Public Document Pack

To: Members of the Cabinet

Notice of a Meeting of the Cabinet

Tuesday, 24 May 2022 at 2.00 pm

Council Chamber - County Hall, New Road, Oxford OX1 1ND

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

Stephen Chandler
Interim Chief Executive   May 2022

Committee Officer: **Colm Ó Caomhánaigh** *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
Dr Pete Sudbury	Cabinet Member for Climate Change Delivery & Environment
Tim Bearder	Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care
Duncan Enright	Cabinet Member for Travel & Development Strategy
Calum Miller	Cabinet Member for Finance
Jenny Hannaby	Cabinet Member for Community Services and Safety
Mark Lygo	Cabinet Member for Public Health & Equality
Andrew Gant	Cabinet Member for Highway Management

*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: 21 June 2022

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 email democracy@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.

AGENDA

1. Apologies for Absence

2. Declarations of Interest

- guidance note opposite

3. Minutes (Pages 1 - 18)

To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 26 April 2022 (**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

Members of the public who wish to speak at this meeting can attend the meeting in person or 'virtually' through an online connection.

To facilitate 'hybrid' meetings we are asking that requests to speak are submitted by no later than 9am four working days before the meeting i.e., 9am on Wednesday 18 May 2022. Requests to speak should be sent to colm.ocaomhanaigh@oxfordshire.gov.uk

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

6. Climate Action Update (Pages 19 - 46)

Cabinet Member: Climate Change Delivery & Environment
Forward Plan Ref: 2022/018
Contact: Sarah Gilbert, Climate Action Team Leader Tel: 07867 467797

Report by Corporate Director Environment & Place (**CA6**).

In response to the council's declaration of a climate emergency, a Climate Action Framework was developed to mobilise a cross-organizational Climate Action Programme. This report updates Cabinet on the delivery of the 21/22 Climate Action Programme delivery plan and sets out the 22/23 delivery plan.

The Cabinet is RECOMMENDED to

a) **Note the annual update on the delivery of the Climate Action Programme (Appendix 1)**

b) **Approve the Climate Action Programme delivery plan for 2022/23 (Appendix 2)**

c) **Approve the council's Carbon Management Plan 2022-25 (Appendix 3) and the interim emissions reduction target for 2024/25.**

7. Oxfordshire Food Strategy (Pages 47 - 72)

Cabinet Members: Climate Change Delivery & Environment and Public Health & Equality
Forward Plan Ref: 2021/129
Contact: Lauren Rushen, Policy Officer Tel: 07990 367851

Report by Corporate Director Customer, Organisational Development & Resources (**CA7**).

An Oxfordshire wide food strategy has been developed in partnership with the district and city councils and the Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS). The strategy supports a broad range of Council priorities and strategies in particular healthy weight strategies, addressing food poverty and tackling inequalities and the Council's Climate Action Framework.

The Cabinet is RECOMMENDED to

a) **Endorse the Oxfordshire Food Strategy – Part One attached at annexe 1 including the principles and overarching framework**

b) **Agree that £250,000 grant funding be awarded to District and City council partners to support the delivery of the strategy as set out in paragraph 22 of the report**

c) **Delegate authority to the Corporate Director Customers and Organisational Development to agree the terms of reference for the grant funding in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Public Health and Equalities**

d)   Delegate authority to the Corporate Director Customers and Organisational Development to make minor design and typographical changes to the document pending adoption by District and City partners

8.   Local Area SEND Strategy (Pages 73 - 102)

Cabinet Member: Deputy Leader (including Children, Education and Young People's Services)
Forward Plan Ref: 2022/046
Contact: Kate Bradley, Head of SEND, 07584 262422

Report by Corporate Director for Children's Service (**CA8**).

A Local Area SEND Strategy was co-drafted over a period of 4 months by a governance group of representatives from Local Authority Education, Social Care (Children's and Adult), Health, Education Setting and Parent/Carers. Public consultation ran from 10 January to 10 March 2022.

The Cabinet is RECOMMENDED to approve publication of the Local Area SEND Strategy.

9.   Library and Heritage Strategy (Pages 103 - 192)

Cabinet Member: Community Services & Safety
Forward Plan Ref: 2021/234
Contact: Mark Haynes, Director for Customer & Cultural Services Tel: 07586 479051

Report by Corporate Director Customers, Organisational Development & Resources (**CA9**).

A draft Libraries and Heritage Strategy: 2022 - 2027 was approved by Cabinet on 21st December 2021 subject to public consultation. This report details the consultation approach and sets out the key themes arising from the consultation.

The Cabinet is RECOMMENDED to

a)   **Note the outcome of the public consultation on the Libraries and Heritage Strategy**

b)   **Delegate the responsibility for the adoption and implementation of the strategy to the Portfolio Holder for Community Services and Safety and the Corporate Director for Customers, Organisational Development and Resources and the project team.**

c)   **Agree that an annual review of the actions to deliver the strategy is reported to Cabinet and the Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

10.   Appointments 2022/23 (Pages 193 - 196)

Cabinet Member: Leader
Forward Plan Ref: 2021/219
Contact: Colm Ó Caomhánaigh, Committee Officer Tel: 07393 001096

Report by Director of Law & Governance (**CA10**).

ANNEX TO FOLLOW

To consider member appointments to a variety of bodies which in different ways support the discharge of the Council's Executive functions.

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

11.   Forward Plan and Future Business (Pages 197 - 200)

Cabinet Member: All
Contact Officer: Colm Ó Caomhánaigh, Committee Officer Tel: 07393 001096

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 **CA11**. 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.

12.   EXEMPT ITEM

In the event that any Member or Officer wishes to discuss the information set out in the Annexes to Agenda Item 13, the Cabinet will be invited to resolve to exclude the public for the consideration of the Annexes by passing a resolution in relation in the following terms:

"that the public be excluded during the consideration of the Annexes since it is likely that if they were present during that discussion there would be a disclosure of "exempt" information as described in Part I of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act, 1972 and specified below the item in the Agenda".

NOTE: The report does not contain exempt information and is available to the public.

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

13. Section 101 Agreement with London Borough of Bromley (Pages 201 - 208)

Cabinet Member: Community Services & Safety
Forward Plan Ref: 2022/047
Contact: Jody Kerman, Head of Trading Standards, 07909 905514

Report by Corporate Director - Commercial Development, Assets and Investment (**CA13**).

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

1. Information relating to any individual

7. Information relating to any action taken or to be taken in connection with the prevention, investigation or prosecution of crime

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

The annexes containing exempt information under the above paragraph are attached.

Entering in to an s101 Agreement with London Borough of Bromley, authorising Bromley to undertake a prosecution in relation to an Oxfordshire resident.

The Cabinet is RECOMMENDED to

(a) **Pursuant to section 101 of the Local Government Act 1972 and section 9EA of the Local Government Act 2000, approve the delegation of specific powers from the county council to the London Borough of Bromley in relation to the investigation and prosecution of companies and individuals associated with the investigation known as Operation Argus**

(b) **Authorise the Head of Legal and/or the Director of Law and Governance to enter the necessary agreements to implement this delegation**

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CABINET

MINUTES of the meeting held on Tuesday, 26 April 2022 commencing at 2.00 pm and finishing at 3.00 pm

Present:

Voting Members: Councillor Liz Leffman – in the Chair
Councillor Liz Brighouse OBE (Deputy Chair)
Councillor Dr Pete Sudbury
Councillor Tim Bearder
Councillor Duncan Enright
Councillor Jenny Hannaby
Councillor Mark Lygo

Cabinet Members Attending remotely: Councillors Neil Fawcett and Calum Miller

Other Members in Attendance: Councillors David Bartholomew, Donna Ford, Andrew Gant, Dan Levy

Officers:

Whole of meeting   Stephen Chandler, Interim Chief Executive; Bill Cotton, Corporate Director Environment & Place; Lorna Baxter, Director for Finance; Sukdave Ghuman, Head of Legal Services; Colm Ó Caomhánaigh, Committee Officer

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.

47/22   APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE
(Agenda Item. 1)

Apologies were received from Councillor Glynis Phillips.
Councillors Neil Fawcett and Calum Miller attended remotely.

48/22   DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST
(Agenda Item. 2)

There were no declarations of interest.

49/22   MINUTES
(Agenda Item. 3)

The minutes of the meeting held on 15 March 2022 were approved and signed.

50/22 QUESTIONS FROM COUNTY COUNCILLORS
(Agenda Item. 4)

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

51/22 PETITIONS AND PUBLIC ADDRESS
(Agenda Item. 5)

The Chair agreed to the following requests to speak:

Item 7: A40 HIF2 Smart Corridor
Graham Smith
Ian Leggett
Councillor Dan Levy

52/22 TREE POLICY FOR OXFORDSHIRE
(Agenda Item. 6)

Cabinet considered a new Tree Policy putting the emphasis on 'Presumption in favour of trees' to maximise canopy cover opportunities and address the Climate Emergency across the Oxfordshire Landscape and Streetscape. Cabinet was recommended to approve the policy and related guidance.

Councillor Pete Sudbury, Cabinet Member for Climate Change Delivery & Environment introduced the policy. He described it as part of a much-needed strategic shift. The old policy viewed trees as something nice to have but saw them largely in terms of costs and risks rather than as assets and something that helps us reduce risks. Under the new policy trees were regarded as critical climate infrastructure. It sets out the need to expand the supply chain for locally grown trees.

The Climate Change Committee outlined 10 principles for successful adaptation. He emphasised four of them: a clear vision, clarity of targets, impact of unpredictable extremes and threshold effects – triggered by particular levels of climate heating. There were two pillars: people and the natural world. The latter will survive no matter what, the question was whether we can accompany it.

There was a broader strategy being worked on but the Climate Change Committee recommended acting quickly on measures such as those in this policy - recognising that tree planting had multiple benefits. He thanked officers for their work on the policy, especially Andy Lederer and Nick Mottram, and also acknowledged the work done by a former Labour councillor for Hackney, John Burke, who led that council's very innovative tree strategy. Many of his ideas informed this policy.

The Chair put the recommendations.

RESOLVED to:

a)   **Approve the updated Tree Policy as at ANNEX 1;**

b)   **Approve the inclusion of related matters into the Street Design Guidance;**

c)   **Support the additional information provided as 'Application of Tree Policy Guidance' as set out at ANNEX 2.**

53/22   A40 HIF2 SMART CORRIDOR - COMPULSORY PURCHASE AND SIDE ROAD ORDERS
(Agenda Item. 7)

Cabinet's approval was sought for the Statement of Reasons and Orders Plans and approval to make the Compulsory Purchase and Side Road Orders in relation to the A40 HIF2 Smart Corridor Scheme, a Housing Infrastructure Fund funded highway and transport improvement scheme.

Before considering the report, Cabinet heard three speakers:

Graham Smith stated that from 2017 they had objected to the design of the Eynsham Roundabout and were told at the time that any alternative designs were not possible because: "we don't own the land". This opportunity can be taken now to solve it.

Two distinct westbound exit lanes have been newly defined which are very dangerous and limiting to active travel.   The consultants were using the DRMB manual which was not appropriate, being for motorways and roads such as the A34 and A40. Since January 2022 he has been awaiting receipt of Road Safety Audits which were promised.

In the designs there was no apparent consideration of the likely trajectories from the new development at Salts Cross and Eynsham. He asked that the officers address redesign of significant parts of this project and urged them not to use AECOM consultants.

Ian Leggett stated that the A40 corridor had been conceived as a programme with two major components: building a dual carriageway and improving public transport. Active travel was seen as disposable and the only new segregated cycle path in the scheme - the B4044 path - was removed.

There was now a growing recognition that active travel provision was critically important if the scheme was to contribute to broader council policies. After two years of discussions there was the potential to create a continuous and integrated network providing safe and segregated active travel linking Witney and Eynsham, Salt Cross and parts of Long Hanborough, Farmoor, Botley, North Oxford and Summertown.

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An additional crossing near the A40 Eynsham roundabout was needed. Without it the lives of cyclists and pedestrians and mobility aid users were at risk. The stakeholder group was waiting to hear whether this Cabinet was prepared to get behind the proposal for an additional crossing creating a coherent, safe and continuous active travel network.

Councillor Dan Levy, Eynsham, welcomed improvements made to the scheme which should make cycling facilities better – though there will not be one extra metre of cycle lane created. Bus times should be improved a bit. Eynsham was already well connected by bus and used as a park and ride. There will also be improvement to the traffic lights at Cassington.

However, he believed there were still a lot of flaws and that the problem with peak time congestion had not been solved. Extra traffic lights and more development will make the problems worse. The only solution was to get people out of their cars.

He believed that the new roundabout at Barnard's Gate will replicate the problems already seen at other roundabouts on dual carriageways. The road would become a barrier between old Eynsham and new Eynsham with crossing required to access schools and the medical centre. These crossings need to be safe and direct if we want to encourage active travel.

Councillor Duncan Enright, Cabinet Member for Travel & Development Strategy, thanked the speakers for keeping a watching brief on this project and said that he would follow up on the road safety audit. He agreed that the Eynsham roundabout was a real challenge. An underpass was the preferred solution. It was not part of this proposal but was being actively pursued.

He noted that the government was creating a new Active Travel England agency as part of the move to encourage active travel. While this scheme was designed without active travel particularly in mind, he believed that it would help make such improvements easier to implement across the area rather than piecemeal.

This report was another stage in the process but it was at the planning stage that they would see the real details of the design. There was also the feasibility study into rail options and Cabinet had already looked at designs for the transport interchange hub which would also be of benefit to local residents.

He urged Cabinet to accept the recommendations in order to keep the delivery of the project on track. He emphasised that the cycling infrastructure would be delivered to a very high standard.

Councillor Tim Bearder thanked the speakers and said that he agreed with the points they were making. He had been a candidate in Eynsham in 2017 and was familiar with the problems. He believed that the A40 was broken but that more roads were not the solution. Rail was the only long term solution and this administration had started the process of looking at that.

The previous administration had taken out the active travel aspect of the scheme but this administration was bringing it back in its Active Travel 3 proposals. He did not believe the proposed A40 scheme would work. There were pinch points that there was not the money to widen. The Oxford North scheme and other developments would increase traffic.

Wales had decided to review its road schemes but if a county council took such a step they would run the real risk of the government taking away funding and giving it to road projects somewhere else.

Nevertheless, he had a real difficulty supporting this scheme and would have to abstain. It was over budget and would run further over budget, would not solve the traffic problems and did not contain enough active travel options.

The Chair noted that this was a legacy project and they were trying to make the best of it but did not have the option to stop and start again. The residents of the new low or zero carbon developments going in around Eynsham needed to be provided with the means to travel in that way as well.

The Chair put the recommendations and they were agreed with one abstention.

RESOLVED to:

a)   **Confirm that the acquisition of the land identified on the map attached to this report (Annex B) ("the Order Map") being the map accompanying The Oxfordshire County Council (Highways Infrastructure - A40 HIF2 Smart Corridor (Hill Farm to Dukes Cut)) Compulsory Purchase Order 2022 ("the CPO") is necessary for highway purposes;**

b)   **Approve the Joint Statement of Reasons (Annex A) for the CPO and The Oxfordshire County Council (Highways Infrastructure – A40 HIF2 Smart Corridor (Hill Farm to Dukes Cut)) (Side Roads) Order 2022 ("the SRO"), together with approving the CPO, the Order Map, the SRO and the plans accompanying the SRO ("SRO Plans") all substantially in the form annexed to this report but to delegate to the Corporate Director Environment & Place following consultation with the Director of Law & Governance, authority to modify them as necessary;**

c)   **Authorise the Director of Law & Governance to make The Oxfordshire County Council (Highways Infrastructure – A40 HIF2 Smart Corridor (Hill Farm to Dukes Cut)) (Side Roads) Order 2022 ("the SRO") to enable the stopping-up, diversion, alteration, improvement and creation of new lengths of highway or reclassification of existing highways, and giving authority to the acquisition of necessary land pursuant to the CPO and that the Common Seal of the Council be affixed to the SRO and to**

the SRO Plans. The SRO also enables the stopping up of private means of access as necessary where the scheme design necessitates and re-provision of private means of access;

d) Authorise the Director of Law & Governance to make The Oxfordshire County Council (Highways Infrastructure - A40 HIF2 Smart Corridor (Hill Farm to Dukes Cut)) Compulsory Purchase Order 2022 pursuant to Sections 239, 240, 246, 250 and 260 of the Highways Act 1980 (as amended) and Part II and III to Schedule 2, and Schedule 3 to the Acquisition of Land Act 1981 for the purpose of acquiring the land and interests shown on the Order Map and described in the Schedules to the CPO (or such lesser area of land should this in his opinion be appropriate) to facilitate the construction of new highway on such land and that the Common Seal of the Council be affixed to the CPO and to the Order Map;

e) Authorise the Director of Law & Governance to advertise the making of the CPO and the SRO and to submit the CPO and SRO to the Secretary of State for Transport for confirmation, together with authorising the Director of Law & Governance to take all other relevant action thereon to promote the confirmation of the CPO and the SRO;

f) In the event that any Public Inquiry is convened to consider objections to the CPO and/or SRO and/or planning application (by way of a call-in decision), to authorise the Director of Law & Governance , in consultation with the Corporate Director Environment & Place to prepare and submit such evidence as is necessary in support of the CPO and/or SRO and/or planning application, including enlisting the assistance of outside consultants, legal advisors and Counsel to assist in the preparation and presentation of such evidence;

g) As soon as the CPO and the SRO have been confirmed and become operative, to authorise the Director of Law & Governance to comply with all associated requirements in respect of personal, site and press notices of confirmation and to make, seal and give notice of a General Vesting Declaration (or declarations where more than one is required) under the Compulsory Purchase (Vesting Declarations) Act 1981 and/or to serve Notices to Treat and Notice of Entry in respect of those properties to be acquired compulsorily;

h) Authorise the Corporate Director Environment & Place in consultation with the Director of Law & Governance to negotiate terms with interested parties for the purchase by agreement or payment of compensation in accordance with the Compensation Code in respect of any interests or rights in or over any land

included in the CPO and, where appropriate, to agree terms for relocation;

i)   Authorise the Director of Property in consultation with the Director of Law & Governance to complete the acquisition of such interests or rights and their transfer to the Council;

j)   In the event that compensation for the acquisition of land and/or rights cannot be agreed between the relevant parties, to authorise the Director of Law & Governance to make a reference to the Upper Tribunal (Lands Chamber) for determination of such compensation together with such other questions as may be necessary to determine, including the engagement of appropriate external legal advisors and surveyors and other experts, as required;

k)   In the event that any question of compensation in relation to the acquisition of land and/or rights is made by way of a reference to the Upper Tribunal (Lands Chamber) (whether by the claimant or the Council) to authorise the Director of Law & Governance to take all necessary steps in relation thereto, including advising on the appropriate uses and compensation payable and issuing the appropriate certificates.

54/22   HIGHWAY WORKS BOND FOR DEVELOPMENT WITH PUBLIC BODIES
(Agenda Item. 8)

Cabinet had before it a report seeking approval for delegated powers to negotiate alternative Section 278 bond solutions with recognised Public Bodies to the Corporate Director for Environment & Place.

Councillor Duncan Enright, Cabinet Member for Travel & Development Strategy, introduced the report and invited Bill Cotton, Corporate Director Environment & Place, to describe the details.

Bill Cotton stated that it was normal to seek a bond from third party partners involved in public highway works to give assurance that work will be done to a high enough standard. If it was not, then the money from the bond was there to rectify the matter. It has been the practice to seek the same from public sector partners such as Network Rail or the Department of Education but this gave rise to budget problems for them as they had to find extra funding.

It would be much more efficient for the tax payer if we do not take those bonds from trusted public sector partners. It is proposed that he, as Corporate Director Environment Place, in consultation with the Cabinet Member and the Director of Finance, could agree those exceptions and that any over £5m would be reported to Cabinet.

Councillor Enright added that this should reduce administration costs and it was important to note that public bodies were not going to go bankrupt and different remedies could be sought should there be problems.

The Chair put the recommendations which were agreed.

RESOLVED: to delegate powers to negotiate and put in place alternative solutions to a conventional Section 278 Agreement Bond with Public Bodies to the Corporate Director for Environment and Place in consultation with the Director of Finance.

55/22 DELEGATED POWERS - APRIL 2022
(Agenda Item. 9)

It was noted that there were no delegated decisions taken by the Chief Executive during the period January to March 2022.

56/22 FORWARD PLAN AND FUTURE BUSINESS
(Agenda Item. 10)

The Cabinet considered a list of items (CA10) 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 ………………………………………..

ITEM 4 – QUESTIONS FROM COUNTY COUNCILLORS

Questions	Cabinet Member
1. COUNCILLOR FREDDIE VAN MIERLO In reply to a question at the last Cabinet meeting you told me that "There will be no East West corridor. This scheme [HIF1] will form no part of a through route for strategic travel. This is a route for local use not a through route as you so rightly say and we have the powers and the flexibility to be able to make that the case and to make that irrevocably the case." We know that National Highways are working on a solution to reduce the traffic on the A34 and we know that one of their previous plans to do this was to build an East West corridor between the A34 and the M40 south of Abingdon. If they should propose this again, could you outline what powers we have to make sure this is irrevocably not the case?	**COUNCILLOR DUNCAN ENRIGHT, CABINET MEMBER FOR TRAVEL & DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY** National Highway are currently progressing a study called 'A34 improvements north and south of Oxford.' This study is looking at options to principally address congestion and safety issues on the A34 between the M4 and M40 junctions. National Highways have not shared any information on options with OCC, but say that they may undertake a non-statutory consultation on these this summer, subject to central government sign-off. The County Council would need to consider any proposals carefully before responding to this consultation, in particular taking into account our emerging Local Transport and Connectivity Plan, but also any more specific plans we have for transport measures across Oxfordshire, for example the current Oxford proposals. In terms of next steps following any non-statutory consultation, National Highways would then need to produce an outline and then full business case to secure funding, alongside undertaking any required formal planning submissions. This is likely to be in the form of a Development Consent Order (DCO) process, which would include an examination in public. The DCO process would be overseen

Questions	Cabinet Member
	by the Planning Inspectorate, with recommendations on whether to progress with granting of permission given to the Secretary of State for a final decision. The County Council as the Highway Authority would be a statutory consultee in this process. Further information on the A34 study is at the following link: A34 improvements north and south of Oxford - Highways England (nationalhighways.co.uk) Further information on the Development Consent Order planning process is at the following link: The process | National Infrastructure Planning (planninginspectorate.gov.uk)'
2. COUNCILLOR FREDDIE VAN MIERLO The paper published for Cabinet March 15th 2022, Didcot Garden Town Housing Infrastructure Fund (HIF1), stated without HIF1 a lack of infrastructure may impact strategic development sites, including Chalgrove Airfield. Notwithstanding that SODC's Local Plan explicitly states that it is not reliant on the site within the first 5 years, and no building is anticipated until 2025/6 at the very earliest,	**COUNCILLOR DUNCAN ENRIGHT, CABINET MEMBER FOR TRAVEL & DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY** As stated in the Cabinet meeting of the 15th March, the reference to HIF Dicot scheme directly in relation to Chalgrove was an error. Chalgrove site is not linked to the HIF infrastructure or the business case for the funding. However, it is acknowledged that the HIF scheme will support the wider transport networks across South and Vale.

Questions	Cabinet Member
the airfield development has never been named in HIF1 applications. Will the Cabinet member correct the record that Chalgrove Airfield is not a reason to deliver the HIF1 project? Can you also report back as to why this development was referred to in the paper?	
3. COUNCILLOR DAVID BARTHOLOMEW I am advised that the council is to spend £5000 per annum on a councillor aid system called 'Caseworker'. That amounts to £15,000 between now and the end of your administration in 2025. The Conservative Group has already declared it has no use for this system, and only 12 councillors across all parties have indicated interest. Why are you unnecessarily spending so much council-taxpayer money on this indulgence wanted by less than 20% of councillors?	**COUNCILLOR GLYNIS PHILLIPS, CABINET MEMBER FOR CORPORATE SERVICES** Caseworker.gov is a casework management tool that allows for easy monitoring and responding to residents' queries and comments with improved workflow for elected members, particularly for the management of workloads and assistance with engagement with residents. Whilst 12 councillors have expressed an interest in being involved so far this can be easily expanded if others would like to use the system, at a cost of under £200 per additional user. We are committed to providing modern and effective ICT tools and equipment to support all Members in their roles and answering residents' queries and comments is an essential element of the councillor role. Please get in touch directly with the ICT team if you would like to use the tool.
Supplementary Thank you for your response and invitation to contact IT, which I will respectfully decline as I have no use for the system nor has the majority of councillors.	**Response** The offer of a software package is in response to the increasing number of questions and queries that members are receiving from residents. The aim is to increase the

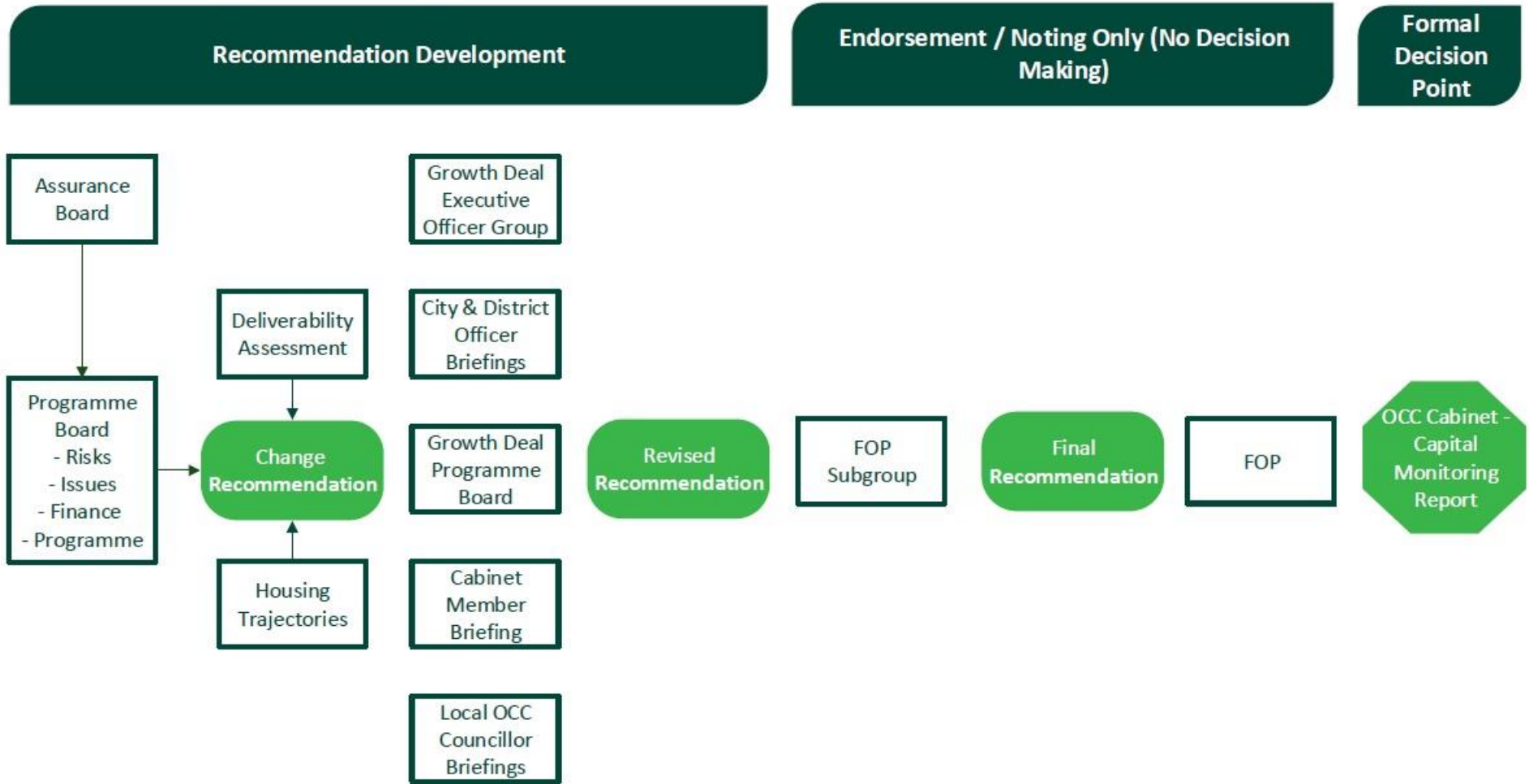| Questions	Cabinet Member
You've explained that the system is easy to expand but that doesn't answer the question: Why is the administration spending £15,000 on a councillor-aid system not wanted by over 80% of councillors?	efficiency of members by providing a tool which improves contacts with residents. Some members are content with the systems that they have put in place but modernising the way we work is vital to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the Council. The offer is still open to all members.
4. COUNCILLOR JOHN HOWSON In their recent White Paper on Education the government reiterated the statement from their previous White Paper that they would review the working of the 'in-year' admissions process. As the County is both corporate parent for children in care and also responsible for part of the in-year admissions process, can the Cabinet Member please identify: A] how many children taken into care since the May 2021 County elections, and requiring a change of school, have had to wait more than 21 days for a new school place? Of these children, how many were placed in-county and how many out-county? B] how many children with SEND seeking an in-year place since the May 2021 elections had to wait more than 21 days for a place, and whether any parents had to resort to	**COUNCILLOR LIZ BRIGHOUSE, DEPUTY LEADER and CABINET MEMBER FOR CHILDREN, EDUCATION & YOUNG PEOPLE'S SERVICES** In response to part A) 58 children of Reception to Year 11 age who required a change of school have been taken into care since the May 2021 County elections. Of these 4 waited more than 21 days for a new school place. Of the 4 , 1 child waited 21 days or over for a change of school in Oxfordshire and 3 waited 21 days or over for an out of county school placement. Therefore 6.8% of the 58 had to wait over 21 days for a school place. In response to part B) Unfortunately, the SEND Team do not currently store the data requested in a format that allows an easy response to this

Questions	Cabinet Member
a Tribunal to achieve a school place?	question, this is not part of the captures that take place and so we are currently unable to let the councillor know how many children with an EHCP are placed in year in more than 21 days. This is because the SEND Team have different admissions processes and timeframes. It should also be noted that the education directorate is moving across to a single Business System called Liquid Logic, which will see all teams within the directorate using the same IT system from August 2022 onwards. From that point, complex data collection and analysis should be significantly enhanced from the current situation which is reliant upon spreadsheets and manual processing.
5. COUNCILLOR ANDREW GANT *Active Travel provision on Woodstock and Banbury Roads* There has been public discussion recently about infrastructure schemes in the Growth Deal, in particular the Woodstock and Banbury Roads Corridor projects, both of absolutely fundamental importance to the safety and amenity of residents of my division and others. Will the Cabinet member confirm that these projects have not been "scrapped", but will be kept under active consideration as part of any review of the HfI list?	**COUNCILLOR DUNCAN ENRIGHT, CABINET MEMBER FOR TRAVEL & DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY** The Woodstock and Banbury Road projects are currently on the list of growth deal schemes with a limited amount of funding. The Growth Deal schemes list undergoes regular review to ensure Oxfordshire is delivering the best possible outcomes in line with the Growth Deal objectives. Any changes to schemes in the capital programme will be made through the proper decision-making process. As pointed out, this administration is committed to improvements in active travel, and these two key corridors into the city are no exception. The council will take every

Questions	Cabinet Member
Will he confirm that this process sits with elected members, and will be conducted in a fully open and democratically accountable way, with full opportunity for members to contribute on behalf of their residents? Whatever the outcome of this process, will he commit the Council to delivering substantive improvements to Active Travel on these key routes, in line with the publicly-stated principles of the Oxfordshire Fair Deal Alliance and the very welcome unequivocal commitment to Vision Zero, in the shortest possible time-frame? If these schemes are considered for movement within the Growth Deal in response to external pressures and wider policy considerations, what assurances can he give on where the funding for improving these roads will come from, and on what timescales? Notwithstanding any wider discussions, would he consider asking our excellent Active Travel and other officer teams to look at some of the more obvious anomalies in the current provision, such as bike lanes not reaching access points for schools, with a view to short-term mitigation? Finally, as a representative of a Witney division, could the Cabinet member share his own impressions of entering	opportunity to secure funding to deliver its priorities, but I cannot guarantee when such funding may become available. We are committed to improving transport links in and out of the city, including active travel, and the ongoing work with the Central Oxfordshire Transport Strategy will help define this ambition. Entering Oxford from the A40 in the West on a bike is an interesting experience, particularly given the Oxford North gateway works. The objective of these, and of the A40 scheme as a whole, is to open up a safe and comfortable route for active travel from Oxford to the western towns and villages of Oxfordshire. The continued journey down Woodstock Road is relatively sheltered for cycles by the bus lane, but the quality of the surface is not great and junctions (particularly Wolvercote roundabout) are a block to easy travel - by any mode, but particularly on foot or by bike. We have a lot of work to do to make Oxford as good as the best places to cycle, but that is our objective.

Questions	Cabinet Member
Oxford via these routes? Does cycling round the Wolvercote roundabout and down the Woodstock Road live up to the confident billing passed *en route* that Oxford is "A Cycling City"?	
Supplementary Will the Cabinet Member confirm that no decisions have been made about a review or changes to the list of growth deal schemes and, when he says that any decisions will be taken through the proper decision-making process, will he also confirm that Members will have a full opportunity to engage with that process and to input into it?	**Response** Written response provided after the meeting: All of the so-called "growth board" schemes are reviewed regularly both as a programme in their own right, and as part of the Council capital programme, and as accountable body for the growth deal infrastructure funding. This is particularly important at this time of high inflation, and as they progress through the project phases. None of these projects is removed from our programme, they are all required to deliver the infrastructure we need for new and existing homes and residents. It may be necessary to re-prioritise them as a result of delays for various reasons, or to bring them into line with area strategies, or because they are better funded another way. Where a scheme is removed from the list funded by the housing and growth deal, it still remains on the programme for delivery through other means. In some instances, this may mean they have to wait until a new funding source is identified. You can see all of the capital projects currently on the programme in the Oxfordshire Infrastructure Strategy: https://www.oxfordshireopenthought.org/oxfordshire

Questions	Cabinet Member
	-infrastructure-strategy-oxis. The governance structure when deciding on priorities is complex as it includes national as well as local partners. However the simple decision making map is provided as a guide below.

Recommendation Development

Endorsement / Noting Only (No Decision Making)

Formal Decision Point

Assurance Board

Growth Deal Executive Officer Group

Deliverability Assessment

City & District Officer Briefings

Programme Board
- Risks
- Issues
- Finance
- Programme

Change Recommendation

Growth Deal Programme Board

Revised Recommendation

FOP Subgroup

Final Recommendation

FOP

OCC Cabinet - Capital Monitoring Report

Housing Trajectories

Cabinet Member Briefing

Local OCC Councillor Briefings

OXFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Divisions Affected - ALL

CABINET
24 MAY 2022

CLIMATE ACTION PROGRAMME – ANNUAL UPDATE

Report by Corporate Director for Environment and Place

RECOMMENDATION

1.   **The Cabinet is RECOMMENDED to**

    a)   Note the annual update on the delivery of the Climate Action Programme (Appendix 1)

    b)   Approve the Climate Action Programme delivery plan for 2022/23 (Appendix 2)

    c)   Approve the council's Carbon Management Plan 2022-25 (Appendix 3) and the interim emissions reduction target for 2024/25.

Executive Summary

2.   In response to the council's declaration of a climate emergency, a Climate Action Framework was developed to mobilise a cross-organizational Climate Action Programme.

3.   This report updates Cabinet on the delivery of the 21/22 Climate Action Programme delivery plan and sets out the 22/23 delivery plan.

Annual update on delivery of the Climate Action Programme

4.   OCC's Climate Action Programme (CAP) annual delivery plan for 2021/22 included 20 priority actions – 10 OCC-only and 10 joint with CDC – split into two groups: decarbonising the councils' estate and operations and enabling the Oxfordshire's transition to net zero.

5.   Please see Appendix 1 for an annual update on the delivery of the priority actions and next steps.

6.   Alongside the CAP priority actions, additional work was delivered in 2021/22 to support OCC's commitment to 'becoming a climate active council':

(a) We trained six staff to deliver the nationally recognised [Carbon Literacy training programme](#), which was offered to staff, leadership and councillors

(b) E-learning course 'Climate Action at OCC: a role for everyone' now mandatory and completed by 2,720 staff members in 2021/22

(c) New Climate Impact Assessment tool developed to inform decision making

(d) 'Net Zero by 2030' dashboard developed to monitor corporate emissions monthly.

Climate Action Programme delivery plan for 22/23

7. The scope of OCC's Climate Action Programme (CAP) 22/23 delivery plan was expanded beyond the transition to net zero to reflect the Strategic Plan 2022-25 and the new climate and natural environment policy (in development).

8. The 22/23 delivery plan (Appendix 2) includes OCC's priority actions in three areas:

(a) Becoming a climate active council – actions to continue embedding climate action into our organizational DNA

(b) Decarbonising our own estate and operations by 2030 – actions captured in the **Carbon Management Plan 2022-25** (see Appendix 3 and section below)

(c) Enabling Oxfordshire's transition to net zero – actions on climate change mitigation and adaptation, as well as nature protection and restoration.
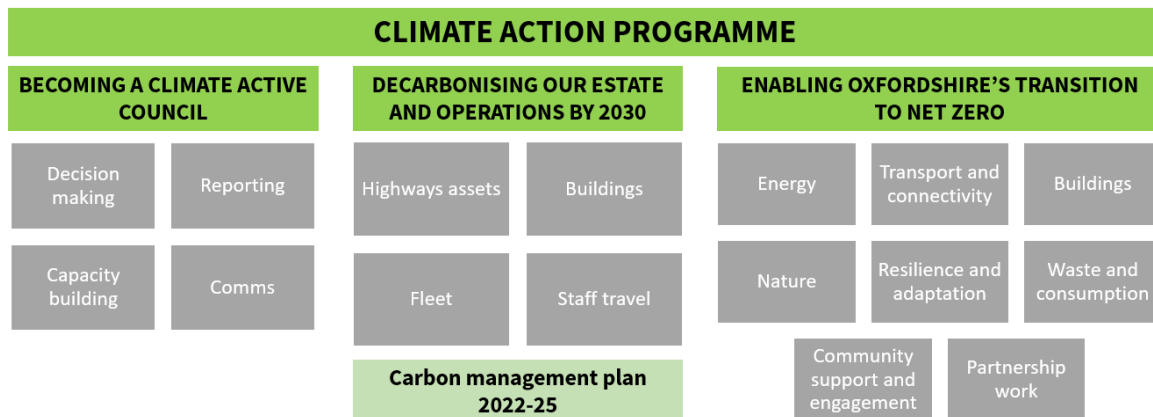

Figure 1 Three pillars of the Climate Action Programme

9.   The Climate Action Programme (CAP) represents a selection of the council's wider climate-aligned activity. There are numerous other projects and initiatives taking place across the council and in collaboration with partners that advance OCC's climate commitments.

Carbon Management Plan 2022-25 (CMP)

10.   The Carbon Management Plan 2022-25 (Appendix 3) is one of the components of the Climate Action Programme. It sets out the approach to reducing the emissions from our buildings, highway assets, fleet, and staff business travel. These are the emissions that we committed to reduce to net zero this decade.

11.   The short-term and longer-term actions set out in this plan, combined with the decarbonisation of the electricity supply, are likely to put the council emissions on a trajectory to reduce emissions to about 6,000t CO2e by 2024/25. This is equivalent to a 75% reduction from our 2010/11 baseline. During this period, the most significant reductions will come from:

(a)   the streetlight LED conversion programme (73% of the estimated reduction from a Business-as-Usual scenario)

(b)   release of leased buildings (10%)

(c)   commitments to reduce staff travel (9%)

(d)   delivery of Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme measures (5%).

12.   The CMP aims to accelerate action on estate decarbonisation and fleet electrification, with the recruitment of a Property Decarbonisation Manager and the implementation of the One Fleet integrated management system.

13.   Our 'net zero by 2030' target does not include emissions from our supply chain. We recognise the importance and scale of these emissions and work is currently taking place to identify and evaluate major contracts to set science-based targets.

Corporate Policies and Priorities

14.   The Climate Action Programme supports the council's commitments to tackle the climate emergency, as expressed in the Strategic Plan 2022-25 and the Climate Action Framework.

Financial Implications

15.   The key emissions-reduction initiative in the Carbon Management Plan – streetlighting LED conversion – is fully funded and in progress. However, the

full costs and impacts of delivering all the longer-term actions in the plan (e.g., fleet and building decarbonisation) are not currently known.

	Investment required	Status	Carbon savings (24/25 vs BAU)	Financial savings
Highway assets	£40m	Fully funded – capital programme	2,783 t CO2e	£77m over 20 years
Buildings	c.£15m for 14 top consuming sites excluding County Hall + £40m for rest of estate	PSDS funded Remaining pending funding – grants, recycling fund, capital and/or revenue bid	686 t CO2e (funded) + TBD from unfunded measures	TBD
Fleet	Under analysis	Pending funding – service revenue budgets	TBD	TBD
Staff travel	--	Fully funded – staff time	359 t CO2e	TBD

16.   Activities planned for 2022/23 in the Carbon Management Plan – including the recruitment of an estate decarbonisation manager and the implementation of One Fleet – will provide the data to assess the level of investment required to transition our buildings and fleet to net zero. An invest-to-save programme will be developed, and business cases will be put forward for funding, including from grant sources such as the Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme.

17.   The remaining actions put forward in the Climate Action Programme 2022/23 delivery plan are being funded through the revenue budget, including £699k additional funding committed to support climate action initiatives over the medium-term financial plan.

18.   Funding for future programme developments will need to be considered through the Budget & Business Planning process from 2023/24 onwards.

Comments checked by:

Filipp Skiffins, Assistant Finance Business Partner,
Filipp.Skiffins@Oxfordshire.gov.uk (Finance)

Legal Implications

19.   This report does not raise legal implications.

Comments checked by:

Jayne Pringle, Interim Principal Solicitor (Contracts),
jayne.pringle@oxfordshire.gov.uk

Staff Implications

20. Staff involvement in current programme delivery is funded by agreed resource allocation and grant funding. Staff requirements of future programme developments will be put forward through the service and resource planning process.

Equality & Inclusion Implications

21. This paper does not raise any specific equalities implications. The Council's Climate Action Framework targets a 'just transition' in which all our communities and businesses are supported to participate, and costs and benefits are fairly shared.

22. While acting on climate change will bring benefits to all, it is most likely to have additional positive impacts on several of the protected and disadvantaged groups considered within the Council's equality framework. As an example, the work being done to increase energy efficiency in homes in fuel poverty will help reduce energy bills.

Sustainability Implications

23. The Climate Action Programme is at the core of the council's response to the climate emergency. A number of its actions have a direct impact on our corporate emissions e.g., converting streetlighting to LED, while others, e.g., developing an adaptation strategy, aim to put in place the strategies, partnerships and initiatives that will help reduce carbon emission and increase climate resiliency across the county.
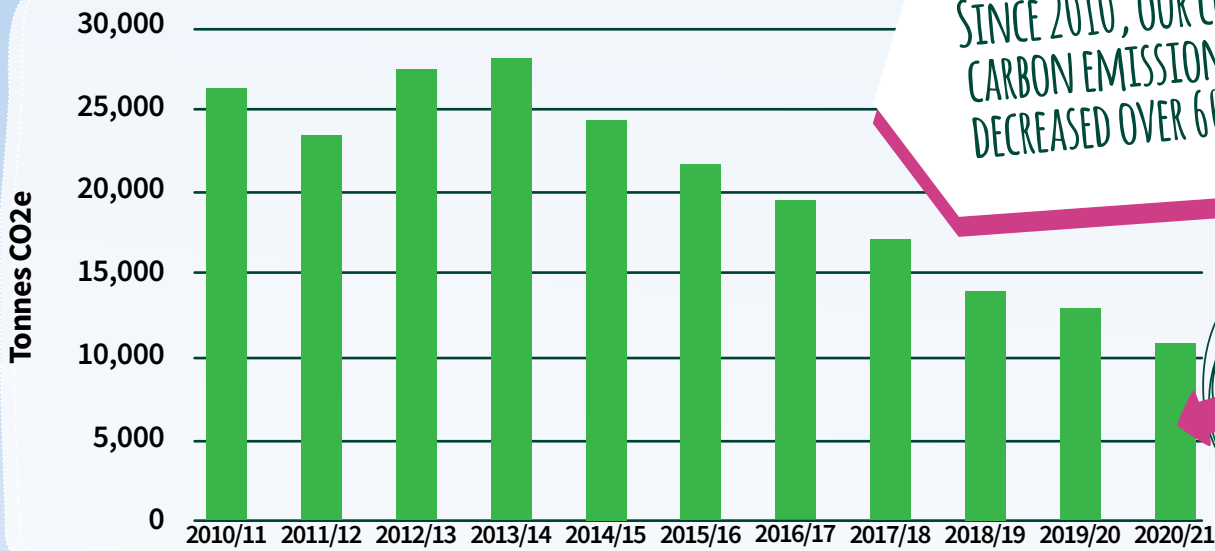
Risk Management

24. The following challenges to reaching net zero by 2030 need to be addressed in tandem with delivery of the Carbon Management Plan (CMP) 2022-25:

   (a) Evolving service needs for assets – as services adapted to COVID restrictions, new ways of working emerged that changed how our buildings and fleet are used; to meet the 2030 target, a way to continue decarbonising our estate within this evolving context must be identified.

   (b) Fragmented asset management – lack of centralised management systems for buildings and fleet have slowed down decarbonisation efforts; implementation of One Fleet, an integrated fleet management

system, and of an integrated building energy management system are essential for CMP delivery.

(c)   Competing investment priorities – decarbonising our estate and operations will require significant investment, particularly to retrofit buildings and replace specialist vehicles; at the moment, the full costs are not known.

25.   The council is leading work with Future Oxfordshire Partnership to develop a countywide net zero routemap and delivery plan based on the Pathways to Zero Carbon Oxfordshire report. Its delivery will require significant engagement and partnership work – with contractors, community action groups, vulnerable populations, schools, districts, retrofit value chain, energy system stakeholders, among others.

Communications

26.   The 21/22 Climate Action Programme annual update (Appendix 1), the 22/23 Climate Action Programme delivery plan, and the Carbon Management Plan 2022-25 will be published on the council's website.

27.   The 22/23 Climate Action Programme comms plan is being developed by the Comms, Marketing and Engagement team

Bill Cotton, Corporate Director for Environment and Place

Annex:	1 – Climate Action Programme annual report (two-pager)
	2 – Climate Action Programme delivery plan 2022/23
	3 – Carbon Management Plan 2022-25

Background papers: Nil

Contact Officer: Sarah Gilbert, Climate Action Team Leader, sarah.gilbert@oxfordshire.gov.uk, 07867467797

April 2022

Climate Action at Oxfordshire County Council

Oxfordshire County Council committed to put climate action at the heart of our work

**Oxfordshire County Council CLIMATE ACTION Carbon neutral by 2030**

SINCE 2010, OUR CORPORATE CARBON EMISSIONS DECREASED OVER 60 PER CENT

Tonnes CO2e (y-axis: 0, 5,000, 10,000, 15,000, 20,000, 25,000, 30,000)

Years: 2010/11, 2011/12, 2012/13, 2013/14, 2014/15, 2015/16, 2016/17, 2017/18, 2018/19, 2019/20, 2020/21

2020-2021 10,774 tonnes CO$_2$e

Climate ACTION at Oxfordshire County Council

How we're transforming to become a climate active council

- Carrying out Climate Impact Assessments to align our decision making with our climate commitments
- Training our staff in Carbon Literacy
- Improving the way we monitor our emissions
- Investing more in our internal climate and environment teams
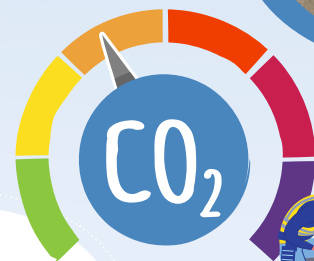
Next ...

- Expand our greenhouse gas reporting to include our supply chain emissions
- Expand our support to communities to tackle climate change
- Develop a toolkit to assess carbon emissions in infrastructure projects

CO$_2$

OXFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

How we're cutting down our own emissions

- Replacing 45% of street lighting with LEDs

- Improving energy efficiency of seven council buildings and four maintained schools through £2.1m grant from Public Sector Decarbonisation Fund

- Helping our staff switch to electric vehicles through a salary sacrifice scheme

Next ...

- Continue converting streetlights and traffic signals to LEDs
- Accelerate the decarbonisation of our buildings
- Implement smart energy management in our buildings
- Trial hydrogen technology in our fire engines

How we're helping Oxfordshire become net zero and tackle climate change

- Shaping a net-zero transport system through the new Local Transport and Connectivity Plan

- Installing EV charging points in council car parks for residents without off-road parking

- Piloting Zero Emissions Zone in Oxford city centre

- Delivering energy efficiency projects in 150 homes in fuel poverty through Green Homes Grant

- Supporting 100+ community-led climate action groups, the largest network of its kind in the UK

- Helping residents recycle and compost 59.5% of all household waste – top place in England for eight years in a row!

- Championing climate action in Oxfordshire Infrastructure Strategy and Oxfordshire Plan 2050

- Partnering with councils, universities, community and private sector to create a smart clean energy system through Local Energy Oxfordshire (LEO)

Next ...

- Invest in public transport with 159 new electric buses in Oxford and surrounding areas
- Develop a Strategic Active Travel Network to help residents swap car journeys for walking and cycling
- Continue supporting homes in fuel poverty to increase energy efficiency and reduce bills
- Help residents and local businesses become more resilient to the effects of climate change
- Support the Circular Economy to reduce waste and consumption
- Work with partners to develop a Nature Recovery Strategy for Oxfordshire

Appendix 2 – Overview of Climate Action Programme 22/23 Delivery Plan

The table below provides an overview of the actions included in the 22/23 delivery plan for the Climate Action Programme, across its three pillars:
- Becoming a climate active council
- Decarbonising our estate and operations by 2030
- Enabling Oxfordshire's transition to net zero.

It also identifies the officers responsible for each action.

Climate Action Programme 22/23 delivery plan

Becoming a climate active council

Action	Officer
Deliver climate action objectives and outcomes through the Delivering the Future Together programme	Karen Edwards
Procure a carbon accounting framework and toolkit to support decision making in capital projects	Sarah Gilbert/Hannah Battye
Expand scope 3 greenhouse gas reporting (supply chain emissions)	Sarah Gilbert/ Melissa Sage
Expand Carbon Literacy training – internally and develop offer to external organisations	Sarah Gilbert
Deliver 'Oxfordshire Net Zero' comms and behavioural change programme for residents, local businesses and community groups	Susannah Wintersgill

Decarbonising our estate and operations by 2030

Action	Officer
Deliver *Carbon Management Plan 2022-25: planned actions for 2022/23* (estate, fleet, highway assets and staff travel)	Vic Kurzeja/ Sarah Gilbert

Enabling Oxfordshire's transition to net zero (inked to PAZCO)

Transport and connectivity

Action	Officer
Adopt and implement Local Transport and Connectivity Plan, including embodied carbon policy	Rachel Wileman
Adopt PAS2080 standard to minimise carbon emissions in infrastructure projects	Hannah Battye
Develop Strategic Active Travel Network plan	Melissa Goodacre
Expand EV charging infrastructure (TBD – pending funding bid outcomes)	Paul Gambrell

Buildings

Action	Officer
Set up retrofit partnership and develop an Oxfordshire retrofit strategy	Sarah Gilbert
Develop retrofit pipeline for inclusion in Oxfordshire Infrastructure Strategy	Sarah Gilbert

Energy

Action	Officer
Develop local energy planning approach	Sarah Gilbert
Support investability of solar generation and heat pumps	Sarah Gilbert

Waste and consumption (circular economy)

Action	Officer
Develop Oxfordshire circular economy strategy	Teresa Kirkham
Support expansion of Community Action Groups' impact, diversity and inclusion	Teresa Kirkham

Adaptation and resilience

Action	Officer
Develop adaptation and resilience strategy, engaging a diverse range of communities	Sarah Gilbert

Natural environment

Action	Officer
Develop Nature Recovery Strategy for Oxfordshire	Nick Mottram
Develop biodiversity net gain policy guidance	Nick Mottram

Community support and engagement

Action	Officer
Implement a climate outreach strategy to support communities and local businesses	Sarah Gilbert
Implement schools' energy and carbon reduction support programme aiming for £400k investment in year 1	Sarah Gilbert

Partnership work

Lead on producing cross-Oxfordshire net-zero route map and action plan through Future Oxfordshire Partnership	Sarah Gilbert
Develop emissions reduction roadmaps with key suppliers (Scope 3)	Sarah Gilbert

Carbon Management Plan 2022-25

Draft v10 – 5.5.2022

Introduction

Oxfordshire County Council committed to reaching net-zero carbon emissions in our estate and operations by 2030 and to embed climate considerations into all our decision making. In 2020, we published our Climate Action Framework, setting out how we are going to reduce our emissions, transform into a climate active organization and play our part in Oxfordshire's transition to net zero.

Since then, addressing the climate and ecological emergency became the council's number one priority. The Climate Action Framework is being complemented by the Climate and Ecological Policy, in development.

The Carbon Management Plan 2022-25 sets out the approach to reducing the emissions from our buildings, highway assets (streetlighting, traffic signals and signage), fleet, and staff business travel in their own vehicles. These are the emissions that we committed to reduce to net zero this decade. The Plan is part of a wider Climate Action Programme that also includes our actions to embed climate and ecological considerations into the organizational DNA and importantly to enable Oxfordshire's transition to net zero across transport and connectivity, buildings, schools, energy systems, waste and consumption, and the natural environment.

Putting our own house in order

While our emissions represent only 0.22% of Oxfordshire's total[1], we are conscious that we all need to play our part in the transition to net zero, adopting more efficient ways of working, travelling, and consuming. By leading the way and seeking to become net zero significantly ahead of the national 2050 timeline, we hope to demonstrate what can be achieved and inspire residents and local businesses to join us on this rewarding journey.

The Carbon Management Plan 2022-25 outlines the decarbonisation approach taken for each area of our 'net-zero by 2030' target, as well as short-term and longer-term actions that add up to the council's emissions trajectory to 2024/25.

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[1] Oxfordshire total 2018 emission as provided by SCATTER

Progress so far

In the decade between our baseline year of 2010/11 and 2020/21, our emissions have decreased 60%[2].
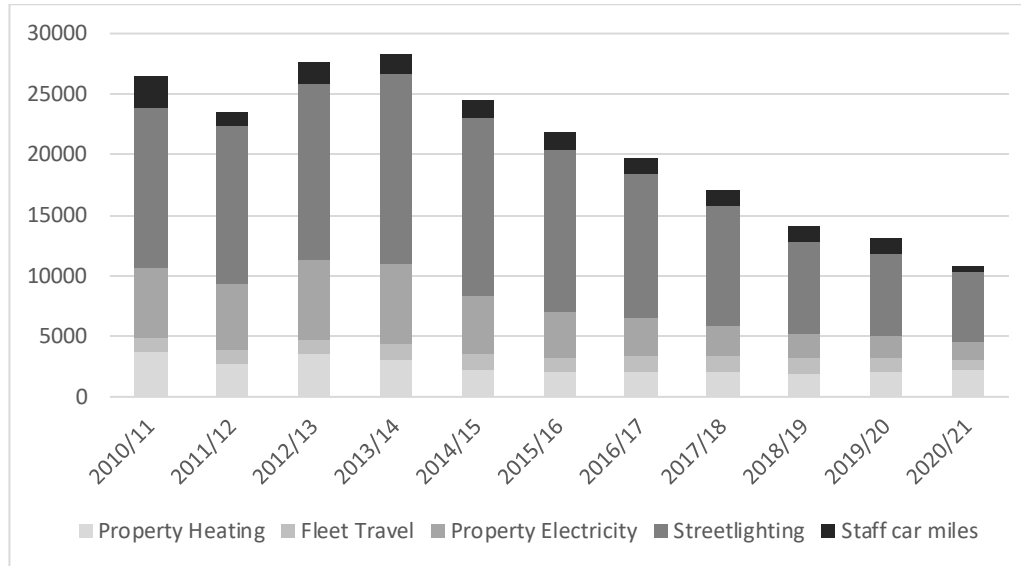

Figure 1 Evolution of emissions included in the 'net-zero by 2030 target'

Key past projects and initiatives to decarbonise our estate and operations:

- 38 per cent of street lighting replaced with LEDs

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[2] Total figures per year might change as internal data review has identified the following issues:
- OCC Highways fleet being reported in Scope 3 along with Skanska; this should have been included in our scope 1
- New bunk fuel data from Wallingford depot
- Business mileage being done by agency staff

- £2.1m for heat decarbonisation and energy efficiency measures at 7 corporate buildings and 4 schools funded by Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme

- 23 electric vehicles and 44 charge points on council sites

- Virtual meetings and agile working policies

- Benson Library off the gas grid with solar panels, battery storage and heat pump

- 42 solar panels at Ron Groves House in Kidlington

- LED and Building Management System upgrades in corporate buildings

Our emissions

About half of our emissions come from streetlighting and 30% from our buildings. Fleet and staff travel emissions represent about 20%. In 2020/21, due to COVID restrictions and changes in work practices, fleet and staff travel emissions dropped by 27% and 67% respectively. We expected that, in 2021/22, emissions from highways assets and electricity usage in buildings will continue to decline, while fleet and staff travel emissions are likely to show a degree of bounce back as services resume.
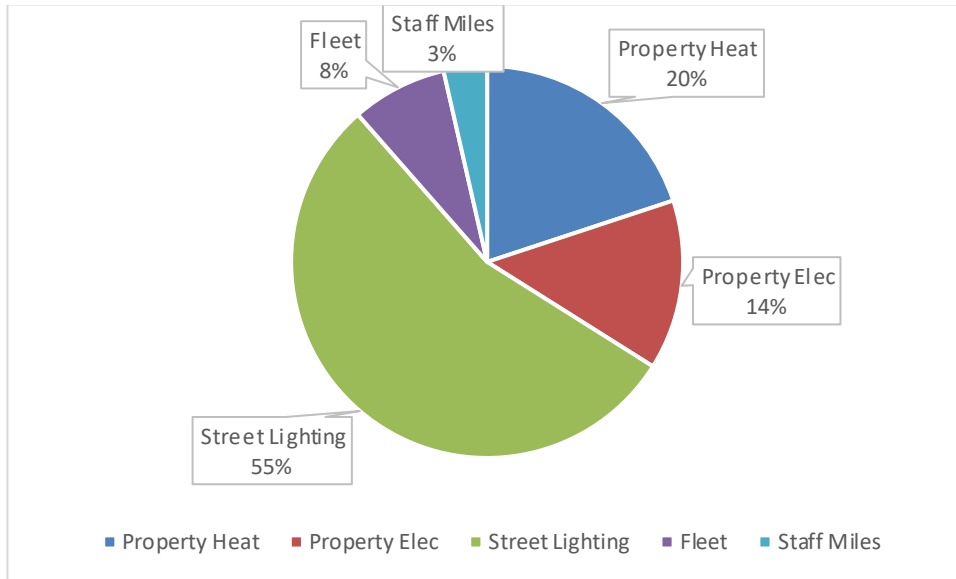
Figure 2: OCC emissions 2020/21   Source: 2020/21 Greenhouse Gas report

Scope 1, 2 and 3 emissions

This carbon management plan covers the following emissions, as described in our annual greenhouse gas report:

Scope 1	direct emissions from fuel use on council estate and fleet
Scope 2	indirect emissions from purchased electricity
Scope 3	indirect emissions from staff travel and electricity distribution

Tackling our Scope 3 emissions

Due to data availability, we currently report on a limited subset of our Scope 3 emissions. However, we are aware of their importance – supply chain emissions typically account for more than 80 per cent of a local authority's total carbon footprint. Consequently, we have committed to consider the climate and carbon implications of our key investment decisions and working with suppliers to reduce the emissions associated with the delivery of council contracts.

Building on the progress that has already been made in understanding emissions of specific contracts and capital projects, we will expand our capacity to develop a comprehensive view of the council's supply chain emissions. We will work collaboratively with the supplier base to design and implement measures to inform, support and encourage suppliers to deliver contracts that are increasingly aligned with science-based targets on net-zero emissions.

Our approach

Guiding principles

Our decarbonisation approach is guided by the following principles:

Demand reduction (avoid-shift-improve). Our actions embody the 'energy hierarchy' to reduce demand and ensure best value. We prioritise actions that avoid energy consumption, such as avoiding unnecessary journeys, and actions that save energy, such as replacing streetlighting with LEDs. Saving energy not only reduces the amount of carbon emitted but protects against price increases. Once energy demand has been minimized, fossil fuels are replaced with cleaner energy, ideally locally produced renewables. Offsets are only used as a last resort.

1	2	3	4	5	6
Energy saving	Energy efficient	Alternative fuel	Generate	Buy zero carbon power	Offset
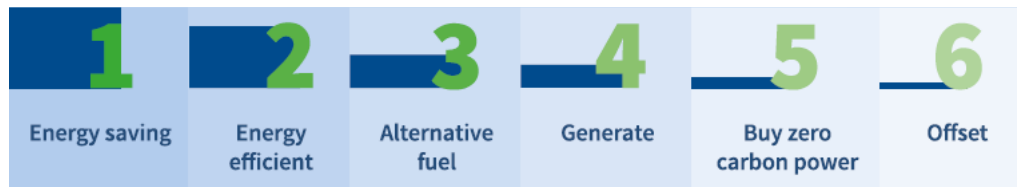
Inclusive transition. We consider the potential impacts of our decarbonisation measures on local communities. We take a participatory approach, ensuring communities are engaged and supported to take action, particularly those most vulnerable to the impacts of the climate and ecological emergency.

Innovation. Our estate is a 'living lab' to trial new ideas and accelerate innovation. We share our learning and are actively seeking new business models to make investment for zero-carbon viable.

Decarbonisation approach

Buildings

The buildings decarbonisation strategy is based on the following principles:

- Adhere to the new design standard in any new buildings to minimise consumption and use renewable energy e.g., using low-carbon heating systems instead of gas boilers

- Encourage staff behaviours that save energy in our buildings

- Improve the way we manage energy consumption in our buildings, drawing on the data provided by our energy management systems to identify savings opportunities and move towards smart buildings

- Focus upon rationalisation of our estate to minimise travel and consolidate assets to support service delivery in light of the growth in population.

- Deliver low carbon retrofit measures in our properties:

    - carry out investment grade energy building audits and condition surveys to identify a full suite of measures

    - determine which measures offer a viable invest-to-save payback and which require external funding

- Explore opportunities to buy renewable energy for our estate via a power purchase agreement in order to support local generation and a resilient local energy system

- Identify an offset threshold above which alternative investment options will be considered (aligned with the council's offset strategy to be developed).

Highway assets (streetlighting, traffic signals and signage)

OCC's highways assets include streetlighting, traffic signals and signage (signage includes illuminated bollards, illuminated signs and miscellaneous other).

The approach to decarbonisation involves delivery of the £40m, six-year streetlighting LED conversion programme that started in 2018. To decrease energy usage and support biodiversity, the possibility of reducing illumination at night when appropriate is also being explored.

The approach for traffic signals currently involves the conversion of eight traffic signals a year to LED and delivery of the Department for Transport-funded project to convert a further six sites in 2022/23. A business case for the conversion for an additional 40 sites is awaiting funding approval.

The approach for signage involves reviewing opportunities to convert bollards to solar when replacing the LED traffic signals.

Fleet

OCC's fleet include 382 vehicles[3], with the largest fleets in Fire and Rescue Service, Supported Transport, Community Support, and Highways.

Type of vehicle	Total	EVs
Car	56	10
SUV/4x4	27	-
Car-derived van	4	-
Large van	11	11
Multi-purpose vehicle	43	1
Large minibus	89	2
Fire appliance	56	-
Other HGV	1	-
Other machinery	5	-

The approach to fleet decarbonisation will prioritise avoidance of emissions by rationalising the fleet, encouraging sharing of resources, and replacing fossil fuels with zero emissions alternatives.

The first step will be putting in place an integrated fleet management system and a dedicated team to centralise all fleet information. The 'One Fleet' system, which will be up and running by March 2023, will rationalise fleet usage and support the development of a fleet replacement plan.

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[3] 2018/19 data, adjusted to know changes in 2020

The council has an 'electric by default' [4] policy that stipulates that we will work to phase out petrol and diesel vehicles in our own fleet, ensuring where operationally feasible all new vehicle acquisitions are zero tailpipe emission by default. We will consider other ultra-low emission alternatives where zero emission is not feasible. To minimise the cost on the public purse we will undertake this transition as vehicles come up for renewal.

Electric alternatives for different vehicle types are at a variety of stages of maturity. Currently, the upfront costs of most electric cars and vans are compensated by lower lifetime running and maintenance costs, making electric the preferred option. For larger vehicles, such as heavy goods vehicles and specialist vehicles such as fire engines, there is still an innovation and/or a viability gap. We will actively explore alternatives and innovative solutions, bringing forward business cases as they become financially and operationally viable.

Fleet electrification

OCC has been transitioning to a net-zero fleet and increasing its charging infrastructure, with 24 EVs and 44 charge points currently in place.

By mid 2023/24, a pipeline for a full EV fleet will be developed by Property, Procurement and Finance, which will inform the expansion of council's EV charging infrastructure.

OCC aims to electrify all cars and vans by 2028.

Fleet innovations

The council's specialist vehicles fleet, such as fire engines are a challenging area to decarbonise by 2030. Working with partners to explore options for these challenging assets is an important step on our journey to net zero.

An example is Innovate UK-funded project HySPERT (Hydrogen Special Purpose Electric Vehicle Platform for Refuse Collection and Fire Trucks). Oxfordshire County Council is currently working with technology partner ULEMCo on a feasibility study for a hydrogen fuel cell fire engine. The first phase of the project will create a full specification and detailed engineered design for a prototype vehicle to be completed by 31st March 2022. We will then seek to secure additional funding for second phase to physically build a prototype hydrogen fuel cell vehicle in 2022/23.

Staff business travel (in staff's own vehicles)

The decarbonisation approach for staff business travel prioritises avoiding travel (e.g., by meeting online when possible), reducing miles (e.g., by optimising routes), and replacing travel in cars with walking and cycling (e.g., using one of the pool e-bikes available). When needing to use a car, staff will be

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[4] Ultra-Low Emission Vehicle (ULEV) Policy Statement 2019

encouraged to use pool EVs. An electric car benefit scheme is also available for staff looking to get a new electric or plug-in hybrid car, with payments deducted from gross salary and consequently savings in income tax and national insurance contributions.

The approach involves retaining some of the mileage-saving initiatives put in place due to Covid-19 restrictions and new ways of working. In 2020/21, staff business travel mileage and associated carbon emissions decreased by almost 70% compared to 2019/20 (from over 4.2 million miles to 1.4 million miles).

To maintain a low level of travel-related emissions while ensuring service provision, the following CO2e reduction targets were agreed (from 2019/20 baseline):

-   Environment and Place: 10% reduction by 2022/23 and 40% by 2024/25
-   Commercial Development, Assets & Investment: 10% reduction by 2022/23 and 30% by 2024/25
-   Cultural Services: 10% reduction by 2022/23 and 30% by 2024/25.

The remaining directorates and services are in the process of defining their targets.

The targets allow for post-Covid bounce back and are reductions in carbon emissions associated with business travel, not necessarily reductions in the number of miles. This way, services are not restricted in their ability to travel, but encouraged to use low-carbon modes of transport.

Staff business travel targets will be reviewed next year following analysis of the 2021/22 mileage data, which will provide a more realistic post-Covid picture of carbon emissions.

Implementation of the **staff business travel programme** will support services to meet their targets:

Year	Staff business travel programme activities
2022/23	- Promote uptake of electric car benefit scheme - Continue 'digital by default' policy for training and internal meetings - Enforce the travel hierarchy and encourage active travel - Explore opportunities for service-specific electric pool cars and/or vans
2023/24	- Encourage better route planning - Offer driver training
2024/25	Promote car sharing

Estimated emissions reduction

The actions set out in this plan, combined with the decarbonisation of the electricity supply, are likely to put the council emissions on a trajectory to reduce emissions to about 6,000t CO2e by 2024/25, which is equivalent to a 75% reduction from our 2010/11 baseline. An estimated 8,500 t CO2e will be saved over this period, equivalent to 3,447 return flights from London to New York or the amount of CO2 absorbed by 1.4 million trees over the 3-year period.

The annual carbon savings from each action will only be realised in full in the following year and reflected in that year's greenhouse gas report.

OCC emissions trajectories to 2024/25
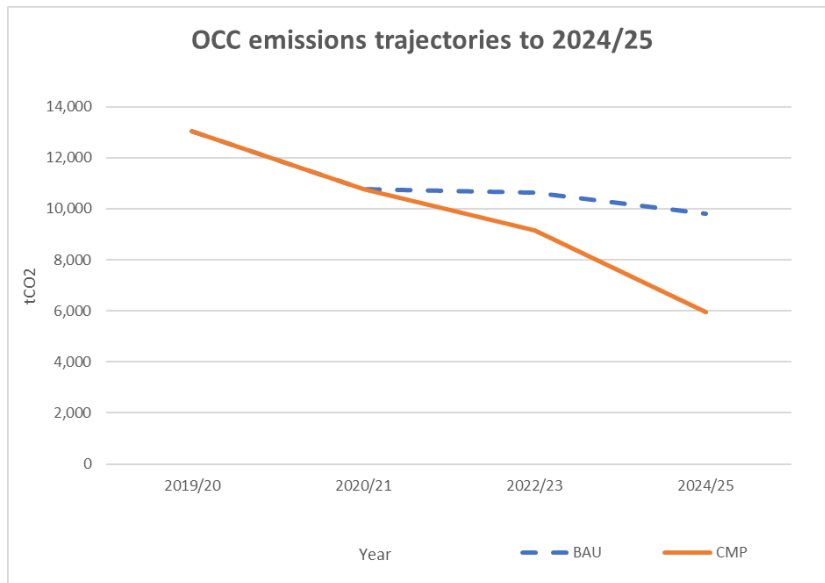
Financing the transition

Some elements of the transition to net zero are likely to deliver financial savings. For example, the ongoing replacement of streetlighting with LEDs, which represents an investment of £40m, has a payback period of 9.7 years and will deliver £77m savings over 20 years. It will also reduce streetlighting energy consumption by 75% and carbon emissions by 95% (from 2019/20 baseline).

On the other hand, retrofitting our buildings and replacing specialist vehicles will require significant investment that is unlikely to generate a financial return within the council's normal payback period.

Activities planned for 2022/23 will provide the data to assess the level of investment required to transition our buildings and fleet to net zero. An invest-to-save programme will be developed, and business cases will be put forward for funding, including from grant sources such as the Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme.

Carbon Management Plan 2022-25

Types of actions

The carbon management plan includes **direct actions** that generate measurable emissions reductions – e.g., replacing lighting with LEDs – and **enabling actions** that create the conditions for future reductions – e.g., putting in place a fleet management system.

Monitoring and reporting

A Delivery Group formed by the Officer Leads (see table below) will be accountable for delivery of the Carbon Management Plan to the Climate Action Programme Board.

When possible, progress will be monitored using the council's Carbon Neutrality dashboard, which displays the latest data on energy and fuel consumption, carbon emissions, and progress on key projects, along with KPIs and targets agreed with services.

Progress on the actions will be reported to:

- Climate Action Programme Board quarterly
- SLT and Members quarterly via Corporate Performance report
- Cabinet annually.

Planned actions for 2022/23

Action	Type	Estimated investment	Status and source of funding	KPI	Estimated annual CO2e	Officer Lead	Cabinet Lead

					savings[5]		
Highway assets							
Continue conversion of streetlighting to LED	Direct	£41m total (£17m 22/23)	Approved funding – capital programme Delivery ongoing	% streetlights converted to LED	1,395 tCO2e	Head of Highway Maintenance	Cabinet Member for Highways Management
Convert 14 traffic signals to LED	Direct	£755k	Approved funding – revenue budget (£340k) and DfT (£415k) Delivery ongoing	Energy or carbon intensity (kWh or CO2e per asset)	5 tCO2e	Head of Highway Maintenance	Cabinet Member for Highways Management
Convert 40 traffic signals to LED	Direct	£104k	Approved funding – capital programme	Energy or carbon intensity (kWh or CO2e per asset)	18 tCO2e	Head of Highway Maintenance	Cabinet Member for Highways Management
Develop and implement policy for streetlight dimming to support Dark Skies	Direct	TBD	Pending funding	Energy or carbon intensity (kWh or CO2e per asset)	TBD	Head of Highway Maintenance	Cabinet Member for Highways Management

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[5] The full year carbon savings for actions implemented in 2022/23 will be realised in 2023/24 & reported in the 2023/24 GHG report

Action	Type	Estimated investment	Status and source of funding	KPI	Estimated annual CO2e savings[6]	Officer Lead	Cabinet Lead
Buildings							
Complete the delivery of PSDS projects	Direct	£1.33m	Approved funding - Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme grant	% CO2e reduction	176 t CO2e	Director of Joint Property Services	Cabinet Member for Finance
Develop and implement an Agile Working Strategy	Enabling	TBD	Pending funding – revenue (HR) and capital (Property)	--	--	Director of Joint Property Services	Cabinet Member for Finance
Recruit a Decarbonisation Manager	Enabling	£60k	Fully funded - revenue budget	--	--	Director of Joint Property Services	Cabinet Member for Finance
Implement active building energy management	Direct	£27-33k	Recycling fund – pending parameter setting	Energy or carbon intensity (kWh or CO2e per m2)	99 t CO2e	Director of Joint Property Services	Cabinet Member for Finance
Seek funding for works on 9 priority sites	Enabling	--	Capital bids and grants funding	--	--	Director of Joint Property Services	Cabinet Member for Finance
Carry out investment grade energy & condition audits	Enabling	£5-8k per site	Pending funding – Low Carbon Skills Fund, revenue budget, capital programme	--	--	Director of Joint Property Services	Cabinet Member for Finance
Release 1 leased building (estate rationalisation)	Direct	--	Revenue saving	% CO2e reduction	237 t CO2e[7]	Director of Joint Property Services	Cabinet Member for Finance

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[6] The full year carbon savings for actions implemented in 2022/23 will be realised in 2023/24 & reported in the 2023/24 GHG report

[7] Assumed release of Abbey House end 2022/early 2023

Delivery of heat decarbonisation measures at Hook Norton Fire Station	Direct	£20k	Funding approved – Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme 3	% CO2e reduction	13 t CO2e	Director of Joint Property Services	Cabinet Member for Finance

Action	Type	Estimated investment	Status and source of funding	KPI	Estimated annual CO2e savings[8]	Officer Lead	Cabinet Lead
Fleet							
Set up One Fleet – integrated fleet management system	Enabling	c. £250k	Fully funded – ICT and Property	--	--	Director of Joint Property Services	Cabinet Member for Finance
Evaluate EV lease vs ownership model	Enabling	--	Staff time only (part of One Fleet work)	--	--	Director of Joint Property Services/ Head of Procurement	Cabinet Member for Finance
Procure electric vehicles to replace end-of-life/lease vehicles in Fire, Hard FM and Highways	Direct	TBD	Pending funding – Service revenue budgets	% fleet electrification	0 (EVs delivered in 23/24)	Head of Procurement	Cabinet Member for Finance
Shift diesel fire fleet to HVO subject to feasibility study	Direct	TBD	Feasibility – staff time only Implementation cost - TBD	% CO2e reduction	TBD	FRS Business Manager	Cabinet Member for Community Services and Safety

[8] The full year carbon savings for actions implemented in 2022/23 will be realised in 2023/24 & reported in the 2023/24 GHG report

Trial of IHAT technology for fire engines subject to business case	Direct	TBD	Business case – staff time only Trial costs - TBD	% CO2e reduction	TBD	FRS Business Manager	Cabinet Member for Community Services and Safety
Launch HySPERT Phase 2	Enabling	TBC	Pending funding – Innovate UK	--	--	Head of iHub	Cabinet Member for Corporate Services
Staff travel							
Implement staff business travel programme	Direct	--	Staff time only	% CO2e reduction % staff green miles	143 tCO2e[9]	Director of Joint Property Services	Cabinet Member for Finance

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[9] Assumed directorates agree to carbon reduction targets. Actions to support this reduction include a 'digital by default' approach to meetings, engagement with high-mileage users, enforcement of the travel hierarchy, take up of the electric car benefit scheme, explore opportunities for electric pool cars and vans, and encouraging better route planning.

Later actions for 2023-25

Action	Type	Estimated investment	Status and source of funding	Estimated annual CO2e savings[10]	Officer Lead	Cabinet Lead
Highway assets						
Complete conversion of streetlighting to LED	Direct	£41m total £6.8m 23/24	Fully funded – capital programme Delivery ongoing	384 tCO2e	Head of Highway Maintenance	Cabinet Member for Highways Management
Convert 16 traffic signals to LED	Direct	£500k	Fully funded – revenue budget Delivery ongoing	2 tCO2e	Head of Highway Maintenance	Cabinet Member for Highways Management
Buildings						
Deliver funded energy efficiency projects	Direct	TBD (pending audit results)	Pending funding – PSDS4, recycling fund, capital governance process and/or revenue bid	TBD (pending audit results)	Director of Joint Property Services	Cabinet Member for Finance
Deliver energy management programme (e.g., behaviour change, smart systems)	Direct	--	Staff time only	TBD	Director of Joint Property Services	Cabinet Member for Finance
Carry out investment grade energy & condition audits	Enabling	£5-8k per site	Pending funding – Low Carbon Skills Fund, revenue	--	Director of Joint Property Services	Cabinet Member for Finance

[10] The full year carbon savings for actions implemented between 2023-25 will be realised in either 2024/25 or 2025/26 & reported in the 2024/25 and 2025/26 GHG report.

			budget, capital programme			
Submit business cases for funding	Enabling	--	--	--	Director of Joint Property Services	Cabinet Member for Finance
Release 4 leased buildings (estate rationalisation)	Direct	--	Revenue saving	237 tCO2e[11]	Director of Joint Property Services	Cabinet Member for Finance
Fleet						
Replace end-of-life cars and vans with electric vehicles when suitable for service needs	Direct	TBD	Pending funding for cost difference of electric vehicles	110 tCO2e[12]	Head of Procurement/ Director of Joint Property Services	Cabinet Member for Finance
Expand EV charging infrastructure	Enabling	TBD	Partly funded - £400k available	--	Director of Joint Property Services	Cabinet Member for Finance
Staff travel						
Implement low carbon staff travel programme	Direct	--	Staff time	190 tCO2e[13]	Director of Joint Property Services	Cabinet Member for Finance

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[11] Assumed release of Nash Court, Knights Court, Samuelson House and Speedwell House in either 2023/24 or 2024/25

[12] Assumed 50% of Hard FM and 75% of Highways fuel use can be electrified and 10 Fire & Rescue diesel cars to be converted to fully electric cars in 2023/24.

[13] Assumed directorates agree to carbon reduction targets. Actions to support this reduction include continuation of a 'digital by default' approached to meetings, continued enforcement of the travel hierarchy, continued take up of the electric car benefit scheme, continued take up of electric pool cars and continued better route planning and from 2024/25 offer driver training and promote car sharing.

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Divisions Affected - All

CABINET

24 May 2022

Oxfordshire Food Strategy – Part One

Report by Corporate Director Customers and Organisational Development

RECOMMENDATION

1.   **The Cabinet is RECOMMENDED to**

   a)   **Endorse the Oxfordshire Food Strategy – Part One attached at annexe 1 including the principles and overarching framework**

   b)   **Agree that £250,000 grant funding be awarded to District and City council partners to support the delivery of the strategy as set out in paragraph 22 of the report**

   c)   **Delegate authority to the Corporate Director Customers and Organisational Development to agree the terms of reference for the grant funding in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Public Health and Equalities**

   d)   **Delegate authority to the Corporate Director Customers and Organisational Development to make minor design and typographical changes to the document pending adoption by District and City partners**

Executive Summary

2.   An Oxfordshire wide food strategy has been developed in partnership with the district and city councils and the Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS). The strategy supports a broad range of Council priorities and strategies in particular healthy weight strategies, addressing food poverty and tackling inequalities and the Council's Climate Action Framework.

3.   The strategy has been developed as a partnership between Good Food Oxfordshire, the County Council and District and City Councils. The partnership have adopted a similar approach to the government's National Food Strategy and have split the developed into two sections. Part One, attached at annexe 1, sets out the reasons for developing a strategy, principles and overarching

framework to be adopted. Part Two will see the development of action plans to meet the ambitions of the strategy which will be developed through further engagement over the next six months which will be brought to Cabinet in the autumn.

4. In order to support the development of tangible actions, it is proposed that the sum of £250,000 is allocated District and City councils in order to award grants that support the delivery of the strategy. This funding will come from the Budget Priorities reserve allocation process to support the cost-of-living impact, as this work will support individuals and families to access food and will support activities to provide longer term stability to food accessibility.

Developing the strategy:

5. The Oxfordshire Food Strategy has been developed by a multi-stakeholder partnership including county and district councils, community groups, local food producers and other major institutions. It has been developed to tackle the challenges of health and wellbeing; climate change and biodiversity; fair incomes and employment and a vibrant and sustainable food system. Part 1 of the strategy (attached as annex 1) seeks to identify priority areas for action, links to existing initiatives and policy and showcase some examples of excellence that can be learnt from and built upon.

6. Public and stakeholder engagement in developing the strategy initially took place during August – October 2021. This included consulting with relevant Councillors/officers at all Oxfordshire local authorities, farmers markets and producers and members of the public attending food related events.

7. To support the ambitions of the strategy, an action plan will be developed by the partnership which will have individual actions for the County Council and for district and city council partners.

8. This strategy spans the breadth of portfolio areas with an underlying priority to address inequality and improving the health of our residents, and this work has been represented by the Cabinet Member for Equalities and Public Health.

Partnership ambitions:

9. The Oxfordshire Food Strategy has been created in partnership because we recognise that in order to address the challenges of food poverty, food supply, climate change and public health tipping points we need a whole system approach.

10. The strategy presents a vision which seeks to ensure that everyone in Oxfordshire can enjoy the healthy and sustainable food they need every day through the following ambitions:
    (a)   Food justice: healthy and sustainable food is affordable and accessible to everyone

(b)   Sustainable food economy: Local food businesses flourish, with more productions, more outlets, more employment and better standards for workers

(c)   Good food movement: more people can enjoy and engage with healthy, sustainable food and 'good food for everyone' is part of our culture

(d)   Food for the planet: We waste less food and the food that we do produce, consume and waste has a less negative impact on the planet

(e)   Sustainable supply chains: More locally produced, sustainable food is bought and consumed locally, and supply chains are more resilient

(f)   Governance and strategy: Continue, evaluate and strengthen existing initiatives. Build foundations for new initiatives. Establish enablers to manage and monitor progress.

Links to the County Council's Plant Based Food Motion

11.   In March 2022, Cabinet resolved to develop an Oxfordshire County Council food policy to support the delivery of sustainable food provision and its disposal within the Council. Whilst there are clear links between this policy it is a distinct piece of work from the Oxfordshire Food Strategy.

12.   In developing the action plan for Part 2, officers will ensure that both pieces of work are complementary and do not result in overlap or duplication.

Grant Funding

13.   It is estimated that 8 – 10 % of all households in Oxfordshire experience food insecurity (Good Food Oxfordshire, 2021) and the ambitions within the strategy seek to address this by supporting more locally produced and sustainable food and enabling all residents the equal opportunity to access healthy food all year round, through education to minimise food waste or grow their own, and through accessing food banks or community larder schemes. There are longer term ambitions within the strategy to grow Oxfordshire's local food economy through local enterprises, local jobs and local wealth generation.

14.   As part of the strategy, an action plan is in development responsibilities for all local councils to meet the ambitions, these actions are to be defined but will include communications and marketing, practical support such as identifying opportunities or providing access to green spaces for community gardens and to provide local business support to address food waste and explore locally sourced food options.

15.   Whilst a number of actions will be completed as 'business as usual', we want to ensure that we can collectively deliver on our ambitions to address issues around cost of living and food poverty for all our residents across Oxfordshire. To enable an equitable approach in our collective response, we propose to allocate funding to all of our districts and city partners and to the Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) to support delivery of our joint commitments.

16. We propose to provide £250,000 of funding to the districts and city councils to be put towards delivery of actions that will directly impact accessibility to food that can be used internally or put towards community groups within the district area. It is proposed that funding is allocated through the Budget Priorities reserve allocation process to support the cost-of-living impact, as this work will support individuals and families to access food and will support activities to provide longer term stability to food accessibility. We recommend that this funding is not used towards employment of personnel resource, as this would provide a short-term solution to a long-term commitment.

17. To determine the allocation per District/City Council, we propose using a previously established Department for Work and Pensions formula, which is based on population weighted by deprivation as measured by the index of multiple deprivation index. This will result in allocation of funding as follows:

Local Authority	Percentage	Allocation
Cherwell District Council	26%	£65,000
Oxford City Council	28%	£70,000
South Oxfordshire District Council	17%	£42,500
Vale of White Horse District Council	16%	£40,000
West Oxfordshire District Council	13%	£32,500
		Total = £250,000

18. Examples of actions the funding can be used towards include:

- Communications including signposting for residents to access existing schemes, raising awareness on available options and providing advice and guidance
- Supporting infrastructure, guidance and access to funding for Community Food Services including distribution networks, foodbanks, larders and fridges.
- Exploration of providing access to vacant and shared spaces and resources to enable communities to come together to grow, cook, eat and share food together

19. A Terms of Reference for the grant will be produced to ensure that there is a governance process and audit trail in place for the funding.

20. As the action plan is developed which will be brought for Scrutiny consideration and Cabinet approval in the autumn. By providing confirmation

of available funding ahead of this process, this allows us as a partnership to be more considered and ambitious in the action setting process.

Next Steps

21. A timeline for the Council's decision is adopting the strategy and its action plan is set out below:

Date	Action
24th May 2022	Part 1 proposal to Cabinet for adoption
June – July	Part 1 proposal to City/Districts for adoption
May – August	Development of action plan
September (date tbc)	Action plan to Scrutiny for comment and recommendations
October 2022 (date tbc)	Part 2 proposal to Cabinet for adoption

22. Due to the local elections, district partners have opted to seek agreement of Part 1 at their meetings in the summer.

Corporate Policies and Priorities

23. Due to the cross-cutting nature of the work, the development of the Oxfordshire Food Strategy supports several Councils priority areas. In particular:
    (a) Put action to address the climate emergency at the heart of our work – measures that will link to net zero targets such as food waste reduction;
    (b) Tackle inequalities in Oxfordshire – measures that will seek to lead on equality in accessing food and tackling food poverty;
    (c) Prioritising the health and wellbeing of residents – measures that will focus on addressing access to healthy foods;
    (d) Preserve and improve access to nature and green spaces – measures that will seek to provide or source green spaces for communities for growing food;
    (e) Create opportunities for children and young people to reach their potential – measures that will support advice and guidance and supporting children and young people to have equal access to food;
    (f) Work with local businesses and partners for environmental, economic and social benefit – working in partnership to implement and deliver the strategy and its broad-ranging benefits.

24. The report itself also sets out closely established links to the whole systems approach to healthy weight by promoting access to healthy food; healthy place shaping; Climate Action Framework; Oxfordshire Plan 2050 and Local Plans.

Financial Implications

25.   We propose to provide £250k of funding to the districts and city councils to be put towards delivery of actions that will directly impact accessibility to food that can be used internally or put towards community groups within the district area.

26.   To determine the allocation per District/City Council, we propose using a previously established DWP formula, which is based on population weighted by deprivation as measured by the index of multiple deprivation index. This will result in allocation of funding as follows:

Local Authority	Percentage	Allocation
Cherwell District Council	26%	£65,000
Oxford City Council	28%	£70,000
South Oxfordshire District Council	17%	£42,500
Vale of White Horse District Council	16%	£40,000
West Oxfordshire District Council	13%	£32,500
		Total = £250,000

27.   If the proposal to allocate funding to the districts and city councils is agreed, we will be requesting £250,000 from the Budget Priorities reserve allocations process.

28.   The action plan will have some actions that will be 'business as usual' and can be incorporated into relevant service delivery, however, any actions that will require new workstreams or prioritisation will need to be considered by each service. This may impact budget and business planning for 2022/23 with proposals to be considered through the organisational process as required or through the Budget Priorities reserve allocation process for immediate, in-year cost needs.

        Comments checked by: Filipp Skiffins, Assistant Finance Business Partner

Legal Implications

29.   The Council has the ability to make such grant funding available but has an obligation to ensure that the funds are used properly. Before funds are released, funding agreements should be drawn up and approved by Cabinet which (inter alia) specify what funds are to be used for, give the Council the opportunity to monitor delivery and give the Council the ability to claw back payments if appropriate

Comments checked by: Richard Hodby, Solicitor

Staff Implications

30. Resourcing the development of the strategy and associated action plans will be met within existing resources.

Equality & Inclusion Implications

31. An Equalities and Climate Impact assessment has been drafted to support the Food Strategy and associated grant funding. No negative equalities implications have been identified.

Sustainability Implications

32. An Equalities and Climate Impact assessment has been drafted to support the Food Strategy and associated grant funding. No negative sustainability implications have been identified.

Risk Management

33. The creation of the Oxfordshire Food Strategy was intended to address the risks identified around access to food, particularly for vulnerable people and to increase resilience in local food supply chains.

34. By not creating a county-wide Food Strategy, there is a risk that residents and suppliers may be more disproportionately affected by the anticipated cost of living increases.

35. There is a risk that trying to create a 'one-size-fits-all' strategy will mean we do not recognise the different food related challenges across the county. This will be addressed in Part 2 as partners seek to develop district level action plans to address challenges at a local level.

Consultations

36. The Oxfordshire Food Strategy was developed in partnership with stakeholders in particular Good Food Oxfordshire which represents over 150 food related organisations. Public engagement in the strategy was undertaken by Good Food Oxfordshire during August – October 2021 through food related events.
37. Further community consultation will take place as part of developing the action plan over the next six months.

Claire Taylor
Corporate Director Customer and Organisational Development

Annex: Annex 1: Oxfordshire Food Strategy – Part 1

Background papers: Good Food Oxfordshire consultation summary

Contact Officer: Lauren Rushen, Senior Policy Officer

May 2022

Oxfordshire Food Strategy

May 2022

Part 1

Contents

GOOD FOOD Oxfordshire

www.oxford.gov.uk

OXFORD CITY COUNCIL

OXFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Cherwell | DISTRICT COUNCIL NORTH OXFORDSHIRE

Vale of White Horse District Council

South Oxfordshire District Council

1.

Introduction

Building a healthy, fair and sustainable food system for Oxfordshire.

Food is both the source of, and solution to, many of the problems we face today.

To tackle the challenges of health and wellbeing, climate change and biodiversity loss, and fair incomes and employment, Oxfordshire must have a vibrant and sustainable food system. This is integral to our organisations, community, and culture.

Alongside environmental and health drivers, the stresses placed on local communities and businesses through global events - COVID, Brexit, the war in Ukraine, rising fuel, food, and other living costs - have highlighted the need to re-evaluate the entire food system and take action. This was recognised in the 2021 National Food Strategy, which also noted the need for local areas to develop their own food strategies.

The Oxfordshire local food strategy was developed by a multi-stakeholder partnership including county and district councils, community groups, local food producers, retail and hospitality businesses, and major institutions. It is a first step towards drawing together the many strands of work that are already happening across the county and seeing them as a coherent whole.

Part 1 of this strategy, presented here, identifies priority areas of action, links to existing initiatives and policy, and showcases some examples of excellence that we can learn from and build on. Part 2 will embed the strategy in existing programmes and plans, develop Food Action Plans for each District, initiate pilot projects, and monitor and evaluate progress.

COP26 highlighted that 1.5 is still alive but we must act swiftly. Whilst much emphasis is placed on fossil fuels and alternative energy sources, food systems currently account for roughly 40% of total greenhouse gases and contribute to biodiversity loss (IPCC,2022). Furthermore, food poverty in Oxfordshire is real, and whilst COVID exacerbated the problem, it is not a new phenomenon. Between 9-14% of all households in Oxfordshire experience food insecurity. This equates to 62,000-96,000 people (Moretti et al 2021).

Removing barriers and ensuring that everyone in Oxfordshire can access affordable, healthy food in ways that promote dignity, recognise diversity, and celebrate our rich cultural heritage are fundamental to this strategy. Alongside building vibrant, thriving communities, supporting the local food economy can be part of the solution. It is fundamental to providing local jobs that serve local communities' needs. Oxfordshire's food economy accounts for 10% of jobs, and in 2020 generated turnover of £2.2 billion or 10% of the local economy. We also know that "pound-for-pound, money spent in the local food web supports three times the number of jobs as the equivalent spent in national grocery chains" (Willis, 2012).

The challenges of food poverty, the climate emergency, food supply, and our diet-related health crisis cannot be addressed without redefining our food systems. The time for action is now.

Part 1: Developing Oxfordshire's food strategy

Understanding the strategic challenges of food in Oxfordshire, in consultation with the Good Food Oxfordshire (GFO) network. ☑

Defining the vision and strategic priorities. Identifying the influencing factors and priority areas for action. ☑

Building on what is currently being done. How the strategy supports, evaluates, and strengthens existing initiatives, and builds the foundations for new initiatives. ☑

Part 2: Implementing Oxfordshire's food strategy

Support and strengthen existing programmes and campaigns ☐

Embed actions to deliver strategic priorities in existing policies and plans ☐

Develop detailed **Food Action Plans** with each key stakeholder ☐

Initiate **foundation projects** to build our knowledge base and inform detailed implementation plans for new initiatives ☐

Good Food Oxfordshire is a network of over 150 local organisations committed to a better food system for Oxfordshire.

Throughout this document we refer to **"good food".** To us, this means food that provides health and social benefits, contributes to thriving local economies and communities, enhances our natural resources, and tackles climate change.

In other words: **food that is good for people, good for communities, and good for the planet.**

Food Retailers

Local Food Processors & Distributors

Cafes and Restaurants

Food Producers

GOOD FOOD Oxfordshire

Community Groups

Local Councils

Institutions

2.

Oxfordshire's food challenge

Oxfordshire's food challenge was real, and now it's far worse.

Fair access to good quality, sustainably produced food is problematic across Oxfordshire, and has been made worse by pressures over the last few years.

Alongside environmental and health drivers, the stresses placed on local communities and businesses through global events - COVID, Brexit, war in Ukraine, rising fuel, food, and other living costs - have highlighted the need to re-evaluate the entire food system and take action. This was recognised in the 2021 National Food Strategy, which also stressed the need for local areas to develop their own food strategies to increase food security and improve good food access.

Food poverty

Climate emergency

Local action required

Health crisis

Food supply

The local picture

Localised, sustainable food systems can provide an opportunity to improve food security for vulnerable groups, meet Oxfordshire's climate and sustainability targets, and improve food supply resilience.

Food poverty

9-14% of Oxfordshire's residents experience food insecurity. This is **62,000—96,000 people** (Moretti et al 2021)

In 2022, the **rise in living costs** mean households face an average loss of **£1,200 to their annual incomes** forcing people into a 'heat or eat' dilemma (Harari et al. 2022)

Cost of living rises disproportionately impact lower income households. There are fewer good-quality 'value' ranges and **prices increase up to 350%** for basic items (Monroe, 2022)

Health crisis

Obesity rates in both Reception-age and Year 6 children **increased by around 4.5% between 2019-20 and 2020-21.** These are the highest annual rises since the measurement programme began in 2006/7 (NCMP, 2021)

55% of adults in Oxfordshire are classified as overweight or obese (JSNA, 2021)

People limited by health problems and disability are **5x more likely** to experience food insecurity (Food Foundation, 2021)

1 in 4 children in Year 6 are obese. Children living in the most deprived areas are more than twice as likely to be obese than those living in least deprived areas.

Climate emergency

Food systems contribute **40% of greenhouse gas emissions** (IPCC, 2022)

Biodiversity of priority species **has fallen more than 70%** in the UK since 1970 (NFS, 2021)

Research by GFO (2020) reported **the valuable contribution of small-scale and community food production** to sustainable land management, food security, and physical and mental health.

Food supply

Oxfordshire's food economy turnover (£millions) by subsector (ONS, 2022)

- ● Agriculture
- ● Manufacture
- ● Wholesale
- ● Food retail
- ● Services

558
91
163
525
840
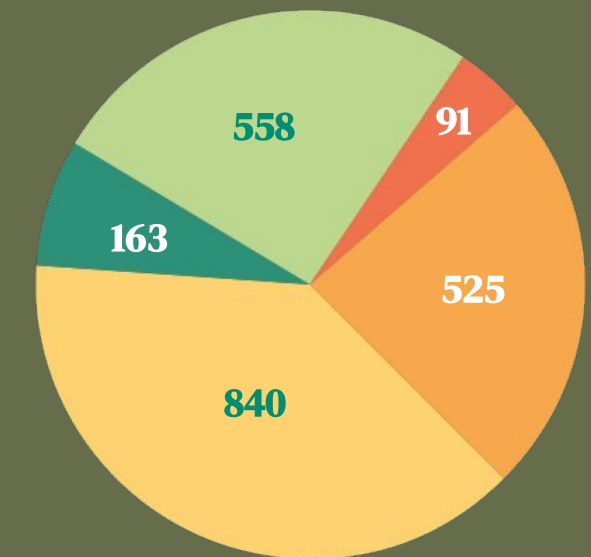
In 2013, half of Oxford's food came from the UK, a third came from the EU, and 15% was imported from further afield. Less than **1% was sourced directly from the region** (Curtis, 2013).

74% of Oxfordshire's land area is agricultural, mostly cereals, followed by livestock grazing for meat and dairy

In 2020, Oxfordshire's local food economy contributed **£2.2 billion in turnover, supporting 19,500 jobs and 2,970 enterprises** (ONS, 2022)

Voices from Oxfordshire

We have listened to local people, groups, and enterprises.

Through our Oxfordshire Community Insights Programme and through workshops, questionnaires, and interviews with local residents, groups, and businesses we have heard what matters to people about food and their current experiences.

Snapshots and learnings

Childhood Malnutrition: From Grassroots to Policy Action
Roundtable Event November 2021

Key learnings:

"Taking a whole systems approach to address the double burden of both underweight and overweight childhood malnutrition involves recognition of the important overlap between the food system, education system and health system"

"breaking down artificial silos between sectors"

"need to trust their [grassroots organisations'] ability to understand the needs and priorities of the community"

(Nagraj et al 2022)

Interviews / survey of growers and producers

"Turnover [of workers] is very high….we need skills and mentoring programmes for apprentice growers… places to live affordably in rural areas."

"Food margins being driven down every year… we need to value doing good and sustainability."

"Every person in the food chain doubles the price."

"Local markets build strong relationships and loyal customers."

School food surveys
May 2021
and workshop
March 2022

"We need to listen to children's voices - understanding why they sometimes avoid the food is powerful and can help with small changes."

Parents on school meals: "They try things they wouldn't at home then come back asking for it, it's fantastic."

"Too many chips according to my daughter."

"nobody needs meat every day, and for the price it can't be from sustainable and high welfare sources. It just destroys our planet and is irresponsible."

Caterers need to keep their businesses viable and struggle to balance children's preferences for unhealthy food with their ambitions to provide nutritious meals.

Schools have the ambition to improve school food, but they lack the time, capacity, and resources necessary to make a significant change.
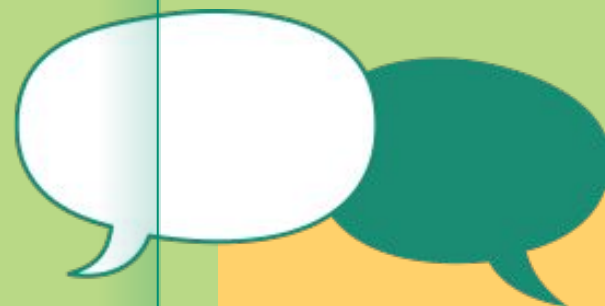
Key Events

September 2021
Good Food Procurement Webinar
20 attendees OSEP and GFO

November 2021
Childhood Malnutrition Roundtable Event
33 attendees, representing community groups, schools, housing associations, councillors, council officers, academics, and researchers*

March 2022
Oxfordshire Schools Food Workshop
40+ attendees representing schools, councils, communities, and caterers

April 2021 - ongoing
Healthy Weight Insights Programme
To date… engaged 28 community partners in Banbury Ruscote/Grimsbury, Blackbird Leys, Abingdon, Witney, and Berinsfield
Conversations with children at target sites
Listened to wider stakeholders at three workshops (146 people, 50 +organisations)

September 2021 - January 2022
GFO Research
11 locations, 100+ members of public interviewed
50+ individual stakeholder meetings held
75+ stakeholders engaged at eight GFO events and network meetings
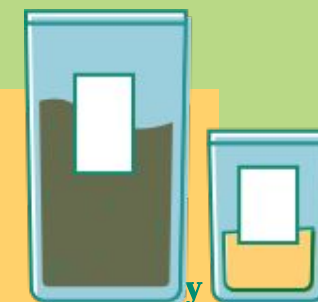
Voices from Oxfordshire

Chippy Larder

Visiting a local farm, engaging with growers, and learning new skills, having your own chick and farm fresh eggs at an affordable price, makes the 'aspirational' accessible.

Cherwell Collective

We need to return to a more symbiotic relationship between food systems and communities. By connecting people to their food, through growing and cooking, people learn the value of food and not just the price. This in turn helps to reduce food waste and improves health and wellbeing through a stronger sense of community and engagement with nature.

Orange Bakery

We love having a good relationship with our mill, our milk and our eggs…
it makes all the difference

Community insights

Life is complex and chaotic: "Many families tell us they have bigger issues to deal with than their child being a bit overweight"

Many people lack the **skills, capacity, or resources** to cook and to change routines & habits: "We don't plan, we live day to day"

Professionals can lack resources or skills to have **difficult conversations** about weight, food, and wellbeing to **help people to achieve a healthy weight**: "It is easier to talk about death than to talk about their child being overweight"
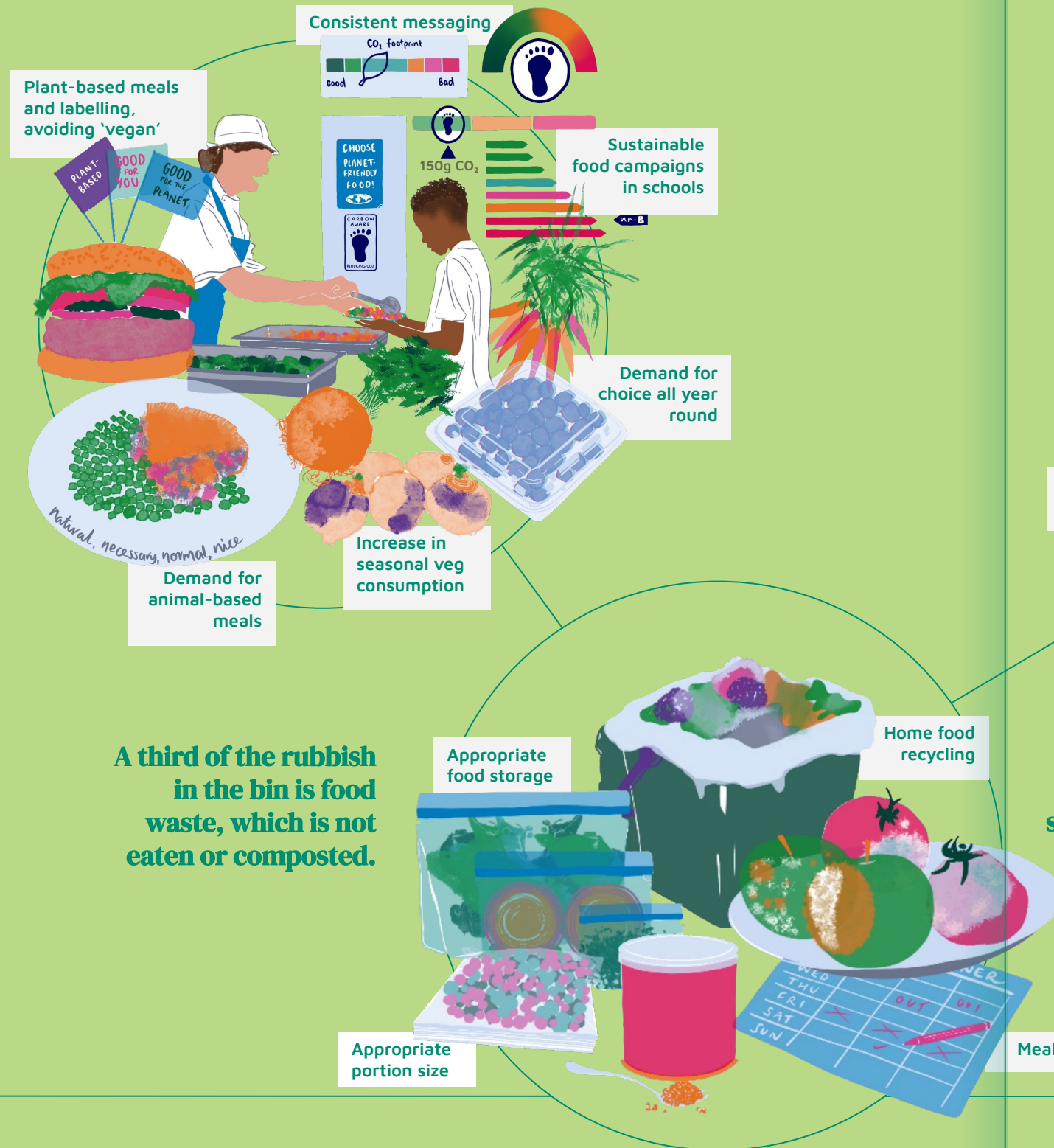
GFO community research
Over 90% of respondents (members of the public) emphasised the importance of buying local food: to support the local economy, reduce food miles, and care for the environment.

Workshops on food and climate identified common themes and links across health, supply, waste, and poverty.

Consistent messaging

CO₂ footprint

Good   Bad

150g CO₂

Plant-based meals and labelling, avoiding 'vegan'

PLANT-BASED   GOOD FOR YOU!   GOOD FOR THE PLANET!

CHOOSE PLANET-FRIENDLY FOOD!

CARBON AWARE REDUCING CO2

Sustainable food campaigns in schools

Demand for choice all year round

natural, necessary, normal, nice

Demand for animal-based meals

Increase in seasonal veg consumption

A third of the rubbish in the bin is food waste, which is not eaten or composted.

Appropriate food storage

Home food recycling

Appropriate portion size

WED THU FRI SAT SUN

Meal planning

Much of the UK's fruit and vegetable supply comes from a small number of growing areas in Europe. Access to land for food production in Oxfordshire is difficult.

Suitable land for local production

Land-owners: aspirations for how they use it

Regular Supply

Ability of producers to supply

Improving access to land for food production

Tenant farms - ability to make change

Availability of shops selling healthy food and rural shops

Demand for healthy food

Price of food in deprived neighbourhoods

Quality of rural transport

£

Urban areas contribute to the risk of unhealthy weight. For example, there are more fast-food outlets in deprived urban areas.

Need to drive to get food

More takeaways in deprived areas

More veg!

Food tasting experiences

Culturally appropriate food

Eating more veg, and less and better meat, reduces climate emissions, and supports sustainable farming practices and better animal welfare.

SEPTEMBER M T W T F S

Local and seasonal food

Less and better meat

Affordable diet

Enjoying more fruit and vegetables

3.

Vision and strategic priorities

Food poverty

Climate emergency

Local food strategy

Health crisis

Food supply

Ambitions to help deliver a collective vision

A coherent food strategy for all those involved with food in Oxfordshire can help push back against these pressures and deliver a vision in which everyone in Oxfordshire can enjoy the healthy and sustainable food they need every day.

Food justice

Healthy, sustainable, and culturally appropriate food is affordable and accessible for everyone.

Food for the planet

We waste less food and the food that do we produce, consume and waste has less negative impact on the planet.

Sustainable supply chains

More locally produced sustainable food is bought and consumed locally, and supply chains are more resilient.

Everyone in Oxfordshire can enjoy the healthy and sustainable food they need every day.

Sustainable food economy

Local food businesses flourish with more production, more outlets, more employment, and better standards for workers.

Governance and strategy

Fair, healthy, and sustainable food is integrated into strategies, policies, and plans of stakeholder organisations. Progress towards ambitions is monitored and evaluated.

Good Food Movement

More people can engage with and enjoy healthy, sustainable food through events, education, and campaigns that build connections, knowledge, and skills.

We have identified the following priority areas for action

Addressing these priorities will deliver the following outcomes.

Tackle food poverty and diet-related ill health

Priorities

Expand and strengthen existing services and programmes aimed at those at risk of food poverty, including Community Food Networks (foodbanks, larders, and fridges), Healthy Start Vouchers, Holiday Activities and Food.

Adopt Healthy Place Shaping principles and a Whole Systems Approach to Healthy Weight.

Outcomes

Everyone in Oxfordshire can access healthy food every day without shame or stigma.

More eligible people accessing existing schemes that tackle health and nutrition inequality.

Uptake of available central government funding is maximised, making full use of available funds, and providing evidence of the local need.

Build vibrant food communities with the capacity and skills to enjoy food together

Priorities

Support communities to grow, cook, learn, and enjoy food together. Promote campaigns and events that enable everyone to access healthy food, reduce food waste, and encourage dietary choices that are good for health and for the planet.

Outcomes

Stronger communities through sharing and participation in food-related activities.

More people can access knowledge and skills to support growing, cooking, and better nutrition.

People make food choices that are better for their health and planetary health.

Grow the local food economy through local enterprises, local jobs, local wealth generation

Priorities

Focus on local enterprises that are driven by local needs, provide employment, and multiply the impacts of money earnt and spent locally.

Use the power of anchor institutions (schools, hospitals, universities, businesses, etc) to procure locally and provide access to finance, infrastructure, and skills. This is called a Community Wealth Building approach.

Outcomes

More local food enterprises flourish.

Better livelihoods, skills, and opportunities for local food workers.

Strengthen short, transparent local food supply chains

Priorities

Detailed scoping project to define the needs, options, and future plans for local supply chain solutions for Oxfordshire.

Consider public and institutional procurement as a way to provide scale and certainty for local sustainable producers.

Identify appropriate infrastructure to support the supply chain including local food processing hubs and dynamic procurement systems.

Work with landholders, existing producers, and new agricultural practitioners to explore access to land, infrastructure, and skills to meet local food demands.

Outcomes

Clear and robust understanding of appropriate solutions for Oxfordshire.

More sustainable food is produced and processed locally for local consumption.

Net zero goals are supported through sustainable food production and reduced food miles.

Consumers are more engaged and connected to the provenance of their food, reinforcing healthier and more sustainable habits.

Improve the health and sustainability of institutional catering

Priorities

Embed healthy, sustainable local food principles and targets within institutional catering.

Link food to net zero targets and promote accreditation schemes such as Food for Life, Fairtrade, and Sustainable Restaurant Association.

Outcomes

More people have access to healthy and sustainable food via local institutions.

The local food economy is supported by institutional procurement.

Institutions' climate and sustainability targets are supported through better food practices.

4.

Delivering the outcomes

Corporate and Local Plans

Whole Systems Approach to Healthy Weight

Tackling Health Inequality

Oxfordshire Plan 2050

Climate Action Framework

Healthy Place Shaping Agenda
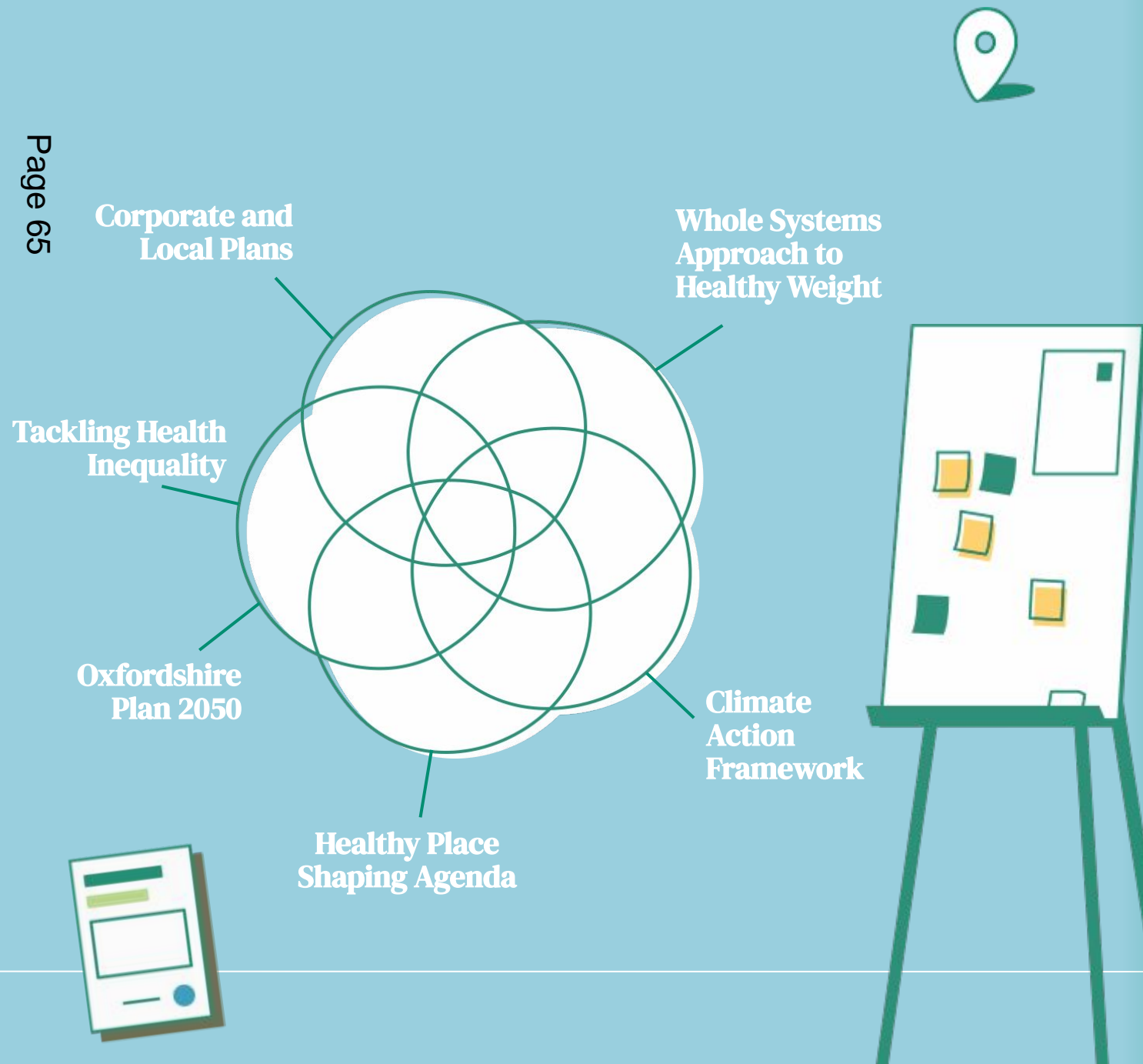
To achieve these ambitions, we need to ensure that food is integrated within existing policy and programmes.

Policy/ programme	Synergies with food strategy
Whole Systems Approach to Healthy Weight	Access to healthy food Awareness and promotion of a healthy diet A healthy start for families Planning healthy weight environments Tackling health inequalities
Healthy Place Shaping	20 minute neighbourhoods - easy access to healthy food Planning healthy weight environments Food systems central to healthy places – growing, buying, cooking, sharing
Tackling Health Inequality	Focus on areas of inequality where access to food and health outcomes such as higher rates of obesity in children, and life expectancy gaps, are usually worse than the Oxfordshire average (Director of Public Health Report 2019/20)
Climate Action Framework	Emissions and biodiversity: food choices, production, handling, and waste Improved local supply chains, reducing emissions from e.g., transportation, waste, and higher production standards
Oxfordshire Plan 2050	Climate action planning and infrastructure Healthy Place Shaping to guide housing growth and inclusion of growing spaces Land-use – local food production to support short, local supply chains
Corporate and Local Plans	Role of farming in climate, nature, and economy Sustainable food businesses as part of green economy Food as a facilitator of Inclusive communities through growing, cooking, and sharing together Community health and wellbeing improved through access to affordable, nutritious food Access to spaces and infrastructure

19

We must ensure that flourishing campaigns and initiatives across Oxfordshire are recognised, supported, and strengthened.

SWITCH UP YOUR LUNCH

Oxfordshire PUMPKIN FESTIVAL — GOOD FOOD Oxfordshire

The CAG Project
COMMUNITY ACTION GROUPS

good to grow

HEALTHY START

REPLENISH
Feed our planet not our bins

EAT THEM TO DEFEAT THEM
JOIN THE FIGHT
#EatThemToDefeatThem

PLAY: FULL

Better Health — Let's do this

The Good Food Cooking Toolkit

قائمة خاصة بمطبخ الطعام الجيد
دليل مفيد لمساعدتك على الإبداع في المطبخ

GOOD FOOD Oxford

SOFEA
NOURISH AND FLOURISH

SUGAR SMART OXFORDSHIRE

VEG PLACES OXFORDSHIRE

By showcasing examples of excellence, we aim to celebrate success and show what is possible...

Case study	Great example of...
Chippy Larder and Bruern Farm	Communities growing and sharing food together
Salt Cross Garden Village	Ambition to create better food environments in new developments, navigating complex planning challenges
Oxford City Council – Healthy Start	Partnership working to increasing the uptake of Healthy Start Vouchers
Swan School	Improving the health and sustainability of school food
Play:Full	Community-led approaches to tackling holiday hunger
Cherwell Collective	Building solutions to food poverty and the climate crisis through community growing, cooking, sharing
OX4 Food Crew	Community Wealth Building, tackling food poverty, supporting resilience and community-led enterprise
Abingdon Community Fridge	Building community, tackling food poverty, reducing food waste
The Wonky Food Company	Sustainable food enterprise preventing food waste
The Orange Bakery, Watlington	Supporting local producers and providing employment for disadvantaged persons
Oxford City Farm	Community education and engagement in growing
Sandy Lane Farm	Organic and regenerative agriculture

...as well as building foundations and collaborations, and developing new initiatives.

Priority areas to develop

Work with schools, caterers, and children to better understand the challenges of school food. Collaboratively develop solutions that are impactful but achievable to improve the quality and sustainability of school food. This approach can also benefit the local food economy through institutional commitments to buying local, ethically, and sustainably produced food. The learnings from the schools pilot can be applied to other institutional settings, including – hospitals and social care.

Strengthen short, transparent local food supply chains that improve resilience to external shocks and the local food economy.
Work with local institutional buyers – including schools, universities, and hospitals – to commit to increasing local procurement.
Work with local producers to increase local, sustainable production to meet demand. Identify the technology, infrastructure, processes, and relationships to facilitate this.

Support Community Wealth Building approaches to preventing food poverty, building resilient communities, and developing skills, jobs, and enterprises that retain wealth locally.
Councils and major institutions commit to being anchor organisations, increasing local procurement, making local assets available to local enterprises, and championing local enterprise.
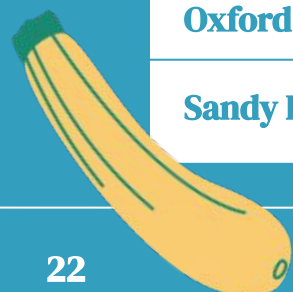
Examples of excellence from Oxfordshire

Chippy Larder and Bruern Farm

Promoting dignity, affordable access to good food and community growing.

the chippy larder

I set up The Chippy Larder to redress the imbalance in my community. We support families who are not only in food, fuel, and educational deprivation but also at high risk of poor physical and mental health. To be surrounded by businesses offering high quality, nutritionally dense, locally produced food, that was and still is financially inaccessible to many is not acceptable.

The first step was to set up a hub that didn't stigmatise those in need, the key was to be inclusive so the whole community could benefit. The Community Larder model was a perfect fit - Chippy Larder is open to everyone providing access to affordable food and reducing food waste. Partnering with Bruern Farm we have set up the Chicky Larder - getting members outdoors and involved with growing. Visiting a local farm, engaging with growers, and learning new skills, having your own chick and farm fresh eggs at an affordable price, makes the 'aspirational' accessible.

Wonky Food Company

Reducing food waste - flourishing with support from OxLEP

The Wonky Food Company

The Wonky Food Company makes relishes from imperfect and surplus fruit and vegetables. Started in Oxfordshire in 2018, the business sells via the Midcounties Co-op and Ocado, as well as through a growing network of independent delis, farm shops and artisan food stores.

In 2022, it was accepted on to the Co-op's first national incubator scheme, focusing on small sustainable food and drink brands. The Wonky Food Company has benefited from local business support since its inception. It received start-up support via OxLEP and is now part of OxLEP's eScalate programme, a three-year European funded initiative supporting social enterprises, charities, and purposeful businesses in Oxfordshire. "It's been such a fantastic programme to be part of," says founder Ashley Cavers. "We have benefitted from some great peer group and networking opportunities. It has also enabled us to build our knowledge in important areas such as impact measurement and raising investment.

Community Wealth Building
from food poverty to resilience and prevention

OX4 FOOD CREW

OX4 Food Crew (OX4FC) is a partnership of nine organisations based in OX4 working with and for people experiencing food poverty, which has been exposed and exacerbated by the pandemic. Founded in April 2020, we quickly responded to local needs by delivering nutritious cooked meals to people experiencing food insecurity in the local area. We are now developing the partnership to move beyond the emergency pandemic-driven response to include services which help build community food resilience. These include free cooking for health and wellbeing courses for parents, 'Pay as you feel' community meals, and incubator support for food social enterprises including Damascus Rose Kitchen and No Vice Ice. As a coalition of organisations, our aim is to work with local communities to co-investigate and design flexible, community-led support and innovations that will help build food resilience in the local area, alongside ongoing emergency food support.

The Swan School Oxford
Improving school food

The Swan School

Family dining enables all students and teachers to share a delicious hot meal together every day. No packed lunches are allowed.

We recreate a 'family' atmosphere. Everyone is encouraged to engage in conversation and take responsibility for different aspects of the service, for example laying the table, serving food, or tidying the table at the end of the meal.

Lunches at The Swan are vegetarian (meat is available at other times) for three main reasons:

- Quality – vegetarian meals allow us to provide better quality for the same price.

- Environment – reducing meat consumption decreases our carbon footprint.

- Community – all our students are able to sit together, regardless of their dietary preferences or religious requirements.

Examples of excellence from Oxfordshire

Cherwell Collective

Stronger communities, reducing waste, alleviating poverty by growing, cooking, learning, and sharing together.

Started during COVID lock-down, Cherwell Collective was a response to food poverty, hardship, and isolation. We have developed our ambitions to empower our community, to increase well-being, to support the vulnerable, and to reduce waste and environmental impact in daily lives. We have over 5,000 users, hundreds of whom are supported weekly.

Our food services include three main groups:

Cherwell Larder: Friends feeding friends - alleviating food poverty, reducing food waste, and a community hub for distributing surplus of all kinds.

Harvest at Home: Food security from the ground up - supporting people to grow at home and in the community. Providing home-growing kits, skills training, support, and access to resources. We have helped over 900 people start growing food for the first time.

Climatarian Kitchen: Eat to save the earth! At our food surplus cafe we enjoy climate-friendly meals together, using surplus and locally grown food. 'Pay what you can' meals have suggested donations according to the carbon footprint of the dish. We also offer freshly made ready meals, meal kits, flexi recipes, shared equipment (via Oxford Party Library), and cooking courses.

cherwell collective
live learn eat grow

Abingdon Community Fridge

Fighting food waste and building community

ABINGDON **COMMUNITY FRIDGE**
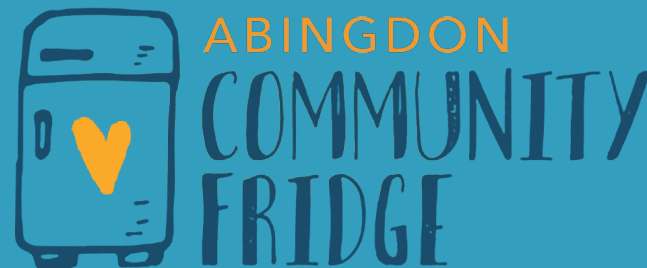
At Abingdon Community Fridge we are focused on reducing food waste by collecting surplus food from local organisations and making this freely available to the whole community. Over 85 tonnes of food has been redistributed since opening in July 2019. Local residents benefit from this access to healthy, nutritious food, with the fridge supporting over 150 visits each week. As a volunteer-led group we are extremely proud of maintaining this free resource and the real sense of community which has grown between the fridge-users, volunteers, and the wider community.

Orange Bakery, Watlington

Embedded in local community, supporting mental health, local producers, employment, and training

orange bakery

We started in our kitchen during lockdown to support mental health and help young people with focus, purpose, and an opportunity for creativity. Initially we baked for ourselves, then our neighbours who were isolating, and then through crowd-funding we were able to fund a shop front on the high street in Watlington.

We bake from the Scout Hut and now employ an apprentice from the local prison. We have learnt so much, from the basics of baking through to running a business. Being embedded in our local community has been vital to this journey - we have benefitted from the generosity of other bakers who offered their time, expertise, and equipment as well as those who crowd-funded us. More formal start-up support from small local enterprise schemes for mission-driven businesses via OSEP's Escalate scheme has been invaluable, particularly the opportunity to connect with peers and networks of like-minded organisations.

Play:Full
A local response to holiday hunger

PLAY: FULL

Play:Full is a response to tackle holiday hunger experienced by many children who rely on Free School Meals during term-time. The evidence suggests that this group of children start the new term several weeks, if not months intellectually behind their more fortunate peers who have enjoyed a more wholesome diet and lots of activity during school holidays.

Play:Full was initiated in Banbury as part of the Brighter Futures project, and has since been trialled in the City and South and Vale. Healthy, nourishing food is embedded alongside enrichment activities and positive food experiences from trying new foods, preparing simple snacks and meals, and enjoying shared meal-times with friends. Sessions are open to all to avoid stigmatisation, but focused on the most deprived wards to target children most in need. The impacts of the programme are clear: children try new foods, learn through enrichment, have fun, and are less isolated. Play:Full helps parents and carers with extra holiday food bills, and connects vulnerable families to a wider network of support.

Examples of excellence from Oxfordshire

Oxford City Farm

Growing food and growing community

Oxford City Farm

At Oxford City Farm we provide valued opportunities for people of all ages and backgrounds to engage with farming and food production, animals, nature, and each other. The food we grow is shared with volunteers and distributed within our local community, enabling us to get fresh produce onto the plates of people who might otherwise have limited access to it.

We work with a range of local organisations to deliver engaging hands-on land- and kitchen-based social and educational opportunities related to food and farming and the environment. Participants include children, vulnerable adults, and people experiencing loneliness and mental health challenges. Not only can participants learn growing and cooking skills in our new on-site teaching kitchen, but also experience an increased sense of well-being and connectedness, greater confidence, team-working, and life skills.

Oxford City Council - Healthy Start Vouchers

Partnership working to increase the uptake of Healthy Start Vouchers in Oxford

HEALTHY START

Healthy Start Vouchers support eligible pregnant women and young children to buy fruit, vegetables, and dairy and are funded centrally via the NHS. In January 2022 in Oxford City, around 240 eligible families were missing out on Healthy Start Vouchers, equivalent to £9,000 per week of unclaimed vouchers.

Through joined-up working across housing, health, and locality teams, the City Council has supported an additional 36 families to access the scheme since the start of 2022. Providing a dedicated contact point within the council to liaise with other teams and provide training, and communications materials has been pivotal to making this change happen.

Sandy Lane Farm

Organic and regenerative agriculture

SANDY LANE FARM

LOCAL. SEASONAL. ORGANIC. EST. 1985.

We are a traditional, mixed, family run farm in the South Oxfordshire countryside, passionate about growing organic veg. The team produces a wide diversity of vegetables in the farm's sandy soil. This is partly to spread the risk that is inherent when you farm without pesticides, partly to keep the soil healthy, and also to champion locally grown veg. Selling vegetables directly to our customers means better value for them and us, and a good variety of produce throughout the year keeps things interesting. The Bennett's commitment to organic growing is both a passion and a mission, and they utilise traditional farming methods - firmly backed by modern science. Biodiversity (above and below ground) is at the heart of organic farming, and our approach is try to keep 'nature in balance' every step of the way. Each year the farm's fields are bordered by beautiful 'beetle banks,' areas of wildflowers and grasses, sown to encourage pollinators and 'nature's pest controllers' to the crops. Early in 2020, the teams also planted nearly 1000 trees on the farm, a mini-agroforestry project which should improve irrigation, provide a habitat for birds and other wildlife, as well as providing valuable aerial cover for the farm's 350 organic egg laying hens.

Salt Cross Garden Village

Ambition to create better food environments in new developments, navigating complex planning challenges.

'a place to grow, a space to breathe'

West Oxfordshire's Salt Cross Garden Village is a landscape-led proposal. It hopes to tackle climate change, is proposing a zero-carbon community, and 25% biodiversity net gain. It hopes to contain 2,200 homes, 50% of which will be affordable within walkable neighbourhoods; a park and ride with 6 minute connection to Oxford City; and utilise the local rail station to Oxford and London.

Salt Cross's edible garden community aims to embed sustainable food systems and maximise food growing opportunities. It will connect people to growing, production, consumption, and contribute to local, fresh food supply.

It proposes: private and community food growing gardens, doorstep allotments, and community orchards; people coming together to cook, learn about, and celebrate changing seasons; careful species selections, hedgerows, woodland edges providing foraging grounds; edible trees and plants along walkways; places for residents to engage with growing food and nature. Planning, delivery, and stewardship challenges are being carefully considered with committed leadership, vision, and ambition. Salt Cross will be an edible garden community that will contribute to Good Food Oxfordshire's sustainable food network, providing healthy, fair, and environmentally sustainable food for all.

We all need to act now to make this vision a reality

Ideas for local councils

- Adopt a whole systems approach to food, ensuring that food is considered within health, climate, and economy policies and programmes

- Embed healthy and sustainable food and healthy weight environments within existing policies, plans, and targets

- Develop a specific food policy that encapsulates key themes and recommendations defined in the strategy

- Champion the development of district level Food Action Plans in partnership with other stakeholders to agree specific council commitments and measure progress against these

- Promote and support community groups and businesses working for a better food system through public procurement and access to resources

- Support vibrant, healthy food communities through access to skills and spaces for growing, cooking, and sharing food

- Lobby national government using local evidence and action

- Appoint food champions at cabinet level as conduits for food issues and action

Ideas for institutions and businesses

- Commit to buying more sustainably-produced local food for catering

- Participate in initiatives to scope and develop short, local supply chain solutions. Contact **mail@gfo.org.uk** to find out more

- Ensure food policies and reporting reflect health and sustainability targets, and link into net zero ambitions

- Participate in the development of Food Action Plans for local areas, agree specific commitments and measure progress against these

- Adopt accreditation and measurement schemes that support food targets

- Engage employees around healthy, sustainable local food. Support campaigns and events. Visit **gfo.org.uk** to find out more

ACT NOW

Ideas for community groups

- Sign the **Oxfordshire Good Food Charter** and join a movement of collective action for a better food system for everyone in Oxfordshire

- Connect with a range of partners in your local food system to work together to solve local food problems like community food services, cooking and growing groups, councils, farms, and food businesses. Together we can do more. Contact **mail@gfo.org.uk** to find out more

- Participate in the development of Food Action Plans for local areas, and agree specific commitments. Measure progress against these

- Join campaigns and events that bring communities together to grow, cook, and share food. Visit **gfo.org.uk** to find out more

Ideas for individuals

- Support local organisations working to tackle food poverty and food waste

- Join local growing schemes. Visit **www.cagoxfordshire.org.uk** and **www.goodtogrowuk.org** to find out more

- Use local sustainable food businesses and markets whenever possible

- Support and volunteer with campaigns and events that promote good food like cooking, nutrition, and growing programmes

- Participate in the develop of Food Action Plans for local areas

- Visit **gfo.org.uk or email mail@gfo.org.uk** to find out more

End of part 1

Divisions Affected -

CABINET
24 May 2022

The Local Area SEND Strategy
Report by Corporate Director of Children's Services

RECOMMENDATION

1. **The Cabinet is RECOMMENDED to approve publication of the Local Area SEND Strategy**

Executive Summary

2. A public consultation on proposed changes to improve outcomes children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) in Oxfordshire ran 10th January to 10th March 2022.

3. The Local Area consists of social care (children's and adult's) health (including CCG), education settings, families and education within the Local Authority.

4. On specialist legal advice, the consultation was a single survey with two distinct, inter-related elements:
   - The Oxfordshire Local Area SEND Strategy 2022-27 – developed collaboratively with and governed by Local Authority Education, Social Care (Children's and Adult), Health, education settings and parent carers representatives
   - Oxfordshire County Council's proposals for system reform for SEND – these proposals relate solely to education

5. With the consultation complete, the two inter-related elements will be uncoupled; this paper accordingly relates solely to the Local Area SEND Strategy.

6. There were 866 consultation responses with 90+% of respondents agreeing with the five strategic objectives:
   - Improving outcomes for children with SEND
   - Developing a continuum of local provision to meet the requirements of children and young people with SEND
   - Good physical and mental health and wellbeing
   - Improving post-16 education, learning, employment and training
   - Positive move into adulthood for young people with SEND

Background

7. A Local Area SEND Strategy was co-drafted over a period of 4 months by a governance group of representatives from Local Authority Education, Social Care (Children's and Adult), Health, Education Setting and Parent/Carers.

8. Version 15 of the Local Area SEND Strategy was agreed by the governance group and an EasyRead version created for consultation.

9. Public consultation ran from 10 January to 10 March 2022.

10. In order to widely publicise the consultation, a range of online and offline communications channels (including a dedicated SEND consultation website, publicity emails to key stakeholders, Council newsletters and social media and a media release) with further targeted communication at four weeks and two weeks to go to ensure awareness among under-represented groups.

11. A series of five online roadshows were planned, one of which was specifically for children and young people. In response to demand, an additional two online roadshows were held (one for adults, one for children and young people). Over 200 people attended the seven independently chaired events.

12. Post consultation thematic analysis indicated overwhelming (90+%) support for the five strategic objectives set out in the draft document. No amendments were suggested to the five strategic objectives and no additional objectives were proposed.

13. Commonly occurring responses to the consultation included:
    - "Difficult to comment without detail/implementation plans"
    - "This will need to be adequately funded"
    - "There will need to be training for staff"

14. The Local Area SEND Strategy did not include details of implementation by design. Implementation plans will be developed aligning with the agreed strategic objectives; these will be, by necessity, multi-agency, dual agency and single agency.

15. The implementation plans will need to be delivered within a sustainable financial envelope, including taking into account the pressures on the High Needs Block.

16. A comprehensive programme of continuous professional development will be required across education, health and social care.

17. The intention is for the Local Area SEND Strategy to be signed off via the individual governance arrangements of the strategic partners for publication by the end of May 2022.

Risk Management

18.   The Local Area SEND Strategy is subject to monitoring by the DfE/NHS England as part of the local area's Written Statement of Action. It is the only outstanding action on the Accelerated Progress Plan. The next Monitoring Visit is on 6 June 2022.

19.   The Local Area SEND Strategy is a high level, overarching document that was given strong support via the public consultation (90+% of responses were Strongly Agree/Tend to Agree). The key risk is not delivering against the agreed strategic objectives.

Financial Implications

20.   The adoption of the Strategy is inextricably linked to the long term financial position of the SEND budget funded by the High Needs block of the Dedicated School Grant. The immediate financial position for High Needs is a £15m to £20m deficit within 2022-23 and this continues in future years.

21.   There is no immediate financial impact from the Strategy but there will be financial implications as each element of the Strategy is implemented. Part of that implementation will be the development of a business plan. Each business plan will need to set out the financial impact. Any additional financial requirements will be managed through the annual budget setting process but investment decisions will need to support the objective of bringing the High Needs budget back into balance.

22.   Comments checked by: Sarah Fogden, Finance Business Partner
Sarah.Fogden@Oxfordshire.gov.uk

Legal Implications

23.   Legal Services provided support and advice prior to the consultation, during the period that the consultation was live and subsequently. In addition, specialist legal advice was sought and provided through the consultation process, from initial development through to consideration of any potential issues post consultation

24.   The Equality Act confers an overarching duty on public bodies not to discriminate against individuals with protected characteristics. A change in procedure and policies such as the one which is being proposed is susceptible to challenges under this legislation and therefore it is necessary for the local authority and its partner agencies to ensure that they have carried out the necessary Equality Impact Assessment giving consideration to all of the relevant factors in reaching its decision about the proposed policy change.

25.   Legitimate expectation - a change in policy or introducing a new policy could give rise to a legitimate expectation. The wording of the policies and procedures

should be carefully prepared and whilst it should be clear and unequivocal such wording needs to be honourable so that the local authority and its partner agencies deliver what the policy and procedures contain otherwise this would give rise to a legal challenge for breach of a legitimate expectation.

26.   Fettering of discretion and exercise of power is another factor which should be taken into consideration in conjunction with the relevant and relatable legislation/s to the issues involved in the policy and procedural changes. Where a duty is conferred on the public bodies by any relevant legislation the policy and procedure should endorse that and be written, followed and delivered in the spirit of that. The policy cannot depart from the statutory provision which governs any specific rule. Where a duty is not expressly stated in legislation the policy and procedure should be applied under the doctrines of natural justice ensuring that it is fair, reasonable, proportionate and rational. [It is the author's responsibility to ensure that any potential legal implications of new proposals have been explored, in consultation with the Head of Legal as appropriate. If assessment highlights legal issues which should be taken into account by the decision maker, these need to be spelt out in the report.]

Comments checked by: Sukdave Ghuman, Head of Legal Services
sukdave.ghuman@oxfordshire.gov.uk

Equality & Inclusion Implications

27.   An Equality and Climate Impact Assessment (ECIA) has been prepared for the Local Area SEND Strategy.

Sustainability Implications

28.   As above, an ECIA has been prepared for the Local Area SEND Strategy.

Consultations

29.   Public consultation on the Local Area SEND Strategy was open from 10th January to 10th March 2022.

30.   There were 866 responses to the consultation, 37% of which were from parent carers.

31.   Each of the five strategic objectives received over 90+% support. No amendments to these objectives were suggested not additional objectives proposed.

32.   The minor amendments to the draft Local Area SEND Strategy are annexed to this paper.

33.   A detailed report of the consultation responses is being drafted with the expectation that it will be published in June 2022 to sit alongside the Local Area SEND Strategy.

Kevin Gordon, Corporate Director of Children's Services

Annex: Draft Local Area SEND Strategy
                                Amendments to Local Area SEND Strategy Following Consultation

Contact Officer: Hayley Good, Deputy Director of Children's Services/ Education, 07551 680562,
                                Hayley.Good@Oxfordshire.gov.uk

May 2022

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Oxfordshire Local Area Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND)
Draft Strategy 2022-2027

Have your say
10 January to 10 March 2022

Rich and fulfilling lives at the heart of their communities.

NHS Oxfordshire
Clinical Commissioning Group

Oxford Health NHS
NHS Foundation Trust

OXFORDSHIRE
COUNTY COUNCIL

Foreword

Children and young people are at the heart of everything we do. We are committed to every child having the very best start in life. This includes opportunities for them to realise their dreams and achieve their potential.

We want to constantly improve. We believe the current outcomes for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) in Oxfordshire can be made even better.

Changes are required to achieve these improvements.

To achieve a shared ambition that Oxfordshire will be a place where all children are healthy, happy, and achieving their potential, organisations that work with children and young people have co-produced a draft strategy for SEND.

This sets out how Oxfordshire will develop high quality services across education, health and social care to support children and young people with SEND and their families.

This draft strategy has been developed for consultation. We want to hear what you think.

Alongside consultation on the SEND Strategy, Oxfordshire County Council is consulting on the best use of the funding available to the council for SEND through the High Needs Block.

Find out more about both consultations at letstalk.oxfordshire.gov.uk/SEND-2022

How to get involved

There are several ways in which you can have your say on our proposed approach.

- **Visit letstalk.oxfordshire.gov.uk/SEND-2022 for information and to complete the online survey.**

- **Roadshows will be held online during the consultation, but if national and local guidelines relating to COVID-19 allow, in-person events may be considered. At these sessions, senior leaders will introduce the two SEND consultations, explain the proposals and answer any questions that you may have.**

- **Visit letstalk.oxfordshire.gov.uk/SEND-2022 for dates and times, and to book a space.**

- **We are asking partners to send out information to parent carers encouraging them to get involved.**

If you need an Easy Read version, or other alternative formats, or you wish to speak to someone, please email: **consultations@oxfordshire.gov.uk** or call **01865 792422**

Contents

1) Underpinning Principles

Welcome to Oxfordshire's Draft Local Area SEND Strategy.

Oxfordshire's ambition is for those with SEND to have rich and fulfilling lives at the heart of their communities.

This strategy sets out how Oxfordshire will work towards that ambition by developing high quality services across education, health and social care to support children and young people with SEND and their families. This is to ensure that they can access high quality services across education, health and social care.

To do this, we have had to rethink the ways in which we work. This strategy reflects the need to build strong partnerships using the principles of co-design and co-responsibility, including our plan for securing this long-term change and how we will know it is working.

This strategy will be reviewed annually so that we can be sure that it is addressing current needs, and identifying where the focus should be.

2) Easy Read version

The intention is to embed an Easy Read version within this document when it is finalised. The Easy Read version of this draft document can be found <u>here</u>

Rich and fulfilling lives at the heart of their communities

3) Executive Summary

Oxfordshire's strategy outlines the vision and key priorities for improving the outcomes achieved and lived experiences of children and young people aged 0-25 with SEND from 2022 to 2027.

Our ambition is for all children and young people with SEND to have the right support and opportunities at the right time so that they go on to live rich and fulfilling lives at the heart of their communities.

To achieve that ambition, we will publish detailed and specific implementation plans that sit beneath this strategy and that focus on taking actions to reduce inequalities.

Our four priority areas:

Develop a continuum of local high-quality provision and enable all services to be inclusive and deliver excellent outcomes for children with SEND, including building on existing good practice

Enable children and young people with SEND to access opportunities that are important to them and for them

To provide timely and equitable access to high quality services before, during and beyond statutory school age including education, health and social care

To ensure that there is seamless and effective transition at all points for young people with SEND to access opportunities that are important to them and for them

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4) Introduction

By placing children and families at the heart of our thinking and our actions, this strategy sets out how we will work collaboratively to ensure the Oxfordshire Local Area acts within both the spirit and the letter of the 2014 Children and Families Act.

The Local Area receives funding from government to meet the needs of children and young people with SEND. Our collective view is that this funding is insufficient to meet the requirements of the Local Area. That said, the Local Area is responsible for using the available funding wisely and effectively. As such, some hard choices have to be made about what services/provision can be supported, and these choices will be made in ways that are transparent, consistent and fair.

Our strategy will be guided and informed by the views of families, children and young people. Parents, carers, children and young people will also be central to developing and reviewing our strategy and measuring its success.

Achieving the aims of this strategy will take collective effort and responsibility from statutory and non-statutory services (including the private and third sector) working in close partnership with families, children and young people to reflect their views and ideas.

Critical to the development of this strategy will be ensuring that co-responsibility across agencies is built into the implementation process leading to co-production with all stakeholders, including families. This is so that the challenges to service delivery for Education, Health and Care are fully reflected, and that there is a joint strategic approach to overcoming them.

The success of this strategy will be defined by whether Oxfordshire will be a place where children and young people with SEND have every opportunity to:

- **Learn and achieve as a result of inclusive, effective, timely and joined-up support from a range of services**
- **Be educated in the most effective setting as close to their home as possible**
- **Belong and feel safe within a community, taking into account their aspirations, choices and individual requirements**
- **Find meaning and purpose within a community, including paid employment that meets their individual aspirations and skills**

5) Context - Setting the Scene in Oxfordshire

The following diagrams provide some high-level information about children and young people in Oxfordshire with SEND. Further detailed sources of available data can be found in the Appendices to this document.

Oxfordshire SEND in numbers

6,965 Aged 0-25 claiming disability benefits[1]

4,049 Aged 0-24 on Oxfordshire disability register[3]

4,017 Aged 0-25 with EHCP supported by Oxfordshire County Council[2]

12,938 Pupils at Oxfordshire schools with SEN support[2]

2,799 Pupils at Oxfordshire schools with EHCPs[2]

379 Children in need with EHCP[3]

129 Children we care for with EHCP[3]

40 Child protection with EHCP[3]

13 Young people in Youth Justice System with SEND[4]

EHCPs by age

Age group	Count
Age 20-25	300
Age 16-19	857
Age 11-15	1,430
Age 5-10	1,300
Under 5	130

EHCP and SEN support pupils by need

Need	Count
Moderate learning difficulty	3,895
Specific LD	1,945
Severe LD	437
Profound and multiple LD	114
Speech, Language and Communications	2,981
Autistic Spectrum Disorder	1,938
Hearing impairment	249
Visual impairment	80
Physical disability	357
Multi sensory impairment	23
Social, emotional & mental health	2,980
SEN support but no type	277
Other	288

EHCP = Education, Health and Care plan
SEND = Special Educational Needs and Disabilities

[1] DWP February 2020, DLA and PIP
[2] DfE SEN2 and school census January 2020 (all ages)
[3] Oxfordshire County Council March 2020
[4] Oxfordshire County Council August 2020

GROUPS: Vulnerable groups

As of March 2020, Children and Young People with an Education, Health and Care Plan in Oxfordshire made up:

- **379** EHCPs of 1,430 children with a Children in Need plan (27%)
- **40** EHCPs of 530 children with a Child Protection plan (8%)
- **129** EHCPs of 788 Children we care for (16%)
- **13** EHCPs of 92 young people in the youth justice system (14%)

OUTCOMES: Attainment and progress of pupils with SEN support

- Pupils with Special Educational Needs in Oxfordshire do less well than nationally at each stage from Early Years to GCSE

- This is a very different picture to attainment by the cohort of pupils without SEN, where Oxfordshire pupils do better than average at each stage

2018/19	SEN support Oxfordshire	SEN Support England	No SEN Oxfordshire	No SEN England
Early years: % good level of development	25	29	78	77
Key Stage 2: % expected level in reading/ writing/ maths	22.2	25.4	75.5	74.9
Key Stage 2: progress in reading	-1.71	-1.01	0.45	0.35
Key Stage 4: average attainment 8 score	29.3	32.6	51.4	50.1
Key Stage 4: average progress 8 score	-0.56	-0.43	0.22	0.08

Access to work by Learning Disabled adults

Percent of adults with Learning Disability in paid employment

Adults with an Learning Disability in paid employment 2018/19
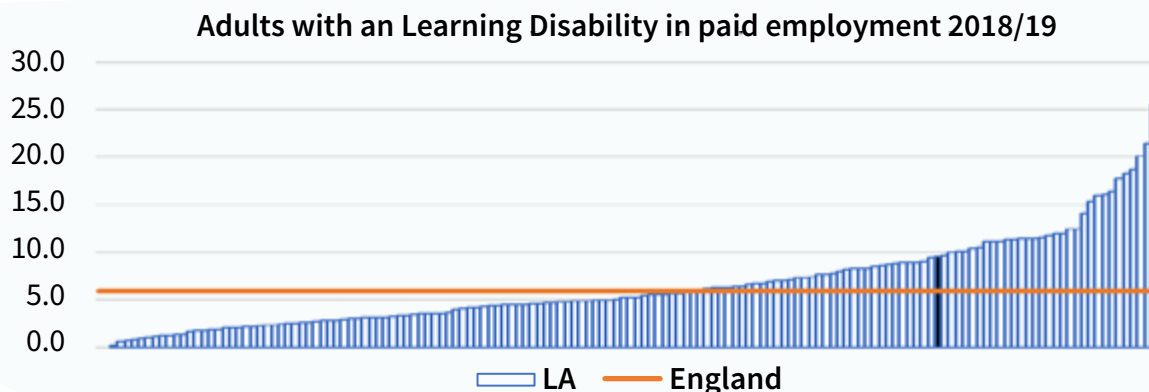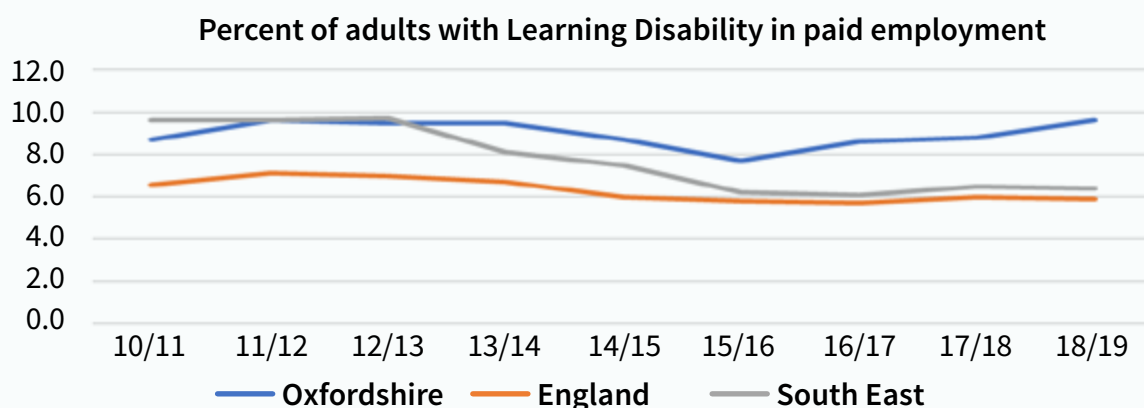
People with learning disabilities have a lower than average life expectancy/higher mortality.

The strategy will need to be informed by further analysis of life outcome data to ensure that there is a detailed understanding of the circumstances people with disabilities are living in within Oxfordshire.

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6) Reasons to Change

There are compelling reasons why the Local Area needs to improve SEND services, and therefore outcomes for children and young people with SEND. These reasons include:

- **The need for clarity about what support is available for children and young people with SEND in all mainstream schools and settings from 0-25**

- **A lack of understanding around parental confidence in the support for children with SEND**

- **Insufficient understanding around children and young people with special educational needs who are not consistently accessing full time education, including children with EHC Plans without a school place**

- **Insufficient capacity within local specialist education provision, leading to the use of independent non-maintained special schools**

Stakeholders have clearly told us about the lack of trust and confidence families have in the ability and willingness of the Local Area to consistently deliver what has been promised.

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7) Our Vision

We are ambitious for all children and young people with SEND. This vision is underpinned by our strategic principles:

- **That the perspective of families will inform the development of plans, services and policies**

- **Protecting and promoting the human rights of children and young people with SEND, ensuring that they are treated as individuals**

- **Promoting authentic inclusive behaviours in order to ensure high quality and impactful services for all**

- **Effective early identification, help and provision available across the Local Area**

- **Building meaningful and purposeful opportunities for a rich and fulfilling adulthood**

- **Ensuring that systems are transparent and fair**

By working together we will consistently secure good outcomes for children and young people aged 0-25 with SEND, and their families.

The implementation of our vision will be underpinned by the key principles of:

- **Effective communication**

- **Building trust and confidence though dignity, respect and understanding**

- **Working in partnership**

- **Maximising the impact of available resources**

Strategic Objective 1 - Improving outcomes for children with SEND

We are committed to the Local Area effectively discharging their duties under the Children and Families Act. We want the Local Area to be equipped to effectively secure high quality outcomes for children with SEND. High quality services that are accessed in a timely manner and at the earliest opportunity have a significant impact on outcomes for children, and lay the foundations for better life chances.

The following priorities have been identified:

- **Timely identification and assessment across the Local Area that leads to earlier intervention**
- **Development of meaningfully joined-up services and approaches**
- **Improved outcomes for children with SEND**
- **Increased expertise, competence and confidence of staff working to meet the needs of children with SEND**

Strategic Objective 2 - Developing a continuum of local provision to meet the requirements of children and young people with SEND

There is a range of provision for children with SEND in Oxfordshire. It is essential that we develop more local provision so that more children have their holistic needs met within their own communities.

The following priorities have been identified:

- **Identify any gaps in the continuum of provision**
- **Improve multi-agency early intervention for children and young people with a range of needs**
- **Develop more local provision that can effectively meet the range of identified needs and demand**

Strategic Objective 3 - Good physical and mental health and wellbeing

We want healthy, happy children and young people who enjoy life. We will work in partnership with children and young people and their families to improve access to both the universal and specialised services they need.

The following priorities have been identified:

- **To empower children and young people with SEND and their families to share their lived experiences in order to better understand and support their health and wellbeing**
- **To provide meaningful, high quality support that meets the holistic needs of the whole family**
- **To ensure that all children and young people with SEND can access seamless, joined-up services at the right time and in the right place**

Strategic Objective 4 - Improving post-16 education, learning, employment and training

All young people will have access to high quality provision in education, training, work experience, apprenticeships and study programmes that support them into meaningful, paid employment and provide them with skills for independent or supported living.

The following priorities have been identified:

- **Develop the range and choice of local post-16 SEND provision**
- **Develop a comprehensive range of aspirational pathways to sustainable, paid employment**
- **Improve the quality and accessibility of information about post-16 options for young people with SEND, and develop training and guidance for families, providers and employers**
- **Develop systems for collecting and monitoring outcomes data from post-16 education providers**

Strategic Objective 5 - Positive move into adulthood for young people with SEND

All young people with SEND and their families should have a positive experience of moving into adulthood. We want young people with SEND to develop the skills, knowledge and confidence to have choice and control over their adult lives.

The following priorities have been identified:

- **Information, advice and guidance available at key transition points so young people and families have the information they need to plan as early as possible**

- **Earlier identification of young people with SEND with timely assessments and support planning**

- **Improved partnership working with young people and families, Children's and Adults Social Care, health, schools and colleges focusing on young people's strengths and aspirations**

- **Improved social care experience for young people and families**

- **Better outcomes for young people with SEND in adulthood**

- **More young people with SEND living closer to home**

8) What do we need to make this happen?

To ensure that we collectively deliver our vision, SEND will be a golden thread weaving through all provider services, with a clear and shared commitment to it from senior leaders.

Budgets will be aligned to our strategic priorities with team plans, individual performance and development targets consistent with the strategic objectives.

Carefully developed implementation plans will be co-produced in partnership with families and service providers. These should be reviewed regularly to ensure that the necessary pace of change is maintained, and action taken when key improvement markers are not met.

Professionals will require a comprehensive, holistic training offer to increase competence, confidence and effectively share good practice.

This will be overseen by joint strategic governance, accountability and challenge through the Oxfordshire SEND Strategic Partnership Board and the Oxfordshire Health and Wellbeing Board.

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(13)

9) What does success look like?

We will know we are successful when:

- Children, young people and their families tell us that the services provided are meeting their needs

- Children and young people's needs are identified early, and partners communicate and coordinate services well, working together to meet these needs

- Early preventative services help parents to provide appropriate physical and emotional care to their children

- Families can access the right level of support when it is needed

- Reviews are thorough, and support providers to enable improvements in the outcomes for the child or young person

- Children and young people with SEND are fully involved in all aspects of education, and feel part of their community

- Children's needs are met in mainstream settings as appropriate, and when more specialist help is needed we are almost always able to provide this in Oxfordshire

- Services use effective interventions so children and young people with SEND make evidenced progress towards their outcomes

- There are well-coordinated transition for children and young people at all key points, through to adulthood and beyond

- All agencies have high aspirations for all children and young people with SEND and we are working effectively together to support them through key transitions to be independent and well-prepared for adult life

- Children and young people and their families are positive about their experiences of the SEND system in Oxfordshire

- Professionals are confident about meeting the needs of children with a broad range of SEND working closely with their parents

- Children and young people with SEND and their families are partners in designing and evaluating services

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10) Governance, Monitoring and Review

SEND is a golden thread weaving through everything we do as a Local Area. The delivery of our Local Area strategy is a partnership responsibility which needs to be collectively owned by all stakeholders working with children, young people and families. Strong governance, accountability and challenge will be provided through the Oxfordshire SEND Strategic Partnership Board and the Oxfordshire Health and Wellbeing Board.

The SEND Strategic Partnership Board meets regularly and reports to the Council Executive. Partners grouped under thematic priorities will be the delivery vehicle for implementation of the strategy.

Appendices

1) The legal requirements underpinning the Local Area SEND Strategy.

In relation to special educational needs and disabilities, statutory services are currently bound by three pieces of legislation and the associated statutory guidance:

(i)   The Children and Families Act 2014, The Carers Act 2014 and the Equality Act 2010.

The Carers Act mirrors the Children and Families Act in relation to SEND as this legislation applies to young people with SEND from the age of 18, and wholly so from the age of 25. The Children and Families Act 2014 (Part 3 relates to SEN) and the SEND Code of Practice set out the following:

- **The strategic planning duties apply to all disabled children and young people and those with SEN;**

- **The individual duties generally apply to children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities. Individual duties related to children and young people with a disability are also contained in the Equality Act 2010.**

(ii)   The Equality Act 2010 brought together a range of existing equality duties and requirements within one piece of legislation. The Act introduced a single Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) or 'general duty'. This applies to public bodies, including maintained schools and academies, free schools etc. It covers all protected characteristics - race, disability, sex, age, religion or belief, sexual orientation, pregnancy and maternity, and gender reassignment. This combined equality duty came into effect in April 2011.

The duty has three main parts. In carrying out their functions, public bodies (including educational settings) are required to have due regard to the need to:

- **Eliminate discrimination and other conduct that is prohibited by the Act**

- **Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it**

- **Foster good relations across all characteristics between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.**

Early years providers, schools/academies, FE colleges, sixth form colleges, 16-19 academies and independent special schools approved under Section 41 of the Children and Families Act 2014 all have duties under the Equality Act 2010.

All publicly funded early years providers must promote equality of opportunity for disabled children. Schools, academies and colleges have wider duties to prevent discrimination, to promote equality of opportunity and to foster good relations.

Local authorities are required to put in place an Accessibility Strategy as specified in Schedule 10 of the Act: Accessibility for Disabled Pupils.

All schools/academies are required to put in place an Accessibility Plan, covering the same responsibilities (see Schedule 10). They are also responsible for the provision of auxiliary aids and services to individual pupils. All schools/academies must make reasonable adjustments to meet the individual needs of children and young people with SEND; this will address the needs of the majority. More specific local guidance about schools' responsibilities is available on the local Offer website.

Schedule 10 says: An accessibility strategy is a strategy for, over a prescribed period:

1)   Increasing the extent to which disabled pupils can participate in the school curriculum;

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(16)

2) Improving the physical environment of the schools for the purpose of increasing the extent to which disabled pupils are able to take advantage of education and benefits, facilities or services provided or offered by the schools;

3) Improving the delivery to disabled pupils of information which is readily accessible to pupils who are not disabled.

The delivery of information in 3) must be:

- **Within a reasonable time**

- **In ways which are determined after taking account of the pupils' disabilities and any preferences expressed by them or their parents**

2) How the Local Area SEND Strategy was developed

The review of SEND was overseen by the Oxfordshire SEND Performance Board, a multi-agency partnership, with parents and carers at its core and comprising stakeholders across education, health, public health, social care, voluntary and community sector partners, and the Oxfordshire Lead Member and Executive Portfolio Holder for Children, Education and Young People. Our review comprised:

Phase 1: Data and evidence gathering and analysis to answer:

- **Is our pattern of provision for children and young people with SEND suitable to meet changing needs?**

- **Do parents and young people find it attractive?**

- **Will it be affordable within future financial allocations?**

We gathered and analysed:

- **Data on the range of SEN in the area, recent trends and likely changes in the future**

- **Evidence on how effectively the current pattern of special educational provision meets needs in the area**

- **Evidence on how effectively the current pattern of special educational provision prepares children and young people for adult life**

- **The range of special education needs which would generally be met by mainstream providers**

- **The range of SEN and disabilities which would generally be met by specialist providers**

- **The range of SEN and disabilities which would be generally met by highly specialised providers**

A core element was to gather evidence about what works well across the current system, areas for improvement, and SEND provision mapping for the future across the whole life cycle from birth through to young adulthood.

Phase 2: Analysis and shaping of emerging themes

Our analysis identified a number of common issues, falling into five over-arching strategic themes. These themes were agreed by the SEND Performance Board as the five strategic themes needed to strengthen and improve current arrangements for SEND across Oxfordshire and the basis for the SEND Strategy:

- **Improving inclusion and education outcomes for children with SEND in Early Years settings and mainstream schools**

- **Developing a continuum of local provision to meet the needs of children with SEND**

- **Promoting good physical and mental health and wellbeing**

- **Improving post-16 education, learning, employment and training**

- **Facilitating positive transitions for young people with SEND to enable them to prepare for adulthood**

Parents and carers were involved in all strategic group discussions. Building on this work, through a series of visioning events a joint vision statement was developed.

Phase 3: Public Consultation

The Strategic SEND Performance Board has given agreement for the vision and priorities to be consulted on more widely through a public consultation exercise to run from January to March 2022. This will involve an online survey alongside a series of public engagement events, to seek views from a wide range of key stakeholders and to enable people to share their thoughts and ideas to help shape the final version of the document.

3) Data Sources

School Census

The School Census is collected every January and covers statutory school-aged children. Further information can be found on the government website through the following link: https://www.gov.uk/guidance/school-census

SEN2 Survey

The SEN2 survey takes place every January and covers those individuals for whom the Local Authority maintains an EHCP. Further information can be found on the government website through this link: https://www.gov.uk/guidance/special-educational-needs-survey

Oxfordshire County Council population forecasts

Office for National Statistics population estimates and projections

DWP StatXplore

Oxfordshire Joint Strategic Needs Assessment

4) Governance Structure
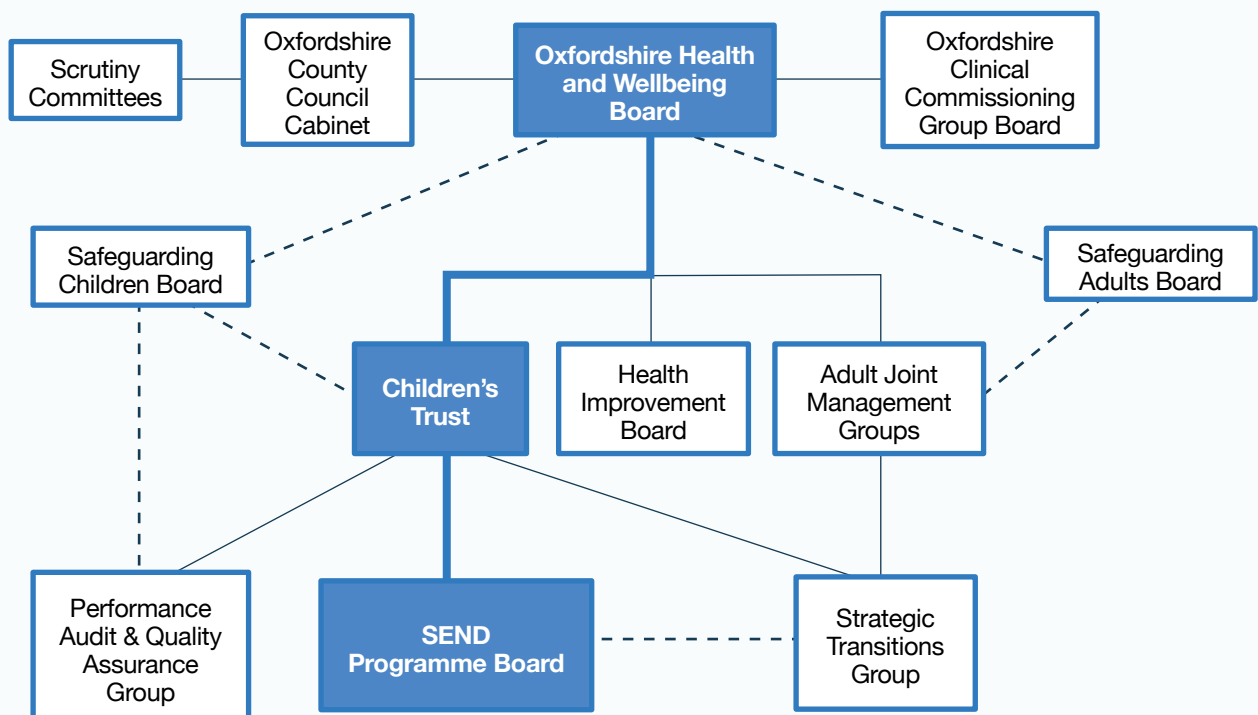
5) Glossary

Age Weighted Pupil Unit (AWPU)
The AWPU is the funding a maintained mainstream school receives for every pupil on roll. The AWPU amount varies by Key Stage.

Alternative Provision (AP)
Alternative provision is something a pupil participates in as part of their regular timetable away from the site of the school where they are enrolled.

Annual Review
Each Education Health and Care Plan must be formally reviewed at least every 12 months.

Children and Families Act
The Children and Families Act 2014 sets out the key SEND legislation.

Compulsory School Age
A child is of compulsory school age from the beginning of the term following their 5th birthday until the last Friday of June in the year in which they become 16, provided that their 16th birthday falls before the start of the next school year.

CYP
Children and young people. The Children and Families Act 2014 gives significant new rights directly to young people once they reach the end of compulsory school age (the end of the academic year in which they turn 16).

When a young person reaches the end of compulsory school age, local authorities and other agencies should normally engage directly with the young person rather than their parent, ensuring that as part of the planning process they identify the relevant people who should be involved, and how to involve them. A person is no longer of compulsory school age after the last day of the summer term during the year in which they become 16.

This distinction is important because once a child becomes a young person they are entitled to take decisions in relation to the Act on their own behalf, rather than have their parents take the decisions for them. This is subject to a young person 'having capacity' to take a decision under the Mental Capacity Act 2005.

Education Heath and Care Needs Assessment (EHCNA)
An assessment carried out by the Local Authority that determines whether a child or young person needs an EHC Plan.

Education Health and Care plan (EHC Plan)
An EHC plan describes the special educational needs that a child or young person has and the help that they will be given to meet them. It also includes the health and care provision that is needed. It is a legal document written by the Local Authority and is used for children and young people who have high support needs.

The Graduated Approach
Schools use the graduated approach of **Assess -> Plan -> Do -> Review** to remove barriers to learning and put effective special educational provision in place.

High Needs Block
The High Needs Block is used to fund specialist placements and top up funding for children and young people with an EHC Plan.

Independent and Non-maintained Special Schools
Independent schools are usually privately run for profit. Non-maintained schools are usually managed by charitable organisations and are not profit-making. Neither is maintained/overseen by Local Authorities.

Information, Advice and Support Service (IASS or SENDIAS)
SENDIAS Services provides impartial advice on the special educational needs system to help children and their parents, and young people, to play an active and informed role in their education and care. Although funded by Local Authorities, SENDIAS Services is run at arm's length from the Local Authority.

Key Stage

There are 5 key stages of education:

Key Stage	National Curriculum Year	Age
KS1	1 and 2	5 – 7
KS2	3 to 6	7 – 11
KS3	7 to 9	11 – 14
KS4	10 and 11	14 – 16
KS5	12 and 13	16 – 18

Local Authority

Local authorities are administrative offices that provide services within their local areas. There are 152 across England that have statutory SEND responsibilities.

Local Offer

The Local Offer is published by the Local Authority to give children and young people with special educational needs or disabilities and their families information about what education, health and care provision is available in their local area. It also gives information about training, employment and independent living for young people with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

Mainstream Schools

Schools that provide education for all children

OCC

Oxfordshire County Council

OCCG

Oxfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group

Outcome

An outcome is a benefit or difference made to an individual as a result of an intervention.

Non-Statutory Services

Non-statutory public services are not required by law.

Parent Carer Forum

The Parent Carer Forum is a representative local group of parents and carers of disabled children who work with local authorities, education, health and other providers to make sure the services they plan and deliver meet the needs of disabled children and families.

Pupil Premium

Publicly-funded schools in England get extra funding from the government to help them improve the attainment of their disadvantaged pupils.

Pupil Referral Unit (PRU)

PRUs teach children who aren't able to attend school and may not otherwise receive suitable education. This could be because they have a short- or long-term illness, have been excluded, or are a new starter waiting for a mainstream school place.

Reasonable Adjustments

Under the Equality Act 2010 public sector organisations have to make changes in their approach or provision to ensure that services are accessible to disabled people as well as to everybody else.

Resource Base

Resource Bases cater for pupils with EHC Plans who require a specialist environment within a mainstream school to support their access to the curriculum and activities offered by the school. A Resource Base usually has a specialist focus such as hearing impairment or Autism Spectrum Disorder.

Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)

Children have special educational needs if they have a learning difficulty which calls for special educational provision to be made for them.

Children of compulsory school age or a young person have a learning difficulty or disability if they:

• **Have a significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of children of the same age or**

• **Have a disability which prevents or hinders them from making use of educational facilities of any kind generally provided for**

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children of the same age in mainstream schools or mainstream post-16 institutions within the Local Education Authority area

- **Are under compulsory school age and fall within the definition at a) or b) above or would so do if special educational provision were not made for them.**

For children aged two or over, special educational provision means educational or training provision that is additional to or different from that made generally for other children or young people of the same age by mainstream schools, maintained nursery schools, mainstream post-16 institutions or by relevant early years providers.

For a child under two years of age, special educational provision means educational provision of any kind.

SEND Code of Practice
The statutory guidance arising from the Children and Families Act 2014. A version for parents can be found here

SENDIASS
Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Information Advice and Support Service or SENDIASS provides free impartial and confidential information, advice and support about education, health and social care for children, young people and their parents on matters relating to special educational needs and disability.

Special Educational Provision
Special educational provision means any educational or training provision that is additional to, or different from, that made generally for other children or young people of the same age.

Special School
A school which specifically caters for children with SEND. To attend a special school, the child must have an EHC Plan.

State School
All children in England aged 5 to 16 are entitled to a free place at a state school. State schools receive funding through the Local Authority or directly from the government, and include community schools (sometimes called Local Authority maintained schools), foundation schools and voluntary schools, academies and free schools, and grammar schools. There are both mainstream and special state schools.

Statutory guidance
Statutory guidance sets out what schools and local authorities must do to comply with the law.

Statutory Services
Statutory public services are required by the law and there are legislations that government sets for them to be in place.

Transition Planning
Planning for moves between phases of education or preparation for adult life.

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Amendments to Local Area SEND Strategy Following Consultation

This document to be read alongside 'SEND draft strategy 2022-2027'

Page Number	Amendment
Header	Remove 'draft'
1	Remove 'draft' and the 'have your say' balloon
2	Remove all text and replace with "Foreword This strategy is for Oxfordshire children and young people aged 0 – 25 years who have Special Educational Needs or/and Disability (SEND), their families and the professionals who work together with them. This document sits alongside our Health and Wellbeing Strategy, which in turn is informed by our Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA). It was produced by the SEND Strategy Development Group, with representatives from Oxfordshire County Council (education and social care), NHS Oxfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group, education settings and Oxfordshire Parent Carers Forum. This strategy is set within the national context and our statutory requirement to meet the needs of children and young people with SEND under the requirements of the Children and Families Act 2014. It is also informed by our local context, which sees rising numbers of children who have a range of complex needs and the requirement to provide high quality, ambitious and responsive services within the national funding provided. We consulted on the draft strategy from 10th January to 10th March 2022 with published materials, Easy Read versions and some adapted materials prepared by sixth form students at one of our Oxfordshire special schools. The consultation focused on the five strategic objectives set out in the draft: • Improving outcomes for children with SEND • Developing a continuum of local provision to meet the requirements of children and young people with SEND • Good physical and mental health and wellbeing • Improving post-16 education, learning, employment and training • Positive move into adulthood for young people with SEND During the consultation period, seven independently chaired roadshows were held, two of which were adapted specifically for children and young people. Given the restrictions resulting from the pandemic, the events were held online with over 200 people attending. There were 866 responses to the consultation with over 90% support from parents and professionals for the new SEND Strategy objectives, resulting in no changes proposed to the five strategic objectives. We recognise that we did not explicitly state within the Strategy that co-production is at the heart of everything we do and central to moving forward with the implementation of this strategy. As a result, the Strategy has been amended to include reference to co-production.

| | The local area recognises that it still has work to do to ensure that children, young people and their families have confidence in the robustness of proposals to implement and embed positive change. This will best be achieved with full involvement of children, young people and their families/carers.

Feedback confirmed the objectives as a positive framework for improving SEND provision and outcomes for children. There was significant interest in the implementation plans. Other themes included lack of resources and the need for staff training. These issues will inform the implementation plans.

Implementation plans will take into account parental feedback, will be developed in co-production, and remain consistent with the strategic objectives. In addition, impact measures for the Local Area SEND Strategy are in development in order to help us to monitor our progress.

This is our shared Local Area SEND Strategy and it will require meaningful commitment from commissioners and service providers to work co-productively and in equal partnership with families, children and young people. We are committed to building those partnerships and ensuring that Oxfordshire becomes a beacon of SEND success." |
|---|---|
| 4 | • Remove 'draft'
• Replace 'co-design and co-responsibility' with 'co-production'
• Insert the following between paragraph ending "….we will know it is working" and paragraph starting "This strategy will be reviewed annually so that we…"
"When we use co-production, we involve all the relevant people in the design, delivery and evaluation of services and in decisions that affect them. This gives people control over their own lives and can provide the community with a sense of collective ownership. It helps people thrive and feel a sense of place and belonging and ultimately leads to better lives for everyone."
• Insert EasyRead version to replace text |

Divisions Affected - All

CABINET

24 May 2022

Report on outcome of public consultation on Oxfordshire County Council Libraries and Heritage Strategy 2022 - 2027

Report of Corporate Director, Customers,

Organisational Development and Resources

RECOMMENDATION

1.   **The Cabinet is RECOMMENDED to**

   a)   Note the outcome of the public consultation on the Libraries and Heritage Strategy

   b)   Delegate the responsibility for the adoption and implementation of the strategy to the Portfolio Holder for Community Services and Safety and the Corporate Director for Customer, Organisational Development and Resources and the project team.

   c)   Agree that an annual review of the actions to deliver the strategy is reported to Cabinet and the Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Executive Summary

2.   A draft Libraries and Heritage Strategy: 2022 - 2027 was approved by Cabinet on 21st December 2021 subject to public consultation.   This report details the consultation approach and sets out the key themes arising from the consultation.

3.   The 191 consultation responses expressed strong support for the strategy, vision and all the priorities for action. In addition, significant support was recorded for the council's ambition as expressed in the vision and key priorities highlighted below.

   - 87% agree with the council's vision
   - 97% agree with our priority to increase libraries and heritage role in fostering literacy and a love of reading
   - 99% agree with our priority to support children and young people's learning and parents support for their learning
   - 87% agree with our priority to increase the impact of libraries and heritage on health, well-being and active citizenship

- 89% agree with our priority to reduce the carbon impact of our buildings and services
- 92% agree with our priority work with communities to design services which reach the heart of communities, reflect our rich diversity, engage new audiences and are responsive to local needs

4. The public consultation on the draft strategy has strongly validated the council's vision and priorities, building on the extensive process of stakeholder engagement undertaken in its development.

5. No significant changes have been made to the content of the strategy (attached as Appendix 2) and a final action plan has been developed (attached as Appendix 3) reflecting the consultation feedback.

Background

6. Between 24 January 2022 and 18 March 2022, the council invited structured feedback on its draft library and heritage strategy 2022 - 2027. People were signposted to the full draft strategy document and encouraged to read it for background information.

7. Feedback was primarily collated using an online survey on the council's digital consultation and engagement platform, Let's Talk Oxfordshire and a small number of paper copies of the consultation document, survey and promotional posters were distributed to all libraries, the Oxfordshire Museum and Oxfordshire History Service. Arrangements were also put in place with Oxfordshire customer services, library and heritage services and the engagement and consultation team to supply information in alternative formats on request and to accept written responses. Anyone replying by paper copy could use of a Freepost address.

8. The consultation was actively promoted to different audiences, using multiple channels, with a strong emphasis on paid-for digital promotion using social media. We also targeted communications at service users, staff, and councillors to help them spread the word.

Overview of the consultation feedback

9. In total, the council received **191** survey responses. Eighty-one per cent of the survey responses were from Oxfordshire residents. A summary report setting out the detailed findings from the consultation can be found in Appendix 1 to this paper.

10. Overall, the consultation findings validate the vision and the package of thirteen priorities for delivery, over the next five years, under the three core priorities of people, place and partnerships. This is a positive reflection of the extensive process of stakeholder engagement we undertook to develop the draft strategy, which included also included early public input in summer 2021.

11. **Vision**

- 87% of survey respondents agreed with our vision for libraries and heritage services as set out in the draft strategy document. Only three per cent disagreed.

- The supporting comments which substantiate peoples' views on the vision, clearly show the value people place on these services, and in particular the importance of the library service.

12. **Package of thirteen priorities**

87% of survey respondents agreed that the thirteen priorities set out in the draft strategy document are the right ones to deliver our ambition and vision for libraries and heritage services in Oxfordshire. Only two per cent disagreed.

People priorities

13. Between 85 per cent and 99 per cent of survey respondents agreed (total saying strongly agree and agree) with the five individual **people priorities**. Very few people disagreed with any - ranging between one person and six people per priority (one to three percent).

- We want to support children and young people's learning and parents support for their children's learning (99 per cent agreement)

- We want to increase libraries and heritage contribution to learning and promote library's role in fostering literacy and a love of reading (97 per cent agreement)

- We want to support people to develop skills and knowledge (97 per cent agreement)

- We want to increase the impact of libraries and heritage services on health, wellbeing and active citizenship (87 per cent agreement)

- We want to equip libraries and heritage staff with skills to deliver on innovative services (85 per cent agreement)

14. **Place priorities**

Overall, views on the place priorities were more mixed, with between 60 per cent and 92 per cent of survey respondents agreeing (total saying strongly agree and agree) with the five individual **place priorities**.

Whilst again, only a small proportion of survey respondents actively disagreed with any of the place priorities (range of between five and nineteen people per priority), a notable proportion said they neither agreed nor disagreed.

- o We want to work with communities to design services which reach the heart of communities, reflect our rich diversity, engage new audiences and are responsive to local needs (92 per cent agreement)

- o We want to identify ways to reduce the carbon impact of our buildings and services (89 per cent agreement)

- o We want to use data and intelligence about 'place' to target the specific needs of local communities and drive a culture of service improvement (80 per cent agreement)

- o We want to involve people in the design of libraries and heritage buildings (73 per cent agreement)

- o We want to deliver services to support business start-ups to support economic growth (60 per cent agreement)

15. **Partnership priorities**
   Between 77 per cent and 85 per cent of survey respondents agreed (total saying strongly agree and agree) with each of the three **partnership** priorities. Again, only a few people disagreed with any (range of between 5 and 14 people per priority) and a notable proportion said they neither agreed nor disagreed.

- o We want to maximise partnerships at local and national level to improve the sustainability of services (85 per cent agreement)

- o We want to develop partnerships that support more resilient, fairer and healthier communities (85 per cent agreement)

- o We value and want to strengthen our partnership with volunteers (77 per cent agreement)

16. The implementation of the Libraries and Heritage Strategy aligns with many of the strategic priorities of the Oxfordshire Fair Deal Alliance. These are set out below:

OCC Strategic Plan Priority	Libraries and Heritage Strategy Priorities	Action
1. Put action to address the **climate emergency** at the heart of our work	Reduce our impact on the climate by retrofitting our buildings where possible and improving our digital offer (Place)	2.2 Identify ways to reduce the carbon impact of our buildings and services
2. **Tackle inequalities** in Oxfordshire	Ensure services meet the predicted population growth	1.5 Support people to develop skills and knowledge

	in the next five years (People, Place) Promote digital inclusion and enhance digital access (People) Support people in the community to gain digital skills, including the potential of advanced technologies such as virtual reality and artificial intelligence (People, Partnership) Support access in rural communities (People, Place)	2.4 Use data and intelligence about 'place' to target the specific needs of local communities and drive a culture of service improvement 2.5 Work with communities to design services which reach the heart of communities, reflect our rich diversity, engage new audiences and are responsive to local needs 3.1 Develop partnerships that support more resilient, fairer and healthier communities to strategy
3. Prioritise the **health and wellbeing** of residents	Increase programmes and activities to support people to have active and healthy lives, reducing social isolation and loneliness (People, Partnership)	1.3 Increase the impact of libraries and heritage services on health, wellbeing and active citizenship 3.1 Develop partnerships that support more resilient, fairer and healthier communities
4. Support carers and the **social care** system	Increase programmes and activities to support people to have active and healthy lives, reducing social isolation and loneliness (People, Partnership)	1.3 Increase the impact of Libraries and Heritage services on health, wellbeing and active citizenship 2.5 Work with communities to design services which reach the heart of communities, reflect our rich diversity, engage new audiences and are responsive to local needs 3.1 Develop partnerships that support more resilient, fairer and healthier communities
7. Create opportunities for **children and young people** to reach their full potential	Strengthen our offer for children, young people and families, including support for early years and improving school readiness (People, Partnership)	1.1 Increase libraries and heritage contribution to learning and promote library's role in fostering literacy and a love of reading

		1.2 Support children and young people's learning and parents support for their children's learning
8. Play our part in a vibrant **local democracy**	Increase and widen participation in services – physical and digital (People, Place) Build on the role of libraries as providers of trusted information and gateways to other public services (People, Partnership) Increase the opportunities for communities to tell the story of their local heritage (People, Place) Increase access to heritage in person and digitally (People, Place) Further develop museum and library buildings as vibrant community hubs (Place, Partnership)	1.1 Increase libraries and heritage contribution to learning and promote library's role in fostering literacy and a love of reading 2.1 Involve people in the design of libraries and heritage buildings 3.3 Value and strengthen our partnership with volunteers supporting service delivery
9. Work with **local businesses and partners** for environmental, economic and social benefit	Increase the contribution of libraries to sustainable economic development, innovation, and entrepreneurship across the county (People, Partnership)	2.3 Deliver services to support business start-ups to support economic growth 3.2 Maximise partnerships at local and national level to improve the sustainability of services

Corporate Policies and Priorities

17.   The strategy has been developed to ensure that the contribution of libraries and heritage services to the council's strategic plan 2022-2025 and nine priorities will be maximised.

Financial Implications

18.   No immediate financial impact. This strategy is planned to be implemented utilising existing resources. Proposed actions and outcomes will be monitored closely with the service, and any significant additional resources identified will follow standard governance procedures prior to expenditure. The management of library buildings is undertaken by the County Council's property and facilities management team and development proposals are set out in the capital programme.

       Comments checked by: Bick Nguyen-McBride, Assistant Finance Business Partner

Legal Implications

19.   The Report to Cabinet on 21 December 2021 confirmed that approving the Libraries and Heritage Strategy did not have Legal Implications which needed noting. The consultation on the Strategy referred to above was "non-statutory" (ie it was not carried out pursuant to any statutory obligation of the Council) and so it does not have Legal Implications which need noting nor does the proposal for an annual report on implementation.

       Comments checked by: Richard Hodby, Solicitor, Legal Services

Staff Implications

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

Equality and Inclusion Implications

21.   There are no immediate equalities and inclusion arising from this report.

Sustainability Implications

22.   The strategy identifies the need to ensure all building refurbishments are designed to reduce impact on the climate. Libraries will review their role in providing trusted information on climate change to ensure it is accurate and will work in partnership to deliver a programme of activities and events to raise awareness of climate change and how residents can take action to reduce climate change.

Risk Management

23. The risk in adopting a libraries and heritage strategy is primarily one of effective communication, managing expectations and successful delivery. The strategy implementation will be strengthened by partner and community support and it is proposed to deliver a stakeholder engagement programme to build support for the strategy.

Consultations

24. The draft strategy was published on the Let's Talk Oxfordshire consultation and engagement portal as set out in para 7. Implementation of significant actions within the strategy will be subject to stakeholder and engagement where necessary, and in line with the principles set out in the strategy, to ensure the council meets its statutory duties.

Appendices:

Appendix 1: Detailed findings from the public consultation

Appendix 2: 'Creative, Inspiring, Inclusive' - A library and heritage service for Oxfordshire now and for the future: 2022-27

Appendix 3: Action Plan

BACKGROUND PAPERS: None

NAME: Lesli Good

CONTACT OFFICER: Lesli Good
                                         Assistant Director, Cultural Services and Libraries and
                                         Heritage Service Manager (Interim)
                                         07930 617798

April 2022

Appendix 1

Draft library and heritage service strategy 2022-2027

Consultation findings

Contents

Executive summary

1. Between 24 January 2022 and 18 March 2022, the council invited structured feedback on its draft library and heritage strategy 2022 - 2027. People were signposted to the full draft strategy document and encouraged to read it for background information.

2. Feedback was primarily collated using an online survey on the council's digital consultation and engagement platform, [Let's Talk Oxfordshire](#) and a small number of paper copies of the consultation document, survey and promotional posters were distributed to all libraries, the Oxfordshire Museum and Oxfordshire History Service. Arrangements were also put in place with Oxfordshire customer services, library and heritage services and the engagement and consultation team to supply information in alternative formats on request and to accept written responses. Anyone replying by paper copy could use a Freepost address.

3. The consultation was actively promoted to different audiences, using multiple channels, with a strong emphasis on paid-for digital promotion using social media. We also targeted communications at service users, staff, and councillors to help them spread the word.

4. In total, the council received **191** survey responses and three written responses. Eighty-one per cent of the survey responses were from Oxfordshire residents.

5. People responding to the survey tended to be older. Just under two thirds of respondents who provided information about themselves self-identified as female (63 per cent) and around a third identify themselves as male (32 per cent).

6. Overall, the consultation findings validate the vision and the package of thirteen priorities for delivery, over the next five years, under the three core priorities of people, place and partnerships. This is a positive reflection of the extensive process of stakeholder engagement we undertook to develop the draft strategy, which included also included early public input in summer 2021.

   Vision
   - Eighty-seven per cent of survey respondents agreed with our vision for libraries and heritage services as set out in the draft strategy document. Only three per cent disagreed.

   - The supporting comments which substantiate peoples' views on the vision, clearly show the value people place on these services, and in particular the importance of the library service.

   Emerging themes – people, place and partnerships

   People
   - Respondents would most like to see or see more of the following in libraries and heritage sites: the use of libraries as community hubs – as social places, as places for classes, groups and activities (32 mentions), the use of sites as

venues for talks and public lectures and live music/performances (27 mentions) and as places to go as family for children's/family events and activities (from early years to teen) (27 mentions).

- As regards how could the council improve our libraries and heritage services offer for young families the top two themes were: more activities and events including during the holidays and at weekends (36 mentions) and practical ideas to help ensure spaces are welcoming to young families (18 mentions).

- When asked the same question for older people, the top two themes were providing in-library social activities suitable for this age group including book groups, crafts, speakers, local history (27 mentions) and support with digital inclusion, both in terms of fully accessing library technology (7 mentions) as well as support with digital literacy, confidence, cyber safety etc. (21 mentions).

- Whilst for rural areas, the top two themes were: reintroduce/have a mobile library service (41 mentions) and set-up more libraries/support library facilities in villages eg book swaps, a library space in community buildings (12 mentions).

Place
- When respondents were asked how the library and heritage strategy can best support your local area the top two themes were: facilitating the library as a community hub (23 mentions) and extending opening hours to meet needs (14 mentions).

- The top two suggestions for how the council might better celebrate local heritage and highlight Oxfordshire's rich history were to: curate displays / exhibitions - including display boards in local libraries and other places that the public congregate such as railway stations (39 mentions) and putting on events to celebrate local history (32 mentions).

Partnerships
- When asked who/which organisations the library and heritage service should work (or work more) with, by far the most frequently mentioned partnership opportunity by respondents was with education settings (with 71 mentions). This included university, further education and colleges, schools (primary and secondary), nurseries and adult education with emphasis on recognising the valuable resources the libraries offer, with particular mention of encouraging children and young people to access libraries.

Package of thirteen priorities

- Eighty-seven per cent of survey respondents agreed that the 13 priorities set out in the draft strategy document are the right ones to deliver our ambition and vision for libraries and heritage services in Oxfordshire. Only two per cent disagreed.

- Between 85 per cent and 99 per cent of survey respondents agreed (total saying strongly agree and agree) with the five individual **people priorities**. Very few people disagreed with any – ranging between one person and six people per priority (one to three per cent).

  - We want to support children and young people's learning and parents support for their children's learning (99 per cent agreement)

  - We want to increase libraries and heritage contribution to learning and promote library's role in fostering literacy and a love of reading (97 per cent agreement)

  - We want to support people to develop skills and knowledge (97 per cent agreement)

  - We want to increase the impact of libraries and heritage services on health, wellbeing and active citizenship (87 per cent agreement)

  - We want to equip libraries and heritage staff with skills to deliver on innovative services (85 per cent agreement)

- Overall, views on the place priorities were more mixed, with between 60 per cent and 92 per cent of survey respondents agreeing (total saying strongly agree and agree) with the five individual **place priorities**.

- Whilst again, only a small proportion of survey respondents actively disagreed with any of the place priorities (range of between five and 19 people per priority), a notable proportion said they neither agreed nor disagreed.

  - We want to work with communities to design services which reach the heart of communities, reflect our rich diversity, engage new audiences and are responsive to local needs (92 per cent agreement)

  - We want to identify ways to reduce the carbon impact of our buildings and services (89 per cent agreement)

  - We want to use data and intelligence about 'place' to target the specific needs of local communities and drive a culture of service improvement (80 per cent agreement)

  - We want to involve people in the design of libraries and heritage buildings (73 per cent agreement)

  - We want to deliver services to support business start-ups to support economic growth (60 per cent agreement)

- Between 77 per cent and 85 per cent of survey respondents agreed (total saying strongly agree and agree) with each of the three **partnership** priorities. Again, only a few people disagreed with any (range of between 5 and 14 people per priority) and a notable proportion said they neither agreed nor disagreed.

    o We want to maximise partnerships at local and national level to improve the sustainability of services (85 per cent agreement)

    o We want to develop partnerships that support more resilient, fairer and healthier communities (85 per cent agreement)

    o We value and want to strengthen our partnership with volunteers (77 per cent agreement)

Section 1: Introduction, communications channels and interpretation

1.1   Between 24 January 2022 and 18 March 2022, the council invited structured feedback on its draft library and heritage strategy 2022 - 2027. People were signposted to the full draft strategy document and encouraged to read it for background information.

1.2   Feedback was primarily collated using an online survey on the council's digital consultation and engagement platform, [Let's Talk Oxfordshire](#) and a small number of paper copies of the consultation document, survey and promotional posters were distributed to all libraries, the Oxfordshire Museum and Oxfordshire History Service. Arrangements were also put in place with Oxfordshire customer services, library and heritage services and the engagement and consultation team to supply information in alternative formats on request and to accept written responses. Anyone replying by paper copy could use a Freepost address.

Communications channels

1.3   The consultation was actively promoted to different audiences between 24 January and 18 March using multiple channels, with a strong emphasis on paid-for digital promotion using social media. This included using Facebook and Instagram to promote the topic to adult audiences and Snapchat to connect and engage with younger teenage residents.

1.4   Messages were also shared on Twitter and Nextdoor to encourage engagement, targeted communications at service users, staff, and councillors to help them spread the word.

1.5   A third of people who provided information about themselves said they found out about the consultation via an email from Oxfordshire County Council (33 per cent), followed by around 21 per cent who heard about the consultation through NextDoor and 17 per cent who found out via Facebook. Overall, our communications had good visibility and many more people engaged with the content, than went on to share their views in the survey.

Chart 1: How did you find out about this consultation?

Source	Number of mentions
Email from Oxfordshire County Council	62
Facebook	33
NextDoor	39
Oxfordshire.gov.uk website	23
Poster/information in local library	13
Twitter	11
Local community group/organisation	9
Local news item (newspaper, online, radio, tv)	6
Local community news item	6
Friend or relative	6
Instagram	2
Linkedin	2
Oxfordshire County Councillor	2
District Councillor	2
Parish or town Councillor	2
Radio advert	1
Other	13

Base: 190 respondents   (Number of mentions)

How to interpret this report

1.6   This is a consultation exercise and has not been designed to be a piece of representative research. Therefore, the council cannot attribute any statistical confidence intervals to the data. The people who participated are entirely self-selecting.

1.7   The report is presented in two parts, with the first section focusing on the responses to the survey form and the second section summarising the key messages from written correspondence received by the council as part of the consultation.

1.8   In total, the council received **191** survey responses and **three** written responses. Not everyone chose to answer each question (as was permitted) and this report uses variable base numbers based on the number of people who had their say.

1.9   Please note that restrictions were placed on the online survey, to limit people to sending only one response from any specific email address. That said, the council cannot prevent individuals from submitting multiple responses, should they have multiple email addresses or from submitting an online form as well as comments by letter, email or paper form should they choose to do so.

1.10   When interpreting the findings, please note that these are based on the number of people who had their say for each specific question. In addition, for some questions, we allowed people to tick multiple answers meaning that the total mentions may sum to more than the total number of responses. In other cases, due to statistical rounding, the total response to a single-answer question may sum slightly over or under 100 per cent.

1.11   This survey contained several open-ended questions, where people responding could share their thoughts. All comments have been read and carefully considered. We have grouped responses into common themes for reporting purposes and used illustrative quotes to bring them to life.

Section 2: Vision

2.1   Part one of the survey sought views on the vision for libraries and heritage as set out in the draft strategy document. Respondents were given the vision and asked to what extent do they agree or disagree with it.

Vision statement:

Our libraries and heritage services provide opportunities for people to connect and create, to learn and grow together. Inspiring us all, they are places to imagine, and they make a difference to the wellbeing of the communities they serve.

Working in partnership we will provide valued and trusted routes to a wide range of services, information and activities that reflect local needs.

Our buildings will be open and welcoming spaces, our services will be accessible and available, and we will champion digital inclusion, broadening access to everything we offer.

Chart 2: To what extent do you agree or disagree with our vision as set out in the draft strategy document?

Base: 189 respondents
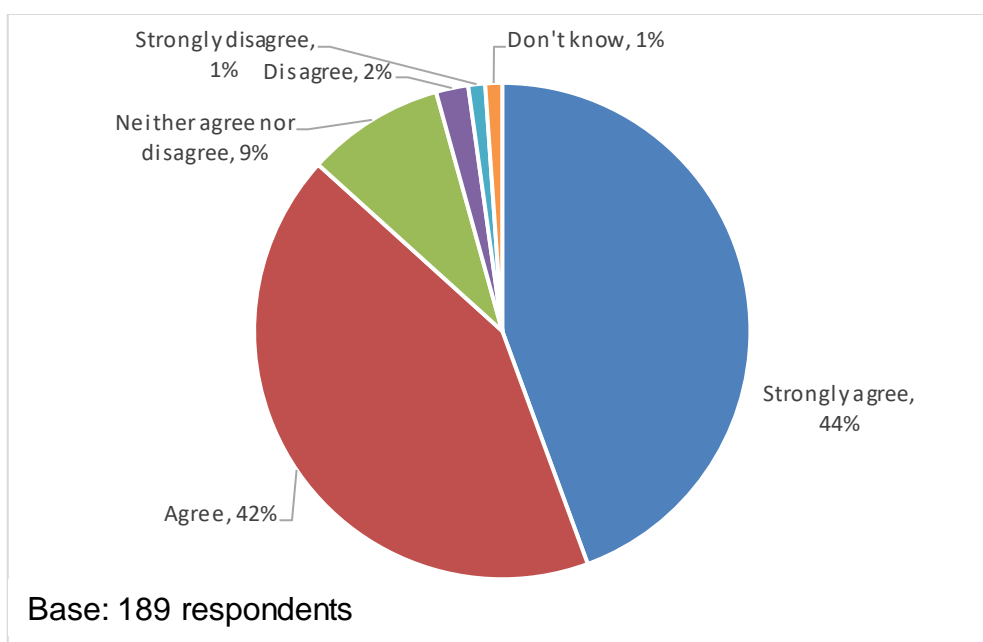
2.2   As shown in chart two above, most respondents were positive about the vision, with 87 per cent in agreement, including 44 per cent who strongly agreed.

2.3   Only three per cent of respondents indicated they actively disagreed with the vision, nine per cent were neutral, saying they 'neither agree nor disagree' and one per cent did not know.

2.4   Ninety respondents provided detailed feedback to further substantiate their opinion on the vision (140 mentions), with many straying into feedback on the strategy as a whole or on the service as it currently stands. This included 26 comments giving constructive criticism of the vision, 22 suggestions for change – including to the strategy, 15 comments exploring the purpose of the library and 12 comments giving feedback about specific libraries/museums. The supporting comments clearly show the value people place on these services, and in particular the importance of the library service.

2.5   Although many single issues were raised and others several times, themes emerging from the comments, all with 10 mentions or more, were:

- Criticism of the vision, including that it doesn't mention books and emphasising their importance to library users, the language used in the strategy more generally (buzz words, meaningless phases) and that the strategy was currently ambiguous and lacking an action plan and targets (26 mentions)

- General supportive comments of the vision and strategy - good ideas, common sense - but with some clear caveats (23 mentions)

- Suggestions for improvement included: extending the visibility of library services to all sections of the community, supporting child and adult literacy, improving engagement and links with other sectors and services, developing libraries as community hubs, and other suggestions for changes to the strategy were also made (22 mentions).

- In addition, 12 people used this opportunity to comment on individual libraries/museums, whilst 15 people chose to discuss the purpose of a library and to a lesser extent history services, with some stating their personal value.

Illustrative quotes:

"Commonsense policy."

"I particularly value the Oxfordshire History Centre and the amazing collection of resources that it provides on the history of Oxfordshire."

"libraries are for me the most important aspect of county provision for well-being."

"There's a lot to take in and quite a lot of jargon to plough through, making it difficult to identify concrete plans and likely changes. I find some aspects of it positive and others less so."

"Connect and create', 'places to imagine' and 'champion digital inclusion' are all phrases which are meaningless to me, sorry!"

"I do also think you need to mention books - having access to free books must remain part of the very DNA of any library."

Section 3: Emerging themes: people, place and partnerships

3.1   Part two of the survey asked people for their views about the three themes - **people**, **place** and **partnerships**, which the strategy is centred around.

3.2   Respondents were informed that these themes had been shaped by research and engagement already undertaken by the service and relevant sections of the strategy were embedded into the survey form to help provide context to the questions.

Theme: people

People – our libraries and heritage services will support people to reach their full potential

Libraries are the place where children and adults can find that special book that helps them get the reading habit, and then borrow for free to feed that habit for life. In the museum and the history centre, people can learn new skills, gain information, and participate in activities to support them to live successful and healthy lives.

We offer so many free opportunities to everyone – including finding out about family history and the county's heritage, accessing council services and other benefits, using freely available computers to apply for jobs, meeting authors, participating in book groups, volunteering, and learning digital skills.

3.3   When asked what activities respondents would **like to see, or see more of, in libraries and heritage sites**, 158 respondents put forward a wide range of suggestions and comments (268 mentions), including 26 comments around heritage services, and 36 around library services. Five key themes emerged and those with 10 mentions or more are summarised below, supported by illustrative quotes:

- o   Facilitate the library as a community hub – a social place, a place for classes, groups and activities (32 mentions)

- o   Put on (put on more) talks and public lectures from authors, poets, historians, experts, and live music/performances (27 mentions)

- o   Children's /family events and activities - (from early years to teen) (27 mentions)

- o   Reading groups/book groups (18 mentions)

- o   Digital services, WIFI, computer access, makerspaces (11 mentions)

Illustrative quotes:

"Anything that helps people to meet others who have similar interests, whether as a book club, history society, local area coordinator for activities etc."

"Groups directed at elderly interested in reading to provide wider social interaction and opportunities to meet people. Book suggestions, poetry choices etc. introducing new books, local history etc. with refreshments."

"I love the idea of bringing books to life through creative activities, reading groups, speakers, writing, music & acting workshops for all ages all inspired by a set text."

"Children's activities, get together for the lonely with refreshments, art displays and demonstrations, advice and support - scams, giving up smoking, claiming benefits, citizens advice etc, live performances."

"Makerspaces, free access to equipment and support for those wanting to learn about new technologies and coding."

3.4 As regards to how the council could improve our libraries and heritage services **offer for young families**, 137 respondents put forward a wide range of suggestions and comments (164 mentions) including addressing practical logistics that young families need.

3.5 Four key themes emerged, all with 10 mentions or more. These are summarised below, again supported by illustrative quotes:

- o Providing child centred/family orientated activities and events including during the holidays and at weekends (36 mentions)

- o Ensure the space is welcoming to young families, this could include: providing toilets, a dedicated space for families to rest, play, do homework, eat, and comfy seats (18 mentions)

- o More outreach/engagement/ better links with schools, nurseries and children's centres (11 mentions)

- o Reading groups, reading challenges, reading mentors and support (11 mentions)

Illustrative quotes:

"Childrens rhymetime and story times with support for parents, advice on benefits, a safe place for families to chill out."

"Toilets, 'picnic areas', secure play facilities while parents browse. Story times for small children."

"Provide child friendly toilets whenever possible alongside basic rest area facilities for parents & carers to change younger siblings or simply take time out from library without needing to actually leave the premises."

"I think that in the past services have been good but perhaps more could be done to encourage links with children's centres, pre-schools and schools in order to encourage more families to get involved especially those parents or carers who do not use the services yet. Reading Challenges etc. Make these more easily accessible to parents who may not read themselves or do not have English as their first language. Link Language Clubs to young families as well as just adults?"

"More frequent baby/toddler groups and after school reading clubs for children"

3.6   When asked what how we could improve our library and heritage services offer for **older people**, 150 respondents put forward a wide range of practical suggestions and comments (215 mentions).

3.7   Six themes emerged, which received 10 mentions or more. These are summarised below, supported by illustrative quotes:

- o   Providing in-library social activities suitable for this age group, including: book groups, crafts, speakers, local history (27 mentions).

- o   Support with digital inclusion, both in terms of fully accessing library technology (7 mentions) as well as support with digital literacy, confidence, cyber safety etc. (21 mentions).

- o   Provide comfortable, suitable seating (14 mentions).

- o   Be mindful of accessibility, heavy doors, low shelves etc. (13 mentions).

- o   Facilitate the library as a community hub – a social place, a meeting place, a place to chat (13 mentions).

- o   Increased focus on customer service for this group (10 mentions).

Illustrative quotes:

"Groups where they could get together - not just a book group - but intellectually stimulating one's as well as crafty ideas."

"Provide computer training for people who can't get out of the house to learn how to use e-book services."

"Training on how to use a computer that is created specifically for older people that haven't used a computer before e.g. out to email, how to do internet searching, online shopping, online banking, completing online forms."

"Comfortable seating, a place to rest whilst looking to find a book to read. Large print and audio books."

"Easy access, no heavy doors, toilets and seating. Large print books and audio books with help to use any new technology needed to access them. Family history guidance. Oral history workshops to gather/share local history from older residents. Photo exhibitions."

3.8 Shifting the focus again to how we could improve our library and heritage services offer for **people in rural areas**, 132 respondents put forward a wide range of ideas and comments (148 mentions). Whilst lots of suggestions were put forward, there were only two themes with 10 mentions or more. These are summarised below, again supported by illustrative quotes:

- o Reintroduce/have a mobile library service (41 mentions)

- o Set-up more libraries/support library facilities in villages eg book swaps, a library space in community buildings (12 mentions)

- o Consider opening hours (10 mentions)

Illustrative quotes:

"I live in a village that, when we moved here 7 years ago, had a mobile library. These were an important part of village life and vital for residents who don't have cars. Bring these back so that everyone can have access to them."

"There has to be a way to connect to us. Many of us have village halls - there should be a way for services to come to our villages in the area once a quarter - I live in x - so there are 10 villages in our area. We can all do something collaboratively. Being flexible with timing and locations is critical."

"Depending on demands really, & this is the area where volunteers can really help! Use of village halls for library-related activities can be useful."

3.9 Sixty-seven respondents came forward with additional comments and ideas (75 mentions) **about the people theme** in the draft library and heritage strategy. No consistent themes emerged (with 10 mentions or more) and comments often reflected points already captured in previous questions.

Theme: place

Place – our libraries and heritage services will be recognised as valuable community assets and we will strengthen their role in 'place making' and their position at the heart of their community.

Our services will place the needs of the local community at the heart of our thinking, decision making and service design. As community needs change, so must our libraries and heritage services to ensure that our physical spaces are integrated with the growing demand for digital services.

We will increase our visibility in communities to ensure increased delivery of the vital social benefits of companionship, support and inspiration. We will listen to and learn from our communities to co-design our spaces. Jointly agreeing outcomes will be crucial to success.

3.10 Moving onto the place theme. When asked how the library and heritage strategy can **best support your local area**, 134 respondents provided

feedback (142 mentions). The following two themes emerged (with 10 mentions or more), with many other varied points raised.

- o Facilitate the library as a community hub - a place for social/community groups to discuss local issues, as a centre of information for the community, and workshops for people to learn new skills (not just computers/IT) (23 mentions).

- o Extend opening hours (14 comments), including weekend and late evening opening, together with promoting this information clearly to local communities.

Illustrative quotes:

"Provide free meeting spaces for community groups - this would encourage many people who might not have visited a library in years to at least come into the building and then could learn about other services on offer."

"Making it a hub of the area."

"By being a hub for local groups and a centre for information."

"Later library opening hours."

"Being open every day."

"The opening times are not always convenient."

3.11 When asked how the council might **better celebrate local heritage, and highlight Oxfordshire's rich history**, 111 respondents provided feedback (114 mentions). There was a strength of feeling that there should be more active publicity of Oxfordshire and local history, to promote what the service can offer, including, but not exclusively, online publicity. The key themes, with 10 mentions or more, were:

- o Displays/exhibitions - including display boards in local libraries and other places that the public congregate - such as railway stations, and encouraging local artists, community groups or schools to put up exhibitions (39 mentions)

- o Events celebrating local history should be organised, with talks from local authors and history societies. Discussion groups, films, walking tours and competitions – which were strongly linked with the suggestions of displays and exhibitions (32 mentions)

- o Working with local history societies/groups, with people expressing that collaboration with these groups would be beneficial, and also collaborating with Heritage Open Days (19 mentions)

Illustrative quotes:

"Display items from museums and heritage centre in libraries for a few weeks at a time."

"Displays of local history e.g. display boards at places like the Railway Station maybe, or the Westgate Centre."

"Exhibitions and local group events - to showcase local groups and what they do/offer."

"Events etc that celebrate historical anniversaries. Where appropriate, there could be re-enactments, short performances / plays / readings and so on."

"Certainly by engaging with the many local history organisations, and encouraging their growth and development."

"Join with the local history groups to display items of interest to adults and children. Maybe the heritage centre can come down and give a talk?"

3.12 Thirty-nine respondents came forward with 46 additional comments and ideas **about the place theme** in the draft library and heritage strategy. No consistent themes emerged (with 10 mentions or more) and again comments often reflected points already captured in previous questions.

Theme: partnerships

Partnerships – our libraries and heritage services will deliver on national and local priorities, increasing our strategic and operational collaborations with a wide range of partners.

Libraries and heritage services constantly work in partnership with local and national organisations. We will build on existing partnerships and evaluate existing relationships alongside developing new partnerships. Partnerships will be essential in attracting funding to support our ambition, but also to ensure we are using our heritage and library assets to deliver maximum impact for health and wellbeing, opportunities for children and young people, vibrant local economies and reducing demand on other services where possible.

Our staff will be supported to develop partnerships where relationships and local knowledge is central. Our consultation shows that our libraries and heritage services are valued by residents; however, we are seeing a decline in physical visits and borrowing in libraries. Whilst the museum and history centre are sustaining visitor numbers, our challenge remains to ensure our services reflect the needs of local communities and are places that inspire visits.

3.13 We asked survey respondents, who/which organisations do you think the **library and heritage service should work, or work more, with** and 250 suggestions were put forward, by 140 people. By far, the most frequently

mentioned partnership opportunity was with education settings (with 71 mentions) including university, further education and colleges, schools (primary and secondary), nurseries and adult education with emphasis on recognising the valuable resources the libraries offer, with particular mention of encouraging children and young people to access libraries.

3.14   Community groups received 28 mentions, including a wide range of suggestions such as baby and toddler groups, brownies, guides, cubs, scouts, groups unique to individual locations such as Henley Festival, and groups that offer support to both children and young people as well as older people.

3.15   Local businesses, healthcare settings and professionals and local council partnerships (city, district and parish) all respectively received 15 mentions. Other opportunities for collaboration with 10 mentions or more were: other museums (13 mentions), citizens advice (11 mentions) and charities (10).

3.16   Thirty-three respondents came forward with 38 additional comments and ideas **about the partnership theme** in the draft library and heritage strategy. No consistent themes emerged (with 10 mentions or more) with one or two issues being mentioned more than once. Several of the comments made were not specifically related to the partnership theme. In terms of partnership ideas, there was further mention of collaboration with schools and a suggestion that unwanted books could be donated to schools.

Section 4: Delivering our ambition

4.1. The draft libraries and heritage strategy sets out a summary of the council's priorities for 2022 to 2027, under the three core emerging themes of people, place and partnerships. There are thirteen priorities in total, with five linked to **people**, five linked to **place** and three linked to **partnerships**. Respondents were asked for their views on each of the thirteen priorities, separated by theme.

People priorities

4.2 Between 85 per cent and 99 per cent of survey respondents agreed (total saying strongly agree and agree) with the five individual **people priorities**. Very few people disagreed with any – ranging between one person and six people per priority (one to three per cent).

  o We want to support children and young people's learning and parents support for their children's learning (99 per cent agreement)

  o We want to increase libraries and heritage contribution to learning and promote library's role in fostering literacy and a love of reading (97 per cent agreement)

  o We want to support people to develop skills and knowledge (97 per cent agreement)

  o We want to increase the impact of libraries and heritage services on health, wellbeing and active citizenship (87 per cent agreement)

  o We want to equip libraries and heritage staff with skills to deliver on innovative services (85 per cent agreement)
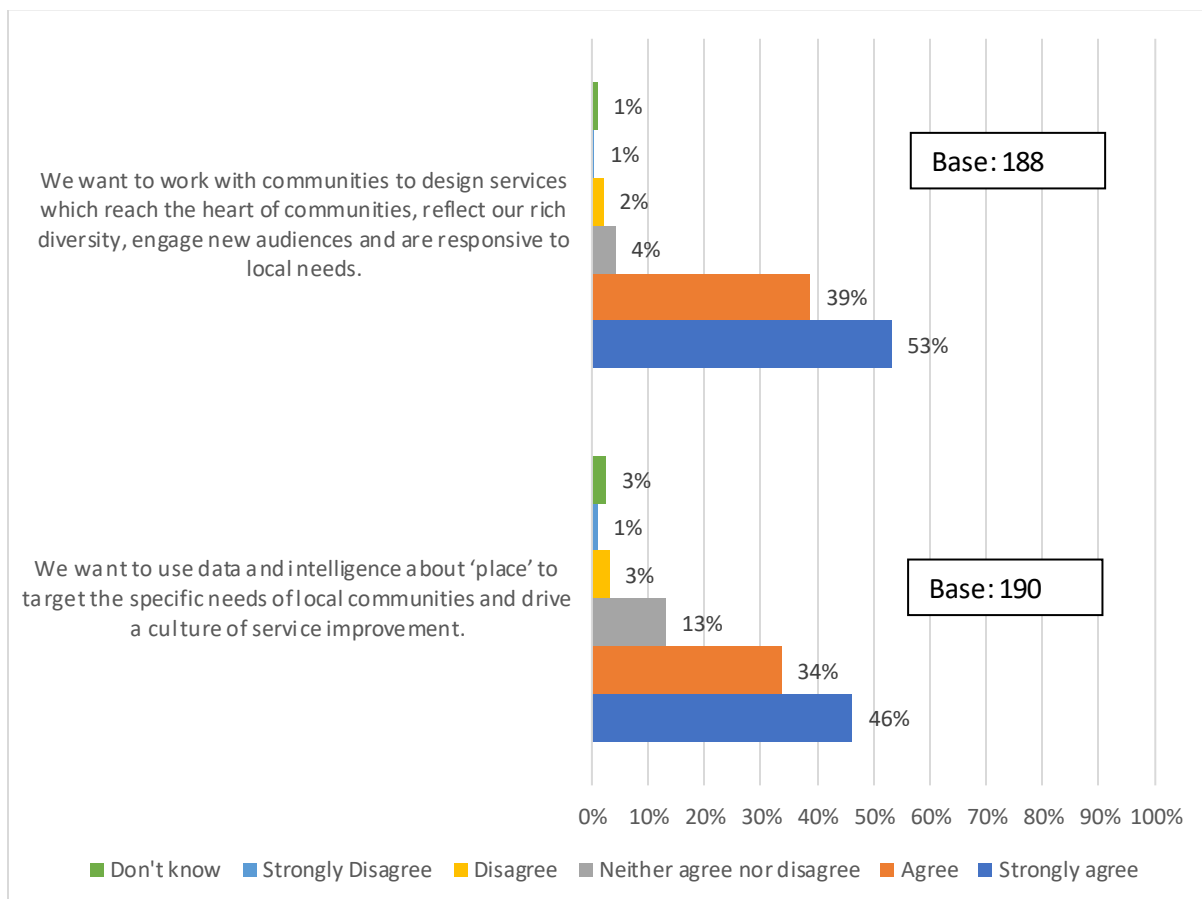
Chart 3: People priorities

Q. Please indicate to what extent you agree or disagree that the following five priorities are the right ones to deliver our vision for libraries and heritage services.

We want to increase the impact of libraries and heritage services on health, wellbeing and active citizenship.
Base: 187
- 1%
- 1%
- 2%
- 9%
- 25%
- 62%

We want to support children and young people's learning and parents support for their children's learning.
Base: 188
- 0%
- 0%
- 1%
- 0%
- 16%
- 84%

We want to increase libraries and heritage contribution to learning and promote library's role in fostering literacy and a love of reading.
Base: 188
- 0%
- 0%
- 2%
- 1%
- 18%
- 79%

Legend: ■ Don't know ■ Strongly Disagree ■ Disagree ■ Neither agree nor disagree ■ Agree ■ Strongly agree
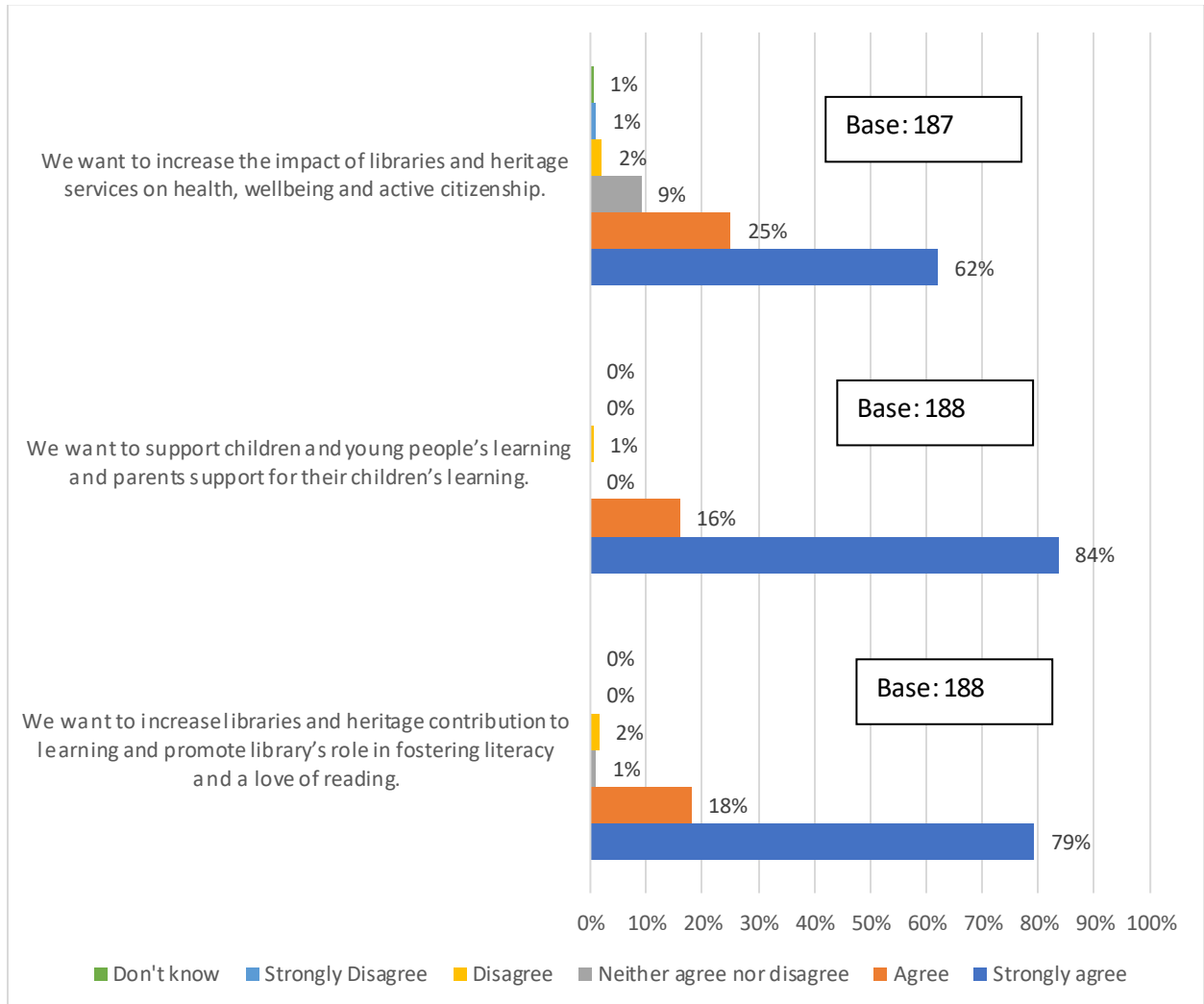
Chart 4: People priorities continued

Q. Please indicate to what extent you agree or disagree that the following five priorities are the right ones to deliver our vision for libraries and heritage services.
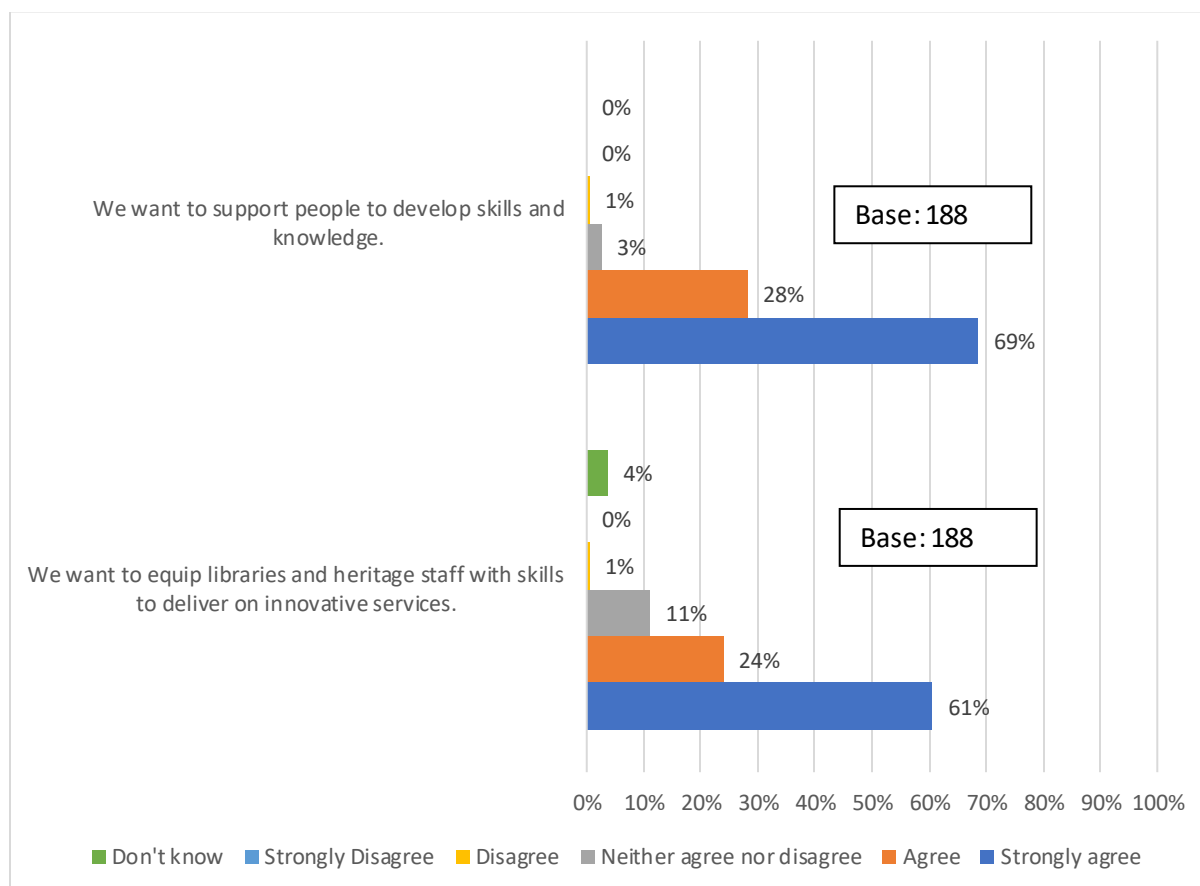
4.3 When asked if they had any comments, if **anything was missing or could be added to the five priorities linked to people**, 74 people provided comments (with a total of 101 mentions). These formed around the following four themes with 10 mentions or more:

- o Purpose of the library (12 mentions). Respondents wished to see libraries as a place for increasing sense of community, knowledge, exchanging ideas, and as a local resource/hub for information and events – as community hubs.

- o Staff and volunteers (12 mentions). These focused on the need for improving levels of staffing, better pay, and the importance of volunteers – but crucially alongside trained staff, not instead of them.

- o Importance of reading and literacy (12 mentions) including that 'supporting a love of reading' should be included in its own right, that books, reading and learning should be a main focus, and stating the importance of literacy, numeracy and language for adults and children.

- General criticism of the strategy (10 mentions) included some querying the meaning of 'active citizenship' and 'innovative services'.

Place priorities

4.4 Overall, views on the place priorities were more mixed, with between 60 per cent and 92 per cent of survey respondents agreeing (total saying strongly agree and agree) with the five individual **place priorities**.

4.5 Whilst again, only a small proportion of survey respondents actively disagreed with any of the place priorities (range of between five and nineteen people per priority), a notable proportion said they neither agreed nor disagreed.

- We want to work with communities to design services which reach the heart of communities, reflect our rich diversity, engage new audiences and are responsive to local needs (92 per cent agreement)

- We want to identify ways to reduce the carbon impact of our buildings and services (89 per cent agreement)

- We want to use data and intelligence about 'place' to target the specific needs of local communities and drive a culture of service improvement (80 per cent agreement)

- We want to involve people in the design of libraries and heritage buildings (73 per cent agreement)

- We want to deliver services to support business start-ups to support economic growth (60 per cent agreement)

Chart 5: Place priorities

Q. Please indicate to what extent you agree or disagree that the following five priorities are the right ones to deliver our vision for libraries and heritage services.

We want to deliver services to support business start-ups to support economic growth.
- 2%
- 4%
- 6%
- 28%
- 32%
- 28%

Base: 187

We want to identify ways to reduce the carbon impact of our buildings and services.
- 0%
- 1%
- 2%
- 8%
- 37%
- 53%

Base: 188

We want to involve people in the design of libraries and heritage buildings.
- 1%
- 2%
- 4%
- 21%
- 32%
- 40%

Base: 188

0% 10% 20% 30% 40% 50% 60% 70% 80% 90% 100%

■ Don't know ■ Strongly Disagree ■ Disagree ■ Neither agree nor disagree ■ Agree ■ Strongly agree
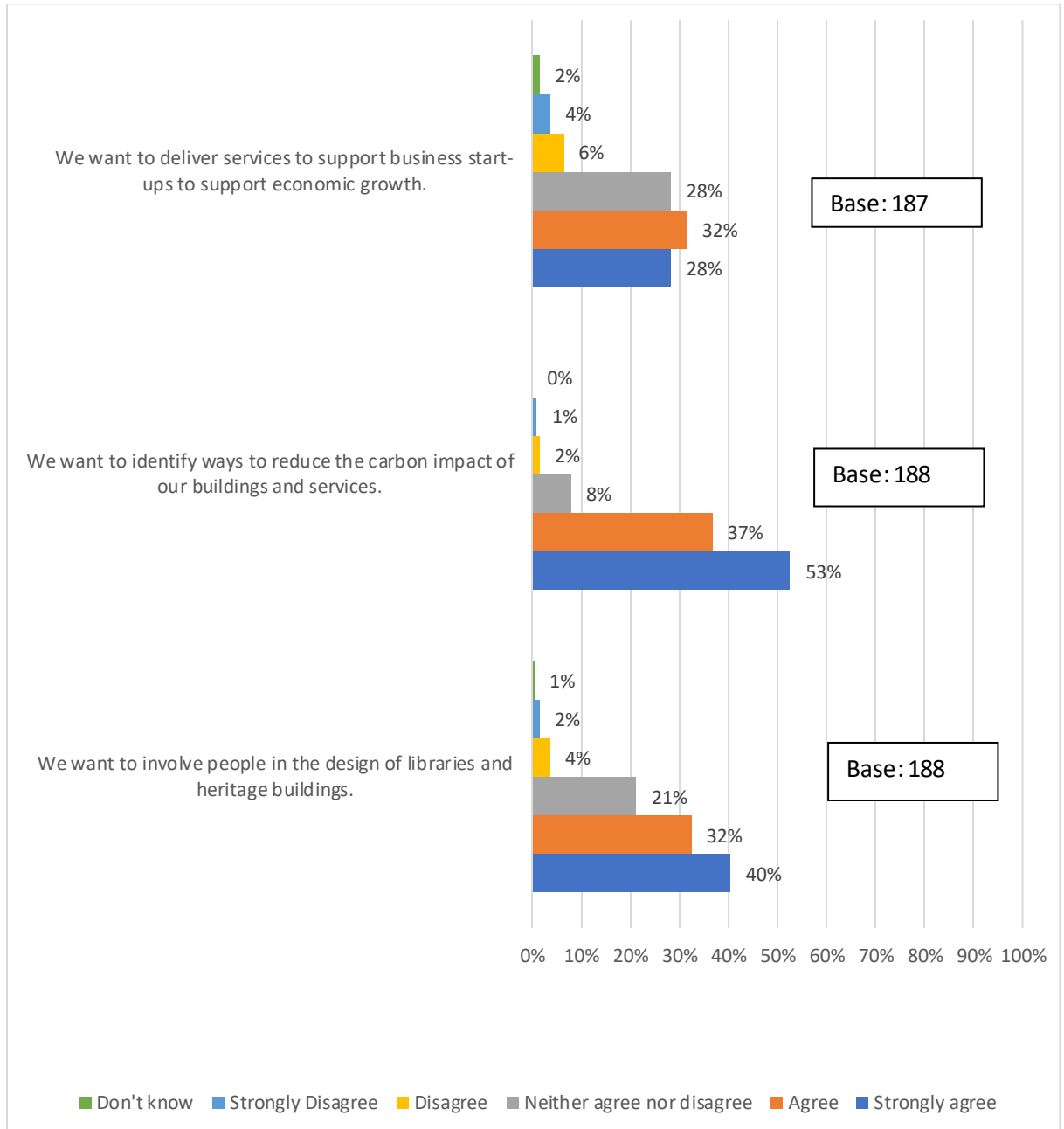
Chart 6: Place priorities continued

Q. Please indicate to what extent you agree or disagree that the following five priorities are the right ones to deliver our vision for libraries and heritage services.

4.6   When asked if they had any comments, if **anything was missing or could be added to the five priorities linked to place**, 58 people provided comments (92 mentions). These formed around the following two themes with 10 mentions or more, with some points that had already been made coming to the fore:

    o   General criticism of the strategy (13 mentions), with some mentioning it was jargon heavy, unspecific and they didn't understand the meaning of words or phrases. There were also concerns that it was trying to cover too many things, and that focus should be on the core purpose of the service. Others commented that the strategy was 'weak and ill-defined' and 'fundamentally on the wrong track' and that 'your social ambitions sound like a waste of public money'. Others said that 'visits' were not a reliable metric to base decisions on, and that the objectives couldn't be achieved without changing the focus of Oxford back to residents (from tourists and students).

o Suggestions - not linked to activities and sessions (10 mentions) included increasing the appeal with more convenient hours, and getting schools involved to encourage children to use libraries instead of parents having to buy too many books. Other suggestions included using resources in local communities, encouraging adults to use libraries through events, speakers and cultural activities, and highlighted the importance of listening to what communities say they want.

Partnership priorities

4.7   Between 77 per cent and 85 per cent of survey respondents agreed (total saying strongly agree and agree) with each of the three **partnership** priorities. Again, only a few people disagreed with any (range of between 5 and 14 people per priority) and a notable proportion said they neither agreed nor disagreed.

   o We want to maximise partnerships at local and national level to improve the sustainability of services (85 per cent agreement)

   o We want to develop partnerships that support more resilient, fairer and healthier communities (85 per cent agreement)

   o We value and want to strengthen our partnership with volunteers (77 per cent agreement)

Chart 7: Partnership priorities

Q. Please indicate to what extent you agree or disagree that the following five priorities are the right ones to deliver our vision for libraries and heritage services.

	We value and want to strengthen our partnership with volunteers supporting service delivery.	We want to maximise partnerships at local and national level to improve the sustainability of services.	We want to develop partnerships that support more resilient, fairer and healthier communities.
Don't know	3%	3%	2%
Strongly Disagree	2%	1%	2%
Disagree	5%	2%	2%
Neither agree nor disagree	13%	10%	10%
Agree	35%	37%	37%
Strongly agree	42%	49%	48%
Base	Base: 188	Base: 189	Base: 187
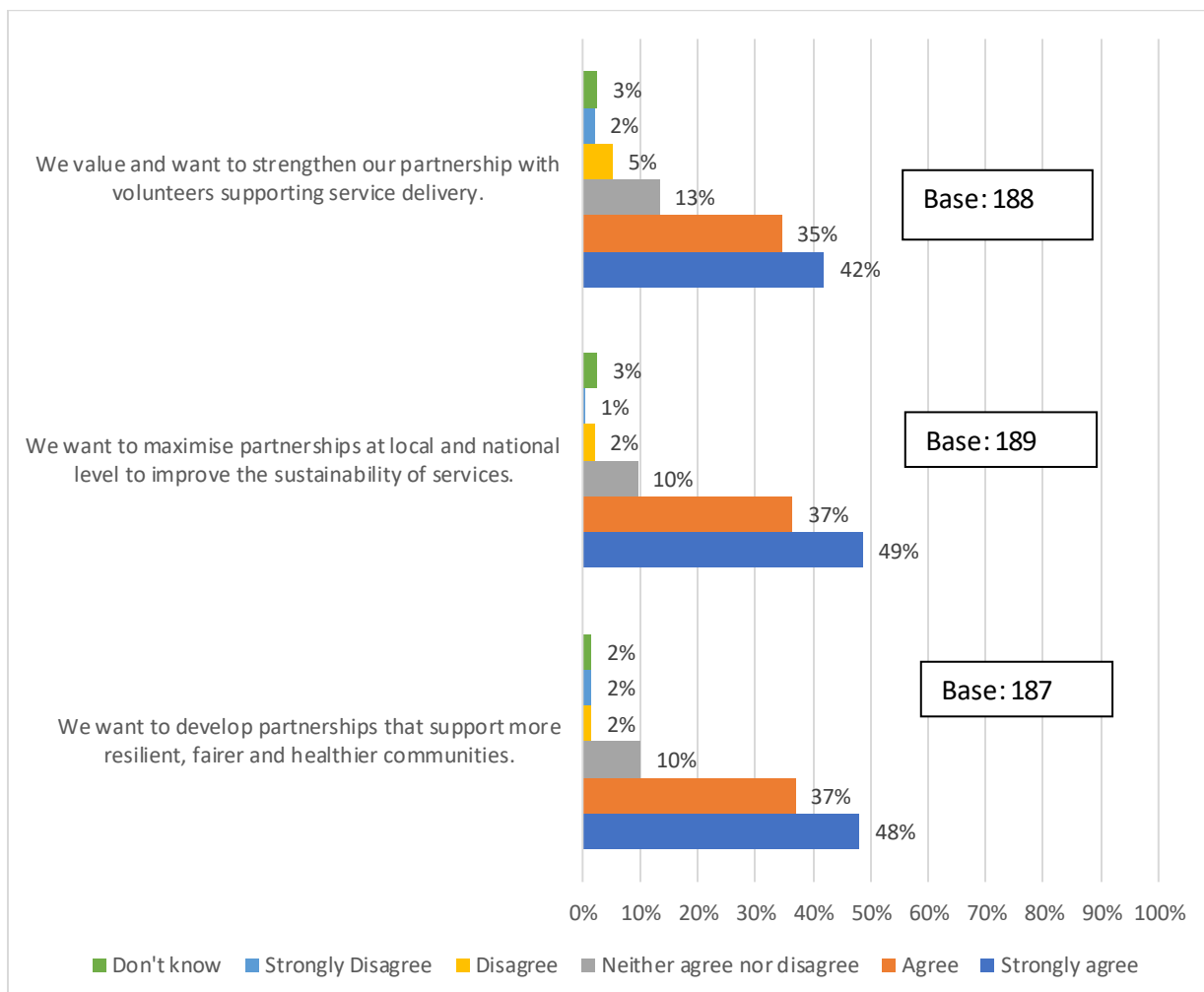
4.8 When asked if they had any comments, if **anything was missing or could be added to the five priorities linked to partnerships**, 61 people provided comments (83 mentions), with one dominant theme emerging:

o Partnerships - staffing and volunteers (40 mentions). The overwhelming majority of such comments voiced concerns that, whilst valuable, volunteers should not replace trained, skilled (and paid) staff. The importance of training (for both staff and volunteers) was mentioned many times, as was paying staff well/fairly for their skills, knowledge and experience.

Overall views on the priorities

4.9   Overall, 87 per cent of survey respondents agreed that the thirteen priorities set out in the draft strategy document are the right ones to deliver our ambition and vision for libraries and heritage services in Oxfordshire, including 29 per cent who strongly agree. Only two per cent disagreed overall, nine per cent indicated they were neutral in opinion, replying 'neither agree nor disagree' and two per cent did not know.

Chart 8: Overall views on our set our thirteen priorities

Q. Please indicate to what extent you agree or disagree that the thirteen priorities are the right ones to deliver our ambition and vision for libraries and heritage services in Oxfordshire?
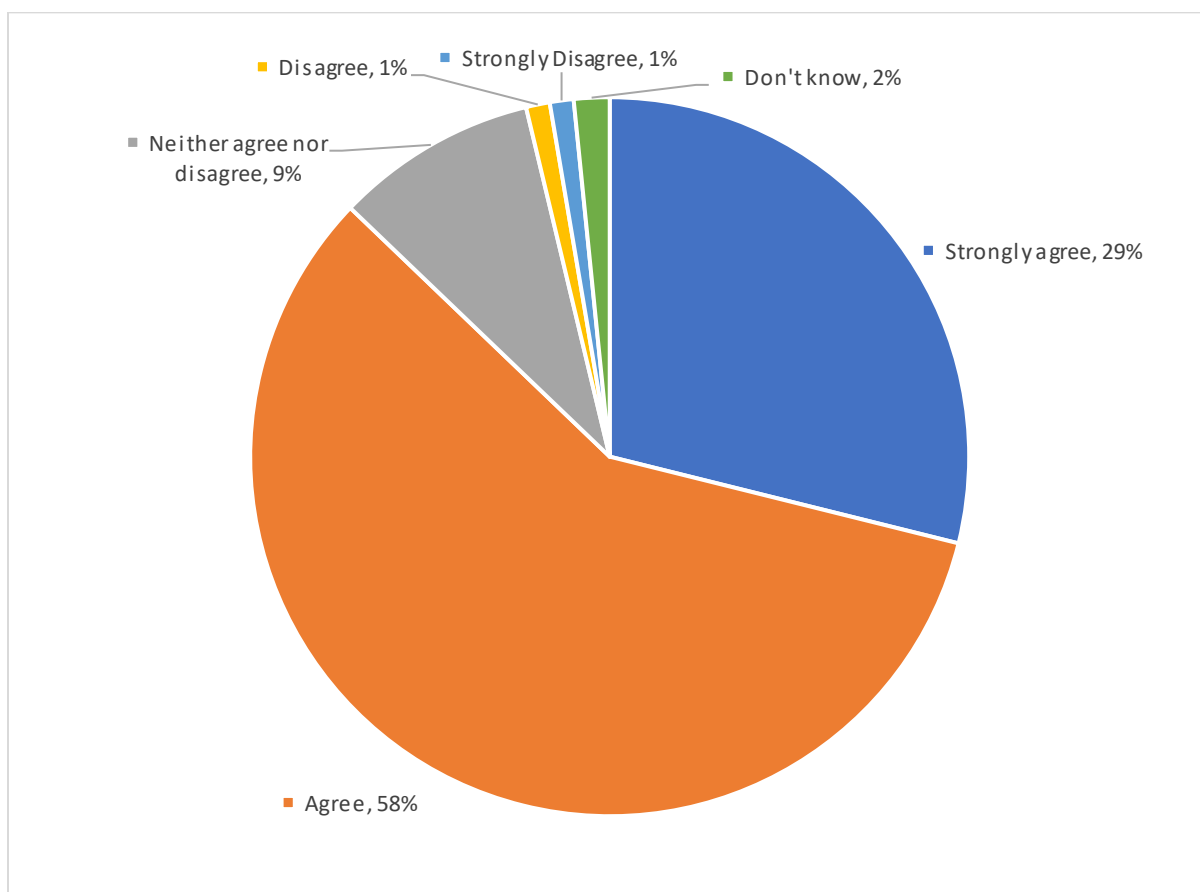
Base: 187 respondents

4.10   When asked **for comments to support their response, if anything was missing, or could anything be added,** 49 people came forward with comments (92 mentions), with one dominant theme emerging (23 mentions) with suggestions, including changes to the priorities and strategy, such as: changes need to be relevant to how people learn and live now after a period of rapid change resulting from the pandemic, wider cultural promotion and

literacy should be considered, concrete figures for book purchases should be provided, and there should be fewer priorities to make changes happen. Other general suggestions included: ensuring there is more for children's literacy, allowing locals to be involved in decision making, providing welcome packs for new residents, holding events to encourage higher footfall, and 'working much more closely with the two universities, with the city council, with local historians, archivists, detectorists, and archaeologists.'

4.11   A number of respondents also criticised the priorities/strategy (16 mentions), with some saying that they didn't understand questions or meanings, the strategy document was not easy to read and uses too much jargon. Other comments included: it wasn't clear from the strategy what or how the outcomes will be delivered or how will scarce funds be allocated and prioritised, and that 13 priorities are far too many and the strategy is too ambitious.

4.12   At the end of the survey, we provided an opportunity for people to share any other comments or feedback they had about the draft strategy. 54 people took up the opportunity, raising 156 points - many of which reiterated comments already made. Four key themes arose, with 10 mentions or more:

   o   Feedback about the strategy (including suggested changes to it) and other general suggestions (43 comments)

   o   Criticism of the strategy (17 comments)

   o   Budget and costs (17 mentions)

   o   Positive comments about libraries/services (10 mentions)

Section 5: Written responses

Summary of written responses to libraries and heritage consultation

5.1 Three written responses were received: two from organisations and one from an individual.

5.2 A response was received from the Oxford Preservation Trust outlining the useful relationship that has been establish between the Museum Service and the Learning and Access Officer. The response highlighted the education facilities offered to adults and children and the value this brings. A request was made that the strategy acknowledges these achievements as well as inserting an ambition to allow further creative discussion to happen within the forward plan.

5.3 The Oxfordshire Local History Association submitted a comprehensive response particularly regarding museum and heritage services and broadly supported the ambitions set out in the strategy. Libraries were lauded as an important community facility which have continued to thrive despite financial challenges and acknowledged the priorities were important and, whilst being supportive of them also stated they could potentially be challenging without adequate resource. Mention was also made of the services provided by the museum and heritage service and challenges the service face. There was an observation that the Oxfordshire Heritage Centre was not well located, with inadequate space and providing suggestions about how this might be addressed.

5.4 The individual who responded stated that they highly valued the mobile library service as a disabled person who receives books to their door and that they rely heavily on the service.

Section 6: Respondent profile

6.1 In total, 191 people responded to the survey. Most (155) were Oxfordshire residents (81 per cent), with one further member of the public who said they lived outside of Oxfordshire.

6.2 The remainder were stakeholders, including: 14 libraries and heritage services volunteers, eight members of staff, seven representatives of groups or organisations, three friends group members, two councillors (one from Banbury Town Council and one from Oxfordshire County Council) and one person who described themselves as a 'regular library user'.

6.3 The seven organisations responding to the survey were as follows. Two have a greater interest in libraries and five have a heritage focus.

   - o ARCh Oxfordshire
   - o Banbury Museum and Gallery
   - o Eynsham Museum and Heritage Centre
   - o Friends of Goring Library
   - o Oxfordshire Architectural and Historical Society
   - o Oxfordshire Family History Society
   - o Soldiers of Oxfordshire Museum.

6.4 Libraries and heritage services serve everyone, and we asked further demographic questions, based on the Equality Act 2010's nine protected characteristics, of the members of the public who responded, so we can better understand whose views have been captured. People were under no obligation to answer any of these questions and could reply 'prefer not to say' or simply skip the question.

   Age

6.5 Overall, people responding to the survey tended to be older. Of those who provided information about themselves, fifteen per cent of respondents were aged 45 - 54 years, around a quarter (26 per cent) were 55 - 64 years, and 42 per cent were aged 65 and over. Four per cent were aged 34 or under, and eight per cent were aged 35 - 44 years. Ten people preferred not to say.

   Sex and gender reassignment

6.6 Of those who provided information about themselves, around two thirds of respondents self-identified as female (63 per cent), and around a third identify themselves as male (32 per cent). Nine people preferred not to say, and one person said they identified using a different term. Nobody identified their gender identity as being different to the gender assigned to them at birth, and ten people preferred not to say.

   Sexual orientation

6.7   Of those who provided information about themselves, seventy-one per cent of respondents self-identified as straight/heterosexual and eight per cent identified themselves as another sexual orientation. Thirty-seven people preferred not to say.

Ethnicity

6.8   The majority of respondents (82 per cent) who provided information about themselves, self-identified as 'White (British, Irish, or any other White Background)'. Twenty-three people preferred not to say.

Marriage or civil partnership

6.9   Seven in ten respondents (70 per cent), who provided information about themselves, self-identified as being married or in a civil partnership. Fifteen people preferred not to say.

Religion or belief

6.10   Just under half of respondents who provided information about themselves (47 per cent), self-identified as Christian (including Church of England, Catholic, Protestant and all other Christian denominations). Just over a third said they had no religion, and twenty-nine people preferred not to say.

Disability, illness or health problem and carer status

6.11   Most respondents who provided information about themselves (80 per cent), identified that their day-to-day activities were not limited because of a long-term illness, health problem or disability, which lasted, or is expected to last at least 12 months. Thirty people identified they had a condition that limited their lives a little or a lot. Seven people preferred not to say.

6.12   Eight per cent of respondents who provided information about themselves self-identified as being a carer, and eight people preferred not to say.

Pregnancy and maternity

6.13   Nobody identified themselves are being pregnant, on maternity leave or returning from maternity leave, and twelve people preferred not to say.

6.14   180 people provided their postcode. These have been mapped and will be shared with the service for consideration of the data at a more local level. Other demographic information will be stripped out to maintain anonymity.

OXFORDSHIRE
COUNTY COUNCIL

Survey for the consultation on the draft library and heritage service strategy 2022-2027

To find out more about this library and heritage service strategy 2022-2027 consultation, and to view or download the draft strategy, visit: **letstalk.oxfordshire.gov.uk/library-heritage-strategy-2022-27**

You can also request a copy of the draft strategy by emailing **consultations@oxfordshire.gov.uk** or calling Oxfordshire County Council's customer services team on **01865 792422**.

If you would prefer to complete this survey online, it is available here: **letstalk.oxfordshire.gov.uk/library-heritage-strategy-2022-27**

Once you have completed this survey in response to the draft library and heritage service strategy 2022-2027, you can return it to us for free (as no stamp is needed) by writing this address as
one line in the middle of the envelope:

FREEPOST OXFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

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

All responses must be received by: **18 March 2022** when the consultation closes.

Alternative formats:
We know that some people can't, or find it difficult to, take part in online consultations or need things in a different format such as large print, Easy Read, audio, braille or a different language, to have their say.

If you, or anyone you know needs an alternative format of the survey or consultation document, paper copies of the consultation document or help with sharing their thoughts, please email: **consultations@oxfordshire.gov.uk** or call Oxfordshire County Council's customer services team on **01865 792422**. Please note the council's customer services team are unable to answer any detailed questions about the consultations, but they can take your details and ask an appropriate member of staff to get in touch.

Introduction

The draft library and heritage service strategy 2022-2027 sets out our ambitions for the future development of our services, their wider contributions to the health and wellbeing of Oxfordshire, and the challenges and opportunities we face.

To develop the strategy, we undertook a wide range of research and engagement. We are now consulting on the draft strategy and would like to hear your views about it.

We are keen for residents and partners to give us their view on the priorities we have identified and suggest any actions that might help us to meet these priorities in the short and long term.

Your responses to the following questions will help us to understand if we need to change anything in the draft strategy before the documents are finalised.

Q1. I am responding to this survey as:

(Choose any one option)

☐ an Oxfordshire resident

☐ a member of the public living outside of Oxfordshire

☐ a business (please give the name of the business you represent in the box below)

☐ a representative of a group or organisation (please give the name of the group/organisation you represent in the box below)

☐ a parish, town, district, or county Councillor (please give your name and the parish or town/ward or division you represent in the box below)

☐ libraries and heritage services staff

☐ libraries and heritage services volunteer

☐ libraries 'Friend Group' member

☐ other (please specify in the box below)

Please write the name of: your business; group/organisation; name and council parish or town/ward or division you represent; or provide more information if you have ticked 'other':

Part 1

Our vision

Our libraries and heritage services provide opportunities for people to connect and create, to learn and grow together. Inspiring us all, they are places to imagine, and they make a difference to the wellbeing of the communities they serve.

Working in partnership we will provide valued and trusted routes to a wide range of services, information and activities that reflect local needs.

Our buildings will be open and welcoming spaces, our services will be accessible and available, and we will champion digital inclusion, broadening access to everything we offer.

Q2. To what extent do you agree or disagree with our vision as set out in the draft strategy document?

Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	I don't know
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Please provide any additional comments:

Part 2

Emerging themes: people, place and partnerships

Based on the feedback we've already received from the research and engagement we have already undertaken, there are 3 core emerging themes linked to libraries and heritage services in Oxfordshire. These are - people, place and partnerships.

We have developed a set of priorities to shape our direction for the future and our actions will be centred on these three themes.

This section of the survey asks for your views about our three themes - **people**, **place** and **partnerships**. We have provided relevant content from the strategy before each set of questions.

Theme: people

People – our libraries and heritage services will support people to reach their full potential

Libraries are the place where children and adults can find that special book that helps them get the reading habit, and then borrow for free to feed that habit for life. In the museum and the history centre, people can learn new skills, gain information, and participate in activities to support them to live successful and healthy lives.

We offer so many free opportunities to everyone – including finding out about family history and the county's heritage, accessing council services and other benefits, using freely available computers to apply for jobs, meeting authors, participating in book groups, volunteering, and learning digital skills.

Q3. What activities would you like to see, or see more of, in libraries and heritages sites?

Q4. How do you think we could improve our libraries and heritage services offer for young families?

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Q5. How do you think we could improve our libraries and heritage services offer for older people?

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Q6. How do you think we could improve our libraries and heritage services offer for people in rural areas?

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Q7. Do you have any other comments/ideas about our **people** theme in the draft library and heritage service strategy?

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Theme: place

Place – our libraries and heritage services will be recognised as valuable community assets and we will strengthen their role in 'place making' and their position at the heart of their community.

Our services will place the needs of the local community at the heart of our thinking, decision making and service design. As community needs change, so must our libraries and heritage services to ensure that our physical spaces are integrated with the growing demand for digital services.

We will increase our visibility in communities to ensure increased delivery of the vital social benefits of companionship, support and inspiration. We will listen to and learn from our communities to co-design our spaces. Jointly agreeing outcomes will be crucial to success.

Q8. How can the library and heritage service best support your local area?

Q9. How might we better celebrate local heritage, and highlight Oxfordshire's rich history?

Q10. Do you have any other comments/ideas about our **place** theme in the draft library and heritage service strategy?

Theme: partnerships

Partnerships – our libraries and heritage services will deliver on national and local priorities, increasing our strategic and operational collaborations with a wide range of partners.

Libraries and heritage services constantly work in partnership with local and national organisations. We will build on existing partnerships and evaluate existing relationships alongside developing new partnerships. Partnerships will be essential in attracting funding to support our ambition, but also to
ensure we are using our heritage and library assets to deliver maximum impact for health and wellbeing, opportunities for children and young people, vibrant local economies and reducing demand on other services where possible.

Our staff will be supported to develop partnerships where relationships and local knowledge is central. Our consultation shows that our libraries and heritage services are valued by residents; however, we are seeing a decline in physical visits and borrowing in libraries. Whilst the museum and history centre are sustaining visitor numbers, our challenge remains to ensure our services reflect the needs of local communities and are places that inspire visits.

Q11. Who/which organisations do you think the library and heritage service should work (or work more) with?

Q12. Do you have any other comments/ideas about our **partnerships** theme in the draft library and heritage service strategy?

Part 3

Delivering our ambition

A summary of our priorities for 2022 to 2027 is set out in the draft strategy, under the three core emerging themes of people, place and partnerships.

There are thirteen priorities in total, with five linked to **people**, five linked to **place** and three linked to **partnerships**.

We would like your views on each of the thirteen priorities.

Theme: people

What are your views on the following five priorities?

Please indicate to what extent you agree or disagree that the following five priorities are the right ones to deliver our vision for libraries and heritage services.

Q13. We want to increase libraries and heritage contribution to learning and promote library's role in fostering literacy and a love of reading

Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	I don't know
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Q14. We want to support children and young people's learning and parents support for their children's learning

Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	I don't know
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Q15. We want to increase the impact of libraries and heritage services on health, wellbeing and active citizenship

Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	I don't know
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Q16. We want to equip libraries and heritage staff with skills to deliver on innovative services

Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	I don't know
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Q17. We want to support people to develop skills and knowledge

Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	I don't know
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Q18. Regarding these five priorities linked to **people**, do you have any comments, is anything missing, or could anything be added?

Theme: place

What are your views on the following five priorities?

Please indicate to what extent you agree or disagree that the following five priorities are the right ones to deliver our vision for libraries and heritage services.

Q19. We want to involve people in the design of libraries and heritage buildings

Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	I don't know
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Q20. We want to identify ways to reduce the carbon impact of our buildings and services

Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	I don't know
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Q21. We want to deliver services to support business start-ups to support economic growth

Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	I don't know
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Q22. We want to use data and intelligence about 'place' to target the specific needs of local communities and drive a culture of service improvement

Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	I don't know
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Q23. We want to work with communities to design services which reach the heart of communities, reflect our rich diversity, engage new audiences and are responsive to local needs

Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	I don't know
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Q24. Regarding these 5 priorities linked to **place**, do you have any comments, is anything missing, or could anything be added?

Theme: partnerships

What are your views on the following five priorities?

Please indicate to what extent you agree or disagree that the following three priorities are the right ones to deliver our vision for libraries and heritage services.

Q25. We want to develop partnerships that support more resilient, fairer and healthier communities

Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	I don't know
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Q26. We want to maximise partnerships at local and national level to improve the sustainability of services

Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	I don't know
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Q27. We value and want to strengthen our partnership with volunteers supporting service delivery

Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	I don't know
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Q28. Regarding these three priorities linked to **partnerships**, do you have any comments, is anything missing, or could anything be added?

We would now like your view on all thirteen priorities as a set.

Q29. Overall, what are your views on our set of thirteen priorities?

Please indicate to what extent you agree or disagree that the thirteen priorities are the right ones to deliver our ambition and vision for libraries and heritage services in Oxfordshire?

Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	I don't know
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Q30. Please tell us more. Is anything missing, or could anything be added?

Q31. Please use this box to share any other comments or feedback you have about our draft library and heritage services strategy.

About you

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

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

All information given is anonymous and is governed by the General Data Protection Regulations 2018.

Q32. How did you find out about this consultation? (Choose all that apply)

- ☐ Facebook
- ☐ Twitter
- ☐ Instagram
- ☐ Linkedin
- ☐ NextDoor
- ☐ Oxfordshire.gov.uk   website
- ☐ Email from Oxfordshire County Council
- ☐ Local news item (newspaper, online, radio, tv)
- ☐ Radio advert
- ☐ Oxfordshire County Councillor
- ☐ District Councillor
- ☐ Parish or town Councillor
- ☐ Local community news item
- ☐ Poster / information in local library
- ☐ Local community group / organisation
- ☐ Friend / relative
- ☐ Other (please specify)

Q33. What is your postcode?

Please provide the first part of your postcode - e.g. OX1 1 or OX14 5
(i.e. the first four or five digits, but not the letters at the end)

Q34. What is your age?

(Choose one option)

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

Q35. What is your gender?

(Choose one option)

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

Q36. Is your gender identity the same as the gender you were assigned at birth?

(Choose one option)

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Prefer not to say

Q37. What is your sexual orientation?

(Choose one option)

☐ Straight/Heterosexual

☐ Bisexual

☐ Gay or Lesbian

☐ Prefer not to say

☐ Other sexual orientation - please state:

Q38. What is your ethnic group or background?

(Choose one option)

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

☐ Black or Black British (Caribbean, African, or any other Black background)

☐ Chinese

☐ Mixed or multiple ethnic groups (White and Black Caribbean, White and Black African, White and Asian, and any other mixed background)

☐ White (British, Irish, or any other white background)

☐ Prefer not to say

☐ Other ethnic group or background (please specify)

Q39. What is your current religion, if any?

(Choose one option)

☐ Buddhist

☐ Christian (including Church of England, Catholic, Protestant and all other Christian denominations)

☐ Hindu

☐ Jewish

☐ Muslim

☐ Sikh

☐ No religion

☐ Prefer not to say

☐ Any other religion (please write below) please specify

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Q40. Are your day-to-day activities limited because of a long-term illness, health problem or disability which has lasted, or is expected to last, at least 12 months?

(Choose one option)

☐ Yes - limited a lot

☐ Yes - limited a little

☐ No

☐ Prefer not to say

Q41. Are you a carer?

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

(Choose any one option)

☐ Yes
☐ No
☐ Prefer not to say

Q42. Are you married or in a civil partnership?

(Choose one option)

☐ Yes

☐ No

☐ Prefer not to say

Q43. Are you pregnant, on maternity leave, or returning from maternity leave?

(Choose one option)

☐ Yes

☐ No

☐ Prefer not to say

Data protection and privacy

Under the Data Protection Act 2018, we (Oxfordshire County Council) have a legal duty to protect any personal information we collect from you. Oxfordshire County Council is committed to open government and this may include quoting extracts from your consultation response in our report.

We will not however, disclose the names of people who have responded unless they have provided consent. For this purpose, we ask that you are careful not to disclose personal information in your comments - for example the names of service users or children. If you do not want all or part of your response to be made public, or shared with councillors, please state below which parts you wish us to keep confidential.

View Oxfordshire County Council's privacy notice online at www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/privacy-notice

Q44. Please use this space to tell us if there is any specific part of your response you wish to keep confidential:

Stay in touch

We invite you to sign up to get regular email updates on news, events, and developments from across the county.

Q45. Would you like to sign-up?

(Choose one option)

☐ Yes

☐ No

If you have chosen 'Yes' for 'Would you like to sign-up?', please provide your email address below, so we can contact you and send a link to our sign-up page where you can tailor which communications you receive:

Thank you for taking the time to answer these questions.

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Creative, Inspiring, Inclusive

A library and heritage service for Oxfordshire now and for the future

Strategy 2022-27

OXFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Contents

1

Foreword

Oxfordshire County Council's public libraries and heritage services are trusted, free to use and open to everyone in the community.

Like all councils, Oxfordshire has a statutory duty to provide a 'comprehensive and efficient library service' but we want to go much further. We want them to inspire, challenge and stimulate those who choose to use them.

Our network of 44 libraries serves both urban and rural communities. Collectively our libraries attracted 2.3 million visits in 2019 and our flagship County Library in Oxford recorded the third highest visitor numbers in England. Alongside our own team, we are supported by Friends Groups and volunteers in 22 of our libraries and in the delivery of museum and history centre services.

Our new strategy sets out how we will create multi-purpose physical and virtual spaces that play a crucial role in ensuring the social, cultural, health and economic wellbeing of individuals and communities – places where people can access a variety of services as well as inspiring cultural assets.

We asked the views of residents from across the county, using their feedback to confirm our strategic approach and design the plan that will enable us to deliver. I'm delighted to introduce this strategy and vision for the future – placing libraries and heritage services as the heart of the fabric of our communities.

Councillor Neil Fawcett
Portfolio Holder for Community Services and Safety

Our libraries and heritage services provide opportunities for people to

Connect and create, learn and grow together.

Inspiring us all, they are places to imagine, and they make a difference to the wellbeing of the communities they serve.

1

Libraries and Heritage Services

- the National and Local Picture

Across Oxfordshire our existing network of libraries and heritage services are valued by communities and service users. But no service can stand still and, as social trends change, technology develops and communities grow, so must our services.

This strategy sets out our ambitions for the future development of our services, their wider contributions to the health and wellbeing of Oxfordshire, and the challenges and opportunities we face. To develop the strategy, we undertook a wide range of research and engagement, the findings from which are set out in section 2.

Developing this strategy

- A review of the national policy framework
- A review of the strategic drivers for change, what factors are likely to have a long-term impact on libraries and heritage services
- A consideration of the county council's wider strategic plans
- A review of our current provision and performance
- A community needs analysis
- Stakeholder engagement
- An externally led peer review

The national policy and legal framework for libraries and heritage services

Like all councils Oxfordshire has a statutory duty to provide a 'comprehensive and efficient library service' as set out in the Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964 for all persons who live, work and study in the area.

The council also has statutory responsibilities to run an archives service under the Public Records Act (1958) and the Local Government Acts (1962, 1972), and has been identified and appointed by the Lord Chancellor as the approved Place of Deposit for the public records of Oxfordshire. These Acts require the care of and provision of access to public records and the records of local authorities.

Arts Council England (ACE) is the national agency for creativity and culture, and they recognise the contributions played by libraries and heritage organisations as part of the social and cultural fabric of the country. They offer funding to support the libraries and museum sector, provide capital grants, revenue grants to National Portfolio Organisations and project grants. As such the Arts Council is a key partner and funder

for Oxfordshire County Council in delivering our libraries and heritage strategy.

Their strategy 'Let's Create' (**www.artscouncil.org.uk/letscreate**) sets out their vision for culture for 2020 to 2030.

Of particular interest to Oxfordshire County Council in supporting the development of our libraries and heritage strategy, is the focus by the Arts Council on children and young people. When consulted, the public said how much they value opportunities for children to take part in creative opportunities and they want to see more opportunities for widening and increasing participation. This is reflected by ACE as a key element of the Creative People outcomes in their **delivery plan** alongside providing high-quality early years activities.

The outcomes set out in 'Let's Create' are directly reflected in the '**Universal Offers**' which are promoted by Libraries Connected, the national support agency for libraries. The new Library Universal Offers aim to connect communities, improve wellbeing and promote equality through learning, literacy and cultural activity.

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Arts Council 'Let's Create' outcomes:

❶ **Creative People:** Everyone can develop and express creativity throughout their life.

❷ **Cultural Communities:** Villages, towns and cities thrive through a collaborative approach to culture.

❸ **A creative and cultural country:** England's cultural sector is innovative, collaborative and international.

Create

Libraries Connected Framework of Universal Offers

Culture and Creativity

Health and Wellbeing

Information and Digital

Reading

An overview of Oxfordshire's current provision

A vibrant network of libraries serving all of Oxfordshire

Oxfordshire libraries deliver a universal service for everyone in the community. Whilst many visitors use the library to borrow books and find useful information, libraries are also seen as safe and welcoming places for people to gather and make social connections.

There is growing evidence nationally that participation in library and heritage activities can lead to improved health and wellbeing, with many examples of innovative partnership working between libraries and heritage services with public health, adult social care and the NHS to explore promising new approaches to social prescribing. [1]

Our network of 44 libraries serves both urban and rural communities. Collectively our libraries attracted 2.3 million visits in 2019 and our flagship County Library in Oxford recorded the third highest visitor numbers in England.

We continually seek opportunities to improve our libraries and heritage assets and in the last five years we have refurbished a number of our libraries. In 2016, Bicester library was moved from an outdated building to Franklin House

in the town centre. The new library is larger than the original, houses more computers and has wifi connectivity to enable users to access the internet on their own devices. The new library, developed in partnership with Cherwell District Council and funded by developer's contribution, has been able to support a greater number of events to benefit the community.

County Library in the Westgate Centre was refurbished in 2017. The new library has an improved entrance to increase its visibility, an extended children's area, more study space and a greater number of computers. In addition, the library houses meeting rooms and a dedicated Makerspace – a collaborative workspace for making and learning, using new technology tools such as virtual reality. The library houses the Business and Intellectual Property Centre (BIPC), developed and run in partnership with the Department for Culture, Media and Sport and the British Library. The BIPC provides new

and aspiring entrepreneurs/small businesses with physical and online networking space and support to grow their businesses and access to online business databases and information, worth thousands of pounds, which is only available through public libraries.

We can see the benefits of co-locating libraries with other services and will continue to do so. Co-locating Charlbury library in the new community centre in 2017 enabled us to deliver longer opening hours than had been possible in the previous site and brought the service closer to local people.

We are supported by Friends Groups and volunteers in 22 of our libraries and in the delivery of museum and history centre services. Benson library was one of the first libraries to start operating under the new model of paid staff and volunteers working together to deliver services in 2012. Working together, the Friends of Benson Library (FOBL), library staff, Incredible Edible, and the scouts delivered a sustainable garden on what was previously waste land in front of the library. When combined with recent work in 2020 to replace the library roof, fit solar panels and turn the library into a carbon-neutral building, Benson can safely be said to be the 'greenest' library in the county!

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[1] A March 2020 report by the University of Oxford's Centre for Evidence-Based Medicine (CEBM), Nuffield Department of Primary Care Health Sciences and the University's Gardens, Libraries and Museums discusses the ways that cultural venues could contribute to health and wellbeing and be a part of social prescribing.

We are also proud of our home library service, a free service for people who are housebound or find it difficult to get to a library in person. As well as providing books and audio-visual items, our staff and volunteers provide vital social contact to home library service users.

One customer commented:

"The Home Library Service is invaluable. I do not drive, am not good on technical matters like Zoom and am a total reader as literacy was and is my lifeline. So, thank you and my prayers are it continues."

The Home Library Service not only connects people with books, but also people with people. It plays a key role in linking residents who may be isolated, especially in rural areas, with the wider world.

As one customer simply said:

"Thank you for coming out when a lot of people would have refused, thank you for being there."

As centres of learning and information provision, libraries are frequently associated with books, but they also offer much more. From supporting the development of digital skills to signposting a wider range of health and wellbeing services, libraries are places

that provide access to knowledge, local information, practical skills and fun activities.

We provide:

- Reading as therapy – Reading Well collections

- Home Library Services

- Reminiscence sessions delivered to people in communities across the county

- Making Every Contact Count in partnership with Public Health – signposting library users to health and wellbeing resources (>2,300 contacts in 2020)

- Space for groups to deliver activities, such as Chess Club, Dungeons and Dragons, Knit and Natter

- Volunteering opportunities

Libraries and museums: contributing to our collective health and wellbeing

The library service, working in partnership with Public Health, is a delivery partner for **Making Every Contact Count** (MECC) – an NHS initiative to contribute to improved health outcomes. MECC is an approach that uses opportunistic conversations in everyday life to encourage people to make positive changes to their physical and mental health and wellbeing.

Our libraries stock 'Reading Well' collections to help people to understand and manage their health and wellbeing using helpful reading. The books are recommended by health experts and people living with the conditions covered. In many cases health professionals will advise people to visit their local library to take advantage of these collections.

It is recognised by government and other agencies that libraries play a role in reducing social isolation. Indeed, there is increasing evidence that libraries have a significant role to play in mitigating this social problem. In 2020 research conducted by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) in Manchester found more than 80 per cent of library users who experience feelings of loneliness or isolation felt the library helped combat these feelings. Libraries have also been

supported with funding by central government as a contributor to 'A Connected Society: A strategy for tackling loneliness (2018).

We also run library services in Huntercombe and Bullingdon prisons and, in addition to making books available to prisoners, we run activities that help prisoners stay in touch with their families and support their mental health and wellbeing.

We benefit from over 1,500 volunteers who work in our libraries, the museum and history

centre. Our volunteers not only provide much valued capacity, but we know that they in turn value the experience and benefits to their emotional and physical wellbeing.

Libraries and museums: places for children and young people

Libraries play a significant role in supporting literacy and a love of reading. Starting with the very young, Oxfordshire libraries encourage reading in early years and beyond.

Our libraries offer special tickets for pre-schools, foster carers and child minders to borrow books to support the children in their care. We do not apply charges to reserve books or audiobooks or CDs for anyone under 18 and there are no overdue charges applied to children under five, childminders or looked-after children and those with reading impairments. Looked-after children and those with reading impairments are also able to benefit from free audiobooks on CD. We have special collections (Reading Well collections), including books for parents and carers, dyslexic children, braille and books to support children and young people's mental health.

All libraries encourage school visits and deliver a range of events and initiatives to increase library participation by children – these include author talks, story times, Chatterbooks reading groups and rhyme times for under 3s, and Bookstart where free books are gifted to new parents in partnership with the Book Trust.

Annually, libraries run an ebook short story competition targeted at children and young people, and the Summer Reading Challenge that aims to keep children reading over the summer holidays.

Children and young people can develop digital literacy skills through Code Clubs, robotics and other activities using new technology in the Makerspace in county library.

our libraries and museums provide:

47,000 children visited our libraries to borrow books

1,780 rhymetime, family events and Stay and Play sessions were delivered

15,000 Bookstart packages gifted to under 5s

8,500 school children engaged with the museum service through loans of boxed collections of objects, workshops at the museum and in school

1,500,000 items were borrowed by children

26,000 children and young people attended a class visit with their teacher – for many it was their first visit to a library

1,500 children engaged in informal learning activities in the museum

9,000 children participated in our Summer Reading Challenge

598 events held to support children's reading and literacy

We are working with local academics and young people to develop innovative practice around harnessing the power of virtual reality to enable young people to craft and tell stories.

Children benefit from memorable and immersive learning experiences at Oxfordshire Museum, where our collection and exhibition programme stimulates their imagination and often introduces new worlds and unknown environments. In addition, the museum plays a direct role in supporting learning at Key Stage 1 and 2 across several subjects in the curriculum. We offer a range of workshops run by museum staff, which feature a range of practical, hands-on activities using a wide variety of objects and photographs, either in the museum or in schools. We also supply box loans or museum objects to schools with a teachers' pack, which can be used to develop observation skills, critical thinking, questioning and problem skills and to stimulate creative writing, art and design.

Libraries and heritage: at the forefront of digital inclusion and literacy and widening access through digital engagement

The UK has a 'digital divide' between those who have the ability, skills, motivation or confidence to access the internet and those who do not. Some homes have no internet access, but even in those that do, challenges may arise if that access is limited. For example, 21 per cent of users in the DE socio-economic group are smartphone-only users compared to 10 per cent in the general population.

Libraries have long been recognised as part of the national solution to promoting digital inclusion since the Library Information Commission's report 'New Library: The People's Network' (1997) made the case for all public libraries to be re-equipped with new, modern computers and library staff to be re-skilled. The report recognised that libraries were the ideal vehicle to 'foster the spread of vital new technological skills amongst the population' and it is clear from our own and others' research that this remains true today.

All 44 libraries in Oxfordshire provide free access to computers for people who do not have their own devices and/or sufficient network connectivity to meet their needs,

whether these are for learning, research, job search or active civic engagement.

Our libraries provide:

Computers in every library

Library staff provide digital support to everyone without appointments

65 volunteer digital helpers provide **340** hours of digital support

Informal gadget sessions held to help people understand how to use their mobile devices

400 Code Clubs delivered to children and young people

Supporting people to use information technology is a key feature of our service. Staff and Digital Helpers across the library network provide support to residents who are not confident. Our support is often at the most basic level and in keeping with national practice. The county council's increased focus on promoting digital inclusion will help enhance the digital offer in our libraries.

Digital delivery has been growing across the libraries and heritage sectors and, in response to the outbreak of COVID-19, our services increased the volume and quality of our digital delivery. During the pandemic, our libraries offered online coffee mornings, language cafés, rhyme time and other activities digitally, including the Summer Reading Challenge.

Digital delivery has the potential to enhance inclusion within the arts and cultural sector by providing opportunities for people to enjoy content and experiences that they would not be able to access in person. It also provides the opportunity to maximise the social benefits of engaging with libraries and heritage (such as improved wellbeing). However, there is a need to implement 'digitally inclusive' approaches to online delivery, so everyone can participate and benefit – including those who struggle to get online. The 2021 report '**Digital Inclusion and Exclusion in the Arts and Cultural Sector**' published by Arts Council England and the Good Things Foundation provides a clear framework for the development of our digital offer across libraries and heritage.

Recommendations from the report are set out below.

embed and promote digital inclusion at an organisational level

promote digital inclusion at a community level through forging local partnerships

invest in staff capacity, skills, knowledge, and willingness to deliver digitally

design digital inclusion programmes that adapt to the needs of different audiences

These findings are consistent with our own local research, the **Oxfordshire Digital Inclusion review**, a collaboration between the University of Oxford and our libraries to collect data-driven insights on the digital needs of people who are under- or unconnected to the internet and other digital technologies.

In addition to offering access to computers and support to build digital skills, Oxfordshire libraries have been offering the opportunity to engage more deeply with digital technologies in the Makerspace, which opened in Oxfordshire County Library in 2018. The concept of a makerspace is to embed STEaM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Mathematics) into the library offer to the public, aiming to enhance job skills and build people's confidence using digital technologies and crafts through self-directed learning. It is a welcoming, democratic environment, providing a platform for experimentation and is open to all – from beginners to people experienced with digital technologies. It also provides an avenue to explore STEaM outside the boundaries of mainstream education.

The Makerspace in County Library has delivered many successful events, many in partnership, such as a virtual reality taster day, Raspberry Pi jams, code clubs, 3D printing and interactive 'choose your own adventure' storytelling sessions.

9

Heritage and History Services in Oxfordshire

In a county with inspirational history and vibrant rural traditions Oxfordshire has a rich heritage offer, with over 40 museums spread across the county. Many of these are staffed by volunteers.

The council supports the collection, preservation and care of Oxfordshire's heritage directly through four cultural venues: the Oxfordshire Museum in Woodstock, the Oxfordshire History Centre in Cowley, the Museums Resource Centre in Standlake (housing the reserve collection and outreach service) and Swalcliffe Barn near Banbury. The History Centre is the designated Diocesan Record Office for Oxfordshire, which preserves and makes available records of parishes, the Oxford Archdeaconry and Oxford Diocese.

Swalcliffe Barn near Banbury

Through an extensive programme of workshops in schools and at the museum, programmes of informal creative activities for families, and through collection loans to schools, the Museums Service enables children to experience the inspirational power of learning from the 'real thing'.

As well as running our own cultural venues, we also support organisations providing access to heritage across the county:

- financial support to the Victoria County History of Oxfordshire Trust, a project to complete the history of Oxfordshire

- storage and care for collections in the ownership of Abingdon Town Council and Cherwell District Council

- collections care and documentation support to enable Abingdon and Banbury Museums to exhibit material from these collections

- provision of objects to the Museum of Oxford

- museum support for the work of the 40+ museum network with mentoring, training and small grants through its work as part of the Arts Council funded South East Museum Development initiative.

Oxfordshire Museum Woodstock

2

Meeting the challenge and seizing opportunities

- developing a strategy for sustaining current services and meeting future need

In developing a new Libraries and Heritage strategy, it was important to consider strategic drivers for change, and to research and consider feedback from a number of key sources. This section covers the main elements of research and has led to the development of our ambition, vision and priorities.

The diagram below sets out the strategic drivers for change.

Community engagement
Opportunities for increased volunteering and community participation in the development and delivery of services to improve outcomes

Market trends
Reductions in income, increase in working from home, increase in people starting own business

Widening access
Key groups face barriers to taking up libraries and heritage services for a number of reasons, including geographical access, confidence and education

Needs of communities
Improving planning for local and targeted needs within a universal service, changing needs/demographics of communities and population growth

Digital access and modernisation
Increasing the depth and reach of digital services, including opportunity to access and learn about digital technologies

Better utilisation of the library and heritage property assets
Need to ensure buildings are flexible and can respond to changing community need and provide opportunities for co-location to bring services closer to people and widen user base

Importance of working collaboratively with other partners and agencies
Improved service resilience (including financial) by sharing data to support innovative developments to meet community needs

Opportunity to increase benefits of these services to support social, cultural, health and economic wellbeing
Harnessing the contribution of these services to preventative outcomes and demonstrating an impact

Impact of COVID
Increased use of digital services

Libraries and Heritage Services – contributing to the long-term vision for Oxfordshire

This strategy directly contributes to the vision and priorities set out by Oxfordshire County Council's Cabinet to make Oxfordshire a greener, fairer and healthier county.

CLIMATE ACTION
Oxfordsh... nty Council
Carbon neutral by 2030

Priorities

1 Put action to address the climate emergency at the heart of our work
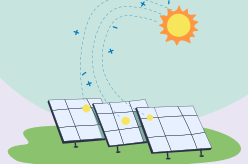
2 Tackle inequalities in Oxfordshire
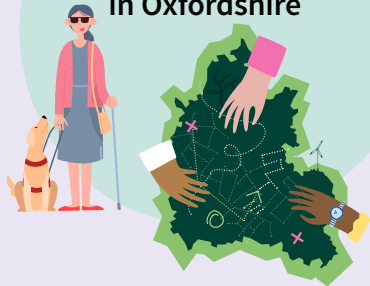
3 Prioritise the health and wellbeing of residents

4 Support carers and the social care system

5 Invest in an inclusive, integrated and sustainable transport network
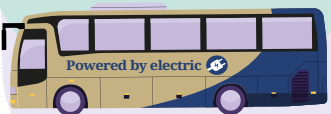
6 Improve access to nature and green spaces

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

8 Play our part in a vibrant local democracy

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

Powered by electric

a great place to live work or visit

The services also operate within a wider framework for Oxfordshire and will continue to take account of partnerships and spatial plans, such as those within the health and education sectors, and the Oxfordshire 2050 vision. The action plan to deliver this strategy will be refreshed on an annual basis and provide an ongoing opportunity for this joined-up approach to take place.

Community Needs Analysis

As part of the development of this strategy, we reviewed a range of data to identify long-term community needs, which our plans should seek to address.

Oxfordshire is a relatively rural county, covering an area of 1,006 square miles and is home to a population of 693,680 (mid-2020 population estimates). Over the next 10 years our housing-led forecasts predict an increase of 16 per cent to a total population of 830,170. There are a significant number of small communities in rural Oxfordshire, with many having fewer than 1,000 residents. 39 per cent of the population live in rural locations (towns or villages less than 10,000 people).

Oxfordshire has one of the strongest economies in the UK, with residents in the main enjoying high incomes and skill levels. Whilst Oxfordshire is one of the least deprived counties in England, there are nonetheless significant health and social inequalities across the county. These challenges are set out in the Director of Public Health's annual report '**Some are More Equal than Others: Hidden Inequalities in a Prospering Oxfordshire**'.

When we look more deeply at the data available at county level, we find that there are ten wards which feature neighbourhoods that fall within the 20 per cent most deprived in England. Residents in these wards experience multiple incidences of deprivation, lower incomes, education and skills, higher unemployment and limiting health conditions. It is also true to say that pockets of deprivation especially in rural areas, can be missed when using these types of indices, so local knowledge is key to understanding.

Oxfordshire's over 65s make up 17 per cent of the population, with the number of people over 85 projected to grow significantly over the next 20 years.

Oxfordshire is becoming a more diverse county and the predicted population growth will see this continue. Most of the ethnic minority population is based in urban areas of Oxford and Banbury. The ethnic minority population of Oxfordshire includes people of Asian/Asian British, 'other white' (many migrants from Europe) and Black origin. Ethnic minority representation is highest in the 15 – 49 age group, with just over a quarter (27 per cent) of primary school pupils from an ethnic minority background, up from 19 per cent in 2011. 25 per cent of secondary school pupils were from an ethnic minority background, up from 15 per cent in 2011.[2]

Working within a context of demographic change, population growth and addressing inequalities requires a diverse range of specific and targeted services to be delivered across all council services, including libraries and heritage services.

Stakeholder feedback

During 2021 we hosted a programme of stakeholder engagement to help develop this strategy. These sessions included focused forums with library and heritage staff, existing and new delivery partners, and councillors. Locality Boards across Oxfordshire received a presentation enabling local councillors to have the opportunity to raise local issues. We held virtual engagement sessions with councillors, staff, Friends of Libraries and volunteers. We met with other council services to identify how we could work together more effectively in the future to deliver council and community priorities. We also invited residents to comment on libraries and heritage services through an open consultation on the 'Let's Talk Oxfordshire' public engagement portal.

We are grateful for the constructive engagement of partners in these events, and for the feedback, issues and ideas raised. The headlines are summarised on the following page.

[2] Figures taken from the Oxfordshire Health and Wellbeing Joint Strategic Needs Assessment report 2021.

Key themes from our engagement

- the challenge and importance of rural access, particularly for older people

- the importance of free computer access and the Digital Helper programme of volunteers supporting people with basic digital skills in libraries

- the richness of Oxfordshire's heritage and the need to promote this more effectively

- museum objects, archives and local history activities in libraries and increased outreach by local history service

- the importance of libraries in supporting school readiness and children's learning and reading, including school visits

- libraries as spaces for young people to study

- cost of reservations of books in libraries can be a challenge and may be a barrier to those residents in rural locations

- growth in population in the county and the need to consider implications for libraries and use of S106 (section 106 developer's contributions)

- open plan arrangement of computers means that when a resident is attending a Digital Helper session, other computer users can be disrupted because of talking

- expand our audience by improving our offer

- value and invest in developing staff skills

- quality and range of stock in smaller libraries

- challenge of access to libraries and heritage services in rural locations

- use data and evidence to plan and deliver services and undertake more outreach at local level

- promote the services more effectively including making it clearer on library buildings the full set of services/opportunities available

Current performance

We have reviewed the performance of our services and find that our library services reflect national trends. Over the last five years we have experienced a decrease in visits. This reduction has been slower than the national rate; however the number of items borrowed from our libraries is declining faster than the national rate.

Analysis of our membership and borrowing by age group shows that 47 per cent of books issued in our libraries are to children and young people. This demonstrates good take-up amongst this group given they represent 23 per cent of the total population.

Visitor numbers at the Oxfordshire Museum fell significantly with the closure of the permanent galleries for 9 months between 2016 and 2017. However, investment in temporary exhibitions and the opening of a new permanent gallery enabled visitor numbers to recover and exceed their former level by 2019.

At our History Centre visitor numbers have remained constant over the past five years, as have remote enquiries about the centre's collections and researching its resources. While demand for access to the physical collection remains high, visits to the service's digital resources have seen a 33 per cent increase over the past three years. This reflects the increase in the amount of content the service has been making available online, and a shift to digital from some users.

Libraries and heritage:
Our pre-pandemic service use

2,300,000 visits to libraries

3,400,000 library items were borrowed

159,071 of these were e-books and e-audio books

there were **166,255** searches for e-magazines

670 house bound residents were supported by the Home Library Service

County library is the **4th** highest library for borrowing in Great Britain

8,355 events in libraries were attended by **98,000** people

1,200 volunteers supported services

127,092 visits to The Oxfordshire Museum

3,645 visits to Oxfordshire History Centre (17% for the first time)

3,600 remote enquiries answered by history centre

Cultural Services Peer Review 2021

During early 2021 the service was fortunate to host a Local Government Association (LGA) Peer Review. An externally led review, the team comprised cultural services professionals and experienced councillors from outside Oxfordshire. The review considered the strengths of the service, opportunities and areas for development and made a series of recommendations. These included ensuring that the foundations of a modern and efficient service are developed, including information technology and business systems to support service delivery as well as staffing arrangements.

The peer team also recommended that partnership working was developed and that the service continued to engage with the community and voluntary sector to support the development and delivery of the service. The **full report** is published on the LGA website.

Meeting the challenge and seizing opportunities – what the evidence tells us

Following a review of the evidence base collected for the development of this strategy, a series of key challenges and opportunities have been identified. Over the lifetime of this strategy, we will need to address them.

- **A review of the national policy framework**

- **A review of the strategic drivers for change, what factors will be likely to have a long-term impact on libraries and heritage services**

- **A consideration of the county council's wider strategic plans**

- **A review of our current provision and performance**

- **A community needs analysis**

- **Stakeholder engagement**

- **An externally led Peer Review**

Our analysis of demographics, current performance, and stakeholder feedback sets out the importance of:

- Responding to our changing population and the needs of different communities. This includes providing services that are locally relevant and meet the needs of service users of all ages.

- Increasing participation, access, and usage.

- Working with volunteers and service users to continually shape our offer.

Our analysis of national and local trends and the wider policy context demonstrates how we must:

- Work across the public sector to act as a gateway to a wide range of services that support the health and wellbeing of the community.

- Work with partners in the private and education sectors to ensure our services contribute to learning, sustainable economic development and entrepreneurship.

- Recognise the important role of our services in tackling challenges such as social isolation and digital inclusion.

And our own desire to modernise and provide the best possible value means we must:

- Develop an asset management strategy to shape the direction and development of our buildings, including the effective use of developer contributions and working to make sure our buildings are as green as possible.

- Embrace new technology and new ways of working to meet the need of our users.

- Invest in partnership working and skills for staff and volunteers.

3

Our ambition and vision for libraries and heritage in Oxfordshire

Ambitious for our communities, ambitious for our services

Over the next five years we want to work with our residents, visitors and partners to ensure our services are operating at their best, addressing the challenges and opportunities identified in this strategy, and offering people of all ages and backgrounds a chance to explore, interact and imagine.

This long-term vision is set out below. It directly reflects what service users and stakeholders have told us about what they value about our services, and their aspirations for its future.

In the next section of the strategy, we set out our priorities for service development to deliver our shared ambitions.

Our vision

Our libraries and heritage services provide opportunities for people to connect and create, to learn and grow together. Inspiring us all, they are places to imagine, and they make a difference to the wellbeing of the communities they serve.

Working in partnership we will provide valued and trusted routes to a wide range of services, information and activities that reflect local needs.

Our buildings will be open and welcoming spaces, our services will be accessible and available, and we will champion digital inclusion, broadening access to everything we offer.

"Always welcoming and friendly. Lovely things going on here – Language café, music sessions, half term and holiday sessions, book group, computer, family history and more. BRILLIANT!"

4

Our priorities for libraries and heritage services in Oxfordshire

To help set a clear route for our journey we have developed a set of priorities to shape our direction for the future. Our actions will be centred on three themes: people, place and partnerships.

People

Place

Parnership

People – our libraries and heritage services will support people to reach their full potential.

Libraries are the place where children and adults can find that special book that helps them get the reading habit, and then borrow for free to feed that habit for life. In the museum and the history centre, people can learn new skills, gain information, and participate in activities to support them to live successful and healthy lives. We offer so many free opportunities to everyone – including finding out about family history and the county's heritage, accessing council services and other benefits, using freely available computers to apply for jobs,

meeting authors, participating in book groups, volunteering, and learning digital skills.

Place – our libraries and heritage services will be recognised as valuable community assets and we will strengthen their role in 'place making' and their position at the heart of their community.

Our services will place the needs of the local community at the heart of our thinking, decision making and service design. As community needs change, so must our libraries and heritage services to ensure that our physical spaces are integrated with the growing demand for digital services. We will increase our visibility in communities to ensure increased delivery of the vital social benefits of companionship, support and inspiration. We will listen to and learn from our communities to co-design our spaces. Jointly agreeing outcomes will be crucial to success.

Partnerships – our libraries and heritage services will deliver on national and local priorities, increasing our strategic and operational collaborations with a wide range of partners.

Libraries and heritage services constantly work in partnership with local and national organisations. We will build on existing partnerships and evaluate existing relationships alongside developing new partnerships. Partnerships will be essential in attracting funding to support our ambition, but also to ensure we are using our heritage and library assets to deliver maximum impact for health and wellbeing, opportunities for children and young people, vibrant local economies and reducing demand on other services where possible. Our staff will be supported to develop partnerships where relationships and local knowledge is central.

Our consultation shows that our libraries and heritage services are valued by residents; however, we are seeing a decline in physical visits and borrowing in libraries. Whilst the museum and history centre are sustaining visitor numbers, our challenge remains ensuring our services reflect the needs of local communities and are places that inspire visits.

Libraries and heritage services have the potential to contribute to reducing inequality, providing opportunities for children and young people to fulfil their potential, enabling residents to gain trusted access and information to play their role as active citizens and to building a vibrant local economy. Our libraries, history centre and museum are highly valued community assets, offering residents and visitors the opportunity to connect, learn and celebrate together.

Having considered the outcome of our engagement, needs and performance assessments, we have identified what we need to do over the next five years to increase the impact of libraries and heritage on the council's ambition for creating a 'greener, fairer and healthier county'.

By working across our three themes of people, place and partnerships we will:

- ensure services meet the predicted population growth in the next five years

- support access in rural communities

- increase and widen participation in services – physical and digital

- further develop museum and library buildings as vibrant community hubs

- promote digital inclusion and enhance digital access

- support people in the community to gain digital skills, including the potential of advanced technologies such as virtual reality and artificial intelligence

- strengthen our offer for children, young people and families, including support for early years and improving school readiness

- increase programmes and activities to support people to have active and healthy lives, reducing social isolation and loneliness

- build on the role of libraries as providers of trusted information and gateways to other public services

- reduce our impact on the climate by retrofitting our buildings where possible and improving our digital offer

- increase the contribution of libraries to sustainable economic development, innovation, and entrepreneurship across the county

- increase access to heritage in person and digitally

- increase the opportunities for communities to tell the story of their local heritage.

5

Delivering our ambition

Our long-term ambitions for Oxfordshire's libraries and heritage services will be delivered with a focus on the priorities we have set out in this strategy. Our success will be measured through a range of metrics, including the number of physical and virtual users and feedback from our stakeholders and customers.

Monitoring and review

We will review the strategy annually and publish an update of our action plans. We will report on key performance measures in the council's monitoring reports and we will provide opportunities for service users, volunteers, councillors, and staff to feedback on our service.

Action plan

A summary of our priorities for 2022 to 2027 is set out on the following pages. A detailed action plan will be updated annually and will be available on our website.

People

Priorities

1.1	Increase libraries and heritage contribution to learning and promote library's role in fostering literacy and a love of reading
1.2	Support children and young people's learning and parents support for their children's learning
1.3	Increase the impact of libraries and heritage services on health, wellbeing and active citizenship
1.4	Equip libraries and heritage staff with skills to deliver on innovative services
1.5	Support people to develop skills and knowledge

Place

Priorities

2.1	Involve people in the design of libraries and heritage buildings
2.2	Identify ways to reduce the carbon impact of our buildings and services
2.3	Deliver services to support business start-ups to support economic growth
2.4	Use data and intelligence about 'place' to target the specific needs of local communities and drive a culture of service improvement
2.5	Work with communities to design services which reach the heart of communities, reflect our rich diversity, engage new audiences and are responsive to local needs

Partnership

Priorities

3.1	Develop partnerships that support more resilient, fairer and healthier communities
3.2	Maximise partnerships at local and national level to improve the sustainability of services
3.3	Value and strengthen our partnership with volunteers supporting service delivery

Appendix 3: Libraries and Heritage Strategy Action Plan: Indicative actions, timescales and performance measures

1. People - Libraries and Heritage services will support people to reach their full potential			
L&H Strategy Priorities	**Indicative actions**	**Timescale**	**Indicative output measures / impact outcomes**
1.1 Increase libraries and heritage contribution to learning and promote library's role in fostering literacy and a love of reading	• Review Libraries engagement programme for children and young people and initiate enhanced offer • Support Early Years development and school readiness by implementing Every Child a Library Member (ECALM) i.e. enabling library membership for children at birth	Year 1 Year 1 (Pilot) Year 2 (Roll out)	• Increased number of events aimed at children and young people • Increased take-up of library services by under 5s • Increased % of under 5s registered as library members • Increased Bookstart engagement levels • Increased borrowing by Early Years (ie under 5s) and children and young people in general
1.2 Support children and young people's learning and parents support for their children's learning	• Review Libraries learning offer for children and young people and their families • Identify opportunities for the History Centre to develop learning offer for schools • Review and improve Libraries and Heritage offer to local schools • Identify new partners to deliver a programme a STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Mathematics)	Year 2 Year 2 Year 2 (ongoing) Year 2	• Increased number of school visits to libraries (especially in targeted areas) • Increased number of learning activities delivered across libraries and heritage • Increased heritage engagement and support for achievement at key stages • Improved planning and communication with schools and education partners
1.3 Increase the impact of Libraries and Heritage services on health, wellbeing and active citizenship	• Sustain and build on the MECC (Making Every Contact Count) model, increasing signposting to available support • Explore opportunities for Libraries and Heritage to contribute to improved health and well-being through social prescribing	Year 1 (ongoing) Year 2 (ongoing)	• Number of MECC interventions increased • Number of partners identified/service level agreements in place and new services piloted, evaluated, and mainstreamed across services • Range of resources and number of relevant activities/events delivered

1.4 Support people to develop skills and knowledge	• Build on the Libraries' Digital Helper programme and develop opportunities for people to access and gain digital skills and confidence • Work with further education and other adult learning providers to develop learning offer	Year 2 Year 3	• Number of ICT access sessions delivered, especially in targeted areas (re. tackling digital exclusion) • Increased number of digital learning/support sessions delivered • Increased opportunities for self-directed learning • Increased access to learning and skills development opportunities for residents • Increased employability of residents
1.5 Equip our staff to deliver innovative services	• Implement a Workforce Development Plan to equip staff with skills and knowledge to deliver innovative services including digital skills	Year 2	• Improved skills of staff • Improved staff retention • Improved customer experience

2. Place - Libraries and Heritage services will be recognised as valuable community assets and will strengthen their role in 'place making'.

L&H Strategy Priorities Activity	Initial detailed actions	Planned timescale	Indicative measures and outcomes
2.1 Involve people in the design of libraries and heritage buildings	• Complete Library and Heritage Asset Development Plan • Develop and implement a Libraries and Heritage Asset Development Strategy to modernise our buildings and respond to population growth and climate reduction • Actively engage residents and stakeholders in planning the design of Libraries and Heritage buildings using people-centred design	Year 1 (ongoing) Year 1 (ongoing)	• Improved customer satisfaction ratings • Completion of initial evidence-led assessment of current Libraries and Heritage assets • Number of community engagement/co-production sessions around future of Libraries and Heritage assets • Increased capital investment in Libraries and Heritage network • Number of targeted projects/developments to meet projected population growth • Improved capacity for museum and local history storage

			• Increased capacity and facilities for Libraries and Heritage to support community activities and participation
2.2 Identify ways to improve the carbon impact of our buildings and services	• Prioritise reduction of the carbon footprint in our buildings in the Libraries and Heritage Asset Development Strategy • Identify ways to reduce the carbon impact of general operations (such as the Home Library Service, stock distribution) • Review and improve the information/ resources provided and engagement programming around the Climate emergency	Year 1 (ongoing) Year 1 (ongoing) Year 1 (ongoing)	• Improved sustainability (via carbon reduction/energy efficiency initiatives etc.) of Libraries and Heritage buildings and operations • Number of carbon reduction/climate emergency activities and initiatives in place, and resources provided • Number of staff completed Climate Action training
2.3 Deliver services to support business start-ups to support economic growth	• Establish a sustainable 'hub and spoke' Business and Intellectual Property Centre (BIPC) network in OCC libraries • Work with partners to deliver a range of business support to aspiring entrepreneurs and SMEs	Year 1 Year 1 (ongoing)	• Number of local entrepreneurs supported to start/grow businesses • Tangible/positive contribution to local economy, especially in targeted areas • Increased number of women, BAME, young entrepreneurs supported
2.4 Use data and intelligence about 'place' to target the specific needs of local communities and drive a culture of service improvement	• Develop a fit for purpose performance and planning framework for Libraries and Heritage • Develop community profiles and performance monitoring/targets for individual libraries • Develop impact measures to understand the contribution of Libraries and Heritage services to corporate priorities and community outcomes	Year 1 Year 1 (ongoing) Year 2 (ongoing)	• Improved customer satisfaction ratings • Complete set of community profiles and regular performance monitoring and analysis • Improved understanding of performance at local and county wide level • Improved consistency in capturing data and impact intelligence, with alignment to corporate Key Performance Indicators and priorities • Increased degree of evidence-led service development
2.5 Work with communities to design services	• Review the current engagement programme across Libraries and Heritage	Year 1 / 2	• Improved customer satisfaction ratings • Baseline current levels of usage and participation

| which reach the heart of communities, reflect our rich diversity, engage new audiences and are responsive to local needs | with the aim of increasing access and widening participation from all groups
• Implement an audience development and marketing with targets to increase and widen participation
• Explore enhanced models of service delivery to improve access for all including rural communities | Year 1 / 2 (ongoing)

Year 2 / 3 (ongoing) | • Number of engagement sessions delivered
• Increased levels of active usage and participation coupled with and greater diversity of usage and participation
• Creation of a communications and marketing strategy and plan designed to attract wider/more diverse audience
• Increased number/delivery of initiatives to combat rural isolation |

Partnership – *Libraries and Heritage services will deliver on national and local priorities, increasing strategic and operational collaborations with the full range of partners*			
L&H Strategy Priorities Activity	**Initial detailed actions**	**Planned timescale**	**Indicative measures and outcomes**
3.1 Develop partnerships that support more resilient, fairer and healthier communities	• Review existing partnerships and establish new/more formal ones • Ensure the Oxfordshire business innovation and support sector are embedded in BIPC delivery • Work with further education, third (charity/voluntary) and commercial sector to strengthen library's role in combatting digital exclusion	Year 1 (ongoing) Year 1 (ongoing) Year 2 (ongoing)	• Increased number of service level agreements in place • Increased number of/new partnerships in areas that reflect strategic priorities • Improved opportunities to bid for funding through partnership working • Number of ICT access sessions delivered, especially in targeted areas (re. tackling digital exclusion) • Increased number of digital learning/support sessions delivered
3.2 Maximise partnerships at local and national level to improve the	• Develop a plan to maximise funding from national and regional partners to improve financial sustainability and invest in service delivery	Year 1 to 5 Year 1 to 5	• Embedding of co-location potential etc. within the Asset Development Plan • Increased number of service level agreements in place

sustainability of services	• Identify partners to co-locate and share our building assets where practicable		• Increased number of/new partnerships in areas that reflect strategic priorities • Increased level of external funding (or in-kind contribution) generated • Key partners contribute expertise to capturing the data needed to demonstrate the contribution of Libraries and Heritage services to strategic outcomes
3.3 Value and strengthen our partnership with volunteers supporting service delivery	• Review and update all community partnership agreements • Review volunteer strategy, policy and practice • Identify opportunities to strengthen the volunteer voice/roles in Libraries and Heritage • Increased diversity across the volunteer community	Year 1 Year 3	• Complete updated set of partnership agreements • Increased number of volunteers/no. of volunteer hours • Increased number of volunteer roles developed and delivered (aligned to service priorities) • Number of volunteer discussion sessions/partnership meetings held • Greater diversity of volunteers

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Divisions: N/A

CABINET – 24 MAY 2022

APPOINTMENTS 2022/23

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 Future Oxfordshire Partnership

4. The Future Oxfordshire Partnership (a 'Joint Committee' formerly the Oxfordshire Growth Board) was established to:

   • Coordinate local efforts to manage economic, housing and infrastructure development in a way that is inclusive and maximises local social and environmental benefits;

   • Support the development of local planning policy that meets the UK Government's stated aim of net zero carbon by 2050, and contributes towards biodiversity gain whilst embracing the changes needed for a low carbon world; and,

   • Seek to secure funding in the pursuit of these aims and oversee the delivery of related work programmes delegated to it by the Joint

Committee's constituent local authority members.

Future Oxfordshire Partnership Advisory Sub Groups

5. The Terms of Reference establish advisory sub groups to the Partnership to oversee programmes to oversee specific work programmes or broader thematic areas as required, to monitor progress against the key milestones and make recommendations to the Partnership 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 Partnership Joint Committee. The Chair of the sub-groups will be appointed by the Partnership and normally drawn from the voting membership of the Partnership acting as an independent Chair.

Future Oxfordshire Partnership Scrutiny Panel

7 The Terms of Reference also establishes a Partnership Scrutiny Panel to enable effective and coordinated scrutiny of Partnership functions and decisions. The Scrutiny Panel is 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 Partnership remains. The Terms of Reference and working arrangements for the Scrutiny Panel were developed with input from the Scrutiny Committee Chairs of the individual councils. The Chair is 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 Safer Oxfordshire Partnership being the representative of the County Council on the Thames Valley Police & Crime Panel.

The current strategic partnerships are listed in **Section 3**.

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 2022/23

Background papers: Nil

Contact Officer: Colm Ó Caomhánaigh, Committee Officer, Tel 07393 001096

May 2022

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Division(s): N/A

CABINET – 24 May 2022

FORWARD PLAN AND FUTURE BUSINESS

Items identified from the Forward Plan for Forthcoming Decision

Topic/Decision   **Portfolio/Ref**

Cabinet, 21 June 2022

Topic/Decision	Portfolio/Ref
▪ **A40 Access to Witney - Compulsory Purchase Order and Side Road Orders** To seek approval of the Statement of Reasons and Orders Plans and approval to make the Compulsory Purchase and Side Road Orders.	Cabinet, 2022/012 - Cabinet Member for Travel & Development Strategy
▪ **Local Transport and Connectivity Plan (LTCP)** To seek agreement of the LTCP document and supporting strategies for adoption by full Council in July 2022. **Joint Responsibilities:** Cabinet Member for Highway Management and Cabinet Member for Travel & Development Strategy	Cabinet, 2021/237 - Cabinet Member for Highway Management, Cabinet Member for Travel & Development Strategy
▪ **National Bus Strategy - Enhanced Partnership** To seek approval of the Enhanced Partnership.	Cabinet, 2021/214 - Cabinet Member for Highway Management
▪ **SEND top-up funding for Schools** To update on the SEND Review:right support, right place, right time and to agree the SEND top-up funding for Schools.	Cabinet, 2022/064 - Deputy Leader of the Council
▪ **Annual Performance Report 2021-2022** To note the report.	Cabinet, 2022/067 - Cabinet Member for Finance, Cabinet Member for Corporate Services
▪ **Cabinet response to Transgender Motion from Council** To agree the recommendations set out in the paper.	Cabinet, 2022/065 - Cabinet Member for Public Health & Equality
▪ **Provisional Capital Outturn 2021/22**	Cabinet, 2021/225 -

To note the performance against the capital programme for 2021/22 as set out in the report.	Cabinet Member for Finance
▪ **Treasury Management Annual Performance Report** Cabinet is asked to note the report and recommend Council to note the council's treasury management activity in 2021/22.	Cabinet, 2022/027 - Cabinet Member for Finance
▪ **Workforce Report and Staffing Data - Quarter 4 - January-March 2022** Quarterly staffing report providing details of key people numbers and analysis of main changes since the previous report.	Cabinet, 2021/220 - Cabinet Member for Corporate Services

Cabinet Member for Highway Management, 23 June 2022

▪ **Bicester – various locations – new and amended waiting restrictions** A decision is sought on new and amended waiting restrictions.	Cabinet Member for Highway Management, 2022/032 - Cabinet Member for Highway Management
▪ **Oxford: E-scooter trial – continuation of enabling traffic regulation orders for duration of extended trial period** A decision is sought on the continuation of enabling traffic regulation orders for duration of extended trial period.	Cabinet Member for Highway Management, 2022/053 - Cabinet Member for Highway Management
▪ **Caversfield - Fringford Road and Aunt Ems Lane - proposed 40mph speed limit** A decision is sought on a proposed 40mph speed limit.	Cabinet Member for Highway Management, 2022/061 - Cabinet Member for Highway Management
▪ **Combe - proposed 20mph speed limit** A decision is sought on a proposed 20mph speed limit.	Cabinet Member for Highway Management, 2022/059 - Cabinet Member for Highway Management
▪ **Crowmarsh - The Street - proposed reduction in length of waiting restrictions** A decision is sought on a proposed reduction in length of waiting restrictions.	Cabinet Member for Highway Management, 2022/056 -

	Cabinet Member for Highway Management
▪ **Didcot: B4493 Wantage Road - Proposed Waiting Restrictions** To seek approval of the proposals.	Cabinet Member for Highway Management, 2022/003 - Cabinet Member for Highway Management
▪ **East Hagbourne - proposed 20mph speed limit** A decision is sought on a proposed 20 mph speed limit restrictions.	Cabinet Member for Highway Management, 2022/029 - Cabinet Member for Highway Management
▪ **Faringdon Market Place - proposed extension of days of operation of market waiting restrictions** A decision is sought on the proposed extension of days of operation of market waiting restrictions.	Cabinet Member for Highway Management, 2022/054 - Cabinet Member for Highway Management
▪ **Finmere - Mixbury - proposed 50mph speed limit** A decision is sought on a proposed 50mph speed limit.	Cabinet Member for Highway Management, 2022/055 - Cabinet Member for Highway Management
▪ **Garsington - Pettiwell - proposed waiting restrictions** A decision is sought on proposed waiting restrictions.	Cabinet Member for Highway Management, 2022/057 - Cabinet Member for Highway Management
▪ **Middle Barton and Westcot Barton proposed 20mph and 30mph speed limits** A decision is sought on proposed 20 mph and 30mph speed limit restrictions.	Cabinet Member for Highway Management, 2022/038 - Cabinet Member for Highway Management
▪ **Oxford – David Walter Close - proposed waiting restrictions** A decision is sought on proposed waiting restrictions.	Cabinet Member for Highway Management, 2022/053 -

	Cabinet Member for Highway Management
▪ **Oxford: Ferry Hinksey Road - Proposed Amendment to Waiting Restrictions and Parking Places** To seek approval of the proposals.	Cabinet Member for Highway Management, 2021/194 - Cabinet Member for Highway Management
▪ **Oxford: Keble Road and Old Greyfriars St** A decision is sought on a proposed electric vehicle charging parking places.	Cabinet Member for Highway Management, 2022/068 - Cabinet Member for Highway Management
▪ **Radley - Whites Lane - proposed prohibition of motor vehicles** A decision is sought on a proposed proposed prohibition of motor vehicles.	Cabinet Member for Highway Management, 2022/058 - Cabinet Member for Highway Management
▪ **Stoke Lyne - proposed 20mph and 30mph speed limits** A decision is sought on propsoed 20mph and 30mph speed limits.	Cabinet Member for Highway Management, 2022/060 - Cabinet Member for Highway Management
▪ **Upper Heyford: Camp Road - Proposed Waiting Restrictions and Loading Bay** To seek approval of the proposals.	Cabinet Member for Highway Management, 2022/010 - Cabinet Member for Highway Management
▪ **Warborough - Thame Road - proposed waiting restrictions** A decision is sought on proposed waiting restrictions.	Cabinet Member for Highway Management, 2022/062 - Cabinet Member for Highway Management

Divisions Affected -

CABINET

24 May 2022

Delegation of the Power to Prosecute in the Matter Known as Operation Argus

Report by Director of Community Safety and Chief Fire Officer

RECOMMENDATION

1. **The Cabinet is RECOMMENDED to**

    (a) Pursuant to section 101 of the Local Government Act 1972 and section 9EA of the Local Government Act 2000, approve the delegation of specific powers from the county council to the London Borough of Bromley in relation to the investigation and prosecution of companies and individuals associated with the investigation known as Operation Argus

    (b) Authorise the Head of Legal and/or the Director of Law and Governance to enter the necessary agreements to implement this delegation

Executive Summary

2. The London Borough of Bromley (LBB) have been investigating a number of complaints from members of the public involving potential offences of fraud, including conspiracy, regulatory offences and/or offences under the Serious Crime Act 2015, referred to as Operation Argus.

3. A consumer affected by this alleged fraud is a resident of Oxfordshire and is willing to support the investigation and any associated criminal proceedings

4. A local authority's power to prosecute an offence is derived from section 222 of the Local Government's Act 1972, where the local authority considers such action to be expedient for the promotion or protection of the interests of the inhabitants of their area

5. Previous court decisions have confirmed the wide definition of the statutory power and discretion given to local authorities under section 222 to prosecute in legal proceedings, but that each case will turn on its own facts

6. However, as none of the complainants associated with the alleged offending reside within LBB and as the suspect companies have ceased trading, it may

prove challenging to establish that a prosecution is in the interests of the inhabitants LBB

7. As a result, LBB do not wish to rely on section 222 and are asking those authorities with complainants who reside within their own area to provide a specific delegation of authority

8. The agreement would authorise LBB to conduct investigations into the companies and individuals involved in the alleged offending, instigate and conduct such legal proceedings as may appear appropriate against all such companies and individuals, in connection with any offences as may appear to have been committed within the administrative area of Oxfordshire County Council

9. If agreed, all and any expenses and investigation costs incurred for Operation Argus will be met by the LBB. LBB would keep Oxfordshire County Council fully informed of the conduct, progress and outcome of any relevant activities on the part of the LBB arising from this agreement.

Exempt Information

10. The information contained within the annexes to this report relates to action taken or to be taken in connection with the prevention, investigation or prosecution of crime

11. The public should therefore be excluded for any consideration of the annexes to this report because its discussion in public would be likely to lead to the disclosure to members of the public present of information in the following category[ies] prescribed by Part I of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended):

    1. Information relating to any individual

    7. Information relating to any action taken or to be taken in connection with the prevention, investigation or prosecution of crime

    and since it is considered that, in all the circumstances of the case, the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information, in that disclosure may prejudice active criminal investigations and potential legal proceedings by another party.

Corporate Policies and Priorities

12. Protecting residents and business from the harms caused by criminals and those breaching consumer protection legislation supports the strategic priorities of supporting the health and wellbeing residents, as well as helping to maintain Oxfordshire as a centre of innovation

13. The recommended course of action also meets with the stated purpose of the trading standards service - to keep individuals, communities, businesses and livestock safe from harm; protect individuals and businesses from financial loss and preventing unfair practices.

Financial Implications

14. No financial implications for Oxfordshire County Council.

   Comments checked by:

   Ian Dyson, Assistant Director of Finance, ian.dyson@oxfordshire.gov.uk

Legal Implications

15. Any agreement entered in to by officers, in relation to this requested delegation of authority, will only be done so on the basis that there will be no resource implications for Oxfordshire County Council and that all legal action will be resourced by LBB. In regard to costs, Oxfordshire County Council will not be liable for costs arising from such proceedings or any other proceedings arising therefrom and LBB will carry the burden of costs in this matter.

16. It is acknowledged that there are differing views on a local authority's ability to prosecute in legal proceedings, where complainants may be resident outside of their administrative area. If authority is delegated to LBB in this matter, it is in response to a specific request of LBB and should not be seen as creating a precedent as to how Oxfordshire County Council may treat a similar matter.

   Comments checked by:

   Sukdave Ghuman, Head of Legal, Sukdave.ghuman@oxfordshire.gov.uk

Risk Management

17. Whilst the majority of any risk associated with the substantive issue that this agreement seeks to deal with rests with LBB, such as the inherent prosecution risk any legal action carries, reputational risks to Oxfordshire County Council may be present. This includes both from any unsuccessful/unjustified legal action taken by LBB, as well as being seen to prevent the inclusion of the Oxfordshire-based complaint within the intended course of action.

18. These risks are mitigated by LBB accepting all and any expenses incurred in relation to Operation Argus, as well as a commitment from LBB to keep Oxfordshire County Council fully informed of the conduct, progress and outcome of any relevant activities on the part of the LBB arising from this agreement.

NAME   Rob MacDougall, Director for Community Safety and Chief Fire Officer

Annex: Annex 1 – Background Information (exempt information)

Annex 2 – Draft Agreement under Section 101 Local Government Act (exempt information)

Contact Officer: Jody Kerman, Head of Trading Standards, 07909 905514, jody.kerman@oxfordshire.gov.uk

May 2022

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