



Notice of a Meeting

Performance & Corporate Services Overview & Scrutiny Committee

Friday, 4 April 2025 at 10.00 am

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

These proceedings are open to the public

If you wish to view proceedings online, please click on this [Live Stream Link](#).
However, that will not allow you to participate in the meeting.

Membership

Chair: Councillor Eddie Reeves

Deputy Chair: Councillor Bob Johnston

<i>Councillors:</i>	Brad Baines	Damian Haywood	Calum Miller
	Arash Fatemian	Kieron Mallon	Glynis Phillips

Date of next meeting: Friday, 18 July 2025

For more information about this Committee please contact:

Committee Officer	-	Scrutiny Team
		<i>E-Mail: scrutiny@oxfordshire.gov.uk</i>

Martin Reeves
Chief Executive

March 2025

What does this Committee review or scrutinise?

All corporate services and budget scrutiny, including customer services, property, assets, procurement, finance, corporate policy matters such as consultation and public engagement; takes a lead role in scrutiny of the budget and corporate plan.

How can I have my say?

We welcome the views of the community on any issues in relation to the responsibilities of this Committee. Members of the public may ask to speak on any item on the agenda or may suggest matters which they would like the Committee to look at. **Requests to speak must be submitted to the Committee Officer below no later than 9 am 4 working days before the date of the meeting.**

About the County Council

The Oxfordshire County Council is made up of 63 councillors who are democratically elected every four years. The Council provides a range of services to Oxfordshire's 678,000 residents.

These include:

schools	social & health care	libraries and museums
the fire service	roads	trading standards
land use	transport planning	waste management

Each year the Council manages £0.9 billion of public money in providing these services. Most decisions are taken by a Cabinet of 9 Councillors, which makes decisions about service priorities and spending. Some decisions will now be delegated to individual members of the Cabinet.

About Scrutiny

Scrutiny is about:

- Providing a challenge to the Cabinet
- Examining how well the Cabinet and the Authority are performing
- Influencing the Cabinet on decisions that affect local people
- Helping the Cabinet to develop Council policies
- Representing the community in Council decision making
- Promoting joined up working across the authority's work and with partners

Scrutiny is NOT about:

- Making day to day service decisions
- Investigating individual complaints.

What does this Committee do?

The Committee meets up to 4 times a year or more. It develops a work programme, which lists the issues it plans to investigate. These investigations can include whole committee investigations undertaken during the meeting, or reviews by a panel of members doing research and talking to lots of people outside of the meeting. Once an investigation is completed the Committee provides its advice to the Cabinet, the full Council or other scrutiny committees. Meetings are open to the public and all reports are available to the public unless exempt or confidential, when the items would be considered in closed session.

If you have any special requirements (such as a large print version of these papers or special access facilities) please contact the officer named on the front page, giving as much notice as possible before the meeting

A hearing loop is available at County Hall.

AGENDA

1. **Apologies for Absence and Temporary Appointments**

To receive any apologies for absence and temporary appointments.

2. **Declaration of Interests**

See guidance note on the back page.

3. **Minutes (Pages 1 - 10)**

The Committee is recommended to **APPROVE** the minutes of the meeting held on 17th January 2025 and to receive information arising from them.

4. **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 9.00 a.m. on 31st March 2025. Requests to speak should be sent to the Scrutiny Officer at scrutiny@oxfordshire.gov.uk.

If you are speaking 'virtually', you are asked to 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 9.00 a.m. two working days before the meeting. Written submissions should be no longer than one A4 sheet.

5. **Budget Management Monitoring Report (Pages 11 - 52)**

Cllr Judy Roberts, Cabinet Member for Infrastructure and Development Strategy, Cllr Andrew Gant, Cabinet Member for Transport Management, Lorna Baxter, Executive Director of Resources and Section 151 Officer, and Paul Fermer, Director of Environment and Highways, have been invited to present a report on Budget Management Monitoring Report (BMMR).

The Committee is asked to consider the report and raise any questions, and to **AGREE** any recommendations it wishes to make to Cabinet arising therefrom.

6. **Local Enterprise Partnership Integration (Pages 53 - 62)**

Cllr Judy Roberts, Cabinet Member for Infrastructure and Development Strategy, Robin Rogers, Director of Economy and Place, Nigel Tipple, LEP Chief Executive, and Sadie Patamia, Corporate Governance Manager – Oxfordshire LEP, have been invited to present a report on the Local Enterprise Partnership Integration.

The Committee is asked to consider the report and raise any questions, and to **AGREE** any recommendations it wishes to make to Cabinet arising therefrom.

7. **Committee Action and Recommendation Tracker (Pages 63 - 78)**

The Committee is recommended to **NOTE** the progress of previous recommendations and actions arising from previous meetings, having raised any questions on the contents.

This includes recent updates on previously accepted and partially accepted recommendations on the following reports:

- Capital Asset Disposal Process
- Draft Customer Experience Strategy
- Employee Engagement Survey
- Social Value

8. **Committee Forward Work Plan** (Pages 79 - 80)

The Committee is recommended to **AGREE** its work programme for forthcoming meetings, having heard any changes from previous iterations, and taking account of the Cabinet Forward Plan and of the Budget Management Monitoring Report.

The Cabinet Forward Plan can be found

here: <https://mycouncil.oxfordshire.gov.uk/mgListPlanItems.aspx?PlanId=433&RP=115>

The most recent BMMR, submitted to Cabinet is January 2025, can be found

here: <https://mycouncil.oxfordshire.gov.uk/ieDecisionDetails.aspx?AId=31293>

9. **Responses to Scrutiny Recommendations** (Pages 81 - 90)

Attached are the Cabinet responses to the Performance and Corporate Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee reports on:

- Commercial Strategy Update
- Community Asset Transfer Policy
- Updated Funding and Budget Proposals 2025/26 – 2027/28

Committee is asked to **NOTE** the responses.

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.

PERFORMANCE & CORPORATE SERVICES OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

MINUTES of the meeting held on Friday, 17 January 2025 commencing at 10.00 am and finishing at 12.42 pm

Present:

Voting Members: Councillor Eddie Reeves - in the Chair

Councillor Bob Johnston
Councillor Brad Baines
Councillor Jenny Hannaby
Councillor Damian Haywood
Councillor Kieron Mallon
Councillor Glynis Phillips

Other Members in Attendance: Councillor Liz Leffman, Leader of the Council
Councillor Pete Sudbury, Deputy Leader of the Council with Responsibility for Climate Change, Environment & Future Generations
Councillor Dan Levy, Cabinet Member for Finance
Councillor John Howson, Cabinet Member for Children, Education and Young People's Services
Councillor Judy Roberts, Cabinet Member for Infrastructure and Development Strategy

Officers: Lorna Baxter, Executive Director of Resources and Section 151 Officer
Stephen Chandler, Executive Director of People and Transformation
Robin Rogers, Director of Economy and Place
Tom Hudson, Scrutiny Manager

The Council considered the matters, reports and recommendations contained or referred to in the agenda for the meeting and decided as set out below. Except insofar as otherwise specified, the reasons for the decisions are contained in the agenda and reports, copies of which are attached to the signed Minutes.

1/25 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND TEMPORARY APPOINTMENTS (Agenda No. 1)

Apologies were received from Cllr Middleton and from Cllr Miller, substituted by Cllr Hannaby.

2/25 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS (Agenda No. 2)

There were none.

3/25 MINUTES

(Agenda No. 3)

The minutes of the meeting on the 6th December 2024 were **AGREED** as a true and accurate record.

4/25 PETITIONS AND PUBLIC ADDRESS

(Agenda No. 4)

Mr David Hearn addressed the committee to highlight the reduction in the number of public toilets at the Westgate library after refurbishment, which had led to long queues, especially on Mondays and Wednesdays when children visit the library. Mr Hearn urged the committee to address the budget for public toilet provision and to review their management.

5/25 UPDATED FUNDING AND BUDGET PROPOSALS 2025/26 TO 2027/28

(Agenda No. 5)

Cllr Liz Leffman, Leader of the Council, Cllr Dan Levy, Cabinet Member for Finance, Lorna Baxter, Executive Director of Resources and Section 151 Officer, Stephen Chandler, Executive Director of People and Transformation, and Robin Rogers, Director of Economy and Place, were invited to attend and present the updated funding and budget proposals 2025/26 to 2027/28.

i. Budget Overview

The Executive Director of Resources and section 151 Officer provided an overview of the developments to the funding and budget proposals 2025/26 to 2027/28, since the previous budget scrutiny meeting in December. In December the budget was reported with a deficit of £25.2 million. This was due to the assumption of no funding changes from 2024-25 because of uncertainties in council tax increases and government grants.

Since that meeting central government had confirmed the final funding settlement, and the proposed increases to council tax had been added to the budget proposals. These developments allowed the Executive Director of Resources and Section 151 Officer to confirm the following changes to the budget proposals.

The social care grant increased to £880 million nationally, resulting in an additional £10.8 million for the council compared to the Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS). The improved Better Care Fund (iBCF) and Adult Social Care (ASC) Discharge Fund merged into the Better Care Grant, continuing at the 2024-25 levels, with no impact on the MTFS. It was also reported that, due to the funding formula, Oxfordshire would not see any of the new £600 million Recovery Grant.

The new Children's Social Care Prevention Grant, of £250 million, was to be distributed on a new needs-based formula, with £1.4 million expected to fund new activity related to the roll out of family help. The New Homes Bonus was also reported to be continued, with an additional £1.1 million in one-off funding.

With the Employers National Insurance increase, only direct costs were to be covered by the national funding of £515 million, which LGA estimates of the actual cost being £637 million. Based off this estimate the Chief Executive of Resources estimated that Oxfordshire would only receive 80% of the estimated £3.9 million of costs, roughly £3.1 million of funding.

The Settlement Funding Assessment (SFA) was also confirmed to be £600,000 lower than the estimated £80 million. However, this was offset by a higher-than-expected income from Section 31 grants for business rates, resulting in no overall impact on the business rates funding.

The most significant change to the updated funding and budget proposals was the changes to council tax. The administration proposed a 4.99% increase in council tax for 2025-26. This includes a 2.99% increase for general council tax and a 2% increase for the adult social care precept.

This increase was expected to generate an additional £15.2 million in ongoing funding from 2025-26. The tax base was expected to grow by 1.87% in 2025-26, higher than the initially estimated 1.75%, providing an additional £700,000 in income.

The combination of increased council tax, changes in the tax base, and additional grant funding reduced the initial deficit of £25.2 million to zero.

Assurances were also made by the Executive Director of Resources and Section 151 Officer that the Council demonstrated that the increase in adult social care spending was sufficient to match the proposed 2% adult social care precept increase, a core requirement for the council tax increase.

Concerns were raised about the impact of cuts on services provided in adult social care and healthcare, particularly on frontline care and the time staff spend with vulnerable people. The Executive Director of People and Transformation acknowledged that there were significant pressures on local authority-commissioned service providers. The council had been working to ensure they pay a fair cost for care and support, and they were among the highest payers in the country. The council was also looking at how technology can help improve efficiency and support staff. However, it was noted that there might be a point where the council would have to look at every level of the organisation and staff groups to continue delivering services effectively.

It was clarified, through the Chair, that of the £25 million deficit £15 million would be recovered from local taxpayers through the proposed council tax increase, and about £10 million would come from government funding. The Executive Director of People and Transformation also emphasised that the Council had been working on reducing the size of the organisation and streamlining services. This included further proposals for reductions and ensuring the organisation was lean without damaging services.

Concerns were raised about the potential costs associated with becoming a unitary authority and whether provisions had been made for these costs in the budget. It was confirmed that a reserve was being proposed to cover the costs associated with

devolution, with a suggested contribution of £5 million. A debate as to whether this should have been funded by central government, with Officers noting that there had not been previous funding. It was highlighted that while the implementation of a unitary authority could yield savings in the long term, there were uncertainties and short-term costs that must be managed prudently.

The Committee **AGREED** to the following actions:

- The Executive Director of Resources and Section 151 Officer would supply a list of the Grants which were ring-fenced for a purpose.

ii. Children's Services

Cllr John Howson, Cabinet Member for Children, Education and Young People's Services, joined to answer questions on the children's services section of the updated funding and budget proposal.

The Executive Director of People and Transformation highlighted the on-going investment of £2 million in preventative services for children's social care, with £1.4 million funded by the Children's Prevention Grant. However, the details concerning the requirements of use for this fund were yet to be confirmed.

Due to uncertainty about the fund requirements, officers could not specify where the money would be spent. However, the Executive Director of People and Transformation indicated that the investment was likely to support both direct staff in prevention and early help, focusing on activities such as parenting support, playgroups, emotional health and well-being, and communication and language support, as well as voluntary sector and external providers.

Concerns were raised about the high cost of out-of-County placements for looked after children. While these costs were not covered by grants, efforts were being made to reduce such placements by investing in local children's homes to keep more Oxfordshire children in Oxfordshire.

The Committee questioned how the council was considering the additional powers and responsibilities provided by the government for local authorities, particularly in relation to its role as an educational authority and working with locally maintained schools.

The Cabinet Member for Children, Education, and Young People's Services noted the Council's approval of the bill clause that transfers admissions responsibilities from academies back to local authorities, especially benefiting children in care. The council also sought to license online schools like the Department of Education does for the private sector, ensuring all children were enrolled in an Oxfordshire school. Their goal was to integrate children into mainstream schools wherever possible, reducing those receiving education elsewhere.

iii. Adult Services

The Executive Director of People and Transformation reported that there were no proposed changes in investments to the adult social services budget since the previous budget scrutiny. However, there was a 3% proposed increase in discretionary charges including community support service and telecare. There was also a 58% increase in the annual charge for support to people funding their own care to £330. This increase was to reflect the actual time required for the support.

The Committee asked if there were any efficiency measures built into the adult social care budget, specifically if contributions, to private contractors, would taper based on improved productivity over time.

The Executive Director of People and Transformation explained that while there were ongoing discussions with providers about improving productivity through technology and other means, the contracts were mostly based on individual care needs, making it difficult to apply a general productivity measure. However, some contracts, like reablement, were based on outcomes and fixed costs, which incentivise efficiency.

iv. Public Health and Communities

The Executive Director of People and Transformation provided a summary of the changes made to the public health and Communities budget, as well as the Oxfordshire Fire & Rescue Service and Community safety budget.

The budget for Domestic Abuse services increased by £0.3m to reflect, due to the increase in the Domestic Abuse Duty Safe Accommodation Grant. There was also a 3.5% rise in charges for Fire and Rescue services, though the Council had limited discretion over these statutory and discretionary charges.

v. Law and Governance

The Executive Director of Resources and Section 151 Officer reported the review of charges in the Resources and law & governance budget. The budget proposed an increase for school meal prices of 14-15% to bring prices in line with other local authorities. This increase was necessary as prices were not raised during the pandemic, leading to an overspend in the meal service. The increase aimed to ensure the sustainability of the service.

There was also a proposed increase of 3-4% in Gypsy and Travellers fees, to reflect the increased staff time and associated costs. Registration Service proposed an increase for 2025/26 and 2026/27 to account for bookings made well in advance.

The Committee raised concerns over why there was such a sharp increase in the school meal price, and why the price had not steadily risen with the costs of supplying the service. Members feared that the increase could have a significant negative impact on families.

The Executive Directors, as well as the Cabinet Member for Children, Education, and Young People's Services, addressed these concerns remarking that it would have

been preferable to have had a steady increase in school meal prices. However, the service was a loss-making service, and the increase in prices was needed to ensure its sustainability. The service was also competing against the private sector, and there was a danger of being seen as unfairly subsidised. It was also noted that the majority of parents would not be affected by this increase as their schools do not use the County Council's meal service.

vi. Economy and Place

Cllr Pete Sudbury, Deputy Leader of the Council with Responsibility for Climate Change, Environment & Future Generations, and Cllr Judy Roberts, Cabinet Member for Infrastructure and Development Strategy, joined to present and answer questions on the updated funding and budget proposals.

The Cabinet Members, along with the Director of Economy and Place, explained that the Economy and Place updated funding and budget proposals included a £2.1 million investment in flood prevention to enhance community resilience and emergency planning, and a £1 million investment to improve rail infrastructure, including the Cowley branch line and Oxford Station.

Members questioned why only £2 million was proposed for spending on flooding and £1 million on rail infrastructure, given the scale of the issues the County had faced over the previous year.

The £2 million allocated for flooding was described as a contingency budget designed to address immediate needs and enhance community resilience. This included employing two flood officers and supporting local flood wardens. The budget aimed to leverage additional funding from partners like the Environment Agency and Thames Water. The council recognised the urgency of flooding issues and plans to use this budget to respond effectively to flooding incidents and prevent future occurrences. The budget was seen as a starting point, with the potential for further investment as needs were identified and partnerships strengthened.

The £1 million investment in rail infrastructure was intended to support various projects, including the Cowley branch line and improvements at Oxford Station. This funding was to be used for feasibility studies, technical advice, and practical works to enhance the rail network. The goal was to leverage further investment from the government and other stakeholders by demonstrating the council's commitment to improving rail services. This investment was seen as a strategic move to secure additional funding and support for larger projects that will have a significant impact on reducing traffic congestion and improving public transportation.

vii. Environment and Highways

The council was to receive £5.1 million for 2025-2026 under the Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) scheme. Funding was to start in November 2025. For the first year, the funds were to be reserved for waste services, covering extra costs, and boosting reuse and recycling of packaging. This was due to uncertainties about long-term income from the scheme and the carbon emission trading scheme starting in April 2028, which would add costs.

The Environment and Highways updated funding and budget proposals, also included the £400,000 allocated for park and ride services intended to maintain the joint ticket price at £4, despite the government's increase in the bus fare cap from £2 to £3. This funding aimed to keep park and ride services competitive and encourage their use, which had been recovering towards pre-pandemic levels.

Additionally, street parking charges were to remain unchanged, while business rate permits were to see an increase of 10%. The mechanism for calculating lane rental fees had been updated to more accurately reflect the costs. Furthermore, DIY waste charges were increase by 4.2%, reflecting the increased costs of disposing of this waste.

Concerns were raised about the potential increase in fly tipping because of the higher charges for DIY waste. However, it was noted that as a criminal activity, fly tipping required effective enforcement to address the issue. There was also a need to balance the contractual obligation to adjust charges and the potential impact on fly tipping. The importance of making it easy for residents to dispose of their waste properly was emphasised to mitigate the risk of increased fly tipping.

The Committee took a short 10-minute break at 12:00. The Executive Director of People and Transformation did not rejoin the meeting after the break.

viii.Capital Programme

The Executive Director of Resources and Section 151 Officer introduced the proposals within the capital programme, supported by the Cabinet Member for Infrastructure and Development Strategy and the Director of Economy and Place.

£0.3 million had been set aside for Banbury town centre to enhance partnership working with the town and district councils. This funding was to support the development of a master plan to guide future development and investment in the town centre, ensuring coordinated efforts to improve the area.

An additional £1.3 million had been allocated for active travel measures intended to accelerate the implementation of Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans (LCWIPs). This funding was to support the delivery of identified projects, prioritising quick wins and leveraging Section 106 agreements. The aim was to enhance active travel infrastructure, focusing on both urban and rural areas, and improving routes to schools and other key destinations.

Concerns arose about the LCWIPs for Banbury, as they initially ignored important destinations like secondary schools, railway stations, and cultural centres. It was noted that local knowledge and input from elected members should be included in planning. Maintaining short-stay parking in market town centres was deemed crucial for supporting local businesses and ensuring accessibility. Additionally, there was a discussion on the need for resources to implement active travel measures and improve market squares to make them more accessible and appealing for social and business activities.

Members sought clarification on project identification and prioritisation based on LCWIPs. The Cabinet Member for Infrastructure and Development Strategy explained that LCWIPs contained a priority list aiming to balance projects between urban and rural areas, focusing on quick and easy implementations. Section 106 funds were considered for projects needing additional resources. Priority was given to projects with significant impacts on modal shift and overlapping beneficial schemes. The process involved officer guidance and leveraging existing resources and funding for efficient implementation.

ix. Outstanding funding information and next steps

The Executive Director of Resources and Section 151 Officer explained that the final local government finance settlement was expected to be published in early February, likely after the administration's proposed budget and budget amendments were produced. Additionally, surpluses and deficits on the council tax collection funds were anticipated by the end of January, along with pending business rates information and funding related to National Insurance contributions.

The immediate next steps in the budget process included the publication of the Cabinet's proposed budget on January 20th. The Cabinet's proposed budget for Council was scheduled for publication on January 31st, with opposition amendments to be published on February 6th, leading up to the Council meeting on February 11th.

The Committee **AGREED** to the following actions as a result of their discussions:

- The Executive Director of Resources and Section 151 Officer would supply a list of the Grants which were ring-fenced for a purpose.

The Committee **AGREED** to make the following observations:

- To recognise the anticipated adverse impact on the Council's income over the course of MTFS due to changes to the criteria for distributing Government grants, including an increased focus on deprivation.
- To recognise that the Council is borrowing as much as it may prudently do to fund capital expenditure
- That there are likely equality impacts of National Insurance changes amongst external social care organisations
- That the Council recognises the desire for additional – though targeted – spending relating to flood-measures, and the importance therefore in securing matched funding from other partners
- That there is support for the development of the Cowley branch line and a new railway station at Wantage/Grove, but also that other rail projects need to be progressed. Nevertheless, investment in bus services may have more immediate and tangible benefits.

The Committee **AGREED** to Recommendations under the following headings:

- That the increases for school meals are stepped over a longer period.
- That the Council budget report provides members with i) the impacts of school meal price rises for parents with two children getting school meals every day

over a year (assuming that the full increase in costs are passed on by schools), and ii) and the anticipated savings to the Council made by increasing school meal prices.

- That the Council budget report includes a benchmark figure for the cost-avoidance accruing from the Council's proposed flood-prevention investment.
- That the Council budget report provides members with the financial impact to the Council of increasing DIY waste charges by 4.2%.
- That the Council makes clear the framework through which projects will be prioritised for active travel spending, including consideration of the impact on numbers of people walking and cycling as well as the additional benefits of schemes being complementary as part of a network.

Cllr Mallon and the guests of the committee left at this stage.

6/25 COMMITTEE ACTION AND RECOMMENDATION TRACKER

(Agenda No. 6)

The Committee **NOTED** the action and recommendation tracker.

The Committee also **AGREED** that they would like updates on recommendation responses periodically following their acceptance by Cabinet, and that the tracker required spring cleaning and updating.

7/25 COMMITTEE FORWARD WORK PLAN

(Agenda No. 7)

A debate arose about holding a meeting on February 21st. Some members emphasised the importance of formal committee consideration for recommendations and transparency, while others expressed concerns about the fluidity of commercial property transactions and the practicality of scheduling a meaningful discussion. It was proposed that an all-member briefing would be more inclusive and suitable for topics like the sale of County Hall and devolution.

It was **NOTED** that the committee had the full intention for the items on the sale of County Hall, and the proposals for Oxfordshire devolution to be full member briefing items.

The Committee **AGREED** to the forward workplan, subject to the removal of the provisional meeting on 21st February.

8/25 RESPONSES TO SCRUTINY RECOMMENDATIONS

(Agenda No. 8)

The Committee **NOTED** the response to scrutiny recommendations on Community Wealth Building and Wider Social Value.

..... in the Chair

Date of signing

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PERFORMANCE AND CORPORATE SERVICES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

04 APRIL 2025

BUSINESS MANAGEMENT AND MONITORING REPORT (HIGHWAYS AND ENVIRONMENT FOCUS)

Report by Executive Director Resources and Section 151 Officer

RECOMMENDATION

1. The Committee is **RECOMMENDED** to
 - consider the report and raise any questions, and to **AGREE** any recommendations it wishes to make to Cabinet.

Executive Summary

2. The Performance and Corporate Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee has a constitutional responsibility to scrutinise 'corporate performance and directorate performance and financial reporting.'
3. The Cabinet is informed of the Council's performance via the Business Management and Monitoring Report (BMMR). To aid focus, the Committee has agreed to focus on the Highways and Environment Service. Future meetings may wish to consider the council's other service areas.
4. An abridged version of the BMMR is provided to reflect this focus as Annex 1. Additional background is provided through the Capital Programme and Monitoring Report, which is similarly abridged as Annex 2.

Background

5. The Cabinet receives its BMMR report every two months, which reports on the Council's performance in terms of finance, delivery and risk, including detail at a service level. The last report BMMR report submitted to Cabinet was considered on 25 March 2025, containing data up to January 2025. To support a focus on the Highways and Environment element of the BMMR report, only data relating specifically to this service is included. In that respect, the report is the same as that considered by Cabinet on 25 March 2025.
6. Committee members should be aware that they are being provided with the scorecard of the Council's performance in full for assurance and completeness. However, those KPIs directly relating to Environment and Highways are:

- OCC01.02 Total No. of streetlights fitted with LED Lanterns
 - OCC01.07 Total % of household waste which is reused, recycled or composted
 - OCC05.03 204.6 KM (4.4%) of the road network to be treated
 - OCC06.02 Percentage of newly planted trees still alive on land OCC own & manage
7. The Capital Programme and Monitoring Report is not part of the BMMR report and is separately considered by Cabinet. However, it is included as useful background to some of the data within the BMMR. It, too, includes data with a focus on corporate issues and those within Highways and Environment.

Corporate Policies and Priorities

8. Overall corporate performance supports all the Council's policies and strategic priorities. Whilst the work of Environment and Highways has cross-cutting input into all the Council's strategic priorities also, its work primarily furthers the Council's ambitions to "put action address the climate emergency at the heart of our work", "invest in an inclusive, integrated and sustainable transport network", and "preserve and improve access to nature and green spaces".

Financial Implications

9. There are no additional financial implications beyond those outlined within the appendices to this report.

Comments checked by:

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

Legal Implications

10. The Performance and Corporate Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee has a specific responsibility within its terms of reference, under Part 6.1A of the Constitution 5 (1) (a) to scrutinise 'corporate performance and directorate performance and financial reporting'.
11. There are no additional legal implications beyond those outlined within the appendices to this report.

Comments checked by:

Kim Sawyer, Interim Head of Legal and Governance:
kim.sawyer@oxfordshire.gov.uk

Lorna Baxter
Executive Director Resources and Section 151 Officer

Annex: Annex 1: Abridged Business Management and Monitoring
Report – January 2025

Annex 2: Abridged Capital Programme and Monitoring Report – January 2025

Background papers: None

Other Documents: None

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March 2025

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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

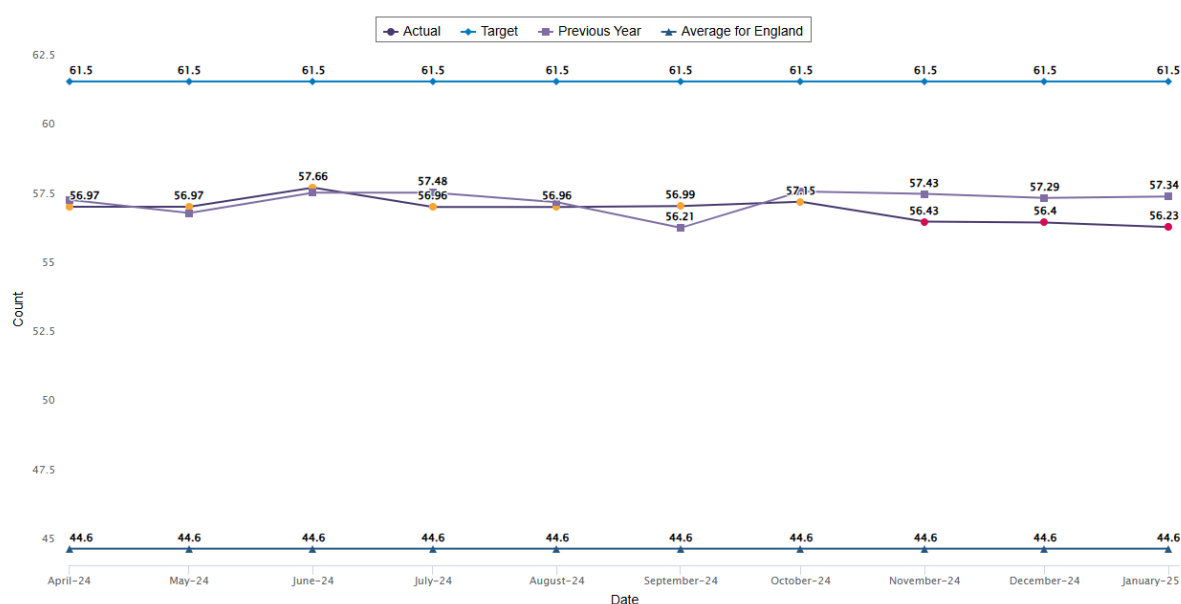


Figure 1: OCC01.07 Monthly performance for 2024/2025 financial year

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.

Strategic Risk Management Overview

11. 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.
12. Strategic risks are being developed with the services for Devolution and Local Government Reform and Section 106 Agreements.
13. 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.
14. 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

Annex 1

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

15. 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:

16. 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.

Centrally held budgets:

17. £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.
18. 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:

19. 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.
20. 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.
21. 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.
22. 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.
23. 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.

24. 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

25. 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

26. 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.
27. 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

January 2025

Oxfordshire County Council

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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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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
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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	
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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.							

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

Environment & Highways

8. 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

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

Countryside & Waste

10. The Countryside & Waste service is currently forecasting a breakeven position, an improvement of £0.2m to the previously reported position
11. 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.
12. The table below summarises budgeted and actual waste activity.

Waste Stream**	Budget			
	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

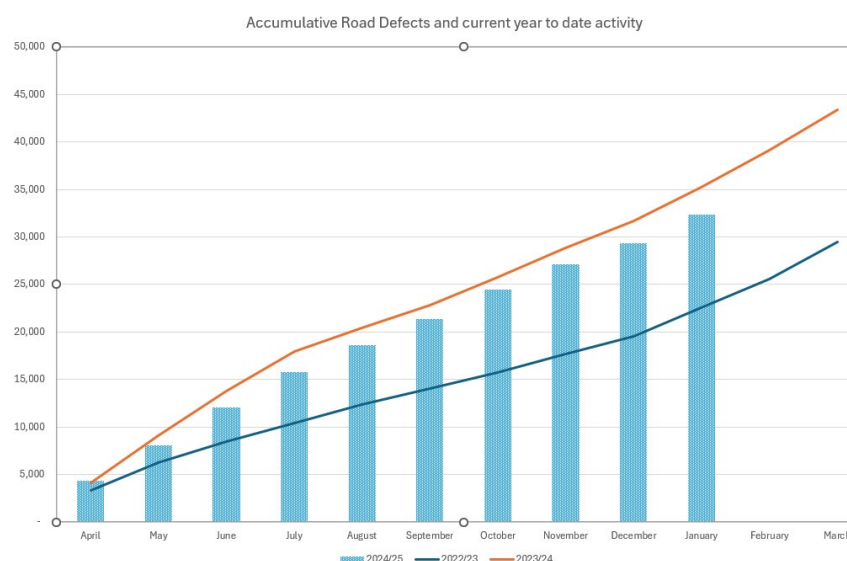
Outturn Forecast*			
Annual £m	Tonnage K'Tonnes	%	Price/ Tonne £
£8.1m	153	56%	£53.24
£17.3m	112	41%	£154.62
£1.3m	8	3%	£167.56
£26.7m	273	100%	£98.07

*December figures presented as the latest dataset.

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

Highways & Maintenance

13. 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.
14. 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.
15. Current level of defects remains lower than last year and in line with the current budget.



Network Management

16. 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

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

Overview of Medium-Term Financial Strategy Investments and Savings

18. 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%

19. 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%

Environment & Highways

Savings

20. 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

21. 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.

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

Annex 2

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

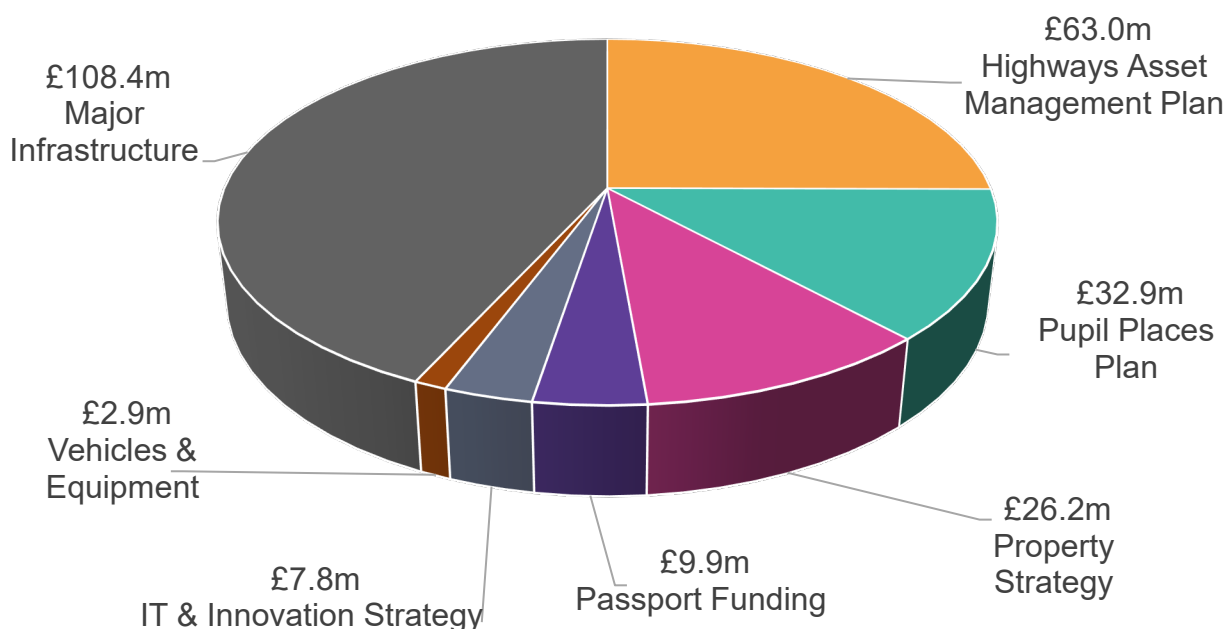
9. Capital expenditure is defined as spending that creates an asset for the council (e.g. buildings, vehicles, and equipment) as well as spending which meets the definition in regulations specified under the Local Government Act 2003. This includes spend on non-current assets that are not owned by the 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

Annex 2

- **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)

2024/25 Capital Monitoring

Annex 2

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.

Major Infrastructure

17. 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

18. 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

19. 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

20. 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

21. 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.
22. 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

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

Transport Policy

Annex 2

24. 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

25. 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.
26. 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

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

Project	Planned Schemes	Completed	Comments on actual delivery 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 Improvements (schemes)	68	68	Surface inlay and minor patching schemes across the county. There will also be minor works carried out in addition to this throughout the year.
Footways (schemes)	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

Annex 2

Project	Planned Schemes	Completed	Comments on actual compared to planned delivery
			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.

28. 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.
29. 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.
30. 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.

Risk Management

31. 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

Annex 2

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.

32. 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.
33. 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.
34. 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

35. 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.
36. 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
37. 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.
38. 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

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

Equality & Inclusion Implications

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

Legal Implications

41. 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

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%
Vehicles & 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

Capital Investment Programme (latest forecast)							CAPITAL INVESTMENT TOTAL
Strategy/Programme	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	£'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

Divisions Affected - ALL

PERFORMANCE AND CORPORATE SERVICES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

4 April 2025

LEP INTEGRATION UPDATE

Report by CHIEF EXECUTIVE of Enterprise Oxfordshire

RECOMMENDATION

1. **The Committee is RECOMMENDED to**
 - **NOTE** the report, raise any questions on its contents and **AGREE** any recommendations it wishes to make to Cabinet.

Executive Summary

2. This report provides an update following the integration of LEP functions into the County Council on 1 April 2024. The report notes the implementation of new governance arrangements, appointment of a new board of directors and the agreement of a new budget and business plan for 2025/26.

Background

3. Formally launched in March 2011, the Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership (OxLEP) was initially established as a partnership of the local authorities, businesses and education sector in the area, and was incorporated as a not-for-profit company limited by guarantee on 31 March 2015.
4. Oxfordshire County Council acted as OxLEP's Accountable Body in respect of OxLEP Ltd's core funds and any additional central government funding received.
5. In August 2023, government confirmed that from April 2024, the government's sponsorship and funding of LEPs will cease. The associated guidance stated that the government expects the functions currently delivered by LEPs – described as, business representation, strategic economic planning, and the delivery of government programmes where directed – to be exercised by upper tier local authorities, where they are not already delivered by a combined authority. In Oxfordshire's case this means Oxfordshire County Council.

6. In February 2024 Cabinet agreed that the council would become the controlling member of OxLEP Ltd, exercising its membership functions through Cabinet, while the existing board of directors remained in place, pending the review phase. This change in control was agreed by the OxLEP Board in March 2024 and came in to effect on 1 April 2024 and was reported to the Performance and Corporate Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee in July 2024.
7. The change in ownership formed the basis of the first phase of a three phased approach to LEP transition. These were:

Phase 1 – Transition (By 1 April 2024 - Complete)
Phase 2 – Implementation (1 April – 30 September 2024 - Complete)
Phase 3 – Establishment (1 October 2024 – 31 March 2025 - Complete)
8. The following sections of this report focus on the progress of two phases namely Implementation. and Establishment, following successfully completing the Phase 1 Transition programme by 1 April 2024.

Implementation

9. During phase 2, the model for delivery of economic functions was reviewed. The following principles were developed to evaluate the preferred delivery model.
 - Stakeholder engagement built into the model
 - Demonstrates council control
 - Provides operational flexibility to support commercialisation and income generation
 - Deliverable within timeframes
 - Minimises financial risk for the council
10. These principles informed the assessment criteria for identifying the preferred delivery model.
11. To support LEP transition a joint working group was established with representatives from OxLEP and the council. This working group undertook a detailed options appraisal. The recommendation to Cabinet, agreed in November 2024, was that the council continues to deliver some economic development programmes through the existing council owned company, OxLEP Ltd trading as Enterprise Oxfordshire, and that the Council retains ownership of the company as the sole member. The primary purpose of the company will be to deliver projects and programmes on behalf of the council.

Governance

12. Cabinet also agreed that a Shareholder Committee would be established to provide strategic oversight of the company, and any future council owned entities, and provide assurance to the Cabinet that the company is compliant with the council's constitution, rules and procedures including achieving best value.
13. The Shareholder Committee will also take decisions on any matters that are reserved to the Council as member in the company's Articles of Association or Shareholders Agreement and will receive annual and periodic reports for the company.
14. Whilst the Shareholder Committee is responsible for providing the oversight of the company through the reserved matters set out in the Articles, Cabinet also noted the need for a board of directors to be appointed to comply with company law regulations (Companies Act 2006). Cabinet agreed that the new company board would be a board of three non-executive directors appointed by the Shareholder Committee. This was to include a cabinet member and senior officer from the council alongside an external independent non-executive director who would also chair the company board. The board may also be supported with one or two co-optees and be advised by the company Chief Executive and council Director of Economy and Place.
15. Subsequently, the Shareholder Committee agreed the relevant revisions to the Company's Articles of Incorporation, as recommended by Cabinet, to ensure Council oversight, and appointed a new board of directors, initially comprising of Cllr Dan Levy and Dr Kate Reynolds, Deputy Director of Education and Inclusion.
16. The Shareholder Committee has subsequently met to approve the appointment of Auditors for the company and to agree the business plan for 2025/26, both matters reserved to the Council.
17. The Board has met on two occasions and meetings for the remainder of 2025 have been scheduled, these align with Cabinet/Shareholder Committee meeting cycles to aid effective and timely decision making.
18. A vacancy remains on the Board for an Independent Chair and a Nolan compliant recruitment process is underway.
19. In the interim the Board remains quorate and operationally effective.

Contract for the provision of services (Joint Services Agreement)

20. The contract for the provision of services is how the Council commissions the delivery of certain initiatives by the company. The contract sets out that the company will deliver the overall strategic objectives for Oxfordshire set annually in the Business Plan as agreed by the Shareholder Committee.
21. Following the change of control of the company to sole membership through the Council, the contract is now the means by which the Council sets out the scope of economic development and business support services that the Teckal company is to deliver for the council, without the need for the council to undertake a procurement process to commission this work.
22. Teckal" refers to a specific legal principle and exemption in EU procurement law, allowing public authorities to contract with a company they own or control without going through a public tender process, provided certain conditions are met.
23. The contract was amended to extend its lifetime for a limited period to April 2025. It now needs further amendment to extend its lifetime even further to provide certainty of commission but also requires amendments to confirm arrangements relating to the Skills Bootcamps initiative.

Appointment of Auditors

24. The County Council has indicated that, as a separate entity, the company should appoint separate external auditors from those who conduct the County Council's statutory audit. Therefore, on 4 February 2025, the Enterprise Oxfordshire company board approved a report recommending the appointment of external auditors for the Financial Year 2024/25. In line with audit best practice, the report also notes that audit services will be retendered for 2025/26.
25. The appointment of External Auditors is a reserved matter and therefore, as noted above, the Shareholder Committee approved a recommendation to appoint auditors at its meeting in February 2025.

Business Plan and Establishment

26. Prior to becoming a county council company OxLEP produced a Corporate Plan that was approved by OxLEP Board. This current Corporate Plan covers 2022-24 and describes strategically the activities the LEP plan to coordinate, support, and deliver over the period to support Oxfordshire's economic recovery and addressing the key challenges that the covid pandemic exposed. It also contains an overview of the LEP's Key Performance

Indicators. A key project which emerged from this work was the concept of an Oxfordshire Inclusive Economy Commission, through working with partner Local Authorities the LEP and the City Council developed the concept into what is now the Oxfordshire Inclusive Economy Partnership Chaired jointly by Jeremy Long (former LEP Chair) and Baroness Jan Royal. The initiatives supported and championed by the OIEP align with and amplify many of the LEP lead delivery programmes across the Business and Skills landscape such as the Social Contract programme.

27. While many of the core themes of the Corporate Plan remain relevant, the plan responded to the former governments policy framework. As such, an interim business plan for 2025/26, aligned to both transfer of LEP functions policy and County Council priorities has been developed and recommended by the Board to the Shareholder Committee for approval on 25 March. During Q1-2 of 2025/26 a revised medium term Business Plan will be developed, recognising the shift in policy direction, County Council priorities, Governments Economic policy direction and Local Government Reform/Devolution direction. This will be developed with the Board, stakeholders and Cabinet/Shareholder Committee for consideration and ultimately a recommendation for approval.
28. In addition to the consideration and approval of the Business plan the Shareholder Committee will also approved the Budget for 2025/26 and 2026/27. The committee is asked to note that the 2-year budget horizon is necessary to demonstrate to the auditors that the company can meet 'going concern' requirements.
29. Alongside the development of the budget and business plan, work to complete the transition arrangements took place between October 2024 and March 2025. This included:
 - a. A renaming exercise to establish the new trading name 'Enterprise Oxfordshire' complete with new logos and other PR materials.
 - b. Changed registered address to that of County Hall on Companies House and relinquish the lease formally held on an office HQ on the Harwell campus
 - c. Updated email addresses to reflect new trading name

Economic Planning

30. In January 2023, OxLEP commissioned a refreshed Strategic Economic Plan (SEP) for Oxfordshire and undertook an Independent Economic Review (IER) to revise the local evidence base. The refreshed SEP was published by OxLEP in December 2023 alongside the detailed evidence base.
31. Guidance subsequently issued by the previous government was that the strategic economic planning functions previously exercised by Local Economic Partnerships should be in the future be exercised by the county

council in those two-tier areas where no combined authority exists. The current government has published its intentions to require all areas to develop Local Growth Plans but has to date issued no guidance or requirements outside of devolved areas.

32. Cabinet determined that it would retain the accountability for strategic economic planning directly, rather than delegating to Enterprise Oxfordshire. In doing so Cabinet noted the ongoing need for business and wider stakeholder engagement in the development of economic plans that deliver against the council's and wider partnership priorities, including tackling inequality and addressing the climate emergency.

33. The council is now undertaking a reassessment of the local strategic economic planning framework. This review will ensure that strategic economic plans are fully aligned to agreed priorities, major developments locally, regionally, nationally and internationally, These developments include:

- The publication of a revised National Planning Policy Framework and the Modern Industrial Strategy
- Government announcements of their focus on the Oxford-Cambridge Growth Corridor
- Publication of the English Devolution White paper
- Most recently, Government's announcement of a requirement on the County Council to deliver a Local Get Britain Working plan
- Local development of a community wealth building approach and programme of work and a broader definition of social value
- Commissioning of a Doughnut Economics report
- The decision to partner with the Institute of Health Equity to develop Oxfordshire as a Marmot Place in order to tackle health inequalities, including through economic interventions
- On-going uncertainty in the international economic outlook

34. The previous evidence base is available to help frame any new economic strategy in the context of these developments and council priorities and the council will work with partners to deliver a new strategic economic plan early in the new municipal year, led through the recently formed Economy and Place Directorate. The role of Enterprise Oxfordshire will be to support delivery of the objectives of the revised strategy and subsequent iterations of the company's business plan will need to reflect the strategy.

Business Engagement

35. The government guidance issued in August 2023 encouraged upper tier

local authorities to create or continue to engage with a business advisory board (or similar) made up of local business leaders and relevant representative bodies to provide the view of local businesses as part of regional decision making and work with local leaders to create a broad economic strategy for the area. Demonstrating a strong business voice is also an eligibility requirement for some government programmes (including Growth Hubs).

36. The guidance also set out a broad base for membership – a wide range of business types, sizes, and locations relating to local economic strengths and priorities. A board should have a diversity of voices, involve business representative organisations (e.g., local Chamber of Commerce, the Federation of Small Businesses) and there should also be a clear conflict of interest policy (where private interests, both pecuniary and non-pecuniary are declared).
37. As such, Cabinet agreed that The Council would establish an Economic Partnership Board to support the Cabinet in the discharge of its economic development functions. This will invite a range of voices to advise on the development of economic strategy in line with government guidance. The guidance also asks upper tier authorities to consider the inclusion of local economic partners outside of the business community in the membership for the board. This will be important in Oxfordshire given the strength of expertise in the wider system.
38. It is likely membership will include representatives from lower tier authorities, the private sector, further and higher education, health and community and voluntary sector. This broader membership would add significant value to the board.
39. The previous private sector members of the previous LEP Board, who have already been through a Nolan compliant recruitment process, will be invited to join the Economic Partnership Board, alongside the further and higher education leaders. The initial membership of the EPB will also include representation from lower tier authorities. A review and further recruitment will be undertaken to ensure appropriate diversity alongside relevant sector specialisms and geographical representation, including for small businesses and representatives of the rural economy. The December 2023 government guidance states that any new business board members must be appointed through an open process. The process should ensure appointees are able to provide a constructive check and challenge on local decision making using their private sector perspective. This guidance will continue to be followed in making future board member appointments and the appointment process will be owned by Cabinet.

Corporate Policies and Priorities

40. LEP transition aligns with the vision set out in the County Council's Strategic Plan to lead positive change by working in partnership to make Oxfordshire a greener, fairer and healthier county. It also supports the priorities of:
- Put action to address the climate emergency at the heart of our work.
 - Tackle inequalities in Oxfordshire.
 - Invest in an inclusive, integrated and sustainable transport network.
 - Create opportunities for children and young people to reach their full potential.
 - Work with local businesses and partners for environmental, economic and social benefit.

Financial Implications

41. While restating its expectations that functions previously held by LEPs continued, Government confirmed in March 2025 that there will be no further funding for Local Enterprise Partnerships. Income and spending for 2025/26 has been agreed through the Business Plan submitted to the Shareholder Committee in March 2025.
42. From 2024/25 group accounts will be required to incorporate the accounts for the Enterprise Oxfordshire Teckal company into the County Council's Statement of Accounts and as such will be overseen by the County Council's Audit and Governance Committee.

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

Legal Implications

43. LEPs were originally established as non-statutory bodies some of which, like OxLEP established themselves as a company to provide a statutory framework and governance for its operations.
44. Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership Limited, referred also in this report as Enterprise Oxfordshire, is a company limited by guarantee of which the Council is the guarantor and sole member.
45. The Council has powers to set up a company under section 95 Local

Government Act 2003 and section 4 Localism Act 2011. Setting up a company enables the Council to trade its discretionary services.

46. The management of companies owned by the Council is an executive function. The Cabinet has constituted a shareholder committee to manage the responsibilities of the Council as guarantor and sole member of Enterprise Oxfordshire. The company is otherwise governed by the various Companies Acts and has additional responsibilities as a local authority owned company.
47. The company has registered its Memorandum and Articles of Association with Companies House. The Articles include several reserved matters which are to be decided by the shareholder committee and cannot be the sole responsibility of the company. The reserved matters include the business and budget of the company which were recently approved by the Shareholder Committee.

Comments checked by: Kim Sawyer Interim Head of Legal & Governance
Kim.sawyer@oxfordshire.gov.uk

Nigel Tipple
Chief Executive

Contact Officer:

March 2025

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Recommendation Tracker

Performance & Corporate Services Overview & Scrutiny Committee

Councillor Eddie Reeves, Chair | Tom Hudson, Principal Scrutiny Officer, tom.hudson@oxfordshire.gov.uk

The action and recommendation tracker enables the Committee to monitor progress against agreed actions and recommendations. The tracker is updated with the actions and recommendations agreed at each meeting. Once an action or recommendation has been completed or fully implemented, it will be shaded green and reported into the next meeting of the Committee, after which it will be removed from the tracker.

KEY	Due to Cabinet	In progress	Complete
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Meeting Date	Item	Recommendation	Lead	Update/response
15-Nov-24	Community Asset Transfer Policy and Leases to VCS Organisations	1. That the Council ensures that local members are involved with next-step discussions with VCS groups and the social value provided by these organisations be considered as part of the discussions.	Vic Kurzeja; Michael Smedley	Accepted See response in item 9
		2. That the Council improves communications around empty properties, including: i) sharing with members a clear statement of the aspiration and timeline for disposing of properties listed for disposal, ii) a quarterly report/update summarising recent events and developments with		Accepted See response in item 9

Action Tracker

Performance & Corporate Services Overview & Scrutiny Committee

Councillor Eddie Reeves, Chair | Tom Hudson, Principal Scrutiny Officer, tom.hudson@oxfordshire.gov.uk

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KEY	Delayed	In progress	Complete
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Meeting Date	Item	Recommendation	Lead	Update/response
		Council land/property ensuring all parties are kept up to date, and iii) regular updates for those residents neighbouring vacant Council properties to keep them up to date with ongoing developments and plans.		
		3. That the Council develops processes for sharing with both members and sister organisations in the county, i) lease requests by VCS organisations, ii) land available for VCS leases, and iii) any planned leases.		Accepted See response in item 9

Action Tracker

Performance & Corporate Services Overview & Scrutiny Committee

Councillor Eddie Reeves, Chair | Tom Hudson, Principal Scrutiny Officer, tom.hudson@oxfordshire.gov.uk

The action and recommendation tracker enables the Committee to monitor progress against agreed actions and recommendations. The tracker is updated with the actions and recommendations agreed at each meeting. Once an action or recommendation has been completed or fully implemented, it will be shaded green and reported into the next meeting of the Committee, after which it will be removed from the tracker.

KEY	Delayed	In progress	Complete
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Meeting date	Item	Recommendation	Lead	Update/response
15-Nov-24	Commercial Strategy Progress Update	1. That the Council develops and shares with the committee on a regular basis a more detailed project plan for the Commercial strategy, outlining specific commercial opportunities in development, enabling activity, timelines, targeted savings or expected income generation, risk and RAG ratings		Accepted See response in item 9
		2. That the Council ensures that future iterations of the Strategy clarify how it intends to help the Council make money, how money		Accepted See response in item 9

Action Tracker

Performance & Corporate Services Overview & Scrutiny Committee

Councillor Eddie Reeves, Chair | Tom Hudson, Principal Scrutiny Officer, tom.hudson@oxfordshire.gov.uk

The action and recommendation tracker enables the Committee to monitor progress against agreed actions and recommendations. The tracker is updated with the actions and recommendations agreed at each meeting. Once an action or recommendation has been completed or fully implemented, it will be shaded green and reported into the next meeting of the Committee, after which it will be removed from the tracker.

KEY	Delayed	In progress	Complete
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Meeting Date	Item	Recommendation	Lead	Update/response
		will be used more efficiently, and how it will be used more effectively.		
		3. That the Council gives consideration to seconding staff to exemplars of good commercial practice to the private sector.		Partially Accepted See response in item 9
		4. That the Council invests in greater capacity to undertake strategic and mid-contract management of contracts.		Accepted See response in item 9
		5. That the Council includes representatives of Adult Social Care and Children's Social Care on its Commercial Board		Rejected See response in item 9

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Meeting Date	Item	Recommendation	Lead	Update/response
17-Jan-25	Updated Funding and Budget Proposals 2025/26 – 2027/28	1. That the increases for school meals are stepped over a longer period	Lorna Baxter	Rejected See response in item 9
		2. That the Council budget report provides members with i) the impacts of school meal price rises for parents with two children getting school meals every day over a year (assuming that the full increase in costs are passed on by schools), and ii) and the anticipated savings to the Council made by increasing school meal prices		Partially Accepted See response in item 9

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Meeting Date	Item	Recommendation	Lead	Update/response
		3. That the Council budget report includes a benchmark figure for the cost-avoidance accruing from the Council's proposed flood-prevention investment		Accepted See response in item 9
		4. That the Council budget report provides members with the financial impact to the Council of increasing DIY waste charges by 4.2%		Partially Accepted See response in item 9
		5. That the Council makes clear the framework through which projects will be prioritised for active travel		Partially Accepted See response in item 9

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KEY	Delayed	In progress	Complete
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Meeting date	Item	Recommendation	Lead	Update/response
		spending, including consideration of the impact on numbers of people walking and cycling as well as the additional benefits of schemes being complementary as part of a network.		

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Performance & Corporate Services Overview & Scrutiny Committee

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KEY	Delayed	In progress	Complete
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Meeting Date	Item	Action	Lead	Update/response
There are no outstanding action items.				



Recommendation Update Tracker

Performance & Corporate Services Overview & Scrutiny Committee

Councillor Eddie Reeves, Chair | Tom Hudson, Principal Scrutiny Officer, tom.hudson@oxfordshire.gov.uk

The recommendation update tracker enables the Committee to monitor progress accepted recommendations. The tracker is updated with recommendations accepted by Cabinet. Once a recommendation has been updated, it will be shaded green and reported into the next meeting of the Committee, after which it will be removed from the tracker. If the recommendation will be update in the form of a separate item, it will be shaded yellow.

KEY	Update Pending	Update in Item	Updated
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Cabinet Response Date	Item	Recommendation	Lead	Update
19-Mar-24	Capital Asset Disposal Process	That the Council conveys information about potential asset disposals to opposition parties at an earlier point and consults with them over potential uses and helpful community contacts.	Michael Smedley	As part of the current disposal process key decisions are sought for significant sales. Ahead of any disposal officers will consult with the local member, and where appropriate other members, to explore the possible uses of buildings prior to their disposal. The final decision on disposal will remain with the Cabinet advised by officers.
19-Mar-24	Employee Engagement Survey	That the Cabinet monitors the actions and progress made in relation to the measures requested of the Head of Paid Service.	Cherie Cuthbertson	That the Head of Paid Service, along with other relevant officers, undertake the following: a) That the staff engagement survey is repeated, in full, on an annual basis – This has been the case, but a project has started to

KEY	Update Pending	Update in Item	Updated
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Cabinet Response Date	Item	Recommendation	Lead	Update
Page 72				<p>investigate an alternative approach to employee engagement surveys which will allow the council to deliver quarterly pulse surveys for greater accuracy and frequency of data.</p> <p>b) That fuller comparative data is requested from Best Companies of the Council's performance against other local authorities and report against this data accordingly in future – Yes, a NET promotor has been generated through the past survey, this is then compared to other local authorities. This will continue with the new engagement approach, as well as work with the Local Government Employee Engagement Index to obtain greater comparisons to local authorities nationally.</p> <p>That future staff engagement surveys are able to differentiate between responses from full and part time staff – Yes this will be the case.</p> <p>d) That questions be added to future surveys over whether staff consider their work to be of value, and whether they feel it is valued. – Yes, this will be included.</p> <p>e) That work is undertaken to convey the inherent value of staff's work, and the value the organisation places on it. – The new approach to the survey will provide opportunities to gather and assess this information. In addition, there is work underway to review the current approach to</p>

KEY	Update Pending	Update in Item	Updated
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Cabinet Response Date	Item	Recommendation	Lead	Update
Page 73				<p>recognition within the organisation. Both the engagement survey and recognition projects will work interdependently.</p> <p>f) That the Council develops measures to understand whether it is achieving its intention to become less hierarchical and more of a matrix-working environment – Yes, the new approach to quarterly pulse surveys will allow the organisation to tailor engagement questions and report more accurately and frequently, providing greater data and insights into how successful the shift to matrix working is progressing.</p> <p>g) That mechanisms are developed to support and develop psychological safety, whereby junior staff feel enabled to challenge senior staff respectfully or pose alternative courses of action in safety without fear of repercussions and that an additional question is added to the survey relating to this - Yes, the survey will champion anonymity to support psychological safety and provide opportunities for feedback and challenge. This additional question can be added. There are additional strands of work within the Our People and Culture strategy which are focused on supporting psychologically safe culture.</p> <p>h) That solutions are developed to address the twin needs of moving to a hybrid working model whilst also ensuring that relationships are developed between more junior and senior</p>

KEY	Update Pending	Update in Item	Updated
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Cabinet Response Date	Item	Recommendation	Lead	Update
Page 74				<p>staff – The survey can be used to target specific questions to provide insights for data-based decision making for solutions, however the agile policy is currently being reviewed as this is a key concern to address within it.</p> <p>i) That means are developed to allow work which does not deliver value to be dropped, rather than consistently adding to expectations on staff - The introduction of new technologies, combined with shifting the culture to support new ways of working is enabling the assessment of task value and prioritisation activity.</p> <p>j) That stronger steps are taken to clarify expectations of staff members around working outside standard office hours – This feedback has been taken on board and will be included in the agile policy review.</p> <p>k) That further work is taken to understand and unlock the skills which the staff members believe are not being utilised – Work has commenced to develop a skills assessment matrix assessing the skills, knowledge and experience of colleagues. In addition, the continuation of the organisational re-design focuses on aligning business needs with colleague skills.</p>
19-Mar-24	Social Value	1. That the Council clarifies the objectives it wishes to achieve through its social value policy, choosing measures and weightings which support those objectives.	Ian Dyson	There is no change to the previously stated practice using the prioritisation and weighting of TOMs. The development of a wider organisational policy is ongoing to ensure a consistent approach

KEY	Update Pending	Update in Item	Updated
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Cabinet Response Date	Item	Recommendation	Lead	Update
Page 75				<p>to social value across all decision-making processes. This will be a priority when the new Head of Commercial and Procurement joins the council later this year.</p> <p>There has been training undertaken with contract managers where social value is included in their contracts, focussed on their role in managing and monitoring performance against social value commitments.</p> <p><u>Original response update:</u> In the reporting year 2023-24, OCC's suppliers contributed £1,442,894.95 of social value delivery against their commitments.</p>
		<p>2. That the Council investigates how it might develop a more bespoke model of social value, to include consideration of how it might support cooperatives to tender for contracts, and selecting TOMs which truly drive climate action benefits.</p>		<p>A review of the Social Value Policy and operating model is scheduled to be undertaken during 2025/26 as part of the Commercial Transformation Programme. Through the procurement process efforts to engage with all levels of suppliers, including cooperatives, are ongoing to ensure diverse sourcing options. The current social value operating model, through the supplier Social Value Portal, includes climate action as a priority in its delivery plan criteria. This supports suppliers to focus on environmental sustainability in their social value submissions and to contribute to reducing the carbon footprint of their activities.</p> <p><u>Original response update:</u> In the reporting year 2023-24, the Jobs Theme saw the highest level of social value delivery, amounting</p>

KEY	Update Pending	Update in Item	Updated
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Cabinet Response Date	Item	Recommendation	Lead	Update
Page 76				to £1,361,223.22. This was primarily achieved through direct local employment, with 38.25 full-time equivalent (FTE) positions recorded under NT1 and its sub-measures. Additionally, there was a broader commitment to supporting local skills, particularly for young people, through 18 hours of school visits, 6 weeks of training opportunities, and 193.5 hours dedicated to supporting young people into work.
		3. That the Council investigates how it can undertake greater pre-engagement with SMEs and cooperatives to understand the issues faced in securing contracts		Through the procurement process the council continues to promote SME engagement and holds regular Buyer Days to address the challenges faced by SMEs and cooperatives in securing contracts.
		4. That the Council provides as part of its response to this recommendation a written outline of the next steps it intends to take develop and finesse its social value policy.		A full review of the procurement social value policy and operating model is scheduled to be undertaken during 2025/26 as part of the Commercial Transformation Programme. An annual review of the current policy is being undertaken in consultation with services, to consider if changes are required for 2025/26.
19-Mar-24	City Centre Accommodation Strategy	That the Council produces a vision document and plan, detailing its understanding of 'social value' and 'regeneration', its priorities for place shaping, the opportunities it sees, and the steps it will take to see those priorities realised throughout the implementation of the strategy as part of the report for the Cabinet's next decision on the sales of either County Hall or Speedwell House.	Vic Kurzeja	Updated during Place OSC on 05 February 2025
		That the Council has a clear understanding over potential future consolidation of current staff buildings into Speedwell House when determining its floorspace needs.		Updated during Place OSC on 05 February 2025

KEY	Update Pending	Update in Item	Updated
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Cabinet Response Date	Item	Recommendation	Lead	Update
<div>Page 77</div> <div>15 Oct-24</div>	Draft Customer Engagement Strategy	1. That the Council reviews within the Customer Experience Strategy - and more widely - its use of the word 'customers' as the preferred term to refer to those in receipt of collectively paid-for public services	Louise Tustian	The definition of 'customer' in the strategy has not been updated. The new head of customer experience is planning to do a refresh of the strategy in light of new data, digital and technology strategies and if required, the definition of customer can be discussed. However, the current, broad definition of customer has allowed the strategy to drive delivery of improvements in a number of areas.
		2. That the Council takes further measures to increase public understanding of its financial limitations		As per the above, the Customer Experience strategy has retained the page outlining the challenge of balancing an increased demand for services with a reducing budget. The budget simulator mentioned above was published again for 2025/26 and details on views can be shared once available.
		3. That the Council works more closely with district/city and town/parish councils to reduce for residents the impact of the complexity of multiple layers of local authority		<p>Since publishing, the Improving Customer Experience transformation programme have been in regular contact with colleagues in Oxford City Council who have a similar, citizen engagement strategy. This has led to interesting conversations around how the services could improve sharing of information and redirection of customers. However, more work is needed on working with other district and town councils to develop the same relationship.</p> <p>The automatic redirection of customers who require district or town council services is something on the workplan for wider roll out of the Zoom platform. We will continue to work closely with the policy</p>

KEY	Update Pending	Update in Item	Updated
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Cabinet Response Date	Item	Recommendation	Lead	Update
Page 78				team who produced the Oxfordshire Councils charter.
		4. That the Council identifies the steps it can reasonably take to extend improvements in service standards to subcontractors.		The above update still applies. The remit of the customer experience strategy has, so far, been focused on services that interact directly with customers and our internal customer processes. While it is accepted that there are improvements that can be made to the way the council works with subcontractors, this is something that will be supported by the new customer experience service rather than led by it.
		5. That the Council monitors the effectiveness of its complaints-handling as part of its Customer Experience Strategy.		The customer complaints and feedback process is a continual work of progress, as we continue to learn from the outcomes. A new case management system will be developed that will allow the team to better track and monitor performance of timeliness and quality of responses to complaints
		6. That the Council includes within its profiles of user groups those who are socioeconomically disadvantaged, and those for whom English is a second or other language.		As above. A wider piece of work between the customer experience service area, IT colleagues and the data service is looking to leverage the increased use of case management to build a holistic view of the customers who use council services. This will allow us to better focus engagement with the user groups mentioned above.
17-Dec-24	Community Wealth Building and Wider Social Value	That the Council works with the Local Government Association to open discussion with central government to clarify s.123 of the Local Government Act 1972.	Vic Kurzeja	Update due April
		That the Council consults on its draft update of the CAT policy with Locality Groups.		Update due April

Work Programme

Performance and Corporate Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Councillor Eddie Reeves, Chair | Tom Hudson, Scrutiny Manager
tom.hudson@oxfordshire.gov.uk

Topic	Relevant strategic priorities	Purpose	Type	Lead Presenters
4 April 2025				
Local Enterprise Partnership Integration	Work with local businesses and partners for environmental, economic and social benefit.	To ensure effective collaboration for maximising community benefits.	Overview and Scrutiny	
Extra Meeting Date TBC				
Government Response on Local Government Re-Organisation	Play our part in a vibrant and participatory local democracy.	To evaluate the effectiveness and implications of proposed changes on local governance, community services, and public accountability.	Overview and Scrutiny	
18 July 2025				
People and Culture Strategy Update and Deep Dive	Play our part in a vibrant and participatory local democracy, to tackle inequalities in Oxfordshire.	To ensure alignment with organisational goals and identify areas for improvement in employee engagement and cultural initiatives.	Overview and Scrutiny	Cherie Cuthbertson

Briefings/Other					
Date	Topic	Relevant strategic priorities	Description	Outcomes	Presenters

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: Commercial Strategy Progress Update

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

Date response requested:² 17 December 2024

Response to report: Commercial Strategy Update

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

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

Overview & Scrutiny Recommendation Response Pro forma

Response to recommendations:

Recommendation	Accepted, rejected or partially accepted	Proposed action (if different to that recommended) and indicative timescale (unless rejected)
<p>That the Council develops and shares with the committee on a regular basis a more detailed project plan for the Commercial strategy, outlining specific commercial opportunities in development, enabling activity, timelines, targeted savings or expected income generation, risk and RAG ratings.</p>	Accepted	<p>The need to develop commercial maturity at pace, including commercial thinking and the enabling systems and processes, is acknowledged. The initial phase of the Commercial Strategy is focussed on developing the operating model, and commercial thinking. Recruitment to the vacant Head of Commercial and Procurement role, who is responsible for the commercial strategy is progressing, with final stage interviews and then hopefully an appointment expected w/c 24 February.</p> <p>The Commercial Transformation Programme has two key projects, Data and Reporting and Contract Management that are timetabled to be concluded July 2025 and September 2025 respectively. These projects will transform the operating model and provide the foundation for improving the commercial maturity and identification of commercial opportunities.</p> <p>It is expected that during the next six months the Commercial Board will receive initial business cases for commercial opportunities. As these opportunities emerge and are developed through the business case process, these will be shared with the committee.</p>
<p>That the Council ensures that future iterations of the Strategy clarify how it intends to help the Council make money, how money will be used</p>	Accepted	<p>The Commercial Strategy will be reviewed and revised on completion of the Commercial Transformation Programme. The timeline for the drafting of a revised strategy is November 2025.</p>

Overview & Scrutiny Recommendation Response Pro forma

more efficiently, and how it will be used more effectively.		
That the Council gives consideration to seconding staff to exemplars of good commercial practice to the private sector.	Partial	The development of commercial skills and good practice for our staff is a key part of the Commercial Transformation Programme, in particular but not exclusively in relation to contract management. The development of skills will be through training, coaching and mentoring, and by establishing a community of practice. Should an opportunity arise to work with a partner or trusted supplier that could support with identified development needs it would be given due consideration.
That the Council invests in greater capacity to undertake strategic and mid-contract management of contracts.	Accepted	Developing the contract management framework and the resources for contract management is one of the key projects being undertaken as part of the Commercial Transformation Programme. The outcome of that project will ensure contract management requirements are clearly defined, performance monitored and reported, with contract managers identified and trained. Investment into resourcing strategic contract management has also been agreed as part of the 2025/26 budget.
That the Council includes representatives of Adult Social Care and Children's Social Care on its Commercial Board	Rejected	The governance including the membership of the Commercial Board is currently under review.

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Overview & Scrutiny Recommendation Response Pro forma

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Issue: Community Asset Transfer Policy and Leases to VCS Organisations

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

Date response requested:² 17 December 2024

Response to report:

Enter text here.

Response to recommendations:

Recommendation	Accepted, rejected or partially accepted	Proposed action (if different to that recommended) and indicative timescale (unless rejected)
That the Council ensures that local members are involved with next-step discussions with	Accepted	Local members will be advised of all interest received in Oxfordshire CC owned vacant properties from the VCS sector

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

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

Overview & Scrutiny Recommendation Response Pro forma

VCS groups and the social value provided by these organisations be considered as part of the discussions.		
That the Council improves communications around empty properties, including: i) sharing with members a clear statement of the aspiration and timeline for disposing of properties listed for disposal, ii) a quarterly report/update summarising recent events and developments with Council land/property ensuring all parties are kept up to date, and iii) regular updates for those residents neighbouring vacant Council properties to keep them up to date with ongoing developments and plans.	Accepted	<p>A quarterly schedule of vacant property owned by Oxfordshire CC will be circulated to members stating the aspiration and proposed future use, with an indicative timescale for disposal.</p> <p>Immediate neighbours and stakeholders will also continue to be updated of the progress of each disposal, where feasible.</p>
That the Council develops processes for sharing with both members and sister organisations in the county, i) lease requests by VCS organisations, ii) land available for VCS leases, and iii) any planned leases.	Accepted	<p>When received lease requests will be shared with members, as well as with sister organisations and contacts within the One Public Estate network.</p> <p>Property and land available for VCS leases will be included in the quarterly member reports, as will proposed leases.</p>

Overview & Scrutiny Recommendation Response Pro forma

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Issue: Budget Scrutiny

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

Date response requested: 17 January 2025

Response to report:

Recommendations from Performance and Corporate Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 17 January 2025

Response to recommendations:

Recommendation	Accepted, rejected or partially accepted	Proposed action (if different to that recommended) and indicative timescale (unless rejected)
That the increases for school meals are stepped over a longer period	Rejected	Whilst it is recognised that the proposed increase in the price of a meal charged to schools is higher than the current rate of

Overview & Scrutiny Recommendation Response Pro forma

		inflation, previous increases have not kept pace with inflation. For example, food price increases hit a peak of 19.2% in March 2023. The charge of £2.90 also reflects the funding received by schools for the price of a meal. It is for the schools to determine how much they charge for the meal.
That the Council budget report provides members with i) the impacts of school meal price rises for parents with two children getting school meals every day over a year (assuming that the full increase in costs are passed on by schools), and ii) and the anticipated savings to the Council made by increasing school meal prices	Partially Accepted	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. A parent paying for two school meals every day would need to pay an additional £66.50, per child, per year, for the full academic year, so a total of £133. The cost rising from £484.50 per year @ £2.55 per meal to £551.00 @ £2.90 per meal, for each child. ii. Increasing the school meal price is estimated to increase income by £0.120m in 2025/26. The additional income will offset costs being incurred by the service.
That the Council budget report includes a benchmark figure for the cost-avoidance accruing from the Council's proposed flood-prevention investment	Accepted	<p>The Environment Agency has stated that every £1 spent improving protection from flooding, we avoid around £5 of property damages. While for more local community benefits this it is difficult to bench mark indirect and intangible costs but these would include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduction in costs associated with temporary accommodation – as recovery is quicker and repair is reduced • Less highway and local flooding where measures remove flooding getting onto a highway • Less insurance claims from small scale flooding and reduction in damage to property

Overview & Scrutiny Recommendation Response Pro forma

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reduction in enquiries to the County and others where communities are more resilient and can 'self-help'
That the Council budget report provides members with the financial impact to the Council of increasing DIY waste charges by 4.2%	Partially Accepted	<p>The financial impact of increasing the DIY charges by 4.2% is £4-5k pa depending upon the number of customers. The increase of 4.2% was reached through contractual mechanisms and then rounded for simple mental calculations whilst on the Household Waste Recycling Centres.</p> <p>Charges have been in place at the HWRCs for almost 20 years and it is not anticipated that this would lead to an increase in fly tipping as customers can take some waste without any charge and because the majority of residents are law abiding citizens who would not fly tip. It is also worth noting that it is a lower cost than our neighbouring authorities.</p>
That the Council makes clear the framework through which projects will be prioritised for active travel spending, including consideration of the impact on numbers of people walking and cycling as well as the additional benefits of schemes being complementary as part of a network.	Partially Accepted	<p>The Council is committed to prioritising Active Travel. Funding is a key consideration, and as much of the funding available to the Council is location specific, eg from S106 sources, that can determine what is spent and where.</p> <p>It is important to balance a number of key elements, namely encouraging numbers of users, eliminating particular blackspots, building a coherent network and ensuring that all parts of the county benefit from investment.</p> <p>There has been huge progress in ensuring that as many places as possible have a current Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) and that there is an outline map of connections between city, towns and villages (the Strategic Active</p>

Overview & Scrutiny Recommendation Response Pro forma

		travel Network) so that when funding becomes available it can be used productively.
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