



Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for Public Health, Inequalities & Community Safety

Tuesday, 4 March 2025 at 1.00 pm

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

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

Items for Decision

The items for decision under individual Cabinet Members' delegated powers are listed overleaf, with indicative timings, and the related reports are attached. Decisions taken will become effective at the end of the working day on 11 March 2025 unless called in by that date for review by the appropriate Scrutiny Committee.

Copies of the reports are circulated (by e-mail) to all members of the County Council.

These proceedings are open to the public

Martin Reeves
Chief Executive

February 2025

Committee Officer: **Democratic Services Team**
committeesdemocraticservices@oxfordshire.gov.uk

Note: Date of next meeting: 8 April 2025

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, but please give as much notice as possible before the meeting.

Items for Decision

1. Declarations of Interest

See guidance below.

2. Questions from County Councillors

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

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

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

3. 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.

Requests to speak must be submitted by no later than 9am four working days before the meeting. Requests to speak should be sent to committeesdemocraticservices@oxfordshire.gov.uk .

If you are speaking 'virtually', you may submit a written statement of your presentation to ensure that if the technology fails, then your views can still be taken into account. A written copy of your statement can be provided no later than 9 am 2 working days before the meeting. Written submissions should be no longer than 1 A4 sheet.

4. Minutes of the Previous Meeting (Pages 1 - 4)

The Cabinet Member is asked to approve the minutes of the previous meeting as an accurate record of proceedings.

5. Approval of Contract Extension to Housing Single Point of Contact Contract - Better Housing, Better Health (Pages 5 - 12)

Cabinet Member: Public Health, Inequalities and Community Safety

Forward Plan Ref: 2025/008

Contact: Kate Eveleigh, Public Health Principal (Kate.Eveleigh@oxfordshire.gov.uk)

Report by Director of Public Health and Communities (**CMDPHICS**).

The Cabinet Member is RECOMMENDED to:

- a) Authorise the extension of the Better Housing Better Health contract for two years from 28 October 2025 to 28 October 2027.**

Councillors declaring interests

General duty

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

What is a disclosable pecuniary interest?

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

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

Declaring an interest

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

Members' Code of Conduct and public perception

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

Members Code – Other registrable interests

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

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

Other registrable interests include:

- a) Any unpaid directorships

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

Members Code – Non-registrable interests

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

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

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

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

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

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

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DELEGATED DECISIONS BY CABINET MEMBER FOR PUBLIC HEALTH, INEQUALITIES & COMMUNITY SAFETY

MINUTES of the meeting held on Tuesday, 4 February 2025 commencing at 1.00 pm and finishing at 1.12pm

Present:

Voting Members: Councillor Dr Nathan Ley – in the Chair

Officers: Jack Nicholson, Democratic Services
Kate Eveleigh, Public Health and Communities
David Munday, Public Health and Communities

The Scrutiny Committee considered the matters, reports and recommendations contained or referred to in the agenda for the meeting [, together with a schedule of addenda tabled at the meeting/the following additional documents:] and agreed as set out below. Copies of the agenda and reports [agenda, reports and schedule/additional documents] are attached to the signed Minutes.

22/25 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

(Agenda No. 1)

There were no declarations of interest.

23/25 QUESTIONS FROM COUNTY COUNCILLORS

(Agenda No. 2)

There were no questions from County Councillors.

24/25 PETITIONS AND PUBLIC ADDRESS

(Agenda No. 3)

There were no petitions and public address.

25/25 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

(Agenda No. 4)

The minutes of the meeting held on 12 November 2024 were approved as an accurate record of proceedings.

26/25 APPROVAL OF CHANGES TO OXFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL AIR QUALITY STRATEGY ROUTE MAP ACTIONS

(Agenda No. 5)

The Chair said his understanding was that the report provided an overview of the update to the Air Quality Route Map first adopted in June 2023. The aim at that time was to ensure that it would be a live document subject to annual review.

Officers said that in the report, actions had been removed if completed, adjusted if they required additional clarity or greater ambition, or added. Three actions were added as outlined in paragraph 16 of the report.

Officers said that the following action had been reinstated:

Undertake Network management as part of an integrated approach to promote traffic flow and reduce idling traffic particularly in locations where there are groups vulnerable to poor air quality.

It was reworded:

Scope the options for Network management as part of an integrated approach to promote traffic flow and reduce idling traffic particularly in locations where there are groups vulnerable to poor air quality.

They said that work was already underway on the development of the workplace parking levy, Low Traffic Neighbourhoods (LTNs), and traffic filters to reduce traffic at certain times, manage congestion, and improve air quality.

The Chair approved the recommendations, subject to the following amendments to the list of actions in the Route Map because he felt it was important to get some details on public record.

1. The reinstatement of this action:

Deliver parking controls, traffic reduction schemes and congestion management measures to reduce private car use and improve local air quality.

2. Revision of five actions as follows:

a. Work to reduce air pollution from waste disposal including development of the circular economy strategy.

Removed as complete as a programme of actions to reduce air pollution included in waste disposal activities and air quality expertise involved in development of the County Councils Circular Economy strategy.

b. Work with local partners to deliver the Oxfordshire Energy Strategy and supporting projects.

Removed as complete as the council has recruited to a new post to support addressing energy challenges. Partners continue to work on delivery of the Oxfordshire Energy Strategy.

c. Ensure air quality impacts are included as a consideration in county council planning consultation responses including in Health Impact Assessments of strategic developments and major infrastructure

schemes, particularly where this is related to county council functions such as transport.

An audit of planning application responses by the Public Health service was carried out in the summer of 2024 and air quality impacts were considered so this action removed as complete as ongoing.

- d. Ensure air quality is included as a potential health impact when conducting HIAs on major transport schemes or plans and any adverse impacts on local air quality are effectively mitigated.**

Removed as complete as the HIA guidance available on Oxfordshire Healthy Place Shaping [webpages](#) which includes air quality as a potential health impact.

- e. Work with our Air Quality Partners to understand current monitoring in Oxfordshire and develop a joined up, integrated approach to local air quality monitoring.**

Removed as complete as University of Birmingham completed a review of air quality monitors and monitoring sites are included on the [Oxonair website](#)

The Chair thanked officers for their contributions to the meeting.

RESOLVED to:

- a) agree the updated actions for 2025 in the Air Quality Route Map developed under the Oxfordshire County Council Air Quality Strategy 2023-2027; and**
- b) agree that annual updates to the actions in the Route Map is delegated to the Director of Public Health and Communities in consultation with the Director of Environment and Highways in the future.**

..... in the Chair

Date of signing 2025

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Delegated Decision by the Cabinet Member for Public Health, Inequalities and Community Safety

4 March 2025

Approval of Contract Extension to Housing Single Point of Contact Contract - Better Housing, Better Health

Report by the Director of Public Health and Communities

RECOMMENDATION

The Cabinet Member is RECOMMENDED to

- a) Authorise the extension of the Better Housing Better Health contract for two years from 28 October 2025 to 28 October 2027.

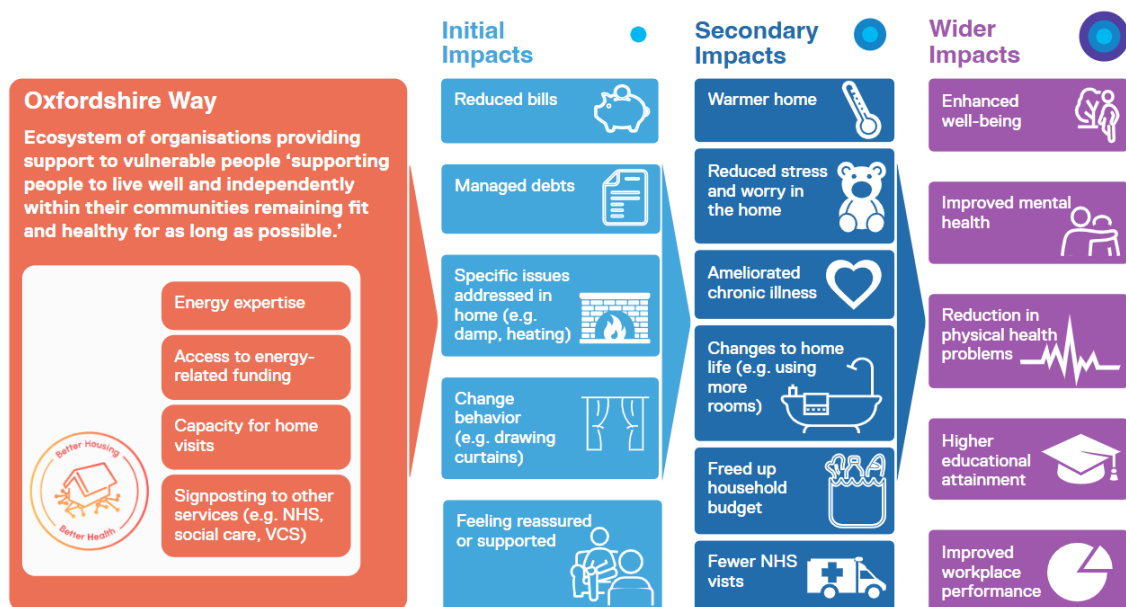
Executive Summary

1. The current contract for the Housing and Health Single Point of Contact (HHSPoC), known as Better Housing Better Health (BHBH) started on the 29th October 2023 and ends on 28th October 2025 and it has an option to extend for an additional maximum of two years to 28th October 2027.
2. The contract is delivering as required and the provider National Energy Foundation is performing satisfactorily.
3. The service continues to deliver against the County Councils strategic priorities
 - a) Put action to address the climate emergency at the heart of our work.
 - b) Tackle inequalities in Oxfordshire.
 - c) Prioritise the health and wellbeing of residents.
4. In addition to supporting residents experiencing fuel poverty, the service also contributes to the aims of Adult Social Care supporting residents to stay independent at home for longer and the Climate Actions team retrofit team to deliver the Home Upgrade Grant and other similar schemes.
5. The minimum contract value is £130,000 a year. This provides 900 telephone “warm and well” assessments and 250 home visits. The total minimum value would be £260,000 for a 24 month extension.
6. The total maximum value per year (which includes the £130,000 and the value of additional services available as options to the Council) is £350,000. The total maximum value would be £700,000 for a 24 month extension.

7. The additional services could include additional telephone assessments and home visits, funds to cover the cost of small energy efficiency measures, such as fuel vouchers, or energy saving equipment, eg slow cookers. Other services may include administration costs associate with distributing funds to residents, developing bids, staff time for attending events as well as administering building works. The Council is able to specify the provider delivers these additional services through a contractual mechanism called an Options Uptake.
8. Additional funds placed with the provider through this Options Uptake mechanism of the contract in the last two years have totalled £202,710. This provided for additional home visits, telephone assessments and administration of small energy efficiency measures (£84,710) and £118,000 of small measures, between November 2023 and January 2025.
9. The funding for the minimum contract value is comprised of financial contributions from Oxford City Council, Cherwell District Council, South Oxfordshire District Council, Vale of the White Horse District Council and West Oxfordshire District Council. Additional funds have come from the County Councils Cost of Living budgets and allocations from the Household Support Fund. There is sufficient budget available and committed to service the minimum cost of the contract extension. The provision of any additional services in the contract extension period will be contingent on additional funding sources being made available.

Background

10. The aim of the service is to support residents with health conditions, low income, disabilities, amongst other risk characteristics to living in cold, damp and otherwise unsafe homes, by providing access to advice, support, financial aid and equipment. It also supports the wider system in the Oxfordshire Way to provide expertise on fuel poverty. The following Theory of Change was produced as part of an evaluation of the service to identify the range of impacts.



11. National Institute of Clinical Excellence (NICE) Guidance¹ recommends a tailored service to provide housing, specifically fuel poverty and energy efficiency, advice and support. The HHSPoC service provides advice over the phone, as well as options to provide home visits and other services. The UKHSA Adverse Weather Planning Guidance² identifies the need for such a service.
12. The current Contract for the provision of Housing and Health Single Point of Contact is provided by National Energy Foundation a charity registered with liability.
13. The Contract Commencement date was on 29th October 2023 and was for a fixed period of two years, with an option to extend for up to a further two years. Notice must be given 6 months before the end of the contract as to whether the service is to be extended or not.
14. The minimum value of the contract is £130,000 per year, to provide telephone advice, home visits and associated follow up case management. District and City Councils each contribute £10,000 a year for telephone support, with the County Council funding the balance of £80,000. The Public Health grant is liable for this £80,000, made up of £10,000/year towards the telephone support and £70,000/year for home visits.
15. Agreement has been secured by all the Oxfordshire District and City Councils to contribute to a further one year's funding at £10,000 each. The existing Memorandum of Understanding will be updated with the new timeframe and financial commitment from partners.
16. The contract has an Options Uptake mechanism which allows for additional services to be provided if additional funding becomes available. The total

¹ <https://shap.uk.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/nice-guidance-ng6.pdf>

² [Adverse Weather and Health Plan - GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/674442/Adverse-Weather-and-Health-Plan.pdf)

additional funding that can be processed through this contract across the full four years is £880,000, which is comprised of the original 2 year term, plus the optional 2 year extension.

Key Issues

Effectiveness of Current Service

17. In 2023/24, the core contract provided 900 telephone assessments, and 226 home visits were completed, which includes additional case work where appropriate. Demand for telephone support is high, particularly during colder months, with up to 200 assessments per month in winter compared to 70 in summer. The cost-of-living crisis in winter 2022/23 increased demand significantly.
18. A qualitative evaluation by the University of Salford³ highlights the value of home visits in empowering residents and improving mental health. Stakeholders view the service as proactive and knowledgeable about funding and support.
19. Research by the Oxfordshire Policy Lab data showed home visits lead to more long-term interventions for vulnerable residents, providing financial savings despite higher upfront costs. A proposed health economic evaluation will assess the service's financial impact.
20. The service effectively reaches target groups, with 45% of supported residents receiving at least one benefit and 43% being social housing tenants. Target groups include those who are over 65 years of age, those under 5 years old, those with a long term health condition and those on means tested benefits.
21. Over the period, 2,912 interventions were made, including debt advice referrals and energy efficiency grants totalling approximately £281,623.80. The estimated carbon savings were 696,828 kg.
22. The minimum number of home visits were completed, however additional capacity for home visits was not achieved. A review was carried out to understand what could have been done differently. One key finding was understanding the ratio of telephone assessments to generate the commissioned number of home visits.

³ <https://salford-repository.worktribe.com/output/2674439/better-housing-better-health-a-qualitative-study-of-energy-advice-and-support-in-oxfordshire>

23. Safeguarding, governance, continuity, and safety have had no issues, and the provider is responsive to feedback. Contract reports are of good quality, and relevant staff attend meetings. Partnerships with 54 organizations, including top referrers like Oxfordshire County Council and Citizens Advice, remain strong.

24. Feedback from residents and stakeholders has been positive, with no formal complaints. A sample of people who had used the service were asked if they would recommend BHBH to a friend or family member, 98% responded that they would be happy to. Of those asked about any improvement in comfort and wellbeing 52% reported an increase.

25. The original procurement process two years ago involved a market testing phase which yielded only one bid, by the now incumbent provider, NEF. The provider market has been monitored since then, including sharing information with other services who procure services from a similar market. The provider market has not changed to such an extent to justify a re-procurement to allow other providers to bid for a new contract.

26. In conclusion, the contract is

- meeting a need to residents at risk of fuel poverty,
- performing satisfactorily
- supported by current funders as they have agreed to fund it for a further period and are satisfied with it.
- working in partnership with a range of stakeholders, within and external to the County Council
- delivers on many shared priorities across health, social care, climate change and equality.

Budgetary implications

27. There is funding within the existing Public Health budget, sourced from the Public Health Grant.

28. There is a well-established history of partnership working alongside a Memorandum of Understanding to jointly fund the service between County and City and District Councils

29. There is a clause in the contract which allows the contract to be terminated in the event of a reduction of funding.

Comments checked by:

Emma Percival, Assistant Finance Business Partner
(emma.percival@oxfordshire.gov.uk)

Equalities implications

30. The HHSPoC is a service which is targeted at those known to be most likely to experience fuel poverty. This approach reduces the widening of health inequalities. Groups most likely to experience fuel poverty are single households, such as care leavers, those with disabilities or long-term health conditions. People from Black, Asian and other Ethnic Minorities are also more likely to experience fuel poverty.
31. The original contract had an Equalities Impact Assessment completed for it which has been reviewed and requires no update. Equalities Impact Assessment.

Legal implications

32. The Council has the statutory power to purchase and provide the services under the contract to be extended under the Health and Social Care Act 2012.
33. The contract as originally procured contains a unilateral right for the Council to extend the contract as proposed in this report. Such extension is therefore compliant with procurement legislation and does not pose any legal risk.

Comments checked by:

Jonathan Pool, Solicitor, jonathan.pool@oxfordshire.gov.uk

Sustainability implications

34. The involves work to reduce energy usage which contributes to the reduction of carbon dioxide emissions from domestic heating there are no amendments to the overall strategy.
35. The HHSPoC has links to the County Council's Climate Action Framework as reducing energy usage reduces emissions of carbon dioxide from domestic heating, from gas central heating, as well as supporting the uptake of heat pumps and solar panels. For further information about possible impacts of the service on sustainability please see the BHBH Climate Impact Assessment.

Risk Management

Through the original Business Case and on further review the contract risks are identified as follows.

Risk Identified	Risk Level	Mitigation Strategy
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Market: The provider market shrinks and competitiveness reduces.	High	Extending the contract, to ensure the a provider with suitable expertise and capacity is available to continue.
Level of Demand Demand for housing visits lower than contracted for	High	Ensure targeted marketing and processes raise awareness and trust in the service for both referrers and residents.
Financial Envelope/demand: Inflationary costs could be significant with a budget this size.	Med	Development and maintenance of transparent and positive relationship with the provider to identify and negotiate inflation costs early. The contract has terms to allow for the termination of the contract with six months notice.

Communications

36. The service was developed in light of a consultation in January 2023⁴ and an evaluation by the University of Salford, involving those who use the service as residents, and also those partners, such as the VSCE sector who make referrals to it.
37. Key stakeholders such as the Oxfordshire District and City Councils and other County services who fund or who work with the provider were consulted on the proposal to extend the contract.
38. The contract extension has not been subject to public consultation however, contract reports include the surveying of residents to confirm likelihood of recommending to friends and family and case studies are gathered to ensure the service is achieving overall outcomes.
39. The Portfolio Holder has been briefed on the general performance of the contract and need for contract extension in advance.

Ansaf Azhar, Director of Public Health and Communities

**Contact Officer: Kate Eveleigh, Public Health Principal,
Public Health and Communities**
(kate.eveleigh@oxfordshire.gov.uk)

February 2025

⁴ [Helping people stay warm and healthy in their homes | Let's Talk Oxfordshire](#)

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