



To: Members of the Cabinet

Notice of a Meeting of the Cabinet

Tuesday, 25 March 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

March 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 2 April 2025
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: 22 April 2025



AGENDA

1. Apologies for Absence

2. Declarations of Interest

- guidance note below

3. Minutes (Pages 1 - 12)

To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 25 February 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 i.e., 9am on Wednesday 19 March 2025. Requests to speak should be sent to chris.reynolds@oxfordshire.gov.uk

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

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

6. Appointments

7. Reports from Scrutiny Committees (Pages 13 - 24)

Cabinet will receive the following Scrutiny reports:-

Education and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee report on Local Area Partnership SEND Update

Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee report on Network Coordination of Road and Street works and Lane Rental for Oxfordshire

8. Response to Council Motion on Part-night Lighting by Councillor Brighthouse (Pages 25 - 32)

Cabinet Member: Deputy Leader with Responsibility for Climate Change, Environment and Future Generations

Forward Plan Ref: 2025/009

Contact: Sean Rooney, Service Lead - Highway Maintenance

sean.rooney@oxfordshire.gov.uk

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

The Cabinet is RECOMMENDED to:

- a) **Note the proposal to undertake a full and thorough consultation, including early engagement with key community groups as set out and presented to Place Scrutiny on the 5th February 2025 ([Place and Overview Scrutiny report: Review of Street Lighting and Illuminated Assets policy framework proposals for part night lighting](#))**
- b) **Approve a community led approach to any part-night lighting proposal, through an application made by the town/parish council (if there is one) and the local county councillor, which following this request will include an area specific public consultation.**
- c) **Request that officers;**
 - i. **Keep councillors informed through regular updates on progress of this work, through locality meetings and/or by way of an all-member briefing.**
 - ii. **Ensure that there is full engagement from a cross section of users in the update of the Street Lighting Policy and development of Part night lighting regime framework.**
 - iii. **Undertake a full, thorough and robust Equalities Impact Assessment for the updated Streetlighting and illuminated assets policy, as well as**

- the Part night lighting framework and during each stage/element of a project.
- iv. **Bring the proposals to Cabinet in the summer for decision together with any wider changes to the council's existing Street Lighting and Illuminated Assets policy**

9. Citizens' Assembly Update (Pages 33 - 48)

Cabinet Members: Infrastructure and Development Strategy & Transport Management
Forward Plan Ref: 2025/059
Contact: Carole Stow, Engagement and Consultation Manager
Carole.stow@oxfordshire.gov.uk

Report by Director of Public Affairs, Policy and Partnerships and Director of Environment and Highways **(CA9)**

Cabinet is RECOMMENDED to

- a) **Commit to considering and responding to the key recommendations of the travel and transport citizens' assembly included in Annex A to this report.**
- b) **Formally request that Place and Overview Scrutiny Committee consider the council's response to the assembly recommendations, prior to approval by Cabinet in July 2025.**
- c) **Record its thanks to the residents who participated in the travel and transport citizens' assembly.**

10. Treasury Management Q3 Performance Report 2024/25 (Pages 49 - 64)

Cabinet Member: Finance
Forward Plan Ref: 2024/166
Contact: Tim Chapple, Treasury Manager
Tim.chapple@oxfordshire.gov.uk

Report by Executive Director of Resources and Section 151 Officer **(CA10)**

The Cabinet is RECOMMENDED to note the council's treasury management activity at the end of the third quarter of 2024/25.

11. Business Management and Monitoring Report - January 2025 (Pages 65 - 112)

Cabinet Member: Finance
Forward Plan Ref: 2024/215
Contact: Kathy Wilcox, Head of Financial Strategy

The Cabinet is RECOMMENDED to:-

- a) note the report and annexes
- b) write off £0.1m owed to the council by a company who are in liquidation. (Annex B, para 107).
- c) write off 17 Adult Social Care contribution debts totalling £0.380m. (Annex B, para 110).
- d) propose to contribute £5.0m to the Local Government Devolution and Reorganisation reserve from the un-utilised contingency (£3.3m) and unallocated pay inflation of £1.7m, taking the total contribution to £10.0m in 2024/25 (Annex B, para 124)
- e) approve the transfer of £1.0m funding from IFRS9 reserves to the budget priorities reserve to support rural active travel measures. (Annex B, para 134 - 136)

12. Forward Plan and Future Business (Pages 113 - 116)

Cabinet Member: All

Contact Officer: Colm Ó Caomhánaigh, Committee Officer Tel: 07393 001096

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 **CA12**. 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.

13. For information only: Cabinet response to Scrutiny items (Pages 117 - 124)

Disposal of County Hall
Local Nature Recovery Strategy
EOTAS Policy (Education Other Than At School)

EXEMPT ITEM

In the event that any Member or Officer wishes to discuss the information set out in annex 3 to Agenda Item , 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 ANNEX HAS NOT BEEN MADE PUBLIC AND SHOULD BE REGARDED AS 'CONFIDENTIAL' BY MEMBERS AND OFFICERS

14. Capital Programme and Monitoring Report - January 2025 (Pages 125 - 148)

Cabinet Member: Finance

Forward Plan Ref: 2024/227

Contact: Natalie Crawford, Capital Programme Manager,
Natalie.crawford@oxfordshire.gov.uk

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

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.

Annex 3 containing exempt information under the above paragraph is attached.

The Cabinet is RECOMMENDED to:

Capital Programme

- a. Note the capital monitoring position for 2024/25 set out in this report and summarised in Annex 1.
- b. Approve the updated Capital Programme at Annex 2 incorporating the changes set out in this report.

Additions to the Capital Programme

- c. Approve a budget increase for the Speedwell House Redevelopment programme, to be funded from corporate resources. (see paragraph 63 - 65)
- d. Approve the inclusion of £2.500m funding into the Capital Programme to fund a contribution to the Cowley Branch Line. The expectation is that as far as possible, this will be funded by S106 developer contributions. Any funding gap will be met through alternative funding sources. (see paragraph 66 - 70)

Budget Changes / Budget Release

- e. Approve the inclusion of £0.868m Active Travel Tranche 5 (ATF5) and a further £2.650m of Consolidated Active Travel Funding (CATF) into the Capital Programme. This additional funding, announced by Active Travel England, will be divided into £2.050m for capital expenditure and £0.600m revenue expenditure. Funds will be held in earmarked reserves, pending business cases coming forward.

Councillors declaring interests

General duty

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

What is a disclosable pecuniary interest?

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

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

Declaring an interest

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

Members' Code of Conduct and public perception

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

Members Code – Other registrable interests

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

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

Other registrable interests include:

- a) Any unpaid directorships

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

Members Code – Non-registrable interests

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

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

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

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

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

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

CABINET

MINUTES of the meeting held on Tuesday, 25 February 2025 commencing at 2.00 pm and finishing at 3.30 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 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 Director of People, transformation and Performance), Anita Bradley (Director of Law & Governance and Monitoring Officer), Lisa Lyons (Director of Children's Services), Chris Reynolds (Senior Democratic Services Officer)

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

29/25 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

(Agenda Item. 1)

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Tim Bearder and Dr Nathan Ley.

30/25 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

(Agenda Item. 2)

There were none.

31/25 MINUTES

(Agenda Item. 3)

The minutes of the meetings held on 9, 21 and 28 January 2025 were approved as a correct record.

32/25 QUESTIONS FROM COUNTY COUNCILLORS

(Agenda Item. 4)

There were none received.

33/25 PETITIONS AND PUBLIC ADDRESS

(Agenda Item. 5)

8 Badger Culling

Cllr Ian Middleton

34/25 APPOINTMENTS

(Agenda Item. 6)

There were no appointments to report to this meeting.

35/25 REPORTS FROM SCRUTINY COMMITTEES

(Agenda Item. 7)

Councillor Liam Walker, Chair of the Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee presented the reports on:-

- a) Infrastructure Funding Statement and S106 Project Review
- b) Disposal of County Hall

Cabinet received the reports and will respond in due course.

36/25 BADGER CULLING

(Agenda Item. 8)

Cabinet had before it a report which set out a proposed response to the motion on Badger Culling passed at the meeting of the Council on 10 December 2025.

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Councillor Ian Middleton thanked the Leader for writing to DEFRA and reaffirming the Council's opposition to the badger cull. He noted that since 2018, hundreds of thousands of badgers, including over 8,000 in Oxfordshire, had been killed using public funds. He criticised the randomised badger culling trial from over 20 years ago for its flawed science and lack of evidence supporting the claim that badger culling reduced TB in cattle. Councillor Middleton emphasised that the County Council should not permit culling on its land, sending an important message. He clarified that his motion aimed to find humane and effective measures to control bovine

TB, such as better herd-based measures and accurate testing, rather than disadvantaging farmers. He urged the Council to fully implement the measures in his motion and hoped this stance would prompt the Labour government to review their position on the cull. He concluded by thanking the Council for considering this matter.

Councillor Pete Sudbury, Deputy Leader with Responsibility for Climate Change, Environment and Future Generations presented the report.

During discussion, members expressed support for ending the cull, stating that the evidence linking badgers to the spread of TB was inadequate.

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

RESOLVED 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 would be presented for adoption in due course**
- c) note that the Leader had written to DEFRA making clear the council's continued opposition to the cull and any extension in size and scope.**

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37/25 COUNCILS FOR FAIR TAX DECLARATION

(Agenda Item. 9)

Cabinet had before it a report proposing a response to a motion to request Cabinet to consider approving the “Council’s for Fair Tax Declaration” that was passed at the meeting of the County Council on 5 November 2024

The “Councils for Fair Tax Declaration” was created by The Fair Tax Foundation Limited that operated as a not-for profit social enterprise. It was developed in collaboration with UK cities, towns and districts who believe they could and should stand up for responsible tax conduct. There were currently 63 Councils across the UK which had made the declaration.

The declaration would commit the council to pursuing exemplary tax conduct in its 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.

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 was due to go live on 24 February 2025 would 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.

The Council's existing policies and procedures underpinned the values of good tax conduct, and this would be supported further by the Procurement Act. Approving the Councils for Fair Tax Declaration did not bring any additional responsibility or requirements on the council.

Councillor Dan Levy, Cabinet Member for Finance, presented the report. He emphasised that the declaration required the Council to take even more care to ensure it only dealt with entities that were responsible and paid their taxes.

During discussion members expressed support for the declaration, highlighting the importance of responsible tax practices and the need for the government to act on this issue.

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

RESOLVED to approve the Councils for Fair Tax Declaration

38/25 ENHANCED PATHWAYS BUSINESS CASE - SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AND DISABILITIES (SEND) STRATEGIC EARLY INTERVENTION TEAM

(Agenda Item. 10)

Cabinet had before it a report which sought approval to expand the funding for the Enhanced Pathway project, which was part of the SEND transformation programme.

Councillor Kate Gregory, Cabinet Member for SEND Improvement, presented the report. She explained that Enhanced Pathways provided teacher-led support in mainstream schools for children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). The initiative offered a bespoke curriculum to meet their needs at mainstream schools. The programme started in 2020-21 and had shown promising results, as evidenced by the case studies detailed in the report.

The programme was fully funded by the Dedicated Schools Grant. The report sought approval for the continuation of funding for the 20 existing Enhanced Pathways, approval for funding an additional 20 Enhanced Pathways to expand the project, and a commitment to a three-year funding

period. It also proposed exploring opportunities to scale the programme in the future.

During discussion, members expressed support for the project, noting that it allowed more children to stay in their communities, which was beneficial for families with multiple children. They referred to the importance of ensuring that the funding was used for staff development to benefit teachers, teaching assistants, children, and the rest of the school.

They also pointed out the advantages for children in maintaining friendships within their local area and the positive impact on their social development.

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

RESOLVED 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.**

**39/25 OXFORDSHIRE CLIMATE ADAPTATION ROUTE MAP &
OXFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL CLIMATE ADAPTATION
DELIVERY PLAN**
(Agenda Item. 11)

Cabinet had before it a report proposing a Climate Adaptation Route Map and Delivery Plan. The route map identified the key actions that needed to be taken by Oxfordshire’s stakeholders to mitigate the impacts of climate change.

Councillor Pete Sudbury, Deputy Leader with Responsibility for Climate Change, Environment and Future Generations, presented the report. He highlighted the urgency of the situation, noting that climate change impacts were already being felt. The Route map was based on the third Climate Change Risk Assessment (CCRA 3) published in 2022 and identified 82 actions that needed to be taken as a county. The Route map prioritised 15 actions that need to be started immediately in partnership with key stakeholders.

The Zero Carbon Oxfordshire Manager provided an overview of the Route map and the County Council Delivery Plan. The Route map had been developed in partnership with district councils and has been endorsed by the Future Oxford Partnership. It served as a framework strategy, directing stakeholders on where action was needed. The County Council Delivery Plan focused on addressing the strategic risk of climate impacts on vulnerable residents. An adaptation summit was scheduled for March, with almost 60 people signed up to attend. The summit would focus on capacity building, engagement, and running a risk management workshop. A countywide working group will be set up through the Zero Carbon Oxford Partnership to implement the Route map.

During discussion, members expressed support for the Route map, highlighting the importance of prioritising schools for climate adaptation. A fund was in place to help small primary schools adapt and suggested working with the 36 Multi Academy Trusts in Oxfordshire to ensure a coordinated approach.

Members also emphasised the financial requirements of the Route map and the need for assistance from central government and stakeholders.

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

RESOLVED 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.**

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40/25 CIVIL ENFORCEMENT PROCUREMENT MODEL

(Agenda Item. 12)

Cabinet had before it a report on proposals for a preferred service model and procurement strategy (enhanced multi contractor) for the Council's Civil Enforcement and Zero Emission Zone (ZEZ) operation.

Councillor Andrew Gant, Cabinet Member for Transport Management, presented the report. He explained that this was the second of three cabinet stages for the civil enforcement procurement contract. The third stage would involve moving towards the go-live of the new contract next year.

Councillor Gant highlighted several key features of the recommended model.

During discussion, members expressed support for the proposed model, emphasising the importance of flexibility in the new contract. They noted that issues around dangerous parking were a common concern among residents and highlighted the need for flexibility in terms of where and when enforcement took place. The importance of ensuring that the contractor could recruit enough staff to carry out enforcement effectively was emphasised.

Members echoed the need for flexibility, particularly in adapting to new technologies and maintaining free pavement space. They emphasised the importance of the new contract in supporting the Council's efforts to keep social spaces in town centres free from obstructive parking.

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

RESOLVED 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.**

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41/25 HOUSEHOLD WASTE RECYCLING CENTRE SERVICE DELIVERY MODEL

(Agenda Item. 13)

Cabinet had before it a report in proposals for a new service delivery model for the Council's Household Waste Recycling Centres.

Councillor Pete Sudbury, Deputy Leader with Responsibility for Climate Change, Environment and Future Generations, presented the report. He explained that Oxfordshire has been the top waste recycler in England for the past ten years. The Household Waste Recycling Centres (HWRCs) were a popular and effective part of this success. The Council was already investing significantly in maintaining and improving the Redbridge site and searching for a replacement for the Ardley site, which was nearing the end of its lease.

The Council recently extended the current contract for the management of HWRCs by three years, but this contract would need to be re-tendered in 2.5 years. The Council's waste team was proactively starting the process to explore and consider options for the future management of HWRCs. This included taking into account the new government's implementation of the Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) and the goal of zero waste.

During discussion, members expressed support for exploring options and highlighted the importance of collaboration with neighbouring authorities to address gaps in HWRC coverage, particularly in the northwest of Oxfordshire.

Councillor Sudbury acknowledged the challenges of cross-border collaboration but emphasised the importance of finding a solution that worked for Oxfordshire residents. He added that the Council would use EPR funding to support the development of a new HWRC service delivery model.

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

RESOLVED 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.**

42/25 WORKFORCE REPORT AND STAFFING DATA - QUARTER 3 2024-25

(Agenda Item. 14)

Cabinet had before it a report providing an overview of the progress towards delivering the Our People and Culture Strategy and a review of the workforce profile for October to December 2024 (Q3 2024/25) including the key workforce trends and other relevant management information and performance indicators.

Councillor Neil Fawcett, Cabinet Member for Community and Corporate Services, presented the report, highlighting that the new aspect of this quarterly report was the inclusion of more information about the implementation of the People and Culture Strategy. This strategy, which was two years old, was built around four themes: attract, grow, develop, and lead. It aimed to make Oxfordshire County Council an employer of choice. Councillor Fawcett commended the team for their significant achievements in moving this strategy forward, noting that almost all planned initiatives have been delivered.

The report also included statistics on various workforce trends. Key highlights included:

- A slight drop in the number of full-time equivalent (FTE) employees, which is a positive trend compared to the private sector.
- Ongoing success in apprenticeships, with 45 new apprentices starting in the quarter and an increase in the proportion of available funding being utilised.
- The introduction of a new associate educational psychologist role to undertake statutory work, reducing reliance on expensive agency staff.

Members welcomed the reduction in working hours lost due to sickness, which decreased from 4.98% to 4.54%. This reduction was seen as an early indicator of employee well-being and satisfaction. They also highlighted improvements in workforce diversity, with an increase in the proportion of staff from ethnic minorities (from 9.44% to 11.3%) and staff with disabilities (from 6% to 8.7%).

Cabinet discussed the positive impact of the People and Culture Strategy and the importance of continuing to support staff development and well-being. The reduction in agency staff spending over the past 12 months was also highlighted as a significant achievement.

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

RESOLVED to note the report.

43/25 CAPITAL PROGRAMME APPROVALS - FEBRUARY 2025

(Agenda Item. 15)

Cabinet had before it a report setting out change requests requiring Cabinet approval that will be incorporated into the agreed Capital Programme and included in the next update in March 2025.

Councillor Dan Levy, Cabinet Member for Finance, presented the report and explained the background to the requests for changes to the programme.

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

RESOLVED 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.

44/25 FORWARD PLAN AND FUTURE BUSINESS

(Agenda Item. 16)

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.

45/25 FOR INFORMATION ONLY: CABINET RESPONSE TO SCRUTINY ITEMS

(Agenda Item. 17)

RESOLVED to note the responses to the following Scrutiny items:-

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

46/25 CITY CENTRE ACCOMMODATION STRATEGY - PROPOSED DISPOSAL OF NEW AND OLD COUNTY HALL

(Agenda Item. 18)

RESOLVED: that the public be excluded for the duration of item 18 since it is likely that if they were present during that item there would be disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 3 of Part I of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended) and specified below in relation to those items and since it is considered that, in all the circumstances of the case, the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

Cabinet had before it a report on the proposals for the disposal of New and Old County Hall and the establishment of the Council's core office at a reimagined Speedwell House campus. This City Centre Accommodation strategy aimed to consolidate the council's physical presence in Oxford to have one core central office complemented by community hubs across the county.

The strategy also emphasised the importance of maintaining public access to the new and Old County Hall as far as possible, recognising it as a massive community asset in the centre of Oxford. Additionally, the strategy aimed to set out the council's ambitions around regeneration, renewal, and restoration of the city centre.

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

The Director of Property and Assets then answered a number of questions about the proposals.

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

RESOLVED 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.

.....in the Chair

Date of signing

Divisions Affected – All

CABINET **25 March 2025**

Local Area Partnership SEND Update **Report of Education and Young People** **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 Education and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee, and
 - b) Agree that, once Cabinet has responded, relevant officers will continue to provide each meeting of the Education and Young People Overview & 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 Education and Young People Overview & Scrutiny Committee requires that, within two months of the consideration of this report, the Cabinet publish a response to this report and any recommendations.

INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

3. The Education and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee considered a report on the Local Area Partnership SEND Update at its meeting on 28 February 2025. The report set out updates from across the partnership since the Committee last received a report on SEND in September 2024.
4. The Committee would like to thank Cllr Kate Gregory, Cabinet Member for SEND Improvement, and Cllr John Howson, Cabinet Member for Children, Education and Young People's Services, for attending.

5. As well as the Independent Chair of the SEND Strategic Improvement and Assurance Board (SIAB), Steve Crocker, the Committee was pleased to welcome representatives from across the Local Area Partnership:
- Lisa Lyons, the Director of Children's Services,
 - Kate Reynolds, Deputy Director of Education and Inclusion,
 - Matthew Tait, Chief Delivery Officer (Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire, and Berkshire West Integrated Care Board),
 - Chris Wright, Associate Director of Place – Oxfordshire (Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire, and Berkshire West Integrated Care Board),
 - Jean Kelly, Deputy Director Children's Social Care,
 - Karen Fern, SEND Designated Clinical Officer (Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire, and Berkshire West Integrated Care Board),
 - Maria Bourbon, Oxfordshire CAMHS Service Manager for Oxfordshire University Hospital Foundation Trust (Oxford University Hospital Foundation Trust),
 - Jules Francis-Sinclair, Co-Chair of Oxfordshire Parent Carers Forum,
 - Caroline Kelly, Head of Integrated Commissioning – Start Well,
 - Nick Field, Children's Services Operations Manager,
 - Stephen Chandler, Executive Director of People and Transformation (Deputy Chief Executive).
6. The Chair had also invited members of the Oxfordshire Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee (HOSC) to attend and participate in the scrutiny of the item. In addition to the Deputy Chair of this Committee, Cllr Hannaby, who also sits on HOSC, Sylvia Buckingham and Cllr Haywood attended in person and Cllr Lygo attended virtually, at the discretion of the Chair.

SUMMARY

7. In her opening remarks, the Cabinet member for SEND Improvement thanked those speakers who had addressed the Committee for sharing their experience and invited the Committee to note the progress made, thanked partners across the Local Area Partnership, and explained that the report outlined the progress made by the partners.
8. The Director of Children's Services emphasised to the Committee that the report was a strategic one and that it focused on the work of the Partnership to address the widespread deficiencies identified in the July 2023 inspection. It was important to recognise that joint-working between partners was the crucial means why the necessary turnaround in these areas could be effected.
9. The Committee had wide-ranging and detailed discussions and issues explored included cultural change, Artificial Intelligence diagnostic tools, capacity and demand, recruitment of educational psychologists, data and Key Performance Indicators (KPIs), benchmarking, the SEND Youth Forum, and

school staffing budgets.

10. The Committee makes two recommendations to Cabinet. The first is that, in the interests of transparency and to aid scrutiny, both current iterations of the Priority Action Plan and the KPI report submitted to the SIAB should be published. The second is that there should be more clarity over the SEND Youth Forum.

RECOMMENDATIONS

11. The Committee accepted that the report set out key data in narrative form. Previous reports, however, had included Red Amber Green (RAG) Ratings indicating progress against the various actions required and expected as part of the Priority Action Plan as agreed with the Department for Education. The Committee recognised that the intention was to present the information in a way that presented the information more clearly and which better outlined the progress and milestones achieved.
12. However, whilst paragraph 20 set out that the deep dives and stocktake meetings overseen by the Department for Education and NHS England had “demonstrated incremental progress”, the Committee considered that it would be of value to the Committee to be able to see and scrutinise the RAG Ratings.
13. The Committee noted the concern that it would not necessarily be ideal to publish the KPIs in the public domain because some of the data was unverified and required validation. It also heard that the data lacked detailed analysis and so there was a concern that presenting it without context might have been unhelpful.
14. The Committee did not consider that a sufficiently weighty reason not to publish the information. It would be simple to mark the data as unverified and to explain that it was subject to change, for example, with verification and validation being expected at a certain point in the future. Whilst providing context might be more challenging, the Committee considered that it would not be unreasonable for it to be expected to ask questions of clarification if such were necessary. The ability of the Committee to scrutinise the information before it for the benefit of the Council and of residents is hindered when it is not provided with the data to do so adequately.
15. Similarly, the Committee noted, in paragraph 19 of the report, that Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) that were submitted to the SIAB on a monthly basis had again not been included as part of the data. These, the Committee considered, would show areas that were on target as well as areas that might benefit from closer scrutiny. When it received a LAP Update at its meeting on 20 September 2024, the Committee had raised concerns about a seeming lack of transparency on the part of the Board and its work and had been assured that discussions were then ongoing about how to improve this. It was pleased that there had been some progress in that regard but was of the view that the publication of both the KPIs and the RAG Rating in the public report to

the Committee would have contributed positively to both openness and transparency but, also, to effective and impactful scrutiny.

16. The Committee was grateful to the Director for agreeing to send members of the Committee the data but it was of the view that, in addition to that, they should be published whilst they are still current.

Recommendation 1: That the Council will publish the most recent Key Performance Indicators reported to the SIAB as well as the RAG Rated Priority Action Plan tracker.

17. The Committee was pleased to note the progress made with regard to the development of the SEND Youth Forum and that it had had four meetings and undertaken a number of initiatives. However, there was a concern raised in Committee that not all members recognised the information presented to them in the report in relation to the SEND Youth Forum as entirely accurate. The Committee noted the Director's assurance that the information was accurate as presented and that the SEND Youth Forum does have a work plan and that it has developed some initiatives as set out in the report. The Committee also noted that examples were provided of individual issues raised by the SEND Youth Forum which had led to actions, including separating out the preparing for adulthood and employment opportunities.
18. The Committee believed it would be helpful, both for members of the SEND Youth Forum, the directorate, and the Council more broadly for the Council and the SEND Youth Forum to set out clearly how members of the Forum would be engaged and how the Forum would be regarded as a consultative body vis-à-vis its members. This view arose from a discussion about the SEND Youth Forum Seal of Approval where there was a slight lack of clarity as to whether it had been approved by the Forum as a Forum or whether it had been approved by members of the Forum.
19. The Committee does not, at this stage, have a view on how the Forum should operate but it notes, as paragraph 7 of the report, that it is described as "an integral part of our improvement arrangements". It would, therefore, well behove both the Council and the Forum to be clear about expectations.

Recommendation 2: That the Council should set out how the views of the SEND Youth Forum, and its members, will be taken into account and how they will be presented, including any consultation prior to the publication of any reports about the Forum.

FURTHER CONSIDERATION

20. The Committee expects to consider another update on SEND in the Local Area Partnership in the autumn of 2025.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

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

Anita Bradley
Director of Law and Governance and Monitoring Officer

Annex:	Pro-forma Response Template
Background papers:	None
Other Documents:	None
Contact Officer:	Richard Doney Scrutiny Officer richard.doney@oxfordshire.gov.uk

March 2025

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Divisions Affected – All

CABINET 25 March 2025

Network Coordination of Road and Street works and Lane Rental for Oxfordshire 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 Network Coordination of Road and Street works and Lane Rental for Oxfordshire.
4. The Committee would like to extend its thanks to Cllr Andrew Gant, Cabinet member for Transport Management, for attending to present the report. The Committee was grateful, too, for Paul Fermer, the Director of Environment and Highways, and Keith Stenning, Head of Network Management, for attending and answering the Committee's questions.

SUMMARY

5. Cllr Gant summarised the report and highlighted that managing road and street works included various permits and regulations affecting residents across the county. The report before the Committee set out that the Council had applied for powers to deploy a Lane Rental Scheme which would enable higher charges to be applied to works on the busiest roads on the network at the busiest times. The intention of the Lane Rental Scheme was to incentivise efficient utility works through financial measures which would generate revenue for highway maintenance. Owing to logistical challenges as well as changes in Government requirements, the beginning of the scheme had been delayed twice but it was hoped the scheme would start in October 2025.
6. It was explained that the reason the Council had been slower than some other authorities to apply for a Lane Rental Scheme was because councils needed to have operated successful permit schemes for three years before the application. Previously, the Council had only recorded work notifications whereas it had moved, in recent years, to a permit scheme.
7. The Committee's discussion emphasised the importance of timely and effective communication with members and residents given the disruptive nature on divisions of utility works. The need for effective coordination where there were multiple works was also highlighted. The discussion explored how the Lane Rental Scheme would work and how income could and could not be used. The challenges of enforcing compliance were also raised, with it being noted that the current fines regime offered little deterrent to utility companies from violating the permit granted, particularly with regard to timely completion of works.
8. The Committee makes three observations and two recommendations. The observations are largely to do with how the Committee considers the recommendations might best be achieved and are dealt with in the same section below. They all relate to enforcement, reporting, and communication.

RECOMMENDATIONS AND OBSERVATIONS

9. There are currently three types of works that take place on the highway: street works (utility works), road works (local authority works), and private works (developers or other private organisations). These are all considered as 'works of the highway' under the Council's Network Management Plan and all are subject to the requirements of the New Roads and Street Works Act 1991 and the Oxfordshire Permit Scheme.
10. Different types of application for permits result in different charges (with local authority works being exempt) and so arrangements are different but one of the key concerns raised by the Committee was the need for better communication, particularly on the part of utility companies. Works may be long-planned or they may be emergency and so need to be undertaken with

little warning. However, the impact on residents can be significant. Whilst the works themselves will not be affected by proactively communicating to residents what is happening and why and for how long, the benefits of doing so are likely to ameliorate the sense of impact. The Committee's attention was drawn to a number of local examples where works had taken longer than was originally anticipated with little clarity provided to residents over that extension.

Observation 1: The Committee is strongly of the view that the Council should work with the utility companies, in particular, to encourage better communication with local residents about the purpose, length, and impact of works.

11. In addition to works such as those indicated above, members raised issues of simultaneous works of different kinds within one location which caused problems. The Council does work to ensure that adequate coordination is in place but recognised that there can still be localised issues. In order to identify and address such issues, the Council is reliant on knowing about them. There are generally 12 officers monitoring compliance and addressing issues across the county daily but that does not mean the Council can be aware of every incident and relies, too, on local reporting.
12. Issues could be reported on www.FixMyStreet.com but this would not necessarily lead to an immediate response and nor would it necessarily highlight the urgency of matters needing to be addressed on occasion. The Committee was keen that the Council explore other ways of identifying and reporting localised network issues. It suggested that work could be done with parish councils and with designated fixmystreet.com 'superusers' so as to ensure that local, efficient, and effective reporting mechanisms are in place across the county.

Observation 2: The Committee believes it would benefit the Council to consider how to enable urgent reporting most effectively, particularly using parish councils and potential 'superusers'.

13. The fact that Civil Enforcement Officers (CEOs) are on the ground on a day to day basis led to questions from the Committee as to whether it would be possible for them to be used to maintain and enforce compliance with network issues too. It was explained that, under the current contract, that was not part of the CEOs' remit or responsibility and thus was not feasible currently. However, there was the possibility of including such a responsibility in any new contract with CEOs trained to report issues beyond parking violations, such as road works and traffic problems. This struck the Committee as an idea well worth countenancing and, indeed, encouraging.

Observation 3: The Committee commends the idea of including monitoring of road works and traffic problems on the part of Civil Enforcement Officers in the new parking enforcement contract.

14. Each of the three observations above is a different aspect of how enforcement of requirements for work on the network can be improved for the benefit of both residents and the Council. They all tie in to the first recommendation that the Committee moved which simply sets out that creative thinking is required in order to best achieve better outcomes.

Recommendation 1: That the Council should explore different models for compliance and enforcement with regard to highways works, including the use of technology and crowdsourcing to report issues.

15. There are expectations and requirements relating to how works must be completed, including repair of existing footways and carriage ways, and leaving works locations in a fit manner. Occasions of leftover sandbags and poor infilling were discussed and it was explained that these were contraventions of permit conditions. The Committee recognised that capacity issues might hinder enforcement of this but also considered it vital that such conditions were enforced and that communities were not blighted by sub-standard reinstatement of surfaces. Substandard work of this type is not only ugly but can be dangerous and can also deter active travel. The Committee calls on the Council to do all that it can to avoid it.

Recommendation 2: That the Council should increase enforcement on 'street scars' and ensure proper reinstatement of road surfaces after works.

FURTHER CONSIDERATION

16. The Committee does currently intend to consider the network management as a whole again. Once the Lane Rental Scheme is in operation, it may seek to review this.

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

March 2025

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CABINET

25 MARCH 2025

Response to Council Motion on Part-night Lighting by Councillor Brighthouse

Report by Director of Environment and Highways

RECOMMENDATION

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

- a) Note the proposal to undertake a full and thorough consultation, including early engagement with key community groups as set out and presented to Place Scrutiny on the 5th February 2025 ([Place and Overview Scrutiny report: Review of Street Lighting and Illuminated Assets policy framework proposals for part night lighting](#))
- b) Approve a community led approach to any part-night lighting proposal, through an application made by the town/parish council (if there is one) and the local county councillor, which following this request will include an area specific public consultation.
- c) Request that officers;
 - i. Keep councillors informed through regular updates on progress of this work, through locality meetings and/or by way of an all-member briefing.
 - ii. Ensure that there is full engagement from a cross section of users in the update of the Street Lighting Policy and development of Part night lighting regime framework.
 - iii. Undertake a full, thorough and robust Equalities Impact Assessment for the updated Streetlighting and illuminated assets policy, as well as the Part night lighting framework and during each stage/element of a project.
 - iv. Bring the proposals to Cabinet in the summer for decision together with any wider changes to the council's existing Street Lighting and Illuminated Assets policy

Executive Summary

2. This report is a response to a motion that was passed at Council on 10 December 2024 (at Annex A) and sets out the proposed action to meet this and outlines the proposals developed to date following the deferral of original proposal published for the 14th November Cabinet Member Decision Meeting.

3. This paper sets out how the council plan to refine proposals for a part-night street lighting framework for the county and review the wider Street Lighting and Illuminated Assets policy, engaging with stakeholders and communities to update the policy and develop a suitable part-night lighting framework, as well as inform a revised Equalities Impact Assessment (EIA).
4. New proposals are expected to be presented for decision by Cabinet in July 2025, alongside any wider changes to the council's existing Street Lighting and Illuminated Assets policy.

Background

5. The motion passed, was in response to Dark Skies – Street Lighting Illumination Proposals, presented to Cabinet Member Decision on 14th November 2024.
6. The council has since proposed a new enhanced approach to updating the Streetlighting and illuminated assets policy, detailed in [Place and Overview Scrutiny report: Review of Street Lighting and Illuminated Assets policy framework proposals for part night lighting](#).
7. The council is currently engaging with stakeholders and impacted groups, this engagement will be followed by a full consultation.
8. A timeline for engagement and consultation are detailed in [Place and Overview Scrutiny report: Review of Street Lighting and Illuminated Assets policy framework proposals for part night lighting](#)
9. The updated Streetlighting and illuminated assets policy is planned to be presented to Cabinet for agreement in July 2025 and this will be informed by the updated data from engagement and consultation and include an updated and more comprehensive EIA.

Corporate Policies and Priorities

10. The council's proposal for engaging with stakeholders and communities aligns with the council's values of inclusivity and community involvement.
11. The council's commitment to keeping councillors informed through regular updates supports the council's values of transparency and accountability.
12. The proposed Part-night lighting initiative, if adopted, and applied in a robust way will consider matters of personal safety along with contributing to the County Council's Priorities concerning the Climate Emergency, and increasing biodiversity & nature recovery.

Financial Implications

13. There are no new budgetary implications arising from this report in response to the motion. The development of part-night proposals and the wider review of the council's street lighting and illuminated assets policy is being funded through existing service budgets.

Matthew Kocak, Management Accountant, matthew.kocak@oxfordshire.gov.uk

Legal Implications

14. There are no new legal implications arising from this report in response to the motion. There is no general requirement or obligation for the county council to light the highway. Oxfordshire has set its own policy based on the council's priorities and general guidance and good practice.
15. The legislation and guidance to which the council must have regard when exercising its power to light the highway includes:
 - a. Section 97 of the *Highways Act 1980* gives the county council the power to provide street lighting, along with other provisions that similarly provide the power to light highways and highway features.
 - b. Regulation 5 of *The Highways (Road Humps) Regulations 1999* requires that road humps are illuminated.
 - c. Section 17 of the *Crime and Disorder Act 1998* places on the county council the duty to consider crime and disorder implications of exercising its various functions.
 - d. Section 39 of the *Road Traffic Act 1988* imposes upon the county council a responsibility for taking measures to prevent road traffic accidents.
 - e. The *Traffic Signs Regulations and General Directions 2016* require some traffic signs to be directly illuminated when within a system of street lighting. Traffic sign illumination will not be affected by this initiative.
 - f. The design requirements in BS 5489 allow road lighting levels to be lowered during periods of low traffic volumes
16. The proposed changes to the operational provision of street lighting are within the powers of the county council.

Jennifer Crouch, Head of Law (Environment Team),
jennifer.crouch@oxfordshire.gov.uk

Staff Implications

17. There are no new staffing implications arising specifically from this report in response to the motion. The development of part-night street lighting framework for the county and the review the wider street lighting and illuminated assets policy is being funded through existing service budgets.

Equality & Inclusion Implications

18. The council recognise the implications that these proposals may have on the physical and psychological safety of many residents, including those who are marginalised and vulnerable.
19. The council accept that the EIA, in its current form, did not capture the needs of our residents, including those who are marginalised and vulnerable. The proposed consultation and engagement with stakeholders and communities, as set out in this report, will work to update the policy and develop a suitable part-night lighting framework, as well as inform and update to the current EIA through identifying the impacts that communities might face.
20. The updated EIA will include robust and proportional mitigations and interventions to reduce any negative impact of this proposal may have on Oxfordshire's communities.
21. The EIA is a living document, and the council will continue to engage with communities to ensure that it is truly reflective of the diversity within Oxfordshire.

Sustainability Implications

22. There are no new sustainability implications arising specifically from this report in response to the motion. There is already a climate impact assessment associated with the council's street lighting and illuminated assets policy. This is a living document and will need ongoing updates to reflect the implementation of the proposed new framework for part-night street lighting.

Risk Management

23. There are no new risks arising specifically from this report in response to the motion. The council recognises that there may be risks for vulnerable stakeholders and community groups in relation to part-time lighting that need to be considered.. The council also recognise the risks of engaging and working with vulnerable stakeholders and community groups. Officers will take appropriate actions to protect the interests and wellbeing of the residents and stakeholders.

Consultations

24. To date no formal consultation has been undertaken in respect of the contents of this report. The report presented to Place Overview Scrutiny Committee on 5 February 2025 sets out a robust two-phase approach to consultation and engagement in respect to the development of part-night street lighting framework for the county and the review the wider street lighting and illuminated assets policy

Paul Fermer, Director of Environment and Highways

Annex: Annex A - Motion

Background papers: [Place and Overview Scrutiny report: Review of Street Lighting and Illuminated Assets policy framework proposals for part night lighting](#)

[Streetlighting policy](#)

Other Documents: None

Contact Officer: Sean Rooney
Head of Highway Maintenance & Road Safety
sean.rooney@oxfordshire.gov.uk

March 2025

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Annex A: Motion agreed by Council, 10 December 2024

This Council, being extremely concerned about the lack of political governance in relation to 'Dark Skies', the administration's plan to switch off many of the county's streetlights between 11pm - 6.30am, which could have had significant adverse consequences for public safety across parts of our county, especially our urban centres, had it proceeded.

Recognising the need for the Council to safeguard public money, support our rural parishes in their aspirations to curtail unwanted light pollution and protect and local wildlife in our villages, this Council calls on the Cabinet to:

- i. carry out a full consultation before bringing this back for delegated decision-making by the Cabinet Member,. Such consultation to include all county councillors alongside community groups and particularly those working with women, and girls, and shift workers in our hospitality and other key sectors, who the Council's own report recognises may have been disproportionately affected by this decision;
- ii. ensure that all county councillors are fully briefed, whether through their locality meetings or by way of an all-member briefing, before any streetlights are switched off; and
- iii. ensure that a fuller Equalities Impact Assessment takes place in connection with future decision-making on such matters of public safety, the previous one in Annexe 5 being lacking.

In future, this Council asks that Cabinet consult elected members more fully on matters of public safety in future.

This Council further notes that pre-scrutiny of such important matters would be beneficial to ensure greater democratic oversight.

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CABINET
– 25 March 2025

Citizens' assembly update report

**Report by: Director of public affairs, policy and partnerships and
director of environment and highways**

RECOMMENDATION

1. **Cabinet is RECOMMENDED to**
 - a) Commit to considering and responding to the key recommendations of the travel and transport citizens' assembly included in Annex A to this report.
 - b) Formally request that Place and Overview Scrutiny Committee consider the council's response to the assembly recommendations, prior to consideration by Cabinet in July 2025.
 - c) Record its thanks to the residents who participated in the travel and transport citizens' assembly.

Executive summary

2. In February and March 2025, 34 Oxfordshire residents selected by democratic lottery took part in Oxfordshire County Council's first ever citizens' assembly. Participants dedicated 45 hours across nine meetings and 14 separate sessions to answer the following challenge question:

'What steps do we need to take so Oxfordshire's transport system enables our county's health, economy, and environment to thrive in 2050?'

3. The assembly's purpose was to make recommendations on how the vision and targets set out in the council's local transport and connectivity plan (LTCP) can be achieved in ways that best meet the needs and preferences of the people of Oxfordshire and other stakeholders. Part of the scope of the assembly was to consider congestion in central Oxfordshire and the core schemes in the central Oxfordshire travel plan.
4. This initial report published immediately after the conclusion of the assembly describes the process followed, presents the key recommendations from the assembly and sets out how the council intends to respond to them using a structured framework. It is proposed that a full report of the citizens' assembly and the council's response to the assembly's recommendations will be prepared for cabinet in July 2025.

Background

5. In February 2024, Council approved a budget for 2024/25 which included a Labour and Co-operative Party Group amendment for a citizens' assembly on transport in central Oxfordshire. A one-off £150k investment was allocated for this purpose.
6. In autumn 2024, the council commissioned MutualGain to deliver its travel and transport citizens' assembly. The contract was to deliver an assembly of up to 40 participants, who would meet over the course of 30 hours.
7. On 21 January 2025, in response to a motion agreed at Council on 10 December 2024, Cabinet agreed changes to the citizens' assembly. This was to extend the duration of citizens' assembly by 15 hours to allow a dedicated focus to be given to congestion in central Oxfordshire and the council's suite of traffic management measures in central Oxfordshire (including traffic filters trial, the workplace parking levy, and the expanded zero emissions zone).
8. In February 2025, Council approved a budget for 2025/26 which included a Labour and Co-operative Party Group amendment in two areas for follow-up funding related to the citizens' assembly. These were a one-off £50k investment to publicise the findings of the citizens assembly and undertake a follow-up public engagement exercise, and a recurring £50k investment for two financial years to support the recommendations of the citizens' assembly on travel and transport.

About the council's travel and transport citizens' assembly

9. A citizens' assembly is a broadly representative group of residents who are chosen by democratic lottery. Citizens' assemblies follow agreed standards and usually adopt a three-step process whereby participants:
 - learn by hearing evidence from a wide range of experts and questioning these;
 - deliberate with one another, carefully considering what they have heard and weighing up the pros and cons; and
 - reach collective recommendations on what they think should be done, with each recommendation aiming for 80 per cent agreement across all assembly members.
10. Recruitment to the council's travel and transport citizens' assembly was led by the Sortition Foundation. Forty Oxfordshire residents were selected by democratic lottery to take part against broad quotas designed to reflect the population make-up of the county in terms of geography, demographics, driver status and attitudes towards climate change. Of the 40 residents selected, a core group of 34 assembly members attended every meeting, with the assembly's structure remaining broadly representative of the county's population profile.
11. An independent advisory board, convened to provide oversight for the council's travel and transport citizens' assembly and to help to develop the structure of the assembly, comprised 18 members. The advisory board membership included experts on deliberative democracy; transport; behavioural insights; cross-party political representation; and local experts. Full details are listed on the county council's website at oxfordshire.gov.uk/citizensassembly
12. All citizens' assemblies start with a challenge question to be answered, set by the commissioning organisation and refined by an independent advisory board. The challenge question for the council's travel and transport citizens' assembly was:

'What steps do we need to take so Oxfordshire's transport system enables our county's health, economy, and environment to thrive in 2050?'

13. The assembly's purpose was to make recommendations on how the vision and targets set out in the council's local transport and connectivity plan (LTCP) can be achieved in ways that best meet the needs and preferences of the people of Oxfordshire and other stakeholders.

How was the citizens' assembly structured?

14. The assembly was structured into four distinct phases as follows:
 - introductory phase (12 hours)

- learning phase (18 hours)
- trade-off phase (six hours)
- recommendations phase (six hours).

Supported by:

- pre-reading, homework and evaluation activities (three hours).

15. During the introductory and learning phase, assembly members heard from over 40 experts providing wide ranging information and covering different perspectives. These included academics, businesses representatives, community representatives, travel and transport specialists and council officers.
16. In designing the assembly, MutualGain took account of discussions at the assembly's independent advisory board that highlighted the need to enable public deliberation around implementation of travel and transport interventions while ensuring agreed policy is clearly communicated and democratic decisions are respected. An important part of the process was ensuring participants were equipped with a clear understanding of democratic decisions made by the council, including those not yet implemented, while being encouraged to offer future ideas and constructive insights into how initiatives could be effectively delivered.
17. Set out in paragraphs 18 - 29 below is a high level outline for each of the eleven introductory and learning phase sessions from the assembly.
18. **Session 1:** focused on building connections, creative visioning and understanding the role of the citizens' assembly. Input was provided by the deputy director of the Constitution Unit at University College London (UCL).
19. **Session 2:** focused on building an understanding of travel and transport in Oxfordshire. Input was as follows:
 - A historic view of travel and transport policy in Oxfordshire by the director of the Transport Studies Unit at the University of Oxford.
 - The council's responsibilities regarding travel and transport, the financial landscape, the democratic landscape now and into the future by the council's executive director of resources and Section 151 officer.
 - The importance and challenges of partnership working on travel and transport by the council's director of economy and place.
 - An introduction to Oxfordshire's local transport and connectivity plan by the council's strategic transport manager.
20. **Session 3:** focused on fair road budgeting and explored the different groups that use the roads and considered how to ensure fairness in road usage. It was run in workshop format by the executive director, LSE Cities at the London School of Economics and Political Science. As an output, participants created a hierarchy of use.

21. **Session 4:** mainly focused on people and transport. Assembly members were invited to be custodians of different personas created by advisory board members for the duration of the assembly. Input was provided as follows:
- Video summary of Oxfordshire's director of public health annual report 2023-2024, which calls residents to take individual action to tackle climate change for the benefit of their health.
 - Public expectations and desires for transport by a representative from the national user voice organisation, Transport Focus.
 - Young people's views on future transport in Oxfordshire, output from a county council day-long sounding board event with secondary school aged children.
 - Specially commissioned video featuring perspectives from often underrepresented voices.
 - Introduction to the relationship between travel and transport and the county's economy by a representative from Enterprise Oxfordshire (formerly the Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership).
22. **Session 5:** focused on active travel including its definition and introducing various walking and cycling schemes; and cycling and walking infrastructure in the county. Input was from representatives from Sustrans and Oxfordshire Cycling Network. Participants also took part in a practical workshop run by the council's technical lead for active travel looking at scheme prioritisation. As an output, participants created a hierarchy for how schemes could be prioritised based on eight criteria.
23. **Session 6:** had a specific focus on the central Oxfordshire travel plan area. It included an overview of core schemes and other travel and transport interventions from council officers. The session was preceded by an introductory session on understanding valued disagreements by a postdoctoral researcher in global health ethics from the Nuffield Department of Medicine at the University of Oxford.
24. Session 6 largely comprised of hearing different perspectives in film and facilitated discussion format, including three representatives from Oxford Business Action Group; and representatives from Oxford Licensed Cab Association, Oxfordshire Liveable Streets, a shop owner in East Oxford and a tradesperson based in Oxford. The director of the Transport Studies Unit at the University of Oxford and the executive director, LSE Cities at the London School of Economics and Political Science joined representatives from the council for a separate facilitated discussion.
25. **Session 7:** continued the focus on the central Oxfordshire travel plan and included input from the council's place planning manager and the director of the Transport Studies Unit at the University of Oxford, who explored comparable schemes nationally and locally. The assembly then spent time in workshop format facilitated by MutualGain considering how any revenue generated from a workplace parking levy in Oxford might best be allocated.
26. **Session 8:** focused on public transport in Oxfordshire. Input was provided on Oxfordshire's bus service challenges by a representative from Oxon4buses; and on upcoming and recent improvements to Oxfordshire's bus services by a

representative from Stagecoach West and Oxford Tube. For rail, the council's rail development lead shared information on the council's emerging rail strategy and representatives from the Oxfordshire Community Rail Partnership provided input on engaging local communities in rail planning, including young people.

27. **Session 9:** focused on community transport and local solutions, with input on community transport from the assistant professor in the School of Earth, Environment & Society at McMaster University, Canada and input on volunteer-led solutions to support rural mobility gaps from a representative of First and Last Mile CIC in Witney. Participants then heard again from the director of the Transport Studies Unit at the University of Oxford on aspects of multimodal travel and from a representative from the Campaign for Better Public Transport. They then participated in a workshop exercise led by MutualGain focusing on designing an integrated transport network for different parts of the county.
28. **Session 10:** focused on place shaping. This included input from a representative of The Go-Ahead Group on the role of housing developers; from a research associate in the Transport Studies Unit at the University of Oxford on the role of EV car clubs; and information on how transport fits into place-shaping and long-term planning from the council's head of place shaping and technical lead for movement and place. During this session participants also learned about vision led planning from representatives of Create Streets and took part in a simulated visioning exercise designed by Create Streets.
29. **Session 11:** had two key themes. Firstly, the relationship between travel and transport and health, with input from a community representative giving a patient's perspective; a council public health principal; and through a second specially commissioned video featuring perspectives from often underrepresented voices. The second theme was road safety, and the assembly received input from a representative of UK Road Offender Education and from two members of the county council's vision zero team.

Developing recommendations

30. The recommendations were developed throughout the assembly using the following process:
 - An initial set of assessment criteria that the assembly might use to evaluate recommendations was created and later reviewed after the learning as part of session 4. A draft version of these criteria was then shared with assembly members, who voted on them as part of their homework.
 - The criteria were revised and reviewed by the assembly as part of session 11.
 - Idea collection: Throughout the learning phase, ideas for recommendations were gathered and summarised in an overview document, allowing participants to see the range of perspectives within the group.

Final weekend

- Changes to the assessment criteria were finalised and applied during the final weekend (sessions 12 – 14) to assess both draft and final recommendations.
 - A revised version of the assembly's collective (but not consensus-based) thoughts was provided to each participant in a guidance document as a potential reference when drafting recommendations.
 - Participants engaged in role-play activities to consider different perspectives and trade-offs.
 - Participants developed draft recommendations in groups, which were reviewed and refined by the whole assembly.
 - Final vote: The final recommendations were voted on by each assembly member, with results presented to the council representatives present.
31. Overall, the assembly developed 20 recommendations, 16 of which secured over 80 per cent support from assembly participants. All recommendations were delivered 'live' to senior council representatives, some members of the citizens' assembly advisory board and all of the project team on 16 March 2025 and are included in Annex A to this report. The previous day the assembly had input from a professor in public policy (global public policy) at the University of Oxford's Blavatnik School of Government on framing good recommendations.

Responding to the citizens' assembly recommendations

32. All recommendations arising from the citizens' assembly will be considered carefully by council officers, including by specialists in transport policy, in place planning and in communications and engagement. This is in the context of the adopted local transport and connectivity plan 5 and its underlying policies and supporting strategies; the central Oxfordshire travel plan and existing and planned schemes of work arising from the previous local transport plan 4, 'Connecting Oxfordshire'.
33. To ensure a fair and consistent approach to considering each recommendation, the council will develop a classification system, building on a [similar framework used to respond to the 2022 Street Voice citizens' jury recommendations](#). The final output will be a table categorising each recommendation and clarifying the role of the council in taking it forward, the area of the council responsible and any appropriate details of progress already made.
34. It is proposed that a further update on the citizens' assembly returns to Cabinet in July 2025, which will be part of a new administration following the county council elections in May 2025. This will include the full report of the assembly from MututalGain and the council's response to the assembly recommendations set out in Annex A. It is proposed that the Place and Overview Scrutiny Committee consider the council's response to the assembly

recommendations in June 2025, so that the cabinet can take the committee's views into account.

Next steps

35. During March and April 2025, MutualGain will formally report on the citizens' assembly and prepare a short film on its proceedings.
36. The council will publish more detailed information on what the assembly covered including evidence givers' presentations and films (where consent has been obtained), to coincide with the publication of the final report of the assembly in July 2025.
37. The council will produce a cross-channel communications and engagement plan to publicise the recommendations of the citizens' assembly and the council's agreed response to them.
38. Arrangements will be developed for monitoring progress against each citizens' assembly action which is upheld and where it is identified that the council has a role in taking it forward. Subject to consent, it is hoped that the council can continue to work with assembly participants to co-design this process.

Corporate policies and priorities

39. The citizens' assembly supports the council's strategic priorities of: i) playing our part in a vibrant and participatory local democracy; and ii) investing in an inclusive, integrated and sustainable transport network.
40. The council's adopted consultation and engagement strategy provides a framework to support innovative and new ways to undertake public engagement and consultation – the citizens' assembly falls within the scope of that strategy.

Financial implications

41. There are no new budgetary implications arising from this report. Following the agreement of the council's response to the assembly recommendations, plans will be made to use the funding allocated in the 2025/26 council budget specifically for the citizens' assembly. This includes both the one-off £50k investment to publicise the findings of the citizens assembly and undertake a follow-up public engagement exercise and the recurring £50k investment for two financial years to support the recommendations of the citizens' assembly on travel and transport.

Lorna Baxter, Executive Director of Resources and Section 151 Officer
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Legal implications

42. The decision to hold a citizens' assembly is an executive function. Whilst there is no general legal duty to hold a citizens' assembly, the council has wide powers to engage with its residents. Primary amongst these is the general power of competence (section 1 Localism Act 2011) and the 'best value' duty requiring the council to seek improvement in the way in which its functions are exercised.
43. The legal implications from recommendations arising out of the citizens assembly will be considered on their individual merits at the point of decision and is therefore not dealt with in this report.

Kim Sawyer Interim Head of Legal & Governance
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Staffing implications

44. There are no new or additional staff implications arising from this report.

Equality and inclusion implications

45. There are no specific equality implications arising from this report. Equality and inclusion impacts were core to the design and delivery of the citizens' assembly. Where specific citizens' assembly recommendations are upheld following assessment by the council, equalities impact assessments will be completed or will already have been completed related to specific planned pieces of work.

Sustainability implications

46. There are no specific sustainability implications arising from this report. Where specific citizens' assembly recommendations are upheld, sustainability implications will be considered or will already have been considered related to specific planned pieces of work.

Risk management

47. This is an update report only. Where specific citizens' assembly recommendations are upheld, risk assessments will be considered or will already have been considered related to specific planned pieces of work

Susannah Wintersgill, Director of Public Affairs, Policy and Partnerships
Paul Fermer, Director of Environment and Highways

Annex A: Recommendations from the 2025 travel and transport citizens' assembly

Background papers: Nil

Other Documents: Nil

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March 2025

Annex A - Citizens' Assembly recommendations

Introduction

Presented in this annex are the recommendations from the citizens' assembly.

They are presented in 'raw format' as captured at the final session of the assembly on Sunday 16th March. Recommendations are listed in order of preference as expressed by assembly members.

Those shown in table one secured over 80 per cent support from assembly participants. We maintain the use of the 80 per cent threshold, which was established when citizens' assemblies first gained prominence, as a means of ensuring that each assembly member has the opportunity to individually register their position before recommendations are finalised. This approach provides a clear indication of consensus within the assembly.

Recommendations that do not meet the 80 per cent threshold during the assembly are shown in table two.

About the assembly recommendations

As described in the accompanying Cabinet paper, this citizens' assembly brought together a diverse range of views and lived experiences, fostering extensive dialogue and debate before the final deliberation stage. As a result, these recommendations reflect a well-rounded and considered perspective on the issues discussed. Any similarities observed will reflect one of two reasons:

1. They did not have the opportunity to merge due to time on the weekend
2. The dialogue sitting behind them was different and will be reflected in the final report.

The assembly members trust that these recommendations represent what they collectively value and ask the council and its partners to consider as they move forward with the local transport and connectivity plan (LTCP) and the central Oxfordshire travel plan (COTP).

The names of facilitators have been retained in three recommendations, as one of the new proposals specifically references them.

Table one: Citizens' assembly recommendations that achieved over 80 per cent support

	Recommendation	Level of support from assembly participants %
1.	<p>To reduce congestion and emissions in Central Oxfordshire by maximising the use of park and ride:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Use of shuttle services to businesses, schools and hospitals from park and ride - Improved cycle connectivity to park and ride and safe cycle storage - Increased frequency of buses from park and ride and incentivised use by making them free. - Improved connectivity between park and ride. <p>This should commence within 12 months.</p>	97.06
2.	<p>Implement standardised ticketing across all of the bus companies in the county. This will make buses easier especially for younger and older people, visitors and people whose first language is not English. Increase overall bus use.</p>	94.12
3.	<p>Sell the vision to the public: inform them about transport and active travel options, and their benefits. Examples: information stands with live feeds, social media campaigns, posters and billboards, regional news and radio, advertising on taxis and public transport.</p>	94.12
4.	<p>Oxfordshire County Council (OCC) to create and administer a 'kite mark' / standard called 'The Oxford Travel Positive Employer' for large companies (e.g over 100 employees). This will generate revenue for OCC to contribute to a ring fenced fund for active travel, traffic reduction, and low emission travel. Criteria could include introduction of shuttle services for staff, use of EV vehicles, encouraging staff to use buses, shower and change facilities, and encouraging car sharing, with Gold, Silver and Bronze levels for the employers</p>	94.12

5.	<p>Invest in educating and informing the public about transport and active travel options and their benefits. To sell the vision of a healthier and more connected travel network and increase public buy in for effective implementation. People need to be inspired by the benefits and opportunities of active travel and public transport. Offer carrots in order to make effective change.</p> <p>Education: school programmes, information roadshows, social media campaigns, posters, billboards, advertising (on buses and taxis).</p> <p>Information: Information points in town and city centres with live data, maps, links to support, accessibility features (vision impaired etc.), information about where to find trains, buses, taxi ranks, bicycle rentals etc.</p> <p>Make public knowledge of information points through social media campaigns, regional radio and news (etc.)</p>	94.11
6.	<p>To improve connectivity in rural areas by ensuring that local communities are listened to by involving them in decision making. Considerations should be given to active travel options and repurposing bridle paths for greenways, rural hubs, car sharing, community travel (mini buses and cars), any other needs identifies by the community, first and last mile options. In terms of accountability evidence MUST be shown that community voices have been listened to in the decision making.</p>	91.18
7.	<p>Improve community infrastructure in the medical sector.</p> <p>Why? less congestion and reducing car journeys, and reduce number of people coming into Oxford. This is line with liveable neighbourhoods thinking.</p>	91.18
8.	<p>Reduce road fatalities and serious injuries by encouraging behaviour change through, for example, enforcements of 20mph limits, using ANPR, more use of speed warnings 'face' signs. Support for residents who want to get involved in community traffic watch initiatives and speed humps. Implement</p>	88.25

	in residential areas, outside schools, and other road fatality hotspots.	
9.	Implementing a franchise model between county council and bus companies so that the council takes back control of bus routes, timetables and pricing so that it ensures that it is driven by needs and services, not just profit. Similar to London and Manchester models.	88.24
10.	Build new housing developments so that major facilities are within walking distance. This will reduce traffic, encourage health habit, build community and create jobs. We acknowledge sometimes it is supportive for well being for people to get out of their immediate neighbourhood - this proposal does not remove the possibility of people doing that.	88.24
11.	<p>A designated road just for a bus system (exceptions for cyclists, emergency vehicles, blue badge holders and taxis during certain hours).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Frequent service and stops - Subsidies for 60+ - Under 16s- incentivise families. <p>City centre location - moving towards a car free city centre.</p> <p>Reserved/exclusive to buses - not new build, existing roads</p> <p>Long term behaviour change. Depends on a 1st class service, has to be accessible, frequent and affordable (an alternative to having a tram).</p>	88.23
12.	Make the city centre car free while being fair and not disadvantaging key groups. The aim would be to reduce congestion, cut emissions, improve environmental and human health and make the city more visitor friendly. Those mainly impacted by this would be car drivers. The intention is to create alternatives for drivers, implementing policies in a phased way so that they have alternatives to use. Alternatives include: strengthening bus networks, making cycling safer, and making the Park and Rides into mobility hubs). It is likely disincentives (sticks) would be needed to encourage people out of cars.	87.67

13.	Promote generational change over the next 15 years to shift the next generation to think active travel first, bus second, car third by making bus and bike travel affordable, extending bike programmes for schools, education programmes from primary school all the way through, and children travel free on public transport. This also helps change behaviour of parents.	86.73
14.	Introduce mobility hubs types 1 and 2 to make cycling safer, reduce congestion, improve rural connectivity Specifically, type 1 in Banbury and Dicot Type 2 in Chipping Norton, Abingdon, Witney, Wantage.	84.76
15.	Introduce a graduated Work Place Parking Levy which must be paid by the employer rather than the employee, and which facilitates reductions and award 'Kite Marks' to those employers that contribute to the COTP and LTCP - exemptions to be decided in a consultation process.	82.36
16.	<p>What: reduce driving by commuters, short trips, and school runs.</p> <p>Why: in order to improve health and the environment, and reduce traffic fatalities by:</p> <p>How:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Introducing a workplace parking levy to generate income for other travel schemes 2. Encourage car sharing by business, schools and other organisations by introducing apps etc and advertising car share schemes. Reflect in the employer kite mark. 3. Introduction of mobility hubs at train stations. 	82.35

Table 2: Recommendations below 80 per cent support

	Recommendation	Level of support from assembly participants %
17.	Subsidised travel for 60+ ensuring it is accessible in peak times. Children under 10 free, children 10-16 (or 18) free during school times, funded by WPL and ZEZs	79.42
18.	Implement a congestion charge to cut car usage coming into the town centre and raise money for the county council. This should be in addition to the ZEZ. This would encourage us to use the park and ride. It is important to have alternatives to car use before this is implemented. For instance using the money that is raised to incentivise other transport options. There will need to be exceptions.	73.53
19.	Trams: develop a north - south and east- west in Oxford that links the park and rides. Trams are sleek, modern, spacious and carry more people than buses. Their energy consumption is also much lower than that of a bus. They provide more capacity than buses and additional room for wheelchair and bicycle users. A tram would help maximise usage of park and rides.	73.53
20.	Generate income to enable the recommendations approved yesterday (Saturday), recommendation 12 and recommendation 14. We will do this by evolving the ZEZ into a wider congestion zone within the ring road, with fair exemptions/concessions by late 2020s.	69.7

CABINET – 25 MARCH 2025

TREASURY MANAGEMENT QUARTER 3 PERFORMANCE REPORT 2024/25

Report by Executive Director of Resources & Section 151 Officer

RECOMMENDATION

1. **The Cabinet is RECOMMENDED to note the council's treasury management activity at the end of the third quarter of 2024/25.**

Executive Summary

1. Treasury management is defined as: "The management of the organisation's borrowing, investments and cash flows, including its banking, money market and capital market transactions, the effective control of the risks associated with those activities, and the pursuit of optimum performance consistent with those risks."
2. The Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy's (CIPFA's) 'Code of Practice on Treasury Management 2021' requires that committee to which some treasury management responsibilities are delegated, will receive regular monitoring reports on treasury management activities and risks. This report is the third for the 2024/25 financial year and sets out the position at 31 December 2024.
3. Throughout this report, the performance for the three quarters of the year to December 2024 is measured against the budget agreed by Council in February 2024.
4. As at 31 December 2024, the council's outstanding debt totalled £271m and the average rate of interest paid on long-term debt during the year was 4.41%. The council launched a "green bond" in December 2024 aiming to raise £0.5m. No other external borrowing was raised during the quarter, whilst £3m of maturing Public Works Loan Board (PWLB), and £5m of LOBO¹ loans were repaid. The cumulative amount of PWLB and LOBO loans repaid during 2024/25 is £3m and £10m, respectively. The council's forecast debt financing position for 2024/25 is shown in Annex 1.
5. The [Treasury Management Strategy for 2024/25](#) agreed in February 2024 assumed an average base rate of 4.75%.

¹ LOBO (Lender's Option/Borrower's Option) Loans are long-term loans which include a re-pricing option for the bank at predetermined intervals.

6. The average daily balance of temporary surplus cash invested in-house was expected to be £463m in 2024/25, with an average in-house return on new and existing deposits of 4.25%.
7. During the nine months to 31 December 2024 the council achieved an average in-house return of 4.74% on average cash balances of £455.652m, producing gross interest receivable of £17.404m. In relation to external funds, the return for the nine months was £2.967m, bringing total investment income to £20.372m. This compares to budgeted investment income of £14.156m, giving a net overachievement of £6.256m.
8. At 31 December 2024, the council's investment portfolio totalled £503.390m. This comprised £390.000m of fixed term deposits, £14.924m at short term notice in money market funds and £98.465m in pooled funds with a variable net asset value. Annex 4 provides an analysis of the investment portfolio at 31 December 2024.

Treasury Management Activity

Debt Financing & Maturing Debt

9. The strategy for long term borrowing agreed in February 2024 included the option to fund new or replacement borrowing up to the value of £232m through internal borrowing. The aim was to reduce the council's exposure to credit risk and reduce the long-term cost of carry (difference between borrowing costs and investment returns).
10. The council is able to borrow from the Public Works Loan Board (PWLB) or through the money markets. Higher than target inflation has led to bond yields, and therefore PWLB rates, remaining high. The expectation is that as inflation falls, PWLB rates should reduce over the medium term. Given the forecast for borrowing rates, the strategy for 2024/25 assumes no new external borrowing during the year, with any increase in the capital financing requirement met through internal borrowing. The exception to this being new debt of £0.5m raised the community municipal investment known as the Oxfordshire Green Bond.
11. As at 31 December 2024, the authority had 42 PWLB loans totalling £241.383m, 5 LOBO loans totalling £25m and one £5m money market loan. The average rate of interest paid on PWLB debt was 4.52% and the average cost of LOBO debt in 2024/25 was 3.91%. The cost of debt on the money market loan was 3.95%. The combined weighted average for interest paid on long-term debt was 4.39%. The council's debt portfolio as at 31 December 2024 is shown in Annex 1.
12. The council repaid £3m of maturing PWLB loans and £5m of LOBO loans during the third quarter of the year. The weighted average interest rate payable on the matured loans was 4.02%. The forecast outturn for interest payable in 2024/25 is £12.21m. This is below the budgeted figure of £15.30m as a result of the early repayment of £10m of LOBO loans during the year. The details are set out in Annex 2.

Investment Strategy

13. The council holds deposits and invested funds representing income received in advance of expenditure plus balances and reserves. The guidance on Local Government Investments in England gives priority to security and liquidity and the council's aim is to achieve a yield commensurate with these principles. The council continued to adopt a cautious approach to lending to financial institutions and continuously monitored credit quality information relating to counterparties.
14. During the first three quarters of the financial year term fixed deposits have been placed with other Local Authorities as per the approved lending list, whilst Money Market Funds have been utilised for short-term liquidity. Inter local authority lending remains an attractive market to deposit funds with from a security view point, whilst the Government's Debt Management Deposit Facility (DMADF) has also provided a competitive and secure counterparty from time to time.
15. The Treasury Management Strategy Statement and Annual Investment Strategy for 2024/25 included the use of external fund managers and pooled funds to diversify the investment portfolio through the use of different investment instruments, investment in different markets, and exposure to a range of counterparties. It is expected that these funds should outperform the council's in-house investment performance over a rolling three-year period. The strategy permitted up to 50% of the total portfolio to be invested with external fund managers and pooled funds (excluding Money Market Funds). The performance of the pooled funds will continue to be monitored by the Treasury Management Strategy Team (TMST) throughout the year against respective benchmarks and the in-house portfolio.
16. At the start of the year the UK Bank Rate was 5.25% which was in line with the forecast. Reductions of 25bps in August and November 2024 and February 2025 brought the rate down to 4.50%. The market is forecasting that the base rate will continue to reduce and will be 4.00% by the end of 2025.

The Council's Lending List

17. In-house cash balances are deposited with institutions that meet the council's approved credit rating criteria. The approved lending list, which sets out those institutions, is updated to reflect changes in bank and building society credit ratings. Changes are reported to Cabinet as part of the Business Management & Monitoring Report. The approved lending list may also be further restricted by officers, in response to changing conditions and perceived risk. There were no changes to the lending list during the third quarter of 2024/25.

Investment Performance

18. Temporary surplus cash balances include: developer contributions; council reserves and balances; and various other funds to which the council pays interest at each financial year end. The budgeted annual return on these in-

house balances for 2024/25 was 4.25% and assumed an average annual in-house cash balance of £361.622m.

19. The actual average daily balance of temporary surplus cash invested in-house was £472.306m for the first three quarters of 2024/25 and the average in-house return was 4.74%, producing gross interest receivable of £17.404m. Gross distributions from pooled funds totalling £2.967m were also realised in the three quarters, bringing total investment income to £20.372m. This compares to budgeted investment income of £14.116m, giving a net overachievement of £6.256m. This reflects a combination of higher than forecast average cash balances, and higher than forecast interest rates.
20. Cash balances for the year are forecast to be lower than they otherwise would be as a result of negative Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) balances relating to High Needs. The negative DSG balance by the end of 2024/25 is forecast to be £84.20m. This would have an estimated opportunity cost of £3.49m in unearned interest during 2024/25.
21. The council operates a number of instant access call accounts and money market funds to deposit short-term cash surpluses. During the first three quarters of 2024/25 the average balance held on instant access was £82.633m, at an average rate of 4.98%.
22. At 31 December 2024 the total value of pooled fund investments was £98.465m. This has decreased from the last reported value of £98.861m at 30 September 2024.
23. At 31 December 2024, the council's investment portfolio totalled 503.390m. This comprised £390.000m of fixed term deposits, £14.924m at short term notice in money market funds and £98.465m in pooled funds with a variable net asset value. Annex 4 provides an analysis of the investment portfolio at 31 December 2024.
24. The council's Treasury Management Strategy Team regularly monitors the risk profile of the council's investment portfolio. An analysis of the credit and maturity position of the portfolio at 31 December 2024 is included at Annex 4.

Prudential Indicators for Treasury Management

25. During the first three quarters of the year, the council operated within the treasury limits and Prudential Indicators set out in the council's Treasury Management Strategy for 2024/25. The position for the Prudential Indicators as at 31 December 2024 is shown in Annex 3.

Financial Implications

26. This report is mostly concerned with finance and the implications are set out in the main body of the report. The impact of additional interest on cash balances

and income from investments is reflected in the forecast position set out in the Business Management & Monitoring Reports to Cabinet.

Comments checked by:

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

Legal Implications

27. The budget is a non-executive function, however the Cabinet has a duty under the Local Government Act 2000 to monitor the budget and make any recommendations to Council as they think fit.
28. The statutory framework for the prudential financial system is set out in the Local Government Act 2003 and the Local Authorities (Capital Finance and Accounting) (England) Regulations 2003. These Regulations provide that the Council must have regard to CIPFA codes in managing its budget.
29. The report is in accordance with both the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) Code of Practice on Treasury Management and the CIPFA Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities. The Council has a wide power to borrow under section 1 of the 2003 Act up to the affordable limit determined by the Council having regard to the CIPFA Code of Practice. The Council also has powers to invest under section 12 of the 2003 Act, subject to restrictions contained in the Local Authorities (Funds)(England) Regulations 1992.

Comments checked by:

Kim Sawyer Interim Head of Legal & Governance
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Staff Implications

30. There are no staffing implications arising from the updates set out in this report

Equality & Inclusion Implications

31. There are no equality or inclusion implications arising from the report.

Sustainability Implications

32. This report is not expected to have any negative impact with regards to the Council's zero carbon emissions commitment by 2030.
33. In December 2024, the council launched its first "green bond" to raise £0.5m. The funding generated through the bond will be used to fund the Capital Programme which includes the council's tree planting and decarbonisation projects.

Risk Management

34. The purpose of treasury management is the management of the council's borrowing, investments and cash flows, including its banking, money market and capital market transactions; the effective control of the risks associated with those activities; and the pursuit of optimum performance consistent with those risks".
The Prudential Code
35. Prudential indicators and credit criteria are agreed by Council each year as part of the Treasury Management Strategy.
36. The credit quality of institutions, changes in the interest rate forecast, cash flow, and prudential indicators are monitored throughout the year and reported monthly to the TMST and quarterly to the council's Audit & Governance Committee, Cabinet and Council.

LORNA BAXTER

Executive Director of Resources & Section 151 Officer

Annex: Annex 1 – Oxfordshire County Council Debt Financing
2024/25

Annex 2 – Long Term Debt Maturing 2024/25

Annex 3 – Prudential Indicator Monitoring to 31 December 2024

Annex 4 – Oxfordshire County Council Investment Portfolio at 31 December 2024

Background papers: Treasury Management Strategy 2024/25

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March 2025

Annex 1

OXFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL DEBT FINANCING 2024/25

<u>Debt Profile</u>		£m
1. PWLB	54%	244.38
2. Other Long Term Loans	9%	40.00
3. Sub-total External Debt		284.38
4. Internal Balances	37%	166.54
5. Actual Debt at 31 March 2024	100%	450.92
6. Prudential Borrowing		73.35
7. Borrowing in Advance		0.00
8. Minimum Revenue Provision		-11.84
9. Forecast Debt at 31 March 2025		464.23
<u>Maturing Debt</u>		
10. PWLB loans maturing during the year		-3.00
11. PWLB/LOBO Loans repaid prematurely		10.00
12. Total Maturing Debt		-22.00
<u>New External Borrowing</u>		
13. PWLB Normal		0.00
14. PWLB loans raised in the course of debt restructuring		0.00
15. Money Market loans		0.50
16. Total New External Borrowing		0.50
<u>Debt Profile Year End</u>		
17. PWLB	48%	241.38
18. Money Market loans (incl £25m LOBOs)	6%	30.50
19. Forecast Sub-total External Debt		271.88
20. Forecast Internal Balances	46%	228.14
21. Forecast Debt at 31 March 2025	100%	500.02

Line Explanation

- 1 – 5 This is a breakdown of the Council's debt at the beginning of the financial year (1 April 2024). The PWLB is a government agency operating within the Debt Management Office. LOBO (Lender's Option/ Borrower's Option) loans are long-term loans, with a maturity of up to 60 years, which includes a re-pricing option for the bank at predetermined time intervals. Internal balances include provisions, reserves, revenue balances, capital receipts unapplied, and excess of creditors over debtors.
- 6 'Prudential Borrowing' is borrowing taken by the authority whereby the associated borrowing costs are met by savings in the revenue budget.
- 7 'Borrowing in Advance' is the amount the Council borrowed in advance to fund future capital finance costs.
- 8 The amount of debt to be repaid from revenue. The sum to be repaid annually is laid down in the Local Government and Housing Act 1989, which stipulates that the repayments must equate to at least 4% of the debt outstanding at 1 April each year.
- 9 The Council's forecast total debt by the end of the financial year, after taking into account new borrowing, debt repayment and movement in funding by internal balances.
- 10 The Council's normal maturing PWLB debt.
- 11 PWLB/LOBO debt repaid early during the year.
- 12 Total debt repayable during the year.
- 13 The normal PWLB borrowing undertaken by the Council during 2024/25.
- 14 New PWLB loans to replace debt repaid early.
- 15 The Money Market borrowing undertaken by the Council during 2024/25
- 16 The total external borrowing undertaken.
- 18-22 The Council's forecast debt profile at the end of the year.

Long-Term Debt Maturing 2024/25**Public Works Loan Board: Loans maturing during 2024/25**

Date	Amount £m	Rate %
22/11/2024	3.000	4.250%
Total	3.000	

LOBO Loans called & repaid during 2024/25

Date	Amount £m	Rate %
31/07/2024	5.000	3.950%
02/10/2024	5.000	4.010%
Total	1000	

Prudential Indicators Monitoring at 31 December 2024

The Local Government Act 2003 requires the Authority to have regard to CIPFA's Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities (the Prudential Code) when determining how much money it can afford to borrow. To demonstrate that the Authority has fulfilled the requirements of the Prudential Code the following indicators must be set and monitored each year.

Authorised and Operational Limit for External Debt

Actual debt levels are monitored against the Operational Boundary and Authorised Limit for External Debt below. The Operational Boundary is based on the Authority's estimate of most likely, i.e. prudent, but not worst case scenario for external debt. The council confirms that the Operational Boundary has not been breached during the third quarter of 2024/25.

The Authorised Limit is the affordable borrowing limit determined in compliance with the Local Government Act 2003. It is the maximum debt that the Authority can legally owe. The authorised limit provides headroom over and above the operational boundary for unusual cash movements. The Authorised Limit was not breached in the in the third quarter of 2024/25 and is not expected to be breached by year end.

Authorised limit for External Debt	£555,000,000
Operational Limit for External Debt	£570,000,000
Capital Financing Requirement for year	£508,413,000

	Actual 31/03/2024	Forecast 31/12/2024
Borrowing	£284,382,618	£271,382,618
Other Long-Term Liabilities	£ 836,000	£ 836,000
Total	£285,218,618	£272,218,618

Interest Rate Exposures

These indicators are set to control the Authority's exposure to interest rate risk. The upper limits on fixed and variable rate interest exposures. Fixed rate investments are borrowings are those where the rate of interest is fixed for the whole financial year. Instruments that mature during the financial year are classed as variable rate.

Fixed Interest Rate Exposure

Fixed Interest Net Borrowing limit	£350,000,000
Actual at 31 December 2024	-£143,617,382

Variable Interest Rate Exposure

Variable Interest Net Borrowing limit	£0
Actual at 31 December 2024	-£87,553,762

Principal Sums Invested over 365 days

Total sums invested for more than 364 days limit	£215,000,000
Actual sums invested for more than 364 days	£ 30,000,000

Maturity Structure of Borrowing

This indicator is set to control the Authority's exposure to refinancing risk. The upper and lower limits on the maturity structure of fixed rate borrowing and the actual structure at December 2024, are shown below. Time periods start on the first day of each financial year. The maturity date of borrowing is the earliest date on which the lender can demand repayment.

	Limit %	Actual %
Under 12 months	0 - 20	4.42
12 – 24 months	0 - 25	11.79
24 months – 5 years	0 - 35	11.79
5 years to 10 years	5 - 40	31.83
10 years +	25 - 95	40.16

OXFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL INVESTMENT PORTFOLIO 31/12/2024

Fixed term deposits held at 31/12/2024

Counterparty	Principal Deposited	Maturity Date
Falkirk Council	£5,000,000.00	03/01/2025
Aberdeen City Council	£5,000,000.00	03/01/2025
Conwy County Borough Council	£5,000,000.00	03/01/2025
Police and Crime Commissioner for Lancashire	£5,000,000.00	06/01/2025
Surrey County Council	£5,000,000.00	07/01/2025
South Ayrshire Council	£3,000,000.00	08/01/2025
Surrey County Council	£5,000,000.00	23/01/2025
Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council	£5,000,000.00	24/01/2025
Police and Crime Commissioner for Merseyside	£5,000,000.00	24/01/2025
Surrey County Council	£5,000,000.00	27/01/2025
East Dunbartonshire Council	£5,000,000.00	29/01/2025
Falkirk Council	£5,000,000.00	31/01/2025
London Borough of Waltham Forest Council	£5,000,000.00	31/01/2025
West Dunbartonshire Council	£5,000,000.00	06/02/2025
Fife Council	£5,000,000.00	14/02/2025
Bolton Metropolitan Borough Council	£5,000,000.00	14/02/2025
Monmouthshire County Council	£5,000,000.00	17/02/2025
Somerset Council	£5,000,000.00	17/02/2025
Fife Council	£5,000,000.00	18/02/2025
Cambridgeshire County Council	£5,000,000.00	24/03/2025
East Dunbartonshire Council	£5,000,000.00	24/03/2025
High Peak Borough Council	£3,000,000.00	09/04/2025
London Borough of Newham Council	£5,000,000.00	11/04/2025
Police and Crime Commissioner for Lancashire	£5,000,000.00	14/04/2025
South Ayrshire Council	£5,000,000.00	17/04/2025
Plymouth City Council	£5,000,000.00	22/04/2025
Rushmoor Borough Council	£5,000,000.00	25/04/2025
Rushmoor Borough Council	£5,000,000.00	29/04/2025
West Dunbartonshire Council	£5,000,000.00	30/04/2025
Rushmoor Borough Council	£5,000,000.00	06/05/2025
North Lanarkshire Council	£5,000,000.00	12/05/2025
Plymouth City Council	£5,000,000.00	13/05/2025
London Borough of Waltham Forest Council	£5,000,000.00	23/05/2025
London Borough of Waltham Forest Council	£5,000,000.00	23/05/2025
Darlington Borough Council	£5,000,000.00	29/05/2025
Blackpool Council	£5,000,000.00	30/05/2025
London Borough of Waltham Forest Council	£5,000,000.00	30/05/2025
Police and Crime Commissioner for Lancashire	£5,000,000.00	02/06/2025
Isle of Wight Council	£5,000,000.00	09/06/2025

Counterparty	Principal Deposited	Maturity Date
Monmouthshire County Council	£5,000,000.00	10/06/2025
Cornwall Council	£5,000,000.00	30/06/2025
Blackpool Council	£5,000,000.00	30/06/2025
Oldham Council	£5,000,000.00	29/07/2025
Plymouth City Council	£5,000,000.00	07/08/2025
West Dunbartonshire Council	£5,000,000.00	12/08/2025
North Lanarkshire Council	£5,000,000.00	12/08/2025
Gloucester City Council	£7,000,000.00	13/08/2025
Kirklees Council	£5,000,000.00	15/08/2025
Cambridgeshire County Council	£5,000,000.00	20/08/2025
South Tyneside Council	£5,000,000.00	20/08/2025
London Borough of Haringey Council	£5,000,000.00	22/08/2025
Derbyshire County Council	£5,000,000.00	26/08/2025
The Highland Council	£5,000,000.00	26/08/2025
The Highland Council	£7,000,000.00	27/08/2025
London Borough of Haringey Council	£5,000,000.00	29/08/2025
The Highland Council	£5,000,000.00	01/09/2025
Babergh District Council	£5,000,000.00	02/09/2025
Wrexham County Borough Council	£5,000,000.00	04/09/2025
Ashford Borough Council	£5,000,000.00	08/09/2025
Police and Crime Commissioner for Lancashire	£5,000,000.00	29/09/2025
Surrey Heath Borough Council	£5,000,000.00	01/10/2025
West Dunbartonshire Council	£5,000,000.00	14/10/2025
Aberdeen City Council	£5,000,000.00	28/10/2025
Fife Council	£5,000,000.00	30/10/2025
Wakefield Council	£5,000,000.00	30/10/2025
Kingston Upon Hull City Council	£5,000,000.00	04/11/2025
Aberdeen City Council	£5,000,000.00	06/11/2025
North East Lincolnshire Council	£5,000,000.00	21/11/2025
Worthing Borough Council	£5,000,000.00	21/11/2025
Bradford Metropolitan District Council	£5,000,000.00	21/11/2025
Moray Council	£5,000,000.00	24/11/2025
Fife Council	£5,000,000.00	02/12/2025
Short Term Deposit Total	£360,000,000.00	

Counterparty	Principal Deposited	Maturity Date
Great Yarmouth Borough Council	£5,000,000.00	22/04/2026
Derbyshire County Council	£5,000,000.00	25/08/2026
Kirklees Council	£5,000,000.00	22/01/2027
Kirklees Council	£5,000,000.00	17/03/2027
Worcestershire County Council	£5,000,000.00	17/12/2027
Worcestershire County Council	£5,000,000.00	23/12/2027
Long Term Deposit Total	£30,000,000.00	
Total Deposits	£390,000,000.00	

Money Market Funds

Counterparty	Balance at 31/12/2024(£)	Notice period
Aberdeen Liquidity Fund	7,580.87	Same day
Goldman Sachs Sterling Liquid Fund	0.00	Same day
Deutsche Sterling Liquid Fund	0.00	Same day
Federated Sterling Liquidity Funds	10,000.00	Same day
Legal & General Sterling Liquidity Fund	14,900,000.00	Same day
CCLA Public Sector Deposit Fund	5,000.00	Same day
Morgan Stanley Sterling Liquid Fund	0.00	Same day
JP Morgan Sterling Liquidity Fund	0.00	Same day
Total	14,922,580.87	

Notice / Call Accounts

Counterparty period	Balance at 31/12/2024 (£)	Notice
Santander Call Account	0.00	Same day
Barclays Current	0.00	Same day
Handlesbanken	2,389.13	Same day
Total	2,389.13	

Strategic Bond Funds

Fund period	Balance at 31/12/2024 (£)	Notice
Threadneedle strategic bond fund (income)	12,467,830.24	4 days
Threadneedle Global Equity Income Fund	16,893,691.73	4 days
Kames Diversified Income	9,445,478.23	4 days
Ninety One Diversified Income	8,903,891.28	4 days

M&G Strategic Corporate Bond Fund	11,127,111.25	4 days
Schroder Income Maximiser	11,431,596.17	4 days
CCLA Better World Cautious Fund	4,779,672.78	4 days
Total	75,329,478.15	

Property Funds

Fund

Balance at 31/12/2024 (£)

Notice period

CCLA Local Authorities Property Fund	23,135,314.07	Monthly
Total	23,135,314.07	

Summary of Investments as at 31/12/2024

Term Deposits	£390,000,000.00
Money Market Funds	£14,922,580.87
Notice & Call Accounts	£2,389.13
Pooled Funds	£75,329,478.15
Property Funds	£23,135,314.07
Total Investments	£503,389,762.22

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CABINET
25 March 2025

BUSINESS MANAGEMENT AND MONITORING REPORT
JANUARY 2025

Report by the Executive Director of Resources & Section 151 Officer

RECOMMENDATION

1. **The Cabinet is RECOMMENDED to**
 - a) note the report and annexes.
 - b) write off £0.1m owed to the council by a company who are in liquidation. (Annex B, para 107).
 - c) write off 17 Adult Social Care contribution debts totalling £0.380m. (Annex B, para 110).
 - d) propose to contribute £5.0m to the Local Government Devolution and Reorganisation reserve from the un-utilised contingency (£3.3m) and unallocated pay inflation of £1.7m, taking the total contribution to £10.0m in 2024/25 (Annex B, para 124)
 - e) approve the transfer of £1.0m funding from IFRS9 reserves to the budget priorities reserve to support rural active travel measures. (Annex B, para 134 - 136)

Executive Summary

2. The business management reports are part of a suite of performance, risk and budget documents which set out the council's ambitions, priorities, and financial performance. The [2022 – 2025 Strategic Plan](#) sets out the Council's ambitions. It also shows the priority activities for the current financial year.
3. This report presents the January 2025 performance, risk, and finance position for the council.
4. Further information is provided in the following annexes to the report:
 - i. Annex A – Performance
 - ii. Annex B – Finance
5. The performance section of this report concentrates on performance exceptions (measures reporting Red (off target), or Amber, (slightly off target, Amber for the last two consecutive months or more). The full performance report is included at Annex A.

Amendments to Measures

6. Due to the implementation of the new telephony platform, Zoom, in November 2024, the parameters for reporting differ from the previous system, making figures pre and post-November incomparable. The service continues to monitor internally daily to ensure that customers are not negatively impacted. The below measures

have been removed for reporting for the remainder of 2024/25. All corporate KPIs are being reviewed as part of the performance refresh for 2025/26.

- **OCC10.03** Overall customer satisfaction rate for the Customer Service Centre – telephony.
- **OCC10.04** Answer 80% of calls to the Customer Service Centre within 30 seconds (exclude SHCT).
- **OCC10.13** The percentage of customer telephone calls abandoned at the Customer Service Centre.

Performance Overview

7. The Outcomes Framework for 2024/2025 reports on the council's nine strategic priorities. A further priority relates to running the business and includes the Customer Service Centre and measures included in the council's Financial Strategy. The Outcomes Framework which sits underneath the strategic priorities comprises monthly, quarterly, termly, six-monthly and annual measures which may change as the year progresses. At the appropriate period, relevant measures will be included in the report.

8. As at the end of January 2025 the measures were rated as follows:

January 2025	Green		Amber		Red		Monitoring Only		Data Unavailable		Number of complaint measures where no complaint received or open within time*		Total	
Monthly	13	48.1%	2	7.4%	1	3.7%	6	22.2%	0	0%	5	18.6%	27	100 %

*Table 1: Summary of January 2025 performance for all measures. RAG = Green = meets or exceeds target, Amber = misses target by narrow margin and Red = misses target by significant margin. This table does not include measures from priority OCC11 (finance). *This column refers only to complaint measures where there were no complaints received or complaints which remain open within timescale.*

- a) A total of 27 measures reported in January 2025 (Table 1), consisting of:
 - 13 measures rated as Green (meeting or exceeding target).
 - 2 measures rated as Amber (missing the target by a narrow margin), of which 2 were Amber for 2+ months.
 - 1 measure rated as Red (missing the target by a significant margin).
 - 6 measures rated as Monitoring only (No target).
 - 0 measures as Data unavailable.
 - 5 measures where there is no data to report due to no complaints being received or the complaint remains open within timeframe.
9. This bi-monthly Cabinet report is the fifth of 2024/2025. The table (Table 2) below compares monthly measures for the 2024/2025 reporting year, please note the number of reported measures fluctuates throughout the year. Any complaints measures that do not receive a complaint within the reporting period are removed for reporting purposes.

Reporting month	Green		Amber		Red		Monitoring Only / No data		Total
April 2024	13	48%	3	11%	2	7%	9	33%	27
May 2024	22	58%	6	16%	2	5%	8	21%	38
June 2024	35	64%	7	12%	2	4%	11	20%	55
July 2024	22	55%	6	15%	4	10%	8	20%	40
August 2024	15	52%	5	17%	2	6%	7	24%	29
September 2024	43	64%	9	14%	7	10%	8	12%	67
October 2024	18	60%	4	13%	1	3%	7	24%	30
November 2024	22	58%	6	16%	3	8%	7	18%	38
December 2024	31	58%	5	9%	4	8%	9	18%	49
January 2025	21	62%	2	6%	5	15%	6	18%	34

Table 2: Comparison of monthly reporting measures for Financial Year 2024/2025. *April, June, August, October and December measures do not include measures from priority OCC11 (finance). This table does not include complaint measures where no complaints were received in the reporting period or complaints measures where the complaint remains open within timescale.

b) There five measures reporting as Red for the reporting period.

Performance measures reporting Red for January 2025	
OCC01.07 Total % of household waste which is reused, recycled or composted	
OCC11.02 Achievement of planned savings	
OCC11.06 Total Outturn variation for DSG funded services (high needs)	
OCC11.10 Debt requiring impairment - Corporate Debtors	
OCC11.11 Debt requiring impairment - Adult Social Care contribution debtors	

Table 3: Red RAG Status Measures January 2025 Reporting Period

c) Table 4 indicates the direction of travel of measures in January 2025 compared to December 2024.

Status changes – December 2024 to January 2025	
Red to Green	OCC10.11 % of Corporate Complaints (Stage 1) responded to within timescales
Amber to Green	Not applicable
Red to Amber	Not applicable
Green to Amber	Not applicable
Amber to Red	Not applicable
Green to Red	Not applicable

Table 4: Change in Performance direction from December 2024 to January 2025

Performance Exceptions

10. This section of the report details all measures reporting Red or Amber status (*consecutive for two months or more*) with extracted supporting commentary from the Directorate, the full commentary can be seen at Annex A. The exception report focuses on three exceptions, one measure has a Red rating, and two measures have Amber ratings for two months or more.

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

This priority has two measures being reported in January 2025: one (50%) is reporting as Green and one (50%) is reporting as Red.

Measure	December Status:	January Status:	Director:
OCC01.07 Total % of household waste which is reused, recycled or composted	Red	Red	Paul Farmer

Table 5: Priority OCC01 Measure Exception – January 2025

OCC01.07 Total % of household waste which is reused, recycled or composted

OCC01.07 Total % of household waste which is reused, recycled or composted

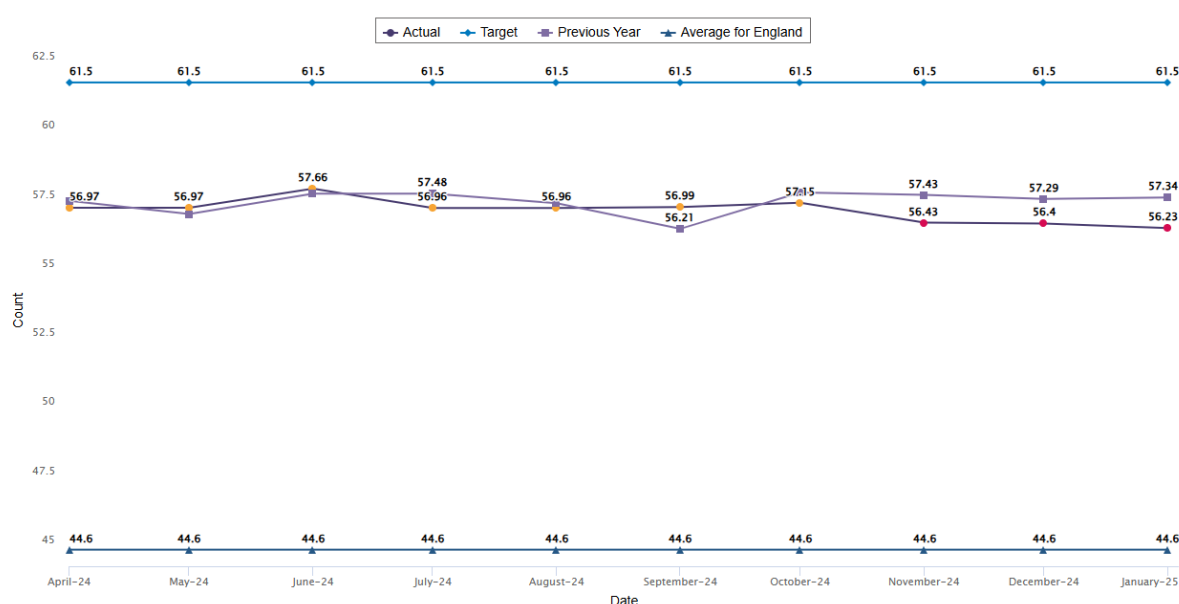


Figure 1: OCC01.07 Monthly performance for 2024/2025 financial year

The percentage of household waste that was reused, recycled, or composted was 56.23% against the year-end target of 61.50%, while the year-to-date performance is slightly higher at 56.87%.

The performance figure is now updated to end of December performance (data is reported one month in arrears). The Figure is the forecast end of year performance. Oxfordshire is the best county in England for recycling, nationally recycling rates have

stagnated for several years. Recent announcements from central government around Simpler Recycling and Extended Producer Responsibility have provided some certainty for the district councils, this may see service changes in the next two years and therefore a step change in the performance.

Priority OCC04: Support carers and the social care system

This priority has five measures being reported in January 2025: two (40%) are reporting as Green and two (40%) are reporting as Amber exceptions. One measure (20%) is reported as monitoring only.

Measure	December Status:	January Status:	Director:
OCC04.01 % of people who received short-term services during 24/25 with no further support request	Amber	Amber	Karen Fuller
OCC04.05 Adults aged 65+ (per 100,000) admitted to residential and care homes (stretched target)	Amber	Amber	Karen Fuller

Table 6: Priority OCC04 Measure Exceptions– January 2025

OCC04.01 % of people who received short-term services during 24/25 with no further support request

OCC04.01 % of people who received short-term services during 24/25 with no further support request

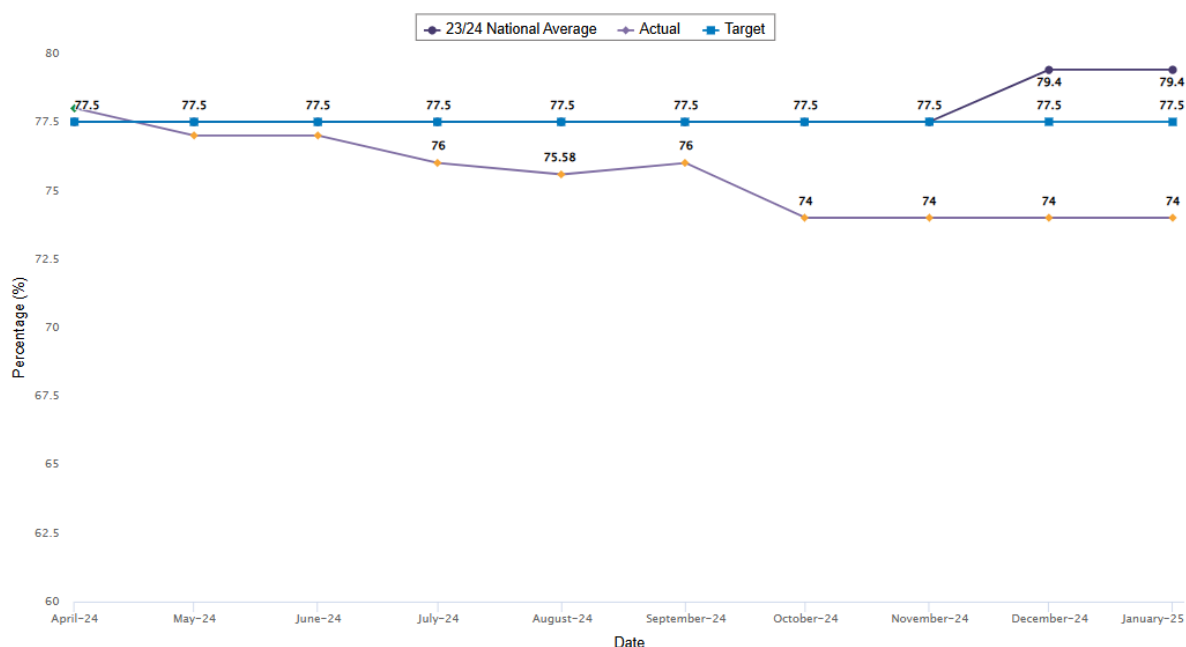


Figure 2: OCC04.01 Monthly performance for 2024/2025 financial year

The percentage of residents who received short-term services in 2024/25 and required no further ongoing support (reablement) has remained at 74.0% (2,010 residents needing no further ongoing support out of a total number of 2,716 residents admitted into the reablement service) since November, which is below the target of 77.50%.

With the introduction of the discharge to assess pathway in January 2024, the reablement service has seen more dependent individuals with higher-level needs accepted into the service. While this is a positive development, the demographic of people accessing the reablement service has changed. The number of people with reduced care needs has increased, while the percentage achieving complete independence has decreased.

Despite this, performance has shown significant improvement over recent years, rising from 57% (1,088 needing no further ongoing support out of a total of 1,914 people admitted into the reablement service) in 2020/21 to 76% (1,190 needing no further ongoing support out of a total of 1,584 people admitted into the reablement service) in 2023/24, though it remains slightly below the 23/24 national average of 79.40% published in December 2024.

Efforts are underway to improve performance, such as working with health partners to expand therapy services across Oxfordshire and recruiting rehabilitation assistants to better address the care needs of people in the reablement service, aiming to increase independence.

OCC04.05 Adults aged 65+ (per 100,000) admitted to residential and care homes (stretched target)

OCC04.05 Adults aged 65+ (per 100,000) admitted to residential and care homes (stretched target)

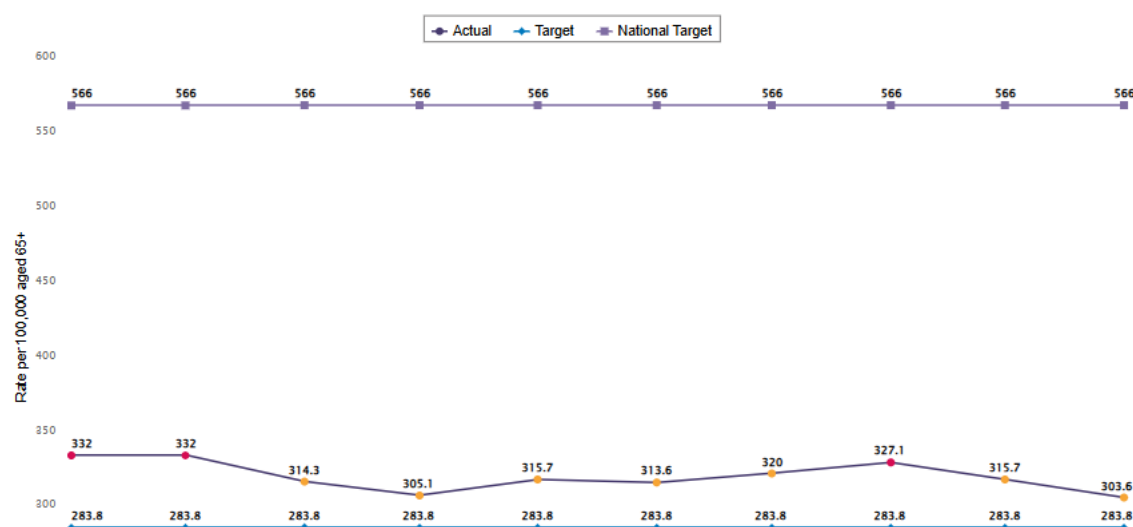


Figure 3: OCC04.05 Monthly performance for 2024/2025 financial year

In January, the actual rate of admissions for the last 12 months for residents aged 65+ per 100,000 population decreased to 303.60 (428 admissions) from 315.7 (445 admissions) per 100,000 population in December.

When compared to last year (2023/24), 480 people were permanently admitted to a care home or a rate of 350 people per 100,000 population. This improvement brings the rate closer to the 2024/25 stretched target of 283.8 per 100,000 (400 admissions) set by the Department of Health and Social Care via the Better Care Fund.

The council continues to outperform the national rate of 566 people per 100,000

population (798 admissions) and ranks 16th nationally out of 152 authorities.

To reduce permanent care home admissions, efforts are being made to enhance support for people at home. This includes increasing home care services and expanding extra care housing, with a 6% increase in home care hours purchased compared to 12 months ago.

Priority OCC11: Running the business

This priority has 12 bi-monthly measures being reported in January 2025: eight (67%) are Green, zero (0%) Amber, and four (33%) Red.

Measure:	November Status:	January Status:	Director:
OCC11.02 Achievement of planned savings	Red	Red	Lorna Baxter
OCC11.06 Total outturn variation for DSG funded services (high needs)	Red	Red	Lorna Baxter
OCC11.10 Debt requiring impairment – Corporate debtors	Red	Red	Lorna Baxter
OCC11.11 Debt requiring impairment – Adult Social Care contribution debtors	Red	Red	Lorna Baxter

Table 7: Priority OCC11 Measure Exceptions - January 2025

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

Performance Highlights

11. This section of the report concentrates on several highlights achieved this period in delivering the council's strategic priorities.

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

Link: [Council aims to go beyond net zero by removing carbon emissions](#)

Oxfordshire County Council has set a target to go beyond net zero by actively removing carbon emissions, becoming the first UK local authority to do so. The council aims to extend its carbon neutral target to include carbon dioxide removal, focusing on methods like afforestation, biochar, and soil carbon sequestration. The council plans to scale the market for carbon dioxide removal through policy and partnerships, benefiting rural economies and adapting to climate change. The market for carbon dioxide removal technologies is currently at an early stage, and so this initiative by Oxfordshire County Council will help kickstart development.

Tackle inequalities in Oxfordshire

Link: [Over 200 laptops gifted to get vulnerable people online](#)

Oxfordshire County Council donated 209 refurbished laptops to Getting Oxfordshire Online, a charity that helps people access the internet. This initiative supports foodbank users, refugees, and those at risk of homelessness, aligning with the council's digital inclusion strategy to reduce inequalities in the county. The charity not only refurbishes and distributes the devices but also helps people to access the data,

training and the support they need to get online.

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

Link: [Young music students to bring 'the force' to the Sheldonian](#)

Music students from across Oxfordshire showcased their talents at the Sheldonian Theatre. The event featured the Oxfordshire County Council youth orchestra performing the Star Wars suite by John Williams. Audience members also enjoyed beatboxing activities and a unique performance of "Voice-Leading," a concerto for beatboxer and orchestra by Alessandra MacKinnon-Botti. Many of the participating pupils have special educational needs and disabilities, and music offers them a powerful means of self-expression, overcoming challenges, and setting aspirations and goals.

Prioritise the health and wellbeing of residents

Link: [Council reaffirms commitment to supporting people directly home after a hospital admission](#)

Oxfordshire County Council is prioritising the Discharge to Assess programme, which helps patients return home quickly and safely after hospital stays. This programme has improved patient experiences by reducing hospital discharge delays and increasing the chances of regaining independence at home with 73% of patients regaining pre-admission independence. The council is committed to remodelling the service to better support residents with complex needs.

Invest in an inclusive, integrated, and sustainable transport network

Link: [Construction completed on southwest section of Benson Relief Road](#)

Residents and visitors in Benson are now enjoying easier travel to the Cala housing development, with the completion of Oxfordshire County Council's 250-metre section of the Benson Relief Road. This new infrastructure is crucial for the village, significantly reducing through traffic in the village centre. The construction of the road promotes cycling and walking, which helps decrease car usage, congestion, local emissions, and improves air quality. The project was completed on time and within budget, achieving notable carbon savings equivalent to 127 return flights from London to New York. The use of recycled materials and design changes further minimised the environmental impact.

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

Link: [Council run initiative helps entrepreneur to start her own business](#)

Sadia Ali, a former investment banker, successfully started her own business with the help of Oxfordshire County Council's Business and Intellectual Property Centre (BIPC). The BIPC provided her with resources, support, and a conducive working environment, which she found invaluable. She highlighted the importance of the centre's free resources, mentoring, and networking opportunities for new entrepreneurs. The BIPC, located in the Oxford Westgate Library, offers various services and activities for start-ups, including one-on-one support and workshops.

Strategic Risk Management Overview

12. A strategic risk is a risk to the council's strategic priorities or long-term outcomes; or a risk with a significance that has an impact at the corporate level.
13. Strategic risks are being developed with the services for Devolution and Local Government Reform and Section 106 Agreements.
14. The table below provides an overview of the current strategic risk position. Strategic risks are reviewed monthly as part of the business management and monitoring process. Risks can be added and escalated at any time during the year.
15. Of the ten strategic risks, all remain static, with the consistent scoring as reported in December 2024. From February 2024 Strategic Risk 08 Policy and Budget has been de-escalated to operational level.







Status Indicator	Status Description
	Residual risk rating is high (Score 16 and above)
	Residual risk rating is medium (Score 10 - 15)
	Residual risk rating is low (Score 1 – 9)
	Residual risk rating has decreased
	Residual risk rating has maintained
	Residual risk rating has increased

Table 8: Strategic Risk Key for January 2025

Risk name	Risk Description	Inherent Score	Previous Residual Risk Score	Current Residual Risk Score	Current Residual Risk Rating	Direction of Travel
01. Financial resilience	The council is not financially sustainable in the immediate/medium term.	25	12	12		→
02. Cyber security	A successful and significant Cyber-attack leading to disruption, damage or compromise of any of the council's computer services, information systems, infrastructure or data.	25	15	15		→
03. HIF1 & HIF2	HIF1 and HIF2 become undeliverable and/or potential financial risk to the council.	16	12	12		→
04. Managing Demand across Adults' and Children's Services	Fluctuating demand of community across Oxfordshire can result in varying requirements in resource.	15	8	8		→
05. Special Educational Needs and Disabilities	Local area SEND partnership inspection outcomes found widespread systemic failure. Delay for children having their SEND needs met. Reputational damage (locally, regionally, and nationally).	20	12	12		→
06. Oxford Core Schemes	Failure to deliver Oxford Core Schemes (Traffic Filters, Workplace Parking Levy, Zero Emissions Zone and associated city area schemes such as Low Traffic Neighbourhoods) with public support.	20	16	16		→
07. Strategic Workforce Planning	A risk that the county council's workforce does not have capacity, capability or resilience to deliver key functions, statutory services or transformational changes required to ensure the councils objectives and long-term priorities are met. Further, that the diversity of the workforce satisfies statutory requirements.	16	12	12		→
08. Policy & Budget	Inability to seek agreement in relation to the policy and budget framework from a minority administration.	25	8	8		→
09. Delivering the Future Together	Failure to deliver organisation wide transformation.	25	8	8		→
10. Climate Impact	Increasing vulnerability to climate impacts leads to failure of key infrastructure and services with a direct impact on health, safety, environment, and businesses.	25	20	20		→

Table 9: Strategic Risk Overview for January 2025

Overall Financial Position

16. As shown below there is a forecast service area overspend of £0.6m. This has improved by £3.7m compared to the position reported to Cabinet in January 2025. After taking account of an underspend against budgets held for contingency and inflation, additional interest receivable on balances held by the council and anticipated capital financing costs, the overall position is a forecast underspend of £10.5m.

	Latest Budget Jan-25 £m	Forecast Spend Jan-25 £m	Forecast Variance Jan-25 £m	Forecast Variance Jan-25 %	Forecast Variance Nov-24 £m	Change Since Nov-24 £m
Adult Services	249.7	245.5	-4.2	-1.7%	0.0	-4.2
Children's Services	202.7	204.0	1.3	0.6%	1.3	-0.0
Environment & Highways	53.2	53.4	0.2	0.4%	0.8	-0.6
Economy & Place	16.9	17.1	0.1	0.9%	0.0	0.1
Oxfordshire Fire & Rescue Service and Community Safety	28.9	29.5	0.6	2.1%	0.7	-0.1
Public Health & Communities	12.9	13.1	0.2	1.5%	0.2	-0.0
Resources and Law & Governance	61.5	62.8	1.3	2.2%	1.3	0.0
Transformation, Digital & Customer Experience	6.6	7.6	1.0	15.0%	0.0	1.0
Service Areas Total	632.3	632.8	0.6	0.1%	4.3	-3.7
Budgets Held Centrally						
Capital Financing	21.3	17.8	-3.5	-16.5%	-3.5	-0.1
Interest on Balances	-10.7	-15.3	-4.6	43.4%	-4.6	0.0
Contingency	3.8	0.5	-3.3	-88.0%	0.0	-3.3
Pay Inflation	6.2	1.6	-4.7	-74.8%	-4.7	0.0
Un-ringfenced Specific Grants	-56.9	-56.9	0.0	0.0%	0.0	0.0
Insurance	1.7	1.7	0.0	0.0%	0.0	0.0
Contribution from COVID-19 reserve	-3.8	-3.8	0.0	0.0%	0.0	0.0
Contribution from Budget Priority Reserve	1.6	1.6	0.0	0.0%	0.0	0.0
Contributions to reserves	17.9	22.9	5.0	28.0%	0.0	5.0
Total Budgets Held Centrally	-18.8	-29.9	-11.1	59.2%	-12.8	1.6
Net Operating Budget	613.5	603.0	-10.5	-1.7%	-8.5	-2.1
Business Rates & Council Tax funding	-613.5	-613.5	0.0	0.0%	0.0	0.0
Forecast Year End Position	-0.0	-10.5	-10.5	-1.7%	-8.5	-2.1

Summary of Service Area positions:

17. Adult Services are now reporting an underspend of £4.2m. The underspend is attributed to the system's diligent approach to achieve efficiencies related to market and operational management.

18. The forecast overspend of £1.3m for Children's Services has remained unchanged and is due to Homes for Transport demand changes for the new academic year. There are also risks in the delivery of savings built into the 2024/25 budget.
19. Environment & Highways forecast has reduced by £0.6m compared to the position reported to Cabinet in January 2025. There is a £1.8m pressure in Network Management relating to the underachievement of lane rental income savings, offset by a £1.6m underspend in Highways maintenance from a reduction in energy costs from lower energy activity.
20. Economy and Place are forecasting an overspend of £0.1m as a result of legal costs awarded against the council from a planning appeal.
21. The forecast overspend of £0.2m within Public Health & Communities relates to the Library Service. The forecast £0.6m underspend against the Public Health grant funding will be transferred to reserves at year end.
22. The forecast overspend for the Oxfordshire Fire & Rescue Service and Community Safety is driven by risks in the delivery of previously agreed savings built into the 2024/25 budget. This has improved by £0.1m since the last report.
23. Resources and Law & Governance forecast overspend of £1.3m remains unchanged and is in part driven by high locum costs in the Legal Service.
24. Transformation, Digital & Customer Experience are forecasting an overspend of £1.0m due to risks in the delivery of savings built into the 2024/25 budget.

Centrally held budgets:

25. £6.3m of the £14.4m pay inflation budget has been used to meet the cost of the additional pay inflation in 2024/25 following the agreement of the Green Book pay award, £0.4m continues to be held to meet the cost of pay inflation for vacant posts when they are recruited to. £1.3m has been used to fund a one-off contribution to the Local Government Reorganisation reserve (a further £1.7m is recommended to be applied). This leaves a one-off underspend of at least £4.7m which has been reflected in the forecast. The on-going budget that is not needed to fund pay inflation in 2024/25 will roll forward and will be available to meet the cost of pay inflation in 2025/26.
26. Based on the forecast service position, £7.0m of the contingency budget can be used to fund a one-off contribution to the Local Government Devolution and Reorganisation reserve. This is an increase of £3.7m since the report to Cabinet January 2025 and, when added to the contribution referred to in paragraph 10, takes the total contribution to the reserve during 2024/25 to £10m.

Other Financial elements:

27. Savings: The 2024/25 budget includes planned service areas savings of £30.1m. 54% of these savings are assessed as delivered and 67% are forecast to be

delivered by the end of the financial year.

28. Reserves: In January 2025 Cabinet approved the creation of a new reserve to hold funding to support the implementation of devolution and reorganisation proposals in Oxfordshire and a contribution of £5.0m.
29. It is proposed to supplement further the newly created reserve with another one - off contribution of £5.0m made up of £3.3m from the contingency budget and £1.7m from the remaining unallocated budget for pay inflation that is not required to be used in 2024/25. The total held would then be £10.0m.
30. The implementation of IFRS 9 (changes in value of Treasury Management Pooled Funds at year end) for existing investments has been extended from 1 April 2025 to 1 April 2029. Due to this extension, it is proposed to redirect £1.0m from the IFRS 9 reserve to the Budget Priorities reserve to support rural active travel measures.
31. General balances: The risk assessed level of one – off funding held in general balances in 2024/25 is £30.2m. A residual balance of £2.3m relating to the underspend at the end of 2023/24 was agreed to be held in balances as part of the Provisional Outturn Report for 2023/24. After taking account of the forecast underspend, balances are currently forecast to be £12.9m above the risk assessed level as at 31 March 2025.
32. Dedicated Schools Grant: The forecast 2024/25 deficit compared to Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) funding for High Needs is £31.9m, £10.6m higher than the budget approved by Council in February 2024. The CIPFA code of practice requires negative High Needs DSG balances to be held in an unusable reserve. The forecast deficit increases the cumulative negative High Needs DSG balance held in this reserve from £55.8m as at 31 March 2024 to £87.7m at 31 March 2025.

Financial Implications

33. This report includes an update on the forecast financial position and risks for the council along with action being taken to manage the budget within the position agreed by Council in February 2024. Strong and sustained financial management, collective action and oversight continues to be required to ensure that services are managed within budgets in 2024/25 and on-going into 2025/26.

Comments checked by: Kathy Wilcox, Head of Corporate Finance and Deputy Section 151 Officer.

Legal Implications

34. The budget is a non-executive function; however the Cabinet has a duty under the Local Government Act 2000 to monitor the budget and make any recommendations to Council as they think fit. The Council's constitution at Part 3.2 (Budget and Policy Framework) and Part 3.3 (Virement Rules) reflects the statutory obligations and responsibilities of both the Cabinet and the Full Council

in approving, adopting and implementing the council's budget and policy framework. These decisions are in accordance with the Council's virement rules as set out in the Constitution as they do not require a major change in policy.

35. The statutory framework for the prudential financial system is set out in the Local Government Act 2003 and the Local Authorities (Capital Finance and Accounting) (England) Regulations 2003. These Regulations provide that the Council must have regard to CIPFA codes in managing its budget. The Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting and the Service Reporting Code of Practice for Local Authorities are issued as statutory guidance. The Council has a fiduciary duty to council taxpayers, which means it must consider the prudent use of resources, including control of expenditure, financial prudence in the short and long term and the need to act in good faith in relation to compliance with statutory duties and exercising statutory powers.

Comments checked by: Kim Sawyer Interim Head of Legal & Governance

Contact Officers: Louise Tustian, Director Transformation, Digital and Customer Experience
Ian Dyson, Director of Financial and Commercial Service

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OCC02.01 Digital Inclusion through libraries (number of hours of use of library public computers)	m	5,500.00	7,680.00	 GREEN	5,500.00	7,680.00	 GREEN
Comments : Usage of public computers remains well above target. This month's figure includes usage from new devices as part of the pilot for a People's Network (PN) replacement programme. This pilot is being run at our 3 busiest libraries for computer use (Westgate, Abingdon and Cowley), and sees the new devices available for use alongside traditional PN computers. This pilot scheme will shortly be widened to 3 additional branches.							
OCC02.03 Number of physical visits to Libraries	#	90,000.00	172,761.00	 GREEN	90,000.00	172,761.00	 GREEN
Comments : Visits to libraries continue to remain above target and represent an increase over 2023-24							
OCC03.09 No of people contacted via Making Every Conversation Count	#	450.00	794.00	 GREEN	450.00	794.00	 GREEN
Comments : This key area of activity continues to remain comfortably above target, and represents a successful partnership with Public Health.							
OCC04.01 % of people who received short-term services during 24/25 with no further support request	%	77.50	74.00	 AMBER	77.50	74.00	 AMBER
Comments : This is a national measure which aims to monitor the effectiveness of reablement support. Reablement is a short term service which aims to help people regain their independence following a hospital admission or in the community. This measure monitors of the people who have completed a reablement episode the proportion that need no on-going care. Performance has increased in recent years - improving from 57% in 2020/21; to 76% in 23/24. This is slightly below the latest reported national figure of 77.5%. for the last 3 months we have seen the rate to independence stable at 74%.							
OCC04.02 % of residents 18-64 with Learning Disability support who live on their own or with family	%		89.80	N/A		89.80	N/A
Comments : Within the Oxfordshire Way we provide people with the ability to support themselves through personal, local and system assets that 'keep them in the centre' of their support. This leads to increased independence and one of the ways in we measure this is through this indicator. This is a national measure that is part of the Adult Social Care Outcome framework. Currently 89.8% of adults with a learning disability are supported in their own home. This is better than the last published national data (81.6%) and higher than our outturn for last year of 89.3%, where performance was in the top quintile in the country.							

This performance has been delivered by concerted work over recent years to support family life, including supporting unpaid carers, and to expand the range of accommodation available within the county to meet the needs of our diverse population of people who require supported accommodation.

OCC04.03 % Section 42 safeguarding enquiries where identified risk was reduced or removed	%	93.00	93.00	 GREEN	93.00	93.00	 GREEN
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Comments :



OCC04.04 Adults aged 65+ (per 100,000) admitted to residential and care homes	#	437.70	303.60	 GREEN	437.70	303.60	 GREEN
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Comments : This is a national measure that looks at the number of people whose support needs are met by a permanent care home admission. Most people want to live in their own home and we work to help people stay at home as long as possible. However there are occasions where a person is best supported in a care home.

The aim is to therefore reduce the number of people needing a permanent care home admission.

Last year (2023/24) 480 people were permanently admitted to a care home or a rate of 350 people per 100,000 population. This is lower (i.e. better than the national average) of 566 per 100,000 population and the 16 best of 152 reporting authorities. In the last 12 months 428 people have been permanently admitted to a care home, a reduction on last year.

People are supported to live at home through increasing the availability of services such as home care and extra care housing. In the last 12 months we have purchased 6% more hours of home care.



OCC04.05 Adults aged 65+ (per 100,000) admitted to residential and care homes (stretched target)	#	283.80	303.60	 AMBER	283.80	303.60	 AMBER
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Comments : This is a national measure that looks at the number of people whose support needs are met by a permanent care home admission. Most people want to live in their own home and we work to help people stay at home as long as possible. However there are occasions where a person is best supported in a care home.

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Last year (2023/24) 480 people were permanently admitted to a care home or a rate of 350 people per 100,000 population. This is lower (i.e. better than the national average) of 566 per 100,000 population and the 16 best of 152 reporting authorities. In the last 12 months 428 people have been permanently admitted to a care home, a slight reduction on last year.

People are supported to live at home through increasing the availability of services such as home care and extra care housing. In the last 12 months we have purchased 6% more hours of home care.

OCC05.03 204.6 KM (4.4%) of the road network to be treated	km	0.00	0.00	 GREEN	204.60	214.31	 GREEN
--	----	------	------	--	--------	--------	--

Comments : No resurfacing works were planned in January.

The planned treatment length to date is already slightly beyond the final planned target, with 214km completed. Most of the activity was completed over the summer months, but there are still 6km planned, which would mean delivery slightly over 220km

OCC06.02 Percentage of newly planted trees still alive on land OCC own & manage	%	90.00	96.08	 GREEN	90.00	96.08	 GREEN
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Comments : The number of trees alive continues to be above the target with minimal loss. Another 268 trees have been planted in January 2025, which has increased the % alive Actual from last month.

Total trees planted to date since 1st January 2023 = 1405. Of those, 1350 are still alive.

OCC07.02 No of children we care for who are Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children	#	86.00	N/A		86.00	N/A	
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Comments : We are currently caring for 86 unaccompanied asylum seeking children. 0.1% of our under 18 population, which is the ceiling at which local authorities will not be directed to receive transfers under the national transfer scheme would be 152.

In addition to the unaccompanied asylum seeking children we are supporting 159 care leavers who were formerly unaccompanied asylum seeking children

OCC07.03 % of children we care for placed out of county and more than 20 miles away from home	%	37.00	N/A		37.00	N/A	
---	---	-------	-----	--	-------	-----	--



Comments : Currently 37% (290/785) looked after children are placed out of county and more than 20 miles from their home address, this compares with the latest national position (March 24) of 17% and 26% for similar authorities. The fundamental issue is a lack of local provision. This is being addressed by the placement sufficiency action plan. The plan is overseen by a monthly meeting of the Placement and Sufficiency Board, chaired by the Director of Children's Service. This covers increasing care home provision, foster care provision and accommodation for young people 16 plus.







1. Children's home provision includes improving the quality of care within the Homes 2 Inspire block contract; development of new homes utilising the DfE capital bid; increased capacity with the cross regional block contract; re-tendering of block contract for children with complex needs and the creation of an approved provider list for care and support providers to support move on from unregistered placements.
2. 16+ accommodation- commissioning supported housing schemes for unaccompanied asylum-seeking children including those placed under the National Transfer Scheme including reviewing the existing contracts, use of offer self-contained property, subject of planning permission and converting a council property into supported housing.
3. Fostering – ensuring we get grow independent fostering agency placements through the South-Central framework and recruit and maintain in-house foster placements.















OCC07.04 Number of Children and Young People accessing the Music Service	#	8,500.00	8,894.00	 GREEN	8,500.00	8,894.00	 GREEN
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Comments :

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OCC07.05 The number of children subject of a child protection plan	#	618.00	495.00	 GREEN	618.00	495.00	 GREEN
Comments : N/A							
OCC07.06 Number of Oxfordshire children we care for	#	699.00		N/A	699.00		N/A
Comments : We are currently caring for 699 Oxfordshire children (or a rate of 45 per 10,000) population under 18. This has risen marginally in the year, but the rate is the same as our statistical neighbours (similar authorities) and below the national rate - 64 per 100,000 population. The number of local children we care for has reduced from 796 and March 31 2022 and 777 at March 23. Some key activities that have driven this reduction include 1. Increased scrutiny to ensure oversight of all decisions when a child or young person may need to be become looked after to ensure that all immediate and extended family support options and alternatives are explored appropriately to avoid separation of children from their families where this is not necessary. 2. Ensuring timely exits from local authority care in line with a child’s agreed care plan, via a range of clear permanence options, ranging from adoption to reunification is also in place. 3. Discharging care orders where they are no longer in children’s best interest. For example, in plans for reunification or where children have remained or been placed back with parents during care proceedings, and they are assessed as remaining safe in the months/year following these decisions being made by the courts.							
OCC07.07 % of Education Health & Care Plans completed within 20 weeks	%	19.10		N/A	19.10		N/A
Comments : N/A							
OCC07.08 The number of Education Health Care Plans maintained by the local authority	#	7,345.00		N/A	7,345.00		N/A
Comments : There are 943 (14.7%) more EHCPs maintained by Oxfordshire in January 2025 than there were during the same month in the previous year.							
OCC10.01 % of Adult Social Care complaints (Stage 1) responded to within statutory timescales	%	80.00	n/a	n/a	80.00	n/a	n/a
Comments : 4 Adult Social Care statutory stage 1 complaints have been received in January 2025. All of them are still open within timescale							
OCC10.02 % of Adult Social Care complaints (Stage 2) responded to within statutory timescales	%	80.00	n/a	n/a	80.00	n/a	n/a
Comments : No Adult Social Care statutory stage 2 complaints were received in January 2025							

OCC10.05 Percentage of FOIs responded to within timescales	%	90.00	100.00	 GREEN	90.00	100.00	 GREEN
Comments : A total of 163 requests for information were received during January, with an additional 17 requests redirected to the other organisations, mainly the local district councils. This is an increase of 40.5% compared to December 2024 (116), and a decrease of 21.3% compared to January 2024 (207). A total of 76 requests were responded to on-time (100%), and 87 requests remain open and on-time (100%).							
OCC10.08 % of Children Social Care complaints (Stage 1) responded to within statutory timescales	%	80.00	100.00	 GREEN	80.00	100.00	 GREEN
Comments : 10 Children Social Care statutory stage 1 complaints have been received in January 2025. 1 case is closed within timescale and 9 are still open within timescale.							
OCC10.09 % of Children Social Care complaints (Stage 2) responded to within statutory timescales	%	80.00	n/a	n/a	80.00	n/a	n/a
Comments : 3 Children Social Care statutory stage 2 complaints were received in January 2025. All of them were still open within timescale.							
OCC10.10 % of Children Social Care complaints (Stage 3) responded to within statutory timescales	%	80.00	n/a	n/a	80.00	n/a	n/a
Comments : No Children Social Care statutory stage 3 complaints were received in January 2025.							
OCC10.11 % of Corporate Complaints (Stage 1) responded to within timescales	%	80.00	91.00	 GREEN	80.00	91.00	 GREEN
Comments : 28 Corporate stage 1 complaints were received in January 2025. 10 were closed within timescale, 1 was closed outside of timescale which falls into the Environment and Highways service. 17 are still open within timescale.							
OCC10.12 % of Corporate Complaints (Stage 2) responded to within timescales	%	80.00	n/a	n/a	80.00	n/a	n/a
Comments : 9 Corporate stage 2 complaints were received in January 2025, all of them are still open within timescale.							

OCC11.01 Overall forecast revenue variance across the Council	%	0.00	(1.90)	 GREEN	0.00	(1.90)	 GREEN
Comments :							
OCC11.02 Achievement of planned savings	%	90.00	67.00	 RED	90.00	67.00	 RED
Comments :							
OCC11.03 General balances are forecast to remain at or above the risk assessed level	%	85.00	145.00	 GREEN	85.00	145.00	 GREEN
Comments :							
OCC11.04 Directorates deliver services and achieve planned performance within agreed budget	%	1.00	0.10	 GREEN	1.00	0.10	 GREEN
Comments :							
OCC11.05 Total Outturn variation for DSG funded services (schools/early years)	%	0.00	0.00	 GREEN	0.00	0.00	 GREEN
Comments :							
OCC11.06 Total Outturn variation for DSG funded services (high needs)	£	21,300,000.00	31,883,000.00	 RED	21,300,000.00	31,883,000.00	 RED
Comments :							
OCC11.07 Use of non-DSG revenue grant funding	%	95.00	95.00	 GREEN	95.00	95.00	 GREEN
Comments :							

OCC11.08 % of agreed invoices paid within 30 days	%	95.00	96.13	 GREEN	95.00	96.13	 GREEN
Comments : December performance is 1% above target an improvement on last period. Breaking down the figures, (Corporate POs and Social Care Controcc) are at or above target. Work is still underway to include Early Years and Education invoices.							
OCC11.09 Invoice collection rate - Corporate Debtors	%	95.00	98.00	 GREEN	95.00	98.00	 GREEN
Comments : This measure identifies the percentage of invoices issued that have been paid within 120 days. In this period, we measured invoices issued in October 2024. The collection rate was 98.00%, above the target of 95%.							
OCC11.10 Debt requiring impairment - Corporate Debtors	£	300,000.00	872,607.00	 RED	300,000.00	872,607.00	 RED
Comments : Debt requiring impairment is the value of invoices with potential to become unrecoverable. The potential loss requires recording in the accounts at year end. If at year end there is an overall increase in the value of invoices at risk, we are required to top up the impairment balance. Consequently, this figure is tracked through the year. Debt requiring impairment this month is £0.873m. The top five cases, including three which are in liquidation, account for 63% of the total bad debt and is being actively worked on by Legal Services and Debt Recovery Officers.							
OCC11.11 Debt requiring impairment - Adult Social Care contribution debtors	£	3,500,000.00	5,070,916.00	 RED	3,500,000.00	5,070,916.00	 RED
Comments : The 2023-24 year-end adults care contribution impairment for bad debt was £4.52m. At 31-Jan-25 it is £5.07m, an increase of £0.55m. As reported previously, wider economic factors have had a significant effect on means tested social care contribution debt levels, as have delays with the court of protection and related activity. This tracks with other local authorities' experience. We are revising our approach to overdue debt and bringing together a debt reduction and recovery plan.							
OCC11.15 Invoice Collection Rate - Adult Social Care contribution debtors	%	92.00	92.23	 GREEN	92.00	92.23	 GREEN
Comments : In this period, we measured invoices issued in October 2024. The 120-day invoice collection rate was 92.23% for this period, above the 92% target.							

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Introduction

1. This annex sets out the fifth financial monitoring update for the 2024/25 financial year and is based on information to the end of January 2025. Key issues are explained below.

The following information is also provided within the annex:

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

Overall Financial Position

2. As shown below there is a forecast service area overspend of £0.6m. This has improved by £3.7m compared to the position reported to Cabinet in January 2025. After taking account of an underspend against budgets held for contingency and inflation, additional interest receivable on balances held by the council and anticipated capital financing costs, the overall position is a forecast underspend of £10.5m.

	Latest Budget Jan-25 £m	Forecast Spend Jan-25 £m	Forecast Variance Jan-25 £m	Forecast Variance Jan-25 %	Forecast Variance Nov-24 £m	Change Since Nov-24 £m
Adult Services	249.7	245.5	-4.2	-1.7%	0.0	-4.2
Children's Services	202.7	204.0	1.3	0.6%	1.3	-0.0
Environment & Highways	53.2	53.4	0.2	0.4%	0.8	-0.6
Economy & Place	16.9	17.1	0.1	0.9%	0.0	0.1
Oxfordshire Fire & Rescue Service and Community Safety	28.9	29.5	0.6	2.1%	0.7	-0.1
Public Health & Communities	12.9	13.1	0.2	1.5%	0.2	-0.0
Resources and Law & Governance	61.5	62.8	1.3	2.2%	1.3	0.0
Transformation, Digital & Customer Experience	6.6	7.6	1.0	15.0%	0.0	1.0
Service Areas Total	632.3	632.8	0.6	0.1%	4.3	-3.7
Budgets Held Centrally						
Capital Financing	21.3	17.8	-3.5	-16.5%	-3.5	-0.1
Interest on Balances	-10.7	-15.3	-4.6	43.4%	-4.6	0.0
Contingency	3.8	0.5	-3.3	-88.0%	0.0	-3.3
Pay Inflation	6.2	1.6	-4.7	-74.8%	-4.7	0.0
Un-ringfenced Specific Grants	-56.9	-56.9	0.0	0.0%	0.0	0.0
Insurance	1.7	1.7	0.0	0.0%	0.0	0.0
Contribution from COVID-19 reserve	-3.8	-3.8	0.0	0.0%	0.0	0.0
Contribution from Budget Priority Reserve	1.6	1.6	0.0	0.0%	0.0	0.0
Contributions to reserves	17.9	22.9	5.0	28.0%	0.0	5.0
Total Budgets Held Centrally	-18.8	-29.9	-11.1	59.2%	-12.8	1.6
Net Operating Budget	613.5	603.0	-10.5	-1.7%	-8.5	-2.1
Business Rates & Council Tax funding	-613.5	-613.5	0.0	0.0%	0.0	0.0
Forecast Year End Position	-0.0	-10.5	-10.5	-1.7%	-8.5	-2.1

3. £6.3m of the £14.4m pay inflation budget has been used to meet the cost of the additional pay inflation in 2024/25 following the agreement of the Green Book pay award, £0.4m continues to be held to meet the cost of pay inflation for vacant posts when they are recruited to. £1.3m has been used to fund a one-off contribution to the Local Government Devolution and Reorganisation reserve (a further £1.7m is recommended to be applied). This leaves a one - off underspend of at least £4.7m which has been reflected in the forecast. The on-going budget that is not needed to fund pay inflation in 2024/25 will roll forward and will be available to meet the cost of pay inflation in 2025/26.
4. Based on the forecast service position, £7.0m of the contingency budget can be used to fund a one-off contribution to the Local Government Devolution and Reorganisation reserve. This is an increase of £3.7m since the report to Cabinet January 2025 and, when added to the contribution referred to in paragraph 10, takes the total contribution to the reserve during 2024/25 to £10m (see paragraph 125 for further information).
5. The 2024/25 budget includes planned service areas savings of £30.1m. 54% of these savings are assessed as delivered and 67% are forecast to be delivered by the end of March 2025.
6. The risk assessed level of one – off funding held in general balances in 2024/25 is £30.2m. A residual balance of £2.3m relating to the underspend at the end of 2023/24 was agreed to be held in balances as part of the Provisional Outturn Report for 2023/24. After taking account of the forecast underspend, balances are currently forecast to be £12.9m above the risk assessed level as at 31 March 2025. The use of £10.8m forecast funding from General Balances was agreed as part of the 2025/26 budget. Based on the forecast position and agreed use balances will be £2.1m above the risk assessed level for 2025/26 as at 1 April 2025.
7. The forecast 2024/25 deficit compared to Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) funding for High Needs is £31.9m, £10.6m higher than the budget approved by Council in February 2024. The CIPFA code of practice requires negative High Needs DSG balances to be held in an unusable reserve. The forecast deficit increases the cumulative negative High Needs DSG balance held in this reserve from £55.8m as at 31 March 2024 to £87.7m at 31 March 2025.

Service Areas Forecasts

Adult Services

8. Adult Services are forecasting an underspend of £4.2m against a budget of £249.7m.

Service Area	Latest Budget Jan-25 £m	Forecast Spend Jan-25 £m	Forecast Variance Jan-25 £m	Forecast Variance Nov-24 £m	Change Since Nov-24 £m
Adult Social Care	29.4	29.7	0.3	0.3	0.0
Health, Education & Social Care Commissioning	7.0	6.7	-0.3	-0.3	0.0
Business Support Service	1.2	1.2	0.0	0.0	0.0
Pooled Budgets	212.1	207.9	-4.2	0.0	-4.2
Total Adult Services	249.7	245.5	-4.2	0.0	-4.2

Pooled Budgets

9. The underspend of £4.2 million is attributed to the system's diligent approach to achieve efficiencies related to market and operational management. Performance in Adult Social Care in parallel to this has shown improvement, resulting in better outcomes for residents. Assessment waiting times have decreased by 74%, and the time people wait to be seen has reduced by 64% over the last two years.

Age Well Pooled Budget

10. The Age Well pooled budget combines health and social care expenditure on care homes, activity relating to hospital avoidance and prevention and early support activities for older people. Budgets within the pool are managed on an aligned basis with the BOB ICB so each partner is responsible for the variation against their element of the funding.
11. The position assumes that all of the savings built into the 2024/25 budget are delivered. Further detail is provided in the savings section of the report.
12. The council's share of the Better Care Fund (BCF) being utilised within the pool is £31.1m in 2024/25.
13. There are risks and assumptions within the forecast including:
- Growth in placements, particularly residential, through the year. Although there is a seasonal trend, it is difficult to predict accurately how activity will move. The forecast includes an element of growth held to mitigate this risk.
 - The ICB has begun a programme of Continuing Healthcare package reviews, following which a number of packages have been assessed as no longer meeting the criteria for funding and therefore becoming a social care commitment. To date the increase in costs to the council for older people is £1.0m in 2024/25. This has potential to increase depending on the outcomes of any further assessments undertaken by the ICB.

- The reablement and discharge to assess services has seen a continued increase in numbers over recent months.

Live Well Pooled Budget

14. The Live Well pool supports a combination of health and social care needs for adults of working age with learning disabilities, acquired brain injury or mental health needs and adults with physical disabilities. Budgets within the pool are managed on an aligned basis with the Integrated Care Board (ICB) for Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire, and Berkshire West (BOB).

15. The council elements of the Live Well pool are forecast to spend to budgets.

16. There are risks and assumptions within the forecast including:

- The ICB has begun a programme of Continuing Healthcare package reviews, following which a number of packages have been assessed as no longer meeting the criteria for funding therefore becoming a social care commitment. To date the increase in costs to the council for adults with learning and physical disabilities is £1.1m in 2024/25.
- Transport costs are forecast to overspend by £0.7m. This is due to costs associated with market conditions rather than increased demand. Work is ongoing to reduce these costs in future years via a transport working group.
- Growth in care packages, particularly for supported living and home support, through the year. It is difficult to predict accurately how activity will move throughout the remaining months of the year.

Non-Pool Services

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

Reserves

18. In January 2025, Cabinet approved a £3.0m contribution to the Budget Priorities reserve. There are some future funding uncertainties facing the sector and this will support and cover for future risks to the sector. This contribution will be added to £1.0m held in the Budget Priorities reserve for Adult Social Care at 1 April 2024.

19. £0.6m held in reserves because of additional contributions made by the ICB in previous years will be allocated in 2024/25 and 2025/26 as agreed with the Joint Commissioning Executive.

20. As the Supervisory Body the council has a statutory obligation to assess and authorise Deprivation of Liberty Safeguarding (DoLS) requests. The number of requests the council receives has increased so £0.4m has been held in the Budget Priorities reserve to help meet this obligation. This funding will be utilised in 2024/25.

21. £0.1m held in the Government Initiative Reserve relates to ongoing costs associated with charging reforms prior to implementation which is now scheduled for autumn 2025.

22. £0.3m of apprenticeship funding is held within the grants and contributions

reserve, funding was awarded to the council late in February 2024 to increase social work capacity within adult social care, the funding will be used before March 2025. Noting the positive impact of the recruitment campaign, 300 applications were received for social work apprenticeships from which 8 were appointed.

23. £0.2m Accelerated Reform Fund funding awarded in January 2024 has been used to address barriers to adopting innovative practices and build capacity and capability within adult social care.

Ringfenced Grants

24. As set out in Annex B-4, 2024/25 ring-fenced government grants for Adult Services total £23.2m.
25. The Improved Better Care Fund Grant is £10.7m, with no change since 2023/24. The conditions attached to the grant funding require it to be used for the purposes of meeting adult social care needs, including contributing to the stabilisation of local care markets and supporting the NHS in addressing pressures such as delayed discharges.
26. The Market Sustainability and Improvement Fund is £10.0m and is being used to support the provider fee uplift in 2024/25 in line with the terms of the grant, to enhance the uplift, and to maintain uplifts from 2023/24 funded through the Market Sustainability and Fair Cost of Care grant which now forms part of this grant.
27. The Adult Social Care Discharge Fund is £2.5m. This is being used to provide interventions that improve discharge of patients from hospital to the most appropriate location for their ongoing care.

Non-ringfenced Grants

28. The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) have allocated a non-ringfenced grant of £0.1m to support Connect To Work activity within Adult Social Care, this will be used in 2024/25 and 2025/26.

Virements

29. There are a number of virements to note. These reflect inflationary uplifts being added to the pooled budgets, and funding for the 2024/25 pay award..

Children's Services

30. Children's services are forecasting an overspend of £1.3m against a budget of £202.6m.

31. For High Needs DSG there is a forecast in year deficit of £31.9m. Forecast expenditure is £10.6m higher than the budget approved by Council in February 2024.

Service Area	Latest Budget Jan-25 £m	Forecast Spend Jan-25 £m	Forecast Variance Jan-25 £m	Forecast Variance Nov-24 £m	Change Since Nov-24 £m
Education & Learning	54.4	55.4	1.0	1.0	0.0
Schools ¹	0.2	0.2	0.0	0.0	0.0
Subtotal Education	54.6	55.6	1.0	1.0	0.0
Early Help, Front Door & Social Care	86.4	85.7	-0.7	-1.5	0.8
Provider Services & Safeguarding	52.6	50.4	-2.3	-1.5	-0.7
Subtotal Children's Social Care	139.1	136.1	-3.0	-3.0	0.0
Children's Services Central Costs	9.0	12.3	3.3	3.3	0.0
Total Children's Services	202.7	204.0	1.3	1.3	0.0
Overspend on High Needs DSG that will be transferred to the unusable reserve	89.4	121.4	31.9	28.4	3.5

Education

32. Within Education & Learning, Home to School Transport continues to be high risk. Expenditure is forecast to exceed the budget by £1.0m based on the pupils and transport requirements for the current academic year.

33. There is a review of ongoing potential mitigations that might improve the outturn position.

Children's Social Care & Central Costs

34. The Children's Social Care is forecast to underspend by £3.0m as a result of a reduction in the forecast against staff budgets and underspends on investments. This is offset by a forecast overspend of £3.3m for Children's Services Central Costs.

35. There remains the risk of demand pressures in Children's Social Care including the cost of children's placements, agency social workers and the challenges delivering savings targets during the financial year.

36. Currently Children's Social Care are mitigating any overspends against in year grant funding for Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children through the use of prior-year funding held in the Grants & Contributions reserve. There remains a risk

¹ *Maintained Schools are funded by Dedicated Schools Grant

that the reserve balance may be exceeded.

37. In relation to staffing, several initiatives are planned to support the reduction in the number of agency social workers. For 2024/25 costs are currently expected to be managed within the budget, however there could be risks in future financial years should the number and cost of agency social workers not reduce in line with budgeted expectations.

38. The latest activity for Children's Social Care is as below:

	Q2	Q4	Q2	Q4	Q2	Q3	January
	2022/23	2022/23	2023/24	2023/24	2024/25	2024/25	2024/25
Oxfordshire born children	778	735	677	624	643	650	653
Disabled Children	61	58	51	49	43	45	48
Subtotal	839	793	728	673	686	695	701
Unaccompanied	69	108	94	95	99	100	90
Total	908	901	822	768	785	795	791

39. The number of cared for children for during 2024/25, excluding the Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children, has continued to broadly stabilise at around the 700 level and is in line with the numbers forecast for the budget at this point in the year.

Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG)

40. The forecast overspend against High Needs DSG funding is a deficit of £31.9m, £10.6m higher than the £21.3m budget approved by Council in February 2024.

Summary of DSG funding	2024/25 Budget £m	2024/25 Projected Outturn £m	Variance £m
Schools block	129.1	129.1	0.0
Central Services Schools block	5.2	5.2	0.0
High Needs block	89.5	121.4	31.9
Early Years block	75.4	75.4	0.0
Total	299.1	331.0	31.9

41. The CIPFA code of practice requires negative High Needs DSG balances to be held in an unusable reserve. The forecast deficit increases the cumulative negative High Needs DSG balance held in this reserve from £55.8m as at 31 March 2024 to £87.7m at 31 March 2025.

Environment & Highways

42. Environment & Highways is forecasting an overspend of £0.2m against a budget of £53.2m.

Service Area	Latest Budget Jan-25 £m	Forecast Spend Jan-25 £m	Forecast Variance Jan-25 £m	Forecast Variance Nov-24 £m	Change Since Nov-24 £m
Transport, Property & Infrastructure Delivery	1.3	1.3	0.0	0.0	0.0
Countryside & Waste	34.9	34.9	0.0	0.2	-0.2
Business Support	0.4	0.4	0.0	0.0	0.0
Highways & Maintenance	21.7	20.1	-1.6	-1.6	0.0
Network Management	-6.2	-4.4	1.8	2.2	-0.4
Senior Management	1.0	1.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Total Environment & Highways	53.2	53.4	0.2	0.8	-0.6

Transport, Property & Infrastructure Delivery

43. The Transport, Property & Infrastructure Delivery service area is forecasting a breakeven position.

Countryside & Waste

44. The Countryside & Waste service is currently forecasting a breakeven position, an improvement of £0.2m to the previously reported position

45. Within Waste Management there is an increase in tonnages transferred to the Energy Recovery Facility and a reduction in recycling tonnages. The resulting overspend (£0.5m) will be offset through income share arrangements with the Energy Recovery Facility (ERF) and through efficiencies in countryside services. The service will continue to monitor waste data trends and report any significant changes in future reports.

46. The table below summarises budgeted and actual waste activity.

	Budget			
Waste Stream**	Annual £m	Tonnage K'Tonnes	%	Price/ Tonne £
Recycling/ Composting	£8.4m	175	60%	£47.86
ERF	£16.2m	105	36%	£154.41
Landfill	£1.6m	11	4%	£149.30
Total	£26.2m	291	100%	£90.09

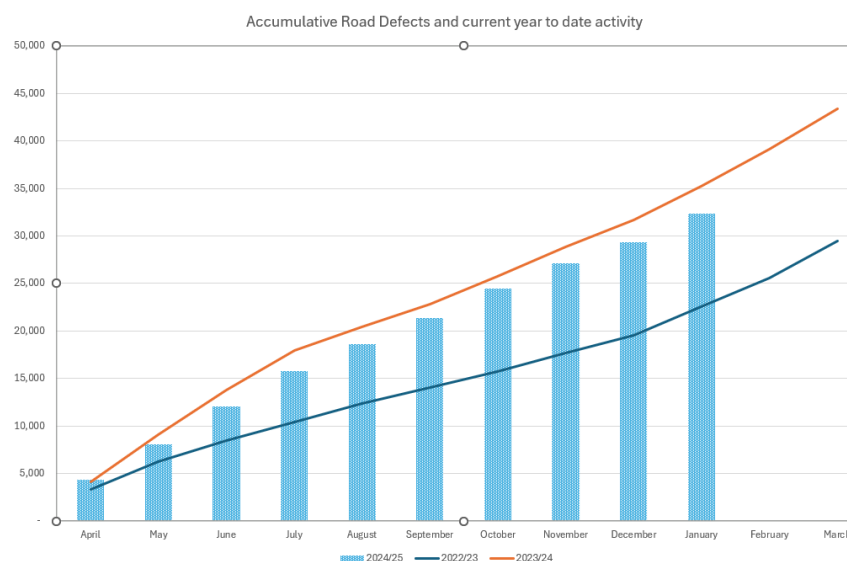
	Outturn Forecast*			
	Annual £m	Tonnage K'Tonnes	%	Price/ Tonne £
	£8.1m	153	56%	£53.24
	£17.3m	112	41%	£154.62
	£1.3m	8	3%	£167.56
	£26.7m	273	100%	£98.07

*December figures presented as the latest dataset.

** Please note that budget, outturn & variance figures are rounded to the nearest 1000

Highways & Maintenance

47. Highways & Maintenance are forecasting an underspend of £1.6m. This reflects a reduction in energy consumption for street lighting and the ongoing effect of a price update received late in 2023/24 setting out more favourable energy prices.
48. The service is forecasting pressures of £2.5m across maintenance predominantly in defect repairs, incident response and winter maintenance, as a result of bad weather across the county. These pressures are currently being mitigated through underspends across the service.
49. Current level of defects remains lower than last year and in line with the current budget.



Network Management

50. Network Management is forecasting an overspend of £1.8m. This is due to a delay in approval of the council's application to implement charging for Lane Rental by the Department for Transport. Although the full level of income will not be achieved actions to mitigate the impact, such as delays in other planned expenditure and additional drawdown of the parking account reserve are reflected in the forecast.

Virements

51. There are number of virements that predominantly realign and correct internal budgets as detailed in Annex B-2b.

Economy & Place

52. Economy & Place is forecasting an overspend an overspend of £0.1m against a budget of £16.9m.

Service Area	Latest Budget Jan-25 £m	Forecast Spend Jan-25 £m	Forecast Variance Jan-25 £m	Forecast Variance Nov-24 £m	Change Since Nov-24 £m
Place Shaping	12.0	12.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Future Economy	0.1	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.0
Regulatory Planning & Enforcement	2.0	2.1	0.1	0.0	0.1
Climate Action	1.2	1.2	0.0	0.0	0.0
OxLEP	0.1	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.0
Innovation	0.4	0.4	0.0	0.0	0.0
Senior Management Team	0.7	0.7	0.0	0.0	0.0
Business Performance & Services Improvement	0.5	0.5	0.0	0.0	0.0
Total Economy & Place	16.9	17.0	0.1	0.0	0.1

53. The Regulatory Planning & Enforcement service area is forecasting an overspend of £0.1m due to legal costs for damages awarded by the Planning inspector against Oxfordshire County Council in a planning appeal.

54. All other services in Economy & Place are forecasting a breakeven position.

Public Health and Communities

55. Public Health and Communities are forecasting a £0.2m overspend against a budget of £12.5m.

Service Area	Latest Budget Jan-25 £m	Forecast Spend Jan-25 £m	Forecast Variance Jan-25 £m	Forecast Variance Nov-24 £m	Change Since Nov-24 £m
Public Health Functions	40.0	39.4	-0.6	-0.2	-0.4
Public Health Recharges	0.6	0.6	0.0	0.0	0.0
Other Income	-1.4	-1.4	0.0	0.0	0.0
Grant Income	-34.4	-34.4	0.0	0.0	0.0
Transfer to Public Health Reserve	0.0	0.6	0.6	0.2	0.4
Total Public Health	4.8	4.8	0.0	0.0	0.0
Total Libraries & Heritage	8.1	8.3	0.2	0.0	0.2
Total Public Health and Communities	12.9	13.1	0.2	0.0	0.2

56. A £0.6m underspend in services funded by the Public Health ringfenced grant will be transferred to the Public Health reserve at year end.

57. Sexual health services are forecasting a £0.1m underspend due to activity levels being lower than anticipated.

58. Tobacco Control is forecast to underspend by £0.1m due to an increase in the Section 31 grant to support the increase in tobacco control and stop smoking activity.

59. The budget for NHS Health Checks is forecast to underspend by £0.1m due to lower activity.

60. Other Public health services are reporting underspends of £0.3m, £0.1m relating to delayed research spend now earmarked for 2025/26 and £0.2m related to staff restructures and delays in delivering NHS partnership evaluation work.

Libraries & Heritage

61. Libraries & Heritage are forecasting an overspend of £0.2m.

62. The Home Library Service is forecast to overspend by £0.1m. Pressures within branch libraries are being managed

Ringfenced Government Grants

63. The ringfenced Public Health grant totals £35.0m in 2024/25. This includes an additional £0.6m to cover the additional in-year cost impact of the National Health Service pay awards for health services commissioned by local authorities and funded through the public health grant.

64. A ringfenced Stop Smoking Services Grant of £0.8m has been awarded to the council to increase the number of smokers engaging with effective interventions to quit smoking.

Use of Un-ringfenced Government Grant Funding

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

- £1.2m Domestic Abuse Duty Grant supporting the provision of accommodation-based support to victims of domestic abuse and their children.
- £0.6m Substance Misuse Treatment & Recovery Housing Grant being used to deliver the Government's aim that by 2024/25 there will be more people recovering from addiction in stable and secure housing.
- £1.7m Supplementary Substance Misuse Treatment and Recovery grant. This is the second year of a three-year scheme where the Office for Health Improvement and Disparities (OHID) is working alongside other government departments to support a process of investment in a whole system approach to tackling illicit drug use, including enforcement, diversion and treatment and recovery interventions.
- £0.2m Employment Individual Placement Support in community drug and alcohol treatment grant, to improve quality of life for people with alcohol and 'other drug' dependence.
- £1.1m Rough Sleeping Drug and Alcohol Grant is being used to provide specialist support for rough sleepers and those at risk.

Reserves

66. Public Health earmarked reserves were £4.5m at 1 April 2024. £1.4m is earmarked to be spent in 2024/25, £1.1m in 2025/26, £0.6m in 2026/27 and £0.4m in 2027/28, leaving a balance of £1.6m. The use of the reserve is continuously being reviewed and it is anticipated that there will be further commitments against this funding agreed throughout 2024/25.

67. £0.1m is being held to expand the Making Every Contact Count work programme in Oxfordshire; this will be spent in 2024/25.

68. The History Service donations reserve of £0.02m is earmarked to be spent in 2024/25

69. The Museum Service donations reserve of £0.1m is earmarked to be spent equally over the next 3 years.

Virements

70. Virements to reflect the agreed 2024/25 Pay Award have been actioned.

Oxfordshire Fire & Rescue Service and Community Safety

71. Oxfordshire Fire & Rescue Service and Community Safety are forecasting a £0.6m overspend against a budget of £28.9m. This is an improvement of £0.1m from the previously reported position.

Service Area	Latest Budget Jan-25 £m	Forecast Spend Jan-25 £m	Forecast Variance Jan-25 £m	Forecast Variance Nov-24 £m	Change Since Nov-24 £m
Fire & Rescue	27.1	27.8	0.7	0.7	0.0
Emergency Planning	0.3	0.3	0.0	0.0	0.0
Trading Standards	1.4	1.4	-0.1	0.0	-0.1
Total Oxfordshire Fire & Rescue Service and Community Safety	28.9	29.5	0.6	0.7	-0.1

72. All services are forecasting a breakeven position with the exception of Fire and Rescue which is forecasting an overspend of £0.7m due to staffing savings that are not expected to be achieved. This is partially offset by in year vacancies in Trading Standards.

Use of Un-ringfenced Government Grant Funding

73. Un-ringfenced grant funding held centrally and agreed to be used to support expenditure budgets within Oxfordshire Fire & Rescue Service includes:

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

Reserves

74. £3.2m is held in reserves for the renewal of fire and rescue vehicles and breathing apparatus equipment. A fleet replacement strategy has been developed, and several vehicles have been ordered and expected to be received in 2024/25, the reserve will be fully utilised by 2025/26.
75. £0.5m was available in the Fire Uplift Grant reserve as at 1 April 2024. This is being held to fund employee costs expected to be incurred over the next three to five years.
76. £0.5m is being held to cover the cost of the replacement of Airwave for the Oxfordshire Fire and Rescue Service and the implementation of the new national Emergency Service Mobile Communications Programme.

Resources and Law & Governance

77. The services within Resources are forecasting an overspend of £1.3m against a budget of £61.5m. This is unchanged from the last report.

Service Area	Latest Budget Jan-25 £m	Forecast Spend Jan-25 £m	Forecast Variance Jan-25 £m	Forecast Variance Nov-24 £m	Change Since Nov-24 £m
Corporate Services	10.9	11.8	0.9	0.9	0.0
HR & Cultural Change	5.1	4.9	-0.2	-0.2	0.0
Financial & Commercial Services	9.7	10.0	0.3	0.0	0.3
Property & Assets	22.1	22.0	-0.1	0.0	-0.1
Public Affairs, Policy & Partnership	4.4	4.4	0.0	0.0	0.0
Law, Governance, Coroner & Registration Services	9.2	9.7	0.5	0.6	-0.1
Total Resources	61.5	62.8	1.3	1.3	0.0

78. There is a forecast overspend of £0.9m within **Corporate Services** due to previously agreed savings of £0.9m which were held corporately but expected to be achieved through reductions in costs related to IT expenditure across the organisation. Since further work has identified that these are not achievable in 2024/25 there is a forecast pressure. In the longer run, action will be taken to reduce costs but some of the contingency budget will be used to manage the impact of the delivery timeline on the on-going achievement of the saving in 2025/26.

79. **Human Resources & Organisational Development** are forecasting an underspend of £0.2m due to in year savings from staff seconded to transformation projects. All savings are expected to be fully delivered.

80. **Financial & Commercial Services** are forecasting a £0.3m driven by increased agency spend to cover vacancies. The forecast also reflects under achievement of income in the procurement area, which has been addressed as part of the 2025/26 Budget. Within that all savings and investments are expected to be fully delivered.

81. **Property & Assets Services** are forecasting a £0.1m underspend. All savings are expected to be fully delivered.

82. **Public Affairs, Policy & Partnership services** are forecasting a breakeven position. All savings and investments are expected to be fully delivered.

83. **Law, Governance, Coroners & Registration Services** are forecasting an overspend of £0.5m as a result of high locum costs in the Legal service where recruitment continues to be a challenge.

Transformation, Digital & Customer Experience (TDCE)

84. The services within TDCE are forecasting a £1.0m overspend against a budget of £6.6m due to savings now expected to be delivered in 2025/26 rather than 2024/25.

Service Area	Latest Budget Jan-25 £m	Forecast Spend Jan-25 £m	Forecast Variance Jan-25 £m	Forecast Variance Nov-24 £m	Change Since Nov-24 £m
Delivery Unit	2.0	3.0	1.0	0.0	1.0
Customer Experience	3.6	3.6	0.0	0.0	0.0
Insight & Corporate Programmes	0.7	0.7	0.0	0.0	0.0
TDCE Management	0.2	0.2	0.0	0.0	0.0
Total Resources	6.6	7.6	1.0	0.0	1.0

85. The **Delivery Unit** is forecasting a £1.0m overspend due to underdelivered savings now expected to be delivered in 2025/26 rather than 2024/25.

86. **Customer Experience** service are forecasting a breakeven position and 100% of savings are expected to be delivered.

87. **Insight & Corporate Programmes** and **TDCE Management** are forecasting breakeven positions.

Overview of Medium-Term Financial Strategy Investments and Savings

88. The 2024/25 budget includes planned services savings of £30.1m. 54% of these savings are assessed as delivered and 67% are forecast to be delivered in 2024/25. Work has continued to ensure that these savings are achieved.

Service areas	2024/25 Planned Savings	Actual Delivery to Date	Actual Delivery to Date	Forecast delivery	Forecast delivery
	£m	£m	%	£m	%
Adult Services	4.3	2.9	67%	4.2	98%
Children's Services	12.3	6.4	52%	6.5	53%
Environment & Highways	8.1	3.9	48%	5.2	65%
Economy and Place	1.0	0.6	65%	1.0	100%
Public Health & Communities	0.5	0.2	53%	0.5	100%
Oxfordshire Fire & Rescue Service and Community Safety	0.5	0.1	15%	0.2	46%
Resources and Law & Governance	1.9	1.8	96%	1.9	98%
Transformation, Digital & Customer Experience	1.5	0.4	23%	0.6	36%
TOTAL	30.1	16.4	54%	20.1	67%

89. The 2024/25 budget also includes planned service areas investments of £11.6m. Currently 51% is forecast to be delivered. £1.6m will be transferred to the Budget Priorities Reserve to support spend now expected to take place in 2025/26. £4.1m is forecast to be unspent and mostly is being used to support service pressures. The £4.1m unspent funding is included within the forecast service position.

Service Areas	2024/25 Planned Investments	Actual Delivery to Date	Forecast delivery in 24/25	Estimated transfer to 25/26	Unspent
	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m
Adult Services	1.4	0.0	0.5	0.4	0.5
Children's Services	6.7	0.3	2.3	1.1	3.3
Environment & Highways	2.5	0.9	2.3		0.2
Economy and Place	0.4	0.2	0.3		0.1
Resources and Law & Governance	0.6	0.5	0.5	0.1	0.0
TOTAL	11.6	1.8	5.9	1.6	4.1
%			51%	14%	35%

Adult Services Savings

90. The 2024/25 budget includes planned savings of £4.3m. 98% are forecast to be delivered.
91. The unconfirmed savings relate to an action to reduce the outstanding unsecured debt. This will not be confirmed until the end of the financial year but while action continues to be taken early reports indicate that this will not be achieved.
92. There were also £0.3m of savings brought forward from 2023/24 to be delivered in 2024/25. 100% of these savings are expected to be delivered.

Investments

93. Planned one – off investments of £1.4m were agreed as part of the 2024/25 budget. Commitments have been made to spend £0.5m of this funding with further work being carried out to utilise the remaining investment. Depending on progress by year end £0.2m may be required to be held in the Budget Priorities Reserve to be used in 2025/26. £0.2m of the investment linked to the Oxfordshire Way is being managed by the Partnership Delivery Service.

Children's Services Savings

94. The 2024/25 budget includes planned savings of £12.3m, 53% is forecast to be delivered. Savings at risk of delivery include the children we care for savings of £6.2m.

Investments

95. Planned investments of £6.7m agreed as part of the 2024/25 budget include the following of which 35% is forecast to be delivered. c£1.1m will be held in reserves at year end for use in 2025/26, including investments for Oxfordshire Way:

Service Areas	2024/25 Planned Investments	Forecast delivery in 24/25	Estimated transfer to 25/26	Unspent	
Additional capacity in the SEND service	£1.5m	£1.2m	£0.3m	£0.0m	
Extend the Family Safeguarding model to reduce demand	£0.9m	£0.1m		£0.8m	*
Recruitment & Retention Strategy	£1.0m	£0.2m		£0.8m	
Home to School Transport to improve data and systems and increase independent travel	£0.8m	£0.0m		£0.8m	*
Digital innovation to assist customer pathways and user experience in information finding and advice	£0.5m	£0.1m		£0.4m	*
Develop the Oxfordshire Way approach	£0.7m	£0.3m	£0.3m	£0.0m	
Other investments (Family services, Foster Care and technological improvement)	£1.3m	£0.4m	£0.5m	£0.4m	
TOTAL	£6.7m	£2.3m	£1.1m	£3.3m	

Note* £2.8m investment funding is supporting service pressures

Environment & Highways Savings

96. The 2024/25 budget includes planned savings of £8.1m. 65% are forecast to be delivered. Savings that are expected to be partially delivered or not expected to be delivered include:

- Lane rental an introduction of charges for all works on the business roads at the busiest times to minimise disruption: the service anticipates that the full £2.2m income expectation will not be achieved as a result in a delay obtaining approval from the Department for Transport. The on-going impact has been addressed through the 2025/26 Budget & Business Planning process.
- Income of £0.2m from introduction of a new Controlled Parking Zones (CPZs): Income realisation is now expected to be between December 2024 and March 2025 through a mix of permit fees and fines. An update on additional CPZ income will be reported at the end of the financial year.
- Prevention of unsorted waste at Household Waste Recycling Centres. A saving of £0.2m is now not expected to be delivered this year due to implementation delays.
- £0.5m commercial savings to be achieved through contractual negotiation is not likely to be fully delivered by the end of this financial year.

Investments

97. The 2024/25 budget includes planned investments of £2.5m. 92% are on track to be delivered. Investments that are at risk of being delivered include:

- £0.2m to introduce new Controlled Parking Zones: the Network and Co-ordination service has prioritised to identify, design and consult on four new schemes. Approval and consultation feedback is to progress with at least two schemes. The other two schemes are deferred.
- £0.1m investment in a feasibility study to introduce a new Demand Responsive transport project is currently on hold pending a decision on whether to reallocate this investment to another project.

Economy and Place

98. The 2024/25 budget includes planned savings of £1.0m. 83% are forecast to be delivered. £0.3m of planned investments are on track to be delivered with plans now progressing for the congestion and mini – Holland capital schemes. Funding for future revenue borrowing is expected to be transferred to reserves at the end of the financial year.

Public Health & Communities

99. The 2024/25 budget includes planned savings of £0.5m. 100% are forecast to be delivered.

Oxfordshire Fire & Rescue Service and Community Safety

100. The 2024/25 budget includes planned savings of £0.5m. 46% are forecast to be delivered, £0.3m staffing savings are at risk of being delivered.

Resources and Law & Governance

101. The 2024/25 budget includes planned savings of £1.9m. 96% of these savings have been delivered and 98% are forecast to be delivered. 87% of planned investments of £0.6m are expected to be achieved.

Transformation, Digital & Customer Experience

102. Delaying staffing savings of £1.5m that need to be achieved across the council are currently being held in the Transformation service. Budgets for senior managers have been adjusted to reflect the new structure. £0.6m of the £1.5m saving has been achieved following the completion of the Tiers 3 and 4 layering.

Debt Management

Corporate Debtors

103. The combined 120-day customer invoice collection rate up to January 2025 based on volumes is 97%, 2% above target. For the same period based on value the rate is 95%, a 1% increase on the previous period.

104. Debt forecast to require impairing at year end is £0.9m, £0.5m above the current impairment balance of £0.4m and £0.6m above the £0.3m target. The top five cases account for 59% of this debt and finance are working with the respective services to expedite resolution.

105. Cabinet is recommended to approve the write off of £0.1m owed to the council by a company who are in liquidation. The liquidators have paid £0.1m towards a total debt of £0.2m and have confirmed that no further dividends are due to creditors.

Adult Social Care Contribution Debtors

106. The combined 120-day invoice collection rate up to January 2025 is 92%, equaling the target. The collection rate based on value of invoices for the same period is 83%, equal with the last period.
107. The 2023/24 year-end adults care contribution impairment for bad debt was £4.5m. The current projected 2024/25 year-end bad debt position has increased this month from £5.0m to £5.1m, this is £0.55m higher than the impairment balance. Additionally, there is a savings target of £0.1m, currently forecast as unachievable. The cumulative impact is a forecast pressure of £0.66m, up from £0.5m last period. Financial services continue to work with the service to support activity to reduce the debt balance. Subject to Cabinet approval of the write off a number of high value historic or legally unenforceable debts (see paragraph 110) the impairment balance is expected to reduce by year end.
108. Cabinet is recommended to approve the writing off of seventeen Adult Social Care contribution debts totaling £0.380m. Nine cases involve deceased individuals with insolvent estates. In six cases, legal advice is there is no route to recover the arrears. One case involves the mismanagement of service user finances by other people. Although secure arrangements are now in place, the debt relates to the prior period and cannot be recovered. The final case involves an individual unable to repay accrued debt, however they are paying ongoing charges.

Budgets Held Centrally

109. After taking account of the use of contingency and additional interest on balances to support the forecast service areas overspend, there is a combined underspend of £11.1m against budgets held centrally.

Capital Financing Costs

110. The borrowing costs and minimum revenue provision (MRP) for capital projects funded by Prudential Borrowing are either recharged to service areas where savings arising from the scheme are expected to meet them or met corporately from the budget for capital financing costs. It is anticipated that after taking account of recharges to service areas costs will be in line with budget.
111. Interest payable is currently forecast to be £11.9m, £3.5m below budget. This reflects the early repayment of two LOBO loans and actual interest costs being lower than budgeted. This is expected to be one – off in 2024/25 as interest payable is expected to increase in 2025/26.

Interest on Balances

112. The forecast for interest receivable is £27.1m, £7.8m above the budget. The additional interest is a result of higher than forecast cash balances coupled with higher than forecast deposit rates. Of the £7.8m, an estimated £3.3m of this will be applied to capital balances.
113. Cash balances for the year are forecast to be £81.9m lower than they would otherwise have been as a result of negative DSG balances. The impact of this is an estimated opportunity cost of £3.4m in unearned interest during 2024/25.

Pay Inflation and Contingency

114. Ongoing funding for pay inflation in 2024/25 total £14.4m and the contingency budget for 2024/25 totals £7.5m.
115. £6.3m of the £14.4m pay inflation budget has been used to meet the cost of the additional pay inflation in 2024/25 following the agreement of the Green Book pay award, £0.4m continues to be held to meet the cost of pay inflation for vacant posts when they are recruited to. £1.3m has been used to fund a one-off contribution to the Local Government Devolution and Reorganisation reserve (a further £1.7m is recommended to be applied). This leaves a one - off underspend of at least £4.7m which has been reflected in the forecast. The on-going budget that is not needed to fund pay inflation in 2024/25 will roll forward and will be available to meet the cost of pay inflation in 2025/26.
116. The Soulbury pay award 2024/25 was agreed in February 2025 and the impact is covered within the forecast
117. Based on the forecast service position, £7.0m of the contingency budget will be used to fund a one-off contribution to the Local Government Devolution and Reorganisation reserve. This is an increase of £3.7m compared to the contribution agreed by Cabinet in January 2025. The remaining contingency budget of £0.5m will be held as a provision for bad debt impairment for debts which are proving challenging to recover.

Reserves, General Balances and Grants

Reserves (Annex B - 3 Earmarked Reserves)

118. Earmarked Reserves are forecast to be £199.5m at 31 March 2025.

Local Government Devolution and Reorganisation Reserve (further contribution of £5.0m)

119. On 16 December 2024, the government published its English Devolution White Paper and the Minister of State for Local Government and English Devolution set out a summary of plans in a Written Ministerial Statement to Parliament.
120. All two-tier areas and small/failing unitary councils are invited to submit reorganisation proposals with the government aiming for all Local Authorities to be unitary authorities with 500,000 population or more. Furthermore, all areas will need to be within Strategic Authorities (including combined authorities) covering at least 1.5 million residents.

121. In January 2025 Cabinet approved the creation of a new reserve to hold funding to support the development of reorganisation and devolution proposals for Oxfordshire and a contribution of £5.0m.

122. It is proposed to supplement further the newly created reserve with another one - off contribution of £5.0m made up of £3.3m from the contingency budget and £1.7m from the remaining unallocated budget for pay inflation that is not required to be used in 2024/25. The total held would then be £10.0m.

Budget Priorities Reserve

123. Existing funding held in the Budget Priorities reserve continues to be used to fund priorities agreed as part of the 2024/25 budget. In January 2025, Cabinet approved to transfer £3.0m from Adult Services to the reserve on a one-off basis. This funding will be used to cover future risks within Adult Services.

124. A contribution of £1.0m was made into the reserve at the end of 2023/24 to extend schemes already agreed as part of the Cabinet's priorities including Rail Studies (£0.2m) and an extension of the funding for efficiency loans to schools (£0.8m). These totals are fully committed in 2024/25.

Transformation Reserve

125. The Transformation Reserve is being used to support the costs of the implementation of the council's transformation programme, Delivering the Future Together.

126. To enable the priorities for the next phase of transformation to be delivered and to create a sustainable council for the future funding of £10.0m was agreed to be added to the reserve as part of the 2024/25 budget. £2.3m of this funding is being used to support revenue budget investments also agreed as part of the 2024/25 budget, with £1.5m supporting the 2024/25 budget and a further £0.8m in 2025/26.

127. The use of £4.5m of the reserve has been agreed during 2024/25. The remaining balance of £2.1m is expected to be committed during 2024/25.

Redundancy Reserve

128. The balance held in the Redundancy Reserve was £2.4m at 31 March 2024. Reflecting the need to reduce the size of the council to be sustainable in future £5.0m was agreed to be added to the reserve as part of the 2024/25 budget. To date the estimated redundancy costs to be funded from this reserve in 2024/25 are £2.5m. After taking account of the cost of redundancies relating to the senior management structure including the layering of Tier 3 and 4 managers in 2024/25 the remaining balance is forecast to be £4.5m.

Collection Fund Reserve

129. The Collection Fund reserve is used to manage fluctuations in Business Rate and Council Tax income that the Council receives. As part of the 2024/25 budget it was agreed to hold £4.0m to fund future volatility in the collection fund position alongside the potential impact of a business rates reset.

130. The forecast balance at 31 March 2025 is £8.4m after taking account of additional business rates funding of £1.3m notified during 2024/25 plus £0.9m income from the North Oxfordshire Business Rates pool.

COVID-19 Reserve

131. The balance held in the reserve at 31 March 2024 was £7.9m with further budgeted planned use of £3.8m in 2024/25 and £2.3m in 2025/26. £1.4m funding not required to be used to fund pressures in Children's Social Care in 2023/24 continues to be held in the reserve and will be transferred to the Transformation Reserve in 2025/26.

Impact of IFRS9

132. A reserve to manage the impact of IFRS9, which relates to the value of pooled investments, was created as part of the 2024/25 budget (Jan 2024 Cabinet Section 4.6 para 33-35). £5.0m funding is currently held in the reserve.
133. Following responses from the Local Government Settlement consultation, MHCLG has decided to implement transitional arrangements for legacy investments already in place at the end of 1 April 2024. The override will now apply to these investments until 1 April 2029. The extension from 2025 to 2029 will provide further time to manage the pooled investments.
134. Since the potential impact is now further ahead, it is recommended to reduce the reserve by £1.0m (revised balance £4.0m) and redirect the funds to support rural active travel measures with the funding initially moved to the Budget Priorities Reserve. The requirement for the remaining funding held in the IFRS9 reserve will be considered during 2025/26 or as part of the budget for 2026/27.

Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) Unusable Reserve

135. An unusable reserve was created in 2020/21 to hold **negative High Needs DSG balances** in line with a change to the CIPFA code of practice on DSG High Needs deficits. The net deficit of £31.9m for 2024/25 will increase the total High Needs deficit held in the reserve from £55.8m to £87.7m as at 31 March 2025. The regulations which require the negative balance to be held in an unusable reserve will come to an end on 31 March 2026.

Grants (Annex B - 4 government grants)

136. 2024/25 Government grants total £532.1m are on track to be delivered. This includes £26.0m in schools' grants for additional mainstream funding, early years funding and pupil premium, plus Adult Social Care Market Sustainability and Improvement Fund (£10.0m).

Homes for Ukraine

137. Following the launch of the Homes for Ukraine (HfU) scheme by the UK government in March 2022, upper tier councils have been in receipt of a tariff fund for individual arrivals in their area of responsibility as well as funding for thank you payments for hosts. Funding for the tariff element was originally provided as a one-off payment at the level of £10,500 per guest, falling to £5,900 for all new arrivals from 1 January 2023. For eligible minors the tariff continues at £10,500.
138. Based on the position as at the end of January 2025, £27.2m of the grant funding received to date has now been allocated and £4.8m remains unallocated.

A further £1.2m funding is expected to be received following the quarter 4 claim.

General Balances (Annex B – 5 General Balances)

139. The risk assessed level of balances for 2024/25 is £30.2m.
140. As set out in the Provisional Outturn Report for 2023/24, a one-off balance of £2.3m was held in balances pending a decision about future use.
141. After taking account of the forecast underspend and the £2.3m funding held since the end of 2023/24, balances are currently forecast to be £12.9m above the risk assessed level at 31 March 2025. The use of £10.8m forecast funding from General Balances was agreed as part of the 2025/26 budget. Based on the forecast position and agreed use balances will be £2.1m above the risk assessed level for 2025/26 as at 1 April 2025

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Division(s): N/A

CABINET – 25 MARCH 2025

FORWARD PLAN AND FUTURE BUSINESS

Items identified from the Forward Plan for Forthcoming Decision

Topic/Decision

Portfolio/Ref

Cabinet, 22 April 2025

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Capital Programme Monitoring Report Financial Report on capital spending against budget allocations, including any necessary capital programme approvals 	Cabinet, 2025/011 - Cabinet Member for Finance
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Cost of Living programme for 2025/26 To agree an expenditure programme following the government's announcement of an extension to the Household Support Fund into 2025/26 	Cabinet, 2025/038 - Cabinet Member for Public Health, Inequalities & Community Safety
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Delegated Powers Report for January to March 2025 To report on a quarterly basis any executive decisions taken under the specific powers and functions delegated under the terms of Part 7.1 (Scheme of Delegation to Officers) of the Council's Constitution – Paragraph 6.3(c)(i). It is not for Scrutiny call-in. 	Cabinet, 2025/051 - Leader

Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for Transport Management, 24 April 2025

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 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
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Walton Street, Oxford - Proposed Parking Amendments To seek approval for minor amendments to parking restrictions as part of plan to improve loading at the Sainsburys Store on Walton Street 	Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for Transport Management,

	25/028 - Cabinet Member for Transport Management
<p>▪ Woodstock Local Cycling and Walking Plan (LCWIP) Seek approval of the draft plan following consultation in line with the Local Transport and Connectivity Plan</p>	Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for Transport Management, 2025/023 - Cabinet Member for Transport Management
<p>▪ Chipping Norton Local Cycling and Walking Plan (LCWIP) Seek approval of the draft Chipping Norton Local Cycling and Walking Plan (LCWIP) as part of the Local Transport and Connectivity Plan.</p>	Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for Transport Management, 2025/022 - Cabinet Member for Transport Management
<p>▪ Churchill Village - Proposed 40mph Speed Limits and Traffic Calming Features To seek approval for the introduction of traffic calming features and speed limit changes - Churchill Village.</p>	Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for Transport Management, 2025/029 - Cabinet Member for Transport Management
<p>▪ Safer Road Fund Project - Side entry Road Treatments (Iffley & Banbury Roads, Oxford) This project is part of the Department for Transport Safer Roads Fund. The Iffley and Banbury Roads have been identified as two of the roads with the highest number of incidents involving vehicles and pedestrians. The inclusion of continuous footways as side road entry treatments aim to reduce road collisions and keep pedestrians safer. If pedestrians feel safer throughout their journeys, they will be likely to choose to make more journeys on foot, improving the overall health of the area.</p>	Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for Transport Management, 2025/045 - Cabinet Member for Transport Management
<p>▪ Cherwell Street Bus Service improvement Scheme Approval to progress to the Infrastructure and Delivery CMD for the start of construction, following a review of the public consultation results, and it's influence (if any) on Detailed Design.</p>	Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for Transport Management, 2025/043 - Cabinet Member

	for Transport Management
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Oxford: Various sites – proposed amendments to parking permit eligibility (Feb 25) A decision is sought on proposed amendments to parking permit eligibility in Oxford 	Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for Transport Management, 2025/040 - Cabinet Member for Transport Management
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Oxford, Frenchay Road - Proposed Relocation of Parking Bays To seek approval for changes to parking bays in Frenchay Road to allow better access for traffic 	Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for Transport Management, - Cabinet Member for Transport Management
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Cherwell Drive, Oxford - Proposed U-Turn Ban Under plans to improve the operation of traffic signals at the junction of Headley Way / Cherwell Drive / Marsh Lane, it is proposed to introduce a U-turn ban for traffic travelling North West, prohibiting the movement onto the opposing carriageway travelling south east. 	Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for Transport Management, 2025/ - Cabinet Member for Transport Management

Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for Infrastructure & Development Strategy, 24 April 2025

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Cherwell Street Bus Service improvement Scheme Approval for the completion of Detailed Design and to start construction, following the Transport Management CMD approval for the scheme consultation results and detailed design review. 	Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for Infrastructure & Development Strategy, 2025/044 - Cabinet Member for Infrastructure and Development Strategy
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Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for Finance, 11 April 2025

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Fire Remedial Project Phase 2&3 To approve the commencement of work on the project 	Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for Finance, 2025/058 - Cabinet Member for Finance
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Asset Rationalisation Programme Approve the proposals for the moving of staff to alternative locations, including the potential purchase of a new freehold property and refurbishment of the existing portfolio. 	Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for Finance, 2025/045 - Cabinet Member for Finance

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 requested¹ 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.	Y	As part of the sale agreement, the purchasers will be required to produce a local community strategy that will be regularly updated. This strategy will ensure public access to Old County Hall is

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

		maintained and will include opening the building for events such as Oxford Open Doors.
2. That the Council should set out its strategy and action plan for the city centre's redevelopment and regeneration.	Y	<p>A high level strategy and action plan is being developed that is focussed on the West End and Southern Gateway as key areas of redevelopment and regeneration and as areas where the Council has influence through physical ownership. The strategy and action plan will need to reflect that responsibility for planning and public realm in Oxford sits with Oxford City Council.</p> <p>Indicative timescale: 12 – 16 weeks.</p>

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: Draft Local Nature Recovery Strategy

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

Date response requested:² 21 January 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 ensure the Local Nature Recovery Strategy is aligned with climate finance and	Accept	We are looking at how to present Oxfordshire natural capital mapping by Oxford University within and alongside the Local Nature Recovery Strategy prior to publication in the Autumn. We

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

natural capital work happening locally and nationally.		are also engaging with the LEP Green Prospectus and working with the Local Nature Partnership on their Nature Finance workstream and Oxfordshire Nature Conservation Investment Fund which focuses on green finance for projects which will align with the LNRS. The LNRS is aligned with delivery of Biodiversity Net Gain and we will continue to monitor additional green finance opportunities coming forward nationally.
2. That the Council should ensure that the Local Nature Recovery Strategy is aligned with the Government's five missions and their outputs.	Partially accept	Having reviewed the Government's 5 missions, it is hard to see a direct link to the LNRS, however, there is a clear link between the LNRS and delivery of the Government's Environmental Improvement Plan as well as achieving the national commitment to protect 30% of land and sea for nature by 2030 (30by30).
3. That the Council should ensure the Local Nature Recovery Strategy is aligned with the Local Transport Connectivity Plan and the Oxfordshire Infrastructure Strategy on the nature costs of roads and rails.	Accept	The Landscape and Nature Recovery Team are currently liaising with officers producing the Movement and Place Strategies (part 2 of the Local Transport and Connectivity Plan). The Local Nature Partnership are currently engaging on review of the Oxfordshire Infrastructure Strategy to ensure Green Infrastructure and delivery of LNRS is integrated, and we will look for opportunities for the Landscape and Nature Recovery Team to further engage.
4. That the Council should develop a delivery plan to ensure that teams within the County Council have integrated and adopted the Local Nature Recovery Strategy.	Accept	A draft of the Council's Biodiversity Action Framework and associated Action Plan have been produced for imminent internal consultation with a view to adoption in early summer. Extension of the LNRS Project Managers contract for a further year, and current recruitment of a Biodiversity Officer, will allow additional officer time to integrate LNRS delivery across Council services.
5. That the Council should make explicit in an annex to the documentation the implications of the strategy for district councils, town and parish councils, neighbourhood groups, and other key partners as well as the actions expected of them.	Accept	Work is now being taken forward by the LNRS Project Manager and partners to develop LNRS user guides for a variety of audiences to be available alongside LNRS publication in Autumn.

Overview & Scrutiny Recommendation Response Pro forma

6. That the Council should strengthen the explanations within the strategy of the benefits to health and wellbeing of the Local Nature Recovery Strategy.	Accept	We invited the Public Health team to submit a response to our consultation to help us improve how we reflect the benefits to health and wellbeing of the LNRS; this will inform the review of the draft LNRS prior to publication in Autumn.
7. That the Council should consider how best it can publicise positive elements of nature recovery that are already happening.	Accept	We will do comms around launch of the LNRS in Autumn, and also plan to do some comms as part of Big Green Week. We would like to develop a comms strategy for biodiversity and nature recovery and will add this to the service delivery plan for 25/26. Such work will require specialist comms support as well as co-ordination with partners such as the Local Nature Partnership; in developing the LNRS we have established a Comms Engagement Working Group through the Local Nature Partnership which we will look to continue..
8. That the Council should ensure it sets an example maintaining its own land for nature recovery and biodiversity gain, as the Responsible Authority for the Local Nature Recovery Strategy.	Accept	This is integrated within the draft Biodiversity Action Framework which introduces policies around our own land management and is likely to be ready for adoption in early summer. We are working with the Properties and Estates Team on development of a habitat banking vehicle to enable delivery of biodiversity net gain on our land, and also promote the delivery of 20% biodiversity net gain through colleagues bringing forward Council-led planning applications.
9. That the Council should work with schools to support them to promote biodiversity and nature recovery in their grounds.	Partially accept	With current resource levels and varied responsibility and relationships with schools it is considered only light reactive response is achievable. This would also be in the form of providing direction to suitable guidance and advice material only. There is some link with our community tree programme, with the Tree Service is planting 3 new community orchards on primary school sites in Oxford with a grant from the Coronation Living Heritage Fund. Much work with schools is delivered through our partners, including the Berks, Bucks and Oxon Wildlife Trust,

Overview & Scrutiny Recommendation Response Pro forma

		Earth Trust, and Science Oxford. Promotion of sources of support for schools has been included within the draft Biodiversity Action Framework which is likely to be ready for adoption in early summer.
10. That the Council should investigate the costs of collecting and/or piling mown grass to enhance wildflower growth and other biodiversity benefits.	Accept	<p>The introduction of cut and collect within the Highways network is currently focussed on our 52 Road Verge Nature Reserves, with an aim to introduce 6 new sites into a cut and collect regime annually, this has been incorporated into the draft Biodiversity Action Plan (due for adoption in early summer).</p> <p>We'll continue to work with the Highways Team to understand costs for more extensive cut and collect and we are work with our highways contractors, Milestone on developing a biodiversity action plan for their new contract, including investigating implementing cut and collect more widely.</p>
11. That the Council should explore the possibilities of supporting flood defences through biodiversity means, including swales, sustainable drainage systems, and rain gardens.	Accept	The inclusion of natural flood management options within Section 19 Flood Reports is integrated into the draft Biodiversity Action Plan (due for adoption in early summer). The recently adopted Flood Risk Management Strategy cross references the LNRS and identifies the role of Natural Flood Management. The new Flood Task Force provides a mechanism to engage with a range of partners including farmer clusters who can help implement natural flood management.

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 requested¹ 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: Draft EOTAS Policy (Education Other Than At School)

Lead Cabinet Member(s): Cllr Kate Gregory, Cabinet member for SEND Improvement; Cllr John Howson, Cabinet member for Children, Education, and Young People's Services

Date response requested:² 21 January 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 re-write the draft EOTAS policy by no later than the end of February 2025 and that it, as well as the		As was explained and agreed at the meeting of the Education and Young People O&S Committee on 28 February 2025, the intention is to continue to coproduce the policy and to bring it to

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

accompanying guidance, should be co-produced and that external experts should be invited to participate in that process.		EYP for its consideration in the early summer of 2025 before it is submitted to Cabinet for approval.
2. That the Council, in tandem with re-writing its draft EOTAS policy, should also write a co-produced Alternative Provision policy.		

CABINET – 25 MARCH 2025

CAPITAL PROGRAMME UPDATE AND MONITORING REPORT

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

Recommendations

1. The Cabinet is RECOMMENDED to:

Capital Programme

- a. Note the capital monitoring position for 2024/25 set out in this report and summarised in Annex 1.
- b. Approve the updated Capital Programme at Annex 2 incorporating the changes set out in this report.

Additions to the Capital Programme

- c. Approve a budget increase for the Speedwell House Redevelopment programme, to be funded from corporate resources. (see paragraph 63 - 65)
- d. Approve the inclusion of £2.500m funding into the Capital Programme to fund a contribution to the Cowley Branch Line. The expectation is that as far as possible, this will be funded by S106 developer contributions. Any funding gap will be met through alternative funding sources. (see paragraph 66 - 70)

Funding Updates

- e. Note £0.868m of Active Travel Tranche 5 (ATF5) funding and a further £2.650m of Consolidated Active Travel Funding (CATF). This additional CATF funding, announced by Active Travel England, will be divided into £2.050m for capital expenditure and £0.600m revenue expenditure. Funds will be held in earmarked reserves, pending business cases coming forward.

Executive Summary

2. The Strategic Plan sets out our vision to lead positive change by working in partnership to make Oxfordshire a greener, fairer, and healthier county.
3. The Capital and Investment Strategy agreed in February 2025 articulates how capital investment will help achieve this vision and the council's nine

priorities. In addition, the capital programme also supports statutory functions such as school placements and urgent health and safety capital maintenance works.

4. The ten-year Capital Programme sets out how the council will use capital expenditure to deliver these council priorities. 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.
5. This is the fourth capital programme update and monitoring report for 2024/25 and sets out the monitoring position based on activity to the end of January 2025.
6. The report also updates the Capital Programme approved by Council in February 2025 taking into account additional funding and new schemes. The updated programme also incorporates changes agreed through the Capital Programme Approval Reports to Cabinet during the year as well as new funding.
7. The forecast programme expenditure for 2024/25 is £251.1m (excluding earmarked reserves). This has decreased by £5.5m compared to the previous capital programme for 2024/25 approved by Council in February 2025. The updated programme reflects the spend profile from the latest delivery timeframes and the inclusion of new grants received by the Council.
8. The total current year and ten-year capital programme (2024/25 to 2034/35) is £1,583.8m. The updated capital programme summary is set out in Annex 2. The main changes since the report to Council in February 2025 are set out in this report.

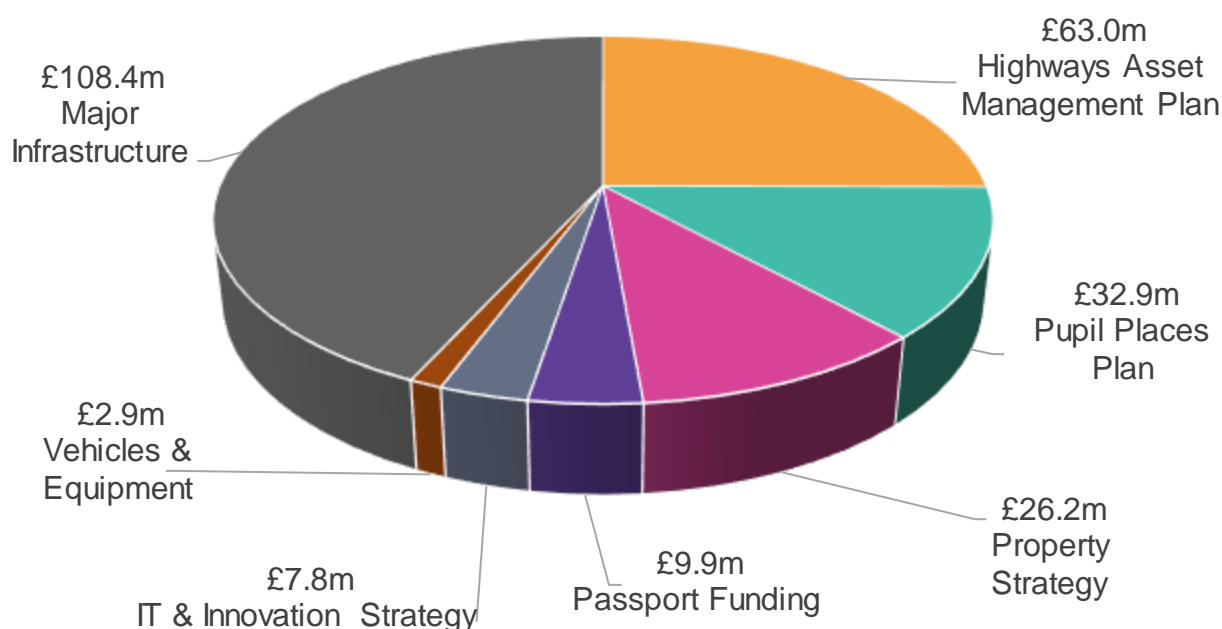
Introduction

9. Capital expenditure is defined as spending that creates an asset for the council (e.g. buildings, vehicles, and equipment) as well as spending which meets the definition in regulations specified under the Local Government Act 2003. This includes spend on non-current assets that are not owned by the council such as academies and the award of capital grants and funding agreements.
10. The capital programme supports the delivery of the council's vision and priorities as set out in the Strategic Plan. The programme is updated quarterly and fully refreshed annually as part of the Budget and Business Planning Process to ensure that it remains aligned with the latest priorities, reflects the latest cost projections and profile for delivery, and incorporates the current funding position.
11. The programme comprises the following strategy areas:
 - **Pupil Place Plan:** including basic need (new schools and expansion), maintenance, health and safety and improvements

- **Major Infrastructure:** including Growth Deal Infrastructure programme
- **Highways and structural maintenance:** including street lighting, and bridges
- **Property Strategy:** including health & safety, maintenance, improvements, the Investment Strategy and climate change measures,
- **IT, Digital & Innovation Strategy:** including broadband and equipment
- **Passported Funds:** including Disabled Facilities Grant and Devolved Schools Capital
- **Vehicles and Equipment:** including fire and rescue vehicles and equipment

12. The detailed investment profile for the 2024/25 Capital Programme is set out below:

2024/25 Programme - Latest Spend Forecast



13. This is the fourth capital programme update and monitoring report for the financial year and focuses on the delivery of the 2024/25 capital programme based on projections at the end of January 2025 and new inclusions within the overall ten-year capital programme.

14. The following annexes are attached:

Annex 1	Capital Programme Monitoring 2024/25 (Summary)
Annex 2	Updated Capital Programme 2024/25 – 2034/35 (Summary)
Annex 3	Exempt information – City Centre Accommodation Strategy

2024/25 Capital Monitoring

15. The capital monitoring position set out in Annex 1, shows forecast expenditure for 2024/25 of £251.1m excluding earmarked reserves). This has decreased by £5.5m compared to the latest capital programme approved by Council in February 2025. The updated programme reflects the forecast year end position for 2024/25 and the impact of re-profiling expenditure in 2024/25 where necessary to reflect the anticipated scheme delivery.

The table below summarises the latest forecast expenditure for 2024/25 as by strategy area and compares that to the last approved programme:

Strategy Area	Last Approved Programme 2024/25 * £m	Latest Forecast Expenditure 2024/25 £m	Variation £m
Pupil Places Plan	32.7	32.9	0.2
Major Infrastructure	113.6	108.4	-5.2
Highways Asset Management Plan	63.4	63.0	-0.4
Property Strategy	27.3	26.2	-1.1
IT, Digital & Innovation Strategy	7.8	7.8	+0.0
Passported Funding	8.9	9.9	+1.0
Vehicles & Equipment	2.9	2.9	+0.0
Total Strategy Programmes	256.6	251.1	-5.5
Earmarked Reserves / Pipeline Schemes	0.0	0.0	+0.0
Total Capital Programme	256.6	251.1	-5.5

* Approved by Council 11 February 2025

16. Actual capital expenditure at the end of January 2025 was £167.3m (66%). The combined spend to date and current forecasted in-year commitments for the Capital Programme are £220.9m or 88% of the revised estimate for the year.

Pupil Places Plan

17. The Pupil Place Programme has forecast spend of £32.9m compared to the previous forecast of £32.7m in 2024/25, an increase £0.2m. The Pupil Place Plan includes three main programmes:
- Basic Need - these are usually school expansion projects that are funded by central government grant and/or Section 106 developer funding / Community Infrastructure Levy funding to ensure there are enough school places for children within Oxfordshire.
 - Growth Portfolio – these are usually new school projects within large housing sites allocated in local plans that are funded from contributions sought from developers via a Section 106 agreement towards the costs of providing community and social infrastructure.
 - Schools Annual Programmes – this includes the School Structural Maintenance Programme funded from the School Condition Allocation, which addresses the highest condition-based priorities

within the school estate enhancing the school stock condition and reducing the backlog maintenance, and the School Access Programme which ensure that mainstream buildings are accessible for pupils with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities.

18. Projects in the basic need and growth portfolio programmes are either delivered directly by the Council, delivered by a housing developer or by a third party (usually an Academy Trust or Diocese) via a funding agreement. Regardless of how they are delivered, each project brings benefits to residents living in Oxfordshire by improving the quality and facilities at existing schools; providing additional pupil places allowing greater parental choice and ensuring that housing developments have the infrastructure necessary for them to become thriving communities.

Basic Need Programme

19. The Basic Need Programme is forecasting spend of £10.4m in 2024/25 compared to the previous forecast of £10.5m. The reduction of £0.1m reflects the latest delivery timeframe. Currently, seven projects are either in construction or have completed this financial year and are creating the following additional pupil places and improved facilities:

- Woodstock Primary School (105 additional pupil places),
- Oxfordshire Hospital School (Remodelling of Cuddesdon Corner to accommodate Family Solutions and Oxford Hospital School),
- Bloxham Primary School (new hall and reconfiguration of internal spaces to create new kitchen to support increased pupil numbers),
- St Frideswide SEND Resource Base (16 additional SEND pupil places),
- Aston & Cote CE Primary School (35 additional pupil places),
- Woodstock, Marlborough CE School (150 additional pupil places),
- Langtree School, Woodcote (installation of 2 science labs),

In addition, there are 10 projects in the pre-construction phase:

- Heyford Park School (150 additional pupil places),
- Witney, Woodgreen School (150 additional pupil places),
- Faringdon Community College (replacement of temporary accommodation),
- Oxford, Orchard Meadow Primary School, (Foundation Stage Accommodation),
- Sonning Common, Bishopswood SEN (relocation of accommodation and expansion of secondary base within Chiltern Edge School),
- Grove CE Primary School (105 additional pupil places),
- Tetsworth Primary School (new School Hall),
- North Hinksey CE Primary School (replacement of temporary accommodation),
- Oxford, Mabel Prichard Special School (23 additional SEND places).
- Yarnton, William Fletcher Primary School (105 additional pupil places)

Growth Portfolio Programme

20. The Growth Portfolio programme is forecasting to spend £15.7m in 2024/25, an increase of £0.5m from the previous forecast.

Currently, one project has been completed since the beginning of the financial year:

- St Edburg's CE Primary School (210 additional pupil places)

In addition, there are 4 projects in the pre-construction phase:

- Wallingford, St Nicholas CE Primary School (relocation) (70 additional pupil places),
- Didcot, Great Western Park SEND School (120 additional SEND pupil places) and
- Upper Heyford Primary School (315 place new primary + 65 place nursery),
- Didcot Valley Park Primary School (630 place new primary),

Three further schools are being delivered by the ESFA (Education Skills Funding Agency) and financial contributions towards the schools are included within the capital programme:

- Bloxham, Grove SEND Free School (118 additional SEND pupil places) – completed January 2024.
- SEND Free School, Faringdon (118 additional SEND pupil places).
- Grove Airfield – Secondary phase of a new all-through School (600 additional pupil places).

Schools Annual Programmes

21. The forecast for the School Access Initiative provision is £0.300m to ensure that mainstream school buildings are accessible for pupils with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities. Projects at primary and secondary schools will be carried out throughout this financial year.
22. The School Structural Maintenance Programme for 2024/25 has highlighted a total of 58 projects to be completed over a two-year programme. This includes 14 projects which began in 2023/24. Nine of these are Air Source Heat Pump projects which are substantially completed but are awaiting the distribution network operator upgrades to fully complete.
23. A further 44 projects are in various stages of progression for delivery by the end of March 2026. The latest spend forecast in 2024/25 is £6.2m a reduction of 0.3m compared to the previous forecast.

Major Infrastructure

24. The latest capital forecast for 2024/25 is £108.4m. This has reduced by £5.2m compared to the previous forecasted position. The programme is divided into sub-programme areas as shown in the table below:

Major Infrastructure	Last Budget	Latest Forecast	Variation
	£'000	£'000	£'000

Housing Infrastructure Fund 1 (HIF1)	15,900	15,500	-400
Housing Infrastructure Fund 2 (HIF2) & A40	14,239	14,039	-200
A423 Improvement Programme	3,289	2,800	-489
Active Travel Phase 3 & Mobility Hubs	3,127	2,600	-568
Bicester & Banbury Locality	17,472	17,472	+0
Oxford Locality	13,006	9,788	-3,218
South & Vale Locality	16,785	16,385	-400
Major Infrastructure Delivery Sub-total	83,818	78,543	-5,275
Major Infrastructure Placemaking Sub-total	2,077	2,102	+25
Transport Policy Sub-total	27,737	27,737	+0
Major Infrastructure –Total	113,632	108,382	-5,250

Major Infrastructure- Delivery

25. Forecast capital spend of £78.5m is £5.3m less than the previous forecast of £83.8m. The programme comprises of three main funding areas and the key in-year budget variations are reported below.

HIF1 Programme

26. The HIF1 programme is progressing through the detailed design phase, following planning approval from the Secretary of State and Highways England approval of an extended timeline and additional funding. The construction phase of the programme remains on schedule for 2026.

HIF2 & A40

27. Overall, the programme is forecast to spend to budget, however in-year delay on the HIF2 programme and progress on land assembly for the A40 Access to Witney scheme, mean that there is the risk that the programme may underspend this financial year.

Growth Deal Programme and Other Funding

28. The programme is now forecasting spend of £49.0m, compared to the previous forecast of £53.7m, a decrease of £4.7m. The main schemes contributing to the revised forecast are as follows:
- Osney Mead bridge (-£2.7m) due to the planning decision being subject to Judicial Review.
 - Kennington Bridge (-£0.5m) due to additional time needed to update the cost estimates and reduce the risks of construction has meant that some of the activities planned for this year have slipped into 2025/26.
 - Steventon Lights (-£0.5m) due to additional time being required within the design & contract award stage.
29. In order to ensure that the full Growth Deal allocation can be utilised by 31 March 2025, £7.500m planned spend on the school Growth Portfolio Programme will be brought into the programme. 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. The funding

released is required to fund on-going spend on the Access to Witney and Tramway Schemes in 2025/26 to enable completion of those schemes.

Major Infrastructure – Placemaking

30. The programme which consists of a range of transport scheme development work is forecasting a spend of £2.1m.

Transport Policy

31. The programme is forecasting a spend of £27.7m which relates to the grant payments to the bus companies (contribution towards the purchase of electric buses under the Zero Emission Bus Regional Area programme). There is no change compared with the previously reported position, and it is anticipated that the delivery of the programme through the £38.8m overall funding provision will be completed during 2024/25.

Highways Asset Management Plan

32. The planned target total surfacing programme (excluding patching) for 2024/25, is calculated at 4.4% of the network. The expectation was that this would enable the council to maintain the 4,656km of network that it is responsible for in as close as possible to a 'steady state' within the funding available.
33. The total in-year forecast capital expenditure for 2024/25 is estimated to be £63.0m and has decreased by £0.4m compared to the previous forecast. The programme is divided into sub-programme areas as shown in the table below:

Highways Asset Management Plan	Latest Budget	Forecast	Variation
	£'000	£'000	£'000
Structural Maintenance Annual Programme	42,325	42,760	+435
Improvement Programmes	3,005	3,005	+0
Major Schemes & Other Programmes	12,783	12,190	-593
Network Management Programme	4,299	4,099	-200
Other	950	950	+0
Highways Asset Management Plan – Total	63,362	63,004	-358

34. The planned activities for the main programmes are summarised below:

Project	Planned Schemes	Completed	Comments on actual compared to planned delivery
Surface Treatments (schemes)	120	122	Schemes to restore the condition or prolonging the life of existing carriageways.
Carriageways (schemes)	10	9	Surfacing/reconstruction/strengthening of roads. 1 more scheme to complete in March.
Structural Highways	68	68	Surface inlay and minor patching schemes across the county. There will

Project	Planned Schemes	Completed	Comments on actual compared to planned delivery
Improvements (schemes)			also be minor works carried out in addition to this throughout the year.
Footways (schemes)	75	64	Repair/construction of footways and cycleways. Further schemes to be completed by the year end.
Drainage (schemes)	35	31	Repair/renewal of existing drainage infrastructure and provision of new infrastructure to resolve known drainage issues. Further schemes to be completed by the year end.
Bridges (schemes)	13	7	Strengthening/replacement/imposition of management measures on weak structures.
Public Rights of Way	4	3	Improved Pedestrian Access Points (delivered as planned-reactive – dependent upon need). In addition to this new/refurbished kit bridges (delivered as planned-reactive with in-house resource).
Electrical	2,822	3,351	LED Replacement units being installed this year.
20mph Speed limit (schemes)	11 100	11 82	Phase 2 – Remaining Schemes reprogrammed from last year. Phase 3 – potential schemes this year – dependant on February CMD.
Section 42 contributions (schemes)	39	39	Programme delivered by the City Council and covers all the unclassified roads and footways within the city.

35. The annual Improvement Programme is forecasting to spend £3.0m in 2024/25. This provides road safety and traffic improvements including road markings, cycle provision improvements, pedestrian crossings, footway improvements and speed limit alterations and this includes the Vision Zero Programme which is forecasted to spend £1.5m in 2024/25.
36. Major Schemes & Other Programme is forecast to spend £12.2m in 2024/25, a decrease of £0.6m compared to the previous reported programme. Following a fatal road traffic collision near to RAF Croughton in Northamptonshire, a road safety review identified a number of schemes in Oxfordshire that have been approved and funded for delivery by the Department for Transport. The Council has received £3.994m of funding to deliver the programme of improvements. Recognising the importance of these measures, additional resources have been mobilised to deliver the programme within the current financial year.
37. The Highway Network Programme is forecasted to spend £4.1m, which includes the enhancement to support journey time reliability, which also

aid bus movements, and traffic signal improvement schemes and improvements to Thornhill Park & Ride.

Property Strategy

38. The Property Strategy is forecasting expenditure of £26.2m in 2024/25, a decrease of £1.1m compared to the previous forecast.

Estate Decarbonisation Programme

39. The council declared a climate emergency in 2019 with a target of 2030 to bring the council's operations and activities to net zero. Alongside this the UK government target for net zero, which the council is party to, is for an area wide target of net zero by 2050.
40. The council's property accounts for approximately 33% of the emissions within this 2030 target (on 2022/23 data). It is clear there is a long-term plan for decarbonisation of the UK electricity grid, however this target is in line with the UK government commitment of net zero by 2050.
41. As such the strategic approach to reaching the decarbonisation targets is to stop fossil fuelled activities within the council's properties, which is predominantly heating, via the electrification of these components.
42. Although there will be a carbon component remaining by 2030 from the use of electricity, this will be much reduced, and the council will be on the pathway to fully net zero in line with the decarbonisation of the electricity grid. This should enable a reducing need for carbon offsetting by 2030 and beyond.
43. The transition to electric heating will predominantly be via heat pumps and infrared heating. Due to the lower operating temperatures of the heat pumps improvements are required in thermal building fabric (e.g. single glazing to double or triple glazing, insulation installations, etc.) to decrease the potential running costs. Nonetheless even with these improvements because of the, currently, low cost of gas compared to electricity the running costs would be increased. As part of the strategic approach the Council would seek to install renewable electricity measures (solar PV) and upgrade electrical components (particularly lighting to LED), in order to ensure the overall running costs do not increase.
44. A reactive only maintenance approach has left much of the council's estate in a very poor-quality condition, with many components past their expected working life. As a result, there is an anticipated need to replace components, such as boilers, which would represent a cost avoidance.
45. This programme supports both the key objectives within the Climate Action Framework and Carbon Management Plan, but also the property strategy.
46. The Decarbonisation works proposed for the 33 sites totals £9.7m and includes £3.1m of grant funding for decarbonisation (PSDS3c) which needs to be spent by 31 March 2025.

Corporate Estate Development

47. Projects completed in 2024/25 or in the construction phase:

- Deddington Highways Depot – Phase 1 was complete in September 2024
- Speedwell House – strip-out works completed

Several projects are in the pre-construction phase including:

- New Fire Station at Rewley Road
- Redbridge Household Waste Recycling Centre improvement works
- Union Street (Second Phase)
- Oxford Community Support Service
- Greenwood Centre (Accommodation block for young people in need of supported accommodation),

Office Rationalisation & Co-location

48. The office rationalisation & co-location programme has a spend forecast of £1.850m for 2024/25. The Council has vacated Abbey House in Abingdon with staff relocated to new locations.
49. Phase 2 of the Knights Court relocation is already underway with works to Ron Groves House and The Forum already completed.
50. Supported Transport will move to Water Eaton later in 2025/26 at an estimated cost of £0.6m.

Resonance Supported Homes Fund

51. During 2024/25 a further £2m has been paid under the Resonance Supported Homes Fund. This will bring the total investment to £5.0m in line with the overall budget provision of £5.0m. A total of 5 properties have been purchased, developed and are now fully mobilised and operational. This investment has resulted in a total of 22 new beds for people with a learning disability in Oxfordshire.

Children's Homes Programme

52. The council is currently forecasting £4.8m in 2024/25 from the £10.450m programme towards the delivering of four new Children's Homes. Four sites have been acquired; refurbishment has started at two sites with the remaining two expecting to commence this financial year. The programme will create 12 additional beds.

Green Homes Upgrade (HUG2)

53. This is the second year of a two-year programme, which runs until the end of March 2025, to deliver energy-saving retrofit measures to owner occupied and privately rented properties in Oxfordshire. The programme is fully funded from the Green Homes Grant managed by Department for Energy Security and Net Zero (DESNZ).

54. Following slow scaling in Year 1 of the Home Upgrade Grant, delivery has gained significant momentum in Year 2. It is currently forecast that between 125 to 135 properties will be delivered in 2024/25 (over 200 properties across the four districts in Oxfordshire, where this scheme operates, have already benefitted since the beginning of the HUG2 programme) with a forecasted spend of £2.7m capital in 2024/25.

Schools Energy Loans

55. The council has allocated over £1m between 2024/25 and 2025/26 as loan financing available to maintained schools to install retrofit measure such as LED and Solar PV. There has been strong interest from schools. Owing to the need for schools to schedule work largely in school holidays, £0.3m is forecast to be spent by the end of this financial year.

IT, Innovation & Digital Strategy

56. The total forecast expenditure for 2024/25 is £7.8m, in line when compared to the previous forecast.

Digital Infrastructure

57. IT are working on a number of projects to implement new applications during 2024/25. Projects expected to be completed include:
- Vehicle Management Service – enabling the vehicle asset management system to move towards carbon reduction in vehicle use.
 - Applicant Tracking System - recruitment system – improved offer for managers and potential employees to attract talent and meet our Employer of Choice as part of the council's vision.
 - Power BI and Social Care Dashboards – to meet the provision of data driven decisions for social care and education services.

Projects starting in 2024/25 include:

- Public Services Telephone Network Withdrawal – working with suppliers to reduce risks and impacts of the withdrawal of the copper telephony network.

Broadband

58. Forecast expenditure for the Rural Gigabit Hub Sites programme is £1m in 2024/25. The programme is funded from grant and income from the Broadband Gainshare.
59. The 5GIR programme commenced in 2023/24 after being awarded £3.8m of grant funding by the Department for Science, Innovation and Technology to increase adoption of 5G connectivity. The programme is a regional partnership, known as England's Connected Heartland (ECH) which comprises local bodies from Berkshire, Buckinghamshire, Bedfordshire and Cambridgeshire with Oxfordshire as the lead authority.

ECH will deploy resources from each of the participating authorities to develop joint opportunities with the wireless telecoms supply chain and to create an Advanced Wireless ecosystem. The project plans to deploy two physical 5G infrastructure builds; the Science & Innovation Campus Project at Harwell and the East West Railway Project to utilise trackside fibre between Bicester and Bletchley. The forecasted spend in 2024/25 is £3.6m.

Passported Funding

60. Expenditure for 2024/25 is forecasted to be £9.9m, an increase of £1.0m from the previous reported position of £8.9m. The increase is due to the recent announcement of additional Disabled Facilities Grant.
61. The Disabled Facilities Grant for 2024/25 was £7.262m and was announced in May 2024. The latest funding has increased the grant to £8.261m. This funding, which is part of the Better Care Fund, is issued to the County Council but must be passed directly on to the City and District Councils in accordance with the grant determination.

Vehicles and Equipment

62. Expenditure for 2024/25 is forecasted to be £2.9m, no change from the previous reported position. This area includes the refurbishment of Libraries and the vehicle replacement programme through the Vehicle Management Service.

CAPITAL GOVERNANCE APPROVALS

Property

Speedwell House Redevelopment

63. The Property and Assets Strategy was approved at Cabinet in November 2022 and set out the 10-year ambition to repurpose assets in order to support agile ways of working in energy-efficient buildings.
64. The City Centre Accommodation Strategy, approved by Cabinet on 23 January 2024 included a decision to dispose of County Hall and to progress the consolidation of the Council's city centre workforce into a refurbished and extended Speedwell House.
65. Due to a number of factors, including changes in scope and associated construction costs, approval is required to increase the budget which is to be funded from corporate resources. (refer to Exempt Annex 3)

Economy & Place

Cowley Branch Line

66. The Cowley Branch line project proposes the introduction of passenger services onto the existing freight-only Cowley Branch Line by enhancing the main line infrastructure between Oxford and Kennington Junction and upgrading the branch line itself. The reopening of this line to passengers,

along with the construction of two new stations at Littlemore and Cowley in the south-east of Oxford would create a genuinely two-way railway i.e. a route which has peak journeys in both directions.

67. The line would connect major areas of economic within Oxfordshire and onwards to Science Vale area and London. Options would include the potential for direct trains to Cambridge as well, via East West Rail (EWR). Significant benefits would include: increased transport options for areas of deprivation, with journey times as fast as 10-12 minutes from central Oxford from Littlemore and the Leys; the economic impact of linking four innovation clusters; unlocking housing growth potential; supporting modal shift from road to rail with associated carbon reduction benefits; increased capacity at Oxford station to facilitate four trains an hour.
68. The County Council and City Council, along with local land-owners (via the Community Infrastructure Levy and directly invested funds) and have previously funded a full business case, which has had a positive reception with Network Rail and the Department of Transport.
69. National Infrastructure Commission guidance is that local promoters should bring together 15-25% of the overall expected delivery cost, if they expect the Government to consider investing in a scheme. As such, a £20m local contribution (approx. 15% of the anticipated delivery cost of £135m) is the current target for local funding. It is highly likely that the value of land in the area will increase if the Cowley Branch Line were to be delivered. As such, it is important that the private sector beneficiaries of the scheme contribute to its delivery. The County Council, alongside the City Council, are in negotiations with local landowners to assemble the required £20m. However, private sector partners are clear that local authorities should also contribute. The City Council have agreed to fund £2.5m and it is proposed the County Council makes the same contribution. These funds would only become payable once a construction contract is in place.
70. The expectation is that as far as possible this will be funded by S106 developer contributions. Any funding gap will be met through alternative funding sources.

Ten Year Capital Programme Update

71. The total ten-year capital programme (2024/25 to 2034/35) is now £1,438.1m (excluding earmarked reserves) an increase of £22.7m when compared to the latest capital programme approved by Council in February 2025. This is due to an additional £1.5m approved at Council towards Energy Savings Measures to support the current Decarbonisation Programme, a further £1m received as part of the 2024/25 Disabled Facilities Grant, inclusion of the New East Carterton Primary School (Cabinet - Capital Approvals February 2025) of £10.2m, a budget increase relating to Speedwell House redevelopment programme and £2.5m as a financial contribution towards the Cowley Branch Line. A summary of the updated capital programme is set out in Annex 2.

Strategy Area	Last Approved Total Programme (2024/25 to 2033/34) * £m	Latest Updated Total Programme (2024/25 to 2033/34) £m	Variation £m
Pupil Places Plan	235.0	245.2	+10.2
Major Infrastructure	697.3	699.9	+2.6
Highways Asset Management Plan	308.2	308.2	+0.0
Property Strategy	113.7	122.6	+8.9
IT, Digital & Innovation Strategy	12.8	12.8	+0.0
Passported Funding	20.7	21.7	+1.0
Vehicles & Equipment	27.7	27.7	+0.0
Total Strategy Programmes	1,415.4	1,438.1	+22.7
Earmarked Reserves	148.9	145.7	-3.2
Total Capital Programme	1,564.3	1,583.8	+19.5

* Approved by Council 11 February 2025.

Capital Funding Update

Prudential Borrowing

72. The ten-year Capital Programme includes a requirement to fund £280.3m through prudential borrowing. The latest borrowing expected to be taken in 2024/25 is £62.5m. The majority of this relates to schemes that have already been delivered but have, until now, been funded temporarily by borrowing from other funding sources within the Capital Programme to delay the need to apply the prudential borrowing. The borrowing in 2024/25 is expected to include a further £14.0m from the £120.0m agreed in 2018 (£105.0m in total), and £17.0m from the £88.4m agreed in 2022. A further £16.6m drawdown of the £40.8m supporting the Street Lighting LED replacement programme (£36.5m in total) is also forecasted to be taken in 2024/25.
73. The use of prudential borrowing will increase the Council's Capital Financing Requirement. The Council is required under statute to set aside a Minimum Revenue Provision to pay down the Capital Financing Requirement. Prudential borrowing is generally paid over 25 years. The Medium-Term Financial Strategy takes account of this cost. As the Capital programme includes the OxLEP City Deal Programme, the borrowing costs relating to this scheme (for which the Council is the Accountable body) will be fully funded through Enterprise Zone 1 retained business rates.

Earmarked Reserves

74. The level of earmarked reserves has decreased by £3.2m from the previous reported position to £145.7m. Reserves include £95.5m of budget provisions approved through the capital budget & business planning process in February 2025 and previous years. They also include the capital programme contingency for the delivery of the current ten-year capital programme plus other identified provisions, these total £50.2m.

Capital Reserves

75. The current level of capital reserves (including capital receipts and capital grants reserves) is approximately £197m. This is expected to reduce to approximately £44m at the end of 2026/27 and reduce further to only £4m by the end of 2028/29. Reserves can be used to temporarily fund schemes to delay the need for prudential borrowing or to help manage timing difference between the delivery of schemes and the receipt of Section 106 funding. The level of reserves impacts on the cashflow of the capital programme and the overall Council Balances and is already factored into the funding of the overall capital programme.
76. When necessary and where funding is available, the Capital Programme can fund schemes in advance of receiving specific funding by utilising other resources within the wider programme on an interim basis. Any advancements would need to be considered and agreed by the s151 officer. At present, the capital Programme has approved approx. £40m of forward funded schemes. Not all expenditure has been incurred and therefore the actual value incurred will be lower as it is forecasted that some of the income is expected to be received before all the expenditure associated with the forward funded schemes are incurred. This excludes any cashflow implications arising from the Speedwell and Oxford Rewley Road Fire Station developments.

Risk Management

77. As reported previously, there are a mix of factors continuing to impact on the deliverability and cost of capital schemes. Where those schemes are grant funded there is a risk that slippage could impact on the availability of grant funding as it is not possible to complete the scheme by the funding deadline. Inflationary pressures may also mean that costs increase further by the point the scheme reaches the construction phase eroding the value of the grant funding so that is insufficient to meet the revised scheme costs.
78. These risks are being managed through the council's capital governance process at both project and programme level and through the Strategic Capital Board. Where necessary action is being taken to adjust scheme deliverables and to use value engineering to maintain spend within the available funding.
79. The remaining £30m Housing & Growth Deal grant funding was received by the council on 10 March 2025. If necessary, an additional scheme will temporarily be brought into the programme in 2024/25 to ensure that the grant funding can be fully utilised by 31 March 2025. The funding released will be used to support the completion of the Tramway and Access to Witney Schemes in 2025/26.
80. The council is assessing and tracking ten strategic risks in 2024/25. One of these risks is that if either HIF1 or HIF2 programmes become undeliverable and/or a potential financial risk to the council. Updates on

this risk are being reported through the Business Management & Monitoring Reports to Cabinet.

Financial Implications

81. The report sets out the planned investment and available funding for the ten-year Capital programme including the risks associated with the delivery of the programme.
82. The following risks are inherent within the funding of the capital programme:
- Certainty over the timing and value of future capital receipts and Section 106 Contributions
 - Certainty over the receipt and security of future grant funding
83. If capital receipts or section 106 contributions are not received within the planned timeframe it may be necessary for the Council to temporarily fund capital expenditure through prudential borrowing. The council has a prudential borrowing reserve to help manage the revenue impact of additional prudential borrowing.
84. Where additional funding is required to fund schemes on a permanent basis this will need to be addressed by reducing investment elsewhere within the programme (reprioritisation) or by permanently funding through prudential borrowing. This would require the identification of long-term revenue funding as the Prudential Borrowing is usually repaid over 25 years through the Minimum Revenue Provision.

Comments checked by:

Kathy Wilcox
Head of Corporate Finance

Staff Implications

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

Equality & Inclusion Implications

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

Legal Implications

87. In year changes to the capital programme must be approved by Cabinet in accordance with the Council's Financial Regulations. In particular paragraph 5.1.1(IV) sets out that where the total estimated resource allocation is above £1m then Cabinet can agree its inclusion into the Capital

Programme, via the periodic Capital Report to Cabinet, based on the recommendations by Strategic Capital Board and the Section 151 Officer.

Comments checked by: Anita Bradley, Director of Law & Governance & Monitoring Officer

LORNA BAXTER

Executive Director of Resources and Section 151 Officer

Background papers:

Contact Officers: Kathy Wilcox, Head of Corporate Finance
Natalie Crawford, Capital Programme Manager

March 2025

Annex 1

Capital Programme Monitoring 2024/25

Strategy / Programme	Capital Programme (Council February 2025)			Latest Forecast			Variation			Current Year Expenditure Monitoring (2024/25)				Performance Compared to Original Programme (Council February 2024)		
	Current Year 2024/25	Future Years	Total	Current Year 2024/25	Future Years	Total	Current Year	Future Years	Total	Actual expenditure to date	Commit- ments	Expenditure Realisation Rate	Actuals & Commitments	Current Year	Variation	Use of Resources Variation
	£'000s	£'000s	£'000s	£'000s	£'000s	£'000s	£'000s	£'000s	£'000s	£'000s	£'000s	%	%	£'000s	£'000s	%
Pupil Places Plan	32,689	202,336	235,025	32,894	212,358	245,252	205	10,022	10,227	16,072	16,432	49%	99%	26,405	6,489	25%
Major Infrastructure	113,632	583,675	697,307	108,382	591,525	699,907	-5,250	7,850	2,600	74,301	15,088	69%	82%	176,443	-68,061	-39%
Highways Asset Management Plan	63,362	244,795	308,157	63,004	245,153	308,157	-358	358	0	46,893	16,069	74%	100%	63,442	-438	-1%
Property Strategy	27,335	86,390	113,725	26,236	96,386	122,622	-1,099	9,996	8,897	16,365	4,779	62%	81%	30,625	-4,389	-14%
IT, Digital & Innovation Strategy	7,823	4,958	12,781	7,823	4,958	12,781	0	0	0	4,268	730	55%	64%	6,600	1,223	19%
Passport Funding	8,862	11,865	20,727	9,861	11,865	21,726	999	0	999	7,870	95	80%	81%	8,008	1,853	23%
Assets & Equipment	2,941	24,756	27,697	2,941	24,756	27,697	0	0	0	1,491	421	51%	65%	2,500	441	18%
Total Capital Programme Expenditure	256,644	1,158,775	1,415,419	251,141	1,187,001	1,438,142	-5,503	28,226	22,723	167,260	53,614	67%	88%	314,023	-62,882	-20%
Pipeline Schemes (Indicative funding subject to initial business case)	0	95,495	95,495	0	95,495	95,495	0	0	0					5,950	-5,950	0%
Earmarked Reserves	0	53,428	53,428	0	50,228	50,228	0	-3,200	-3,200					0	0	0%
OVERALL TOTAL	256,644	1,307,698	1,564,342	251,141	1,332,724	1,583,865	-5,503	25,026	19,523	167,260	53,614	67%	88%	319,973	-68,832	-22%

Annex 2

Updated Capital Programme 2024/25 to 2034/35

Strategy/Programme	Capital Investment Programme (latest forecast)						CAPITAL INVESTMENT TOTAL £'000s
	Current Year	Firm Programme	Provisional Programme				
	2024 / 25	2025 / 26	2026 / 27	2027 / 28	2028 / 29	up to 2034 / 35	
	£'000s	£'000s	£'000s	£'000s	£'000s	£'000s	
Pupil Places Plan	32,894	55,010	44,723	29,258	19,235	64,132	245,252
Major Infrastructure	108,382	156,043	246,317	132,074	26,587	30,504	699,907
Highways Asset Management Plan	63,004	64,032	54,861	24,600	13,660	88,000	308,157
Property Strategy	26,236	44,329	33,438	14,083	3,250	1,286	122,622
Digital & Innovation Strategy	7,823	3,312	991	533	99	23	12,781
Passport Funding	9,861	8,562	1,000	750	750	803	21,726
Vehicles & Equipment	2,941	3,257	3,820	7,800	5,076	4,803	27,697
TOTAL ESTIMATED CAPITAL PROGRAMME EXPENDITURE	251,141	334,545	385,150	209,098	68,657	189,551	1,438,142
Pipeline Schemes (Indicative funding subject to initial business case)	0	17,500	36,500	29,000	12,000	495	95,495
Earmarked Reserves	0	2,900	9,587	8,323	6,000	23,418	50,228
TOTAL ESTIMATED CAPITAL PROGRAMME	251,141	354,945	431,237	246,421	86,657	213,464	1,583,865
TOTAL ESTIMATED PROGRAMME IN-YEAR RESOURCES	277,331	283,294	324,485	212,830	79,376	195,777	1,373,093
In-Year Shortfall (-) /Surplus (+)	26,190	-71,651	-106,752	-33,591	-7,281	-17,687	-210,772
Cumulative Shortfall (-) / Surplus (+)	196,690	222,880	151,229	44,477	10,886	-14,082	-14,082

SOURCES OF FUNDING		2024 / 25	2025 / 26	2026 / 27	2027 / 28	2028 / 29	up to 2034 / 35	CAPITAL RESOURCES TOTAL
		£'000s	£'000s	£'000s	£'000s	£'000s	£'000s	£'000s
SCE(C) Formulaic Capital Allocations - Un-ringfenced Grant		74,204	120,674	55,031	29,500	23,500	112,700	415,609
Devolved Formula Capital- Grant		1,000	650	650	650	650	253	3,853
Prudential Borrowing		62,517	78,946	58,103	44,947	24,515	11,295	280,323
Grants		71,630	91,254	197,724	59,095	869	899	421,471
Developer Contributions		37,771	59,861	38,965	37,210	2,252	37,739	213,798
Other External Funding Contributions		20	400	670	0	500	0	1,590
Revenue Contributions		3,971	3,160	2,436	5,229	800	4,800	20,396
Schools Contributions		28	0	0	0	0	0	28
Use of Capital Receipts		0	0	43,207	36,199	26,290	28,091	133,787
Use of Capital Reserves		0	0	34,451	33,591	7,281	3,605	78,928
TOTAL ESTIMATED PROGRAMME RESOURCES UTILISED		251,141	354,945	431,237	246,421	86,657	199,382	1,569,783
TOTAL ESTIMATED IN YEAR RESOURCES AVAILABLE		277,331	283,294	324,485	212,830	79,376	195,777	1,373,093
Capital Grants Reserve C/Fwd	116,211	106,205	31,514	0	0	0	0	0
Usable Capital Receipts C/Fwd	33,075	39,347	40,787	0	0	0	0	0
Capital Reserve C/Fwd	47,404	77,328	78,928	44,477	10,886	3,605	0	0

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