OXFORDSHIRE
COUNTY COUNCIL

To: **Members of the Cabinet**

Notice of a Meeting of the Cabinet

Tuesday, 15 July 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

July 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 21 July 2025
unless called in by that date for review by the appropriate Scrutiny Committee.
Copies of this Notice, Agenda and supporting papers are circulated
to all Members of the County Council.

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

Date of next meeting: 16 September 2025

AGENDA

1. Apologies for Absence

2. Declarations of Interest

- guidance note below

3. Minutes (Pages 1 - 10)

To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 17 June 2025 (**CA3**) and to receive information arising from them.

4. Questions from County Councillors

Any county councillor may, by giving notice to the Proper Officer by 9 am 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

7. Reports from Scrutiny Committees (Pages 11 - 22)

Cabinet will consider the following Scrutiny reports:-

Education and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee reports on:-

a) S.19 of the Education Act (to follow)
b) EOTAS Policy
c) Home to School Transport Policy

8. EOTAS Policy (Education other than at School) (Pages 23 - 38)

Cabinet Member: Children, Education and Young People's Services
Forward Plan Ref: 2024/324
Contact: Kate Reynolds, Deputy Director of Education
Kate.reynolds@oxfordshire.gov.uk

Oxfordshire County Council (OCC) is required to implement a policy for the delivery of Education Other Than At School (EOTAS) as highlighted by the SEND inspection in 2023. This policy is crucial to ensure that all children and young people, particularly those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), receive a suitable and effective education, even if they are unable to attend 'traditional' school settings.

Report by Director of Children's Services (CA8)

a) **The Cabinet is RECOMMENDED to consider and approve the attached draft policy and draft parents' guide**

b) **The Cabinet is RECOMMENDED to request an annual review of the policy and that the findings of that review are presented to Cabinet in April 2026.**

9. Connect to Work: Approval of final Development Plan (Pages 39 - 66)

Cabinet Member: Adult Social Care
Forward Plan Ref: 2025/090
Contact: Will Gardner, Employment Print Finishers Team Leader
Will.gardner@oxfordshire.gov.uk

Report by Director of Adult Social Services **(CA9)**

Connect to Work (CtW) is a nationally prescribed and locally commissioned supported employment programme, funded by the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) through grant funding. It is delivered by the Accountable Bodies that will determine how the support is delivered locally, in line with local priorities.

The Cabinet is RECOMMENDED to

a) **Authorise the Council to enter into grant funding agreement/s with the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) to develop and deliver the Connect to Work Programme for such period as the programme continues to be funded by DWP**

b) **Authorise the Council to take receipt of grant funding in its role as Accountable Body (and as determined by an approved DWP grant cost register and delivery plan).**

10. Proposed response to the 2025 Oxfordshire Travel and Transport Citizens' Assembly (Pages 67 - 140)

Cabinet Member: Leader
Forward Plan Ref: 2025/106
Contact: Carole Stow, Engagement and Consultation Manager
Carole.stow@oxfordshire.gov.uk

Report by Director of Environment and Transport and Director of Public Affairs, Policy and Partnerships **(CA10)**

This report provides Cabinet with background information about the citizens' assembly on travel and transport, its 20 recommendations and the council's proposed initial response to these. It is supported by: Annex A - the full report of the Citizens' Assembly prepared by MutualGain; and Annex B - a table setting out the council's proposed initial response to the citizens' assembly's 20 recommendations.

Cabinet is RECOMMENDED to

a) **Approve the council's initial response to the 20 recommendations developed by the citizens' assembly.**

b) **Support the development of a work programme, including a prioritisation matrix, as the next step to take forward the citizens' assembly recommendations.**

c) **Support the deeper involvement of communities in transport policy development, and scheme design and delivery, including the ongoing involvement of citizens' assembly members.**

11. Climate Action Programme update (Pages 141 - 206)

Cabinet Member: Place, Environment and Climate Action

Forward Plan Ref: 2025/077
Contact: Ariane Crampton, Zero Carbon Oxfordshire Manager
Ariane.crampton@oxfordshire.gov.uk

Report by Director of Environment and Place **(CA11)**

This report is a six-monthly update to cabinet on the delivery of the 2024/25 Climate Action Programme workstreams, including the development of a new Circular Economy Plan.

Cabinet is RECOMMENDED to:

a) **Adopt the Circular Economy Plan (Annex 1).**

b) Note the climate outcomes dashboard (Annex 2).

c) Note the update on the delivery of the Climate Action Programme 2024/25 and approve the proposed Climate Action Programme for 2025/26 (Annex 3).

12. Update on Process of Producing the Minerals and Waste Local Plan (Pages 207 - 218)

Cabinet Member: Place, Environment and Climate Action
Forward Plan Ref: 2025/067
Contact: Kevin Broughton, MWLP Manager
Kevin.broughton@oxfordshire.gov.uk

Report by Director of Economy and Place **(CA12)**

The County Council is the Minerals and Waste Planning Authority for Oxfordshire and responsible for producing the Oxfordshire Minerals and Waste Local Plan which, alongside the District Authority Local Plans, forms the Development Plan for Oxfordshire.

The Cabinet is RECOMMENDED to

a) approve the cessation of the preparation of the new Minerals and Waste Local Plan under the current plan-making process and authorise the production of a new Minerals and Waste Local Plan under the new plan-making process in accordance with the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act 2023

b) delegate to the Director of Economy and Place in consultation with the Director of Law and Governance

  i. putting in place changes to the Minerals and Waste Development Scheme to reflect this

  ii. carrying out a review within 6 months if the provisions of the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act have not been brought into force

by that time or earlier in the event of possible intervention by the Secretary of State.

13. Community Banking Hubs Motion (Pages 219 - 224)

Cabinet Member: Resources and Deputy Leader
Forward Plan Ref: 2025/103
Contact: Paul Wilding, Programme Manager
Paul.wilding@oxfordshire.gov.uk

Report by Director of Policy, Public Affairs and Partnerships **(CA13)**

On 1 April 2025 the Council passed a motion which stated: "Council requests the relevant Cabinet member for Community and Corporate Services and the Cabinet Member for Finance to take a lead from forward-thinking colleagues at Buckinghamshire Council and, working with its Town Council, and District Council partners, invite banks and building societies that have left – or are due to leave – our high streets to explore opportunities to work with this Council to set up similar banking hubs within appropriate Council libraries."

The Cabinet is RECOMMENDED to agree to the continuation of efforts to engage banks to provide community services within library facilities and other suitable locations in areas lacking banking services

14. Future Civil Enforcement Contract Models (Pages 225 - 254)

Cabinet Member: Transport Management
Forward Plan Ref: 2025/069
Contact: Sasha Redhead, Project Manager
Sasha.redhead@oxfordshire.gov.uk

Report by Director of Economy and Place **(CA14)**

Following Cabinet approval in February 2025 to procure enhanced multi contactor contracts for the civil enforcement and ZEZ operation, Civil Enforcement specialists (Parking Matters) were appointed alongside legal specialists (Ashford's) to work with officers to develop new specifications, pricing schedules and contract terms

The Cabinet is RECOMMENDED to:

a) **Endorse the approach and proposals surrounding the civil enforcement at Oxfordshire County Council (the Council) contracts as set out in this paper.**

b) **Authorise the Director of Financial and Commercial Services to prepare and commence the procurement of:**

   1. **A new 5-year Civil Enforcement Service contract (Contract 1) to commence on 1 May 2026 (following a mobilisation period) with options for two 1-year extensions (7-year potential contract length).**

   2. **A new 5-year Penalty Charge Notice (PCN) Software and Technology contract (Contract 2) to commence on 1 May 2026 (following a mobilisation period) with options for two 1-year extensions (7-year potential contract length).**

   3. **A new Zero Emissions Zone (ZEZ) Checker contract (Contract 3) to commence on 1 April 2026 (following a mobilisation period) plus a maintenance period of 2 years.**

   4. **A new Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) Camera's contract (Contract 4) for supply, maintenance and hosting of new cameras, to start as soon as possible, via further competition on the CCS framework for 4 years (longest length the framework will allow).**

c) **Delegate the decision to the award the contracts, and any potential future contract extensions, to the Director of Environment and Highways in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Transport Management.**

d) *Endorse the Director of Financial and Commercial Services to explore collaboration with neighbouring authorities to enable Contracts 1 and 2 to be utilised by up to two other large authorities that the Council are currently considering procuring on behalf of. Once the exploration is complete, delegate the decision on the way forward to the Director of Environment and Highways in consultation with Cabinet Member for Transport Management, and the Cabinet Member for Finance, Property and Transformation.*

15. **Treasury Management 2025/26 Outturn** (Pages 255 - 268)

Cabinet Member: Finance, Property and Transformation
Forward Plan Ref: 2025/031
Contact: Tim Chapple, Treasury Manager
Tim.chapple@oxfordshire.gov.uk

Executive Director of Resources and Section 151 Officer **(CA15)**

The Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy's (CIPFA's) 'Code of Practice on Treasury Management 2021' requires that committee to which some treasury management responsibilities are delegated, will receive regular monitoring reports on treasury management activities and risks. This is the fourth and final update for the 2024/25 financial year and sets out the position at 31 March 2025.

Cabinet is RECOMMENDED to note the report, and to RECOMMEND Council to note the council's treasury management activity and outcomes in 2024/25.

16. **Budget & Business Planning 2026/27 - Fair Funding Review 2.0** (Pages 269 - 288)

Cabinet Member: Finance, Property and Transformation
Forward Plan Ref: 2025/137
Contact: Kathy Wilcox, Head of Corporate Finance (Kathy.Wilcox@oxfordshire.gov.uk)

Report by Executive Director of Resources and Section 151 Officer (**CA16**).

This report provides an overview of the proposals included in the "Fair Funding Review 2.0" consultation, which was published by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) on 20 June 2025.

The Cabinet is RECOMMENDED to:

a) **Note the report and annexes;**

b) **Delegate the approval of the response to the Fair Funding Review 2.0 consultation to the Executive Director of Resources and Section 151 Officer in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Finance, Property and Transformation.**

17. **Business Management & Monitoring Report - Revenue Update and Monitoring Report** (Pages 289 - 306)

Cabinet Member: Finance
Forward Plan Ref: 2025/099
Contact: Kathy Wilcox, Head of Corporate Finance
Kathy.wilcox@oxfordshire.gov.uk

Report by Executive Director of Finance and Section 151 Officer **(CA17)**

The budget for 2025/26 and Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) to 2027/28 was agreed by Council on 11 February 2025. £53.6m new funding to meet inflationary and demand pressures in 2025/26 was included as part of the budget along with £6.9m investments and £30.3m savings.

This report sets out the initial revenue forecast and expected outlook for the financial year and includes updates on:

- financial risks which will need to be managed in 2025/26;
- savings and investment position; and

- funding notified since the budget was agreed.

The Cabinet is RECOMMENDED to

a) **Note the report and annexes.**

b) **Approve a £3.5m transfer from Budgets held centrally to Adult Services to meet the financial pressure on contracted costs for the provision of social care (paragraph 24)**

c) **Approve the following virements relating to funding changes (paragraphs 27 – 31).**

- **£3.6m transfer of grant funding from budgets held corporately to Children's Services.**
- **£0.8m additional un-ringfenced grants transferred to the in-year contribution to General Balances.**
- **£2.2m increase in the final notified Business Rates funding and Council Tax surpluses transferred to the Collection Fund Reserve.**

d) **Note the DSG High Need Block update (paragraphs 32 - 35).**

18. Capital Programme Monitoring Report (TO FOLLOW)

Cabinet Member: Finance
Forward Plan Ref: 2025/012
Contact: Natalie Crawford, Capital Programme Manager
Natalie.crawford@oxfordshire.gov.uk

Report by Executive Director of Resources and Section 151 Officer **(CA18)**

The Cabinet is RECOMMENDED to:

Capital Programme

a. Note the capital monitoring position for 2025/26 set out in this report and summarised in Annex 1.

b. Approve the updated Capital Programme at Annex 2 incorporating the changes set out in this report.

Budget Changes / Budget Release

c. Approve the inclusion of St Joseph's, Thame into the capital programme with an indicative budget of £1.500m (para 62-63).

d. Approve the inclusion of Safe Space into the capital programme with a budget of £1.795m (para 64-66).

e. Approve the inclusion of Redbridge Redevelopment into the capital programme with an indicative budget of £6.545m (para 67-69).

f. Approve the inclusion of Cinder Track improvements, Route 2 of the South and Vale Active Travel Network (SVATN), into the capital programme (para 70-71).

g. Approve the inclusion of the A420 (Oxford) Safer Roads Fund into the capital programme with a budget of £2.225m (para 72-73)

h. Approve an increase in budget of the A34 Lodge Hill Interchange Scheme from £34.660m to £36.090m, an increase of £1.430m (para 74-75).

i. Approve the inclusion of the Bus Service Improvement Delivery Plan 2025/26 into the capital programme with a budget of £5.441m (para 76-78).

j. Approve the inclusion of the Data Centre Hardware Refresh into the capital programme with an indicative budget of £1.600m (para 78-80).

Funding Updates

k. Agree the inclusion in the capital programme of the following grant funding updates and allocations:

- Revise the previous forecasted value of the School Condition Allocation 2025/26 to £4.647m (para 82).

- Add the Basic Need Capital Allocations for 2026/27 & 2027/28 of £7.732m and £4.904m to the basic need programme to address pupil places (para 83).

- Add the SEN High Needs Capital Allocation 2025/26 of £7.936m to the basic need programme to address SEN provision (para 84-85).

- Add the Integrated Transport Block 2025/26 of £3.717m into the capital programme and replace existing council funded transport schemes (para 86).

l. Note the reduction in the over-programming of the ten – year capital programme from £14.082m as agreed by Council in February 2025 by £3.717m to an over-programme of £10.365m.

19. Forward Plan and Future Business (Pages 307 - 312)

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 **CA19.** 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.

EXEMPT ITEM

It is RECOMMENDED that the public be excluded for the duration of item 20 since it is likely that if they were present during that item there would be disclosure of exempt information as defined in Part I of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended) and specified below in relation to those items and since it is considered that, in all the circumstances of the case, the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

THE ANNEX TO THE ITEM HAS NOT BEEN MADE PUBLIC AND SHOULD BE REGARDED AS 'CONFIDENTIAL' BY MEMBERS AND OFFICERS ENTITLED TO RECEIVE THEM.

THIS ALSO MEANS THAT THE CONTENTS SHOULD NOT BE DISCUSSED WITH OTHERS AND NO COPIES SHOULD BE MADE.

20. Financial and land agreements relating to the conversion of Woodeaton Manor School to an academy (Pages 313 - 324)

Cabinet Member: Children and Young People
Forward Plan Ref: 2025/109
Contact: Barbara Chillman, Service Manager – Pupil Place Planning
Barbara.chillman@oxfordshire.gov.uk

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

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

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

The **annex** containing exempt information under the above paragraph is attached.

Report of the Director of Children's Services **(CA20)**

Woodeaton Manor School is a foundation school without a foundation, catering for children with social and emotional difficulties and is set to convert to academy status on 1st October 2025 following the issue of Directive Academy Order, with Propeller Academy Trust (PAT) as the academy trust.

The Cabinet is RECOMMENDED to:-

a) approve the proposal for Oxfordshire County Council (OCC) to retain maintenance and repairs of Woodeaton Manor School building after it converts to academy status and until the lease is terminated, at an annual cap of up to £0.2m per annum, for a period of between 2-4 years until the school can be relocated to new accommodation, the maximum cost to the general fund is £0.4m to £0.8m.
b) approve the proposed funding, subject to conditions, as detailed in the annex, to support the trust with adaptations to the building to meet the special educational needs and disabilities (send) requirements of current students.
c) approve an enhanced level of revenue funding for Woodeaton Manor School, as detailed in the annex, starting on the date of academy conversion (scheduled for 1 October 2025) and being reviewed on an annual basis, with any changes taking effect from 1 April each year.
d) note the options relating to the land transfer set out in this report and to approve the delegation of authority to the Director of Children's Services, in consultation with the Director of Law & Governance and the Director of Property & Assets as appropriate, to finalise and execute the necessary documentation to meet the Department for Education (DFE) timescales for academisation. this includes the final decision relating to the transference of insurance excess costs in the case of negligence by the trust employees, and the final processes relating to freehold transfer.

21. For information only: Cabinet responses to Scrutiny items (Pages 325 - 342)

Report on the Virtual School
Co-production in Adult Social Care
s.106 Improvement Programme Update
Rail Strategy
Local Economic Partnership Integration
Business Management and Monitoring Report

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 Tuesday, 17 June 2025 commencing at 2.00 pm and finishing at 4.15 pm

Present:

Voting Members:	Councillor Liz Leffman – in the Chair Councillor Neil Fawcett Councillor Tim Bearder Councillor Andrew Gant Councillor Sean Gaul Councillor Kate Gregory Councillor Jenny Hannaby Councillor Ben Higgins Councillor Judy Roberts
Other Members in Attendance:	Councillors Thomas Ashby, Liz Brighouse OBE. Izzy Creed, Imade Edosomwan, and Kieron Mallon

Officers:

Whole of meeting	Lorna Baxter (Executive Director of Resources & Section 151 Officer), Stephen Chandler (Executive Director of People, Transformation and Performance), Anita Bradley (Director of Law & Governance and Monitoring Officer), Lisa Lyons (Director of Children's Services), Chris Reynolds (Senior Democratic Services Officer)

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

77/25 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

(Agenda Item. 1)

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Dan Levy.

78/25 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

(Agenda Item. 2)

There were none.

79/25 MINUTES

(Agenda Item. 3)

The minutes of the meetings held on 20 March and 22 April 2025 were approved as a correct record.

80/25 QUESTIONS FROM COUNTY COUNCILLORS

(Agenda Item. 4)

See annex.

81/25 PETITIONS AND PUBLIC ADDRESS

(Agenda Item. 5)

7 – Report from Scrutiny Committee - Place OSC report to Cabinet - Transport Working Group

Amanda Chumas
Danny Yee

9 – Traffic Filter Trial Delay – Mitigation Proposals

City Councillor Lubna Arshad
Ian Loader
City Councillor Katherine Miles
John Center
Luke Marion
Sajad Khan
Becky Carlyle
Jeremy Mogford
Danny Yee
Patrick Lingwood
Robin Tucker
Aeron Buchanan
Anne Gwinnett
Emily Scaysbrook
Duncan Parkes
Chris Hanson
Councillor Emily Kerr
Councillor David Henwood
Councillor Emma Garnett
Councillor James Fry

82/25 APPOINTMENTS 2025-26

(Agenda Item. 6)

Cabinet had before it a report asking it to consider member appointments to a variety of bodies which in different ways supported the discharge of the Council’s executive functions.

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

RESOLVED to agree the appointments to the bodies set out in the Annex to the report.

83/25 REPORTS FROM SCRUTINY COMMITTEES

(Agenda Item. 7)

Cabinet received the following Scrutiny reports and will respond in due course:-

Education and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee reports on:-

a) Report of the Virtual School
b) Update of Children's Homes
c) Home to School Transport Policy

Performance and Corporate Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee reports on:-

d) Local Enterprise Partnership Integration
e) Business Management and Monitoring Report

Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee reports on:-

f) Report of the Transport Working Group
g) s.106 Improvement Project
h) Rail Strategy

84/25 HOME TO SCHOOL TRANSPORT & POST 16 TRAVEL POLICY 2025-26

(Agenda Item. 8)

Cabinet had before it a report on a review of the Council’s Home to School Transport Policies. These were last consulted upon in 2014 (Compulsory School Age) and 2018 (Post 16). Department for Education Guidance was last updated in 2019 for Post 16 Travel and in 2023 and 2024 for Compulsory School Age.

Local authorities were required to keep their school travel policy under regular review to ensure it continued 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.

Councillor Sean Gaul, Cabinet Member for Children and Young People, presented the report. The report reflected extensive analysis and consultation feedback on the revisions to the Home to School Transport Policy. He said that the report highlighted that 60% of respondents to the consultation opposed the introduction of charges for post-16 transport.

During discussion, the following points were made:-

- Councillor Liz Brighouse, Chair of the Education and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee recommended an annual review of the policy. She also suggested more flexibility in the policy to accommodate individual circumstances, such as the example of siblings traveling separately to the same school.

- Another member expressed satisfaction with the extensive consultation process and the decision not to introduce contribution charges. The importance of considering the lived experiences of those affected by the policy was emphasised.

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

RESOLVED 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.**

85/25 TRAFFIC FILTER TRIAL DELAY - MITIGATION PROPOSALS

(Agenda Item. 9)

Network Rail’s ongoing closure of Botley Road at Oxford station meant that Cabinet’s November 2022 decision to introduce six trial traffic filters in Oxford could not be implemented until at least August 2026.

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

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Cabinet was addressed by a number of members of the public and councillors on the proposals.

Councillor Andrew Gant, Cabinet Member for Transport Management, presented the report. He outlined, in detail, the reasons for the proposed temporary implementation of a congestion charging scheme using the infrastructure developed for the traffic filter trial.

During discussion, the following points were made:-

- the need to reduce congestion and improve bus services was emphasised
- Members highlighted the historical context and previous support for traffic reduction measures in Oxford.

The Chair highlighted the lack of any credible alternative proposals and the need to tackle congestion in Oxford.

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

RESOLVED 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.**

86/25 HR & CULTURAL CHANGE - QUARTERLY EMPLOYEE DATA REPORT - QUARTER 4 2024-25

(Agenda Item. 10)

Cabinet had before it a report which provided an overview of the progress towards delivering the Our People and Culture Strategy (as measured by the achievement of its key performance indicators) and summarised the main employee-related trends for Q4 2024/25.

Councillor Neil Fawcett, Cabinet Member for Resources and Deputy Leader, presented the report. He commented, in particular, on the positive trends illustrated in the report including the reductions in agency staff spend and staff turnover.

During discussion, members made the following comments:-

- the significant increase in the utilisation of the apprenticeship levy, from 66.5% in the previous year to 89.6% in the current year.
- An apprentice from the Council won an award for their achievements, showcasing the success of the apprenticeship programme.
- the positive working relationship with trade unions, who provided constructive feedback and worked collaboratively with the Council was noted

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

RESOLVED to note the report.

87/25 BUSINESS MANAGEMENT & MONITORING REPORT - ANNUAL REPORT, PROVISIONAL REVENUE OUTTURN 2024/25

(Agenda Item. 11)

The business management reports were part of a suite of performance, risk and finance documents which set out the council's ambitions, priorities, and financial performance.

Cabinet had before it a report which presented the year-end position for 2024/25 performance, risk, and finance for the council. It also provided the council's Annual Report for 2024/25.

In the absence of the Cabinet Member for Finance, Property and Transformation, Councillor Liz Leffman, Leader of the Council, presented the report. She highlighted the following points from the report:-

- Oxfordshire County Council remained the top-performing waste disposal authority for the 11th consecutive year, with nearly 58% of household waste being recycled, reused, or composted.
- Progress was made on the Vision Zero initiative to improve road safety and reduce road traffic accidents.
- £106,530 in grants were awarded to maintain community transport services.
- The Council became the first County Council to be awarded Authority of Sanctuary status.
- Digital and information support sessions have been rolled out in libraries, with several libraries undergoing refurbishment.
- Oxfordshire had become a Marmot Place, focusing on reducing health inequalities.

- The longest waiting time for social care assessments has been reduced to 42 days, an 80% reduction over the last four years.
- The quality of education healthcare plans has improved, with 44% rated good or outstanding in November 2024, compared to 21% in July 2023.

Councillor Leffman reported on the Council's financial position including the delivery of savings, underspend and general balances which put the Council in a strong financial position for 2025/26.

The high needs deficit for 2024-2025 was £36.5 million, increasing the cumulative negative balance to £92.3 million. The Council awaited government action to address this national issue.

Members noted that the Cheers M'Dears community support service in Banbury had won the MJ Award for Innovation in Children's and Adult Services and that two graduates were runners-up in the Young Local Authority of the Year Awards.

During discussion, a member highlighted that Oxfordshire County Council remained the top council in the Climate Emergency Scorecards, with an improved score from the previous year.

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

RESOLVED 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).**

88/25 CAPITAL OUTTURN REPORT 2024-25

(Agenda Item. 12)

The ten-year Capital Programme set out the agreed capital investment to deliver the priorities identified in the council's Capital and Investment Strategy. Cabinet received a report which provided an update on the performance against the programme shown in the latest monitoring report for 2024/25 and also compared back to the capital programme agreed by Council in February 2024.

In the absence of the Cabinet Member for Finance, Property and Transformation, Councillor Liz Leffman, Leader of the Council, presented the report. She referred to the significant number of schemes which had been delivered including additional school places and progress on various major infrastructure projects.

Councillor Leffman also referred to the Schools Energy Efficiency Loan Scheme and schemes delivered through the Children's Home Programme.

Councillor Leffman moved, and Councillor Roberts seconded the recommendations, and they were accepted.

RESOLVED 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

89/25 CAPITAL PROGRAMME APPROVALS - JUNE 2025

(Agenda Item. 13)

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

In the absence of the Cabinet Member for Finance, Property and Transformation, Councillor Liz Leffman, Leader of the Council, presented the report. She referred to the various schemes requiring approval and inclusion in the capital programme.

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

RESOLVED to:-

a) **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) **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.**

90/25 FORWARD PLAN AND FUTURE BUSINESS

(Agenda Item. 14)

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.

91/25 FOR INFORMATION ONLY: CABINET RESPONSES TO SCRUTINY REPORTS

(Agenda Item. 15)

Cabinet noted the following responses to Scrutiny items:-

a) **Network management (Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee)**

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

……………………………………………….in the Chair

Date of signing …………………………………………..

Divisions Affected – All

CABINET

15 July 2025

Education Otherwise Than At School (EOTAS) Policy

Report of Education and Young People Overview & Scrutiny Committee

RECOMMENDATION

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

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

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

REQUIREMENT TO RESPOND

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

INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

3. The Education and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee considered a report on the draft Education Otherwise Than At School (EOTAS) Policy at its meeting on 13 June 2025. The draft policy had been revised after the Committee considered it on 22 November 2024, with the Committee making recommendations to Cabinet about this, and the Committee had requested it be reviewed again by the Committee before its submission to Cabinet. The Committee had previously agreed that the deadline of February 2025 the Committee had recommended for the policy to

be rewritten should be extended, given that the co-productive work being undertaken to rewrite the draft policy was proceeding fruitfully.

4. The Committee would like to thank the Leader of the Council, Cllr Liz Leffman, the Director of Children's Services, Lisa Lyons, the Deputy Director of Education and Inclusions, Kate Reynolds, and Deb Smit, Assistant Director for SEND and Inclusion, for attending to present the report and to answer the Committee's questions.

SUMMARY

5. The Leader of the Council began by noting that the Local Area SEND Inspection had criticised the Council for not having such a policy in place. The Leader noted that the work to develop the policy had been ongoing for a year and expressed the desire to finalise it.

6. The Deputy Director reminded the Committee that, whilst concerns had been raised about the draft parents' guide in particular, that was still a work in progress. The policy itself aimed to ensure fairness and transparency and was modelled on good practice from other authorities. It was not the Council's intention that this would necessarily be the final iteration. It was possible that an implementation period might lead to revision and the policy might require future adjustment but there was no benefit that the Council could see to further delay in having an approved policy in place.

7. Members discussed co-production and deadlines and raised concerns about the significant cost associated with the substantial increase in the number of children receiving EOTAS. Members also discussed monitoring of EOTAS packages and the performance and progression of children with such.

8. The Committee considered it appropriate for the policy to move forward to Cabinet so that Cabinet could decide whether or not to approve it. However, the Committee made one recommendation relating to the associated guidance.

RECOMMENDATION

9. The Committee recognised that there was a significant level of frustration felt by parents and carers and was grateful for the insights provided by those who took the time to write to, and to publicly address, the Committee. The Committee declined to request a deferral of the Cabinet decision on the policy, as some had suggested, but did discuss whether it was possible to separate the EOTAS policy from the EOTAS guidance.

10. The Committee decided that it would be appropriate to do so. The Committee recognised that the policy should be finalised swiftly, in order to ensure both compliance but also transparency, but considered that there should be time after the policy has been submitted for Cabinet approval for parents and carers to be able to work with the Council to co-produce the guidance for

parents and carers that arises from the policy.

11. The Committee also considers that it would be appropriate for the Committee to review the guidance before it is submitted to Cabinet.

Recommendation 1: That the Council, if the draft EOTAS Policy is approved by Cabinet, should commit to co-producing the parent carer guidance relating to the policy in a timely fashion with it being reviewed by the Committee before it is submitted to Cabinet.

FURTHER CONSIDERATION

12. The Committee anticipates reviewing the EOTAS guidance during this municipal year.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

13. 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.

14. 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

July 2025

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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: Education Otherwise Than At School (EOTAS) Policy

Lead Cabinet Member(s): **Cllr Sean Gaul, Cabinet member for Children and Young People**

Date response requested:[2] **15 July 2025**

Response to recommendations:

Recommendation	Accepted, rejected or partially accepted	Proposed action (if different to that recommended) and indicative timescale (unless rejected)
That the Council, if the draft EOTAS Policy is approved by Cabinet, should commit to co-producing the parent carer guidance relating to the policy in a timely fashion with it being		

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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

reviewed by the Committee before it is submitted to Cabinet.		

Divisions Affected – All

CABINET

15 July 2025

Home to School Transport Policy

Report of Education and Young People Overview & Scrutiny Committee

RECOMMENDATION

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

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

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

REQUIREMENT TO RESPOND

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

INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

3. The Education and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee considered a report on the Home to School Transport & Post 16 Travel Policies 2025/26 at its meeting on 13 June 2025. The report set out proposals that Cabinet was recommended to approve at its meeting on 17 June 2025, following a public consultation during which the consultation documents were also put before the Committee.

4. The Committee would like to thank the Leader of the Council, Cllr Liz Leffman, the Director of Children's Services, Lisa Lyons, the Deputy Director of

Education and Inclusions, Kate Reynolds, and the Home to School Transport Manager, Stephen Good, for attending to present the report and to answer the Committee's questions.

5. The Committee submitted recommendations to Cabinet on 17 June 2025 with an oral introduction but, for consistency, clarity, and completion's sake, submits its written rationale here.

SUMMARY

6. In her opening remarks, the Leader of the Council highlighted that this was the first time the policy had been consulted on in ten years. Cllr Leffman reminded the Committee that, whilst the Council had consulted on a proposal to introduce a financial contribution from families for post-16 travel, it had been decided not to pursue this proposal.

7. The Committee established that the public consultation had sought to align the revised policy with the Department for Education's guidelines and to make it user-friendly for officers, parents, and schools. The policy refresh aimed to simply aspects without altering service eligibility of provision.

8. The Committee discussed the need for clarity of expectation and communication, flexibility, perceptions of unfairness, spare seats schemes and split villages, and the impact of the policy in rural areas. There was also a wider discussion about the costs of providing the service.

9. As Cabinet knows, the Committee moved two recommendations: the first calling for more flexibility going forward and the second being about ensuring regular review of the policy.

RECOMMENDATIONS

10. The Committee recognises that any policy necessarily has parameters and that 'grey areas' are unhelpful to those making decisions. However, there can be a danger that, in order to deliver objectivity and clarity, any sense of discretion or of flexibility can be eradicated. This can lead to outcomes which are, counter-intuitively, more expensive for the Council.

11. One example was given in Committee of two siblings who live at the same house and who attend the same school each day. The older sibling is a member of staff; the younger sibling is a pupil with an EHCP. Because of the current arrangements and requirements of the policy, they need to travel – from the same address to the same school but not for precisely the same timings – separately.

12. That inability to be flexible is a source of frustration both to officers and to those in receipt of transport. The Committee established that the Council was undertaking work around this and was considering how personal transport budgets might best and most smoothly be utilised.

13. Given the practical benefits to service users and their families and a potential commensurate financial benefit to the Council in reducing its costs, the Committee considers that the Council should commit to ensuring that this work is undertaken speedily so that results can be implemented as soon as is practicable.

Recommendation 1: That the Council should work at pace to organise personal transport budgets with appropriate flexibility to take account of individual circumstances.

14. The review of the Home to School Transport Policy is, as everyone concedes, well overdue. The existing policies were lasted consulted upon in 2014 for compulsory school age and in 2018 for post-16 transport. This pre-dates changes to the DfE Guidance which was updated in 2019 for post-16 travel and in 2023 and 2024 for compulsory school age travel.

15. The Committee recognises that there is a possibility of changes both to legislation and to guidance which could necessitate substantial revision of the current policies. However, ordinarily, the Committee considers that the policy should be reviewed each year. That would mean the Council could ensure that the policy continued to meet its needs and deliver the service it considers most appropriate.

16. The Committee was pleased to hear it confirmed that the intention was for the policy to be reviewed each year but considers it important for Cabinet to confirm this so that there is transparency and accountability about that.

Recommendation 2: That the Council should ensure regular review of the policy is to mean 'annual', subject to legislative changes.

FURTHER CONSIDERATION

17. The Committee does not currently anticipate considering Home to School Transport again during this municipal year.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

18. 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.

19. 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

July 2025

Overview & Scrutiny Recommendation Response Pro forma

Under section 9FE of the Local Government Act 2000, Overview and Scrutiny Committees must require the Cabinet or local authority to respond to a report or recommendations made thereto by an Overview and Scrutiny Committee. Such a response must be provided within two months from the date on which it is requested[1] and, if the report or recommendations in questions were published, the response also must be so.

This template provides a structure which respondents are encouraged to use. However, respondents are welcome to depart from the suggested structure provided the same information is included in a response. The usual way to publish a response is to include it in the agenda of a meeting of the body to which the report or recommendations were addressed.

Issue: Home to School Transport Policy

Lead Cabinet Member(s): **Cllr Sean Gaul, Cabinet member for Children and Young People**

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

The Education and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee met on 13 June 2025 and agreed the following recommendations. A report explaining the Committee's rationale will be submitted to the next Cabinet.

Response to recommendations:

Recommendation	Accepted, rejected or partially accepted	Proposed action (if different to that recommended) and indicative timescale (unless rejected)
1. That the Council should work at pace to organise personal transport budgets with appropriate flexibility to take account of individual circumstances.		

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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

Overview & Scrutiny Recommendation Response Pro forma

2. That the Council should ensure regular review of the policy is to mean 'annual', subject to legislative changes.		

Agenda Item 8

OXFORDSHIRE
COUNTY COUNCIL

CABINET

15 July 2025

EOTAS POLICY (Education other than at School)

Report by Lisa Lyons, Director of Children's Services

RECOMMENDATION

1. **The Cabinet is RECOMMENDED to** consider and approve the attached draft policy and draft parents' guide

2. **The Cabinet is RECOMMENDED to** request an annual review of the policy and that the findings of that review are presented to Cabinet in April 2026.

Executive Summary

3. Oxfordshire County Council (OCC) is required to implement a policy for the delivery of Education Other Than At School (EOTAS) as highlighted by the SEND inspection in 2023. This policy is crucial to ensure that all children and young people, particularly those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), receive a suitable and effective education, even if they are unable to attend 'traditional' school settings.

4. The EOTAS policy is designed to provide a structured framework for delivering personalised educational plans tailored to the unique needs of each child or young person.

5. A policy has been drafted and is attached to this report as Annex A for the consideration of the Committee for feedback and prior to presentation at full cabinet on 15 July 2025.

Background

6. The number of children and young people in receipt of EOTAS is increasing, with a 64% increase from 2022-23 to 2023-24. As stated above, EOTAS aims to ensure that all children, especially those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), receive an efficient and effective education, even if they cannot attend traditional schools. The SEND inspection of 2023 noted the absence of a policy and recommended that the Council put one in place for the delivery of EOTAS. Given the increase of the number of children and young people in receipt of EOTAS, the introduction of a policy is also necessary to

formalise the Council's approach in this area and ensure we are working collaboratively with children and young people, and their parents, considering their views, wishes and feelings.

7. To facilitate collaborative working, a number of meetings have taken place since May 2024 between the Deputy Director Education and Inclusion, Education Inclusion Manager, health professionals, SEND Head of Operations, SENDIASS and Parent/Carer Forum Chairs, Assistant Director SEND and the Eotas support group including a listening event with parents/carers in September 2024 and the C&YP Scrutiny committee on 22 November 2024. As part of the follow up to the Scrutiny meeting a further four meetings have been held with the representatives of the parent carer forum and the EOTAS support group. At one of these meetings at external legal expert was in attendance. All the views from these meetings have been taken into account in developing this draft policy.

8. The policy is shaped by several Acts, including the Children and Families Act 2014, the Education Act 1996, and the Equality Act 2010. These laws mandate that local authorities ensure the provision of special educational needs as outlined in Education, Health & Care Plans (EHCPs)

9. Local authorities are responsible for arranging EOTAS. This provision is typically short-term, with the goal of reintegrating the child or young person into a mainstream education setting as soon as possible however, for a small group of children or young people with complex needs they may require an EOTAS package for an extended period.

10. EOTAS is funded by local authorities through the high needs block. The current spend on EOTAS as of May 2025 is roughly £2.6m per annum. The cost of EOTAS contributes to the overall High Needs Deficit.

11. The EOTAS policy lays out Oxfordshire County Council's position and commitment to those children and families in receipt of EOTAS. It sets out aims and objectives of the policy.

12. EOTAS is funded using Direct Payments to parent/carers or the young person, or using Oxfordshire County Council to pay the provider directly.

13. In order that effective use is made of public funds, , the policy states that Oxfordshire County Council will seek to carry out due diligence on all direct payments made as part of an EOTAS package.

14. Any planning and/or amendments to the agreed package will be completed as part of the annual review of the child or young person's EHCP.

15. Safeguarding arrangements will comply with DfE statutory guidance 'Keeping Children Safe in Education 2024 and Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023.

16. A draft parents/carers' guide is attached as Annex B. This guide is for information only and has not yet had input from the parent/carer forum and other key stakeholders. It is intended that further work to co-produce the guide is completed as a matter of priority so that a guide is available for the start of the academic year in September 2025.

17. Given the importance of the policy and the contribution it makes to enabling the local authority to support its most vulnerable children and young people. It is proposed that a full review of the workings of the policy, including proposed amendments, is brought to Scrutiny in summer 2026.

Corporate Policies and Priorities

18. The policy will support the Vision, Values, Objectives and Strategic Priorities of the County Council, as having a clear EOTAS policy in place will specifically help to support and create opportunities for certain individual children and young people with SEND to enable them to reach their full potential. Having a transparent policy in place will also enable a more joined up approach to this work with partner agencies across the Local Area.

Financial Implications

20 As at May 2025 70 young people are in receipt of EOTAS packages at a total cost of c£2.7m per annum.

19.

20. The cost of these packages of support are met by the local authority via the High Needs Block of the Dedicated Schools Grant. Payments for EOTAS packages can be made direct to the parent, directly by the LA or a combination of both.

21. The proposed EOTAS policy sets out current practice and therefore it is not anticipated that the introduction will have any direct financial implications. This is however an area of spend where there has been growth in both demand and total spend over recent years, and this is unlikely to change as a result of this policy.

22. The implementation of the policy alongside the guidance and information regarding personal budgets will help to ensure better monitoring of the spend, and governance of EOTAS packages, so that these packages are appropriately monitored and audited.

Comments checked by:

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

Legal Implications

23. The main body of this report and the attached policy set out the Council's legal duties and responsibilities in this area of work. The introduction of a policy will mean that the Council have a clear indication of how it should approach this issue and officers will need to apply the policy when making decisions in order that these are robust in the face of any potential legal challenge.

Comments checked by:

Leanne Schrouder, Locum SEN and Education Solicitor,
Leanne.Schrouder@oxfordshire.gov.uk

Staff Implications

24. Currently the number of school aged children and young people in receipt of EOTAS packages is growing within Oxfordshire and many of these packages are complex. As the students are not on roll at a setting there is an increased demand on the EHCP Casework Team to monitor and support the coordination of the provision. This will have an ongoing impact on the team which may mean that additional staff roles need to be created to ensure the packages are set up, managed and monitored effectively and appropriately.

Michelle Higgs, HR Business Partner (Schools and Education),
Michelle.Higgs@Oxfordshire.gov.uk

Equality & Inclusion Implications

25. It is considered that there would be no negative implications in relation to equality and diversity in the approval of this policy. EOTAS is part of the Local Authority's offer to support vulnerable children across Oxfordshire. Having a formal policy in place will help to ensure equality and inclusion and that that children's needs are met. Of the 70 children and young people currently receiving an EOTAS package (as at May 2025), 5 are entitled to free school meals, 49 are male, 21 are female and 62 are White British.

Sustainability Implications

26. There are no sustainability matters arising in the proposal.

Risk Management

27. There is a risk currently across the Council in not having a clear policy in place which sets out the Council's position on EOTAS. Having a new policy will present some operational risks in implementation and effective

communication with all stakeholders will be vital, but having a policy in place will ensure that there is better consistency of practice and clarity for professionals, parents/carers and children and young people.

Consultations

28. We have consulted with parents and carers, through a listening event in September 2024 which was attended by parents/carers in receipt of EOTAS and those new to EOTAS. More recently we have sought comment from PCF and the EOTAS Support Group and health professionals on the drafted EOTAS policy and made amendments as appropriate.

Lisa Lyons

Annex A: Draft EOTAS policy 2025
Annex B: Draft parents'/carers' guide

Background papers: Nil

Contact Officer: Kate Reynolds, Deputy Director of Education & Inclusion, Kate.Reynolds@oxfordshire.gov.uk .

May 2025

OXFORDSHIRE
COUNTY COUNCIL

Annex A: DRAFT EOTAS POLICY

OCC

Education Otherwise Than At School (EOTAS) Policy 2025

Note: EOTAS can be referred to as Education Otherwise Than In School or college (EOTIS or EOTiSC)

Document Summary: This policy details the arrangements through which the LA meets the Statutory requirement to ensure that children and young people with an Education Health, Care Plan (EHCP), who are unable to be educated in school receive suitable education.

It is applicable to those seeking EOTAS packages as well as those currently in receipt of EOTAS packages from 1st September 2025. Any potential changes to existing EOTAS packages will only be considered through the next due Annual Review process

A full glossary of terms relating to this policy can be found within Oxfordshire County Council's Local Offer: [Glossary of terms for the SEND Local Offer | Oxfordshire County Council]

Vision and values

Local Area Partnership

We are committed to taking accountable and purposeful ***action*** *to ensure that children and young people with SEND, along with their families, are* ***valued, respected, and empowered*** *to thrive in an inclusive and supportive community.*

Our Approach

Together, we embrace a holistic perspective that ***celebrates individuals' strengths****, aspirations, and achievements.*

Through ***partnership, involvement and collaboration****, we support children and young people with SEND, their families and carers to fulfil their wishes and aspirations.*

What is Education Otherwise Than at School (EOTAS)?

1. Sometimes, children and young people with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) require education outside of conventional settings such as schools or colleges and Section 42 of the Children and Families Act 2014 enables education outside of traditional settings.
2. EOTAS stands for Education Otherwise Than At School and is education provision to meet specific needs of children and young people who have an Education Health & Care Plan (EHCP) where the Local Authority is satisfied that it would be inappropriate for some, or all, of the assessed provision to be made in any early years, school or post-16 setting.
   Under a formal EOTAS arrangement, the child or young person will not be required to be on the roll of, or in attendance at, an educational setting.
3. The child or young person will receive their education and special educational provision either at home, or within an external setting that is not a registered educational setting.

The Law relating to EOTAS

4. EOTAS allows for a Local Authority (LA), under Section 61 of the Children and Families Act 2014, to devise a package of special educational provision to be delivered in a setting such as the home or other appropriate setting, where such provision would be inappropriate to be made in a school, post-16 institution or place at which relevant early years education is provided.
5. There must be appropriate consultation with the child's parents/carers or the young person before the Local Authority can make this decision.
6. National SEND Tribunal case law has clarified the high threshold which must be met for EOTAS to be determined as necessary and laid out the circumstances in which it might. https://www.gov.uk/administrative-appeals-tribunal-decisions/nn-v-chesire-east-council-sen-2021-ukut-220-aac
7. Case law has confirmed that for a child to be no longer enrolled at a school and to have their education delivered entirely via an EOTAS package, the Local Authority (or exceptionally SEND Tribunal) would need to be satisfied that it would be inappropriate to deliver any already identified provision in Section F of the EHC Plan need in any school or post-16 institution, including specialist or independent settings.
8. EOTAS provision in Section F of an EHCP is legally treated the same as provision which is delivered within a school setting. The law relating to specificity applies to EOTAS just as it does to provision delivered within

educational institutions. All provision should be written into the EHCP with such a level of specificity that it leaves no room for doubt regarding exactly what provision should be delivered.

9. EOTAS is not a form of Elective Home Education (EHE), with EHE the parent/carer has full responsibility for the educational provision for the child or young person. Under EHE parents/carers must ensure access to a suitable education in accordance with their legal duty under section 7, Education Act 1996.
10. Neither is EOTAS a form of:
    - Flexi-schooling
    - Alternative education provision
11. Parents/carers can seek advice and support on EOTAS from the Special Educational Needs and Disability Service (SENDIASS) who provide impartial information, advice and support to parents and carers of children with SEND, and children and young people themselves through the CHYPSS (Children and Young People's Partnership Service) element of SENDIASS.

Aims

12. Oxfordshire County Council will ensure that children and young people have appropriate learning opportunities and are effectively safeguarded.
13. EOTAS is not necessarily seen as a long-term solution for most children and young people, but an EOTAS package can last as long as needed and deemed to be appropriate and in line with other statutory obligations.

Process of identifying EOTAS

14. As part of the annual review process, or during the drafting of a new EHCP, if it is identified that the provision necessary to meet a child or young person's needs cannot be delivered in an educational setting, an EOTAS package will be considered under Section 61 of the Children and Families Act 2014.This process will include the views of the child or young person and their parent/carers.
15. This will also take into account where EOTAS may be being considered when it is not parental preference but an appropriate setting is not currently available.
16. Oxfordshire County Council will consider all proposals for EOTAS on a case-by-case basis at the Complex Case Panel, considering the individual circumstances for each child or young person.
17. In line with case law (TM v London Borough of Hounslow [2009] EWCA Civ 859 (11 June 2009) such factors will include:

i. the child's background and medical history;
ii. the particular educational needs of the child;
iii. the facilities that can be provided by a school;
iv. the facilities that could be provided other than in a school;
v. the comparative cost of the possible alternatives to the child's educational provisions
vi. the child's reaction to educational provision, either at school or elsewhere;
vii. the parents' wishes (although they are not generally determinative); and
viii. any other particular circumstances that apply to a particular child

18. If there is a setting, which the Local Authority identifies is appropriate, that can offer a placement, meet assessed need and deliver the provision as recorded in an accurate and up to date EHCP, Oxfordshire County Council is unable to consider EOTAS.
19. If, having considered a request for EOTAS, this is not agreed by the Local Authority, a full rationale for this decision will be shared with parents/carers alongside identified next steps.
20. If a parent/carer or child or young person disagrees with the decision, they have the right to appeal to Tribunal (SENDIST)

If EOTAS is agreed the following will apply

22. Oxfordshire County Council will decide how the package is to be delivered in consultation with parents/carers and the child or young person and will secure the provision in the EHCP.
23. From the date the EHCP is finalised, Oxfordshire County Council will arrange all provision set out in the EHCP. Oxfordshire County Council will usually use appropriate providers who are registered as part of the Council's Alternative Education Provision Framework to deliver EOTAS packages.
24. Provision will be either funded directly, or a personal budget will be agreed and paid to the parent/carer or young person in line with the Council's Direct Payment arrangements, or a combination of both.
25. Any personal budget will be sufficient to provide appropriate education and special educational provisions. Oxfordshire County Council will ensure that there is efficient use of resources and therefore, any EOTAS provision set out in an EHCP will be delivered in the most efficient way possible.
26. Agreeing to receive a direct payment comes with responsibilities for families, such as contracting with or employing staff, arranging pre-contracting checks with professional bodies and by the Disclosure & Barring Service (DBS), providing regular financial returns to the Council to demonstrate appropriate spending, and ensuring the quality of the service provided.
27. Advice, guidance and support will be available to support parent/carers and young people around personal budgets by the Direct Payment Advice Team.
28. Oxfordshire County Council will seek to carry out due diligence on all direct payments made as part of an EOTAS package to support the monitoring of public funds.
29. EOTAS will be recorded in the child or young person's EHCP as follows:
    i. Section F will clearly describe all of the support they need, including the provision which will be delivered under EOTAS
    ii. Section I will be left intentionally blank if not setting or institution is going to be attended at all
    iii. Section J will detail the special educational needs and outcomes to be met by any agreed personal budget via direct payments relating to Section F
30. Educational provision will be approved for the equivalent of an academic year. However, the provision can be timetabled and identified funding can be used flexibly, depending on the needs of the child or young person, and it may be that provision will be built up gradually at the individual child or young person's pace.
31. All EOTAS packages would usually include Maths, English and Science as

part of meeting the needs of the child or young person.

32. Post 16 packages may (where appropriate) include English and Maths if the CYP has not yet achieved a grade 4 or equivalent in these subjects and where a young person is studying for GCSEs
33. Arrangements will be made for children and young people entitled to free school meals via the EOTAS package.

Transport

34. Oxfordshire County Council will consider transport on a case-by-case basis and in line with the home to school transport policy.

Safeguarding

35. Oxfordshire County Council is committed to the safeguarding of all children and young people. For provision delivered via the Alternative Education Provision Framework, appropriate due diligence and safeguarding checks will have been made. In the case of parent/carers or young people with a personal budget, assurances and evidence will need to be given to the Council that appropriate checks have been made.

36. If there are any safeguarding concerns, then these will be reported to the EHCP Casework Officer as the main point of contact, who will escalate as appropriate. All professionals working with the child and young person will be aware of and follow processes if they have any concerns: Concerns about a child | Oxfordshire Schools

Monitoring

37. It is Oxfordshire County Council's responsibility to coordinate and monitor EOTAS in collaboration with parents/carers, young people and other professionals. Individual EOTAS packages will be monitored by the child's and young person's allocated EHCP Casework Officer with strategic oversight from the SEND Operations Manager.
38. All staff working with parent/carers and young people around EOTAS will be provided with appropriate training.
39. EOTAS arrangements will be reviewed at least three times per academic year, and as part of the next Annual Review of the EHCP.
40. As part of the Annual Review process and having considered the appropriateness of current provision with the child or young person and parent/carers and all professionals involved, Oxfordshire County Council will consult with appropriate education settings if there is evidence that the legal test for EOTAS may no longer be met.
41. The LA will convene, coordinate and chair the Annual Review meeting. The parent/carer or the child or young person themselves can also request an Annual Review.

Transition planning

42. If, following the Annual Review process, a setting is identified for the child or young person then a transition plan with achievable timescales will be developed with parents/carers, professionals and the setting to ensure that

this placement is successful. This transition plan may include continuation of some of the previous EOTAS provision if appropriate and will be regularly reviewed.

43. If, following the Annual Review process, the LA proposes to cease the child or young person's EHCP then a transition plan will be developed with parents/carers and professionals, including support and signposting to other agencies.

Combining other types of Personal Budgets

44. If a child or young person with EOTAS arrangements is eligible for medical treatment or therapy in section G of their EHCP, and/or social care provisions in section H of their EHCP, they may be eligible for other personal budgets for those parts too. When eligible for more than one personal budget, families may wish combine budgets to arrange the education, health, and social care provisions in their child/young person's EHCP more flexibly. This arrangement gives families the most control and creativity over those arrangements.

45. Oxfordshire County Council may only consider parents/carers requests for personal (education) budgets when a draft EHCP has been issued or as part of an Annual Review of an EHCP. Requests for personal health or social care budgets may be made and considered at other times to the responsible organisations. Parents/carers may not appeal the Council's decisions about whether they award a direct payment or not, but they may ask to review theirdecisions.

Complaints

46. If there are concerns about aspects of individual EOTAS packages, then parents/carers should raise this with their allocated Casework Officer in the first instance. Parents/carers can also raise complaints under Oxfordshire County Council's complaints processes Complaints and comments about Oxfordshire County Council | Oxfordshire County Council

47. In exceptional circumstances, the Director of Children's Services along with the Lead member for Children, Education and Families, may agree an alternative arrangement. This arrangement will be reviewed as part of the Annual Review.

This policy should be read in conjunction with any guidance issued by Oxfordshire County Council.

Further Information

Local Offer Website

Relevant legislation and guidance

Section 61 of the Children and Families Act 2014

Section 42 of the Children and Families Act 2014

Section 7, Education Act 1996.

Keeping Children Safe in Education 2024

Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023.

Alternative Provision: Statutory guidance for local authorities January 2013

Responsible officer: Kate

Reynolds, Director Education

and Inclusion

Responsible Service Area:

Education

Review Date: April 2026/
To be reviewed annually.

Annex B: draft parents/carers' guide – subject to further amendment.

Education Otherwise Than At School/College (EOTAS/EOTAC)

Education in a school or college isn't always the best fit for every child or young person.

Sometimes, due to specific challenges or circumstances, your child may need to learn in a different way or in a different place. This approach is called EOTAS/EOTAC (Education Otherwise Than At School/College), and it's there to help children who can't thrive in 'traditional' education settings.

To ensure that all children/young people can receive an efficient and effective education, the Children and Families Act 2014 allows for education outside of traditional education settings.

Under s 61 of the Children and Families Act 2014, children and young people may be educated otherwise than at school or college if it is inappropriate for their SEN provision to be delivered in an educational setting.

EOTAS/EOTAC is a provision designed for children and young people who cannot thrive in 'traditional' educational settings due to various challenges. It is provided by Oxfordshire County Council and meets the needs of your child who, for whatever reason, is unable to attend school.
Oxfordshire County Council remains legally responsible for organising and funding your child's special education provision.

Why do some children and young people need EOTAS/EOTAC?

For your child, school/college may not be suitable and they may be unable to receive an appropriate education in any school/college.

- they may have mental health difficulties that affect their ability to attend a school/college.
- they may have medical conditions that affect their ability to attend a school/college.
- the school/college they have attended may not have been able to meet their needs.

An EOTAS/EOTAC package may be considered if your child is undergoing a statutory assessment and Oxfordshire County Council assesses and determines that it may be inappropriate for them to attend an educational institution.

An EOTAS/EOTAC package may be considered if your child is having a review of their EHCP and Oxfordshire County Council assesses and determines that it may be inappropriate for them to attend school or college.

If Oxfordshire County Council considers school or college to be inappropriate for your child, they can arrange for the provision to be delivered somewhere other than in a school, college or early years setting.

What could EOTAS/EOTAC look like?

EOTAS/EOTAC provision could include:

- online schooling
- tuition at home
- tuition or training at a specialist centre
- hospital schooling
- therapeutic interventions
- life skills training, including travel training.

What makes an education setting 'inappropriate' for your child?

EOTAS/EOTAC is only possible where Oxfordshire County Council is satisfied that it would be inappropriate for your child's special educational provision to be made in a school/college. To meet this test, evidence is needed to demonstrate that education in a school/college would be inappropriate.

- Information, evidence and views submitted by you and your child.
- Information collated by the local authority, from the professionals and agencies.

Your child's circumstances must be looked at including;

- their background and medical history
- their educational needs
- the facilities that can be provided by a school/college
- the facilities that could be provided other than in a school/college
- the comparative cost of the possible alternatives to your child's educational provision
- the efficient use of public resources
- your child's views, wishes and feelings
- your views, wishes and feelings
- any other circumstances.

When everyone agrees to the EOTAS/EOTAC package, Oxfordshire County Council have a duty to ensure that your child is receiving education as set out in their EHCP.

What if the EOTAS/EOTAC package is not agreed?

You will have the right of appeal in certain circumstances, such as:

- a final plan is issued after the initial EHC needs assessment
- a final amended EHCP after an annual review has been issued
- a final amended EHCP is issued after reassessment.
- a refusal to reassess
- a refusal to amend an EHCP after annual review
- appealing against a plan being ceased.

EOTAS/EOTAC and EHC Plans

When a full time or part time EOTAS/EOTAC package is agreed. or directed by a tribunal, the package is set out within Section F of the Education Health Care Plan.

Full Time EOTAS/EOTAC

If it is agreed that it would be entirely inappropriate for your child to attend an educational institution, then Section I of the EHCP will be left blank.

Part Time EOTAS/EOTAC
If it is agreed that your child will attend an educational institution for at least part of the time, Section I of the EHCP must name the school or college they will attend.

EOTAS/EOTAC and annual reviews

There is the same duty to conduct an annual review when your child is educated otherwise than at school/college. All timescales and obligations will remain the same throughout the annual review process.

Oxfordshire County Council may want to see ongoing evidence that it is still inappropriate for your child to be educated in an educational setting so you may wish to consider this evidence before the annual review takes place.

Parental/Carer request for a Personal Budget via Direct Payments for EOTAS/EOTAC

You have a right to request for a Personal Budget to have greater control over the delivery of the EOTAS/EOTAC package.

Payments can only be made to an adult, either the young person themselves, their parent/carer, or a nominated person.

Oxfordshire County Council must ensure that the amount requested is sufficient to secure the provision and that it is an efficient use of the authority's resources. Direct Payments will not be agreed if it is more cost effective for Oxfordshire County Council to secure the provision. There is no right of appeal against the decision.

Concerns and complaints about an EOTAS/EOTAC

You and/or your child are entitled to raise any concerns about the EOTAS/EOTAC provision with Oxfordshire County Council. In the first instance, it is helpful to discuss any concerns with the allocated officer who will work to resolve these. If you or your child wishes to escalate the complaint, this can be done by submitting a complaint via Oxfordshire County Council's complaints procedure.

Safeguarding

Oxfordshire County Council has a duty of care to children and young people who are receiving education other than at school or college. If concerns are raised that a child or young person's safety or wellbeing is compromised, or it is felt that the child or young person may be at significant risk, Oxfordshire County Council will respond without delay and, if appropriate, refer to the Children's Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH). MASH is equipped to identify the level of risk and needs of children and where necessary, rely on multi agency information sharing processes to make an informed decision about the most appropriate response that needs to be taken.

CABINET

15th July 2025

Connect to Work

Report by Director Adult Social Care

RECOMMENDATION

1. **The Cabinet is RECOMMENDED to**

   a. Authorise the Council to enter into grant funding agreement/s with the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) to develop and deliver the Connect to Work Programme for such period as the programme continues to be funded by DWP.

   b. Authorise the Council to take receipt of grant funding in its role as Accountable Body (and as determined by an approved DWP grant cost register and delivery plan).

Executive Summary

2. Connect to Work (CtW) is a nationally prescribed and locally commissioned supported employment programme, funded by the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) through grant funding. It is delivered by the Accountable Bodies that will determine how the support is delivered locally, in line with local priorities.

3. The CtW programme aims to support individuals outside the workforce and facing disadvantages to get into and to stay in work. Eligible target groups include disabled people, offender/ex-offenders, carers/ex-carers, homeless people, former members of HM Armed Forces or a partner of current or former Armed Forces personnel, people with an alcohol or drug dependency, care experienced young people/care leavers (please see Connect to Work: Grant Guidance for England for details on eligibility).

4. The Council has been designated as one of the 43 Accountable Bodies across England which will be responsible for designing the local offer to support people to find and fulfil their potential to work in line with local services and priorities.

5. The programme is expected to run for a five-year duration until 2030. DWP modelling expects around 2,000 people across Oxfordshire to access the CtW programme through the provision of the Supported Employment 5 Stage

Model and the Individual Placement Support model, both accredited as high-fidelity models of engagement.

6. The DWP funding for Oxfordshire gives an indicative programme cost of circa £8.4 million based on current demand modelling. The programme will be funded in arrears by the DWP subject to a delivery plan and grant funding agreement.

7. The CtW programme will build on the local high fidelity supported employment delivery model already in place in Oxfordshire. This is currently delivered by Oxfordshire Employment, our dedicated service helping people with long-term health issues or a disability to gain and maintain employment. Oxfordshire Employment will deliver the Supported Employment Quality Framework (SEQF) pathway of the programme.

8. Market analysis and an options appraisal identified Enterprise Oxfordshire as the preferred external partner for delivering the IPS (Individual Placement Support) component of the programme, aligning with local priorities for effective collaboration.

9. The Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care took the decision to progress the design with Oxfordshire Employment as internal delivery and Enterprise Oxfordshire for the Individual Placement Support pathway on 29 April 2025.

10. The delivery plan was submitted to DWP and received positive feedback. Responses to clarification questions are being addressed for further submission.

Background

11. Get Britain Working White Paper, published on 26 November 2024, sets out the Government’s ambition to bring down economic inactivity (people without a job due to ill health, disability, lack of essential reading, writing or digital skills or caring responsibilities) levels. There are three pillars of the white paper:

- a modern Industrial Strategy and Local Growth Plans – to create more good jobs in every part of the country,
- improving the quality and security of work through the Plan to Make Work Pay,
- the biggest reforms to employment support for a generation, bringing together skills and health to get more people into work and to get on in work.

12. The first major element of this Strategy is the Connect to Work Programme launched nationally in January 2025 to help around 100,000 (nationally) disabled people, people with health conditions and complex barriers to employment to seek to find sustainable work each year by offering them voluntary support based on the high-fidelity model of Supported Employment.

13. Connect to Work Programme (CtW) will build on the existing DWP funded Supported Employment programmes; Local Supported Employment (LSE) and Individual Placement and Support in Primary Care (IPSPC).

14. CtW is a separate programme complementing other local or national supported employment programmes such as NHS England's Individual Placement and Support for people with severe mental illness (IPS SMI) and the Office for Health Improvement and Disparities' Individual Placement and Support for Alcohol and Drug Dependence (IPS-AD) programme. Individuals will not be able to access these programmes and CtW simultaneously.

15. Connect to Work will be delivered by 43 Accountable Bodies in England over five years, 2025-2030. Oxfordshire County Council is the Accountable Body for local design and delivery of the programme across the geographical boundaries of Oxfordshire.

16. There are two core participant pathways under Supported Employment: Supported Employment Quality Framework (SEQF) and the Individual Placement and Support (IPS). The main difference in the pathways is the target audience - IPS supports people with severe mental health challenges whereas SEQF is more tailored to support individuals with learning disabilities and autism. Under CtW, SEQF is expected to support 30% of the participants while IPS will support 70%.

17. Over the five years of the programme, there is an indicative target of 2,000 participants in Oxfordshire, split between the two models (70% for IPS and 30% for SEQF pathways). The indicative cost of the programme in Oxfordshire is approx. £8.4 million based on the DWP's current demand modelling. The programme will be funded in arrears by the DWP subject to an agreed delivery plan and grant funding agreement.

Delivery of the Supported Employment Quality Framework (SEQF) Pathway

18. In Oxfordshire, Oxfordshire Employment, the Council's dedicated supported employment service, helps people with long-term health issues or a disability to gain and maintain employment. Oxfordshire Employment is currently the only provider that holds the Supported Employment Fidelity Accreditation within the county, providing employment support for over 75 years.

19. Oxfordshire Employment was tasked to work on the scope and potential design of CtW implementation in Oxfordshire to support around 2,000 people expected to access the CtW programme. This is through the provision of the Supported Employment 5 Stage Model and the IPS model, both accredited as high-fidelity models of engagement.

20. The commercial strategy and business case put forward options for the identification and appointment of suitable contractors. In considering the options, consideration was given to the fit of CtW with wider government and local support (as reflected in the local work, health, and skills plan). Future planning for Oxfordshire Employment's sustainability is included in the delivery

model design, allowing for further consideration in the long term. The business case was approved by the Council's Senior Leadership Board on 17th February 2025.

Delivery of the Individual Placement Support Pathway (IPS)

21. A mapping exercise was conducted to identify potential providers of the IPS pathway and a number of organisations that could be interested in delivering local Connect to Work programmes identified.

22. Market engagement took place to explore opportunities with these potential organisations, including with Enterprise Oxfordshire (a Teckal company[1], previously known as OxLEP).

23. An options appraisal was conducted to choose the IPS pathway provider, ensuring Oxfordshire residents get the most value from the CtW programme. The appraisal considered the following criteria:

- The ability to meet the ambitious DWP timescales for the delivery of the programme and the programme outcomes
- The capability to deliver a quality, fidelity model for IPS in Oxfordshire
- Opportunities to tap into the existing experience and knowledge of Oxfordshire's labour market
- Ability to focus on supporting local people into employment effectively in conjunction with Council's ambitions and existing programmes to support inclusive employment in Oxfordshire
- Achieving ambitions which reflect the strategic vision of the Oxfordshire Way and other local strategy across health, employment, and communities
- Deliver social value including keeping investment and jobs local as well as building capacity of local organisations and Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprises (VCSE).

24. The appraisal concluded that the option of a mixed model where Oxfordshire Employment delivers the '5 Stage Supported Employment' Workstream and the Council commissions Enterprise Oxfordshire for the IPS pathway would be the best route for a successful delivery of this programme in Oxfordshire. The Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care supported this approach on 29th April 2025.

Programme Delivery

25. The programme will expand current local provision and provide an opportunity to bring together multiple referral pathways and a 'single front door' offering (through physical locations and on online portal).

26. The Local Supported Employment programme (LSE), developed by DWP as a test and learn model for CtW, is currently operated by Oxfordshire Employment. This is projected to run to July 2025, and it is expected that the current programme pipeline be preserved and extended until the start of CtW delivery.

27. Consideration is given in the new contract to the current SEQF programme pipeline and longer-term planning to ensure continuity of service. External provision will need to be fidelity accredited to be grant compliant. DWP have confirmed accreditation can be secured after award with sufficient mitigations written into contract terms.

28. Enterprise Oxfordshire (previously OxLEP) provides a non-fidelity accredited employment support programme in Oxfordshire and have demonstrated capability and appetite for delivery of the IPS model in their capacity as a local authority Teckal company. Enterprise Oxfordshire have completed an IPS self-assessment in advance of programme start.

29. Internal resource is in place and subject to regular review to support programme design, implementation, and mobilisation. Additional support is procured via a specialist consultant to minimise risk to the timeline, market engagement and design through initial planning phases with an option to extend into implementation phase.

30. Resourcing for the programme is included as part of the delivery design and any tendered offer (Enterprise Oxfordshire tendered services), which will be developed according to key criteria and DWP conditions.

31. The design stage has addressed key risks to ensure suitable mitigations are in place to enable delivery of a high quality, innovative programme. Key issues addressed include:

- Sighting and accessibility of the programme (residents)
- Equity in service/ provision
- Enhanced, sustainable hyper local networks, that leave a legacy
- Avoidance of duplication in offers
- Complementary offer that strengthens existing provision
- Engagement across stakeholders and in co-design of service/s
- Sighting of offer
- Best practice commissioning and accessibility/equity of opportunity (SME's - local specialists)

32. The Delivery Plan outlines how the preferred mixed delivery model combining internal delivery by Oxfordshire Employment and commissioned external partners will work in Oxfordshire. This plan was shaped through co-production and engagement, with a range of stakeholders and partners. Engagement and co-production will continue through the implementation period of the Delivery Plan.

Communications and Marketing

33. The programme will be supported with a Communications and Marketing plan that will give consideration for different audience groups, using appropriate language, visuals, and tools to ensure effective reach and engagement with potential participants and stakeholders. Marketing and communications efforts

will be flexible through the development, implementation, and delivery phases of the programme to ensure expectations are clearly communicated to all parties. ~~contracted parties and partner groups.~~

Timescales & Next Steps

34. For the Council to move into the Grant Agreement stage, as Accountable Body with DWP, DWP must first approve the Delivery Plan (including Grant Cost Register).

35. A draft delivery plan and grant cost register were submitted to DWP in May 2025. Feedback was received on 13 June 2025. The overall feedback has been positive. Work is underway to provide additional information requested on the Delivery Plan, to progress to formal panel review and sign off stage in summer 2025. Following the DWP's approval, the programme is planned to start in November 2025.

36. The implementation is contingent on programme progress against key milestones and reviews by the DWP. As the model evolves, timelines and key dates will be updated accordingly.

37. This is a 5-year programme, subject to spending reviews, ending 31 March 2030. Financial risk is included within the Risk Register and mitigations are included in the contracting arrangements.

Links to Oxfordshire's Strategic Priorities

38. This programme will expand successful Oxfordshire Employment and Enterprise initiatives to support people in accessing and maintaining quality employment.
We believe this programme and funding will give the opportunity to ensure alignment with our strategic plans and initiatives including Get Oxfordshire Working to achieve the impact.

39. Stakeholder and Partner engagement will continue and develop as the programme moves from planning to implementation and delivery phases. We will continue working with our system partners such as our local Health and Wellbeing Board, Integrated Care Systems/Integrated Care Board partners, Job Centre Plus (JCP) as well as other key local stakeholders through the project governance structure and engagement activities.

40. Work continues to inform and align with internal colleagues across key directorates such as Economy & Place, Public Health, Marketing and Comms, Co-production, Joint Commissioning, and others for early engagement into programme development and design.

41. Alongside CtW, the Council, in partnership with the Integrated Care Board and Job Centre Plus must produce a local Get Britain Working plan ('Get Oxfordshire Working'), which will deliver a whole system approach to tackling the supply and demand challenges within local labour markets, covering

market issues such as participation, progression, earnings and job quality in the labour market. Aligning our local Get Oxfordshire Working plan and CtW programmes will ensure a whole place approach and methodology.

Corporate Policies and Priorities

42. Good quality work provides people with income, social interaction, a sense of fulfilment and purpose among many other benefits. Work supports people's wellbeing and aligns with the overarching strategy for delivering Adult Social Care in Oxfordshire, the Oxfordshire Way, which focuses on using strengths-based approaches and empowering people to be independent and live well in their community.

43. The programme supports the Council's strategic priorities in tackling inequalities in Oxfordshire, creating opportunities for young people to reach their full potential and working with local businesses for economic and social benefit.

Financial Implications

44. The programme is fully funded against a five-year operational period by DWP subject to a delivery plan and grant funding agreement. We do not expect any exceptional expenditure.

45. Based on DWP modelling, 2,000 people are expected to access the programme. DWP estimated the lifetime cost to be £4,200 per participant indicating a programme budget of circa £8.4 million.

46. The Council has been awarded £100,000.00 from the total project budget to fund development activities.

47. It is recommended that the proposed contract length is 5-years with review periods after 1 year, 3 years and 5 years, which will give the opportunity to review the service provided.

48. It is also recommended that there be an option to extend for 2-years, should further government funding be provided as has been the case in other programmes. This will give the Council flexibility should short-term funding be allocated before any further support programmes come in.

49. The following grant conditions should be noted:

    - Grant funding is 'in arrears' and subject to agreement by DWP who may adjust or cancel such funding dependent on review outcomes. This risk is recognised in the risk profile of the project. Relevant mitigations will be included in contracting terms as appropriate.
    - DWP volumetric assumptions are that there will be a ramp up in 2025/2026 with peak volumes (100k participants per year nationally) in 2026/2027 and 2027/2028 before reducing towards the end of 2028/2029 as the

programme winds down and a small volume and tail costs in 2029/2030. This is subject to outcomes of future Government Spending Reviews.

Comments checked by:

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

Legal Implications

50. The delivery of the CtW Programme will require entering into and complying with the DWP grant agreement conditions and guidance which will need legal input and support.

51. The Council is authorised to enter into such grant agreements in accordance with the financial procedure rules of its constitution and such arrangement will be monitored by the Councils s151 officer and relevant directors to ensure such funds are appropriately accounted for and used in accordance with the grant agreement terms and conditions.

52. The grant agreement conditions will be mirrored into any agreement with Enterprise Oxfordshire or any other Delivery Partner, including a condition for any subcontracted parties to adhere to such conditions.

53. The grant and project are pursuant to section 2 of the Employment and Training Act 1973 where the Secretary of State shall make such arrangements as he considers appropriate for the purpose of assisting persons to select, train for, obtain and retain employment suitable for their ages and capacities or of assisting persons to obtain suitable employees (including partners and other business associates).

Comments checked by:
Donna Creffield, Contracts Lawyer, donna.creffield@oxfordshire.gov.uk

Staff Implications

54. Internal resource is in place to support programme design, implementation, and mobilisation. Additional support is procured via a specialist consultant to minimise risk to the timeline, market engagement and design through initial planning phases with an option to extend into implementation phase.

55. Resourcing for the programme is included as part of the delivery design and any tendered offer (Enterprise Oxfordshire tendered services), which will be developed according to key criteria and DWP conditions.

56. HR business partners are engaged in the design discussions to ensure that recruitment to specific posts is made in accordance with the Council's own policies and procedures.

57. Resourcing across the project is kept under regular review through the assigned project management function.

Equality & Inclusion Implications

58. CtW is a flagship initiative under the Government's 'Get Britain Working' strategy and is aligned with Oxfordshire's broader goals to reduce economic inactivity and promote inclusive growth. It is designed to complement local health, skills, and employment systems, ensuring a joined-up approach to tackling inequality.

59. The core mission of CtW is to support individuals who are currently outside the workforce and face significant barriers to employment such as disability, long-term health conditions, caring responsibilities, or homelessness. By focusing on these groups, the programme directly addresses structural inequalities in access to work and contributes to the delivery of the Council's strategic priorities.

60. In addition, the delivery plan supports workforce equality and inclusion by:
- Promoting disability confidence among employers
- Supporting Access to Work applications and job carving
- Implementing EDI strategies with mandatory training, staff networks, and race equality standards.

61. The programme features KPIs and delivery frameworks to monitor progress in addressing employment disparities across urban and rural areas. The stakeholder plan, for instance, aims to reduce these disparities by 2029.

62. Contracting terms will require any contracting party to adhere to the relevant legislation and standards as a minimum with clear expectations as to culture, training, and onward investment in EDI.

Sustainability Implications

63. Contracting terms will include the Council's standard terms and expectations for sustainability and environmental impact. It is not anticipated that a separate Climate Impact Assessment will be required at this stage.

64. Conditions will be mirrored into any agreement with Enterprise Oxfordshire or any other Delivery Partner, including a condition for any subcontracted parties to adhere to such conditions where applicable.

Risk Management

65. The development plan includes a fully developed risk assessment and management plan which is kept under review. The following risks have been identified and appropriate mitigations included in the delivery plan:

- Programme timetable managed by DWP
- Programme resource and capacity for planning, implementation, and delivery
- Duplication of provision
- Volumes of participants (in line with DWP profiling)
- IPS procurement of a delivery partner
- Cashflow / defrayed payments
- Continuation of grant funding (review based).
- Enterprise Oxfordshire's capacity to support the programme in the short-term
- Recruitment challenges given volume of Employment Advisors required at peak delivery

Annexes:

1. Delivery Elements: Connect to Work Annex 1- Delivery Elements.docx
2. Options Appraisal: Connect to Work Annex 2 CtW Options Appraisal Template V1.0.docx
3. Informal Cabinet report (April): CMDASC20250429 Reports pack.pdf
4. Timeline (Updated): Connect to Work Annex 3 Timeline June.xlsx
5. Risk Register: ￼ Risk Register - CtW Programme.xlsx

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July 2025

Connect to Work: Delivery Elements

High Fidelity models

Programme delivery requires the provision of high-fidelity models of Supported Employment. Providers must complete annual fidelity compliance reviews. Within the county, the council's own Oxfordshire Employment service is the sole accredited high-fidelity provider of the 5 Stage Supported Employment Model, receiving a 'Good' accreditation under the Supported Employment Quality Framework in September 2024. Other providers, such as Oxford Health, deliver smaller scale IPS provision with high fidelity accreditation. OxLEP offers a COMF-funded employment support service with significant scale but does not follow either high fidelity model.

Individual Placement Support (IPS)

The IPS model primarily supports individuals experiencing mental ill health. Provision is tailored to the needs of the participant cohort. IPS case holders typically manage larger caseloads (25 IPS vs. 20 for the 5 Stage Model). Nationwide expansion of IPS (Sever Mental Illness and Alcohol and Drug pathways), in addition to Connect to Work delivery, is planned.

Supported Employment 5 Stage Model

The 5 Stage Model supports various participant groups, particularly those with learning disabilities and/or autism. There is overlap between participant groups, with the 5 Stage Model also effectively supporting individuals with mental health needs. Service provision may be influenced by programme availability and capacity.

Both models are underpinned by independently assessed high fidelity accreditation schemes. IPS accreditation has existed longer than that for the 5 Stage Model. Fidelity accreditation is a significant commitment for provider organisations; only large-scale providers currently hold both accreditations.

Oxfordshire Employment currently delivers the Local Supported Employment Programme, intended by DWP as a precursor to Connect to Work. Oxfordshire is one of 20 local authorities that successfully bid to deliver this provision in 2022.

Front Door

An essential element of effective service provision is a single front door for triaging participant needs and directing customer flow to appropriate services. Other Lead Authorities, such as Gloucestershire, already have service-wide employment hubs or front door arrangements where skilled staff direct individuals to suitable provision. In Oxfordshire, OXLEP partners to deliver a front door to their employment services, though this does not currently include access to either high-fidelity model.

Programme guidance specifies that participants accessing the front door must be referred to the most appropriate provision to meet their needs, even if this is external to Connect to Work.

Programme Management

Programme guidance and initial discussions with DWP suggest that audit and assurance compliance will follow a model similar to that used for LSE provision. The council will be responsible for defraying costs to delivery partners and using supplied tools to monitor programme and partner performance.

Grant Funding

To support implementation, the Connect to Work Grant payment will be made monthly in arrears for planning and implementation activities during the implementation period, and quarterly in arrears for the Delivery Period. Funding is subject to an agreed delivery plan and grant cost register. Payments will reimburse costs defrayed by the council in delivering the programme.

Connect to Work (CtW)

Annex 2

Options Appraisal Template

OPTIONS APPRAISAL

Title for Business Need	Connect to Work Programme	
Pipeline Reference	TBA	
Author	Will Gardner	
Service Area	Adult Social Care	
Version	V1.0	
Date	January 2025	
Approvals Given	Approver	Date
Service Lead	[Insert Name]	[dd/mm/yyyy]
Category Manager	[Insert Name]	[dd/mm/yyyy]
Relevant Governance E.G. Project Board; DLT or other forum	DLT review	06/01/25

1. Description of Proposal

Connect to Work is a nationally prescribed and locally commissioned supported employment programme, fully funded by the Department for Work and Pensions. Accountable Bodies across England (Oxfordshire County Council) will be responsible for design and delivery of a programme within the county with an initial four-year duration. (Appendix 1: Executive Summary) It is expected that around 2000 local participants will access the Oxfordshire programme through the provision of the Supported Employment 5 Stage Model and the Individual placement Support model, both accredited as high-fidelity models of engagement (Appendix 2). The indicative funding for Oxfordshire is £4200.00 per participant. Significant risks identified relate to standing up the service within timeline (Annex 3), the recruitment of practitioners to deliver the programme and identifying the ambitious numbers of participants required.

Initial indications show that other local authorities are planning a range of delivery strategies involving internal and external provision. (Appendix 2)

All options will be funded by the Department for Work and pensions through an agreed delivery plan.

2 Options Analysis

NB: There is no ‘Do Nothing’ option.

2.1 Option 1- The Council commissions the delivery of Connect to Work entirely by one or more external partners.

Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats

Aligns entirely with the council's strategy of being an enabler and partner of choice rather than a provider of services. Reduces risks and costs associated with direct provision and employment. Utilises accredited IPS provision Costs can be contained within budget through procurement arrangements.	Does not use the services of Oxfordshire Employment, the only accredited 5-Stage Model provider in the county. New providers will not have established networks and employer engagement structures in place: these take time to develop. Resources are unlikely to be in place to continue the current LSE (Appendix 2) customer pipeline.	Broadening the supported employment and IPS provider offer in the county. Delivers a collaboratively commissioned and system -wide approach to reach and effectively engage those furthest from the employment market.	Poor provider performance: Over promising and under delivery against challenging participant numbers Lack of provider presence in advance of programme delivery Timescales will pose a significant challenge to a fully external delivery. (Appendix 3) Choosing large single providers may restrict collaborative approaches. Attracting and training a workforce within timescale will be a significant challenge. Does not use exiting 5 Stage Model HF

			accredited provision Likely to mean the council's own high fidelity supported employment service is financially unsustainable.

2.2 Option 2- The Council commissions part of the programme delivery by one or more external partners whilst using its internal resource (Oxfordshire Employment) to deliver the 5 Stage Supported Employment workstream.

Strengths	**Weaknesses**	**Opportunities**	**Threats**
Aligns partly with the council's strategy of being an enabler and partner of choice rather than a provider of services. Reduces some risks and costs associated with direct provision and employment. Provides direct control of the provision of	New providers will not have established networks and employer engagement structures in place: these take time to develop. Requires additional internal employment.	Broadening the supported employment and IPS provider offer in the county. Provides a collaborative approach to programme delivery enabling a system wide approach to attract those furthest from the employment	Lack of provider presence in advance of programme delivery Timescales will pose a significant challenge to a fully external delivery. Attracting and training a workforce within timescale may not be possible.

supported employment. Supports 'hyper local' through existing networks of small provider provision. Utilises the provision, local networks and performance of the county's only high-fidelity provider of supported employment. Utilises IPS high fidelity accredited provision. Allows for the continuation of the current LSE (Annex 2) referral pipeline.		market with greater focus on hyper local delivery. Savings in core funding of approximately £150,000.00 per annum from moving current OE workstreams to CtW.	

2.3 Option 3- The Council seeks to deliver all Connect to Work delivery entirely in-house.

Strengths	**Weaknesses**	**Opportunities**	**Threats**

Provides control of the provision of supported employment through direct provision. Utilises the provision of the county's only high-fidelity provider of supported employment.	Does not align with the council's strategic aims. The council does not currently have IPS fidelity accreditation. All financial risk would remain with the council. The council would need to recruit a significant number of new employees – circa 30 fte. Does not increase the supported employment provider footprint in Oxfordshire.	Broadening the high fidelity supported employment and IPS provider offer in the county. OE achieves IPS provider accreditation Savings in core funding of approximately £150,000.00 per annum from moving current OE workstreams to CtW.	Poor provider performance: Over promising and under delivery. Lack of market diversification. Timescales will pose a significant challenge to a fully internal delivery. Attracting and training a workforce within timescale may not be possible.

2.3 Critical Success Factors Table

Critical success criteria	Option one	Option two	Option three

Delivers a sucessful, innovative local programme aligning with local strategies.	2	3	1
Least Reputation Risk	3	3	1
Likely to provide best user outcomes and satisfaction.	2	3	1
Strategic Aims achieved	3	3	1
Total	10	12	4

Preferred Option (s)

Option 3 should be discarded as it neither meets the council's strategic aims nor is likely to deliver strong and successful programme outcomes.

Option 1 and 2 both offer the opportunity to deliver a high quality, collaboratively commissioned programme. Both options offer opportunities to further involve 'hyper local' groups to provide high quality participant support through grant funding arrangements.

Option 1 Full external commissioning is likely to attract large providers with out of county experience of delivering both high fidelity models. Seeing more than one provider will add complexity to the commissioning process and increased contract monitoring and reporting activity. A local front door and triage service is required; this provision already exists in county, provided by OXLEP. Duplicating this may cause confusion to customers.

Option 2 utilises the council's own high-fidelity accredited supported employment service (Oxfordshire Employment). This ensures that sustaining the current participant pipeline for Local Supported Employment programme delivery is achievable.

OE is the only in-county high-fidelity accredited provider of the Supported Employment 5 Stage Model; this option ensures full fidelity provision with an ILS accredited delivery Partner. Option 2 will require the direct employment by the council of approximately 5 fte additional staff members.

Option 2 is the preferred option with the potential to build on existing quality and performance whilst incurring little additional risk for the council. This option also produces annual full year savings of approx. £150,000.00 in OE operating costs.

1. Cost Estimate of Preferred Option

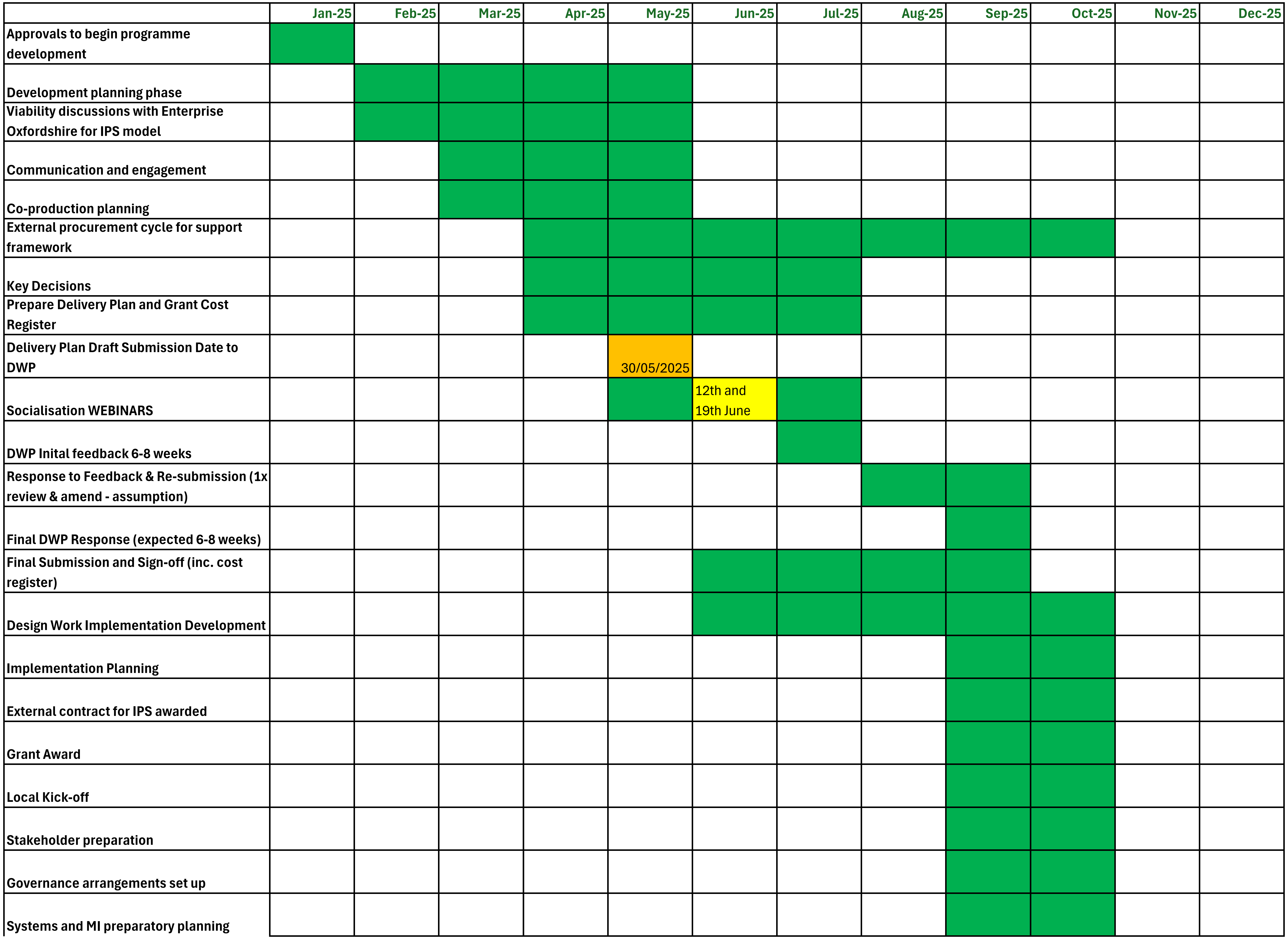
Subject to the agreement of a costed development plan, programme delivery is fully funded in arrears by the Department for Work and Pensions. Indicative funding information suggests that Oxfordshire would support around 2000 participants over the life of the provision with an indicative cost of £ 4200 per participant accessing either fidelity model (Revised from £4000.00 prior to publication of final guidance). Some participants will receive advice and guidance, the cost of which will form part of the delivery plan.

Reference	Link
Process Link	
Handbook	

Version	Approved by	Date
V0.1		

Planning

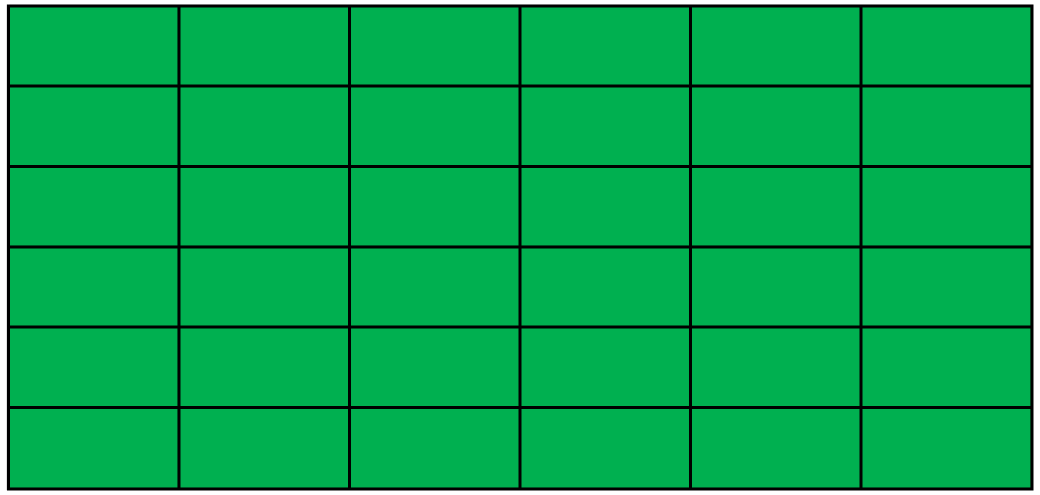
Implementation



	Jan-25	Feb-25	Mar-25	Apr-25	May-25	Jun-25	Jul-25	Aug-25	Sep-25	Oct-25	Nov-25	Dec-25
Approvals to begin programme development	🟩											
Development planning phase		🟩	🟩	🟩	🟩							
Viability discussions with Enterprise Oxfordshire for IPS model		🟩	🟩	🟩	🟩							
Communication and engagement			🟩	🟩	🟩							
Co-production planning			🟩	🟩	🟩							
External procurement cycle for support framework				🟩	🟩	🟩	🟩	🟩	🟩	🟩		
Key Decisions				🟩	🟩	🟩	🟩					
Prepare Delivery Plan and Grant Cost Register				🟩	🟩	🟩	🟩					
Delivery Plan Draft Submission Date to DWP					30/05/2025							
Socialisation WEBINARS					🟩	12th and 19th June	🟩					
DWP Inital feedback 6-8 weeks							🟩					
Response to Feedback & Re-submission (1x review & amend - assumption)								🟩	🟩			
Final DWP Response (expected 6-8 weeks)									🟩			
Final Submission and Sign-off (inc. cost register)						🟩	🟩	🟩	🟩			
Design Work Implementation Development						🟩	🟩	🟩	🟩	🟩		
Implementation Planning									🟩	🟩		
External contract for IPS awarded									🟩	🟩		
Grant Award									🟩	🟩		
Local Kick-off									🟩	🟩		
Stakeholder preparation									🟩	🟩		
Governance arrangements set up									🟩	🟩		
Systems and MI preparatory planning									🟩	🟩		

Delivery	**Recruitment of programme team**											03/11/2025	🟩
	Delivery										🟩	🟩	🟩
	Referral pipeline development inc marcomms											🟩	🟩
	Initial Referrals											🟩	🟩
	Management of Service (monthly meetings)											🟩	🟩
	Management of Provider (monthly meetings)											🟩	🟩

Jan-26	Feb-26	Mar-26	Apr-26	May-26	Jun-26



RISK REGISTER

RISK LAST UPDATED BY & DATE	LMC ND JF 22/05/2025

						INHERENT RATING				RESIDUAL RATING					TARGET RATING							
RISK REFERENCE	RISK DESCRIPTION	RISK EFFECT	RISK TYPE	RISK OWNER	IMPACT DATE	LIKELIHOOD LEVEL	IMPACT LEVEL	TOTAL (LIKELIHOOD X IMPACT)	Current Mitigation/Controls	LIKELIHOOD LEVEL	IMPACT LEVEL	TOTAL (LIKELIHOOD X IMPACT)	Planned Mitigations/Controls	ACTION OWNER	LIKELIHOOD LEVEL	IMPACT LEVEL	TOTAL (LIKELIHOOD X IMPACT)	TARGET DATE	ESCALATION	RISK STATUS	SLT RISK	DATE CLOSED
CTW01	Potential inability to start the project within the time scales required integral to CTW	Support less people, reputational damage.	Commercial	Project lead	03-Nov-25	**3**	**3**	**9**	Project team to be in regular contact with the REL to let them know of expectations and forward plans.	**1**	**1**	**1**	Project team to be in regular contact with the REL to let them know of expectations and forward plans.	Project Lead	**1**	**1**	**1**	03/11/2025	N/A	Open	No	
CTW02	Being able to recruit, train, retain programme staff	Customer dissatisfaction, reduced outcomes.	Commercial	Project lead	01-Oct-25	**4**	**4**	**16**	Identifiying opportunities to utilise current staffing across OCC and delivery partners. Increasing salary levels to ensure interest in roles	**2**	**2**	**4**	Expand out job profiles Reprofiling caseloads to maximum level	Project Lead	**1**	**1**	**1**	01/11/2025	N/A	Open	No	
CTW03	Inability/delay to commission IPS devliery parrtner	No participants throguh IPS Pathway	Operational	IPS Lead	01-Oct-25	**2**	**4**	**8**	Delievery partner initiating in early market engagement.	**1**	**1**	**1**	Expand procurement reach Understanding key market blockers Adapt offer where possible (in negotiation with DWP)	IPS Lead	**1**	**1**	**1**	01-Nov-25	N/A	Open	No	
CTW04	Programme design does not fit with local market	Loss of strategic fit impacting effectivness of programme and duplicating provision	Operational	Delivery Lead	01-Sep-25	**2**	**3**	**6**	Early engagement with partners and stakeholders to map both local provision and need	**2**	**2**	**4**	Targeted engagement with strategic partners & system level stakeholders	Project Lead	**1**	**1**	**1**	01/10/2025	N/A	Open	No	
CTW05	Delievery partner failure	Outputs not achieved/materially compromised. Adverse impact of programme resource e.g. management controls	Operational	Project Manager	01-Apr-26	**2**	**4**	**8**	Programme governance including management controls established and in place	**1**	**1**	**1**	Management controls and escalation processes utilised. Move into a recovery planning in partnership with delivery partner and DWP	Project Manager	**1**	**1**	**1**	01/07/2026	N/A	Open	No	
CTW06	Adverse fluctuations in the economy e.g Interest rates	Bell curve model is adversly impacted requiring a re-profile.	Financial	Project Lead	01-Apr-26	**2**	**3**	**6**	Current profiling allows for forecast increases year on year.	**2**	**2**	**4**	Addition fluctuations to be negotiated with DWP across GCR and /or funding agreement	Project Lead	**2**	**2**	**4**	01/07/2026	N/A	Open	No	
CTW07	Lack of Programme up-take/ early exit	A low uptake in CTW will result in programme not hitting targets	Operational	Delivery Lead	01-Mar-26	**2**	**4**	**8**	Marketing and comms plan will include local communications to socialise and build confidence in the offer	**1**	**2**	**2**	Staggering/stages of markting material. Accellerated partnership working to improve referral rate and review of martketing material	Delivery Lead	**1**	**2**	**2**	01/07/2026	N/A	Open	No	
CTW08	Priority particpant groups no not engage	Do not meet cohorts of people intended	Operational	Delivery Lead	01-Mar-26	**2**	**4**	**8**	Comms and engagement teams cited early on project and target groups to ensure no eligible individuals are missed	**1**	**1**	**1**	Ensuring that messages are staggered and deeper engagement with partners representing various cohorts	Delivery Lead	**1**	**1**	**1**	01/07/2026	N/A	Open	No	
CTW09	CRM system is not fit for purpose	Ability to report against DWP requirements is compromised	Operational	Delivery Lead	15-Dec-25	**2**	**3**	**6**	Detailed design phase including contractual requirements will reduce risk of reporting failure.	**1**	**2**	**2**	Early review meeting with CRM design team to update system	Delivery Lead	**1**	**2**	**2**	02/02/2026	N/A	Open	No	
CTW10	Loss of/Breach of Data	Breach in data protection could lead to legal challenge and financial penalty. Loss of data would impact on reporting and cost verification	Operational/ Financial	Delivery Lead	03-Nov-25	**2**	**4**	**8**	DPIA to be completed and information exchanges to be fully mapped. Creation and sharing of data protection protocols inc. Privacy notices and consent.	**1**	**4**	**4**	Review old client data sharing. Identify source of breach and remedial action required e.g additional controls, reset access passwords etc.	Delivery Lead	**1**	**4**	**4**	01/05/2026	N/A	Open	No	
CTW11	Evidence of serious fraud uncovered	Reputational risk to the council and loss of funding from DWP.	Financial	Contract Manager	12-Jan-26	**2**	**4**	**8**	Contract management and financial controls in place. Monthly/quarterly reporting requirements and reconciliation to verfiy accurate spend	**1**	**3**	**3**	Full investigation into incident(s) of fraud caried out to identify additional controls and/or formal proceedings.	Contract Manager	**1**	**3**	**3**	01/04/2026	N/A	Open	No	
CTW12	Trended averages exceed specified unit cost	Participant volumes decrease below profile expectation	Financial	Project Lead	12-Jan-26	**2**	**3**	**6**	Construct Grant Cost Register with provider to account for robust participant cost allowances.	**1**	**3**	**3**	Identify outlying costs/areas where costs can be reprofiled to bring into line with original expectation	Project Lead	**2**	**1**	**2**	01/04/2026	N/A	Open	No	
CTW13	Cash flow risk with delivery partner	The IPS prgramme delivery is no longer viable.	Financial	Project Lead	10-Apr-25	**3**	**4**	**12**	Management of financial controls confirmed and in place, including payment terms e.g. 30 days in line with the current procurement guidance	**2**	**3**	**6**	Regular contract review meetings to identify any issues	Project Lead	**2**	**2**	**4**	01/07/2026	N/A	Open	No	

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Divisions Affected - All

CABINET

– 15 July 2025

Proposed response to the 2025 Oxfordshire Travel and Transport Citizens' Assembly

Report by: Director of Environment and Highways and Director of Public Affairs, Policy and Partnerships

1. **Cabinet is RECOMMENDED to**

   1. Approve the council's initial response to the 20 recommendations developed by the citizens' assembly.

   2. Support the development of a work programme, including a prioritisation matrix and further technical development and engagement work to properly assess whether each recommendation can be progressed (including policy, legal and financial considerations), as the next step to take forward the citizens' assembly recommendations.

   3. Support the deeper involvement of communities in transport policy development, and scheme design and delivery, including the ongoing involvement of citizens' assembly members.

Executive summary

2. In February and March 2025, a citizens' assembly was conducted to explore how Oxfordshire's transport system could support people's health, the local economy, and the environment by 2050. The council commissioned MutualGain to design and deliver the assembly.

3. The assembly's purpose was to make recommendations on how the vision and targets set out in the council's Local Transport and Connectivity Plan (LTCP) can be achieved in ways that best meet the needs and preferences of the people of Oxfordshire and other stakeholders.

4. On 23 March 2025, Cabinet received the travel and transport citizen's assembly's recommendations and committed to considering and responding to these at a future meeting in July 2025. Cabinet requested the council officers' response be considered by Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee in advance of Cabinet's meeting in July and this happened on 25 June 2025.

5. This covering report provides Cabinet with background information about the citizens' assembly on travel and transport, its 20 recommendations and the council's proposed initial response to these. It is supported by: Annex A - the full report of the Citizens' Assembly prepared by MutualGain; and Annex B - a

table setting out the council's proposed initial response to the citizens' assembly's 20 recommendations.

Background

6. A citizens' assembly is a broadly representative group of residents who are chosen by democratic lottery. Citizens' assemblies follow agreed standards and usually adopt a three-step process whereby participants:
    - learn by hearing evidence from a wide range of experts and questioning these;
    - deliberate with one another, carefully considering what they have heard and weighing up the pros and cons; and
    - reach collective recommendations on what they think should be done, with each recommendation aiming for 80 per cent agreement across all assembly members.

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

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

8. The assembly's purpose was to make recommendations on how the vision and targets set out in the council's LTCP can be achieved in ways that best meet the needs and preferences of the people of Oxfordshire and other stakeholders. Part of the scope of the assembly was to consider congestion in central Oxfordshire and the core schemes in the Central Oxfordshire Travel Plan.

9. In February 2024, Council approved a budget for 2024/25 which included a Labour and Co-operative Party Group amendment for a citizens' assembly on transport in central Oxfordshire. A one-off £150k investment was allocated for this purpose.

10. In autumn 2024, the council commissioned MutualGain to deliver its travel and transport citizens' assembly. The contract was to deliver an assembly of up to 40 participants, who would meet over the course of 30 hours.

11. On 21 January 2025, in response to a motion agreed at Council on 10 December 2024, Cabinet agreed changes to the citizens' assembly. This was to extend the duration of the citizens' assembly by 15 hours to allow a dedicated focus to be given to congestion in central Oxfordshire and the council's suite of traffic management measures in central Oxfordshire (including traffic filters trial, the workplace parking levy, and the expanded zero emissions zone).

12. In February 2025, Council approved a budget for 2025/26 which included a Labour and Co-operative Party Group amendment in two areas for follow-up funding related to the citizens' assembly. These were a one-off £50k investment to publicise the findings of the citizens' assembly and undertake a follow-up public engagement exercise, and a £50k investment for two financial years to support the recommendations of the citizens' assembly on travel and transport.

13. On 23 March 2025, Cabinet received the travel and transport citizen's assembly's recommendations and committed to considering and responding to these at its meeting in July 2025. Cabinet requested the council officers' response be considered by Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee in advance of Cabinet's July meeting.

14. Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee met on 25 June 2025 to consider the council officers' initial response to the recommendations and ask questions. The committee was interested in monitoring the continued progress of how the council is taking forward the citizens' assembly's recommendations.

About the 2025 Oxfordshire Citizens' Assembly on travel and transport

15. Section one of MutualGain Citizens' Assembly report (pages 5 - 10 in Annex A) sets out information on the design of the 2025 Oxfordshire Citizens' Assembly on travel and transport, demonstrating how it follows agreed standards for citizens' assemblies.

16. Overall, the citizens' assembly was designed and delivered by MutualGain working with a cross-council project team involving officers working in place shaping and communications and engagement service areas and a research associate from the University of Oxford with expert knowledge of citizens' assemblies who participated in a personal capacity.

17. Recruitment to the citizens' assembly was led by the Sortition Foundation. Forty Oxfordshire residents were selected by democratic lottery to take part against broad quotas designed to reflect the population make-up of the county in terms of geography, demographics, driver status and attitudes towards climate change. Of the 40 residents selected, a core group of 34 assembly members attended nearly every meeting, with the assembly's structure remaining broadly representative of the county's population profile.

18. An independent advisory board was convened to provide oversight for the council's travel and transport citizens' assembly and to help to develop the structure of the assembly. The advisory board membership included experts on deliberative democracy; transport; behavioural insights; cross-party political representation; and local experts. Full details are listed on the county council's Let's talk Oxfordshire website.

19. As MutualGain state in their report, the board played a vital role in maintaining the integrity of the process by ensuring the assembly was fair, balanced, and methodologically robust.

The advisory board's core responsibilities included:

- Ensuring the assembly question was fair, neutral, and accessible.
- Reviewing the structure and evidence base to ensure diversity of perspectives.
- Acting as a critical friend to the project team, identifying gaps, testing ideas, and
- Strengthening credibility.

20. Section two of the Citizens' Assembly report (Annex A, pages 11 - 21) sets out a detailed description of how the assembly was delivered by MutualGain and what it covered.

21. The assembly was structured into four distinct phases:
    - introductory phase (12 hours)
    - learning phase (18 hours)
    - trade-off phase (six hours)
    - recommendations phase (six hours).

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

22. During the introductory and learning phase, assembly members heard from over 40 experts providing wide ranging information and covering different perspectives. These included academics, business representatives, community representatives, travel and transport specialists and council officers.

23. In designing the assembly, MutualGain took account of discussions at the assembly's independent advisory board that highlighted the need to enable public deliberation around implementation of travel and transport interventions while ensuring agreed policy is clearly communicated and democratic decisions are respected. An important part of the process was ensuring participants were equipped with a clear understanding of democratic decisions made by the council, including those not yet implemented, while being encouraged to offer future ideas and constructive insights into how initiatives could be effectively delivered.

24. Appendix III to the Citizens' Assembly report (Annex A, pages 49 - 51) provides links to all the video evidence shown throughout the learning phase of the assembly.

Proposed response to the citizens' assembly recommendations

25. Overall, the assembly developed 20 recommendations based on their deliberations. These are set out in section 3 of the Citizens' Assembly report (Annex A, pages 22 - 27) and analysed in more depth in section 4 of the same (pages 28 - 37).

26. Sixteen of the recommendations secured over 80 per cent support from assembly participants. MutualGain uses this threshold to suggest that the council can feel confident these recommendations would likely receive similar support from a wider population, given the same information and time to deliberate.

27. In the concluding section of their report on page 38, MutualGain state the following specifically about the recommendations:

> “Over 45 hours of structured learning and deliberation, 34 residents from across the county worked together to grapple with some of the most pressing and complex transport challenges Oxfordshire faces. Their recommendations were not only ambitious but deeply considered, rooted in a commitment to fairness, feasibility, and forward-thinking solutions.
>
> Participants showed a strong collective desire to move away from car dependency (even among frequent drivers) provided that alternatives are convenient, affordable, and well-communicated. From buses and bike lanes to workplace engagement and new community design, the Assembly’s proposals form a coherent, interconnected roadmap for change.
>
> Support for these recommendations cut across demographic lines. Rural residents and urban dwellers, younger and older participants, regular drivers and non-drivers alike, found common ground around the need for a more sustainable and inclusive transport system. What distinguished the Assembly’s work was not just what was proposed, but how those proposals were reached: through dialogue, challenge, empathy, and a genuine attempt to balance trade-offs.
>
> Policymakers now have in front of them a unique and valuable asset: a set of recommendations shaped by residents who were given the time, tools, and trust to engage meaningfully. As the Council responds to these proposals, the test will not be whether each is implemented in full, but whether the spirit of the Assembly - strategic, participatory, and just - is embedded in the decisions ahead.
>
> If Oxfordshire is to thrive by 2050, as the Assembly’s challenge question asked, then the insights gathered here must not only inform this moment but shape the culture of future policy design. The Assembly has shown that the public is ready to be part of the solution. The next step is to show they’ve been heard.”

Responding to the citizens’ assembly recommendations

28. The council recognises the citizens’ assembly offered hugely valuable input, drawn from the unique perspective of a diverse group of people who have gone through a significant period of learning to understand the issues and opportunities the council is faced with.

29. All recommendations arising from the citizens' assembly are being considered carefully by council officers, including by specialists in transport policy, in place planning, and in communications and engagement. Consideration needs to be given in the context of the council's priorities, the adopted LTCP and its underlying policies and supporting strategies - such as the Central Oxfordshire Travel Plan, and existing and planned schemes of work arising from the previous Local Transport Plan 4, 'Connecting Oxfordshire'.

30. To ensure a fair and consistent approach to considering each of the assembly's recommendations, the council has developed a classification system, building on a similar framework used by the council to respond to the 2022 Street Voice citizens' jury recommendations.

31. Council officers have scored each recommendation in workshop format independently facilitated by MutualGain. They used a standard scoring system where:

- 1 = Work is planned or ongoing – Oxfordshire County Council is already conducting the work proposed by the recommendation or has plans to conduct the work recommended.

- 2 = Will be considered – Oxfordshire County Council will consider the work proposed by the recommendation.

- 3 = Not proposed to progress – The work proposed by the recommendation is not feasible for the county council to conduct at this time.

32. Subsequently, officers have also considered who the lead organisation is, and specifically the role of Oxfordshire County Council. This was included to clarify where the county council could directly lead the work proposed by the recommendations and where partner organisations would be required to lead the work, with support from the county council.

33. The council's proposed initial response to each of the assembly's recommendations is set out in table format in Annex B to this report, including written commentary. This response is subject to further technical development and engagement work to properly assess whether the recommendation can be progressed; this includes policy, legal and financial considerations.

34. As shown in the table in Annex B, the council has been able to respond positively to many of the recommendations. These are initial responses, and it is planned to use the funding allocated to support this work, as referenced in paragraph 12, to consider and assess in greater depth.

35. Overall, it is considered that the citizens' assembly recommendations align well with ongoing or planned county council work. For example, the work on a proposed temporary congestion charge, traffic filters trial, expanded zero

emission zone and workplace parking levy already directly responds to a number of the recommendations.

36. In addition, consideration can be given to the recommendations as part of existing workstreams for travel behaviour change and public transport. For example, through the Future Bus Regulation Options Report which will come report to Cabinet in autumn 2025.

37. Unfortunately, one of the recommendations from the assembly (recommendation 19) is not feasible for the council to progress. This is primarily because the significant level of funding required is not available, and alternative solutions, that would deliver similar benefits, are considered more beneficial and practical.

38. Some of the recommendations overlap and some contain several activities/ideas in one. As such, consideration is also being given as to how best to track the council's progress in responding to the recommendations. It is considered that presenting by theme/activity might be clearer and easier to provide a response to and monitor against. For example, these themes may include demand management, communications and behaviour change, integrated transport and rural transport.

Monitoring progress against citizens' assembly recommendations

39. A work programme will be developed to monitor progress against each citizens' assembly recommendation where it is identified that the council has a role in taking it forward. As a minimum it is expected that this is reported annually in the autumn alongside progress made with delivering against the LTCP, which has previously been considered by both Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Cabinet.

Publicising the citizens' assembly recommendations

40. We are committed to publicising the value of the citizens' assembly to the council. This will be a phased approach, firstly focusing on launching the citizens' assembly report outside of the council's committee cycle followed by communications on individual workstreams post Cabinet. This will be multi-channel using paid for and organic promotion and targeted stakeholder communications. Each year we will do a roundup of communications focusing on 'you said, we did'. This will coincide with the publication of the monitoring report mentioned in paragraph 39 above.

Future use of deliberative methodologies to inform transport policy

41. The use of a citizens' assembly was a first for the council and reflects the ambitions of the council to explore new methodologies and tools for involvement, as set out in its consultation and engagement strategy 2022 – 2025. While the citizens' assembly has proved extremely valuable, it is a very

resource-intensive and expensive engagement methodology, and it is not an approach that the council can use extensively.

42. However, the council is keen to maximise the value of its first citizens' assembly. The recommendations published are not the only outputs from the engagement process. During the assembly, participants shared their valued insight into live problems, for example the prioritisation of active travel schemes and principles for fair road sharing as part of a wider study being led by the London School of Economics. Meanwhile the council has been able to benefit from relationships with academics and other stakeholders who kindly gave their time to take part in the assembly as advisory board members or evidence-givers.

43. We are also delighted that assembly members have confirmed that they wish to continue to be involved in transport policy and schemes for the council. The first opportunity to continue this relationship will be at a meeting in mid-July when assembly members have been invited to discuss the council's initial response to their recommendations, and to consider in detail the current consultation on proposals for temporary congestion charge locations in Oxford.

44. Subject to approval from Cabinet of the council's proposed response to the citizens' assembly, officers will actively seek opportunities to involve assembly participants in different workstreams where appropriate to do so and where they are willing to be involved.

45. In addition, the council is due to refresh its consultation and engagement strategy this year, including co-production, to further strengthen our inclusive approach to community engagement. This will include trialling new methodologies such as targeted residents' feedback panels and innovative co-design activities as we seek to work side by side with communities.

Corporate policies and priorities

46. The citizens' assembly supports the council's current strategic priorities of: i) playing our part in a vibrant and participatory local democracy; and ii) investing in an inclusive, integrated and sustainable transport network.

47. The council's adopted consultation and engagement strategy provides a framework to support innovative and new ways to undertake public engagement and consultation – the citizens' assembly falls within the scope of that strategy.

Financial implications

48. There are no new budgetary implications arising from this report. Following the agreement of the council's response to the assembly recommendations, proposals will be made to use the funding allocated in the 2025/26 budget for

the citizens' assembly. This includes both the one-off £50k investment to publicise the findings of the citizens' assembly and undertake a follow-up public engagement exercise and the £50k investment for two financial years to support the recommendations of the citizens' assembly on travel and transport.

49. The financial implications of each of the recommendations, arising out of the citizens' assembly, will need to be considered as part of the further technical development and engagement work referred to in this report. This work will properly assess whether each upheld recommendation can be progressed. Accordingly, the financial implications of the recommendations are not dealt with in this report.

Comments by Lorna Baxter, Executive Director of Resources and Section 151 Officer

Legal implications

50. The decision to hold a citizens' assembly is an executive function. Whilst there is no general legal duty to hold a citizens' assembly, the council has wide powers to engage with its residents. Primary amongst these is the general power of competence (section 1 Localism Act 2011) and the 'best value' duty requiring the council to seek improvement in the way in which its functions are exercised.

The legal implications of each of the recommendations, arising out of the citizens' assembly, will need to be considered as part of the further technical development and engagement work referred to in this report. This work will properly assess whether each upheld recommendation can be progressed. Accordingly, the legal implications of the recommendations are not dealt with in this report.

Karen Jordan, Senior Solicitor and Team Leader

Staffing implications

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

Equality and inclusion implications

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

Sustainability implications

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

Risk management

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

55. Reputation risks associated with the council’s response to the citizens’ assembly recommendations and the release of citizens’ assembly report and associated evidence have been carefully considered and will be mitigated by communications, marketing and engagement service working closely with colleagues as appropriate.

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

Annexes:

- Annex A: Final OCC Citizens’ Assembly Report (prepared by MutualGain)
- Annex B: Council’s response to citizens’ assembly recommendations

Background papers: Nil

Other Documents: Nil

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July 2025

Citizens' Assembly on Travel and Transport

Prepared for

Oxfordshire County Council

Special thanks go to

- The assembly members who dedicated their time and hard work to the process
- Expert contributors for their energising perspectives
- The Advisory Board for their guidance and expertise

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

Spring 2025

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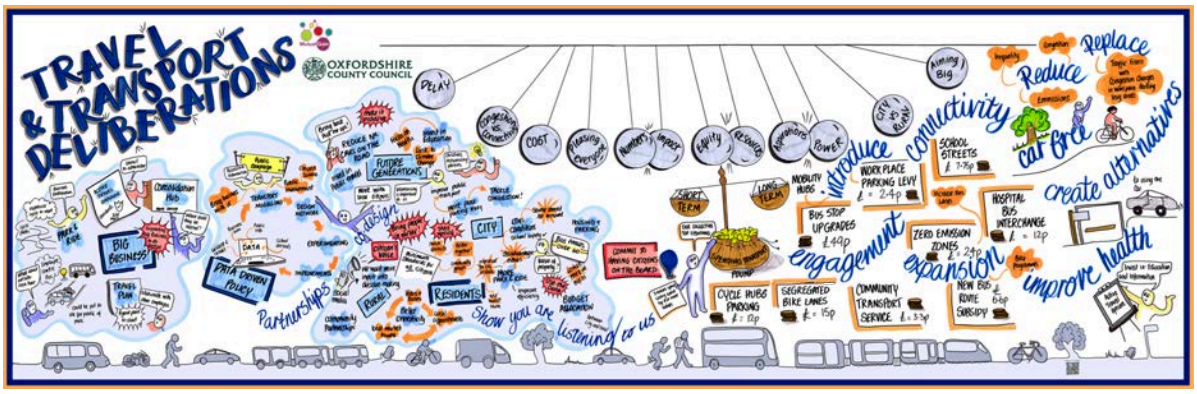
Executive Summary



In early 2025, a Citizens' Assembly to explore how Oxfordshire's transport system could support people's health, the local economy, and the environment by 2050 was conducted.

Thirty-four residents were selected by civic lottery to reflect the demographic and geographic diversity of Oxfordshire, including urban, rural, and market town communities.

The Assembly was independently designed and facilitated by MutualGain, following national best practice in deliberative democracy. Oversight was provided by an independent Advisory Board.

All individuals and organisations who expressed an interest in contributing were given the opportunity to do so. 48 speakers contributed in a variety of ways (see section two)

Across five sessions and over 45 hours, Assembly members engaged with policy evidence, lived experience, expert speakers, and peer dialogue to develop informed, future-focused proposals. Participants considered this within the context of the ambitions set out in the Local Transport and Connectivity Plan and Central Oxfordshire Travel Plan.

They worked individually and in groups to explore trade-offs and test ideas using co-designed criteria, including fairness, affordability, deliverability, and community benefit.

The Assembly placed particular focus on the needs of both city and rural areas, ensuring that congestion, access, and connectivity were considered at a whole county level, with specific focus on Central Oxfordshire. They undertook structured exercises to consider financial decisions and co-developed practical tools and frameworks for future planning.

Executive Summary

Key process explorations included:

- Consideration of core schemes within the existing policy framework
- A Fair Road Use framework prioritising essential journeys and people with fewer alternatives (e.g. disabled people, care workers, tradespeople, rural residents).
- A set of Active Travel investment criteria, to guide future decision-making on walking and cycling improvements.
- A series of public transport considerations that resulted in access, pricing, integration, and community connectivity for operators to respond to.

Participants developed 20 recommendations, 16 of which received over 80% support. These included:

- Expanding and improving Park & Ride services, including 24/7 access and smart ticketing.
- Introducing a county-wide bus fare and ticketing system across all providers.
- Launching a public information campaign to promote sustainable travel choices.
- Establishing a 'Travel Positive Employer' kite mark to support workplace travel change.
- Enforcing 20mph zones and improving safety, alongside investment in safe, accessible infrastructure for walking and cycling, and employer support for active travel.

Assembly members showed strong levels of agreement across demographics. While some nuance was observed, such as younger members favouring longer-term change and rural residents emphasising local flexibility with engagement, there were no recommendations that significantly divided the group.

The Citizens' Assembly demonstrated that with time, structure, and support, diverse residents can engage meaningfully with complex decisions. Their recommendations were submitted to Oxfordshire County Council in March 2025. A formal response will be taken forward by the administration through their scrutiny and cabinet processes.

SECTION ONE: DESIGN AND DELIVERY OF THE ASSEMBLY PROCESS

1.Introduction

1.1. In February and March 2025, 34 Oxfordshire residents took part in the county's first Citizens' Assembly on travel and transport. Participants were selected through a democratic lottery process to reflect the diversity of the local population. Over the course of 45 hours, assembly members were asked to consider the following challenge:

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

1.2. The Assembly was convened to generate informed recommendations on how the council's Local Transport and Connectivity Plan (LTCP) could be delivered in ways that reflect the needs and priorities of Oxfordshire residents, and other stakeholders.

1.3. Delivered by MutualGain in accordance with best practice guidance in deliberative democracy, the Assembly enabled participants to learn about key issues, deliberate with one another, and produce recommendations on complex transport challenges facing the county.

1.4. Held across fourteen three-hour sessions, with an additional three hours of homework, the Assembly involved a wide range of expert speakers and perspectives. Assembly members developed twenty evidence-informed recommendations. Sixteen of these received more than 80 per cent support, and the remaining four received between 69.7 per cent and 79.4 per cent. These have been rounded up and down accordingly in section 3.

1.5. The recommendations address a range of themes, including congestion reduction, improvements to active travel and public transport, and the integration of transport planning with land use strategy. They were formally presented to decision-makers on 16 March 2025.

1.6. The Council is scheduled to respond to each recommendation through its democratic process following local elections taking place on 1 May 2025.

This report sets out how the Assembly was designed and delivered and provides an analysis of the recommendations that emerged.

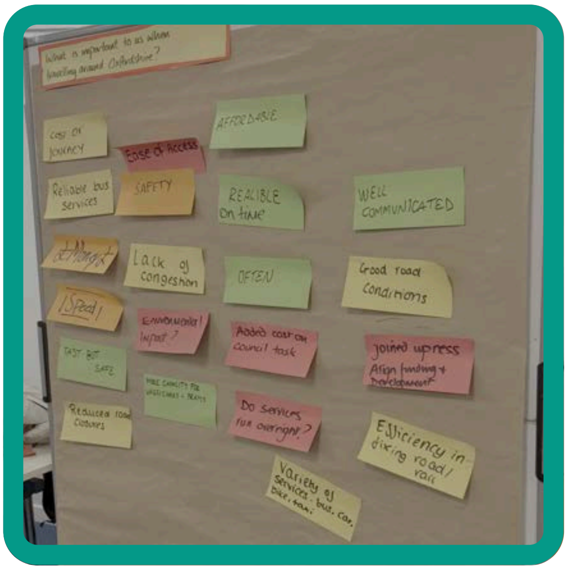


Figure 1: This image reflects early thinking on what is important when travelling around Oxforsdhire

1.2 Scope of the Assembly and its Influence

1.2.1 Oxfordshire's first Citizens' Assembly on travel and transport was designed to enable the implementation of the Local Transport and Connectivity Plan (LTCP), the council's long-term strategy for delivering a healthier, more sustainable, and better-connected transport system by 2050. Key targets in the LTCP include:

By 2030

- Replace or remove one out of every four current car trips in Oxfordshire.
- Increase the number of cycle trips in Oxfordshire from 600,000 to 1 million cycle trips per week.
- Reduce road fatalities or life changing injuries by 50 per cent.

By 2040

- Deliver a net-zero transport network.
- Replace or remove an additional one out of three car trips in Oxfordshire.

By 2050

- Deliver a transport network that contributes to a climate positive future.
- Have zero, or as close as possible, road fatalities or life-changing injuries.

Local Transport and Connectivity Plan
2022 - 2050

July 2022

Contact: ltcp5@oxfordshire.gov.uk

OXFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

1.2.2. The Local Transport and Connectivity Plan (LTCP) provides the strategic framework for a series of Movement and Place strategies (area-based transport plans). The first of these, the Central Oxfordshire Travel Plan (COTP), was used alongside the LTCP throughout the Assembly. This allowed members to consider how policies might apply in practice to citizens living, working, and visiting the central Oxfordshire travel plan area (Oxford, Kidlington, Eynsham, Botley, Cumnor, Kennington and Wheatley). Each participant received copies of both plans to support their discussions about how the strategies could work across urban centres, market towns, and rural areas.

1.2.3. The Citizens' Assembly was originally commissioned as a 30-hour, county-wide process to explore the implementation of Oxfordshire's Local Transport and Connectivity Plan (LTCP). However, prior to its launch, a motion was raised within the Council regarding the Assembly's ability to reflect the unique challenges of the central Oxfordshire travel plan area. In response, **on 21 January 2025 Cabinet agreed to expand the Assembly by an additional 15 hours.**

1.2.4 This decision enabled the Assembly to have a dedicated focus on congestion in central Oxfordshire and the council's suite of traffic management measures (traffic filters trial, the Workplace Parking Levy (WPL), and the expanded Zero Emissions Zone (ZEZ)). The challenge question had already been approved by the Advisory Board "*What steps do we need to take so Oxfordshire's transport system enables our county's health, economy, and environment to thrive in 2050?*" and was broad enough to accommodate these additional topics without altering the Assembly's integrity or neutrality.

Central Oxfordshire Travel Plan

August 2023

Central Oxfordshire Travel Plan

OXFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

1.2.5. Central Oxfordshire was therefore integrated into the Assembly in two ways: first, through dedicated sessions; and second, as a case study across the full programme. This ensured that participants had structured opportunities to explore specific schemes in the COTP while also understanding their implications county-wide.

1.2.6. This approach respected existing Council decisions while creating space to explore how implementation could better reflect local needs. As living plans, the status of transport schemes under discussion in the COTP varied. The traffic filters trial had been formally agreed but was subsequently paused due to the extended Botley Road closure. The Expanded Zero Emissions Zone was still in its proposal stage, with wider consultation expected later in 2025. The Workplace Parking Levy was under exploration by the Council, with expressions of interest registered with central government. Existing decisions about Low Traffic Neighbourhoods (LTNs) were *not* in scope for *reversing* but if the Council were to make any future decisions on implementing LTNs they would use the learning from this process. .

1.2.7. The scope meant the Assembly could not revisit or re-debate settled policy decisions concerning schemes in the COTP, which had been under development for ten years. They could critically think about how these measures could be implemented in practice, including how they should be phased, how they might be communicated to the public, and what kinds of mitigations or adjustments might be necessary in light of real-world challenges, so that they could be delivered in ways that are fair, effective, and responsive to local conditions.

1.2.8. The 15 additional hours were clearly embedded within the Assembly’s learning and deliberation:

- Session 3 (2.5 hours): Explored fairness in road use, focusing on congestion in the central Oxfordshire travel plan area. Participants developed a “Fair Car Use Hierarchy” that informed later recommendations (see section two).
- Sessions 6 and 7 (6 hours): Focused entirely on the COTP including its core schemes. Participants heard polarised perspectives from speakers and developed early recommendations.
- Sessions 8 and 9 (6 hours): Explored public transport strategy, with residents of the central Oxfordshire travel plan area engaged in an integrated transport mapping exercise.
- Session 10 (3 hours): A vision-led design session, led by Create Streets, addressed the design of new developments in the central Oxfordshire travel plan area as a key reference point.

1.2.9 These sessions meant that **the Assembly's deliberations and final recommendations substantially addressed congestion affecting the central Oxfordshire travel plan area,** including the most strongly supported recommendation.

1.3 Recruiting and Working with the Advisory Board

1.3.1. The Citizens’ Assembly was supported by an Advisory Board to reflect best practice in deliberative processes. The Board played a vital role in maintaining the integrity of the process by ensuring the Assembly was fair, balanced, and methodologically robust.

1.3.2. Its core responsibilities included:

- Ensuring the Assembly question was fair, neutral, and accessible.
- Reviewing the structure and evidence base to ensure diversity of perspectives.
- Acting as a critical friend to the project team, identifying gaps, testing ideas, and strengthening credibility.

1.3.3. A total of eighteen advisory board members participated in six meetings throughout the project. Members were drawn from a wide range of sectors including academia, transport, policing, public health, local government, business, and civil society. Recruitment routes included:

- Recommendations from those originally invited, but who were unable to make dates - this drew from a long list of diverse possible contributions
- Direct expressions of interest
- Professional networks of MutualGain
- Nominations from the project team (their networks and cross-party political representation)

1.3.4. Despite the breadth of experience represented, some gaps remained. Organisations from the faith sector and wider business and transport representative bodies were invited but did not participate.

1.3.5. The Board was initially formed to oversee a 30-hour county-wide process. Following the Council's decision on 21 January 2025 to expand the Assembly's scope (to include a dedicated focus on congestion in central Oxfordshire) the Board continued to provide guidance. Although the expansion came *after* the Board's core work was complete, those previously invited with a specific Oxfordshire focus (and did not accept) were re contacted and invited as expert contributors during the Assembly sessions.

1.3.6. Over the lifecycle of the project, the Advisory Board:
- Shaped the final challenge question
- Recommended a diverse mix of expert speakers
- Supported the learning and deliberation design
- Proposed creative methods such as personas and participatory budgeting
- Attended sessions as observers and, in some cases, as expert contributors

1.3.7. Their guidance ensured the Assembly remained inclusive and credible, while also helping to reflect Oxfordshire's wide-ranging transport priorities and lived experiences.

1.4. Recruitment of Experts and Evidence Givers

1.4.1. Speakers were drawn from a wide range of sectors to ensure the Assembly was informed by a balance of professional expertise, lived experience, and community perspectives.

1.4.2. Breakdown of contributors:
- Academics: 16 invited across 9 institutions, with 8 delivering evidence.
- Business representatives: 21 contacted, including sole traders, SMEs, and major transport companies. 10 delivered evidence.
- Civic life representatives: 26 invited, including voices from community and advocacy organisations. 18 delivered evidence.
- Public sector representatives: 23 were invited, including senior council officers and local public service representatives. 12 delivered evidence
- Faith leaders: 3 faith leaders from Oxfordshire were invited. Unfortunately, none were able to present at the assembly.

1.4.3. Expert speakers played a critical role in the Assembly's learning phase, helping participants to understand key transport issues, explore contrasting perspectives, and engage with the real-world implications of policy decisions. Each expert was selected to contribute to a balanced evidence base, reflecting diverse views and experiences on current and proposed transport measures.

1.4.4. Speakers presented in various formats:

- Live presentations and Q&A sessions
- Pre-recorded five-minute videos (the most common format)
- Goldfish bowl discussions and participatory workshops
- Specific workshop design that reflected expertise

1.4.5. All expert content was structured to be accessible and engaging. Where possible, sessions featured speakers with opposing views or contrasting experiences, helping participants examine issues from multiple angles.

1.4.6. No speaker was excluded. Every individual or organisation invited, and willing to participate, gave their perspective. Contributions ranged from technical expertise to personal testimony, with equal value placed on both. All video content shown to the Assembly can be found in the links below.

1.4.7. Participants were encouraged to engage critically with the material, ask questions, and reflect on the evidence within their group discussions. Time was dedicated to peer discussion and deliberation after presentations - a key hallmark of deliberative assemblies - ensuring participants had space to process information, exchange perspectives and develop collective recommendations. This deliberate mix of expert input and peer deliberation helped ensure that final recommendations were grounded in both technical insight and community values.

Contributors to the assembly and their video links can be found in section two of this report.

1.5. Recruitment of Assembly Members

1.5.1. Assembly members were recruited through a civic lottery process known as sortition, managed by the independent organisation Sortition Foundation and subcontracted by MutualGain. Sortition is a globally recognised method for ensuring fairness, independence, and demographic balance in deliberative processes.

1.5.2. How the process worked:

- 8,000 randomly selected households across Oxfordshire received invitation letters.
- Interested residents registered via post, online, or telephone.
- From those who responded, 40 participants were selected using stratified random sampling, ensuring representation across age, gender, ethnicity, education, geography, disability status, driving frequency, and climate views.

1.5.3. This recruitment method avoids bias and helps create a group that reflects a wide range of lived experiences and viewpoints.

SECTION TWO: WHAT DID THE ASSEMBLY COVER?

2.1. The Assembly met for a total of 45 hours, across three weekends and three weekday evenings. Each session was designed to build on the last, with a strong balance of expert input, group dialogue, hands-on exercises, and creative problem-solving. Over time, participants developed a working knowledge of key policies in Oxfordshire's Local Transport and Connectivity Plan (LTCP) and Central Oxfordshire Travel Plan (COTP) and explored transport's practical, emotional and policy dimensions. The session summaries that follow capture the flow of learning and the key ideas, priorities, and values that shaped the final recommendations.

Key features of the learning phase included:
- **Small group discussions** (5-6 assembly members) with expert facilitation
- Equal weighting between **expert input and peer deliberation**
- Direct engagement with the **LTCP and COTP documents** to ground discussion in real policy framework. From session 5 onwards, assembly members were given page references to relevant sections of both the LTCP and COTP, allowing them to locate and consult policies being discussed in each session.
- Learning about Oxfordshire's unique transport challenges and opportunities as well as **drawing on international examples**.

2.2. Session 1 to 4 focused on building a shared foundation amongst the assembly members, participants got to know the Citizens' Assembly process, explored Oxfordshire's unique transport challenges and were introduced to some of the key themes of the question such as economy, environment and health. A specially commissioned video introduced a specific focus on how transport can meet the needs and preferences of Oxfordshire's diverse population. These early sessions introduced the policy context of the LTCP and laid the groundwork for deeper exploration of specific policies and interventions in the sessions that followed.

1.5.4. 52 individuals were onboarded. Twelve replacements were made during the pre-assembly period due to withdrawals for personal reasons. Care was taken to ensure demographic continuity during replacements.

- 36 participants attended the first session.
- 2 withdrew later in the process due to personal reasons.
- 1 further withdrawal (for personal reasons) at the very end of the process, resulted in 33 residents completing the full Assembly.

This final number remains within standards to ensure rich and diverse deliberation.

1.5.5. The table in appendix II outlines the intended and actual demographic breakdown of the Assembly.

1.5.6. Onboarding and Accessibility Support: Onboarding calls were conducted with every participant by the MutualGain team, to build rapport, understand needs, and provide personalised support.

- **Five participants identified as disabled:** those with disabilities were offered tailored support based on their needs. Facilitators adjusted methods in real-time to support a range of learning and communication styles, using visual, verbal, and participatory techniques to ensure all participants could engage meaningfully
- **Two participants identified as autistic:** one engaged confidently in groups with tailored facilitation; the other contributed through drawing and voice notes with dedicated one-to-one support.
- **Digital inclusion:** adjustments included postal and phone communication for those without email. In the few instances where digital input in session was required, technical support and alternative devices were provided.

1.5.7. Beyond access needs, the cohort represented diverse experiences, including views that spanned the political spectrum (surfaced through dialogue). This diversity enhanced the credibility and depth of the Assembly's discussions and outputs.

The table below provides a session by session outline, including speakers and outputs. Where videos were provided, links are included in Appendix III.

SESSION NUMBER	SUMMARY	SPEAKERS	OUTPUTS
1–2: Orientation & Strategic Framing	Introduced participants to each other and the assembly process. Covered the LTCP, COTP, and council's transport strategy. Included expert presentations and set expectations around learning and participation.	• Professor Tim Schwanen – Director of the Transport Studies Unit and Professor of Transport Geography, University of Oxford • Lorna Baxter – Executive Director of Resources and Section 151 Officer (Deputy Chief Executive) Oxfordshire County Council (OCC) • Robin Rogers – Director of Economy and Place, Oxfordshire County Council (OCC) • Ben Smith – Strategic Transport Manager, Oxfordshire County Council (OCC) • Professor Alan Renwick – Professor of Democratic Politics and Deputy Director, University College London (UCL)	Shared vision An understanding of why this assembly at this time

SESSION NUMBER	SUMMARY	SPEAKERS	OUTPUTS
3: Fair Transport Policy	Focused on equitable use of road space. Participants created a Fair Car Use Budget hierarchy, ranking users and trip purposes by need.	• Dr Philipp Rode – Executive Director, LSE Cities, London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE)	Ranked **priority user groups**: 1) Disabled people, 2) Key and care workers 3) Public transport and taxi drivers 4) Tradespeople 5) Delivery drivers 6) Rural residents. Ranked **priority trip purposes**: 1) Emergencies 2) Health appointments 3) Care-related trips 4) Freight/delivery 5) Education 6) Work-related travel.
4: People and Transport Themes	Explored transport's link to the environment, health, and the economy. Highlighted under-represented voices and user diversity in transport.	• Commissioned video featuring underrepresented voices in Oxfordshire transport • Insights from the Youth Board • Nina Howe – Senior Engagement Manager, Transport Focus • Ansaf Anzhar – Director of Public Health, Oxfordshire County Council • Nigel Tipple – Chief Executive, Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership (OxLEP)	Assembly members explored transport through a presentation on national travel perspectives, recorded input from disabled and neurodiverse residents, and visual engagement by young people. Each was randomly assigned an Oxfordshire persona (adapted from DfT profiles) to consider alongside their own needs.

2.4 Sessions 5 to 11 marked a transition into focused policy exploration. Assembly members examined a range of interventions in greater depth, including active travel investment, traffic management schemes, and proposals for public transport and mobility hubs.

2.5 Each session built on prior learning, encouraging participants to explore trade-offs, assess funding options, and consider both countywide strategy and local priorities.

2.6. Activities included: applying funding criteria, mapping future infrastructure, and discussing real-world case studies. Throughout, the LTCP and Central Oxfordshire Travel Plan (COTP) remained key reference points, helping participants test ideas against live policy frameworks and long-term goals for the county.

SESSION NUMBER	SUMMARY	SPEAKERS	OUTPUTS
5: Active Travel LTCP reference: Policies 1-9, pp. 35-45 COTP reference: Actions 9-12, pp.26-31	Assessed investment priorities for walking, wheeling, and cycling. Participants used eight funding criteria.	• Robin Tucker – Co-Chair, Coalition for Healthy Streets and Active Travel (CoHSAT) • Xavier Brice – Chief Executive, Sustrans • David Calonge – Active Travel Lead, Oxfordshire County Council (OCC)	**Top 3 active travel funding criteria** selected: 1) Improved access to public transport 2) Continuity of the network 3) Increase in cycling/walking trips. Framed investment discussions around fairness over cost-effectiveness.

SESSION NUMBER	SUMMARY	SPEAKERS	OUTPUTS
6–7: The Central Oxfordshire Travel Plan (COTP) and its schemes COTP reference: Actions 1-3, pp.17-21	Reviewed current and proposed demand management schemes (traffic filters, ZEZ, LTNs, WPL) and heard contrasting views through film and live discussion.	• Dr Natalie Tegama – Postdoctoral Researcher in Global Health Ethics, Centre for Tropical Medicine and Global Health • Richard Parnham – Co-Founder, Reconnecting Oxford • Bernadette Evans – Oxford Business Action Group (OxBAG) • Jeremy Mogford – Chairman, The Oxford Collection & member, OxBAG • Jenny Wells – Mobile Hairdresser & member, OxBAG • Adrian Arbib – Renewables Installer, Electrician & Mobile Tradesman in Oxfordshire • Xander – Independent Shop Owner, Oxford • Zuhura Plummer – Former Campaign Director, Oxfordshire Liveable Streets • Professor Tim Schwanen – Director, Transport Studies Unit & Professor of Transport Geography, University of Oxford • Dr Philipp Rode – Executive Director, LSE Cities, London School of Economics • Craig Rossington – Senior Transport Planner, Oxfordshire County Council (OCC) • Hannah Battye – Head of Placemaking, OCC • Joanne Fellows – Place Planning Manager – Central Economy and Place, OCC	Eight early recommendations for central Oxfordshire developed Participants identified challenges to implementation, and shared ground between supporters and critics.

SESSION NUMBER	SUMMARY	SPEAKERS	OUTPUTS
8–9: Public Transport and Mapping Mobility Hubs LTCP reference: Policies 18-23 pp. 67-79 COTP reference: Actions 13-16, pp.32-41	Discussed affordability, access, and area differences in transport needs. This included a mobility hub mapping exercise.	• Dr Brenda Boardman – Oxon4Buses • Chris Hanson – Managing Director at Stagecoach West • Pete Brunskill – Rail Development Lead, Oxfordshire County Council (OCC) • Luke Goddard – Youth Engagement and Insight Lead, Gloucestershire Community Rail Partnership • Samuel – Representative from the Youth Transport Forum led by Gloucestershire and Oxfordshire Community Rail Partnership (GOCRP) • David Miles – First and Last Mile • Dr Léa Ravensbergen – Assistant Professor in the School of Earth, Environment and Society (SEES) at McMaster University • Michael Solomon Williams – Head of Campaigns, Campaign for Better Transport	Proposed mobility hub locations (e.g. Lewknor, Eynsham); Prioritised Park & Ride trials, Community mini-hubs, and cross-boundary planning; Developed place-specific early recommendations.

SESSION NUMBER	SUMMARY	SPEAKERS	OUTPUTS
10: Designing New Places LTCP reference: Policies 8-14 pp. 46-61 COTP reference: Actions 19-23, pp.39-52	Explored infrastructure for future growth. Focused on planning tools, car clubs, and integration of transport into development.	• Nick Small – Head of Built Environment and Infrastructure (Central and Southern England), Go-Ahead Group • David Milner, Director and Robert Kwolek, Senior Architectural Designer, Create Streets • Dr Hannah Budnitz – Research Associate, Transport Studies Unit • Hannah Battye – Head of Placemaking • Joaquim Muntane – Technical Lead (Movement and Place) Oxfordshire County Council (OCC)	Mapped new community layouts with integrated walking, cycling, and public transport; explored EV car club feasibility; refined long-term place-shaping recommendations.
11: Safety, Health and confirming Consensus LTCP reference: Policies 15-16 pp. 62-65	Reviewed safety and healthcare access. Used a 'Collective Thinking' document to consolidate shared insights.	• Ruth Purdie – Chief Executive, UK Road Safety Trust • Andy Ford – Station Manager, Oxfordshire Fire and Rescue Service and Caroline Coyne – Project Manager for Vision Zero (OCC) • A video featuring a series of perspectives from often underrepresented voices focusing on accessing hospitals and healthcare (this was specially commissioned for the assembly) • Annie Skinner – Resident of Oxford	Developed thinking on safety Confirmed Assembly's shared positions; Developed and refined draft recommendation criteria to include: • Affordability • Clarity • Community Benefit • Connectivity • Fundability • Integration, • Sustainability

2.7. Deliberation and Recommendation Development

In its final phase, the Citizens' Assembly shifted from learning to decision-making. Over the course of three final sessions (Sessions 12–14), participants applied what they had heard and discussed, to create a set of informed, values-driven recommendations for the LTCP and the COTP.

.7.1. **Session 12** explored perspectives through role play. The session opened with a presentation by Professor Thomas Hale, Professor in Global Public Policy at the Blavatnik School of Government, who offered practical guidance on how to draft a good policy recommendation. He emphasised the importance of clarity, feasibility, and evidence, as well as the need to balance ambition with realism. His talk introduced key elements of effective policymaking, helping Assembly members consider not only what they wanted to recommend, but to include their rationale to show how actionable it might be for decision-makers.

2.7.2 Following the presentation, the assembly engaged with a structured role-play exercise designed to help Assembly members understand the complexity of policymaking from multiple perspectives. Each participant selected one of five stakeholder roles:

- **Data-Driven Policy Team**: Focused on evidence-led innovation, smart transport technologies, and data accessibility.
- **City and Town Residents of Today**: Emphasised road safety, affordability, air quality, and protection of small business needs.
- **Rural Residents of Today**: Advocated for fair access to services, reliable public transport, and infrastructure investment outside the city.
- **Residents of Tomorrow**: Represented future generations, prioritising sustainability, climate resilience, and community design.
- **Big Employers**: Called for staff connectivity, infrastructure consistency, and revenue policies that do not burden operations.

2.7.3. Each group received a detailed briefing and a toolkit of materials from earlier sessions, including LTCP/COTP excerpts, expert slides, and key outputs like the Fair Car Use hierarchy to prepare their case. They presented their positions to a mock council panel made up of facilitators and Advisory Board representatives, role-playing as political, technical, and community leadership representatives that reflected the highlights of what had been heard through the learning phase.

2.7.4. The exercise was energetic and constructive. Participants voiced their stakeholder priorities, challenged opposing views, and proposed compromises. A number of final recommendation themes emerged, notably the concept of a "kite mark" accreditation scheme to highlight transport-friendly businesses. The session helped Assembly members see the policy process from new angles, deepening their appreciation for trade-offs and the need for fair, feasible solutions.

2.7.5.Session 13: Budgeting for the Future: The afternoon session introduced a participatory budgeting exercise designed to bring Oxfordshire's transport priorities to life. Each group was given a fictional Council transport budget of £1 and a menu of costed options, based on real figures and expert advice (*The £1 figure is symbolic. It represents the full relevant council budget scaled down for simplicity, not an actual spending limit.*) Participants had to prioritise investments, justify trade-offs, and consider revenue mechanisms if needed. A summary of their choices is set out below to illustrate the thinking that informed their deliberations.

2.7.6. Three groups spent exactly £1 but still chose to invest in a combination of revenue-generating mechanisms. Their approaches differed slightly: one group combined a Workplace Parking Levy (WPL) with a Zero Emission Zone (ZEZ), another combined a WPL with traffic filters, and another combined all three: WPL, ZEZ, and traffic filters.

Groups exceeding the £1 spending limit spent:

- £3.64, proposing to reopen a rail line and fund improvements to the Oxford rail corridor. They suggested using all three revenue mechanisms (WPL, ZEZ, traffic filters) to fund these more expensive, longer-term projects.
- £2.73, reopening a rail line but limiting reliance on levies, using ZEZ income only in the short term.

2.7.7. Despite different paths, consistent investment themes emerged:

- **Upgrades to bus stops** for safety and accessibility were popular with all groups.
- **New bus routes and community transport services** were chosen unanimously.
- **Free Park & Ride trials,** particularly for one year, were supported by four out of five groups.
- **Segregated bike lanes**, although considered 'expensive', were chosen by most for their long-term safety and climate benefits.

2.7.8. Some less popular but considered proposals included:

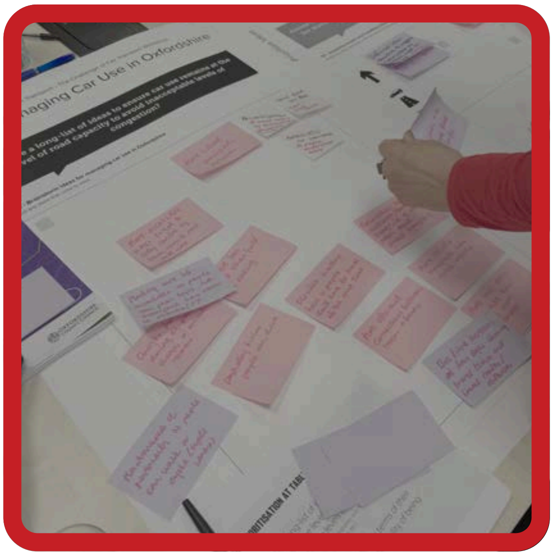
- Rail schemes: not included as they tend to exceed Council level budget limitations.
- EV car clubs, selected only once, reflecting concerns about over-dependence on cars, even electric ones.
- Greenways were not included as much as groups would like because assembly members questioned whether the cost could be justified given the limited number of people they believed would regularly use them.

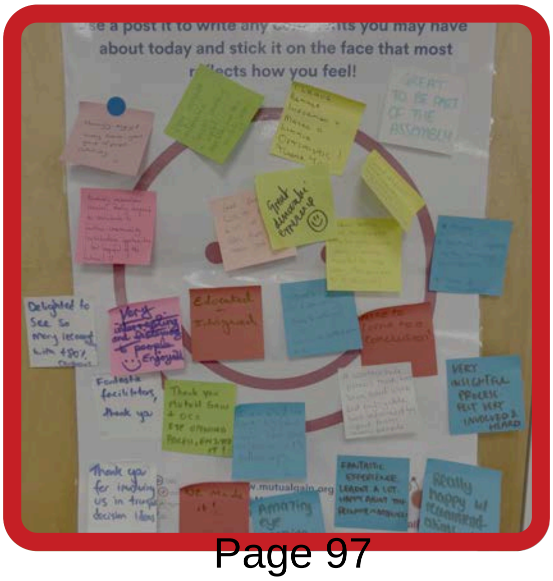
2.7.9. This session highlighted how different values and local needs shaped participants' decisions. By balancing ambition with feasibility, the Assembly developed a nuanced sense of what a fair and effective transport investment strategy could look like. Drawing on the insights collected across the learning phase, they went on to develop a first draft of recommendations that received assembly wide feedback.

2.7.10. **Session 14:** In this session, participants reviewed, refined, and voted on the recommendations once again. They revised and applied their co-created set of assessment criteria in this session, including affordability, clarity, community benefit, and sustainability to test the strength of each proposal.

2.7.11. The session concluded with a structured vote using SurveyMonkey, confirming the final set of recommendations that would be submitted to Oxfordshire County Council.

2.7.12. After sharing the recommendations with a range of decision makers, a dialogue followed for decision-makers and the advisory board members to better understand how the assembly came to the conclusions it did.




about today and stick it on the face that most
r..lects how you feel!
GREAT TO BE PART OF THE ASSEMBLY
Great democratic experience
Delighted to see so many [illegible] with 480% [illegible]
Very interesting and [illegible] to people Enjoyable
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Fantastic facilitators, thank you
Thank you Mutual Gain + OCC [illegible]
VERY INSIGHTFUL PROCESS FELT VERY INVOLVED & HEARD
Thank you for including us in [illegible] decision [illegible]
FANTASTIC EXPERIENCE LEARNT A LOT
Amazing eye
Really happy w/ recommend-
w.mutualgain.org

SECTION THREE: RECOMMENDATIONS

3.1. Assembly members developed 20 recommendations based on their deliberations. Each small group of 5–6 assembly members was initially tasked with producing:

- One recommendation for Central Oxfordshire, and
- One for the wider county.

3.2 In the final stages of recommendation development, assembly members could choose where to sit and who to work with, creating space for fresh conversations and a blend of voices. This open approach helped ensure that different lived experiences and priorities were brought into the room, building on the learning and dialogue developed throughout the Assembly, including through the role play activity, the budgeting task and the Collective Thinking summary of insights.

3.3. Once both recommendations were completed, groups had the freedom to create additional recommendations on any other priorities they felt were important. To gauge the level of collective support, all 20 recommendations were put to a vote using Survey Monkey.

Assembly members indicated their level of approval using the following scale:

- Strongly support
- Support
- Do not support
- Strongly do not support

3.4. We define “support” as the combined total of those who ‘supported’ or ‘strongly supported’ a recommendation. Recommendations that received more than 80% support are considered to reflect consensus among the assembly.

3.5. In total, 16 recommendations achieved over 80% support. MutualGain uses this threshold to suggest that the Council can feel confident these recommendations would likely receive similar support from a wider population, given the same information and time to deliberate.

3.6. Four recommendations received under 80% support and are listed at the end of this section.

No.	Recommendation	% support
1	To reduce congestion and emissions in Central Oxfordshire by maximising the use of park and ride: - Use of shuttle services to businesses, schools and hospitals from park and ride - Improved cycle connectivity to park and ride and safe cycle storage - Increased frequency of buses from park and ride and incentivised use by making them free. - Improved connectivity between park and ride. This should commence within 12 months.	97%
2	Implement standardised ticketing across all of the bus companies in the county. This will make buses easier especially for younger and older people, visitors and people whose first language is not English. Increase overall bus use.	94%
3	Sell the vision to the public: inform them about transport and active travel options, and their benefits. Examples: information stands with live feeds, social media campaigns, posters and billboards, regional news and radio, advertising on taxis and public transport.	94%
4	Oxfordshire County Council (OCC) to create and administer a 'kite mark' / standard called 'The Oxford Travel Positive Employer' for large companies (e.g over 100 employees). This will generate revenue for OCC to contribute to a ring-fenced fund for active travel, traffic reduction, and low emission travel. Criteria could include introduction of shuttle services for staff, use of EV vehicles, encouraging staff to use buses, shower and change facilities, and encouraging car sharing, with Gold, Silver and Bronze levels for the employers	94%

No.	Recommendation	% support
5	Invest in educating and informing the public about transport and active travel options and their benefits. To sell the vision of a healthier and more connected travel network and increase public buy in for effective implementation. People need to be inspired by the benefits and opportunities of active travel and public transport. Offer carrots in order to make effective change. Education: school programmes, information roadshows, social media campaigns, posters, billboards, advertising (on buses and taxis). Information: Information points in town and city centres with live data, maps, links to support, accessibility features (vision impaired etc.), information about where to find trains, buses, taxi ranks, bicycle rentals etc. Make public knowledge of information points through social media campaigns, regional radio and news (etc.)	94%
6	To improve connectivity in rural areas by ensuring that local communities are listened to by involving them in decision making. Considerations should be given to active travel options and repurposing bridle paths for greenways, rural hubs, car sharing, community travel (mini buses and cars), any other needs identifies by the community, first and last mile options. In terms of accountability evidence MUST be shown that community voices have been listened to in the decision making.	91%
7	Improve community infrastructure in the medical sector. Why? less congestion and reducing car journeys, and reduce number of people coming into Oxford. This is line with liveable neighbourhoods thinking.	91%

No.	Recommendation	% support (rounded up or down)
8	Reduce road fatalities and serious injuries by encouraging behaviour change through, for example, enforcements of 20mph limits, using ANPR, more use of speed warnings 'face' signs. Support for residents who want to get involved in community traffic watch initiatives and speed humps. Implement in residential areas, outside schools, and other road fatality hotspots.	88%
9	Implementing a franchise model between county council and bus companies so that the council takes back control of bus routes, timetables and pricing so that it ensures that it is driven by needs and services, not just profit. Similar to London and Manchester models.	88%
10	Build new housing developments so that major facilities are within walking distance. This will reduce traffic, encourage health habit, build community and create jobs. We acknowledge sometimes it is supportive for well being for people to get out of their immediate neighbourhood - this proposal does not remove the possibility of people doing that.	88%
11	A designated road just for a bus system (exceptions for cyclists, emergency vehicles, blue badge holders and taxis during certain hours). - Frequent service and stops - Subsidies for 60+ - Under 16s- incentivise families. City centre location - moving towards a car free city centre. Reserved/exclusive to buses - not new build, existing roads Long term behaviour change. Depends on a 1st class service, has to be accessible, frequent and affordable (an alternative to having a tram).	88%

No.	Recommendation	% support
12	Make the city centre car free while being fair and not disadvantaging key groups. The aim would be to reduce congestion, cut emissions, improve environmental and human health and make the city more visitor friendly. Those mainly impacted by this would be car drivers. The intention is to create alternatives for drivers, implementing policies in a phased way so that they have alternatives to use. Alternatives include: strengthening bus networks, making cycling safer, and making the Park and Rides into mobility hubs). It is likely disincentives (sticks) would be needed to encourage people out of cars.	88%
13	Promote generational change over the next 15 years to shift the next generation to think active travel first, bus second, car third by making bus and bike travel affordable, extending bike programmes for schools, education programmes from primary school all the way through, and children travel free on public transport. This also helps change behaviour of parents.	87%
14	Introduce mobility hubs types 1 and 2 to make cycling safer, reduce congestion, improve rural connectivity Specifically, type 1 in Banbury and Didcot Type 2 in Chipping Norton, Abingdon, Witney, Wantage.	85%
15	Introduce a graduated Workplace Parking Levy which must be paid by the employer rather than the employee, and which facilitates reductions and award 'Kite Marks' to those employers that contribute to the COTP and LTCP - exemptions to be decided in a consultation process.	82%

No.	Recommendation	% support
16	What: reduce driving by commuters, short trips, and school runs. Why: in order to improve health and the environment, and reduce traffic fatalities by: How: 1. Introducing a workplace parking levy to generate income for other travel schemes 2. Encourage car sharing by business, schools and other organisations by introducing apps etc and advertising car share schemes. Reflect in the employer kite mark. 3. Introduction of mobility hubs at train stations.	82%
17	Subsidised travel for 60+ ensuring it is accessible in peak times. Children under 10 free, children 10-16 (or 18) free during school times, funded by WPL and ZEZs	79%
18	Implement a congestion charge to cut car usage coming into the town centre and raise money for the county council. This should be in addition to the ZEZ. This would encourage us to use the park and ride. It is important to have alternatives to car use before this is implemented. For instance using the money that is raised to incentive other transport options. There will need to be exceptions.	74%
19	Trams: develop a north - south and east- west in Oxford that links the park and rides. Trams are sleek, modern, spacious and carry more people than buses. Their energy consumption is also much lower than that of a bus. They provide more capacity than buses and additional room for wheelchair and bicycle users. A tram would help maximise usage of park and rides.	74%
20	Generate income to enable the recommendations approved yesterday (Saturday), recommendation 12 and 14. We will do this by evolving the ZEZ into a wider congestion zone within the ring road, with fair exemptions/concessions by late 2020s.	70%

SECTION FOUR: RECOMMENDATION ANALYSIS

4.1. This analysis draws on several key sources of data collection throughout the assembly. Each recommendation was developed using a structured template that included space for participants to explain their rationale. These rationales have been used as the primary basis for the analysis, supplemented by notes and clarifications from facilitators where needed. Where relevant, insights from the learning phase and deliberations have been incorporated to further contextualise each recommendation.

4.2. SurveyMonkey was selected as the voting tool. This provided a more detailed analysis of support based on demographics. Where relevant, notable trends are highlighted.

4.3. Across the board, recommendations were supported by a wide cross-section of participants. There was no single proposal that deeply split the Assembly. However, the analysis did reveal nuances in emphasis, conditional support, and implementation concerns.

4.4. A particularly noteworthy finding is that all participants who take two or more car journeys per week supported several key recommendations aimed at reducing car dependency. These included calls for council investment in viable alternatives, such as improved park and ride infrastructure, standardised ticketing across bus operators, public education on transport options, and expanded support for active travel and rural mobility solutions. This suggests that regular drivers were open to shifting their behaviour, provided that practical, accessible alternatives were in place

72% of participants who take two or more car journeys a week strongly supported Park and Ride expansion, including investment to improve connections by bike, foot, and public transport

4.5. Participants living in rural areas consistently championed locally designed solutions that could reflect the realities of life with limited public transport, for example, isolation and infrequent services (varies from one bus a day or one a week)

- The need for more dialogue, not just digital surveys
- Fair exemptions from schemes like congestion charges or WPL

100% of rural participants supported the call for local co-design of transport plans (Recommendation: Involve rural communities in designing local solutions)

4.6 Support for ideas like mobility hubs and shared investment in mini-Park & Rides was strong, but conditional on place-sensitive implementation.

4.7. Participants living in urban areas, particularly those based in Oxford, demonstrated strong support for measures that shift public space use, reduce emissions, promote active travel and increase safety. These included:

- A dedicated bus-only road in the city centre
- Investment in mobility hubs and active travel infrastructure
- Active travel campaigns and education
- Enforcing 20pmh limits using ANPR cameras and more speed warnings 'face' signs

'95% of participants living in urban areas support 20 mph limits to help reduce road fatalities and serious injuries

4.8. However, they also supported ideas that originated from rural groups, especially the call for more inclusive design processes, suggesting a broad county-wide sense of fairness and responsibility.

4.9 Assembly members under 35 were among the most enthusiastic supporters of:

- New mobility ideas like EV car clubs
- Behaviour change campaigns in schools
- Investment in generational shifts, even where impact is not immediate

4.10 They saw value in bold, visionary interventions, but were also pragmatic, supporting ideas like employer incentives and affordable travel for low-paid workers.

4.11 For participants from market towns, priority was placed on:

- Affordable and more frequent buses
- Real-time information infrastructure
- Shuttles to and from employment hubs

4.12. They echoed rural concerns around declining service coverage but were more focused on enhancing existing options rather than building new systems from scratch.

4.13. This demographic lens adds some texture to the Assembly's headline findings. In particular:

- There is readiness for change across all user groups, including frequent drivers.
- Fairness and flexibility are essential for winning support especially for rural communities and lower-income workers.
- Policymakers can expect high support for incremental, visible improvements (e.g. better P&R, more buses) and respectful dialogue to shape longer-term transitions.
- Demographic specific communications and implementation, e.g. co-design in rural areas, employer engagement in cities, will be vital to turning recommendations into successful action.

Policy Insight
Support for every major recommendation crossed demographic lines. Implementation strategies, not the recommendations themselves, will make or break public trust.

Tackling Congestion

4.14 A clear priority across the Assembly was the need to reduce traffic congestion, particularly in and around Oxford. Participants proposed a layered approach that combined:

- Disincentives such as parking levies and congestion charges
- Incentives like enhanced, affordable public transport options
- Infrastructure investments including active travel routes and mobility hubs

4.15. Rather than relying on a single solution, recommendations blended behaviour change, strategic planning, and equitable access.

Connecting Communities

4.16. Connectivity emerged as equally vital, especially for market towns and rural communities where residents face isolation, infrequent services, and few viable alternatives to car use. Assembly members understood that a successful transport strategy for Oxfordshire must go beyond Oxford itself.

4.17 Improved bus services, better integration across modes, and investment in mobility hubs were seen as key tools for addressing this disparity. Importantly, participants recognised that tackling congestion in cities would only be fair if those outside them had access to effective, reliable alternatives.

Strategic, Fair and Realistic

4.18 Across the 14 sessions, Assembly members repeatedly demonstrated a pragmatic, strategic mindset. A central question underpinning discussions was: “What would make me get out of my car?” While there was consensus on the need to shift away from private vehicle use, assembly members were also attuned to the challenges and barriers that different communities face in making such changes. From this sprang three principles that shaped their recommendations:

4.18.1 Strategic Thinking

Participants sought a phased roadmap for transformation, balancing long-term ambition with practical, short-term steps. Many proposals were intentionally interconnected, building on one another to create momentum. For example: Recommendation 15 builds directly on the idea of the “Oxford Travel Positive Employer” kite mark (Recommendation 4), linking employer action to funding mechanisms like the Workplace Parking Levy (WPL). This illustrates a layered and systems-focused approach to change. Crucially, strategy wasn’t just about infrastructure: it included a deep understanding of behaviour. **Participants discussed motivation, incentives, and barriers, recognising that achieving modal shift means supporting not just the ability to travel differently, but also the desire to do so.**

4.18. 2. A Commitment to Fairness

Equity was a constant thread. Assembly members challenged proposals where they saw the risk of unintended harm, particularly for those with low incomes, mobility challenges, or limited access to alternatives. Key equity considerations included:

- Rural connectivity gaps (e.g. areas with only one bus a day or week)
- Essential travel exemptions from schemes like WPL and ZEZ
- Support for lower-paid workers, such as hospital staff and carers

Assembly members often asked: "Who benefits, and who might be left behind?" This lens shaped recommendations to include exemptions, targeted support, and criteria for prioritisation rooted in need rather than visibility.

4.18 3. Realistic and Actionable Proposals

The budgeting exercise grounded deliberations in financial reality. Participants used fictional, costed interventions to simulate real-world decisions, choosing how to allocate a limited 'transport pound.' Some participants welcomed the exercise as a tool to focus their thinking and avoid "blue sky" proposals. Others found it constrained to the here and now, but all recognised the need for trade-offs. As a result, many recommendations reflect a mix of ambition and feasibility. For example: While a tram system generated interest, it received less support than investment in buses which was seen as more flexible, cost-effective, and better aligned with current constraints and jurisdiction. Appetite for a tram was evident in the Assembly, but participants heard from different experts sharing alternative views on its viability and they wanted to ensure their recommendations could be achieved within their knowledge. As a result, the recommendations focused on improving and developing existing alternatives to the car in Oxfordshire, both expanding provision and making better use of existing infrastructure.

4.19 These principles reveal a Citizens' Assembly committed to transformation, but not at any cost. Participants showed a clear appetite for reducing car use and enhancing connectivity, underpinned by a strong desire for equity and realism.

4.20 **They did not view congestion as a city problem or connectivity as a rural one: instead, they advocated for a joined-up, county-wide response rooted in shared responsibility and shared benefit.**

Policy Insight

Assembly members - from rural villages to Oxford city centre- supported action to shift how people move around. The message is clear: **if alternatives are fair, reliable, and well-designed,** the public is ready for change.

KEY IDEAS

4.21. The following section explores some of the Citizens' Assembly's key ideas. Each reflects a balance of ambition and pragmatism, grounded in participant learning and lived experience. These ideas do not stand alone: they were developed through collaborative exercises, prioritisation activities, and direct dialogue with expert speakers. They demonstrate how the Assembly built a shared vision of change rooted in fairness, behaviour change, and deliverability.

Recommendation: Reduce congestion and emissions in central Oxfordshire by maximising the use of park and ride.

Support: 97.% of participants

- 72% of participants who take two or more car journeys a week strongly supported this recommendation (100% supported it)
- 81% of participants who live outside of the city strongly supporting it (100% supported it)

Your paragraph text

Maximise the Use of Park & Ride

4.22. Park & Ride sites were widely seen as underutilised assets with the potential to deliver rapid, visible gains in congestion reduction. Assembly members proposed practical enhancements, including:

- Free-to-use services and increased bus frequency
- Shuttle links to businesses, schools, hospitals
- Improved active travel access and secure cycle storage
- Better connections between existing Park & Ride sites to create a network

4.23. They shifted from a more expensive proposal of building new sites to a more financially realistic strategy of enhancing what already exists, demonstrating cost-conscious adaptation.

Implementation note: This recommendation was most strongly supported by those who typically rely on cars, provided it offers reliability, convenience, and value.

Policy Insight

Park & Ride could be a gateway to multimodal travel, not just a car park with buses

The Oxford Travel Positive Employer

4.24. Although the 100+ employee threshold was not a major focus of discussion, it reflects the assembly’s broader commitment to fairness and strategic impact, targeting employers with the greatest capacity to invest in sustainable travel and who contribute most significantly to traffic volumes.

Recommendation: Establish a 'kite mark' to recognise and incentivise large employers (100+ employees) that support low-emission and sustainable travel practices.

Support: 94% overall

- 100% support from regular car users and rural/market town participants

4.26. Born from the Assembly’s role-play exercise, this idea quickly gained traction. It combines behaviour change with reputational incentives, offering Bronze, Silver, and Gold levels for actions such as:

- Providing shuttle services
- Promoting bus or EV use
- Offering cycle facilities including showering and changing facilities
- Supporting car share schemes

4.27 The scheme was compared to the Fairtrade mark: credible, visible, and values-led, and viewed as a tool to shift workplace culture and reduce peak-hour congestion.

Implementation note: Participants stressed that any revenue raised must be transparently reinvested in active travel, traffic reduction and low emission travel.

Policy Insight
Businesses should be part of the solution, and rewarded for it

Introduce a Workplace Parking Levy (WPL)

Recommendation: 15 & 16 support this measure:
Support:
- 82% endorsed, particularly those living in market town and rural areas
- Incorporated into 4 out of 5 groups budgeting choices

Policy Insight
The WPL must be fair, transparent, and part of a bigger shift, not just a tax

Implementation note: Fair and transparent reinvestment in sustainable transport, especially for non-city and low-income commuters, is key to public support for the WPL.

4.28 The WPL was seen as a necessary tool to shift commuter behaviour and fund transport improvements. Participants supported the levy on the condition that:
- Clear exemptions and mitigations are developed for essential workers
- Revenue is transparently reinvested
- Recommendation 15 specified that the levy should be paid by the employer rather than the employee. Recommendation 16, and the interim proposals developed during Session 6, did not include this condition

4.29 During deliberations, the question of who should pay was widely debated. Some participants strongly supported requiring employers to cover the cost, citing the need to promote fairness, ensure organisational accountability, and protect lower-paid staff or those without viable alternatives to driving. Some participants acknowledged that, in practice, the cost of a Workplace Parking Levy (WPL) might be passed on to employees. However, they were only willing to accept this trade-off on the condition that the revenue was reinvested fairly and effectively in improving sustainable transport options, particularly for those most likely to be affected, such as residents of market towns and rural areas.

4.30 Popular reinvestment suggestions included:
- Shuttle buses from Park & Rides to major employment zones, ensuring that these shuttle buses were cheaper than the WPL charge, providing a genuine financial incentive to leave the car at home.
- Offering unlimited free travel for under-18s and over-60s, and reinstating the £2 single bus fare cap
- Reduced fares for low-income workers, families, and young people
- On-demand services, particularly in rural areas

4.31 Participants proposed accountability mechanisms such as ANPR enforcement and carbon offsetting schemes tied to workplace travel.

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Reimagining the City Centre: bus only roads and a fare free core

Implementation note: Bus-only roads were preferred over a tram system for reasons of cost and deliverability. Many participants referenced the Cowley rail extension and expressed confidence that rail was already being addressed. .

Policy Insight

"I have seven kids. If the buses were that easy and affordable, I'd switch. But they're not."

4.32 Participants developed bold proposals for transforming Oxford's transport spine, including:

- A dedicated bus-only corridor into and within the city centre (88% support)
- Fare-free bus travel from Park & Rides (97%)
- Franchised, simplified ticketing across operators (94%)
- Longer-term vision: a city tram network (74%)

4.33 These ideas were framed as both behavioural nudges and infrastructure changes, making the alternative to driving not just possible, but preferable. 'Participants also acknowledged that disincentives to driving would likely be necessary to achieve long-term change, but emphasised that these must be applied fairly, with appropriate exemptions for those who genuinely need to rely on a car.

4.34.The following ideas and tensions shaped their proposals.

Public Transport: A Viable and Attractive Alternative to the Car

4.35. Participants consistently emphasised that public transport must be a credible, convenient, and cost-effective alternative to private car use, particularly for those with regular commutes or constrained mobility.

4.36 Key Recommendations and Support Levels in this theme:

- Introduce standardised bus ticketing across operators – 94%
- Franchise model for local authority-led bus services – 88%
- Dedicated bus-only road in Oxford city centre – 88%
- Free, frequent Park & Ride buses – 97%
- Subsidised travel for over-60s and free travel for children – 79%
- Tram system linking Park & Ride sites (long-term) – 74%

4.37 Participants preferred buses over rail and trams due to lower costs, greater geographic coverage, and local authority control. The bus-only road proposal was especially compelling: one parent of seven said it was the only option that could persuade her to leave the car at home.

Implementation Insight:
"If you want us to switch, it has to work for families, shift workers, and older people."

Shift to Active Travel: Changing Behaviour Through Education and Design

4.38 Education and infrastructure were viewed as essential partners in reducing car use and promoting walking, wheeling, and cycling.

4.39. **Key Recommendations:**

- Active travel education campaigns – 94%
- Behaviour change programmes in schools – 87%
- Cycle connectivity and secure storage at Park & Rides – 97%
- Create multi-modal mobility hubs in towns – 85%
- Repurpose rural bridleways for community routes – 91%

4.40 Participants saw early intervention, especially among young people, as key to long-term culture change. However, several active travel options (e.g. bridleways, greenways) were perceived as costly and did not feature strongly in the budgeting activity, suggesting implementation must be balanced with practical feasibility. These types of infrastructure were more likely to be considered worthwhile if they contributed to a wider strategic network and improved connectivity to public transport, aligning with the Assembly's top funding criterion for active travel (developed in session 5): improving access to public transport

Involving People in Strategic Decision-Making

4.41 The Assembly heard clear calls for locally designed, place-based transport solutions, particularly from rural participants. These voices were among the most consistent and urgent.

4.42 **Key Recommendation**:
Involve rural communities in co-designing local transport solutions – 91%

4.43 Why It Matters:

- Isolation and infrequent services (sometimes one bus per day or week)
- Limited or no digital access: participants repeatedly requested conversations, not surveys
- Policies such as the Workplace Parking Levy or congestion charges could have a disproportionate impact on rural residents, and this must be addressed in the design and implementation of such measures.
- Demand for engagement that reflects hyper-local geography (village-to-village)

4.44 Participants called for more use of deliberative methods like this to conduct community mapping, and tailored listening methods.

Land Use, Health and Infrastructure Integration

4.45 Participants recognised that travel behaviour is shaped by the environment, and that housing, services, and health access must be designed to reduce car dependency.

4.46 **Key Recommendations:**

- Ensure new housing is walkable and well-connected – 88%
- Improve local infrastructure for accessing healthcare without a car – 91%

4.47 Tensions highlighted

- Central planning vs. community-led development
- Oxfordshire County Council's jurisdiction over planning decisions

4.48 This theme linked closely with urban experiences and rural, reinforcing the importance of local knowledge in future housing and health service planning.

Workplace Parking Levy: Revenue, Responsibility, and Realism

4.49 Participants saw the Workplace Parking Levy (WPL) as both a lever for change and a funding tool, provided fairness, communication, and ring-fenced reinvestment were guaranteed.

4.50 **Key Recommendations:**

- Graduated WPL paid by employers – 82%
- Use WPL income to fund sustainable travel – 79%
- Combine with employer engagement (Travel Positive Employer) – 94%
- Exemptions for low-paid essential workers

4.51 There was some support for a congestion charge and ZEZ expansion (74% and 70%), but concerns about fairness for lower-income workers dampened support. The WPL received strong backing in both recommendations and budget simulations, but only if clearly linked to improved options for those most affected.

Safety and Enforcement

Safety was a universal concern, particularly in residential and school areas. Personal experiences shared during the Assembly had a strong emotional impact.

4.55.**Key Recommendation:**

- Enforce 20mph zones with ANPR and signage – 88%
- There was almost unanimous support from urban residents for the introduction of 20mph zones with ANPR cameras and signage

4.56 Participants also called for improved lighting, visibility, and awareness campaigns, particularly in and around mobility hubs. Safety was framed as a shared responsibility, not just enforcement, and an essential precondition for behaviour change.

4.57. In the budgeting exercise participants invested in lots of school streets as a cost effective way to start behaviour change in travel whilst keeping young people and their families safe and healthy

SECTION FIVE: CONCLUSION

5.1 The Oxfordshire Citizens' Assembly on Travel and Transport marks a significant moment in local democratic engagement. Over 45 hours of structured learning and deliberation, 34 residents from across the county worked together to grapple with some of the most pressing and complex transport challenges Oxfordshire faces. Their recommendations were not only ambitious but deeply considered, rooted in a commitment to fairness, feasibility, and forward-thinking solutions.

Participants showed a strong collective desire to move away from car dependency (even among frequent drivers) provided that alternatives are convenient, affordable, and well-communicated. From buses and bike lanes to workplace engagement and new community design, the Assembly's proposals form a coherent, interconnected roadmap for change.

Support for these recommendations cut across demographic lines. Rural residents and urban dwellers, younger and older participants, regular drivers and non-drivers alike, found common ground around the need for a more sustainable and inclusive transport system. What distinguished the Assembly's work was not just what was proposed, but how those proposals were reached: through dialogue, challenge, empathy, and a genuine attempt to balance trade-offs.

Policymakers now have in front of them a unique and valuable asset: a set of recommendations shaped by residents who were given the time, tools, and trust to engage meaningfully. As the Council responds to these proposals, the test will not be whether each is implemented in full, but whether the spirit of the Assembly - strategic, participatory, and just - is embedded in the decisions ahead.

If Oxfordshire is to thrive by 2050, as the Assembly's challenge question asked, then the insights gathered here must not only inform this moment but shape the culture of future policy design. The Assembly has shown that the public is ready to be part of the solution. The next step is to show they've been heard.

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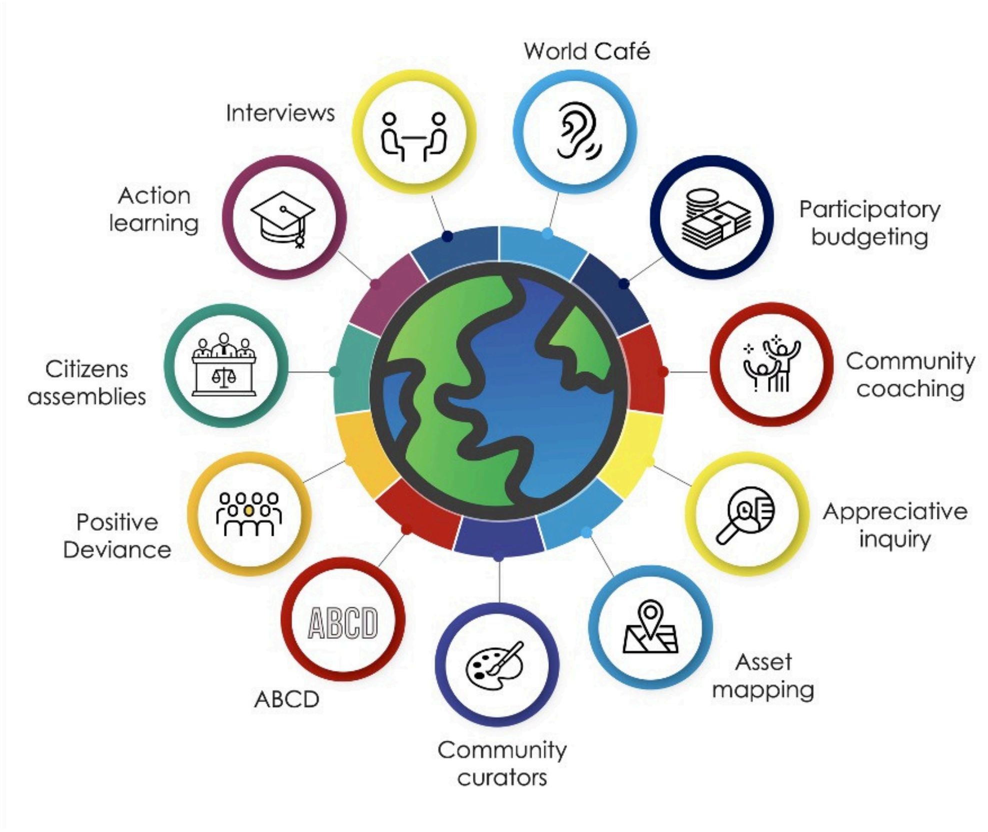

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Appendix I: Evaluation

How would you rate your overall experience on the Citizens' Assembly? (n = 33)	
Excellent	19
Really good	10
Good	2
OK	2

29 out of 33 participants (88%) rated the experience as Excellent or Really Good, indicating a very high level of satisfaction.

22 out of 33 participants (67%) said their understanding had significantly improved, while a further 8 participants (24%) reported it had improved, and only 3 participants (9%) indicated a slight improvement. This reflects a strong learning impact across the assembly.

How much has your understanding of travel and transport in Oxfordshire changed as a result of participating in the assembly?	
Significantly improved	22
Improved	8
Slightly improved	3

100% said they would recommend signing up for a random selection (sortition) process again.

"The facilitation was brilliant. With so many voices in the room, the facilitators did a fantastic job capturing everyone's input while ensuring a truly inclusive discussion. They struck the perfect balance, encouraging those who had a lot to say while creating space for quieter participants to contribute. What stood out most was their attentiveness to individuals with special needs, making sure they felt fully included in the conversation. I've rarely seen facilitation done so well, and it made for a truly engaging and meaningful experience."

33 participants completed the evaluation as one dropped out at the final stage and was unable to complete. Not all participants answered every question

How would you rate the quality of input during the learning phase (this refers to the films and speakers you heard from up until the final weekend)	
3 stars	3
4 stars	19
5 stars	10

Participants rated the quality of the learning inputs, including films and speakers, very positively, with 29 out of 32 respondents (91%) awarding 4 or 5 stars. This suggests that the content was both engaging and informative for the vast majority of participants.

If you had to tell someone about this process, which three words would you use?

Participants overwhelmingly described the process using positive language, with the most frequently mentioned words being interesting, informative, enjoyable, and engaging. These words suggest a process that was thought-provoking, participatory, and well-received. Other frequently used descriptors such as enlightening, rewarding, inclusive, and collaborative highlight the sense of fairness, learning, and connection that many participants experienced.

Only a handful of words (five in total) suggested areas for reflection, each mentioned just once. One of these offered a personal perspective that “minorities were not served,” which stands apart from the wider group’s emphasis on inclusion and prioritisation of underrepresented voices. Two others “rushed” and “limiting” were selected as third-choice words by different participants. Overall, the feedback strongly affirms the quality and impact of the process, with a small number of responses offering helpful nuance for future learning.

Participants were asked to reflect on six different skills or experiences they may have drawn on or developed during the Citizens' Assembly. The results show that a wide range of valuable capabilities were activated through the process, with especially strong results in areas relating to collaboration, learning, and processing information.

	I did this a lot (%)	**I did this a bit (%)**	**I didn't do this much (%)**	**I didn't do this at all (%)**
Collaborated with people from different backgrounds	90.9	6.1	0.0	3.0
Learned about delivering policy change	72.7	27.3	0.0	0.0
Practiced collective decision-making	72.7	24.2	3.0	0.0
Used critical thinking to deepen understanding	66.7	33.3	0.0	0.0
Processed complex information	81.8	15.2	3.0	0.0
Built new relationships	50.0	40.6	9.4	0.0

Participants were asked to reflect on key areas of **skill development and engagement during the Citizens' Assembly.** These areas explored whether individuals felt they had applied or strengthened skills such as collaboration, critical thinking, decision-making, and understanding policy processes. The results show a consistently strong level of engagement across all areas, with the majority of participants reporting that they had used these skills a lot. Just one participant (3%) felt they didn't engage in this area at all, indicating broad inclusion and engagement.

Learned about delivering policy change

- 73% of participants said they learned a lot about what it takes to implement change in complex systems, and the remaining 27% said they learned a bit. No one felt they didn't engage with this at all, showing the learning phase resonated widely.

Practiced collective decision-making

- Again, 73% of participants felt they did this a lot, and another 24% said a bit. Only one participant (3%) said they didn't do this much, suggesting strong engagement with negotiation, compromise, and consensus-building.

Used critical thinking to deepen understanding

- Two-thirds of participants (67%) reported doing this a lot, and the remaining third (33%) said a bit. This demonstrates the impact of the learning content and discussion structure in prompting participants to question, probe, and reflect.

Processed complex information

- 82% of participants felt they did this a lot, while 15% said a bit. Just one person (3%) felt they didn't do this much. This suggests that most participants were confident in navigating the materials provided and making sense of the issues under discussion.

Built new relationships

- While slightly lower than the other areas, this still saw 50% of participants say they did this a lot, and 41% say a bit. Only 9% said they didn't do this much, with no one indicating they didn't do it at all. This shows the assembly offered social value as well as intellectual engagement.

Overall, the responses illustrate a rich learning environment where participants not only contributed to the assembly's outcomes but also developed or applied a wide range of transferable civic and social skills. This supports the wider democratic purpose of deliberative processes: to empower people with the tools, experience, and confidence to engage more deeply in public life.

Were you able to discuss the content of the Assembly with people in your social networks (friends, family, neighbours, clubs)? And followed up with Q10 that asked for an estimated number

This question aimed to understand whether the Assembly's impact extended beyond the room, reaching friends, family, neighbours, or other social networks. In deliberative processes like this, participants often share what they are learning with others, helping to spark informal conversations and wider awareness of the topic. Capturing this helps illustrate the potential ripple effect that participation can have across the wider community.

Out of 32 responses, 28 participants (88%) said they were able to discuss the Assembly with people in their social networks. Only four said they had not. In follow-up estimates, participants who did engage reported speaking to anywhere from a few individuals to 15 or more.

While the responses were grouped into general ranges (e.g. *less than 5*, *between 5–15*), and a few stated they didn't speak to anyone, a conservative calculation **suggests that at least 150 additional people heard something about the Assembly second-hand through these conversations**.

This suggests that the Assembly not only provided a meaningful experience for participants but also helped to spark wider awareness and dialogue within communities, a key principle of active citizenship and democratic engagement.

Appendix II

Demographic targets were developed in partnership with Oxfordshire County Council, the Office for National Statistics, and the Sortition Foundation. The table below shows the target profile for a full assembly of 40 participants, alongside the actual makeup of the 34 who took part

Characteristic	Target (40)	Actual (34)
Gender		
Female	20	17
Male	20	16
Non Binary or Other	No target set	1
Age		
16-24	6	5
25-34	7	5
35-44	6	5
45-54	6	6
55-64	6	6
65+	9	7
Ethnicity		
Asian or Asian British	2	2
Black or Black African or Carribean	1	0
Mixed or Multiple Ethnicities	1	0

Characteristic	Target (40)	Actual (34)
White British	31	26
Other Ethnic Group (aggregated to protect individual identities where numbers were 1)	5	6
Disability		
Yes, limited a lot or a little	6	5
No	34	29
Education		
No qualification, Level 1 & Level 2	13	12
Level 3, Apprenticeship, Other	10	7
Level 4 and above	17	15
Views on Climate Change		
Not at all concerned	2	1
Not very concerned	6	5

Characteristic	Target (40)	Actual (34)
Fairly concerned	17	14
Very concerned	15	14
Other	0	0
Do they have children?		
No	28	24
Yes	12	10
Driving Frequency		
Five days a week or more	7	8
Two to four days a week	11	11
Once a week or less	10	11
Not driven in the last four weeks, or never	12	4
Geography		
Cherwell	9	5
Oxford	9	10

Characteristic	Target (40)	Actual (34)
South Oxfordshire	8	7
Vale of White Horse	8	9
West Oxfordshire	6	3
Urban/Market Town/Rural		
Urban	23	22
Market Town	6	6
Rural	11	6

* The target figures were for a 40 person assembly and the actual figures are the 34.

Appendix III

Video Evidence from Oxfordshire's Citizens' Assembly on Travel and Transport

This document provides links to all of the video evidence shown throughout the learning phase of the assembly. The videos are all 'unlisted' on YouTube, which means that they can only be accessed by clicking the links below.

Session 1: Getting to know each other and the assembly process

- What is a citizens' assembly for?, Alan Renwick, Professor of Democratic Politics and Deputy Director of the Constitution Unit, University College London (UCL), https://youtu.be/fa7sUtD2kVc

Session 2: Why this assembly now?

- A History of Traffic Management in Oxfordshire and Challenges for the Future Professor Tim Schwanen, Professor of Transport Geography and Director of the Transport Studies Unit (TSU), https://youtu.be/iPgF778_LFg
- Who is the council and what have they got to do with transport and travel? Lorna Baxter, Executive Director of Resources and Section 151 Officer (Deputy Chief Executive), Oxfordshire County Council, https://youtu.be/TMoL2-MXSvg
- Oxfordshire County Council Local Transport and Connectivity Plan, Ben Smith, Strategic Transport Manager in Transport Policy, Oxfordshire County Council, https://youtu.be/6eBQwwvcq5E
- Connectivity for People, Robin Rogers - https://youtu.be/jJDQathqzKc

Session 3: The Challenge of Fair Transport Policy

- Fair Car Use Budgeting Results, Dr Philipp Rode, Executive Director of LSE Cities, London School of Economics, https://youtu.be/AXRgFKlykG8

Session 4: People in Transport

- Transport and the Economy, Nigel Tipple, Chief Executive Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership (OxLEP), https://youtu.be/yBcAMg2x2OY

- Transport User Priorities, Nina Howe, Senior Engagement Officer, Transport Focus, https://youtu.be/r4N1GcOspec
- Hidden Voices in Transport: Perspectives from Underrepresented Voices in Oxfordshire, A series of local voices in Oxfordshire, https://youtu.be/KtobRau8ii0

Session 5: Active Travel

- What is Active Travel, Xavier Brice, Chief Executive of Sustrans, https://youtu.be/2a8dBmswhC4
- The Potential of Better Cycling Routes, Robin Tucker, Chair, Oxfordshire Cycling Network, https://youtu.be/Zc7SrBfpOm0

Session 6: Travel Demand and the Central Oxfordshire Travel Plan

- A resident perspective on Transport Schemes in the Central Oxfordshire Travel Plan (COTP), Richard Parnham, Co-founder of Reconnecting Oxford, https://youtu.be/QKOCT_sB9pw
- A small and medium sized enterprise perspective on Transport Schemes in the Central Oxfordshire Travel Plan (COTP), Bernadette Evans, Secretary of Oxford Business Action Group (OBAG), https://youtu.be/id6w5alZmC8
- A taxi driver Perspective on Transport Schemes in the Central Oxfordshire Travel Plan (COTP), Sajad Khan, Secretary of City of Oxford Licensed Taxicab Association (COLTA), https://youtu.be/cs5l57iY1YI
- A resident perspective on Transport Schemes in the Central Oxfordshire Travel Plan (COTP), Zuhura Plummer, Campaign Director of Oxfordshire Liveable Streets, https://youtu.be/xivybLS25yA
- A hotelier's perspective on Transport Schemes in the Central Oxfordshire Travel Plan (COTP), Jeremy Mogford, Chairman of The Oxford Collection and Member of Oxford Business Action Group, https://youtu.be/OYVf76cNj38
- A tradesperson perspective on Transport Schemes in the Central Oxfordshire Travel Plan (COTP), Adrian Arbib, Renewables installer and electrician who runs his own company Evolve Electric, https://youtu.be/YAKo3xIPcac
- A mobile hairdresser's perspective on Transport Schemes in the Central Oxfordshire Travel Plan (COTP), Jenny Wells, Mobile Hairdresser, https://youtu.be/lOs5toO_0jY

Session 7: The Central Oxfordshire Travel Plan, Joanne Fellows - https://youtu.be/_vPlqZZedUo

Session 8 and 9: Public Transport

- Delivering Better Bus Services in the County, Brenda Boardman, Chair, Oxon4buses, https://youtu.be/H0e1DcFx15M
- What role do bus services have to play in Oxfordshire's future transport system? Chris Hanson, Managing Director Stagecoach West & Oxford Tube, https://youtu.be/EqJ1EC4u2fA

- What are community rail partnerships? Luke Goddard, Youth and Insight Lead, Oxfordshire Community Rail Partnership, https://youtu.be/AreLri8Bxrk
- Community transport in Oxfordshire, Léa Ravensbergen, School of Earth, Environment and Society, McMaster University, https://youtu.be/bwFVsAzNhjs
- What is community transport? David Miles, First and Last Mile, https://youtu.be/Wg6WVfkfwHA

Session 10: Designing New Places

- An Introduction to Transport, Development and Placemaking, Dr Nick Small, Head of Built Environment and Infrastructure, Go-Ahead Group, https://youtu.be/fQOnEG15upo
- Opportunities and Obstacles for EV Car Ownership, Dr Hannah Budnitz, Research Associate, Transport Studies Unit and Environmental Change Institute, University of Oxford, https://youtu.be/B8_1GHJkaA8

Session 11: A final focus on safety and health and end of learning phase, start of deliberations

- Transport schemes and healthcare access: A patient's perspective, Dr Annie Skinner, Resident of Oxford, https://youtu.be/EfFeY0RWw3Q
- Hidden voices in transport in relation to accessing hospitals and care, A series of voices in Oxfordshire, https://youtu.be/_9NLRMQxvHk
- Travel and Transport and the Role of health, Kate Eveleigh, Public Health Principle, Oxfordshire County Council, https://youtu.be/ShkRroRUG0o
- How can we reduce the number of serious and fatal collisions on the road? Ruth Purdie, Chief Executive, Road Safety Trust and former assistant chief constable in Cheshire Constabulary, https://youtu.be/cd4POZ3fQ78

ANNEX B

Assembly recommendations – county council initial response table. Note all recommendations will be subject to further consideration to review fit with policy, deliverability and ability to fund.

Category key:

- 1 = Work is planned or ongoing – Oxfordshire County Council is already conducting the work proposed by the recommendation or has plans to conduct the work recommended.
- 2 = Will be considered – Oxfordshire County Council will consider the work proposed by the recommendation.
- 3 = Not proposed to progress – The work proposed by the recommendation is not feasible for the county council to conduct at this time.

Recommendation	Category	Responsible	OCC role	Initial Response
1 To reduce congestion and emissions in Central Oxfordshire by maximising the use of park and ride: (a)Use of shuttle services to businesses, schools and hospitals from park and ride (b)Improved cycle connectivity to park and ride and safe cycle storage (c)Increased frequency of buses from park and ride and incentivised use by making them free. (d)Improved connectivity between park and ride. This should commence within 12 months. 97% support	1	Oxfordshire County Council (OCC)	OCC to lead and coordinate	(a) Active discussions are happening with schools and the hospital trusts looking at the practicality of this recommendation. Fits well with concept of mobility hubs and would support a Workplace Parking Levy (WPL) and congestion reduction initiatives. (b) Again fits well with the Mobility Hub initiative. There is ongoing work on a cycling network which will pick up connectivity with some P&R sites. Funding is needed for design work to look at segregated cycle lanes and safe locations of lockers and potentially e-bikes and e-scooters. (c) To be successful congestion on those routes needs to be reduced, any solution would need to be financially sustainable and hence be part of WPL and potentially temporary congestion charge (if approved) projects.

				(d) Connectivity is already reasonably good, through direct services between most Park and Rides (P&Rs) (300, 400, 600, 700), but it is agreed that work to evolve these, and consider capacity at the P&Rs, will be required to support travel behaviour changes.
2 Implement standardised ticketing across all of the bus companies in the county. This will make buses easier especially for younger and older people, visitors and people whose first language is not English. Increase overall bus use. 94% support	1	Bus operators	OCC to lead through the enhanced bus partnership	My Bus ticket is available on most buses countywide and the SmartZone ticket is available within Oxford. The recommendation is supported though as it is recognised further improvements might be possible subject to bus operators' support and available technology. This can be raised through an Enhanced Partnership working group looking at ticketing.
3 Sell the vision to the public: inform them about transport and active travel options, and their benefits. Examples: information stands with live feeds, social media campaigns, posters and billboards, regional news and radio, advertising on taxis and public transport 94% support	1	OCC	OCC to lead and coordinate	It is considered that recommendations 3 and 5 are linked as both relate to 'selling' the vision of sustainable, active travel to the public. This can be split into the following areas for consideration. Some work has recently been progressed in this area; further work will be required to fully realise the recommendation. **Awareness-raising** Location specific webpages are being developed to help residents navigate the wide range of travel and active travel initiatives and infrastructure work happening in their area. This will provide a clear structure which can be easily navigated as well as

				allowing them to understand the detail but also the vision for their town or city and the county as a whole. In addition, we have recently launched a web-based search tool called Better Travel. This will make it much easier for residents, visitors and others to see the active travel initiatives (such as led-walks) going on in their area. This will also help providers raise the profile of their initiative. We will review what else is required to take this forward, optimising the behavioural insights research the council has recently undertaken and some of which has already been applied to the projects above. Some other examples include: improving our understanding of people's barriers to choosing more sustainable travel and their motivations to shape our places and the propensity for change (e.g. are economy, time, climate, health, air quality, etc key factors?). Improving our data and analysis capabilities will also underpin and enable this. An active travel promotion budget could also be considered. **Navigating** Wayfinding projects are being developed in a number of locations across the county. Turning this into a countywide standard to provide consistency in core messaging can be considered. Bus maps are in development. These will cover Oxfordshire, the city, and market town 'where to catch

				your bus' maps, plus a transport to hospitals map and to tourist attractions.
4 Oxfordshire County Council (OCC) to create and administer a 'kite mark' / standard called 'The Oxford Travel Positive Employer' for large companies (e.g over 100 employees). This will generate revenue for OCC to contribute to a ring-fenced fund for active travel, traffic reduction, and low emission travel. Criteria could include introduction of shuttle services for staff, use of EV vehicles, encouraging staff to use buses, shower and change facilities, and encouraging car sharing, with Gold, Silver and Bronze levels for the employers 94% support	3	OCC / Enterprise Oxfordshire	OCC to lead, develop, monitor	Fits well with travel behaviour change initiatives and proposals for such a standard can be worked up. This would be a visible standard/accreditation for employers to demonstrate their commitments to responsible and sustainable travel, including to existing and prospective employees, local communities and investors. In a Central Oxfordshire locality context, this recommendation could be considered through the development of the Workplace Parking Levy (WPL) and workplace travel planning. Consideration would need to be given to how to offer this countywide. However central Oxfordshire could pilot and establish value. Initial thinking is that this is more likely to be successful as an accreditation rather than a charge to businesses. Consideration would need to be given to the ongoing monitoring.

5 Invest in educating and informing the public about transport and active travel options and their benefits. To sell the vision of a healthier and more connected travel network and increase public buy in for effective implementation. People need to be inspired by the benefits and opportunities of active travel and public transport. Offer carrots in order to make effective change. Education: school programmes, information roadshows, social media campaigns, posters, billboards, advertising (on buses and taxis). Information: Information points in town and city centres with live data, maps, links to support, accessibility features (vision impaired etc.), information about where to find trains, buses, taxi ranks, bicycle rentals etc. Make public knowledge of information points through social media campaigns, regional radio and news (etc.) 94% support	1	OCC	OCC to lead and coordinate	This is supported and is being actioned in part and will need to be part of a wider package of engagement. Giving people opportunities to try active/sustainable modes in their everyday lives is part of this, to boost skills and confidence. This very much forms a package and linking in with other themes and motivations beyond purely transport, such as improving personal/public health, to achieve shared outcomes. See response to recommendation 3 and notes here for additional strands: We know from research into travel behaviour change that a package of interventions is the best enabler to changing behaviour - in this case, switching modes. The travel behaviour change team could consider new incentives for behavioural change, including ensuring where physical schemes are delivered, that behaviour change activities to upskill/motivate/inform of the alternatives travel options available. School engagement takes place, and work through the updated Sustainable School Travel Strategy will consider and develop these recommendations further.
6 To improve connectivity in rural areas by ensuring that local communities are listened to by	1	OCC	OCC to lead	This is recognised and the recommendation supported. Work which will help deliver this recommendation is underway in part through the development of

involving them in decision making. Considerations should be given to active travel options and repurposing bridle paths for greenways, rural hubs, car sharing, community travel (mini buses and cars), any other needs identifies by the community, first and last mile options. In terms of accountability evidence MUST be shown that community voices have been listened to in the decision making 91% support				"Movement and Place Strategies" as part of the Local Transport and Connectivity Plan. Engagement and the coproduction of measures that need to be developed needs considering and scoping. There are some successful pilots around the county on rural transport and car share, co-wheels and these will be looked to be rolled out once funding is secured.
7 Improve community infrastructure in the medical sector. Why? less congestion and reducing car journeys, and reduce number of people coming into Oxford. This is line with liveable neighbourhoods thinking. 91% support	2	BOB ICB	OCC to liaise with BOB ICB	We will coordinate with the Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire, Berkshire West Integrated Care Board (BOB ICB) on travel and transport options. The BOB ICB has provided information to Oxford locality councillors on health provision in the city. Officers are seeking their input to a future locality meeting to discuss this further.
8 Reduce road fatalities and serious injuries by encouraging behaviour change through, for example, enforcements of 20mph limits, using ANPR, more use of speed warnings 'face' signs. Support for residents who want to get involved in	1	OCC	OCC to lead	Great to see this within the recommendations and can be considered through our Vision Zero Programme. More signs and traffic management measures are within our direct control. Enforcement of speed limits and Community Speed Watch limits are not though. There is a strong Community Speed Watch programme already and we will continue to work with Thames

community traffic watch initiatives and speed humps. Implement in residential areas, outside schools, and other road fatality hotspots. 88% support				Valley Police to assess the opportunities on enforcement.
9 Implementing a franchise model between county council and bus companies so that the council takes back control of bus routes, timetables and pricing so that it ensures that it is driven by needs and services, not just profit. Similar to London and Manchester models. 88% support	2	OCC	OCC to influence	There are lots of conversations and considerations nationally around this at the moment. Great to see and very supportive of the outcome that is recommended. There may be other ways to achieve this rather than franchising though, and work is under way with the council having commissioned a “Future Bus Regulation Options Assessment Report”. It is hoped this will be considered at Cabinet in autumn 2025.
10 Build new housing developments so that major facilities are within walking distance. This will reduce traffic, encourage health habit, build community and create jobs. We acknowledge sometimes it is supportive for well being for people to get out of their immediate neighbourhood - this proposal does not remove the possibility of people doing that. 88% support	1	OCC/ District councils	OCC to influence	The county council work with the district councils who are the Local Planning Authorities to ensure that developments are sustainable and are located near to transport interchanges and services. This ambition is set out in the Local Transport and Connectivity Plan policies. However, there are speculative developments coming forward that are not in the Local Plan and for these it can be challenging to ensure they are located near existing facilities. Walkable neighbourhoods are recommended to be designed in from the start of a development giving pleasant, safe routes for people to move around developments.

11 A designated road just for a bus system (exceptions for cyclists, emergency vehicles, blue badge holders and taxis during certain hours). - Frequent service and stops - Subsidies for 60+ - Under 16s- incentivise families. City centre location - moving towards a car free city centre. Reserved/exclusive to buses - not new build, existing roads Long term behaviour change. Depends on a 1st class service, has to be accessible, frequent and affordable (an alternative to having a tram). 88% support	2	OCC	OCC to lead	This is considered to build on work already being undertaken, in particular transport schemes in the city that will reduce through traffic in the city centre. Related to this is the council's Street Design Code that is under development and will include bus stop design standards. This is an update to our existing Street Design Guide and will also include considerations around the Kerbside Strategy. "MyBus" and "Get Around" cards are already in place for youth travel, and we will work with the bus operators to optimise the public transport offer, including allocating some budget from the Bus Service Improvement Plan – delivery plan 25/26 for bus education and support.
12 Make the city centre car free while being fair and not disadvantaging key groups. The aim would be to reduce congestion, cut emissions, improve environmental and human health and make the city more visitor friendly. Those mainly impacted by this would be car drivers. The intention is to create alternatives for drivers, implementing policies in a phased way so that they have alternatives to use. Alternatives include: strengthening bus networks,	1	OCC	OCC to lead	This is an ambition that reflects projects under development, e.g. the temporary congestion charge, traffic filters, expanded zero emission zone and WPL, and the work undertaken on the Central Oxfordshire Movement and Place Framework which looked at the reallocation of road space to public realm. Car free principles and closures are already in place (e.g. the High Street bus gate and School Streets). Trial car free days could be considered.

making cycling safer, and making the Park and Rides into mobility hubs). It is likely disincentives (sticks) would be needed to encourage people out of cars. 88% support				
13 Promote generational change over the next 15 years to shift the next generation to think active travel first, bus second, car third by making bus and bike travel affordable, extending bike programmes for schools, education programmes from primary school all the way through, and children travel free on public transport. This also helps change behaviour of parents. 87% support	1	OCC	OCC to lead	This will come with the wider development of the countywide school travel behaviour change programme. There is a government drive to have a Sustainable School Travel Strategy. For Oxfordshire this was adopted in September 2024. This recommendation will be included as part of the strategy and the action plan when it is revised/updated.
14 Introduce mobility hubs types 1 and 2 to make cycling safer, reduce congestion, improve rural connectivity Specifically, type 1 in Banbury and Didcot Type 2 in Chipping Norton, Abingdon, Witney, Wantage. 85% support	2	OCC	OCC to lead	Great to see this is recommended and we will look to take on board the recommendations on type as any mobility hub plans are developed.

15 Introduce a graduated Workplace Parking Levy which must be paid by the employer rather than the employee, and which facilitates reductions and award 'Kite Marks' to those employers that contribute to the COTP and LTCP - exemptions to be decided in a consultation process. 82% support	1	OCC	OCC to lead	Great to see support for a Workplace Parking Levy (WPL) which the council is progressing as quickly as practically possible. Unfortunately, Oxfordshire County Council is not able to legally require an employer to pass the charge on to the employee. See previous recommendation about Kite Mark – we will consider rolling this out as a part of the WPL and workplace travel planning.
16 What: reduce driving by commuters, short trips, and school runs. Why: in order to improve health and the environment, and reduce traffic fatalities by: How: 1. Introducing a workplace parking levy to generate income for other travel schemes 2. Encourage car sharing by business, schools and other organisations by introducing apps etc and advertising car share schemes. Reflect in the employer kite mark. 3. Introduction of mobility hubs at train stations. 82% support	1	OCC	OCC to lead	A great ambition and good to see suggestions as to how to make happen, particularly as many are underway in some form. We are progressing with (1) as quick as is practically possible; in terms of point (2) we will consider what more we can do in terms of scope and marketing; and on point (3) this fits well into our Mobility hub ambition and we will work with train operators to ensure we understand the full potential of opportunity.
17 Subsidised travel for 60+ ensuring it is accessible in peak times. Children under 10 free, children 10-16 (or 18)	2	OCC	OCC to lead	Discounts and free travel would be great; any initiative does need to be financially sustainable and affordable though, so it would need to be linked to income from other initiatives. It is considered unlikely that this could

free during school times, funded by WPL and ZEZs 79% support				be done at scale, but some targeted subsidy, recognising the need to be equitable, might be possible.
18 Implement a congestion charge to cut car usage coming into the town centre and raise money for the county council. This should be in addition to the ZEZ. This would encourage us to use the park and ride. It is important to have alternatives to car use before this is implemented. For instance using the money that is raised to incentivise other transport options. There will need to be exceptions. 74% support	1	OCC	OCC to lead	We believe that the proposed traffic filters will deliver a more sustained and robust impact on congestion and traffic. However, we have proposed (and hope to be able to implement) a congestion charge as a temporary measure ahead of the traffic filter trial.
19 Trams: develop a north - south and east- west in Oxford that links the park and rides. Trams are sleek, modern, spacious and carry more people than buses. Their energy consumption is also much lower than that of a bus. They provide more capacity than buses and additional room for wheelchair and bicycle users. A tram would help maximise usage of park and rides. 74% support	3	OCC	OCC to lead	Whilst a great and ambitious idea, the likelihood of being able to deliver due to cost and physical challenges is considered very low. The concept of a “new” mass transit transport offer is recognised. It is recommended that work to achieve this is focussed on “metro” style system and branding for buses to hopefully achieve the same outcome. In the long term we could look at further developments to speed up and smooth journeys.

20 Generate income to enable the recommendations approved yesterday (Saturday), recommendation 12 and 14. We will do this by evolving the ZEZ into a wider congestion zone within the ring road, with fair exemptions/concessions by late 2020s. 70% support	1	OCC	OCC to lead	Income generation certainly provides the opportunity to invest in incentives and facilities to make improvements to walking, cycling and public transport, but it is not considered appropriate to implement schemes like these for the purpose of generating income. Some projects that will generate income are under development (for example temporary congestion charge and WPL) and any surplus income will be spent on transport improvements.

Divisions Affected - ALL

CABINET

July 2025

CLIMATE ACTION PROGRAMME UPDATE AND CIRCULAR ECONOMY PLAN

Report by Director of Economy and Place

RECOMMENDATION

Cabinet is RECOMMENDED to:

a. Adopt the Circular Economy Plan (Annex 1).

b. Note the climate outcomes dashboard (Annex 2).

c. Note the update on the delivery of the Climate Action Programme 2024/25 and approve the proposed Climate Action Programme for 2025/26 (Annex 3).

Executive Summary

1. This report is a six-monthly update to cabinet on the delivery of the 2024/25 Climate Action Programme workstreams, including the development of a new Circular Economy Plan.

2. The Circular Economy Plan (Annex 1) expands the council's approach to climate action by focussing additionally on the resources it uses. The plan builds on work which the council is already undertaking, such as the Carbon Management Plan, and seeks to deliver a culture change which embeds circular economy at the heart of the Council's policy and practice.

3. The Climate Outcome Measures dashboard (Annex 2) has been updated with the latest data available, and additional measures have been added to reflect the broader focus on adaptation and community engagement. Highlights include progress in decarbonising the Council's estate and operations, including a significant increase in renewable generation, rollout of electric vehicle charging infrastructure, and an over 200% increase in volunteering hours through the Community Action Group network since 2021.

4. An update is provided on workstreams agreed by Cabinet for 2024/25, alongside an overview of the proposed activities for 2025/26 (Annex 3).

5. One of the key focuses for 2025/26 is the refresh of the Climate Action Framework. This follows 5 years of full delivery against the framework and allows the council to respond to local and national policy priorities.

Circular Economy Plan

6. The council committed to producing a Circular Economy plan as part of the 2024/25 Climate Action Programme. The Circular Economy Plan (Annex 1) expands the council's approach to climate action by focussing additionally on the resources the council uses.

7. It is based on three principles:

    - Designing out waste and pollution.
    - Keeping materials and products in use for longer.
    - Regenerating natural systems.

8. The Circular Economy Plan brings together a wide range of different policies and workstreams, including those on carbon reduction, waste management, social value, ethical procurement, biodiversity and community wealth building.

9. Elements of the plan delivery will be incorporated into the Carbon Management Plan, highways maintenance contracts, property and facilities work and Oxfordshire Resources and Waste Partnership.

Climate Outcomes Dashboard

10. The Climate Outcomes Dashboard (Annex 2) was introduced for the first time in April 2024, as a way of providing a snapshot of the outcomes of climate mitigation and adaptation-related actions across the county. The dashboard has now been updated to include a wider range of metrics, including those on climate adaptation and engagement.

11. Highlights from the dashboard are provided below, alongside their outcome reference number from Annex 3:

    - CAS 1-5: The data from the Council's own estates and operations shows the success of the delivery of the Carbon Management Plan, work on supply chain monitoring, and renewable generation on the council's estate which has increased more than six-fold between 2019 and 2024.

    - CAS 6a – b: As discussed in the previous update to cabinet in November 2024, data on territorial greenhouse gas emissions is provided by the Department of Energy Security and Net Zero (DESNZ) with a two-year lag. This presents a challenge for monitoring emissions in real time, however the data indicates an overall reduction in total greenhouse gas emissions in Oxfordshire since 2019, largely due to continued grid decarbonisation.

    - CAS 8a – b: Programmes to increase the availability of electric vehicle charging infrastructure have been successful (a threefold increase in charge points since 2019), and this is one of the factors which has been driving the reduction of carbon dioxide emissions from road transport over time. However, total transport greenhouse gas emissions for Oxfordshire have continued to rise (CAS 7).

- CAS 10: Bus patronage is increasing after a significant drop off during the COVID-19 pandemic.

- CAS 14a – b: Emissions from residential properties in the county have been dropping, despite the growing number of homes, due to continued decarbonisation of the grid.

- CAS 19 – 23: New indicators have been included in the dashboard to reflect progress on climate adaptation. Going forward, this will include reported flooding events and the number of trained flood wardens in the county, which has been increasing.

- CAS 21: Outcome measures on community engagement also indicate a significant willingness from communities to be involved, with over twice as many volunteering hours from the Community Action Group network between 2021 and 2024.

- There is work ongoing to establish indicators for circular economy, including engagement with other organisations who are leading the way nationally such as Zero Waste Scotland.

- Key focus areas for reducing emissions should continue to be working towards OCC's 2030 target for its own estate and operations, transport emissions county-wide (particularly alternatives to petrol or diesel private vehicles), delivering home retrofit programmes and supporting the delivery of the Climate Adaptation Route Map.

Climate Action Programme 2024/25

12. The Climate Action Programme is developed under three programme pillars: becoming a climate active council, decarbonising our estate and operations, and enabling Oxfordshire's transition to net zero.

13. The actions have been developed from the priorities and commitments in the Climate Action Framework. Annex 3 provides cabinet with an overview of the progress under each of the actions since the last update in November 2024.

14. Some key updates include:

    - Awarding £298,000 in loans to seven primary schools for energy efficiency measures, **saving 32 tonnes of CO_2 and £35,700 in energy bills** through efficiency improvements.

    - Through an 18-month funded innovation programme trialling the Energy Saver App which enables residents to **save money and install home retrofit measures** (initially solar panels with battery storage) on a subscription basis, with no upfront cost.

    - Accessing **£2.6 million of government funding under Phase 2 of the Home Upgrade Grant** to retrofit 150 homes at risk of fuel poverty who are not on mains-gas.

- **Expanding our electric vehicle fleet to 71 (**43 EVs in OCC fleet and 28 EV in fire and rescue service**)** - over 15.6% of our total fleet, replacing petrol and diesel vehicles, **saving 100 tonnes of CO_2 annually and reducing harmful air pollution**.

- Began work on **£10 million of energy efficiency and renewable energy improvements to the corporate estate** across approximately 33 properties.

- Developing an **evidence base to identify future impacts on Oxfordshire from climate change** and provided resources to stakeholders to understand Oxfordshire's climate vulnerabilities.

- Developing a **climate engagement plan** with wide community participation.

- Appointing a consultant and commencing the development of a **Local Area Energy Plan for Oxfordshire (OxLAEP)** to identify the future energy needs of the county.

- Launching and commencing delivery of the **Oxfordshire Adaptation Route Map and Action Plan.**

- Continuing to support the **expanded Zero Carbon Oxfordshire Partnership.**

15. Eight actions are rated amber, largely due to resource constraints or slippage in timescales.

16. The only action rated red is the delivery of the Local Energy Oxfordshire Neighbourhoods (LEO-N) scheme. As stated in the November 2024 update to Cabinet, the partnership bid for a 4-year multi million pound programme to continue the work programme under LEO was unsuccessful. Work is ongoing by various partner organisations to explore possibilities for a resubmission.

Climate Action Programme 2025/26

17. Annex 3 also provides an overview of the proposed workstreams reported within the Climate Action Programme for 2025/26.

18. This includes the addition of a workstream to refresh the Council's Climate Action Framework which was published in 2020. There has been significant progress since the publication of the first Framework. The refresh of the Climate Action Framework presents an opportunity to further align the plan both with local priorities for inclusive economic growth and reducing health inequalities, and to reflect national programmes such as Clean Power 2030.

19. The Framework refresh will take place across the 2025/26 financial year. As such, it is proposed that next report on this programme is brought alongside the refreshed Framework in order to align with the approval of that document.

Financial Implications

20. There are no direct financial implications as a result of this report, as all other funding sources have been agreed previously in their relevant papers.

21. The following capital funding is allocated to the climate action programme including the school's energy efficiency loan scheme over the medium-term financial plan.

Ref	Project/Programme Name	Prev Yrs Expenditure	Remaining Budget	Total
		£'000	£'000	£'000
1)	Schools Energy Efficiency Recycling Fund	298	1,567	1,865
2)	Tree Policy	632	1,393	2,025
3)	Green Homes Grant 2023/24 - 2024/25	3,872	0	3,872
4)	Energy Saving Measures 2024/25 Programme	2,396	7,048	9,444
5)	Energy Saving Measures 2025/26 Programme	0	10,360	10,360
6)	Vehicle Management Service - Replacement Programme	1,419	16,581	18,000
7)	EV Charging Points (for Fleet)	355	655	1,010
8)	Warm Homes: Local Grant 2025/26 - 2027/28	0	3,750	3750
	Total	**8,972**	**41,354**	**50,326**

22. An additional £110,000 has been allocated in 2025/26 for the purchase of carbon credits to address residual emissions. Based on the UK Government's Clean Power 2030 Action Plan and assuming the timely implementation of the decarbonisation programme outlined in the Carbon Management Plan (CMP), Oxfordshire County Council's residual operational carbon emissions are projected to be approximately 2,720 tonnes CO_2e in 2030/31.

23. There will be additional investment needs to reach net zero as set out in the November 2024 update to cabinet. These will be addressed by service leadership through the revenue planning process for 2026/27, although there is no guarantee that this additional budget allocation will be approved.

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

Circular Economy Plan

24. Directors have agreed to actions within the plan. Some actions require investigating business cases which may generate investment needs which would be subject to agreement though the council's decision-making processes. A number of activities may be invest to save, such as trialling innovative materials in buildings and highways to reduce degradation over time (and therefore repair and replacement).

Corporate Governance

25. The Climate Action Programme supports the council's commitments to tackle the climate emergency as expressed in the Strategic Plan 2022-25.

26. There are a number of corporate boards and working groups which also oversee various elements of the Climate Action Programme. These include:

    - **100 Together Steering Group**: Responsible for overseeing the 100 Together programme activities and receives reports from the Communications and Collateral Working Group, and the Green Finance and Investment Working Group.

    - **Zero Carbon Oxford Partnership Adaptation Working Group**: Leads the delivery of priority actions within the Oxfordshire Climate Adaptation Route Map where collaboration between different organisations is required.

    - **Local Area Energy Planning Officer Working Group and Executive Steering Board**: Two groups which oversee the governance of OxLAEP.

    - **Carbon Management Plan Delivery Group**: Oversees the delivery of OCC's Carbon Management Plan for our estate and operations.

    - **Oxfordshire Leaders Joint Committee**: Receives reports on specific work areas, including OxLAEP and the Adaptation Route Map.

Legal Implications

27. Central government has committed to achieving net zero carbon emissions by 2050, recognising much of this reduction must happen before 2030. Local authorities are clearly expected to play a role in these efforts and whilst there are currently no clear specific statutory duties on local authorities to take action that mitigates or adapts to climate change the Council does have wide powers to undertake such activities under its general power of competence set out at Section 1 of the Localism Act 2011.

Comments checked by: Jonathan Pool, Solicitor (Contracts), jonathan.pool@oxfordshire.gov.uk

Equality and Inclusion Implications

28. The council's Climate Action Framework aims to ensure a fair sharing of costs and benefits and avoiding energy inequality.

29. An Equalities Impact Assessment has been undertaken for the Circular Economy Plan and found a net positive impact on protected groups and the wider community. Further EIA will take place on business case development for individual elements of the programme as they progress.

30. Over the long term, this will reduce the impacts of climate change compared to a do-nothing scenario, and benefit all groups, especially those who have been identified as vulnerable. This also applies to the wider Climate Action Programme

which includes both mitigation of impacts and adaptation to the locked-in effects of climate change.

Sustainability Implications

31. The Climate Action Programme is at the centre of the council's commitment to tackle the climate challenge.

Risk Management

32. A strategic risk is included on the council's strategic risk register, noting the increasing vulnerability of communities, economy and infrastructure to climate impacts. A number of control measures have been identified and are being reported on through the Business Management and Monitoring report. The Climate Adaptation Route Map which is being delivered with the district councils and key partners will identify further mitigations.

Annexes
Annex 1 – Oxfordshire County Council Circular Economy Plan
Annex 2 – Climate Outcomes Dashboard
Annex 3 – Climate Action Programme delivery plan 2024/25 update and 2025/26 programme

Robin Rogers, Corporate Director for Environment and Place

Contact Officer:
Sarah Gilbert,
Head of Climate Action,
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Oxfordshire County Council

Circular Economy Plan 2025 - 2030

July 2025

Contents

Foreword

I am proud to introduce Oxfordshire County Council's first Circular Economy Plan. This plan sets out a bold and necessary shift in how we think about resources: how we use them, how we value them, and how we ensure they serve both people and planet for generations to come. It builds on our county's strong record of climate leadership and innovation, and it reflects our shared ambition to be greener, fairer, and more resilient.

The climate emergency demands more than incremental change. While we have made significant progress in reducing emissions from energy and transport, we must now turn our attention to the 45 per cent of emissions that come from the way we make, use, and dispose of products and food. The circular economy offers a powerful response. It designs out waste, keeps materials in use, and regenerates natural cycles and systems.

This plan is not just aspiration; it builds on a track record of excellence. Oxfordshire has been the top-performing county council for household waste recycling for 11 consecutive years, with residents recycling, reusing, or composting 57.6 per cent of their household waste in 2023–24.

From embedding reuse and repair targets in major contracts, to trialling innovative materials like graphene-enhanced asphalt, to donating over 200 refurbished laptops to tackle digital exclusion, we are already putting circular principles into practice. We are empowering our residents to lead as well. The Community Action Groups we support saved over 1,600 tonnes of non-food waste from disposal in just one year.

This plan aligns with Oxfordshire County Council's ambition of becoming a partner and place shaper of choice. It recognises that the transition to a circular economy is not only essential for the environment, but also an opportunity to build a healthier, more inclusive and prosperous future for our residents and businesses alike.

You'll find buckets of ambition, innovation, and practical action throughout this plan. Together, we can lead the way in building a circular Oxfordshire that thrives within the limits of our planet and leaves a legacy we can be proud of.

Cllr Judy Roberts
Cabinet Member for Place, Environment and Climate Action
Oxfordshire County Council

A Circular Council Overview

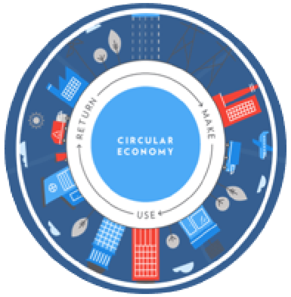
Circular economy key principles:

- Design out waste and pollution
- Keep materials and products in use for longer
- Regenerate natural systems

Our Goals

- Facilitate a culture shift within the organisation
- Use our purchasing power to enable circularity
- Reduce carbon emissions
- Build on our strong waste prevention & recycling record
- Use our assets to drive efficiencies, reuse and repair
- Become a more resilient council and save money
- Regenerate nature and reduce pollution
- Support innovation

Core Themes



- A culture shift
- Enable circularity
- Reduce carbon
- Regenerate nature & reduce pollution
- Build resilience
- Support innovation
- Build on waste prevention & recycling record

1 Introduction

As a society we are using more resources than our planet can sustain. Everything we buy has an impact on the environment. Our economy is built on a 'take-make-dispose' approach involving extraction of raw materials, production, consumption and discarding of products and materials soon after use. However, this linear model does not take into account the costs to both people and the planet. It has led to a huge waste burden, the loss of critical resources and significant environmental harm, including biodiversity loss and pollution. Operating within the constraints of the planet's boundaries is a key challenge right now and for the coming decades.

As the global impacts of climate change escalate, reducing emissions from fossil fuels by transitioning to renewable energy and implementing energy efficiency measures is crucial. However, it is estimated that these energy related actions can only tackle 55% of emissions. We also need to urgently address the remaining 45% of emissions that are attributed to the way materials, products, and food are designed, produced and used[1].

The Circular economy represents our biggest untapped opportunity to reduce our impact on climate and nature, improve biodiversity and cut carbon emissions further and faster. Adopting a circular approach will reduce costs, grow the economy and kick start the transition to an economy that is fairer and healthier for people, as well as more sustainable.

Oxfordshire County Council wants to be at the forefront of this opportunity. This Circular Economy Plan outlines how we intend to do this.

1.1 What is a circular economy?

The circular economy is an approach to tackling global challenges like climate change, biodiversity loss, waste, and pollution.

At its core the concept is based on three principles:

- Design out waste and pollution
- Keep materials and products in use for longer
- Regenerate natural cycles and systems

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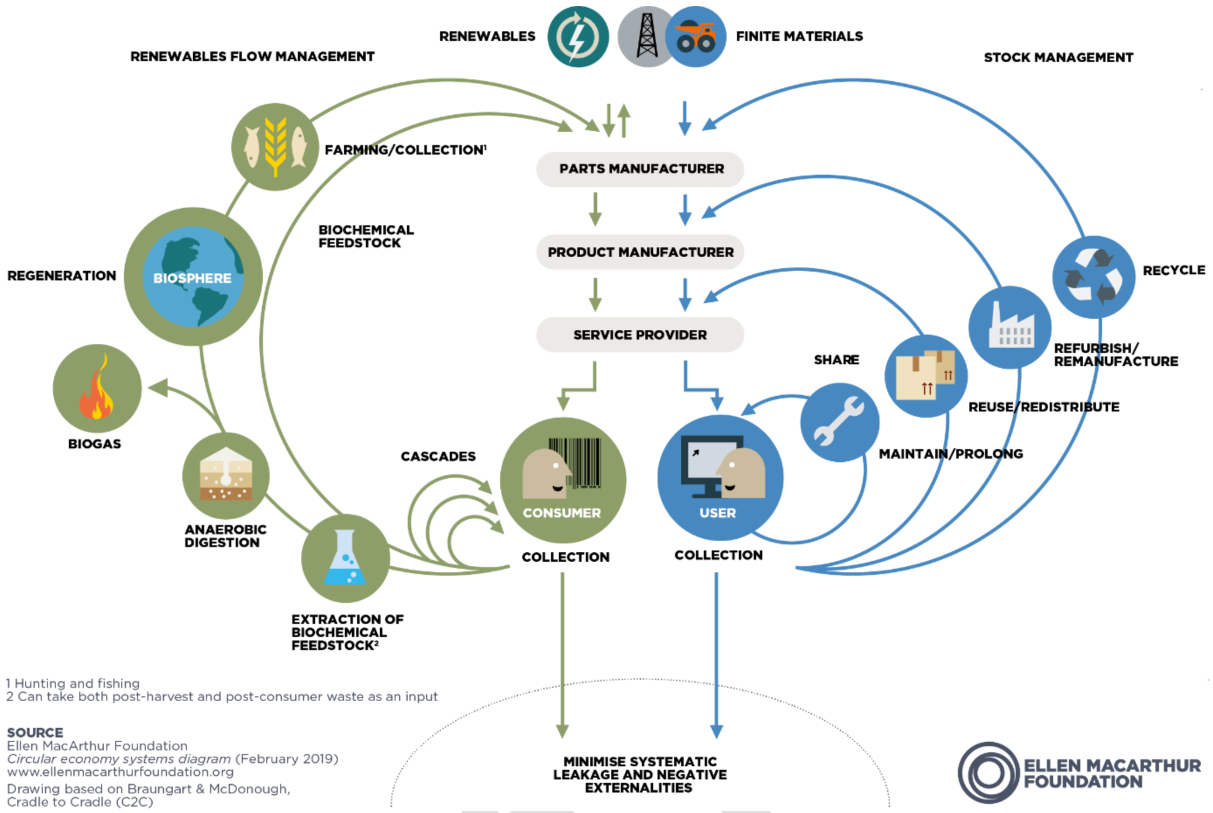
[1] https://www.ellenmacarthurfoundation.org/completing-the-picture



1 Hunting and fishing
2 Can take both post-harvest and post-consumer waste as an input

SOURCE
Ellen MacArthur Foundation
Circular economy systems diagram (February 2019)
www.ellenmacarthurfoundation.org
Drawing based on Braungart & McDonough, Cradle to Cradle (C2C)

1.2 A Circular Economy in Practice

The principles of the circular economy in practice, mean using less resources and energy by creating and/or buying locally, extending the life of materials, maintaining and repairing items and reusing as much as possible.

In a circular economy, products and infrastructure are designed to consider their whole life so they can be easily repaired, re-purposed, and refurbished. These circular actions build resilience. For example, if less virgin material is required, we are less reliant on the often-volatile markets for these materials. They prevent the loss of precious resources and reduce wasteful practices. They serve to protect our natural environment and reduce pollution, for example, by reducing extraction of raw materials which in turn reduces habitat destruction and associated pollution, and supports people's health and wellbeing. A systemic change to a more local economy also has the potential to empower citizens and provide new opportunities for community wealth building[2].

For example, at the household level circular actions include sharing and borrowing items rather than purchasing new; repairing items; selling or donating things we no

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[2] Community Wealth Building seeks to change the way that our economies have come to function by aiming to retain more wealth and opportunity for the benefit of local people. This is in contrast to the predominant economic model, whereby wealth is created by property ownership, regeneration is based on speculative property development and large companies extract wealth for the benefit of distant shareholders.

longer need to others; and where possible purchasing what we need second hand, extending its useful life.

In a council context examples include the use of reused or recycled materials in infrastructure construction, refurbishing buildings and equipment where possible, reviewing policy around ICT equipment to ensure more items are collected and redistributed rather than purchasing new, setting targets for reuse/repair in all major contracts (for example mobility and healthcare aids) and phasing out the use of peat and herbicides/pesticides on the council's estate.

1.3 Scope of the work

This plan sets out:

- The work the council is already doing that supports a circular economy.
- The further actions we will take to ensure circular principles are adopted and practised in-house.
- How we can work within our sphere of influence to support the adoption of circularity across Oxfordshire.

It should be noted that transitioning to a circular economy is by no means a quick task. This plan represents a long-term commitment by the council.

The circular economy landscape is still evolving with exciting developments regularly coming on board. It's complex and impacts a wide range of services at the council. To address this challenge, we have developed an overarching plan which will take us up to 2030. Progress will be reported annually to cabinet. This will allow flexibility to ensure that the right approach is being taken, and ambitious change can be delivered.

2 Policy Landscape

This plan supports our goal to be greener, healthier, and fairer. It will contribute towards the following corporate priorities: addressing the climate emergency, tackling inequalities, supporting residents' health and wellbeing, preserving and restoring green spaces, and working with local businesses and partners for environmental, economic and social benefit.

Oxfordshire County Council declared a climate emergency in 2019. We are committed to reaching net zero as a council by 2030 and enabling Oxfordshire to be carbon neutral as early as possible in the 2040s. The council's Climate Action Framework notes the importance of resource consumption and the role circular economy must play in this transition.

Designing out waste and keeping products and materials in circulation through processes such as maintenance, refurbishment, reuse, recycling and composting sits at the heart of the circular economy. This plan closely aligns with the aims of the Oxfordshire Resources and Waste Partnership's (ORWP's) Joint Municipal Waste Management Strategy and Action Plan 2018-2027 which sets the following objectives:

- Keep household waste growth to zero (per person per year)
- Increase the amount of household waste we recycle to 70% by 2030

It also supports the soon to be published 'Oxfordshire Resources & Waste Partnership's Waste Prevention Strategy - towards zero waste growth in Oxfordshire'- which sets out more detail about how ORWP will work to meet the first target.

Procurement will play a central role in the transition to a circular council. As a council, we aim to use the flexibility of the Procurement Act to consider local suppliers. The Social Value Policy encourages us to work with suppliers to ensure what we buy brings positive benefits to the local economy, environment and people. Our Ethical Procurement Policy supports good, clean, and inclusive growth that keeps wealth local. Becoming a more circular council also supports our ambitions around community wealth building, outlined in Embedding Community Wealth Building into Oxfordshire County Council.

Circular economy principles align closely with the aim to protect and restore nature and biodiversity in Oxfordshire. Supporting natural cycles (carbon, water, nutrients) by restoring healthy ecosystems will provide a wide range of associated benefits from improved food production, greater biodiversity, better climate regulation, cleaner air and water, and improved health and wellbeing. In November 2022, cabinet approved the Climate and Natural Environment Policy Statement and adopted the Oxfordshire Environmental Principles, to enable the development of a countywide strategic framework to support the development of Local Plans and ensure development is underpinned by these key environmental principles. Our Biodiversity Framework and Action Plan is currently under development and has cross-cutting themes which reference this Circular Economy Plan. We have cross-referenced actions to ensure both of these pieces of work are fully aligned.

The circular economy principle of designing out pollution supports the objectives of the council's Air Quality Strategy and ambitions outlined in the council's Carbon

Management Plan to transition to an electric fleet, reduce the impacts of colleagues commuting and business travel for example.

We have also committed to consider future generations in our decision making as a council. The principle of Future Generations is about acting in a manner that is intergenerationally fair, ensuring we consider the people who will live in the years to come, and their needs and well-being. A transition to a circular economy can help meet the needs of the present while giving future generations the same opportunity.

2.1 The Benefits of a Circular Approach

Table 2-1 below outlines some of the key benefits resulting from the transition to a circular economy approach.

Category	Benefits of a circular approach
Environment	➢ It is central to delivering our net zero commitments. It is estimated globally 45% of carbon emissions come from the way we design, produce and use products and food[3]. ➢ It will significantly contribute to the protection and restoration of nature in Oxfordshire by reducing natural resource use and pollution.
Health and Wellbeing	➢ A transition to a circular economy supports living within the planet's boundaries. It will afford future generations the opportunity to have the resources they need to live a good life. ➢ Circular economy in practice can help foster well-being, reduce inequalities, and create more cohesive communities through reuse and repair, the sharing of equipment and skills.
Economic	➢ It is estimated that transitioning to a circular economy could bring direct economic benefit to Oxfordshire businesses of between £400m and £500m each year. It would also bring £1bn of wider societal benefit per year as well as about 6,000-7,000 jobs[4]. ➢ Circular economy principles support the council's ambitions around community wealth building, and procurement that supports good, clean, and inclusive growth that keeps wealth local.

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[3] https://www.wrap.ngo/taking-action/climate-change

[4] https://assets.website-files.com/5f9978a71f4d1719b3f50dfb/6103e3c499290417675e89aa_Circular%20Economy%20in%20Oxfordshire%20-FINAL%20Report.pdf

Building Resilience	➢ Circulating resources locally and using renewable energy develops resilience to global price fluctuations and the rapidly growing risk of resource scarcity (e.g. recent energy cost inflations). ➢ Preventing and reducing household waste across Oxfordshire will help reduce core business costs (Oxfordshire County Council is forecasting over £33m spend on household waste management in 2024/25).

Table 2-1: Benefits to a circular economy approach

3 Themes and Actions

Theme 1: Facilitate a culture shift within the organisation

The circular economy represents a fundamental shift in perspective; it is not an add on. These principles need to sit at the heart of the organisation – in both policy and delivery. A culture shift can be achieved by providing a mandate for change within our policies; considering circular economy principles when decisions are made; and by raising awareness with colleagues around the circular economy and how it can be applied to their role.

How the council is supporting a circular approach

As outlined in the policy landscape section many of our policies are strongly aligned with the principles of the circular economy. Circular economy considerations are included within our decision support tools and processes which are mandatory for all new proposals. We will continue to ensure these circular principles are integral as decision support tools and processes evolve over time.

Further actions the council will take:

- ✓ Add circular economy to existing training around climate i.e. mandatory climate action.
- ✓ Add circular economy content to the Carbon Literacy Training modules.
- ✓ Continue to incorporate circular economy principles into council polices.
- ✓ Continue to consider circular economy in decision making via Climate Impact Assessment tool.
- ✓ Ensure circular principles are integral when implementing PAS 2080 (a global standard for assessing building and infrastructure whole life cycle carbon) across the organisation.
- ✓ Ensure capital project processes and documentation incorporate circular economy considerations.

Spotlight On: E-Learning

Tailored information will be incorporated into both the council's climate action e-learning module that's mandatory for all colleagues and its carbon literacy training. We are aiming to attain carbon literacy silver status by December 2026 which will require an additional 504 colleagues to be trained and accredited over this period.

Theme 2: Use our purchasing power to enable circularity

How we procure goods and services will play a central role in transitioning to a circular council. We spend over £500m a year with suppliers delivering critical services for residents. Over 80% of the council's spend is with its 25 biggest suppliers. Working with those suppliers affords the greatest opportunity to use our influence as a customer to reduce our impact on climate and nature and get a fairer, greener outcome for residents. By working with suppliers to raise awareness, measure and monitor success we can facilitate the transition to a circular council.

How the council is supporting a circular approach

Our ethical procurement policy has been refreshed to ensure circular economy principles sit at the heart of the policy. We have begun work to embed circular economy into all procurement processes and build circular economy-based Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) into select contracts. We are using the flexibility of the Procurement Act to consider local companies. For example, a new minor works procurement framework is under development, allowing us to spend between £10-15 million per annum with local companies benefiting Oxfordshire's economy.

We continue to invest in renewable energy for our estate and support the installation of renewable energy for state-maintained schools, via the Action on Carbon and Energy in Schools initiative.

Further actions the council will take:

- ✓ Implement revised guidance for colleagues around purchasing that follows circular principles.
- ✓ Explore leasing versus capital options for major contracts.
- ✓ Put in place a local procurement framework for property works.
- ✓ Set Circular Economy KPIs in major contracts and begin to measure outcomes.

Spotlight On: Highways Maintenance

From 1 April 2025, the council entered into a new long-term highways maintenance contract with its supplier M Group. In addition to setting science-based targets for the reduction of carbon emissions during the contract, it includes significant KPIs that will enable a circular approach, alongside committing to the following:

- ➢ Recycled materials specified as default, where feasible.
- ➢ Investment in a permanent aggregate recycling centre.
- ➢ Reuse of materials, for example, use of recycled asphalt[5] material on the road network over the first five years of the contract. This is particularly significant in terms of reducing pollution, as asphalt contains coal tar which is deemed hazardous waste.
- ➢ Looking for opportunities to work with local community groups, charities and not-for-profit enterprises to reuse or recycle materials.
- ➢ A commitment to fund a Net Zero Depot feasibility study which will investigate the potential to create OCC's first net zero depots at Drayton and Deddington.
- ➢ A Carbon Reduction Group which consists of members from M Group, OCC, and our supply chain partners, and will take an alliance approach to carbon reduction, sharing ideas and exploring joint opportunities.

Theme 3: Build on our record of Oxfordshire-wide waste prevention and high recycling rates

We have been the top performing county council household waste disposal authority for 11 consecutive years now. In 2023/24, residents recycled, reused, or composted

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[5] A mixture of dark bituminous pitch with sand or gravel, used for surfacing roads, flooring, roofing

57.6 per cent of their household waste. Despite this good record a significant proportion of valuable resources are currently not going back into the system.

Reducing the amount of household waste managed by councils within Oxfordshire makes economic sense; around £60million (2023/24) is spent by the county and district councils on dealing with household waste through collection, disposal and transport.

Preventing waste can also help residents to save money. Wasting food costs the average family with children £1,000 a year[6]. Repairing clothes and electrical items can help products last longer, meaning new items do not need to be bought as often.

How the council is supporting a circular approach

The council is working as part of ORWP to deliver the following ambitious targets outlined in the Joint Municipal Waste Management Strategy:

- To keep household waste growth to zero (per person per year)
- Increase the amount of household waste we recycle to 70% by 2030

The council regularly runs communication campaigns aimed at residents around preventing food waste, composting, reuse and recycling. We also provide tools such as the waste wizard which allows residents to understand where they can repair, reuse, recycle, or dispose of unwanted household items.

We have been supporting the Community Action Group network since 2001. The network is involved with many grass root level initiatives on waste reduction and recycling outlined in the spotlight below.

Further actions the council will take:

- ✓ Deliver on ORWP targets.
- ✓ Participate in the EU Circle Up project[7] and complete 25 case studies.
- ✓ Continue to support the Community Action Group network to run repair cafes and create Libraries of things.

Spotlight On: Community Action Groups

The council has been supporting Oxfordshire’s Community Action Groups since 2001 and there are now 117 groups across the county. It is the biggest climate network of its kind reaching over 120,000 participants in 2023-24.

As a collective between 2023-24 the CAG network:

- Saved 1,654 tonnes of non-food waste from disposal.
- Redistributed, cooked or processed 678 tonnes of food that would otherwise have been wasted.
- Repaired 1,194 bikes.
- Prevented 1,695 tonnes of carbon dioxide emissions.

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[6] https://www.wrap.ngo/media-centre/press-releases/urgent-action-needed-scale-tackle-food-waste-our-homes

[7] A Horizon Europe research project which develops, tests and implements strategies to encourage circular practices at a micro level, within local communities and individual households.

Theme 4: Use the council's assets to drive efficiency, reuse and repair

Using less, reusing materials and repairing products are central to the circular model. Councils can play a role in meeting these objectives by driving energy efficiency across their estates and exploring using council owned assets to support reuse and repair activities.

How the council is supporting a circular approach

The ten-year plan to manage and rationalise the buildings within our portfolio began in 2022. The programme will save money, see us use less energy and resources, gain efficiencies and build resilience.

Starting in 2020, we have replaced street lighting in Oxfordshire with energy-efficient LEDs. This has cut costs and emissions by more than 70 % in comparison with 2010 figures. We have implemented rigorous energy management practices in our buildings, as well as, carrying out retrofitting to increase energy efficiency in some council offices, schools and a fire station.

The council has also changed its approach to issuing mobile phones. Instead of issuing mobile phones by default to new colleagues a range of options are now offered, appropriate to the role. Along with a phone amnesty, this new approach has reduced the number of phones needed overall. We have also established a process to allow older laptops to be donated to charity (see spotlight).

Further actions the council will take:

- ✓ Embed circular economy principles into the re-development of Speedwell House offices in Oxford and decommissioning of County Hall.
- ✓ Explore the potential for green leases to be used in certain circumstances.
- ✓ Explore the reusing of materials and/or the use of materials with recycled content in minor property repairs.
- ✓ Use the new HWRC contract to drive reuse and repair and keep benefits local.
- ✓ Continue to drive energy efficiency measures in line with our Carbon Management Plan.
- ✓ Increase our in-house recycling rate by 5% yearly from a baseline of 60%.

Spotlight On: Technology

The council has established a process to allow older laptops to be donated to charity. In 2024, over 200 refurbished laptops were donated to the charity 'Getting Oxfordshire Online' to support residents who face digital exclusion gain access to a computer.

Theme 5: Agree circular economy metrics and establish a baseline

Our Circular Economy Plan is pioneering work - at the time of writing very few councils across the UK have a plan in place to transition to a more circular approach. Circular economy metrics for local government to measure and monitor progress are not yet well established. As a priority we need to gather data to establish a baseline and agree suitable metrics to allow us to set targets and measure success.

Actions the council will take:

- ✓ Set up a working group to research and agree appropriate circular economy metrics.
- ✓ Undertake a gap analysis to establish any additional data required and set up processes to record this data.

Theme 6: Pilot innovative materials or processes that support circularity

One of the most powerful outcomes of transitioning to a circular economy is that, because it requires innovation, it drives innovation.

How the council is supporting a circular approach

We will continue to use our estate as a ‘Living Lab’ to trial new products or processes that support innovation and circularity. By demonstrating how these materials and/or processes work in real life settings we will pave the way for future uptake.

Our infrastructure teams i.e. transport infrastructure, highways maintenance and property and assets are particularly well placed to drive circular principles and practices within the organisation (see Spotlight on: Highways Maintenance). We will continue to support these teams to take action.

Further actions the council will take:

- ✓ Develop business cases for the reuse of materials, use of secondary materials and the use of innovative materials across our infrastructure teams.
- ✓ Investigate building design for lifespan flexibility and disassembly.
- ✓ Develop a circular economy assessment checklist which can be used to ensure that all opportunities for integrating circular economy principles are taken.
- ✓ Continue to pilot the re-use of materials and use of innovative materials.

Spotlight On: Innovative Materials

The Highways team have been trialling the use of an innovative product; an enhanced type of asphalt called Gipave[8] for road repairs. It is thought that the product will increase the lifespan of road surfaces, reduce the need for resurfacing work (approx. 165 % compared to conventional resurfacing methods), ease the burden on highways budgets, and cut carbon emissions by approx. 40% for the life cycle of a stretch of road.

Gipave also uses waste plastics which would not normally be recycled. The asphalt containing Gipave can itself be entirely recycled – promoting the circular economy which reduces waste and the need for new materials.

Theme 7: Regenerate nature, increase biodiversity and reduce pollution

Globally, over-consumption, production relying on the extraction of virgin materials and the use of chemicals in agriculture, for example, are significant threats to nature, causing pollution and reducing habitats available for wildlife. The principles of the circular economy, including regenerating and restoring natural systems and keeping materials in use for as long as possible, support nature recovery.

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[8] A graphene-enhanced asphalt supermodifier. Gipave combines graphene with polymers extracted from carefully selected waste hard plastics, that would not normally be recycled.

How the council is supporting a circular approach

As a council we are bringing together people and organisations that care about Oxfordshire's habitats and species to develop a Local Nature Recovery Strategy. This will allow us to develop a shared ambition to recover nature across Oxfordshire.

We have also developed a Biodiversity Framework and Action Plan for our own estate that aligns with our circular economy ambitions. We will continue to support circular economy principles when carrying out our statutory duty to plan for mineral extraction and waste management as outlined in the Minerals and Waste Local Plan (see spotlight below). We will also continue to influence via our role within the planning process to recommend that circular approaches are adopted.

We are a Good Food Oxfordshire Network member, and contributor to the Oxfordshire Food Strategy which aims to improve Oxfordshire's food system and make it more sustainable, affordable and resilient. We are working towards achieving the Soil Association's 'Food for Life Accreditation' which champions local, fresh, healthy and sustainably sourced food for its primary school catering.

Our approach to fleet decarbonisation prioritises avoidance of emissions by rationalising the fleet, encouraging sharing of resources, and replacing fossil fuels with zero tailpipe emissions alternatives. Electric vehicles now make up 10% of our fleet and we have 44 charge points across 19 council sites.

Further actions the council will take:

- ✓ Implement the council's Biodiversity Framework and Action Plan.
- ✓ Support the delivery of the priorities and actions identified in the Oxfordshire LNRS.
- ✓ All applications for Oxfordshire County Council development submitted under Regulation 3[9] from 1st January 2026 will contain measures to increase biodiversity by a minimum of 20%.
- ✓ Deliver on the objectives set out in the council's Air Quality Strategy (up to 2030).
- ✓ Continue to rationalise our fleet.
- ✓ Achieve the Soil Association's 'Food for Life Accreditation' for state-maintained primary school catering.

Spotlight On: Minerals and Waste

Our adopted Minerals and Waste Local Plan enables circularity through:

- Encouraging the maximum practical recovery of aggregate from secondary and recycled materials for use in place of primary aggregate
- Ensuring provision is made for facilities to enable the production and/or supply of recycled and secondary aggregate
- Making provision for waste management capacity that allows Oxfordshire to aim to be net self-sufficient in meeting its own waste needs

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[9] Where a local authority is both the applicant and determining authority for a planning application relating to land they own or manage.

- Supporting initiatives that reduce the amount of waste produced and encourage the delivery of waste management facilities that drive waste up the waste hierarchy
- Promoting a biodiversity-led approach to restoration of minerals sites.

4 Governance, Evaluation and Monitoring

This plan runs to 2030 in line with the Carbon Management Plan and Air Quality Strategy (see Action Plan overleaf) and will be monitored regularly to ensure progress is measured and the work is driven forward. Progress against relevant actions will be monitored by the Carbon Management board and reported in the Climate Action Programme report annually.

A Circular Council Action Plan

Theme	Objective	Action	Target Date	Delivery Stakeholders
Theme 1: Facilitate a culture shift within the organisation	Raise awareness of the circular economy with colleagues and supplier base	✓ Add circular economy to existing training around climate i.e. mandatory climate action ✓ Add circular economy content to the Carbon Literacy Training modules	End of 2025	Climate Action Team Learning and Development Team
	Provide a mandate for change by embedding circular principles into policy	✓ Continue to incorporate circular economy principles into council polices	Ongoing	Policy Team
	Embed circular economy into decision making processes	✓ Continue to consider circular economy in decision making via Climate Impact Assessment tool	Ongoing	Climate Action Team Capital Programmes Team
		✓ Ensure circular principles are integral when implementing PAS 2080 (a global standard for assessing building and infrastructure whole life cycle carbon) across the organisation	Ongoing	
		✓ Ensure capital project processes and documentation incorporate circular economy e.g. options appraisal, prioritisation matrix, budget setting and governance process.	End of 2025	

Theme 2: Use our purchasing power to enable circularity	Embed circular economy into procurement practices & processes	✓ Implement revised guidance for colleagues around purchasing following circular principles. ✓ Explore leasing versus capital options. ✓ Put in place a local procurement framework for property works.	TBC Mar 2027	Procurement Team Climate Action Team
	Set Circular Economy KPIs in major contracts	✓ Set Circular Economy KPIs in major contracts and begin to measure outcomes.	Ongoing until 2027 (based on contract refresh timescales)	Procurement Team Service Areas
Theme 3: Build on our record of Oxfordshire-wide waste prevention and high recycling rates	Meet waste prevention & recycling targets committed to with the ORWP	✓ Deliver on ORWP targets: ○ Keep household waste growth to zero (per person per year). ○ Increase the amount of household waste we recycle to 70% by 2030. ✓ Participate in the EU Circle Up project & develop 25 case studies. ✓ Continue to support the Community Action Group network.	April 2028 Dec 2027 Ongoing	Waste Strategy Team
Theme 4: Use the council's assets to drive efficiency,	Use the councils' assets to enable circularity	✓ Embed circular economy principles into the re-development of Speedwell House and decommissioning of County Hall	Spring 2027	Waste Strategy Team Property and Assets Team

reuse and repair		✓ Explore the potential for green leases to be used in certain circumstances ✓ Explore reusing of materials and/or the use of materials with recycled content in minor property repairs	TBC TBC	
	Drive efficiencies	✓ Use new HWRC contract to drive reuse and repair and keep benefits local ✓ Continue to drive energy efficiency measures in line with our carbon management plan ✓ Increase our in-house recycling rate by 5% yearly from a baseline of 60%.	Mar 2027 2030 Jan 2028	Waste Management Team Property and Assets Team
Theme 5: Agree circular economy metrics and established	To enable progress to be measured against targets	✓ Set up a working group to research and agree appropriate circular economy metrics ✓ Undertake a gap analysis to establish any additional data required and set up processes to record this data	July 2026 July 2026	Climate Action Team
Theme 6: Pilot innovative materials or processes that	Demonstrate viability of circular products/practices to promote further uptake	✓ Develop business cases for the reuse of materials, use of secondary materials and the use of innovative materials across our infrastructure teams ✓ Investigate building design for lifespan flexibility and disassembly	TBC TBC	Highways Maintenance Team Transport Infrastructure Team

support circularity		✓ Develop a circular economy assessment checklist which can be used to ensure that all opportunities for integrating circular economy principles are taken ✓ Continue to pilot the re-use of materials and use of innovative materials	TBC TBC	Property and Assets teams
Theme 7: Regenerate nature, improve biodiversity and reduce pollution		✓ Implement the council's Biodiversity Action Plan ✓ Support the delivery of the priorities and actions identified in the Oxfordshire LNRS ✓ All applications for Oxfordshire County Council development submitted under Regulation 3 from 1st January 2026 will contain measures to increase biodiversity by a minimum of 20% ✓ Deliver on the objectives set out in the council's Air Quality Strategy (up to 2030) ✓ Continue to rationalise and decarbonise our fleet ✓ Achieve the Soil Association's 'Food for Life Accreditation' for state maintained primary school catering.	Ongoing Ongoing Jan 2026 2030 Ongoing Mar 2025	Biodiversity Team Minerals and Waste Policy Team Property and Assets Team Transport Policy and Strategy Team

Oxfordshire County Council
Equalities Impact Assessment

Oxfordshire County Council Circular Economy Plan

21 May 2025

5 Contents

6 Section 1: Summary details

Directorate and Service Area	Economy and Place, Climate Action
What is being assessed (e.g. name of policy, procedure, project, service or proposed service change).	Circular Economy Plan
Is this a new or existing function or policy?	A new plan for OCC
Summary of assessment Briefly summarise the policy or proposed service change. Summarise possible impacts. Does the proposal bias, discriminate or unfairly disadvantage individuals or groups within the community? (following completion of the assessment).	The principles of the circular economy in practice, mean using less resources and energy by creating and/or buying locally, extending the life of materials, maintaining and repairing items and reusing as much as possible. The plan sets out: • The work the council is already doing that supports a circular economy. • The further actions we will take to ensure circular principles are adopted and practised in-house. • How we can work within our sphere of influence to support the adoption of circularity across Oxfordshire. It does not include actions for the wider county that are not within the council's remit. All of the possible impacts of implementing the Circular Economy Plan are positive. They are largely focused around a reduction in emissions and therefore associated risk regarding the impacts of climate change. There are also benefits from the use of the council's assets to bring circularity to communities at local hubs and libraries.
Completed By	Aoife Dudley, Zero Carbon Oxfordshire Policy & Project Lead

Authorised By	Jamie Kavanagh, Senior Policy Officer (Equalities)
Date of Assessment	21 May 2025

7 Section 2: Detail of proposal

Context / Background Briefly summarise the background to the policy or proposed service change, including reasons for any changes from previous versions.	Climate Action represents the number one priority for the council, which includes both climate mitigation (reducing carbon emissions) and climate adaptation (minimising the impacts of climate change). Circular economy is part of the mitigation strategy, supporting the council's goals to be greener, healthier and fairer. Designing out waste and keeping products and materials in circulation through processes such as maintenance, refurbishment, reuse, remanufacture, recycling and composting sits at the heart of the circular economy. This in turn reduces emissions, which will feed into the council's 2030 and 2050 emissions targets. The Circular Economy Plan has been co-developed with representatives from across the council, in order to ensure that circular economy practices can be embedded into business as usual across the organisation. The Circular Economy Plan is on the forward plan for Cabinet in July 2025.
Proposals Explain the detail of the proposals, including why this has been decided as the best course of action.	The Circular Economy Plan outlines a range of actions which fit into a number of themes: • Facilitate a culture shift within the organisation • Use our purchasing power to enable circularity • Build on our record of Oxfordshire-wide waste prevention and high recycling rates • Use the council's assets to drive efficiency, reuse and repair • Agree circular economy metrics and establish a baseline • Pilot innovative materials or processes that support circularity • Regenerate natural systems and reduce pollution The proposal is for this Circular Economy Plan to be adopted, and circular economy principles to be embedded within all areas of OCC, from procurement to investment, delivery and maintenance, and across all of our assets.

Evidence / Intelligence List and explain any data, consultation outcomes, research findings, feedback from service users and stakeholders etc, that supports your proposals and can help to inform the judgements you make about potential impact on different individuals, communities or groups and our ability to deliver our climate commitments.	A brief research paper was developed to imagine the future of a circular economy in Oxfordshire and understand the opportunities for different areas of the county. This was followed up with a paper for internal stakeholders outlining the process of developing a circular economy strategy in line with the council's priorities, presenting a range of policy options and giving further detail on three key pieces of work which would underpin the strategy: • OCC Circular Economy Action Plan • Oxfordshire Resources and Waste Partnership Waste Prevention Strategy • Oxfordshire Circular Economy Route Map As the global impacts of climate change escalate, reducing emissions from fossil fuels by transitioning to renewable energy and implementing energy efficiency measures is crucial. However, it is estimated that these energy related actions can only tackle 55% of emissions. We also need to urgently address the remaining 45% of emissions that are attributed to the way materials, products, and food are designed, produced and used.
Alternatives considered / rejected Summarise any other approaches that have been considered in developing the policy or proposed service change, and the reasons why these were not adopted. This could include reasons why doing nothing is not an option.	Due to the wide-ranging nature of the circular economy, and the need for action to reduce emissions, doing nothing is not considered a viable option. A circular economy approach could be implemented on a project-by-project basis, however this would likely result in key opportunities for maximising circularity being overlooked. The nature of circular economy principles mean that a whole systems approach is required, and the best way to ensure that all parts of the council are on board is to develop a plan that can be embedded into day-to-day service delivery. An Oxfordshire-wide plan has also been considered, however at the present time this piece of work cannot be progressed. This will be revisited in the future.

8 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	☐	☒	☐	By implementing circular economy principles within the council, this will reduce the demand for additional resources and extraction of new or raw materials. This in turn will lead to a reduction in carbon emissions and environmental degradation. Over the long term, this will reduce the impacts of climate change compared to a do-nothing scenario, which will have a positive impact on older and younger residents in particular, as they are at higher risk from the impacts of extreme weather events associated with climate change.			

Disability	☐	☒	☐	By implementing circular economy principles within the council, this will reduce the demand for additional resources and extraction of new or raw materials. This in turn will lead to a reduction in carbon emission and environmental degradation. Over the long term, this will reduce the impacts of climate change compared to a do-nothing scenario, which will have a positive impact on disabled residents in particular, as they are at higher risk from the impacts of extreme weather events associated with climate change.			
Gender Reassignment	☒	☐	☐	No direct impact on people who are undergoing, or who have undergone, gender reassignment has been identified			

Marriage & Civil Partnership	☒	☐	☐	No direct impact on people who are married or in a civil partnership has been identified			
Pregnancy & Maternity	☐	☒	☐	By implementing circular economy principles within the council, this will reduce the demand for additional resources and extraction of new or raw materials. This in turn will lead to a reduction in carbon emission and environmental degradation. Over the long term, this will reduce the impacts of climate change compared to a do-nothing scenario, which will have a positive impact on pregnant residents in particular, as they are at higher risk from the impacts of extreme weather events associated with climate change.			

Race	☒	☐	☐	No direct impact on people on people of different races has been identified			
Sex	☒	☐	☐	No direct impact on people on people of different sexes has been identified			
Sexual Orientation	☒	☐	☐	No direct impact on people on people of different sexual orientation has been identified			
Religion or Belief	☒	☐	☐	No direct impact on people on people of different religion or belief has been identified			

9 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	☐	☒	☐	A key part of the Circular Economy Plan is the use of the council's assets e.g. community hubs and libraries to drive circular economy in practice, and to support the Community Action Group network. This will benefit rural communities as it will provide access to resources and services within the local area. Rural communities are also more at risk from the impacts of climate change due to their relative isolation, limited transport connections and the higher concentration of elderly residents. Over the long term, implementing circular economy principles will reduce emissions and			

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**
				therefore the impacts of climate change compared to a do-nothing scenario. This will have a positive impact on rural communities by reducing the impacts of extreme weather events associated with climate change.			
Armed Forces	☒	☐	☐	No direct impact on the armed forces has been identified			
Carers	☒	☐	☐	No direct impact on people with caring responsibilities has been identified			
Areas of deprivation	☐	☒	☐	A key part of the Circular Economy Plan is the use of the council's assets e.g. community hubs and libraries to drive circular economy in practice, and to support the Community Action Group network. This			

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**
				will benefit deprived communities as it will provide access to resources and services within the local area. Deprived communities are also more at risk from the impacts of climate change due having fewer resources to allow for adaptation and the mitigation of the impacts of extreme weather. Over the long term, implementing circular economy principles will reduce emissions and therefore the impacts of climate change compared to a do-nothing scenario. This will have a positive impact on areas of deprivation by reducing the impacts of extreme weather events associated with climate change.			

10 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	☐	☒	☐	Embedding circular economy principles will improve efficiency and reduce waste of all kinds, improving productivity. The plan is also likely to reduce costs in the long term by looking for opportunities for sharing and collaboration of assets and processes between teams. The improvements to the environment, including the re-development of Speedwell House, will also benefit staff.			
Other Council Services	☐	☒	☐	Embedding circular economy principles will improve efficiency and reduce waste of all kinds, making services easier to navigate and improving			

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**
				productivity. The plan is also likely to reduce costs in the long term by looking for opportunities for sharing and collaboration of assets and processes between services.			
Providers	☐	☒	☐	The implementation of circular economy principles will encourage our suppliers to reduce waste, adopt innovative materials and processes and reduce their emissions accordingly. Short term need to invest in new or reusable equipment, accreditation, and expertise which will temporarily increase costs.	The increase in costs are time limited. Lead time so suppliers have time to prepare Tendering		

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
Social Value [10]	☐	☒	☐	There are clear positive social value implications of encouraging circular economy principles within the local community through the use of the council's assets to drive reuse and repair. The Circular Economy Plan also has an objective to regenerate natural systems and reduce pollution which will improve the local environment for use by people across Oxfordshire and encourage better public health outcomes.			

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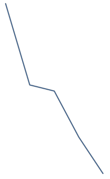
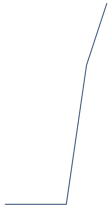
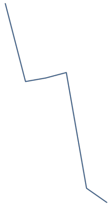
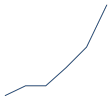
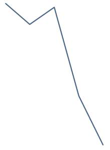
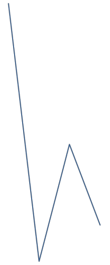
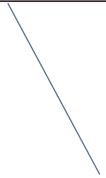
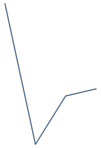
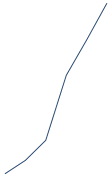
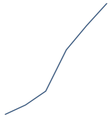
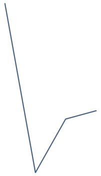
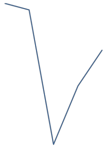
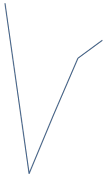
[10] If the Public Services (Social Value) Act 2012 applies to this proposal, please summarise here how you have considered how the contract might improve the economic, social, and environmental well-being of the relevant area

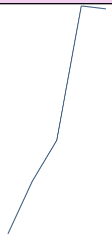
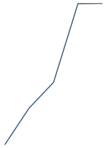
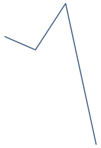
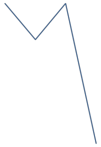
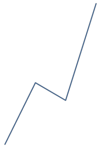
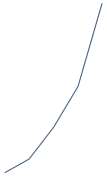
11 Section 4: Review

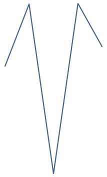
Where bias, negative impact or disadvantage is identified, the proposal and/or implementation can be adapted or changed; meaning there is a need for regular review. This review may also be needed to reflect additional data and evidence for a fuller assessment (proportionate to the decision in question). Please state the agreed review timescale for the identified impacts of the policy implementation or service change.

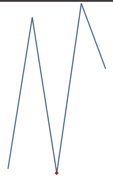
Review Date	**21 May 2026**
Person Responsible for Review	**Aoife Dudley**
Authorised By	**Sarah Gilbert**

Annex 2- Outcome Measures				Data								
Outcome Measures	**Definition**	**Source**	**Target or Benchmark**	**2019**	**2020 (COVID)**	**2021 (COVID)**	**2022**	**2023**	**2024**	**Progress (2019-latest year)**	**Trendline**	**Commentary**
OCC Estates / Operations Decarbonisation												
CAS 1 - OCC Estate and Operations 2030 Net Zero Target in tCO2e (Fiscal year Reporting year+1, example 2022 is FY 2022/23)	OCC GHG estate and operational emissions (Buildings, Highways Assets, Fleet, Staff Mileage)	OCC Annual Greenhouse Gas Report	Net Zero by 2030 (OCC Target)	13,311	10,595	10,391	8,857	7,638	Due Sept 2025	↓		Emissions across the council's estates and operations are reducing year on year. Delays to some programmes, such as fleet and property decarbonisation, have affected the rate of emissions reduction, however overachievement in previous years means that this programme remains largely on track to meet our net zero target overall.
CAS 2 - OCC Scope 3 Supply Chain real activity GHG emissions reporting (% of Total Supply chain emissions) (Fiscal Year).	We are aiming to report emissions of 80% Suppliers (100%=3500 suppliers).	OCC Annual Greenhouse Gas Report	80% of Supply Chain emissions calculated and reported by 2030 (OCC Target)	0%	0%	0%	0%	9%	13%	↑		This measure is indicative of the progress in understanding and measuring our Scope 3 emissions from our supply chain. It shows that progress is being made in this area and our understanding of our Scope 3 emissions continues to increase.
CAS 3 - Carbon intensity of pension funds investments - WACI (Weighted Average Carbon Intensity)	As reported in line with the Task Force on Climate-related Financial Disclosure	Oxfordshire Pension Fund Carbon Metrics Report	Annual target of 7.5% decline	248	204	206	209	144	136	↓		For the period 2023 – 2024 the WACI figure shows a decrease in carbon intensity of around 5.5%. This is behind our annual target of a 7.5% decline, however, if we track the trend from the baseline year of 2019 there is an overall intensity decrease of around 45%, which is equivalent to an approximately 9% decrease each year since 2019, which is well ahead of our 7.5% target.
CAS 4 - Renewable energy generated on the council estate (kWh)	Does not include schools	OCC data		31,257	52,255	52,560	92,997	137,952	231,840	↑		There has been a six-fold increase (642% between 2019 and 2024) in renewable energy generated on the council estate linked to increased investment.
CAS 5 - OCC Council Maintained Schools emissions in tCO2e	OCC supports the decarbonisation of Maintained Schools (adjusted for academisation)	OCC Annual Greenhouse Gas Report	Net Zero by 2050 (OCC Target)	5811	5582	5769	4807	4275	Due Sept 2025	↓		OCC continues its progress in supporting the decarbonisation of maintained schools. As maintained schools are converted to academies they are no longer included within OCC's carbon accounting process.
PaZCO Overall												
CAS 6a - Total territorial GHG emissions for Oxfordshire in kT CO2e	All emissions within the Oxfordshire boundaries. Includes CO2, CH4 and NO2	DESNZ local authority greenhouse gas emissions	PAZCO commits us to go further and faster than other areas of the UK in achieving zero carbon emissions	4,530	3,987	4,233	4,064	Due summer 2025	Due summer 2026	↓		A decline in total greenhouse gas emissions within the county, largely driven by grid decarbonisation, against a backdrop of population increase. As outlined in the 2024 Countywide Greenhouse Gas Report, emissions in 2022 exceeded the annual allowance within our PaZCO carbon budgets. However, extrapolation of the data and overachievement in previous years suggests that we will recover our position in relation to this 5 year carbon budget period.

Outcome Measures	Definition	Source	Target or Benchmark	2019	2020 (COVID)	2021 (COVID)	2022	2023	2024	Progress (2019-latest year)	Trendline	Commentary
CAS 6b - Total territorial GHG emissions for Oxfordshire in kT CO2e per capita	All emissions within the Oxfordshire boundaries. Includes CO2, CH4 and NO2	DESNZ local authority greenhouse gas emissions	England benchmark 5.1tCO2e South East benchmark 4.4tCO2e	6.4	5.6	5.8	5.5	Due summer 2025	Due summer 2026	⬇		Per capita emissions continue to decline in the county, largely driven by grid decarbonisation, however these remain higher than both the England and South East averages.
PaZCO - Transport & Connectivity												
CAS 7 - Total transport GHG emissions for Oxfordshire (territorial Kt)	All emissions within the Oxfordshire boundaries. Includes CO2, CH4 and NO2	DESNZ local authority greenhouse gas emissions		1,821	1,411	1,552	1,572	Due summer 2025	Due summer 2026	⬆		A slight increase in emissions in 2022, which was the first year unaffected by COVID. This likely reflects the increase in trips on all modes after the pandemic.
CAS 8a Total number of EV charge point locations in Oxfordshire	All publicly available charging points - timepoint January in each year	DfT/DESNZ electric vehicle charging infrastructure statistics		212	256	322	536	652	773	⬆		There continues to be strong growth in the delivery of public charging infrastructure, with the number of chargepoints more than trebling since 2019.
CAS 8b EV charge point locations per 100,000 population in Oxfordshire	All publicly available charging points - timepoint January in each year		England Benchmark 97.4 SE Benchmark 82.3	30.8	37	46.2	73.8	89.7	104.7	⬆		There continues to be strong growth in the delivery of public charging infrastructure. We are well above the benchmarks for England and the South East with more EV charge points to come through OxLEVI.
CAS 9 - Road Transport Emissions	Oxfordshire Emissions CO2 eq (LTCP Indicator)	LTCP Annual Monitoring Report		1,323	1,056	1,141	1,154	Due autumn 2025	Due autumn 2026	⬆		Emissions from transport have increased slowly since 2020. The increase in emissions is lower than the increase in vehicle miles over the same period, demonstrating the impact of increased uptake of lower emission vehicles. Road transport emissions were 1.56tCO2e per capita in 2022.
CAS 10 - Passenger journeys on local bus services	Per head of population per annum (LTCP Indicator)	LTCP Annual Monitoring Report	England benchmark: increase of 19% between 2022-2023	60.9	58.8	16.8	35.1	46.2	Due autumn 2025	⬆		Bus patronage fell significantly during the COVID-19 pandemic but has been recovering year on year. There was an increase of 31% between 2022 and 2023 which is well above the national average of 19%. Patronage has not yet reached the same level as before the pandemic.
CAS 11 - Car Vehicle Miles (millions)	Total Miles in Oxfordshire (LTCP Indicator)	LTCP Annual Monitoring Report		3,800	2,710	3,085	3,449	3,562	Due autumn 2025	⬆		Car vehicle miles increased by 3% in Oxfordshire between 2022 and 2023 which is in line with the national average , but are lower than the 2019 baseline. Continuing to reduce vehicle miles and the length of car trips is a key aspect of the LTCP and will be required to meet net zero transport system targets.

Outcome Measures	Definition	Source	Target or Benchmark	2019	2020 (COVID)	2021 (COVID)	2022	2023	2024	Progress (2019-latest year)	Trendline	Commentary
CAS 12 - Number of registered battery EVs	Total Registered in Oxfordshire	LTCP Annual Monitoring Report	25,000 by 2025 120,000 by 2030 (PAZCO Target)	1,704	3,564	5,022	9,804	9,694	Due autumn 2025	⬆		EV registrations have increased significantly since 2019, however there was a drop of 1.1% between 2022 and 2023. This is in contrast to the national average, which shows an increase in registrations. This is primarily due to a decrease in the number of registered battery electric company vehicles in Cherwell district between 2022 and 2023. At the current rate of change, it is likely that the targets set out in PaZCO for EV uptake will not be met.
CAS 13 - Number of battery EVs as a percentage of total light vehicles.	DfT publish vehicle licensing statistics each quarter (%)	LTCP Annual Monitoring Report	40% by 2030 (PAZCO Target) UK Benchmark: 2.77%	0.38	0.94	1.32	2.51	2.52	Due autumn 2025	⬆		The proportion of the fleet which is battery electric in Oxfordshire has increased since 2019, but remained similar between 2022 and 2023. This is the first year that this figure is lower than the national benchmark, and it continues to be well below the 40% PaZCO target.
PaZCO - Buildings												
CAS 14a - Total homes GHG emissions for Oxfordshire (territorial Kt)	All domestic emissions within the Oxfordshire boundaries. Includes CO2, CH4 and NO2	DESNZ local authority greenhouse gas emissions		1,034	1,023	1,063	941	Due summer 2025	Due summer 2026	⬇		The reduction in emissions from homes is largely driven by grid decarbonisation.
CAS 14b - GHG emissions per dwelling for Oxfordshire (tonnes)	Average carbon emissions (Includes CO2, CH4 and NO2) per dwelling within Oxfordshire	MHCLG and DLUHC live tables on dwelling stock	England Benchmark 2.74	3.39	3.30	3.39	3.04	Due summer 2025	Due summer 2026	⬇		Emissions per home have dropped, likely due to grid decarbonisation, new homes being built to higher efficiency standards, and homes being retrofitted. This figure is higher than the England average.
CAS 15 - Households facing energy poverty %	% Households Fuel Poor	DESNZ sub-regional fuel poverty data	England Benchmark 13.1% SE Benchmark 12.9%	7.4	8.1	7.9	9	Due Dec 2025	Due Dec 2026	⬆		Increasing energy costs outpacing household income leading to higher energy poverty. There is lower fuel poverty in Oxfordshire compared to national and regional benchmarks.
PaZCO - Energy												
CAS 16 - Renewable energy capacity in Oxfordshire (MW): installed capacity	Amount of capacity	DESNZ renewable electricity by local authority data		459	462	468	475	490	Due Sept 2025	⬆		There has been an upward trend in installed capacity, and the pace of change has increased in the last year.

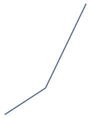
CAS 17 - Renewable energy generation - Oxfordshire (MWh)	Performance of capacity	DESNZ renewable electricity by local authority data		504,968	517,358	483,531	517,495	508,888	Due Sept 2025	➡		There was a reduction in renewable generation in 2023, as it is dependent on weather conditions.

Outcome Measures	Definition	Source	Target or Benchmark	2019	2020 (COVID)	2021 (COVID)	2022	2023	2024	Progress (2019-latest year)	Trendline	Commentary
CAS 18 - Renewable electricity supply as a % of electricity demand in Oxfordshire	Renewable energy generation out of total electricity generation	DESNZ renewable electricity by local authority data	Target 31% by 2030 (PAZCO Target)	14%	15%	14%	16%	15%	Due Sept 2025	➡		This has remained steady since 2019, as it is dependent on installed capacity (which is increasing) and weather conditions (which increase the variability of output). Progress indicates that we are approximately half way towards the target set on PaZCO.

PaZCO - Adaptation

CAS 19 - Reported flooding events	Number of flooding incidents reported across the county	OCC data							263	n/a		This is a new indicator for this year, to represent progress on community preparedness for climate impacts in anticipation of increasing instances of extreme weather in the county. We will monitor this annually going forwards.
CAS 20 - Flood wardens	Trained flood wardens across Oxfordshire	OCC data						13	17	⬆		This is a new indicator for this year, to represent progress on adaptation delivery. We will monitor this annually going forwards. There has been a small increase in the number of trained flood wardens, with a further 10 areas targeted for the next year.

Community Engagement

CAS 21 - Community Action Group (CAG) volunteering hours	Number of volunteering hours within the CAG network	CAG Annual Report				65,000	97,650	201,248	Due summer 2025	⬆		This is a new indicator for this year. There has been a more than 200% increase in volunteering hours in CAGs since 2021. This shows the capacity and level of engagement of Oxfordshire residents in climate and environmental issues.
CAS 22 - Vulnerable households reached with preparedness advice	Oxfordshire households reached with Community Resilience advice to prepare for power cuts, water disruption, flooding and hot and cold weather	JORT Annual Community Resilience Report							1432	n/a		This is a new indicator for this year, to track progress on community preparedness for climate impacts. We will monitor this annually going forwards.
CAS23 - Parish and town council community emergency plans	Number of parish and town councils with a community emergency plan in place	JORT Annual Community Resilience Report							71	n/a		This is a new indicator for this year, to track progress on community preparedness for climate impacts. We will monitor this annually going forwards.

Annex 3 – Overview of Climate Action Programme 2024/25 Delivery Plan

The table below provides an overview of the actions included in the 2024/25 delivery plan for the Climate Action Programme, across its three pillars:

- Becoming a climate active council
- Decarbonising our estate and operations by 2030
- Enabling Oxfordshire's transition to net zero

<table>
<tr><th colspan="2">Climate Action Programme 2024/25 delivery plan</th><th></th></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2"><b>Becoming a climate active council</b></td><td><b>RAG</b></td></tr>
<tr><td><b>Expand Carbon Literacy training – targeting silver status</b></td><td>Head of Climate Action / Organisational Development</td><td>A</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="3">• OCC as a whole is currently behind in its ambition to reach silver status (a minimum of 15 % of an organisation trained) as a Carbon Literate Organisation by December 2026. Economy and Place/Environment and Highways will likely reach silver status by December 2025.
• 509 colleagues have now received nationally recognised Carbon Literacy training, with 245 becoming accredited.
• Six of our eight volunteer trainers have become accredited Carbon Literacy Facilitators.
• Seven teams totalling approximately 200 colleagues have expressed interest in receiving training.</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2"><b>Decarbonising our estate and operations by 2030</b></td><td><b>RAG</b></td></tr>
<tr><td><b>Deliver Carbon Management Plan (CMP) 2022-30: planned actions for 2024/25 (estate, fleet, highway assets and staff travel)</b></td><td>Director of Property and Assets / Head of Climate Action</td><td>A</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="3">OCC's residual operational carbon emissions are projected to be approximately 2,720 tonnes CO_2e in 2030/31. This is based on the UK Government's Clean Power 2030 Action Plan for decarbonising electricity grid and timely implementation of the decarbonisation programme outlined in the CMP.
<i>Highways</i>
• The highways electrical assets (streetlighting LED conversion programme) is showing continued savings and now largely complete.
• Completion of traffic signal upgrades in Q3/4 will show savings in emissions next year.
<i>Properties</i>
• Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme (PSDS) Phase 3a works, which was delayed from the previous year four schools have completed on site with some pending electricity grid upgrades before being activated.
• Of the works proposed for the financial year 24/25, 27 sites were submitted for PSDS Phase 3c works, three sites dropped out, one due to technical complexities and the others due to strategic review of future occupation. A further two sites were subsequently included into the programme. Of these sites work was started on nearly all of them with two sites completed by the end of the financial year. A</td></tr>
</table>

further 7 sites had works conducted under the Salix Recycling Fund for Solar PV and LED improvements which was completed by the end of the financial year. • The Council was successful in securing funding under the Low Carbon Skills Fund (LCSF) Phase 5 for the detailed design of two sites (which was completed) and submitted funding for a further 16 sites under PSDS Phase4. *Fleet* • We have a total of 71 EVs (15.6%) in our fleet (with 43 EVs in OCC fleet along with 28 EVs). The purchasing target of 99 EVs for OCC fleet in 2024/25 fell short last year for two reasons. The FM fleet replacement requirement was reduced from 29 to 14 vehicles, reflecting a successful fleet rationalisation. The 14 identified FM vehicles could not be delivered within the financial year and have been deferred to 2025/26, setting a revised target of 74 EVs for the current year. • 71 charge points have been installed across the county for OCC fleet use. • All fleet are now under the control of the vehicle management system. *Business Travel* • The draft policy has been completed and is awaiting approval by end of June 2025. • A new process is in place for vehicle booking with better data capture to help inform future decisions on decarbonising business Travel.		
Developing a carbon insetting/offsetting strategy and action plan for the council's own estate	Head of Climate Action	G
• Calculations have been completed to assess likely 2030 carbon residual emissions. • £30,000 was agreed in the 2025/26 budget to forward purchase carbon credit that would contribute towards meeting 2030 carbon neutrality target. A further £80,000 has been agreed for offsetting projects in line with beyond net zero. • A strategy is in development to support this work.		
Support schools through providing Action on Carbon and Energy in Schools (ACEs) programme and deliver and evaluate success of loan scheme	Head of Climate Action	G
• Seven schools have completed installs of solar and batteries in 2024/25 for £300,000. • Through the budget setting process the loan scheme has been expanded to £1.7m over 3 years. • An additional 18 schools applied for a further £970,000 which will be delivered in 25/26.		
Expand Scope 3 greenhouse gas reporting (supply chain emissions) and collaborating on emissions reduction roadmaps with key suppliers (Scope 3)	Head of Procurement Contract Management	A
• In our 2023/24 greenhouse report we included the emissions of four of our top emitter suppliers. Since then, we have secured data from two more suppliers, and the aim is to increase the number of suppliers further for the 2024/25 report by September 2025. Progress has been slower than expected given that existing		

contracts don't have carbon reporting requirements and some suppliers have lower carbon reporting capabilities than expected.

- In key strategic contracts, such as Highways Maintenance contracts, we are working to improve carbon governance practices through enhancing best practice such PAS2080 standard and the adoption of science-based targets in contracts. On other contracts we are establishing collaborations for developing carbon reduction plans suitable for their capabilities and sectoral challenges.
- We are exploring the potential of a supply chain carbon digital platform to accelerate our supplier engagement program and as a resource to enhance supplier carbon management capabilities. This will coincide with the adoption of a new Ethical Procurement Policy which along procurement's contract management review, will aim to put more focus on emissions reporting directly into OCC contracts and positioning service areas in the best place to deliver on sustainability requirements in contracts. Clauses are being developed to be placed in contracts and provide leverage to OCC in successfully accessing Scope 3 emissions reporting.

Develop process and toolkit to manage carbon in infrastructure projects	Director of Environment and Highways / Head of Climate Action	A

- Policy 27 of the Local Transport and Connectivity Plan (LTCP) requires OCC to use PAS2080 (a leading carbon governance standard for built environment) to take into account embodied, operational and user emissions when assessing a potential infrastructure project and its contribution to Oxfordshire's carbon budget and to a net zero transport network by 2040. In 2024 a review of OCC infrastructure teams and processes was completed to assess the level of alignment with PAS2080 requirements, resulting in the Highways Maintenance team having the highest score following the PAS2080 accreditation of OCC's highways maintenance contractor. In the renewal of this contract in 2025 the partnership is working to further improve by setting science-based targets for the contract in alignment with Policy 27 of LTCP.
- Since the 2024 review, climate action has been working on an improvement plan which is currently in consultation with heads of service of infrastructure teams (Transport Delivery, Place Shaping, Highways Maintenance and Procurement) and developing tailored PAS2080 guides for each infrastructure team/function along with a methodology for translating national and regional carbon reduction targets to infrastructure project/programme level. The climate action team is also actively participating with procurement colleagues in reviewing the procurement ways of working to introduce PAS2080 requirements as part of procurement's broader review of contract management processes.

Enabling Oxfordshire's transition to net zero (linked to PAZCO)		
Transport and connectivity		**RAG**
Implement Local Transport and Connectivity Plan (LTCP), including embodied carbon policy	Director of Environment and Highways	A

Following adoption of the LTCP in July 2022, work has been ongoing to progress and implement the policies in the LTCP. This has included the following since Q3 of 2024:

<table>
<tr><td colspan="3">• Following a public consultation, the phase two schools were approved to use Automatic Number Plate Recognition cameras to enforce their school street trials.
• The adoption of Sustainable School Travel Strategy 2024/25.
• Progress on the development of Local Walking and Cycling Infrastructure Plans (LCWIPS).
• The first demonstrations of last mile freight innovation solutions under GREENLOG, a Horizon Europe project, in Q4 of 2024.
• Progress towards an Oxfordshire Rail Strategy.
• A 2025/26 delivery plan for the Bus Service Improvement Plan was approved by the council and is due to be submitted to government - this plan includes more than £15 million for improving bus services in the county.
• Progress on HGV studies in Windrush and Henley.
• Progress on an Emissions Parking Charging study.
• Progress on the emerging Movement and Place Strategies.
• Consultation for the Central Oxfordshire Movement and Place Framework Phase 1: City Centre and North Oxford.
• Consultation for the Oxford Greenways project.
• Publication of the second annual LTCP monitoring report.
• Publication of an updated LTCP to include factual corrections and a new target to reduce car vehicle miles driven in Oxfordshire by 20% by 2030.
It is also noted that ongoing delays to the reopening of the Botley Road have impacted the rollout of traffic filters and other central Oxford schemes within the LTCP.</td></tr>
<tr><td><b>Evaluate and extend car-share schemes enabling reduced vehicle ownership, subject to receiving grant funding</b></td><td>Lead Technologist – EV Integration</td><td>A</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="3">• Following the completion of the EV car club pilot, all car club vehicles that were in place have remained and a few more have been added.
• Across the sites involved in the pilot (20 district council public car parks and two Oxford Park and Rides) there are currently 11 EV and 2 petrol hybrid car club vehicles in operation.
• A small number of non-EV car club vehicles have been introduced into Oxfordshire in recent months, but it is not expected that EV car club expansion will continue at significant pace without further intervention from OCC.
• Further research has been completed, and a suggested programme of works and resourcing approach to delivering more EV car clubs over the next three years for decision.
• This is rated amber as resource for any extension to the scheme will need to be sought.</td></tr>
<tr><td><b>Delivery of Oxfordshire Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Strategy through the OxLEVI programme</b></td><td>Team Leader – EV Integration</td><td>A</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="3">• Procurement is currently underway for two charge point operator (CPO) concessionaires to install at least 1,200 public EV chargers by the end of 2027.
• Procurement is also currently underway for a supplier to provide and install EV charging cable gullies under the LEVI Pilot project.
• It is expected that OCC will start to take applications from residents for EV charging cable gullies from mid-summer 2025 at the latest.</td></tr>
</table>

Buildings		**RAG**
Delivery of retrofit innovation programmes – Clean Heat Streets, Oxfordshire Energy Insights Project	Head of Climate Action	G
• Clean Heat Streets concluded with a double-bill event on the final day of delivery, 31 January 2025, engaging partners, the Department for Energy Security & Net Zero (DESNZ) and residents – including the 31 people those who had received an ASHP through the project, and those interested in the future. • Funding for Clean Heat Streets phase II to utilise the model developed under the Heat Pump Ready scheme is now being sought to continue delivery and expand the area of focus. • The Energy Saver App, launched under the DESNZ-funded Alternative Energy Markets Programme last summer, has now received a 6-month extension, allowing work to continue beyond this quarter, through to 1 October 2025. • Installations of solar PV with battery storage have continued (the first two being in December 2024), with an ASHP offer to launch next quarter.		
Expand retrofit delivery to homes in fuel poverty – complete Home Upgrade Grant 2 and apply for Local Authority Retrofit Scheme	Head of Climate Action	**Complete**
• Delivery against the Home Upgrade Grant, phase II completed in May 2025 covering 150 homes • £3.75m of Warm Homes: Local Grant funding across 3 years has been awarded to the Oxfordshire consortium, to be delivered by OCC.		
Input into the development of strong local planning policy driving environmental outcomes	Head of Strategic Planning	G
• OCC is currently responding to the emerging district and city Local Plans, and also providing advice to strategic sites and Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects. • Since September 2024, the Climate Team has responded to the National Planning Policy Framework Consultation the South East Strategic Reservoir Option consultation, elements of the Botley West Solar Farm examination, and worked with the Strategic Planning team to promote the inclusion of climate action in the delivery of various strategic sites • OCC is responsible for the production of the Local Nature Recovery Strategy for Oxfordshire by Autumn 2025 and the Biodiversity and Nature Recovery team has taken the lead in its production/undertaken consultation. • The council is also engaging with a proposal by a private developer for a Heat Network in Oxford.		
Energy		**RAG**
In partnership, delivery of Local Energy Oxfordshire Neighbourhoods (LEO-N) expanding our work on smart community energy systems	Head of Climate Action / Consortium	R
• The LEO-N project was put on hold after an unsuccessful Strategic Innovation Fund bid run by Ofgem.		

• There have been some discussions of a resubmission of the bid, however without OCC’s involvement at this stage.		
Development and delivery of Local Area Energy plan for County	Head of Climate Action / FOP Infrastructure Advisory Group	G
• This programme seeks to set out the pathways and projects required at a district level in order for net zero ambitions to be met. This also includes deep engagement with the energy sector to give them an understanding of our growth and energy needs which will in turn determine their investment strategies. Additionally, it will look at the investment needs for net zero infrastructure in the county. • A successful open-market procurement led to the appointment of Arup as the consultant for OxLAEP, reporting to the county consortium led by OCC. • Contract mobilisation began in January 2025, followed by initial stakeholder engagement workshops, stakeholder mapping and an engagement plan. • A baseline energy assessment for the county is complete as of June 2025 in preparation for the district level planning.		
Development of green finance workstreams including Oxfordshire green prospectus, finance strategy, Green Bond and 2025 100together green finance conference	Head of Finance / Various	G
• Work on a green investment prospectus for Oxfordshire has continued, with five projects featured in the initial prospectus. The prospectus was launched at the 100 Together Conference at the Blavatnik School of Government on 26 June 2025. • A Green Finance and Investment Working Group has been formed under the 100 Together brand looking at further opportunities to support financing green initiatives. • In the budget setting process the council agreed to allocate funding to a loan system to bring forward more nature recovery and carbon sequestration projects in the county. • OCC’s first green bond programme was launched in December 2024, and raised £500,000 which will be used to fund a range of energy efficiency improvements to council-owned buildings as well as an ambitious tree planting programme.		
Waste and consumption (circular economy)		**RAG**
Develop Oxfordshire circular economy strategy	Head of Environment and Circular Economy	**Complete**
• A Circular Economy Plan has been developed for the council and is appended to this report for approval by Cabinet.		
Delivery of strong climate outcomes in the Minerals and Waste Local Plan	Head of Strategic Planning	G
• The adopted Minerals and Waste Local Plan and its policies continue to be used in the determination of Minerals and Waste planning applications. The Minerals and Waste Local Plan includes policies to ensure strong climate outcomes. • A review is underway to assess progress alongside a proposed new system for plan making.		

<table>
<tr><td colspan="3">• The team have been successful in bidding for Central Government funding for a new Sustainability Officer role within the team.
• A Climate Impact Assessment tool is being explored which can be used to strategically assess minerals and waste sites.</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2"><b>Adaptation and resilience</b></td><td><b>RAG</b></td></tr>
<tr><td><b>Convene multiagency underwater summit to review 2023-24 Oxfordshire flooding to scope pre-emptive action to reduce harm from future recurrence</b></td><td>Director of Public Affairs, Policy and Partnerships</td><td><b>Complete</b></td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="3">• The Underwater Summit took place in December 2024 and was well attended by a broad range of stakeholders including district, town and parish councils, representatives of the farming community, representatives of community flood groups, the Met Office, the Environment Agency as well as internal OCC teams including flood risk management, resilience team, planning, communications, highways and others.
• Key outputs from the meeting were:
o Improved understanding of the complex systems around flood response and the different roles and responsibilities across multiple organisations.
o Connections and contacts made between the individuals at the meeting.
o An action plan was developed.
o Initial meetings of a ‘Flooding task force’</td></tr>
<tr><td><b>Develop an adaptation strategy which incorporates the role of people, nature and technology in adapting and building resilience</b></td><td>Head of Climate Action</td><td><b>Complete</b></td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="3">• The Adaptation Route Map was endorsed by OLJC in January 2025, with approval received from OCC Cabinet in February 2025.
• The Route Map can be found on the Oxfordshire Data Hub.
• The implementation phase of the Route Map is now underway as reported to OLJC in June. The Route Map was launched at the Oxfordshire Climate Adaptation Summit in March 2025 and the first Climate Adaptation Working Group meeting has been convened under the Zero Carbon Oxfordshire Partnership (ZCOP).</td></tr>
<tr><td><b>Extend pilot flood wardens’ engagement programme</b></td><td>Principal Officer – Flood Risk Management</td><td>G</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="3">• The Volunteer Flood Warden Scheme is currently being rolled out county-wide. Target areas are based on locations that have experienced flooding in the past. At present, volunteer flood wardens are in place in the following locations:
o Ascott under Wychwood – 3 volunteers
o Witney – 7 volunteers
o Sunningwell – 3 volunteers
o Abingdon – 4 volunteers
• Town and Parish Councils are continuing to be approached for the scheme’s rollout. The next areas for training are Kidlington and Thame.
• Kidlington Parish Council advertised for volunteers in April 2025, with training to be held in June 2025.
• Approximately 10 other locations are being approached, and this list is under constant review.</td></tr>
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<table>
<tr><th colspan="2">Natural environment</th><th>RAG</th></tr>
<tr><td><b>Develop Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) for Oxfordshire, integrating with adaptation strategy</b></td><td>Principal Biodiversity Officer</td><td>G</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="3">• The draft version of the LNRS was prepared for public consultation.
• The LNRS team attended over 50 meetings during the 6-week consultation to engage directly with over 700 local people and organisations. Further online communication was also completed.
• The consultation received high levels of positive participation with 2,143 responses to the LNRS documents and map and strong agreement levels supporting the draft version.
• Engagement levels were approximately 5-10 times higher than other areas of England, so time is being taken to ensure proper consideration of all comments, which are being incorporated into the final version of the LNRS.
• A final copy of all written LNRS documents and map data was prepared by June 2025. After June, this will be shared with the district, city, and county councils to begin the process of approving and adopting the strategy.</td></tr>
<tr><td><b>Develop biodiversity net gain policy</b></td><td>Principal Biodiversity Officer</td><td>G</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="3">• A report on Biodiversity Actions in 2024 has been produced.
• A draft Biodiversity Action Framework and draft Biodiversity Action Plan are ready for internal consultation. The Framework document contains a biodiversity net gain policy with regards to council-led development. Any revisions of OCC planning policy will be carried out through the Minerals and Waste Local Plan update.
• The consultation for these documents has been extended to mid-July 2025, and they will be taken to Full Council for adoption on 4 November 2025 to align with the timetable for the adoption of the LNRS.
• It is required under the Environment Act/NERC Act that a report on actions taken under the Biodiversity Duty is published in Jan 2026.</td></tr>
<tr><td><b>Working with Natural Capital Investment Group for Local Nature Partnership (LNP) to develop offset model for Oxfordshire</b></td><td>Oxfordshire Local Nature Partnership Manager</td><td>G</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="3">• A set of draft nature market principles have been developed. The draft principles are currently being tested with several projects locally to assess relevance/applicability.
• 3Keel is close to finalising a market opportunity assessment of ecosystem services (including carbon) that could be delivered from Oxfordshire, and combining with potential demand sources. Work is ongoing to develop potential delivery mechanism.
• The LNP is working with the North East Cotswold Farmer Cluster to develop natural flood management (NFM) and soil carbon baselining across the Cherwell district. This should enable landowners & farmers to achieve more rapid, lower cost access to nature markets and contribute to understanding of private market opportunities that NFM may provide in particular locations.
• The LNP team is involved in assessing biochar potential across Oxfordshire & liaising closely with OCC team. There has been ongoing participation with wider UK/DESNZ greenhouse gas removal initiatives using biochar, and the LNP recently participated in policy workshop with UK Demonstrator</td></tr>
</table>

project/DEFRA/EA identifying potential levers to encourage local authority and farmer/landowner participation in biochar projects. • Work has been progressing with Trust for Oxfordshire's Environment (TOE) on establishment of investment fund for progressing early-stage projects aligned with LNRS to investment-readiness. The governance and operational framework are being finalised, with formal launch anticipated in late June 2025. OCC funding of £0.5m and existing £0.2m from TOE will form the initial capital for the fund.		
Deliver tree replacement programme, including development of County-wide partnerships and collaborations to increase tree cover.	Head of Environment and Circular Economy / Principal Officer - Arboriculture	🟩 G
• In October 2024 feedback was collated from stakeholders about proposed tree planting sites, and the plan was adjusted taking into account feedback within the consultation period. • The first tree delivery was received in November 2024 and planting began on in subsequent days. • A total of 1079 trees were planted between November 2024 and March 2025. • The Tree Planting feedback form has continued to capture feedback and retains respondent feedback of this work as >95% were pleased to see that OCC is planting trees and >96% of respondents who have seen trees that we have planted rate the quality of planting Fair or Excellent. • This year ~23% of tree planting has focused on planting food or nut producing trees within communities. This has been possible through the Coronation Living Heritage Fund, a government grant (approximately £50,000) which was successfully secured and delivered. As the trees grow, communities will have access to the produce on their 'doorsteps' with added benefits for biodiversity. • To support a resilient and diverse treescape which has the potential to adapt to a changing climate, 157 different varieties of tree were planted, made up of 39 different genus across the 829 trees planted in highway and other sites. • Between now and June 2025, we plan to begin planning and identifying the planting locations for 25-26 tree planting.		
Community support and engagement		**RAG**
Develop new climate engagement and comms strategy and activity	Head of Climate Action	🟩 G
• Participatory development of the Climate Engagement Action Plan has been completed. The Participatory Report was written and published, and participatory phase findings presented in three webinars to 180 people and in person at the Adaptation summit and a Cherwell District Council event. • The Climate Engagement Action Plan was completed in March 2025. The Participatory Report was written and published, and participatory phase findings presented in three webinars to 180 people and in person at the Adaptation summit and a Cherwell District Council event. • Reviewed and added 'Actions' and articles to the Climate Action Oxfordshire Website and a map signposting the wide range of community activity on climate action. • Developed a community-based project in three Oxfordshire communities with CAG and ZCOP and submitted EOI for Lottery funding		

• Supported Schools work in the Henley area and supported the strategy development and Launch of the Greener Henley Charity • Presented at Party for the Planet with stall targeting residents and visitors • Received Britain Talks Climate training from CSE and Climate Outreach and roll out of training to other internal teams and external partners		
Continue to support scale up of Community Action Group (CAG) network	Head of Environment and Circular Economy	G
• Work continues to progress well as part the CAG grant agreement in place. • The Climate Action Team have continued to support the CAG through a tree give away and funding for Great Big Green Week activities within communities across the county. • Data collection for 2024/5 annual report is underway. • The 2024/5 annual report is due to be delivered by July 2025. • The publicity around the launch of the annual report will be planned and actioned during this period.		
Partnership and Strategy		**RAG**
Support the creation of a Zero Carbon Oxfordshire Climate Partnership	Head of Climate Action	G
• The expanded Zero Carbon Oxfordshire Partnership (ZCOP) was launched in interim form in March 2025. Key organisations across the county were engaged with including Blenheim, Harwell Campus and Abingdon and Witney College. • The Adaptation Working Group convened in the first week of May 2025, and is responsible for the delivery of the Oxfordshire Adaptation Route Map. • The ZCOP Industrial Decarbonisation Roadmap and Action Plan has been published, outlining the key actions required to decarbonise industry within Oxford City. • An Oxford Industrial Cluster has also been established, bringing together organisations who manufacture, process or produce goods within the Oxford City Council area, to deliver, drive and scale the net zero transition in industry through targeted action. • Low Carbon Oxford North, in partnership with ZCOP, has launched a new Oxford Travel Options website to offer travel information and advice for people living, working and visiting Oxford. • The ZCOP Annual Report was published to highlight the key activities and impacts delivered by the Partnership over the last year, including progress against the ZCOP Roadmap and Action Plan, and updates on the ZCOP's working groups and sprints.		
Play an active role in networks to promote OCC's work and lobby government	Various	G
• The Climate Action team submitted a response to the Climate Emergency UK Scorecard through the Right of Reply period in December 2024. The results of the scorecard are expected in June 2025. • A new public affairs and energy role is being hosted within the Climate Action team to enhance our public affairs work when it comes to transitioning the energy systems. This will include raising our profile within central govt and other key public policy stakeholders.		

- The Climate Action Team has represented OCC at Utility Week Live and the APSE Big Energy Summit.
- The Energy Systems & Investment Team received a special commendation in the National Energy Efficiency Awards, and were a finalist for the Energy Saver App project in the Utility Week Awards.
- Members of the team were interviewed for BBC Radio Oxford and BBC Radio South Today, as well as being featured in the local press to talk about the Energy Saver App and other retrofit programmes.
- The council continues to work jointly in a number of formal and informal forums on activity to tackle the climate emergency, including through the Greater South East Net Zero Hub, Local Nature Partnership, Future Oxfordshire Partnership, LEO and the Low Carbon Hub, and actively leading a number a workstreams under ZCOP. Partnership with Oxfordshire businesses has continued through the Oxfordshire Greentech network.
- The council is an active member of the following national networks through which it shares best practice with other local authorities and lobbies government on national climate policy: UK100, Association of Directors of Environment, Planning and Transport Climate Change and Environment Boards (ADEPT). Oxfordshire County Council also currently chairs the Local Government Association Sustainability Action Network.

Overview of Climate Action Programme 2025/26 Delivery Plan

Activities included in the 2025/26 Climate Action Programme are as follows:

Climate Action Programme 2025/26 delivery plan		**Benchmark/Target**
Becoming a climate active council		
Reach silver status as a Carbon Literate Organisation by December 2026 Reach silver status for Economy & Place/Environment & Highways by December 2025	Directors / Organisational Development	• Number of colleagues accredited: 15% target for OCC, 30% target for Economy and Place/Environment and Highways
Decarbonising our estate and operations by 2030		
Deliver *Carbon Management Plan 2025-30: planned actions for 2025/26* (estate, fleet, highway assets and staff travel)	Director of Joint Property Services/ Head of Climate Action	• **Estate** - Complete PSDS 3a & 3c decarb works (27 buildings). • **Highways** - Complete LED traffic bollard replacement, heritage lamp replacement possibilities and part-night lighting consultation. • **Fleet** - 65 vehicles replaced with EVs. Complete vehicle and travel policy. Create new procurement model. Complete second phase of VMS fleet management system. Procure Vehicle trackers and collect/analyse data. • **Business Travel** - Complete essential user vehicle allocation for 10 high mileage drivers.
Develop a carbon insetting strategy and action plan for the council's own estate.	Head of Climate Action	• Receive cabinet agreement for offsetting strategy. • Deliver on funding for credits
Support schools through providing Action on Carbon and Energy in Schools (ACEs) programme and deliver and evaluate success of loan scheme	Head of Climate Action	• Allocate remainder of loan and complete energy efficiency projects (Total £1.8m). • Continue to offer support to schools through ACEs
Put the climate emergency at the heart of OCC's professional activities by integrating Scope 3 emissions reporting directly into our policies in procurement and engaging with our supply chain.	Head of Procurement Contract Management	• 15 suppliers directly reporting emissions to OCC • Roll out of Ethical Procurement Policy V2 to incentivise service areas to adopt increased climate emissions reporting into new procurements. • Recalculation of expenditure-based carbon assessment of OCC supply chain will improve data quality and inform strategy in the Contract Management Review
Support OCC transport infrastructure teams (Place Shaping, Transport Delivery, Highways Maintenance and Procurement) to enhance carbon governance to implement policy 27 (Embodied Carbon) of Local	Director of Transport and Infrastructure	• Development of two PAS2080 Guidelines: 1) Place Shaping/Transport Delivery 2) Procurement

Transport Connectivity Plan through the adoption of PAS2080 processes.		• Develop one methodology for translating national and regional carbon reduction targets at transport infrastructure project/programme level. • Implement continuous improvement in new Highways Maintenance contract including the adoption of Science Based Targets.
Enabling Oxfordshire's transition to net zero – Pathways to a Zero Carbon Oxfordshire Outcomes		
Transport and connectivity		
Implement Local Transport and Connectivity Plan, including embodied carbon policy	Director of Transport and Infrastructure	• As measured by LTCP annual report
Delivery of Oxfordshire Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Strategy through the OxLEVI programme	Team Leader - EV Integration	• Number of chargers to be installed - 1182 by end of 2027
Buildings		
Delivery of Warm Homes:Local Grant government-funded capital grant scheme.	Head of Climate Action	• 173 properties completed over 3 years • £3.5m Capital spend over 3 years
Retrofit Strategy development	Head of Climate Action	• Completion and agreement of a retrofit strategy
Input into the development of strong local planning policy and major applications driving environmental outcomes	Head of Strategic Planning/ Head of Countryside and Waste / Head of Climate Action	• Respond effectively to NSIPs and proposed development
Energy		
Local Area Energy Planning Programme	Head of Climate Action / OLJC LAEP subgroup	• Oxfordshire LAEP delivered • Coordinate input into the 3 Distribution System Operators for electricity investment planning for the energy needs of the county. • Development of investment models
Green Finance		
Continued development of green finance workstreams including launch and marketing of the Oxfordshire green prospectus, development of a capital and investment strategy, and continued promotion of the 100 Together programme	Head of Finance /Various	• Launch of the Oxon Green Futures website • Delivery of the 100 Together conference
Waste and consumption (circular economy)		
Deliver the Circular Economy Plan	Head of Climate Action	• Adoption by Cabinet in July 2025 • Develop monitoring framework by July 2026

Adaptation and resilience		
Implement the Oxfordshire Adaptation Route Map and Action Plan	Head of Climate Action	• As measured in OLJC report
Extend Pilot flood wardens' engagement programme	Principal Officer – Flood Risk Management	• Target 10 areas for new flood warden recruitment
Natural environment		
Develop the Local Nature Recovery Strategy for Oxfordshire	Head of Countryside and Waste	• Adoption by Cabinet in Autumn 2025
Develop Biodiversity Action Framework and reporting	Head of Countryside and Waste	• Adoption by Cabinet in Autumn 2025
Working with Natural Capital Investment Group for LNP to develop offset model for Oxfordshire	Oxfordshire Local Nature Partnership Manager	• Project completion in October 2025
Deliver tree replacement programme, including development of County-wide partnerships and collaborations to increase tree cover.	Head of Environment and Circular Economy / Principal Officer - Arboriculture	• 1,100 trees planted and established on land OCC own and manage by March 2026 • 90% survival rate of trees planted on land OCC own and manage
Community support and engagement		
Deliver the year 1 actions of the Climate Engagement Strategy	Head of Climate Action	• Website traffic • Attendance at workshops
Continue to support scale up of Community Action Group network	Head of Environment and Circular Economy	• Total of 3,000 events per year across the network
Partnership and Strategy		
Refresh the Climate Action Framework	Head of Climate Action	• Adoption by Cabinet in April 2026
Support the continued expansion of the Zero Carbon Oxfordshire Climate Partnership	Head of Climate Action	• Recruit an additional 9 members from the wider county
Play an active role in networks to promote OCC 's work and lobby government	Various	• Develop bank of case studies to share best practice with networks • Continue submitting for awards and representing OCC at conferences and events

Divisions Affected - All

CABINET DECISION

15 JULY 2025

OXFORDSHIRE MINERALS AND WASTE LOCAL PLAN

UPDATE ON PROCESS OF PRODUCING THE MINERALS AND WASTE LOCAL PLAN

Report by Director of Economy and Place

RECOMMENDATION

The Cabinet is **RECOMMENDED** to:

- approve the cessation of the preparation of the new Minerals and Waste Local Plan under the current plan-making process and authorise the production of a new Minerals and Waste Local Plan under the new plan-making process in accordance with the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act 2023
- delegate to the Director of Economy and Place in consultation with the Director of Law and Governance and Monitoring Officer
  (a) to put in place changes to the Minerals and Waste Development Scheme to reflect this and
  (b) to carry out a review within 6 months if the provisions of the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act have not been brought into force by that time or earlier if necessary.

Summary

1. The County Council is the Minerals and Waste Planning Authority for Oxfordshire and responsible for producing the Oxfordshire Minerals and Waste Local Plan which, alongside the District Authority Local Plans, forms the Development Plan for Oxfordshire.

2. It was agreed by Cabinet in December 2022 to prepare a new Minerals and Waste Local Plan, which, upon adoption, will replace the Oxfordshire Minerals and Waste Local Plan Part 1 – Core Strategy (OMWCS) (2017). The Core Strategy remains the County Council's Development Plan Document until it is replaced. The Core Strategy will continue to be relevant minerals and waste planning policy during the time the new plan takes to be produced. There will be no change to the risk of speculative development.

3. The County Council is required to produce and maintain a Minerals and Waste Development Scheme[1] (MWDS) which contains the timetable for Minerals and

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[1] The Levelling Up and Regeneration Act 2023 includes provisions to remove the requirement to produce a Local Development Scheme and instead to prepare a "local plan timetable" (Schedule 7). However, these

Waste Local Plan production. The most recent MWDS was approved by Cabinet in December 2022.

4. The preparation process of the new Local Plan currently remains the same as set out with the timetable outlined in the December 2022 MWDS. However, progress through this process has been impacted by ongoing challenges in preparing the evidence required and acquiring the relevant expertise. These constraints have limited the County Council's capacity to meet the milestones as set out within the MWDS; this despite continued efforts to address the issue.

5. Whilst the adopted Minerals and Waste Local Plan itself remains in place, the MWDS for the new MInerals and Waste Local Plan is now significantly out of date and the timetable within it provides little guidance to our communities, our partners, industry and Central Government on our Local Plan preparation process or its timetable. It therefore requires updating accordingly.

6. It should be noted that, since the MWDS was agreed in 2022, a number of changes are being proposed by Central Government, including:
   - New Plan Making Process
     - A proposed plan making timescale of 30 months;
     - Three "gateways" in the process to advise on plan production;
     - Replacement of the MWDS with a "Local Plan Timetable
   - Proposed introduction of National Development Management Policies.

7. The Authority has considered four potential options:
   1. **Maintain Status Quo**: Refrain from updating the MWDS and await the commencement of the new plan making process.
   2. **Extend MWDS Timeline**: Continue with the current plan-making process and establish a new, extended timeframe within a revised Minerals and Waste Development Scheme, disregarding the current December 2026 proposals.
   3. **Engage External Resources**: Appoint external resources to complete the preparation and submission of the Local Plan by December 2026 in line with current MWDS.
   4. **Cease and Prepare**: Cease the current plan preparation process, amend the MWDS to reflect this, and initiate the new plan-making process once brought into force(in accordance with expected Government plan making guidelines).

8. Following a review of the options noted in 7, above, it is recommended that the production of the Minerals and Waste Plan under the current plan making system is formally ended and Plan preparation under the new process once secondary legislation is made is agreed (Option 4).

9. Ceasing the production of the Minerals and Waste Local Plan under the current plan-making system and agreeing to produce the plan under the new plan-making system:
   - Would provide greater certainty to stakeholders, partners and our communities;

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provisions have not yet been brought into effect

- Would not affect the status of the current Minerals and Waste Local Plan Part 1 – Core Strategy;
- Would not halt work on other minerals and waste policy and strategy responsibilities;
- Would allow the formal process on the new plan-making system to be well planned, resourced and commenced, following the release of revised plan making details from central government.

10. Further analysis of the options not recommended are set out in the body of the report below.

Background

11. The County Council is the Minerals and Waste Planning Authority for Oxfordshire and is responsible for all minerals and waste planning matters in the county.

12. A requirement of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended) is that each Minerals and Waste Planning Authority should produce a Minerals and Waste Development Scheme (MWDS), which is the Minerals and Waste Planning Authority version of the Local Development Scheme (LDS) produced by District and Unitary Councils and must contain the same information as an LDS.

13. The MWDS sets out the Council's priorities for producing planning policy documents. It must include any Development Plan Documents it intends to publish, their area of coverage, subject matter and a timetable indicating the main milestones of production and revision.[2] The Minerals and Waste Local Plan is a Development Plan Document.

14. The new Local Plan is therefore still subject to the preparation timetable as set out in the current Minerals and Waste Development Scheme (as set out above).

Current Minerals and Waste Development Scheme Timetable

15. The current timetable for the new Minerals and Waste Local Plan production is set out in the published Oxfordshire Minerals and Waste Development Scheme (MWDS) (Dec 2022). This MWDS sets out three consultation stages in the Plans preparation, followed by Submission of the Plan for Examination by the Planning Inspectorate (Regulation 22) and Adoption; these within a three-year period. Under this timetable, the Minerals and Waste Plan was due to be submitted for examination in March 2025.

16. To achieve this timescale of Plan production, the programme required substantial support from external contracts/consultants to undertake significant

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[2] The Levelling Up and Regeneration Act 2023 includes provisions to remove the requirement for planning authorities to produce a Local Development Scheme and instead to prepare and maintain a "local plan timetable" (Schedule 7). However, these provisions have not yet been brought into effect.

evidence-based projects such as the sustainability appraisal and strategic flood risk assessments.

17. Upon seeking contracts from external consultants, it was determined that procuring and ensuring Value for Money within the prescribed timeframe, was not feasible.

18. Therefore, the new Minerals and Waste Local Plan, under the current timetable is not able to be delivered.

19. The MWDS is therefore now significantly out of date and provides little guidance to our communities, our partners, industry, Planning Inspectorate and Central Government on our Local Plan preparation process. The timetable therefore requires updating.

Current Planning Policy

20. The Oxfordshire Minerals and Waste Local Plan Part 1 – Core Strategy (OMWCS) was adopted in September 2017 and is the County Council's Development Plan Document. It sits alongside relevant District Local Plans and relevant Neighbourhood Plans to form the Development Plan for Oxfordshire.

21. The OMWCS will stay in force until it is replaced, and so there will continue to be relevant minerals and waste planning policy during the time a new plan takes to be produced. There will be no change to the risk of speculative development through cessation of new Local Plan preparation.

Progress on the Minerals and Waste Local Plan and Other Work Areas

22. Despite the challenge in advancing beyond the initial stages of Plan preparation for the reasons set out above, further work has continued on the wider evidence base by the Minerals and Waste Policy and Strategy Plan team, notably the Local Aggregates Assessments and establishing waste baseline figures.

Central Government Changes to Plan-making

23. The Government has proposed a new plan-making process designed to expedite the Local Plan development.

24. Some key points of the proposed changes are:
    - A proposed timescale of 30 months;
    - Three gateways in the process to advise on plan plan production;
    - Replacement of the MWDS with a "Local Plan Timetable"; and
    - Introduction of National Development Management policies to reduce overlap in policy writing.

25. The Levelling Up and Regeneration Act received Royal Assent in October 2023. However, the provisions relating to plan-making have not yet been brought into force. Secondary legislation and changes to national policy and guidance are anticipated, but the detail and timing of these remains uncertain.

The current government has stated that it intends to implement the new plan-making system as set out in the Levelling-up and Regeneration Act from summer or autumn 2025. (https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/proposed-reforms-to-the-national-planning-policy-framework-and-other-changes-to-the-planning-system)

26. The Government has set out transitional arrangements to the existing plan-making process. This requires that any Local Plans be submitted for examination by December 2026 under the current plan-making process, or the process should begin again under the new plan-making process[3]. It is not possible to meet that timeline and therefore any plan will need to be developed under the new plan-making process.

Options for the Minerals and Waste Local Plan

27. It is considered that the Authority has four options available:

Option	Proposal	Benefits	Risks
OPTION 1 Maintain Status Quo	**Refrain from updating the MWDS and await the commencement of the new plan process.**	**Resources** No additional resources will be required until the new plan process is brought into force. **Finance** No additional finances will be required until the new plan process is brought into force.	**Clarity and Transparency** Provides no clarity or transparency to partners and stakeholders, including the public, industry, and statutory consultees. **Central Government Involvement** If the Secretary of State believes a Local Planning Authority are failing or omitting to do anything it is necessary for them to do in connection with the preparation, revision or adoption of a development plan document they may intervene.
OPTION 2 Extend current MWDS Timeline	**Continue with the current plan-making process for the New Minerals and Waste Local Plan by formally extending the timeline within a revised MWDS.**	**Process Continuity** Retains the current known plan-making process. **Transparency and Accountability:** Provides a timeline for partners and stakeholders, including the public, industry, and statutory consultees. **Stakeholder Confidence** Demonstrates the Authority's commitment to progressing the Local Plan.	**Deadline Sensitivity:** As set out in guidance, if the new Local Plan is not submitted for examination by 2026, the current plan making process must cease. The plan would then need to restart under the new national plan-making framework, resulting in significant delays and potential abandonment of work already undertaken. **Financial Implications:** Restarting the process if the December 2026 deadline were missed, would incur additional costs, including re-engagement of consultants and possible duplication of technical work. This could lead to inefficient use of public funds and not offer Value for Money. **Reputational Risk:** A failure to deliver the plan within the extended timeframe may damage the

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[3] Paragraph 235 of Levelling-up and Regeneration Bill: consultation on implementation of plan-making reforms - GOV.UK

Option	Proposal	Benefits	Risks
			Authority's credibility, particularly given the previous cessation of the Site Allocations Plan. **Community Impact:** Communities previously consulted on options and potential sites may feel disenfranchised if the process is halted again, potentially reducing engagement and trust in future consultations.
OPTION 3 Engage External Resources	**Appoint external resources to complete the preparation of the Local Plan by December 2026 and prepare a MWDS to meet this timescale.**	**Process Continuity:** Retains the current plan-making process, avoiding disruption. **Transparency and Accountability:** A revised and published MWDS provides a clear and accountable framework for stakeholders, including the public, industry, and statutory consultees. **Compliance:** Ensures the Authority remains compliant with statutory requirements by maintaining an up-to-date and publicly available development scheme. **Stakeholder Confidence:** Demonstrates the Authority's commitment to progressing the Local Plan. **Secures Dedicated Expertise:** Ensures that resources are in place from the outset	**Lack of consultants:** Previous lack of interest due to tight deadlines may recur or drive up costs **Deadline Sensitivity:** Missing the 2026 deadline would force a restart under new process, wasting prior work. **Financial Implications:** If December 2026 deadline missed, restarting would incur extra costs and duplicate technical work, reducing value for money. Alternatively to complete it by December 2026, would be highly costly to the Authority for the amount of resources required **Reputational Risk:** A failure to deliver the plan within the extended timeframe may damage the Authority's credibility, particularly given the previous cessation of the Site Allocations Plan. **Community Impact:** Communities previously consulted on the draft plan and potential sites may feel disenfranchised if the process is halted again, potentially reducing engagement and trust in future consultations. **Loss of in-house expertise:** Consultants would be employed for a fixed time frame, after which any monitoring, review and questions on the Local Plan would be the responsibility of the Authority who may not have the in house knowledge.
OPTION 4 Cease current plan preparation and prepare for new approach	**Cease the current plan preparation process and initiate the new plan-making process once brought into effect.**	**Transparency** Having a clear approach on next steps for the Authority provides clarity to stakeholders, including the public, industry, and statutory consultees **Align with Future Legislation** Avoids the risk of having to redo work to comply with new legal requirements once the new framework is in force. **Efficiency and Clarity**	**Delays in Government legislation** The Government may delay the publication of the Legislation, causing a further deferment to be starting the new process. **Central Government Involvement** Central Government may wish to intervene and prepare a Local Plan for the Authority if we are not preparing a new plan if the new legislation is not brought into force. **Uncertainty for Stakeholders** Developers, communities, and

Option	Proposal	Benefits	Risks
		Starting a new Local Plan under the new system may streamline the process, reduce duplication, and provide a clearer structure aligned with national expectations. **Least Financial Risk** Prevents spending on consultants or technical work that may become obsolete or non-compliant under the new rules. **Strategic Reset** Offers an opportunity to reassess priorities, evidence, and options in light of updated national policy and local needs. **Movement at Pace** Enables the team to undertake evidence gathering and be at the forefront on the new plan making system **MWDS** The Authority still have a MWDS but it will state that the Plan production has ceased and a new Plan will be prepared under the new Plan process	statutory bodies may face prolonged uncertainty, affecting investment and engagement. **Plan making period takes longer that 2031** Our current policies remain in place until 2031. After that we would need to save them for them to still be considered in decision making

Recommended Option

28. It is recommended that Option 4 "Ceasing the production of the Minerals and Waste Local Plan under the current plan-making system and preparing to produce the plan under the new plan-making system" is the approach taken by the Authority. The MWDS will be updated to reflect this.

29. Ceasing the production of the Minerals and Waste Local Plan under the current plan-making system and agreeing to produce the plan under the new plan-making system:
    - Would provide greater certainty to stakeholders, partners and our communities;
    - Would not affect the status of the current Minerals and Waste Local Plan Part 1 – Core Strategy;
    - Would not halt work on other minerals and waste policy and strategy responsibilities;

30. It is also recommended that the Authority undertake a review on this position, within 6 months, if the provisions of the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act have not been brought into force by that time or earlier if necessary.

Plan Timetable

31. The government proposals for the plan making process set out that a local plan timetable will need to be produced at the initial stages of the plan making process in Gateway 1. The secondary legislation containing this detail is expected in the Autumn. Once this legislation is published a new local plan timetable will be drawn up.

Legal Implications

32. The current processes for the production of a local plan are set out in both primary legislation and regulations. The principal relevant legislation and regulations are:

1. The Town and Country Planning Act 1990
2. The Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012
3. The Levelling Up and Regeneration Act 2023
4. The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, in particular,

    - Section 16(1) states that each mineral and waste planning authority must prepare and maintain a scheme to be known as their minerals and waste development scheme.
    - Section 15, as applied by section 16, sets out the required contents of such a scheme, including a timetable for the production of the MWLP (as a Development Plan Document).
    - Section 15(8) states that the local planning authority must revise their local development scheme (a) at such time as they consider appropriate or (b) when directed to do so by the Secretary of State.
    - Under Section 27 if the Secretary of State thinks that a local planning authority are failing or omitting to do anything it is necessary for them to do in connection with the preparation, revision or adoption of a development plan document they may—
        (a) prepare or revise (as the case may be) the document, or
        (b) give directions to the authority in relation to the preparation or revision of the document

33. A decision to cease production of the current Local Plan and start work on a new local plan when the provisions for the new plan-making process have been brought into force is a pragmatic approach in the current transitional period. This can be reviewed if there is a threatened challenge and should be reviewed in any event within 6 months.

34. Whilst it may not be considered a ‘key decision’ as it does not meet the criteria for a Key Decision, Minerals and Waste Local Plans are recognised as important documents that have a high level of public interest and therefore it is recommended to have a Cabinet decision on this report. In addition, it is recognised that all past decisions have been made at Cabinet, which reinforces this view.

Comments checked by: David Mytton, Solicitor,
David.Mytton@Oxfordshire.gov.uk

Equality and Inclusion Implications

35. Ceasing the current Oxfordshire Minerals and Waste Local Plan and initiating a new plan under the forthcoming legislation presents both opportunities and challenges for equality and inclusion.

36. Positively, the new plan making framework is expected to be more digital, interactive and accessible, which could enhance future plan engagement for individuals with protected characteristics—particularly those with disabilities, language barriers, or limited digital literacy.

37. It is acknowledged that the transition may prolong uncertainty and risk disengagement from communities previously consulted, especially marginalised groups who may already feel excluded from planning processes.

38. However, the current published MWDS is out of date, offering no guidance or information to our communities on what stage of Plan making the Authority is at. Being clear that the new Plan preparation has ceased, and that we will be proceeding under the new Plan making process, will provide clarity.

39. To mitigate risks, it will be essential to embed inclusive engagement strategies from the outset of the new plan making process, ensuring that it is equitable, transparent, and responsive to the diverse needs of Oxfordshire's population.

Sustainability Implications

40. The Oxfordshire Minerals and Waste Local Plan is the County Council's only policy document document that is part of the Development Plan. It is the Development Plan against which all planning applications are decided. The policies within the document are absolutely central to the County Council's climate change and Circular Economy agenda, and it is the only opportunity for the County Council to create policies that are in the Development Plan. To that extent the plan has great importance.

41. Currently the Local Plan process requires a Sustainability Appraisal (SA) and Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) to be carried out as an iterative process throughout. The proposed changes to the plan making system would replace Sustainability Appraisals with an Environmental Outcomes Report.

42. This would all be considered with the new Plan Making process.

Finance Implications

43. The production of a local plan was approved by Cabinet on 22nd December 2022. The cost of the plan production was estimated to be £320,000 including £120,000 for project costs (including the preparation of technical evidence between January 2023 and March 2025) and £200,000 due to be incurred in 2025/26 for the Examination in Public. There have been no specific budget

set aside for this and was intended to be absorbed through existing budget envelope, therefore cessation of this plan releases this pressure.

44. The new MWDS would end the plan making under the current process and commence preparations for promoting the plan under the new plan making process. That new process would require the production of a Local Plan timetable which would change the timelines of budgetary pressures, particularly on the timing of the Examination in Public.

45. The cost associated with plan preparation currently represents a net budget pressure on the Policy and Strategy teams existing budget. The budget sits within the wider Economy and Places budget.

46. At present, pausing the plan and reinitiating it under the new plan-making framework presents the option with the least financial risk.

47. In the preparation of the New Plan, all reasonable steps will be taken to manage this pressure within existing budgets. We will review potential mitigations and internal processes to support delivery reducing requirements for additional funding. However, given the statutory nature of the work, preparation of a Local Plan is a budgetary pressure that will need to be considered in future Authority budget planning.

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

Conclusion

48. Ceasing the production of the Minerals and Waste Local Plan under the current plan-making system and preparing to produce the plan under the new plan-making system provides a greater certainty to stakeholders, particularly our local communities.

49. The MWDS will be updated to reflect this and a new Local Plan timetable will be prepared once the Secondary Legislation is produced.

50. The current Minerals and Waste Local Plan Part 1 – Core Strategy remains in place as the Development Plan Document for Oxfordshire.

Robin Rogers
Director of Economy and Place

Contact Officer:	Charlotte Simms Team Leader Minerals and Waste Policy and Strategy Charlotte.simms@oxfordshire.gov.uk

CABINET

15 July 2025

Community Banking Hubs Motion

Report by Director of Public Affairs, Policy & Partnerships

RECOMMENDATION

1. **The Cabinet is RECOMMENDED to**

   a) Agree to the continuation of efforts to engage banks to provide community services within library facilities and other suitable locations in areas lacking banking services

Executive Summary

2. This report sets out the intended approach to take forward the Council Motion on community banking hubs resolved by Council on 1 April 2025.

3. A summary of recent work is included in the report together with an analysis of areas currently lacking banking services.

Background

4. On 1 April 2025 the Council passed a motion which stated: “Council requests the relevant Cabinet member for Community and Corporate Services and the Cabinet Member for Finance to take a lead from forward-thinking colleagues at Buckinghamshire Council and, working with its Town Council, and District Council partners, invite banks and building societies that have left – or are due to leave – our high streets to explore opportunities to work with this Council to set up similar banking hubs within appropriate Council libraries.”

5. This report is presented to Cabinet with the aim of responding to the motion and setting out the council’s approach to Community Banking Hubs.

Evidence of need for community banking services

6. The records of the council debate on the motion on 1 April 2025 notes that the loss of community banking services is of concern to many residents, especially older constituents and those with disabilities and adaptive needs.

7. The debate identified a variety of groups who may need access to banking services. This included those listed above but also businesses and people who preferred not to use digital services, and the main need identified was to have places to deposit and withdraw cash. Since the debate, Nat West have announced the closure of branches in Abingdon and Bicester, although this leaves other banking services in these towns.

8. The Financial Conduct Authority (FCA) published their latest research into the use of banking services in England and Wales in May 2025. A link to the report and some relevant extracts are included at Annex 1. Whilst this research reflects national trends, it provides some additional insight into potential needs for banking services.

9. LINK (the British interbank network) provide a map which identifies the location of cash facilities in all locations in the country: LINK / Cash Locator. Using this data and other publicly available sources, an analysis has been conducted of the types of banking and similar services available in settlements of more than 5,000* inhabitants in Oxfordshire. Settlements without traditional banking services are shown in Table 1 below.

Table 1**

	Types of financial services available		
Settlement	**Post Office**	**Building Society**	**Other**
Benson	Yes		
Carterton	Yes		
Chinnor	Yes		
Eynsham	Yes		
Faringdon	Yes		
Grove	Yes		
Henley-on-Thames	Yes	Nationwide	Barclays Community Bank
Kidlington	Yes	Coventry	Barclays Community Bank
Shrivenham	Yes		
Sonning Common	Yes		
Thame	Yes	Nationwide	Lloyds advice service (until Oct 25)
Wallingford	Yes	Nationwide	

*The figure of 5,000 is not significant in relation to the provision of services but is a low enough number to include all towns and large villages.
**Chipping Norton has not been included in the above list as it has a Barclays community banking service operating four days a week.

Attempts to develop community banking services in Oxfordshire

10. Library Services have been actively pursuing opportunities with a number of banks to provide community banking services in our libraries, including Barclays, Bank of Scotland and Lloyds.

11. Barclays have set up a number of pop-up sessions offering community banking services for half and full days. However, this has not yet led to an ongoing presence. The Bank of Scotland has been operating out of Didcot library for a couple of months and will continue until September 2025. A six-week trial is due to commence shortly at Didcot Library with Lloyds Banking Group providing ‘community banking’ support.

12. Thame Town Council have been keen to support the development of a banking hub there. A review by LINK of access in Thame made the sole recommendation of providing a cash deposit service for businesses. The town council have made a complaint regarding this decision but have had both their

first and second stage appeals turned down. The next appeal stage involves the appointment of an Independent Assessor to consider the matter. Hosting a hub in Thame library has also been discussed, but the building has limited space and privacy.

13. One of the main barriers to greater take-up has been limited availability of confidential meeting space at libraries. To address this need, Libraries are building this kind of facility into all new refurbishments. This will be of use for a variety of potential services.

Provision of cash facilities

14. There are a range of challenges in providing facilities for cash withdrawal and deposit in community banking hubs. The hub provided in Buckingham uses the Post Office for this purpose. However the deposit limits operated by the Post Office would make this unsuitable for many business customers. For the council to provide its own cash facilities would bring a range of requirements. The most obvious ones are secure facilities for cash storage, appropriate staffing levels, training and processes for cash handling.

Alternative forms of support

15. In the FCA research in Annex 1, a key factor driving demand for in-person banking services is digital exclusion and mistrust of digital services. As such improved digital inclusion could deliver improved access to banking services. This approach would have a broader reach than the potential establishment of a small number of banking hubs.

16. Getting Oxfordshire Online are currently delivering a project to identify barriers to digital inclusion in the most deprived areas of the county. This work is jointly funded by Public Health and the Cost of Living Programme. The work is due to complete in the autumn.

Next Steps

17. Although the council is keen to develop community banking services, it requires active support from banks to do so.

18. It is proposed to continue the conversations with the banks which are participating in existing projects to discuss how we can continue and extend these initiatives. We will also discuss the approach taken in Buckingham with the Town Council and Buckinghamshire Council to take advantage of their learning.

Corporate Policies and Priorities

19. Enabling access to banking services addresses the council’s priority of tackling inequality in Oxfordshire. It also indirectly addresses the prioritising of residents’ health and wellbeing.

Financial Implications

20. There are no new budgetary implications arising from this report. The current work is being completed using existing resources.

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

Legal Implications

The General Power of Competence, introduced by the Localism Act 2011, allows councils to do anything an individual can do, unless it's specifically prohibited. However, this power does not extend to permit the Council itself to provide and act as a banking service. However, it is possible for the Council to work with banks as set out in this report to facilitate the provision of banking services within its community settings such as libraries. As this report recommends that further engagement with banks is undertaken there are no specific legal implications arising directly from this report.Comments checked by: Anita Bradley, Director of Law and Governance and Monitoring Officer.

Staff Implications

21. Work so far has been undertaken within the Library Service within existing budgets.

Equality & Inclusion Implications

22. Section 1 of the Equality Act which sets out a socio-economic duty has not been enacted, although doing so is a manifesto commitment from the current government. The duty would seek to reduce socio-economic disadvantage and ensuring access to financial services is an important element of this. People suffering socio-economic disadvantage are also more likely than average to have another protected characteristic. Measures to reduce socio-economic disadvantage therefore will also reduce inequality.

Sustainability Implications

23. There are no significant impacts in respect of environmental sustainability in this programme.

Risk Management

24. The risks in this area of work are low, and set out below:
    - Reputational – People without access to banking services may perceive the council to be the only organisation in a position to address the issues. Failing to attempt to address the issue could therefore lead to a loss of reputation.

- Generating demand – Success in establishing a community banking hub in one area may raise expectations that cannot be met in other areas. Ultimately such services are dependent on the engagement of banks, and so communication on this issue should reflect this.

Susannah Wintersgill
Director of Public Affairs, Policy & Partnerships

Annex: Annex 1 – Summary FCA Research

Background papers: Nil

Contact Officer: Paul Wilding, Programme Manager (Cost of Living), 07756 772085, paul.wilding@oxfordshire.gov.uk

June 2025

Annex 1 – Financial Conduct Authority (FCA) research

The full FCA research findings are here: Financial Lives 2024 survey - Retail banking: Selected findings

Some relevant excerpts are as follows:

- In 2024, 7% of day-to-day account holders had not undertaken banking activities online or using a mobile banking app in the last 12 months.

- In 2024, we asked day-to-day account holders who do not use online or mobile banking why they do not do so. The main reasons given were a preference to speak with someone in person (41%) and a concern that digital banking is not secure (37%)

- In 2024, day-to-day account holders most likely to use a branch regularly (at least once a month) were the digitally excluded (40%)

- In 2024, 17% of all UK adults said they found getting to a bank, building society or credit union difficult – up 4pp since 2022. 5% said it was difficult to get to an ATM and 6% said it was difficult to get to a Post Office – neither statistically different from 2022

Divisions Affected – ALL

CABINET
15 July 2025

Future Civil Enforcement Contract Models

Report by Director for Environment and Highways

RECOMMENDATION

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

   a) Endorse the approach and proposals surrounding the civil enforcement at Oxfordshire County Council (the Council) contracts as set out in this paper.

   b) Authorise the Director of Financial and Commercial Services to prepare and commence the procurement of:

      1. A new 5-year Civil Enforcement Service contract (**Contract 1**) to commence on 1 May 2026 (following a mobilisation period) with options for two 1-year extensions (7-year potential contract length).

      2. A new 5-year Penalty Charge Notice (PCN) Software and Technology contract (**Contract 2**) to commence on 1 May 2026 (following a mobilisation period) with options for two 1-year extensions (7-year potential contract length).

      3. A new Zero Emissions Zone (ZEZ) Checker contract (**Contract 3**) to commence on 1 April 2026 (following a mobilisation period) plus a maintenance period of 2 years.

      4. A new Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) Camera's contract (**Contract 4**) for supply, maintenance and hosting of new cameras, to start as soon as possible, via further competition on the CCS framework for 4 years (longest length the framework will allow).

   c) Delegate the decision to the award the contracts, and any potential future contract extensions, to the Director of Environment and Highways in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Transport Management.

   d) Endorse the Director of Financial and Commercial Services to explore collaboration with neighbouring authorities to enable Contracts 1 and 2 to be utilised by up to two other large authorities that the Council are currently considering procuring on behalf of. Once the exploration is complete, delegate the decision on the way forward to the Director of Environment and Highways in consultation with Cabinet Member for Transport Management, and the Cabinet Member for Finance, Property and Transformation.

Executive Summary

2. Following Cabinet approval in February 2025 to procure enhanced multi contactor contracts for the civil enforcement and ZEZ operation, Civil Enforcement specialists (Parking Matters) were appointed alongside legal specialists (Ashford's) to work with officers to develop new specifications, pricing schedules and contract terms.

3. After market engagement and discussion with other Local Authorities, the requirements have been packaged to compete via the most appropriate routes to market, and these are set out in paragraphs below.

4. For Contracts 1, 2 and 3, the Competitive Flexible Procedure under the Procurement Act 2023 (PA 2023) will be utilised.

5. The Competitive Flexible Procedure allows the Council to design a procurement process to allow dialogue, demonstrations and negotiation to allow bidders to improve bids based on feedback given during the process. This will allow the Council to ensure value for money and to be confident in the solutions being offered.

6. For Contract 4**,** it is proposed that a new competition via the Crown Commercial Service Framework is carried out.

7. In all cases, to ensure the most suitable bidders are appointed and the tenders are compliant, detailed evaluation themes have been developed and designed to ensure the successful bidders will be able to provide a cost-effective and high-quality Civil Enforcement Services, along with supporting the council in its delivery of its' key priorities.

Background

8. The Council first took on the powers of Civil Parking Enforcement in Oxford City in 1997, and subsequently for Cherwell, Vale of White Horse, and South Oxfordshire District Councils in 2021, and then finally West Oxfordshire in 2023.

9. These contracts were awarded to Conduent who were sold on 1 April 2024 to Modaxo who are now trading as Trellint.

10. In April 2022 the Council successfully applied to the Secretary of State for the powers to enforce moving traffic contraventions such as prohibited

vehicles, banned turns, School Streets etc.

11. As a result, the Council has five Civil Enforcement contracts with an external supplier which allow for the enforcement of restrictions across the County. Subject to completion of extension negotiations of these contracts, they will all expire in April 2026.

12. The Council also operates a Road User Charging Scheme, the Zero Emission Zone under Transport Act 2000 and its subsequent regulation under The Road User Charging Schemes (Penalty Charges, Adjudication and Enforcement) (England) Regulations 2013. The scheme started as a pilot in February 2022. The original contract awarded to Conduent Public Sector UK Ltd was in place for the initial pilot stage.

13. A new contract is also required for continued enforcement of the Zero Emission Zone.

14. In February 2025 Cabinet approved officers to progress with the preferred service model of tendering the contracts subject to agreeing the procurement strategy for each workstream, which this report sets out.

Context

15. Over the past 5 years the Council has significantly expanded its enforcement operation, leading to a service that has tripled in size. As new powers have emerged, such as for moving traffic enforcement, the Council has applied, in the first tranches, for the powers, to enable the Council to support the Local Transport and Connectivity Plan (LTCP) and other policies to create a sustainable transport network for all users.

16. Four of the contracts relate to enforcement, with the other being for the technology support. The reason there are four contracts is because each original contract didn't allow the council to enforce more than was originally set out. This meant when the time came, the Council couldn’t take on enforcement of the districts or moving traffic through the original contracts due to them being both out of the scope and beyond the contract value.

17. The new contracts need to be flexible enough in terms of both being able to:

    a) Enable the Council to enforce additional areas/restrictions, beyond what the Council currently does, to ensure that future transport schemes can be enforced. In addition, under Local Government Reorganisation it will enable all on and off-street enforcement to be undertaken by the same council.

    b) Have an allowance within the cost value to do the above, and for other currently unknown elements, over the coming years.

18. The aim of this is to remove the need to continually put new solutions in place and allow the council to continue to be innovative and increase its operational activity as needed.

19. The current contracts have Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) which the current contractor is expected to deliver. However, these do not have any penalty clauses within them should they not meet the KPIs. The new contracts will contain such clauses, and should the required KPIs not be met, the supplier will be penalised.

20. A specific office space in a suitable location for operational needs is required. The business case considered that the best value for money was for the council to provide this. As well as considering options for the council to provide this, the procurement will ask the tenderers to show best value for money for the premises it will operate from.

Procurement and specification details

21. When developing the procurement specification requirements and process, Officers looked to ensure the 'key objectives' of the service, officers and Members were met. These objectives are.

- Ensuring greater control of deployment plans.
- Ensuring an efficient software system which will allow for reporting in a variety of forms to inform future deployment plans and inform members / the public of what enforcement is being undertaken.
- Delivery of service within budget and ensuring value for money is realised
- Supporting the delivery of the Councils carbon reduction targets
- Promotion of innovation

22. For Contracts 1, 2 and 3, the Competitive Flexible Procedure under the Procurement Act 2023 (PA 2023) will be utilised. This is to ensure contracts are both 'straight forward' and easily manageable but also meeting the specific needs of Oxfordshire. For Contract 1 the British Parking Association (BPA) Model Contract will be used as the base, tailored to Oxfordshire requirements, enabling specifications and pricing schedules to be used where possible. Relevant additional clauses and amendments will be included to ensure suitability to meet Oxfordshire's specific needs. Contract 2 and 3 will be based on industry standard contracts with relevant clauses for the specific needs of Oxfordshire.

23. The Competitive Flexible Procedure allows the Council to design a procurement process to allow dialogue, demonstrations and negotiation to allow bidders to improve bids based on feedback given during the process. This will allow the Council to ensure value for money and to be confident in the solutions being offered.

24. For Contract 1, the pricing schedule is going to be based on open book accounting. The contractor only gets its profit element if the KPIs are met.

This is the principle of the BPA style contract. We will use bespoke clauses to reflect the specific requirements for the service provision.

25. Contract 2 pricing is normally a fixed fee plus a fee for each PCN issued or permit application. However, some suppliers charge a fixed fee plus a fee for each debt type and addition of new cameras on the system. There will be a list of items in the pricing schedule where the bidders will let the council know how much they charge. For instance, the current supplier charges us yearly maintenance fees for every camera and a one-off fee to set the cameras up on the system. They also charge us every time we set up new parking restrictions.

26. To ensure the contracts remain competitive and at the forefront of delivery and innovation throughout their life they will include a review process which will take place after 5 years of the initial period of the contract. This review will be an opportunity for both client and provider to complete a 'deep dive' into contract performance, pricing and innovation and will help inform the Council's decision around contract extensions.

27. For Contract 3 the Council is proposing a fixed fee to develop the system rather than expensive maintenance licences.

28. For Contract 4**,** it is proposed that a new competition via the Crown Commercial Service Framework (RM6009 – Transport Technology & Associated Services) is carried out. This framework is a route to market allowing competition with the contractors that the Council wishes to engage in this opportunity. As this is a competition, through the framework, this will be a standard pricing schedule.

29. In all cases, to ensure the most suitable bidders are appointed and the tenders are compliant, detailed evaluation themes have been developed and designed to ensure the successful bidders will be able to provide a cost-effective and high-quality Civil Enforcement Services, along with supporting the council in its delivery of its' key priorities.

30. Due to the nature of the Civil Enforcement industry, the new contract will not commit to a minimum annual spend but will provide an indication of spend through previous spend profiles which will be shared as part of the tender documentation.

Key Dates

31. If recommendations are approved, then the key dates are set out below, a more detailed programme is at Annex 1.

Indicative dates for procurement of Contracts 1 & 2 (Civil Enforcement Service and Penalty Charge Notice Software and Technology)

Activity	Target Date
Approval of approach by Cabinet	July 2025
Advert placed on e-tendering Portal	July 2025
ITT closing time and date	October 2025
Due diligence	October 2025 – April 2026
Contract start date	May 2026

Indicative dates for procurement of Contract 3 – ZEZ Systems Checker

The Competitive Flexible Procedure under PA 2023 will be utilised whereby the council will reserve the right to undertake negotiations should there be the need to do so at its absolute discretion to negotiate any element of the contract.

Activity	Target Date
Advert placed on e-tendering Portal	November 2025
Final date for submission of ITT questions	November 2025
Time period in which questions will be answered	November 2025
ITT closing time and date	November 2025
Notification of award outcome to Tenderers	January 2025
Standstill	January 2026
Contract start date	February 2026

Indicative dates for procurement of Contract 4 – ANPR Camera & Hosting

Under the Crown Commercial Service Framework (RM6009 – Transport Technology & Associated Services), a Request for Information will be conducted to generate interest in the requirements.

Activity	Target Date
Advert placed on e-tendering Portal to those companies on the framework	September 2025
Final date for submission of ITT questions	September 2025
Time period in which questions will be answered	September 2025
RFQ closing time and date	October 2025
Notification of award outcome to Tenderers	November 2025
Standstill	November 2025
Contract start date	January 2026

Collaboration Opportunity

32. The Council has been approached by two other unitary authorities, within the Thames Valley region, asking if it is possible to utilise the Council’s expertise and procure on behalf of them. An assessment is currently being undertaken to determine the benefits and risks to understand if this is a there is merit in such an approach.

33. It is expected that this will be welcomed by the markets and officers also support this potential collaboration opportunity as it will align contracts within the local region and deliver wider benefit with economies of scale in terms of being an attractive customer and other harmonies.

34. The Council would need to be reimbursed at full cost for the work undertaken on behalf of the other authorities.

Policies, Priorities and Legislation

35. Civil Enforcement are key policies within the Council's Local Transport and Connectivity Plan (LTCP) and the Network Management Plan. Policy 33 – Parking Management and Policy 34 – Parking Enforcement, specifically cover the aims for the service.

36. In addition to the civil enforcement specific policies in LTCP the Civil Enforcement Service also plays a key role in helping to achieve the aims of a number of other LTCPs policies as set out below:
    Policy 1 – Transport User Hierarchy
    Policy 2 – Cycling and Walking Networks
    Policy 15 – Vision Zero
    Policy 18 – Bus Strategy
    Policy 28 - Clean Air and Zero Emissions Zones.

37. The current service is contracted out as noted above. The contracts are funded by the revenue raised by parking permits, parking bay suspensions, pay and display income and Penalty Charge Notices (fines) that are issued to drivers that contravene the restrictions.

38. The Traffic Management Act 2004 requires the Council to hold a separate account for parking and enforcement. Any running costs are off set against the revenue received. Currently the Parking account generates a surplus which is then used on highway related projects, in-line with the legislation governing spend.

Financial Implications

39. Contracts 1 and 2 are to be to be funded through the surplus generated by the Civil Enforcement Service. Contract 3 is to be funded from the surplus from the current ZEZ. Contract 4 is a combination of capital funding for camera installation and any revenue from PCNs issued will fund their annual hosting and maintenance fees.

40. Within the current contracts and operating methodology, cost is £7.4m per annum with income generated at £10.6m per annum. Any surplus is collected into the Parking Account governed by section 55 of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984. The provision of the service is funded by the revenue received from the service or from the parking reserves.

41. As reported to Cabinet in February 2025, when looking at the options appraisal, the new approach to contract provision is intending to provide efficiencies meaning greater surplus to be utilised in sustainability of parking provision and enforcement as well as supporting highway and network services around the county.

42. Due to the scale and complexity of the project external specialist consultancy services will be required to support the project. This is for finalising specifications and procurement stages, from both a Civil Enforcement Service and Legal & Procurement perspectives. It is estimated this will cost in the region of £75,000.

43. The cost of this will be met through existing budgets and if necessary, from the parking account reserve and that existing staff costs would be met through relevant operating budgets.

Comments checked by:

Filipp Skiffins, Assistant Finance Business Partner, (Finance)

Legal Implications

44. This procurement will be completed in line with all relevant legislation and guidelines – in particular, The Procurement Contracts Regulations 2015 (for the framework further competition only), the Procurement Act 2023 for all the other contracts, and the Council's Contract Procedure Rules.

45. Due to the scale and value of the contract/s being procured, a member of the legal team has been appointed to the Project team. Given the tight timescales outlined above and the fact that any procurements have to be done under the new procurement regime in what has proved to be a very litigious area of the Council's work, in February Cabinet approved external legal resource could be brought in to assist in drafting the contracts at a minimum, provide some oversight over the procurement process if requested by Council officers. Ashford's law firm have been appointed to work on the Terms and Conditions for **Contracts 1, 2 and 3**. Contract 4 will be drafted by the in-house legal team.

46. As the 'Civil Enforcement Authority' for Oxfordshire, the procurement of new Civil Enforcement contracts is essential to ensure the Council meets its obligations under the Traffic Management Act 2004, to serve regulation 9 and 10 PCNs to vehicles observed to be in contravention of restrictions.

Comments checked by: Busola Akande, Solicitor (Contracts).

Procurement Implications

47. The Procurement for these contracts will be in line with the Council's policies

and national legislation, using the procurement routes illustrated in this report.

48. For Contracts 1, 2 and 3, significant weighting will be placed on ensuring contracts deliver the Council's Social Value Policy. These could include measures aimed at boosting local employment, use of SMEs in the wider supply chain and climate change targeted actions in line with our Social Value policy. 16% of the overall evaluation score for the contract will be based on the social value commitments each bidder makes as part of their tender submission.

Comments checked by: Katherine Booker, Head of Category – Environment and Place.

Staff Implications

49. Due to the scale and complexity of the project there has been the need to appoint additional expertise to support the subsequent procurement and contracts activity. Parking Matters and Ashford's law firm have been appointed to support this project.

50. In the case of a change of provider, the preferred model will require the TUPE of c.60 staff who currently undertake civil enforcement on behalf of the Council. Staff transfer will be from Trellint (the current provider) directly to the new provider for Contract 1 (there are no staffing implications for the other three contracts).

51. The wider contract delivery project team has been internally resourced from both within the service area and corporate centre.

52. To support the management of these contracts, it is proposed to appoint a dedicated contract management resource within the service. It is proposed to fund this post through additional surplus income generated beyond that already committed in budgets.

Equality & Inclusion Implications

53. It Is not anticipated the procurement of new parking enforcement contracts will impact negatively on any 'protected characteristics' groups, nor on the armed forces, carers, staff, other Council services or providers. As part of any procurement, the social value aspects of the company and its submission will be assessed and will form a key part of the award assessment. The Equalities Impact Assessment (EIA) can be seen at Annex 2.

Sustainability Implications

54. A new delivery model and new contracts will provide opportunities to

improve the position for the council in this area for this service. The future provision will look to adopt the latest technologies and innovations and reduce carbon through efficient deployment planning and techniques where possible. By allowing to the contact to be future proofed to allow for the ZEZ to be expanded will have significantly positive impact on emissions. A copy of the Climate Impact Assessment (CIA) can be found in Annex 3.

Risk Management

55. The procurement of new Civil Enforcement contracts offers many opportunities for the Council by ensuring any selected model is appropriate for the current and forecast future challenges for the council.

56. Failure to award a new contract/s holds significant risk for this project and will potentially leave the Council without a Civil Enforcement Service. to fulfil statutory obligations. To minimise this risk the project was commenced in good time with suitable programme durations to enable a robust assessment and procurement process to take place.

57. This can be a litigious market, and the project program reflects the potential risk and likelihood of challenge. Whist the current contracts are due to expire at the end of April 2026, there is the option to extend them for a further additional year, should we face any challenges that are not able to be dealt with within programme timeframes. In addition, the use of the Competitive Flexible Procedure will allow the mechanism to work with bidders closely, foreseeing any issues early on to allow mitigation in the process rather than at contract award. The Council will work closely with specialist legal support throughout the process which will also help mitigate the risk of and manage any challenge.

58. A detailed Risk Assessment and Issues log is actively managed by the Project team and escalated when required.

Annex1 - Detailed Programme Contracts 1 & 2
Annex 2 – Equality Impact Assessment
Annex 3 – Climate Impact

Assessment Background papers:

None

Paul Fermer Director for Environment and Highways

Contact Officers:	Phil Whitfield – Head of Network Management phil.whitfield@oxfordshire.gov.uk
	Cathy Champion – Operational Manager – Civil Enforcement cathy.champion@oxfordshire.gov.uk

John Charlton – Team Leader – Civil Enforcement
john.charlton@oxfordshire.gov.uk

July 2025

Annex 1 – Indicative dates for procurement of Contracts 1 & 2 (Civil Enforcement Service and Penalty Charge Notice Software and Technology)

Activity	**Indicative Timeframe**
Approval of approach by Cabinet	July 2025
Initial Participation period (Procurement Specific Questionnaire) used to shortlist those invited to the tender stage.	July – August 2025
Date for notifying unsuccessful Bidders	September 2025
Bidders Day to present the tender in detail and to meet the team.	September 2025
Date for releasing Invitation to tender documentation (could be written) or Dialogue stage (Potentially dialogue stage)	October 2025
Final date for submission of Invitation to Tender (ITT) questions	October 2025
Latest date by which all clarifications and final Contracts will be answered.	October 2025
Invite bidders for Presentation/Dialogue stage (we will need to expand on what this will entail in terms of what we are asking bidders to have dialogue/provide presentations on)	October 2025
Deadline for return of Initial Tenders	End October 2025
Evaluation of Tenders/Presentation/Dialogue Stage	November 2025
The Council decides to award the Contract based on the Initial/Dialogue/Presentations; provides debriefing information to unsuccessful Bidders and commences a 10-day standstill period. OR The Council decides not to award the Contract based on the Initial Tenders/dialogue/presentation; choses to initiate the Invitation to Negotiate ("ITN") stage and provides debriefing information to unsuccessful Bidders not continuing in the CPN process.	November 2025
Issue of the ITN to shortlisted Bidders (if chose this route)	November 2025
Negotiation stage (if chose this route)	December 2025
Invitation to Submit Final Tenders ("ISFT") issued to Bidders	December 2025
Final Tender submission deadline	January 2026
Evaluation of Final Tenders	January 2026
Award decision date	January – March 2026
Mobilisation of new contract	February 2026 – April 2026
Launch of new contract	May 2026

Annex 2 - EIA

Oxfordshire County Council

Equalities Impact Assessment

Retendering of the Civil Enforcement Contracts

21.01.25

Annex 2 - EIA

Contents

Section 1: Summary details

Directorate and Service Area	Environment and Highways, Civil Enforcement
What is being assessed (e.g. name of policy, procedure, project, service or proposed service change).	Retendering our current enforcement contracts
Is this a new or existing function or policy?	Existing function
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).	**Policy or Proposed Service Change:** The project involves the retendering of Oxfordshire County Council's current enforcement contracts for Civil Enforcement. This is an existing function that aims to continue the enforcement of parking regulations and other related duties. **Possible Impacts:** • **Age**: The new contract will continue to offer multiple ways to pay Penalty Charge Notices (PCNs) and challenge them, ensuring accessibility for all age groups.. • **Disability**: Continued enforcement will help respond to reports of non-blue badge holders using disabled bays, ensuring these spaces are available for those who need them.. • **Race**: Potential language barriers are addressed by offering various ways to contact the service and using translation services available in libraries.. • **Other Protected Characteristics**: The policy also considers impacts on gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, sex, sexual orientation, and religion or belief, ensuring that services are accessible and fair to all.

	Bias, Discrimination, or Unfair Disadvantage: The proposal does not bias, discriminate, or unfairly disadvantage individuals or groups within the community. It aims to provide equitable services and considers various protected characteristics to ensure fairness and accessibility for all.
Completed By	Cathy Champion
Authorised By	Keith Stenning
Date of Assessment	21.01.25

Section 2: Detail of proposal

Context / Background Briefly summarise the background to the policy or proposed service change, including reasons for any changes from previous versions.	Oxfordshire County Council first took on the powers of parking enforcement in Oxford City in 1997. The Council has continued to offer Civil Enforcement since. In October 2020 the Cabinet agreed to pursue an application to DfT to take on powers covering Cherwell, Vale of White Horse and South Oxfordshire districts. Enforcement of these districts went live in November 2021. As part of our duty under the legislation we have to have Civil Enforcement Officers and Technology such as ANPR cameras to undertake this duty. The Council currently has five existing contracts with Conduent (now sold to Modaxo and trading as Trellint) are set to expire in March 2026. Oxfordshire County Council therefore needs to get a new contract in place to allow us to perform our statutory duties.

Proposals Explain the detail of the proposals, including why this has been decided as the best course of action.	The outcome of optional appraisal has identified the appointment of an enhanced contracted model with multiple providers to cover all the elements of Civil Enforcement and the ZEZ. It also highlighted that the Council should consider finding its own building to house the enforcement operation rather than pay for a lease through a tendered enforcement contract. The outcome also identified clear separation of elements to be included in the procurement process. To procure specialist contractors for Civil Enforcement, Back-office processing software, ZEZ software and ANPR cameras. It is recommended that this enhanced model is endorsed by Cabinet and for them to give permission for officers to develop the finer details and relevant documentation (specification, contract terms, and pricing schedules) required for procurement of this enhanced model. Cabinet will be asked to approve the specification and details of procurement in July prior to procurement commencing.
Evidence / Intelligence List and explain any data, consultation outcomes, research findings, feedback from service users and stakeholders etc, that supports your proposals and can help to inform the judgements you make about potential impact on different individuals, communities or groups and our ability to deliver our climate commitments.	An options appraisal assessment was undertaken. Officers instructed an independent consultant (Parking Matters) to give an overview of the options available to local authorities in terms of enforcement and recommend options for the way forward. At the same time officers undertook their own engagement and research. A member's workshop was held on 19th December and the main feedback from this workshop was: • Not enough enforcement on the ground (several areas of concern were expressed such as Cowley Road and enforcement in the Market Towns). • Innovations – smarter enforcement, red routes and the ability for the contract to adapt to changes in legislation for instance pavement parking. • Members wanted more information on and control of performance and deployment. Officers have spoken with other authorities in the country some of whom have brought operations in house and those that still contract their service out, to establish the best opportunities for our service as well as learning from our peers.

	- Buckinghamshire Council and London Borough of Hackney have an in-house enforcement team. Their PCN software is contracted out and have a separate contract for ANPR cameras. - Slough Council and Reading Council have an out-source enforcement and PCN software solution. Slough have not yet introduced moving traffic enforcement but are intending to do so. The ANPR cameras will be procured in due course. Slough provide the accommodation for the enforcement contractor. Early market engagement with numerous suppliers has also been undertaken. There is strong interest in this procurement.
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.	We considered not enforcing, but we have a legal obligation to do so and no enforcement would be detrimental to managing the transport network and have negative impacts on all transport network users. We considered bringing the operation fully in-house, but this has been rejected to be more costly and us not being able to take advantage of improvement sin technology as the software used is very specialist to the enforcement industry.

Section 3: Impact Assessment - **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	☒	☐	☐	Through a new contact we would continue to carry out the same processes that we do now, which we are heavily legislatively based. In terms of Penalty Charge Notices (PCNs) that are issued, both directly onto a vehicle or in the post there are a number of ways to pay including phone, online and by post. Legal challenges to PCNs can be undertaken by post or email. The PCNS also state that if you have difficulty reading the notice or require a larger printed version or have another query then then recipient can call the team phone number. Therefore, we will continue to offer this service to all.			

Disability	☐	☒	☐	Parking in disabled bays is a common issue. By continuing to have enforcement it means we can respond to reports of non-blue badge holders and get officers out to issue PCNs to deter abuse of these spaces so they can be used by the people they were designed for.			
Gender Reassignment	☒	☐	☐				
Marriage & Civil Partnership	☒	☐	☐				
Pregnancy & Maternity	☒	☐	☐				
Race	☒	☐	☐	It is anticipated there may be potential language barriers for individuals from different cultural backgrounds. As stated above for age we offer different way to contact the service.	As an authority we have the libraries offer an online and in-library dictionaries with two-way translation. There are many free on-line services, such as, google translate, to translate web pages and text themselves.	Already in place, at the libraries and can be done via the user using free web-based translation websites.	Already in place.

Sex	☒	☐	☐				
Sexual Orientation	☒	☐	☐				
Religion or Belief	☒	☐	☐				

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	☒	☐	☐				
Armed Forces	☒	☐	☐				
Carers	☒	☐	☐				
Areas of deprivation	☒	☐	☐				

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	☐	☒	☐	New contacts allow more control and deployment planning, which should improve number of correspondences the staff deal with.			
Other Council Services	☐	☒	☐	By continuing enforcement this will mean we support other services to maintain a working network.			
Providers	☐	☒	☐	Using the British Parking Contract model this is a collaborative approach to contracts and sets our realistic KPIs			
Social Value [1]	☐	☒	☐	We would expect whichever supplier wins the contract to have a strong social value policy in place which would			

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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

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
				benefit a wider range of people and the environment. .			

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	
Person Responsible for Review	
Authorised By	

Climate Impact Assessment

Summary

Directorate and Service Area	Environment and Highways
What is being assessed	Re-tender of the Civil Enforcement Contracts
Is this a new or existing function or policy?	Existing
Summary of assessment	The project involves the retendering of Oxfordshire County Council's current enforcement contracts for Civil Enforcement. This is an existing function that aims to continue the enforcement of parking regulations and other related duties. Re-tendering the contracts doesn't have an impact on nature, waste, resilience or organisations. However it has a positive impact on energy, transport and connectivity, building,
Completed by	Cathy Champion
Climate action sign off by	Franco Gonzalez
Director sign off by	Keith Stenning
Assessment date	30.01.25

Preview

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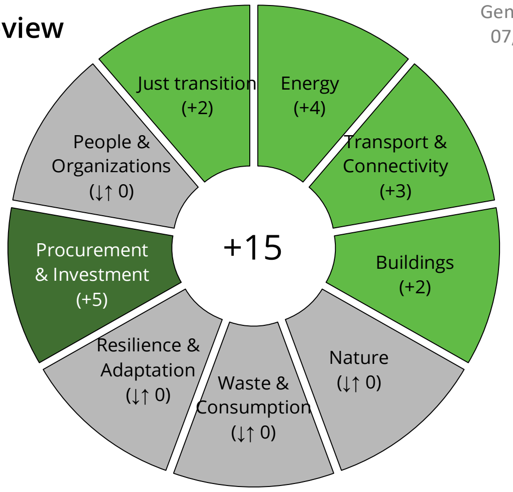

Oxfordshire Council has committed to being a carbon neutral organisation by 2030 (8 years and 0 months away).

Detail of proposal

Context / Background	Oxfordshire County Council first took on the powers of parking enforcement in Oxford City in 1997. The Council has continued to offer Civil Enforcement since. In October 2020 the Cabinet agreed to pursue an application to DfT to take on powers covering Cherwell, Vale of White Horse and South Oxfordshire districts. Enforcement of these districts went live in November 2021. As part of our duty under the legislation we have to have Civil Enforcement Officers and Technology such as
Proposal	The outcome of optional appraisal has identified the appointment of an enhanced contracted model with multiple providers to cover all the elements of Civil Enforcement and the ZEZ. It also highlighted that the Council should consider finding its own building to house the enforcement operation rather than pay for a lease through a tendered enforcement contract. The outcome also identified clear separation of elements to be included in the procurement process. To procure specialist contractors for Civil Enforcement, Back-office processing software, ZEZ software and ANPR cameras. It is recommended that this enhanced model is endorsed by Cabinet and for them to give permission for officers to develop the finer details and relevant documentation (specification, contract terms, and pricing schedules) required for procurement of this enhanced model. Cabinet will be asked to approve the specification and details of procurement in July prior to procurement commencing.
Evidence / Intelligence	An options appraisal assessment was undertaken. Officers instructed an independent consultant (Parking Matters) to give an overview of the options available to the authority in terms of enforcement and recommend options for the way forward. At the same time officers undertook their own engagement and research. A member's workshop was held on 19th December and the main feedback from this workshop was: •Not enough enforcement on the ground (several areas of concern were expressed such as Cowley Road and enforcement in the Market Towns). •Innovations – smarter enforcement, red routes and the ability for the contract to adapt to changes in legislation for instance pavement parking. •Members wanted more information on and control of performance and deployment.
Alternatives considered / rejected	We considered not enforcing, but we have a legal obligation to do so and no enforcement would be detrimental to managing the transport network and have negative impacts on all transport network users, and the climate. We considered bringing the operation fully in-house, but this has been rejected to be more costly and us not being able to take advantage of improvements in technology as the software used is very specialist to the enforcement industry.

Category	**Impact criteria**	**Score (-3 to +3)**	**Description of impact**	**Actions or mitigations to reduce negative impacts**	**Action owner**	**Timeline and monitoring arrangements**
Energy	Increases energy efficiency	2	By allowing things to be more technology based and getting new more energy efficient premises this offers the opportunity to be significantly better from an energy efficiency point of view.	Procure / set out in specification for energy efficient hardware and building for operational base.	Supplier / OCC property team	On-going for lifetime of contract.
Energy	Promotes a switch to low-carbon or renewable energy	2	The specification will allow future			
Energy	Promotes resilient, local, smart energy systems	N/A				
Transport & Connectivity	Reduces need to travel and/or the need for private car ownership	N/A				
Transport & Connectivity	Supports active travel	1	By having larger premises this will allow storage of more bicycles and e-bikes for operational purposes this can reduce the need for additional vehicles.		Supplier / OCC property team	Prior to commencement of new arrangements
Transport & Connectivity	Increases use of public transport	1	By having a central oxford base gives the maximum opportunity for staff to travel to base on public transport.		Supplier / OCC property team	Prior to commencement of new arrangements
Transport & Connectivity	Accelerates electrification of transport	2	The specification will set out that all vehicles used in the operation (mopeds and cars / vans will need to be electric).	The operational base will need to have electrical charging points for the vehicles that can be sued for overnight (and other time) charging.	Specification authors	Prior to going out to market.
Buildings	Promotes net zero new builds and developments	1	Promotes net zero standards for new operational base.		Property Team	Produce and secured through the specification documentation.
Buildings	Accelerates retrofitting of existing buildings	N/A				
Nature	Protects, restores or enhances biodiversity, landscape and ecosystems	N/A				
Nature	Develops blue and green infrastructure	N/A				
Nature	Improves access to nature and green spaces	N/A				
Waste & Consumption	Reduces overall consumption	N/A				
Waste & Consumption	Supports waste prevention and drive reuse and recycling	N/A				
Resilience & Adaptation	Increases resilience to flooding	N/A				
Resilience & Adaptation	Increases resilience to other extreme weather events (e.g., storms, cold snaps, heatwaves, droughts)	N/A				
Resilience & Adaptation	Increases resilience of council services, communities, energy systems, transport infrastructure and/or supply chains	N/A				
Procurement & Investment	Procurement practices prioritise low-carbon options, circular economy and sustainability	1	Specification will set out that low carbon operations will be sought out (including as mentioned above the purchase of electric vehicle fleet)	Use technology and low carbon equipment alliable on the market.	Specification author and contractor	prior to commencement of new arrangement, and within annual monitoring

Procurement & Investment	Investment being considered supports climate action/ is consistent with path to net zero	2	The specification will allow future proofing to allow us to enforce more than we are currently doing . This would include enforcing an expanded ZEZ and introduction of red routes. The expanded ZEZ, with enforcement, will reduce the number of higher emissions vehicles in the centre of Oxford. Red routes on highly trafficked arterial routes will improve bus journey times and remove obstacles from cyclists, which in turn should make these modes more attractive (and safer), reducing the number of journeys undertaken in motor vehicles.	Ensure the specification allows for these uses both from a specification point of view but also allows headroom in the contract value to deliver these.	Specification author and tender evaluators	prior to commencement of new arrangement, and within annual monitoring
People & Organizations	Drives behavioural change to address the climate and ecological emergency	N/A				
People & Organizations	Drives organizational and systemic change to address the climate and ecological emergency	N/A				
Just transition	Promotes green innovation and job creation	N/A				
Just transition	Promotes health and wellbeing	2	The specification will allow future proofing to allow us to enforce more than we are currently doing . This would include enforcing an expanded ZEZ and introduction of red routes. The expanded ZEZ, with enforcement, will reduce the number of higher emissions vehicles in the centre of Oxford. Red routes on highly trafficked arterial routes will improve bus journey times and remove obstacles from cyclist, which in turn should make these modes more attractive (and safer), reducing the number of journeys undertaken in motor vehicles.	Ensure the specification allows for these uses both from a specification point of view but also allows headroom in the contract value to deliver these.	Specification author and tender evaluators	prior to commencement of new arrangement, and within annual monitoring
Just transition	Reduces poverty and inequality	N/A				

CABINET – 15 JULY 2025

TREASURY MANAGEMENT ANNUAL PERFORMANCE REPORT 2024/25

Report by Executive Director of Resources & Section 151 Officer

RECOMMENDATION

1. **Cabinet is RECOMMENDED to note the report, and to RECOMMEND Council to note the council's treasury management activity and outcomes in 2024/25.**

Executive Summary

1. Treasury management is defined as: "The management of the organisation's borrowing, investments and cash flows, including its banking, money market and capital market transactions, the effective control of the risks associated with those activities, and the pursuit of optimum performance consistent with those risks."

2. The Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy's (CIPFA's) 'Code of Practice on Treasury Management 2021' requires that committee to which some treasury management responsibilities are delegated, will receive regular monitoring reports on treasury management activities and risks. This is the fourth and final update for the 2024/25 financial year and sets out the position at 31 March 2025.

3. Throughout this report, the performance for the 2024/25 financial year is measured against the budget agreed by Council in February 2024.

4. As at 31 March 2025, the council's outstanding debt totalled £272m and the average rate of interest paid on long-term debt during the year was 4.41%. The council launched its "green bond" in December 2024 with an aim to raise an initial £0.5m. No other external borrowing was raised during the year, whilst £3m of maturing Public Works Loan Board (PWLB), and £10m of LOBO[1] loans were repaid. The council's debt financing position for 2024/25 is shown in Annex 1. Annex 2 shows the long term debt that matured in 2024/25.

5. The Treasury Management Strategy for 2024/25 agreed in February 2024 assumed an average base rate of 4.75%.

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

6. The average daily balance of temporary surplus cash invested in-house was expected to be £463m in 2024/25, with an average in-house return on new and existing deposits of 4.25%.

7. The council achieved an average in-house return of 4.86% on average cash balances of £460.916m, producing gross interest receivable of £22.398m. In relation to external funds, the return for the year was £4.763m, bringing total investment income to £27.161m. This compares to budgeted investment income of £19.242m, giving a net overachievement of £7.919m.

8. At 31 March 2025, the council's investment portfolio totalled £484.920m. This comprised £335.000m of fixed term deposits, £52.000m at short term notice in money market funds and £97.919m in pooled funds with a variable net asset value. Annex 4 provides an analysis of the investment portfolio at 31 March 2025.

Treasury Management Activity

Debt Financing & Maturing Debt

9. The strategy for long term borrowing agreed in February 2024 included the option to fund new or replacement borrowing up to the value of £232m through internal borrowing. The aim was to reduce the council's exposure to credit risk and reduce the long-term cost of carry (difference between borrowing costs and investment returns).

10. The council is able to borrow from the Public Works Loan Board (PWLB) or through the money markets. The strategy for 2024/25 assumed no new external borrowing during the year, with any increase in the capital financing requirement met through internal borrowing, as external borrowing rates were forecast to remain elevated for the year. The exception to this was new debt of £0.500m raised the community municipal investment known as the Oxfordshire Green Bond.

11. As at 31 March 2025, the authority had 42 PWLB loans totalling £241.383m, 5 LOBO loans totalling £25.000m and two money market loans totalling £5.500m. The average rate of interest paid on PWLB debt was 4.52% and the average cost of LOBO debt in 2024/25 was 3.91%. The cost of debt on the money market loans was 4.00%. The combined weighted average for interest paid on long-term debt was 4.39%. The council's debt portfolio as at 31 March 2025 is shown in Annex 1.

12. The council repaid £3m of maturing PWLB loans and £10m of LOBO loans during the year. The weighted average interest rate payable on the matured loans was 4.250%. The outturn for interest payable in 2024/25 was £12.23m. The details are set out in Annex 2.

Investment Strategy

13. The council holds deposits and invested funds representing income received in advance of expenditure plus balances and reserves. The guidance on Local Government Investments in England gives priority to security and liquidity and the council's aim is to achieve a yield commensurate with these principles. The council continued to adopt a cautious approach to lending to financial institutions and continuously monitored credit quality information relating to counterparties.

14. During the first three quarters of the financial year term fixed deposits have been placed with other Local Authorities as per the approved lending list, whilst Money Market Funds have been utilised for short-term liquidity. Inter local authority lending remains an attractive market to deposit funds with from a security view point. The Government's Debt Management Deposit Facility (DMADF) has not been a competitive counterparty to deposit with, however the Council maintains access to this facility for times of financial uncertainty.

15. The Treasury Management Strategy Statement and Annual Investment Strategy for 2024/25 included the use of external fund managers and pooled funds to diversify the investment portfolio through the use of different investment instruments, investment in different markets, and exposure to a range of counterparties. It is expected that these funds should outperform the council's in-house investment performance over a rolling three-year period. The strategy permitted up to 50% of the total portfolio to be invested with external fund managers and pooled funds (excluding Money Market Funds). The performance of the pooled funds will continue to be monitored by the Treasury Management Strategy Team (TMST) throughout the year against respective benchmarks and the in-house portfolio.

16. At the start of the year the UK Bank Rate was 5.25% which was in line with the forecast. Reductions of 25 basis points in August, November and February reduced the rate to 4.50%, where it remained until the end of the financial year.

The Council's Lending List

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

Investment Performance

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

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

19. The actual average daily balance of temporary surplus cash invested in-house was £460.916m for 2024/25 and the average in-house return was 4.86%, producing gross interest receivable of £22.398m. Gross distributions from pooled funds totalling £4.763m were also realised in the year, bringing total investment income to £27.161m. This compares to budgeted investment income of £19.242m, giving a net overachievement of £7.918m. This reflects a combination of higher than forecast average cash balances, and higher than forecast interest rates.

20. Cash balances for the year were lower than they otherwise would be as a result of negative Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) balances relating to High Needs. The negative DSG balance by the end of 2024/25 was £92.5m. This created an estimated opportunity cost of £3.8m in unearned interest during 2024/25. The cumulative opportunity cost as a result of negative DSG balances since 2019/20 is now £10.42m.

21. The council operates a number of instant access call accounts and money market funds to deposit short-term cash surpluses. During 2024/25 the average balance held on instant access was £80.340m, at an average rate of 4.48%.

22. At 31 March 2025 the total value of pooled fund investments was £97.919m. Whilst this is a marginal increase compared to the value of £97.804 at 31 March 2024, it is a reduction of £2.344m compared to the recent high of £100.263m in February 2025. This reduction is due to global financial instability caused by the economic impact of changes to US import tariffs.

23. At 31 March 2025, the council's investment portfolio totalled £484.920m. This comprised £335.000m of fixed term deposits, £52.000m at short term notice in money market funds and £97.920m in pooled funds with a variable net asset value. Annex 4 provides an analysis of the investment portfolio at 31 March 2025.

24. The council's Treasury Management Strategy Team regularly monitors the risk profile of the council's investment portfolio. An analysis of the credit and maturity position of the portfolio at 31 March 2025 is included at Annex 4.

Prudential Indicators for Treasury Management

25. During the financial year, the council operated within the treasury limits and Prudential Indicators set out in the council's Treasury Management Strategy for 2024/25. The outturn for the Prudential Indicators is shown in Annex 3.

Financial Implications

26. This report is mostly concerned with finance and the implications are set out in the main body of the report.

    Comments checked by:

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

Legal Implications

27. The budget is a non-executive function, however the Cabinet has a duty under the Local Government Act 2000 to monitor the budget and make any recommendations to Council as they think fit.

28. The statutory framework for the prudential financial system is set out in the Local Government Act 2003 and the Local Authorities (Capital Finance and Accounting) (England) Regulations 2003. These Regulations provide that the Council must have regard to CIPFA codes in managing its budget.

29. The report is in accordance with both the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) Code of Practice on Treasury Management and the CIPFA Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities. The Council has a wide power to borrow under section 1 of the 2003 Act up to the affordable limit determined by the Council having regard the CIPFA Code of Practice. The Council also has powers to invest under section 12 of the 2003 Act, subject to restrictions contained in the Local Authorities (Funds)(England) Regulations 1992.

    Comments checked by:

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

Staff Implications

30. This report does not create any staffing implications.

Equality & Inclusion Implications

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

Sustainability Implications

32. This report is not expected to have any negative impact with regards to the Council's zero carbon emissions commitment by 2030.

33. In December 2024, the council launched its first “green bond” to raise £0.5m fundingto support the councils tree planting and decarbonisation projects.

Risk Management

34. The purpose of treasury management is the management of the council’s borrowing, investments and cash flows, including its banking, money market and capital market transactions; the effective control of the risks associated with those activities; and the pursuit of optimum performance consistent with those risks”. The Prudential Code.

35. Prudential indicators and credit criteria are agreed by Council each year as part of the Treasury Management Strategy.

36. The credit quality of institutions, changes in the interest rate forecast, cash flow, and prudential indicators are monitored throughout the year and reported monthly to the TMST and quarterly to the council’s Audit & Governance Committee, Cabinet and Council.

LORNA BAXTER
Executive Director of Resources & Section 151 Officer

Annex:	Annex 1 – Oxfordshire County Council Debt Profile as at 31 March 2025
	Annex 2 – Long Term Debt Matured During 2024/25
	Annex 3 – Oxfordshire County Council Investment Portfolio at 31 March 2025
	Annex 4 – Prudential Indicator as at 31 March 2025
Background papers:	Treasury Management Strategy for 2024/25
Contact Officer:	Tim Chapple, Treasury Manager, 07917 262935, tim.chapple@oxfordshire.gov.uk

June 2025

Annex 1

OXFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL DEBT PROFILE 31 MARCH 2025

LOAN No	£m	RATE %	Start Date	End Date	LOAN No	£m	RATE %	Start Date	End/Call Date
483659	2.000	4.250	25/11/1999	30/04/2025	492386	2.000	4.350	03/11/2006	01/04/2027
487777	4.000	4.650	16/05/2003	01/05/2028	492535	10.000	4.200	29/11/2006	30/06/2037
488562	7.650	4.700	19/03/2004	16/03/2030	492561	6.000	4.250	07/12/2006	30/06/2032
488563	1.733	4.700	19/03/2004	16/03/2030	492598	8.000	4.500	18/12/2006	30/04/2027
488989	6.000	4.850	16/08/2004	13/07/2030	492599	6.000	4.500	18/12/2006	31/05/2027
489168	6.000	4.700	22/10/2004	01/03/2030	492789	6.000	4.500	24/01/2007	31/01/2032
489287	6.000	4.600	22/11/2004	01/04/2032	492990	6.000	4.450	06/03/2007	31/03/2032
489429	6.000	4.550	02/12/2004	01/06/2032	492807	4.000	4.250	25/01/2007	30/06/2053
489856	5.000	4.600	06/05/2005	01/05/2033	493378	4.000	4.900	11/06/2007	30/06/2032
490105	5.000	4.450	23/05/2005	01/12/2033	493638	6.000	4.550	02/08/2007	30/09/2052
491669	4.000	4.450	23/05/2006	14/06/2026	493803	4.000	4.650	23/08/2007	20/09/2032
491948	5.000	4.650	16/08/2006	31/12/2026	493822	6.000	4.450	23/08/2007	30/09/2053
491957	4.000	4.500	18/08/2006	31/12/2031	494069	6.000	4.500	21/11/2007	30/09/2052
491958	4.000	4.500	18/08/2006	30/09/2031	494171	6.000	4.480	27/12/2007	31/03/2052
491959	2.000	4.600	21/08/2006	30/04/2027	494200	6.000	4.420	04/01/2008	31/03/2057
491960	10.000	4.600	21/08/2006	30/09/2026	494703	6.000	4.460	04/08/2008	13/07/2058
492021	5.000	4.350	25/08/2006	22/11/2031	494747	10.000	4.390	15/08/2008	26/03/2058
492063	5.000	4.450	31/08/2006	31/03/2028	497549	5.000	4.190	08/07/2010	14/06/2054
492064	5.000	4.450	31/08/2006	30/04/2027	LOBO 07	5.000	4.500	27/04/2005	27/10/2023
492088	4.000	4.350	04/09/2006	02/03/2032	MML 01	5.000	3.950	31/05/2005	29/05/2065
492117	4.000	4.450	07/09/2006	02/03/2037	LOBO 09	5.000	3.680	23/11/2005	24/11/2025
492371	13.000	4.500	31/10/2006	31/12/2026	LOBO 11	5.000	3.840	31/07/2006	31/07/2026
492375	10.000	4.200	01/11/2006	31/12/2036	LOBO 12	5.000	3.825	02/10/2006	04/10/2027
492376	10.000	4.200	01/11/2006	31/03/2037	LOBO 15	5.000	3.720	21/09/2006	13/10/2027
					MML 02 Abundance 1	0.500	4.400	02/12/2024	31/03/2030
					TOTAL	271.883			

Annex 2

Long-term debt that Matured in 2024/25

Date	Amount £m	Rate %	Repayment Type	Loan Type
22/11/2024	3.000	4.250	Maturity	PWLB
31/07/2024	5.000	3.800	Maturity	LOBO
02/10/2024	5.000	4.100	Maturity	LOBO
Total	**13.000**			

Repayment Types

Maturity – Full amount of principal is repaid at the final maturity date
EIP – Equal Instalments of Principal are repaid every 6 months until the final maturity date

Annex 3

OXFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL INVESTMENT PORTFOLIO 31/03/2025

Fixed term deposits held at 31/03/2025

Counterparty	Principal Deposited	Maturity Date
High Peak Borough Council	£3,000,000.00	09/04/2025
London Borough of Newham Council	£5,000,000.00	11/04/2025
Police and Crime Commissioner for Lancashire	£5,000,000.00	14/04/2025
South Ayrshire Council	£5,000,000.00	17/04/2025
Plymouth City Council	£5,000,000.00	22/04/2025
Rushmoor Borough Council	£5,000,000.00	25/04/2025
Rushmoor Borough Council	£5,000,000.00	29/04/2025
West Dunbartonshire Council	£5,000,000.00	30/04/2025
Rushmoor Borough Council	£5,000,000.00	06/05/2025
North Lanarkshire Council	£5,000,000.00	12/05/2025
Plymouth City Council	£5,000,000.00	13/05/2025
London Borough of Waltham Forest Council	£5,000,000.00	23/05/2025
London Borough of Waltham Forest Council	£5,000,000.00	23/05/2025
Darlington Borough Council	£5,000,000.00	29/05/2025
Blackpool Council	£5,000,000.00	30/05/2025
London Borough of Waltham Forest Council	£5,000,000.00	30/05/2025
Police and Crime Commissioner for Lancashire	£5,000,000.00	02/06/2025
Isle of Wight Council	£5,000,000.00	09/06/2025
Monmouthshire County Council	£5,000,000.00	10/06/2025
Cornwall Council	£5,000,000.00	30/06/2025
Blackpool Council	£5,000,000.00	30/06/2025
Oldham Council	£5,000,000.00	29/07/2025
Plymouth City Council	£5,000,000.00	07/08/2025
West Dunbartonshire Council	£5,000,000.00	12/08/2025
North Lanarkshire Council	£5,000,000.00	12/08/2025
Gloucester City Council	£7,000,000.00	13/08/2025
Kirklees Council	£5,000,000.00	15/08/2025
Cambridgeshire County Council	£5,000,000.00	20/08/2025
South Tyneside Council	£5,000,000.00	20/08/2025
London Borough of Haringey Council	£5,000,000.00	22/08/2025
Derbyshire County Council	£5,000,000.00	26/08/2025
The Highland Council	£5,000,000.00	26/08/2025
The Highland Council	£7,000,000.00	27/08/2025
London Borough of Haringey Council	£5,000,000.00	29/08/2025
The Highland Council	£5,000,000.00	01/09/2025
Babergh District Council	£5,000,000.00	02/09/2025
Wrexham County Borough Council	£5,000,000.00	04/09/2025
Ashford Borough Council	£5,000,000.00	08/09/2025
Police and Crime Commissioner for Lancashire	£5,000,000.00	29/09/2025

Counterparty	Principal Deposited	Maturity Date
Surrey Heath Borough Council	£5,000,000.00	01/10/2025
Surrey Heath Borough Council	£5,000,000.00	02/10/2025
Surrey Heath Borough Council	£5,000,000.00	08/10/2025
West Dunbartonshire Council	£5,000,000.00	14/10/2025
Aberdeen City Council	£5,000,000.00	28/10/2025
Fife Council	£5,000,000.00	30/10/2025
Wakefield Council	£5,000,000.00	30/10/2025
Kingston Upon Hull City Council	£5,000,000.00	04/11/2025
Aberdeen City Council	£5,000,000.00	06/11/2025
North East Lincolnshire Council	£5,000,000.00	21/11/2025
Worthing Borough Council	£5,000,000.00	21/11/2025
Bradford Metropolitan District Council	£5,000,000.00	21/11/2025
Conwy County Borough Council	£5,000,000.00	21/11/2025
Moray Council	£5,000,000.00	24/11/2025
Fife Council	£5,000,000.00	02/12/2025
The Highland Council	£3,000,000.00	10/12/2025
High Peak Borough Council	£2,500,000.00	18/12/2025
Staffordshire Moorlands District Council	£2,500,000.00	18/12/2025
Aberdeen City Council	£5,000,000.00	06/01/2026
Police and Crime Commissioner for Merseyside	£5,000,000.00	07/01/2026
Wrexham County Borough Council	£5,000,000.00	14/01/2026
Aberdeen City Council	£5,000,000.00	29/01/2026
Short Term Deposit Total	**£300,000,000.00**	
Counterparty	**Principal Deposited**	**Maturity Date**
Great Yarmouth Borough Council	£5,000,000.00	22/04/2026
Derbyshire County Council	£5,000,000.00	25/08/2026
Kirklees Council	£5,000,000.00	22/01/2027
Kirklees Council	£5,000,000.00	17/03/2027
Worcestershire County Council	£5,000,000.00	17/12/2027
Worcestershire County Council	£5,000,000.00	23/12/2027
Falkirk Council	£5,000,000.00	31/01/2028
Long Term Deposit Total	**£35,000,000.00**	
Total Deposits	**£335,000,000.00**	

Money Market Funds

Counterparty	Balance at 31/03/25 (£)	Notice period
Aberdeen Liquidity Fund	25,000,000.00	Same day
Goldman Sachs Sterling Liquid Fund	0.00	Same day
Deutsche Sterling Liquid Fund	0.00	Same day
Federated Sterling Liquidity Funds	1,900,000.00	Same day

Legal & General Sterling Liquidity Fund	25,083,046.30	Same day
CCLA Public Sector Deposit Fund	10,000.00	Same day
JP Morgan Sterling Liquidity Fund	0.00	Same day
Morgan Stanley Sterling Liquid Fund	5,000.00	Same day
Total	**51,998,046.30**	

Notice / Call Accounts

Counterparty **Balance at 31/03/25 (£)** **Notice**
period

Santander Call Account	0.00	Same day
Barclays Current	0.00	Same day
Handlesbanken	2,389.13	Same day
Total	**2,389.13**	

Strategic Bond Funds

Fund **Balance at 31/03/25 (£)** **Notice**
period

Threadneedle strategic bond fund (income)	12,443,200.51	4 days
Threadneedle Global Equity Income Fund	16,646,877.74	4 days
Kames Diversified Income	9,295,682.92	4 days
Ninety One Diversified Income	8,919,605.18	4 days
M&G Strategic Corporate Bond Fund	11,009,350.50	4 days
Schroder Income Maximiser	11,611,955.46	4 days
CCLA Better World Cautious Fund	4,659,914.83	4 days
Total	**74,586,587.14**	

Property Funds

Fund **Balance at 31/03/25 (£)** **Notice**
period

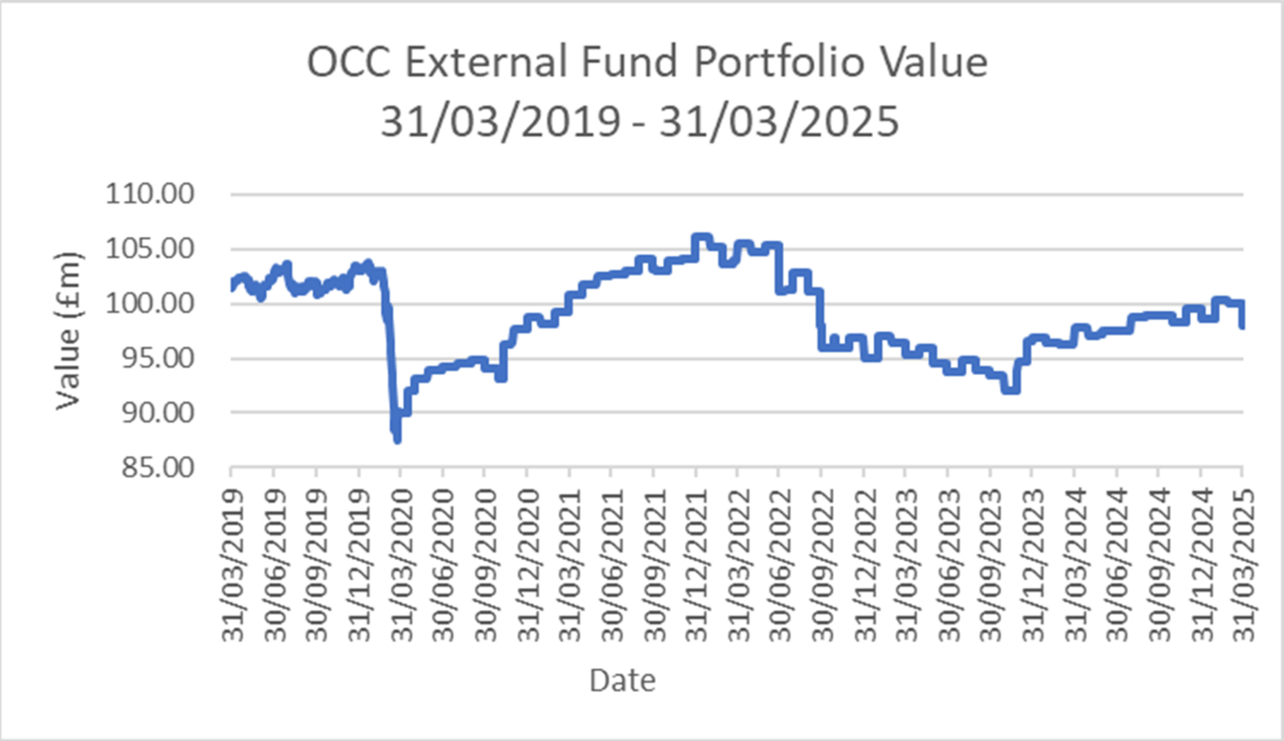
CCLA Local Authorities Property Fund	23,332,563.96	6 Monthly
Total	**23,332,563.96**	

Total Strategic Pooled Funds	**£97,919,151.10**

Investment Portfolio Summary

Short and Long Term Deposits	£335,000,000.00
Money Market Funds & Notice/Call Accounts	£52,000,435.40
Strategic Bond Funds & Property Funds	£97,919,151.10
TOTAL	**£484,919,586.53**

Strategic Pooled Fund Portfolio Value Over Time



Annex 4

Prudential Indicators Outturn 31 March 2025

Authorised and Operational Limit for External Debt

Authorised Limit for External Debt	£555,000,000
Operational Limit for External Debt	£570,000,000
Actual External Debt at 31 March 2025	£271,382,618

Fixed Interest Rate Exposure

Fixed Interest Net Borrowing limit	£350,000,000
Actual at 31 March 2025	-£75,617,382

Variable Interest Rate Exposure

Variable Interest Net Borrowing limit	0
Actual at 31 March 2025	-£124,083,586

Sums Invested over 364 days

Total sums invested for more than 364 days maximum limit	£215,000,000
Actual sums invested for more than 364 days at 31 March 2025	£35,000,000

Maturity Structure of Borrowing at 31/03/25

	Limit %	**Actual %**
From 01/04/23		
Under 12 months	0 - 20	4.42
12 – 24 months	0 - 25	11.79
24 months – 5 years	0 - 35	17.46
5 years – 10 years	5 - 40	26.16
10 years +	25 - 95	40.16

The Prudential Indictors for maturity structure are set with reference to the start of the financial year. The actual % shown above relates to the maturity period remaining at 01/04/24 on loans still outstanding at 31/03/25.

Division(s): N/A

CABINET – 15 July 2025

Budget & Business Planning 2026/27 - Fair Funding Review 2.0

Report by the Executive Director of Resources and Section 151 Officer

RECOMMENDATION

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

   a) **Note the report and annexes;**
   b) **Delegate the approval of the response to the Fair Funding Review 2.0 consultation to the Executive Director of Resources and Section 151 Officer in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Finance, Property and Transformation.**

Executive summary

2. The report provides an overview of the proposals included in the "Fair Funding Review 2.0" consultation, which was published by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) on 20 June 2025.

3. Based on the proposals it is anticipated that the council would see an increase in funding through the Settlement Funding Assessment as a result of the proposed Relative Needs Formulae and Area Cost Adjustment. However, this will be offset by the impact of resource equalisation based on the level of Band D council tax. The government is expected to publish a local government finance policy statement alongside a response to this consultation at the end of September/early October 2025. This is expected to provide more detail on individual local authority funding allocations ahead of the local government finance settlement expected at the end of November 2025.

4. The 46 questions contained in the consultation are included at Annex 1. Further analysis from the County Council Network and the Society of County Treasurers is awaited before the council's response will be completed. Therefore, it is recommended that the council's response to the consultation is delegated to the Executive Director of Resources and Section 151 Officer in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Finance, Property and Transformation..

Introduction

5. On 20 June 2025, the Ministry for Housing Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) published the "Fair Funding Review 2.0" consultation. This is open for eight weeks and will close on 15 August 2025. The government is expected to publish a local government finance policy statement alongside a response to this consultation at the end of September/early October 2025.

6. The government's intention is that the consultation marks the next step in introducing a fairer funding system that targets money where it is most needed, in partnership with local government. This up-to-date approach will use the best available evidence to take account of the different needs and costs faced by local authorities in urban and rural areas, and the ability of individual local authorities to raise Council Tax. This is intended to be a fairer and simpler approach overall, with fewer formulae, whilst also proposing that in certain high-cost areas, like temporary accommodation and home-to-school transport, bespoke formulae are justified.

7. The seven principles for funding reform are simplicity, transparency, dynamism, sustainability, robustness, stability, and accountability. In that context the government is seeking feedback on the following:

   - A new transparent, fair distribution methodology, bringing together the approach to relative need, cost and resources.
   - Proposals to simplify the local funding landscape so that local authorities can plan more effectively.
   - Proposals to reduce the number of relative needs formulae (RNF) which calculate a share of need for each local authority for a particular service or group of services.
   - How to account for differences in the cost of delivering local government services in both urban and rural areas when determining funding allocations.
   - The proposed approach to accounting for local resources by setting an assumed level of Council Tax.
   - The longer-term approach to the business rates retention system, including the design of future resets, the approach to the levy rate and safety net, and pooling arrangements for local authorities. This builds on the previous consultation which ran from 8 April to 2 June 2025 which set out a 'reset' of the business rates retention system as a core part of distributional reform
   - Ending the New Homes Bonus.
   - Transitional arrangements while implementing funding reform.
   - The role the Local Government Finance Settlement could play in funding Strategic Authorities, how to treat emerging unitary authorities in a reformed funding system, and the reduction of unnecessary burdens on local government.
   - Views on modernising and increasing flexibilities on sales, fees and charges, whilst minimising impact on service users. This includes a

proposed framework for updating fees and charges and longer-term options for devolving certain fees to local authorities, which balance fairness with the need for fees and charges to better meet the cost of delivering services.

8. The government's intention is to implement the changes for 2026/27, with transitional arrangements in place for three years (subject to consultation).

9. Alongside the consultation the government has also announced an extension to the High Needs Dedicated Schools Grant statutory override, which currently ends on 31 March 2026, to 31 March 2028. The government also intend to commence a phased transition process which will include working with local authorities to manage their SEND system, including deficits. Further information on this, and a White Paper on SEND reform is expected later in the year.

10. Annexes are attached as follows:

Annex 1:	Consultation questions
Annex 2:	Summary of funding formulae from 2013/14 alongside the proposed new formulae

Determining Local Authority Funding Allocations

11. The government proposes to calculate updated local authority funding allocations by bringing together: an updated assessment of relative need; a resources adjustment; and transitional arrangements.

12. The overall relative need share for each local authority will be determined by a series of Relative Needs Formulae (RNFs), which assess differences in demand for services between local areas.

13. A 'resource adjustment' will direct funding towards places that are less able to meet their needs through locally raised income.

14. The **Settlement Funding Assessment (SFA)** will be the relative needs share allocation less this resources adjustment.

15. To determine each local authority's final funding position, the government is proposing to apply transitional arrangements to create a **New Spending Power** for each council. This will be made up of:

    Settlement Funding Assessment (SFA) ± transitional arrangements + Council Tax income

16. It is possible that the updated SFA would find that an area has the resources to fund all its assessed need through increases in local Council Tax and therefore would receive a zero allocation. The government is considering the consequences of zero allocations within the updated SFA and possible

mitigations to avoid any local authority's SFA reducing to zero. It is not currently anticipated that the council would receive a zero allocation.

Funding Simplification

17. In 2025/26 over 300 grants were awarded to local government from across government departments. Many of these had specific conditions, and sometimes reporting requirements attached.

18. From 2026/27 the government proposes to bring together grants from across government into large ringfenced consolidated grants delivered as part of the settlement. Many of these will support prevention and service reform.

19. The intention is that including these in the settlement will provide multi – year certainty over as much funding as possible. This will be supported by a shift towards outcome - based accountability for local authorities.

20. Consolidated grants will bring together existing grants, which fund similar services and strive for the same broad outcomes, into a single fund delivered through the Settlement with simplified conditions of use. Each consolidated grant will be delivered as a single ringfenced Section 31 grant and will have a bespoke distribution. Where appropriate, distributions will be consulted on as part of the 2026/27 Provisional Local Government Finance Settlement. This is effectively an interim step between the current fragmented approach and rolling the grants into SFA. The four consolidated grant streams for 2026/27 are:

<u>Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Grant</u>
This will bring together funding for all homelessness and rough sleeping revenue funding.

<u>Public Health Grant</u>
The Public Health Grant will be consolidated alongside other service-specific grants to create a wider Public Health grant, delivered as a separate grant within the Local Government Finance Settlement in 2026/27.

<u>Crisis and Resilience Grant</u>
This will enable local authorities to build the financial resilience of their communities and assist those facing financial crisis, incorporating Discretionary Housing Payments.

<u>Children, Families and Youth Grant</u>
This will consolidate the Children's Social Care Prevention Grant and the Children and Families Grant, alongside further investment in children's social care reform. The government will explore whether additional grants for children, families and youth services can be consolidated within this grant.

21. All existing settlement grant funding will be rolled into Revenue Support Grant (RSG) and will be distributed using the Settlement Funding Assessment. This will include funding for Adult Social Care (Market Sustainability and Improvement Fund (MSIF), and Local Authority Better Care Fund (BCF) Grant), the Social Care Grant and Children's Social Care Prevention Grant. It is also assumed that the Employers National Insurance Contributions grant will be rolled in.

22. The three social care grants will be rolled into the SFA – but only the MSIF and Social Care Grant will be paid via Revenue Support Grant. The Local Authority Better Care Fund grant will be paid via section 31 grant (funded from a top-slice of Revenue Support Grant (RSG), so that it can continue to be pooled with the NHS through the Better Care Fund arrangements.

23. The inclusion of adult social care grants in the Settlement Funding Assessment will be accompanied by a published adult social care 'notional allocation' for each local authority. This 'notional allocation' will set out the government's expectation for how much local authorities should spend on adult social care, considering local authority expenditure, alongside income and funding available, for adult social care.

24. The government will also develop new accountability arrangements, that will describe how they intend to work with local government to ensure that this funding supports delivery of the government's ambitions for adult social care. Further details on accountability and assurance will be set out alongside the provisional Local Government Finance Settlement.

Approach to Assessing Demand

25. Relative needs formulae (RNFs) calculate how much 'need' a local authority has relative to other authorities for a particular service or group of services. The formulae do not calculate the amount of money required for a local authority to deliver this service. Instead, each local authority is given a 'share' of the need.

26. Since 2013/14, the Local Government Finance Settlement's core distribution has used 15 RNFs that encompass a range of service areas. The formulae have been used within the Settlement Funding Assessment (SFA) to help determine the distribution of Revenue Support Grant (RSG) and set each local authority's Baseline Funding Level (BFL).

27. The updated formulae proposed for inclusion take a comparable number of services areas into account and merges these into a smaller number of RNFs. Annex 2 compares the 2013/14 formulae to the proposed new formulae which are summarised in the table below.

Social care formulae	• Adult social care (older adults and younger adults) • Children's and young persons' services

Non-social care formulae	• Foundation Formula (upper and lower tier) • Fire and rescue • Highways maintenance • Home to school transport [1] • Temporary accommodation

28. The consultation notes that separate formulae for adult and children's social care services are critical to support the sector to deliver responsibilities which represent their largest costs.

29. The new Children and Young People's Services (CYPS) formula aims to better reflect how the need for services is spread across local authorities resulting in a fairer allocation of resources. An interim version of the CYPS formula was used for the first time in 2025/26, to distribute the new Children's Social Care Prevention Grant.

30. The government's intention in updating the formula is to fund local authorities based on their anticipated need for children's services, rather than assessing need based on historical service use. The CYPS model does this by assessing the combination of child and neighbourhood characteristics that most accurately predict whether a child will engage with social care.

31. Each individual formula is assigned a weight; to help determine the impact a formula has in the overall calculation. These are collectively known as the control totals and they reflect the scale of national expenditure on the service area(s) assessed by the formula. The combination of weighted RNFs is then used to determine an overall share of need for each local authority. To arrive at control total weights, the government proposes using revenue outturn (RO) data to explain net current expenditure by local government across services.

32. The impact of the proposed formula for **Adult Social Care**, which appears to be an updated formula with updates advised by the Personal Social Services Research Unit (PSSRU) is important as this will distribute a very large share of the funding within SFA, and also £9.6bn in specific grants that will be rolled into SFA.

33. The new formula for **Highways Maintenance** is based on road length and traffic flow data. The current RNF has a higher weighting for urban roads (x2), there is a top-up for non-resident population, and for winter maintenance. The proposed changes to the formula generally favour rural rather than urban authorities.

34. The new formula for **Home to School Transport** (HTST) will provide specific funding for both mainstream and SEND home-to-school transport (HTST). The proposed formula for mainstream HTST is based on the number of pupils and the distance travelled (capped at 20 miles). For SEND

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[1] Post 16 travel is covered by the Foundation Formula.

HTST, there is a proxy formula based on anticipated number of pupils with EHCPs, and the average distance travelled. Both formulas are largely based on distance (which is appropriate) but will favour county areas, where distances travelled for HTST will be further.

35. As a result of the proposed RNFs and shares of the national control totals the council's needs assessment would increase from 0.8348% using the 2013/14 formulae to 0.9255% from 2026/27. The split across the formulae is shown in Table 1 below:

	2013-14			NEW		
Service Specific Formula	**Share of RNF**	**Control Totals**	**Share of Total**	**Share of RNF**	**Control Totals**	**Share of Total**
Adult Social Care Relative Need Formula	0.9549%	36.2%	0.3459%	1.1050%	37.5%	0.4148%
Children and Young People's Services Relative Need Formula	0.9413%	17.8%	0.1672%	0.7975%	23.2%	0.1848%
Foundation Formula	0.4464%	29.6%	0.1321%	0.6346%	27.1%	0.1721%
Fire & Rescue Relative Need Formula	1.0817%	4.9%	0.0527%	1.1470%	4.3%	0.0493%
Highways Maintenance Relative Need Formula	1.1841%	3.3%	0.0394%	1.5712%	3.2%	0.0503%
Home to School Transport Service Relative Need Formula				1.6713%	3.2%	0.0541%
Temporary Accomodation Relative Need Formula				0.0000%	1.4%	0.0000%
Capital Financing (2013)	1.1874%	8.2%	0.0975%			
Total Needs Assessment			**0.8348%**			**0.9255%**

36. All the RNFs will use the latest mid-year population estimates (2023). These are based on the 2021 Census, which was heavily affected by population movements in the COVID pandemic. Funding allocations will be fixed for 3 years and will not be updated each year with the latest data. This means that the government will want to use population projections (based on those produced by the ONS) and also taxbase projections.

37. The consultation sets out that the government expect the vast majority of councils with social care responsibilities will see their Core Spending Power increase in real terms over the multi-year Settlement, with most councils seeing it increase in cash terms.

Approach to Assessing Cost

38. As well as variations in need there will be differences in the cost of delivering local government services between different areas because of differences in local labour markets and rurality, for example. Because of this the government are proposing to continue to apply an Area Cost Adjustment (ACA) to the Relative Needs Formulae to account for differences in the costs of delivering services.

39. The Government have reviewed previous versions of the ACA and are proposing to incorporate the following adjustment factors:

- Rates Cost Adjustment (RCA) – aims to measure the difference in the cost of property rates / rents between local authorities. This reflects the variation between areas in the cost of using equivalent premises due to differences in local supply and demand factors;

- Labour Cost Adjustment (LCA) – aims to measure the difference in the cost of labour between local authorities. This reflects the fact that authorities will need to compete with other potential employers to secure and retain suitable skilled staff;
- Accessibility Adjustment – aims to measure the impact of the difference in travel time to provide services on the cost of labour. There are two measures within this adjustment - a dispersal adjustment factor (longer journeys to reach households) and a traversal adjustment factor (longer journeys between households). They are measured using journey time data and combined with the LCA, since they are measures of additional labour cost. This adjustment is a new addition since the 2013/14 ACA; and
- Remoteness Adjustment – aims to measure the impact of separation from larger concentrations of service users.

40. It is anticipated that every authority will have its own ACA, instead of being included in a regional grouping.

Council Tax equalisation and the notional Council Tax level

41. Paragraph 6.2.2 of the consultation sets out that the government has an important role as an equaliser for local government income, directing funding towards the places that are less able to meet their needs through locally raised income. The objective of equalisation is to make funding available in such a way as to enable all local authorities to provide the same level of service to their residents.

42. To equalise for the Council Tax base of a local authority, it is proposed to set an assumed or 'notional' level of Council Tax for all authorities. The government is proposing to set a notional Council Tax level that achieves the objective of full equalisation.

43. To fully equalise against the Council Tax base, the notional Council Tax level would be set at the average Band D level of Council Tax in England for authorities in scope of these reforms (c. £2000 in 2026/27). Where there are multiple tiers of local government the consultation proposes to uniformly apply the average tier split in multi-tier areas to the measure of Council Tax in the resources adjustment. Using this methodology the Band D Upper Tier share in 2024/25 for England would be 84.4% and the Fire Tier share would be 4.6%.

44. The council's Medium Term Financial Strategy agreed in February 2025 assumes a Band D of £1,987.66 in 2026/27 assuming a council tax increase of 3.99%. At the 4.99% referendum limit for 2026/27 set out in the Spending Review 2025 this would increase to £2,006.78. Assuming an 89.0% share of £2,000 for the Upper and Fire Tiers set out in the consultation the comparative notional Band D for 2026/27 would be £1,780.00 Since the council's Band D would be £207.66 (or 10.4% at 3.99%) or £226.78 (or 11.3% at 4.99%) above the notional band D the council would expect to lose

grant funding through resource equalisation based on the amount of council tax generated above the notional Band D.

45. No adjustment will be made to equalisation for any income from sales, fees and charges, or from parking income.

46. More generally the government has confirmed that there are no plans to reform council tax.

Business Rates Retention System

47. Local authorities expected to retain growth in business rates from a baseline of April 2013 up until the point of a business rates reset. This was originally planned for April 2020 but did not take place. A core part of the funding system proposed in the consultation is a full reset of the Business Rates Retention System in 2026/27.

48. The government's aim is to ensure funding is targeted where it is needed most and restore the balance between aligning funding with need and rewarding business rates growth. The local share (the percentage share of locally collected business rates that will be retained by local government) will continue to be subject to redistribution across local government via 'top-ups' and 'tariffs', which will be updated at the Reset.

49. The consultation on Local authority funding reform which ran from 8 April to 2 June 2025 proposed a methodology to remeasure the income each local authority expects to collect from business rates at the start of the new reset period. The government is now considering the responses within its work on establishing new Business Rates Baselines and will publish a response to this consultation in due course.

50. The level of risk and reward local authorities are subject to within the Business Rates Retention System will largely be determined by the level of protection provided to local authorities experiencing drops in their business rate income from the Safety Net, the levy charged on business rate growth above funding baselines, and whether local authorities are able to share risk and reward through pooling arrangements.

51. Beyond 2026/27, the government has proposed periodic Resets to ensure funding allocations are kept up-to-date while providing future funding certainty to local authorities. The frequency and design of these Resets will impact how the reward for business rates growth feels for authorities. The time elapsed between resets will determine how long growth accumulates before being available for reallocation based on assessed need. To provide certainty to the sector and continue to reward local authorities for business rate growth, the government proposes that the Business Rates Retention System will be reset in 2026/27 and not reset in the remaining years of the multi-year Settlement.

52. To help them drive growth the government is considering whether Mayoral Strategic Authorities should eventually receive a direct share of business rates through the Business Rates Retention System. Engagement will take place over the forthcoming multi-year Settlement period to co-develop a new offer with view to implementation thereafter.

New Homes Bonus

53. 2025/26 will be the final year the New Homes Bonus is paid in its current format. The funding (£290 million nationally in 2025/26), will be returned to the core Settlement, and allocated according to the updated assessment of needs and resources.

54. The council received £1.1m funding from the Homes Bonus in 2025/26. The Medium Term Financial Strategy agreed in February 2025 assumes this falls out in 2026/27 so there is no change to existing assumptions.

Transitional Arrangements and Keeping Allocations up to Date

55. The government will begin implementation of updated funding allocations at the 2026/27 Settlement, alongside a business rates reset with the new allocations phased in over the three years of the multi-year Settlement. This will align with the Spending Review period (2026/27 to 2028/29).

56. To support local authorities to move to their new allocations in a sustainable way, the government are inviting views on a package of transitional arrangements available over the multi-year Spending Review period. Where funding reduces, the government expect that service transformation supported by the use of funding held in reserves, will be required to support the move to the new funding allocations.

57. The consultation includes a proposal for a 0% (cash flat) funding floor so authorities would not suffer cash-terms reductions in overall funding over the period of the multi - year settlement. Any protection offered through a funding floor will assume local authorities use their full council tax flexibility (ie. they would set the Band D council tax at the referendum limit).

Local Government Reorganisation

58. Areas such as Oxfordshire developing reorganisation proposals will need to do so in light of the funding reform proposals set out in the consultation and will need to have regard to the impact of these proposals on both existing and new local authorities.

59. Where two tier areas seek to reorganise into a single unitary authority, the government proposes that allocations of the predecessor authorities are combined to determine the allocation of the successor authority.

60. Where there are proposed boundary changes, including where an area is divided into more than one unitary authority, the government proposes to provide guidance to support areas to determine an appropriate division of allocations locally.

61. It is important that areas determine allocations locally because local authorities hold the information needed to assess the level of need and resources at a sub-local authority level, for example information on social care demand within a county area. This means local authorities are best placed to use this information to determine the appropriate share of funding between successor authorities.

62. The government is proposing to provide guidance to areas on how to determine the division of funding locally. Local authorities will need to ensure that proposed funding splits are financially sustainable for the new unitary authorities. Guidance is also important in recognition of the fact areas are developing proposals at the same time as government is delivering much needed reforms to the funding system. Additionally, the guidance would ensure that there is a consistent approach to the division of funding allocations across all reorganisation areas, recognising that this is the most significant local government reorganisation in decades. This guidance will set out how the government expects areas to use the information they hold to determine local allocations and provide clarity on how Council Tax harmonisation will affect allocations to new unitary areas.

63. The final decision on the division of allocations between successor authorities will sit with the Secretary of State, and will ultimately be subject to Parliamentary approval through the annual Local Government Finance Settlement process. This approach will apply to all funding delivered through the Settlement.

Staff implications

64. There are no staffing implications arising directly from this report. Further information will be shared through the budget and business planning process.

Climate implications

65. Climate Action is a policy priority for Oxfordshire County Council. There are no climate implications arising directly from this report. Changes to funding may impact on the council’s ability to support non – statutory expenditure but further information is awaited later in the year.

Equality and inclusion implications

66. There are no equality and inclusion implications arising directly from this report. A high level assessment of the broad impact of the revenue budget proposals will be included as part of the published information later in the year.

Risk management

67. Risks and opportunities to the council and the level and use of reserves and balances will be considered as part of the budget and business planning process.

Financial implications

68. The Council is required by law to set a balanced budget for 2026/27 before 1 March 2026. Alongside this, there is a requirement under Section 25 of the Local Government Finance Act 2003 for the Chief Finance Officer to prepare a statement on the robustness of the budget estimates and the adequacy of reserves. This report sets out a summary of the Fair Funding 2.0 consultation and the potential impact on the council's funding for 2026/27 onwards. Further funding information is awaited later in the year and action will need to be taken to balance planned expenditure with the future funding.

69. The extension to the Statutory Over-ride for High Needs DSG means the negative reserve is likely to increase to over £200m by 31 March 2028. Further information expected later in the year will need to set out how this can be managed and what action needs to be taken to ensure the on-going financial sustainability of the council.

Comments checked by:

Ian Dyson,
Director of Financial & Commercial Services

Legal implications

70. The response to a government consultation is an executive function. The cabinet is requested to delegate completion of the Council's response to the Fair Funding Review 2.0 consultation to the Executive Director of Resources and Section 151 Officer in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Finance, Property and Transformation. The subject matter of the consultation is the review of how local authorities are funded in future years.
Comments checked by:

Anita Bradley
Director of Law and Governance and Monitoring Officer

LORNA BAXTER
Deputy Chief Executive and Executive Director of Resources (Section 151 Officer)

Contact Officer:

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

July 2025

Annexes:

Annex 1:	Consultation Questions
Annex 2:	Summary of formulae that were included in 2013/14 alongside the new proposal

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The Fair Funding Review 2.0 Consultation Questions

1. What are your views on the updated SFA resulting in zero allocations, and the use of mitigations to avoid zero allocations?

2. Do you agree with how the government proposes to determine the Council of the Isles of Scilly's Settlement Funding Assessment?

3. Do you agree with the government's plans to simplify the grant landscape?

4. Do you agree with the formulae for individual services the government proposes to include?

5. Do you agree with the areas of need the government proposes to no longer include in the assessment through the Foundation Formula?

6. Do you agree with the government's approach to calculating the control total shares for the relative needs formulae?

7. Do you agree with the Labour Cost Adjustment (LCA) and Rates Cost Adjustment (RCA) equations set out in this chapter?

8. What are your views on the proposed approach to the Area Cost Adjustment (ACA)?

9. Do you agree or disagree with the inclusion of the Remoteness Adjustment? Do you have any evidence to support or contradict the theory that rural areas face additional costs due to separation from major markets?

10. Do you agree with the government's proposal to set a notional Council Tax level at the national average level, to achieve the objective of full equalisation?

11. Do you agree with the government's proposal to fully include the impact of mandatory discounts and exemptions in the measure of taxbase?

12. Do you agree with the government's proposal to use statistical methods to proxy for the impact of Working Age Local Council Tax Support in the measure of taxbase?

13. What are your views on the proposed statistical approach to proxy for the impact of Working Age Local Council Tax Support?

14. Do you agree with the government's proposal to assume that authorities make no use of their discretionary discount and premium schemes in the measure of taxbase?

15. Do you agree with the government's proposal to apply a uniform Council Tax collection rate assumption to all authorities?

16. Do you agree with the government's proposal to split or allocate the resource adjustment in multi-tier areas according to the average share in Council Tax receipts in multi-tier areas?

17. Noting a potential trade-off of an increased levy charged on business rate growth for some local authorities, do you agree that the level of Safety Net protection should increase for 2026-27?

18. Do you agree with the government's proposal to end the New Homes Bonus in the Settlement from 2026-27 and return the funding currently allocated to the Bonus to the core Settlement, distributed via the updated Settlement Funding Assessment?

19. What measures could the government use to incentivise local authorities to specifically support affordable and sub-market housing?

20. Are there any further flexibilities that you think could support local decision-making during the transitional period?

21. What are the safeguards that would need to go alongside any additional flexibilities?

22. Do you agree or disagree that we should move local authorities to their updated allocations over the multi-year Settlement?

    Please provide any additional information, including the impact this measure could have on local authorities' financial sustainability and service provision.

23. Do you agree or disagree that we should use a funding floor to protect as many local authorities' income as possible, at flat cash in each year of the Settlement?

    Please provide any additional information, including on:
    - The level of protection or income baseline, considerate of the trade-off with allocating funding according to the updated assessment of need and resources; and
    - The possible impacts on local authorities' financial sustainability and service provision.

24. Do you agree or disagree with including projections on residential population?

25. Do you agree or disagree with including projections on Council Tax level?

26. Do you agree or disagree with including projections on Council Tax base?

27. Please provide any additional information, including any explanation or evidence for your response and any views on technical delivery. If you agree, what is your preferred method of projecting residential population, Council Tax level and Council Tax base?

28. Do you agree with the proposed above approach to determining allocations for areas which reorganise into a single unitary authority along existing geographic boundaries?

29. Do you agree that, where areas are reorganising into multiple new unitary authorities, they should agree a proposal for the division of existing funding locally, based on any guidance set out by central government?

    Please provide any supporting information, including any further information areas would find helpful in guidance.

30. Do you agree that the government should work to reduce unnecessary or disproportionate burden created by statutory duties? If you agree, what specific areas of statutory duties impose significant burden without significant value for residents?

    Please provide any examples of changes you would like to see to statutory duties, being as specific as possible.

31. Do you agree with the proposed framework outlined at paragraph 11.2.3 for assessing whether a fee should be changed?

    Please provide any additional information, for example any additional considerations which would strengthen this proposed assessment framework, and any data which would be used to assess against it.

32. The government invites views from respondents on how best to balance the need to maintain fee values and the original policy intent of the fee whilst minimising cost of living impacts for service users.

33. Do you agree that the measures above provide an effective balance between protecting charge payers from excessive increases, while providing authorities with greater control over local revenue raising?

    Please provide a rationale or your response. We are also interested in any further mechanisms which could be applied to fees that are updated or devolved, that will help strike a balance between those objectives.

34. Do you agree that we should take action to update fees before exploring options to devolve certain fees to local government in the longer term?

35. Do you agree or disagree that these are the right Relative Needs Indicators? Are there any other Relative Needs Indicators we should consider? Note that we will not be able to add additional indicators for a 2026-27 update.

36. Do you agree or disagree with including population projections in the ASC formula, when published, that have been rebased using Census 2021 data?

37. Do you agree or disagree with our proposal to include a Low-Income Adjustment (LIA) for the older adults component of the ASC RNF model?

38. Do you agree or disagree that the overall ASC RNF should combine the two component allocation shares using weights derived from the national ASC net current expenditure data on younger and older adults (in this case 2023 to 2024)?

If you disagree, what other weightings would you use? Please provide details for why you would use these weights and what data it would be based on?

39. Do you agree that ethnicity should be removed as a variable in the CYPS formula? Please explain your reasoning.
40. Do you agree overall that the new formula represents an accurate assessment of need for children and family services? Please share any reflections or suggested changes.
41. Do you believe that the components of daytime population inflow should be weighted to reflect their relative impact on demand for services?
42. Do you agree with/have any comments on the design of the Foundation Formula?
43. Do you agree with/have any comments on the design of the Fire and Rescue Formula?
44. Do you agree with/have any comments on the design of the formula for Highways Maintenance?
45. Do you agree with/have any comments on the design of the formula for Home-to-School-Transport?
46. Do you have any views on the potential impacts of the proposals in this consultation on persons who share a protected characteristic?

Annex 2

Summary of formulae that were included in 2013/14 alongside the new proposal

2013/14 formulae in Settlement Funding Assessment (SFA)	Formulae the government proposes using in the updated core assessment
Adult's Personal Social Services (Social Services for Older Adults)	**Updated** Adult Social Care (Older Adults)
Adult's Personal Social Services (Social Services for Younger Adults)	**Updated** Adult Social Care (Younger Adults)
Children's Services (Youth and Community)	**New** Children and Young People’s Services
Children's Services (Children's Social Care)	
Children's Services (Central Education Functions)	**New** Home to School Transport
Concessionary Travel	
Continuing Environment Agency Levies	
Coast Protection	**New** Foundation Formula (Upper Tier) **New** Foundation Formula (Lower Tier)
Environmental, Protective and Cultural Services (Lower Tier)	
Environmental, Protective and Cultural Services (Upper Tier)	
Flood Defence	
Fire and Rescue	**Updated** Fire and Rescue
Highways Maintenance	**New** Highways Maintenance
n/a	**New** Temporary Accommodation
Fixed Costs	No longer included in assessment
Legacy Capital Finance	

CABINET – 15 JULY 2025

REVENUE UPDATE AND MONITORING REPORT

Report by the Executive Director of Resources and Section 151 Officer

Recommendations

1. **The Cabinet is RECOMMENDED to**

   a) Note the report and annexes.
   b) Approve a £3.5m transfer from budgets held centrally to Adult Services to meet the financial pressure on contracted costs for the provision of social care (paragraph 24)
   c) Approve the following virements relating to funding changes (paragraphs 27 – 31).
      - £3.6m transfer of grant funding from budgets held corporately to Children's Services.
      - £0.8m additional un-ringfenced grants transferred to the in-year contribution to General Balances.
      - £2.2m increase in the final notified Business Rates funding and Council Tax surpluses transferred to the Collection Fund Reserve.
   d) Approve the change to the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) High Needs Block 2025/26 updated budgeted deficit (paragraphs 32 - 35).

Executive Summary

2. The budget for 2025/26 and Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) to 2027/28 was agreed by Council on 11 February 2025. £53.6m new funding to meet inflationary and demand pressures in 2025/26 was included as part of the budget along with £6.9m investments and £30.3m savings.

3. This report sets out the initial revenue forecast and expected outlook for the financial year and includes updates on:
   - financial risks which are being managed in 2025/26;
   - savings and investment position; and
   - funding notified since the budget was agreed.

4. The council's financial position underpins the delivery of its priorities.

Key Messages – Revenue, Balances and Reserves

- Nationally local government continues to work in a challenging environment but the position at the end of 2024/25 demonstrated that the council is able to take action across services to manage within the available funding. At the end of May 2025 (Financial Period Month 2), the council's services are forecasting a £1.2m overspend as at 31 March 2026. This is offset by a forecast underspend of £2.3m within budgets held centrally. The overall forecast is an underspend of £1.1m. The details are shown in Annex 1 and summarised in Table 1 (paragraph 6 below).

- In order to ensure ongoing financial resilience, the council is holding an on-going corporate contingency budget of £7.3m as well as one – off general balances based on an assessment of risk agreed as part of the budget. These measures provide additional financial resilience should the service area overspend not be effectively mitigated by corrective actions before the end of the financial year. Based on current forecasts, the contingency budget is not currently expected to be required in full. Any underspend later in the year will be transferred to reserves to further improve financial resilience and provide funding for future investments.
- The cumulative deficit against Dedicated Schools Grant funding for High Needs had increased to £92.5m as at 31 March 2025. It is expected that this will continue to increase reaching over £130m during 2025/26 and growing further by 31 March 2026. In June 2025, the government extended the statutory override which requires this expenditure to be held in a negative reserve to 31 March 2028. Further information on how High Needs deficits will be managed in future is expected later in the year along with a White Paper on SEND reform.

5. More detailed financial information summarising the Financial Strategy – Reserves and General Balances is included in Annex 4.

Forecast Revenue position as at 31 May 2025

6. At Month 2, the council is forecasting a £1.1m underspend against the revenue budget as at 31 March 2026. Table 1 below shows the forecast revenue budget, forecast expenditure and variation for the year by Service Area (further details are set out in Annex 1):

Table 1 - Summary revenue budget forecast variances as at 31 May 2025

Service	Net Budget	Forecast Expenditure	Forecast Variance
Adult Services	£253.2m	£253.2m	£0.0m
Children's Services	£210.9m	£210.9m	£0.0m
Public Health & Communities	£13.5m	£13.5m	£0.0m
Environment & Highways	£53.2m	£53.2m	£0.0m
Economy & Place	£20.6m	£20.6m	£0.0m
Fire & Rescue and Community Safety	£30.5m	£31.2m	£0.7m
Resources and Law & Governance	£61.6m	£62.2m	£0.5m
Transformation, Digital & Customer Experience	£6.5m	£6.5m	£0.0m
Service Areas Position	**£650.1m**	**£651.3m**	£1.2m
Budgets held Centrally	-£3.8m	-£4.0m	-£0.1m
Corporate Funding	-£646.3m	-£648.4m	-£2.2m
Overall	**£0.0m**	**-£1.1m**	**-£1.1m**

7. In 2025/26, updates will be provided on an exception basis highlighting any pressures, risks, in-year mitigations and opportunities. Where relevant, and known ahead of the budget being agreed, budgets for 2025/26 have been updated to reflect on-going pressures or issues continuing from 2024/25.

8. The position for each Service Area has been approved by the relevant director.

9. **Adults and Children's Services** – **no forecast variation**. Both Adults and Children's Services currently expect to manage expenditure within current general fund resources amidst national demand and pricing challenges.

10. **Environment & Highways (E&H) – no forecast variation.** The following risks are being monitored and managed. These are:
    - Waste Management - market prices and volumes remain high for dry mixed recyclables.
    - Network Management - the Department for Transport (DfT) has delayed approving the application to charge for lane rental. The delay will impact on attaining the expected income targets. E&H will endeavour to mitigate as much as possible depending on the performance of other income streams.
    - Gullying and Highway maintenance - the weather and overall condition of the roads and gullies could impact on the level of expenditure. Robust plans and programmes are in place based on the assumed condition of the gullies and roads.

    If necessary, in-year mitigations will be required.

11. **Fire & Rescue and Community Safety - £0.7m forecast overspend**. The forecast overspend is primarily due to undelivered staff savings allocated to the service on an estimated basis in previous years. Work is on-going to assess savings expected to be achieved through the redesign of the council's staffing structures. Following this staffing savings will be realigned to services to reflect actual reductions.

12. **Resources - Law & Governance Services - £0.5m forecast overspend.** The Legal Service continues to experience issues relating to retention & recruitment and an increase in the volumes of appeals. The issues are expected to cause a £0.5m overspend due to locum cover.

13. **Budgets held centrally - £0.1m underspend.** Interest on balances is forecast to be £1.5m higher than budgeted because interest rates have remained higher than expected. Un-ringfenced grants are also expected to be £0.8m higher than budgeted.

    This is offset by the proposed increase in contributions to reserves needed to transfer £2.2m additional Business Rates and Council Tax Collection Fund funding to the Collection Fund Reserve.

14. **Corporate Funding - £2.2m increase in funding.** When the budget for 2025/26 was agreed some information in relation to funding for 2025/26 remained outstanding. This included confirmation of Business Rates income including the Collection Fund position, Local Share, and Section 31 Grant Funding as well and final confirmation of the Council Tax collection fund position. Final Council Tax Collection Fund & Business Rates information has now been received, and overall funding has increased by £2.2m. It is proposed to transfer this to the

Collection Fund Reserve. The use of this funding will be considered as part of the 2026/27 budget process.

Savings & Investments update

15. The presentation of savings and investments has been adjusted to focus on the savings and investments that need to be achieved in 2025/26. Any adjustments relating to savings and investments that were time bound and finished in 2024/25 have been removed from the targets and realigned into net pressures (£1.8m reversal of savings, and £7.0m investments). Children's Services budget movements include a further on-going savings risk adjustment of £4.7m in 2025/26. This is being treated as an offsetting negative saving so that the related savings can be tracked and monitored.

16. After adjusting for these changes, there are £43.5m inflation and demand pressures along with £14.2m investments and £27.4m savings.

17. Within the Outturn Report for 2024/25 considered by Cabinet in June 2025, one – off funding for £1.8m of investments was agreed to be carried forward to future years (currently phased as £1.6m for use in 2025/26 and £0.2m in future years). Subject to a review of the requirement for this funding, virements to adjust service area budgets for this funding will be included in the next monitoring report. After taking account of new and 2024/25 carried over funding, there is funding for investments totalling £15.8m in 2025/26.

Table 2: Revised Budget Movements by service area

	Budget 2024/25	Pressures & Funding	Investments	Savings	Feb 2025 2025/26 Budget	Carried Forward Investments	2025/26 Budget
Adult Services	£251.7m	£12.4m	£0.0m	-£9.4m	£254.6m	£0.5m	£255.1m
Children's Services	£199.1m	£20.9m	£4.9m	-£8.1m	£216.8m	£0.5m	£217.4m
Public Health & Communities	£12.9m	£0.5m	£2.0m	-£0.8m	£14.6m		£14.6m
Environment & Highways	£53.5m	£2.2m	£4.2m	-£4.6m	£55.3m		£55.3m
Economy & Place	£17.0m	£0.8m	£0.3m	-£1.1m	£17.0m		£17.0m
Fire & Rescue and Community Safety	£28.9m	£2.3m	£0.0m	-£0.2m	£31.0m		£31.0m
Resources and Law & Governance	£61.3m	£4.0m	£1.7m	-£2.2m	£64.9m	£0.1m	£64.9m
Transformation, Digital & Customer Experience	£3.5m	£0.4m	£1.0m	-£1.0m	£3.8m	£0.5m	£4.3m
Service area budgets	**£627.8m**	**£43.5m**	**£14.2m**	**-£27.4m**	**£658.0m**	**£1.6m**	**£659.6m**
Budgets held Centrally	-£16.5m	£4.8m			-£11.7m	-£1.6m	-£13.3m
Corporate Funding	-£611.3m	-£35.0m			-£646.3m		-£646.3m
Overall	**£0.0m**	**£13.3m**	**£14.2m**	**-£27.4m**	**-£0.0m**	**£0.0m**	**£0.0m**

18. Savings relating to contract and staffing have currently been allocated to services on a pro-rata basis, but as plans emerge and crystallise this will be reallocated to align with actual delivery.

19. The achievement of the savings and investments will be reflected within the overall forecast.

- savings that are anticipated not to be delivered will be evident through the service area overspending or explaining one-off mitigations.
- investments that are anticipated not to be delivered, will be evident through the service area underspending against the budget for the investment. Alternatively, there may be pressures where outcomes from investments have not been achieved as expected.
  Where any investment outcomes have been re-evaluated and the investment returned to reserves, this will be explained through the commentary and reserves forecast adjustments within budgets held centrally.

Pay Inflation

20. The agreed budget includes funding for an estimated pay award equivalent to 3.5% for all staff. Further excess funding for pay inflation in 2024/25 has also rolled forwards to 2025/26 so this is available to meet any additional pay costs and/or will be considered through the 2026/27 Budget & Business Planning Process. Each additional 1% above that is estimated to cost around £2.0m.

21. As part of the agreed budget for 2025/26 an estimate for pay inflation was allocated to each service. During the year budgeted pay inflation will be held within Budgets held Centrally until the actual pay awards are agreed. Funding will then be allocated to meet the relevant actual increase in costs. The Grey Book Pay award relating to firefighters has been agreed at 3.2% from 1 July 2025 and the Service Area budget includes this increase.

22. The Unison, GMB and Unite unions submitted their Green Book pay claim for 2025/26 on 31 January 2025. This included an increase of at least £3,000 across all spinal column points, a clear plan to reach a minimum pay rate of £15 an hour, one extra day of annual leave for all staff and a reduction in the working week by two hours, with no loss of pay.

23. On 22 April 2025, National Employers made a full and final pay offer for 2025/26, proposing a 3.2% increase for all National Joint Council for Local Government Service (NJC) Green Book employees, effective from 1 April 2025. The unions have recommended that their members reject the offer and are currently consulting with their members. Further updates will be provided once further information is available.

24. £4.3m budgeted funding was held corporately as part of the 2025/26 budget to meet the financial pressure on contracted costs for the provision of social care. £3.5m will be transferred to Adult Services to meet the impact on contract uplifts in 2025/26. The remainder will be held pending confirmation of whether there are any further impacts on other services.

Budget Updates

25. Annex 2 highlights where service area budgets have moved since the Budget Book agreed by Council in February 2025. This mainly reflects the reaggregation of the pay inflation which will be held corporately ahead of the agreement of the pay award, grant changes, plus service area updates and alignments. The £1.6m funding for investments carried forward from 2024/25 and the one – off funding agreed in the report to Cabinet in June 2025 for Innovate Oxfordshire (£0.5m –

Service Area Economy & Place) and the Business and Intellectual Property Centre (BIPC) (£0.1m Service Area Public Health & Communities) will be reflected in the next report.

26. Paragraph 31 outlines government grant and corporate funding approvals. All other virements are below £1m and have received delegated approval in accordance with the Virement Rules for 2025/26.

Additional Corporate funding & External grant funding

27. The report to Council in February 2025 set out that some funding was awaiting confirmation, so estimates were included within the budget. 2025/26 funding has been confirmed through receipts and confirmations.

Table 3 – Grant funding as at 31 May 2025

Service areas	Original Grant Funding	Updates from Grant letters	Transfers (unring to ring)	Revised Grant Funding
Adult Services	£23.2m	£0.0m	£0.0m	£23.2m
Children's Services	£21.1m	£2.8m	£3.6m	£27.6m
Public Health & Communities	£35.2m	£2.5m	£0.0m	£37.7m
Environment & Highways	£0.3m	£0.0m	£0.0m	£0.3m
Economy & Place	£5.5m	£0.0m	£0.0m	£5.5m
Fire & Rescue and Community Safety	£1.4m	-£0.2m	£0.0m	£1.3m
Service Areas position	**£86.8m**	**£5.2m**	**£3.6m**	**£95.6m**
Dedicated School Grants	£341.4m	-£1.3m	£0.0m	£340.2m
Un-ringfenced Grants	£61.6m	£0.7m	-£3.6m	£58.7m
Government Grants	**£489.8m**	**£4.6m**	**£0.0m**	**£494.4m**
Corporate Funding	£646.3m	£2.2m	£0.0m	£648.4m
Overall Funding	**£1,136.1m**	**£6.8m**	**£0.0m**	**£1,142.9m**

Note: Only Service Areas with budgeted government grants are listed.

28. The conditions for £3.6m of grants relating to Children's Services have changed from un-ringfenced to ringfenced as originally expected and will now be held by the service along with the expenditure budget.

29. Notable updates in government grants from the receipts:
    - £2.5m increase in the Public Health Grant to £36.9m – notified in February 2025 but received too late to be included in the budget papers;
    - £1.2m Adoption Support fund not previously included;

    There are other movements totalling £0.9m across a number of other grants.

30. Business Rates Section 31 grants, the local share and top-up have been revised following receipt of information from the district councils and MHCLG. The Council Tax Collection fund surplus has also been updated to reflect the final notified position. Estimated and revised Business Rates are shown in the table below:

	2025/26 Budget (February 2025)	2025/26 Updated Post Budget
Settlement Funding Assessment	**£79.4m**	**£79.4m**
Local Growth	£2.9m	£2.9m
Section 31 Grant for Business Rates Reliefs – Retail & Hospitality reliefs	£1.9m	£2.1m
Section 31 Grant – Indexation Element	£15.2m	£16.4m
Section 31 Grant for Business Rates Reliefs – on-going reliefs	£1.8m	£1.9m
Total Section 31 Grant for Business Rates Reliefs and Indexation	**£18.9m**	**£20.4m**
Collection Fund Surplus (+) or Deficit (-)	£0.0m	£0.4m
Total	**£101.2m**	**£103.1m**

31. Annex 3 outlines Government Grants (ring fenced and un-ringfenced) and Business Rates funding. Cabinet is recommended to approve the following:
    - £3.6m transfer of Children & Families grants from un-ringfenced to ringfenced. The funding will now be held by the service instead of corporately;
    - £0.8m additional un-ringfenced grants proposed to be transferred to general balances; and
    - £2.2m increase in funding from Business Rates and Council Tax surpluses will be transferred to the Collection Fund Reserve.

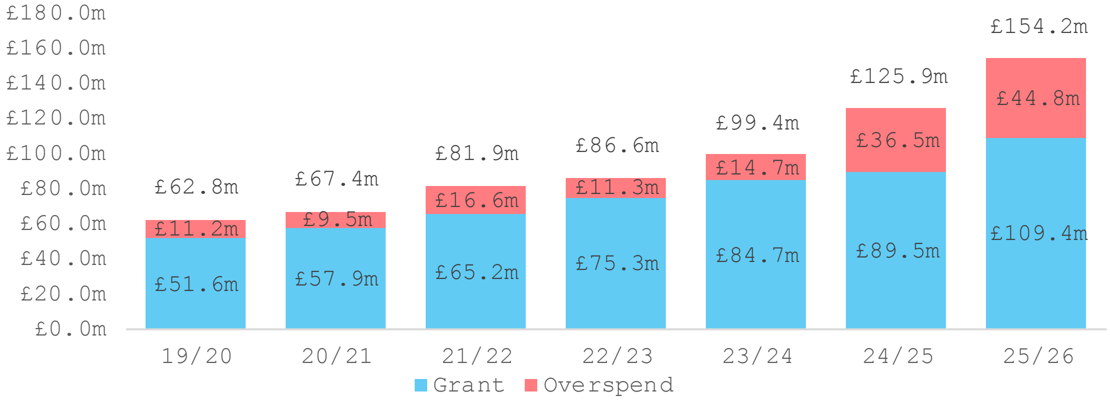
And note the £4.6m increase to government grant funding.

Dedicated Schools Grant – High Needs Block

32. The statutory reporting requirements for the 2025/26 accounts require the closing deficit balance on Dedicated Schools Grant to be held within an unusable reserve. The existing statutory override was due to end on 31 March 2026 but the Government has now extended this until 31 March 2028. While the council is continuing to take action to manage the deficit through the Deficit Management Plan, it is continuing to grow in line with demand. Further information on how deficits will be managed in future is expected later in the year along with a White Paper on SEND reform and also the Provisional Local Government Settlement expected in November 2025.

33. The council's deficit is the cumulative impact of each year's demand exceeding funding since 2019/20. The graph below highlights that the grant amounts have been increasing nationally, but the actual volumes are still greater than the estimated values. This suggests that while the funding has been growing, the actual demand has consistently exceeded the Department of Education estimate from the High Needs Block grant formula.

Graph: 2019 – 2025 Annual DSG High Needs Block grant & actual year overspends and 2025/26 forecast



34. Based on the recent publication of other county council's draft 2024/25 Statement of Accounts and analysis of the deficit negative reserves indicates that other county councils are experiencing similar issues with a similar upward trajectory to Oxfordshire.

35. In February 2025, the budget proposal cabinet paper outlined the initial funding and deficit for 2025/26 High Needs Dedicated Schools grant funding and deficit. Following the 2024/25 outturn position and further assessments, the High Needs Budget for 2025/26 has been revised to an in-year deficit of £42.3m. Based on the latest forecast is expected to overspend that by £2.5m driven by continuing demand outstripping grant funding increases.

36. The High Needs Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) Block cumulative deficit was £92.5m at the end of 2024/ 25 and this is expected to exceed £130m by 31 March 2026.

Next Report

37. The Business Management Report to Cabinet in September 2025 will reflect the organisation's performance, risk and an overview of revenue financial position. The next detailed financial update will be shared with Cabinet in October 2025.

Commentary by the Section 151 Officer

38. Most local authorities, especially those with responsibilities for education and social care, are facing significant budgetary pressures and future funding uncertainty. Despite coming from a position of strong financial resilience, the council continues to manage the impact of increasing demand and costs of service delivery. The council has a duty to ensure its expenditure does not exceed the resources available and therefore it is vital that we continue to emphasise and promote the importance of financial management, the delivery of savings and reduce expenditure through the council's transformation programme, to protect service delivery and achieve a balanced budget position.

39. In addition to delivering services within a balanced budget in the current financial year, the council needs to consider the medium-term financial outlook beyond 2025/26. The Fair Funding 2.0 consultation which was published on 20 June 2025 sets out the Government's proposals for changes to both assessments of need and costs as well as resource equalisation. While the implications are currently being assessed the council expects to see a reduction in funding as a result of these changes. This, coupled with the impact of Local Government Reorganisation, and risks around High Needs Dedicated Schools Grant means the council needs to continue to consider issues of medium-term financial sustainability as a priority.

Comments checked by: Kathy Wilcox, Head of Corporate Finance

Staff Implications

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

Equality & Inclusion Implications

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

Legal Implications

42. The Council's constitution at Part 3.2 (Budget and Policy Framework) sets out the obligations and responsibilities of both the Cabinet and the Council in approving, adopting and implementing the council's budget and policy framework.

43. 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 2026 as part of its fiduciary duty to implement budgetary controls and monitoring.

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

LORNA BAXTER
Executive Director of Resources and Section 151 Officer

Contact Officers: Kathy Wilcox, Head of Corporate Finance
Verity Royle – Financial Planning & Reporting Manager

Background:

Annex 1 -	2025/26 Revenue Forecast as at 31 May 2025
Annex 2 -	Summary of 2025/26 Service Area budgets from the Budget Book to current reporting
Annex 3 -	Outline of Confirmed Government Grants and Business Rates funding update.
Annex 4 -	Reserves & General Balances

Annex 1 – Service Area forecast

Service	Cabinet Member	Director	Net Budget	Forecast	Forecast Variance
Adult Social Care	T Beard	K Fuller	£36.4m	£36.4m	£0.0m
Pooled Budgets (Adults Social Care and NHS)	T Beard	K Fuller	£216.8m	£216.8m	£0.0m
Adult Services			£253.2m	£253.2m	£0.0m
Education Services	S Gaul	L Lyons	£56.3m	£56.3m	£0.0m
Children's Social Care	S Gaul	L Lyons	£139.2m	£139.2m	£0.0m
Safeguarding, Quality Assurance, Partnerships and Improvement	S Gaul	L Lyons	£6.1m	£6.1m	£0.0m
Children's Services Central Costs	S Gaul	L Lyons	£9.1m	£9.1m	£0.0m
Schools	S Gaul	L Lyons	£0.2m	£0.2m	£0.0m
Children's Services			£210.9m	£210.9m	£0.0m
Public Health	K Gregory	A Azher	£42.0m	£42.0m	£0.0m
Public Health Grant Income & Reserves	K Gregory	A Azher	-£36.9m	-£36.9m	£0.0m
Libraries & Heritage	N Fawcett	A Azher	£8.4m	£8.4m	£0.0m
Public Health & Communities			£13.5m	£13.5m	£0.0m
Transport & Property Infrastructure Delivery	A Gant	P Fermer	£1.7m	£1.7m	£0.0m
Countryside & Waste	J Roberts	P Fermer	£37.3m	£37.3m	£0.0m
Highways & Maintenance	A Gant	P Fermer	£20.3m	£20.3m	£0.0m
Network Management	A Gant	P Fermer	-£5.4m	-£5.4m	£0.0m
E&H Central Costs	A Gant	P Fermer	-£0.7m	-£0.7m	£0.0m
Environment & Highways			£53.2m	£53.2m	£0.0m
Place Shaping & Future Economy	J Roberts / B Higgins	R Rogers	£18.6m	£18.6m	£0.0m
Climate Action	J Roberts	R Rogers	£1.3m	£1.3m	£0.0m
Innovate & Enterprise Oxfordshire	B Higgins	R Rogers	£0.0m	£0.0m	£0.0m
E&P Central Costs	J Roberts	R Rogers	£0.7m	£0.7m	£0.0m
Economy & Place			£20.6m	£20.6m	£0.0m
Fire & Rescue	J Hannaby	R MacDougall	£28.7m	£29.40	£0.7m
Emergency Planning	J Hannaby	R MacDougall	£0.3m	£0.3m	£0.0m
Trading Standards	J Hannaby	R MacDougall	£1.5m	£1.5m	£0.0m
Fire & Rescue and Community Safety			£30.5m	£31.2m	£0.7m
HR & Cultural Change	N Fawcett	C Cuthbertson	£5.2m	£5.2m	£0.0m
Financial & Commercial Services	D Levy	I Dyson	£10.7m	£10.7m	£0.0m
Property & Assets	D Levy	V Kurzeja	£20.9m	£20.9m	£0.0m
Public Affairs, Policy & Partnership	L Leffman	S Wintersgill	£4.7m	£4.7m	£0.0m
Law & Governance	N Fawcett	A Bradley	£9.4m	£9.9m	£0.5m
Corporate Services	L Leffman	L Baxter	£10.6m	£10.6m	£0.0m
Resources and Law & Governance			£61.6m	£62.1m	£0.5m
Transformation & Digital	D Levy / N Fawcett	L Tustian	£0.7m	£0.7m	£0.0m
Customer Experience	D Levy	L Tustian	£3.9m	£3.9m	£0.0m
Data	N Fawcett	L Tustian	£1.7m	£1.7m	£0.0m

TDCE Management	N Fawcett	L Tustian	£0.2m	£0.2m	£0.0m
Transformation, Digital & Customer Experience			£6.5m	£6.5m	£0.0m
Service Areas position			**£650.0m**	**£651.2m**	**£1.2m**
Budgets held centrally	D Levy	L Baxter	-£3.8m	-£4.0m	-£0.1m
Corporate Funding	D Levy	L Baxter	-£646.3m	-£648.4m	-£2.2m
Overall			**-£0.0m**	**-£1.1m**	**-£1.1m**

Annex 2 - Summary of 2025/26 Service Area budgets from the Budget Book to current reporting

Budgeted		Original Budget (Council Feb 2025)	From Feb – May 2025	Movements	Reported Budget
Adult Services	**AS**	**£254.6m**	-£1.4m	-£1.4m	£253.2m
Children's Services	**CS**	**£216.8m**	-£5.9m	-£5.9m	£210.9m
Public Health & Communities	**PH**	**£12.9m**	£0.6m	£0.6m	£13.5m
Environment & Highways	**E&H**	**£53.1m**	£0.1m	£0.1m	£53.2m
Economy and Place	**E&P**	**£20.9m**	-£0.3m	-£0.3m	£20.6m
Fire & Rescue Service and Community Safety	**FRS**	**£31.0m**	-£0.5m	-£0.5m	£30.5m
Resources and Law & Governance	**RLG**	**£64.9m**	-£3.3m	-£3.3m	£61.6m
Transformation, Digital & Customer Experience	**TDCE**	**£3.8m**	£2.7m	£2.7m	£6.5m
Total service areas	**SA**	**£658.0m**	**-£7.9m**	**-£7.9m**	**£650.1m**
Budgets held centrally	**BC**	**-£11.7m**	£7.9m	£7.9m	-£3.8m
Corporate Funding		**-£646.3m**			-£646.3m
Overall		**£0.0m**	**£0.0m**	**£0.0m**	**£0.0m**

	AS	CS	E&H	E&P	PH	FRS	RLG	TDCE	SA	BC	Total
Pay adjustments											
Pay inflation remove initial estimate and await agreement	-£0.9m	-£1.9m	-£0.3m	-£0.3m	£0.0m	-£1.0m	-£1.2m	-£0.1m	-£5.7m	£5.7m	£0.0m
Reverse NI Estimate	-£0.8m	-£1.2m	-£0.4m		-£0.1m	-£0.5m	-£0.8m	-£0.1m	-£3.9m	£3.9m	£0.0m
Grey Book 24/25 Pay award Apr-Jun 2025 at 4%						£0.2m			£0.2m	-£0.2m	£0.0m
Grey Book 25/26 Pay award Jul 2025-Mar 2026 at 3.2%						£0.5m			£0.5m	-£0.5m	£0.0m
NI Uplift	£0.9m	£1.1m	£0.3m	£0.2m	£0.2m	£0.1m	£0.9m	£0.1m	£3.8m	-£3.8m	£0.0m
Responsibilities alignment to current structure											
Clarification of responsibilities			£0.7m	-£0.3m			-£1.6m	£1.2m	£0.0m		£0.0m
Income Budget realignment			£0.0m	-£0.0m			-£0.0m		£0.0m		£0.0m
Transfer Tree budget from Property to Highways £207k			£0.2m				-£0.2m		£0.0m		£0.0m
Home to school transport		£0.9m					-£0.9m		£0.0m		£0.0m
Align Savings to correct cost centres	-£0.3m	-£0.3m			£0.6m				£0.0m		£0.0m
Saving & Investment updates											
Distribution of 2024/25 reorganisation savings	-£0.1m	-£0.9m	-£0.3m	£0.1m	£0.0m	£0.0m	-£0.3m	£1.5m	-£0.0m		-£0.0m
Corp IT Savings to Transformation Reserve							£0.7m		£0.7m	-£0.7m	£0.0m
Other adjustments											
Accumulation of small adjustments	-£0.0m	£0.0m	-£0.1m	£0.1m	-£0.0m	-£0.0m	£0.0m	-£0.0m	-£0.1m	£0.1m	-£0.0m

	AS	CS	E&H	E&P	PH	FRS	RLG	TDCE	SA	SM	Total
Funding updates:											
Transformation reserves amendment									£0.0m	£0.0m	£0.0m
Update on Funding - Extended Rights to Free Travel							£0.1m		£0.1m	-£0.1m	£0.0m
Removal of the Fire funding						£0.0m			£0.0m	-£0.0m	£0.0m
Turning Point Grants 25/26					-£0.0m				-£0.0m	£0.0m	£0.0m
Removing un-ringfenced grant treatment to align to new Children's grants		-£3.6m							-£3.6m	£3.6m	£0.0m
Month 2 Movements	-£1.4m	-£5.9m	£0.1m	-£0.3m	£0.6m	-£0.5m	-£3.3m	£2.7m	-£7.9m	£7.9m	£0.0m

Further details of specific virements are available on request.

Annex 3 - Confirmed Government Grants and Business Rates funding update

Ringfenced	Issued By	Service Areas	Budget Book 2025/26 £000	Updates from Grant letters £000	Transfers (un-ringfenced to ringfenced) £000	Latest Allocation £000
R	DHSC	Improved Better Care Fund	13,207			13,207
R	DHSC	Adult Social Care Market Sustainability and Improvement Fund	10,026			10,026
		Adult Services	**23,233**	**0**	**0**	**23,233**
R	DfE	Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) - Schools Block	128,827	0		128,827
R	DfE	Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) - Central Block	5,821	-355		5,465
R	DfE	Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) - Early Years	108,620	775		109,395
R	DfE	Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) - High Needs	98,158	-1,690		96,469
		Subtotal DSG Grants	**341,426**	**-1,270**	**0**	**340,156**
R	DfE	Pupil Premium	8,194	94		8,288
R	DfE	Sixth Form Funding and Threshold	371	0		371
R	DfE	PE and Sport Grant	2,217	0		2,217
R	DfE	Universal Infant Free School Meals	4,047	0		4,047
R	DfE	Teacher's Pension Grant	10	0		10
		Subtotal School Grants	**14,839**	**94**	**0**	**14,933**
R	AC	Music Service	844	0		844
R	YJB	Youth Justice Grant	0	0		0
R	HO	Asylum (UASC and Post 18)	713	12		725
R	YJB	Remand Framework	4,636	0		4,636
R	DWP	Reducing Parental Conflict Workforce Development Grant	71	0		71
R	DfE	Adoption Support Fund	0	1,226		1,226
R	DfE	Family Group Conferences	0	124		124
R	YJB	Turnaround Programme	0	115		115
R	HO	Child Decision Making Pilots (NRM)	0	45		45
R	MHCLG	Children's Social Care Prevention Grant	0		1,530	1,530
R	MHCLG	Children & Families Grant	0	1,216	2,108	3,324
		Subtotal Other Children's Services Grants	**6,264**	**2,737**	**3,638**	**12,639**
		TOTAL CHILDREN'S SERVICES	**362,529**	**1,560**	**3,638**	**367,727**
R	DHSC	Public Health Grant	34,413	2,536		36,949
R	DHSC	Local Stop Smoking Grant	795	0		795
R	MHCLG	Homes for Ukraine	0	0		0
		TOTAL PUBLIC HEALTH & COMMUNITIES	**35,208**	**2,536**	**0**	**37,744**
R	NE	LNRS Natural Environment	227			227
R	ATE	Active travel	58			58

		TOTAL ENVIRONMENT & HIGHWAYS	**284**	**0**	**0**	**284**

Ringfenced	Issued By	Service Areas	Budget Book 2025/26 £000	Updates from Grant letters £000	Transfers (unring to ring) £000	Latest Allocation £000
R	MHCLG	LEP	615			615
R	DBT	Oxford Innovation Business Support	205			205
R	ATE	Capability & Ambition Fund	125			125
R	DfT	Bus Service Improvement Grant	795			795
R	DfT	Bus Service Improvement Plan	3,785			3,785
		TOTAL ECONOMY & PLACE	**5,525**	**0**	**0**	**5,525**
R	MHCLG	Fire Fighter's Pension Fund Grant	1,061	-48		1,014
R	MHCLG	Fire Fighter's Pension Fund Admin Grant	75	0		75
R	MHCLG	Fire Protection Uplift Grant	252	-126		126
R	MHCLG	Fire Fighter's New Dimensions Grant	39	0		39
		TOTAL FIRE & RESCUE and COMMUNITY SAFETY	**1,427**	**-174**	**0**	**1,254**
U	MHCLG	New Homes Bonus	1,127	0		1,127
U	DfE	Local Reform & Community Voices Grant	328	0		328
U	DfE	Social Care in Prisons Grant	183	0		183
U	DfE	War Pensions Disregard Grant	4	0		4
U	MHCLG	Social Care Support Grant (including Independent Living Fund)	48,596	52		48,648
U	HO	Firelink	44	-44		0
U	OHID	Supplementary Substance Misuse Treatment & Recovery Grant	1,136	0		1,136
U	OHID	Supplementary Substance Misuse Treatment & Recovery Housing Grant	622	0		622
U	OHID	Supplementary Substance Misuse Inpatient Detox & Rehabilitation	80	0		80
U	OHID	Rough Sleeping Drugs & Alcohol Grant	1,140	-61		1,079
U	MHCLG	Domestic Abuse Duty Grant	1,482	0		1,482
U	OHID	Individual Placement and Support in community drug and alcohol treatment	228	11		239
U	DfE	Supporting Families - previously Troubled Families	1,141		-1,119	22
U	DfE	Implementation of Supported Accommodation Reforms	990		-990	0
U	MHCLG	Children's Social Care Prevention Grant	1,530		-1,530	0
U	MHCLG	Employers National Insurance compensation	3,721		0	3,721
U	DfE	Rough Sleeper Grant	0		0	0
	RSG	Extended Travel transferred to RSG	-707	707		0
		TOTAL Budget held Centrally	**61,643**	**666**	**-3,638**	**58,672**

Ringfenced	Issued By	Service Areas	Budget Book 2025/26 £000	Updates from Grant letters £000	Transfers (unring to ring) £000	Latest Allocation £000
U	MHCLG	Revenue Support Grant (RSG)	2,489	0		2,489
		Business Rates				
B		Business Rates (Direct share)	39,349	705		40,054
B		Business Rates S31 Grant Top-Up	42,971	-311		42,660
B		Section 31 Grant for Business Rate Compensation	18,900	1,503		20,403
		Council Tax				
C		2025/26 Council Tax	533,328			533,328
C		Prior year Collection fund & Carer Leavers discount	9,220	264		9,484
		TOTAL Corporate Funding	**646,257**	**2,161**	**0**	**648,418**
		Total All Funding	**1,136,106**	**6,750**	**0**	**1,142,857**
Comprising of:						
R		Ringfenced	428,206	3,923	3,638	435,767
U		Un-ringfenced	64,839	-41	-3,638	61,161
		Government Grants	493,045	3,882	0	496,927
B		Business Rates	101,220	1,897	0	103,117
C		Council Tax	542,548	264	0	542,812
issued by:						
	DfE	Department for Education	358,911	173	-2,108	356,976
	MHCLG	Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government	60,987	1,095	2,108	64,189
	DHSC	Department of Health & Social Care	58,441	2,536	0	60,977
	YJB	Youth Justice Board	4,636	115	0	4,751
	DfT	Department for Transport	4,580	0	0	4,580
	OHID	Office for Health Improvement and Disparities	3,205	-49	0	3,156
	AC	Arts Council	844	0	0	844
	HO	Home Office	757	13	0	770
	NE	Natural England	227	0	0	227
	DBT	Department for Business and Trade	205	0	0	205
	ATE	Active Travel England	183	0	0	183
	DWP	Department of Work & Pensions	71	0	0	71
	RSG	Transfer to RSG	-707	707	0	0
		Total All Grants by issuer	**492,338**	**4,589**	**0**	**496,927**

Annex 4 – Reserves & General Balances

Reserves	Balance at 31 March 2025	Movement	Balance at 31 March 2026
Revenue Grants Unapplied			
Grants and Contributions reserve	£30.3m	-£6.6m	£23.7m
COVID-19 reserve	£3.8m	£0.0m	£3.8m
Government Initiatives reserve	£6.6m	-£0.6m	£6.0m
Subtotal	**£40.7m**	**-£7.2m**	**£33.5m**
Corporate Priorities			
Budget Priorities reserve	£11.5m	-£0.2m	£11.3m
Local Government Reorganisation reserve	£10.0m	£0.0m	£10.0m
Transformation reserve	£7.5m	£0.0m	£7.5m
Commercial Pump Priming reserve	£2.0m	£0.0m	£2.0m
Zero Emissions Zone	£1.5m	£0.0m	£1.5m
Green Financing reserve	£0.9m	£0.0m	£0.9m
Extended Producer Responsibility reserve	£0.0m	£0.0m	£0.0m
Subtotal	**£33.3m**	**-£0.2m**	**£33.1m**
Funding for Risk			
Demographic Risk reserve	£21.0m	£0.0m	£21.0m
Insurance reserve	£10.6m	£0.0m	£10.6m
Collection Fund Risk reserve	£8.1m	£0.0m	£8.1m
IFRS 9 (Value of Treasury Management Pooled Funds)	£4.0m	£0.0m	£4.0m
Redundancy reserve	£4.1m	£0.0m	£4.1m
Council Elections	£0.7m	-£0.7m	£0.0m
Trading Accounts	£0.2m	£0.0m	£0.2m
Council Tax Collection Fund reserve	£0.0m	£0.0m	£0.0m
Business Rates reserve	£0.0m	£0.0m	£0.0m
Subtotal	**£48.6m**	**-£0.7m**	**£47.9m**
Capital & Equipment			
Capital & Prudential Borrowing reserves	£109.6m	£0.0m	£109.6m
Vehicle and Equipment reserve	£3.2m	-£1.8m	£1.4m
Investment Pump Priming reserve	£0.1m	£0.0m	£0.1m
Subtotal	**£113.0m**	**-£1.8m**	**£111.2m**
Other reserves			
Partnership reserves	£1.7m	£0.0m	£1.7m
On Street Car Parking reserve	£5.3m	£0.0m	£5.3m
Budget Equalisation reserve	£0.0m	£0.0m	£0.0m
Subtotal	**£7.1m**	**£0.0m**	**£7.1m**
Unusable			
Schools' reserves	£10.7m	-£0.7m	£10.1m
Total Earmarked reserves	**£253.4m**	**-£10.6m**	**£242.8m**

Reserves	Balance at 31 March 2025	Movement	Balance at 31 March 2026
by Service Area:			
Adult Services	£6.1m	-£0.5m	£5.6m
Children's Services	£20.4m	-£0.7m	£19.7m
Public Health & Communities	£14.7m	-£6.2m	£8.5m
Environment & Highways	£9.3m	-£0.1m	£9.2m
Economy & Place	£8.7m	-£0.4m	£8.2m
Fire & Rescue and Community Safety	£3.6m	-£2.0m	£1.6m
Resources and Law & Governance	£2.1m	-£0.7m	£1.4m
Transformation, Digital & Customer Experience	£8.3m	£0.0m	£8.3m
Service Areas Position	**£73.1m**	**-£10.6m**	**£62.5m**
Budgets held Centrally	£180.3m	£0.0m	£180.3m
Total Earmarked reserves	**£253.4m**	**-£10.6m**	**£242.8m**

General Balances		
General Balances as 31 March 2025 (Statement of Accounts)	£45.3m	
Less budgeted contribution as part of the reserve and balances policy statement for 2025/26	-£10.8m	
Less approved as part of Outturn: Support 25/26 revenue costs - Innovate and BIPC	-£0.7m	
General Balances as 31 March 2025		**£33.8m**
Add: Planned contributions		£2.6m
Proposed additional un-ringfenced grant		£0.8m
2025/26 Forecast underspend		£1.1m
General Balances forecast as at 31 May 2025		**£38.3m**
Risk assessed level of balances for 2025/26		£30.2m
Surplus balances compared to risk assessed level		£8.1m

Division(s): N/A

CABINET – 15 JULY 2025

FORWARD PLAN AND FUTURE BUSINESS

Items identified from the Forward Plan for Forthcoming Decision

Topic/Decision **Portfolio/Ref**

Cabinet, 16 September 2025

▪ **Update to the Street Lighting and Illuminated Assets Policy with respect to Part Night Lighting** Update to the Street Lighting and Illuminated Assets Policy with respect to Part Night Lighting, and consultation feedback.	Cabinet, 2025/086 - Cabinet Member for Place, Environment and Climate Action
▪ **HR & Cultural Change Quarterly Employee Data Report - Quarter 1 2025-26** Quarterly staffing report providing details of key people numbers and analysis of main changes since the previous report.	Cabinet, 2025/032 - Cabinet Member for Resources and Deputy Leader
▪ **Capital Programme Approvals - September 2025** Report on variation to the capital programme for approval (as required).	Cabinet, 2025/080 - Cabinet Member for Finance, Property and Transformation
▪ **Business Management & Monitoring Report - July 2025** To note the report and approve the recommendations	Cabinet, 2025/100 - Cabinet Member for Finance, Property and Transformation
▪ **Get Oxfordshire Working** To present an update on the centrally funded Get Oxfordshire Working project. This plan is due to central government in September and felt it would be worth sending it to Cabinet for information.	Cabinet, 25/128 - Cabinet Member for Future Economy and Innovation

Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for Transport Management, 4 September 2025

▪ **Cherwell Street Bus Service improvement Scheme - Detailed Design** 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
▪ **Cherwell Street Bus Service improvement Scheme - Construction** 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
▪ **Faringdon Parking Review 2025/26** 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
▪ **Railway Lane, Littlemore, Oxford - Proposed 20mph Speed Limit 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
▪ **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
▪ **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
▪ **Charlbury Local Cycling and Walking Plan (LCWIP)** Seek approval of the draft plan following public consultation in line with the Local Transport and Connectivity Plan	Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for Transport Management, 2025/024 - Cabinet Member for Transport Management
▪ **Market Street, Oxford - public realm enhancement** Ahead of a comprehensive enhancement of the Covered Market, the city council wants to improve Market Street to make it more welcoming for existing and potential new visitors. The proposal is to make permanent restrictions on access and public realm enhancements (seating, planting etc) by rearranging loading and parking in the street	Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for Transport Management, 2025/087 - Cabinet Member for Transport Management
▪ **Forest Hill, Shotover, Old Road: 20mph Speed Limit Extension** Part of Phase 3 of Countywide 20mph Speed Limit Project.	Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for Transport Management, 2024/194 - Cabinet Member for Transport Management
▪ **Holton: Proposed 20mph Speed Limit Extension** Part of Phase 3 Countywide 20mph Speed Limit Project.	Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for Transport Management, 2024/174 - Cabinet Member for Transport Management
▪ **Abingdon Centre North - Proposed Permit Parking Area** Following informal consultation with residents, officers have	Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member

developed proposals with input from local councillors for further consultation, which will see the introduction of permit parking areas to project parking for local residents	for Transport Management, 25/134 - Cabinet Member for Transport Management
▪ **Proposed Permit Parking Zone - Ock St Area, Abingdon** Following informal consultation with residents, proposals have been brought forward with support of local councillors for the introduction of a new permit parking zone in the Ock St area of Abingdon	Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for Transport Management, 25/133 - Cabinet Member for Transport Management
▪ **Banbury Centre South - Proposed Permit Parking Area & Paid Parking Bays** Introduction of permit parking areas and bays including the use of paid parking bays in the town centre.	Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for Transport Management, 25/127 - Cabinet Member for Transport Management
▪ **Oxford City & Henley-on-Thames: Permit Parking Eligibility Amendments - June 2025** Parking permit elgiblity amendments required as part of planning conditions and requests from the public	Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for Transport Management, 25/125 - Cabinet Member for Transport Management
▪ **Proposed No Waiting Restrictions - Water Eaton Lane, Kidlington** Waiting restrictions are proposed to prevent obstruction and ensure free access to residences and public footpaths at the end of Water Eaton Lane, also access for large vehicles to Northfield Farm - in anticipation of the upcoming residential development PR7a to the west of Water Eaton Lane	Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for Transport Management, 25/121 - Cabinet Member for Transport Management
▪ **Proposed Market Traders permits - Market Sq, Chipping Norton** Introduction of a Market Trader permit holder only (MT) on Market Days, Chipping Norton	Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for Transport Management, 25/122 - Cabinet Member for

	Transport Management
▪ **Proposed 20mph limits - Grove Airfield Development** Proposed 20mph speed limit on roads located on the Grove Airfield development accessed of Newlands Drive, Grove.	Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for Transport Management, 25/123 - Cabinet Member for Transport Management
▪ **Oxford North - A44 Woodstock Road, Proposed Bus Lanes** New bus lanes (outbound) and extension of existing bus lanes (inbound) on A44 Woodstock Road, from Peartree interchange required as part of a section 278 agreement with the Oxford North development	Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for Transport Management, 25/131 - Cabinet Member for Transport Management
▪ **Coxwell Road, Faringdon - Proposed Highway Improvements** As part of a nearby development - the council is promoting changes linked to a section 278 agreement which includes new bus stops, shared cyclepaths and speed limit changes	Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for Transport Management, 25/136 - Cabinet Member for Transport Management

Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for Finance, Property and Transformation, 12 September 2025

▪ **Cleaning and Catering** Provision for Cleaning and Catering.	Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for Finance, Property and Transformation, - Cabinet Member for Finance, Property and Transformation

Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for Public Health and Inequalities, 2 September 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
▪ **Oxfordshire Domestic Abuse Service Contract Extension** To approve an extension of an existing service contract for 2 years. The current contract will end in March 2026.	Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for Public Health and Inequalities, 2025/046 - Cabinet Member for Public Health and Inequalities

CABINET

15 July 2025

FINANCIAL AND LAND AGREEMENTS RELATING TO THE CONVERSION OF WOODEATON MANOR SCHOOL TO AN ACADEMY

Report by Director of Children's Services

RECOMMENDATION

1. **The Cabinet is RECOMMENDED to**

   a) Approve the proposal for Oxfordshire County Council (OCC) to retain maintenance and repairs of Woodeaton Manor School building after it converts to academy status and until the lease is terminated, at an annual cap of up to £0.2m per annum, for a period of between 2-4 years until the school can be relocated to new accommodation, the maximum cost to the General Fund is £0.4m to £0.8m.

   b) Approve the proposed funding, subject to conditions, as detailed in the Annex, to support the Trust with adaptations to the building to meet the special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) requirements of current students.

   c) Approve an enhanced level of revenue funding for Woodeaton Manor School, as detailed in the Annex, starting on the date of academy conversion (scheduled for 1 October 2025) and being reviewed on an annual basis, with any changes taking effect from 1 April each year.

   d) Note the options relating to the land transfer set out in this report and to approve the delegation of authority to the Director of Children's Services, in consultation with the Director of Law & Governance and the Director of Property & Assets as appropriate, to finalise and execute the necessary documentation to meet the Department for Education (DfE) timescales for academisation. This includes the final decision relating to the transference of insurance excess costs in the case of negligence by the Trust employees, and the final processes relating to freehold transfer.

Executive Summary

2. Woodeaton Manor School is a foundation school without a foundation, catering for children with social and emotional difficulties and is set to convert to academy status on 1st October 2025 following the issue of Directive Academy Order, with Propeller Academy Trust (PAT) as the academy trust. Since 1 March 2025, PAT has been managing the school under an SLA agreement to bring about rapid school improvement. The Interim Executive Board (IEB) has retained governance responsibilities. This report outlines the strategic intention

for the school buildings, the proposal for OCC to retain maintenance responsibilities, and the financial implications of the transition.

Exempt Information

3. The financial information relating to this report is contained in an annex which is exempt from publication under paragraph 3 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, as it includes information relating to the financial or business affairs of the authority.

Background

4. Woodeaton Manor School received an inadequate rating in its 2023 Ofsted inspection. The inspection highlighted significant issues across various areas, including the quality of education, behaviour and attitudes, personal development, and leadership and management. Due to these findings, the DfE issued a Directive Academy Order in November 2023, meaning that the school is required to convert to an academy. In such circumstances, the DfE aims for the process to be completed within 6 months, but this varies according to the complexity of the conversion. With the current target conversion date of October 2025, Woodeaton will have taken two years to convert. The length of time is related to the complex property, finance and staffing issues related to the school.

5. The conversion aims to bring about necessary improvements by providing additional support and resources, ensuring better governance, and implementing effective strategies to address the identified shortcomings. The incoming academy trust, Propellor (PAT), will inherit higher than expected staffing expenditure as well as accommodation which requires significant investment both through a time limited increased top-up allocation per child and also through the proposed repairs and maintenance approach as detailed in this report.

6. The council wants any improvements to be rapid and sustainable in the long term, and in line with its policy of working with the sponsored academy, has established a service level agreement with the PAT starting 1st March 2025 until the date of conversion that will provide the opportunity for PAT to establish operational oversight, to better understand the school, to add staffing capacity and expertise to the school, and to initiate improvements that they have identified before the conversion date, in line with their vision for the school. This also allows the governance arrangements to return to a strategic function and avoid any unnecessary operational overlap.

7. Woodeaton Manor School is located in a 1775 Grade II* Listed manor house in a rural conservation area 7 miles outside of Oxford. The buildings have been used as a school since the 1950s, and the grounds cover 56,552sqm. Maintaining a Grade II* Listed building generates atypical revenue costs that exceed those of nearly all other schools. The current school accommodation is

not fit for delivering a modern curriculum for children with SEND. Urgent works to address key site security and health and safety issues from the inadequate Ofsted report in 2023 are being addressed by the Facilities team at a cost of c£1.7m and are progressing well.

8. The long-term intention is to relocate Woodeaton Manor School to a new purpose-built facility that meets DfE expectations. A potential site has been identified and discussions to secure the land as part of a lease agreement are ongoing and positive. Work is continuing towards enabling the land to be secured.

9. OCC Property team is already working on a high-level school design for an expanded school of 120 pupils, enabling OCC to address sufficiency demands for SEND places as well as re-locate Woodeaton school. Once the land is secured, a planning application can be submitted. Based on experience, this is likely to take around six to nine months to determine. It is hoped that the opening of the new school will be in academic year 2027/28; however, at this stage the timescale for this relocation cannot be completely confirmed, as some dependencies are beyond the county council's control, and a longer time period must therefore be allowed for.

10. In the meantime, PAT will require support to maintain the school's accommodation.

11. When the school is converted to an academy, OCC will retain freehold ownership of the existing Woodeaton Manor School site, and grant a lease to PAT. It is intended that proceeds from any future sale will help fund the new school. Other sources of funding for this include monies from the place priority fund for SEND from S106 contributions and high needs capital grant funding.

Proposals

12. In recognition of the exceptional building situation and the need to support PAT until the academy is relocated, it is proposed that OCC retain both planned and reactive maintenance and repairs of the building. A condition report commissioned by PAT and reviewed by OCC will guide the repairs, which will be limited to those that relate to Safeguarding and Health and Safety concerns only. PAT will be issued a standard 125-year academy lease by OCC with a break clause for relocation. A standard academy lease places the repair, maintenance and insurance obligations on the academy trust, but in this instance the council will relieve PAT of those obligations until the school is rebuilt, and document this in a separate agreement. Key elements of this agreement would include:
    - OCC will repair, maintain, and insure the building until the lease is terminated. OCC will fund any insurance excess. There is an outstanding decision on the transference of insurance excess costs in the case of negligence by the Trust employees. If this is not resolved before the Key Decision is taken, it is requested that authority is

delegated to the Director of Children's Services in consultation with the Director of Law & Governance to finalise this issue.
- PAT will grant OCC access for repairs and maintenance.
- PAT will have no liability for failure to maintain or repair under the lease.

13. Additional funding is also proposed to support PAT with improvements to the quality of accommodation identified by PAT, and accepted by OCC, as necessary to develop the educational experience and meet current SEND needs. This expenditure will be managed by OCC in conjunction with PAT to ensure best value for money and compliance with Historic England requirements for a listed building. This is a revenue cost to be funded from the Dedicated Schools Grant High Needs Block.

14. Creating a calm, neutral environment is essential for supporting students with Social, Emotional, and Mental Health (SEMH) needs. Such environments help reduce sensory overload and anxiety, fostering a sense of safety and security. This is particularly important for students who have experienced trauma or have heightened sensitivity to their surroundings. Implementing features like soft lighting, neutral colour schemes, and organised spaces can significantly enhance students' ability to focus and engage in learning activities. Designated calm areas within the classroom, such as 'calm corners,' provide students with a safe space to retreat when feeling overwhelmed. These areas support emotional regulation and self-soothing, enabling students to return to learning with minimal disruption. Moreover, a calm classroom environment benefits not only students but also teachers, leading to reduced stress levels and improved teacher-student relationships. By prioritising a tranquil and neutral setting, schools can create an inclusive atmosphere that supports the well-being and academic success of all learners.

15. Woodeaton Manor School has several rooms that will need decorating to support the return of over 20 students who are currently in Alternative Educational Provision, which will ultimately reduce placement costs and return the school to financial viability. Currently, if students returned, the facilities would not be suitable. The current setting is mostly a bright yellow paint, which not only appears in classrooms but all communal transition areas. Any dysregulation during transition between timetabled subjects can impact behaviour and disrupt learning for all students and cause physical harm. As children change and grow, the settings are also updated to try and desensitise reactions to colours to enable wider community integration. This can also change more frequently as cohorts of children change. Ceilings and room height in some of the facilities are 20ft high and as with listed buildings, some areas are required to use oil-based paints in accordance with the graded listing status of 2* plus, making materials significantly more expensive. Equally, the sound of shoes on hard flooring can dysregulate students, which is why carpets create sound mufflers and are being retrofitted to classrooms where sound is an issue. The priority is to create the right environment to facilitate the return of students to achieve more efficient use of funding and better academic outcomes.

16. The third strand of additional support for the school is a proposed exceptional top-up rate of per-pupil revenue funding (from the High Needs Block budget) to

be paid starting on the date of academy conversion (scheduled for 1 October 2025) and reviewed on an annual basis, with any changes taking effect from 1 April each year. This is necessary due to the current high levels of staffing and other costs which will be inherited by the academy trust, which it will require some time to be able to manage back down to sustainable levels.

Corporate Policies and Priorities

17. This proposal aims to improve opportunities for children and young people to reach their full potential, through the improvement of the educational environment for students with social and emotional difficulties. Additionally, the proposal addresses the council's commitment to tackling inequalities by ensuring that students with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) have access to high-quality education and facilities. This initiative demonstrates the council's dedication to investing in the future of its young residents and ensuring that all children have the opportunity to thrive in an environment that meets their specific needs.

Financial Implications

18. The proposal for Oxfordshire County Council (OCC) to retain maintenance and repairs of Woodeaton Manor School building after it converts to academy status and until the lease is terminated, has the following implications:

    (a) The annual expectation on spend is £150,000 for planned and reactive building repairs and maintenance, with a total annual cap at £200,000. This will include the Devolved Formula Capital allocation which the academy would ordinarily receive each year (in 2024/25 this was under £10,000).

    (b) If these payments are required for 2-4 years until the school can be relocated into new accommodation, the maximum cost to OCC would be £400,000 - £800,000.

19. Further financial implications are set out in the Annex, which is exempt from publication under paragraph 3 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, as it includes information relating to the financial or business affairs of the authority.

    Comments checked by:
    Lorna Baxter, Executive Resources
    lorna.baxter@oxfordshire.gov.uk

Legal Implications

19. Woodeaton Manor School (the School) changed status from a community school to a foundation school without a foundation, on or around 1 April 2008.

Upon change of status, the beneficial interest in the school land automatically became vested in the governing body of the foundation school by operation of law, and the council was required by the School Standards and Frameworks Act 1998 to transfer the freehold legal title to the governing body of the school. For various reasons, the statutory transfer of the freehold remains uncompleted, and the legal title remains registered with the council at HM Land Registry. The legal registration and beneficial interest therefore currently lie with separate bodies.

20. The Department for Education has confirmed that, when the Academy Order was issued, there was no direction issued by the Secretary of State pursuant to paragraph 10(3)(c) of Schedule 1 of the Academies Act 2010 directing the school's land or any part of the land to be transferred to the Academy Trust. Legal Counsel has advised that, in the absence of such property direction, when the governing body is dissolved upon academy conversion, the land would vest in the council by default pursuant to paragraph 13(3)(a) Schedule 1 of the Academies Act 2010.

21. Both PAT and the IEB are in agreement that on conversion, the full freehold title to the land should revert to the council, with the council then issuing a lease to the academy in the usual manner.

22. For a lease to be issued, both the legal registration and beneficial interest will need to be vested in the council rather than the governing body of the school; it is possible that the current situation (whereby the legal registration and beneficial interest lie with separate bodies) could prove a hindrance to the necessary conversion processes, even though Counsel's advice is that, if no property direction has been issued by the Secretary of State, upon dissolution of the governing body at conversion the land would vest in the council by default pursuant to paragraph 13(3)(a) Schedule 1 of the Academies Act 2010.

23. Work is therefore underway to confirm the most appropriate legal mechanism to ensure the council will hold the full title, with the beneficial interests, at the point of conversion and will be able to grant a lease to PAT. If action is required to bring the legal registration and beneficial interest together ahead of the date of conversion, to facilitate the agreement of a lease, this may mean that council transfers the legal title to the IEB, for full title to then revert to the council upon dissolution of the IEB at conversion. Alternatively, the IEB, subject to such Department of Education approval as may be necessary, could assign the beneficial interest back to the council prior to conversion.

24. These are arrangements that sit outside the model academy lease and commercial transfer agreement and will need to be recorded in a separate agreement to be entered into by the council and PAT.

Comments checked by:
Jayne Pringle, Head of Law & LBP – Contracts & Conveyancing
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Staff Implications

25. None

Equality & Inclusion Implications

26. The requested decision is necessary to enable the school to convert to an academy, as required by the Department for Education when issuing a Directed Academy Order as a result of the school's Ofsted rating. This conversion needs to complete without further delay to allow the incoming academy trust to focus on raising standards at the school. The requested decision therefore has positive equality and inclusion impacts in strengthening the education provision for children and young people with SEND.

Sustainability Implications

27. There are no direct sustainability implications of this proposal.

Risk Management

28. The urgency of the decision, driven by the Department for Education (DfE) timelines, poses a significant risk if not addressed promptly.

29. To manage risks relating to the financial implications, there will be a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Trust. The condition report commissioned by the Propeller trust (PAT) and reviewed by OCC will guide the repairs and maintenance of the building.

30. As OCC will retain insurance liability for the accommodation, there is a potential additional cost should anything occur, relating to the insurance excess. There is also an outstanding decision on the transference of insurance costs in the case of negligence by the Trust employees. If this is not resolved before the Key Decision is taken, it is requested that authority is delegated to the Director of Children's Services in consultation with the Director of Law & Governance to finalise this issue.

31. The need for additional funding will remain until the school can be rebuilt. As such a project involves multiple dependencies, many beyond the control of the county council, there could be delays which result in the additional funding being required for longer than currently planned.

Lisa Lyons, Director of Children's Services

Annex:	Financial information (exempt from publication for reasons of commercial sensitivity).

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

July 2025

By virtue of paragraph(s) 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A
of the Local Government Act 1972.

Document is Restricted

Overview & Scrutiny Recommendation Response Pro forma

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Issue: The Virtual School

Lead Cabinet Member(s): **Cllr Sean Gaul, Cabinet member for Children and Young People**

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

Response to report:

As Acting Head of the Virtual School and author of the presented report, I welcome the Committee's engagement and thoughtful recommendations. Thank you for the opportunity to respond. I look forward to continuing our shared commitment to improving outcomes for children in our care.

My response to the two recommendations is outlined below:

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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

Overview & Scrutiny Recommendation Response Pro forma

Response to recommendations:

Recommendation	Accepted, rejected or partially accepted	Proposed action (if different to that recommended) and indicative timescale (unless rejected)
1. That the Council should continue to highlight the work of the virtual school with governing boards and social workers to ensure they are well-informed and engaged in supporting the education of children in care.	Accepted	I fully support this recommendation. The Virtual School will continue to work closely with governance leads and social care colleagues to ensure that governors and social workers are well-informed about their responsibilities as corporate parents. We will strengthen our training offer and communication channels to promote the role of the Virtual School and the importance of educational outcomes for children in our care.
2. That the Council, in subsequent annual reports of the Virtual School, should report in more detail on exclusions including informal internal processes.	Partially accepted	I acknowledge the Committee's concern and agree that greater transparency is essential. While data on unlawful exclusions is not collected through statutory data returns, the Virtual School will work with schools and performance data colleagues to improve the granularity of reporting on exclusions, where possible. We are committed to working collaboratively with colleagues across the school system to challenge unlawful practices, promote best practice and ensure that every child - wherever they reside - feels a sense of belonging and is supported to thrive in school.

Overview & Scrutiny Recommendation Response Pro forma

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Issue: Co-Production in Adult Social Care

Lead Cabinet Member(s): Cllr Tim Bearder, Cabinet member for Adult Social Care

Date response requested:[2] **22 April 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, during the 2025/26 municipal year, require all staff within Children's Services and within Adult Social	Partially Accepted	The Level 1 Co-production training is a foundational, in-person course designed to introduce the four underpinning and practice of co-production. Participants receive the booklet *"Working*

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Overview & Scrutiny Recommendation Response Pro forma

Care to complete the Level 1 Co-production training.		*Together – getting started with co-production*" as a companion resource. This training programme has been running for a few years and colleagues can book their session Via the Learning Zone or by emailing coproduction@oxfordshire.gov.uk. The training is actively advertised in Council's staff Engagement Forums and via 'Co-pro Hour'. A high number of colleagues across the Council including Adults and Children's Services have already completed the course to date and they are encouraged to attend the training. Requiring all staff to complete the training in the current financial year needs careful planning with OCC HR and Training teams to ensure the Council has the capacity and availability to deliver and colleagues to attend the training. We will continue to work with them to achieve this.
2. That the Council should encourage all councillors to complete the Level 1 Co-production training during the 2025/26 municipal year.	Partially Accepted	Co-production is part of the wider training programme for councillors as detailed in the OCC Councillor Welcome Pack
3. That the Council should arrange for the Chair of the People Overview and Scrutiny Committee to sit as a member of the Co-production Advisory Board, with the Deputy Chair of the People Overview and Scrutiny Committee, being permitted as a substitute.	Rejected	The Co-production Advisory Board serves as an advisory body composed of individuals with lived experience of services in Oxfordshire. Its core functions are providing advice and feedback on council projects that would benefit from co-production and supporting the Council in embedding the principles of Access, Equality, Diversity, and Reciprocity across services. The Board meets monthly. All members must complete co-production training and induction. It is made up of people with

		lived experience in areas such as older people's services, learning disabilities, mental health services, domestic abuse, homelessness and SEND. Currently, membership is shifting away from representatives of organised groups toward individuals from seldom-heard communities. The Co-production Advisory Board is one of the shared platforms OCC have to hear the views of people with lived experience of council services. We disagree with the proposal due to risks and considerations below: **1. Risk to Independence and Governance Integrity** Advisory boards are designed to provide **independent advice** to officers and decision-makers. Including councillors, who are themselves elected decision-makers, can blur the lines between advice and influence, undermining the board's neutrality. This concern is echoed in national governance commentary, which warns that councillor involvement may lead to: • Perceived or actual lobbying behind the scenes. • Pressure on officers or fellow councillors to adopt certain positions (please see Guidance on Local Government Association Model Councillor Code of Conduct | Local Government Association) • A dilution of the board's role as a critical friend, especially if members feel constrained by political dynamics. **2. Conflict with Scrutiny and Oversight Roles** Councillors already hold formal roles in scrutiny committees, cabinet, and full council. If they also sit on advisory boards, it can create:

		• Conflicts of interest, especially when the board's advice feeds into decisions councillors later scrutinise. • Duplication of oversight, reducing the distinctiveness and value of advisory board contributions. • Reduced trust from community members, who may see the board as politically influenced rather than community-led. **3. Undermining the Lived Experience Model** The Co-production Advisory Board's strength lies in its composition: people with lived experience of services, supported by officers. Including councillors as members may risk • Shifting the power dynamic, making it harder for community members to speak freely. • Compromising the board's ethos of equality and reciprocity, which is central to co-production. **4. Legal and Structural Boundaries** Advisory boards are not statutory decision-making bodies. Councillors, by contrast, are legally accountable for decisions made in council. Mixing these roles can: • Create ambiguity in accountability. • Lead to misinterpretation of advice as policy. • Breach the principles outlined in the Oxfordshire County Council Governance Handbook 2025, which emphasises clear thresholds and separation of powers.
4. That the Council should adopt a Co-production Charter committing itself to systemic and whole-hearted co-production across Children's Services and Adult Social Care and, as part of that, during the 2025/26	Partially accepted	The proposal to develop the charter is supported by the Advisory Board and its members are already working on this action. The charter contents will be drafted over the summer months by the board.

municipal year, the Council will, as a minimum: a) require all staff within Children’s Services and within Adult Social Care to complete the Level 1 Co-production training, and b) encourage all councillors to complete the Level 1 Co-production training during the 2025/26 municipal year, and c) arrange for the Chair of the People Overview and Scrutiny Committee to sit as a member of the Co-production Advisory Board, with the Deputy Chair of the People Overview and Scrutiny Committee, being permitted as a substitute.		The directorate's response to the elements of set out by scrutiny can be found in the relevant section of this document.

Overview & Scrutiny Recommendation Response Pro forma

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Issue: **S.106 Improvement Programme**

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:

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 include more detail of contractual agreements, including trigger points for funding release, within the s.106 dashboard.	Accepted	The first Members' dashboard release was June 25th. The project team will continue to develop the dashboard further to include requirements not delivered in release one due to data or technical limitations, alongside delivery of new requirements such as those requested here. The next release is due 23rd September.

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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.	Partially Accepted	.Projects can be linked to key LTCP policies, and it can be noted that schemes contribute towards meeting 'Targets'. It is not possible to quantify modal share driven by any scheme.
3. That the Council should prioritise dataset integration to enhance the dashboard's capabilities.	Accept	As part of the first dashboard release the project integrated the project and programme management system with the planning system. At the same time the project created the ability to integrate with the pre-delivery application—a new application being developed as part of the project—and the council's capital programme budget and spend dataset. For release 2, the project aims to finalise these integrations to enhance the dashboard.
4. That the Council should ensure that there is sufficient officer resource to be represented at developer fora.	Accept	The S106 improvement programme is helping to inform the current organisation restructures.
5. That the Council should publish milestones and targets for its Key Performance Indicators related to the s.106 Improvement Project.	Accept	Head of Regulatory Planning and Enforcement is currently working with the Performance and Insight Team to develop corporate KPIs for reporting levels of negotiation and spend against target.
6. That the Council should continue to explore the benefits of Local Development Orders and whether they should be used more widely.	Accept	Local Development Orders are cross authority instruments and not part of the section 106 review work. This authority works pro-actively with developers and districts through LDO proposals and are supportive where they are appropriate.
7. That the Council should celebrate the learning that has arisen from the s.106 Improvement Project and disseminate it across the organisation.	Accept	The Programme Lead/Manager is in discussion with the Corporate Transformation Programme Office to explore opportunities of sharing this and other ongoing programmes.

Overview & Scrutiny Recommendation Response Pro forma

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Issue: Rail Strategy

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:

We welcome the input and comments received by Scrutiny and set out responses to the recommendations below.

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 integrate the Futures-led Foresight approach into the Rail Strategy modelling, to ensure it aligns with	**Partially accepted**	The rail strategy will have a vision-led approach. It will consider how rail can best support the Council's nine priorities through its themes of improving connectivity and enhancing infrastructure,

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the approach of the LTCP and to ensure and enable long-term strategic planning.		climate action, and rail as placeshaper. Rail demand and economic assessment undertaken for the strategy will be at a strategic level, and the strategy will outline if more detailed modelling and assessments may be needed to support particular interventions and projects that are expected to be identified in the work.
2. That the Council should support private-public finance upskilling and apply lessons from the funding of the Elizabeth Line.	**Accepted**	The Council's rail strategy will include input from its Head of Future Economy and from its appointed specialist rail consultants on innovative methods of securing funding and investment, including from the private sector and informed by experience elsewhere including the Elizabeth Line - to support improvements to the County's rail infrastructure and services. Additionally, the strategy will consider potential future opportunities for the Council to take a greater role in sponsoring rail infrastructure and service development.

Overview & Scrutiny Recommendation Response Pro forma

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Issue: Local Enterprise Partnership Integration Update

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

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)**
That the financial liabilities and resilience of Enterprise Oxfordshire should be clearly documented and monitored, ensuring that the	Accepted	Enterprise Oxfordshire (EO) has robust financial controls and monitoring arrangements. EO currently reports an in-year financial outturn – essentially a profit & loss – with monthly

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organisation has adequate reserves to cover unexpected costs and maintain operational stability.		internal operational reporting, quarterly reporting to the EO Board, and annual reporting to the Shareholder Board. In addition, the preparation of its accounts and its annual report to Companies House is subject to statutory external audit – and a key test that must be passed as part of the audit is that EO has sufficient income and/or reserves to demonstrate that it is a "going concern" for the subsequent financial year. Furthermore, EO has commissioned an Annual Controls Review from its external auditors, which is undertaken before the annual audit process, allowing the company to test and strengthen its processes, procedures and mitigate any residual risks should they occur. However, EO recognises that Oxfordshire County Council does not currently have sufficient visibility of the company's financial performance and therefore proposes to report its financial outturn, along with its balance sheet, to Shareholder Board on a quarterly basis. This will give the County Council greater visibility of the company's financial performance, including assets and liabilities, to enable the County Council to take an informed view on the company's ability to cover unexpected costs and to maintain operational performance.

Overview & Scrutiny Recommendation Response Pro forma

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Issue: Business Management and Monitoring Report – Environment and Highways Focus

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

Date response requested: **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, as a minimum, reviews its targets over the percentage of household waste which is reused, recycled or composted, or, preferably, that the Council draws up a new	Accepted	Nationally and locally the percentage of household waste reused, recycled or composted has stagnated. Until there is a step change in how the service is delivered locally, for example moving to 3 weekly residual waste collections, current performance will not change significantly. The target used

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measure which will measure performance better in light of Extended Producer Responsibility measures.		currently for this indicator is the target set in the Joint Municipal Waste Management Strategy agreed by all Oxfordshire authorities of 65% by 2030. For information the target the nationally achieved performance of 45%, or the governments 2035 target of 65%. Our ability to improve our already good performance within current systems is very limited in the short term. There are a series of national policies coming in over the next few years which will change the composition of the waste that has to be managed by the authority including the Deposit Return Scheme, Extended Producer Responsibility for packaging waste, mandatory kerbside food services and Simpler Recycling along with the inclusion of waste incinerators in the UK Carbon Emission Trading Scheme. The interconnectedness of these policies makes modelling future waste composition and therefore probable and possible performance particularly complex to the extent that even central government has not been able to do it. For example, it is anticipated that the deposit return scheme will divert recyclable waste from the kerbside collections into the take back schemes and as a result there will be less recyclable waste at the kerbside which in turn will impact on the recycling rate but to what degree is unknown because it will depend upon householder behaviour in seeking to get the deposit back, and on manufacturer behaviours as a result of the Extended Producer Responsibility requirement. We have uncertainty and are performing as best we can, but we do need to monitor and escalate if we fall below this. As such it is proposed to keep the existing measure but base the target and indicator on current good performance, which will allow escalation should our performance fall due to any of the above uncertainty.

Overview & Scrutiny Recommendation Response Pro forma

2. That the Council maintains a measure of customer satisfaction in relation to the Customer Service Centre specifically because of the move to a new telephony system.	Accepted	The original customer satisfaction KPI was created using the council's previous telephony system, this was removed due a low response rate (less than 2%) and not providing accurate insight of how the service was actually performing. The new omni channel platform, Zoom has enabled the council to track much more meaningful data. Included in the BMMR will be two new metrics, the sentiment and engagement of each call. These measures will give the organisation meaningful insight into the customers actual experience. These allow us to use AI to analyse 100% of the calls and are based on customers actual experience of interacting with the council. The sentiment score is based on the language used by the customer to ascertain the overall sentiment of the call. This qualitative and quantitative data reports insight into the reasons for customers potential dissatisfaction with Council services, enables an opportunity to feed this into continuous improvement cycles. A further metric we intend to introduce is engagement score, which looks at the performance of the contact centre advisors. We believe that the combination of these metrics far outweighs the need for collection of customer satisfaction via post call surveys as it gives us greater insight into customer experience, is based on 100% response rates and gives us meaningful insight to drive continuous improvement of the customer experience.
3. That the Council measures and reports on the level of local public support for Oxford Core Schemes within its	Partially Support	All the Core Schemes are at various stages. Formal consultation on the individual schemes will identify the support for each scheme.

Business Management and Monitoring Report.		Until the schemes are implemented and operational, the Council will not be able to measure support. It is considered that as this will be different from the consultation and may change as the benefits of Air Quality, bus reliability and patronage etc., are realised. The exception is the Traffic Filters Experimental Traffic Order, which will constantly consult through the experiment for up to 18 months. To track the overall support of all the core schemes and more broadly the Central Oxfordshire Travel strategy, it is considered this is best (and only really achievable) through the annual resident's survey about traffic and congestion in Central Oxfordshire.
4. That the Council provides commentary on the recent actions taken to mitigate its Key Strategic Risks and the impact on the residual score within the Business Management and Monitoring Report.	Partially accepted	The Business Management and Monitoring Report will include an overview of the actions/mitigations including commentary put in place to try to reduce the inherent risk scoring of the strategic risks. The residual risk score is as a result of mitigations and actions having been put in place. The BMMR will include further commentary.