and email updates.

49. The Heat Health Plan and actions from the Director of Public Health's Annual Report represent key communications initiatives with Oxfordshire residents.

50. In January 2025, the Route Map was endorsed by the Future Oxfordshire Partnership Board.

Next Steps

51. Upon approval of the Route Map and Delivery Plan, efforts will turn to implementing the identified actions, with initial focus on the 15 priority actions identified.

52. A working group on climate adaptation will be set up under the auspices of the new Zero Carbon Oxfordshire Partnership to take forward the

recommendations in the Route Map, as well as the other enabling action identified in the Route Map and Delivery Plan.

Robin Rogers, Director of Economy and Place

Annex

Annex 1: Draft Oxfordshire Climate Adaptation Route Map Summary

Annex 2: Draft Oxfordshire Climate Adaptation Route Map

Annex 3: OCC Climate Change Adaptation Delivery Plan

Annex 4: Equalities Impact Assessment for Oxfordshire Climate Adaptation Route Map and OCC Climate Adaptation Delivery Plan.

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February 2025

Climate Change Adaptation Route Map for Oxfordshire 2025-2030

Summary

Enhancing resilience for all Oxfordshire communities and businesses to the impacts of climate change, prioritising the most vulnerable

Author:
Sustainability West Midlands

Version:
Final

Date:
January 2025

Front cover image: Flooding on Abingdon Road, Oxford

sustainability west midlands

Future Oxfordshire Partnership +

1 Introduction

SWM has been commissioned and funded by the Future Oxfordshire Partnership (FOP) to develop a Climate Change Adaptation Route Map, aimed at providing a series of actions that should be considered for implementation by decision makers in Oxfordshire, to ensure that the county's natural environment, people, infrastructure, buildings and businesses are prepared for the impacts of climate change. **This document provides a summary of the Route Map.**

The actions included in this summary should be delivered in the financial year 2025/26. In all cases, it should be noted that:

- Many of the actions are currently unfunded, with resourcing yet to be identified.
- Implementation of most of the actions will only take place when resources and/or funding has been secured and agreed by relevant stakeholders.
- Stakeholders have not yet committed to deliver many of the actions so far, but they will look to incorporate if and when an opportunity arises (or when resources are found).
- Actions are currently high-level and subject to change as understanding and circumstances evolve.

The Route Map is to be delivered by a wide range of Oxfordshire stakeholders and includes a set of actions that can only be implemented collectively and in partnership. It builds on the wider aims of Oxfordshire's adaptation programme, which are as follows:

- Protect the health and wellbeing of Oxfordshire residents, enabling them to build long term resilience to a changing climate.
- Improve the resilience of council services and key stakeholder operations across Oxfordshire to a changing climate.
- Minimise financial cost to the council and Oxfordshire stakeholders from future adverse and extreme weather events.
- Realise added benefit from Oxfordshire's natural environment improvement programmes and support its improved resilience to a changing climate.

The core objective is to ensure that Oxfordshire can better manage, prepare for and respond to severe weather events and an increasing likelihood and severity of these in future.

Flooded field near Witney, January 2024

2 Purpose and background

2.1 Overview

The full Route Map from which this summary is derived, includes 83 adaptation actions that will be implemented by decision makers in Oxfordshire, to ensure that the county's natural environment, people, infrastructure, buildings and businesses are prepared for the impacts of climate change, including greater incidence and severity of flooding, a higher likelihood of water scarcity and more intense and prolonged heatwaves.

This summary extracts those actions that we have allocated as being a **very high and immediate (VH-I) priority** for Oxfordshire (as opposed to Very High, High or Medium priority), and that should be implemented, or implementation commenced, in the financial year 2025/26. Prioritisation is based on the following criteria:

- The urgency of the associated climate risk
- The resource intensity and likely cost-benefit of implementation
- Potential financing options available
- Co-benefits, e.g. supporting Net Zero, biodiversity or health outcomes
- The potential magnitude of the impact in Oxfordshire if no action is taken
- Whether the action builds on existing work and, therefore, could be accelerated
- Whether the action can be implemented quickly with minimal resource
- Whether there is stakeholder expertise on the relevant topic area
- Whether there is national/ policy backing to support implementation

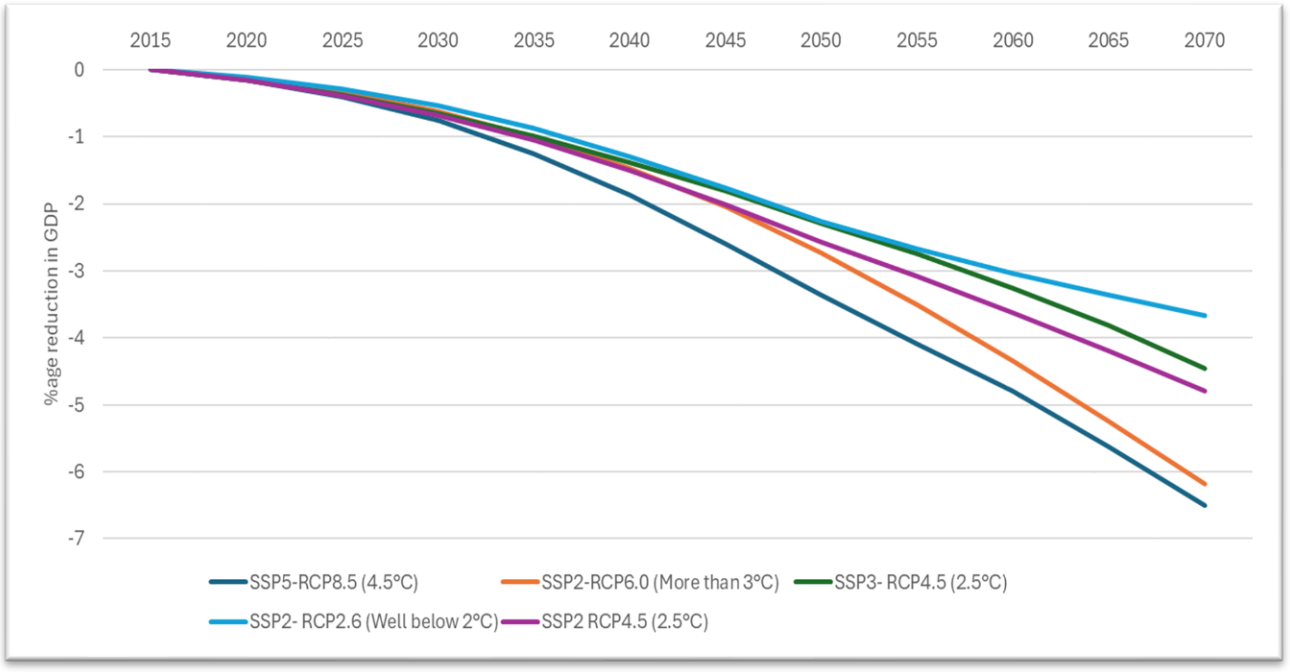
Full details on the background and context that forms the Route Map and this Summary can be found in the full Route Map document. This includes a summary of the Oxfordshire Climate Vulnerability Assessment, and a climate change risk assessment which forms the evidence base for the action plan.

2.2 The economic case for action

An additional evidence base for action comes when looking at the potential economic impact that climate change could have on Oxfordshire. Indicative results show that, when compared to a 2015 baseline, if no adaptation is taken climate change could reduce Oxfordshire's GDP by:

- **0.5% to 0.8% by 2030**
- **2.3% to 3.4% by 2050**
- **3.7% to 6.5% by 2070**

These and other potential scenarios are shows in the graph overleaf. The different lines on the graph show how our global efforts to reduce emissions may affect the overall impact on local GDP; in short, the more we accelerate emissions reductions, the less severe the impact climate change is likely to have on GDP in Oxfordshire. However, even with rapid emissions reductions, GDP is still likely to be reduced if no action is taken.



The figures make a compelling case for action, as they show that climate change will have a negative impact on local economic performance. As such, adapting to the projected climatic changes is fundamental to build Oxfordshire's economic resilience and try to limit the likely negative impacts outlined above.

Acknowledgement

This work has been supported by the Pathways2Resilience project, as a featured case study.

Work undertaken by the Pathways2Resilience project, funded by the European Union under grant agreement No 101093942. Views and opinions expressed are however those of the author(s) only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union or of CINEA. Neither the European Union nor the granting authority can be held responsible for them.

Paul Watkiss Associates (UK) is an associated partner of the Pathways2Resilience project. PWA has received funding from UKRI under the UK Government's Horizon Europe Guarantee, Reference Number: 10063306

3 Priority Actions for 2025/26

This section provides a summary of the actions from the Route Map allocated as being a 'very high and immediate' priority and should be implemented, or implementation commenced, within the financial year 2025/26 (i.e. by 31 March 2026). **For more details on each of these actions, and all the other actions identified, please consult the full Route Map document.**

Enabling actions: governance, reporting and monitoring

- Report on progress with delivery of this Route Map and implementation blueprint annually to the FOP and set up a monitoring framework.
  - *This will ensure actions are kept relevant, are being delivered on time and have appropriate success measures identified.*

- Develop a new Oxfordshire-wide Climate Adaptation Working Group under the Zero Carbon Oxfordshire Partnership (ZCOP) structure.
  - *This group will help to make implementation of the actions in the Route Map easier through catalysis and collaboration. District councils not currently part of ZCOP will still be invited to join the adaptation group.*

- Identify financing options and funding sources to enable implementation and integrate into the next budget cycle.
  - *Funding will be required to take forward many of the actions outlined in this Plan; it is, therefore, crucial that a financing strategy is produced to help take forward projects across the county and encourage research of innovative approaches to implementation.*

- Develop a set of adaptation capacity building materials that are specifically targeted at executive officers, Cabinet Members and Councillors across the county.
  - *Senior officer buy-in underpins many actions within this Plan, and they are crucial to enabling local action on climate adaptation. Capacity building materials will help to strengthen this buy-in through engagement.*

- Embed and/or support delivery of climate adaptation into a range of co-dependent strategies and plans being produced by council departments and external partners.
  - *This embedment is crucial to ensure that decision making is factoring the impact climate change could have on various future policies. Without this, many of these strategies and action plans may not be fit for purpose.*

- Each district council should begin to consider developing an adaptation plan.
  - *This will ensure the districts fully assess how climate change could impact on their specific service areas and key operations, which the Route Map does not provide in detail.*

Natural Environment and Assets

- Ensure that climate change adaptation forms a key part of the emerging Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) for Oxfordshire.
  - *The LNRS is a huge opportunity to enabling nature to become a significant part of the adaptation solution, by ensuring that new nature creation/ enhancement programmes help to create a bigger, better, and more joined up natural environment which will be more resilient to the impacts from climate change.*

- Conduct an analysis of which of Oxfordshire's habitats, species and crops could be most affected by climate change, including the negative impacts of new pests, pathogens or Invasive Non-Native Species (INNS).
  - *Launching local analyses on how this could affect habitats and species in the county would represent a first step to help prepare and protect ecosystems from their most negative consequences, especially high-quality habitats already at risk from climate change.*

Health, Communities and the Built Environment

- Provide adaptation training for health and social care delivery professionals and senior leaders.
  - *The health and social care sector needs to adapt to the increasing threats it faces from a changing climate; buy-in and understanding can be achieved through the running of capacity building training.*

- Ensure climate risks to health, buildings and infrastructure that affect health and care settings are embedded into corporate risk / business continuity plans.
  - *Embedment into these plans, which all care settings are already required to produce, will ensure climate risks can be considered more routinely and discussed and monitored by risk professionals within the heart of the health and social care sector.*

- Identify and appraise climate adaptation options for the most vulnerable health and care assets.
  - *These assets accommodate some of the county's most vulnerable people. In particular, they are likely to overheat more often in future if they have not been constructed with climate change in mind, meaning that there is a greater likelihood of mortality and extreme discomfort as a consequence of extreme heatwave conditions. An analysis of options to deal with this issue is critical to health and social care delivery continuity.*

- Produce an adaptation plan for the NHS Integrated Care System and Trusts that cover Oxfordshire.
  - *Deriving a plan that can pick up appropriate options to address outcomes from the above analysis, alongside other climate risks, is crucial to ensuring future service continuity.*

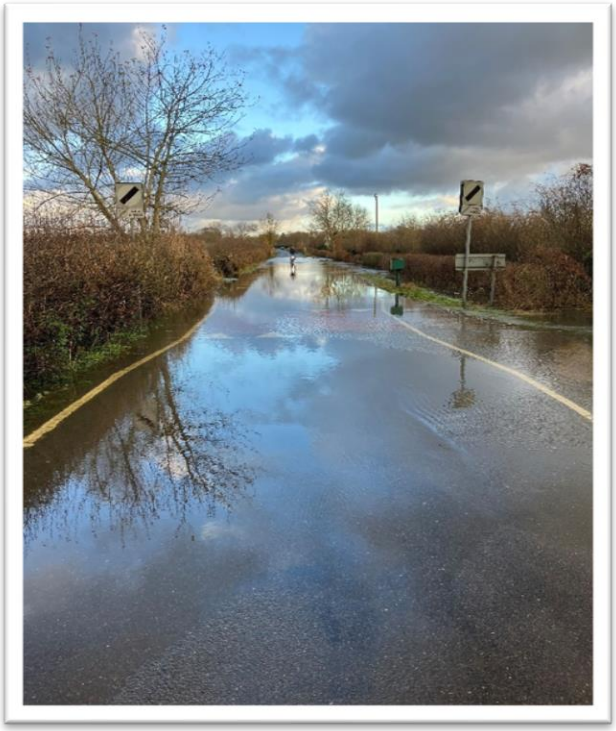
- Produce new county-wide climate change adaptation guidance for developers.
  - *Guidance on how to ensure new developments integrate climate adaptation measures should encourage developers to design new homes and commercial premises with a future climate in mind, maximising longevity and performance.*

- Expand on existing work and relationships to empower vulnerable communities to develop climate change adaptation and/or community emergency plans.
  - *Vulnerable communities will need better protection and support to prevent issues such as displacement or health implications as a result of climate change; working with partners to build resilience is fundamental.*

Business and Industry, including Agriculture

- Establish a climate risk and adaptation engagement programme for farmers and land managers.
  - *Adopting new land management practices to help alleviate flood risk, as well as assessing options to deal with the risks climate change poses to farming practices in Oxfordshire, is crucial given that 70% of land in Oxfordshire is agricultural (as of 2024).*

4 Next steps and initial recommendations



Flooding in Wytham © Ariane Crampton

It is recommended that the next steps and principles towards successful implementation of the Route Map are as follows.

Maintain engagement with stakeholders

Oxfordshire CC will quickly build on the extensive engagement that took place with stakeholders to develop the full Route Map, by establishing a new Oxfordshire-wide Climate Adaptation Working Group, fitting into the structure of the new Zero Carbon Oxfordshire Partnership (ZCOP). This will include all the district councils, even if they are not currently part of the ZCOP, along with key stakeholders who are likely key stakeholders who are likely to be chiefly responsible for implementing the actions in this plan. This should launch alongside publication of this Route Map so that it is still fresh in people's minds and, initially, should be used to agree who will lead on each of the VH-I 2025/26 actions.

Integration

Wherever possible, adaptation measures will be integrated into Net Zero and other relevant activities to maximise the impact of the activity whilst minimising resource requirements. This also ensures adaptation actions do not threaten to contradict Net Zero targets, or visa-versa.

Adaptation financing

Identifying financing options will be crucial to the successful implementation of some of these actions. Mapping of these opportunities and lobbying of central Government needs to take place hand-in-hand, to encourage appropriate investment. There also needs to be strategic use of public sector funds to lever in appropriate private sector investment. The 100 Together initiative set up in Oxfordshire and the forthcoming Green Investment Pipeline and Prospectus provides a key mechanism to identify private financing sources that may be suitable for adaptation.

Outcomes and measures of success

Undertaking a cost-benefit analysis of each action will provide some element of quantification and give backing to implementation. In-depth analysis will be needed when embarking on implementation of actions where investment is required. Where undertaking a cost-benefit analysis is not possible, it is still important to consider what the specific outcomes are for each action, in order to make the case for implementation.

Building in flexibility

Despite having an understanding on the likely broad climatic changes expected to occur in Oxfordshire, it is impossible to be specific about exactly what is going to happen when, due to various elements of uncertainty. Not knowing exactly when, and to what extent, we need to take action by makes both implementation of adaptation actions, and making the case for implementation, more challenging.

It will therefore be important to build flexibility into adaptation actions by taking an adaptation pathways approach, which can help to manage the long-term and uncertain nature of climate change impacts. It will allow projects to be scaled up or down depending on how the climate actually changes, and will show what level of adaptation needs to take place against a range of plausible scenarios.

Monitoring and evaluation (M&E)

Developing a process for M&E that outlines how and when actions will be assessed and allows progress against each action to be captured is critical. A first step should be to develop a monitoring system, or integrate adaptation actions into an already established monitoring system, which allows for the capturing of progress against each action. A reporting mechanism will also be established to ensure progress is being communicated to partners and senior leaders.

-END-

Climate Change Adaptation Route Map for Oxfordshire 2025-2030

Enhancing resilience for all Oxfordshire communities and businesses to the impacts of climate change, prioritising the most vulnerable

Author:
Sustainability West Midlands

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sustainability west midlands

Future Oxfordshire Partnership +

Report information

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Customer: Future Oxfordshire Partnership

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Disclaimer: This report represents the independent advice commissioned from Sustainability West Midlands and partners and not necessarily that of the funders.

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Suggested Citation: 'Climate Change Adaptation Route Map for Oxfordshire' (Future Oxfordshire Partnership and Sustainability West Midlands 2024).

About Sustainability West Midlands

Sustainability West Midlands (SWM) was established in 2002 as an independent, not-for-profit company and our purpose is to help the West Midlands become more sustainable, greener and fairer for all.

Our vision is that the West Midlands is leading in contributing to the national target of Net Zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050 whilst addressing health inequality and driving inclusive growth. We monitor the West Midlands Sustainability 2030 Roadmap which acts as a framework that all organisations based or operating in the region can use to help them make changes to their activities in the knowledge that they will contribute to wider regional ambition.

SWM supports our members and other local stakeholders in the public, private and third sectors to implement these changes by enabling them to demonstrate innovation and leadership and provide opportunities to collaborate and celebrate success.

www.swm.org.uk
Registered company No.04390508

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Above: Harcourt Arboretum, Nuneham Courtenay
Front cover image: Flooding on Abingdon Road, Oxford

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Foreword

As one of the most successful counties in the UK, Oxfordshire has an enormous array of strengths and assets across a diverse variety of areas – from its academic and research excellence to its world-renowned natural environment, historic towns, innovative business and community groups. Oxfordshire's economy is thriving and its innovation is the envy of much of the world.

However, this success is threatened by the impacts of climate change. In recent years, we have witnessed an increasing number of extreme weather events around the world. From the extreme drought in Chennai in 2019 and record-breaking Canada Heat Dome in 2021, to flash flooding in Germany in 2024, to the raging wildfires in Los Angeles. The scale of these events would be unimaginable without climate change.

Oxfordshire is not immune to the impacts of climate change – the increasingly frequent flood events, the record 38°C heatwave in 2022 and the extreme levels of rainfall in 2024 are already impacting the county. Without action, the impacts of these events will only get worse – the health and wellbeing of our residents and communities will suffer from increasingly severe heatwaves, the size of the local economy will shrink considerably and our biodiversity and natural habitats will be increasingly threatened.

The good news is that we have the power to act and adapt to a changing climate to ensure Oxfordshire continues to thrive. By taking long-term, proactive measures and investing in approaches that will bring numerous co-benefits to residents, business and the natural environment, Oxfordshire has an enormous opportunity to futureproof itself from the increasingly severe and frequent weather events we can expect in the future.

This Climate Adaptation Route Map has been co-developed by local stakeholders, including councils, business, the universities, the NHS and community groups, to enable Oxfordshire to take collective action and build long-term resilience to a changing climate.

The Route Map sets out ambitious plans on what needs to be done at a local level in Oxfordshire, both our initial priorities as well as long-term actions into the future, prioritising nature-based solutions to realise the co-benefits for the natural environment, residents and communities. These proposals will necessitate innovative and collaborative thinking against a backdrop of ever tighter funding constraints and competing priorities. The hard work to implement this Route Map, in full, starts now!

Cllr Liz Leffman, Chair of the Future Oxfordshire Partnership and Leader of Oxfordshire County Council

1 Introduction

SWM has been commissioned and funded by the Future Oxfordshire Partnership (FOP) to develop a Climate Change Adaptation Route Map, aimed at providing a series of actions that will need to be implemented by decision makers in Oxfordshire to ensure that the county's natural environment, people, infrastructure, buildings and businesses are prepared for the impacts of climate change.

The Route Map is to be delivered by a wide range of Oxfordshire stakeholders (see Annex 2 for a full list of those with whom engagement has taken place) and identifies a set of actions that will need to be implemented collectively and in partnership. It is also in place to maximise the influence of local stakeholders on central Government and provides a call to action on what is required by them by way of support.

The total set of actions is split into priority actions that should be delivered in the financial year 2025/26 and, with the remaining long-term actions included in an implementation blueprint in Annex 1. In all cases, it should be noted that:

- Many of the actions are currently unfunded, with resourcing yet to be identified.
- The initial focus is on the 2025/26 actions, with the actions included in Annex 1 being opportunities to implement only when circumstances allow.
- Implementation of most of the actions will only take place when resources and/or funding has been secured and agreed by relevant stakeholders.
- Stakeholders have not yet committed to deliver many of the actions so far, but they will look to incorporate if and when an opportunity arises (or when resources are found).
- Stakeholders identified as being key to implementing the actions may only play a supporting, coordinating or consulting role in delivering the action, and not necessarily lead its implementation.
- Actions are currently high-level and subject to change as understanding and circumstances evolve.

The Route Map builds on the wider aims of Oxfordshire's adaptation programme, developed with stakeholders as part of the Climate Vulnerability Assessment in 2023, which are as follows:

- Protect the health and wellbeing of Oxfordshire residents, enabling them to build long term resilience to a changing climate.
- Improve the resilience of council services and key stakeholder operations across Oxfordshire to a changing climate.
- Minimise financial cost to the county/district councils and Oxfordshire stakeholders from future adverse and extreme weather events.
- Realise added benefit from Oxfordshire's natural environment improvement programmes and support its improved resilience to a changing climate.

The core objective is to ensure that Oxfordshire can better manage, prepare for and respond to severe weather events and an increasing likelihood and severity of these in future.

Flooded towpath at Iffley Lock

2 Purpose and background

2.1 Purpose of this document

This document sets out the climate change adaptation priorities for the county to ensure that Oxfordshire's natural environment, people, infrastructure, buildings and businesses are prepared for the impacts of climate change, including greater frequency and severity of flooding, a higher likelihood of water scarcity and more intense and prolonged heatwaves. Adaptation is needed given that analysis undertaken alongside the development of this Route Map shows that the impact of climate change could reduce Oxfordshire's GDP by up to 3.4% by 2050 and 6.5% by 2080 if no action is taken.

Flooded field near Witney, January 2024

The primary audience for this adaptation plan are the organisations who can collaborate to implement and accelerate appropriate adaptation action in the county, including national Government departments and arm's length bodies, local councils, other local organisations such as the NHS and universities, and communities.

Many of the actions included within the Plan will be implemented over the long-term and will require regular scrutiny. This Plan will therefore be continuously updated via a rigorous monitoring system, with a full refresh conducted in 2030, so that decision-making can be done in advance and as accurately as possible, in light of continuously changing circumstances. Much is likely to have changed by 2030 and this is a reasonable timescale by which to conduct a full Plan review.

The document provides:

- A summary of likely climate impacts in Oxfordshire, based on the Oxfordshire Climate Vulnerability Assessment.
- A list of climate risks, drawing on the England assessment of the Independent Assessment of UK Climate Risk and extracting those risks relevant to Oxfordshire.
- A Climate Change Adaptation implementation blueprint that sets out a series of responses to the above risks and associated impacts, and a Route Map for implementation.
- Recommended next steps and initial quick wins, and suggestions for monitoring and evaluation processes.

This document is not intended as a detailed, technical assessment of potential adaptation options and instead provides a framework to further shape key areas of intervention. For example, where there is reference to actions such as 'identify and appraise climate adaptation options for buildings,' it is only through such an assessment that detailed information would be provided on the buildings are most at risk, the reasons why (building type, who uses it etc.), and what the most appropriate actions are to address these risks (building modifications to improve ventilation, green infrastructure for more shading for example) against a range of future climatic scenarios. This Plan aims to trigger more detailed assessments where required, which would be commissioned and funded by national and local decision makers.

2.2 Background and context

Adaptation versus mitigation

This Route Map should be considered alongside others that organisations in Oxfordshire have published which convey targets and strategies to meet their relevant environmental goals. This includes a Net Zero Route Map that focus on specific sustainability thematic areas such as waste and transport, and the Oxfordshire Climate Vulnerability Assessment.

To date, many of the climate-focused plans and strategies produced for Oxfordshire have focused on climate change mitigation, i.e. how actions can reduce greenhouse gas emissions. By contrast, this Plan focuses on accepting that we are already locked-in to a significant level of climatic change as a result of historical greenhouse gas emissions, and that we therefore need to deal with the increasing severe weather events that will occur as a consequence. This is known as climate adaptation. The defined differences between mitigation and adaptation are as follows:

- **Climate change mitigation** means avoiding and reducing emissions of heat-trapping greenhouse gases (e.g. carbon dioxide) into the atmosphere to prevent the planet from warming to more extreme temperatures.

- **Climate change adaptation** means altering our behaviour, systems, and, in some cases, ways of life to protect our families, our economies, and the environment in which we live from the impacts of climate change. Adaptation to climate change can be considered as being proactive rather than reactive wherever possible.

This Route Map focuses on climate change adaptation, although it should be borne in mind throughout this document that some of the adaptation focussed actions could support the county's target to meet its Net Zero emissions target by 2050. Similarly, some mitigation focused actions included in other plans will also offer opportunities for adaptation. The key message is that Oxfordshire **needs to do both** in order to strengthen its overall climate resilience and, wherever possible, identify ways that it can deliver projects that both reduce greenhouse gas emissions and adapt to climate impacts concurrently, such as nature-based projects.

Adaptation national context

The Climate Change Committee (CCC) is the Government's statutory adviser on preparing for climate change. Under the Climate Change Act (2008) the CCC, through its Adaptation Committee and secretariat, has two main roles in relation to climate change adaptation:

- To provide independent, expert advice on the UK Climate Change Risk Assessment (CCRA).

- To report to Parliament on progress with implementation of the Government's National Adaptation Programme (NAP).

In June 2021, the CCC launched its latest Independent Assessment of UK Climate Risk for Government to form the basis of the third CCRA. Over 450 people from more than 130 organisations contributed evidence to the report, which was then used to assess the risks to the UK from climate change and the magnitude and urgency of these risks (research for its next assessment due to be published in 2026 has (as of Summer 2024) now commenced).

This assessment was then used to develop the next UK CCRA, published by Defra in January 2022, and the third National Adaptation Programme (NAP3) published in July 2023 , within which are numerous actions that are intended to accelerate adaptation action in the UK, alongside recommendations for local authorities on what they can do to adapt.

Alongside this, adaptation forms a key part of the Government's Environmental Improvement Plan published in January 2023. This should be referred to alongside globally-focused agreements at recent United Nations Climate Change Conferences (COP) events, such as the measures to halt and reverse nature loss, including putting 30% of the planet and 30% of degraded ecosystems under protection by 2030 which was agreed at COP15. Without climate change adaptation, such targets cannot realistically be met as the expected climate impacts of more extreme weather and associated consequences (flooding, heatwaves, wildfires, drought) will undermine them.

Flooding at Ladygrove Estate, Didcot

Defra asks certain authorities to respond to the Adaptation Reporting Power (ARP), a mechanism to produce reports on what these authorities are doing to adapt to climate change. This largely covers infrastructure providers operating on a national level. However, at the time of publication there remains an absence of local reporting requirements, targets and resourcing to assist local authorities and their partners to adequately adapt to climate change. That is why this Route Map is required, so that key actors in Oxfordshire can begin to prioritise and simplify how actions to adapt to climate change can be embedded into other activities, e.g. nature enhancement projects. Annex 3 provides a summary of the adaptation plans of key national providers.

Work that has already been done in Oxfordshire

Oxfordshire has already commenced work on climate adaptation and the table below summarises the good practice activity already undertaken, and there are also a range of plans and strategies, some of which are mandatory, where adaptation has (at least partially) been integrated.

Nature of activity	Activity title	Details
Evidence base	Climate Vulnerability Assessment and Extreme Value Analysis	AtkinsRealis were commissioned by Oxfordshire CC to produce a Climate Change Risk Assessment, a Climate Vulnerability Assessment and an Extreme Value Analysis (see section 2).
Evidence base	Local Flood Risk Management Strategy	In their role as Lead Local Flood Authority, Oxfordshire CC has produced a Flood Risk Management Strategy in partnership with the district councils. The Strategy sets a long term programme for the reduction of flood risk and priorities for implementing measures to reduce this risk. The next iteration has recently (as of August 2024) completed a round of consultation.
Evidence base	Director of Public Health Climate Change report	The latest Oxfordshire Director of Public Health Climate Change Report highlights the health impacts of climate change and the positive benefits of climate action for individuals, families and communities. It is framed around the aforementioned Climate Vulnerability Assessment.
Evidence base	Natural Capital in Oxfordshire short report	The Environmental Change Institute at the University of Oxford have produced a report that looks at the natural capital potential in Oxfordshire and maps this accordingly. The benefits of enhancing natural capital in relation to helping tackle climate change has also been addressed.
Governance and Policy	Embedding climate impact assessments into processes	All Oxfordshire CC Services have been asked to use **climate impact assessments** in decision making (see Climate Action Programme Update document 23 April 2024).
Networks and influence	Local Climate Adaptation Guide	Oxfordshire CC worked with Exeter University and partners to develop a **climate adaptation skills and knowledge resource**, aimed at engaging and supporting local decision makers to develop their capability on climate adaptation and resilience.
Governance and Policy	Oxford to Cambridge Arc Integrated Water Management Policy and Planning Project	The three-year Integrated Water Management Framework (IWMF) programme will explore how to draw together current and ongoing water, flood, natural capital, and land use planning work to **create a shared understanding of issues and pressures** and fully interconnected water and flood risk evidence base, and test and trial new approaches across the range of water functions. It is hosted by the Environment Agency's Oxford to Cambridge Team, working with stakeholders across the water sector and Oxford to Cambridge geography. An initial review has taken place (phase 1) and it is proposed to progress phase 2 as a programme of projects to reduce the complexity of addressing these issues, maximising potential of planning policy, rethinking water planning, and developing an interactive decision-making toolkit that will help organisations understand how to integrate water in their work.

Nature of activity	Activity title	Details
Nature Based Solutions Feasibility Study	Bernwood Otmoor Ray (BOR) Landscape Nature Based Solutions (NBS) Feasibility Study	Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire Wildlife Trust have led on a feasibility study to draw out the most **immediate opportunities for nature and people** in the BOR landscape, with funding from Buckinghamshire Council. The Oxfordshire Local Nature Partnership are supporting this by **investigating new funding mechanisms and income streams** based upon the ecosystem services that this region can provide for people, communities and the environment.
Natural Flood Management	Evenlode Catchment Natural Flood Management (NFM) Projects	Multiple Flood Management Schemes have been implemented in areas such as Bledington and Bruern, as part of a five-year project (2016-2021) aiming to reduce flood risk and enhance the river environment. The Environment Agency collaborated with Wild Oxfordshire, the Evenlode Catchment Partnership (ECP), Bruern Estate and the local community to deliver **agricultural land management changes and NFM measures**, including constructing 15 field corner bunds (which temporarily store 30,000m^3 of flood water), 27 leaky woody dams, and de-culverting 100m of watercourse. The NFM project was selected as the **winner of the Climate Resilient Places** category in the Flood & Coast Excellence Awards 2021.
Natural Flood Management	Freshwater network - Wetland and freshwater habitat restoration	From the Freshwater Habitats Trust website Feb 2023: "More threatened freshwater and wetland habitats will be restored, thanks to an **£811,000 Government grant** awarded to Freshwater Habitats Trust. The funding will support the national wildlife conservation charity and partner organisations to build the Freshwater Network, a national network of **wilder, wetter, cleaner and connected freshwaters**."
Capacity building	Developing capacity to develop adaptation action plans for schools	Oxfordshire CC are working on **building in-house capability** to provide site-surveys and develop bespoke climate adaptation action plans for their own schools, identifying a range of passive, behavioural and operational measures for schools to take to reduce flooding and overheating.
Planning for heatwaves	Heat Health Action Plan	Through working with Public Health, a Heat Health Action Plan has been developed to **support vulnerable residents during possible heatwave events** over the summer, including to identify near-term improvements to provision of advice and guidance to residents and increase the uptake on Community Resilience Plans with added emphasis on heatwave planning.

Developing this Route Map

This Route Map has been co-developed by Oxfordshire's stakeholders through an extensive stakeholder engagement programme (see Annex 2), which included training and co-creation workshops, interviews and surveys. Other previously produced pieces of work have also been consulted in order to inform the Route Map, especially the risk assessment and implementation blueprint elements, including:

- The Independent Assessment of UK Climate Risk (CCRA3) (2021)

- The Oxfordshire Climate Vulnerability Assessment (see section 2) (2023)
- The West Midlands Climate Change Adaptation Plan (2021)
- Other local area, place-based adaptation planning conducted by SWM and others in recent years

3 The evidence base for action

3.1 Economic assessment

Alongside the development of this Route Map, Paul Watkiss Associates (PWA) has undertaken a high-level assessment of the potential economic costs of climate change to Oxfordshire. This has included looking at the potential impact climate change could have on the county's GDP, and providing an economic rationale for implementing the very high priority actions included in this Route Map. The full analysis is available in a separate report upon request.

Indicative results show that, when compared to a 2015 baseline, and if no adaptation is taken, climate change could reduce Oxfordshire's GDP by:

- **0.5% to 0.8% by 2030**
- **2.3% to 3.4% by 2050**
- **3.7% to 6.5% by 2070**

These and other potential scenarios are represented in Figure 1 below, which shows how a range of potential global emissions trajectories may impact Oxfordshire's GDP. In short, the greater the global emissions reductions, the less impact there is likely to be on GDP in Oxfordshire. However, even with rapid emissions reductions, GDP is still likely to be reduced if no adaptation takes place.

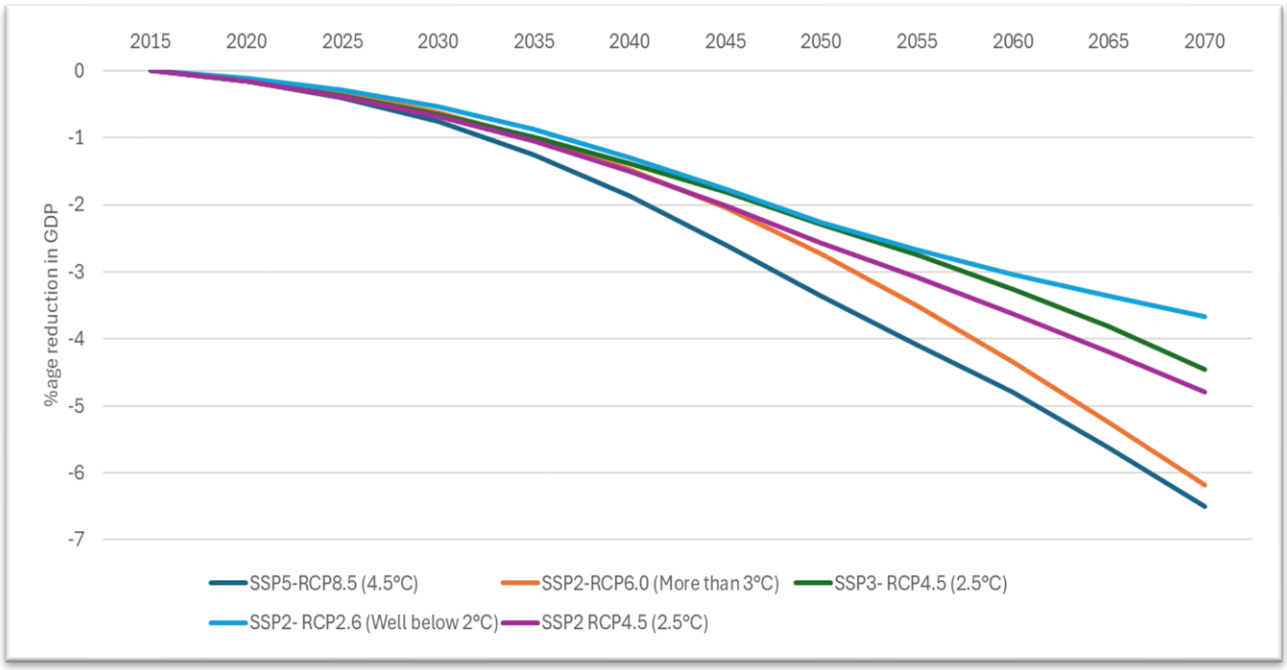


Figure 1: Potential GDP Contraction in Oxfordshire from Climate Change

It should be noted that, due to numerous uncertainties with regards to exactly how the climate will change in Oxfordshire, GDP may reduce by an even greater extent in reality, especially if more unprecedented extreme weather events occur than are currently anticipated.

Either way, the figures make a compelling case for action, as they show that climate change will have a negative impact on local economic performance. As such, adapting to projected climatic change is

fundamental to building Oxfordshire's economic resilience and limiting the likely negative impacts described above.

This is one of the main drivers for this Route Map and the actions that are included within it. Section 4 outlines the immediate actions (up to 31 March 2026) that stakeholders in Oxfordshire should take to commence the process of adapting to climate change now, with Annex 1 providing the full suite of actions.

PWA have also undertaken an economic appraisal of these actions that summarises the economic benefit of their implementation. Their analysis finds that **there is a strong economic case for investing in early adaptation actions in Oxfordshire**, given the future climate change impacts that are projected for the county, and because the benefits of such actions are likely to outweigh the costs. It also finds that the 'very high priority' actions included in section 4 and Annex 1 have a **clear economic case and rationale**.

3.2 Summary of the Oxfordshire Climate Vulnerability Assessment

See: Oxfordshire Climate Vulnerability Assessment for full details

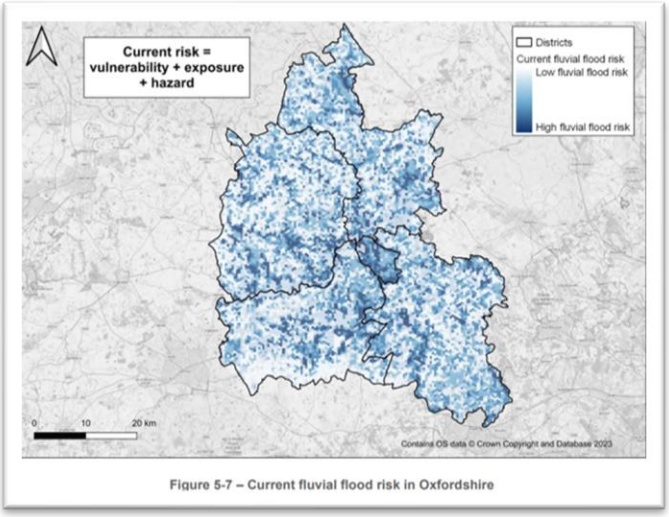


Figure 5-7 – Current fluvial flood risk in Oxfordshire

This report, commissioned by Oxfordshire CC, and produced by AtkinsRealis, looks at current and future risks posed by climate-related hazards with regards to the four key thematic areas used in the CCRA and that will be used in this Route Map: 1) critical infrastructure, 2) health, communities and the built environment, 3) natural environment and assets and 4) business and industry. The report includes:

- A summary of climate-related events since 2000, current climate-related hazards, and their impacts nationally and for Oxfordshire.
- A future risk assessment looking at future climate change scenarios projected in 2050.
- A health impact assessment to help identify the impact of climate on health and wellbeing, focusing on communities and infrastructure that are particularly vulnerable or exposed to climate hazards and Oxfordshire's current capacity to manage risks.
- Mapping of flood and heatwave risks, as well as a synthesis of available evidence related to other risks.

Actions included later in this document have been partially derived from the key findings of the Vulnerability Assessment and have also been used to produce the climate change risk assessment overleaf. It is upon these assessments that relevant actions must be developed to ensure that the county is adequately addressing the aspects that need most attention.

Key findings from the Vulnerability Assessment include:

- Heatwaves are becoming more frequent in the county, although the overall impacts of extreme heat are less well understood than the impacts from floods.
- Flooding has occurred frequently and presented the most significant climate risk in recent years.

- Drought, high winds, storms and low temperatures are still important climate-hazards, posing risks to all four themes.
- Compound risks, where multiple climate hazards and other factors combine to cause an impact, are becoming more prevalent.
- Current climate risks are not evenly spread across the county, with higher risks to vulnerable populations and future climate risks likely to exacerbate existing inequalities. The wards at highest risk are located in specific areas of Abingdon, Witney and Oxford City.
- For health impacts, vulnerable characteristics include the elderly, children and people who work outside. The potential impacts are on mental health, mortality, morbidity and healthcare services buildings and operations.

3.3 Oxfordshire Climate Change Risk and Opportunity Assessment

Introduction and summary of methodology

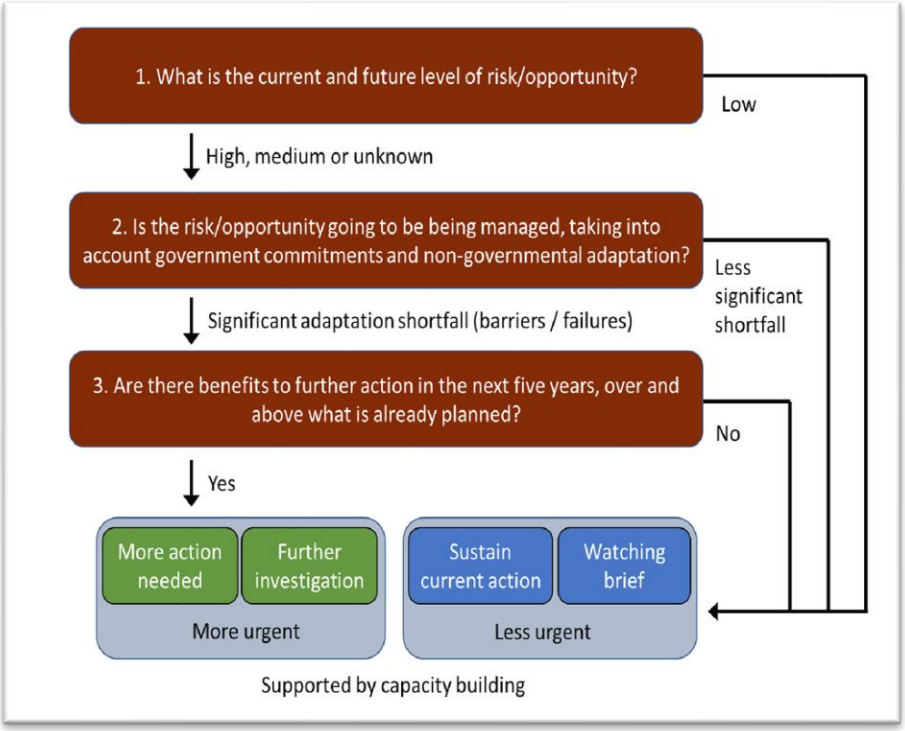
This section summarises the risks and opportunities that climate change presents in Oxfordshire. The list of risks and opportunities, complied by Paul Watkiss Associates, takes into account a combination of the Climate Vulnerability Assessment (CVA) detailed in the previous section, and the Third Climate Change Risk Assessment for England formulated by the CCC as part of their Independent Assessment (published in 2021) in informing the latest UK Climate Change Risk Assessment (CCRA3, published in 2022). It does not take into account any work that has been undertaken since 2022 that may affect the risk scores assigned in CCRA3; the next CCRA independent assessment will be completed in 2026 and will reflect this.

The CCRA3 method prioritises risks and opportunities into differing levels of urgency, based on three key questions:

1. What is the current and future level of risk/opportunity?

2. Is the risk/opportunity going to be being managed, considering Government commitments and other non-Government adaptation?

3. Are there benefits to further action in the next five years, over and above what is already planned?



The overall flow chart showing this is outlined above (as given by the CCC).

The four categories of urgency are as follows (as given by the CCC):

Category	Description
More action needed	New, stronger or different Government action, whether policies, implementation activities or enabling environment for adaptation, over and above those already planned, are beneficial in the next five years to reduce climate risks or take advantage of opportunities. This will include different responses according to the nature of the risks and the type of adaptation: • Addressing current and near-term risks or opportunities with low and no-regret options (implementing activities or building capacity). • Integrating climate change in near-term decisions with a long lifetime or lock-in. • Early adaptation for decisions with long lead-times or where early planning is needed as part of adaptive management.
Further investigation	On the basis of available information, it is not known if more action is needed or not. More evidence is urgently needed to fill significant gaps or reduce the uncertainty in the current level of understanding in order to assess the need for additional action.
Sustain current action	Current or planned levels of activity are appropriate, but continued implementation of these policies or plans is needed to ensure that the risk or opportunity continues to be managed in the future.
Watching brief	The evidence in these areas should be kept under review, with continuous monitoring of risk levels and adaptation activity (or the potential for opportunities and adaptation) so that further action can be taken if necessary.

More details about the methodology that was used to produce the England assessment and the urgency scores can be found on the UK Climate Risk website. We have also provided the methodology that was used to compile the risk and opportunity assessment, and the limitations thereof, in the Annex 2.

Risk and opportunity assessment

This high-level analysis suggests that Oxfordshire's own climate risks (and importantly, the urgency to address them within the next five years) are not substantially different from those identified at the national level for CCRA3 (presented below) and should serve as the basis to inform this Route Map. However, the analysis highlights a number of areas where stakeholder judgement indicates that, whilst the scores themselves may not be different, the adaptation efforts may warrant greater attention. These were notably in three areas:

- Building adaptive capacity in Flood Risk Management (noting the concerns raised in accessing Flood Risk Management funding to deliver schemes).
- Water availability, noting that many issues in the Water Resources Management Plan to manage drought were completely or partially outside the remit of Thames Water and subject to various stakeholder views and perspectives.
- Overheating in healthcare and council estates. There were examples cited of this already being a problem, for example a library constructed in 2016 which regularly reached 45 degrees Centigrade.

Theme: Natural Environment and Assets			
Risk or Opportunity	**Risk number and Receptor**	**Nature of risk/opportunity**	**Revised urgency score**
RISKS	N1. Terrestrial species and habitats	Changing climatic conditions and extreme events, including temperature change, water scarcity, wildfire, flooding, wind, and altered hydrology	**More action needed**

		(including water scarcity, flooding and saline intrusion)	
RISKS	N2. Terrestrial species and habitats	Pests, pathogens and invasive species	**More action needed**
RISKS	N4. Soils	Changing climatic conditions, including seasonal aridity and wetness	**More action needed**
RISKS	N7. Agriculture	Pests, pathogens and invasive species	**More action needed**
RISKS	N8. Forestry	Pests, pathogens and invasive species	**More action needed**
RISKS	N11. Freshwater species and habitats	Changing climatic conditions and extreme events, including higher water temperatures, flooding, water scarcity and phenological shifts	**More action needed**
RISKS	N12. Freshwater species and habitats	Pests, pathogens and invasive species	**More action needed**
RISKS & OPPORTUNITIES	N5. Natural carbon stores, carbon sequestration and GHG emissions	Changing climatic conditions, including temperature change and water scarcity	**More action needed**
RISKS & OPPORTUNITIES	N6. Agricultural and forestry productivity	Extreme events and changing climatic conditions (including temperature change, water scarcity, wildfire, flooding, coastal erosion, wind)	**More action needed**
RISKS & OPPORTUNITIES	N18. Landscape character	Climate change	**Further investigation**
OPPORTUNITIES	N3. Terrestrial species and habitats	New species colonisations	**Further investigation**
OPPORTUNITIES	N9. Agricultural and forestry productivity	New/alternative species becoming suitable	**Further investigation**
OPPORTUNITIES	N13. Freshwater species and habitats	New species colonisations	**Sustain current action**
Theme: Infrastructure			
Risk or Opportunity	**Risk number and Receptor**	**Nature of risk/opportunity**	**Revised urgency score**
RISKS	I1. Infrastructure networks (water, energy, transport, ICT)	Cascading failures	**More action needed**
RISKS	I2. Infrastructure services	River, surface water and groundwater flooding	**More action needed**
RISKS	I4. Bridges and pipelines	Flooding and erosion	**Further investigation**
RISKS	I5. Transport networks	Slope and embankment failure	**More action needed**
RISKS	I6. Hydroelectric generation	Low or high river flows	**Further investigation**
RISKS	I7. Subterranean and surface infrastructure	Subsidence	**Further investigation**
RISKS	I8. Public water supplies	Reduced water availability	**More action needed**
RISKS	I9. Energy generation	Reduced water availability	**Watching brief**
RISKS	I10. Energy	High and low temperatures, high winds, lightning	**Further investigation**

RISKS	I12. Transport networks	High and low temperatures, high winds, lightning	**More action needed**
RISKS	I13. Digital	High and low temperatures, high winds, lightning	**Further investigation**
Theme: Health, Communities and the Built Environment			
Risk or Opportunity	**Risk number and Receptor**	**Nature of risk/opportunity**	**Revised urgency score**
RISKS	H1. Health and wellbeing	High temperatures	**More action needed**
RISKS	H3. People, communities and buildings	Flooding	**More action needed**
RISKS	H5. Building fabric	Moisture, wind and driving rain	**Further investigation**
RISKS	H7. Health and wellbeing	Changes in indoor and outdoor air quality	**Further investigation**
RISKS	H8. Health	Vector-borne disease	**More action needed**
RISKS	H9. Food safety and food security	Higher temperatures (food safety) and extreme weather (food security)	**Further investigation**
RISKS	H10. Health	Poor water quality and household water supply interruptions	**Further investigation**
RISKS	H11. Cultural heritage	Changes in temperature, precipitation, groundwater, land, ocean and coastal change	**More action needed**
RISKS	H12. Health and social care delivery	Extreme weather	**More action needed**
RISKS	H13. Delivery of Education and prison services	Extreme weather	**More action needed**
RISKS & OPPORTUNITIES	H6. Household energy demand	Summer and winter temperature changes	**More action needed**
OPPORTUNITIES	H2. Health and wellbeing	High temperatures	**Further investigation**
Theme: Business and Industry			
Risk or Opportunity	**Risk number and Receptor**	**Nature of risk/opportunity**	**Revised urgency score**
RISKS	B1. Flooding of business sites	Increase in flood risk	**More action needed**
RISKS	B3. Business production processes	Water scarcity	**Further investigation**
RISKS	B4. Business access to finance, investment and insurance	Extreme weather	**Sustain current action**
RISKS	B5. Reduced employee productivity in businesses	Infrastructure disruption and higher temperatures in working environments	**Further investigation**
RISKS	B6. Disruption to business supply chains and distribution networks	Extreme weather	**More action needed**
OPPORTUNITIES	B7. Changes in demand for goods and services	Long-term climate change	**Further investigation**

4 Priority Actions for 2025/26

4.1 Introduction

Following extensive stakeholder engagement and consideration of the evidence base, this section summarises those actions that are deemed a **'very high-immediate' (VH-I)** priority for implementation in the first financial year, 2025/26. Other actions that are deemed 'very high,' 'high' or 'medium' in priority are included in Annex 1, the implementation blueprint.

The table overleaf sets out:

- Actions that should be implemented, or be on the way to implementation, by the end of the financial year 2025/26 (i.e. by 31 March 2026), all of which will begin to help adapt Oxfordshire's natural environment, infrastructure, people and businesses to a changing climate. The table also includes a justification and further explanation as to how these actions have been developed.

- The suggested order in which to begin implementation of each action has been provided (far-left column); although many of them should be carried out concurrently.

- Key stakeholders who are likely to have a role in implementing these actions (ordered alphabetically against each action).

- Where an action requires resourcing/ funding, an indication as to whether there is resourcing/ funding secured already (Yes), whether funding has been secured to support part of the action, or to enable the action to be kick-started (Partially), whether it is planned and upcoming (Planned) or where resourcing/ funding needs to be sourced (No). A reference to 'Low/no cost' in this column indicates that only a small amount of additional resource is likely to be required to undertake this action.

- Whether implementing this action is expected to be intense from a resourcing and cost perspective, from L (Low), Medium (M) to H (High).

- Whether the action is a 'no regret (No Regret)' action that will need to be implemented regardless of the future trajectory of climate change and the nature of resulting climate impacts., whether the action is 'no regret, but may require minor modifications (No Regret (M))' should climate projections significantly change, or whether the action requires 'continuous monitoring (Cont. Monitor)' when implemented to determine its effectiveness under a range of future climate scenarios.

Further details on the actions, the methodology and the full set of all proposed actions is included in Annex 1.

4.2 List of acronyms

Each action details the stakeholders who are likely to have a role in implementation, the acronyms of which are listed below.

Acronym	Organisation
BBOWT	Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire Wildlife Trust
BOB ICB	Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West Integrated Care Board
BRE	Building Research Establishment
CAG	Community Action Group Oxfordshire
DB&T	Department for Business & Trade
Defra	Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs
DHSC	Department of Health & Social Care
District Councils	All district councils in Oxfordshire: West Oxfordshire District Council, Vale of the White Horse District Council, Cherwell District Council, South Oxfordshire District Council and Oxford City Council
EA	Environment Agency
FC	Forestry Commission
GSENZH	Greater South East Net Zero Hub
HE	Historic England
JORT	Joint Oxfordshire Resilience Team
LCGs	Local community groups
LEP	Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership
LHRF	Local Health Resilience Partnership
LRF	Local Resilience Forum
MHCLG	Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government
NE	Natural England
NFF	National Flood Forum
NFU	National Farmers' Union
NHS	National Health Service
NLCF	National Lottery Communities Fund
NT	National Trust
OACP	Oxfordshire Association of Care Providers
OALC	Oxfordshire Association of Local Councils
OBU	Oxford Brookes University
OHFT	Oxford Health NHS Foundation Trust
OLNP	Oxfordshire Local Nature Partnership
OUH	Oxford University Hospitals
Oxfordshire CC CA	Oxfordshire County Council Climate Action Team
Oxfordshire CC L&NR	Oxfordshire County Council Landscape & Nature Recovery
Oxfordshire CC PH	Oxfordshire County Council Public Health

Acronym	Organisation
RSPB	Royal Society for the Protection of Birds
SWM	Sustainability West Midlands
TW	Thames Water
UKHSA	UK Health Security Agency
UOx	University of Oxford
WO	Wild Oxfordshire

Overleaf commences the Priority Actions for the 2025/26 financial year.

4.3 The Priority Actions for 2025/26

Key to colour coding in the 'No.' column:

Enabling actions: governance, reporting and monitoring	Natural Environment and Assets	Health, Communities and the Built Environment	Business and Industry, including Agriculture

No.	Action	Further information and action justification	Relevant stakeholders that could support action implementation	Possible example funder(s)	Funding/ resource secured	Resource Intensity	Type of action
1.	Report on progress with delivery of this Route Map and implementation blueprint annually to the FOP and set up a monitoring framework.	This will ensure actions are kept relevant and are being delivered with success measures identified. One of the first actions that should be undertaken is the development of a monitoring system that goes alongside this Route Map to track progress (see recommendations section). A mechanism to celebrate success of actions that have been implemented should also be established alongside the overall monitoring system.	All partners	Defra EA	Low/no cost	**L/M**	**No Regret**
2.	Develop a new Oxfordshire-wide Climate Adaptation Working Group under the Zero Carbon Oxfordshire Partnership (ZCOP) structure.	This group will help to make implementation of actions through catalysis and collaboration. It will also ensure implementation is considerate of all key stakeholder's needs. The first steps will be to develop a Terms of Reference within which all partners' roles and responsibilities should be clearly defined. Where district councils are not currently part of ZCOP (e.g. South and Vale), they will still be invited to join the new adaptation group.	ZCOP and other stakeholders as required, including all the district councils	EA Defra All potential group members	Yes	**L/M**	**No Regret**
3.	Ensure that climate change adaptation forms a key part of the emerging Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) for Oxfordshire.	Nature is struggling in no small part due to climate change. It will not recover unless the recovery options consider how nature may fare in a future climate (see action 18 in the full implementation blueprint). It is a huge opportunity to use LNRSs to allow nature to become a significant part of the adaptation solution, by ensuring that new nature creation/ enhancement programmes help to create a bigger, better, and more joined up natural environment which will be more resilient to the impacts from climate change. Considering the LNRS through this lens will also help to address any conservation-focused actions that may conflict with what is required from an adaptation perspective.	BBOWT EA FC NE NT/HE Oxfordshire CC L&NR RSPB WO	-	Yes	**L**	**No Regret (M)**

No.	Action	Further information and action justification	Relevant stakeholders that could support action implementation	Possible example funder(s)	Funding/ resource secured	Resource Intensity	Type of action
4.	Expand efforts to Identify financing options and funding sources to enable implementation and integrate into the next budget cycle.	Ultimately, funding will be required to take forward many of the actions outlined in this Plan. The aforementioned Working Groups and the 100 Together initiative and the forthcoming Green Investment Pipeline and Prospectus can be used to facilitate potential partnerships and to develop a financing strategy to help take forward projects across the county and encourage research of innovative approaches to implementation. Existing public and private funding options that currently focus on other areas can also be utilised, e.g. carbon markets, river catchment and nature restoration funds etc, and adaptation activity integrated where feasible.	District Councils GSENZH LEP OBU OLNP Oxfordshire CC CA UOx	To be determined by this action	Low/no cost	**L/M**	**No Regret**
5.	Develop a set of adaptation capacity building materials that are specifically targeted at executive officers, Cabinet Members and Councillors across the county.	Senior officers in a range of public, private and voluntary organisations, along with Cabinet Members and Councillors in local authorities, are crucial to enabling local action on climate adaptation. Without their support, many of these actions either could not be implemented at all or as effectively, and therefore their buy-in underpins many actions within this Plan. Materials will also need to be versatile or targeted to accommodate the key differences between organisations (e.g. service-oriented and planning-oriented teams). In some cases, training will need to be integrated into existing programmes such as carbon literacy training that many councils have already undertake. Adaptation could also be embedded into new staff inductions to highlight its importance.	CAG District Councils Oxfordshire CC CA, Comms SWM	-	No	**L/M**	**No Regret (M)**
6.	Embed and/or support delivery of climate adaptation into a range of co-dependent strategies and plans being produced by council departments/ external partners.	A list of plans and strategies to which this action applies can be found in Annex 2. Each plan will individually need consideration as to how to best embed adaptation into them. Some of these plans are statutory and can be used as strong hooks for action. Also, adaptation should be embedded into any future iterations of Oxfordshire CC's Climate Action Framework. This embedment is crucial to ensure that decision making is factoring the impact climate change could have on various future policies. Without this, many of these strategies and action plans may not be fit for purpose.	Numerous council departments and external partners	-	No	**M**	**No Regret (M)**

No.	Action	Further information and action justification	Relevant stakeholders that could support action implementation	Possible example funder(s)	Funding/ resource secured	Resource Intensity	Type of action
7.	Each district council should begin to consider developing an adaptation plan.	This Route Map covers actions that need to take place across the whole county to accelerate adaptation to climate change. However, it does not go into detail about how climate change could affect specific service areas, and locations, that are under the jurisdiction of the district councils. Therefore, each district council should begin to prepare a plan outlining what it may need to do additionally to adapt its services to climate change.	District councils Oxfordshire CC CA	-	No	**M**	**No Regret**
8.	Provide adaptation training for health and social care delivery professionals and senior leaders.	The health and social care sector needs to adapt to the increasing threats it faces from a changing climate. Buy-in and understanding can be achieved through capacity building training - explaining what adaptation means, its relevance to the NHS and what can be done at the Trust/ICB level by way of implementation.	BOB ICB NHS England OACP OHFT OUH Oxfordshire CC PH SWM/Sniffer	DHSC UKHSA NHS	Partially	**L/M**	**No Regret (M)**
9.	Ensure climate risks to health, buildings and infrastructure that affect health and care settings are embedded into corporate risk / business continuity plans.	Embedment into these plans, which all care settings are already required to produce, will ensure such risks can be considered more routinely and discussed and monitored by risk professionals within the heart of the health and social care sector.	GPs LHRF OHFT OHU Other health and care providers UKHSA	-	Low/no cost	**L**	**No Regret (M)**
10.	Identify and appraise climate adaptation options for the most vulnerable health and care assets.	Such locations accommodate some of the county's most vulnerable people, especially if they are elderly and have underlying physical or mental health conditions. In particular, all such assets are likely to overheat more often in future if they have not been constructed with climate change in mind, meaning that there is a greater likelihood of mortality and extreme discomfort as a consequence of extreme heatwave conditions. Therefore, building on the Director of Public Health's Climate Change report which helps to identify the most vulnerable health and care settings at risk from climate change, vulnerable assets should be evaluated for overheating and	BOB ICB BRE EA OACP and other health bodies OHFT OHU	DHSC UKHSA NHS England	No	**H**	**Cont. Monitor**

No.	Action	Further information and action justification	Relevant stakeholders that could support action implementation	Possible example funder(s)	Funding/ resource secured	Resource Intensity	Type of action
		flooding risks. To help support this, the EA are producing a piece on climate transition which will look at doctors, nurseries, care homes etc.	Oxfordshire CC PH, social care Technical consultancies UKHSA				
11.	Produce an adaptation plan for the NHS Integrated Care System and Trusts that cover Oxfordshire.	The above action can help to identify adaptation options for individual assets. Armed with this intelligence, an adaptation plan should be produced for the healthcare sector in Oxfordshire that sets out and prioritises which assets to adapt first and which options to take forward. The plan should also set out options to address how climate change could affect service delivery and patient care due to increasing extreme heat, flooding, water scarcity and other climate related risks. The new Green Plan adaptation guidance on the WeAdapt platform and SWM's Adapt to Survive toolkit can be used to assist with this.	BOB ICB NHS England OHFT OHU Oxfordshire CC PH SWM	DHSC UKHSA NHS England	No	**L/M**	**No Regret**
12.	Conduct an analysis of which of Oxfordshire's habitats, species and crops could be most affected by climate change, including the negative impacts of new pests, pathogens or invasive non-native species (INNS).	Climate change is likely to affect multiple species in a range of different ways. Oxfordshire would benefit from having greater awareness of which of its habitats and species are most (and least) likely to be at risk of decline or stress under a range of climate scenarios. In addition, pests, pathogens and INNS are more likely to establish themselves due to climate change. Launching local analyses on how these could affect habitats and species in the county would represent a first step to help prepare and protect ecosystems from their most negative consequences, especially high-quality habitats already at risk from climate change, and that could potentially benefit from opportunities new species may bring. Lessons could also be learned from approaches taken abroad, along with resources produced by NE including their Climate Change Adaptation Manual and Climate Change Vulnerability Model. Following this, more targeted measures could be identified and data from the Forestry Commission's TreeAlert system could be obtained to aid with this.	BBOWT Defra EA FC NE Oxfordshire CC L&NR RSPB UOx WO	Defra NE FC	No	**M/H**	**Cont. Monitor**

No.	Action	Further information and action justification	Relevant stakeholders that could support action implementation	Possible example funder(s)	Funding/ resource secured	Resource Intensity	Type of action
13.	Produce new county-wide climate change adaptation guidance for developers.	Guidance on how to ensure new developments integrate climate adaptation measures should encourage developers to design new homes and commercial premises in a particular way and, in this case, will assist with the objective that all new residential and commercial developments consider their longevity and performance in a future climate (e.g. through solar gain, ventilation, rainwater harvesting, avoiding non-permeable driveways etc.). Developers should be guided in the right direction and adhere to the guidance for all new developments, via a robust procurement and monitoring process. A guide developed across the whole county born from collaboration between the district councils would help with consistency of messaging, sharing of resources and assist with integration into the next round of Local Plans.	Developers District Council EA Oxfordshire CC Property Services	EA MHCLG DB&T	No	**L/M**	**Cont. Monitor**
14.	Expand on the Oxfordshire Way, existing work and relationships to empower vulnerable communities to develop climate change adaptation and/or community emergency plans.	Communities in Oxfordshire could increasingly struggle to cope in the event of an extreme weather incident. This could be due to the demographic of the residents, their rural isolation or being in (e.g.) a flood risk area. Such communities will need better protection and support to prevent issues such as displacement or health implications. Oxfordshire CC has mapped where the most vulnerable communities to climate change may be located, and have already established Flood Groups across the county, alongside developing tools such as the Local Climate Action Toolkit. These areas should be targeted as initial pilots for developing climate adaptation plans that expand beyond flood risk, with the process then being rolled out to other communities that would benefit most from having a plan in place. Delivery of capacity building training with these communities, using existing and well-established networks, may need to be commissioned first (which could be linked to the below).	District councils EA LCGs LRF/ Fire Service NFF OALC Oxfordshire CC JORT, CA, Flood Risk Parish councils TW	EA Defra MHCLG NLCF	Partially	**M**	**No Regret (M)**
15.	Establish a climate risk and adaptation engagement programme for farmers and land managers.	Farming represents a significant proportion of the Oxfordshire landscape (over 70% of Oxfordshire's land as of 2024). Adopting new land management practices to help alleviate flood risk could positively affect many local communities, and the farm itself.	BBOWT Catchment partnerships Defra District councils	Defra EA	No	**M**	**No Regret (M)**

No.	Action	Further information and action justification	Relevant stakeholders that could support action implementation	Possible example funder(s)	Funding/ resource secured	Resource Intensity	Type of action
		Climate change also poses risks to the types of crops that can grow, therefore raising awareness of alternatives or ways to protect existing crops would also be beneficial from a food security and economic perspective. However, at present, there is limited coordinated support on this agenda for farmers, along with how the Local Nature Recovery Strategy, Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG), Environmental Land Management Schemes (ELMS) and other mechanisms can contribute to adaptation. An engagement programme showing how farmers can effectively adapt both their business activities (e.g. crop types etc.) to climate change and contribute positively to local land management to help will provide a good place to start.	EA Food Alliance NE NFU and other farm cluster facilitators Oxfordshire CC CA, Flood Risk TW				

5 Next steps and initial recommendations

This Route Map, and the engagement that informed its development, is just the first step in ensuring that Oxfordshire's people, places and businesses can adapt to climate change.

Sunrise over fields in Drayton, Oxfordshire

It is therefore hugely important that authorities and organisations that are able to take forward these actions do so now, either by identifying the necessary resourcing, working collaboratively or sourcing funding from elsewhere. The declaration of climate emergencies from all councils in Oxfordshire emphasises the importance of taking ambitious actions such as those identified in this document.

As such, it is recommended that the following next steps and principles are taken to support successful implementation of the Route Map.

Maintain engagement with stakeholders

Throughout the development of the Route Map, various rounds of stakeholder engagement have been undertaken, and connections and relationships have been established and built upon. This Route Map has very much been co-created, as without stakeholder input the implementation blueprint would likely have looked very different, less location-specific and not reflective of existing local activity.

In their role as a coordinating body, Oxfordshire CC will build on this engagement by convening a new Oxfordshire-wide Climate Adaptation Working Group, fitting into the structure of the new Zero Carbon Oxfordshire Partnership (ZCOP). This will include all the district councils, even if they are not currently part of the ZCOP, along with key stakeholders who are likely to be chiefly responsible for implementing the actions in this plan. This should launch alongside publication of this Route Map so that it is still fresh in people's minds and, initially, should be used to agree who will lead on each of the VH-I 2025/26 actions.

As the term 'working group' suggests, the group will be active, action-focused and collaborative; in other words, it should exist to take forward the highest priority actions. The group's Terms of Reference will be reflective of this ambition.

Identify priorities

The first step is to agree a list of actions with partners that are going to be implemented in the first year, or where implementation will be commenced quickly. We have provided our perspective on how each action should be prioritised for implementation in the full implementation blueprint provided in Annex 1:

VH-I	Very High and Immediate
VH	Very High
H	High
M	Medium

This is based on the following aspects:

- The urgency of the risk based on the risk assessment
- The resource intensity of implementation and the likely cost/benefit
- Potential financing options available
- The co-benefits that implementing the action would bring
- The potential scale of the impact
- Whether the action builds on existing work
- Whether the action is a quick-win and can be implemented at pace
- Whether there is clear stakeholder expertise to mobilise implementation
- Whether implementation has national or local policy backing

Integration

Wherever possible, adaptation measures will be integrated into Net Zero and other relevant activities to maximise the impact of the activity whilst minimising resource requirements. This also ensures adaptation actions do not threaten to contradict Net Zero targets, or visa-versa. Many actions provide suggestions on how to do this.

Adaptation financing

Identifying financing options will be crucial to the successful implementation of some of these actions. Mapping of these opportunities and lobbying of central Government needs to take place hand-in-hand, to encourage appropriate investment. There also needs to be strategic use of public sector funds to lever in appropriate private sector investment. The 100 Together initiative set up in Oxfordshire and the forthcoming Green Investment Pipeline and Prospectus provides a key mechanism to identify private financing sources that may be suitable for adaptation.

Outcomes and measures of success

Undertaking a cost-benefit analysis of each action will provide some element of quantification and give backing to implementation. A high-level analysis of this has commenced in the form of the economic rationale (see section 3.1), but a more in-depth analysis will be needed when embarking on implementation of actions where investment is required. Where undertaking a cost-benefit analysis is not possible, it is still important to consider what the specific outcomes are for each action, in order to make the case for implementation.

View from Wittenham Clumps, north of Didcot and Wallingford

Building in flexibility

Despite having an understanding of the likely broad climatic changes expected to occur in Oxfordshire, it is impossible to be specific about exactly what is going to happen and to what timeframe, due to various elements of uncertainty.

Not knowing exactly when, and to what extent, we need to take action makes both implementation of adaptation actions, and making the case for implementation, more challenging. This is why the implementation blueprint highlights many 'no regret' actions that can be implemented in the face of this uncertainty. However, this may be more challenging with others where (e.g.) significant investment is required.

It will therefore be important to build flexibility into adaptation actions by taking an adaptation pathways approach, which can help to manage the long-term and uncertain nature of climate change impacts. It will allow projects to be scaled up or down depending on how the climate changes in reality, and will also show what level of adaptation needs to take place against a range of plausible scenarios.

Monitoring and evaluation (M&E)

Developing a process for M&E that outlines how and when actions will be assessed and allows progress to be captured against each action is critical. A first step will be to develop a monitoring system or integrate adaptation actions into an already established monitoring system, which allows for the capturing of progress against each action. This will include milestones and dates agreed with the FOP on the 2025/26 (VH-I) actions. A reporting mechanism will also be established to ensure progress is being communicated to partners and senior leaders. Oxfordshire CC will take responsibility for the M&E process as the county-wide coordinating body, and seek regular updates on progress from the FOP members and other relevant partners responsible for implementation as required.

The Local Partnerships Climate Adaptation Toolkit for Local Authorities (page 40+) provides more information on M&E and how this can be achieved.

6 Further information sources

- Climate Change Committee: UK Climate Risk (CCRA3)
- Climate Change Committee: Adaptation Progress Report
- Defra: A Green Future: Our 25 Year Plan to Improve the Environment
- Defra: Climate Change Adaptation Reporting Power reports
- Defra: National Adaptation Programme (NAP)
- Defra: UK Climate Change Risk Assessment 2022
- Environment Agency: Climate Change Allowances for Flood Risk Schemes
- Environment Agency: Flood Risk Mapping
- Environment Agency: National Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management Strategy for England
- Environment Agency: National Framework for Water Resources
- Environment Agency: Sign up for flood warnings service
- Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC)
- King's College London: Maximising UK Adaptation to Climate Change (MACC) hub
- Local Partnerships: Climate change adaptation pages and toolkit
- Met Office: Local Authority Climate Service
- Met Office: Weather warnings alert service
- Oxfordshire County Council: Climate Vulnerability Assessment
- Oxfordshire County Council: Local Climate Adaptation Tool (LCAT)
- SWM: Adapt to Survive: A Tool for Building Resilience to Climate Change into Health Care Systems
- SWM: Climate change adaptation: practical examples for local authorities
- SWM: Weathering the Storm for Agriculture: A practical guide for farmers and land managers
- TCPA: The Climate Crisis – a guide for local authorities on planning for climate change
- UKRI: UK Climate Resilience Programme
- WeADAPT

Annex 1: Detailed Implementation Blueprint

Introduction

Provided overleaf is the full Implementation Blueprint that sets out:

- Actions that have been identified that, if implemented, will help to adapt Oxfordshire's natural environment, infrastructure, people and businesses to a changing climate, and a justification and further explanation as to why these actions have been selected.

- Where the action is given in **bold type**, this means it is also listed in the 2025/26 priority actions, section 4.3.

- Key stakeholders who are likely to have a role in implementing these actions.

- Where an action requires resourcing/ funding, an indication as to whether (as far as we are aware) there is resourcing/ funding secured already (Yes), whether funding has been secured to support part of the action, or to enable the action to be kick-started (Partially), whether it is planned and upcoming (Planned) or where resourcing/ funding needs to be sourced (No). A reference to 'Low/no cost' in this column indicates that only a small amount of additional resource is likely to be required to undertake this action.

- Whether implementing this action is expected to be intense from a resourcing and cost perspective, from Low (L), Medium (M) to High (H).

- Whether the action should be (either due to urgency or its simplicity) implemented in the short (within the next two years), medium (two-10 years) or long (>10 years) term.

- Whether the action is a 'no regret (No Regret)' action that could be implemented regardless of the uncertainty in the climate system and projections, whether the action is 'no regret, but may require minor modifications (No Regret (M))' should climate projections significantly change, or whether the action requires 'continuous monitoring (Cont. Monitor)' when implemented to determine its effectiveness under a range of future climate scenarios.

- Based on various aspects, we have prioritised each action as follows:

VH-I	Very High and Immediate
VH	Very High
H	High
M	Medium

- Very High-Immediate refers to actions that are urgent and should be implemented and/or be mobilised within the first year of publication of this Route Map, i.e. by the end of the financial year 2025/26. These are set out and mirrored in section 4.3 of this document.

- We have also used the principles set out in the Local Partnerships Adaptation Toolkit (Section 4.3) when selecting and considering actions:

Effectiveness – will the actions meet your objectives and if so how?	☐	**Legitimacy** – is it politically, ethically and socially acceptable?	☐
Efficiency – do the benefits exceed the costs? If not, how can they?	☐	**Urgency** – how soon could each option be implemented?	☐
Equity – the action should not adversely affect other areas or vulnerable groups	☐	**Costs** – consider social and environmental costs, not just economic	☐
Flexibility – is each option flexible and will it allow for adjustments and incremental implementation?	☐	**Robust** – is each option able to cope with a range of future climate projections?	☐
Sustainability – does each option contribute to sustainability objectives, and are they themselves sustainable?	☐	**Synergies/coherence with other strategic objectives** – does each option help to achieve other objectives?	☐
Practical – can the action be implemented on relevant timescales?	☐		

- We have ensured that the actions listed do not (e.g.) contradict other local priorities, disadvantage vulnerable people, and consider cost and efficiency, rather than merely suggesting a set of unrealistic and potentially counterproductive actions that could lead to maladaptation, prioritising no-regret actions that can be taken forward regardless of precisely how the climate changes.

- We recognise that some of these actions may be being implemented or considered by organisations that we did not consult with during the evidence-gathering stage. An established monitoring process should allow for actions to be continuously reviewed, with progress reported back through to stakeholders through the relevant established partnerships. It is also recommended that a refresh of the Route Map takes place after five years (2030).

With regards to all of the actions listed in this Annex, it should be noted that:

- Many of the actions are currently unfunded, with resourcing yet to be identified.
- The initial focus is on the 2025/26 actions, with the actions included in Annex 1 being opportunities to implement only when circumstances allow.
- Implementation of most of the actions will only take place when resources and/or funding has been secured and agreed by relevant stakeholders.
- Stakeholders have not yet committed to deliver many of the actions so far, but they will look to incorporate if and when an opportunity arises (or when resources are found).
- Stakeholders identified as being key to implementing the actions may only play a supporting, coordinating or consulting role in delivering the action, and not necessarily lead its implementation.
- Actions are currently high-level and subject to change as understanding and circumstances evolve.

Actions not included

National ARP-reporting bodies

The actions included in this Plan are those where there is no strong evidence of a coordinated response. Where there is evidence to suggest action is taking place, namely actions included in the plans published by organisations under the jurisdiction of the Adaptation Reporting Power (ARP), we have not included these

in this Plan and will assume these actions continue to be implemented. This mostly pertains to infrastructure providers, such as Network Rail, National Highways, Cadent Gas, National Grid and others (direct links to the most relevant have been provided in Annex 2). Therefore, example actions that are **not** included in this Plan include, for example, ensuring the Oxfordshire's rail network is resilient to extreme heat events, and ensuring electricity substations in Oxfordshire are protected from flood risk.

The other reason we have not included actions such as these in the Plan is due to the limited influence local stakeholders in Oxfordshire, including the councils, could have on their completion. Network Rail, for example, have a national planned coordination of works associated with strengthening rail infrastructure resilience to climate change. Aside from local organisations raising any local issues directly to them, there is little they can do by way of implementation. That means, however, it is important to ensure that the organisations reporting under the ARP are consulted in activities that may be affected by, or where they could add value to, any new adaptation actions implemented locally.

Atlantic Meridional Overturning Circulation (AMOC)

The AMOC, which includes the Gulf Stream, moves heat northwards in the Atlantic and means that Europe is milder than it would otherwise be. It is considered very likely that the AMOC will weaken as a result of climate change. This weakening would reduce the heat moved northwards, so the UK would experience less warming (but not no warming) than if the AMOC did not weaken but may also cause other changes in our weather patterns such as more winter storms. A less likely possibility is that the AMOC could collapse completely, leading the UK to experience colder temperatures in future rather than warmer temperatures, leading to a knock-on of potentially devastating effects. However, although weakening is likely, complete collapse is deemed as 'unlikely' by the Met Office, and the IPCC states that they have 'medium confidence that a collapse will not occur.'

The current science states, therefore, the continued warming of the UK climate is most likely over the coming decades, and it is this assumption that this Route Map is based upon. Deriving a list of potential actions that could also be implemented should the AMOC collapse occur is outside the scope of this project and, moreover, would likely dilute and contradict the actions that are more likely to be required based on the current science, along with expanding on an already long list of adaptation options. A watching brief on the AMOC is advised over the coming years.

List of acronyms

The implementation blueprint includes relevant stakeholders that could support action implementation. Most of these are given in acronyms, and they are listed below. It should be noted that organisations listed in the Plan are only *potential* implementors of the specified actions; it may be that the action is best led by an organisation not listed in the Plan.

Acronym	Organisation
BBOWT	Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire Wildlife Trust
BOB ICB	Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West Integrated Care Board
BITC	Business in the Community
BRE	Building Research Establishment
CAG	Community Action Group Oxfordshire

Acronym	Organisation
C&RT	Canal and River Trust
DB&T	Department for Business & Trade
Defra	Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs
DESNZ	Department for Energy Security & Net Zero
DfE	Department for Education
DfT	Department for Transport
DHSC	Department of Health and Social Care
District Councils	All district councils in Oxfordshire: West Oxfordshire District Council, Vale of the White Horse District Council, Cherwell District Council, South Oxfordshire District Council and Oxford City Council
DLUHC	Department for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities
EA	Environment Agency
EAUC	The Alliance for Sustainability Leadership & Education
FC	Forestry Commission
FSA	Food Standards Agency
FSB	Federation of Small Businesses
GHO	Growth Hub Oxfordshire
GSENZH	Greater South East Net Zero Hub
GWS	Groundwork South of England
HE	Historic England
IDBS	Internal Drainage Board
JORT	Joint Oxfordshire Resilience Team
LCGs	Local community groups
LEP	Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership
LHRF	Local Health Resilience Partnership
LRF	Local Resilience Forum
MHCLG	Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government
NE	Natural England
NFF	National Flood Forum
NFU	National Farmers' Union
NH	National Highways
NHS	National Health Service
NLCF	National Lottery Communities Fund
NLHF	National Lottery Heritage Fund
NR	Network Rail

Acronym	Organisation
NT	National Trust
OALC	Oxfordshire Association of Local Councils
OBU	Oxford Brookes University
OHFT	Oxford Health NHS Foundation Trust
OLNP	Oxfordshire Local Nature Partnership
OUH	Oxford University Hospitals
Oxfordshire CC	Oxfordshire County Council
Oxfordshire CC CA	Oxfordshire County Council Climate Action Team
Oxfordshire CC L&NR	Oxfordshire County Council Landscape & Nature Recovery
Oxfordshire CC PH	Oxfordshire County Council Public Health
RSPB	Royal Society for the Protection of Birds
SCAS	South Central Ambulance Service
SHAP	Sustainable Housing Action Partnership
SSEN	Scottish and Southern Electricity Networks
SWM	Sustainability West Midlands
TVERC	Thames Valley Environmental Records Centre
TW	Thames Water
UKHSA	UK Health Security Agency
UOx	University of Oxford
WO	Wild Oxfordshire

Overleaf commences the main Adaptation Plan for Oxfordshire.

The full implementation blueprint

No.	Action	Further information and action justification	Relevant stakeholders that could support action implementation	Possible example funder(s)	Funding/ resource secured	Resource Intensity	Time	Type of action	Priority
Enabling actions: governance, reporting and monitoring									
People, engagement and communications									
1.	**Develop a new Oxfordshire-wide Climate Adaptation Working Group under the Zero Carbon Oxfordshire Partnership (ZCOP) structure.**	This group will help to make implementation of the actions in this plan easier through catalysis and collaboration. It will also ensure implementation is considerate of all key stakeholder's needs. The first steps will be to develop a Terms of Reference within which all partners' roles and responsibilities should be clearly defined. Where district councils are not currently part of ZCOP (e.g. South and Vale), they will still be invited to join the new adaptation group.	ZCOP and other stakeholders as required, including all the district councils	EA Defra All potential group members	Yes	**L/M**	Short-term, on-going	**No Regret**	**VH-I**
2.	Ensure adaptation is fully integrated into existing relevant boards/groups.	This will help drive forward some of these actions and lobby national and local funders and policymakers to ensure adaptation to climate change is at the heart of all activities, and that the focus is not solely on Net Zero. Embedment into council Strategic Plans is paramount, as well as establishing appropriate KPIs to monitor progress as part relevant outcomes frameworks. Overall, it will help to strengthen resilience to climate change across council's corporate thinking and decision making and, thus, influence decisions that are made across the county.	All organisations can look at embedding adaptation into their KPI and reporting processes	-	Low/no cost	**L**	Short-term, on-going	**No Regret**	**VH**
3.	**Identify financing options and funding sources to enable implementation and integrate into the next budget cycle.**	Ultimately, funding will be required to take forward many of the actions outlined in this Plan. The aforementioned Working Groups and the 100 Together initiative and the forthcoming Green Investment Pipeline and Prospectus can be used to facilitate potential partnerships and to develop a financing strategy to help take forward projects across the county and encourage research of innovative approaches to implementation. Existing public and private funding options that currently focus on other areas can also be utilised, e.g. carbon markets, river catchment and nature restoration funds etc, and adaptation activity integrated where feasible. Ideally, the highest priority	District Councils GSENZH LEP OBU OLNP Oxfordshire CC CA UOx	To be determined by this action	Low/no cost	**L/M**	Short-term	**No Regret**	**VH-I**

No.	Action	Further information and action justification	Relevant stakeholders that could support action implementation	Possible example funder(s)	Funding/ resource secured	Resource Intensity	Time	Type of action	Priority
		actions outlined in this plan should be costed and funding identified by the next budgetary planning cycle, which for Oxfordshire CC is from September 2025.							
4.	**Each district council should begin to consider a specification for developing an adaptation plan.**	This Route Map covers actions that need to take place across the whole county to accelerate adaptation to climate change. However, it does not go into detail about how climate change could affect specific service areas, and locations, that are under the jurisdiction of the district councils. Therefore, each district council should begin to prepare a plan outlining what it may need to do additionally to adapt its services to climate change.	District councils Oxfordshire CC CA	-	No	**M**	Short-term	**No Regret**	**VH-I**
5.	Identify adaptation leads and other equivalent working groups in neighbouring counties.	This will ensure there is a recognition that climate risks and adaptation solutions do not stop at boundaries. This is especially relevant in relation to catchment-based schemes for example, to prevent maladaptation (e.g. flood protection in one area leading to worsening issues in another) and to share wider good practice and expertise. Better engagement with Gloucestershire, Berkshire, Buckinghamshire, Northamptonshire and Warwickshire counties would be a first step. Establishing details of relevant existing cross-boundary partnerships (e.g. the Oxford to Cambridge Pan-regional Partnership's stakeholder network, or others developed by the LRF) could also assist with this.	Oxfordshire CC CA Relevant partners as specified, including local National Landscapes and GSENZH	-	Low/no cost	**L**	Short-term	**No Regret**	**H**
6.	Ensure climate adaptation and resilience is a key theme when engaging with young people in the county.	Our future generations will be significantly affected by climate change and have plenty to lose by ineffective adaptation. We need to give them a voice on this issue via existing platforms. This could be via: • Integrating adaptation as a theme into relevant youth boards across the county. • Establishing a 'young person's voice' on the Working Group (see action 1). • Using the Climate Ambassadors Programme as a lever to educate young people on adaptation. Adaptation could also be integrated into Oxfordshire CC's existing Action on Carbon and Energy in Schools Programme as a starting point for engagement.	Colleges EAUC OBU Oxfordshire CC Education UOx Youth organisations, such as Oxfordshire Youth	-	Low/no cost	**L**	Short-term	**No Regret**	**H**

No.	Action	Further information and action justification	Relevant stakeholders that could support action implementation	Possible example funder(s)	Funding/ resource secured	Resource Intensity	Time	Type of action	Priority
7.	**Develop a set of adaptation capacity building materials that are specifically targeted at executive officers, Cabinet Members and Councillors across the county.**	Senior officers in a range of public, private and voluntary organisations, along with Cabinet Members and Councillors in local authorities, are crucial to enabling local action on climate adaptation. Without their support, many of these actions either could not be implemented at all or as effectively, and therefore their buy-in underpins many actions within this Plan. Materials will also need to be versatile or targeted to accommodate the key differences between organisations (e.g. service-oriented and planning-oriented teams). In some cases, training will need to be integrated into existing programmes such as carbon literacy training that many councils already undertake. Adaptation could also be embedded into new staff inductions to highlight its importance.	CAG District Councils Oxfordshire CC CA, Comms SWM	-	No	**L/M**	Short-term	**No Regret (M)**	**VH-I**
8.	Establish and rollout a climate change adaptation public communications strategy and plan.	A communications strategy that focuses on wider sustainability issues, but where adaptation and personal resilience is incorporated as a key theme, should be produced. Successful engagement may come in the form of an initial focus on various co-benefits, but the adaptation and resilience message should be formed through this. This could also include the use of behavioural change specialists and a focus on healthy place-shaping and the links to adaptation. Lessons could be learnt on how messaging on Covid-19 was established, which resulted in rapid and fundamental change.	Climate Outreach District Councils EA LCGs OBU Oxfordshire CC CA, Comms UOx	Defra EA	Partially	**L/M**	Short-term	**No Regret (M)**	**H**
9.	Develop an online hub of adaptation resources.	Expand the existing climate adaptation webpages on the Oxfordshire CC website, the Oxfordshire Flood Toolkit and the Climate Action Oxfordshire website to include a 'hub' of resources on climate adaptation, including this Adaptation Plan. Link this to existing hubs such as WeAdapt and key resources such as the NAP, CCRA, CVA, relevant organisation's ARP submissions and case studies and any relevant local activity. The Flood Toolkit in particular acts as a useful 'one-stop-shop' for advice, guidance and good practice with regards to flooding, but further expansion of this to address all climate related hazards would help organisations adapt their own estates, help	Oxfordshire CC CA, Comms	-	Low/no cost	**L/M**	Short-term, on-going	**No Regret (M)**	**M**

No.	Action	Further information and action justification	Relevant stakeholders that could support action implementation	Possible example funder(s)	Funding/ resource secured	Resource Intensity	Time	Type of action	Priority
		communities strengthen their resilience and make it easier for decision-makers to take forward actions. Further information could also be embedded onto other websites that engage with specific audiences, such as provision of advice for local communities and residents.							
			Data, strategy and monitoring						
10.	**Embed and/or support delivery of climate adaptation into a range of co-dependent strategies and plans being produced by council departments/ external partners.**	A list of plans and strategies to which this action applies can be found in Annex 2. Each plan will individually need consideration as to how to best embed adaptation into them. Some of these plans are statutory and can be used as strong drivers for action. Also, adaptation should be embedded into any future iterations of Oxfordshire CC's Climate Action Framework. This is crucial to ensure that decision making is factoring in what impact climate change could have on various future policies. Without this, many of these strategies and action plans may not be fit for purpose.	Numerous council departments and external partners	-	No	**M**	Short-term, on-going	**No Regret (M)**	**VH-I**
11.	Embed climate risks into corporate risk assessments.	This will help to ensure climate risks and adaptation responses are considered in all decisions made by organisations at a strategic level, and that there is a recognition that the current risk level of factors such as flooding and heatwaves are unlikely to reflect the expected frequency and intensity of these events in the future.	All organisations can embed climate risks into corporate risk assessments Central Govt	-	Low/no cost	**L**	Short-term	**Cont. Monitor**	**H**
12.	Develop an approach to capturing data that can help to monitor the impact severe weather events have on the county.	This will help determine the impact of these weather events on people, services and from a financial point of view, allowing for better planning. An analysis of available open-source datasets and, subsequently, a central bank of data sources would be beneficial to allow quantification of weather-related impacts and, over time, climate change impacts to help improve budgeting and assign resource allocation to manage impacts more effectively. Investigate use of the SWIMS tool to make this process easier.	C&RT District councils EA Fire Service LRF Met Office Oxfordshire CC Police SSEN/ Scottish Gas Network TW	-	Low/no cost	**L/M**	Short-term, on-going	**No Regret**	**VH**

No.	Action	Further information and action justification	Relevant stakeholders that could support action implementation	Possible example funder(s)	Funding/ resource secured	Resource Intensity	Time	Type of action	Priority
13.	Map climatological and relevant non-climatological data to inform spatial planning.	Upon identifying, accessing and collating the datasets outlined above, alongside other relevant climate and non-climatic datasets (e.g. demographic and health data), upload spatial datasets into GIS mapping software and establish a central point of access for decision and policymakers to help them inform future projects with climate change impacts in mind. This dataset should be interactive and accessible online.	Oxfordshire CC CA Several partners can help contribute relevant datasets	-	Partially	**L/M**	Short-term, on-going	**No Regret**	**H**
14.	Establish a comprehensive database of local adaptation projects.	These projects should, wholly or in part, focus on climate adaptation in Oxfordshire and the database should be updated at least monthly and owned by the new Working Group (see action 1). It should be shared in a space that is accessible to all members for their input. This would help to ensure a joined-up approach to activities and enabling the sharing of good practice across the area to avoid duplication.	Oxfordshire CC CA Organisations working on climate adaptation projects	-	Low/no cost	**L/M**	Short-term, on-going	**No Regret**	**H**
15.	**Report on progress with delivery of this Route Map and implementation blueprint annually to the FOP and set up a monitoring framework.**	This will ensure actions are kept relevant and are being delivered with success measures identified. One of the first actions that should be undertaken is the development of a monitoring system that goes alongside this Plan to track progress (see recommendations section). A mechanism to celebrate success of actions that have been implemented should also be established alongside the overall monitoring system.	All partners	Defra EA	Low/no cost	**L/M**	On-going	**No Regret**	**VH-I**
Natural Environment and Assets									
Strategy, policy and engagement									
16.	Embed climate adaptation into any natural environment/ natural capital working groups operating county-wide.	This will enable a more joined-up approach to ensure that climate adaptation is considered when implementing projects where enhancing nature is a core objective, either in terms of how a nature-based scheme can contribute to adaptation, and/or to ensure nature-based schemes are resilient to a future climate.	BBOWT District councils EA FC NE OLNP Oxfordshire CC CA, L&NR RSPB	-	Low/no cost	**L**	Short-term	**No Regret**	**H**

No.	Action	Further information and action justification	Relevant stakeholders that could support action implementation	Possible example funder(s)	Funding/ resource secured	Resource Intensity	Time	Type of action	Priority
17.	**Ensure that climate change adaptation forms a key part of the emerging Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) for Oxfordshire.**	Nature is struggling in no small part due to climate change. It will not recover unless the recovery options consider how nature may fare in a future climate (see action 18). It is a huge opportunity to use LNRSs to allow nature to become a significant part of the adaptation solution, by ensuring that new nature creation/ enhancement programmes help to create a bigger, better, and more joined up natural environment which will be more resilient to the impacts from climate change. Considering the LNRS through this lens will also help to address any conservation-focused actions that may conflict with what is required from an adaptation perspective.	BBOWT EA FC NE NT/HE Oxfordshire CC L&NR RSPB WO	-	Yes	**L**	Short-term	**No Regret (M)**	**VH-I**
18.	Ensure climate change adaptation options prioritise and incentivise the delivery of habitat improvement projects, and embed into future LNRS iterations.	Following publication of the LNRS, delivery of adaptation options should, where possible, aim to accelerate habitat connectivity and nature improvement, and visa-versa. All projects that may be born from the LNRS have the potential to strengthen delivery of both areas to create an environment across Oxfordshire that can help adapt to the pressures of a changing climate. The Landscape Connectedness Under Climate Change in Oxfordshire report highlights which areas could benefit from increased connectivity in a future where climate change has taken hold, and, as such, where action should be accelerated.	BBOWT EA FC NE NT/HE Oxfordshire CC CA, L&NR RSPB WO	Defra NE FC	No	**M**	Medium-term, on-going	**No Regret (M)**	**VH**
19.	Consider how adaptation could be integrated into implementation of BNG requirements.	In addition to focusing on habitat connectivity and quality, additional criteria around how climate adaptation could be integrated into the BNG process, with guidance provided to developers on how to achieve this, could help to strategically provide benefit through (e.g.) NFM approaches. The district councils and Oxfordshire CC could help to encourage this integration.	BBOWT Defra District councils EA NE Oxfordshire CC L&NR	-	Low/no cost	**L**	Short-term	**No Regret (M)**	**H**
20.	Work collaboratively to support National Landscapes (previously AONBs) that cover Oxfordshire with the	National Landscapes are being encouraged by Government to produce adaptation plans by 2028. This new requirement provides an opportunity to strengthen the resilience of some of the most beautiful and sensitive landscapes in the country. The Oxfordshire area includes three National Landscapes and local partners should support the efforts of the National Landscape	BBOWT FC National Landscapes NE NT/HE Oxfordshire CC L&NR	Defra NE	No	**L/M**	Medium-term	**No Regret**	**VH**

No.	Action	Further information and action justification	Relevant stakeholders that could support action implementation	Possible example funder(s)	Funding/ resource secured	Resource Intensity	Time	Type of action	Priority
	development of adaptation plans.	bodies to produce their plans and ensure synergies between other, relevant local priorities (e.g. LNRS) to prevent duplication.	RSPB WO						
Practical nature-based projects to help enhance adaptation									
21.	Ensure local tree planting and biodiversity improvement programmes contribute to climate adaptation objectives.	Most new tree planting schemes have the primary aims of meeting Net Zero targets, or delivering air quality or biodiversity benefits, but by planting the right trees in the right place, all future schemes could also have positive impacts on helping alleviate the impacts of climate change too, e.g. that they help to reduce flood risk, contribute to urban cooling etc. Ensuring that new trees are also likely to be resilient to a future climate is also important. These principles need to also be embedded into the emerging Oxfordshire CC Tree Strategy. Other habitats, such as floodplain grazing marsh, wetlands, fens, hedgerow, species-rich grasslands etc can also bring about significant adaptation benefits and these should be a key consideration in future improvement works.	The myriad of organisations involved in such schemes. Nurseries should also be consulted to ensure demand can be met locally.	FC EA NE Defra	Partially	**L/M**	Short-term, on-going	**No Regret (M)**	**VH**
22.	Produce a Green and Blue Infrastructure Strategy for Oxfordshire.	Building on the green infrastructure investment policymaker summary and Oxfordshire's greenspace-deprived neighbourhoods report, it would be beneficial for Oxfordshire to produce a Green and Blue Infrastructure Strategy to provide a framework for the various existing and planned initiatives and consolidate them into one coordinated strategy that puts climate change, wellbeing and nature at its heart. These initiatives include the Natural Capital in Oxfordshire short report, the forthcoming Tree Strategy and LNRS, district council strategies such as Oxford's Urban Forest Strategy, and existing green/blue infrastructure strategies and projects developed by the district councils, such as Wild Oxford. Ultimately, adaptation to climate change should be one of the key reasons for investing in green infrastructure, as it can help to alleviate flood risk and reduce the urban heat island effect, amongst other things. Other outcomes of such a strategy will include biodiversity, air quality, economic growth and health and wellbeing.	BBOWT C&RT District councils EA FC GWS NE Oxfordshire CC L&NR RSPB WO	Defra EA NE	No	**M**	Long-term	**No Regret**	**VH**

No.	Action	Further information and action justification	Relevant stakeholders that could support action implementation	Possible example funder(s)	Funding/ resource secured	Resource Intensity	Time	Type of action	Priority
23.	Assess the climate resilience of Oxfordshire's parks and green spaces and propose appropriate adaptation options.	Our green spaces have become ever more important in our society, especially since the impact of Covid-19, for both wildlife and people. Ensuring they are fit for a future climate is hugely important and will help to contribute to a range of objectives around biodiversity, alleviation of air pollution and health and wellbeing, the latter of which is discussed in detail in the new Oxfordshire's greenspace-deprived neighbourhoods report. This is especially important, given that green spaces may be used more in future if we get more prolonged dry weather. Adaptation measures should be integrated where appropriate, such as strategic tree planting, water meadows, changing mowing regimes, installing drinking water fountains, planting more drought-resistant species etc, and actions taken shared with other landowners.	District councils Oxfordshire CC L&NR GWS RSPB LCGs EA TW C&RT	Defra NE	No	**M**	Medium-term	**Cont. Monitor**	**H**
24.	Assess locations that may be most prone to outdoor fires and propose appropriate adaptation options.	Some local stakeholders are concerned about the future risk of fire in Oxfordshire due to its rurality. Many fires are started by people, therefore methods of prevention need to be considered, such as providing sites safe for barbecues, managing spaces better to reduce fire risk and provision of signage and guidance at prone sites encouraging users not to exacerbate the risk. Other potential sources of ignition should also be evaluated as part of the fire vulnerability assessment.	BBOWT District councils FC Fire Service Oxfordshire CC L&NR	Defra NE	No	**L/M**	Short-term	**No Regret (M)**	**H**
25.	Ensure Oxfordshire continues to establish a range of Nature Based Solutions and NFM projects to support adaptation objectives.	NFM and nature-based projects can provide multiple benefits alongside climate change adaptation, including biodiversity improvements, carbon sequestration and reducing pollution. Investment in such schemes should continue as the most nature-friendly way of alleviating climate risk, with existing collaborative mechanisms utilised for quicker gains on a greater scale (e.g. catchment partnerships and the Thames Valley Flood Scheme). Setting up a monitoring process to assess the effectiveness of such schemes is also crucial.	All of the partners listed here that in some way look after the natural environment	EA NE Defra	Yes	**M/H**	Short-term, on-going	**No Regret (M)**	**VH**
Assessment, research and monitoring									
26.	**Conduct an analysis of which of Oxfordshire's**	Climate change is likely to affect multiple species in a range of different ways. Oxfordshire would benefit from having greater	BBOWT Defra	Defra NE	No	**M/H**	Short-term	**Cont. Monitor**	**VH-I**

No.	Action	Further information and action justification	Relevant stakeholders that could support action implementation	Possible example funder(s)	Funding/ resource secured	Resource Intensity	Time	Type of action	Priority
	habitats, species and crops could be most affected by climate change, including the negative impacts of new pests, pathogens or Invasive Non-Native Species (INNS).	awareness of which of its habitats and species are most (and least) likely to be at risk of decline or stress under a range of climate scenarios. In addition, pests, pathogens and INNS are more likely to establish themselves due to climate change. Launching local analyses on how these could affect habitats and species in the county would represent a first step to help prepare for this eventuality to protect ecosystems from their most negative consequences, especially high-quality habitats already at risk from climate change, and potentially benefit from opportunities new species may bring. Lessons could also be learned from approaches taken abroad, along with resources produced by NE including their Climate Change Adaptation Manual and Climate Change Vulnerability Model. Following this, more targeted measures could be identified and data from the Forestry Commission's TreeAlert system could be obtained to aid with this.	EA FC NE Oxfordshire CC L&NR RSPB UOx WO	FC					
27.	Set up or utilise existing community-led groups that can routinely monitor the areas identified as potentially being most vulnerable to pests and diseases.	Following the above exercise, utilising community groups and volunteers will encourage local people to help protect their nearby woods and forests, and monitoring on a more routine basis will ensure diseases are picked up early. Again, the TreeAlert system could be used for more systematic logging of observed impacts.	BBOWT Defra District councils EA FC LCGs NE Oxfordshire CC L&NR RSPB TVERC WO	Defra NE FC	No	**L/M**	Medium-term	**No Regret**	**VH**
28.	Monitor the colonisation of new species due to climate change.	Climate change could lead to new species colonies in terrestrial and freshwater environments. While some colonisations may lead to negative impacts, some may benefit the native ecosystems and landscape and boost biodiversity. Analysis and monitoring of such species will allow for better maintenance and a more resilient ecosystem.	BBOWT Defra EA FC LCGs NE Oxfordshire CC L&NR	Defra NE FC	No	**M**	Medium-term	**Cont. Monitor**	**M**

No.	Action	Further information and action justification	Relevant stakeholders that could support action implementation	Possible example funder(s)	Funding/ resource secured	Resource Intensity	Time	Type of action	Priority
			RSPB TVERC WO						
29.	Undertake detailed future scenario modelling of flood (fluvial and surface water) and drought risk in Oxfordshire.	The impact climate change could have on rainfall intensity and frequency could have consequences on the area in terms of both flood and drought risk. Building on the EA's work on integrated water management, undertaking future scenario modelling of water course behaviour and surface water flooding potential against a range of future climate scenarios may help to identify key risks, and locations and sectors that may be most affected. This will help to obtain a clearer picture of future water management practices that may need to take place to reduce both flood and drought impacts, aligned with water usage data and analysis from TW to target areas for intervention alongside their Water Resource Management Plan and existing adaptation activities. It will also help with development and investment decision-making. The EA's NAFRA maps are being updated in 2025 which will aid with this and should be consulted initially to determine what is covered.	EA Oxfordshire CC Flood risk Technical consultancies TW	EA	Planned	**M**	Short-term, on-going	**Cont. Monitor**	**VH**
Infrastructure									
Engagement and communications									
30.	Embed climate change adaptation into existing infrastructure forums.	One of the biggest challenges and complexities with regards to climate change risk is that of cascading failures, i.e. if one piece of infrastructure fails due to an extreme weather event, this could result in a 'domino effect' of failures on other infrastructure which, in turn, leads to negative effects on businesses and the community (e.g. loss of power, closure of roads etc.). More active dialogue needs to take place between key infrastructure providers to ensure solutions are being proposed that consider the way climate risks interact and interlink for the benefit of Oxfordshire and beyond. Existing infrastructure forums should be	DESNZ DfT EA All major infrastructure companies in power, transport, communications etc and relevant council departments	Central Govt	No	**L/M**	Short-term, on-going	**No Regret**	**VH**

No.	Action	Further information and action justification	Relevant stakeholders that could support action implementation	Possible example funder(s)	Funding/ resource secured	Resource Intensity	Time	Type of action	Priority
		utilised and adaptation integrated as a key theme, acting as a conduit of global good practice solutions, and ensure that stakeholder responsibilities for infrastructure improvement and maintenance are well-defined and transparent.							
Highways and travel									
31.	Undertake an assessment/ mapping exercise of local roads, cycle paths, pavements, electric vehicle charging points and car parks to determine which are most likely to be at risk from failing/ reduced performance in future climatic conditions.	National Highways have produced a climate change adaptation plan, but this only includes the main trunk roads (motorways and major A-roads). Therefore, all other roads and highways assets and car parks in council control need to be assessed for their likely ability to cope in a future climate to ensure connectivity is maintained. This should include priority areas of the Resilient Highways Network alongside those most vulnerable to flood risk, slope failure, drainage pressure/ inundation and damage caused by storms or overheating, coupled with the strategic importance of the asset and popular bus routes. The outcome of this exercise can then inform the resilient network and build on actions already referred to in the Highways Asset Management Plan.	District councils Oxfordshire CC Flood risk, Highways DfT EA NH TW	DfT EA	No	**M/H**	Medium-term	**Cont. Monitor**	**VH**
32.	Utilise telemetry and warning systems to provide alerts and notifications of severe weather related issues on the road/cycle network.	If alerts are set up to operate in locations where the road/cycle network is most relied upon, this could help improve the response and rapidity in which roads can reopen following a severe weather event.	EA Met Office Oxfordshire CC Highways, JORT	-	Low/no cost	**L**	Short-term	**No Regret**	**H**
33.	Identify and prioritise adaptation options on the most popular current and future walking and cycling routes across the county.	There is a need to prioritise and expand walking and cycling opportunities as part of the county's Net Zero commitments, and one way to do this will be to ensure the most used routes (e.g. National Cycle Network Route 5), and potentially important future routes created to fulfil housing demand, are as resilient to climate change impacts as possible, to ensure they are 'reliable' routes for users. Adaptation options include drainage, green infrastructure integration, appropriate surfacing materials and 'cooling stations,' such as water fountains and shaded benches. There is also an opportunity to include adaptation in Local	District councils Living Streets Oxfordshire CC Highways, Transport Policy, L&NR Sustrans	-	No	**M/H**	Medium-term	**Cont. Monitor**	**H**

No.	Action	Further information and action justification	Relevant stakeholders that could support action implementation	Possible example funder(s)	Funding/ resource secured	Resource Intensity	Time	Type of action	Priority
		Walking and Cycling Infrastructure Plans to embed it into project delivery.							
34.	Ensure biodiversity improvements and tree planting programmes are integrated into local highways works.	This action can build on the priorities of the Local Transport and Connectivity Plan. However, for any project where the aim is to improve biodiversity, consideration should be given as to whether the species planted are fit for purpose, and whether cutting and maintenance regimes need to change. An analysis of capacity of those undertaking maintenance regimes should also take place, as innovation may be required above and beyond the more standard mowing/cutting regimes currently in place. There could also be an opportunity to prioritise biodiversity improvements around roads that are most vulnerable to (e.g.) flooding, and whether 'rewilding' such areas can lead to a reduction in climate risk.	District councils Oxfordshire CC Highways, Transport Policy, L&NR	NE EA	Yes	**L**	Short-term	**No Regret (M)**	**H**
35.	Undertake an analysis of all County Council-owned bridges and structures to check their viability in a future climate.	Bridges have been identified as being especially vulnerable to climate change due to their fragile structure and that they often enable connections over water bodies which are likely to flood more often. As part of routine inspection regimes, an assessment of those owned by the County Council (i.e. those outside the jurisdiction of Network Rail, National Highways etc.), alongside an analysis of other critical structures, should be taken to prevent the risk of erosion, failure, damage and subsequent connectivity issues. Adaptation options can them be prioritised depending on the outcomes of this analysis and the strategic importance of the bridge. The approach to this should be joined up with District Council processes so that all similar assets are dealt with consistently.	C&RT DfT District councils EA HE NR Oxfordshire CC Highways	-	No	**M/H**	Medium-term	**Cont. Monitor**	**H**
36.	Ensure new local passenger transport vehicles are fitted with air cooling devices.	Passenger transport use will continue to be a priority to help meet the county's Net Zero targets. There is an opportunity to take advantage of the rollout of new electric/ hydrogen passenger transport vehicles to ensure they are also fitted with air conditioning or equivalent technology, and/or passive cooling measures such as blinds to ensure they are cool in summer, to maintain passenger numbers and reduce adverse health impacts.	Bus operators such as Stagecoach DfT Oxfordshire CC Transport Policy	Bus operators DfT	No	**M/H**	Medium-term, on-going	**No Regret**	**M**

No.	Action	Further information and action justification	Relevant stakeholders that could support action implementation	Possible example funder(s)	Funding/ resource secured	Resource Intensity	Time	Type of action	Priority
37.	Ensure climate adaptation is integrated into the design and planning for new infrastructure assets and schemes.	These schemes could include new roads, bus shelters, sub-stations, drainage upgrades etc. Consistent integration of climate adaptation (and, where feasible, nature-based) considerations will ensure any new infrastructure will be resilient, preventing damage and saving money in the long-term, while keeping the county connected.	All infrastructure providers including councils	-	No	**M**	Short-term, on-going	**Cont. Monitor**	**VH**
38.	Ensure climate adaptation is integrated into future updates to the Local Transport Plan.	To ensure that the Oxfordshire transport network is resilient for the future, consideration should be given as to how future transport planning policies consider climate risks and how adaptation measures, such as some of those outlined above, could be integrated into future transport schemes. Adaptation could be embedded into existing policies (e.g. healthy place shaping) or be included as a standalone policy.	DfT NH Oxfordshire CC Transport Policy, Highways, CA Sustrans	DfT	No	**L/M**	Medium-term	**No Regret (M)**	**VH**
			Water and waste management						
39.	Continue the rollout of strategic flood management schemes and identification of areas suitable for alternative flood resilience measures.	Flood risk is increasing and will continue to do so and some areas of Oxfordshire will be impacted more often by severe flooding in the future. Work to identify where existing interventions will largely prevent flooding versus those areas where flooding is still likely to occur should take place, alongside the embedment of potential future flood risk when planning any new strategic defence schemes. In areas that will not benefit from these, areas should be prioritised for alternative flood resilience measures (e.g. property/site-level residential or commercial measures, nature-based solutions etc.).	EA LRF NFF Oxfordshire CC Flood Risk, JORT	EA Defra	Partially	**H**	Long-term, on-going	**Cont. Monitor**	**VH**
40.	Work collaboratively to accelerate rollout of existing water saving programmes and campaigns.	Water supply will become more constrained in future because of drier summers and an increasing population. If all residents, public sector bodies and businesses saved a small quantity of water each year it could result in a significant cumulative saving, reducing pressure on water supplies. It will also help support existing resilience plans and water saving strategies being implemented by TW, alongside the objective to work with public sector bodies to identify leaks throughout their building stock. To do this, TW and the local councils should work in partnership to target areas of high water usage to raise awareness of simple,	District councils Housing Associations Oxfordshire CC PH TW and other water companies that cover parts of the county	-	Yes	**L/M**	Short-term	**No Regret**	**H**

No.	Action	Further information and action justification	Relevant stakeholders that could support action implementation	Possible example funder(s)	Funding/ resource secured	Resource Intensity	Time	Type of action	Priority
		cost-effective measures that all residents and employees can take to reduce their water usage. This messaging can be expanded to all households and businesses regardless of their location. Lessons on how to achieve this effectively can be learnt from existing/ historic campaigns (e.g. on energy efficiency).							
41.	Analyse how climate change could impact on the local waste collection and disposal service.	This is one of the most valued and public-facing services that councils operate and ensuring that they are robust and able to withstand a future climate will be paramount to service continuity and reputation. To do this, a review of the impact of a variety of recent extreme weather events (heatwave 2022, flooding 2024 etc.) on the waste collection and disposal services should take place initially, to help proactively plan for what may be required to deal with more frequent such events in future, including staff health risk assessments, mapping of prone areas to (e.g.) flooding, quantification of impact on service delivery etc. Other actions within this Plan, such as provision of advice to residents on managing extreme weather impacts, will also assist with this.	District councils Oxfordshire CC Waste Management Waste collection companies	-	No	**L/M**	Short-term	**No Regret (M)**	**H**
42.	Ensure waste management practices, storage and treatment facilities are robust to withstand future climatic conditions.	Landfill, incineration and waste handling, treatment and recycling operations need to be resilient to climate change and extreme weather events, and specifically assess the risk of pollution incidents from flooding. Without this consideration, there could be significant public health and environmental consequences if (e.g.) untreated sewage is released. Moreover, new waste and other activities subject to environmental permitting (such as minerals, agriculture and chemical plants) need to undertake a climate change risk assessment if active for five years or more, according to EA guidance.	Defra EA Oxfordshire CC Waste Management Technical consultancies Waste contractors/ operators Wrap	Waste contractors EA Defra	No	**M/H**	Medium-term	**Cont. Monitor**	**H**
43.	Ensure all other sectors and businesses which require environmental permits assess the potential impacts of	As with waste management sites above, it is important that climate risk assessments are thoroughly conducted, and adaptation options considered, on all sites where environmental permits are required (such as for activities involving potentially harmful substances, cement works, petrol stations etc), given the	Defra District Councils EA Oxfordshire CC Relevant operators	EA Defra	No	**M**	Medium-term	**No Regret**	**H**

No.	Action	Further information and action justification	Relevant stakeholders that could support action implementation	Possible example funder(s)	Funding/ resource secured	Resource Intensity	Time	Type of action	Priority
	climate change on their operations.	disruption of operations and potentially harmful impacts these sites could have on the surrounding area (e.g. contamination of flood water). The EA should support operators to assess their risks accordingly.	Technical consultancies						
44.	Conduct a climate change assessment of minerals extraction processes.	Minerals extraction, a practice which is also subject to environmental permits, frequently involves water abstraction and, therefore, should be subject to consideration for climate adaptation given pressures on water availability in the environment. Operations could be disrupted if future climate scenarios are not borne in mind. The restoration of mineral sites also offers wide ranging climate adaptation opportunities including flood alleviation, water resources and green infrastructure.	Defra Landowners/ NFU Oxfordshire CC Minerals & Waste Relevant operators Technical consultancies Wildlife and environmental organisations	EA Defra Industry	No	**M**	Medium-term	**Cont.** **Monitor**	**H**
Health, Communities and the Built Environment									
Health and Social Care									
45.	**Identify and appraise climate adaptation options for the most vulnerable health and care assets.**	Such locations accommodate some of the county's most vulnerable people, especially if they are elderly and have underlying physical or mental health conditions. In particular, all such assets are likely to overheat more often in future if they have not been constructed with climate change in mind, meaning that there is a greater likelihood of mortality and extreme discomfort as a consequence of extreme heatwave conditions. Therefore, building on the Director of Public Health's Climate Change report which helps to identify the most vulnerable health and care settings at risk from climate change, each of these assets should be audited for the most appropriate adaptation options most appropriate on a site by site basis. Oxfordshire CC's adaptation planning audits for schools could be utilised and tailored to achieve this, and the EA are also producing a piece on climate transition which will look at doctors, nurseries, care homes etc.	BOB ICB BRE EA OACP and other health bodies OHFT OHU Oxfordshire CC PH, social care Technical consultancies UKHSA	DHSC UKHSA NHS England	No	**H**	Medium-term	**Cont.** **Monitor**	**VH-I**

No.	Action	Further information and action justification	Relevant stakeholders that could support action implementation	Possible example funder(s)	Funding/ resource secured	Resource Intensity	Time	Type of action	Priority
46.	**Produce an adaptation plan for the NHS Integrated Care System and Trusts that cover Oxfordshire.**	The above action can help to identify adaptation options on an asset by asset basis. Armed with this intelligence, an adaptation plan should be produced for the healthcare sector in Oxfordshire that sets out and prioritises which assets to adapt first and which options to take forward. The plan should also set out options to address how climate change could affect service delivery and patient care due to increasing extreme heat, flooding, water scarcity and other climate related risks. Use the new Green Plan adaptation guidance on the WeAdapt platform and SWM's Adapt to Survive toolkit to assist with this.	BOB ICB NHS England OHFT OHU Oxfordshire CC PH SWM	DHSC UKHSA NHS England	No	**L/M**	Short-term	**No Regret**	**VH-I**
47.	Annually raise awareness and disseminate the Adverse Weather and Health Plan, and the Oxfordshire Heat Health Action Plan to health and care settings.	Alongside the above, implementing this is a quick win action; the documents already exist and should be used by all healthcare workers in the county when a heatwave occurs to ensure staff and residents are as protected as possible. The Heat Health Plan can also be reviewed as part of this process, to ensure it is reflective of new threats that climate change may bring.	BOB ICB NHS England OACP OHFT OHU Oxfordshire CC PH UKHSA	-	Low/no cost	**L**	Short-term	**No Regret**	**M**
48.	**Provide adaptation training for health and social care delivery professionals and senior leaders.**	As the previous actions show, the health and social care sector needs to adapt to the increasing threats from a changing climate. Buy-in and understanding can be achieved through capacity building training, explaining what adaptation means, its relevance to the NHS and what can be done at the Trust/ICB level by way of implementation.	BOB ICB NHS England OACP OHFT OUH Oxfordshire CC PH SWM/Sniffer	DHSC UKHSA NHS	Partially	**L/M**	Short-term	**No Regret (M)**	**VH-I**
49.	Ensure that climate risks are addressed and considered in the commissioning and provision of all new health and social care services and assets.	The impacts of climate change will affect the vulnerable in society the most, so it is critical that climate risk planning is embedded into all aspects of the social care system and that people who need greater support during heatwaves, flood events etc are provided with it. The NPPF and other local planning policies should be referred to for details on what to consider for new developments and climate change.	DHSC District Councils GPs/ other healthcare providers NHS England Oxfordshire CC PH UKHSA	UKHSA	No	**M**	Short-term	**Cont. Monitor**	**VH**

No.	Action	Further information and action justification	Relevant stakeholders that could support action implementation	Possible example funder(s)	Funding/ resource secured	Resource Intensity	Time	Type of action	Priority
50.	**Ensure climate risks to health, buildings and infrastructure that affect health and care settings are embedded into corporate risk / business continuity plans.**	Embedment into these plans, which all care settings are already required to produce, will ensure such risks can be considered more routinely and discussed and monitored by risk professionals within the heart of the health and social care sector.	GPs LHRF OHFT OHU Other health and care providers UKHSA	-	Low/no cost	**L**	Short-term	**No Regret (M)**	**VH-I**
Communities and engagement									
51.	Review, support and strengthen early warning systems and communications of weather thresholds in light of climate change.	The Met Office already provides an early warning system when severe weather events are due to take place. However, as a result of climate change, a review should be undertaken around the communication of warnings to the most vulnerable communities, households, businesses, and other organisations and identify areas for strengthening or additional communication channels, as technology and media rapidly develop. Lessons could be learned from early warning systems that were developed during the Covid-19 pandemic, as to whether they could be suitable to tailor to extreme weather.	District councils EA LRF Met Office Oxfordshire CC CA, JORT	-	Low/no cost	**L**	Short-term	**No Regret**	**H**
52.	**Expand on the Oxfordshire Way, existing work and relationships to empower vulnerable communities to develop climate change adaptation and/or community emergency plans.**	Communities in Oxfordshire could increasingly struggle to cope in the event of an extreme weather incident; this could be due to the demographic of the residents, their rural isolation or being in (e.g.) a flood risk area. Such communities will need better protection and support to prevent issues such as displacement or health implications. Oxfordshire CC has mapped where the most vulnerable communities to climate change may be located, and have already established Flood Groups across the county, alongside developing tools such as the Local Climate Action Toolkit. These areas should be targeted as initial pilots for developing climate adaptation plans that expand beyond flood risk, with the process then being rolled out to other communities that would benefit most from having a plan in place. Delivery of capacity building training with these communities, using existing	District councils EA LCGs LRF/ Fire Service NFF OALC Oxfordshire CC JORT, CA, Flood Risk Parish councils TW	EA Defra MHCLG NLCF	Partially	**M**	Short-term, on-going	**No Regret (M)**	**VH-I**

No.	Action	Further information and action justification	Relevant stakeholders that could support action implementation	Possible example funder(s)	Funding/ resource secured	Resource Intensity	Time	Type of action	Priority
		and well-established networks, may need to be commissioned first (which could be linked to the below).							
53.	Develop a consistent approach to supporting parish and town councils with adaptation planning.	Parish and town councils can be supported to develop adaptation plans in the form of: • Climate change adaptation training provided by a third party that can be promoted by OALC. • Development of a simple and consistent template plan, alongside support to the parishes to help them complete it. • Practical examples of small-scale projects that can help with local climate-related issues. • Where development of an adaptation plan is not possible, severe weather resilience should be integrated into Parish Council neighbourhood and emergency plans.	District councils LCGs OALC Oxfordshire CC CA Parish councils	-	Planned	**L/M**	Medium-term	**No Regret**	**VH**
54.	Continue utilising existing funds and explore new ways of funding community resilience projects.	Some funding sources have already been utilised to support community groups with enhancing their resilience to climate change; these have included grants from the Oxfordshire CC Flood Risk team and Scottish and Southern Electricity Networks. Further flexible funding opportunities should be explored, which could be linked to county and district council social value policies, to support communities vulnerable to climate impact exposure, combined with demographic characteristics.	District councils Fire Service LCGs LRF Oxfordshire CC CA, Flood Risk	Defra EA	Partially	**M/H**	Short-term, on-going	**No Regret**	**VH**
55.	Promote and expand on existing measures that promote building household resilience to climate change.	Oxfordshire's Flood Toolkit is a really helpful way of providing proactive and reactive assistance to the impacts of flooding. Expanding this to include other extreme weather events will enable householders and communities to be better prepared for a greater frequency and intensity of extreme weather events and reduce strain on local emergency services and health centres. Framing in a way that can empower householders and communities to take pride in their local area could also further encourage action (linking with action 8). The Better Housing Better Health Programme (which provides advice on overheating) and the Climate Action Oxfordshire websites can also be built upon to include advice on adaptation options and actions that can be taken during extreme weather events. Advice and	District councils Fire Service Housing Associations LCGs Oxfordshire CC JORT, Flood Risk Parish councils SHAP	MHCLG EA NLCF	No	**M/H**	Medium-term	**No Regret (M)**	**H**

No.	Action	Further information and action justification	Relevant stakeholders that could support action implementation	Possible example funder(s)	Funding/ resource secured	Resource Intensity	Time	Type of action	Priority
		resilience bags should be provided to homes, prioritising vulnerable households, so that they can respond quicker in the event of extreme weather.							
56.	Research effectiveness of 'cool spaces.'	Cool spaces (indoor or outdoor) could be where people go during hot summer weather to cool off, especially if their home is prone to overheating, they are homeless, or they have an underlying health condition that could make them more at risk of complications. This will help to reduce the risk of heat-related health issues occurring and reduce the pressure on hospitals and other healthcare settings. Other authorities (e.g. Greater London Authority) have established a cool spaces map, and engagement with them and others should take place to identify their effectiveness and impact, along with analysis of the effectiveness of local existing 'warm spaces' programmes. Engagement with potential owners of cool spaces, such as Church of England, can also take place to determine level of appetite to be involved.	BOB ICB District councils Housing Associations LCGs Oxfordshire CC CA, PH Parish councils	UKHSA NHS	No	**M**	Short-term	**No Regret**	**H**
			Planning, retrofit and design						
57.	**Produce new county-wide climate change adaptation guidance for developers.**	Guidance on how to ensure new developments integrate climate adaptation measures should encourage developers to design new homes and commercial premises in a particular way and will assist with the objective that all new residential and commercial developments consider their longevity and performance in a future climate (e.g. through solar gain, ventilation, rainwater harvesting, avoiding non-permeable driveways etc.). Developers should be signposted to and adhere to the guidance for all new developments, via a robust procurement and monitoring process. A guide developed across the whole county through collaboration between the district councils would help with consistency of messaging, sharing of resources and assist with integration into the next round of Local Plans. (see action 60).	Developers District councils EA Oxfordshire CC Property Services	EA MHCLG DB&T	No	**L/M**	Medium-term, on-going	**Cont. Monitor**	**VH-I**
58.	Investigate the viability of a monitoring process to determine if resilient	At present, even if new developments are said to be constructed to a standard that is highly resilient to climate change (and/or to a very efficient and carbon neutral standard), there is no process in place to monitor their effectiveness over time, e.g. does the	Developers District councils	EA MHCLG	No	**M**	Medium-term, on-going	**No Regret**	**H**

No.	Action	Further information and action justification	Relevant stakeholders that could support action implementation	Possible example funder(s)	Funding/ resource secured	Resource Intensity	Time	Type of action	Priority
	building standards are upheld.	building overheat? Are the Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SUDS) effective and well-maintained? Are driveways and paving areas permeable? Consideration should be given to whether an appropriate and non-intrusive monitoring system could be put in place to determine the effectiveness of development resilience over time.	EA MHCLG						
59.	Confirm what additional measures could further integrate climate adaptation into emerging Local Plans.	It is crucial that new developments are resilient to a changing climate. Building this principle into the next round of Local Plans, while linking with nature, health and economic outcomes, for each district of Oxfordshire as a core principle from the start is paramount so that this vision can become a realistic prospect. Use the principles of the new guidance (action 57) to support this and produce a checklist that allows councils to identify how it can and has been embedded into local plan development.	District councils EA Oxfordshire CC CA	MHCLG	No	**M**	Short-term	**Cont. Monitor**	**VH**
60.	Integrate the consideration of adaptation options into Net Zero retrofit programmes.	Retrofitting existing homes and buildings is always a challenge but is necessary if we are to achieve our Net Zero ambitions. Adaptation measures should be embedded into existing domestic or corporate retrofit programmes as homes and buildings will become increasingly unable to deal with future climatic conditions as they age, leading to health, displacement and financial issues for occupants. This could include measures such as water efficiency, shading options, better ventilation to reduce overheating risk and to improve indoor air quality, etc, with a monitoring checklist produced to ensure integration has been successful. Oxfordshire CC can use its adaptation planning approach for schools and apply this to its other buildings during the retrofitting process, as well as consult the new planning guidance (action 57) should this be produced.	BRE Developers District councils GSENZH Housing Associations Oxfordshire CC CA, Property Services	EA MHCLG	Partially	**M/H**	Medium-term	**Cont. Monitor**	**VH**
Assessment, research and monitoring									
61.	Produce adaptation plans for the emergency services.	Emergency responders have to deal with the impacts of extreme weather events, be it flooding, fires or extremes of temperature. Should these incidents continue to increase in number and severity, further pressure will be felt by these organisations and business-as-usual may be difficult to maintain. Developing a	District councils EA Fire Service LRF Oxfordshire CC CA, JORT	-	No	**L/M**	Short-term	**No Regret**	**VH**

No.	Action	Further information and action justification	Relevant stakeholders that could support action implementation	Possible example funder(s)	Funding/ resource secured	Resource Intensity	Time	Type of action	Priority
		tested plan with a range of options to acknowledge and address this issue should be the starting point.	SCAS TV Police						
62.	Continue the schools adaptation plan programme, and expand to other public buildings and assets.	Oxfordshire CC are working with consultancy Arup to develop adaptation plans for schools. This approach should continue, with three additional considerations. First, Oxfordshire CC could build on the Director of Public Health's Climate Change report to prioritise which schools to develop a plan for first. Second, funding options should be sought to help the schools implement the adaptation options identified. Third, as mentioned in other actions in this plan, this approach should be rolled out to other public buildings and assets where appropriate, including those not in direct Oxfordshire CC control (e.g. academies, libraries, district council premises etc) via collaboration and Oxfordshire CC's role as a coordinating body; this could be established as a service provided by Oxfordshire CC to local organisations.	Academy Trusts BRE DfE Oxfordshire CC Education, Property Services Technical consultancies	DfE Defra	Partially	**M**	On-going	**No Regret (M)**	**H**
63.	Conduct a climate risk assessment of Oxfordshire's heritage assets and propose adaptation options for those most at risk.	Oxfordshire is home to many significant heritage assets, bringing economic and environmental benefits to the area. Given their historic sensitivity and often remote locations, many of these properties and landscapes are likely to be at high risk of the impacts of climate change. A first step will be to develop a framework for assessment and prioritisation of assets given their quantity. Following this, identifying priorities based on current and future risk can take place to target adaptation options, building on work the National Trust has already carried out. The process could be aligned with Historic England's approach to adaptation under their ARP requirement.	District Councils FC HE NE NT Oxfordshire CC Archaeology, L&NR	NLHF Defra NE	Partially	**M**	Medium-term	**Cont. Monitor**	**H**
64.	Monitor changes to vector-borne diseases as a result of climate change.	Vector-borne diseases from insects such as ticks and mosquitos are likely to increase due to climate change. These can cause serious diseases in humans and need to be monitored closely over time to provide more accurate advice on where and when the likely hotspots in the county will be, and what to do if affected. With this intelligence to hand, a vector management, communication and training plan can be developed with local responders.	Defra DHSC NE NHS England Oxfordshire CC PH UKHSA	UKHSA Defra	No	**M**	Medium-term, on-going	**Cont. Monitor**	**H**

No.	Action	Further information and action justification	Relevant stakeholders that could support action implementation	Possible example funder(s)	Funding/ resource secured	Resource Intensity	Time	Type of action	Priority
65.	Conduct an assessment into how climate change could affect pollution levels in Oxfordshire.	Extreme heat could lead to (e.g.) worsening air quality due to more static meteorological conditions, more extensive flooding could lead to greater incidents of water pollution and more incidents of noise complaints due to increased ventilation of properties (open windows) and increased use of outdoor spaces (property gardens, parks, etc). These trends need to be analysed so that organisations can build this into continuity planning and existing strategies, such as the Air Quality Strategy.	District councils EA OBU Oxfordshire CC Highways, Flood Risk, PH TW UKHSA UOx	Defra EA	No	**M**	Medium-term	**Cont. Monitor**	**H**
66.	Monitor the impact of food safety and security as a result of climate change.	This has been identified as a key risk in the UK CCRA, and it is as yet unclear what activity on this is taking place nationally. Oxfordshire can utilise the principles of its Food Strategy to ensure work is going on to ensure a safe and secure food supply, by working with the agriculture industry, as climate change could affect supply chains and the viability of certain products.	Defra District councils FSA Good Food Oxfordshire Logistics industries NFU Oxfordshire CC PH, Trading Standards	FSA Defra	No	**M**	Medium-term	**Cont. Monitor**	**M**
67.	Conduct an assessment around how climate change could affect the distribution and quantity of pest outbreaks in the county.	For example, could more heatwave conditions lead to an increase in the prevalence of rats and mice due to the impact heat can have on waste disposal, or could warmer winters allow pests to thrive when they would not otherwise have done so? Identifying possible changes will enable businesses and landowners to adapt over time as they can align more resource to specific future trends.	Defra Landowners Oxfordshire CC Trading Standards	Defra	No	**M**	Medium-term	**Cont. Monitor**	**M**
Business and Industry, including Agriculture									
Business resilience									
68.	Build on business resilience engagement programmes and integrate climate change adaptation.	Such engagement, combined with more general business continuity planning and sharing good practice, will enable businesses (especially SMEs) to protect themselves from losses and supply chain disruption due to future weather shocks caused by more flooding, water scarcity and overheating by planning and	BITC Chamber Fire Service FSB LEP	DB&T DLUHC EA GHO/ LEP	Yes	**L/M**	Short-term	**No Regret (M)**	**VH**

No.	Action	Further information and action justification	Relevant stakeholders that could support action implementation	Possible example funder(s)	Funding/ resource secured	Resource Intensity	Time	Type of action	Priority
		implementing adaptation actions. Build on the Code Red project to take such engagement forward, and focus on providing the tools to enable businesses to adapt their own sites to climate risks. The Oxfordshire CC Procurement team are also embarking on business engagement programmes. The Weathering the Storm guidance from SWM and the EA can also assist with this action.	Oxfordshire CC Econ Dev, JORT, Procurement SWM TW						
69.	Launch a funded programme of adaptation planning and support for businesses.	Most businesses, especially SMEs, do not have the time, resource or knowledge to focus on identifying and implementing adaptation options most suitable for their circumstances. A funded programme offering a step-by-step process of auditing, assessing, identification and implementation should be set up to improve business resilience and strengthen the local economy. This could be part of the above engagement process, and options discussed could include flood barriers and raised electrical systems, green and blue infrastructure measures, cooling system installation, etc. Ensure this programme also covers businesses in the agriculture sector. The Shared Prosperity Fund (SPF) could be suitable for this, through integration with wider business support programmes.	BITC Chamber EA FSB LEP NFF Oxfordshire CC Econ Dev	EA LEP Oxfordshire CC	No	**H**	Medium-term	**Cont. Monitor**	**H**
70.	Provide advice and guidance to businesses on how to operate in heatwave conditions.	As summers become hotter, more business premises will overheat and it may become difficult for workers to concentrate and potentially lead to negative health impacts, leading to reduced productivity. This is especially true for businesses that require manual labour and outdoor working. Businesses need to manage workplace overheating and be flexible during such conditions, but also provide advice so that employees can keep themselves as cool as possible.	BITC Chamber DB&T FSB GHO/ LEP HSE Oxfordshire CC PH UKHSA	DB&T UKHSA GHO/ LEP	Low/no cost	**L**	Short-term	**No Regret**	**H**
71.	Ensure as many businesses as possible sign up to the EA flood warnings service.	This will allow businesses, especially those in flood vulnerable areas, to prepare more effectively for flooding when it is likely to occur, minimising the potential costs as a result. This could be supported by the Code Red project (action 68).	BITC Chamber EA FSB LEP	-	Low/no cost	**L**	Short-term	**No Regret**	**H**

No.	Action	Further information and action justification	Relevant stakeholders that could support action implementation	Possible example funder(s)	Funding/ resource secured	Resource Intensity	Time	Type of action	Priority
			Oxfordshire CC JORT, Econ Dev SWM						
72.	Promote and encourage uptake of ISO 14090:2019	This approach would give businesses a framework and incentive for action and provide the opportunity for businesses to share learning and progress with each other on adaptation. Ultimately, it would result in a greater number of businesses more prepared for climate change impacts. Promotion of this should be incorporated into the engagement and Code Red programmes (action 68).	BITC Chamber FSB GHO LEP Oxfordshire CC Econ Dev	DB&T GHO/ LEP	Low/no cost	**L/M**	Short-term	**No Regret**	**H**
			Economic growth						
73.	Explore adaptation options and integrate actions into town centre regeneration and brownfield re-development programmes.	Regeneration projects have the potential to represent exemplar 'resilient communities' by implementing adaptation measures, meaning that they can grow and thrive for decades to come. Measures could include natural flood alleviation, SUDS and greening initiatives that benefit climate adaptation, and ensuring all new builds contain rigorous climate resilient standards. This will be achieved by strong planning policies and obligations on landowners and developers. Where brownfield sites are not suitable for development, consider appropriate site greening options (urban forests, parks, wetlands etc).	BBOWT District Councils EA LEP NE Oxfordshire CC Econ Dev Technical consultancies	LEP	No	**H**	Long-term	**Cont. Monitor**	**H**
74.	Embed climate adaptation into new investments and projects designed to boost economic growth.	Future investment needs to be resilient to a changing climate, otherwise new projects could fail before they begin. Ensuring that investment strategies and projects include adaptation as a core principle will ensure all funded projects are as resilient to a changing climate as they can be.	DB&T Defra EA LEP Oxfordshire CC Econ Dev Technical consultancies	-	No	**L/M**	Short-term, on-going	**Cont. Monitor**	**VH**
75.	Provide funding and acceleration opportunities for SMEs (including farmers) to develop adaptation solutions	There are many programmes that help businesses develop innovations for Net Zero, but few focusing on climate adaptation. Launching a programme on adaptation will have the dual benefits of being able to harness the ideas and innovative solutions of SMEs, farmers and NGOs to the climate crisis, while strengthening the local economy. We learnt from the Covid-19	BITC FSB GSENZH LEP Oxfordshire CC Econ Dev	DB&T Innovate UK	No	**H**	Medium-term	**No Regret**	**H**

No.	Action	Further information and action justification	Relevant stakeholders that could support action implementation	Possible example funder(s)	Funding/ resource secured	Resource Intensity	Time	Type of action	Priority
	(technologies or processes).	pandemic how responsive and flexible SMEs can be; this experience should be utilised.							
76.	Perform an analysis of local climate adaptation skills and services.	We have a strong understanding of where wider Net Zero and environmental skills and services co-exist, but much less of an understanding of this for adaptation. Without this research, and the knowledge and examples in would uncover, it will not be possible to understand where there may be opportunities for growth and development of skillsets to support solutions for the climate crisis.	BITC Chambers DB&T FSB GSENZH LEP OBU Technical consultancies UOx	DB&T Innovate UK	No	**M**	Short-term	**No Regret**	**H**
77.	Embed climate resilience into public sector procurement criteria.	Many public sector bodies are considering Net Zero within their procurement practices, but few consider their supplier's resilience to climate change, and whether they are considering their own resilience to climate related shocks. By doing so, this will help to diversify the SME (and agricultural) supply chain and reduce reliability on potentially vulnerable sources, especially if businesses rely on an international supply chain including areas where climate change is likely to have an even greater impact.	All public sector procurement teams	LEP DLUHC	No	**M**	Medium-term	**No Regret**	**H**
			Agriculture						
78.	Rollout and extensively promote Weathering the Storm for Agriculture.	This document aims to improve land manager resilience to climate change, providing practical actions and solutions. It is a resource designed for use by farmers across the country, including Oxfordshire, and an easy win will be to extensively promote it across farming networks across the area.	NFU Various potential partners could assist with rollout	-	Low/no cost	**L**	Short-term	**No Regret**	**H**
79.	**Establish a climate risk and adaptation engagement programme for farmers and land managers.**	Farming represents a significant proportion of the Oxfordshire landscape (over 70% of Oxfordshire's land as of 2024). Adopting new land management practices to help alleviate flood risk could positively affect many local communities, and the farm itself. Climate change also poses risks to the types of crops we can grow, therefore raising awareness of alternatives or ways to protect existing crops would also be beneficial from a food security and economic perspective. However, at present, there is limited coordinated support on this agenda for farmers, along	BBOWT Catchment partnerships Defra District councils EA Food Alliance NE	Defra EA	No	**M**	Medium-term	**No Regret (M)**	**VH-I**

No.	Action	Further information and action justification	Relevant stakeholders that could support action implementation	Possible example funder(s)	Funding/ resource secured	Resource Intensity	Time	Type of action	Priority
		with how the LNRS, BNG, ELMS and other mechanisms can contribute to adaptation. An engagement programme showing how farmers can effectively adapt both their business activities (e.g. crop types etc.) to climate change and contribute positively to local land management to help will provide a good place to start.	NFU and other farm cluster facilitators Oxfordshire CC CA, Flood Risk TW						
80.	Establish dialogue between farmers and planning and permitting officers to encourage adaptation measures on farms.	It has been noted that some farmers see planning and permitting as a barrier to implementing potentially relevant infrastructure to help them adapt their land, e.g. appropriate infrastructure to be better able to store rainwater to prevent flooding and for use during periods of water scarcity. Given the importance of agriculture to the local economy, and the critical role it plays in maintaining food supply for the UK, it is important that they are made aware of their options, and given flexibility to implement them, to ensure there is a more stable water supply available to them throughout the year, even during periods of water scarcity. This could align with a toolkit currently being produced by OLNP which is looking at the environmental benefits farms can deliver, along with potential funding options.	District councils EA NE NFU OLNP	Defra	Low/no cost	**L/M**	Medium-term	**No Regret**	**VH**
81.	Launch a farm adaptation auditing programme.	With backing/ funding from and engagement with the key actors to enable the above, rollout a programme that provides farms with individual mini adaptation action plans that detail the most cost- and 'climate-effective' measures to install on their farm to improve their resilience to a future climate. Prioritise those farms that have experienced a greater degree of failure in recent years due to extreme weather.	Defra EA Local farming networks NFU Oxfordshire CC CA	Defra	No	**M/H**	Medium/ long-term	**Cont. Monitor**	**VH**
82.	Accelerate local food growing initiatives to build resilience into the food supply chain.	Growing food locally has strong environmental and economic benefits, but can also help to reduce the need for the county to import food from other countries where supply and food safety may be compromised due to the impacts of climate change abroad. Local food initiatives are already a priority of the Oxfordshire Food Strategy but further consideration and research into which types of food may be at risk of supply due to climate	CAG Defra District councils FSA Local businesses and farmers	Defra	Low/no cost	**L**	Short-term, on-going	**No Regret**	**M**

No.	Action	Further information and action justification	Relevant stakeholders that could support action implementation	Possible example funder(s)	Funding/ resource secured	Resource Intensity	Time	Type of action	Priority
		change and, therefore, which may be most beneficial to grow locally should be factored into this.	Local LCGs						

Annex 2: Detailed methodology

This annex outlines the methodology used to compile the Climate Change Adaptation Route Map for Oxfordshire.

Step one: Preliminary research

Upon commencing the project, our first task was to establish a baseline that reflects projects that have already been delivered and how adaptation is being integrated in wider sustainability, nature and Net Zero related activities, to help influence what is referred to in this document, and to identify any existing activity. To do this, we:

- Gained a clear understanding of the Climate Vulnerability Assessment completed by Atkins on behalf of the Future Oxfordshire Partnership, and how it may inform the actions in this Route Map, and their priority status.
- Accessed and read key Council strategies to identify where adaptation is being, or should be, included. These included:
    - Circular economy strategies
    - Community Wealth Building Strategy
    - Council and external Net Zero Plans
    - Emerging Local Nature Recovery Strategy
    - Emerging Oxfordshire rail strategy
    - Health and wellbeing Strategies
    - Highways Maintenance Plans
    - Infrastructure Strategies and Development Plans
    - Local Flood Risk Management Strategy and action plan
    - Schools Capital Investment Strategy.

- Gained an understanding of relevant partnerships for environmental activities that local councils are involved in. This included a particular focus on the Oxfordshire Local Nature Partnership who are one of the project partners supporting Oxfordshire CC with the development of the Local Nature Recovery Strategy, and the Future Oxfordshire Partnership who are delivering a range of activities including a Net Zero Route Map & Action Plan and work on green finance (and by whom this plan has been commissioned).
- Read relevant organisations' latest ARP submission reports and those organisations with a statutory requirement to consider climate change adaptation; links to the most relevant of these are provided below.

ARP-reporting body	Link to latest ARP submission
Cadent Gas	Climate Change Adaptation Report
Environment Agency	Living better with a changing climate
Forestry Commission	Climate change adaptation reporting: Forestry Commission
Historic England/ English Heritage Trust	Climate Change Adaptation Report
National Grid	Climate Change Adaptation Report

ARP-reporting body	Link to latest ARP submission
National Highways	Preparing for climate change on the strategic road network
Natural England	Natural England's climate change adaptation plan
Network Rail	Network Rail Third Adaptation Report
Thames Water	Protecting our water and world
The Wildlife Trusts	Changing nature: a climate adaptation report by The Wildlife Trusts
UK Health Security Agency	Health and care adaptation report

In particular, we were looking to identify any projects already being undertaken that contribute to improving the county's resilience to climate change, or that have the potential to contribute to improving the county's resilience to climate change should they be slightly modified or adapted. This gave us a good base of knowledge to help ensure these projects are reflected and captured in the Plan where appropriate modification, scaling-up and replication could be beneficial.

Step two: Stakeholder engagement

As mentioned above, key to ensuring that this Adaptation Plan is accurate, realistic and fit for purpose was effective and in-depth engagement with stakeholders. As experts on matters in the county, it was critical to speak to those working day-to-day in the area to find out how severe weather and climate change is affecting them.

Identifying stakeholders

We undertook a stakeholder mapping exercise to identify a range of stakeholders from Oxfordshire, which included a series of local and national contacts. The list below outlines who we engaged with and how, with further details forthcoming on the nature of the type of engagement, with explanations given as to what was included in the workshop, 1-2-1 meetings and the survey. In the first column, Oxfordshire CC refers to Oxfordshire County Council, followed by the relevant team/ department.

Organisation engaged with	Route Map workshop	1-2-1 meeting	Survey response
Cherwell Council – Climate Change	Y	Y	
Cherwell Council – Planning	Y	Y	
Community Action Groups (CAG) Oxfordshire	Y		
Environment Agency		Y	
National Farmers Union		Y	
Natural England	Y		
North East Cotswold Farmer Cluster CIC	Y		
Oxfordshire CC – Adult & Social Care		Y	
Oxfordshire CC – Biodiversity	Y	Y	

Organisation engaged with	Route Map workshop	1-2-1 meeting	Survey response
Oxfordshire CC – Business and Intellectual Property Centre	Y		
Oxfordshire CC – Flood Risk Management	Y	Y	
Oxfordshire CC – Highway Maintenance		Y	
Oxfordshire CC – Joint Oxfordshire Resilience Team	Y	Y	
Oxfordshire CC – Landscape/ Green Infrastructure		Y	
Oxfordshire CC – Local Nature Recovery		Y	
Oxfordshire CC – Property Services		Y	
Oxfordshire CC – Public Health	Y	Y	
Oxfordshire CC – Retrofit			Y
Oxfordshire CC – Transport Policy	Y	Y	
Oxford City Council – Climate Change	Y		
Oxford City Council – Planning	Y	Y	
Oxford Health NHS Foundation Trust	Y	Y	
Oxford University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust	Y		
Oxfordshire Association of Care Providers		Y	
Oxfordshire Association of Local Councils		Y	
Oxfordshire Fire & Rescue Service	Y	Y	
Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership	Y		Y
Oxfordshire Local Nature Partnership	Y		Y
South and Vale Councils – Climate Change	Y		Y
South and Vale Councils – Planning		Y	
Stagecoach West			Y
Thames Valley Local Resilience Forum		Y	
Thames Valley Police	Y		
Thames Water	Y	Y	
University of Oxford	Y		Y
West Oxfordshire Council – Climate Change	Y		
West Oxfordshire Council – Planning		Y	

It should also be noted that many other attendees and organisations attended an initial climate change adaptation capacity building training workshop that we ran in June 2024 (see below).

Stakeholder engagement programme

We wanted to provide a range of ways to engage with the development of this Route Map. As such, we provided a flexible and varied approach to stakeholder engagement that was realistic in the timeframe available, as follows.

Method of engagement	Purpose	Date(s)
Sustainability Leads monthly meeting presentation	• Opportunity to enable to district councils to provide early input to the Route Map, and ask questions about the project	16 May 2024
Capacity building training workshop (online)	• Upskill all stakeholders on what climate change adaptation is, its relevance in Oxfordshire and the latest policy and practice (~80 attendees)	13 June 2024
Route Map development workshop (in person)	• Giving stakeholders an opportunity to shape the content of the Route Map, and comment on the overall vision (~40 attendees)	03 July 2024
1-2-1 online meetings	• Gain a more in depth understanding on how each organisation/ service has been impacted by severe weather in the past few years • Ascertain any existing activity that has taken place to adapt Oxfordshire to climate change impacts	July/ August 2024
Survey	• As above, to gain any further responses from stakeholders who could not be interviewed	July/ August 2024
Environment and Place Portfolio Holders Briefing	• Briefing for Oxfordshire CC elected members on the Route Map, and an opportunity for them to feed in their views on what it should include	25 July 2024

1-2-1 meetings and survey (July/ August 2024)

The purpose of the 1-2-1 meetings was to discuss how severe weather has impacted on those interviewed and the service they are responsible for, and to discuss whether they are considering adapting to climate change, and what actions may have already taken place.

We developed pro-formas for each 1-2-1 meeting so that we could fill in answers to the questions during an online call. We asked similar questions at each meeting, but there were some specific questions that focused on the area of expertise of each stakeholder. The survey, created on Microsoft Forms, mirrored the generic questions that were used at each meeting, and below is a list of questions we asked all stakeholders, and the questions that were presented to those who filled in the survey.

- Can you tell us in broad terms how extreme weather events have impacted your organisation/service over the past few years?

- Do you quantitatively measure the financial/economic impact, or the impact on people/communities, that extreme weather events have on your organisation/service?

- Can you tell us which organisations you have worked with when preparing for, or responding to, the impact of an extreme weather event?
- Has your organisation/service already done anything to improve its resilience to extreme weather impacts?
- What more do you feel your organisation/service needs to do to better respond to the impacts of extreme weather events? What help do you need to do this?
- Is your organisation/service in the process of developing any new strategies/action plans which adapting to climate change could influence, or be influenced by?
- Do you have any other comments?
- Are you happy if SWM and/or the Council keep you informed about the work on climate change adaptation going forwards? Yes or No.

It was the responses to these questions, and the bespoke questions for each stakeholder, that provided the most useful information to inform this Route Map and ensure that it was as accurate and led by stakeholders as possible.

Step three: Development of a Climate Change Risk and Opportunity Assessment for Oxfordshire

In order to develop and validate the risk and opportunity assessment for Oxfordshire, we enlisted the support of Paul Watkiss Associates (PWA). Their assessment took into account the third UK Climate Change Risk Assessment (CCRA3), the Oxfordshire Climate Vulnerability Assessment (CVA) and the stakeholder engagement undertaken.

Risk identification, evaluation and scoring

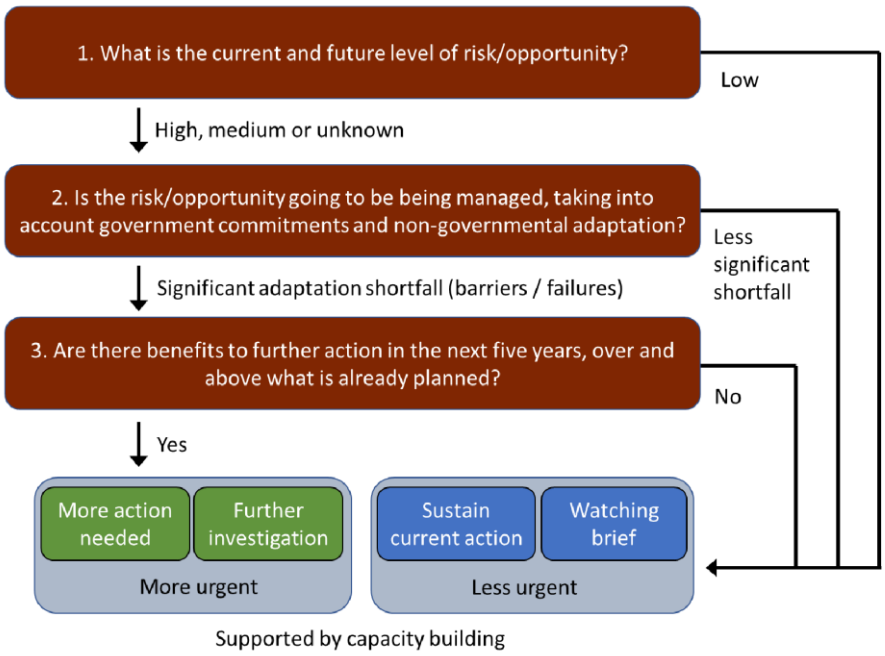
It was agreed that to define the list of risks, the study would use the CCRA3 risks and opportunities unless exceptional circumstances, such as the presence of a new and unplanned risk discovered in the evidence base or interview transcripts which was deemed significant by the study team to warrant inclusion. Furthermore, given the landlocked nature of Oxfordshire, nine risks relating to coastal change, and sea level rise, as well as to marine habitats and species and offshore infrastructure were excluded. This review resulted in a list of 52 risks for the Oxfordshire area, broken down as follows:

Theme	CCRA3 list	Oxfordshire list
Natural Environment	18	13
Infrastructure	13	11
Communities, Health and Built Environment	13	12
Business and Industry	7	6
International	10	10
Total	**61**	**52**

The CCRA3 method prioritises risks and opportunities into differing levels of urgency, based on three key questions:

1. What is the current and future level of risk/opportunity?
2. Is the risk/opportunity going to be managed, considering Government commitments and other non-Government adaptation?
3. Are there benefits to further action in the next five years, over and above what is already planned?

The overall flow chart showing this is outlined below:



The four categories of urgency are as follows:

Category	Description
More action needed	New, stronger or different Government action, whether policies, implementation activities or enabling environment for adaptation, over and above those already planned, are beneficial in the next five years to reduce climate risks or take advantage of opportunities. This will include different responses according to the nature of the risks and the type of adaptation: • Addressing current and near-term risks or opportunities with low and no-regret options (implementing activities or building capacity). • Integrating climate change in near-term decisions with a long lifetime or lock-in. • Early adaptation for decisions with long lead-times or where early planning is needed as part of adaptive management.
Further investigation	On the basis of available information, it is not known if more action is needed or not. More evidence is urgently needed to fill significant gaps or reduce the uncertainty in the current level of understanding in order to assess the need for additional action.
Sustain current action	Current or planned levels of activity are appropriate, but continued implementation of these policies or plans is needed to ensure that the risk or opportunity continues to be managed in the future.

Category	Description
Watching brief	The evidence in these areas should be kept under review, with continuous monitoring of risk levels and adaptation activity (or the potential for opportunities and adaptation) so that further action can be taken if necessary.

The starting point was to assume that the scores for the risks in Oxfordshire would be broadly consistent with the national picture set out in CCRA3 risk list. The study then reviewed the CVA, as well as the 16 interview transcripts. The assumption was that the UK score would be retained for Oxfordshire unless there was significant evidence found for the need to diverge.

It is important to emphasise that such a task is not a replacement for a thorough, comprehensive risk assessment to prioritise actions. However, the method was felt appropriate given:

- The broad consistency of urgency scores over previous CCRA cycles.
- The collective expertise provided through the consortium, including substantial contributions to national and international climate risk assessment, as well as subnational risk assessment within the UK (Glasgow City Region, Edinburgh, Highland, Herefordshire, Rugby, Lincolnshire etc.).
- The existing evidence already developed through work done through the CVA, and planned stakeholder engagement in the Route Map development process.

Findings and justification for risks included

The findings of the work were broadly consistent to that of the overall CCRA3. The review of interview transcripts did not highlight any justifications for variations in overall scores compared to the UK. However, it did highlight a number of areas where stakeholder judgement indicates that whilst the scores themselves may not be different, the adaptation efforts may warrant greater attention. These were notable in three areas:

- Building adaptive capacity in Flood Risk Management (noting the concerns raised in accessing Flood Risk Management funding to deliver schemes).
- Water availability, noting that many issues in the Water Resources Management Plan to manage drought were completely or partially outside the remit of Thames Water and subject to various stakeholder views and perspectives.
- Overheating in healthcare and council estates; there were examples cited of this already being a problem, for example a library constructed in 2016 which regularly reached 45 degrees Centigrade.

Whilst the risk scores did not change substantially through the screening process, it is also important to note that this analysis may mask some potential relative local importance **between** the risks. For example, anecdotally, the interview undertaken with the NHS and OACP highlighted overheating in the NHS and in care homes, and an analysis of overheating in the NHS for 2021/22 highlighted the Southeast region had the second highest numbers of sites overheating. The same analysis also found that Oxford University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust had the highest number of overheating occurrences within the region. This could suggest that there may be a need. However, the risks to health and social care delivery (H12), and to health and wellbeing from heat (H1) are already scored as more action needed.

A summary of the final scores across the themes of the risk assessments is set out below:

	More urgent		Less urgent	
Theme	**More Action Needed**	**Further Investigation**	**Sustain Current Action**	**Watching Brief**
Infrastructure	5	5	0	1
Natural Environment	9	3	1	0
Communities, Health and Built Environment	7	5	0	0
Business and Industry	2	3	1	0
International	6	0	1	3
Total	**29**	**16**	**3**	**4**

Limitations

Whilst this study has provided an initial set of risks and urgency scores, there were a number of limitations to the approach.

Limitations due to resource constraints and methods

Due to the resources available to conduct this study, one could not consider the wider evidence base when putting together the risk assessment and the compiling each risk's urgency score. For example, the Adaptation Reporting Power reports for infrastructure, or other scientific or policy literature, could have brought about additional evidence that may have influenced the final risk assessment. As such, there was little scope to consider how the risks may vary compared to the national picture provided by CCRA3.

Limitations with the existing evidence base

There were a number of areas where the CVA made it challenging for the study to interpret the relevant urgency scores. These included:

- **Local economic context:** The CVA had limited consideration of the local socio-economic context. For example, agriculture was assessed as a risk but the study did not assess how important it is to the local economy.
- **Consideration of uncertainty:** The assessment's analysis considered the likely level of risk by the 2050s, based on either a pathway to 2 degree or 4 degrees of global warming by 2100. This is consistent with the national level analysis in CCRA3, but can miss important information on uncertainty at the local level.
- **Current and future flood scenarios**: The approach used in the CVA to assess flood risk makes it challenging to understand the potential local risk versus the general national picture. In addition, the study does not outline which of the three CCRA3 flood risk projections were used (see here, page 5) which could affect local future flood risk. Also, the assessment did not account for economic growth and future development in Oxfordshire, which may also increase the level of risk.

- **Assessments of plans and policies:** The CVA assessed both local and national policies together which has made it more challenging to identify the adaptive capacity of the county compared to the national picture.
- **Clustering of risk scores and results**: In the risk scoring process, the CCRA3 risks were scored based on the overall climate related hazard only, rather than also considering the receptor separately. This made it difficult to determine how the receptors may have impacted the risk scores.
- **The scope** of the CVA is narrower than CCRA3 overall and a number of areas of future risks were not included in the analysis. These are shown below:

Chapter	Gap
Infrastructure	Bridges, slopes and embankments for transport, gas pipelines, telecommunications, hydroelectricity, cascading failures, subsidence, water availability
Health, Communities and Built Environment	Energy demand, risks to building fabric
Business and Industry	All major CCRA3 risks were not assessed, e.g. risks from flooding, water availability, access to finance
Natural Environment	Pests, pathogens and invasive species
International	Value chains, migration, food availability, safety and quality, trade, economic losses, public health, international governance

Local studies are often an opportunity to be more specific. For example, work could have looked at what drives economic value and jobs in Oxfordshire and their relative vulnerability to climate risk, which infrastructure is most critical to the area, or which public services (e.g. hospitals) could be most affected.

On the back of the methodology and limitations outlined, PWA have provided some further conclusions and recommendations as part of their accompanying report detailing their approach to the risk and opportunity assessment that has been borne in mind for the development of this Route Map. This report is available upon request.

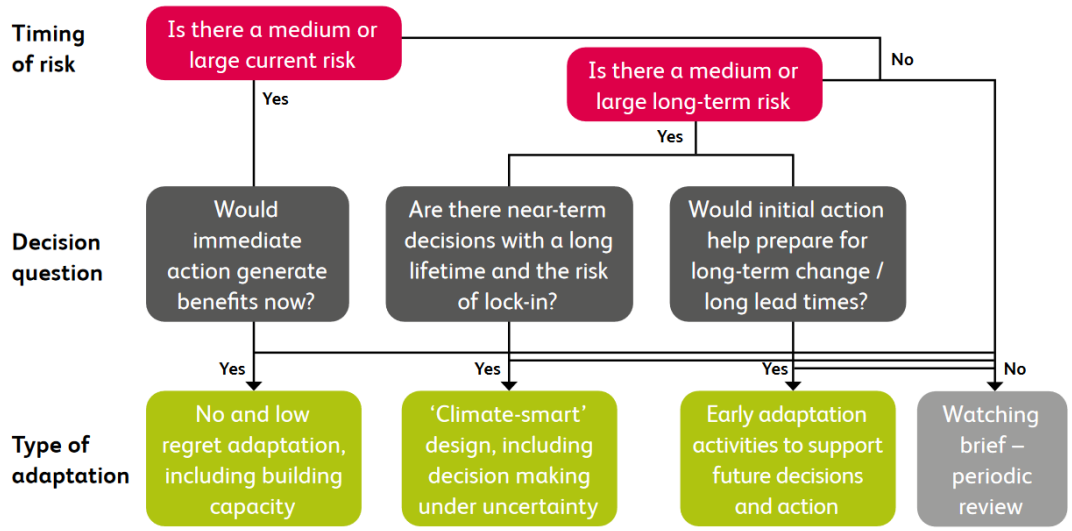
Step four: Identification of Actions

Numerous sources of information and evidence were used to inform the actions included in the adaptation plan detailed in Section 5. These were:

- The risk and opportunity assessment conducted by PWA
- The stakeholder engagement programme
- The literature review
- Good practice from other locations
- Existing work taking place in Oxfordshire
- Our own knowledge on what works

Ultimately, we wanted to ensure at least one action addressed each identified risk and that the plan was structured consistently with the risk assessment, which in itself is consistent with the CCRA3. The actions have been derived using the 'building block approach for adaptation' (first flow chart, based on Watkiss and

Betts 2021) combined with the principles of selecting adaptation options set out in the Local Partnerships Adaptation Toolkit (second tick list).



Effectiveness – will the actions meet your objectives and if so how? ☐	**Legitimacy** – is it politically, ethically and socially acceptable? ☐
Efficiency – do the benefits exceed the costs? If not, how can they? ☐	**Urgency** – how soon could each option be implemented? ☐
Equity – the action should not adversely affect other areas or vulnerable groups ☐	**Costs** – consider social and environmental costs, not just economic ☐
Flexibility – is each option flexible and will it allow for adjustments and incremental implementation? ☐	**Robust** – is each option able to cope with a range of future climate projections? ☐
Sustainability – does each option contribute to sustainability objectives, and are they themselves sustainable? ☐	**Synergies/coherence with other strategic objectives** – does each option help to achieve other objectives? ☐
Practical – can the action be implemented on relevant timescales? ☐	

Many of the actions are 'first step' actions to implementing something bigger, e.g. further research, engagement and integration into strategy and planning. These should then lead to more tangible actions that have a noticeable impact on the ground.

We understand that some of the actions are challenging, potentially resource intensive and require a high degree of effort to implement. Omitting actions on these grounds would, however, go against the reality which is that climate change is happening now, and with a (as of summer 2024) lack of strong policy, guidance and accountability at the national level, action needs to take place rapidly and at scale. This is why we have provided recommended action leads, prioritisation and resource intensity indicators against each one, to help make the plan more digestible.

We have also provided Oxfordshire CC with a spreadsheet and, thus, filterable version of the implementation blueprint, which can be used as a basis for a monitoring system.

-END-

Climate Change Adaptation Action Plan for Oxfordshire County Council services

Author:
Sustainability West Midlands

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sustainability west midlands

OXFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Report information

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Customer: Oxfordshire County Council

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About Sustainability West Midlands

Sustainability West Midlands (SWM) was established in 2002 as an independent, not-for-profit company and our purpose is to help the West Midlands become more sustainable, greener and fairer for all.

Our vision is that the West Midlands is leading in contributing to the national target of Net Zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050 whilst addressing health inequality and driving inclusive growth. We monitor the West Midlands Sustainability 2030 Roadmap which acts as a framework that all organisations based or operating in the region can use to help them make changes to their activities in the knowledge that they will contribute to wider regional ambition.

SWM's support our members and other local stakeholders in the public, private and third sectors to implement these changes by enabling them to demonstrate innovation and leadership and provide opportunities to collaborate and celebrate success.

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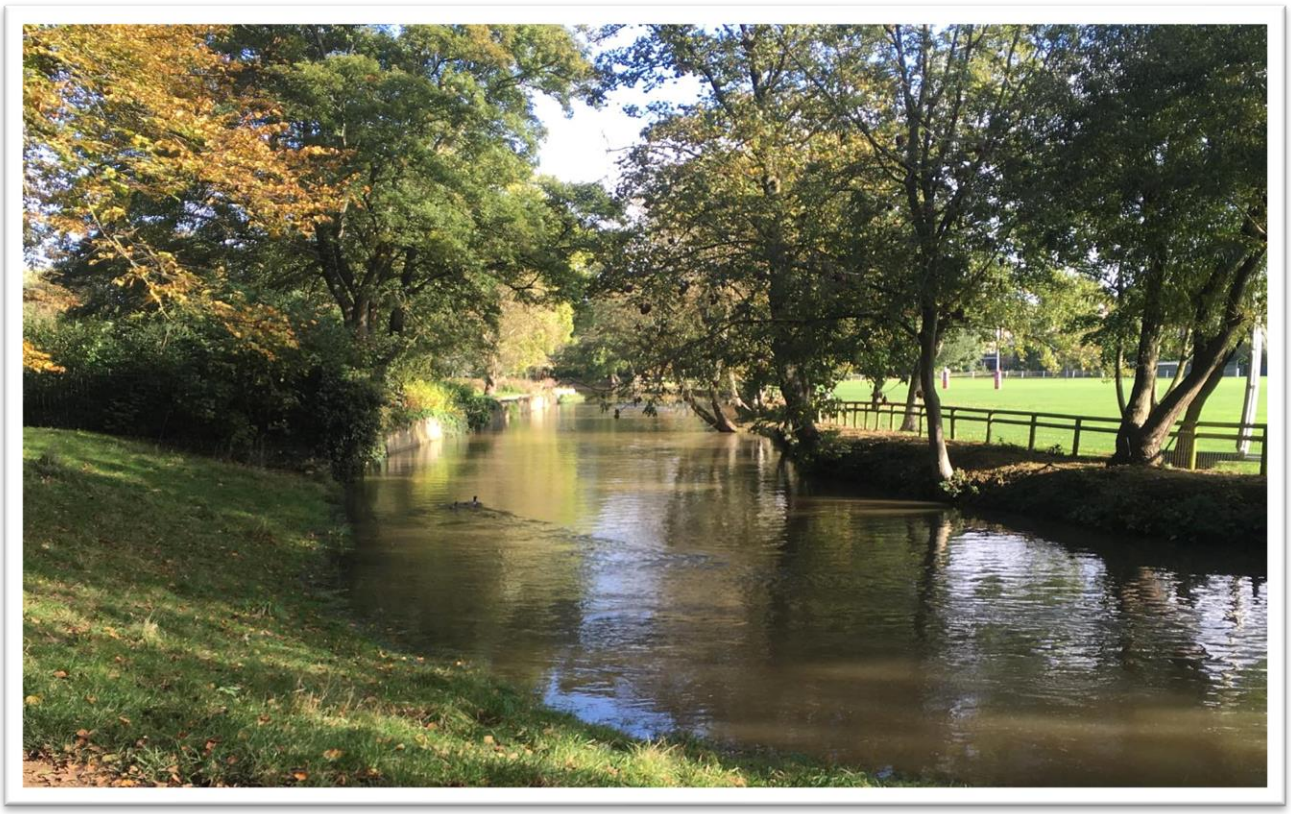

Above: River through Oxford
Front cover image: Flooding on Abingdon Road, Oxford

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Summary of the Actions for 2025/26

This document sets out the climate change adaptation actions that should be considered for implementation by Oxfordshire County Council (OCC), to ensure that the services it provides are prepared for the impacts of climate change, including greater incidence and severity of flooding, a higher likelihood of water scarcity and more intense and prolonged heatwaves.

Following extensive stakeholder engagement and consideration of the evidence base, this section summarises those actions that are deemed a **'very high-immediate' (VH-I)** priority for implementation in the first financial year, 2025/26. Other actions that are deemed 'very high,' 'high' or 'medium' in priority are included in section 2.4, the full action plan.

1. Report on progress with delivery of this Route Map and implementation blueprint annually to the FOP and set up a monitoring framework.

2. Develop a new Oxfordshire-wide Climate Adaptation Working Group under the Zero Carbon Oxfordshire Partnership (ZCOP) structure.

3. Revise membership of, and develop a new Terms of Reference for, the OCC internal adaptation working group.

4. Ensure that climate change adaptation forms a key part of the emerging Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) for Oxfordshire.

5. Expand efforts to Identify financing options and funding sources to enable implementation and integrate into the next budget cycle.

6. Develop a set of adaptation capacity building materials that are specifically targeted at executive officers, Cabinet Members and Councillors across the county.

7. Embed and/or support delivery of climate adaptation into a range of co-dependent strategies and plans being produced by council departments/ external partners.

8. Conduct an analysis of which of Oxfordshire's habitats, species and crops could be most affected by climate change, including the negative impacts of new pests, pathogens or invasive non-native species (INNS).

9. Expand on the Oxfordshire Way, existing work and relationships to empower vulnerable communities to develop climate change adaptation and/or community emergency plans.

1 Introduction and background

SWM has been commissioned by Oxfordshire County Council (OCC) on behalf of the Future Oxfordshire Partnership (FOP) to develop a Climate Change Adaptation Route Map, aimed at providing a series of actions that should be considered for implementation by decision makers in Oxfordshire, to ensure that the county's natural environment, people, infrastructure, buildings and businesses are prepared for the impacts of climate change. The core objective is to ensure that Oxfordshire can better manage, prepare for and respond to severe weather events and an increasing likelihood and severity of these in future.

Purpose of this document

Alongside this, OCC have asked SWM to prepare an adaptation plan that focuses on the climate change adaptation actions that should be considered for implementation by Oxfordshire County Council, to ensure that the services within its control are resilient to a future climate. The document should be read in conjunction with the Climate Change Adaptation Route Map for Oxfordshire, which is the county's overall response to adaptation. This document extracts the actions that OCC are most likely to provide a leading role in implementing and expands on them accordingly, to help OCC prioritise what it should be considering as next steps. It also includes a selection of additional actions that are deemed too specific to include in the Route Map.

This Plan will be continuously updated via a rigorous monitoring system, with a full refresh conducted in 2030, i.e. five years after its creation. Many of the actions included within the Plan will commence from now, although many may take longer than five years to complete, and some may not be able to be implemented until after 2030. In short, there is a need for regular scrutiny and updating of this document so that decision-making can be done in advance and as accurately as possible, in light of continuously changing circumstances. Much is likely to have changed by 2030 and this is a reasonable timescale by which to conduct a full Plan review.

This document focuses **only** on the actions for OCC and does **not** include:

- Background and policy context
- A summary of the Oxfordshire Climate Vulnerability Assessment.
- The climate change risk assessment for Oxfordshire.
- The overall Route Map for implementation across the county.
- The detailed justification behind the selection of each action.
- A detailed methodology.

For readers wishing to obtain more information on the above, please consult the Climate Change Adaptation Route Map for Oxfordshire.

2 Oxfordshire County Council Climate Change Adaptation Action Plan

2.1 Introduction and what is included

This plan only includes actions that are **within the direct control of OCC** to implement or that OCC is **likely to provide a leading role on** with regards to implementation, and **do not** include actions that are outside OCC's control, or that OCC may be able to act only in a supporting role. Most of these actions are included in the Climate Change Adaptation Route Map for Oxfordshire, as the actions OCC take the lead on will affect the whole county's approach on adaptation and, critically, OCC have the power and capacity to take on a leading role for many of the actions, even if responsibility for implementation could be shared. However, some other actions have been added specifically to this plan that we have deemed to be too specific to be included in a county-wide plan.

However, it should be emphasised that some of the actions in this plan cannot happen in isolation and, therefore, the Route Map should be consulted alongside to ensure actions are being considered holistically and with other activities and priorities in mind.

2.2 How the action plan is set out

Provided overleaf is an Action Plan that sets out:

- Actions that have been identified that, if implemented, could help to adapt Oxfordshire County Council's services to a changing climate. The majority of these actions are mirrored in the Climate Change Adaptation Route Map for Oxfordshire, with some new additions as indicated.
- Three initial suggested steps that OCC **could** take towards implementation of the specified action.
- Which OCC department(s) should lead on delivery (the plan is ordered alphabetically by delivery lead).
- Other OCC teams or (an)other organisation(s) that may be able to support the implementation of this action.
- Whether the action should be (either due to urgency or its simplicity) implemented in the short (within the next two years), medium (two-10 years) or long (>10 years) term.
- Whether implementing this action is expected to be intense from a resourcing and cost perspective, from L (Low), Medium (M) to H (High).
- Based on various aspects, we have prioritised each action as follows:

VH-I	Very High and Immediate
VH	Very High
H	High
M	Medium

- We have also used the principles set out in the Local Partnerships Adaptation Toolkit (Section 4.3) when selecting and considering actions:

Effectiveness – will the actions meet your objectives and if so how?	☐	**Legitimacy** – is it politically, ethically and socially acceptable?	☐
Efficiency – do the benefits exceed the costs? If not, how can they?	☐	**Urgency** – how soon could each option be implemented?	☐
Equity – the action should not adversely affect other areas or vulnerable groups	☐	**Costs** – consider social and environmental costs, not just economic	☐
Flexibility – is each option flexible and will it allow for adjustments and incremental implementation?	☐	**Robust** – is each option able to cope with a range of future climate projections?	☐
Sustainability – does each option contribute to sustainability objectives, and are they themselves sustainable?	☐	**Synergies/coherence with other strategic objectives** – does each option help to achieve other objectives?	☐
Practical – can the action be implemented on relevant timescales?	☐		

- We have ensured that the actions listed do not (e.g.) contradict other local priorities, disadvantage vulnerable people, and consider cost and efficiency, rather than merely suggesting a set of unrealistic and potentially counterproductive actions that could lead to maladaptation.

- We recognise that some of these actions may be being implemented or considered by organisations that we did not consult with during the evidence-gathering stage. An established monitoring process should allow for actions to be continuously reviewed with progress reported back through to stakeholders through the relevant established partnerships. It is also recommended that a refresh of this plan takes place alongside the Route Map after five years (2030).

2.3 List of acronyms

The table below includes the acronyms of the organisations listed in the plan.

Acronym	Organisation
BBOWT	Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire Wildlife Trust
BOB ICS	Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West Integrated Care System
BRE	Building Research Establishment
C&RT	Canal and River Trust
DB&T	Department for Business & Trade
DCMS	Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport
Defra	Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
DfE	Department for Education
DfT	Department for Transport
DHSC	Department for Health and Social Care

Acronym	Organisation
EA	Environment Agency
FC	Forestry Commission
GWS	Groundwork South of England
HE	Historic England
LCGs	Local Community Groups
LEP	Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership
LRF	Local Resilience Forum
NE	Natural England
NFF	National Flood Forum
NFU	National Farmers Union
NH	National Highways
NR	Network Rail
NT	National Trust
OALC	Oxfordshire Association of Local Councils
OBU	Oxford Brookes University
OCC	Oxfordshire County Council
OHFT	Oxford Health NHS Foundation Trust
OUH	Oxford University Hospitals
PH	Public Health
RSPB	Royal Society for the Protection of Birds
SHAP	Sustainable Housing Action Partnership
SWM	Sustainability West Midlands
TW	Thames Water
UOx	University of Oxford
WO	Wild Oxfordshire

Overleaf commences an adaptation plan for OCC services. Unlike the Route Map, it is ordered alphabetically by lead delivery team, rather than by risk theme.

2.4 The Action Plan

The colour coding in the 'Action No.' column corresponds to the following theme:

Governance, Reporting and Monitoring	Natural Environment and Assets	Infrastructure	Health, Communities and the Built Environment	Business and Industry, including Agriculture

Action No.	Action	Suggested first three steps towards implementation	Likely lead OCC delivery team	Other stakeholders that could support implementation	Possible example funder(s)	Timescales for implement	Resource Intensity	Priority
1.	Develop a register of people under the care and responsibility of OCC who may be most at risk from the impact of heatwaves.	1. Collate a register of all individuals who are looked after by OCC, e.g. those under the jurisdiction of home care services 2. Determine which of these people are most exposed to the impacts of heatwaves, e.g. those with respiratory conditions, disabilities etc. 3. Ensure that protocols are put in place to provide them with appropriate PPE during hot weather.	Adult Social Care Children's Services	OHU OHFT	-	Medium-term, on-going	**L**	**VH**
2.	Consider adding adaptation measures into assistive technology options.	1. Identify any existing measures that could assist with adaptation objectives (but that are perhaps not classed as adaptation at present) 2. Draw up a list of potential options, e.g. provision of fans during heatwaves 3. Train assistive technology needs assessors to factor in such provisions when assessing homes.	Adult Social Care	Assistive Technology suppliers	DHSC	Short-term	**L/M**	**M**
3.	Develop a new Oxfordshire-wide Climate Adaptation Working Group under the Zero Carbon Oxfordshire Partnership (ZCOP) structure.	1. Identify and map the stakeholders you want to be represented on the group 2. Co-develop a Terms of Reference (ToR) 3. Establish a secretariat and set up a date for the first meeting.	Climate Action	ZCOP and other stakeholders as required	EA Defra All potential group members	Short-term, on-going	**L/M**	**VH-I**
4.	Ensure adaptation is fully integrated into existing relevant boards/groups.	1. Identify a list of relevant boards and groups 2. Propose how adaptation could be integrated in Group ToRs	Climate Action	All organisations can look at embedding adaptation into their	-	Short-term, on-going	**L**	**VH**

Action No.	Action	Suggested first three steps towards implementation	Likely lead OCC delivery team	Other stakeholders that could support implementation	Possible example funder(s)	Timescales for implement	Resource Intensity	Priority
		3. Prepare briefing papers on adaptation for Group Chairs and provide a presentation on adaptation at one of the meetings.		KPI and reporting processes				
5.	Revise membership of, and develop a new Terms of Reference for, the OCC internal adaptation working group.	1. Use this plan to identify gaps in membership, and any members who are infrequent attendees 2. Revise the ToR, reflecting the how the group can help to deliver this plan 3. Arrange the next meeting at which the new ToR is proposed and shared.	Climate Action	SWM	-	Short-term, on-going	**L**	**VH-I**
6.	Establish strategic links with the local universities by offering work placements and research opportunities on adaptation.	1. Identify which of the actions in this plan and the Route Map may be suitable for further research by a university placement 2. Engage with the local universities and establish contacts with relevant departments (e.g. geography, earth science, physics) 3. Prepare short- and long-term placement briefs for projects to generate support for the highest priority actions.	Climate Action	UOx OBU	-	Short-term, on-going	**L**	**H**
7.	Identify adaptation leads and other equivalent working groups in neighbouring counties.	1. Use SWM's good practice research document (done as part of this commission) to identify neighbouring activities 2. Identify contacts either via council central switchboards or other sources such as the Net Zero Hubs or LGA 3. Reach out to these contacts for an initial conversation.	Climate Action	Relevant partners as specified, including local National Landscapes and GSENZH	-	Short-term	**L**	**H**
8.	Develop a set of adaptation capacity building materials that are specifically targeted at executive officers, Cabinet Members	1. Research what is already out there in terms of materials and identify existing good practice 2. Peruse resources from Climate Outreach who may have some pre-developed materials 3. Engage with executive officers, Cabinet Members and Councillors to determine knowledge gaps to help tailor the materials.	Climate Action, Comms	CAG District Councils SWM	-	Short-term	**L**	**VH**

Action No.	Action	Suggested first three steps towards implementation	Likely lead OCC delivery team	Other stakeholders that could support implementation	Possible example funder(s)	Timescales for implement	Resource Intensity	Priority
	and Councillors across the county.							
9.	Establish and rollout a climate change adaptation public communications strategy and plan.	1. Research what is already out there in terms of materials and identify existing good practice 2. Peruse resources from Climate Outreach who may have some pre-developed materials 3. Identify key messages to highlight to local residents, using existing resources such as the CVA and the new Route Map.	Climate Action, Comms	Climate Outreach District Councils EA LCGs OBU UOx	Defra EA	Short-term	**L/M**	**H**
10.	Develop an online hub of adaptation resources.	1. Review the content on the existing climate adaptation webpages on the OCC website 2. Collate a list of new resources that could add value and decide where they should be uploaded; adding a new adaptation section to the Climate Action Oxfordshire website may be the most impactful solution 3. Use the new communications materials outlined above to help populate these new pages.	Climate Action, Comms	-	-	Short-term, on-going	**L/M**	**M**
11.	Embed and/or support delivery of climate adaptation into a range of co-dependent strategies and plans being produced by council departments/ external partners.	1. Identify the relevant strategies and plans included in this action plan that are priority for adaptation integration (e.g. LNRS; see Annex 2 in the main Route Map) 2. Identify a list of additional relevant strategies and plans 3. Engage with strategy/plan owners to discuss embedment.	Climate Action	-	-	Short-term, on-going	**L**	**VH-I**
12.	Embed climate risks into corporate risk assessments.	1. Identify key climate risks that are likely to affect the county (using the CVA) 2. Determine to what extent climate risks are discussed in other corporate risk registers and service delivery plans already	Climate Action	All organisations can embed climate risks into corporate risk assessments Central Govt	-	Short-term	**L**	**H**

Action No.	Action	Suggested first three steps towards implementation	Likely lead OCC delivery team	Other stakeholders that could support implementation	Possible example funder(s)	Timescales for implement	Resource Intensity	Priority
		3. Set up discussions with relevant OCC teams around how to best reflect climate risks into their existing risk registers.						
13.	Develop an approach to capturing data that can help to monitor the impact severe weather events have on the county.	1. Identify where the current data gaps are 2. Engage with data holders on how these gaps may be filled and identify where data may exist already 3. Investigate use of the SWIMS tool for an easier and more creative way of capturing extreme weather impacts.	Climate Action	C&RT District councils EA Fire Service LRF Met Office Police SSEN/ Scottish Gas Network TW	-	Short-term, on-going	**L/M**	**VH**
14.	Map climatological and relevant non-climatological data to inform spatial planning.	1. Identify the relevant datasets that OCC already has access to via engagement with GIS specialists. 2. Map stakeholders who could have other datasets that OCC does not yet have access to. 3. Engage with these data holders to encourage data sharing to assist the county's climate change planning.	Climate Action	Several partners can help contribute relevant datasets	-	Short-term, on-going	**L/M**	**H**
15.	Establish a comprehensive database of local adaptation projects.	4. Develop a sharable spreadsheet and populate with existing known projects (some of which are referred to in the Route Map) 5. Put out a call to the new Working Group members at every meeting to provide updates 6. Identify a central point of contact to ensure the database is kept up to date.	Climate Action	Organisations working on climate adaptation projects	-	Short-term	**L/M**	**H**

Action No.	Action	Suggested first three steps towards implementation	Likely lead OCC delivery team	Other stakeholders that could support implementation	Possible example funder(s)	Timescales for implement	Resource Intensity	Priority
16.	Report on progress with delivery of the Route Map and action plan annually to the FOP and set up a monitoring framework.	1. Develop a monitoring mechanism (see recommendations section) for the Route Map 2. Align the actions in this plan with those in the Route Map to, ideally, have one monitoring mechanism that covers both 3. Use this to keep this plan and the Route Map continuously up to date.	Climate Action	All partners	Defra EA	On-going	**L/M**	**VH-I**
17.	Integrate the consideration of adaptation options into Net Zero retrofit programmes.	1. Work with DC planners to identify principles being considered in the new adaptation guidance document for developers that could be applied to retrofit programmes 2. Liaise with expert bodies (e.g. BRE) to ascertain if any guidance on integrating adaptation into retrofit schemes already exists 3. Bring this intelligence together to create new retrofit guidance that includes adaptation measures alongside Net Zero considerations.	Climate Action, Property Services	BRE Developers District council Housing GSENZH Housing Associations	EA MHCLG	Medium-term	**M/H**	**VH**
18.	Launch a farm adaptation auditing programme.	1. Share intel from the schools auditing programme with NFU on a potential approach for adaptation auditing 2. Help them to identify farms that are potentially most in need of an audit based on impacts from past events 3. Identify adaptation options that have been implemented on the ground in farm settings already as good practice examples.	Climate Action	Defra EA Local farming networks NFU	Defra	Medium/ long-term	**M/H**	**VH**
19.	Assess how planned digital infrastructure projects could be affected by climate change.	1. Ascertain whether extreme weather or future climate risks have been factored into digital infrastructure projects led by OCC 2. Identify areas that are targeted for intervention and whether there is a particular exposure to climate risks in these areas 3. Appraise options to ensure resilience in future digital projects.	Digital Infrastructure	DCMS Digital infrastructure providers	DCMS	Medium-term	**M**	**H**

Action No.	Action	Suggested first three steps towards implementation	Likely lead OCC delivery team	Other stakeholders that could support implementation	Possible example funder(s)	Timescales for implement	Resource Intensity	Priority
20.	Embed climate adaptation into new investments and projects designed to boost economic growth.	1. Identify existing projects and those in the pipeline 2. Work with the LEP to establish criteria that prioritises future-proofing in investment 3. Use mapping and other intelligence to determine locations that would benefit from investment in resilience to boost growth whilst adapting to climate change.	Economic Development	DB&T Defra EA LEP Technical consultancies	-	Short-term, on-going	**L/M**	**VH**
21.	Continue the rollout of strategic flood management schemes and identification of areas suitable for alternative flood resilience measures.	1. Continue dialogue with the EA to align plans for flood management schemes 2. Identify any areas that are prone to flooding but where flood defence schemes may not benefit, to prioritise locations for alternative flood protection measures 3. Use the CVA to identify potentially vulnerable assets and prioritise measures in these areas.	Flood Risk, Joint Oxfordshire Resilience Team	EA LRF NFF	EA Defra	Long-term, on-going	**H**	**VH**
22.	Undertake an assessment/ mapping exercise of local roads, cycle paths, pavements, electric vehicle charging points and car parks to determine which are most likely to be at risk from failing/ reduced performance in future climatic conditions.	1. Consult with NH and other partners as to whether any mapping has already been undertaken, and source other relevant maps (such as flood maps from the EA) 2. Interrogate data and information on past weather events and their impacts on the highways network 3. Identify gaps in these data prior to undertaking a new mapping exercise, and produce a strategy aiming to fill these gaps.	Highways	District council Parking teams OCC Flood risk DfT EA NH TW	DfT EA	Medium-term	**M/H**	**VH**
23.	Assess the potential for increased asset failure (e.g. street lights, signals, other street furniture) due to climate change.	1. Use data and reports to determine the reasons for asset failure in recent years, and whether these are linked to extreme weather events 2. Identify any patterns that may show that increasing flood or heatwave events have led to an increase in asset failure	Highways	NH District councils	-	Medium-term	**M**	**H**

Action No.	Action	Suggested first three steps towards implementation	Likely lead OCC delivery team	Other stakeholders that could support implementation	Possible example funder(s)	Timescales for implement	Resource Intensity	Priority
		3. Undertake climate modelling to determine how climate change may exacerbate the problem in future.						
24.	Utilise telemetry and warning systems to provide alerts and notifications of severe weather related issues on the road/cycle network.	1. Identify existing systems that could be utilised and engage with the JORT team who have a similar action allocated to them (see action 31) 2. Engage with partners on how to maximise the effectiveness of rolling out a new system 3. Collate a list of users who would benefit most from being in receipt of the alerts.	Highways	OCC Joint Oxfordshire Resilience Team EA Met Office	-	Short-term	**L**	**H**
25.	Assess the adequacy of the provision of salt and grit supplies.	1. Based on recent heatwave events, analyse the impact this has had on grit usage and supplies in Oxfordshire 2. Identify thresholds at which grit spreading is required in heatwave conditions 3. Use climate modelling to determine whether a likely increase in temperatures across the year may lead to changes in the quantity of grit required.	Highways	NH Met Office	-	Short-term	**L/M**	**M**
26.	Assess the viability of current 'green verges' in a future climate.	1. Consider whether current cutting regimes may need to change (especially) due to milder winters, and the potential cost implications 2. Identify verges that have already suffered in extreme weather conditions 3. Work with the NE&L team to identify how green verges along highways could perform in future climatic conditions using climate modelling.	Highways	OCC Natural Environment and Landscapes District councils	NE	Short-term	**L/M**	**H**
27.	Identify and prioritise adaptation options on the most popular current and future walking and cycling routes across the county.	1. Identify through data and engagement which routes are used most often and for what purpose 2. Determine if these routes have any existing issues (e.g. prone to flooding) 3. Consider adaptation options that will enhance the resilience of these routes to maintain and boost usage.	Highways, Transport Policy	OCC Natural Environment and Landscapes Sustrans Living Streets District councils	-	Medium-term	**M/H**	**H**

Action No.	Action	Suggested first three steps towards implementation	Likely lead OCC delivery team	Other stakeholders that could support implementation	Possible example funder(s)	Timescales for implement	Resource Intensity	Priority
28.	Ensure biodiversity improvements and tree planting programmes are integrated into local highways works.	1. Establish if there are any existing biodiversity improvement plans along highways networks by engaging with colleagues responsible for nature improvement 2. Prioritise which areas may benefit most from biodiversity improvements, factoring in how these could enhance resilience to future extreme weather impacts 3. Develop a pilot scheme in one area prior to rolling out and wider integration.	Highways, Transport Policy	OCC Natural Environment and Landscapes District councils	NE EA	Short-term	**L**	**H**
29.	Undertake an analysis of all County Council-owned bridges and structures to check their viability in a future climate.	1. Consider the possibility of integrating this with action 21, undertaking an assessment/ mapping exercise on the local road network 2. Interrogate data and information on past weather events and their impacts on bridges and structures 3. Identify gaps in these data prior to undertaking the analysis, and produce a strategy aiming to fill these gaps.	Highways	C&RT DfT District councils EA HE NR	-	Medium-term	**M/H**	**H**
30.	Develop a register of OCC staff who may be most vulnerable during heatwaves and consider provisions to support them.	1. Collate a list of all staff employed by OCC and their roles 2. Determine which of these people are most exposed to the impacts of heatwaves, e.g. outdoor workers, manual labourers, care workers etc. 3. Ensure that protocols are put in place to ensure they are provided with appropriate PPE during hot weather, and that this is written into staff handbooks etc.	HR	OCC Climate Action, PH	-	Short-term, on-going	**L**	**H**
31.	Review, support and strengthen early warning systems and communications of weather thresholds in light of climate change.	1. Use climate projections to determine how the thresholds may need to change, based on best practice 2. Identify existing systems that could be utilised, and engage with Highways who have a similar action allocated to them with regards to the road network (see action 24)	Joint Oxfordshire Resilience Team	OCC Climate Action District council Housing EA LRF	-	Short-term	**L**	**H**

Action No.	Action	Suggested first three steps towards implementation	Likely lead OCC delivery team	Other stakeholders that could support implementation	Possible example funder(s)	Timescales for implement	Resource Intensity	Priority
		3. Collate a list of users who would benefit most from being in receipt of the alerts.		Met Office				
32.	Expand on the Oxfordshire Way, existing work and relationships to empower vulnerable communities to develop climate change adaptation and/or community emergency plans.	1. Identify a project lead for this activity who can convene and manage a large range of partners 2. Map out the stakeholders who are likely to be interested in supporting this programme in some form 3. Identify vulnerability via this engagement, using existing mapping (including the CVA) and by liaising with communities who have lived experience of dealing with extreme weather.	Joint Oxfordshire Resilience Team, Climate Action, Flood Risk	District councils EA LCGs LRF/ Fire Service NFF OALC Parish councils TW	EA Defra MHCLG NLCF	Short-term, on-going	**M**	**VH-I**
33.	Promote and expand on existing measures that promote building household resilience to climate change.	1. Collate existing pieces of guidance to build from and identify ways these could be brought together into a package of advice for householders 2. Identify whether these measures could be integrated into the public communications campaign suggested in action 9 3. Utilise mapping (e.g. CVA) and identify areas most exposed to climate hazards, aligned with other vulnerabilities, to target interventions in areas that may need them most.	Joint Oxfordshire Resilience Team, Flood Risk	District Council Housing Fire Service Housing Associations LCGs Parish councils SHAP	MHCLG EA NLCF	Medium-term	**M/H**	**H**
34.	Embed climate adaptation into any natural environment/ natural capital working groups operating county-wide.	1. Identify a list of relevant groups 2. Propose how adaptation could be integrated in Group ToRs 3. Prepare briefing papers on adaptation for Group Chairs and provide a presentation on adaptation at one of the meetings.	Natural Environment and Landscapes, Climate Action	BBOWT District councils EA FC NE OLNP RSPB	-	Short-term	**L**	**H**
35.	Ensure that climate change adaptation forms a key part of the emerging Local	1. Engage with the EA's LNRS lead, who is pioneering integration of adaptation into LNRS strategies 2. Assess how climate change is impacting upon nature recovery right now, and how this is likely to change in future	Natural Environment and Landscapes	BBOWT EA FC NE NT/HE	-	Short-term	**L**	**VH-I**

Action No.	Action	Suggested first three steps towards implementation	Likely lead OCC delivery team	Other stakeholders that could support implementation	Possible example funder(s)	Timescales for implement	Resource Intensity	Priority
	Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) for Oxfordshire.	3. Align this with the key priorities of the LNRS.		RSPB WO				
36.	Ensure local tree-planting and biodiversity improvement programmes contribute to climate adaptation objectives.	1. Identify the range of organisations who are planning on implementing tree planting programmes 2. Determine their consideration of the 'right tree right place' principle with respect to climate adaptation 3. Provide advice to lead organisations on how to factor adaptation into future programmes.	Natural Environment and Landscapes	The myriad of organisations involved in tree planting schemes. Nurseries should also be consulted to ensure demand can be met locally	FC EA NE Defra	Short-term, on-going	**L/M**	**VH**
37.	Produce a Green and Blue Infrastructure Strategy for Oxfordshire.	1. Consider existing (e.g. LNRS) and future planned (e.g. tree) strategies and how these need to be reflected in the new GI strategy 2. Conduct a similar exercise with existing GI projects and their impact on various objectives (biodiversity, adaptation, health and wellbeing etc.) 3. Identify key stakeholders and run a preliminary workshop to kick start first steps.	Natural Environment and Landscapes	BBOWT C&RT District councils EA FC GWS NE RSPB WO	Defra EA NE	Long-term	**M**	**VH**
38.	Ensure Oxfordshire continues to establish a range of Nature Based Solutions and Natural Flood Management (NFM) projects to support adaptation objectives.	1. Identify existing projects and those in the pipeline 2. Use the development of new strategies (see above) to identify areas that could benefit from new NFM projects 3. Engage with a range of stakeholders on these proposals prior to building a business case.	Natural Environment and Landscapes	All of the partners listed here that in some way look after the natural environment	EA NE Defra	Short-term, on-going	**M/H**	**VH**
39.	Conduct an analysis of which of Oxfordshire's habitats, species and crops could be most affected by climate change, including	1. Identify whether any organisations have already commenced looking into this issue, especially at the national level (Defra) 2. Collaborate with local beneficiaries to mobilise action and identify who has resources to take it forward	Natural Environment and Landscapes	BBOWT Defra District councils EA FC NE	Defra NE FC	Short-term	**M/H**	**VH-I**

Action No.	Action	Suggested first three steps towards implementation	Likely lead OCC delivery team	Other stakeholders that could support implementation	Possible example funder(s)	Timescales for implement	Resource Intensity	Priority
	the negative impacts of new pests, pathogens or Invasive Non-Native Species (INNS).	3. Use existing literature to identify any emerging or observed trends in pests, pathogens or INNS that are affecting habitats and species present in Oxfordshire.		RSPB UOx WO				
40.	Set up or utilise existing community-led groups that can routinely monitor the areas identified as potentially being most vulnerable to pests and diseases.	1. Peruse the analysis undertaken on which species could be most at risk from the negative impacts of new pests, pathogens or Invasive Non-native Species (INNS) (see above) 2. Identify prone hotspots identified and cross-reference with the location of active community groups 3. Engage with the DCs and these groups to determine appetite on assisting with monitoring.	Natural Environment and Landscapes	BBOWT Defra District councils EA FC LCGs NE RSPB TVERC WO	Defra NE FC	Medium-term	**L/M**	**VH**
41.	Monitor the colonisation of new species due to climate change.	1. Identify through the strategies and further engagement whether new species are already establishing themselves in Oxfordshire 2. Identify any existing studies into potential future trends; liaise with BBOWT 3. Establish ways of monitoring future trends (potentially by integrating with the above two actions).	Natural Environment and Landscapes	BBOWT Defra EA FC LCGs NE RSPB TVERC WO	Defra NE FC	Medium-term	**M**	**M**
42.	Embed climate resilience into public sector procurement criteria.	1. Identify any current supply chain vulnerabilities that may disrupt operations, based on climate change risks elsewhere 2. Identify any examples of good practice where climate resilience is being embedded into procurement criteria already 3. Develop criteria within tender documentation asking suppliers to comment on whether they have assessed their company risks to climate change, and have any plans in place to address these.	Procurement	All public sector procurement teams	LEP DLUHC	Medium-term	**M**	**H**

Action No.	Action	Suggested first three steps towards implementation	Likely lead OCC delivery team	Other stakeholders that could support implementation	Possible example funder(s)	Timescales for implement	Resource Intensity	Priority
43.	Continue the schools adaptation plan programme, and expand to other public buildings and assets.	1. Prioritise which schools would benefit most from a plan, based on various vulnerability parameters 2. Seek funding sources that can help schools implement identified options 3. Consider expanding the programme to include other public buildings in OCC control, prioritising those that are most vulnerable in terms of exposure and who uses the building.	Property Services, Education	Academy Trusts BRE DfE Technical consultancies	DfE Defra	On-going	**M**	**H**
44.	Assess the viability of all other OCC-owned buildings (e.g. libraries, museums, wedding ceremony rooms) in a future climate.	1. Identify through asset and estate management strategies which buildings are likely to be retained or sold/ vacated, to help prioritise 2. Undertake initial analysis of potentially vulnerable buildings based on past event exposure and existing mapping, and propose options 3. Identify consultancies who can undertake a climate risk assessment of the remaining buildings to determine for which to prioritise interventions (including retrofit; see below).	Property Services	OCC Climate Action Technical consultancies	DESNZ	Short-term	**M/H**	**M**
45.	Apply the principles of integrating adaptation into retrofitting of OCC-owned buildings.	1. Undertake the tasks associated with the action above to identify which buildings to prioritise for retrofit 2. Use the principles of the retrofit guidance created for action 16 3. Identify suitable adaptation retrofit options for each building as appropriate.	Property Services	OCC Climate Action BRE Developers	DESNZ	Medium-term	**M/H**	**M**
46.	Research effectiveness of 'cool spaces.'	1. Learn lessons from other authorities (e.g. London) that have developed similar initiatives 2. Develop criteria that constitutes a 'cool space' and collate a list of potential candidate locations 3. Consult existing mapping (e.g. CVA) that can help to highlight where cool spaces may be most beneficial for the community.	Public Health	BOB ICB District councils Housing Associations LCGs Parish councils	UKHSA NHS	Short-term	**M**	**H**

Action No.	Action	Suggested first three steps towards implementation	Likely lead OCC delivery team	Other stakeholders that could support implementation	Possible example funder(s)	Timescales for implement	Resource Intensity	Priority
47.	Ensure climate adaptation is integrated into the design and planning for new infrastructure assets and schemes.	1. Identify examples of good practice conducted elsewhere on applying the principles of climate resilient infrastructure standards 2. Learn from the development of the new adaptation planning guidance (refer to the Route Map) 3. Use this to develop new guidance for new infrastructure projects on climate adaptation integration.	Teams responsible for provision of infrastructure	All other infrastructure providers	-	Short-term, on-going	**M**	**VH**
48.	Ensure new local passenger transport vehicles are fitted with air cooling devices.	1. Work with the local bus companies to ensure a consistent approach to this action 2. Identify whether any new community vehicles are due to be commissioned in the near-term 3. Integrate an expectation into the procurement of new vehicles that they should include cooling.	Transport Policy	Bus operators such as Stagecoach DfT	Bus operators DfT	Medium-term, on-going	**M/H**	**M**
49.	Ensure climate adaptation is integrated into future updates to the Local Transport Plan.	1. Use this plan for ideas of ways to incorporate adaptation options into the next LTP revision in 2027 2. Consult with Highways on areas where adaptation measures may be most effective to deal with current known issues 3. Identify how adaptation could be integrated into the LTP revision, e.g. embedding resilience to the 'healthy place shaping' theme.	Transport Policy	OCC Highways, Climate Action DfT NH Sustrans	DfT	Medium-term	**L/M**	**VH**
50.	Analyse how climate change could impact on the local waste collection and disposal service.	1. Engage with the DCs; doing this analysis in collaboration covering collection and disposal will save resources and create a holistic picture 2. Determine whether any existing analysis has already been carried out on waste disposal resilience 3. Use mapping and past experiences to identify disposal sites that may already be at risk from the impacts of extreme weather to aid prioritisation.	Waste Management	District council waste collection teams Waste collection companies	-	Short-term	**L/M**	**H**
51.	Ensure waste management practices, storage and treatment facilities are	1. Identify what support can be provided to this action; OCC could potentially act as convenor to ensuring all the county is covered	Waste Management	Defra EA Wrap	Waste contractors EA	Medium-term	**M/H**	**H**

Action No.	Action	Suggested first three steps towards implementation	Likely lead OCC delivery team	Other stakeholders that could support implementation	Possible example funder(s)	Timescales for implement	Resource Intensity	Priority
	robust to withstand future climatic conditions.	2. Determine whether any existing analysis has already been carried out around waste storage and treatment facilities 3. Integrate waste facilities into the development of new infrastructure guidance (see action 47) as appropriate.		Technical consultancies Waste contractors/ operators	Defra			
52.	Conduct a climate change assessment of minerals extraction processes.	1. Determine whether any analysis has already been carried out on how climate change could affect minerals extraction 2. Determine whether any existing analysis has already been carried out around minerals extraction sites 3. Undertake climate modelling and risk assessments of relevant sites; this may be led by OCC or guidance provided by OCC to enable operators to undertake the assessment themselves.	Waste & Minerals	Defra Landowners/ NFU Relevant operators Technical consultancies Wildlife and environmental organisations	EA Defra Industry	Medium-term	**M**	**H**

3 Strengthening the delivery of the Strategic Plan

In developing this plan, it is easy for us to focus purely on the need to adapt to climate change in light of there being a climate emergency, rather than consider the bigger picture. However, we understand that Oxfordshire, led by the County Council, has very specific priorities that need to be taken forward, and we need to consider these priorities in this plan, which we have tried to do throughout the process.

We would like to demonstrate this by setting out our arguments about how climate adaptation can aid the delivery of the key outcomes detailed in the Oxfordshire Strategic Plan 2023-25. This is essentially the county's delivery manual and, in the Council leader's own words, sets out how the council and its partners can *'make sure that everyone in Oxfordshire can take advantage of the opportunities that our vibrant, diverse and innovative county has to offer.'*

The table below lists the majority of the outcomes and how we feel that a county more adapted and resilient to climate change can help strengthen and/or accelerate the likelihood of achieving them, or how the success measures can help ensure the county is resilient to climate change.

Strategic Plan priorities	Objectives given in the Strategic Plan	How adapting to climate change could aid delivery, or visa-versa
The Climate Emergency	Implement together with partners the county's 'pathways to zero carbon' route map, a comprehensive plan for decarbonising Oxfordshire.	As described in this plan, both adaptation and Net Zero actions have the potential to complement each other and accelerate the delivery of both agendas, if done well.
	Work to bring our own buildings and operations to net zero by 2030 and increasingly align our supply chain emissions with our net zero ambitions. Support the retrofit of residential homes to improve energy efficiency.	Improving the efficiency and energy performance of buildings provides an opportunity to minimise future risks to climate change, especially through improvements to ventilation leading to a reduction in overheating.
	Support and promote a shift towards active travel (walking, cycling and use of public transport), reducing the need for private cars and accelerate the transition to electric vehicles by expanding charging capacity across the county.	Air quality may worsen in a future of hotter, drier summers so driving down vehicle use will help to ease the potential health implications of this. Such conditions also provide opportunities for more favourable walking and cycling conditions in future summers.
	Work with partners to continue to build a greener, more resilient and fairer renewable energy network.	Energy infrastructure is at risk from climate change, through (e.g.) increased flooding of sub-stations and power failures during extreme heat. Investing in local, renewable energy schemes will strengthen resilience to the network, reducing the risks of failures.
	Accelerate work on supporting biodiversity and nature recovery in parallel with adaptation to climate change, including	This priority directly benefits adaptation; much of this plan focuses on the importance of nature in the adaptation response.

Strategic Plan priorities	Objectives given in the Strategic Plan	How adapting to climate change could aid delivery, or visa-versa
	potential impacts of extreme weather and supply chain disruption.	
	Support community and business activity to cut carbon emissions and accelerate a shift to a resilient and locally focused zero carbon economy.	A resilient economy will not be realistic if helping businesses to address the risks to climate change is not considered alongside helping them meet net zero targets. Businesses that consistently flood or close during periods of extreme weather will weaken the local economy, and resilience must be built into their processes now.
	Deliver our LED street lighting replacement programme to further reduce the energy, visual and environmental impacts of street lighting.	A review of local highways in terms of their likely ability to cope in a future climate will help to ensure the lights will not go out along key strategic routes during periods of extreme weather.
Transport	Prioritise active travel and public transport on the existing and planned highway network to support healthy lifestyles and address inequalities in transport.	As mentioned previously, there is potential for warmer, drier summers to provide opportunities for more favourable walking and cycling conditions in future summers, but only if (see above) all transport networks are assessed for their climate resilience.
	Develop and implement a plan for improved strategic routes for freight, including exploring rail and reducing large vehicle movements on non-strategic roads.	A review of local highways in terms of their likely ability to cope in a future climate will help to ensure strategic routes are not going to fail. Considering adaptation measures on the network should be built in from the planning stage to ensure future resilience.
	Develop and approve priority local transport and connectivity plan part 2 — area travel plans.	
	Deliver our commitments within the bus service improvement plan and enhanced bus partnership.	As above, and there should also be consideration to overheating risk on buses to aid passenger safety and not discourage bus use in hotter summers.
Nature and Green Spaces	Support and enable the activities from Oxfordshire's community action groups to improve local environments and make nature more accessible.	There is a huge opportunity for existing community action groups to also focus on climate resilience, working together to ensure climate impacts are minimised in their local area and that vulnerable residents are protected. Nature improvement activities can be the key to this.
	Improve the amount and distribution of accessible and safe natural green space within Oxfordshire in conjunction with partners.	Whether green spaces are resilient to future climate change is also significant, as people will not want to visit them if they are (e.g.) often closed due to flooding.

Strategic Plan priorities	Objectives given in the Strategic Plan	How adapting to climate change could aid delivery, or visa-versa
Inequalities	Develop a countywide nature recovery strategy, including a tree and woodland plan that involves taking part in the Queen's Green Canopy programme, and support the development of a new local nature partnership for Oxfordshire.	Adaptation should be fully integrated into all nature and tree related strategies, as both the key to bolstering resilience (e.g. planting trees in the right place can help to alleviate flood risk and reduce the urban heating effect) and to ensure new and existing plantations are themselves resilient to a future climate.
	Ensure our public rights of way network is safe and effectively maintained.	There is a greater risk that rights of way could become flooded and overgrown due to changing weather patterns; prone areas should be prioritised for maintenance to reduce the risk of possible closure.
	Address the drivers and impact of disadvantage through practical plans delivered with partners to create a more inclusive and sustainable Oxfordshire.	Climate change will affect disadvantaged people disproportionately. Plans to tackle disadvantage should, therefore, include addressing climate-related risks at their heart.
	Provide technology to improve processes around signposting, self-assessment and information about sources of help for local residents.	These sources of help could include how to cope during periods of extreme weather, to build in personal resilience.
	Work with those communities most at risk of poor health, gathering insight to understand the causes of poor health and developing funded action plans to improve residents' health.	Climate change impacts will affect those most prone to poor health more than others, for example through exacerbation of respiratory conditions in heatwaves. These risks should be considered when planning and funding decisions are being made.
	Implement the delivery plan for Oxfordshire's digital inclusion strategy together with partners, including how assistive technology can support vulnerable groups to access services and lead a better quality of life.	These solutions could also include aids towards personal resilience, such as mapping 'cool spaces' vulnerable people can visit during heatwaves, an initiative not possible without digital literacy.
	Deliver support programmes to help mitigate the impact of ongoing rises to the cost of living, including launching a crisis fund to support those in most financial need.	As with health outcomes, those less-financially well-off are more at risk of being negatively affected by climate impacts, due to an inability to respond and recover. Ways of helping people deal with such issues can be built into this priority and considered as a criteria for the crisis fund.
	Address local health inequalities through the establishment of a Health Inequalities Forum for Oxfordshire within the new integrated care system.	The Integrated Care System must consider climate adaptation options so that issues should as addressing health inequalities can be tackled through this lens, considering that climate

Strategic Plan priorities	Objectives given in the Strategic Plan	How adapting to climate change could aid delivery, or visa-versa
		impacts are likely to further expand the health inequality gap.
Local democracy	Build greater confidence in our consultation and engagement processes by clearly describing how residents' feedback will be used and where it has helped shape policy or decision-making.	Involving and consulting residents on adaptation options is important so that these options can reflect their needs and are not forced upon them from above.
	Improve our approach to equality and climate impact assessments, ensuring that we set out the effects of our decisions on particular groups of residents.	This is directly related to climate adaptation and links to the above action.
	Provide regular opportunities for residents to engage in open dialogue with cabinet members, including Oxfordshire Conversation Q&A events.	This can be achieved through the establishment of community resilience schemes, where local Councillors are taking a leading in role in supporting and engaging with their residents to strengthen their local area's ability to manage climate impacts.
	Demonstrate the contribution of each scrutiny committee to the development of policy and decision-making through the publication of an annual report.	There may be an opportunity to build decisions made on climate adaptation into this report.
Local businesses and partners	Work with partners, including the Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership (OxLEP), to enable long-term job creation for local businesses through apprenticeships and business support.	There is a need for a cohort of employees who have adaptation skills, such as flood engineering or overheating retrofit specialists as expertise on these issues is lacking. There is potential for the LEP to encourage growth in this area.
	Work with partners and contractors to develop green skills, promote jobs and investment in the green sector, encouraging sustainable and inclusive development as we transition to a circular economy.	The 'green sector' should also include climate resilience as emphasised above, and also include experts on providing nature-based solutions to multiple issues pertaining the climate crisis.
	Promote career pathways in health and social care for local people and encourage those who are looking to change their careers to start their own enterprises in the sector.	Careers in health and social care are likely to be even more sought after when climate impacts become more prevalent.
	Work with suppliers to maximise additional social and environmental value, as part of our progressive procurement policy and development planning processes, which will benefit local communities.	Environmental value should also include climate resilience criteria; a buyer may have their own house in order but their supplier may fail in periods of extreme weather, so asking for evidence of resilience and business continuity protocols will provide reassurance of maintained delivery.

Strategic Plan priorities	Objectives given in the Strategic Plan	How adapting to climate change could aid delivery, or visa-versa
	Facilitate research and collaboration between businesses, the universities, OxLEP and our health and local authority partners to maintain Oxfordshire as a centre of innovation, turning ideas into real-life solutions in areas including transport, climate, energy and healthcare.	Innovative solutions are needed more for climate adaptation than they are for net zero, and so there as an opportunity to ensure this is a key area of focus.
	Provide a long-term support offer for our voluntary and community sector partners through the implementation of the voluntary and community sector strategy, enabling a strong, diverse and vibrant voluntary and community sector in Oxfordshire.	This links to building community resilience programmes, and the strategy should include a strand to help establish these to build in the strength that the Strategic Plan is aiming for.
Health and wellbeing	Lead on an update to the Oxfordshire health and wellbeing strategy, which includes: implementing the domestic abuse strategic action plan, and combatting the harm caused in local communities from illicit drug use.	Climate change poses potentially significant health and wellbeing risks, and it is important that measures to address potential climate impacts are embedded into the strategy, along with any opportunities that climate change (e.g. drier summers) could bring.
	Address worsening rates of unhealthy weight in Oxfordshire, including addressing a range of underlying factors that cause this trend.	Linked to the above, there are potential opportunities for more favourable summer conditions to encourage exercise. Of equal importance is ensuring resilience to green spaces and (e.g.) cycle paths so that extreme weather does not lead to closure and discouragement of use.
	Maximise access to the opportunities provided by libraries, museums, nature and green spaces and other services to support the health and wellbeing of residents.	These assets should be assessed for their resilience to climate impacts to ensure they can remain open and functional during extreme weather.
	Provide a long-term support offer for our voluntary and community sector partners through the implementation of the voluntary and community sector strategy, enabling a strong, diverse and vibrant voluntary and community sector in Oxfordshire.	As mentioned above, community resilience forms a big part of this, as enabling communities to address climate impacts themselves will build strength and encourage their ability to flourish.
Carers and social care	Help people to live independently and support themselves through personal and local facilities, using the Oxfordshire Way approach.	This could include provision of 'resilience packs' for individuals, so that if increases in extreme weather occurs and results in (e.g.) power outages, individuals are better prepared to look after themselves.

Strategic Plan priorities	Objectives given in the Strategic Plan	How adapting to climate change could aid delivery, or visa-versa
	Focus resources on areas of high deprivation to tackle social isolation and reduce health inequalities.	People in these areas are most likely to be worst affected by the impacts of climate change due to their inability to prepare, respond or recover. This should be a key theme when focusing on provision of resources in these areas.
	Co-produce with carers a refreshed all-ages carers strategy for the health and social care system, which improves carers' wellbeing, and invest in practical solutions to help carers maintain their caring roles.	There is a risk to social care delivery due to climate change, leading to (e.g.) carers unable to access the homes of vulnerable people or care homes becoming too difficult to work in during heatwaves. Climate assessments should take place to ensure climate change does not negatively impact on carer wellbeing.
	Prepare for care quality commission assurance, working with residents and partners to triangulate evidence and further embed continuous improvement.	Building resilience into care home operations and business continuity, i.e. ensuring that they can still operate a quality service during extreme weather, will help to achieve this outcome.
Children and young people	Support the emotional mental health and wellbeing of children and young people by increasing the number of interventions in schools and places which young people frequent.	Schools are also at risk from climate impacts, and to avoid closure or health risks during an increase in periods of extreme weather, climate risk and impact assessments should take place especially at schools that are (e.g.) in flood risk zones or where vulnerable children reside.
	Increase activity that supports pupils with special educational needs and disabilities to have their needs met in mainstream school settings and deliver our special school capacity expansion programme.	As above, except this becomes more important in special schools where pupils may have underlying conditions making them more vulnerable to health issues, especially during heatwaves.
	Support families to care for their children at home where it is safe to do so, integrating assessments and support in the community to prevent children needing to come into the care system.	The quality of a family's home, including aspects such as damp and thermal comfort, play a part in enabling children to stay at home, and any homes that may be at greater risk of issues relating to these could be prioritised for adaptation.

This analysis shows that, to varying degrees, creating a more climate resilient Oxfordshire is commensurate with the priorities of the Strategic Plan and, in many cases, can help to make those priorities more achievable and deliverable, if adaptation is carried out with consideration, thought and effectiveness.

It is important the future iterations of the Strategic Plan consider climate change adaptation throughout their development, and that strengthening climate resilience forms a key part of future county priorities. We hope that the above analysis can assist with this.

4 Next steps and initial recommendations

In the Climate Change Adaptation Route Map for Oxfordshire, we have set out what we believe should be the first steps towards successful implementation. These recommendations have been repeated here, but we have supplemented this with an additional box which provides further clarity on what OCC's role should be specifically.

Maintain engagement with stakeholders

Throughout the development of the Route Map, we have undertaken various rounds of stakeholder engagement, and connections and relationships have been established and built upon. We can be confident in stating that the Route Map has been co-created, as without stakeholder input the action plan would likely have looked very different, less location-specific and not reflective of existing local activity.

In their role as a coordinating body, OCC should build on this extensive engagement quickly, by establishing a new Oxfordshire-wide Climate Adaptation Working Group, fitting into the structure of the new Zero Carbon Oxfordshire Partnership (ZCOP). This should include key stakeholders who are likely to be chiefly responsible for implementing the actions in this plan. This should launch alongside publication of this Route Map so that it is still fresh in people's minds and, initially, should be used to agree who will lead on each of the VH-I 2025/26 actions.

We recommend calling it a 'working group' as this implies it will be active, action-focused and collaborative; in other words, it should exist to take forward the highest priority actions. This would also make it clear that this is not 'just another plan' to sit on a dusty, virtual shelf. The group's Terms of Reference should be reflective of this ambition. SWM can share an example from the West Midlands upon request.

OCC's role

As the recommendation states, OCC should lead on the establishment and setting up of the Working Group, ready to launch by April 2025. The first steps towards achieving this will be to:

- Map those stakeholders that are required on the Working Group based on the stakeholders likely to be key in delivering the VH-I actions both in the Route Map and in this action plan.
- Follow up with those stakeholders that are required to join the Working Group post-Route Map publication to encourage them to participate.
- Develop a Terms of Reference for the Group in consultation with fledgling group members (SWM has sent the West Midlands example as mentioned to OCC).
- Establish a secretariat, an individual who has time and capacity to manage the logistics of the group alongside ensuring any matters arising and actions are taken forward.
- Identify a suitable Chair who has the capacity and skills to lead the Group.
- The secretariat should then mobilise by arranging a date for the first meeting in April 2025.

Identify priorities

The first step is to agree a list of actions with partners that are going to be implemented in the first year, or where implementation will be commenced quickly. We have provided our perspective on how each action should be prioritised for implementation in the main action plan:

VH-I	Very High and Immediate
VH	Very High
H	High
M	Medium

This is based on the following aspects:

- The urgency of the risk based on the risk assessment
- The resource intensity of implementation and the likely cost/benefit
- Potential financing options available
- The co-benefits implementing the action would bring
- The potential scale of the impact
- Whether the action builds on existing work
- Whether the action is a quick win and can be implemented at pace
- Whether there is clear stakeholder expertise to mobilise implementation
- Whether implementation as national or local policy backing.

OCC's role

While the Route Map is owned by the Future Oxfordshire Partnership (FOP), as a coordinating body and the better resourced local authority, OCC has the gift to lead on prioritisation of the actions through collation of views from other members of the FOP and other key stakeholders, i.e. those who will form the new Working Group. It is suggested that OCC can:

- Use the first meeting of the Working Group to discuss prioritisation and where OCC is proposing to deviate from our recommendations, allowing Group members to comment.
- Prioritise actions that are under its control, i.e. those outlined in this Plan, where the effect on other partners in re-prioritisation is minimal.

This re-prioritisation will allow for more realistic implementation and ability to establish a more robust monitoring system.

Integration

Wherever possible, adaptation measures should be integrated into Net Zero and other relevant activities to double the impact of the activity whilst minimising resource requirements. This would also ensure adaptation actions do not threaten to contradict Net Zero targets, or visa-versa. Many actions provide suggestions on how to do this.

OCC's role

Oxfordshire's councils are already excelling in many areas of climate mitigation, in particular pertaining building retrofit, transport and behaviour change. It is within OCC's gift to focus on integrating adaptation measures into these projects where possible, as indicated in this plan. It can also advise other Working

Group members on how to do the same, and it may be beneficial to focus one of the meetings specifically on co-benefits.

Adaptation financing

Identifying financing options will be crucial to the successful implementation of some of these actions. Mapping of these opportunities and lobbying of central Government needs to take place hand-in-hand, to encourage appropriate investment. There also needs to be strategic use of public sector funds to lever in appropriate private sector investment. The 100 Together initiative set up in Oxfordshire and the forthcoming Green Investment Pipeline and Prospectus provides a key mechanism to identify private financing sources that may be suitable for adaptation.

OCC's role

The university and/or the LEP are likely to have good insight into financing options for adaptation projects. Where OCC could support this, aside from expressing any of its own knowledge on adaptation financing, is by aligning actions in this plan and in the Route Map with the identified financing options, by utilising the prioritisation process to identify which projects require innovative financing to be taken forward. OCC is key in ensuring that applications for funding are robust, with clear objectives established on what they hope to achieve.

Outcomes and measures of success

Undertaking a cost/benefit analysis of each action will provide some element of quantification and give backing to implementation. A high-level analysis of this has commenced in the form of the economic rationale (see the Route Map), but a more in-depth analysis will be needed when embarking on implementation of actions where investment is required. Where undertaking a cost/benefit analysis is not possible, it is still important to consider what the specific outcomes are for each action, in order to make the case for implementation.

OCC's role

OCC can lead on the development of these outcomes and measures of success for both the Route Map and this action plan. These should follow the principles of SMART goals wherever possible and can be established directly for actions where OCC are likely to be the lead. For other actions in the Route Map where other stakeholders are likely to be the lead, OCC can support with the establishment of these objectives for the highest priority actions. All outcomes, regardless by whom they are derived, should be transparent and communicated to all Working Group members to ensure there is no contradiction or overlap with other actions.

Building in flexibility

Despite having an understanding on the likely broad climatic changes expected to occur in Oxfordshire, it is impossible to be specific about exactly what is going to happen when, due to various elements of uncertainty.

Not knowing exactly when, and to what extent, we need to take action by makes both implementation of adaptation actions, and making the case for implementation, more challenging. This is why the action plan highlights many 'no regret' actions that can be implemented in the face of this uncertainty. However, this may be more challenging with others where (e.g.) significant investment is required.

Iffley Lock and Towpath, near Oxford

It is, therefore, important to build flexibility into adaptation actions by taking an adaptation pathways approach, which can help to manage the long-term and uncertain nature of climate change impacts. It will allow projects to be scaled up or down depending on how the climate changes in reality, and will also show what level of adaptation needs to take place against a range of plausible scenarios

OCC's role

The universities, alongside Government departments and arm's-length bodies such as the Environment Agency, Met Office and Defra, are likely to have some intelligence around adaptation pathways and how to build this flexibility into projects and systems, as well a small selection of private consultancies. OCC should establish dialogue with these organisations to identify good practice and gain advice on how to approach this for the projects that require significant investment, or whereby having a greater degree of certainty would make a stronger case for implementation. This can form part of the prioritisation exercise outlined above.

Monitoring and evaluation (M&E)

Developing a process for M&E that outlines how and when actions will be assessed and allows one to capture progress against each action is critical. A first step should be to develop a monitoring system, or integrate adaptation actions into an already established monitoring system, which allows for the capturing of progress against each action. A reporting mechanism should also be established to ensure progress is being communicated to partners and senior leaders. OCC should be responsible for the M&E process as the county-wide coordinating body, and should ask for regular updates on progress from the FOP members and other relevant partners responsible for implementation as required.

The Local Partnerships Climate Adaptation Toolkit for Local Authorities (page 40+) provides more information on M&E and how this can be achieved.

OCC's role

While the Route Map is owned by the FOP, as a coordinating body and the better resourced local authority, OCC will look after the main monitoring process that is implemented post-publication of the Route Map to keep track of the progress of the actions. It is also likely to be the lead organisation for many of the actions, as demonstrated by this action plan.

At a high level, the monitoring 'system' can simply be a spreadsheet that can be shared with the Working Group members which, ideally, can allow any of the action owners to provide updates on progress towards implementing the actions. Where this is not possible, the secretariat can manage this process as part of Working Group member liaison, ensuring that one of the recurring items at Working Group meetings is to review and update the monitoring spreadsheet with progress.

Evaluating implemented actions can also be led by OCC, especially for actions within its control and with consultation on other actions where leads are more likely to be external organisations. This is where establishing measures of success is key, so that evaluation can be made easier and, in some cases, quantifiable.

-END-

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Oxfordshire County Council

Equalities Impact Assessment

Oxfordshire Climate Adaptation Route Map and OCC Climate Adaptation Delivery Plan

07.02.25

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Section 1: Summary details

Directorate and Service Area	Economy and Place, Climate Action
What is being assessed (e.g. name of policy, procedure, project, service or proposed service change).	Oxfordshire Climate Adaptation Route Map and OCC Climate Adaptation Delivery Plan
Is this a new or existing function or policy?	A new strategy for Oxfordshire and a new OCC delivery plan
Summary of assessment Briefly summarise the policy or proposed service change. Summarise possible impacts. Does the proposal bias, discriminate or unfairly disadvantage individuals or groups within the community? (following completion of the assessment).	The Route Map Delivery Plan sets out the key areas that Oxfordshire and OCC is at risk from as a result of climate change. The key impacts on Oxfordshire – heatwaves, flooding, drought, cold snaps and storms – will become more severe and more frequent and increasingly affect a range of OCC service areas, Oxfordshire organisations and residents. The Route Map and Delivery Plan sets out a number of priority actions and longer term actions that need to be implemented across a broad range of thematic areas to enable Oxfordshire to adapt and become more resilient to the impacts of climate change. The impacts of climate change disproportionately impact residents with disabilities, the very young and very old, as well as those living in areas of deprivation. These population groups have more limited adaptive capacity with regard to climate change, which has subsequent impacts on council service areas including adult services, childrens services, public health and highways.
Completed By	Tom Layzell, Climate Adaptation Policy and Project Lead
Authorised By	

Date of Assessment	06.02.25

Section 2: Detail of proposal

Context / Background Briefly summarise the background to the policy or proposed service change, including reasons for any changes from previous versions.	Climate Action represents a key priority for the council, which includes both climate mitigation (reducing carbon emissions) and climate adaptation (minimising the impacts of climate change). On Climate Adaptation, Due to the range of vulnerabilities identified for Oxfordshire from climate change and the subsequent impacts on OCC service areas, climate change has been identified as a key risk for Oxfordshire and the County Council. As a result, climate change has been added to OCC's Strategic Risk Register (one of only 10 strategic risks included on the register). Several population groups are particularly exposed to the impacts of climate change, including the very elderly and very young, those with disabilities and those living in areas of deprivation. Significant action is needed across Oxfordshire to ensure these population groups are sufficiently supported to reduce their exposure to severe weather events. The Oxfordshire Climate Adaptation Route Map has been co-developed over several months with key Oxfordshire stakeholders and was endorsed by the Future Oxfordshire Partnership (FOP) Board on the 28th January 2025. FOP represents a partnership with strategic stakeholders across Oxfordshire, including the city and district councils. The Route Map and internal delivery plan is also on the forward plan for OCC cabinet in February 2025.
Proposals Explain the detail of the proposals, including why this has been decided as the best course of action.	A Climate Vulnerability Assessment has been completed for Oxfordshire, identifying important vulnerabilities for Oxfordshire as a result of climate change. The assessment highlighted a wide range of vulnerabilities that Oxfordshire is exposed to across a broad scope of thematic areas (infrastructure, health, communities and the built environment, natural environment and business and industry). These vulnerabilities will impact a wide range of residents, businesses and communities directly as well as OCC and other local organisations. Effective partnership working will be required to effectively implement the the route map effectively. It was therefore decided that a route map that was co-developed and co-owned by multiple stakeholders was needed.

	The Route Map includes 82 actions that have been agreed with stakeholders that will require implementation over the long term. Of these actions, an initial set of 15 priority actions have been identified, focussed on enabling actions to support wider implementation.
Evidence / Intelligence List and explain any data, consultation outcomes, research findings, feedback from service users and stakeholders etc, that supports your proposals and can help to inform the judgements you make about potential impact on different individuals, communities or groups and our ability to deliver our climate commitments.	In 2023 Atkins were commissioned to undertake a Climate Vulnerability Assessment (CVA) for Oxfordshire, covering key themes including Critical Infrastructure, Natural Environment, Health, Communities and the built Environment, Business Industry. The Assessment identified key vulnerabilities for Oxfordshire as a result of climate change. The CVA build on the UK Climate Change Risk Assessment published by the UK Government and coincides with the OCC Director of Public Health Annual Report on Climate Change, which identifies key health impacts of climate change and actions that need to be taken forward. An extreme value analysis was also undertaken to better understand the anticipated future climate in Oxfordshire.

Alternatives considered / rejected Summarise any other approaches that have been considered in developing the policy or proposed service change, and the reasons why these were not adopted. This could include reasons why doing nothing is not an option.	Due to the exposure of Oxfordshire to the impacts of climate change and the potentially severe impacts at both an organisational level and with the local population, doing nothing was not considered an option. An alternative option would be to develop projects on an individual basis. This was not considered feasible due to the scale of action needed and the need for multiple organisations to be involved in the implementation of measures, as well as the need to build momentum through a wide scale climate adaptation programme.

Section 3: Impact Assessment - Protected Characteristics

Protected Characteristic	No Impact	Positive	Negative	Description of Impact	Any actions or mitigation to reduce negative impacts	Action owner* (*Job Title, Organisation)	Timescale and monitoring arrangements
Age	☐	☒	☐	Climate change will disproportionately impact the very elderly and very young, who are typically more vulnerable and less able to adapt to extreme weather events. The Route Map includes measures that are focussed on supporting vulnerable population groups.			
Disability	☐	☒	☐	Climate change will disproportionately impact people with disabilities, who are typically more vulnerable and less able to adapt to extreme weather events. The Route Map includes measures that are focussed on supporting vulnerable population groups.			
Gender Reassignment	☒	☐	☐	No direct impact on gender reassignment as a defined group has been identified.			

Marriage & Civil Partnership	☒	☐	☐	No direct impact on marriage and civil partnerships as a defined group has been identified.			
Pregnancy & Maternity	☐	☒	☐	Climate change will disproportionately impact pregnant women, who are typically more vulnerable and less able to adapt to extreme weather events. The Route Map includes measures that are focussed on supporting vulnerable population groups.			
Race	☒	☐	☐	The Route Map focusses on key vulnerable groups. Individual races are not specifically targeted through the Route Map, although it may be the case that some races represent a greater proportion of vulnerable groups than others. Where any negative impacts are uncovered, these will be accompanied with risk mitigations as required.			

Sex	☒	☐	☐	The Route Map focusses on key vulnerable groups. Individual sex is not a category that is specifically targeted through the Route Map, although it may be the case that a particular sex represents a greater proportion of vulnerable groups than others. Where any negative impacts are uncovered, these will be accompanied with risk mitigations as required.			
Sexual Orientation	☒	☐	☐	The Route Map focusses on key vulnerable groups. Sexual orientation is not specifically targeted through the Route Map, although it may be the case that sexual orientation is reflected in the identification of vulnerable population groups. Where any negative impacts are uncovered, these will be accompanied with risk mitigations as required.			

Religion or Belief	☒	☐	☐	The Route Map focusses on key vulnerable groups. Individual religions and beliefs are not specifically targeted through the Route Map, although it may be the case that some religions/ beliefs represent a greater proportion of vulnerable groups than others. Where any negative impacts are uncovered, these will be accompanied with risk mitigations as required.			

Section 3: Impact Assessment - Additional Community Impacts

Additional community impacts	No Impact	Positive	Negative	Description of impact	Any actions or mitigation to reduce negative impacts	Action owner (*Job Title, Organisation)	Timescale and monitoring arrangements
Rural communities	☐	☒	☐	Rural communities are increasingly impacted from climate change due to the more limited transport connections and lack of amenities in rural villages and towns. Rural settlements also tend to have higher population of elderly people than urban areas, who are typically more vulnerable. The Route Map aims to support areas of Oxfordshire that are more exposed to the impacts of climate change.			
Armed Forces	☒	☐	☐	No direct impact on the armed forces as a defined group has been identified.			
Carers	☐	☒	☐	Climate change will disproportionately impact people with disabilities, the very elderly and very young who are typically more			

Additional community impacts	No Impact	Positive	Negative	Description of impact	Any actions or mitigation to reduce negative impacts	Action owner (*Job Title, Organisation)	Timescale and monitoring arrangements
				vulnerable and less able to adapt to extreme weather events. The Route Map includes measures that are focussed on supporting vulnerable population groups, including through working with those who provide care for vulnerable members of society.			
Areas of deprivation	☐	☒	☐	Areas of deprivation are typically more vulnerable to the impacts of climate change, as they typically have lower adaptive capacity and fewer resources to counter the impacts of flooding and other weather events. Areas of deprivation will therefore be the focus of several of the actions in the Route Map.			

Section 3: Impact Assessment - Additional Wider Impacts

Additional Wider Impacts	No Impact	Positive	Negative	Description of Impact	Any actions or mitigation to reduce negative impacts	Action owner* (*Job Title, Organisation)	Timescale and monitoring arrangements
Staff	☐	☒	☐	Climate change can be expected to impact the majority of the Oxfordshire population, including OCC staff. The Route Map includes an OCC-specific component that includes actions around workforce productivity (e.g. during heatwaves) as well as improving the resilience of a range of OCC assets to climate change, including the buildings where staff work.			
Other Council Services	☐	☒	☐	Through providing clear guidance on where future action is needed across OCC service areas, staff can be expected to be better equipped to accommodate changing requirements for their service areas as a result			

Additional Wider Impacts	No Impact	Positive	Negative	Description of Impact	Any actions or mitigation to reduce negative impacts	Action owner* (*Job Title, Organisation)	Timescale and monitoring arrangements
				of climate change from having the Route Map in place.			
Providers	☐	☒	☐	Through providing clear guidance on where future action is needed across OCC service areas, staff and other providers can be expected to be better equipped to accommodate changing requirements for their service areas as a result of climate change from having the Route Map in place.			
Social Value [1]	☐	☒	☐	The Route Map can be expected to improve the economic, social and environmental well-being of Oxfordshire relative to if no action on climate adaptation is taken.			

[1] If the Public Services (Social Value) Act 2012 applies to this proposal, please summarise here how you have considered how the contract might improve the economic, social, and environmental well-being of the relevant area

Section 4: Review

Where bias, negative impact or disadvantage is identified, the proposal and/or implementation can be adapted or changed; meaning there is a need for regular review. This review may also be needed to reflect additional data and evidence for a fuller assessment (proportionate to the decision in question). Please state the agreed review timescale for the identified impacts of the policy implementation or service change.

Review Date	**06.02.25**
Person Responsible for Review	**Tom Layzell, Climate Adaptation Lead**
Authorised By	**Sarah Gilbert**

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Divisions Affected - All

CABINET

25 February 2024

CIVIL ENFORCEMENT PROCUREMENT MODEL

Report by Director of Environment and Highways

RECOMMENDATION

1. **The Cabinet is RECOMMENDED to**

a) Approve the preferred service model and procurement strategy (enhanced multi contractor) for the Civil Enforcement and Zero Emission Zone (ZEZ) operation.

b) Support progression to the next stage of the project, that being the development and drafting of the specification, contract, and other tender documents required for procurement.

Executive Summary

2. Following Cabinet approval, officers have been undertaking research and working with specialist Civil Enforcement contractors – Parking Matters, to determine the most appropriate model for Oxfordshire.

3. The outcome of optional appraisal has identified the appointment of an enhanced contracted model with multiple providers to cover all the elements of Civil Enforcement and the ZEZ. It also highlighted that the Council should consider finding its own building to house the enforcement operation rather than pay for a lease through a tendered enforcement contract. The outcome also identified clear separation of elements to be included in the procurement process. To procure specialist contractors for Civil Enforcement, Back-office processing software, ZEZ software and Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) cameras.

4. It is recommended that the proposal to contract out parking enforcement is endorsed by Cabinet and for them to give permission for officers to develop the details and relevant documentation (specification, contract terms, and pricing schedules) required for procurement of this enhanced model. Cabinet will be

asked to approve the specification and details of procurement in July prior to procurement commencing.

Current Civil Enforcement arrangements

Background

5. Oxfordshire County Council first took on the powers of civil parking enforcement in Oxford City in 1997, and subsequently for Cherwell, Vale of White Horse, and South Oxfordshire District Councils in 2021, and then finally West Oxfordshire in 2023.

6. These contracts were awarded to Conduent who were sold on 1 April 2024 to Modaxo who are now trading as Trellint.

7. In April 2022 the Council successfully applied to the Secretary of State for the powers to enforce moving traffic contraventions such as prohibited vehicles, banned turns, School Streets etc.

8. The Council also operates a road user charging scheme, the ZEZ under Transport Act 2000 and its subsequent regulation under The Road User Charging Schemes (Penalty Charges, Adjudication and Enforcement) (England) Regulations 2013. The scheme started as a pilot in February 2022. The original contract was awarded to Conduent Public Sector UK Ltd and was in place for the initial pilot stage.

9. A new contact is required for continued enforcement of the ZEZ.

10. As a result, Oxfordshire County Council has five civil enforcement contracts with an external supplier which allow for the enforcement of restrictions across the County. Subject to completion of extension negotiations of these contracts, they will all come to an end in March 2026.

Context

11. Over the past 5 years the Council has significantly expanded its enforcement operation, leading to a service that is three times the size it was in 2020. As new powers have emerged, such as for moving traffic enforcement, the Council has applied, in the first tranches, for the powers, to enable it to support the Local Transport and Connectivity Plan (LTCP) and other policies to create a sustainable transport network for all users.

12. Four of the contracts the Council currently has relate to the actual enforcement side of the operation, with the other being for the technology side of the service. The reason there are four contracts is because each original contract didn't allow the Council to enforce more than was originally set out. This meant when the time came, the Council couldn’t take on enforcement of the districts or moving traffic through the original contracts due to them being both out of the scope and beyond the contract value.

13. The solution moving forward needs to be able to continue to deliver the service the Council currently do, more efficiently and with more control to ensure the correct deployment of civil enforcement officers to the places and times of day they are most needed.

14. The solution also needs to be flexible enough in terms of both being able to:
    (a) enforce additional areas, beyond those currently enforced, such as red routes, expanded ZEZ and pavement parking. Devolution could allow the Council to take on power for pavement parking and if a unitary authority is forthcoming to assume the enforcement of off-street public car parks in the city and districts; and
    (b) have an allowance within the cost value to do the above, and other unknown elements, over the coming years.

15. This will then remove the need to put new solutions in place every couple of years and allow the Council to continue as one of the early providers of enforcement operations outside of London.

16. Currently the Council's contracts have Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) contained within them that the current contractor is expected to deliver against. However, these do not have any penalty clauses within them should the contractor not meet the KPIs. The solution will need to ensure KPIs are thoroughly reviewed and, critically, that if they are not being met the supplier will be penalised. There needs to be a means to incentive good performance.

17. The civil enforcement industry is very much led by legislation. That legislation is different for London and Scotland compared to England. It is also different for public and private providers.

    (a) The legislation the Council has to adhere to heavily relies on people, even with all the technology available it has its limits and can't legally be used to observe contraventions and issue Penalty Charge Notices (PCNs).
    (b) For on-street and off-street parking this requires a physical Civil Enforcement Officer (CEO) to observe and issue the PCN (technology can be used to check up on the vehicle in the intervening time and guide a CEO to a vehicle that is nearing contravention).
    (c) For the ANPR cameras whilst the camera can be used to record the offence, the images they capture need to be reviewed by a person, to observe a contravention has occurred.
    (d) Private providers can take advantage of ANPR technology at the entrance and exits of car parks. This means vehicles cannot exit without paying for their ticket (linked to barrier system such as that at the Westgate Car Park). Or, if they do exit without either paying at all or for the appropriate amount of time, then a PCN can be issued in the post to them. This is not something local authorities are allowed to do. The vehicles must be checked in situ and a PCN issued by a CEO.
    (e) The PCN amount for England is set nationally and not been increased since 2007. Whereas, London and Scotland have significantly higher

fines, which means they act as more of a deterrent and allows increased income.

18. The civil enforcement operation requires specific secure (private) accommodation. In order to continue the business as it is now, and allow for future proofing the requirement is for a 3,000 SQ feet building. This includes, but not limited to, storage and charging facilities for operational vehicles and devices, welfare facilities and secure space for reviewers (due to legislation).

19. In parallel with delivering a new solution, officers will also be updating the operational polices, which look at observation times and other elements, where legislation allows, to be more specific to Oxfordshire's needs.

Options Appraisal

20. Whilst the existing model of an externally provided service has traditionally been the preferred choice for many authorities, given the changing nature of the industry and county council priorities, it is recognised that alternative approaches for the provision of civil enforcement should be explored to assess if it continues to be the right approach for Oxfordshire.

21. Officers instructed an independent consultant (Parking Matters) to give an overview of the options available to local authorities in terms of the enforcement function and recommend options for the way forward.

22. At the same time officers undertook their own engagement and research:

(a) A Member's workshop was held on 19 December 2024 and the main feedback from this workshop was:

- Not enough enforcement on the ground (several areas of concern were expressed such as Cowley Road and enforcement in the Market Towns).
- Innovations – smarter enforcement, red routes and the ability for the contract to adapt to changes in legislation for instance pavement parking.
- Members wanted more information on and control of performance and deployment.

(b) Officers have spoken with other authorities in the country some of whom have brought operations in-house and those that still contract their service out, to establish the best opportunities for the Council's service, as well as learning from peers.

- Buckinghamshire Council and London Borough of Hackney have an in-house enforcement team. Their PCN software is contracted out and they have a separate contract for ANPR cameras.
- Slough Borough Council and Reading Borough Council have out-sourced enforcement and PCN software solution. Slough have not yet introduced moving traffic enforcement but are intending to do so.

The ANPR cameras will be procured in due course. Slough and Hackney provide the accommodation for the enforcement contractor.

23. Early market engagement with numerous suppliers has also been undertaken. There is strong interest in this potential procurement.

24. Parking enforcement functions fall into four main areas; Compliance Management, Penalty Charge Notice System, Zero Emissions Zone checker and payment system, provision and maintenance of the ANPR camera system. The focus of the service model option appraisal has been on the Compliance Management function, as it is considered the other functions could not feasibly be undertaken directly.

25. In respect of the Compliance Management function, on balance it is considered that it would be preferable to both the council and its residents to contract out this service, as a procured service will provide greater service resilience and give better access to innovation and technology advancements than an in-house service. It is also anticipated that the overall cost to the authority would be less than providing it in-house.

26. Annex 1 sets out the high- level initial assessment for the four enforcement areas.

Summary of Compliance Management Options Assessment

27. Annex 2, produced by Parking Matters, sets out the various options, along with recommendations. Officers have taken these recommendations along with consideration for best value for money, better control, as well as flexibility to allow the Council to future proof the service.

28. Overall, they recommend that the enforcement element of the contracts should continue to be contracted out, with stronger management and control of the contracts.

29. Officers have considered the risks and associated costs with bringing the service in-house and contracting it out.

Below is a high-level, annual, cost estimate of the two options available to the council compared to current contracts:

	Costs		
	Current contract	In-house option	Enhanced contracted model option
Total Expenditure	£7,028,636.36	£7,172,435.06	£6,583,628.62

30. The above table shows that the Council can deliver the service at a lower annual cost through retendering the contracts. The In-house costs are higher, predominately due to higher wages (and oncosts) under the council's terms and conditions, as well as how an in-house operation would need to be structured. Also, with an outsourced solution the companies who supply the market have economies of scale in purchasing power, but also especially where it comes to specialised training for the officers.

31. Turning to the risks associated with the main options contracting out is seen as lower risk as the market in civil enforcement is a relatively mature one. Binging this in-house would be a large transition and without the correct management may not work as effectively as now.

32. Parking matters highlight the issues with recruitment of staff. This is true for in-house and external, although talking to other authorities it is a particular issue to councils. The Council's current contractors are struggling to meet the current resource required within the contracts. Bringing the operation in-house could see this worsen, based on the experiences of other authorities, which in turn could see a further reduction in our ability to deliver the service.

33. Outsourcing enforcement, with stronger KPIs means the Council should get the number of officers set out in the contract, and if a new supplier was still struggling, they may have other contracts that they could utilise to bring temporary staff in, which the Council would not have access to, if in-house.

34. The risks with an in-house service lie with the need for sufficient high-quality managers and the difficulty in recruiting, training and retaining staff. At least one authority has a perpetual advert for Civil Enforcement Officers. Authorities seem especially susceptible to high rates of sickness and absence, creating a need for a dedicated HR resource.

35. The solution moving forward needs to be able to continue to deliver the service the Council currently provides, more efficiently and with more control to ensure the correct deployment of civil enforcement officers to the places and times of day they are most needed. Both in-house and contracted out offers opportunity to do this.

36. Appropriate KPIs to measure performance will ensure effective performance. The KPIs should be the same for in-house and contracted out. With a contracted option, the Council would base the contract on the British Parking Association's model contract which puts measures in place that if the KPIs are not being met, the supplier will be penalised, which incentivises good performance. If the service was brought in-house there would be no way to penalise not meeting the KPIs, making it harder to meet the targets and improve performance.

37. Many of the council's that have in-house enforcement are unitary authorities and a significant source of income comes from off-street parking charges. Which in turn help fund the service and increase their surplus. The Council currently has the Park & Rides (P&R) at Thornhill, Oxford Parkway and Bicester. These are generally running at cost or below, as the Council wants to

encourage people to get out of their cars sooner and travel sustainably for their onward journey. If devolution were to take place and the Council was to assume the running and enforcement of the city's other P&Rs as well as off-street car parks across the city and districts, the Council would not see such surpluses as many of the other authorities, due to low charges (and in West Oxfordshire's case, no charges at all). Therefore, due to higher running costs the in-house model would reduce the amount of surplus available to be spent on highways maintenance and other schemes the council draws down from the parking account, to allow it to stay self-funding.

38. The contracted-out option would require the council to have an enhanced contract with the supplier. The new enhanced contract will amalgamate the enforcement contracts into one and have plenty of head room and capacity to allow for expansion of our service without the need to procure again. The specification will set out what the Council need now and future needs (red routes, ZEZ expansion and pavement parking) and also leave flexibility for any changes from devolution i.e. capacity to take on other enforcement (off- street) in the districts. The in-house option may require restructures to allow for expansion and would likely not be as quick to respond to changing requirements.

39. The procurement of a civil enforcement model offers the least risk in terms of experience of contractors in the market, retention and recruitment of staff and incentivising good performance, along with giving us the most flexible approach to enforcement.

40. Based on the costs and risks associated with the two options, officers recommend to proceed with an enhanced contract option where enforcement services are contracted out with appropriate KPIs to manage the service delivery. It is also recommended that the Council investigates the provision of a building for the operation of the service. There is the potential for savings as the Council would own the asset and would not then pay for leases and other costs through the contract. This would also align with the Council's property policy. The first line appeals process will remain with the Council.

41. The enhanced option would allow more control of the CEO deployment plans, through the KPIs, including being both flexible and reactive to requirements.

42. The enhanced contract option gives the council the best of the contract arrangements, with elements such as non compliance with KPIs reducing profit, so they contractor is incentivised to deliver a good service. That is not something the current contract or an in-house operation allows for. It offers the least risk and most flexible approach to enforcement, that will be future proofed to allowed continued enforcement over any changes that may come about due to devolution.

43. As well as new KPIs, stronger management of the contracts would be achieved by having a dedicated contracts manager along with a monitoring officer within the civil enforcement team.

Proposed programme

44. To support the delivery of work to date an officer led working group and a joint member/officer steering group have been established. Each group meets on a monthly basis.

45. Officers, in partnership with a specialist consultant and legal support will develop a specification and a contract for services to be procured against with the intention of commencing the procurement and issuing invitations to tender in July 2025. Throughout this process industry and local authority engagement will continue to help refine the specification to recognise the latest sector position, ensuring an ambitious, deliverable, and cutting-edge contract can be procured.

Key Dates

Milestone	Milestone Date
Approval of approach by Cabinet	**January 2025**
Investigation and development of preferred model	September 2024 - January 2025
Approval of preferred model by Cabinet	**February 2025**
Development of specification/s to support model	March 2025
Approval to procure preferred model by Cabinet	**July 2025**
Launch of procurement	August 2025
Closure and bid evaluation	September 2025 - October 2025
Appointment of contractor/s	December 2025
Mobilisation of new contract	January 2026 - March 2026
Launch of new contract	**April 2026**

Policies, Priorities and legislation

46. Civil Enforcement are key policies within the Council's Local Transport and Connectivity Plan (LTCP) and the Network Management Plan. Policy 33 – Parking Management and Policy 34 – Parking Enforcement, specifically cover the aims for the service.

47. In addition to the civil enforcement specific policies in the LTCP the civil enforcement service also plays a key role in helping to achieve the aims of a number of other LTCPs policies as set out below:

Policy 1 – Transport User Hierarchy
Policy 2 – Cycling and Walking Networks
Policy 15 – Vision Zero
Policy 18 – Bus Strategy
Policy 28 - Clean Air and Zero Emissions Zones

48. The current service is contracted out as noted above. The contracts are funded by the revenue raised by parking permits, parking bay suspensions, pay and display income and Penalty Charge Notices ((PCNs) i.e. fines)) that are issued to drivers that contravene the restrictions.

49. The Traffic Management Act 2004 requires the Council to hold a separate account for parking and enforcement. Any running costs are offset against the revenue received. Currently the Parking account generates a surplus which is then used on highway related projects, in-line with the legislation governing spend.

Financial Implications

50. Within the current contracts and operating methodology, cost is £7.4m per annum with income generated at £10.6m per annum. Any surplus is collected in the Parking Account governed by section 55 of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984. The provision of the service is funded by the revenue received from the service.

51. Due to the scale and complexity of the project it is expected external specialist consultancy services will be required. This is for both the optioneering and procurement stages, from both highways service and Legal & Procurement perspectives. It is estimated this will cost in the region of at least £100k split as follows:

    2024/25 - £30,000
    2025/26 - £70,000

52. The cost of this will be met through existing budgets and if necessary, from the parking account reserve and that existing staff costs would be met through relevant operating budgets.

    Comments checked by:

    Filipp Skiffins, Assistant Finance Business Partner,
    filipp.skiffins@oxfordshire.gov.uk (Finance)

Legal Implications

53. Any procurement exercise to appoint professional services to support the project, and to procure the new contractors, including any associated contracts, will be completed in line with all relevant legislation and guidelines – in particular, the new Procurement Act 2023. Due to the scale and value of the contract/s being procured, a member of the legal team has been appointed to the Project team. Given the tight timescales outlined above and the fact that any procurements have to comply with the new procurement regime in what has proved to be a very litigious area, it is recommended that external legal resource is provided to assist in drafting the contracts, and possibly to, provide some oversight to the procurement process.

    Comments checked by:
    Busola Akande, Solicitor (Contracts).

Procurement Implications

54. Any procurement exercise to appoint professional services to support the project and new parking contract/s will be completed in line with all relevant procurement policy and guidelines. Due to the scale and value of the contract/s being procured a member of the procurement team will be appointed to the project team and will take ownership for the procurement elements of the project. Once a preferred approach has been identified a detailed procurement strategy will be developed to support the delivery of the contract/s. It should be noted that legislative changes to the Procurement Regulations will come into effect February 2025 and the specific timings of the tender will need to be taken into consideration with regard to the project programme and risks.

55. The model would require the procurement to be 4 lots:

Compliance Management – enforcement
Technology – Software provision
ZEZ – Vehicle checker and payment integration
ANPR cameras

56. The market is specialised and has a small number of suppliers. An open tender is recommended to ensure that all the suppliers have chance to submit competitive tenders.

Comments checked by:

Becky Funnell
Head of Category – Environment and Place
Becky.funnell@oxfordshire.gov.uk (procurement)

Staff Implications

57. Due to the scale and complexity of the project there will be the need to appoint additional subject matter expertise on a fixed term / consultancy basis to support the subsequent procurement and contracts activity. The wider project team will be internally resourced from both within the directorate and corporate centre.

58. Should the preferred model be approved it is likely there will be some potential TUPE of staff relating to additional activity or functions undertaken by the county council, the bulk of staff transfer will be from Trellint to the new enforcement provider.

Equality & Inclusion Implications and Sustainability Implications

59. An Equalities Impact Assessment has been completed prior to the submission of this paper. It is not anticipated the procurement of a new parking enforcement model and associated contract/s will impact negatively on any particular groups

with ‘protected characteristics’, nor on the armed forces, carers, staff, other Council services or providers. As part of any procurement, the social value aspects of the company and its submission will be assessed and will form a key part of the award assessment.

Sustainability Implications

60. A climate impact assessment has been completed prior to the submission of this paper. A new delivery model and any new contract will provide opportunities to improve the position for the council in this area for this service. The future provision will look to adopt the latest technologies and innovations and reduce carbon through efficient deployment planning and techniques where possible. By allowing to the contact to be future proofed to allow for the ZEZ to be expanded will have significantly positive impact on emissions.

Risk Management

61. The procurement of a new civil enforcement contracts offers many opportunities for the Council by ensuring any selected model is appropriate for the current and perceived future challenges for the council.

62. Failure to award new contracts holds significant risk for this project, failure to do so by 31 March 2026 will potentially leave Oxfordshire County Council without a civil enforcement service to fulfil its statutory obligations. To minimise this risk the project has been established in advance of this date to enable a robust assessment and procurement process to take place.

63. A detailed risk and issue log is being developed and will be actively managed by the officer led working group. Key risks will be escalated to the steering group and added to the corporate register where required.

Annex 1 - High level initial assessment of delivery models
Annex 2 - Parking Matters - Options appraisal

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February 2025

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Annex 1 - High level initial assessment of delivery models

This covers a high level initial assessment for the four main areas of consideration (Compliance Management, Penalty Charge Notice System (back-office), Zero Emissions ZEZ permits and payments stem and ANPR cameras.

Compliance Management - Enforcement

1. Parking Matters carried out a research exercise on delivery models in 2021 to advise a client in southern England. During this work they spoke to a number of local authorities in southern and south-western England including urban unitary authorities and larger rural counties.

   When considering the high-level options for service delivery there are broadly, three models for service delivery currently deployed across the country:
   In-house: day-to-today delivery is entirely or largely delivered within the local authority by directly employed staff.
   Contracted: day-to-day delivery is entirely or largely delivered by a contractor appointed by a local authority.
   Third Party Agreement: whereby a third party, for example a neighbouring council (or even a Joint Venture company) is employed to carry out parking management and enforcement.

2. Parking matters ruled out third party agreements as a viable option for resourcing contracts (such as long-term concessions, private finance or creating public-private joint ventures) as they are not considered appropriate by councils or suppliers in the market.

3. That left the options of bringing the service in-house or contracting out for further consideration. Irrespective of whether the service is brought in house or contracted out, the following parts of the service must be externally sourced.

Penalty Charge Notice (PCN) Software

4. PCN software is a specialist piece of software that enables PCNs to be issued and for the PCN to be managed through its process. The market has established contractors and mature products. This software is not something that the Council could consider developing its own version. The likely development time and cost would not make this viable.

ZEZ Vehicle Checker and Payment System

5. The ZEZ vehicle checker and payment system is currently provided through Trellint. This is a specialist piece of software that lets those wishing to enter the ZEZ a chance to check the eligibility of their vehicle and then to pay the appropriate fee. It is recommended to procure this software to ensure the continue operation of the ZEZ.

ANPR Cameras

6. These cameras are specialist cameras and are required to be certified by the Vehicle Certification Authority (VCA). The Council had a contract through the ESPO Framework with Videalert for the provision of ANPR enforcement cameras. A new contract is required for Council's future Moving Traffic programme, ZEZ cameras, School Streets and replacement cameras for existing sites. It is recommended that a call off contract is considered to enable these programmes to be completed and to ensure that should an existing camera need to be replaced it can be done so without having to carry out a lengthy procurement process. The exact number of cameras needed is dependent on the programme, consultation, etc. This contract would not guarantee any yearly values but provide the process to enable the smooth operation of Moving Traffic Enforcement.

Civil Enforcement Procurement

Options Appraisal Report

Prepared by

January 2025

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Summary

Oxfordshire County Council first took on parking enforcement powers in Oxford City in 1997, extending these powers as they became available to Civil Enforcement (under TMA 2004) covering bus lanes and, most recently, moving traffic (such as prohibited vehicles, banned turns, School Streets etc) in 2022.

The Council has expanded operations beyond the City. In October 2020 the Cabinet agreed to pursue an application to DfT to take on powers covering Cherwell, Vale of White Horse and South Oxfordshire. Enforcement of these districts went live in November 2021. Agreement was reached with West Oxfordshire District Council to take on the West Oxfordshire on-street enforcement, which went live in April 2023. Negotiations were also concluded with Cherwell District Council to undertake the off-street enforcement of their car parks via an agency agreement. This went live in September 2023.

The Zero Emission Zone is also managed by the Civil Enforcement team since its inception in 2022.

The Civil Enforcement operation in 2024 was three times the size of the service in 2020. The current operation manages over 22,000 parking spaces (on and off street), issues nearly 200,000 PCNs annually with a revenue of £9.6m and an expenditure of £5m.

The extent of Civil Enforcement operations has resulted in the need to contract with specialist providers to assist with day-to-day operations, as well as providing specialist personnel, equipment and services. Many of these contracts will expire in the coming years and will need to be re-procured. In addition, the Thornhill and Oxford Parkway Park and Rides are currently managed through an Agency agreement with the City Council that expires in 2026.

The Council is undertaking an exercise to evaluate potential options to replace the current contracts and Agency Agreements. In order to review and, where possible rationalise the contracts, the extensions to the current contracts have been triggered for an additional year and there is the option to extend for a further year if needed.

This paper details the areas of operation, the current contracts and the options going forward.

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1. Current Contracts

1.1 Compliance Management

These contracts cover the day-to-day operations including required personnel and supporting assets as detailed in Table 1 below. Operations include on and off street enforcement by CEO patrols, review of ANPR evidence packs and issue of PCNs, and Pay and Display machine maintenance. Correspondence processing (scanning incoming correspondence, printing and posting outgoing letters) is also part of the Compliance Management contract.

Personnel	*Equipment*
Civil Enforcement Officers (CEOs) - Patrol streets and car parks **ANPR review officers** - Office based, reviewing evidence packs from ANPR	Handheld devices Mobile printers Vehicle (suspensions and frontline P&D maintenance) Vehicles (CEO transport) Office equipment for operation Comms/radio system
Premises	
Building(s) for CEO base and vehicles	
Other services	*Innovations*
Print, scan and post service P&D ticket rolls Uniforms - CEOs	Spotter (ANPR) vehicle

Table 1: Civil Enforcement Contract Scope

1.1.1 PCN and Permit Processing

The processing of PCNs of all types (parking, ZEZ, Bus Lanes, Moving Traffic), including replying to challenges and handling appeals, as well as the issuing and management of permits are currently managed by in-house teams.

1.1.2 Factors determining contract scope

The operation of the service is constrained by the legislation, affecting not only the contract scope but also the efficiency of the services provided. For example:

- For the majority of parking contraventions, a Civil Enforcement Officer must observe the vehicle parked in contravention for a period before physically placing a PCN on the vehicle. ANPR devices can only be used in very limited circumstances to enforce parking contraventions.
- Evidence of each contravention from ANPR devices (for bus lanes and moving traffic contraventions) must be reviewed by a trained officer before a PCN can be issued
- Whilst the Council can accept challenges by email, some outgoing correspondence has to be in the form of a physical letter, printed and posted.
- Whilst the initial (informal) challenge to a PCN could be handled by contracted personnel, formal representations and appeals made to the Traffic Penalty Tribunal (TPT) must be considered by an officer employed by the Council.

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1.1.3 Park and Ride Agency Agreement

Thornhill and Oxford Parkway are currently enforced by ODS through an Agency Agreement with Oxford City Council. The functions covered by this agreement are very similar to the scope of the Civil Enforcement scope. This agreement is due to expire 30 August 2025 however this can be extended by a further year.

The Agreement covers:

- Parking enforcement in Thornhill and Oxford Parkway P&R car parks through Excess Charges
- Provision and maintenance of ticket machines at the above sites
- First & second line appeals
- Opening and closing the buildings at Thornhill and Oxford Parkway
- Management of the pay by phone contract
- Cleaning the building and site
- CCTV daily check
- Call-out when required

1.2 Enforcement Technology

The hardware and software required to manage the deployment of CEOs, vehicle observations, PCN issue and processing is amongst the most specialised employed by the Council. Procurement must be divided according to the specialties in the market (e.g. ANPR suppliers, PCN systems, etc).

The scope of the current contracts are listed in Table 2.

PCN Software	*ANPR (bus lane and moving traffic)*
CEO deployment Handheld software	Fixed roadside cameras ANPR review suite
Innovations	
ANPR Cameras for ZEZ ZEZ Vehicle checker Payment mechanism	

Table 2: Hardware and software scope

1.2.1 ZEZ Contract

The current contract is a direct award, made due to the innovative nature of the requirement. However, the initial contract has expired and attempts to extend this through a framework contract have been unsuccessful as the supplier is not currently on any framework.

1.2.2 ANPR Cameras

The Council has a programme to extend ANPR camera usage beyond the scope of the current contract. As ANPR cameras have to be approved by the Vehicle Certification Agency for use in enforcement, a call-off contract with a specialised supplier will need to be put in place to fulfil the requirements of the programme.

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1.3 Enforcement Agents

There are certain elements of the Civil Enforcement service that have been excluded from the review process as they require specialist providers, or the function has to remain within the Council. Enforcement Agents (Bailiffs) are a specialised field with a small number of suppliers with the required nationwide coverage. The contract for Enforcement Agents is a nil cost contract and was recently procured, having 3.5 years remaining.

2. Options for Service Delivery

As a Highway Authority, Oxfordshire County Council is committed under the Traffic Management Act 2004 (TMA) to making sure traffic moves freely and quickly on its roads. TMA gives councils the tools to manage parking policies and enforce some moving traffic offences, enabling the Council to maintain the network functionality, whilst also facilitating more sustainable travel choices. Without enforcement the Council will encounter issues with road safety, increased pollution, delays to all users on the network and impact the emergency services.

It is therefore assumed that, for the purposes of this document, the Council wishes to maintain a Civil Enforcement service.

2.1 Technology

As stated above, the technology is highly specialised and provided by a small number of suppliers. Whilst the number of suppliers is not ideal, the systems are relatively inexpensive (given their complexity) and generally fit for purpose.

As far as we are aware, no councils processing PCNs under TMA have attempted to create their own software. This would be prohibitively expensive, requiring a significant initial investment and an 18 month to two year initial development time as well as an ongoing commitment to bug fixing and support. The resulting software is unlikely to be an improvement on commercially available systems.

It is therefore recommended that the Council seeks to procure replacement contracts for hardware and software.

2.2 Compliance Management

The main consideration for the Council is whether to continue to outsource the compliance management service or whether to bring this in-house.

Parking Matters carried out a research exercise on delivery models in 2021 to advise a client in southern England. During this work they spoke to a number of local authorities in southern and south-western England including urban unitary authorities and larger rural counties.

When considering the high-level options for service delivery there are broadly, three models for service delivery currently deployed across the country:

1. **In-house**: day-to-today delivery is entirely or largely delivered within the local authority by directly employed staff.
2. **Contracted:** day-to-day delivery is entirely or largely delivered by a contractor appointed by a local authority.

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3. **Third Party Agreement**: whereby a third party, for example a neighbouring council (or even a JV company) is employed to carry out parking management and enforcement.

Across England almost all authorities either deliver services in-house or through a contract with a supplier (options 1 or 2). Many have a 'hybrid' arrangement, in which some functions are outsourced while others are delivered in house.

Other models for resourcing contracts (such as long-term concessions, private finance or creating public-private joint ventures) are not considered appropriate by councils or suppliers in the market.

In the research they conducted, Parking Matters found that most authorities made the decision on their delivery models at the point they adopted civil enforcement. There have been relatively few cases of wholesale change in delivery model. Many councils that have considered changing often conclude that the financial cost and culture changes required will be too expensive and/or too great a risk to a key source of revenue.

2.2.1 In-house delivery

Parking Matters estimate around half of authorities deliver their parking services in-house including some of the country's largest cities (e.g. Newcastle and Bristol), counties (e.g. Devon), unitary authorities (e.g. Bath and NE Somerset and Swindon), and numerous districts (often off-street only). This does not mean that all services are delivered in-house, but that the majority of the team, including the Civil Enforcement Officers and notice processors are employed directly by the council.

Commonly cited strengths of this model are the direct and easy access to the civil enforcement service, the ability to direct and change the service to respond to policy changes and the shared services with other departments. The risks with an in-house service lie with the need for sufficient high quality managers and the difficulty in recruiting and retaining staff. One authority has a perpetual advert for Civil Enforcement Officers. and authorities seem especially susceptible to high rates of sickness and absence, creating a need for a dedicated HR resource.

An In-house operation would still require some contracts, however each of these would be small in value and there is potential to use some existing contracts already within the Council such as fleet vehicles, cleaning services etc

Figure 1 summarises the benefits, weaknesses and threats of a service delivered fully in house, as identified by the authorities that operate in this way.

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Strengths	Weaknesses
• Easy Access and influence. • Complete control over quality of delivery • Intimate understanding of the local area and authority • Ability to reach back into other council services • Intangible customer service benefits e.g. enforcement staff working for their own communities ('civic pride'). • Staff can be redeployed to deal with other issues including litter, graffiti, blocked drains • Intangible benefit of having council representatives on the street.	• Ongoing need for training and continued professional development often overlooked • Fewer economies of scale when purchasing equipment • Difficult to scale up or down • Corporate policies / priorities can reduce the efficiency and professionalism of the service • Slower to procure services and equipment • Slower to recruit and replace staff. • Inability to incentivise performance
Opportunities	**Threats**
• Some shared services or shared economies (e.g. CCTV, Cash Collection) • Better quality of delivery and customer service leading to reputational benefits • Branding and communications.. • Overhead savings from use of other council departments and premises.	• Corporate policies such as recruitment freezes or carte blanche cost-cutting • Senior salaries often lower than market rate; • Junior staff pay & benefits often lead to higher costs • High sickness and vacancy rates • Inappropriate corporate projects (i.e. with software or corporate systems).

Figure 1: In House delivery SWOT Table

2.2.2 Contracted

Letting a contract for specialist services can be beneficial to Civil Enforcement services and provide managed, efficient, resilient and cost-effective solutions if the contract is well specified, the performance targets are achievable and fair, and internal contract management is consistently applied. Importantly, risk is transferred from the commissioning body to the contractor.

Cost savings can arise from economies of scale, as being part of a larger operation results in a pool of expertise which is kept up-to-date and can be deployed to other operations by the supplier. Contractors are often keen to adopt new technologies especially where these deliver efficiencies.

The most common method of operation is to let a large main contract, typically for a 5-year term, sometimes including break options and/or extensions, which encompasses all elements of the service. This requires careful specification (usually with assistance, if this is the first time such a contract is let), and an open tendering process.

A client team will still be required to interface with councillors and suppliers as well as perform some duties which have to be considered by the Local Authority (formal challenges and appeals). Any issues with staff retention or the recruitment of new staff to carry out these duties will impact this part of the service. Figure 2 summarises the benefits, weaknesses and threats of a fully contracted out service, as identified by the authorities that operate in this way.

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Strengths	Weaknesses
• Pool of expertise to draw from which is kept well trained and knowledgeable • Economies of scale • Easier to scale up or down • Risk transfer to provider • New services can be brought in quickly without large capital investment. • Contract management can incentivise and encourage performance	• Although margins are low, a proportion of the price will be taken as profit • Pricing can be high for services out-of-contract • Sub-contracting carries a management fee • Intangible customer service implications resulting from staff employed by a third party.
Opportunities	**Threats**
• Benefit from industry change and innovation • Adopt new technologies quicker • Quicker procurement and equipment renewal • Expertise and economies of scale for purchasing.	• Poor contracts / procurement can lead to inflexibility • Poor future proofing post contract with knowledge loss a risk. • Complicated ownership of assets (e.g. handheld devices) • Bankruptcy or insolvency.

Figure 2. Outsourced delivery SWOT table

2.2.3 Third Party Agreement

A small number of authorities have entered into joint agreements to manage parking. This usually involves one authority acting for both, or a new joint venture being set up (either of which may then be outsourced). These arrangements are usually entered into by large authorities (e.g. the London Boroughs of Wandsworth and Richmond) and are often part of larger collaborations. However, the agency agreement with ODS (owned by the City Council) is an example of this type of arrangement, even though this accounts for a relatively small part of the overall service.

Whilst there may be some cost savings through joint management, the disadvantage of third part agreements is that the Council risks losing some policy independence and may find it difficult to control costs.

2.2.4 Hybrid

In practice, many councils operate parts of the service through contracts and part in-house. This is the current situation in Oxfordshire.

A hybrid approach is very flexible as it enables some of the more difficult elements of the service (e.g. recruiting and training Civil Enforcement Officers) to be contracted out, whilst elements that the council wishes to be flexible and responsive to policy (e.g. PCN processing) can be employed directly. Most councils adopting this strategy will outsource functions such as PCN issuing (including CEOs and ANPR reviewers, their deployment, supervision and management) and correspondence handling (both incoming and outgoing).

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2.3 Other considerations

The Compliance Management activity requires the use of accommodation for CEOs and ANPR review officers, vehicle parking, storage, etc. In the current enforcement contract, the contractor is obliged to source and to service their own accommodation, the costs of which are included in the contract.

The Council's property policy is to own rather than rent and it may be possible to

purchase a building for use by Compliance Management regardless of whether the service is outsourced or provided in-house, using the savings to repay the capital outlay. A building would need to be sourced as there is no suitable property within our current Council Portfolio. This would take around 12 months however the contractor's existing building can be used until the new premises are ready.

2.4 Ensuring the chosen option is successful

In Parking Matters' experience, a high-quality efficient service can be achieved by any of the options above. However, there are a number of issues that are key determinants of service quality regardless of the option taken.

2.4.1 Management

The provision by the Council of sufficient management resource (both quantity and appropriate experience) of suitable seniority is a key determinant of success. Poorly managed or resourced parking services can perform very badly with low PCN rates and high rates of PCN appeals, putting revenue and reputation at risk.

A fully contracted out service (or continuing with the current hybrid arrangement) will require adequate contract management resource, whilst changing to an in-house service will require the recruitment of a significant number of operational managers with appropriate experience.

2.4.2 Ensuring responsiveness and performance

Even with sufficient management, contracts need to be properly framed to enable the Council to direct resources where it considers they are needed and to review and promote performance. In-house services also need to be seen as business units with clear functions. Both contracted and in-house services must be provided with operational targets and key performance indicators that are regularly reviewed, with incentives for meeting these targets.

3. Procurement Options

Civil Enforcement procurement has to be carefully managed as some potential bidders have a long history of challenging Councils' decisions. This section assumes that some procurement will be required.

As with other areas of Council activity, there are two main approaches to contract procurement in Civil Enforcement:

3.1 Frameworks

Frameworks help councils to procure goods and services from a list of pre-approved suppliers, with agreed terms and conditions and legal protections. Many (such as ESPO or Crown Commercial Service) are owned by local or central government bodies. From the

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Council's perspective, frameworks can make the procurement process cheaper, faster and less prone to challenge.

Frameworks create 'lots' that consist of a coherent scope of works (e.g. parking enforcement technology) and invite suppliers to 'bid' to join the framework as a supplier for one or more lots. Once the lot is in place, councils can use the documentation and supplier's bids as the basis for a 'mini competition.'

3.2 Open Procurement

If not offered through a framework, tenders for contracts with a large value must be advertised in an open, regulated process. This is usually more work for the procurement team and therefore more expensive than using a framework.

In practice, councils use frameworks where possible, only resorting to open procurement where an appropriate framework lot is not available.

4. Contract Scope

If one or more elements of the Civil Enforcement service are to be contracted out, consideration must be given to the scope of the contract(s). Councils follow one of two models:

4.1 Single Provider

All contract elements are procured from a single supplier, including all parts of the compliance management and enforcement technology.

This approach can place the maximum cost risk with the supplier, potentially reducing costs for the Council. However, there are a number of weaknesses in this approach:

Suppliers will cost the extra risks into their bid, negating the potential savings for the Council

The breadth of contract scope may make it difficult to ensure that the contract is flexible enough to cover any changes the Council may want to make to the service

No one potential supplier that can undertake all of the items the Council is looking to procure. There is a potential that suppliers may subcontract or form a consortium. However, concerns remain that it would limit the market and thereby limit competitive tendering.

4.2 Multiple Providers

Elements of the Civil Enforcement service are grouped into 'lots', each is procured either through a matching framework lot or by open procurement as necessary.

The specialist nature of Civil Enforcement does lend itself to procuring contracts with multiple providers and frameworks do exist for a large number of the elements. However, there is no framework contract for compliance management so this would still need to be procured through an open tender (Crown Commercial Service are working on an enforcement framework contract but this will not be available in time).

Recent market testing by the Council has indicated that companies are interested in tendering for elements of the service and that procurement in lots would attract eligible companies from specialist fields, thus maximising the competition.

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The Multiple Providers approach will also align with the Hybrid service delivery option, enabling the Council to only scope those elements that it wishes to outsource.

5. Recommended Procurement Strategy

Given the nature of the service, some contracts will be required to facilitate the Civil Enforcement service. This section breaks down the elements of the service, based on the specialist areas in the market, identifies the options and recommends an approach for each.

5.1 Single Provider

As discussed above, one option would be to outsource all elements of the service that can be contracted out to a single provider. Given the nature of the Council's Civil Enforcement service and the drive to innovate within the Council, it would be difficult to create a specification that would provide the flexibility required. Such a contract may also prove to not be cost effective given the perceived risk and range of sub-contractors that potential suppliers are likely to price for.

*It is therefore recommended that the Council **does not** pursue the Single Provider route.*

5.2 Technology

5.2.1 PCN (Enforcement) Software

This market has established contractors with mature products. A suitable framework lot exists for this and early market engagement has indicated a strong interest in bidding for the work as a single lot. As part of the tender it is recommended that each tenderer is given the opportunity to demonstrate their software which will then form part of the evaluation.

PCN software is normally provided with an integrated permit management module. Separate permit management software was recently procured as part of the Traffic Filters project. However, should Traffic Filters not be implemented or made permanent within the timescale for PCN Software procurement, the option to include a permit module should be included in the tender as this would remove the need for a further separate tender exercise.

It is recommended that PCN Software be procured through a framework with the option to supply permit software included.

5.2.2 ANPR Cameras

There are a number of VCA certified providers of ANPR cameras and associated evidence review software in an established market. However, the Council is not aware of a suitable framework for this lot. This forms a separate market from PCN software although all suppliers are able to interface with each other, enabling any evidence review software to send PCN data to any PCN software.

Offering this as a separate lot would enable the Council to purchase cameras needed for any Civil Enforcement requirement (including Traffic filters, weight limit monitoring, etc) and will enable the Council to equip its programmes for School Streets and Moving Traffic, covering the purchase, installation and ongoing yearly software hosting and maintenance of the cameras. This lot would also be used for purchasing cameras to enforce the current ZEZ and proposed expansion.

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It is recommended that ANPR cameras and associated software be procured through an open tender.

5.3 ZEZ Vehicle Checker

As noted above, a direct award contract was made in August 2021 to supply the pilot ZEZ system. This contract covered:

- ANPR cameras (to enforce Zone)
- Vehicle checker (to confirm charge for entering the ZEZ).
- Online Payment (to enable the public to pay the ZEZ charge).

Contracts are required to replace the above functions as follows:

5.3.1 ANPR Cameras

It is anticipated that the ANPR Camera lot supplier will be able to supply suitable certified equipment for the ZEZ and this will be included in the specification for the ANPR Camera lot (see 5.2.2 above).

5.3.2 Vehicle Checker

The Vehicle Checker is highly specialised software and not available as a commercial product. The Council will therefore need to procure a developer to code the checker, with the Council owning the resulting product. This will enable the Council to specify a product that allows changes to the ZEZ configuration (e.g. amending the cost of entering the Zone) by Council staff and enable IT colleagues to make small changes to the software as requirements change (e.g. linking to the new DVLA/UKVD API link).

It is recommended that the development of the ZEZ Vehicle Checker be procured through an open tender.

5.3.3 Online Payment

The payment API may be provided by a specialist supplier that would link into the Council's Pay360 solution, ensuring that payments are made directly into the Council's account. However, it may also be possible to provide a cheaper alternative by using the National Parking Platform (NPP) to collect charges, a payment method already established within Oxfordshire.

Discussions with the NPP will need to establish whether this is a viable alternative and the Council will need to decide on the most appropriate route.

It is recommended that the payment of ZEZ charges be discussed with the NPP and a decision made to either use the NPP or procure a new payment service through an open tender.

5.4 Compliance Management Contract

This is the largest of the lots in terms of value and early market engagement has indicated that contractors want to bid for this work. This lot contains most strategic options which will be covered in more detail below. Even within this lot there are options, either to let all the functions as one lot (single supplier) or to break down the functions and decide whether to include them in the procurement scope or to manage them in-house. Each part of the service has been broken down and the options identified, the route to market for each will depend on the options chosen. Note however that a very restricted scope may

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not be commercially attractive to many suppliers and this will need to be taken into account when choosing and combining options.

5.4.1 PCN and Permit Processing

It is assumed within these options that PCN and Permit Processing will continue to be delivered in-house. Whilst there may be some minor cost savings in outsourcing these, this would potentially be at the expense of responsiveness and quality as discussed above.

It is recommended that PCN and Permit Processing continue to be delivered in-house.

5.4.2 Civil Enforcement Officers and ANPR review

As discussed above, CEOs and ANPR Review Officers are currently outsourced. However it could be possible to bring CEOs and ANPR review officers into Council employment. This also includes the team providing first line P&D maintenance.

The Council may have better control over the patrol routes that are undertaken and direct enforcement to areas where members have concerns. Staff who would be employed by the Council are also likely to be paid more and have better terms and conditions than if they were employed in the private sector. However, these benefits could be delivered through well-defined specification and contract terms, and the potential benefits of direct employment need to be balanced with the risks. Civil Enforcement Officers are out in all weathers dealing with unhappy motorist who has received PCNs. Sickness absence can be an issue and the current contractor has also found it difficult to retain and recruit CEOs. There is also little or no cost benefit to direct employment of CEOs and ANPR Review Officers

On balance it is recommended that the employment of CEOs and ANPR Review Officers are included in the Compliance Management contract scope.

5.4.3 Correspondence Management

Contractors provide highly efficient Printing, scanning and posting services and it is unlikely that this could be provided as efficiently in-house.

It is recommended that Correspondence Management is included within the Compliance Management contract scope

5.4.4 Facilities

As discussed above, accommodation for contract staff, vehicles etc could be better provided directly by the Council.

It is recommended that Contractors are provided with premises by the Council.

5.4.5 Equipment

Many Councils supply high cost equipment such as vehicles, scan bikes etc through their authority-wide leasing arrangements. This may have some cost benefits for the Council so should be investigated as an option in any tender issued. Low value equipment (such as uniforms, handheld devices and printers) should be treated as consumables and provided by the contractor.

It is recommended that Contractors provide pricing for equipment but the Council retains the option to provide high value items directly.

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5.4.6 Park and Ride

As described above, the Oxford Parkway and Thornhill park and ride car parks are currently enforced by Oxford City Council through an Agency Agreement. It is proposed that this agreement is not renewed and that the park and rides are included in the Compliance Management scope.

Tasks outside the usual Compliance Management scope (such as the cleaning of the buildings) can be added to existing contracts with our Facilities Team's responsibility.

It is recommended that the Agency Agreement ends, and the activities are undertaken by the Council's Civil Enforcement service

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Recommendation summary

2. Options for Service Delivery			
Section		Recommendation	Description
2.1	**Technology**	The Council seeks to procure replacement contracts for hardware and software.	Hardware and software to support the Civil Enforcement service is too complex to be provided in house. Attempting to provide this in-house would create an unnecessary risk to revenue.
2.4.1	**Management**	The Council ensures that there are adequate resources to manage the chosen solution.	Services perform poorly when there is inadequate or inappropriate management. Significant loss of revenue often results, far outstripping any cost savings from reduced management.

5. Recommended Procurement Strategy				
Section			Recommendation	Description
5.1	**Single Provider**		The Council **does not** pursue the Single Provider route.	A single supplier contract is unlikely to provide the control and flexibility required by the Council. Multiple contracts will be required.
5.2.1	**Technology**	**PCN (Enforcement) Software**	PCN software should be procured through a framework with the option to supply permit software included	A framework is available that would simplify the procurement of enforcement software. An option on permit software will enable a permit solution to be purchased independent of Traffic Filters.
5.2.2	**Technology**	**ANPR Cameras**	ANPR cameras and associated software should be procured through an open tender.	No viable framework exists for this; therefore an open tender is the only practical option.
5.3.1	**ZEZ Vehicle Checker**	**ANPR Cameras**	Include this in the specification for the ANPR Camera lot (5.2.2)	The requirement is very similar to the wider ANPR cameras, therefore both can be included in the same lot.
5.3.2	**ZEZ Vehicle Checker**	**Vehicle Checker**	The development of the ZEZ Vehicle Checker should be procured through an open tender	This is a highly specialised requirement that will need to be created for the Council. A small separate tender is the most likely to be successful.

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	ZEZ Vehicle Checker	**Online Payment**	The payment of ZEZ charges should be discussed with the NPP and a decision made to either use the NPP or procure a new payment service through an open tender.	The Council already uses the NPP for parking payments, adding the ZEZ may be a simple way of providing a very flexible payment route for customers.
5.4.1	**Compliance Management**	**PCN and Permit Processing**	PCN and Permit Processing continue to be delivered in-house	This part of the service is provided efficiently by the in-house team, therefore there is no need to outsource.
5.4.2	**Compliance Management,**	**CEOs and ANPR review**	The employment of CEOs and ANPR Review Officers should be included in the Compliance Management contract scope.	This part of the service is already outsourced, the costs and disruption of moving in-house is unlikely to be offset.
5.4.3	**Compliance Management**	**Correspondence Management**	Correspondence Management should be included within the Compliance Management contract scope	This is a highly specialised activity and a high volume, highly automated service can be provided by most suppliers. This would be more efficient than a service provided in house.
5.4.4	**Compliance Management**	**Facilities**	Contractors should be provided with premises by the Council.	This would follow Council policy to provide buildings for its services and may result in cost savings
5.4.5	**Compliance Management**	**Equipment**	Contractors should provide pricing for equipment, but the Council retains the option to provide high value items directly.	An evaluation of the relative benefits of procuring from the compliance management contractor or using other Council contracts can be made at the time of procurement.
5.4.6	**Compliance Management**	**Park and Ride**	When the Agency Agreement ends, the activities should be undertaken by the Council's Civil Enforcement service	The service will be more efficient and there will be cost savings if this is included in the wider contracts and existing in-house services within Civil Enforcement.

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Divisions Affected - All

CABINET

25 February 2025

Household Waste Recycling Centre Service Delivery Model

Report by Director of Environment and Highways

RECOMMENDATION

1. **The Cabinet is RECOMMENDED to**

   a. Approve the commencement of work to explore and consider options for the household waste recycling centre management service delivery provision, noting that the current contract is coming to an end in September 2027.

   b. Endorse the proposed approach for developing the options and key procurement stages as set out in this paper.

   c. Approve the use of Extended Producer Responsibility funding for consultancy work to support the future household waste recycling centre model development.

Executive Summary

2. Under Section 51 of the Environmental Protection Act 1990, Oxfordshire County Council (the Council) has a legal duty to provide household waste recycling centres for Oxfordshire residents.

3. The Council's current household waste recycling centres management contract has been extended and comes to an end on 30 September 2027. A future model for the service delivery is required to be in place and mobilised prior to the expiry of the existing contract.

4. Due to the changing nature of the household waste recycling centre sector, the model for how the Council manages its household waste recycling centre provision needs to be fully explored before determining the best option for the new arrangement. This will aim to maximise reuse and recycling, and reduce waste to landfill or energy recovery and so help tackle the climate emergency and assist with delivering the Circular Economy.

5. To undertake the new household waste recycling centres management service delivery model, it is proposed there will be three main decision points for Cabinet:

   a. This report seeking support for commencement of work to explore and consider the new service delivery options.

   b. When initial options have been explored, a key decision will be made to commence procurement of the preferred service delivery model (June 2025).

   c. To seek a key decision to implement /award the new service and any related contracts (March 2027), allowing the commencement of the mobilisation of the preferred service delivery model.

Current contract arrangements

Background

6. The Council is the Waste Disposal Authority and, together with the districts and City Council, has one of the highest recycling rates in England, along with very low waste arisings per head. Working together under the Oxfordshire Resources and Waste Partnership, and with the household waste recycling centres strategy, the Council aims to deliver targets on recycling and reducing waste to landfill. The Council's network of 7 household waste recycling centres are a key component in delivering the Council's obligations to the partnership and the strategy. Collectively they handle around 15% of the total household waste arisings in Oxfordshire, recycling, composting and reusing around 65% of the waste delivered to the sites and receiving around 1 million visits per annum.

7. The current contract commenced on the 1 October 2017 being awarded to Geoffrey David Thompson trading as Weymouth and Sherborne Recycling (W&S). W&S run and operate 6 of the 7 sites, the exception being the Dix Pit site though at that site W&S provide all the logistics and the majority of the containers. The site staff and day to day management of Dix Pit is carried out by FCC Environment. This exception is due to a long-term arrangement and contract linked to the 1986 Dix Pit landfill contract and the transfer station which shares the same site and is also operated by FCC Environment under a different contract.

8. Historically contracts have tended to pass financial risks to the contractor however this is considered to be unlikely to be acceptable in the current market.

9. The current pricing structure includes a base rate management fee for site operations and a series of gate fees and transport costs for a variety of materials received, recycled and managed through the sites. The exceptions to these being residual waste gate fees for energy recovery to Ardley Energy Recovery Facility, garden waste composting gate fees and landfill to Sutton Courtney

landfill site, which are arranged through other Oxfordshire County Council contracts. The total costs to the Council for the operation of the Household Waste Recycling Centres including treatment and disposal of all materials delivered to those sites is presently around £6m per annum.

10. In order to shape the scope and nature of the future service provision a public engagement exercise was completed in summer 2021 to determine what residents wanted from their household waste recycling centre service. The feedback from 1,911 respondents gave a strong opinion that residents did not want their household waste recycling sites to shut, and they were valued as a local, easy to use service that can accept a wide range of waste materials.

Proposed approach

11. Whilst the existing model of an externally provided service has traditionally been the preferred choice for many authorities, given the changing nature of the industry and new Council priorities, it is recognised that alternative approaches for the provision of household waste recycling centres should be explored to assess if it continues to be the right approach for Oxfordshire.

12. The proposed approach has three main stages: Investigation and optioneering; development of the preferred option; and then procurement / delivery of that option. It is important that the Council undertakes the first stage with an open mind and fully engages with members, communities, the market, and other local authorities to help shape the service for the future. It is also important that data is utilised to understand the cost, risks and deliverability of options to shape and determine the preferred option for Oxfordshire.

13. Understanding which elements of the existing contract arrangements work well and which do not work as well will be included in the process. Both qualitative and quantitative data will be used to baseline the current contract performance, and this will be used to help inform the options appraisal process. To achieve this, it is also proposed that engagement is undertaken to enable key stakeholders to feed back on their experiences of the current household waste recycling centres management service. This data and feedback will then be analysed by officers with outcomes feeding in to identifying a preferred model.

14. Engagement and learning from other local authorities to understand their household waste recycling centre management models and their operational delivery approaches and to learn from their previous experiences will help inform which model may be most appropriate for Oxfordshire recognising the changing landscape and opportunities local government reorganisation will bring. Where possible, qualitative and quantitative data from other local authorities will also be reviewed to see how different models perform against the existing Oxfordshire model.

15. Early soft market engagement has commenced to understand the wider waste industry views on direction of travel and what the market can offer. Discussions on future innovations are very informative and will help to understand what other elements may need to be considered when developing the preferred model.

16. Internally a review of opportunities to commercialise waste services, considering opportunities for generating income, reducing costs and improving performance is in progress and reporting through to commercial board. This work will dovetail with the household waste recycling centre model review.

17. It is proposed Cabinet will take formal decisions at three key stages during the optioneering and procurement process.

    a. Approval of, and support for, the commencement of work to explore and consider the options (February 2025).

    b. Key decision and approval of the preferred model to develop once the options have been explored (June 2025).

    c. Key decision to confirm implementation of service provision model (if it is procurement route this would be awarding contract) (March 2027).

Proposed programme

18. High level timescales for the delivery of the new delivery model are being developed. Shown below is an overview of potential key milestones. Once this approach paper has been approved by Cabinet in February 2025, a more detailed plan will be developed.

Milestone	**Indicative Milestone date**
*Approval of approach by Cabinet	February 2025
Investigation and development of preferred model with input from Commercial Board	December 2024 – March 2025
Preferred model agreed by Waste and Circular Economy Team and Commercial Board	April - May 2025
*Approval of preferred model by Cabinet	June 2025
Implementation of preferred model	July 2025 – March 2027
Mobilisation of new service model	April – September 2027
New service model start date	1October 2027

***Cabinet Decision points**

Corporate Policies and Priorities

19. Whichever service model is chosen it will be required to align with the Council's priorities, with a particular focus on the following:

    (a) Put action to address the climate emergency at the heart of our work – by looking to increase environmental performance through reuse, recycling and reducing disposal as part of the Council's transition to a circular economy and helping to reduce carbon emissions.

    (b) Prioritise the health and wellbeing of residents – the provision of safe, legal, and environmentally sustainable ways of disposing of materials no longer wanted by residents.

    (c) Working with local businesses and partners for environmental, economic, and social benefit – the new service will explore site access for local small and medium sized enterprises, and the network will continue to be used by charities to recycle and dispose of materials.

20. The household waste recycling centre strategy supports the overarching countywide Joint Municipal Waste Management Strategy that aims to keep waste growth to zero percent per head, increase reuse and recycling rates, and reduce what is sent to landfill or sent for energy recovery. The strategy is a key component in delivering the Council's targets under that strategy.

21. The Local Transport and Connectivity Plan aims for an inclusive and net zero Oxfordshire Transport system. While household waste recycling centre users are likely to still use a car to access sites (as materials are often too heavy or bulky to transport in other ways), the strategy acknowledges the Council's active travel policies and will ensure that the centres' access policy continues to enable residents to visit sites easily using a variety of different transport modes. The strategy commits to maintaining a network of sites, which means that residents can still access a local site without needing to make longer journeys, and as part of the overall Joint Municipal Waste Management Strategy, efforts to reduce the overall amount of household waste being generated will help to reduce the number of trips needing to be made to the household waste recycling centres.

Financial Implications

22. The current service contract has a total contract value in excess of £30 million and whilst it is clearly too early to establish the future costs now, it is expected that new contract rates will rise significantly, and the finalised model terms may impact the overall costs. Whatever final preferred service delivery model is chosen, key parameters of the service (including the technical specification) and how it is costed (financial modelling) will be provided. This is particularly the case where the Council engages with a third-party supplier and there is the

added need to robustly evaluate, check and challenge proposals where there is a complex interplay between operational and financial models.

23. To deliver this work the Council will make maximum use of internal resources including officers in the Waste Team, Business, Performance and Service Improvements Team (project management), Category Managers for procurement as well as financial and legal support, however, it is evident given the scale and complexity of work required that additional external consultancy support will be required. Based on previous procurement experience the cost of this support could be expected to be in the region of £300k spread over the next 2 to 3 years.

24. The government confirmed in November 2024 that the Council would receive payments totalling £5.025 million during 2025/26 from the Extended Producer Responsibility fund. Approval is therefore being sought for around £300k of this funding to be used to fund the consultancy support required. Whilst the funding is not ring-fenced, Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs are clear *"this guaranteed funding will enable you to drive the changes needed to deliver an efficient waste service".* The first tranche of the £5.025 million payment will not be made until November 2025, so the Council will need to be cognisant of this cash flow profile, with consultancy support work starting from early 2025.

25. Some of this support will be required for the initial optioneering work, and as part of the initial options appraisal, officers are investigating a number of methods to reduce costs, including:

    a. Operational methodology: including the most cost-effective method to deliver the overall service and achieve value for money.
    b. Innovation available in the waste industry to drive down costs and increase efficiency, including greater development of reuse and circular economy management.
    c. Greater investment in intelligent deployment of limited resources; with data informing evidence led decision making.

26. Evaluation of the options and costings will be the subject to a further report to Cabinet, which will set out the recommendations based on the findings.

27. Within the current contract period, there are still significant capital works required to remedy the current site issues. These capital costs are being addressed via the household waste recycling centre programme and will at present be handled separately to the Contract procurement.

Comments checked by:

Filipp Skiffins, Assistant Finance Business Partner, Filipp.skiffins@oxfordshire.gov.uk (Finance)

Legal Implications

28. Pursuant to section 30 of the Environmental Protection Act 1990 (the Act) the Council, being a county council, is a waste disposal authority for the purposes of Part II of the Act. Under section 51 of the Act (which falls under Part II) waste disposal authorities have a statutory duty to provide residents with a place to deposit their household waste and to dispose of the waste so deposited. They are usually household waste recycling centres.

29. Depending on the preferred option selected, legal implications in respect of the future procurement will be considered in the follow up report to Cabinet. A member of the Legal Team will be appointed to the project team. It is expected that the Procurement Act 2023 will be in effect and apply to the procurement of any new Management Contract. Any procurement exercise to appoint professional services to support the project will be undertaken in accordance with the Council's Contract Procedure Rules.

    Comments checked by: Gareth Hale, Senior Solicitor and Team Leader, Contracts & Conveyancing
    Gareth.Hale@oxfordshire.gov.uk

Procurement Implications

30. Any procurement exercise to appoint professional services to support the project and new contractor/s will be completed in line with the Council's contract procedure rules. The Category Manager for Environmental Services has ownership for the procurement elements of the project with Head of Category support.

31. Once a preferred approach has been identified a detailed procurement strategy will be developed to support the delivery of the new service model / contract (s). It should be noted that legislative changes to the Procurement Regulations will come into effect February 2025 and the specific timings of the tender will need to be taken into consideration regarding the project programme and risks.

32. The value of this procurement means that Social Value will form part of the contract delivery.

    Comments checked by:

    Katherine Booker – Category Manager, Environmental Services 21/11/24 and again 16/12/24

Staff Implications

33. Due to the scale and complexity of the project there will be a need to appoint additional and dedicated subject matter expertise on a consultancy basis to

advise on the type, scale and scope of the model / contract we may wish to procure.

34. The wider project team will be internally resourced from both within the directorate and corporate centre.

35. There will be resource and staffing implications brought about by the new operating model. Depending on the preferred option selected, any new resource and staffing implications will be detailed and considered in further reports to Cabinet.

Equality & Inclusion Implications and Sustainability Implications

36. It is not anticipated the procurement of a new service delivery model will impact negatively on any 'protected characteristics' groups, nor on the armed forces, carers, staff, other Council services or providers. There is an opportunity through any procurement to positively impact rural communities and areas of deprivation. These will be considered as part of the options appraisal and reported on in detail in the follow up reports to Cabinet.

37. An Equalities Impact Assessment has been carried out as part of the strategy development, to identify any impacts on residents with protected characteristics and any additional community impacts. This found that the household waste recycling centre strategy is most likely to impact travel distances for residents, meaning sites are either nearer, or further than they are currently. This may impact carbon emissions (and associated climate impacts) and travel costs.

Sustainability Implications

38. A climate impact assessment will be completed as part of the project and reported on in follow up reports to Cabinet. Any future options will look to adopt the latest technologies and innovations, and improve social value, and reduce carbon through efficient deployment planning and techniques where possible. A Climate Impact Assessment will be completed and reported to follow up reports to Cabinet.

Risk Management

39. The procurement of a household waste recycling centre model offers many opportunities for the Council by ensuring any selected model is appropriate for the current and perceived future challenges for the Council. Through using this approach, it is hoped that the most advantageous outcome is reached for the Council, and any cost increases are mitigated as much as possible, however it should be recognised that there is a risk that the overall cost of the service could rise significantly compared to current costs

40. The current contract passed on significant unmitigated risk to the current contractor including inflation and legislative changes. A number of risks have

materialised during the current contract, and the transfer of such unmitigated risk in any new arrangement is now considered unlikely to be accepted by prospective bidders. The costs absorbed in the current contract will be reflected in the new operating model.

41. Failure to award a new contract/s or other service model is a significant risk for this project, failure to do so by March 2027 will potentially leave the Council without a household waste recycling centre service to fulfil the statutory obligations. To minimise this risk the project has been established well in advance of this date to enable a robust assessment and appropriate procurement process to take place.

42. The project's risk register has been included in this paper for reference as Annex 1.

Paul Fermer Director for Environment and Highways

Contact Officers:

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Jeffrey Farrell – Household waste recycling centre manager – Waste and Circular Economy Jeffrey.Farrell@oxfordshire.gov.uk

Jan 2024

ANNEX 1 – HWRC reprovision risk register

ANNEX 1 – HWRC reprovision risk register

SERVICE RISK REGISTER

Risk Ref.	Date	Workstream	Target Level Achieved	Risk Description			Risk category	Risk Owner	Risk Reporting Level	Current controls	MITIGATION SUMARY Ref mitigation tab	Previous Risk Score			Current Risk Score			Target Risk Score			
Unique identifier	The date the risk was identified	Which workstream risk relates to	Is the risk at the target level?	Description of the risk	Trigger - Description of the cause or trigger of the risk	Consequence - Description of the consequences of the risk (positive or negative)	What is the area of project tolerance most affected by the risk	Risk Owner	At what level of the project or programme will the risk be monitored	Description of actions already taken or controls in place to mitigate the risk.	Summary of current/ planned mitigation actions to move from current risk score to target risk score	Impact	Likelihood	Score	Impact	Likelihood	Score	Impact	Likelihood	Score	Target date
01	16.01.2025	Optioneering	No	Not able to engage a consultant in time to ensure the implementation timetable is adhered too (Links to risk 4).	Issues with engaging a consultant in time to ensure the procurement timetable is adhered too. Documents not issued swiftly enough to adhere to timeline.	Implementation timetable is affected / pushed back, which impacts on the overall contract procurement timeline.	Time	JF	HWRC Contract Steering Group	OCC Category leads very engaged and onboarded with project	HWRC Contract Steering Group and Working Group set up to discuss and monitor implentation process / timelines. Procurement guidance being provided.				5	3	15	3	2	6	01.12.2025
02	16.01.2025	Optioneering	No	Funding for engaging a consultant not available and /or not enough funding available for the £300k required to engage a consultant over the 3 year period	Funding not sourced /agreed Funding stopped or level of funding reduced	Consultant not engaged. Consultant engaged and then have to let go.	Quality	JF	HWRC Contract Steering Group	Agreement that £300k will be made available for engaging a consultant	It has been agreed that EPR funding with be used to 'backfill' the costs of engaging a consultant.				3	3	9	3	2	6	01.12.2025
03	16.01.2025	Optioneering	Yes	Cabinet / members do not support the implentation of the new model	Cabinet / members do not support the implentation of the new model	Lack of political support and/or member disagreement / un-alignment with Service delivery requirements may affect public perceptions / support for new model	Quality	JF	HWRC Contract Steering Group	Meetings planned with Cllr Sudbury to ensure he is informed of progress; 3 x cabinet papers being submitted to cabinet to ensure members are informed and aware of progress / and have opportunity to discuss and raise any concerns. Member engagement planned	Meeting with Cllr Sudbury. Member engagement planned 3 x cabinet papers				3	2	6	3	2	6	01.12.2025
04	16.01.2025	Implementation	No	Unable to deliver implementation to agreed timetable.	Unforeseen delays impact on the 1st October 2027 start date. Delays to timetable mean the start date of 1st October 2027 is compromised.	Start date is not achieved	Time	JF	HWRC Contract Steering Group	Key project milestones developed to ensure timescales are adhered too. Working Group and Steering Groups set up to monitor progress. Programme Plan developed to monitor progress against. De-mobilisation and Mobilisation plans created.	Programme Plan created, with key milestones identified.				3	3	9	3	2	6	01.12.2025
05	16.01.2025	Implementation	No	Costs higher than anticipated.	Level of funding insufficient to deliver model	Costs exceed planned / available funding levels	Cost	JF	HWRC Contract Steering Group	Working Group and Steering Groups set up to monitor costs. Procurement involvement to ensure procurement rules are adhered too Commercial Board involvement to provide guidance and oversight	Programme Plan created, with key milestones identified.				3	3	9	3	2	6	01.12.2025
06	16.01.2025	Implementation	No	Insufficient market interest in the specification (link with 10)	New models used nationally, bidders likely to opt for most appealing.	Scope and/or quality and/or cost of new model may be jeopardised.	Quality	JF	HWRC Contract Steering Group	Recruitment of expert resource to help shape specification to ensure market interest. Take steps to ensure contract is desirable to industry. Ongoing engagement with industry to keep abreast of latest market trends	Soft Market testing in place to gather industry feedback, and to inform contract development.				3	3	9	3	2	6	01.12.2025
07	16.01.2025	Implementation	No	Ensuring we get best deal, and ensure best value for money is sustained throughout the life of the new model	New model specfication wording leaving items open to interpretation, lack of clarity on key points	Best value for money is not delivered over the duration of the new model	Cost	JF	HWRC Contract Steering Group	Performance visibility determined through negs. Ensuring risk profile is clear. Market and customer experience around providers, asking intelligent questions to ensure delivering VfM	Develop and agree contract performance / KPI requirements Commercial Board involvement				3	3	9	3	2	6	01.12.2025
08	16.01.2025	Implementation	No	The new model is challenged	Unsuccessful bidders challenges the award letter.	Delay to procurement process Financial implications if the challenge is successful.	Cost	JF	HWRC Contract Steering Group	Highly competent procurement function. Expert consultant resource to advise throughout process. Evaluation process documented throughout. Procurement involved to ensure fair and open scoring. Contract notices/ Tender Docs/ Evaluation criteria/ Evaluation methodology/ Award letter reviewed by legal prior to issuance.	Adherence to procurement regs Clear and open procurement processes Well documented procurement processes Legal input and involvement throughout contract procurement.				3	3	9	3	2	6	01.12.2025
09	16.01.2025	Implementation	No	Market volatility and inflation, future proof pricing mechanism	Current market prices are volatile due to number of external factors beyond control of OCC. National waste legislation changes	Defensive pricing mechanisms from providers to mitigate their own risks.	Cost	JF	HWRC Contract Steering Group	Include benchmarking opportunities to help deliver fair and transparent pricing over the lifetime of the new model Ensuring that pricing is looked at as part of ongoing performance reviews.	All suppliers will be under the same external market conditions so pricing should be equitable. Need to agree benchmarking options / Discuss further with market at the soft marketing testing to ensure they understand the new model ideas / concepts.				3	3	9	3	2	6	01.12.2025
10	16.01.2025	Implementation	No	Failure to secure supplier interest in the new model (Links to 6)	The new model does not gain the interest of potential suppliers	New suppliers do not bid on the new model and or there are a reduced number of potential bidders	Quality	JF	HWRC Contract Steering Group	Soft Market Testing is being carried out to understand / gauge the market's level of interest	Soft Market feedback is being used to develop the various model options Ongoing discussions with the market to ensure contract model is of interest				3	3	9	3	2	6	01.12.2025
11	16.01.2025	Implementation	No	Cost of model is excessive (beyond budget provision)	The costs of the new model exceeds budget provisions.	The cost of the model makes it not viable.	Cost	JF	HWRC Contract Steering Group	The model altered / changed to fit budget availability	Ongoing engagement it Commercial and finance leads through out the option erring stage to ensure model costs are viable.				4	3	12	3	2	6	01.12.2025
12	16.01.2025	Optioneering	No	The model passes on significant unmitigated risk to the supplier	A number of risks have materialised during the term of the current contract, and the transfer of such unmitigated risk in any new model is now considered unlikely to be accepted by prospective supliers.	The level of risk within the model makes the model terms unacceptable /unpalatable for potential suppliers	Cost	JF	HWRC Contract Steering Group	Learnt lessons from current contract to be applied to new model Potential risks to mapped out and identified with clear strategic measures agreed to reduce them; Legal involvement and support throughout the project.	Specification to contain clear and specific terms, including liability limits, indemnity clauses, insurance requirements, with clear dispute resolutions, warranties amendments procedures and termination clauses included. Minimise potential risks, and enhance the effectiveness. Consulting legal professionals during the drafting and review processes				4	3	12	3	2	6	01.12.2025

CABINET

25 February 2025

WORKFORCE REPORT & WORKFORCE DATA OCTOBER - DECEMBER 2024 (Q3 2024/25)

Report by Director of HR and Cultural Change

RECOMMENDATION

1. Cabinet is **RECOMMENDED** to note the report.

Executive Summary

2. The people who work for Oxfordshire County Council are what makes the organisation so special. Every day, they make millions of moments for thousands of people – bringing lasting change to all the county's communities. Their professionalism and commitment to delivering high-quality services supports the council's ambition to become a greener, fairer and healthier county.

3. Together, Oxfordshire County Council is on a journey to Deliver the Future Together and become an Employer of Choice. This ambition is underpinned by the Our People and Culture Strategy, which was approved by Cabinet in January 2024. The strategy aims to develop an inclusive and empowering culture, enabling all employees to be the best they can be to deliver excellent services for everyone the council serves.

4. This report provides an overview of the progress towards delivering the Our People and Culture Strategy whilst also reviews the workforce profile for October to December 2024 (Q3 2024/25) including the key workforce trends and other relevant management information and performance indicators (Annexes 1 and 2).

Our people and culture strategy

5. The vision for the Our People and Culture Strategy is that 'we develop and maintain high performing, innovative, highly engaged, and agile teams, employing the best people, and reflecting the communities we serve. We nurture an environment that supports diversity, equality, and inclusion, and allows all our employees to bring their whole selves to work to deliver great services for our Oxfordshire residents'. The Strategy focuses on priorities under 4 pillars:

Our people and culture strategy - Year One progress

6. Within the **'Attract - Attracting, recruiting and retaining talented people'** pillar, highlights include:

    - The establishment of a new in-house Talent Acquisition and Resourcing team.
    - Moving away from using Hampshire's Integrated Business Centre (IBC) for recruitment.
    - Implementing a new Applicant Tracking System.
    - Developing a new Employer Value Proposition and employer brand.

7. Collectively, these initiatives are designed to raise the Council's employer profile, improve the candidate experience, and enhance recruitment success and time to hire. This change has already started to improve recruitment for hard to fill posts. In Adults Social Care, for instance, vacancies being recruited to for operational roles e.g. Social Workers and Occupational Therapists roles have decreased over the last 6 months, from 82.7fte in June 2024 to 46.99fte currently, leading to a reduction in agency spend.

8. Within the **'Thrive - Enabling our people to thrive and perform'** pillar, highlights include:

    - The development of modern, simple-to-follow policies and toolkits which enable a proactive approach to people-related matters and early resolution, as evident in the downward trend in sickness absence.

9. Within the **'Grow - Enabling our people to grow and evolve for the future'** pillar, highlights include:

    - Launching a reciprocal mentoring scheme aimed at improving equality, diversity, and inclusion.
    - Refreshing the 12.3.2 managing for performance tool to ensure alignment with organisational narratives and to ensure that quality conversations between managers and their people are happening consistently.
    - Enhancing the Early Careers offer by expanding the management trainee programme to offer the Chartered Managers Degree Apprenticeship alongside the Local Government Association graduate programme, introducing a work experience scheme and developing a new internship programme.

10. Within the **'Lead - Enabling our people to lead and transform for the future'** pillar, highlights include:

    - Introduction of a range of people management controls to enable the organisation to operate within budget, focusing on agency usage, honorariums, overtime and purchasing annual leave scheme.
    - Engaging a leadership specialist to scope and shape the future work within this pillar.

Progress on a key priority programme under the Our People and Culture Strategy - the Organisation Redesign Programme

11. A key priority under the Our People and Culture Strategy has been the Organisation Redesign Programme, which aims to resize the organisation to deliver our ambitions whilst remaining within budget.

12. This programme is one of a suite of transformation programmes to enable us to Deliver the Future Together and become an employer, partner and place shaper of choice.

13. Organisational Design will help the council realise its bold ambitions and deliver its Strategic Plan for 2023-25 and beyond. Leaders are redesigning the size and shape of the organisation to improve matrix working; reduce hierarchies and silos; and make sure the council has the right roles to deliver its priorities. Setting the organisation up for success and sustainability in this way will also put it in the strongest position to respond to the government's white paper on devolution.

14. The programme will also deliver agreed financial savings. Savings of £1.9m have been achieved from Tiers 2-4, and further phases of the programme will result in implementation of new organisational structures leading to further staffing savings of £5.9m (£2m in 2025/26 and £3.9m in 2026/27), as set out in the budget approved by Council on 11 February 2025.

15. Phase one of Organisation Design (the Tier 2 Director structure) was implemented in July 2024, reducing the number of director roles from 15 to 12 and realigned roles and responsibilities to create capacity for priority areas, reduce duplication and improve collaboration.

16. In December 2024 the Tiers 3 and 4 (Assistant Director, Deputy Director and Head of Service) redesign was implemented reducing posts from 73 to 57 (a reduction of 22%) and achieving a full year financial savings of £1.42m.

17. Phase three of the programme has now commenced, and it will review the size and shape of service areas across the whole organisation. As part of this work, the project will implement consistent role profiles for all employees and a framework which enhances career progression, workforce planning and organisational capacity.

Workforce trends – Apprenticeships

18. During Q3 2024/25 there were a total of 45 new apprenticeship enrolments and the actual spend for Q3 was £362,067. The utilisation of the funds from the apprenticeship levy pot has increased from 74.4% at the end of Q2 2024/25 to 80.1% at the end of Q3 2024/25.

Workforce trends – Full Time Equivalent

19. In terms of directly employed colleagues (i.e. workforce excluding agency workers), the Council's FTE (Full time equivalent) figure has decreased from 4,656.19 to 4,654.79 FTE (which equates to 5,493 people) in Q3. Further details are shown in Annex 2.

20. There were 130 new starters in the last quarter, and 135 leavers. The last time the council has had a decrease in snapshot headcount and FTE figures was Q1 2021-22.

21. The new starter data shows a number of small trends, and these are mostly positive, such the filling of (various) hard-to-fill roles as a result of successful campaigns – e.g. 17 firefighters and various posts in Children's Services – this is the service area that has had the highest proportion of new starters – 42 out of the 130 new starters in Q3.

22. Mostly, though, the data shows a wide variance amongst the new joiners - the new employees started in a wide variety of roles and across many different teams in the

organisation. The 130 new starters joined 12 Service Areas (previously referred to as directorates), and within those, 89 separate Organisational Units, in 72 different roles (based on their job titles).

Workforce trends – agency spend

23. The Council changed its contingent labour provider from Comensura to HAYS, starting in November 2024, therefore agency spend data for Q3 2024/25 in this report is based on information obtained from HAYS. The change of provider was successful, but involved a slightly different way of reporting on agency spend. Considering that the HAYS way of reporting will now continue, it is suggested that the 2024/25 Q3 figures will now become the baseline.

24. Agency spend via the council's agreed provider (now HAYS) decreased quarter on quarter, from £6.86m to £6.82m, despite the inclusion of the Statement of Work spend. The overall trend in agency spend is a decrease in the last 2 years, (Annex 2).

25. In terms of the length of agency bookings, there has been a noticeable shortening of booking durations year on year, (Annex 2) which is a positive trend.

26. Q3 2024/25 has also seen a reduction in the off contract (i.e. not via a provider of agency workers) agency spend, from £1.5m in Q2 to £0.57m in Q3 (Annex 1), and there has been a longer-term trend where this type of spend, while fluctuating quarter to quarter, has seen an overall reduction (Annex 2).

27. The highest agency spend in Q3 continues to remain in Children's Services, Adult Services, Environment and Highways, Law and Governance and Property (Annex 2).

Workforce trends – Turnover

28. Voluntary annual turnover at the council has decreased from 12.4% to 11.7%, a positive trend towards our People and Culture Strategy KPI target of 11.5% p.a.

29. Involuntary annual turnover has increased from 2.3% to 2.5%.

30. The top five reasons why colleagues leave the organisation are: to move to alternative employment (including other local government organisations), retirement, family commitments and moving away/emigrating. Further details are shown in Annex 2.

Workforce trends - Sickness Absence

31. The sickness absence rate in the rolling 12-month period has decreased from 8.8 days absence per FTE in Q2 2024/25 to 8.6 days absence per FTE in Q3 2024/25. This is a positive overall trend towards the target of 8 days sickness absence per year per FTE as set in the Our People and Culture Strategy, and it is believed to be a result of the Council's recent investment made into the Employment Relations team supporting managers with managing attendance.

32. There has been a small increase in the quarterly sickness absence recorded in Q3 2024/25 compared to Q2 2024/25. This increase is consistent with the long-standing trend where there is a regular increase in sickness absence in Q3 each year, due to increases in viral infections.
33. However, notwithstanding the slight increase from Q2 2024/25 to Q3 2024/25, there is a decrease in sickness absence rate when comparing Q3 2024/25 and the same

period last year (Q3 2023/24) - the percentage of working hours lost due to sickness per quarter dropped from 4.98% in Q3 2023/24 to 4.54% in Q3 2024/25.

Workforce trends - Diversity profile

34. Gender - the majority of colleagues at the Council continue to be female – 66%, which is in line with the overall national trend in Local Government. In Q3 there has been a slight increase in the proportion of promotions/secondments awarded to female colleagues versus male colleagues, the split has changed from 57% female/43% male in Q2, to 60% female/ 40% male in Q3, showing a greater move towards a more proportionate rate of promotion/secondment to the gender split of the workforce.

35. Age - 6% of the Council's workforce were under 26 at the end of Q3, no change since the end of Q2.

36. Ethnicity - There is a positive trend in terms of the percentage of colleagues declaring as being from an ethnic minority background, with the figure increasing steadily from 9.44% in March 2023, the figure now stands at 11.3% currently (the council's target of 12.25%).

37. Disability - the percentage of council colleagues declaring a disability has increased steadily over the last 5 years from 6.06% as of 31 March 2023 to 8.7% as of 31 December 2024.

Equality & Inclusion Implications

38. Equality and inclusion implications are considered across all our workstreams.

Sustainability Implications

39. There are no sustainability implications arising from this report.

Risk Management

40. There are no risk management issues arising from this report.

Corporate Policies and Priorities

41. The Our People and Culture Strategy referred to in this report directly underpins the Council's ambition to become an Employer of Choice.

Financial Implications

42. The level of agency expenditure was a contributory factor in the year end service area overspend for both 2022/23 and 2023/24. On-going focus through the Our People and Culture Strategy is required so that costs can be managed within agreed service areas budgets for 2024/25.

Comments checked by:
Ian Dyson, Director of Commercial and Financial Services

Legal Implications

43. There are no direct legal implications arising from this report.

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

Staff Implications

44. Staff implications are considered across all our workstreams and covered in this report.

Cherie Cuthbertson
Director of HR and Cultural Change

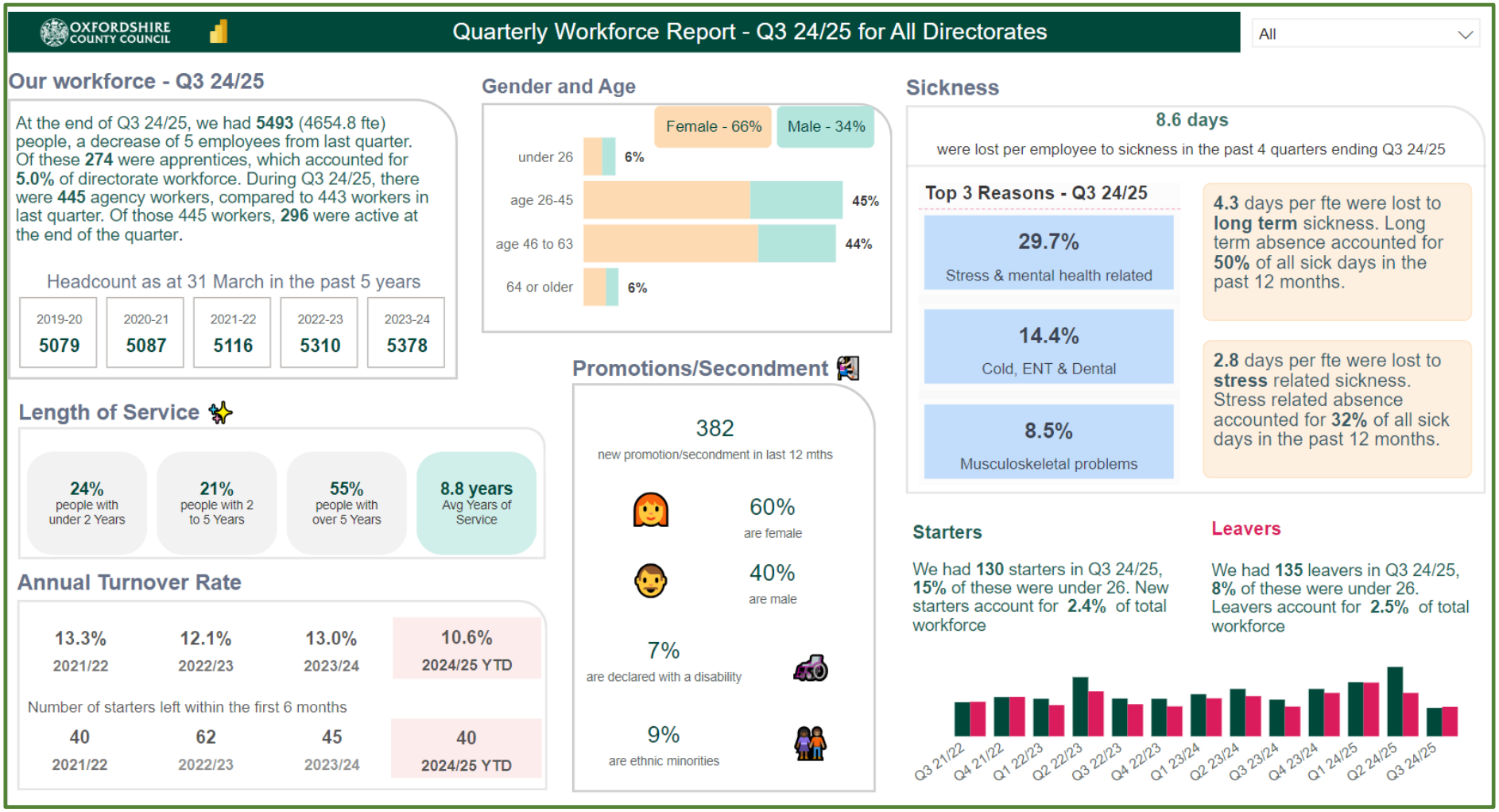
Annexes:

ANNEX 1 Quarterly workforce dashboard Q3 2024-2025
ANNEX 2 Quarterly workforce dashboard - additional data Q3 2024-2025

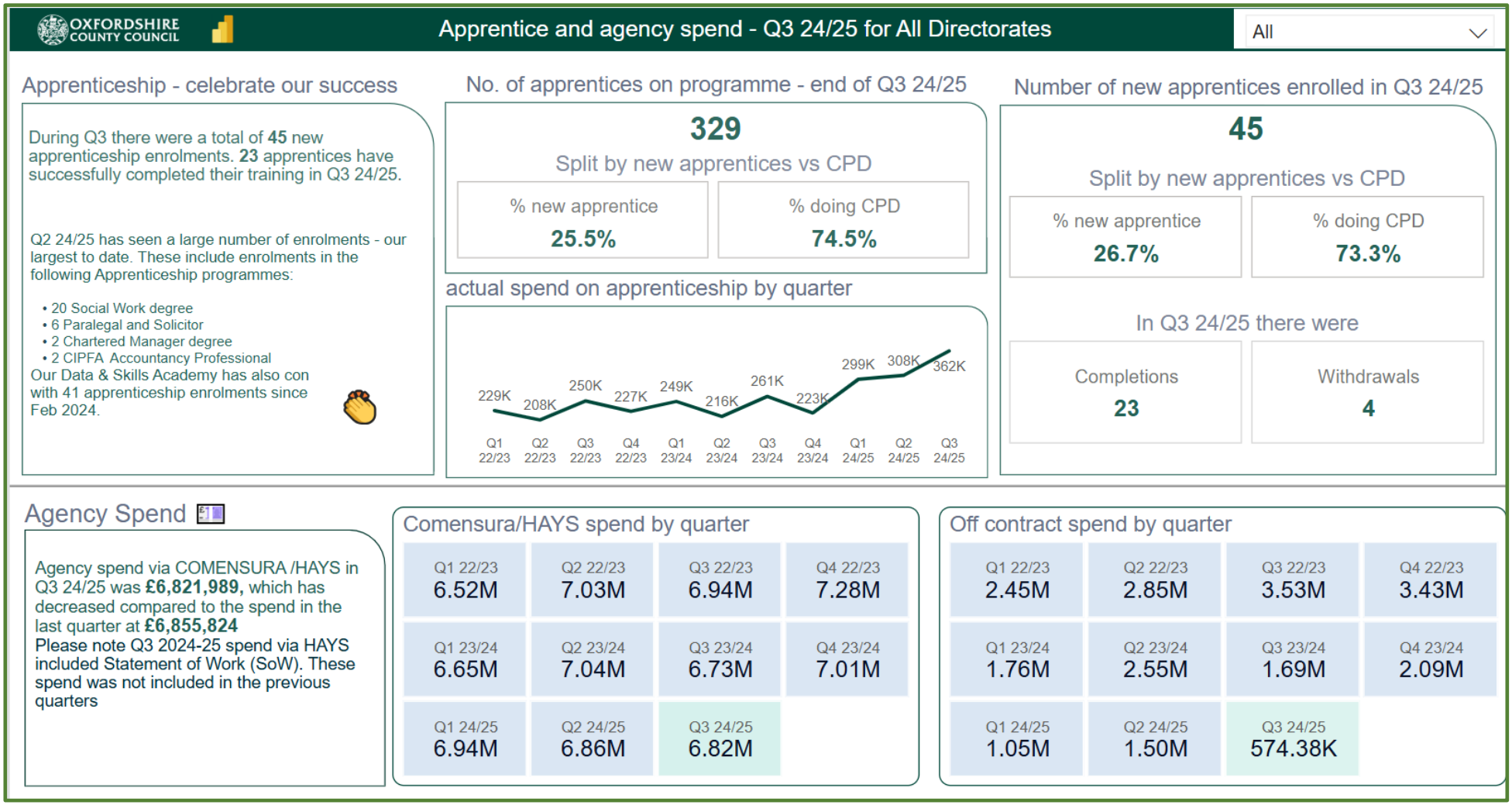
Background papers: Nil
Contact Officer: Katrina Pennington
23 January 2025

ANNEX 1 Quarterly workforce dashboard Q3 2024-2025

PART 1



PART 2


OXFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL
Apprentice and agency spend - Q3 24/25 for All Directorates
All
Apprenticeship - celebrate our success
During Q3 there were a total of 45 new apprenticeship enrolments. 23 apprentices have successfully completed their training in Q3 24/25.
Q2 24/25 has seen a large number of enrolments - our largest to date. These include enrolments in the following Apprenticeship programmes:
• 20 Social Work degree
• 6 Paralegal and Solicitor
• 2 Chartered Manager degree
• 2 CIPFA Accountancy Professional
Our Data & Skills Academy has also con
with 41 apprenticeship enrolments since
Feb 2024.
No. of apprentices on programme - end of Q3 24/25
329
Split by new apprentices vs CPD
% new apprentice
25.5%
% doing CPD
74.5%
actual spend on apprenticeship by quarter
229K
208K
250K
227K
249K
216K
261K
223K
299K
308K
362K
Q1 22/23
Q2 22/23
Q3 22/23
Q4 22/23
Q1 23/24
Q2 23/24
Q3 23/24
Q4 23/24
Q1 24/25
Q2 24/25
Q3 24/25
Number of new apprentices enrolled in Q3 24/25
45
Split by new apprentices vs CPD
% new apprentice
26.7%
% doing CPD
73.3%
In Q3 24/25 there were
Completions
23
Withdrawals
4
Agency Spend
Agency spend via COMENSURA /HAYS in Q3 24/25 was £6,821,989, which has decreased compared to the spend in the last quarter at £6,855,824
Please note Q3 2024-25 spend via HAYS included Statement of Work (SoW). These spend was not included in the previous quarters
Comensura/HAYS spend by quarter
Q1 22/23 6.52M
Q2 22/23 7.03M
Q3 22/23 6.94M
Q4 22/23 7.28M
Q1 23/24 6.65M
Q2 23/24 7.04M
Q3 23/24 6.73M
Q4 23/24 7.01M
Q1 24/25 6.94M
Q2 24/25 6.86M
Q3 24/25 6.82M
Off contract spend by quarter
Q1 22/23 2.45M
Q2 22/23 2.85M
Q3 22/23 3.53M
Q4 22/23 3.43M
Q1 23/24 1.76M
Q2 23/24 2.55M
Q3 23/24 1.69M
Q4 23/24 2.09M
Q1 24/25 1.05M
Q2 24/25 1.50M
Q3 24/25 574.38K

ANNEX 2 ADDITIONAL DATA Q3 2024/25

The following key performance indicators (KPIs) have been established to monitor progress against the Our People and Culture Strategy

	KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATOR (KPI)	TARGET SET
Agency spend	Reduce the spend and usage of agency workers across the organisation.	Maintain a baseline figure of £27.9 million
Voluntary turnover rate	Improve retention rates to keep our talented and skilled people.	11.50%
Average days lost to sickness per employee	Reduce the number of sickness days per employee.	Reduce the sickness absence to 8 days per FTE
Apprenticeship levy spend	Spend the Apprenticeship levy to support OCC and partners.	Utilise 65% of the levy pot
Internal movement and promotion	Track promotions and internal movement to show talent growth.	8.50%
Gender and ethnicity pay gap (yearly)	Ensure fairness of pay across our organisation.	Gender pay gap - mean 1.2% Ethnicity pay gap - mean 0.22 %
Employee engagement index (yearly)	Track overall improvement in OCC engagement.	A score of 680 which is an improvement on the last (2024) survey
Employee demographics	Ensure diversity is represented appropriately in all tiers of our organisation.	To increase the representation of our BAME colleagues to 12.25% (of our workforce)
Time to Hire	Reduce our time to hire to secure new talent quickly and reduce backfill costs.	The target for this KPI will be set once the new Applicant Tracking System has been live for a period long enough to allow this measurement

Table 1 Our People and Culture Strategy KPIs and targets

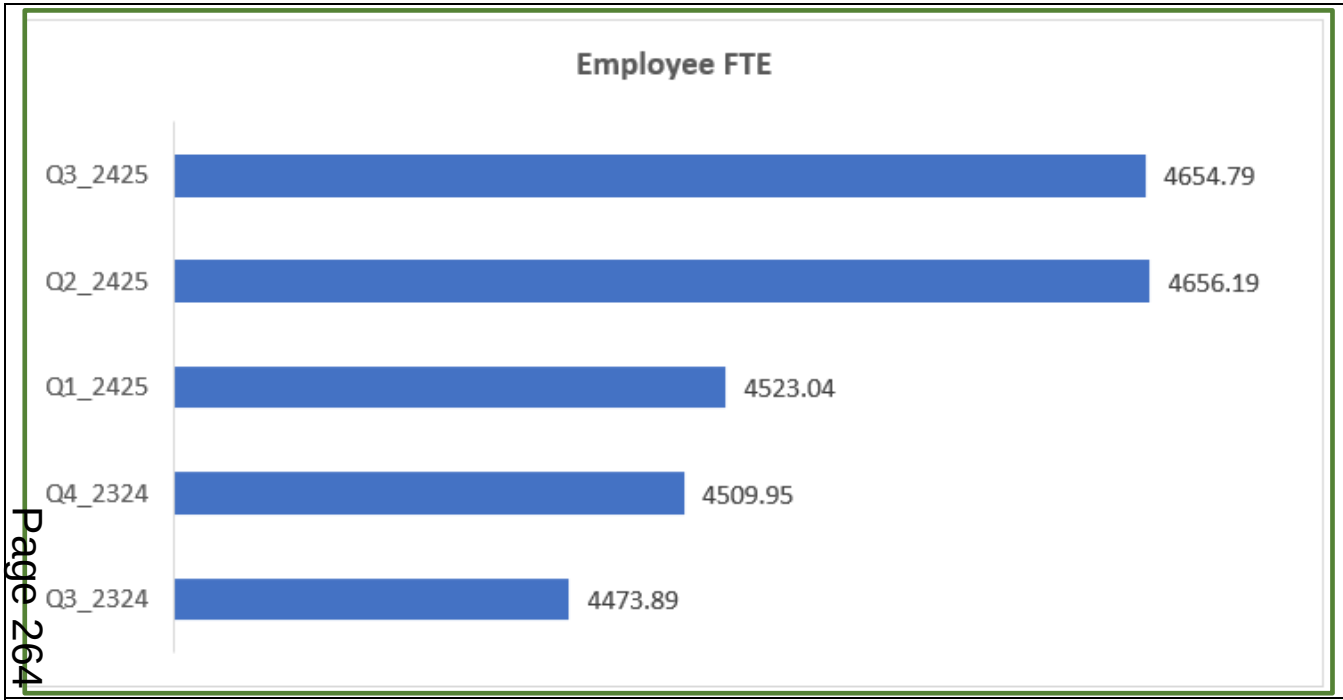


Table 2 Employee FTE figures in the last 5 periods (quarters)

Service Area	Number of New Starters in Q3
Children's Services	42
Property and Assets	22
Adult Social Services	17
Fire Officer and Community Safety	17
Environment and Highways	12
Public Health and Communities	9
Economy and Place	3
Transformation Digital and Cust Exp	2
ICT	2
Financial and Commercial Services	2
Public Affairs Policy Partnerships	1
Law and Gov and Monitoring Officer	1
Grand Total	130

Table 3 Number of New Starters who joined in Q3 2024/2025 split across services they joined

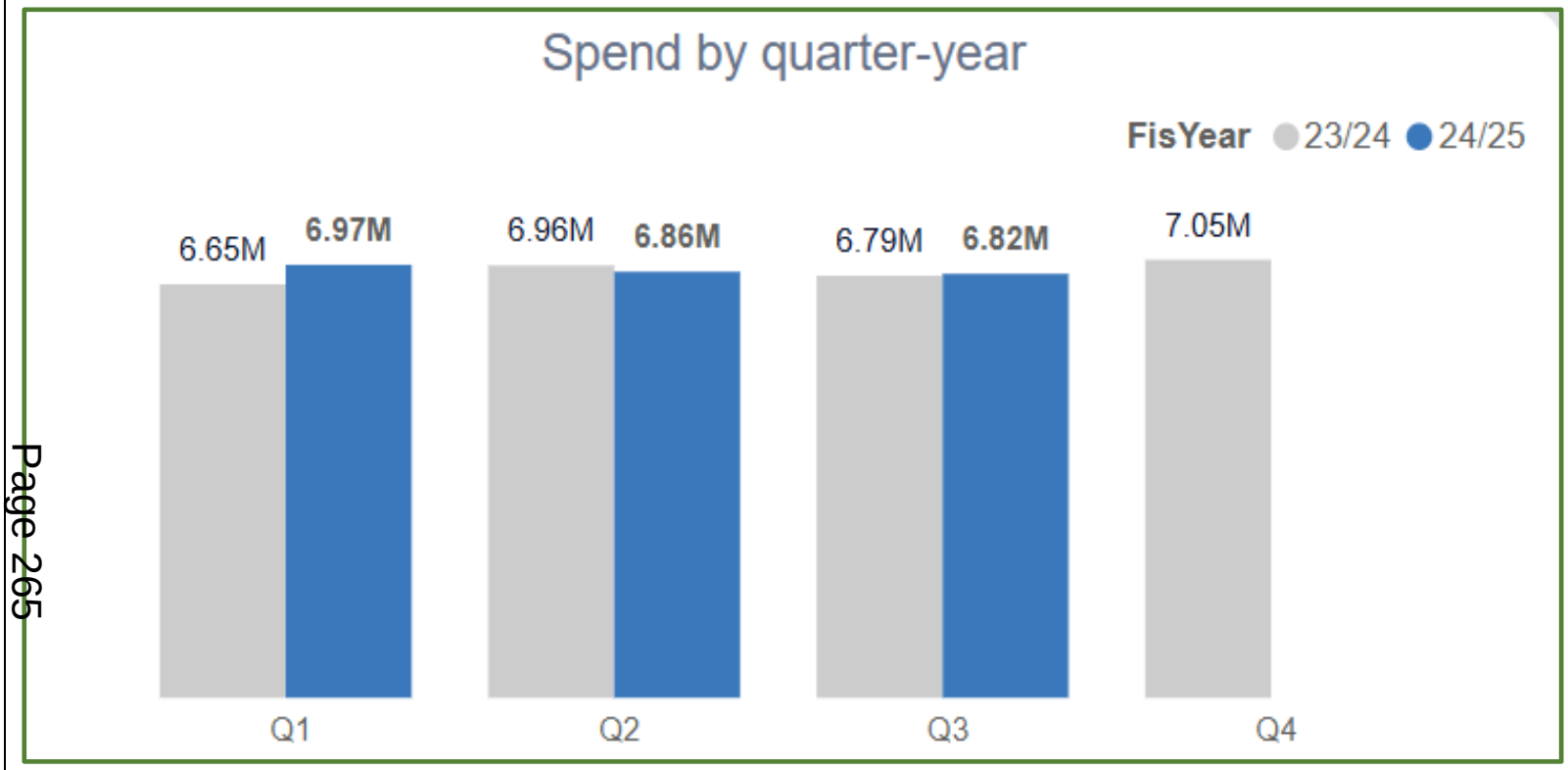


Table 4 Quarterly agency spend via the Council's provider of agency workers (please note it was Commensura until November 2024, then HAYS) from Q1 2023/2024 to Q3 2024/2025.

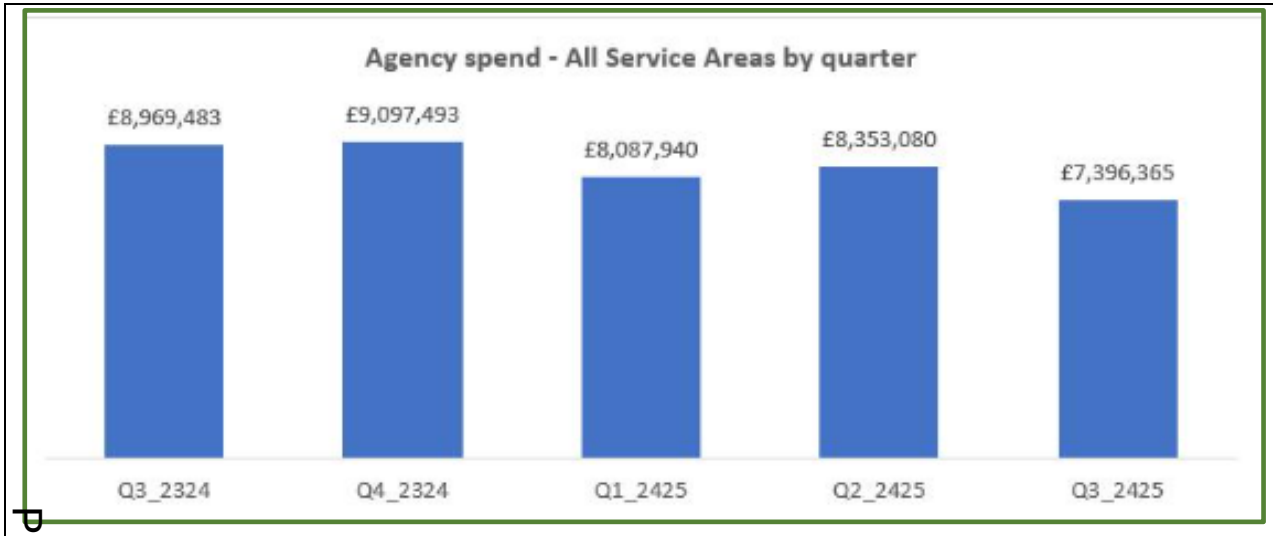


Table 5 total quarterly agency spend (contract and off-contract) from Q3 2023/2024 to Q3 2024/2025

Tenure	# workers latest period	# workers SPLY
0-3 mths	72	45
4-6 mths	104	61
7-9 mths	67	45
10-12 mths	70	31
13-15 mths	29	32
16-18 mths	36	47
19-21 mths	37	38
22-24 mths	11	19
Over 2 yrs	85	110
Total	**445**	**428**

Table 6 The length of agency bookings and the number of workers booked - in Q3 2024/25 compared to SPLY (same period last year - Q3 2023/24). There has been a noticeable shortening of booking durations year on year.

ServiceArea	Latest Qtrly Spend	Trend	% Change	SPLY
Children's Services	3,253,604	↑	+23.4%	2,637,618
Adult Social Services	1,145,982	↓	-5.2%	1,208,664
Environment and Highways	957,847	↓	-6.1%	1,020,433
Law and Gov and Monitoring Officer	519,408	↓	-26.4%	705,471
Property and Assets	316,945	↑	+39.5%	227,255
Economy and Place	315,576	↓	-27.0%	432,409
ICT	126,151	↓	-3.7%	130,941
Financial and Commercial Services	101,678	↓	-45.6%	186,786
HR and Cultural Change	69,909	↑	+272.0%	18,792
Transformation Digital and Cust Exp	14,890	↓	-91.7%	179,531
Fire Officer and Community Safety		↓	-100.0%	36,957
Total	**6,821,989**	↑	**+0.5%**	**6,790,514**

Table 7 Agency Spend by Service Area from largest to smallest in Q3 2024/25 compared to SPLY (same period last year, Q3 2023/24)

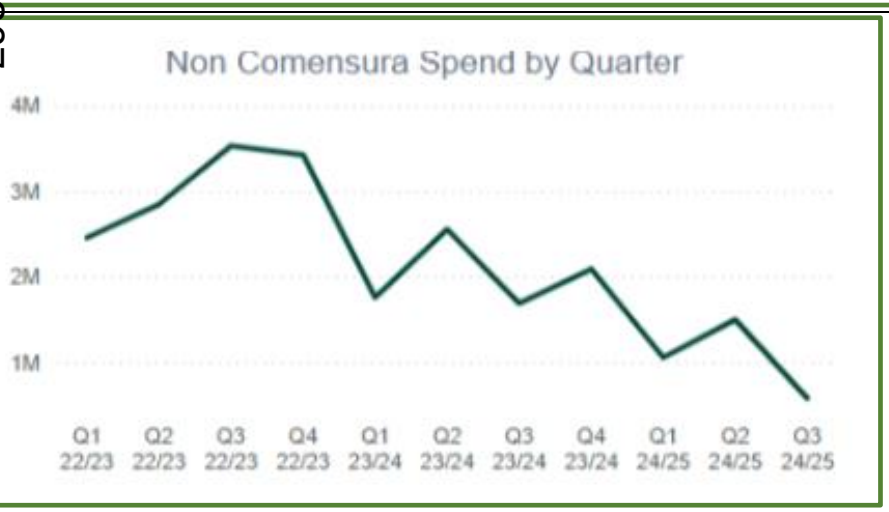


Table 8 Off-contract agency spend trend by Quarter, from Q1 2022/23 to Q3 2024/25 shows gradual reduction.

The five top reasons for sickness absence are:

Rank	Reason	% of total absent hours
1	Stress & mental health related	29.7%
2	Cold, ENT & Dental	14.4%
3	Musculoskeletal problems	8.5%
4	Operation/Post Op.	6.8%
5	Gastrointestinal problems	6.7%

Table 9 The five top reasons for sickness absence in Q3 2024/25.

The top five reasons for colleagues leaving the organisation in Q3 24/25 are:

Reason for leaving	Count of leavers
Resign - Alternative Employmt	53
Resign - Family Commitment	15
Retirement - Voluntary	9
Resign - Moving Away/Emigrate	6
Resign - Alternative LG Org	6
Retirement Normal Pension Date	6
Resign - Dissatisfaction	5
Resign - Career Break	4
Resign - Post Maternity Leave	2
Resign - Late Retirement	2
Resign - No Reason given	1
Resign - Health	1
Grand Total	110

Table 10 The reasons for leaving the organisation in Q3 2024/25

Reasons for an increase in the agency spend in Children's Services include changes from transformation and restructuring, retirement of key members of the workforce with temporary cover needed whilst recruitment takes place, special programmes and projects to respond to service improvement such as SEND and to changing legislation. The service predominately employs a younger female workforce and has a requirement to cover maternity leave taken by those in key statutory posts. The correct number of statutory posts must be maintained for the service to be able to do the work safely, with the national shortage of key roles such as Qualified Social Workers and Educational Psychologists. Actions to reduce the agency spend are being undertaken and include:

1. Mitigations via the Workforce Development Board include conversion of agency workers to fixed term contracts in key areas.
2. Curtailing of agency worker contracts, many of which are due to end imminently.
3. A moratorium on agency appointments without senior approval.
4. The service is also taking many actions to improve the attraction, recruitment and retention of talent, particularly those in the key roles, including:

4.1. International SW campaign with a cohort of 16 Qualified Social Workers due to join the service between January and April 2025.
4.2. The acquisition of 12 new SW apprentices and the development of plans to use this approach cyclically.
4.3. A national campaign and partnership with Community Care and the Trade Press throughout 2025.
4.4. Further service alignment under the target operating model is envisaged to make best use of the employee/colleague resource.
4.5. A cultural and service review has been conducted between July and October 2024 for CEF to look at staff wellbeing, terms and conditions and culture including working practices.
4.6. Introduction of a new Associate Educational Psychologists annualised hours contract to undertake statutory work, therefore supporting the demand in this area without having to rely on expensive agency Educational Psychologists. There are currently 5 colleagues engaged on these contracts.

Table 11 Reasons for an increase in the agency spend in Children's Services

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CABINET – 25 FEBRUARY 2025

CAPITAL PROGRAMME APPROVALS – FEBRUARY 2025

Report by the Executive Director of Resources and Section 151 Officer

Recommendations

1. The Cabinet is RECOMMENDED to:

   a) approve the inclusion of a new one-form-entry primary school - East Carterton - into the Capital Programme with an indicative budget of £10.227m, to be funded from S106 developer contributions and basic need funding.
   b) note that £7.500m of the remaining Housing and Growth Deal funding is to be allocated to Grove Airfield School in 2024/25.

Executive Summary

2. The Capital Programme was approved by Council in February 2025 and updated during the year through the capital programme and monitoring reports. This report sets out change requests requiring Cabinet approval that will be incorporated into the agreed programme and included in the next update to the Capital Programme in March 2025.

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. Variations are included in this report.

Property

East Carterton Primary School

5. In order to meet the Council's statutory duty to provide sufficient pupil places, a new one-form-entry primary school is to be provided to serve the new housing development in East Carterton. The existing school, Brize Norton Primary School, is to be relocated to the new site.

6. Approval is required to enter this scheme into the Capital Programme with an indicative budget of £10.227m to be funded by held S106 developer contributions and basic need funding.

Major Infrastructure

Housing and Growth Deal

7. The Housing and Growth Deal funding of £142.727m needs to be fully spent by 31 March 2025 with only a small element able to be retained for safety audits in 2025/26.

Tramway Road

8. The scheme to improve access to Banbury railway station for pedestrians, cyclists, buses, and taxis is in construction and is expected to be completed in 2025/26. However, agreement for early access to a small part of the land was rescinded by the landowner, meaning that progress has been delayed. As a result the element that can be funded from the Housing and Growth Deal has reduced from £15.217m to £5.600m.

Access to Witney

9. The Access to Witney scheme, which will construct a new west-facing slip roads at the A40/B4022 Shores Green junction to improve access to Witney, has been impacted by delays in assembling the land. The decision on a Compulsory Purchase Order was expected in July 2024 but due to the General Election it was issued in October 2024. This caused a delay to the start of the construction stage so the amount of Growth Deal funding that can be utilised by 31 March 2025 has reduced from £15.600m to £9.700m. However, the scheme started on site on 10 February 2025 and is on track to be delivered in 2025/26.

10. In order to ensure that the full Growth Deal allocation can be utilised by 31 March 2025, £7.500m planned spend on Grove Secondary school will be brought into the programme. The 600-place secondary school is being directly delivered by the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA). The school is essential in supporting infrastructure required to ensure the provision of sufficient secondary school places to meet the demand generated by the new housing development of up to 2,500 new dwellings at Grove Airfield. The funding released will be used to fund on-going spend on the Access to Witney and Tramway Schemes in 2025/26 to enable completion of those schemes.

11. The use of Housing and Growth Deal funding for other schemes that are part of the existing planned programme will also be maximised in 2024/25.

Financial Implications

12. It is anticipated that the council will receive the remaining £30m Housing & Growth Deal grant funding from MHCLG in 2024/25.

13. The use of Housing and Growth Deal Funding to support Grove Airfield School in 2024/25 will help to fully utilise the funding, maximise the funding available in the capital programme, and ensure that the remaining Housing & Growth Deal projects can be completed.

Comments checked by:
Kathy Wilcox, Head of Corporate Finance

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 the Financial Regulations 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.

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
February 2025

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Division(s): N/A

CABINET – 25 February 2025

FORWARD PLAN AND FUTURE BUSINESS

Items identified from the Forward Plan for Forthcoming Decision

Topic/Decision	Portfolio/Ref

Cabinet, 20 March 2025

▪ **Local Government Reorganisation in Oxfordshire – First Stage Response to Government** To consider a response to the Government on Local Government Reorganisation in Oxfordshire	Cabinet, 2025/047 - Leader

Cabinet, 25 March 2025

▪ **Capital Programme and Monitoring Report - January 2025** Financial Report on capital spending against budget allocations, including any necessary capital programme approvals.	Cabinet, 2024/227 - Cabinet Member for Finance
▪ **Treasury Management Q3 Performance Report 2024/25**	Cabinet, 2024/166 - Cabinet Member for Finance
▪ **Business Management and Monitoring Report - January 2025** The business management reports are part of a suite of performance, risk and budget documents which set out our ambitions, priorities, and financial performance.	Cabinet, 2024/ 215 - Cabinet Member for Finance
▪ **Cabinet Response to Council Motion on Dark Skies** To provide an update on the response to the motion passed at Council on 10 December 2024.	Cabinet, 2025/009 - Deputy Leader of the Council with Responsibility for Climate Change, Environment & Future Generations

Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for Children, Education & Young People's Services, 19 March 2025

▪ **School Term Dates 2026/27 and 2027/28** To approve the proposed school term dates	Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for Children, Education & Young People's Services, 2025/005 - Cabinet Member for Children, Education & Young People's Services
▪ **Funding award for Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) contract** OCC funding contribution of £750k towards ICB managed CAMHS contract delivered by Oxford Health	Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for Children, Education & Young People's Services, 2025/037 - Cabinet Member for Children, Education & Young People's Services
▪ **Woodeaton Manor School Residential Provision** Decision on future residential provision at Woodeaton Manor School	Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for Children, Education & Young People's Services, 2025/019 - Cabinet Member for Children, Education & Young People's Services

Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for Transport Management, 27 March 2025

▪ **Drayton Village - Proposed Traffic Calming and New Pedestrian Crossings** To seek approval for the introduction of traffic calming features and new pedestrian crossings	Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for Transport Management, 2024/350 - Cabinet Member for Transport Management

Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for Transport Management, 27 March 2025

▪ **B4031, Hempton - Proposed New Traffic Calming Features** As part of DfT United States Visiting Forces road safety initiative - traffic calming is proposed on the B4031, Hempton. This is deemed necessary to reduce speeds and improve safety on a route commonly used by USVF drivers which is also a busy HGV route incorporating a pinch point within this section	Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for Transport Management, 2024/345 - Cabinet Member for Transport Management
▪ **Burford - Proposed Coach Access Restrictions, Waiting Restrictions and New Pedestrian Crossings** To seek approval for the introduction of access restrictions for coaches and parking at various locations, plus a new crossing in Burford.	Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for Transport Management, 2024/339 - Cabinet Member for Transport Management
▪ **Cherwell & West Oxfordshire Districts, Various Locations - Proposed New and Deleted Disabled Persons Parking Places (March 2025)** To seek approval for the introduction and amendments to Disabled Persons Parking Places.	Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for Transport Management, 2024/352 - Cabinet Member for Transport Management
▪ **Westwell: Proposed 20mph Speed Limits** To seek approval for the introduction of a 20mmph speed limit in Westwell.	Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for Transport Management,

	2024/311 - Cabinet Member for Transport Management
▪ **A4260: Vision Zero Speed Limit Review** Proposed changes along the A4260 corridor include reductions to 50, 40 and 30mph on various lengths between Banbury and Shipton-on-Cherwell. Includes adjoining sections of B4030 at Hopcrofts Holt, and B4027 and A4095 at Bunkers Hill.	Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for Transport Management, 2024/298 - Cabinet Member for Transport Management
▪ **Holton: Proposed 20mph Speed Limit Extension** Part of Phase 3 Countywide 20mph Speed Limit Project.	Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for Transport Management, 2024/174 - Cabinet Member for Transport Management
▪ **Shutford: Proposed 20mph Speed Limits** Part of Phase 3 Countywide 20mph Speed Limit Project	Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for Transport Management, 2024/169 - Cabinet Member for Transport Management
▪ **Goddington: Proposed 20mph Speed Limits** Part of Phase 3 Countywide 20mph Speed Limit Project.	Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for Transport Management, 2024/161 - 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

▪ **Thame - Proposed Introduction of Zonal Car Club Permits** Proposals for a Zonal hybrid car club vehicle for the central area of Thame.	Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for Transport Management, 2025/004 - Cabinet Member for Transport Management
▪ **Proposed No Waiting At Anytime Restrictions - White Post Road, Bodicote** To seek approval for the introduction of no waiting at any time restrictions on White Post Road, Bodicote.	Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for Transport Management, 2025/003 - Cabinet Member for Transport Management
▪ **Davenant Road - Traffic Calming and Enhancement of Tree Pits (2025)** To seek approval for a scheme to introduce traffic calming features to deter rat running.	Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for Transport Management, 2025/002 - Cabinet Member for Transport Management
▪ **Boswell Road, Oxford - Proposed Traffic Calming and Waiting Restrictions** Part of the reserved matters application for the Plot 4200 of ARC Oxford include improvements to the pedestrian and cycle facility (effectively a crossing point) along Boswell Road, off Barns Road. The cycle / pedestrian improvements are located in a public highway and adjustments to the arrangement is subject to a S278 agreement with the Local Highway Authority. The TRO is for the proposed Double Yellow Lines, which will be required to avoid blocking and congesting the proposed pedestrian crossing buildout.	Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for Transport Management, 2025/001 - Cabinet Member for Transport Management
▪ **Great Western: B4493 Didcot Road - Proposed 20mph Speed Limit Extension** Part of Phase 3 Countywide 20mph Speed Limit Project	Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for Transport Management, 2024/195 - Cabinet Member

	for Transport Management
▪ **Forest Hill, Shotover, Old Road: 20mph Speed Limit Extension** Part of Phase 3 of Countywide 20mph Speed Limit Project.	Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for Transport Management, 2024/194 - Cabinet Member for Transport Management
▪ **Adderbury & Bloxham Proposed Parking Restrictions (2025)** To seek approval for the introduction of waiting restrictions in Adderbury and Bloxham being promoted by the Parish Council's.	Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for Transport Management, 25/021 - Cabinet Member for Transport Management

Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for Public Health, Inequalities & Community Safety, 4 March 2025

▪ **Approval of Contract Extension to Housing Single Point of Contact Contract - Better Housing, Better Health** The maximum, optional contract value of a two extension exceeds £500,000. Approval is sought to extend the contract for a further two years.	Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for Public Health, Inequalities & Community Safety, 2025/008 - Cabinet Member for Public Health, Inequalities & Community Safety

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.

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Issue: LTCP Monitoring Report

Lead Cabinet Member(s): Cllr Andrew Gant, Cabinet Member for Transport Management, and Cllr Judy Roberts, Cabinet Member for Infrastructure and Development Strategy

Date response requested:[2] 19 November 2024

Response to report:

Cabinet welcomes the recommendations from the Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee on the LTCP Monitoring Report. The recommendations were reviewed prior to the LTCP Monitoring Reports consideration at Cabinet on 19th November 2024 so that any changes required to the LTCP or LTCP Monitoring Report could be made to the documents. The full response to the recommendations can be found below.

Cabinet also welcomes the comments and suggestions made by the Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee on the LTCP Monitoring Report at their meeting on 25th September 2024. Many of these have been incorporated into the final version of the LTCP Monitoring Report. The suggestions made, officer responses and summary of changes can be found in paragraph 20 of the LTCP Monitoring Report Cabinet report, available here. It was not possible to include all of the suggestions for this year's report and there is ongoing work to investigate and collate information for next year.

[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

Response to recommendations:

Recommendation	Accepted, rejected or partially accepted	Proposed action (if different to that recommended) and indicative timescale (unless rejected)
That the Council, for the headline LTCP targets on car use reduction, should move from a car trip to car mileage reduction measure.	Partially accepted	It is considered there is benefit in monitoring and reporting on car trips, but it is accepted that there is a benefit in having a car millage reduction target too - in particular due to the importance of reducing vehicle mileage to delivering net-zero targets. Adding to, rather than replacing, will also enable officers time to properly consider the implications that moving from trips to mileage could have on the County Council's current approach. On the 19th November 2024 Cabinet approved the recommendation to add the car mileage reduction target recommended by the Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee as an additional headline target, alongside car trips.

Overview & Scrutiny Recommendation Response Pro forma

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Issue: Flood Event Response

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] 19 November 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 investigate how best to retrofit sustainable drainage systems, as well as other flood prevention measures, to Council maintained properties and streets.	Partially accepted	These will be investigated on a case by case basis and as the need arises.

[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

That the Council should improve communications to Members, raising awareness of the up-to-date Flood Toolkit generally as well as active flood measures in the event of emergencies.	Accepted	There is a clear process in place for communicating key updates to members and where to signpost residents to, evidenced by a number of flooding incidents in January/February 2024 (Storm Henk) and late Sept 2024 and November (Storm Bert). However, timing of member communications can be reliant on the nature of the flooding incident and amount of heavy rainfall (Sept 2024) linked to the warnings the Met Office issue. We will continue to endeavour to issue member comms at the earliest opportunity when flooding thresholds are reached.
That the Council should improve social media communication for residents during flooding and other emergencies.	Accepted	Social media communications have also been in place to support warning and informing residents. Following Storm Henk, the council increased the use of social media channels (assessing the right balance with other content) in addition to X, which was being used as the main (not only) social media channel to warn and inform. While this remains the most appropriate channel to use in this capacity increased use of Facebook, Insta, Next Door, where appropriate, is widening the reach for those who might not access X. Social media is one method of reach but other channels are also used (timing dependent) including Your Oxfordshire (resident e-newsletter) and the council's dedicated news flooding page that is activated during incidents (this gives situational updates, including high level travel information). Messages (including member comms) are also shared with the TVLRF warning and informing group, including the city and district councils, for message amplification across their channels. We also now have a more visual landing page that has been developed (again to be activated in relation to flood

		warnings) to support those who are being flooded or who are about to be flooded by signposting to trusted sites – gov.uk, the flood forum or sites that they link to. The focus is on providing quick and easy information to residents. To support this a number of social media assets have been developed that can be issued proactively and reactively to support and link to this page. This will also link to the newspage, and in development is a highways / roads closed page (again to be activated in a flooding emergency). All will be linked and connected. The recently created Flooding Task Force will also be reviewing communications with residents as a part of its work.
That the Council should promote the benefits of creating of community emergency plans by parish councils and support the Resilience team to do that.	Accepted	The Joint Oxfordshire Resilience Team promotes these to communities twice a year but has low take up, as a small team attending parish meetings in the evenings is a challenge, support from locality meetings, with comms and councillors supporting this process would be beneficial. The recently created Flooding Task Force will also be reviewing how there can be better community resilience and activation.
That the Council should commit to working closely with partners to ensure that s.19 reports are completed swiftly, and recommendations can be acted upon.	Accepted/Partially accept	Collaboration with other Risk Management Authorities has always been fostered and is further embedded in the Local Flood Risk Management Strategy. In regards S19 reports these are undertaken with the District/City partners and are discussed with all authorities involved as the report progresses. There is always an initial phase of data gathering and information which is required to provide factual

Overview & Scrutiny Recommendation Response Pro forma

		information. Recommendations are reviewed and will be reported. The recently created Flooding Task Force will also be reviewing this process with partners.
That the Council should investigate the role and responsibilities of OFWAT and the potential for invoking s.94 measures.	Accepted	Collaborative working will always be prioritised, but a clear understanding will be sought from Legal Services about what formal action could be taken if it became necessary.

Overview & Scrutiny Recommendation Response Pro forma

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Issue: Community Asset Transfer Policy and Leases to VCS Organisations

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

Date response requested:[2] 17 December 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 ensures that local members are involved with next-step discussions with	Accepted	Local members will be advised of all interest received in Oxfordshire CC owned vacant properties from the VCS sector

[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

VCS groups and the social value provided by these organisations be considered as part of the discussions.		
That the Council improves communications around empty properties, including: i) sharing with members a clear statement of the aspiration and timeline for disposing of properties listed for disposal, ii) a quarterly report/update summarising recent events and developments with Council land/property ensuring all parties are kept up to date, and iii) regular updates for those residents neighbouring vacant Council properties to keep them up to date with ongoing developments and plans.	Accepted	A quarterly schedule of vacant property owned by Oxfordshire CC will be circulated to members stating the aspiration and proposed future use, with an indicative timescale for disposal. Immediate neighbours and stakeholders will also continue to be updated of the progress of each disposal, where feasible.
That the Council develops processes for sharing with both members and sister organisations in the county, i) lease requests by VCS organisations, ii) land available for VCS leases, and iii) any planned leases.	Accepted	When received lease requests will be shared with members, as well as with sister organisations and contacts within the One Public Estate network. Property and land available for VCS leases will be included in the quarterly member reports, as will proposed leases.

Overview & Scrutiny Recommendation Response Pro forma

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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: Commercial Strategy Progress Update

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

Date response requested:[2] 17 December 2024

Response to report: Commercial Strategy Update

[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

Response to recommendations:

Recommendation	Accepted, rejected or partially accepted	Proposed action (if different to that recommended) and indicative timescale (unless rejected)
That the Council develops and shares with the committee on a regular basis a more detailed project plan for the Commercial strategy, outlining specific commercial opportunities in development, enabling activity, timelines, targeted savings or expected income generation, risk and RAG ratings.	Accepted	The need to develop commercial maturity at pace, including commercial thinking and the enabling systems and processes, is acknowledged. The initial phase of the Commercial Strategy is focussed on developing the operating model, and commercial thinking. Recruitment to the vacant Head of Commercial and Procurement role, who is responsible for the commercial strategy is progressing, with final stage interviews and then hopefully an appointment expected w/c 24 February. The Commercial Transformation Programme has two key projects, Data and Reporting and Contract Management that are timetabled to be concluded July 2025 and September 2025 respectively. These projects will transform the operating model and provide the foundation for improving the commercial maturity and identification of commercial opportunities. It is expected that during the next six months the Commercial Board will receive initial business cases for commercial opportunities. As these opportunities emerge and are developed through the business case process, these will be shared with the committee.
That the Council ensures that future iterations of the Strategy clarify how it intends to help the Council make money, how money will be used	Accepted	The Commercial Strategy will be reviewed and revised on completion of the Commercial Transformation Programme. The timeline for the drafting of a revised strategy is November 2025.

Overview & Scrutiny Recommendation Response Pro forma

more efficiently, and how it will be used more effectively.		
That the Council gives consideration to seconding staff to exemplars of good commercial practice to the private sector.	Partial	The development of commercial skills and good practice for our staff is a key part of the Commercial Transformation Programme, in particular but not exclusively in relation to contract management. The development of skills will be through training, coaching and mentoring, and by establishing a community of practice. Should an opportunity arise to work with a partner or trusted supplier that could support with identified development needs it would be given due consideration.
That the Council invests in greater capacity to undertake strategic and mid-contract management of contracts.	Accepted	Developing the contract management framework and the resources for contract management is one of the key projects being undertaken as part of the Commercial Transformation Programme. The outcome of that project will ensure contract management requirements are clearly defined, performance monitored and reported, with contract managers identified and trained. Investment into resourcing strategic contract management has also been agreed as part of the 2025/26 budget.
That the Council includes representatives of Adult Social Care and Children's Social Care on its Commercial Board	Rejected	The governance including the membership of the Commercial Board is currently under review.

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Divisions Affected – All

CABINET

25 February 2025

CITY CENTRE ACCOMMODATION STRATEGY - PROPOSED DISPOSAL OF NEW AND OLD COUNTY HALL

Report by Director of Property and Assets

RECOMMENDATION

1. **The Cabinet is RECOMMENDED to**

   a. Agree to the freehold disposal of New and Old County Hall, on the terms set out in exempt Annex 4.
   b. Delegate authority to the Executive Director of Resources and Section 151 Officer, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Finance, to negotiate and agree the final heads of terms which will be substantially in accordance with the details set out in exempt Annex 4.
   c. Delegate authority to the Executive Director of Resources and Section 151 Officer, in consultation with the Director of Law and Governance and Monitoring Officer, to conclude negotiations and complete all necessary legal documentation to implement the disposal.

Executive Summary

2. On 23 January 2024 as part of the city centre strategy Cabinet approved the resolution to consolidate into Speedwell House and to dispose of County Hall, as the preferred option and "to engage the market to assess interest in both New and Old County Hall to inform a final decision on Old County Hall's future".

3. Following an open tender process in accordance with procurement regulations, Savills were appointed in July 2024 as the Council's investment advisors, to market the properties and assess interest.

4. A comprehensive marketing campaign was undertaken to understand and assess interest in both New and Old County Hall. Reflecting the wide range of potential uses and purchasers, the approach did not dictate or pre-determine the end use and was designed to encourage as wide a breadth of interest as possible. The properties were presented as a regeneration opportunity in the context of Oxford West End and the city as a whole and aimed to capture the full gamut of redevelopment, refurbishment, and re-positioning potential.

5. This marketing approach adopted was aimed to ensure the Council maximised its chances of generating the highest possible value from the site in accordance with its obligations to obtain 'best consideration' under s123 of the Local Government Act 1972, whilst also positioning the site as an opportunity to deliver positive change delivering social benefit for the city.

6. In total, 19 parties submitted bids, and each party was then invited to provide a more detailed response and to resubmit their bids. From these revised bids a shortlist was produced, and these parties were invited to attend an interview and present their proposals. Feedback was provided to each party, and they were invited to resubmit their final proposal.

7. A summary of the bids and recommendation from Savills is attached in exempt Annex 2 along with a breakdown of the bids received.

8. Taking into consideration the detailed evaluation of the bids and advice from Savills, Officers recommend that New and Old County Hall are sold based on the terms set out in exempt Annex 4, subject to receipt of planning consent.

9. The recommendation reflects the fact that the value of the site has been maximised complying with the requirement to achieve best consideration. The proposal will also restore and reimagine Old County Hall opening it up for public use and will deliver employment, economic growth, social value and be sustainable and meet the Councils net zero strategic objectives.

Exempt Information

10. Information in the annexes 2, 3 and 4 to this report is supplied in commercial confidence and disclosure would prejudice the commercial position of the parties involved. It would also prejudice the position of the authority's investments to the detriment of the Council's ability to properly discharge its fiduciary and other duties as a public authority.

11. In the event that any member or officer wishes to discuss the information set out in annexes 2, 3, or 4 to Annex A, the press and public should therefore be excluded because discussion of these annexes in public would be likely to lead to the disclosure to members of the public present of information in the following categories prescribed by Part I of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended):

> "3 Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information)."

12. It is considered that, in all the circumstances of the case and for the reasons set out in paragraph 10 of this report, the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

Background

13. PwC were appointed in December 2022 to undertake a strategic review of Oxfordshire County Council's city centre accommodation. PwC's report/Outline Business Case was presented to Cabinet in January 2024.

14. The report concluded: "There is now an unavoidable priority need to take a decision on the Council's city centre office accommodation, as well as a key window of market opportunity to maximise the potential of the Council's assets to support its financial sustainability and the wider economic and social development of the city centre. To do nothing is no longer an option; the city centre assets do not reflect the organisation Oxfordshire County Council aspires to be - an employer, partner, and place shaper of choice with modern building and environmental standards.

15. A recommendation was made by Cabinet on 23 January 2024 that the Council should consolidate into Speedwell House and dispose of County Hall.

16. The Cabinet Advisory Group (CAG) discussed the Oxford City Centre Accommodation Strategy on 18 December 2023 and resolved to approve the following:

> "To progress 'Consolidation in Speedwell House and disposal of County Hall' as the preferred option and progress the project through the Council's capital governance and reporting processes, noting the financial position," and "To engage the market to assess interest in both New and Old County Hall to inform a final decision on Old County Hall's future." The resolutions above were approved by Cabinet on 23 January 2024.

17. To engage with the market, a tendering exercise was undertaken to appoint sales agents and external solicitors to advise the Council on the disposal of County Hall. In order to appoint a best-in-class sales agent with the relevant experience and track record, the top five ranked investment agents in the UK were asked for proposals. These proposals were to include an estimation of sales price based on a number of different end uses as well as views on a disposal of New County Hall and Old County Hall separately or together.

18. Following evaluation and moderation of tender submissions, Savills, were selected to advise the Council on the marketing and market assessment of County Hall and Browne Jacobson LLP were appointed as Solicitors for the disposal.

19. The basis of Savills appointment is a contract, with a capped fee and this is only payable on completion of the disposal (i.e. no sale, no fee). Savills have been a long standing and trusted partner with the council for many years. Savills also have established global values that formalise their commitment to ethical, professional, and responsible conduct, which includes a focus on social value and environmental impact. They have implemented policies such as the Group

Ethical Procurement Policy, and standards related to compliance obligations and professional conduct.

20. All the agents asked to tender were asked to provide in their responses indicative values for the site. There was a spread of values based on the end use.

21. From the agents responses it was identified that County Hall was likely to generate a range of interest for different uses including offices, life sciences, residential, student housing and hotel with appeal from a wide range of parties from the UK and across the world.

22. Agents considered the sale of a long leasehold interest in New County Hall and Old County Hall, and it was considered that the sale of a long leasehold interest would meaningfully impact the depth of market, competition, and level of pricing.

23. Accordingly, Savills recommended approach to optimise interest levels and capital receipts was to market and sell New County Hall and Old County Hall together on the basis of a freehold disposal. In order to encourage as wide a range of interest as possible Savills did not quote a price for the purposes of the marketing and market engagement exercise.

24. In view of the wide range of potential uses (and purchasers) as well as the spread of pricing, the marketing approach to County Hall did not dictate or pre-determine the end use and was designed to encourage as wide a breadth of interest as possible.

25. This approach was adopted to ensure the Council maximised its chances of generating the highest possible value from the site in accordance with its obligations to deliver 'best consideration' under s123 of the Local Government Act 1972, whilst also positioning the site as an opportunity to deliver positive change with social benefit for the city.

26. Details of the global marketing undertaken by Savills are set out in Annex 1 and included a digital brochure and video. This were supported by a legal and property information data site which was set up so that interested parties could undertake detailed due diligence before bids being submitted

Local engagement

27. Property Officers and Savills have actively engaged with local landowners, special purchasers, and other stakeholders. Oxford Preservation Trust (OPT) has also been engaged in connection with the future use of Old County Hall.

Planning

28. Old County Hall is a Grade II* listed building[1] located within the Central (University and City) Conservation Area which covers the historic centre of Oxford and is within the City Centre Archaeological Area. Under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, all listed buildings, including those classified as Grade II*, are legally protected meaning any alterations, extensions, or demolitions of listed buildings must receive consent from the relevant local planning authority. The aim being to prevent unauthorised changes that could compromise the building's historical and architectural integrity.

29. The existing mature tree which is located within the site is protected under a Tree Preservation Order due to its location within the Conservation Area.

30. The listed status of Old County Hall as well as the context of the conservation area and proximity of Oxford Castle are factors that have been considered when assessing and appraising interest and offers.

Speedwell House

31. Following a competitive tender process the strip out works at Speedwell House have been completed and a Technical Advisor has been appointed. In addition, a Design & Build contractor is being appointed to undertake the main refurbishment works. Based on current timescales it is anticipated that the refurbishment works at Speedwell House will be completed in Spring 2027 at which time the Council will vacate County Hall and occupy Speedwell House.

32. The capital receipt from the disposal of County Hall will fund the delivery of the refurbished Speedwell House complex and also enable the wider regeneration and placemaking initiatives envisaged in and around Speedwell Street.

Implications of not proceeding to dispose of the site

33. The majority of the interest has been in respect of acquiring the whole of the site i.e. both New and Old County Hall. Of the 19 offers received, 16 were for New and Old County Hall together. Interest in New County Hall on its own and Old County Hall on its own was limited and only at a nominal purchase price.

34. To remain in County Hall essential works would be required. To undertake these works, the building would need to be vacated, and alternative accommodation would need to be found for at least 2 years at an estimated cost of over £3m per annum to cover the cost of rent and rates. There would also be a significant cost for moving out and then moving back to New County Hall once works were

[1] Listing is in respect of the front of the building but applies to the whole as it's an integral part

complete. In addition, not selling the property now would mean that other funding options would need to be considered for the redevelopment of Speedwell House.

35. Retaining Old County Hall, should New County Hall be sold, would involve splitting the building, undertaking substantial essential works, installation of a separate heating system plus basic restoration works and remedial work. This is likely to cost in excess of £8m.

36. If the council chooses not to proceed with the sale at this stage in the process, this would mean that the property could not be brought back to the market for two to three years as the council would not be perceived as a serious seller, and interested parties would be deterred from bidding. Market sentiment is that if the sale were delayed it is likely the value will fall based on the prevailing economic outlook and market conditions.

37. There would be an opportunity to let Old County Hall, but the anticipated rental income would be below the costs of retaining the building. The potential uses of Old County Hall are limited because of the nature and character of the building.

38. The retention of County Hall, or just Old County Hall, will leave a substantial ongoing financial burden, with no return on investment, with no financial upside. Therefore, it is the recommendation of Officers to request approval for the sale of Old County as well as New County Hall.

Analysis of offers received and recommendation.

39. A detailed analysis of the bids and recommendation is contained within Savills report, exempt Annex 2 along with a summary of all offers received. Exempt Annex 3 sets out an analysis of the bids.

40. Savills' recommendation is to progress with the offer set out in exempt Annex 2, having comprehensively marketed the site to a wide audience. They consider the offer plus overage to be an excellent price for the site and above their initial estimate. Savills believe that the risk to the council of this option is minimal, and that planning will be secured quickly and the purchase completed in Q1 2026, with construction to commence on site as soon as the council vacates. The developer has satisfied concerns that the heritage value of Old County Hall will be preserved and enhanced for Oxford and Oxfordshire residents. They also believe that the redevelopment of the site will be a major step in transforming the West End of Oxford and revitalising the public realm.

Financial Implications

41. The financial implications are set out in detail within this report including exempt Annexes 2, 3 and 4. The process undertaken at this stage of the project has determined the best value consideration that can be obtained for the disposal of New and Old County Hall, therefore the recommended option would be in compliance with s123 of the Local Government Act 1972. The recommended

option would provide a capital receipt to fully fund (based on current estimates) the delivery of the refurbished Speedwell House complex.

Comments checked by:

Ian Dyson, Director of Financial and Commercial Services, ian.dyson@oxfordshire.gov.uk

Legal Implications

42. Councils are required to maximise the land value in accordance with S.123 of the Local Government Act 1972 and cannot dispose of land for a consideration (i.e. monetary payment) less than the best that can be obtained in the market, except with permission of the Secretary of State. As indicated above and set out within the exempt Annexes 2, 3 and 4 to this report, work has been undertaken to ensure that this transaction is compliant with S.123 of the Local Government Act 1972 and the Council has considered and taken due regard of all the professional advice it has received in respect of the recommendations set out in this report.

43. Judicial interpretation of S.123 of the Local Government Act 1972 has established that, whilst the Council is required to obtain the best consideration reasonably obtainable, this does not necessarily mean that the highest offer on the table is always the best.

Comments checked by:

Anita Bradley, Director of Law and Governance and Monitoring Officer, anita.bradley@oxfordshire.gov.uk

Staff Implications

44. There are no new or additional staff implications.

Equality & Inclusion Implications

45. The sale of New and Old County Hall has no equality or inclusion implications at this stage. From the engagement to date with the potential purchasers there is full support to meet the Equality and Inclusivity Policies, and this will be fully determined before exchange of contracts.

Sustainability Implications

46. From the engagement to date with the potential purchasers there is full support to meet the Sustainability Policies, and this will be fully determined before exchange of contracts.

Risk Management

47. As part of the evaluation of the bids received the risks have been considered. The risks identified with the recommendation are that the offer is subject to planning, the purchaser seeks to renegotiate the proposal or fails to complete the sale and the funds to complete the purchase are not available.

48. The developer has considerable experience of planning in the Oxford market. A pack of information has been prepared so the pre application submission can be made within weeks of exclusivity being confirmed. The Council's planning advisors have also considered the proposal and are positive that consent will be received for a change of use. From the investment put into the bid so far and the fact that a professional team have been instructed it is clear that the purchaser is in position to exchange contracts as soon as is possible and that they have undertaken considerable due diligence ahead of submitting their bid. Both the purchaser and developer are also recognised as being very experienced operators with a history of completing projects. The purchasers have also been interviewed and the recommendation for funding is ready to be approved by their investment committee once and if they are confirmed as the successful party.

Consultations

49. On 5 February 2025, the Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee considered a report on the City Centre Accommodation Strategy – Disposal of Old and New County Hall. The recommendations from the committee are elsewhere on the agenda of this Cabinet meeting.

50. In addition, the Cabinet Advisory Group met on 14 February 2025 to provide feedback to the Cabinet Member for Finance on the proposed disposal of Old and New County Hall.

Contact Officer: Vic Kurzeja, Director of Property and Assets
Vic.Kurzeja@Oxfordshire.gov.uk **Tel: 07726 307 813**

Annex: **Annex1 - Savills Marketing Brochure**

Exempt Annex 2 -Savills report and recommendations

Exempt Annex 3 – Bid Analysis

Exempt Annex 4 – Heads of Terms

Annex 1 Marketing

JANUARY 2025

RECOMMENDATION REPORT

For the Freehold Sale of New County Hall and Old County Hall

OXFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

savills

This report will cover

Full details of the marketing process, outcomes and Savills' recommendations

01.The Brief
02. Why Savills?
03. Savills' Track Record
04.The Asset
05. Summary of the marketing process - Prior to Marketing
06. Summary of the marketing process:-The Campaign
07. Campaign/Transaction Timeline
08. Marketing Campaign continued
09. Interest Received
10. Bids Received (Rounds 1 and 2)
11. Bids Received (Round 3 onwards)
12. Shortlisted Bidders
13. Bid Analysis – LGIM/Reef Origin
14. 15. Bid Analysis – Dominus
15. Bid Analysis – Singapore based SPV
16. Bid Analysis – Aviva Capital/Marick RE
17. Summary
18. Our Recommendation
19. Appendices

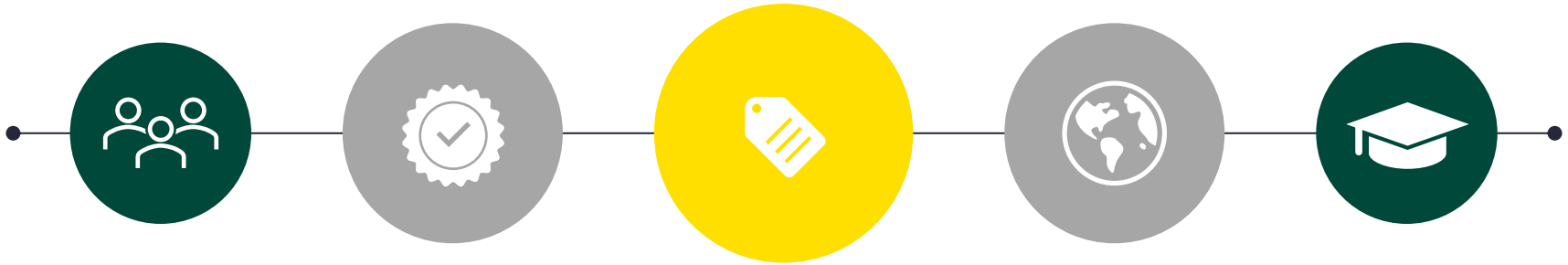
The Brief

The purpose of this report is to provide a clear summary of the process that Savills have taken to meet Oxfordshire County Council's requirements. These requirements are set out below:

- Carry out a full open marketing campaign to dispose of the asset(s) and establish market interest in the County Hall site on either a freehold or long leasehold basis;
- Present the opportunity to the market on the basis of the site being a regeneration opportunity in the context of Oxford West End, and an opportunity to deliver positive change for the city.
- Run an inclusive marketing process without a quoting price which does not influence or pre-determine the end use of the site or the type of purchaser
- Offer the site as a whole or with the ability to purchase New and Old County Hall separately
- With consideration to the above, maximize the financial receipt that can be generated from the sale of the property (S123 of the Local Government Act 1972)
- Maximize sales receipts to support the delivery of Speedwell House without the need for borrowing so that the project is cost neutral to the Council.
- Retain the ability for Oxfordshire County Council to remain in occupation of the property until Speedwell Street is ready for occupation.
- Evaluate and advise on the strengths and weaknesses of the bids received.
- Secure a price and deal structure with as little risk as possible to Oxfordshire County Council whilst maximizing returns.
- Ensure the delivery of a sustainable regeneration scheme which adds value to Oxford.

Why Savills?

Savills was chosen to work with Oxfordshire County Council to deliver strategic objectives in relation to the city centre on the basis of their professional experience and track record.



Best in class, market leading team.

Local, National and International reach. We are the only firm to offer this in Oxford.

Comprehensive Understanding.

Of your requirements, the asset and location, alongside your strategic objectives.

Significant investment Development transactions.

Recent track record in Oxford, the surrounding area and on a national basis.

Market-leading Cross Border Investment team.

£50bn of bids procured over 5 years.

Cross Sector expertise.

We have an unrivalled market insight, supported by our specialist research function.

Savills' track record and cross sector expertise in Oxford, gives us the credibility to frame the assets in the most positive way.

Locally Established

Savills has been present in Oxford for over 20 years and is now a multi-disciplinary practice offering, commercial, residential and rural services across 11 departments. There are two offices; Botley and Summertown, comprising a combined team of over 130 staff.

Our specialist commercial agency team based in the city of Oxford in Botley comprises six team members solely focused on the commercial market in the region. This includes

- Office
- Industrial
- Life Science
- Retail
- Commercial development land

Savills Oxford Commercial Team have over 50 years experience in the sector.

They have advised on a diverse range of clients ranging from Oxford Colleges, Financial Institutions, Property Companies, Developers and increasingly occupiers.

The local Oxford Commercial Agency often work alongside the wider South-East Business Space team and forms part of the wider Savills Science working group. Our success and strength stems from our ability to provide an integrated service across the local, regional and international markets.

Our Track Record

Savills unrivalled track record in Oxfordshire for major development and investment opportunities:

Beaver House

Vendor sale on behalf of an Oxford College. This is an existing central Oxford office building of c. 70,000 sq ft.

Savills Investment (London) and Occupational Teams (Oxford) advised the college leading to an off-market process to a targeted list of six parties within tight timescales. The building was sold in 2022 to UBS who were looking to deploy capital into the science sector.

Completed in 2022 ahead of the guide price..

Oxford North

The scheme was delivered by Stanhope / Cadillac Fairview / TWO.

Phase 1a consists of 135,000 sq ft alongside retail / restaurant / café, Hotel and public open space.

There is total outline consent for 1.00 million sq ft. Oxford North will become a multi-phase scheme from 2024 onwards.

Oxford Innovation Park

A rare freehold life science development opportunity sold to Ellison Institute for Transformative Medicine.

The scheme has 41,417 sq ft of existing space and a proposed further 32,153 sq ft over two development plots.

The final sale price was **more than double the guide price.**

New Barclay House

Vendor sale on behalf of a Private Family Office to CTI / Berwick Holdings of existing investment sold to Threadneedle Pension Fund.

Life Science redevelopment potential subject to planning and securing vacant possession.

Harwell Campus

Savills advised Brookfield from inception through to financial close for the purchase of Harwell Science and Innovation Campus.

It involved a proposed business plan of growing the Campus from c.400,000sq ft to 1,800,000 sq ft over 5-7 years.

Other relevant projects:

- Savills sold Oxford Retail Park, Cowley to Christ Church in 2023
- Northbrook House on Oxford Science Park, which we acquired for Brydell & Partners in 2022
- Cantay House, Park End Street, which Savills recently acquired off market
- Savills advising on the Oxpens scheme for Nuffield College and Oxford City Council

The Asset

Savills were instructed to market and establish market interest in the freehold interest in the 1-acre County Hall site which includes New County Hall, The Link Building and the Grade II* Listed Old County Hall.

- The opportunity consists of a prime city centre site comprising County Hall and Old County Hall.
- Rare freehold interest.
- Central pitch between Westgate Shopping Centre and Oxford Castle Quarter, opposite Nuffield College and St Peter's College.
- Prominent site on the corner of New Road and Castle Street extending to approximately 1 acre.
- This is a rare and exciting refurbishment and/or reimagination opportunity to completely transform the site and wider area.
- The site forms part of Oxford's West End major regeneration area which will be completely re-shaped over the next few years.
- An opportunity to remodel the buildings totalling 91,421 sq ft GIA to form a focal point of the West End redevelopment plan, enhancing the vitality of the city centre and delivering social value.
- Offered subject to a leaseback to Oxfordshire County Council until Spring 2027 at a peppercorn rent.
- Strong occupational market fundamentals which support a wide range of potential uses including: office, laboratory, residential, student accommodation/ education, hotel and retail/leisure.
- Offers invited subject to contract.

Summary of the Marketing Process

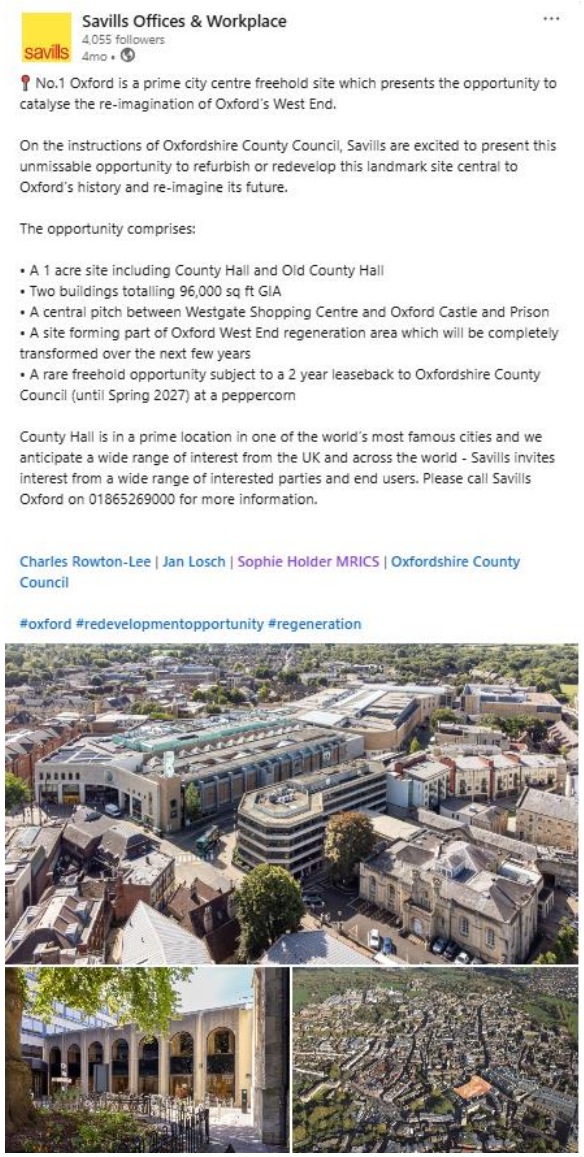
Prior to Marketing:

- Savills worked with OCC Officers and consultants to understand the brief, requirements and sensitivities to design a marketing approach that would deliver the optimum outcome for the Council.
- Savills worked with a specialist marketing and design team to produce a best in class marketing brochure and short film (See Appendix 1).
- Savills worked with OCC to commission necessary building reports and surveys and with Browne Jacobson solicitors to curate a comprehensive legal and property information data room.
- Savills used their previous experience and contacts from across several specialist departments to produce a targeted marketing list in the region of 800 parties who might have an interest in purchasing the site.

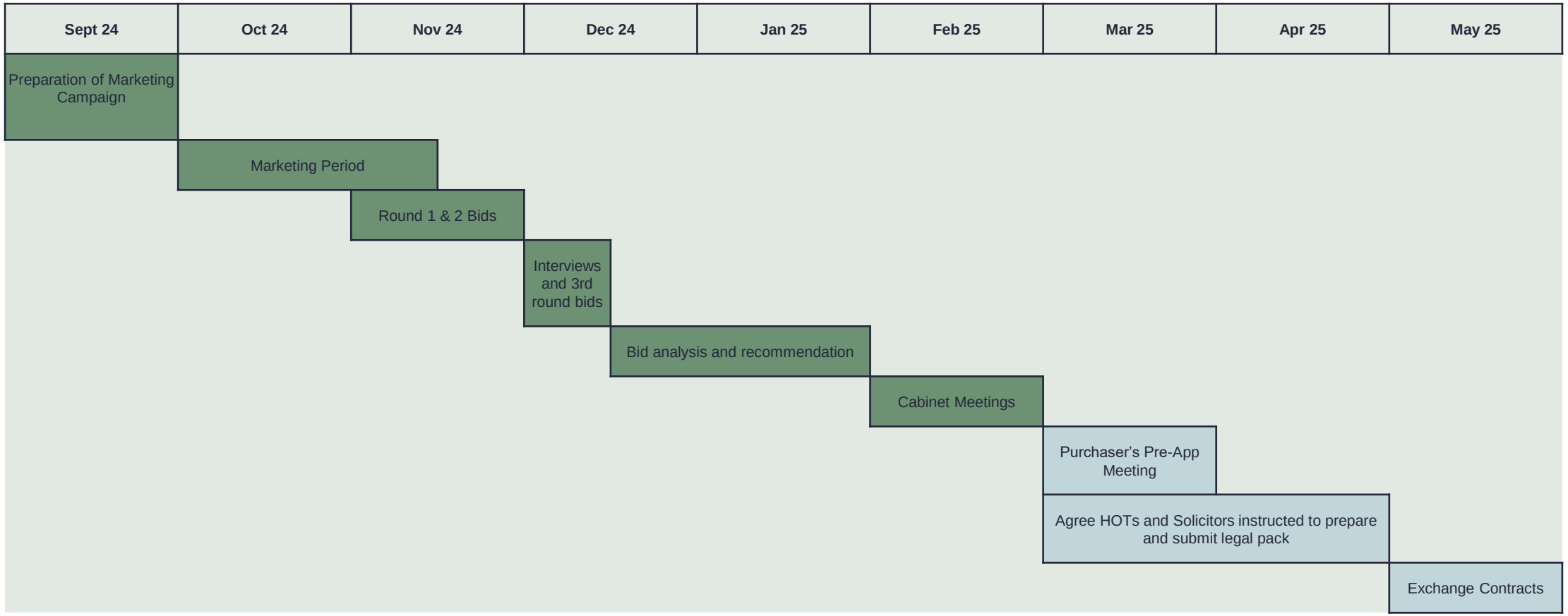
Summary of the Marketing Process

The Campaign:

- **Savills were instructed to market the freehold interest by way of a private treaty open market process. The property was offered as a whole or with the option to purchase buildings individually.**
- **Savills decided not to quote a price so as not to deter anyone from any particular sector or background from bidding and actively encouraged wide ranging interest from different parties and end users.**
- A soft launch was undertaken during week commencing 23rd September where Savills made initial phone calls to parties on their marketing list.
- The property was formally launched to the open market on 3rd October 2024 where the brochure was emailed to the entire marketing list and a social media campaign was publicised (See Appendix 2).
- The property was listed on the Savills website (global viewing platform) and Rightmove Commercial.
- Calls were made to Savills' key target list to discuss the opportunity.
- Savills received a large number of enquiries from the online listings which we responded to.
- Interested parties were invited to access the data room.
- Savills arranged viewing days starting week commencing 7th October.
- Weekly meetings were held with OCC to discuss each of the interested parties and review the ongoing marketing strategy and timescales.



Campaign/Transaction Timeline

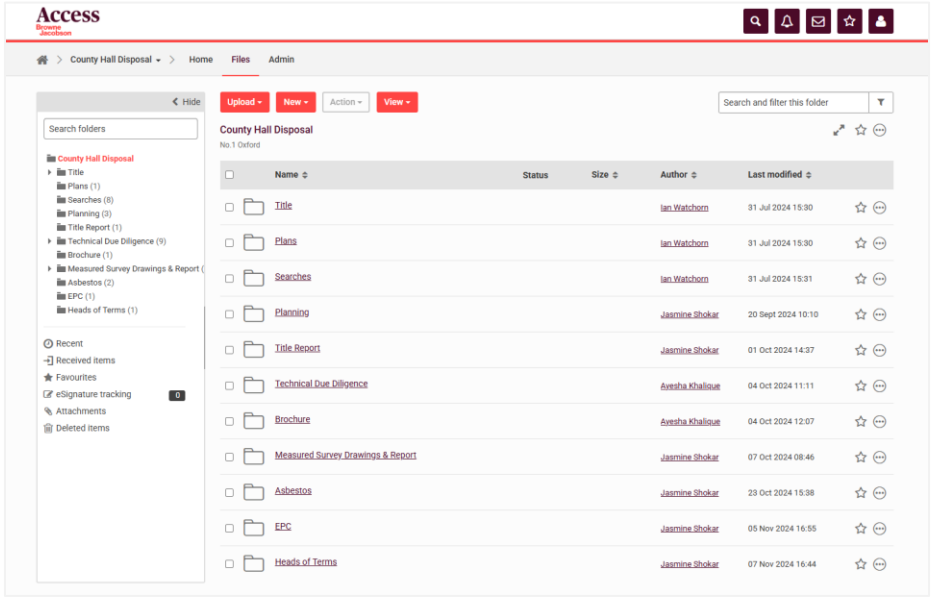


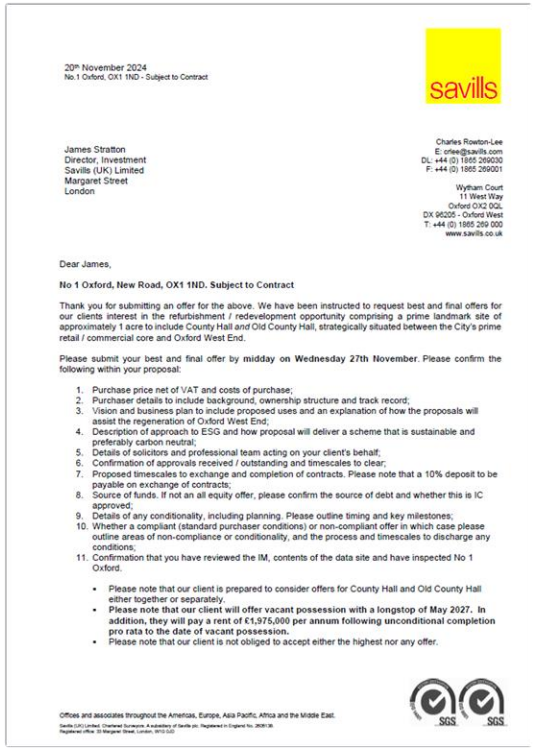
Marketing Campaign Continued

- The marketing period ran for **7 weeks**
- During this period Savills carried out **in excess of 30 viewings** with 27 different parties
- Savills had calls with in excess of **100 parties in total**
- The use of a **monitored data room** enabled Savills to assess which parties were showing serious interest and conducting the highest levels of due diligence (see appendix 3)

Following the marketing period, Savills issued **a prescribed bid letter** (See appendix 4) to the original target marketing list plus all new enquiries **(Total 1,761 parties**) to invite bids on the basis of:

- A **freehold purchase** of Old and New County Hall **together or separately** if preferred
- Subject to a **leaseback** to Oxfordshire County Council **until May 2028 at a peppercorn (market rent from May 2027).**
- Preference for an unconditional purchase




20th November 2024
No.1 Oxford, OX1 1ND - Subject to Contract

savills

James Stratton
Director, Investment
Savills (UK) Limited
Margaret Street
London

Charles Rowton-Lee
E: crlee@savills.com
DL: +44 (0) 1865 269030
F: +44 (0) 1865 269001

Wytham Court
11 West Way
Oxford OX2 0QL
DX 96205 - Oxford West
T: +44 (0) 1865 269 000
www.savills.co.uk

Dear James,

No 1 Oxford, New Road, OX1 1ND. Subject to Contract

Thank you for submitting an offer for the above. We have been instructed to request best and final offers for our clients interest in the refurbishment / redevelopment opportunity comprising a prime landmark site of approximately 1 acre to include County Hall and Old County Hall, strategically situated between the City's prime retail / commercial core and Oxford West End.

Please submit your best and final offer by **midday on Wednesday 27th November**. Please confirm the following within your proposal:

1. Purchase price net of VAT and costs of purchase;
2. Purchaser details to include background, ownership structure and track record;
3. Vision and business plan to include proposed uses and an explanation of how the proposals will assist the regeneration of Oxford West End;
4. Description of approach to ESG and how proposal will deliver a scheme that is sustainable and preferably carbon neutral;
5. Details of solicitors and professional team acting on your client's behalf;
6. Confirmation of approvals received / outstanding and timescales to clear;
7. Proposed timescales to exchange and completion of contracts. Please note that a 10% deposit to be payable on exchange of contracts;
8. Source of funds. If not an all equity offer, please confirm the source of debt and whether this is IC approved;
9. Details of any conditionality, including planning. Please outline timing and key milestones;
10. Whether a compliant (standard purchaser conditions) or non-compliant offer in which case please outline areas of non-compliance or conditionality, and the process and timescales to discharge any conditions;
11. Confirmation that you have reviewed the IM, contents of the data site and have inspected No 1 Oxford.

- Please note that our client is prepared to consider offers for County Hall and Old County Hall either together or separately.
- **Please note that our client will offer vacant possession with a longstop of May 2027. In addition, they will pay a rent of £1,975,000 per annum following unconditional completion pro rata to the date of vacant possession.**
- Please note that our client is not obliged to accept either the highest nor any offer.

Offices and associates throughout the Americas, Europe, Asia Pacific, Africa and the Middle East.

No1 Oxford

NEW ROAD, OX1 1ND
A PRIME CENTRAL OXFORD FREEHOLD SITE.
OPPORTUNITY TO CATALYSE THE
RE-IMAGINATION OF OXFORD'S WEST END.

savills

COUNTY HALL

N°1 Oxford

Opportunity

WE ARE INSTRUCTED BY OXFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL TO SELL THE FREEHOLD INTEREST IN THE COUNTY HALL SITE, CENTRAL OXFORD, ENABLING THE COUNCIL TO MEET ITS STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES AND RELOCATE TO SPEEDWELL HOUSE.

- The opportunity consists of a prime city centre site comprising County Hall and Old County Hall.
- Rare freehold interest.
- Central pitch between Westgate Shopping Centre and Oxford Castle Quarter, opposite Nuffield College and St Peter's College.
- Prominent site on the corner of New Road and Castle Street extending to approximately 1 acre.
- This is a rare and exciting refurbishment and/or reimagination opportunity to completely transform the site and wider area.
- The site forms part of Oxford's West End major regeneration area which will be completely re-shaped over the next few years.
- An opportunity to remodel the buildings totalling 91,421 sq ft GIA to form a focal point of the West End redevelopment plan, enhancing the vitality of the city centre and delivering social value.
- Offered subject to a leaseback to Oxfordshire County Council until Spring 2027 at a peppercorn rent.
- Strong occupational market fundamentals which support a wide range of potential uses including: office, laboratory, residential, student accommodation/ education, hotel and retail/leisure.
- Offers invited subject to contract.

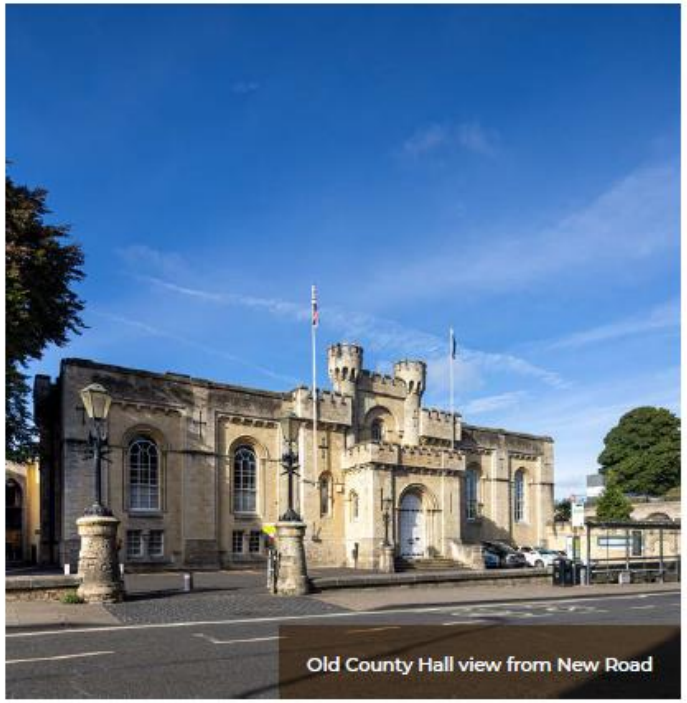
Please note: The boundary drawn is indicative only - please refer to the title plan for the most accurate representation.

County Hall view from
New Road / Castle Street

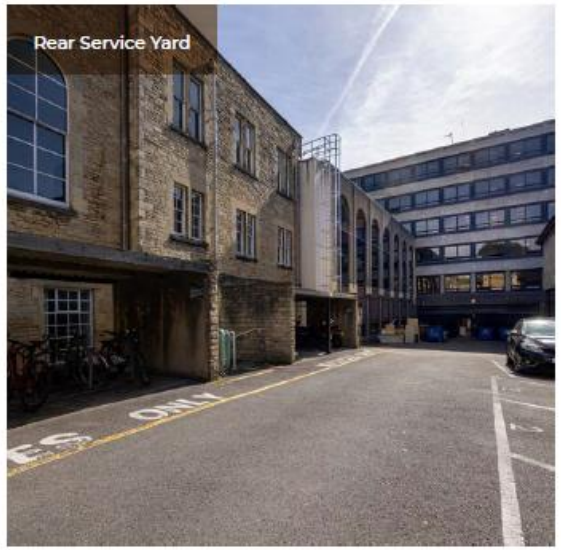
County Hall entrance

County Hall office space

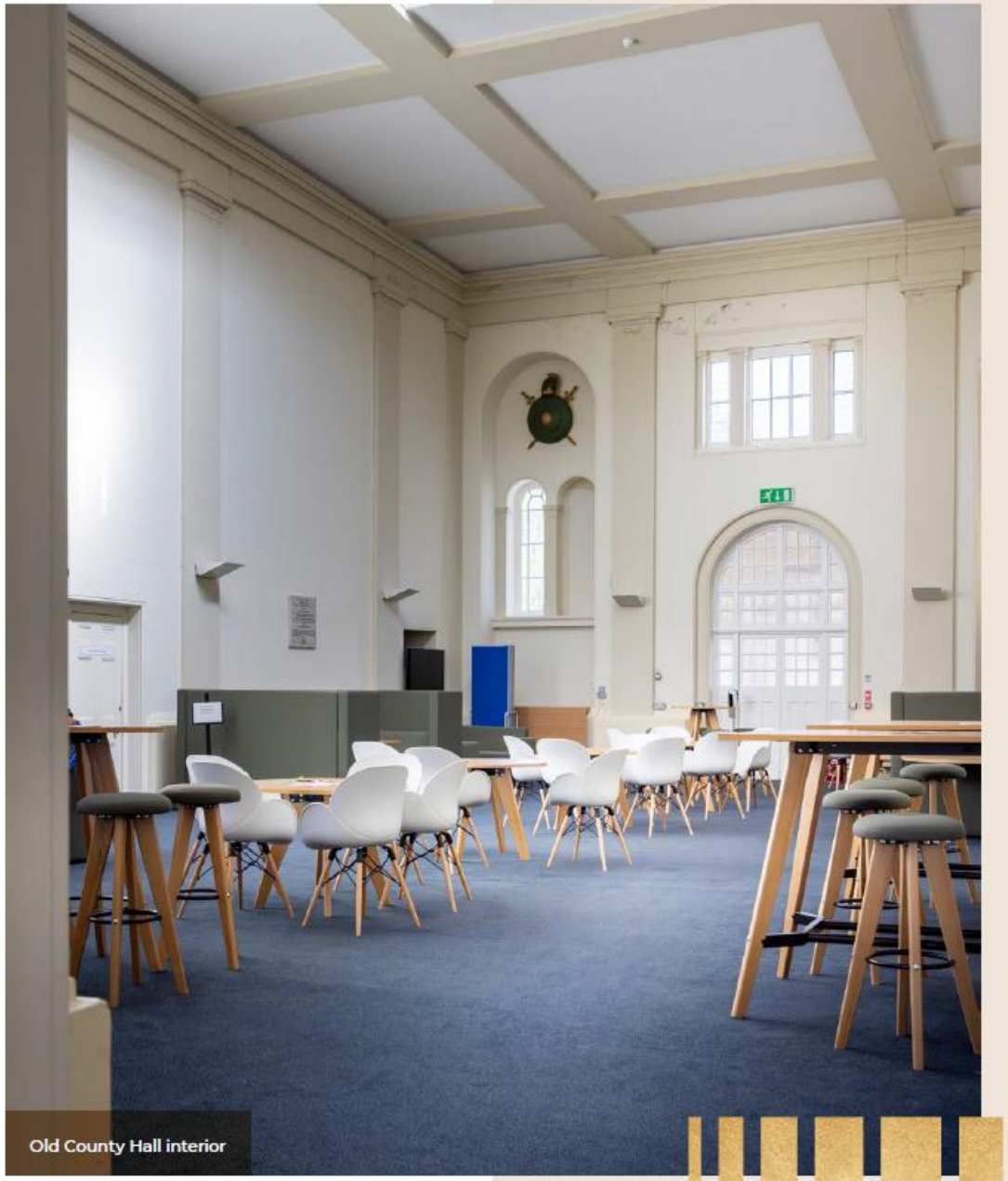
Old County Hall interior


Old County Hall view from New Road

Link Building


Rear Service Yard

Link Building interior


Old County Hall interior

№1 Oxford

Location

OXFORD IS GLOBALLY RECOGNISED FOR ITS KNOWLEDGE BASE, ANCHORED BY THE STRENGTH OF THE UNIVERSITY WHICH FOR THE 8TH YEAR RUNNING WAS RANKED 1ST IN THE TIMES HIGHER EDUCATION GLOBAL RANKINGS.

Oxford is strategically located within the Golden Triangle alongside London and Cambridge, and represents a key component of the Oxford-Cambridge Knowledge Arc.

Oxford is established as a leading location within the science and innovation sector. The global standing of its academic institutions, as well as it's globally significant role in developing a COVID-19 vaccine, has ensured the city is a target location for companies, of all sizes, working within the many areas of human health and technology.

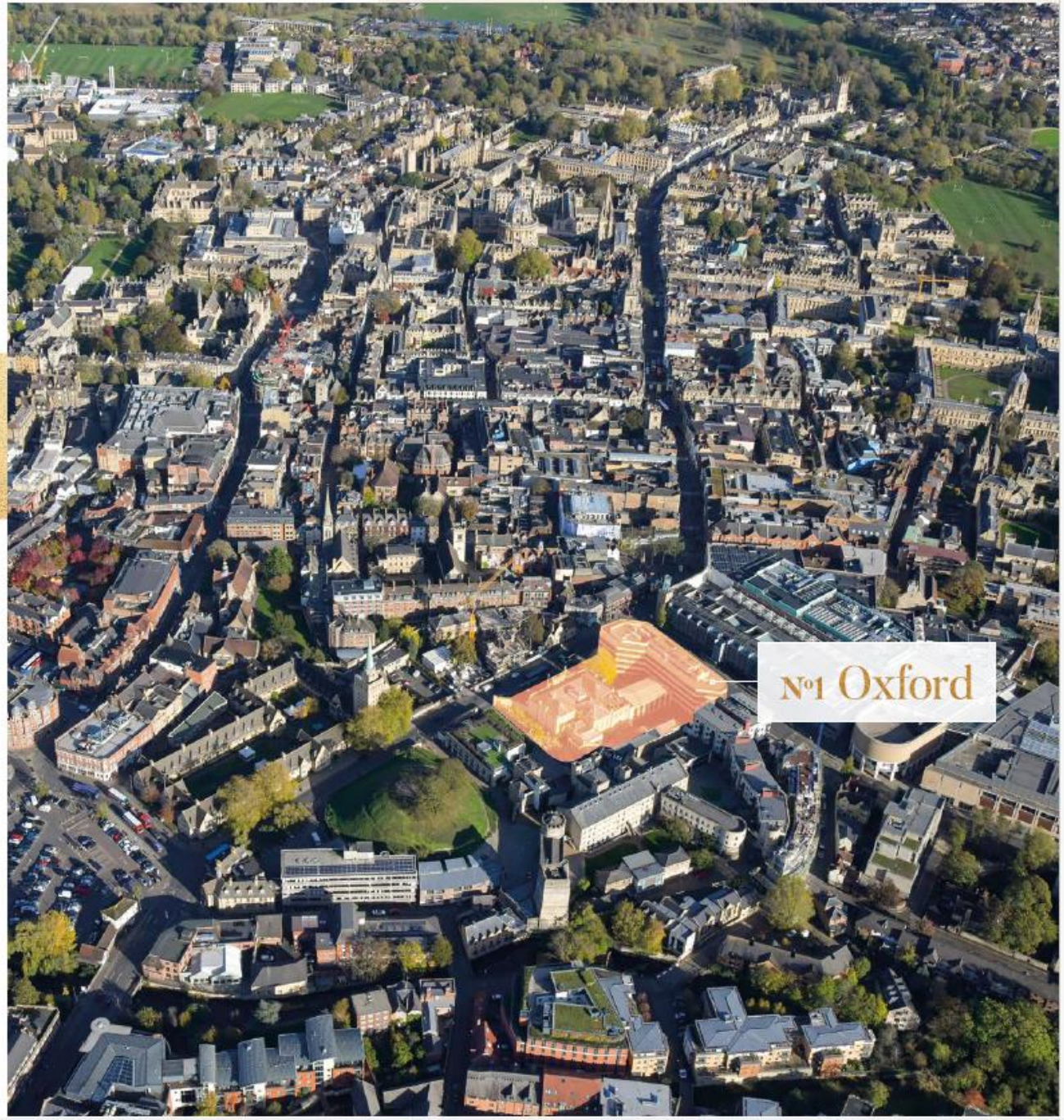
The University of Oxford, during the past couple of decades, has led the way in the value of spin-outs created and amount of capital raised. In part achieved by Oxford Science Enterprises which since it was founded in 2015 has raised over £850 million and means that today the county has the highest intensity of university spin outs in the country.

The site is situated between the Westgate Shopping Centre and Castle Quarter leisure areas. The Westgate Centre totals approximately 779,000 sq ft and provides approximately 106 retail units across the lower ground and upper ground levels.

It is home to several major international and national retail brands including John Lewis, Uniqlo, Superdry, Calvin Klein, Dr. Martens, H&M, Joules, Levi's and Primark as well as several leisure brands including Sixes Cricket, Buzz Gym and Curzon Cinema.

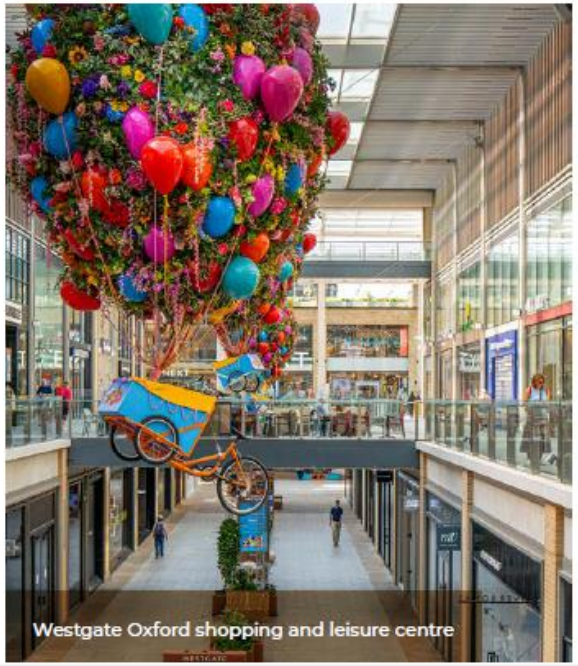
Combined with restaurants on the roof terrace and upper ground floor, the Westgate Centre provides a food and leisure offering with restaurants such as Sticks 'n' sushi, Nando's, Pret a Manger, Social Street Food, Costa, Starbucks and Itsu.

Castle Quarter which adjoins County Hall to the South and West comprises the former Oxford Castle and Prison, and is a successful leisure and tourist destination and includes the Malmaison Hotel and Oxford Castle visitor attraction.



Independent shops and cafés in The Covered Market

The Store luxury hotel and spa

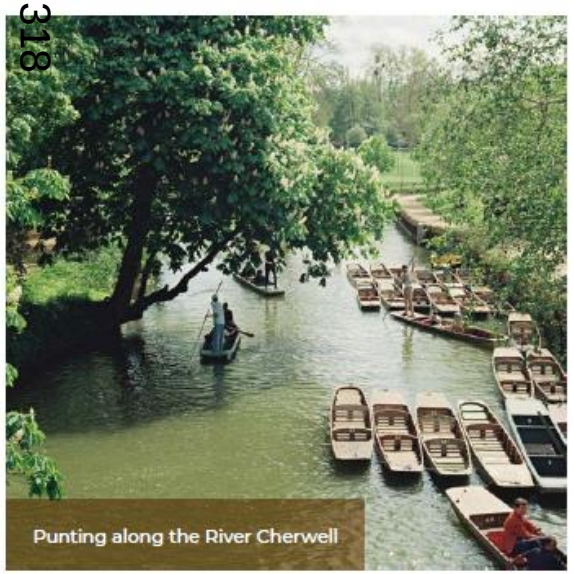


Westgate Oxford shopping and leisure centre

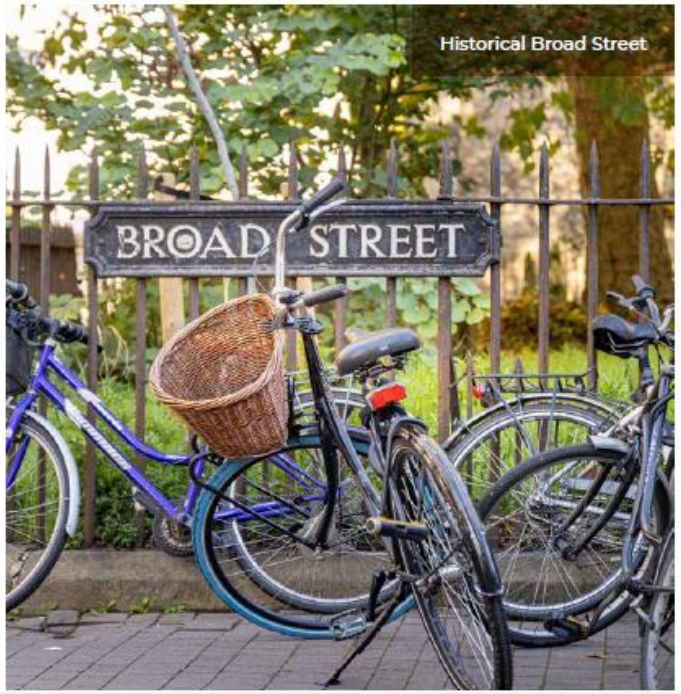
Malmaison Oxford hotel, bar and restaurant

Oxford University Life and Mind Building

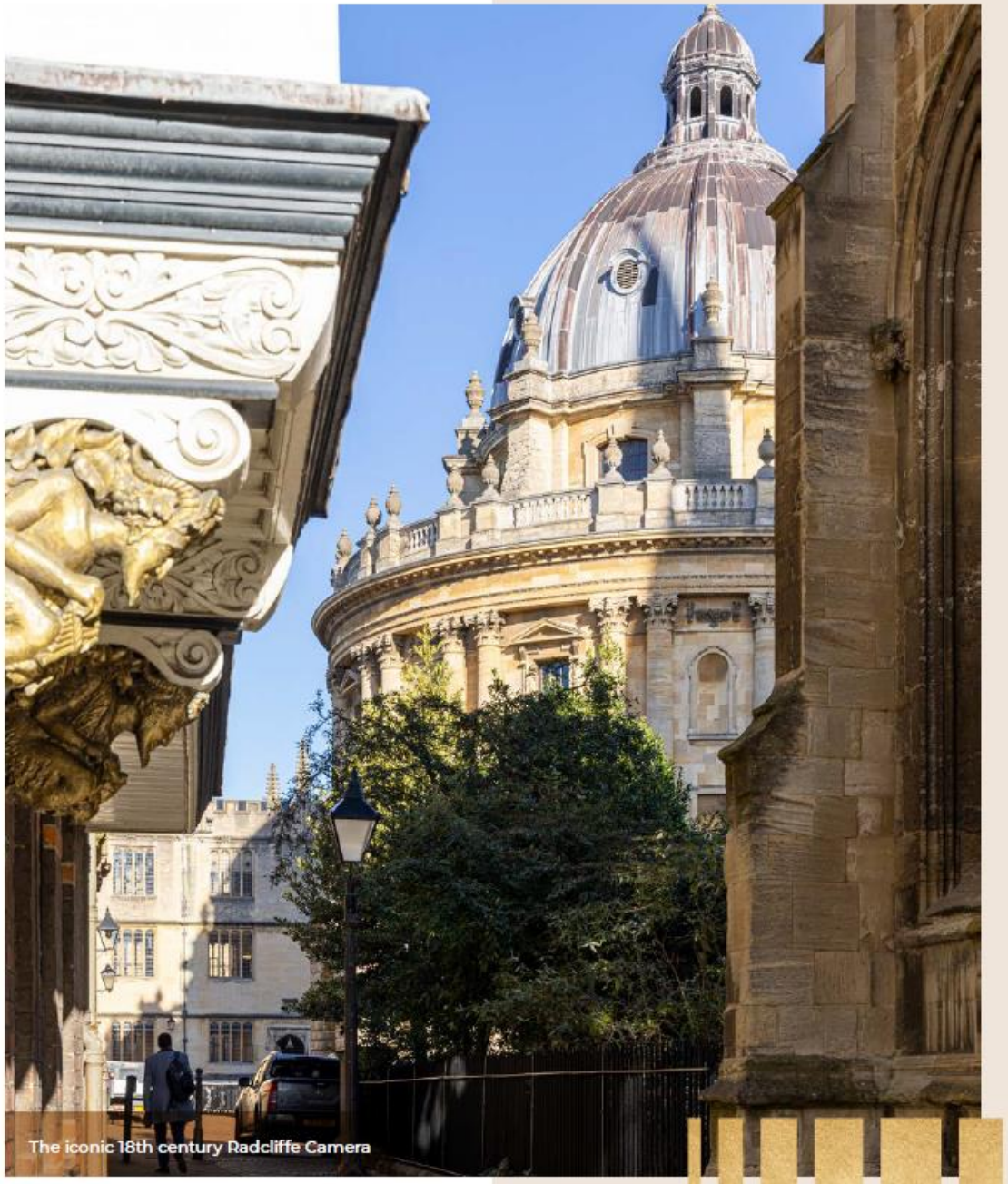
The city's famed dreaming spires



Punting along the River Cherwell



Historical Broad Street



The iconic 18th century Radcliffe Camera

№1 Oxford

Connectivity

ROAD

Corner of New Road and Castle Street

No. 1 Oxford has strong road connections with the Oxford Ring Road linking the city to the A34 which runs south to Southampton. The M40 is also accessible via the A34 and A40 with Birmingham to the northwest and London to the southeast.

BUS

10 stops within 200 metres

The property benefits from Oxford's exceptional bus network with five park and rides located around the city's ring road. Four bus stops line New Road and six on Castle Street, providing local services to the park and rides and across the county.

COACH

From Gloucester Green (6 mins walk)

The Oxford Tube coach service provides 24/7 transport to London, at peak times leaving every 10 minutes. The coach station is 300m from the property going via Hillingdon and Uxbridge terminating in London Victoria.

RAIL

From Oxford (11 mins walk)

Oxford train station is 0.5 miles west of the property and provides direct services to London Paddington and London Marylebone in 52 and 76 minutes respectively. Birmingham New Street to the northwest can be accessed in 69 minutes.

4.6 miles north of the property is Oxford Parkway station which opened in 2015 and provides journey times of 61 minutes direct to London Marylebone.

There are plans for new stations along the Cowley Branch Line south of the city. Improvements are currently underway to replace the Botley Road Bridge in order to increase rail capacity for the future.

AIR

London Heathrow, the largest airport in the UK is located 35 miles southeast of Oxford. Located 7.5 miles to the north is Oxford Airport, one of Thames Valley's primary regional and business airports.

Oxford Railway Station redevelopment

DRIVE TIMES

	Miles	Mins (Approx)
A34	1.8	10
M40	11	30
A40	4.5	15
London	60	130
Cambridge	100	180

RAIL

From Oxford (11 mins walk)

London Paddington	Birmingham New Street	London Marylebone
52 mins	1 hr 9 mins	1 hr 16 mins

BUS

From No. 1 Oxford (outside the subject property)

Kidlington	Bicester	Banbury
17 mins	27 mins	1 hr 16 mins

COACH

From Gloucester Green (6 mins walk)

Heathrow	London Marylebone	London Victoria
1 hr 11 mins	2 hr 1 min (Express route)	2 hr 10 mins

The Building

HISTORY

Old County Hall is a building with a rich past. It was designed by John Plowman in the Gothic Revival style and was completed in 1841. The building features a symmetrical castellated main frontage with a central projecting porch and round-headed windows.

It continued to be used for judicial purposes until the new Oxford Combined Court Centre opened in 1985. Following the implementation of the Local Government Act 1888, it also became the meeting place for Oxfordshire County Council.

The building is Grade II* listed, recognized for its architectural and historical significance. Oxfordshire County Council welcome proposals for exciting new uses for Old County Hall which respect and enhance its heritage.

DESCRIPTION

The property comprises a site of approximately 1 acre (0.33ha) and includes three elements: County Hall, Old County Hall and the Link Building.

Opened by Queen Elizabeth II the 1970s, County Hall is the largest of the three elements providing mostly office and administrative uses for Oxfordshire County Council.

The accommodation is set over basement, ground and four upper floors and one floor of plant.

Old County Hall (14,459 sq ft), is the only listed element of the three and includes the Council Chamber, Grand Jury Room and Coroner's Court Room. Staircases from the centre of the two court rooms provide access to underground passages and basements beneath the building.

Old County Hall is connected to County Hall by the Link Building comprising a number of offices and meeting rooms.

The three buildings are all set around a central open courtyard with a large copper beech tree and traditional Oxfordshire highway sign at its centre.

A car park is located to the front of the building, with further car parking in the service yard at the rear, in total providing 27 spaces.

CONSTRUCTION

County Hall is of reinforced concrete frame construction. Floor slabs are typically 300mm thick with a 50mm screed through which services are distributed via cast-in floor boxes and cable ducts. It is understood removing the screed would achieve a structural slab-to-soffit clear height of 2850mm.

The flat roof is of concrete slab construction with a perimeter downstand at fourth floor level. Elevations are clad with bands of glazing and precast concrete panels with a textured aggregate finish between.

The Link Building is of reinforced concrete frame construction. The elevations are formed of pre-cast concrete panels, matching County Hall, with large arched windows and slithers of render between.

The southeast corner of Old County Hall has been reconfigured to adjoin the Link Building.

Old County Hall is of traditional construction with a slate roof covering. The elevations are faced in limestone with ashlar quoins and dressings, castellated turrets and parapets.

Further detail on the fabric and structure of the buildings is available on the data site.

Summary of Accommodation

Building	Size sq m (GIA)	Size sq ft (GIA)	Size sq m (NIA)	Size sq ft (NIA)
County Hall and Link Building	7,150.2	76,962	5,050.4	54,361
Old County Hall	1,343.3	14,459	Not Applicable	Not Applicable
Total	8,493.5	91,421	5,050.4	54,361

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