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OXFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

To: Members of the Cabinet

Notice of a Meeting of the Cabinet

Tuesday, 22 June 2021 at 2.00 pm

County Hall, Oxford

These proceedings are open to the public

Please note that Council meetings are currently taking place in-person (not virtually) with social distancing at the venue. Meetings will continue to be live-streamed and those who wish to view them are strongly encouraged to do so online to minimise the risk of Covid 19 infection.

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

Places at the meetings are very limited due to the requirements of social distancing. If you still wish to attend this meeting in person, you must contact the Committee Officer by 9am four working days before the meeting and they will advise if you can be accommodated at this meeting and of the detailed Covid-19 safety requirements for all attendees.

Please note that in line with current government guidance *all* attendees are strongly encouraged to take a lateral flow test in advance of the meeting.

Yvonne Rees
Chief Executive

June 2021

Committee Officer: ***Colm Ó Caomhanaigh***
Tel: 07393 001096; E-Mail:
colm.ocaomhanaigh@oxfordshire.gov.uk

Membership

Councillors

Liz Leffman	Leader of the Council
Liz Brighouse OBE	Deputy Leader of the Council
Glynis Phillips	Cabinet Member for Corporate Services
Neil Fawcett	Cabinet Member for Community Services & Safety
Dr Pete Sudbury	Cabinet Member for Climate Change Delivery & Environment
Tim Bearder	Cabinet Member for Highways Management
Duncan Enright	Cabinet Member for Travel & Development Strategy
Calum Miller	Cabinet Member for Finance
Jenny Hannaby	Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care

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

Date of next meeting: 20 July 2021

recycled paper

Declarations of Interest

The duty to declare…..
Under the Localism Act 2011 it is a criminal offence to
(a) fail to register a disclosable pecuniary interest within 28 days of election or co-option (or re-election or re-appointment), or
(b) provide false or misleading information on registration, or
(c) participate in discussion or voting in a meeting on a matter in which the member or co-opted member has a disclosable pecuniary interest.

Whose Interests must be included?
The Act provides that the interests which must be notified are those of a member or co-opted member of the authority, **or**

- those of a spouse or civil partner of the member or co-opted member;
- those of a person with whom the member or co-opted member is living as husband/wife
- those of a person with whom the member or co-opted member is living as if they were civil partners.

(in each case where the member or co-opted member is aware that the other person has the interest).

What if I remember that I have a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest during the Meeting?.
The Code requires that, at a meeting, where a member or co-opted member has a disclosable interest (of which they are aware) in any matter being considered, they disclose that interest to the meeting. The Council will continue to include an appropriate item on agendas for all meetings, to facilitate this.

Although not explicitly required by the legislation or by the code, it is recommended that in the interests of transparency and for the benefit of all in attendance at the meeting (including members of the public) the nature as well as the existence of the interest is disclosed.

A member or co-opted member who has disclosed a pecuniary interest at a meeting must not participate (or participate further) in any discussion of the matter; and must not participate in any vote or further vote taken; and must withdraw from the room.

Members are asked to continue to pay regard to the following provisions in the code that *"You must serve only the public interest and must never improperly confer an advantage or disadvantage on any person including yourself"* or *"You must not place yourself in situations where your honesty and integrity may be questioned….."*.

Please seek advice from the Monitoring Officer prior to the meeting should you have any doubt about your approach.

List of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests:
Employment (includes"*any employment, office, trade, profession or vocation carried on for profit or gain*".), **Sponsorship, Contracts, Land, Licences, Corporate Tenancies, Securities.**

For a full list of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests and further Guidance on this matter please see the Guide to the New Code of Conduct and Register of Interests at Members' conduct guidelines. http://intranet.oxfordshire.gov.uk/wps/wcm/connect/occ/Insite/Elected+members/ or contact Glenn Watson on **07776 997946** or glenn.watson@oxfordshire.gov.uk for a hard copy of the document.

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

recycled paper

AGENDA

1. Apologies for Absence

2. Declarations of Interest

- guidance note opposite

3. **Minutes** (Pages 1 - 22)

To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 20 April 2021 (**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 two working days before the meeting, ask a question on any matter in respect of the Cabinet's delegated powers.

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

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

5. Petitions and Public Address

This Cabinet meeting will be held virtually in order to conform with current guidelines regarding social distancing. Normally requests to speak at this public meeting are required by 9 am on the day preceding the published date of the meeting. However, during the current situation and to facilitate these new arrangements we are asking that requests to speak are submitted by no later than 9am four working days before the meeting i.e. 9 am on 16 June 2021. Requests to speak should be sent to: Colm.OCaomhanaigh@Oxfordshire.gov.uk. together with a written statement of your presentation to ensure that if the technology fails then your views can still be taken into account. A written copy of your statement can be provided no later than 9 am 2 working days before the meeting.

Where a meeting is held virtually and the addressee is unable to participate virtually their written submission will be accepted.

Written submissions should be no longer than 1 A4 sheet.

6. COVID-19: Progress and Planning Update

Cabinet Member: Leader
Forward Plan Ref: 2021/074
Contact: Robin Rogers, Programme Director COVID Response Tel: 07789 923206

Report by Chief Executive (**CA6**) **REPORT TO FOLLOW**

On 26 December 2020, Oxfordshire entered local Tier 4 restrictions in response to a rise in COVID-19 case-rates and pressure on the health system. A broader national lock-down was reinstituted from 5 January. As part of an integrated systems response, Oxfordshire County Council has continued to play a critical role in leading the ongoing local response to COVID-19 and in supporting residents to maintain their broader health and wellbeing.

The impact of national, local and individual efforts has brought case rates back to low levels. As a consequence, national restrictions are being eased through the Roadmap period. As we reach the end of the originally planned Roadmap period, this report describes the current local COVID-19 situation. It summarises the response to COVID-19 over the past six months, describes ongoing activity and includes a description of the recovery status of Council services. It goes on to set out the requirement to maintain and adapt COVID-19 capacity and management structures as the context in which we work continues to evolve rapidly. Finally, it recommends that the local and organisational lessons learnt from the pandemic should be used to help direct long-term recovery planning and inform future corporate direction.

An announcement on the planned 21 June lockdown step is due on the evening of 14 June after the publication of this agenda. The report will therefore be published as a late paper in order to accurately reflect the updated position.

7. Business Management & Monitoring Report - March/April 2021 (Pages 23 - 118)

Cabinet Member: Cabinet Member for Corporate Services and Cabinet Member for Finance
Forward Plan Ref: 2021/001
Contact: Louise Tustian, Head of Insight & Corporate Programmes Tel: 07741 607452/Hannah Doney, Head of Corporate Finance Tel: 07584 174654

Report by Corporate Director Customers & Organisational Development and Director of Finance (**CA7**).

This report sets out Oxfordshire County Council's (OCC's) progress towards Corporate Plan priorities for 2020/21 – March 2021.

Cabinet is RECOMMENDED to:

(a) note this month's business management and monitoring report;
(b) note the annual review 2020/21;
(c) note the virements set out in Annex C-2b;
(d) note the summary of financial position for 2020/21 along with the year- end position on general balances and earmarked reserves as set out in Annex C;
(e) approve the underspend £5.9m should be transferred to balances.

8. Provisional Capital Outturn 2020/21 (Pages 119 - 146)

Cabinet Member: Finance
Forward Plan Ref: 2021/002
Contact: Hannah Doney, Head of Corporate Finance Tel: 07584 174654

Report by Director of Finance (**CA8**).

The Council's ten-year Capital Programme sets out the agreed capital investment to deliver the priorities identified in the Council's Capital and Investment Strategy. The report sets out the performance against the planned capital programme for 2020/21. Figures shown in the report reflect those to be included in the Council's Statement of Accounts for 2020/21.

The Cabinet is RECOMMENDED to note the performance against the capital programme for 2020/21 as set out in the report.

9. Treasury Management 2020/21 Outturn (Pages 147 - 160)

Cabinet Member: Finance
Forward Plan Ref: 2021/021
Contact: Tim Chapple, Treasury Manager Tel 07917 262935

Report by Director of Finance (**CA9**).

The report sets out the Treasury Management performance in the financial year 2020/21 in compliance with the CIPFA Code of Practice. The report includes Debt and Investment activity, Prudential Indicator Outturn, Investment Strategy, and interest receivable and payable for the financial year.

Cabinet is RECOMMENDED to note the report, and to RECOMMEND Council to note the Council's Treasury Management Activity in 2020/21.

10. Report on the Outcome of the LGA Peer Review of Libraries and Cultural Services (Pages 161 - 188)

Cabinet Member: Community Services & Safety
Forward Plan Ref: 2021/055
Contact: Lesli Good, Assistant Director, Cultural Services Tel: 07930 617798

Report by Corporate Director of Customers and Organisational Development (**CA10**).

Cabinet agreed on 20 April 2021 to the development of a Libraries and Heritage Strategy to be presented to Cabinet by the end of 2021. The development of a strategy will set a clear long-term direction for the development of these services, their contribution to post pandemic recovery and wider community outcomes focused around the following themes:

- education, learning and skills
- healthy place shaping and well-being
- culture and creativity
- digital inclusion
- social inclusion and community cohesion
- economic development
- environmental sustainability

The strategy will be informed by an evidence base including a review of current performance, analysis of community needs and customer feedback. Further, insight will be gathered through community engagement in Faringdon and Banbury, these locations have planned library improvements (including capital expenditure) and offer an immediate opportunity for proactive stakeholder engagement in shaping the future of the service.

In developing the evidence base the county council have benefited from feedback from a Local Government Association (LGA) Peer Review on Oxfordshire Libraries and Heritage Services Libraries which took place virtually on 11 and 12 March 2021. Cabinet is now asked to consider the report, note the recommendations made, and agree that these should be incorporated into the council's business planning and development of the strategy.

The Cabinet is RECOMMENDED to:

(a) ***consider the LGA Cultural Services Peer Review feedback report (Annex 1);***
(b) ***note the recommendations set out within the report;***
(c) ***agree the proposals set out at paragraph 10 for incorporating the report's recommendations into the service planning and Libraries and Heritage Strategy development process.***

11. National Bus Strategy - Proposal for an Oxfordshire Enhanced Bus Partnership (Pages 189 - 314)

Cabinet Member: Highway Management
Forward Plan Ref: 2021/071
Contact: John Disley, Infrastructure Strategy & Policy Manager Tel: 07767 006742

Report by Corporate Director for Environment and Place (**CA11**).

The National Bus Strategy (NBS), published on 15 March, includes a specific requirement for all Local Transport Authorities (LTAs) to commit to establishing Enhanced Partnerships across their areas under the Bus Services Act by the end of June 2021.

Commitment to an Enhanced Partnership can be done either as the long-term intention or as a precursor to development of a London-style franchising scheme. From 1 July 2021, only LTAs and operators who meet these requirements will continue to receive the COVID-19 Bus Services Support Grant (CBSSG), any new sources of bus funding from the Government's £3bn funding commitment to buses announced last year (including funding for recovery in 2021/22) and potentially Bus Service Operator's Grant (BSOG).

This proposal would commit the Council to enter into a formal, legal partnership arrangement with bus operators in order to meet the requirements set out in the NBS and for the Council and operators to be able to continue to access central Government funding for buses. Commitment to enter into an Enhanced Partnership needs to be followed by the publication of a Bus Service Improvement Plan by the end of October 2021, which is proposed to form part of the Council's emerging Local Transport & Connectivity Plan.

Key issues covered in the report include:

- The relative features, advantages and risks of an Enhanced Partnership compared with the Franchising alternative;
- The requirements of a Bus Service Improvement Plan
- The current context, including the emerging post-COVID position on bus operations and use and how the proposed approach could support recovery;
- Issues for partners, particularly bus operators, and opportunities for our joint working;
- Financial/legal implications and risks and issues for service delivery and reputation, for example in relation to the potential need to support socially and/or economically necessary services.

Cabinet is RECOMMENDED to:

(a) ***commit to establishing an Enhanced Partnership across Oxfordshire under the Bus Services Act 2017; and***

(b) ***give formal notice of the Council's intention to prepare an Enhanced Partnership and invite all local bus operators to confirm their intention to participate.***

12. Zero Emission Buses Regional Areas (ZEBRA) Schemes (Pages 315 - 324)

Cabinet Member: Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Highway Management
Forward Plan Ref: 2021/077
Contact: Joanne Fellows, Growth Manager – Central Tel: 07990 368897

Report by Assistant Director for Growth & Place (**CA12**).

The Government is seeking 'Expressions of Interest' (EoI) for local authorities to take part in the Zero Emission Bus Regional Areas (ZEBRA) scheme, in support of the Government's Road to Zero Strategy for transition to zero emission transport by 2050.

The funding, which totals £120 million and is expected to support at least three areas, is intended to enable deployment of zero emission buses and relevant accompanying infrastructure.

In order to best meet the criteria and maximise the opportunity and chances of success, it is recommended that an EoI is submitted which would incorporate urban services operating wholly within the Oxford SmartZone area. The SmartZone area extends from Kidlington in the north to Kennington in the south, and from Cumnor in the west to Wheatley in the east.

If successful, this bid would support a number of the key corporate priorities related to health and well-being, climate action, air quality and healthy place shaping. A reduction in bus emissions in Oxford would contribute to better air quality and better environments for all users as well as reducing transport's contribution to climate change. Electric buses may also improve the image of buses and the passenger experience, helping to boost bus use and reduce traffic congestion. There are also linkages to the Council's current work, for example Connecting Oxford and the Oxford Zero Emission Zone, the first phase of which is due to start operating in summer 2021.

Cabinet is RECOMMENDED to:

(a) authorise officers to finalise and submit an Expression of Interest for the Government's Zero Emission Bus Regional Areas funding initiative;
(b) agree a capital allocation of up to £6m in 2022/23 to provide additional council grant to bus operators, if operators can demonstrate this is required to make the scheme feasible.

13. Releasing Development Strategy in Didcot and Surrounding Villages in the Vicinity of HIF1 Schemes (Pages 325 - 352)

Cabinet Member: Highways Management
Forward Plan Ref: 2021/018
Contact: Jason Sherwood, South Growth Manager Tel: 07795 684708/Cathy Champion, Infrastructure Locality Lead Tel: 07920 084256/Michael Deadman Transport Development Control Lead Officer Tel: 07767 608992

Report by Assistant Director Growth & Place (**CA13**).

Prior to Didcot Garden Town Housing Infrastructure (HIF 1) funding being secured in June 2020, it was established that the local and strategic highway network that serves Didcot and the surrounding area has severe congestion and capacity issues during the morning and evening commuter periods.

To manage the highway network a strategy was devised in 2018 between officers of the district councils and Oxfordshire County Council (OCC) to control development within areas (including Didcot) that have the most severe capacity issues in the absence of strategic highway infrastructure to support new growth in the Vale of White Horse and South Oxfordshire districts (as identified in LTP4 and district Local Plans). This strategy involved OCC in the role as Local Highway Authority objecting to new developments that will generate a new vehicular trip in the morning and evening commuter peak times.

While this approach enabled both district councils and OCC to manage the impact of new development on the highway network and support the HIF 1 bid, it has placed OCC's position under immense scrutiny and officers are aware of frustration from developers who have been unable to progress their allocated development sites since HIF 1 funding was secured. Such frustrations have led to some development sites appealing their planning applications

To assist with the delivery of much needed housing in the Vale of White Horse and South Oxfordshire districts, officers have identified the need for a development strategy to be implemented by OCC. Allowing for some controlled development to come forward prior to HIF 1 infrastructure being available for public use.

This development strategy seeks to avoid speculative development, potential appeal costs against the council and deliver some much-needed housing in the Vale of White Horse and South Oxfordshire districts. It assumes that housing build programmes / trajectories can align with the delivery programme of HIF 1 and applicants demonstrate that there will be no severe harm to the operation of the highway network. It also allows for the controlled release of employment following a similar approach.

The Cabinet is RECOMMENDED to implement a strategy to assist with the delivery of new development in the Vale of White Horse and South Oxfordshire districts to allow some growth to come forward in a controlled manner prior to HIF 1 funded infrastructure being open for public use based upon the following requirements:

- ***Development site housing build programmes / trajectories / occupations being aligned with (or after) the delivery of HIF 1 which will require occupation thresholds / controls on development sites.***
- ***Development sites to provide agreed sustainable / active travel infrastructure at the beginning (early occupations) of development sites to reduce traffic impact on the highway network prior to HIF 1 delivery.***
- ***New services or enhancements to existing bus service arrangements being implemented at the beginning (early occupations) of development sites.***
- ***Local off-site and on-site highway works to be delivered at the early stages of development to lessen the direct impact of a development site on the highway network.***
- ***Travel Plans prepared and approved by the council's Travel Plan team with deliverable and monitored targets.***
- ***Strategic transport / highway contributions will be sought in accordance with Regulation 122 and the three Section 106 tests.***

14. Housing Infrastructure Fund 1 - In Principle Use of Statutory Powers (Pages 353 - 378)

Cabinet Member: Highway Management
Forward Plan Ref: 2021/052
Contact: Aron Wisdom, Programme Lead (HIF1) Tel: 07776 244856

Report by Director of Growth and Economy (**CA14**).

The Didcot Garden Town Housing Infrastructure Fund programme (hereon in referred to as HIF1) is to fund £218m of a £234m package of measures (the remaining funding - circa £16m - will come from developer obligations either held or secured by Oxfordshire County Council via section 106 agreements. Any funds not held at the time of construction will be forward funded by Oxfordshire County Council) consisting of four separate but interdependent highways schemes:

(a) A4130 widening from Milton Interchange to a new Science Bridge by making it a dual carriageway;
(b) a new Didcot Science Bridge from the A4130 over the Great Western Railway Mainline into the Didcot 'A' Power Station site and re-joining the A4130 Northern Perimeter Road north of the Purchas Road/Hawksworth roundabout;
(c) a new river crossing and link road between the A4130 at Didcot and A415 at Culham, including two new bridges;
(d) a Clifton Hampden Bypass between the A415 at Culham Science Centre and B4015 north of Clifton Hampden.

The primary focus of HIF1 is to provide additional highway capacity and connectivity to resolve long-standing capacity constraints that is preventing new homes and jobs allocated in local plans from coming forward in a timely manner. Additionally, the infrastructure will include high quality and completely segregated cycling and pedestrian facilities. Coupled with creating the right environment for enhanced bus services in the area, the new infrastructure will provide residents with real mode choice.

Land assembly is a key driver to project delivery and hence the report outlines the in principle use of various statutory powers to mitigate this risk to the Council, as far as is reasonably practicable.

The Cabinet is RECOMMENDED to:

(a) approve in principle the development of The Oxfordshire County Council (Access to Didcot Garden Town) Compulsory Purchase Order 202[x]. Negotiations for private acquisition will be conducted in parallel to the compulsory purchase process. Powers of compulsory purchase will be used only as a matter of last resort, in order to bring forward the timely development of the Housing Infrastructure Fund 1 (HIF1) project. Formal authority for the making of The Oxfordshire County Council (Access to Didcot Garden Town) Compulsory Purchase Order 202[x] will be reported to Cabinet following the submission of a planning application for the scheme;
(b) approve the preparation and service of statutory notices for the Requisition of Information pursuant to Section 16 Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 (as amended) to assist with determining the interests in the land required for the delivery of the scheme;
(c) approve the preparation of The Oxfordshire County Council (Access to Didcot Garden Town) Compulsory Purchase Order 202[x] in draft, together with a draft Order Map, draft Order Schedule, draft Statement of Reasons and all necessary land referencing activity in advance of seeking formal authority to make the Order;
(d) approve the preparation of The Oxfordshire County Council (Didcot to Culham Thames Bridge) Scheme 202[x] in accordance with section 106(3) of The Highways Act 1980 (as amended) in relation to a new road overbridge crossing of the River Thames, being a navigable waterway;

(e) approve the preparation of The Oxfordshire County Council (Didcot Garden Town Housing Infrastructure Fund (HIF1) – A4130 Improvement) (Side Roads) Order 202[x] (or multiple Side Roads Orders as may be necessary), and The Oxfordshire County Council (Didcot Garden Town Highways Infrastructure – A4130 Improvement) Compulsory Purchase Order 202[x] to enable the stopping-up, diversion, amendment, improvement and creation of new lengths of highway or reclassification of existing highways. Please note that the final titles of the orders will be determined as the project progresses and will be updated in this report accordingly. This includes the stopping up of private means of access as necessary where the scheme design necessitates. Formal approval for the making of Side Roads Order(s) will be reported to Cabinet, and necessary approval sought, following the submission of a planning application for the scheme.

15. Housing Infrastructure Fund 2 - In Principle Use of Statutory Powers
(Pages 379 - 404)

Cabinet Member: Highway Management
Forward Plan Ref: 2021/053
Contact: Tom Shuttleworth, A40 Programme Lead Tel: 07908 059132

Report by Director of Growth & Economy (**CA15**).

In November 2019, it was announced that Oxfordshire County Council's Housing Infrastructure Fund bid had been successful in securing £102m of grant funding towards a package of transport improvements proposed along 10.8km of the A40 corridor between Witney and Duke's Cut (North Oxford), known as A40 HIF2 Smart Corridor (HIF2). The contract with Homes England in the form of a Grant Determination Agreement (GDA) was subsequently entered in to in August 2020.

The primary focus of HIF2 is the provision of additional highway capacity and connectivity to encourage/facilitate modal shift, enabling more sustainable forms of travel to meet the Council's zero carbon transport network ambitions focussing this around public transport and active travel. Delivery is also intended to expedite a significant level of economic benefits in terms of new homes and retained and new employment opportunities within West Oxfordshire.

Land assembly is a key driver to project delivery and hence the report outlines the in principle use of various statutory powers to mitigate this risk to the Council, as far as is reasonably practicable.

Following a review of the scheme and further negotiations with Homes England there is agreement to extend the HIF funding allocation to cover all current scheme costs, subject to an amended GDA to the value of £106.756m, through to February 2025.

The Cabinet is RECOMMENDED to:

(a) approve in principle the development of The Oxfordshire County Council (A40 HIF2 Smart Corridor) Compulsory Purchase Order 202[x] in parallel with negotiations for private acquisition, with such powers of compulsory

purchase used only as a matter of last resort, in order to bring forward the timely development of the A40 HIF2 Project. Formal authority for the making of The Oxfordshire County Council (A40 HIF2 Smart Corridor) Compulsory Purchase Order 202[x] will be reported to Cabinet, and necessary approval sought, following public engagement on preferred options and submission of a planning application for the scheme;

(b) approve the preparation and service of statutory notices for the Requisition of Information pursuant to Section 16 Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 (as amended) to assist with determining the interests in the land required for the delivery of the scheme;

(c) approve the preparation of The Oxfordshire County Council (A40 HIF2 Smart Corridor)Compulsory Purchase Order 202[x] in draft , together with a draft Order Map, draft Order Schedule, draft Statement of Reasons and all necessary land referencing activity in advance of seeking formal authority to make the Order;

(d) approve the preparation of The Oxfordshire County Council (HIF2 Smart Corridor – A40 Classified Road) Side Roads Order 202[x](or multiple Side Roads Orders as may be necessary) to enable the stopping-up, diversion, alteration, improvement and creation of new lengths of highway or reclassification of existing highways. This includes the stopping up of private means of access as necessary where the scheme design necessitates. Formal approval for the making of Side Roads Order(s) will be reported to Cabinet, and necessary approval sought, following public engagement on preferred options and submission of a planning application for the scheme;

(e) subject to the confirmation that the required due diligence has been completed to manage programme and financial risk to the Council, authorise the Corporate Director Environment and Place, in consultation with the Director of Law & Governance, Director of Finance, Cabinet Member for Travel and Development Strategy and Cabinet Member for Finance to approve the amended Grant Determination Agreement (GDA);

(f) subject to the satisfactory completion of recommendation (e) approve the additional £4.745m Housing Infrastructure Fund grant for an overall budget provision of £106.756m for the A40 HIF2 Smart Corridor project within the capital programme, subject to the implementation of the Grant Determination Agreement with Homes England.

16. Delivery of Supported Living Units Through Investment in the Resonance Supported Homes Fund (Pages 405 - 416)

Cabinet Member: Adult Social Care
Forward Plan Ref: 2021/069
Contact: Gillian Douglas, Assistant Director Housing & Social Care Commissioning Tel: 07503 259834

Report by Corporate Director – Adults & Housing (**CA16**).

Through the Care Act 2014, the Council has a responsibility to meet the care and support needs of adults with learning disabilities and/or autism. To achieve positive outcomes the council generally supports these service users to live independently with their care needs met in their own home.

Through the provision of supported living accommodation, the council enables people to live in their own home with care support provided on site. Based on current and anticipated supply, there is a need to access an additional planned pipeline of supported living accommodation in Oxfordshire over the next 2-3 years and to increase the overall supply of suitable properties. The report outlines a proposal to invest £5m capital funding in the Resonance Supported Homes Fund in order to deliver up to 25 units of supported living accommodation for people with learning disabilities and autism.

The Cabinet is RECOMMENDED to approve an investment of £5.0m by the County Council in the Resonance Supported Homes Fund for the delivery of supported living accommodation units for adults with learning disabilities and/or autism.

17. Workforce Report and Staffing Data - Quarter 4 - January-March 2021 (Pages 417 - 436)

Cabinet Member: Corporate Services
Forward Plan Ref: 2020/177
Contact: Sarah Currell, HR Manager – Business Systems Tel: 07867 467793

Report by Director of Human Resources (**CA17**).

Quarterly staffing report providing details of key people numbers and analysis of main changes since the previous report.

The Cabinet is RECOMMENDED to note the report.

18. Appointments 2020/21 (Pages 437 - 448)

Cabinet Member: Leader
Forward Plan Ref: 2020/176
Contact: Colm Ó Caomhánaigh, Committee Officer Tel: 07393 001096

Report by Director of Law & Governance (**CA18**).

The report asks the Cabinet to consider member appointments to a variety of bodies which in different ways support the discharge of the Council's executive functions. The report reflects the basis on which appointments to the respective bodies have been made in the past and, subject to any adjustments that may be considered appropriate, invites the Cabinet to agree arrangements for filling the councillor places on those bodies. A further update Annex will be circulated shortly prior to the Meeting, once all appointments are known.

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

19. Forward Plan and Future Business (Pages 449 - 454)

Cabinet Member: All
Contact Officer: Ali Bartlett, Democratic Support Officer Tel: 07741 607515

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.

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CABINET

MINUTES of the meeting held on Tuesday, 20 April 2021 commencing at 2.00 pm and finishing at 3.27 pm.

Present:

Voting Members:	Councillor Ian Hudspeth – in the Chair Councillor Mrs Judith Heathcoat Councillor Lawrie Stratford Councillor Steve Harrod Councillor Ian Corkin Councillor Lorraine Lindsay-Gale Councillor Yvonne Constance OBE Councillor David Bartholomew Councillor Mark Gray
Other Members in Attendance:	Councillor Damian Haywood (Agenda Items 7 & 8) Councillor Glynis Phillips (Agenda Item 6) Councillor Emma Turnbull (Agenda Item 9) Councillor Gill Sanders (Agenda Item 10)
Officers:	
Whole of meeting	Yvonne Rees (Chief Executive); Lorna Baxter, Director of Finance; Anita Bradley, Director of Law & Governance; Steve Jorden, Corporate Director, Commercial Development, Assets and Investment; Sue Whitehead (Law & Governance)
Part of Meeting	Item 6 - Claire Taylor, Corporate Director, Customers and Organisational Development; Louise Tustian, Head of Insight and Corporate Programmes Item 7 – Bill Cotton, Corporate Director of Environment and Place; Rachel Wileman, Assistant Director Strategic Infrastructure and Planning; Dawn Pettis, Strategic Planning Team Item 8 – Bill Cotton, Corporate Director of Environment and Place, Paul Fermer, Assistant Director Community Operations Item 9 – Claire Taylor, Corporate Director, Customers and Organisational Development; Jane Portman, Consultant, Cultural Services Item 10 – Kevin Gordon, Corporate Director for Children's Services; Lara Patel, Deputy Director - Safeguarding

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

34/21 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE
(Agenda Item. 1)

An apology was received from Councillor Eddie Reeves.

Councillor Ian Hudspeth, Leader of the Council thanked and paid tribute to the work of Councillor Judith Heathcoat, Deputy Leader of the Council, Councillor Lawrie Stratford, Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Public Health and Councillor Mark Gray, Cabinet Member for Local Communities all of whom were standing down from the County Council at the upcoming elections.

35/21 MINUTES
(Agenda Item. 3)

The Minutes of the meeting held on 16 March 2021 were approved and signed as a correct record.

36/21 QUESTIONS FROM COUNTY COUNCILLORS
(Agenda Item. 4)

The questions received from County Councillors and responses are set out in an Annex to these Minutes.

Councillor Howson thanked Cabinet Members for the way in which they had answered the many questions he had put to them during this administration.

He also thanked Sue Whitehead, Principal Committee Officer, who was retiring, for her work in supporting these meetings. Cabinet Members also thanked Sue Whitehead for her work.

37/21 PETITIONS AND PUBLIC ADDRESS
(Agenda Item. 5)

The following requests to address the meeting had been agreed by the Chairman:

Item 6 – Business Management and Monitoring Report - Councillor Glynis Phillips, Shadow Cabinet Member for Finance

Item 7– Strategic Vision for Oxfordshire - Councillor Damian Haywood, Shadow Cabinet Member for Highways Delivery and Operations

Item 8 – Highway Maintenance Contract Extension - Councillor Damian Haywood, Shadow Cabinet Member for Highways Delivery and Operations

Item 9 – Developing a Strategic Framework for Oxfordshire County Council Libraries and Heritage Services - Councillor Emma Turnbull, Shadow Cabinet Member for Education & Cultural Services

Item 10 – Reprovision of Maltfield House – New Build Children's Home - Councillor Gill Sanders, Shadow Cabinet Member for Children's Services.

38/21 BUSINESS MANAGEMENT & MONITORING REPORT - FEBRUARY 2021

(Agenda Item. 6)

Cabinet considered a report setting out Oxfordshire County Council's (OCC's) progress towards Corporate Plan priorities for 2020/21 – February 2021.

Councillor Glynis Phillips, Shadow Cabinet Member for Finance highlighted several areas in the report:

- On air quality metrics referred to at page 19 of the agenda Councillor Phillips asked that locality meetings be advised of air quality issues in their area, where the air pollution monitors were sited and the specific actions in the designated air quality management areas.
- Expressed concern over the street lighting LED conversion programme, where the target for conversions for 2021 had not been achieved.
- Councillor Phillips highlighted that the condition of the highways was rated green when Fix my Street data advised that repairs completed did not meet the target set and noted that nearly a quarter of issues reported fell below the intervention criteria. She noted that this was a known issue and that the report referred to a number of interventions. Councillor Phillips requested information on the interventions. As a known issue she asked what was being done to reduce the number of inappropriate issues being reported on Fix My Street.
- In noting that the percentage target for defects posing an immediate or potential risk of injury was met Councillor Phillips suggested that future reports indicate the actual number of defects involved.
- Referring to page 51 on notification received on ringfenced grant relating to free activities and healthy food for disadvantaged children, Councillor Phillips requested more detail on the allocation of this funding and on how spend would be monitored.
- Councillor Phillips welcomed the shift in resources to more home care being provided.
- Councillor Phillips noted that the risk register made no mention of preparation for the County wide Youth Service. The register noted the increase in demand for children's services and the need to ensure effective arrangements are in place for safeguarding children. A benefit of a County wide youth service is that social workers would be available to support children and their families before crises happen. The preparations should be mentioned in the risk register as a mitigating factor and Councillor Phillips sought assurance that plans were being made to set up this service.

Councillor Constance responded to the concerns raised around the street lighting LED conversion programme. The difficulty in meeting the conversion target was due to a column supply issue. The delivery programme would be caught up in 2021/22. She added that whilst below the target on numbers,

the programme was targeted at the units with the highest energy usage and therefore energy saving would profile ahead of target.

Councillor Constance indicated that Councillor Phillips would receive a direct response on her queries on Fix My Street.

Councillor Judith Heathcoat, Deputy Leader of the Council, introduced the risk and performance management elements of the report noting that the Council continued to perform well 16 green, 10 amber with none reported as red. One measure was unable to be reported on as a direct consequence of Covid-19. There had been no score changes on the risk register in the month of February.

Councillor Heathcoat commented that it was a testament to the Council's workforce that we continued to support our communities well. Councillor Heathcoat highlighted work within the Community Safety portfolio where Trading Standards continued their work to support the reporting of scams and doorstep crime and the Fire Service crews and Home and Community Advisers who carried out Home and Well Visits within the community.

Councillor David Bartholomew, Cabinet Member for Finance introduced the finance element of the report and at the last meeting of Cabinet in this term gave special thanks to Lorna Baxter, Director of Finance, Hannah Doney, Chief Finance Officer, and to Emma Greenland, Graham Clare, Tim Chapple and other members of the Finance team for their hard work and support over the years. Councillor Bartholomew also thanked Councillor Glynis Phillips in her role as Shadow Cabinet Member for Finance for her constructive comments in this area. In moving the recommendations outlined the forecast revenue budget at the end of February 2021 and an update on the Medium-Term Financial Strategy. The report included information on the financial impact of COVID-19 and Councillor Bartholomew stated that there would be additional costs into 2021/22.

During discussion Cabinet responded to the points raised by Councillor Phillips thanked staff and highlighted positive performance within their portfolios.

RESOLVED: to note this month's business management and monitoring report.

39/21 STRATEGIC VISION FOR OXFORDSHIRE

(Agenda Item. 7)

As a partner of the Growth Board, the County Council has been part of the commissioning and development of a new Oxfordshire Strategic Vision for Long-Term Sustainable Development. The Growth Board published a draft Vision document for engagement in November which was considered by Cabinet on 15 December. The report before Cabinet set out Oxfordshire's Strategic Vision for agreement.

Councillor Damian Haywood, Shadow Cabinet Member for Highways Delivery and Operations welcomed the report many elements of which he liked, including the reference to reducing inequalities and the changes to the narrow definition of growth following feedback. However, he did have several concerns including:

- the role of the document as it stated that it was not intended to replace specific visions by partner organisations and whether this meant that it could be ignored;
- how the document fitted in to the national framework and timescales on sustainability/climate goals;
- when the detail would be coming forward that made the vision specific to Oxfordshire;
- that whilst understanding that this was a strategic rather than an operational document there was no indication of how the vision was to be achieved; and
- concern that there had not been enough consultation and engagement to ensure that communities were part of the vision and concern that there were insufficient resources to enable that consultation and engagement to take place.

Councillor Hudspeth, Leader of the Council commented on the background to the development of the Growth Board and that it had been instrumental in the success of bidding to Government for funding on growth and infrastructure. He noted that all the Councils were responsible for their respective planning and transport powers and so the document could not dictate how the vision would be achieved.

Councillor Yvonne Constance, Cabinet Member for Environment (including Transport) moved the recommendations.

Anita Bradley, Director of Law & Governance, responding to a query in relation to paragraph 14 of the report that stated the decision be taken before the pre-election period, confirmed that it was appropriate for the decision to be taken today during the pre-election period.

RESOLVED: to:

(a) agree the final Oxfordshire's Strategic Vision for Long Term sustainable Development (attached at Annex 1), noting that it was endorsed by the Oxfordshire Growth Board at its meeting on 22 March;

(b) consider agreeing the Vision as the basis for informing future county council plans and strategy development, notably the Local Transport and Connectivity Plan (LTCP), the Oxfordshire Infrastructure Strategy (OXIS) and the future Nature Recovery Network Strategy; and

(c) note the implications and observations outlined in paragraphs 13 to 25 in this report.

40/21 HIGHWAY MAINTENANCE CONTRACT EXTENSION

(Agenda Item. 8)

The County Council needed to decide on whether to grant a two-year extension to its highways contract. The report set out the options that were available to the Council and recommended an extension be granted, subject to both parties committing to a programme of service improvement, cost reduction and social value enhancement.

Councillor Damian Haywood, Shadow Cabinet Member for Highways Delivery and Operations spoke in support of the recommendations

RESOLVED: to

(a) support an extension to the highway maintenance contract by two years to the end of March 2025.

(b) delegate authority for the completion of the extension and associated Framework Alliance Contract (FAC) to the Corporate Director for Environment & Place in consultation with the Corporate Director of Commercial Development, Assets and Investment, and the s151 Officer.

41/21 DEVELOPING A STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK FOR OXFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL LIBRARIES AND HERITAGE SERVICES

(Agenda Item. 9)

The council's current library and heritage services provide a network of assets in our local communities and an active and passionate community of volunteers. Our libraries provide a 'footprint' in many communities, geographically spread across the county, on which to build and develop responsive library and added value services that explicitly meet local needs.

The report sought approval for the development of a clear vision and strategic framework for the planning and delivery of libraries and heritage services to strengthen the contribution they make to wider community outcomes.

Councillor Emma Turnbull, Shadow Cabinet Member for Education and Cultural Services raised the following queries

- A recent peer review of the heritage and library services was not mentioned in the report. Councillor Turnbull queried whether it was going to be published and when, and whether its recommendations were included in this service redesign.
- Councillor Turnbull welcomed the concept of co-production and queried how it would work in practice; how would the volunteers across our library service be involved.

- The report mentioned the Council's Inclusion Strategy but did not go into detail. Councillor Turnbull queried how this new service will build diverse inclusive communities.

Councillor Lorraine Lindsay-Gale, Cabinet Member for Education and Cultural Services introduced the contents of the report commenting she was pleased to bring the report as it represented a desire to raise the profile of the services and the important role they play in the lives of Oxfordshire residents.

Councillor Lindsay-Gale commented that there had been a recent LGA Peer Review and their comments had supported the development of a strategy to enable the Council to secure maximum value from its investment in these services to reduce inequality and to support the task of levelling up post pandemic. Their report would be published. Councillor Lindsay-Gale moved the recommendations.

Jane Portman, Interim Consultant Cultural Services responded to the query on co-production recognising that the volunteer workforce was vital and would be part of the co-production work undertaken. Library users would also be engaged and library non-users.

On inclusion, whilst library services are universal and open to everybody, it was also vital to ensure that there were targeted services for particular communities and groups of people. Claire Taylor, Corporate Director, Customers and Organisational Development added that it was important to recognise that in recent times and in the response to recovery from the pandemic going forward there had been a focus on putting inclusion at the heart of what the Council was doing. It was important in the co-production work to reach out to those people who did not currently use the library service and to think about a more local focus and local determination of the service provided to respond to specific needs in individual communities.

Councillor Heathcoat as the former portfolio holder warmly welcomed the report and recommendations although sounding a note of caution in respect of the financial implications taking this forward.

RESOLVED: to

(a) agree the purpose for libraries and heritage services set out in para 28 and the development of a strategic framework to enable these services to contribute more effectively to broader community outcomes in line with the council's statutory duties and strategic vision 'Thriving Communities for Everyone in Oxfordshire';

(b) ensure the role of the libraries and heritage is widely acknowledged as a significant contributor to economic growth and development in the county and the region by setting out the ambitions and planned outcomes in strategic plans;

(c) agree that the development of the strategic framework should be based on detailed understanding of local need and engagement with stakeholders as set out in para 34 to 38; and

(d) agree to the development of a Member Engagement Plan to build a shared understanding of the contribution of these services to community outcomes.

42/21 REPROVISION OF MALTFIELD HOUSE - NEW BUILD CHILDREN'S HOME

(Agenda Item. 10)

Cabinet considered a report seeking approval of the proposal to change the design specification of the new build children's home from six to four beds.

Councillor Gill Sanders, Shadow Cabinet Member for Children and Family Services spoke in support of the proposals for a new children's home but expressed surprise that it was for a reduced number of placements given the cost of out of county placements. She noted that it was possible to extend later but suggested that it would be sensible to plan and build for 6 placements now. Councillor Sanders noted that the report did not give detailed information on the number of places available in county, the number of places filled and the number of places out of county. She requested that this information be made available for the Guardianship meeting and hoped that the decision could be reconsidered urgently.

Councillor Steve Harrod, Cabinet Member for Children and Family Services referred to the context of the earlier closure of Maltfield House noting that its replacement had already been agreed at an earlier meeting. Today Cabinet was being asked to consider the specific needs of a replacement building. The proposals to reduce the new building from 6 to 4 placements was a result of sound analysis and a refreshed insight of the specific needs of the children we care for.

Councillor Harrod in moving the recommendation thanked Councillor Sanders for her positive and encouraging input as Shadow Cabinet Member. He took on board her request for additional information to the Guardianship for Us Panel meeting.

Cabinet noted that some cabinet members having raised similar concerns over the reduction from 6 to 4 placements had met with Councillor Harrod and Kevin Gordon, Corporate Director, Children's Services to explore the reasoning for the reduction. They accepted the view of experts that a smaller 4 bed placement was better but had wanted the design to be such that it could be extended at a future date should thinking or requirements change.

Lara Patel, Deputy Director, introduced the contents of the report and detailed the reasons for the recommendation to move to a 4 bed building based on the refreshed needs analysis of children cared for that had been carried out last year.

RESOLVED: to approve the proposal to change the design specification of the new build children's home from six to four beds; and

1. To ensure that the design of the property is future-proofed for wider Council uses.
2. Council confirms its commitment to high quality residential childcare within the County

43/21 DELEGATED POWERS - APRIL 2021

(Agenda Item. 11)

Cabinet noted the following executive decisions taken under the specific powers and functions delegated under the terms of Part 7.2 (Scheme of Delegation to Officers) of the Council's Constitution – Paragraph 6.3(c)(i). It is not for Scrutiny call-in.

Date	*Subject*	*Decision*	*Reasons for Exemption*
21 January 2021	Request for exemption from tendering under Contract Procedure Rule ("CPR") 20 in respect of the award of a contract for vision screening for 4-5 year olds	Approved an exemption from the tendering requirements under OCC's Contract Procedure Rules in respect of the award of a contract to Oxford University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust for vision screening to 4-5 year olds.	To avoid impacting on the vision screening programme for 2021/22 and to ensure continuity of service provision.
5 February 2021	Request for exemption from tendering under Contract Procedure Rule ("CPR") 20 in respect of the award of a contract providing Housing & Care Services for People with a Learning Disability	Approved an exemption from the tendering requirements under OCC's Contract Procedure Rules in respect of the award of a contract to Sanctuary Supported Living providing Housing & Care Services for People with a Learning Disability	The proposed provision is currently the only offer of multiple self-contained properties made to the Council, and there is no evidence of other providers being able to deliver similar housing.
31 March 2021	Request for exemption from	Approved an exemption from the	In light of the short notice given of the

	tendering under Contract Procedure Rule ("CPR") 20 in respect of the award of a contract providing Holiday Activities and Food Provision Services	tendering requirements under OCC's Contract Procedure Rules in respect of the provision of holiday activities and food provision services for the Easter period to existing providers including Ignite Sport, East Oxford Community Partnership, GetActiveSports, Cherwell District Council, Elite Youth Sports and The Ray Collins Charitable Trust.	grant funding available for the Easter School holiday, to ensure provision of activities and healthy food provision.

44/21 FORWARD PLAN AND FUTURE BUSINESS

(Agenda Item. 12)

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.

..... in the Chair

Date of signing 2021

CABINET – 20 APRIL 2021

ITEM 4 – QUESTIONS FROM COUNTY COUNCILLORS

Questions	Answers
1. COUNCILLOR PETE SUDBURY Emissions Accounting: Whilst I am sure it can be argued that the methodology used by the Council is technically correct and follows BEIS guidance, I am concerned that the Council's Emissions accounting gives our citizens a false, incomplete and potentially misleading view of the Council's efforts and its real impact on the Climate Crisis, not least because it is extremely difficult to determine the effect of the Council's own efforts of a "like for like" basis. Two essentially extraneous factors in particular produce distortions which are larger than any of the underlying trends. 1. Progressive decarbonisation of the electricity grid (66% in the 7 years to 2020), which is a "freeloader" effect, being nothing to do with the Council's efforts and capable of concealing	**COUNCILLOR YVONNE CONSTANCE, CABINET MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENT** **Emissions accounting** In 2010/11 the council's emissions added to 68,041t CO_2e (55,862t CO_2e if deducting REGO-backed green electricity). By 2019/20, emissions had dropped to 19,164t CO_2e. This reduction was due to: • 149 schools becoming academies and no longer being part of the council's estate • Electricity grid decarbonisation • Council's energy efficiency and energy generation initiatives • Changes to contractual arrangements and modes of service delivery • Sale of corporate sites. The table below shows a like-for-like comparison of 2010/11 and 2019/20,

Questions	Answers
poor or negative performance in (for example) energy efficiency. 2. Schools leaving the control of the Council. The emissions from these are transferred to the control of another entity, but appears in the Council's accounting as though it were a genuine reduction in emissions. The atmosphere really does not care about a transfer of ownership. These two combined appear to account for over half of the stated reductions, rendering the headline decarbonisation rate of 65.7% since 2010/11 meaningless and extraordinarily misleading. In addition, the figures are further distorted in the "Zero by 2030" target by omitting schools and outsourced functions such as datacentres and highways maintenance, all of which are entirely attributable to, and fully under the control of the Council and its core operations. **Please could you supply a tabulated Emissions Comparison 2019/20 and 2010/11, expressed on a "like for like" basis (i.e. Stripping out electricity decarbonisation and change of ownership effects) and a forecast**	accounting for the effect of academisation, grid decarbonisation and sale of corporate sites. When considering the adjusted 2010/11 figure, a drop of 40% or 12,770t CO_2e by 2019/20 remains. |	2010/11	2019/20 | |---|---|---| | **Total emissions (t CO_2e)** | **68,041** | | | Schools becoming academies | -24,002 | | | Grid decarbonisation | -9,609 | | | Corporate disposals | -2,496 | | | **New total emissions (t CO_2e)** | **31,934** | **19,164** | | Reduction | | 39.99% | ## Corporate emissions forecast to 2030 The council has committed to net-zero emissions by 2030 across highway

Questions	Answers
statement of the expected emissions of the full Council estate (including schools, highway maintenance and datacentres) in 2030?	assets, fleet, staff travel, and buildings' heating and electricity. These corporate emissions are estimated to have declined 60% between the baseline year of 2010/11 and 2020/21, from 26,510t CO_2e to about 10,500t CO_2e. Forecasting has shown that, without further action, electricity grid decarbonisation, population changes, and technology uptake would result in approximately a 70% drop from 2010/11 to 2030/31, with 8,000t CO_2e remaining. Having chosen a mitigation strategy, in which offsets will only be considered as a last resort, the council has in place a climate action programme to reduce emissions across all areas of its corporate neutrality target: **Highway assets:** the streetlighting LED conversion programme, due to be completed in 2025/26, will reduce emissions from 13,273t CO_2e in 2010/11 to an estimated 610t CO_2e by 2030/31. **Fleet:** OCC has an 'EV by default' fleet replacement policy and is putting in place One Fleet, an integrated fleet management approach that will support fleet rationalisation and decarbonisation. The climate action framework sets out a goal of replacing all cars with EVs by 2024 and all vans by 2028. A detailed fleet replacement programme will be developed this year, which will provide a forecast of emissions reductions to 2030. **Staff travel (grey fleet):** changes in work practices due to COVID have

Questions	Answers
	accelerated progress in this area, delivering in one year the emissions reductions expected by 2024-25. To sustain these changes, a low carbon staff travel programme is being proposed to encourage 'digital by default' meetings and active travel, as well as explore options for promoting the use of EVs for staff travel. The programme will provide a forecast of emissions reductions to 2030. **Buildings' heating and electricity:** an invest-to-save decarbonisation programme is being developed for the council's corporate buildings, which will provide a forecast of emissions reductions to 2030. Projects recently funded by the Public Sector Decarbonisation Fund will deliver a reduction of 205t CO_2e per year, while LED conversion at Park and Ride will deliver a further 19t CO_2e savings per year.
2. COUNCILLOR PETE SUDBURY Scope 3 Emissions Accounting: There is a serious problem with both the definition and the accounting of "scope 3" emissions, with regard to both the Council's carbon accounting to date and its "Zero by 2030" target. The GHG report 2020 makes no reference	**COUNCILLOR YVONNE CONSTANCE, CABINET MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENT** **Scope 3 emissions:** The council's reporting of scope 3 emissions includes: • Emissions that are part of our carbon neutrality target – grey fleet and electricity transmission and distribution losses in our buildings and highway assets • Emissions that are not part of our carbon neutrality target – highways

Questions	Answers
whatsoever to the impact of decisions taken by the Council, regarding, for example, road building, active transport, etc. These "value chain" scope 3 emissions are likely to dwarf the magnitude of the Councils Scope 1 and 2 emissions, plus directly attributable scope 3 emissions, which together amount to the equivalent of building only 300 homes per year. Treating the Council as though it is solely a provider organisation and ignoring its core political function is counter-intuitive, misleading and ignores the huge contribution political decisions can make in both worsening and mitigating the climate crisis. The traditional "oil Company" response to scope 3 emissions is to argue that they are someone else's scope 1 and not relevant (this could be characterised as a "not our problem if they choose to burn it..." defence). However, given that even Oil Companies are now reporting their scope 3 emissions and taking actions to bring them into compliance with Paris / 1.5C, surely it is time for the Council to do the same? **What were the changes in scope 3 emissions**	maintenance contractor's fleet fuel, outsourced data centre servers' electricity consumption, and maintained schools' grey fleet. Although it is not possible to forecast the latter scope 3 emissions, there is ongoing work that will contribute to significant reductions: • **Highways management contract**: total emissions from the Highways Contract have been calculated at c. 9000t CO_2e for 2018. Required actions for decarbonisation have been identified and are currently being assessed for feasibility of implementation. Materials, depots, highways design, as well as plant and fleet, are all included within the project scope. These emissions are not currently included in scope 3 reporting. • **Kennington Bridge replacement scheme**: as part of the project, a preliminary carbon assessment has been undertaken, with total emissions from the project (including both temporary and permanent works) calculated at 11112 t CO_2e. A series of high-level recommendations for reducing these emissions have been identified, which require further assessment to determine feasibility. These emissions are not currently included in GHG reporting. • **Social value policy:** once the policy is in place, carbon emissions savings from the council's supply chain will be tracked for at least 12 months to quantify its potential impact; we are currently looking at the

Questions	Answers
that can be attributed to OCC policies and decisions over the period of the carbon budget reporting (2010-2019) and what changes are projected over the next 1-5 years?	possibility of including a specific emissions weighting in tender valuations, which would maximise the policy's impact on scope 3 emissions. • **Schools:** a support package is being prepared to help schools take climate action and reduce their carbon emissions. • **Infrastructure schemes:** the council is also embedding considerations of climate impact into decisions on infrastructure schemes through a scheme prioritisation tool that assesses alignment with climate strategy. The Oxfordshire Infrastructure Strategy, currently being reviewed, will also use climate criteria to prioritise future schemes.
3. COUNCILLOR JOHN HOWSON At the meeting on the County Council on 11th July 2017 you provided me with details of damages paid by the County Council over the preceding four-year period. In your answer you alluded to the fact that there remained some £10.4 million in open claims from earlier years still to be settled. Can you please provide the figures by Directorate for the current position with these outstanding	**COUNCILLOR DAVID BARTHOLOMEW, CABINET MEMBER FOR FINANCE** The provision of £10.4m, calculated at the balance sheet date of 31 March 2017, was made up of two parts: • £5.6m – the estimated value of outstanding claims received at 31 March 2017 • £4.8m – an actuarial valuation of potential claims relating to previous years that could be received in the future (i.e. the liability has been incurred but the claim has not been received)

Questions	Answers
claims mentioned in your answer of 2017, indicating the size of any amount still set aside for open claims and the amount spent in damages and legal costs by this Council in settling the claims, together with the amount of any sums not required from the £10.4 million estimate in your answer of 11th July 2017?	Since April 2017, £2.1m has been paid out in respect of claims received at 31 March 2017. These figures are inclusive of the amounts spent in damages and legal costs. It is not possible to provide a breakdown of this information by Directorate. The provision is recalculated at the end of each financial year. The equivalent figures at 31 March 2020 were: • £4.0m – estimated value of outstanding claims received at 31 March 2020 • £4.1m - an actuarial valuation of potential claims relating to previous years that could be received in the future Within the known figure of £4.0m there are 17 claims still outstanding that were included in the estimate of £5.6m at 31 March 2017. The current outstanding estimate for these claims is £1.3m. Therefore, the 2017 provision of £5.6m overprovided for known claims by £2.2m. The actuary is in the process of calculating the provision at 31 March 2021 and this information will be included in 2020/21 Statement of Accounts.

Questions	Answers
4. COUNCILLOR JOHN HOWSON On the 4th March this year I emailed you about the failure to repair or replace the rising bollard on Aristotle Lane in my division. In your reply, you stated that 'Between us (*yourself and officers*), we will come back to you with a response.' Officers and cabinet members are not unaware of this matter, as I both Cllr Buckley and I have raised it in public on several occasions. As this was the original 'safe street' precaution, it is ironic that the problem has taken so long to resolve. In view of the motion about 'safe streets' passed at the County Council meeting last week, can you explain why I have still not had a response saying when this issue will be fixed after so long?	I am sorry you have not been kept informed of progress. I have asked officers to make sure they do this in the future. Officers have been working with the supplier to get the replacement rising bollards to an operational state. The bollards are functioning, but require CCTV and ANPR for systems to work to be operational. The supplier has stated that there is insufficient broadband width to allow the cameras and ANPR system to operate correctly. We are checking this to ensure that this conclusion is correct. We are currently upgrading the broadband line at the Cornmarket bollard and this work should be completed in April. If this resolves the connectivity issues, then we will roll out broadband upgrades across all the other sites as soon as possible. We are also exploring, directly with the camera supplier, using a higher spec camera to see if this will also aid the system. We believed that we would be able to operate a limited service, operating the bollards without ANPR recognition, but testing of the system has revealed that we cannot get reliable picture feeds to see who is at the bollard, so that we can raise and lower the bollard safely remotely. This is incredibly frustrating for both myself and the Officers working on the project but we continue to work towards a solution. I have asked officers to look into the practicalities of temporarily operating the Aristotle Lane bollard manually on site and will update you on this potential temporary measure.
5. COUNCILLOR TIM BEARDER	**COUNCILLOR YVONNE CONSTANCE, CABINET MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENT**

Questions	Answers
There have been several reports in the Oxford Times about the ”Expressway by Stealth”. Irrespective of any role in the Expressway, responses to recent FOI requests indicate that changes were made to the South Oxfordshire Local Plan at a late stage on the initiative of County Council officers - in particular the addition of a proposal to “improve” the B4015, the removal of the safeguarding plan for Stadhampton Bypass and the inclusion of possible M40 junction changes outside the District which together with other local plan road proposals gives support to the suspicion that a major new route through our area is being planned. In any event, the proposed improvement of the B4015, 2 miles long country lane, would have drastic effects environmentally. Apparently, this has not been the subject of any public consultation or discussion by members of this authority. As these late changes to the Local Plan were initiated by officers of the County Council as highway authority could you please answer the following questions: Q1. Could the CC provide an explanation;	Responses are set against individual questions below: Comments regarding improvements to the B4015 between A4074 and B480

Questions	Answers
indicating what assessments of the costs, traffic and environmental impacts along the road itself and along its feeder routes, especially the A239 to the east and at the M40, it has undertaken before proposing the B4015 Improvement be included in the South Oxfordshire Local Plan ?	were included in the April 2020 Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) following an e-mail from OCC on 12th December responding to a request from South Oxfordshire District Council (SODC) for an update to their IDP. The B4015 between A4074 and B480 is the road between Golden Balls Roundabout and Chislehampton; both of which are separately proposed for potential improvement. Given the above and the fact that there was significant strategic housing development proposed that would impact on this part of the network, officers identified that there may be a need to improve this section of road and SODC was notified accordingly. There are no designs, costings or feasibility studies for any works. SODC chose to include this section of highway network in the IDP, noting that it is subject to change, depending on the Transport Assessments accompanying planning applications. Improvements to this length of OCC highway network are not included in the OCC strategic transport planning policy and the M40 junction improvements included within the district council's IDP were not proposed by OCC. Highways England and Homes England (as developer of strategic housing allocation at Chalgrove) made proposals to include these junctions in the IDP. The district council (SODC) subsequently drafted and added text to the IDP referencing junctions 8,8A,9 &10.
Q 2. Can you indicate whether there has been or will be any public consultation on the individual proposals and on the effective creation of a major	Any proposed changes or improvements to the B4015 between A4074 and B480, would likely come forward, as noted above through planning application Transport Assessments, if either are proposed by an applicant or

Questions	Answers
route linking the two strategic routes; A34 and M40 and the consequential wider network implications?	requested by OCC. Consultation and comment opportunity will then be possible through the normal planning process. As noted above, to date there are no specific proposals for improvements to this section of carriageway proposed. There is no proposal either within the current Local Transport Plan or the emerging Local Transport & Connectivity Plan for the creation of a strategic link between the A34 and the M40. Highways England is leading a study looking at potential improvements to the A34, but this is in its early stages and does not include any specific outcomes or proposals, which may emerge over time The SODC IDP is a document setting out the infrastructure required to support the local plan. This is a live document and subject to change through the life of a Local Plan. The IDP is not a document that sets out strategic highway network aspirations. Any highway related elements included in the Local Plan IDP are there to support the plans delivery.

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Divisions: N/A

CABINET REPORT - 22 JUNE 2021

BUSINESS MANAGEMENT & MONITORING REPORT March 2021

Report by Corporate Director for Customers and Organisational Development and Director of Finance

RECOMMENDATIONS

Cabinet is RECOMMENDED to:

(a) note this month's business management and monitoring report;
(b) note the annual review 2020/21;
(c) note the virements set out in Annex C-2b;
(d) note the summary of financial position for 2020/21 along with the year-end position on general balances and earmarked reserves as set out in Annex C;
(e) approve the underspend £5.9m should be transferred to balances.

Executive Summary

1. This report sets out Oxfordshire County Council's (OCC's) progress towards Corporate Plan priorities for 2020/21 – March 2021.

Introduction

2. The Council recognises the importance of timely, accurate and accessible performance and budget management information as part of its commitment to both transparency and demonstrating efficiency and effectiveness.

3. These monthly business management reports are part of a suite of performance, leadership risk and budget documents which set out our ambitions, priorities and financial performance. The Corporate Plan sets out the Council's ambitions for the next two years, under our vision for Thriving Communities. It also shows our priority activities for the current business year.

4. Our Corporate Plan, Medium Term Financial Plan, Outcomes Framework and previous business management reports, can be found on the Council's website.[1]-

5. The Annual Performance report is Annex D and it contains a summary of performance during 2020-21, highlighting achievements under each of our strategic priorities and COVID response.

6. This report summarises performance and risk within these Business Management & Monitoring Reports. Further information is provided in three annexes:
   a. Annex A: Performance
   b. Annex B: Risk
   c. Annex C: Finance
   d. Annex D: Annual Performance Report 2020-21

[1] **Corporate Plan and Medium Term Financial Plan:** https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/sites/default/files/file/about-council/CorporatePlan2020.pdf **Outcomes Framework and previous reports:** https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/council/about-your- council/plans- performance-and-policies/performance- reports

7. The continuing impact of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic on the Council's performance can be seen in this report. The majority of councillors and officers continue to work from home, other than those whose work requires otherwise, in those cases the appropriate risk assessments are taken and government guidelines are followed. We are proud of the quick and efficient response delivered by our services to support our communities and the new regulations given during the pandemic.

8. However, as can be seen in Annex A of this report, some services' performance has been disrupted by the need to vary or suspend normal operations as part of our planned COVID-19response.

9. This report helps to demonstrate some of the ways in which the Council is taking climate action for a thriving Oxfordshire. In April 2019, councillors unanimously agreed to take greater action on carbon emissions, including calling on the Leader to set an ambitious target to become carbon neutral by 2030 for our own estate and activities. Since then we have been taking action across all our main areas of influence: our schools, our supply chain, our policy making and our partnerships. This report shows progress towards our ambitions to reduce carbon emissions, improve transport networks and support healthy communities as part of our commitment to tackle climate change (see Annex A indicators 10 to 13).

10. The report also supports our commitment to inclusion and equality, which is enshrined in the Council's vision of "Thriving communities for everyone in Oxfordshire" and the newly agreed Equalities, Diversity and Inclusion Framework, Including Everyone. We know that the data and commentary in this report does not tell the whole story of how the Council is working to address inequality: that commitment also runs throughout services and activities which are not reported here. However, this report helps to demonstrate our commitment in action. We also know that inequality persists in Oxfordshire for a variety of reasons and we will continue to use our knowledge and influence to ensure that our services perform well for everyone.

Progress towards delivery of Oxfordshire County Council's Corporate Plan

11. Oxfordshire County Council's vision for Oxfordshire has six priorities which show our ambitions for the county. Our Corporate Plan specifies outcomes which describe the changes we expect to see as a result of the Council's actions. Performance indicators show the extent to which those outcomes are being achieved, and in turn measures and targets show progress towards the indicators. Collectively, this arrangement is called the Outcomes Framework.

12. This year's Outcomes Framework includes 11 outcomes, 27 indicators and 80 measures.

13. Every reporting period, the indicators are given a Red, Amber or Green (RAG) rating in these reports, signifying whether or not progress is on track. In deciding RAG ratings, we consider data on current performance and an assessment of progress.

14. Each month we use snapshot tables (below) to indicate the main areas of change since the previous report.

15. The information below provides a snapshot of progress towards Corporate Plan outcomes during March 2021, including some of our performance highlights. A full account of progress towards our Corporate Plan priorities is at Annex A.

We listen to residents so we can continuously improve our services and provide value for money

Performance highlights

- 94% of social care providers in Oxfordshire are rated as good or outstanding, compared to 84% nationally. It should be noted that routine inspections were suspended during lockdown and when they are restarted will include new standards.

- The Customers Service Centre undertakes a customer satisfaction survey one week every month. Latest satisfaction survey – March –114 customers surveyed 98.25% were happy with the service they received from Customer Services.

- 6,752 contacts recorded from all channels. 6,033 contacts were resolved at first point of contact.

Areas for improvement

- Total public enquiries recorded on FixMyStreet in relation to potholes and other carriageway issues in March was 1,346 (29%) Ofthese:

    - 391 (29%) are now repaired.
    - 796 (59%) were closed without action.
    - 116 (9%) are still awaiting a decision from office.
    - 43 (3%) are waiting for Skanska to repair.

PERFORMANCE SUMMARY			
OUTCOMES	**INDICATORS**	**RAG**	**Change since last report**
Our services improve	1. Improvement following external inspection/audit	Green	No change
	2. Listening to residents	Amber	No change
We deliver value for money	3. The Council is financially resilient	Green	No change
	4. Effective financial management and governance	Green	No change

We help people live safe and healthy lives and play an active part in their community

Performance highlights

- 9.3% of users of OPIATES that left drug treatment successfully (free of drug(s) of dependence) who do not then re-present to treatment again within 6 months as a percentage of the total number of opiate users in treatment.

- 49.9% of users of NON-OPIATES that left drug treatment successfully (free of drug(s) of dependence) who do not then re-present to treatment again within 6 months as a percentage of the total number of non-opiate users in treatment.

- 53.2% of users of ALCOHOL ONLY that left treatment successfully (free of alcohol dependence) who do not re-present to treatment again within 6 months as a percentage of the total number of ALCOHOL ONLY users in treatment.

Areas for improvement

- 76.73% of emergency call attendances made within 11 minutes and 86.6% of emergency call attendances made within 14 minutes. Not reaching the 80% and 95% targets respectively.

- 605 people alive as a result of our "365 Alive" prevention, protection and emergency response activities, subsequently missing the 971 target. There are a couple of elements for this measure that have led to not meeting target:

    - The low number of Co-Responding calls which is an area outside of our control, but we are reviewing our scope and target in this area for 2021-22.
    - Unfortunately, we have seen an increase in road related fatalities in Oxfordshire. To address this, we are looking at new ways to inform road users to attempt to influence their behavior and reduce casualties. Technological developments are being trialed not only in vehicles but also in education

PERFORMANCE SUMMARY			
OUTCOMES	**INDICATORS**	**RAG**	**Change since last report**
People are helped to live safe and healthy lives	5. Numbers of people helped to live safe and healthy lives	Amber	No change
	6. Timeliness of emergency response	Amber	No change
	7. Numbers of people receiving support to stop smoking or for drug and alcohol dependency	Green	No change

We provide services that enhance the quality of life and protect the local environment

Performance highlights

- The percentage of highway maintenance construction, demolition and excavation waste diverted from landfill is at an average of 97.9% between April and February (data reported one month in arrears). Achieving over and beyond the 90% annual target.

- The council is reporting an 8% annual reduction for 2019/20 against the previous year on the scope of its carbon neutrality target. Target of 6% has been achieved.

- 66.95% of household waste recycled, composted and re-used at our Household Waste Recycling Centres (HWRCs), which sits above the 59% target.

Areas for improvement

- A total of 709 led lanterns were installed in March 2021 making for an overall quantity of lanterns fitted with LED technology of 19,470 from our total of 59,631 or 32.7%. This is around 1,000 units below our revised target for the year and can be attributed to slow delivery of lighting columns. The current programme continues into 2021/22 separately from the works already planned and will contribute to the target that has been set for the end of March 2022. The energy consumption of the lanterns replaced as part of the 2020/21 programme are trending to be slightly lower than projected in the project plan which is encouraging.

- 3.01% of household waste sent to landfill is 0.01% over the 3% target. However, due to the temporary suspension of some of these services at the beginning of the year the amount of waste landfilled has dropped to a low level. Over 95% of residual waste continues to be sent to Ardley ERF for energy recovery.

PERFORMANCE SUMMARY			
OUTCOMES	**INDICATORS**	**RAG**	**Change since last report**
Our quality of life in Oxfordshire is enhanced	8. Condition of highways	Green	No change
	9. Engagement with cultural services	Amber	No change
Our local environment is protected, and climate change is tackled	10. Reduction in carbon equivalent emissions from OCC's activities	Amber	No change
	11. Reduced carbon impact of our transport	Green	No change
	12. Air quality	Amber	No change
	13. Household waste re-used, recycled or composted	Green	Amber

We strive to give every child a good start in life and protect everyone from neglect

Performance highlights

- Throughout the year Children Services have worked hard to improve the timeliness of Education, Health and Care plans. This has now hit the target level and is in line with the national average. This has been delivered by strong management action; improved processes and targeted resources.

- In June 2018 over 750 children were the subject of a child protection plan. The number had grown both locally and nationally for over a decade. Children's services and its partners knew it had to do something to stem the growth in numbers. Family Solutions services were strengthened, and staff have worked with families to deliver the plan's objectives as quickly as possible, so children safely come off the plan. We are now down to under 475, the lowest since 2012/13.

- 97.8% of families received a new birth visit either face to face were risk assessed or virtually.

Areas for improvement

- The first national lockdown led to an increase in contacts to the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH). The MASH is staffed to deal with 350 contacts per week and so far, this year there have been over 550 contacts. The additional 7 temporary staff agreed by the council have been recruited and have helped to deal with this additional work. However along with all teams the current stage of the virus and lockdown is putting additional pressures on this team.

- The number of children we care for is above (worse than) the target level, and higher than this time last year. This has been driven by a slowdown in children and young people who leave the system as people are unable to move through e.g. as family court sittings have reduced during COVID-19. The pattern is reflected nationally. The implementation of the Family Safeguarding Plus Model was planned to help manage and reduce demand and support savings. However, with the changing risk to managing children in the community this is particularly challenging at present given the limitations of education and community protective factors during the three lockdown periods.

PERFORMANCE SUMMARY			
OUTCOMES	**INDICATORS**	**RAG**	**Change since last report**
Children are given a good start in life	14. Prevalence of healthy children	Amber	No change
	15. Number of looked after children	Amber	No change
	16. Numbers of children's social care assessments	Green	No change
	17. Number of child protection plans	Green	No change
Children are able to achieve their potential	18.Timeliness completing Education, Health &Care Plans	Green	No change

We enable older and disabled people to live independently and care for those in greatest need

Performance highlights

- We continue to support independent living by increasing the amount of home care we purchase to support people at home. We are currently purchasing over 5,000 more hours of home care per week than at the start of the year. This has meant that that more people are supported at home and fewer people have been placed in care homes. Over a hundred new people this year have been supported with care in extra care housing.

- People are supported to have more control over the delivery of care. More people have a personal budget than the national average, and more people organise their care through a direct payment where they are provided with the cash to purchase the care

- 92% of people with personal budgets remains above the national average.

- 23% of people aged over 65 using Adult Social Care services who receive a direct payment remains above the national average

- There has been a 25% increase in the amount of home care hours purchased since April, which is helping to support more people to live at home.

- 90.4% of working age (18-64) service users with a learning disability support, who are living on their own or with their family, remains above the national average (76%).

Areas for improvement

- The national data shows fewer people in Oxfordshire have the opportunity for reablement (a short-term intervention to help them to return to their previous level of functioning) than elsewhere. As such we are looking to increase the amount of reablement in Oxfordshire next year through a new contract.

PERFORMANCE SUMMARY			
OUTCOMES	**INDICATORS**	**RAG**	**Change since last report**
Care services support independent living	19. People needing short-term support can access an effective service	Not assessed	No change
	20. Number of people with control over their care	Green	No change
	21. Number of people delayed leaving hospital	Green	No change
	22. People needing social care are supported to stay in their own home	Green	No change

We support a thriving local economy by improving transport links to create jobs and homes for the future

Performance highlights

- 95% of iHub's live projects are progressing on schedule and on Budget. There is a reliance on external partners to reach time and deliver milestones.

- IHub service have continued to maintain a good success rate of bids at approximately 20%, which is very high compared to a typical rate of 10%. This is good news as the competition for bids has grown rapidly in the last year. It is built on years of work developing both a good reputation and a large strong network, which helps lead to more well-developed projects when they are submitted for various funding rounds.

- Average excess waiting time for buses on frequent services (minutes) is running at 46 seconds, well below the 5 mins target. Bus punctuality has improved with the reduction of vehicles on the network during Lockdown 3.

- 99.6% of premises in Oxfordshire with access (via either our contract or commercial providers) to superfast/ultrafast/full fibre broadband.

- Delivery of 122% of the planned programme for number of highway trees surveyed within the 4-year cycle. Inspecting 84 parishes by the end November 2020, despite challenges with COVID-19. 73 parish surveys need to be undertaken by March 2022. The service has started surveying parishes due in 2021/22 to enable ability to front load at beginning of April 2021, and 22% have been completed.

Areas for improvement

- 82% of agreed programme for the year 20/21 has been spent as of 31st March against the original budget agreed by Council in Feb 2020, the latest budget was £36.6 m, 91% has been spent against the latest budget.

SUMMARY

OUTCOMES	INDICATORS	RAG	Change since last report
Everyone has access to good homes and jobs	23. Infrastructure delivery supports growth	Green	No change
	24. Number of new homes	Amber	No change
Businesses are able to grow and develop	25. Support for a strong local economy	Green	No change
People and communities Have excellent transport and broadband connections	26. Levels of disruption to journeys	Green	No change
	27. Enhanced digital connectivity for residents & businesses	Green	No change

Risk Management

16. The most senior level of risk management in the Council is carried out collectively by the Chief Executive's Direct Reports (CEDR). CEDR manages the Council's "leadership risks" – those risks that are significant in size and duration and could impact on the performance of the Council as a whole, and in particular on its ability to deliver its strategic priorities. This may include operational risks escalated from services to the leadership level due to the potential scale of their impact.

17. The Council's Leadership Risk Register (see Annex B) forms the basis of our COVID-19 risk management approach.

Risk Ref	Risk Title	Residual Risk Score	D'tion of travel	Latest Update
LR1	Demand management - Children	20 High Risk	↔	Risk reviewed
LR2	Safeguarding of vulnerable children	15 High Risk	↔	Risk reviewed
LR3	Capital Infrastructure Programme Delivery	10 Medium	↔	Risk reviewed
LR4	Local resilience, community resilience, cohesion	8 Medium Risk	↔	Risk reviewed
LR5	Management of partnerships (non-	6 Low Risk	↔	Risk reviewed
LR6	Supply chain management	8 Medium Risk	↔	Risk reviewed
LR7	Delivery of statutory duties	4 Low Risk	↔	Risk reviewed
LR8	Corporate governance	2 Low Risk	↔	Risk reviewed
LR9	Workforce management	9 Medium Risk	↔	Risk reviewed
LR10	Organisational Change and Service Design	12 Medium Risk	↔	Risk reviewed
LR11	Financial resilience	10 Medium Risk	↔	Risk reviewed
LR12	Property and assets	6 Low Risk	↔	Risk reviewed
LR13	Health and Safety	8 Medium Risk	↔	Risk reviewed
LR14	Business Continuity and recovery plans	8 Medium Risk	↔	Risk reviewed
LR15	Cyber security	12 Medium Risk	↔	Risk reviewed
LR16	ICT Infrastructure	8 Medium Risk	↔	Risk reviewed
LR17	COVID-19 Community and customers	16 High Risk	↔	Risk reviewed
LR18	COVID-19 Business continuity	20 High Risk	↔	Risk reviewed
LR19	Safeguarding of vulnerable adults	10 Medium Risk	↔	Risk reviewed
LR20	Demand management - adults	12 Medium Risk	↔	Risk reviewed
LR21	County Elections May 2021	8 Medium Risk	↔	Risk reviewed

18. The table above provides a summary of the Council's leadership risks at 23rd April 2021. Risks are assessed for both their likelihood (on a scale of 1-4) and their impact if they were to happen (on a scale of 1-5), which are then combined to give each risk a score. Once all management controls are taken in consideration, each risk's "residual score" is recorded. This can be seen in detail in Annex B, and in summary in the table below. Higher scores indicate more significant risks: in OCC a score of 20 is the highest possible.

19. During March the Leadership Risk Register has no score changes. Please review Annex B for details.

Financial Management

Summary of the Council's financial position

20. This section provides a summary of the financial position for the 2020/21 financial year as reflected in the draft Statement of Accounts. The position includes the financial impact of COVID-19 for 2020/21.

21. Ernst and Young, Oxfordshire County Council's external auditor, will carry out their audit of the Council's draft 2020/21 Statement of Accounts in the summer, once they have been completed in early June, and it is possible that changes may be made to the accounts during this period which may alter the position presented within this report. The statutory deadline for the publication of the audited accounts is September 2021.

22. It is expected that the results of the external audit will be reported to Audit and Governance Committee in July or September 2021, at which stage that Committee is expected to approve the audited 2020/21 Statement of Accounts for publication.

23. At 31 March 2021, there is an underspend of **£5.9m** on directorate services. This position includes **£56.3m** of costs arising from measures to address the COVID-19 pandemic. Corporate Measures, which includes the costs of borrowing, is reporting a breakeven position. At the year end, there was a balance of **£14.2m** remaining of the COVID-19 budget and this has been transferred to the COVID-19 reserve for use in 2020/21.

Directorate	Final Budget 2020/21 £m	Outturn 2020/21 £m	Outturn Variance 2020/21 £m	Outturn Variance 2020/21 %
Children's Services	133.9	130.5	-3.4	-2.6%
Adult Services	197.3	197.3	0.0	0.0%
Public Health	0.8	0.8	0.0	0.0%
Environment & Place	63.6	65.5	+1.9	3.1%
Customers, Organisational Development & Resources	35.3	34.4	-0.9	-2.7%
Commercial Development, Assets & Investments	49.9	46.4	-3.5	-7.0%
Total Directorate Position	**480.8**	**474.9**	**-5.9**	**-1.2%**
Corporate Measures	-506.4	-506.4	0.0	0.0%
COVID -19 Budget	21.0	21.0	0.0	
Contribution from (-)/to (+) Reserves and Balances	4.6	4.6	0.0	
Total Outturn Position	**0.00**	**-5.9**	**-5.9**	

24. As part of the Medium Term Financial Strategy agreed by Council on 11 February 2020 a contribution of **£4.6m** to general balances in 2020/21 was approved. As part of this report, it is proposed that the underspend of **£5.9m** should be transferred to balances. After taking these into account, general balances at 31 March 2021 were **£34.6m**. This compares to the risk assessed level for 2020/21 and of **£23.4m** and **£28.8m** for 2021/22 as set out in the Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) approved by Council in February 2021. This position reinforces the sound financial position the Council is in.

25. The table below sets out the position relating to COVID-19 spend and funding during 2020/21. In total the Council has received **£67.2m** of government grants during 2020/21 for COVID-19 of which, **£24.4m** were unringfenced and **£42.8m** ringfenced. Un- ringfenced COVID-19 funding available in 2020/21 totaled **£53.5m** comprising the grants received in 2020/21 as well as **£14.2m** unringfenced COVID-19 support grant carried forward from 2019/20 and £**14.9m of** in-year savings. This has been used to fund **£39.3m** of expenditure and lost income and the balance of **£14.2m** will be placed in the COVID-19m for use in 2021/22 and beyond. As set out in Annex C-5b, of the **£42.8m** ringfenced funding received in 2020/21, in line with terms and conditions of the individual grants, the unspent amount of **£12.7m** has been carried forward for use in 20201/22. Of this sum, **£9.9m** relates to the Contain Outbreak Management Fund.

Directorate	Non-Ringfenced Funding £m	Ringfenced Funding £m	Total £m
COVID-19 Spend			
Children's Services	4.6	2.4	7.0
Adult Services	8.1	18.0	26.1
Public Health	0.0	1.8	1.8
Environment & Place	4.7	0.9	5.6
Customers, Organisational Development & Resources	7.1	6.5	13.6
Commercial Development, Assets & Investments	1.9	0.0	1.9
Corporate Measures	12.9	0.0	12.9
Total Spend	**39.3**	**29.6**	**68.9**
Funded by			
Residual 2019/20 COVID-19 Support Grant	-14.2		-14.2
2020/21 Grant	-24.4	-42.8	-67.2
2020/21 In-Year Savings	-14.9		-14.9
Total COVID-19 Funding	**-53.5**	**-42.9**	**-96.4**
Balance Carried Forward to 2021/22	*-14.2*	*-12.5*	*-26.7*
*To be returned to Grant Issuer**		*-0.8*	*-0.8*

**relates to Infection Control grant passported to care providers, Lateral Flow Test Grant and Bus Services Support Grant*

26. After adjusting for savings which could not be delivered in year due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, 98% of planned savings totaling £21.3m have been delivered in 2020/21. £0.5m of savings that have not been achieved in year are reflected in the Directorate forecast outturn position. The majority of these savings relate to income generation which has been affected by COVID-19. 100% of the £14.9m additional one- off savings agreed as part of the Revised Budget approved by Council in September 2020 have been achieved.

27. See Annex C for further details and commentary.

CLAIRE TAYLOR	**LORNA BAXTER**
Corporate Director for Customers and Organisational Development	Director of Finance

Contact Officers:

Louise Tustian, Head of Insight and Corporate Programmes – 07741 607452

Hannah Doney, Head of Corporate Finance – 07584 174 654

June 2021

ANNEX A – PERFORMANCE DASHBOARDS – March 2021

WE LISTEN TO RESIDENTS SO WE CAN CONTINUOUSLY IMPROVE OUR SERVICES AND PROVIDE VALUE FOR MONEY							
OUTCOME	**INDICATOR**		**OUT-LOOK**	**MEASURE**	**TARGET**	**RATE / LEVEL**	**COMMENTARY**
Our services improve	1. Improvement following audit or inspection	**GREEN**	↔	Proportion of actions dealt with on time after any external inspection (Ofsted, CQC, HM Inspector of Fire & Rescue)	50%	60%	Of the ten actions required, six have been closed. We expect to close one more in April 2021, two in Q3 of 2021/22 and the last in Q4 2021/22
				The proportion of social care providers rated as 'outstanding' or 'good' by the Care Quality Commission in Oxfordshire remains above the (monthly) national average (84% in Apr 19).	> 84%	94%	94% of social care providers in Oxfordshire are rated as good or outstanding, compared to 84% nationally. It should be noted that routine inspections were suspended during lockdown and when they are restarted will include new standards
	2. Listening to residents	**AMBER**	↔	Number of pothole enquiries reported on FixMyStreet repaired, or actioned for repair, against the total during the calendar month prior to reporting date	> 50%	29%	Total public enquiries recorded on FixMyStreet in relation to pothole and other carriageway issues in March was 1,346. Of these: • 391 (29%) are now repaired. • 796 (59%) were closed without action. Of this group, 4% were the responsibility of other organisations 42% did not meet our intervention criteria 42% don't warrant immediate action but have been placed onto long term planning. (Dragon, Drainage, resurfacing programmes) 11% were duplicates of other reports • 116 (9%) are still awaiting a decision from officers. • 43 (3%) are waiting for Skanska to repair. Nearly a quarter of issues reported in the pothole category are below our intervention criteria. This is a known issue and the subject of a number of interventions. The 59% of issues in the 'closed without action' group represents about 796 reports this month. Some of this group are in locations where resurfacing is already on the scheduled program. It is proposed that in those cases we reply automatically to the reporter of the issue saying when the resurfacing will take place. This saves inspector time and improves customer satisfaction. This will be a systems upgrade on the projects list for Spring 2021. This information is reported in arrears to enable inclusion of full month activity.

				Increase the number of FixMyStreet (FMS) Super-User Volunteers from members of the public	+4 per month	4	The Volunteer Coordination team have now retrained over 30 of the existing SuperUsers (SUs) onto the new FMS system with a few more to confirm training dates. This has worked very well, and the response has been positive. The training has been successfully piloted with 4 new SU volunteers. Service team are going to continue with booking up the training for the new volunteers whilst continuing to improve on the training and system. With the greater numbers service will be in a better position to analyse the data and make comparisons with towns and parishes. It is very encouraging to see that the defects reported this month have increased suggesting that the SU's are more confident with the new FMS version. Also received some very encouraging reports of SU's liaising with the Highways officers, e.g. for out of scope defects and sending of photos. There have also been discussions with East Sussex Council, who are keen to know about the scheme.
				Increase the % of residents calling the Customer Services Centre who are satisfied with the overall service that they have received	>85%	98.25%	The Customers Service Centre undertakes a customer satisfaction survey one week every month. Latest satisfaction survey – March –114 customers surveyed 98.25% were happy with the service they received from Customer Services. 0.8% where Neutral. 0.87% was dissatisfied. 98.25% of customers where happy with the experience they received from individual officers.

				Increase the % of callers whose enquiry is resolved at the first point of contact	>75%	94%	6,752 contacts recorded from all channels. 6,033 contacts (89%) were resolved at first point of contact.
				Reduce the % of calls to the Customer Services Centre which are abandoned by the caller	<5%	10%	During March, the Customer Service Centre received 15,475 inbound calls, up 3,934 (34%) against February and made 8,117 outbound calls. The abandonment rate increased from 6.3% to 10% March was a very busy month for School Admissions as 1st was Secondary Allocation Day. Compared to February, we received 2,261 calls – all mainly about allocations for year 7. 86% of calls were answered by the advisors. Blue Badge calls increased to a level they have not been at since October 2020. This is likely due to the easing of lockdown during March. Calls to Residential Parking increased slightly, and the new CPZs went live, which resulted in more permits being issued. Calls to Children Social Care increased to a level they have not been at since Oct-Nov 2020. Calls to Adult Social Care also increased slightly.
Our services improve and deliver value for money	3. The Council is financially resilient	**GREEN**	↔	Financial indicators contained in the Financial Strategy are on track	100%	64%	The measures taken in response to COVID-19 have impacted on this target, with the temporary suspension of debt recovery in particular resulting in lower levels of performance. Overall, the indicator remains Green as whilst performance levels are below target it is generally related to COVID-19, and mitigation has been taken to maintain good financial resilience.
				General balances remain at or above the risk assessed level	100%	148%	Balances are £34.6m at 31 March 2021 compared to a risk assed level of £23.4m.
	4. Effective financial management and governance	**GREEN**	↔	Directorates deliver services and achieve planned performance within agreed budget	< +/-1% variation to net budget	-1.2%	At year end, there is a directorate underspend of -£5.9m.
				Capital projects are delivered on time and within budget	>80%	73%	During the year, 12 schemes were completed. Of these, five (42%) were completed within their baseline budget. If annual programmes are taken into account, and weighted by monetary value, 73% of the completed capital programme was delivered within the original budget approval.
				Systems and processes operate effectively and are well controlled to reduce and detect error and fraud (as measured by the percentage of Green- or Amber-rated internal audit reports relating to financial systems)	100%	100%	During the year two internal audits were undertaken relating to financial systems. These were Payroll (Amber) and Pensions Admin (Green).

WE HELP PEOPLE LIVE SAFE AND HEALTHY LIVES AND PLAY AN ACTIVE PART IN THEIR COMMUNITY							
OUTCOME	**INDICATOR**		**OUT-LOOK**	**MEASURE**	**TARGET**	**RATE / LEVEL**	**COMMENTARY**
People are helped to live safe and healthy lives	5. Numbers of people helped to live safe and healthy lives	**AMBER**	↔	Number of vulnerable children and adults helped to live more secure and independent lives	6250	5649	This measure is doing well and on track to meet the year-end target. The Trading Standards team have continued to support reports of scams and doorstep crime, and the Fire Service crews, and Home & Community Advisers have continued to carry out Safe and Well visits during lockdown in a COVID safe way.
				Number of children better educated to live safer and healthier lives	14640	440	Unfortunately, the government restrictions have significantly affected this measure and we've not achieved our target. The prevention teams have adapted to online sessions and holding our Fire Cadets meeting online, and even this has not been to full capacity.
				% of eligible population 40-74 who have been invited for an NHS Health Check since April 2017	No target	No data	Targets will not be set for GP Providers in 2020/21 as these local suppliers are not prepared to commence full delivery until 2021/22. Focus remains on encouraging those with capacity to target their resources to the patients with the greatest CVD/COVID-19 risk.
				% of eligible population 40-74 who have received an NHS Health Check since April 2017	No target	No data	Targets will not be set for GP Providers in 2020/21 as these local suppliers are not prepared to commence full delivery until 2021/22. Focus remains on encouraging those with capacity to target their resources to the patients with the greatest CVD/COVID-19 risk.
				Numbers of people walking or cycling increase (5% and 2% respectively) over the 19-20 baseline for Oxfordshire in the Government's Active Lives Survey	Walking 3,060,000 Cycling 666,000	Rate not available	Owing to COVID-19 and its varied effects on overall travel patterns and mode share, it is very difficult to forecast performance against these targets. However, the current situation has emphasised the importance of significantly increasing levels of Active Travel. In this context, how we measure and monitor travel by cycling and walking is being reviewed with targets to be reset, with more specific indicators developed to measure the impacts of our interventions where we have approved Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans, (currently Oxford and Bicester, with others at the planning stage). The 2021/22 proposed targets below have been identified for approval by the Active Travel Programme Board: • OC1: OCC will plan for 38% of all Oxford to Oxford work journeys to be by bicycle by 2031 (representing a 50% increase from 11,000 to 17,000 commuter cycle journeys a day compared to 2011) • OC2: OCC will plan for a 50% increase in all cycle journeys within Oxford for all purposes by 2031 (representing an increase from 300,000 to 450,000 in cycle journeys a week by Oxford residents) • BCW 1: OCC will plan for at least a 200% increase in cycling (tripling) and 50% increase in walking for trips within Bicester from 2020 to 2031 In addition, the Programme Board is considering the overall headline measures for this area, which would require baselines to be re-established and targets agreed/set: • To increase the % of cycling and walking in Oxfordshire by promoting modal shift to active travel. • To increase the % of people who feel safer when walking and cycling, including on journeys to school.

				Increase in Making Every Contact Count conversations (encouraging behavior changes that have a positive effect on physical or mental health and wellbeing) initiated with residents by Cultural Services staff	+10%	99% drop from Feb 2020	This is a very important health prevention programme. Aside from the partial reopening and the expected drop in visitors, this is a difficult service to restart as customers are being asked to reduce their time in libraries and avoid direct contact where possible. It has been less conducive to hold a conversation while both parties are wearing face coverings. We will continue to rebuild this programme given its previous positive outcomes. (Libraries closed for most of November 2020, and closed again from January 2021)
	6. Timeliness of emergency response	AMBER	↔	More people alive as a result of our “365 Alive” prevention, protection and emergency response activities	971	602	There are a couple of elements for this measure that have led to not meeting target: 1) The low number of Co-Responding calls which is an area outside of our control, but we are reviewing our scope and target in this area for 2021-22. 2) Unfortunately, we have seen an increase in road related fatalities in Oxfordshire. To address this, we are looking at new and ways to inform road users to attempt to influence their behavior and reduce casualties. Technological developments are being trialed not only in vehicles but also in education
				% of emergency call attendances made within 11 minutes	80%	76.73%	We are only 3% below our stretch target of attending 80% of incidents within 11 minutes with an outturn higher than this time last year (75.49%).
				% of emergency call attendances made within 14 minutes	95%	88.6%	Our average response time in March was 8mins 23secs.
	7. Numbers of people receiving support to stop smoking or for drug and alcohol dependency	GREEN		Rate of successful quitters per 100,000 smokers 18+	> 2,919	2774	Data runs a quarter in arrears, Q4 2020/21 data be published 7th July 2021. The 2020/21 target has been adjusted to >2919 per 100,000 due to the impact of COVID-19 that correlates to the relief given to the provider of the service
				Number of users of OPIATES that left drug treatment successfully (free of drug(s) of dependence) who do not then re-present to treatment again within 6 months as a percentage of the total number of opiate users in treatment.	> 6.6%	9.3%	We continue to exceed local targets and England averages
				Number of users of NON-OPIATES that left drug treatment successfully (free of drug(s) of dependence) who do not then re-present to treatment again within 6 months as a percentage of the total number of non-opiate users in treatment.	> 36.6%	49.9%	We continue to exceed local targets and England averages
				Number of users of ALCOHOL ONLY that left treatment successfully (free of alcohol dependence) who do not re-present to treatment again within 6 months as a percentage of the total number of ALCOHOL ONLY users in treatment.	> 42.8%	53.2%	We continue to exceed local targets and England averages

WE PROVIDE SERVICES THAT ENHANCE THE QUALITY OF LIFE AND PROTECT THE LOCAL ENVIRONMENT							
OUTCOME	**INDICATOR**		**OUT-LOOK**	**MEASURE**	**TARGET**	**RATE / LEVEL**	**COMMENTARY**
Our quality of life in Oxfordshire is enhanced	8. Condition of highways	**GREEN**	↔	Defects posing immediate risk of injury are repaired within 24 hours	100%	99.7%	Cumulative rate and covers all defects April to February. (Data is reported one month in arrears.)
				Defects creating potential risk of injury repaired within 28 calendar days	90%	99.2%	Cumulative rate and covers all defects April to February. (Data is reported one month in arrears.)
				Kilometers of highway resurfaced as % of total	3.07%	2.68%	The final amount for the 2020 total surfacing programme completed is 2.68% of the network (excluding patching). This is lower than the target of 3.07% due to the Micro Asphalt completed length being 3.45km, compared to original programme of 4.7km. This is due to a reduction in the overall programme, partly due to levels of funding available and contractor availability.
	9. Engagement with cultural services	**AMBER**	↔	In person engagement with Heritage services by increasing numbers of a) daily visits, b) attendances over 2019-20 level	a) 3% b) 2%	Museums Service a) -100% b) -100% History Service a) -100% b) -100%	Museum Service: In person engagement February March 2021: - Visitors = 0 (March 20 = 4654) School children = 0 (March 20 = 272) In the community = 0 attendees (March 20 = 243) Museum Service unable to deliver to schools and groups in the community. All service points closed in response to Lockdown 3 History Service: In-person engagement March 2021: 0 visitors (February 2020 = 280) 0 attendees at events (February 2020 = 106). History Centre was closed to all visitors under national lockdown.
				Online engagement with Cultural Services, (social media, website visits, remote enquiries)	Baseline to be set	Reporting quarterly	Museum Service: Online/remote engagement. March 2021 = 22,622 available) representing a 100% increase over March 2020 NB Museum collection Heritage Search website engagements are included in History service total below. History Service: Online/remote engagement March 2021 = 67.113 engagements representing a 9% decrease from February 2020. This includes answering 182 e-mail enquiries, a decrease of 14% on March 2020, as the remote enquiry service was largely shut down under lockdown, with no access to physical archive collections. Library Services: Online engagement (social media and website visits) for February 2021 is 202,760
				Improve access to library services by increasing numbers of a) active users b) new users and c) daily visits, over 2019-20 levels	a) 3% b) 2% c) 1%	a) -53% b) -78% c) -97%	A phased re-opening of the library network commenced in July 2020. As of 5 November 2020, Libraries were closed again with the exception of Click & Collect and pre-booked access to public computers. Libraries reopened for December, before reverting to Click& Collect in the National Lockdown from January.

							a) Active users Feb 2020 = 81219. Active users Feb 2021 = 38,086 - this is a reduction of 53%. This figure does not count customers who have borrowed eBooks or engaged with the digital offer (e.g. Ref online or social media output). While this is concerning, it is worth noting that registered borrowers have only dropped by around 10%. b) New borrowers Feb 2020 = 2211. New borrowers Feb 2021 = 484. (drop of 78%) (NB Libraries closed in Feb 2021). c) Daily visits Feb 2020 = 204,369. Daily visits Feb 2021 = 6,847 (drop of 97%). The drop is due to the service operating a limited service from only 14 libraries in Feb 2021.
Our local environment is protected, and climate change is tackled	10. Reduction in carbon equivalent emissions from OCC's activities	**AMBER**	↔	Yearly reduction of 6% in carbon equivalent emissions from Council estates & activities (to be Carbon Neutral by 2030)	6%	8%	This is an annual measure. The council is reporting an 8% annual reduction for 2019/20 against the previous year on the scope of its carbon neutrality target. Target of 6% has been achieved.
				% of streetlights fitted with LED lanterns by March 2021	40%	31.5%	A total of 709 led lanterns were installed in March 2021 making for an overall quantity of lanterns fitted with LED technology of 19,470 from our total of 59,631 or 32.7%. This is around 1,000 units below our revised target for the year and can be attributed to slow delivery of lighting columns. The current programme continues into 2021/22 separately from the works already planned and will contribute to the target that has been set for the end of March 2022. The energy consumption of the lanterns replaced as part of the 2020/21 programme are trending to be slightly lower than projected in the project plan which is encouraging.
				Increase the number of staff who have accessed the Council's Cycle to Work scheme	-	-	The majority of OCC staff were instructed to work from home as part of the Council's response to COVID-19. Reporting on this new measure will begin when offices and workplaces reopen.
	11. Reduced carbon impact of our transport network	**GREEN**	↔	Increase a) the total number of electric vehicle (EV) charging points and b) the number of electric vehicles charging points per 100,000 population, compared with 2019-20 baseline	140 (for Park and Charge Project by end October 2021) 7.5% of all car parking spaces in the county by end of 2025. (OCC policy rate to monitor with the Districts on an annual basis)	Rate not available	Chargers on the pilot car park were installed on the 9th April and following a period of testing these are planned to be 'soft' launched later that month with an official launch in May. Due to external issues 2 planned car parks have had to be dropped from the project and the team is now working on alternates to replace these. The remaining 21 car parks will now have chargers installed between July 2021 and December 2021 after which usage data will be monitored until end March 2022. The Oxfordshire EV Infrastructure Strategy was adopted by OCC on the 16th March and is now in the process of also being adopted by all the district and city councils in Oxfordshire. This sets a target 7.5% of car parking spaces being electrified by the end of 2025. Annual target relates to the Park and Charge project only. It is now expected that 140 chargers in 24 car parks will be installed. Success of charging installation is not under the control of OCC, but we can facilitate/influence the project. (Note 140 relates to number of chargers - each charger is a twin socket making 280 charging spaces countywide). The first on-line communication event aimed at encouraging residents to move to EVs took place on 18th March 2021. Over 450 people viewed the event with a high degree of interaction and involvement. The next event is due to take place around the official opening of the pilot car park.

			% of highway maintenance construction, demolition and excavation waste diverted from landfill	90%	97.9%	Rate is the average for April to February (data is reported one month in arrears).
	12. Air quality	AMBER	↔	Quarterly assessment of air quality as reported by District and City councils' air quality monitoring	Reporting only	Rate not available	There is limited air quality data, although improved reporting of the assessments is expected to be available in 2021/22. This follows the successful recruitment of a new Air Quality Programme Manager to manage the work on air quality strategy, monitoring and action plans as part of the Council's Strategic Planning Team. Discussions are also underway with service areas and partner organisations about establishing a strategic framework for managing air quality, including identifying specific measures and actions required in designated Air Quality Management Areas.
				Minimise the number of traffic routes diverted (e.g. due to roadworks) signposted into Air Quality Management Areas, where air quality has been recognised formally as an issue.	< 10 p.a.	0	No diversions have been sign posted through Air Quality Management Areas.
	13. Household waste re-used, recycled or composted	GREEN	↔	% of household waste a) recycled, b) composted and c) re-used (and total %)	a) 30% b) 29.5% c) 0.5% Total >60%	a) 30.13% b) 29.87% c) 0.19% Total 60.19 %	The figures are the forecasted end of year position and reflect the combined effort of OCC and the City and district councils. Overall household waste tonnages are 7% higher than last year due to the impacts of the pandemic however despite the challenges residents and authorities have pulled together to achieve a slight increase on this indicator compared to the previous year.
				% of household waste sent to landfill (forecasted end of year position)	< 3%	3.01%	This is the forecasted end of year position. Most of the waste landfilled is bulky waste from HWRCs or collected from residents by the district and city councils. Due to the temporary suspension of some of these services at the beginning of the year the amount of waste landfilled has dropped to a low level. Over 95% of residual waste continues to be sent to Ardley ERF for energy recovery.
				% of household waste recycled, composted and re-used at our Household Waste Recycling Centres (HWRCs).	> 59%	66.95%	This is the forecasted end of year position. The increase in performance compared to previous years is primarily as a result of the wood being processed at a different facility which reports a higher recycling rate.

WE STRIVE TO GIVE EVERY CHILD A GOOD START IN LIFE AND PROTECT EVERYONE FROM NEGLECT							
OUTCOME	**INDICATOR**		**OUT-LOOK**	**MEASURE**	**TARGET**	**RATE / LEVEL**	**COMMENTARY**
Children are given a good start in life	14. Prevalence of healthy children	**AMBER**	↔	Number of expectant mothers who receive a universal face to face contact at 28 weeks	78%	No Data	During Wave 1 50% of the workforce was redeployed to the NHS response and they began returning to their substantive posts during Quarter 2. Universal Partnership Plus families (the most vulnerable families) were proactively followed up, and the performance for this cohort was 77.9%. All staff were now back in post for Quarter 3.
				Percentage of births that have received a face to face New Birth Visit	95%	97.8%	All families received a new birth visit either face to face were risk assessed or virtually. This indicator includes all births. (1707 births)
				Percentage of children who received a 12-month review	93%	No Data	This target has been impacted by COVID-19, during wave 1 50% of the workforce was redeployed to the NHS response and they began returning to their substantive posts in Quarter 2. Universal Partnership Plus families (the most vulnerable families) were proactively followed up, the performance for this cohort was 84.3%. All staff were now back in post for Quarter 3.
				Percentage of children who received a 2-2½ year review	93%	No Data	This target has been impacted by COVID-19. During Wave 1 50% of the workforce was redeployed to the NHS response and they began returning to their substantive posts in Quarter 2. Universal Partnership Plus families (the most vulnerable families) were proactively followed up and the performance for this cohort was 88.7%. All staff were now back in post for Quarter 3.
				Babies breastfed at 6-8 weeks of age	60%	No Data	This target was achieved in 2019/20, however, it has been impacted by COVID-19. During the first wave 50% of the workforce was redeployed to the NHS response and they began returning to their substantive roles in Quarter 2. Universal partnership Plus (the most vulnerable families) was proactively followed up and the performance for this cohort was 27%. The service did continue to support mothers with breastfeeding, offering universal packages of care and virtual help. This indictor is interdependent on midwifery services as feeding methods are often established before babies leave the hospital. Midwifery services were also impacted.
				% of mothers receiving a Maternal Mood Review in line with the local pathway by the time the infant is aged 8 weeks.	95%	No Data	This target was achieved in 2019/2020 however it has been impacted by COVID-19. During the first wave 50% of the workforce was redeployed to the NHS response and they began returning to their substantive post in Quarter 2. Universal Partnership Plus (most vulnerable families) were proactively followed up, performance for this cohort was 93.2%. Appointments/visits were either phone/digital consultation or face to face if risk assessed as necessary.
	15. Number of children we care for	**AMBER**	↔	Safely reduce the number of children we care for to bring it nearer to the average of our statistical neighbors during 2020-21.	750	776	The number of children we care for is higher (worse) than 12 months ago when it was 767 and the target of 750 as fewer people are leaving the cared for system in part due to backlogs in family courts.

	16. Number of children's social care assessments	GREEN	↔	Level of social care assessments to not exceed the 2019-20 level.	< 7,250	5,961	The service is staffed for 140 assessments per week. However, the weekly variation in demand, which in the year ranged from 42 (Christmas week) or 76 (second lowest week) to 195 incoming assessments impacts timeliness and caseloads. Referrals, and hence assessments, fell during lock down and the subsequent school holidays. The rate of children being assessed is lower (better) than similar authorities.
	17. Number of child protection plans	GRE	↔	Maintain the number of children who are the subject of a child protection plan to the average of our statistical neighbors during 2020-21.	550	475	Although performance remains positive there is a risk that the number of children the subject of a plan may increase as a result of the national lockdown
Children are able to reach their potential	18. Timeliness of completing Education, Health and Care Plans	GREEN	↑	Increase the proportion of Education Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) that are completed within 20 weeks, to be above the national average by March 2021	58.7%	60%	In the last 12 months 60% of plans have been issued in 20 weeks, in line with the latest national average (2019 calendar year of 59%). Even with COVID-19 requests for EHCPs have not dropped.

WE ENABLE OLDER AND DISABLED PEOPLE TO LIVE INDEPENDENTLY, AND CARE FOR THOSE IN GREATEST NEED							
OUTCOME	**INDICATOR**		**OUT-LOOK**	**MEASURE**	**TARGET**	**RATE / LEVEL**	**COMMENTARY**
Care services support independent living	19. People needing short-term support can access an effective service	**NOT RATED**	↑	Maintain the number of hours of reablement delivered	Monitoring	5502	Figures are affected by COVID-19.
				Number of people receiving reablement		2600	
				% of people who need no ongoing care after the end of reablement		40%	
	20. Number of people with control over their care	**GREEN**	↔	% of people with safeguarding concerns who define the outcomes they want	> 90%	96.2%	This is a local measure so there is no national benchmark. It is included here as a key measure of how people who are the subject of a safeguarding concern can maintain control of the process. Figure is improving in the year.
				Number of people with personal budgets remains above the national average	> 90%	92%	92% of people in Oxfordshire who receive on-going social care funded by the council have a personal budget compared with 90% nationally.
				% of people aged over 65 using Adult Social Care services who receive a direct payment remains above the national average	> 17%	23%	24% of people over 65 in Oxfordshire who receive council funded social care in their own home have a direct payment compared with 17.5% nationally
				% of people aged under 65 using Adult Social Care services who receive a direct payment remains above the national average	> 40%	45%	45% of people aged 18-64 in Oxfordshire who receive council funded social care in their own home have a direct payment compared with 39.5% nationally.
	21. Number of people delayed leaving hospital	**GREE**	↔	Reduce the number of people delayed in hospital awaiting **health** care	22	8	Central government has ceased the reporting of delayed transfers of care going forward as it is recognised that this is not the best measure of timely and appropriate patient flow through hospitals. It is reported here as a local measure till a new national measure is agreed.
				Reduce the number of people delayed in hospital awaiting **social** care	6	7	
				Reduce the number of people delayed in hospital awaiting both **health and social** care	26	11	
	22. People needing social care are supported to stay in their own home	**GREEN**	↔	Maintain the number of home care hours purchased per week	> 21,000 hours	25,282	There has been a 25% increase in the amount of home care hours purchased since April, which is helping to support more people to live at home
				Reduce by 10% the number of people aged 18-64 entering permanent residential care (vs. OCC rate of the past 3 years)	< 39 people	17	
				Ensure the % of working age (18-64) service users with a learning disability support, who are living on their own or with their family, remains above the national average (76%)	> 76%	90.4%	The service continues to deliver above target.
				Increase to the national average the percentage of older people in long term care who are supported to live in their own home	> 57%	60%	Increasing home care being purchased and fewer care home admissions
				There are 60 successful nominations for Extra Care Housing for older people with care needs in 2020-21	60	104	104 new funded placements in the year so far though not all through formal nominations

WE SUPPORT A THRIVING LOCAL ECONOMY BY IMPROVING TRANSPORT LINKS TO CREATE JOBS & HOMES FOR THE FUTURE							
OUTCOME	**INDICATOR**		**OUT-LOOK**	**MEASURE**	**TARGET**	**RATE /**	**COMMENTARY**
	23. Infrastructure e delivery supports growth	**GREEN**	↔	Percentage of the Capital Programme delivered in line with budget (measured by comparing the Council-approved budget of Feb 2020 for 2020-21 with the outturn budget)	95% (cumulative target to end of March 2021)	82% (position as at 31 March)	This measures the capital major infrastructure programme and means 82% of agreed programme for the year 20/21 has been spent as of 31st March against the original budget agreed by Council in Feb 2020, the latest budget was £36.6 m, 91% has been spent against the latest budget.
Everyone has access to good homes and jobs	24. Number of new homes	**AMBER**	↔	We support the delivery of new affordable housing starts,1322 by March 2022	1,322 homes to March 2022	658 homes estimated to March 2021	The programme has not met the agreed three-year target. This is due to low grant rates offered to Registered Providers and consequent lack of take up in early years. COVID-19 also delayed approx. 600 units programmed for year three. The programme has been extended to March 2022. The extended programme for the fourth year provides the capacity to deliver the agreed target and utilise the allocated budget from Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG). Discussions with (MHCLG) have led to a principled agreement that the programme will be extended to a fourth year with the possibility of further 5th year extension, on a scheme by scheme basis to ensure delivery of COVID delayed homes. In addition, MHCLG have agreed a revised competitive grant regime that will see Oxfordshire agreeing grant rates with Homes England via a joint assessment process. This will be a national exemplar. MHCLG have received and approved a revised programme that will deliver the Deal commitments for affordable housing.
Businesses s can grow and develop	25. Support for a strong local economy	**GREEN**	↑	Number of businesses given support by Trading Standards interventions or fire risk inspections	3409	2212	We have not reached our target for this year despite the fantastic work achieved by the Trading Standards team with their business intervention work. Other work in this measure has been affected by the COVID-19 restrictions.

		Rate of participation in innovation funding bids or new projects in support of the Living Oxfordshire and Oxfordshire's Innovation ambition	20	41	Rate is April to end of March. Ihub service have continued to maintain a good success rate of bids at approximately 20%, which is very high compared to a typical rate of 10%. This is good news as the competition for bids has grown rapidly in the last year. It is built on years of work developing both a good reputation and a large strong network, which helps lead to more well-developed projects when they are submitted for various funding rounds. There does seem to be a trend of smaller competitions thus smaller pots of funding, which requires some extra management from OCC but also allows for even more sector opportunities. This year Ihub service have leveraged innovation funding to also support corporate services, beyond the project delivery itself. Thjs is particularly in areas such as the Climate Action Programme and working closely with the Climate team. Service have also brought various new mobility data sets and tools this year, from a variety of projects, together to provide a unique and useful mechanism for evaluating and monitoring new schemes, such as Active Travel and LTNs. Building such data and tools from scratch would have otherwise cost the Council £100k's. These tools will continue to be built upon for wider work. We have also delivered the EV infrastructure Strategy, resources funded via an Innovate UK project, meaning Oxfordshire is one of the first Authorities to have a detailed strategy and will support the drive for Zero Emission Zone in Oxford and EV's across the county. This is again a piece of work that would otherwise of cost upward of £100k to deliver without non-traditional Innovation funding, IHub has leveraged. IHub service continue to look at wider corporate opportunities, both in terms of new Innovation projects but also opportunities to leverage existing and previous projects to support the Councils day to day activities.
		Proportion of live iHub (OCC's Innovation Hub) projects progressing on schedule and on budget	>75%	95%	Rate is for March. There is reliance on external partners to reach time and delivery milestones.

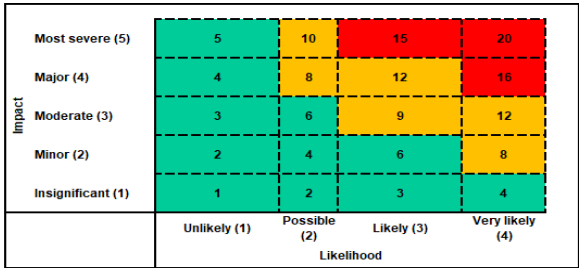
People and communities have excellent transport and broadband connections	26. Level of disruption to journeys	GREEN	↔	Reduce the number of failed utility works inspected	<15%	28%	From 947 sample A/B/C inspections conducted in March (including all follow up inspections) 268 failed. This equates to 28% failure rate. This is above the target of 15% and mainly due to one area with extensive failures by one company The failures largely relate to the quality of the reinstatements. Action and this is being pursued through escalation with the company concerned and issuing of a fixed penalty notices.
				Increase in the number of days' works on the highway saved via the Council's duration challenges	5% over 19-20 rate	Rate not available	Currently unable to quantify. Service is accelerating work with the IT supplier to identify and log the relevant data. Discussions with the system supplier and data from the Department for Transport is expected to be available from May 2021.
				Reduce the number of "return repairs" to the Council's own works (i.e. revisiting to correct Non-Compliant Defects)	<5%	0.6%	The reported rate is for February. The level of non-compliant defects is expected to be low. This is because approximately 90% of all pothole defects are repaired as 'cut' defects rather than 'sweep and fill'. This continues to be monitored. A random 10% check was completed in February by Highway Officers, and data confirms there were 8 Non-Compliant Defects. February rate calculated as 8 return repairs/visits to own works (NCDs) divided by 2,620 total potholes fixed.
				Minimise the number of Deemed Permits allowed (i.e. applications for permits approving works on the highway that have been received into the system but not processed in accordance with the Oxfordshire Permit Scheme)	<1%	0%	No permits that entered the system went deemed.
				Delivery of 2020/21 planned programme for number of highway trees surveyed within the 4-year cycle.	100% by end of Mar 2021	122%	4-year inspection programme is in place. 100% of the planned annual programme for inspecting 84 parishes has been completed as at end November 2020, despite challenges with COVID-19. 73 parish surveys need to be undertaken by March 2022. The service has started surveying parishes due in 2021/22 to enable ability to front load at beginning of April 2021, and 22% have been completed. Performance Indicators and potential alignments with other indicators for the Tree Service are being reviewed to look at options to provide further information on the value of the service.
				Average excess waiting time for buses on frequent services (minutes)	5 mins	46 secs	The target of 5 minutes is under review to ensure consistency with the Punctuality Improvement Partnership (PIP) agreement, now signed off by OCC and bus operator Directors.
	27. Enhanced digital connectivity for residents and businesse	GREEN	↔	The number of premises we have enabled to have access to superfast broadband within Oxfordshire, via our contracts with BT and Airband	79,600	79,340	Rate is to end of March. The Better Broadband for Oxfordshire Programme (BBfO) programme has now finished and there were no more connections through that programme, however the Businesses in Rural Oxfordshire (BiRO) programme has started to deliver in Q3 2020 via BT Openreach and in Q1 2021 Airband have begun to connect premises. The total number of premises in this contract is much smaller than in the Better Broadband for Oxfordshire Programme (BBfO) programme so numbers will increase by a much more modest rate than previously. Please Note: Lockdown 3 has affected connection numbers as Openreach, whilst taking orders, would not provide the final connection in homes. NOTE - Broadband Programme has moved to Customers, Organisational Development & Resources Directorate.

				The % of premises in Oxfordshire with access (via either our contract or commercial providers) to superfast/ultrafast/full fibre broadband	99%	99.6%	Rate is to end of March. Figure is for Oxfordshire delivered either via our contracts or via commercial coverage from a range of suppliers. This also covers the full range of available services and not just full fibre to the premise.
				The % of premises in Oxfordshire without access to: • At least Basic Broadband (at least2Mb/s) • OFCOM 'acceptable' broadband(10Mb/s)	<=0.1	0.22% 0.70%	Rates are to end of March. Figures are impacted by the delivery of our managed programmes and commercial delivery across Oxfordshire by suppliers. As the rates for KPI refs SPO11 and SPO12 increase, these figures will fall. COVID-19 has impacted the planned pace of fibre rollout in the county which has in turn effected the reduction in % of both 2 & 10m/bps properties/businesses, however, a plan is in place to address this.

ANNEX B – LEADERSHIP RISK REGISTER – March 2021

Risk Assessment Guidance

Level of Risk	How the risk should be manage
High Risk (15 - 20)	**Requires active management -** to manage down and maintain exposure at an acceptable level. Escalate upwards
Medium Risk (12 - 8)	**Contingency plans-** a robust contingency plan may suffice together with early warning mechanisms to detect any deviation from the profile
Low Risk (1 - 6)	**Good Housekeeping -** may require some risk mitigation to reduce likelihood if this can be done cost effectively, but good housekeeping to ensure the impact remains low should be adequate. Re-assess frequently to ensure conditions remain the same.



Risk Probability Key				
Score	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**
Level	**Unlikely**	**Possible**	**Likely**	**Very Likely**
Probability	<10%	10 - 40%	41 - 75%	>75%
Timescale	It is unlikely to occur	Possible in the next 3 or more years	Likely to occur in the next 1 - 2 years	Occurred in the last year/very likely to occur in the next year

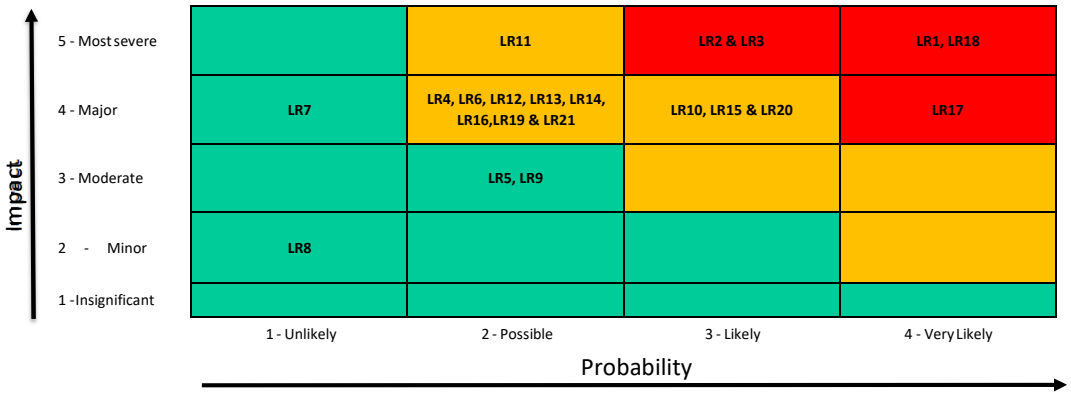
Risk Impact Key				
Score	**Level**	**Financial ***	**Performance / Service Delivery**	**Reputation**
1	**Insignificant**	Financial loss less than £500k / £2.5m in a year or negative variance against annual revenue or capital budget	Limited disruption to services	A few minor complaints and/or minimal local media attention No impact on council reputation or identity
2	**Minor**	Financial loss up to £1m / £5m in a year or negative variance against annual revenue or capital budget	Short term disruption to services that do not directly affect vulnerable groups	A number of complaints but minimal local media attention Minor impact on council reputation or identity with no lasting effects
3	**Moderate**	Financial loss up to £1.5m / £7.5m in a year or negative variance against annual revenue or capital budget	Loss of services that do not directly affect vulnerable groups	Extensive adverse local media attention Perception and identity of Council damaged / undermined in the short term with some rebuilding required
4	**Major**	Financial loss up to £2m / £10m in a year or negative variance against annual revenue or capital budget	Significant disruption of services directly affecting vulnerable groups	Extensive national media attention or sustained local media attention. Perception and identity of Council damaged / undermined with long term - major rebuilding required
5	**Most Severe**	Financial loss over £2.5m / £12.5m in a year or negative variance against annual revenue or capital budget	Loss of services directly affecting vulnerable groups	Ministerial intervention and/or public enquiry with sustained national media attention. Perception and identity of Council fundamentally damaged and undermined, potentially beyond repair

* The two figures denote different levels of financial impact: for Operational risk and Strategic risk

Risk Definition	
Leadership	Strategic risks that are significant in size and duration, and will impact on the reputation and performance of the Council as a whole, and in particular, on its ability to deliver on its corporate priorities
Operational	Risks to systems or processes that underpin the organisation's governance, operation and ability to deliver services

OCC Leadership Risk Register - As at 23/04/2021

Risk Matrix - Ratings (residual risk scores)



Risk Ref	Risk Title	Residual Risk Score	Direction of travel
LR1	Demand management -Children- : managing the impact of increased demand on council services	20	↔
LR2	Safeguarding of vulnerable children: ensuring there are effective arrangements in place for safeguarding	15	↔
LR3	Capital Infrastructure Programme Delivery	10	↔
LR4	Local and community resilience ensuring there are plans in place to support and engage communities with regards to resilience, cohesion, and community tension	8	↔
LR5	Management of partnerships (non-commercial) maximising the use of effective partnerships to deliver strategic outcomes and community benefit.	6	↔
LR6	Supply chain management ensuring effective delivery through the supply chain	8	↔
LR7	Delivery of statutory duties delivery of service and duties in compliance with requirements and responding to changes.	4	↔
LR8	Corporate governance creating and embedding an effective and robust management and governance system that provides accountability and transparency.	2	↔
LR9	Workforce management long term plans to ensure a capable and skilled workforce with the capacity to deliver required and new services.	9	↔
LR10	Organisational Change and Service Design ensuring there are effective plans and governance in place to deliver required organisational change.	12	↔
LR11	Financial resilience: ensuring there are effective plans in place to deliver a balanced budget and a sustainable medium term financial strategy	10	↔
LR12	Property and assets (maintenance cost)	6	↔
LR13	Health and safety: ensuring effective arrangements are in place to meet our duties	8	↔
LR14	Business continuity and recovery plans Resilience to a additional significant disruption during the Covid-19 Response	8	↔
LR15	Cyber security assurance that effective controls are in place to prevent security issues.	12	↔
LR16	ICT Infrastructure: assurance that IT infrastructure is reliable and fit for purpose	8	↔
LR17	Covid-19. Community and Customers providing service and support to those impacted by the coronavirus pandemic	16	↔
LR18	Covid-19. Business Continuity: managing the ongoing impact of the pandemic on council operations.	20	↔
LR19	Safeguarding vulnerable adults.	10	↔
LR20	Demand management - Adults -	12	↔
LR21	County Elections May 20121	8	↔

OCC Leadership Risk Register

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LR1	**Demand management - Children- :** managing the impact of increased demand on council services	That increased demand for statutory service is greater than the resources available to meet statutory duties, community needs and political aspirations. This may be due to changing demographics, growth and the current outbreak of COVID -19 , leading to more requests for children's social care, SEN services, elective home education and adult services and housing. Failure to reconfigure services (both directly provided and commissioned by the Council) to become more preventative in their approach, could exacerbate the effect of rising demand. The impact on children's and adults services is exacerbated by the current situation relating to COVID -19 with the risk of increased vulnerabilities due to isolation and CV 19 measures	Reduced confidence in the Council's ability to deliver services Poor timeliness and prioritisation of services leading to poor engagement from partners and the community. Potential for legal requirements not being met. Services to the most vulnerable residents or groups are disrupted or not provided due to ineffective assessment and prioritisation processes. Vulnerable children and young people are ineffectively safeguarded and come to harm, and their educational needs unmet. Failure to balance budget and/or maintain capital investment strategy in infrastructure. Financial – significant overspend in annual budgets Over-reliance on voluntary groups acting without co-ordination	Kevin Gordon	Hannah Farncombe & Karen Fuller	5	4	20	Maintain a good early-help and prevention offer, in partnership with key stakeholders to ensure diversion from high cost services. Maintain good communication of early-help and prevention offer within the community to ensure effective uptake of services. Efficient assessment of need and risk – strong 'Front door' arrangements including effective MASH. Maintain good practice and performance reporting to ensure timely triage and assessment of contacts into services. Management oversight of children's social care plans to ensure timely progress is achieved and drift is eliminated. Child protection numbers continuing to reduce safely: continue to drive successful achievement of child protection plans and step-down of statutory intervention, and monitor re-referrals. All services are tasked with managing activities within allocated budgets including additional Covid funding for agency staff. Council transformation - moves to reconfigure services to be more preventative in their approach, drive out failure demand, and involve partners and the Voluntary and Community Sector. iMPOWER in October 2019 identified OCC as 5th most productive council for older people Command and control structure implemented to deal with the CV-19 outbreak. (Adult Social Care cell set up at TV and Oxon wide. TV LRF Children's and Education cell also established). Staff reassignment process in place to maintain provision.	4	5	20	Recruiting new social care workforce, including those recently retired and others willing to train. Staff retraining and redeployment process in place to maintain provision, including children's residential care. 7 x Temp additional social workers have been deployed in the MASH and agency SWs retained and newly recruited in Family Solutions to assist in managing high caseloads, including a backlog of assessments. September to January has seen 35% increase in contacts to MASH and volatile demand for assessments, including weeks with very high numbers. This is linked to high levels of domestic abuse and police referrals. Re-designed early help partnership work has developed swift access to help in communities for children and families and mobilised resources across schools/agencies/MASH/VCS. Transformation projects have been kept on track as redesigned services prioritise managing demand, supporting directly provided services and those that we commission, to develop a more preventative approach. The planned SEN Early Intervention Service aims to reduce demand on the statutory service by allowing more children to receive support and thrive in mainstream education placements and increase the confidence of parents that their child's needs can be met without the need for a specialist placement.	↔	Ongoing	Early Help networks offering 'pre-front door' swift access to family support have continued to deliver multi-agency support: now have reached over 200 families. Council's locality community supoort teams have been integrated with the MASH and are absorbing referrals for service. All outstanding assessments have been completed and agency staff released from this task. Refreshed performance framework has been brought in from beginning Feb to sharpen managers' focus on completing agreed actions withing target timeframes. First 12 weeks of FSP have been reviewed by the FSP Board and results indicate good mobilisation of the new service, including swifter access to help for parents. Child Protection numbers down <500 - lowest since 2012/13 due to focused effort on improving outcomes more quickly, stepping children down to CIN. A review of SEN services, including EIS, is underway to ensure the forward plan is a cost effective model of delivery. The council has received 28% increase in requests for elective home education. The internal team (3 staff) are managing the pressures in as timely way as possible and we have requested additional resource from the DfE. Risk reviewed -No changes	23/04/2021
LR2	**Safeguarding of vulnerable children:** ensuring there are effective arrangements in place for safeguarding	Risk of death or serious injury to children or young people hrough inadequate service delivery or failure to provide protection. This is enhanced due to the social isolation and distancing measures in addition to the restrictions related to school and home visits.	Potentially devastating impact to a child, family and community. Reduced trust in the Council and partners. Notification of poor performance may affect the Council's current service judgements and lead to Central Government intervention, resulting in a higher financial cost related to improvement activity and intervention.	Kevin Gordon	Lara Patel, Hayley Good & Karen Fuller	5	4	20	Maintain strong focus on good practice, performance reporting and statutory requirements, ensuring timely record keeping, compliance with procedures and acting on any poor performance indicators at an early stage. Monitored weekly through CEF Performance Dashboard and Performance Management Framework. Daily monitoring report for ASC deputy-director with monthly scrutiny at ASC Performance Board. Every child known to social care services is RAG rated and face to face visits to all children open to CSC have been reinstated subject to individual risk assessments. Efficient assessment of need and risk by having strong children's 'Front door' arrangements in place, including effective MASH. Completion of CEF Self-evaluation report every quarter which is submitted to Ofsted at the Annual Conversation. Statutory safeguards continue to be upheld at both service level and with individual children Detailed updated guidance for social workers implemented to ensure all children receive home visits subject to individual risk assessments. Quality assurance framework in children's social care currently being assessed for reach, effectiveness and impact. Safeguarding complaints submitted to Ofsted are reviewed and investigated in a timely manner. Outcomes are reported to Ofsted. School attendance is monitored daily, attendance team staff undertaking home visits to encourage attendance, in partnership with schools. Numbers of electively home educated children are monitored.	3	5	15	Monthly reviews of RAG ratings. Multi-agency Domestic Abuse campaign county wide. Advice and guidance prepared for schools in readiness for anticipated phased return Preparing for recovery and learning from lockdown experiences of working with young people Discussions are taking place between officers from Children's Services and representative Headteachers to identify key considerations as schools admit all children To the fore in the thinking are safeguarding, emotional wellbeing, health and safety matters. Work is underway to provide mental health training in schools to support returning children, via the DfE Wellbeing for Education Return programme. Attendance is monitored and reported by schools to the DfE daily. Numbers of children registered as Electively Home Educated have increased significantly. Mediation is underway to encourage returning to a school roll. Numbers are monitored and reported to DfE daily.	↔	Ongoing	100+ Schools participating in the Wellbeing for Education Return programme are being supported to deliver the programme. Others are being encouraged to participate. Attendance in all sectors of the school community has been consistently above national averages. Numbers of EHE have increased by 19% since the same period last year. National increase is 35%Performance management and quality assurance frameworks are further embedded with additional quality assurance audit training having been delivered to all senior and front line managers in Aug and Sept. RAG ratings now reviewed monthly rather than weekly as a all children on a statutory plan are being seen via face-to-face visits to family homes, schools and placements subject to risk assessments. Performance is being monitored weekly and any late recording of statutory visits are addressed directly by team managers with individual workers. Risk reviewed - No changes	31/03/2021

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OCC Leadership Risk Register

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LR3	**Capital Infrastructure Programme Delivery**	Each element of the Capital Infrastructure Programme has a different set of deal conditions formally agreed with Government. The recently signed HIF1 and HIF 2 funding agreements have agreed delivery end dates, which if exceeded would cause all costs from that point onwards to be the responsibility of the County Council. The Growth Deal has greater flexibility, but not delivery would result in the outcomes not being realised and potential reputational risks.	HIF1 potentially could cost OCC £2m per month after the end date of Nov '24. HIF could cost OCC £1m per month after March '24. Other risks could include: Withdrawal of funding, lack of accelerated homes delivered and potential breakdown in collaborative working across Oxfordshire local authorities. • Reduced delivery of affordable housing and related impact on the community • Lack of investment in road infrastructure to support current housing delivery and future planned growth leading to a sever impact on the network or the Council objecting to new development. • Additional strain on the highways network that could restrict the county's ability to improve productivity • Lack of a strategic framework for future growth in the county. • Constraint on economic development	Bill Cotton	Owen Jenkins	5	3	15	A Director has been allocated to focus on OCC Infrastructure Delivery which will address senior management capacity challenges. The role focuses on delivering the capital programme and establishing internal processes to speed up delivery e.g. a Programme Management Office has been established, a new ICT system for more effective Project Management is being introduced (Oct 2020) and new governance structure to deal with the volume of schemes in the pipeline and provide, for example, technical programme management, risk/assurance management, performance management and a broader partnership function. Temporary Additional skills and resources have been brought in to assist with the programme management of the major elements of the programmes.	2	5	10	The directorate has started a Service Improvement that links to the Communities directorate redesign and will ensure the long term resources are put in place and all processes are modernised and in place to manage this large and complex set of programmes. A corporate Assurance Board has been set up, chaired by the CEO to ensure the cross council focus and support is in place to capture any issues early and enable the prioritisation of resources and effort where needed. The impact remains high, however the probability is improving reducing the probability score and therefore the risk ratring.	↔	Ongoing	Mitigating Action are in place and beginning to take effect, including temporary resources to ensure programmes are progressed. Significant progress has been made in scheme delivery, and although some residual risk remains, the situation is improving. Risk Reviewed Risk owner updated	01/04/2021
LR4	**Local and community resilience** ensuring there are plans in place to support and engage communities with regards to resilience, cohesion, and community tension	~~Pandemic control measures could increase existing tensions or create flashpoints.~~ National and Local issues could create tensions or flashpoints in our communities Equally a united effort may increase community cohesion. Possible triggers are likely to be: change in government policy; local decisions making on contentious issues (i.e. full impacts of Brexit later in the year/ LTNs)	Impact on Council's ability to deliver services if disruption affects particular locations, customers or staff. ~~Impact on Council's ability to deliver Covid-19 Response services.~~ Potential reduction in public trust if the council is not seen to be acting appropriately.	Yvonne Rees	Rob MacDougall	4	3	12	Thames Valley Police and Safer Community Partnership are monitoring communities to identify any issues that may indicate escalating community tensions. Communication network in place including local Members to provide single consistent messaging via multiple trusted sources should it be needed.	2	4	8	Health Protection Board, MOAC and Surveillance Cell in place to manage pandemic surveillance, implementation of restrictions and Oxfordshire System communications. Impacts of UK Transition being monitored by specific Oxfordshire System group and community tension risk being reviewed by Local Resilience Forum. Government Road Map to Recovery being reviewed by all relevant groups.	↔	Ongoing	Risk reviewed - changes in cause, effect and mitigating actions	20/04/2021
LR5	**Management of partnerships (non-commercial)** maximising the use of effective partnerships to deliver strategic objectives and community benefit.	Ineffective partnership working and relationships with key strategic partners, including District and City Councils, the CCG, NHS, Police, Military and voluntary and community sector, leading to negative impact on service delivery and outcomes for local residents / communities. CV-19 outbreak heightens both the potential and impact of this, with attention and resources being necessarily diverted to prioritise the outbreak over 'business as usual' relationships. Change in Portfolio Holder could lead to less effective relationship management.	Deterioration of key relationships could reduce the Council's ability to: • meet desired outcomes for residents, • achieve efficient delivery • take opportunities to improve services. It also has the potential to negatively affect public confidence in the Council (e.g. through inspection outcomes) Failure to work effectively with the local Voluntary & Community Sector (VCS) might impact on our ability to both support and utilise the capacity and capability of the sector to help generate community resilience, community willingness to effectively address local needs and help to reduce demand for services (e.g. prevention)	Claire Taylor	Robin Rogers Emily Schofield (Acting)	4	2	8	• Ongoing management of existing relationships held at Cabinet and senior officer level, including sharing of priorities and early discussion of potential changes or challenges • Supported by regular engagement and interaction at different levels of the organisation, including joint working initiatives and shared posts • Formal/informal meetings with main bodies and sector representatives • Participation and engagement in local partnerships, forums and project / policy development work • The Civilian / Military Partnership is implementing changes to how it operates, and has supported the Council to achieve Gold status under the Armed Forces Employer Recognition Scheme • Health and Wellbeing Board has oversight of development of Integrated Care System and pooled budget arrangements • Growth Board retains oversight of the implementation of the Housing and Growth Deal and Housing Infrastructure Fund schemes. • Systems structures in place to deliver on-going response to CV-19 and plan for recovery • Liaison and planning arrangements in-place with VCS for Covid-19 community response, VCS resilience and recovery planning	2	3	6	• Maintain oversight of partnerships in the county to reflect new recovery systems working arrangements, including bi-laterals • New working relationships with VCS and infrastructure support contract are being developed, with new support arrangements to be in place by April 2022 • Community development strategy and approach to be produced and implemented jointly with VCS and partners • Partners' engagement with / involvement in Community Resilience work will help to minimise the likelihood of this risk • Support Democratic Services with new Member induction packs and support new Portolio Holder through advising and briefing of relevant relationships to establish as priority.	↔	Various	Risk manager,risk cause and mitigation action added in light of upcoming Elections and departure of current Portfolio Holder.	12/04/2021
LR6	**Supply chain management** Failure of effective delivery through the supply chain	The supply chain could fail as a result of a major supplier entering insolvency procedures either via administration or liquidation. .The supply chain is disrupted due to temporary close down or accessibility issues as a result of CV-19 mitigation measures	Delays to meeting service requirements or service provision.	Steve Jorden	Melissa Sage	4	2	8	The Procurement team has a contract in place for a credit check service that analyses the financial position of an organisation to determine a credit score. This information is used in the Tender evaluation process to select a suitable supplier and to monitor ongoing performance of current suppliers. Current suppliers that see a drop in their financial rating would trigger an alert that would be considered by the applicable contract manager.	2	4	8	The Procurement team has a contract in place for a credit check service that analyses the financial position of an organisation to determine a credit score. This information is used in the Tender evaluation process to select a suitable supplier and to monitor ongoing performance of current suppliers. Current suppliers that see a drop in their financial rating would trigger an alert that would be considered by the applicable contract manager.	↔	Ongoing	'The Contract Management Intelligence Team, as part of Provision Cycle, is taking a more proactive role in identifying risks in the supplier and marketplace more generally. As part of the implementation of Provision Cycle, contract management procedures are being discussed with Service Areas, in order to agree respective roles. Risk Reviewed - Risk Manager updated	01/04/2021

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LR7	**Delivery of statutory duties** delivery of service and duties in compliance with requirements and responding to changes.	That the Council acts unlawfully by failing to deliver statutory responsibilities	-Litigation/judicial review -Financial penalties - Local Government Ombudsman/Regulators/Central Government -Damages liability to residents and commercial counterparties -Central Government intervention	Sukdave Ghuman	Glenn Watson	4	3	12	•Constitution of Council (including Finance Procedure Rules and Contract Procedure Rules) •Support role of Finance, Legal and Procurement •Audit function •Legal Compliance and Service Plan •Service Level Agreements between directorates and Legal •Dedicated specialist teams for information rights and complaints resolution	4	1	4	Ensure support functions are fully resourced (see separate section on Comments on Complaints Team). Action plan is in place to ensure we are address our statutory duties for the Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards for adults, statutory duties for children with special educational needs and disabilities; and unregistered provision for children. Scheme of Delegation (Finance) reviewed to reflect current management structure. Information rights, complaints and Ombudsman cases tracked	↔	Ongoing	Action plans continue to be reviewed and addressed by the Leadership Team. When appropriate, consideration ought to be given to statutory easements for SEN and Social Care. Complaints Service – taking remedial action to preserve the service due to two key members of staff leaving the Team; recruitment confirmed and persons appointed with 1June start date. Monitoring Officer add Directorate Leadership Team aware. Additional temporary assistance drafted from Governance Service. Risk reviewed - Mitigating actions and comments updated	22/04/2021
LR8	**Corporate governance creating** and embedding an effective and robust management and governance system that provides accountability and transparency.	That the Council's corporate governance, including supplementary governance arrangements to support the CV-19 response, is insufficiently robust, either due to incomplete processes or limited staff awareness of its requirements.	Inconsistent, uncompliant or potentially unlawful actions/decisions. Inability to support Council's democratic functions / obligations (e.g. remote public meetings, remote voting) Elements of the Covid-19 response may be compromised or delayed.	Sukdave Ghuman	Glenn Watson	2	2	4	•Council governance framework is regularly reviewed and updated by senior managers and members. •Constitution - updated and annually reviewed by Monitoring Officer and Full Council - Amendments made to the Constitution to facilitate virtual/remote public meetings. •System of internal control - co-ordinated by the Corporate Governance Assurance Group; overseen by the Chief Internal Auditor; elected member oversight by Audit & Governance Committee, which reviews the Annual Governance Statement. •Annual Governance Statement – annual opportunity to review the effectiveness of internal controls; signed by Leader and three statutory postholders (HOPS, MO, CFO); overseen by Audit & Governance Committee. •Business Continuity Plans are in place which ensure that appropriate leadership of the Covid-19 response. •Control measures implemented throughout 2019/20 and updates on key issues are reported to Audit & Governance Committee. •Democratic decision-making processes are in place and reviewed as part of the Constitution Review and with regard to COVID regulations and virtual meetings processes	2	1	2	Continue to undertake control measures throughout 2019-20 and respond to specific matters as they arise. Annual Governance Statement process for 2020/21 is now under way with the Corporat Governance Assurance Group. Whistleblowing Polices updated and new co-ordinated approach in place under the Monitoring Officer (led by Principal Governance Officer) with central log being put in place and co-ordination of cases. Corporate Governance Assurance Group leading a project to review/align governance processes between Cherwell DC and Oxon CC. Proposals for a Constitution Review for Oxon CC agreed by Audit & Governance Committee and Full Council in March agreeing a fuller review to be owned by the new incoming Council after the May 2021 elections. Election planning meetings taking place with District Council colleagues monthly between now and election. Regular two-weekly meetings with Returning Officer and elections team (across Oxon CC and CDC). In touch with Electoral Commission as standing member of the Group. And Oxon Monitoring Officers group has standing item on election and the democratic structures. So we will be able to track the elections and also what, if cancelled/postponed for COVID, plans should be in place for the continuation of the current Council term. Project to ensure member development/induction in place post-election and that decision-making meetings can legally be held physically if not permissible virtually after 7 May	↔	Ongoing	Project boards in place to ensure elections and continued delivery of decision -making meetings.' Risk reviewed - Mitigating actions and comments updated.	22/04/2021
LR9	**Workforce management** long term plans to ensure a stable and skilled workforce with the capacity to deliver refreshed and new priorities.	Lack of effective workforce strategies may result in long term under-performance of the organisation or increased costs.	Failure to manage the workforce and develop strategic HR plans may result in the following: •Recruitment and retention issues •Increased costs of agency staff •Increased costs in training and development •Underperformance or lack of delivery	Claire Taylor	Karen Edwards	3	4	12	• On-going monitoring of issues and HR data • Key staff in post to address risks (e.g. strategic HR business partners, reward manager) • Ongoing service redesign will set out long term service requirements .	3	3	9	Development and adoption of sector relevant workforce plans Development of new People and Organisational Development strategy The ability to interrogate and access key data (ongoing) in order to inform workforce strategies. Development of new Learning & Development strategy, including apprenticeships Post Covid-19 recovery plans to support the workforce are under commission. These will include any lessons learnt and training needs and alignment with any new service delivery requirements arising from Covid-19. Weekly review of the absence data is being undertaken to identify areas of high absence.	↔	Apr-21	Risk reviewed - No changes	10/03/2021
LR10	**Organisational Change and Service Design** ensuring there are effective plans and governance in place to deliver required organisational change.	The risk is that the Council's portfolio of organisational change and service redesign programmes and projects under-delivers due to lack of capacity, expertise or governance. The ongoing impact of CV-19 may mean that some organisational change projects are delayed. It may also mean that alternative modernisation, change or transformational activities are required in order to deliver new or realigned services in a post Covid-19 world.	The impact of the risk occurring would be failure to realise improved service delivery, quality and inability to respond to growing demands. It may cause inefficiencies, increasing costs and/or lack of delivery of planned savings. Furthermore inefficiencies may result in increased costs and/or lack of delivery of planned savings. The breadth of the programme means that it is built of many constituent parts, so that if any one project fails, i can be 'tied off', replaced or redesigned. This breadth means that risk is managed across a wide portfolio but it also requires the right capacity, skills and governance to ensure delivery.	Claire Taylor	Tim Spiers	4	4	16	• All projects identify benefits to be delivered and long term financial implications (upfront costs and savings), supported by project plans • Financial benefits realisation articulated in all project plans, monitored via monthly highlight reports and our corporate reporting process • Systematic service improvement activity focused on demand management, and developing a more preventative approach to our services • All project resourcing considered monthly, roles allocated & additional 3rd party support commissioned where there is a lack of internal capacity • Organisation change and service redesign has been fully incorporated into business as usual and so scrutiny and assuranc will revert to the Performance Scrutiny and Audit & Governance committees. This will be supplemented by detailed financial analysis that reflects the explicit link between the programme of work and the council's Medium-Term Financial Plan. • Where joint activity is planned the Partnership Working Group review progress and delivery. • Capacity and expertise is managed through inhouse resources (including development of new skills where necessary) and the use of external professional support where required – a mixed economy model of delivery. •CEDR continues to manage in flight change projects and directorates have been directed where possible that implementation of change is to continue e.g. provision cycle, family safeguarding, front office transformation where possible. Delays and the consequences thereof will be considered by CEDR as the accountable body for change management. CEDR and ELT review capacity and resource allocated to change projects in light of C-19 and either allocate additional resource or slow the pace of change in order to maintain operational resilience and C-19 response.	4	3	12	•Ensure that the Council's change agenda, including all existing programmes, is integrated into one overall portfolio of change programmes that lead and inform the Service and Resource Planning Process, and expand in scope where further savings are required • Continue to ensure that detailed planning and monitoring of projects fully understands interdependencies between projects • Ensure all change activity is fully aligned to, and supportive of, the corporate priority setting and Medium Term Financial Planning process • CEDR to regularly review the Council's portfolio of change programmes' (both corporate and service focused) fitness for purpose and delivery, as part of quarterly reviews reported to members CEDR to review impact of Covid-19 on organisational change a reprofile projects as required. • Align work with CDC programmes wherever possible to achieve increased benefits.The IT Services are being closely joined which will support alignment.	↔	Various	There will be delays to planned work and the analysis of full impact of Covid-19 on the organisational change and service redesign programmes and projects is ongoing. Monthly dashboards are now being produced and reported to CEDR. Further work required to ensure programme of work is fully aligned as outlined in mitigating actions. Ongoing work is being undertaken as outlined in mitigating actions. There have been various projects progressing well, although there have been some slippages, this is being managed by the governance process and a full risk review will be undertaken in the final quarter of the year as set out in the risk strategy. Risk reviewed- Mitigating actions updated	18/03/2021

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OCC Leadership Risk Register

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LR11	**Financial resilience:** ensuring there are effective plans in place to deliver a balanced budget and a sustainable medium term financial strategy	The MTFP and longer-term financial plans are not sustainable, adequate or effective due to the outcomes of local government funding reforms; unexpected demand on services; financial management performance; financial support to local businesses and residents as a result of CV-19; or not achieving planned savings and efficiencies on time. CV-19 grant funding not at the required level to meet needs of services.	Significant overspend at year end leading to: • extensive use of general balances, taking them below their risk assessed level • extensive use of earmarked reserves resulting in no funding available for earmarked purpose • further savings or income generation required in year or across the life of the Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) Further reductions to funding will require additional savings or income generation opportunities above those in the existing MTFP. Given the scale of the reductions already delivered and those planned, plus continuing rising demand in Adults and Children's services, the ability to respond to this, and quickly, could put at risk the setting of a balanced budget and MTFP.	Lorna Baxter	Ian Dyson	5	3	15	• Progress against current year's savings is tracked monthly and included in the Business Management Reports to Cabinet. • Progress against future year's savings is also tracked monthly, and if necessary addressed as part of the Service & Resourc Planning process Additional costs, loss of income and non- achievement of savings are being tracked and inform data returns to MHCLG • Savings under the banner of Organisational Change and Service Design being monitored on a project/activity level with detailed planning, milestones & reporting • Regular meetings between Directors and s151 Officer to discuss significant financial issues and risks • Service & Resource Planning process including reports to Cabinet and Performance Scrutiny Committee and ultimately Council inFebruary 2020• s25 report of Chief Finance Officer	5	2	10	The financial impact of COVID- 19 is being tracked and is being reported to CEDR, Cabinet and Performance Scrutiny Committee and as part of the monthly Business Management report. As a result of the COVID-19 the expected financial pressures in year have been managed through a Revised Budget, that was approved by Council in September. The Government continues to provide grant funding to assist with the public health response and containment of further outbreaks, which is enabling targeting support to local businesses, communities and voluntary sector, without additional cost to the Council. The Government is also funding lost income on Sales Fees and Charges related to COVID, which we are claiming in accordance with the Government timetable. COVID related grants and funding are being reported routinely to CEDR. The longer-term financial impacts will become clearer during the recovery phase both locally and nationally, but currently remains uncertain. The Local Government Finance Settlement was announced inDecember. The outcomes from the public consultation and the Performance Scrutiny Committee review of budget proposals have been considered by Cabinet. At their meeting on 19 January Cabinet agreed their proposed budget. The deficit on High Needs DSG funding is now on the leadership risk. CEF are developing plans for managing the in year deficit for 21/22 and a startegy going forward.	↔	Dec-20	The impact of Covid19 has changed the financial outlook for the Council, and as a consequence the Council set a revised budget for 2020/21 and is in the process of setting a budget for 2021/22 taking into account the short to medium term financial implications of Covid- 19. The longer-term impacts beyond 2021/22 are still to be understood and this will need to be continually reviewed. Risk reviewed - Mitigation actions refreshed and updated	23/04/2021
LR12	**Property and assets** (maintenance cost)	Legacy of poor asset condition management information reduces the Council's ability to fully ensure property maintenance and compliance.	Non-compliance issues and potential financial pressures to bring our assets to a compliant and acceptable standard.	Steve Jorden	George Eleftheriou	4	4	16	Property, Investment and Facilities Management function redesign to get the right professionals running the service Develop Property Strategy which would determine where to prioritise efforts/spend on assets Install right systems to enable us to keep on top of managing information about our assets	3	2	6	Control activities are prioritising compliance (i.e. 'nice to haves' can wait) Taking more long term views on use/potential use of certain assets. New asset condition surveys have indicated additional financial pressures to bring maintenance of our assets to an acceptable condition. Work is ongoing on a number of sites. A programme based on risk and compliance was developed to resolve outstanding legacy issues and we continue to monitor the financial effect of this activity. The FM team redesign needs to be a priority and completed as soon as possible.	↔	Ongoing	All of mitigation actions referred to are now in place and activities ongoing. The right team/expertise now inhouse dealing with this with a plan in place to achieve full compliance and maintain programme going forward H&S team within PIFM overseeing this and KPIs developed as means of checking performance Additional budget allocated to the team to carry out further works Despite parts of the budget being offered for saving initiatives we are still confident that any risk is mitigated and BAU is unaffected. Risk reviewed - No changes	13/04/2021
LR13	**...and safety:** ...ring **effective** ...rangements are in ... to meet our duties	Identified weaknesses in governance policy could lead to reduced oversight of health and safety issues and infringe on our associated duty of care to staff and others affected by the activities of the Council. The Covid-19 outbreak also increases risk in relation to greater homeworking activities, risks associated with frontline work and mental health and well being risk.	· Unsafe services leading to injury or loss · Breach of legislation and potential for enforcement action. · Financial impact (compensation or improvement actions)	Steve Jorden	Paul Lundy	4	3	12	• H&S policies and procedures have been reviewed and adopted • Risk Assessments completed including COVID-19. • Provision of PPE is priority area of focus for both standard work issue and additional infection control requirements for COVID-19. • Information and training programmes in place for staff and volunteers. Communications channels in place including COVID-19 focussed H&S information. • H&S Governance Board maintains oversight of policy and practice with response to COVID-19 covered within business continuity support structure. • Additional budget has been allocated for rectifying all H&S and compliance items across our buildings and to bring full statutory compliance • We have established a H&S and Compliance function within PIFM where the right expertise is now in-house to enable us to bring and maintain the right level of compliance • H&S monitoring will be carried out in selected services to assess compliance subject to restrictions due to COVID-19; • Reporting of key data and issues to Leadership Teams and through business continuity support structure. This will include any incidents of work-related exposure to COVID-19 as per RIDDOR. • Home-working arrangements supported by advice, guidance, equipment etc., frequent messages from CEO and Internal Comms. Specific arrangements in place to provide equipment for those with specialist requirements or needs.	4	2	8	COVID-Secure arrangements and safe working practices remain effective and are regularly reviewed to ensure they are inline with government guidance. Even though positive outlook with reducing cases controls are expected to remain in place for longer term e.g. IPC procedures including PPE. Corporate Assurance on effectiveness of H&S controls is monitored by the H&S Assurance Board. Key areas of focus include: - Task and Finsih group established to review and recommend improvements for the role of Responsible Premises Manager. This will be delivered as part of the Property function redesign which will look holistically at property management and include system improvement. - As part of delivering the future and agile working a review is underway to ensure the health and safety is adequalty considered for home working. This has included improvements around DSE Assessments, provision of work equipment and prevention of ill health. Policies and procedures are regularly reviewed to ensure safe operating framework.	↔	Ongoing During 20/21 Ongoing - As per changes to government PH Guidance Ongoing	Demand for H&S support is increasing as services restore/increase activity whilst still operating within COVID-Secure environments. The review of Corporate H&S Policies Part 3 Arrangements (Service Level) is on track to be completed April 21. Lone worker mobile app project on track to commence roll-out in May 21. HSE Spot checks for COVID compliance of council services ongoing - no concerns raised and all compliant.	08/04/2021
LR14	**Business continuity and recovery plans** Resilience to a additional significant disruption during the Covid-19 Response	ignificant of multiple disruption occur that require implementation of business continuity arrangements.	Essential Council Services are unable to be recovered within a reasonable time frame. Impacts could include risk to life or welfare, financial loss (for example due to litigation) and reduction of trust in Council services	Yvonne Rees	Rob MacDougall	4	4	16	A business continuity improvement programme is under way and has led to significant improvements including to a consistent approach to business impact assessments, service business continuity frameworks and business continuity plans. Review of London Bridge undertaken by corporate leads across Oxfordshire system	4	2	8	Health Protection Board, MOAC and Surveillance Cell in place to manage pandemic surveillance, lifting of restrictions and Oxfordshire System communications Agile working policy is being coordinated by the Organisational Recovery Steering Group and CEDR. Business Continuity Plans have been reviewed and business impact assessments are being completed for 21/22.	↔	Ongoing	Risk reviewed - changes in cause, effect and mitigating actions	20/04/2021

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OCC Leadership Risk Register

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LR15	**Cyber security** assurance that effective controls are in place to prevent security issues.	Levels of threat mean that it is possible our defences will be breached, whether through system failure or human error this level may be increased during the CV-19 measures with increased numbers of staff working at home	A serious and widespread attack (like Wannacry in Health or Ransomeware attacks in Hackney and Recar) could mean the Council will not be able to function or support services, causing business continuity plans to be invoked. There may be less serious lower level theft of data or a publicity type attack.	Claire Taylor	Tim Spiers	4	4	16	A robust plan is in place and under continuous improvement. OCC and CDC are 'Cyber Security Essentials Plus' accredited. OCC are currently undertaking 'Cyber Essentials Plus' accreditation. OCC and CDC are PSN accredited. OCC and CDC are also working with other local government organisations to ensure a co-ordinated approach to Cyber Security events. Guidance has been re-issued to all staff on protective measures to take when home working, less secure apps have been disabled.	4	3	12	The IT Service at CDC and OCC continue to manage cyber security threats in-line with the required 'Cyber Essentials Plus' standards. As part of the IT service redesign a joint OCC/CDC Cyber Security officer has been appointed , to undertake: •Responsibility for managing security threats and prevention methods •Working with Information Management to ensure implications of GDPR on data security are understood and built in •Working with partners to provide training so that every OCC user is aware of their role in preventing cyber threats •Documenting processes and policy to define roles, responsibilities and procedures •Maximising tech to reduce cyber risks •E nsuring all new and existing suppliers meet cyber security requirements Launched a 'Cyber Security Awareness' project to evaluate and improve Cyber awareness across the Council, including new eLearning material and security exercises. Implemented 'Microsoft Cloud App Security' which protects our use of cloud services, providing advanced threat detection against ransomware, inside threats and data leaks. Trialling an email banner to highlight external emails – providing protection against phishing attacks, spoofed emails and scams.	↔	Jul-20	IT and Cyber Security Officer has been appointed to cover both OCC and CDC. The IT Service continues to work with colleagues and partners to manage the cyber security threat. IT technical resources from OCC and CDC are working closely to ensure both organisations are protected from Cyber security threats.Risk is being treated as a high priority due to the ongoing threat to all organisations. Our approach is guided by the National Cyber Security Centre (NCSC) and also informed by Gartner insight. Presentation made to Audit and Governance Committee regarding the current status and plans to ensure the organisation continues to do everything possible to manage the ongoing threat. Work is being planned to increase awareness. Risk reviewed - mitigating actions updated.	23/04/2021
LR16	**ICT Infrastructure:** assurance that IT infrastructure is reliable and fit for purpose	The server infrastructure, backup and disaster recovery hardware is at or past end of life	There is a risk of ICT failure which could disrupt our ability to sustain parts of the Council's services. We need to plan replacement as the back-up solution has started to fail intermittently. Council's ICT is inadequate and/or inappropriate to support extensive home-working during CV-19 response. Difficulties in providing ICT support for new/returning members of staff (and volunteers needing access to council systems?) Limited capacity/effectiveness in meeting the requirements of novel schemes/services required by Govt as part of CV-19 response	Claire Taylor	Alastair Read	4	3	12	All servers and services have been migrated (by the end of Q4 2019/20) to the new data centre equipment and are operational. The new backup service is operational. The cloud Disaster Recovery solution is configured and running. IT support and provision for new/returning members of Staff is functioning well and demand is being met. IT are working with Integrated Transport to deliver and collect equipment required by Staff working from home. IT Staff have been reassigned to meet any increase in demand due to COVID19 business requirements. IT have secured more laptops to help ensure we have stock in case there is delivery issues after Brexit	4	2	8	Maintaining assessment to keep on top of changing needs of workforce, services and cyber threats under CV-19 Ensuring sufficient staff cover is lined up to keep ICT running in the event of staff illness Replacement datacentre, disaster recovery and backup solution are fully operational. Datacentre network equipment has been updated and the amount of core space used rationalised. Measures remain in place together with the resilience testing to maintain core IT services. Staff resources are assigned to the most in demand IT requirements. An expanded duty team will support delivery of critical services out of hours. New joint cyber security officer has been appointed which enables an even greater focus on protecting the organisation against possible cyber-attacks. Business Continuity Plans and Risk have been updated since the COVID-19 outbreak t capture all new learnings. Mitigation has been put in place to create COVID-19 bubbles to ensure essential staff are separated in case of infection. All projects have been prioritised to ensure that critical work can continue in case of 2nd or 3rd wave. A proposal for a more cost effective and less complex DR solution has been agreed and procurement will start this month for installation in November. This should be able to	↔	Apr-20	Demand for Covid-19 related IT activity is minimal, and there is an increase in more standard IT requests and work. IT Service is back to normal workloads and BAU objectives, with project work also increasing, utilising our new ways of working. Work is continuing on our IT Strategy to ensure we have even more flexibility in our IT for agile working. IT resources a bit stretched due to extra equipment requirements, SIM swaps and Windows Phone replacement service. At present the service is runnign at Green, the DR is installed and I believe this risk can be closed. Risk reviewed - No changes	07/04/2021
LR17	**Covid-19. Community and Customers** providing service and support to those impacted by the coronavirus pandemic	Significant spread of the Covid-19 virus results in potential impacts in terms of customers and communities. Including community resilience, ability to access services, consequences of prolonged social distancing or isolation, economic impacts to business, including but not limited to the visitor economy.	•Possible reductions in frontline service delivery, events, meetings and customer contact. •Economic hardship impacting local business and potentially the local workforce. •Impact on vulnerable residents who may find it harder to access services. •Increased demand on both frontline and enabling services. •Prolonged risk of social isolation and the mental and physical consequence thereof.	Claire Taylor	Mark Haynes	5	4	20	•Business Continuity Plans have been reviewed and tested to ensure the ongoing delivery of priority services •Remote (home based) working in place, to facilitate self isolation and limit impact on service delivery. •Communications stepped up, to support remote working, reinforce national guidelines and set out the current organisational response. •Regular updates from Director of Public Health, shared internally and externally. Partnership communications enhanced and regular conversations convened. •Regular teleconference with local councils and emergency services discussing updates, concerns and best practice (in-line with usual business continuity and emergency planning protocols). •Mutual aid with regional Thames Valley partners enable a tactical response to community resilience. •Engagement with suppliers to manage impacts across the supply chain •Creation of a dedicated telephony helpline to support the most clinically extremely vulnerable (shielded) residents in the county and operating extended hours each day •Provision of additional body storage as temporary place of rest to support the current mortuary provision. •Face to face customer events e.g. wedding ceremony, library provision ceased in line with government guidance County is now in national lockdown and the CEV group of resident now have to follow strict new guidelines. The arrangement across Oxfordshire have now been fully extended and stood up. Major comms drive to highlight the increase in cases across the county and the need for the residents to take note and abide by the national lockdown restrictions.	4	4	16	Ongoing review and implementation of Council and partnership business continuity and emergency planning arrangements. The nature of the risk is such that national public health guidelines will determine the councils' response. The councils will enact any support schemes as set out by national government as they emerge. The council will respond to new modelling figures provided by either Public Health England or Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government regarding excess deaths in the community As the current lockdown is eased, we will review the impact and take the necessary steps to follow the latest guidelines and instructions Customer contact demand will continue to be monitored and resource allocated to key priorities Appropriate risk assessments are being taken to enable the opening of key cultural sites in July 20 Involvement on the Health Protection Board supporting vulnerable customers if isolated due to tract and trace protocols and in line with Local Outbreak Plan Easing of lockdown restrictions has enabled a wider range of services to become more available to customers and residents. 91% of core libraries are now open and customer contact at the CSC is back to normal levels. Review of current BCP's underway. Various central government grants are being used to support the community and residents eg COMF Additional customers are now classified as 'clinically extremely vulnerable' and being supported Vaccination outreach commenced Shielded has now been paused as at 31 3 2021 however there are still on going support for our customer base from local track and trace, vaccination outreach, community testing approach has been expanded and various grants available to certain types of redidents.	↔	May-20	Risk reviewed - Mitigating actions updated and score reduced	13/04/2021
LR18	**Covid-19. Business Continuity:** managing the ongoing impact of the pandemic on council operations.	Significant staff absence due to the Covid-19 virus results in potential impacts on frontline service delivery and the ability to run the councils' business on a day to day basis.	•Possible reductions in frontline service delivery, events, meetings and customer contact. •Potential confusion amongst staff with regards to how to plan and respond to reduced service availability, professional support and maintain business as usual. •Requirement to reprioritise service delivery • Assess critical services and consider alternative methods of delivery •R equirement to offer mutual aid to partner organisations. •Potential impact in the medium to long term resilience of staff may result in wider wellbeing issues.	Claire Taylor	Karen Edwards	5	4	20	•Business Continuity Plans have been reviewed, tested and are maintained and updated •Remote working in place •Staff communications stepped up, to support remote working, reinforce national guidelines and set out the current organisational response. •Regular updates from Director of Public Health, shared internally and externally. •Regular teleconference with local councils and emergency services discussing updates, concerns and best practice. (in-line with usual business continuity and emergency planning protocols). •Regular communication messages following Public Health advice • Sanitisers in washrooms/corporate buildings • Weekly sickness monitoring implemented •Agile working being tested further across services, ensuring equipment and access is in place. •Posters around the offices encouraging regular hand washing. Hand sanitisers available in washrooms and shared spaces. •Stocks of laptops being maintained / weekly managers bulletin with guidance and support offered / arrangements in place for duty, on call and reassignment where necessary Improved understanding of the risk factors across the workforce identified through COVID-19 data. • Weekly reports on all sickness absences, COVID-19 related and others, are being produced by Directorate. • IT has build a new reporting system with a RAG rating to update each area indicating and/or forecasting significant staff pressuress when they happen due to COVID-19. This data is monitored weekly at Silver.	5	4	20	The nature of the risk is such that national public health guidelines will determine the councils' response. IT has build a reporting system with a RAG rating to update each area indicating and/or forecasting significant staff pressuress when they happen.	↔	On-going	Risk reviewed - No changes	10/03/2021

OCC Leadership Risk Register

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LR19	**Safeguarding of vulnerable adults:** Failure to safeguard vulnerable adults. The Care Act 2014 places a duty on the council to work with other parts of the health and care system to safeguard adults at risk of abuse or neglect. Roles, responsibilities and accountability are set out in the act with the council being required to take the lead coordinating role.	• Insufficient quality controls for care providers • Increased numbers of safeguarding alerts without sufficient resource to manage them in a timely and appropriate manner • Safeguarding concerns not being reported • Failure to act when concerns are expressed about an individual being subject to abuse or neglect • Poor / inappropriate information sharing amongst partners.	• Vulnerable people not protected from abuse or neglect. • Serious injury or death of a vulnerable adult • Significant reputational damage for the council	Stephen Chandler	Melanie Pearce	5	3	15	a. Oxfordshire Safeguarding Adults Board oversees and scrutinises the safeguarding of vulnerable adults across all partners in Oxfordshire b. The act brought in the principles of 'Making Safeguarding Personal'. Oxfordshire is recognised as doing this well. Part of the principle is that people own their own risks - so it can never be completely mitigated away. c.Centralised Safeguarding Team which leads on incoming safeguarding concerns and the completion of all subsequent safeguarding activity. d. Clear statement of the minimum standards expected of care providers (from the County Council, the Care Quality Commission and the Oxfordshire Association of Care Providers) e. Monitoring of providers by the Council's Quality and Contracts Team. This includes performance information (complaints, safeguarding referrals, etc.), contract monitoring meetings, and quality monitoring visits and gathering feedback. These are measured against ten quality standards and an internal traffic light system. f. Working closely with the Care Quality Commission to identify and share issues to ensure they are dealt with appropriately. The Care Governance Group which is led by the council includes both the safeguarding lead for the Council and the Care Quality Commission g. Publicise and provide clear communication on the ways in which a person can raise a safeguarding concern. h. Dailly, weekly, monthly performance reports in place on the activity in the safeguarding team. Quarterly perforamce report t the Performance Subgroup of the board on wider partnership issues. i. Cross partermership training plan in place	5	2	10	Number of concerns are increasing following a small decrease during April 2020. Consultation service is continuing to provide support and has resulted in 1530 calls to the service. However received 5,116 concerns and 1,296 enquiries last year which does put pressure on a small team. Timings of dealing with concerns and enquiries are monitored daily. The quality of providers in Oxfordshire is higher than elsewhere as evidence by the CQC ratings. Multi agency meetings in place to ensure appropriate sharing of information; regular audits of case work in place. No additional actions required but we will respond to any issues raised in the on-going monitoring	↔		Risk reviewed - No changes	23/04/2021
LR20	**Demand management - Adults-** Adult social care services aren't help people remain independent and healthy for as long as possible	Numbers of people requiring care increase and numbers of people providing informal care do not rise as quickly as demand. Health Services face reduced funding which puts further pressure on the council.	More people present with higher social care needs, reflecting not just the growth in needs in the population but also the change in informal care, which will not rise as quickly as demand. People with needs, who did not come forward for care previously, now start to come forward with greater public awareness of social care. Those people who do come forward, have higher levels of need. People moving to social care funded services as health services also face reduced funding.	Stephen Chandler	Suzanne Westhead	4	4	16	a.The service has an agreed model for predicting demographic pressure and this is funded by the Council. b. investment in services to reduce demand (e.g. reablement) c. Pooled budget with health which allows whole system investment d. referrals into teams in 20-21 for the first 6 months of the year has increased by 21% compared to the same time last year, but the people w support in long term care is 1% lower than the same time last year e. Medium and long term impact from Covid not known.	4	3	12	Risk at target level but a permanent risk due to demographic pressures. These are being managed well in Oxfordshire as evidenced by iMPOWER rating the productivity of older people's service as 5th highest in the country. High use of equipment - 28% more likely to have received equipment. Main issue in managing demand remains the performance of the reablement pathway (subject of a separate risk) which is monitored monthly with action plan in place. A system plan is in place to deliver a new reablement approach in 2021, this is being piloted and showing success in reducing long term care needs. ASC transformation and Making it Happen approach have begun, in partnership with the voluntary sector.	↔		Risk reviewed - No changes	19/04/2021
LR21	**County Elections May 2021 – Ensure** safe and legal ground elections on 6 May 2021	Insufficient planning and staffing; Covid insecure polling stations and counts; lack of effective communication with stakeholders	Complaints. Loss of confidence from participants if polling stations and count venue aren't deemed Covid safe, leading to a risk of low voter turnout, problems recruiting staff and compromised engagement from candidates/agents.	Yvonne Rees	Steve Jorden	4	4	16	Corporate wide approach taken to delivering the election with specialists from service areas supporting different aspects. Election Special Interest Group (SIG) with County and District election specialists *(and County Deputy Returning Officer staff) each month as key part of planning the detail. Electoral Commission attendance of SIGs.	4	2	8	Plan and risk register in place and regularly reviewed. Weekly project board meetings chaired by the Returning Officer. Election Special Interest Groups monthly to aid detailed planning All polling stations risk assessed for Covid compliance	↔		The Elections Project Board meet weekly to go through issues and agree actions. Key risks are around Covid compliance of polling stations and reluctance of some schools to allowing elections on site. All polling stations are being risk assessed and checked for Covid compliance against Gov guidelines, with appropriate mitigations being put in place. Further risk of insufficient staff to run polling stations and count due to concerns over Covid. Various comms channels being used to appoint sufficient Polling Station staff, includingworking through the LEP. Discussions taking place about the possibility of putting count staff in bubbles so as to limit impact of any Covid related illness. Detailed plans in place to deal with verification and count to ensure staff and candidates/agents are safe. Risk reviewed - Comments updated	23/04/2021

Summary of Financial Position for 2020/21

This Annex provides a summary of the financial position for the 2020/21 financial year which ran from 1 April 2020 to 31 March 2021. The report includes the financial impact of COVID-19 for 2020/21.

The information in this report will be used to compile the Council's Statement of Accounts 2020/21. Ernst and Young, the Council's external auditor, will carry out their audit of the accounts in the summer, and it is possible that changes may be made to the accounts during this period which may alter the position presented within this report.

The statutory deadline for the publication of the audited accounts is September 2021. The publication of the draft accounts and audit is expected to take place during June and July. It is hoped that the results of the external audit will be reported to Audit and Governance Committee in July 2021, at which stage that Committee is expected to approve the 2020/21 Statement of Accounts for publication. However, this may be delayed to the September Committee reflecting the extension of the deadline by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The Statement of Accounts will be published on the Council's website.

The following additional information is provided to support the information in this Annex:

Annex C – 1 (a) to (f)	Detail of Directorate Financial Position 2020/21
Annex C – 2	COVID-19 Un-ringfenced Expenditure and Income
Annex C – 3a	Earmarked Reserves
Annex C – 3b	Maintained School Balances
Annex C – 3c	Parking Account
Annex C – 4	General Balances
Annex C – 5a	Government Grants Summary
Annex C – 5b	COVID-19 Grant Detail

Introduction

The 2020/21 budget was set by Council on 11 February 2020 alongside the Corporate Plan for 2020 – 24 for Thriving Communities for everyone in Oxfordshire. The budget set out plans for a net investment in services of £28.4m including £9.1m for measures to manage demand and £4.8m for invest to save proposals.

The majority of the planning for the 2020/21 budget was completed well in advance of the discovery of the coronavirus. The World Health Organisation formally named the virus COVID-19 on 11 February, the same day that the budget was set. At that point there was little indication that the financial year would begin in a period of national lockdown which was announced by the Prime Minister on 23 March 2020.

The new financial year began on 1 April in an environment of significant uncertainty about additional costs and duties as a result of the pandemic, the impact on services, and what level of additional funding would be available from central government.

The Business Management and Monitoring Report to Cabinet in July 2020 noted that the COVID-19 pandemic was having a significant impact on the local government sector and had required authorities to commit expenditure that was outside of their agreed budgets and that councils were also experiencing significant losses in income from fees and charges. It was estimated that the financial pressure arising from these factors could be as significant as £50.9m for the Council.

At that point, the total funding received by the Council to meet the forecast pressure was £31.0m of which £30.7m was available to use in 2020/21 after £0.3m was applied in 2019/20. This created an estimated in year funding gap of up to 20.2m.

On 18 August, Cabinet agreed revisions to the budget that reprioritised £14.9m of Council resources towards managing the impact of COVID-19. The virements (budget movements) to enact the revised budget were approved by Council on 8 September 2020.

Following the agreement of the in-year budget, additional funding was announced by the Government. This included a further tranche of general emergency grant funding (£3.9m) and the Sales, Fees and Charges Income Compensation Scheme (for which the Council claimed £4.0m). This additional general funding, combined with other specific financial support for care providers, reduced the pressure in 2020/21 on existing Council resources.

As the year progressed, it became clear that there would be a long-term impact of COVID-19 on Oxfordshire's residents and communities and the Council's services that extends beyond the 31 March 2021.

The combination of increased funding and the revised profile of additional expenditure has created an underspend against the COVID-19 budget in 2020/21. The balance of £14.2m will be carried forward through reserves into 2021/22 to manage the ongoing financial impact of the pandemic.

The first Business Management and Monitoring report for 2021/22 will be reported to Cabinet in July and will set out the latest assumptions for 2021/22.

Overview of Financial Position

At the end of the year, there is a directorate underspend of £5.9m against the latest budget and a breakeven position for Corporate Measures[1]. This position includes the transfer of £14.2m to the COVID Reserve.

Directorate	Final Budget 2020/21 £m	Net Expenditure 2020/21 £m	Variance 2020/21 £m	Variance 2020/21 %
Children's Services	133.9	130.5	-3.4	-2.6%
Adult Services	197.6	197.6	0.0	0.0%
Public Health	0.8	0.8	0.0	0.0%
Environment & Place	63.6	65.5	+1.9	3.1%
Customers, Organisational Development & Resources	35.0	34.1	-0.9	-2.7%
Commercial Development, Assets & Investments	49.9	46.4	-3.5	-7.0%
Total Directorate Position	**480.8**	**474.9**	**-5.9**	**-1.2%**
Corporate Measures	-506.4	-506.4	0.0	0.0%
COVID -19	21.0	21.0	0.0	
Contribution from (-)/to(+) Reserves and Balances	4.6	4.6	0.0	
Total Outturn Position	**0.00**	**-5.9**	**-5.9**	

In total the Council has received £67.2m of government grants during 2020/21 of which, £24.4m were unringfenced and £42.8m were ringfenced.

The table on the next page sets out the position relating to COVID-19 spend and funding during 2020/21. During 2020/21, the Council incurred additional expenditure and income losses of £68.9m due to COVID-19.

Un-ringfenced COVID-19 funding available in 2020/21 totals £53.5m. This reflects the COVID-19 grants received in 2020/21 as well as £14.2m unringfenced COVID-19 support grant received in March 2020 and carried forward from 2019/20, plus £14.9m of in-year savings. This has been used to fund £39.3m of exceptional expenditure and income losses. The balance of £14.2m will be placed in the COVID-19 Reserve for use in 2021/22 and beyond.

As set out in Annex C-5b ringfenced COVID-19 funding of £42.8m was received in 2020/21 of which £12.7m has been carried forward for use in future years reflecting the terms and conditions of the individual grants. Of the £12.7m carried forward £9.9m relates to the Contain Outbreak Management Fund.

[1] Corporate Measures includes capital financing, income from treasury management investments, general grant funding, business rate income and council tax income.

Directorate	Non-Ringfenced Funding £m	Ringfenced Funding £m	Total £m
COVID-19 Spend			
Children's Services	4.6	2.4	7.0
Adult Services	8.1	18.0	26.1
Public Health	0.0	1.8	1.8
Environment & Place	4.7	0.9	5.6
Customers, Organisational Development & Resources	7.1	6.5	13.6
Commercial Development, Assets & Investments	1.9	0.0	1.9
Corporate Measures	12.9	0.0	12.9
Total Spend	**39.3**	**29.6**	**68.9**
Funded by			
Residual 2019/20 COVID Support Grant	-14.2		-14.2
2020/21 Grant	-24.4	-42.8	-67.2
2020/21 In-Year Savings	-14.9		-14.9
Total COVID-19 Funding	**-53.5**	**-42.9**	**-96.4**
Balance Carried Forward to 2021/22	*-14.2*	*-12.5*	*-26.7*
*To be returned to Grant Issuer**		*-0.8*	*-0.8*

**relates to Infection Control grant passported to care providers, Lateral Flow Test Grant and Bus Services Support Grant*

The sections below set out the year end position in each directorate.

Children's Services

An underspend of £3.4m is reported by Children's Services against a budget of £133.9m. The directorate position includes £7.0m of COVID-19 spend, with £4.6m funded from un-ringfenced grants and £2.4m funded from ringfenced grants.

An overspend of £9.5m is reported for the High Needs DSG for 2020/21, against a budget of £57.9m. In line with regulations and prescribed accounting practice, this deficit will be carried forward to 2021/22 within an unusable DSG deficit reserve. The deficit recovery is being managed through the SEN Transformation Project.

Education and Learning **Budget** £30.5m **Variation** £3.3m underspend -10.8% **RAG rating** AMBER **Outcomes Achieved** Yes	<u>Yearend variation to budget</u> An underspend of £3.3m is reported for this service. <u>Key Issues</u> The majority of the variance relates to Home to School Transport which reports an underspend of £3.0m. £1.0m is due to reduced costs, primarily associated with the take up of Direct Transport payments and to a lesser extent increased take up of Bus Passes, instead of arranged transport. A further £1.0m in cost reductions is due to the 85% payments to providers throughout the year, for suspended routes. The balance of just under £1.0m is due to a variety of reasons, including the full year impact of negotiated bus contracts and the re-negotiation of high cost routes, and a reduction in the number of lone transport routes. An annual contribution of £0.6m from High Needs will be returned to the DSG High Needs Budget. In addition, a £0.2m underspend is reported within the Academies and New Schools service, which is the result of reduced numbers of conversions during the year. This is partly a result of school choice, but also a reflection of the pause in Ofsted inspections for schools during the pandemic, and therefore is likely to be a temporary reduction. <u>Financial Impact of COVID-19</u> Additional COVID-19 spend totalled £1.0m for Education and Learning services. A further £0.8m relates to Home to School Transport, which was funded by a specific Department for Education grant reported within Environment and Place which was used to meet the additional costs of social distancing on home to school transport. Demand for Education, Health and Care Plans continued to increase throughout the various periods of lockdown, which increased workloads for Educational Psychologists and the Casework Team resulting in additional costs of £0.2m.

	£0.1m relates to the cost of laptops and virtual tuition for children during the first lockdown. In addition, lost income is forecast at £0.2m within Education and Learning as a result of the partial closure of schools. This has been funded through the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government's (MHCLG) income guarantee scheme.
Children's Social Care **Budget** £30.5m **Variation** £1.0m underspend -3.3% **RAG rating** GREEN **Outcomes Achieved** Yes	<u>Yearend variation to budget</u> An underspend of £1.0m is reported for this service. <u>Key Issues</u> The underspend within this service is made up of a number of variations. Significant variances include: • An underspend of £0.3m within Leaving Care Service mainly relating to a reduction in demand for allowances. • An underspend of £0.4m relating to Early Help Centres due to vacancies held following a pause on recruitment early in the year. Recruitment to these posts is now underway. • The balance of £0.3m relates to a number of small variances across the service. <u>Financial Impact of COVID-19</u> Reported spend on COVID-19 is £1.2m for Social Care. As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic there has been an increase in spend on staffing during the year, and particularly since September 2020. This reflects an increase in demand within teams, particularly within the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) where contacts have increased by 34% this financial year compared to the same period last year. Demand has increased across frontline social care teams where children and families are remaining on a plan for longer than would normally be expected, contributing to an increase in overall cases. In addition the pandemic has also had a significant impact on the ability to attract and retain social care staff to front line roles, with increased caseloads, staff sickness, caring responsibilities, and increased staff turnover of both permanent and temporary staff due to the market at this time. This combination of demand and vacancies has therefore increased the number and cost of agency staff required to ensure the council continues to operate a safe service. The cost in this year to meet this additional demand was £0.9m. Outside staffing, the main costs incurred to date relate to an increase in allowances to reflect universal credit increases totalling £0.1m and additional costs in supporting Unaccompanied Children of £0.1m which was funded by a specific DfE grant.
Children's Social Care Countywide Services	<u>Yearend variation to budget</u> In May 2020 an action plan was agreed which set out plans to fund a forecast overspend through the use of an earmarked reserve of

Budget £66.8m **Variation** £0.8m overspend 1.2% **RAG rating** GREEN **Outcomes Achieved** Yes	£0.8m and a transfer from the corporate contingency budget of £3.3m. The transfer from contingency was agreed by Council on 8 September 2020. Previously, a breakeven position was forecast for Corporate Parenting taking into account the planned contribution from reserve of £0.8m. Given the overall position of the directorate, this contribution has not been drawn down and will remain in reserve to meet investment in future years. By not using the reserve it results in an overspend of £0.8m being reported for this service due to decisions on funding rather than a change in activity. <u>Key Issues</u> The overspend of £0.8m within this area is made up of a number of variances. Significant variances include: • Additional planned expenditure of £1.2m relates to Corporate Parenting and Services for Disabled Children. As above this spend was expected to be met from a draw down of reserve funding. Given the overall position for the directorate it does not require the transfer this year and therefore the funds will be held in earmarked reserves to meet investments in future years. • An underspend of £0.2m within the Youth Justice and Exploitation service due to a number of vacancies within the new service which are being recruited to. • An underspend of £0.2m across a number of other services. <u>Financial Impact of COVID-19</u> Reported spend on COVID-19 within the Countywide Social Care service is £1.7m. £1.6m of this is due to additional costs relating to placements and support for children we care for and children with disabilities. The remaining £0.1m relates to additional cover for demand and sickness within the Emergency Duty Team. There remains a concern that demand hasn't yet arrived within the service, and therefore costs to date haven't risen as fast as originally anticipated. Demand is now high within the MASH and it is assumed that this will work through the social care system, resulting in increased demand for placements in the future. Work completed so far anticipates that the forecast seen earlier in the year will move in to 2021/22 financial year and beyond.
Schools **Budget** £1.0m **Variation** £0.1m overspend 8.2%	<u>Yearend variation to budget</u> An overspend of £0.1m is reported for this service. <u>Key Issues</u> The overspend of £0.1m relates to a union duties budget imbalance in year, which isn't significant over the longer-term.

	Financial Impact of COVID-19
RAG rating GREEN **Outcomes Achieved** Yes	COVID-19 grants were received during the financial year, with £1.4m for the Coronavirus Catch Up Premium for maintained schools and providers of SEN education and £0.4m was received for the Coronavirus (COVID-19) School Fund which were allocated to maintained schools.
Children's Central Costs **Budget** £5.1m **Variation** Breakeven **RAG rating** GREEN **Outcomes Achieved** Yes	Yearend variation to budget A breakeven position is reported for this service which funds the Children's Services contribution to the Joint Commissioning service and other corporate and management costs. Key Issues No variance is reported. Financial Impact of COVID-19 No variance is reported due to COVID-19.

Dedicated School Grant (DSG)

High Needs **Budget** £57.9m **Variation** £9.5m overspend 16.4% **RAG rating** RED **Outcomes Achieved** Yes	Yearend variation to budget A net overspend of £9.5m is reported for this service. Cabinet in January 2021 and September 2020 agreed increases in the financial support for EHCP plans (top-up) for the academic year, which means that within the net overspend is a £0.9m underspend of earmarked funding for top-ups in the Summer Term. The underlying overspend is therefore £10.4m Key Issues The variance of £9.5m relates to the growth in demand for Education, Health and Care Plans and support for the current year against the high needs dedicated schools grant funding. Significant diagnostic work has been undertaken to analyse the relationship between activity, increased demand and spending pressures across the SEN funding system. Officers will continue to work with Schools, Parents and other stakeholders through the SEN Transformation Board to develop proposals for the High Needs Block to move into line with its operating budget in the medium term.
Early Years **Budget** £38.8m **Variation** £0.2m overspend 0.6% **RAG rating**	Yearend variation to budget A net overspend of £0.2m is reported. Within this figure is £0.2m of ringfenced underspend in relation to Disabled Access Fund and the Maintained Nursery Supplementary funding elements of Early Years DSG. These sums will be allocated in 2021/22. The underlying position is therefore a £0.4m overspend and this will be funded from available prior year Early Years DSG balances. Key Issues

AMBER **Outcomes Achieved** Yes	The Early Years DSG has overspent by £0.4m. There has been an increased take-up of the SEN Inclusion Fund, which supports lower level SEN need in settings, and a step change in the number of eligible 2 year olds. Use of prior year DSG to meet the overspend was agreed at Schools Forum in November 2020. <u>Financial Impact of COVID-19</u> A package of provider support of £1.3m was agreed in April 2020. Spend in this year is reported as £1.1m, with £0.3m funded from Early Years DSG, £0.1m funded from the Contain Outbreak Management Fund and the remaining £0.7m funded from COVID-19 budgets for income and losses. The COVID-19 costs relate to provider sustainability payments to early years settings to meet statutory need including a forecast risk into the future and to meet Government COVID-19 guidelines. It also includes additional opening (e.g. out of term-time), and key worker funding where children have been placed away from their usual setting.
Maintained School Balances	Maintained schools' balances were £14.5m at 1 April 2020 and increased to £17.2m at 31 March 2021. As set out in Annex C-3b, 123 schools had surplus balances at 31 March 2021, while 14 had deficits. This is in comparison to 31 March 2020 where 124 schools were in surplus and 17 in deficit. The overall number of maintained schools decreased by four during the year due to three schools converting to academies and one school closing. The net decrease of three maintained schools with deficits is due to seven maintained schools moving to a surplus position and four maintained schools moving to a deficit position. There was an overall decrease in deficit balances of £0.1m. All schools with deficit budgets are subject to a strategy intervention. Surplus balances increased by £3.6m, which reflects the impacts of COVID-19 on spend in schools. This is seen in a reduction in the normal pattern of spend of £8.4m in areas including in staffing, catering, building costs, and bought in professional services. This is offset in part by a £4.8m reduction in income relating to extended school services, facilities and other services. The impact on individual schools varied across Oxfordshire, with some recording in-year deficits for 2020/21. School balances reflect the cash position of the school at 31 March 2021. Maintained schools have received an additional £1.3m in grant funding through the COVID-19 Catch Up Premium which has been allocated to schools in 2020/21 but relates to the academic year. Maintained primary schools also received PE and Sports Premium Payments of £1.3m allocated to schools in 2020/21 but relating to the academic year. It is anticipated that some schools

	will carry forward a balance to be used in 2021/22. The carry forward is higher than in previous years as COVID-19 restricted the ability to spend the grant. 149 schools have converted to academy status as at 31 March 2021. Under the transfer of Balances Regulations, the local authority must transfer the school balances to the successor academy once the closed school accounts have been finalised and agreed. A total of £0.2m remains to be agreed and passed to academies.

Adult Services

The year-end position for the Directorate was a **£9.4m** (4.8%) underspend against a budget of £197.6m. This has been transferred to reserves to help meet pressures in 2021/22, resulting in a break-even position for Adult Services. The amount transferred to reserves includes an additional £1.5m that was released from the Council's contribution to the Better Care Fund Pool as a result of an additional contribution from the Oxfordshire Clinical Commissioning Groups (OCCG) in 2020/21. This will be carried forward to meet on-going costs relating to hospital discharges or other system wide pressures in 2021/22.

The directorate outturn position includes **£8.1m** of costs relating to COVID-19.

Better Care Fund Pool **Budget** £80.4m **Variation** Breakeven **RAG rating** Green **Outcomes Achieved** Yes	**Yearend variation to budget** A breakeven position is reported for the council elements of the pooled budget with health, after taking into account £6.3m that has been transferred to reserves to support future pressures. Budgets within the pool were managed as per the agreement of the risk share arrangements for 2020/21, which states that each partner will retain underspends or manage any overspend on their element of the Pool, the Council for the social care element and the OCCG for the health care element. Financial Impact of COVID-19 Included in the outturn position is £4.3m of expenditure relating to costs arising from the COVID-19 pandemic. These include a 10% payment made to contracted care providers in April, May and June 2020, an increase in the number of empty beds within the council's block contract that we are committed to pay for, plus funding for increased costs linked to winter pressures. Key Issues The pool combines health and social care expenditure on care homes, activity relating to hospital avoidance and prevention and early support activities for older people and adults with physical disabilities.

The Hospital Discharge Scheme 1 ended on 31 August 2020, with a requirement to move everyone currently funded by the scheme onto business as usual arrangements by 31 March 2021. £10.1m of social care costs were charged against this scheme and have contributed to the underspend in the Better Care Fund pool.

Arrangements for hospital discharges from 1 September 2020 onwards (Scheme 2), which support the provision of care for a period of up to six weeks to enable assessment to take place remained in operation until the end of the year and will continue to be in operation in the early part of 2021/22.

The funding for Scheme 2 is intended to support service activity that has been put in place specifically to support hospital discharge that is additional to business as usual provision, including for people who would ordinarily be self – funders. Social care costs totalling £1.6m were charged against this scheme in 2020/21.

There is a £1.6m (-3.7%) **underspend** within care homes reflecting the reduced activity seen throughout the year arising as a result of the pandemic. Costs met by the Hospital Discharge Schemes have also suppressed actual spend, during 2020/21 £4.6m of costs were charged against both schemes. This incorporates a £0.9m increase in the cost of voids within the council's block contract, £0.4m of which was funded by COVID-19 funding.

The council is required to make provision in the accounts for the risk associated with the collection of adult social care service user income that is still due to be paid after six months. A decrease in the volume of debt in 2020/21 means that the risk has reduced leading to **an underspend of** £0.1m.

A £0.3m (-31.1%) **underspend** has occurred in relation to carers including both services to carers contracts and carers personal budgets, highlighting a 10% reduction in the number of carers receiving a payment in 2020/21. From 1st April 2021 a new carer support service will be in operation which will take over from this current arrangement.

A £0.2m (-20.6%) **underspend** has occurred within the Information and Advice service, but actual spend is comparable with the 2019/20 outturn position.

Home Support related services are **underspent** by £1.8m (-4.6%), highlighting a £1.1m reduction in contingency home care spend, a £0.4m underspend on internal day services and £0.3m underspend within all other direct home support provision. Underlying activity on business as usual home support has increased but the impact is masked by the Hospital Discharge Schemes, within 2020/21 there was £3.4m of Home Support costs charged against both schemes.

	Due to ongoing challenges with recruiting occupational therapists and social workers, the staffing budget in the pool has **underspent** by £0.5m. (-11.5%) Staff vacancies and lower than anticipated spend has led to a £0.2m (-7.9%) **underspend** on equipment. Updated arrangements to respond to the COVID -19 pandemic means there is a £0.1m **underspend** against the budget for delayed discharge fines. The short stay hub beds are reporting an £0.2m overspend linked to backdated unit price increases. This is offset by a budget set aside for housing support for people leaving hospital not being utilised as this service was funded through money allocated for winter pressures. Reflecting the positive outcomes achieved through on-going joint working across health and social care, OCCG have increased their Better Care Fund contribution to support adult social care expenditure by £1.5m in 2021/22. The council budget released has been transferred to reserves and will be used to support on-going costs relating to hospital discharges or other system pressures in 2021/22.
Adults with Care and Support Needs Pool **Budget** £98.9m **Variation** £0.3m underspend **RAG rating** Green **Outcomes Achieved** Yes	<u>Yearend variation to budget</u> A **£0.1m** underspend is reported for the council elements of the pooled budget with health, after taking into account **£3.1m** that has been transferred to reserves. <u>Financial Impact of COVID-19</u> Included in the outturn position is **£2.2m** of expenditure relating to costs arising from the COVID-19 pandemic. Included within these costs are a 10% payment made to contracted social care providers in April, May and June 2020 and voids costs associated with service users having to have an extended period in respite rather than not being placed. <u>Key Issues</u> The pool supports a mix of health and social care needs for adults of working age with learning disabilities, acquired brain injury or mental health needs. The 2020/21 health contribution to the pool was £17.6m. This should cover the cost of a learning disability block contract held with Oxford Health, health costs associated with acquired brain injury service users, the OCCG contribution to the cost of transactional processing and a contribution to the health element of Learning Disability personalisation costs. Under the risk share arrangements agreed for

	2020/21 the council is responsible for any variation against budgets for learning disabilities within the pool. There has been a **£0.4m** (-0.4%) underspend within Learning Disabilities. This includes a £0.2m underspend from a one- off budget allocated to fund health and safety mitigations for night-time fire risk for vulnerable adults in supported living accommodation where the actual cost was lower than originally anticipated. There has also been a £0.2m increase in actual service user contributions towards their care over and above what had been budgeted for. Overspends have occurred within Home Support and Direct Payments which have been offset by underspends within Care Homes and Supported living. This reflects a reduction in care home placements although the unit cost has increased over the year, (4.8%), and an increase in both home support activity and unit cost, (3.0%). A £0.5m overspend is reported relating to the cost of people with mental health needs falling outside the scope of the Outcome Based Contract with Oxford Health Foundation Trust. As per the agreed risk share in this area the council is responsible for **£0.3m** of this overspend**.** An underspend of **£0.7m** (-28.3%) has occurred in relation to the cost of care for people with High Functioning Autism; the budget transferred into this pool from the Better Care Fund Pool during the year was higher than the actual activity in this area. The cost of social care costs for service users with an acquired brain injury are lower than expected resulting in a **£0.1m** (-8.2%) underspend. **£0.1m** of mental health costs paid in 2019/20 was reimbursed by OCCG during the year, following a review of the end of year financial adjustments managed by Oxford Health resulting in a further underspend. As part of the 2020/21 service and resource planning process £2.75m one-off funding was built into the budget to support pressures relating to Mental Health and Autism within Oxfordshire. Temporary funding arrangements put in place for NHS providers in response to the COVID-19 pandemic mean that some of this funding has not been needed and remains available to meet future pressures. **£2.2m** is held in reserves for use to meet pressures in 2021/22 or future years.
Non-Pool Services **Budget** £11.3m	Yearend variation to budget An underspend of £0.5m is reported. Financial Impact of COVID-19

Variation £0.5m underspend **RAG rating** Green **Outcomes Achieved** Yes	Included in the forecast is **£1.6m** of expenditure relating to costs arising from the COVID-19 pandemic. These include additional staffing costs, a contribution to Homelessness costs in Oxford City and pressure arising within the print unit linked to a loss of income. Key Issues Within provider and support services, there is an underspend of **£0.3m** (-11.6%) linked to staff vacancies within the money management team and reduced spend in the community support innovation fund. The domestic violence and abuse support service has underspent by **£0.1m** (-27.1%) as a result of funding set aside for prevention services not being utilised. A **£0.1m** (-0.7%) underspend has occurred within the Responsible Localities teams as a result of vacant positions and on-going challenges with recruitment.

Commissioning **Budget** £6.9m **Variation** £0.6m overspend **RAG rating** Green **Outcomes Achieved** - Yes	Yearend variation to budget An overspend of £0.6m is reported. Key Issues The year-end position is a **£0.6m** (9.5%) overspend linked to staffing vacancy targets that were not achieved, increased recruitment costs and the cost of agency staff employed to cover key roles while the new Health, Education & Social Care team is put in place.
COVID-19 Specific Grants **RAG rating** Green **Expected Use of Grants** 100%	As set out in Annex 5a ring-fenced government grants held by the directorate total £26.6m for 2020/21, after taking account of £0.4m being paid back to the Department for Health and Social Care (DHSC). The first tranche of Infection Control Grant of £7.3m was available to support providers with infection control measures from May to September 2020. This was required to be used to support adult social care providers to reduce the rate of COVID-19 transmission in and between care homes (75% of the grant total) and to support wider workforce resilience measures (25% of the grant)., £0.2m was returned to DHSC In accordance with the grant determination. A second tranche of Infection Control Grant of £6.3m was allocated to the council to reduce the rate of COVID-19 transmission within and between care settings in the second half of 2020/21. The conditions

specify that 60% the grant needed to be passed to care homes and a further 20% to domiciliary care providers. The remaining 20% of the grant was allocated at the discretion of the council in line with the relevant guidelines.

The funding was required to be fully spent by care providers by 31 March 2021. Each provider has been required to report monthly on their use of the grant with their returns collated into a summary update to the DHSC.

At the end of the year, £3.7m had been passed to care homes, £1.9m to domiciliary care providers, £0.3m to external day care providers and £0.4m to people using direct payments to provide financial support with infection control measures.

Funding to support providers to undertake Lateral Flow Device (LFD) Testing was announced in late December and the council received £1.8m of the £149m available nationally. All funding was required to be used to support increased LFD testing in care settings and needed to be spent by 31 March 2021. 80% of the funding had to be passed to care homes within the local authority's geographical area on a 'per beds' basis. This includes residential drug and alcohol services. The remaining 20% had to be used to support the care sector to implement increased LFD testing but could be allocated at the local authority's discretion. Each provider accepting the grant and undertaking the testing was required to report on the use of the grant monthly in February, March and April 2021.

At the year-end £1.6m has been passed to 102 care homes who had indicated that they were undertaking the testing. £0.2m of the mandatory element that was not accepted by care homes will be returned to DHSC in accordance with the grant determination.

The council was also allocated £1.1m as part of the workforce capacity fund from the DHSC. This grant had to be used to deliver measures that result in additional staffing capacity for Adult Social Care and needed to be spent by 31 March 2021. The first instalment of £0.8m (70%) was received in February. The remaining 30% was received in March, £0.035m was retained for local recruitment campaigns but the rest of the grant was passed on to domiciliary care providers and care homes.

The council was awarded £0.2m by the DHSC to facilitate timely discharges into the community to reduce the number of people with learning disabilities who are inpatients, which was used to help fund housing modification within the service.

The council was awarded £0.1m to support victims of domestic abuse and their children within safe accommodation, this was bid for by the

provider in partnership with the council and should be passed onto the provider to manage.

Public Health

A breakeven position is reported after a **£2.1m** transfer into the Public Health reserve.

Variation Breakeven against £31.2m ringfenced grant **RAG rating** Green **Outcomes Achieved** Yes	Yearend variation to budget A breakeven position is reported. Financial Impact of COVID-19 There has been no increase in costs arising from the COVID-19 pandemic or loss of income due to the COVID-19 pandemic but there have been one-off savings due to reductions in service provision in line with national directives. Key Issues The breakeven position is after taking account of **£3.1m** reductions in planned spend. This includes a **£1.4m** reduction in spend due to reduced activity in sexual health services due to COVID-19 together with expediting a move to home testing previously scheduled for 2021/22, plus a further **£0.4m** reduction in spend on NHS health checks linked to a lower number of face to face services being taken up during the pandemic. There is also a **£0.7m** underspend relating to staff vacancies. A **£0.1m** underspend within smoking and tobacco control. A **£0.6m** underspend has occurred due to community work in relation to inequalities not taking place due to coronavirus. Offsetting these underspends is a cost pressure of **£0.1m** related to an additional requirement under the grant to fund NHS pay inflation in contracts. £1.0m of spend has been identified elsewhere in the council that contributes to Public Health outcomes and is eligible to be funded by the grant in 2020/21. This spend has been allocated as follows: £0.7m to Other Public Health Services, £0.2m against drugs and alcohol plus £0.1m split between Physical Activity, Public Health General and Smoking and Tobacco Control.

The report includes a budget of £0.8m allocated to Oxfordshire County Council as a Rough Sleeping Drug and Alcohol Treatment Grant. This is to fund specialist support for individuals to access and engage with drug and alcohol treatment and move towards longer-term accommodation, supporting the work of wider homelessness and rough sleeping funding, £0.3m of this funding will be spent in 2021/22 and is being held in the Council's reserves.

The balance of the reported underspend will be transferred to the Public Health reserve.

Grant Funding

RAG rating - Green

Expected Use of Grants

100%

As set out in Annex 5a government grants held by the directorate total £34.8m for 2020/21.

The Public Health grant is £31.2m, an increase of £1.5m from the previous year, this grant was used to support appropriate Public Health activities throughout 2020/21.

The council has received £2.9m Test and Trace Service Support Grant to support the mitigation against and management of local outbreaks of COVID-19. The actual spend by the end of the year was £1.3m. The £1.6m balance remaining will be carried forward and used to support eligible spend in 2021/22.

The council has been awarded £0.13m from Sport England for a Wayfinding project to encourage children to walk to school. The funding is split as follows; £0.08m revenue and £0.05m capital. Work is in progress to recruit schools to this project. £0.03m of the funding claimed in 2020/21 of which £0.01m was spent with the remainder being carried forward into 2021/22 as the costs have not yet been incurred. The balance of the funding is anticipated to be claimed by July 2021 in line with the school year.

The Council has also received £0.1m to support delivery of routine commissioning of pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) for HIV. This grant covers the in-year costs of this new public health requirement. The grant will fund a contract variation with the Council's sexual health provider who delivers this service. Funding for PrEP is included in the public health grant for 2021/22.

The Community Testing Programme (CTP) aims to accelerate a reduction in prevalence of COVID-19 by identifying asymptomatic cases through local testing. The Council has worked in collaboration with the district councils and testing in Oxfordshire started on 8 February 2021. £0.5m of costs have been claimed against the £0.5m Community Testing Grant that the council received in 2020/21.

Environment & Place

A **3.1%** overspend of £1.9m is reported against a budget of £63.5m.

Planning & Place **Budget** £4.0m **Variation** £0.1m (3.1%) Overspend **RAG rating** RED **Outcomes Achieved** Yes	Yearend variation to budget This service area leads in the planning and development of strategic infrastructure that support Oxfordshire's ambitions for a thriving economy and delivering services that make the maximum contribution to achieving the Council's corporate objectives. The service is reporting an overspend of £0.1m as a result of increased staffing costs in Planning and Place management due to increased resource requirement to deliver the service. Key Issues There are no issues reported at the year end.

Growth & Economy **Budget** £0.1m **Variation** £1.7m (1826.9%) Overspend **RAG rating** RED **Outcomes Achieved** No	Yearend variation to budget This service, in partnership with the Sustainable Development Team, is responsible for the delivery of the Council's Infrastructure Growth programme, including strategic planning. The service is reporting a £1.7m overspend position at yearend. Key Issues Growth & Economy are reporting an overspend of £1.7m as a result of increased staffing resources, agency and interim staff. The service is primarily funded by the capital programme as staff costs are directly attributable to the delivery of capital schemes within the Major Infrastructure Programme. However, there has been a significant overspend in Programme Management Office (PMO) operations, in particular on schemes that are still in the early stages of development and are therefore outside the scope of the capital programme and capital funding. The evolution and growth of PMO to support the delivery of infrastructure is directly linked to the scale of the Major Infrastructure Capital Programme. The Capital Programme Report 2020/21 is at item x on the agenda and sets out that £33.2m of investment in infrastructure was delivered in 2020/21.

Communities Management **Budget** £1.0m	Yearend variation to budget This budget for staffing and associated costs is reporting a breakeven yearend position.

	Key Issues
Variation £0.0m (0.0%) underspend **RAG rating** GREEN **Outcomes Achieved** Yes	No key issues are reported.

Community Operations **Budget** £58.3m **Variation** £0.2m (0.3%) Overspend **RAG rating** GREEN **Outcomes Achieved** Yes	Yearend variation to budget Community operations area delivers a range of services relating to the operation and maintenance of county council's highways and transport. The service is reporting a £0.2m overspend . This was anticipated throughout the reporting year with a £0.2m pressure being reported in Highway Management. Although an overall overspend is reported, there are offsetting underspends in some areas. The directorate has largely been able to manage the activity to keep expenditure close to budget. Key Issues. There has been a significant reduction of income throughout the year in on and off-street parking due to the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic and local travel restrictions. Coupled with the addition of free parking provision in the Park and Ride services during August and December this resulted in £3.1m loss of income. Parking services did see a slight reduction in expenditure on the parking account due to COVID-19, but this was not sufficient to offset the significant loss of income, the majority of which was covered through the Sales, Fees and Charges Income Guarantee Scheme funded by MHCLG. As set out in Annex C- 3c, the Parking Account Reserve balance has increased from £2.0m at 1April 2020 to £3.1m at 31 March 2021. This reflects a budgeted contribution to the reserve. The forecast position reported throughout the year anticipated a breakeven position due to uncertainty created by COVID-19 and the potential suspension or part suspension of some income streams. The recovery of income through the Sales, Fees and Charges Income Guarantee Scheme meant that the service could meet budgeted income levels and as such there has been a contribution to reserve for the financial year 2020/21 in line with the budgeted expectations. In accordance with Section 55(4) of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984, the Parking Account Reserve is ringfenced for provision and maintenance of county's parking facilities, highway & road improvements and meeting costs for provision of public transport.

	Waste Management reported a £0.1m underspend. Although there has been a 7.3% (19,000 tonnes) increase in the amount of household waste disposed of in the county, this has been largely mitigated by work carried out by the service working with partners, contractors and the recycling centres to ensure as much waste as possible is recycled, reused or composted. Financial Impact of COVID – 19 As described in the above paragraph the service seen a £3.1m loss of income through various lockdown restrictions during the pandemic resulting in reduction in parking.

Customers, Organisational Development & Resources

An underspend of £0.9m (2.7%) is reported compared to the budget of £35.0m.

Corporate Services **Budget** £2.0m **Variation** £0.2m (11.4%) overspend **RAG rating** GREEN **Outcomes Achieved** Yes	Yearend variation to budget This service provides operational support, administration and planning to the Chief Executive's office and the Lord Lieutenant of Oxfordshire and the. An overspend of £0.2m is reported. Key Issues Corporate services have overspent by £0.2m due to increased demand on staff costs. Financial Impact of COVID 19 Included in the yearend position £0.4m of COVID-19 related expenditure covering Customers Organisational Development Directorate. This includes staff costs for extending the Customer Service Centre operating hours, additional ICT needs to support home working, Occupational Health Assessments for non-school staff returning to work and Health & Safety costs for re-opening Libraries.
Human Resources & Organisational Development **Budget** £2.4m **Variation** £0.2m (0.0%) underspend **RAG rating** GREEN **Outcomes Achieved**	Yearend variation to budget A £0.2m underspend is reported. Key Issues. The underspend is comprised of a £0.1m underspend in occupational health as a result of a reduction in referrals in schools and directorates, and a new contract implementation that has been delayed. A further underspend of £0.2m is reported in organisational development due to delays in delivery of some of the courses due to COVID-19. These underspends were partially offset by a £0.1m overspend in Human Resources.

Yes	
Communications, Strategy & Insight **Budget** £2.5m **Variation** £0.6m (25.3%) underspend **RAG rating** GREEN **Outcomes Achieved** Yes	<u>Yearend variation to budget</u> A £0.6m underspend is reported. <u>Key Issues.</u> This underspend can primarily be attributed to the service not being able to carry out planned marketing and engagement activities and several staff vacancies that the service was unable to recruit to during the pandemic.
ICT & Digital **Budget** £10.7m **Variation** £0.0m (0.0%) breakeven **RAG rating** GREEN **Outcomes Achieved** Yes	<u>Yearend variation to budget</u> ICT maintain, protect and enhance the Council's ICT infrastructure. The service reports a balanced position spend against budget <u>Key Issues.</u> There are no issues in the service.
Culture & Customer Experience **Budget** £11.1m **Variation** £0.2m (1.7%) underspend **RAG rating** Red **Outcomes Achieved** No	<u>Yearend variation to budget</u> Customer Service Centre provides the first point of contact for all initial enquiries across wide range of council services. Cultural services provide public libraries, museums, history & archive services throughout the county. A £0.2m underspend is reported. <u>Key Issues.</u> £0.1m of the underspend relates to closures of Libraries throughout the year resulting in the service not being able to deliver planned service developments. A further £0.1m of the underspend is reported in the Customer Service Centre, primarily due to not recruiting any apprentices throughout the year because of the pandemic.

	COVID-19 Specific Grant Funding and Expenditure The council spent £2.4m in 2020/21 ensuring there was sufficient Temporary Places of Rest (TPOR) capacity throughout the pandemic. Around £2.4m was spent in the first 6 months of the year to set up, maintain and decommission 3 hangers located at the Upper Heyford Park and a £0.047m contribution was made towards the costs of the Wexham Park TPOR, through a joint arrangement with Reading Borough Council.
Finance **Budget** £6.2m **Variation** £0.1m (2.1%)underspend **RAG rating** GREEN **Outcomes Achieved** Yes	Yearend variation to budget The service provides financial planning, monitoring, accounting and advice and Treasury Management. Finance is reporting a £0.1m underspend position at year end. Key Issues The underspend is due to budgeted system developments and improvements to the Shared Service systems by the Integrated Business Centre (IBC) being delayed to 2021/22.
Grant Funding **RAG rating** - Green **Expected Use of Grants** 100%	COVID-19 Specific Grant Funding and Expenditure **Food and Essential Supplies (COVID-19) Grant** A national £63m emergency scheme to support people who are struggling to afford food and other essentials due to COVID-19 was announced by government in June 2020. Details on the local allocation of £0.5m along with guidance on the purpose and use of the fund was published in July 2020. Guidance set out that government anticipated the funds would be utilised within 12 weeks. The funding allocations were been made to County Councils in two tier areas, but councils were expected to collaborate with partners to make most effective use of the funding in the interest of residents. The Joint District Community Hub Working Group coordinates the Oxfordshire system's community engagement and support activity in relation to COVID-19 and this group was consulted to agree the approach to allocating the funding. The majority of the funding was passed to the City and District Councils based on a formula that replicated the national allocation. Three County wide schemes also received funding. **COVID Winter Grant Scheme** On 8 November 2020 the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) announced £170m COVID Winter Grant scheme to support children, families and the most vulnerable over the winter months. The Council

has worked with partners to agree the best route to distributing the funding to those who need it. The Council's allocation was £1.3m and the funding was used for provision of free school meals equivalent payments during the school holidays. The scheme was further extended to provide food vouchers for vulnerable families and welfare support for individuals in temporary accommodation over the period of early December 2020 to 31 March 2021. Further funding of £0.5m is due to be received in April 2021 subject to submission of data to DWP to evidence use of the funding.

Funding to support Clinically Extremely Vulnerable
The Council has received £0.7m to support people on the Government's clinically extremely vulnerable list in two instalments. This was based on £14.60 per person on the shielding list. The Council has worked with partners to utilise the funding effectively and £0.04m has been spent in 2020/21 with a further £0.4m already committed to be allocated to districts in the next financial year.

Contain Outbreak Management Fund Surge Funding Grant
The Council has received £16.2m of funding in 2020/21 as set out in annex C-5b of which, the Council spent £6.2m through contribution to local district councils and supporting local partners during the pandemic such as Oxfordshire Community & Voluntary Action and Citizens Advice. The balance of £9.9m has been placed in the Grants and Contributions Reserve for use in 2021/22.

Commercial Development, Assets & Investment

An underspend of **£3.5m** (7.0%) is reported compared to the budget of £49.9m.

Property & Community Facilities Management **Budget** £16.9m **Variation** - £3.4m (20.1%) underspend **RAG rating** RED **Outcomes Achieved** Yes	Yearend variation to budget An underspend of £3.4m is reported. Key Issues. The underspend within the service includes: • £1.7m underspend on staffing costs due to a delayed restructure and staffing vacancies. • £0.6m underspend due to lack of activity across facilities management attributable to impact and limitations of the pandemic. • £0.3m underspend as a result of the suspension of activity related to asset rationalisation in light of the Property Strategy, Service Strategies and the implications arising from COVID-19.

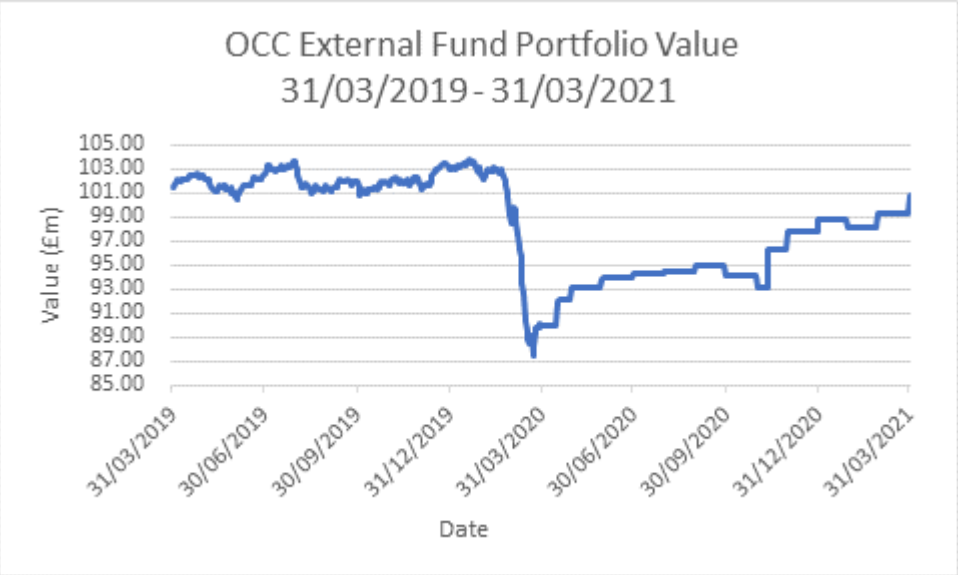
	• £0.8m underspend in Estates Services primarily attributable to the overachievement of income targets and negotiated savings arising from paying dilapidation costs in respect of surrendered and terminated leases. Further savings on utility costs were made resulting from mild winter conditions and building closures across the county due to COVID-19. <u>Financial Impact of COVID-19</u> The loss of income on the catering service as a result of schools closures has been met by compensation received through the Sales, Fees and Charges Income Guarantee Scheme funded by MHCLG.
Law & Governance and Procurement **Budget** £8.3m **Variation** £0.2m (2.9%) overspend **RAG rating** RED **Outcomes Achieved** Yes	<u>Yearend variation to budget</u> An overspend of £0.2m is reported. <u>Key Issues</u> Within the service, there is an overspend in the legal services£0.4m which is primarily attributable to the increase in demand and costs relating to Counsel services for children in care. This is partially offset by an underspend of £0.2m in procurement due to greater income achieved through retrospective rebates built into contracts with specific suppliers. <u>Financial Impact of COVID-19</u> Included in the yearend position is £1.5m expenditure on Personal Protective Equipment purchased by the Council to protect staff and contractors in the delivery of frontline services.
Community Safety **Budget** £24.0m **Variation** £0.3m (1.4%) Underspend **RAG rating** GREEN **Outcomes Achieved**	<u>Yearend variation to budget</u> An underspend of £0.3m is reported. <u>Key Issues</u> At year end there is an underspend of £0.2m for Fire & Rescue services. This is due to a significant reduction in vehicle movements resulting in savings on travel and fuel costs. Furthermore, the national emergency service communications programme was not delivered in year as planned, resulting in several local projects not being completed due to external supplier availability as a consequence of COVID-19. Trading Standards report an underspend of £0.1m as a result of the income received during the year being above anticipated levels and additional cost savings having been realised through adopting different ways of working during the pandemic.

Corporate Measures

General Balances **RAG rating** Green	As set out in the table on Annex C-4 the current forecast for general balances at 31 March 2021 is £34.6m, compared to the position at 1 April 2020 of £28.7m. This position reflects the Directorate underspend of £5.9m being transferred to general balances at year end. The risk assessed level for general balances for 2020/21 was £23.4m. The risk assessed level for 2021/22 is £28.8m reflecting the changing risk environment that has emerged as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. The Council's external auditors will assess the Council's financial sustainability as part of their Value for Money Commentary. The increase in general balances above the risk assessed level will provide evidence that the Council is financially sustainable.
Reserves **RAG rating** Green	On the 1 April 2020 Earmarked Reserves totalled £110.6m. This is £7.7m higher than previously reported due to the movement of £7.7m from Capital Grants and Contributions to Capital Earmarked Reserves which was agreed during the audit of the 2019/20 accounts to give greater flexibility for the use of the funding. As set out in Annex 3a on 31 March 2021 reserves are £159.1m an increase of £48.5m. This position is after the transfer of the DSG High Needs Deficit of £19.1m to the DSG unusable reserve as set out below. The increase in reserves includes contributions to two new reserves; £14.2m to the COVID-19 Reserve and £6.0m to the Council Tax Collection Fund reserve plus planned contributions agreed by Council as part of the 2020/21 Budget in February 2020 to the Capital Reserve (£2.2m), the Budget Prioritisation Reserve (£4.4m) and the Demographic Risk Reserve (£3.0m) An additional £10.3m held is also being held in the Budget Prioritisation Reserve to support Adult Social Care and Mental Health service pressures in future years. The Grants and Contributions Reserves holds unspent specific grants including Contain Outbreak Management Fund and Surge Funding Grant of £9.9m as well as £3.5m Public Health Reserve and DSG Grant of £2.1m. <u>Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) Deficit</u> The School and Early Years Finance (England) Regulations 2020 came into force on 21 February 2020 and are applicable to the 2020/21 accounts. The regulations stipulate that a deficit on the DSG must be carried forward to be funded from future DSG income unless permission is sought from the Secretary of State for Education to fund the deficit from general resources. Further clarification of the accounting treatment for deficit DSG balances was provided by the Local Authorities (Capital Finance and Accounting) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2020 which came into force on 29 <u>November 2020. These stipulated that where a local authority has a</u> deficit

	in respect of its school budget for a financial year beginning on 1st April 2020, 2021 or 2022, the authority— (a) must not charge to a revenue account an amount in respect of that deficit; and (b) must charge the amount of the deficit to an account established, charged and used solely for the purpose of recognising deficits in respect of its school budget As a result of this, an unusable reserve has been created on the balance sheet to hold the negative balance. This is different to the previous accounting treatment where the negative balance is held within the Council's total Earmarked Reserves. The Council has existing unusable reserves such as the Pension Reserve. Unusable reserves are usually created to hold accounting adjustments that cannot be charged to the general fund and have no cash value. The new DSG unusable reserve is unique in that it the deficit balance has a real impact on the Council's cash balance. Within the Council's brought forward Earmarked Reserves balance of £110.6m was a negative balance of £11.2m relating to High Needs DSG. This balance and the net in year DSG deficit of £7.9m has been transferred to the DSG Unusable Reserve which has a negative balance of £19.0m at 31 March 2021.
Grants **RAG rating** Green	As set out in Annex C-5a government grants totalling £422.1m have been received by the Council during 2020/21. This has increased by £3.5m from the last report and comprises the last tranche for 2020/21 of Contain Outbreak Management Fund Surge Funding Grant of £3.6m, additional funding for Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children £1.2m offset by a decrease in the Dedicated Schools Grant of £1.3m. The grant funding that is being managed within the directorates and the associated spend against the funding is set out in the paragraphs above. A summary of this funding and how it has been allocated is set out in Annex C-5b.
Medium Term Financial Plan Savings **RAG rating** Red **% of savings expected to be achieved** 84.6%	The 2020/21 budget agreed by Council in February 2020, included planned savings of £21.8m of which £15.7m relates to Corporate saving plans and £6.1m relates to Directorate saving plans. Overall, 97.7% of these savings have been delivered compared to the target of 95% set out in the budget agreed by Council in February 2020. £15.7m (100%) of Corporate savings plans have been or are forecast to be delivered by year end. £5.6m, 91% of the directorate savings have been delivered. £0.5m, 9% of the directorate savings haven't been delivered which The majority of these savings relate to income generation which has been affected by the COVID-19 pandemic.

	The budget pressures arising from savings which have not been delivered form part of the Directorate positions reported above. £4.0m service redesign savings due to be achieved in 2020/21 were temporarily funded as part of the revised budget agreed by Council on 8 September 2020. Permanent savings proposals were agreed as part of the 2021/22 Budget and Business Planning process. 100% of the £14.9m additional one-off savings agreed as part of the revised budget have been achieved. A significant proportion of the savings were delivered as a result of reduced activity during the year as the Council put in place measures to comply with the Coronavirus Act, Health Protection Regulations and government guidance to manage the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.
Strategic Measures **RAG rating** Green	Overall there is a breakeven position reported for Strategic Measures. <u>Capital Financing</u> The borrowing costs for capital projects that deliver service savings and are funded by Prudential Borrowing are recharged to the directorates. There is an overspend created by a shortfall of £2.3m on internal recharges to directorates in 2020/21 as a result of a combination of factors, This includes delays to the delivery of schemes funded by prudential borrowing and the ability to defer borrowing and fund schemes temporarily from other funding sources with the capital programme. As a result of the deferral of prudential borrowing, the Minimum Revenue Provision charge for 2020/21 is £0.8m lower than budgeted. <u>Treasury Management</u> There is **£1.0m** additional interest earned on cash balances. The table in Annex C - 4 sets out average in-house cash balances and average rates of return for March 2021. The provisional outturn position for in house interest receivable is **£3.4m**, which is **£0.9m** above budget. This was achieved by increasing the long term lending limit and arranging longer term loans which attract a higher rate of interest. External Fund dividends are paid quarterly. The provisional outturn position for external fund returns is **£3.9m**. This is £0.1m above budget. The value of external funds increased by £1.6m in March 2021 to a value of £100.7m as at 31.03.2021, which is above the original purchase cost of £100.5m.



Interest Payable is forecast to be in line with the budgeted figure of **£15.0m**.

There is also £0.3m of unused Corporate Contingency compared to an original budget of £4.9m. During 2020/21 the use of the Corporate Contingency budget includes £3.3m has been transferred to Children's Social Care to offset placement pressures and £1.1m to meet the additional 0.75% Green Book pay award.

As set out in the introduction the unused £14.2m of COVID-19 Expenditure budget has been transferred to the COVID-19 Reserve for use in future years.

Debt and Loan Write Offs & Impairments

Financial Impact of COVID-19. Customer debt attributed to COVID-19 has increased from £0.02m to £0.03m; all this debt relates to three property customers; discussions in relation to relief applications are continuing with the service.

Corporate Debtors

The average collection rate increased by 1.4% to 93.6%, still below target. However, the collection rate for invoices over £10,000 was 100% this period.

RAG rating
Green

Debt requiring impairment (DRI) reduced to below the £0.3m target; the year end impairment was £0.297m. The reduction in bad debt is due to entry of write offs approved by Cabinet in February and March into the accounts, as well as the cancellation of a disputed waster invoice. The highest debt linked to one customer accounts for 8% of bad debt and relates to HMP Libraries and procedural issues with invoicing; work is underway to support the service.

Performance Indicators for this area are set out in Annex C-4.

Debt and Loan Write Offs & Impairments	The invoice collection rate has dropped slightly to 90%, below the 92% target. Unsecure debt over one year saw a slight decrease for the second month, however, remains well above the current target.
– Adult Contribution to Care Charges	Debt requiring impairment (DRI) reduced this month by £0.16m and the final year end impairment figure was £2.69m which enabled a £0.13m reduction to the ASC impairment. The reported pressure did not materialise at year end as expected; the forecast method will be reviewed with the team to assess if the methodology can be enhanced through 21-22.
RAG rating Green	<u>Impact of COVID-19.</u> The team continue to work through the backlog of case work linked to the COVID-19 pause April – September last year. There are a four high value cases with a value of approximately £0.250m, these require the support of legal services and outside counsel; it is expected these will not be quickly resolved. There continues to be delays on and state systems i.e. Court of Protection, Probate Office, house sales and HMCTS. However, probate cases have picked up and debt in the category has reduced to 19% from 23% Internal operational challenges continue to effect debt collection: impact of remote working; additional case work linked to deaths; case backlog from held action at start of the year. The team are focused on stabilising process and case work over 21-22 and trying to regain position. As reported previously this may take many months to stabilise and likely the impact felt well into the next financial year. <u>Performance Indicators for this area are set out in Annex C-4.</u>

Business Management & Monitoring Report
Summary of Financial Position for 2020/21

Directorate	Final Net Budget	Total Spend	Year End Variance	Year End Variance	Variance Last Month	Change in Variance
			underspend- overspend+			
	£000	£000	£000	%	£000	£000
Children's Services	133,911	130,487	-3,424	-2.6%	-1,500	-1,939
Adults Services	197,603	197,633	30	0.0%	0	30
Public Health	788	788	0	0.0%	0	0
Environment and Place	63,542	65,503	1,961	3.1%	550	1,411
Customers, Organisational Development and Resources	35,094	34,108	-986	-2.8%	-610	-376
Commerical Development, Assets and Investments	49,963	46,445	-3,518	-7.0%	-2,416	-1,102
Directorate Total Net	**480,901**	**474,964**	**-5,937**	**-1.2%**	**-3,976**	**-1,976**

Business Management & Monitoring Report
Summary of Financial Position for 2020/21

Directorate	Final Net Budget	Total Spend	Year End Variance	Year End Variance	Variance Last Month	Change in Variance
			underspend- overspend+			
	£000	£000	£000	%	£000	£000
Contributions to (+)/from (-)reserves	-3,774	-3,774	0	0.0%		0
Contribution to (+)/from(-) balances	4,591		-4,591	-100.0%	4,376	-8967
Public Health Saving Recharge	0	0	0	0.0%		0
Transformation Savings	0	0	0	0.0%		0
Contingency	414	53	-361	-87.2%		-361
COVID-19 Budget	21,042	21,042	0	0.0%		0
Insurance	2,942	2,942	0	0.0%		0
Capital Financing	24,077	23,218	-859	-3.6%		-859
Prudential Borrowing Internal Recharge	-5,260	-2,978	2,282	-43.4%		2,282
Interest on Balances	-5,189	-6,307	-1,118	-21.5%	-400	-718
Strategic Measures Budget	38,843	34,196	-4,647	-12.0%	3,976	-8,623
Unringfenced Government Grants	-44,018	-43,860	158	-0.4%		158
Council Tax Surpluses	-8,610	-8,610	0	0.0%		0
Business Rates Top-Up	-40,546	-40,546	0	0.0%		0
Business Rates From District Councils	-35,125	-35,224	-99	0.3%		-99
Council Tax Requirement	391,445	380,920	-10,525	-2.7%	0	-10,540

Business Management & Monitoring Report
Summary of Financial Position for 2020/21
Budget Monitoring - Children's Services

		Final Net Budget	Total Spend	Year End Variance	Year End Variance	Variance Last Month	Change in Variance
		£000	£000	underspend- overspend+ £000	%	£000	£000
CEF1	Education & Learning	30,515	27,214	-3,301	-10.8%	-1,500	-1,801
CEF2	Children's Social Care	30,532	29,525	-1,007	-3.3%	0	-1,007
CEF3	Children's Social Care Countywide	66,756	67,564	808	1.2%	0	808
CEF4	Schools	970	1,065	95	9.8%	0	80
CEF5	Children's Services Central Costs	5,138	5,119	-19	-0.4%	0	-19
	Directorate Total	**133,911**	**130,487**	**-3,424**	**-2.6%**	**-1,500**	**-1,939**

Business Management & Monitoring Report
Summary of Financial Position for 2020/21
Budget Monitoring - Adult Services

		Final Net Budget	Total Spend	Year End Variance	Year End Variance	Variance Last Month	Change in Variance
		£000	£000	underspend- overspend+ £000	%	£000	£000
SCS1-1A	Better Care Pool	80,372	80,372	0	0.0%	-100	100
SCS1-1B	Adults with Care and Support Needs Pool	98,984	98,886	-98	-0.1%	-100	2
SCS1-2 to SCS1-9	Other Adult Social Care	11,322	10,790	-532	-4.7%	-200	-332
	Subtotal Adult Social Care	190,678	190,048	-630	-0.3%	-400	-230
SCS2	Commissioning	6,925	7,585	660	9.5%	400	260
	Directorate Total	**197,603**	**197,633**	**30**	**0.0%**	**0**	**30**

Business Management & Monitoring Report
Summary of Financial Position for 2020/21
Budget Monitoring - Public Health

		Final Net Budget	Total Spend	Year End Variance	Year End Variance	Variance Last Month	Change in Variance
		£000	£000	underspend- overspend+ £000	%	£000	£000
PH1& 2	Public Health Functions	31,395	29,329	-2,066	-6.6%	-1,100	-966
PH3	Public Health Recharges	633	633	0	0.0%	0	0
PH4	Grant Income	-31,240	-31,240	0	0.0%	0	0
	Transfer to Public Health Reserve	0	2,066	2,066	0.0%	1,100	966
	Directorate Total	**788**	**788**	**0**	**0.0%**	**0**	**0**

Business Management & Monitoring Report
Summary of Financial Position for 2020/21
Budget Monitoring - Environment and Place

		Final Net Budget	Total Spend	Year End Variance	Year End Variance	Variance Last Month	Change in Variance
		£000	£000	underspend- overspend+ £000	%	£000	£000
PG1	Planning & Growth Management	16	16	0	0.0%	0	0
PG2	Planning & Place	3,999	4,122	123	3.1%	-300	423
PG3	Growth & Economy	93	1,792	1,699	1826.9%	450	1,249
COM1	Communities Management	1,094	1,046	-48	-4.4%	0	-48
COM2	Community Operations	58,340	58,527	187	0.3%	400	-213
	Directorate Total	**63,542**	**65,503**	**1,961**	**3.1%**	**550**	**1,411**

Business Management & Monitoring Report
Summary of Financial Position for 2020/21
Budget Monitoring - Customers, Organisational Development and Resources

		Final Net Budget	Total Spend	Year End Variance	Year End Variance	Variance Last Month	Change in Variance
		£000	£000	underspend- overspend+ £000	%	£000	£000
COD1	Corporate Services	2,209	2,461	252	11.4%	0	252
COD2	Human Resources & Organisational Development	2,393	2,181	-212	-8.9%	0	-212
COD3	Communications, Strategy & Insight	2,436	1,819	-617	-25.3%	-421	-196
COD4	ICT & Digital	10,746	10,741	-5	0.0%	0	-5
COD5	Culture & Customer Experience	11,143	10,908	-235	-2.1%	-189	-46
COD6	Finance	6,167	5,998	-169	-2.7%	0	-169
	Directorate Total	**35,094**	**34,108**	**-986**	**-2.8%**	**-610**	**-376**

Business Management & Monitoring Report
Summary of Financial Position for 2020/21
Budget Monitoring - Commercial Development, Assets & Investments

		Final Net Budget	Total Spend	Year End Variance	Year End Variance	Variance Last Month	Change in Variance
		£000	£000	underspend- overspend+ £000	%	£000	£000
CDAI1	Property, Investment & Facilities Management	16,983	13,571	-3,412	-20.1%	-2,636	-776
CDAI2	Law & Governance	8,297	8,541	244	2.9%	200	44
CDAI3	Community Safety	23,901	23,576	-325	-1.4%	20	-345
CDAI4	CDAI Management Costs	782	757	-25	-3.2%	0	-25
	Directorate Total	**49,963**	**46,445**	**-3,518**	**-7.0%**	**-2,416**	**-1,102**

COVID Budget 2020/21
Cabinet 22 June 2021

	COVID - 19 Expenditure Virement August 2020	COVID - 19 Expenditure Virement December 2020	COVID - 19 Expenditure Virement March 2021	COVID - 19 Expenditure Year End Reconcilation Journal	Total COVID-19 Expenditure 2020/21
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
Children's Services					
Gross Expenditure	1,724	664	709	856	3,953
Gross Income	0	0	0	624	624
	1,724	664	709	1,480	4,577
Adult Services					
Gross Expenditure	6,874	891	445	-86	8,124
Gross Income	0	0	0	0	0
	6,874	891	445	-86	8,124
Public Health					
Gross Expenditure	0	0	0	0	0
Gross Income	0	0	0	0	0
	0	0	0	0	0
Environment and Place					
Gross Expenditure	629	50	1,087	-127	1,639
Gross Income	0	0	0	3,092	3,092
	629	50	1,087	2,965	4,731
Customers & Organisational Development					
Gross Expenditure	3,370	895	200	510	4,975
Gross Income	0	0	0	2,079	2,079
	3,370	895	200	2,589	7,054
Commercial Development, Assets & Investment					
Gross Expenditure	178	246	427	194	1,045
Gross Income	0	0	0	895	895
	178	246	427	1,089	1,940
Corporate Measures	10,916	0	-800	2,777	12,893
Total Expenditure & Income Losses	**23,691**	**2,746**	**2,068**	**10,814**	**39,319**

COVID Budget 2020/21
Children's Services
Cabinet 22 June 2021

		COVID - 19 Expenditure Virement August 2020	COVID - 19 Expenditure Virement December 2020	COVID - 19 Expenditure Virement March 2021	COVID - 19 Expenditure Year End Reconcilation Journal	Total COVID-19 Expenditure 2020/21
		£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
CEF1	Education & Learning					
	Gross Expenditure	163	53	135	46	397
	Gross Income				624	624
		163	53	135	670	1,021
CEF2	Children's Social Care					
	Gross Expenditure		23	52	1,016	1,091
	Gross Income					0
		0	23	52	1,016	1,091
CEF3	Children's Social Care Countywide Services					
	Gross Expenditure	1,200	195	117	36	1,548
	Gross Income					0
		1,200	195	117	36	1,548
CEF4	Schools					
	Gross Expenditure	186	220	347	-232	521
	Gross Income					0
		186	220	347	-232	521
CEF5	Children's Services Central Costs					
	Gross Expenditure	175	173	58	-10	396
	Gross Income					0
		175	173	58	-10	396
	Expenditure Total	1,724	664	709	856	3,953
	Income Total	0	0	0	624	624
	Total Children's Services Net Budget	**1,724**	**664**	**709**	**1,480**	**4,577**

COVID Budget 2020/21
Adult Services
Cabinet 22 June 2021

		COVID - 19 Expenditure Virement August 2020	COVID - 19 Expenditure Virement December 2020	COVID - 19 Expenditure Virement March 2021	COVID - 19 Expenditure Year End Reconcilation Journal	Total COVID-19 Expenditure 2020/21
		£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
SCS1	**Adult Social Care**					
SCS1-1A	Better Care Fund Pool Contribution					
	Gross Expenditure.	3,816	517	128		4,461
	Gross Income.					0
		3,816	517	128		4,461
SCS1-1B	Adults with Care and Support Needs Pool Contribution					
	Gross Expenditure.	1,994	27	23		2,044
	Gross Income.					0
		1,994	27	23		2,044
SCS1-2 to	Other Adult Social Care Services					
SCS1-9	Gross Expenditure					0
	Gross Income					0
		0	0	0		0
	Total Adult Social Care	**5,810**	**544**	**151**	**0**	**6,505**
SCS2	**Commissioning**					
	Gross Expenditure	1,064	347	294	-86	1,619
	Gross Income					0
	Total Commissioning	**1,064**	**347**	**294**	**-86**	1,619
	Expenditure Total	6,874	891	445	-86	8,124
	Income Total	0	0	0	0	0
	Total Adult Services Net Budget	**6,874**	**891**	**445**	**-86**	**8,124**

COVID Budget 2020/21
Public Health
Cabinet 22 June 2021

		COVID - 19 Expenditure Virement August 2020	COVID - 19 Expenditure Virement December 2020	COVID - 19 Expenditure Virement March 2021	COVID - 19 Expenditure Year End Reconcilation Journal	Total COVID-19 Expenditure 2020/21
		£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
PH 1 & 2	Public Health Functions					
	Gross Expenditure					
	Gross Income					
		0	0	0	0	0
PH3	Public Health Recharges					
	Gross Expenditure					
	Gross Income					
		0	0	0	0	0
PH4	Grant Income					
	Gross Expenditure					
	Gross Income					
		0	0	0	0	0
	Expenditure Total	0	0	0	0	0
	Income Total	0	0	0	0	0
	Total Public Health Net Budget	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**

COVID Budget 2020/21
Environment and Place
Cabinet 22 June 2021

		COVID - 19 Expenditure Virement August 2020	COVID - 19 Expenditure Virement December 2020	COVID - 19 Expenditure Virement March 2021	COVID - 19 Expenditure Year End Reconcilation Journal	Total COVID-19 Expenditure 2020/21
		£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
COM1	Communities Management					
	Gross Expenditure	100	50	606	-127	629
	Gross Income					0
		100	50	606	-127	629
COM2	Community Operations					
	Gross Expenditure	529		465		994
	Gross Income				3,092	3,092
		529	0	465	3,092	4,086
PG1	Planning & Growth Management					
	Gross Expenditure			16		16
	Gross Income					0
		0	0	16	0	16
	Gross Expenditure	629	50	1,087	-127	1,639
	Gross Income	0	0	0	3,092	3,092
	Total Communities	**629**	**50**	**1,087**	**2,965**	**4,731**

COVID Budget 2020/21
Customers, Organisational Development & Resources
Cabinet 22 June 2021

		COVID - 19 Expenditure Virement August 2020	COVID - 19 Expenditure Virement December 2020	COVID - 19 Expenditure Virement March 2021	COVID - 19 Expenditure Year End Reconcilation Journal	Total COVID-19 Expenditure 2020/21
		£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
COD1	Corporate Services					
	Gross Expenditure	188	91	153	517	949
	Gross Income					0
		188	91	153	517	949
COD2	Human Resources & Organisational Development					
	Gross Expenditure					0
	Gross Income					0
		0	0	0	0	0
COD3	Communications, Strategy & Insight					
	Gross Expenditure					0
	Gross Income					0
		0	0	0	0	0
COD4	ICT & Digital					
	Gross Expenditure					0
	Gross Income					0
		0	0	0	0	0
COD5	Culture & Customer Experience					
	Gross Expenditure	1,861	600	47		2,508
	Gross Income				2,079	2,079
		1,861	600	47	2,079	4,587
COD6	Finance					
	Gross Expenditure	1,321	204		-7	1,518
	Gross Income					0
		1,321	204	0	-7	1,518
	Expenditure Total	3,370	895	200	510	4,975
	Income Total	0	0	0	2,079	2,079
	Total Customers, Organisational Development & Resources Net Budget	**3,370**	**895**	**200**	**2,589**	**7,054**

COVID Budget 2020/21
Commerical Development, Assets & Investment
Cabinet 22 June 2021

		COVID - 19 Expenditure Virement August 2020	COVID - 19 Expenditure Virement December 2020	COVID - 19 Expenditure Virement March 2021	COVID - 19 Expenditure Year End Reconcilation Journal	Total COVID-19 Expenditure 2020/21
		£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
CDAI1	Property, Investment & Facilities Management					
	Gross Expenditure					0
	Gross Income				839	839
		0	0	0	839	839
CDAI2	Law & Governance					
	Gross Expenditure					0
	Gross Income					0
		0	0	0	0	0
CDAI3	Procurement					
	Gross Expenditure			155		155
	Gross Income					0
		0	0	155	0	155
CDAI4	CDAI Management Costs					
	Gross Expenditure	134	246	272	23	675
	Gross Income					0
		134	246	272	23	675
COM4	Community Safety					
	Gross Expenditure	44			171	215
	Gross Income				56	56
		44	0	0	227	271
	Expenditure Total	178	246	427	194	1,045
	Income Total	0	0	0	895	895
	Total Commerical Development, Assets & Investment Net Budget	**178**	**246**	**427**	**1,089**	**1,940**

COVID Budget 2020/21
Corporate Measures and Funding
Cabinet 22 June 2021

	COVID - 19 Expenditure Virement August 2020	COVID - 19 Expenditure Virement December 2020	COVID - 19 Expenditure Virement March 2021	COVID - 19 Expenditure Year End Reconcilation Journal	Total COVID-19 Expenditure 2020/21
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
Contributions to (+)/from (-)reserves	6,000				6,000
COVID-19 Budget	18,267	4,946	-2,119		21,094
Interest on Balances	800		-800		0
Unringfenced Government Grants					0
Total Corporate Measures and Funding	**25,067**	**4,946**	**-2,919**	**0**	**27,094**

Business Management & Monitoring Report - March 2021
Cabinet - 22 June 2021
Earmarked Reserves

	2020/21			
	Balance at 1 April 2020 £000	Movement £000	Balance at 31 March 2021 £000	Commentary
Schools' Reserves	14,565	2,737	17,302	In accordance with the Education Reform Act 1988, the scheme of Local Management of Schools provides for the carry forward of individual schools surpluses and deficits. These reserves are committed to be spent on schools. Other School Reserves cover a number of miscellaneous education activities, including amounts loaned to individual schools against school reserves, and School Partnership Accounts which are operated in respect of inter-school activities, primarily relating
Vehicle and Equipment Reserve	2,871	-790	2,081	This reserve is to fund future replacements of vehicles and equipment.
*Grants and Contributions Reserve	21,415	1,465	22,880	This reserve has been set up to hold unspent grants and contributions committed to be spent in future years. This includes the Dedicated Schools Grant and Public Health Grant
Government Initiatives	806	1,325	2,131	This reserve is used to hold underspends on budgets funded by unringfenced grants held that relate to specific agreed outcomes or the implementation of Government initiatives.
Trading Accounts	542	-30	512	This reserve holds funds relating to traded activities to help manage investment.
Council Elections	531	218	749	This will be used to fund future elections. In years where no County Elections take place any underspend on the Council Elections budget will be transferred to this reserve.

Business Management & Monitoring Report - March 2021
Cabinet - 22 June 2021
Earmarked Reserves

	2020/21			
	Balance at 1 April 2020 £000	Movement £000	Balance at 31 March 2021 £000	Commentary
Partnership Reserves	3,003	-51	2,952	To be spent on OxLEP related project expenditure and the Growth Deal
On Street Car Parking	2,010	1,139	3,149	This surplus has arisen under the operation of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 (section 55). The purposes for which these monies can be used are defined by statute.
Transformation Reserve	3,134	-2,036	1,098	This reserve is needed to fund the implementation costs of the Council's Transformation programme.
Demographic Risk Reserve	3,000	3,000	6,000	In light of the significant pressures relating to High Needs DSG and other budgets with demographic volatility. This reserve will help to manage demographic risk.
Youth Provision Reserve	1,000	-281	719	This reserve is available to provide seed funding for locality based youth provision
Budget Prioritisation Reserve	3,444	11,200	14,644	This reserve is being used to support the implementation of the Council's priorities and the Medium Term Financial Plan.
Insurance Reserve	11,392	1,069	12,461	This reserve covers the County Council for insurance claims that, based on the previous experience of the County Council, are likely to be received, as well as a number of insurance related issues.
Business Rates Reserve	1,049	0	1,049	This reserve is to smooth the volatility of Business Rates income.

Business Management & Monitoring Report - March 2021
Cabinet - 22 June 2021
Earmarked Reserves

	2020/21			
	Balance at 1 April 2020 £000	Movement £000	Balance at 31 March 2021 £000	Commentary
Capital Reserves	41,282	6,084	47,366	This reserve has been established for the purpose of financing capital expenditure in future years.
Budget Equalisation Reserve	0	0	0	This reserve is being used to manage the cash flow implications of the variations to the Medium Term Financial Plan.
Investment Pump Priming Reserve	0	2,000	2,000	This reserve has been established to meet revenue costs associated with the Investment Strategy including optioneering and feasibility studies.
Council Tax Collection Fund Reserve	0	6,000	6,000	This reserve has been established to help manage the impact of COVID-19 on the Council Tax collection fund
Redundancy Reserve	548	1,223	1,771	This reserve has established to meet the costs of redundancy associated with service redesign and improvement.
COVID-19 Reserve		14,205	14,205	This reserve has been established to help manage the medium to long term financial impact of COVID-19
Total Reserves	**110,592**	**48,477**	**159,069**	

Business Management Report: Children's Services
Summary of Financial Position for 2020/2021
MAINTAINED SCHOOL BALANCES

1. Number of Schools with Deficit/Surplus Budgets

	Number of Schools 31 March 2020		Number of Schools 31 March 2021	
	Deficit Balance	Surplus Balance	Deficit Balance	Surplus Balance
Primary	16	117	13	118
Secondary	1	0	1	0
Special	0	7	0	5
Total	**17**	**124**	**14**	**123**

2. Balances as at 31 March 2020 and 31 March 2021

	Balances at 31 March 2020			Balances at 31 March 2021		
	Deficit Balance	Surplus Balance	Total Balance	Deficit Balance	Surplus Balance	Total Balance
	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m
Primary	0.565	-8.947	-8.382	0.806	-12.336	-11.530
Secondary	1.527	0.000	1.527	1.258	0.000	1.258
Special	0.000	-1.217	-1.217	0.000	-1.483	-1.483
Total	**2.092**	**-10.164**	**-8.072**	**2.064**	**-13.819**	**-11.755**
Schools Contingency, Closed Schools and Other Balances			-6.404			-5.422
School Loans and Other School Related Reserves			-0.089			-0.125
Schools Balance as shown in Annex 3a			**-14.565**			**-17.302**

	Balances 31 March 2021	
	Largest Individual Surplus	Largest Individual Deficit
	£m	£m
Primary	-0.425	0.184
Secondary	0.000	1.257
Special	-0.438	0.000

Summary of Financial Position 2020/21
ON/OFF-STREET CAR PARKING 2020/21 - ACTUAL INCOME / EXPENDITURE AND IMPACT ON PARKING RESERVE

	ON - STREET PARKING									OFF - STREET PARKING			
	OXFORD CITY Pay & Display	OXFORD CITY Parking Contraventions	OXFORD CITY Designated Parking Places	ABINGDON	HENLEY	WALLINGFORD & FARINGDON	SUBTOTAL a	BUS LANE CAMERA ENFORCEMENT b	TOTAL ON - STREET PARKING a+b	WATER EATON PARK AND RIDE c	THORNHILL PARK AND RIDE d	BICESTER PARK AND RIDE e	TOTAL OFF-STREET PARKING c+d+e
	£	£	£	£	£		£	£	£	£	£	£	£
EXPENDITURE													
PURCHASE EQUIPMENT	1,255						1,255	222,049	**223,304**				**0**
MANAGEMENT CONTRACT	277,252	805,258	241,516	30,706	81,938		1,436,670	165,913	**1,602,583**	172,989	171,300		**344,289**
STAFF COSTS	69,471	65,217	65,259	8,508	8,508		216,963	13,873	**230,836**	21,271	21,271		**42,542**
PARKING SHOP	13,873	27,745	216,414	0	0		258,032	79,463	**337,496**	2,775	2,775		**5,549**
OTHER	204,458	195,141	182,102	6,888	15,666	295	604,550		**604,550**	144,039	273,762	64,719	**482,519**
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	**566,308**	**1,093,361**	**705,291**	**46,102**	**106,113**	**295**	**2,517,470**	**481,298**	**2,998,768**	**341,073**	**469,107**	**64,719**	**874,899**
INCOME													
TOTAL	-3,348,554	-565,300	-1,195,216	-45,200	-90,500	-3,309	-5,248,080	-1,171,626	**-6,419,706**	-231,700	-643,085		**-874,785**
TOTAL INCOME	**-3,348,554**	**-565,300**	**-1,195,216**	**-45,200**	**-90,500**	**-3,309**	**-5,248,080**	**-1,171,626**	**-6,419,706**	**-231,700**	**-643,085**	**0**	**-874,785**
NET SURPLUS (-) or DEFICIT (+)	**-2,782,246**	**528,061**	**-489,925**	**902**	**15,613**	**-3,015**	**-2,730,609**	**-690,328**	**-3,420,938**	**109,373**	**-173,978**	**64,719**	**114**
			###########										

Balance on Parking Reserve as at 1 April 2020 **2,010,482**

Designated parking places refer to any bay designated to a class of vehicle or specific purpose and include pay & display bays (some enforcement of rather than income from parking charges), resident's bays, business bays, disabled bays, loading bays, doctors bays, ambulance bays, etc. whether they are inside of outside of a controlled parking zone.

Parking contraventions are any other contraventions whether they be inside or outside of controlled parking zones.

On-Street Parking	2,730,609	(a)
Less Net Parking Budget	-363,000	not included in the table above
Surplus from Camera Enforcement	690,328	(b)
Surplus from Thornhill P&R	173,978	(d)
TOTAL CONTRIBUTION TO PARKING RESERVE	**3,231,916**	
Deficit from Water Eaton	-109,373	(c)
Deficit from Bicester	-64,719	(e)
TOTAL CONTRIBUTION FROM PARKING RESERVE	**-174,092**	

Contribution to 2020/21 revenue budget **-1,919,300**

Balance on Parking Reserve as at 31 March 2021 **3,149,006**

General Balances

	£m	£m
General Balances at 31 March 2020		24.1
Planned contribution as per MTFS in 2020/21		4.6
General Balances at 1 April 2020		**28.7**
Directorate and Strategic Measures Underspend		5.9
General Balances at 31 March 2021		**34.6**
Risked Assessed Level of General Balances 2020/21		23.4

Strategic Measures

Month	Average cash balance	Average rate of return
March 2021	£422.95m	0.69%

Performance Indicator	Actual	Target
Average interest rate achieved in-house compared to treasury Management Budgeted Rate	0.86%	>=0.85%
Average Annualised Return achieved compared to Benchmark Rate* (Pooled Fund)	3.91%	>=3.75%

Debt and Loan Write Offs & Impairments - Corpotate Debtors

Corporate Debtors

Performance Indicator	Target	January	February	March
Invoice collection rate	97.50%	92.33%	92.22%	93.63%
Avg. days outstanding	35	29	30	30
Debt requiring impairment	<£0.30m	£0.56m	£0.57m	£0.30m
Unsecure debt over 1 year	<£0.50m	£0.54m	£0.55m	£0.46m
Write offs as % of income YTD	<0.10%	0.003%	0.003%	0.067%

Adult Contribution to Care Charges

Performance Indicator	Target	January	February	March
Invoice collection rate	92.00%	90.24%	90.17%	90.04%
Avg. days outstanding	100	106	104	102
Debt requiring impairment	<£2.00m	£3.08m	£2.97m	£2.69m
Unsecure debt over 1 year	<£1.60m	£4.41m	£4.33m	£4.26m
Write offs as % of income YTD	<1.0%	0.320%	0.397%	0.593%

Business Management & Monitoring Report - March 2021
Summary of Financial Position for 2020/21
Government Grants 2020/21

Ringfenced	Directorate	Issued By	Esimate 2020/21 £000	In year Adjustments / New Allocations reported previously £000	In year Adjustments/ New Allocations reported this time £000	Latest Allocation £000	Total Spent 2020/21 £000	Carried Forward for use in future years £000	Returned/To be Returned to Issuer £000
	Children's Services								
	Dedicated School Grants								
R	Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) - Schools Block	DfE	117,406	-341	-1,328	115,737	115,620	117	
R	Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) - Central Block	DfE	4,126	0	0	4,126	4,069	57	
R	Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) - Early Years Block	DfE	38,639	113	0	38,752	38,976	-224	
R	Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) - High Needs Block	DfE	60,373	-2,434	0	57,939	67,440	-9,501	
	Subtotal DSG Grants		**220,544**	**-2,662**	**-1,328**	**216,554**	**226,105**	**-9,551**	
	School Grants								
R	Pupil Premium	DfE	5,255	1,763	0	7,018	7,018	0	
R	Education Funding Agency - Sixth Form Funding and Threshold	DfE	224	16	-2	238	238	0	
R	PE and Sport Grant	DfE	2,350	-47	0	2,303	2,303	0	
R	Universal Infant Free School Meals	DfE	4,020	-47	0	3,973	3,973	0	
R	Teacher's Pay Grant	DfE	1,430	235	0	1,665	1,665	0	
R	Teacher's Pension Grant	DfE	2,771	2,764	0	5,535	5,535	0	
R	Coronavirus Catch Up Premium	DfE	0	1,371	0	1,371	1,371	0	
R	Coronavirus (Covid-19) Schools Fund	DfE	0	413	0	413	413	0	
	Subtotal School Grants		**16,050**	**6,468**	**-2**	**22,516**	**22,516**	**0**	
	Other Children's Services Grants								
R	Youth Justice Board	YJB	548	7	0	555	555	0	
R	Asylum (USAC and Post 18)	HO	1,844	0	1,149	2,993	2,993	0	
R	Role of the Virtual School Head	DfE	0	66	0	66	66	0	
R	Extended Personal Adviser Duty Grant	DfE	77	0	0	77	77	0	
R	Staying Put Implementation Grant	DfE	225	46	0	271	271	0	
R	Remand Framework	YJB	25	52	0	77	77	0	
	Subtotal Other Children's Services Grants		**2,719**	**171**	**1,149**	**4,039**	**4,039**	**0**	
	TOTAL CHILDREN'S SERVICES		**239,313**	**3,977**	**-181**	**243,109**	**252,660**	**-9,551**	

Business Management & Monitoring Report - March 2021
Summary of Financial Position for 2020/21
Government Grants 2020/21

Ringfenced	Directorate	Issued By	Esimate 2020/21	In year Adjustments / New Allocations reported previously	In year Adjustments/ New Allocations reported this time	Latest Allocation	Total Spent 2020/21	Carried Forward for use in future years	Returned/To be Returned to Issuer
			£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
	Adult Services								
R	Improved Better Care Fund	DHSC	8,099	0	0	8,099	8099	0	
R	Winter Pressures	MHCLG	2,292	0	0	2,292	2292	0	
R	Infection Control Grant 1	DHSC		7314	0	7,314	7141	0	173
R	Infection Control Grant 2	DHSC		6314	0	6,314	6314	0	
R	Lateral Flow Testing	DHSC		1840	0	1,840	1651	0	189
R	Staffing Capacity Grant	DHSC		1146	0	1,146	1146	0	
	TOTAL ADULT SERVICES		**10,391**	**16,614**	**0**	**27,005**	**26,643**	**0**	**362**
	Public Health								
R	Public Health Grant	DHSC	31,329	-89	0	**31,240**	29174	2066	
R	HIV PREP Grant	DHSC		122	0	**122**	122	0	
R	Wayfinding Grant	SE		130	-104	**26**	9.1	16.9	
R	Track and Trace	MHCLG		2858	0	**2,858**	1198	1660	
	TOTAL PUBLIC HEALTH		**31,329**	**3,021**	**-104**	**34,246**	**30,503**	**3,743**	**0**
	Environment & Place								
R	Bus Service Operators Grant	DfT	0	795	0	795	-795	0	
R	Additional Dedicated H2S & College Transport Grant	DfT		819	0	819	-819	0	
R	COVID-19 Bus Services Support Grant	DfT		422	165	587	106	59	422
R	Natural England	DEFRA	227	0	0	227	-227	0	
	TOTAL ENVIRONMENT & PLACE		**227**	**2,036**	**165**	**2,428**	**-1,735**	**59**	**422**

Business Management & Monitoring Report - March 2021
Summary of Financial Position for 2020/21
Government Grants 2020/21

Ringfenced	Directorate	Issued By	Esimate 2020/21 £000	In year Adjustments / New Allocations reported previously £000	In year Adjustments/ New Allocations reported this time £000	Latest Allocation £000	Total Spent 2020/21 £000	Carried Forward for use in future years £000	Returned/To be Returned to Issuer £000
	Customers & Organisational Development								
R	Music Service	AC	837	0	0	837	837	0	
R	Library projects - Building Bridges	AC		15	0	15	15	0	
R	Food and essential supplies (COVID) grant	DEFRA		507	0	507	507	0	
R	Winter Support Grant	DWP		1,368	0	1,368	1,368	0	
R	Winter Support Grant Extension	DWP		476	0	476	476	0	
R	Support for Clinically Extremely Vulnerable	DHSC		715	0	715	46	669	
R	MaaS:CAV	Innovate UK	0	638	0	638	638	0	
R	V2 Go Project	Innovate UK	0	132	0	132	132	0	
R	OmniCAV	Innovate UK	0	235	0	235	235	0	
R	Park & Charge	Innovate UK	0	580	0	580	580	0	
R	Virgin Park & Charge	Innovate UK	0	26	0	26	26	0	
R	Data Driven Safety Tool	Innovate UK	0	151	0	151	151	0	
R	Quantum Gravitometer	Innovate UK	0	84	0	84	84	0	
R	Resilient CAV	Innovate UK	0	25	0	25	25	0	
R	Heart Park Project	DFT	0	90	0	90	90	0	
R	GTC DfT Congestion Tool	DFT	0	59	0	59	59	0	
R	CAVL4R	DFT	0	11	0	11	11	0	
	TOTAL CUSTOMERS & ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT		**837**	**5,112**	**0**	**5,949**	**5,280**	**669**	**0**
	Commercial Development , Aseets & Investment								
R	Fire Fighter's Pension Fund Grant	MHCLG	1,361	0	0	1,361			
R	Fire Fighter's New Dimensons Grant	MHCLG	40	-1	0	39			
R	Building Risk Review Grant	HO		60	0	60			
R	Protection Uplift Grant	HO		272	0	272			
	TOTAL COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT, ASSETS & INVESTMENT		**1,401**	**331**	**0**	**1,732**	**0**	**0**	**0**

Business Management & Monitoring Report - March 2021
Summary of Financial Position for 2020/21
Government Grants 2020/21

Ringfenced	Directorate	Issued By	Esimate 2020/21	In year Adjustments / New Allocations reported previously	In year Adjustments/ New Allocations reported this time	Latest Allocation	Total Spent 2020/21	Carried Forward for use in future years	Returned/To be Returned to Issuer
			£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
	Strategic Measures								
U	Lead Local Flood Authority	DEFRA	45			**45**			
U	Extended Rights to Free Travel	DfE	278	177		**455**			
U	Fire Revenue Grant	MHCLG	213			**213**			
U	Troubled Families - Service Transformation Grant	MHCLG	500			**500**			
U	Troubled Families Attachement Fees - Phase 2	MHCLG	143			**143**			
U	Troubled Families Payment by Result	MHCLG		73		**73**			
U	New Homes Bonus	MHCLG	4,137			**4,137**			
U	Local Reform & Community Voices Grant	DfE	515	103		**618**			
U	Independent Living Fund	DfE	3,454			**3,454**			
U	School Improvement and Brokering Grant	DfE	570	-13		**557**			
U	Section 31 Grant for Business Rate Compensation	MHCLG	5,144			**5,144**			
U	Social Care Support Grant	MHCLG	12,031			**12,031**			
U	Key Stage 2 Moderation and Key Stage 1 Phonics Grant	DfE		22		**22**			
U	COVID-19	MHCLG		20387		**20,387**			
U	Wellbeing for Education Return Grant	DfE		112		**112**			
R	Contain Oubreak Management Fund Surge Funding Grant	DHSC		12648	3,557	**16,205**			
U	Sales, Fees and Charges Compensation	MCLG		1,379		**1,379**			
U	Rough Sleeping Drug and Alcohol Treatment Grant Scheme	DHSC		788		**788**			
U	Business Rates Top-Up	MHCLG	40,546			**40,546**			
	Subtotal Strategic Measures		**67,576**	**35,676**	**3,557**	**106,809**	**0**	**0**	**0**

Business Management & Monitoring Report - March 2021
Summary of Financial Position for 2020/21
Government Grants 2020/21

Ringfenced	Directorate	Issued By	Esimate 2020/21 £000	In year Adjustments / New Allocations reported previously £000	In year Adjustments/ New Allocations reported this time £000	Latest Allocation £000	Total Spent 2020/21 £000	Carried Forward for use in future years £000	Returned/To be Returned to Issuer £000
	Grants held on behalf of Local Enterprise Partnership								
R	Oxford Innovation Business Support	BEIS	205			205			
R	European Regional Development Fund		900			900			
R	EU Transition - Growth Hub Funding	BEIS		54		54			
R	DCLG (Local Enterprise Partnership Funding)	MHCLG	500			500			
	Subtotal Grants held on behalf of Local Enterprise Partnership		**1,605**	**54.0**	**0**	**1,659**	**0**	**0**	**0**
	TOTAL STRATEGIC MEASURES		**69,181**	**35,730**	**3,557**	**108,468**	**0**	**0**	**0**
	Total All Grants		**352,679**	**66,821**	**3,437**	**422,937**	**313,351**	**-5,080**	**784**

Ringfenced
R Ringfenced
U Un-ringfenced

Issued by
DfE Department for Education
YJB Youth Justice Board
HO Home Office
DHSC Department of Health
MHCLG Ministry for Housing, Communities & Local Government
DfT Department for Transport
BEIS Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy
DEFRA Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
AC Arts Council
SE Sports England

COVID-19 Grant Detail
Summary of Financial Position for 2020/21

Government Department	Directorate	Grant Name	Total Grant Funding	Allocation to General Fund	Allocation to be determined	Allocation to schools	Allocation to Providers and Voluntary Sector	Allocation to District and City Councils	Total Spent in 2019/20	Total Spent in 2020/21	Carried forward for Use in Future Years	Returned to Issuer
			£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Ringfenced Funding												
DHSC	Adult Services	Infection Control Grant 1	7,314		173		7,141			7,141		173
DHSC	Adult Services	Infection Control Grant 2	6,314				6,314			6,314		
DHSC	Adult Services	Lateral Flow Testing	1,840		189		1,651			1,651	189	189
DHSC	Adult Services	Staffing Capacity	1,146				1,146			1,146		
DHSC	Adult Services	Community Discharge	211				211			211		
MHCLG	Adult Services	Support to Victims of Domestic Abuse	45				45			-	45	
DEFRA	Customers and Organisational Development	Food and Essential Supplies	507				53	454		507		
					1,660		761	437		1,198	1,660	
DHSC	Public Health	Test and Trace Service Support Grant	2,858		76		439			439	76	
							817			817		
							165			106	59	422
DHSC	Public Health	Community Testing Grant	515									
DfE	Environment & Place	Home to School Transport	817							413		
DFT	Environment & Place	COVID-19 Bus Services Support Grant	587		422							
DfE	Claimed directly by schools	Exceptional costs associated with coronavirus (COVID-19) Grant	413			413				1,371		
						1,371						
DfE	Children's Services	Covid Catch Up Fund	1,371				76			76		
DfE	Children's Services	UASC COVID-19 Fund	76							1,368		
					1,368							
DWP	Customers, Organisational Development & Resources	Winter Grant Scheme	1,368							476		
					476							
DWP	Customers, Organisational Development & Resources	Winter Grant Scheme Extension	476							46	669	
					669		425	3,557		6,212	9,993	
DHSC	Customers, Organisational Development & Resources	Clinically Extremely Vulnerable	715	46	9,091		**19,244**	**4,448**		**29,492**	**12,691**	**784**
				3,132								
DHSC	Customers, Organisational Development & Resources	Contain Outbreak Management Fund Surge Funding Grant	16,205	**3,17**	**14,124**	**1,78**						
Total Ringfenced Grants			**42,778**									

COVID-19 Grant Detail
Summary of Financial Position for 2020/21

Government Department	Directorate	Grant Name	Total Grant Funding	Allocation to General Fund	Allocation to be determined	Allocation to schools	Allocation to Providers and Voluntary Sector	Allocation to District and City Councils	Total Spent in 2019/20	Total Spent in 2020/21	Carried forward for Use in Future Years	Returned to Issuer
			£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Unringfenced Funding												
MHCLG	Strategic Measures	COVID-19 Emergency Grant										
		Tranche 1 *	14,539	14,539					303	14,236		
		Tranche 2	12,695	12,695						12,695		
		Tranche 3	3,791	3,791						3,791		
		Tranche 4	3,900	3,900						3,900		
MHCLG	Strategic Measures	Sales, Fees and Charges Income Guarentee Scheme (Claim 1)	1,379	1,379						1,379		
MHCLG	Strategic Measures	Sales, Fees and Charges Income Guarentee Scheme (Claim 2)	1,823	1,823						1,823		
MHCLG	Strategic Measures	Sales, Fees and Charges Income Guarentee Scheme (Claim 3)	774	774						774		
DHSC	Public Health	Rough Sleeping	788		788					449	339	
DfE	Children's Services	Wellbeing for Return to Schools	112			112				93	19	
Total Unringfenced Grants		**Total Non-Ringfenced**	**39,801**	**38,901**	**788**	**112**	**0**	**0**	**303**	**39,140**	**358**	**0**
Total COVID-19 Grant Funding		**Grants to OCC**	**82,579**									

*£0.3m was applied to expenditure in 2019/20

Business Management Report
Summary of Financial Position for 2020/21

CABINET IS RECOMMENDED TO NOTE THE VIREMENTS AS DETAILED BELOW:

Directorate (CD = Cross Directorate)	Month of Cabinet meeting	Month of Directorate MMR	Narration	Budget Book Line	Service Area	Permanent / Temporary	Expenditure + increase / - decrease £000	Income - increase / + decrease £000
CD	Jun	Mar	Update to DSG Budgets	CEF1-2	SEND	T	616	-616
				CEF4-1	Delegated Budgets	T	-1,357	1,357
				CEF4-4	Schools Support Service Recharges	T	-616	616
				COM2-2	Infrastructure Operations	T	-616	616
			Troubled Families Grant update	CEF3-2	Safeguarding	T	142	0
				VSMMGT	Strategic Measures	T	0	-142
			Troubled Families Q4 Payment By Results	CEF3-2	Safeguarding	T	56	0
				VSMMGT	Strategic Measures	T	0	-56
CS	Jun	Mar	Holiday Activities and Food Programme Grant	CEF2-2	Social Care	T	142	-142
			Realignment of school covid grant allocation budgets	CEF4-1	Delegated Budgets	T	-854	854
AS	Jun	Mar	Additional CCG Conribution to Dementia Support	BCFPOOL	Better Care Fund Pool	T	28.3	-28.3
Grand Total							-2,459	2,459

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Divisions: N/A

CABINET – 22 JUNE 2021

CAPITAL PROGRAMME REPORT 2020/21

Report by Director of Finance

RECOMMENDATION

The Cabinet is RECOMMENDED to note the performance against the capital programme for 2020/21 as set out in the report.

Executive Summary

1. The Council's ten-year Capital Programme sets out the agreed capital investment to deliver the priorities identified in the Council's Capital and Investment Strategy. This report sets out the performance against the planned capital programme for 2020/21. Figures shown in the report reflect those to be included in the Council's Statement of Accounts for 2020/21.

2. The capital programme is updated throughout the year to reflect the latest delivery profiles and cost estimates for each programme. The capital programme for 2020/21 was last updated in February 2021. Expected spend for the year totalled **£174.1m**. Actual capital programme expenditure for the year 2020/21 was **£153.5m**. The variation between the latest programme and the actual expenditure is **-£20.6m** (-12%). Of this variation, **£11.1m** relates to four individual projects.

3. The Capital Programme expenditure of **£153.5m** was funded by **£123.5m** of capital grants and other external contributions, **£28.2m** of developer contributions**, £1.6m** of revenue contributions, and **£0.2m** of prudential borrowing.

Introduction

4. The Council's ten-year Capital Programme sets out the agreed capital investment to deliver the priorities identified in the Council's Capital and Investment Strategy which is agreed annually by Council alongside the revenue budget and medium term financial strategy.

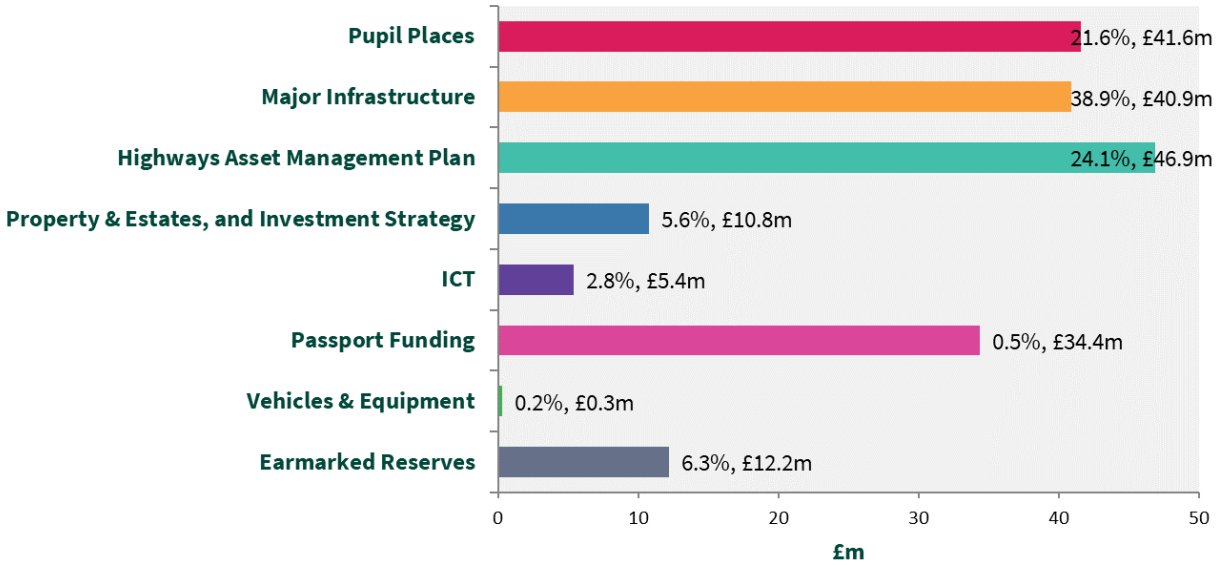
5. Capital expenditure is defined as spending that creates an asset for the Council (e.g. buildings, vehicles and equipment), and spending which meets the definition in regulations specified under the Local Government Act 2003 which includes spend on non-current assets that are not owned by the Council such as academies and the award of capital grants and funding agreements.

6. The capital programme is structured as follows:

- **Pupil Place Plan:** including basic need (new schools and expansion), maintenance, health and safety and improvements
- **Major Infrastructure:** including Growth Deal Infrastructure programme
- **Highways and structural maintenance:** including street lighting, and bridges
- **Property and Estates:** including health & safety, maintenance, improvements and the Investment Strategy
- **ICT Strategy:** including broadband and End User equipment
- **Passported Funds:** including Disabled Facilities Grant and Devolved Schools Capital
- **Vehicles and Equipment:** including fire and rescue vehicles and equipment

7. Each strand of the programme is underpinned by supporting strategies which set out the need for capital investment and the contribution of that planned investment towards the Council's priorities.

8. The original capital programme for 2020/21 was agreed by Council in February 2020 alongside the Capital and Investment Strategy. This set out an expected programme of spend of **£192.4m**, including **£12.2m** for programme contingency within Earmarked Reserves. This included **£41.6m** on providing additional school places and new schools in housing developments and **£40.9m** on major infrastructure projects, including large road improvement schemes, and road maintenance:



9. It was planned to fund this from grants and contributions **£142.2m**, developer contributions **£30.8m** and prudential borrowing **£19.4m**:



10. The capital programme is updated three times each year to reflect the latest forecast profile of expenditure. The latest updated programme was agreed by Council in February 2021. This included planned investment of **£174.5m** (excluding earmarked reserves of £12.2m). This was a reduction of **£6.2m** from the original budget of which **£5.0m** related to grants passported to third parties where the scheme delivery is outside the direct control of the Council.

11. Annex 1a sets out a summary of actual expenditure for 2020/21 by strategy area compared to both the original budget and latest budget.

Performance Summary 2020/21

12. Actual capital programme expenditure for 2020/21 was **£153.5m** compared with **£105.7m** in 2019/20 an increase of **£47.8m** (44%). Just over half of the increase represents additional delivery within the Pupil Places, Major Infrastructure and Highways Asset Management Plan Strategies, while **£21.7m** was issued through the Passported Funding route as part of the OxLEP capital programme and the Affordable Housing Programme within the Growth Deal.

13. A summary of actual expenditure compared to budget is set out in the table on the next page. Further comments explaining the key movements within each strategy area are set out below. A detailed analysis of the variations by scheme is shown in Annex 1c.

Strategy Programmes	Latest Capital Programme (Council Feb 2021) £m	Actual Capital Expenditure 2020/21 £m	Variation to Latest Capital Programme £m	Variation to Latest Capital Programme %
Pupil Places	44.555	38.025	-6.530	-15%
Major Infrastructure	36.536	33.212	-3.324	-9%
Highways Asset Management Plan	48.207	39.458	-8.749	-18%
Property & Investment Strategy	9.627	4.890	-4.737	-49%
ICT	5.714	4.015	-1.699	-30%
Passport Funding	29.367	32.874	3.507	12%
Vehicles & Equipment	0.050	0.980	0.930	1860%
Total Strategy Programmes Expenditure	**174.056**	**153.454**	**-20.602**	**-12%**

Pupil Places

14. The total capital expenditure for the year 2020/21 was **£38.0m (£5.9m** higher than in 2019/20). This is **£6.5m** lower than the latest capital programme.

15. The New Schools Growth Portfolio invested **£19.1m** with the successful completion of 3 new primary schools which created an additional 945 primary pupil places and capacity for up to 240 part time equivalent nursery places:

- Barton Park Primary School - Oxford,
- Cherry Fields Primary School - Banbury
- GEMS Wantage Primary School - Wantage

16. A new secondary school, Whiteland Academy - Bicester, was also completed, creating an additional 600 pupil places.

17. The variation from the latest capital programme of **-£3.0m** relates mainly to the replacement and expansion of Orion Academy (formerly Northfield Special School) in Oxford. The spend to date is **£1.8m** lower than the planned spend profile, however the new school building remains forecast to complete to schedule in October 2021.

18. The Basic Needs Programme invested £16.5m during the year. The expansion of six primary schools was successfully completed creating an additional 490 pupil places:

- Benson CE Primary School
- Longworth Primary School

- John Blandy Primary School – Southmoor
- Marcham CE Primary School
- Chesterton CE Primary School
- West Witney Primary School

19. The variation from the latest capital programme of **-£1.3m** relates mainly to the expansions of primary capacity at Chosley Primary School (forecast completion August 2021) and secondary capacity at Wallingford School. Both projects are on-site but spend in 2020/21 was less than originally planned. The Published Admission Number was increased by one form entry in 2019 for Wallingford School. The scheme is a two form entry expansion project to enable the school to grow to nine form entry and consists of a two-storey teaching block to provide 20 classrooms. In 2019 a temporary double classroom building was installed on-site to meet the school's increased numbers until 2021. The Cholsey Primary school expansion identified a project completion date of August 2020. This date has been pushed back due to delays to entering contract caused by COVID-19. This project also required a temporary single classroom building to be installed to meet the school's increased numbers until the completion of the four additional classrooms.

20. Schools Annual Programmes invested **£2.0m**, mainly through the Schools Structural Maintenance Programme, delivering 11 of the 18 planned key projects. The slipped projects, which primarily explain the variation from the latest capital programme of **-£1.7m**, are planned to be completed next year.

Major Infrastructure

21. The total capital expenditure for the year 2020/21 was **£33.2m (£11.8m** higher than in 2019/20). This compares to planned spend of **£36.5m** in the latest programme.

22. The four projects within the HIF1 programme are now in design stage and spent **£5.9m** in 2020/21. In total, this programme will invest **£230.8m** in infrastructure around Didcot Garden Town over the next four years to facilitate housing and employment growth in South and Vale districts and includes:

    - Widening the A4130 from A34 Milton Interchange towards Didcot from single to dual carriageway,
    - New Science Bridge over the A4130, Great Western railway Line and Milton Road,
    - New Didcot to Culham bridge between the A4130 and A415 including a new crossing of the River Thames river.
    - Clifton Hampden bypass.

23. Anticipated delays, due to ground investigation and archaeological surveys, were a major factor contributing to the **-£0.7m** variation, pushing some elements of planned spend into the first quarter of 2021/22.

24. The four main projects/programmes within the HIF2 & A40 Locality programme spent **£7.4m**. The total investment in the A40 Corridor over the next four years will be **£156.6m**. The projects within the HIF2 programme are progressing through the

pre-construction phases, securing access to land and land acquisition and includes:

- Extension of the A40 dual carriageway from Witney to the proposed Eynsham Park & Ride,
- Extension of the A40 westbound bus lane from west of Duke's Cut canal and railway bridges to the proposed Eynsham Park & Ride,
- A40 capacity and connectivity improvements to widen access at Duke's Cut canal and railway bridges, extending bus priority lane.

25. The A40 Oxford North project has now moved into the construction phase which will upgrade the A40 west of the Wolvercote roundabout with a new eastbound bus lane, dedicated cycle lanes and widened footpaths. The other two schemes are the A40 Science Transit scheme (Cabinet December 2020) and Access to Witney (Shore's Green) junction improvements.

26. The majority of the other schemes within the Major Infrastructure programme are fully or partly funded through the annual **£30.0m** Growth Deal allocation. 2020/21 is the third year of the five year deal with the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) and Homes England totalling **£150m**. The majority of schemes are now progressing through the pre-construction phases with planning submissions expected in 2021/22 and construction and completion from 2022 onwards.

27. During the course of 2020/21, 21 contracts were sealed representing commitment to **£40.5m** worth of investment. These contracts covered all aspects of the programme lifecycle and included contracts relating to feasibility, preliminary design, detailed design, and construction phases.

28. In year, the 11 projects within the Bicester & Banbury Locality programme spent **£6.6m**.

29. The construction of an Underbridge and Underpass through the embankment supporting the Railway line at Bicester to provide access for the realigned A4095 (steel underbridge) and connectivity for pedestrians and cyclists (concrete underpass) has commenced. Both structures will open up the land either side of the railway to housing and commercial development potentially delivering up to 6,000 new homes.

30. A funding agreement with Highways England has been concluded to provide new and improvements to the existing junction to provide capacity to support the on-going housing development taking place at the former RAF base at the Upper Heyford site (Heyford Park) near junction-10 of the M40 Motorway. The funding agreement will enable to Highways England to design and construct the scheme.

31. The 13 projects of the Oxford Locality programme spent **£7.0m**, with slippage to the Riverside Routes to Oxford City Centre and the Active Travel Phase 2 projects predominately contributing to the **-£1.3m** variation.

32. The Access to Headington Scheme was completed in October 2020 and included junction upgrades, improved cycling facilities and pedestrian crossings linking the Universities, Churchill, Nuffield and John Radcliffe Hospitals with adjacent residential and business areas.

33. As part of the Active Travel Phase 2 project, a range of cycling and walking infrastructure improvements have been introduced in Bicester between Middleton Stoney Road and the Town Centre in Bicester. Similar measures have been introduced along the 1.6-mile corridor running from the Tower Hill cycle track, through the town centre and onto Madley Park in the east of Witney. The 2021/22 year will see a similar range of schemes being introduced in Oxford City.

34. The 10 projects of the Countywide Locality programme spent **£5.5m**. This included the completion of the Science Vale Cycle Network Improvement programme. The cycling and footpath scheme, which cost **£5.8m** in total, improves links between three large employment centres with nearby towns by upgrading and creating more than 10km of cycling provision along six key routes

Highways Asset Management Plan

35. Total capital expenditure for the 2020/21 year was **£39.5m (£6.1m** higher than in 2019/20). This is **£8.7m** less than budgeted in the latest capital programme.

36. The Structural Maintenance Programme invested **£28.7m** by surfacing and treating 137km (or 3.06%) of the network through 20 programmes over 220 sites. Within this, **£11.5m** was spent on Surface Treatments and Carriageways. A few schemes have slipped into the first quarter of 2021/22, contributing to the programme variation to planned spend of **-£1.4m**. A total of **£9.3m** was invested in Structural Highway Improvement schemes. Expenditure on the remainder of the Programme, covering footways, drainage, bridges and Section 42 contributions to Oxford City Council, totalled **£7.9m**.

37. Structural Maintenance Major Schemes and other Programmes invested **£10.7m**. Significant schemes in this area included Street Lighting LED replacements **(£3.1m)**, Tetsworth Embankment **(£2.0m)**, and Kennington Bridge **(£1.8m)**.

38. The year end programme variation of **-£8.7m** included slippage on the Street Lighting LED replacements programme of **-£4.7m**.

39. The **£40.8m** LED street lighting replacement programme commenced in 2019/20 and will convert the remaining traditional lanterns to LED lanterns. The full programme includes the replacement of 47,500 lanterns of which 21,000 columns that are at the end of their life will be replaced entirely. The five-year programme is still expected to be completed by the end of 2024/25 as planned when all 60,000 units will be fitted with LED Technology. The remaining lanterns were either originally installed as LED or been replaced as part of the maintenance programme.

40. By the end of March 2021, a total of 19,500 lanterns were fitted with LED equipment. Of the total, 7,300 have been completed since April 2020 during the

second year of the programme. This is 66% of what was originally planned for delivery during 2020/21 but delivery will catch up in later years of the programme. The expected energy reduction at the end of year two is in line with the plan as higher energy consumption lanterns have been prioritised. The installation of energy efficient lighting will result in significant cost reductions through reduced maintenance and lower energy consumption. The programme will help reduce the Council's exposure to rising energy prices. The LED streetlights will reduce energy consumption by around 70% helping the Council to meet carbon reduction targets.

Property & Estates, Investment Strategy

41. The total capital expenditure for the year 2020/21 was **£4.9m, £4.7m** lower than the latest approved programme. The majority of the slippage relates to the Defect Liability Programme (**-£2.9m**) and the Corporate Structural Maintenance programmes (**-£0.5m**). This is due to the impact of closures of a number of buildings during the year which occurred in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. In respect of the defect liability programme, the building closures meant that works could not get started. The projects which have slipped beyond 31 March 2021 will now be completed by December 2021. In respect of the structural maintenance programme, the building closures has meant that there has been a reduction in the need to carry out emergency or reactive works during the year.

42. During the year significant work has been undertaken to progress projects within the Investment Strategy that will maximise the value of the Council's existing assets. These include:

- working with the Climate Action Delivery Team on the development of a business case for progressing a site in Stanford in the Vale and other sites as a solar farm investment project, to generate long term revenue to the Council.

- development of business cases to redevelop Speedwell House and Rewley Road Fire Station to deliver optimised viable investments that generate long term revenue to the Council as leased accommodation.

- preparing outline planning applications for a number of the Council's small holdings in order to crystalise capital value in line with the Capital Programme.

ICT

43. The total capital expenditure for the year 2020/21 was **£4.0m** compared to the original programme of **£5.4m**. The majority of spend related to the Digital Infrastructure Programme (**£2.5m**). The focus of the programme during the year was on investment in the end user. At the beginning of the year, expenditure on laptops and mobile phones was prioritised to enable home working in response to the change in working arrangements for staff resulting from measures to manage the COVID-19 pandemic. Further investment was made in the purchase of 1,000 mobile phones to replace the outdated Windows phones and around 120 additional laptops.

44. The original 2020/21 programme included **£1.8m** relating to Broadband for Businesses in Rural Oxfordshire. Delays to the supply chain due to COVID-19 have resulted in programme slippage of **£0.9m**.

Passported Funding

45. The total capital expenditure for passported funding in 2020/21 was **£32.9m** (**£21.7m** higher than in 2019/20). This is **£3.5m** lower than the latest approved programme.

46. Disabled Facilities Grant of **£6.9m**, including an additional **£0.8m** of funding announced in December 2020, was passed directly on to the City and District Councils in accordance with the grant determination. Households are eligible to apply for the grant for home adaptations if a child or adult in the household has a substantial and permanent disability. Types of adaptations funded by the grant include stairlifts, level access showers, ground floor extensions designed around the disability, kitchens designed for a wheelchair user.

47. Schools Devolved Formula Capital expenditure was **£0.4m** higher than the original programme and totalled **£1.2m**. The additional expenditure was funded through a combination of carry forward balances, revenue contributions, and donations.

48. The Affordable Housing element of the Housing & Growth Deal is received by the County Council as the Accountable Body for the Deal and passported to the District and City Councils for the delivery of Affordable Housing as agreed with Homes England. The programme delivery is therefore outside of the direct control of the County Council and is reported to the Growth Board. The original programme, as set out in the Housing & Growth Deal Delivery Document agreed in February 2018, included planned grant draw down and investment of **£32.0m** for 2020/21 which would be the final year of the three-year programme. The programme has now been extended by a further year into 2021/22. During 2020/21, **£16.5m** was invested in 275 affordable homes that satisfied the contractual start conditions of the funding as at 31 March 2021. The remaining funding of **£34.0m** from the original **£60m** programme is expected to be drawn down in 2021/22.

Vehicles and Equipment

49. At year end, vehicles and equipment purchased for use by the Fire Service and costing over £20,000 are added to the Council's asset register under proper accounting practices. For 2020/21 the value of vehicles and equipment was **£1.0m**.

Capital Programme Financing

50. The table in Annex 1b summarises the financing of the 2020/21 capital programme and compares it to the financing planned in the original and latest capital programme.

51. Various capital grants totalling **£123.4m** have been used towards the funding capital investment during 2020/21. These include basic need, condition funding and SEN grant towards the provision of pupil places, the highways maintenance block plus the highways challenge funding, various funding streams to support the major infrastructure programme including almost **£10m** of Housing Infrastructure Funds towards the Didcot Garden Town and A40 programmes, and **£48m** to support the Housing and Growth Deal and the Local Growth Fund programmes.

52. Capital funding received from developer contributions amounted to **£67.3m** in 2020/21. Total developer contributions of **£28.2m** was used in 2020/21 to finance various capital projects with **£27.1m** of this towards the delivery of the Pupil Places programme. The balance of capital developer contributions has increased to **£207.6m**.

53. The level of the un-ringfenced grant balance in the Capital Grants Reserve has increased by **£8.3m** during the year to **£43.4m.** The balance includes **£2.8m** of the 2021/22 Pothole funding received in March 2021 and **£8.3m** grant funding from Homes England and Cherwell District Council for various major infrastructure schemes in Bicester. These grants do not have conditions and are not time limited so can be used flexibly across the Capital Programme. Therefore, where available, other funding sources are used to fund capital expenditure before un-ringfenced grants. The balance of un-ringfenced grants is forecast to be spent over the ten-year capital programme period.

54. The balance of unapplied ringfenced Capital Grants held by the Council has reduced by **£0.6m** to **£25.4m.** The balance includes the remaining sum of the Local Growth Fund of **£8.0m** and the Getting Building Fund of **£3.9m**, which are held on behalf of the Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership (OxLEP). A further **£3.6m** was received before the end of the financial year to support the Public Sector Carbonisation and Green Homes climate change agenda.

55. The capital receipts and capital reserve balances are **£25.1m** and **£29.1m** respectively. The capital receipts and reserve balances are forecast to be spent over the ten-year capital programme period.

Key performance Indicator

56. A Key Performance Indicator (KPI) for capital projects is reported in the Budget and Business Management Report annually. The KPI requires 80% or more of projects completed in year should be delivered on time and within budget. The baseline for the budget is set when the Outline Business Case is approved, and this is compared to the latest approved budget in the year the scheme is completed to calculate the measure.

57. During the year, 12 schemes were completed. Of these, five (42%) were completed within their baseline budget. If annual programmes are taken into account, based on the monetary value, then 73% of the completed capital programme was delivered within the original budget approval.

Ref	Completed Schemes / Programmes2020/21	Number of Schemes	Stage 1 OBC £m	Latest Approved Budget £m	Change £m
1)	New Schools	4	33.0	31.1	-1.9
2)	School Expansions	6	8.4	13.7	5.3
3)	Major Infrastructure	2	16.1	23.4	7.3
4)	Annual Programmes		33.4	31.2	-2.2
	Total	**12**	**90.9**	**99.4**	**8.5**

58. For the School Expansion projects, majority of these started off under the previous construction contract with Carillion and then new procurement routes for both Technical Advisor and new construction contractor were needed. This resulted in additional costs due to due diligence, extended programme delivery resulting in cost inflation, providing additional temporary accommodation, change in scope and with projects being completed through the pandemic, additional costs associated with COVID-19.

59. In relation to the Major Infrastructure projects, for the Access to Headington project, additional funding of £3.5m was secured from the Oxfordshire Housing and Growth Deal to allow for previously descoped elements to be re-introduced to the project and for emerging cost pressures to be met. The in-year completed projects also benefitted from additional funding of £0.4m (Highways Maintenance and City Council), £0.6m Local Growth Fund and a further £0.5m was allocated to meet additional COVID related constructions costs in the final phase of both Access to Headington and Science Vale Cycle Network Improvements.

LORNA BAXTER
Director of Finance

Contact Officer: Hannah Doney, Head of Corporate Finance. Tel: 07584174654

June 2021

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Capital Programme Provisional Outturn 2020/21 **Annex 1a**

Summary outturn position compared to the original capital programme and latest updated capital programme

Capital Expenditure	Original Capital Programme (Council Feb 2020)	Latest Capital Programme (Council Feb 2021)	Actual Expenditure 2020/21	Variation to Original Capital Programme		Variation to Latest Capital Programme	
	£000	£000	£000	£000	%	£000	%
Strategy Programmes							
Pupil Places	41,620	44,555	38,025	-3,595	-9%	-6,530	-15%
Major Infrastructure	40,854	36,536	33,212	-7,642	-19%	-3,324	-9%
Highways Asset Management Plan	46,854	48,207	39,458	-7,396	-16%	-8,749	-18%
Property & Investment Strategy	10,848	9,627	4,890	-5,958	-55%	-4,737	-49%
ICT	5,414	5,714	4,015	-1,399	-26%	-1,699	-30%
Passport Funding	34,385	29,367	32,874	-1,511	-4%	3,507	12%
Vehicles & Equipment	303	50	980	677	223%	930	1860%
Total Strategy Programmes Expenditure	**180,278**	**174,056**	**153,454**	**-26,824**	**-15%**	**-20,602**	**-12%**
Earmarked Reserves	12,170	0	0	-12,170	100%	0	0%
Total Capital Programme Expenditure	**192,448**	**174,056**	**153,454**	**-38,994**	**-20%**	**-20,602**	**-12%**

Capital Programme Provisional Outturn 2020/21 **Annex 1b**

Summary Capital Financing Position

Capital Financing	Original Capital Programme (Council Feb 2020) £000	Latest Capital Programme (Council Feb 2021) £000	Actual Financing 2020/21 £000	Variation to Original Capital Programme £000	Variation to Latest Capital Programme £000
Unringfenced grants	131,580	112,335	103,090	-28,490	-9,245
Devolved Formula Capital - Grant	800	800	857	57	57
Other Grants	9,095	24,200	19,446	10,351	-4,754
Developer Contributions	30,864	34,020	28,243	-2,621	-5,777
Other External Contributions	229	238	45	-184	-193
Schools Contributions	0	28	0	0	-28
Revenue Funding	529	564	1,597	1,068	1,033
Prudential Borrowing	19,351	1,871	176	-19,175	-1,695
Capital Receipts/Reserves	0	0	0	0	0
Total Capital Programme Financing	**192,448**	**174,056**	**153,454**	**-38,994**	**-20,602**

Capital Balances	Balance brought forward at 1 April 2020 £000	Original planned balance carried forward £000	Latest planned balance carried forward £000	Actual balance carried forward at 31 Mar 2021 £000	Variation to Original Capital Programme £000	Variation to Latest Capital Programme £000
Capital Reserve	25,794	25,799	25,490	29,098	3,299	3,608
Capital Receipts Unapplied	24,144	26,599	26,064	25,101	-1,498	-963
Capital Grants Reserve	35,114	13,333	26,059	43,431	30,098	17,372
Total	**85,052**	**65,731**	**77,613**	**97,630**	**31,899**	**20,017**

Capital Grants (excluding school local balances)	Balance brought forward at 1 April 2020 £000	Balance carried forward at 31 Mar 2021 £000
Receipts in Advance (ringfenced/eligible spend not yet incurred)	26,044	25,445
Total	**26,044**	**25,445**

Capital Programme Provisional Outturn 2020/21 **Annex 1c**

Ref	Scheme	Original Capital Programme (Council Feb 2020) £000	Latest Capital Programme (Council Feb 2021) £000	Actual Expenditure 2020/21 £000	Variation to original Capital Programme £000	Variation to latest Capital Programme £000	Comments
	Provision of School Places (Basic Need)						
1)	Existing Demographic Pupil Provision (Basic Needs Programme)	10,020	1,300	602	-9,418	-698	Provision transferred to schemes below.
2)	11/12 - 19/20 Basic Need Programme Completions	280	0	0	-280	0	Settlement of final accounts.
3)	Marcham - Expansion to 1FE (ED882)	750	750	797	47	47	Completed Nov 20.
4)	John Blandy - Expansion to 1.5FE (ED887)	1,500	1,725	1,841	341	116	Completed Dec 20.
5)	Cholsey - Expansion to 2FE (ED911)	1,700	1,700	995	-705	-705	On-site. Completion forecast Aug 21. On budget but actual expenditure slower than expected.
6)	Chesterton - Expansion to 1FE (ED898)	1,350	1,350	1,711	361	361	Phase 1&2. Phase 2 completed Feb 21. Additional cost due to Covid-19
7)	West Witney - Expansion to 2FE (ED889)	2,300	2,150	2,503	203	353	Completed Dec 21. Additional cost due to Covid-19
8)	Benson - Expansion to 1.5FE (ED914)	1,100	1,350	1,492	392	142	Completed Dec 20.
9)	Longworth - Expansion to 0.5FE (ED921)	0	350	363	363	13	Completed July 20.
10)	Burford - Expansion to AN20 (ED925)	0	375	377	377	2	On-site.
11)	St Blaise - Expansion to 1FE (ED860)	0	2,200	1,673	1,673	-527	On-site, completion forecast Oct 21. On budget but actual expenditure slower than expected.
12)	St Andrew's, Chinnor - Expansion to 2FE (ED920)	0	800	917	917	117	On-site, completion forecast April 21
13)	Five Acres - Repl Temporary Accommodation (ED912)	0	800	502	502	-298	On-site, completion forecst June 21
14)	Manor, Long Hanborough - Expansion to 1.5FE (ED909)	0	1,300	1,940	1,940	640	On-site. Completion forecast Aug 21. On budget but actual expenditure was more than expected in 20/21
15)	Bardwell - Expansion (ED935)	0	450	364	364	-86	On-site.
16)	Wallingford - Expansion by 2FE (ED896)	0	1,100	338	338	-762	On-site.
17)	Stanaton Harcourt - Expansion to AN20 (ED957)	0	50	70	70	20	On-site.
	Basic Need Sub-total	**19,000**	**17,750**	**16,485**	**-2,515**	**-1,265**	

Capital Programme Provisional Outturn 2020/21 **Annex 1c**

Ref	Scheme	Original Capital Programme (Council Feb 2020) £000	Latest Capital Programme (Council Feb 2021) £000	Actual Expenditure 2020/21 £000	Variation to original Capital Programme £000	Variation to latest Capital Programme £000	Comments
	Growth Portfolio - New Schools						
20)	Bicester, South West (Whitelands) - Secondary (ED880)	4,500	5,500	5,103	603	-397	Completed Oct 20. Project was completed below budget.
21)	Oxford, Barton Park - 1.5FE Primary School (ED868)	4,000	3,900	3,718	-282	-182	Completed Jul 20. Project was completed below budget.
22)	Banbury, Southam Road - 1FE Primary School (ED907)	2,000	3,000	2,910	910	-90	Completed July 20. Project was completed below budget.
23)	North East Wantage, Crab Hill: GEMS, Wantage - 2FE Primary School (ED918).	350	350	346	-4	-4	Developer build - Completed Sept 20.
24)	West Witney, Curbridge - 1.5FE Primary School (ED927)	50	50	66	16	16	Developer build - forecast opening Sept 21.
25)	Bicester, Graven Hill - 2FE Primary School (ED919)	50	50	50	0	0	Developer build - forecast opening Sept 23.
26)	Northfield Special School - Replacement & Expansion (ED940)	5,000	8,000	6,166	1,166	-1,834	On-site. Completion forecast Oct 21. On budget but actual expenditure slower than expected.
27)	Wallingford - 2FE Primary School (ED930)	2,800	50	66	-2,734	16	
28)	Faringdon - 2FE Primary School (ED943)	1,000	900	528	-472	-372	Pre-Construction. Completion forecast Aug 22.
29)	NE Didcot - 2FE Primary Schol (ED929)	0	100	31	31	-69	Pre-Construction. Completion forecast Aug 23.
30)	Shrivenham - 1.5FE Primary School (ED945)	0	50	17	17	-33	Pre-Construction. Completion forecast Aug 23.
31)	Grove Airfield - 2FE Primary School (ED963)	0	100	30	30	-70	Developer build - forecast opening Sept 23.
32)	Project Development Budget	0	0	28	28	28	
33)	New School Programme Completions	0	100	101	101	1	Project contingencies returned.
	Growth Portfolio Sub-total	**19,750**	**22,150**	**19,160**	**-590**	**-2,990**	

Capital Programme Provisional Outturn 2020/21 **Annex 1c**

Ref	Scheme	Original Capital Programme (Council Feb 2020) £000	Latest Capital Programme (Council Feb 2021) £000	Actual Expenditure 2020/21 £000	Variation to original Capital Programme £000	Variation to latest Capital Programme £000	Comments
	Annual Programmes						
34)	Schools Access Initiative	300	300	20	-280	-280	Budget returned to Capital Programme.
35)	Temporary Classrooms - Replacement & Removal	200	300	33	-167	-267	Budget returned to Capital Programme.
36)	School Structural Maintenance (inc Health & Safety)	1,900	3,585	1,913	13	-1,672	18 projects, 11 projects delivered, remaining 7 to be delivered as part of 2021/22 programme.
	Other Schemes & Programmes						
37)	Early Years Entitlement for Disadvantage 2 year olds	250	250	386	136	136	
					0		
	Retentions						
38)	Retentions	220	220	28	-192	-192	Settlement of final accounts.
	Pupil Places Capital Programme Total	**41,620**	**44,555**	**38,025**	**-3,595**	**-6,530**	
					-9%	**-15%**	

Capital Programme Provisional Outturn 2020/21 **Annex 1c**

Ref	Scheme	Original Capital Programme (Council Feb 2020) £000	Latest Capital Programme (Council Feb 2021) £000	Actual Expenditure 2020/21 £000	Variation to original Capital Programme £000	Variation to latest Capital Programme £000	Comments
	HIF1 Locality						
1)	HIF1 A4130 Dualing	0	1,400	1,203	1,203	-197	Delays to some Ground Investigation / Archaelogical surveys have pushed some antipated elements of spend into Q1 2021/22. Projects in Design stage.
2)	HIF1 Didcot Science Bridge	0	1,600	1,217	1,217	-383	
3)	HIF1 Culham River Crossing	0	2,000	2,366	2,366	366	
4)	HIF1 Clifton Hampden Bypass	0	1,600	1,103	1,103	-497	
5)	HIF1 Didcot Garden Town	0	0	42	42	42	
	HIF1 Locality Programme Total	**0**	**6,600**	**5,931**	**5,931**	**-669**	
	HIF2 & A40 Locality						
6)	A40 Oxford North (N G'way)	18	1,500	1,932	1,914	432	On-site - highways completion forecast for Q3 2021/22)
7)	Oxford Science Transit Phase 2 - A40 Public Transit	25	1,400	1,476	1,451	76	Feasibility stage
8)	HIF2 West Oxon A40 Smart Corrdior	0	3,500	3,429	3,429	-71	Prelim Design/Feasibility stages
9)	Access to Witney - Shores Green	0	0	477	477	477	Design stage - scheme was allocated H&GD funding in Sept 2020
10)	B4044 Strategic Cycle Improvement (Development Budget)	0	100	37	37	-63	
11)	Salt Cross to Eynhsam Underpass (Development Budget)	0	0	0	0	0	
	HIF2 & A40 Locality Programme Total	**43**	**6,500**	**7,351**	**7,308**	**851**	
	Bicester & Banbury Locality						
12)	NW Bicester A4095 Underbridge & Under pass	0	4,500	4,580	4,580	80	Detailed Design stage - early contruction
13)	NW Bicester A4095 Road Realignment	0	250	343	343	93	Feasibility stage
14)	NW Bicester A4095 Roundabout Improvements	0	300	200	200	-100	Feasibility stage
15)	M40 J10 Improvements	0	500	63	63	-437	Advance Funding Agreements totalling £16.5m now sealed with Highways England
16)	Access to Banbury: A422 Hennef Way (Development Budget)	0	170	263	263	93	

Capital Programme Provisional Outturn 2020/21 **Annex 1c**

Ref	Scheme	Original Capital Programme (Council Feb 2020) £000	Latest Capital Programme (Council Feb 2021) £000	Actual Expenditure 2020/21 £000	Variation to original Capital Programme £000	Variation to latest Capital Programme £000	Comments
17)	Ploughley Rd / A41 Junction Improvements, Bicester	0	150	196	196	46	
18)	Tramway Rd, Accessibility Improvements	0	200	164	164	-36	Prelim Design stage
19)	A361 Road Safety Improvements	111	800	786	675	-14	Scheme now completed
20)	Bicester Perimeter Road (Development Budget)	250	250	0	-250	-250	
21)	Farmfield Road / Oxford Road - Junction Improvement (Development Budget)	0	50	4	4	-46	
22)	London Road, Bicester: Cycle Improvements	0	25	0	0	-25	
	Bicester & Banbury Locality Programme Total	**361**	**7,195**	**6,599**	**6,238**	**-596**	
	Oxford Locality						
23)	Eastern Arc Phase 1 Access to Headington	3,433	1,723	1,991	-1,442	268	Construction activity now complete
24)	Oxford, Botley Road	3,080	3,000	3,062	-18	62	Phase 1.1 substantailly complete, Phase 1.2 underway
25)	Oxpens to Osney Mead Cycle	0	100	3	3	-97	
26)	Oxofrd Quiet Connector Cycling & Walking Routes	0	80	93	93	13	
27)	Banbury Rd Improvement (Banbury Rd Corridor)	0	150	108	108	-42	
28)	Woodstock Rd Improvement (Woodstock Rd Corridor)	0	150	112	112	-38	
29)	Connecting Oxford (Development Budget)	0	400	210	210	-190	
30)	A44 Corridor Improvements (Peartree & Cassington)	0	1,000	894	894	-106	
31)	North Oxford Corridors - Kidlington	0	0	41	41	41	

Capital Programme Provisional Outturn 2020/21 **Annex 1c**

Ref	Scheme	Original Capital Programme (Council Feb 2020) £000	Latest Capital Programme (Council Feb 2021) £000	Actual Expenditure 2020/21 £000	Variation to original Capital Programme £000	Variation to latest Capital Programme £000	Comments
32)	Riverside Routes to Oxford City Centre	0	500	57	57	-443	
33)	Old Greyfairs School signal change	15	15	0	-15	-15	
34)	Active Travel Phase 2	0	1,225	384	384	-841	Delay in starting scheme
35)	Oxford Zero Emission Zone	0	0	79	79	79	
	Oxford Locality Programme Total	**6,528**	**8,343**	**7,034**	**506**	**-1,309**	
	Countywide Locality						
36)	Watlington Relief Rd	5,000	150	250	-4,750	100	
37)	Benson Relief Rd	0	250	442	442	192	
38)	Milton Heights Bridge	0	100	81	81	-19	
39)	Wantage Eatern Link Rd (Phase 1-3)	2,500	50	55	-2,445	5	
40)	Frilford Junction & Relief to Marcham (Development Budget)	0	100	77	77	-23	
41)	Relief to Rowstock	0	250	245	245	-5	
42)	Science Vale Cycle Network Improvements	3,175	4,400	3,811	636	-589	Construction activity completed Q1 2020/21
43)	Didcot Northern Perimeter Road 3	9	50	25	16	-25	
44)	A34 Lodge Hill Slips	6,000	500	558	-5,442	58	Re-profiling (programme and costs) exercise underway with recently appointed D&B contractor
45)	Carterton Crossroads Improvements	0	25	0	0	-25	
	Countywide Locality Programme Total	**16,684**	**5,875**	**5,544**	**-11,140**	**-331**	
46)	Growth Deal Programme	13,527	0	0	-13,527	0	Budget allocated to individual schemes across Locality Programmes
	Countywide Locality Programme Total	**13,527**	**0**	**0**	**-13,527**	**0**	
	Major Infrastructure Locality Programme Total	**37,143**	**34,513**	**32,459**	**-4,684**	**-2,054**	

Capital Programme Provisional Outturn 2020/21 **Annex 1c**

Ref	Scheme	Original Capital Programme (Council Feb 2020) £000	Latest Capital Programme (Council Feb 2021) £000	Actual Expenditure 2020/21 £000	Variation to original Capital Programme £000	Variation to latest Capital Programme £000	Comments
	Other Programmes						
47)	East-West Rail (Contribution)	737	737	109	-628	-628	
48)	City Deal, Pinch Point, Local Growth Programmes - Completed Schemes	2,841	1,129	631	-2,210	-498	Final Accounts to be settled
49)	Other Completed Schemes	133	157	13	-120	-144	
	Other Programme Total	**3,711**	**2,023**	**753**	**-2,958**	**-1,270**	
	Major Infrastructure Capital Programme Total	**40,854**	**36,536**	**33,212**	**-7,642**	**-3,324**	
					-19%	**-9%**	

Capital Programme Provisional Outturn 2020/21 **Annex 1c**

Ref	Scheme	Original Capital Programme (Council Feb 2020) £000	Latest Capital Programme (Council Feb 2021) £000	Actual Expenditure 2020/21 £000	Variation to original Capital Programme £000	Variation to latest Capital Programme £000	Comments
	Structural Maintenance Programme						
1)	Carriageways	7,972	7,186	4,738	-3,234	-2,448	
2)	Surface Treatments	5,651	5,651	6,746	1,095	1,095	
3)	Structural Highway Improvements	8,731	8,761	9,276	545	515	
4)	Footways	750	852	1,015	265	163	Delivered structural maintenance on 137km through 20 programmes over 220 sites. A small number of projects and schemes have slipped into the first quarter of 2021/22
5)	Drainage	1,450	1,480	1,606	156	126	
6)	Bridges	2,300	2,325	1,777	-523	-548	
7)	Public Rights of Way Foot Bridges	225	225	219	-6	-6	
8)	Street Lighting / Electrical	1,512	1,512	1,282	-230	-230	
9)	Section 42 contributions	1,700	1,700	1,690	-10	-10	
10)	Minor Works	430	430	391	-39	-39	
	Structural Maintenance Annual Programmes Total	**30,721**	**30,122**	**28,740**	**-1,981**	**-1,382**	
	Improvement Programme						
11)	Accessibility & Road Safety Schemes	2,000	1,453	700	-1,300	-753	First year of funding. Initial programme develped but not fully delivered. Enhanced delivery programme to be planned for 21/22
12)	Bus Journey Time Reliability	1,000	1,000	961	-39	-39	
	Improvement Programme Total	**3,000**	**2,453**	**1,661**	**-1,339**	**-792**	
	Major Schemes and Other Programmes						
13)	Street Lighting LED replacement	7,800	7,800	3,083	-4,717	-4,717	Slower start to programme than planned, but overall programme not expected to need extending.
14)	Tetsworth Embankment	1,400	2,253	2,048	648	-205	
15)	Oxford Rd, Banbury	0	976	871	871	-105	
16)	Kennington Railway Bridge	685	685	556	-129	-129	
17)	Kennington Railway Bridge	2,000	2,000	1,246	-754	-754	
18)	COVID Emergency Active Travel (P1)	0	335	402	402	67	

Capital Programme Provisional Outturn 2020/21 **Annex 1c**

Ref	Scheme	Original Capital Programme (Council Feb 2020) £000	Latest Capital Programme (Council Feb 2021) £000	Actual Expenditure 2020/21 £000	Variation to original Capital Programme £000	Variation to latest Capital Programme £000	Comments
19)	Network Rail Electrification Bridge Betterment Programme	250	250	0	-250	-250	
20)	Completed Major Schemes	398	163	142	-256	-21	Settlement of final accounts.
	Major Schemes & Other Programmes Total	**12,533**	**14,462**	**8,348**	**-4,185**	**-6,114**	
	Other Maintenance Programmes						
21)	Small Schemes (developer and other funded)	600	1,000	606	6	-394	
22)	HS2 Tiddington & Wardington	0	170	103	103	-67	
	Other Maintenance Programme Total	**600**	**1,170**	**709**	**109**	**-461**	
	Highway Asset Management Plan Capital Programme Total	**46,854**	**48,207**	**39,458**	**-7,396**	**-8,749**	
					-16%	**-18%**	

Capital Programme Provisional Outturn 2020/21 **Annex 1c**

Ref	Scheme	Original Capital Programme (Council Feb 2020) £000	Latest Capital Programme (Council Feb 2021) £000	Actual Expenditure 2020/21 £000	Variation to original Capital Programme £000	Variation to latest Capital Programme £000	Comments
	Corporate Estate Programme						
1)	Carterton Fire Station	0	0	64	64	64	
2)	Fire Review Development Budget	100	100	0	-100	-100	Incorporated into Carterton Fire Station scheme.
3)	Relocation of Rewley Training Facility	50	0	0	-50	0	
4)	Bicester Library (CS13)	250	250	250	0	0	Delivered via funding agreement. Complete. Requires conditions to be met before funding released.
5)	Westgate Library	235	235	-27	-262	-262	
6)	Barton Library Access (CS20)	87	40	38	-49	-2	Complete.
7)	Adult Social Care Programme	50	0	0	-50	0	
8)	Re-provision of Maltfield (ED932)	250	250	117	-133	-133	
9)	Didcot Library & Community Hub (CS19)	100	0	0	-100	0	
10)	New Salt Store & Accommodation (R20)	597	200	156	-441	-44	Drayton Complete Mar 2019, Deddington to commence in 2021/22.
11)	Drayton Depot	50	50	0	-50	-50	
	Corporate Estate Programme Total	**1,769**	**1,125**	**598**	**-1,171**	**-527**	
	Climate Action Programme						
12)	SALIX Energy Programme	100	100	48	-52	-52	
13)	Electric Vehicles Charging Infrastructure	20	20	23	3	3	
14)	One-Fleet EV Charging Point	100	100	11	-89	-89	
15)	Climate Action Recycling Fund	100	100	0	-100	-100	
	Climate Action programme Total	**320**	**320**	**82**	**-238**	**-238**	

Capital Programme Provisional Outturn 2020/21 **Annex 1c**

Ref	Scheme	Original Capital Programme (Council Feb 2020) £000	Latest Capital Programme (Council Feb 2021) £000	Actual Expenditure 2020/21 £000	Variation to original Capital Programme £000	Variation to latest Capital Programme £000	Comments
	Structural Maintenance Programmes						
16)	Minor Works Programme	500	760	503	3	-257	
17)	F&RS - Replacement Fire Doors	100	97	82	-18	-15	
18)	Health & Safety (Non-Schools)	75	75	0	-75	-75	
19)	Defect Liability Programme	6,000	6,000	3,137	-2,863	-2,863	Complexity of the projects and the COVID-19 Pandemic, limiting access. Remaining projects planned to be delivered by December 2021
20)	Corporate Structural Maintenance	1,500	750	267	-1,233	-483	Due to closure of a significant number of corporate buildings the level of work required reduced
	Structural Maintenance Programmes Total	**8,175**	**7,682**	**3,989**	**-4,186**	**-3,693**	
	Investment Strategy						
21)	Investment Strategy & Land Costs	250	250	267	17	17	
	Investment Strategy Programme Total	**250**	**250**	**267**	**17**	**17**	
	Waste Management Programme						
22)	Waste Recycling Centre Infrastructure	75	250	286	211	36	
	Waste Management Programme Total	**75**	**250**	**286**	**211**	**36**	
23)	Retentions	259	0	-332	-591	-332	Settlement of final accounts & cleareance of old accruals
	Property & Estates, and Investment Startegy Capital Programme Total	**10,848**	**9,627**	**4,890**	**-5,958**	**-4,737**	
					-55%	**-49%**	

Capital Programme Provisional Outturn 2020/21 **Annex 1c**

Ref	Scheme	Original Capital Programme (Council Feb 2020) £000	Latest Capital Programme (Council Feb 2021) £000	Actual Expenditure 2020/21 £000	Variation to original Capital Programme £000	Variation to latest Capital Programme £000	Comments
	ICT Strategy Programme						
1)	Children Services - ICT (Phase 1&2)	500	1,000	166	-334	-834	Delay in phased implementation
2)	Better Broadband For Oxfordshire (BBFO)	25	25	483	458	458	
3)	Broadband for Businesses in Rural Oxfordshire (BiRO)	1,789	1,789	854	-935	-935	Covid related supplier delays pushed delivery out to 21/22
4)	Digital Infrastructure	3,100	2,900	2,512	-588	-388	Delay in WAN project contributed to the underspend, focus for the year was on delivering updated equipment to support staff working from home.
	ICT Strategy Capital Programme Total	**5,414**	**5,714**	**4,015**	**-1,399**	**-1,699**	
					-26%	**-30%**	

Capital Programme Provisional Outturn 2020/21 **Annex 1c**

Ref	Scheme	Original Capital Programme (Council Feb 2020) £000	Latest Capital Programme (Council Feb 2021) £000	Actual Expenditure 2020/21 £000	Variation to original Capital Programme £000	Variation to latest Capital Programme £000	Comments
	Third Party Growth & Housing Deal						
1)	Local Growth Fund	1,700	9,507	7,886	6,186	-1,621	
2)	Getting Building Fund	0	1,000	264	264	-736	
3)	Housing Deal	31,785	11,000	16,487	-15,298	5,487	20/21 Funding Allocation reprofiled to 212/22.
	Third Party Growth & Housing Deal Programme Total	**33,485**	**21,507**	**24,637**	**-8,848**	**3,130**	
	Passported Funding						
4)	Disabled Facilities Grant	0	6,658	6,658	6,658	0	Funding allocation announced after Council Feb 2020. Delivered via funding agreement with District Councils.
5)	PHE Wayfinding Grant	0	52	0	0	-52	
6)	Devolved Formula Capital (Schools)	800	800	1,152	352	352	
	Passported Funding Programme Total	**800**	**7,510**	**7,810**	**7,010**	**300**	
	Specialist Hoyusing & Financial Assistance						
7)	ECH - New Schemes and Adaptations to Existing Properties	0	250	353	353	103	
8)	Deferred Interest Loans (CSDP)	50	50	0	-50	-50	
9)	Loans to Foster/Adoptive Parents	50	50	74	24	24	
	Specialist Housing & Financial Assistance Programme Total	**100**	**350**	**427**	**327**	**77**	
10)	Retentions & Minor Works	0	0	0	0	0	
	Passport Funding Capital Programme Tota	**34,385**	**29,367**	**32,874**	**-1,511**	**3,507**	
					-4%	**12%**	

Capital Programme Provisional Outturn 2020/21

Annex 1c

Ref	Scheme	Original Capital Programme (Council Feb 2020) £000	Latest Capital Programme (Council Feb 2021) £000	Actual Expenditure 2020/21 £000	Variation to original Capital Programme £000	Variation to latest Capital Programme £000	Comments
	Vehicles & Equipment						
1)	Fire Equipment (SC112)	103	0	0	-103	0	
2)	Fire Protective Equipment	200	50	0	-200	-50	
3)	Capitalised purchase of vehicles	0	0	980	980	980	
	Vehicles & Equipment Capital Programme	**303**	**50**	**980**	**677**	**930**	
					223%	**1860%**	

Divisions: N/A

CABINET – 22 JUNE 2021

TREASURY MANAGEMENT ANNUAL PERFORMANCE 2020/21

Report by Director of Finance

RECOMMENDATION

1. **Cabinet is RECOMMENDED to note the report, and to RECOMMEND Council to note the Council's Treasury Management Activity in 2020/21.**

Executive Summary

2. The Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy's (CIPFA's) 'Code of Practice on Treasury Management 2017' requires that the Council and Audit & Governance Committee receives an updated report on Treasury Management activities at least twice per year. This report is the second report for the financial year 2020/21 and sets out the position as at 31 March 2021.

3. Performance for the financial year 2020/21 is measured against the original budget set in February 2020.

4. Treasury management is defined as: "The management of the local authority's investments and cash flows, 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."

5. At 31 March 2021, outstanding debt totalled £335m and average interest paid on long-term debt was 4.44%. The Council repaid £6m of maturing PWLB loans during the year. No new borrowing was arranged during 2020/21. The Council's debt financing position for 2020/21is shown in Annex 1.

6. The Treasury Management Strategy for 2020/21 was based on an average base rate forecast of 0.75%, with heavily weighted risk to the downside. The budget for interest receivable assumed that an average interest rate of 0.85% would be achieved. The average daily balance of temporary surplus cash invested in-house was £402m in 2020/21.

7. The Council achieved an average in-house return for the year of 0.84%, producing gross interest receivable of £3.357m. In relation to external funds, the return for the year was 3.91% producing gross distributions totalling £3.947, bringing total investment income to £7.304m. This compares to budgeted investment income of £6.258 m, giving a net overachievement of £1.046m.

8. At 31 March 2021, the Council's investment portfolio of £529.326m comprised £379.300m of fixed term deposits, £49.339m at short term notice in money market funds and £100.687m in pooled funds with a variable net asset value. Annex 4 provides an analysis of the investment portfolio at 31 March 2021.

Treasury Management Activity

Debt Financing & Maturing Debt

9. The Strategy for Long Term Borrowing included the option to fund new or replacement borrowing up to the value of £100m through internal borrowing to reduce the Council's exposure to credit risk and reduce the cost of carry (difference between borrowing costs and investment returns) whilst debt rates remained higher than investment interest rates.

10. The Council is able to borrow from the Public Works Loan Board (PWLB) or through the money markets. However, as the Council was able to undertake internal borrowing no new borrowing was arranged during 2020/21.

11. At 31 March 2021, the authority had 53 PWLB loans totalling £285.383m, 9 LOBO[1] loans totalling £45m and one £5m money market loan. The average rate of interest paid on PWLB debt was 4.55% and the average cost of LOBO debt in 2019/20 was 3.94%. The cost of debt on the money market loan was 3.95%. The combined weighted average for interest paid on long-term debt was 4.44%. The Council's debt portfolio as at 31 March 2021 is shown in Annex 1.

12. The Council repaid £6m of maturing PWLB loans during the year. The weighted average interest rate payable on the matured loans was 3.342%. The outturn for Interest Payable in 2020/21 was £15.0m which is in line with the budget in the Medium Term Financial Plan. The details are set out in Annex 2.

Investment Strategy

13. In line with the CIPFA Code of Practice on Treasury Management, the Council prioritised Security and liquidity of cash above the requirement to maximise returns. The Council used fixed deposits, call accounts, notice accounts, money market funds and pooled funds to deposit its in-house cash surpluses during 2020/21. The Council continuously monitored credit quality information regarding the institutions on the Council's approved Lending List.

14. As a result of an in year balances analysis, the long term lending limit for 2020/21 was increased from £200m to £215m, whilst the limit for 2021/22 was increased from £150m to £200m. The increase in limit allowed the Council to take further advantage of inflated intra local authority deposit rates.

15. During 2020/21, because of financial uncertainty caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, the Council limited the exposure to banks by lending to local authorities. At 31 March 2021 the Council had £72.3m of long-term fixed deposits (deposits over 364 days), all of which were placed with local authorities. The aim was to maintain a high level of security and manage exposure to interest rate and counterparty risk.

16. The inter local authority lending market is beneficial to both the lender and the borrower. The lender is able to benefit by having access to high security deposits. The borrower is able to

[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.

secure short to medium term cash at a borrowing cost that is lower than available through PWLB or other money market participants.

17. The weighted average maturity of all deposits at 31 March 2021, including money deposited in short-term notice accounts, was 225 days (compared with 193 days during 2019/20). The increase in weighted average maturity was a strategic decision to take advantage of inflated inter local authority longer term lending rates, against a back drop of lowering inter bank lending rates.

18. The 2020/21 Treasury Management Strategy allowed for 50% of the total portfolio to be help in Strategic Pooled funds. During the year, the Council maintained the investment in Strategic Pooled Funds. These funds are all income producing. As the value of the funds can fluctuate, these investments are treated as long term.

19. In March 2021 the TMST explored options for longer dated investments. Increasing the exposure to Strategic investments was not deemed appropriate as the certainty of cash levels, above the current exposure, for the 10 year time horizon was not satisfied. An analysis of shorter dated and cash plus funds was undertaken, however the returns were not favourable. It was decided to review these funds in the first half of 2021/22.

The Council's Lending List

20. The Council's in-house cash balances are deposited with institutions that meet the Council's approved credit rating criteria. The approved Lending List is regularly updated during the year to reflect changes in bank and building society credit ratings. Changes are reported to the Cabinet on a regular basis as part of the Financial Monitoring & Business Strategy Delivery reports. The approved lending list may also be further restricted by officers, in response to changing conditions and perceived risk. Annex 3 shows the amendments incorporated into the Lending List during 2020/21, in accordance with the approved credit rating criteria and additional temporary restrictions.

Investment Outturn

21. The average daily balance of temporary surplus cash invested in-house was £401.675m in 2020/21. The Council achieved an average in-house return for the year of 0.84%, producing gross interest receivable of £3.357m. Temporary surplus cash balances include: developer contributions; council reserves and balances; trust fund balances; and various other funds to which the Council pays interest at each financial year end, based on the average three month London Interbank Bid (LIBID) rate.

22. During 2020/21 the average three month LIBID rate was 0.14%. The Council's average in-house return of 0.84% exceeded this benchmark by 0.70%. The average in-house return was 0.01% lower than the rate of interest of 0.85% assumed in the budget. The budgeted forecast was for UK Base Rate to remain at 0.75% for 2020/21. However, as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, official bank rate was lowered to 0.10% in March 2020 and remained at that level for the duration of 2020/21.

23. The Council operates a number of instant access call accounts and money market funds to deposit short-term cash surpluses. During 2020/21 the average balance held on instant access was £83.819m.

24. In-house deposits produced gross interest receivable of £3.357m for the year. Gross distributions from pooled funds totalling £3.947m were realised in year, bringing total investment income to £7.304m. This compares to budgeted investment income of £6.258m, giving a net overachievement of £1.046m. The overachievement in income received was due to a combination of higher than forecast average cash balances and higher than forecast distributions from pooled funds.

25. At 31 March 2020 the total value of pooled fund investments was £89.974m, which represented a book value loss of £11.031m. The loss was a direct result of global investment market contractions as a result of the Coronavirus pandemic. As at 31 March 2021, the portfolio had regained the losses and was valued at £100.687m.

26. At 31 March 2021, the Council's investment portfolio of £529.326m comprised £379.300m of fixed term deposits, £49.339m at short term notice in money market funds and £100.687m in pooled funds with a variable net asset value. Annex 4 provides an analysis of the investment portfolio at 31 March 2021.

27. 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 2021 is shown in Annex 4.

Prudential Indicators for Treasury Management

28. During the financial year, the Council operated within the treasury limits and Prudential Indicators set out in the Council's Treasury Management Strategy Report. The outturn for the Prudential Indicators is shown in Annex 5.

External Performance Indicators and Statistics

29. The Council's treasury management advisors Link Treasury Services also benchmark the Council's investment performance against its other clients on a quarterly basis. The results of the quarter 4 benchmarking to 31 March 2021 are included in Annex 6.

30. The benchmarking results show that the Council was achieving higher than average interest on deposits at 31 March 2021 compared to the benchmark group. This has been achieved by placing deposits over a longer than average duration with institutions that are of higher than average credit quality.

Financial and Legal Implications

31. This report is mostly concerned with finance and the implications are set out in the main body of the report.

Lorna Baxter
Director of Finance

Contact officer: Tim Chapple
Telephone Number: 07917 262935

June 2021

Annex 1

OXFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL DEBT PROFILE 31 MARCH 2021

LOAN No	£m	RATE %	Start Date	End Date	LOAN No	£m	RATE %	Start Date	End Date
479915	1.684	6.625	30/11/1995	26/03/2023	492376	10.000	4.200	01/11/2006	31/03/2037
479916	0.316	6.625	30/11/1995	26/03/2023	492386	2.000	4.350	03/11/2006	01/04/2027
480364	1.000	6.250	29/12/1997	31/12/2022	492535	10.000	4.200	29/11/2006	30/06/2037
480867	2.000	5.625	23/04/1998	30/04/2023	492561	6.000	4.250	07/12/2006	30/06/2032
480915	2.000	5.625	30/04/1998	22/05/2023	492598	8.000	4.500	18/12/2006	30/04/2027
483469	3.000	4.250	12/11/1999	22/11/2024	492599	6.000	4.500	18/12/2006	31/05/2027
483659	2.000	4.250	25/11/1999	30/04/2025	492786	10.000	4.850	23/01/2007	31/01/2022
487777	4.000	4.650	16/05/2003	01/05/2028	492789	6.000	4.500	24/01/2007	31/01/2032
488204	8.000	5.000	27/10/2003	01/11/2023	492990	6.000	4.450	06/03/2007	31/03/2032
488562	7.650	4.700	19/03/2004	16/03/2030	492807	4.000	4.250	25/01/2007	30/06/2053
488563	1.733	4.700	19/03/2004	16/03/2030	493378	4.000	4.900	11/06/2007	30/06/2032
488989	6.000	4.850	16/08/2004	13/07/2030	493638	6.000	4.550	02/08/2007	30/09/2052
489168	6.000	4.700	22/10/2004	01/03/2030	493803	4.000	4.650	23/08/2007	20/09/2032
489287	6.000	4.600	22/11/2004	01/04/2032	493822	6.000	4.450	23/08/2007	30/09/2053
489429	6.000	4.550	02/12/2004	01/06/2032	493960	4.000	5.050	03/10/2007	31/10/2022
489856	5.000	4.600	06/05/2005	01/05/2033	494069	6.000	4.500	21/11/2007	30/09/2052
490105	5.000	4.450	23/05/2005	01/12/2033	494171	6.000	4.480	27/12/2007	31/03/2052
491669	4.000	4.450	23/05/2006	14/06/2026	494200	6.000	4.420	04/01/2008	31/03/2057
491948	5.000	4.650	16/08/2006	31/12/2026	494703	6.000	4.460	04/08/2008	13/07/2058
491957	4.000	4.500	18/08/2006	31/12/2031	494747	10.000	4.390	15/08/2008	26/03/2058
491958	4.000	4.500	18/08/2006	30/09/2031	497549	5.000	4.190	08/07/2010	14/06/2054
491959	2.000	4.600	21/08/2006	30/04/2027	LOBO 06	5.000	4.290	27/04/2005	27/04/2021
491960	10.000	4.600	21/08/2006	30/09/2026	LOBO 07	5.000	4.500	27/04/2005	27/04/2021
492021	5.000	4.350	25/08/2006	22/11/2031	MML08	5.000	3.950	31/05/2005	29/05/2065
492063	5.000	4.450	31/08/2006	31/03/2028	LOBO 09	5.000	3.680	23/11/2005	23/11/2021
492064	5.000	4.450	31/08/2006	30/04/2027	LOBO 10	5.000	3.800	31/07/2006	31/07/2019
492088	4.000	4.350	04/09/2006	02/03/2032	LOBO 11	5.000	3.840	31/07/2006	29/07/2021
492117	4.000	4.450	07/09/2006	02/03/2037	LOBO 12	5.000	3.825	02/10/2006	02/10/2022
492367	2.000	4.700	25/10/2006	31/12/2021	LOBO 13	5.000	4.010	02/10/2006	02/10/2024
492369	10.000	4.650	31/10/2006	31/12/2021	LOBO 14	5.000	3.820	31/08/2006	31/08/2023
492371	13.000	4.500	31/10/2006	31/12/2026	LOBO 15	5.000	3.720	21/09/2006	13/10/2022
492375	10.000	4.200	01/11/2006	31/12/2036	**Total**	**154.383**			

Annex 2

Long-term debt Maturing 2020/21

Public Works Loan Board: Loans Maturing in 2020/21

Date	Amount £m	Rate %	Repayment Type
01/06/2020	5.0	3.540	Maturity
13/07/2020	0.5	2.350	EIP
31/07/2020	0.5	2.350	EIP
Total	**6.0**		

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

Lending List Changes during 2020/21

Lending limits & maturity limits changed from 1 April 2020

There were no changes to the Lending List During 2020/21

Annex 4

OXFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL INVESTMENT PORTFOLIO 31/03/2021

Fixed term deposits held at 31/03/2020

Counterparty	Principal Deposited (£)	Maturity Date
Spelthorne Borough Council	£4,000,000.00	02-Jul-21
London Borough of Croydon Council	£10,000,000.00	25-Oct-21
London Borough of Croydon Council	£5,000,000.00	06-Dec-21
Warrington Borough Council	£10,000,000.00	14-Oct-21
Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council	£10,000,000.00	01-Jul-22
Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council	£5,000,000.00	03-Jan-23
Cambridgeshire County Council	£5,000,000.00	09-Jan-23
Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council	£5,000,000.00	12-Oct-22
Wokingham Borough Council	£5,000,000.00	10-Feb-22
Wokingham Borough Council	£5,000,000.00	23-Mar-22
London Borough of Islington Council	£5,000,000.00	21-May-21
Northumberland County Council	£5,000,000.00	30-Jan-23
Peterborough City Council	£5,000,000.00	29-Apr-22
Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council	£5,000,000.00	08-Nov-22
Worcestershire County Council	£7,500,000.00	03-Mar-23
Thurrock Council	£5,000,000.00	01-Apr-21
Thurrock Council	£5,000,000.00	01-Apr-21
Slough Borough Council	£10,000,000.00	01-Apr-21
Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council	£5,000,000.00	01-Apr-21
Gloucester City Council	£5,000,000.00	07-Apr-21
Police and Crime Commissioner for Lancashire	£5,000,000.00	22-Apr-21
Slough Borough Council	£5,000,000.00	26-Apr-21
Wokingham Borough Council	£5,000,000.00	26-Apr-21
Wokingham Borough Council	£5,000,000.00	28-Apr-21
Uttlesford District Council	£5,000,000.00	19-Jun-23

Counterparty	Principal Deposited (£)	Maturity Date
Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council	£3,000,000.00	10-Jul-23
Staffordshire Moorlands District Council	£3,000,000.00	31-Jul-23
Kingston Upon Hull City Council	£7,000,000.00	04-May-21
Liverpool City Council	£5,000,000.00	15-Apr-21
Liverpool City Council	£5,000,000.00	30-Apr-21
Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council	£5,000,000.00	09-Jun-21
Plymouth City Council	£5,000,000.00	23-Apr-21
Liverpool City Council	£5,000,000.00	28-Apr-21
West Dunbartonshire Council	£6,000,000.00	21-Jun-21
Liverpool City Council	£5,000,000.00	21-Jun-21
Cherwell District Council	£5,000,000.00	15-Jul-22
Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council	£5,000,000.00	23-Jun-21
Lancashire County Council	£5,000,000.00	17-May-21
Lancashire County Council	£5,000,000.00	21-May-21
Brentwood Borough Council	£5,000,000.00	16-Jun-21
Spelthorne Borough Council	£10,000,000.00	30-Jun-21
Spelthorne Borough Council	£10,000,000.00	08-Jul-21
Police & Crime Commissioner for Nottinghamshire	£10,000,000.00	14-Jul-21
West Dunbartonshire Council	£5,000,000.00	21-Jul-21
Lancashire County Council	£5,000,000.00	21-Jul-21
Kingston Upon Hull City Council	£5,000,000.00	07-Sep-21
Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council	£5,000,000.00	01-Sep-21
Plymouth City Council	£5,000,000.00	15-Sep-21
Plymouth City Council	£5,000,000.00	28-Sep-21
Police and Crime Commissioner for Merseyside	£5,000,000.00	15-Jul-21
Thurrock Council	£5,000,000.00	09-Nov-21
Moray Council	£5,000,000.00	30-Nov-21
Fife Council	£5,000,000.00	14-Dec-21
Aberdeenshire Council	£5,000,000.00	05-Jan-22

Counterparty	Principal Deposited (£)	Maturity Date
Aberdeenshire Council	£5,000,000.00	06-Jan-22
Fife Council	£5,000,000.00	12-Nov-21
West Dunbartonshire Council	£5,000,000.00	22-Oct-21
Plymouth City Council	£5,000,000.00	08-Nov-21
North Lanarkshire Council	£5,000,000.00	10-Jan-22
South Ayrshire Council	£3,000,000.00	22-Feb-24
Cambridgeshire County Council	£5,000,000.00	17-Feb-22
Surrey County Council	£5,000,000.00	06-Sep-21
London Borough of Barking & Dagenham Council	£5,000,000.00	23-Aug-21
London Borough of Brent Council	£5,000,000.00	23-Feb-22
West Dunbartonshire Council	£5,000,000.00	25-Feb-22
London Borough of Southwark Council	£10,000,000.00	24-Jan-22
London Borough of Haringey Council	£5,000,000.00	28-Feb-22
Gravesham Borough Council	£5,800,000.00	15-Mar-24

Money Market Funds

Counterparty	Balance at 31/03/20 (£)	Notice period
Aberdeen Liquidity Fund	2,005,000.00	Same day
Goldman Sachs Sterling Liquid Fund	5,000.00	Same day
Deutsche Sterling Liquid Fund	355,291.44	Same day
Federated Sterling Liquidity Funds	25,000,577.48	Same day
Legal & General Sterling Liquidity Fund	21,681.16	Same day
CCLA Public Sector Deposit Fund	5,000,496.86	Same day
Morgan Stanley Sterling Liquid Fund	2,000,000.00	Same day
Total	**34,388,046.94**	

Notice / Call Accounts

Counterparty	Balance at 31/03/20 (£)	Notice period
Santander Call Account	14,948,787.34	Same day
Barclays Current	9,325.51	Same day
Handlesbanken	2,376.69	Same day
Total	**14,960,489.54**	

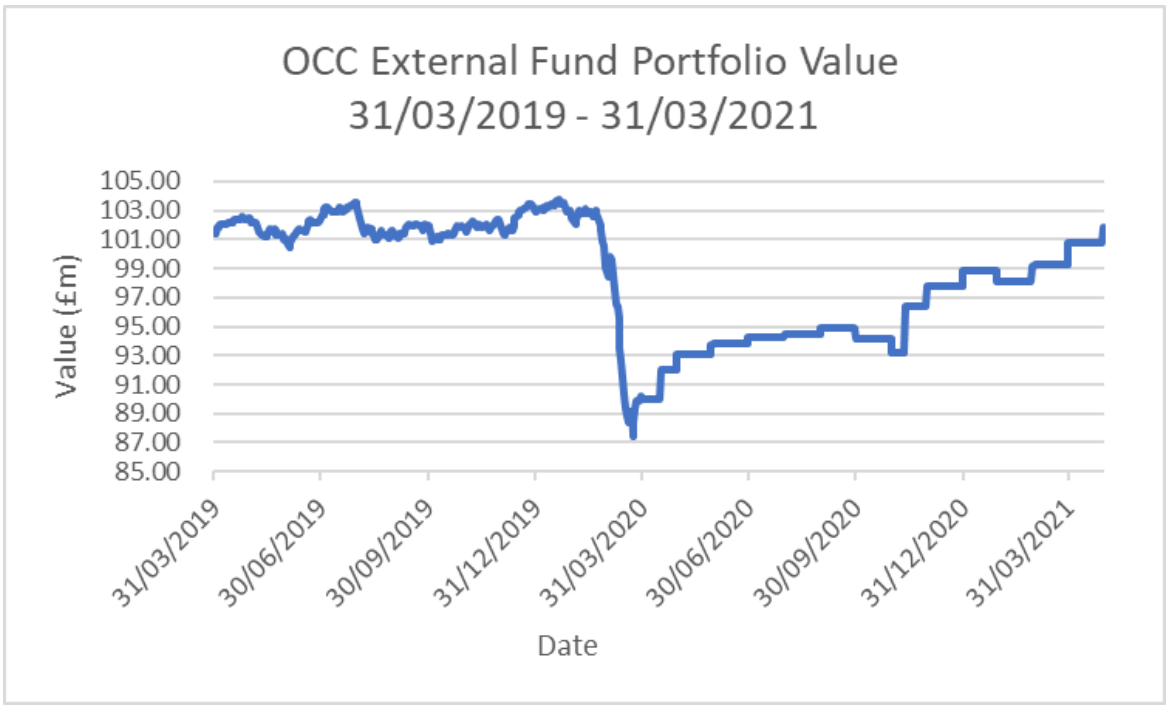
Strategic Bond Funds

Fund	Balance at 31/03/20 (£)	Notice period
Threadneedle strategic bond fund (income)	13,795,046.06	4 days
Threadneedle Global Equity Income Fund	14,263,076.25	4 days
Kames Diversified Income	10,152,586.53	4 days
Ninety One Diversified Income	9,961,311.54	4 days
M&G Strategic Corporate Bond Fund	13,031,392.99	4 days
Schroder Income Maximiser	10,294,839.09	4 days
CCLA Diversified Income Fund	4,924,380.30	4 days
Total	**76,422,632.76**	

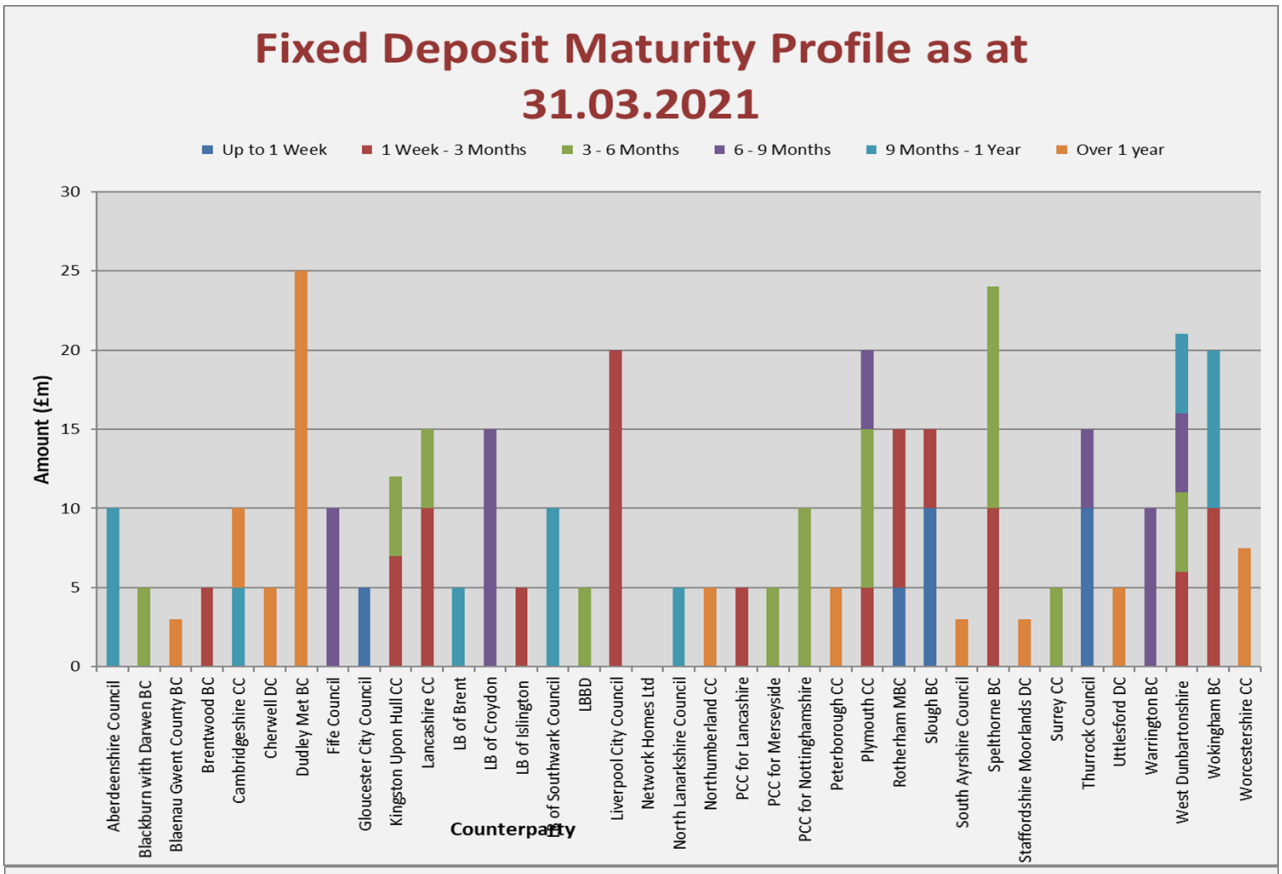
Property Funds

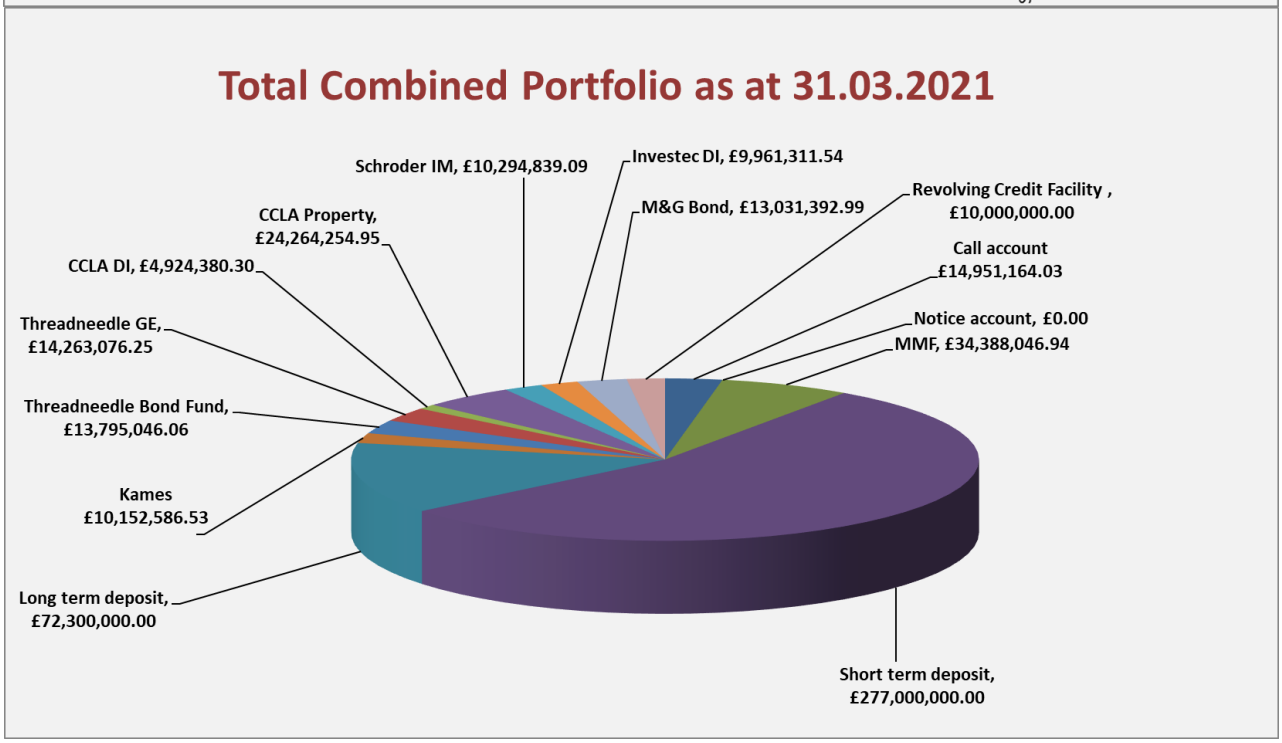
Fund	Balance at 31/03/20 (£)	Notice period
CCLA Local Authorities Property Fund	24,264,254.95	Monthly
Total	**24,264,254.95**	

Strategic Pooled Fund Portfolio Value Over Time



Investment portfolio risk profile at 31/03/21





Annex 5

Prudential Indicators Outturn 31 March 2021

Authorised and Operational Limit for External Debt	
Authorised Limit for External Debt	£410,000,000
Operational Limit for External Debt	£390,000,000
Actual External Debt at 31 March 2019	£335,382,618
Fixed Interest Rate Exposure	
Fixed Interest Net Borrowing limit	£350,000,000
Actual at 31 March 2020	£158,882,618
Variable Interest Rate Exposure	
Variable Interest Net Borrowing limit	0
Actual at 31 March 2021	- £9,727,083.22
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 2021	£72,300,000

Maturity Structure of Borrowing at 31/03/20

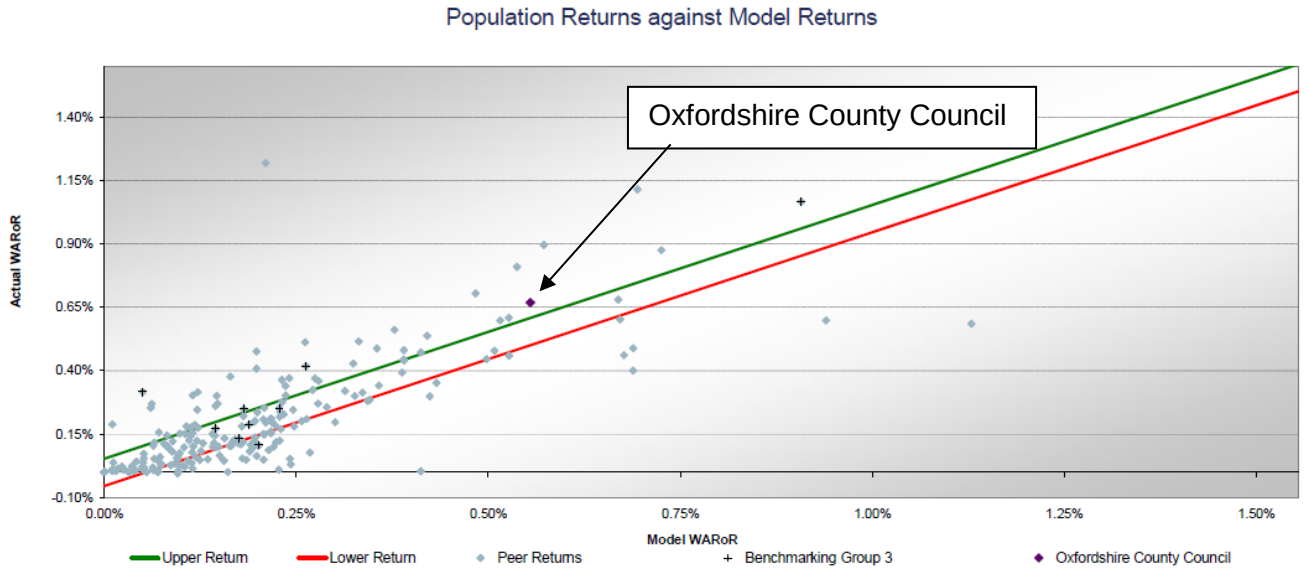
	Limit %	**Actual %**
From 01/04/18		
Under 12 months	0 - 20	17.00
12 – 24 months	0 - 25	5.07
24 months – 5 years	0 - 35	5.07
5 years – 10 years	5 - 40	25.46
10 years +	50 - 95	47.41

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 01/04/20 on loans still outstanding at 31/03/21.

Annex 6

Benchmarking

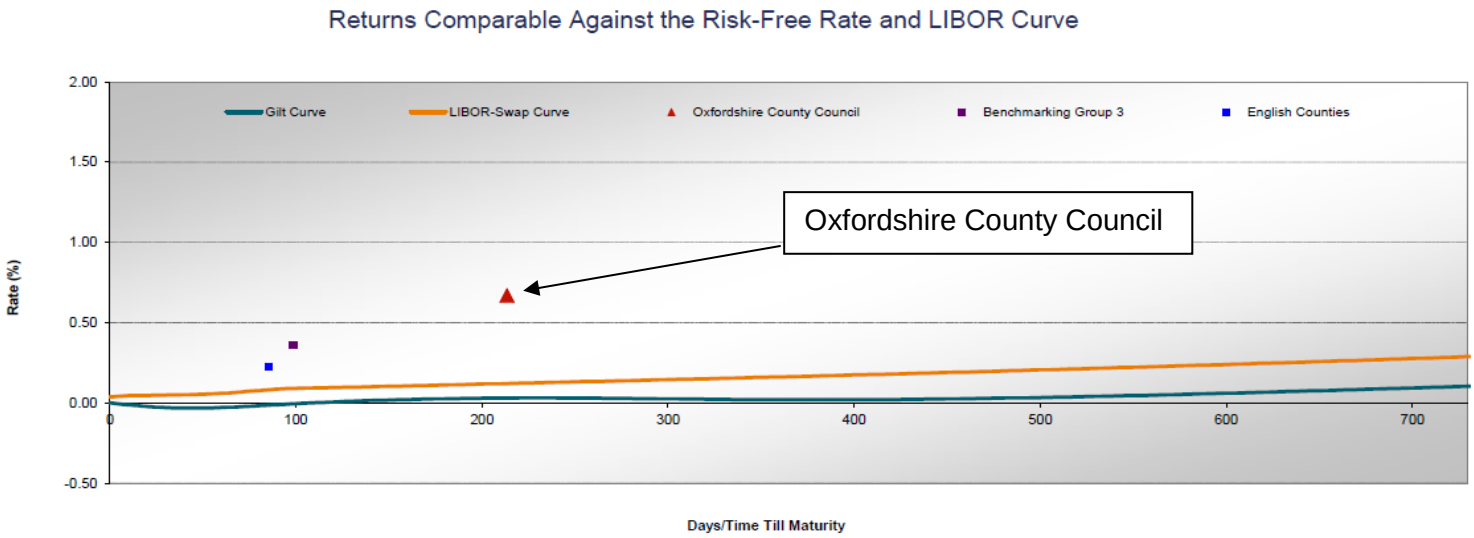
Weighted Average Return



	Actual WARoR	Model WARoR	Difference	Lower Bound	Upper Bound	Performance
Oxfordshire County Council	0.67%	0.55%	0.11%	0.50%	0.61%	Above

Oxfordshire County Council achieved a higher interest rate compared to the average achieved by Link Treasury Services clients, as at 31/03/2021.

Return Compared to Risk Free Rate



Oxfordshire County Council achieved a higher interest rate compared to the average achieved by Link Treasury Services clients, as at 31/03/2021, by increasing the weighted average duration of deposits.

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Divisions Affected - All

CABINET - 22 JUNE 2021

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION (LGA) LIBRARIES AND HERITAGE SERVICES PEER REVIEW FEEDBACK REPORT

Report by Claire Taylor, Corporate Director, Customers, Organisational Development and Resources

RECOMMENDATION

The Cabinet is RECOMMENDED to:

(a) consider the LGA Cultural Services Peer Review feedback report (Annex 1);
(b) note the recommendations set out within the report;
(c) agree the proposals set out at paragraph 10 for incorporating the report's recommendations into the service planning and Libraries and Heritage Strategy development process.

Executive Summary

1. Cabinet agreed on 20 April 2021 to the development of a Libraries and Heritage Strategy to be presented to Cabinet by the end of 2021. The development of a strategy will set a clear long-term direction for the development of these services, their contribution to post pandemic recovery and wider community outcomes focused around the following themes:

- education, learning and skills
- healthy place shaping and well-being
- culture and creativity
- digital inclusion
- social inclusion and community cohesion
- economic development
- environmental sustainability

2. The strategy will be informed by an evidence base including a review of current performance, analysis of community needs and customer feedback. Further, insight will be gathered through community engagement in Faringdon and Banbury, these locations have planned library improvements (including capital expenditure) and offer an immediate opportunity for proactive stakeholder engagement in shaping the future of the service.

3. In developing the evidence base the county council have benefited from feedback from a Local Government Association (LGA) Peer Review on

Oxfordshire Libraries and Heritage Services Libraries which took place virtually on 11 and 12 March 2021. Cabinet is now asked to consider the report, note the recommendations made, and agree that these should be incorporated into the council's business planning and development of the strategy.

4. Peer reviews are conducted by a team convened by the LGA and include Councillors and senior officers from other councils, who provide challenge and bring experience of service innovation and improvement to bear in their review of the county council's services. Oxfordshire County Council would like to formally record its thanks to those officers and members who undertook the review.

Scope of the LGA Peer review

5. The Libraries and Heritage Services subject to review included (appendix 1 sets out key service statistics):

- 44 libraries – 22 of which are Community Supported Libraries run by library staff supported by volunteers
- home library service
- on-line library services
- The Oxfordshire Museum in Woodstock
- the Museums Resource Centre at Standlake, housing the reserve collection
- a Scheduled Ancient Monument and Grade 1 listed medieval barn at Swalcliffe, providing accessible storage for large agricultural and trade vehicles
- museum learning service at Oxford Council
- all three locations are Accredited Museums
- the museum service also has a legacy responsibility for the remains of the Bishop's Palace in Witney
- local history and archives service based in the History Centre in St Lukes Church
- Victoria County History

6. The peer review team looked at one core question applicable to all cultural service reviews namely:

- How effective is the contribution of libraries and heritage to cross cutting agendas of other services and the wider council objectives?

The council also asked the peer team to focus on the following area:

- How to ensure the themes and content in the forthcoming Libraries and Heritage Strategy will deliver better outcomes for residents, visitors and businesses.

The LGA Peer Review Process

7. Engagement with libraries and heritage staff and the Cabinet member for Cultural Services took place before the review, with senior and service managers contributing to the production of a position statement provided to the peer review team in advance of their virtual visit. The peer team prepared for the peer challenge by reviewing a range of documents and information and then then spent 1.5 days participating in online activity during which they:

- Spoke to more than 40 people including a range of council staff together with councillors and external partners and stakeholders.
- Gathered information and views from more than 13 meetings, and additional research and reading.
- Collectively spent more than 120 hours to determine their findings – the equivalent of one person spending more than 3.5 weeks in Oxfordshire.
- Presented initial findings at the conclusion of the peer review visit to senior managers and the Cabinet member for Cultural Services

LGA Peer Feedback and Recommendations

8. The LGA Feedback Report is attached as Annex 1. An Executive Summary in section one summaries the review team's conclusions.

9. Following the review, the LGA peer team have made six recommendations:

1. reconsider timescale for strategy development
2. modernising foundation blocks
3. include an engagement plan as part of the strategy process – councillors, staff, customers and stakeholders
4. consider establishing new arrangements internally and externally to improve partnership working
5. tap into all the available Peer support for both Elected Members and Officers
6. look at best practice elsewhere to inform components of the Libraries and Heritage Strategy.

10. The table below sets out how each recommendation will be delivered and considers who will need to be involved.

1. Reconsider timescale for strategy development
What have we already done?
At the time of the peer review in March 2021 it was our ambition to take a draft strategy to Cabinet in June 2021. Following the feedback from the peer review team on the timescale at the time of the review the decision was taken to work towards a later deadline to present the draft strategy to Cabinet.

Cabinet on 20 April approved a report setting out the rationale for developing a strategy, key themes to be explored in the forthcoming strategy and the deadline for receiving the draft strategy later in the year.

How will we go further to deliver this recommendation?

The peer review team recommended that the strategy development is underpinned by a comprehensive analysis of library and heritage services performance against community need. The performance and community needs analyses will be undertaken during the early summer, with the results available to be shared with stakeholders, including staff, members and partners (internal and external).

The community needs analysis will involve a review of secondary data, demographic, socio-economic, skills, health, and economic data to be combined with the outcome of two locally focused co-production projects to take place in Farringdon and Banbury.

Who will need to be involved?

- Library and heritage staff
- Councillors
- Other council departments
- Partners
- Local communities in Faringdon and Banbury (the pilot areas)

2. Modernising our foundation blocks

What have we already done?

This recommendation consisted of a number of key actions in order to form a solid bedrock from which the Libraries and Heritage services can progress more effectively**:**

- Put in place mechanisms that will help the services undertake transactional elements of service provision; for example taking online payments.

  We have identified the requirements for on-line payments across libraries and heritage and have a plan to implement a new payment system

- Identify solutions to help the digital offer flourish and adopt a more strategic approach to engaging current and future audiences through a range of platforms.

  The Cultural Services Improvement Programme has a project underway to improve digital capacity in heritage services to secure a new search engine to increase access and the ability for visitors to interact with our rich heritage collection. This project has started to consider the digital capacity to maximise audience development and engagement more widely and this learning will be fed into the strategy development deliberations.

- Review the data collection system to ensure it captures quantitative and qualitative data to both inform the management of services and also demonstrate cross-cutting strategic impact. This will better enable advocacy regarding the value of the service.

  As part of the strategy development process we are mapping the data we collect and how it is currently used in the service to support both operational and strategic planning

- To enable the realisation of the vision for libraries to act as vibrant community hubs and meet the demands of today's communities, consider whether the staffing structure is flexible enough and also whether the structure and the asset base is fit for future purpose.

  A database of libraries and heritage assets has been collated to enable an understanding of how our assets will be able to support future demand given projected population growth and the delivery of a wide range of activities to meet identified community need.

How will we go further to deliver this recommendation?

The level of on-line activity across libraries and heritage grew significantly during the pandemic and it is important to build on this experience and integrate digital and physical access and engagement in future service development. The strategy will fully explore the current digital capacity (platforms, skills and culture of OCC) and set out clear ambitions and requirements to ensure our digital reach is maximised.

A new data collection framework will be developed as an outcome of the strategy development process.

We will assess the effectiveness of the staffing structure in libraries and heritage services once the strategy has been agreed.

Who will need to be involved?

- Library and heritage services managers
- Communications, Strategy and Insight team
- IT and Digital
- Libraries and heritage staff
- HR
- Unions

3. Include an engagement plan as part of the strategy process – councillors, staff, customers and stakeholders

What have we already done?

The paper considered by Cabinet in April 2021 to secure agreement to the strategy development process contained a recommendation to deliver a Member Engagement Strategy and to pilot a community co-production model.

How will we go further to deliver this recommendation?

An Engagement and Communications strategy and plan is in development with the following objectives:

- build a shared understanding with stakeholders of the need for change and the benefits of a strategy
- build a shared understanding of how libraries and heritage services contribute community benefit now and how they can be improved to deliver increased impact
- ensure that stakeholders at all levels are enabled and encouraged to contribute
- manage any anxiety that staff may have about possible service change and how this might affect them and their communities
- build stakeholder capacity to be advocates for the strategy
- build our skills, knowledge and understanding of working differently with communities and how place-based planning can support service excellence

- As part of the development of the strategy the council's overview and scrutiny committee will be engaged. Local members will also be included within the place-based pilots. Localities meetings will form part of the engagement strategy.

Who will need to be involved?

- Political and managerial leaders
- Towns, parishes and other civic organisations
- Libraries and heritage services staff
- All councillors
- VCS role in understanding and engaging with communities
- Service users, carers, and representative groups
- The public and media
- Broad representative groups of local stakeholders

4. Consider establishing new arrangements internally and externally to improve partnership working

What have we already done?

The report recommends a cross departmental steering group for the following reasons.

"It would also help to embed understanding regarding how libraries and heritage can support wider council priorities moving forward"

The report also recommends that the council establish an external forum for the following reasons.

"An external forum would harness the existing goodwill towards the council's Libraries and Heritage services and act as a mechanism to ensure ongoing engagement regarding the development of the Libraries & Heritage Strategy, resulting in improved partnership working and the potential to lever external funding"

The peer April Cabinet paper sets out the contribution of libraries and heritage services across a number of themes, including social, health and well-being, education and skills and economic development to assist councillors and officers to understand how these services contribute to wider council priorities currently.

This increased awareness of the contribution of these services to wider council priorities was reinforced by the inclusion of senior officers from health, children's and adult services as part of the peer review discovery in March.

How will we go further to deliver this recommendation?

We will establish new engagement fora as part of the development of the strategy. These will include enhancing internal networks to ensure the service directly contributes and reflects council priorities and external networks, to ensure community engagement and customer focus.

Who will need to be involved?

- Political and managerial leaders
- Towns, parishes and other civic organisations
- Voluntary and Community Sector S role in understanding and engaging with communities
- Service users, carers, and representative groups
- The public and media
- Broad representative groups of local stakeholders

5. Tap into all the available Peer support for both Elected Members and Officers

What have we already done?

Officers regularly attend Libraries Connected, Arts Council, National Archives and LGA events to ensure that strategic and operational planning and delivery of these services is informed by best practice and new thinking.

How will we go further to deliver this recommendation?

Elected members will be provided with details of LGA webinars for elected members and ACE/LGA Leadership Essentials for Cultural Portfolio Holders to build understanding of how councils can use cultural services to improve outcomes for their communities and learn from good practice across the country.

Member briefings to update will be held in addition to the engagement strategy and as part of the final launch.

Who will need to be involved?

- Cabinet
- The Cabinet Portfolio Holder
- Members
- Officers

6. Look at best practice elsewhere to inform components of the Libraries and Heritage Strategy.

What have we already done?

We regularly look at best practice through engagement with professional networks.

How will we go further to deliver this recommendation?

One of the strands of the strategy development process will be horizon scanning to identify learning that will benefit the future delivery of these services in Oxfordshire.

Who will need to be involved?

- Colleagues from OCC and across the sector
- Councillors

Corporate Policies and Priorities

11. The strategy will address how libraries and heritage services will contribute to the councils wider set of strategic priorities as set out in the Council's Corporate Plan for Thriving Communities

Financial Implications

12. There are no immediate financial implications arising from this report.

Comments checked by:
Lorna Baxter, Director of Finance

Legal Implications

13. Library authorities have a statutory duty under the Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964 'to provide a comprehensive and efficient library service for all persons' in the area that want to make use of it (Section 7). The Act does not try to define what a 'comprehensive and efficient library service' is, but when considering how best to deliver the statutory duty, each library service is responsible for determining, through consultation, local need and how to deliver a modern and efficient library service that meets the requirements of their communities within available resources.

Comments checked by:
Anita Bradley, Director Law and Governance

Staff Implications

14. There are no immediate staff implications arising from this report

Equality and Inclusion Implications

15. There are no immediate equalities and inclusion arising from this report. The proposed strategy will be based on a robust understanding of need achieved through use of a wide range of data sources. The strategy will enable libraries and heritage services to address inequalities through increased targeting of services to best meet community needs. The plans for public consultation on the draft strategy if required will be subject to an impact assessment.

Climate Change Implications

16. Climate change and environmental sustainability are key priorities of Oxfordshire County Council, the strategy will set out the service will contribute to our net zero commitment and the delivery of our climate action framework.

Risk Management

17. This paper sets out the findings of the peer challenge, the only immediate risk arising from these recommendations is one of missed opportunity i.e. failure to act to address areas for development. The project and engagement plan for the development of the service strategy will set out the risks associated with undertaking the work.

Consultations

18. The peer challenge recommends the development of an engagement strategy to underpin the new service strategy. The peer challenge itself is based on stakeholder feedback.

CLAIRE TAYLOR
Corporate Director, Customers, Organisational Development and Resources

Appendix 1:	Key Service Statistics
Annex 1:	LGA Cultural Services Peer Review feedback report
Contact Officer:	Lesli Good, Assistant Director, Cultural Services June 2021

June 2021

Appendix 1: Key Service Statistics

Libraries

- in 2019/20 3,382,439 million items were borrowed
- of these 159,071 were e-books and e-audio book and there were 166,255 searches for e magazines
- the Home Library Service supported 670 active borrowers
- County library is the 4th highest library for borrowing in Great Britain
- at 2,462,330 visits this was an increase of 16% over the previous year
- however, in common with other library services across the country borrowing and visits have been falling over the last ten years. CIPFA data for 2006 – 2016 shows a national decline in visits of 28% and 38% in issues (items borrowed). Over the period 2010 to 2020, Oxfordshire's visits declined by 20% and issues by 29.5%
- at 120/1000 population active borrowers are above the average of 110 for our comparator group (active borrowers are defined as someone who has borrowed at least one item in the last year)
- at £12,448 revenue expenditure/1000 population is above the average £10,986 for our comparator group

Oxford Museum

- cares for more than 100,000 objects in store and on display at the Oxfordshire Museum and elsewhere across Oxfordshire
- in 2019/20 the Service welcomed 125,000+ visitors to its sites (excluding school groups)
- museum sites were open and freely accessible to the public for 2,038 hours
- the service engaged with more than 8,500 school children through loans of boxed collections of objects, workshops at the museum and in school, and with more than 1,500 children in informal learning activities
- more than 3,000 adults in the community benefitted from face to face activities
- the service benefited from 5,400 hours of volunteer support.

Oxfordshire History Centre

In 2019/20

- the history centre housed 8,467 metres of physical archive holdings and 26.3 terabytes of digital storage
- the centre was open to visitors 39 hours per week
- the centre welcomed 3,645 on-site physical visitors, of whom 17% were first-time users
- 8,000 documents from the strong rooms were produced for customer requests
- 2,611 enquiries were dealt with by email or letter
- at £1518 expenditure/1000 population the history service is above the average of £1352 in our comparator group

Cultural Peer Challenge
Oxfordshire County Council

March 2021

Feedback Report

1. Executive Summary

Oxfordshire County Council Library Service was awarded a peer challenge through the Arts Council England (ACE) and Local Government Association (LGA) partnership. The scope and focus of the challenge are set out in section three of this report.

This report describes the feedback given at the end of the Libraries & Heritage Services online Peer Challenge and sets out the recommendations of the peer team.

Oxfordshire has a population of 687,466 people (ONS 2019) living in both rural communities and urban population centres. Over the next 10 years, growth plans for Oxfordshire will see the construction of 100,000 new homes and deliver an increase in 85,000 jobs. The council will need to plan how it amplifies and modernises provision for all of its services in response to an increased demand from the resident user base. In terms of libraries and heritage responding to this ambitious place-shaping agenda, it will be imperative to consider how best to utilise the public asset base to serve the growing communities, which will necessitate 're-imagining' the current offer by reshaping, refurbishing and, in some instances, relocating provision.

The council recognises the interdependence between individuals and communities and, in the wake of the pandemic, has a focus on local place-based development as part of the recovery to help ensure 'Thriving Communities for Everyone in Oxfordshire'. The service response to the challenges of COVID-19 was agile, and building on the achievements and innovations during successive lockdowns, the service is now well positioned to contribute to post COVID-19 recovery by helping to tackle loneliness and isolation, providing alternative opportunities for people to engage in cultural activities.

An internal peer review of cultural services carried out in September 2020 was a robust exercise, acknowledging the challenges faced and opportunities presented by adopting a fresh strategic approach. Subsequently senior officers have invested time in conducting research to position their thinking firmly into the national, regional and local strategic context.

There is evidence of a number of notable projects and initiatives at service level, although these do not seem to be strategically driven and aligned to corporate priorities. The council will benefit from improving the strategic alignment of these services and this will feed through to the proposed Library and Heritage Services strategy which is currently in development. In addition, investing time in helping staff to understand the 'golden thread' will enable better advocacy for the role of libraries and heritage across the council and out into communities.

During the peer challenge process we spoke to a number of staff, stakeholders and also councillors who expressed frustration at the lack of progress made with previous strategic plans for culture. This included a strategic investment plan for the creative, cultural, heritage and tourism sector in Oxfordshire 'Creating the Environment for Growth' and also the museum strategy and business case. This review has not been able to identify the root cause of the issue; however, it was variously described as 'shelving', 'inertia' and a 'systemic blockage'. There may well be valid reasons why both these initiatives have paused, but there is now an imperative to ensure that the future work around the Libraries

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and Heritage Strategy is driven forward, to meet the expectations of all those involved, deliver for communities and avoid reputational damage.

The peer team found the Portfolio Holder, staff and stakeholders who participated in the challenge process to be enthusiastic, and willing. However, wide ranging, structured engagement plans will be vital to focus this commitment and build strong relationships internally and externally. In particular, ensuring stakeholders are involved with and understand the strategic direction for libraries and heritage, and that they have confidence there will be momentum in terms of translating this into tangible action.

To enable wider engagement in the strategic framework and the development of a detailed action plan, it is recommended that the current timeframe is extended.

Within this report a number of key modernising actions around IT, digital, data collection and use, and also staffing are recommended in order to form a solid bedrock from which the delivery of libraries and heritage services can progress more effectively.

Acknowledgement should be made of the tremendous efforts made by the staff to shift the offer online during the pandemic and also make adaptations for those unable to access digital services. We heard testimony of notable creativity and flexibility and staff are to be congratulated on their obvious commitment to the libraries and heritage services.

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2. Key recommendations

There are a range of suggestions and observations within the main section of the report that will inform some 'quick wins' and practical actions, in addition to the conversations onsite, many of which provided ideas and examples of practice from other organisations. The following are the peer team's key recommendations to the council:

1. **Reconsider timescale for strategy development**
   The current plan is to develop a strategic framework for approval by Cabinet in July 2021. However, once the high-level themes are agreed at the Cabinet meeting in April, there will be significant work to undertake in order to ensure that a full and detailed analysis of local need informs the strategic direction, alongside locality-based consultation with residents and also engagement with staff and stakeholders. This is set against a backdrop of a local elections, which may see an influx of new elected members, who it will be important to involve in the strategy development process. As such, the peer team recommend that the timescale is expanded to allow sufficient time for this work to take place in a comprehensive manner.

2. **Modernising foundation blocks**
   A number of key actions are recommended in order to form a solid bedrock from which the Libraries & Heritage services can progress more effectively**:**
   - Put in place mechanisms that will help the services undertake transactional elements of service provision; for example taking online payments.
   - Identify solutions to help the digital offer flourish and adopt a more strategic approach to engaging current and future audiences through a range of platforms.
   - Review the data collection system to ensure it captures quantitative and qualitative data to both inform the management of services and also demonstrate cross-cutting strategic impact. This will better enable advocacy regarding the value of the service.
   - To enable the realisation of the vision for libraries to act as vibrant community hubs and meet the demands of today's communities, consider whether the staffing structure is flexible enough and also whether the structure and the asset base is fit for future purpose.

3. **Include an engagement plan as part of the strategy process – councillors, staff, customers and stakeholders**
   Given the need to secure political support for the Libraries & Heritage Strategy, it is recommended that workshops are convened for elected members once the new administration is in place to empower them to articulate the cross cutting value of the services and garner support for associated action plans.

   Further work needs to be undertaken with the staff to introduce the strategic framework and ensure that they understand how the themes relate to what goes on at service delivery level. Testing back early thinking as a result of consultations with users will help shape the service to meet customer needs.

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The majority of external stakeholders we spoke to asked to be consistently engaged with the strategy development and action plans. In the past there has been incidents of engagement with this group, however whilst strategic plans have been developed, they have not seen their input translate into actions.

4. **Consider establishing new arrangements internally and externally to improve partnership working**
   The establishment of a cross service steering group would support the development of the Libraries and Heritage Strategy, opening up discussions regarding how the cultural assets, services and staff expertise could be mobilised. It would also help to embed understanding regarding how libraries and heritage can support wider council priorities moving forward

   An external forum would harness the existing goodwill towards the council's Libraries & Heritage services and act as a mechanism to ensure ongoing engagement regarding the development of the Libraries & Heritage Strategy, resulting in improved partnership working and the potential to lever external funding.

5. **Tap into all the available Peer support for both Elected Members & Officers**
   Peer support can play a helpful role in supporting both elected members and officers, particularly at times of transformational change.
   It is recommended that the offer of participating in LGA webinars for elected members and ACE/LGA Leadership Essentials for Cultural Portfolio Holders is taken up in future as these provide an opportunity to consider how councils can use cultural services to improve outcomes for their communities and learn from good practice across the country.

   Similarly, consistent officer engagement with regional Libraries Connected meetings will allow peers support and access to a forum to share experiences and best practice.

6. **Look at best practice elsewhere to inform components of the Libraries & Heritage Strategy.**
   A number of specific initiatives were identified during the virtual peer challenge as having relevance to the current context and future ambition for Oxfordshire libraries and heritage and these are summarised with relevant links in the section on signposting and good practice from other local authorities. These are set out in section 4.3.

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3. Summary of the Peer Challenge approach

The peer team

Peer challenges are delivered by experienced elected member and officer peers. The make-up of the peer team reflected your requirements and the focus of the peer challenge. Peers were selected on the basis of their relevant experience and expertise and agreed with you. The peers who delivered the peer challenge were:

- Councillor Kam Kaur – Cabinet Member, Customer & Transformation Warwickshire Warwickshire County Council
- Tony Witton – Culture & Creative Economy Manager, Kent County Council
- Sophie Lancaster - Senior Manager, Libraries Development, Arts Council England
- Heidi Bellamy – LGA Peer Challenge Manager

Scope and focus

The peer team looked at one core question applicable to all cultural service reviews namely:

- How effective is the contribution of libraries and heritage to cross cutting agendas of other services and the wider council objectives?

The council also asked the peer team to focus on the following areas:

- How to ensure the themes and content in the forthcoming Libraries and Heritage Strategy will deliver better outcomes for residents, visitors and businesses.

The peer challenge process

It is important to stress that this was not an inspection. Peer challenges are improvement focussed and tailored to meet individual councils' needs. They are designed to complement and add value to a council's own performance and improvement. The process is not designed to provide an in-depth or technical assessment of plans and proposals. The peer team used their experience and knowledge of local government to reflect on the information presented to them by people they met, things they saw and material that they read.

The peer team prepared for the peer challenge by reviewing a range of documents and information in order to ensure they were familiar with the council and the challenges it is facing. The team then spent 1.5 days participating in online during which they:

- Spoke to more than 40 people including a range of council staff together with councillors and external partners and stakeholders.

- Gathered information and views from more than 13 meetings, and additional research and reading.

- Collectively spent more than 120 hours to determine their findings – the equivalent of one person spending more than 3.5 weeks in Oxfordshire.

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This report provides a summary of the peer team's findings. It builds on the feedback presentation provided by the peer team at the end of the online challenge (10 - 11 March 2021). In presenting feedback to you, they have done so as fellow local government officers and members, not professional consultants or inspectors. By its nature, the peer challenge is a snapshot in time. We appreciate that some of the feedback may be about things you are already addressing and progressing.

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4. Feedback

4.1 How effective is the contribution of libraries and heritage to cross cutting agendas of other services and the wider council objectives?

The draft report to Cabinet 20th April 21 sets out how libraries and heritage contribute to a range of outcomes including supporting social, cultural, economic and educational wellbeing. Furthermore, the staff within the service consider themselves to be delivering a range of outcomes that contribute to the corporate priorities of thriving, communities, thriving economy and thriving individuals. A focus on strengthening the evidence base for the cross-cutting outcomes delivered by the services would help to better profile the impact of libraries and heritage work. Whilst there is widespread acknowledgment that the services contribute to broader council objectives, currently this is based on anecdotal information and there was a consensus that robust evidence would help to make the case for future internal investment and external funding applications.

There was a high level of receptiveness to working with the Libraries & Heritage team across the directorates that the peer team met and also recognition that libraries and heritage is already supporting some of their priorities; specific mentions were given to the work with public health on 'Making Every Conversation Count', literacy projects for Early Years, and supporting early stage dementia sufferers with reminiscence projects.

Moving forwards more could be done to contribute to the Adult Social Care (ASC) prevention agenda, with a suggestion that the asset base offers an alternative to day care settings, whereby vulnerable people experiencing loneliness, isolation, age related illness, managing disability or mental health could be referred to participate in activities and groups that help them remain active and independent. This could be achieved by better co-ordination with ASC to ensure that the contact centre, which maps resources in communities and signpost customers to them, is fully apprised of the totality of support offer. A key benefit of a more co-ordinated approach would be access to information regarding customer mapping, as 'call backs' are built into the service to understand whether the offer was taken up, and if not why not.

The profile of libraries and heritage has been raised corporately during the pandemic and there is a key opportunity for the services to contribute to post COVID-19 recovery with a number of specific areas mentioned relating to Education and Children & Young People. Learning loss due to pandemic has shown to be greater amongst disadvantaged children, which will affect their future attainment; there is potential for libraries to help address this learning gap by supporting children to catch up. This could dovetail with the recently announced Education Recovery Package for Children & Young People.

The museum service has recently developed a series of curriculum-focused films on key history topics to support parents and teachers in delivering lockdown learning. Schools are also keen to give children as many opportunities as possible to develop their curiosity as restrictions ease, and so museums reinstating an enhanced curriculum offer will be invaluable moving forwards. In addition, an interest was expressed in discussing how the

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museums and archives collections might contribute to supporting exploration of heritage issues around inclusivity, equalities and access.

Overall there was a sense that the current service offer is not strategically driven and significant scope exists to do more systematically and consistently – “good stuff happens by accident rather than design” (quote from staff focus group). This could best be achieved by using the development of the Libraries and Heritage Strategy to open up discussions regarding how the cultural assets, services and staff expertise could be further mobilised. Establishing a cross-service steering group to feed into the strategy development will help to embed understanding regarding how libraries and heritage can support wider Council priorities moving forwards.

Furthermore, tackling inequalities, healthy place shaping and prevention were cited as areas of common concern that bring OCC and community leaders together. The recently formed joint health, education and social care commissioning hub was mentioned as an opportunity for engaging with system commissioners to meet this strategic priority. Upstream prevention and promotion was cited as a way that cultural services could interface to develop and support strategic interventions.

The current Portfolio Holder is passionate about libraries and heritage and demonstrates an ongoing commitment to the services. To support this enthusiasm, and ensure the Portfolio Holder is well equipped to articulate the cross cutting value to Cabinet, the creation of a compelling narrative is recommended. This could then be used to engage a broader set of Elected Members in the new administration and drive future decision-making. There is also an important role for the Corporate Director, Customers and Organisational Development and Resources to focus on positioning the libraries and heritage service through advocacy and influencing across the Chief Executive Direct Reports group (CEDR).

The staff focus groups revealed that they consider themselves to be professional, motivated and resourceful with a clear commitment to customer service.
However, the churn in service leadership, inertia regarding key decisions and lack of a long-term strategy has given rise to frustration perhaps impacting on staff morale.

The effectiveness of the team has also been impacted by the absence of the necessary business applications and digital strategy as a result of inadequate tools and technical support from the corporate core. Enthusiasm was expressed by staff to modernise services, so that they could better meet the needs of local communities. Indeed, service leadership and management should consider the opportunity to learn best practice in digital transformation to improve outcomes for customers.

To fully realise the ambition, consistent leadership and clarity of strategic direction are vital moving forwards.

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4.2 How to ensure the themes and content in the forthcoming Libraries and Heritage Strategy will deliver better outcomes for residents, visitors and businesses?

The response of the libraries and heritage service to the challenges of COVID-19 was agile, with adaptations made to offer access to library services via Click and Collect, 'Ask a librarian' and the Home Library Service in partnership with Age UK. With a national focus on supporting vulnerable people, particularly those shielding, the digital offer was bolstered with a series of short YouTube films featuring museum curators talking about objects, digitised content about the collections uploaded at Oxford History Centre, and library events such as Rhymetime and Book Club taking place via Facebook.

During the pandemic there has also been an increase in engagement across all social media platforms. Delivery plans in the forthcoming Libraries and Heritage Strategy will need to embrace the changing public expectation, with both a sustained shift to digital alongside a return to 'in person' service provision to support those who cannot or do not want to embrace digital.

Plans are already in place to initiate a community co-design process for the library service in two localities, focusing on what services would best meet the local needs. It is the understanding of the peer team that this work will be completed in advance of the final strategic framework for libraries and heritage and therefore has the potential to inform the approach to achieving deeper and wider engagement with communities.

Senior officers have invested time in conducting robust research into the national strategic context, undertaken a SWOT analysis, identified the opportunity to reposition services and drafted a process to create a strategic framework for Libraries & Heritage. This includes clarifying the purpose for cultural services as 'vibrant hubs bringing people together with access to services and opportunities that will support them to thrive'. In order to translate this work into tangible outcomes, the framework will need to progress to the next stage and incorporate a fully detailed action plan, with specific, measurable, attainable, relevant and time-based targets. This will help to ensure that there is momentum behind the plan once it has been endorsed by Cabinet. It will also reassure stakeholders that the strategy will progress towards tangible actions in local communities. Furthermore, it is recommended that once performance measures have been agreed for libraries and heritage by Cabinet, these are fed back to Overview and Scrutiny in order that they are able to play a deeper role into the overall strategic plan for delivery.

The peer team was asked to canvas opinion as to whether the proposed themes for the strategic framework were both comprehensive and ambitious. The themes are as follows:

- education, learning and skills
- health and well-being
- culture and creativity
- digital inclusion
- social inclusion and community cohesion
- economic development

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Those officers who are part of the Chief Executive Direct Reports group, and who had already been party to initial discussion about the importance of cultural services across the county, expressed a general level of agreement that the themes were comprehensive and would enable them to work with the Library and Heritage services on shared priorities.

Further work needs to be undertaken with the Libraries and Heritage Leadership team to introduce the strategic framework and ensure that they understand how the themes relate to what goes on at service delivery level, as this had not yet fully percolated down. Investing time helping staff to understand the 'golden thread' will enable better advocacy for the role of libraries and heritage across the council and out into communities.

From the perspective of the stakeholders that were interviewed during the review, the reaction to the themes was a request to see these further developed into clear, meaningful outcomes. Continuing to engage with stakeholders as the process progresses will help to ensure greater understanding of the strategic direction thus engendering ownership of the subsequent action plan.

Overall it is the opinion of the peer team that the themes reflect the strategic priorities of the council and are broadly mirrored by the strategic direction being adopted by Cultural Services across the country.

Recent documents detail the intention to undertake a full and detailed analysis of local need to inform targeted services. This will be important as although Oxfordshire is one of the most affluent counties in the UK, however there are 10 wards which feature areas which are in the 20% most deprived in England. These levels of deprivation and Covid-19 have likely further exacerbated the embedded health inequalities. Discussion with Public Health highlighted the potential to collaborate around Health Impact Assessments, which ensure the wider determinants of health are considered when developing and reviewing services, activities and policies. This would bring vital information regarding health inequalities and boost the contribution of the libraries and heritage service in helping support the healthy place agenda.

Health Impact Assessment (HIA) uses a systematic and evidence-based approach to identify and assess what effect a service, activity, policy or project may have on the wider determinants of health and the health and wellbeing of different groups of people.

Stakeholders stressed that communication was historically lacking regarding the decision-making process and cited a number of previous strategic initiatives that had not progressed e.g. the previous Museum of Oxfordshire study. There remains however, significant willingness amongst the stakeholders spoken to as part of this peer challenge to further contribute to council objectives. Indeed, they self-identified as an underutilised resource that needs to be 'nurtured'. Building the cultural network is an important element of driving forward culture-led regeneration. An external cultural forum would help to harness the latent goodwill, and act as a mechanism to ensure ongoing engagement regarding the development of the Libraries & Heritage Strategy, resulting in improved partnership working and the potential to attract external funding.

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During the course of the peer challenge the team heard testimony regarding the need to focus on a range of foundation blocks to enable the transition to a more modern heritage and library service. These will help to ensure the services operate as effectively as possible, underpinning the strategic ambitions.

- Digital and IT strategy support is required from the corporate IT team to put in place mechanisms that will help the services undertake transactional elements of service provision; for example taking online payments.
- Digital delivery - during lockdown the digital offer has taken a huge leap forward, this has not been without challenges. To enable the digital offer to continue to flourish, attention now needs to be given to adopting a more strategic approach, along with the necessary digital applications and skills building that will ensure the staff are able to engage current and future audiences through a range of platforms. The peer team recommend engaging with opportunities arising from the Public Library Skill Strategy, The National Archives digital programme Plugged In, Powered Up and the ACE Digital Culture Network.
- Exploiting data – data regarding the performance of libraries and heritage is captured, however testimony suggests that it is not necessarily the right data nor is the existing capture method entirely efficient, as it involves 'double handling'. Putting in place a system to capture both quantitative and qualitative data that will help inform the management and development of services and demonstrate impact would be highly advantageous for internal and external advocacy purposes.
- Staffing - to enable the realisation of the vision that libraries and museums will become 'vibrant hubs that bring people together to access services and opportunities that will support them to thrive', consideration needs to be given to whether the staffing structure is flexible enough.
  Testimony suggests that libraries require a more flexible workforce to ensure community needs are met with peripatetic staff that can be redeployed across the network.
  Both staff and a number of stakeholders aired concerns about the museums staffing resource and expressed the opinion that it was not resourced adequately to realise the strategy ambition. If additional resources are not available, then it may be helpful to consider ways in which to further mobilise the volunteer capacity, using the springboard offered by COVID-19 to expand and diversify the pool.
- Asset base - a review of the asset base is needed, linking with the planned growth and informed by the place shaping agenda and desire that these serve as hubs for the growing communities. There is S106 and CIL funding available and consideration should be given to engaging users in the 're-imagining' of the current offer, so that refurbishment, reshaping and, in some instances, relocating provision is the best fit for future purpose.

There are a number of national and regional initiatives that have been identified in the horizon scanning exercise undertaken as part of the internal peer review. The Oxford-Cambridge Arc, Economic Prospectus acknowledges over 7000 English Heritage sites across the Arc region, with digital and creative industries being one of the sector

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strengths. The Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership worked with OCC on developing a strategic investment plan for the creativity, cultural, heritage and tourism sector and there is now a subgroup, which is a key conduit for conversations about the contribution of culture to the quality of life and pride of place.

In order to ensure key opportunities and funding are not missed; the strategic framework for libraries and heritage should seek to establish clear linkages with these initiatives and demonstrate how the council is an active partner driving forward relevant proposals.

There is a key role for the portfolio holder to play in raising the profile of the work to develop a strategic framework for libraries and heritage; this will entail championing the value of the services and clearly articulating the links with the corporate priorities to secure political buy-in. A mechanism that may be useful here is for the portfolio holder to create a short video outlining the priorities of the strategy with can then be shared with councillors, staff and stakeholders. It is also suggested that a clear plan is developed for engagement at the city, district and locality level to create Member advocates for the service.

National cultural bodies can be important partners in helping to realise cultural ambitions and OCC has in the past enjoyed a strong relationship with Arts Council England (ACE). During the period of high management turnover, this relationship faltered however the peer challenge has provided an opportunity to reconnect. It has been agreed that OCC will engage with Libraries Connected, a Sector Support Organisation funded by ACE to support the public library network and with other specialised areas of ACE including Museums and Digital Teams.

Creative UK, (formerly the Creative Industries Federation and Creative England) is an important source of information and resources and may usefully connect OCC with national thinking to enable the development of a wider strategic approach.

Finally, developing a shared vision is an important foundation, but moving forwards it will only deliver better outcomes for residents, visitors and businesses if there is continuity from strategy, through leadership to delivery plans.

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4.3 Signposting and good practice from other local authorities

The LGA has produced Cultural Strategy in a Box https://local.gov.uk/cultural-strategy-box. This guide offers key lessons and guidance in writing a cultural strategy that can be tailored to suit the needs of the local authority and place, drawing on good practice examples from across England.

Creative Places provides useful guidance on how councils can support the local economy: https://www.local.gov.uk/creative-places-supporting-your-local-creative-economy

Consultation methodology - Kent County Council Cultural Strategy
The consultation methodology used as part of Kent & Medway Cultural Strategy mobilised a variety of different approaches in order to include a variety of voices and be as inclusive as possible. It included conference events and focus groups, sector led conversations, one to one interviews and an online survey. KCC are happy to share the details; contact tony.witton@kent.gov.uk for more information.

Mindful that museums must consider the best operating model to meet local needs and priorities, LGA and ACE have published a handbook aimed at supporting Councillors. The guide contains information about different models, such as independent trusts, the council as a trustee and case studies around partnership working and how museums can contribute to wider local priorities https://www.local.gov.uk/making-most-your-museums-handbook-councillors

The current Public Libraries Skills Strategy (PLSS) is being refreshed. The PLSS aims to guide the development of information and library skills, knowledge and qualifications in the public library sector in England between now and 2030. An example of the type of work includes, delivering seminars to help library services understand how they might best embed the Library, information and archive services assistant apprenticeship standard into their library services.

The National Archives has published a digital capacity building strategy *Plugged In, Powered Up* https://nationalarchives.gov.uk/archives-sector/projects-and-programmes/plugged-in-powered-up/ that sets out an ambitious plan of programmes, training and resources to support the archives sector meet its digital ambitions with regard to digital preservation, access and engagement.

ACE Digital Culture Network https://digitalculturenetwork.org.uk/ provides specialist support in digital strategy, digital marketing, social media, eCommerce, data analytics and insight, search engine marketing, websites, content creation, CRM and ticketing, and email marketing.

Libraries Connected have created an advocacy toolkit *Libraries: An essential part of local recovery* https://www.librariesconnected.org.uk/resource/libraries-essential-part-local-recovery this can be adapted to suit local context and inform the development of the advocacy narrative, raise awareness regarding how libraries contribute to Council priorities and to illustrate how they are an important element of the COVID-19 recovery environment.

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The Centre for Cultural Value https://www.culturalvalue.org.uk summarises existing research to make it more accessible, and has useful relevant evidence for example the value of culture on referral programmes and how they might contribute to improved health and wellbeing outcomes.

The Cultural Learning Alliance provides analysis, evidence, and arguments that can be used to show that cultural education fosters creativity, innovation, empathy, and resilience; that it is crucial for economic prosperity; and that it enriches lives, making us happier and healthier. Sign up for the ebulletin https://culturallearningalliance.org.uk/join-us/

Arts Council England in partnership with The National Archives, created a guide to help libraries and archive services advocate for their work within the context of local authority planning. https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/publication/championing-archives-and-libraries-within-local-planning

Nottingham City Council standalone library service website. Arts Council England funded Nottingham City Council to explore if and how a stand-alone public library website is achievable in context of the statutory function and in terms of user needs https://www.nottinghamcitylibraries.co.uk/

London Borough of Barking and Dagenham are leaders/best practice in communications (all channels) with their communities.
Communications tools with residents and users are increasingly important to provide information. The following local authorities have strong communications with their users and residents and have been recognised as leaders in utilising communication tools. London Borough Barking & Dagenham https://www.lbbd.gov.uk/ One Borough campaign covers all the services areas in a short and clear email bulletin, also Orkney has a strong social media presence on twitter in particular https://twitter.com/OrkneyLibrary.

Barnsley Museums, run by Barnsley Council, offers an exemplar in new and innovative ways of heritage programming for residents facing isolation, loneliness and a lack of opportunity to engage in cultural activities https://www.local.gov.uk/barnsley-museums-staying-safe-and-engaged-barnsley-council

Libraries Connected Regional Support Offer programme
Over the past 12 months Haringey, Worcestershire and Leicestershire Libraries have tested out the potential for offering library services the chance to draw on support from an 'expert bank'. Each library service has worked with a specialist on a project which has focused on one of these three themes; Advocacy and evidence, Transformation: service review and design, Transformation: partnerships. The tools will be available to all library services shortly. https://www.librariesconnected.org.uk/page/regional-support-offer

Leicestershire Libraries is currently investigating ways in which it can evidence this impact in addition to traditional performance measures. The objective of the project is to support an authority to strengthen their ability to evidence the contribution of the library service within the Council and with partners.

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Haringey Libraries is developing a Partnership Toolkit. It will be used to develop a culture of strong partnerships throughout the library service by providing:

- guidance about successful partnership working
- a model for partnership development in the workshop template
- signposting to resources to support partnership development

More generally, it may be useful to develop an Outcomes Framework drawing on the Local Government Association guidance designed to assist culture and leisure teams https://www.local.gov.uk/our-support/our-improvement-offer/culture-and-sport-improvement/guide-developing-local-outcomes. This approach can help to:

- measure and evidence the difference the service makes and its contribution to local priorities
- make the case for continued investment of public money
- demonstrate to other organisations why they should be working with you
- focus business and service plans on the priorities for the local area
- communicate the value of culture and sport to opinion formers and decision makers
- promote improvement by identifying what works in delivering better outcomes
- influence commissioners working in other service areas such as Adult Social Care, Public Health, Children & Young People's services.

In addition to the above, Local Digital is funding 3 councils to use common data standards: https://localdigital.gov.uk/funded-project/open-community-beta/

Research recently commissioned by ACE from the Centre for Economic and Business Research provides useful statistics on post COVID-19 sector recovery: https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/news/faster-recovery-arts-and-culture

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5. Next steps

Immediate next steps

We appreciate the senior managerial and political leadership will want to reflect on these findings and suggestions in order to determine how the organisation wishes to take things forward.

As part of the peer challenge process, there is an offer of further activity to support this (there would be a charge for this). The LGA is well placed to provide additional support, advice and guidance on a number of the areas for development and improvement and we would be happy to discuss this. William Brooks is the main contact between your authority and the Local Government Association (LGA). William Brooks can be contacted by email at William.Brooks@local.gov.uk or on his mobile: 07949 054421

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Divisions Affected - ALL

CABINET– 22 JUNE 2021

NATIONAL BUS STRATEGY – PROPOSAL FOR AN OXFORDSHIRE ENHANCED PARTNERSHIP

Report by Bill Cotton, Corporate Director for Environment & Place

RECOMMENDATION

1. **Cabinet is RECOMMENDED to:**

   (a) commit to establishing an Enhanced Partnership across Oxfordshire under the Bus Services Act 2017; and
   (b) give formal notice of the Council's intention to prepare an Enhanced Partnership and invite all local bus operators to confirm their intention to participate.

Executive Summary

2. In March 2021, Central Government published 'Bus Back Better', the National Bus Strategy. This *"sets out an ambitious vision to dramatically improve bus services in England through greater local leadership, to reverse the recent shift in journeys away from public transport and encourage passengers back to bus. Local Transport Authorities (LTAs) and local bus operators must work at pace with local communities to plan and deliver a fully integrated service with simple, multi-modal tickets, more bus priority measures, the same high-quality information for all passengers in more places, and better turn-up-and-go frequencies that keep running into the evenings and at weekends*"

3. Part of the rationale of the strategy, and the proposals it includes, is the need to reshape how bus networks and services are decided, operated and funded, with its central aim to get more people travelling by bus – first, to get overall patronage back to its pre-COVID-19 level, and then to exceed it. The Strategy is attached as Annex 1 – pages 40 to 42 of this document summarise what Local Transport Authorities (LTAs) and bus operators must do and by when.

4. Central to these proposals for the National Bus Strategy to 'build back better' are new requirements for Local Transport Authorities (LTAs), to give them a much stronger role in specifying and organising local bus services.

5. LTAs are expected to use the powers available in the Bus Services Act 2017 to achieve the aims of the Strategy. Two potential routes are available – the development of a statutory Enhanced Partnership between LTAs and bus operators, or a franchising scheme. By the end of June 2021, Government expects all LTAs to commit to establishing an Enhanced Partnership across their entire areas and for all operators to be in co-operation with the process.

6. The only alternative to this model (other than non-compliance) is for LTAs to pursue a franchising model for bus services, although this approach requires commitment to implementing an Enhanced Partnership in the meantime until the franchising process, which can be lengthy, is complete.

7. From 1 July 2021, only LTAs and operators who meet these requirements will continue to receive the COVID-19 Bus Services Support Grant (CBSSG) or any new sources of bus funding from the Government's £3bn funding commitment to buses announced last year, including recovery funding for the 2021/22 financial year and potentially Bus Service Operator's Grant (BSOG) which is an annual fuel duty rebate paid to operators and LTAs. Without these funds, there would be a major contraction of bus services in Oxfordshire.

8. Further to these requirements, by the end of October 2021, Government expects all LTAs to publish a local Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP), detailing how they propose to use their powers to improve services. This BSIP would need to be updated annually, with six-monthly progress reports, and reflected in the authority's Local Transport Plan. This is proposed to be subject of a separate report and decision by Cabinet in October, informed by further guidance due to be published by Government.

9. On 17th May, Government published guidance for Local Authorities and bus operators on BSIPs. Although this will inform the Oxfordshire BSIP report in October, it provides a clear indication of is expected from this whole process, summarised in paragraph 49 of the guidance, which sets out how BSIPs, as a an agreed document with participating operators, should describe in outline how local authorities and operators propose to deliver the key goals of our Bus Strategy, making services:
   - *more frequent*, with turn-up-and-go services on major routes and feeder or demand-responsive services to lower-density places.
   - *faster and more reliable*, with bus priority wherever necessary and where there is room.
   - *cheaper*, with more low, flat fares in towns and cities, lower point-to-point fares elsewhere, and more daily price capping everywhere.
   - *more comprehensive*, with overprovision on a few corridors reduced to boost provision elsewhere and better services in the evenings and weekends, not necessarily with conventional buses.
   - *easier to understand*, with simpler routes, common numbering, co-ordinated timetable change dates, good publicity, and comprehensive information online.
   - *easier to use*, with common tickets, passes and daily capping across all operators, simpler fares, contactless payment and protection of bus stations.
   - *better integrated with other modes and each other*, including more bus-rail interchange and integration and inter-bus transfers

10. This report sets out the requirements, opportunities and potential risks of the approaches which the Council can take and recommends development of an Enhanced Partnership to meet the National Bus Strategy requirements.

Current Context of Bus Operations

11. Nationally, bus use in most areas has been continuing to fall, even pre-pandemic. Oxfordshire has historically been a bus patronage success story, with the highest per capita bus use of any shire county in England – however, even here bus use has been on a broadly downward trajectory, with annual trips falling from 43.2m in 2013/14 to 40.8m in 2019/20.

12. The COVID-19 pandemic has brought these difficulties into sharp focus, as it has accelerated the challenges to the bus operating model. Few services could now survive without the emergency state support which is continuing to keep the industry going and services running. There is a significant risk to communities as services can no longer be planned and operated purely on a commercial basis and the Council currently does not provide support for socially necessary services.

13. The latest Government data suggests that nationally bus use is close to 70% of its pre-pandemic level. However, in Oxfordshire, the local picture is clouded by the higher proportion of tourist activity (particularly for Oxford City) and, in general, lower levels of discretionary bus use where users with a choice are now turning to other forms of travel, especially car (with traffic levels now exceeding 95% of normal). As a result, bus use is noticeably lower in Oxfordshire, particularly in the Oxford city area. The latest data following the easing of restrictions, shows bus use at around 55% of pre-COVID levels in Oxford City, slightly higher at around 60-65% in Witney and Banbury and around 80% on Thames Travel inter-urban routes – lower than national levels of use.

14. The impact on Park & Ride use in Oxford, previously operated entirely without subsidy, is particularly notable, with current use around 35-40% of pre-COVID levels at peak travel times, well below the overall figure for bus use in Oxfordshire, although off peak / holiday use has been higher. Longer distance coach operations particularly serving Airports are also significantly depressed.

15. Overall, it is very clear that the bus market in Oxfordshire will not recover to its former position without increased financial support and a package of measures designed to encourage greater bus use, as part of an agreed strategy with dedicated officer and political governance.

Future options

Franchising of bus services

16. The first option available to LTAs is to follow the model for how bus services are managed and operated in London, which unlike the rest of England, are franchised. Transport for London determines the network of services which are provided, under contracts for specific routes, by private sector operators. Franchising does not necessarily have to replicate this route-by route tendering – contracts can be let for different parts of a city or to a single operator for a whole network, with significant co-design opportunities for that operator.

17. Franchising powers are only available automatically to Mayoral Combined Authorities but can be provided to other Local Transport Authorities (LTAs) through secondary legislation. Whilst some metropolitan areas, most notably Tyne & Wear and West Yorkshire, have considered this approach in the past, no franchising proposals have come forward and currently only Greater Manchester has stated they are proposing to take this approach.

18. This reflects the complex realities of a franchising approach – In order to proceed with a franchise scheme LTAs must follow a very robust process that includes producing a business case, detailed consideration of the effects of the scheme, whether it is affordable, achievable and represents value for money, plus a comparison of the proposed scheme with alternatives. The governance and financial risks associated with such a proposal are highly significant, which is partly why none have successfully come forward to date (Greater Manchester considers the initial (planning) cost of franchising to be £134.5m).

19. Franchising would therefore be a very significant legal and commercial change, requiring several years to bring about (Greater Manchester's process is not envisaged to be complete until 2025) and very significant resource commitment to do so, without any guaranteed benefit and leaving the bulk of the financial risk with the Local Authority rather than operators.

Enhanced Partnership

20. An Enhanced Partnership (EP) is a statutory arrangement under the Bus Services Act 2017 which can specify, for example, timetables and multi-operator ticketing, and allows the LTA to take over the role of registering bus services from the Traffic Commissioners. It is important to be clear that an EP is a legally binding commitment between the Local Transport Authority and Bus Operators, specifying what improvements will be made to bus services that operators (which would remain substantially commercial) would still run.

21. The main difference compared with franchising is that in an EP, operators have a much greater role, working with LTAs to both develop and deliver improvements for passengers and having a real say on how bus services should be improved – bringing expertise, innovation and the potential for investment. Enhanced Partnerships also offer significantly more flexibility than franchising.

22. What is not yet clear is the extent to which the requirements for EPs set out in the 2017 Act will apply, or what changes may be made – Government has said it will publish updated guidance on EPs 'in the coming weeks' but there is no specific timing commitment and given the time constraints we are therefore working on the basis of what the 2017 Act sets out – given that much of this is framed in legislation, it is not expected there will be significant change.

23. Under the EP guidance in the 2017 Act, a LTA working with local bus operators will produce an Enhanced Partnership Plan (EPP) which analyses the local bus market and considers the improvements the LTA and the operators want to make to the bus network. The LTA and local bus operators will also produce an Enhanced Partnership Scheme (EPS) which will set standards that all operators within a geographical area would need to meet. These could include frequency

and timing of services; vehicle standards (e.g. emissions standards, vehicle branding); ticketing arrangements (types of tickets; fare zones across operators, methods of payment, price of a multi-operator tickets); the way information is provided to the public (both on and off buses); common terms and conditions. A fuller summary of current EPP and EPS requirements is set out in Annex 2.

24. The Council awaits further guidance, but our understanding is that the Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) required by October 2021 would effectively be the Enhanced Partnership Plan. In the absence of this our assumption is that, with the EP having set the partnership commitment, the BSIP / EPP sets out the vision and outcomes outlined above and the EPS, which would become effective from April 2022, would contain the details of how this into practice, monitored and reviewed.

25. In some ways, an EP is a more formal extension of the 'Quality Bus Partnership' which has been operating in Oxfordshire over recent years and has led, through joint working, to a number of successful initiatives including introduction of the Oxford 'Smartzone' and multi-operator ticketing, coordinated timetables on main routes via the associated Bus Qualifying Agreement and a managed approach to introduction of low emission buses.

26. More recently, despite the current challenging operating situation, partnership working with operators has continued. This has involved developing proposals for specific funding initiatives (currently the Zero Emission Buses Regional Areas fund) but also agreeing an overall outcomes-based approach based on '50 deliverables' across this area, which are expected to underpin our BSIP. This is being overseen by a reconstituted Oxfordshire Bus Board, supported by specialist joint working groups, which will feed into decision making.

27. An EP approach would require a significant step change in joint working and commitment to a shared vision. This will be important to enable Oxfordshire to continue to benefit from the pro-active approach operators have shown, and to allow them to continue to bring investment and innovation to the Oxfordshire bus market – which would be at risk if a franchising approach were adopted. In addition, it would also allow our strategies for zero emission buses, bus priority and associated service enhancements to be an integral part of the BSIP and Enhanced Partnership Scheme when it is finalised.

28. This reflects the legal status of EPs as a binding commitment of partners to the Enhanced Partnership Plan / Scheme and the BSIP once it has been agreed. This would place a more significant and binding requirement on the Council as any measure agreed to via the EP process. For example, the National Bus Strategy states that in Bus Service Improvement Plans, Government expects to see proposals for bus lanes "*on any roads where there is a frequent bus service, congestion, and physical space to install one*". Under an EP, proposals to introduce bus priority on a specific corridor would effectively become a firm commitment (subject to any other process required to be followed). Paragraphs 42 to 44 below cover this point in more detail.

Conclusion

29. An overall assessment of how the Franchising and EP options compare, both generally how they map against corporate outcomes, is included as Annex 3

30. For the reasons set out above, and considering the timescale, cost risk and uncertainty that developing a franchising proposal would entail, development of an EP is proposed as the only credible way forward for Oxfordshire. In theory, whilst "doing nothing" and not following either path is an option, the potential financial consequences (summarised in paragraphs 7 and 37-38) and subsequent effect on Oxfordshire's communities would be little short of disastrous, so this is not being proposed for consideration.

Joint Working and Engagement with Operators

31. Discussions to date have been taking place with Oxfordshire's two main operators, Stagecoach (where the Oxfordshire operations are now part of the bigger Stagecoach West group) and the Go-Ahead Group (which includes the Oxford Bus Company, Thames Travel and City Sightseeing) which have informed this report. Both Groups have committed to working with the Council to develop EP and BSIP proposals. The proposed approach outlined in this report is due to be discussed at the Oxfordshire Bus Board on 16th June and feedback will be reported at the Cabinet meeting.

32. As required by the guidance on Enhanced Partnerships, informal discussions are also taking place with Oxfordshire's numerous smaller bus operators on the viability of an Enhanced Partnership from their perspective – recognising that the requirements of an EP which can be more easily absorbed by larger operators are more challenging and less obviously beneficial for smaller ones.

33. Should a decision be agreed to progress an EP, this would require the next, formal, stage of the process to be undertaken, starting with the Notice of Intention and Invitation to Participate in the Partnership, which includes setting out its geographical limits (assumed to cover the whole of Oxfordshire) and a contact point at the authority – to every public service vehicle operator providing services within it. Formal discussions cannot take place before this, which is a statutory requirement.

Corporate Policies and Priorities

34. The requirement and proposals for an Enhanced Partnership set out in this report are – subject to funding being secured - an opportunity to directly support the County Council's (and more widely Oxfordshire's) Vision and Strategic Priorities, including improving bus services, making ticketing and fares simpler and more affordable, reprioritising road space for low carbon travel and reducing carbon emissions, which will have a positive impact on communities, climate change and air quality.

35. Reinforcing the opportunity to support the Council's Zero Carbon ambition, Government guidance on BSIPs states that "At a local level, every LTA that wishes to receive funding from the Department for local transport projects

must develop ambitious strategies, targets and measures for cutting carbon from transport in their area"

36. More widely, the proposals could substantially contribute to objectives and outcomes aimed at securing greater inclusion, outlined in paragraphs 46-48.

Financial Implications

37. The National Bus Strategy states that CBSSG is discretionary, as will be future bus funding from the £3billion and potentially other transport funding not specifically related to buses. From 1 July 2021, CBSSG and any successor funding to it; funding to transform services as outlined in the Strategy; and potentially reformed BSOG (on which proposals are due to be consulted upon in the near future), will only be available to LTAs who have committed to entering into Enhanced Partnerships or started the statutory process of franchising services, and to operators who co-operate with the process.

38. There would therefore be a very significant impact of not complying with the requirements of the Strategy – the Oxfordshire bus market would effectively collapse or require unsustainable levels of Council funding to maintain. As well as this, Government has also stated that LTAs who don't comply may encounter future difficulty in obtaining funds for non-bus related transport schemes.

39. Government has made available an initial LTA Bus Capacity Fund revenue allocation of £100,000 to LTAs to support and resource the development of EPs and, subsequently, a BSIP. Oxfordshire has secured this initial funding, which can be spent on staff resource, consultancy support or other activity e.g. training. Although it is the Council's decision on how best to use the funding, there is a clear steer from Government towards development of in-house resource, and they will be collecting information and how funding has been spent to shape future funding rounds. Beyond this initial allocation of capacity funding, the Government intends to offer 'further support' from the same funding pot to LTAs that have committed to follow an EP or franchising.

40. Development of a stronger in-house capability to support buses is very likely to be needed, both to develop and implement an Enhanced Partnership and Bus Service Improvement Plan, and to maintain this higher level of activity beyond these initial commitments. As such, any commitment to additional staff resource would potentially require an ongoing staff (revenue) budget commitment, once the allocated Government funding has been used. This would need to be quantified in due course.

41. The likely requirement for additional measures to prioritise and support bus operation – including a potential statutory requirement to provide socially or economically necessary services set out in paragraphs 46 to 48– is also likely to have financial implications. These are not currently able to be quantified, but need not necessarily be additional, as they could for example result in reprioritisation of funding from other projects or programmes.

Comments checked by: Rob Finlayson, Finance Business Partner (Environment & Place) – Email: rob.finlayson@oxfordshire.gov.uk

Legal Implications

42. Entering into an Enhanced Partnership, once it is 'made', is a legal undertaking by all parties with specific requirements. The LTA has the formal responsibility for making the Enhanced Partnership Scheme. In doing so, this potentially places more significant and binding obligations on the Council to deliver scheme requirements (as per the example in paragraph 28 of this report).

43. More generally, if an authority includes any facilities or measures in an Enhanced Partnership Scheme, they have a legal obligation to provide the facilities and take the measures not later than the date(s) specified in the scheme and continue to provide those facilities and take those measures throughout the life of the scheme or until a scheme is varied to remove the obligation to do so. The only exception to this rule is if the EPS is formally postponed or if the authority is temporarily unable to provide a facility or take a measure due to circumstances beyond their control.

44. When considering any type of partnership, even if underpinned by legislation, LTAs must consider competition issues. In this case, this is not just to ensure compliance with competition law, it is also to preserve as far as possible the passenger benefits of lower fares, quality services and innovation that competition between operators will help foster. This is also an issue for operators and will need to be worked through in finalising any Enhanced Partnership Plan. Further guidance on competition requirements is expected to be issued by the Government in due course.

Comments checked by: Christian Smith, Principal Solicitor (Contracts and Conveyancing), Oxfordshire County Council and Cherwell District Council
Email: christian.smith@oxfordshire.gov.uk

Staff Implications

45. As set out in paragraphs 40 to 41 there is likely to be requirement for a greater level of staff resource to support this activity in future. Currently, existing staff resources are being used to develop initial EP proposals and engage with operators, supported by some limited call-off consultancy support. However, this can only be maintained in the short term and hence it has been agreed to appoint a fixed-term Principal Bus Strategy Officer, using the Government capacity funding previously referred to, to lead the process for the authority.

Equality & Inclusion Implications

46. Buses are the most-used mode of public transport and are key to the levelling-up agenda; in many areas, users are disproportionately from less advantaged social groups and places. Improved services should strengthen communities, sustain town centres and connect disabled and isolated people. Strengthening the Council's commitment to buses via an EP and BSIP should directly benefit these objectives, as well as providing wider benefits to meet the 'thriving communities' element of the Council's Vision.

47. The Strategy states that "*making sure that people are connected to centres of employment, broadening their choice of work and education, is both socially and economically important*". Government is also proposing to publish new guidance on the meaning and role of 'socially necessary' services, expanding the category to include 'economically necessary' services for the first time, to recognise *'the vital role that buses have in getting people to work at all times of the day and night'*. To drive forward the levelling-up agenda, this will include provision for economically disadvantaged areas.

48. While the details of what this would mean for Oxfordshire primarily need be considered as part of the development of the BSIP, it is noted that the strategy references that "*if this cannot be achieved by agreement, we will consider statutorily requiring the provision of socially necessary bus services, including those which improve people's access to employment*." The Council does not currently fund such services.

Sustainability Implications

49. At the same time, buses should not only be seen, or promoted, only as transport for those without an alternative. There is clear evidence that, as part of an overall transport strategy, a comprehensive, effective and affordable bus network can draw people away from car travel and lead to long-term modal shift. To achieve this, it is proposed that the Bus Service Improvement Plan would essentially form the Bus Strategy in the Council's emerging Local Transport & Connectivity Plan and be baked into the future transport policy of the Council.

50. Given the Government's strong messages on public transport use during the pandemic, and the subsequent changes to work and shopping patterns that may result, it is critical that a strong response to the Strategy is provided so that a car-based recovery can be avoided in Oxfordshire. In particular, through a commitment to an Enhanced Partnership the Council will be able to access Government funds for zero emission buses that are likely to make a significant contribution to air quality in Oxford.

51. Not complying with the requirements of the Strategy will result in a significant reduction in bus service coverage/frequency in Oxfordshire, with withdrawals of operators from the market and a low chance of recovery. The consequences of this would be very significant for communities and for the environment.

Risk Management

52. Entering into a more formal, legally framed partnership arrangement carries a degree of risk in terms of committing the Council to the outcomes and proposals it includes, compared with the current informal quality bus partnership arrangement. This can be mitigated by early discussion and agreement with partners, particularly operators, to ensure that whilst retaining the overall ambition for this area, the Council does not commit itself to interventions or investment it cannot justify or sustain. Expectations as to what the proposed partnership arrangement can realistically achieve in the present climate will also be important to manage, especially those which require significant funding.

53. The much greater risk – whether measured as financial, reputational or in terms of corporate outcomes – is not to follow the requirements of the strategy, with the funding and other implications set out earlier in this report.

Consultations

54. The Strategy states that plans must be developed in collaboration with "*local bus operators, community transport bodies and local businesses, services and people.*" So whilst formal consultation is not a requirement of setting up an Enhanced Partnership, it is expected that stakeholders, including passenger groups, will be engaged in the process of developing the BSIP, and that views are taken into account.

55. In setting out and developing the proposals, views and input would be sought from a range of Stakeholders and partners including Local Members, District Councils, Parish Council Transport Representatives, the Local Enterprise Partnership, Rail Operators and Active Travel Groups. This will require a clear and jointly agreed communications plan to be in place.

Next Steps

56. Subject to a commitment to enter into an Enhanced Partnership being given, the next steps are to:
    (a) inform the Department for Transport, by statutory notice, of this commitment by the 30th June deadline;
    (b) give formal notice of the Council's intention to prepare an Enhanced Partnership with all participating local bus operators (also by 30th June), to secure their agreement to entering into the Partnership;
    (c) During summer 2021, develop proposals for an Enhanced Partnership Plan (EPP) / Enhanced Partnership Scheme (EPS) and Bus Service Improvement Plan, consult and agree on these with Bus Operators taking into account the views of other Stakeholders
    (d) report to Cabinet on the proposed EPP/EPS and Oxfordshire Bus Service Improvement Plan (19th October 2021) prior to submission of the BSIP (by 31st October).

BILL COTTON
Corporate Director for Environment & Place

Annexes:

Annex 1 – National Bus Strategy (March 2021)

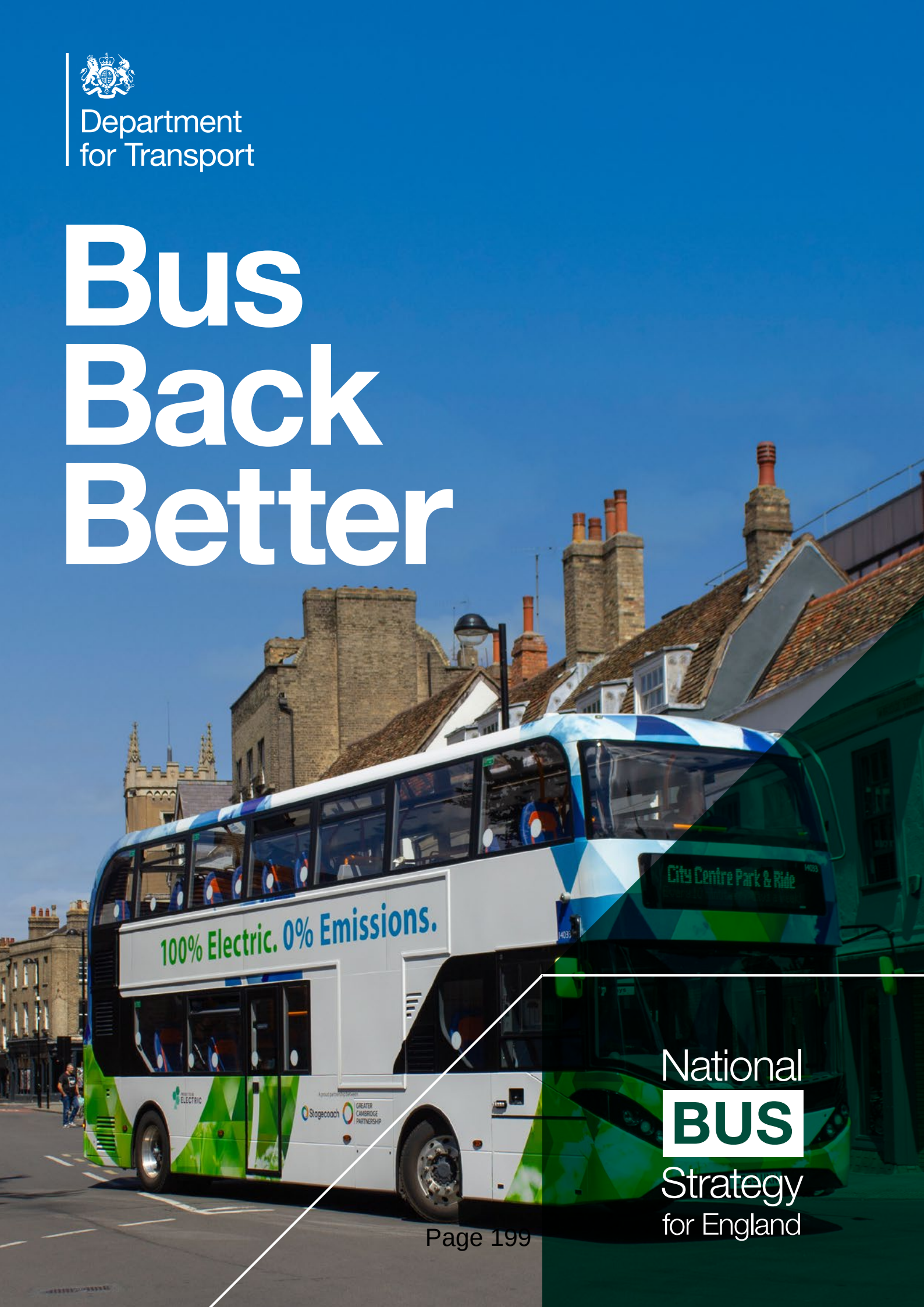
Annex 2 – Summary of current Enhanced Partnership Plan and Enhanced Partnership Scheme requirements

Annex 3 – Summary Comparison of Franchising and Enhanced Partnerships

Background papers: None
Contact Officer: John Disley, 07767 006742
June 2021

Department for Transport

Bus Back Better



National BUS Strategy for England





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Prime Minister's Foreword

I love buses, and I have never quite understood why so few governments before mine have felt the same way. A couple of years ago, I unintentionally broke the internet with the widely-mocked, but true, statement that one of my hobbies is making models of buses. As mayor of London, I was proud to evict from the capital that mobile roadblock, the bendy bus, and to replace it with a thousand sleek, green, street-gracing New Routemasters.

Buses are the country's favourite mode of public transport too – used for twice as many journeys as trains, from thousands more stopping-places across the country. They get teenagers to college. They drive pensioners to see their friends. They connect people to jobs they couldn't otherwise take. They sustain town centres, they strengthen communities and they protect the environment. They are lifelines and they are liberators.

Some people ask what levelling-up means in practice, and what difference it will really make to people's lives. This is part of what it means. As we build back from the pandemic, better buses will be one of our major acts of levelling-up.

As successive mayors showed in London, buses are the easiest, cheapest and quickest way to improve transport. In only a few years, policies started by my Labour predecessor and which I built on transformed the service. With frequent buses, low fares, and priority lanes to glide past traffic, we made London's bus network a natural choice for everyone, not just those without cars. Usage rose by more than half.

Outside London, with a few exceptions, that lesson has not been learned. For governments of all colours before this one, the bus has been last in the queue, with a fraction of the investment and political attention given to other, shinier things. Traffic has increased, but bus priority has stagnated, and some councils are actually taking bus lanes out. As services get slower, they become more expensive to run and less attractive to passengers. It is a classic vicious circle, which we intend to break.

Last year, we announced £3bn of new funding to level up buses across England towards London standards. This strategy describes how we will use that money. Just as we already have in the capital, we want main road services in cities and towns to run so often that you don't need a timetable. We want better services in the evenings and weekends, to reflect people's 24-hour lives and to provide safe, reliable transport for key workers. In places unserved or barely served by conventional buses, such as rural villages and out-of-town business parks, we want more demand responsive services with smaller vehicles.

Our job has changed because of Covid. In some ways it is harder. Bus use has dropped, though by less than on the railways. In some ways it is easier. The industry has had almost £1bn in emergency funding, and will need significant public support for some time to come. The deal for operators is that we will give you that support, and the measures to unstick traffic that you have wanted for years – but in return, we need your cooperation and partnership to deliver the policies in this strategy.

In every way, the pandemic has made our job more urgent. We must build back greener, minimising pollution and tackling the congestion that clogs up our towns and cities. But as the country recovers, this strategy looks to the long term.



We want simple, cheap flat fares that you can pay with a contactless card, with daily and weekly price capping across operators, rail and tram too. We want a network that feels like a network, with easy-to-understand services, consistent high standards and comprehensive information at the touch of a phone. We want 4,000 new green buses, and many others, running faster and more reliably in special lanes. As in London, all that will need councils, who control the roads, and bus operators to work together.

Introduction

Our vision for the future of buses





Buses are at the centre of the public transport network, making 4.07 billion journeys in England in 2019/20[1], more than twice as many as the railways.

They bring people to jobs, study and local services; they liberate people who are old, young, disabled and isolated; they save millions of tonnes of carbon and pollution, and thousands of miles of traffic jams. The double-decker bus is a symbol of Britain.

Yet for decades, buses have been largely ignored by policymakers. Unlike rail, road aviation, cycling or walking, there was not – until now – a national strategy for buses. And unlike rail or road, buses have never – until now – had long-term funding commitments. Almost uniquely in the developed world, bus operators themselves, outside London, decide where most services are run and what to charge.

Services can be confusing, split between different companies who do not accept each other's tickets or, in some cases, acknowledge each other's existence. Traffic congestion has made buses slower, less reliable and costlier to run. Public subsidy has fallen. The industry faces new structural challenges which it cannot meet alone, such as the rise of ride-hailing. Usage in most places keeps falling.

And then came COVID-19. Bus use has held up more strongly than rail in the pandemic, but as with the railways it has accelerated the challenges to an operating model that was already in trouble. Few services could now survive without emergency state support. If we are not to abandon entire communities, services cannot be planned purely on a commercial basis.

COVID-19 has caused a significant shift from public transport to the private car. To avoid the worst effects of a car-led recovery – cities and towns grinding to a halt; pollution, road injuries, respiratory illness and carbon emissions all rising – we need to shift back quickly, by making radical improvements to local public transport as normal life returns. Buses are the quickest, easiest and cheapest way to do that.

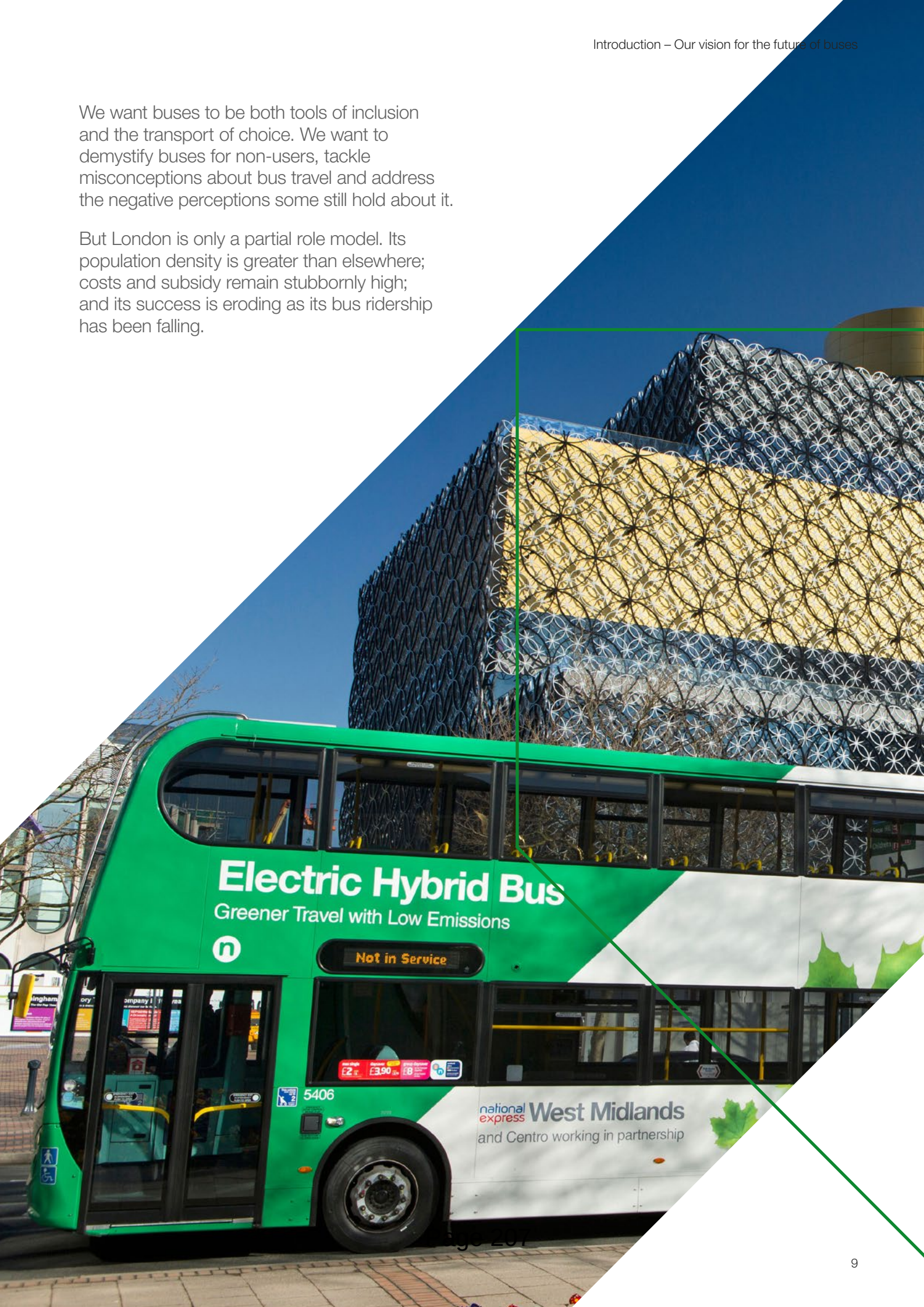
Even before the pandemic started, the Government had committed £3bn of new money during the current Parliament to improve buses outside London. Armed with that transformational funding, this National Bus Strategy will build back better. Its central aim is to get more people travelling by bus – first, to get overall patronage back to its pre-COVID-19 level, and then to exceed it. We will only achieve this if we can make buses a practical and attractive alternative to the car for more people.

To achieve our goal, this strategy will make buses more frequent, more reliable, easier to understand and use, better co-ordinated and cheaper: in other words, more like London's, where these type of improvements dramatically increased passenger numbers, reduced congestion, carbon and pollution, helped the disadvantaged and got motorists out of their cars.

We want the same fully integrated service, the same simple, multi-modal tickets, the same increases in bus priority measures, the same high-quality information for passengers and, in larger places, the same turn-up-and-go frequencies. We want services that keep running into the evenings and at weekends.

We want buses to be both tools of inclusion and the transport of choice. We want to demystify buses for non-users, tackle misconceptions about bus travel and address the negative perceptions some still hold about it.

But London is only a partial role model. Its population density is greater than elsewhere; costs and subsidy remain stubbornly high; and its success is eroding as its bus ridership has been falling.



Wherever and whenever bus patronage grows, there are likely to be bus operators and local government working together to deliver improvements for passengers.

Buses in London, unlike the rest of England, are franchised. Transport for London determines the network of services which are provided, under contracts for specific routes, by private sector operators. Franchising does not necessarily have to replicate this route-by route tendering. Less onerously, contracts can be let for different parts of a city or to a single operator for a whole network, with significant co-design opportunities for that operator. This is the model of the successful LibertyBus franchise in Jersey. Franchising powers are only available automatically to Mayoral Combined Authorities (MCAs) but can be provided to other Local Transport Authorities (LTAs) through secondary legislation. We will support any LTA which wishes to access franchising powers, and which has the capability and intention to use them at pace to deliver improvements for passengers.

But franchising is not the only route to better and more locally accountable bus services. An Enhanced Partnership is a statutory arrangement under the 2017 Bus Services Act which can specify, for example, timetables and multi-operator ticketing, and allows the LTA to take over the role of registering bus services from the Traffic Commissioners. The main difference versus franchising is that operators in an Enhanced Partnership have a much greater role, working with LTAs to both develop and deliver improvements for passengers and having a real say on how bus services should be improved. Enhanced Partnerships also offer significantly more flexibility than franchising.





By the end of June 2021, we expect all LTAs, except MCAs which have started the statutory process of franchising bus services, to commit to establishing Enhanced Partnerships across their entire areas under the Bus Services Act, and all operators to co-operate with the LTA throughout the process. LTAs which also wish to pursue franchising may do so – but they should commit to implementing Enhanced Partnerships in the meantime until the franchising process, which can be lengthy, is complete. LTAs which are not mayoral combined authorities and wish to pursue franchising will need to satisfy the Secretary of State that they have the capability and resources to do so, and that it will better deliver service improvements for passengers.

From 1 July 2021, only LTAs and operators who meet these requirements will continue to receive the COVID-19 Bus Services Support Grant (CBSSG) or any new sources of bus funding from the Government's £3bn budget. The terms and conditions of CBSSG already make clear that it is discretionary. The new funding will also be discretionary. As part of wider reform of the Bus Service Operators Grant – see below – we will consult on linking payment of that reformed grant to these commitments. By the end of October 2021, we expect all LTAs to publish a local Bus Service Improvement Plan, detailing how they propose to use their powers to improve services. We expect actual delivery of Enhanced Partnerships by April 2022. From that date, the new discretionary forms of bus funding from Government will only be available to services operated, or measures taken, under an Enhanced Partnership or where a franchising scheme has been made. In addition, only services operated under these statutory agreements will be eligible for the reformed Bus Service Operators Grant, subject to consultation. The Secretary of State may disapply these rules or the deadline of April 2022 in individual cases, on an exceptional basis; we will also ensure that no operator is disadvantaged through any failure to establish an Enhanced Partnership due to actions beyond their control.


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Via Hospital & Woolston
PROUDLY TRANSPORTING NHS WORKERS
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We expect that the majority of LTAs will choose these Enhanced Partnerships rather than franchising as their end state, though others will proceed to franchising. We value the crucial role that bus operators have and believe that partnerships will allow LTAs to harness their knowledge and entrepreneurial skills. As we describe later, partnerships will work best if they deliver benefits and incentives to both sides. We will publish updated guidance on Enhanced Partnerships in the coming weeks.

Just as important as new operating models, are other measures to drive quality and efficiency. We want to create a virtuous circle: increasing usage, but also reducing operating costs so better services can be sustained without permanently higher subsidy. In cities and other congested places, the key intervention will be significantly more ambitious bus priority schemes, making services faster, more reliable, more attractive to passengers and cheaper to run.

To benefit from the funding in this strategy, LTAs in such places will be expected to implement ambitious bus priority schemes and draw up ambitious Bus Service Improvement Plans. Statutory traffic management guidance will be updated to make promoting bus reliability an integral part of highway authorities' Network Management Duty. As we have already announced, the remaining elements of Part 6 of the Traffic Management Act 2004 – which allow local authorities to enforce moving traffic offences – will be commenced this year and we will consult shortly on increasing MCAs' powers over key roads in their areas, where they are not already the highway authority.

To further our commitments in the Government's green ten-point plan, we will support the purchase of at least 4,000 new zero emission buses, more than a tenth of the fleet[2]. We will also set a date for ending the sale of new diesel buses in the UK. This, too, will reduce costs, since an electric bus is much cheaper to operate than a conventional one.

And in lower-density, often rural areas, not served or barely served by conventional buses, we will support new forms of provision, such as demand responsive travel in smaller vehicles. These innovations in service may be how we improve evening and Sunday services in places which currently lack them, integrated with conventional buses during the day.

As well as spending more money, we will fundamentally reform how it is spent. The main current funding stream, the Bus Service Operators Grant (BSOG), is a fossil fuel subsidy. The new funding regime will take a holistic approach targeted at the delivery of the policies in this strategy and other specific benefits: growing patronage, increasing efficiency, improving the environment and securing modal shift from the private car.

Much of the work to improve services and manage the new funding streams will be done by local authorities, whose capacity varies significantly. We will therefore provide £25 million in 2021/22 to support partnership and franchising development, including a Bus Centre of Excellence.

Just as buses are central to the public transport network, bus reform is central to this Government's objectives. We are acting not just because buses are the easiest, cheapest and quickest way of improving transport – but because the bus is key to two of our wider priorities: net zero and levelling up.

During a challenging time for public transport, it might seem strange to predict a prosperous future for the bus. From crisis, however, comes opportunity.

1



Chapter 1

The opportunity


EMERGENCY EXIT



Buses are the easiest, cheapest and quickest way to improve transport. Building a new railway or road takes years, if not decades. Better bus services can be delivered in months. Experience shows that relatively small sums of money, by the standards of transport spending, can deliver significant benefits.


xact fare
please
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given.
Contactless/app
preferred.
welcome
aboard
Brighton Hove
WELCOME
ABOARD

Since COVID-19, the need has become more urgent. In many places, roads already operated at or close to capacity before the pandemic. There is a risk that when full economic life returns, the move away from public transport during the crisis will cause unmanageable levels of car traffic, slowing some areas to a crawl, holding back the economic recovery and creating a severe risk to health. Bus services can be improved relatively quickly to draw people back to public transport. They can also be reconfigured more easily than railways to meet any post-COVID change in travel patterns, such as a greater number of suburban, local and orbital journeys in cities.

The bus sector includes many examples of success and innovation. Despite years of decline, the quantity of bus services in many places remains quite good, at least during the working day. But because buses have been neglected, their future is fragile and there remains substantial scope for improvement. Our task is both to unlock the substantial untapped potential in the existing service, by making it easier to understand and use; and to improve it, making it more reliable, more frequent and cheaper, and making more use of new forms of provision such as demand responsive transport.

Buses are key to delivering wider government priorities

Buses can play a greater role in enabling access to work or more productive work. 44% of bus trips are for work or education, compared with 27% of solo car journeys[3]. Buses can help drive better employment outcomes for disabled people, and in cities outside London, 77% of jobseekers do not have regular access to a car, van or motorbike. Having found employment, affordable bus travel helps ensure that work pays and can be sustained for everyone[4]. But local bus fares have risen by 1.4% a year in real terms since 2010[5].

Buses can improve productivity more widely, for instance by reducing congestion which affects all road users and costs urban economies at least £11bn a year[6].

Buses can be key to levelling-up; users are disproportionately from less advantaged social groups and places. Improved services will strengthen communities, sustain town centres and connect disabled and isolated people. But buses should not be seen, or promoted, only as transport for those without an alternative. There is clear evidence that they can be made attractive enough to draw people away from their cars.

For this reason, buses are vital to ensuring the economy meets Net Zero carbon emissions and driving the green transformation. In congested areas, substantial modal shift away from the car will soon be needed if clean air targets and the Government's broader climate goals are to be met. The only mode capable of sufficient expansion in the time available is the bus. We need more people to choose the bus for their journeys; we need to reverse the declines of the past.

Bus spending works and is high value for money

A Department for Transport (DfT) analysis of 33 major bus schemes found an average benefit-cost ratio of 4.2; in other words, they delivered benefits worth more than four times their cost[7]. Buses generate a significant proportion of benefits which accrue to other road users and to society at large.

The challenge: a cycle of decline

Our system isn't working. With some encouraging exceptions, bus services have been in decline for a long time, as we have become an increasingly car-focused society. In many areas, we are stuck in a vicious cycle where ever-increasing congestion slows down buses and makes them less attractive, pushing people further towards the car and compounding the problem.

The way the bus industry works, with few incentives for operators and local authorities to work together, has made it harder to cope with these trends, or to act strategically. Since 1986, almost uniquely in the developed world, buses in Britain (outside London) have been organised on a predominantly commercial basis, with operators themselves deciding where to run and what to charge.

Following that change, profitable routes and times of day were flooded with buses at the expense of other routes and times; services became unstable and confusing; the quality of vehicles fell and fares in many places rose sharply. Services which could not be run commercially, previously cross-subsidised from the profits of busier routes, now had to be supported by the taxpayer. The money available for this fell substantially over the last ten years, causing severe cuts to supported services; some councils now spend nothing at all. The worst excesses of the "bus wars," which saw streets choked with rival vehicles, are long over, but the legacy remains.



Examples of some barriers to delivering better bus services



Limited cooperation

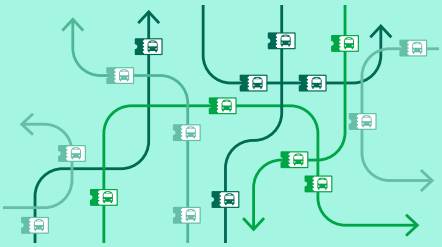
In a busy seaside resort, there are two sizeable **rival bus networks** that **don't acknowledge each other's existence**. They:

- publish **separate city maps**, showing only their own services, giving potential users including visitors the impression that **some areas of the city are completely unserved**;
- they use the **same route numbers for entirely different routes**; and
- on the busiest routes, served by both operators, there can be **overcapacity at certain times of the day**.

There is a multi-operator ticket, but it is **more expensive** and **hard** to find out about.

On numerous routes across the country, evening and daytime services are operated by different bus companies, many of which **do not acknowledge each other's existence** or even accept each other's tickets. Some operator timetables **don't display each other's services**, which gives the impression there are **no services** at different times of the day.







Lack of evening services

Large areas of even major cities have **only one or two buses an hour in the evenings**, even though late-night and shift-working are becoming commonplace. Lots of bus services in **rural areas cease as early as 5 or 6pm**.

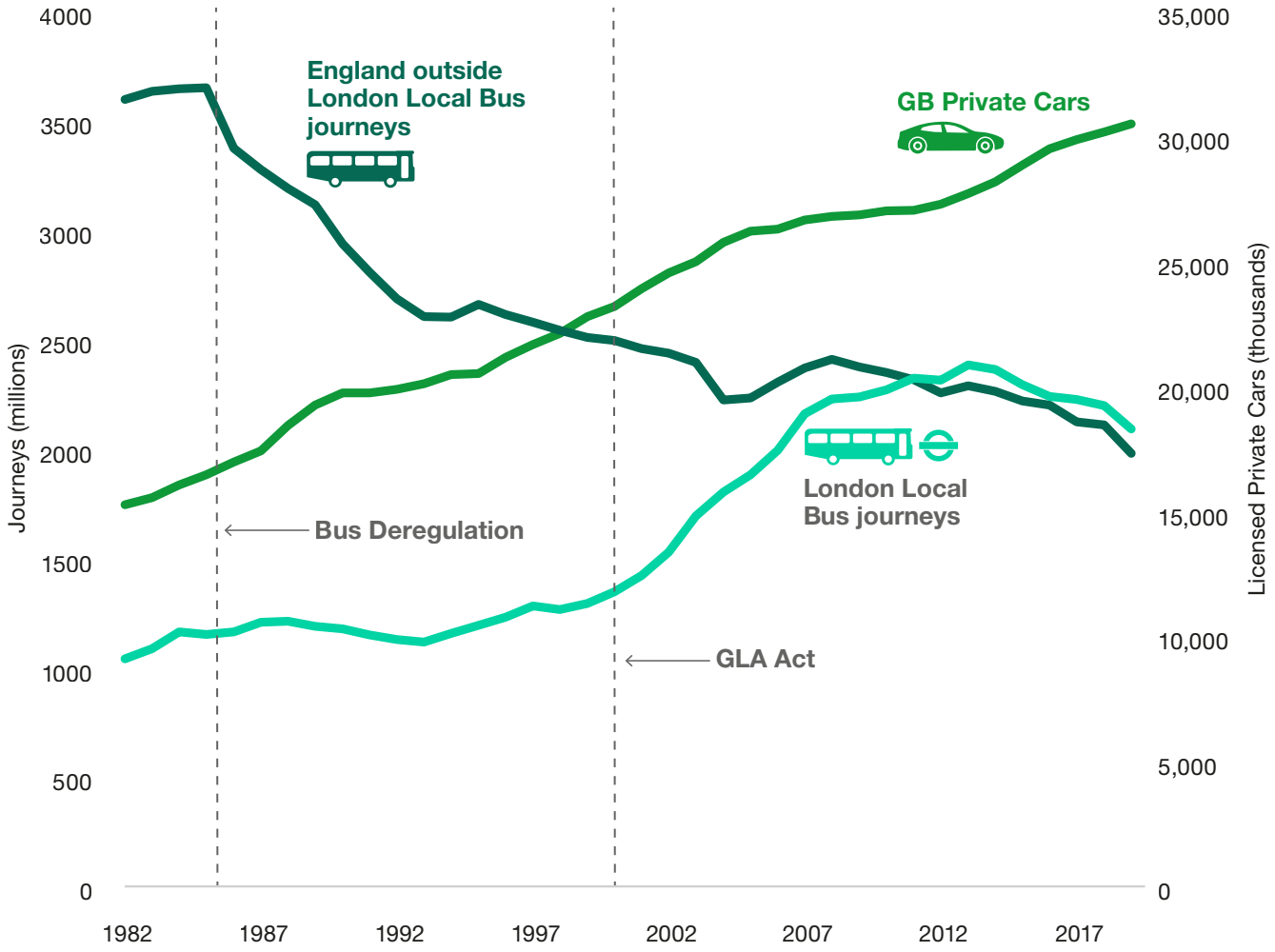
Complex ticketing

In a major northern city, bus passengers are faced with the choice of **many different weekly or monthly tickets**, which have different names and conditions attached to them. This can be **confusing** and makes it **difficult for passengers to choose** the best option for them. There are six different weekly tickets but none that gives travel on all the city's public transport networks.

Poor integration

In one Home Counties town with generally excellent bus services, **misguided landscaping and redevelopment** around the railway station **moved bus stops further away**.

Bus Use and Car Ownership 1982–2019[8]



GLA (Greater London Authority) Act 1999 established authority for the Greater London Authority, the Mayor of London and the London Assembly to make provision about transport and road traffic in and around Greater London.

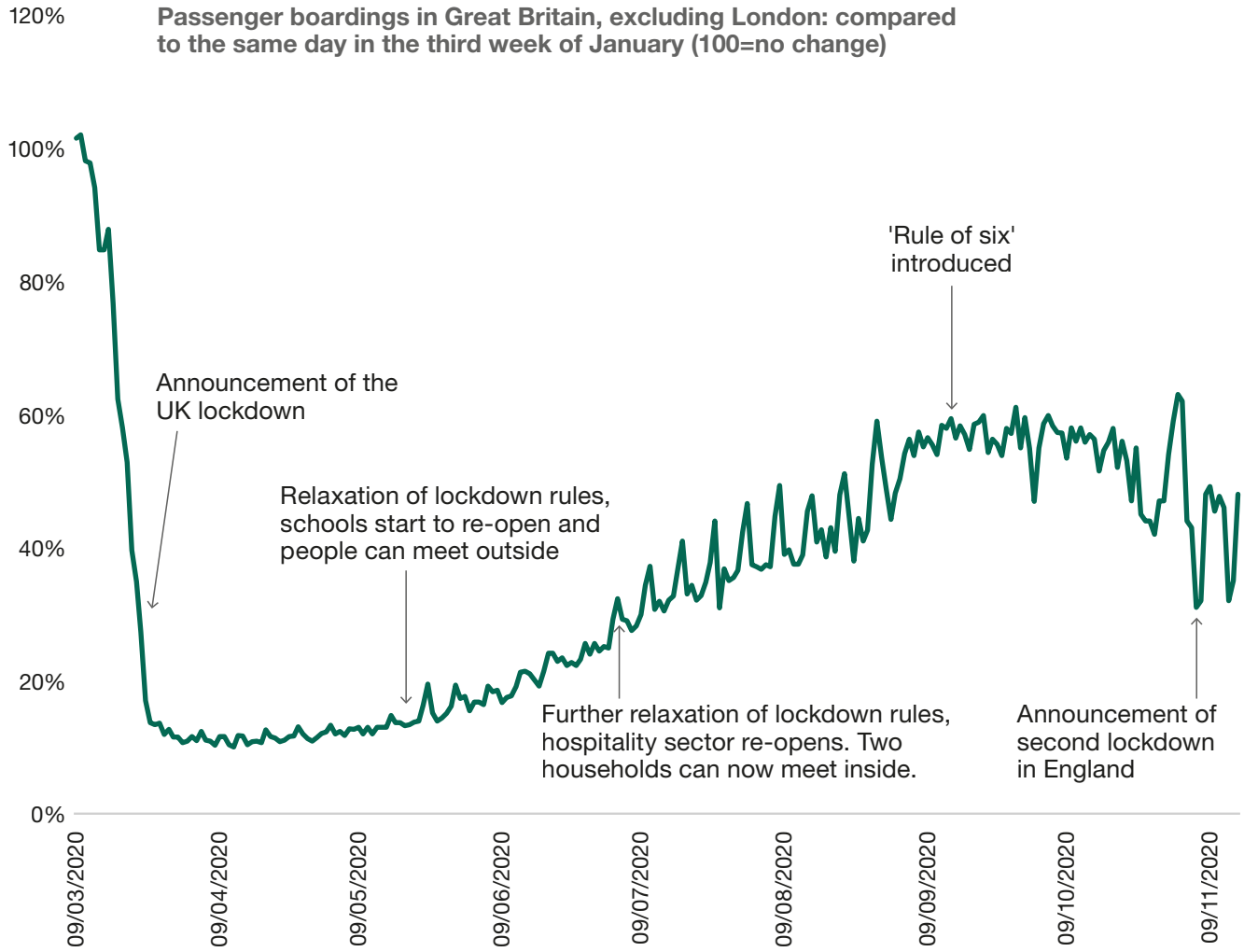
In rural areas, more dispersed, lower density populations make it challenging to deliver widespread timetabled services run by traditional buses. Services often take long and indirect routes, to serve as many people as possible, but they become an unattractive alternative for passengers with access to a car. Services invariably need funding from LTAs and, when money is tight, funding for bus services is deprioritised. Services get cut, and people are even more likely to buy a car, reducing the potential demand for buses even further.

If we are to meet our legal obligation to deliver Net Zero carbon emissions and have thriving communities, we have to reverse these cycles.

This is made more challenging by the impact of COVID-19 on the bus sector. With over £1bn of financial support provided by the Government during the pandemic so far, the sector has provided the essential services for people who have needed to keep using public transport, including key workers. But the lasting impact on bus use remains unknown, with passenger numbers expected to fall from pre-COVID levels – at least initially.

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a huge impact on bus use in 2020

During the first lockdown passenger boardings fell to approximately 10% of those on the same day in the third week of January. As restrictions were eased passenger boardings increased[9].



The impact of COVID-19 is both a significant risk and an opportunity. It has meant much greater co-operation between many LTAs and bus operators which we cannot afford to lose. While relationships and capacity still need to be built and improved, there can simply be no return to the situation, seen in too many parts of England, where services were planned on a purely commercial basis with little or no engagement with, or support from, LTAs.

The next year provides a unique chance to change the way in which local authorities and operators work together and deliver significant improvements for passengers. That is why we are seeking urgent action.

Examples of success

Across England there are pockets of hope – places where significant growth has been seen despite the national trends. We know what can work and how the cycle can be broken. It needs LTAs and bus operators to work together to put passengers first. Where operators understand their passengers, offer great customer service and have clean, modern fleets; and LTAs invest to give buses priority on busy roads and junctions, and put buses at the heart of their local transport planning.

Brighton & Hove

Partnership working between Brighton and Hove Council and local operators is cited as a key reason why the area has the highest bus use per head in England outside of London, with 167 journeys per person made between 2019–2020[10]. It has created a platform for co-operation and innovation, and shared initiatives on greening fleets and modernising the passenger experience.

Within the partnership, the council has focused on bus priority measures, improved passenger waiting areas and real-time information displays. The operators have focused on improving service frequencies, creating value for money fares and tickets, investing in new buses and improving customer training and marketing.



Picture:
Brighton and Hove Buses



Picture: The Harrogate Bus Company

The Harrogate Bus Company

The 36, a premium bus route linking Ripon and Harrogate with the City of Leeds, offers a sophisticated and comfortable service which has transformed the passenger experience and encouraged people to make the switch to bus. Achieving consistent growth, the number of passengers using the 36 has nearly doubled over 15 years.

Along with a high frequency timetable, the spacious and comfortable buses, which include USB power outlets, superfast WiFi and a glazed panoramic roof, have earned the route 36 service a customer satisfaction score of 97% and more than 50% of customers, who have a car available, choose to use the 36 instead[11].



Picture: Bristol's Metrobus

Bristol's Metrobus

The metrobus network was built with an investment of £235m – including £113m from the Department for Transport. Metrobus is a bus rapid transit system comprising three limited-stop routes in the Bristol urban area that use bus lanes and segregated busways.

There are 90 metrobus stops with new high-profile shelters and 'iPoints' that provide real-time information and sell tickets. The network uses new low-emission biomethane buses in a bespoke livery, and all ticket sales take place off-bus to ensure quick boarding. Minimum frequencies and maximum fares are specified.

Projects which have grown patronage

The West Midlands is a good recent example of how revenue and capital subsidy by operators and government can arrest general decline. Bus use has been stabilised by a series of corridor and route enhancement schemes:

- 2.5km of bus lanes on B425 Lode Lane, Solihull, was an investment of £4.5m and delivered a 11% boost to patronage.
- £800k of route enhancements on Harborne Road delivered a 4% rise in patronage.

In addition, half-price travel for under-18s and low-fare zones for all, including cutting the price of a DaySaver ticket by c.25%, brought an extra 4,000 journeys a day[12].

In Crawley, West Sussex, the Fastway scheme – a series of bus priority measures along two core routes, linking Horley, Gatwick airport and Crawley, has delivered patronage growth of 160% over ten years as well as an increase to customer satisfaction and reduced journey times. Assessments estimate a benefit-cost ratio of at least 4.67[13].

So the cornerstone of this strategy is a roll out of this model for success – bringing together LTAs and their bus operators in every part of England to set out plans to improve local bus services and break the vicious cycle of decline.

Our plan is backed by transformative, long-term funding. The £3bn for buses in England outside London, which was announced by the Prime Minister in February 2020, will initially be invested in:

- Supporting new and increased services – with at least £300m of funding to support the sector recover from the pandemic in 2021/22.
- Giving LTAs the skills and people they need to deliver this strategy – with £25m of the £300m allocated in 2021/22.
- Bus priority schemes to speed up journeys – with the first schemes delivered in 2021/22.
- Accelerating the delivery of zero emission buses with £120m in 2021/22.

The bulk of the £3bn transformation funding will be paid after the transformational changes begin in April 2022.

Chapter 2

The buses we want



2


WiFi
HANDS
FACE
SPACE





Our goal is to get bus use back to what it was before the pandemic. Then we want to increase patronage and raise buses' mode share. We can only do these things by ensuring that buses are an attractive alternative to the car for far more people.


the air filter bus: for serious air lovers
Eastleigh
272
bluestar
HF69 CNC

That means making them:

- **More frequent:** Turn up and go services, where passengers don't need a timetable, should be provided on major urban routes. Feeder services, using conventional buses or smaller vehicles, can boost the frequency of connections from places away from main roads, connecting to the major routes with integrated ticketing. In low-density areas and at low-demand times of day, demand responsive vehicles can provide much higher levels of service than conventional fixed bus routes.
- **Faster and more reliable:** Buses must have greater priority on urban roads. LTAs will be given new powers to enforce traffic regulations. They will be expected to promote bus reliability, and to implement ambitious bus priority schemes, to receive new funding. These must be planned to complement walking and cycling schemes. We will consult shortly on increasing Metro Mayors' powers over key roads in their areas, where they are not already the highway authority.
- **Cheaper:** We want to see more low, flat fares in towns and cities, lower point-to-point fares elsewhere, and more daily price capping everywhere.
- **More comprehensive:** Overprovision on a few urban corridors with dozens of competing buses every hour should be reduced to boost under provision elsewhere. More services should operate in the evenings, weekends, and at night, and to smaller towns and villages, sometimes using new forms of demand responsive transport.
- **Easier to understand:** All public transport across England – bus, light rail and conventional rail – should be easy to access via journey planning websites and apps, with everything passengers need to know at their fingertips, including times, accessibility information, fares and live running. The data is already available; we want to see it used. Additionally:
  - Bus stops should show accurate information about the services stopping there. Every town, city and rural area should have easy to access, up to date maps, showing all local bus services.
  - Each local area should have a common numbering system, to avoid two routes with the same number in the same place, and bus stops should be named consistently by operators running the same bus routes.
  - Local branding that reflects the community and not the operator should be adopted, though successful existing brands such as Harrogate's 36 should not be sacrificed.
  - Routes should, as far as possible, be the same in the evenings and weekends as they are in the daytime.
  - Routes should be as easy as possible to understand, with simple, high-frequency trunk services rather than lots of low-frequency services combining together.
  - All operators which run the same route should accept the same tickets, use the same route number and be shown on the same timetable.
  - Timetable changes should be minimised and co-ordinated across operators, so they happen at the same time.
  - There should be heavy promotion and marketing to familiarise non-users with their local buses, to demystify the service for non-users, and introductory offers to promote the service to them.


Bus Stop
Keresley Road
The Scotchill
Towards City Centre
16 16A 43W
61 735
ptmjd to 84268 or www.netwm.mobi
Contactless NOW LIVE
Coventry single
£2.20
£1 city hop
Coventry all day unlimited travel
£4
up to 5 people
£8 £5 after 6pm
4397

- **Easier to use:** Common tickets, passes and daily capping should be available on all services irrespective of operator, at little or no premium to single-operator fares. All buses should accept contactless payment. Tickets and fares should be simple; flat fares should increasingly be standard in urban areas. Bus stations should be protected from closure and redevelopment and improved.
- **Better to ride in:** Comfortable, high-spec, modern buses will help make using the bus more appealing. Passengers should feel safe on board. Buses should offer end to end accessibility and provide ample areas for pushchairs and luggage in addition to the wheelchair space, so that everybody can travel with confidence. They should also offer audible and visible information, in addition to WIFI and charging as standard – allowing people to work and interact online whilst they travel, and make better use of their time. In holiday and scenic areas, much more should be done to promote buses to visitors, with the views from the top deck an attraction in themselves.
- **Better integrated with other modes and each other:** More bus routes should serve railway stations, as is standard in most European countries, and integrate with cycling and walking routes and networks. Additionally:
  - Railway stations should be hubs for connecting services with high quality stops close to station entrances. Schemes that move buses further away from stations should not be allowed.
  - Passengers should not have to buy a new ticket when changing buses. Easy through ticketing should be available between bus operators and other transport modes.
  - Our ambition is for an integrated ticketing approach to allow you to buy a through journey for local bus, rail and metro with a single tap on your smartphone.
  - Full information on local bus services should be posted in railway stations, and the rail industry should promote bus links.
  - Park-and-ride schemes should be expanded, and more rural bus services should carry bikes.
- **Greener:** We will support the introduction of at least 4,000 more zero emission buses.
- **Accessible and inclusive by design:** Disabled people must be able to use bus services as easily as other passengers. Making buses more accessible (not just the vehicles themselves, but also bus stops, bus stations, and by providing excellent customer service) will benefit other passengers too. Next stop announcements, for example, will help everyone know where the bus is going and when they've reached their stop.
- **Innovative:** We want to harness the entrepreneurial skills of the best operators to constantly strive for innovation in the market.
- **Seen as a safe mode of transport:** The sector must strive for the highest safety standards, upheld by the Traffic Commissioners. Marketing should emphasise the features that support personal safety, for example CCTV onboard and at bus stops and data that allows passengers to know when a bus is arriving so they do not have to wait in the street. This should be supported by more demand responsive services in the evenings and late at night.

We want bus services that mean fewer journeys are needed by private car. We want buses across the country to become the transport of choice for people with other options, as they already are in some places. Our changes therefore need to tackle negative perceptions by non-users. We will have failed if we do not address the perceptions which deter people from buses:

Passenger Satisfaction

The latest Transport Focus 'Annual Bus Passenger Survey' gives headline satisfaction figures of between 76% and 95% for local bus services in England outside London[14].

We know that people's top priorities for improvement – from among people who both do and don't use buses – include:



Source: Transport Focus, Bus Passengers' priorities for improvement survey, published September 2020.

We want to see any negative views and misconceptions surrounding bus use, which include the examples below, addressed by up to date and easy to access information about local bus services.

Won't the bus journey take a long time?

How do I safely take my children with me?

I don't understand where my local routes go.

Is there a service I can use to get home late evening and at weekends?

Where do I go to find the time of my next bus service?

How do the fares work and can I use contactless to pay?

How do I know if my bus service is accessible?

I'm worried about my personal safety.

I'm worried I may get stuck somewhere.

3



Chapter 3

Delivering better bus services


5 62 77 T1
Tickets
Litter





Strong bus networks connect our communities, getting people to jobs and services, giving them opportunities, and boosting economic growth and inclusion. This chapter sets out the collaborative approach that will give us stronger, better planned networks, and how Government will support local transport authorities and operators to deliver.



Today's bus sector

Since 1986, the bus market in England outside London has been deregulated. Prior to COVID-19, around 87% of local bus service mileage outside London was run on a commercial basis by hundreds of private sector bus operators[15]. These operators decide where and when to run commercial services, invest in the buses and facilities, and set their own fares, with only a very limited role for LTAs*.

Before the pandemic, the 20% of services which were not run commercially were 'tendered' for and subsidised by LTAs if they considered them 'socially necessary'. Prior to COVID-19, the sector received funding from central Government through concessionary fares funding, the Bus Service Operators Grant, community transport grants and support to subsidise socially necessary services.

This model doesn't always work for passengers. There is often no incentive for integrated ticketing, or for operators to run services that are not profitable outside of peak hours. LTAs may not have the budget to provide additional or replacement services, or the skills and resources to understand where they are needed. And there is little or no visibility for the public of the role that LTAs play in supporting buses or data by which the local electorate can hold their councillors or Mayor to account for their part in improving bus services.

LTAs can do something about this. Over the past 20 years they have been given increasing powers to work with bus operators to improve services and ensure that they work for passengers and local communities. Most recently the Bus Services Act 2017 gave LTAs the potential for much greater influence over bus services in their area –underpinned by new types of statutory partnerships with operators and the ability to franchise services. Franchising powers are automatically available to Mayors of Combined Authorities and can be made available to other types of local authority, where needed, through secondary legislation.

COVID-19 has meant greater co-operation between LTAs and bus operators and a more transparent approach to the costs and revenues of running bus services. We want to build on this close working to drive the recovery of the bus sector.

Building back better – recovering from the pandemic

The Government has provided an unprecedented amount of support for the bus sector during the pandemic. Through the COVID-19 Bus Services Support Grant (CBSSG) and the Bus Service Operators Grant (BSOG), the Government had announced over £1 billion of support by the end of 2020. CBSSG will remain in place as long as it is needed. We are clear that we will continue to support the sector to run the services needed to get our economy back on track.

CBSSG is discretionary, as will be future bus funding from the £3bn. From 1 July 2021, CBSSG and any successor funding to it; funding to transform services as outlined in this Strategy; and potentially, subject to consultation on wider reform, the reformed Bus Service Operators Grant, will only be available to LTAs, outside of London, who have committed to entering into Enhanced Partnerships or started the statutory process of franchising services, and to operators who co-operate with the process. Since franchising can take several years, we expect those LTAs who want to start down that road to commit to establishing an Enhanced Partnership in the meantime, unless they have begun the process of implementing franchising already (as in Greater Manchester, for instance).

* Upper tier local authorities (usually combined authorities and county councils) and unitary authorities. Combined authorities are local government entities set up by two or more neighbouring councils wishing to co-ordinate responsibilities and powers over services, including aspects of transport, housing and social care. If the authority has a directly elected Mayor it is a Mayoral Combined Authority.

We want to see the commitment to these partnerships realised, so from April 2022 only LTAs with an Enhanced Partnership or who have begun following the statutory process to decide whether to implement franchising, will be able to access the new discretionary streams of Government bus funding. From that date, the new discretionary forms of bus funding from Government will only be available to services operated, or measures taken, under an Enhanced Partnership or where a franchising scheme has been made. In addition, only services operated under these statutory agreements will be eligible for the reformed Bus Service Operators Grant, subject to consultation. The Secretary of State may disapply these rules or the deadline of April 2022 in individual cases, on an exceptional basis; we will also ensure that no operator is disadvantaged through any failure to establish an Enhanced Partnership due to actions beyond their control. We will also take into account an LTA's performance with respect to the policies set out in this strategy when considering funding allocations for wider, non-bus local transport schemes.

By the end of October 2021, we expect all LTAs to publish a local Bus Service Improvement Plan. These new plans must set out how they will use their Enhanced Partnership or franchising scheme to deliver an ambitious vision for travel by bus, meeting the goals and expectations in this strategy and driven by what passengers and would-be passengers want in their area.

Hertfordshire's Enhanced Partnership

Hertfordshire County Council introduced 'intalink', England's first Enhanced Partnership agreement in April 2020.

The partnership's objectives include prioritising bus services in traffic, closer integration of the bus network including upgrading bus infrastructure; improving the image of bus travel and using data and information.

These objectives aim to keep passengers informed about available services, increase service frequencies and improve reliability and co-ordination with other modes to encourage residents to make bus their first choice to get around their local area.

Plans must be developed in collaboration with local bus operators, community transport bodies and local businesses, services and people. They will be living, transparent documents, with targets. LTAs will need to routinely publish six-monthly progress reports against these targets. Plans will demonstrate how bus services are integrated with other types of transport in their area such as connectivity to train stations, making journeys simple and stress-free for customers. They must take account of cycling and walking schemes, complementing these forms of travel and not competing with them. We will publish detailed guidance on preparing a Bus Service Improvement Plan shortly, and update our existing guidance on Enhanced Partnerships and franchising.

LTAs may also join together to produce joint plans and partnership or franchising arrangements and should be looking to do so where local economies and travel to work areas overlap significantly. We would expect to see shared arrangements across any areas wishing to become new or expanded Mayoral Combined Authorities in the future.

To support LTAs in forming partnerships and developing plans, we will make £25m available in financial year 2021–22.



Summary of what LTAs and bus operators must do to access CBSSG from 1 July and transformational funding from April 2022

- **By the end of June 2021** LTAs will need to commit to establishing Enhanced Partnerships under the Bus Services Act or the LTA should begin the statutory process of franchising services. Operators in those areas should cooperate with those processes.
- Those LTAs who do not have access to franchising powers at present, but consider that it is the best route to adopt in the interest of passengers and that they have the capability and resources to deliver it, should progress with the implementation of an Enhanced Partnership alongside applying to the Secretary of State for access to franchising powers.
- **By the end of October 2021** each LTA will need to publish a local Bus Service Improvement Plan. Each plan will need to be updated annually and reflected in the authority's Local Transport Plan* and in other relevant local plans such as Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans (LCWIPs).
- **From April 2022**, LTAs will need to have an Enhanced Partnership in place, or be following the statutory process to decide whether to implement a franchising scheme, to access the new discretionary streams of bus funding. Only services operated or measures taken under an Enhanced Partnership or where a franchising scheme has been made will be eligible to receive the new funding streams.

Bus Service Improvement Plans will:

- Be developed by LTAs in collaboration with local bus operators, community transport bodies and local businesses, services and people.
- Cover the LTA's full area, all local bus services within it, and the differing needs of any parts of that area (e.g. urban and rural elements).
- Focus on delivering the bus network that LTAs (in consultation with operators) want to see, including how to address the under provision and overprovision of bus services and buses integrating with other modes.
- Set out how they will achieve the objectives in this strategy, including growing bus use, and include a detailed plan for delivery.
- Be updated annually and reflected in the authority's Local Transport Plan.
- Influence the share of the £3bn of transformation funding each LTA receives.

We expect Bus Service Improvement Plans to:

- Set targets for journey times and reliability improvements (for the LTA as a whole and in each of the largest cities and towns in its area) – to be reported against publicly at least every six months.
- Identify where bus priority measures are needed, including consideration of Bus Rapid Transit routes to transform key corridors and how traffic management can be improved to benefit buses.
- Set out pressures on the road network, air quality issues and carbon reduction targets which improved bus services could address, and set out actions working with operators to transform the local bus fleet to zero emission.
- Drive improvements for passengers by:
  - Setting targets for passenger growth and customer satisfaction (to be reported against publicly at least every six months).
  - Setting out plans and costs for fares, ticketing and modal integration. Initially, we expect LTAs and bus operators to develop plans to enable multi-operator ticketing, where plans do not exist. Over time we will expect LTAs to work across transport modes towards enabling a multi-modal ticketing scheme.
  - Considering the impact of roadside infrastructure (e.g. bus stops and shelters) on passenger safety, security and accessibility.
  - Considering how a coherent and integrated network should serve schools, health, social care, employment and other services.
  - Taking into account the views of local people.
  - Committing to a Bus Passenger Charter (BPC) that sets out what passengers can expect from bus operators delivering local bus services across their area. BPC's should include commitments on the accessibility of bus services.

* All local transport authorities in England are required to have a Local Transport Plan (LTP) relating to transport to, from and within their area. It is a practical document which sets out in detail the authority's transport policies over a given period. This includes local objectives, strategy and an implementation plan highlighting what measures will be taken to achieve those aims.

Bus Service Improvement Plans will need to explain:

- How current services meet or fall short of the expectations listed above.
- How the improvements needed will be delivered through the Enhanced Partnership/franchising schemes and the LTA's and operators' investment plans.
- The financial support that the LTA is providing for subsidised public bus services, listing the numbers of routes and route mileage supported.
- How traffic management and investment are used to prioritise buses. In Mayoral Combined Authorities (MCA) this will include the extent of the MCA's role over a Key Route Network and how that is used to prioritise bus services.

Franchising

Franchising can be an effective way of correcting a market failure and we support its use where it is in the best interests of passengers. Used well, franchising can harness the knowledge and expertise of the private sector and improve service levels, customer satisfaction and overall patronage.

Franchising does not always require the scale of LTA resource and planning seen in London. There are also strong models of franchising in the Channel Islands and other countries which capitalise on the strengths of private sector route planning, marketing and investment as part of the tendering process whilst ensuring stronger local accountability and financial incentives to prioritise bus services for the local authority.

The franchising powers within the Bus Services Act can currently be used by MCAs at any time, but only by other LTAs with the Secretary of State's consent and new secondary legislation. We support the use of franchising and will allow any LTA which has the capability to do so to pursue franchising where it would not needlessly delay the provision of better services.

This will include demonstrating the capability in traffic management necessary to ensure buses are prioritised appropriately.

The Secretary of State will reserve the right to refuse an application for franchising if he believes a LTA does not, or will not, have the capability and resources to deliver the franchised model chosen; or that an Enhanced Partnership would deliver the improvements proposed more quickly and cost-effectively.

Those LTAs which do not have access to franchising powers at present, but consider that it is the best route to adopt in the interest of passengers and that they have the capability and resources to deliver it, should progress with the implementation of an Enhanced Partnership alongside applying to the Secretary of State for access to franchising powers. An LTA may move from an Enhanced Partnership to franchising later, subject to the conditions above.

We will also strengthen our statutory guidance on Enhanced Partnerships and franchising – making it easier for operators and LTAs to focus on what they want to achieve.

LibertyBus Franchise in Jersey

The Government of Jersey introduced a new bus franchising model in 2013 which was awarded to LibertyBus, a subsidiary of the HCT Group. LibertyBus is responsible for all routes, which call at approximately 800 stops around the island.

The franchise has created a long-term partnership which both parties can invest in, bringing together local authority and industry knowledge and skills with the aim of improving customer service to achieve better passenger satisfaction, which as of February 2020 scored 8.3 out of 10. Between 2012 and 2017 ridership has increased by 38% and the contract price has decreased by 11%[16].



Picture: HCT LibertyBus

The offer for bus operators and LTAs

Operators will gain things they have long sought: first, the certainty of continued support through what are likely to be several years of recovery; and second a commitment by councils and Government to tackle some of the biggest threats to the future of their operations, above all traffic congestion.

LTAs will have access to significant new Government funding streams and powers to make a difference in their areas, and significant assistance to build up their capabilities to exercise those powers. LTAs' performance in exercising these new responsibilities will be taken into account when allocating this and other DfT funding.

The Government intends to bring forward the English Devolution and Local Recovery White Paper in due course, detailing how the UK government will partner with places across the UK to build a sustainable economic recovery.

We are clear that successful partnerships should work for both parties, with incentives and benefits for both, and that where new franchising proposals are developed, they should harness the commercial skills and expertise of bus operators, such as seen in Jersey.

We will use part of the £25m fund for supporting LTAs to establish England's first Bus Centre of Excellence (BCoE), enabling the delivery of a long-term programme of activities and support. The centre will be co-sponsored by the Department, and training will be managed and delivered by experts from across the bus sector. This will focus on: public transport service planning and network design, performance oversight, contract procurement and competitive tendering, design and development of bus priority measures, and wider traffic management measures to improve local bus performance.

We will tailor our approach to ensure that the needs of differing LTAs, their officers and elected members of local authorities, are sufficiently met, recognising that a single approach will not work everywhere. Our approach will be based on evidence: we will work with stakeholders in local government, the bus industry and professional institutions to ensure we understand the gaps in capacity and capabilities across the sector. We want to ensure that all parties are well placed to develop and deliver Enhanced Partnerships, franchising and Bus Service Improvement Plans and drive forward the productive partnerships needed to make a step change in bus services.

We will also support a peer network of senior leaders working to deliver bus transformation, to support the sharing of experience and solutions across the private and public sector.

Partnership guidance will also clarify how unexpected circumstances, such as the COVID-19 pandemic, should be handled – to minimise the additional work that LTAs need to take to reach a franchising decision.

Devolution

In line with previous devolution of bus funding to Transport for London and Transport for Greater Manchester, we will work to devolve Bus Service Operators Grant (BSOG), including once it has been reformed, to MCAs and other LTAs who request it. This will form part of wider work to reform BSOG (see page 48) and will not be in place for financial year 2021–22.

In return, we expect all LTAs to:

- agree Enhanced Partnerships or to be following the statutory process to decide whether to implement franchising;
- commit to significant improvements in traffic management, including bus priority measures, active travel measures and control of roadworks.
- drive forward other relevant Government policies such as air quality improvement and, where relevant, the implementation of Clean Air Zones; and
- in addition, MCAs should develop (along with their constituent member authorities) a Key Route Network, subject to consultation and legislation, to include development of bus priority measures and improved bus performance.

Delivering better bus services

This investment and changes to how the bus sector works will drive improvements for passengers. These are set out on the following pages.

Intensive services and investment on key corridors

In densely populated areas, Enhanced Partnerships and franchising agreements should ensure that key radial roads have buses so often – every few minutes – that passengers never need a timetable. Evening services on these roads should be at least every 15 minutes. On these routes, wherever physically possible, there should be significant investment in bus priority – bus lanes, at a minimum. See below for more about bus lanes and priority measures.

Bus Service Improvement Plans should also carefully consider network design – for example, whether local needs are best met through infrequent “branch” services of main routes which provide through journeys at the expense of frequency, or through high-frequency feeder routes connecting to the main line service instead, with through ticketing at no extra charge.

On a few corridors, the legacy of the 1980s “bus wars” is overprovision, with dozens of buses per hour, including with duplicate competing services which do not accept each other’s tickets. This is wasteful, polluting and can paradoxically make services slower and less attractive. Planning should make sure that services are appropriately spread between corridors, avoiding significant over and under provision.

There must be significant increases in bus priority

The key to making buses more attractive is making them faster and more reliable.

In Bus Service Improvement Plans, we expect to see plans for bus lane on any roads where there is a frequent bus service, congestion, and physical space to install one. Bus lanes should be full-time and as continuous as possible. They should be part of a whole-corridor approach, including other physical measures such as:

- Traffic signal priority;
- Bus gates, which allow buses to enter a road that prohibits access to other traffic; and;
- Clear and consistent signage.

We will not support opening bus lanes to electric cars or vans, which would quickly erode their benefits to bus users. Intensive and granular focus on the precise conditions of each road can pay dividends, as some places have shown. Issues such as bus stop locations and spacing, residential parking policy, and removal of buildouts and pinchpoints should all be considered. Non-residential parking will not generally be an efficient use of roadspace on such routes.

Loading's impact on bus lanes must be minimised, and to achieve this hours should be restricted, or loading bays inset or re-provided close by, away from the main carriageway. LTAs should consider physical changes to roads' footprints to allow the provision of continuous bus lanes. Where there is insufficient space for a bus lane, LTAs should consider point closures of some main roads to private cars, allowing through traffic on other main roads nearby.

Robust enforcement of traffic restrictions can bring benefits for buses through less congestion. As we have already announced in Gear Change: A Bold Vision for Cycling and Walking, we will this year commence authorities' enforcement powers under the remaining elements of Part 6 of the Traffic Management Act 2004. These powers will allow local authorities, rather than the police, to enforce against a range of moving traffic offences which can help ease congestion and help buses make progress more quickly. We will issue guidance to local authorities about the powers, including on the importance of ensuring citizens are properly informed about them, and the need for traffic signing to be properly designed and placed, so that it is clear to drivers what restrictions are in force. As we stated in Gear Change, we will consider issuing warnings for a limited period after introduction or for a first offence.

The Government will refresh its statutory guidance to local authorities on traffic management, to provide up to date and relevant advice. Statutory traffic management guidance will be updated to expect enhanced bus reliability as an integral part of highway authorities' Network Management Duty. We will also consider how to facilitate sharing of good practice and experience in delivering bus priority schemes.

As set out in "A Better Deal for Bus Users" in September 2019, all new road investments in England which receive central UK government funding are now required to either support bus priority measures or explain why doing so would not be necessary or appropriate in that instance. All funding bids now need to explicitly address this issue.

We will also support bus rapid transit and other such schemes which lie between conventional bus and light rail, aiming to bring the benefits and user experience of light rail to bus corridors at significantly lower cost. See page 66.

Key Route Networks

Most Mayoral Combined Authorities (MCAs) now have a Key Route Network (KRN) of the most important local roads for which they share powers to operate and manage with Local Highways Authorities. The Government plans to consult on strengthening the KRN approach. Whilst some KRN designations exist at present, Mayors are limited in their powers, particularly over the allocation of road space.

Our intention is to increase their powers over their KRNs, similar to the powers that apply already in London and enable integrated highways and transport authority status at Combined Authority level for these roads, and we will consult on this. As with other local authorities, MCAs and their constituent members will be expected to implement ambitious bus priority programmes and other roadspace reallocation measures, using all relevant powers available to them. As explained earlier in the section about Bus Service Improvement Plans, future Government funding will recognise the level of ambition demonstrated by local authorities.

Superbus networks for "intermediate" areas – neither fully urbanised nor deeply rural

A Superbus network provides higher frequency, lower fare services; it can deliver the type of change we want to see. Places such as South Northumberland, County Durham, Lancashire, and the East Midlands, with their patchworks of small industrial towns and large villages, have not had the advantages of metropolitan transport authorities but are ideal bus territories that could really benefit from the Superbus concept. We particularly encourage ambitious Bus Service Improvement Plans in these types of places and remain committed to supporting the first, low fare Superbus network in Cornwall.

More comprehensive 'socially necessary' services

Currently, LTAs can step in to ensure that 'socially necessary' services are provided where there are gaps in the commercial network. But outside specific categories, there is no obligation on LTAs to fund these crucial services. Across England, there are significant differences in provision, from reasonably generous to almost nothing, but the trend is sharply downward. Many communities have lost their daily bus services altogether. Others have services for only a few hours a day, suitable perhaps for a short shopping trip but not for work or longer-distance journeys. Others might have relatively good services in the daytime but no service at all in the evenings. This has a serious impact on people's ability to find and travel for work.

Partnerships and franchising arrangements must deliver more comprehensive services, including those which are socially or economically necessary. This includes services to smaller and more isolated places, and more services in the evenings and at weekends. Without services at the times people want, people will not use the bus. Lack of a whole-day service reduces the number of passengers in the daytime too, preventing people from using the bus if they are unable to get back in the evening.

We will issue new guidance on the meaning and role of 'socially necessary' services, expanding the category to include 'economically necessary' services for the first time. This recognises the vital role that buses have in getting people to work at all times of the day and night. This guidance will set clear expectations of what we want to see. To drive forward the levelling-up agenda, this will include provision for economically disadvantaged areas. Making sure that people are connected to centres of employment, broadening their choice of work and education, is both socially and economically important.

Through Bus Service Improvement Plans we expect LTAs to work with operators to set the daytime, evening and Sunday service levels that different communities need. In some cases, these services could be provided by demand responsive transport, integrated with the conventional buses, where they exist. Places that are economically disadvantaged, including smaller industrial towns and isolated housing estates, should also be included in that thinking to connect them better to centres of employment, broadening opportunities and the choice of work, education and leisure for those who live there. We will also expect to see better services being provided to places of employment off existing main bus routes, such as out-of-town industrial estates and factories. Again, this could be done with integrated demand responsive transport geared to shift times. There is a role to play for employers in helping with this.

If this cannot be achieved by agreement, we will consider statutorily requiring the provision of socially necessary bus services, including those which improve people's access to employment.

We will modernise the Bus Service Operators Grant (BSOG)

Almost £260 million per year is paid in BSOG to operators of eligible bus services and community transport organisations. This includes a core element to recover some of their fuel costs, and incentive-related payments. It benefits passengers by helping operators keep fares down, and enabling operators to run services that might otherwise be unprofitable, particularly in rural areas. It is cost effective, delivering high value for money[17] with each £1 spent generating between £2.70 and £3.70 in benefits, including wider economic and social impacts.

However, the outcomes incentivised by a fuel-based subsidy are not right for the twenty-first century and the environmental challenges we face; and the BSOG incentive payments are outdated, focusing on delivering outcomes that should have become standard many years ago. We will reform BSOG to better meet Government priorities, which will support environmental objectives, levelling up the country, and provide better passenger journeys.

We will consult in 2021 on the details of a modernised BSOG. We will set out our detailed plans in that consultation, but we are considering:

- moving the main element of BSOG from fuel consumption to a distance rate which would address the current problem where base BSOG is not paid to electric vehicles (except for a small incentive payment);
- updating the low carbon incentive to better meet environmental objectives. The existing incentive started in 2009 so is based on comparisons to a Euro III bus;
- an additional amount for rural bus services;
- new incentives for demand responsive transport, which could encourage the delivery of services, and bus use, in rural areas;
- efficiencies from administrative changes such as payments in arrears; and
- ending payments for 'dead' mileage between depots and the start or finish of passenger services; and
- making the reformed BSOG available only to LTAs and operators in an Enhanced Partnership, or where franchising is being actively pursued.

We will make sure that future local transport is joined up

We are committed to reforming future local transport funding to better support local leaders deliver their priorities and achieve key objectives, such as levelling up and decarbonisation. We will better coordinate local transport funding by engaging local areas about their investment priorities in the round and their overall strategy for improving transport infrastructure. This will enable better strategic planning and more joined up infrastructure projects across local transport networks.

Local Transport Plans (LTPs) will become the focus of transport funding discussions between central and local government. LTPs should set out holistic place-based strategies for improving transport networks, proposed projects for investment and ultimately how key objectives will be achieved. In particular, LTPs should include clear plans for how interventions across local transport modes will drive decarbonisation in their area. To ensure investments achieve their intended aims, LTPs and business cases in future will need to demonstrate local commitment to deliver certain measures. For example, this strategy sets out what we require of Bus Service Improvement Plans and local commitment to bus franchises or Enhanced Partnerships. Bus Service Improvement Plans must be fully aligned with wider Local Transport Plans.

Reading Buses

Reading Buses is owned by Reading Borough Council and has been transporting passengers for over one hundred years. It has one of the youngest and most environmentally friendly fleets in the UK, and in the Autumn 2019 Transport Focus Bus Passenger Survey, Reading Buses' passenger satisfaction score was 92%[18].

Bus usage has grown through consistent partnership working between the Council and bus company, resulting in Reading having the second highest bus use in England, outside London, per head of population in 2019/20 – with an average of 137.5 annual bus trips per person[19]. Total bus use in Reading borough had grown to over 22m journeys in 2018/19 before the pandemic, an increase of almost 40% in the last 6 years[20].



Picture: Reading Buses

The Government is committed to transforming local transport, and its recent publication "Gear Change: A bold vision for cycling and walking" sets outs its plans to transform the role cycling and walking play in our transport system. "Gear Change" and this strategy complement each other. Cycling, walking and using the bus are all part of the Government's agenda to deliver a transport system that works for everyone, where walking cycling and taking the bus are a natural choice for shorter journeys.

As set out in Gear Change, we will carry bikes on more bus routes. Buses and cycles together can allow more journeys which are otherwise only possible by car, recognising that far more people live near a bus stop than a rail station. In many rural areas, where demand is lower, we will work with bus operators to allow a limited number of bikes on board, in addition to onboard wheelchair space, on appropriate routes, as a few rural bus routes already do. A handful of urban routes also allow bikes, using external racks. We will investigate extending this provision further. The Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy Investment Model also reveals that bus route enhancements also have an impact in generating additional walking trips.

We will review whether it remains right that local authorities cannot set up new bus companies

The Bus Services Act 2017 prevents further municipal (that is, local authority-owned) bus companies being set up from scratch. While this is not an absolute barrier, as Local Authorities can already purchase an existing bus or coach company, we believe this part of the legislation is ripe for review. There are only a handful of municipal bus companies at present, but there are some strongly performing examples among them.

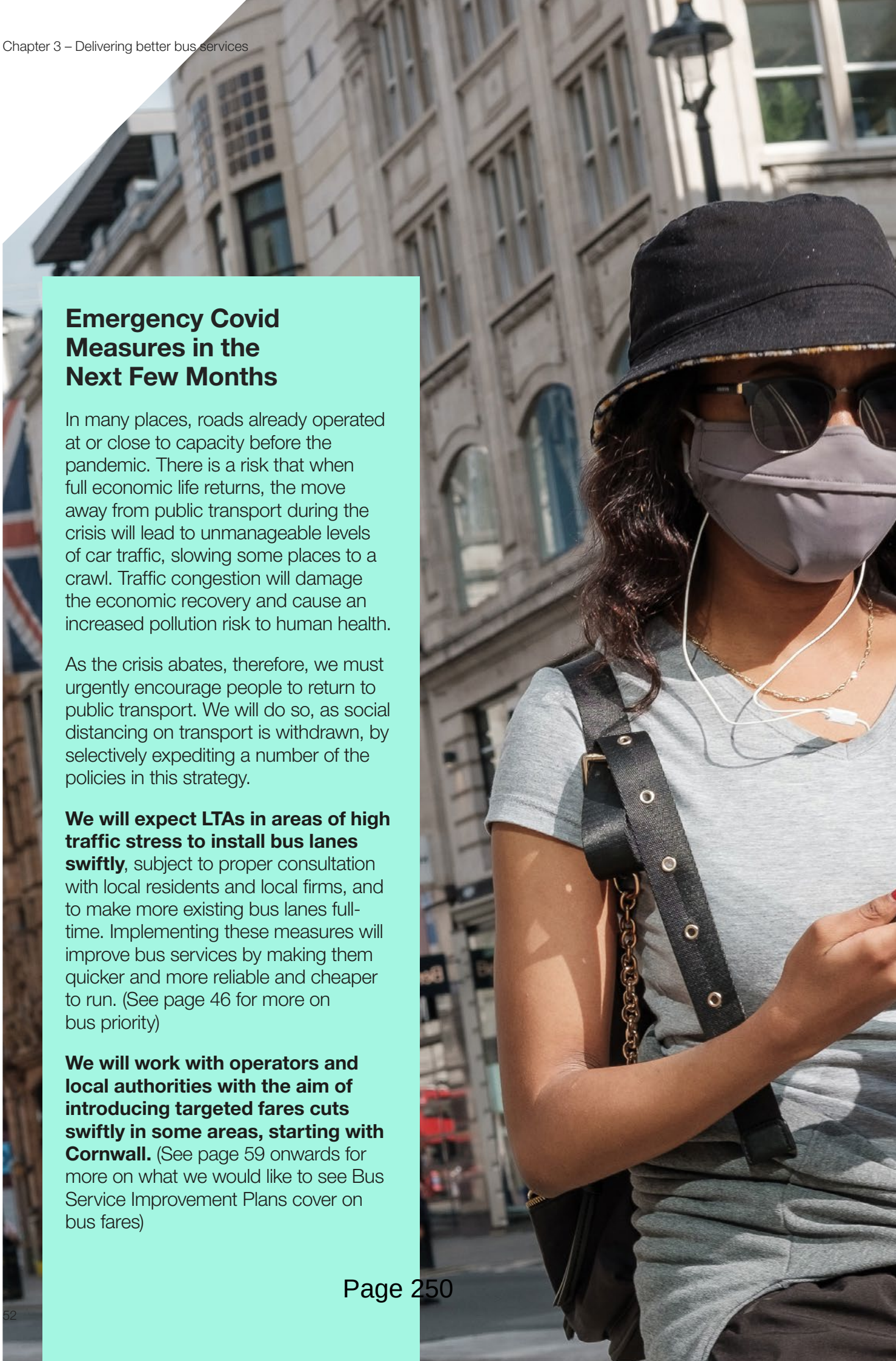
Future-proofing our regulatory framework for more flexible services

The Future of Transport Regulatory Review aims to address the opportunities and challenges that technology is having on our traditional concepts of transport. The first Call for Evidence[21] of the Regulatory Review examined the legislative framework around on-demand, flexible bus services which currently pre-dates the advent of the smartphone. The key findings from this were published in December 2020, and many responses emphasised the need for regulation to be focused on the desired outcomes for the user rather than the service itself. Learnings from the bus sector must feed into the review.

The Law Commissions have been undertaking a review of Automated Vehicles (AVs),[22] looking at the regulatory framework for the safe deployment of automated vehicles in the UK. The second consultation of this review, the findings of which were published in May 2020, specifically considered how highly automated vehicles might be used for passenger transport. In their third consultation paper in December 2020, the Law Commissions proposed a system that unifies passenger and freight licensing to reflect the modular design of highly automated vehicles (with no human on-board). Passenger AVs would be subject to stricter requirements than freight AVs but both would be founded on the same requirements necessary for a vehicle with no responsible person on-board. We will review how legislation that separately covers buses, taxis, private hire vehicles and light rail may be brought together to reflect the blurring boundaries between these forms of travel, within the Future of Transport Regulatory Review. This will give service providers a clear, long-term, regulatory framework, which will allow new forms of service to be provided to passengers by removing obstacles to innovation and allowing greater flexibility.

We want to stimulate innovation and enable it to thrive. Regulation itself will change, as it always has. But our goals will not change. We want transport to be cleaner, safer, healthier, greener, cheaper, more convenient, and more inclusive. Our approach will be underpinned as far as possible by the following Future of Transport principles:

1. New modes of transport and new mobility services must be safe and secure by design.
2. The benefits of innovation in mobility must be available to all parts of the UK and all segments of society.
3. Walking, cycling and active travel must remain the best options for short urban journeys.
4. Mass transit must remain fundamental to an efficient transport system.
5. New mobility services must lead the transition to zero emissions.
6. Mobility innovation must help to reduce congestion through more efficient use of limited road space, for example through sharing rides, increasing occupancy or consolidating freight.
7. The marketplace for mobility must be open to stimulate innovation and give the best deal to consumers.
8. New mobility services must be designed to operate as part of an integrated transport system combining public, private and multiple modes for transport users.
9. Data from new mobility services must be shared where appropriate to improve choice and the operation of the transport system.



Emergency Covid Measures in the Next Few Months

In many places, roads already operated at or close to capacity before the pandemic. There is a risk that when full economic life returns, the move away from public transport during the crisis will lead to unmanageable levels of car traffic, slowing some places to a crawl. Traffic congestion will damage the economic recovery and cause an increased pollution risk to human health.

As the crisis abates, therefore, we must urgently encourage people to return to public transport. We will do so, as social distancing on transport is withdrawn, by selectively expediting a number of the policies in this strategy.

We will expect LTAs in areas of high traffic stress to install bus lanes swiftly, subject to proper consultation with local residents and local firms, and to make more existing bus lanes full-time. Implementing these measures will improve bus services by making them quicker and more reliable and cheaper to run. (See page 46 for more on bus priority)

We will work with operators and local authorities with the aim of introducing targeted fares cuts swiftly in some areas, starting with Cornwall. (See page 59 onwards for more on what we would like to see Bus Service Improvement Plans cover on bus fares)


THANK
YOU

Chapter 4

Delivering for passengers

4



Buses for Everyone: We will set a high bar for standards enabling buses to be used by all.


7 DOGS
HEAD STREET
SHOP
CONVENIENCE STORE
BET
Martlesham Tesco
via Kesgrave
66
Ipswichreds
69008
AU05 DMV

In 2018, the Government consulted on proposals to use powers introduced by the Bus Services Act 2017 to mandate the provision of audible and visible route and next stop announcements on local bus services, in order to help disabled passengers to travel with greater confidence. Subject to final analysis, we will make these Accessible Information Regulations by summer 2022, ensuring passengers can board any bus with confidence and that they will know when to alight when their destination is reached. We will increase the funding for the smallest bus companies to ensure their passengers benefit from improved onboard information by at least £1.5m in 2021–22.

We will make sure that apps can provide passengers with accessibility data about bus stations and stops so they can make informed travel choices regarding accessibility of services. Recognising roadside information and hard copy formats are also important for many passengers.

We will expect LTAs to explicitly consider inclusivity and to review the impact of roadside infrastructure on passenger safety, security and accessibility as part of their Bus Service Improvement Plans.

We will also review the impact of roadside infrastructure on passenger convenience, comfort, safety, security and accessibility, seeking to understand the factors which permit or encourage greater bus usage, and those which turn potential passengers away. We will also consider how we can use this understanding to empower passengers to make informed journey choices, and to support LTAs to provide facilities which encourage greater bus use.

We will ensure that buses funded by Government provide an enhanced level of accessibility: including additional flexible space for a second wheelchair user or passengers with pushchairs, hearing loops, space for assistance dogs, and audible and visible information.

We will review eligibility for free bus travel for disabled people to ensure that we are improving equality of opportunity and helping disabled people participate fully in public life. We will also look to digitalise the concessionary bus pass for older and disabled people in England, giving passengers the option to store their permit on a smartphone.

We will digitally transform the bus service registration process, ensuring it is optimised for passenger information purposes and is suitable for the provision of new innovative services. In addition, we will consider setting minimum standards for registration in the future to ensure buses are providing what passengers want. We will deliver a comprehensive review of the Public Service Vehicle Registration Regulations under which operators register their services, to ensure they are fit for purpose for the 21st century.

We will review key regulations to improve accessibility. This includes the Public Service Vehicles Accessibility Regulations 2000 (PSVAR) by the end of 2023, ensuring that future decisions on accessibility standards are based on an up-to-date understanding of passenger need. We will consult in 2021 on draft amendments to the Public Service Vehicles (Conduct of Drivers, Inspectors, Conductors and Passengers) Regulations 1990, to ensure that the wheelchair space and priority seats are made available for passengers who need them. We will continue to work with the Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency (DVSA) to ensure that non-compliance is identified, and effective action is taken in response.

Accountability for local services also means accountability for promoting access for all. We expect each Local Transport Plan to include measures that improve accessibility for older and disabled people, including: designing appropriate networks which minimise walking distances to key destinations and streamline inter-connectivity, promoting high-quality customer service through appropriate and consistent training, modernising vehicles and upgrading supporting infrastructure to facilitate independent accessible journeys.

The design of bus infrastructure improvements should be informed by the experience of disabled people and consulted on with a range of passengers; particular care should be taken when implementing bus priority measures to ensure that they do not impede access for disabled people reliant on private motor vehicles, taxis and private hire vehicles.

We will continue to fund free off-peak bus travel for disabled people, free off-peak travel for pensioners and free travel to and from school for children who live beyond walking distance. We will not fund travel for people who are not necessarily disadvantaged, such as blanket free travel for unaccompanied children or older people below the state pension age.

Fares must be lower and simpler

Average bus fares have risen by 403% since 1987*, compared to 325% for rail fares and 163% for motoring costs[23]. Lower and simpler fares attract passengers. They should be seen as an investment not just in transport but in town centres, in social inclusion and in a greener future. We will expect to see fares policy as an integral part of Bus Service Improvement Plans.

Within cities and towns, we want low flat fares (or maximum fares and daily price caps) to be the norm, as in London. Flat fares speed boarding and are easier for passengers and potential passengers to understand. We want to see lower single fares and more low daily price capping. We will also expect Bus Service Improvement Plans to consider youth fares; initiatives such as the youth fares implemented in Merseyside had a positive impact on patronage and we want to see this replicated across the country.

There must be seamless, integrated local ticketing between operators and we want to see this across all types of transport

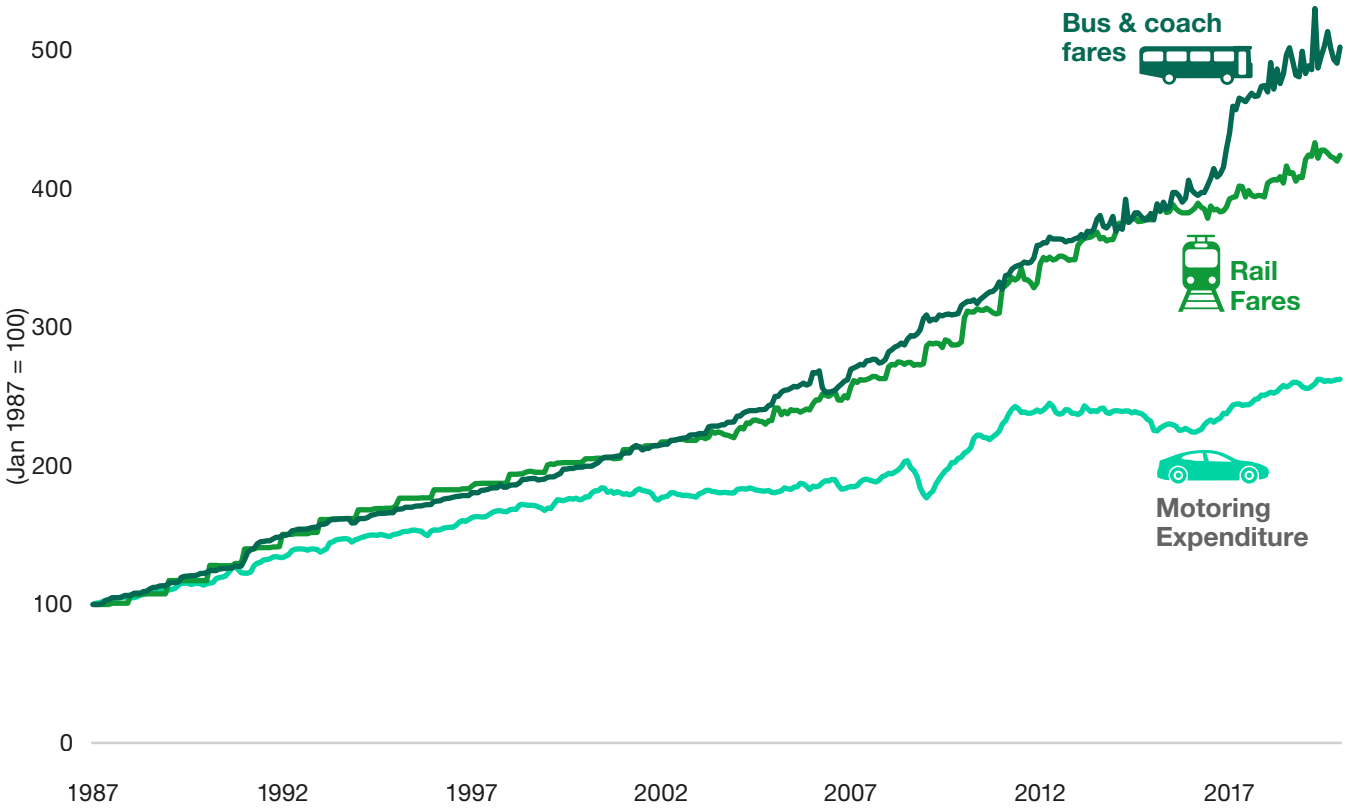
We know that passengers value the integrated and simplified service found in London, with no fuss multi-modal and multi-operator tickets and the same high-quality information for passengers – and we want LTAs to work towards replicating this seamless experience everywhere. There are many places where we can see that integrated multimodal ticketing drives up use of public transport. In the West Midlands, the SWIFT scheme which connects bus, tram and train has enabled passengers to travel on public transport in a seamless manner. The West Midlands is one of the few areas nationally, that pre-pandemic, had reported significant increases in ridership.

Merseyside – 'MyTicket'

Across the Liverpool City Region, the introduction in 2014 of 'MyTicket' priced at £2.20, which allows under 19s unlimited day travel on any bus, has been one of the key drivers of fare paying passenger growth. By 2019, the number of bus journeys made by young people had increased by 168%[24]. Initiatives like this give young people a great value and easy to understand ticketing offer, which can encourage bus use from an early age and increase the likelihood of these people remaining bus users throughout their adulthood.

* DfT buses fares data weighted together with coach fares data collected by the Office for National Statistics.

Retail Prices Index (RPI): Bus and coach fares, rail fares and motoring expenditure, 1987–2019[25]



We want to see multi-operator ticketing everywhere, covering all bus services at a price little if at all higher than single-operator tickets, then to extend this to tickets that cover all travel modes (bus, light rail/metro, rail). Approximately 75% of places do now have multi-operator tickets allowing travel on all bus services in the area but they are not always well advertised and can be significantly more expensive than single-operator tickets.

Nowhere outside London has multi-modal daily and weekly price capping using contactless debit or credit cards, and only a few places have multi-operator daily price capping using contactless. We want partnerships and franchising agreements to change this. We expect to see all Bus Service Improvement Plans setting out how they will deliver no-fuss, multi-operator tickets and price caps on contactless credit and debit cards, at little or no premium to single operator fares. We will expect all operators to work with LTAs to deliver this.

We will work with transport technology providers, app developers, bus operators and LTAs to ensure that any technology to support this is developed strategically, and money is not wasted on different technology solutions for different places. As rail ticketing and fares systems are updated, we will also consider opportunities for facilitating integrated electronic ticketing with buses.

84% of buses in England already accept contactless payment[26]. To drive even greater adoption of contactless across the industry, we will use CBSSG to incentivise operators to adopt the technology. In the longer term, to ensure the industry reaches, and then maintains the standard of 100% contactless, we will consider making it a condition of bus service registration and BSOG eligibility.

Given the growing importance of contactless on buses, we do not believe that there is any need to integrate or unify the many existing bus smartcard products. Their usage will decline as contactless uptake rises. But we also believe that operators should continue to accept cash for now: there is a risk that otherwise we will deter or exclude passengers who, for any reason, may not have usable debit or credit cards. Price-capping will obviously not be available to those who pay cash, but paper day tickets should be.

Through ticketing should also be easier. A degree of through ticketing between bus and rail is already available under the PlusBus scheme, although its coverage and availability are limited. We will promote PlusBus better, and work towards extending the range of destinations available under it and making PlusBus tickets available as e-tickets and mobile tickets, so users can start their journey with a bus trip without needing to have paper tickets posted out or collected in advance from a railway station.

We want to see through fares for any journey across England involving bus, rail and light rail easily available, not only on journey planning websites, but also on smartphones as standard, and will work with industry to secure this.

Service patterns must be integrated with other modes

More bus routes and demand responsive services should serve railway stations and for easy connections between modes, bus services should be timed to connect with trains. For example, in Cornwall, the railway line running through the county will act as the spine of the transport network and the new Superbus services will align with it. We will work towards the inclusion of bus services in rail journey planners as standard.

Buses must also work better with each other. There are many instances of poor connections and uncoordinated timetables. Bus Service Improvement Plans should detail plans for ensuring that in places (often rural) where services are regular, but not frequent, connectivity is maximised. Hub models can connect services, with buses all arriving and departing at the hub town within the same ten or fifteen-minute window each hour, ideally all servicing the same centrally located bus or railway station.

We will support people into work

Currently, only some bus operators accept the Jobcentre Plus Travel Discount Card. This card is provided by Jobcentre Plus advisers to those unemployed claiming Jobseekers Allowance or Universal Credit, and it gives 50 per cent off selected rail tickets and some operators' bus fares. We want to make the card accepted by all operators and will work with them to deliver this. We will also explore relaxing the eligibility criteria so the card is available to more claimants.

Services must be simpler and easier to understand

A key deterrent to using buses is that they are, or are perceived as, confusing. We have already described some negative features of the market, such as rival networks which do not acknowledge each other's existence, and which use the same route numbers for wholly different services. Bus Service Improvement Plans must eradicate this. We want to see common numbering systems, and routes that are as far as possible the same in the evenings and weekends as they are in the daytime. All operators which run the same route should accept the same tickets, use the same route number and be shown on the same timetable. Timetable changes should wherever possible be co-ordinated, and at set, relatively infrequent points in the year.

Bus Service Improvement Plans should consider whether to simplify routes; for example, considering whether networks should have more high-frequency major route services rather than lots of low-frequency services combining. Route variations and letter suffix routes should be reduced.

Networks often try to provide infrequent through services to everywhere or divert buses away from the main route to serve smaller places, reducing speed and convenience for people travelling between a route's major points. As described, on high-frequency services more use could instead be made of good hub-and-spoke connections, with frequent feeder buses connecting into frequent major routes and through ticketing. This becomes possible if frequency and reliability improve.

Bus Service Improvement Plans should consider questions of network design like this – and as with all elements of the plan, show how stakeholders and communities will be engaged in the thinking.

Bus information

It is too difficult for non-users to find where buses go. Information online is often incomplete, misleading or hard to locate. But bus operators now have a legal obligation to publish timetable and running data, and we will be providing funding for predictions information which will inform the passenger how many minutes away their bus is from the bus stop and on average how long the journey will take.

Nottingham's Hucknall Connect

The Hucknall Connect service operated by Trent Barton offers local Hucknall residents in Nottingham an easy route into the city centre by connecting them to their local tram station and the main bus routes.

Their connect ticket option includes a full day's travel on Connect in Hucknall and the tram.



Picture: Trent Barton

Bus Journey Information

Transport for the West Midlands (TfWM) is part of the West Midlands Combined Authority, chaired by the Mayor of the West Midlands. It is the UK's third largest public transportation authority, responsible for a region encompassing the major cities of Birmingham and Coventry, with a population of 2.9 million people and in 2019/20 accounted for 246.6 million passenger journeys.[27]

To improve customer experience and increase use of public transport, TfWM has invested significantly in the provision of accurate passenger information, supporting operators and the developer community to include timetable and location data for bus tram and rail delivered to journey planning applications, websites and third-party developers as well as to 1,800 real time information displays at bus stops and stations.

However, this is a challenging task, with more than thirty bus operators, six train operators as well as a tram operator running services they use many different systems each providing data in different forms and formats, at different frequencies and with varying levels of accuracy.

The Bus Open Data Service was launched in November 2020 and the statutory obligation to publish data was introduced on 1 January 2021, with national datasets currently being built for timetables, fares and location. None of the most commonly-used public transport journey planning apps and websites yet provide comprehensive, accurate, England-wide local bus information and there are many other apps that only include some operators.

This may mislead potential passengers into thinking that there are no services to the place they want to go. A number of apps and websites give inaccurate information when tested. Web searches for particular routes often also bring up old timetable PDFs which have since changed. Every town, city and rural area should have published, up to date maps.

We will continue to work with app providers and search engines to support the creation of transport apps using this data. We will aim for the apps to show every service, including fares and running information, and support inclusive and accessible journey planning, and will provide guidance through our upcoming Mobility as a Service Code of Practice. We want passengers to be able to plan, buy and show tickets on their smartphone for any journey, including through trips on buses and other transport modes, though this will not be achievable immediately.

Information at bus stops is often poor. They should be viewed as free advertising sites for the bus, including the opportunity to promote services' frequency and price, and should include full timetable information.



Picture: KPMG

Networks must feel like a whole system which works together

One of the distinguishing features of London's bus network is that it feels like a network, a coherent, consistent, strongly-branded operation which gives people confidence in using it. Passengers know that a bus will be along in a few minutes, what the fare will be and what the experience will be like. They know that at an interchange there will be a poster guiding them to the next bus or a train. Typefaces, liveries, logos create an impression of unity. Most successful consumer businesses, such as retailers and airlines, aim to create similar levels of consistency and brand identity. LTAs, in their Bus Service Improvement Plans, should consider strong network identities. There are already successful examples of individual, eye-catching route branding in different parts of the country. Route branding can still work well as part of a wider network identity.

We will promote buses, aiming to demystify them and improve their image

Research shows that many people have negative perceptions about buses but are often pleasantly surprised when they try them. We, as Government, have a role to play in promoting the use of buses, to attract both previous and new users onto buses, working closely with the LTA, bus operators and trade bodies to reverse the decades of decline in customer numbers. To do this, we will support an industry led Back to Bus campaign this year to promote the reformed network and address misconceptions, encouraging people to use the bus. This may include signposting people to apps and websites, targeted local promotions encouraging non-users to give buses a try, such as free day vouchers, try-before-you-buy, refund guarantees if a passenger is dissatisfied and a period of free travel for people who have started new jobs or bought new homes. We will also showcase services focussing on the quality of experience for commuters, including charging points, comfortable seats and other perks.

In popular tourist areas such as the West Country and the national parks, often blighted and congested by too many cars, we want Bus Service Improvement Plans to show how far more will be done to promote buses to visitors, with improved services, easily accessible information, park-and-ride sites and special tickets. Scenic railways, such as the Settle-Carlisle and West Highland lines, are now significant tourist attractions and wealth generators in their own right. We see no reason why several of Britain's equally splendid bus routes should not be marketed in the same way.

We will give bus passengers more of a voice and a say

Bus Service Improvement Plans must include a passengers' charter giving bus users rights to certain standards of service, including punctuality, vehicle cleanliness, proportion of services operated, information and redress.

We want to see mechanisms for redress at a local level and means to ensure these standards are met, which could include forums such as Bus Advisory Boards being set up. At a national level, we will consult on the appropriate standards and mechanisms by which these can be enforced, and a review of the consumer landscape to determine the appropriate body to supervise them.

We will continue to work with the bus industry to increase awareness of bus passenger rights including those specific to disabled passengers, and how complaints can be made. We will also continue to promote the adoption of best practice in disability awareness training: we will publish the high-level training framework to drive up standards of customer service of drivers and on-board staff who seek to understand passengers' access needs, and who tailor the support they provide accordingly.



Picture: Tees Flex Service

Tees Valley – Tees Flex Service

The new Tees Flex service, which has been funded by the Tees Valley Mayor and Combined Authority, was introduced in February 2020. It is operated by fully accessible minibus vehicles and caters for on-demand and pre-bookable journeys for residents in more isolated communities across Darlington & Stockton, Hartlepool, and Redcar & Cleveland.

The service has created new links which can now be accessed for the cost of a bus fare and passenger numbers have remained strong even during the COVID-19 outbreak. The service can be easily pre-booked via a smartphone app, website or over the telephone. Passengers can request pick-up and drop-off points within the serviced area, and to destinations including train and bus stations, along with hospitals outside of the area.

More demand responsive services

In lower-density areas and at less popular times, conventional fixed-route buses can never compete with the attractiveness or flexibility of the car. But now, aided by technology, demand responsive services can – offering a more personal, on-demand service, taking people from their doors or closer to their doors than a regular bus.

Demand responsive services are not a perfect solution to every challenge. Several of the large operators have tried and failed to operate them commercially. They must strike a balance: on the one hand, providing a service which is responsive and frequent enough to be useful and on the other, not running too much mileage, with little environmental advantage over the car or subsidy advantage over conventional buses.

They will never replace frequent urban and inter-urban routes, as too many vehicles would be needed.

But they could be particularly useful to improve provision in the countryside and in the evenings and on Sundays, including serving large workplaces with anti-social hours, such as hospitals, tackling the bugbear of hospital car parking. Because they are more door-to-door, they can overcome the concerns of some users, particularly women, about taking public transport at night.

We have already established a Rural Mobility Fund to trial more demand responsive services and have awarded funding to 17 pilot projects. We will consider expanding this work, including piloting non-rural services. We expect all demand responsive services to be fully integrated with the mainstream network, accepting the same tickets and passes, using the same or similar branding and shown on timetables and journey planning apps and websites. We also expect them to be provided using accessible vehicles, including provision for a wheelchair user.

On demand bus services in Sevenoaks

In Sevenoaks, Kent, an area with very high car ownership but also high levels of rail commuting, some local bus services have been replaced by demand responsive vehicles during the COVID-19 outbreak, while demand for services has been lower and social distancing in force.

These services have improved passengers' access to buses, which are easily bookable via a smartphone app, so residents can continue to make essential journeys to shops, work and medical facilities at no extra cost beyond a regular bus fare.



Picture: Go Coach

We want to ensure that the needs of rural transport users are given equal consideration to those in urban areas. We have piloted projects targeting rural areas specifically. We are committed to improving the connectivity of isolated rural communities and those with infrequent and unreliable services. We have been seeking views and evidence on what could be incorporated into a Future of Transport: rural strategy. This strategy will set out how innovations and technological developments in transport can be harnessed in rural communities. We want improved rural transport to support economic growth and development in rural communities.

Rural Mobility Fund

We have awarded funding to 17 pilot projects of this £20m funding scheme: the successful schemes will trial innovative, demand responsive solutions to transport challenges that rural, and suburban, areas often face.

"Total Transport"[28]

In 2016 we allocated £7.6 million to 37 separate schemes run by 36 local authorities to pilot Total Transport solutions; these were focussed on rural areas. "Total Transport" is about finding ways of commissioning public sector funded transport so that passengers get a better service with less duplication of resources. This can include services like non-emergency patient transport, adult social care transport and home to school transport. Considering all these streams together can allow networks to be designed so they complement each other, reduce administrative overheads by centralising commissioning, and achieve overall cost efficiencies.

We will support more Bus Rapid Transport networks

Bus Service Improvement Plans should include consideration of Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) networks on key corridors. BRT is a hybrid between bus and light rail, using high-capacity buses on segregated, bus-only roadways with stops more like light rail stations. Unlike light rail, however, buses can leave the segregated busways and use conventional roads. BRT could be a game-changer for bus networks. It can deliver a large proportion of the benefits of rail-based schemes at much lower cost, as demonstrated in schemes such as Cambridgeshire Guided Busway, Belfast Glider and Leigh-Salford-Manchester Busway.

BRT systems feature comfortable vehicles, fast journey times, real time passenger information and high-quality waiting environments. Costs are typically much lower than for rail-based schemes, owing to fewer engineering, planning and land acquisition constraints.

Passenger journey times can be lower than those on rail-based systems due to increased frequencies. In a number of large South American cities, they can carry tens of thousands of passengers per direction, per hour, equivalent to conventional rail lines. Journey times are optimised when travelling on segregated infrastructure. However, buses are able to run on conventional roads and are therefore not constrained by the infrastructure: they can steer around roadworks and are not dependent on the provision of a fully-segregated alignment. The Cambridgeshire system is a good example of mixed operation.

We think Glider-style BRT has great potential, and our ambition is to see the development of proposals for up to five Glider-style systems in England's towns and cities. We will work with local authorities and operators as local Bus Service Improvement Plans are produced to identify potential locations for system trials. These services could be protected from other competition through bus franchising powers (which are flexible and can cover routes at a local level not just wider geographies) – so they could be tendered like rail or light rail services.



Picture: Translink Glider

Bus Rapid Transport – Belfast's Glider

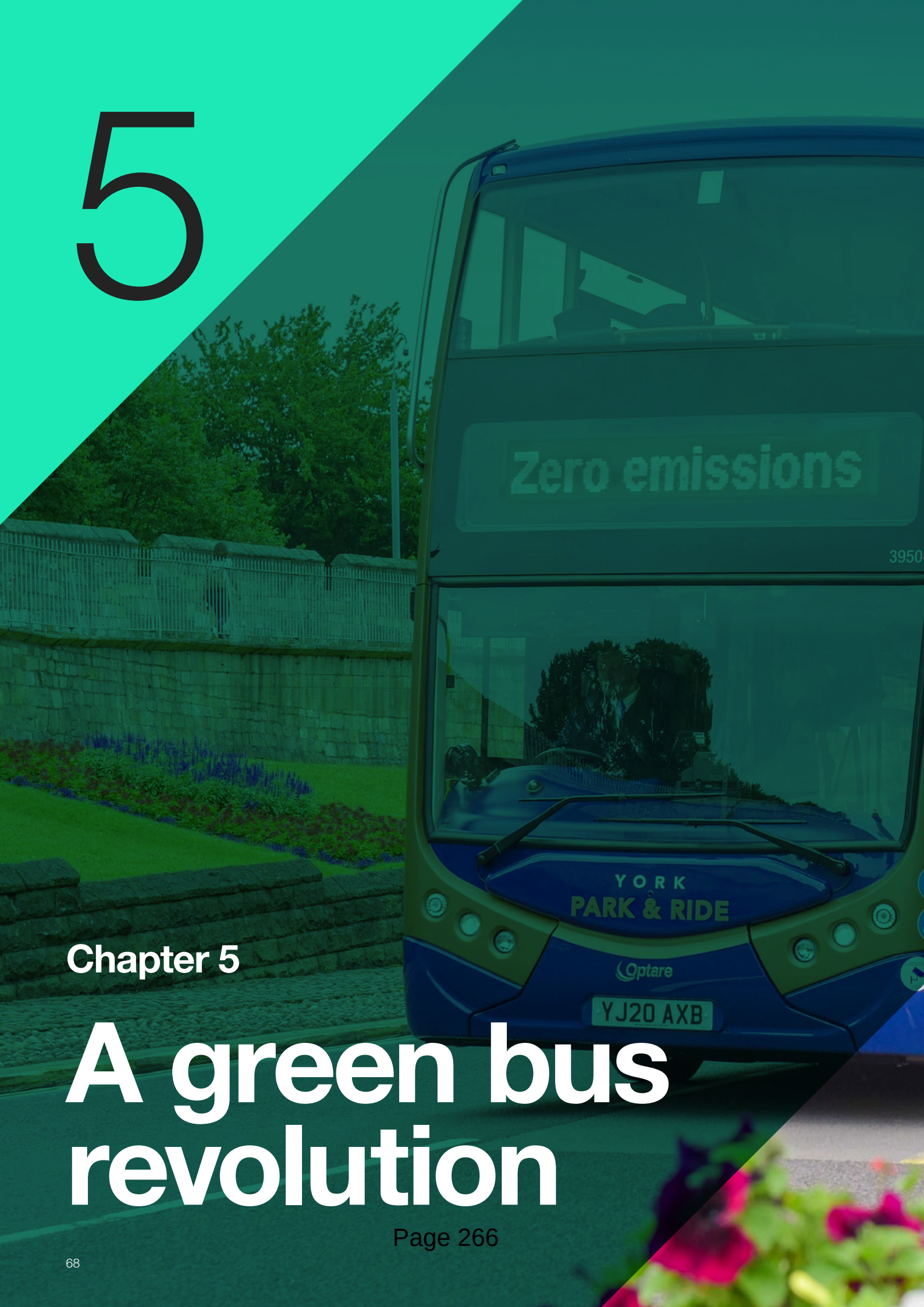
Translink's cross-city Glider services are operated by tram-style vehicles, which have three sets of doors on each vehicle for speedy alighting and boarding. The Glider provides an inclusive environment, including separate areas for wheelchair users and passengers with pushchairs, step free boarding and audible and visible stop announcements.

Key Features:

- Tram style stops with a shelter, benches and perches.
- Dedicated bus lanes throughout the route.
- Real time passenger information at all stops.
- 30% fewer stops than conventional bus, on average 400m apart to improve predictability and reliability of the service.
- Services spaced apart for maximum frequency and reliability, arriving every 7–8 minutes in either direction, so that passengers know they will never have long to wait.
- Additional facilities at the terminus, including a waiting room with seating and toilets.
- Sheltered bike storage to encourage cycling and free parking for cars to encourage park & ride into the city centre.
- Priority road maintenance – ensuring a high quality of surface for the bus lanes and improving drainage all along the route.

Construction costs for Bus Rapid Transit systems, such as Glider, are typically at least 50% lower than traditional light rail/tram schemes.

5



Chapter 5

A green bus revolution

Page 266


YORK


WS15 ZEB



The UK has one of the most ambitious approaches in the world to achieving net zero by 2050. Our Transport Decarbonisation Plan (to be published shortly) will set out measures to help achieve this, with significant local air quality improvements preventing thousands of early deaths each year.


100%
ELECTRIC
ZERO
EMISSIONS
14031
14031

Zero emission bus services, that meet the needs of passengers and communities, and attract passengers from other forms of transport, are at the heart of our plans.

New vehicles offer more than environmental benefits – with more comfortable journeys and a reduction in vehicle noise and vibration they provide an opportunity to attract new users. The added incentive is that we expect that zero emission buses will achieve operating cost savings in the longer term, which can be reinvested in more frequent services, lower fares and other improvements for passengers.

Where we are

UK bus operators have invested over £1.3bn in cleaner and greener buses over the last five years, supported by £89m funding through the Government's Low and Ultra-Low Emission bus schemes*. However, there is much more to do. The majority of these vehicles are hybrid or gas-powered and only around 2% of England's bus fleet is fully zero emission today[29]. This represents 4% of London's fleet and 1% of the fleet in England outside of London[30]

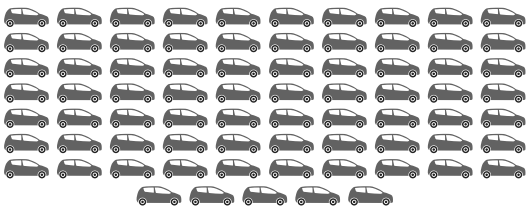
Bus operators share our ambitions to achieve a zero emission bus fleet. Many have committed to purchase only ultra-low or zero emission buses from 2025, and to start this process by 2023 in some urban areas, if there is continued Government support towards the extra purchase and fuel infrastructure costs[31].

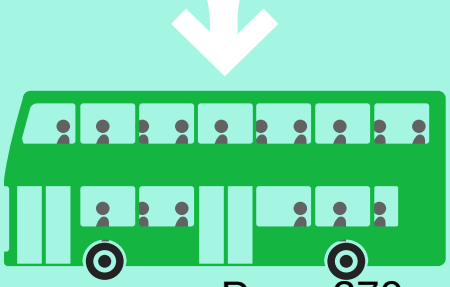


3%

of transport greenhouse gas emissions in the UK are produced by **Buses and Coaches**

A fully-loaded double deck bus can take **75 cars off the road,** helping to reduce congestion and reduce the impact of transport on the environment





Each zero emission bus saves around per year

100% NO_x

23 kilograms

70% CO_2

46 tonnes

0

In June 2019, Parliament passed legislation requiring the Government to achieve **'Net Zero' Greenhouse gas emissions by 2050**

The Roadmap to Net Zero Bus Services

Five principles underpin our roadmap to a zero emission fleet. They are:

- We will consider all technologies fairly, assessing their cost, contribution to decarbonisation and utility.
- We will provide the financial support and incentives needed for the market to scale up quickly.
- We will take a place-based approach to investment wherever appropriate.
- Both operators and LTAs must play their part.
- We will ensure our plans for buses lead to overall carbon reductions.

We will consider all technologies fairly

Zero-emission buses can run on electric batteries or hydrogen fuel-cells. Battery-electric has dominated zero emission bus purchases to date, but both technologies have strengths in different circumstances. On current technology, battery-electric is a more efficient user of energy, but hydrogen can lend itself better to longer journeys in rural areas. We will consider all technologies fairly and our ambition is that:

- Fuel must be green: in the future we want to see carbon-free fuel being used;
- Zero emission first: low or ultra-low emission vehicles should only be purchased where a zero emission vehicle is not a viable operational alternative.

We also understand that local decarbonisation roadmaps may include transitional technologies such as biofuels and hybrids, which can help support decarbonisation of fleets while zero emission technology develops its capability.

This work will be aligned to the consultation on the date for the phase out on the sale of diesel buses. See page 75.

We will provide the financial support to scale up quickly

The high upfront capital costs of vehicles and energy infrastructure can act as a barrier to the rapid adoption of new zero emission buses. In the short term we will play our part by providing funding to address this challenge.

We will support the market to scale up by:

- giving the certainty to create a sustained pipeline of vehicle orders, allowing British bus manufacturers to invest, production volumes to increase and the costs of vehicles to fall.
- ensuring that we support new funding and financing models needed to deliver our ambition, including new types of vehicle leasing and maintenance arrangements, as part of a vibrant financing strategy.

As a first step we will invest an unprecedented £120m in zero emission buses in 2021/22. This is in addition to £50m from 2020/21 to deliver the first All-Electric Bus Town or City.

It will also launch the Zero Emission Bus Regional Area (ZEBRA) scheme, bringing together LTAs, bus operators, energy companies and other stakeholders to develop financial and commercial models of delivering zero emission buses at scale, with government and non-government funding.

Based on experience in these pathfinder areas, we will then scale up to deliver the Prime Minister's commitment to 4,000 new zero emission buses. This unprecedented investment, the single biggest of its kind for zero emission buses, will also help safeguard thousands of jobs in Britain's bus manufacturing industry.

We are clear that our support must focus on green vehicles and as such Government funding will not incentivise the continued use of diesel buses. As a principle, our reform of grant funding for bus services* will ensure it is no longer paid on the basis of fuel used and instead will incentivise the take up of zero emission vehicles.

We will take a place-based approach to investment wherever appropriate

De-carbonising the bus fleet requires investment in both fuelling infrastructure and vehicles. Taking an area-based approach to infrastructure investment allows more innovative solutions to be considered – such as:

- allowing for more effective land use and spatial planning;
- adopting plans to address local issues such as air quality; and
- utilising the technology solutions that work for the economies and topography of the area.

This approach allows a more strategic approach to energy networks which can provide longer term savings.

The All-Electric Bus Town or City competition demonstrated significant interest across England in rolling out zero emission buses quickly and at scale. The Department expect to announce funding for the first All Electric Bus Town or City by the end of 2020/21.

We will build on existing interest to identify locations that are ready this year deliver hundreds more zero emission buses. This will utilise the £120m announced at the Spending Review for the roll-out of zero emission buses. To drive forward our ambitions, we will learn from this early investment to inform models that will support scaling up of investment, exploring private financing and leasing options. This aligns with the work on the UK Government's new national infrastructure bank.

As we committed in "Gear Change" we will create at least one zero emission city. We are looking for at least one small or medium-sized city which wants to create a zero emission transport system, with extensive bike lanes, a zero emission bus fleet, and a ban on nearly all petrol and diesel vehicles in the city centre, with deliveries made to consolidation hubs and the last mile being done by cargo bike or electric van.

We will shortly announce details of the ZEBRA scheme and how this can be part of local areas' decarbonisation plans.

Both operators and LTAs must play their part

We expect decisions on the local transition to zero emission fleets to be taken collaboratively through local bus partnerships.

Local authorities:

- will have expectations for the outcomes they want to see and when;
- will work with energy providers to integrate the needs of buses into wider fuel infrastructure plans and identify best energy provision solutions; and
- may play a central part in funding and financing arrangements.

Bus operators:

- should always take the lead in specifying the technical requirements for vehicles – ensuring that they meet passengers' needs;
- should develop an understanding of the energy requirements of decarbonising their fleet so that the best energy provision solutions can be identified; and
- will often provide or secure the majority of the investment required.

We will ensure our plans for buses lead to overall carbon reductions

We are committed to achieving an all zero emission bus fleet in the future and will set a legal end date for the sale of new diesel buses, and set an expectation for when the entire bus fleet will be zero emission. We will consult on potential dates this year. A key factor will be ensuring these ambitions do not make bus services more expensive to operate overall, otherwise fares will rise or services will be cut – potentially leading to greater overall carbon emissions as more journeys are made by car.

At a local level we will expect every LTA that wishes to receive funding from the Department for local transport projects to develop ambitious strategies, targets and measures for cutting carbon from transport in their area. We will expect all LTAs to work with bus operators and energy providers to include ambitions to decarbonise the local bus fleet in their Bus Service Improvement Plans. We want to see local standards for zero emissions set in partnership and franchising schemes ensuring that commitments to invest are delivered.

Bus2Grid – An example of a smart charging approach

In January 2018, the Office for Low Emission Vehicles and the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy awarded almost £30 million, through an Innovate UK vehicle-to-grid programme, where electric vehicles can supply electricity to the grid at times of high energy demand.

Bus2Grid is part of this programme and is exploring the commercial value and social benefits to the energy and passenger transportation systems. The project will develop services to support National Grid, local Distribution Network Operators (DNOs), bus operators and transport authorities and at the same time will consider bus fleet consumer engagement approaches necessary for its commercial implementation. Bus2Grid claims to be developing the “world’s largest bus to grid site” and is bolstered by a diverse project consortium, including: SSE Enterprise, automotive manufacturer Build Your Dreams (BYD), the Distribution Network Operator UK Power Networks (UKPN) and the University of Leeds.

The project is a first of a kind large scale, multi-megawatt, demonstration of vehicle-to-grid technology in electric bus depots located in London. This process is managed by an aggregation platform that enables the 28 e-bus batteries to interact with the energy system by charging or exporting energy to support the grid in times of high energy demand.

Appendix

COVID recovery 2021–22




Fares

In March 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic had the potential to severely impact and reduce the bus network. Both the request to travel less and the new social distancing requirements posed significant questions of viability on the bus network across the country. During the first lockdown, passenger numbers fell to approximately 10% of those before the pandemic[32] However, through the joint efforts of Local Transport Authorities (LTAs), bus operators and central government, vital bus services were supported, enabling frontline workers to get to their jobs, children to return to education and the public to make the essential journeys needed.

To support this effort, the Government has provided an unprecedented amount of support for the bus sector. Through the discretionary COVID-19 Bus Services Support Grant (CBSSG) Restart, and by continuing to pay out Bus Service Operators Grant (BSOG) at pre-COVID-19 levels, the Government had announced over £1 billion of support by the end of 2020. This has been essential to keep bus services running when, with reduced capacity due to social distancing, the vast majority of buses would otherwise have operated at a loss or would have stopped running entirely.

The efforts of LTAs and bus operators were also substantial over the year. Together, they have worked flexibly to adapt service levels to work for their local areas, adapted to the challenge of children returning to school in September, and worked to manage sickness absence and conduct winter planning. This, combined with the continued concessionary fare funding support from local government, has been central to the transport response to the pandemic. We will build on these successful partnerships to drive not only recovery of the sector but also to improve services for passengers and bring more people onto buses.

CBSSG Restart

We will continue to provide CBSSG until the funding is no longer needed. To ensure services remain responsive to local demand whilst ensuring social distancing requirements are met, all operators receiving CBSSG are expected to continue to work closely with LTAs to agree service levels.

Local collaboration is a key tenet of this emergency funding. As a condition of receiving CBSSG, DfT can ask operators to demonstrate on request that consultations on service levels have taken place, and that reasonable requests from LTAs for service changes have been considered in good faith. DfT can deny or recover CBSSG payments from operators who have not engaged adequately with LTAs. From 1 July 2021, CBSSG and future funding streams will be available only to LTAs, outside of London, who have committed to entering Enhanced Partnerships or who have started the statutory process of franchising services, as set out in the Bus Services Act 2017; and to operators who are cooperating with those processes.

We also expect operators to run cost-effective services which are delivering value to the local area. As CBSSG has provided financial support for operators that have lost passenger revenue as a result of reduced demand, operators cannot achieve pre-tax profits on their bus services in receipt of CBSSG.

Over the coming months, we will be reviewing the terms and conditions of CBSSG to begin to rapidly deliver the policies set out in this strategy. Initially, we will be using this funding to drive the roll-out of contactless ticketing machines. However, we will also look at how we can encourage engagement on the rest of the strategy, including strengthening the role of LTAs in decisions on the services needed.

We will continue to provide CBSSG as long as necessary. Passenger numbers are likely to remain depressed for some time as confidence in public transport returns and new travel patterns bed-in. Further funding (outside of London) will only be available to LTAs who have committed to entering Enhanced Partnerships, and operators who cooperate with the process. It will also be available to LTAs that have started the statutory process towards franchising, or which have applied to the DfT for powers to do so.

This provides LTAs and operators with a significant opportunity. As service patterns and networks are reset, there is no better time to simplify fares and ticketing or address the traffic bottlenecks which can reduce operating costs on key routes.

What is needed during 2021–22 will be agreed locally, but we expect LTAs and operators to continue to work together to:

- maximise the number of services provided, supporting them and re-growing the customer base;
- prevent a scaling back of services to just the most profitable routes: focusing on the entire network and planning for the longer term;
- work towards agreeing the Bus Services Improvement Plans needed for October 2021 (see Chapter 3);
- ensure bus services meet the changing needs of local communities and do not change suddenly or unexpectedly;
- explore innovative approaches such as demand responsive transport; and
- deliver noticeable improvements for passengers, particularly around bus priority measures, information provision, fares and ticketing.

Funding will be used to achieve the objectives in this strategy, including bus priority measures in areas of high traffic stress, tendered services, support for existing services or set payments to operators similar to CBSSG Restart funding. We expect the majority of the funding will be used to support services, though the funding is not designed to replicate CBSSG and we understand operators and LTAs may need to make difficult decisions about the network they continue to run. Further information will be published once we have greater certainty about any follow-on funding and have confirmed how this will be delivered. Once Bus Service Improvement Plans are in place then the LTA must ensure it is clear how any funding drives delivery of these plans.

We want to see the commitment to these partnerships realised. From April 2022, only LTAs with an Enhanced Partnership in place, or following the statutory process to decide whether to implement a franchising scheme, will be able to access new streams of Government bus funding; and only services operated, or measures taken, under Enhanced Partnerships or where a franchising scheme has been made will be eligible for these discretionary funding schemes. The Secretary of State may disapply these rules or the deadline of April 2022 in individual cases, on an exceptional basis; we will also ensure that no operator is disadvantaged through any failure to establish an Enhanced Partnership due to actions beyond their control.

Concessionary fares funding

Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic the continued contribution from local authorities to support the bus network in the form of English National Concessionary Travel Scheme payments has ensured that, along with our CBSSG funding, buses have continued to operate full networks and support essential journeys. The vast majority of local authorities have continued to use their pre-existing budgets to pay concessionary fares at pre-COVID levels, despite the significant fall in concessionary travel which has supported operators to maintain routes and service levels. As the pandemic response continues, we are asking local authorities to continue to make these payments in line with the guidance we have issued and we will be laying a statutory instrument to support them to do so, to explicitly strengthen the legal basis for these payments.

Further to this, however, we also expect that once social distancing rules are relaxed, local authority funding to operators will need to remain above the actual level of concessionary patronage for a period of time, in order to protect services and maintain sufficient service levels. While the bus market is recovering, we will still look to Local Authorities to contribute to the operation of their bus markets, though to a decreasing extent. We are working with Local Authority organisations, through the Urban Transport Group, the Association of Transport Coordination Officers, the Association of Directors of Environment, Economy, Planning & Transport and the Local Government Association, and with bus operators, through the Confederation of Passenger Transport and the Association of Local Bus Company Managers, to develop how best we can re-establish the link between concessionary journeys and concessionary fares payments as quickly as possible.

In doing so, we want to ensure that we do so in such a way that concessionary fare payments work effectively for local authorities and bus operators. To this end, we will be reviewing how these payments will work in this recovery period. We will also review the current appeals process, reimbursement guidance and, by extension, the reimbursement calculator, following the impact of COVID-19 on travel patterns.

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33 Horseferry Road
London SW1P 4DR
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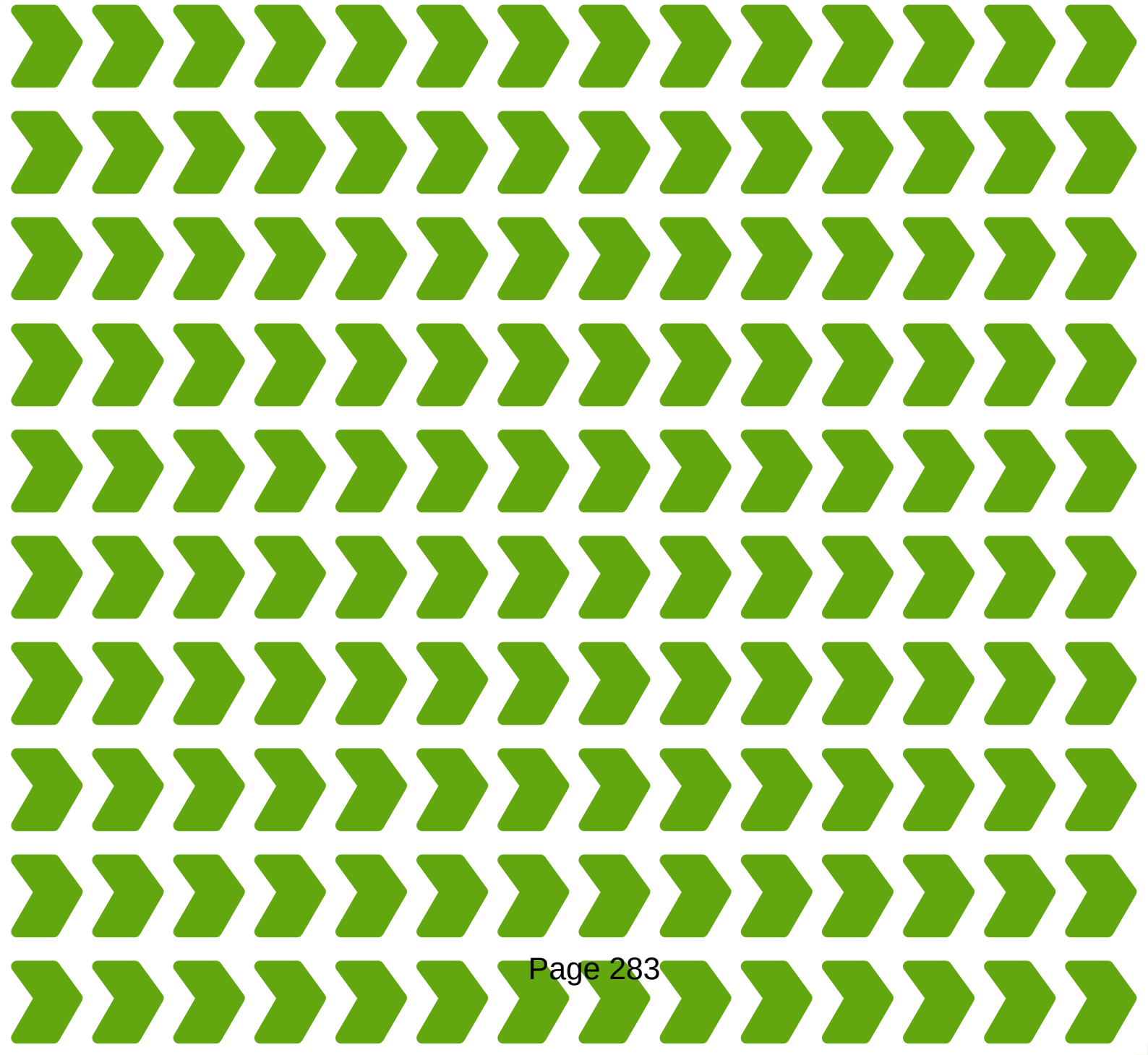
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Department for Transport

The Bus Services Act 2017
New powers and opportunities



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1. Foreword

Buses are England's most used form of public transport, accounting for more than 60% of all public transport trips. For millions of people, the bus is a fundamental part of each and every day. Buses help commuters get to work, students to school and shoppers to the high street, and help people, wherever they are, to enjoy a wide range of services and leisure opportunities.

However, the picture of bus usage across the country is mixed. While bus patronage has increased in London, other areas have seen a decline in passenger numbers. The benefits of a reliable and innovative bus service are clear: less congestion, greater productivity and communities that are connected rather than apart. But we need more people to benefit from them.

The Bus Services Act 2017 presents local authorities with new powers to bring about change, and unlock the potential for the bus industry to achieve more for passengers than it does today.

New enhanced partnership and advanced quality partnership powers provide the framework for authorities to work side by side with operators to set a shared vision for bus services in their area.

Regulations made under the new open data provisions and new ticketing powers should make it easier for passengers to use buses, move between different modes of transport and access timetables, fares and routes.

And the new franchising provisions will provide Mayors of combined authorities with equivalent powers to those available in London.

Powers in legislation do not help anyone unless they are put into practice. We would ask every local authority to consider how bus services can help achieve their economic, environmental and social objectives and whether the powers in the Act will help to do this.

The guidance the Department has produced here is the starting point for local authorities. In 2019, we will be looking to see what has been achieved and how the bus industry stands two years after the Act received Royal Assent. The potential for change is there.

Jesse Norman MP

Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Roads, Local Transport and Devolution

2. Introduction

2.1 Buses support our economy and connect our communities to the workplace, and to vital public services such as healthcare and education.

2.2 Buses are England's most used form of public transport, accounting for over 60% of all public transport trips, with over 4.5 billion passenger journeys every year. Passenger satisfaction levels are at 87%, but there remains room for improvement.

2.3 The Bus Services Act 2017 (the 2017 Act) was introduced on 19 May 2016 in the House of Lords and received Royal Assent on April 27 2017. The aim of the Act is to improve bus services for passengers by providing local authorities, the Secretary of State and bus operators with a new toolkit to enable improvements to be made to bus services in their areas.

2.4 In particular, the 2017 Act:

- strengthened arrangements for partnership working between bus operators and local authorities in England, introducing new Advanced Quality and Enhanced Partnership schemes;
- introduced, in England, bus franchising powers to replace previous Quality Contract Schemes;
- modernised previous ticketing legislation and
- provided the powers necessary for a step change in the information available to passengers through audio and visual on-board information (across Great Britain) and through the provisions of open data on timetable, fares and bus service arrival times (in England).

2.5 The purpose of this document is to outline the new schemes and the opportunities that they offer. It provides:

- a short overview of the different types of schemes which can be introduced locally through the powers in the Act: Advanced Quality Partnerships (AQPS), Enhanced Partnerships (EP), Franchising and Advanced Ticketing schemes;
- general guidance for a local authority planning improvements to bus services. This addresses a range of important issues, which could be relevant to the use of some or all of the powers in the Act, many of which were raised during the legislation's passage through Parliament and on which the Government undertook to issue appropriate guidance.

2.6 Separate, more detailed, guidance documents have also been produced to support local authorities and bus operators who are involved in the development of AQPS, EP or franchising schemes. Further guidance on Advanced Ticketing Schemes will be issued in due course.

2.7 All of these guidance documents were produced following consultation with the bus industry, passenger representatives, local authorities and other key stakeholders. We

will monitor the use of this guidance and how individual schemes are developed and implemented to ensure that it remains fit for purpose.

3. The new options

The main options

3.1 The 2017 Act provides a new legislative framework to help bus operators and local authorities to improve local bus services and realise untapped growth potential in our cities, regions and rural areas. These powers have the potential to lead to better journeys and value for taxpayers and passengers. The powers in the 2017 Act could be used to achieve any, or all of the outcomes listed in Table 1 below:

Better journeys

- New buses - potentially with WiFi and USB sockets.
- Better bus networks - serving more or different locations, operating at night or weekends.
- Easier, contactless payment
- More tickets that work across operators and modes
- A step change in information - know when your bus will arrive and how much it will cost
- Services that are more accessible for passengers with disabilities

Better places

- New and better links to job opportunities
- Increased productivity
- Fewer car journeys in congested town centres
- Low emissions buses - improving air quality
- Thriving community transport services

Better value

- Different types of discounts, for apprentices, job seekers and other groups
- Better competition between operators
- Fares that are easier to compare
- Services provided by commercial operators who remain free to innovate.
- More joined up services - bringing regular bus services, school services and health transport together

3.2 Local transport problems require local transport solutions. There are two main new types of powers in the 2017 Act - partnership and franchising schemes - and it is up to local authorities to work with their local bus operators to decide which of these tools (if any) will best improve local services in their area. Paragraphs 3.3 to 3.24 of this document provide a brief overview of the four main schemes. Authorities and operators remain free to negotiate informal partnership arrangements.

Advanced Quality Partnerships

3.3 Under a bus partnership services continued to be operated by commercial bus operators (whether private sector or local authority owned and whether providing contracted services to a local authority or not). But new standards are set which some or all of the bus operators in the area are required to meet.

The sorts of outcomes which could be achieved with an AQP are summarised in Table 2 below:

Better journeys

- Better buses (e.g. Wifi, lower emissions)
- Minimum Service frequency or evenly-spaced timings
- Improved passenger information
- Route or area branding and/or marketing
- Smart cards and contactless payments

Better places

- Better transport connections
- Low emissions buses

Better value

- Maximum fares for given routes or services

3.4 The success of any bus partnership arrangements depends on good working relationships between the local authority and bus operators. There needs to be consensus on what needs to be done and a degree of trust that everyone will deliver "their part of the bargain".

3.5 Within this context, an Advanced Quality Partnership Scheme (AQPS) is made by a local authority. The authority commits to take steps to support local bus services and in exchange the bus operators are required to meet specific local standards - such as those outlined in the table above. These standards usually apply to a specific route or corridor, but it is possible for an AQPS to cover a wide geographical area, such as an entire local authority or city region. Any operator who does not meet the required standards is unable to use infrastructure provided by the local authority and specified in the scheme.

3.6 Some of the standards which can be set, such as service frequency and maximum fares, can only be implemented if there are no outstanding objections from operators

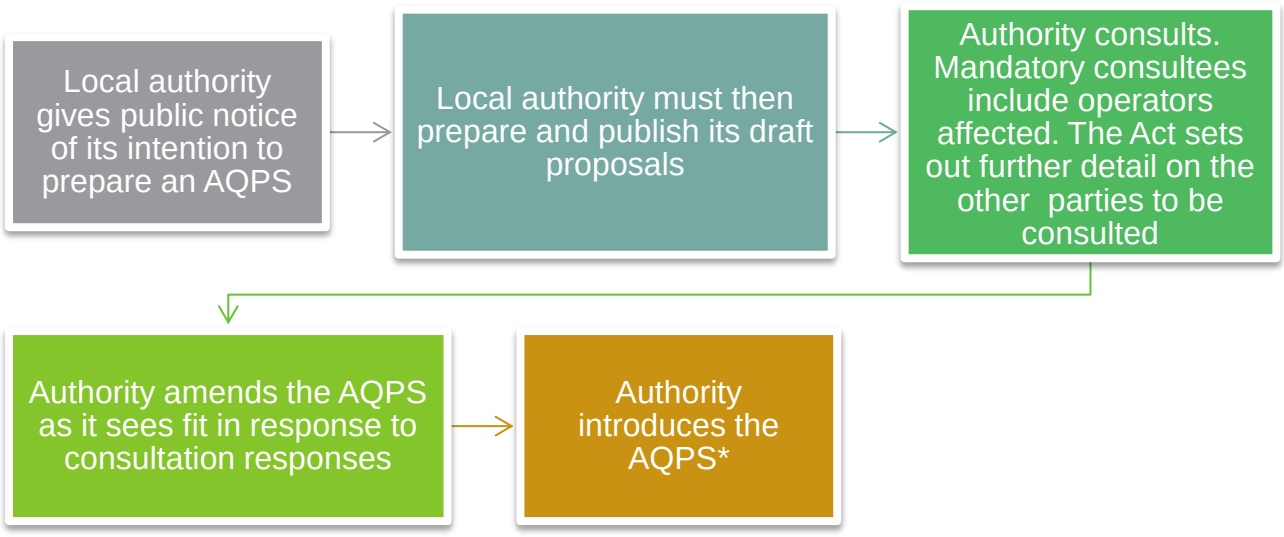
who would be affected by the scheme. This gives every affected operator a clear say in the proposals, but - as a result - can be a time consuming process.

3.7 The local authority's "side of the bargain" can involve providing bus-related facilities (such as bus stops, shelters, bus stations or even depots) and/or committing to take measures that directly or indirectly encourage bus patronage. Such measures could include - but are not limited to:

- parking policies that encourage the use of public transport;
- traffic management policies that prioritise buses; and
- advertising and marketing campaigns to promote the use of local bus services.

What is the process for setting up an Advanced Quality Partnership?

3.8 The way in which an Advanced Quality Partnership proposal should be developed and implemented is summarised in the flow chart below:



Enhanced Partnerships

3.9 An Enhanced Partnership (EP) is an agreement between a local transport authority and the majority of their local bus operators to work together to improve local bus services. It includes a clear vision of the improvements that the EP is aiming for (known as an EP plan) and accompanying actions to achieve them (set out in one of more EP schemes).

The differences between an EP plan and EP scheme are set out in Table 3 below:

Enhanced Partnership Plan

- Analyse performance of the local bus market
- Sets the geographical area or areas of application
- Sets bus improvements objectives
- Explains how long the proposals will last
- Explains how the related scheme will achieve the objectives

Enhanced Partnership Scheme

- Sets out the detailed actions to be taken by the authority
- Sets out the operations requirements for services in the area, for example:

a. Vehicle specifications
b. Branding
c. Payment methods
d. Ticketing structure
e. Real-time information requirements

- Sets out the route requirements for services in the area, potentially such as:

a. Frequency of services
b. Timetables

3.10 EPs can vary considerably in their scale or scope. An EP could address a particular issue with services in a local high street or be used to improve bus services across the entirety of a city region. It could cover all, or parts of, the area of a local transport authority, and it is also possible for more than one local authority to be involved.

3.11 No legislation can ensure that the trust and consensus required to develop a successful partnership is achieved. But it can set a framework which gives authorities and operators the best possible opportunity to do so. That is why local bus operators have to be given an opportunity to participate in the development of an EP and have a formal say on the process at several key stages. At these points the EP cannot proceed unless formal agreement from a defined proportion of operators is obtained. Meanwhile the local authority - as the body responsible for formally making the EP - also has to be content with what is proposed.

3.12 The range of outcomes that can be achieved through an EP is broader than can be delivered through an AQPS. They include those outlined in the table below. Once agreed these standards become requirements of all bus services operating in the

relevant area, whether new or existing. The local authority can in certain circumstances also become responsible for registering local bus services - taking on responsibilities from Traffic Commissioners - and enforcing those standards.

The sorts of outcomes which could be achieved with an EP are summarised in Table 4 below:

Better journeys

- Better buses (e.g. Wifi)
- Service frequency
- Route/area branding
- Smart cards and contactless payment

Better places

- Links to employment
- Better transport connections
- Environmental standards
- Better routes in communities (e.g. serving health and education services)

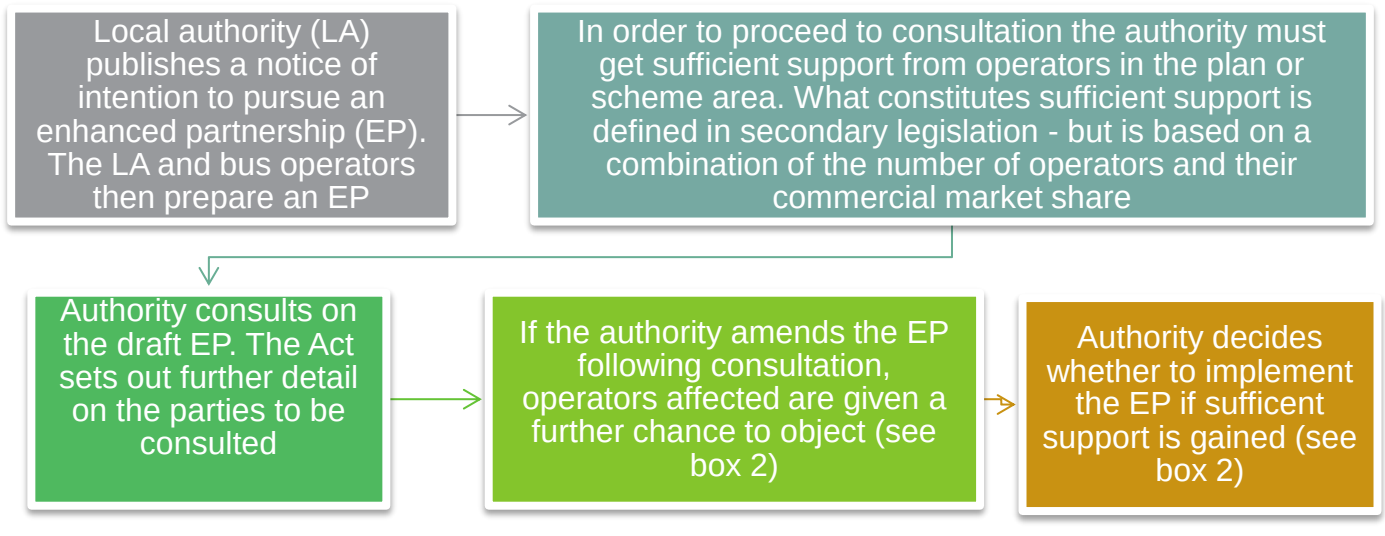
Better value

- Multi operator tickets, including price setting
- Common ticket rules and fare zones
- Uniform discounts for apprentices and other groups

3.13 As with an AQPS, authorities that make EPs can agree to provide either or both facilities or bus improvement measures which directly or indirectly encourage bus patronage.

What is the process for setting up an Enhanced Partnership Scheme?

The way in which an enhanced partnership proposal should be developed and implemented is summarised in the flow chart below:



Franchising

3.14 Franchising is an established model for providing bus services used in London and in many cities and regions across Europe. In a franchising scheme, local authorities will determine the details of the services to be provided – where they run, when they run and the standards of the services. Typically bus operators provide their services under contract to the local authority who can let whatever sort of contract they feel is appropriate. No other services can operate in the franchised area without the agreement of the franchising authority.

3.15 Franchising authorities have considerable scope in determining how services are specified and provided. In London contracts are generally let on a route-by-route basis, whilst in Jersey there is one contract for the whole of the island and some European cities have a small number of franchises covering different areas. The sorts of outcomes which could be achieved are summarised in Table 5 below:

Better journeys:

- Giving Local Government the power to decide:

a. what buses services run where and when.

b. the types of ticket available including discounts for apprentices or other passengers as required.

c. what types of payment must be accepted including smart and contactless.

d. what information is available to passengers.

Better places:

- Putting responsibility for key local roads, and deciding which bus services run, in one place.
- Giving Local Government the power to decide what sorts of buses must be used – including their emissions standards or technologies.

Better value:

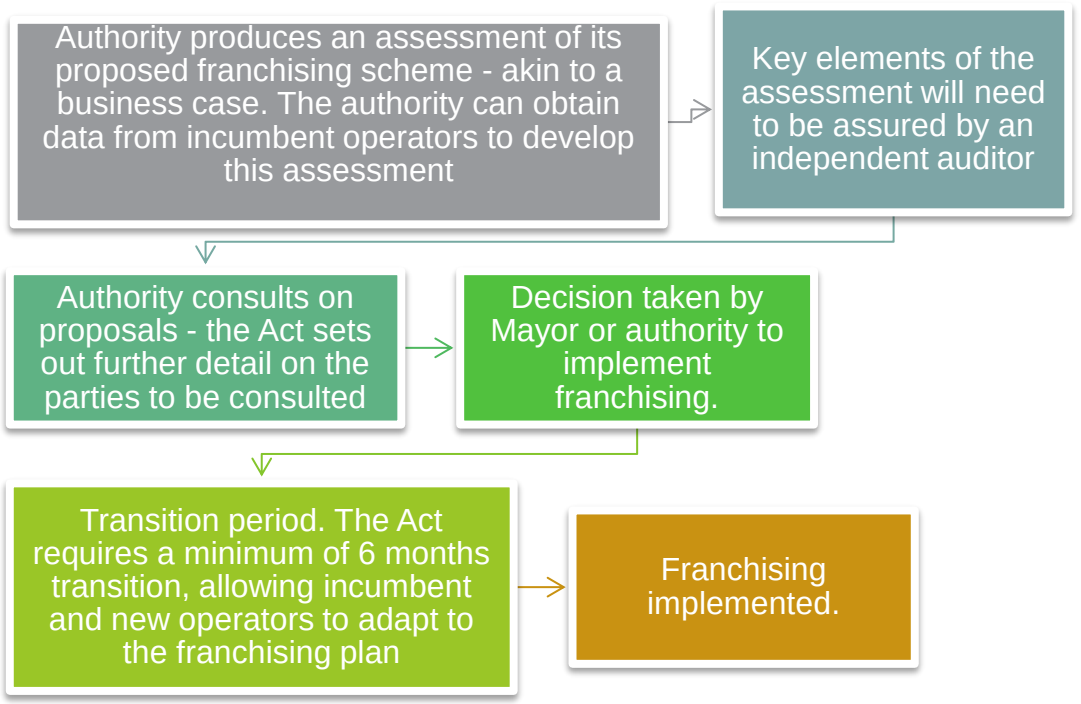
- Local Government accountable to local people – setting all fares.
- Giving Local Government the central funding for bus services that is currently provided directly to operators.
- Taking a more strategic view of what services are needed and where and focusing services where they are most needed – rather than where the best commercial opportunity may be.
- Creating effective competition to run bus services in areas where there is little on-road competition today.
- Local Government joining up their planning of local transport services across modes and types of provision (including school and health transport).
- Allowing commercial bidders for franchises to innovate too.

3.16 The core principles underpinning the bus franchising powers in the 2017 Act are that:

- franchising is a big decision which - as well as creating new opportunities - can have significant implications for existing bus operators and passengers and potentially expose local authorities to significant financial risks.
- franchising powers are therefore only available automatically to Mayoral Combined Authorities. Other types of authorities can request franchising powers for which secondary legislation is necessary. In addition these other types of authorities need the consent of the Secretary of State before they can begin to use the new powers. They will need to demonstrate, amongst other things, their capability to deliver, as well as their track record in delivering transport improvements and plans to make a difference for passengers.
- the decision on whether or not to introduce a franchising scheme should be taken locally and a named individual, such as a Mayor, should be clearly accountable for it.
- these decisions need to be based on robust evidence and analysis - with the needs of passengers, including those who travel into and out of the franchising area, the impacts on existing operators and the affordability of the plans firmly in mind.
- bus services should continue to be provided by commercial operators, not local authorities. Local authorities cannot set up new municipal bus companies to compete for franchised services with existing operators or any new private sector providers.
- commercial services should be able to continue to operate into and out of the franchising area and to spot and fill any gaps in service provision that the authority may have overlooked - providing they do not adversely affect the franchised arrangements.
- plans to implement franchising must take account of the needs of small and medium sized operators; and
- non-commercial community transport operators should not be adversely affected by franchising.

What is the process for setting up a franchising scheme?

3.17 The way in which a franchising proposal should be developed and implemented is summarised in the flow chart below. This applies to Mayoral Combined Authorities, and those other types of authority that have obtained franchising powers from the Secretary of State:



Advanced Ticketing Schemes

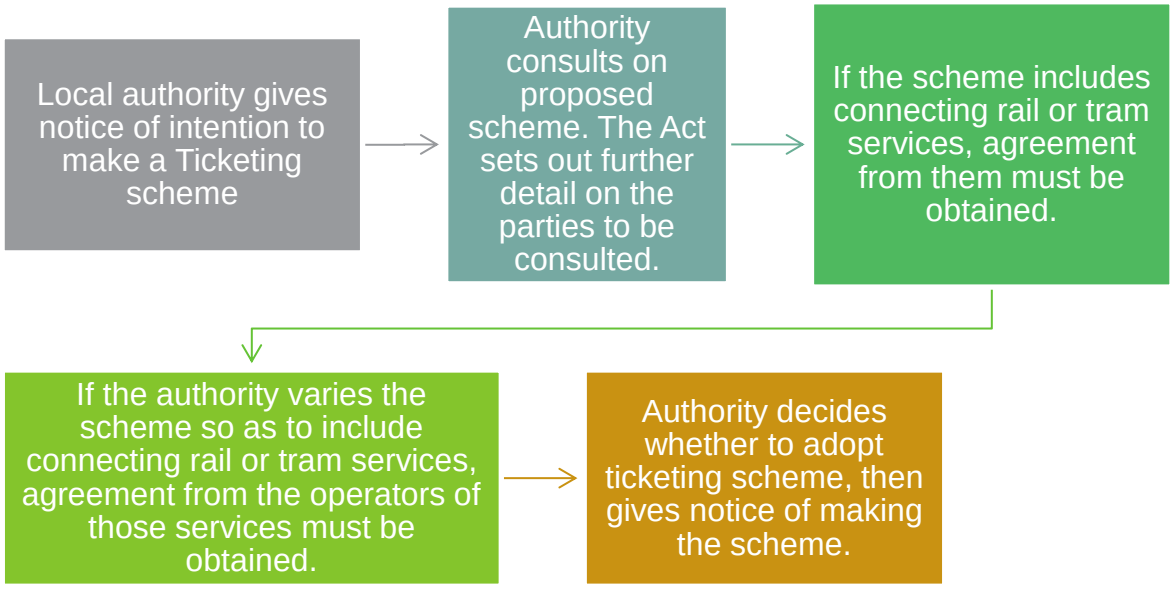
3.18 New technologies, such as contactless payment, can increase patronage, offer passengers better value for money and ultimately encourage use of public transport.

3.19 The Act replaces in England existing ticketing scheme powers. The new powers, known as 'Advanced Ticketing Schemes', allow the establishment of multi-operator and multi-modal ticketing schemes so that local authorities can specify, among other things, the technology to be accepted (e.g. contactless bank cards, mobile technology, smart cards). The Act also ensures that an authority developing new advanced ticketing arrangements thinks about the need to facilitate journeys to and from other nearby authorities and whether their scheme might make it easier for nearby authorities to adopt similar arrangements. .

3.20 These powers do not, however, allow local authorities to set the price of multi-operator or multi-modal tickets which will need to be agreed with the relevant operators. There are established arrangements to achieve this in several parts of England which generally involve a local ticketing company of which both the local authority and relevant operators are members.

What is the process for setting up an Advanced Ticketing Scheme?

3.21 The way in which a Ticketing scheme should be developed and implemented is summarised in the flow chart below: If the scheme includes connecting rail or tram services, agreement from them must be obtained.



Identifying the best option

3.22 It is up to local authorities, working with their local bus operators, to determine which of the partnership schemes, if any, could improve local bus services in their areas. Deciding on which approach to choose first requires an understanding of what a local authority hopes to achieve. The 2017 Act specifies that local authorities must complete an options assessment exercise when assessing the case for franchising.

Choosing the right type of partnership

3.23 Most of what can be specified in an AQPS and an EPS can be delivered through a voluntary partnership – which can involve some, but not all, of the local bus operators - provided there is full agreement between the authority and all of the affected operators. Good examples of this include the West Midlands and Liverpool City Region Bus Alliances, both of which are voluntary partnership arrangements.

3.24 An AQPS or EP will be useful where either party are looking to ensure certainty through legal commitments, or where voluntary partnership are not seen to be working.

3.25 In developing the legislation we envisaged that an AQPS would be best used where:

- there is broad support from operators for the scheme; and/or
- operators and the authority feel it would help for both the authority and operators to have a legislative obligation to deliver 'their side of the bargain'; and
- the geographical area to be covered was comparatively limited; and
- the desired outcomes were relatively modest and could be met through an AQPS.

3.26 We envisaged that an Enhanced Partnership would be most likely to be used where:

- it was important the requirements applied to all operators in the area concerned; and
- the majority of bus operators are likely to agree to the scheme, but a minority of operators would oppose some or all of the package; and;
- where the scope of the scheme is likely to be more ambitious than an AQPS - for example: by including a zonal-based multi-operator ticketing scheme that may also set the prices of the ticket; and/or;
- where the local transport authority wishes to take over the registration and enforcement of local bus service registrations from the traffic commissioner.

The different options for ticketing and the requirements that can be put on operators are outlined in the table below:

Can a requirement be put on bus operators to:	Ticketing schemes	Advanced Quality Partnership	Enhanced Partnership	Franchising
Sell and accept a multi-operator or multi-modal ticket (including in a specific format, such as on a smart card?	✓	✓	✓	✓
Market particular tickets in a certain way (including promoting multi-operator tickets not just their own tickets)?	✗	✓	✓	✓
Set all their tickets and fares on a standard set of 'zones' that apply to all operators?	✗	✗	✓	✓
Follow common ticket rules for their own tickets (such as a standard length of 'period' tickets or age to qualify for a youth concession if offered)?	✗	✗	✓	✓
Sell of accept any ticket on a particular technology (such as a smart card)?	✓	✓	✓	✓
Charge a set price for a multi-operator ticket?	✗	✗	✓	✓
Charge a set price for their own, single-operator tickets?	✗	✗	✗	✓

4. Guidance for authorities when planning improvements to bus services

4.1 This part of the document seeks to bring alive some of the outcomes that the powers in the 2017 Act could be used to achieve. It outlines how partnership and franchising schemes could be implemented in ways which address important local challenges, provides important context in each of these areas and links the new powers in the 2017 Act to the wider responsibility of local authorities.

4.2 In particular, this section covers how the 2017 Act's provisions can contribute to:

- providing an inclusive service for passengers;
- improving environmental outcomes;
- maximising social value;
- improving the safety of bus services;
- tackling congestion; and
- meeting the needs of rural communities.

4.3 Not all of these areas will be relevant to every local authority or potential scheme. But we would encourage local authorities and bus operators to consider which of these areas are most relevant to them and to reflect on this guidance in developing their proposals.

Providing an inclusive service

4.4 On average, disabled people take ten times as many trips by bus as they do by rail. With one in twelve people being disabled, it is essential that bus services meet the needs of everyone wishing to use them.

4.5 This section describes steps which local authorities can take to ensure that services are accessible and that disabled people have the information they need in order to travel with confidence.

Designing an inclusive service

4.6 Where authorities are involved in the design of services, such as when establishing franchising or partnership arrangements we recommend that they:

- Consult at an early stage with disabled people and groups that represent them;
- Ensure that vehicles meet acceptable accessibility standards and that the roadside infrastructure provided is consistent with equality legal duties and accessibility best practice;

- Consider requiring or encouraging the provision of enhanced accessibility features, such as:
  - A second wheelchair space or additional flexible spaces on-board vehicles;
  - Acceptance of assistance cards to assist passengers with impaired communication;
  - Audible and visible information identifying routes and upcoming stops; and
  - Acceptance of mobility scooters consistent with the Confederation of Passenger Transport Scooter Code of Practice.
- Ensure that ticketing systems, such as websites or ticket vending machines are accessible to those needing to use them.

4.7 Further information and advice may be found on:

Accessible infrastructure and streetscape design:

- Inclusive Mobility: https://tinyurl.com/baq8h9s
- Manual for Streets: https://tinyurl.com/adgr344

Equalities legal requirements may include:

- Equality Act 2010 Duty to make reasonable adjustments: http://tinyurl.com/nxp6bbm
- Equality Act 2010 Public Sector Equality Duty: http://tinyurl.com/oqfyc29

Driver Disability Awareness

4.8 In order to respond to the needs of disabled people and those with reduced mobility, bus drivers should be adequately trained. The Department is fully supportive of the principle of all drivers being trained in disability awareness and the majority already receive such training as part of their Certificate of Professional Competence (CPC). This will become a mandatory requirement from March 2018.

4.9 Many local bus operators already provide training of this nature on a non-statutory basis recognising the benefits it brings to passengers and their own businesses. We would encourage all franchising authorities to consider whether such training should be a requirement of their franchise contract requirements. Local transport authorities pursuing partnership arrangements would benefit from discussing current provision and the potential for improvements with local bus operators and representatives of bus users. Franchising authorities can consider making such training a requirement of the contract.

Information for bus passengers

4.10 Anecdotal evidence suggests that many disabled people lack the confidence to use public transport. This is often due to a lack of information on the services available to help them complete journeys safely and in comfort.

4.11 We recommend that authorities require or encourage bus operators to make publically available information on features of their service which assist disabled passengers, or that the authority makes available such information itself. In particular, such information should include:

- Descriptions of transport networks including, where possible, the locations of accessible bus stations and stops;
- Accessibility features of vehicles, including those required by law and any additional enhancements such as audible and visible announcements or the acceptance of mobility scooters;
- Information on the acceptance of national concessionary bus passes and local discretionary concessions, and on the accessibility of ticketing facilities including websites and ticket vending machines;
- Information on disability awareness training provided to drivers and other customer facing staff;
- Information on what assistance will be provided in the event of travel disruption; and
- Contact details to obtain help or further information.

4.12 We recommend that such information should be provided online, and made available in hard copy and alternative accessible formats (such as Braille or large print) upon request. In all cases, information should be provided consistent with best practice in accessible digital and print design.

Further information:

4.13 ODI guidance on accessible communications is available at http://tinyurl.com/mub2agv

Improving environmental outcomes

4.14 Buses have a key part to play in addressing some of the country's air quality problems. Diesel buses, which make up the majority of bus fleets, contribute to the UK's level of carbon and nitrogen dioxide (NO2) emissions, with the latter contributing to poor air quality in many of our towns and cities.

4.15 Poor air quality is the largest environmental risk to public health in the UK. It is known to have more severe effects on vulnerable groups and people already suffering from pre-existing health conditions such as respiratory and cardiovascular conditions.

4.16 We therefore want to create a healthy and growing market for low and ultra-low emission buses in this country, speeding up the eventual transition to an entirely ultra-low emission bus fleet. At present, these buses only represent around 9% of buses in service in England. We are determined to increase that share, and for the UK to be at the forefront of the design, development and manufacturing of these buses.

4.17 Under the Green Bus Fund, Government funding has helped put over 1,200 low carbon buses on our roads since 2009, and the £30m of Low Emission Bus Scheme funding announced in July 2016 should deliver over 300 buses with an enhanced emissions performance. In addition, another £100m is to be made available between 2017/18 and 2020/21 to help purchase new low emission buses or to retrofit existing buses; more details of how this will be spent will be announced later in 2017.

4.18 Government has also recently announced plans to improve air quality in cities through the introduction of Clean Air Zones to discourage the use of older, more polluting vehicles. Government expects five cities in England outside London to implement Clean Air Zones, and local authorities already have the power to introduce zones voluntarily should they choose to do so.

How can the Act improve local air quality?

4.19 The Department would encourage all authorities to think about how they can use the tools in the Act to improve air quality in their local areas. Authorities forming a scheme that will operate within an Air Quality Management Area should certainly consider how the powers contained within the Act could improve air quality - as part of their wider efforts for tackling this issue. Further detail on the Government's approach to tackling nitrogen dioxide concentrations can be found on the GOV.UK website.[1]

4.20 Any authority developing a franchising proposal or an Advanced or Enhanced Partnership Scheme should consider whether their proposed approach could be used to improve local air quality. The authority's view on the suitability, or otherwise, of attempting to improve local air quality through the implementation of their franchising or partnership approach should be recorded in consultation materials. As well as the benefits offered, this might include consideration of the cost effectiveness of such an approach and the potential implications for bus operators and service provision.

Partnership

4.21 Through partnership approaches, authorities can work with bus operators in their area to deliver a set of agreed outcomes. One of the areas that local authorities can look to improve through partnerships is that of the quality of the bus fleet used in the area and the associated emission standards.

4.22 If, working with operators, an authority is of the opinion that they want to improve the emission standards of the buses used in their area they can establish either an Advanced Quality Partnership Scheme or Enhanced Partnership to help deliver those outcomes. An authority could, for example, specify that all buses used in the partnership area must comply with certain international engine emission standards, which would require bus operators to either purchase newer, less polluting vehicles, or retro-fit their existing vehicles with technologies to help improve the emission standards. This could help authorities improve air quality in their towns and cities, and provides a useful tool for tackling problem areas.

4.23 It is important to remember that these tools are designed to help authorities work together with operators in partnership. Purchasing newer, cleaner vehicles or retrofitting vehicles with new technologies will be costly, and authorities may find that the best way forward is to begin by discussing with operators options to deliver better outcomes. It may be, for example, that the authority could agree to provide funding towards delivering the higher standards, for example on their tendered network, or determine realistic timescales with bus operators for implementation. Effective use of bus priority measures can also improve air quality by reducing 'stop start' congestion.

[1] http://tinyurl.com/y7gp8pyd

4.24 The Department would encourage authorities to proactively work with operators in their area to determine whether improvements can be made, and also to develop future plans and strategies which could potentially be part-funded by Government should future funds become available.

Franchising

4.25 Similarly, franchising authorities can look to improve the emission standards of the bus fleet in the area. Authorities will be able to set certain standards as part of the contracts that they would issue to bus operators, and they would need to consider whether the standards set in those contracts were achievable and affordable.

4.26 Where an authority chooses to set vehicle emission standards as part of a franchising or enhanced partnership proposal, with the aim of improving local air quality, they should use standards or thresholds that already exist internationally or are otherwise recognised by the bus manufacturing or emissions reduction sector.

Maximising social value

4.27 The Public Services (Social Value) Act 2012 requires authorities who commission public services to think about how they can also secure wider social, economic and environmental benefits. Authorities commissioning public services should think about whether the services they are going to buy, or the way they are going to buy them, could secure these benefits for their area and for local people.

4.28 The Act is a tool to help get more value for money out of procurement. It also encourages those who commission public services to talk to their local providers and communities to design better services, with the aim of finding new and innovative solutions to difficult problems.

4.29 Local authorities regularly commission and procure local bus services where they feel that the needs of the local community are not being met by the existing services. In addition, any authority that pursues franchising will be responsible for commissioning and procuring most local bus services in their area. We would encourage local authorities who are commissioning and procuring local bus services, be that through franchising or by tendering for supported services, to consider the provisions in the Social Value Act and the steps they could take to secure wider social, economic and environmental benefits for their local area. Even where the provisions of the Social Value Act do not apply because the procurement value falls below relevant thresholds, local authorities should still look to apply the core principles of the Social Value Act when procuring services.

4.30 In 2015, Lord Young conducted a review of the Social Value Act. His report contains a number of useful case studies, practical guidance on how to apply the Act, and a framework and principles for measurement. The report is published on the GOV.UK website.[2] The Department would encourage authorities to consider this report when applying the principles of the Act when procuring local bus services.

[2] https://tinyurl.com/lwztnde

Improving the safety of bus services

4.31 'The Department would encourage local authorities to think about how they could implement bus safety measures as part of their overall scheme. In particular, the Department would encourage local authorities to consider the benefits of an independent confidential reporting system (ICRS), and release of bus safety incident data, when they are forming a partnership or franchising scheme.

4.32 An ICRS, such as the Confidential Incident Reporting & Analysis System (CIRAS), provides employees with an avenue in which they can anonymously report safety incidents to an independent safety organisation. Employees may use this system if they feel their safety concerns have not been addressed through internal operator safety procedures. It is for the investigator in the relevant ICRS to determine whether a genuine safety concern has been reported and if action by an operator is appropriate. If so, a report may be sent by the independent organisation to the operator from where the report originated. It is then up to the operator to act upon the contents of that report. It should be noted that operators are not legally required to act upon reports from an ICRS, unless the incident reported is in contravention of the law.

4.33 Local authorities should also consider releasing bus safety incident data from the operators in a partnership or franchising scheme. Operators could be required to provide incident data – such as data on incidents involving pedestrians, vehicles and cyclists - at specified intervals. The authority may publically release this data, in a format that it sees fit, at specified intervals, such as once a quarter.

Tackling congestion

4.34 Congestion has a major effect on the attractiveness of bus services, both to new and existing passengers. The time taken to make a journey drives mode choice, determines the cost and efficiency of bus networks and is vital to customer perceptions and satisfaction. But buses do not operate in a closed network, they form part of a dynamic and increasingly busy road system. In the UK road traffic has risen seven-fold since 1950 and on local A roads the trend over the last five years has been decreased average speeds and increased delays and journey times. We therefore expect authorities proposing franchising and partnership schemes to consider, as part of the overall package, what measures should be taken to minimise the effects of congestion on the service to passengers and how bus services could be used to help reduce congestion more generally.

Measuring and monitoring congestion

4.35 Congestion means different things in different contexts. It can mean unreliable journey times (20 minutes one day and 40 minutes the next), or that the journey is too slow, or in times of exceptional disruption (road works, public events) traffic levels are significantly affected.

4.36 The degree to which congestion is caused by road works, events, accidents, etc., is not well understood nationally, but local level data is helpful in pinpointing causes. Reliable, specific, real time data provision can improve travel behaviours and traffic management and help to tackle congestion.

4.37 Bus operators and LTAs that are seeking to reduce the effect of congestion on local bus services will need to monitor bus services to identify routes that are prone to delays. This can be done using existing data from real-time passenger information systems and/or GPS monitoring systems used by bus operators for routing, tracking and security purposes. Not all bus operators will use this technology, but where franchising or partnership agreements are in place the sharing of this information between operators and LTAs can be used to identify congestion 'hot-spots'.

4.38 Local authorities should also consider the value of the datasets they hold and how these could be used to tackle congestion. As a minimum they should share with bus operators local data on traffic management, including planned roadworks.

Tackling congestion

4.39 No single measure is likely to tackle congestion alone. Instead, a range of measures are required, with the precise mix dependent on local factors. Bus use can significantly reduce congestion, but to do so requires high levels of occupancy (particularly during peak times). To maximise the benefits of bus services in reducing congestion, bus operators and LTAs will need to work in partnership in order to deliver services attractive enough to create a shift away from car use. A number of long standing pro-bus options exist which can help to encourage increased ridership and modal shift, such as:

- Setting realistic bus timetables and scheduling services appropriately, without making journey times unattractively long in typical conditions.
- Bus pricing – ensuring pricing is clear and encourages frequent use, that services are affordable and seen to represent value for money when compared with other means of travel.
- Better integration – a bus journey is usually only one stage of a door to door trip. Buses need to integrate with other forms of transport, with the transition made as seamless as possible.
- Park and ride schemes – More than 80% of users of the park and ride schemes previously travelled by car in to Leeds centre.
- Parking controls – often used in conjunction with park and ride schemes to encourage modal shift. This option includes increasing the cost of parking in congested areas, reducing supply in congested areas, reducing allocation to permitted users (e.g. residents) and the enforcement of rules about illegal parking.
- Bus lanes and other priority measures such as signal priority - making bus use faster, more reliable and more attractive.
- The literature on influencing behaviour change suggests that the optimal times for seeking to influence peoples travel choices are when they are young (i.e. before they hold a driving licence and have access to a car), and after they have changed house/occupation. Focusing efforts on specific groups (new housing or business developments, and schools) could therefore encourage increased bus use.
- Smart transport innovations can be used to tackle congestion in new ways, in line with local needs. These innovations include: Data initiatives – to enable users to make informed travel choices through the provision of reliable real time, user specific information.

- Cooperative Intelligent Transport Systems – using technology to allow vehicles to communicate with other vehicles, traffic signals and roadside infrastructure.
- Busways and other dedicated rights of way.
- Demand responsive, flexible mass transit.

Meeting the needs of rural communities

Rural bus services - the challenges

4.40 Local buses help commuters get to work, students to school and ensure people can access a wide range of services and leisure opportunities. The loss of a local bus service, particularly in rural areas, can leave people isolated or dependent on friends and family to help them travel. But it can also be in rural areas that commercial services are the most difficult to provide, because the critical mass of passengers required for a regular service can be difficult to achieve.

4.41 Where bus services are not provided commercially by bus operators, local authorities are able to step in and subsidise additional services. Local authorities are best placed to decide which services are needed in their local areas, reflecting local needs and the available budget. In England, local authorities have spent an average of £330 million a year over the past three years supporting bus services.

4.42 The Department is aware of the many challenges facing local authorities in ensuring rural communities have access to regular bus services - including the concentration of amenities in town and cities and ongoing financial pressures – and it is important that authorities are able to get the most out of the funding that is available to ensure the needs of local communities can be met.

4.43 Through the provisions in the Bus Services Act, the Total Transport initiative and its support for community transport, the Department provides a range of tools and options to help local authorities deliver better local bus services, particularly in rural areas. More details on these tools are set out in this section as well as the methods that local authorities can use to consider and take account of the impacts of their policy choices on rural areas.

Rural Proofing

4.44 Rural proofing of new policies has been applied across central government for over a decade. It requires policy-makers to consider impacts of their policies and programmes on rural areas and, where necessary, to make adjustments to achieve equally effective and successful outcomes for individuals, communities and businesses.

4.45 During the development of the provisions of the Bus Services Act, consideration was given to the impact on rural areas. We therefore strongly recommend that local authorities undertake a rural proofing exercise when they are reviewing their transport provisions or considering using the new powers available to them under the provisions of the Bus Services Act. Following the exercise, local authorities should adapt their policies as necessary to ensure their approach achieves equally effective and successful outcomes for individuals, communities and businesses in rural areas.

4.46 In deciding how to support rural bus services, or when considering the impact of potential policy choices on rural areas, local authorities should undertake a rural proofing exercise. The Department recommends this is done not only when

authorities are considering implementing franchising or the partnership provisions in the Act, but for any authority reviewing its transport provisions. Where franchising or partnership approaches are considered, rural proofing should be undertaken both at an early stage, to shape the proposals, and before the final arrangements are implemented.

4.47 Rural proofing does not require exactly the same outcome, or the provision of exactly the same level of service, in rural as in urban locations. This would not be practical in many cases, as the costs would be prohibitive. Rural communities should expect government policies and programmes to be sufficiently flexible to apply fairly in their areas and to deliver quality services that meet their everyday needs.

4.48 Further information on rural proofing can be found at: https://www.gov.uk/guidance/rural-proofing-guidance

How can the Bus Services Act improve rural bus services?

4.49 The Bus Services Act provides a wide range of tools for local authorities to use to help improve bus journeys for local passengers in a way that meets the needs of their local communities. These powers include the ability to work more effectively with bus operators through advanced quality partnerships or enhanced partnership schemes, and the potential to establish a system of franchising.

4.50 The powers contained in the Act have been designed for use across England – in both rural and urban areas. It is up to local authorities to decide whether and how to use the powers in the Act. However, when considering the most appropriate approach, we recommend that local authorities give full consideration to the needs of rural areas.

Franchising and rural bus services

4.51 Franchising powers allow local authorities to determine and specify the local bus services that should be provided in their area. Through the implementation of bus franchising, authorities are able to determine:

- which bus services run and when;
- the types of ticket available;
- the fares that should be charged;
- the types of payment that must be accepted;
- the information that is available to passengers; and
- the standards of buses that must be used – including their emissions standards or fuel technologies.

4.52 Under a franchising scheme, local authorities can design the procurement process in a way that makes the most out of the existing resources. This could, for example, involve packaging some less profitable routes in rural areas together with those which are likely to be more commercially viable. It will be down to each authority to determine the most effective way of delivering local services.

4.53 Franchising could be used by an authority to help balance-out the provision of services across the area, potentially diverting some services from more urban areas,

where the authority may consider that there is over-provision of services, to rural areas.

Partnership working and rural bus services

4.54 The advanced quality partnership and enhanced partnership provisions in the Act enable local authorities and bus operators to work together to set out and deliver improvements to local bus services in the area. Through partnership working, authorities and operators can agree standards for local bus services – including vehicle specifications, branding, ticketing and service frequencies.

4.55 Partnership working provides the opportunity for authorities and bus operators to work together to identify the bus services needed in an area, including thinking about the best mix of services to meet the needs of passengers throughout the area, including in rural communities.

4.56 Partnerships provide a useful mechanism through which to discuss and determine the optimum network of services for the area, and it may be that there are efficiency savings that could be made, or a re-deployment of existing resources. As discussed below, it is also possible through partnership to coordinate the timing of services so, for example, supported rural services can act as feeder services to commercial routes running into, say, the centre of a town.

4.57 This, coupled with comprehensive passenger information (including real-time data) can make a real difference - cutting costs and journey times for supported services whilst giving passengers confidence that their connecting service will arrive.

4.58 The Department would encourage any authority considering how best to target support for local bus services in their area, particularly in rural areas, to engage with local bus operators to discuss what might be possible, either through a statutory partnership, or a voluntary approach.

Other options for improving rural services

4.59 Whilst the Act provides some useful tools, there are other ways that local authorities can look to make the most out of their resources and deliver more efficient bus services in rural areas. Alongside, or together with, the tools available in the Act, the Department strongly recommends that local authorities consider the opportunities offered by encouraging the local community transport sector and through the application of Total Transport principles.

Community Transport

4.60 Community transport operators can play a major role in the solution to transport issues in rural areas. Community transport operators run Demand Responsive Services and also operate scheduled services on fixed routes. They provide crucial services that both encourage growth and reduce isolation by linking individuals and communities to existing transport networks, work, education, shops and services. Where commercial bus services are not viable, the community transport sector can offer bespoke services that address local needs, and the sector is well placed to

serve more isolated communities, with approximately 8 million passenger trips taking place in rural areas[3].

4.61 When reviewing the provision of local bus services in rural areas, the Department recommends that authorities consider how best to encourage and integrate community transport services into the wider network of commercial and supported services. The Community Transport Association is a good source of practical advice and help on how to achieve this.

4.62 This applies equally when authorities are considering introducing a franchising scheme or a partnership approach, as community transport can be used effectively to complement the wider network under any of the models available through the Act.

Total Transport

4.63 In most areas, particularly rural ones, the transport mix includes a variety of public sector funded transport services that cater for a range of transport needs. These can include:

- non-emergency patient transport;
- adult social care transport;
- school bus services;
- community transport services, such as dial-a-ride; and
- subsidised local bus services

4.64 These services can overlap and it is important that they are provided in a joined up way, especially in rural areas where they often provide a vital link to those who would otherwise have little or no access to transport.

4.65 The Total Transport concept seeks to achieve this through joint commissioning of public sector funded transport that is more effective, avoids unnecessary duplication and provides a better service to passengers overall.

4.66 In April 2015, the Department allocated £7.6m to 37 schemes run by 36 local authorities in England to pilot Total Transport solutions in their areas. These pilots were focused on rural areas and have indicated that integration is possible and has the potential to deliver the following benefits to passengers:

- The creation of a ‘one-stop shop’ – avoiding the need for passengers to deal separately with different service providers that have inconsistent and confusing processes and restrictions.
- Better management of transport availability so that passengers receive a more responsive service better suited to their needs – for example, integrated IT for journey booking. This has the potential to open up the transport options for individual passengers due to a wider fleet of vehicles being available.
- A single and consistent standard – for example, eligibility for dial-a-ride, adult social care transport or patient transport.
- The scope for efficiency savings through better use of existing drivers and vehicles.

[3] http://tinyurl.com/ojppgym

4.67 In rural areas, there is connectivity between this sort of transport and ‘mainstream’ local bus services. For example, a public sector funded demand responsive service could carry passengers from a series of villages to a bus stop or interchange where they can then use a commercial local bus service to complete their journey into, for example, the centre of a market town. This arrangement has the potential to keep the running costs of the demand responsive service down as well as helping to maintain the commercial viability of the connecting commercial local bus service.

4.68 Adopting Total Transport principles has the potential to greatly improve the services that are provided to passengers of public sector funded transport – such as non-emergency patient transport and adult social care transport – and also result in cost savings to those that fund this type of transport. The most effective Total Transport approach will require co-operation between public bodies such as local authorities and NHS Clinical Commissioning Groups.

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Annex 3 – Summary Comparison of Enhanced Partnerships and Franchising

	Enhanced Partnership	**Franchising**
Benefits / Opportunities		
Council and Corporate Priorities and Outcomes	Ability to closely align with transport, environmental outcomes, particularly Reduce carbon emissions to tackle climate change and improve air quality	Network and services could, in theory, be most closely tailored to meet outcomes
General	Greater ability to draw in operator innovation, investment and expertise	Greater level of local authority control / influence on network and service patterns
Weaknesses / Threats		
Corporate Priorities and Outcomes	May be less easy to achieve where networks or services cannot operate without some form of subsidy	Length of time taken to implement means little chance of any directly outcomes in the current corporate plan period
General		Very significant cost and resource to set up Financial risk predominantly lies with local authority

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Divisions Affected – All Oxford divisions, plus Kirtlington & Kidlington North, Kidlington South, North Hinksey, Kennington & Radley, Berinsfield & Garsington, Wheatley

CABINET - 22 JUNE 2021

ZERO EMISSION BUS REGIONAL AREAS (ZEBRA) SCHEME CALL FOR EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST

Report by Bill Cotton – Corporate Director for Environment & Place

RECOMMENDATION

Cabinet is RECOMMENDED to:

(a) authorise officers to finalise and submit an Expression of Interest for the Government's Zero Emission Bus Regional Areas funding initiative;

(b) agree a capital allocation of up to £6m in 2022/23 to provide additional council grant to bus operators, if operators can demonstrate this is required to make the scheme feasible.

Executive Summary

1. The Government is seeking 'Expressions of Interest' (EoI) for local authorities to take part in the Zero Emission Bus Regional Areas (ZEBRA) scheme, in support of the Government's Road to Zero Strategy for transition to zero emission transport by 2050.

2. The funding, which totals £120 million and is expected to support at least three areas, is intended to enable deployment of zero emission buses and relevant accompanying infrastructure. In order to best meet the criteria and maximise the opportunity and chances of success, urban services operating wholly within the Oxford SmartZone area have been selected as the preferred location for the EoI. The SmartZone area extends from Kidlington in the north to Kennington in the south, and from Cumnor in the west to Wheatley in the east – a map is at **Annex 1**.

3. The development of the EoI is ongoing with further detail being developed rapidly to meet the submission deadline of 25 June. If successful at phase 1, a business case (phase 2) will be required by January 2022.

4. If successful, this bid would support a number of the key corporate priorities related to health and well-being, climate action, air quality and healthy place shaping. A reduction in bus emissions in Oxford would contribute to better air quality and better environments for all users as well as reducing transport's

contribution to climate change. Electric buses may also improve the image of buses and the passenger experience, helping to boost bus use and reduce traffic congestion. There are also linkages to the Council's current work, for example Connecting Oxford and the Oxford Zero Emission Zone, the first phase of which is due to start operating in summer 2021.

5. Cabinet is asked to agree that officers submit an EoI for part of this funding.

Background

6. The Council submitted an Expression of Interest for the All-Electric Bus City project in June 2020, which was successful despite not strictly being compliant with the terms of the competition. Subsequently, it was determined that this could not proceed to business case stage and the Government advised that the ZEBRA scheme would be more appropriate for Oxford.

7. The stated objectives of the ZEBRA project are to:

- support the government's commitment to decarbonisation and to reduce the transport sector's contribution to CO2 emissions;
- support the roll-out of the 4,000 Zero Emission Buses that the government committed to in February 2020;
- support bus manufacturers in the development of zero emission bus technology;
- support partnership working between Local Transport Authorities (LTAs), bus operators and other local stakeholders as set out in the National Bus Strategy; and
- understand better the challenges of introducing zero emission buses and supporting infrastructure to inform future government support for zero emission buses.

8. The Government recognises that buses have a significant role to play in tackling air quality and reducing greenhouse gas emissions. Not only does a fully loaded double decker bus take up to 75 cars off the road which helps to reduce congestion and the impact of transport on the environment, but by switching to the next generation ultra-low or zero emission buses the improvement in air quality is significant.

9. To secure delivery through a partnership with the bus companies and to maximise the competitive offer of the bid through providing a single solution at a city scale, the Oxford SmartZone area has been selected as the preferred location for the ZEBRA EoI. The technology is currently best suited to dedicated urban and sub-urban routes, of which only Oxford (together with its immediate surroundings) and Banbury have any of note – however, the Government have been clear that only one submission is permitted per authority and it must be for a single defined area. They have also confirmed that future funding opportunities linked to zero emission buses will be available which the Council may wish to bid for in due course.

10. Buses already play a key role in Oxfordshire's transport system – getting people to work, to education and to see friends and family. Plans are advanced for the initial pilot phase of a city centre Zero Emission Zone, with implementation planned for summer 2021. The Council has also announced plans for a wider ZEZ to be introduced in 2022. In addition, there is a currently agreed requirement for most buses operating in the city to be Euro VI by the end of 2021, although this may be superseded by the ZEBRA scheme.

11. The ZEBRA scheme would therefore support proposals such as the Oxford Zero Emission Zone and Connecting Oxford. With buses funded by the scheme required to be in operation no later than two years after a successful funding award, this proposal would fit well with the current envisaged timescales for the Connecting Oxford programme, with the infrastructure and supporting measures that includes and the new electric buses complementing each other.

12. The EoI will be required to indicate air quality challenges in Oxford and how the proposal will affect those challenges, detail the overall vision for improving public transport in the area, demonstrate the involvement of stakeholders (including the support of bus operators) and demonstrate an understanding of the risks. Much of this work has already been undertaken as part of the All-Electric Bus City bid in 2020.

13. The Council considers that the proposal would be well-placed to meet the eligibility criteria for the ZEBRA scheme, which are significantly less stringent than for the All-Electric Bus City scheme.

14. A map and details of the routes and number of buses expected to be covered by the bid are contained in **Annex 1**.

Key Issues

15. The key issues surrounding the bid are:

- Financial – particularly the bus operators' willingness to commit to significant investment at a time when the industry has been weakened by the Covid-19 pandemic, and the means of overcoming any gaps in the funding programme. Bus operators have indicated they are likely to be unable to proceed without additional council grant to help cover the investment which is required in addition to the ZEBRA funding from DfT.
- Political – bus operators are seeking greater certainty on delivery of the major Council schemes such as Connecting Oxford to give them confidence to make an investment; and
- Technological – even with the scope now focused on purely urban routes, vehicle range remains a concern for bus operators.

16. A successful bid would contribute significantly towards the Council's strategic objectives and priorities for transport improvement. It would support a number

of the key corporate priorities related to health and well-being, climate action, air quality and healthy place shaping. A reduction in bus emissions in Oxford would contribute to better air quality, better environments for all users and a reduction in transport's contribution to climate change.

17. Of particular relevance is the Council's declaration of a 'climate emergency' in April 2019.

Corporate Policies and Priorities

18. If successful, this bid would support a number of the key corporate priorities related to health and well-being, climate action, air quality and healthy place shaping. The proposed ZEBRA bid area includes three Air Quality Management Areas, where nitrogen dioxide levels exceed national limit values. The proposals would lead to 72% of daily bus mileage within the SmartZone area being operated with zero emission buses. The resulting dramatic reduction in bus emissions would contribute significantly to better air quality and better environments for all users as well as reducing transport's contribution to climate change. Electric buses may also improve the image of buses and the passenger experience, helping to boost bus use and reduce traffic congestion. There are also linkages to the Council's current work, for example Connecting Oxford and the Oxford Zero Emission Zone, the first phase of which is due to start operating in summer 2021.

Financial Implications

19. Government has made available £120 million in total to support the ZEBRA scheme and expect this to fund at least three areas. There is no minimum or maximum bid size, but bids are expected to be in the region of £25-35 million.

20. The amount of support for a place will be based on the following funding formula:

- DfT will contribute up to 75% of the cost difference between a zero-emission bus and a standard conventional diesel bus equivalent of the same total passenger capacity; and
- DfT will contribute up to 75% of the capital expenditure incurred for infrastructure improvements as a result of its purchase and installation.

21. As an example, an electric double decker bus costs c.£445,000. Under this funding initiative the cost to the bus operator would be the cost of a standard diesel double decker bus £235,000, which would leave a difference of £210,000. ZEBRA would fund 75% of that difference, leaving 25%, or £52,500, to be funded by the bus operator or other funding sources.

22. The Covid-19 pandemic has led to significantly reduced levels of bus patronage, which has detrimentally impacted bus operator finances and their ability to fund the 25% 'gap' between the cost of a diesel bus and an electric bus which remains after the ZEBRA funding.

23. Oxford Bus Company and Stagecoach have indicated that they will likely require additional financial assistance to make the ZEBRA scheme financially feasible. Both operators have been asked to submit a request for the specific additional funding they require to make the scheme feasible, supported by appropriate financial evidence. Subject to this evidence, officers recommend that the county council provides an additional council grant to operators to meet the additional funding requirement.

24. It is recommended however that this additional grant is capped at a maximum of 50% of the 25% gap, or £6m – whichever is smaller. 50% of the gap is currently estimated at £5.3m. The maximum cap is recommended i) to limit the pressure on the council's own budgets to a proportionate level and ii), because contributing a higher amount proportionately brings subsidy control risk which could lead to legal challenge.

25. The amount contributed would be a non-repayable capital grant funded through prudential borrowing, which would be repaid over the next 5 to 8 years, creating an annual revenue pressure on the council's budget of between £0.7m and £1.2m for that period. This would need to be addressed through the Budget and Business Planning process with existing resources reprioritised to meet the pressure or new income streams identified to offset the cost.

26. Based on the latest available figures from operators, in a scenario where the council funded 50% of the 25% gap, total operator costs would be £41.32m (53%) and total government / council grant would be £36.98m (47%).

Comments checked by:

Rob Finlayson, Finance Business Partner, rob.finlayson@oxfordshire.gov.uk

Legal Implications

27. Independent legal advice has been sought on the state aid, subsidy control and procurement issues relating to the ZEBRA scheme; the main conclusions are summarised below.

28. EU State aid rules now only apply in limited circumstances, which do not include this project. The new subsidy rules are contained in the UK-EU Trade and Cooperation Agreement (TCA), which require public authorities to consider on a case-by-case basis whether financial support could fall within the definition of "subsidy" and if so whether it would comply with six key principles. Unlawful subsidy can be challenged in the courts by way of judicial review. The government is also intending to introduce a Subsidy Control Bill this year to regulate domestic subsidies.

29. The Council will not itself receive unlawful subsidy as it will pass the ZEBRA Grant in full to the Operators and as a result the subsidy control rules will not be engaged.

30. The ZEBRA Grant will fall within the definition of "subsidy" when paid by the Council to the Operators, which means the Council must, as the next step, satisfy itself that the Grant is consistent with the six key TCA principles. Legal advice suggests the risks on this point are low.

31. If the Council wishes to provide Additional Council Grant, it will need strong evidence to demonstrate how doing so would be consistent with the six TCA principles, in particular around compliance with those concerning proportionality, necessity and the positive benefits outweighing the negative effects. The provision of an Additional Council Grant increases the risks of unlawful subsidy, but it is likely that this can be mitigated if this evidence is in place. Further legal advice will be sought as more detailed evidence becomes available and also in the event that new legislation comes into effect.

32. Risks relating to indirect subsidy can be mitigated by compelling operators to tender the contracts for the buses and related infrastructure using a transparent competitive procedure equivalent to one under the Public Contracts Regulations 2015.

33. Risks relating to public procurement rules are considered low as long as any works contracts for the charging infrastructure are not more than 50% funded by the Council and would be further mitigated if operators' tender contracts competitively.

Comments checked by:

Jayne Pringle, Solicitor – Jayne.Pringle@oxfordshire.gov.uk

Staff Implications

34. Local authorities are expected to fund the preparation of EoIs in phase 1. The costs associated with the submission of the EoI will be met through existing budgets. The DfT have indicated that funding and support can be made available for business case development (phase 2); this may include appointment of an internal project manager and/or external support.

Equality & Inclusion Implications

35. An Equality and Climate Impact Assessment is in preparation and will develop as the EoI is progressed.

36. At this stage it is anticipated that the project would have an overall positive effect, especially on key groups that suffer the effects of congestion and associated pollution. The ZEBRA bid area includes a number of areas of deprivation within Oxford which will benefit from reduced bus emissions and improved bus services.

Sustainability Implications

37. This bid would support a number of the key corporate priorities related to climate action, air quality and healthy place shaping. A reduction in bus emissions in Oxford would contribute to better air quality and better environments for all users as well as reducing transport's contribution to climate change. Electric buses may also improve the image of buses and the passenger experience, helping to boost bus use and reduce traffic congestion.

Risk Management

38. A risk register and management strategy are in development. The project is being proactively managed through the development of the EoI and, if that is successful, the Business Case development stage and on to implementation of our bid.

39. There are likely to be a wide range of risks associated with both the bidding process and the delivery of the bid. These range from ensuring due diligence is completed to minimising subsidy control risk; capital implications on the council's budget for supporting the new bus network by grant funding; to contractually ensuring the buses secured through the project are retained locally. These and other risks are being identified and assessed with officers across the council and will be managed through the Council's established processes.

40. Ongoing timely and effective communications will be needed with the bus operators, city council and stakeholders.

BILL COTTON
Corporate Director for Environment & Place

Annex:	Annex 1 – ZEBRA bid area and bus services included
Background papers:	Nil
Contact Officer:	Eric Owens, Assistant Director for Growth and Place, 07799097637, eric.owens@oxfordshire.gov.uk Joanne Fellows, Growth Manager – Central, 07990 368897, joanne.fellows@oxfordshire.gov.uk

June 2021

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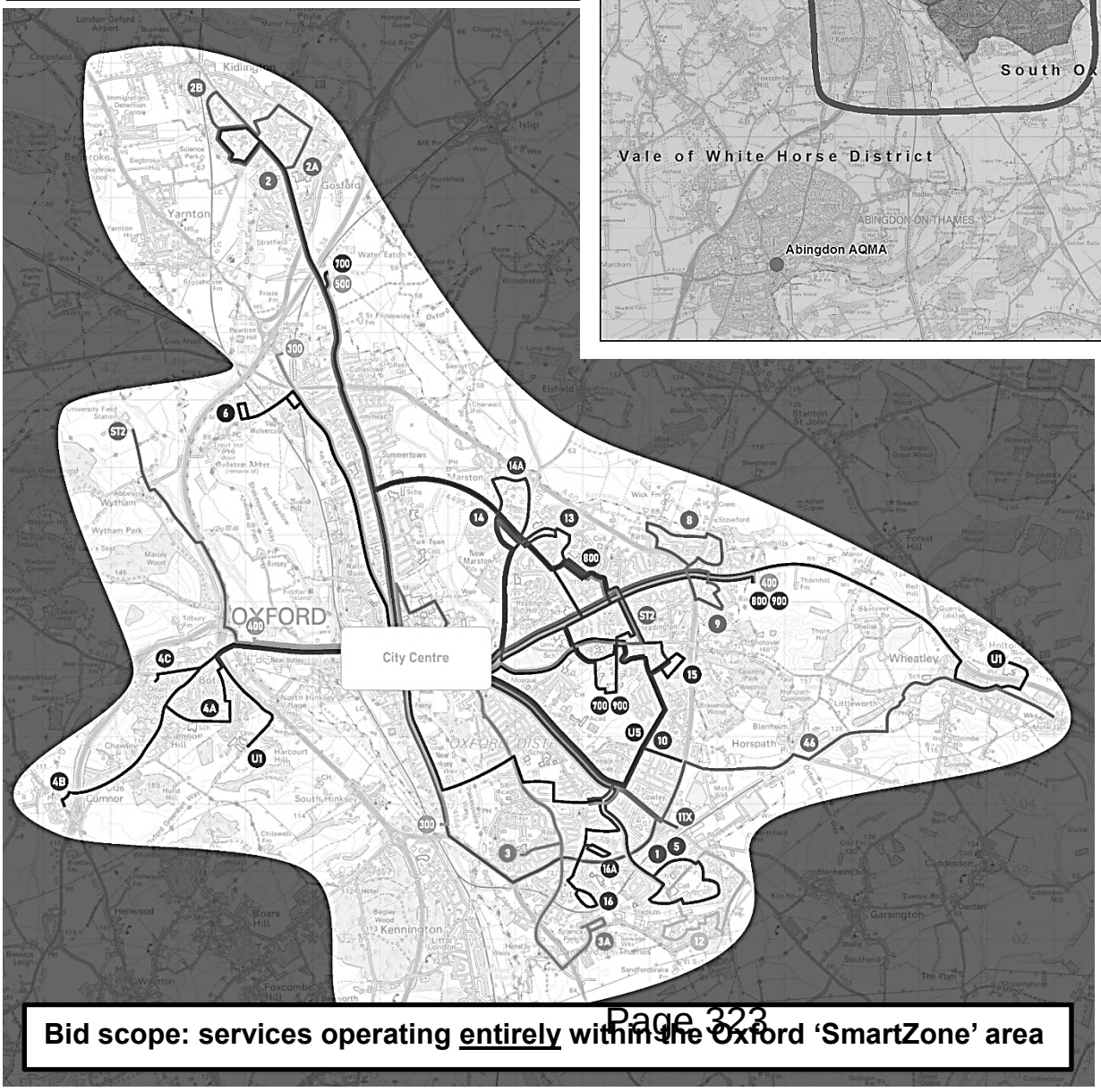
Annex 1: ZEBRA bid area and services included

Proposed ZEBRA area contains three AQMAs – Oxford, Botley and Kidlington



Within SmartZone area, electrification of:

- 48% of bus services
- 67% of total hourly bus flows
- 72% of total daily bus mileage



Bid scope: services operating <u>entirely</u> within the Oxford 'SmartZone' area

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Divisions: all Didcot

CABINET REPORT – 22 JUNE 2021

RELEASING DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY IN DIDCOT AND SURROUNDING VILLAGES IN THE VICINITY OF HIF 1 SCHEMES

Report by Bill Cotton Corporate Director for Environment & Place

RECOMMENDATION

The Cabinet is RECOMMENDED to implement a strategy to assist with the delivery of new development in the Vale of White Horse and South Oxfordshire districts to allow some growth to come forward in a controlled manner prior to HIF 1 funded infrastructure being open for public use based upon the following requirements:

- **Development site housing build programmes / trajectories / occupations being aligned with (or after) the delivery of HIF 1 which will require occupation thresholds / controls on development sites.**
- **Development sites to provide agreed sustainable / active travel infrastructure at the beginning (early occupations) of development sites to reduce traffic impact on the highway network prior to HIF 1 delivery.**
- **New services or enhancements to existing bus service arrangements being implemented at the beginning (early occupations) of development sites.**
- **Local off-site and on-site highway works to be delivered at the early stages of development to lessen the direct impact of a development site on the highway network.**
- **Travel Plans prepared and approved by the council's Travel Plan team with deliverable and monitored targets.**
- **Strategic transport / highway contributions will be sought in accordance with Regulation 122 and the three Section 106 tests.**

Executive Summary

1. Prior to Didcot Garden Town Housing Infrastructure (HIF 1) funding being secured in June 2020, it was established that the local and strategic highway network that serves Didcot and the surrounding area has severe congestion and capacity issues during the morning and evening commuter periods. The areas of concern most affected have been identified as the river crossing between Sutton Courtenay and Culham, Clifton Hampden village signal junction, and the A4130 as the main route between Didcot and Milton Interchange (A34).

2. To manage the highway network a strategy was devised in 2018 between officers of the district councils and Oxfordshire County Council (OCC) to manage development within the areas that have the most severe capacity issues in the absence of strategic highway infrastructure, to support new growth in the Vale of White Horse and South Oxfordshire districts (as identified in LTP4 and district Local Plans). This strategy involved OCC in the role as Local Highway Authority objecting to new developments (including single dwellings and house holder extensions) that will generate a new vehicular trip in the morning and evening commuter peak times.

3. While this approach enabled both district councils and OCC to manage the impact of new development on the highway network and support the HIF 1 bid, it has placed OCC's position under immense scrutiny and officers are aware of frustration from developers who have been unable to progress their allocated development sites since HIF 1 funding was secured. Such frustrations have led to some development sites appealing their planning applications, with one of the reasons identified as OCC's position being considered unreasonable by not allowing some development when sites build out programmes are aligned to the delivery programme of HIF 1. Defending the established position through such appeals places a significant financial (and reputational) risk on OCC. **Annex A** identifies the development sites considered to be most at risk of appealing their planning applications.

4. Pressure is also being placed on OCC by the district councils to allow some development due to the ongoing delays of application responses which is impacting on their housing supply numbers. Such delays are providing an opportunity for speculative development impacting on planned development and associated infrastructure, which is also placing further resource pressures on both district councils to resist such proposals. At times this has strained the working relationships between the Districts and OCC. There also remains an expectation that homes will be delivered in a timely manner in accordance with the agreement on funding secured through Homes England.

5. Securing HIF 1 funding, the adoption of the Vale of White Horse Local Plan and the adoption of the South Oxfordshire Local Plan has provided OCC with more confidence in the delivery of HIF 1. Although it continues to be recognised by officers that in the absence of the HIF 1 infrastructure, much of the highway network is at design capacity during the morning and evening commute times. It remains the fact that all applications are assessed on their merits and officers are mindful that there is an overall national planning gain in delivering houses and economic growth. OCC should not be seen to be obstructing this for a further 3.5 years, whilst also maintaining a working highway network.

<u>Releasing Development Strategy</u>

6. To assist with the delivery of much needed housing in the Vale of White Horse and South Oxfordshire districts, officers have identified the need for a development strategy to be implemented by OCC. Allowing for some controlled

development to come forward prior to HIF 1 infrastructure being available for public use.

1. Officers consider there are three broad scenarios:

   - *Scenario 1: Now OCC has secured HIF 1 funding OCC remove the current restriction in respect of all development in the restriction area* (**Annex B**).
   - *Scenario 2: Have a phased approach to releasing development that allows for a proportion of housing to come forward aligned to the delivery programme of HIF 1.*
   - *Scenario 3 don't allow any economic or housing growth until the HIF 1 schemes are open for use.*

2. Officers consider that there is too much risk financially and reputationally to recommend either Scenarios 1 or 3 and therefore consider that Scenario 2 should be recommended as providing a balanced way forward. Set out below is further information and risks associated with Scenario 2. The risks associated with Scenarios 1 and 3 are not detailed, as in summary they result in either entirely blocking development or risk the delivery of an unworkable highway network that will be gridlocked.

3. Securing the HIF 1 funding gives OCC more confidence in the delivery of HIF 1 infrastructure but recognises that in the absence of this infrastructure, the highway network is at design capacity during peak periods. However, HIF 1 infrastructure is also predicated on the timely delivery of allocated / planned development. It remains the fact that all applications are assessed on their merits and officers must be mindful that there is an overall balance to be struck between securing national planning gain in delivering houses and economic growth whilst maintaining an overall working highway network.

4. The proposed Development Strategy seeks to avoid speculative development, potential appeal costs against the council and deliver some much-needed housing in the Vale of White Horse and South Oxfordshire districts. It assumes that housing build programmes / trajectories can align with the delivery programme of HIF 1 and applicants demonstrate to that there will be no severe harm to the operation of the highway network. This would be secured through aligning build out with an enhance package of measures secured through a Section 106 legal agreement. The table below summaries the proposed tiered approach with associated risk.

Table 1.1 Releasing Development Risk Levels

Tier	**Development Type**	**Risk to OCC**
1	Single dwelling / householder proposals	Low
2	Development sites of less than 10 houses	Low / Medium
3	Allocated sites	Medium
4	Culham & Berinsfield sites in adopted SODC Local Plan.	Medium
5	Speculative (non-allocated) large development sites	Medium

6	Commercial developments	Medium

Scenario 2 - Releasing Development Strategy proposal

5. Tier 1: Single house (and extension) proposals are expected to generate modest new vehicular movements in the morning and evening commuter peak hours are no longer to be objected to by OCC officers on traffic impact (HIF 1) grounds. This is on the basis HIF 1 funding has been secured and OCC is confident in delivering HIF 1. Each Tier 1 planning application will be assessed on its merits.

6. Tier 2: Developments of less than 10 houses that will generate new vehicular movements in the morning and evening commuter peak periods are no longer to be objected to by OCC officers on traffic impact (HIF 1) grounds. This is on the basis HIF 1 funding has been secured and OCC is confident in delivering HIF 1. Tier 2 development proposals will be assessed on their merits and strategic highway and public transport contributions will be sought as well as any appropriate mitigation works.

7. Tier 3: Development sites of 10+ houses that will generate new vehicular movements in the morning and evening commuter peak periods are no longer to be objected to by OCC officers on traffic impact (HIF 1) grounds. This is on the basis HIF 1 funding has been secured and OCC is confident in delivering HIF 1. Tier 3 development proposals will be assessed on their merits and strategic highway and public transport contributions will be sought. Off-site and on-site highway infrastructure will be expected to be delivered early on for these development sites to encourage sustainable and active travel patterns. Occupation controls will be applied to development sites to lessen the cumulative impact on the highway network.

8. Tier 4: Commercial developments. It is recognised by OCC that there are significant existing and proposed commercial sites in the area that help support the local and national economy such as Culham Science Centre, Milton Park, Harwell Campus (and others). While these sites are not directly linked to releasing housing via the delivery of HIF 1, they are to play an essential role in its delivery, such as providing land or delivering some elements of the highway works. While HIF 1 funding has been secured and OCC is confident is delivering HIF 1, Tier 4 development proposals will be assessed on their merits but will be expected to mitigate their own impact through local and site wide measures which may include providing excellent pedestrian, and/or cyclist provisions and enhanced frequent public transport service provisions to help reduce their impact in the local area before HIF1 is delivered and in the long term. Restrictions on gross floor area usage or occupation thresholds may be applied to development sites to lessen the cumulative impact on the highway network.

9. While this tiered approach will enable some development to come forward prior to the delivery of HIF 1; OCC officers will continue to monitor the operation of the highway network in consultation with the Vale of White Horse and South

Oxfordshire district councils and will continuously review this tiered approach until the delivery of HIF 1.

Financial and Staff Implications

7. Cost of potential planning appeals will be significant, in both monetary and in terms of officer time and are not allowed for within current budgets. Although managers will do everything, they can to resource any in-house officer time directly associated with any appeal within current establishment budgets, external costs associated with appeals would present an unfunded pressure for the council. It is anticipated that these exceptional costs would be reported through the normal FMR process and any subsequent pressure identified as an overspend. If the pressure cannot be met within Directorate resources, funding will be sought through a request for a supplementary estimate from general balances.

Comments checked by:
Robert Finlayson, Finance Business Partner (Environment & Place' C, OD&R. A&I), Robert.Finlayson@Oxfordshire.gov.uk

Equality, Sustainability & Inclusion Implications

8. An Equality and Climate Impact Assessment has been undertaken. This has confirmed there are no known groups that would be particularly disadvantaged by the proposed approach.

Legal Implications

Legal Advice

9. Legal Advice has been sought as this report has been developed and has informed the recommended approach promoting the release of controlled development prior to the delivery if HIF 1.

Comments checked by:
Jennifer Crouch, Principal Solicitor (Environment Team),
Jennifer.Crouch@Oxfordshire.gov.uk

Risk Management

Land Assembly and delivery

10. If allocated housing sites are permitted to occupy without restriction once OCC secures HIF 1 planning consent, there remains a risk that land assembly may

require a CPO process. Certainty delivering HIF 1 does not occur until either all the required land is secured by negotiation or a successful CPO process has been completed. Thereafter, the risk profile reduces and focuses on delivery of construction.

11. Should HIF 1 infrastructure not be delivered (i.e. HIF 1 schemes aren't deliverable within the funding timeframe and / or OCC loses HIF 1 funding) transport modelling indicates that the highway network in and around Didcot will be severely compromised, even before all adopted allocated sites approved are built out. This risk cannot be mitigated through planning obligations; as restricting housing occupations on such a scale impacts upon development viability. OCC would accept it has a transport network that does not function efficiently. This could affect local business confidence, limit the construction of new houses and have a severe impact on the Strategic Road Network (A34).

Public Relations

12. If the public see OCC is unlocking growth ahead of infrastructure being delivered, especially with evidence that shows the current severity of impact, this may become a political and sensitive issue. The significance of Cabinet considering the recommended development strategy is to ensure transparency in the decision-making process by balancing the national imperative to support housing and employment growth with the risks involved against the cost exposure from likely planning appeals for delaying allocated development until HIF 1 is delivered for public use at the end of 2024.

South Oxfordshire Local Plan Juridical Review

13. The South Oxfordshire Local Plan was adopted 10th December 2020 setting the housing development numbers and location of the sites (partly included in HIF 1 bid) up to 2035 in the district. The district council received notification in late March 2021 of the outcome of the judicial review that had been submitted by Bioabundance CIC. The result of this review confirmed that the lawfulness of the decision-making process for the Local Plan has been proven sound. This decision was subsequently appealed in April 2021 and was dismissed by The Honourable Mrs Justice Lang. Further to this decision, Bioabundance CIC has made an application to the Court of Appeal seeking to overturn the April 29th High Court decision. The District Council currently await notification from the Court of Appeal regarding any future step.

Managing Development

14. Allowing new development to come forward in a controlled manner does not mean OCC will not object to planning applications on other grounds. Examples of such reasons include unacceptable highway safety implications, or insufficient walking, cycling, or public transport provision, and indeed, there may be non-transport objections from OCC (including Education, Archaeology or Drainage). This is no different to the way any other planning application is assessed across the county.

Risk of Planning Appeals

15. With a development strategy in place releasing development prior to the delivery of HIF 1, there remains a risk that some sites may still press ahead with a planning appeal if they do not wish to be restricted by the rate of house building. Officers will defend OCC's position with the evidence that is available at the time, although unbudgeted appeal costs should not be to the exceptional level of costs anticipated at paragraph 16 above. Officers will seek to mitigate cost exposure by narrowing matters of difference with the appellant. Other highway issues will be assessed on their merits in line with national and local policies.

BILL COTTON
Corporate Director, Environment & Place

Annexes: Annex A: Development Sites at risk of appeal
Annex B: Restriction Area Plan

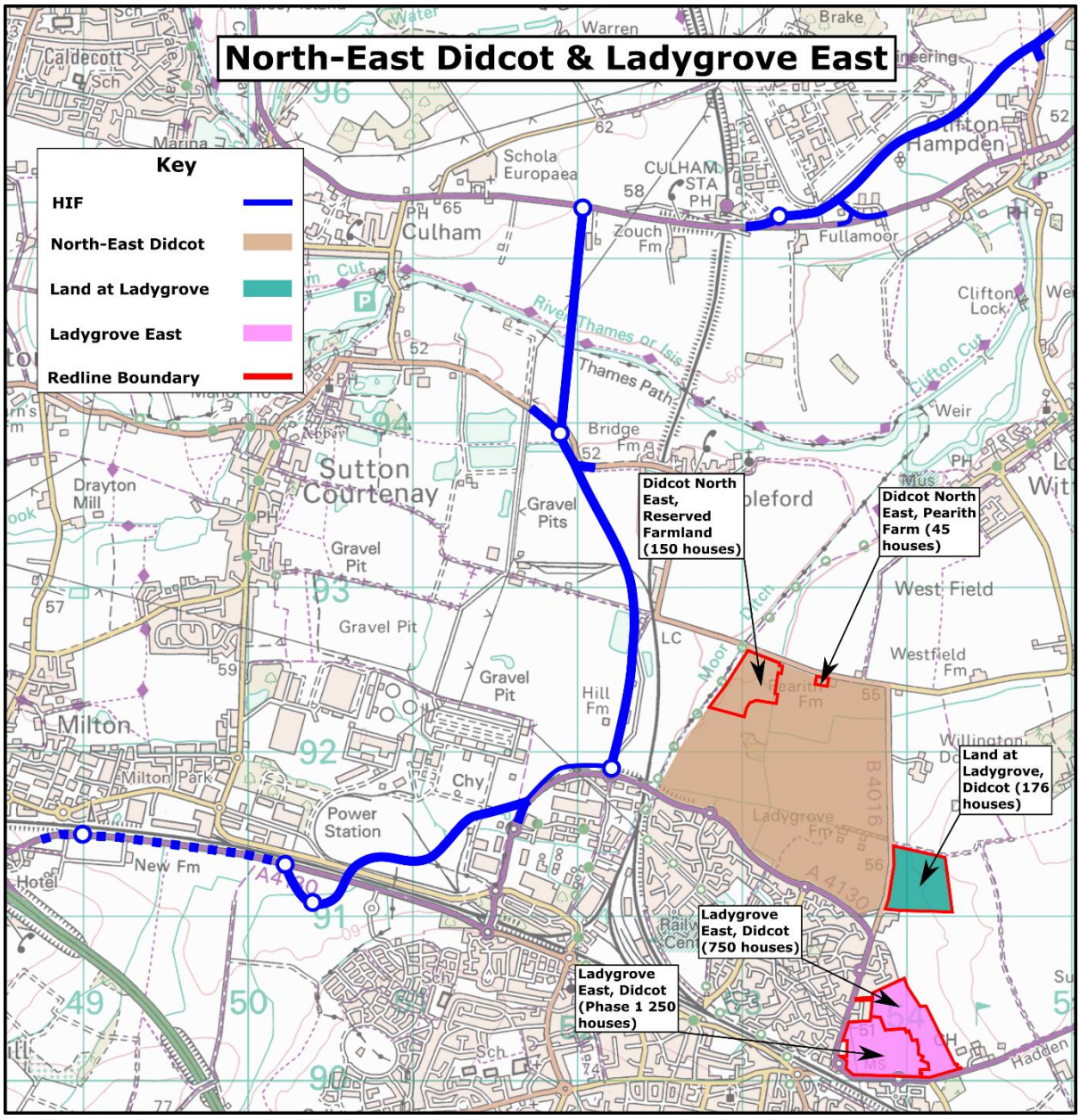
Background papers: Nil

Contact Officers: Eric Owens, Assistant Director, Environment & Place, 07799097637, Eric.Owens@Oxfordshire.gov.uk,
Jason Sherwood, South Growth Manager, 07795 684708, Jason.Sherwood@Oxfordshire.gov.uk and
Michael Deadman TDC Lead Officer, 07767608992, Michael.Deadman@Oxfordshire.gov.uk

June 2021

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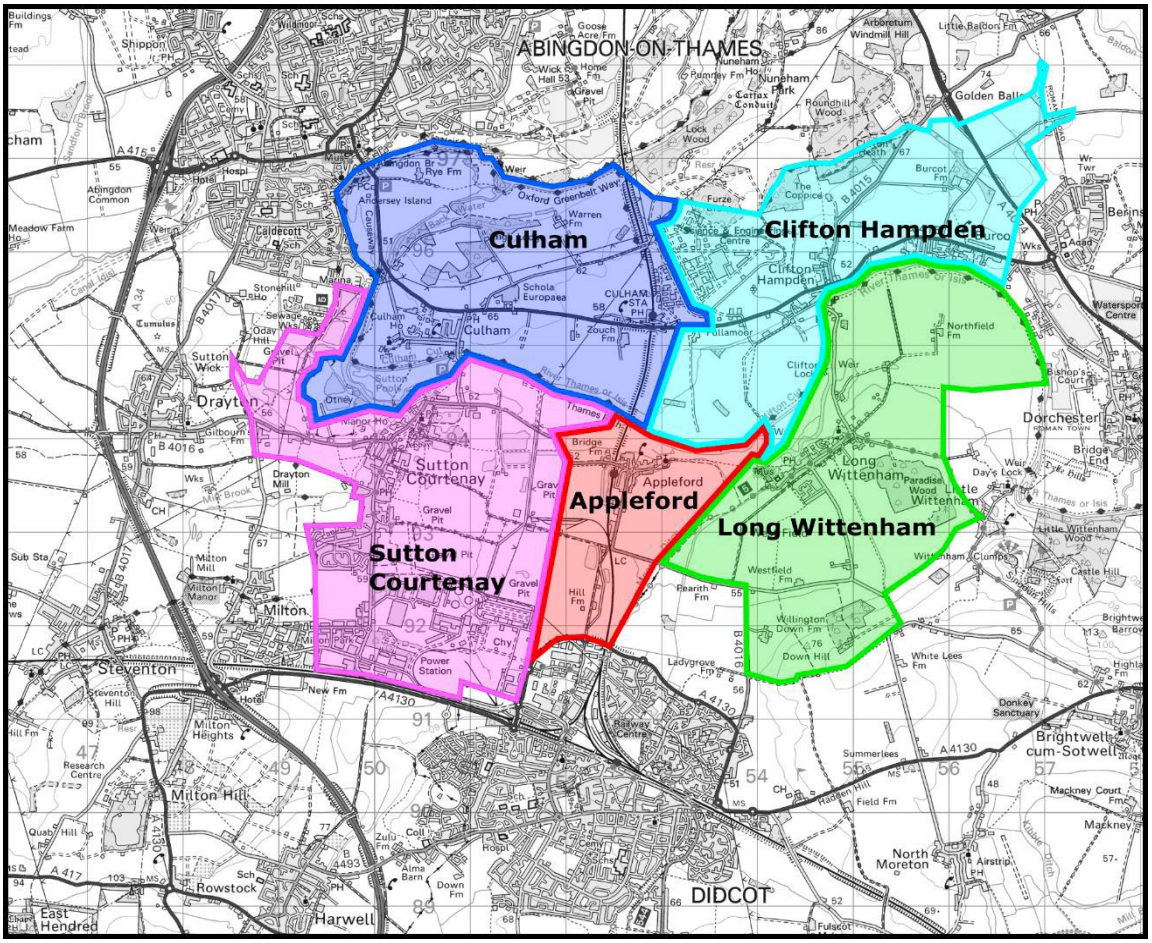
Annex A: Development sites considered to be most at risk of appealing their planning applications



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Annex B: Restricted Development Strategy in Didcot and Surrounding Villages in the vicinity of HIF 1 schemes

To manage the highway network a strategy was devised between officers of the district councils and OCC to control development within areas (including Didcot) that have the most severe capacity issues in the absence of strategic highway infrastructure to support new growth in the Vale of White Horse and South Oxfordshire districts (as identified in LTP4 and district Local Plans). This strategy involved OCC in the role as Local Highway Authority objecting to new developments that will generate a new vehicular trip in the morning and evening commuter peak times. The plan below highlights these restriction areas.



It should be noted that in all the parishes highlighted above OCC objected to planning applications for all development from a single house up to strategic sites. Applications in the areas surrounding these parishes, including Didcot, have been assessed on a case by case basis and any sites that put new trips over the current river crossings have also had objections from OCC.

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Cherwell District Council and Oxfordshire County Council

Equality and Climate Impact Assessment

Releasing Development Strategy in Didcot

and surrounding villages in the vicinity of HIF 1 schemes

June 2021

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Section 1: Summary details

Directorate and Service Area	Communities – Environment & Place
What is being assessed (e.g. name of policy, procedure, project, service or proposed service change).	Releasing Development Strategy in Didcot and surrounding villages in the vicinity of HIF 1 schemes
Is this a new or existing function or policy?	New Strategy
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).	OCC's Cabinet is being recommended to adopt a new strategy to assist with the delivery of new development in the Vale of White Horse and South Oxfordshire districts to allow some growth to come forward in a controlled manner prior to HIF 1 funded infrastructure being open for public use in 2024 based upon the following requirements: • *Development site housing build programmes / trajectories / occupations being aligned with (or after) the delivery of HIF 1 which will require occupation thresholds / controls on development sites.* • *Development sites to provide agreed sustainable / active travel infrastructure at the beginning (early occupations) of development sites to reduce traffic impact on the highway network prior to HIF 1 delivery.* • *New services or enhancements to existing bus service arrangements being implemented at the beginning (early occupations) of development sites.* • *Local off-site and on-site highway works to be delivered at the early stages of development to lessen the direct impact of a development site on the highway network.* • *Travel Plans prepared and approved by the council's Travel Plan team with deliverable and monitored targets.* • *Strategic transport / highway contributions will be sought in accordance with Regulation 122 and the three Section 106 tests.*

	This strategy has been prepared to assist with the delivery of much needed housing in the Vale of White Horse and South Oxfordshire districts allowing for some controlled development to come forward prior to HIF 1 infrastructure being available for public use. Some negative impacts may be identified by concerned residents or local protection groups regarding air quality issues or carbon reduction matters associated with housing growth. However, such environmental risks would be expected to be mitigated through local and national planning policies controlled through the planning application process. The planning application process will secure early active traffic management, new public transport services and highway asset improvements to ensure mitigation of transport impacts. It is acknowledged there will so some residual carbon impact from development proposals coming forward. However, as noted above all development will be provided in line with relevant environmental policies and impacts of development proposals, and are to be considered against the gains in delivering much needed housing and economic growth in the districts of the Vale of White Horse and South Oxfordshire.
Completed By	Michael Deadman, TDC Leader Officer, Environment & Place
Authorised By	Eric Owens, Assistant Director, Environment & Place
Date of Assessment	8th June 2021

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.	Prior to Didcot Garden Town Housing Infrastructure (HIF 1) funding being secured in June 2020, it was established that the local and strategic highway network that serves Didcot and the surrounding area has severe congestion and capacity issues during the morning and evening commuter periods. The areas of concern most affected have been identified as the river crossing between Sutton Courtenay and Culham, Clifton Hampden village signal junction, and the A4130 as the main route between Didcot and Milton Interchange (A34). To manage the highway network a strategy was devised in 2018 between officers of the district councils and Oxfordshire County Council (OCC) to manage development within the areas that have the most severe capacity issues in the absence of strategic highway infrastructure, to support new growth in the Vale of White Horse and South Oxfordshire districts (as identified in LTP4 and district Local Plans). This strategy involved OCC in the role as Local

	Highway Authority objecting to new developments (including single dwellings and house holder extensions) that will generate a new vehicular trip in the morning and evening commuter peak times. While this approach enabled both district councils and OCC to manage the impact of new development on the highway network and support the HIF 1 bid, it has placed OCC's position under immense scrutiny and officers are aware of frustration from developers who have been unable to progress their allocated development sites since HIF 1 funding was secured. Such frustrations have led to some development sites appealing their planning applications, with one of the reasons identified as OCC's position being considered unreasonable by not allowing some development when sites build out programmes are aligned to the delivery programme of HIF 1. Defending the established position through such appeals places a significant financial (and reputational) risk on OCC. Pressure is also being placed on OCC by the district councils to allow some development due to the ongoing delays of application responses which is impacting on their housing supply numbers. Such delays are providing an opportunity for speculative development impacting on planned development and associated infrastructure, which is also placing further resource pressures on both district councils to resist such proposals. There also remains an expectation that homes will be delivered in a timely manner in accordance with the agreement on funding secured through Homes England. Securing HIF 1 funding, the adoption of the Vale of White Horse Local Plan and the adoption of the South Oxfordshire Local Plan has provided OCC with more confidence in the delivery of HIF 1. Although it continues to be recognised by officers that in the absence of the HIF 1 infrastructure, much of the highway network is at design capacity during the morning and evening commute times. It remains the fact that all applications are assessed on their merits and officers are mindful that there is an overall national planning gain in delivering houses and economic growth. OCC should not be seen to be obstructing this for a further 3.5 years, whilst also maintaining a working highway network. To assist with the delivery of much needed housing in the Vale of White Horse and South Oxfordshire districts, officers have identified the need for a development strategy to be implemented by OCC. Allowing for some controlled development to come forward prior to HIF 1 infrastructure being available for public use

Proposals Explain the detail of the proposals, including why this has been decided as the best course of action.	The development strategy seeks to avoid speculative development without appropriate mitigation packages, potential appeal costs against the council and deliver much-needed housing in the Vale of White Horse and South Oxfordshire districts. It assumes that housing build programmes / trajectories can align with the delivery programme of HIF 1 and applicants demonstrate to that there will be no severe harm to the operation of the highway network. This would be secured through aligning build out with an enhance package of active travel measures secured through a Section 106 legal agreement. A tiered approached is proposed to reduce the risk of planning appeal while also managing the risk / impact of new development on the highway network. Each development proposal will continue to be assessed on its merits.
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	All matters related to evidence etc will be captured through the planning application process and will be expected to be in line with national and Vale of White Horse and South Oxfordshire core local plan policies. It is the role of the district council as the local planning authority to consult with stakeholders and manage development proposals in accordance with their local plan policies.

Tier	Development Type	Risk to OCC
1	Single dwelling / householder proposals	Low
2	Development sites of less than 10 houses	Low / Medium
3	Allocated sites	Medium
4	Culham & Berinsfield sites in adopted SODC Local Plan.	Medium
5	Speculative (non-allocated) large development sites	Medium
6	Commercial developments	Medium

make about potential impact on different individuals, communities or groups and our ability to deliver our climate commitments.	
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.	Officers considered there were three scenarios to allow development: • *Scenario 1: Now OCC has secured HIF 1 funding OCC remove the current restriction in respect of all development in the restriction area*. • *Scenario 2: Have a phased approach to releasing development that allows for a proportion of housing to come forward aligned to the delivery programme of HIF 1.* • *Scenario 3 don't allow any economic or housing growth until the HIF 1 schemes are open for use.* Officers considered that there is too much risk financially and reputationally to recommend either Scenarios 1 or 3 and therefore considered that Scenario 2 should be adopted to provide a balanced way forward. The risks associated with Scenarios 1 and 3 are not detailed on why they were rejected, however, the main risks from them were that OCC entirely blocked development or increase the risk of delivery of an unworkable highway network that will be gridlocked.

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	☒	☐	☐	Not applicable.	Not applicable.	Not applicable.	Not applicable.
Disability	☒	☐	☐	No specific impact. New developments when they come forward are required to be designed, constructed and provide infrastructure to serve all users of the public highway in accordance with national and local design standards, guidance and planning policy.	Not applicable.	Michael Deadman, TDC Lead Officer	Not applicable.
Gender Reassignment	☒	☐	☐	Not applicable.	Not applicable.	Not applicable.	Not applicable.
Marriage & Civil Partnership	☒	☐	☐	Not applicable.	Not applicable.	Not applicable.	Not applicable.
Pregnancy & Maternity	☒	☐	☐	Not applicable.	Not applicable.	Not applicable.	Not applicable.
Race	☒	☐	☐	Not applicable.	Not applicable.	Not applicable.	Not applicable.
Sex	☒	☐	☐	Not applicable.	Not applicable.	Not applicable.	Not applicable.
Sexual Orientation	☒	☐	☐	Not applicable.	Not applicable.	Not applicable.	Not applicable.

Religion or Belief	☒	☐	☐	Not applicable.	Not applicable.	Not applicable.	Not applicable.

Section 3: Impact Assessment - Additional Community Impacts

Additional community impacts	No Impact	Positive	Negative	Description of impact	Any actions or mitigation to reduce negative impacts	Action owner (*Job Title, Organisation)	Timescale and monitoring arrangements
Rural communities	☒	☐	☐	No specific impact. New developments when they come forward in any area are required to be designed, constructed and provide infrastructure to serve all users of the public highway in accordance with national & local design standards, guidance and planning policy.	Not applicable.	Michael Deadman, TDC Lead Officer	Not applicable.
Armed Forces	☒	☐	☐	Not applicable.	Not applicable.	Not applicable.	Not applicable.
Carers	☐	☒	☐	New development may provide improved facilities for carers to use.	Not applicable.	Not applicable.	Not applicable.
Areas of deprivation	☐	☒	☐	New development may attract and bring investment to areas of deprivation.	Not applicable.	Not applicable.	Not applicable.

Section 3: Impact Assessment - Additional Wider Impacts

Additional Wider Impacts	No Impact	Positive	Negative	Description of Impact	Any actions or mitigation to reduce negative impacts	Action owner* (*Job Title, Organisation)	Timescale and monitoring arrangements
Staff	☒	☐	☐	No additional impacts identified for staff that are not already involved in the assessment of planning applications from a transport perspective.	Not applicable.	Michael Deadman, TDC Lead Officer.	Not applicable.
Other Council Services	☐	☒	☐	Impact on council services is expected to be positive in the long terms bringing forward development in a controlled manner as this will provide funding and physical improvements to existing council services i.e. new bus services, new schools, new active travel infrastructure etc.	Not applicable.	Michael Deadman, TDC Lead Officer.	Not applicable.
Providers	☒	☐	☐	No impact expected.	Not applicable.	Not applicable.	Not applicable.

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 [1]	☐	☒	☐	New development may attract and bring investment to areas of deprivation.	Not applicable.	Michael Deadman, TDC Lead Officer.	Not applicable.

[1] If the Public Services (Social Value) Act 2012 applies to this proposal, please summarise here how you have considered how the contract might improve the economic, social, and environmental well-being of the relevant area

Section 3: Impact Assessment - Climate Change Impacts

OCC and CDC aim to be carbon neutral by 2030. How will your proposal affect our ability to reduce carbon emissions related to

Climate change 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
Energy use in our buildings or highways	☒	☐	☐	No impact expected.	Not applicable.	Not applicable.	Not applicable.
Our fleet	☒	☐	☐	No impact expected.	Not applicable.	Not applicable.	Not applicable.
Staff travel	☒	☐	☐	No impact expected.	Not applicable.	Not applicable.	Not applicable.
Purchased services and products (including construction)	☒	☐	☐	No impact expected.	Not applicable.	Not applicable.	Not applicable.
Maintained schools	☐	☒	☐	New development may provide improved facilities for existing schools.	Not applicable.	Michael Deadman, TDC Lead Officer.	Not applicable.

We are also committed to enable Cherwell to become carbon neutral by 2030 and Oxfordshire by 2050. How will your proposal affect our ability to:

Climate change 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
Enable carbon emissions reduction at district/county level?	☐	☒	☐	New developments when they come forward in any area are required to be designed and constructed in accordance with county, district and national carbon emission and reduction standards.		Michael Deadman, TDC Lead Officer.	

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	**31st March 2023**
Person Responsible for Review	**Michael Deadman**
Authorised By	**Eric Owens**

Divisions Affected: Didcot, Hendreds & Harwell, Sutton Courtenay & Marcham, Berinsfield & Garsington

CABINET - 22 JUNE 2021

DIDCOT GARDEN TOWN HOUSING INFRASTRUCTURE FUND; IN PRINCIPLE USE OF STATUTORY POWERS

Report by Corporate Director Environment and Place

RECOMMENDATION

The Cabinet is RECOMMENDED to:

(a) approve in principle the development of The Oxfordshire County Council (Access to Didcot Garden Town) Compulsory Purchase Order 202[x]. Negotiations for private acquisition will be conducted in parallel to the compulsory purchase process. Powers of compulsory purchase will be used only as a matter of last resort, in order to bring forward the timely development of the Housing Infrastructure Fund 1 (HIF1) project. Formal authority for the making of The Oxfordshire County Council (Access to Didcot Garden Town) Compulsory Purchase Order 202[x] will be reported to Cabinet following the submission of a planning application for the scheme;

(b) approve the preparation and service of statutory notices for the Requisition of Information pursuant to Section 16 Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 (as amended) to assist with determining the interests in the land required for the delivery of the scheme;

(c) approve the preparation of T<u>he Oxfordshire County Council (</u>Access to Didcot Garden Town) <u>Compulsory Purchase Order 202[x]</u> in draft, together with a draft Order Map, draft Order Schedule, draft Statement of Reasons and all necessary land referencing activity in advance of seeking formal authority to make the Order;

(d) approve the preparation of The Oxfordshire County Council (Didcot to Culham Thames Bridge) Scheme 202[x] in accordance with section 106(3) of The Highways Act 1980 (as amended) in relation to a new road overbridge crossing of the River Thames, being a navigable waterway;

(e) approve the preparation of The Oxfordshire County Council (Didcot Garden Town Housing Infrastructure Fund (HIF1) – A4130 Improvement) (Side Roads) Order 202[x] (or multiple Side Roads Orders as may be necessary), and The Oxfordshire County Council (Didcot Garden Town Highways Infrastructure – A4130 Improvement) Compulsory Purchase Order 202[x] to enable the stopping-up,

diversion, amendment, improvement and creation of new lengths of highway or reclassification of existing highways. Please note that the final titles of the orders will be determined as the project progresses and will be updated in this report accordingly. This includes the stopping up of private means of access as necessary where the scheme design necessitates. Formal approval for the making of Side Roads Order(s) will be reported to Cabinet, and necessary approval sought, following the submission of a planning application for the scheme.

Executive Summary

1. This report is technical in nature due to the fact that it is intended to be used as a part of the documentary evidence base throughout the statutory processes to which it relates.

2. The Didcot Garden Town Housing Infrastructure Fund programme (hereon in referred to as HIF1) is to fund £218m of a £234m package of measures (the remaining funding - circa £16m - will come from developer obligations either held or secured by Oxfordshire County Council via section 106 agreements. Any funds not held at the time of construction will be forward funded by Oxfordshire County Council) consisting of four separate but interdependent highways schemes:

   (a) A4130 widening from Milton Interchange to a new Science Bridge by making it a dual carriageway;
   (b) a new Didcot Science Bridge from the A4130 over the Great Western Railway Mainline into the Didcot 'A' Power Station site and re-joining the A4130 Northern Perimeter Road north of the Purchas Road/Hawksworth roundabout;
   (c) a new river crossing and link road between the A4130 at Didcot and A415 at Culham, including two new bridges;
   (d) a Clifton Hampden Bypass between the A415 at Culham Science Centre and B4015 north of Clifton Hampden.

3. The grant funding will need to be spent by November 2024, as detailed in the Grant Determination Agreement (contract) with Homes England.

4. The HIF1 programme will directly unlock 11,711 new homes and support the delivery of more than 17,000 new homes in total in the Didcot Garden Town area. The residential units are across 12 separate sites in and around Didcot in South Oxfordshire (SODC) and Vale of White Horse (VoWHDC) districts.

5. The HIF objectives are to:
   (a) Directly unlock the delivery of 11,711 new homes in the area, of which approximately 4,200 affordable homes;
   (b) Support the delivery of approximately an additional 6,000 new homes;
   (c) Support approximately 20,000 new jobs in the Science Vale area including unlocking jobs across existing and new employment sites in the area. The HIF1 infrastructure will unlock business rates contributions

from Enterprise Zones to be reinvested back into the local economy as per the Enterprise Zone policy;

(d) Ensure the impact of additional housing on the transport network is acceptable;

(e) Provide for real mode choice by future proofing new infrastructure;

(f) Reduce congestion in the parishes surrounding Didcot to the north;

(g) Ensure that growth in and around Didcot does not place undue pressure on the strategic road network (A34); and

(h) Support Didcot as a new and vibrant Garden Town by providing forward funding for the necessary infrastructure enabling funding from development etc. to potentially be spent on Garden Town aspirations. Additionally, in conjunction with other highway improvements in the area, the HIF1 infrastructure will help to minimise traffic through the centre of Didcot facilitating a different movement strategy in Didcot.

6. The HIF1 schemes are also essential for the economic and social prosperity of Science Vale UK, one of the first Enterprise Zones, in addition to other newer Enterprise Zones in the area. Whilst the HIF1 programme is based on future growth, the HIF1 infrastructure will also help to ameliorate the issues resulting from historic housing and employment growth.

7. In the recovery phase of COVID-19, ensuring that Oxfordshire is able to make a significant contribution to the growth of the national economy is of the utmost importance. The timely delivery of the HIF1 programme is fundamental to realising this aim.

8. Following a report to Cabinet in July 2020, the preferred options were agreed by Cabinet to proceed with the preliminary design and planning application for the scheme.

9. Key milestone dates for the delivery of the project are outlined in Table 2 of this report.

10. OCC's Local Transport Plan: Connecting Oxfordshire 2015-2031 was agreed by full council in September 2015, following public consultation on the draft plan earlier that year. This includes HIF1 schemes as specific proposals in policies, SV2.6, SV2.13, and SV2.16 within the Science Vale Transport Strategy.

11. The schemes are also included in the policies of the Vale of White Horse Local Plan 2031 Part 1 and Part 2 (adopted) and the South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2034 (adopted). Both Local Plans include policies to safeguard land for these schemes and were consulted upon extensively with the public and through examination.

Background

12. The HIF1 infrastructure is the cornerstone of the Science Vale transport strategy and helps to support employment and growth ambitions in neighbouring Oxford City. It will benefit a large swathe of Oxfordshire residents that are required to travel from or into the Science Vale area for work, shopping and leisure. The

funding awarded will transform Didcot and the surrounding areas and will help deliver the Garden Town aspirations by forward funding essential highway infrastructure, which includes substantial improvements to pedestrian and cycle connectivity and will help to facilitate new and enhanced bus services.

13. The Didcot Garden Town HIF1 schemes are constituted of four key pieces of highway improvements: widening the A4130, Science Bridge, Didcot to Culham River Crossing and the Clifton Hampden Bypass. Although separate schemes, they must be delivered cohesively for their benefits to be fully realised.

14. Other priority areas, such as community facilities, affordable housing, and further walking and cycling infrastructure will be the focus of future bids and/or developer obligations that may not have been viable without HIF1 funding. Subject to the Cabinet resolution being sought, the County Council is committed to delivering the much-needed infrastructure and has already committed funding. In order to ensure HIF1 spend by Autumn 2024, the County Council cannot afford to pause or delay this programme.

15. OCC's Local Transport Plan: Connecting Oxfordshire 2015-2031 was agreed by full council in September 2015, following public consultation on the draft plan earlier that year. This includes HIF1 schemes as specific proposals in policies, SV2.6, SV2.13, and SV2.16 within the Science Vale Transport Strategy.

16. The Evaluation of Transport Impacts (ETI) which formed part of the evidence base for the Vale of White Horse Local Plan 2031 identified the requirement for significant highway infrastructure intervention in order to support the delivery of homes and jobs growth in the area.

17. Subsequently, the ETI produced to support the submitted South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2034 lends further weight to the need for these schemes. These ETIs were undertaken using the Oxfordshire Strategic Model (OSM).

18. The schemes are also included in the policies of the Vale of White Horse Local Plan 2031 Part 1 and Part 2 (adopted) and the South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2034 (submitted for examination). Both Local Plans include policies to safeguard land for these schemes and were consulted upon extensively with the public and through examination.

19. OCC held a consultation and public exhibitions in November 2018 to describe the need for these schemes, explain other options that were considered, and to show early indicative plans of the schemes. 307 responses were received. All information is available here: www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/didcot and also noted in Appendix B. Feedback from this consultation has helped to inform scheme design.

20. Without the HIF1 infrastructure, the County Council cannot ensure an efficient and safe highway network. Such are the current pressures on the network that the County Council, as the Highway Authority, has objected to planning applications for very small residential developments (single dwellings or extensions) with an identified traffic impact on the river crossing at Culham

(comprised of Sutton Bridge and Culham Cut) on the grounds that traffic generated by these proposals would result in a severe impact on the highway network.

21. Four such applications have subsequently received planning committee refusals with the decisions then being tested at appeal. On each occasion, the Planning Inspectorate has upheld the decision of the local planning authority and dismissed the appeals due to the severe cumulative impact on the highway network as per Paragraph 109 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

22. With the security of HIF funding, the County Council, together with its partners, can manage growth to enable residential and, importantly, commercial development in high tech sectors in the Science Vale area to progress, ensuring economic and jobs growth for residents of Oxfordshire.

23. To support delivery of the HIF1 programme of activity, Cabinet has previously authorised assembling the necessary land to support the scheme, including exercising compulsory purchase powers as a matter of last resort in the event that the land cannot be acquired by negotiation (23rd April 2019), along with adding the HIF1 programme to the capital programme following completion of a funding agreement (15th October 2019) with Homes England. The funding agreement was signed in late June 2020.

24. A further and more detailed report will be taken back to Cabinet to request a resolution to make and submit for confirmation to the Secretary of State for Transport The Oxfordshire County Council (Access to Didcot Garden Town) Compulsory Purchase Order 202[x], the [name of Bridging Scheme] and [name of SRO(s)], specifically for the HIF1 schemes, with that process to run in parallel to ongoing negotiations with those parties with land interests. Powers of compulsory purchase, should they be required and confirmed, would only be used as a matter of last resort to ensure the effective and timely delivery of the HIF1 schemes where the absence of a CPO would prevent that delivery.

The Need for the Scheme – Economic, Environmental and Social Benefits

25. To be produced along with the CPO and will be ready as scheme evolves. This section will be updated in due course.

Planning - Current Position

26. One planning application (Regulation 3 (Town and Country Planning General Regulations 1992) Development) will be submitted for all four schemes. OCC intend to submit a planning application in summer 2021 with determination likely in winter 2022.

Progress to Date

27. The work undertaken to date to develop the project since the preferred options report to Cabinet has included:

- The development of the preliminary design and planning application including an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA).
- Engagement with key stakeholders to develop design and engineering options for elements of the scheme e.g. structural design and flood modelling etc.
- Development of a robust scheme budget, risk management process and delivery programme, as set out within this report.
- Consultation with the public and stakeholders at various stages of the scheme development to date.
- The appointment of a number of technical specialists and contractors to deliver this and subsequent stages of the project.

28. In conjunction with all of the above, the land and property needed for the scheme to be delivered is being assessed. This has identified the need for the use of statutory powers in the form of:
    - Compulsory Purchase Order (CPO)
    - Side Roads Order (SRO)
    - Bridging Scheme

29. Powers of compulsory purchase will be used only as a matter of last resort in parallel to private treaty negotiations. This is in order to facilitate the timely delivery of the scheme where there would not be a reasonable prospect of delivery within the funding window (November 2024) in the absence of powers.

Programme

30. Due to the need to continue to develop and deliver the scheme at pace to limit further delays and also with the related funding window set out in the criteria in the contracted HIF1 Grant Determination Agreement, a defined programme to meet the tight critical paths is paramount.

31. The delivery programme has undergone a full review up to construction, with Early Contractor Involvement secured to advise on buildability and the construction programme. A number of ‘critical friends’ and key delivery partners have also been procured to advise on various disciplines. The programme is being continually updated as the project progresses, in line with Council internal governance requirements.

32. Key milestones through to successful scheme delivery are set out within Table 2.

33. The critical path to the delivery of the HIF1 project is to successfully acquire all of the necessary land and new rights required for the delivery of the scheme. At present, the programme reflects a worst-case position that the orders (or any number of them) will be contested with the likely need for Public Inquiry. Regardless of the need for a Public Inquiry the Secretary of State for Transport will need to approve the orders.

34. Acquiring authorities should acknowledge and understand that every effort should be made to acquire the necessary land interests and new rights by

private agreement with the affected parties and that **compulsory acquisition is a matter of last resort**. The Council has appointed external property agents and CPO legal specialists to undertake this work. However, acquisitions by negotiated agreement of all of the land affected and new rights required may not be possible within the funding window for this scheme and are, therefore, a key risk to its delivery.

35. Whilst acquisition by agreement will be diligently pursued, from a timescale perspective, initiating the CPO process over the entire land holding that is required to implement the scheme offers certainty, should parallel negotiations to acquire the land and new rights by agreement be unsuccessful. This is particularly important considering the funding window within which this scheme needs to be delivered.

Table 2 – Proposed Key Milestones HIF1

Activity	**Date**
Cabinet – in principle use of statutory powers	June 2021
Public engagement	Aug / Sept 2021
Planning application submission	Aug / Sept 2021
Detailed design commences	December 2021
Cabinet – resolution to make CPO/SRO/Bridging Scheme	October 2021
Planning determination	Early 2022
Detailed design complete	Late 2022
Possession of land	March / April 2023
Construction start	March / April 2023
ALL Construction Complete	Late 2024

36. COVID-19 programme effects moving forward have been included as far as reasonably practicable within the timescales indicated above. The potential ongoing effect is discussed further within the Risk Management section of this report.

Corporate Policies and Priorities

37. The delivery of the HIF1 project will actively support the following key themes within Oxfordshire County Council's Corporate Plan 2020-24;

(a) **Providing services that enhance the quality of life and protect the local environment** – will promote the modal shift away from private cars and into the more sustainable modes of travel of public transport, cycling and walking. This will be for both existing traffic as well as supporting future development in the area, enabling a culture change from the outset driven by the provision of quality infrastructure, rather than attempting to 'retrofit' afterwards. Reducing congestion and traffic through historic Oxfordshire villages to improve the quality of life for its residents. A bio-diversity net gain of at least 10% will achieved on the scheme

(b) **Supporting a thriving local economy by improving transport links to create jobs and homes for the future** – will directly provide enhanced highway capacity including for active travel and public transport, improved journey times for all, improved connectivity and reliability of public transport provision in and around Didcot. The scheme will unlock thousands of new homes and jobs, ensuring the highway network can cope with existing and predicted demand by all modes.

(c) **Taking action against Climate Change** – by reducing congestion and promoting modal shift in how people travel in and around Didcot will translate into clear benefits in terms of reducing carbon emissions, promoting 'zero carbon travel' and improving air quality in the area.

Financial Implications

Project Costs

38. The following is a high-level breakdown of the current project costs, reviewed in detail at end of April 2021;

- Stage 2 Design & Procurement – £19m
- Stage 3 Construction / Delivery – £107m
- Stage 4 Closeout – £0 (included in risk and contingency fund)

39. All figures are inclusive of the appropriate inflation allowances.

40. The risks associated with scheme delivery are underwritten by a £106m quantified risk and contingency fund which are accounted for separately within the overall forecast budget. However, with reference to the capped costs and funding availability within the Grant Determination Agreement with Homes England, any costs over and above the agreed funding envelope or that fall outside of the agreed timescales would need to be met by the Council. These additional costs would need to be met by reprioritising the capital programme or borrowing to fund the pressure. A letter of assurance has been signed by the section 151 officer for HIF1 confirming that Oxfordshire County Council has the ability to cover any cost increases in order to complete the project should the risk materialise.

41. The current and approved expenditure forecast indicates that between June and November 2024 expenditure for all four HIF1 schemes will be between approximately £6m and £8m per month. Depending on the length of delay (assuming between one and six months), without Homes England approving an extension, the funding exposure to the Council will be between £6m and £48m.

42. The total HIF1 scheme cost to completion is **£234m**.

Project Funding

43. The Didcot Garden Town HIF1 programme is to fund £218m of a £234m package of measures (the remaining funding - circa £16m - will come from developer obligations).

44. The Council entered into the Grant Determination Agreement in June 2020 to secure funding from the HIF programme.

45. The funding is in place to cover the whole scheme costs to deliver the HIF1 programme of works.

Comments checked by:
Rob Finlayson, Finance business Partner, rob.finlayson@oxfordshire.gov.uk

Legal Implications

Statutory Powers

46. Members should note that whilst the Council has compulsory purchase powers as an acquiring Authority, under the Highways Act 1980 and the Acquisition of Land Act 1981, as referenced elsewhere in this report, these powers should be used as a matter of last resort. Dialogue with affected landowners has commenced and will continue in parallel to acquire by negotiation as a first principle.

47. While an Authority can use compulsory purchase powers where it is expedient to do so, in considering whether to confirm the CPO, the Secretary of State will need to be convinced that there is a "compelling case in the public interest for compulsory acquisition". Members should therefore apply a similar test before authorising the in-principle decision to use these powers based on the balance of the information contained in this report. This is in the knowledge that a further report will be brought to Cabinet at a later date seeking authority to make the formal statutory Order itself.

48. The acquiring Authority is also expected to show that if compulsory acquisition is authorised the scheme is unlikely to be blocked by physical or legal impediments to deliverability. These include related infrastructure works, funding and the need for planning permission, the position of all of which are covered under various sections of this report.

49. Members should also note that once the CPO is made (following any future Cabinet authority required), those parties with an interest in the land and the public generally have a right to object to the CPO (and SRO) and, if so decided by the Secretary of State for Transport, have their objections heard at a local Public Inquiry. As Acquiring Authority, the Council must make the case for confirmation of the CPO to the Secretary of State but, if heard in a public Inquiry, the case will be made and tested in this forum. The CPO does not take effect until confirmed by the Secretary of State. Confirmation of the CPO affords the Acquiring Authority the power to compulsorily acquire land, but those powers have to be actively engaged, which has statutory minimum time periods for taking possession of land. Once the Order is confirmed, any party aggrieved by

the decision has a further six weeks from the first date of public notification of the confirmation in the local press to challenge the decision in the High Court on a point of law, often referred to as statutory Judicial Review. This could result in the Order, or the decision to confirm it, being quashed in whole or in part. The same principles of statutory challenge apply in relation to the Side Roads Order.

50. The principal powers in the Highways Act 1980 are, but not limited to;

(a) Section 14 and 125 (SROs)
(b) Section 106(3) (Bridging Scheme)
(c) Section 239(1), which provides that a highway authority may acquire land required for the construction of a highway which is to be maintainable at the public expense;
(d) Section 239(3) which allows a highway authority to acquire land for the improvement of a highway being an improvement which the authority is authorised to make under the Act;
(e) Section 240, which allows the acquisition of land in relation to an order under Section 14
(f) Section 246 authorises the acquisition of land for the purpose of mitigating the adverse effects of the construction or improvement of highways;
(g) Section 250 authorises the compulsory acquisition of new rights over land; and
(h) Section 260 authorises the clearance of the title to land already held by the Council and required for the scheme and which might otherwise interfere with the Council's activities in exercising its statutory powers to construct the works.

though it should be noted that a full assessment of appropriate Highways Act powers will be included in the Report to Cabinet for the making of the CPO and SRO in due course.

51. Some of the areas over which freehold title is to be acquired may not be required for the permanent works and may be offered back to the current owners at Open Market Value under the Crichel Down Rules, providing that certain criteria are met. There is no obligation on these parties to purchase the land back and so the Council should assume that all land will be retained, whether surplus or not, and budget accordingly.

52. The SRO will authorise the stopping-up, amendment, diversion, improvement and creation of new lengths of highway or reclassification of existing highways and the CPO will include land that is required to enable the works authorised by the SRO to be carried out. The SRO gives authority to the CPO and the CPO cannot, therefore, be made without the SRO having first been made (i.e., sealed and executed by the Council) though this will happen immediately consecutively.

53. In addition, the SRO may make provision for the stopping-up and (where appropriate) re-provision of private means of access to premises and

agricultural land. The CPO makes provision for the acquisition of land and new rights to enable new, replacement private means of access pursuant to the CPO, to be provided as part of the scheme.

54. It should be noted that the confirmation of compulsory purchase powers does not require that those powers be used nor does it acquire the land interests; it only provides the ability to use them. The Acquiring Authority has a duty to continue to try to acquire all necessary interests by private treaty agreement, where possible, with powers of compulsory purchase being used only as a matter of last resort. There is a statutory process pertaining to the implementation of powers, which will be reported to Cabinet when authority to make the CPO is sought later in 2021.

55. There may also be a requirement for both permanent and temporary traffic regulation orders (TROs) to enable the scheme, however, Cabinet approval is not required to implement these.

Requests for Information

56. In order to pursue a compulsory purchase order, Acquiring Authorities must undertake diligent enquiry to ascertain the land interests that exist in relation to each parcel of land required to facilitate the delivery of the scheme. The Council has engaged land referencing specialists to undertake this work, which feeds into the Order Map and Order Schedule.

57. Albeit that much of the information regarding interests in land can be discovered from investigation of the information held at HM Land Registry, one of the key components of land referencing is the ability to request information directly from the parties known from the desktop referencing process. These requests take the form of statutory requisitions for information pursuant to Section 16 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 (as amended).

58. Such requisitions provide for a minimum 14-day period from receipt for a response, though authorities often provide a longer period. Non-response to a statutory requisition for information is a criminal offence and it is for this reason that the approval of Cabinet to the service of these notices is sought, over and above the delegated powers to officers in the Council's Standing Order. It should be noted that any action taken as a result of an offence being committed is entirely at the discretion of the Council.

Human Rights

59. The Human Rights Act 1998 incorporated into domestic law the European Convention on Human Rights ("the Convention"). The Convention includes provisions in the form of Articles, the aim of which is to protect the rights of the individual.

60. The following articles of the Convention are relevant to the determination as to whether a compulsory purchase order should be confirmed:

(a) Article 1 of the First Protocol protects the right of everyone to peaceful enjoyment of possessions. No one can be deprived of their possessions except in the public interest and subject to the relevant national and international laws. Any interference with possessions must be proportionate and, in determining whether a particular measure is proportionate, a fair balance must be struck between the public benefit sought and the interference with the rights in question;

(b) Article 6 entitles those affected by the powers sought in any CPO to a fair and public hearing by an independent and impartial tribunal;

(c) Article 8 protects the right of the individual to respect for his private and family life, his home and his correspondence. A public authority cannot interfere with these interests unless such interference is in accordance with the law and is necessary in the interests of, inter alia, national security, public safety or the economic wellbeing of the country.

61. Any CPO has the potential to infringe the human rights of persons who own property in the Order Land. Such infringement is authorised by law provided:

(a) the statutory procedures for obtaining the Order are followed and there is a compelling case in the public interest for any CPO; and

(b) any intervention with the Convention right is proportionate to the legitimate aim served.

62. A full consideration of human rights implications of the Scheme will be considered when reporting to Cabinet in October 2021 for authority to make the CPO.

Comments checked by:
Christian Smith, Principal Solicitor, Christian.smith@oxfordshire.gov.uk

Staff Implications

63. The resource requirements to successfully deliver HIF1 will come from existing project and technical management functions, primarily within the Growth and Economy Directorate. This will be supported by other disciplines from across the Council organisation as the need arises.

64. Specialist legal advisors are already engaged to provide support to the CPO and other such statutory processes to limit the potential for future challenge to an absolute minimum. Additionally, a specialist surveying company has been engaged to undertake land referencing and valuation.

65. The forecast Council staffing costs of project and technical management to completion are contained within the total budget quoted within this report.

Equality & Inclusion Implications

66. The equalities implications of the HIF1 scheme will be assessed robustly through the design development stages of the scheme. These equalities implications will be considered in line with the Equality Act 2010 and through the completion of an Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) as part of the development of the HIF1 and wider A40 programme.

67. The Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED), to which the County Council is also subject, places additional obligations on public sector bodies to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations. Recognising and complying with these higher standards is required to discharge the PSED. In particular, steps must be taken to meet the needs of persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are different from the needs of persons who do not share that characteristic.

68. Work towards this has already taken the form of considering the safety of all pedestrians, cyclists, and horse-riders through a Walking, Cycling and Horse-Riding Assessment & Review which will form part of the information presented at planning. This continual review and development process will ensure that the protected characteristics, particularly those of age and disability, are considered appropriately in the design of the schemes through the provision of suitable crossing facilities and segregated routes of a high standard along all of the schemes. Further to this, by facilitating new bus services and better access to urban and rural areas for non-motorised users, the needs of all people are being addressed. Reviewing the EqIA and the County Council's PSED will be a continuous process throughout the development of the scheme.

Sustainability Implications

69. The HIF1 proposals are designed to promote sustainable modes of travel for access into and around Didcot by commuting traffic by modal shift away from the private vehicle and on to public transport or by walking and cycling. High-quality pedestrian and cycling infrastructure will be provided along the full length of the scheme with new routes setting the conditions for new bus services between Oxford, Culham, Didcot and Harwell. In reducing traffic congestion levels this has positive impacts on air quality and carbon emissions.

70. Similar to the above, the successful delivery of the project, will form a core part of the promotion and early enabling the use of more sustainable forms of travel for the existing and new developments (new homes and employment) planned for the Didcot area. This will be teamed with promotional activities to achieve the cultural shift required. The forward funding element of the HIF1 project funds the essential infrastructure that would have been required from development sites to mitigate harm and will therefore enable developments to concentrate their resources on sustainable travel modes to/from their sites as primary mitigation.

71. The project has been developed to be as sustainable as possible in terms of its impact on the environment by using the likes of sustainable urban drainage

systems as a core part of its design development to date, non-statutory 10% biodiversity net gain provisions and appropriate levels of flood compensation.

72. During the next stages of scheme delivery there will be specific sustainability targets imposed on the design and build contractor with the likes of re-use of site won materials as an example of how additional temporary environmental impacts during construction will be reduced.

Risk Management

73. A risk register has been maintained as part of the project plan. The main risk to the delivery of the schemes is delay to the programme. The funding must be spent by November 2024. Any delay to the programme will see the County Council fail to meet this deadline. This risk and the others identified on the Risk Register are being managed by officers working closely with the professional services commissioned by OCC to deliver this scheme.

74. Emerging risks will be escalated through the capital governance process to ensure that issues and risks arising and impact on the Council are considered and managed.

75. COVID-19 currently poses an unquantifiable risk to the project's future delivery programme, as well as the associated knock on impact to the HIF1 funding agreement. COVID-19 impacts will be closely monitored and implications on programme reported.

76. For more information refer to Appendix A.

Communications

77. There is a detailed communications and engagement plan in place for the project. The purpose of this is to ensure consistency of approach across the wider HIF1 programme, ensuring that this is seen as a joined up complementary investment programme.

78. The communication and engagement plan have also been informed by a series of public consultations over the course of the scheme development, notably (but not restricted to) engagement events in November 2018 and March/April 2020. A further public engagement/information event is planned prior to the planning application submission. Formal responses will be considered through the statutory consultation associated with the planning application process.

79. The projects webpage has recently been launched (link below). https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/residents/roads-and-transport/roadworks/future-transport-projects/didcot-infrastructure-fund

80. OCC has commissioned AECOM to provide user friendly GA drawings and video fly-throughs. Once received these will be uploaded to the website.

81. This has been supported by a number of engagements via the following forums;

- Member briefings on-going throughout scheme development.
- On-going District and Parish Council meetings since summer 2020.
- Submission of OCC response paper to Appleford Parish Council position paper, follow up meeting attended by HIF1 team and Cllr Hudspeth.
- Responses to circa. 30 Appleford Residents emails/letters.
- Communication email sent to key stakeholders regarding intrusive survey mobilisation and programme of works.
- Landowner engagement has been ongoing since early 2020 seeking acquisition by negotiation.
- Further key user group meetings to explain scheme design and gain buy in to proposals set up for Q2 2021.
- Discussions with adjacent land / property owners being set up for Q2 2021.
- Preparation for public engagement event in summer 2021 currently being planned prior to submission of a planning application. Options for virtual and face to face subject to COVID restrictions being explored.
- Proactive engagement with statutory bodies such as the Environment Agency and Natural England to ensure that any scheme impacts are carefully and comprehensively mitigated.
- Engagement with developers of adjacent sites to ensure works are co-ordinated from both technical and practical perspectives.

82. For Consultation Response Report, see Appendix B. A frequently asks questions (FAQ) and glossary related to this consultation can be found at Appendix B1.

83. There is a clear understanding of the importance of continuing to develop this communications and engagement plan, strengthening relationships with all stakeholders in the process.

BILL COTTON
Corporate Director for Environment and Place

Annex:	Appendix A – Risk Management and Strategic Risk Register Appendix B – Consultation Response Report Appendix B1 – FAQs and Glossary
Background papers:	Didcot Garden Town Housing Infrastructure Fund: Preferred Scheme Alignments – July 2020 Didcot Garden Town Housing Infrastructure Fund DRAFT HEADS OF TERMS – October 2019
Contact Officer:	Aron Wisdom, HIF1 Programme Lead, 07776244856 Aron.Wisdom@Oxfordshire.gov.uk

June 2021

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Annex A

Risk Management & Strategic Risk Register

1. The technical complexity of the project has necessitated a quantified risk assessment (QRA) which was developed as part of the bid. A revised QRA is being developed to update the project risks against which costs and probability of realisation of risk is applied to each to give an estimated total financial value. A full risk register has been maintained throughout the project which covers construction including health and safety, design and engineering, environmental and reputational risks. The risk register has been split into a single Programme level risks (applicable to all 4 schemes) and four individual scheme risk registers specific to each scheme forming the HIF1 Project. Risk registers have been regularly reviewed and updated throughout the HIF1 project development.

2. In addition, a general contingency allowance has been made as part of the scheme cost build up, which is reflective of the current status of development and will be updated to reflect the latest QRA exercise at the end of the preliminary design stage to validate the contingency level.

3. Table A1 outlines the key strategic risks to scheme delivery;

Table A1 – HIF1 - Strategic Risks Summary

Risk	**Mitigation**
Delivery programme timescales remain challenging – if exceeded Council pays all subsequent capital investment costs	Engage early contractor involvement to advise on programme, phasing, material etc. Investigate potential for early works. Resource programming/planning critical friend to continually monitor programme. Continued liaison with Homes England and monitoring of key milestones.
Inability to acquire all necessary land and rights to deliver the scheme within the available funding window	Secure use of Highways CPO powers as a matter of last resort and running in parallel with private treaty negotiations
Need for Side Roads Orders to facilitate scheme delivery	Secure use of Side Roads Order powers from Cabinet
Contested statutory process leading to local Public Inquiry (planning / CPO / SRO)	Ensure adequate time and cost allowances are included within the scheme programme and budget to allow for a local Public Inquiry
HIF1: statutory processes (Highways CPO / Planning) running in parallel with HIF2 and other major schemes promoted by OCC.	Careful programming between the Programmes to avoid clashes where possible. Early engagement with decision making authorities to highlight resource risk.
Statutory Blight	Assess potential for Statutory Blight and design out wherever possible. Any Statutory Blight identified to be brought to Cabinet to set out position and seek

	necessary delegated approvals to deal with any such claims.
Spend beyond funding window e.g. Part 1 claims and mandatory post scheme monitoring.	Dialogue ongoing with Homes England to agree mechanism to draw down funding in advance of spend, which could be several years post scheme opening. Reserve s106 funding allocated to project for post-scheme claims/monitoring.
Client and supply chain resources to ensure successful delivery.	OCC resourcing forecast in place, secure client delivery team for duration of project where practicable. Robust procurement strategy in place and being delivered.
High value statutory undertaker diversions required to facilitate works – long lead times and high values	Early identification and engagement with statutory undertakers to agree extents and costs of diversions. Design out wherever possible. Potential to include as early enabling works package in advance of main construction (depending on land assembly).
Interdependency with adjacent development sites and programmes	Continuous liaison with development industry to identify programme clashes and opportunities. Use the development planning system to ensure OCC requirements can be accommodated.

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Frequently Asked Questions

This document will be updated throughout the consultation to include new frequently asked questions as we receive them.

Date of this version: 24.04.2020

What are you asking me to comment on and why?
We are now sharing with you the latest scheme designs and asking for your comments, so we can consider them in later stages of design. We welcome all relevant comments on any aspects of the scheme designs, hence the open-ended questions on the feedback form.

In order to meet the funding terms set by Government we have to soon move into the next stage of scheme design, therefore if we do not consult now it will be too late to incorporate comments into the schemes. This consultation follows a previous consultation and public exhibition in November 2018. The principle of the schemes and land safeguarding for them has also formed part of the consultation processes associated with the adopted Oxfordshire County Council Local Transport Plan 2015-2031, the adopted Vale of White Horse District Council's Local Plan 2031 Part 1 and Part 2, and the submitted for examination South Oxfordshire District Council's Local Plan 2011-2034.

Why is the consultation only happening online?
As a result of Government restrictions on social distancing in response to COVID-19, it was unfortunately not possible to hold the five public exhibitions that were scheduled for the last two weeks of March 2020. Due to the very tight timescales imposed by Government with respect to the terms of the funding (via the Housing Infrastructure Fund), it was necessary to continue with an online consultation in order to avoid delay to the project programme. When the planning application for the schemes is submitted, statutory consultation will be undertaken in accordance with the applicable planning legislation. There will also be ongoing liaison with key stakeholders and statutory bodies as the schemes progress as well as further non-statutory public consultations / exhibitions.

In light of the COVID-19 related restrictions on social distancing, what have you done to ensure local people can respond to the consultation?
This consultation was originally planned to last 4 weeks, which is usual for a non-statutory consultation such as this, but this duration was extended to 6 weeks to allow people more time to respond.

We are going above and beyond the usual steps taken in a non-statutory consultation; we are doing everything we can to reach as many people as we can in this unprecedented time, including:

- Sending letters to over 22,000 residences in the area
- Using an innovative virtual exhibition room with live chat function (we are the first council in the world to use this particular platform)
- Including phone numbers on all correspondence for people to call
- Directly contacting landowners with whom we have already been dealing
- Newspaper adverts in print (published each week during the consultation period)
- Newspaper adverts online (throughout the consultation period)
- Radio adverts (throughout the consultation period)
- OCC Facebook (17,800 people 'like' the OCC Facebook page)
- OCC Twitter (42,000 followers)
- OCC website
- Directly contacting OCC Councillors
- Directly contacting District Councillors

- Directly contacting Parish Councils
- Directly contacting major employment sites and asking them to disseminate to staff
- Sending printed versions of the materials to those who request them due to lack of internet access
- Extending the consultation – the usual period would be 3-4 weeks whereas this was for 6 weeks

How are you reaching people without access to the internet?
According to the Office for National Statistics, 93% of households had access to internet in 2019, therefore the vast majority of people should be able to access the online consultation. However, we want to ensure everyone has the opportunity to be involved so we are also trying to reach people without internet, whilst adhering to Government's instructions regarding COVID-19:

- We are sending letters to over 22,000 residential properties in the area, which includes a telephone number for people to call
- Letters have been sent to all landowners with whom we have been in previous contact regarding land access for surveys
- Radio adverts about the consultation, including a telephone number for people to call
- Printed newspaper adverts, including a telephone number for people to call
- Parish Councils have been informed of the consultation and provided a telephone number to call

What major changes have you made since the last consultation?
In response to your feedback from the previous consultation in November 2018, Clifton Hampden Bypass has been re-aligned further from residences in the north of the village. The Didcot to Culham River Crossing has also been moved further west from residential properties in Appleford village. Following further transport modelling work, which forecasts the anticipated growth in traffic in future years, the link road through the Former Didcot A Power Station site is proposed to connect into the existing A4130 approximately 100 metres north of the Purchas Road/A4130/Hawksworth roundabout, whereas previously it was proposed to connect directly into the existing roundabout. The drawings now show more developed high-quality pedestrian and cycle facilities with varying types of road crossings.

Where is the money coming from?
The cost of these schemes is £234 million. £218 million of this comes from the Government's Housing Infrastructure Fund and the rest has been secured through developer obligations in the area. Although the funding for the transport improvements has been announced, Oxfordshire County Council is currently in the final stages of negotiating the details of the funding agreement with Government.

Why are we building this infrastructure?
We are proposing to build new roads and improve existing roads because the highway network was not designed to cope with modern traffic levels. The housing and employment growth allocated in the adopted Vale of White Horse Local Plan 2031 Part 1 and Part 2 and proposed in the submitted South Oxfordshire District Council Local Plan 2011-2034 requires a significant upgrade to the current network in order to help facilitate this growth.

As part of these improvements, Oxfordshire County Council (OCC) is encouraging the use of sustainable travel modes through the provision of high-quality walking and cycling infrastructure. Future work on these schemes will also include examining how they connect to existing Public Rights of Way and other pedestrian and cycle routes in the area, including the National Cycle Network 5 route.

How is the land being obtained for these schemes?
OCC will primarily be attempting to obtain the land required through negotiation. However, should this not prove possible, OCC may be required to use its Compulsory Purchase Order (CPO) powers to acquire the land necessary to deliver the infrastructure.

How will this affect Golden Balls Roundabout and Nuneham Courtenay and why are there no proposals for these locations?
Through the Housing and Growth Deal, funding is available to investigate future changes to the Golden Balls Roundabout. Study work undertaken on this junction will also need to take into account the impact of traffic through Nuneham Courtenay on the A4074 and also align with transport proposals in Oxford.

The funding announced by Government for the schemes being consulting on (£218 million) was as a result of a competitive bidding process against many other councils across the country. The £218 million is amongst the highest sums awarded (see the full list of 33 here). Including any other schemes as part of this package could have significantly reduced the chance of a successful bid. Additionally, there are currently no schemes designed for Golden Balls Roundabout and Nuneham Courtenay, so it would not have been possible to have included them in a bid where it is required that schemes are shown with robust costs.

How will this affect Appleford?
The Didcot to Culham River Crossing will alleviate some of the traffic passing through Appleford as it will provide a more direct alternative route across the River Thames and to Didcot. OCC will liaise with the parish council and local community in Appleford throughout scheme development.

Will this fix all the traffic issues in the area?
The network will still have a lot of traffic flowing through it due to existing traffic and expected growth, but it will flow a lot more smoothly as a number of pinch points will be removed, significantly reducing congestion.

Will construction traffic cause traffic disruption in Didcot?
There will be some disruption during construction but, through the implementation of a Construction Traffic Management Plan, this disruption will be minimised. The construction of the four schemes will also be carefully phased in order to avoid, where possible, works taking place simultaneously in multiple locations on the existing highway network.

Is the Northern Perimeter Road Phase 3 (NPR3) scheme part of this project?
No, NPR3 has been partially held up by progress on these schemes as it was necessary to establish how they would best fit with each other. Now that preferred alignments for these schemes have been identified, it will be possible to progress further design work on the NPR3 scheme. At present, the proposals for this scheme include a roundabout at the A4130/B4016 junction, a new road down to A4130 (roughly along the line of the boundary of the golf course), and a new roundabout on A4130 to the east of the Hadden Hill Retail Park / Tesco roundabout

Are the schemes safe?
A Road Safety Audit (RSA) Stage 1 has been carried out on every aspect of the schemes in their present stage of design. Where appropriate, recommendations from the RSA report will be incorporated into the next stage of scheme design. Further RSAs will be undertaken as necessary throughout the development of the schemes.

What about the impact on wildlife and the environment?
The impact on the environment, wildlife, and ecology will be investigated through an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) to ensure any impacts are properly mitigated or avoided where possible in accordance with the applicable legislation. The EIA will also include, amongst other chapters, an Air Quality Impact Assessment and Noise Impact Assessment. As part of the landscaping strategy there is the potential for planting alongside some sections of the schemes. This will be investigated as work on the schemes continues.

Where will bus stops be located?
Proposed locations for bus stops have been identified on some parts of the schemes. The locations of other bus stops will be identified during the next stage of design through liaison with bus operators and other stakeholders.

What are the speed limits of these schemes?
The speed limits are proposed as follows:

- A4130 Widening: 40mph
- Science Bridge: 30mph
- Didcot to Culham River Crossing: 50mph
- Clifton Hampden Bypass: 60mph

Why are the pedestrian and cycle crossings different across the schemes?
The type of each pedestrian and cycle crossing depends on the nature of the environment, the anticipated usage, and proposed speed limit in each location. For example, the crossings on the A4130 are signal controlled (traffic lights), staggered toucan (pedestrians and cyclists) crossings due to the proposed speed limit (40mph) and the width of the road, whereas the crossings over most of the side roads onto the A4130 are proposed to be raised parallel crossings (zebra crossings that cyclists can also legally use) as these roads will have a lower speed limit (see Glossary section for further info on terminology). The next stages of design will further consider the appropriateness of each type of crossing, taking into account the comments received as part of this consultation and further Road Safety Audits.

Why does the 'Next Steps' section say that the planning application will be submitted in Winter 2021 and the CPO submission in Spring 2021?
The 'Next Steps' section is in chronological order. 'Winter 2021' refers to the early months of 2021, not the end of it.

Why is there a t-junction rather than a roundabout where the existing A4130 meets the new A4130?
One of the key aims of these infrastructure schemes is to provide a strategic route for traffic to travel around the periphery of Didcot and to encourage traffic to use the Science Bridge route, which is intended to form a new section of the A4130. This will reduce traffic movements at the Mendip Heights and Milton Road roundabouts, which are already very congested. One of the main ways this can be achieved is to discourage traffic from using the existing A4130 between the Mendip Heights and Purchas Road roundabouts by creating a priority t-junction instead of a roundabout where the existing A4130 meets the new A4130, thus giving priority to the peripheral route. The roundabout at the Collett access to the Southmead Industrial Estate will still remain and so provides easier access for HGV movements eastwards.

Glossary of terms

Hard Strip: an extension of the road surface alongside a carriageway, typically only required on faster roads and normally delineated by a painted white line.

Parallel Crossing: a type of 'uncontrolled' pedestrian and cycle crossing, i.e. without requirement to press a button to activate a green signal. This is similar to a Zebra crossing but is designed to allow both pedestrians and cyclists to use it (unlike a Zebra, which is for pedestrians only). In most locations these will be raised to make it easier for pedestrians and cyclists to use.

Toucan Crossing: a type of 'controlled' crossing, i.e. with the requirement to press a button and to wait for a green signal indicating that it is safe to cross. These are designed for use by both pedestrians and cyclists, whereas Puffin and Pelican crossings are for pedestrians only. In some locations, where the roads are wide, these will need to be staggered so that pedestrians and cyclists will be required to cross in two stages.

Reinforced/over runnable area for abnormal loads: this applies to two junctions on the link road through the former Didcot A power station site, which forms part of the Science Bridge scheme. This is to accommodate very long heavy goods vehicles that are occasionally required to transport equipment to and from the Didcot B power station site. These vehicles are accompanied by special safety escorts and usually take place at night to minimise disruption to the highway network.

Scheduled Ancient Monument: an archaeological site of national importance. These have special protections and any impacts on them must be minimised or mitigated in accordance with the relevant legislation.

Segregation Strip: a 'gap' that physically separates a footway or cycleway and the carriageway for safety purposes. This may be a paved or grass surface. Unlike a Hard Strip, a Segregation Strip is typically at the same level as the pedestrian/cycling provision, rather than at the same level as the carriageway.

Swale: a shallow trough running parallel to a carriageway for drainage purposes. These are typically covered in grass and are sometimes planted with reeds.

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Divisions Affected: Eynsham

CABINET - 22 JUNE 2021

A40 HIF2 SMART CORRIDOR IN PRINCIPLE USE OF STATUTORY POWERS

Report by Corporate Director Environment and Place

RECOMMENDATION

The Cabinet is RECOMMENDED to:

(a) approve in principle the development of The Oxfordshire County Council (A40 HIF2 Smart Corridor) Compulsory Purchase Order 202[x] in parallel with negotiations for private acquisition, with such powers of compulsory purchase used only as a matter of last resort, in order to bring forward the timely development of the A40 HIF2 Project. Formal authority for the making of The Oxfordshire County Council (A40 HIF2 Smart Corridor) Compulsory Purchase Order 202[x] will be reported to Cabinet, and necessary approval sought, following public engagement on preferred options and submission of a planning application for the scheme;

(b) approve the preparation and service of statutory notices for the Requisition of Information pursuant to Section 16 Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 (as amended) to assist with determining the interests in the land required for the delivery of the scheme;

(c) approve the preparation of The Oxfordshire County Council (A40 HIF2 Smart Corridor)Compulsory Purchase Order 202[x] in draft , together with a draft Order Map, draft Order Schedule, draft Statement of Reasons and all necessary land referencing activity in advance of seeking formal authority to make the Order;

(d) approve the preparation of The Oxfordshire County Council (HIF2 Smart Corridor – A40 Classified Road) Side Roads Order 202[x](or multiple Side Roads Orders as may be necessary) to enable the stopping-up, diversion, alteration, improvement and creation of new lengths of highway or reclassification of existing highways. This includes the stopping up of private means of access as necessary where the scheme design necessitates. Formal approval for the making of Side Roads Order(s) will be reported to Cabinet, and necessary approval sought, following public engagement on preferred options and submission of a planning application for the scheme;

(e) subject to the confirmation that the required due diligence has been completed to manage programme and financial risk to the Council, authorise the Corporate Director Environment and Place,

in consultation with the Director of Law & Governance, Director of Finance, Cabinet Member for Travel and Development Strategy and Cabinet Member for Finance to approve the amended Grant Determination Agreement (GDA);

(f) subject to the satisfactory completion of recommendation (e) approve the additional £4.745m Housing Infrastructure Fund grant for an overall budget provision of £106.756m for the A40 HIF2 Smart Corridor project within the capital programme, subject to the implementation of the Grant Determination Agreement with Homes England.

Executive Summary

1. This report is technical in nature due to the fact that it is intended to be used as a part of the documentary evidence base throughout the statutory processes to which it relates.

2. Oxfordshire County Council (OCC) submitted a business case for HIF2 in March 2019. In November 2019, it was announced that the bid had been successful (subject to contract) in securing £102m of grant funding towards a package of transport improvements proposed along 10.8km of the A40 corridor between Witney and Duke's Cut (North Oxford).

   Scheme Purposes

   The purposes of the A40 HIF2 Smart Corridor transport scheme are to:

   - increase transport capacity along the A40 in West Oxfordshire;
   - provide greater travel choice and encourage more use of bus, cycling and walking;
   - deliver faster and more reliable bus journey times;
   - improve safety and reduce environmental impacts such as air pollution and noise;
   - improve accessibility and connectivity to employment and public services;
   - support housing delivery in West Oxfordshire;
   - promote economic growth in Oxfordshire and creation of new jobs.

3. The A40 road corridor west of Oxford is a heavily constrained route. Oxfordshire's Local Transport Plan, Connecting Oxford states that *"Congestion on the A40 to the east of Witney causes very lengthy delays for journeys to and from Oxford at peak times. This impacts on the ability of local businesses to achieve growth and makes…a less desirable place for new businesses to locate. Bus services are vulnerable to delay because of congestion within Witney, through Eynsham and approaching Oxford on the A40".*

4. Therefore, the primary focus of HIF2 is the provision of additional highway capacity and connectivity to encourage/facilitate modal shift, enabling more sustainable forms of travel to meet the Council's zero carbon transport network ambitions focussing this around public transport, walking and cycling. Delivery

is also intended to promote wider health and place shaping benefits in line with the Council's key priorities.

5. The scheme will not only expedite a significant level of transport benefits but directly unlock 4,813 new homes (including 2,222 affordable homes) and support the delivery of more than 10,000 new homes in total in the West Oxfordshire area committed through the Local Plan 2031.

6. A schematic plan of the A40 corridor's programme and its related housing is included as Figure 1.

7. In summary, the HIF2 scheme includes three key highway elements, namely;

   - Element 1: A40 Dual carriageway extension - between Witney and Eynsham, approximately 3.2km in length
   - Element 2: A40 Integrated Bus Lanes, approximately 7km in length
   - Element 3: A40 Duke's Cut capacity and connectivity improvements across canal and railway bridges, approximately 0.6km in length

8. The related and interdependent Science Transit scheme, primarily funded by retained Local Growth Funded from Department for Transport (DfT) includes:
   - Park & ride at Eynsham
   - A40 East bound bus priority Lane.

9. Subsequent to the funding announcement and a further period of work to develop the schemes and agreements, Cabinet resolved to approve the recommendations as set out in a report in July 2020 and the Grant Determination Agreement was subsequently entered in to (28th August 2020) with Homes England to secure the funding, subject to conditions.

10. Following the report to Cabinet, a further phase of development work has been undertaken to identify preferred options for each of the three elements. These preferred options are the basis of recent stakeholder engagement and consultation undertaken, the results of which will be reported to Cabinet in July 2021.

11. Following further review Homes England have agreed to extend their funding allocation to cover all current scheme costs, subject to an amended Grant Determination Agreement (GDA) to the value of £106.756m.

12. The grant funding will need to be spent by February 2025, subject to approval of the recommendation to amend the current GDA.

13. The delivery of the HIF2 project is supported by a dedicated project team, which sits within the A40 Programme business unit, within the Growth and Economy Directorate.

14. Key milestone dates for the delivery of the project are outlined in Table 2 of this report.

15. There are a range of current issues and risks associated with the delivery of the A40 corridor programme which are being actively managed by the Programme team. Whilst a number of these can be considered as reflective of the scale and complexity of the programme being undertaken, land assembly is a matter of particular note.

Background

Scheme Purposes

16. The purposes of the A40 HIF2 Smart Corridor transport scheme are to:

- increase transport capacity along the A40 in West Oxfordshire;
- provide greater travel choice and encourage more use of bus, cycling and walking;
- deliver faster and more reliable bus journey times;
- improve safety and reduce environmental impacts such as air pollution and noise;
- improve accessibility and connectivity to employment and public services;
- support housing delivery in West Oxfordshire;
- promote economic growth in Oxfordshire and creation of new jobs.

Scheme Description

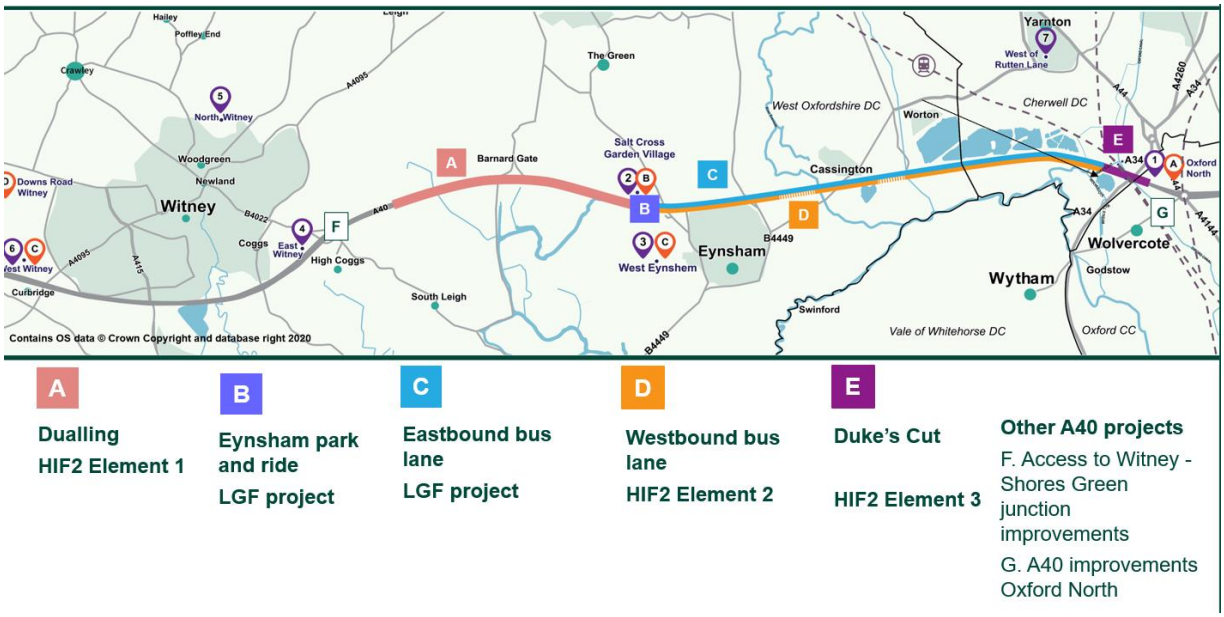
17. The A40 HIF2 Smart Corridor project is the second phase of the A40 corridor programme investment. The scheme includes three key highway enhancement elements:

- Element 1: A40 Dual carriageway extension - between Witney and Eynsham, approximately 3.2km in length
- Element 2: A40 Integrated Bus Lanes, approximately 7km in length
- Element 3: A40 Duke's Cut capacity and connectivity improvements across canal and railway bridges, approximately 0.6km in length

18. The A40 HIF2 Smart Corridor scheme as a single integrated package of measures has been designed to mitigate the increased transport demand generated by housing growth by increasing the highway capacity of the route between Witney and Eynsham, while providing a high-quality, congestion-free public transport alternative for travel between Eynsham and Oxford. Interchange would be made possible at Eynsham Park & Ride, part of the A40 Science Transit 2 Scheme.

19. Figure 1 sets out how the HIF2 project and the other elements of the A40 corridor Programme have been designed to form an integrated package of measures.

Figure 1: A40 Corridor Programme Overview



Strategic Context

20. Oxfordshire County Council's Local Transport Plan 2015 – 2031 ('LTP4') identifies a transport strategy for the A40 corridor. The West Oxfordshire Local Plan 2031 ('WOLP') (adopted September 2018) seeks to provide for around 15,950 new homes. The WOLP was supported by an evidence base, including a Sustainability Assessment, amongst other things identifying strategic environmental issues potentially affected by developments. Section 7 of the WOLP outlines transport issues and plans and policy T2 Highway Improvement Schemes identifies A40 improvement plans (which are also referenced in other policies including WIT1, WIT2, WIT6, EW2 and EW10).

21. Policy EW1 of the WOLP requires Salt Cross Garden Village (SCGV) allocation to be taken forward on a comprehensive basis led by an Area Action Plan (AAP). SGCV is a strategic location for growth to include around 2,200 homes, a campus style science park and other supporting services and facilities including the park and ride site. The SCGV sets out a vision for the garden village supported by core objectives, policies and a delivery framework. The AAP is supported by a suite of documents including an Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP). The IPD also formed part of the evidence for the successful HIF grant and the resultant Proposed Development. The SCGV AAP is now substantially advanced, WODC formally submitted the AAP to the Planning Inspectorate for independent examination on 10th February 2021.

Table 1 – A40 HIF2 Smart Corridor dependent sites

Site	Site Name	Homes	Current Status
1	Salt Cross Garden Village	2,200	In Planning (Outline application Submitted)

2	West Eynsham	763	In Planning (Outline Application for 180 homes)
3	East Witney	450	In Planning (Outline Application submitted)
4	North Witney	1,400	Pre-Application Stage

22. Element 1 A40 Dualling extension
Delivery of this will extend the capacity increase provided by the existing A40 Dual Carriageway (Witney Bypass) further east from Witney to Eynsham. Witney is the largest town in West Oxfordshire and a key retail and services destination for neighbouring settlements. This element directly supports housing growth at Site 3 East Witney and Site 4 North Witney.

23. Widening the single carriageway to dual carriageway will significantly increase highway capacity for all modes of transport and provide access to the transport interchange hub at Eynsham Park & Ride site, where fast bus services to Oxford city centre, Oxford Hospitals and key employment sites can be accessed. This Element also provides more capacity for local trips between Witney and Eynsham, including a shared pedestrian and cycle lane, which will enable residents at the Eynsham sites (Sites 1 and 2) to easily access local employment, retail and services in Witney.

24. Element 2 A40 Integrated Bus Lanes and Element 3 A40 Dukes Cut
The improvements directly serve Site 1 Oxfordshire Salt Cross Garden Village and Site 4 West Eynsham. This part of Oxfordshire has some of the highest levels of "out-commuting" in the county, over 20,000 West Oxfordshire residents commute to destinations outside of the District for work, the highest proportion of which at over 7,500 people commute to Oxford City. This means there is a high level of dependency on the A40 corridor, and the HIF2 proposals, to access a growing job market in Oxford.

25. Should the A40 HIF2 Smart Corridor project not progress, the four Local Plan Housing sites at Witney and Eynsham, would not be supported by the essential infrastructure to mitigate the transport impact of growth. These homes contribute to the Oxfordshire Housing and Growth Deal commitment to support the delivery of 100,000 homes by 2031. Without the HIF2 project, this objective would be placed at risk, as WODC would have to consider the use of planning conditions to halt housing delivery until certainty around infrastructure funding could be secured.

Transport Context and Issues

26. The A40 forms the major east-west route across the south of the West Oxfordshire district. It forms the primary route between Oxford and Cheltenham as well as being part of the long-distance route between London and south-west Wales. The A40 carries a mix of local, regional and longer-distance traffic, some travelling to/from M40 and Carterton.

27. The A40 road corridor west of Oxford is a heavily constrained route. Oxfordshire's Local Transport Plan, Connecting Oxford states that *"Congestion on the A40 to the east of Witney causes very lengthy delays for journeys to and from Oxford at peak times. This impacts on the ability of local businesses to achieve growth and makes…a less desirable place for new businesses to locate. Bus services are vulnerable to delay because of congestion within Witney, through Eynsham and approaching Oxford on the A40".*

28. On an average weekday a total of 32,000 vehicles travel along the A40 Witney to Eynsham section in both directions with around 2,000 vehicles using this in both directions during the morning and evening peak hours. East of the Cassington junction the average weekday traffic flows are lower with a total of 23,000 vehicles in both directions with around 1,800 in the morning peak and 1,600 in the evening peaks hours.

29. Poor network performance on the A40 corridor, translates into slow traffic flows and subsequently longer journey times, which is especially evident during morning and evening peak periods. In addition to these higher average journey times, there is evidence of significant variability, which highlights the existing journey time reliability issues on the corridor.

30. In terms of journey times between the Shores Green Junction at Witney and the Wolvercote Roundabout the surveyed journey times demonstrate that congestion during the peak hours almost doubles the journey times in both directions from 11 to 19 minutes.

31. Journey time uncertainty has affected peak periods for many years, but the extent of peak spreading and redistribution to less suitable routes has reached conditions that can be interpreted as 'severe' (as set out in National Planning Policy Framework).

32. The A40 is an important bus corridor. Bus routes S1, S2 and S7 connect Carterton, Witney and Eynsham with Oxford. Bus patronage has been growing steadily over recent years with 2019 showing a 45% increase on 2007/8 levels. Local bus travel pre-Covid accounted for around 20% of peak period passenger trips on the A40 corridor between Witney-Eynsham and around 12% east of Eynsham.

33. Further connectivity and growth in the bus passenger market is constrained by the long and unreliable journey times with services delayed in the same congestion as all other vehicles. The current service operator (Stagecoach) have indicated that they are unwilling increase services along the A40 to Oxford or to the John Radcliffe Hospital and Headington area during the peak periods because it is impractical to timetable bus services.

34. Without bus priority on the A40 corridor the public transport on the A40 suffers from slow journeys as well as from reliability issues and therefore limits the potential to shift demand to more sustainable alternatives.

35. Oxford has one of the highest rates of cycling in the UK, with over a quarter of all commuting trips under 3 miles made by bike and 16% of those between 3 and 5 miles, compared to 6% and 3% for England, respectively. However, cycle mode share is significantly lower on the A40 corridor, at around 5% in Witney and 7% in Eynsham and Cassington. This is primarily due to low quality cycling provision along the A40 corridor.

36. Based on surveys of active travel in recent years, cycle travel is highest between Cassington and Duke's cut, with 200-250 two-way daily trips; Pedestrian volumes were lower, with the greatest activity recorded near the bus stops in the Witney Road area

37. Current active modes infrastructure comprises of a shared pathway that runs alongside both sides of the A40 from Eynsham to the east, with only a northside path between Eynsham and Witney. Much of the existing provision is approximately 1m wide and lacks provision for Active Travel crossings at most intersections with local roads near urbanised areas, mainly at Eynsham, which creates important severance barriers, especially for pedestrians.

38. A failure to give road users choices of travel and better journey time reliability would lead to County Council objections to planning applications that increase traffic on the A40 corridor in the West Oxfordshire area, most noticeably those which are dependent on the HIF2 infrastructure.

The Need for the Scheme – Economic, Environmental and Social Benefits

39. The A40 corridor infrastructure proposals would provide several Economic and Social benefits.

40. Economic

- Directly unlocking strategic housing development sites at East and North Witney and West Eynsham as well as the Salt Cross Garden Village development site, which includes an 80,000m² Science Park (4,500 jobs)
- Addressing identified housing need, including affordable homes for West Oxfordshire and the County
- Address transport challenges, in particular improving transport connectivity along the corridor and particularly to employment in Oxford and strategically (Ox-Cam Arc, London etc)

41. Initial feasibility work was carried out on the three HIF2 scheme elements to scope and cost the work in order to prepare the funding submission to Homes England prior to entering into the funding agreement

42. The Economic Appraisal results provided a Net Present Value of £362m and Benefit to cost ration (BCR) of 2.5:1 for housing and transport combined. Therefore, for every £1 invested there is a £2.50 return to the wider economy.

43. This initial economic assessment reinforces the case for the full scheme and in line with Department for Transport's Value for Money Framework the Preferred Option represents high value for money for the taxpayer.

44. Environmental

- A minimum of 10% biodiversity net gain is to be achieved as a direct result of the scheme. this net gain will be kept local to the scheme boundary.

45. Social

- Individual and collective health benefits from a mode shift away from car use and an increase in walking and cycling
- A positive impact on air quality from a reduction in vehicular emissions
- Safety improvements and a subsequent reduction in accidents and severance due to enhanced infrastructure for all road users.

The Need for the Scheme – Highway and Transport Network Benefits

46. The A40 HIF2 Smart Corridor infrastructure proposals would provide a number of Highway and Transport benefits:

Highway

- Increased capacity between Witney and the proposed Eynsham Park & Ride Site
- Management and control of traffic movements along the A40 at Eynsham and east to the Wolvercote Roundabout
- Improved journey time reliability

Transport Network

- The provision of Bus Lanes between the proposed Eynsham Park & Ride and Wolvercote Roundabout will provide improved bus journey times and reliability. This would reduce bus operating costs and improve resilience which would provide the opportunity for enhanced bus services in terms of bus frequencies routes and connectivity.
- Improved Walking and Cycling infrastructure both along and across the A40 which will help facilitate and encourage mode shift.
- The improved infrastructure would include a number of high quality at grade controlled and uncontrolled crossings across the A40 that will help facilitate safe crossing of the A40 and cater for the forecast increase in walking and cycling demand due to the proposed dependent developments.

47. The proposed infrastructure will enhance the operation of the existing network whilst providing those wider opportunities for users of the A40 corridors to travel by alternative modes. This in combination with the completion of the Local Transport and Connectivity Plan targeted to be adopted in late 2021, with Draft

Vision Consultation having been undertaken during February and March 2021, will strategically manage travel along the A40 corridor moving forward.

48. The full benefits of the proposed scheme are currently being re-quantified and will be provided as part of the full Planning Application and future reports to Cabinet.

Planning Policy Context

49. The Development Plan for the HIF2 planning application comprises:

- West Oxfordshire Local Plan 2031
- Cherwell Local Plan 1996 (Saved Policies)
- Oxfordshire Minerals and Waste Local Plan Part 1 Core Strategy
- Made Neighbourhood Plans affecting the route

50. Key material planning policy considerations include the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), Planning Practice Guidance (PPG), Oxford Local Plan and Oxfordshire Local Transport Plan 4. Emerging planning policy documentation will also form material considerations with weight to be attributed depending on the stage of the Local Plan process the document has reached.

Form and Scope of Planning Application

51. OCC is preparing a single, full planning application accompanied by a single Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA). The three elements are interdependent on each other, and in EIA terms are considered to comprise a single Project. The planning and EIA strategy for the scheme was ratified by Graeme Keen QC on 6 January 2021 following his consideration of OCC's written instructions and a subsequent consultation to discuss the proposals and the approach in some detail.

52. During an informal briefing meeting held with OCC Planning in their capacity as the Local Planning Authority (LPA) on 17 February the Applicant team briefly discussed the possibility that some of the proposed Element 3 works may benefit from permitted development rights under Class A Part 9 of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (as amended).

53. OCC has since sought further advice from their planning and environmental advisors on the possibility of this approach. At the time of writing, it is considered that the maintenance aspects of the Element 3 proposals could potentially be pursued under Permitted Development rights and that there is no planning requirement for their explicit inclusion within the HIF2 planning application (albeit for completeness it is anticipated that these will be referenced). It is further considered that the improvement measures will require planning permission, largely as a result of the environmental implications and cumulative impacts associated with the wider Project. Consequently, these are very likely to be incorporated into the main HIF2 planning application.

54. OCC will explore the detail of this approach with the LPA in due course including the requirement for a Lawful Development Certificate in relation to the works of maintenance.

Regulation 3

55. OCC acting as Applicant intends to submit a full planning application to OCC as the LPA. OCC is required to determine some of its own planning applications by virtue of Regulation 3 of the Town and Country Planning General Regulations 1992. Regulation 3 enables OCC to make planning applications to itself providing that the development is to be carried out by or on behalf of the Council and the interest in the development by the Council is significant.

Planning - Current Position

56. Currently the HIF2 scheme is at pre-application stage. OCC as Applicant is working with the LPA to finalise pre-application arrangements including the approach for delivering collaborative working practices at pre-application stage with Officers from the local and district authorities.

57. A Scoping report, which sets out in detail the proposed approach to the requisite EIA was submitted to the LPA on 16 March 2021 (R3.0034/21).

Progress to Date

58. The work undertaken to date to develop the project since the last report to Cabinet has included:
    - The development of the original concept and options for the scheme through to a complete Feasibility design.
    - A detailed value engineering process to finalise the preferred design options to achieve the most cost-effective solution, minimising where practicable the impact of third party land take and alterations to existing access arrangements.
    - Informed by the above, the commencement of the preliminary design stage.
    - Development of a robust scheme budget, risk management process and delivery programme, as set out within this report.
    - Consultation with the public and stakeholders at various stages of the scheme development to date.
    - Development of a full planning application for the scheme to be submitted in September 2021.
    - The appointment of a number of technical specialists and contractors to deliver this and subsequent stages of the project.

59. In conjunction with all of the above, the land and property needed for the scheme to be delivered has also been initially assessed. This has identified the need for the use of statutory powers in the form of:
    - Compulsory Purchase Order (CPO)
    - Side Roads Order (SRO)

with powers of compulsory purchase used only as a matter of last resort in parallel to private treaty negotiations in order to facilitate the timely delivery of the scheme where there would not be a reasonable prospect of delivery within the funding window in the absence of powers.

Programme

60. Due to the need to continue to develop and deliver the scheme at pace to limit further delays and also with the related funding window set out in the criteria in the contracted HIF2 Grant Determination Agreement, a defined programme and meeting the tight critical paths is paramount.

61. The delivery programme has undergone a full review and with the input of a number of key delivery partners to ensure that it is as robust as possible. The programme is being continually updated as the project progresses and in line with Council internal governance requirements.

62. Key milestones through to successful scheme delivery are set out within Table 2.

63. The critical path to the delivery of the HIF2 project is to successfully acquire all of the necessary land and new rights required for the delivery of the scheme. At present, the programme reflects a worst-case position that the orders (or any number of them) will be contested and the Secretary of State for Transport will call a local Public Inquiry.

64. Acquiring authorities should acknowledge and understand that every effort should be made to acquire the necessary land interests and new rights by private agreement with the affected parties and that **compulsory acquisition is a matter of last resort**. The Council has appointed external property agents and CPO legal specialists to undertake this work. However, acquisitions by negotiated agreement of all of the land affected and new rights required may not be possible within the funding window for this scheme and are, therefore, a key risk to its delivery.

65. Whilst acquisition by agreement will be diligently pursued, from a timescale perspective, initiating the CPO process over the entire land holding that is required to implement the scheme offers certainty should parallel negotiations to acquire the land and new rights by agreement be unsuccessful. This is particularly important considering the funding window within which this scheme need to be delivered.

Table 2 –Proposed Key Milestones HIF2

Activity	**Target Date**
Public engagement	May 2021
Cabinet – in principle use of statutory powers	June 2021
Cabinet – preferred scheme options	July 2021
Planning application	September 2021
Detailed design commences	October 2021
Cabinet – resolution to CPO	October 2021

Planning determination	Early 2022
Detailed design complete	late 2022
Possession of land	mid 2023
Construction commences	mid 2023
ALL Construction Complete	late 2024
Project Close	Early 2025

66. COVID-19 programme effects moving forward have been included as far as reasonably practicable within the timescales quoted above. The potential ongoing effect is discussed further within the Risk Management section of this report.

Corporate Policies and Priorities

67. The delivery of the HIF2 project will actively support the following key themes within Oxfordshire County Council's Corporate Plan 2020-24:

- **Providing services that enhance the quality of life and protect the local environment –** alongside other A40 projects such as Science Transit Phase 2 the HIF2 project will promote the modal shift away from private cars and into the more sustainable modes of travel of public transport, cycling and walking. This will be for both existing traffic as well as supporting future development in the area, enabling a culture change from the outset driven by the provision of quality infrastructure, rather than attempting to 'retrofit' afterwards.

- **Supporting a thriving local economy by improving transport links to create jobs and homes for the future –** the HIF2 project is integral part of the wider A40 investment programme which will directly provide enhanced highway capacity, improved journey times for all and connectivity and reliability of public transport provision in West Oxfordshire.

- **Taking action against Climate Change –** by reducing congestion and promoting modal shift in how people travel along the A40 there are clear benefits in terms of reducing carbon emissions, promoting 'zero carbon travel' and improving air quality in the area.

Financial Implications

Project Costs

68. The following is a high-level breakdown of the current project costs, reviewed in detail at end of April 2021:

- Stage 2/3 Development and Design - £ 6.925m
- Stage 4 Detailed Design – £ 5.745m
- Stage 5 Construction - £ 57.150m
- Stage 2-5 Client and miscellaneous costs – £ 6.173m

- Legal and property fees (inc. land) – £ 5.446m
- Statutory Undertakers diversions - £ 6.60m

69. All figures are inclusive of the appropriate inflation allowances.

70. The risks associated with scheme delivery are underwritten by a £18.717m quantified risk and contingency fund which are accounted for separately within the overall forecast budget.

71. Therefore, the total scheme cost to completion is **£106.756m.**

Project Funding

72. The project is entirely funded by Housing Infrastructure Fund grant to a capped value of £106.756m, subject to entering into the revised Grant Determination Agreement (GDA) with Homes England as per the recommendations set out in this report.

73. The Council entered into the GDA on 28.08.2020 to secure these monies, subject to a series of linked conditions. The current value secured is £102.011m. Please see also section of report on risk.

74. As set out in the December 2020 Cabinet report, the funding is in place to cover the whole scheme costs associated with the interdependent Science Transit Phase 2 scheme, subject to the successful approval of the Full Business Case (FBC). The FBC having now been submitted for approval by the DfT.

75. Further to the same there is a need to uplift the cap on development costs in line with the revised GDA from £5m to £8.6m and update the Council's capital programme. This is fully funded from HIF grant.

76. However, with reference to the capped costs and funding availability within the Grant Determination Agreement with Homes England, any costs over and above the agreed funding envelope or that fall outside of the agreed timescales would need to be met by the Council. These additional costs would need to be met by reprioritising the capital programme or borrowing to fund the pressure. A letter of assurance has been signed by the section 151 officer for HIF2 confirming that Oxfordshire County Council has the ability to cover any cost increases in order to complete the project should the risk materialise.

Comments checked by:
Rob Finlayson, Finance business Partner, rob.finlayson@oxfordshire.gov.uk

Legal Implications

Statutory Powers

77. Members should note that whilst the Council has compulsory purchase powers as an Acquiring Authority, under the Highways Act 1980 and the Acquisition of Land Act 1981, as referenced elsewhere in this report, these powers should be

used as a matter of last resort. Dialogue with affected landowners has commenced and will continue in parallel to acquire by negotiation as a first principle.

78. While an Authority can use compulsory purchase powers where it is justified and expedient to do so, in considering whether to confirm the CPO, the Secretary of State will need to be convinced that there is a compelling case in the public interest for compulsory acquisition. Members should therefore apply a similar test before authorising the in-principle decision to use these powers based on the balance of the information contained in this report. This is in the knowledge that a further report will be brought to Cabinet at a later date seeking authority to make the formal statutory Order itself.

79. The acquiring Authority is also expected to show that if compulsory acquisition is authorised the scheme is unlikely to be blocked by physical or legal impediments to deliverability. These include related infrastructure works, funding and the need for planning permission, the position of all of which are covered under various sections of this report.

80. Members should also note that once the CPO is made (following any future Cabinet authority required), those parties with an interest in the land and the public generally have a right to object to the CPO (and SRO) and, if so decided by the Secretary of State for Transport, have their objections heard at a local Public Inquiry. As Acquiring Authority, the Council must make the case for confirmation of the CPO to the Secretary of State but, if heard in a public Inquiry, the case will be made and tested in this forum. The CPO does not take effect until confirmed by the Secretary of State. Confirmation of the CPO affords the Acquiring Authority the power to compulsorily acquire land, but those powers have to be actively engaged, which has statutory minimum time periods for taking possession of land. Once the Order is confirmed, any party aggrieved by the decision has a further six weeks from the first date of public notification of the confirmation in the local press to challenge the decision in the High Court on a point of law, often referred to as statutory Judicial Review. This could result in the Order, or the decision to confirm it, being quashed in whole or in part. The same principles of statutory challenge apply in relation to the Side Roads Order.

81. The principal powers in the Highways Act 1980 are:

- Section 14 and 125 (SROs)
- Section 239(1), which provides that a highway authority may acquire land required for the construction of a highway which is to be maintainable at the public expense;
- Section 239(3) which allows a highway authority to acquire land for the improvement of a highway being an improvement which the authority is authorised to make under the Act;
- Section 240, which allows the acquisition of land in relation to an order under Section 14

- Section 246 authorises the acquisition of land for the purpose of mitigating the adverse effects of the construction or improvement of highways;
- Section 250 authorises the compulsory acquisition of new rights over land; and
- Section 260 authorises the clearance of the title to land already held by the Council and required for the scheme and which might otherwise interfere with the Council's activities in exercising its statutory powers to construct the works.

though it should be noted that a full assessment of appropriate Highways Act powers will be included in the Report to Cabinet for the making of the CPO and SRO in due course.

82. Some of the areas over which freehold title is to be acquired may not be required for the permanent works and may be offered back to the current owners at Open Market Value under the Crichel Down Rules, providing that certain criteria are met. There is no obligation on these parties to purchase the land back and so the Council should assume that all land will be retained, whether surplus or not, and budget accordingly.

83. The SRO will authorise the stopping-up, amendment, diversion, improvement and creation of new lengths of highway or reclassification of existing highways and the CPO will include land that is required to enable the works authorised by the SRO to be carried out. The SRO gives authority to the CPO and the CPO cannot, therefore, be made without the SRO having first been made (i.e., sealed and executed by the Council), though this will happen immediately consecutively.

84. In addition, the SRO may make provision for the stopping-up and (where appropriate) re-provision of private means of access to premises and agricultural land. The CPO makes provision for the acquisition of land and new rights to enable new, replacement private means of access pursuant to the CPO, to be provided as part of the scheme.

85. It should be noted that the confirmation of compulsory purchase powers does not require that those powers be used nor does it acquire the land interests; it only provides the ability to use them. The Acquiring Authority has a duty to continue to try to acquire all necessary interests by private treaty agreement, where possible, with powers of compulsory purchase being used only as a matter of last resort. There is a statutory process pertaining to the implementation of powers, which will be reported to Cabinet when authority to make the CPO is sought, targeted for October 2021.

86. There may also be a requirement for both permanent and temporary traffic regulation orders (TROs) to enable the scheme, however, Cabinet approval is not required to implement these.

Requests for Information

87. In order to pursue a CPO, Acquiring Authorities must undertake diligent enquiry to ascertain the land interests that exist in relation to each parcel of land required to facilitate the delivery of the scheme. The Council has engaged land referencing specialists to undertake this work, which feeds into the Order Map and Order Schedule.

88. Albeit that much of the information regarding interests in land can be discovered from investigation of the information held at HM Land Registry, one of the key components of land referencing is the ability to request information directly from the parties known from the desktop referencing process. These requests take the form of statutory requisitions for information pursuant to Section 16 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 (as amended).

89. Such requisitions provide for a minimum 14-day period from receipt for a response, though authorities often provide a longer period. Non-response to a statutory requisition for information is a criminal offence and it is for this reason that the approval of Cabinet to the service of these notices is sought, over and above the delegated powers to officers in the Council's Standing Order. It should be noted that any action taken as a result of an offence being committed is entirely at the discretion of the Council.

Human Rights

90. The Human Rights Act 1998 incorporated into domestic law the European Convention on Human Rights ("the Convention"). The Convention includes provisions in the form of Articles, the aim of which is to protect the rights of the individual.

91. The following articles of the Convention are relevant to the determination as to whether a compulsory purchase order should be confirmed:

- Article 1 of the First Protocol protects the right of everyone to peaceful enjoyment of possessions. No one can be deprived of their possessions except in the public interest and subject to the relevant national and international laws. Any interference with possessions must be proportionate and, in determining whether a particular measure is proportionate, a fair balance must be struck between the public benefit sought and the interference with the rights in question;
- Article 6 entitles those affected by the powers sought in any CPO to a fair and public hearing by an independent and impartial tribunal;
- Article 8 protects the right of the individual to respect for his private and family life, his home and his correspondence. A public authority cannot interfere with these interests unless such interference is in accordance with the law and is necessary in the interests of, inter alia, national security, public safety or the economic wellbeing of the country.

92. Any CPO has the potential to infringe the human rights of persons who own property in the Order Land. Such infringement is authorised by law provided:

- the statutory procedures for obtaining the Order are followed and there is a compelling case in the public interest for any CPO; and
- any intervention with the Convention right is proportionate to the legitimate aim served.

93. A full consideration of human rights implications of the Scheme will be considered when reporting to Cabinet in October 2021 for authority to make the CPO.

Comments checked by:
Christian Smith, Principal Solicitor, Christian.smith@oxfordshire.gov.uk

Staff Implications

94. The resource requirements to successfully deliver HIF2 will come from existing project and technical management functions, primarily within the Growth and Economy Directorate. This will be supported by other disciplines from across the Council organisation as the need arises.

95. Specialist legal advisors are already engaged to provide support to the CPO and other such statutory processes to limit the potential for future challenge to an absolute minimum.

96. The forecast Council staffing costs of project and technical management to completion are contained within the total budget quoted within this report.

Equality & Inclusion Implications

97. The equalities implications of the HIF2 scheme will be assessed robustly through the design development stages of the scheme. These equalities implications will be considered in line with the Equality Act 2010 and through the completion of an Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) as part of the development of the HIF2 and wider A40 programme.

98. The Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED), to which the County Council is also subject, places additional obligations on public sector bodies to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations. Recognising and complying with these higher standards is required to discharge the PSED. In particular, steps must be taken to meet the needs of persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are different from the needs of persons who do not share that characteristic.

99. Work towards this has already taken the form of considering the safety of all pedestrians, cyclists, and horse-riders through a Walking, Cycling and Horse-Riding Assessment & Review which will form part of the information presented at planning. This continual review and development process will ensure that the protected characteristics, particularly those of age and disability, are considered appropriately in the design of the schemes through the provision of suitable crossing facilities and segregated routes of a high standard along all of the schemes. Further to this, by facilitating new bus services and better access to

urban and rural areas for non-motorised users, the needs of all people are being addressed. Reviewing the EqIA and the County Council's PSED will be a continuous process throughout the development of the scheme.

Sustainability Implications

100. The HIF2 proposals alongside the complimentary ST2 project is designed to promote sustainable modes of travel for access into Oxford by commuting traffic by modal shift away from the private vehicle and on to public transport or by walking and cycling. In reducing traffic congestion levels this has positive impacts on air quality and carbon emissions.

101. Similar to the above, the successful delivery of the project, alongside other planned transport investment on the A40 corridor, will form a core part of the promotion and early enabling the use of more sustainable forms of travel for the new developments planned for the West Oxfordshire area. This will be teamed with promotional activities to achieve the cultural shift required.

102. The project, again alongside the wider A40 proposals, has been developed to be as sustainable as possible in terms of its impact on the environment by using the likes of sustainable urban drainage systems as a core part of its design development to date.

103. The scheme design has also been developed to offset any bio-diversity net loss and provision of improved environment and habitat for wildlife, providing a 10% net gain in biodiversity as a direct result of its implementation.

104. During the next stages of scheme delivery there will be specific sustainability targets imposed on the design and build contractor with the likes of re-use of site won materials as an example of how additional temporary environmental impacts during construction will be reduced.

Risk Management

105. The key risk to delivery of the A40 HIF2 Smart Corridor was the original funding window deadline of March 2024 and the impact on Council capital finances should this be exceeded. As per previous sections of this report recent work demonstrated that to conclude a Highways CPO process the more realistic timescale to then construct the scheme would be late 2024. This key risk has now been mitigated via the revised funding contract with Homes England.

106. It should however be noted that the delivery programme remains significantly challenging with a number of workstreams required to run in parallel to meet the revised timeline.

107. Only minimal time risk allowance is included and therefore it is important that the project continues to be delivered in line with those key milestones contained within Table 2.

108. Further information around risks and their management can be found at Annex A, including a register of key strategic risks to the project.

109. Emerging risks will be escalated through the capital governance process to ensure that issues and risks arising and impact on the Council are considered and managed.

110. COVID-19 currently poses an unquantifiable risk to the project's future delivery programme, as well as the associated knock on impact to the HIF2 funding agreement. COVID-19 impacts will be closely monitored and implications on programme reported.

Consultations

111. There is a detailed communications and engagement plan in place for the project. The purpose of this is to ensure consistency of approach across the wider A40 programme, ensuring that this is seen as a joined up complementary investment programme.

112. The 'communication and engagement' plan has also been informed by a series of public consultations over the course of the scheme development notably but not restricted to the Connecting Oxfordshire – A40 Investment Consultation, November 2018.

113. Further detail on consultations and stakeholder engagement can be found at Annex B.

114. There is a clear understanding of the importance of continuing to develop this communications and engagement plan, strengthening relationships with all stakeholders in the process.

BILL COTTON
Corporate Director for Environment and Place

Annexes:

Annex A – Risk Management and Strategic Risk Register
Annex B – Consultation and Stakeholder Engagement

Background papers: Cabinet report – July 2020 – FP 2020/059: West Oxfordshire A40 Smart Corridor – Housing Infrastructure Fund (HIF2)

Cabinet report – December 2020 – FP 2020/141: LGF – Science Transit 2 – Funding and Full Business Case Submission

Contact Officer: Tom Shuttleworth, A40 Programme Lead, 07908059132, tom.shuttleworth@oxfordshire.gov.uk

June 2021

Annex A

Risk Management & Strategic Risk Register

1. The technical complexity of the project has necessitated a comprehensive quantified risk assessment (QRA) to be maintained throughout the development of the project up to this point. A QRA is a fully developed list of project risks against which costs and probability of realisation of risk is applied to each to give a total financial value. This has looked at key areas of risk, notably health and safety, cost, programme, design, environmental and reputational. This risk register has been regularly reviewed and updated throughout the previous phases of scheme development.

2. In addition to the QRA a general contingency allowance has been made as part of the scheme cost build up which is reflective of the current status of development.

3. Table A1 outlines the key strategic risks to scheme delivery;

Table A1 – A40 HIF2 Smart Corridor - Strategic Risks Summary

Risk	Mitigation
Delivery programme timescales remain challenging – if exceeded Council pays all subsequent capital investment costs	Recent approval by Homes England to extend the funding window and grant further monies has formed first part of the mitigation to this risk. Continued delivery by the Council to the key milestones as set out in Table 2 is the ongoing mitigation to this risk.
Inability to acquire all necessary property rights to deliver the scheme within the available funding window	Secure use of Highways CPO powers as a matter of last resort and running in parallel with private treaty negotiations
Need for Side Roads Orders to facilitate scheme delivery	Secure use of Side Roads Order powers from Cabinet
Contested statutory process leading to local Public Inquiry (planning / CPO / SRO)	Ensure adequate time and cost allowances are included within the scheme programme and budget to allow for a local Public Inquiry
HIF2: statutory processes (Highways CPO / Planning) running in parallel with HIF1 and other major schemes promoted by OCC.	Careful programming between the Programmes to avoid clashes where possible. Early engagement with decision making authorities to highlight resource risk.
Statutory Blight	Valid claims are received from affected properties requiring OCC to acquire. Paper to be brought to Cabinet in July to set out position and seek necessary delegated approvals to deal with any such claims.
Spend beyond funding window on the likes of Part 1 claims and mandatory post scheme monitoring.	Dialogue ongoing with Homes England to agree mechanism to draw down funding in advance of spend, which

	could be several years post scheme opening.
Client and supply chain resources to ensure successful delivery.	OCC resourcing forecast in place, secure client delivery team for duration of project where practicable. Robust procurement strategy in place and being delivered to.
High value statutory undertaker diversions required to facilitate works – long lead times and high values	Early identification and engagement with statutory undertakers to agree extents and costs of diversions. Potential to include as early enabling works package in advance of main construction.

4. There remains a risk of interdependency between this project and the ST2 investment, which is being developed to be complementary, as will be the benefits delivered. These risks are set out in detail in the July and December 2020 reports to Cabinet, as set out within the background papers to this report.

5. The report to Cabinet in July 2020 set out the potential to combine the ST2 project with one or more elements of the HIF2 proposals to generate cost and time efficiencies in the wider programme. There remains a small risk that this cannot be achieved, however, following further recent work the project team has developed a delivery programme illustrating how this will be facilitated. This will be explained in more detail in subsequent Cabinet reports.

Annex B

Consultation and Stakeholder Engagement

1. The projects webpage has recently been updated to a new format to make this more user friendly and in preparation for more detailed updates to be provided to the public during the subsequent stages of delivery.

2. This has more recently been supported by a number of engagements via the following forums;

   - Member, District and Parish Council briefings, March through May 2021
   - Landowner engagement has been ongoing since early 2020 seeking acquisitions by negotiation. Many of these are well progressed. Furthermore, intensive engagement with affected landowners has been undertaken during the months March – June 2021 as the scheme preferred options became known. This will continue throughout all subsequent stages of delivery.
   - Key user group meetings to explain scheme design and gain buy in to proposals.
   - Proactive engagement with statutory bodies such as the Environment Agency and Natural England to ensure that any scheme impacts are carefully and comprehensively mitigated.
   - Engagement with developers of adjacent sites to ensure works are co-ordinated from both technical and practical perspectives.

3. On 10 May a public engagement event was launched informed by the scheme preferred options. This closed on 7 June and the results are currently being collated to be brought back to Cabinet in July 2021 as part of a report to seek formal endorsement of the preferred scheme options.

4. A Statement of Community Involvement will also be produced to support the forthcoming planning application. This will outline all of the pre-application engagement carried out, the feedback received and how this has influenced the project.

5. There is a clear understanding of the importance of continuing to develop this communications and engagement plan, strengthening relationships with all stakeholders in the process.

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Divisions Affected: N/A

CABINET - 22 JUNE 2021

DELIVERY OF SUPPORTED LIVING UNITS THROUGH INVESTMENT IN THE RESONANCE SUPPORTED HOMES FUND

Report by Corporate Director of Adult and Housing Services

RECOMMENDATION

The Cabinet is RECOMMENDED to approve an investment of £5.0m by the County Council in the Resonance Supported Homes Fund for the delivery of supported living accommodation units for adults with learning disabilities and/or autism.

Executive Summary

1. Through the Care Act 2014, the council has a responsibility to meet the care and support needs of adults with learning disabilities and/or autism. To achieve positive outcomes the council generally supports these service users to live independently with their care needs met in their own home.

2. Through the provision of supported living accommodation, the council enables people to live in their own home with care support provided on site. Based on current and anticipated supply, there is a need to access an additional planned pipeline of supported living accommodation in Oxfordshire over the next 2-3 years and to increase the overall supply of suitable properties.

3. Resonance is an experienced social impact investment and property fund manager with a track record of delivering accommodation for vulnerable groups on behalf of local authorities. The Resonance Supported Homes Fund (RSHF) was launched in July 2020 and aims to ensure that people with learning disabilities, autism and mental ill health are treated fairly in society

4. Based on a scoping exercise carried out in late 2020 the expectation is that an investment of £5m, funded through the council's capital programme, will deliver around 25 supported living accommodation units and help meet those unmet service needs.

5. Background to the RSHF and the service needs that would be met are set out in this report.

Supported Living Accommodation Needs

6. Oxfordshire County Council (OCC) has a responsibility to meet the care and support needs of adults with learning disabilities and autism. Many people can live at home with family and others can live independently in general housing. Through the provision of supported living accommodation, the council enables people to live in their own home with care and support provided on site.

7. Oxfordshire County Council's Market Position Statement 2019 sets out the council's strategic approach to Supported Living for Adults with Learning Disabilities. With an overarching aim 'that people with learning disabilities should be supported to live in communities rather than in care homes, holding their own tenancies where possible' the statement sets out that the council will:

    - increase the supply of Supported Living for adults with a learning disability, including developing the capacity and capability within the market to bring a significant number of people back to the county from out of area residential care placements;

    - continue to work with providers to reduce isolated 1, 2 and 3-person accommodation by clustering properties together or creating an increased number of properties with their own front door, whereby services to meet care needs can be shared.

8. Supported living accommodation with care and support is delivered by housing providers and care providers working in partnership. The accommodation is usually sourced by working directly with housing providers or with private investors who will purchase the property. In both cases the accommodation is managed by a housing provider (generally a registered provider) and the council enters into a long-term nomination agreement with the provider, to secure the on-going use of the accommodation for supported living purposes. On-going day to day care to support the resident to live independently is commissioned separately by the council and funded through the council's revenue budget.

9. Maintaining and increasing the supply of suitable housing is also key to the council's commitment to bring some individuals from out of county residential care back into Oxfordshire and to offering accommodation with support to young people transitioning into adult services from Children's Social Care.

10. Demand modelling carried out for the council by the Housing Learning and Improvement Network identifies that even with the anticipated number of units being delivered through existing routes an additional 56 units of accommodation will still be required between 2021 and 2023. Appendix 1 sets out the anticipated demand over the next 3 years.

11. The aim of investing in the RSHF is to increase and accelerate the overall availability of suitable housing stock in Oxfordshire and to increase the certainty over future supply. Alongside that the council will continue to work with private investors and housing providers to meet the overall need set out in Appendix 1.

Resonance Supported Homes Fund

12. The RSHF was launched in July 2020 and aims to ensure that people with learning disabilities, autism and mental ill health are treated fairly in society. As a social investor Resonance is seeking tangible impacts for people that include:

- ✓ Having 'own home' and a degree of independence
- ✓ Control of a stable housing situation
- ✓ An 'ordinary home on an ordinary street' with the same rights and access to opportunities as all citizens
- ✓ Enhanced opportunities for work where possible and desired

13. At least 90% of the investments made in the RSHF will be used to acquire supported living accommodation for adults with learning disabilities and/or autism. The expectation is that properties will be 'ordinary homes in ordinary streets' i.e. integrated into local communities with good transport and service infrastructure.

14. The fund targeted initial investments of at least £10m in 2020 and is now seeking to increase investor commitments to a target fund size of £50m - £100m. Investments to date total £10.250m and include £5m each from the Greater Manchester Combined Authority and social impact investor Big Society Capital, plus £0.250m from Barrow Cadbury Trust.

15. Appendix 2 provides further information about the fund structure and governance arrangements and explains what the council's role and responsibilities as an investor would be.

Additional Supply of Supported Living Accommodation through the RSHF

16. In Autumn 2020, RSHF carried out an assessment of properties available in the Oxfordshire housing market and estimated that at that time an investment of £5m would enable the purchase and provision of 25 units of accommodation in Oxfordshire.

17. Following agreement to invest the RSHF would work with the council to identify potential tenants and their accommodation needs. RSHF would then oversee the sourcing and purchase of appropriate properties in Oxfordshire and carry out any adaptations or renovations required to meet service user needs. Once that work is complete, they will then enter into a framework agreement with a registered housing provider who will lease the property from the fund and manage it on an on-going basis. The rental for the tenancy paid to the registered provider by the tenant is expected to be funded by Exempt Housing Benefit.

18. Based on feedback from RSHF accommodation units purchased by the fund would generally be expected to be available for occupation anywhere from 6-24 months from the point of investment.

Corporate Policies and Priorities

19. The County Council's vision as set out in the Corporate Plan is 'Thriving Communities for Everyone in Oxfordshire' and specifically to : 'Enable older and disabled people to live independently and care for those in greatest need' and 'Tackle inequality, help people live safe and healthy lives and enable everyone to play an active part in their community'. The delivery of supported living contributes to delivering against these commitments.

Financial Implications

20. Funding for the £5m investment in the RSHF, expected to be met through prudential borrowing, is built into the council's capital programme from 2021/22. There would be a capital receipt when the council divested.

21. While the council's primary aim is to increase the supply of supported living accommodation to meet anticipated unmet needs, the RSHF aims to deliver an investor return of around 6% per annum, over the minimum investment period of 8 years, or around 7.5% per annum over 16 years, the next point that investors could exit the fund.

22. These returns are expected to be achieved through a combination of the property rental income paid to the fund by registered providers through their lease agreements and long run capital appreciation on the properties held in trust by the RSHF. The latter would be realised at the point the council exited the fund. If the value of its investment in the Fund was below £5m at 8 or 16 years or an exit point beyond that, any capital loss up to a maximum of £5m would need to be met by the council.

23. Both the cash yield and capital appreciation will be calculated as a share of the whole fund portfolio and not limited to individual investments or areas. Further information about the assumptions behind the returns is set out in Appendix 3.

24. In the longer term the expectation is that the cost of capital needed to support the investment would be met from the annual returns payable to the council as an investor in the fund. An anticipated shortfall in the first few years would either be managed through reserves or by delaying the need for borrowing by utilising other resources in the capital programme. If neither of those were possible Adult Services would need to meet the capital costs from revenue funding.

25. The expectation is that the council's investment would be wholly drawn down by the end of the initial investment period (July 2024) based on property acquisition across the fund. While any unspent funds would be returned to investors at the end of the investment period if they had not been used to

purchase properties, the likelihood is that the Council's investment will be committed to the fund for at least eight years.

26. The council's External Auditor and Treasury Management advisor have reviewed and advised on the proposal and the accounting treatment. The investment will be treated as a capital loan under regulation 25(1)(b) of the Capital Financing Regulations.

Comments checked by:

Kathy Wilcox, Finance Business Partner, Adult Social Care and Public Health, kathy.wilcox@oxfordshire.gov.uk (Finance)

Legal Implications

27. The RSHF is a Collective Investment Scheme and as such is regulated under the Financial Services and Markets Act 2000 (FSMA) and relevant secondary legislation.

28. OCC has the power to make an investment of this type pursuant to s.12 Local Government Act 2003 and s.111 Local Government Act 1972.

29. Legal Services have been fully involved in the discussions with Resonance and have advised on the matters addressed in this report.

Comments checked by:

Christian Smith, Principal Solicitor, christian.smith@oxfordshire.gov.uk (Legal)

Staff Implications

30. The Lead Commissioner for Live Well will have responsibility for working with Resonance to oversee the sourcing of appropriate properties and for commissioning the care and support for the people accommodated. The Brokerage team, working with Adult Social Care locality teams, will identify and nominate people to the supported living units as they become available. Ongoing support from the Finance Team will be required to support the financial arrangements. This work will be resourced from existing staffing.

Equality & Inclusion Implications

31. An increase in the supply of supported living accommodation will support the council to meet the objectives set out by the Health & Wellbeing Board and enable more disabled people to live independently in accommodation appropriate to their needs.

32. On the basis that it would increase the volume of accommodation available beyond the level available through existing routes participation in the RSHF

would contribute to the ambitions set out in the council's Market Position Statement and deliver much needed supported living units, particularly for young disabled adults with care and support needs.

Sustainability Implications

33. The properties purchased will be assessed for energy efficiency and refurbishment work will be undertaken that maximises energy efficiency to keep fuel costs low.

Risk Management

RSHF Maturity, Investors and Returns

34. The RSHF has a short operating history and at this stage it is unclear what the ultimate fund value will be. Based on RSHF's model neither the annual returns nor capital appreciation appear to be particularly sensitive to the size of the fund over the long run. However, at smaller levels of investment, and with no guarantee the fund would grow beyond the current total, it is possible that the lower level of geographical spread for property purchases and actions by other investors to either to invest or withdraw from the fund could impact more on the overall returns achieved over the long run.

35. Annual returns will also depend on the on-going availability of Exempt Housing Benefit to fund the property rental costs. Since this would be a long-term investment any future change to the arrangements for that could impact on the wider fund and the ability to generate a cash yield.

Provision of Supported Living Accommodation

36. While RSHF's scoping exercise in 2020 indicated that an investment of £5m would enable the provision of 25 units of accommodation the actual number will depend on the Oxfordshire property market during the period of property purchase.

37. Final sign off for each specific property purchase is through the Investment Committee that sits within the fund governance and the council would have no direct influence over that decision. While the needs of the likely tenant(s) are considered when houses are identified the ultimate decision about whether to purchase a property will be based on the anticipated return to the Fund through the rental paid by the registered provider. This is in turn dependent on the rental income paid to them by the tenant which is funded by Exempt Housing Benefit This is assessed and agreed by the local housing authority based on the rental costs and care plan for the relevant service user(s). If as a result of that assessment it became apparent that the return was not enough, there is a risk that there may be abortive work and a need to source an alternative property which would lead to delays in the availability of accommodation

38. RSHF will attempt to agree with the registered provider that the council has the nomination rights for each property purchased, both initially and on an on-going basis if the tenant changes. However, the outcome of this process will only be known after the council has made its commitment to invest. As demonstrated

by the demand modelling, there is a high degree of confidence that the demand exists to ensure uptake of all units by people nominated by Adult Social Care, but there is a small risk that the tenancy could be taken up by people who are not Oxfordshire service users. This risk is deemed to be extremely small and the expectation is that all of the units of accommodation purchased in Oxfordshire for Oxfordshire residents will be occupied by Oxfordshire residents only.

Consultations

39. The proposal sets out a proposal for an investment in the RSHF supported homes fund. Any service impacts will be consistent with the council's existing policies and the published Market Position Statement.

STEPHEN CHANDLER
Corporate Director Adult and Housing Services

Annex:	Appendix 1 – Demand Data Appendix 2 – Structure of the Fund Appendix 3 – Fund Yield
Background papers:	Nil
Contact Officer:	Gillian Douglas, Assistant Director Housing and Social Care Commissioning, gillian.douglas@oxfordshire.gov.uk

June 2021

Appendix 1

40. An overview of demand for specialist accommodation over the next 3 years for people with learning disabilities and/or autism is set out below. The yellow shading indicates predictions taken from the Market Position Statement and the work done by the Housing Learning & Improvement Network to predict demand in Oxfordshire:

		2021-22	2022-23	2023-24
Reprovision of existing stock	- Demand	29	27	12
	- Units identified	21	5	0
	- Units required	8	22	12
Learning Disabilities & Autistic Spectrum Condition	- Demand	27	10	10
	- Units identified	27	0	0
	- Units required	0	10	10
Profound and Multiple Learning Disabilities	- Demand	10	10	10
	- Units identified	10	0	0
	- Units required	0	10	10
Learning Disabilities & Complex Behaviours	- Demand	6	6	6
	- Units identified	0	6	0
	- Units required	6	0	6
Young People Transition	- Demand	0	12	6
	- Units identified	0	12	0
	- Units required	0	0	6

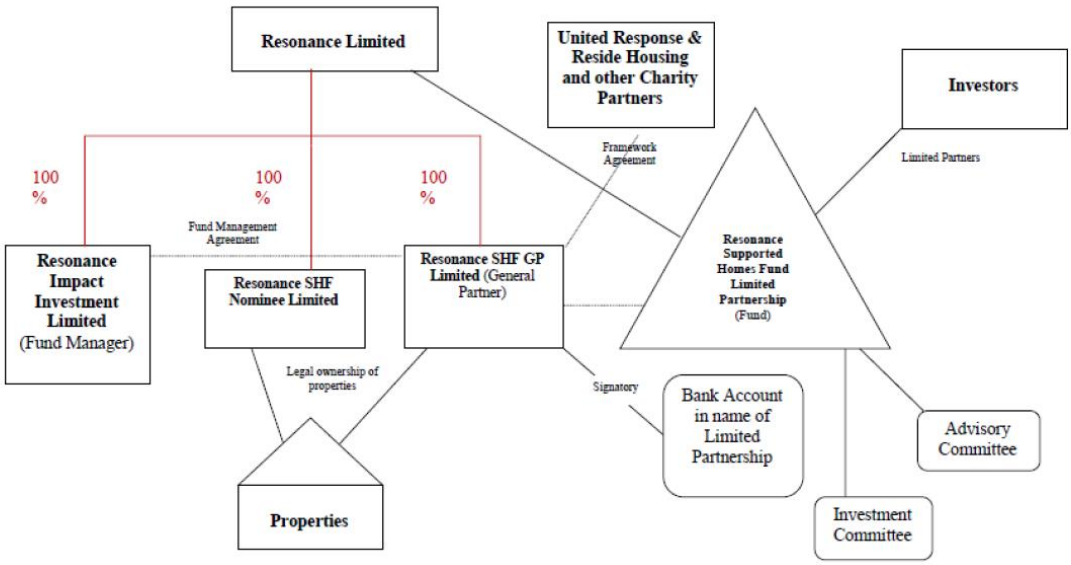
Appendix 2

41. Resonance Limited was established since 2002 and is the holding company for all of Resonance's activity in UK social impact investment, which include both unregulated activity (e.g., consultancy to social enterprises) and regulated activity (e.g., fund management).

42. Its subsidiary, Resonance Impact Investment Limited (RIIL) is authorised and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority and has been managing funds since 2013.

43. The RSHF is a ring-fenced property fund, launched by Resonance in July 2020. The Fund will be managed as a long-term 'evergreen' structure, i.e. it has no pre-agreed end date, reflecting the long-term tenancies it is seeking to create.

44. The investors in the fund (the Limited Partners) are the indirect owners of the properties in the property fund. These property assets are held on trust for them by the General Partner and a nominee company. The relationships required for the fund's operation are summarised below:



45. An Investment Committee made up of independent associates with experience in real estate financing, social investment, property valuations and the charity/specialist supported housing will review each property to assess if it is reasonable investment for the fund and likely to deliver the returns promised to investors. It is unlikely that a property acquisition would be agreed unless a rental yield of 6% for the property is assessed to be achievable.

46. The Advisory Committee helps to smooth the operational function of the fund and is responsible for reviewing any actual or potential conflict of interest between the interest of the Fund and the interests of the Fund Manager, the General Partner or any of their Associates or any of their respective officers, agents, delegates, members or employees. It will also review with the Fund

Manager the progress of the Fund generally in achieving its Investment Objective. The Fund Manager will also require the consent of the Advisory Committee to:

(a) approve any of the following changes to the criteria for property acquisitions:

(i) any change to the net initial yield floors for acquisitions of Properties set out in the stock selection criteria section of the Information Memorandum, in light of market or asset specific conditions; and

(ii) any proposal to purchase leasehold Properties with an unexpired lease term of less than 75 years,

(b) amend or waive any of the following investment restrictions:

(i) no one single asset (property block) will have a value at the time it is acquired by the Partnership in excess of 10% of total Commitments;

(ii) only up to 20% of Properties may be let on the open market as opposed to being let to those who require specialist supported housing;

47. Based on the current investments the council would be a member of the Advisory Committee unless or until the value of its investment fell below 20% of the total fund.

48. Each investor will enter into a Limited Partnership agreement with the fund with any specific local arrangements set out in a binding side letter. This will specify that the council's investment will wholly be used to obtain supported living accommodation in Oxfordshire.

49. As a limited partner in the limited partnership, the council would have an obligation for the liabilities of the partnership up to the value of its investment of £5.0m.

50. A Limited Partner can request to redeem their interest in the fund once every 8 years from 30 March 2020 on two years' prior notice. The expectation is that on redemption funds would be released through (a) sale to other existing investor(s) in the Fund (b) the Fund-raising debt to provide the cash necessary for redemption or (c) sale of certain properties in the Fund. However, the right to redeem is qualified as the Fund Manager is only required to use reasonable endeavours to arrange repayment. In addition, Limited Partners will also have the right to wind up the Fund every eight years with a two-year notice period (i) if the Fund size is less than £50m it will require a vote of at least 25% of Limited Partners; (ii) if the Fund size is £50m or more, a vote of at least 75% of Limited Partners will be required.

51. Should any material change to the fund be required it would have to made via a Special Resolution, where 75% of investors would vote for a substantive

amendment to the fund terms and conditions. As an investor OCC would form part of this ballot.

Appendix 3

Annual Cash Yield

52. The cash yield is obtained from charging the registered housing provider a 6% return on investment from the core rent. This return is dependent on payments to the fund by registered providers through their lease agreement. In turn those payments are supported by the rent paid to them by the tenant which is expected to be funded by Exempt Housing Benefit.

53. Resonance will take a share of the 6% return to cover their management/running costs (1% per annum whilst the fund is building the portfolio and 0.75% per annum thereafter) plus other fees to cover annual costs of audit and fund valuation as well as a fee to cover the costs associated with each placement. They will retain £0.100m cash for the duration of the fund, but any surplus above that, and after initial set – up costs have been met, would be passed to investors through the cash yield.

54. In the long run, RSHF project that the cash yield across the fund will be an average of 4-5 % per annum paid on a quarterly basis. That assumes the Investment Committee would only agree the purchase of any property where the return on investment to the fund was at least 6%.

Capital Value

55. Capital appreciation or losses will be driven by changes in property values across the whole fund and would not be specific to the property market in Oxfordshire. However, Resonance's expectation is that a buy and hold strategy over a long period of time, plus the diversified spread of the anticipated portfolio, will mitigate the impact of any downturns in the property market.

56. While there is expected to be capital appreciation over the life of the investment (modelled at 3% by RSHF, although that is not guaranteed) there will be a loss in the early period of the fund. This is because there are sunk costs at the beginning of the model (stamp duty, renovation, fees etc.) which mean that the fair value of the investment will initially be around 17% lower than the initial investment of £5m. Because these upfront costs are likely to need to be recovered through capital appreciation over the long term the modelled returns are relatively higher over a period of investment beyond the minimum 8 – year period.

Divisions: N/A

CABINET - 22 JUNE 2021

WORKFORCE REPORT AND STAFFING DATA Q4 2020/2021

Report by Karen Edwards

RECOMMENDATION

The Cabinet is RECOMMENDED to note the report.

Executive Summary

1. Our workforce is the most valuable asset the council deploys. It is our people that make a difference to our residents and our communities. The very nature of the work, and the services we provide, is people intensive. Our residents are reliant on the professionalism of our workforce to deliver high quality services and the future ambitions of the Council.

2. Many of our staff have continued to work from home during Q4 (January-March 2021) as a result of the pandemic and the lockdown restrictions with very limited numbers working from council buildings.

3. This report provides an update on key HR activities during Quarter 4 (1st January – 31st March 2021) along with a refreshed workforce profile at Appendix 1 and absence data including COVID related absence data which is provided at Appendix 2.

Quarter 4 overview of activity.

- General Overview of the HR, OD and Corporate Health and Safety Team
- Equalities, Diversity and Inclusion
- Apprenticeships
- Delivering the Future Together Programme
- Managing for Performance Framework – 12.3.2.
- Organisational Change and Redundancies
- Resourcing
- Corporate Health, Safety and Wellbeing

General Overview of the HR, OD and Corporate Health and Safety Team

4. The HR team continues to work flexibly and predominantly from home with no impact on the delivery of services. During Quarter 4, the team has continued to respond to COVID 19 in addition to business as usual activities. We continue to adapt the delivery of our services and the advice and guidance provided in response to the challenges our workforce experience as a result of the pandemic.

5. The team is made up of a range of specialists including HR Business Partners and Advisory, Reward, Resourcing, Business Systems and Data Analytics, Corporate Health, Safety and Wellbeing and Organisational Development (OD). The range of knowledge, skills and experience across the team has been instrumental in providing an effective response to the pandemic and this continues to be the case as we move forward and respond to the Government's roadmap and the lifting of some restrictions whilst ensuring that HR moves forward to support the delivery of organisational goals.

6. We continue to update the COVID FAQ's as national advice and guidance starts to change and respond to new emerging issues resulting from the pandemic. A weekly manager's briefing continues to be produced providing a wealth of information and top tips for managers on areas such as looking after the wellbeing of employees and sharing good practice.

7. Informal meetings continue to take place every 4 weeks with the trade unions. These meetings continue to focus on COVID and any resulting issues that arise as a result in changes to national guidance including any impact on the local situation. These are well attended and allow us to deal promptly with emerging issues whilst sharing information, maintaining good communication and enabling positive collaboration across Oxfordshire.

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI)

8. Work continues on the workforce action plan aligned to the Including Everyone: Equalities, Diversity and Inclusion Framework.

9. A mentoring programme has been launched to create opportunities for staff, particularly those in underrepresented groups, to have shadowing and mentoring opportunities to support everyone to reach their full potential. 22 mentors from across the organisation have been trained by West Midlands Employers who manage the Coaching and Mentoring pool on behalf of OCC. There is a link on the OCC intranet to the site where staff can register their interest and can filter their search by using key words to find a match with a Mentor with a particular professional specialism. . A further 24 training places will be made available to increase the number of mentors in late summer 2021.

10. The OCC Organisational Development (OD) team receive notification that an interest has been registered and OCC staff have access to both our internal Mentors and experienced Mentors from other public sector organisations who are members of the West Midlands Coaching and Mentoring pool.

11. The site prompts mentees and mentors to complete regular feedback forms throughout their mentoring programme (at the point of registration, at the point of

matching, at the mid-way point and when the programme comes to an end, this is optional but we do encourage our staff to complete this.

12. In addition to the mentoring programme, the council has introduced a programme to focus on reverse mentoring for diversity. 15 members of the BAME Network were trained as mentors in February 2021 by an external provider who is experienced in reverse mentoring. These 15 mentors have been matched with members of CEDR and ELT to provide mentoring around EDI with a focus on lived experience. The programme's mid-point review meeting took place in May 2021 and reported very positive outcomes around learning and safe spaces to discuss difficult issues. A final review will take place in August 2021 with the intention of rolling out a further programme from Autumn 2021.

13. In Q4, the Council published the Gender Pay Gap report for 2019/2020 (snapshot date 30 March 2020) and registered this on the government's gender pay gap service portal.

14. Whilst there is currently no legal requirement to do so, the Council also produced its first ethnicity pay gap report for 2019/2020. The data identifies a small ethnicity pay gap in terms of the mean hourly rate of 1.1% and there is a lower proportion of BAME staff in the lower middle quartile and the upper pay quartile. The report format and data presentation require further refinement and has therefore not been published this year, but it is anticipated that as from 2020/2021, the report will be placed on the OCC website alongside the Gender Pay Gap report.

15. Although the report has not been published, it has been shared and discussed with the Council's BAME network. A focus group was held at the end of Q4 to discuss the report's findings and to explore and discuss colleagues' experiences of career development at OCC and any barriers to progression. Feedback included a desire for better access to acting up and project work opportunities as valuable ways to provide further development opportunities. There was also some concern about a lack of consistency in the management of these opportunities across the Council and this will be taken forward by the HR Business Partners at the Directorate Leadership Team meetings. Whilst the re-focus of the Managing for Performance framework 12. 3. 2. will provide for more focussed and effective one-to-one conversations about career aspirations and development, further targeted work needs to be considered for BAME colleagues and others.

Apprenticeships

16. As reported in Q3, this coming year we have made a commitment to focus on apprenticeships. Work on the apprenticeship action plan is progressing well with the development of a new workforce planning tool which will provide an emphasis on embedding apprenticeships and career pathways within workforce plans.

18. A vacancy arising in the Organisational Development team has been converted to an Apprenticeship Manager role to support the development of an apprenticeship strategy, improve optimisation of the levy, the development and

embedding of career pathways, to support work with our communities around skills gaps and social mobility and to help establish better links with young people across Oxfordshire who are experiencing barriers to employment. The successful candidate is expected to commence employment in early July 2021. Further work will be undertaken in Q1 and early Q2 to build an apprenticeship hub supported by some fixed term funding as detailed in the Corporate Plan for 2021/22.

19. Challenges continue with using the full apprenticeship levy, but we spent 70% of the annual levy in 2020 compared to less than 50% in 2019.

20. As of 31st March 2021, 175 staff members were studying for apprenticeships with 22 having registered on programmes in the previous quarter. 82 apprenticeships were completed in the year April 2020 – March 2021. In the year April 2020 – March 2021 33% of new enrolments were in schools.

21. A further 42 registrations are planned to take place shortly of which 22 have arisen as part of an organisational wide initiative in business improvement skills through the LEAN Academy.

22. With the COVID restrictions being lifted and the establishment of the apprenticeship hub, we are expecting the numbers of apprenticeships to increase significantly during 2021-22.

Delivering the Future Together (DTFT) Programme

23. The Delivering the Future Together (DTFT) programme is our internal programme for change. Following a widespread employee engagement programme which commenced in June 2020, new/refreshed values and behaviours have been developed and finalised. The DTFT programme is all about living our values and behaviours and working together so that we can build on our strengths, be even better at everything we do and have an even greater impact on the lives of the people and communities of Oxfordshire. The programme is all about supporting, engaging, enabling and developing our people. The launch of the new/refreshed values and behaviours is scheduled to take place towards the end of Q1 2021/2022.

24. In Q4, the DTFT board successfully recruited to the role of Champions Network Lead. The role was offered as an internal secondment opportunity for 12 months and the successful candidate will start in role in early June 2021.

25. The Champions Network Lead will lead a network of 150 plus Champions who will be recruited from across OCC to work throughout the organisation. Their role will support bringing the values and behaviours to life in our teams and be instrumental in providing feedback about what's working well and 'even better if', collecting great ideas, making connections and sharing best practice from teams across the organisation and sharing this with the Programme Board. They will do this by supporting and facilitating discussions to support teams to adopt the Values and Behaviours within their work. This will provide personal development for those who come forward as Champions and support managers with their

teams. Internal recruitment for the Champions will start in Q1 following the launch of the new Values and Behaviours. Being a Champion is all about passion and not seniority, those who take up the roles will receive training.

26. In addition to the above work, the DTFT programme board has identified several workstreams that will support a great workforce culture into the future through which our new/refreshed Values and Behaviours will run as a recurrent theme. These include Managing for Performance, Recruitment and Induction, Talent Management, Reward and Recognition, Learning and Development, Wellbeing and others, all of which form a work programme of approximately 12 – 18 months.

Managing for Performance Framework – 12.3.2

27. The first of the DTFT workstreams to start to be delivered is the refreshed performance management framework 12. 3. 2. This framework was first introduced in 2017 and reviewed during Q3 2020/2021.

28. As part of the Q3 review, the framework has been refreshed setting out more clearly the purpose of the framework with a clear emphasis on the need for quality conversations to be taking place between all managers and staff throughout the year. 12 is the number of meetings that should take place over the year with each employee, 3 of which should be extended conversations to look at objective setting, review of performance, development opportunities and to look at what is working well and what could be even better with 2 meetings per year focussed on service planning in response to the corporate plan. An increased emphasis has been placed on wellbeing as part of the 12 conversations per year.

29. During Q4, a programme of training on 12. 3. 2. for all managers has been developed consisting of 4 modules.

- Module 1 – What is 12. 3. 2. and what is its purpose?
- Module 2 – Holding quality conversations
- Module 3 – Embedding the Values and Behaviours in our conversations
- Module 4 – Holding challenging conversations

30. The objectives for the re-focussing on 12.3.2. managing for performance programme are as follows:

- Understand what managers need to do to manage ***for*** performance (not just performance manage) … and act on this
- Understand the importance of doing **quality one to ones**, the benefits they get from them and to carry them out constantly and consistently
- Demonstrate effective **performance management s**kills (setting great objectives, focusing on strengths not weaknesses, giving people stretch

challenges not panic ones, developing and promoting their team members)

- Demonstrate effective **management for performance skills** (holding quality conversations, dealing with challenging conversations, motivating people to change their behaviours)

- Understand and appreciate the **12.3.2 framework** and how it differs (positively)from traditional appraisals

- Are able to see the impact of how having **a good quality conversation** with their people, delivers even better service to our residents, customers and colleagues

- Include the values and behaviours as a common part of 121 conversations

- Are seen to add even more **value** to their team

31. For our staff, over time, we want to achieve a workplace where teams and individuals

- Are clear in their understanding about what is expected from them and how they will be supported and developed in order to **achieve success**

- Know what to expect from **the 12.3.2 framework** and understand and value a 12.3.2 conversation

- **Are celebrated for their efforts** and achievements, especially with regard to demonstrating our values and behaviours

- Are supported to **deliver and achieve** – regularly and consistently

- Receive the same **management for performance experience** across the whole organisation

- Know their manager believes in them and promotes their **development and well being**

- Feel **listened to** and heard

- **Value and appreciate** the time spent with their manager

32. Ultimately, one to ones should be a mutually worthwhile experience and something that both parties look forward to.

Organisational Change and Redundancies

33. The HR Business Partners and Advisory team continue to support several projects where changes to staffing structures are planned providing support from inception to implementation and during Q4 work to support a joint Property Team re-design, consultation on a joint Continuous Improvement team in the Customer

Service Centre was completed and a new IT service delivery model was developed and consulted on to support the implementation of the new IT and digital improvements strategy.

34. In Quarter 4, there were a total of 9 redundancies all of which related to the organisational change programmes taking place in the Provision Cycle and the Health, Education and Social Care (HESC) areas.

35. In total in 2020/2021 there were 26 redundancies at the council.

HR Resourcing Team – Key Projects

36. The HR Resourcing team is a small team which provides specialist resourcing expertise to managers across the Council. The support that is provided ranges from reviewing and advising on job descriptions for specific markets, the design of adverts, advising on the advertising of roles via internal social media channels and external advertising, sourcing agencies, briefing and liaising with agencies, determining the best approach for assessment/interview processes and researching market pay rates where there is difficulty filling roles. In Q4, the team have supported recruitment to vacancies within the Provision Cycle, the Continuous Improvement Team in the Customer Services Centre, Peripatetic Customer Services Advisers in Libraries and the Growth team.

37. Other more specific areas of focus for the Resourcing team during Q4 have been:

<u>Surge Testing</u>

38. In Q4, the HR Resourcing team supported the preparation of 'surge testing' across Oxfordshire in response to new variants of COVID-19. In preparation, HR developed a resourcing plan for the provision of staff including recruitment, screening, and training to ensure the Council was prepared for a rapid response to instructions to undertake targeted surge testing across potentially affected areas in the county. HR also continues to monitor the availability of suitable agency staff via a local recruitment agency.

<u>Children's Services</u>

39. The team have continued to support the transition to the Family Solutions model including onboarding a high number of new starters and supporting hiring managers throughout the recruitment process. A focus on the reduction of temporary agency worker placements is now underway.

40. HR is working with the Director of Children's Services and his senior leadership team to look at recruitment and retention issues amongst Children's Social Workers which is both a local and national issue. The Director of Children's Services is due to take a report to CEDR shortly highlighting the challenges and the work undertaken in Children's Services to date and next steps for consideration.

Adult Services

41. The Resourcing team have met and interviewed with people in the Approved Mental Health service, to gain a deeper understanding of the Approved Mental Health Practitioner (AMPH) role, and the motivations of the remarkable people who undertake the role. This shaped the creation of content for job adverts with the right look, tone and approach, placed in the right locations for AMHPs working for other authorities to see our adverts. A branding concept was also agreed to use for Social Work and Occupational Therapist recruitment. A web landing page has been created with the campaign branding including quotes and audiograms from the team.

Armed Forces Engagement

42. Links have been forged with the Careers Transitions Partnership and Forces Families Jobs to promote job opportunities to veterans and their families. Automated feeds for vacancies through to these jobs boards are being explored as well as attendance at virtual careers events.

Future Temporary Agency Staff Delivery and Sourcing Options for Oxfordshire County Council and Cherwell District Council

43. OCC's current managed service contract for temporary agency staff delivery and sourcing with Comensura is due to expire in November 2021. HR & Procurement colleagues have undertaken soft market testing in preparation for the next tender exercise.

Corporate Health, Safety and Wellbeing

Covid 19

44. During Q4, the Council's Corporate Health and Safety team continued to work with colleagues in Public Health and service areas to maintain compliance with government requirements to ensure our buildings and operations remain safe. On 22 February 2021, the UK government announced a four-step roadmap to ease restrictions across England and provide a route back to a more normal way of life.

45. As the economy reopens and the relevant milestones are reached, the Council will continue to follow the relevant government guidance on working safely and put in place measures to reduce the risk of COVID-19 transmission.

Dealing with violent, abusive and threatening behaviour towards staff

46. The Council has updated and reinforced its Zero Tolerance: Violent, Abusive and Threatening Behaviour policy to prevent, manage and respond to work-related violence from clients and members of the public. This approach gives a clear message to the public that any violent, abusive or threatening behaviour towards any Council employee or Council worker is unacceptable and will not be tolerated.

47. The nature of some work i.e. social care often means exposure to this behaviour is unfortunately a residual risk. We aim to ensure staff are competent and confident in the measures needed to deal or respond to it. This includes ensuring risks are properly assessed and safe systems of work implemented and reinforced through training.

48. Whilst in many cases most incidents can be dealt with through engagement and working with clients, in some cases, the situation may escalate or pose a serious risk of harm. In these cases, senior management will be consulted, and consideration given to what police or legal action is available and in extreme cases services may be withdrawn.

Stress, Anxiety and Depression within the workforce

49. Stress, Anxiety and Depression remains the top reason for sickness absence. At present we are unable to identify from reports where stress is related to the workplace or other non-occupational stressors.

50. The council has an Employee Assistance Programme and the provider is Vita. Vita are able to provide staff with a fully comprehensive psychological support service, offering counselling sessions for our staff and a dedicated managers hotline. In addition, higher counselling such as Eye Movement Desensitisation and Reprocessing (EMDR) which is particularly helpful for trauma and Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and Cognitive Behaviour Therapy (CBT) can also be provided.

51. Through our occupational health provider People Asset Management (PAM) we are able to provide wellbeing assessments (Psychological Occupational health Assessments), tailored debriefing sessions (both group and individual) such as dealing with anxiety in Covid times, critical incident debriefing and wellness sessions.

52. Our intranet pages contain advice to managers about how an employee that reports feelings of stress should be helped and we encourage employees to complete a stress risk assessment which asks individuals to identify the areas of the work as identified by the HSE where they may be feeling overwhelmed, this enables the line manager to put in place an action plan and address any issues raised.

53. A WAP (Wellness Action Plan) is also available on the Intranet can be utilised by an employee to help advise their line manager as to how best to support them in the workplace and what keeps them well at work. We also have a Psychological Health Questionnaire available on the Intranet to help employees identify whether they may need to seek support.

54. We have a number of support groups throughout the council and our wellbeing champions are always keen to help signpost individuals to the relevant support.

55. We also have some Stress awareness bitesize sessions available for line managers. Every year we run a number of webinars for staff and have had

speakers from MIND Oxfordshire, Able futures and Access to Work over the last 12 months.

Quarter 4 Staffing Data (1st January – 31st March 2021)

56. Appendix 1 of this report provides staffing data relating to the workforce profile, sickness absence, turnover, apprenticeship numbers and agency spend.

57. Workforce data and trends are published in more detail on the Council's intranet. This includes a breakdown of staffing numbers and trends over the past five quarters by Directorates and Schools, including temporary and part time employees, turnover and sickness rates along with diversity and salary profiles. This data provides information by service and includes the spend and use of agency workers.

Equality & Inclusion Implications

58. Equality and inclusion implications are considered across all our workstreams as identified in the section above.

Sustainability Implications

59. There are no sustainability implications arising from this report.

Risk Management

60. There are no risk management issues arising from this report.

CLAIRE TAYLOR
Corporate Director Customers, Organisational Development & Resources

Annex: Appendix 1 - Workforce Profile Q4
Appendix 2 – Covid Absence Data Q4
Appendix 3 – Apprenticeship and Levy note

Background papers: Nil

Contact Officer: Karen Edwards, Director Human Resources

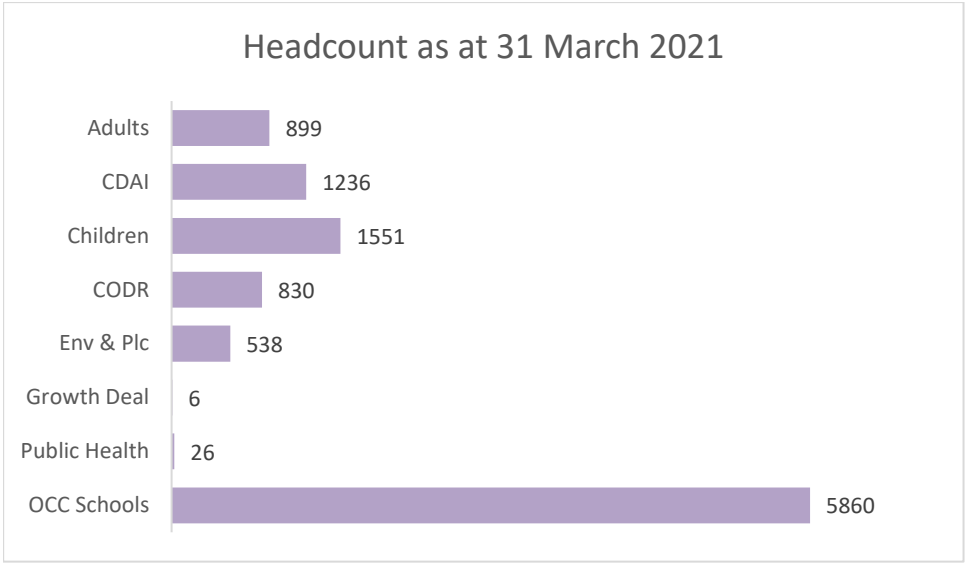
June 2021

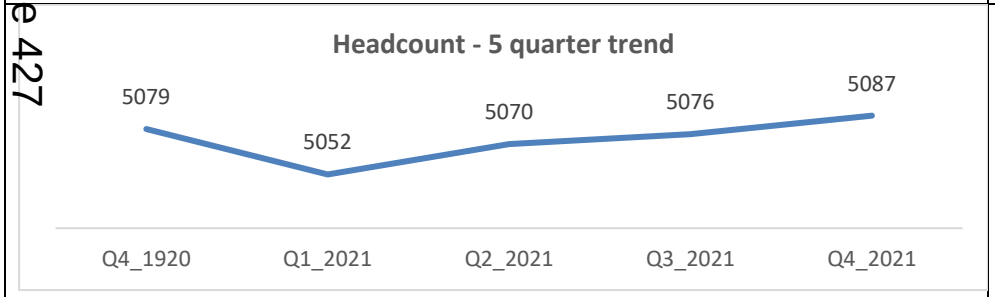
Headcount and Full Time Equivalent (FTE) comparison

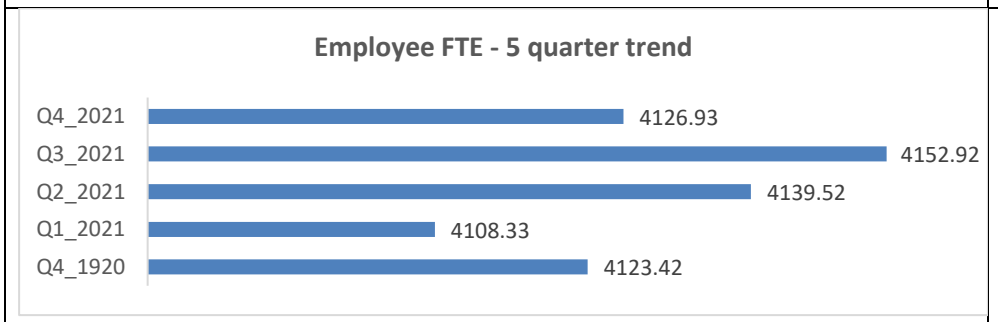
Overall the headcount has remained relatively stable in the last year with some minor fluctuations between quarters which are likely to be caused by the normal rhythm of starters and leavers and the end of fixed term contracts.

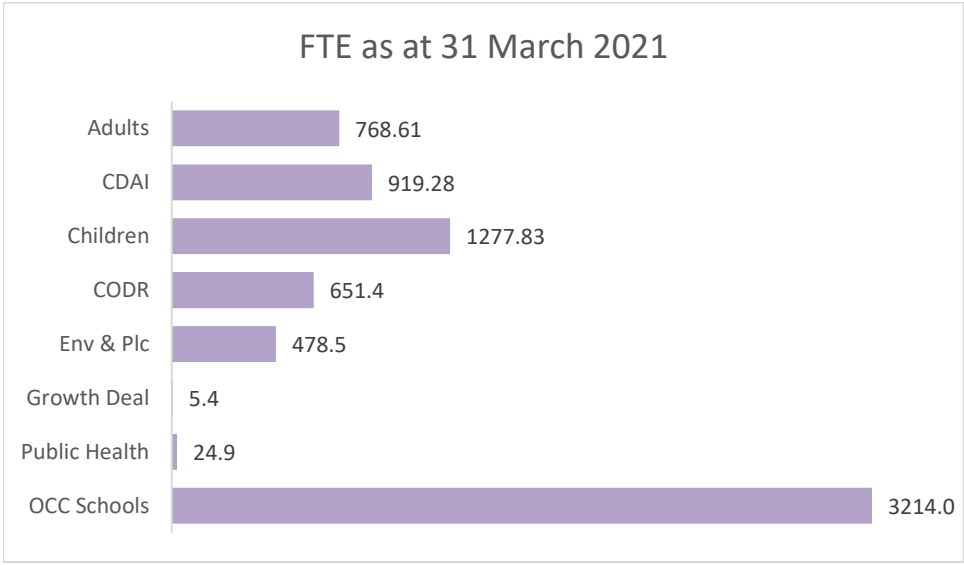
Headcount and FTE at the end of Q4 (2020/21) is 5087 and 4126.93 respectively, a marginal increase on Q4 2019/20. The overall change in headcount during Q4 is minimal, although there has been a major restructure in Adults Services with the Provision Cycle, Health Education and Social Care (HESC) replacing Joint Commissioning for which key posts are still being recruited to.

A detailed workforce profile showing a 5-quarter trend for each Directorate and Service area is available on the intranet on the Workforce Data webpages.





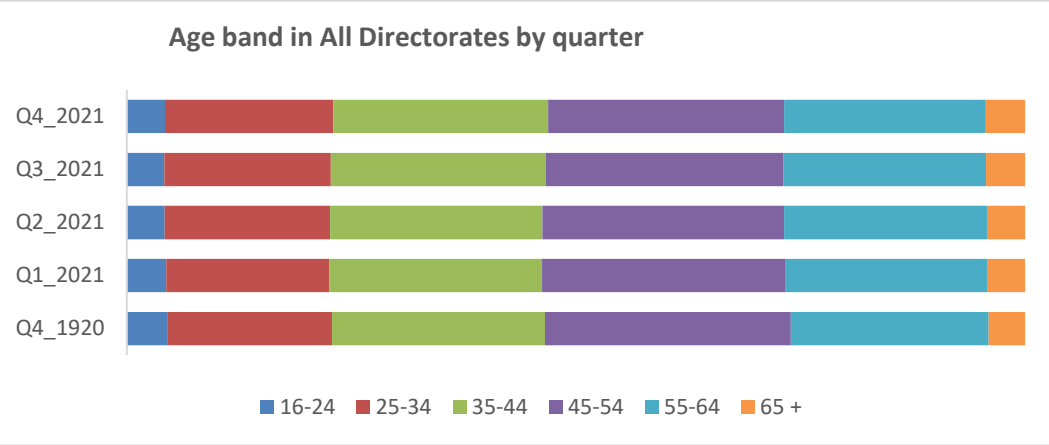




Age and Gender

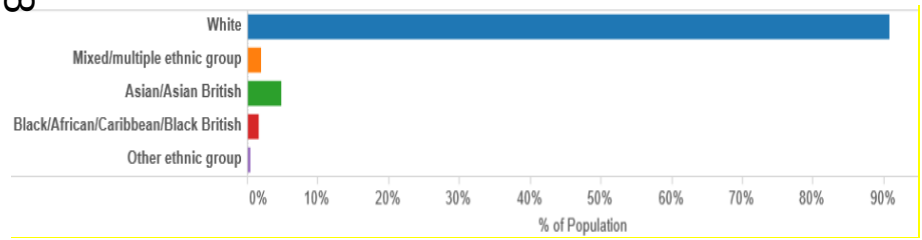
The directorate workforce gender split remains consistent with two thirds women and one third men. The full time/part time split is more even across genders. 44.7% of the OCC workforce (excluding schools) are part time. The workforce age profile also remains stable and highlights a slightly older workforce with 53.4% of the workforce aged 45 years and over.

244 employees (4.8%) have temporary contracts. 14.75% of these are apprentices. 33% are part time, 78% are female. 68% are aged between 16 and 44 years, and 32% are aged over 45 years. Approximately 24% of contracts among the 16-44 age group can be attributed to apprenticeships.



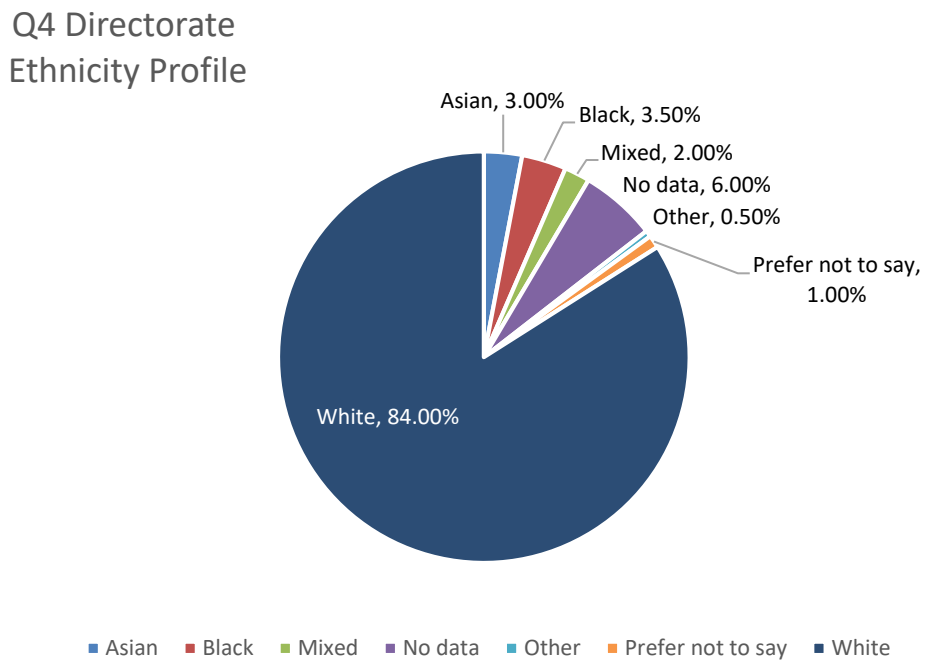
Ethnicity and Disability

The working population of Black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) in Oxfordshire per the 2011 census was 9.2%. (See below)



At OCC 9% of the directorate workforce are recorded as BAME, 84% are white (77.5% are white British, and 6.5% white other), and 7% remain undeclared. The proportion of BAME employees remains higher within our social care workforce at 11.3%. 1% of the workforce have selected 'Prefer not to say' and there is no data held for 6% of the directorate workforce. We are working with our BAME networks to try to improve this data.

Disability: 5.2% of the directorate workforce have recorded themselves as having a disability.



Apprenticeships

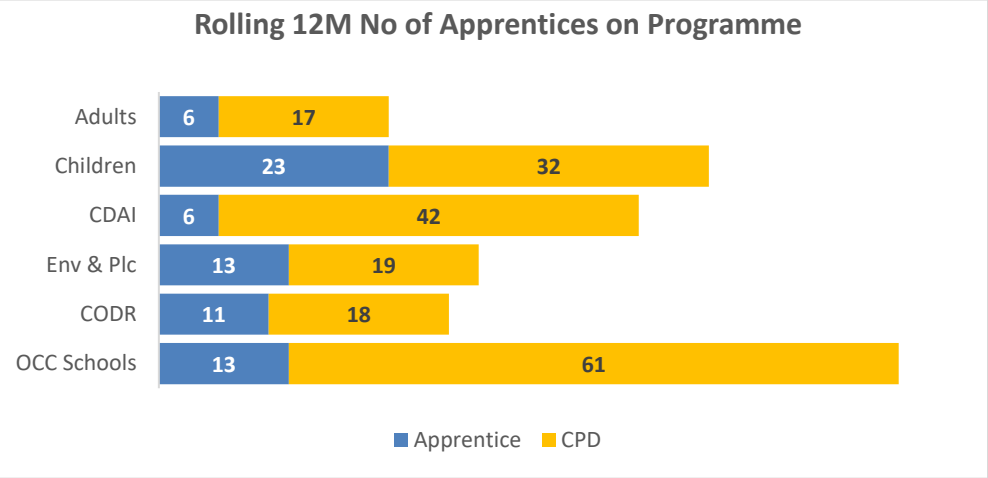
During the rolling year 1 April 20 - 31 March 21 there were 257 apprentices on programme, of these around 70% were permanent staff undertaking an apprenticeship as CPD. The split across directorates and apprenticeships/CPD are shown to the right.

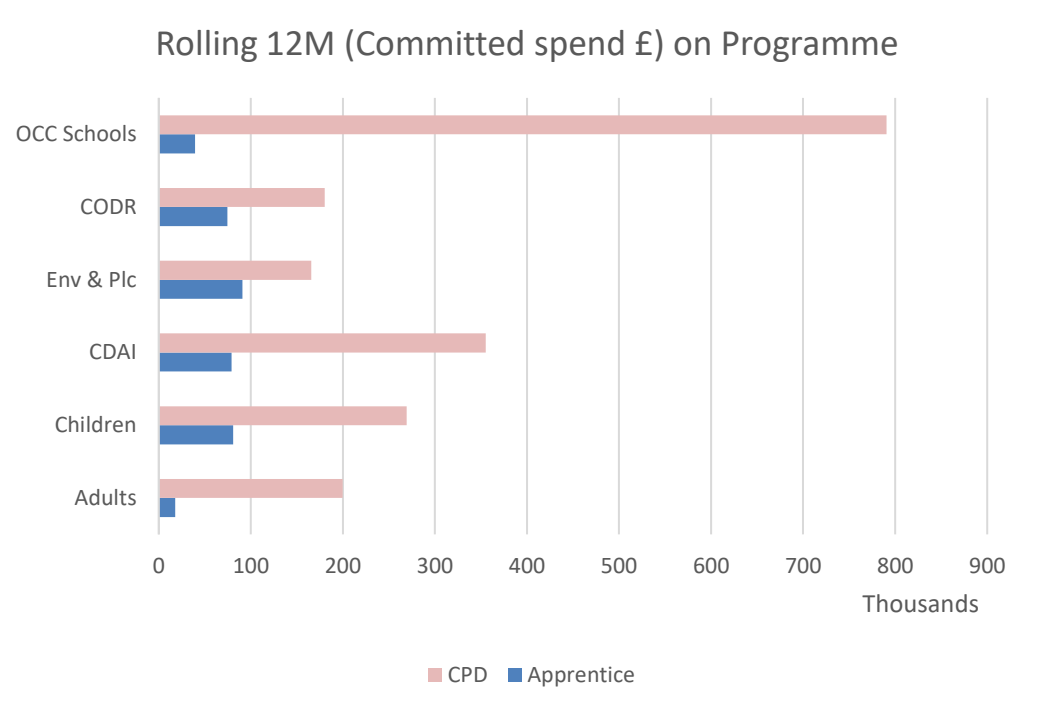
The Levy paid in the past 12 month rolling period is £1,076,755 – of this approximately 40% comes from Schools. In addition there is a 10% top up from Government giving a total Levy fund of £1,184,430 for the period April 2020 – March 2021.

There were 92 new enrolments during the 12 month period with a committed spend of just over £1 million across the duration of the apprenticeships ranging from 1 year - 5 years. 33% of new enrolments in the period were schools. There were 175 active apprenticeships in Q4.

With the impact of Covid and the restrictions in place, new enrolments in Q1-Q4 of 20/21 were lower than anticipated with only 21 candidates commencing their apprenticeship in Q4, but numbers are likely to increase now that restrictions are lifting. There are 42 apprenticeships due to start over the next two of months.

Directorate	Apprentice	CPD	Total
Adults	0	1	1
Children	4	0	4
CDAI	0	3	3
CODR	0	3	3
Env & Plc	0	3	3
OCC Schools	1	6	7
Grand Total	**5**	**16**	**21**





Sickness Absence

Recorded sickness absence continued to increase during Q4 which follows the usual cyclical pattern but is lower than for Q4 2019/20. The percentage of working hours lost to sickness absence continues to rise from 2.49% (Q3) to 2.87% (Q4), but this remains lower than in Q4 2019/20 when it was 3.16%. It is likely that the reduction is a direct correlation to most staff working from home as a result of the pandemic, including those who were isolating but still working. It is thought that working from home with reduced commutes and the ability to work more flexibly may have positively impacted on reduced sickness absence levels. Other sectors are reporting similarly. 39 of 5087 staff (0.77%) reported absent due to covid related absence during Q4.

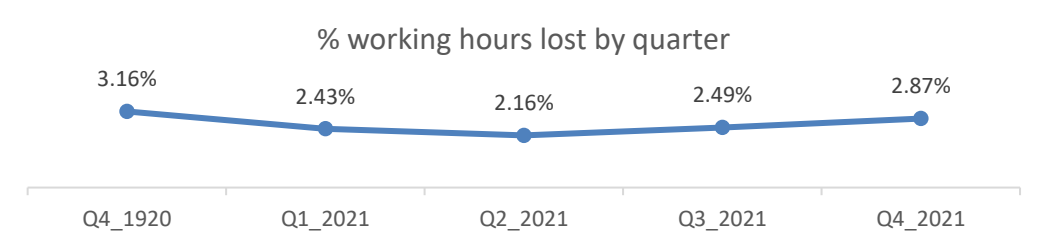
The number of employees on long term sickness (20 days or more) has also slightly increased in Q4.

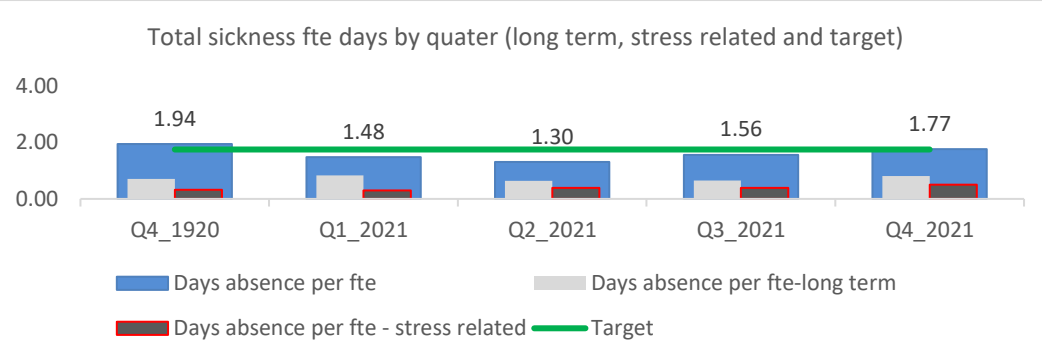
The significant reduction in recorded absence in Q1, Q2, Q3 (2020/21) plus the reduction in recorded absence for this quarter means that the rolling absence over the last 12 months has reduced further to 6.5 days absence per fte– which is below the target rate of 7 days per fte.

From February 2021, we were able to change the way we record absence through IBC and this should improve the reporting and accuracy of absence data.

The top 5 reasons for absence continue to include stress, anxiety and depression as the top reason, followed by COVID-19, isolation non-working, muscular skeletal problems and operation/post op.

The % of stress related absence has increased again in Q4 and this could in part, be related to the continuation of COVID.

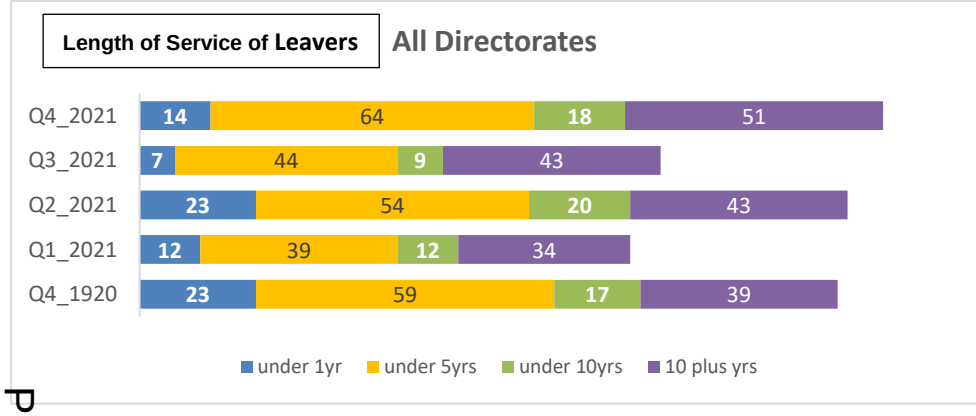




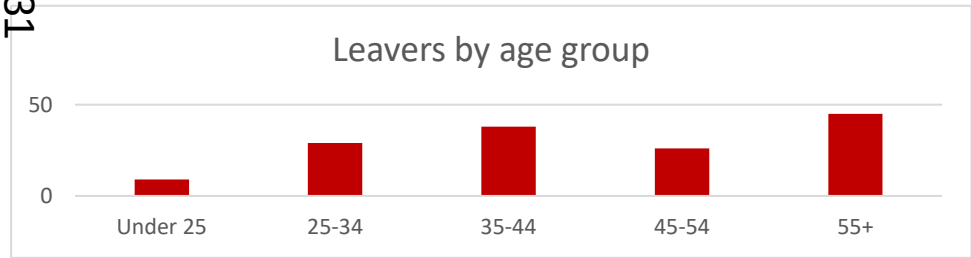
Short Term Sickness by Directorate for Q4	Headcount at end of Q4	No of staff on short term sickness Q4	% of staff on short term sickness Q4
Children	1551	341	21.98%
Adults	899	278	30.92%
Environment and Place	538	104	19.33%
CODR	830	154	18.55%
CDAI	1236	312	25.24%
Public Health	26	4	15.38%
Growth Deal	6	0	0.00%
Grand Total	**5087**	**1193**	23.45%

Turnover

Turnover for Q4 for Directorates was 2.9% which is an increase on previous quarters. Turnover for the rolling 12 month period was 9.6% for all Directorates, increasing to 13.8% when including schools. There were no Academy conversions during Q4.

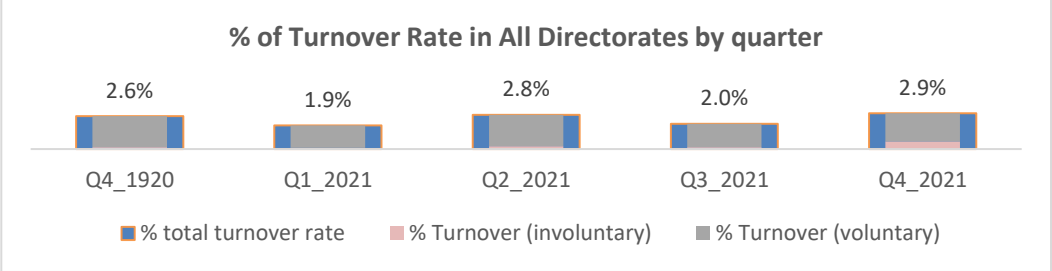


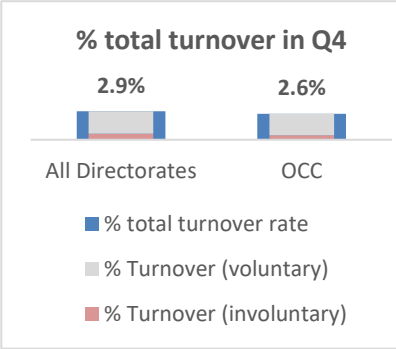
40% of leavers during Q4 left with less than 1 years' service, 44% had between 1-5 years' service, and 35% had more than 10 years' service.

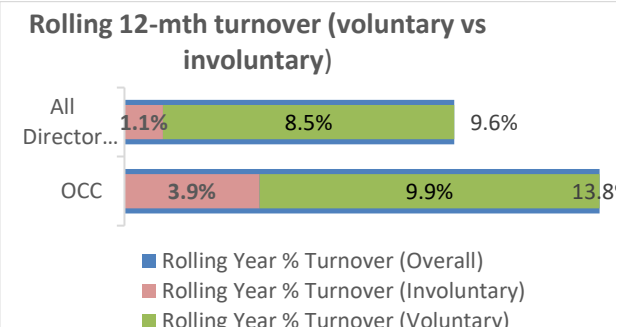


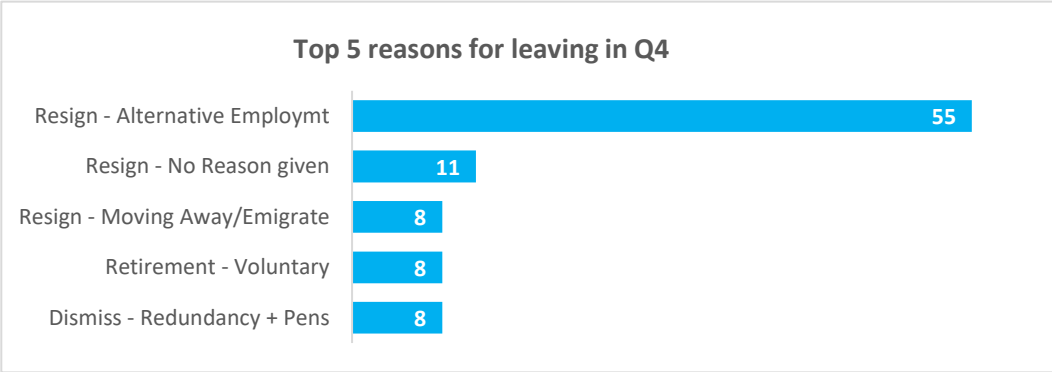
31% (45) of the leavers in Q4 were in the over 55 age group, of which 15 retired (voluntary and normal retirement age) and 6 left to go to alternative employment. The average length of service of our employees is relatively stable at 9.5 years, with the average length of service of leavers at 9.3 years.

Turnover is marginally higher than Q4 2019/20 but there isn't yet a continual increase to indicate a return to pre COVID levels .







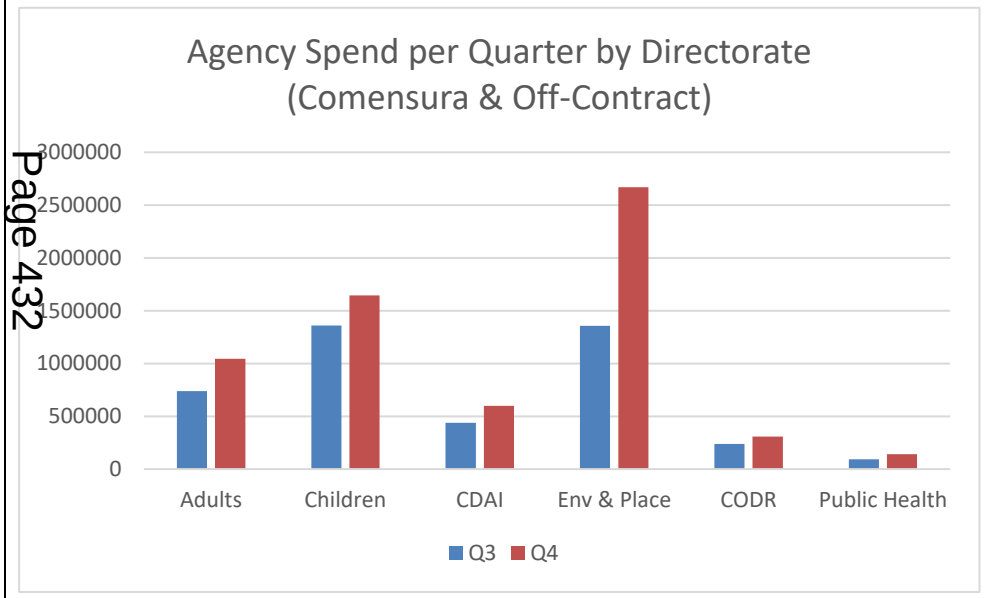


37% of leavers took up alternative employment. 5% left due to moving away, 5% were made redundant, 5% retired and 7.5% gave no reason. We are currently working towards improving our exit data with the introduction of a revised questionnaire which prompts managers and employees to engage in the exit review process to help us understand why employees leave the Council.

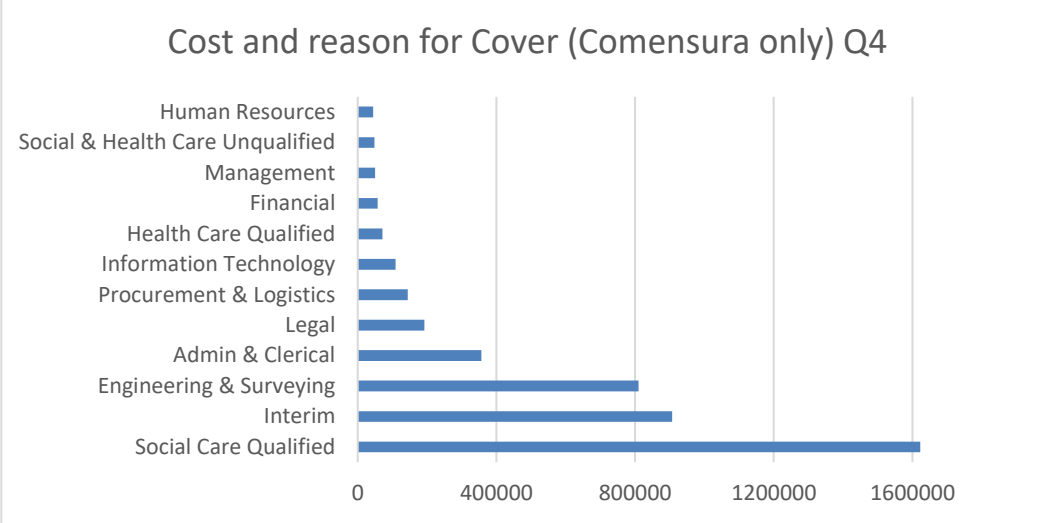
Agency Spend (Comensura and Off Contract)

Agency staff expenditure (Comensura contract only) has increased this quarter to £4,492,365 (an increase of £807,563).

There were 112 new bookings this quarter for 163 positions, 42% were to cover a vacancy. 30 new bookings (18%) were to cover COVID-9 related absences, which is a further increase on previous quarters. At the end of Q4 there were 344 active bookings, an increase of 78 on Q3.

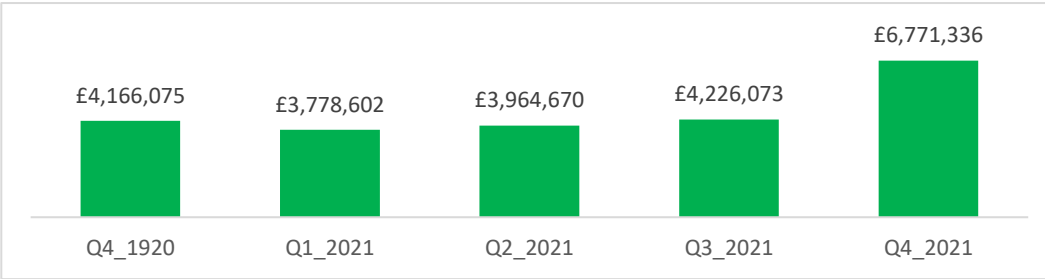


Off contract spend (agency usage outside of Comensura contract) has increased significantly in Q4 to £2,258,390 from £541,271 in Q3. The majority of spend outside of the Comensura contract is within Environment and Place (£2,003,799) and relates to expenditure within the MHA framework for contractors to fill vacancies to deliver major infrastructure projects pending the outcome of the Directorate review and authorisation to recruit.



The highest agency spend relates to the need for qualified Social Care staff, although Q4 is showing increased spend against the use of Interims and Engineering & Surveying workers over previous quarters. The total spend in Q4 for all agency expenditure is £6,771,336, an increase of approximately £2,500,000. Costs have increased across all directorates in Q4 but most significantly within Environment & Place. To note: The financial data shows that some of the off-contract payments made in Q4 refer to costs associated with Q3.

All Agency spend (Comensura and off-contract spend)
All Directorates by quarter



COVID-19 related and other sickness absences – up to 2 April 2021

Chart 1 shows a snapshot of the number of absent employees as at 2 April 2021.

Chart 1

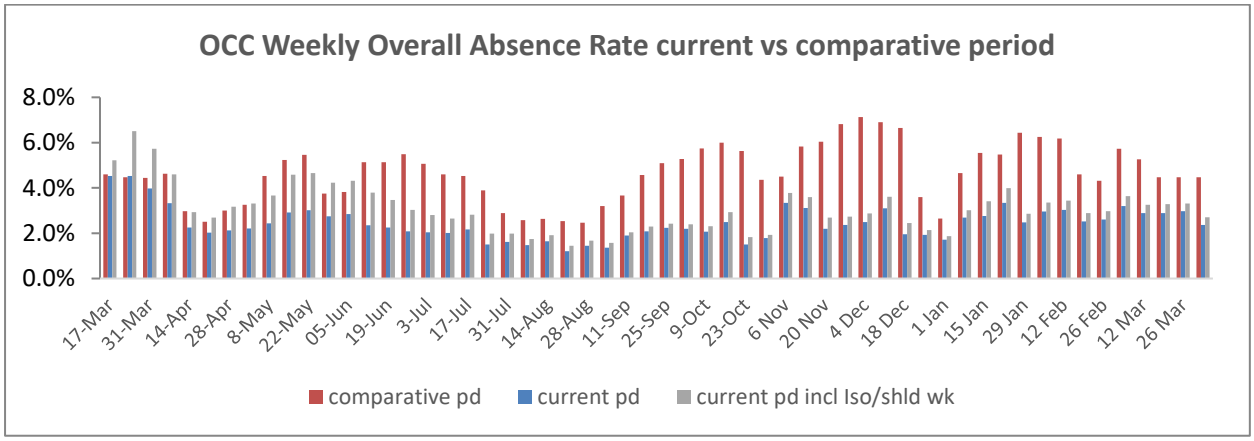
Directorate	COVID-19	Iso-working	Iso-non-working	Other sickness
Adult Services	3	1	0	36
Children's Services	4	3	0	49
CDAI	0	1	2	10
Environment & Place	0	1	2	11
Community Safety	2	2	2	18
CODR	2	6	1	26
Public Health	0	0	0	1
Growth Deal	0	0	0	0
OCC Schools	9	21	25	53
Grand Total	20	35	32	204

During the whole of Q4, 39 directorate employees reported an absence related to covid-19, this represents 0.77% of the Directorate workforce.

Chart 2 shows the weekly absence rate compared to the same period last year for all Directorates and OCC Schools

In 2020, the main peak is towards the end of March with rates reducing in April until there is a second peak towards the end of May which reduces during June and starts to climb again significantly in November, reduces over the holiday period and increases again during Q4. Overall, absence rates for 2020/21 were significantly lower than those reported for 2019/2020.

Chart 2



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Apprenticeships and Levy Funding
Briefing Note

The Apprenticeship Levy was introduced in 2017. OCC's Apprenticeship Levy pot is approx. £1.2m per year; this funding can only be spent on apprenticeship training and not on salaries or support costs. The levy is generated by a monthly charge of 0.5% on the council's pay bill plus a 10% government top-up and lasts for 24 months. Any unspent levy in the council's account that is older than 24 months is returned to the treasury.

Only qualifications aligned to agreed apprenticeship standards can be funded by the levy. When the levy was first introduced, standards were under- developed however there are now over 300 standards available in the UK with more being continuously developed.

Apprentices must evidence at least 20% "off the job training" which is directly relevant to the apprenticeship standard. This includes lectures, workshops, practical training, shadowing, mentoring, learning support, time writing assignments/assessments and research. Off the job training can take place in the workplace or off site.

Public Sector Apprenticeship (PSA) target

The Organisational Development team is responsible for managing the Apprenticeship Levy and for monitoring the Public Sector Apprenticeship target (PSA).

The PSA target requires large public bodies to have regard to a target of having 2.3% of the workforce made up of apprentices based on the average of apprenticeship starts since 2017.

PSA figures are published annually. The most recent national report is for 2019 which indicates that County Councils averaged 1.05% against the target of 2.3%.

The figures that will be nationally published for 2020 for OCC are Cumulative 0.94% (an average of new starts since 2017) of target.

The PSA target includes maintained schools in Oxfordshire, including Foundation schools and Voluntary Controlled schools.

Apprenticeships and how they can be used

Apprenticeships can be undertaken by staff in a variety of different ways and under various contractual arrangements.

Apprenticeships training contracts

These are fixed term contracted for the duration of the apprenticeship and often referred to as training contracts. Training contracts are offered as both internal and external opportunities for entry level and higher-level apprenticeships. For example, an apprentice can start at Level 3 Paralegal and upon successful completion, progress

to a further training contract to study for the Level 7 Solicitor. These types of training contracts appeal to people of all ages who do not wish to enter or go back to university to study or re-train. These types of posts are offered with no guarantee of a permanent role at the end of the apprenticeship.

Permanent posts with career development

These are permanent posts within the organisational structure that are offered as a permanent training post with career development or progression whereby the post holder (who can be internal or external) is not expected to be either qualified or fully qualified upon entry to the role. The relevant level of apprenticeship is mapped to the role to support the employee to gain their professional qualifications via a levy funded apprenticeship. Recent examples of this are Finance (AAT), Audit (Intelligence Analyst) and Transport Planning (Transport Planning Technician). Completion of the apprenticeship is a mandatory part of the role. These roles will often be the first step of a defined career pathway in the specialist area using apprenticeship training throughout.

Continuous Professional Development (CPD)

These are opportunities for existing staff to gain additional continuing professional development opportunities via the apprenticeship route. For example, staff may wish to undertake a Learning Mentor apprenticeship to enable them to take the next step in their career towards a management role when a suitable vacancy arises and then undertake a first line management apprenticeship which will stand them in good stead for more senior management roles where they could undertake higher level management and leadership apprenticeships.

Divisions: N/A

CABINET – 22 JUNE 2021

APPOINTMENTS 2021/22

Report by Director of Law & Governance

RECOMMENDATION

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

Introduction

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

2. The schedule only refers to those appointments which are the direct responsibility of Cabinet to make. There are other outside body appointments that are the responsibility of the Remuneration Committee or local processes as appropriate.

Joint Committees

3. These are formal bodies set up to exercise statutory functions jointly with other authorities. Members of joint committees exercising executive functions must be members of the Cabinet.

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

Appointments to sub groups of the Oxfordshire Growth Board

4. The Oxfordshire Growth Board is now responsible for delivery of the Oxfordshire Housing and Growth Deal which was agreed by all Oxfordshire authorities and Government in February 2018. The Growth Board Terms of Reference have been updated to reflect these new responsibilities and new programmes of work required to deliver the commitment in the Deal.

Oxfordshire Growth Board Advisory Sub Groups

5. The Terms of Reference establish advisory sub groups to the Growth Board to oversee programmes of work on infrastructure, housing and the Joint Statutory Spatial Plan. The purpose of the sub groups is to oversee the programmes of work to deliver the commitments in the Deal, to monitor progress against the key milestones and make recommendations to the Growth Board on decisions

required. It is expected that the sub groups will normally meet on a quarterly basis.

6. The advisory sub groups are made up of elected member representatives from each of the constituent councils appointed by the Leader of that council and other representatives as agreed by members of the Growth Board Joint Committee. The Chair of the sub-groups will be appointed by the Growth Board and normally drawn from the voting membership of the Growth Board acting as an independent Chair.

Oxfordshire Growth Board Scrutiny Panel

7 The Terms of Reference also establishes a new Growth Board Scrutiny Panel to enable effective and coordinated scrutiny of Growth Board functions and decisions. The Scrutiny Panel will be non-statutory to enable flexibility for the constituent councils to reflect local scrutiny membership. The ability of the constituent council Scrutiny Committees to scrutinise the Growth Board will remain. The Terms of Reference and working arrangements for the Scrutiny Panel will be developed with input from the Scrutiny Committee Chairs of the individual councils. The Chair will be elected by the members of the Scrutiny Panel.

Local Statutory Bodies

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

The current local statutory bodies are listed in **Section 2**.

Strategic Partnerships

9. This category comprises Partnerships which the Cabinet has designated as 'strategic' and whose membership Cabinet has agreed should be linked to the role of Cabinet Member/s and not to individually named members. An exception in the past has been the representative on the Oxfordshire Safer Communities Partnership being the representative of the County Council on the Thames Valley Police & Crime Panel.

The current strategic partnerships are listed in **Section 3**.

Standing Advisory Bodies

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

The current standing advisory bodies are listed in **Section 4**.

Informal Member/Officer Working Groups

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

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

    The informal member / officer working groups are listed in **Section 5**.

Strategic Outside Bodies

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

    The strategic outside bodies are listed in **Section 6**

ANITA BRADLEY
Director of Law & Governance

Annex: Appointments Schedule 2019/20

Background papers: Nil

Contact Officer: Deborah Miller, Committee Officer, Tel

June 2021

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` **APPOINTMENTS SCHEDULE 2021/22** **ANNEX**

Joint Committees

Joint Committee	**Frequency of meetings (FOM)**	**Places**	**Appointees for 2021/22**
Thames Valley Fire Control Service		2	Glynis Phillips, Neil Fawcett
Traffic Penalty Tribunal - Outside London Adjudication Committee	quarterly	1	Tim Bearder
Growth Board		1	Liz Brighouse
Thames Valley Collaboration Group		1	Neil Fawcett
Didcot Garden Town Board	quarterly	1	Liz Leffman

SECTION 2

Local Statutory Bodies

Statutory Body	Frequency of meeting	Places	Basis of Member Appointment	Lib Dem/Green All	Cons Ind All	Lab & Co-op
Adoption & Permanency Panels & Fostering Panels	3 per month 2 per month (occasionally	3 2	On the nomination of the political groups according to political balance see below: Adoption & Permanency Fostering	Sally Povolotsky Bethia Thomas	Kevin Bulmer Kevin Bulmer	1
Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education (SACRE)	3 per month	3	On the nomination of the political groups according to political balance	Bob Johnston	Nigel Simpson	1

SECTION 3 – STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS

Partnership	**FOM**	**Appointees for 2021/22**
Oxfordshire Partnership Board	2 per annum	Leader of the Council
Thematic Partnerships:		
Health & Well Being Board	3 per annum	Leader of the Council, Cabinet Members responsible for Adult Social Care, Public Health & Children's & Family Services
Children's Trust Board	3 per annum	Cabinet Members with responsibility for Children & Family Services, Education, Cultural Services and Adult Social Care
Health Improvement Partnership Board	3 per annum	Cabinet Member with responsibility for Public Health.
Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership	3 per annum	Leader of the Council
Safer Oxfordshire Partnership	4 per annum	Councillor Richard Webber
Oxfordshire Stronger Communities Alliance	4 per annum	Cabinet Member with responsibility for local communities
Oxfordshire Environmental Partnership	4 per annum	Cabinet Member for Climate Change Delivery and Environment
Milestone Strategic Partnership Board	Annually	Cabinet Member for Highway Management and Leader
Viridor Strategic Partnership Board	Occasionally	Cabinet Member for Climate Change Delivery and Environment

SECTION 4

Standing Advisory Bodies

Body	FOM	Places	Basis of Member Appointment	Lib Dem/Green All	Cons Ind All	Lab & Co-op
Arts Council S. E. Region Board	3/4 per annum	1*	Cabinet Member with responsibility for cultural services *Nomination only – appointment process by Arts Council	Andy Graham		
Music House Committee / Music Education Hub (Partnership) for Oxfordshire	3 per annum	3	On the nomination of the political groups according to political balance	Andy Graham	Felix Bloomfield	1
Outdoor Centres House Committee (under review)		3	On the nomination of the political groups according to political balance	Dan Levy	Ian Snowdon	1
Schools Organisation Stakeholder Group	quarterly	5 1	Non-executive County Council Members On the nomination of the political groups according to political balance Cabinet Member with	Kate Gregory Bob Johnston	Michael Waine Juliette Ash	1

		observer (with no voting rights)	responsibility for Education			
Joint Parking project Group	monthly	2	2 councillors on the nomination of the political group	Judy Roberts	Liam Walker	

SECTION 5

Informal Member/Officer Working Groups

Working Group	FOM	Places	Basis of Appointment	Lib Dem/Green All	Cons Ind All	Lab & Co-op
Guardians for Us	4 per annum	11	On the nomination of the political groups according to political balance, to include the Cabinet Member for Children & Family Services and the three members serving on the Fostering & Adoption Panels Director for Children's Services, and Director for Adult Services or nominees	Sally Povolotsky Bethia Thomas Kate Gregory Bob Johnston	Ian Corkin Kevin Bulmer Nigel Champken-Woods Juliette Ash	3
Minority Ethnic Consultative Forum.		3	On the nomination of the political groups according to political balance	Robin Bennett	Arash Fatemian	**1**
West End Steering Group	as required	2	Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Travel and Development Strategy	Andrew Gant		1

Member Champions

Cycling:

Mental Health & Loneliness: Alison Rooke

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

Cabinet Advisory Groups: these are so far as possible appointed according to political balance but take account of the need for geographical spread and member knowledge:

Minerals and Waste Cabinet Advisory Group: 7 members (Chairman/Chair: Cabinet Member for Climate Change Delivery and Environment)

Pete Sudbury, Bob Johnston, Richard Webber, George Reynolds, Yvonne Constance, Ted Fenton

Transport Strategy Cabinet Advisory Group: 9 members (Chairman: Cabinet Member with responsibility for Highway Management)

Tim Bearder, Judy Roberts, Richard Webber, David Rouane, Dan Levy, Liam Walker, Yvonne Constance, Nick Leverton

Strategic Outside Body	FOM	OCC Entitlement	Appointees for 2021/22
County Councils Network (CCN)	Council - 2 per annum Executive – 3 per annum Annual conference	4 county councillors – in past this has been Leader/Deputy leader	Liz Leffman, Liz Brighouse Calum Miller, Mark Lygo
Local Government Association (LGA)	General Assembly -1 per annum		Liz Leffman (C.V), Liz Brighouse, Pete Sudbury, Duncan Enright
Oxfordshire Association of Local Councils	as required		
Oxfordshire Care Partnership Board	as required	1	Jenny Hannaby
Oxfordshire Countryside Access Forum	2/3 per annum	1	Andy Cole
Community First Oxfordshire (formerly Oxfordshire Rural Community Council)	as required	1	Ian Middleton

Division(s): N/A

CABINET – 22 JUNE 2021

FORWARD PLAN AND FUTURE BUSINESS

Items identified from the Forward Plan for Forthcoming Decision

Cabinet, 20 July 2021

Topic/Decision	Portfolio/Ref
▪ **Delegated Powers - July 2021** To report on a quarterly basis any executive decisions taken under the specific powers and functions delegated under the terms of Part 7.1 (Scheme of Delegation to Officers) of the Council's Constitution – Paragraph 6.3(c)(i). It is not for Scrutiny call-in.	Cabinet, Leader 2021/023
▪ **Business Management & Monitoring Report - May 2021** To note and seek agreement of the report. **Joint Responsibility**: Cabinet Member for Corporate Services and Cabinet Member for Finance.	Cabinet, Corporate Services/Finance 2021/022
▪ **Draft Oxfordshire Plan 2050 Reg 18 (Stage 2)** To approve draft Plan for public consultation.	Cabinet, Highway Management 2020/048
▪ **A40 Access to Witney - In Principle Use of Statutory Powers** To seek approval to pursue the implementation of statutory powers to enable the project; and issue Requisition for Information notices.	Cabinet, Highway Management 2021/054
▪ **A40 HIF 2 Smart Corridor - Preferred Options, Funding and Blight** To seek agreement to: - accept the preferred route options for the scheme; - note the confirmed funding package for the scheme; and - note the Statutory Blight regime that requires the Council to respond to Blight claims.	Cabinet, Highway Management 2021/082
▪ **Rural Gigabit Public Sector Hub Site Project** To seek approval to move to contract with chosen preferred supplier.	Cabinet, Travel & Development Strategy 2021/045

Topic/Decision	Portfolio/Ref
▪ **Capital Programme Monitoring Report - May 2021** Financial report on capital spending against budget allocations, including any necessary capital programme approvals.	Cabinet, Finance 2021/020

Cabinet Member for Climate Change Delivery & Environment, 29 July 2021

Topic/Decision	Portfolio/Ref
▪ **Burford Experimental Weight Limit** To consider the future of the Burford Weight Limit.	Cabinet Member for Climate Change Delivery & Environment, 2021/051

Cabinet Member for Highway Management, 1 July 2021

Topic/Decision	Portfolio/Ref
▪ **Chinnor: Greenwood Avenue - Proposed No Waiting Restrictions** To seek approval of the proposals.	Cabinet Member for Highway Management, 2021/025
▪ **Long Wittenham: Didcot Road - Proposed Amendment to Traffic Calming Build Out** To seek approval of the proposals.	Cabinet Member for Highway Management, 2021/043
▪ **Oxford: Belbroughton Road - Proposed Relocation of Coach Parking Place** To seek approval of the proposals.	Cabinet Member for Highway Management, 2021/064
▪ **Didcot: A4130 Manor Bridge and Power Station Roundabout - Proposed 30mph Speed Limit** To seek approval of the proposals.	Cabinet Member for Highway Management, 2021/042

Topic/Decision	Portfolio/Ref
▪ **Henley: A4130 Northfield End - Proposed Residents Parking Place - Village Roads** To seek approval of the proposals.	Cabinet Member for Highway Management, 2021/060
▪ **Henley: A4155 Reading Road - Proposed Car Club Parking Places** To seek approval of the proposals.	Cabinet Member for Highway Management, 2021/061
▪ **Oxford: Westgate Link Road - Proposed Access for Taxi and Private Hire Vehicles** To seek approval of the proposals.	Cabinet Member for Highway Management, 2021/066
▪ **Shipton Under Wychwood - Milton Road - Proposed Waiting Restrictions** To seek approval of the proposals.	Cabinet Member for Highway Management, 2021/067
▪ **South and Vale District Areas: Various Locations - Proposed New Disabled Persons Parking Places (DPPPs) Including also Proposed Removal of DPPPs** To seek approval of the proposals.	Cabinet Member for Highway Management, 2021/068
▪ **Oxford: Various - Proposed Exclusion of Properties from Parking Permit Eligibility Neighbourhoods** To seek approval of the proposals.	Cabinet Member for Highway Management, 2021/065

Cabinet Member for Highway Management, 29 July 2021

Topic/Decision	Portfolio/Ref
▪ **Oxford: Cowley Central East and West CPZs - Proposed Minor Modifications** To seek approval of the proposals.	Cabinet Member for Highway Management, 2021/063
▪ **Ambrosden: Merton Road - Proposed Extension of 30mph Speed Limit** To seek approval of the proposals.	Cabinet Member for Highway Management, 2021/058

Topic/Decision	Portfolio/Ref
▪ **Chesterton: Alchester Road and Orchard Rise - Proposed Waiting Restrictions** To seek approval of the proposals.	Cabinet Member for Highway Management, 2020/137
▪ **Didcot: Brasenose Road and Slade Road - Proposed Traffic Calming Measures** To seek approval of the proposals.	Cabinet Member for Highway Management, 2020/180
▪ **Chesterton: Village Roads - Proposed 20mph and 40mph Speed Limits** To seek approval of the proposals.	Cabinet Member for Highway Management, 2021/059
▪ **Bicester: B4030 Middleton Stoney Road - Proposed 40mph Speed Limit and Bus Stop Clearway** To seek approval of the proposals.	Cabinet Member for Highway Management, 2021/085
▪ **Gosford and Water Eaton - Water Eaton Lane - Proposed Waiting Restrictions** To seek approval of the proposals.	Cabinet Member for Highway Management, 2021/088
▪ **Abingdon: Larkhill Road - Proposed Waiting Restrictions** To seek approval of the proposals.	Cabinet Member for Highway Management, 2021/089
▪ **Bicester/Launton: Bicester Road - Proposed Turning Restrictions** To seek approval of the proposals.	Cabinet Member for Highway Management, 2021/090
▪ **Ambrosden: Graven Hill - Proposed 20mph Speed Limit and Parking Places** To seek approval of the proposals.	Cabinet Member for Highway Management, 2021/091
▪ **Oxford: Various Locations - Proposed Amendments to Permit Eligibility and Schedule Corrections to CPZ Orders** To seek approval of the proposals.	Cabinet Member for Highway Management, 2021/092

Topic/Decision	Portfolio/Ref
▪ **Watlington: B480 Cuxham Road/B4009 Britwell Road - Proposed Bus Stop Clearway** To seek approval of the proposals.	Cabinet Member for Highway Management, 2021/093
▪ **Oxford: East Oxford - Proposed Low Traffic** To seek approval on whether to progress with the proposal.	Cabinet Member for Highway Management, 2021/098

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