To: Members of the Cabinet

Notice of a Meeting of the Cabinet

Tuesday, 17 June 2025 at 2.00 pm

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

If you wish to view proceedings online, please click on this Live Stream Link.

Martin Reeves
Chief Executive   June 2025

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

Membership

Councillors

Liz Leffman	Leader of the Council
Neil Fawcett	Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Resources
Tim Bearder	Cabinet Member for Adults
Andrew Gant	Cabinet Member for Transport Management
Sean Gaul	Cabinet Member for Children and Young People
Kate Gregory	Cabinet Member for Public Health and Inequalities
Jenny Hannaby	Cabinet Member for Community Wellbeing and Safety
Ben Higgins	Cabinet Member for Future Economy and Innovation
Dan Levy	Cabinet Member for Finance, Property and Transformation
Judy Roberts	Cabinet Member for Place, Environment and Climate Action

The Agenda is attached. Decisions taken at the meeting will become effective at the end of the working day on unless called in by that date for review by the appropriate Scrutiny Committee. Copies of this Notice, Agenda and supporting papers are circulated to all Members of the County Council.

Date of next meeting: 15 July 2025

County Hall, New Road, Oxford, OX1 1ND
www.oxfordshire.gov.uk Media Enquiries 01865 323870

AGENDA

1. Apologies for Absence

2. Declarations of Interest

- guidance note below

3. Minutes (Pages 1 - 8)

To approve the minutes of the meetings held on 20 March and 22 April 2025 and to receive information arising from them.

4. Questions from County Councillors

Any county councillor may, by giving notice to the Proper Officer by 9 am three working days before the meeting, ask a question on an item on the agenda.

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.

5. Petitions and Public Address

Members of the public who wish to speak on an item on the agenda at this meeting, or present a petition, can attend the meeting in person or 'virtually' through an online connection.

Requests to present a petition must be submitted no later than 9am ten working days before the meeting.

Requests to speak must be submitted no later than 9am three working days before the meeting.

Requests should be submitted 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 9am on the day of the meeting. Written submissions should be no longer than 1 A4 sheet.

6. Appointments 2025-26 (Pages 9 - 20)

Cabinet Member: Leader
Forward Plan Ref: 2025/030
Contact: Chris Reynolds, Senior Democratic Services Officer,
chris.reynolds@oxfordshire.gov.uk

Report by Director of Law and Governance and Monitoring Officer

The Annex provided in the agenda pack contains the list of the bodies to which appointments will be made. The nominations will be circulated in advance of the meeting.

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

7. Reports from Scrutiny Committees (Pages 21 - 60)

Cabinet will receive the following Scrutiny reports:-

Education and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee reports on:-
   a) Report of the Virtual School – to follow
   b) Update of Children's Homes – to follow
   c) Home to School Transport Policy – to follow if the Committee makes recommendations on Friday

Performance and Corporate Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee reports on:-
   d) Local Enterprise Partnership Integration – to follow
   e) Business Management and Monitoring Report – to follow

Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee reports on:-
   f) Report of the Transport Working Group - attached
   g) s.106 Improvement Project - attached
   h) Rail Strategy – to follow

8. Home to School Transport & Post 16 Travel Policy 2025-26 (Pages 61 - 172)

Cabinet Member: Children and Young People
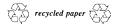*Forward Plan Ref:* 2025/076
Contact: Stephen Good, Home to School Transport Programme Manager
Stephen.good@oxfordshire,gov.uk

Report by Director of Children's Services

The existing Home to School Transport Policies were last consulted upon in 2014 (Compulsory School Age) and 2018 (Post 16). DfE Guidance was last updated in 2019 for Post 16 Travel and in 2023 and 2024 for Compulsory School Age.

Local authorities should keep their school travel policy under regular review to ensure it continues to meet local needs and comply with statutory requirements. Due to the

significant time that had passed since the previous consultations, a review of the policies was undertaken in 2024. The purpose of the review was to ensure alignment with the Council's statutory obligations and identify existing areas of discretionary provision.

The Cabinet is RECOMMENDED TO

a) **ENDORSE the recommendations following analysis of the public consultation feedback in relation to the Home to School Travel and Transport Policy 2025/26 onwards for Reception to Year 11.**

b) **AGREE to the adoption of the proposed Post 16 Transport Policy Statement Academic Year 2026/27, which reflects the consultation analysis recommendations to not introduce a contribution charge for those eligible for support under this policy.**

9. Traffic Filter Trial Delay - Mitigation Proposals (Pages 173 - 190)

Cabinet Member: Transport Management
Forward Plan Ref: 2025/113
Contact: Aron Wisdom, Programme Lead – Central
Aron.wisdom@oxfordshire.gov.uk

Report by Director of Environment and Highways

Network Rail's ongoing closure of Botley Road at Oxford station means Cabinet's November 2022 decision to introduce six trial traffic filters in Oxford cannot be implemented until at least August 2026.

Officers have reviewed a range of potential options to mitigate this situation, and the recommended options to pursue (subject to consultation and development) have been identified. This report outlines the background, the need for intervention, and the options considered.

Cabinet is RECOMMENDED to

a) **Authorise officers to carry out a public consultation on a proposal to temporarily implement a congestion charging scheme using the systems and infrastructure developed for the traffic filter trial, to mitigate the impact of the delay of the traffic filter trial while Botley Road remains closed.**

b) **Authorise officers to develop the minor schemes as outlined in paragraph 13 (e) to (i)**

c) **Request officers to develop an 'income spending strategy' which will focus the net surplus income on reducing the costs of bus travel, including potential park and ride incentives, in accordance with relevant legislation.**

10. HR & Cultural Change - Quarterly Employee Data Report - Quarter 4 2024-25 (Pages 191 - 216)

Cabinet Member: Cabinet Member for Resources and Deputy Leader

Forward Plan Ref: 2025/042
Contact: Cherie Cuthbertson, Director of HR and Cultural Change
Cherie.cuthbertson@oxfordshire.gov.uk

Report by Executive Director of Resources and Section 151 Officer

This report provides an overview of the progress towards delivering the Our People and Culture Strategy (as measured by the achievement of its key performance indicators) and summarises the main employee-related trends for Q4 2024/25.

Cabinet is RECOMMENDED to note the report.

11. Business Management & Monitoring Report - Annual Report, Provisional Revenue Outturn 2024/25 (Pages 217 - 350)

Cabinet Member: Finance, Property and Transformation
Forward Plan Ref: 2025/098
Contact: Kathy Wilcox, Head of Corporate Finance
Kathy.wilcox@oxfordshire.gov.uk

Report by Executive Director of Finance and Section 151 Officer

This report presents the year-end position for 2024/25 performance, risk, and finance position for the council.

The Cabinet is RECOMMENDED to:

a) **Note the report and annexes including the council's Annual Report for 2024/25 (Annex D).**
b) **Note the summary of the provisional year-end financial position for 2024/25 along with the year-end position on general balances and earmarked reserves (Annex B).**
c) **Approve the following proposals relating to reserves and the use of general balances:**

   i. **Add the £1.8m underspend against budgeted funding for investments in 2024/25 to the Budget Priorities reserve for use in 2025/26 (Annex B Paragraph 12).**
   ii. **Agree that the £1.2m 2024/25 On-Street Parking Account surplus, that has not yet been applied to fund eligible expenditure in accordance with Section 55(4) of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984, is carried forward to 2025/26 as set out in Annex B-3c (Annex B Paragraph 64).**
   iii. **Approve the use of one - off funding from General Balances to support Innovate Oxfordshire (£0.5m) and the Business and Intellectual Property Centre (£0.1m) (Annex B Paragraph 14).**

12. Capital Outturn Report 2024-25 (Pages 351 - 376)

Cabinet Member: Finance, Property and Transformation
Forward Plan Ref: 2025/079
Contact: Natalie Crawford, Capital Programme Manager

Natalie.crawford@oxfordshire.gov.uk

Report by Executive Director of Resources and Section 151 Officer

The ten-year Capital Programme sets out the agreed capital investment to deliver the priorities identified in the council's Capital and Investment Strategy. This report updates on the performance against the programme shown in the latest monitoring report for 2024/25 and also compares back to the capital programme agreed by Council in February 2024. Figures shown reflect those to be included in the Council's Statement of Accounts for 2024/25.

The Cabinet is RECOMMENDED to:

a) **note the performance against the capital programme for 2024/25 as set out in the report.**

b) **note the Capital Programme Provisional Outturn Summary for 2024/25 as set out in:**

Annex 1a: Strategy Programmes Expenditure
Annex 1b: Capital Financing
Annex 1c: Strategy / Programme Level Reporting during the year

13. Captial Programme Approvals - June 2025 (Pages 377 - 380)

Cabinet Member: Finance, Property and Transformation
Forward Plan Ref: 2025/124
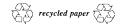*Contact:* Natalie Crawford, Capital Programme Manager,
natalie.crawford@oxfordshire.gov.uk

Report by Executive Director of Resources and Section 151 Officer

The Capital Programme was approved by Council in February 2025 and will be updated during the year through the capital programme and monitoring reports. This report sets out change requests requiring Cabinet approval that will be incorporated into the agreed programme and included in the next update to the Capital Programme in July 2025.

The Cabinet is RECOMMENDED to:

a) **to approve the inclusion of a programme of work into the capital programme with an indicative budget of £5.906m to be funded from the Traffic Congestion Improvement Fund (TCIF), agreed through Council in February 2024.**

b) **to note the proposed schemes to be delivered under the TCIF programme of work.**

c) **approve a budget increase of £1.800m for the Access to Witney Scheme from £25.025m to £26.825m to be funded by incorporating £1.800m from the Traffic Congestion Improvement Fund.**

d) **approve the inclusion of the Benson Lane Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) into the capital programme, with an indicative budget of £1.232m, to be funded by a combination of developer contributions, Transport Provision**

funding, BSIP programme funds and the Traffic Congestion Improvement Fund.

14. Forward Plan and Future Business (Pages 381 - 388)

Cabinet Member: All
Contact Officer: Chris Reynolds, Senior Democratic Services Officer,
chris.reynolds@oxfordshire.gov.uk

The Cabinet Procedure Rules provide that the business of each meeting at the Cabinet is to include "updating of the Forward Plan and proposals for business to be conducted at the following meeting". Items from the Forward Plan for the immediately forthcoming meetings of the Cabinet appear in the Schedule at **CA13.** This includes any updated information relating to the business for those meetings that has already been identified for inclusion in the next Forward Plan update.
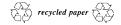
The Schedule is for noting, but Cabinet Members may also wish to take this opportunity to identify any further changes they would wish to be incorporated in the next Forward Plan update.

The Cabinet is RECOMMENDED to note the items currently identified for forthcoming meetings.

15. For information only: Cabinet responses to Scrutiny Reports (Pages 389 - 394)

There are two Cabinet responses provided:

- Network management (Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee)

- Local Area Partnership SEND Update (Education and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee)

Councillors declaring interests

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

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

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

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

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

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

Wellbeing can be described as a condition of contentedness, healthiness and happiness; anything that could be said to affect a person's quality of life, either positively or negatively, is likely to affect their wellbeing.
Other registrable interests include:
   a) Any unpaid directorships

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

Members Code – Non-registrable interests

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

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

In order to determine whether you can remain in the meeting after disclosing your interest the following test should be applied:
Where a matter affects the financial interest or well-being:
a) to a greater extent than it affects the financial interests of the majority of inhabitants of the ward affected by the decision and;
b) a reasonable member of the public knowing all the facts would believe that it would affect your view of the wider public interest.

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

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CABINET

MINUTES of the meeting held on Thursday, 20 March 2025 commencing at 2.00 pm and finishing at 3.05pm

Present:

Voting Members: Councillor Liz Leffman – in the Chair
Councillor Dr Pete Sudbury (Deputy Chair)
Councillor Tim Bearder
Councillor John Howson
Councillor Dan Levy
Councillor Judy Roberts

Other Members in Attendance: Councillor David Bartholomew

Officers:

Whole of meeting   Martin Reeves (Chief Executive) Lorna Baxter (Executive Director of Resources & Section 151 Officer), Stephen Chandler (Executive Director of People, Transformation and Performance), Kim Sawyer (Head of Legal and Governance), Helen Mitchell (Head of Public Affairs and Strategy), Chris Reynolds (Senior Democratic Services Officer)

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

47/25 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE
(Agenda Item. 1)

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Neil Fawcett, Andrew Gant, Kate Gregory and Dr Nathan Ley.

48/25 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST
(Agenda Item. 2)

There were none.

49/25 PETITIONS AND PUBLIC ADDRESS
(Agenda Item. 3)

4 Initial Response to Government: Statutory invitation for Local Government Reorganisation and Devolution

Cllr Bethia Thomas – Leader, Vale of White Horse District Council

Cllr Andy Graham – Leader, West Oxfordshire District Council

Cllr Susan Brown – Leader, Oxford City Council

Cllr Ian Middleton

50/25 INITIAL RESPONSE TO GOVERNMENT: STATUTORY INVITATION FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT REORGANISATION AND DEVOLUTION
(Agenda Item. 4)

Cabinet had before it a report on interim proposals for Local Government reorganisation in response to a statutory invitation by the Government following publication of the Devolution White Paper on 16 December 2024. Since the receipt of the statutory invitation, all Councils across Oxfordshire had been working together on initial options accompanied by a single interim plan. The plan, and the three proposals, along with the statutory invitation were included in the report.

Cabinet were addressed by a number of speakers regarding the report and recommendations.

Councillor Bethia Thomas, Leader of Vale of White Horse District Council, expressed appreciation for the constructive engagement by her authority with Oxfordshire County Council on local government reorganisation and devolution. She referred to the Government's views of the necessity for a mayoral strategic authority to enable authorities to access the maximum benefits from devolution and supported recommendation 4 in the Chief Executive's report.

Councillor Andy Graham, Leader of West Oxfordshire District Council referred to his authority's their unanimous decision to support a two-unitary option for local government reorganisation. He emphasised the need to protect local services and maintain a local voice for residents. He stressed that residents needed to come first in any discussions around future options for local government.

Councillor Graham acknowledged the importance of financial sustainability but emphasised that councils should serve residents and enhance communities.

Councillor Susan Brown, Leader of Oxford City Council supported the creation of three strong unitary authorities in Oxfordshire, emphasising place-based thinking and the importance of maintaining a strong city and workable unitaries to the north and south of the city. She referenced the statement by the Minister of State for Local Government and English Devolution about the range of possible sizes for unitary authorities and the 500K number being an average population, not a minimum.

Councillor Brown acknowledged that there was a lot more work to be done on the proposals and looked forward to working together with other councils on the detailed proposals.

Councillor Ian Middleton, Leader of the Green Party Group at Oxfordshire County Council, expressed opposition to a single unitary authority, arguing that it would centralise decision-making and reduce local accountability. He supported the two-unitary model as it would maintain some degree of autonomy and recognise the character and needs of different areas. He emphasised that Oxfordshire was a diverse county with diverse local needs, which a single unitary authority might not address effectively.

Councillor Liz Leffman, Leader of the Council presented the report. She stated that the three proposals presented for restructuring: a single unitary authority, two unitary authorities including parts of West Berkshire, and three units which would include Greater Oxford and parts of Berkshire would be submitted to the Government. The County Council's preferred option was the single unitary authority, which the County Council supported.

The report emphasised the collaborative approach taken by the County Council in discussing these proposals, involving various councils and stakeholders. Councillor Leffman reminded members that the County Council currently delivered 85% of local government services, including crucial areas such social care and highways, which would be impacted by any restructuring. She also referred to the importance of maintaining connections between scientific campuses across the county and the potential for devolving services to town and parish councils. There would be ongoing consultations depending on the Secretary of State's response to the proposals.

During discussion, members expressed strong support for a single unitary authority for Oxfordshire, citing the benefits of maintaining existing relationships, avoiding fragmentation of services, and ensuring financial stability. They commented on the challenges that smaller unitary authorities could face in funding services. There was the possibility of devolving some services to town councils to maintain local delivery within a single unitary structure.

Members also emphasised the importance of including Buckinghamshire in the preferred geography for a mayoral strategic authority, while noting that there were no current conversations with Buckinghamshire. It was planned to progress discussions with Berkshire and to include Buckinghamshire if they decided to join at a later date.

RESOLVED to:-

a) **note the receipt of the statutory invitation received from the Minister of State for Housing, Communities & Local Government on 5 February 2025;**

b) **agree to submit to Government the interim plan as set out in Appendix 1 and each option for local government reorganisation set out in Appendix 2 to 4;**

c) **agree that Oxfordshire County Council proposes and supports as its optimal model for re-organisation – a single county unitary for Oxfordshire as set out as option 1 in Appendix 2.**

d) **agree that as the constituent member of any future Mayoral County Combined Authority, the Cabinet's preferred geography for a Mayoral Strategic Authority is Berkshire, Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire.**

e) **endorse the Leader of the Council to correspond with Government, setting out the County Council's position with respect to local government reorganisation and devolution, and to hold meetings with Ministers on such matters in due course.**

………………………………………………….in the Chair

Date of signing …………………………………………..

CABINET

MINUTES of the meeting held on Tuesday, 22 April 2025 commencing at 2.00 pm and finishing at 2.30 pm

Present:

Voting Members: Councillor Liz Leffman – in the Chair
Councillor Dr Pete Sudbury (Deputy Chair)
Councillor Andrew Gant
Councillor John Howson
Councillor Dan Levy
Councillor Dr Nathan Ley
Councillor Judy Roberts

Other Members in Attendance:

Officers:

Whole of meeting

The 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, and decided as set out below. Except insofar as otherwise specified, the reasons for the decisions are contained in the agenda, reports and schedule, copies of which are attached to the signed Minutes.

65/25   APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE
(Agenda Item. 1)

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Bearder, Fawcett and Gregory.

66/25   DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST
(Agenda Item. 2)

There were none.

67/25   MINUTES
(Agenda Item. 3)

The minutes of the meeting held on 25 March 2025 were approved as a correct record.

68/25   QUESTIONS FROM COUNTY COUNCILLORS
(Agenda Item. 4)

There were none received.

69/25 PETITIONS AND PUBLIC ADDRESS
(Agenda Item. 5)

There were no requests received.

70/25 APPOINTMENTS
(Agenda Item. 6)

There were no appointments to report to this meeting.

71/25 REPORTS FROM SCRUTINY COMMITTEES
(Agenda Item. 7)

Councillor Kieron Mallon, Chair of the People Overview and Scrutiny Committee, presented the report in Co-production in Adult Social Care.

Cabinet received the report and will respond in due course.

72/25 COST OF LIVING PROGRAMME FOR 2025/26
(Agenda Item. 8)

Cabinet had before it a report setting out the intended approach to support those residents who were most negatively impacted by cost-of-living pressures following the government's announcement of an extension of the Household Support Fund from 1 April 2025 to 31 March 2026.

The report also provided the latest position on the impact of cost-of-living pressures and set out highlights from the 2024/25 funding programme.

Councillor Dr Nathan Ley, Cabinet Member for Public Health, Inequalities and Community Safety, presented the report. Councillor Lay highlighted the main elements of the programme including holiday free school meal support, resident support scheme (crisis payments and local district level funding), and advice services. He also wanted to congratulate also cost of living team for their nomination for the best small team of the year at the Local Government Chronicle Awards

During discussion, members referred to the uncertainty of the holiday support fund for school meals and the government's plan to publish a child poverty strategy later in the year. The importance of protecting those struggling with the cost of living was emphasised.

RECOMMENDED to:-

     a) **approve the support package for 2025/26, as summarised in Table 2**

   b) **approve the repurposing £85,000 of funding held in the Emergency Welfare Fund reserve to support the Community Wealth Building programme**

   c) **delegate authority to the Director for Public Affairs, Policy & Partnerships in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Public Health, Inequalities and Community Safety, to approve the deployment of unallocated funds for emerging need, and to amend the programme during the year in response to changing and emerging need, within the overall programme budget**

73/25   CAPITAL PROGRAMME APPROVALS - APRIL 2025
(Agenda Item. 9)

Cabinet had before it which set out change requests requiring Cabinet approval that will be incorporated into the agreed Capital programme and included in the next update to programme in June 2025.

Councillor Dan Levy, Cabinet Member for Finance, presented the report. He referred to the two schemes detailed in the report relating to energy saving measures funded through corporate resources and a government decarbonisation scheme and fire safety improvements in council buildings, ensuring compliance with safety regulations. Both initiatives reflect the council's commitment to reducing carbon emissions and maintaining safe facilities.

RESOLVED to:

   a) **approve the addition of a new phase of energy saving measures into the capital programme, at a total cost of £10.360m. The two-year programme will run from 2025-2027 and is to be funded by £10.000m from corporate resources, as approved by Council in February 2025, with the remaining £0.360m to be funded by a successful bid to Phase 4 of the Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme (PSDS4).**

   b) **approve the inclusion of phase 2 and 3 of Fire Compartmentation Remedial works into the capital programme, at a cost of £3.700m. The programme of work is to be funded from £2.000m corporate resources agreed by Council in February 2024 and a further £1.700m agreed by Council in February 2025.**

74/25   DELEGATED POWERS REPORT FOR JANUARY TO MARCH 2025
(Agenda Item. 10)

There were no executive decisions taken under delegated powers during the period January to March 2025 to report to this meeting.

75/25 **FORWARD PLAN AND FUTURE BUSINESS**
(Agenda Item. 11)

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

RESOLVED to note the items currently identified for forthcoming meetings.

76/25 **FOR INFORMATION ONLY: CABINET RESPONSE TO SCRUTINY ITEM**
(Agenda Item. 12)

Cabinet noted the response to the Scrutiny item on Infrastructure Funding Statement and S.106 Project Review.

…………………………………………….in the Chair

Date of signing …………………………………………..

Divisions: N/A

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CABINET – 17 JUNE 2025

APPOINTMENTS 2025/26

Report by Director of Law & Governance and Monitoring Officer

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RECOMMENDATION

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

Introduction

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

2. The schedule only refers to those appointments which are the direct responsibility of Cabinet to make. There are other outside body appointments that are the responsibility of the of Full Council, its committees or local processes as appropriate.

Joint Committees

3. These are formal bodies set up to exercise statutory functions jointly with other authorities. Members of joint committees exercising executive functions must be members of the Cabinet. The Future Oxfordshire Partnership has been replaced by Oxfordshire Leaders Joint Committee.

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

Local Statutory Bodies

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

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

Strategic Partnerships

6. This category comprises Partnerships which the Cabinet has designated as 'strategic' and whose membership Cabinet has agreed should be linked to the

role of Cabinet Member/s and not to individually named members. An exception in the past has been the representative on the Safer Oxfordshire Partnership being the representative of the County Council on the Thames Valley Police & Crime Panel.

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

Standing Advisory Bodies

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

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

Informal Member/Officer Working Groups

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

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

10.   The Corporate Parenting Panel was previously designated a formally constituted Council Committee with political balance reporting to Cabinet. but has reverted to a Member/Officer Working Group and listed in this category.

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

Strategic Outside Bodies

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

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

Member Champions

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

Financial Implications

15. There are no financial implications for this report.

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

Legal Implications

16. Appointments to joint committees or working groups that exercise executive functions fall within the remit of the Cabinet.

17. Appointments or nominations to outside bodies are made in accordance with the Council's Constitution (Part 3.4 paragraph 1(e)) which gives Cabinet the authority to appoint to a list of external bodies agreed by Council.

18. There are no other specific legal implications arising from this report.

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

ANITA BRADLEY
Director of Law & Governance and Monitoring Officer

Annex: Proposed appointments for 2025/26.

Background papers: Nil

Contact Officer: Chris Reynolds, Senior Democratic Services Officer,
chris.reynolds@oxfordshire.gov.uk

June 2025

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Category A - 2025/26 Appointments

Section 1 – Joint Committees

Organisation	Number of Reps	Status of Rep	Member	Substitute
Thames Valley Fire Control Service	2			
Traffic Penalty Tribunal - Outside London Adjudication Committee	1	Cabinet Member for Transport		
Oxfordshire Leaders Joint Committee	1	Leader of the Council		
Thames Valley Collaboration Group	1			
Didcot Garden Town Board	1			

Section 2 – Local Statutory Bodies

Organisation	Number of Reps	Status of Rep	Member	Substitute
Adoption Panels	4	One from each political group nominated by the group leader.		
Fostering Panels	1	Any councillor		
Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education (SACRE)	4	One from each political group nominated by the group leader.		

Section 3 – Strategic Partnerships

Organisation	Number of Reps	Status of Rep	Member	Substitute
Oxfordshire Inclusive Economy Partnership Board	1	Leader of Council		
Health and Wellbeing Board	4	Leader of Council, Cabinet Member for Adults , Public Health, Children's and Young People		
Children's Trust Board	2	Cabinet Members for Children & Young People and Public Health & Inequalities		
Health Improvement Partnership Board	1	Cabinet Member with responsibility for Public Health		
Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership	1	Leader of the Council		
Integrated Care Partnership	1	Cabinet Member for Adults		
Oxford University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust	1	Cabinet Member for Adults		

Oxford Health NHS Foundation Trust	1	Cabinet Member for Adults		
Oxford Strategic Partnership	1			
Oxfordshire Stronger Communities Alliance	1	Cabinet Member with responsibility for local communities		
Oxfordshire Environmental Partnership	1	Cabinet Member for Place, Environment and Climate Action		
Milestone Strategic Partnership Board	1	Cabinet Member for Transport Management		
Rural Services Network	1			
South East Employers	3			
Viridor Strategic Partnership Board	1	Cabinet Member for Place, Environment and Climate Action		

Section 4 – Standing Advisory Bodies

Organisation	Number of Reps	Status of Rep	Member	Substitute
Oxfordshire Music Hub Board	3	On the nomination of the political groups according to political balance		
Schools Organisation Stakeholder Group	5	Non-executive County Council Members and 1 observer with no voting rights - Cabinet Member with responsibility for Education		

Section 5 - Informal Member/Officer Working Groups

Organisation	Number of Reps	Status of Rep	Members	Substitute
West End Steering Group	2	Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member	Liz Leffman	
			Judy Roberts	

Section 6 – Strategic Outside Body

Organisation	Number of Reps	Status of Rep	Member	Substitute
County Councils Network (CNN)	4	4 County Councillors - in the past this has been Leader/ Deputy Leader		
Local Government Association (LGA)	4			
Oxfordshire Association of Local Councils	1			
Oxfordshire Care Partnership	1			

	Number of Reps	Status of Rep	Member	Substitute
Oxfordshire Countryside Access Forum	1			
Community First Oxfordshire (formerly Oxfordshire Rural Community Council)	1			

Section 7 – Member Champions

	Number of Reps	Status of Rep	Member	Substitute
Active Travel & Cycling Champion	1			
Public Transport Champion	1			
Future Generations Champion	1			
Water Resources Champions	2			
Mental Health & Loneliness Champion	1			

| Military | 1 | The Leader of the Council (or such other person as nominated) acts as Armed Forces Champion on behalf of the County, then each military base has a champion who acts as a point of contact | | |

Divisions Affected – All

CABINET
17 June 2025

– Transport Working Group
Report of Place Overview & Scrutiny Committee

RECOMMENDATION

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

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

   b) Agree that, once Cabinet has responded, relevant officers will continue to provide each meeting of the Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee with a brief written update on progress made against actions committed to in response to the recommendations for 12 months, or until they are completed (if earlier).

REQUIREMENT TO RESPOND

2.   In accordance with section 9FE of the Local Government Act 2000, the Place Overview & Scrutiny Committee requires that, within two months of the consideration of this report, the Cabinet publish a response to this report and any recommendations.

INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

3.   At its meeting on 25 September 2024, the Committee established a Transport Working Group. The Committee agreed that Cllr Bennett, Cllr Haywood, Cllr Hicks, and Cllr Walker should comprise the membership, with Cllr Hicks elected as Chair and Cllr Walker as Deputy Chair.

4.   The Transport Working Group was concerned that the Council was not on track to meet its objective and, through this Group, sought to scrutinise aspect of the Council's delivery to consider what was working well and what could be improved.

5. The Group conducted two deep dives, into the Oxford Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) and into the Science Vale Movement and Place Strategy. In order to ensure the Group's work was focused, it concentrated primarily on the active travel targets whilst having an awareness of wider targets.

6. The Committee and the Group were very grateful to the large number of officers who had contributed to its work.

SUMMARY

7. The Transport Working Group submitted its report to the Committee on 23 April 2025 for its approval and onward submission to Cabinet. The Group made 20 recommendations which the Committee endorsed in their entirety. The recommendations focused on data, governance, capacity building, funding, partnerships, and public engagement. The recommendations were fundamentally about ensuring that the Council makes the changes necessary to meet its headline targets of the LTCP, including the necessary resources, monitoring, skills, capacity, and approach, to mean that its active travel plans are at the heart of its place-making priorities.

8. The Committee resolved to endorse the recommendations and report of the Transport Working Group and to submit the substantive report of the Transport Working Group (paragraphs 2 onwards) to Cabinet.

FURTHER CONSIDERATION

9. It will be for members of the 2025/26 Committee to set its work programme but it is anticipated that they will continue to scrutinise the Council's transport ambitions.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

10. Under Part 6.2 (13) (a) of the Constitution Scrutiny has the following power: 'Once a Scrutiny Committee has completed its deliberations on any matter a formal report may be prepared on behalf of the Committee and when agreed by them the Proper Officer will normally refer it to the Cabinet for consideration.

11. Under Part 4.2 of the Constitution, the Cabinet Procedure Rules, s 2 (3) iv) the Cabinet will consider any reports from Scrutiny Committees.

Anita Bradley
Director of Law and Governance and Monitoring Officer

Annex: Report of the Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee's
                              Transport Working Group (with its annexe 1
                              'Recommendations under headings'; 2 'Emerging
                              Conclusions')
                              Pro-forma Response Template

Background papers: None

Other Documents: None

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

June 2025

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Cabinet

– 17 June 2025

REPORT OF THE PLACE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE'S TRANSPORT WORKING GROUP

RECOMMENDATION

1. The Committee resolved to agree to the recommendation to:

    - **ENDORSE** the recommendations and report of the Transport Working Group;
    - **SUBMIT** the substantive report of the Transport Working Group (paragraphs 2 onwards) to Cabinet;
    - **DELEGATE** any minor editing to the Scrutiny Officer, in consultation with the Chair of the Committee and the Chair of the Transport Working Group.

Executive Summary

2. The Transport Working Group was established by the Committee at its September 2024 meeting. The Committee agreed that Cllr Bennett, Cllr Haywood, Cllr Hicks, and Cllr Walker should comprise the membership. Cllr Hicks was elected as Chair and Cllr Walker as Deputy Chair.

3. In its introductory meetings, the Group was concerned that, whilst the Local Transport Connectivity Plan (LTCP) set out the objectives for the Council, the LTCP5 Monitoring Report which had been reviewed by the Committee in September 2024 showed that the Council was not on track to meet those objectives. This was of concern to members who sought, through this Group, to scrutinise aspects of the Council's delivery to consider what was working well and what could be improved.

4. The Group conducted two deep dives, into the Oxford LCWIP and into the Science Vale Movement and Place Strategy.

5. From those deep dives, the Group proposes that the Committee makes 20 recommendations to Cabinet. These recommendations are grouped under the headings of data and monitoring; governance and responsibility/skills and capacity building; funding and budgets; working with other organisations; co-production and public engagement. Some of the recommendations inevitably cross categories but these headings are drawn from those identified by officers for the LTP4 report scrutinised by the Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee at its meeting on 16 November 2022.

6.   The recommendations are listed in an annexe at the end of this report but they are set out below along with the narrative seeking to explain why the Group has proposed them.

7.   The recommendations are fundamentally about ensuring that the Council makes the changes necessary to meet its headline targets of the LTCP, including the necessary resources, monitoring, skills, capacity, and approach, to mean that its active travel plans are at the heart of its place-making priorities. In order to ensure the Group's work was focused, it concentrated primarily on the active travel targets whilst having an awareness of wider targets.

8.   In both its work and its proposed recommendations, the Group has been conscious of the lessons learned set out by officers on previous LTP monitoring reports. The Group notes in particular the review of LTP4 in Annex 1 of the report submitted to the Committee for its meeting on 16 November 2022.[1] On objectives and policies, the Group noted that there was a need:

(a)   for a clear vision to guide the document and supporting strategies;
(b)   to ensure alignment between policy goals;
(c)   for strong policy wording and more specific policies;
(d)   to improve internal processes, understanding of the LTCP, and a consistent application of policies;
(e)   for SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-bound) targets/objectives;
(f)   to establish a monitoring framework and to improve the reporting of progress;
(g)   to consider language used and how policies/schemes are explained – including why they are needed and how they will benefit residents.

9.   When approaching area strategies, there was a need:

(a)   For a consistent countywide approach that aligns with LTCP policy;
(b)   To move away from 'predict and provide' transport planning approach;
(c)   For more ambitious measures to support the overarching objectives and move away from highways infrastructure improvements;
(d)   For a greater focus on activation, healthy place shaping, and measures to support infrastructure improvements;
(e)   For robust consultation and engagement.

Evidence

10.   The Group was grateful to a large number of officers for attending its meetings and preparing work for its deep dives and wider consideration. The Group extends its thanks to the officers below and to all those who have contributed to the work it has scrutinised.

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[1] https://mycouncil.oxfordshire.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=1173&MId=6832&Ver=4

- Paul Fermer, Director of Environment and Highways;
- Robin Rogers, Director of Economy and Place;
- Hannah Battye, Head of Place Shaping
- Ben Smith, Strategic Transport Manager
- Joseph Kay, Team Leader (Oxfordshire Transport Strategy)
- Ashley Hayden, Team Leader (Area Travel Plans)
- Dave Harrison, Team Leader (Public Transport)
- Sean Rooney, Head of Highway Maintenance and Road Safety
- Valerie Lambrechts, Infrastructure Portfolio Manager
- Stewart Wilson, Place Planning Team Leader (Central)
- David Calonge, Technical Lead (Active Travel)
- Julia Hawkins, Place Planning Manager (South)
- Jacqui Cox, Place Planning Manager (North)
- Joanne Fellows, Place Planning Manager (Central)
- Chris Dyer, Head of Transport Property and Infrastructure Delivery
- Odele Parsons, Team Leader (Place Planning and Coordination)
- Melissa Goodacre, Sustainable Transport Manager

Introductory meetings

11. The Group met the Director of Environment and Highways, Paul Fermer, as well as Ben Smith, Strategic Transport Manager, Joseph Kay, Team Leader (Oxfordshire Transport Strategy), and Ashley Hayden, Area Movement and Place Strategies Team Leader. The conversation focused on a series of questions based on the detailed LTP4 review report which the Committee had scrutinised in November 2022.

12. It was agreed that the Council needed to have a clear vision to guide the implementation and outworking of the LTCP and supporting strategies and to ensure alignment between policy goals. There was a recognition that internal processes would benefit from improvement with a need for greater embedding of an understanding of the LTCP and consistent application of policies.

13. The success of the Movement and Place Strategies being developed by the Council was dependent on them being a package that work together and are deliverable. There needs to be an understanding of phasing (insofar as the core schemes are enablers for other policies in the Central Oxfordshire Travel Plan (COTP) and an understanding of what the priorities are in the policy hierarchy.

14. A second meeting was held with the Group, this time meeting Hannah Battye, Head of Placemaking, Sean Rooney, Head of Highways Delivery, and Valerie Lambrechts, Infrastructure Portfolio Manager. This meeting focused on the challenges of delivering policy ambitions and adopted strategies.

15. The broad areas of challenge identified were with regard to decisions and processes, and also resources and programming and how they are packaged

up to move forward. With regard to funding, it was identified that sometimes the money collected from either developers or active travel funding towards providing schemes is no longer enough but sometimes it was never going to be enough. There were also issues raised about the impact of the length of time it takes for a scheme to come to fruition. Sometimes, it might be considered that the scheme is no longer required or it might not fit with current policy. The importance of maintenance considerations were also highlighted as a key factor which were not necessarily embedded in decision-making when planning schemes currently.

16.   Having undertaken its initial exploratory work, the Group identified a number of issues it called 'emerging conclusions.' The Group was conscious that it would be inappropriate to identify formal recommendations so early on in its deliberations but considered that there were issues that had arisen which it sought to test against the evidence and information it scrutinised during its deep dives.

17.   These emerging conclusions are set out in Annexe 2 and offer an insight into the framing of the deep dives. The Group was conscious that they may be seen to be structured in a way that is unduly negative but that was not the primary purpose. There was an openness to these emerging conclusions being challenged and disproved. That was indeed the case with some of them.

18.   However, there were also some themes which initial hesitancy saw grow into desired recommendations to Cabinet. This report sets them out and seeks the approval of the Place Overview & Scrutiny Committee to move them formally as such.

19.   Having developed the above emerging conclusions, the Group also compiled a series of lines of inquiry which it intended to use to explore via deep dive case studies, covering urban areas and market towns. This diversity of setting reflected both the divisions members of the Group represented but also some of the representative different settings found within Oxfordshire. It was intended that this breadth would help the Group to ensure any recommendations that arose were applicable across the county rather than simply focused on individual areas or projects.

Oxford LCWIP Deep Dive

20.   The first substantive meeting of the Group was held on 10 February 2025 and explored the Oxford Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan. In advance of the meeting, members had received responses to their lines of inquiry.

21.   The Group established that, of the transport major infrastructure schemes active in the last two years, funding for them had been broadly split in the following way:

Mode	Funding
Bus infrastructure	£218m
Rail	£11m
Active Travel	£299m
General Highway capacity	£445m
Total:	£973m

22. Officers advised that, in addition to the information above, as part of the "Active Travel Capability Ratings 2024 self-assessment form" Local Authorities are required to calculate the percentage of total transport budget spent on active travel schemes. In 2023/24, the Council spent 7% of the total transport budget on active travel schemes.

23. In the 2023/24 financial year there was a total budget for transport of £146.782m. This was broken down into the following areas:
    - Major Infrastructure Delivery - £55.697m
    - Highways Capital Programme - £56.828m
    - Highways Maintenance - £21.160m
    - Transport and Infrastructure - £13.097m

24. Within these areas there was a budget of £10.695m for active travel and £12.17m for public transport.

25. The Group was keen to understand if the Council had robust monitoring tools in place to assist with the annual review of the LTCP. The monitoring report, as reviewed by the Place Overview & Scrutiny Committee and subsequently submitted to Cabinet, sets out a full list of sources for the data used to monitor the headline targets and Key Performance Indicators (KPIs).

26. The Group was advised that car trips had not previously been monitored and that there was not a readily available data source but that work had begun in 2023 to collect that data. The Council had developed a bespoke monitoring mechanism which combined INRIX telematics data as well as automatic traffic count site data.

27. There was a recognition that scheme-level and monitoring data were weaker and that it was therefore challenging to establish how much of the changes to the LTCP targets or KPIs were a result of LTCP delivery. The Group was advised that some scheme-level monitoring and pilot travel behaviour survey work has been included in the 2023-24 LTCP monitoring report. There is ongoing work with iHUB, the Council's innovation hub which was created in 2015 initially to focus on transport innovation but which has since broadened out to other areas including modelling, air quality, and infrastructure, to develop a centralised and improved monitoring and evaluation approach.

28.   At February 2025, 51% of Oxfordshire's population lived in an area that was covered by an approved LCWIP, broken down as follows:

City/Town	Population	Percentage of Oxfordshire's Population
Oxford	176,600	24%
Banbury	52,000	7%
Bicester	37,700	5%
Didcot	34,600	5%
Abingdon	31,300	4%
Witney	30,200	4%
Kidlington	17,200	2%

29.   The Group was advised that this was projected to rise to 61.9% by the end of 2025, on the completion and approval of the following LCWIPs:

City/Town	Population	Percentage of Oxfordshire's Population
Thame	13,273	2%
Wantage and Grove	21,000	3%
Wallingford area	11,600	2%
Woodstock	3,500	0.5%
Chipping Norton	9,600	1%
Carterton	18,000	2%
Charlbury	3,100	0.4%

30.   The Group also received a breakdown of routes within the Oxford LCWIP which were and were not 'shovel ready.' The Group noted that, of the 29, only two (namely OCR 17 Iffley Road and OCR 20 Abingdon Road) were identified as completed. Two were marked as largely completed (OXR 1 Canal Path and OXR 7 Marston Road); nine were neither completed nor was any significant progress noted; the remaining 16 reported some progress. Whilst the Group acknowledged there could be realistic and justifiable reasons for this variation in progress, it was concerned that the limited progress indicated that a lack of prioritisation compared to major infrastructure suggested that the schemes were not approached in the same strategic way.

31.   With regard to funding for these routes, nine were in scope of the Mini Holland project and there was some funding in place for some of the others, albeit this did not mean that all schemes had yet attracted funding. Funding streams were from a number of different sources including moneys via the Department for Transport, the Growth Deal, s.106 funding, the Canal and Riverside Trust, as well as via the Safer Roads Fund, through School Streets, Active Travel funds, and via the Cycle City Ambition Grant.

32.   The Group was advised that post-completion monitoring was undertaken for each scheme delivered with the Council's iHub assisting with both monitoring and evaluation. It was established that, from Active Travel Tranche 3 onwards, Active Travel England (ATE) would carry out a design review so that their inspections team could provide comments and ensure that schemes met their requirements with regards to LTN 1/20 compliance and quality. Officers

also advised members that ATE would now also carry out post-completion inspections.

33. During the meeting, members explored the data regarding completion of LCWIP routes and emphasised the Council's need for detail in order for it to ensure it focused on fulfilling its aims and targets. The Group identified that data is not easily available to show all the routes are in place and what progress is needed in order to complete the schemes. Similarly, members emphasised the importance of funding being allocated appropriately in order to advance the schemes.

34. The Group confirmed with approval that, in line with the recommendation of the Chief Medical Officer's 2024 annual report 'Health in Cities' that "health and wellbeing should be given greater weight in appraisal assessment of capital and revenue projects relating to urban transport", the Council prioritised routes based on a variety of factors, including public health information. These prioritisation criteria ensured that critical areas received both attention and funding.

35. The Group emphasised the importance of a robust process being in place around LCWIP completion, including assessment of existing infrastructure quality as well as progress on routes. That progress should include timeliness, effectiveness and quality (as defined by LTN 1/20 which ACE uses to assess schemes). There was a recognition from officers that it would be useful to have more granular detail on completion. This would require more monitoring systems to be implemented. Whilst the data was available, it was not currently easily available and accessible and thus it was not easy to monitor owing to a lack of integration between multiple data sources. Without easy monitoring, the Group was concerned that there would be a negative impact on delivery.

36. Members discussed with officers how best auditing infrastructure both to identify 'pain points' and to prioritise improvements in the progress of routes could be achieved. The Group was of the view that the Council should invest in resources both to audit and to map existing cycling and walking infrastructure and there is the opportunity to work with a wide range of public stakeholder groups to help. This crowdsourcing would enable the Council to understand the status and quality of current infrastructure which would also inform future developments. The Group considers that Transport for Greater Manchester provides a strong example of effective crowdsourcing, particularly through the work of its former Active Travel Commissioner, Chris Boardman.

37. One issue that was noted was that it was not necessarily easy for either members of the public or other stakeholders to engage with the process because of a potential lack of visibility. The Group was advised that open data tools and interactive maps were being planned. Members were keen that there was sufficient investment in these to make them useful.

38.   Easily-accessible open data tools would not only make the LCWIP process more transparent but it would also be more accessible both to the public and to potential investors. As set out above, not all routes within the LCWIP currently have funding attached to them which means they are unlikely to be activated within the short-term. However, it is arguably more likely that funding might be forthcoming if stakeholders were able to see what was planned and how that would engage with the rest of the network.

39.   That engagement on the part of stakeholders would also be improved by engaging the public too. Local residents in particular are those with most familiarity with the locales in which routes are to be activated and will have considerable expertise to offer in advising how best to implement them. The Group was keen to encourage co-production and engagement with stakeholders in both active travel scheme design and delivery. The Group noted the Council's intentions to strengthen its relationship with Active Travel England and hear of its intentions to improve the Council's capability rating through regular training and engagement.

40.   With regard to skills and capacity, the Group established that the active travel policy team (three officers) sets the policy and guidance whilst the place planning delivery teams (four officers) are responsible for delivery of the LCWIPs. The Group recognised the value that external consultants can provide on occasion but it was concerned that an over-reliance on external resource would hinder the Council's success in delivery and its commitment to achieving this. Members were concerned that, where external resource is commissioned regularly, there is the potential – and, indeed, perhaps the likelihood – of that core skill and expertise within the Council not being as strong as it could be were the internal teams adequately resourced. The Group also had reservations about the relative seniority of officers in both the policy and delivery teams and considered that this could be understood to imply that the Council does not recognise the key importance of these areas.

41.   The report above sets out the discussions during the Group's meeting on 10 February and which describe the background to the recommendations made below.

Recommendations arising from Oxford Deep Dive

42.   The Group identified that data and monitoring was essential for efficient and effective progress to be made towards achieving the Council's LTCP ambitions. Whilst recognising that progress is being made towards having adequate information and commending the work on developing GIS-compatible maps and tracking tools for LCWIP delivery being undertaken, it makes two recommendations:

   1. That the Council should invest in resources to audit and map existing cycling and walking infrastructure to understand the current status, condition, and quality (including LTN 1/20 compliance) and identify gaps, including processes to crowdsource.

2. That the Council should use open data tools to create publicly accessible, interactive maps that show the status of LCWIP delivery and future projects.

43. When considering its findings through the lens of Governance and Responsibility/Skills and Capacity Building, the Group recognised that active travel was a responsibility that lay more broadly than solely with one or two teams. It considered it imperative that there was appropriate training across all relevant teams and that there should be a clear governance structure so that accountabilities, roles, and responsibilities are immediately transparent and, ultimately, that delivery of a high quality active travel network happens.

3. That the Council should ensure all relevant teams are trained in LTN 1/20 guidance, and that active travel is integrated into their day-to-day responsibilities.

4. That the Council should develop a clear governance structure that outlines the roles and responsibilities of different teams in delivering the LCWIP.

44. The Group recognised some merit in having a distributed function responsible for active travel. However, it was nervous that there was not enough capacity or seniority within the active travel policy team (currently three officers) and in the delivery team (currently four officers). There was also concern over the regular use of external consultants rather than in-house activity. Therefore the Group considers that the Council should develop its own in-house capacity to develop active travel schemes and bring them forward for delivery.

5. That the Council should develop its own in-house capacity to design and develop active travel schemes and bring them forward for delivery.

45. The Group remained concerned that there was an over-reliance on a piecemeal approach to funding of LCWIP infrastructure, as set out in the second set of emerging conclusions (EC2.1-EC.2.4) The Group recognises that it is unlikely that funding would be solely provided from existing Council budgets, or even by Government grants, and therefore to meet the LTCP targets it will be necessary to attract additional funding from other sources or other revenue streams. The Group considers that it is important for a more strategic approach to be adopted and proposes four recommendations to that effect. As described in paragraph 30, the Group believes that the strategic approach demonstrated towards major infrastructure should also be adopted towards active travel, rather than the largely tactical approach currently followed.

6. That the Council should actively develop a strategic approach to funding that includes identifying potential sources of funding and engaging with external organisations to secure financial support, including a revised approach to active travel whereby strategic

funding becomes business as usual.

7. *That the Council should adopt an agreed methodology to calculate how much is currently spent on active travel per person per year, in line with Department for Transport metrics.*

8. *That the Council should match Scottish levels of funding for active travel, currently at £50 per resident per year.*

9. *That the Council should create a prioritisation matrix to systematically allocate funding to projects based on their impact and feasibility.*

46. Without working with other organisations, the Council will struggle to meet its commitments. In both the city and more broadly across the county, the Council has available to it a vast array of organisations that can offer both support and resource. The Group calls on the Council to do all it can to achieve that.

10. *That the Council should strengthen partnerships with local organisations, such as universities, colleges, and health institutions, to leverage their resources and support for active travel projects.*

11. *That the Council should encourage these organisations to invest in specific projects by providing clear information on the benefits and costs, using the open data tools to support this.*

47. The final three recommendations arising from this case study are linked to some of those proposed above. Co-production will be a key tool for enabling local stakeholders to engage in both design and delivery of active travel projects and a resource setting out how that will be understood and managed would be very useful. This co-production is part of a wider project to truly engage residents and other stakeholders for the betterment of their local active travel projects.

12. *That the Council should develop a Co-production Handbook to guide the involvement of local stakeholders and the public in the design and delivery of active travel projects.*

13. *That the Council should use interactive online maps and other tools to keep the public informed about the progress of projects and to gather their input.*

14. *That the Council should work transparently with local communities to complete the open data mapping and to adopt the Active Travel England Guidance on Best Practice Community Consultation and Engagement.*

Science Vale Movement and Place Strategy

48.   On 10 March 2025, the Group met officers to consider draft proposals relating to the Science Vale Movement and Place Strategy. The Group was advised that Movement and Place Strategies (MAPS) reflect Oxfordshire's priority to be a place shaper of choice and that the strategies are intended to be a better articulation in that regard. They provide strategies for places with a focus on achieving liveable, healthy neighbourhoods and are intended to help demonstrate integration across different modes. It was noted that MAPS replace LTP4 Strategies and provide a framework with clear actions for delivery at different spatial levels. This is to help the Council work with partners, provide a means to help monitor status and progress in delivery of schemes as part of an overall package of measures.

49.   The Group was advised that using the lens of place-making would help to provide a more people-focused approach and that there was a recognition that it is important to identify needs of an area in order to assess the contribution that a scheme or package of measures would make at the spatial level.

50.   During the meeting, officers set out what had been delivered and where progress had been made since the LTP4 strategy and explained that updates reflected both the Joint Local Plan of South Oxfordshire District Council and the Vale of the White Horse District Council and other more recent policy work, including other modal strategies. There was a recognition that further work was required and that the MAPS would be a live and evolving document which was regularly updated.

51.   In presenting the draft MAPS, officers were aware that further work would be required and had set out where gaps had been identified. In presenting the strategy, there was a keenness to make it more accessible to residents, potentially setting out the objectives and actions in a more flexible, geographic, map-based way.

52.   An infographic was provided which showed clearly on a map the nine schemes that had been delivered since LTP4 and the three that were in the pipeline. It also set out that the Science Vale MAPS would deliver another eight specific schemes, progress another seven specific ones, and that the Council would explore opportunities for another seven. This was in addition to generic schemes (such as 'enhanced bus services and infrastructure', 'network of cycling parking', and 'new car club and car sharing scheme').

53.   The Council was committed to engaging on its proposals but that engagement had not yet begun. The Leader of the Council has chaired the quarterly Didcot Garden Town Advisory Board, on which she serves as the Council's representative, and this has provided a public forum for updates on progress within the five wards of the Didcot Garden Town and the wider Science Vale area. It is anticipated that the Didcot Garden Town Advisory Board will continue to be the primary oversight body for this. Groups, including Councillor Working Groups, were proposed with the intention being that they would begin

meeting after the local elections in May 2025.

54. The Group was advised that the Council is keen to involve local stakeholders as widely as possible and that, collectively, the governance structures will guide the scale of ambition for the areas as well as helping to shape proposals and identify links or gaps between places and people before the allocation of budgets or the start of major works.

Recommendations arising from Science Vale Deep Dive

55. In discussion with officers broadly and when scrutinising the Science Vale MAPS specifically, the Group identified a cultural lack of comfort with uncertainty which it considered was likely to hamper a shift to the delivery of the Council's new policies. Moving from a 'predict and provide' approach to one of 'decide and provide'[2] requires the Council to become more comfortable with uncertainty, whether with transport modelling or more widely. The Group considers that one important way for the Council to become more comfortable with uncertainty is for it to use policy tools like strategic forecasting, backcasting, and foresights. This would strengthen the Council's ability to move to a truly vision-led approach. It is that vision-led approach which, ultimately, will translate the Council's ambitions into delivery. The Committee has previously commended the use of the Government Office for Science's Futures Toolkit[3] and the Group considers it relevant here too.

> ***15. That the Council should use the Futures Toolkit, adopting tools such as strategic forecasting, backcasting, and forecasting, so as to become more comfortable with uncertainty in implementing its vision-led approach.***

56. The Group was keen to support the idea of data as a key strategic tool for planning and assessment with ambitions and targets relating to modal share being vital for effective prioritisation and delivery. The Group notes that the Royal Town Planning Institute's research paper *Net Zero Transport* [4] follows and encourages that approach of the centrality of modal share and the Group commends this method to the Council.

> ***16. That the Council should ensure, in its development and implementation of Movement and Place Strategies, that data is used as a key strategic tool with mode share targets being widely used.***

57. A key advantage of being data-led is that it can be monitored. The Group was pleased to see that the Science Vale MAPS was presented as vision-led

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[2] see, for example, s.1.1 of
https://mycouncil.oxfordshire.gov.uk/documents/s62102/CA_SEP2022R12%20Annex%201_Implementing%20Decide%20and%20Provide%20-%20TA%20Requirements.pdf

[3] https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/futures-toolkit-for-policy-makers-and-analysts/the-futures-toolkit-html

[4] https://www.rtpi.org.uk/media/9233/rtpi-net-zero-transport-january-2021.pdf

but it was also of the view that such a vision-led approach needed to be planned in a data-led way that aligned to the headline targets. The Group regretted that such targeting was not immediately obvious across all relevant workstreams. The Group considers it important that projects are assessed against the modal share targets given their impact on the LTCP headline targets.

> ***17. That the Council ensures vision-led planning is data-led with projects at all levels being assessed against modal share targets.***

58. The Group describes above its concerns that the Council's approach to funding active travel projects is not sufficiently strategic and its reservations remained when considering the Science Vale MAPS. The Group was concerned that sources of funding had not yet been identified for a number of schemes identified within this deep dive too and emphasises the importance of recommendation 6 above, calling for the prioritisation of a strategic approach to funding.

59. The Group was of the view that now what was formerly the Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership is the Council-owned company Enterprise Oxfordshire, it was key for the Council to take the opportunities afforded by this transition. The Council should work to ensure that its active travel ambitions are embedded in Enterprise Oxfordshire's work and that the latter should contribute positively to the question of funding.

> ***18. That the Council should work to ensure that strategic funding for active travel is a priority for Enterprise Oxfordshire.***

60. The Group recognises the key role of growth plans and infrastructure strategies across the county in contributing to the achievement of the Council's goals. As the Oxfordshire Infrastructure Strategy (OXIS) is revised, the Group considers that the Council's active travel ambitions should be translated into the strategy. Similarly, the Group considers it imperative that the Strategy's ambitions and monitoring should be measured against the Council's modal share targets and the LTCP's headline targets. This will help to translate ambitions into delivery. The Group is conscious that this would impact on officer capacity which ties into its recommendation about relating to the importance of in-house capacity.

> ***19. That the Council should ensure that there is sufficient capacity for future versions of the Oxfordshire Infrastructure Strategy to be measured against modal share targets and the LTCP's headline targets.***

61. Similarly, recommendation 9 – about a prioritisation matrix for projects – is relevant here too. There needs to be an options appraisal process behind projects so that all stakeholders can understand on what basis individual schemes are being given priority.

62.　　Relevant to this is developing good relationships with developers.　The recently-launched Oxfordshire Developers Forum is a positive development and the Group is keen that the Council ensures that there is sufficient capacity in the organisation to engage with this and with more localised fora.　The presence of relevant Council officers at local developer fora would provide the opportunity for the Council to engage and encourage developers at an early stage to consider the impact on mode share of their projects.　The Group recognises that this will be a capacity issue for officers but considers the benefits of such that it will be imperative for the Council to ensure that the team is properly resourced.

63.　　 Effective and timely engagement with developers is also married to effective and timely engagement with local residents as well as other stakeholders.　The Group has talked above of the importance of co-production and engagement.　The development of the Science Vale MAPS provides a key opportunity for the Council to demonstrate this.

20. That the Council should ensure further resource is provided to the active travel teams to enable it to participate in developer fora in order to engage developers at an early stage and to highlight the importance of mode share targets in their considerations.

Contact Officer:　　　　　　Richard Doney, Scrutiny Officer,
　　　　　　　　　　　　　　richard.doney@oxfordshire.gov.uk

April 2025
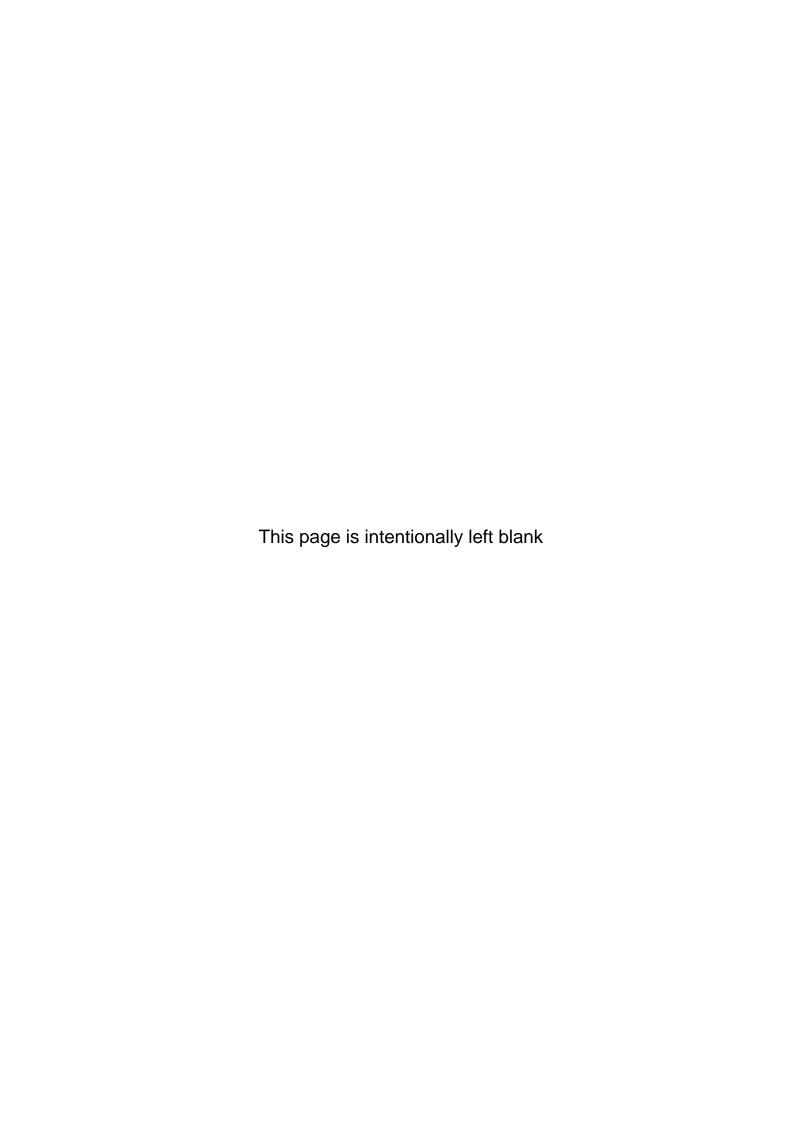
Data and monitoring

1	That the Council should invest in resources to audit and map existing cycling and walking infrastructure to understand the current status, condition, and quality (including LTN 1/20 compliance) and identify gaps, including processes to crowdsource.
2	That the Council should use open data tools to create publicly accessible, interactive maps that show the status of LCWIP delivery and future projects.
16	That the Council should ensure, in its development and implementation of Movement and Place Strategies, that data is used as a key strategic tool with mode share targets being widely used.
17	That the Council ensures vision-led planning is data-led with projects at all levels being assessed against modal share targets.
19	That the Council should ensure that there is sufficient capacity for future versions of the Oxfordshire Infrastructure Strategy to be measured against modal share targets and the LTCP's headline targets.

Governance and Responsibility/Skills and Capacity Building

3	That the Council should ensure all relevant teams are trained in LTN 1/20 guidance, and that active travel is integrated into their day-to-day responsibilities.
4	That the Council should develop a clear governance structure that outlines the roles and responsibilities of different teams in delivering the LCWIP.
5	That the Council should develop its own in-house capacity to design and develop active travel schemes and bring them forward for delivery.
15	That the Council should use the Futures Toolkit, adopting tools such as strategic forecasting, backcasting, and forecasting, so as to become more comfortable with uncertainty in implementing its vision-led approach.
19	That the Council should ensure that there is sufficient capacity for future versions of the Oxfordshire Infrastructure Strategy to be measured against modal share targets and the LTCP's headline targets.

Funding and Budgets

6 That the Council should actively develop a strategic approach to funding that includes identifying potential sources of funding and engaging with external organisations to secure financial support, including a revised approach to active travel whereby strategic funding becomes business as usual.

7 That the Council should adopt an agreed methodology to calculate how much is currently spent on active travel per person per year, in line with Department for Transport metrics.

8 That the Council should match Scottish levels of funding for active travel, currently at £50 per resident per year.

9 That the Council should create a prioritisation matrix to systematically allocate funding to projects based on their impact and feasibility.

18 That the Council should work to ensure that strategic funding for active travel is a priority for Enterprise Oxfordshire

Working with other organisations

10 That the Council should strengthen partnerships with local organisations, such as universities, colleges, and health institutions, to leverage their resources and support for active travel projects.

11 That the Council should encourage these organisations to invest in specific projects by providing clear information on the benefits and costs, using the open data tools to support this.

Co-production and public engagement

12 That the Council should develop a Co-production Handbook to guide the involvement of local stakeholders and the public in the design and delivery of active travel projects.

13 That the Council should use interactive online maps and other tools to keep the public informed about the progress of projects and to gather their input.

14 That the Council should work transparently with local communities to complete the open data mapping and to adopt the Active Travel England Guidance on Best Practice Community Consultation and Engagement.

20   That the Council should ensure further resource is provided to the active travel teams to enable it to participate in developer fora in order to engage developers at an early stage and to highlight the importance of mode share targets in their considerations.

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Annexe 2: Emerging conclusions

Skills and Capacity building

15. *EC1.1: Given that "decide and provide" is a new policy approach to transport and land-use planning and delivery, there may not yet be 100% adoption of this new approach in practice in all the County Council's (and/or District Council's and/or developers') activities.*

16. *EC1.2: Given that LTN1/20 is relatively new guidance, it is possible that not all active travel infrastructure that has recently been delivered, when audited, would be found to meet LTN1/20 design standards. This may be having a negative impact on our reputation as an organisation with Active Travel England (ATE).*

17. *EC1.3 The Council could make better use of futures and strategic foresights policymaking tools to (a) help meet the 2030/2040/2050 LTCP targets and (b) reduce levels of siloed working which may be currently negatively impacting delivery pace and quality.*

Funding and budgets

18. *EC2.1 There is a concern that, when looked at in the whole, that the Council's total spend (particularly capital) on transport, infrastructure and place, is not aligned with meeting the LTCP goals. There is therefore curiosity over whether the Capital Programme Board processes and priorities should be updated to better reflect policy goals.*

19. *EC2.2 There is a concern that the Council's current approach to funding active travel infrastructure is more tactical than strategic, i.e., that contributions and funding are received piecemeal for smaller projects that deliver only small parts of the network, rather than in larger tranches suitable for delivering whole routes and whole sections of the network.*

20. *EC2.3 There is a concern that there is not clarity on where funding is coming from to match delivery aspirations and goals (e.g. there is a need for more clarity at the start of the project on where funding is going to come from to enable a project to be delivered)*

21. *EC2.4 There is a concern that the whole life-time cost of an asset (i.e. including all maintenance costs) are not factored into the business case for a project at the start, which leads to problems down the line.*

Working with other organisations

22. *EC3.1 The Council may not be working closely enough with Developers early enough in the process to ensure that new developments meet the LTCP5 goals*

23. *EC3.2 The Council may not be doing enough to ensure that historic schemes are redesigned to bring them in line with current LTCP policy and government*

guidance

24. *EC3.3 The Council may not be putting enough emphasis on proper co-production in practice, which may be reflected by a lack of budget allocation to citizen engagement within the overall project budget.*

Data and monitoring

25. *EC4.1 There is a concern that – based on what is known - the Council's current project delivery is not putting the Council on course to deliver the LTCP5 targets*

26. *EC4.2 There is a concern that the Council does ~~not~~n't have the monitoring, data or evaluation tools in place for most projects so it is currently blind as to whether a particular scheme (planned or delivered) is helping or hindering on the delivery of the LTCP targets.*

27. *EC4.3 There is a concern that the Council does ~~not~~n't have all its exiting existing assets and infrastructure accurately mapped*

28. *EC4.4 There is a concern that the traffic modelling methods used are still models that align the ~~C~~councils' delivery to the 'predict and provide' approach, rather than the adopted 'decide and provide' approach.*

29. *EC4.5 There is a concern that the Council struggles with uncertainty caused by not knowing the future, both in terms of future policy and future scenarios in the world. Rather than embrace this uncertainty in policy approaches (e.g. taking a strategic or futures and foresights approach), it appears to cause delays in decision-making and delivery.*

Planning and policy alignment

30. *EC5.1: There is a concern that public health policies (i.e. "healthy place shaping") are not sufficiently integrated, in practice, into the design and delivery of transport and place projects.*

31. *EC5.2: There is a concern that policies are either not being followed, or that policies that do not align with LTCP5 policies or support LTCP5 targets are being prioritised in design decisions.*

32. *EC5.3: There is a concern that Local Development Plan and Local Transport and Connectivity Plan policies and project delivery are not well integrated, which leads to multiple problems in both delivery of projects and policy outcomes.*

Being future proof

33. *EC6.1 There is concern that the whole lifetime cost of the assets created or modified in a project are not sufficiently costed in during the business case*

phase / start of a project.

34. *EC6.2 There is a concern that the Council may not have enough information on assets owned by other organisations (e.g. utilities infrastructure) and how this may impact on the project delivery and maintenance considerations.*

35. *EC6.3 There is a concern that infrastructure being delivered does not sufficiently take climate adaptation or resilience into account.*

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Overview & Scrutiny Recommendation Response Pro forma

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Issue:

Lead Cabinet Member(s):   **Cllr Judy Roberts, Cabinet member for Place, Environment, and Climate Action**

Date response requested:[2]   **17 June 2025**

Response to report:
Enter text here.

Response to recommendations:

Recommendation	Accepted, rejected or partially accepted	Proposed action (if different to that recommended) and indicative timescale (unless rejected)
1. That the Council should invest in resources to audit and map existing cycling and walking infrastructure to understand the current status, condition,		

---

[1] Date of the meeting at which report/recommendations were received
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Overview & Scrutiny Recommendation Response Pro forma

and quality (including LTN 1/20 compliance) and identify gaps, including processes to crowdsource.		
2. That the Council should use open data tools to create publicly accessible, interactive maps that show the status of LCWIP delivery and future projects.		
3. That the Council should ensure all relevant teams are trained in LTN 1/20 guidance, and that active travel is integrated into their day-to-day responsibilities.		
4. That the Council should develop a clear governance structure that outlines the roles and responsibilities of different teams in delivering the LCWIP.		
5. That the Council should develop its own in-house capacity to design and develop active travel schemes and bring them forward for delivery.		
6. That the Council should actively develop a strategic approach to funding that includes identifying potential sources of funding and engaging with external organisations to secure financial support, including a revised approach to active travel whereby strategic funding becomes business as usual.		
7. That the Council should adopt an agreed methodology to calculate how much is		

Overview & Scrutiny Recommendation Response Pro forma

currently spent on active travel per person per year, in line with Department for Transport metrics.		
8. That the Council should match Scottish levels of funding for active travel, currently at £50 per resident per year.		
9. That the Council should create a prioritisation matrix to systematically allocate funding to projects based on their impact and feasibility.		
a. That the Council should strengthen partnerships with local organisations, such as universities, colleges, and health institutions, to leverage their resources and support for active travel projects.		
10. That the Council should encourage these organisations to invest in specific projects by providing clear information on the benefits and costs, using the open data tools to support this.		

Overview & Scrutiny Recommendation Response Pro forma

11. That the Council should develop a Co-production Handbook to guide the involvement of local stakeholders and the public in the design and delivery of active travel projects.		
12. That the Council should use interactive online maps and other tools to keep the public informed about the progress of projects and to gather their input.		
13. That the Council should work transparently with local communities to complete the open data mapping and to adopt the Active Travel England Guidance on Best Practice Community Consultation and Engagement.		
14. That the Council should use the Futures Toolkit, adopting tools such as strategic forecasting, backcasting, and forecasting, so as to become more comfortable with uncertainty in implementing its vision-led approach.		
15. That the Council should ensure, in its development and implementation of Movement and Place Strategies, that data is used as a key strategic tool with mode share targets being widely used.		
16. That the Council ensures vision-led planning is data-led with projects at all levels being assessed against modal share targets.		

Overview & Scrutiny Recommendation Response Pro forma

17. That the Council should work to ensure that strategic funding for active travel is a priority for Enterprise Oxfordshire.		
18. That the Council should ensure that there is sufficient capacity for future versions of the Oxfordshire Infrastructure Strategy to be measured against modal share targets and the LTCP's headline targets.		
19. That the Council should ensure further resource is provided to the active travel teams to enable it to participate in developer fora in order to engage developers at an early stage and to highlight the importance of mode share targets in their considerations.		

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Divisions Affected – All

CABINET
17 June 2025

– Section 106 Improvement Project Update
Report of Place Overview & Scrutiny Committee

RECOMMENDATION

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

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

   b) Agree that, once Cabinet has responded, relevant officers will continue to provide each meeting of the Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee with a brief written update on progress made against actions committed to in response to the recommendations for 12 months, or until they are completed (if earlier).

REQUIREMENT TO RESPOND

2.   In accordance with section 9FE of the Local Government Act 2000, the Place Overview & Scrutiny Committee requires that, within two months of the consideration of this report, the Cabinet publish a response to this report and any recommendations.

INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

3.   At its meeting on 23 April 2025, the Committee considered a report updating it on the Section 106 Improvement Programme.

4.   This was the second meeting of the 2024/25 municipal year when the Committee considered the topic as a substantive topic as the Committee was keen to monitor and scrutinise the programme to ensure that it was delivering the improvements members across the Council had desired. The Committee had previously established that the Council had been very effective in collecting developer contributions but that there had been problems

encountered in spending them efficiently. The report set out the changes that had been implemented during phase 2 of the improvement programme which had focused on accelerating current delivery and a more transparent and systematic approach for the future. Phase 3 was beginning in April 2025 and would see a shift of focus to delivery and implementation of key projects.

5. The Committee was grateful to Cllr Judy Roberts, Cabinet member for Infrastructure and Development Strategy, and to Robin Rogers, Director of Economy and Place, and Paul Fermer, Director of Environment and Highways, for attending to present the report.

6. The Committee was grateful, too, to officers in Finance and Information Technology for attending and welcomed Tom Scholes, Operational Manager for Data Intelligence, Jason Sherwood, Head of Regulatory Planning Enforcement, Natalie Crawford, Capital Programme Manager, Alistair Read, Head of IT, and Melanie Graham, Operational Manager for Business Performance.

SUMMARY

7. The Cabinet member for Infrastructure and Development Strategy reported progress on Section 106 improvements, highlighting better fund delivery, system enhancements, and a new transparency dashboard. Cllr Roberts emphasised the need for flexible legal terms and repurposing leftover funds. The Director of Economy and Place addressed Section 106 funding and delivery system improvements and described having established a project team for better management and transparency.

8. The Operational Manager for Data Intelligence demonstrated how the new dashboard integrating financial, programme management, and Section 106 data for transparency and effective management worked. This was intended to be rolled out as part of the induction process for new and returning members after the May 2025 election. Members welcomed the dashboard and discussed data integration, project tracking, and resource limitations, suggesting appointing a Section 106 officer for better member engagement.

9. The Committee also explored the nature of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for programme elements within phase three of the improvement project which began in April 2025, particularly in relation to oversight.

10. The Committee noted with approval the improvements made so far and looked forward to the results of the improvements being embedded and coming to fruition.

11. The Committee makes seven recommendations, three related to the efficacy of the long-awaited data dashboard, one relating to officer capacity, one to publication of milestones, and one to exploration of Local Development Orders being employed more widely. The seventh celebrates the learning that has arisen as a result of the improvement project and calls for it to be disseminated across the organisation.

RECOMMENDATIONS

12.   The s.106 dashboard was warmly welcomed by members of the Committee and will clearly be of use to all members so that they are able to easily monitor projects in their divisions. The Committee was pleased to note that its questions at the Committee meeting on 13 November 2024 had been taken on board to the extent that they were largely answered by the dashboard's functionality.

13.   Nonetheless, the Committee also identified some additional points which the dashboard could incorporate to make it even more useful.

14.   The first issue was the detail of contractual agreements. Funding is released at certain trigger points during infrastructure projects, depending on the detail of the contract. The Committee established that, whilst that data is available in the Master Gov system, it is not currently integrated into the dashboard as a factor. Its inclusion within the dashboard would be of value to members who could then monitor more closely progress within their divisions and would be welcomed by them. The Committee therefore recommends that this be done.

Recommendation 1: That the Council should include more detail of contractual agreements, including trigger points for funding release, within the s.106 dashboard.

15.   The second element that the Committee considers could be improved is showing the links between infrastructure projects and the Local Transport and Connectivity Plan (LTCP) and its targets – particularly whether or not new infrastructure is helping to meet those targets. The Committee recognised that this would involve some work if it was not currently possible to filter infrastructure projects by mode of transport but was assured this was technically possible. Similarly, the impact of a particular project on the likely impact on mode share should also be included.

16.   This level of integration would help members to monitor but also to show the strategic direction. Recording it in this way would also save considerable time and effort in the long-term because answers could be more readily available and remove the need for discrete investigation to ask about a particular project.

Recommendation 2: That the Council should include information within the dashboard linking projects to LTCP targets, including modal share.

17.   The benefits of wider dataset integration – so that the various data the Council holds in different places are able to be manipulated and monitored more readily within one system - are clear but the Committee recognises that this will have resourcing implications. The Committee was assured that the Council was committed to the successful integration of more and more datasets so that the dashboard is as useful as possible. For it to successfully

do so, though, it will need to ensure that budgets are available for officer time and capacity to prioritise that integration.

Recommendation 3: That the Council should prioritise dataset integration to enhance the dashboard's capabilities.

18.   The Committee explored the benefits to developments of members being aware of discussions between the Council and developers at an early stage pre-application but also, and perhaps more importantly, officers being involved with developer fora when considering and planning developments. That enables the Council to influence proposals so that they are aligned with, for example, the LTCP and that they reflect Council policies.

19.   Whilst it is not unusual for officers to attend them, it is not universal and the Committee recognises that this is largely a resourcing issue: there is a finite amount of officer time. However, the early prioritisation of attendance at, and engagement with, these fora would – the Committee considers – reap benefits.

Recommendation 4: That the Council should ensure that there is sufficient officer resource to be represented at developer fora.

20.   The Committee noted the increased efficiency that has arisen as a result of the improvement project and noted that the report set out that Key Performance Indicators would be developed as part of the implementation of continuous monitoring and performance improvement. The Committee was supportive of proposed metrics given as examples (namely, the percentages of funds committed within set timescales; Number of schemes delivered on schedule; Overall spend vs collection rate; Level of fund expiry risk) but would like to encourage milestones and targets within those metrics.

21.   The example provided in Committee was that increasing funding to accelerate delivery could legitimately be marked as achieved were an additional £1.00 per year to be provided. Greater granularity with challenging targets and milestones along the journey would be to provide a benchmark and ensure that the Council remains on track and maintains an healthy pressure.

Recommendation 5: That the Council should publish milestones and targets for its Key Performance Indicators related to the s.106 Improvement Project.

22.   The Committee discussed the benefits of using Local Development Orders[1] (LDOs). These allow a flexibility which can potentially help to accelerate delivery of appropriate development. The Committee accepted that these are not always going to be appropriate and heard it explained that they are very complex agreements to deliver. However, it was also explained that they can give businesses confidence about their plans and can also be used to help

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[1] https://www.local.gov.uk/pas/topics/local-development-orders/local-development-orders

release s.106 contributions and deliver infrastructure more quickly.

23. The Committee recognises that that there are both advantages and disadvantages to using LDOs and that it not be universally appropriate to employ them and – indeed – that it might be inappropriate in the main. However, given the benefits established, the Committee is of the view that the Council should continue to explore their benefits and to consider their wider use.

Recommendation 6: That the Council should continue to explore the benefits of Local Development Orders and whether they should be used more widely.

24. The Committee makes no apology for the amount of time it has spent considering this topic. Its scrutiny has drawn attention and focus to an issue that needed highlighting. That attention and focus has resulted in considerable achievements on the Council's part in becoming more efficient and effective due to the improvement project. The Committee commends those who have worked so diligently and looks forward to continuing to monitor progress.

25. The learning that has arisen is considerable and the Committee thinks that should be made known more widely and that, also, its benefits and examples should be disseminated across the organisation.

Recommendation 7: That the Council should celebrate the learning that has arisen from the s.106 Improvement Project and disseminate it across the organisation.

FURTHER CONSIDERATION

26. It will be for the 2025/2026 Committee members to decide whether or not to continue scrutinising the improvement programme but it is expected that they will do so.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

27. Under Part 6.2 (13) (a) of the Constitution Scrutiny has the following power: 'Once a Scrutiny Committee has completed its deliberations on any matter a formal report may be prepared on behalf of the Committee and when agreed by them the Proper Officer will normally refer it to the Cabinet for consideration.

28. Under Part 4.2 of the Constitution, the Cabinet Procedure Rules, s 2 (3) iv) the Cabinet will consider any reports from Scrutiny Committees.

Anita Bradley

Director of Law and Governance and Monitoring Officer

Annex: Pro-forma Response Template

Background papers: None

Other Documents: None

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

June 2025

Overview & Scrutiny Recommendation Response Pro forma

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Date response requested:[2]   **17 June 2025**

Response to report:
Enter text here.

Response to recommendations:

Recommendation	Accepted, rejected or partially accepted	Proposed action (if different to that recommended) and indicative timescale (unless rejected)
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[1] Date of the meeting at which report/recommendations were received
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Overview & Scrutiny Recommendation Response Pro forma

2. That the Council should include information within the dashboard linking projects to LTCP targets, including modal share.		
3. That the Council should prioritise dataset integration to enhance the dashboard's capabilities.		
4. That the Council should ensure that there is sufficient officer resource to be represented at developer fora.		
5. That the Council should publish milestones and targets for its Key Performance Indicators related to the s.106 Improvement Project.		
6. That the Council should continue to explore the benefits of Local Development Orders and whether they should be used more widely.		
7. That the Council should celebrate the learning that has arisen from the s.106 Improvement Project and disseminate it across the organisation.		

CABINET

Date – 17 June 2025

Home to School Transport & Post 16 Travel Policies 2025/26

Report by Director of Children Services

RECOMMENDATION

1.   The Cabinet is RECOMMENDED TO

a)   ENDORSE the recommendations following analysis of the public consultation feedback in relation to the Home to School Travel and Transport Policy 2025/26 onwards for Reception to Year 11.

b)   AGREE to the adoption of the proposed Post 16 Transport Policy Statement Academic Year 2026/27, which reflects the consultation analysis recommendations to not introduce a contribution charge for those eligible for support under this policy.

Executive Summary

2.   Based on the consultation feedback, benchmarking analysis and the Council's desire to deliver effective and efficient services the following recommendations have been identified:

(a)   Officer recommendation is for the Council to adopt the updated policies for Home to School Travel & Transport 2025/26 onwards for Reception to Year 11, and the Post 16 Transport Policy Statement Academic Year 2026/27 (see appendix). These policies reflect the original review of the existing policies and the feedback received through the consultation, including the implementation of review area 1 which aimed to improve language, format and user experience, whilst ensuring alignment with DfE guidelines. It also incorporated improved wording and information within the policy (review area 2 and 3) which focussed specifically on Direct Travel Payments and Alternative Education Provision travel.

(b)   Officers have also recommended that the Council does not introduce contribution charges (review area 4) for young people in Post 16 education using travel provided by the Council based on the feedback received through the consultation and in recognition of the potential impact. The introduction of a contribution charge should also continue to be reviewed for future consideration and possible implementation in reflection of any existing issues and/or circumstances changing in the future.

3. The existing Home to School Transport Policies were last consulted upon in 2014 (Compulsory School Age) and 2018 (Post 16). DfE Guidance was last updated in 2019 for Post 16 Travel and in 2023 and 2024 for Compulsory School Age.

4. Local authorities should keep their school travel policy under regular review to ensure it continues to meet local needs and comply with statutory requirements. Due to the significant time that had passed since the previous consultations, a review of the policies was undertaken in 2024. The purpose of the review was to ensure alignment with the Council's statutory obligations and identify existing areas of discretionary provision.

5. The review, which included engagement from the OxPCF SEND Listening Event in October 2024, parents/families, officer feedback, and feedback from committees/sprint groups, identified that the current policies are hard to understand, and the locating of specific information is difficult. This creates frustration and contributes to difficulty establish consistent and understandable expectations of the service.

6. The primary focus of the update to the policies was to improve the accessibility of the Policy documents by improving its structure, flow, and language. The purpose was to improve effectiveness and usefulness of the documents for both officers, families, schools, and other key stakeholders.

7. During the review it was identified that the existing policies include a few areas of discretionary provision. This included:

    (a) extended support for children and young people living in "split villages",
    (b) the delivery of the spare seat scheme,
    (c) and the provision of travel support for young people in Post 16 education free of charge

8. The consultation included a proposal to introduce a contribution charge for Post 16 travel. Split villages and the spare seat scheme were also included within the consultation, but only as an early engagement to seek understanding of the perception of the public about these two areas of extended provision, beyond the Council's statutory obligations.

Public Consultation
9. The public consultation ran between 23 January 2025 and 9 March 2025 (11:59pm) It included the proposed refreshed policies, the proposal to introduce contribution charges to Post 16 travel, and explored early engagement/feedback about existing discretionary provision.

10. The consultation focused on seeking views on the following areas:

    Review area 1: Updates to the format and language used in our home to school transport policy and our post 16 transport policy statement to improve customer understanding, awareness and overall experience.

Review area 2: Specific updates to the use and application of direct travel payments in our home to school transport policy to ensure the language is more user friendly and consistent with current government guidelines.

Review area 3: Specific updates to our home to school transport policy for travel arrangements to Alternative Education Provision settings to meet current government guidelines and to reflect Oxfordshire's current alternative provision arrangements.

Review area 4: Proposals to ask for a financial contribution for post 16 pupils with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) for travel to post 16 settings.

As well as consulting on the proposed changes the consultation also explored views on the following discretionary elements of both policies where proposals for change had not yet been developed:

Review area 5: Discretionary travel at split village locations
Review area 6: Spare seat scheme

11. During the consultation, members of the public were able to seek clarification and further understanding of the proposals through four engagement events. The consultation received 81 registrations to attend the events.

12. Feedback from the public regarding the proposals was received through an online survey. 649 surveys were submitted during the consultation period.

13. Updates to the format and language (**Review Area 1**) of the policies to improve understanding, awareness and general experience receive significant support with 66% of respondents either significantly or somewhat approving of the proposed changes.

14. Significant support was also received for **Review Area's 2 and 3**, which related to specific updates to wording within the policy in relation to Direct Travel Payments (DTP's) and travel support for those in Alternative Education Provision. 63% were in support of the updated wording for Review Area 2, and 39% for Review Area 3, 42% neither agreed or disagreed with Review Area 3 proposals.

15. **Review Area 4** was the final proposed change, relating to the introduction of a contribution charge for young learners with an EHCP in Post 16 education where the Council provides support with travel. 60% of respondents disagreed with the proposals.

16. The primary reason for disagreeing with the proposal is the affordability and financial impact of the proposal. Those individuals and families affected are often associated with additional costs which other families may not experience.

17. Feedback also indicated that the financial impact would also have significant impact on a young person's ability to continue their education with respondents indicating the proposal would create a barrier to education.

18. In the consultation it was explored whether the Council should review the support provided to families living in 'split villages', which is discretionary support currently being offered, and if the Council was to make changes to this support what would the impact be. Feedback from the consultation indicated that 43% believed there would be a negative impact on the community if this support was reduced. If this support was withdrawn completely then 55% of responses indicated this would have a negative impact.

19. The consultation also explored the existing discretionary support available through the selling of spare seats. Feedback indicated that if the Council considered to reduce the service in the future, then 65% felt this would have a negative impact. If the Council was to explore increasing the contribution paid to access a spare seat, then 53% indicated this would have a negative impact.

20. Due to the feedback received in relation to Review Area 4 a number of mitigations were considered to explore to understand if the concerns/impact of the proposal could be reduced. This included:

    (a) Phasing of the proposal for new Post 16 learners, protecting existing learners
    (b) Enabling monthly payment option in addition to the original termly payment proposal
    (c) Removing the higher rate contribution band of £1,015 per annum to create a single contribution requirement of £546 per annum irrespective of distance from home to education setting. Waiver to remain for low-income households.
    (d) Reducing contribution to £350 per annum, irrespective of distance from home to education setting, with waiver removed for low-income households.

21. After a review of possible mitigation measures and consultation feedback it is recommended that the original proposal for Review Area 4 is withdrawn and support continuing to be made available to those meeting the agree eligibility criteria without the need for a contribution charge.

22. Proposals from Review Area 1, 2 and 3 are recommended for implementation and publishing in the policies for the 2025/26 academic year.

Background

23. Oxfordshire County Council as a local authority, has a statutory duty to provide free travel for children and young people of compulsory school age (5-16 years of age) who meet those thresholds detailed in legislation. These thresholds are set out in sections 508A, 508B, 508C and 509D and Schedule 25B of the Education Act 1996 (as amended by Part 6 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006).

24. Compulsory School age is set out in section 8 of the Education Act 1996 and the Education (Start of Compulsory School Age) Order 1998 as follows: a child reaches compulsory school age on the prescribed day following their fifth

birthday, or on the fifth birthday if it falls on a prescribed day. The prescribed days are 31 December, 31 March and 31 August. A child ceases to be of compulsory school age on the last Friday in June in the academic year in which they reach age 16.

25.   The Education Act 1996 duty applies to all local authorities in England in respect of arrangements for young people (over compulsory school age) aged 16-18 and those continuing learners up to age 25 with EHC plans who started their programme of learning before their 19th birthday. There are also duties that apply to local authorities in England in respect of arrangements for adults aged 19 and over, who started their programme of learning after their 19th birthday. The legislation therefore gives local authorities the discretion to determine what transport and financial support are necessary to facilitate young people's attendance at their setting.

26.   Where the Council is proposing changes to the Compulsory School Age Travel Policy and the Annual Post Transport Policy Statement, and those changes may affect eligibility for travel/transport then the Council should consult locally.

Service Delivery & Spend

27.   In Oxfordshire the total number of statutory school aged pupils is circa 100,000. The number of pupils conveyed to school every day are set out in the tables below:

Table 1. Numbers of pupils using Home to School Transport

Category of Passenger	2022/23	2023/24
Mainstream	6605	6871 (+4%)
SEND	1,162	1,428 (+19%)
Spare Seat	1105	1314
Total	**8,872**	**9,613**

28.   As demand for travel support and provision has grown spend in this area continues to grow annually.

Table 2. Annual Spend of Home to School Transport as per Supported Transport IBC

Category of Spend	2022/23 Actual £'000	2023/24 Actual £'000	2024/25 Outturn £'000	2025/26 Budget £'000
Mainstream	£7,665	£7,551	£9,468	£9,700
SEND	£20,485	£24,721	£30,228	£33,393
Total Spend	**£28,151**	**£32,271**	**£39,695**	**NA**
Total Budget	**£26,381**	**£29,139**	**£39,899**	**£43,093**

29.   SEND and Mainstream transport spend reflects the growth in passenger numbers for each category of spend.

Cost Efficiencies and Savings

30.   Management of demand is a key to ensure efficient and effective delivery of transport services, with significant increases in cost associated for each child or young person using the service.

31.   A significant proportion of demand and cost pressures are not influenceable by the Council. Children and young people meeting the statutory eligibility criteria are entitled to free travel support, whilst economic fluctuations directly impact the cost of travel arrangements the Council makes on behalf of those entitled children and young people.

32.   Provision of travel for children and young people, exceeding the Council's statutory obligations continues to be under review. Current cost pressure and potential benefits have been identified and captured within the directorates savings targets, any alteration to planned activity will require the identification of an alternative means to deliver unrealised savings.

33.   Proposed changes to existing policies outlined in the recent public consultation were forecast to reduce service spend in the Children, Education and Families Directorate, by £207k per annum.

Integrated Transport Delivery Hub Programme

34.   Demand management activity directly impacts the organisation and provision of transport services. Property & Assets directorate has responsibility for delivery of Home to School transport services.

35.   The objective of the Integrated Transport Delivery Hub Programme is to address the ever-growing pressures being generated across ASC, CEF and Supported Transport and the proposed overall budgetary reduction of £5m over 3 years.

36.   To effectively manage spend in this area the Council must ensure that it affectively assesses each application to identify the most appropriate form of travel, provision of public transport. Alternative/independent travel options continue to be the most cost-effective form of travel offered by the Council.

37.   The Council must also ensure that any provision is effectively organised and co-ordinated to maximise the use of available resources and minimise unnecessary travel, such as dead mileage or under capacity vehicle/routes.

38.   The Council must also ensure that it effectively procures and sources travel arrangements to secure value for money.

39.   In total the programme has an agreed savings target of £5m to be delivered over a 3 year period. This will support the Council to sustainably deliver this service within the agreed budgetary financial constraints. Without this action the service will continue to be delivered, exceeding agreed budgets adding financial

pressure to the service whilst increasing risk to other support provided by the Council by other service areas.

Policy Review

40.   The Council last consulted on its Home to School Transport Policy for Compulsory Aged Children in 2014, whilst it last consulted on its policy for Post 16 Travel in 2018.

41.   A legal review of both existing policies relating to Home to School and Post 16 Travel was undertaken between April and July 2024 to identify improvements and to ensure alignment with the current statutory guidance and legislation.

42.   Due to the significant time since the policies were last consulted upon it was agreed by the service that the refreshed policies should be consulted upon in order to seek views from the public and key stakeholders/users of the service. This should include feedback in relation to existing discretionary travel arrangements to explore whether they continue to be necessary and a sustainable use of Council resources.

43.   The service review of the policy identified that the majority of the policy detailed the statutory obligations of the Council, the remainder contained a few discretionary elements, these include:

(a) Spare Seat Scheme
(b) Split Villages
(c) Travel operations arrangements such as Personal Transport Budgets, Independent Travel Training

44.   The policy review also identified a requirement to update the description and detail in relation to travel support for those children and young people attending Alternative Education Provision (AEP).

Consultation of Home to School and Post 16 Transport Policies

45.   Due to the time that has elapsed since the existing Home to School and Post 16 Transport policies were last consulted upon, it was necessary to consult to ensure they continued to remain appropriate and effective.

46.   Feedback from key stakeholders outside of the consultation period previously indicated that the format, language and detail impacted individuals' ability to understand what support was available and the responsibility of the Council, families, Schools and transport providers.

47.   It was decided that the Council would consult on the refreshed policies, and in recognition of the Council's financial situation it was agreed that discretionary elements of both policies should also be consulted upon to establish if they remain a necessity, whether alterations were required, and whether they continue to be appropriate for the Council to support.

Consultation Detail

48.   As per the DfE Guidelines, there is a requirement to consult for a minimum of 28 working days, which should be held during term time. In accordance with these guidelines consultation ran from the 23 January 2025 to 9 March 2025.

49.   The consultation's objective was to obtain the views of the following aspects of Home to School & Post 16 Transport:

- **Review area 1:** Updates to the format and language used in our home to school transport policy and our post 16 transport policy statement to improve customer understanding, awareness and overall experience.
- **Review area 2:** Specific updates to the use and application of direct travel payments in our home to school transport policy to ensure the language is more user friendly and consistent with current government guidelines.
- **Review area 3:** Specific updates to our home to school transport policy and our post 16 transport policy statement for travel arrangements to Alternative Education Provision settings to meet current government guidelines and to reflect Oxfordshire's current Alternative Education Provision arrangements.
- **Review area 4:** Proposals to ask for a financial contribution for post 16 pupils with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) for travel to post 16 settings.

As well as consulting on proposed changes mentioned above, the consultation also targeted responses to explore public views on the following discretionary elements of both policies. Proposals had not been developed for the consultation and review areas were included to inform future thinking with no changes planned or developed. These included:

- **Review area 5:** Discretionary travel at split village locations
- **Review area 6:** Spare seat scheme

50.   The consultation was accessible via Lets Talk using the following link https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/hometoschool . It provided the public with details of the consultation, the draft policies, details of the proposals, access to the consultation survey, and access links to book attendance at scheduled engagement events.

51.   Consultation document, information & survey were available online, it also included options for the public to request printed versions, alternative formats and an Easy Read version.

52.   Publicity of the consultation involved directed mailing to existing service users via post and email. The consultation was also promoted through Member Briefing, School News, Your Oxfordshire, and via promotion through social media. OxPCF provided support by promoting the consultation by directly messaging their members and through social media.

53.   To support survey responses and improve understanding of the consultation, four engagement events took place, with events taking place during lunchtimes

and evenings. There were 81 registrations to attend these events although actual attendance was approximately 30.

54. Follow up communication was also undertaken directly to those who registered for the events to ensure both those attending and those that decided to not attend, had the necessary information to allow them to submit their views via the survey.

55. The consultation pack, survey, and draft policies can be found in the annex of this paper.

Consultation Analysis

56. A total of 649 surveys were submitted in response to the consultation. 173 of the surveys related to a family with a child/young person with SEND, 61 from individuals living in an existing 'split village', and 116 from those currently using a spare seat to access their education setting.

57. **Review Area 1:** Updates to the format and language used in our home to school transport policy and our post 16 transport policy statement to improve customer understanding, awareness and overall experience. We propose to update both documents to: Improve understanding of our home to school transport policy and our post 16 transport policy statement amongst families/stakeholders. More clearly define requirements and explanations to minimise instances of misunderstanding/misinterpretation. Improving the overall customer experience of these policies. Respondents were asked to indicate to what extent they agreed or disagreed with the proposed changes.

Response	Total Responses	%
Strongly Agree	236	37%
Agree Somewhat	188	29%
Neither Agree or Disagree	161	25%
Disagree Somewhat	5	1%
Strongly Disagree	17	3%
Not Sure	37	6%

Table 3

58. **Review Area 2:** We proposed to refresh the wording in the home to school transport policy to align with current provision and updated guidelines from the DfE. We also propose to update the wording to: Improve understanding of direct travel payments related to mileage rates amongst families/stakeholders. Including more clearly defined requirements and explanations of how decisions in relation to how direct travel payments are made, to minimise instances of misunderstanding/misinterpretation.

There will be no impact to anyone currently receiving direct transport payments as a result of implementation of the proposed changes to the policy. Those responding were requested to indicate to what extent they agreed or disagreed with the proposed changes.

Response	Total Responses	%
Strongly Agree	196	31%
Agree Somewhat	205	32%
Neither Agree or Disagree	176	27%
Disagree Somewhat	5	1%
Strongly Disagree	14	2%
Not Sure	45	7%

Table 4

59. **Review Area 3:** Specific updates to our home to school transport policy were shared in relation to travel arrangements to Alternative Education Provision settings, reflecting current government guidelines and Oxfordshire's current Alternative Education Provision arrangements. Specifically to reflect that alternative provision is now not solely based a Meadowbrook College.

Respondents were asked to indicate to what extent they agreed or disagreed with the proposed changes.

Response	Total Responses	%
Strongly Agree	137	21%
Agree Somewhat	116	18%
Neither Agree or Disagree	266	42%
Disagree Somewhat	6	1%
Strongly Disagree	13	2%
Not Sure	101	16%

Table 5

60. **Review Area 4**: This proposal explored the introduction of financial contributions for post 16 pupils with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) travelling to post 16 settings.

We proposed to introduce a contribution charge for young people in post 16 education that require provision of travel arrangements from the council, seeking feedback to understand what the impact might be on families, schools, and wider community.

The proposed charge for Post 16 travel was as follows:

- Less than 3 miles from home to school/college £546.00 per annum (£182.00 per term)
- 3 miles and over from home to school/college £1,015.92 per annum (£338.64 per term)

The proposed rates mirrored the cost of the council's spare seat scheme, including the existing waiver of a contribution due to low-family income. Those responding were asked to indicate to what extent they agreed or disagreed with the proposed changes.

Response	Total Responses	%
Strongly Agree	47	7%
Agree Somewhat	85	13%
Neither Agree or Disagree	95	15%
Disagree Somewhat	82	13%
Strongly Disagree	302	47%
Not Sure	32	5%

Table 6

61. A review of the responses disagreeing with the proposal indicated two key reasons for their response. This was that the proposal was not financially viable for families, and that the proposal would create a barrier to education.

62. **Review Area 5:** Discretionary travel is currently provided at split village locations. Through the consultation the Council explored whether this support should continue to be available for pupils living in 'split villages' and continue to enable them to access travel support to either the nearest suitable school or the designated/catchment school for the village/area.

This discretionary provision for split villages has been in place since the last consultation in 2014. In the consultation we explored if this support continues to be necessary, and if it were to be changed or withdrawn, what the impact might be on families, schools, the council, and wider community.

As part of this early exploration, we are also asked for views on whether the council should continue to provide discretionary transport support to two destinations in split villages locations(catchment school and nearest suitable school), whilst other locations in the county can only access this support to a single destination (their nearest suitable school).

No proposals for split villages have been developed. Should these come forward in the future, we will formally consult on them before any decisions are made.

Respondents were asked to indicate the potential impact on families, school and wider community if proposals were developed (in the future) to **reduce** this service?

Response	Total Responses	%
Significant Positive Impact	13	2%
Somewhat Positive Impact	15	2%
Neither Positive or Negative Impact	133	21%
Somewhat Negative Impact	97	15%
Significant Negative Impact	181	28%
Not Sure	203	32%

Table 7

63.   In the future, if proposals were developed to withdraw this service, what would the potential impact be on families, schools, and wider community?

Response	Total Responses	%
Significant Positive Impact	17	3%
Somewhat Positive Impact	4	1%
Neither Positive or Negative Impact	87	14%
Somewhat Negative Impact	79	12%
Significant Negative Impact	276	43%
Not Sure	176	28%

Table 8

64.   **Review Area 6:** Early exploration of whether the discretionary selling of spare capacity seats on existing home to school transport services (which the Council organises) should continue into the future.

The discretionary provision of the spare seat scheme has been in place for many years. In the consultation is was explored, at an early stage, if this support should continue to be made available in its current format and approach. This included whether the financial support underpinning the scheme should be either adjusted to make the scheme sustainable moving forward, or whether financial support should be withdrawn.

As part of this early exploration, the Council also wanted to understand what the impact might be on families, schools, and wider community if the spare seats scheme was to be changed or withdrawn. No proposals for changing the spare seats have been developed.

Respondents were asked, if proposals were developed to change the level of spare seat contribution (increase), what would the potential impact be on families, schools, and wider community?

Response	Total Responses	%
Significant Positive Impact	27	4%
Somewhat Positive Impact	31	5%
Neither Positive or Negative Impact	84	13%
Somewhat Negative Impact	121	19%
Significant Negative Impact	215	34%
Not Sure	156	25%

Table 9

65.   Respondents were also asked to provide feedback based on the Council developing proposals to reduce this service, what might the potential impact be on families, schools, and wider community?

Response	Total Responses	%
Significant Positive Impact	12	2%
Somewhat Positive Impact	8	1%
Neither Positive or Negative Impact	65	10%
Somewhat Negative Impact	108	17%
Significant Negative Impact	305	48%
Not Sure	134	21%

Table 10

Local Authority Benchmarking

66. A review of Post 16 travel provided by other Local Authorities was also undertaken, to enable comparison of the Council's current approach and the proposal detailed within the consultation.

67. A review of 20 County Council's and 12 Unitary Council's in England was undertaken, reviewing their latest Post 16 Travel Policy Statements. A list of those Council's reviewed is detailed in the table below:

Cambridgeshire County Council	Derbyshire County Council	Devon County Council	East Sussex County Council
Essex County Council	Gloucestershire County Council	Hampshire County Council	Hertfordshire County Council
Kent County Council	Lancashire County Council	Leicestershire County Council	Lincolnshire County Council
Norfolk County Council	Nottinghamshire County Council	Staffordshire County Council	Suffolk County Council
Surrey County Council	Warwickshire County Council	West Sussex County Council	Worcestershire County Council

Table 11: List of County Council's Reviewed

Bath & North Somerset Council	Bedford Borough Council	Buckinghamshire Council	Central Bedfordshire Council
Cumberland Council	Durham County Council	North Somerset Council	Northumberland County Council
Shropshire Council	Somerset Council	West Berkshire Council	Wiltshire Council

Table 12: List of Unitary Council's Reviewed

68. 85% of County Council's reviewed require a contribution to be paid before any travel arrangements are finalised, as part of the assessment and eligibility process. From the sample of Unitary Council's reviewed, only 58% of those Council's required a contribution payment to be made.

69.   A summary from the Council's reviewed is listed in the table 13 below, detailing the number of Councils that charge a contribution, the lowest/highest contribution charges identified, and the average charge from review.

Type of Council	No. Council's Review	No. Council's Requesting Contribution Charge (SEND)	Lowest Contribution Charge	Highest Contribution Charge	Average Contribution Charge
County	20	17	£438 Per Annum	£1,632 Per Annum	£787.43 Per Annum
Unitary	12	7	£464 Per Annum	£1,300 Per Annum	£902.57 Per Annum
Total	**32**	**24**	**£438 Per Annum**	**£1,632 Per Annum**	**£821.01 Per Annum**

Table 13

70.   Hertfordshire County Council had the highest single rate fare. Derbyshire County Council had the lowest single rate fare. Central Bedfordshire Council, the highest Unitary single rate fare, Bedford Borough Council the lowest Unitary single rate fare.

Contribution Rate Type – Single Rate vs Mileage Banding

71.   22 out of the 24 Council's reviewed who request a contribution payment use a single rate that applies to all young people applying for support. Irrespective of the distance travelled, the mode or transport or individual circumstances, everyone pays the same contribution. Hampshire County Council and Warwickshire County Council use a mileage rate to calculate the contribution rate based on the distance between home and their education setting.

Discounted Contributions – Low Income Threshold

72.   From the 24 Councils who require a contribution payment to be made, 14 enable a discounted rate to be paid if specific criteria are met. In the case of these 14 Council's, the young person or family would need to evidence they meet the agreed low income threshold set by the Council.

73.   Across the 14 Council who offer a reduction of contribution, the contribution reduced on average by 44%, if agreed criteria is met.

74.   The remaining 10 Councils who request a contribution payment but do not offer a reduction in contribution, expect the full value of the contribution to be paid before eligibility is finalised and travel arrangements are put in place.

Officer Recommendations

75.   Based on the consultation feedback, benchmarking analysis and the Council's desire to deliver effective and efficient services the following recommendations have been identified:

(a)   It is recommended that the Council adopts the updated policies for Home to School Travel & Transport 2025/26 onwards for Reception to

Year 11, and the Post 16 Transport Policy Statement Academic Year 2026/27. This is based on the review of the existing policies and the consultation feedback of the proposed policies (see appendix), which supports the aims to achieve the improved understanding of Home to School Transport Services, including updated clarity in relation to Direct Travel Payments and Alternative Education Provision travel.

(b)   It is recommended that the Council does not introduce contribution charges for young people in Post 16 education using travel provided by the Council. The introduction of a contribution charge should also continue to be reviewed for future consideration and possible implementation in reflection of any existing issues and/or circumstances changing in the future.

Corporate Policies and Priorities

76.   The consultation of the refreshed Home to School Transport and Post 16 Travel policies and the review of the Council's discretionary provision enables the service to continue to support the Council's existing priorities.

77.   Undertaking the proposed activity will enable the service to ensure both policies create opportunities for children and young people to reach their full potential by supporting travel and access in accordance with the Council's statutory obligations and discretionary powers.

Financial Implications

78.   The proposals detailed within this paper maintain the existing financial pressure currently placed on the Home to School Transport budget, which is currently presenting a outturn for 2024/25 of £39.6m from a budget of £39.8m. The proposals do not create additional pressure based on current service demand, if demand is maintained. However, there is forecast demand growth based on increasing pupil numbers and therefore any existing pressure is expected to be maintained.

79.   The original consultation proposal for the introduction of a contribution charge for Post 16 travel was forecast to create a reduction in budget pressure of £207k per annum.

80.   Alternative improvements will need to be identified within the service to mitigate the impact of not realising the benefit of introducing contribution towards travel costs for Post 16 pupils.

Comments checked by: Emma Wren, Finance Business Partner – Education. Date – 15/05/25

Legal Implications

81. The changes proposed during the Consultation and supported through the feedback have been adopted in the proposed policies recommended for adoption in this paper.

82. They continue to reflect the statutory obligations of the Council in relation to support provided for Home to School Travel and access to Post 16 travel. The improvements provided to the policies during this process provides greater clarity and understanding, whilst providing a robust framework for officers to work to when undertaking eligibility assessments and delivering the service.

   Comments checked by: Leanne Schrouder, Locum SEN and Education Solicitor
   Date – 15/05/25

Staff Implications

83. Based on the proposed recommendations, no staffing implications have been identified.

   Comments checked by: Michelle Higgs, HRBP Schools and Education
   Date – 14/5/25

Equality & Inclusion Implications

84. The changes being proposed continue to maintain access to education for children and young people in Oxfordshire. The Councils position of continuing to provide its statutory duties remain unaltered, this maintains the support available for protected groups within the framework of the Council's statutory duties, whilst the Council continues to maintain the power to exercise is discretion and provide support where it deems necessary through the established application process. In addition to the statutory support available the proposals maintain the existing extended support for families living in designated 'split villages' and the additional support for children and young people not meeting the existing eligibility criteria with the continued option of purchasing of spare seats.

85. The proposals present a neutral impact, with adequate mitigations to continue to support those protect groups within the community to continue to access education within Oxfordshire.

Sustainability Implications

86. No sustainability implications have been identified relating to the proposed recommendations

Risk Management

87. Analysis of the consultation feedback have been considered in the recommendation outlined in this paper. It reflects the concerns raised by respondents that some proposals may impact access to education.

88. Recommendations also support the maintaining of existing support ensuring access to education continues to be supported through the Council's statutory obligations and discretionary powers. Therefore, no new risks have been identified.

89. The Council continues to maintain discretionary powers when deciding whether to provide support, this is managed through the established application and assessment process where families are able to request support even though they fail to meet the stated eligibility criteria, evidence of the family circumstances will be considered on a case-by-case basis based on the evidence provided.

Consultations

90. The consultation of proposals relating to Home to School Transport and Post 16 Travel was live between 23 January 2025 to 9 March 2025.

91. Direct communication was sent to 8000 existing users of the service to make them aware of the consultation, how to access details of the proposals, and how to provide feedback.

92. 4 engagement events were held during the consultation period, providing opportunity for the public to seek further information and clarity on the proposals before submitting their response. Sessions were held during the day and in the evening to accommodate pre-existing commitments and arrangements for those likely interested in the consultation.

93. Feedback in the form of submitted surveys were analysed and considered when finalising recommendations identified in this paper.

Lisa Lyons
Director of Children's Services

Annexes: Annex 1 Consultation Pack
                            Annex 2 Consultation Survey
                            Annex 3 Consultation Feedback Analysis
                            Annex 4 Proposed Home to School Transport Policy
                            Annex 5 Proposed Post 16 Transport Policy Statement
                            2026/27

Annex 6 Equality Impact Assessment

Background papers: Nil

Other Documents: [Existing Compulsory School Age Home to School Transport Policy 2024/25](#)

[Existing Post 16 Transport Policy Statement 2024/25](#)

[Public Information relating to Split Villages (inc. current list)](#)

Contact Officer: Kate Reynolds
Deputy Director of Education
Kate.reynolds@oxfordshire.gov.uk

Stephen Good
Home to School Transport Transformation Programme Manager
Stephen.good@oxfordshire.gov.uk

June 2025

Consultation on Oxfordshire County Council's home to school transport policy and post 16 transport policy statement (2025)

Introduction

We are consulting on proposed changes to our **home to school transport policy** (for compulsory school age pupils), and our **post 16 transport policy statement** (for pupils in post 16 education). These documents set out the statutory (legal) responsibilities that we have, to help with transport to school or another education setting for children and young people living in Oxfordshire.

It is some time since we last thoroughly reviewed and consulted on these policies. Since then, various wording and phrasing has been added or tweaked within the documents to clarify specific aspects or to provide information where this was previously missing. Amendments have also been made to reflect changes in the statutory guidance from the government's department for education (DfE).

Consultation focus

This consultation is seeking views on:

- **Review area 1:** Updates to the format and language used in our home to school transport policy and our post 16 transport policy statement to improve customer understanding, awareness and overall experience.
- **Review area 2:** Specific updates to the use and application of direct travel payments in our home to school transport policy to ensure the language is more user friendly and consistent with current government guidelines.
- **Review area 3:** Specific updates to our home to school transport policy for travel arrangements to Alternative Education Provision settings to meet current government guidelines and to reflect Oxfordshire's current alternative provision arrangements.
- **Review area 4:** Proposals to ask for a financial contribution for post 16 pupils with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) for travel to post 16 settings.

As well as consulting on the proposed changes as mentioned above, we are also exploring views on the following discretionary elements of both policies **where proposals for change have not been developed**:

- **Review area 5:** Discretionary travel at split village locations
- **Review area 6:** Spare seat scheme

Discretionary elements are services that **we are not** required to provide by law. Exploring views and potential impacts of possible future changes to these discretionary elements now, helps us to understand different perspectives.

We understand that some children and young people's needs will mean they will always require travel assistance. Regardless of any future decisions made, we will continue to meet our statutory requirements in relation to school transport.

How to have your say

This consultation is open from Thursday 23 January 2025 and closes at 11:59pm on Sunday 9 March 2025.

You can have your say by:

Please complete our online survey: https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/hometoschool

To request a paper copy of the consultation documents and survey, please email: school.transport@oxfordshire.gov.uk or you can call our customer service team on 01865 792422.

Why your views are important

We have a legal requirement to seek the views of parents, children and young people and others who may be affected by any proposed changes to these policies.

The views you share will be reviewed and analysed to inform changes to the policies and how travel support is delivered. They will also help the us to understand different perspectives on existing discretionary arrangements that we have yet to develop proposals for.

On 29 April 2025, the council's Cabinet will meet to consider and decide about changes to the home to school transport policy (for compulsory age pupils), and the post 16 transport policy statement (for pupils in post 16 education).

About the home to school transport and post-16 transport service

We currently arrange daily transport to school for approximately 9,500 children and young people, including those using the Spare Seat Scheme. Of these, approximately 8,000 attend mainstream school places and approximately 1,500 attend places that provide for their special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) or other needs.

We are required by law to provide school transport, free of charge, to all children and young people of compulsory school age that meet the nationally set distance criteria, where any of the following apply:

- The child is of compulsory school age but under eight years old, and they attend the nearest qualifying schools, and the shortest available walking route is more than two miles.
- The child or young person is eight years old or over, but not above compulsory school age, and they attend their nearest qualifying school, where the shortest available walking route is more than three miles (this is reduced to more than two miles if the child or young person meets low-income criteria).
- Parents apply for a place at their nearest qualifying school and a place is not available. In this situation, assistance would be offered to the next closest school with an available place if the walking distance criteria above are met.
- The walking route to school is classified as an 'unsafe walking route'.
- The child or young person has extra health and education support needs and meets the distance criteria described above for school transport. This also applies where, for reasons of their special educational needs, disabilities or mobility problems, such children and young people cannot reasonably be expected to walk to their nearest suitable school.

Children and young people are of compulsory school age from the beginning of the term following their fifth birthday (or from their fifth birthday if it falls on 31 August, 31 December, or 31 March) until the last Friday in June of the academic year in which they reach 16 years of age.

For post 16 travel, support is available for those in post 16 education who attend their nearest suitable educational placement to their home address and have SEND and the following applies:

- The distance from their home to the educational placement is over 3 miles.
- The distance from their home to the educational placement is less than 3 miles and there is no available walking route.
- It would not be reasonable to expect the young person to walk to the educational placement because of their mobility problems or because of associated health and safety issues related to their learning difficulty and/or disability, or because of a temporary or long-term medical condition.

Part 1: Proposed changes to Oxfordshire County Council's home to school transport policy (for compulsory school age pupils), and the post 16 transport policy statement (for pupils in post 16 education)

Review area 1: Updates to the format and language used in our home to school transport policy and our post 16 transport policy statement to improve customer understanding, awareness and overall experience.

What is the current situation?

As part of the review of both policies, we have listened to feedback from families, schools, council officers and other stakeholders who have told us that our current published documents are difficult to navigate and understand.

What changes are proposed?

We propose to update both documents to:

- Improve understanding of our home to school transport policy and our post 16 transport policy statement amongst families/stakeholders.
- More clearly define requirements and explanations to minimise instances of misunderstanding/misinterpretation.
- Improve the overall customer experience of these policies.

Changes include:
- A new contents page to support easier navigation to key areas of interest for families/stakeholders.
- Clearly labelled sections and sub sections containing all key information in one location.
- Re-ordering content to follow the different stages of the Home to School and Post 16 Travel process that families/stakeholders follow.

All detail continues to reflect the previous agreed policies and existing practice, aligning with the Department for Education guidelines.

Review area 2: Specific updates to the use and application of direct travel payments in our home to school transport policy to ensure the language is more user friendly and consistent with current government guidelines.

What is the current situation?

We currently provide payment in the form of a direct travel payment for some children/young people who meet the agreed eligibility criteria. It enables families to make their own travel arrangements to best fit the family circumstances and the needs of the child/young person. If this travel option is offered to a family and they meet the statutory eligibility, then the family can choose to accept or decline this offer and if they decline, we will make alternative travel arrangements.

The current wording within the existing home to school transport policy and the post 16 transport policy statement is as follows:

> "OCC may agree to the payment of a mileage allowance. The mileage allowance is provided for the child's journey to school and the return to the child's home. The mileage allowance is the HMRC "All Car Rate". If, through a change in circumstances, the payment of the mileage allowance proves no longer to be the cheapest means of transporting the child to school, the alternative means of travel will be offered."

What changes are proposed?

We proposed to refresh the wording in the home to school transport policy to align with current provision and updated guidelines from the DfE. We also propose to update the wording to:

- Improve understanding of direct travel payments related to mileage rates amongst families/stakeholders.
- More clearly define requirements and explanations of how decisions about how direct travel payments are made to minimise instances of misunderstanding/misinterpretation.

There will be no impact to anyone currently receiving direct transport payments as a result of the proposed changes to the policy.

Below is an extract from the updated policy outlining the considerations and structure of a direct travel payment to support access to and from education settings for pupils.

> "To determine the appropriate Direct Travel Payments amount, the following factors, alongside discussion with the family, will be considered:
>
> - the special educational needs and disabilities of the pupil/student
> - the travel distance as measured by the council
> - how the pupil/student might travel to their educational setting
> - the time the journey takes
> - whether the pupil/student is able to travel alone or if they need to

be accompanied
- the age of the pupil/student
- whether any specialist equipment might be required"

"The standard amount that would be awarded with a Direct Travel Payment (DTP) based on the straight-line distance (using the council's transport software system) between the pupils home and their main school and calculated based on the mileage band. It is expected the value of the DTP will support the cost of two return journeys per day of attendance at their educational setting (i.e. all four legs of the journeys). Any variation to the standard amount will be considered as part of the pupil/student's travel assessment. As a Direct Travel Payment can be used in many ways there is no expectation that the parent/carer will use the same route as measured by the council."

"More detailed information on mileage banding and Direct Travel Payment values can be found on our [Direct Travel Payment webpage](#). Banding and values are reviewed annually and updated accordingly to ensure ongoing sustainability and value for money."

Review area 3: Specific updates to our home to school transport policy for travel arrangements to Alternative Education Provision settings to meet current government guidelines and to reflect the Oxfordshire's current Alternative Education Provision arrangements.

What is the current situation?

Alternative Education Provision arrangements have evolved significantly since the home to school transport policy was last consulted upon. With more Alternative Education Provision available within Oxfordshire the existing phrasing within the policies requires updating to reflect the current and future educational arrangements. This will help ensure clarity and consistency of approach when identifying what travel support is available for pupils attending Alternative Education Provision.

There will be no impact to anyone currently receiving transport to Alternative Education Provision as a result of the proposed changes to the policies.

The existing phrasing within the policies is as follows:

"Currently the main provider of alternative education for OCC is Meadowbrook College which is an academy and independent of OCC control. This determination will be made on the same basis as attendance at a mainstream school and the relevant criteria are shown in 20.1 of this policy. No free travel will be provided to school funded days at an alternative education provider."

"Therefore, after permanent exclusion from school, a child allocated an OCC-funded, short-term place at Meadowbrook College (or a similar establishment) will receive free travel if that child:

- Lives over the statutory walking distance from the setting attended
- Lives under the statutory walking distance from the institution but the route is unsafe to walk, even if accompanied by an adult
- Meets the eligibility criteria related to family income"

What changes are proposed?

To reflect that Alternative Education Provision is now not solely based at Meadowbrook College, we proposed to update the wording in the policies as follows:

> "Where a pupil's placement has broken down and the pupil continues to be maintained on the school roll (of the pupil's original school) pending next placement but attends an Alternative Education Provision to ensure continued access to education (similar to S61/S19) then assistance with travel may be agreed to the nearest suitable provision."

> "Both the school and the council must agree and confirm that the original placement has broken down, and this is confirmed by both the school and the council. Any support with travel in these circumstances will be reviewed and agreed on a case-by-case basis in consideration of the established eligibility criteria for Home to School Transport assessments."

Review Area 4: Proposals to ask for financial contribution for post 16 pupils with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) to post 16 settings.

What is the current situation?

At present there are approximately 300 young people who have an education and healthcare plan (EHCP), in post 16 education who use free travel arrangements organised by us to access their nearest education setting. Currently we provide this free of charge, but by law, we have the discretion to request a contribution from families towards the cost of travel. This is whilst supporting continued access to education.

Many councils around the country now request a contribution from families for providing travel assistance for this age group. It helps them to offset travel costs which continue to be heavily subsidised.

Local authority areas with these arrangements include:

Council	Maximum contribution (per annum)
Central Bedfordshire	£801
Birmingham City	£1,028
Essex	£900
Hertfordshire	£1,632
Surrey	£908
Buckinghamshire	£1,021

| Wiltshire | £950 |

What changes are proposed?

We are proposing to introduce a contribution charge for young people in post 16 education that require provision of travel arrangements from the council and are keen to understand what the impact might be on families, schools, and wider community.

The proposed charge for Post 16 travel is as follows:

- Less than 3 miles from home to school/college £546.00 per annum (£182.00 per term)
- 3 miles and over from home to school/college £1,015.92 per annum (£338.64 per term)

The proposed rates would mirror the cost of the council's spare seat scheme, including the existing waiver of a contribution due to low-family income.

It is expected that the impact of the proposed introduction of a request for contribution towards costs could be offset partly by young people and families accessing available financial support, such as the 16-19 bursary fund for students in vulnerable groups. The value of the bursary is up to £1,200 and is available to young people who meet the following criteria:

- Young person is in or recently left local authority care
- Young person gets income support or universal credit because they financially supporting themselves
- Young Person gets Disability Living Allowance (DLA) in their name and either Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) or Universal Credit
- Young Person gets a Personal Independence Payment (PIP) in their name and either ESA or Universal Credit

Other bursaries and financial support are also available, and these continue to be identified within the existing transport policies and online.

The proposed change would align the financial contribution young people and families make in relation to travel costs for both young people with and without an EHCP, despite the vast differences in actual travel costs. The current average cost to the council for travel for a young person without an EHCP is approximately £1,015 per annum, for a young person with an EHCP it is approximately £18,000 per annum.

It is anticipated that this proposal, if accepted, would generate a contribution of approximately £207,000 per annum, offsetting our current transport spend of approximately £2m per annum

Part 2: Exploring potential future changes to discretionary elements of Oxfordshire County Council's home to school transport policy (for compulsory school age pupils), and the post 16 transport policy statement (for pupils in post 16 education)

Review area 5: Discretionary travel at split village locations

Exploring whether discretionary support should continue to be available for pupils living in 'split villages', where pupils are able to access travel support to either the nearest suitable school or the designated/catchment school for the village/area.

What is the current situation?

At present we provide travel support for children/young people where 20 percent or more of the addresses within that village fall within the designated/catchment school area to either their nearest suitable school or the designated/catchment school. All other locations in the county are assessed considering the nearest suitable school only.

This provision for split villages is discretionary and exceeds our legal duty. The current statutory position is that a child/young person is entitled to access travel support if they meet all the statutory eligibility criteria, this includes attending their nearest suitable school.

Only 14 villages within Oxfordshire are identified as a split village, with approximately 266 children/young people currently benefiting from this discretionary support. The current average cost to the council, of a child/young person using free home to school transport, is £1,015 per annum. The approximate proportion of cost for this split villages discretionary provision is estimated at £270k per annum.

What is the council seeking views on?

With limited funds available it is essential that we provide support only where it is necessary. This discretionary provision for split villages has been in place since the last consultation in 2014. In this consultation we now want to explore if this support continues to be necessary, and if it were to be changed or withdrawn, what the impact might be on families, schools, the council, and wider community.

As part of this early exploration, we are also asking for views on if the council should continue to provide discretionary transport support to two destinations or split villages (catchment school and nearest suitable school), whilst other locations in the county can only access this support from a single destination (their nearest suitable school).

No proposals for split villages have been developed. Should these come forward in the future, we will formally consult on them before any decisions are made.

Understanding potential impacts now will help us to see if any mitigation is required and what this might look like should any proposals be developed.

Area 6: Spare seats scheme

Exploring at an early stage whether the discretionary selling of spare capacity seats on existing home to school transport services (which we organise) should continue into the future.

What is the current situation?

At present we provide a spare seats scheme for some children and young people who do not meet the stated eligibility criteria for assistance with transport, where travel arrangements (contracted by the council) are already in place and spare capacity exists.

Demand for statutory travel support fluctuates and therefore the availability of spare capacity/seats also fluctuates throughout the year. Any spare seat that is provided to a child/young person is not guaranteed and may be withdrawn if the spare capacity no longer exists. This includes spare seats being withdrawn either mid-school year or during the summer holidays.

We have a statutory responsibility to provide free travel arrangements for compulsory age children who met the statutory eligibility criteria. We also make arrangements for some young people who are not compulsory school age (post 16) as per our current post 16 policy statement. This provision of the spare seats scheme is discretionary and exceeds our legal duty.

Where a spare seat is offered/provided we charge families between £546 and £1,015 per annum (dependent on distance from home to school) for the seat. The charge may be waived if low-income evidence can be provided.

The demand for spare seats often exceeds the availability of spare seats. The number of spare seats allocated over the last few years has been reducing as a result of transport routes being updated to reflect the demand and provision for entitled children/young people. This is shown in the following table:

	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
Approximate number of spare seat passengers	1,200	1,100	1,300	900	600

What is the council seeking views on?

With limited funds available it is essential that we provide support only where it is necessary.

The discretionary provision for spare seats has been in place for many years. We are exploring, at an early stage, if this support should continue to be made available in its current format and approach. This includes whether the financial support

underpinning the scheme should be either adjusted to make the scheme sustainable moving forward, or whether financial support should be withdrawn.

As part of this early exploration, we also want to understand the impact if the spare seats scheme were to be changed or withdrawn, and what the council could do to lessen any impact.

No proposals for spare seats have been developed.

Should these proposals come forward in the future, we will formally consult on them before any decisions are made.

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Consultation on home to school transport policy and post 16 transport policy statement (2025)

We would like to hear your views on proposed changes to our **home to school transport policy and post 16 transport policy statement (2025).**

We are consulting on proposed changes to our **home to school transport policy** (for compulsory school age pupils), and our **post 16 transport policy statement** (for pupils in post 16 education). These documents set out the statutory (legal) responsibilities that we have, to help with transport to school or another education setting for children and young people living in Oxfordshire.

It is some time since we last thoroughly reviewed and consulted on these policies. Since then, various wording and phrasing has been added or tweaked within the documents to clarify specific aspects or to provide information where this was previously missing. Amendments have also been made to reflect changes in the statutory guidance from the government's department for education (DfE).

Consultation focus
This consultation is seeking views on:

- **Review area 1:** Updates to the format and language used in our home to school transport policy and our post 16 transport policy statement to improve customer understanding, awareness and overall experience.
- **Review area 2:** Specific updates to the use and application of direct travel payments in our home to school transport policy to ensure the language is more user friendly and consistent with current government guidelines.
- **Review area 3:** Specific updates to our home to school transport policy for travel arrangements to Alternative Education Provision settings to meet current government guidelines and to reflect Oxfordshire's current Alternative Education Provision arrangements.
- **Review area 4:** Proposals to ask for a financial contribution for post 16 pupils with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) for travel to post 16 settings.

As well as consulting on the proposed changes as mentioned above, we are also exploring views on the following discretionary elements of both policies **where proposals for change have not been developed**:

- **Review area 5:** Discretionary travel at split village locations
- **Review area 6:** Spare seat scheme

Please read the supporting documentation which can be found at:
https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/hometoschool before answering the questions.

Survey

Q1 I am responding to this survey as: (Choose one option) *

☐ as a child/young person using home to school transport
☐ as a parent/carer of a child/young person using home to school transport
☐ an Oxfordshire resident
☐ a member of the public living outside of Oxfordshire
☐ a representative of a transport provider serving Oxfordshire schools
☐ a representative of an Oxfordshire school
☐ a parish, town, district, or county councillor in Oxfordshire – please give your name and the parish or town/ward or division you represent below
☐ other (please specify)

Q2 Do you/your child or young person have SEND and an EHCP?
☐ Yes
☐ No

Q3 Do you live in any of the following villages which are identified as split villages within the existing home to school transport policy?
☐ No
☐ Adderbury/Twyford
☐ Ascott-under-Wychwood
☐ Charlbury
☐ Dry Sandford
☐ Duns Tew
☐ Freeland
☐ Great Haseley
☐ Kirtlington
☐ Long Hanborough
☐ Old Boars Hill
☐ South Hinksey
☐ Tadmarton
☐ Twyford/Adderbury
☐ Yatscombe Copse

Q4 Do you use the home to school transport spare seat scheme?
☐ Yes
☐ No

Part 1: Proposed changes to Oxfordshire County Council's home to school transport policy (for compulsory school age pupils), and the post 16 transport policy statement (for pupils in post 16 education)

Q5 **Review area 1:** Updates to the format and language used in our home to school transport policy and our post 16 transport policy statement to improve customer understanding, awareness and overall experience.

We propose to update both documents to:

- Improve understanding of our home to school transport policy and our post 16 transport policy statement amongst families/stakeholders.
- More clearly define requirements and explanations to minimise instances of misunderstanding/misinterpretation.
- Improve the overall customer experience of these policies.

Please indicate to what extent you **agree** or **disagree** with the proposed changes for review area 1:

☐ Strongly agree
☐ Agree somewhat
☐ Neither agree nor disagree
☐ Disagree somewhat
☐ Strongly disagree
☐ Not sure

Q6 If you **strongly disagreed** or **disagreed somewhat**, please tell us why you gave that answer:

Q7 **Review area 2:** Specific updates to the use and application of direct travel payments in our home to school transport policy to ensure the language is more user friendly and consistent with current government guidelines.

What changes are proposed?

3

We proposed to refresh the wording in the home to school transport policy to align with current provision and updated guidelines from the DfE. We also propose to update the wording to:

- Improve understanding of direct travel payments related to mileage rates amongst families/stakeholders.
- More clearly define requirements and explanations of how decisions about how direct travel payments are made to minimise instances of misunderstanding/misinterpretation.

There will be no impact to anyone currently receiving direct transport payments as a result of the proposed changes to the policy.

Please indicate to what extent you **agree** or **disagree** with the proposed changes for review area 2:

- ☐ Strongly agree
- ☐ Agree somewhat
- ☐ Neither agree nor disagree
- ☐ Disagree somewhat
- ☐ Strongly disagree
- ☐ Not sure

Q8 If you strongly disagreed or disagreed somewhat, please tell us why you gave that answer:

Q9 **Review area 3:** Specific updates to our home to school transport policy for travel arrangements to Alternative Education Provision settings to meet current government guidelines and to reflect the Oxfordshire's current Alternative Education Provision arrangements.

What changes are proposed?

To reflect that Alternative Education Provision is now not solely based a Meadowbrook College, we proposed to update the wording in the policies.

Please indicate to what extent you **agree** or **disagree** with the proposed changes for review area 3:

- ☐ Strongly agree
- ☐ Somewhat agree
- ☐ Neither agree nor disagree

4

☐ Somewhat disagree
☐ Strongly disagree
☐ Not sure

Q10 If you strongly disagreed or disagreed somewhat, please tell us why you gave that answer:

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Q11 **Review area 4**: Proposals to ask for financial contribution for post 16 pupils with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) to post 16 settings.

What changes are proposed?

We are proposing to introduce a contribution charge for young people in post 16 education that require provision of travel arrangements from the council and are keen to understand what the impact might be on families, schools, and wider community.

The proposed charge for Post 16 travel is as follows:

- Less than 3 miles from home to school/college £546.00 per annum (£182.00 per term)
- 3 miles and over from home to school/college £1,015.92 per annum (£338.64 per term)

The proposed rates would mirror the cost of the council's spare seat scheme, including the existing waiver of a contribution due to low-family income.
Please indicate to what extent you **agree** or **disagree** with the proposed changes for review area 4:

☐ Strongly agree
☐ Somewhat agree
☐ Neither agree nor disagree
☐ Somewhat disagree
☐ Strongly disagree
☐ Not sure

Q12 If you strongly disagreed or disagreed somewhat, please tell us why you gave that answer:

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│                                                              │
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Part 2: Exploring potential future changes to discretionary elements of Oxfordshire County Council's home to school transport policy (for compulsory school age pupils), and the post 16 transport policy statement (for pupils in post 16 education)

Q13 **Review area 5**: Discretionary travel at split village locations

What changes are proposed?

Exploring whether discretionary support should continue to be available for pupils living in 'split villages', where pupils are able to access travel support to either the nearest suitable school or the designated/catchment school for the village/area.

What is the council seeking views on?

With limited funds available it is essential that we provide support only where it is necessary. This discretionary provision for split villages has been in place since the last consultation in 2014. In this consultation we now want to explore if this support continues to be necessary, and if it were to be changed or withdrawn, what the impact might be on families, schools, the council, and wider community.

As part of this early exploration, we are also asking for views on if the council should continue to provide discretionary transport support to two destinations or split villages (catchment school and nearest suitable school), whilst other locations in the county can only access this support from a single destination (their nearest suitable school).

No proposals for split villages have been developed. Should these come forward in the future, we will formally consult on them before any decisions are made.

Understanding potential impacts now will help us to see if any mitigation is required and what this might look like should any proposals be developed.

If proposals were developed to **reduce** this service (limit/reduce number of split villages), what would the **potential impact** be on families, schools, and wider community?

☐ Significant positive impact
☐ Somewhat positive impact
☐ Neither positive nor negative impact
☐ Somewhat negative impact
☐ Significant negative impact

☐ Not sure

Q14 If you answered somewhat negative or significant negative impact, please tell us why you gave that answer:

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Q15 If proposals were developed to **withdraw** this service, what would the **potential impact** be on families, schools, and wider community?

☐ Significant positive impact
☐ Somewhat positive impact
☐ Neither positive nor negative impact
☐ Somewhat negative impact
☐ Significant negative impact
☐ Not sure

Q16 If you answered somewhat negative or significant negative impact, please tell us why you gave that answer:

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Q17 What are your views on split villages being able to access transport support to two destinations (nearest suitable school and catchment school) where all other parts of the county can only access transport support to a single destination (nearest available school)?

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Q18 **Area 6:** Spare seats scheme

Exploring whether the discretionary selling of spare capacity seats on existing home to school transport services (which we organise) should continue into the future.

What is the council seeking views on?

With limited funds available it is essential that we provide support only where it is necessary.

The discretionary provision for spare seats has been in place for many years. We are exploring, at an early stage, if this support should continue to be made available in its current format and approach. This includes whether the financial support underpinning the scheme should be either adjusted to make the scheme sustainable moving forward, or whether financial support should be withdrawn.

As part of this early exploration, we also want to understand the impact might be on families, schools, and wider community if the spare seats scheme were to be changed or withdrawn.

No proposals for spare seats have been developed.

If proposals were developed to change the level of contribution (increase), what would the **potential impact** be on families, schools, and wider community?

- ☐ Significant positive impact
- ☐ Somewhat positive impact
- ☐ Neither positive nor negative impact
- ☐ Somewhat negative impact
- ☐ Significant negative impact
- ☐ Not sure

Q19 If you answered negative or significant negative impact, please tell us why you gave that answer:

Q20 If proposals were developed to **reduce** this service, what would the **potential impact** be on families, schools, and wider community?

8

☐   Significant positive impact
☐   Somewhat positive impact
☐   Neither positive nor negative impact
☐   Somewhat negative impact
☐   Significant negative impact
☐   Not sure

Q21   If you answered negative or significant negative impact, please tell us why you gave that answer:

Q22   If proposals were developed to **withdraw** this service, what would you like to see the council do to the **lessen impact** on families, schools, and wider community?

Q23   At present we provide a spare seats scheme for some children and young people who do not meet the stated eligibility criteria for assistance with transport, where travel arrangements (contracted by the council) are already in place and spare capacity exists. This scheme allows non-entitled children/young people to purchase access (a seat) on a specific vehicle/route.

        What are your views on the council continuing financially subsidising some of the costs for children and young people who are not entitled to free transport support to purchase spare seats where they are available?

Should these come forward in the future, we will formally consult on them before any decisions are made. Understanding potential impacts now will help us to look at if any mitigation is required and what this might look like should any proposals be developed.

About You

We would like to know more about you so that we can understand more about our customers and residents, as it helps us to know if we are hearing the views of a wide range of people and communities.

If you do not wish to provide any of this information, please select prefer not to say.

Information in this section is anonymous and is governed by the General Data Protection Regulations 2018.

Q24 What is your age?

☐ Under 16
☐ 16 - 24
☐ 25 - 34
☐ 35 - 44
☐ 45 - 54
☐ 55 - 64
☐ 65 – 74
☐ 75 - 84
☐ 85 or over
☐ Prefer not to say

Q25 What is your sex?

☐ Female
☐ Male
☐ Prefer not to say
☐ I use another term (please state here)

Q26 What is your ethnic group or background?

☐ Asian or Asian British (Indian, Pakistani, Bangladeshi or any other Asian background)

☐ Black or Black British (Caribbean, African, or any other Black background)
☐ Chinese
☐ Mixed or multiple ethnic groups (White and Black Caribbean, White and Black African, White and Asian, and any other mixed background)
☐ White (British, Irish, or any other white background)
☐ Prefer not to say
☐ Other ethnic group or background (please specify)

Q27 Are your day-to-day activities limited because of a long-term illness, health problem or disability which has lasted, or is expected to last, at least 12 months?

☐ Yes - a lot
☐ Yes – a little
☐ No
☐ Prefer not to say

Q28 Are you a carer?

A carer is anyone who cares, unpaid, for a friend or family member who, due to illness, disability, a mental health problem or an addiction, cannot cope without their support. Both children and adults can be carers

☐ Yes
☐ No
☐ Prefer not to say

Q29 What is your postcode?
Please provide the first four or five digits of your postcode (but not the letters at the end). e.g. OX1 1 or OX14 5.

Q30 **Would you like to find out more about what's happening in Oxfordshire?**

We'd like to invite you to receive **email updates** on news, events and developments across Oxfordshire and opportunities to have your say.

The email contact details you provide will be separated from the feedback you have shared in this survey.

Would you like to sign up to any of the following?
(Please tick all that apply)

☐ Your Oxfordshire – our residents e-newsletter

☐ Consultations e-newsletter - with opportunities to have your say and updates on our response to residents' feedback

☐ No thanks

Q31 If you'd like to sign up, please provide your email address below:

You can post completed paper surveys to us for free (no stamp required) by writing this address as one line in the middle of an envelope:

Freepost OXFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Please also write 'School transport' on the top left corner of the envelope, so we can easily identify what is inside the envelope.

Please ensure that you submit your consultation response to the County Council by midnight on **Sunday 9 March 2025**. Any responses received after this time may not be taken into consideration.

Home to School Transport Policy & Post 16 Policy Statement Consultation Feedback Analysis

Summary of Responses
649 Surveys Submitted (Total)
173 Relate to a child/young person with SEND
61Live in an existing split village
116 Use the Spare Seat School

Response Detail

Review Area 1: For OCC to updated/refresh Policy improving wording, layout and understanding (drafts included in consultation information)

Response	No. Responses	% of Responses
Strongly Agree	236	37%
Agree Somewhat	188	29%
Neither Agree or Disagree	161	25%
Disagree Somewhat	5	1%
Strongly Disagree	17	3%
Not Sure	37	6%

Review Area 2: Proposed updated wording relating to Direct Travel Payments

Response	No. Responses	% of Responses
Strongly Agree	196	31%
Agree Somewhat	205	32%
Neither Agree or Disagree	176	27%
Disagree Somewhat	5	1%
Strongly Disagree	14	2%
Not Sure	45	7%

Review Area 3: Proposed updated wording relating to Alternative Education Provision travel

Response	No Responses	% of Responses
Strongly Agree	137	21%
Agree Somewhat	116	18%
Neither Agree or Disagree	266	42%
Disagree Somewhat	6	1%
Strongly Disagree	13	2%
Not Sure	101	16%

Review Area 4: Proposed introduction of Contribution Charging for Post 16 Travel (SEND)

Response	No Responses	% of Responses
Strongly Agree	47	7%
Agree Somewhat	85	13%
Neither Agree or Disagree	95	15%
Disagree Somewhat	82	13%
Strongly Disagree	302	47%
Not Sure	32	5%

Main comment/feedback is that it is too expensive for those families, they couldn't pay the contribution and therefore a barrier to education post 16.

Review Area 5: Exploring the continued support of Split Villages

Reducing the service – What would be the potential impact?

Response	No Responses	% of Responses
Significant Positive Impact	13	2%
Somewhat Positive Impact	15	2%

Neither Positive or Negative Impact	133	21%
Somewhat Negative Impact	97	15%
Significant Negative Impact	181	28%
Not Sure	203	32%

Main comment of reducing choice of school and financial impact on families

Withdraw the service – What would be the potential impact?

Response	No Responses	% of Responses
Significant Positive Impact	17	3%
Somewhat Positive Impact	4	1%
Neither Positive or Negative Impact	87	14%
Somewhat Negative Impact	79	12%
Significant Negative Impact	276	43%
Not Sure	176	28%

Review Area 6: Exploring Continued Sustainability of Spare Seat Scheme

Increasing Contribution – What would be the potential impact?

Response	No Responses	% of Responses
Significant Positive Impact	27	4%
Somewhat Positive Impact	31	5%
Neither Positive or	84	13%

Response	No Responses	% of Responses
Negative Impact		
Somewhat Negative Impact	121	19%
Significant Negative Impact	215	34%
Not Sure	156	25%

Reducing Service – What would be the potential impact

Response	No Responses	% of Responses
Significant Positive Impact	12	2%
Somewhat Positive Impact	8	1%
Neither Positive or Negative Impact	65	10%
Somewhat Negative Impact	108	17%
Significant Negative Impact	305	48%
Not Sure	134	21%

Most comments relate to the scheme is already really expensive, sometimes more than the public bus. Without it you take away education choice and unable to attend school they want to attend. Issues with public transport and accessing areas of Oxford, especially rural locations was also raised.

Response Break Down by User/Type

<u>Review Area 1:</u> For OCC to updated/refresh Policy improving wording, layout and understanding (drafts included in consultation information)

Response	Young Person Using HTST	Parent Carer Using HTST (Child has an EHCP)	Lives in a Split Village	Spare Seat User	Total Final	% @ Final
Strongly Agree	5 (36%)	74 (43%)	17 (29%)	43 (38%)	236	37%
Agree Somewhat	3 (21%)	50 (29%)	19 (33%)	32 (28%)	188	29%
Neither Agree or Disagree	3 (21%)	32 (19%)	16 (28%)	30 (27%)	161	25%
Disagree Somewhat	0 (0%)	1 (1%)	0 (0%)	1 (1%)	5	1%
Strongly Disagree	1 (7%)	2 (1%)	1 (2%)	1 (1%)	17	3%
Not Sure	2 (14%)	12 (7%)	5 (9%)	6 (5%)	37	6%
Total	14	171	58	113		

<u>Review Area 2:</u> Proposed updated wording relating to Direct Travel Payments

Response	Young Person Using HTST	Parent Carer Using HTST (Child has an EHCP)	Lives in a Split Village	Spare Seat User	Total Final	% @ Final
Strongly Agree	4 (29%)	58 (34%)	16 (28%)	36 (32%)	196	31%
Agree Somewhat	5 (36%)	51 (30%)	17 (29%)	39 (35%)	205	32%
Neither Agree or Disagree	4 (29%)	42 (25%)	18 (31%)	32 (28%)	176	27%
Disagree Somewhat	1 (7%)	2 (1%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	5	1%
Strongly Disagree	0 (0%)	1 (1%)	1 (2%)	1 (1%)	14	2%

Response	Young Person Using HTST	Parent Carer Using HTST (Child has an EHCP)	Lives in a Split Village	Spare Seat User	Total Final	% @ Final
Not Sure	0 (0%)	17 (10%)	6 (10%)	5 (4%)	45	7%
Total	14	171	58	113		

Review Area 3: Proposed updated wording relating to Alternative Education Provision travel

Response	Young Person Using HTST	Parent Carer Using HTST (Child has an EHCP)	Lives in a Split Village	Spare Seat User	Total Final	% @ Final
Strongly Agree	2 (14%)	42 (25%)	8 (14%)	23 (20%)	137	21%
Agree Somewhat	1 (7%)	36 (21%)	11 (19%)	20 (18%)	116	18%
Neither Agree or Disagree	9 (64%)	51 (30%)	29 (50%)	50 (44%)	266	42%
Disagree Somewhat	1 (7%)	3 (2%)	1 (2%)	0 (0%)	6	1%
Strongly Disagree	0 (0%)	4 (2%)	2 (3%)	0 (0%)	13	2%
Not Sure	1 (7%)	34 (20%)	7 (12%)	20 (18%)	101	16%
Total	14	170	58	113		

Review Area 4: Proposed introduction of Contribution Charging for Post 16 Travel (SEND)

Response	Young Person Using HTST	Parent Carer Using HTST (Child has an EHCP)	Lives in a Split Village	Spare Seat User	Total Final	% @ Final
Strongly Agree	0 (0%)	10 (6%)	3 (5%)	21 (19%)	47	7%
Agree Somewhat	3 (21%)	9 (5%)	7 (12%)	21 (19%)	85	13%
Neither Agree or Disagree	1 (7%)	8 (5%)	5 (9%)	25 (22%)	95	15%

Response	Young Person Using HTST	Parent Carer Using HTST (Child has an EHCP)	Lives in a Split Village	Spare Seat User	Total Final	% @ Final
Disagree Somewhat	2 (14%)	12 (7%)	16 (28%)	15 (13%)	82	13%
Strongly Disagree	8 (57%	125 (73%)	22 (39%)	22 (19%)	302	47%
Not Sure	0 (0%)	7 (4%)	4 (7%)	9 (8%)	32	5%
Total	14	171	57	113		

<u>**Review Area 5:**</u> Exploring the continued support of Split Villages

Reducing the service – What would be the potential impact?

Response	Young Person Using HTST	Parent Carer Using HTST (Child has an EHCP)	Lives in a Split Village	Spare Seat User	Total Final	% @ Final
Significant Positive Impact	0 (0%)	5 (3%)	0 (0%)	5 (4%)	13	2%
Somewhat Positive Impact	1 (7%)	3 (2%)	0 (0%)	1 (1%)	15	2%
Neither Positive or Negative Impact	4 (29%)	30 (18%)	4 (7%)	25 (22%)	133	21%
Somewhat Negative Impact	2 (14%)	16 (9%)	11 (19%)	16 (14%)	97	15%
Significant Negative Impact	6 (43%)	40 (24%)	33 (58%)	36 (32%)	181	28%
Not Sure	1 (7%)	76 (45%)	9 (16%)	29 (26%)	203	32%
Total	14	170	57	112		

Withdraw the service – What would be the potential impact?

Response	Young Person Using HTST	Parent Carer Using HTST (Child has	Lives in a Split Village	Spare Seat User	Total Final	% @ Final
		has				

	Young Person Using HTST	Parent Carer Using HTST (Child has an EHCP)	Lives in a Split Village	Spare Seat User	Total Final	% @ Final
Significant Positive Impact	0 (0%)	6 (4%)	0 (0%)	5 (4%)	17	3%
Somewhat Positive Impact	1 (7%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	4	1%
Neither Positive or Negative Impact	4 (29%)	14 (8%)	4 (7%)	18 (16%)	87	14%
Somewhat Negative Impact	2 (14%)	12 (7%)	5 (9%)	11 (10%)	79	12%
Significant Negative Impact	6 (43%)	68 (40%)	40 (70%)	54 (48%)	276	43%
Not Sure	1 (1%)	68 (40%)	8 (14%)	24 (21%)	176	28%
Total	14	168	57	112		

Review Area 6: Exploring Continued Sustainability of Spare Seat Scheme
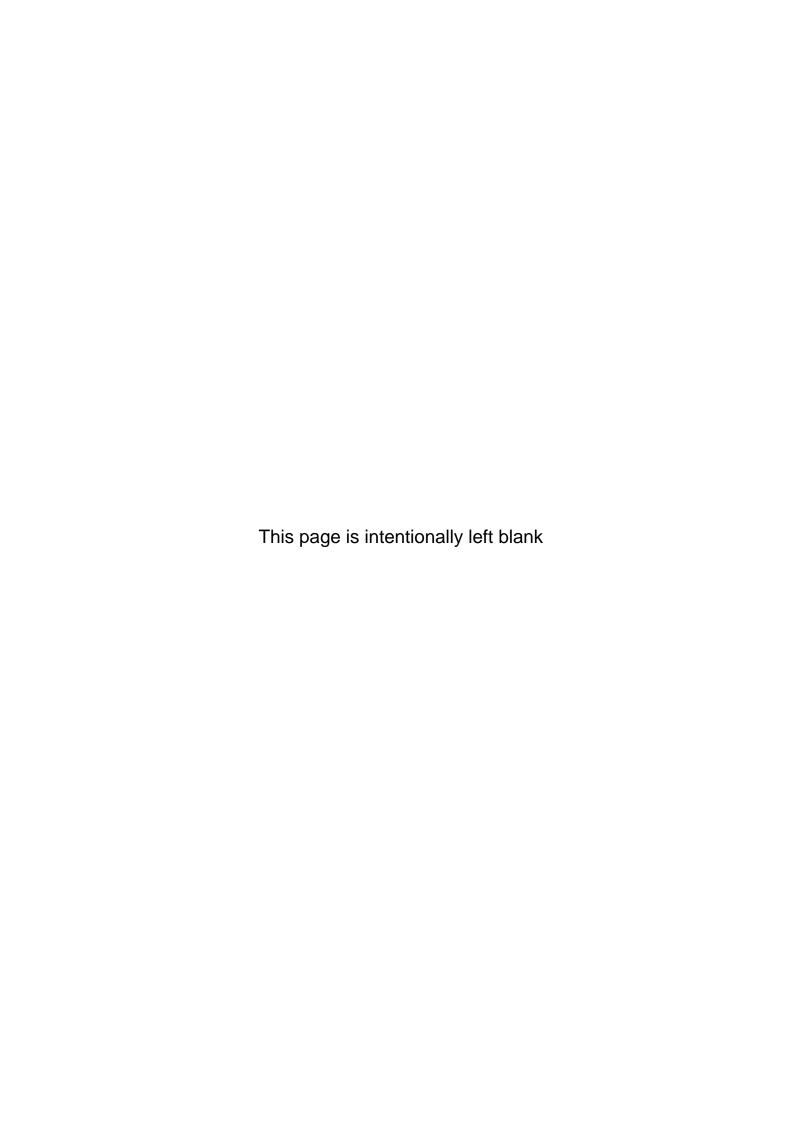
Increasing Contribution – What would be the potential impact?

Response	Young Person Using HTST	Parent Carer Using HTST (Child has an EHCP)	Lives in a Split Village	Spare Seat User	Total Final	% @ Final
Significant Positive Impact	2 (15%)	7 (4%)	1 (2%)	8 (7%)	27	4%
Somewhat Positive Impact	0 (0%)	7 (4%)	1 (2%)	6 (5%)	31	5%
Neither Positive or Negative Impact	4 (31%)	16 (10%)	5 (9%)	6 (5%)	84	13%
Somewhat Negative Impact	2 (15%)	23 (14%)	17 (29%)	24 (21%)	121	19%

Response						
Significant Negative Impact	4 (31%)	42 (25%)	23 (40%)	62 (55%)	215	34%
Not Sure	1 (8%)	71 (43%)	11 (19%)	6 (5%)	156	25%
Total	13	166	58	112		

Reducing Service – What would be the potential impact

Response	Young Person Using HTST	Parent Carer Using HTST (Child has an EHCP)	Lives in a Split Village	Spare Seat User	Total Final	% @ Final
Significant Positive Impact	1 (8%)	3 (2%)	0 (0%)	7 (6%)	12	2%
Somewhat Positive Impact	0 (0%)	2 (1%)	0 (0%)	1 (1%)	8	1%
Neither Positive or Negative Impact	2 (15%)	12 (7%)	5 (9%)	1 (1%)	65	10%
Somewhat Negative Impact	2 (15%)	25 (15%)	11 (19%)	6 (5%)	108	17%
Significant Negative Impact	8 (62%)	63 (38%)	35 (61%)	92 (81%)	305	48%
Not Sure	0 (0%)	62 (37%)	6 (11%)	6 (5%)	134	21%
Total	13	167	57	113		

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Home to School Travel and Transport Policy 2025/26 onwards for Reception to Year 11

Contents

Introduction

1.1 This document describes the policy for home to school travel assistance and the criteria applied to determine eligibility.

1.2 The Policy has been developed in accordance with the legislative framework set out in sections 508A, 508B, 508C, 508D and 509AD and Schedule 35B of the Education Act 1996 (as amended by Part 6 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006), the current Government Home-to-school travel guidance. and, where appropriate, the Equality Act.

1.3 Parents have a legal duty to make necessary arrangements to ensure that their statutory aged children attend school regularly. The council is only required to provide free school travel assistance to children resident within the administrative area of Oxfordshire County Council. if the school transport eligibility criteria are met.

1.4 Home to School travel assistance aims to:
- support those most in need
- promote principles of independence
- provide the most cost-effective travel assistance
- promote and encourage the use of sustainable travel

1.5 As a Council, we expect the service delivered to be of a high standard. All children and young people who travel under this Policy can expect that those standards will be monitored and maintained. In this policy we have referred to children of statutory school age (5-16 years) as "pupils", and those over statutory school age as "students".

1.6 The Education Act 1996 provides the following duties and powers on local authorities:

- duty to promote sustainable modes of travel to meet school travel needs - s.508A
- duty to make necessary travel arrangements free of charge to secure suitable home to school travel arrangements for eligible children. Eligibility includes age, distance to school, special educational needs, a disability (SEND) or mobility problems and safe walking routes - S.508B
- power to make necessary school travel arrangements for other children on payment of a charge as appropriate - s.508C
- power to provide travel assistance or travel expenses for children attending early years education, subject to eligibility criteria - s.509A
- duty to prepare a Post-16 transport policy statement setting out transport provision and financial assistance (where applicable) to facilitate attendance of sixth form students at educational institutions - s.509AA and s.509AB

1.7 Those who are not resident in Oxfordshire are advised to contact their own home local authority for details of any policy that their local authority may have regarding home to school/college transport.

Home to School Transport Eligibility

Under Statutory school age (0 to 4 years) Eligibility for Travel Assistance

2.1   Free and subsidised transport **is not automatically provided to children of pre-school age** who attend an Early Years settings or school. Travel arrangements for a child attending a nursery provision remains the responsibility of a child's parent.

2.2   In exceptional circumstances the Council will consider providing travel assistance for any child who will turn 5 within the term that the application is made, subject to them meeting the transport eligibility criteria and the Council completing a travel needs assessment. Each case is considered individually therefore parents should not assume automatic entitlement.

2.3   A child with an EHCP attending a mainstream or specialist nursery can bring their case to the Transport Exceptions Panel to be considered for travel assistance, as long as the placement is the nearest suitable setting. If travel assistance is offered, this is likely to be in the form of a Direct Travel Payment, subject to a consideration of a family's ability to make suitable transport arrangements for their child's journey to nursery.

2.4   If it is determined by the School Transport Eligibility Team that once the child is 5 they will meet the eligibility criteria for home to school transport, A child with an EHCP attending a reception class before they turn 5 may be transported during the academic year that they are due to turn 5, providing there is existing transport running from the child's home area to the educational setting. This is subject to the Council completing a travel needs assessment.

2.5   If it is determined by the School Transport Eligibility Team that a child with an EHCP attending a reception class would be eligible to receive Council funded home to school travel assistance once they turn 5, then we would consider providing travel assistance if the child needs it before the age of 5. This would be the case even if there was no existing transport provision running from the child's home area to the educational setting. These cases can be brought to the Transport Exceptions Panel for consideration.

2.6   If travel assistance is offered, this is likely to be in the form of a Direct Travel Payment subject to a consideration of a family's ability to make suitable transport arrangements for their child's journey to school.

Statutory school age (5 to 16 years - Mainstream and SEND)

2.7   Statutory school age begins with the start of term following a child's 5th birthday and ends on the last Friday in June in the academic year in which they turn 16. Children of statutory school age need to attend a school or educational setting on a full-time basis; this is defined as 190 days (or 380 sessions) each academic year.

2.8   There are 4 categories of statutory school age students living in Oxfordshire and attending their nearest suitable school who are eligible for Council funded travel assistance:
- children who live beyond the statutory walking distance
- children from low income families (where extended rights apply – see section 2.25)

- children whose walking route to school is unsafe
- children with Special Educational Needs (SEN), a disability or a mobility difficulty

2.9 The nearest suitable school is defined as 'the nearest qualifying school with places available that provides education appropriate to the child's age, ability, aptitude, gender and any special educational needs they may have'. A 'qualifying' school is:
- a maintained school or nursery, or a special school approved under s.342 of the Education Act 1996
- a pupil referral unit or Alternative Education Provision
- an academy

2.10 Where a child has an EHCP, the school named in the EHCP will normally be considered to be their nearest suitable school.

2.11 The nearest suitable school used for the transport eligibility assessment may not be the same as the catchment school or nearest school for admissions purposes.

2.12 Where a village has at least 20% of its addresses located nearest to the catchment/designated area school and the rest are nearest to another school, free transport will be provided to the catchment school for all addresses if the distance is beyond the "statutory walking distance" or there is no safe walking route. This is referred to as 'split village' entitlement. This additional entitlement applies to all children of the relevant age for the schools concerned and applies whether a child does or does not have an EHCP. A list of the villages affected can be found under 'Villages' on the following webpage www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/schooltransport .

2.13 When school applications are processed, where a preference is expressed for and a place is offered at the nearest suitable school, and this school is out of county, then this is considered in the school transport eligibility assessment.

2.14 When determining the nearest suitable school for transport purposes, the assessment does not take into account whether a child is qualified for grammar school. Therefore, the nearest suitable school may be an upper/all-ability school. In these instances, if a child chooses to attend a grammar school further away, Council funded transport will not be provided to that school.

2.15 Parents/carers should always express a preference for their nearest suitable school on their application. The School Transport Eligibility Team will determine places available and therefore families do not need to be concerned about whether their child is likely to secure a place at the nearest suitable school.

2.16 'Places available' does not apply to admissions to Special Schools or Additionally Resourced Provision.

2.17 Parents are not required to name the nearest suitable school as their first preference when they make their school application, but it must be listed as their first preference if they want to be considered for transport. If a place cannot be offered a place at the nearest suitable school, then transport could be provided to the next nearest school.

2.18 If parents do not express their nearest suitable school as one of their preferences, and instead choose a place at a school which is not the nearest suitable school,

the pupil will not be eligible for Council funded travel assistance unless the extended rights apply (see section 2.25 – 2.30).

Statutory Walking Distances

2.19 The statutory walking distances are used to determine whether a pupil is eligible for Council funded travel assistance. The statutory walking distances are as follows:

- up to 2 miles (if below the age of 8)
- up to 3 miles (if aged between 8 and 16)

2.20 The statutory walking distance is measured along the shortest route along which a child, accompanied by a responsible adult, may walk with reasonable safety. The route may include footpaths, bridleways, and other pathways, as well as recognised roads. All such routes need to be open to the public. Even where the distance is calculated to have been longer than the statutory walking distance it will still be measured using this method.

2.21 If the distance between home and the nearest suitable school is more than these limits, the pupil is eligible for Council funded travel assistance. Pupils who live beyond the statutory walking distance may be required to use public transport and in these cases the Council will provide a bus or train travel pass in order for them to use the relevant public transport service.

2.22 Where a pupil lives within the statutory walking distance of their nearest suitable school and is not eligible for Council funded travel assistance on any of the other grounds set out in this policy, the parent/carer is responsible for making suitable arrangements for their child's travel to school.

2.23 If issues are raised over the possible safety of a walking route the School Transport Eligibility Team will arrange for an initial assessment and, if necessary, a full assessment by a member of the Road Safety Team.

2.24 For pupils who fall within the 'Extended Rights' eligibility criteria the 6 miles and 15 miles upper limits are not walking routes. These routes are those which are passable using a suitable motorised vehicle. In short, the two upper limits will be measured along road routes.

Extended rights for pupils from low income families

2.25 A pupil may be eligible for extended rights under the 'low income' provisions. The Council defines low income families as those where a child receives free school meals because their parents or carers receive at least one of the benefits listed below:

- Income Support
- Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance
- Income-related Employment and Support Allowance
- Child Tax Credit – provided their parents/carers are not also entitled to Working Tax Credit and have an annual gross income of no more than £16,190
- Universal Credit - if they apply on or after 1 April 2018 their household income must be no more than £7,400 a year (after tax and not including any benefits they get)
- The guaranteed element of Pension Credit
- Support under Part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999

2.26 If the pupil is not entitled to free school meals, another benefit that is accepted is entitlement to the maximum level of Working Tax Credits. This means that there is no reduction due to income in the Working Tax Credits elements section of their HM Revenue & Customs award notice for the current tax year and their annual income is no more than £16,190.

2.27 Where extended rights apply, pupils aged 8 to 10 from low income families who live more than 2 miles (rather than 3) from their nearest suitable school become eligible for Council funded home to school travel assistance.

2.28 Secondary school age pupils from low income families who attend schools between 2 and 6 miles from their home will be eligible for Council funded home to school travel assistance even if the school they attend is not their nearest suitable school, providing it is one of the three nearest schools which the pupil is qualified to attend (for example a mainstream pupil is not qualified to attend a special school even if it is one of the three nearest schools and therefore it would be discounted).

2.29 Secondary school age pupils from low income families who attend a school between 2 miles and 15 miles away from home will be entitled to Council funded home to school transport if their parents/carers have expressed a wish for them to be educated at that particular school based on the parents/carer's religion or belief and, having regard to that wish, there is no nearer suitable school. This applies to parents/carers with a particular religious or philosophical belief, including those with a lack of religion or lack of belief.

2.30 When assessing whether a child lives within the 6 or 15 miles upper limits, the Council will measure road routes only.

Pupils whose route to school is unsafe

2.31 A pupil is eligible for Council funded travel assistance if they attend their nearest suitable school, and
- it is within the statutory walking distance of their home, and
- the nature of the route means they could not be expected to walk there in reasonable safety, even if accompanied by their parent/carer, and
- there is no alternative route within the statutory walking distance that they would be able to walk in reasonable safety, even if accompanied by their parent/carer.

2.32 All walking routes are assessed by the Council in accordance with the Road Safety GB and RoSPA (Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents) guidelines. The Council will assess the route at the times the pupil would be using it and will consider:
- The age of the pupil
- whether risks might be less if the pupil were accompanied by their parent/carer
- the width of the road and the existence of pavements
- the volume and speed of traffic
- the conditions at different times of the year

2.33 Where a route previously assessed as unsafe is reassessed and determined to be safe (for example by reviewing the route, through route improvements, upgrades or maintenance, the building of new footpaths or installing pedestrian crossings,

etc.) the transport eligibility for all pupils who are using the previously assessed unsafe walking route will be reviewed. Pupils who are no longer eligible once the route is reassessed as safe will be given a minimum six weeks notice before Council funded travel assistance is withdrawn. It will then be the parent/carer's responsibility to make suitable travel arrangements for their child.

2.34 It is clear from relevant case law that assessments must look at the relationship between pedestrians and traffic only and that personal safety/security issues of children travelling alone should not be considered. Therefore, routes are assessed in terms of road safety rather than personal safety/security in any other sense.

2.35 The assessment carried out is a road safety assessment. This assessment does not include the weight of the bags carried by an individual, the local weather conditions, temporary surface conditions such as mud or puddles, the presence of uncut hedges, difficult terrain and the arduousness of the route or whether the accompanying responsible adult will also have a younger child or pram with them.

2.36 If a footway is over ½ a metre in width the footway is classed as an available route.

2.37 If a footway is less than ½ a metre in width then traffic volumes and speeds are included in the assessment to determine whether the footway is an available route.

2.38 Even if there is not a footway, the walking route will still be assessed as available if it is safe to walk, accompanied, as necessary, by a responsible adult. The assessment will take account of traffic flows and whether drivers have enough time to slow down or pedestrians have time to step-off the road or verge. It is the responsibility of a parent to ensure that a child is accompanied as necessary on the walking journey to school.

2.39 No walking route can be absolutely safe. The term used in the Road Safety GB guidance to describe the accepted standard is "reasonable safety".

2.40 Assessments will usually take place in the morning during the times children will be travelling to school and assessments may also be undertaken when returning home in the afternoon. Visits will be timed, where possible, so that crossing assessments of main roads take place at the times when the number of children travelling to school is highest.

Transport to schools that are not the nearest

2.41 If a place cannot be offered at the nearest suitable school when this has been expressed as the preference school, then travel assistance to the next nearest suitable school will be offered. Where the Council allocates a school place which is not a preference, we will only consider providing Council funded travel assistance if the nearest suitable school was expressed the 1st preference.

Split Site Schools

2.42 In the case of split site schools, as with all other schools, when assessing whether a child should receive free travel because of the walking distance to that school, the distance will be measured to the site they initially attend. This decision will not be reviewed because a child subsequently moves to a different site of the same school.

2.43 The following Oxfordshire secondary schools currently have split sites:

- The Cherwell School
- King Alfred's Academy
- Lord Williams' School
- Heyford Park School

Home to school transport provision in specific circumstances

2.44 There may be specific circumstances where Council funded travel assistance could be provided. These are provided at the Council's discretion.

2.45 Parents/carers of pupils who do not meet the eligibility criteria above, may have reasons why they think their child should be provided with travel assistance which they want the Council to consider. The Council has a 2 stage appeal process for parents/carers to challenge decisions about transport eligibility.

2.46 Each appeal must be made in writing. The appeal will be considered, and transport may be provided at the discretion of the Council.
- Discretionary assistance will be:
- dealt with on a case-by-case basis
- granted for a set period of time
- is subject to review more frequently than other circumstances
- may cover the whole cost of transport provision or be a contribution to the cost of the travel assistance

Criteria for home to school transport for pupils with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) or mobility issues

2.47 Pupils who have SEND or mobility issues may require assistance with getting to school or to another educational setting. This may be over and above the provision made for other pupils. Pupils with SEND who attend their nearest suitable school/setting and satisfy the distance, unsafe walking route or low income assessment criteria set out above are eligible for Council funded travel assistance.

2.48 Having an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) does not automatically mean that a child will be eligible for travel assistance.

2.49 A pupil with an EHCP will not usually be provided with Council funded travel assistance unless they meet the statutory eligibility criteria, or they live within the statutory walking distance limits and the pupil has a special educational need, disability or mobility issue which prevents them from walking to school in reasonable safety, even if accompanied.

2.50 The Council considers the individual needs of pupils, including professional advice, and will consult with parents/carers and teachers about travel needs and assistance. Where appropriate the pupil will also be consulted.

2.51 The Council will take the following into account when determining eligibility for transport assistance for pupils with SEND:
- distance to nearest suitable school
- medical needs
- behaviour that challenges, impacting on reasonable safety
- mobility issues
- whether the pupil is able to walk to school in reasonable safety if accompanied by their parent/carer

- vulnerability (including age, young parents and those at risk of disengaging from employment, education or training)
- low income family criteria

This list is for guidance only, and satisfying one or more of these factors does not automatically support entitlement to Council funded travel assistance.

2.52 When determining the most appropriate type of travel assistance for pupils with SEND, the Council will consider the following:
- age of the pupil
- nature and severity of the pupil's SEND
- availability of public transport
- length and nature of the journey
- most cost-effective mode of transport
- safety of handover arrangements
- travel training readiness
- pupil's ability to use public transport independently

2.53 Parents of pupils with EHCPs may, in certain circumstances, be given the option of a personal budget to meet some or all of the provision detailed in the Plan and special transport will be an element of the personal budget.

2.54 A parent will be formally notified, in writing, of the travel arrangements that the Council believes to be appropriate. At that point the parent may appeal against the mode of transport decided upon through the normal transport appeal process set out in this document. The first stage of this process is to request a review from the School Transport Eligibility Team. Prior to any appeal the Council will only make available the transport decided upon in the assessment. The result of any transport appeal is binding on the Council.

Elective Home Education

2.55 Where parents/carers decide to provide Home Education for their children instead of sending them to a school, this is called elective home education (EHE). In the case of EHE, no assistance will be available from the Council in connection with any transport need arising.

Education other than at school (EOTAS)

2.56 Education other than at school (EOTAS) must be agreed by the Council. Where the Council arranges for a pupil/student to have education other than at a school, the Council may consider transport subject to the normal eligibility criteria as detailed in section Criteria for home to school transport for pupils with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) or mobility issues of this Home to School Transport Policy. Circumstances will be reviewed and agreed on a case-by-case basis.

Alternative Education Provision

2.57 Where a pupil's placement has broken down and the pupil continues to be maintained on the school roll (of the pupil's original school) pending next placement but attends an Alternative Education Provision to ensure continued access to education (similar to S61/S19) then assistance with travel may be agreed to the nearest suitable provision.

2.58 Both the school and the council must agree and confirm that the original placement has broken down, and this is confirmed by both the school and the council. Any support with travel in these circumstances will be reviewed and agreed on a case-by-case basis in consideration of the established eligibility criteria for Home to School Transport assessments.

Looked After Children (under the care of the Council - all ages)

2.59 The Council is committed to supporting those most in need, ensuring that travel assistance is available to those who require it. It is recognised that Looked After Children face specific challenges and barriers to achieving their full potential, and as corporate parents we are committed to reducing those barriers.

2.60 For Looked after Children under our care, transport will be provided as follows:
- if a Looked After Child is educated at a school that is not the nearest suitable school for less than one term, transport will be provided by the Council for this period
- if a Looked After child is educated at school that is not the nearest suitable school for more than one term, transport will be provided by the Council for one term. During this term it is expected that an application will be made to the nearest suitable school, unless there are exceptional circumstances as to why the pupil should not move to this school. The view of the Head Teacher of the Virtual School will be taken into account when senior officers consider any exceptional circumstances

Non-statutory school age (16 to 25 years - Mainstream and SEND)

3.1 Under national legislation, students are required to be in education, employment or training until their 18th birthday. This could involve staying in full-time education in school/college, starting an apprenticeship or traineeship, or spending 20 hours or more a week working or volunteering while in part-time education or training. There has not, however, been any change to statutory school age which ends at the end of the academic year in which the student turns 16.

3.2 Under the current law, there is no automatic entitlement to Council funded transport from home to school or to another educational setting once a student is 16 and over. However, the Council is required to facilitate the attendance of all those of sixth form age i.e. those students over compulsory school age who started their programme of learning before their 19th birthday. This may involve travel assistance, but the Council does not need to provide this assistance free of charge. Responsibility for attendance lies with the student and their parents/carers.

3.3 Where a student with SEND starts a new course at aged 19 or older, any transport assistance which is necessary to facilitate attendance must be free of charge i.e. fully Council funded, as they are Adult Learners. More information is provided in our Post-16 Transport Policy Statement.

Post-16 Transport Policy Statement

3.4 The Council has a duty to prepare and publish an annual Transport Policy Statement. This statement specifies the arrangements for transport that the Council considers it necessary to make in order to facilitate the attendance of sixth form students receiving education or training.

3.5　The Post-16 Transport Policy Statement includes information on:
- fares, Passes and Travel Cards
- travel options for mainstream students including the Spare Seats Scheme
- travel assistance for students with SEND
- financial hardship
- bursaries
- independent Travel Training

3.6　This Post-16 Transport Policy Statement takes account of the Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice 0 to 25 years.

Support for students with SEND 19-25 years
3.7　The Council outlines the support available to students aged 19 to 25 with SEND in the Post-16 Transport Policy Statement described above.

Application and Review Process
Application process
4.1　For enquiries about school transport eligibility for pupils/students with EHCPs please contact the School Transport Eligibility Team.

4.2　For all other pupils, school transport eligibility is assessed and confirmed by the School Transport Eligibility Team. Enquiries about school transport eligibility can be made using the School Transport Eligibility Team 'Contact us' form.

4.3　Pupils/students without an EHCP do not normally need to apply for free home to school transport. Eligibility will be checked when a school place is offered. Where a parent/carer have either applied to a school directly, moved to a new home address, or if there has been a change in their circumstances, then they will need to contact the School Transport Eligibility Team to apply directly for assistance.

Review process
4.4　Provision of travel assistance at any one time does not guarantee that this will be an ongoing arrangement, and the requirement will be reviewed by the Council on a regular basis.

4.5　All pupils/students who receive travel assistance will be subject to review:
- at the end of Year 3 in which the pupil attains the age of 8 years;
- at the end of Year 6;
- following the successful completion of Independent Travel Training;
- following a change in circumstances.

4.6　If during the course of any school year the Council determines that the provision of home to school transport does not need be provided any longer, it will stop at the end of the term in which the decision is made.

How to challenge a decision

Concerns about transport arrangements

4.7 Transport arrangements are based on the Council's assessment of the young person's individual transport needs and relate to how their transport is delivered. Examples include the type of vehicle, number of passengers, use of a passenger assistant.

4.8 If a parent/carer's have a concern about their child's transport arrangements, they should contact Supported Transport in the first instance. If their concern is not resolved, then they should refer to the How to make a Home to School Transport complaint section of this policy.

Appeals about transport eligibility

4.9 Transport eligibility relates to whether the child or young person:
- has a legal right to have transport provided, or,
- meets Oxfordshire Council's criteria for exceptional reasons to have transport provided

4.10 The Council has a 2 stage appeal process for young people and parents/carers to challenge a decision about transport eligibility.

Stage 1 – Review by a senior officer/officer panel

4.11 Parents/carers have 20 working days to request a review of our decision about home to school transport eligibility or provision. Parents/carers should write to us, detailing why the decision should be reviewed, giving details of any personal/family circumstances and include all supporting evidence to be considered, for example, evidence from a medical professional. In most cases the parent/carer will be asked to complete a form for further information. The parent/carer will receive an acknowledgement when we have received their written request for a review.

4.12 The parents/carers of pupils/students should write to the School Transport Eligibility Team using the School Transport Eligibility 'Contact us' form.

4.13 The decision will be reviewed by a senior officer or via the Transport Exceptions Panel. The Transport Exceptions Panel meet throughout the year and is made up of officers from Children's Services, the Support Transport team and Integrated SEND teams.

4.14 Within 20 working days of receipt of their written request including all supporting evidence, parents/carers will be advised in writing of the appeal decision.

Stage 2 - Review by an Independent Appeal Panel

4.15 Parents/carers have 20 working days from receipt of our Stage 1 appeal decision notification letter to write to ask for it to be reconsidered at Stage 2, which is a review by an Independent Appeal Panel. Details of where to send the Stage 2 request will be included on the Stage 1 appeal decision letter. Within 40 working days of receipt of the parents/carers Stage 2 request, an Independent Appeal Panel will consider written and verbal representations from both the parent/carer and officers involved in the case. The Independent Appeal Panel will give a detailed written notification of the outcome within 5 working days of the panel meeting.

4.16 The Independent Appeal Panel is made up of officers who have experience and knowledge of transport issues. These officers are independent of the original decision making process.

Stage 3 - Complaint to Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman

4.17   Parents/carers can complain to the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman only if they consider that:

- there was a failure to comply with the procedural rules
- if there are any other irregularities in the way the appeal has been handled

4.27   For further information contact the School Transport Eligibility team.

Types of travel assistance

5.1   The travel assistance offered by the Council may take the form of:

- a public bus or train travel pass
- Independent Travel Training
- a Direct Travel Payment
- a Council arranged coach/bus service
- a Council arranged minibus
- a Council arranged shared taxi
- a Council arranged solo taxi, based on a travel needs assessment undertaken by the Council
- Passenger assistant support, based on a travel needs assessment undertaken by the Council
- Other alternative assistance based on needs/circumstances (case by case)

5.2   In order to determine the most appropriate travel option for pupils/students and the most cost effective means of travel assistance, the Council will use a range of criteria.

5.3   In exceptional circumstances, considered on a case by case basis, a Direct Travel Payment may be offered to the parent/carer of mainstream (non-SEND) pupils who are eligible for Council funded travel assistance, as an alternative to Council organised transport. However, in these instances Council funded and organised travel assistance is always available if this is the preference.

Direct Travel Payments and Mileage claims for pupils with SEND

Direct Travel Payments

5.4   The Families of pupils/students of all ages with SEND who are eligible for transport can apply for a Direct Travel Payment. This is awarded at the Council's discretion to support the pupil to travel from home to their school or educational setting.

5.5   A Direct Travel Payment is paid on the assumption that a pupil of statutory school age attends their school/educational setting 190 days a year (as determined by the government definition of a school year); or for students who are over 16 years old, that they attend a full-time programme of learning that is at least 540 guided learning (planned and funded) hours per year.

5.6   If a pupil or student receives a Direct Travel Payment part way through the school year, or attends school or learning on a part-time basis, the total payment is on a pro rata basis to account for the reduced amount of time that a parent/carer would be responsible for transport arrangements.

What is a Direct Travel Payment?

5.7   A Direct Travel Payment allows families to have the freedom and flexibility to make

their own travel arrangements rather than travelling on Council organised transport. A Direct Travel Payment is awarded at the discretion of the Council. It is a sum of money to support the pupil or student to travel from home to their school or educational setting. It is not a short-term alternative while a transport application is being processed.

5.8 A Direct Travel Payment could be used in many ways, including:
- to pay for fuel and/or running costs on a family vehicle that is used to transport a pupil or student to school/educational setting
- lease a vehicle to use if the family don't have one
- paying for a shared taxi with other pupils or students
- paying for another person to take a sibling to school to free a parent/carer up to transport the pupil or student with SEND
- buying travel passes for other children in the family so that they can travel to and from school, allowing the parent/carer to transport the pupil or student with SEND
- paying for childcare for another child to allow a parent/carer to take the pupil or student with SEND to school/educational setting
- working with the school to join up transport options with other parents (for example car share), encouraging a sense of community
- A Direct Travel Payment allows families to have the freedom and flexibility to make their own travel arrangements rather than travelling on Council organised transport. A Direct Travel Payment is awarded at the discretion of the Council. It is a sum of money to support the pupil or student to travel from home to their school or educational setting. It is not a short-term alternative while a transport application is being processed.

5.9 Direct Travel Payments can be used for any non-Council provided transport service. This means for, example, a public transport bus pass, commercially provided closed school bus pass or rail pass. A Direct Travel Payment cannot be used for Council organised transport services, for example the Council's Spare Seats scheme or to pay for Council arranged transport for an annual fee.

5.10 All eligible pupils or students for whom a Direct Travel Payment request is made will have their application assessed. We will take into consideration any cost to the Council of arranging the transport and will make a best value assessment based on the cost of council arranged transport as well as the specific needs of the pupil/student.

Conditions of use for Direct Travel Payments
5.11 If a parent/carer uses the Direct Travel Payment to employ someone (for example for childcare), then they will be responsible for complying with relevant rules regarding Tax and National Insurance, Employment Law, Insurance, Health and Safety or any other relevant rules or legislation in force at that time. In addition, parents/carers should make relevant and appropriate checks on whether employed staff have current Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) certificates; and parents/carers should arrange or pay for those checks if directly employing an individual who doesn't have one.

5.12 Similarly, if a parent/carer uses the Direct Travel Payment to enter into contracts with organisations for example after school/extra-curricular clubs, or individuals, the parent/carer would be responsible for complying with the terms and conditions of those contracts. This may include payment arrangements or notice of cancellation.

5.13   All children with an Education, Health and Care Plan in the same family would be considered when agreeing the amount awarded via a Direct Travel Payment. There may be some circumstances where it is appropriate for a family to have one child travelling on Post-16 SEND Council arranged transport (and paying an annual fee), while the other child has a Direct Travel Payment. Where this is an appropriate arrangement, this would be discussed with the family. Where a pupil or student attends more than one educational setting, their eligibility for a Direct Travel Payment to each setting will be assessed separately.

5.14   Regular and proportionate checks will be carried out to ensure that Direct Travel Payments are used appropriately, in accordance with the Council's Direct Travel Payment agreement with the parent/carer.

5.15   A Direct Travel Payment may be withdrawn in some circumstances or a reduction in the payment amounts made, including if:

- a pupil/student's attendance falls below 90% (this aligns with the government definition of "Persistent Absence" in school-age children which is an absence rate of 90% and below) - it would be recognised that attendance for some pupils may be affected by their medical needs, and the details and evidence of this will be taken into consideration in determining whether to withdraw, reduce or reclaim a Direct Travel Payment
- a pupil/student regularly arrives late at their educational setting in the mornings or in an unfit state to learn
- a Direct Travel Payment is not being used appropriately
- it is not cost-effective for the Council to continue providing the Direct Travel Payment
- it has been assessed that the pupil/student is no longer eligible for travel assistance
- there is a change to national legislation and/or the Council's policies

Agreeing the amount of Direct Travel Payments

5.16   To determine the appropriate Direct Travel Payments amount, the following factors, alongside discussion with the family, will be considered:

- the special educational needs and disabilities of the pupil/student
- the travel distance as measured by the Council
- how the pupil/student might travel to their educational setting
- the time the journey takes
- whether the pupil/student is able to travel alone or if they need to be accompanied
- the age of the pupil/student
- whether any specialist equipment might be required

5.17   The standard amount that would be awarded with a Direct Travel Payment (DTP) based on the straight-line distance (using the Council's transport software system) between the pupils home and their main school and calculated based on the mileage band. It is expected the value of the DTP will support the cost of two return journeys per day of attendance at their educational setting (i.e. all four legs of the journeys). Any variation to the standard amount will be considered as part of the pupil/student's travel assessment. As a Direct Travel Payment can be used in many ways there is no expectation that the parent/carer will use the same route as measured by the Council.

5.18 Where a pupil receives a DTP partway through the academic year, the total payment will be offered on a pro rata basis to account for the reduced timescale that the parent/carer will be responsible for transport arrangements.

5.19 Where a pupil is accessing education on a part-time basis, or they are making use of boarding facilities, their DTP payments will be offered on a pro rata basis to account for the reduction in journey frequency.

5.20 There might be circumstances where a Direct Travel Payment is not appropriate. This could include where the Council can arrange transport at a lower cost and would take into account the specific needs of the pupil/student. This will be assessed as part of the application process. The Council will make the final decision based on all the available information.

5.21 More detailed information on mileage banding and Direct Travel Payment values can be found on our Direct Travel Payment webpage. Banding and values are reviewed annually and updated accordingly to ensure ongoing sustainability and value for money.

Mileage allowance for pupils/students with SEND

5.22 Direct Travel Payments have replaced mileage allowance. However, there may be exceptional circumstances where a mileage allowance could be offered. These are assessed and offered to parents/carers on a case-by-case basis.

Sustainable modes of travel

5.23 The Council has a Sustainable Modes of Travel Strategy.

5.24 School Travel Plans identify, and address congestion, safety, health and environmental issues associated with car use on the school journey.

5.25 Schools may organise campaigns and projects, run initiatives and events and promote activities to reduce single occupancy car use for the journey.

Spare Seats Scheme

5.26 The Council contracts with companies to provide school bus transport for pupils who are eligible for Council funded transport. Spare seats on these vehicles may be sold where there are seats remaining after the allocation of seats to eligible pupils have been made. More information about the Council's Spare Seat Scheme can be found on our website.

5.27 Spare seats on Council provided transport are extremely limited. All purchased seats are subject to the seat being withdrawn with 5 working days' notice if it is required for a pupil who is eligible.

5.28 Where free travel is provided or a seat is purchased through the Spare Seat Scheme, travel is provided for attendance at the beginning and end of the school day only and not for extracurricular activities. This applies both to children who have an Education, Health and Care Plan and those who do not have such a plan.

5.29 On routes where spare seats are available and where applications are received by the advertised deadline, spare seats will be prioritised and allocated in the following order

- renewal applications
- looked After Children or former Looked After Children who have been adopted
- pupils/students with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) who have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP)
- children of Armed Forces personnel - in line with our duty as part of the Oxfordshire Armed Forces Covenant
- siblings of pupils/students allocated a place in priority 1 and siblings of eligible pupils travelling on the same route.
- all others - on a first come first served basis from date of application

5.30　Detailed terms and conditions on the Spare Seats Scheme are published on our website.

5.31　The travel pass provided for this transport is the responsibility of the pupil/student. If lost or damaged, contact us online to request a replacement quoting a valid student reference number, name, address and date of birth. An administration charge will apply.

Passenger Assistants for pupils/students with SEND

5.32　Passenger assistants are responsible for the supervision of pupils/students to and from school. They will oversee the pupil's/student's conduct and safety in such a way that the driver is able to drive the vehicle safely. The role of the passenger assistant is to help the driver to ensure the pupil/student can access their transport provision in a safe and appropriate way.

5.33　The needs of each individual pupil/student will be assessed to determine whether they will require supervision by a passenger assistant. There is no minimum and maximum age that determines whether a passenger assistant is required.

5.34　Passenger assistants receive training to understand the needs of pupils/students placed in their care. All Council passenger assistants are subject to an Enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check.

5.35　Every effort will be made to ensure that the same passenger assistant and driver continue to transport a pupil/student. We understand disruption can be unsettling and will do our best to minimise changes. This may not always be possible and changes may need to be made, for example as a result of staff unavailability/staff turnover/contract renewals.

5.36　The passenger assistant is not responsible for the administration of routine medical aid/medication during the journey. If an eligible pupil/student has a medical condition which will require the administration of routine medical aid/medication during the journey, the Council will make suitable transport arrangements. Alternatively, the parent or carer could choose to receive a Direct Travel Payment and arrange their own transport.

Medical needs while onboard transport

5.37　The driver and/or any passenger assistant are not responsible for the administration of routine medical aid or medication during the journey. If a pupil/student has a medical condition which would require the administration of

routine medical aid or medication during the journey, the Council will make suitable transport arrangements in line with the pupil's/student's travel needs assessment. For example, the Council will make suitable arrangements for medical aid onboard transport where a child has complex medical needs requiring a medical professional to administer treatment or medication during the journey. The transport arrangements will be informed by supporting evidence from a senior medical professional e.g. a consultant. Alternatively, the parent/carer may choose to receive a Direct Travel Payment and make their own suitable transport arrangements.

5.38   In the event of a medical emergency while the pupil/student is onboard transport, the driver will stop the vehicle where it is safe to do so. The driver and/or passenger assistant will call 999 and while they wait for paramedic assistance, they will follow the instructions given to them by the emergency operator.

5.39   Parents/carers are responsible for advising the Council of any changes to their child's medical needs which may affect their transport arrangements.

Boarding & Alighting Arrangements

5.40   Appropriate transport arrangements will be made based on the age and needs of the child. Pick-up and drop-off times cannot be rescheduled to take into account other family commitments. Parents/carers who are unable to be home at the specified pick-up and drop-off times and location will have to make alternative arrangements.

5.41   Pupils/students receiving mainstream transport assistance are expected to walk up to 1 mile to their pick up point, with or without a parent/carer as appropriate. The pick up point for SEND pupils/students may be a short distance from their home address.

5.42   Parents/carers are responsible for ensuring their child is at the pick-up point near their home and for accompanying their child to/from this point where required. Where necessary, parents/carers are responsible for ensuring they are waiting to meet their child at the setting down point on the return (homeward) journey.

Passenger Travel Times

5.43   The Council will make every effort to ensure that travelling times to and from school are a maximum of:
- 45 minutes each way at primary school age;
- 75 minutes each way at secondary school age

5.44   The distances involved mean that some pupils/students will have longer journeys. As return journeys are not constrained by specific times, homeward journeys may be quicker than advertised. Every effort is made to ensure that the waiting time on school premises, before and after school, and at pick up and set down points, does not exceed 20 minutes.

5.45   Parents/carers will receive a schedule of journey pick up times and will be notified if there are any changes.

Transport during the school / college day

5.46 Transport is only provided Monday to Friday. The only exception to this may be instances where weekend travel is required for pupils/students who are boarders at residential schools. Transport is provided at the start and end of the normal school or college day. Transport will not be provided for journeys made during the school/college day.

5.47 Travel assistance will not be provided outside of the pre-agreed timetable. Examples of circumstances where travel assistance will not be provided are:

- to enable pupils/students to undertake work experience, work placements, apprenticeships or traineeships
- to enable the pupil/student to attend any off-site provision arranged by the school/college
- to transfer the pupil/student between the main school/college site and a satellite site during the normal school or college day
- for induction or taster days
- to take students home after extra-curricular activities or detentions
- for students who are taken ill at school/college to enable them to return home
- to enable students to attend medical or dental appointments

5.48 In the above circumstances the school, college or parent/carer, as appropriate, must make their own arrangements and pay for transport.

Transport for pupils/students with SEND transferring to a different school

5.49 Where an eligible pupil or student with SEND receives Council funded travel assistance, this is arranged from home to the designated school/setting only. When an eligible pupil or student with SEND transfers to a different school/setting, Council funded travel assistance will be withdrawn and the pupil's/student's eligibility for Council funded travel assistance from their home to the new school/setting will be assessed.

5.50 The parent/carer will need to make suitable travel arrangements while eligibility to the new school/setting is assessed. If the pupil/student is not eligible for Council funded travel assistance to the new school/setting, the parent/carer is responsible for their child's travel arrangements, including the cost of those arrangements.

5.51 If a pupil or student is confirmed as being eligible for travel assistance to their new school/setting, their travel needs may be reassessed. It can take up to 15 working days from the date that the travel needs assessment is completed to make Council funded travel assistance arrangements. During this time, the parent/carer is responsible for school attendance.

Safety of Transport Arrangements

5.52 The Council will monitor the routes and vehicles used to ensure that they are fit for purpose and do not pose a risk to anyone travelling on the vehicle or using the route to travel to school. Any vehicle or route found to be unsafe will be withdrawn and alternative arrangements made until normal service can be resumed. The Council reserves the right to make changes to routes and types of travel as necessary.

5.53 If a parent/carer is concerned about the safety of a route, they should report this to Support Transport.

Identification of new routes

5.54 The Council reserves the right to review all routes in light of any changes to the Admissions Policies, the availability of walking routes and/or areas of new housing. If such changes mean that a pupil/student will no longer be eligible for Council funded travel assistance, then they will be given a minimum of six weeks notice from the date of notification to the parent/carer before Council funded travel assistance is withdrawn.

5.55 Examples of change could include the building of new roads or housing developments, opening of new or repairs to existing footpaths, or changes to the safety of a route as determined by the Council.

Changes to school transport due to severe weather

5.56 If a school decides it needs to close early or not open because of severe weather, we will attempt to advise parents/carers of these changes, using the contact details we hold. This may not always be possible especially in the case of larger schools. The school will advise parents/carers of their procedures in the event of an emergency closure.

5.57 In severe weather conditions, the transport operator is the sole judge of whether to begin or complete a school transport journey, giving priority to the safety of the pupils/students on the vehicle.

5.58 Parents/carers must ensure that the pupil/student is appropriately dressed in case the journey to or from school is very slow or even halted in severe weather.

5.59 In the event that transport is not able to operate in the morning because of adverse weather conditions, but a parent/carer nevertheless decides to take the pupil/student to school, then they are expected to make their own arrangements to collect the pupil/student either at the end of the day or at the time of early closure.

5.60 Drivers are required to seek the safest route and may therefore make changes to the normal routes in order to stay on major roads or to avoid specific hazards. They are instructed that they must only set-down pupils/students at specific set-down points. Where transport is not able to access the predetermined set-down point due to severe weather, passengers may be required to leave the vehicle at an alternative safe location.

5.61 Where a road is too hazardous for school transport in the morning due to severe weather conditions, the transport operator is under no obligation to attempt the afternoon run. Parents/carers would be informed if this is the case so they can make alternative arrangements to collect their child from school.

Parents/Carers of pupils or students with SEND who are not at home

5.62 In the event that parents/carers of pupils/students with SEND are not at home when the pupil/student is returning from school, the driver or passenger assistant will notify the Council's Client Transport team to seek advice. Where possible, they will continue their route and make a return visit to the family home to check if the parent or carer has returned.

5.63 If the parent/carer has not returned by the end of the route, the driver or passenger assistant will contact the Supported Transport team to inform them of the situation. The Supported Transport team will then inform the Head Teacher and/or the relevant Social Care team. Drivers and passenger assistants will receive further instructions following the advice given by the Head Teacher and may be required to travel back to school to leave the pupil/student with an appropriate adult. In all cases, a note will be left for the parent/carer containing details of who they should contact and the whereabouts of the pupil/student.

5.64 If an incident happens after 5pm Monday to Thursday, and after 4.30pm on a Friday, contact will be made with the Social Care Emergency Duty Team. All incidents will be recorded and considered by the Council.

Residential Schools

5.65 The frequency of transport for pupils/students in 52-week placements will be determined on a case by case basis.

5.66 The frequency of transport for pupils/students in a standard 40 week placement will depend on the number of weeks in the school calendar. The following numbers are for guidance only:
- termly Boarders: 2 journeys each term, 6 journeys per academic year
- half Termly Boarders: 2 journeys each half term, 12 journeys per academic year
- fortnightly Boarders: 2 journeys each fortnight, 38 journeys per academic year
- weekly Boarders: 2 journeys each week, 76 journeys per academic year

5.67 Where a pupil/student is unable to make their journey to school due to sickness or family matters and the Council has been informed at least 24 hours before the journey is due to take place, the journey will be provided at an alternative date agreed between the Transport Officer and the parent/carer. A parent/carer will be expected to make their own transport arrangements if the Council is notified less than 24 hours before the journey is due to take place.

General Home to School Transport Guidance

Home address

6.1 Transport assistance is based upon the distance from the home address to school and will be verified using the information supplied by the parent/carer. Normal home address is defined as being the address at which the parent/carer ordinarily resides and with whom the child normally lives.

6.2 In situations of joint parental custody, the home address would normally be that at which the parent/carer, in receipt of the child benefit for that pupil, resides. If child benefit is not received, then the address at which the child is registered with a GP will be used. If this is not conclusive then we will use the address the child spends the greater proportion of the school week.

Educational placement for pupils/students with an EHCP

6.3 Parents/carers have the right to ask for a preferred school/setting to be named in their child's EHCP when the plan is first drawn up and when the Council amends

the existing plan. Where naming the parent's preferred school/setting would be unsuitable for the pupil's/student's age, ability, aptitude or special educational needs, or incompatible with the efficient education of others or the efficient use of resources, the Council must name a different school that would be appropriate for the pupil/student.

6.4 There is no automatic entitlement to travel assistance.

6.5 Where a parent/carer would prefer their child to attend a school that is further away from their home than the nearest school with available spaces that would be able to meet their child's needs, the Council will consider the cost of the two educational placements. Where relevant, this will include the estimated costs of Council funded travel assistance to each setting. If the Council determines naming the parent's preferred school would be incompatible with the efficient use of its resources, the Council may:

- name a different school that would be appropriate for the child's needs, which may be the nearer school, or
- name the parent's preferred school on the condition that the parent arranges and provides all of the cost of the travel.

6.6 This is at the discretion of the Council based on efficient use of resources. The decision will be made in line with the Council's legal responsibilities in completing the EHCP.

6.7 The Council will record the decision to name the parent's/carer's preferred school on the condition that the parent/carer arranges and pays for their child's home to school travel. The Council may review the school named in the EHCP if the parent/carer is later unable or unwilling to arrange or pay for their child's travel.

Change of address and emergency contact details

6.8 Parents have an obligation to notify the council when they move house.

6.9 If an eligible pupil or student moves to an address further away from the school such that their current school is no longer the nearest suitable school, Council funded travel assistance will be withdrawn from the moving date.

6.10 If the parents/carer apply for and are allocated a place at their nearest suitable school, the pupil's/student's eligibility for Council funded travel assistance will be reassessed.

6.11 If a pupil or student is confirmed as being eligible for travel assistance from their new home address to their nearest suitable school, it can take up to 15 working days to organise the transport arrangements. During this time, the parent/carer is responsible for ensuring school attendance.

6.12 Parents/carers must provide the council with up to date emergency contact numbers and email addresses. It is the parent/carer's responsibility to provide updated information where there are changes.

Inaccurate Applications

6.13 The Council reserves the right to reclaim the cost of any transport provided, if it is

found that any incorrect information has been submitted in order to gain travel assistance.

Students living outside of Oxfordshire

6.14   Students who live outside of Oxfordshire attending a school in Oxfordshire should apply to their own Local Authority for assistance with transport.

Grounds of religion or belief

6.15   There is no eligibility for transport assistance for pupils on the grounds of religion or belief, except in relation to low income families.

Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) Checks

6.16   Enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks are carried out on all drivers and passenger assistants prior to them being employed on Home to School Transport contracts. Following a satisfactory check and appropriate safeguarding training and other relevant training, an identity badge will be issued to drivers and passenger assistants by the Council which is worn at all times as proof of approval to undertake the work. If a driver or passenger assistant cannot produce their badge, the parent/carer should notify the Supported Transport immediately and not let their child travel in the vehicle.

6.17   If parent/carer's have any concerns regarding the behaviour of drivers or passenger assistants, they should report this immediately to Supported Transport.

Data Protection

6.18   The Data Protection Act 2018 and UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR) regulates the way we use your personal information.

6.19   This information is provided when an application for support is made or when in direct contact with the Council. The Act provides a legal framework to the way we handle this data. Data Protection compliance is not an activity that is done once, and we regularly review our compliance.

6.20   The Council employs a Data Protection Officer. Our data protection policy can be found here on the Council's website.

Expected level of behaviour for all pupils/students

6.21   We aim to ensure the safety and well-being of all pupils/students travelling on Home to School Transport. All pupils/students using Council organised transport are expected to meet standards of behaviour that will ensure their own safety and that of other passengers. The Council will work in partnership with schools and other educational settings to promote appropriate standards of behaviour and pupils/students being transported will be expected to follow the same behaviour codes as they do when in school or other educational settings. Behaviour that does not meet our standards will be monitored and appropriate action taken.

6.22   When behaviour first becomes an issue dialogue with the parents/carers and the school/educational setting will begin, with a view to resolving issues prior to any further action being taken. If the issues are not resolved, parents/carers will be notified when transport will be suspended or withdrawn, giving 5 working days'

notice of the suspension/exclusion. This will take the form of a written warning letter, suspension or withdrawal letter. If an incident is of a serious nature the Council reserves the right to withdraw the pupil/student from transport immediately to ensure the safety of the pupil/student and others. In these instances, the parent/carer will be notified.

6.23   The withdrawal or suspension of transport for a set period would be a matter of last resort. The length of the suspension or withdrawal from home to school transport will be dependent upon the seriousness of the incident.

6.24   The decision to suspend or withdraw transport for eligible pupils/students will take into account any special educational needs and disabilities the pupil/student may have that impact on their presenting behaviour. Where this is the case, the Council will work with parents/carers and the pupil/student with SEND (where they have capacity) to identify alternative solutions to safely transport them to their school/ educational setting. As this is an exceptional circumstance, if an immediate solution cannot be identified a Direct Travel Payment may be offered on a temporary basis.

6.25   Parents/carers are responsible for transporting their own children during any period of suspension or exclusion from transport due to inappropriate behaviour that is unrelated to any special educational needs and disabilities. No refunds for transport provided under the Spare Seat Scheme will be made during this period.

6.26   Behaviour that falls below the required standard includes that which is likely to significantly offend or endanger others, including, but not limited to:

- serious damage to the vehicle by the pupil/student
- actions which may constitute a health and safety risk to themselves or others
- assaults on others
- verbal, written or online abuse of other people including but not limited to swearing, taunting, racist, sexist, transphobic or homophobic comments, threatening behaviour
- incitement of others to engage in misbehaviour
- making repeated malicious false allegations of mistreatment requiring investigation
- serious misuse of a travel pass including allowing others to use their travel pass
- failure to comply with the reasonable instructions of the driver, passenger assistant, Council officer, or authorised member of school / establishment staff

6.27   During the period of suspension or withdrawal, it is expected that parents/carers take steps to address the behaviour. The parent/carer, pupil/student (where reasonable) and school/educational setting will be consulted on arrangements for the return to transport.

6.28   Parents/carers who wish to appeal a decision taken to suspend or withdraw transport should follow the process outlined in the suspension or withdrawal notification letter. This will enable a review of the case.

How to make a Home to School Transport complaint

6.29   Any pupil, parent or carer wishing to make a complaint relating to Home to School Transport arrangements should complete the School Transport Eligibility Contact Us Form.

6.30   Formal complaints should be made through our Feedback and Complaints Procedure.

Appendix 1

Schools that have opted out of the In-Year Admissions Scheme

This information was correct at the time this policy was published. An up-to-date list is available online at www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/residents/schools/apply-school-place/transferring-or-moving-school/before-you-start

All-through schools with an age-range of 4 to 18 years. The normal point of entry to these schools is Reception year group.

- Heyford Park School
  heyfordparkschool.org/
  01869 232203

Primary schools with an age range of 4 to 11 years. The normal point of entry to these schools is Reception year group.

- Ashbury with Compton Beauchamp Church of England Primary School
  www.ashburyprimary.org.uk/default.asp
  01793 710259
- Bampton Church of England Primary School
  www.bamptonprimaryschool.org.uk/
  01993 850371
- The Blake Church of England Primary School, Witney
  www.blake.oxon.sch.uk/website
  01993 702840
- Brize Norton Primary School
  www.brizeprimary.org/
  01993 842488
- Dr South's Church of England Primary School, Islip
  dr-souths.co.uk/
  01865 372323
- Goring Church of England Primary School
  www.goring.oxon.sch.uk/
  01491 872289
- John Henry Newman Academy
  www.jhnacademy.co.uk/website
  01865 772495
- Kidmore End Church of England Primary School
  moodle.kidmore-end.co.uk/
  0118 357 3149
- North Leigh Church of England Primary School
  www.northleighprimaryschool.org.uk/
  01993 881525
- Our Lady's Catholic Primary School, Cowley
  ourladyscowley.co.uk/
  01865 779176
- St Christopher's Church of England Primary School, Langford
  www.st-christophers.oxon.sch.uk/
  01367 860318

- St Christopher's Church of England Primary School, Oxford
  www.st-christophers-pri.oxon.sch.uk/
  01865 779772
- St Joseph's Catholic Primary School, Thame
  www.st-josephs.oxon.sch.uk/
  01844 214278
- St Mary & St John Church of England Primary School, Oxford
  www.ssmj.oxon.sch.uk
  01865 245768
- St Peter's Church of England Primary School, Alvescot
  www.stpeters.oxon.sch.uk/
  01993 842535
- Tyndale Community Primary School, Oxford
  www.tyndalecommunityschool.co.uk/
  01865 454000

Secondary schools with an age range of 11 to 18 years. The normal point of entry to these schools is Year 7.

- Wykham Park Academy, Banbury
  wykhampark-aspirations.org/
  01295 251451

Studio Schools and University Technical Colleges with an age range of 14 to 18 years. The normal point of entry to these schools is Year 10.

- Futures Institute Banbury
  www.futuresbanbury.org/
  01295 257942
- UTC Oxfordshire, Didcot
  www.utcoxfordshire.org.uk/
  01235 391587

Appendix 2

Split Villages

Transport will be provided to the designated area school from all addresses in the contiguous built-up area of the village because more than 20% of the addresses are closest to the designated area school. Transport will also be provided from individual addresses to the relevant nearest school (if different) where appropriate.

Village *	Nearest Schools	Designated Area School
Adderbury/Twyford	Blessed George Napier Catholic School The Warriner School	The Warriner School
Ascott-under-Wychwood	Burford School Chipping Norton School	Burford School
Dry Sandford	Fitzharrys School Larkmead School	Fitzharrys School
Duns Tew	Dr Radcliffe's CE Primary School Middle Barton School	Dr Radcliffe's CE Primary School
Freeland	Bartholomew School Wood Green School	Bartholomew School
Great Haseley	Lord Williams's School Wheatley Park School	Wheatley Park School
Kirtlington	Gosford Hill School Heyford Park Free School The Marlborough CE School	The Marlborough CE School
Long Hanborough	Bartholomew School The Marlborough CE School Wood Green School	Bartholomew School
Old Boars Hill	Fitzharrys School Matthew Arnold School	Fitzharrys School
South Hinksey	Matthew Arnold School St Gregory the Great Catholic School	Matthew Arnold School
Tadmarton	Bloxham CE Primary School Sibford Gower Endowed Primary School	Sibford Gower Primary School
Twyford/Adderbury	Blessed George Napier Catholic School The Warriner School	The Warriner School
Yatscombe Copse	Fitzharrys School St Gregory the Great Catholic School	Fitzharrys School

* Oxfordshire County Council considers the 'village' to be the contiguous built-up area.

An address within the Civil Parish but outside the contiguous built-up area of the village does not qualify for free travel under the 'split-village' rule.

Similarly, where the village name forms part of the postal address, but the property is outside the contiguous built-up area of the village, free transport will not be provided under the 'split-village' rule.

School Transport Code of Conduct

OXFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

The safety and welfare of students travelling on home to school transport is of paramount importance and therefore it is expected that all parties will abide by the School Transport Code of Conduct at all times. Failure to do so could result in home to school transport being withdrawn from a student or a contract with a Service Provider being terminated.

Any incident reported to Oxfordshire County Council involving school transport and the behaviour of students using school transport will be taken seriously and will be investigated by Quality Monitoring and some cases may be referred to Schools Safeguarding Transport and if necessary the School or Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) before any action is taken. Where there is a consistent concern or refusal to comply with the School Transport Code of Conduct and a student is excluded from travelling, it will then be the responsibility of parents or carers to ensure that there is a continued attendance at school.

Responsibilities of Oxfordshire County Council

- To provide free home to school transport by the most cost-efficient means for students living in Oxfordshire, who qualify for free travel under the Home to School Travel and Transport Policy (Please refer to the Home to School Travel and Transport Policy for further information)
- Provide a safe journey on all home to school transport contracts between the designated pick up point and the school site, and vice versa
- Ensure that the Service Provider provides a suitable vehicle and that all drivers and vehicles are suitably licenced and insured for the conveyance of students. Agree all routes and schedules with the Service Provider
- Ensure all Drivers and Passenger Assistants have an enhanced DBS check and Safeguarding and Disability Awareness Training
- Ensure all Drivers and Passenger Assistants are issued with an OCC Identification Badge
- Provide route schedule for mainstream primary and secondary routes
- Provide a pass for students who travel on vehicles of 20 seats and above
- Monitor contracts with Service Providers to ensure contract and law compliance
- Carry out risk assessments where appropriate to establish suitability of provision and routes
- To ensure there is a robust complaints procedure in place
- Investigate all complaints, liaising with schools and Service Providers, where necessary, and respond to all parties advising of the outcome
- Ensure that all confidential information is handled in line with General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR)

Responsibilities of the Service Provider

- To provide students safe travel between their designated collection point and the school site, and vice versa ensuring all safeguarding protocols are followed
- To provide vehicles and drivers that meet all legal and contractual requirements
- To have appropriate employers' liability, public liability and vehicle insurance cover
- Ensure they hold an appropriate operator's or local authority licence where applicable
- Comply with all terms and conditions of contract
- Ensure all Drivers and Passenger Assistants hold a valid Oxfordshire County Council Identification Badge

- Ensure that all Drivers are issued with the most up to date route and schedule
- Ensure that no changes are made to the schedule without approval from the Supported Transport Service. This includes location of designated pick up and drop off points.
- Immediately inform Oxfordshire County Council where a serious incidence has occurred
- To notify Oxfordshire County Council and the school of any incidents of unacceptable student behaviour as soon as possible
- Ensure Drivers and Passenger Assistants conveying students with Special Educational Needs have sight of students Risk Assessment Passenger Passport
- Ensure that all confidential information is handled in line with General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR)

Responsibilities of the Driver and Passenger Assistant

- Always be presentable and courteous
- Adhere to the Taxi Driver, Passenger Assistant and Coach Driver Code of Conduct
- To be in possession of an appropriate license to drive the vehicle being used to convey students and be able to produce it on demand
- Hold a valid Oxfordshire County Council Identification Badge and be able to produce this when requested
- To undertake Oxfordshire County Council Safeguarding and Disability Awareness Training
- Follow the route and schedule as agreed and not deviate from this without prior authorisation, unless exceptional circumstances (e.g. a road closure) make a deviation necessary – they should notify their controller in these circumstances so that the school and/or parents and carers may be notified of any delay
- Never leave a designated collection point earlier than the published time
- Do not pick-up or drop-off at any point other than a designated stop
- Check passes issued to students on vehicles over 20 seats, on a regular basis and only transport those students who can produce a valid pass for the vehicle that they are attempting to board
- In the event of a vehicle breakdown, maintain a safe environment for all passengers and contact their controller
- Must not sell or supply goods of any kind to students or stop en route for students to obtain goods of any kind
- To be responsible for the safety of the students for the entire duration of their journey
- If there is an emergency on board and it is safe to do so, stop the vehicle and follow protocols. If appropriate consult with the student's Passenger Passport and where necessary, ring 999. If it is not safe to stop, or it would be safe to continue, once at the nearest safe destination (home or school) inform their controller who will then inform the Supported Transport Service, school and parents
- Never try to resolve any acts of misconduct (unless a student's behaviour presents a danger to the vehicle or other students on board) but report the names of the miscreants to the school at the earliest opportunity
- Unless there are genuine concerns for the safety of the students on board the vehicle, the vehicle should not be stopped. If stopped, it must be in safe place and for as short a period of time as possible and the school and Service Provider must be notified of such a break to the journey
- Serious incidents or accidents involving the safety of children, the vehicle or other road users must be reported immediately to the Service Provider who will be responsible for notifying Oxfordshire County Council's Supported Transport Service.
- Must not provide food, sweets or drinks to students in their care
- No student should be put off any vehicle mid-journey
- Seek immediate advice from the Service Provider where a serious incident occurs

- Report any incident to their management as soon as it happens
- Where a student travels in a wheelchair, anchor and secure the webbing on the chair on all journeys
- If conveying a student with Special Educational Needs will ensure they have read the Risk Assessment Passenger Passport
- Ensure when transporting a primary aged student or student with Special Educational Needs they are handed over to an appropriate responsible adult before leaving designated stop (school, home or bus stop)
- Can refuse to transport a student whose behaviour would put the driver, passengers and any other road user in danger for the immediate short term and until further guidance has been received from Supported Transport Service
- If the student's behaviour on the vehicle presents a danger to themselves or others, transport may be withdrawn - we will work extensively with the parent/carer and school, college or unit before withdrawing transport. The parent/carer has a responsibility to manage the student's behaviour and if transport is withdrawn, it does not excuse the student from attending their school, college or unit
- The Driver and Passenger Assistant's duty of care does not do not end until the last student has been discharged. On no account must this duty be delegated to any other person

Drivers and Passenger Assistants are responsible for ensuring that a seat belt or safety harness is provided for passengers and that it has been secured. However, they are not responsible for securing seatbelts or harnesses. Neither are they responsible for escorting students from the vehicle into home or into school premises. Drivers are not permitted to lift or assist by manually handling passengers in or out of vehicles.

Responsibilities of the School

The Department for Education expects schools to promote appropriate standards of behaviour by students on their journey to and from school through rewarding positive behaviour and using sanctions to address poor behaviour. The Education and Inspections Act (EIA) 2006 empowers headteachers to take action to address unacceptable behaviour even when this takes place outside the school premises and when students are not under the legal control of the school, but when it is reasonable to do so. In the Department for Education's view, this would include behaviour on school transport, or otherwise on the route to and from school, whether or not the students are in school uniform. A school cannot exclude a student from transport provided by Oxfordshire County Council.

- To be responsible for the behaviour of students from the start to end of their home to school transport journey, both morning and afternoon.
- To have a zero-tolerance policy in relation to inappropriate behaviour on home to school transport
- Identify a lead member of staff to have responsibility for home to school transport and provide contact details for this person. This person will act as the main point of contact for reporting incidents of misconduct and will be responsible for notifying Oxfordshire County Council's Supported Transport Service Quality Monitoring Team of such incidents
- To be the initial point of contact for complaints about student misconduct or anti-social behaviour on all school transport.
- Keep an up to date record of all incidents, misconduct and anti-social behaviour on home to school transport
- Treat seriously any notification of an incident that is reported on home to school transport and notify the Supported Transport Service Quality Monitoring Team

- To work with students, parents and carers to ensure that any unacceptable behaviour issues either on the home to school transport journey or at the designated stop are addressed and take action to issue appropriate sanction
- Only issue temporary passes for travel on transport provided by Oxfordshire County Council where a current bus pass has been lost, stolen or forgotten. However, a temporary bus pass should not be issued to a student who does not already have entitlement to travel
- School staff are responsible for assisting students onto and off of school transport

Responsibilities of Parents and Carers

- To support the school and the Service Provider by ensuring that the Student Code of Conduct has been read and is followed at all times
- Ensure that your child is at the boarding point five minutes before transport is due and that young children are accompanied until the transport has departed
- Ensure that your child arrives at the designated stop safely in the morning and reaches home safely from the designated stop in the afternoon.
- Where a student is of primary school age or has Special Educational Needs or a disability and they hold an EHCP, they will need to be met at the designated stop or home address by a responsible adult. Failure for a responsible adult being present could result in a child being returned to the school or the nearest police station.
- Teach your child, where they do not need to be accompanied to and from the designated stop, the safest walking route between home and the designated stop, including the safest crossing points on their route
- Teach your child to think about their own and others' safety, while walking to and from the designated stop and on the transport
- Teach your child the importance of waiting for the transport in an orderly, courteous and calm manner and ensure that they know what to do if the transport does not arrive within 15 minutes of the scheduled time, or if access to the transport is refused
- Ensure that any travel pass is carried at all times (drivers and Service Providers will make necessary checks that students are permitted to travel and have the right to refuse to carry a student without a pass)
- Prior to the start of transport ensure your child has read the No Pass No Travel Guidance, where a pass has been issued
- Ensure any Special Educational Needs Risk Assessment Passenger Passports are carried at all times
- Where a student's behaviour in a vehicle presents a danger to themselves or to others, home to school transport may be withdrawn. However, where a student's behaviour in a vehicle is due to their Special Educational Needs or disability, the Supported Transport Service will work extensively with parents, carers, school or college before withdrawing transport in these cases
- If transport is withdrawn it is the responsibility of parents and carers to ensure their child's continued attendance at school
- Remind your child that they need to wear any seatbelt or harness that is provided at all times
- For students with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities, ensure that seat belts and harnesses are fastened and secured before the vehicle pulling away
- Ensure your child is aware that in the event the vehicle has to make an unscheduled stop, that they must follow the driver's instructions. If the driver's instruction is not followed, then this is at the student's own risk
- Cooperate with the school, Service Provider and Oxfordshire County Council if your child exhibits bad behaviour on home to school transport

- Ensure that any incidents or concerns are reported to Oxfordshire County Council and the school as soon as possible. You should not contact the Service Provider directly unless you have been asked to do so
- Ensure that the school and Oxfordshire County Council School Transport Eligibility are advised of any change in the students' personal circumstances or family circumstances which may have an impact on eligibility for free home to school travel e.g. change of address, no longer eligible for free school meals. Where there has been a change of address, evidence of the new address will be required before any new travel arrangements can be approved.
- Parents and carers are not permitted to board the vehicle
- Parents and carers should not act in a threatening or abusive way towards the driver, passenger assistant or any other students either on or around the vehicle. Any concerns should be reported to the school and or the Supported Transport Service. If there are any additional adults or children present with you at the stop when the school transport arrives, you are responsible for ensuring that they also adhere to the rules.

It is important that students should behave in an appropriate manner towards any Driver, Passenger Assistant, other students or members of staff at Oxfordshire County Council. All students who use home to school transport are expected to abide by the School Transport Code of Conduct and any student who fails to abide by this when using any transport provided by Oxfordshire County Council may be excluded from using the transport in accordance with Oxfordshire County Council's Home to School Travel and Transport Policy.

If your child is excluded from home to school transport for a fixed-term or permanently, you will be responsible for ensuring that they continue to attend school. Alternative travel arrangements will not be put in place.

If your child is found to be responsible for bad behaviour on home to school transport, which does not result in them being excluded, it is your responsibility to ensure that reasonable steps are taken to modify that behaviour and to stress to your child the importance of behaving in an appropriate manner while travelling on home to school transport. It is also your financial responsibility to meet the costs for repair or replacement of equipment or any property intentionally damaged as a result of your child's actions.

Oxfordshire County Council has a determined procedure for dealing with cases of poor behaviour reported to us and will write to you to warn you that your child is at risk of being excluded from home to school transport.

If your child has been excluded from travelling under the School Travel Code of Conduct and you feel that it has been applied unfairly or incorrectly, you can lodge an appeal by emailing schooltransporteligibility@oxfordshire.gov.uk

Responsibilities of the Student

- To ensure they abide by the School Transport Code of Conduct at all times
- To act responsibly while travelling to and from the designated stop and while travelling to and from school on home to school transport
- To behave well at all times and not to act in a way that may compromise the safety of others
- Show respect at all times for the driver, Passenger Assistants and all other passengers
- Ensure that they follow the instructions of the driver or Passenger Assistants at all times
- To report any concerns about safety to the named member of staff at school

Before the journey to school
- Arrive at the designated stop 5 minutes before the scheduled pick-up time
- Wait at the designated stop for 15 minutes past the scheduled pick-up time before notifying Supported Transport Service and await advice. If transport still has not arrived, follow the procedure you have agreed with your parent or carer (for example go home to organise alternative transport) and notify your parent/carer and school.
- Wait in an orderly, courteous and calm manner
- Keep away from the kerb and well clear of other traffic
- Only board the home to school transport you have been allocated when it is stationary
- Always carry your pass (if a pass has been issued), and show it to the driver when boarding the vehicle – see No Pass No Travel Guidance

During the school journey
- Find a seat quickly and remain seated for the whole journey
- If provided, seatbelts and harnesses must be worn
- Only occupy one seat per passenger
- Never distract the driver or be discourteous
- Do not be abusive or shout at the driver, other students or other passengers in the vehicle. Bad language and unruly behaviour will not be tolerated
- Treat all on board with care and respect and do not bully any other students. Any form of bullying will not be tolerated
- Follow any instructions given by the driver or Passenger Assistant quickly and without hesitation
- Do not vandalise the vehicle or other people's property
- Do not smoke, use electronic cigarettes, drink alcohol or consume illegal substances
- Do not carry an offensive weapon, real or replica
- Do not throw objects from or within the vehicle
- Do not eat or drink while on the vehicle or leave litter
- Keep the aisle clear. Bags go under the seat, on the parcel shelf or on your lap. Make sure you have all your belongings as you leave the vehicle
- Do not open the emergency door unless the driver instructs you to, or if there is a genuine emergency

At the end of the school journey
- Ensure all of your belongs are taken with you when you exit the vehicle
- Stand back from the road when the vehicle moves off
- If you need to cross a road, only do so once the vehicle has moved off and the road is clear in both directions

It is important to understand that bad behaviour of any kind will not be tolerated and may lead to students being excluded from home to school transport. Where students are excluded this does not excuse them from attending school and parents and carers will be responsible for the cost and provision of transport during this time. Where students fail to attend school, they may be referred to the County Attendance Team.

Any criminal offences that result in a student being excluded may also be reported to the police.

Oxfordshire County Council may choose to refuse Spare Seat Scheme applications from students who have been excluded multiple times for disobeying the School Transport Code of Conduct.

Complaints and Concerns
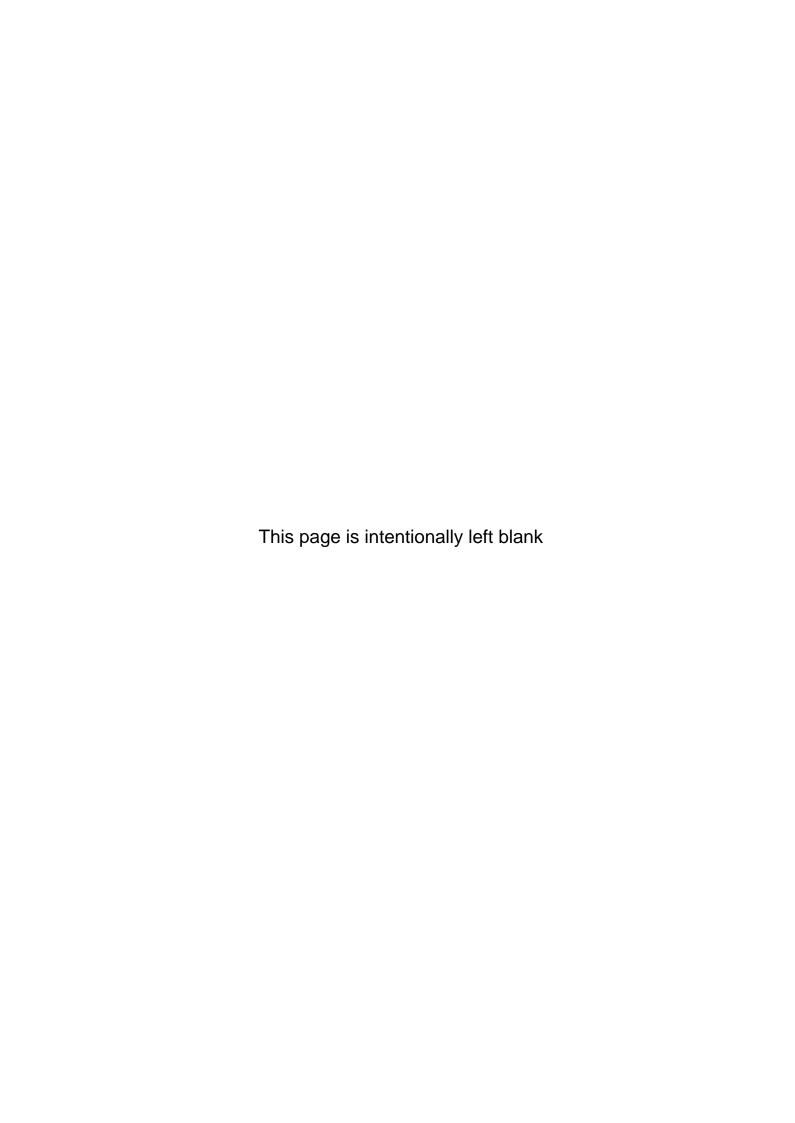
If at any time, you wish to report an incident involving the behaviour of an adult or student in connection with school transport you should email Quality Monitoring & Contract Compliance at QMCC@Oxfordshire.gov.uk.

All complaints regarding passenger or parent behaviour received by Oxfordshire County Council will be investigated and, if necessary, they will be passed for further investigation to the Transport Safeguarding Officer, the School, Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) or the Police.

'No Pass No Travel' Guidance for Parents, Carers and Students

Where a pass has been issued it MUST be shown in order to travel. This is necessary to ensure everyone has a seat and can travel safely and in reasonable comfort.

- If a student who is entitled to travel is unable to produce a bus pass because they have forgotten to carry it, or the pass has been lost or stolen, a temporary pass can be obtained from the school.

- Temporary passes are valid for 10 days to enable a replacement pass to be arranged. If a valid replacement pass cannot be produced after 10 days, the driver can refuse travel.

- If a pass has been lost or stolen a replacement can be purchased. Further information can be found at:
  https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/residents/schools/travelling-school/information-existing-users-travel-assistance/replacement-school-bus-pass

- Parents or carers who take students to a stop to meet the vehicle are advised to either ensure that the student is carrying a valid pass or wait with them until the vehicle arrives and advise the driver accordingly.

- Out of date passes will be confiscated.

- If the vehicle has not arrived 15 minutes past its normal pick up time, students should call the number on the back of their pass.

- Transport is arranged by Oxfordshire County Council through its Supported Transport Service.

- Queries regarding Mainstream School Transport should be sent to mainstream.schooltransport@oxfordshire.gov.uk and for SEND School Transport to ee-specialeducationalneedsITU@oxfordshire.gov.uk

- If your enquiry is urgent and you need to speak to us by phone you can contact Mainstream School Transport on 01865 323500 and SEND School Transport on 01865 323795

- If transport is no longer required, please return the pass to Supported Transport Service, PO Box 867, Oxford, OX1 9NR. This will enable us to allocate the place to another student.

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Post 16 Transport Policy Statement Academic Year 2025-26

Transport policy statement for young people aged 16–18 in further education, those continuing learners who are aged 19 and those young people aged 19- 24 (inclusive) with learning difficulties and/or disabilities

Contents

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1.   Introduction

1.1   Local authorities do not have to provide free or subsidised post 16 travel support, but they do have a legal duty to prepare and publish an annual transport policy statement specifying the transport arrangements or other support facilitating the attendance of young people of sixth form age receiving education or training.

1.2   All eligible young people who require travel support must apply by completing an application form, see section 1.8 below.

1.3   Nevertheless, in most circumstances young people accessing Post 16 education will make their own travel arrangements to access their chosen school or college. They may walk, cycle, use public transport or the council's Spare Seat Scheme to travel to school or college.

1.4   For most young people, any travel costs incurred will be their responsibility, or that of their parent or parents.

1.5   This policy statement details the transport provision and financial assistance with transport that the council believes are necessary for Oxfordshire residents of sixth form age who are receiving education or training. Therefore, this statement covers those young people in Oxfordshire aged 16 to 18 and those continuing learners who started their course before their 19th birthday.

1.6   Travel assistance may also be made available for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities aged 19 up until they reach the age of 25 years. However, travel assistance for this age group involves submitting a request for a Care Assessment. These assessments are the responsibility of Adult Social Care, not the Transport Eligibility Team.

1.7   Travel assistance will normally only be considered if the student has an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) or if the student has a disability which means he/she requires transport arrangements to be provided, and the establishment attended is **the nearest suitable placement to the student's main address**.

1.8   In all cases, the student, or their parent, will need to apply for transport assistance using Oxfordshire's online system and provide evidence that without transport assistance the student will be unable to attend the educational placement. Therefore, when assessing whether to provide transport assistance we consider:

- whether transport assistance is being requested to attend the nearest suitable school or college than can meet that student's special needs;
- whether there is a closer educational provision which is suitable and can meet a student's special educational needs
- whether there is evidence that a student will otherwise be unable to attend Post 16 education or training
- whether distance thresholds have been met
- any supporting evidence from professionals involved with the student and their family;
- the best use of the county council's resources

1.9   Education or training refers to learning or training at a school, further education institution, a council maintained or assisted institution providing higher or further education, an

establishment funded directly by the Education Skills Funding Agency, learning providers delivering accredited programmes of learning which lead to positive outcomes and are funded by the council, for example, colleges, charities and private learning providers. Learners must be receiving education or training at one of the following:

- a school;
- a further education institution;
- a local authority maintained or assisted institution providing higher or further education;
- a 16-19 Academy; or
- at any establishment (not falling within the above categories) at which the council secures the provision of education or training under section 15ZA of the Education Act 1996

2. Who Is Support Available For?

2.1 Where it is not possible to access Post 16 education, for example the nearest school or college is over 3 miles from the student's home, there is no public transport service, and there is no private transport available, the council may be able to assist with travel. In these circumstances, the student or parents should contact School Transport Eligibility at:

SchoolTransportEligibilty@Oxfordshire.gov.uk

2.2 Those young people beyond statutory school age who are aged 16 to 19, or started their course before the age of 19, and have learning difficulties and/or disabilities may receive assisted travel when they attend the **nearest suitable educational placement** to their home address that has an available place and one of the following applies:

- the distance from their home to the educational placement is over 3 miles; or,
- the distance from their home to the educational placement is less than 3 miles but there is no available walking route; or,
- it would not be reasonable to expect the young person to walk to the educational placement because of their mobility problems or because of associated health and safety issues related to their learning difficulty and/or disability, or because of a temporary or long-term medical condition (evidence is required from a GP or Consultant).

2.5 The nearest suitable educational placement is one at which the student's needs can be met. For those with EHCPs, this will be established by the School Transport Eligibility Team from the responses to the formal consultations with schools and colleges undertaken by the SEN Team. If a school or college responds to a consultation stating that need can be met, whether or not it gives reasoning that will establish that it is a suitable establishment. Preference for a particular course or establishment is not relevant to the decision on whether a school or college is considered to be the nearest suitable school or college. In all other cases, the decision of the School Transport Eligibility Team as to suitability of a placement is final and is not open to review.

2.6 If a young person attends an educational placement where there is more than one site, travel assistance will only be provided to the nearest of those sites at which the young person's needs can be met. The council will not provide assisted travel between sites. Any dispute over whether the provision at a particular site "meets need" will be determined by confirmation from the School or College as to whether it can meet need at that particular site.

2.7   Those who wish to study a course at an alternative educational placement to the nearest one that can meet their needs, will be responsible for the full cost and provision of any travel arrangements that will be required for them to attend.

2.8   The transport needs of young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are assessed individually. Therefore, if travel assistance is approved the travel arrangements will be made according to the student's needs, for example, if travel assistance has been agreed and the student is in a residential placement, travel arrangements would be made on a weekly or termly basis.

2.9   An officer within the School Transport Eligibility Team is responsible for the assessment of eligibility for travel assistance.

2.10 Independent travel training for students who face difficulties with transport may be provided on a one-to-one basis depending on the level of need and the availability of trainers.

3.   Oxfordshire County Council Spare Seat Scheme for those aged 16-19

3.1   If a young person does not qualify for travel assistance, it may be possible to purchase a seat on home to school transport through the Spare Seat Scheme.

3.2   It may be the case that there is already transport arranged by Oxfordshire County Council from where a student lives for young people who are eligible for free travel to their school or college, and if there is space in the vehicle it may be possible to purchase a seat.

3.3   This is a paid service that is only available on existing transport and where there would be no additional cost for Oxfordshire County Council to add the young person to the journey

3.4   If a student would like to be considered for any place available under the Spare Seat Scheme, they need to submit an application using the following link:
      Paid home to school travel assistance (spare seats scheme) | Oxfordshire County Council

3.5   There is no guarantee that a seat will be available or will continue to be available for the duration of the period of study for a young person. It is important that students consider how they may travel to school or college if this service is not available.

3.6   Seats on coaches provided for home-to-school transport are made available on payment of a distance related charge. The charges for the 2025/26 academic year are set out in Table 2.

Table 2: Post-16 Charges for the Spare Seat Scheme

Spare Seats Scheme Charge	2025/26
Less than 3 miles from home to school/college	£182.00 per term (£546.00 per annum)
More than 3 miles from home to school/college	£338.64 per term (£1015.92 per annum)

Note: Charges are subject to review and change further information can be found on the Council's website

3.7 The charge will depend on the distance from a student's home to their school or college. The distance from home to school or college will be measured along the shortest available route on Oxfordshire County Council's Geographic Information System.

3.8 If there are more requests to pay for seats on a route than there are seats available, they will be allocated in the descending order of priority shown in Table 3.

Table 3: Priority for Spare Seat Scheme

Priority	Category
1	Those with an Education, Health and Care (EHC) Plan naming the school
2	Looked After Children
3	Years 12 and 13 (if there is no available service bus route)
4	Those in receipt of Free School Meals or whose parent or carer is in receipt of the maximum level of Working Tax Credit
5	Those who travelled on the route the previous term
6	By year group, in ascending order of priority from Reception to Year 11 (or to Year 13 if there is an available service bus route)

* Where there are more applicants than places in any of the above categories, priority will be given to those living closest to the destination school (measured using the shortest available route on Oxfordshire County Council's Geographic Information System)

4. 16 to 19 Bursary Fund

4.1 To help with funding school and colleges have a fund provided by the government called the 16 to 19 Bursary Fund which is available for students in Post 16 Education and can be used toward the cost of travelling to and from school or college.

4.2 There are two types of 16 to 19 bursaries:
- a vulnerable bursary of up to £1,200 a year for young people in one of the defined vulnerable groups;
- discretionary bursaries which institutions award to meet individual needs, for example, help with the cost of transport, meals, books and equipment.

4.3 Further information on the 16-19 Bursary Fund is available on Gov.UK web pages at the following link 16 to 19 Bursary Fund: Overview - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

4.4 16-19 Bursary funds are managed by schools and colleges. Young people who want to apply for support from the bursary fund should contact their chosen institution to make an application.

4.5 Students aged under the age of 19 enrolled on courses for higher education qualifications are not eligible for support.

5. Support for students aged 19-25 (Adult Duty) – Continuing with a first course of study begun before the 19th birthday

5.1 The Transport and Eligibility Team will consider applications for travel assistance made by, or on behalf of, those students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities aged between 19 and 24 years of age (inclusive) if they are continuing with a first course of study begun before their 19th birthday. An assessment will be made taking account of the specific circumstances of the applicant and the case for assistance with travel. Once a student is starting a course of study after their 19th birthday any requests for travel assistance will need to be made to Adult Social Services through an application for a Care Assessment.

5.2 If travel assistance is agreed, it will continue until the end of the agreed course of study, or until the end of the academic year in which the student's 25th birthday occurs, whichever is the sooner. However, travel assistance will be reviewed throughout the course and independent travel will be encouraged.

5.3 More information about Oxfordshire County Council's Local Offer for young people attending education or training can be found here:
Education and employment for young people | Oxfordshire County Council

Further helpful information is contained in the following Moving into Adulthood online Handbook at:
OxFSN | Moving Into Adulthood

6. Young parents / Care to Learn

6.1 If a student is a young parent under 20, Care to Learn can help pay for childcare and related travel costs, up to £160 per child per week, while they are learning. Care to Learn can help with the cost of:

- childcare, including deposit and registration fees.
- a childcare 'taster' session (up to 5 days).
- keeping a childcare place over the summer holidays.
- taking the student's child to the childcare provider.

6.2 More detailed information on this and how to apply can be found here:
Care to Learn: Overview - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

7. Types of travel assistance

7.1 Where assistance from the Council is necessary, the Council may consider provision of one of the following forms of travel assistance:

- a public bus or train travel pass
- Independent Travel Training
- a Direct Travel Payment
- a Council arranged coach/bus service
- a Council arranged minibus
- a Council arranged shared taxi
- a Council arranged solo taxi, based on a travel needs assessment

- Passenger assistant support, based on a travel needs assessment undertaken by the Council
- Other alternative assistance based on needs/circumstances (case by case)

7.2 In order to determine the most appropriate travel option for pupils/students and the most cost effective means of travel assistance, the Council will use a range of criteria.

7.3 Information on Direct Travel Payment, what they are, what they can be used for, and their values, can be found on our Direct Travel Payment webpage. Banding and values are reviewed annually and updated accordingly to ensure ongoing sustainability and value for money.

7.4 The Council operates its own Independent Travel Training Programme (ITT), designed to help young people with special educational needs and/or Disabilities use public transport. The programme helps young people obtain knowledge and experience of a planned route and attain a high level of road safety skills. Assessment for suitability of ITT will be undertaken on a case-by-case basis and reflect the needs/circumstances of the young person. Where it is identified that ITT is not appropriate then it will not be offered and an alternative for of travel will be provided.

7.5 The programme provides Individual travel training on a bespoke one-to-one basis with young people. By directly assisting the young people, their families and support networks, the training is tailored to suit the needs of each individual student.

8.   Transport Appeals

8.1 If a parent disagrees with the decision not to award travel assistance it is possible to appeal. Oxfordshire County Council follows a two-stage appeals process.

8.2 The Council has a 2 stage appeal process for young people and parents/carers to challenge a decision about transport eligibility.

Stage 1 – Review by a senior officer/officer panel

8.3 Parents/carers have 20 working days to request a review of our decision about home to school transport eligibility or provision. Parents/carers should write to us, detailing why the decision should be reviewed, giving details of any personal/family circumstances and include all supporting evidence to be considered, for example, evidence from a medical professional. In most cases the parent/carer will be asked to complete a form for further information. The parent/carer will receive an acknowledgement when we have received their written request for a review.

8.4 The parents/carers of pupils/students should write to the School Transport Eligibility Team using the School Transport Eligibility 'Contact us' form.

8.5 The decision will be reviewed by a senior officer or via the Transport Exceptions Panel. The Transport Exceptions Panel meet throughout the year and is made up of

officers from Children's Services, the Support Transport team and Integrated SEND teams.

8.6   Within 20 working days of receipt of their written request including all supporting evidence, parents/carers will be advised in writing of the appeal decision.

Stage 2 - Review by an Independent Appeal Panel

8.7   Parents/carers have 20 working days from receipt of our Stage 1 appeal decision notification letter to write to ask for it to be reconsidered at Stage 2, which is a review by an Independent Appeal Panel. Details of where to send the Stage 2 request will be included on the Stage 1 appeal decision letter. Within 40 working days of receipt of the parents/carers Stage 2 request, an Independent Appeal Panel will consider written and verbal representations from both the parent/carer and officers involved in the case. The Independent Appeal Panel will give a detailed written notification of the outcome within 5 working days of the panel meeting.

8.8   The Independent Appeal Panel is made up of officers who have experience and knowledge of transport issues. These officers are independent of the original decision making process.

Stage 3 - Complaint to Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman

8.9   Parents/carers can complain to the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman only if they consider that:

- there was a failure to comply with the procedural rules
- if there are any other irregularities in the way the appeal has been handled

8.10   For further information contact the School Transport Eligibility team.

8.11   The LA will not consider requests for a further transport appeal within the same school academic year unless there has been a significant change of circumstance.

8.12   Complex Stage 2 cases may take longer than the timescale given above.

9.   Useful contact information

9.1   Oxfordshire County Council

School Admissions Team (Transport Eligibility)
County Hall
New Road
Oxford
OX1 1ND
Tel: 0345 241 2487
Email:schooltransporteligibility@oxfordshire.gov.uk
Web:https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/

Supported Transport Services
PO Box 867
Oxford
OX1 9NR

Tel: 01865 323500
Email: mainstream.schooltransport@oxfordshire.gov.uk
Web:https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/

9.2   Planning Transport to School/College

The public transport pages on the Oxfordshire County Council website give details
of bus routes by parish as well as links to operators' websites and timetables:

www2.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/public-site/public-transport

9.3   Other useful sources of information on public transport

Traveline: https://www.traveline.info/
Oxford Bus Company: https://www.oxfordbus.co.uk/
Stagecoach Oxfordshire: https://www.stagecoachbus.com/about/oxfordshire
Thames Travel: https://www.thames-travel.co.uk/

10.   Complaints

Any complaints arising from the processes and procedures set out above should be
submitted via the Council's general complaints procedure, details of which are found at:

Complaints about Oxfordshire County Council | Oxfordshire County Council

Oxfordshire County Council

Equalities Impact Assessment

TITLE

DATE COMPLETED

Contents

Section 1: Summary details

Directorate and Service Area	Children, Education and Families (DCS)
What is being assessed (e.g. name of policy, procedure, project, service or proposed service change).	Home to School Travel and Transport Policy and the Post 16 Transport Policy Statement
Is this a new or existing function or policy?	Existing Policy – Update & Refresh
Summary of assessment Briefly summarise the policy or proposed service change. Summarise possible impacts. Does the proposal bias, discriminate or unfairly disadvantage individuals or groups within the community? (following completion of the assessment).	Following consultation and review of feedback there are no proposed service changes. Changes to the existing policies are cosmetic to improve the ease of use and ensure alignment with the latest DfE Guidance and best practice. Both policies continue to deliver the Council's statutory duties which continue to support compulsory school age pupils and those in post 16 education, specifically those with additional needs (Special Educational Needs) to ensure access is available to the nearest appropriate school that can meet their needs. In addition to support available for individuals/families with disability, support is also available to enable access for those identified as low income, and/or those living in rural communities. Both policies continue to allow individuals to present their personal/individual circumstances for consideration through the application process, if they are unable to meet the described eligibility criteria but have difficulty accessing their child's education setting, these continue to be considered on a case-by-case basis. The proposed changes therefore do not bias, discriminate, or unfairly disadvantage individuals or groups within the community.
Completed By	Stephen Good – HtST Programme Manager
Authorised By	

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Date of Assessment	

Section 2: Detail of proposal

| Context / Background

Briefly summarise the background to the policy or proposed service change, including reasons for any changes from previous versions. | Oxfordshire County Council as a local authority, has a statutory duty to provide free travel for children and young people of compulsory school age (5-16 years of age) who meet those thresholds detailed in legislation. These thresholds are set out in sections 508A, 508B, 508C and 509D and Schedule 25B of the Education Act 1996 (as amended by Part 6 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006).

Compulsory School age is set out in section 8 of the Education Act 1996 and the Education (Start of Compulsory School Age) Order 1998 as follows: a child reaches compulsory school age on the prescribed day following their fifth birthday, or on the fifth birthday if it falls on a prescribed day. The prescribed days are 31 December, 31 March and 31 August. A child ceases to be of compulsory school age on the last Friday in June in the academic year in which they reach age 16.

The Education Act 1996 duty applies to all local authorities in England in respect of arrangements for young people (over compulsory school age) aged 16-18 and those continuing learners up to age 25 with EHC plans who started their programme of learning before their 19th birthday. There are also duties that apply to local authorities in England in respect of arrangements for adults aged 19 and over, who started their programme of learning after their 19th birthday. The legislation therefore gives local authorities the discretion to determine what transport and financial support are necessary to facilitate young people's attendance at their setting.

The existing Home to School Transport Policies were last consulted upon in 2014 (Compulsory School Age) and 2018 (Post 16). DfE Guidance was last updated in 2019 for Post 16 Travel and in 2023 and 2024 for Compulsory School Age.

A review of the policies was undertaken, the primary focus of the update to the policies was to improve the accessibility of the Policy documents by improving its structure, flow, and language. The purpose was to improve effectiveness and usefulness of the documents for both officers, families, schools, and other key stakeholders.

Updated policies were drafted and published for consultation, a public consultation ran between 23 January 2025 and 9 March 2025 (11:59pm) It included the proposed refreshed policies, the proposal to introduce contribution charges to Post 16 travel, and explored early engagement/feedback about existing discretionary provision. |

		Included in the consultation was a proposal to introduce a contribution charge for young people accessing support with travel to their Post 16 education setting. All other updates to the policy are an update of the existing policy to improve wording and use, no other changes to eligibility or service were included.
Proposals Explain the detail of the proposals, including why this has been decided as the best course of action.		The current policies were last consulted on in 2014 and 2019, since then the DfE have reissued guidance for Home to School Travel. The proposed changes to policy reflect the latest updated guidance without changing existing service provision or entitlement. This course of action have been decided to ensure that the policy reflects DfE phrasing and guidance, providing the necessary clarity and consistency requested by families, schools and council officers. It also continues to provide valuable support across protected characteristic groups and wider community. Despite an original proposal to implement a contribution charge it is now proposed that this charge for post 16 travel support is not implemented. As a result there is no change to service under the Post 16 Transport Policy Statement, maintaining existing support across all protected characteristics.

Evidence / Intelligence
 	
List and explain any data, consultation outcomes, research findings, feedback from service users and stakeholders etc, that supports your proposals and can help to inform the judgements you make about potential impact on different individuals, communities
		The proposed policies were consulted upon between 23 January 2025 and 9 March 2025 (11:59pm) It included the proposed refreshed policies, the proposal to introduce contribution charges to Post 16 travel, and explored early engagement/feedback about existing discretionary provision.
		
		The consultation focused on seeking views on the following areas:
		    Review area 1: Updates to the format and language used in our home to school transport policy and our post 16 transport policy statement to improve customer understanding, awareness and overall experience.
		    Review area 2: Specific updates to the use and application of direct travel payments in our home to school transport policy to ensure the language is more user friendly and consistent with current government guidelines.

or groups and our ability to deliver our climate commitments.	**Review area 3:** Specific updates to our home to school transport policy for travel arrangements to Alternative Education Provision settings to meet current government guidelines and to reflect Oxfordshire's current alternative provision arrangements. **Review area 4:** Proposals to ask for a financial contribution for post 16 pupils with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) for travel to post 16 settings. As well as consulting on the proposed changes the consultation also explored views on the following discretionary elements of both policies where proposals for change had not yet been developed: **Review area 5:** Discretionary travel at split village locations **Review area 6:** Spare seat scheme

Feedback from the public regarding the proposals was received through an online survey. 649 surveys were submitted during the consultation period.

Updates to the format and language (**Review Area 1**) of the policies to improve understanding, awareness and general experience receive significant support with 66% of respondents either significantly or somewhat approving of the proposed changes.

Significant support was also received for **Review Area's 2 and 3**, which related to specific updates to wording within the policy in relation to Direct Travel Payments (DTP's) and travel support for those in Alternative Education Provision. 63% were in support of the updated wording for Review Area 2, and 39% for Review Area 3, 42% neither agreed or disagreed with Review Area 3 proposals.

Review Area 4 was the final proposed change, relating to the introduction of a contribution charge for young learners with an EHCP in Post 16 education where the Council provides support with travel. 60% of respondents disagreed with the proposals.

The primary reason for disagreeing with the proposal is the affordability and financial impact of the proposal. Those individuals and families affected are often associated with additional costs which other families may not experience.

Feedback also indicated that the financial impact would also have significant impact on a young person's ability to continue their education with respondents indicating the proposal would create a barrier to education.

	In the consultation it was explored whether the Council should review the support provided to families living in 'split villages', which is discretionary support currently being offered, and if the Council was to make changes to this support what would the impact be. Feedback from the consultation indicated that 43% believed there would be a negative impact on the community if this support was reduced. If this support was withdrawn completely then 55% of responses indicated this would have a negative impact.
	The consultation also explored the existing discretionary support available through the selling of spare seats. Feedback indicated that if the Council considered to reduce the service in the future, then 65% felt this would have a negative impact. If the Council was to explore increasing the contribution paid to access a spare seat, then 53% indicated this would have a negative impact.
	The Consultation feedback supports the proposed changes to both policies.
Alternatives considered / rejected Summarise any other approaches that have been considered in developing the policy or proposed service change, and the reasons why these were not adopted. This could include reasons why doing nothing is not an option.	Consideration was given to implement the proposal included in the public consultation in relation to the introduction of a contribution charge for Post 16 pupils accessing support with travel to their place of education. After review of the feedback, the potential mitigations, and benefits available to the Council it was decided introduction of a contribution charge should be delayed pending a further review and development of key mitigation to ensure access to education is maintained for those it is necessary to support. Implementing this proposal would have been a significant change to the Council existing policy, by not implementing the proposal there is no change to existing service/support available.

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Section 3: Impact Assessment - Protected Characteristics

Protected Characteristic	No Impact	Positive	Negative	Description of Impact	Any actions or mitigation to reduce negative impacts	Action owner* (*Job Title, Organisation)	Timescale and monitoring arrangements
Age	☒	☐	☐	No impact from proposed changes	NA	NA	NA
Disability	☒	☐	☐	No impact from proposed changes	NA	NA	NA
Gender Reassignment	☒	☐	☐	No impact from proposed changes	NA	NA	NA
Marriage & Civil Partnership	☒	☐	☐	No impact from proposed changes	NA	NA	NA
Pregnancy & Maternity	☒	☐	☐	No impact from proposed changes	NA	NA	NA
Race	☒	☐	☐	No impact from proposed changes	NA	NA	NA
Sex	☒	☐	☐	No impact from proposed changes	NA	NA	NA
Sexual Orientation	☒	☐	☐	No impact from proposed changes	NA	NA	NA
Religion or Belief	☒	☐	☐	No impact from proposed changes	NA	NA	NA

Section 3: Impact Assessment - Additional Community Impacts

Additional community impacts	No Impact	Positive	Negative	Description of impact	Any actions or mitigation to reduce negative impacts	Action owner (*Job Title, Organisation)	Timescale and monitoring arrangements
Rural communities	☒	☐	☐	No impact from proposed changes	NA	NA	NA
Armed Forces	☒	☐	☐	No impact from proposed changes	NA	NA	NA
Carers	☒	☐	☐	No impact from proposed changes	NA	NA	NA
Areas of deprivation	☒	☐	☐	No impact from proposed changes	NA	NA	NA

Section 3: Impact Assessment - Additional Wider Impacts

Additional Wider Impacts	No Impact	Positive	Negative	Description of Impact	Any actions or mitigation to reduce negative impacts	Action owner* (*Job Title, Organisation)	Timescale and monitoring arrangements
Staff	☒	☐	☐	No impact from proposed changes	NA	NA	NA
Other Council Services	☒	☐	☐	No impact from proposed changes	NA	NA	NA
Providers	☒	☐	☐	No impact from proposed changes	NA	NA	NA
Social Value [1]	☒	☐	☐	No impact from proposed changes	NA	NA	NA

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[1] If the Public Services (Social Value) Act 2012 applies to this proposal, please summarise here how you have considered how the contract might improve the economic, social, and environmental well-being of the relevant area

Section 4: Review

Where bias, negative impact or disadvantage is identified, the proposal and/or implementation can be adapted or changed; meaning there is a need for regular review. This review may also be needed to reflect additional data and evidence for a fuller assessment (proportionate to the decision in question). Please state the agreed review timescale for the identified impacts of the policy implementation or service change.

Review Date	**30 April 2025**
Person Responsible for Review	**Stephen Good**
Authorised By	

CABINET

17 June 2025

Traffic Filter Trial Delay - Mitigation Proposals

Report by Director of Environment and Highways

RECOMMENDATION

1. **Cabinet is RECOMMENDED to**

   a) Authorise officers to carry out a public consultation on a proposal to temporarily implement a congestion charging scheme using the systems and infrastructure developed for the traffic filter trial, to mitigate the impact of the delay of the traffic filter trial while Botley Road remains closed.

   b) Authorise officers to develop the minor schemes as outlined in paragraph 13 (e) to (i)

   c) Request officers to develop an 'income spending strategy' which will focus the net surplus income on reducing the costs of bus travel, including potential park and ride incentives, in accordance with relevant legislation.

Executive Summary

2. Network Rail's ongoing closure of Botley Road at Oxford station means Cabinet's November 2022 decision to introduce six trial traffic filters in Oxford cannot be implemented until at least August 2026. This has meant that the scheme benefits of quicker and more reliable buses, safer and more attractive walking and cycling, and improved air quality cannot be realised. The continued closure of Botley Road has worsened the situation for business travel in the city including community-based healthcare professionals and tradespeople, who will benefit from the trial traffic filters.

3. In early 2025, organisations such as Oxford City Council and Oxford Bus Company requested that Oxfordshire County Council must investigate short term options given the continued closure of Botley Road and the resultant delay to the trial traffic filters.

4. Officers have reviewed a range of potential options, and the recommended options to pursue (subject to consultation and development) have been identified. The main recommended option is a temporary congestion charge scheme based on the existing trial traffic filter proposals. Subject to a future decision by Cabinet, following the consultation, the temporary scheme could be introduced while Botley Road remains closed using the infrastructure and systems already implemented during 2024 in readiness for the traffic filters trial.

5. This report outlines the background, the need for intervention, and the options considered.

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Background

6.   Network Rail's ongoing closure of Botley Road at Oxford station means Cabinet's November 2022 decision to introduce six trial traffic filters in Oxford cannot be implemented until at least August 2026.

7.   The trial traffic filters are designed to reduce congestion enabling a transformation of the public transport experience for journeys into and around the city by drastically improving bus journey times and reliability, facilitating new and improved routes. It is also designed to create a more comfortable environment for those walking, wheeling and cycling by reducing traffic and harmful emissions while encouraging mode shift to these healthy and sustainable forms of transport. It supports the Zero Emission Bus Regional Area (ZEBRA) investment and the commitments in the Enhanced Partnership, particularly the commitment to improve bus productivity by 10% by the end of 2025.

8.   At the time of the 2011 census (the latest reliable travel to work data), 53% of Oxford residents travelled to work by non-car modes. 70% of those working in Oxford city centre travelled to work by non-car modes (excluding park and ride). Additionally, 32% of Oxford residents do not have access to a car, and more than 90% of city centre visitors (including shopping, tourism, leisure and education as well as commuting) arrive by non-car modes. The County Council has committed to take action to mitigate the impact of the extended Botley Road closure that provide benefits to the majority of road users in the city.

9.   The trial traffic filters will provide extensive exemptions and permits for those unable to use alternative and more space-efficient modes or for instances when these other modes (e.g. public transport or cycling) are not possible. For those with an exemption or using a permit, less traffic will provide an enhanced journey experience even when using their private car.

10.   In January 2025, Network Rail announced a further delay to the full reopening of the Botley Road until August 2026. As a result, the County Council received letters and strong representations from groups and organisations lobbying the county council to take action. Oxford City Council submitted a statement (see Annex 1) imploring 'Oxfordshire County Council to take action now to tackle congestion.' The Oxford Bus Company warned that 'Congestion in Oxford is at "emergency levels"' and urged the County Council to come up with a 'Plan B solution' and it "should not wait until the introduction of the traffic filters to tackle growing congestion (Annex 2). Representations have been received from carers and tradespeople (Annex 3), two groups of essential road users that would have benefited from the introduction of the trial traffic filters in November 2024. Officers have therefore considered a range of interim options while Network Rail completes its works.

11.   The closure of Botley Road has increased congestion, slowing buses by up to 17% on Abingdon Road and lengthening journey times on Banbury and Woodstock roads. This has made conditions tougher for pedestrians and cyclists. Workers such as healthcare professionals and tradespeople are affected by longer traffic queues. There is a risk of losing more bus services, creating a negative cycle of deteriorating public transport and increasing congestion. The council has already stepped in to

financially support previously commercial bus services in the city due to increased congestion, but this is not financially sustainable in the longer term.

12. A citizens' assembly was held in early 2025 to discuss and debate the council's transport policies. There was strong support for traffic reduction measures and cheaper and more reliable public transport.

Options considered

13. In March 2025, officers investigated a range of solutions to mitigate the delay in implementing the trial traffic filters. The guiding principles were to achieve benefits similar to those expected for the trial traffic filters, and to be able to implement any interventions quickly and at low cost. The following options have been considered:

   (a) Do Nothing

   (b) Partial implementation of the trial traffic filters (4 out of 6 filters)

   (c) Use the trial traffic filters as temporary congestion charging locations

   (d) Accelerating the expanded ZEZ

   (e) Rephasing of signals at Abingdon Road/Weirs Lane

   (f) Introducing Red Routes, suspension of parking/loading etc

   (g) School streets around private schools

   (h) Park & Ride stops and bus lane access for private school shuttle buses

   (i) Direct access to hospitals bus links/Park & Ride

14. As has been outlined in the previous section, the 'do nothing' option is not considered viable for the reasons given previously.

15. A partial implementation of the trial traffic filters has been considered in the past. This would likely include operating only 4 of the 6 filter points, with the filters on Hythe Bridge Street and Thames Street not operating while the Botley Road is closed. This adjustment would be necessary to provide access to an area of the city centre that, under a 6-filter proposal, would only be accessible from the Botley Road for cars. Consequently, bus journey time benefits would not be achieved on the Abingdon, Woodstock, and Banbury roads, as car traffic attempts to access this city centre area from other routes. This situation is already occurring on these roads with the Botley Road closed. Any proposal needs to be seen as a city-wide initiative to ensure that traffic, and the congestion it creates, is not reassigned to other key bus routes. Given the maximum trial period of 18 months, the monitoring and evaluation for the trial traffic filters would be 'null and void' and could not be used for decision-making at the end of the 18-month period. For this reason, this option has been discounted.

16. The temporary congestion charge would be identical to the approved trial traffic filter scheme, except that cars without a permit have the option to pay a daily charge for

access through the congestion charge locations, rather than being prohibited. Exemptions and permits would be identical to the traffic filters (but with an additional central permit area to take account of the continued closure of the Botley Road – see Annex 4).

17.   Infrastructure (much of which is already in place) would be largely the same as for the traffic filters, minimising infrastructure costs. Back-office systems for enforcement and permit management would be the same as for traffic filters, with the addition of a payment module. Traffic reduction impacts would depend on the level of the charge, but with a proposed daily charge of £5 (for access through all six charge locations) the reductions would be expected to be approaching those of the traffic filters with corresponding benefits for bus services.

18.   An accelerated city centre ZEZ, whilst having some traffic reduction benefits within and around the zone itself, would not provide city-wide benefits and could make congestion worse on some important bus routes e.g. at either end of Marston Ferry Road (as people try to avoid driving through the city centre). There is no infrastructure currently in place for the city centre ZEZ, with the design and assessment work underway but not completed. The back-office systems are in place for the ZEZ pilot, but these require major modification for a wider city centre ZEZ. Therefore, it would not be possible to implement the expanded ZEZ until shortly before the reopening of the Botley Road so the benefits would be very short-lived.

19.   Options (e) to (i) at paragraph 13 above, would provide benefits in terms of traffic reduction, but this would be geographically localised, not city-wide. Additionally, improvement for bus services (scheduled and private) would require lower levels of congestion to achieve the full benefits. The private schools already offer comprehensive home-to-school transport, but the coaches get caught in the same congestion as general traffic. Nevertheless, it is considered there is some benefit and these warrant investment as mitigation and officers are proposing (subject to further development and approval) implementation of options (e) to (i) in conjunction with a city-wide proposal. Indeed, new and improved bus services serving the hospitals were introduced in early 2025, and tweaks are being made to traffic signals timings.

20.   For the reasons given above, officers believe that the only realistic and materially effective option, deliverable within the required timeframe, is a temporary congestion charge alongside developing options (e) to (i).

21.   If the proposal proceeds to implementation, the intention is to replace the temporary congestion charge with the trial traffic filters as soon as practically possible once the Botley Road reopens. The congestion charge does not provide the full benefits in terms of traffic reduction, and like other congestion charge schemes, its effectiveness is likely to diminish over time. Therefore, it is not expected to achieve the full benefits of the trial traffic filters required to deliver the walking and cycling benefits from reduced traffic and potential road space reallocation.

22.   The current proposal for a congestion charge scheme is unique as, unlike typical schemes, it is based on six individual charging locations rather than a zone, applies only to cars (including fully electric cars), and includes various exemptions and permits, unlike those seen in places like London. This design closely mirrors the trial traffic filter scheme for ease of understanding and utilises existing infrastructure to

enable quick implementation. It is a pragmatic solution to address the delay in the trial traffic filter scheme, which was expected to be implemented in November 2024. If a permanent Oxford congestion charge scheme were designed from scratch, it would likely differ significantly in terms of charge levels, operational area and time, and the number of discounts and exemptions. This proposal is very much a short-term, temporary solution, making use of existing investment.

23. If a temporary congestion charge is pursued, it is likely to generate surplus income. Subject to further work and a future Cabinet approval, this could be invested in bus service enhancements and/or reducing the cost of bus travel e.g. reducing the cost of park and ride. In line with the requirements of the Transport Act 2000, the net revenue generated by a charging scheme can only be spent on schemes that facilitate the achievement of local transport policies.

Corporate Policies and Priorities

24. Developing a scheme, that has similar benefits to the trial traffic filters, during this extended closure to the Botley Road, will support the council's nine priorities:

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

- Tackle inequalities in Oxfordshire

- Prioritise the health and wellbeing of residents

- Support carers and the social care system

- Invest in an inclusive, integrated and sustainable transport network

- Preserve and improve access to nature and green spaces

- Create opportunities for children and young people to reach their full potential

- Play our part in a vibrant and participatory local democracy

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

25. In July 2022, Oxfordshire County Council adopted its new Local Transport and Connectivity Plan (LTCP) which sets a clear vision to deliver a net-zero transport system that enables Oxfordshire to thrive, protects the environment and makes the county a better place to live for all residents. This includes ambitious targets to:

- replace or remove 1 in 4 car trips in Oxfordshire by 2030

- deliver a net-zero transport network by 2040, and

- have zero, or as close as possible, road fatalities or life-changing injuries by 2050.

26. To help deliver the LTCP vision, the emerging Central Oxfordshire Travel Plan proposes a set of 22 actions to support a more sustainable and reliable transport

system across the central Oxfordshire area, including proposals for traffic filters which are required to address several challenges, including the need to:

- reduce exposure to air pollution and rapidly reduce carbon emissions from all transport related activities

- reduce congestion and its negative impacts on bus services and economic productivity and vitality

- encourage more sustainable development, making greater use of limited road space and prioritising public transport, walking and cycling

- improve health and wellbeing and reduce health inequalities

Equality & Inclusion Implications

27.   If recommendation (a) is approved, an Equalities Impact Assessment (EqIA) will be produced for the consultation with a final assessment accompanying the consultation outcome report to Cabinet later in the year. However, the implications are expected to be broadly similar to the EqIA associated with the trial traffic filters which can be viewed here.

Sustainability Implications

Climate impact assessment

28.   If recommendation (a) is approved, a Climate Impact Assessment (CIA) will be produced for the consultation with a final assessment accompanying the report to Cabinet later in the year. However, this is expected to be broadly similar to the CIA associated with the trial traffic filters which can be viewed here.

Financial Implications

29. The proposal would largely utilise the infrastructure, including the back-office systems, approved for the trial traffic filters (through a separate Cabinet approval, in November 2022, and business case).

30. However, additional capital investment of £0.5m is required for new signs and adaptation to the back-office systems to add a charging module. It is proposed to fund this through the Congestion Relief Fund, within the council's approved capital programme, allocated to the Botley Road Mitigation package.

31. If the proposal proceeds to implementation, the operating expenditure (OpEx), including additional staff costs and maintenance, is planned to be funded by the temporary congestion charge income.

32. It is expected that a temporary congestion charge would generate surplus income above the operational costs identified. Subject to future decision-making, this surplus income could be used to reduce the cost of bus travel, including park & ride, in Oxford. Any use will need to be in line with the requirements of the Transport Act 2000 where net revenue generated by a charging scheme can only be spent on schemes that facilitate the achievement of local transport policies.

    Comments checked by:

    Rob Finlayson, Strategic Finance Business Partner,
    rob.finlayson@oxfordshire.gov.uk (Finance)

Legal Implications

33. The consultation will be carried out in line with the gunning consultation principles and in line with other relevant legislations.

34. The temporary congestion charge would be introduced and managed using powers available in the Transport Act 2000. The Council also has powers under the Highways Act 1980 and the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 (RTRA) to implement highway improvements and to make and amend traffic regulation orders

35. Introduction of the charging scheme and the other options proposed would be subject to consultation and consideration of the matters set out in the relevant legislation.

36. All highways authorities have a duty under the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984, the New Roads and Street Works Act 1991(NRSWA) and the Traffic Management Act 2004 (TMA) to manage its road network with a view to achieving, so far as may be reasonably practicable having regard to its other obligations, policies and objectives, the expeditious and safe movement of traffic, including pedestrians, on its road network. Managing congestion on its road network is an essential element and the options in this report would assist the Council in complying with this duty.

    Comments checked by:

Jennifer Crouch, Head of Law (Environmental) jennifer.crouch@oxfordshire/gov.uk

Staff Implications

37.   There are no staffing implications related to this decision. However, if the proposal proceeds to implementation, additional staff (as identified in the approved trial traffic filter trial) would be required in Customer Services and Parking & Enforcement. If the proposal proceeds to implementation, this Operational Expenditure would be funded by the temporary congestion charge income.

Risk Management

38.   If the proposal does not proceed, there will be abortive costs related to design, assessment and consultation. The reopening of Botley Road could be different from that communicated, and the order will be drafted to accommodate this. A full risk register will be developed if approved for consultation.

39.   The future implementation of the proposal, if approved, will require Department for Transport (DfT) sign authorisation. As the proposal cannot proceed without this and time is a constraint, officers are currently seeking DfT sign authorisation with a view to securing this prior to the start of public consultation, should Cabinet approve recommendation (a). Granting of a sign authorisation does not in any way commit the council to implementing the scheme.

Consultation and stakeholder engagement

Consultation

40.   Subject to the recommendation being approved, a public consultation on introducing a temporary congestion charge would start later this month for a period of six weeks. The consultation would help the council understand the impact of the proposed scheme on residents, businesses and other users of the road network. A survey would be hosted on the county council's Let's Talk engagement platform, with paper copies available in main libraries. A series of online information and Q&A events will be open for all to join and the council would use a range of methods to reach different audiences across the county.

Paul Fermer
Director of Environment and Highways

Annex 1: Oxford City Council statement 3 February 2025
Annex 2: Oxford Mail article of OBC views 20 March 2025

Annex 3: Representations from carers and tradespeople
Annex 4: Central permit area

Background papers: Nil

[Other Documents:]   Nil

Contact Officer: Aron Wisdom, Programme Lead (Central), 07776244856,
                            aron.wisdom@oxfordshire.gov.uk

June 2025

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Statement calling for action to tackle congestion and speed up bus journeys in Oxford

Published: Monday, 3 February 2025

"We share the frustration of local residents and businesses about further delay to the Botley Road bridge replacement.

"The upgrade of Oxford train station is vital for the city's economy, but the closure of Botley Road is having a devastating impact on residents and businesses across Oxford.

"Oxfordshire County Council, as the highways authority, must take action now to tackle congestion and speed up bus journeys in Oxford. We cannot leave residents wasting hours every day sitting in traffic jams for another year and a half.

"The county council needs to sit down with the bus companies, businesses and others urgently to find solutions. All options must be on the table."

Councillor Louise Upton, Cabinet Member for Planning

https://www.oxford.gov.uk/news/article/1631/statement-calling-for-action-to-tackle-congestion-and-speed-up-bus-journeys-in-oxford

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Oxford Mail 20 March 2025

Congestion in Oxford needs 'Plan B' warns bus company boss
20th March

Congestion in Oxford is at "emergency levels" according to a bus company boss who is urging council leaders to come up with a "Plan B" solution.

Luke Marion, the managing director of Oxford Bus Company, said the county council, the highways authority, should not wait until the introduction of the **traffic** filters to tackle growing congestion.
He is urging council leaders to act now as hold-ups around the city are delaying bus services and leading to a reduction in passenger numbers.

The council has spent £2.7m preparing to introduce six new traffic filters across Oxford but it has pledged not to introduce them while the Botley Road remains closed, due to a £161m Network Rail scheme to revamp Oxford rail station.
The Botley Road closed at the rail bridge in April 2023, and rail minister Lord Hendy said in January Botley Road would not reopen until August 2026.
Mr Marion urged the council to act now, instead of waiting until the new camera-enforced traffic filters - also known as bus gates - are introduced.

The managing director said: "The impact of the road closure has been devastating for many, and as a bus operator we've suffered too, through reductions in our patronage.
"Data proves congestion is now at emergency levels across Oxford and it is holding the city back, with hundreds of hours of productivity being lost every day to traffic jams.
"The Low Traffic Neighbourhood (LTN) schemes in East Oxford have also slowed bus journey times, as they funnel a lot of traffic from side roads onto main arteries converging at The Plain roundabout, which does not have the capacity to deal with all the extra traffic – meaning the bus routes then clog up. We now have traffic jams during peak hours that previously did not exist."
Department for Transport figures show journey times have increased on roads including Iffley Road, Abingdon Road, Woodstock Road and Banbury Road.

Mr Marion added: "The county council's original plan was to introduce the LTNs in conjunction with six traffic filters in the city, to encourage people to change their behaviour and to walk, cycle and use buses more where they could. It was agreed to delay launching them until Botley Road reopened, which made sense on the original timelines for the rail works.
"But Oxford simply cannot cope with another year of worsening congestion – rather than continuing to wait for the traffic filters, we need a 'plan B' to address the congestion problem over the next 12 months, and we need it quickly.

"Journey times on Abingdon Road have increased by an average of 17% since the Botley Road was closed, and our services between Blackbird Leys and Oxford city centre have slowed down by 33% compared to 2013 levels."

Last year, Oxford Bus Company invested more than £30m to deliver a fleet of over 100 brand new electric vehicles, in partnership with **Oxfordshire County Council** and Stagecoach. Stagecoach has also made a similar substantial investment in its fleet.

Mr Marion said in order to maintain or improve services the company need to add more buses to the timetables, which was not commercially viable.

"The changes we recently made to increase the frequency of our 3A service to Littlemore and Sandford cost two more buses to implement than we had planned when we first started planning the improvements," he added.

"Our service 15 from Wood Farm to the city has seen its journey time worsen by an average of 15% compared to 2019, and is now scheduled to take 46 minutes at peak time, compared to 24 minutes off peak. This means that services like this operate at a greatly reduced frequency, at exactly the time that most people want to travel."

Mr Marion urged the county council to bring forward plans to "re-shape the road network to help ease congestion" before the Botley Road reopens.

In January, the Government increased the bus fare cap for single fares from £2 to £3, and it will remain at £3 until the end of 2025.

The county council said it has regular meetings with the county's bus operators "to review bus operations and possible benefits and impacts from any highways matters".

A spokesman added: "The county council is currently looking at what may be possible to alleviate traffic congestion during this interim period as we wait for Network Rail to complete its works."

Andrew Gant, cabinet member for highways management, said: "Our local bus services are a great option for travelling around the city and county easily.

"Traffic congestion is a problem on Oxford's narrow road network and the solution lies with providing realistic alternatives to the private car. We want to make public transport, walking, wheeling and cycling the natural first choice for short trips. This will help those that need to use cars do business in our city."

The county council said it would continue to liaise with bus operators, including discussing how to alleviate congestion as a result of the ongoing delays to reopening the Botley Road.

Graham Jones, of traders' group ROX (Backing Oxford Business), said the traffic filters scheme should be dropped.

He added: "There does need to be a serious re-think to tackle congestion but I don't think traffic filters will be the solution - it will just push traffic onto the ring road, and into streets where there are no filters."

County council 11 February 2025

Petitions
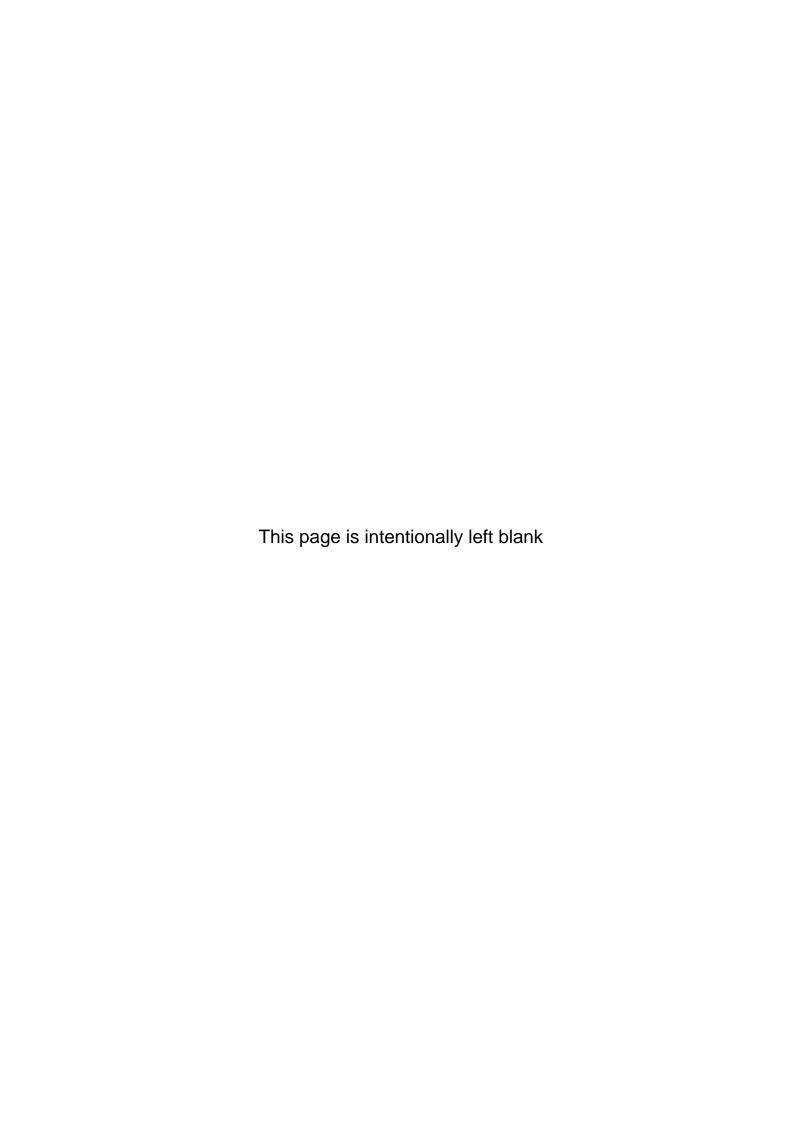
Jenny Wells presented a petition with around 570 signatures regarding Low Traffic Neighbourhoods on behalf of mobile trades.

https://mycouncil.oxfordshire.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=116&MId=7462

Meeting recording from 0:32:37
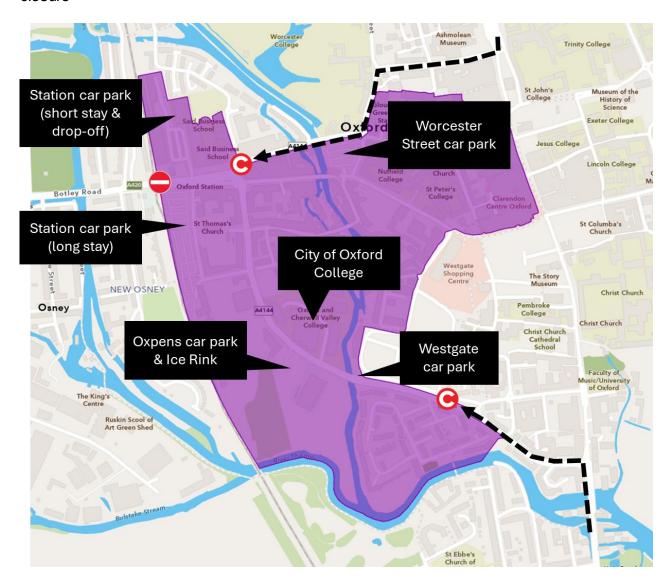
Oxford Mail article about carers and congestion 4 April 2025
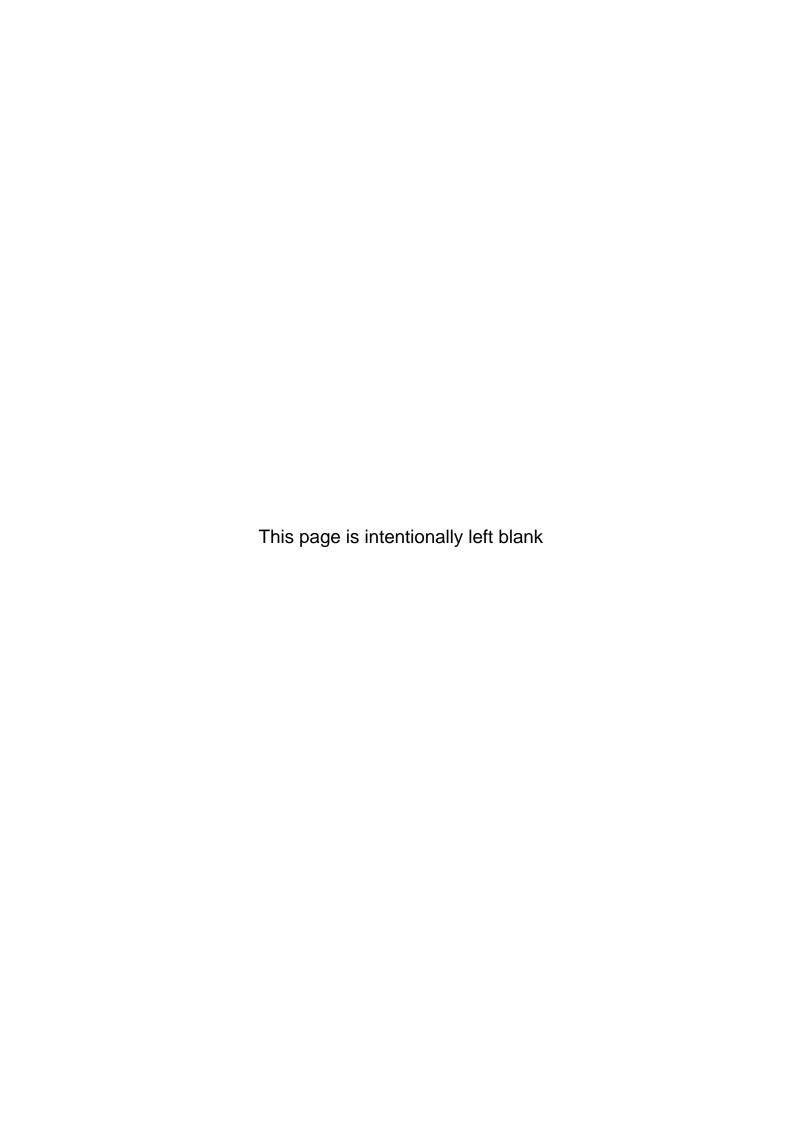
Carers say Oxford LTNs have 'severe impact' on patients | Oxford Mail

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Annex 4 – potential "Central permit area"

Area not accessible without passing a congestion charge location due to Botley Road closure

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CABINET

17 June 2025

**HR & CULTURAL CHANGE – QUARTERLY EMPLOYEE DATA REPORT
JANUARY 2025 TO MARCH 2025 (Q4 2024/25)**

Report by Director of HR and Cultural Change

RECOMMENDATION

1. Cabinet is **RECOMMENDED** to note the report.

Executive Summary
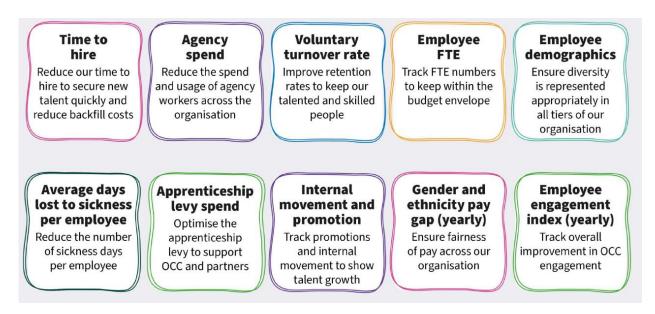
2. The people who work for Oxfordshire County Council are what makes the organisation so special. Every day, they make millions of moments for thousands of people – bringing lasting change to all the county's communities. Their professionalism and commitment to delivering high-quality services supports the Council's ambition to become a greener, fairer and healthier county.

3. Together, Oxfordshire County Council is on a journey to Deliver the Future Together and become an Employer of Choice. This ambition is underpinned by the Our People and Culture Strategy (Annex 3), which was approved by Cabinet in January 2024. The strategy aims to develop an inclusive and empowering culture, enabling all colleagues to be the best they can be to deliver excellent services for everyone the Council serves.

4. This report provides an overview of the progress towards delivering the Our People and Culture Strategy (as measured by the achievement of its key performance indicators) and summarises the main employee-related trends for Q4 2024/25 (Annexes 1 and 2).

5. **Our people and culture strategy**

   5.1. The vision for the Our People and Culture Strategy is that 'we develop and maintain high performing, innovative, highly engaged, and agile teams, employing the best people, and reflecting the communities we serve. We nurture an environment that supports diversity, equality, and inclusion, and allows all our employees to bring their whole selves to work to deliver great services for our Oxfordshire residents'. The Strategy focuses on priorities under 4 pillars, ATTRACT, THRIVE, GROW and LEAD:

5.2. Organisational people ad culture KPIs (key performance indicators) – for the targets set for the KPIs see Annex 2.

Time to Hire

6. A new applicant tracking system (ATS), Tribepad, was introduced at the council in September 2024. Over the next few months, reporting from Tribepad will enable the HR and Cultural Change team members to start tracking the time to hire as one of the KPIs under the Our People and Culture Strategy.

Agency spend

7. Agency spend via the Council's agreed provider of agency workers, HAYS, decreased from £6.82m reported in Q3 24/25 to £6.56m in Q4 24/25.

8. Q4 24/25 has also seen a reduction in the off contract (i.e. not via the main agreed provider of agency workers, HAYS) agency spend, from £1.74m in Q3 to £1.68m in Q4 (Annex 1).

9. The total (HAYS and off-contract) agency spend reduced from £8.56m in Q3 24/25 to £8.24m in Q4 24/25. Year on year the total (on and off-contract) agency spend for Q4 reduced from £9.10m in Q4 23/24 to £8.24m in Q4 24/25.

10. The highest agency spend in Q4 continues to remain in Children's Services, Adult Social Services, Environment and Highways, Law and Governance and Property (Annex 2).

11. The total annual agency spend continues to see a downward trend from £40.03m in 22/23 to £35.52m in 23/24 and £33.14m in 24/25.

Voluntary Turnover Rate

12. Voluntary annual turnover at the Council has decreased from 11.7% to 11%, a positive trend exceeding our People and Culture Strategy target of 11.5% p.a.

13. Involuntary annual turnover has remained at 2.5% in Q4.

14. The overall (voluntary and involuntary) turnover in the 12-rolling months has decreased from 14.2% in the period ending at the end of Q3 24/25 to 13.5% in the period ending at the end of Q4 24/25.

15. Year on year, voluntary turnover rate decreased from 13% in Q4 23/24 to 11% in Q4 24/25.

Employee FTE (Full Time Equivalent)

16. In terms of directly employed colleagues (i.e. excluding agency workers), the Council's FTE (full time equivalent) figure has decreased from 4,654.79 FTE in Q3 24/25 to 4,606.23 FTE in Q4 24/25 (which equates to a decrease from 5,493 to 5,454 people). Further details are shown in Annex 2.

17. There were 118 new starters in the last quarter, and 157 leavers. It's the second consecutive quarter where the number of the Council's directly employed colleagues has reduced.

18. Amongst the 118 people who joined the Council in Q4, 98 colleagues (83%) are on a permanent contract, while 20 colleagues (17%) are on a fixed term or temporary contract. 61 of the new starters (over 50%) have been recruited into posts which are either hard to fill or essential to the delivery of statutory services.

Employee demographics

19. Ethnicity:

  19.1. the percentage of colleagues declaring as being from an ethnic minority background has increased from 11% in Q3 24/25 to 12% in Q4 24/25 (the Council's target is 12.25%).

  19.2. the percentage of promotions/secondments awarded to those who declared as being from an ethnic minority background increased from 9% in Q3 24/25 to 11% in Q4 24/25.

20. Gender - the majority of colleagues at the Council are female (66%), this trend remains stable.

21. Age – percentage of colleagues at the Council who are under 26 remains stable at the end of Q4 24/25.

22. Disability - the percentage of colleagues at the Council declaring a disability increased from 8.7% at the end of Q3 24/25 to 8.8% at the end of Q4 24/25.

23. Disability - the percentage of promotions/secondments awarded to colleagues at the Council declaring a disability decreased from 7% in Q3 24/25 to 4% in Q4 24/25.

Average Days Lost to Sickness

24. The sickness absence rate in the rolling 12-month period has increased slightly from 8.6 days absence per FTE in Q3 24/25 to 8.7 days absence per FTE in Q4 24/25.

25. There has been a decrease in the sickness absence recorded quarter on quarter, from 4.54% in Q3 24/25 to 4.31% in Q3 24/25.

26. There has been a decrease in the sickness absence recorded year on year, from 9 days absence per FTE in Q4 23/24 to 8.7 days absence per FTE in Q4 24/25.

Apprenticeships and Apprenticeship Levy utilisation

27. During Q4 2024/25 there were a total of 41 new apprenticeship enrolments and the total number of apprentices on programme increased from 329 in Q3 24/25 to 340 at the end of Q4 24/25 (this figure includes colleagues undertaking apprenticeships in schools).

28. The actual spend on apprenticeships for Q4 24/25 was £369,093, with a total spend for the year 24/25 at £1,337,587. This is the largest apprenticeship spend recorded by the Council to date.

29. The Apprenticeship Levy utilisation has increased from 80.1% in Q3 24/25 to 89.6% in Q4 24/25.

30. Year on year, the Apprenticeship Levy utilisation has increased from 66.5% in Q4 23/24 to 89.6% in Q4 24/25.

Movement and promotion

31. Movement and promotion at the Council remains stable quarter on quarter at 6.9% (mobility rate) in Q4 24/25.

32. Year on year, the mobility rate at the council increased from 6.1% in Q4 23/24 to 6.9% in Q4 24/25.

Gender and ethnicity pay gap March 2025

33. In March 2024, the Council's Gender Pay Gap was 2.95%, and the Ethnicity Pay Gap was 2.59%.

34. This year's figures (March 2025) will be shared with the Remuneration Committee in the first instance as part of the annual Pay Gap Report. The Report will be published more widely shortly after that, and the figures for this year will be included in the next Quarterly Report (Q1 2025/26).

Equality & Inclusion Implications

35. Equality and inclusion implications are considered across all our workstreams.

Sustainability Implications

36. There are no sustainability implications arising from this report.

Risk Management

37. There are no risk management issues arising from this report.

Corporate Policies and Priorities

38. The Our People and Culture Strategy referred to in this report (Annex 3) directly underpins the Council's ambition to become an Employer of Choice.

Financial Implications

39. The level of agency expenditure was a contributory factor in the year end service area overspend for 2023/24.

40. Focus on this through the Our People and Culture Strategy has helped to reduce costs and has contributed to services managing expenditure within the agreed budget in 2024/25.

41. Continuing focus is required so that costs can be managed within agreed service area budgets for 2025/26.

Comments checked by:
Kathy Wilcox, Head of Corporate Finance

Legal Implications

42. There are no direct legal implications arising from this report.

Comments checked by:
Kim Sawyer, Interim Head of Legal & Governance and Deputy Monitoring Officer

Staff Implications

43. Staff implications are considered across all our workstreams and covered in this report.

Cherie Cuthbertson
Director of HR and Cultural Change

Annexes:
        ANNEX 1 Quarterly employee data dashboard Q4 2024-2025 *
        ANNEX 2 Quarterly employee data dashboard - additional data Q4 2024-2025
        ANNEX 3 Our People and Culture Strategy v2

Background papers: Nil
Contact Officer: Katrina Pennington
14 May 2025
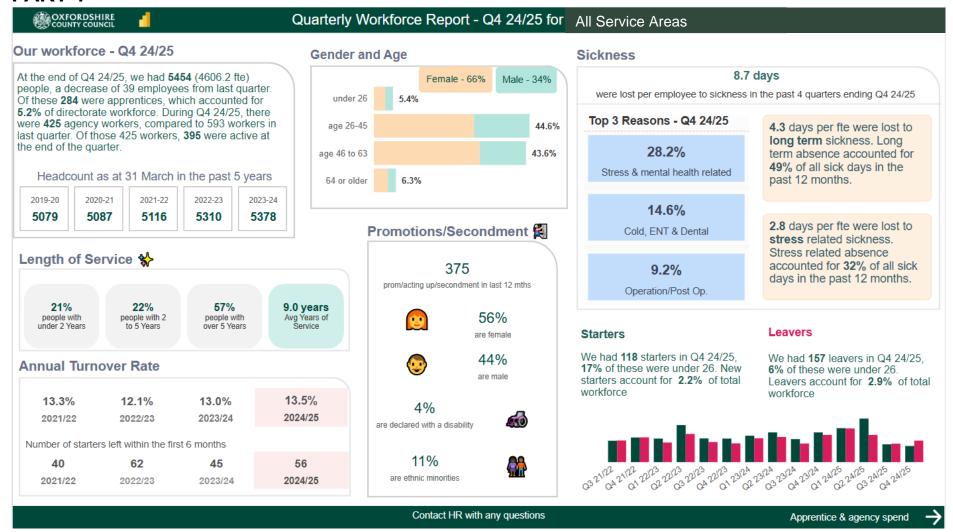
*note that the off-contract agency spend figure for Q3 24/25 has been revised following a review of the coding of the relevant expenditure. As a result this has been revised to £1.74m of spend as reported in this (Q4 24/25) report.

ANNEX 1 Quarterly workforce dashboard Q4 2024-2025

PART 1

OXFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Quarterly Workforce Report - Q4 24/25 for All Service Areas

Our workforce - Q4 24/25

At the end of Q4 24/25, we had **5454** (4606.2 fte) people, a decrease of 39 employees from last quarter. Of these **284** were apprentices, which accounted for **5.2%** of directorate workforce. During Q4 24/25, there were **425** agency workers, compared to 593 workers in last quarter. Of those 425 workers, **395** were active at the end of the quarter.

Headcount as at 31 March in the past 5 years

2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24
5079	**5087**	**5116**	**5310**	**5378**

Length of Service ✨

21% people with under 2 Years	22% people with 2 to 5 Years	57% people with over 5 Years	9.0 years Avg Years of Service

Annual Turnover Rate

13.3%	12.1%	13.0%	13.5%
2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25

Number of starters left within the first 6 months

40	62	45	56
2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25

Gender and Age

Female - 66%   Male - 34%

under 26	5.4%
age 26-45	44.6%
age 46 to 63	43.6%
64 or older	6.3%

Promotions/Secondment 🚪

375

prom/acting up/secondment in last 12 mths

56% are female

44% are male

4% are declared with a disability

11% are ethnic minorities

Sickness

8.7 days

were lost per employee to sickness in the past 4 quarters ending Q4 24/25

Top 3 Reasons - Q4 24/25

| **28.2%** Stress & mental health related |
| **14.6%** Cold, ENT & Dental |
| **9.2%** Operation/Post Op. |

4.3 days per fte were lost to **long term** sickness. Long term absence accounted for **49%** of all sick days in the past 12 months.

2.8 days per fte were lost to **stress** related sickness. Stress related absence accounted for **32%** of all sick days in the past 12 months.

Starters

We had **118** starters in Q4 24/25, **17%** of these were under 26. New starters account for **2.2%** of total workforce

Leavers

We had **157** leavers in Q4 24/25, **6%** of these were under 26. Leavers account for **2.9%** of total workforce

Q3 21/22, Q4 21/22, Q1 22/23, Q2 22/23, Q3 22/23, Q4 22/23, Q1 23/24, Q2 23/24, Q3 23/24, Q4 23/24, Q1 24/25, Q2 24/25, Q3 24/25, Q4 24/25

Contact HR with any questions

Apprentice & agency spend →

PART 2

OXFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Apprentice and agency spend - Q4 24/25 — All Service Areas

Apprenticeship - celebrate our success

During Q4 there were a total of **41** new apprenticeship enrolments. **16** apprentices have successfully completed their training in Q4 24/25.

Q2 24/25 has seen a large number of enrolments - our largest to date. These include enrolments in the following Apprenticeship programmes:

- 20 Social Work degree
- 6 Paralegal and Solicitor
- 2 Chartered Manager degree
- 2 CIPFA Accountancy Professional

Our Data & Skills Academy has also con with 41 apprenticeship enrolments since Feb 2024.

No. of apprentices on programme - end of Q4 24/25

340

Split by new apprentices vs CPD

% new apprentice	% doing CPD
23.5%	**76.5%**

actual spend on apprenticeship by quarter

229K	208K	250K	227K	249K	216K	261K	223K	299K	308K	362K	
Q1 22/23	Q2 22/23	Q3 22/23	Q4 22/23	Q1 23/24	Q2 23/24	Q3 23/24	Q4 23/24	Q1 24/25	Q2 24/25	Q3 24/25	

Number of new apprentices enrolled in Q4 24/25

41

Split by new apprentices vs CPD

% new apprentice	% doing CPD
9.8%	**90.2%**

In Q4 24/25 there were

Completions	Withdrawals
16	**4**

Agency Spend

Agency spend via COMENSURA /HAYS in Q4 24/25 was **£6,554,614,** which has decreased compared to the spend in the last quarter at **£6,821,989**

Please note from Q3 2024-25 spend via HAYS included Statement of Work (SoW). These spend was not included in the previous quarters

Comensura/HAYS spend by quarter

Q1 22/23	Q2 22/23	Q3 22/23	Q4 22/23
6.52M	7.03M	6.94M	7.28M
Q1 23/24	Q2 23/24	Q3 23/24	Q4 23/24
6.65M	7.04M	6.73M	7.01M
Q1 24/25	Q2 24/25	Q3 24/25	Q4 24/25
6.94M	6.86M	6.82M	6.55M

Off contract spend by quarter

Q1 22/23	Q2 22/23	Q3 22/23	Q4 22/23
2.45M	2.85M	3.53M	3.43M
Q1 23/24	Q2 23/24	Q3 23/24	Q4 23/24
1.76M	2.55M	1.69M	2.09M
Q1 24/25	Q2 24/25	Q3 24/25	Q4 24/25
1.05M	1.50M	1.74M	1.68M

← Back to overview page   Contact HR with any questions

ANNEX 2 ADDITIONAL DATA Q4 2024/25
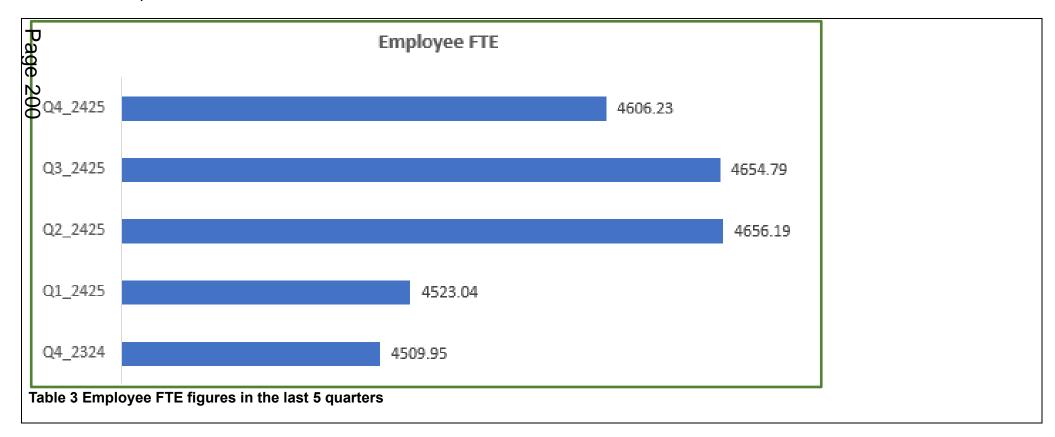
The following key performance indicators (KPIs) have been established to monitor progress against the Our People and Culture Strategy

	KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATOR (KPI)	TARGET SET
Agency spend	Reduce the spend and usage of agency workers across the organisation.	Maintain a baseline figure of £27.9 million
Voluntary turnover rate	Improve retention rates to keep our talented and skilled people.	11.50%
Average days lost to sickness per employee	Reduce the number of sickness days per employee.	Reduce the sickness absence to 8 days per FTE
Apprenticeship levy spend	Spend the Apprenticeship levy to support OCC and partners.	Utilise 65% of the levy pot
Internal movement and promotion	Track promotions and internal movement to show talent growth.	8.50%
Gender and ethnicity pay gap (yearly)	Ensure fairness of pay across our organisation.	Gender pay gap - mean 1.2% Ethnicity pay gap - mean 0.22 %
Employee engagement index (yearly)	Track overall improvement in OCC engagement.	A score of 680 which is an improvement on the last (2024) survey
Employee demographics	Ensure diversity is represented appropriately in all tiers of our organisation.	To increase the representation of our BAME colleagues to 12.25% (of our workforce)
Time to Hire	Reduce our time to hire to secure new talent quickly and reduce backfill costs.	The target for this KPI will be set once the new Applicant Tracking System has been live for a period long enough to allow this measurement

Table 1 Our People and Culture Strategy KPIs and targets

Key Performance Indicator (KPI)	STATUS	PROGRESS	CHANGE
Total agency spend	On target	£27.17m/ 27.90m	Reduction Year on Year (YoY) Reduction Quarter on Quarter (QoQ)
Average days lost to sickness per employee	In progress	8.7/8 days	Reduction YoY Increase QoQ
Voluntary turnover rate	On target	11% / 11.5%	Reduction YoY Reduction QoQ
Internal movement and promotion (% mobility rate)	In progress	6.9% / 8.5%	Increase YoY Stable QoQ
Apprenticeship Levy spend	On target	89% / 65%	Increase YoY Increase QoQ

Table 2 Performance against currently tracked Our People and Culture Strategy KPIs (quarter on quarter – Q3 to Q4 24/25, and year on year – Q4 23/24 to Q4 24/25)

Employee FTE

- Q4_2425: 4606.23
- Q3_2425: 4654.79
- Q2_2425: 4656.19
- Q1_2425: 4523.04
- Q4_2324: 4509.95

Table 3 Employee FTE figures in the last 5 quarters
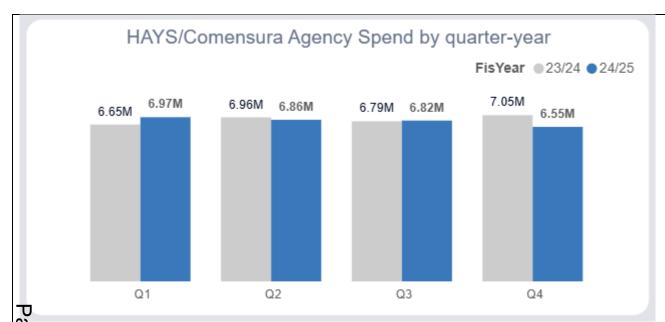
Service Area	Number of new starters in Q4 24/25
Children's Services	50
Property and Assets	31
Adult Social Services	13
Public Health and Communities	12
Financial and Commercial Services	4
Law and Gov and Monitoring Officer	2
Economy and Place	2
Environment and Highways	2
Transformation Digital and Cust Exp	1
Fire Officer and Community Safety	1
Grand Total	**118**

Table 4 Number of New Starters who joined the Council in Q4 24/25 split by service

Service Area	Number of leavers in Q4 25/26
Children's Services	42
Adult Social Services	21
Fire Officer and Community Safety	21
Property and Assets	20
Public Health and Communities	14
Transformation Digital and Cust Exp	9
Economy and Place	8
Law and Gov and Monitoring Officer	7
Environment and Highways	7
HR and Cultural Change	3
Public Affairs Policy Partnerships	2
Financial and Commercial Services	2
ICT	1
Grand Total	**157**

Table 5 Number of colleagues who left the Council in Q4 24/25 split by service

HAYS/Comensura Agency Spend by quarter-year

FisYear ● 23/24 ● 24/25

Quarter	23/24	24/25
Q1	6.65M	6.97M
Q2	6.96M	6.86M
Q3	6.79M	6.82M
Q4	7.05M	6.55M

Table 6 Quarterly agency spend via the Council's provider of agency workers (please note it was Commensura until November 2024, then HAYS since) from Q1 23/24 to Q4 24/25. The table illustrates quarter by quarter spend fluctuation as well as comparison with the spend over the same period last year.

Total Agency Spend - OCC (excluding Schools)

Period	Spend
Q4_2324	£9,097,493
Q1_2425	£8,087,940
Q2_2425	£8,353,080
Q3_2425	£8,558,169
Q4_2425	£8,237,692
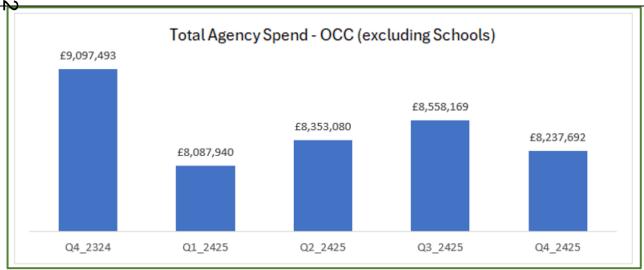
Table 7 total (contract and off-contract) quarterly agency spend in the last 5 periods, from Q4 23/2024 to Q4 24/2025.

ServiceArea	Latest Qtrly Spend ▼	Trend	% Change	SPLY
Children's Services	2,944,864	↑	+1.1%	2,911,954
Adult Social Services	1,112,957	↓	-2.7%	1,144,145
Environment and Highways	812,716	↓	-22.4%	1,047,914
Law and Gov and Monitoring Officer	526,341	↓	-21.0%	666,513
Economy and Place	401,514	↓	-16.8%	482,793
Property and Assets	295,341	↑	+19.9%	246,395
Financial and Commercial Services	161,147	↓	-20.8%	203,427
ICT	142,387	↓	-18.2%	174,095
HR and Cultural Change	103,667	↑	+1113.7%	8,541
Transformation Digital and Cust Exp	51,458	↓	-61.4%	133,264
Public Affairs Policy Partnerships	2,220	↑		
Total	**6,554,614**	↓	**-7.0%**	**7,048,746**

Table 8 Agency Spend by Service Area from largest to smallest in Q4 24/25 compared to SPLY (same period last year, Q4 23/24)

* The increase in the HR and Cultural Change agency spend in Q4 24/25 is due to engaging 3 senior consultants while recruiting the new Heads of Service (there is therefore no salary cost for the Heads of Service as these remain vacant while recruitment is ongoing). It is anticipated that the directly employed 3 Heads of Service will be joining the council in July 2025.

**As part of the commercial savings programme of work, HR and Cultural Change are currently working with an organisation called Newtrality to identify further savings that can be made on agency spend. This work is ongoing until the end of June 2025.

***The agency (both on and off-contract – i.e. both via HAYS and outside of the contract with HAYS) spend in the Infrastructure Delivery service within Environment and Highways service is capitalised through a recharge mechanism, which accounts for about 95% of the revenue spend for these (i.e. agency workers') suppliers.

Table 9 Off-contract (i.e. non-HAYS OR Commensura) agency spend trend by Quarter, from Q1 22/23 to Q4 24/25.

Table 10 Spend of the funds from Apprenticeship Levy pot - cumulative spend by quarter, from Q1 23/24 to Q4 24/25.

Rolling 12-Mths % of Levy Spend

Q1 23/24	Q2 23/24	Q3 23/24	Q4 23/24	Q1 24/25	Q2 24/25	Q3 24/25	Q4 24/25
69.1%	68.5%	68.0%	66.5%	69.1%	74.4%	80.1%	89.6%

12-month ending in quarter
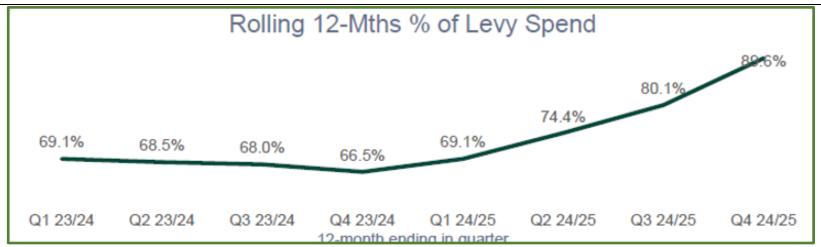
Table 11 Utilisation of the Apprenticeship Levy pot – cumulative by quarter, from Q1 23/24 to Q4 24/25.

	Q4_2324	Q1_2425	Q2_2425	Q3_2425	Q4_2425
Total FTE Sick days in quarter	10196.41	8929.65	9497.21	11155.13	10503.06
No of long term absence	175	151	153	187	160
Long term FTE sick days	5055.43	4753.31	4800.65	5528.76	4884.08
No of Stress related sickness	201	184	214	244	211
Stress related FTE sick days	3039.39	3071.59	2990.4	3425.13	3096.38
Days absence per fte	2.270	1.977	2.069	2.396	2.280
Days absence per fte-long term	1.125	1.052	1.046	1.188	1.060
Days absence per fte - stress related	0.68	0.68	0.65	0.74	0.67
% working hours lost	4.27%	3.75%	3.87%	4.54%	4.31%
% working hours lost-LT	1.86%	1.98%	1.95%	2.24%	1.99%
% working hours lost-Stress	1.09%	1.29%	1.26%	1.40%	1.25%

Table 12 Sickness Absence trend by quarter, from Q4 23/24 to Q4 24/25. The table uses colour scales conditional formatting, (where green is the lowest and red is the highest amount of sickness absence in a quarter in comparison to other quarters).

Rank	Reason	% of total absent hours
1	Stress & mental health related	28.2%
2	Cold, ENT & Dental	14.6%
3	Operation/Post Op.	9.2%
4	Gastrointestinal problems	7.6%
5	Infection (incl. viral)	6.5%

Table 13 The five top reasons for sickness absence in Q4 24/25.

Service Area	Number of leavers in Q4 24/25	%
Resign - Alternative Employmt	62	39%
Resign - Family Commitment	17	11%
Resign - Career Break	10	6%
Resign - Dissatisfaction	9	6%
Resign - Alternative LG Org	9	6%

Table 14The top five reasons for colleagues leaving the organisation in Q4 24/25.

DELIVERING
the Future Together

Our people and culture strategy

Delivering the Future Together

Together, we are the
moment makers

OXFORDSHIRE
COUNTY COUNCIL

Introduction

Our people are our most valuable asset. The last few years have been unprecedented and our people have risen to the challenges showing resilience and strength to push through and deliver for the residents of Oxfordshire.

With the arrival of our new Chief Executive, Martin Reeves the new Delivering the Future Together vision for 2023–2026 has been agreed.

We will be focus on becoming an employer of choice, a partner of choice and a place shaper of choice. We will need to manage this within our financial envelope, becoming even more commercially astute.

Our future challenges

As we move into the future, the nature of the challenges we face and how we respond will be very different. Having leaders that can create and lead an organisation that is innovative, collaborative and inclusive, which embraces continuous improvement and holds itself to account will be important in addressing these challenges.

It is essential that we adopt a change mindset and continuously strive for improvement by looking up and out for innovative ideas – using insight from our own internal sources to deliver change in these challenging times.

We need to be confident and work at pace and we need to support each other by creating a trusted, transparent and inclusive environment where people feel safe to grow and innovate.

We need to work collaboratively and innovatively with each other and with partners across Oxfordshire and beyond. Working beyond our walls with volunteers, commissioned services, maintained schools and academies, and the employees of our strategic partners will create better solutions and experiences for the residents of Oxfordshire.

Oxfordshire County Council Delivering the Future Together

Employer of choice

All our colleagues recommend working here. People aspire to work for us and proactively seek employment.

Partner of choice

We choose the right organisations to develop purposeful relationships to deliver the best outcomes for our residents.

Place shaper of choice

We convene public, private and community groups to shape the county. Our residents take pride in where they live and are happy with the facilities and services available to them.

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COUNTY COUNCIL

Our key opportunities

DELIVERING the Future Together

- Shaping our organisation to be efficient and work within the budget
- Working at pace
- Becoming a skilled and valuable partner
- Delivering opportunities for residents, children and adults
- Transforming our organisation so it's fit for the future
- Creating a thriving and sustainable environment for our people to flourish
- Delivering to our strategic priorities
- Creating an inclusive and positive work environment
- Becoming an employer of choice to attract and retain the best people
- Developing our workforce so they have the skills for the future
- Being a digital first organisation
- Being a place shaper of choice

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OXFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Leading through our values and behaviours

Our values are at the heart of all we do here at Oxfordshire County Council. We all share a common purpose to deliver excellence for the residents of Oxfordshire.

Our values act as a guide to how the organisation and our people should approach everything we do.

Leading through our values every day, putting them front and centre of every behaviour, decision and action will unite us as we strive to deliver this excellence together.

By doing this we will attract and retain great talent, we will reward great performance, we will create a positive environment where people can thrive and grow, we will nurture talent and create excellent leaders for now and the future.

Daring to do it differently

Always learning

Taking responsibility

Leading through our values

Be kind and care

Equality and integrity in all we do

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COUNTY COUNCIL

Our vision and priorities

Our vision

We develop high performing, innovative, highly engaged and agile teams – employing the best people and reflecting the communities we serve.

We nurture an environment that supports diversity, equality and inclusion, and allows all our employees to bring their whole selves to work to deliver great services for our Oxfordshire residents.

Our priorities

ATTRACT
Attracting, recruiting and retaining talented people

- It is essential that we are able to attract, recruit and retain our talented people to deliver excellent services for the residents of Oxfordshire.

THRIVE
Enabling our people to thrive and perform

- Creating a positive and inclusive work environment built on fairness, trust and transparency will allow our people to thrive and perform.

GROW
Enabling our people to grow and evolve for the future

- Providing growth opportunities both on and off the job to build our knowledge, skills and behaviours will help us all deliver the future together.

LEAD
Enabling our people to lead and transform for the future

- Empowering our leaders to embrace the skills and behaviours needed to achieve high performance and effective outcomes.

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Attract

Attracting, recruiting and retaining talented people

We want to nurture and develop talented people with the skills we need for the future, alongside welcoming new colleagues who can fill skills gaps and bring new ideas.

We are mindful that how we recruit is changing rapidly. Candidates' expectations about ways of working and organisational culture are important, alongside health and wellbeing and good pay and benefits, so we need to take a different approach to attract talented candidates and ensure our organisation reflects the demographics of the people we serve.

We need to strengthen our attraction as an employer and develop a strong brand for Oxfordshire County Council so that we create a desirable place to work that is diverse, inclusive and promotes equality.

We will:

- Raise our employer profile so we become an employer of choice.

- Reimagine our recruitment processes so they are quick, effective and offer a great experience for all involved.

- Be fair and equitable in our resourcing and reward practices to ensure diversity and inclusion.

- Deliver dynamic and digitally enabled onboarding and induction.

- Enhance our rewards and benefits offer so that it is valued by our people, as well as being competitive and attractive in the market.

What success will look like:

- Quick and effective recruitment processes.

- Increased retention rates.

- Our organisational diversity profile is reflective of the people of Oxfordshire.

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Thrive

Enabling people to thrive and perform

We want highly engaged people, who enjoy coming to work and feel challenged by, and appreciated for, what they do.

People work at their best when there is strong and effective leadership, as well as a positive, encouraging and inclusive work environment. We will create opportunity for people to connect and make sure their voices are heard, to create an environment of trust, inclusivity, fairness and transparency.

We want employees to use their skills and ideas to help us provide better services and adopt innovative strategies as we become leaner, more efficient and higher performing.

We will:

- Promote a positive and inclusive working environment where people can have open discussions to create a culture of trust, collaboration and ambition where we can all belong and thrive.

- Offer wellbeing services to support our people.

- Manage change well.

- Develop modern, simple to follow toolkits and policies.

- Train and support managers to manage and achieve early resolution of people related matters.

What success will look like:

- High employee engagement and a positive organisational culture.

- High performing teams.

- Well managed absence supported by wellbeing services.

- Strong people management skills to seek early resolution.

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Grow

Enabling people to grow and evolve for the future

We already have highly skilled and committed people working here. Looking ahead, we know the way we work and deliver services is changing and many employees need new skills both now and for the future.

We want to foster an environment where employees lead their own areas of learning and development based on the role they do, the needs of their team and their individual career goals.

We aim to create a culture of learning, where everyone can continuously develop new skills and find career paths within the organisation so that we retain the best talent.

We will:

- Evolve our mindset and behaviours so people are empowered to lead their own learning and development.

- Enhance our early careers offer to attract diversity and develop our skills for the future.

- Enable our people to develop their professional and technical skills to support high performance and embrace innovation.

- Support people to grow, move forward and develop their careers with us.

- Develop skills and learning to support transformation.

What success will look like:

- Our people have the skills they need to do their jobs well.

- We grow our own talent.

- We are an innovative organisation, embracing new practices.

- Effective workforce and succession planning to support our organisation to flex and change to the environment in which it exists.

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Lead

Enabling people to lead and transform for the future

We want our leaders to be role models, championing our values consistently and adopting working practices that are sustainable and supportive.

We will invest in the development of our existing and future leaders so they can achieve high performance and effective outcomes and support employees through transformational change.

We want to bring more diversity to our leadership and management roles so that we have a broader wealth of knowledge and varying perspectives to meet our challenges.

We will:

- Identify and develop the skills and behaviours of our leaders and future leaders.

- Identify and develop diverse leaders of the future.

- Equip our leaders to lead transformational change.

- Resize the organisation to deliver our ambitions within our budget envelope.

- Empower our leaders to make decisions and have greater accountability.

What success will look like:

- Our leaders are high performing and achieve effective outcomes.

- A diverse pool of future leaders are identified and developed.

- Our leaders are confident to lead the organisation through change.

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COUNTY COUNCIL

Organisational people and culture KPIs

Time to hire
Reduce our time to hire to secure new talent quickly and reduce backfill costs

Agency spend
Reduce the spend and usage of agency workers across the organisation

Voluntary turnover rate
Improve retention rates to keep our talented and skilled people

Employee FTE
Track FTE numbers to keep within the budget envelope

Employee demographics
Ensure diversity is represented appropriately in all tiers of our organisation

Average days lost to sickness per employee
Reduce the number of sickness days per employee

Apprenticeship levy spend
Optimise the apprenticeship levy to support OCC and partners

Internal movement and promotion
Track promotions and internal movement to show talent growth

Gender and ethnicity pay gap (yearly)
Ensure fairness of pay across our organisation

Employee engagement index (yearly)
Track overall improvement in OCC engagement

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COUNTY COUNCIL

CABINET

17 June 2025

BUSINESS MANAGEMENT AND MONITORING REPORT, ANNUAL REPORT & PROVISIONAL REVENUE OUTTURN 2024/25

Report by the Executive Director of Resources & Section 151 Officer

RECOMMENDATION

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

a)   Note the report and annexes including the council's Annual Report for 2024/25 (Annex D).

b)   Note the summary of the provisional year-end financial position for 2024/25 along with the year-end position on general balances and earmarked reserves (Annex B).

c)   Approve the following proposals relating to reserves and the use of general balances:

i.   Add the £1.8m underspend against budgeted funding for investments in 2024/25 to the Budget Priorities reserve for use in 2025/26 (Annex B Paragraph 12).

ii.   Agree that the £1.2m 2024/25 On-Street Parking Account surplus, that has not yet been applied to fund eligible expenditure in accordance with Section 55(4) of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984, is carried forward to 2025/26 as set out in Annex B-3c (Annex B Paragraph 64).

iii.   Approve the use of one - off funding from General Balances to support Innovate Oxfordshire (£0.5m) and the Business and Intellectual Property Centre (£0.1m) (Annex B Paragraph 14).

Executive Summary

2.   The business management reports are part of a suite of performance, risk and finance 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 year-end position for 2024/25 performance, risk, and finance for the council. It also provides the council's Annual Report for 2024/25. Further information is provided in the following annexes to the report:
- Annex Ai – Performance exceptions at 31/3/25 and commentary
- Annex Aii – Performance measures and commentary at 31/3/25

- Annex B – Provisional revenue outturn 2024/25
- Annex C - Complaints and Freedom of information requests (FOIs) / Environmental Information regulation requests (EIRs)
- Annex D – Oxfordshire County Council's Annual Report 2024/25

Performance Overview

4. 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.

5. As at the end of the reporting year 2024/25 the measures were rated as follows:

March 2025	Green		Amber		Red		Monitoring Only		Data Unavailable		Total	
Monthly	12	**55%**	2	**9%**	2	**9%**	6	**27%**	0	**0%**	22	**34 %**
Quarterly	16	**80%**	3	**15%**	1	**5%**	0	**0%**	0	**0%**	20	**31 %**
Half Yearly	2	**100%**	0	**0%**	0	**0%**	0	**0%**	0	**0%**	2	**3%**
Annual	12	**57%**	1	**5%**	4	**19%**	0	**0%**	4	**19%**	21	**32 %**
Total	42	**65%**	6	**9%**	7	**11%**	6	**9%**	4	**6%**	65	**100%**

Table 1: Summary of end of year performance 2024/25 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 15 measures from priority OCC11 (finance). Five complaints measures have not been included due to no complaints being received across the year.

6. Of the 68 measures shown in Table 1:
- 42 measures were rated as Green (meeting or exceeding target).
- 6 measures were rated as Amber (missing the target by a narrow margin), of which 4 were Amber for 2+ months.
- 7 measures were rated as Red (missing the target by a significant margin).
- 6 measures were monitored only with no target.
- Data was unavailable for 7 measures.

7. There are some measures where data is unavailable at the time of reporting these are:

- **OCC02.04 Inequality in life expectancy at Birth (Female) and OCC02.05 Inequality in life expectancy at Birth (Male):** The latest data is unavailable at time of reporting. The latest data is anticipated to be published by the Office of Health and Disparities (OHID) in Summer 2025 and the performance position will be reported in Quarter 1 2025/26.

- **OCC05.02 Number of park and ride passenger journeys:** Data is not available at the time of reporting.
- **OCC06.05 Total number of community activities held as part of the Community Action Group Network:** The Community Action Group network will produce an annual report in June 2025 at which point data will be available.

8. This bi-monthly report is the sixth of 2024/25. The table (Table 2) below compares monthly measures for the 2024/2025 reporting year, noting that the number of reported measures fluctuates throughout the year. The data for March reports the end of year performance position.

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
February 2025	14	58%	2	8%	1	4%	7	29%	24
March 2025	52	65%	7	9%	11	14%	10	12%	**80**

*Table 2: Comparison of monthly reporting measures for Financial Year 2024/2025, this includes 15 financial measures that are not included in table 1. *April, June, August, October and December measures do not include measures from priority OCC11 (finance). The above table does not include the 5 complaint measures where no complaints were received throughout the year.*

Performance Highlights

9. The Annual Report 2024/25 in Annex D reflects the highlights and achievements over the last 12 months against the nine strategic priorities of the council and its vision for a greener, fairer and healthier Oxfordshire. The achievements include:
- being the top-performing county council waste disposal authority for the 11th year running;
- becoming the first county council to be awarded local authority of sanctuary status, and the first local government employer in the south east to sign up to the UNISON anti-racism charter; and
- partnering with University College London's Institute of Health Equity and

Professor Sir Michael Marmot to become a Marmot Place, a two-year programme to tackle health inequalities in local communities.

The Annual Report also highlights a number of key achievements in transformation and innovation. These include working with commercial and local authority partners to build 165 miles of drone superhighways, connecting airspace above major cities in the south of the UK, which improves routes for emergency response, search and rescue, and transportation of organs and medical supplies.

10. These following paragraphs concentrate on highlights achieved this period in delivering the council's strategic priorities.

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

Link: New plan to help power Oxfordshire using local renewable energy

Oxfordshire County Council, Oxford City Council, and several district councils have partnered under the Future Oxfordshire Partnership to create Local Area Energy Plans (LAEPs). These plans aim to address climate change and secure cleaner, more affordable energy for Oxfordshire by collaborating with local communities and businesses to identify projects that support the transition to cleaner energy. The plans will outline specific actions for each district and strategic projects at the county level, focusing on transforming local energy generation, use, and management, improving building efficiency to reduce reliance on fossil fuels, and enhancing the planning and delivery of energy from the electricity grid to ensure cleaner, more reliable power for homes and businesses.

Tackle inequalities in Oxfordshire

Link: Neurodiversity Celebration Week: Smashing employment barriers with resilience and determination

Oxfordshire Employment supports individuals with additional needs in finding and maintaining suitable jobs. Jenny Taylor, diagnosed with Asperger's syndrome, now thrives at County Print Finishers, a company offering accessible employment for those with disabilities or long-term health concerns. Starting part-time, she has progressed to a full-time grade five workforce associate, showcasing the value and diversity individuals with unique skills bring to Oxfordshire's workforce.

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

Link: Enhanced learning pathways for children with SEND approved

Oxfordshire County Council has approved over £2 million per year to fund 20 new enhanced pathways and continue funding the 20 already in place for children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). This initiative, developed within mainstream schools, provides small group support and specialised curriculums tailored to meet the social, emotional, sensory, and academic needs of each child.

Prioritise the health and wellbeing of residents

Link: [Nearly 10,000 cigarettes seized following trading standards operation](#)

Oxfordshire County Council's trading standards team seized nearly 10,000 counterfeit and smuggled tobacco and nicotine products during Operation CeCe on 21 January. The raids, which targeted off-licences, convenience stores, food retailers, and barbers in Banbury, Kidlington, and Oxford, involved specialist tobacco detection dogs. The operation resulted in the confiscation of 9,340 illegal cigarettes, 700g of counterfeit hand-rolling tobacco, 180 non-compliant nicotine pouches, and 42 illegal vapes, with a total street value of approximately £5,000.

Invest in an inclusive, integrated, and sustainable transport network

Link: [£7.4 million road resurfacing programme to begin next month](#)

This spring, Oxfordshire County Council will begin a £7.4 million programme to improve nearly 100 roads across the county. Surface dressing work will be carried out in 73 towns and villages from 22 April to 16 June, treating over one million square metres of carriageway. Motorists are advised to adhere to a 20mph speed limit on newly treated roads to avoid damage and skidding. Surface dressing involves applying bituminous emulsion and chippings, which helps seal the road surface, reduce deterioration, restore skid resistance, and minimise traffic disruption.

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

Link: [Reimagining Oxford's streets](#)

Oxfordshire County Council sought feedback on street improvements for Oxford city centre and north Oxford. The project aimed to enhance public spaces, promote walking, cycling, and public transport, and improve access to green spaces. Key locations included Carfax junction, St Giles', Hythe Bridge Street, Little Clarendon Street, and Summertown. The improvement options were developed in collaboration with local resident groups, civic organisations, public transport operators, landowners, and transport user groups. Residents could review suggestions and participate in a survey until 23 March 2025.

Play our part in a vibrant and participatory local democracy

Link: [Local authority of sanctuary accreditation confirmed for county council and partners](#)
Oxfordshire County Council received local authority of sanctuary status, recognising its support for refugees and asylum seekers. The council partnered with Asylum Welcome and bus companies to provide free bus passes, aiding integration. Collaborating with local organisations, the council has supported over 8,000 refugees with accommodation, employment, healthcare, education, and social integration. The Council of Sanctuary action plan (2025-2028) aims to further enhance Oxfordshire's inclusivity.

Performance Exceptions

a) Annex Ai sets out the details of the sixteen measures reporting Red or Amber status. The eleven measures reported as Red are:

Performance measures reporting Red for March 2025
OCC01.04 Oxfordshire greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions as published annually by DESNZ with a 2-year lag
OCC01.07 Total % of household waste which is reused, recycled or composted
OCC02.09 Total number of people accepted into domestic abuse accommodation
OCC3.13 Numbers in substance misuse treatment. Children and young people, during the financial year
OCC05.07 Public satisfaction in the condition of Highways
OCC09.01 No of overdue inspections from Risk Based Inspection Programme
OCC10.11 % of Corporate Complaints (Stage 1) responded to within timescales
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 March 2025 Reporting Period

b) The change in direction of measures compared to the last update are:

Direction of travel between last reporting period and end of year position March 2025	
Red to Green	OCC03.06 Percentage of births that have received a face-to-face New Birth Visit
Amber to Green	OCC01.01 % reduction in corporate emissions within our Net Zero by 2030 target
	OCC01.05 Percentage of milestones delivered for the Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS)
Red to Amber	Not Applicable
Green to Amber	Not Applicable
Amber to Red	Not Applicable
Green to Red	OCC02.06 Digital engagement with Heritage Services
	OCC03.11 No of people directly reached with Trading Standards preventative advice and support
	OCC10.11 % of Corporate Complaints (Stage 1) responded to within timescales

Table 4: Change in Performance Change in Performance across April 2024 to March 2025

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. All nine strategic risks remained static in their residual risk scores from February 2025 to March 2025.

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 17: Strategic Risk Key for March 2025

Risk name	Risk Description	Inherent Score	Previous Residual Risk Score	Current Residual Risk Score	Current Residual Risk Rating	Direction of Travel
01. Financial resilience	The council is not financially sustainable in the immediate/medium term.	25	12	12	Amber	→
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	Amber	→
03. HIF1 & HIF2	HIF1 and HIF2 become undeliverable and/or potential financial risk to the council.	16	12	12	Amber	→
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	Green	→
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	8	8	Green	→
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	Red	→
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	Amber	→
09. Delivering the Future Together	Failure to deliver organisation wide transformation.	25	8	8	Green	→
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	Red	→

Table 18: Strategic Risk Overview for March 2025

Summary of the Council's financial position at the end of 2024/25

15. The table below summarises the net expenditure for each service area compared to the final budget and shows the movement since the report to Cabinet in March 2025. At the end of 2024/25 there was a service area underspend of £0.3m. This improved by £0.9m compared to the forecast reported to Cabinet in March 2025 and the overall position reflects actions taken to manage service expenditure during the year and strong financial management.

16. A further underspend of £12.5m relates to corporate budgets where there was an underspend against the contingency budget given the strong financial management within services and a lower than budgeted pay award along with additional interest on balances from higher-than-expected interest rates.

17. Reflecting the forecast underspend reported earlier in the financial year, Council agreed to use £10.8m of the projected underspend in 2024/25 to invest in the 2025/26 budget.

	Final Budget	Total Spend	Year End Variance	Year End Variance	Variance March Cabinet	Change in Variance
Adult Services	£249.0m	£245.1m	-£3.9m	-1.6%	-£4.2m	£0.3m
Children's Services	£202.1m	£202.3m	£0.1m	0.1%	£1.3m	-£1.2m
Environment & Highways	£53.5m	£54.3m	£0.8m	1.5%	£0.2m	£0.6m
Economy & Place	£16.9m	£16.7m	-£0.3m	-1.5%	£0.2m	-£0.5m
Oxfordshire Fire & Rescue Service and Community Safety	£28.9m	£29.5m	£0.6m	2.2%	£0.6m	£0.0m
Public Health & Communities	£12.9m	£13.0m	£0.1m	0.5%	£0.2m	-£0.2m
Resources and Law & Governance	£59.8m	£61.2m	£1.5m	2.5%	£1.3m	£0.2m
Transformation, Digital & Customer Experience	£8.2m	£9.0m	£0.7m	9.1%	£1.0m	-£0.3m
Service Areas Total	**£631.3m**	**£631.0m**	**-£0.3m**	**0.0%**	**£0.6m**	**-£0.9m**
Budgets Held Centrally						
Capital Financing	£21.3m	£21.7m	£0.4m	2.0%	-£3.5m	£3.9m
Interest on Balances	-£10.7m	-£17.4m	-£6.8m	63.2%	-£4.6m	-£2.1m
Contingency	£0.5m	-£0.1m	-£0.6m	-124.0%	-£3.3m	£2.7m
Pay Inflation	£4.8m	£0.0m	-£4.8m	-100.0%	-£4.7m	-£0.1m
Un-ringfenced Specific Grants	-£56.4m	-£56.4m	£0.0m	0.0%	£0.0m	£0.0m
Insurance	£1.7m	£1.5m	-£0.2m	-13.6%	£0.0m	-£0.2m
Contribution from COVID-19 reserve	-£3.8m	-£3.8m	£0.0m	0.0%	£0.0m	£0.0m
Contribution from Budget Priority Reserve	£1.6m	£1.6m	£0.0m	0.0%	£0.0m	£0.0m
Contributions to reserves	£23.1m	£22.5m	-£0.6m	-2.4%	£5.0m	-£5.6m
Total Budgets Held Centrally	**-£17.9m**	**-£30.4m**	**-£12.5m**	**69.8%**	**-£11.1m**	**-£1.4m**
Net Operating Budget	**£613.5m**	**£600.6m**	**-£12.9m**	**-2.1%**	**-£10.5m**	**-£2.4m**
Business Rates & Council Tax funding	-£613.5m	-£613.3m	£0.1m	0.0%	£0.0m	£0.1m
Forecast Year End Position	**£0.0m**	**-£12.8m**	**-£12.8m**	**-2.1%**	**-£10.5m**	**-£2.3m**

Contingency & Pay Inflation

18. £6.6m of the £14.4m pay inflation budget was transferred to service areas to meet the cost of the additional pay inflation in 2024/25 following the agreement of the Green & Grey Book, and Soulbury pay awards. £3.0m has been used to fund a one-off contribution to the Local Government Re-organisation and Devolution reserve. The remaining pay inflation budget was £4.8m. The on-going budget not needed to fund pay inflation in 2024/25 is available to meet the cost of pay inflation in 2025/26.

19. The underspend against £7.0m of the contingency budget has also been added to the Local Government Re-organisation & Devolution reserve increasing the total funding held for that purpose to £10.0m as at 31 March 2025.

2024/25 Savings & Investments

20. The 2024/25 budget includes planned service savings of £30.1m. This was offset by a budgeted risk adjustment of £4.1m added to reflect risks around the achievement of savings for Children's Services. £20.1m savings were delivered during the year. Savings that it was not possible to deliver total £6.0m and include:

- £1.1m savings related to Children's Services staffing, agency staff, contract savings and placements.
- £2.2m arising from delays to the introduction of Lane Rental charges in Environment & Highways.
- £0.7m Environment & Highways waste collections and other income generation targets.
- £1.1m delivering Future together savings target implementation delays.

21. The 2024/25 budget also includes planned service area investments totalling £11.6m. £4.5m has been spent on planned programmes of work in 2024/25. £1.8m expenditure will now take place in 2025/26 so it is recommended that this funding is temporarily transferred to the Budget Priorities reserve ahead of use. Of the £5.3m released investments, £4.1m has been used to support service pressures as explained in previous reports.

General Balances

22. The risk assessed level of one – off funding held in general balances in 2024/25 was £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 underspend of £12.8m, balances are £15.1m above the risk assessed level as at 31 March 2025. The use of £10.8m of this total was already agreed as part of the 2025/26 budget agreed by Council in February 2025. Based on the actual outturn position and agreed use, balances will be £4.3m above the risk assessed level for 2025/26 as at 1 April 2025.

23. There is a proposal to use some of the additional one – off funding held in General Balances to support the following:

   a. Business and Intellectual Property Centre: £0.1m one-off funding to enable the continuation of the BIPC service for 2025/26 while action is taken to seek self-sustainable funding streams for 2026/27 and onwards.
   b. Innovate Oxfordshire: £0.5m to enable the creation of a successful sustainable commercial model and less reliant on council tax funding by providing future savings.

24. Based on the actual outturn position and proposed use, balances will be £3.7m above the risk assessed level for 2025/26 as at 1 April 2025.

High Needs Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) Balances

25. The 2024/25 deficit compared to Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) funding for High Needs is £36.5m, £15.3m higher than the £21.2m deficit 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 deficit would increase the cumulative negative High Needs DSG balance held in this reserve from £55.8m as at 31 March 2024 to £92.5m at 31 March 2025.

26. Further details and commentary explaining each service area position and variations on budgets held centrally are included in Annex B.

Financial Implications

27. This report sets out the financial position for the council as at 31 March 2025. The overall underspend of £12.8m mainly includes additional interest on balances and the use of contingency along with higher budget provision than was required to meet the actual cost of pay inflation. The combined service area position is £0.3m underspent and reflects sustained management action throughout the year.

28. In 2025/26 the budget for contingency and pay inflation is lower and an increased level of interest on cash balances is already built into in the budget. Strong financial management and oversight, along with a focus on actions being taken to achieve savings and investments, will continue to be required to ensure that the council remains financially sustainable.

Comments checked by: Kathy Wilcox, Head of Corporate Finance

Legal Implications

29. The Council's constitution at Part 3.2 (Budget and Policy Framework) sets out the obligations and responsibilities of both the Cabinet and the Full Council in approving, adopting and implementing the council's budget and policy framework.

30. The Council has a fiduciary duty to council taxpayers, which means it must consider the prudent use of resources, including control of expenditure, financial prudence in the short and long term and the need to act in good faith in relation to compliance with statutory duties and exercising statutory powers. The report sets out the performance and finance position for the Council as at 31 March 2025 as part of its fiduciary duty to implement budgetary controls and monitoring.

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

LORNA BAXTER
Executive Director of Resources and Section 151 Officer

Further information is provided in the following annexes to the report:
- Annex Ai – Performance exceptions at 31/3/25 and commentary
- Annex Aii – Performance measures and commentary at 31/3/25
- Annex B – Provisional revenue outturn 2024/25
- Annex C - Complaints and Freedom of information requests (FOIs) / Environmental Information regulation requests (EIRs)
- Annex D – Oxfordshire County Council's Annual Report 2024/25

Contact Officers:
Louise Tustian, Director Transformation, Digital and Customer Experience
Kathy Wilcox, Head of Corporate Finance

KPI Name	Target	Actual	RAG rating	End of year target	End of year actual	End of year RAG rating	Commentary
CC01.04 Oxfordshire greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions as published annually by DESNZ with a 2-year lag	9	5	Red	9	5	Red	Data received September. This latest data from Department for Energy Security and Net Zero (DESNZ) shows that Oxfordshire tracked the national trend in green house gas (GHG) reduction between 2021 and 2022 and showed a similar % reduction as the South East region and comparator authorities. While Oxfordshire met the Climate Change Committee carbon budget it did not meet the ambitious Pathways to a Zero Carbon Oxfordshire (PAZCO) trajectory for Oxfordshire Leading the Way. 2022 is the first full year post pandemic when normal economic activity resumed. During this period, transport emissions which are hard to decarbonise continued to dominate for the county. The carbon intensity of the grid also increased in 2021 due to more coal and gas in the mix has been gradually reducing since. The 9% year on year reduction target from the PAZCO Oxfordshire Leading the Way scenario applies to CO2 only and excludes some transport sources, waste and land use changes. Finance Impact The latest GHG data highlights the need to continue to invest in climate action and work with partners to stay on course for our county net zero ambitions. The majority of financing for the net zero transition will come from private sources and the council is seeking to create policy and partnerships that enable that investment. The cost of climate impacts such as from recent floods will be increasingly felt as national and global emissions are not reducing fast enough to prevent climate breakdown. Risk Impact This is the first time that Oxfordshire has not been on track to deliver against the Oxfordshire Leading the Way trajectory. The county is tracking regional and national emissions reductions, showing that national policy is the key driver. Therefore there is a risk that insufficient government action will prevent Oxfordshire meeting its net zero ambitions, and our new public affairs function is key to continue pressing for a more ambitious policy framework

			Red			Red	nationally. There is a risk that Oxfordshire will not meet its ambitious carbon budgets as set out in the Net Zero Route map, however it is also possible that the county will recover its position given that the grid is decarbonising again since a peak in 2021 and that action is being taken at local and national level to tackle emissions. Further data will be available from DESNZ in summer 2025 relating to 2023 GHG emissions.
OCC01.07 Total % of household waste which is reused, recycled or composted	61.5	55.95	Red	61.5	55.95	Red	Small movement downward again on last month. Oxfordshire remains the best county council in England for recycling, however performance has flatlined which reflects national trends, indeed the latest statistics show that recycling rates across England have reduced year on year. In November 2024 central government made announcements around Simpler Recycling and Extended Producer Responsibility. It is hoped that this will provide some certainty in terms of future collections arrangements and may see service changes in the next two to three years and therefore a step change in the performance, but performance will not change much ahead of then.
OCC02.09 Total number of people accepted into domestic abuse safe accommodation	65	53	Red	65	53	Red	1. People are staying longer in safe accommodation due to lack of accommodation to move on to. 2. More single people (without children) are using safe accommodation and are occupying family rooms. This means the overall number of people that can be accommodated is reduced, and contractual targets are being reviewed.
OCC03.02 % of the eligible population aged 40-74 who have been offered NHS Health Check	5	4.82	Amber	20	17.83	Amber	Reporting Period: Q3-24 Q3 2024/25 has an increase in the number of invitations compared to Q2 2024/25. The rise is due to an increase by both Primary Care and the Supplementary NHS Health Check service. This is supported by a marketing plan to raise awareness of the NHS Health Check programme with the public.
OCC03.08 Average response time to emergency incidents within Oxfordshire	9	9.11	Amber	9	9.11	Amber	9 minutes is an average level which a number of services achieve, nationally. Previously Oxfordshire Fire and Rescue Service (OFRS) have aimed for 10 min and 14 min, 80% and 95% of the time. The new metric is challenging to achieve due to a variety of factors: the reduction in Automatic Fire Alarms (AFA) has resulted in a disproportionate reduction of

							calls near wholetime resources, meaning an average calculation of the response times across the county no longer benefits from these times. The difference in response times between the two areas is explained by the fact that whilst our wholetime crews attend a large number of incidents within the city, resulting in a positive impact in overall response times, attending remote incidents in more rural areas clearly results in a negative impact. Compounding these issues are the challenges around on-call availability: if remote, rural stations are unavailable then travel-times to incidents from other stations will be increased and this therefore reduces the overall ability of the organisation to meet these thresholds. Work is being done to address the availability issue through both our interim measures and the CSS Review Phase 3 response model, which will be looking to stabilise and improve availability levels for the provision of a minimum level of fire cover. This will therefore have a positive impact on response times as the final response model is introduced. Until then, the interim response model aims to try and improve our response time towards this national level.
OCC03.13 Numbers in substance misuse treatment: Children and young people during the financial year	149	79	Red	149	79	Red	New provider started April 2023, with new approach which focuses more on earlier intervention that is not recorded in this figure. Additionally, overall fewer children and young people are being seen by the provider, because pathways into the new service are still developing. Improvement Plan Partners are working together to make sure that children and young people who need this service are referred. We have a comprehensive action plan that we are monitoring regularly. Timeframe Numbers are already increasing. We will continually review the appropriateness of the current target in light of the different service approach. Finance Impact Children and young person's substance misuse service are covered within the contract for Oxfordshire. Risk Impact Risk that children and young people who need the service are not being supported.

Measure						Comment
OCC04.01 % of people who received short-term services during 24/25 with no further support request	77.5	74	Amber	77.5	74	Amber	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 74% in 24/25. This is slightly below the latest reported national figure of 77.5%. The service has continued to increase the number of people being supported through the discharge to assess pathway with 25% more people being discharged from hospital than last year. Of all people receiving reablement 86% achieve independence or a reduction of their care support needs. We are implementing training with all our providers to enhance their understanding of reablement as we develop our support for people with complex needs at the point of discharge.
OCC04.05 Adults Aged 65+ (per 100,000) admitted to residential and care homes (stretched target)	283.8	297.3	Amber	283.8	297.3	Amber	We have not delivered the stretch target for reduction in care home placements in 24/25. 38% of all council-funded "new" placements in care homes are people who were already in situ and have spent their capital as self-funders. These "threshold" cases significantly impact on the council's ability to further reduce permanent places as by that date they have lost the capability to live safely in other settings. There is a separate area of work under way to support self-funders. This measure will be vacated in 2526.
OCC05.07 Public satisfaction in the condition of Highways	32	19	Red	32	19	Red	This year's customer satisfaction score has shown a 1% improvement on last year's score, at 19%, which is 3% below the average benchmark score of 22%. This is below the target score of 32%, which was set at the average benchmark score in 2022, when Oxfordshire's result was 30%. The drop in satisfaction, from the 2022 figure does not appear to be linked to real-world drop in the actual condition of the road surface.
OCC09.01 No of overdue inspections from Risk Based	0	3	Red	0	3	Red	Comment Both the higher use of annual leave near year end and officers needing to priortise attention to enforcement

Inspection Programme			Red			Red	activities (issuing Prohibition Notices), has led to a slight delay in undertaking these visits. These will be prioritised for completion early in the new financial year and given the relatively small number, will not impact on the ability to undertake visits to other scheduled premises.
OCC10.11 % of Corporate Complaints (Stage 1) responded to within timescales	80	77	Red	80	77	Red	28 Corporate stage 1 complaints have been received in March 2025. 10 were closed within timescale, 3 closed outside of timescale (Children Education and Families service), 14 cases are still open within timescale and 1 is open outside of timescale which falls Environment and Highways service. The team continue to work with services to ensure responses are provided within timescales provided.
OCC11.02 Achievement of planned savings	90	66	Red	90	66	Red	
OCC11.06 Total Outturn variation for DSG funded services (high needs)	21300000	36450000	Red	21300000	36450000	Red	
OCC11.10 Debt requiring impairment - Corporate Debtors	300000	800451	Red	300000	800451	Red	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 £0.800m. The top five cases, including two which are in liquidation, account for 59% 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	3500000	4511920	Red	3500000	4511920	Red	The 2023-24 year-end adults care contribution impairment for bad debt was £4.52m. At 31-Mar-25 it is £4.51m, an increase of £0.01m. 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.
OCC11.12 Average cash balance compared to forecast average cash balance	462628000	558807000	Amber	462628000	558807000	Amber	

KPI Name	Target	Actual	RAG rating	End of year target	End of year actual	End of year RAG rating	Commentary
OCC01.01 % reduction in corporate emissions within our Net Zero by 2030 target	9	5	Amber	18	18	Green	Reporting for Q1 and Q2 24-25 The figures are preliminary calculations and may change in final annual GHG (Greenhouse Gases) report. During Q1 and Q2 of 2024/25 (April to September 2024), Oxfordshire County Council emissions from the scope of our carbon neutrality 2030 target (corporate estate and activities) reduced by 5% (151 tonnes CO2e) compared with the same period in 2023/24. The reduction is less than expected due to delayed delivery of property decarbonisation and fleet replacement programmes. The LED street lighting replacement programme now completed. The emission savings corresponded to delivery of property decarbonisation and fleet electrification programme will start materialising from towads the end of 2025/26, contingent on timely delivery. The breakdown of this overall reduction in Q1 &Q2 2024/25 by area of operation is the following: -Property emissions decreased by 56 tonnes of CO2e, this is a 7% decrease compared to the same period in 2023/24. -Highways Electrical Assets emissions decreased 97 tonne of CO2e, this is a 10% reduction compared to the same period in 2023/24. Fleet emissions decreased by 1 ton of CO2e, this is a 0.2% reduction compared to the same period in 2023/24. -Staff mileage emissions increased by 4 tonnes of CO2e, this is a 1% increase compared to the same period in 2023/24.
OCC01.02 Total No. of streetlights fitted with LED Lanterns	1300	1755	Green	1300	1755	Green	The figure for the month of March 2025 is 129 LED Lanterns converted. The cumulative total number for this year which is now includes the non-routine maintenance works is 1755 LED lanterns that have been replaced. Which will help to assist OCC towards our long-term energy reduction.
OCC01.04 Oxfordshire greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions as published annually by DESNZ with a 2-year lag	9	5	Red	9	5	Red	Data received September. This latest data from Department for Energy Security and Net Zero (DESNZ) shows that Oxfordshire tracked the national trend in green house gas (GHG) reduction between 2021 and 2022 and showed a similar % reduction as the South East region and comparator authorities. While Oxfordshire met the Climate Change Committee carbon budget it did not meet the ambitious Pathways to a Zero Carbon Oxfordshire

(PAZCO) trajectory for Oxfordshire Leading the Way. 2022 is the first full year post pandemic when normal economic activity resumed. During this period, transport emissions which are hard to decarbonise continued to dominate for the county. The carbon intensity of the grid also increased in 2021 due to more coal and gas in the mix has been gradually reducing since.

The 9% year on year reduction target from the PAZCO Oxfordshire Leading the Way scenario applies to CO2 only and excludes some transport sources, waste and land use changes.

Finance Impact

The latest GHG data highlights the need to continue to invest in climate action and work with partners to stay on course for our county net zero ambitions. The majority of financing for the net zero transition will come from private sources and the council is seeking to create policy and partnerships that enable that investment. The cost of climate impacts such as from recent floods will be increasingly felt as national and global emissions are not reducing fast enough to prevent climate breakdown.

Risk Impact

This is the first time that Oxfordshire has not been on track to deliver against the Oxfordshire Leading the Way trajectory. The county is tracking regional and national emissions reductions, showing that national policy is the key driver. Therefore there is a risk that insufficient government action will prevent Oxfordshire meeting its net zero ambitions, and our new public affairs function is key to continue pressing for a more ambitious policy framework nationally.

There is a risk that Oxfordshire will not meet its ambitious carbon budgets as set out in the Net Zero Route map, however it is also possible that the county will recover its position given that the grid is decarbonising again since a peak in 2021 and that action is being taken at local and national level to tackle emissions. Further data will be available from DESNZ in summer 2025 relating to 2023 GHG emissions.

OCC01.05 Percentage of milestones delivered for the Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS)	100	90	Amber	100	90	Amber	The public consultation to Oxfordshire's draft LNRS was an excellent point of engagement receiving a high number of responses (over 2,100). This has been 3-4 times higher than expected for LNRSs. The LNRS groups therefore agreed to add additional 3 months to the timeline to launch before October 2025 to enable the LNRS to process and act on those consultation responses. This is reflected in the reduction of milestones met in the past month.
OCC01.06 Number of fully-funded retrofit measures delivered to low income/fuel poor homes	45	34	Amber	195	285	Green	It's early into the quarter, but 15 installs have been completed under the HUG2 scheme in January, plus a further 17 in February, plus 2 Solar PV with battery storage under the Energy Saver App scheme in February.
OCC01.07 Total % of household waste which is reused, recycled or composted	61.5	55.95	Red	61.5	55.95	Red	Small movement downward again on last month. Oxfordshire remains the best county council in England for recycling, however performance has flatlined which reflects national trends, indeed the latest statistics show that recycling rates across England have reduced year on year. In November 2024 central government made announcements around Simpler Recycling and Extended Producer Responsibility. It is hoped that this will provide some certainty in terms of future collections arrangements and may see service changes in the next two to three years and therefore a step change in the performance, but performance will not change much ahead of then.
OCC02.01 Digital Inclusion through libraries (number of hours of use of library public computers)	5500	7588	Green	5500	7588	Green	Usage of public computers remains high and shows ongoing demand for this part of our service offer.
OCC02.02 % of premises in Oxfordshire below legal Universal Service Obligation of 10Mb/s	0.42	0.36	Green	0.42	0.36	Green	
OCC02.03 Number of physical visits to Libraries	115000	164677	Green	115000	164677	Green	Visits to libraries remain above target and exceeded 2 million for the period April 2024 to March 2025. This is as a result of work to promote the value of libraries, and to run events

			<td style="background:green"></td>			<td style="background:green"></td>	and activities, plus continued efforts to maintain quality, relevant book stock.
OCC02.04 Inequality in life expectancy at Birth (female)	4.3	0	N/A	4.3	0	N/A	The latest data is anticipated to be published in May 2025 by Office of Health and Disparities (OHID) A total of 13 Community Insight Profiles have now been completed. In the 2024-25 period, three additional profiles were published: Berinsfield (September 2024), Witney Central (February 2025), and Wood Farm (February 2025). These reports focus on areas ranked within the 30-40% most deprived nationally and/or those most at risk of experiencing poor health outcomes. All reports are available on the Oxfordshire data hub. One final report is due to be published for Bicester West in June 2025. Grant funding rounds for the initial 10 priority areas and Berinsfield are now complete. Community Health Development Officers (CHDOs) are in place for 13 of the 14 profile areas, and contracts for the CHDOs in the initial 10 priority areas are being extended following an evaluation of their roles.
OCC02.05 Inequality in life expectancy at Birth (male)	5.7	0	N/A	5.7	0	N/A	The latest data is anticipated to be published in May 2025 by Office of Health and Disparities (OHID). A total of 13 Community Insight Profiles have now been completed. In the 2024-25 period, three additional profiles were published: Berinsfield (September 2024), Witney Central (February 2025), and Wood Farm (February 2025). These reports focus on areas ranked within the 30-40% most deprived nationally and/or those most at risk of experiencing poor health outcomes. All reports are available on the Oxfordshire data hub. One final report is due to be published for Bicester West in June 2025. Grant funding rounds for the initial 10 priority areas and Berinsfield are now complete. Community Health Development Officers (CHDOs) are in place for 13 of the 14 profile areas, and contracts for the CHDOs in the initial 10 priority areas are being extended following an evaluation of their roles.
OCC02.06 Digital engagement with Heritage Services	444000	398607	Red	1110000	1207019	Green	Sustained level of engagement across all platforms including heritage search engagement increased in last quarter.

OCC02.07 Number of completed profiles for local communities with the greatest health inequalities	13	13	Green	13	13	Green	A total of 13 Community Insight Profiles have now been completed. The three profiles published in 2024-25 are Berinsfield (September 2024), Witney Central (February 2025) and Wood Farm (February 2025). All reports are available on the Oxfordshire data hub. One final report is due to be published for Bicester West in June 2025.
OCC02.08 Number of physical visits to Heritage sites (i.e. Museums, History Centre and VCH events)	17500	32460	Green	73000	130578	Green	Increase on previous quarter partly owing to museum visitor attendance during Feb half term and Bird Photographer exhibition being very high.
OCC02.09 Total number of people accepted into domestic abuse safe accommodation	65	53	Red	65	53	Red	1. People are staying longer in safe accommodation due to lack of accommodation to move on to. 2. More single people (without children) are using safe accommodation and are occupying family rooms. This means the overall number of people that can be accommodated is reduced, and contractual targets are being reviewed.
OCC03.01 % of successfully treated opiate users not requiring treatment again within 6 months	7	10.1	Green	7	10.1	Green	Reporting Period Q3-24 The Community Alcohol and Drug Service continues to achieve very high opiate successful completion rates, significantly above the national average of 5.2%. This measure demonstrates a focus on quality of drug treatment in line with the national drug strategy, achieved alongside a focus on increasing the number of opiate users in treatment.
OCC03.02 % of the eligible population aged 40-74 who have been offered NHS Health Check	5	4.82	Amber	20	17.83	Amber	Reporting Period: Q3-24 Q3 2024/25 has an increase in the number of invitations compared to Q2 2024/25. The rise is due to an increase by both Primary Care and the Supplementary NHS Health Check service. This is supported by a marketing plan to raise awareness of the NHS Health Check programme with the public.
OCC03.03 Live well-promote and prevent Smoking prevalence in adults (18+)- self-reported	10.8	10.3	Green	10.8	10.3	Green	Reporting Period: 2023 (calendar year) The local stop smoking service continues to support smokers to quit, with specific focus on priority groups. Further programmes are underway across the system to further support quits including • National Health Service England (NHSE) funded

			Green			Green	tobacco dependency services within acute, mental health and maternity settings. • Swap to Stop schemes.
OCC03.04 Reduce the % of women smoking in pregnancy to contribute towards OCC smokefree strategy	6	5	Green	6	5	Green	Reporting Period: Q3-24 A maternity in-house tobacco dependency advisor service (via National Health Service (NHS) Long Term Plan funding) is live and successfully supporting pregnant women to quit smoking. This includes Swap to Stop access to vapes for them and their household members. The local stop smoking service continue to support small numbers of pregnant women and their partners to quit, usually because they live on the borders of the county and are not under maternity care of Oxfordshire NHS trust.
OCC03.05 Of those residents invited for a NHS Health check, the % who accept and complete the offer	45	50.9	Green	45	50.9	Green	Reporting Period: 23-24 Activity by Primary Care to deliver National Health Service (NHS) Health Checks has been consistent throughout the year and an improvement on 2022/23. Alongside this, the Supplementary NHS Health Check Service provider has been offering community health checks showing a high take up from the priority groups identified by the Council.
OCC03.06 Percentage of births that have received a face to face New Birth Visit	95	95	Green	95	95	Green	Reporting Period: Q3-24 This indicator is performing well and is on target. In this quarter the Health visitors saw 1,752 families in person during a face to face visit which typically takes place in the home.
OCC03.07 Reduce the levels of children overweight and obese in year 6 (NCMP data)	29.7	32	Amber	29.7	32	Amber	Reporting Period: 2023-24 In Oxfordshire, latest data (23/24) shows for year 6 there has been a very slight (not statistically significant) increase in excess weight over the last year though trend is fairly level. For this age group excess weight fell from 34% to (21/22) to 31% (22/23) then to 32% 24/25. Oxfordshire performs well against the England average generally, but there are some areas in Oxfordshire where children have experienced excess weight over a long period. A new all age healthy weight service launched in September with a focus on addressing inequalities associated with weight. For children, there is the option of both group sessions within the community and remote Programmes to support them and

			Amber			Amber	their family to create healthy habits. Work to support more healthy environments continues.
OCC03.08 Average response time to emergency incidents within Oxfordshire	9	9.11	Amber	9	9.11	Amber	9 minutes is an average level which a number of services achieve, nationally. Previously Oxfordshire Fire and Rescue Service (OFRS) have aimed for 10 min and 14 min, 80% and 95% of the time. The new metric is challenging to achieve due to a variety of factors: the reduction in Automatic Fire Alarms (AFA) has resulted in a disproportionate reduction of calls near wholetime resources, meaning an average calculation of the response times across the county no longer benefits from these times. The difference in response times between the two areas is explained by the fact that whilst our wholetime crews attend a large number of incidents within the city, resulting in a positive impact in overall response times, attending remote incidents in more rural areas clearly results in a negative impact. Compounding these issues are the challenges around on-call availability: if remote, rural stations are unavailable then travel-times to incidents from other stations will be increased and this therefore reduces the overall ability of the organisation to meet these thresholds. Work is being done to address the availability issue through both our interim measures and the CSS Review Phase 3 response model, which will be looking to stabilise and improve availability levels for the provision of a minimum level of fire cover. This will therefore have a positive impact on response times as the final response model is introduced. Until then, the interim response model aims to try and improve our response time towards this national level.
OCC03.09 No of people contacted via Making Every Conversation Count (MECC)	450	1405	Green	5400	10361	Green	This month is yet another record total for MECC conversations - due to staff meetings to increase priority in this area, and to ensure better and more consistent reporting across our 44 libraries.
OCC03.10 Money saved or recovered for the victims of scams, doorstep crime & other forms	25000	1000	Red	100000	125540	Green	This is an aspirational target with several variables outside of the services control. Performance can also vary significantly, as a small number of high value savings can impact on the total amount saved, or not. Whilst quarterly performance was below target, importantly, YTD performance achieved its target.

Indicator							Comment
OCC03.11 No of people directly reached with Trading Standards preventative advice and support	375	200	Red	1500	2035	Green	Whilst quarterly performance is below target, the end of year performance is well above target. Q4 included our celebrated Consumer Challenge Quiz, a learning and celebration event aimed at Oxfordshire's special schools.
OCC03.12 Number of accidental fires in people's homes per 100,000 population	8.73	5.56	Green	8.73	5.56	Green	
OCC03.13 Numbers in substance misuse treatment: Children and young people during the financial year	149	79	Red	149	79	Red	New provider started April 2023, with new approach which focuses more on earlier intervention that is not recorded in this figure. Additionally, overall fewer children and young people are being seen by the provider, because pathways into the new service are still developing. Improvement Plan Partners are working together to make sure that children and young people who need this service are referred. We have a comprehensive action plan that we are monitoring regularly. Timeframe Numbers are already increasing. We will continually review the appropriateness of the current target in light of the different service approach. Finance Impact Children and young person's substance misuse service are covered within the contract for Oxfordshire. Risk Impact Risk that children and young people who need the service are not being supported.
OCC03.14 Numbers in treatment: Alcohol only during the financial year	810	987	Green	810	987	Green	Comment The Community Alcohol and Drug Service continues to significantly overperform on their contract targets to increase the number of people in treatment for alcohol only (no other substance). They have achieved a 46.22% increase in numbers since the Jan-Dec 2021 baseline.
OCC03.15 Number of volunteer hours contributed to the library service	27500	31916	Green	27500	31916	Green	

Measure						Commentary
OCC04.01 % of people who received short-term services during 24/25 with no further support request	77.5	74	Amber	77.5	74	Amber	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 74% in 24/25. This is slightly below the latest reported national figure of 77.5%. The service has continued to increase the number of people being supported through the discharge to assess pathway with 25% more people being discharged from hospital than last year. Of all people receiving reablement 86% achieve independence or a reduction of their care support needs. We are implementing training with all our providers to enhance their understanding of reablement as we develop our support for people with complex needs at the point of discharge.
OCC04.02 % of residents 18-64 with Learning Disability support who live on their own or with family	0	89.6	N/A	0	89.6	N/A	The reason for this slight decrease is likely to be that a person has required (due to health deterioration) a hospital admission, which can result in them needing more formal support such as supported living once discharged. There are also more options available in relation to formal support now that there are over 50 specialist providers on the Live Well Supported Services Framework, to support people in a formal capacity.
OCC04.03 % Section 42 safeguarding enquiries where identified risk was reduced or removed	93	93	Green	93	93	Green	This is a national measure that looks at the outcome of adult safeguarding enquiries. Last year there were 1485 completed safeguarding enquiries of which in 93% of cases resulted in the risk being removed or reduced. Occasionally, risk can remain as the subject of the enquiry chooses for the situation to remain as it is. Nationally, 93% of enquiries result in risk being reduced or removed and the target is to remain above this level.
OCC04.04 Adults aged 65+ (per 100,000) admitted to residential and care homes	437.7	297.3	Green	437.7	297.3	Green	The measure indicates that we have exceeded planned performance at year end with fewer than planned OCC funded admissions to care homes for people >65 in 2024/25. This reflects the strengths-based approach to care assessment and planning and the alternatives to care homes

Measure							Commentary
			Green			Green	placement that have been developed by commissioners and deployed by brokerage and operational staff.
OCC04.05 Adults aged 65+ (per 100,000) admitted to residential and care homes (stretched target)	283.8	297.3	Amber	283.8	297.3	Amber	We have not delivered the stretch target for reduction in care home placements in 24/25. 38% of all council-funded "new" placements in care homes are people who were already in situ and have spent their capital as self-funders. These "threshold" cases significantly impact on the council's ability to further reduce permanent places as by that date they have lost the capability to live safely in other settings. There is a separate area of work under way to support self-funders. This measure will be vacated in 2526.
OCC05.01 Number of bus passenger journeys	34.7	37.1	Green	34.7	37.1	Green	This measure reports a year in areas. 37.10m passengers in 2023/24.
OCC05.02 Number of park and ride passenger journeys	0	0	N/A	0	0	N/A	There is no data available for this measure
OCC05.03 204.6 KM (4.4%) of the road network to be treated	0	6.1	Green	204.6	220.41	Green	In March 2025, 6.1 km of road were treated, contributing to the overall total of 220 km for the fiscal year 2024/2025. This total represents 4.77% of the entire road network.
OCC05.04 % of Annual change in average nitrogen dioxide contentrations in AQMAs	10	11	Green	10	11	Green	There are currently 13 air quality management areas (AQMAs) in Oxfordshire declared in relation to nitrogen dioxide concentrations. The highest levels in each of the 13 AQMAs areas within Oxfordshire were recorded by the District and City Councils. The average of the highest levels was 32.33 μg/mwhich is less than the UK's statutory limit value of 40 μg/m. The 2023 figure is an 11% reduction in the average of highest nitrogen dioxide levels recorded in each of the 13 AQMAs in Oxfordshire compared to last year and a 35% reduction compared to the baseline year of 2019. Every year air pollutant levels are likely to fluctuate due to weather conditions and other local conditions such as road closures near monitoring sites. However, the downward trend is apparent across the UK, with most monitoring sites showing reductions in NO levels. This is likely to be due to newer road vehicles having to meet stricter emission standards and the uptake of electric road vehicles. A national move away from coal usage in power generation has also impacted nitrogen

			Green			Green	dioxide levels. Finance impact There is no impact on finance at this stage. Risk impact Delivery is on target and there are no impacts on risk at this stage.
OCC05.05 Number of cycling trips	34263	534729	Green	34263	534729	Green	Comment We have exceeded our target for November 2021 to November 2022 and are on track to meet our cycle trip target of 1 million per week by 2030. This is being achieved by a number of cycling initiatives.
OCC05.06 Number of Rail passenger trips originating in Oxfordshire Stations	8408406	0	Green	8408406	0	Green	23/24 annual statistic
OCC05.07 Public Satisfaction in the condition of Highways	32	19	Red	32	19	Red	This year's customer satisfaction score has shown a 1% improvement on last year's score, at 19%, which is 3% below the average benchmark score of 22%. This is below the target score of 32%, which was set at the average benchmark score in 2022, when Oxfordshire's result was 30%. The drop in satisfaction, from the 2022 figure does not appear to be linked to real-world drop in the actual condition of the road surface.
OCC05.08 % of delivery against Countywide 20mph plan	30.25	30.25	Green	100	120.94	Green	Project completed excepting two schemes (Bicester and Carterton) - Bicester approved at CMD 27 March 2025, and Carterton planned to be consulted on in latter part of May.
OCC06.01 No of trees planted & established on land OCC own & manage	1000	1079	Green	1000	1079	Green	Planting target slightly less than planned. New target is 1000 trees. 829 Highway trees and 250 fruit trees planted to establish >15 new community orchards. First tree delivery received on 18/11/2024 of 200 trees. Monthly updates on planting numbers below. 112 trees planted in November 2024. 202 trees planted in December 2024. 268 trees planted in January 2025. 218 trees planted in February 2025. 279 trees planted in March 2025. Total trees planted this season = 1079.

OCC06.02 Percentage of newly planted trees still alive on land OCC own & manage	90	97.10	Green	90	97.1	Green	The number of trees alive continues to be above the target with minimal loss. Another 279 trees have been planted in March 2025, which has increased the % alive 'Actual' from last month. Total trees planted to date since 1st January 2023 = 1902. Of those, 1847 are still alive.
OCC06.03 Volunteer hours on the PRoW network through established groups	1750	1900	Green	7000	7472.25	Green	Strong performance from our volunteer groups during this winter period.
OCC06.04% [by length] of Public Rights of Way network free from serious issues or obstruction	90	90	Green	90	90	Green	The actual figure of prows free from serious obstructions is 89.61% rounded to 90%. The difference since this was last recorded is 0.25% which is rounded an extra 10km in length free from serious obstructions. This figure will fluctuate all the time as new issues are reported and existing ones are resolved. Although an issue may only affect a small area of a path, eg a locked gate, it will in theory affect a whole link which can vary in length considerably from just a few metres to over 3kms. One issue may involve huge effects to resolve and barely impact the figure, while another may be relatively straight forward but have a greater impact.
OCC06.05 Total number of community activities held as part of the Community Action Group Network	3000	0	N/A	3000	0	N/A	The Community Action Group network will produce an annual report in May/June 2025 at which point these figures will be available.
OCC07.01 % of 2-2½ year review showing children at or above the expected level of development	85.1	86.9	Green	85.1	86.9	Green	Reporting Period: Q3-24 The Health Visiting workforce completed 1,491 reviews in this quarter to check the development of children. If children are not at the expected level, the family are offered advice and support and referred on to specialist health services where needed. This supports children to be ready to learn and thrive when they start at school.
OCC07.02 No of children we care for who are Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children	0	80	N/A	0	80	N/A	Since the decline in figures in January, a result of Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASC) turning 18 the number of UASC has remained a steady figure since February. We remain under 0.1% of our under 18 population.

Indicator							Comment
OCC07.03 % of children we care for placed out of county and more than 20 miles away from home	0	38	N/A	0	38	N/A	Children are being placed out of area due to a lack of suitable provision closer to home. The issue of out of area placements is most pronounced for residential placements and our new internal residential placement provisions continue to developed. We will always take steps to place children with relatives or their extended network, which could be further than 20 miles away from home, where appropriate, and in accordance with their individual care plan.
OCC07.04 Number of Children and Young People accessing the Music Service	8500	8833	Green	8500	8833	Green	
OCC07.05 The number of children subject of a child protection plan	618	528	Green	618	528	Green	
OCC07.06 Number of Oxfordshire children we care for	0	704	N/A	0	704	N/A	Since February (698) there has been a reduction of 6 children that we care for. This is a reflection of children being permanently adopted.
OCC07.07 % of Education Health & Care Plans completed within 20 weeks	0	28	N/A	0	28	N/A	
OCC07.08 The number of Education Health Care Plans maintained by the local authority	0	7544	N/A	0	7544	N/A	There are 900 (13.5%) more EHCPs maintained by Oxfordshire in March 2025 than there were during the same month in the previous year.
OCC08.01 Deliver a citizen's assembly on transport in Oxfordshire by March 2025	1	1	Green	1	1	Green	The citizens' assembly has been delivered. Its key recommendations were reported to Cabinet on 25 March 2025 for future consideration and response.
OCC09.01 No of overdue inspections from Risk Based Inspection Programme	0	3	Red	0	3	Red	Comment Both the higher use of annual leave near year end and officers needing to priortise attention to enforcement activities (issuing Prohibition Notices), has led to a slight delay in undertaking these visits. These will be prioritised for completion early in the new financial year and given the

Indicator							Commentary
			 			 	relatively small number, will not impact on the ability to undertake visits to other scheduled premises.
OCC09.03 No of Trading Standards interventions conducted with businesses	375	393	Green	1500	2014	Green	Q4 performance continues to be above target, with achievement well above the annual target. Contributing activities included a range of business intervention activities - providing businesses with advice, inspection visits, the verification of weighing and measuring equipment, underaged test purchasing of age restricted products and the testing/sampling of products for safety and accuracy of labelling (food and consumer products).
OCC09.04 % of Gigabit capable (DOCSIS 3.1 or Full Fibre) Broadband	79.5	87.52	Green	79.5	87.52	Green	
OCC09.05 % of Full Fibre To The Premises broadband (FTTP) premises in Oxfordshire.	55	64.48	Green	55	64.48	Green	
OCC09.06 Minimum of £1.5m generated in social value from suppliers who have contracts with OCC	1500000	1597478.01	Green	1500000	1597478.01	Green	This figure is for social value incorporated within some of Oxfordshire County Council's (OCC) contracts of which the Social Value Portal manage, evidence and validate on behalf of OCC. This figure is for what we have evidenced and validated as of 31st March 2025 and may increase as more evidence is received from contract suppliers for the final quarter which is only now being validated as the quarter has closed.
OCC10.01 % of Adult Social Care complaints (Stage 1) responded to within statutory timescales	80	100	Green	80	100	Green	4 Adult Social Care statutory stage 1 complaints have been received in March 2025. 1 was closed within timescale and 3 are still open within timescale.
OCC10.02 % of Adult Social Care complaints (Stage 2) responded to within statutory timescales	80	0	N/A	80	0	N/A	3 Adult Social Care statutory stage 2 complaints have been received in March 2025. All the cases are still open within timescale.
OCC10.05 Percentage of FOIs	90	100	Green	90	100	Green	A total of 196 requests for information were received during March, with an additional 21 requests redirected to the other organisations, mainly the local district councils.

responded to within timescales			Green			Green	This is an increase of 16.7 % compared to February 2025 (168), and an increase of 44.1% compared to March 2024 (136). A total of 62 requests were responded to on-time (100%), and 134 requests remain open and on-time (100%).
OCC10.08 % of Children Social Care complaints (Stage 1) responded to within statutory timescales	80	0	N/A	80	0	N/A	5 Children Social Care statutory stage 1 complaints have been received in March 2025. All the cases are still open within timescale.
OCC10.09 % of Children Social Care complaints (Stage 2) responded to within statutory timescales	80	0	N/A	80	0	N/A	5 Children Social Care statutory stage 2 complaints have been received in March 2025. All the cases are still open within timescale.
OCC10.10 % of Children Social Care complaints (Stage 3) responded to within statutory timescales	80	0	N/A	80	0	N/A	No Children Social Care statutory stage 3 complaints received in March 2025.
OCC10.11 % of Corporate Complaints (Stage 1) responded to within timescales	80	77	Red	80	77	Red	28 Corporate stage 1 complaints have been received in March 2025. 10 were closed within timescale, 3 closed outside of timescale (Children Education and Families service), 14 cases are still open within timescale and 1 is open outside of timescale which falls Environment and Highways service. The team continue to work with services to ensure responses are provided within timescales provided.
OCC10.12 % of Corporate Complaints (Stage 2) responded to within timescales	80	0	N/A	80	0	N/A	6 Corporate stage 2 complaints were received in March 2025. All the cases are still open within timescale.
OCC11.01 Overall forecast revenue variance across the Council	0	-2.1	Green	0	-2.1	Green	
OCC11.02 Achievement of planned savings	90	66	Red	90	66	Red	

OCC11.03 General balances are forecast to remain at or above the risk assessed level	85	112	Green	85	112	Green	
OCC11.04 Directorates deliver services and achieve planned performance within agreed budget	1	0.5	Green	1	0.5	Green	
OCC11.05 Total Outturn variation for DSG funded services (schools/early years)	0	0	Green	0	-0.9	Green	
OCC11.06 Total Outturn variation for DSG funded services (high needs)	21300000	36450000	Red	21300000	36450000	Red	
OCC11.07 Use of non-DSG revenue grant funding	95	99	Green	95	99	Green	
OCC11.08 % of agreed invoices paid within 30 days	95	96.28	Green	95	96.28	Green	February performance is 1% above target, all areas are above target.
OCC11.09 Invoice collection rate - Corporate Debtors	95	96.77	Green	95	96.77	Green	This measure identifies the percentage of invoices issued that have been paid within 120 days. In this period, we measured invoices issued in November 2024. The collection rate was 96.77%, above the target of 95%.
OCC11.10 Debt requiring impairment - Corporate Debtors	300000	800451	Red	300000	800451	Red	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 £0.800m. The top five cases, including two which are in liquidation, account for 59% 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	3500000	4511920	Red	3500000	4511920	Red	The 2023-24 year-end adults care contribution impairment for bad debt was £4.52m. At 31-Mar-25 it is £4.51m, an increase of £0.01m. 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.
OCC11.12 Average cash balance compared to forecast average cash balance	462628000	558807000	Amber	462628000	558807000	Amber	
OCC11.13 Average interest rate achieved on in-house investment portfolio	3	4.86	Green	3	4.86	Green	
OCC11.14 Average annualised return achieved for externally managed funds	3.75	4.2	Green	3.75	4.2	Green	
OCC11.15 Invoice Collection Rate - Adult Social Care contribution debtors	92	93.4	Green	92	93.4	Green	In this period, we measured invoices issued in November 2024. The 120-day invoice collection rate was 93.40% for this period, above the 92% target.

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Introduction

1. This annex sets out the final financial monitoring update for the 2024/25 financial year and is based on information covering the period from 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2025.

2. The following additional information is provided to support the information in this Annex:

Annex B – 1 (a) to (e)	Detailed directorate positions 2024/25
Annex B – 2	Virements to note
Annex B – 3	Earmarked reserves
Annex B – 4	Government grants
Annex B – 5	General Balances

Overview of 2024/25 Expenditure & Funding

3. The budget for 2024/25 and Medium-Term Financial Strategy to 2026/27 was agreed by Council on 20 February 2024. £68m new funding to meet inflationary and demand pressures was included as part of the budget for 2024/25 along with £30.1m budget reductions less £4.1m savings risk adjustment. There was also funding for investments totalling £11.6m.

4. This is the final update for 2024/25 and sets out the final expenditure against the agreed budget as well as an update on the achievement of planned budget savings and investments.

5. The information in this report will be incorporated into the Council's Statement of Accounts for 2024/25. Both the draft and final Statement of Accounts will be published on the Council's website.

6. Under the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015, specifically regulations 9 and 15, the commencement period for the exercise of public rights to inspect the draft 2024/25 accounts and related documents is based on completing the Statement of Accounts by 30 June 2025. Following the amendment to the Accounts and Audit Regulations (2015), the planned public inspection dates are set between 1 July and 12 August 2025.

Service Area Budgets & Expenditure

7. The table below summarises the service area's net expenditure compared to the final budget and shows the movement since the report to Cabinet in March 2025. At the end of 2024/25 there was a service area underspend of £0.3m.

8. There has been strong financial management within services that has led to an outturn £12.8m underspend position. £12.5m of the overall underspend arises from corporate budgets particularly contingency and interest on balances from higher-than-expected interest rates. At the time of setting the 2025/26, there was a significant forecast underspend. It was agreed to support the 2025/26 budget by £10.8m.

	Final Budget	Total Spend	Year End Variance	Year End Variance	Variance March Cabinet	Change in Variance
Adult Services	£249.0m	£245.1m	-£3.9m	-1.6%	-£4.2m	£0.3m
Children's Services	£202.1m	£202.3m	£0.1m	0.1%	£1.3m	-£1.2m
Environment & Highways	£53.5m	£54.3m	£0.8m	1.5%	£0.2m	£0.6m
Economy & Place	£16.9m	£16.7m	-£0.3m	-1.5%	£0.2m	-£0.5m
Oxfordshire Fire & Rescue Service and Community Safety	£28.9m	£29.5m	£0.6m	2.2%	£0.6m	£0.0m
Public Health & Communities	£12.9m	£13.0m	£0.1m	0.5%	£0.2m	-£0.2m
Resources and Law & Governance	£59.8m	£61.2m	£1.5m	2.5%	£1.3m	£0.2m
Transformation, Digital & Customer Experience	£8.2m	£9.0m	£0.7m	9.1%	£1.0m	-£0.3m
Service Areas Total	**£631.3m**	**£631.0m**	**-£0.3m**	**0.0%**	**£0.6m**	**-£0.9m**
Budgets Held Centrally						
Capital Financing	£21.3m	£21.7m	£0.4m	2.0%	-£3.5m	£3.9m
Interest on Balances	-£10.7m	-£17.4m	-£6.8m	63.2%	-£4.6m	-£2.1m
Contingency	£0.5m	-£0.1m	-£0.6m	-124.0%	-£3.3m	£2.7m
Pay Inflation	£4.8m	£0.0m	-£4.8m	-100.0%	-£4.7m	-£0.1m
Un-ringfenced Specific Grants	-£56.4m	-£56.4m	£0.0m	0.0%	£0.0m	£0.0m
Insurance	£1.7m	£1.5m	-£0.2m	-13.6%	£0.0m	-£0.2m
Contribution from COVID-19 reserve	-£3.8m	-£3.8m	£0.0m	0.0%	£0.0m	£0.0m
Contribution from Budget Priority Reserve	£1.6m	£1.6m	£0.0m	0.0%	£0.0m	£0.0m
Contributions to reserves	£23.1m	£22.5m	-£0.6m	-2.4%	£5.0m	-£5.6m
Total Budgets Held Centrally	**-£17.9m**	**-£30.4m**	**-£12.5m**	**69.8%**	**-£11.1m**	**-£1.4m**
Net Operating Budget	**£613.5m**	**£600.6m**	**-£12.9m**	**-2.1%**	**-£10.5m**	**-£2.4m**
Business Rates & Council Tax funding	-£613.5m	-£613.3m	£0.1m	0.0%	£0.0m	£0.1m
Forecast Year End Position	**£0.0m**	**-£12.8m**	**-£12.8m**	**-2.1%**	**-£10.5m**	**-£2.3m**

Note: the figures in all tables have been rounded - this may mean the overall totals vary slightly to the sum of the figures included in them.

Contingency & Pay Inflation

9. £6.3m of the £14.4m pay inflation budget was transferred to Service Areas to meet the cost of the additional pay inflation in 2024/25 following the agreement of the Green & Grey Book, and Soulbury pay awards. Also £0.3m was transferred meet the cost of pay inflation for in year recruited vacant posts. £3.0m has been used to fund a one-off contribution to the Local Government Re-organisation and Devolution reserve. The remaining pay inflation budget was £4.8m. The on-going budget not needed to fund pay inflation in 2024/25 is available to meet the cost of pay inflation in 2025/26.

10. The underspend against £7.0m of the contingency budget has also been added to the Local Government Re-organisation & Devolution reserve.

MTFP 2024/25 Savings & Investment

11. The 2024/25 budget includes planned services savings of £30.1m. This was offset by a budgeted risk adjustment of £4.1m added to reflect risks around the achievement of savings for Children's Services. The undelivered savings for 2024/25 total £6.0m and include:
    - £1.1m savings related to Children's Services staffing, agency staff, contract savings and placements.
    - £2.2m arising from delays to the introduction of Lane Rental charges in Environment & Highways.
    - £0.7m Environment & Highways waste collections and other income generation targets.
    - £1.1m delivering Future together savings target implementation delays.

12. The 2024/25 budget also includes planned service area investments totaling £11.6m. £4.5m has been spent on planned programmes of work in 2024/25. £1.8m expenditure will take place in in 2025/26 so it is recommended that this funding is temporarily transferred to the Budget Priorities reserve ahead of use. Of the £5.3m released investments, £4.1m has been used to support service pressures as explained in previous reports.

Overview of General Balances & DSG High Needs Balances

13. 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 underspend of £12.8m, balances are £15.1m above the risk assessed level as at 31 March 2025. The use of £10.8m of this total was already agreed as part of the 2025/26 budget. Based on the actual outturn position and agreed use, balances will be £4.3m above the risk assessed level for 2025/26 as at 1 April 2025.

14. There is a proposal to support two further opportunities costing £0.6m:
    - Business and Intellectual Property Centre: £0.1m one-off funding from the General Balances to enable the continuation of the BIPC service for 2025/26 while action to seek self sustainable funding streams for 2026/27 and onwards.
    - Innovate Oxfordshire: £0.5m one-off funding from General Balances to enable the creation of a successful sustainable commercial model and less reliant on council tax funding by providing future savings.
    Based on the actual outturn position and proposed use, balances will be £3.7m above the risk assessed level for 2025/26 as at 1 April 2025.

15. The 2024/25 deficit compared to Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) funding for High Needs is £36.5m, £15.3m higher than the £21.2m deficit 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 deficit would increase the cumulative negative High Needs DSG balance held in this reserve from £55.8m as at 31 March 2024 to £92.3m at 31 March 2025.

Service Financial Positions as at 31 March 2025

Adult Services

16. The service is reporting an underspend position of £3.8m against a budget of £248.9m (-1.6%) due to robust financial management and continuing the Oxfordshire Way approach which supports people to live well in their community, remaining independent for as long as possible.

Service Area	Final Budget £m	Total Spend £m	Year end Variance £m	Variance March Cabinet £m	Change £m
Adult Social Care	28.9	28.5	-0.4	0.3	-0.7
Health, Education & Social Care Commissioning	6.9	6.3	-0.7	-0.3	-0.4
Business Support Service	1.2	1.1	-0.1	0.0	-0.1
Pooled Budgets	211.9	209.2	-2.7	-4.2	1.5
Total Adult Services	**249.0**	**245.1**	**- 3.9**	**- 4.2**	**0.3**

Pooled Budgets

17. Pooled Budgets are reporting an underspend of £2.7m (-1.3%).

18. Budgets allocated for risk, demography and inflationary related pressures within the pooled budgets in 2024/25 were £20.8m, -£18.1m was directly allocated to the pools to cover demographic and inflationary pressures. £2.7m earmarked for in-year risk was not required as all further pressures arising during the financial year were managed within the existing budget.

   Age Well Pooled Budget

19. The Age Well combines health and social care expenditure on care homes, activity relating to hospital avoidance and prevention and early support activities for older people. Budgets within the pool are managed on an aligned basis with the Integrated Care Board (ICB) for Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire, and Berkshire West (BOB).

20. The council's share of the Better Care Fund (BCF) utilised within the pool is £31.1m in 2024/25, an increase of 5.66% from 2023/24. Age Well is reporting a breakeven position. The position assumes that all savings are delivered.

   - The Reablement and Discharge to Assess service has seen a managed significant increase in activity during 2024/25. Numbers increased by 27% from an average of 437 per month in 2023/24 to an average of 555 per month in 2024/25. This investment has benefited the wider system, moving people out of hospital earlier whilst ensuring they receive the correct level of care. This has resulted in an increased cost of £4.8m

- Care Homes have seen a 14% reduction in the level of activity during 2024/25 resulting in a £3.6m underspend. This aligns to our Oxfordshire Way strategy, helping to support more people to live independently at home
- Support at Home are reporting a £1.0m overspend primarily reflecting an increase in equipment, supported living and direct payments.
- The overall £2.2m pressure within the Age Well pool has been offset from within the risk budget as mentioned in paragraph 18 in this report

Live Well Pooled Budget

21. The Live Well pool supports a mix of health and social care needs for adults of working age with learning disabilities, acquired brain injury or mental health needs and adults with physical disabilities.

22. Budgets within the pool are managed on an aligned basis with the Integrated Care Board (ICB) for Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire, and Berkshire West (BOB).

23. The Live Well pool is reporting a breakeven position for 2024/25.
    - The High Functioning Autism budgets saw unexpected in year pressures due to activity levels which led to a £2.3m overspend. The number of supported people increased by 59 during 2024/2025 which represents a 64% increase which created this pressure.
    - Learning Disabilities budget is reporting a £0.4m overspend, this primarily related to the high costs of voids for supported living placements
    - Physical Disabilities are reporting a £0.7m overspend highlighting an increase in Home Support activity. On average the number of people supported increased by 25 over the year 2024/2025.
    - The overall £3.4m pressure within the Live Well pool has been offset from within the risk budget as detailed in paragraph 18 in this report.

Non-Pool Services

24. An underspend of £1.1m is reported across all other services.

25. Adult Social Care underspend is reported as £0.5m. This was a result of one off funding being utilised in 2024/25 to support safeguarding. The service area benefitted from increased Deputyship Management fees agreed by the Office of Public Guardian with effect from April 2024, which are contributing to savings from 2025/26.

26. Health Education and Social Care commissioning reported an underspend of £0.6m. This is a result of vacant posts held throughout the year and one-off additional funding received.

Savings

27. The 2024/25 budget included planned savings of £4.3m. 98%, £4.2m of savings were delivered. There was also £0.3m of savings brought forward from 2023/24 to be delivered in 2024/25 which was fully delivered.

Investments

28. A total one-off investment of £1.2m was made into the Adult Social Care budget in 2024/25. £0.1m was spent in-year on digital projects to support practitioners to make better use of data. £0.4m has been committed to be spent on further digital innovations in 2025/26. The remaining £0.7m has been returned to corporate reserves to fund other council priorities.

Reserves

Adult Services	Balance at 31 March 2024	Movement	Balance at 31 March 2025
Held within Grants and Contributions reserve:	-£0.5m	£0.1m	-£0.4m
Held within Government Initiatives reserve:	-£0.1m	£0.0m	-£0.1m
Held within Trading Accounts reserve:	-£0.0m	£0.0m	-£0.0m
Held within Capital & Equipment reserves:	-£0.1m	£0.0m	-£0.1m
Held within Budget Priorities reserve:	-£1.9m	-£3.6m	-£5.5m
Overall Service area earmarked reserves	**-£2.7m**	**-£3.4m**	**-£6.1m**

29. The Grants and Contributions reserve held the Apprenticeship funding and Accelerated Reform Funds grants,

   - £0.3m of Apprenticeship funding was held within the grants and contributions reserve, this funding was awarded to the council late in Feb 2024 to increase social work capacity within adult social care, £0.240m was used in 2024/25. The remaining £60,000 will be returned to the Department of Health & Social Care in 2025/26. Noting the positive impact of the recruitment campaign, 300 applications were received for social work apprenticeships, from which 8 were appointed.

   - £0.2m Accelerated Reform Fund, funding awarded in Jan 2024 to cover a period up until March 2025. New funding was received in 2024/25 of £0.3m. This has been used in 2024/25 to expand development of community-based housing and care models, improve support of unpaid carers and encouraging people to live well by improving promotion of existing services. There was £0.1m unspent, which has been allocated to the reserve to continue to support this work in 2025/26.

30. £0.1m was held in the Government Initiative Reserve, £40,000 was used in 2024/25 with balance to be used in 2025/26.

31. The Budget Priorities reserve retains a number of specific allocations for Adults Services and other Service Areas. The reserve started the year at £1.9m and moved in year by £3.6m. Here are the specific allocations relating to Adults Services:

- £1.0m was held in the budget priorities reserve for Adult Social Care at April 2024. This will be used in 2025/26 for refurbishments to supported living units and to support the accommodation workstream within the new Mental Health contract.

- There has been an additional contribution to the budget priorities reserve of £3.0m in 2024/25, this is being held to support complex service delivery and demographic growth within social care.

- £0.6m was held because of additional contributions made by the ICB in previous years, £0.3m was used on agreed projects in 2024/25 and a further £0.3m will be used in 2025/26 as agreed with the Joint Commissioning Executive.

- As the Supervisory Body the council has a statutory obligation to assess and authorise Deprivation of Liberty Safeguarding (DoLS) requests. Due to the delay in implementation by Central Government additional investment was required to manage ongoing demand. £0.4m that was held in reserve was utilised in 2024/25 to meet the statutory obligations. An additional base budget has been allocated for future years to manage the demand.

- DWP have allocated a non-ringfenced grant of £0.1m to support Connect To Work activity within Adult Social Care in 2024/25 and 2025/26. This has been temporarily transferred to the Budget Priorities reserve.

Government Grants

32. As set out in Annex B-4, ring-fenced government grants received by the directorate in 2024/25 total £22.2m.

- Improved Better Care Fund Grant is £10.7m in 2024/25, with no change since 2023/24. The conditions attached to the grant funding require it to be used for the purposes of meeting adult social care needs, including contributing to the stabilisation of local care markets and supporting the NHS is addressing pressures such as delayed discharges.

- Market Sustainability and Improvement Fund is £10.0m and has been used to support the provider fee uplift in 2024/25 in line with the terms of the grant, to enhance the uplift, and to maintain uplifts from 2023/24 funded through the Market Sustainability and Fair Cost of Care grant which now forms part of this grant.

- Adult Social Care Discharge Fund is £2.5m which has been used to provide interventions that improve discharge of patients from hospital to the most appropriate location for their ongoing care.

Children's Services (General Fund)

33. Children's Services overspent by £0.1m against a budget of £202.1m. The final position has improved by £1.2m compared to the January 2025 forecast.

Service Area	Final Budget £m	Total Spend £m	Year end Variance £m	Variance March Cabinet £m	Change £m
Education & Learning	54.7	55.1	0.4	1.0	-0.6
Schools	0.2	0.0	-0.2	0.0	-0.2
Subtotal Education	**54.9**	**55.1**	**0.2**	**1.0**	**-0.8**
Children's Social care	133.2	131.4	-1.8	-1.5	-0.3
Safeguarding, Quality Assurance, Partnerships and Improvement	5.6	4.6	-1.1	-0.7	-0.3
Children's Social care	138.8	136.0	-2.8	-2.3	-0.5
Children's Services Central Costs	8.4	11.2	2.7	2.6	0.1
Subtotal Children's Social Care & Central costs	**147.2**	**142.1**	**-0.1**	**0.3**	**-0.4**
Total Children's Services	**202.1**	**202.3**	**0.1**	**1.3**	**-1.2**

Education

34. Education Services and Schools overspent by £0.2m against a budget of £54.9m. Within this total, the overspend of £0.4m for Education & Learning was offset by an underspend on Schools of £0.2m. In total this represents a net decrease of £0.8m compared to the previously reported position. This is due to lower than expected expenditure on Home to School Transport.

Children's Social Care & Central costs

35. Children's Social Care and Central Costs underspent by £0.1m against a budget of £147.2m. Children's Social Care underspent by £2.8m, which was offset by an overspend of £2.7m for Children's Services Central Costs. In total this represents a net decrease of £0.3m compared to the previously reported position, which is attributable to prudent forecasts on demand-led budgets not being fully met by placement activity in the final months of the year.

36. The latest activity for Children's Social Care, related to Children We Care For is shown below:

	Q2 2022/23	Q4 2022/23	Q2 2023/24	Q4 2023/24	Q2 2024/25	Q3 2024/25	Q4 2024/25
Oxfordshire born children	778	735	677	624	643	650	655
Disabled children	61	58	51	49	43	45	48
Sub Total	839	793	728	673	686	695	703
Unaccompanied	69	108	94	95	99	100	90
Total	908	901	822	768	785	795	789

37. Children's Social Care are continuing to manage demand. The number of cared for children for during 2024/25, excluding Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children, has continued to broadly stabilise at around the 700 level. This is in line with the numbers forecast for the budget in 2024/25.

Reserves

Children's Services	Balance at 31 March 2024	Movement	Balance at 31 March 2025
Schools reserves	-£13.1m	£2.4m	-£10.7m
Held within Grants & Contributions reserve:	-£3.2m	-£1.0m	-£4.2m
Held within Government Initiatives reserve:	-£1.3m	-£2.7m	-£4.0m
Held within Partnership reserve:	-£0.2m	-£0.1m	-£0.3m
Held within Trading Accounts reserve:	-£0.0m	-£0.1m	-£0.1m
Held within Capital & Equipment Reserves:	-£0.2m	£0.1m	-£0.0m
Held within Budget Priorities reserve:	-£0.1m	-£1.0m	-£1.1m
Overall Service area earmarked reserves	**-£18.2m**	**-£2.3m**	**-£20.5m**

38. Total directorate earmarked reserves are £20.5m and have increased by £2.3m during the financial year. £10.7m of the total relates to school balances which have decreased by £2.4m in the year. The movement relates to

- £1.4m – Schools balances that started as a surplus at the beginning of the year but deteriorated to deficits. Resolution actions are being implemented.
- £1.2m – School that have converted to academies and their balances transferred out from reserves.
- Offset by £0.2m other schools contributing movements.

39. Grants and Contributions reserve and Government Initiatives mainly relate to ringfenced grants and that are expected to be spent in future years.

Grants

40. As set out in Annex B-4, ring-fenced government grants received by Children's Services in 2024/25 totalled £339.9m.

Savings

41. The 2024/25 budget included savings of £12.3m, offset by a risk adjustment budget of £4.1m, because of the scale of the original savings target, to give net budgeted savings of £8.2m. Actual delivery of savings achieved in year was £7.1m. The resulting net unachieved savings total was £1.1m.

Investments

42. The 2024/25 budget included investments of £6.4m. Actual spend against investments was £1.7m, with an additional £0.5m transferred to the budget priorities reserve to be applied to investment delivery planned in future years. The total planned underspend against investments was £4.1m, due to prudent budget management of the overall budget, savings delivery risk and the demand-led challenges within placement budgets.

Childrens' Services (Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG))

43. For High Needs DSG there was an in-year deficit of £36.5m. This was £15.3m greater than the £21.2m deficit agreed by Council in February 2024.

44. Variations against the Dedicated Schools Grant blocks are summarised in the table below.

Summary of DSG funding	2024/25 Final Budget £m	2024/25 Outturn £m	Variance at P12 £m	Variance at P10 £m
Schools block	126.8	126.8	0.0	0.0
Central Services Schools block	5.2	5.3	0.1	0.0
High Needs block	89.5	125.9	36.5	31.9
Early Years block	80.2	78.2	-2.0	0.0
Total	**301.6**	**336.2**	**34.6**	**31.9**

45. The cost of providing education is met from the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG). Over the last ten years, the DSG allocation for 2014/15 for the High Needs block was £50.1m, whilst the latest allocation, adjusted for recoupment, deductions and direct funding, for 2024/25 is £89.5m. Some of the key issues impacting on High Needs DSG spend in 2024/25 were the cost of placements from September 2024, tribunal challenges to placement decisions, and the impact of inflation on providers' fees.

46. Due to exponential growth in the number of Education, Health, and Care Plans (EHCPs), and their cost, in comparison to the funding allocated by Government, the forecast deficit continues to grow at a more material rate than local measures can currently mitigate the impact. The deficit compared to DSG funding for High Needs is £36.5m in 2024/25.

47. Early Years DSG is underspent due to lower than anticipated hours of early years education being funded.

Reserve

48. The CIPFA code of practice requires negative High Needs DSG balances to be held in an unusable reserve. The in-year deficit has increased the cumulative negative High Needs DSG balance held in this reserve from £55.8m as at 31 March 2024 to £92.3m at 31 March 2025.

Environment & Highways

49. Environment & Highways overspent by £0.8m against a budget of £53.5m. The overspend has increased by £0.6m compared to the January 2025 forecast.

Service Area	Final Budget £m	Total Spend £m	Year end Variance £m	Variance March Cabinet £m	Change £m
Transport, Property & Infrastructure Delivery	1.8	1.1	-0.7	0.0	-0.7
Countryside & Waste	34.8	35.4	0.6	0.0	0.6
Business Support	0.4	0.2	-0.2	0.0	-0.2
Highways & Maintenance	21.4	20.8	-0.6	-1.6	1.0
Network Management	-6.2	-4.4	1.8	1.8	0.0
Senior Management	1.3	1.2	-0.1	0.0	-0.1
Total Environment & Highways	**53.5**	**54.3**	**0.8**	**0.2**	**0.6**

Transport, Property & Infrastructure delivery

50. The underspend of £0.7m is due to increased capitalisation of programme management costs that have resulted in further savings.

Countryside & Waste

51. Countryside & Waste overspent by £0.6m, largely driven by an overspend in Waste. Over the year, and in line with national trends, there has continued to be a reduction in tonnes of waste recycled and composted, but an increase in tonnes of waste recovered or disposed. Due to recovery and disposal being more expensive than recycling and composting this has increased costs.

52. A saving of £0.2m related to the unsorted waste scheme at the Household Waste Recycling Centres was not delivered within the financial year due to progress being slower than planned. However, the scheme is expected to have an effect in 2025/26. The table below details the waste tonnage trends at the end of the financial year:

Waste Stream	Budget				Outturn				Variance Analysis		
	Annual	Tonnage		Price/ Tonne	Annual	Tonnage		Price/ Tonne	Tonnage	Price	Total
	£	Tonnes	%	£	£	Tonnes	%	£	£	£	£
Recycling/	8,362	175	60.1%	47.86	8,140	152	55.9%	53.61	-1,095.00	873.00	-222.00
ERF	16,167	105	36.1%	154.41	17,201	112	41.2%	153.49	1,137.00	-103.00	1,034.00
Landfill	1,624	11	3.8%	149.30	1,288	8	2.9%	165.64	-463.00	127.00	-336.00
Total	**26,153**	**291**	**100%**	**90.09**	**26,629**	**272**	**100%**	**98.02**	**-421.00**	**897.00**	**476.00**
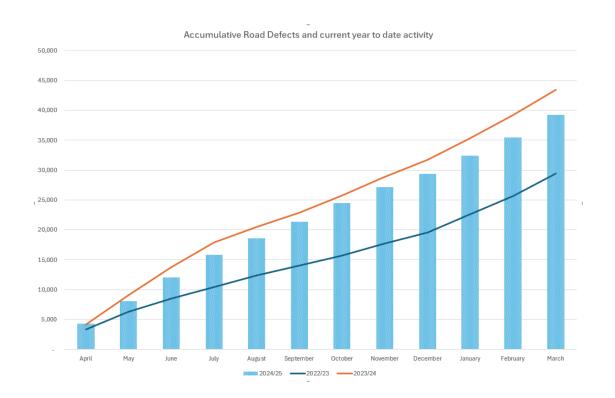
Business Support

53. The Business support service underspent by £0.2m due to staff vacancies throughout the year.

Highways & Maintenance

54. The Highway & Maintenance service underspent by £0.6m. This reflects energy cost changes for streetlighting, which have remained quite volatile, and over-achievement of energy reduction from the LED street lighting project, resulting in overall energy costs being reduced during the year.

55. Furthermore, there was a significant amount of capital work carried out through the highways maintenance contract. The revenue funding released as a result of this was utilised in mitigating additional spend on maintenance, mitigating costs of defects & incidents, and gully emptying.

56. The last year saw a significant increase in the number of defects on the network. This can be attributable to the wet and cold weather patterns. Initial budgets and forecasts are based on previous and in year trends and insights. - the level of defects experienced within the last quarter of the year was greater than expected or planned for; consequently contributed to the pressure.

Accumulative Road Defects and current year to date activity

57. There were further unplanned and unforeseen pressures in winter maintenance. The reasons for this include a 20% increase in the number of gritting runs and salt costs and as a result of the increased "wet" winter in 2024/25. An additional unexpected cost also was incurred by having to remove the residual salt from Deddington depot to allow for the construction of the new salt barn.

58. As part of the cost reconciliation at the end of the previous highways maintenance contract, there were costs that were not accounted. Other ancillary costs such as gritter insurance, weather forecasting service and upgrades to the forecasting infrastructure all added to the cost increase from that which was originally expected.

Network Management

59. Network Management overspent by £1.7m. The level of income was higher than expected and helped to mitigate service pressures. Demand to work on the highway network in Oxfordshire still remains but the service's ability to charge fines for non-compliance is determined by the Department for Transport (DfT) - this is currently being reviewed. A decision on the lane rental scheme is awaited. The on-going impact was considered as part of the 2025/26 budget.

60. Parking income has remained steady but has been impacted by changes in use and demand for parking in Oxford city centre and will need to be assessed carefully in coming years.

61. The lane rental scheme requires approval from a number of Government agencies and departments such as Department for Transport, Natural England, DEFRA and Homes England. The approval has been delayed consequently delaying implementation. Another parking scheme is the implementation of proposed new Civil Enforcement Controlled Parking Zones (CPZ). These also have been deferred. Both schemes have impacted on the level of revenue generation. Incidentally the existing schemes have generated higher than budgeted income and compensated for the delayed schemes.

Grants

62. Budgeted grants and contributions for the year were £0.3m. There were further grant contributions of £0.2m of grant funding Natural England. The overall grant income for Environment & Highways was £0.5m.

Reserves

63. Drawdowns from various reserves in Environment and Highways totaled of £4.8m. This was mainly from the Parking account as set out below and funding to support countryside initiatives.

E&H	Balance at 31 March 2024	Movement	Balance at 31 March 2025
Held within Partnership reserve:	-£1.8m	£0.4m	-£1.4m
Held within Grants & Contributions reserve:	-£4.5m	£3.5m	-£1.0m
Zero Emissions Zone	-£1.2m	-£0.3m	-£1.5m
Parking Account	-£6.5m	£1.2m	-£5.3m
Overall Service area earmarked reserves	**-£14.0m**	**£4.8m**	**-£9.3m**

64. Parking Account Reserves - Expenditure and income relating to parking is required to be transacted through the parking account. In accordance with Section 55(4) of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984, the Cabinet is required to approve that any surplus from the parking account can be carried forward to support infrastructure and maintenance in future years. After taking into account net income of £2.9m and a £4.1m contribution to the revenue budget a net drawdown of £1.2m has been made from the reserve as planned. This contribution is primarily to be held for the benefit of the Highways Infrastructure and Parking Account to fund future drawdowns.

65. Zero Emission Zone funding is ringfenced in accordance with the Transport Act 2000 which requires that revenue generated by the scheme to be used to cover the cost of the scheme's operation with the net proceeds to be applied to facilitate the achievement of the Council's local transport policies contained in its Local Transport Plan. £0.3m has been added to the Zero Emission Zone reserve. This funding is required to be shared with Oxford City Council.

Economy & Place

66. Economy & Place underspent by £0.3m against a budget of £16.9m.

Service Area	Final Budget £m	Total Spend £m	Year end Variance £m	Variance March Cabinet £m	Change £m
Place Shaping	16.2	16.1	-0.1	0.0	-0.1
Future Economy	0.1	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.0
Regulatory Planning & Enforcement	-2.3	-2.4	-0.1	0.2	0.1
Climate Action	1.2	1.1	-0.1	0.0	-0.1
Enterprise Oxfordshire (OxLEP)	0.1	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.0
Innovation	0.3	0.3	0.0	0.0	0.0
Senior Management Team	0.8	0.9	0.1	0.0	0.1
Service Improvement	0.5	0.4	-0.1	0.0	-0.1
Total	**16.9**	**16.7**	**-0.3**	**0.2**	**-0.5**

67. The **Place Shaping service** area underspent by £0.1m. Local Plan modelling has put pressure on the Place Planning areas along with the development of key priority projects including the impact of speculative development and major infrastructure in the county. Some projects within Transport policy came in lower than expected leaving some surplus to be used in other areas. The projects awarded from the 2024/25 budget are underway but had to be reprofiled as with all projects development of the schemes needed less funding than delivery.

68. **Regulatory Planning & Enforcement** underspent by £0.1m due to a small underspend in Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA) services, although the bulk of investment in LLFA has been utilised, a small proportion of this was not along with other minor underspends in the wider service area.

69. **Climate Change** reported a small underspend position of -£0.1m due to unfilled vacancies throughout the year.

70. The overspend of £0.1m in the **Senior management team** area relates to the allocation of funding for redundancy costs between services.

71. Service improvement service is underspent by £0.1m, due to a greater allocation of staff time to capital schemes and projects.

Reserves

E&P	Balance at 31 March 2024	Movement	Balance at 31 March 2025
Held within Partnership reserve:	£0.0m	-£0.0m	-£0.0m
Held within Government Initiatives reserve:	-£0.6m	-£0.7m	-£1.3m
Held within Grants & Contributions reserve:	-£7.6m	£0.3m	-£7.4m
Overall Service area earmarked reserves	**-£8.2m**	**-£0.4m**	**-£8.7m**

72. Drawdowns from various reserves held by Economy and Place services totalled £1.9m and were mainly used to support digital infrastructure projects. There was also smaller drawdown to planning obligations services through developer contributions.

73. The services have also contributed a total of £1.3m into developer contributions reserve to support planning initiatives and growth across the county in the future years.

Government Grants

74. Budgeted grants and contributions for the year amounted to £6.2m. Within the year additional £0.8m was received for 2024/25 in relation to Innovation. Total Government grants were £7.0m

Public Health and Communities

75. Public Health and Communities overspent by £0.1m at the end of 2024/25.

Service Area	Final Budget £m	Total Spend £m	Year end Variance £m	Variance March Cabinet £m	Change £m
Public Health Functions	36.7	37.8	-0.9	-0.6	0.3
Public Health Recharges	0.6	0.6	0.0	0.0	0.0
Grant Income	-34.4	-35.0	-0.6	0.0	0.0
Transfer to Public Health reserve	0.0	1.3	1.3	0.6	-0.7
Total Public Health	**4.8**	**4.7**	**-0.1**	**0.0**	**-0.1**
Libraries and Heritage	**8.1**	**8.3**	**0.2**	**0.2**	**0.0**
Total Public Health & Communities	**12.9**	**13.0**	**0.1**	**0.2**	**-0.1**

Public Health

76. For services covered by the Public Health Grant, a break-even position is reported. Public Health Services funded by the council underspent by £0.1m. Notable changes are:

- NHS Health Check underspent by £0.1m (20%) linked to lower-than-expected Health Checkup-take throughout 2024/25. This service has been slower to recover activity levels since the pandemic.
- Substance misuse projects underspent by £0.1m (0.6%) due to lower than expected activity in residential treatment.
- Tobacco services underspent by £0.1m due to some services now being funded through the ring-fenced stop smoking grant.
- Other Public Health services are underspent by £0.3m as a result of delayed and unspent activity in Research, Insight and Healthy Place Shaping. £0.1m of Healthy Place Shaping underspend has been earmarked for 2025/26.

77. Within that a £0.7m underspend has been transferred to the Public Health reserve. Additional funding allocated to Public Health for Agenda for Change in 2024/25 to support health commissioned services has also been transferred to reserves (£0.6m) and is committed in 2025/26.

Libraries & Heritage

78. Libraries & Heritage overspent by £0.2m. The Home Library Service overspent by £0.1m, and the Bookstart and Early Years Programme by £0.1m. These are ongoing operational pressures that will be funded in 2025/26. Branch libraries had pressures of £0.2m which were managed by reducing spend within Stock and Reader Services.

Reserves

Public Health	Balance at 31 March 2024	Movement	Balance at 31 March 2025
Held within Grants and Contributions reserve:			
Public Health Grant reserve	-£4.5m	-£0.1m	-£4.6m
Other public Health grants reserves	-£0.1m	£0.1m	-£0.1m
Public Health reserves	-£4.6m	-£0.1m	-£4.7m
History Service Donations reserve	-£0.0m	-£0.0m	-£0.0m
Oxfordshire Museum Donations reserve	-£0.1m	£0.0m	-£0.1m
Communities reserves	-£4.8m	-£0.0m	-£4.8m
Held within Government Initiatives reserve:			
Public Health Grant reserve	-£1.1m	-£0.1m	-£1.2m
Overall Service area earmarked reserves	**-£5.9m**	**-£0.1m**	**-£6.1m**

79. £1.4m was drawn down from the Public Health Grant reserve to support one – off planned expenditure during the year. £0.7m unspent funding was added at the end of 2024/25. An additional contribution of £0.6m for Agenda for Change was also added to the reserve and is allocated to workstreams in 2025/26 resulting in a closing balance of £4.6m.

Government Grants

80. Public Health and Communities received ringfenced grants for:
   - £35.0m for Public Health which includes an additional £0.6m Agenda for Change uplift to support health commissioned services.
   - £0.8m Stop Smoking Services Grant to increase the number of smokers engaging with effective interventions to quit smoking. £0.1m was unspent in 2024/25; this will continue to support projects in 2025/26.

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

Oxfordshire Fire & Rescue Service and Community Safety (OFRS&CS)

82. Oxfordshire Fire & Rescue Service and Community Safety overspent by a £0.6m against a budget of £28.9m.

Service Area	Final Budget £m	Total Spend £m	Year end Variance £m	Variance March Cabinet £m	Change £m
Community Safety Management	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Fire & Rescue	27.1	27.9	0.8	0.7	0.1
Emergency Planning	0.3	0.3	0.0	0.0	0.0
Trading Standards	1.5	1.3	-0.2	-0.1	-0.1
Total OFRS & CS	**28.9**	**29.5**	**0.6**	**0.6**	**0.0**

83. Fire and Rescue overspent by £0.8m mainly due to staffing savings that it was not possible to achieve. This is partially offset by vacancy management in Trading Standards.

Reserves

OFRS	Balance at 31 March 2024	Movement	Balance at 31 March 2025	
Held within Grants and Contributions Reserve:				
Home Office - Building Risk/Fire Uplift Grant	-£0.4m	£0.2m	-£0.3m	
Home Office - Building Risk Review Grant . Fire Uplift Grant	-£0.1m	£0.1m	£0.0m	
OFRS Grants & Contributions Reserve	-£0.2m	£0.0m	-£0.2m	Note 1
Fire & Rescue Capital & Equipment reserves	-£0.7m	£0.2m	-£0.5m	
Held within Capital & Equipment Reserves:				
Breathing Apparatus Equipment	-£0.2m	£0.0m	-£0.2m	
F&RS Communications Fund	-£2.9m	£0.7m	-£2.3m	Note 2
F&RS Vehicles Reserve	-£0.7m	£0.0m	-£0.6m	Note 3
Fire & Rescue Capital & Equipment reserves	-£3.9m	£0.8m	-£3.1m	
Overall Service area earmarked reserves	**-£4.5m**	**£1.0m**	**-£3.6m**	

Note 1: Fire Uplift Grant reserve. This is to fund employee costs expected to be incurred over the next 2 years.

Note 2: Cover the cost of the replacement of Airwave for Oxfordshire Fire and Rescue Service and the implementation of the new national Emergency Service Mobile Communications Programme.

Note 3: Renewal of fire and rescue vehicles and breathing apparatus equipment. A fleet replacement strategy has been developed, and several vehicles have been ordered. The reserve is expected to be fully utilised by 2025/26

Government Grants

84. OFRS&CS received un-ringfenced grants for:

- £0.1m Firelink Grant - The council has been notified that no funding is available for 2025/26.

Resources and Law & Governance

85. The services within Resources and Law & Governance overspent by £1.5m against a budget of £59.8m.

Service Area	Final Budget £m	Total Spend £m	Year end Variance £m	Variance March Cabinet £m	Change £m
Property & Assets	21.7	21.5	-0.2	-0.1	-0.1
Corporate Services	10.0	11.0	1.0	0.9	0.1
Financial & Commercial Services	9.7	10.0	0.3	0.3	0.0
Law, Governance, Coroner & Registration Services	9.1	9.5	0.4	0.5	-0.1
HR & Cultural Change	5.1	5.0	-0.1	-0.2	0.1
Public Affairs, Policy & Partnership	4.2	4.2	0.0	0.0	0.0
Total Resources	**59.8**	**61.2**	**1.5**	**1.3**	**0.2**

Note: all numbers in all tables have been rounded - which may cause a casting difference

86. **Property & Assets Services** underspent by £0.2m. All savings were fully delivered.

87. Overspend of £1.0m within **Corporate Services** was due to previously agreed savings of £0.9m which were held corporately offset by reductions in costs related to IT expenditure across the organisation.

88. **Financial & Commercial Services** overspent by £0.3m because of a requirement for agency staff to cover vacancies and under achievement of income in procurement. The on-going impact of the latter has been addressed as part of the budget for 2025/26.

89. **Law, Governance, Coroners & Registration Services** overspent by £0.4m as a result of high locum costs in the Legal service where recruitment continues to be a challenge.

90. **Human Resources & Organisational Development (HR&OD)** underspent by £0.1m due to staff seconded to transformation projects. All savings have been fully delivered.

91. **Public Affairs, Policy & Partnership services** report a breakeven position. All savings and investments have been fully delivered.

Reserves

Resources	Balance at 31 March 2024	Movement	Balance at 31 March 2025
Held within Grants and Contributions reserve:			
Contain Outbreak Management Fund	-£0.0m	£0.0m	£0.0m
One Public Estate	-£0.4m	£0.1m	-£0.3m
Resources reserves	-£0.4m	£0.1m	-£0.3m
Held within Funding for Risk reserves:			
Council Elections	-£0.6m	-£0.2m	-£0.7m
Held within Budget Priorities reserve:			
JUA R&M Reserves	-£0.2m	-£0.3m	-£0.5m
Food Strategy	-£0.3m	£0.3m	£0.0m
Councillors' Priority Fund	-£0.7m	£0.6m	-£0.1m
Resources reserves	-£1.1m	£0.6m	-£0.5m
Overall Service area earmarked reserves	**-£2.1m**	**£0.5m**	**-£1.6m**

Government Grants

92. Resources and Law & Governance received ringfenced grant for:

- £6.7m Household Support Fund was received in 2024/25 - The grant is to provide support to households, who would otherwise struggle to buy food or pay essential utility bills or meet other essential living costs or housing costs (in exceptional cases of genuine emergency) and to promote or undertake activity that prevents households facing similar hardship in future. The fund is administered and paid in arrears to the district and city councils.

Transformation, Digital & Customer Experience (TDCE)

93. The services within TDCE overspent by £0.8m against a budget of £8.2m.

Service Area	Final Budget £m	Total Spend £m	Year end Variance £m	Variance March Cabinet £m	Change £m
Transformation & Digital	3.1	4.0	0.9	1.0	(0.1)
Customer Experience	3.6	3.6	0.0	0.0	0.0
Data	0.7	0.7	0.0	0.0	0.0
Management & Others	0.8	0.7	(0.1)	0.0	(0.1)
Total TDCE	8.2	9.0	0.7	1.0	(0.3)

Note: all numbers in all tables have been rounded - which may cause a casting difference

94. Transformation & Digital services overspent by £0.9m, primarily due to savings now expected to be delivered in 2025/26.

95. Customer Experience broke even compared to the budget and 100% of savings are delivered.

96. Management & Others underspent by £0.1m.

Reserves

TDCE	Balance at 31 March 2024	Movement	Balance at 31 March 2025
Held within Corporate Priorities reserves:			
Transformation reserve	-£1.8m	-£5.6m	-£7.5m
Held within Budget Priorities reserve:			
Community Hub	-£0.4m	£0.1m	-£0.4m
24/25 Investment - Oxfordshire Way	£0.0m	-£0.5m	-£0.5m
TDCE reserves	-£0.4m	-£0.4m	-£0.9m
Overall Service area earmarked reserves	**-£2.3m**	**-£6.1m**	**-£8.3m**

Medium Term Financial Strategy Savings

97. The 2024/25 budget includes planned services savings of £30.1m. This was offset by a budgeted risk adjustment of £4.1m added to reflect risks around the achievement of savings for Children's Services. The overall savings have been adjusted accordingly.

98. Undelivered savings for 2024/25 total £6.0m (25%, if based on original target of £30.1m – 34%) . This is mainly due to:

   - £1.1m Children Services staffing, agency staff, contract savings and placements
   - £2.2m in Environment & Highways related to delays in the introduction of Lane rental charges.
   - £0.7m in Environment & Highways relating to waste and other income generation targets.
   - £1.1m Delivering the Future Together savings target implementation delays.

Service Areas	2024/25 Planned Savings	Actual delivery	Unachieved savings
Adult Services	-£4.3m	-£4.2m	-£0.1m
Children's Services	-£8.2m	-£7.1m	-£1.1m
Environment & Highways	-£8.1m	-£4.8m	-£3.3m
Economy and Place	-£1.0m	-£1.0m	£0.0m
Public Health & Communities	-£0.5m	-£0.5m	£0.0m
Fire & Rescue Service and Community Safety	-£0.5m	-£0.2m	-£0.3m
Resources and Law & Governance	-£1.9m	-£1.8m	-£0.1m
Transformation, Digital & Customer Experience	-£1.5m	-£0.5m	-£1.1m
TOTAL	**-£26.0m**	**-£20.0m**	**-£6.0m**

Adult Services

99. The 2024/25 budget included planned savings of £4.3m. 98% of these savings have been delivered. Undeliverable savings relate to an action to reduce the outstanding unsecured debt.

Children's Services

100. The 2024/25 budget included savings of £12.3m, offset by a risk adjustment budget of £4.1m due to the ambitious scale of the original savings targets, to give net budgeted savings of £8.2m. Actual delivery of savings achieved in year was £7.1m. The resulting net unachieved savings total was £1.1m

<u>Environment & Highways</u>

101. The 2024/25 budget includes planned savings of £8.1m. 65% has been delivered. Savings that have been partially delivered or not delivered include:

- Lane rental: the introduction of charges for all works on the roads at the busiest times to minimise disruption was expected to generate £2.2m in 2024/25. A delay in approval for the scheme means that the scheme cannot be implemented until 2025/26. The impact of the delay was considered as part of the budget for 2025/26.
- Income of £0.2m from introduction of a new Controlled Parking Zones: Income realisation is likely to be between December and March through a mix of permit fees and fines
- Savings of £0.2m through prevention of unsorted waste at the Household Waste Recycling Centres achieved in 2024/25 due to contractual and operational complications of progressing with the scheme within the timeframe originally hoped.   Work is on-going to achieve this in 2025/26.

<u>Oxfordshire Fire & Rescue Service and Community Safety</u>

102. The 2024/25 budget includes planned savings of £0.5m. 46% are delivered. £0.3m of staffing savings allocated to the service are undelivered.

<u>Resources</u>

103. The 2024/25 budget includes planned savings of £1.9m. 98% of these were delivered.

<u>Transformation, Digital & Customer Experience</u>

104. The 2024/25 budget includes planned savings of £1.5m. 36% of these were delivered. Delayering staffing savings of £1.5m that need to be achieved across the council are currently being held in the Transformation service. Budgets for senior managers have been adjusted to reflect the new structure implemented during the year. £0.6m of the £1.5m savings have been achieved following the completion of the Tiers 3 and 4 delayering in late 2024.

Medium Term Financial Strategy Investments

105. The 2024/25 budget also includes planned service areas investments of £11.6m. £4.5m (39%) has been spent on planned programmes of work and £1.8m (16%) is now expected to be spent in 2025/26. This is proposed to be temporarily transferred to the Budget Priorities Reserve. Of the £5.3m (46%) released investments, £4.1m was approved to support service pressures.

Service Areas	2024/25 Planned Investments	2024/25 Actual	Rephased to 2025/26	Overall Position	Investments released
Adult Services	£1.2m	£0.1m	£0.7m	£0.7m	£0.5m
Children's Services	£6.4m	£1.7m	£0.5m	£2.2m	£4.1m
Environment & Highways	£2.2m	£1.6m	£0.0m	£1.6m	£0.6m
Economy and Place	£0.7m	£0.5m	£0.0m	£0.5m	£0.1m
Resources and Law & Governance	£0.6m	£0.5m	£0.1m	£0.6m	£0.0m
Transformation, Digital & Customer Experience	£0.5m	£0.0m	£0.5m	£0.5m	£0.0m
TOTAL	**£11.6m**	**£4.5m**	**£1.8m**	**£6.3m**	**£5.3m**

Adult Services

106. Planned one – off investments of £1.2m were agreed as part of the 2024/25 budget. £0.7m has been carried forward to be delivered in 2025/26

Children's Services

107. The 2024/25 budget included investments of £6.4m. Actual spend against investments was £1.7m and £0.5m carried forward to be applied to investment delivery planned in future years. The total planned underspend against investments was £4.1m, due to prudent budget management of the overall budget, savings delivery risk and the demand-led challenges within placement budgets.

108. Underspends against investments are offsetting the balance of unachieved 2024/25 savings, as well as prior-year unachieved savings which have been permanently addressed as part of the 2025/26 budget.

109. Notable and planned underspends against investments in 2024/25 included:

Service Areas	2024/25 Planned Investments	Delivery in 24/25	Transfer to 25/26	Unspent	
Additional capacity in the SEND service	£1.5m	£1.1m		£0.4m	
Extend the Family Safeguarding model to reduce demand	£0.9m	£0.1m		£0.8m	*
Recruitment & Retention Strategy	£1.0m	£0.2m		£0.8m	
Home to School Transport to improve data and systems and increase independent travel	£0.8m	£0.0m		£0.8m	*
Digital innovation to assist customer pathways and user experience in information finding and advice	£0.5m	£0.1m		£0.4m	*
Develop the Oxfordshire Way approach	£0.4m	£0.0m		£0.4m	
Other investments (Family services, Foster Care and technological improvement)	£1.3m	£0.9m	£0.5m	£0.4m	
TOTAL	**£6.4m**	**£1.8m**	**£0.5m**	**£4.1m**	

Environment & Highways

110. The 2024/25 budget includes planned investments of £2.2m. 72% have been delivered. Investments that have not been delivered include:

- £0.2m in introduction of a new Controlled Parking Zones: Network and coordination service is currently working on CPZ programme prioritisation. The service reports that New CPZs are in progress with 50% investment being utilised. The planned implementation has been deferred at present (May 2025).
- £0.3m in various transport feasibility studies have not been fully delivered in 2024/25.

Economy and Place

111. £0.5m of planned investments have been delivered. The residual schemes are progressing notably the congestion and mini – Holland capital schemes. Funding for future revenue borrowing has been transferred to reserves at the end of the financial year.

Resources and Law & Governance

112. The 2024/25 budget includes planned investments of £0.6m. 100% of these investments have been delivered.

Transformation, Digital & Customer Experience

113. Adult and Children Services have transferred to the TDCE the Oxfordshire Way investments of £0.5m. These funds have been delayed and will be spent in 2025/26.

Debt Management

Corporate Debtors

114. The 120-day invoice collection rate was 97% in March 2025, and 97% for the year; 2% above target. The 120-day collection rate based on invoice value for the year was 94%.

115. The target level for debt requiring impairment at the end of 2024/25 was £0.3m, the final position was £0.8m, £0.5m above target. The top two cases account for £0.1m of the impaired balance.

116. 177 debtor write-offs were processed in 2024/25 with a combined value of £0.15m or 0.01% of the value of invoices raised in the same period. A further seven corporate cost centre write-offs were processed with a value of £2,000. 83 historic vendor account balances were written off with a value of £93,000.

Adult Social Care Contribution Debtors

117. The 120-day invoice collection rate was 93% in March 2025, 1% above the 92% target.

118. The final balance of adult social care contribution debt requiring impairment was £4.5m, matching the 2024/25 carried forward balance. £0.1m of savings linked to a reduction in the impairment were not achieved.

119. There were 271 Adult Social care write-offs processed this year with a value of £0.868m, this equates to 1.7% of the value of invoices raised (£50.8m) and 0.7% above target.

Strategic Measures

120. The table below shows the final budget and variations against budgets and funding held centrally.

	Final Budget	Total Spend	Year End Variance
Capital Financing	£21.3m	£21.7m	£0.4m
Interest on Balances	-£10.7m	-£17.4m	-£6.8m
Contingency	£0.5m	-£0.1m	-£0.6m
Pay Inflation	£4.8m	£0.0m	-£4.8m
Un-ringfenced Specific Grants	-£56.4m	-£56.4m	£0.0m
Insurance	£1.7m	£1.5m	-£0.2m
Contribution from COVID-19 reserve	-£3.8m	-£3.8m	£0.0m
Contribution from Budget Priority Reserve	£1.6m	£1.6m	£0.0m
Contributions to reserves	£23.1m	£22.5m	-£0.6m
Total Strategic Measures	**-£17.9m**	**-£30.5m**	**-£12.5m**

121. The overall underspend of £12.5m mainly relates to £6.8m additional interest on balances, mainly due to interest receivable; and £4.8m relating to pay inflation not needed to meet agreed increases in 2024/25.

Capital Financing Costs

122. The borrowing costs and minimum revenue provision (MRP) for capital projects funded by Prudential Borrowing are either:
   - recharged to service areas because certain scheme will provide the service area savings and long terms direct benefits or
   - met corporately from the budget for capital financing costs.
   The position is that the recharges are in line with the initial budget.

123. Interest payable was £11.9m, which was £3.5m below budget. This reflects the early repayment of two Lender Option Borrowing Option (LOBO) loans and actual interest costs being lower than budgeted. This is expected to be one – off in 2024/25 as interest payable is expected to increase in 2025/26.

124. Budgeted reserve drawdowns have been reassessed considering actual capital spend and assigned funding to the programme. Therefore, the net position is a £0.4m over commitment against 2024/25 budget.

<u>Interest on Balances</u>

125.   Interest receivable was £27.2m, £7.9m above the budget. This was a result of higher than forecast cash balances coupled with higher than forecast deposit rates.

126.   Cash balances for the year were forecast to be £92.5m lower than they would otherwise have been as a result of negative DSG balances. The impact of this was an opportunity cost of £3.8m in unearned interest during 2024/25.

<u>Pay Inflation and Contingency</u>

127.   Initially budgeted funding for pay inflation in 2024/25 was £14.4m and the contingency budget for 2024/25 totalled £7.5m.

128.   £6.3m of the £14.4m pay inflation budget was transferred to Service Areas to meet the cost of the additional pay inflation in 2024/25 following the agreement of the Green, Gold & Grey Books, and Soulbury pay awards. Also £0.3m was transferred meet the cost of pay inflation for in year recruited vacant posts. £3.0m has been used to fund a one-off contribution to the Local Government Re-organisation and Devolution reserve. The remaining pay inflation budget was £4.8m.

129.   The on-going budget that is not needed to fund pay inflation in 2024/25 is available to meet the cost of pay inflation in 2025/26.

130.   £7.0m of the contingency budget was used to fund a one-off contribution to the Local Government Re-organisation reserve. The -£0.6m underspend against the remaining budget of £0.5m is due to £0.4m increase to the bad debt provision for debts which are proving challenging to recover offset by £0.5m for a rental agreement (in 2025/26 the latter has been redirected to Property Services).

Reserves

131. On 1 April 2024 one – off funding held in earmarked reserves totalled £210.3m. As set out in Annex B-3a this increased to £254.4m as at 31 March 2024. The increase includes budgeted net contributions to/from reserves totalling £11.6m agreed in February 2024, plus other net changes during the year which reduced reserves by £5.4m.

132. The DSG reserve held a deficit balance of £56.0m on 1 April 2024. The net deficit added to the reserve in 2024/25 was £36.5m. After taking this into account the closing deficit balance was £92.5m at 31 March 2025.

133. Reserves held by the council, including planned contributions agreed as part of the 2024/25 budget and other changes during the year are summarised in the table below. Most of the funding is being held for specific agreed purposes and will be used to support revenue expenditure, including the council's Delivering the Future Together programme, or to fund capital expenditure. Where relevant the totals below incorporate the service reserves noted earlier in the report.

Reserves	Balance at 31 March 2024	Movement	Balance at 31 March 2025
Revenue Grants Unapplied			
Grants and Contributions reserve	£33.6m	-£3.3m	£30.3m
COVID-19 reserve	£7.9m	-£4.1m	£3.8m
Government Initiatives reserve	£3.2m	£3.4m	£6.6m
Subtotal	**£44.6m**	**-£3.9m**	**£40.7m**
Corporate Priorities			
Budget Priorities reserve	£10.7m	£1.7m	£12.5m
Local Government Reorganisation reserve	£0.0m	£10.0m	£10.0m
Transformation reserve	£1.8m	£5.6m	£7.5m
Commercial Pump Priming reserve	£0.0m	£2.0m	£2.0m
Zero Emissions Zone	£1.2m	£0.3m	£1.5m
Green Financing reserve	£0.0m	£0.9m	£0.9m
Extended Producer Responsibility reserve	£0.0m	£0.0m	£0.0m
Subtotal	**£13.8m**	**£20.5m**	**£34.3m**
Funding for Risk			
Demographic Risk reserve	£17.0m	£4.0m	£21.0m
Insurance reserve	£10.3m	£0.3m	£10.6m
Collection Fund Risk reserve	£0.0m	£8.1m	£8.1m
IFRS 9 (Changes in the Value of Treasury Management Pooled Funds)	£0.0m	£4.0m	£4.0m
Redundancy reserve	£2.4m	£1.7m	£4.1m
Council Elections	£0.6m	£0.2m	£0.7m
Trading Accounts	£0.1m	£0.1m	£0.2m
Council Tax Collection Fund reserve	£3.0m	-£3.0m	£0.0m
Business Rates reserve	£11.7m	-£11.7m	£0.0m
Subtotal	**£45.0m**	**£3.7m**	**£48.6m**

Reserves (Cont)	Balance at 31 March 2024	Movement	Balance at 31 March 2025
Capital & Equipment			
Capital & Prudential Borrowing reserves	£81.1m	£28.6m	£109.6m
Vehicle and Equipment reserve	£4.1m	-£0.9m	£3.2m
Investment Pump Priming reserve	£0.1m	£0.0m	£0.1m
Subtotal	**£85.3m**	**£27.7m**	**£113.0m**
Other reserves			
Partnership reserves	£2.1m	-£0.3m	£1.7m
On Street Car Parking reserve	£6.5m	-£1.2m	£5.3m
Budget Equalisation reserve	£0.0m	£0.0m	£0.0m
Subtotal	**£8.6m**	**-£1.5m**	**£7.1m**
Unusable			
Schools' reserves	£13.1m	-£2.4m	£10.7m
Total Earmarked reserves	**£210.3m**	**£44.0m**	**£254.4m**
DSG reserves	-£56.0m	-£36.5m	-£92.5m
Total Reserves	**£154.3m**	**£7.5m**	**£161.9m**

Grants and Contributions Reserve

134. This reserve holds underspends on ringfenced grant funding which needs to be used in accordance with the relevant grant conditions in future years.

135. The net contribution from this reserve in 2024/25 was £3.3m reducing the total held to £30.3m.

136. The balance includes £8.6m grant funding for the Homes for Ukraine scheme that has not been required to be spent by the end of 2024/25. This will be used to support the on-going costs of the scheme in Oxfordshire in 2025/26 and beyond.

137. £4.9m relates to the remaining balance of the BT Openreach Broadband Gainshare that was received in 2021/22 (held within Economy & Place). This will be used to fund future ICT related capital expenditure in accordance with the Gainshare agreement.

138. Other more significant balances and grant funding held in the reserve at 31 March 2025 are:
- £4.9m Public Health & Communities grants mainly related to the £4.7m Public Health grants.
- £4.2m Children's Services grants relating to £1.2m unaccompanied asylum seeking children (UASC) and £1.2m supported accommodation reform grant, and £1.8m other grants.
- £3.0m Section 106 revenue funding for Public Transport that will be used in accordance with the agreements.
- £2.5m Economy & Place grants related to funding Countryside services, developer contributions and Enterprise Oxfordshire.
- £2.2m across Adults, Environment & Highways, Oxfordshire Fire & Rescue and Resources.

Government Initiatives Reserve

139. This reserve is used to hold underspends on service budgets funded by un-ringfenced grants so that the funding remains available for use to support the specified purpose of the grant in future years. The balance held in this reserve at the end of 2024/25 was £6.6m. £3.4m added to the reserve relates to accumulated unused balances from grant funded projects.

140. Notable balances and grant funding held in the reserve at 31 March 2025 are:
    - £ 4.0m for Children Services mostly to support the provision of accommodation-based support to victims of domestic abuse and their children and the graduate trainee programme in future years and other social care and education grants
    - £1.3m for the Innovation Hub within Economy & Place.

COVID-19 Reserve

141. The balance held in the reserve at 31 March 2024 was £7.9m. As agreed in February 2024, the reserve balance is at £3.8m at the end of March 2025. There is further budgeted planned use of the reserve of £2.3m in 2025/26. The remaining £1.4m was agreed to be transferred to the Transformation Reserve in 2025/26 as part of the 2025/26 budget.

Budget Priorities Reserve

142. This reserve is to fund the priorities of the Council. As at 31 March 2025 £12.5m was held in the reserve. The reserve has moved by £1.7m. The following priorities have contributed £8.5m to the reserve this year:
    - £3.0m Adult Social care priorities
    - £1.7m carry forward for investment implementation deferments and delays (see investment section for details and held by the relevant Service Area). £0.1m that was to part fund 2024/25 Labour & Co-operative Group amendments was not drawn down. Therefore, carry forward is £1.8m
    - £1.5m Service area ringfenced priorities (£0.4m Children's services, £0.5m Adult Services & £0.5m Emergency funds)
    - £1.0m budgeted contribution
    - £1.0m for active travel measures (agreed to be transferred from the IFRS9 reserve in 2024/25).
    - £0.3m for repair and maintenance of Joint Use Agreement (JUA) Leisure facilities. The revised position is £0.5m.

143. £6.8m was drawn down from the reserve during 2024/25:
    - £3.8m transferred to the Redundancy Reserve as agreed in the 2024/25 budget.
    - £0.1m for Community Hubs. Initially £0.4m remains to be spent in 2025/26.
    - £0.6m Councillor Priority Fund. £0.1m remains to be spent in 2025/26.
    - £0.4m complete of backdated Deprivation of Liberty & Safeguarding cases within Adult Services
    - £0.3m for the council's Food Strategy
    - £0.2m Oxfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group. £0.4m use of the remaining funding will be agreed with the ICB.

- £0.1m Children's center rents

144. The overall position for Budget priorities is:

	Apr-24	Movement	Mar-25
Adults Services	£1.9m	£3.7m	£5.6m
Children's Services	£0.2m	£0.9m	£1.1m
Environment & Highways	£2.2m	-£1.4m	£0.8m
Economy & Place	£0.4m	£1.0m	£1.4m
Resources and Law & Governance	£1.1m	-£0.6m	£0.6m
Transformation, Digital & Customer Experience	£0.4m	£0.9m	£1.4m
Budget priority allocations held for Service Areas:	£6.2m	£4.5m	£10.9m
Budget priority allocations earmarked	£0.9m	£0.0m	£0.9m
Budget priority contributions & unallocated	£3.6m	-£2.8m	£0.8m
Budget priority allocations	£10.7m	£1.7m	£12.5m

Local Government Re-organisation & Devolution Reserve

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

146. In January 2025 Cabinet approved the creation of a new reserve to hold funding to support the development of reorganisation and devolution proposals for Oxfordshire and a contribution of £5.0m. A further contribution of £5.0m in March 2025 increased the total held to £10.0m.

Transformation Reserve

147. The Transformation Reserve has been used to support the costs of the implementation of the council's transformation programme, Delivering the Future Together.

148. The opening position as at 1 April 2024 was £1.8m and the movements on the reserve during the year were:
- £10.0m added as agreed in the 2024/25 budget to enable the priorities for the next phase of transformation to be delivered and to create a sustainable council for the future funding
- £1.5m of the total was used to support investments agreed as part of the 2024/25 budget
- £2.9m spend on transformation change in 2024/25.

149. Consequently, the transformation reserve balance is £7.5m. £0.8m of this total was committed to support 2025/26 revenue budget approved in February 2024.

Zero Emissions Zone (ZEZ)

150. Surpluses generated by Network Coordination are being ringfenced for the development and expansion of the ZEZ in the future years, as well as funding the ongoing cost and maintenance of the existing scheme in Oxford. £0.3m was added to the reserve at the end of 2024/25.

Demographic Risk Reserve

151. In light of the significant pressures relating to High Needs and other budgets with demographic volatility a demographic risk reserve was created in 2019/20. The existing MTFS includes an on-going annual contribution to the reserve of £4.0m   £21.0m was held in the reserve at the end of 2024/25.

Collection Fund Reserve

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

153. Council Tax Collection Fund and Business rates reserves have been combined into the Collection Fund Risk reserve. The balance at 31 March 2025 was £8.1m after taking account of additional business rates funding of £1.3m notified during 2024/25 plus £0.6m income from the North Oxfordshire Business Rates pool.

Redundancy Reserve

154. The balance held in the Redundancy Reserve was £2.4m at 31 March 2024. Reflecting the need to reduce the size of the council to be sustainable in future £5.0m was agreed to be added to the reserve as part of the 2024/25 budget. Redundancy costs funded from the reserve in 2024/25 were £3.3m. The remaining balance is £4.1m.

Impact of IFRS9

155. A reserve to manage the impact of IFRS9, which relates to the value of pooled investments, was created as part of the 2024/25 budget (Jan 2024 Cabinet Section 4.6 para 33-35). Initially £5.0m funding was allocated.

156. Following responses from the Local Government Settlement consultation, Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) implemented transitional arrangements for legacy investments. The override will now apply to these investments until 1 April 2029. The extension from 2025 to 2029 will provide further time to manage the pooled investments.

157. Since the potential impact is now further ahead, it was recommended to reduce the reserve by £1.0m (revised balance £4.0m) and redirect the funds to support rural active travel measures with the funding initially moved to the Budget Priorities Reserve. The requirement for the remaining funding held in the IFRS9 reserve will be considered as part of the budget for 2026/27.

Council Elections Reserve

158. This reserve holds funds to meet the cost of the County Council elections every four years. Funding held in this reserve increased by £0.2m to fund future years election activities and totalled £0.7m at 31 March 2025. This funding has been used to help support the cost of the County Council elections in May 2025.

Capital & Prudential Borrowing Reserves

159. The Capital Reserve holds capital receipts and other funds to meet the cost of borrowing to finance the capital programme. Funding held in the reserve is expected to be used to meet the costs of the capital programme and pipeline agreed in February 2025.

Vehicle & Equipment Reserve

160. £3.2m was held in reserves at the year-end for the renewal of fire and rescue vehicles and breathing apparatus equipment.

On-Street Car Parking Reserve

161. Expenditure and income relating to parking is required to be transacted through the parking account. In accordance with Section 55(4) of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984, the Cabinet is required to approve that any surplus from the parking account can be carried forward to support infrastructure and maintenance in future years. After taking into account net income of £2.9m and a £4.1m contribution to the revenue budget a net drawdown of £1.2m has been made from the reserve as planned. This contribution is primarily to be held for the benefit of the Highways Infrastructure and Parking Account to fund future drawdowns.

Schools' Reserves

162. As shown in Annex B-3b maintained schools' balances were £13.1m at 1 April 2024 and decreased to £10.7m at 31 March 2025. This is made up of surpluses of £15.9m (for 111 schools) and deficits of £2.8m (for 22 schools).

DSG Reserve

163. Schedule 2 to the School and Early Years Finance (England) Regulations 2023, requires a deficit on the Dedicated School's Grant to be carried forward to be funded from future DSG income unless permission is sought and received from the Secretary of State for Education to fund the deficit from general council resources.

164. The total deficit transferred to the DSG reserve at the end of 2024/25 was £36.5m and increased the closing deficit balance to £92.5m as at 31 March 2025. This incorporates an overspend of £36.5m on High Needs, offset by a £2.1m underspend on Early Years, and other minor adjustments.

165. Within the overall total, which also includes positive balances held for Early Years and other purposes, the total unusable High Needs deficit has increased from £41.1m at 1 April 2023 to £55.8m at 31 March 2024.

166. The Local Authorities (Capital Finance and Accounting) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2020 (SI 2020 No 1212), made by Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG), require DSG deficits to be held in a separate reserve in local authorities' accounts. These regulations, which require the negative balance to be held in an unusable reserve, will come to an end on 31 March 2026. The impact of the unusable reserve on the council's ability to set a balanced budget over the medium term will need to be considered through the Budget & Business Planning Process for 2025/26.

General Balances

167. The risk assessed level of balances for 2024/25 was £30.2m. As set out in the Provisional Outturn Report for 2023/24, a one-off balance of £2.3m was held in balances pending a decision about future use.

168. After taking account of the £12.8m actual outturn underspend and the £2.3m funding held since the end of 2023/24, balances are £15.1m above the risk assessed level as at 31 March 2025. £10.8m from General Balances was agreed to support the 2025/26 budget. Based on the actual outturn position and agreed use balances will be £4.3m above the risk assessed level for 2025/26 as at 1 April 2025.

169. There is a proposal to support two further opportunities costing £0.6m:
   - Business and Intellectual Property Centre: £0.1m one-off funding from the General Balances to enable the continuation of the BIPC service for 2025/26 while action to seek self sustainable funding streams for 2026/27 and onwards.
   - Innovate Oxfordshire: £0.5m one-off funding from General Balances to enable the creation of a successful sustainable commercial model and less reliant on council tax funding by providing future savings.

   Based on the actual outturn position and proposed use, balances will be £3.7m above the risk assessed level for 2025/26 as at 1 April 2025.

Business Management & Monitoring Report
Position to the end of March 2025
Budget Monitoring

Directorate	Final net budget	Full Year Spend	Year End Variance underspend-overspend+	Year End Variance	Variance Last Reported (January Position) Reporting Month	Change in Variance	Year End Traffic Light Red > 1.5% Amber >1.1% <1.5%
	£000	£000	£000	%	£000	£000	Green on track
Adult Services	248,954	245,057	-3,896	-1.56%	-4,200	304	G
Children's Services	202,129	202,272	144	0.07%	1,310	-1,167	G
Environment & Highways	53,530	54,346	816	1.52%	200	616	R
Economy and Place	16,931	16,670	-261	-1.54%	145	-406	G
Oxfordshire Fire & Rescue Service and Community Safety	28,896	29,520	624	2.16%	600	24	R
Public Health & Communities	12,935	12,984	49	0.38%	200	-151	G
Resources and Law & Governance	59,762	61,241	1,479	2.47%	1,340	139	R
Transformation, Digital & Customer Experience	8,211	8,957	746	9.09%	990	-244	R
Directorate Total Net	**631,348**	**631,046**	**-300**	**-0.05%**	**585**	**-885**	G

Business Management & Monitoring Report
Position to the end of March 2025
Budget Monitoring

Directorate	Final net budget	Full Year Spend	Year End Variance underspend- overspend+	Year End Variance	Variance Last Reported (January Position) Reporting Month	Change in Variance	Year End Traffic Light Red > 1.5% Amber >1.1% <1.5%
	£000	£000	£000	%	£000	£000	Green on track
Budget held Centrally							
Capital Financing							
Capital Financing - Principal	15,533	14,319	-1,214	-7.82%	-1233	19	
Prudential Borrowing Recharges	-9,557	-4,805	4,752	-49.72%	1157	3,595	
Capital Financing - Interest	15,351	12,231	-3,120	-20.32%	-3,451	331	
Interest on Balances	-10,673	-17,423	-6,750	63.25%	-4,627	-2,123	
Contingency	455	-132	-587	-129.01%	-3,300	2,713	
Pay Inflation held corporately	4,762	0	-4,762	-100.00%	-4,658	-104	
Unringfenced Specific Government Grants	-56,354	-56,426	-72	0.13%	0	-72	
Insurance	1,737	1,460	-277	-15.94%	0	-277	
Contribution from COVID-19 Reserve	-3,756	-3,756	0	0.00%	0	0	
Contribution from Budget Priorities Reserve	1,604	1,604	0	0.00%	0	0	
Contributions to (+)/from (-)reserves	23,034	31,972	8,938	38.80%	5000	3,938	
		-9,500	-9,500	#DIV/0!		-9,500	
Cabinet June 2024 - Drawdown on General Balances for 23/24 reserve contributions					0		
Total Budget held Centrally	**-17,864**	**-30,456**	**-12,592**	**70.49%**	**-11,112**	**-1,480**	
Net Operating Budget	**613,484**	**600,590**	**-12,892**	**-2.10%**	**-10,527**	**-2,365**	
Business Rates & Council Tax Funding	-613,484	-613,348	136	-0.02%	0	136	
Forecast Year End Position	**0**	**-12,758**	**-12,756**	**-2.12%**	**-10,527**	**-2,229**	

Business Management and Monitoring Report: Adult Services
Position to the end of March 2025
Revenue Budget Monitoring

		Final net budget	Full Year Spend	Year End Variance	Variance Last Reported (January Position)	Change in Variance
				underspend- overspend+		
		£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
SCS1	Adult Social Care	28,905	28,541	-364	300	-664
SCS2	Other Adult Social Care Services	6,985	6,277	-708	-300	-408
SCS4	Business Support Service	1,194	1,106	-88	0	-88
SCS5	Pooled Budget Contributions	211,869	209,133	-2,736	-4,200	1,464
	Total Adult Services	**248,953**	**245,057**	**-3,896**	**-4,200**	**304**

Business Management & Monitoring Report: Children's Services
Forecast Position at the end of March 2025
Revenue Budget Monitoring

		Final net budget	Full Year Spend	Year End Variance	Variance Last Reported (January Position)	Change in Variance
				underspend- overspend+		
		£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
CEF1	Education & Learning	54,692	55,112	422	1,000	-578
CEF2	Children's Social Care	133,155	131,393	-1,762	-1,518	-244
CEF3	Safeguarding, QA, Partnerships and Improvement	5,630	4,577	-1,053	-739	-314
CEF4	Schools	216	15	-201	0	-201
CEF5	Children's Services Central Costs	8,426	11,165	2,738	2,568	170
CEF9	Children's Services Corporate Overheads	0	5	5	0	5
CEFATV	Adopt Thames Valley	10	4	-6	0	-6
	Total Children's Services	**202,129**	**202,272**	**144**	**1,310**	**-1,167**

MEMORANDUM: DEDICATED SCHOOLS GRANT - DSG Funded Expenditure (Gross)

	Schools DSG	126,797	126,797	0	0	0
	High Needs DSG	89,474	125,924	36,450	31,883	4,568
	Early Years DSG	80,161	78,166	-1,995	0	-1,995
	Central DSG	5,196	5,296	100	0	100
	Total DSG Funded Expenditure	**301,628**	**336,184**	**34,556**	**31,883**	**2,673**

Business Management & Monitoring Report : Oxfordshire Fire & Rescue Service and Community Safety
Position to the end of March 2025
Revenue Budget Monitoring

		Final net budget	Full Year Spend	Year End Variance	Variance Last Reported (January Position)	Change in Variance
				underspend- overspend+		
		£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
CDA3	**Community Safety**					
COM4-1	Community Safety Management	0	-9	-9	0	-9
COM4-2	Fire & Rescue	27,121	27,914	793	650	143
COM4-3	Emergency Planning	319	333	14	0	14
COM4-5	Trading Standards	1,456	1,282	-174	-50	-124
	Total Community Safety	**28,896**	**29,520**	**624**	**600**	**24**

Business Management & Monitoring Report : Public Health & Communities
Position to the end of March 2025
Revenue Budget Monitoring

		Final net budget	Full Year Spend	Year End Variance	Variance Last Reported (January Position)	Change in Variance
				underspend-overspend+		
		£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
PH1	PH - Mandatory Functions	19,470	19,348	-122	-200	78
PH2	PH - Non Mandatory Functions	19,187	18,420	-767	-400	-367
PH3	Public Health Recharges	577	577	0	0	0
PH4	Grant Income	-34,401	-34,401	0	0	0
	Transfer to Public Health Reserve	0	741	741	600	141
	Total Public Health	4,833	4,685	-148	0	-148
COD1-2	Homes for Ukraine	0	0	0	0	0
COD5-3	Libraries & Heritage	8,102	8,299	197	200	-3
COD9-3	Migration	0	0	0	0	0
	Total Libraries & Heritage	8,102	8,299	197	200	-3
	Total Public Health & Communities	**12,935**	**12,984**	**49**	**200**	**-151**

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Business Management & Monitoring Report: Economy and Place
Position to the end of March 2025
Revenue Budget Monitoring

		Final net budget	Full Year Spend	Year End Variance	Variance Last Reported (January Position)	Change in Variance
				underspend- overspend+		
		£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
EP1	Place Shaping	16,240	16,149	-91	0	127
EP2	Future Economy	105	124	19	0	19
EP3	Regulatory Planning & Enforcement	-2,314	-2,378	-64	145	-209
EP4	Climate Action	1,210	1,072	-138	0	-138
EP5	OxLEP	57	25	-32	0	-32
EP6	Innovation	359	358	-1	0	-1
EP7	Senior Management Team	759	883	124	0	124
EP8	Business Performance & Services Improvement	515	437	-78	0	-78
	Total Economy & Place	**16,931**	**16,670**	**-261**	**145**	**-406**

Business Management & Monitoring Report: Environment & Highways
Position to the end of March 2025
Revenue Budget Monitoring

		Final net budget	Full Year Spend	Year End Variance	Variance Last Reported (January Position)	Change in Variance
				underspend- overspend+		
		£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
EH1	Transport & Property Infrastructure	1,750	1,078	-672	0	-672
EH2	Countryside & Waste	34,810	35,438	628	0	628
EH3	Business Support	386	227	-159	0	-159
EH4	Highways & Maintenance	21,426	20,790	-636	-1,600	805
EH5	Network Management	-6,210	-4,434	1,776	1,800	-32
EH6	Senior Management Team	1,368	1,247	-121	0	-121
	Total Environment & Highways	**53,530**	**54,346**	**816**	**200**	**616**

Business Management & Monitoring Report: Resources and Law & Governance
Position to the end of March 2025
Revenue Budget Monitoring

		Final net budget	Full Year Spend	Year End Variance	Variance Last Reported (January Position)	Change in Variance
				underspend- overspend+		
		£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
HRCCDIR	HR & Cultural Change	5,114	4,981	-133	-220	87
FCSDIR	Financial & Commercial Services	9,671	10,025	354	290	64
PADIR	Property & Assets	21,703	21,602	-101	-100	-1
PAPPDIR	Public Affairs, Policy & Partnership	4,153	4,038	-115	0	-115
CORPDIR	Corporate Services	9,976	11,034	1,058	900	158
LGCRDIR	Law & Governance	9,145	9,561	416	470	-54
	Total Resources and Law & Governance	**59,762**	**61,241**	**1,479**	**1,340**	**139**

Business Management & Monitoring Report: Transformation, Digital & Customer Experience
Position to the end of March 2025
Revenue Budget Monitoring

		Final net budget	Full Year Spend	Year End Variance	Variance Last Reported (January Position)	Change in Variance
				underspend- overspend+		
		£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
TDCE1	Transformation & Digital	3,118	3,976	858	990	-132
TDCE2	Customer Experience	3,625	3,625	0	0	0
TDCE3	Data	709	665	-44	0	-44
TDCE4	Insight & Corporate Programmes	0	0	0	0	0
TDCE5	TDCE Management	759	691	-68	0	-68
	Total Transformation, Digital & Customer Experience	**8,211**	**8,957**	**746**	**990**	**-244**

Business Management Report
Position to the end of March 2025

NEW VIREMENTS THAT HAVE BEEN ACTIONED FOR CABINET TO NOTE

Directorate (CD = Cross Directorate)	Month of Cabinet Meeting	Month of Directorate MMR	Narration	Budget Book Line	Service Area	Permanent / Temporary	Expenditure + increase / - decrease £000	Income - increase / + decrease £000
CS	Jun	Feb	2024-25 Schools DSG to match latest (21/01/25) allocations	CEF4-1	Delegated Budgets	T	-2,262	2,262
			Between 2 SENSS cost centres. EP0665 is called 'EDM' (Educational development) is used to fund generic staffing related costs	CEF1-2	SEND	T	25	-25
			24CS31 Inflation - move from holding code	CEF1-4	Access to Learning	P	305	0
				CEF5-1	Management & Admin	P	-305	0
			Funding for Music Service from EYDSG	CEF1-7	Music Service	T	50	-50
				CEF4-2	Early Years Funding Formula	T	-50	50
AS	Jun	Feb	Panel Meeting Inflation reallocation	ACSNPOOL	Live Well Pool	P	13	-13
				BCFPOOL	Age Well Pool	P	0	0
				SCS5	Pooled Budget Contributions	P	0	0
			CSS Pool Budgets update	ACSNPOOL	Live Well Pool	P	486	-486
				BCFPOOL	Age Well Pool	P	99	-99
				SCS1-5	Provider Services	P	1,105	-1,108
				SCS5	Pooled Budget Contributions	P	3	0
			Health Reserves Drawdown	ACSNPOOL	Live Well Pool	T	33	-33
				SCS5	Pooled Budget Contributions	T	0	0
			Magic Notes 2nd part of contract	SCS1-3	Provider and Support Services	T	19	0
				SCS5	Pooled Budget Contributions	T	-19	0
			Home Improvement Agency	BCFPOOL	Age Well Pool	P	5	-5
				SCS5	Pooled Budget Contributions	P	0	0
		Mar	Panel Meeting Inflation reallocation	ACSNPOOL	Live Well Pool	P	27	-96
				BCFPOOL	Age Well Pool	P	166	-97
				SCS5	Pooled Budget Contributions	P	0	0
			Camden Core Hour uplift	ACSNPOOL	Live Well Pool	P	39	-39
				SCS5	Pooled Budget Contributions	P	0	0
			Correction to virement 2024003304	ACSNPOOL	Live Well Pool	P	0	69
				BCFPOOL	Age Well Pool	P	0	-69
				SCS5	Pooled Budget Contributions	P	0	0

Business Management Report
Position to the end of March 2025

NEW VIREMENTS THAT HAVE BEEN ACTIONED FOR CABINET TO NOTE

Directorate (CD = Cross Directorate)	Month of Cabinet Meeting	Month of Directorate MMR	Narration	Budget Book Line	Service Area	Permanent / Temporary	Expenditure + increase / - decrease £000	Income - increase / + decrease £000
SM	Jun	Feb	Business Rates Section 31 grant	VSMMGT	Strategic Measures	T	2	-2
		Mar	SM 25-26 Transparency New Burdens Grant	VSMMGT	Strategic Measures	T	13	-13
CD	Jun	Feb	Community Safety Management Trainees 24/25 Costs allocation to A21006	COM4-2	Fire & Rescue	P	-3	0
				HRCCDIR	HR & Cultural Change	P	3	0
			Green Book pay award - update Fraud team	FCSDIR	Financial & Commercial Services	T	-5	0
				VSMMGT	Strategic Measures	T	5	0
			Management Trainee Funding from EH & EP	EH6	Supported Transport	P	-18	0
				EP7	Senior Management Team	P	-11	0
				HRCCDIR	HR & Cultural Change	P	29	0
			Pay Award 24/25 reversal	COD9-3	Migration	T	-5	0
				VSMMGT	Strategic Measures	T	5	0
			Budget for 8 posts from IT to Transformation & Digital	CORPDIR	Corporate Services	P	-534	0
				TDCEDIR	Transformation, Digital & Customer Service	P	534	0
			Budget for 10 posts move from IT to Data	CORPDIR	Corporate Services	P	-677	0
				TDCEDIR	Transformation, Digital & Customer Service	P	677	0
			V00025 - Transformation budget adj to P10 forecast	TDCEDIR	Transformation, Digital & Customer Service	T	-1,771	0
				CEF5-1	Management & Admin	T	-190	0
				COD5-3	Libraries & Heritage	T	4	0
				COM4-5	Trading Standards	T	4	0
				CORPDIR	Corporate Services	T	-27	0
				EH4	Highways & Maintenance	T	-9	0
				EH6	Supported Transport	T	-39	0
				EP6	Innovation	T	3	0
				EP7	Senior Management Team	T	57	-25
				FCSDIR	Financial & Commercial Services	T	-1	0
				HRCCDIR	HR & Cultural Change	T	-6	0
				LGCRDIR	Law & Governance	T	-42	0
				PADIR	Property & Assets	T	-31	20
				PAPPDIR	Public Affairs, Policy & Partnership	T	11	0
				SCS1-1	Social Care Management & Practice	T	7	0

Business Management Report
Position to the end of March 2025

NEW VIREMENTS THAT HAVE BEEN ACTIONED FOR CABINET TO NOTE

Directorate (CD = Cross Directorate)	Month of Cabinet Meeting	Month of Directorate MMR	Narration	Budget Book Line	Service Area	Permanent / Temporary	Expenditure + increase / - decrease £000	Income - increase / + decrease £000
				SCS2	Health Ed. & Social Care Commissioning	T	-15	0
				TDCEDIR	Transformation, Digital & Customer Service	T	320	0
			Transfer Oxfordshire Way funds to project budget	CEF2-9	Change	T	-349	0
				SCS5	Pooled Budget Contributions	T	-175	0
				TDCEDIR	Transformation, Digital & Customer Service	T	524	0
			Budget for 5 Major Projects posts from Property K30110 to Highways N93820	EH1	Infrastructure Delivery	P	729	-640
				PADIR	Property & Assets	P	-729	640
			Budget for 3 Ops Support posts from Property K10112 to Highways N93810	EH1	Infrastructure Delivery	P	200	0
				PADIR	Property & Assets	P	-200	0
			Reorganisation Reserve & Budget Priorites Reserve	SCS5	Pooled Budget Contributions	T	-3,000	0
				VSMMGT	Strategic Measures	T	3,000	0
			Agency Savings Temp Virement 24/25 re Qtr 3&4	EH2	Environment	T	-31	0
				EH4	Highways & Maintenance	T	-95	0
				EH5	Network Management	T	-37	0
				EH6	Supported Transport	T	163	0
				EP1	OXLEP	T	-41	0
				EP7	Senior Management Team	T	41	0
		Mar	Tier 1 & 2 Restructure savings	TDCEDIR	Transformation, Digital & Customer Service	T	-273	0
				VSMMGT	Strategic Measures	T	273	0
			Soulbury Pay Award 2024-25	CEF1-2	SEND	P	31	0
				CEF1-5	Learner Engagement Service (Virtual School)	P	8	0
				CEF3-1	Provider Services	P	2	0
				CEFATV	Adopt Thames Valley	P	2	0
				VSMMGT	Strategic Measures	P	-42	0

Business Management Report
Position to the end of March 2025

NEW VIREMENTS THAT HAVE BEEN ACTIONED FOR CABINET TO NOTE

Directorate (CD = Cross Directorate)	Month of Cabinet Meeting	Month of Directorate MMR	Narration	Budget Book Line	Service Area	Permanent / Temporary	Expenditure + increase / - decrease £000	Income - increase / + decrease £000
			Creation of expediture and income budget for new un-ringfenced grant (Single Use Plastic Ban)	COM4-5	Trading Standards	T	0	9
				VSMMGT	Strategic Measures	T	0	-9
RLG	Jun	Feb	Resources, L&G Management Trainees Costs allocation to service areas	CORPDIR	Corporate Services	P	-5	0
				FCSDIR	Financial & Commercial Services	P	-5	0
				HRCCDIR	HR & Cultural Change	P	27	0
				LGCRDIR	Law & Governance	P	-5	0
				PADIR	Property & Assets	P	-10	0
				PAPPDIR	Public Affairs, Policy & Partnership	P	-2	0
			Accept additional inflation 24CS31 Inflation from CEF	PADIR	Property & Assets	P	305	-305
			A62000 to EC1200 Budget for 6 Digital Team posts from Communications to IT Ops	CORPDIR	Corporate Services	P	289	0
				PAPPDIR	Public Affairs, Policy & Partnership	P	-289	0
			Governance cost centres - housekeeping	LGCRDIR	Law & Governance	P	8	-8
			G21024 Procurement - housekeeping	FCSDIR	Financial & Commercial Services	P	44	-44
			24/25 Legal cost centres - housekeeping	LGCRDIR	Law & Governance	T	51	-51
F&R & CS	Jun	Feb	Fire Y23003 PCC funding	COM4-2	Fire & Rescue	P	-500	500
Grand Total							-333	333

Business Management & Monitoring Report
Position to the end of March 2025
Earmarked Reserves

	2024/25			Description
	Balance at 1 April 2024	Movement	Balance at 31 March 2025	
	£m	£m	£m	
Revenue Grants Unapplied				
Grants and Contributions Reserve	33.6	-3.3	30.3	Holds underspent grants & contributions committed to be spent or recovered in future years. Excludes balance relating to DSG.
Covid-19 Reserve	7.9	-4.0	3.9	The balance held in the reserve at 31 March 2024 was £7.9m. After taking account of the planned used in 2024/25 the balance expected to be held in the reserve at 31 March 2025 is £3.6m with further budgeted use of £2.3m in 2025/26 to support directorate pressures. It is proposed that the £1.4m balance is transferred to the Transformation Reserve. The reserve will be closed after the transfer of funding in 2025/26.
Government Initiatives Reserve	3.2	3.4	6.6	Holds underspends on budgets funded by un-ringfenced specific grants relating Government initiatives or agreed outcomes and funding for the iHub.
Subtotal Revenue Grants Unapplied	**44.6**	**-3.9**	**40.7**	
Corporate Priorities				
Budget Priorities Reserve	10.7	1.7	12.4	This reserve is being used to support the implementation of the Council's priorities and the Medium Term Financial Strategy.
Transformation Reserve	1.8	5.6	7.5	This reserve is needed to fund the implementation costs of the Council's Transformation programme.
Zero Emissions Zone (ZEZ)	1.2	0.3	1.5	This reserve holds surpluses generated by Network Coordination for the development and expansion of the ZEZ in the future years.
Youth Provision Reserve	0.0	0.0	0.0	
Green Financing Reserve	0.0	0.9	0.9	This reserve is available to support the Council's Green Financing projects.
Commercial Pump Priming Reserve	0.0	2.0	2.0	This reserve is available to support the Council's commercial strategy with the use overseen by the Commercial Board.
Local Government Reorganisation Reserve	0.0	10.0	10.0	This reserve is being used to support the development of Local Government reorganisation and devolution proposals for Oxfordshire
Subtotal Corporate Priorities	**13.8**	**20.5**	**34.3**	

Business Management & Monitoring Report
Position to the end of March 2025
Earmarked Reserves

	2024/25			Description
	Balance at 1 April 2024	Movement	Balance at 31 March 2025	
	£m	£m	£m	
Funding for Risk				
Insurance Reserve	10.3	0.3	10.6	This reserve covers the County Council for insurance claims that, based on the previous experience of the County Council, are likely to be received, as well as a number of insurance related issues.
Demographic Risk Reserve	17.0	4.0	21.0	In light of the significant pressures relating to High Needs DSG and other budgets with demographic volatility this reserve will help to manage demographic risk.
Council Elections	0.6	0.2	0.7	This reserve is held to meet the cost of the County Council elections every four years.
Redundancy Reserve	2.4	1.7	4.1	This reserve is available to fund redundancy costs arising from Transformational Change.
Trading Accounts	0.1	0.1	0.2	Holds funds relating to traded activities which are carried forward each year (whether surplus or deficit).
Council Tax Collection Fund Reserve - removed as part of 2024/25 budget	3.0	-3.0	0.0	This reserve was closed as part of 2024/25 budget
Business Rates Reserve - removed as part of 2024/25 budget	11.7	-11.7	0.0	This reserve was closed as part of 2024/25 budget
Collection Fund Risk Reserve	0.0	8.1	8.1	This reserve is held to manage fluctuations in Business Rate and Council Tax income that the Council receives each year.
IFRS 9 (Changes in the Value of Treasury Management Pooled Funds)	0.0	4.0	4.0	This reserve is held to to smooth the potential impact of IFRS9 (changes in the value of Treasury Management Pooled Funds at year end) which may impact on the revenue account in 2025/26 if the statutory override which removes changes in their value from the accounts is confirmed to end on 1 April 2025.
Subtotal Risk	**45.0**	**3.7**	**48.6**	

Business Management & Monitoring Report
Position to the end of March 2025
Earmarked Reserves

	2024/25			Description
	Balance at 1 April 2024	Movement	Balance at 31 March 2025	
	£m	£m	£m	
Capital & Equipment				
Capital Reserves	81.1	28.6	109.6	This reserve has been established for the purpose of financing capital expenditure in future years. Drawdown will be confirmed later in the year.
Vehicle and Equipment Reserve	4.1	-0.9	3.2	To fund future replacement of vehicles and equipment
Investment Pump Priming Reserve	0.1	0.0	0.1	Funding held to meet the costs of self-financing schemes which require pump priming until the funds are returned.
Subtotal Capital & Equipment	**85.3**	**27.7**	**113.0**	
Other Reserves				
Schools' Reserves	13.1	-2.4	10.7	In accordance with the Education Reform Act 1988, the scheme of Local Management of Schools provides for the carry forward of individual schools surpluses and deficits. These reserves are committed to be spent on schools. Other School Reserves cover a number of miscellaneous education activities, including amounts loaned to individual schools against school reserves, and School Partnership Accounts which are operated in respect of inter-school activities.
Partnership Reserves	2.1	-0.3	1.7	This relates to funding for the Growth Deal
On Street Car Parking Reserve	6.5	-1.2	5.3	This surplus has arisen under the operation of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 (section 55). The purposes for which these monies can be used are defined by statute.
Budget Equalisation Reserve	0	0	0	
Subtotal Other Reserves	**21.7**	**-3.9**	**17.8**	

Business Management & Monitoring Report
Position to the end of March 2025
Earmarked Reserves

	2024/25			Description
	Balance at 1 April 2024	Movement	Balance at 31 March 2025	
	£m	£m	£m	
Total Earmarked Reserves	**210.3**	**44.1**	**254.4**	
DSG Unusable Reserve *	-56.0	-36.5	-92.5	
DSG High Needs deficit within Unusable Reserve *	**-55.8**	**-36.5**	**-92.3**	* total exluding postive balances (eg. new schools set up fund offset by High Needs Deficit)
Total Earmarked Reserves after DSG Unusable Reserve	**154.3**	**7.6**	**161.9**	

Business Management Report
Position to the end of March 2025
Government Grants 2024/25

Ringfenced	Directorate	Issued By	Estimate 2024/25 £000	In year Adjustments / New Allocations previously reported £000	In year Adjustments/ New Allocations reported this time £000	Final Grant Received in 2024/25 £000
	Adult Services					
R	Improved Better Care Fund	DHSC	10,705	0	0	10,705
R	Adult Social Care Market Sustainability and Improvement Fund	DHSC	10,026	0	0	10,026
R	Adult Social Care Discharge Fund	DHSC	1,501	1,000	0	2,501
R	Adult Social Care Market Sustainability and Improvement Fund - Workforce Fund	DHSC	0	0	0	0
R	CQC Review and Assessment Grant	DHSC	0	0	0	0
	TOTAL ADULT SERVICES		**22,232**	**1,000**	**0**	**23,232**
	Children's Services					
	Dedicated School Grants					
R	Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) - Schools Block	DfE	132,163	-4,560	-806	126,797
R	Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) - Central Block	DfE	5,153	43	0	5,196
R	Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) - Early Years Block	DfE	73,221	2,145	4,795	80,161
R	Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) - High Needs Block	DfE	89,405	69	0	89,474
	Subtotal DSG Grants		**299,942**	**-2,303**	**3,989**	**301,628**
	School Grants					
R	Pupil Premium	DfE	8,194	-122	0	8,072
R	Education Funding Agency - Sixth Form Funding and Threshold	DfE	321	50	0	371
R	PE and Sport Grant	DfE	2,217	-136	0	2,081
R	Universal Infant Free School Meals	DfE	4,047	-118	0	3,929
R	Teacher's Pension Grant	DfE	10	4,051	0	4,061
R	Recovery Premium	DfE	0	137	0	137
R	National Tutoring Grant	DfE	0	96	0	96
R	Early Career Framework - Off Timetable	DfE	0	166	0	166
R	Early Career Framework - Mentor	DfE	0	65	0	65
R	Teacher's Pay Additional Grant	DfE	0	2,904	0	2,904
R	ESFA Training Grant (National Professional Qualification)	DfE	0	19	0	19
R	Core Schools Budget Grant	DfE	0	4,063	0	4,063
R	Early Year Supplement Grant	DfE	0	0	0	0
	Subtotal School Grants		**14,789**	**11,174**	**0**	**25,963**

Business Management Report
Position to the end of March 2025
Government Grants 2024/25

Ringfenced	Directorate	Issued By	Estimate 2024/25 £000	In year Adjustments / New Allocations previously reported £000	In year Adjustments/ New Allocations reported this time £000	Final Grant Received in 2024/25 £000
	Other Children's Services Grants					
	Education					
R	Role of Virtual School Heads to children with a social worker	DfE	0	164	0	164
R	Role of Virtual School Heads to Previously Looked after Children	DfE	0	66	0	66
R	Pupil Premium Plus post 16 pilot	DfE	0	148	0	148
R	Supported Internships for Young People with SEND	NDTi	0	0	0	0
R	Intervention Delivering Better Value in SEND - Grant for Data Analysis	DfE	0	0	0	0
R	Multiply	DfE	0	899	0	899
R	Music Service	AC	844	0	0	844
R	Social Care					
R	Youth Justice Grant	YJB	704	9	1	714
R	Asylum (UASC and Post 18)	HO	4,636	1,335	841	6,812
R	Extended Personal Adviser Duty Grant - Care Leavers Staffing	DfE	112	0	0	112
R	Staying Put Implementation Grant - Fostering Main	DfE	288	0	0	288
R	Remand Framework	YJB	37	34	0	71
R	Reducing Parental Conflict Workforce Development Grant	DWP	0	48	-4	44
R	Matching project - Adoption Grant	DfE	0	114	0	114
R	Holiday Activities and Food Programme	DfE	0	1,547	-66	1,481
R	Adopton Support Fund	DfE	0	0	2	2
R	Family Group Conferences	DfE	0	124	-11	113
R	Turnaround Programme	YJB	0	170	-7	163
R	Child Decision Making Pilots (NRM)	HO	0	43	0	43
R	Fostering Recruitment Support Hub Mobilisation	DfE	0	42	-42	0
R	Employer Support Fund - Social Work Apprenticeships	DfE	0	67	196	263
U	Implementation of Supported Accommodation Reforms	DfE	299	-299	0	1
	Subtotal Other Children's Services Grants		**6,920**	**4,511**	**910**	**12,342**
	TOTAL CHILDREN'S SERVICES		**321,651**	**13,383**	**4,899**	**339,933**
	Economy & Place					
R	Zero Emissions Transport City		0	187	0	187
R	LEP		0	615	0	615
R	OBS		0	205	0	205
R	Active travel	ATE	0	90	0	90
R	Capability & Ambition Fund	ATE	0	1,136	0	1,136
R	Bus Service Improvement Plan	DfT	0	3,564	0	3,564
	TOTAL ECONOMY & PLACE		**0**	**5,797**	**0**	**5,797**

Business Management Report
Position to the end of March 2025
Government Grants 2024/25

Ringfenced	Directorate	Issued By	Estimate 2024/25 £000	In year Adjustments / New Allocations previously reported £000	In year Adjustments/ New Allocations reported this time £000	Final Grant Received in 2024/25 £000
	Environment & Highways					
R	Bus Service Operators Grant	DfT	309	0	0	309
R	Natural England	DEFRA	227	0	0	227
R	PMO	H&GD	70	0	0	70
R	LNRS Natural Environment	NE	0	111	0	111
	TOTAL ENVIRONMENT & HIGHWAYS		**606**	**111**	**0**	**717**
	Public Health & Communities					
R	Public Health Grant	DHSC	34,401	629	0	35,030
R	Local Stop Smoking Grant	DHSC	790	5	0	795
R	Homes for Ukraine	DLUHC	0	0	3,087	3,087
	TOTAL PUBLIC HEALTH & COMMUNITIES		**35,191**	**634**	**3,087**	**38,912**
	Fire & Rescue Service and Community Safety					
R	Fire Fighter's Pension Fund Grant	DLUHC	1,061	0	0	1,061
R	Fire Fighter's Pension Fund Admin Grant	DLUHC	75	0	0	75
R	Fire Protection Uplift Grant	DLUHC	303	-52	0	251
R	Fire Fighter's New Dimensons Grant	DLUHC	40	0	0	40
	TOTAL FIRE & RESCUE and COMMUNITY SAFETY		**1,479**	**-52**	**0**	**1,427**
	Resources and Law & Governance					
R	Household Support Fund - April 24 to Mar 25	DWP			6,722	6,722
	TOTAL RESOURCES and LAW & GOVERNANCE		**0**	**0**	**6,722**	**6,722**
	Transformation, Digital & Customer Experience					0
	TOTAL TRANSFORMATION, DIGITAL & CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE		**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**

Business Management Report
Position to the end of March 2025
Government Grants 2024/25

Ringfenced	Directorate	Issued By	Estimate 2024/25	In year Adjustments / New Allocations previously reported	In year Adjustments/ New Allocations reported this time	Final Grant Received in 2024/25
			£000	£000	£000	£000
	Strategic Measures					
U	Lead Local Flood Authority	DEFRA	45	-45		0
U	New Homes Bonus	DLUHC	1,700	-26		1,674
U	Local Reform & Community Voices Grant	DfE	328	0		328
U	Social Care in Prisons Grant	DfE	183	7	0	190
U	War Pensions Disregard Grant	DfE	4	102	0	106
U	Social Care Support Grant (including Independent Living Fund)	DLUHC	42,443			42,443
U	Services Grant	DHSC	444	58		502
U	Accelerated Reform Fund	DHSC	0		519	519
U	Extended Rights to Free Travel	DfE	278	707	0	985
U	Firelink	HO	213	-126	0	87
U	Supplementary Substance Misuse Treatment & Recovery Grant	OHID	635	501	0	1,136
U	Supplementary Substance Misuse Treatment & Recovery Housing Grant	OHID	622	0	0	622
U	Supplementary Substance Misuse Inpatient Detox & Rehabilitation	OHID	80	0	0	80
U	Rough Sleeping Drugs & Alcohol Grant	OHID	1,140	0	0	1,140
U	Domestic Abuse Duty Grant	DLUHC	1,151	38	0	1,189
U	Individual Placement and Support in community drug and alcohol treatment	OHID	228	0	0	228
U	Supporting Families - previously Troubled Families	DfE	1,048	428	268	1,744
U	Leaving Care Allowance Uplift Grant	DfE	0	136	0	136
U	Rough sleeping strategy - Care Leavers	DfE	0	95	0	95
U	Implementation of Supported Accommodation Reforms	DfE	0	990	0	990
U	Wraparound Childcare Programmme	DfE	0	2,110	0	2,110
U	Phonics & Moderation Grant	DfE	0	20		20
U	Trading Standards - Offensive Weapons Act grant	HO	0	10	0	10
U	Financial Reporting Grant	DLUHC	0	0	0	0
U	Transparency New Burdens Grant	MHCLG	0	0	13	13
U	Single Use Plastic Grant	DEFRA	0	0		0
	Subtotal Strategic Measures		**50,541**	**5,005**	**799**	**56,345**
	Business Rates					
U	Section 31 Grant for Business Rate Compensation	DLUHC	19,945	1,289		21,234
U	Business Rates S31 Grant Top-Up	DLUHC	42,128			42,128
U	Revenue Support Grant	DLUHC	1,394	141		1,535
	Subotal Business Rates		**63,467**	**1,430**	**0**	**64,897**

Business Management Report
Position to the end of March 2025
Government Grants 2024/25

Ringfenced	Directorate	Issued By	Estimate 2024/25	In year Adjustments / New Allocations previously reported	In year Adjustments/ New Allocations reported this time	Final Grant Received in 2024/25
			£000	£000	£000	£000
	Grants held on behalf of Local Enterprise Partnership					
R	Dept for Business & Trade funding	BEIS	261	-261		0
R	DfE Skills Bootcamp funding	DLUHC	2,696	-2,696		0
	Subtotal Grants held on behalf of Local Enterprise Partnership		**2,957**	**-2,957**	**0**	**0**
	TOTAL STRATEGIC MEASURES		**116,965**	**3,478**	**799**	**121,242**
	Total All Grants		**498,124**	**24,351**	**15,508**	**537,982**

R	Ringfenced grant	**DLUHC**	Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities
U	Un-ringfenced grant	**BEIS**	Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy
	Issued by	**OHID**	Office for Health Improvement and Disparities
HO	Home Office	**DEFRA**	Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
DHSC	Department of Health & Social Care	**AC**	Arts Council
DfT	Department for Transport	**YJB**	Youth Justice Board
DfE	Department for Education	**NDTi**	National Development team for Inclusion

Business Management & Monitoring Report
Position to the end of March 2025
General Revenue Balances

	2024/25	
	£m	£m
General Balances: Outturn 2023/24	42.026	
County Fund Balance		**42.026**
Agreed contribution from balances (February 2024)	-3.700	
Agreed contribution from balances (June 2024)	-5.800	
Outturn position 2024/25 after 23/24 drawdowns		**32.526**
Add: Outturn underspend (as set out in Annex 1)		12.756
Previously agreed in Feb 2025 budget		
Contribution to Transformation reserve	-10.000	
Contribution to Redundancy reserve	-0.800	
Calls on balances deducted		-10.800
Net General Balances		**34.482**
Calls on / returns to balances requested in this report		
Innovate Oxfordshire	-0.500	
BIPC	-0.100	
		-0.600
Net General Balances after additional requests		**33.882**
Risk Assessed Level of Balances for 2024/25		**30.200**

Surplus/(deficit) balances compared to risk assessed level 3.7

1.   Complaints and FOI Requests

1.1 Summary of Statutory and Corporate Complaints (March 2025)

•   A total of 51 complaints were logged during 1 – 31 March 2025, comprising 37 stage 1 complaints, 14 stage 2 complaints. This represents a 4.1% increase
        compared to February 2025
•   14 cases were closed, 11 within of timescale and 3 outside of it. There are 37 cases still open,35 within timescale and 2 outside
•   Children's Directorate received the most cases, with 36 of the 51 total cases. Of these, 9 were closed (6 within and 3 outside of timescale) ,27 remain open (26 within of timescale and
        1 outside)

1.2 Freedom of Information Requests (FOI) and Environmental Information Regulation (EIR).

•   A total of 196 requests were logged as FOI/EIR during March, marking a 16.7% increase from February (28 more requests)
•   62 requests have been closed during March, all within the 20 working days of receiving the initial request. No requests were closed outside of timescale.
•   134 requests remain open and on-time within 20 working days of receiving the initial requests, with none remaining open outside of timescale.
•   100% of requests were closed within timescale.

31st March 2025										
	01. Number of complaints received	02. Complaints closed at the end of the month	03. Closed within timescale	04. Closed outside of timescale	05. Percent closed within timescale	06. Open within timescale	07.Percent open within timescale	08. Open outside of timescale	09. Percent open outside of timescale	10. Number upheld	11. Percent upheld

Adult Social Care Corporate Stage 1	1	0	0	0	0%	1	100%	0	0%	0	0%
Adult Social Care Statutory Stage 1	4	1	1	0	100%	3	100%	0	0%	1	100%
Children's Corporate Stage 1	20	9	6	3	67%	11	100%	0	0%	4	44%
Children's Statutory Stage 1	5	0	0	0	0%	4	80%	1	20%	0	0%
Community Safety Stage 1	0	0	0	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Economy & Place Stage 1	3	1	1	0	100%	2	100%	0	0%	1	100%
Highways & Environment Stage 1	3	2	2	0	100%	0	0%	1	100%	1	50%
Law & Governance Stage 1	1	1	1	0	100%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Publich Health Stage 1	0	0	0	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Resources Stage 1	0	0	0	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%

Tranformation Digital & Customer Experience Stage 1	0	0	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Stage 1 Complaints Total	**37**	**14**	**11**	**3**	**79%**	**21**	**91%**	**2**	**9%**	**7**	**50%**

Stage 2 Complaints											
31st March 2025											
	01. Number of complaints received	02. Complaints closed at the end of the month	03. Closed within timescale	04. Closed outside of timescale	05. Percent closed within timescale	06. Open within timescale	07.Percent open within timescale	08. Open outside of timescale	09. Percent open outside of timescale	10. Number upheld	11. Percent upheld
Adult Social Care Corporate Stage 2	0	0	0	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Adult Social Care Statutory Stage 2	3	0	0	0	0%	3	100%	0	0%	0	0%
Children's Corporate Stage 2	6	0	0	0	0%	6	100%	0	0%	0	0%
Children's Statutory Stage 2	5	0	0	0	0%	5	100%	0	0%	0	0%
Community Safety Stage 2	0	0		0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%

Economy & Place Stage 2	0	0	0	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Highways & Environment Stage 2	0	0			0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Law & Governance Stage 2	0	0	0		0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Publich Health Stage 2	0	0	0	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Resources Stage 2	0	0	0	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Tranformation Digital & Customer Experience Stage 2	0	0	0	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Stage 2 Complaints Total	**14**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0%**	**14**	**100%**	**0**	**0%**	**0**	**0%**

Complaints by Service			
31st March			
		Previous Period	Current Period	Actual
Adult Social Care All Complaints	Adult Social Care	11	8	-3
	Adult Social Care Corporate Housing	0	0	0

	Commissioning	0	0	0
Children's Services All Complaints	Children's Education	15	24	9
	Children's Social Care	12	12	0
Environment and Place All Complaints	Highways and Operations	2	2	0
	Planning, Environment and Climate Change	4	2	-2
	Transport and Infrastructure	3	2	-1
Public Health and Community Safety All Complaints	Public Health and Community Safety	0	0	0
Resources Directorate (CODR and L&G) All Complaints	Customer and Culture	0	1	1
	Finance	1	0	-1
	HR and OD	1	0	-1
Total All Complaints	**Total**	**49**	**51**	**2**

	FOIs								
	31st March 2025								
	01. Number of complaints received	02. Complaints closed at the end of the month	03. Closed within timescale	04. Closed outside of timescale	05. Percent closed within timescale	06. Open within timescale	07.Percent open within timescale	08. Open outside of timescale	09. Percent open outside of timescale
Adult Social Care FOIs	10	2	2	0	100%	8	100%	0	0%
Children's Services FOIs	34	7	7	0	100%	27	100%	0	0%
Community Safety FOIs	13	8	8	0	100%	5	100%	0	0%
Economy & Place FOIs	25	6	6	0	100%	19	100%	0	0%
Highways & Environment FOIs	47	16	16	0	100%	31	100%	0	0%
Law & Governance FOIs	1	0	0	0	0%	1	100%	0	0%
Publich Health FOIs	6	2	2	0	100%	4	100%	0	0%
Resources FOIs	59	21	21	0	100%	38	100%	0	0%
Tranformation Digital & Customer Experience FOIs	1	0	0	0	0%	1	100%	0	0%
All FOIs Total	**196**	**62**	**62**	**0**	**100%**	**134**	**100%**	**0**	**0%**

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Greener

Fairer

Healthier

Annual report

2024–2025

Working in partnership
to make Oxfordshire a greener,
fairer and healthier county.

OXFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Foreword

Welcome to Oxfordshire County Council's annual report, providing an overview of our performance and key achievements from April 2024 to March 2025.

Our vision is to make Oxfordshire a greener, fairer and healthier county, and this is centred around strong local communities, healthy places to live and a sustainable and inclusive economy that benefits everyone.

Including everyone lies at the heart of our vision. This means providing inclusive services with equal access for all; working with communities to tackle health inequalities; providing an inclusive workplace with equality of opportunity; and supporting an inclusive local economy, such as using local businesses in our supply chain.

We want to enable people across the county to be happy, healthy, safe and successful, from getting the best start in life to ageing well and remaining as independent as possible for as long as possible. Our Oxfordshire Way transformation programme is making a real difference in this respect, with outreach

teams, local coordinators and innovative technology all supporting people to live happy, healthy lives.

We also want to ensure that our decision-making process is inclusive, enabling people to make their views known on the issues that matter to them. This includes involving and engaging children and young people in shaping policy and decision making through initiatives such as our SEND youth forum and Future Generations work.

Tackling climate change underpins all we do as the climate emergency is the biggest challenge the planet faces. We are really proud of our achievements, from being the top-performing county council waste disposal authority for the 11th year running to approving over 200 requests for reducing the speed limit to 20mph in towns and villages across our county.

Our strategic plan 2023–2025 sets out our nine cross-cutting priorities (see pages 4–5) and details how we will deliver our vision and commitments. Our budget set in February 2025 supports the continued delivery of our

plan, which is reviewed annually, and allows us to both invest in our priorities and meet our demand pressures for the year ahead. This annual report provides an insight into our progress over the last year.

Thank you for taking the time to read this report. As we look forward to 2025–2026, we will continue to ensure that we provide the greatest opportunities possible for our residents.

Councillor Liz Leffman, Leader of Oxfordshire County Council

Our nine priorities

Our vision

To lead positive change by working in partnership to make Oxfordshire a greener, fairer and healthier county.

CLIMATE ACTION
Oxfordshire County Council
Carbon neutral by 2030

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

2. Tackle inequalities in Oxfordshire

6. Preserve and improve access to nature and green spaces

7. Create opportunities for children and young people to reach their full potential

3. Prioritise the health and wellbeing of residents

4. Support carers and the social care system

5. Invest in an inclusive, integrated and sustainable transport network

Powered by electric

8. Play our part in a vibrant and participatory local democracy

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

Greener

Fairer

Healthier

The climate emergency

Our strategic priority

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

Oxfordshire County Council
CLIMATE ACTION
Carbon neutral by 2030

- We helped residents recycle, reuse or compost 57.6 per cent of household waste, making us the **top-performing county council waste disposal authority for the 11th year running.**

- We welcomed over one million visitors to our seven **household waste recycling centres.** 70 per cent of all waste received was recycled.

- We organised a **flood summit, Oxfordshire Under Water**, in November 2024, bringing partners together to discuss how to improve resilience and our response to flooding.

- Our food waste team contacted almost 10,000 households to promote food waste recycling. The project **increased annual food waste recycling** by 100 tonnes.

- Our **Action on Carbon and Energy in Schools programme** supported an additional 22 county schools. Overall, it saved 42 tonnes of CO_2 and £44,000 on energy costs. In addition, we provided energy efficiency loans to six schools to create environmentally friendly classrooms.

- We **expanded our electric vehicle fleet** to 58 - over 13 per cent of our total fleet. This saved 100 tonnes of CO_2 annually.

- We **reduced our operational emissions** by 71 per cent, avoiding 118,000 tonnes of CO_2, equivalent to the annual emissions of 74,000 petrol cars.

- We rolled out the innovative **Energy Saver App,** which is enabling 8,000 residents to save money and install home retrofit measures.

Greener

We were awarded £2.5 million by the government to **install a range of insulation, low-carbon heating measures and solar PV in more than 160 low-income households** who don't have mains gas.

We collaborated with Exeter University to develop a tool to help stakeholders **understand Oxfordshire's climate vulnerabilities**.

We completed the **Clean Heat Streets partnership project**, installing 31 air-source heat-pumps in Rose Hill, Oxford.

We supported **117 community action groups** to hold 8,000 events to encourage and inspire environmental and sustainable behaviours.

We received £99,000 LCSF5 grant funding for the **design of a zero carbon heating system** for two county council sites, with £565,000 of Salix Recycling Fund spent on **LED and solar PV projects** for a further 12 sites. This is in addition to decarbonisation grant funding already secured last year.

We launched the **Oxfordshire Green Investment** in December 2024, raising an initial £500,000 from members of the public to help fund a range of decarbonisation schemes on council-owned buildings, such as fire stations and care homes.

We adopted an **Oxfordshire climate adaptation route map** containing 82 measures, which will help ensure the county's natural environment, communities, infrastructure and businesses are prepared for more severe flooding, a higher likelihood of water scarcity, cold snaps, storms and more intense heatwaves.

Travel and transport

Our strategic priority

Invest in an inclusive, integrated and sustainable transport network

- Work began to roll out **Vision Zero, a package of safety improvements** as well as behaviour change initiatives that will help eliminate death and serious injuries on our roads.

- **We started work on a number of major infrastructure programmes**, including upgrades to the M40 junction 10 roundabout, improvements to the A40 near Witney, and access to Banbury Station.

- **We completed improvements** to the A44 between the Pear Tree interchange and Cassington Road roundabout, Bicester's Banbury Road junction, the Benson relief road, Oxford's Woodstock Road and Kidlington roundabout.

- We awarded £106,530 in grants to nine organisations to **maintain vital community transport services.**

A44 LOOP FARM ROUNDABOUT

Greener

- An **electric car club pilot scheme** was so popular that 15 vehicles have remained in place at more than 10 new and existing locations around the county.

- £3.6 million was secured to **improve public EV charging**, making driving electric vehicles more accessible for all.

- Over 200 requests have now been approved to **reduce speed limits to 20mph** in towns and villages across the county.

- Together with bus operators, we launched a new Oxfordshire bus ticket, which offers **unlimited travel for a fixed price** on more than 150 bus services run by 12 operators in Oxfordshire.

- In April 2024, five new bus routes began operating to **connect more villages to market towns** and Oxford, following the council's allocation of £1.2 million for rural and community transport.

- A vital new link **connecting Wantage and Grove** officially opened to traffic in December 2024. The new route will help reduce congestion in Wantage town centre and the surrounding road network.

- Our History Centre launched a free digital resource to enable people to **discover the rich history of Oxfordshire's roads and bridges**, including a 1905 survey that recorded all highways and bridges for which the county council was responsible following its establishment in 1889.

OVER 150 BUS SERVICES

JUST ONE TICKET

Travel around Oxfordshire for less with MyBus

mybusoxfordshire.org.uk

Funded by UK Government

Stagecoach

oxford bus company

OXFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Nature and green spaces

Our strategic priority

Preserve and improve access to nature and green spaces

- We **planted 825 trees**, inspected more than 6,700 individual or groups of trees, and arranged and completed more than **3,300 tree care operations**.

- We worked with a broad range of stakeholders and partners to draft and consult on a **Local Nature Recovery Strategy,** which will develop a coordinated approach to recover nature across the county.

- Our countryside access team **repaired and replaced 139 bridges, maintained 319km of pathways and cleared 125 fallen or hazardous trees**.

- We planted **16 new community orchards,** which included 250 fruit producing trees.

- A total of **45 biodiversity volunteers** were recruited, providing over 195 hours of volunteer time.

Greener

- **20 new road verge nature reserves** were designated, ensuring continued protection of biodiversity next to our roads.

- **Two natural flood management schemes** were implemented in Sunningwell and Littleworth, with input from local communities and partners.

- We delivered two significant **footpath access improvement projects**. One in Wolstone and the other, a DEFRA funded Removing Barriers project, in Milton-Under-Wychwood.

Greener

Tackling inequalities

Our strategic priority

Tackle inequalities in Oxfordshire

- Through our government-funded **resident support scheme**, over 4,500 vulnerable households received more than £1.2 million in supermarket vouchers, energy credit and essential household items.

- We spent £3.3 million ensuring families of children entitled to free school meals received **support with food costs** during the school holidays.

- £300,000 was provided to **four Citizens Advice offices and four independent advice providers** to enable services to continue to be supported.

- **Free access to period products** was made available on a trial basis in libraries and children and family centres for people facing period poverty.

- We launched our **refreshed Equalities, Diversity and Inclusion Framework 2025-29**, working with residents and communities who shared their lived experience and feedback.

- We ran a **reciprocal mentoring scheme**, pairing senior leaders with colleagues from underrepresented groups to mentor one another as ambassadors for inclusion.

- In January 2025 we signed up to the **UNISON anti-racism charter** – the first local government employer in the south-east to do so.
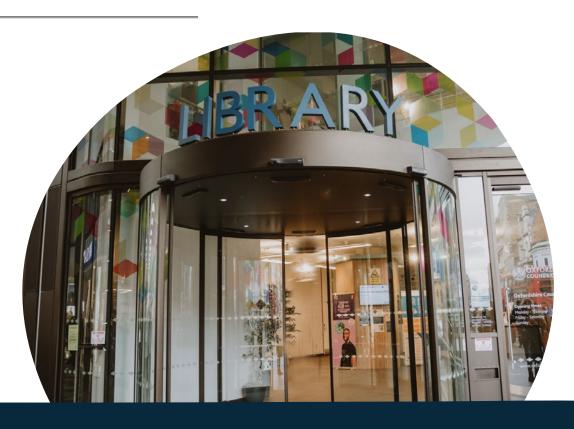
Including Everyone
2025 - 2029
Equalities, diversity and inclusion framework

OXFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Fairer

Fairer

- We partnered with Asylum Welcome and local bus companies to pilot **free bus travel** for asylum seekers in Oxford.

- In March 2025 we became the first county council to be awarded **local authority of sanctuary status**, underpinning our commitment to supporting people fleeing war, persecution and serious human rights violations.

- In November 2024 we secured **RACE Equality Code accreditation** - a commitment to taking action for race equality in our workplace and decision-making.

- **Oxfordshire Employment**, funded by the council, celebrated 10 years of helping adults who have had to overcome challenges to find and retain employment. The service was also **graded** "**good**" under the new Supported Employment Quality Framework.

- 10,435 people attended our **digital and information support sessions** in libraries, and library users clocked up over **90,000 hours of free access time** on library computers.

- We introduced out of hours emergency services for **urgent death registrations and urgent end of life weddings** for couples where one partner is terminally ill.

Local democracy

Our strategic priority

Play our part in a vibrant and participatory local democracy

- We launched the **Oxfordshire Councils Charter** in July 2024 to enhance local democracy and improve ways of working between Oxfordshire councils.

- We **celebrated an affiliation between Oxfordshire and the Royal Navy ship HMS Diamond** in February 2025, reaffirming the council's commitment to our armed forces communities.

- We revised, updated and published a **full review of our Constitution**.

- We have **improved digital access** in the council chamber and committee rooms, to ensure anyone who wants to take part is able to do so.

- **Young people have been actively shaping our Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) services** and a quality seal of approval is now being used where co-production was involved.

- 34 residents took part in our **first Citizens' Assembly** in February and March 2025, spending 45 hours discussing and making recommendations on Oxfordshire's transport system.

- We held our **first Future Generations Fortnight** in November 2024 to involve and engage children and young people in local democracy.

- Our Education and Young People Overview & Scrutiny Committee now includes a number of young people as members, helping ensure the **perspectives of young residents are included** in discussions and decision-making processes.

- We began work with other councils to develop proposals that will **shape local government** in the county and wider region following the publication of the English Devolution White Paper in December 2024.

seal of approval

S E N D
Youth Forum

Fairer

Local businesses and partners

Our strategic priority

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

Fairer

- Together with partners we **launched Our Oxfordshire Story** and an Oxfordshire champions network in July 2024 to collectively promote the county and help attract inward investment.

- We worked to ensure the smooth transition of **Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership (OxLEP)**, which supported thousands of businesses, to a new operating model and trading name (**Enterprise Oxfordshire**).

- We created **over £1.9 million in social value** through our tendering activities, from using local businesses in our supply chain to using local residents employed on local contracts.

- Our trading standards team conducted over **2,000 interventions with Oxfordshire businesses**, providing advice and support, testing products and procedures.

- Through a GigaHubs project, we **improved connectivity for 191 public service sites** in rural Oxfordshire.

- There were 2,815 visits to the **Business and Intellectual Property Centre** in Oxford Westgate Library to access business support.

- We worked with Oxfordshire Social Enterprise Partnership to provide grants that allowed **local social entrepreneurs** to attend the B Corps **Louder than Words** conference – for businesses with strong environmental and ethical standards.

- We won funding to build **two private 5G networks** at Harwell Science Campus and between Bicester and Bletchley on the new East West Rail route - supporting the local economy.

- Through the **Councillor Priority Fund**, councillors distributed £945,000 to support local projects between 2023 and 2025, including community gardens, playgrounds, food banks and larders.

Health and wellbeing

Our strategic priority

Prioritise the health and wellbeing of residents

- We had 10,418 conversations with residents on health-related issues, through our **Making Every Conversation Count** initiative across Oxfordshire libraries.

- We delivered 17,237 **NHS health checks** across the county to those aged between 40 and 74.

- With the NHS, we've **jointly funded Active Oxfordshire** to help get people moving. YouMove and MoveTogether have reached over 17,000 residents.

- 6,091 children have now joined our **cycle training programme**, which teaches 7–11 year olds to ride safely.

- We introduced a **new health visitor review** for all children before they start school. 2,595 children have been seen and supported.

- 2,514 residents completed **the DrinkCoach test** to better understand the health risks associated with their drinking.

Healthier

- In May 2024 we launched the **Local Policy Lab**, a joint initiative with Oxford University and Oxford Brookes in which researchers and students collect and evaluate data around health and climate policy initiatives.

- In November 2024 we partnered with University College London's Institute of Health Equity and renowned academic Professor Sir Michael Marmot to become a **Marmot Place, a two-year programme to tackle health inequalities in local communities.**

- Ansaf Azhar, Director of Public Health, published his annual report which looked at the **health impacts of climate change** and the positive benefits of climate action for individuals, families and communities.

- All women who contacted the integrated sexual health service received **emergency contraception advice** within one working day, and **contraceptives** within two days.

- We introduced **local area co-ordinators** to work directly with residents to help improve their wellbeing.

Children and Young People's Mental Health

2024/25 Director of Public Health Annual Report

Director of Public Health Annual Report 2024/2025

A stitch in time:
Supporting the mental wellbeing of young people today to improve their prospects for tomorrow

OXFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

100% More young people out of work due to ill health compared to 10 years ago

More than 1 in 4 secondary school children barely showed up to school in 2023.

1 in 3 young people report a mental health problem

Hi, I'm **Lisa,** your local area coordinator for Kidlington.

Speak to me about what you're finding challenging. Together we'll find a way forward.

Hi, I'm **Cheryl,** your local area coordinator for Chipping Norton.

Speak to me about what you're finding challenging. Together we'll find a way forward.

Hi, I'm **Tamsin,** your local area coordinator for east Bicester.

Speak to me about what you're finding challenging. Together we'll find a way forward

Healthier

Carers and social care

Our strategic priority

Support carers and the social care system

- The longest waiting time for a **social care assessment** is now 42 days, a reduction of 80 percent in the past four years.

- We supported more people to live in their local communities for longer, arranging **3,186 packages of home care**.

- Our reablement service helped 74 per cent of people leaving hospital **regain their independence** and 85.5 per cent achieve independence or a reduction in the amount of care support they require.

- In the latest round of our **community capacity grants**, 94 grassroots projects were awarded funding totalling £597,000 to help isolated people stay connected, healthy and active in their community.

- We introduced **carer ID cards** to help unpaid carers to access the extra support that they are entitled to, often at a time when they need it most.

- We funded and supported the **implementation of West Vale Mobility**, a community transport service, supporting residents in a rural area of the county to access their local health and wellbeing services.

Healthier

- We **opened The Hagbournes**, a 12-person supported living property for young people moving into adulthood.

- Our **customer service centre** handled 23,381 inbound phone calls, 23,101 outbound phone calls, and 44,926 emails about adult social care. This resulted in 4,683 referrals.

- Our **social care academy** recruited its largest ever group of 15 social work apprentices.

- We **redesigned our short break service** (respite care) with the help of people who use the service, resulting in a hybrid system offering traditional building-based stays as well as more flexible community-based solutions.

- We completed the **refurbishment of eight properties** for people with additional needs. This has helped 39 people live well in their own communities.
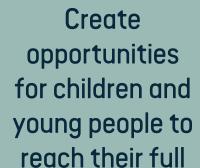
- We **supported 69 job starts** and worked with **294 people** to provide them with advice, guidance and in-work support.

- A countywide **health and social care connections** roadshow enabled over 750 residents and stakeholders to share their experiences of health and social care services with senior figures in the NHS and Oxfordshire County Council.

- Alongside the Transfer of Care Hub our '**discharge to assess' programme** has enabled more than 7,000 people to be discharged safely from hospital — an increase of 23 per cent compared to the previous year.

Page 339

Healthier

Children and young people

Our strategic priority

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

- In January 2025, we brought together 100 delegates at an **Early Years Summit** to discuss the importance of early childhood development, the challenges young children face and how partners can move forward together.

- Our **behaviour inclusion team** supported 292 students, meeting their social, emotional and mental health needs and reducing suspensions.

- 55 children and young people have been supported by mentors through our **big brother, big sister programme**.

- We launched a **Life Long Links** service to support care experienced young people to reconnect and build safe relationships.

- We **opened a new nursery** in Woodstock, creating 88 new government funded places to support families with childcare needs.

- We invested in **adaptive musical instruments**, giving children with SEND opportunities to perform and compose music.

- We **reopened our Leys Children and Family Centre** after extensive refurbishments, with new play and learn spaces for families.

- We joined the largest **local authority fostering partnership** in the country, working across the south east to recruit more foster carers.

Healthier

- We **opened a new children's home in Oxfordshire** and are developing three more, helping us care for more children locally.

- We launched a **new early help strategy** and are working with partners to support families earlier.

- 9,808 pupils experienced **hands on history**, with 217 loans to schools from our museums service.

- Our **enhanced pathways initiative** is now in 20 schools, supporting 165 children with SEND to stay in their local school.

- We invested £9.4 million in **expanding Grove Church of England Primary School**, creating 100 new primary school and 39 nursery places.

- We established a SEND youth forum in July 2024 to integrate the **voices of young people** into future service delivery.

- The quality of educational health and care plans (EHCPs) is improving: 44 per cent were **rated good or outstanding** in November 2024, compared with 21 per cent in July 2023.

- A WellComm pilot launched in January 2025 in 46 primary schools to identify children who may be **experiencing barriers to speech and language** development at an early stage.

- Over 2,000 young people accessed living well with **neurodivergence workshops and webinars** delivered by Autism Oxford in collaboration with the child and adolescent mental health services.

Healthier

Transformation

We launched a **new public data website**—the Oxfordshire Data Hub—to provide residents and partners with curated data about our county—on themes such as population, children and young people, health and environment.

We **improved the application process** for Blue Badges and also how we processed adult social care referrals—both are now quicker and easier for residents.

We're **growing our own talent** with the development of a work experience scheme, internship programmes and the expansion of the management trainee scheme to offer Chartered Managers Degree Apprenticeships.

In November 2024 we **improved customer experience** by introducing Zoom. It makes it easier for us to ensure customers are signposted more efficiently when contacting us. It also allows us to ultimately expand the number of ways customers can contact us.

We **piloted a community hub** at the Sunshine Centre in Banbury, bringing together partners like the NHS and Citizens Advice to offer community-based support for residents.

We continued to **transform and improve SEND** (special educational needs and disabilities) provision in the county. We secured funding for a new school in Didcot and expansion of a school in Oxford, established a SEND youth forum and saw improvements across the programme in delivery of support for parents and children.

The Oxfordshire Way continued to make a real difference, supporting people to live happy, healthy lives. Innovative use of technology helps people live independent lives, local coordinators now directly support residents to find answers to their questions and outreach teams work alongside partners to provide one to one, personalised care.

Innovation

We delivered the **Smart Infrastructure Pilots Programme (SIPP)**, funded by the Department for Science, Innovation and Technology (DSIT). It provides free WiFi and enhanced connectivity along a 1.5km corridor starting from Oxford train station to the city centre.

With partners Freshwave and VMO2, we deployed 4G small cells at 16 strategic locations, including 14 in Oxford city centre – this has more than **doubled the WiFi connectivity rates** for residents in the area.

We delivered **Project Skyway**, working with commercial partners and Coventry City Council and Reading Borough Council. The project consortium built 165 miles (265km) of drone superhighways, connecting airspace above major cities in the south of the UK. This improves routes for emergency response, search and rescue, transportation of organs and medical supplies, and conducting safer, more efficient surveys.

Awards

- Along with our community action groups, we won the national 2024 **LARAC Best Partnership award** for our joint efforts to improve recycling and reduce waste.

- Our **performance and insight analyst team** won the best teamwork award in the ONS Datathon 2024.

- "Cheers M'Dears" – Community Support Service Banbury was an **MJ Award Winner** for Innovation in Children's and Adults' Services 2024.

- Our construction project to improve access to Banbury railway station won a **Green Apple Environment Gold award**, recognising industry-leading carbon and cost reduction as part of its design and management.

- Our retrofit team, part of our climate action service, were finalists for the Energy Saver App project in the **Utility Week Awards**. It also received a special commendation in the **National Energy Efficiency Awards**.

- Susmita Dave and Sam Randle were runners up in the **Young Local Authority of the Year Awards**.

- Chief Fire Officer Rob MacDougall was recognised for over 25 years of service to public safety with a **King's Fire Service Medal in the New Year's Honours**.

- Two of our library managers, Jake Tilling and Karen Seymour, were recognised with a nomination at the prestigious **Libraries Connected Awards** for their work in improving health and wellbeing in their communities.

- Our cost of living support team was shortlisted for **Small Team of the Year in the 2025 LGC Awards**.

- Our internal communications team was shortlisted in two categories in the **Comms2Point0 national sector awards**, for best internal communications team and best small team.

- An innovative project to collect data for the food waste project was shortlisted for an **ESRI Customer Success Award** (Geographical Information Systems).

- Our Fire and Rescue Service – along with colleagues in Buckinghamshire Fire and Rescue, Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue and Thames Valley Police – was nominated and shortlisted for an award at the **Excellence in the Fire and Emergency Services Awards** ceremony.

Construction project:
Green Apple Environment Gold award

Waste and Recycling team:
LARAC Best Partnership award

Sam Randle and Susmita Dave:
Young Local Authority of the Year Awards

Karen Seymour:
Libraries Connected Awards

Mark Watson and Anne Kearsley:
ESRI Customer Success Award

Retrofit team:
National Energy Efficiency Awards

2024/25 in figures

We recorded **7,268** births and **6,551** deaths.

We conducted and registered **2,367** civil partnership and marriage ceremonies.

We repaired **37,255** potholes.

We conferred British citizenship on **1,620** new citizens.

Our fire and rescue service attended over **6,200** incidents.

Our inspectors of weights and measures tested and verified **600** items of weighing and measuring equipment.

87.4 per cent of applicants were awarded their first choice of secondary school in Oxfordshire for 2025/26.

We welcomed **127,685** visitors to the Oxfordshire Museum, providing free access to the county's history.

94.04 per cent of applicants were awarded their first choice of primary school in Oxfordshire for 2025/26.

We cared for **1,113** children.

735 children had a foster placement in year; this includes kinship.

196 children had a residential placement.

Our fire and rescue service completed **491** fire safety audits of commercial premises and 731 fire safety building regulations consultations.

Our libraries welcomed **2,021,941** visitors.

This represents an increase of almost six per cent on the previous year.

Performance and feedback

Performance summary

This summarises the progress we have made delivering against the activities, tasks and projects outlined in our strategic plan under each of the nine strategic priorities.

The bi-monthly business management and monitoring reports can be found here for further detail of achievements and action plans.

mycouncil.oxfordshire.gov.uk

Listening and learning

Throughout the year we provide opportunities to our residents to have their say. Whether through customer satisfaction surveys, consultations on our budget, new projects and services, talking to local business organisations or feedback through our website; we are keen to listen to what you like and what needs to be improved.

letstalk.oxfordshire.gov.uk

Let's Talk

On target/ Ahead of target
52

Slightly off target
7

Off target
11

Finance

What we spent on council services

In 2024/25 the council spent **£1,096m** on services – our gross expenditure. The chart below shows how much we spent on services in 2024/25.

50% Adult and children's social care

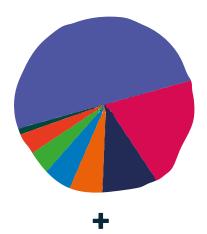**20%** Education and learning

10% Highways, transport and infrastructure

6% Capital borrowing and other financial costs (eg contingency and reserves)

5% Public health improvement and prevention services

4% Waste disposal and recycling

4% Fire and rescue and community safety
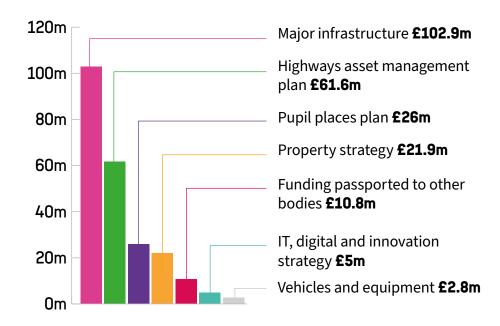
1% Libraries, culture and customer service

+

In addition we spent **£249m** on maintained schools.

Capital programme

In 2024/25, we spent **£231m** on capital projects which included investment in highway improvements, new school buildings, and children's homes and decarbonisation of the council's buildings. This money can only be used for the purpose it has been given and cannot be allocated to day-to-day council spending.

Major infrastructure **£102.9m**

Highways asset management plan **£61.6m**

Pupil places plan **£26m**

Property strategy **£21.9m**

Funding passported to other bodies **£10.8m**

IT, digital and innovation strategy **£5m**

Vehicles and equipment **£2.8m**

Contact us:

oxfordshire.gov.uk/contact-us

01865 792 422

Oxfordshire County Council
County Hall
New Road
Oxford
OX1 1ND

contact

details

online services

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social

You can **apply**, **book**, **find**, **report** and **pay** for a range of services on the county council's website:

oxfordshire.gov.uk

Let's talk

Have your say in **consultations about changes** to council services or policies at:

letstalk.oxfordshire.gov.uk

Sign up

For **monthly news and updates** from across the county, sign up to Your Oxfordshire and get the latest direct to your inbox.

oxfordshire.gov.uk/newsletter

CABINET – 17 June 2025

CAPITAL OUTTURN REPORT 2024/25

Report by Executive Director of Resources and Section 151 Officer

Recommendation

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

    a)   note the performance against the capital programme for 2024/25 as set out in the report.

    b)   note the Capital Programme Provisional Outturn Summary for 2024/25 as set out in:

    Annex 1a: Strategy Programmes Expenditure
    Annex 1b: Capital Financing
    Annex 1c: Strategy / Programme Level Reporting during the year

Executive Summary
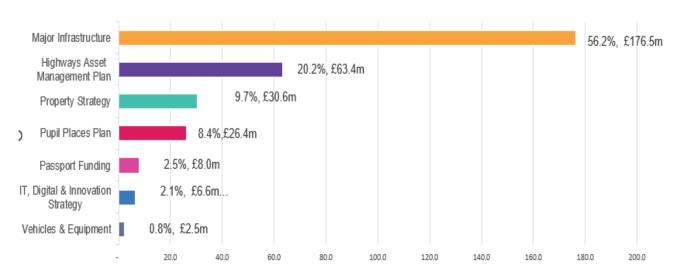
2. The ten-year Capital Programme sets out the agreed capital investment to deliver the priorities identified in the council's Capital and Investment Strategy. This report updates on the performance against the programme shown in the latest monitoring report for 2024/25 and also compares back to the capital programme agreed by Council in February 2024. Figures shown reflect those to be included in the Council's Statement of Accounts for 2024/25.

3. The capital programme is updated throughout the year to reflect the latest delivery profiles and cost estimates for each programme. The last update was based on the January 2025 monitoring position, and this was agreed by Cabinet in March 2025. Planned capital spend for 2024/25 totalled £251.1m. Actual capital programme expenditure by 31 March 2025 was £231.0m. The variation between the latest programme and the actual expenditure is -£20.1m (-8%).   This spend is now expected to take place in 2025/26.

4. The £231.0m expenditure was funded by £146.9m of capital grants and other external contributions, £27.1m of developer contributions and Community Infrastructure Levy, £3.3m of revenue contributions, and £53.7m of prudential borrowing.
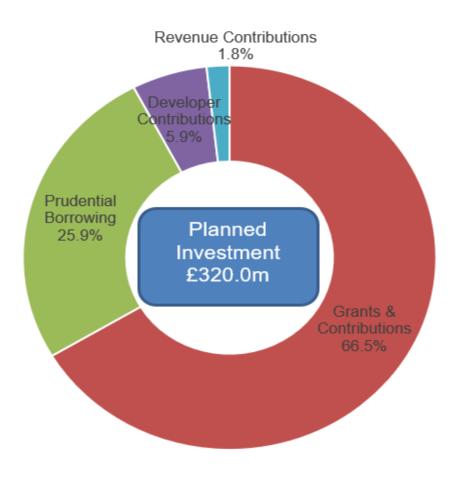
Introduction

5. Capital expenditure is defined as spending that creates an asset for the council (e.g. buildings, vehicles and equipment), and spending which meets the definition in regulations specified under the Local Government Act 2003

which includes spend on non-current assets that are not owned by the Council such as academy schools and the award of capital grants and funding agreements.

6. The council's ten-year capital programme sets out the agreed capital investment to deliver the priorities identified in the Capital and Investment Strategy. This is agreed annually by Council alongside the revenue budget and Medium-Term Financial Strategy.

7. The capital programme is currently structured as follows:

    - **Pupil Place Plan:** including basic need (new schools and expansion), maintenance, health and safety and improvements,
    - **Major Infrastructure:** including Growth Deal Infrastructure programme,
    - **Highways and structural maintenance:** including street lighting, and bridges,
    - **Property Strategy:** including health & safety, maintenance, improvements and the Investment Strategy,
    - **IT, Digital & Innovation Strategy:** including broadband, software and equipment,
    - **Passported Funds:** including Disabled Facilities Grant and Devolved Schools Capital,
    - **Vehicles and Equipment:** including fire and rescue vehicles and equipment,

8. Each strand of the programme is underpinned by supporting strategies which set out the need for capital investment and the contribution of that planned investment towards the council's priorities. These include:
    - Pupil Place Plan and Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Sufficiency Plan
    - Local Transport & Connectivity Plan
    - Highways Asset Management Plan
    - Property & Assets
    - Household Waste Recycling
    - Libraries & Heritage
    - Climate Action Framework
    - IT & Digital

9. The original capital programme for 2024/25 was agreed by Council in February 2024 as part of the Capital and Investment Strategy and set out anticipated spend of £320.0m. This included £26.4m (8% of the overall programme) for the provision of additional school places and new schools, and £240.0m (75% of the overall programme) planned expenditure on major infrastructure projects, including large road improvement schemes, and road maintenance. Funding required to deliver the IT & Digital Strategy was £6.6m and spend on the Property Strategy of £30.6m. The chart below shows the planned spend and the proportion of the overall programme by programme area based on the original budget plans for 2024/25.

2024/25 Original Budget

Major Infrastructure	56.2%, £176.5m
Highways Asset Management Plan	20.2%, £63.4m
Property Strategy	9.7%, £30.6m
Pupil Places Plan	8.4%, £26.4m
Passport Funding	2.5%, £8.0m
IT, Digital & Innovation Strategy	2.1%, £6.6m...
Vehicles & Equipment	0.8%, £2.5m

10.   As shown in the chart below it was planned to fund the planned investment of £320.0m from grants and contributions £212.6m (66.4% of the planned investment), developer contributions £18.9m (5.9%), prudential borrowing £82.8m (25.9%) and revenue contributions of £5.7m (1.8%).

Revenue Contributions 1.8%
Developer Contributions 5.9%
Prudential Borrowing 25.9%
Planned Investment £320.0m
Grants & Contributions 66.5%

11. The capital programme is updated four times each year to reflect the latest forecast profile of expenditure. The latest updated programme was agreed by Cabinet in March 2025 and set out anticipated investment of £251.1m in 2024/25.

12. Annex 1a sets out a summary of actual expenditure for 2024/25 by strategy area compared to both the original budget and latest budget.

Performance Summary 2024/25

13. A summary of actual expenditure compared to the latest capital programme update is set out in the table below and Annex 1a.

Strategy Programmes	January 2025 Capital Monitoring (Cabinet March 2025) £m	Actual Capital Expenditure 2024/25 £m	Variation to Latest Capital Programme £m	Variation to Latest Capital Programme %
Pupil Places Plan	32,894	26,041	-6,853	-21
Major Infrastructure	108,382	102,881	-5,501	-5
Highways Asset Management Plan	63,004	61,615	-1,389	-2
Property Strategy	26,236	21,883	-4,353	-17
IT, Digital & Innovation Strategy	7,823	5,021	-2,802	-36
Passport Funding	9,861	10,786	925	9
Vehicles & Equipment	2,941	2,820	-121	-4
Total Strategy Programmes Expenditure	**251,141**	**231,047**	**-20,094**	**-8**

14. Actual capital programme expenditure for 2024/25 was £231.0m compared with £175.9m in 2023/24 and £172.2m in 2022/23.

Pupil Places Plan

15. Actual expenditure on pupil places was £26.0m in 2024/25. This is £6.8m lower than forecast in the report to Cabinet in March 2025. The Pupil Place Plan includes 3 main programmes:

- Basic Need - these are usually school expansion projects that are funded by central government grant and/or Section 106 developer funding to ensure there are enough school places for children within Oxfordshire.

- Growth Portfolio – these are usually new school projects within large housing sites allocated in local plans that are funded from contributions sought from developers via a Section 106 agreement towards the costs of providing community and social infrastructure.

- Schools Annual Programmes – this includes the School Structural Maintenance Programme (SSMP) which addresses the highest condition-based priorities within the school estate enhancing the school stock condition and reducing the backlog maintenance, and the School Access Programme which ensure that mainstream buildings are accessible for pupils with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities.

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

17. The Basic Needs Programme invested £8.1m during 2024/25. This has created 140 additional pupil places and 16 additional Special Education Needs & Disability (SEND) pupil places. Schemes completed in 2024/25 include:

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

   Schemes currently in construction which are due to be completed in 2025/26 to 2026/27 include:

   - Woodstock, Marlborough CE School (150 additional pupil places),
   - Langtree School, Woodcote (improvements and new science labs),
   - Wallingford, St Nicholas CE Primary School (relocation) (70 additional pupil places),
   - Woodgreen Secondary, Witney (150 additional pupil places),

18. In additional there are four projects in the pre-construction phase and it is anticipated that these will commence construction in 2025/26.

   - Fir Tree School, Wallingford (Conversion from Junior to 1FE primary),
   - North Hinksey, CE School, replacement of temporary accommodation,
   - Orchard Meadow School – Internal alterations,
   - Mabel Prichard School – Expansion (24 new SEND spaces),

19. The Growth Portfolio programme invested £12.2m during 2024/25. One new school opened during 2024/25 creating 210 additional primary school places.

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

In addition, there are 3 projects in the pre-construction phase:
- Didcot, Great Western Park SEND School (120 additional SEND pupil places) and
- Upper Heyford Primary School (315 place new primary + 65 place nursery),
- Didcot Valley Park Primary School (630 place new primary),

Three further schools are being delivered by the Education & Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) and financial contributions towards the schools are included within the capital programme:
- Bloxham, Grove SEND Free School (118 additional SEND pupil places) – completed January 2024.
- SEND Free School, Faringdon (118 additional SEND pupil places).
- Grove Airfield – Secondary phase of a new all-through School (600 additional pupil places).

20. The Schools Annual Programmes invested £5.5m, delivering projects mainly through the Schools Structural Maintenance Programme. A total of 19 projects were completed during the year, with a further 10 projects on site. A new programme of works in excess of £11.5m for 2025/26 has been identified and consists of 66 projects.

21. Projects were delivered via the School Access Programme which ensure that mainstream buildings are accessible for pupils with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities. In total, accessibility improvements were made to 13 primary schools and nine secondary schools enabling disabled pupils to attend their preferred school.

Major Infrastructure

22. Spend on schemes with the Major Infrastructure Programme was £102.9m. The programme is divided into various sub-programme areas as shown in the table below.

Major Infrastructure	Latest Monitoring	Actual	Variation
	£'000	£'000	£'000
Housing Infrastructure Fund 1 (HIF1)	15,500	19,829	+4,329
Housing Infrastructure Fund 2 (HIF2) & A40	14,065	14,871	+806
A423 Improvement Programme	2,800	2,731	-69
Active Travel Phase 3	2,559	2,213	-346
Bicester & Banbury Locality	17,847	16,369	-1,478
Oxford Locality	9,788	9,034	-754
South & Vale Locality	16,385	13,218	-3,167
Major Infrastructure Sub-total	**78,944**	**78,265**	**-679**
Placemaking	1,702	1,079	-623
Transport Policy	27,729	23,503	-4,226
Other Programmes	7	34	27
Major Infrastructure –Total	108,382	102,881	-5,501

23. The reduction of £5.5m compared to the forecast of £108.4m included in the March programme update reflects a mix of changes.

<u>HIF1 Programme</u>

24. 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 compulsory purchase order approval by the Secretary of State remains outstanding. The construction phase of the programme remains on schedule for 2026. The in-year spend is £19.8m, £4.3m more than the latest budget. This is mainly due to better than anticipated progress on statutory undertaking payments, which had been expected to take place in the first quarter of 2025/26. This programme provision is expected to invest £332.5m in infrastructure around Didcot Garden Town to facilitate housing and employment growth in South and Vale districts and includes the following schemes which are at Stage 2 Detailed Design stage:

- Clifton Hampden bypass
- Culham River Crossing
- Didcot Science Bridge

<u>HIF2 & A40</u>

25. The HIF2 & A40 programme has spent £14.9m during 2024/25. In total, the HIF2, Oxford Science Transit programmes and Access to Witney will look to invest £194.2m in infrastructure along the A40 corridor and include the following schemes at stage category:

- Eynsham to Wolvercote - Stage 2 Detailed Design
- HIF2 Dukes Cut – Stage 2 Detailed Design
- A40 Access to Witney – Stage 3 Construction
- Phase 1 Oxford North – Stage 4 Close Out
- Phase 2 Science Transit - Stage 4 Close Out

<u>Growth Deal Programme</u>

26. The programme spent £38.6m during 2024/25. The following projects completed construction and are at stage 4 Close Out:

- Banbury Road Roundabout
- Benson Relief Road
- Broad Street
- North Oxford Corridor – A44 loop Farm to Cassington Road
- North Oxford Corridor – Kidlington Roundabout
- Wantage Eastern Link Road

27. The following projects were on-site during 2024/25 and remain live schemes:

- A34 Lodge Hill
- A40 Access to Witney
- A4130 Steventon Lights
- M40 Junction 10 Padbury Roundabout
- Tramway Road, Banbury
- Watlington Relief Road
- Woodstock Road Corridor

Other Funding

28.   The design of a number of other schemes was progressed during 2024/25 including:

- Active Travel Tranche 3
- Safer Roads Schemes
- Zero Emissions Zone
- Traffic Filters

Transport Policy

29.   The programme spent £23.5m in 2024/25 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). The final claims by Stagecoach are now expected in the first quarter of 2025/26, following delays in the supply chain for the vehicles.

Highways Asset Management Plan (HAMP)

30.   The annual planned target total surfacing programme (excluding patching) for 2024/25, was 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. By the year end, 4.64% of the network had been resurfaced as follows:

a) Over 17km of the network was, either wholly or in part, reconstructed or resurfaced to an as new condition
b) Approximately 182km of the network's surface was treated in order to slow down deterioration, delaying the need for more extensive repairs, often by well over ten years,
c) Approximately 2km of the network prone to road traffic accidents were prioritised for works to improve and enhance the likelihood of future collisions.

31.   The total spend in 2024/25 was £61.6m compared to the latest forecast of £63.0m in the report to Cabinet in March 2025. The programme is divided into sub-programme areas as shown in the table below.

Highways Asset Management Plan	Latest Monitoring	Actual	Variation
	£'000	£'000	£'000
Structural Maintenance Annual Programme	43,040	42,297	-743
Improvement Programme	2,955	2,578	-377
Major Schemes & Other Programmes	12,190	11,742	-448
Network Management Programme	3,869	3,556	-313
Other	950	1,442	+492
Highways Asset Management Plan – Total	**63,004**	**61,615**	**-1,389**

32. The annual Structural Maintenance Programme invested £43.0m, -0.7m less than last reported.

33. The planned and delivered activities for the main programmes are set out below:

Project	Planned Schemes	Completed	Comments on actual compared to planned delivery
Surface Treatments (schemes)	120	122	Schemes to restore the condition or prolonging the life of existing carriageways.
Carriageways (schemes)	10	10	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	72	Repair/construction of footways and cycleways.
Drainage (schemes)	35	35	Repair/renewal of existing drainage infrastructure and provision of new infrastructure to resolve known drainage issues. Other minor drainage works have also taken place in addition to this.
Bridges (schemes)	13	9	Strengthening/replacement/imposition of management measures on weak structures. List does not include reactive works from area programme.
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 installed this year.

Project	Planned Schemes	Completed	Comments on actual compared to planned delivery
20mph Speed limit (schemes)	11 100	11 90	Phase 2 – Remaining Schemes reprogrammed from last year. Phase 3 – Remaining schemes reprogrammed to be delivered 25/26.
Section 42 contributions (schemes)	39	39	Programme delivered by the City Council and covers all the unclassified roads and footways within the city.

34. The annual Improvement Programme invested £2.6m in 2024/25. This includes road safety and traffic improvements including road markings, cycle provision improvements, pedestrian crossings, footway improvements and speed limit alterations. This includes the specific Vision Zero Programme which spent £1.2m in 2024/25.

35. The Structural Maintenance Major Schemes programme invested £11.7m, -£0.4m less than previously reported. A total of 3,351 LED replacement units were delivered in 2024/25. The total number of LED units now replaced is approximately 94.2%.

36. Following a fatal road traffic collision near to RAF Croughton in Northamptonshire in August 2019, 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. Expenditure of £3.5m was incurred in 2024/25.

37. The Highway Network Management Programme spent £3.6m in 2024/25, which includes the enhancement to support journey time reliability, which also aid bus movements, and traffic signal improvement schemes and improvements to Thornhill Park & Ride.

Property Strategy

38. The total capital expenditure in 2024/25 was £21.9m, £4.4m lower than the latest monitoring report. Almost half of this underspend relates to the Travellers programme (£0.8m) and Office rationalisation Programme (£1m).

39. Corporate Estate Development spent £8.8m. The three largest areas being delivered are:

- Children's Homes Programme (£4.4m) – Children's Services successfully secured DfE match funding to purchase and refurbish four new children's homes. The £10.45m capital programme will increase the placement sufficiency for Children We Care For by 12 beds for 11-17 year olds. Four sites have been acquired; refurbishment has started at two sites with the remaining two expecting to commence this financial year. The programme will create 12 additional beds.

- Deddington Highways Depot – Phase 1 was complete in September 2024 (£1.8m), This provides for a new salt barn to ensure that the salt OCC spread on the roads is kept in a compliant way, under cover and with suitable drainage.
- Speedwell House – strip-out works completed (£1.8m), this is the first phase of the Speedwell House redevelopment project.

Estate Decarbonisation Programme

40. The council declared a climate emergency in 2019 with a target of 2030 to bring the council's operations and activities to net zero. Alongside this the UK government target for net zero, which the council is party to, is for an area wide target of net zero by 2050.

41. The council's property accounts for approximately 33% of the emissions within this 2030 target (on 2022/23 data). It is clear there is a long-term plan for decarbonisation of the UK electricity grid, however this target is in line with the UK government commitment of net zero by 2050.

42. As such the strategic approach to reaching the decarbonisation targets is to stop fossil fuelled activities within the council's properties, which is predominantly heating, via the electrification of these components.

43. Although there will be a carbon component remaining by 2030 from the use of electricity, this will be much reduced, and the council will be on the pathway to fully net zero in line with the decarbonisation of the electricity grid. This should enable a reducing need for carbon offsetting by 2030 and beyond.

44. The transition to electric heating will predominantly be via heat pumps and infrared heating. Due to the lower operating temperatures of the heat pumps improvements are required in thermal building fabric (e.g. single glazing to double or triple glazing, insulation installations, etc.) to decrease the potential running costs. Nonetheless even with these improvements because of the, currently, low cost of gas compared to electricity the running costs would be increased. As part of the strategic approach the Council would seek to install renewable electricity measures (solar PV) and upgrade electrical components (particularly lighting to LED), in order to ensure the overall running costs do not increase.

45. A reactive only maintenance approach has left much of the council's estate in a very poor-quality condition, with many components past their expected working life. As a result, there is an anticipated need to replace components, such as boilers, which would represent a cost avoidance.

46. This programme supports both the key objectives within the Climate Action Framework and Carbon Management Plan, but also the property strategy.

47. The Decarbonisation works proposed for the 33 sites totals £9.7m. Expenditure of £2.4m was incurred in 2024/25. The programme is supported by a £2.560m grant funding for decarbonisation (PSDS3c).

<u>Office Rationalisation & Co-location</u>

48.   The office rationalisation & co-location programme incurred expenditure of £0.9m in 2024/25. The Council has vacated Abbey House in Abingdon with staff relocated to new locations.

49.   Phase 2 of the Knights Court relocation is already underway with works to Ron Groves House and The Forum already completed.

50.   Supported Transport will move to Water Eaton later in 2025/26 at an estimated cost of £0.6m.

<u>Resonance Supported Homes Fund</u>

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

<u>Green Homes Upgrade (HUG2)</u>

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

53.   Following slow scaling in Year 1 of the Home Upgrade Grant, delivery has gained significant momentum in Year 2. The programme spent £3.1m in 2024/25 and delivered improvements to 173 properties. In total 238 properties across Oxfordshire, will have benefitted since the beginning of the HUG2 programme.

<u>Schools Energy Loans</u>

54.   The council issued loans totalling £0.3m to seven maintained schools to install retrofit measure such as LED and Solar PV. An additional 18 schools applied for a further £1.0m which is forecasted to be delivered in 2025/26.

IT, Digital & Innovation Strategy

55.   The total capital expenditure on ICT schemes in 2024/25 was £5.0m compared to the previous forecast of £7.8m set out in the March 2025 report. The majority of the underspend was on the 5G Innovation Region Programme.

56.   The Rural Gigabit Hub Sites programme which commenced during 2021/22 incurred final expenditure of £0.8m in 2024/25 for build work completed under

the programme. This programme has enabled fibre infrastructure to be built for county council buildings (where gigabit broadband infrastructure does not exist), other public buildings such as schools and GP practices, and a range of community hub buildings like village halls. 178 sites have been completed to date and a further 15 community hub buildings are due for completion in 2024/25. This project was funded partly by Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS), and partly out of the Gainshare payments received from BT under the completed Better Broadband for Oxfordshire project (£5m). This programme has helped to reduce the cost of connections required for the Council's buildings, help tackle inequalities in Oxfordshire (a number of schools in socially deprived areas are included in the project), and by connecting a number of Community buildings will help provide a platform for local delivery of health and social care, facilitate a reduction in isolation, and provide the means for these important local assets to be at the heart of the community.

57.   The 5GIR programme commenced in towards the end of 2023/24 and incurred £1.2m of expenditure in 2024/25 after being awarded £3.8m of grant funding by the Department for Science, Innovation and Technology (DSIT) to increase adoption of 5G connectivity focussing on regional strengths in research and development, advanced engineering and manufacturing. The programme is a regional partnership, known as England's Connected Heartland (ECH) which comprises local bodies from Berkshire, Buckinghamshire, Bedfordshire and Cambridgeshire with Oxfordshire as the lead authority. ECH will develop joint opportunities with the wireless telecoms supply chain and create an Advanced Wireless ecosystem. The project is deploying two physical 5G infrastructure builds: the Science & Innovation Campus Project at Harwell and the East West Railway Project on the track between Bicester and Bletchley.

58.   The digital infrastructure programme (to deliver the outcomes of the ITID Strategy) incurred expenditure of £2.7m. The following projects were completed in 2024/25:

- Contact Centre as a Service – the new omni-channel environment installed in the council's Contact Service Centre enables the creation of a unified and seamless customer experience across all channels, including phone, mobile, social media and online. This has ensured a simplified approach for the customer to be accurately routed to the correct team, with better sound quality, and seamless transfers. It also provides deeper insights into customer interactions, simplifies call wrap-up, and reduces costs.

- Zero Trust Network Access – replacement of the legacy private Wide-Area-Network with a modern security approach to enable use of faster and more commercially available Internet based connections. Benefits include a more secure and robust access for staff that significantly reduces ongoing costs, enables faster delivery of connectivity for property changes, easier access for partnership working and guests, greater resiliency, and a significant increase in speed of network for staff.

- Vehicle Management Service – enabling the vehicle asset management system to move towards carbon reduction in vehicle use through access to comprehensive vehicle asset data.

- Applicant Tracking System - recruitment system – improved solution for managers and potential employees to attract talent and meet our Employer of Choice as part of the council's vision.

59.   IT are working on a number of applications, these include:

- Reimaging the intranet – investment in a new employee engagement platform to support and enable effective staff transactions and communications

- Power BI and Social Care Dashboards – to meet the provision of data driven decisions for social care and education services.

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

Passported Funding

60.   Disabled Facilities Grant of £8.3m, was passed to the District Councils in accordance with the Better Care Fund grant determination. Households are eligible to apply for the grant for home adaptations if a child or adult in the household has a substantial and permanent disability. Types of adaptations funded by the grant include stairlifts, level access showers, ground floor extensions designed around a person's needs and kitchens designed for a wheelchair user.

61.   Schools Devolved Formula Capital expenditure was £1.4m for the year. This is grant funded by the Department of Education and through local contributions, donations and fund raising activities. School capital balances have decreased by £0.6m to £1.5m as at 31 March 2025. This is expected as at the end of 2022/23 schools received additional capital funding of £1.6m compared to the annual allocation of £0.7m. This was partly spent in 2023/24 and further utilised in 2024/25. Also, when schools convert to academy status any capital balance is transferred to the academy.

62.   The Fire Control Renewal Fund incurred £0.6m of expenditure in 2024/25 as part of the hardware refresh project at the Thames Valley Fire Control Service. This is a combined provision with two other stakeholders.

Vehicles and Equipment

63.   At year end, certain vehicles and equipment programmes used by the Fire & Rescue Service and in-house Fleet Management Service have been added to the Council's asset register. The value of vehicles and equipment purchased

in 2024/25 for the Fire & Rescue Service was £1.3m. This is funded from the annual revenue budget and a drawdown from earmarked reserves of £0.7m. This has decreased the balance held in reserves for the future purchase of vehicles to £2.2m. For the Fleet Management Service, a further £1.2m of expenditure was incurred to purchase 31 vehicles (minibuses, vans and cars). Of these all were full EV electric.

Comparison with Original Financial Plans for 2024/25 (agreed by Council in February 2024)

64. The capital programme and monitoring report is submitted to Cabinet four times during the financial year. The table in Annex 1c compares the original budget for 2024/25 to actual expenditure for each programme area at each update.

65. The original budget plan for 2024/25 was £320.0m. Changes to plans set out in reports during the financial year reduced the expected outturn position to £251.1m in the report to Cabinet in March 2025. Actual expenditure for 2024/25 was £231.0m, £89m lower than originally forecasted. This represents delivery of 72% (71% in 2023/24) on the original financial plan for the year agreed by council in February 2024.

66. The variations during the year were explained within the monitoring reports and can be summarised within the following areas. The variations for schemes within each programme are set out in detail in Annex 1c:

a) Major Infrastructure: Reduction to original plan of £73.6m

   The actual outturn position is £73.6m lower than the original plan. This is made up of a reduction of £68.1m when comparing the March 2025 position with the original plan agreed in February 2024 and a further £5.5m reduction when comparing the last reported position to actual outturn. The programmes and projects which were significantly reprofiled were:

- HIF2 Programme (-£26.6m) – The Dukes Cut scheme, as a rail-bridge project, has a close dependency with Network Rail. The overrunning Botley Road works affected their ability to provide rail possession dates and the scheme was therefore required to extend its design stage to accommodate this.

- For much of 2024/25 the A40 HIF2 scheme underwent an extended optioneering process to identify a scheme that would continue to achieve its primary objectives and be deliverable within its funding envelope. The amended proposal was approved by the funder Homes England in October 2024 however the process affected the ability to spend as planned during 2024/25.

- Access to Witney (-5.6m) – The 2024 General Election impacted the land assembly programme for the scheme, with the Compulsory Purchase Order (CPO) decision delayed from Summer 2024 to October 2024. The CPO was eventually successfully granted but the delay in issuing the decision pushed the start of construction to 2025/26.

- A423 Kennington Bridge Improvements Programme (-4.3m) – As design progressed during 2024/25 additional risks and challenges have been identified. This additional work has impacted on the ability to spend as planned during the financial year.

- Tramway Rd, Banbury (-4.7m) – Land access issues arose during construction which meant that the scheme could not progress as planned whilst the issue was resolved, affecting the ability to spend during 2024/25.

- A34 Lodge Hill Slip Roads (-5.7m)- An extended detailed design stage and the need to undertake Value Engineering exercises to deliver a scheme with the funding envelope meant the construction start date shifted from October 2024 to August 2025.

- A4130 Steventon Lights (-7.3m) – As with Lodge Hill, an extended detailed design stage and the need to undertake Value Engineering exercises to deliver a scheme with the funding envelope meant the construction start date shifted from October 2024 to July 2025.

- Oxford Station Development (Contribution) (-£10m) - This contribution is connected to milestones in the delayed Phase 2 Oxford Station/ Botley Road Network Rail programme. As the original milestones have been met the money was not drawn down, however the commitment to contribute still stands. The new milestones have been agreed with Network Rail and DfT, and this contribution will be drawn down to a new profile from 2025/26.

b) Pupil Place Plan: Reduction to original plan of £0.4m

While the overall position is aligned with the original forecast, this has concealed significant changes reported in year. The new Grove Secondary School to create 600 pupil places is being delivered by the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA). On request from the ESFA, the early payment of £7.5m was made in 2024/25, when originally it was planned in 2025/26. This has been offset from reprofiling on a number of schemes. While some spend has slipped to 2025/26 the overall project cost remains within the approved budget with no significant impact on the delivery programme – the additional capacity is still expected to be available as planned.

Due to underspends in previous years on the School Structural Maintenance Programme, a two year programme was set for 2024/25 of £7.5m to utilise the grant funding available. A total of £5.1m was spent

compared to an original budget of £7.5m. The identified projects in the programme that are not yet complete will be carried forward into the 2025/26 programme.

c) Property Strategy: Reduction to original plan of £8.7m

The reduction is mainly due to the delivery of the Office Rationalisation & Co-location Programme (-£2.1m) & Carterton Community Safety Centre (-3.0m).

Capital Programme Financing

67. The table in Annex 1b summarises the financing of the 2024/25 capital programme and compares it to the financing planned in the original and latest capital programme.

68. The Capital and Investment Strategy for 2024/25 includes the following as part of the council's financing principles:

- Ringfenced resources are used for the purposes for which they are issued.
- Non ringfenced capital grants are treated as a corporate resource and used flexibly.
- Capital receipts are treated as a corporate resource and used across the capital programme flexibly.

69. Ringfenced grants are generally utilised first to ensure that the use of this funding is maximised in line with the grant conditions. The majority of non-ringfenced grants do not have conditions and are not time limited so can be used flexibly across the Capital Programme. Therefore, where available, other funding sources, including borrowing where that is the planned source of funding, have been used to fund capital expenditure before un-ringfenced grants. That ensures that as far as possible the on-going cost of borrowing in the council's revenue account is broadly aligned to the relevant capital expenditure.

70. Capital grants totalling £146.9m have been used towards the funding capital investment during 2024/25. These include the various funding streams to support the major infrastructure programme including £25.7m of Housing Infrastructure Funds towards the Didcot Garden Town and A40 programmes. A further £13.9m grant from the remaining £30m Growth Deal infrastructure programme has been incurred as all previous recycled funds have been met. The remaining balance of £23.4m has been used 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).

71. Capital funding for infrastructure works received from developer contributions totalled £38.8m in 2024/25. A total of £27.1m of developer contributions and Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) funding was used in 2024/25 to finance various capital projects with the majority of this towards the delivery of the Pupil Places Plan programme. The balance of capital developer contributions

towards infrastructure works held by the council as at 31 March 2025 is £234.0. A total forecast of £175.1m of this funding (including secure funding) is built into the capital programme from 2025/26 onwards. The remainder will be used to support future schemes in line with the relevant agreements.

72. Un-ringfenced grant funding held in the Capital Grants Reserve decreased by £9.0m during the year to £110.7m as at 31 March 2025. Within the total there is £29.0m SEN High Needs Capital Grant, £19.6m towards the A40 Oxford Science Programme, £11m Basic Need Grant, £10.5m Active Travel Grant and £16.1m Housing & Growth Deal Grant. The balance of un-ringfenced grant funding is forecast to be spent over the ten-year capital programme period.

73. The balance of unapplied ringfenced capital grants held by the Council has increased by £4.7m to £18.4m as at 31 March 2025. The balance includes £8.3m of Community Infrastructure Levy funding received towards various projects and £3.7m towards the Local Electrical Vehicle Infrastructure programme.

74. The capital receipts and capital reserve balances are £37.3m and £77.6m respectively at 31 March 2025. The capital receipts and reserve balances are forecast to be spent over the ten-year capital programme period.

Risk Management

75. Previously reports set out that HIF1 posed a significant risk to the authority due to the schemes requiring completion before the funding deadline of March 2025. This risk has now been significantly reduced as the deadline for completion of schemes has now been extended to 31 March 2028. If there are delays to delivery beyond this point caused by exceptional circumstances, then the council will be liable for any cost overruns past the end of the funding availability period, but this is currently assessed as low risk.

76. As outlined in the Capital Outturn Report for 2023/24, there was a potential risk in relation to the HIF2 scheme funding and timeline. Following negotiations with Homes England, an amended proposal was approved in October 2024. The new Grant Determination Agreement (GDA) requires the grant funding to be spent in full by September 2027. Expenditure beyond this date will be funded by Department for Transport grant funding that the council is holding.

77. The Housing and Growth Deal funding agreement originally required the £120.0m grant funding to be fully utilised by 31 March 2025. Following discussions with the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) in early 2025 the final £30m instalment of the grant funding was received by the council in March 2025. This will be used to complete the remaining schemes in the programme in 2025/26 in line with the grant determination.

78. In November 2022, the Cabinet approved the [Oxfordshire Climate and Natural Environment Policy Statement,](#) which sets an ambition of achieving 20% Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) for the County Council's own developments. If on-site measures cannot be implemented, then there may be a requirement to purchase of off-site BNG credits, thereby increasing financial risks to those projects requiring planning permission. This risk is being monitored through the council's capital governance process.

79. A mix of factors continue to impact on cost and deliverability of capital schemes. The cost of materials and supply chain issues continue to have an impact, as well as higher than anticipated construction costs.

80. Risks are managed through the Council's capital governance processes at both programme and project level. The most significant risks are escalated to the Strategic Capital and Commercial Board which is chaired by the Executive Director of Resources and S151 Officer. Risk escalations are presented and options considered, ensuring that appropriate actions are taken to ensure spend does not exceed available funding.

Staff Implications

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

Equality & Inclusion Implications

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

Sustainability Implications

83. The Climate Action Framework sets the council's commitment to tackling the climate emergency which is underpinned by the Council's priority to put action to address the climate emergency at the heart of our work.

84. This report includes updates on the decarbonisation of the council's assets as well as funding for improvements to energy efficiency in maintained school buildings.

Financial Implications

85. The report sets out the position at the end of 2024/25 for the planned investment and available funding for the ten-year Capital programme.

86. The following risks are inherent within the funding of the capital programme:

- Certainty over the timing and value of future capital receipts and Section 106 Contributions

- Certainty over the receipt and security of future grant funding.

- Ability to meet the deadlines for the use of grant funding.

87.   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.

88.   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.

89.   Since the introduction of new governance measures in 2022, there has been a commitment to continuously improve upon what is already in place. An ongoing programme of work is aiming to build upon these foundations, which will enable efficiency, transparency and effectiveness across all areas of Capital Programme governance. Central to this, is the integration of technology tools which will provide senior leaders with increased visibility and oversight of the capital programme and an enhanced capacity to make evidence-based decisions.

Comments checked by:
Kathy Wilcox, Head of Corporate Finance

Legal Implications

90.   Local authorities are required to have robust governance structures in place to oversee capital programmes, including regular reviews and updates to capital strategies, ensuring decisions are made transparently. The Councils Financial Rules and Financial Regulations which make up part of the Constitution outline the financial governance structures.

91.   **Prudential Code Compliance**: To meet the requirement for transparency the Council must adhere to the Prudential Code for Capital Finance, which emphasizes affordability, prudence, and sustainability in borrowing and investment decisions. This ensures that capital investments are financially sound and do not jeopardize the authority's financial stability.

92.   **Regulatory Framework**: The Local Authorities (Capital Finance and Accounting) (England) Regulations 2003, as amended, govern how local authorities manage their capital finance. These regulations include provisions for borrowing limits, capital receipts, and the use of capital allowances. This report is the assurance by officers that the regulatory framework and the prudential code are being complied with.

93.   The Council's Financial Regulations states that in year changes to the capital programme must be approved by Cabinet. Paragraph 5.1.1(IV) sets out that where the total estimated resource allocation is above £1,000,000, Cabinet must agree its inclusion into the Capital Programme. Due diligence regarding changes to the Capital Programme is carried out at officer level by the Strategic Capital Board and the Section 151 Officer.

Comments checked by:

Kim Sawyer
Interim Head of Legal & Governance
Kim.Sawyer@oxfordshire.gov.uk

LORNA BAXTER
Executive Director of Resources and Section 151 Officer

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

June 2025

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Capital Programme Provisional Outturn 2024/25   **Annex 1a**

Summary outturn position compared to the original capital programme and latest updated capital programme

Capital Expenditure	Original Capital Programme (Council Feb 2024) £'000	Latest Capital Programme (Council Feb 2025) £'000	Latest Forecast Position (as at end of Jan 2025) £'000	Actual Expenditure 2024/25 £'000	Variation to Original Capital Programme		Variation to Latest Reported Position	
					£'000	%	£'000	%
Strategy Programmes								
Pupil Places Plan	26,405	32,689	32,894	26,041	-364	-1%	-6,853	-21%
Major Infrastructure	176,443	113,632	108,382	102,881	-73,562	-42%	-5,501	-5%
Highways Asset Management Plan	63,442	63,362	63,004	61,615	-1,827	-3%	-1,389	-2%
Property Strategy	30,625	27,335	26,236	21,883	-8,742	-29%	-4,353	-17%
IT, Digital & Innovation Strategy	6,600	7,823	7,823	5,021	-1,579	-24%	-2,802	-36%
Passport Funding	8,008	8,862	9,861	10,786	2,778	35%	925	9%
Vehicles & Equipment	2,500	2,941	2,941	2,820	320	13%	-121	-4%
Total Strategy Programmes Expenditure	**314,023**	**256,644**	**251,141**	**231,047**	**-82,976**	**-26%**	**-20,094**	**-8%**
Earmarked Reserves	5,950	0	0	0	-5,950	100%	0	0%
Total Capital Programme Expenditure	**319,973**	**256,644**	**251,141**	**231,047**	**-88,926**	**-28%**	**-20,094**	**-8%**

Summary Capital Financing Position

Capital Financing	Original Capital Programme (Council Feb 2024) £'000	Latest Capital Programme (Council Feb 2025) £'000	Latest Forecast Position (as at end of Jan 2025) £'000	Actual Financing 2024/25 £000	Variation to Original Capital Programme £'000	Variation to Latest Reported Position £'000
Unringfenced grants	118,487	80,431	74,204	80,004	-38,483	5,800
Devolved Formula Capital - Grant	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,130	130	130
Other Grants	92,827	71,031	71,630	65,808	-27,019	-5,822
Developer Contributions & CIL	18,851	37,146	37,771	27,070	8,219	-10,701
Other External Contributions	350	48	48	0	-350	-48
Schools Contributions	0	0	0	0	0	0
Revenue Funding	5,697	3,971	3,971	3,335	-2,362	-636
Prudential Borrowing	82,761	63,017	62,517	53,700	-29,061	-8,817
Capital Receipts/Reserves					0	0
Total Capital Programme Financing	**319,973**	**256,644**	**251,141**	**231,047**	**-88,926**	**-20,094**

Capital Balances	Balance brought forward at 1 April 2024 £'000	Latest Capital Programme (Council Feb 2025) £'000	Latest Forecast Position (as at end of Feb 2025) £'000	Actual balance carried forward at 31 Mar 2025 £'000	Variation to Original Capital Programme £'000	Variation to Latest Reported Position £'000
Capital Reserve	39,197	77,328	77,328	77,592	38,395	264
Capital Receipts Unapplied	34,552	39,347	39,347	37,329	2,777	-2,018
Capital Grants Reserve	119,709	99,978	106,205	110,709	-9,000	4,504
Total	**193,458**	**216,653**	**222,880**	**225,630**	**32,172**	**2,750**

Capital Grants (excluding school local balances)	Balance brought forward at 1 April 2024 £'000		Balance carried forward at 31 Mar 2025 £'000
Receipts in Advance (ringfenced/eligible spend not yet incurred)	13,705		18,415
Total	**13,705**		**18,415**

Capital Programme Provisional Outturn 2024/25 - Programme Level

Strategy / Programme	Budget Council (Feb 24) For 24/25	Monitoring May 24 - Cabinet (July 24)	Monitoring Aug 24 - Cabinet (Oct 24)	Monitoring Oct 24 - Cabinet (Dec 24)	Budget Council (Feb 25) 24/25	Monitoring Jan 25 - Cabinet (Mar 25)	24/25 (Cabinet June 25) Outturn
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Pupil Places Plan							
Basic Need	8,125	9,700	10,100	10,470	10,500	10,415	8,074
Growth Portfolio	10,330	9,905	8,218	7,999	15,174	15,714	12,218
Annual Programmes	7,700	7,950	7,965	6,965	6,965	6,715	5,544
Early Years	250	250	250	250	50	50	205
Pupil Places Plan Capital Programme Total	**26,405**	**27,805**	**26,533**	**25,684**	**32,689**	**32,894**	**26,041**
Major Infrastructure							
HIF 1	18,600	22,791	21,004	19,950	15,900	15,500	19,829
HIF 2 & A40	47,400	28,904	20,384	19,228	14,265	14,065	14,871
A423 Improvement Programme	7,000	9,000	2,750	2,750	3,289	2,800	2,731
Active Travel P3	4,750	4,740	3,555	3,127	3,127	2,559	2,213
Bicester & Banbury Locality Programme Total	23,920	23,405	23,160	21,222	17,847	17,847	16,369
Oxford	14,679	17,045	14,348	13,679	13,006	9,788	9,034
South & Vale	32,700	33,869	24,418	20,208	16,785	16,385	13,218
Major Infrastructure Locality Programme Total	**149,049**	**139,754**	**109,619**	**100,164**	**84,219**	**78,944**	**78,265**
Placemaking	11,887	12,156	2,127	2,052	1,677	1,702	1,079
Transport Policy	15,507	28,437	27,729	27,729	27,729	27,729	23,503
Major Projects - Final Account Programme	0	36	7	7	7	7	34
Major Infrastructure Capital Programme Total	**176,443**	**180,383**	**139,482**	**129,952**	**113,632**	**108,382**	**102,881**
Highways AMP							
Structural Maintenance Annual Programmes	42,530	41,671	42,050	42,540	42,805	43,040	42,297
Improvement Programmes	4,000	4,025	3,455	3,455	2,955	2,955	2,578
SM Major schemes and one off programmes	12,569	14,767	13,595	13,583	12,783	12,190	11,742
Highways Network Management	3,543	3,774	4,973	4,773	3,869	3,869	3,556
Other Programmes	800	800	800	800	950	950	1,442
Highways AMP Capital Programme Total	**63,442**	**65,037**	**64,873**	**65,151**	**63,362**	**63,004**	**61,615**

Strategy / Programme	Budget Council (Feb 24) For 24/25	Monitoring May 24 - Cabinet (July 24)	Monitoring Aug 24 - Cabinet (Oct 24)	Monitoring Oct 24 - Cabinet (Dec 24)	Budget Council (Feb 25) 24/25	Monitoring Jan 25 - Cabinet (Mar 25)	24/25 (Cabinet June 25) Outturn
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Property Strategy							
Corporate Estate Programme	13,820	11,267	12,473	12,334	10,019	10,019	8,849
Climate Action	5,625	6,050	5,535	5,760	5,740	5,640	4,781
Waste Management Programme	1,131	1,653	1,653	1,958	783	783	736
Corporate Estate Condition Total	5,305	11,196	11,393	11,444	6,549	5,550	4,436
Investment Strategy Total	4,744	4,535	4,545	4,694	4,244	4,244	3,081
Environment & Economy Total	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Property Strategy Capital Programme Total	**30,625**	**34,701**	**35,599**	**36,190**	**27,335**	**26,236**	**21,883**
IT, Digital & Innovation Strategy							
Children Services - ICT (Phase 1&2)	123	55	0	0	0	0	1
Broadband	1,600	950	950	950	950	950	885
Innovation Region Connected Heartland	3,100	2,900	2,900	3,634	3,634	3,634	1,175
Smart Infrastructure Pilot Prog (SIPP)	0	0	0	200	250	250	250
Digital Infrastructure	1,777	2,695	3,366	3,209	2,989	2,989	2,710
IT, Digital & Innovation Strategy Capital Programme	**6,600**	**6,600**	**7,216**	**7,993**	**7,823**	**7,823**	**5,021**
Passported Funded							
Passported Funding	6,658	7,262	7,262	7,262	7,262	8,261	8,262
Devolved Schools Capital	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,374
Specialist Housing & Financial Assistance	350	350	350	350	600	600	534
Other	0	0	0	0	0	0	616
Passported Funded Capital Programme Total	**8,008**	**8,612**	**8,612**	**8,612**	**8,862**	**9,861**	**10,786**
Vehicles & Equipment							
Vehicles & Equipment	1,000	1,057	1,441	1,441	1,441	1,441	1,625
Fleet Management	1,500	1,500	1,500	1,500	1,500	1,500	1,195
Vehicles & Equipment Capital Programme Total	**2,500**	**2,557**	**2,941**	**2,941**	**2,941**	**2,941**	**2,820**
Capital Programme Total	**314,023**	**325,695**	**285,256**	**276,523**	**256,644**	**251,141**	**231,047**

CABINET – 17 JUNE 2025

CAPITAL PROGRAMME APPROVALS – JUNE 2025

Report by the Executive Director of Resources and Section 151 Officer

Recommendations

1. The Cabinet is RECOMMENDED to:

    a) to approve the inclusion of a programme of work into the capital programme with an indicative budget of £5.906m to be funded from the Traffic Congestion Improvement Fund (TCIF), agreed through Council in February 2024.

    b) to note the proposed schemes to be delivered under the TCIF programme of work.

    c) approve a budget increase of £1.800m for the Access to Witney Scheme from £25.025m to £26.825m to be funded by incorporating £1.800m from the Traffic Congestion Improvement Fund.

    d) approve the inclusion of the Benson Lane Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) into the capital programme, with an indicative budget of £1.232m, to be funded by a combination of developer contributions, Transport Provision funding, BSIP programme funds and the Traffic Congestion Improvement Fund.

Executive Summary

2. The Capital Programme was approved by Council in February 2025 and will be updated during the year through the capital programme and monitoring reports. This report sets out change requests requiring Cabinet approval that will be incorporated into the agreed programme and included in the next update to the Capital Programme in July 2025.

Introduction

3. The Capital Programme sets out how the Council will use Capital expenditure to deliver the Council's priorities as set out in the Strategic Plan.

4. 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. On occasion, variations to the Capital programme are recommended to Cabinet. All variations and financial implications are contained within this report.

Placemaking

Traffic Congestion Improvement Fund

6. A £6.000m fund to create a pipeline of capital projects to ease congestion in built up areas was agreed as part of the Labour & Co-operative Group budget amendments, agreed by Council in February 2024. The 2-year programme, with an indicative cost of £5.906m, will deliver a package of measures, comprising of major works, bus service improvement schemes, signing updates to map providers, and signals upgrades.

7. Detailed analysis has been undertaken to identify congestion hotspots across the County with a focus on built-up areas. The following mitigations have been identified as being the highest priority schemes:

   a. **Traffic Filter trial delay mitigations package** – a package of measures to reduce the impact of delays to the traffic filter trial due to the ongoing Botley Road closure
   b. **Littlemore Roundabout** – signals upgrades / refurbishments and the addition of a pedestrian crossing
   c. **Horspath Road: Phase 1** – signals upgrades, pedestrian cycle crossing improvements and bus priority
   d. **Horspath Driftway: Phase 1** – signals upgrade and traffic management scheme to improve bus journey times
   e. **Benson Lane BSIP, Crowmarsh Gifford** – measures to improve bus journey times and service reliability
   f. **Swan Close Road, Banbury** – feasibility work to identify improvements at 3 junctions
   g. **A40 Access to Witney** – complimentary measures to re-route traffic from Witney town centre
   h. **Urban Traffic Control Upgrades (countywide)** – improvement of visibility of sites to ensure they are performing optimally
   i. **CCTV Cameras (countywide)** – increased coverage allowing greater visual oversight of traffic on the highway network

8. Approval is required to enter this programme of work into the Capital Programme with an indicative budget of £5.906m.

Major Infrastructure

Access to Witney

9. The Access to Witney Scheme will improve access to the A40 from east and north-east Witney, reducing the need for local and longer-distance traffic to travel through the town centre by providing an alternative traffic route around the edge of the town.

10. Due to the delay in releasing the Compulsory Purchase Order decision caused by the timing of the 2024 general election, the scheme has incurred prolongation costs. Additional costs have also been incurred due to requirements to carry out accommodation works mandated through the planning process, as well as the need to design and implement a signing strategy.

11. Approval is required to increase the budget from £25.025m to £26.825m, which is to be met by incorporating £1.800m from the Traffic Congestion Improvement Fund (TCIF), agreed through Council in February 2024.

Benson Lane Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP)

12. The Benson Lane BSIP Scheme, part of the Council's Bus Service Improvement Plan, will improve access to bus services for residents and visitors. The project will deliver a signalised right-turn for buses only off the southbound A4074 into Benson Lane and will also include infrastructure improvements to enhance safety and accessibility for walking and cycling.

13. Approval is required to enter this scheme into the capital programme with an indicative budget of £1.232m. The funding required to deliver the programme is comprised of contributions from the following sources:

   a. S106 developer contributions (£0.222m)
   b. Transport provision (£0.160m)
   c. BSIP programme fund (£0.100m)
   d. Traffic Congestion Improvement Fund (£0.750m)

Financial Implications

14. As set out in the budget agreed by Council in February 2024 the cost of £6.0m borrowing to support the schemes included in the Transport Congestion Improvement Fund, which includes £1.8m for Access to Witney and £0.750m for the Benson Lane BSIP scheme, will be met by on-going funding built into the revenue budget (see 2025L&CO16).

15. A further £0.160m to support the cost of the Benson Lane BSIP scheme will be met from £4.000m capital funding agreed by Council in February 2025. This funding was for schemes which are partly funded by Section 106 developer contributions but require additional funding to progress.

   Comments checked by:
   Kathy Wilcox, Head of Corporate Finance

Staff Implications

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

Equality & Inclusion Implications

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

Legal Implications

18. Local authorities are required to have robust governance structures in place to oversee capital programmes, including regular reviews and updates to capital strategies, ensuring decisions are made transparently. The Councils Financial Rules and Financial Regulations which make up part of the Constitution outline the Council's financial governance structures.

19. **Prudential Code Compliance**: To meet the requirement for transparency the Council must adhere to the Prudential Code for Capital Finance, which

emphasizes affordability, prudence, and sustainability in borrowing and investment decisions. This ensures that capital investments are financially sound and do not jeopardize the authority's financial stability.

20. **Regulatory Framework**: The Local Authorities (Capital Finance and Accounting) (England) Regulations 2003, as amended, govern how local authorities manage their capital finance. These regulations include provisions for borrowing limits, capital receipts, and the use of capital allowances. This report is the assurance by officers that the regulatory framework and the prudential code are being complied with.

21. The Council's Financial Regulations states that in year changes to the capital programme must be approved by Cabinet. Paragraph 5.1.1(IV) sets out that where the total estimated resource allocation is above £1,000,000, Cabinet must agree its inclusion into the Capital Programme. Due diligence regarding changes to the Capital Programme is carried out at officer level by the Strategic Capital Board and the Section 151 Officer.

22. In year changes to the capital programme must be approved by Cabinet in accordance with Financial Regulation and in particular paragraph 5.1.1(iv) permitting Cabinet to agree resource inclusion into the capital programme via a periodic Capital Report to Cabinet, based on the recommendation of the Strategic Capital Board (chaired by the Executive Director of Resources and Section 151 Officer).

Comments by:

Kim Sawyer Interim Head of Legal & Governance

LORNA BAXTER
Executive Director of Resources and Section 151 Officer

Background papers: none

Contact Officers:
Natalie Crawford, Capital Programme Manager
June 2025

Division(s):   N/A

CABINET – 17 JUNE 2025

FORWARD PLAN AND FUTURE BUSINESS

Items identified from the Forward Plan for Forthcoming Decision

Topic/Decision

Portfolio/Ref

Cabinet, 15 July 2025

Topic/Decision	Portfolio/Ref
▪ Treasury Management 2025/26 Outturn To note the Council's treasury management activity and outcomes in 2025/26	Cabinet, 2025/031 - Cabinet Member for Finance, Property and Transformation
▪ Capital Programme Monitoring Report Financial Report on capital spending against budget allocations, including any necessary capital programme approvals	Cabinet, 2025/012 - Cabinet Member for Finance, Property and Transformation
▪ Climate Action Programme update 6 monthly update on climate action programme; annual dashboard of outcome measures; upcoming programme for 2025-26; new circular economy plan	Cabinet, 2025/077 - Cabinet Member for Place, Environment and Climate Action
▪ Parking Contract The existing five contracts with Conduent (now sold to Modaxo and trading as Trellint) are set to expire in March 2026 (including a one-year extension). We seek approval from Cabinet for four new Civil Enforcement Contracts.	Cabinet, 2025/069 - Cabinet Member for Transport Management
▪ Business Management & Monitoring Report - May 2025 To note the report and approve the recommendations	Cabinet, 2025/099 - Cabinet Member for Finance, Property and Transformation
▪ Council Motion on Banking Hubs To agree the way forward following the Council motion in relation to the availability of community banking services	Cabinet, 2025/103 - Cabinet Member for Resources and Deputy Leader

▪ **Citizens' Assembly Update** The council's initial response to the assembly's recommendations and next steps.	Cabinet, 2025/106 - Leader
▪ **EOTAS Policy (Education other than at School)** Agree final draft of policy following delivery at other education meetings and implementation.	Cabinet, 2024/342 - Cabinet Member for Children and Young People
▪ **Future Bus Regulation Options** To note the findings of the Future Bus Regulation Options Report and consider officer recommendations.	Cabinet, 2025/091 - Cabinet Member for Transport Management
▪ **Financial and land agreements relating to the conversion of Woodeaton Manor School to an academy** To seek urgent approval for financial and land agreements relating to Woodeaton Manor School to enable its conversion to academy status, as directed by the DfE, scheduled for 1 June 2025.	Cabinet, 2025/109 - Cabinet Member for Children and Young People
▪ **Education Act 1996 (Section 19) - Response to Local Government Ombudsman's Report** Following an Ombudsman direction, we are required to bring to Scrutiny our response to their report highlighting concerns about our approach to Section 19. The report includes our response and highlights through our action plan work completed to date and further action that is planned.	Cabinet, 2025/114 - Cabinet Member for Children and Young People

Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for Children and Young People, 9 July 2025

▪ **Young Peoples Supported Accommodation (YPSA) - Contract Extensions** Contracts for Young Peoples Supported Accommodation services are due to expire on the 30th September however there is an option to extend for up to 2 years. Contracts to be extended by 1 year plus 1 year.	Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for Children and Young People, 2025/089 - Cabinet Member for Children, Education & Young People's Services

Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for Transport Management, 17 July 2025

▪ **Cherwell Street Bus Service improvement Scheme** Approval to progress to the Infrastructure and Delivery CMD for the start of construction, following a review of the public consultation results, and it's influence (if any) on Detailed Design.	Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for Transport Management, 2025/043 - Cabinet Member for Transport Management
▪ **Cherwell Street Bus Service improvement Scheme** Delegated decision to officer to enter in to construction contract for Cherwell Street Bus Service Improvement scheme.	Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for Transport Management, 2025/044 - Cabinet Member for Transport Management
▪ **Shirburn - Proposed Traffic Calming Chicane and Extension of Existing 30mph Speed Limit** To seek approval for the introduction of Traffic Calming and speed limit changes in Shirburn	Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for Transport Management, 2024/273 - Cabinet Member for Transport Management
▪ **A4260: Vision Zero Speed Limit Review** Proposed changes along the A4260 corridor include reductions to 50, 40 and 30mph on various lengths between Banbury and Shipton-on-Cherwell. Includes adjoining sections of B4030 at Hopcrofts Holt, and B4027 and A4095 at Bunkers Hill.	Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for Transport Management, 2024/298 - Cabinet Member for Transport Management
▪ **Proposed shared use cycleway/footway - Grove Road, Wantage** A new shared use path is being proposed as part of s278 agreement with a developer for a new Lidl store in Wantage	Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for Transport Management, 2025/116 - Cabinet Member for Transport Management

▪ **Oxford Airport – Langford Lane Toucan Crossing and The Boulevard Access Removal** Introduction of a Toucan crossing, shared used cycle paths and waiting restrictions associated with a nearby development.	Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for Transport Management, 2025/084 - Cabinet Member for Transport Management
▪ **A4074 Oxford to A4310 speed limit reductions** Proposed changes for safety reasons along the A4074 corridor include reductions to 50 and 40mph on various lengths between Oxford and the County Boundary and also including the A4130 Wallingford bypass	Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for Transport Management, 2025/115 - Cabinet Member for Transport Management
▪ **Market Place, Wantage - Traffic Management restrictions** Following the expiration of the Experimental Traffic Regulation Order within the Market Place area of Wantage, and the subsequent approval to make it permanent in March 2023, proposals have been consulted upon to introduce an amended version of the scheme, including the prohibition of motor vehicles & parking changes. The proposals will continue to facilitate safer pedestrian movement and the safe use of tables and chairs by the adjacent hospitality businesses.	Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for Transport Management, 2025/092 - Cabinet Member for Transport Management
▪ **Thame Road, Chinnor - Proposed waiting restrictions** Project supported by the Town Council to introduce restrictions to prevent parking on footways in the vicinity of the Biker Bean Cafe. Proposals also include formalising existing yellow line restrictions.	Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for Transport Management, 2025/094 - Cabinet Member for Transport Management
▪ **Proposed car club bays - Great Clarendon St, Oxford** Proposed introduction of 2 car club bays near the junction with Hart Street, to support a move away from car ownership as the main means of travel.	Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for Transport Management, 2025/095 - Cabinet Member for Transport Management

▪ **Road Safety & Pedestrian Improvement Scheme – Chilton Lower Road** Lower Road, Chilton is one of the main road to village and serves with pedestrian access between recreational ground, village hall and Chilton County primary school. Due to direct access from the A34 to the village focusing vulnerable pedestrian safety point, the scheme is consulting with proposal of speed reduction and access improvement between Chilton Recreation ground and Jubilee Bridge access to Chilton village & Chilton primary School.	Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for Transport Management, 2025/117 - Cabinet Member for Transport Management
▪ **Proposed speed limit changes - B430 Western on the Green** New 30 & 40mph limits being promoted for road safety	Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for Transport Management, 2025/106 - Cabinet Member for Transport Management
▪ **B4031, Hempton - Proposed New Traffic Calming Features** As part of DfT United States Visiting Forces road safety initiative - traffic calming is proposed on the B4031, Hempton. This is deemed necessary to reduce speeds and improve safety on a route commonly used by USVF drivers which is also a busy HGV route incorporating a pinch point within this section	Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for Transport Management, 2024/345 - Cabinet Member for Transport Management
▪ **Westwell: Proposed 20mph Speed Limits** To seek approval for the introduction of a 20mmph speed limit in Westwell.	Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for Transport Management, 2024/311 - Cabinet Member for Transport Management
▪ **Great Western: B4493 Didcot Road - Proposed 20mph Speed Limit Extension** Part of Phase 3 Countywide 20mph Speed Limit Project	Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for Transport Management, 2024/195 - Cabinet Member for Transport Management
▪ **Shutford: Proposed 20mph Speed Limits** Part of Phase 3 Countywide 20mph Speed Limit Project	Delegated Decisions by

	Cabinet Member for Transport Management, 2024/169 - Cabinet Member for Transport Management
▪ **Railway Lane, Littlemore, Oxford - Proposed 20mph and Traffic Calming** The County Council requested traffic calming measures to be included in the s278 Works reasons of road safety during the planning process. The County Council has requested a 20mph speed limit for the estate roads as part of the s38 technical approval process. This would make the road on the new estate the same speed limit as the roads in the vicinity.	Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for Transport Management, 2025/110 - Cabinet Member for Transport Management
▪ **Faringdon parking review 25.26** Review of parking restrictions, including introduction of permit parking around the centre of Faringdon	Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for Transport Management, 2025/112 - Cabinet Member for Transport Management

Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for Place, Environment and Climate Action, 17 July 2025

▪ **Update on Process of Producing the Minerals and Waste Local Plan** A report seeking approval to move the minerals and waste Local Plan production from the existing plan-production process onto the new plan-making process in accordance with the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act 2023.	Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for Place, Environment and Climate Action, 2025/067 - Cabinet Member for Place, Environment and Climate Action
▪ **Approval to Enter into Agreements - Bicester London Road** To approve the award of a contract in relation to construction and delivery of the Bicester London Road Active Travel Scheme.	Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for Place, Environment and Climate Action, 2025/111 -

	Cabinet Member for Place, Environment and Climate Action

Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for Finance, Property and Transformation, 11 July 2025

▪ **Asset Rationalisation Programme** Approve the proposals for the moving of staff to alternative locations, including the potential purchase of a new freehold property and refurbishment of the existing portfolio.	Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for Finance, Property and Transformation, 2025/045 - Cabinet Member for Finance, Property and Transformation

Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for Adults, 15 July 2025

▪ **Connect to Work: Approval of final Development Plan** Approval of final development plan as agreed with the Department for Work and Pensions, for delivery of the Connect to Work Programme in Oxfordshire.	Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for Adults, 2025/090 - Cabinet Member for Adults

Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for Public Health and Inequalities, 1 July 2025

▪ **Detoxification and Residential Rehabilitation Services for Adults with Problematic Substance Use – Dynamic Approved Provider List (DAPL)** We are asking for agreement to enact the two-year extension option on this contract for Residential Detoxification and Rehabilitation Providers on OCC DAPL Framework. The notice period deadline for this contract is 31 January 2026. The extension period would commence on 01/05/2026 until 30 April 2028.	Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for Public Health and Inequalities, 2025/085 - Cabinet Member for Public Health and Inequalities

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Annex - Overview & Scrutiny Recommendation Response Pro forma

Under section 9FE of the Local Government Act 2000, Overview and Scrutiny Committees must require the Cabinet or local authority to respond to a report or recommendations made thereto by an Overview and Scrutiny Committee. Such a response must be provided within two months from the date on which it is requested[1] and, if the report or recommendations in questions were published, the response also must be so.

This template provides a structure which respondents are encouraged to use. However, respondents are welcome to depart from the suggested structure provided the same information is included in a response. The usual way to publish a response is to include it in the agenda of a meeting of the body to which the report or recommendations were addressed.

Issue: Streetworks Management

Lead Cabinet Member(s): Cllr Andrew Gant, Cabinet member for Transport Management

Date response requested:[2] 25 March 2025

Response to report:
Enter text here.

Response to recommendations:

Recommendation	Accepted, rejected or partially accepted	Proposed action (if different to that recommended) and indicative timescale (unless rejected)
1. *That the Council should explore different models for compliance and enforcement with regard to highways works, including the use of technology and crowdsourcing to report issues.*	Accept	Network Management are always looking at ways and means to improve how compliance on the network is managed and improved and are keen to embrace new technologies. This is demonstrated through the introduction of new technologies e.g. Symology Aurora as our management system and being early adopters for new powers to better manage the highway e.g. Lane Rental application. A significant amount of work has been undertaken to adopt latest technologies.

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

Annex - Overview & Scrutiny Recommendation Response Pro forma

		The service has received additional investment to allow for increased 'boots on the ground' to proactively investigate and manage works. All users of the highway, including our Oxfordshire Together volunteers and Fixmystreet superusers Members of the public, volunteers are all able and encouraged to use fixmystreet to report issues identified. Issues reported on fixmystreet will be triaged and allocated to officers to investigate and respond promptly. The services traffic control centre actively monitor the highway network and when delays are identified will check to see if any works are taking place in the affected area and will use this data driven intelligence to dispatch street works officers to investigate potential breaches where identified. The council is currently letting a new contract for parking enforcement and officers will ensure when finalising the specification officers consider the use of enforcement officers to support qualified officers with basic compliance of works.
2. ***That the Council should increase enforcement on 'street scars' and ensure proper reinstatement of road surfaces after works.***	Partially accept	The service has received additional investment to allow for increased 'boots on the ground' to proactively investigate and manage works including street scars. Statutory Undertakers are bound via the Code of Practice for the

		Reinstatement of Openings on the Highway to match the colour of their reinstatement to the colour of the road surface, however as the road surface will fade with age the 'scar' will very often be more prominent than the surrounding surface. Where the incorrect colour is used officers will enforce legislation to ensure the Statutory Undertaker reinstates correctly. Unfortunately the council can rarely ask for full width reinstatements to be made when works are carried out as legislation does not allow statutory undertakers to carry out reinstatements that improve the condition of the highway. Only when a statutory undertakers works are expected to cause failure of the wider area of highway can this be requested.

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Overview & Scrutiny Recommendation Response Pro forma

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This template provides a structure which respondents are encouraged to use. However, respondents are welcome to depart from the suggested structure provided the same information is included in a response. The usual way to publish a response is to include it in the agenda of a meeting of the body to which the report or recommendations were addressed.

Issue: Local Area Partnership SEND Update

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

Date response requested:[2] 25 March 2025

Response to report:

.Response to recommendations:

Recommendation	Accepted, rejected or partially accepted	Proposed action (if different to that recommended) and indicative timescale (unless rejected)
1. That the Council will publish the most recent Key Performance Indicators reported to the SIAB as well as the RAG Rated Priority Action Plan tracker.	Partially accepted	We are revising our priority action plan and the associated KPIs and RAG ratings. A white paper on SEND is due imminently and we may need to reflect that in our approach. Therefore, we will be in a position to publish information in early autumn.
2. That the Council should set out how the views of the SEND Youth Forum, and its	Accepted	The views of the Forum are taken into account as part of service developments. Representatives from the Forum attend

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

members, will be taken into account and how they will be presented, including any consultation prior to the publication of any reports about the Forum.		SiAB on a regular basis so that they can inform our improvement journey. Young people are also represented on our Preparation for Adulthood work – specifically supported internships.