

Annual report

2024–2025

Working in partnership
to make Oxfordshire a greener,
fairer and healthier county.

Greener

Fairer

Healthier



OXFORDSHIRE
COUNTY COUNCIL

Foreword

Welcome to Oxfordshire County Council's annual report, providing an overview of our performance and key achievements from April 2024 to March 2025.

Our vision is to make Oxfordshire a greener, fairer and healthier county, and this is centred around strong local communities, healthy places to live and a sustainable and inclusive economy that benefits everyone.

Including everyone lies at the heart of our vision. This means providing inclusive services with equal access for all; working with communities to tackle health inequalities; providing an inclusive workplace with equality of opportunity; and supporting an inclusive local economy, such as using local businesses in our supply chain.

We want to enable people across the county to be happy, healthy, safe and successful, from getting the best start in life to ageing well and remaining as independent as possible for as long as possible. Our Oxfordshire Way transformation programme is making a real difference in this respect, with outreach

teams, local coordinators and innovative technology all supporting people to live happy, healthy lives.

We also want to ensure that our decision-making process is inclusive, enabling people to make their views known on the issues that matter to them. This includes involving and engaging children and young people in shaping policy and decision making through initiatives such as our SEND youth forum and Future Generations work.

Tackling climate change underpins all we do as the climate emergency is the biggest challenge the planet faces. We are really proud of our achievements, from being the top-performing county council waste disposal authority for the 11th year running to approving over 200 requests for reducing the speed limit to 20mph in towns and villages across our county.

Our strategic plan 2023–2025 sets out our nine cross-cutting priorities (see pages 4–5) and details how we will deliver our vision and commitments. Our budget set in February 2025 supports the continued delivery of our

plan, which is reviewed annually, and allows us to both invest in our priorities and meet our demand pressures for the year ahead. This annual report provides an insight into our progress over the last year.

Thank you for taking the time to read this report. As we look forward to 2025–2026, we will continue to ensure that we provide the greatest opportunities possible for our residents.



**Councillor
Liz Leffman,**
Leader of
Oxfordshire
County Council

Our nine priorities

Our vision

To lead positive change by working in partnership to make Oxfordshire a greener, fairer and healthier county.





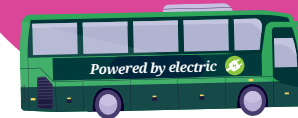
3. Prioritise the health and wellbeing of residents



4. Support carers and the social care system



5. Invest in an inclusive, integrated and sustainable transport network



8. Play our part in a vibrant and participatory local democracy



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



Greener

Fairer

Healthier

The climate emergency

Our strategic priority

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



Greener

- We helped residents recycle, reuse or compost 57.6 per cent of household waste, making us the **top-performing county council waste disposal authority for the 11th year running.**

- We welcomed over one million visitors to our seven **household waste recycling centres.** 70 per cent of all waste received was recycled.

- We organised a **flood summit, Oxfordshire Under Water**, in November 2024, bringing partners together to discuss how to improve resilience and our response to flooding.

- Our food waste team contacted almost 10,000 households to promote food waste recycling. The project **increased annual food waste recycling** by 100 tonnes.

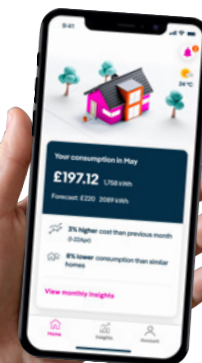


- Our **Action on Carbon and Energy in Schools programme** supported an additional 22 county schools. Overall, it saved 42 tonnes of CO² and £44,000 on energy costs. In addition, we provided energy efficiency loans to six schools to create environmentally friendly classrooms.

- We **expanded our electric vehicle fleet** to 58 - over 13 per cent of our total fleet. This saved 100 tonnes of CO² annually.

- We **reduced our operational emissions** by 71 per cent, avoiding 118,000 tonnes of CO², equivalent to the annual emissions of 74,000 petrol cars.

- We rolled out the innovative **Energy Saver App**, which is enabling 8,000 residents to save money and install home retrofit measures.





- We were awarded £2.5 million by the government to **install a range of insulation, low-carbon heating measures and solar PV in more than 160 low-income households** who don't have mains gas.
- We collaborated with Exeter University to develop a tool to help stakeholders **understand Oxfordshire's climate vulnerabilities**.
- We completed the **Clean Heat Streets partnership project**, installing 31 air-source heat-pumps in Rose Hill, Oxford.
- We supported **117 community action groups** to hold 8,000 events to encourage and inspire environmental and sustainable behaviours.

- We received £99,000 LCSF5 grant funding for the **design of a zero carbon heating system** for two county council sites, with £565,000 of Salix Recycling Fund spent on **LED and solar PV projects** for a further 12 sites. This is in addition to decarbonisation grant funding already secured last year.

- We launched the **Oxfordshire Green Investment** in December 2024, raising an initial £500,000 from members of the public to help fund a range of decarbonisation schemes on council-owned buildings, such as fire stations and care homes.

- We adopted an **Oxfordshire climate adaptation route map** containing 82 measures, which will help ensure the county's natural environment, communities, infrastructure and businesses are prepared for more severe flooding, a higher likelihood of water scarcity, cold snaps, storms and more intense heatwaves.



Travel and transport

Our strategic priority

Invest in an inclusive, integrated and sustainable transport network

- Work began to roll out **Vision Zero**, a package of safety improvements as well as behaviour change initiatives that will help eliminate death and serious injuries on our roads.
- We started work on a number of major infrastructure programmes, including upgrades to the M40 junction 10 roundabout, improvements to the A40 near Witney, and access to Banbury Station.



- We completed improvements to the A44 between the Pear Tree interchange and Cassington Road roundabout, Bicester's Banbury Road junction, the Benson relief road, Oxford's Woodstock Road and Kidlington roundabout.
- We awarded £106,530 in grants to nine organisations to **maintain vital community transport services**.

Greener

- An **electric car club pilot scheme** was so popular that 15 vehicles have remained in place at more than 10 new and existing locations around the county.
- £3.6 million was secured to **improve public EV charging**, making driving electric vehicles more accessible for all.
- Over 200 requests have now been approved to **reduce speed limits to 20mph** in towns and villages across the county.



- Together with bus operators, we launched a new Oxfordshire bus ticket, which offers **unlimited travel for a fixed price** on more than 150 bus services run by 12 operators in Oxfordshire.
- In April 2024, five new bus routes began operating to **connect more villages to market towns** and Oxford, following the council's allocation of £1.2 million for rural and community transport.
- A vital new link **connecting Wantage and Grove** officially opened to traffic in December 2024. The new route will help reduce congestion in Wantage town centre and the surrounding road network.
- Our History Centre launched a free digital resource to enable people to **discover the rich history of Oxfordshire's roads and bridges**, including a 1905 survey that recorded all highways and bridges for which the county council was responsible following its establishment in 1889.

Nature and green spaces

Our strategic priority

Preserve and improve access to nature and green spaces



- We **planted 825 trees**, inspected more than 6,700 individual or groups of trees, and arranged and completed more than **3,300 tree care operations**.
- We worked with a broad range of stakeholders and partners to draft and consult on a **Local Nature Recovery Strategy**, which will develop a coordinated approach to recover nature across the county.



- Our countryside access team **repaired and replaced 139 bridges, maintained 319km of pathways and cleared 125 fallen or hazardous trees**.
- We planted **16 new community orchards**, which included 250 fruit producing trees.
- A total of **45 biodiversity volunteers** were recruited, providing over 195 hours of volunteer time.



- **20 new road verge nature reserves** were designated, ensuring continued protection of biodiversity next to our roads.
-



- **Two natural flood management schemes** were implemented in Sunningwell and Littleworth, with input from local communities and partners.
-



- We delivered two significant **footpath access improvement projects**. One in Wolstone and the other, a DEFRA funded Removing Barriers project, in Milton-Under-Wychwood.
-



Greener

Tackling inequalities

Our strategic priority

Tackle inequalities in Oxfordshire

Fairer

- Through our government-funded **resident support scheme**, over 4,500 vulnerable households received more than £1.2 million in supermarket vouchers, energy credit and essential household items.
- We spent £3.3 million ensuring families of children entitled to free school meals received **support with food costs** during the school holidays.
- £300,000 was provided to **four Citizens Advice offices and four independent advice providers** to enable services to continue to be supported.
- Free access to period products** was made available on a trial basis in libraries and children and family centres for people facing period poverty.
- We launched our **refreshed Equalities, Diversity and Inclusion Framework 2025-29**, working with residents and communities who shared their lived experience and feedback.
- We ran a **reciprocal mentoring scheme**, pairing senior leaders with colleagues from underrepresented groups to mentor one another as ambassadors for inclusion.
- In January 2025 we signed up to the **UNISON anti-racism charter** – the first local government employer in the south-east to do so.





■ In November 2024 we secured **RACE Equality Code accreditation** - a commitment to taking action for race equality in our workplace and decision-making.

■ **Oxfordshire Employment**, funded by the council, celebrated 10 years of helping adults who have had to overcome challenges to find and retain employment. The service was also **graded “good”** under the new Supported Employment Quality Framework.

■ We partnered with Asylum Welcome and local bus companies to pilot **free bus travel** for asylum seekers in Oxford.

■ In March 2025 we became the first county council to be awarded **local authority of sanctuary status**, underpinning our commitment to supporting people fleeing war, persecution and serious human rights violations.

■ 10,435 people attended our **digital and information support sessions** in libraries, and library users clocked up over **90,000 hours of free access time** on library computers.

■ We introduced out of hours emergency services for **urgent death registrations and urgent end of life weddings** for couples where one partner is terminally ill.



Local democracy

Our strategic priority

Play our part in
a vibrant and
participatory local
democracy

Fairer

- We launched the **Oxfordshire Councils Charter** in July 2024 to enhance local democracy and improve ways of working between Oxfordshire councils.
- We **celebrated an affiliation between Oxfordshire and the Royal Navy ship HMS Diamond** in February 2025, reaffirming the council's commitment to our armed forces communities.
- We revised, updated and published a **full review of our Constitution**.
- We have **improved digital access** in the council chamber and committee rooms, to ensure anyone who wants to take part is able to do so.
- **Young people have been actively shaping our Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) services** and a quality seal of approval is now being used where co-production was involved.
- 34 residents took part in our **first Citizens' Assembly** in February and March 2025, spending 45 hours discussing and making recommendations on Oxfordshire's transport system.
- We held our **first Future Generations Fortnight** in November 2024 to involve and engage children and young people in local democracy.
- Our Education and Young People Overview & Scrutiny Committee now includes a number of young people as members, helping ensure the **perspectives of young residents are included** in discussions and decision-making processes.
- We began work with other councils to develop proposals that will **shape local government** in the county and wider region following the publication of the English Devolution White Paper in December 2024.



SEND
Youth Forum

Local businesses and partners

Our strategic priority

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

Fairer

- Together with partners we **launched Our Oxfordshire Story** and an Oxfordshire champions network in July 2024 to collectively promote the county and help attract inward investment.
- We worked to ensure the smooth transition of **Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership (OxLEP)**, which supported thousands of businesses, to a new operating model and trading name (**Enterprise Oxfordshire**).
- We created **over £1.9 million in social value** through our tendering activities, from using local businesses in our supply chain to using local residents employed on local contracts.
- Our trading standards team conducted over **2,000 interventions with Oxfordshire businesses**, providing advice and support, testing products and procedures.
- Through a GigaHubs project, we **improved connectivity for 191 public service sites** in rural Oxfordshire.
- There were 2,815 visits to the **Business and Intellectual Property Centre** in Oxford Westgate Library to access business support.
- We worked with Oxfordshire Social Enterprise Partnership to provide grants that allowed **local social entrepreneurs** to attend the B Corps **Louder than Words** conference – for businesses with strong environmental and ethical standards.
- We won funding to build **two private 5G networks** at Harwell Science Campus and between Bicester and Bletchley on the new East West Rail route - supporting the local economy.
- Through the **Councillor Priority Fund**, councillors distributed £945,000 to support local projects between 2023 and 2025, including community gardens, playgrounds, food banks and larders.

Health and wellbeing

Our strategic priority

Prioritise the health and wellbeing of residents



- We had 10,418 conversations with residents on health-related issues, through our **Making Every Conversation Count** initiative across Oxfordshire libraries.
- We delivered 17,237 **NHS health checks** across the county to those aged between 40 and 74.
- With the NHS, we've **jointly funded Active Oxfordshire** to help get people moving. YouMove and MoveTogether have reached over 17,000 residents.
- 6,091 children have now joined our **cycle training programme**, which teaches 7–11 year olds to ride safely.
- We introduced a **new health visitor review** for all children before they start school. 2,595 children have been seen and supported.
- 2,514 residents completed **the DrinkCoach test** to better understand the health risks associated with their drinking.

Healthier

- In May 2024 we launched the **Local Policy Lab**, a joint initiative with Oxford University and Oxford Brookes in which researchers and students collect and evaluate data around health and climate policy initiatives.

- In November 2024 we partnered with University College London's Institute of Health Equity and renowned academic Professor Sir Michael Marmot to become a **Marmot Place, a two-year programme to tackle health inequalities in local communities.**

- Ansaf Azhar, Director of Public Health, published his annual report which looked at the **health impacts of climate change** and the positive benefits of climate action for individuals, families and communities.

- All women who contacted the integrated sexual health service received **emergency contraception advice** within one working day, and **contraceptives** within two days.

- We introduced **local area co-ordinators** to work directly with residents to help improve their wellbeing.



Healthier

Carers and social care

Our strategic priority

Support carers and the social care system

Healthier

- The longest waiting time for a **social care assessment** is now 42 days, a reduction of 80 percent in the past four years.
- We supported more people to live in their local communities for longer, arranging **3,186 packages of home care**.
- Our reablement service helped 74 per cent of people leaving hospital **regain their independence** and 85.5 per cent achieve independence or a reduction in the amount of care support they require.
- In the latest round of our **community capacity grants**, 94 grassroots projects were awarded funding totalling £597,000 to help isolated people stay connected, healthy and active in their community.



- We introduced **carer ID cards** to help unpaid carers to access the extra support that they are entitled to, often at a time when they need it most.
- We funded and supported the **implementation of West Vale Mobility**, a community transport service, supporting residents in a rural area of the county to access their local health and wellbeing services.

- We **opened The Hagbournes**, a 12-person supported living property for young people moving into adulthood.
- Our **customer service centre** handled 23,381 inbound phone calls, 23,101 outbound phone calls, and 44,926 emails about adult social care. This resulted in 4,683 referrals.
- Our **social care academy** recruited its largest ever group of 15 social work apprentices.
- We **redesigned our short break service** (respite care) with the help of people who use the service, resulting in a hybrid system offering traditional building-based stays as well as more flexible community-based solutions.
- We completed the **refurbishment of eight properties** for people with additional needs. This has helped 39 people live well in their own communities.

- We **supported 69 job starts** and worked with **294 people** to provide them with advice, guidance and in-work support.
- A countywide **health and social care connections** roadshow enabled over 750 residents and stakeholders to share their experiences of health and social care services with senior figures in the NHS and Oxfordshire County Council.
- Alongside the Transfer of Care Hub our **‘discharge to assess’ programme** has enabled more than 7,000 people to be discharged safely from hospital — an increase of 23 per cent compared to the previous year.



Healthier

Children and young people

Our strategic priority

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

Healthier

- In January 2025, we brought together 100 delegates at an **Early Years Summit** to discuss the importance of early childhood development, the challenges young children face and how partners can move forward together.

- Our **behaviour inclusion team** supported 292 students, meeting their social, emotional and mental health needs and reducing suspensions.

- 55 children and young people have been supported by mentors through our **big brother, big sister programme**.

- We launched a **Life Long Links** service to support care experienced young people to reconnect and build safe relationships.

- We **opened a new nursery** in Woodstock, creating 88 new government funded places to support families with childcare needs.

- We invested in **adaptive musical instruments**, giving children with SEND opportunities to perform and compose music.



- We **reopened our Leys Children and Family Centre** after extensive refurbishments, with new play and learn spaces for families.
- We joined the largest **local authority fostering partnership** in the country, working across the south east to recruit more foster carers.

- We **opened a new children's home in Oxfordshire** and are developing three more, helping us care for more children locally.
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- We launched a **new early help strategy** and are working with partners to support families earlier.
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- 9,808 pupils experienced **hands on history**, with 217 loans to schools from our museums service.
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- Our **enhanced pathways initiative** is now in 20 schools, supporting 165 children with SEND to stay in their local school.
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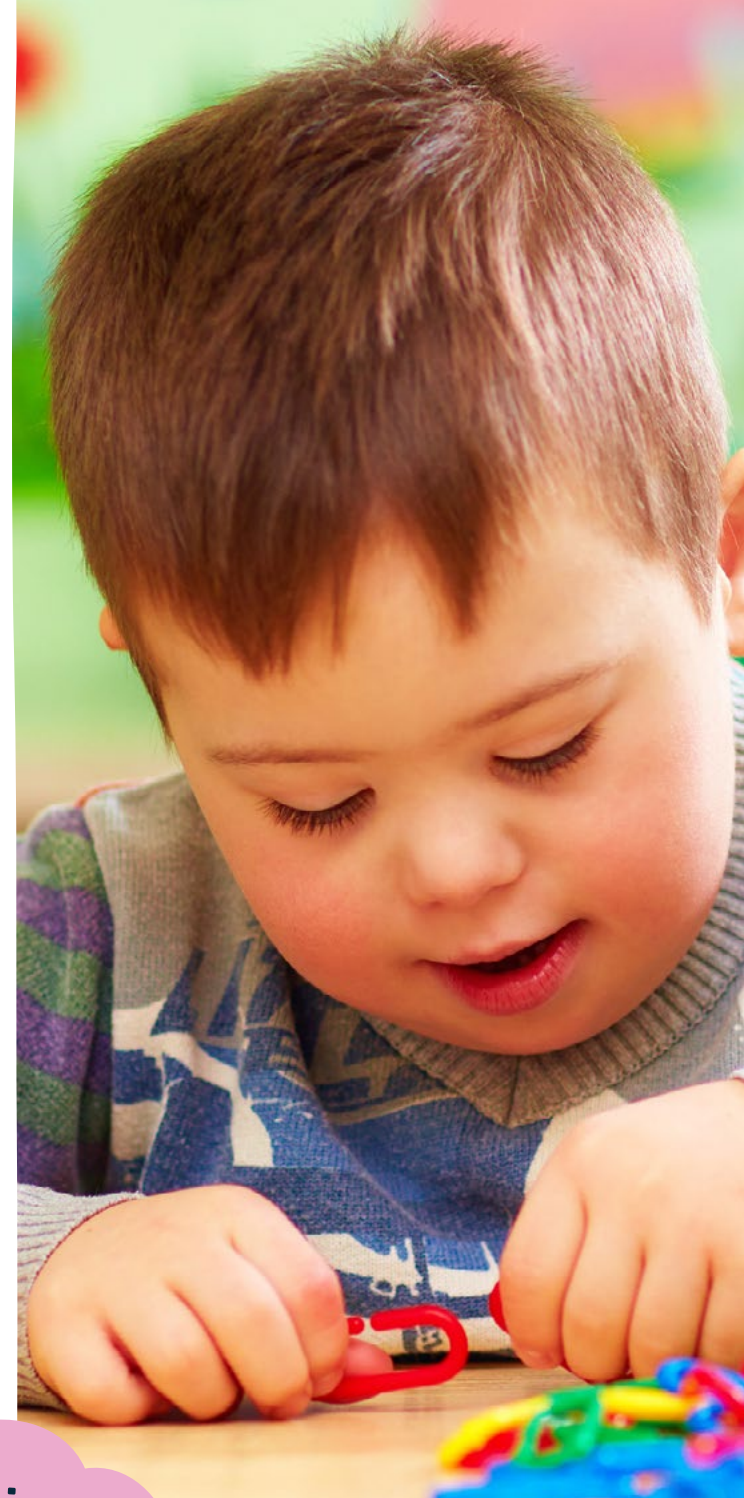
- We invested £9.4 million in **expanding Grove Church of England Primary School**, creating 100 new primary school and 39 nursery places.
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- We established a SEND youth forum in July 2024 to integrate the **voices of young people** into future service delivery.
-

- The quality of educational health and care plans (EHCPs) is improving: 44 per cent were **rated good or outstanding** in November 2024, compared with 21 per cent in July 2023.
-

- A WellComm pilot launched in January 2025 in 46 primary schools to identify children who may be **experiencing barriers to speech and language** development at an early stage.
-

- Over 2,000 young people accessed living well with **neurodivergence workshops and webinars** delivered by Autism Oxford in collaboration with the child and adolescent mental health services.
-



Healthier

Transformation

- We launched a **new public data website**—the Oxfordshire Data Hub—to provide residents and partners with curated data about our county—on themes such as population, children and young people, health and environment.

- We **improved the application process** for Blue Badges and also how we processed adult social care referrals—both are now quicker and easier for residents.

- We're **growing our own talent** with the development of a work experience scheme, internship programmes and the expansion of the management trainee scheme to offer Chartered Managers Degree Apprenticeships.

- In November 2024 we **improved customer experience** by introducing Zoom. It makes it easier for us to ensure customers are signposted more efficiently when contacting us. It also allows us to ultimately expand the number of ways customers can contact us.

- We **piloted a community hub** at the Sunshine Centre in Banbury, bringing together partners like the NHS and Citizens Advice to offer community-based support for residents.

- We continued to **transform and improve SEND** (special educational needs and disabilities) provision in the county. We secured funding for a new school in Didcot and expansion of a school in Oxford, established a SEND youth forum and saw improvements across the programme in delivery of support for parents and children.

- **The Oxfordshire Way** continued to make a real difference, supporting people to live happy, healthy lives. Innovative use of technology helps people live independent lives, local coordinators now directly support residents to find answers to their questions and outreach teams work alongside partners to provide one to one, personalised care.



Innovation

- We delivered the **Smart Infrastructure Pilots Programme (SIPP)**, funded by the Department for Science, Innovation and Technology (DSIT). It provides free WiFi and enhanced connectivity along a 1.5km corridor starting from Oxford train station to the city centre.



- With partners Freshwave and VMO2, we deployed 4G small cells at 16 strategic locations, including 14 in Oxford city centre – this has more than **doubled the WiFi connectivity rates** for residents in the area.
- We delivered **Project Skyway**, working with commercial partners and Coventry City Council and Reading Borough Council. The project consortium built 165 miles (265km) of drone superhighways, connecting airspace above major cities in the south of the UK. This improves routes for emergency response, search and rescue, transportation of organs and medical supplies, and conducting safer, more efficient surveys.



Awards



- Along with our community action groups, we won the national 2024 **LARAC Best Partnership award** for our joint efforts to improve recycling and reduce waste.
- Our **performance and insight analyst team** won the best teamwork award in the ONS Datathon 2024.
- “Cheers M’Dears” – Community Support Service Banbury was an **MJ Award Winner** for Innovation in Children’s and Adults’ Services 2024.
- Our construction project to improve access to Banbury railway station won a **Green Apple Environment Gold award**, recognising industry-leading carbon and cost reduction as part of its design and management.
- Our retrofit team, part of our climate action service, were finalists for the Energy Saver App project in the **Utility Week Awards**. It also received a special commendation in the **National Energy Efficiency Awards**.
- Susmita Dave and Sam Randle were runners up in the **Young Local Authority of the Year Awards**.
- Chief Fire Officer Rob MacDougall was recognised for over 25 years of service to public safety with a **King’s Fire Service Medal in the New Year’s Honours**.
- Two of our library managers, Jake Tilling and Karen Seymour, were recognised with a nomination at the prestigious **Libraries Connected Awards** for their work in improving health and wellbeing in their communities.
- Our cost of living support team was shortlisted for **Small Team of the Year in the 2025 LGC Awards**.
- Our internal communications team was shortlisted in two categories in the **Comms2Point0 national sector awards**, for best internal communications team and best small team.
- An innovative project to collect data for the food waste project was shortlisted for an **ESRI Customer Success Award** (Geographical Information Systems).
- Our Fire and Rescue Service – along with colleagues in Buckinghamshire Fire and Rescue, Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue and Thames Valley Police – was nominated and shortlisted for an award at the **Excellence in the Fire and Emergency Services Awards** ceremony.



Construction project:
Green Apple Environment Gold award



Waste and Recycling team:
LARAC Best Partnership award



Sam Randle and Susmita Dave:
Young Local Authority of the Year Awards



Karen Seymour:
Libraries Connected Awards



Mark Watson and Anne Kearsley:
ESRI Customer Success Award

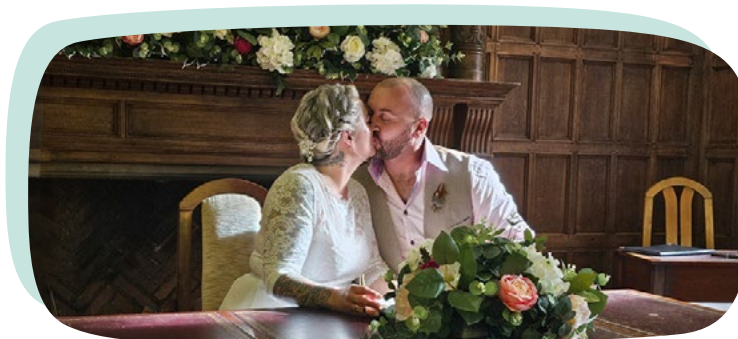


Retrofit team:
National Energy Efficiency Awards

2024/25 in figures



We recorded **7,268** births and **6,551** deaths.



We conducted and registered **2,367** civil partnership and marriage ceremonies.



We repaired **37,255** potholes.



We conferred British citizenship on **1,620** new citizens.



Our fire and rescue service attended over **6,200** incidents.



Our inspectors of weights and measures tested and verified **600** items of weighing and measuring equipment.



87.4 per cent of applicants were awarded their first choice of secondary school in Oxfordshire for 2025/26.



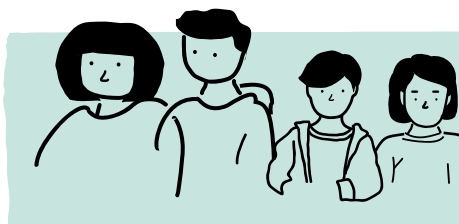
94.04 per cent of applicants were awarded their first choice of primary school in Oxfordshire for 2025/26.



Our fire and rescue service completed **491** fire safety audits of commercial premises and 731 fire safety building regulations consultations.



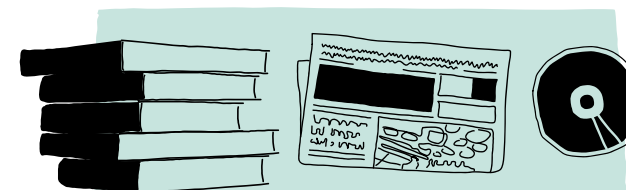
We welcomed **127,685** visitors to the Oxfordshire Museum, providing free access to the county's history.



We cared for **1,113** children.

735 children had a foster placement in year; this includes kinship.

196 children had a residential placement.



Our libraries welcomed **2,021,941** visitors.

This represents an increase of almost six per cent on the previous year.



Performance and feedback

Performance summary

This summarises the progress we have made delivering against the activities, tasks and projects outlined in our strategic plan under each of the nine strategic priorities.

The bi-monthly business management and monitoring reports can be found here for further detail of achievements and action plans.

mycouncil.oxfordshire.gov.uk

Listening and learning

Throughout the year we provide opportunities to our residents to have their say. Whether through customer satisfaction surveys, consultations on our budget, new projects and services, talking to local business organisations or feedback through our website; we are keen to listen to what you like and what needs to be improved.

letstalk.oxfordshire.gov.uk



Let's Talk

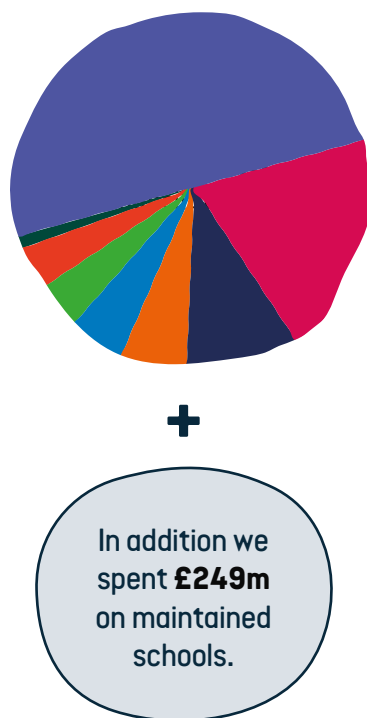


Finance

What we spent on council services

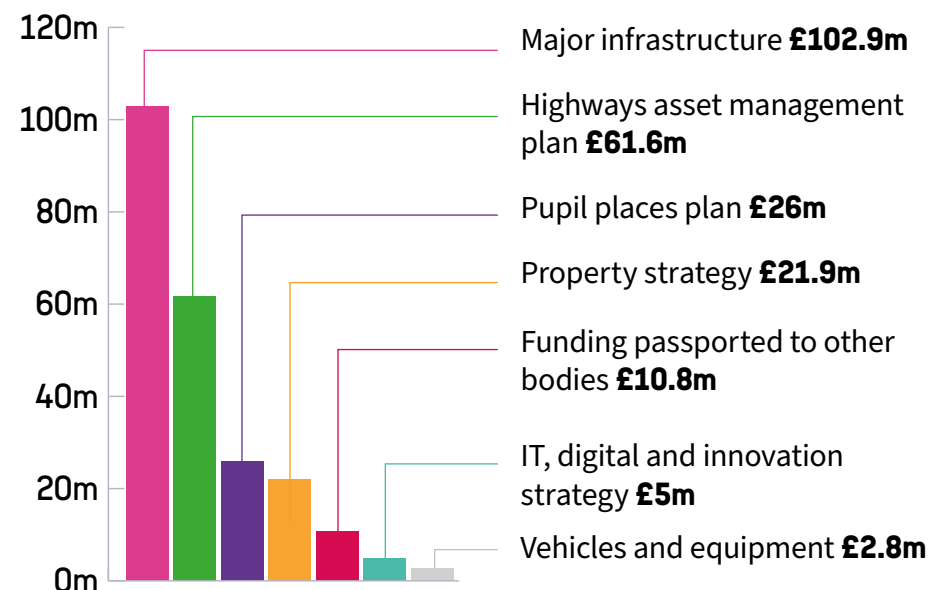
In 2024/25 the council spent **£1,096m** on services – our gross expenditure. The chart below shows how much we spent on services in 2024/25.

- 50%** Adult and children's social care
- 20%** Education and learning
- 10%** Highways, transport and infrastructure
- 6%** Capital borrowing and other financial costs (eg contingency and reserves)
- 5%** Public health improvement and prevention services
- 4%** Waste disposal and recycling
- 4%** Fire and rescue and community safety
- 1%** Libraries, culture and customer service



Capital programme

In 2024/25, we spent **£231m** on capital projects which included investment in highway improvements, new school buildings, and children's homes and decarbonisation of the council's buildings. This money can only be used for the purpose it has been given and cannot be allocated to day-to-day council spending.



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To find out more about how you can **take part in local democracy** by asking questions or making statements at council meetings, visit:

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Let's talk



Have your say in **consultations about changes** to council services or policies at:

letstalk.oxfordshire.gov.uk

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oxfordshire.gov.uk/newsletter