One council: One Oxfordshire

Contents

Why One Oxfordshire?

We set out why Oxfordshire works as a footprint for local government reorganisation through a clear analysis of our place, people, partnerships and economy – and how this supports our case for change for One Oxfordshire.

We demonstrate our financial resilience and share what people think of our proposal. We evidence their support as well as show how we will meet people's needs and concerns.

One Oxfordshire provides the strongest opportunities associated with having all the levers of local government at the disposal of one council.

Let's make this happen – let's build one Oxfordshire Council.

1. Introduction

1.1 Foreword

"Every place is unique, but Oxfordshire is truly special. It is a county of contrasting and connected communities whose ideas and discoveries have changed lives around the world, making it an exceptional place to live and work.

"From world-class universities and cutting-edge science parks to a rich cultural heritage and a highly skilled population of over 760,000, Oxfordshire plays a vital role in driving innovation, job creation and economic prosperity for the region and the nation.

"Connectivity and diversity are key to our county's success. Our internationally renowned campuses such as Bicester Motion, Culham, Harwell and Milton Park, are pioneering new developments in AI, quantum computing, space technology, biomedical sciences and robotics. These are boosted by the exchange of ideas and talent from our academic institutions and businesses – start-ups and global giants.

"However, the county is not without its challenges. An ageing population, rising demand for services, a housing affordability ratio, which is among the highest in England, and a lack of transport connectivity between towns, cities and rural areas are hindering economic growth, and placing services under significant strain.

"The government's call for local government reform is therefore both timely and necessary. We have listened carefully to our residents, partners and stakeholders, and we are ready to lead the way through One Oxfordshire.

"We will deliver a £63 million annual saving by creating a single county unitary. We will reduce duplication, protect our critical services and have the scale to focus and invest in prevention and early help, tackling inequalities and homelessness.

"One Oxfordshire is not just a structural solution; it is a vision for a stronger, fairer and more ambitious future for the county. By bringing together all the levers of local government into a single, resilient authority, we can unlock the full potential of our people and places, drive innovation and deliver the high quality services our communities deserve.

"This is a once in a generation chance to seize the opportunities that public sector reform, together with devolution, offers. One Oxfordshire will provide the scale and stability to withstand future financial shocks, the efficiency to maximise value for money, and the ambition to deliver real and lasting benefits for every resident and business, and for the nation as a whole."

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

📍 **Hook Norton**

1.2 Executive summary

The government has laid out its plans for the future of local government, planning and infrastructure, the NHS and the industrial strategy in England. This comes at a time when public finances are under significant strain and councils across England are facing either immediate or future crises as a result. Oxfordshire, while not immune to these challenges, is well placed to respond to them – not least as result of prudent and far-sighted treasury and financial management over many years.

Oxfordshire is a county of national and global significance, renowned for its world-class universities, cutting-edge science and technology clusters, and vibrant communities. Yet, the current two-tier system of local government no longer serves the county's needs. Fragmentation, duplication and inefficiency are impeding Oxfordshire's ability to deliver the scale of transformation, efficiency and resilience required by the government's devolution and public sector reform agenda. Change is needed to enable all Oxfordshire's residents to thrive and for the county to realise its full potential as an economic and innovation powerhouse.

The government's statutory invitation and the English Devolution White Paper have made clear that local government must be large enough to withstand financial shocks, deliver high quality services, and unlock the benefits of devolution. The proposal for One Oxfordshire – a single unitary council for the county – offers a robust, evidence-based proposal that meets and exceeds the government's criteria for reorganisation: scale, efficiency, financial resilience and improved outcomes for residents.

Our proposal for local government reorganisation sets out why One Oxfordshire is the right footprint for the county – one which will deliver stronger, simpler services that are closer to communities, connected and cost effective.

Our case for change

Financial resilience and value for money

The financial case for One Oxfordshire is compelling and independently verified. We will deliver a £63 million annual saving by creating a single unitary council for Oxfordshire, with total net savings of £163 million achieved by year five. These savings are achieved through the aggregation of services, transformation of delivery and the elimination of duplication across six councils.

With transition costs of under £22 million, the payback period is just 1.3 years. Moreover, this proposal does not require ongoing government financial support. One Oxfordshire provides the fastest, cheapest and lowest risk transition to a new council.

Financial modelling demonstrates that only One Oxfordshire has the scale to withstand future funding shocks, including those anticipated from the Fair Funding Review 2.0 and business rates reset, ensuring that services are protected for the long-term.

Service continuity, integration and improvement

Service continuity and improvement are at the heart of this proposal. Oxfordshire County Council already delivers services on a countywide footprint, providing 85 per cent of local government services by expenditure. One Oxfordshire will avoid the costly and risky disaggregation of high-performing services, particularly in adult and children's social care. Our proposal is laser-focused on protecting and improving these critical services, with a proven track record of "good" ratings from Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission.

By integrating upper and lower tier services, One Oxfordshire will enable systematic transformation – unifying waste services, creating person-centred homelessness support and joining up planning, housing and highways. Residents and businesses will benefit from a single front door to all services, simplifying access and reducing confusion.

The risks of fragmentation are clear: disaggregating services would increase costs, reduce standards, and undermine the progress made in areas such as the Oxfordshire Way – a prevention and early intervention programme that has delivered a 67 per cent reduction in adults waiting for social care assessment and a 20 per cent reduction in long-term care needs. A single unitary would also avoid the unnecessary, costly and temporary disaggregation of Oxfordshire Fire and Rescue Service.

Only a single council can safeguard, promote and optimise Oxfordshire's unique asset base, ensuring that high-performing services are not only preserved but enhanced.

Economic growth and national impact

Oxfordshire is one of only four county areas that are net contributors to the UK exchequer, generating £29.3 billion in GVA annually and supporting 430,000 jobs. The county hosts the highest concentration of science research facilities in Western Europe and has attracted over £3.1 billion in foreign direct investment since 2017. Major global firms such as Moderna and BMW, alongside the University of Oxford's spinouts valued at £6.4 billion, underpin a thriving innovation ecosystem.

One Oxfordshire will provide the governance and strategic clarity needed to build a successful Oxford-Cambridge Growth Corridor, unlock housing and infrastructure, and drive inclusive growth – directly supporting the government's Industrial Strategy.

The Knowledge Spine, which connects Bicester, Oxford and the Science Vale, serves as the backbone of Oxfordshire's innovation ecosystem, supporting high-skill employment and enterprise growth. Oxfordshire's economic coherence has long been recognised by central government, and a unified approach through One Oxfordshire will enhance the county's capacity to drive national growth through innovation and expertise. Evidence is compelling that Oxfordshire's economic success, particularly in advanced research and manufacturing, has created significant employment and

growth in other regions of the UK. This could be stalled if economic coherence is lost through disaggregation and reduced scale.

Strategic planning, housing and infrastructure

The current system of local governance has failed to deliver the strategic planning and housing Oxfordshire needs. In the current planning round, Oxford City Council has had its local plan rejected at examination stage for failing to meet the duty to cooperate. The planning inspectorate has also written to Vale of White Horse District Council and South Oxfordshire District Council recommending that their joint-plan is withdrawn, again on the issue of the duty to cooperate.

In addition, the Oxfordshire Strategic Vision – the precursor to the Oxfordshire Joint Statutory Spatial Plan (Oxfordshire Plan 2050) – failed in 2022 on the issue of agreeing housing numbers. These failures demonstrate the urgent need for a fresh start and that scale is essential when making decisions about growth.

One Oxfordshire will create a single local planning authority, streamlining decision-making, resources and governance. This will support faster, more coordinated progress towards housing and development goals, ensuring coordination of infrastructure and a localised and authentic approach to community involvement.

The county's ambitious OxRAIL 2040 strategy and the ability to act as a single point of contact for major infrastructure projects will enable Oxfordshire to respond effectively to national priorities and deliver regeneration at

scale. Delivery of sustainable development is critical to the county's economic success and to the government's wider growth agenda.

Partnership, collaboration and devolution

We will operate as a strong partner within a future Thames Valley mayoral strategic authority, enabling coherent regional planning, transport and economic development. One Oxfordshire supports government ambitions for integrated health and care, with pooled budgets and neighbourhood-level delivery in partnership with the NHS and voluntary and community sector. Oxfordshire's extensive network of partnerships and organisations, strengthened after the COVID pandemic, will be leveraged to deliver improved outcomes for residents and businesses.

Our One Oxfordshire proposal is underpinned by extensive engagement with residents, MPs, businesses, public sector providers and our workforce, including focus groups, interviews and a statistically representative residents' survey. Lessons from comparable unitarisation programmes, such as in Buckinghamshire, together with independent research and assurance from sector experts, have informed our transition and implementation plan.

Democratic accountability and localism

One Oxfordshire will strengthen local democracy through robust neighbourhood governance, area committees and closer partnerships with town and parish councils. We will ensure that decision making is brought closer to communities, their local voices heard, with clear accountability and a single set of

councillors operating at the heart of their areas. Oxford's city status and identity will be protected through modern charter trustees and dedicated governance arrangements.

We recognise the importance of local identity and a new council will be designed to ensure that the benefits of reform are felt in every community across the county. Residents have made it clear that they want a council that is cost effective, delivers consistent services that are easy to access, and listens and responds to local communities. One Oxfordshire will address these priorities and make local government work better for everyone.

Risk mitigation and deliverability

Risk mitigation and deliverability are central to the One Oxfordshire approach. This is the fastest, lowest risk and lowest cost transition of all three options, building on the firm foundations of existing countywide delivery and minimising disruption for residents and partners. The proposal is grounded in robust financial planning, independent assurance, and a clear implementation framework that balances strategic oversight, operational continuity and comprehensive stakeholder engagement.

The transition plan is structured around clear phases, with dedicated programme governance, risk management and independent assurance to ensure that the benefits of reform are realised safely and effectively. The county council's experience, financial resilience and partnerships provide a strong and robust platform for delivering One Oxfordshire and leading the transition to an ambitious new council.

One Oxfordshire: a compelling, evidence-based solution

One Oxfordshire is the only proposal that fully meets the government's criteria for local government reorganisation. It offers the scale to serve over 760,000 residents; the efficiency to maximise savings and provide the best value for money; the resilience to withstand financial shocks and invest in long-term growth; and the service excellence to protect and improve critical services. It is directly aligned with government policy on public sector reform, devolution and economic growth.

This is a pivotal opportunity to deliver a stronger, simpler and more prosperous future for Oxfordshire and the nation. We can achieve this through a new successor council that can build on firm foundations for modern and effective local government, an institution with the strength and voice to activate exciting and enduring positive change, and one that people can be proud of – a council that is on their side.

Let's build one Oxfordshire Council.

1.3 Options appraisal

We know local government and governance in Oxfordshire needs to change, and we welcome this. Oxfordshire County Council has been an advocate for reorganisation for many years and recognise the benefits it will bring to our residents and wider stakeholders.

This new opportunity for reorganisation has brought a fresh focus for what could work for Oxfordshire and the options available. Based on the statutory invitation issued to Oxfordshire, we have undertaken a robust options appraisal to determine what best meets the government's criteria. We have considered:

1. One council for all of Oxfordshire.

2. Two councils (eastern/western Oxfordshire, northern/southern Oxfordshire and Oxford plus the surrounding county).

3. Three councils (Oxford and two rural authorities).

The criteria tables on pages 162 - 163 summarise which chapters of our proposal demonstrate how we meet each of the government's criteria.

The options
A scoring was applied to assess viability against the government's criteria. Our options appraisal shows the demonstrable benefits of one Oxfordshire council.

1	Low score against government criteria
2	Medium score against government criteria
3	High score against government criteria

Government criteria	Option 1: One Oxfordshire council	Option 2: Two Oxfordshire councils	Option 3: Three Oxfordshire councils
Proposals should seek to achieve for the whole of the area concerned the establishment of a single tier of local government	This option will achieve a single tier of local government for the whole of Oxfordshire.	This option will achieve two single tiers of local government for the whole of Oxfordshire.	This option will achieve three single tiers of local government for the whole of Oxfordshire.
	Option covers an established geography and economic area which will help to increase housing supply.	Option breaks the established geography and economic area into two and makes it more challenging to deliver increased housing supply	While Oxford city has a recognised geography, this option breaks the established economic area into three and makes delivery of increased housing supply virtually unattainable
	Option provides an appropriate taxbase which allows for the differences in need (services) and resources (funding) and does not create any undue advantage or disadvantage across the geography.	Option provides two smaller taxbases which could result in differences in need (services) and resources (funding) which would likely create undue advantage or disadvantage across the geography.	Option does not provide an appropriate taxbase to allow for the differences in need (services) and resources (funding) and would create undue advantage or disadvantage across the geography.
Meets government criteria?	**3**	**2**	**1**

Government criteria	Option 1: One Oxfordshire council	Option 2: Two Oxfordshire councils	Option 3: Three Oxfordshire councils
Councils must be the right size to achieve efficiencies, improve capacity and withstand financial shocks.	One council would be above 500,000 residents, in line with government requirements.	Two councils would be under the population for new councils required by government.	Three councils would be significantly under the population for new councils required by government.
	Option enables maximum savings for the short, medium and long-term with the optimal payback period.	Option supports some savings; however, these are reduced by the costs of disaggregation.	Option enables the lowest savings, which are mostly offset by the costs of disaggregation.
	The strongest option for future financial resilience.	Creation of two councils, under the population threshold creates councils with reduced resilience to withstand financial shocks.	Creation of three councils, significantly under the population threshold does not create councils with the resilience to withstand financial shocks.
Meets government criteria?	3	2	1
Councils must prioritise the delivery of high quality and sustainable public services to citizens.	Provides continuity of critical services rated 'good' for both adult and children's social care. Provides continuity for SEND improvement programme. The risks and costs associated with disaggregation will be avoided.	Disaggregation of critical services will need to take place. This means additional cost and risk.	Excessive disaggregation of critical services will need to take place. This means additional cost and risk.
	Avoids unnecessary fragmentation of services. creating relative stability for further transformation and public sector reform to take place at pace.	Disaggregation will need to take place for all upper tier services. This option will also include the costs and risk of transferring Oxfordshire Fire and Rescue Service into a highly temporary combined fire authority structure.	Excessive disaggregation will need to take place for all upper tier services This option will also include the costs and risk of transferring Oxfordshire Fire and Rescue Service into a highly temporary combined fire authority structure.
	Provides the opportunity to improve service delivery through consolidation of some services such as homelessness	Provides some opportunity to improve service delivery through consolidation of some services such as homelessness	Provides little opportunity to improve service delivery through consolidation of some services such as homelessness
	Financial headroom offered by one council allows for greater opportunities for investment in prevention, neighbourhood working and ongoing transformation.	Lower levels of financial headroom mean lower capacity for investment in prevention, neighbourhood working and ongoing transformation.	The least level of financial headroom means minimal investment in prevention, neighbourhood working and ongoing transformation.
Meets government criteria?	3	1	1

Government criteria	Option 1: One Oxfordshire council	Option 2: Two Oxfordshire councils	Option 3: Three Oxfordshire councils
Proposals should show how councils in the area have sought to work together in coming to a view that meets local needs and is informed by local views.	Councils have worked together to share information.	Councils have worked together to share information.	Councils have worked together to share information.
	Engagement has demonstrated that residents and stakeholders value simplicity and cost effectiveness. This is in addition to a lack of disruption to services.	This option will not deliver the simplicity and cost effectiveness that residents and stakeholders want.	This option will not deliver the simplicity and cost effectiveness that residents and stakeholders want.
	Strong community involvement and an effective neighbourhood working model, supported by financial headroom, are needed to balance the organisation's size.	While two organisations partly address concerns about size, they remain less local than the current two-tier system. Reduced financial flexibility will also limit investment in new neighbourhood models.	While three organisations address concerns about size, they remain less local than the current two-tier system. Limited financial flexibility will also limit investment in new neighbourhood models.
Meets government criteria?	2	1	1
Proposals must support devolution arrangements.	Option unlocks effective devolution to a Thames Valley mayoral strategic authority.	Devolution is possible under this option; however, it weakens the benefits that Oxfordshire can secure by fragmenting the functional economic area.	Devolution is possible under this option; however, it significantly weakens the benefits that Oxfordshire can secure by fragmenting the functional economic area.
	A single council will provide a strong single voice for the complete functional economic area of Oxfordshire.	Creates distinct differences and competing influences for Oxfordshire.	Creates distinct differences and competing influences for Oxfordshire.
Meets government criteria?	3	2	1

Government criteria	Option 1: One Oxfordshire council	Option 2: Two Oxfordshire councils	Option 3: Three Oxfordshire councils
Proposals should enable stronger community engagement and deliver genuine opportunity for neighbourhood empowerment.	A single council has the financial headroom and the scale to invest in strong community involvement and an effective neighbourhood governance model that can be sustained long-term. It will also balance the organisation's size.	Two councils have an opportunity to reflect local views and engagement more consistently. Two councils may partly address concerns about size, strong community involvement but an effective neighbourhood governance model is still needed. The reduced financial headroom means that structures which enable strong community engagement may not be sustained in the long-term.	Three councils have an opportunity to reflect local views and engagement more consistently. Three councils address concerns about size, strong community involvement but an effective neighbourhood governance model is still needed. The significantly reduced financial headroom means that structures which enable strong community engagement may not either be developed or sustained in the long-term.
Meets government criteria?	3	2	2

Totals	17	10	7

Other proposals have been brought forward from district councils in Oxfordshire, which include West Berkshire Council to mitigate some of the weaknesses identified in the options appraisal. We have not included West Berkshire in our options appraisal for the following reasons:

▶ It did not receive the statutory invitation from government on 9 February 2025 as it is not within an existing two tier county area. We have provided an option to government for Oxfordshire in response to the invitation to Oxfordshire councils.

▶ Any expansion of the area to encompass West Berkshire puts Oxfordshire at additional levels of unnecessary risk given it is currently in receipt of exceptional financial support from government.

▶ It would create a boundary change, effectively abolishing the ceremonial county of Oxfordshire that has a strong, well established national and international identity.

▶ It would also create an unnecessary, costly and temporary disaggregation of Oxfordshire Fire and Rescue Service into a new combined fire authority either for Oxfordshire or joining with Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service prior to the creation of a Thames Valley Fire and Rescue Service.

In addition, an independent financial options appraisal from PwC – which provides high level estimates of savings and costs from reorganisation (before being refined by any local factors) for two and three councils including West Berkshire – demonstrates that the single council for Oxfordshire still offers the most financially resilient option with the lowest transition costs.

It is, therefore, not in the interests of Oxfordshire residents, business communities or wider stakeholders, to create a principal authority with West Berkshire. There isn't clear evidence to suggest how inclusion of West Berkshire in Oxfordshire's reorganisation would contribute to putting local government in the area as a whole on a firmer footing.

	Gross annual benefit	Additional annual costs	Recurring net annual benefit	One-off transition costs	Payback period	Net benefit after 1 year	Net benefit after 5 year
Single UA for all of Oxfordshire (Excluding West Berkshire)	£27.3m	£0	£27.3m	£23.8m	3.1 years	-£16.3m	£44.3m
2 UAs - Oxford & Shires and Ridgeway	£24.9m	£3.0m	£21.9m	£30.4m	4.2 years	-£24.9m	£16.6m
3 UAs - Greater Oxford, North Oxfordshire and Ridgeway	£20.2m	£10.7m	£9.5m	£32.5m	8.7 years	-£34.7m	-£35.5m

Our options appraisal shows that creating more than one council in Oxfordshire results in a weaker financial position, significant risk and a reduced ability to meet the government criteria.

The geography of one council for the whole of Oxfordshire also makes sense. Oxfordshire is a recognised and significant geography that has been used for successful public service design and delivery for many years. The case for an Oxfordshire footprint is strong and compelling.

As our options appraisal has demonstrated, there is strong alignment for One Oxfordshire with the government's criteria for reform, including its geography.

One Oxfordshire provides the optimal geography for a new council and we will demonstrate this using robust evidence and supporting data. We have considered our historic identity and opportunities to evolve this; democracy; demographics relevant for public service planning and delivery; our economy and connectivity; and our rich partnerships.

📍 **Bicester Motion**

Credit: Bicester Motion

2. The case for an Oxfordshire footprint

2.1 Place

Geography and population

Oxfordshire is home to an estimated 763,218 people in 2024 and 31,755 businesses. One Oxfordshire will serve this population meeting the government's criteria for council size and as a single tier of local government.

Population estimates and housing forecasts

Area	ONS population estimates: Mid-2024[2]	2032 OCC housing-led forecasts
Cherwell	170,426	184,000
Oxford	166,034	170,700
South Oxfordshire	156,470	170,100
Vale of White Horse	149,347	166,600
West Oxfordshire	120,941	123,400
Oxfordshire (totals)	**763,218**	**814,700**

Oxfordshire is a predominantly rural county, the least populated in the south-east, covering 260,595 hectares.

It hosts protected national landscapes, areas of strategic value to nature, including national nature reserves and sites of special scientific interest[4], as well as the Thames Path and Ridgeway national trails. There is a strong, interconnected network of thriving villages and market towns, with the historic city of Oxford at its heart.

Oxfordshire's geography supports its coherence and connection. The county is bounded and shaped by natural features like the Chiltern Hills, Cotswolds, the River Thames and its transport infrastructure (A34, M40, rail links, bus network). The county has over 4,200 km of roads and over 4.79 billion vehicle miles were travelled on them in 2024[5]. Major rail and road transport links reinforce internal connectivity, providing a foundation for growth within the new economy, across Bicester, Oxford and Didcot[6]. Oxfordshire is both a ceremonial county and an administrative one with boundaries that are the same.

While Oxfordshire boasts natural beauty, it does pose flooding risks. Local authority responsibility for flood management is currently divided between county and district councils. The Oxfordshire Local Flood Risk Management Strategy[7] identifies flooding from rivers, notably the Thames and its tributaries as the primary source of flood risk. Historically, this means Burford and Witney in West Oxfordshire, Abingdon and Henley-on-Thames in South Oxfordshire,

Banbury and Kidlington in Cherwell, and Oxford face particular risk of properties being impacted and damaged from flooding[8].

One Oxfordshire will enable a consistent approach to flood preparedness and response across the whole of the county. We will empower communities to work with local councillors and the council on building local awareness and hyper-local resilience hubs to take action to protect homes and communities most affected. The county council already has countywide experience and strong relationships forged within the Thames Valley Local Resilience Forum to continue to respond to incidents on a small or large geographical scale.

Historic identity and opportunity

Oxfordshire is bordered by Northamptonshire and Warwickshire to the north, Buckinghamshire to the east, Berkshire to the south, and Wiltshire and Gloucestershire to the west. Oxford city is the largest settlement. Anchored on the Thames, it lies between the Cotswolds to the west, Chilterns and the North Wessex Downs to the south and the Cherwell Valley in the north.

Oxfordshire was first recorded as a county more than 1,000 years ago with Oxfordshire County Council established in 1889. In 1974, the current borders and powers for the county council, the four shire district councils – Cherwell, South Oxfordshire, West Oxfordshire and the Vale of White Horse – were created, as well as Oxford City Council, previously a self-governing county borough.

The northern boundary of Berkshire was historically defined by the River Thames, which flows through the Vale of White Horse and South Oxfordshire. Following the redrawing of boundaries in 1974, communities served by their county town, Abingdon, were added into the administrative county of Oxfordshire. In practical terms, this is the area covered by Vale of White Horse District Council and part of South Oxfordshire District Council.

This incorporation of parts of Berkshire into Oxfordshire was not arbitrary. The Thames and the North Wessex Downs acts as a natural barrier and there is relatively little economic interaction north to south between the Vale of White Horse and West Berkshire. This is evidenced by limited travel to work activity and home to school transport, the latter comprising only 8.8 per cent of origin destination trips compared to 85.6 per cent within the county footprint[9].

Oxford travel to work area[10]

University of Oxford
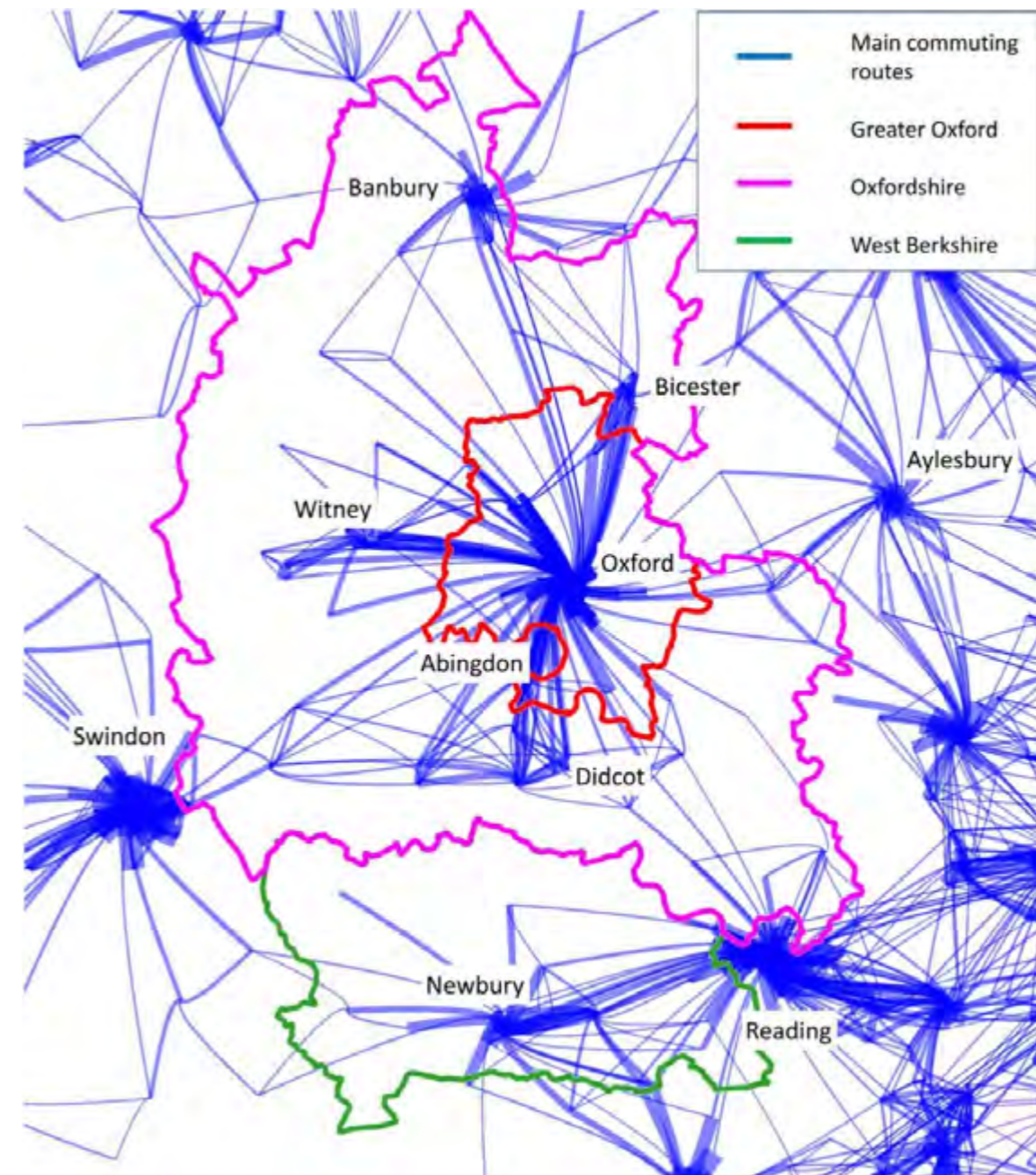
Oxford

Critical to the historic identity of Oxfordshire is Oxford, with the University of Oxford playing a strong role in shaping the growth and development of the city since its foundation – the exact year of which is unknown, but pre-dates 1096[11]. Despite this clear Oxford brand, there are key interactions and connections between the different parts of the county, which enable the city to thrive and perpetuate its global identity.

One Oxfordshire will maintain and strengthen existing connections through a new, single council for all Oxfordshire residents, businesses, institutions and investors. It will maintain the links between our great universities and organisations developing advanced technology, including our science campuses at Begbroke, Culham, Harwell and Milton Park so that our county can drive innovation and inclusive growth across the region.

The county council's groundbreaking research alliances with Oxford's universities (and University College London) are already bridging the gap between research and practice to deliver evidence-based policy making at scale and with impact ensuring that we can test, learn and grow services rooted in what works.

Visitor economy

The county's visitor economy is worth £2.4 billion and sustains 41,000 jobs (11 per cent of total employment in Oxfordshire[12]).

It is home to a wide variety of well-known brands including Blenheim Palace, Bicester Village and the Cotswolds. Established attractions such as Le Manoir aux Quat'Saisons, Henley Regatta and the Wilderness Festival will be joined over the coming years by major new attractions such as the proposed Puy du Fou and the Great Wolf Lodge, bringing even greater visitor numbers to Oxfordshire.

These brands are supported by a wider ecosystem of retail, leisure and hospitality businesses, market towns and natural assets that collectively make Oxfordshire an internationally significant tourist destination.
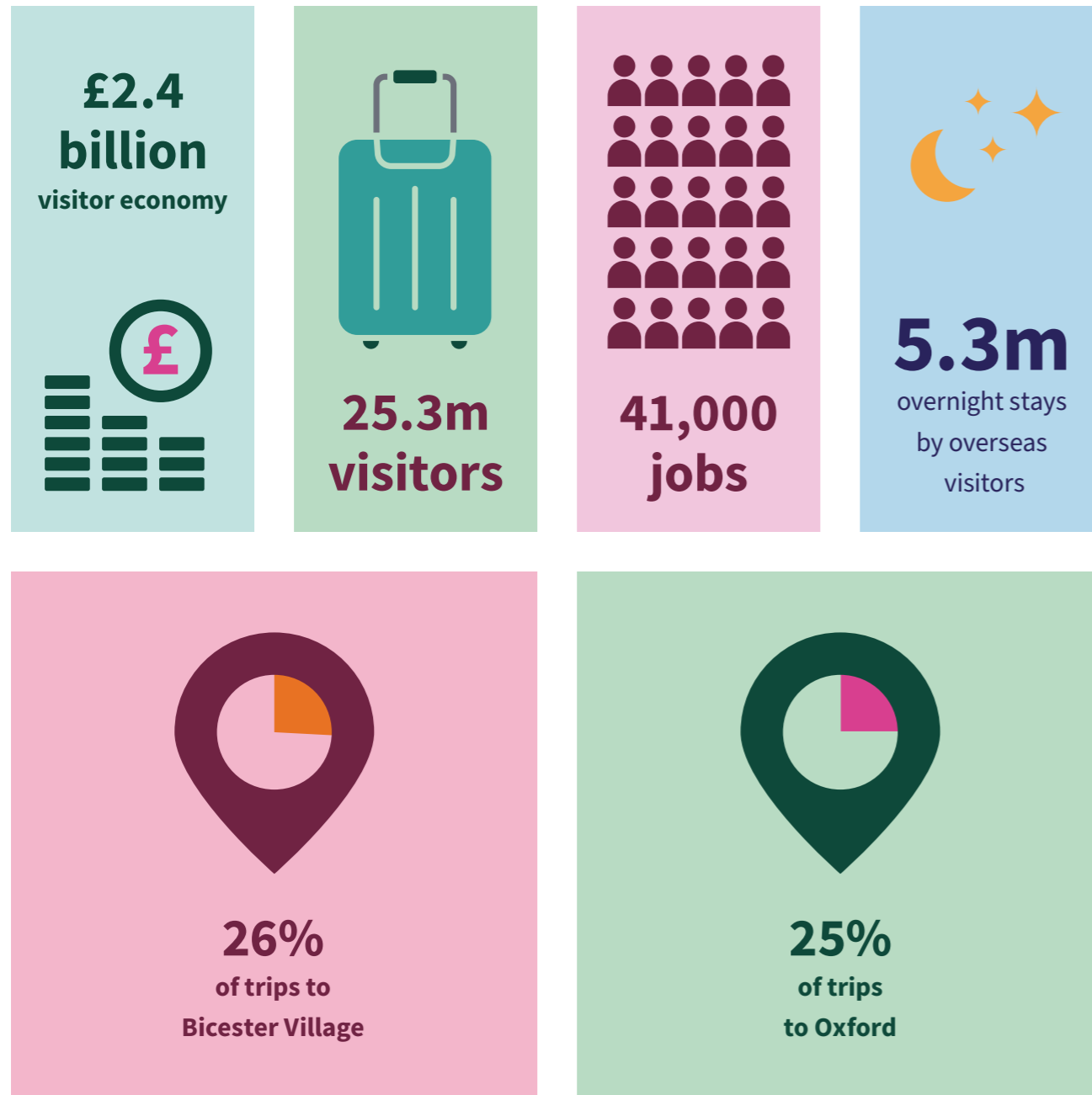
In 2024 alone, Oxfordshire welcomed 25.3 million visitors spending 9.7 million nights in the county, with more overseas visitors (5.3m) than domestic (4.4m). Importantly, Cherwell (home to Bicester Village) received as many visitors (26 per cent of trips) as Oxford city (25 per cent)[13].

The city supports a tourism industry comprising seven million daytime and staying visitors per year, generating £780 million of income[14] for local Oxford businesses.

In 2021, Oxford was the ninth most visited city from overseas staying visits in the UK. Protecting the image of Oxford and its valued tourism industry is critical to the ongoing economic success of the city. With a large geographic footprint, One Oxfordshire can be more strategic in how Oxford flourishes allowing it to more effectively protect a familiar, globally recognisable image that attracts visitors from around the world.

Support for our visitor economy is currently fragmented across six local authorities and one destination management organisation – which leads to duplicated effort, inconsistent branding and competitive marketing. Experience Oxfordshire's 2023 visitor survey highlighted poor transport links and a lack of awareness of the county's offer as key reasons not to visit[15].

One Oxfordshire will better enable the sustainable growth of the county's visitor economy. We will do this by improving transport integration, delivering economies of scale in marketing, investing at scale in countywide cultural experiences, and targeting support for the whole system through planning, business and employment support. Ultimately, this will enable Oxfordshire to attract and retain more visitors.

£2.4 billion
visitor economy

25.3m visitors

41,000 jobs

5.3m
overnight stays by overseas visitors

26%
of trips to Bicester Village

25%
of trips to Oxford

"Take away Oxfordshire and you remove a cornerstone of continuity, identity and resilience."

(Oxfordshire resident, investor and business owner)

Democracy

Elections to a council representing Oxfordshire have occurred since 1889 and are part of our democratic tradition and identity, one recognised by Oxfordshire's residents.

The county council's long-standing leadership and delivery of county elections across districts, consolidating efforts into a single Oxfordshire team, is a demonstration of our collective abilities to lead and deliver electoral events at scale.

Since 2017[16], county council elections in Oxfordshire have averaged a turnout of 38.1 per cent. This figure is above the English average for county election turnouts during the same period (35.3 per cent) and represents a comparatively good level of democratic engagement and recognition of county-based democracy. This turnout level exceeds those of all English unitary authorities in equivalent electoral years (35.5 per cent). Building from this strong foundation of democratic engagement, One Oxfordshire will offer streamlined, unified governance that can strengthen this further.

County local election turnout mean averages[16]

Election year	Oxfordshire County Council	All English county local authorities	All English unitary councils
2017	38.5	35.3	37.6
2021	40.1	36.3	34.8
2025	35.6	34.3	34.0
Average turnout	**38.1**	**35.3**	**35.5**

One Oxfordshire will leverage a sense of place through the continuity of a democratic organisation that electors recognise. It provides stability and requires no boundary changes.

One Oxfordshire propels this remarkable county forward through a new council enriched with all local government functions. We will bring residents, businesses and institutions together and strengthen connections to the communities they recognise.

We believe that a governance model that respects and reflects this is more likely to succeed in strengthening democracy in Oxfordshire.
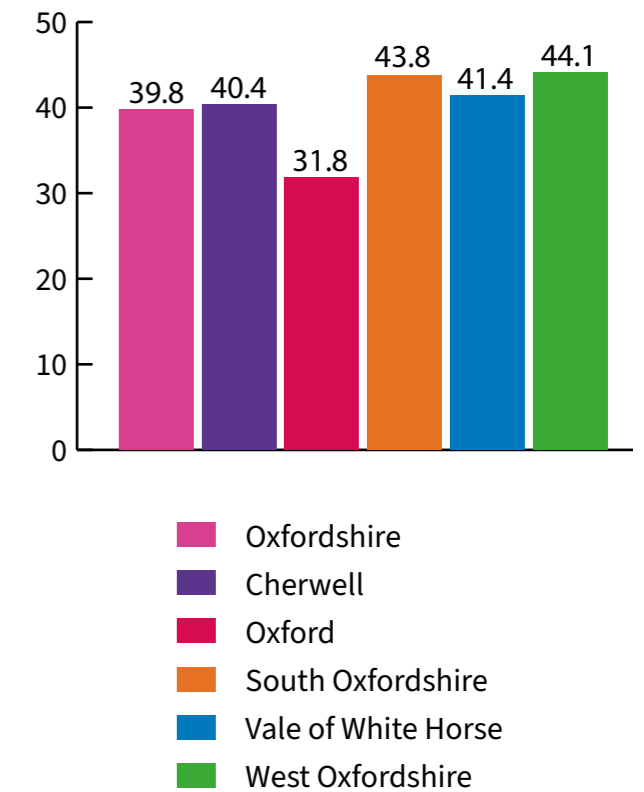
2.2 People

Age profiles

Oxfordshire residents have a similar age profile across district areas with the exception of Oxford, which is substantially lower. This relates to the number of 18 - 22 year olds linked to the city's large student population. There are also a number of Oxford residents under the age of 40 who migrate out of the city into the county's towns and rural areas, which reduces the city's average age[17].

Life expectancy in Oxfordshire is better than national averages. Males in all districts have a statistically significantly better life expectancy than the rest of the country at 79.3 years with Oxford the lowest at 80.6 years through to South Oxfordshire with an average of 82.7 years[19]. Female life expectancy in Cherwell and Oxford is marginally above the England average of 83.2 years, whereas South Oxfordshire, Vale of White Horse and West Oxfordshire all average over 85 years of age[20].

Oxfordshire has a broadly similar population base in terms of age and ethnicity[21] in all districts with the exception of Oxford, which has a younger average population and greater ethnic diversity amongst its residents.

ONS median population age: Oxfordshire and district council areas (mid-2024)[18]

Bar chart values:
- Oxfordshire: 39.8
- Cherwell: 40.4
- Oxford: 31.8
- South Oxfordshire: 43.8
- Vale of White Horse: 41.4
- West Oxfordshire: 44.1

Legend:
- Oxfordshire
- Cherwell
- Oxford
- South Oxfordshire
- Vale of White Horse
- West Oxfordshire

Deprivation

Oxfordshire is the tenth least deprived of 151 upper tier local authorities in England[22]. Only 16.4 per cent of locations in Oxfordshire are within the 50 per cent more deprived locations within England, and of these only 0.2 per cent are within the most deprived category. By comparison, 26.3 per cent of areas in Oxfordshire are in the least deprived group with a further 20.9 per cent in the second least deprived group[23].
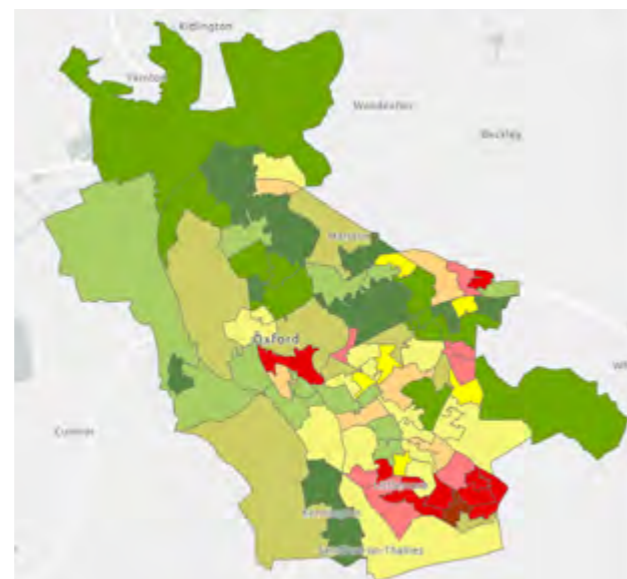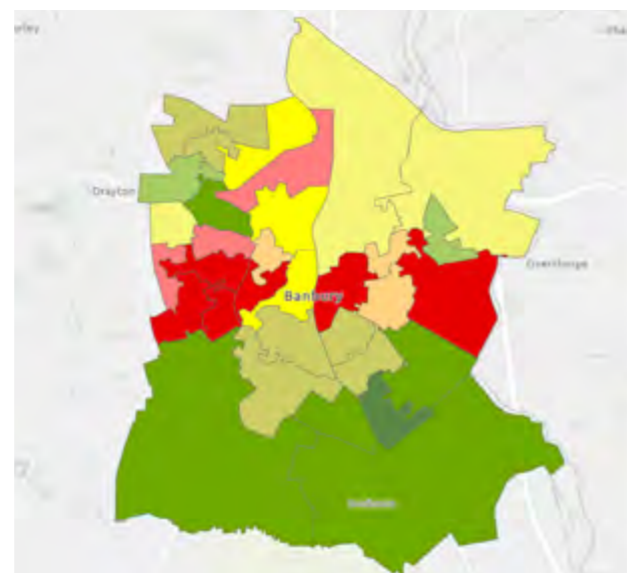
Although there are relatively few areas of deprivation, Oxfordshire has ten communities ranked in the 20 per cent most deprived in England[24] masking deep inequalities across the county.

One Oxfordshire will tackle these inequalities by building on and progressing existing exemplar work led by the county council's public health team, as well as utilising partnerships and new alliances.
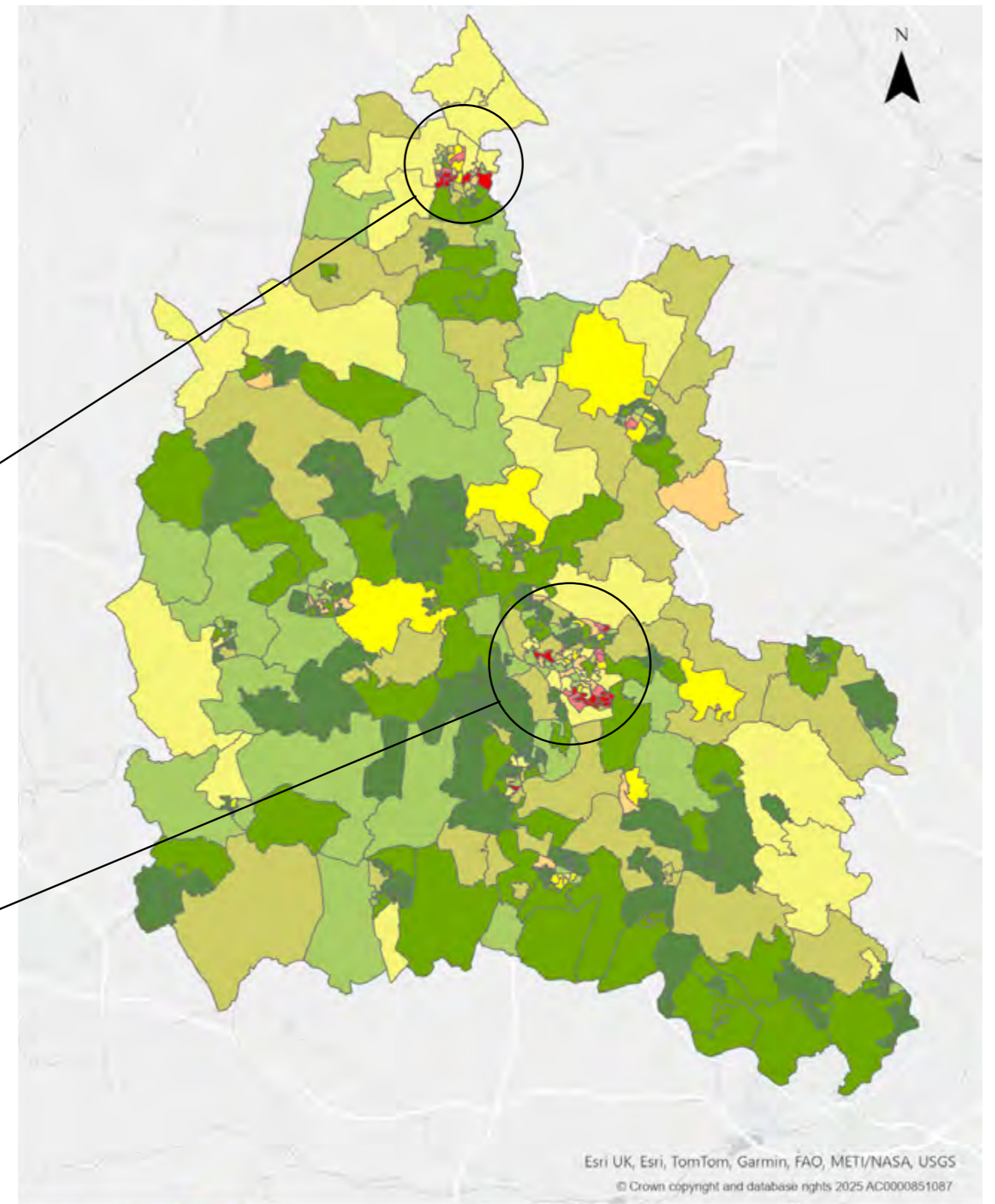
One such alliance is the Local Policy Lab formed in March 2024 between the University of Oxford, Oxford Brookes University and the county council. The lab aims to bridge the gap between research and local policy by building meaningful and long-lasting connections between local public policy makers, communities and academic researchers. It will support evidence-based public policy in key areas, initially focusing on health and climate policy.

Recently, the county council signed up to developing Oxfordshire as a Marmot Place[26] using academic and research expertise to help us better understand what actions will reduce health inequality.

Strategic approaches, such as addressing health inequalities through the Marmot programme, are more efficiently delivered at a county level. A single point of conversation with key partners will lead to more efficient outcomes across a complex health space including public health; adult and children's social care; research partners; contracted services; and national and sub-national bodies such as the Thames Valley Integrated Care Board. One Oxfordshire can build a more diverse range of experiences and develop strategy that can flex for local needs as appropriate.

Deprivation in Oxfordshire[25]

IMD

1 - High	5
2	6
3	7
4	8
5	9
	10 - Low

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OXFORDSHIRE
COUNTY COUNCIL

Reducing health inequalities in Blackbird Leys

Oxfordshire, despite its reputation for being wealthy and privileged, is facing stark inequalities.

A child born in Blackbird Leys will live 13 years less than a child born in the richest parts of the county, and residents living in Blackbird Leys often face multiple barriers to living an active life. Thanks to the strength of local partnerships, there is excellent work underway to get more residents active and tackle these embedded inequalities head on.

Sport England has invested £630,000 into Oxfordshire between 2025 - 2028 to enable long-term systemic changes in how inequalities are tackled and physical activity increased. The county council has directly funded Active Oxfordshire to help drive this place-based approach in our most deprived communities. Funding is being used to turbocharge this local work in Blackbird Leys to strengthen connections, share learnings and create even more long-term impact.

Oxfordshire's Marmot approach [26]

Where people are born, live, grow, work and get older has the biggest influence on health and health inequalities.

The county council has partnered with the University College London's Institute of Health Equity to become a Marmot Place.

This means we've committed to tackling health inequalities and improving health fairness in Oxfordshire by working with local partners across the system.

These include local authorities, communities, public services, businesses, and voluntary sector organisations.

The programme aims to create a fairer and healthier Oxfordshire and is initially focusing on three of the eight Marmot principles:

- ▶ Give every child the best start in life.
- ▶ Create fair employment and good work for all.
- ▶ Ensure a healthy standard of living for all.

Pride in Place

Greater Leys will receive £20 million over ten years through the Pride in Place programme to tackle deprivation and improve quality of life.

The funding will deliver a locally agreed regeneration plan focused on three priorities: community facilities; public spaces; and safety. Planned investments include refurbishing Blackbird Leys and Greater Leys community centres, upgrading play areas and green spaces, and improving cycle and walking routes to connect residents with jobs and services.

High street improvements will support local businesses, while targeted measures will address anti-social behaviour and enhance lighting and CCTV. A neighbourhood board – made up of councillors, MPs and residents – will oversee delivery and ensure projects reflect community priorities. The programme also aims to boost skills and employment through training hubs and partnerships with local employers.

By creating safer streets, better amenities, and stronger community networks, the initiative seeks to make Greater Leys a thriving, inclusive neighbourhood. One unitary council will be able to use the strength of its connections and scale to support such partnership work, making funding work harder and reach wider across communities.

Professor Sir Michael Marmot

2.3 Partnerships

Oxfordshire partnerships and organisations

Local government cannot meet the needs of our people alone. Collaboration isn't just an option, it's how we lift everyone across the county. We need effective, long-term partnerships to design and deliver public services and advocate for our shared interests locally, nationally and internationally.

One of the biggest strengths of Oxfordshire's current system is its amazing network of partnerships and organisations across the county strengthened after the COVID pandemic. One Oxfordshire has the opportunity to leverage these relationships to become a partner of choice. We will actively seek and develop mature and purposeful relationships with our strategic partners that drive improved outcomes for the county's residents.

A snapshot of the partnerships and organisations that have a significant role and impact across Oxfordshire include.

Examples of partnerships and statutory organisations working across Oxfordshire:

Experience Oxfordshire

Oxfordshire Association of Local Councils

Oxfordshire Care Partnership

Oxfordshire Children's Trust

Oxfordshire Community Safety Partnership

Oxfordshire Domestic Abuse Service (run by A2Dominion)

Oxfordshire Football Association

Oxfordshire Health and Wellbeing Board

Oxfordshire Homelessness Alliance

Oxfordshire Inclusive Economy Partnership

Oxfordshire SEND Local Area Partnership

Oxfordshire Prevention and Health Inequalities Forum

Oxfordshire Safeguarding Adults Board

Oxfordshire Safeguarding Children Partnership

Oxfordshire System Urgent Care Delivery Group

Oxfordshire Urgent and Emergency Care Board

Zero Carbon Oxfordshire

Other Oxfordshire organisations:

Active Oxfordshire

Age UK Oxfordshire

Aspire Oxfordshire

Citizens Advice Oxfordshire

Community First Oxfordshire

Experience Oxfordshire

Homelessness Oxfordshire

My Vision Oxfordshire

Oxfordshire Community and Voluntary Action

Oxfordshire Community Foundation

Oxfordshire Playing Fields Association

Rural Broadband Oxfordshire

Wild Oxfordshire

These examples of countywide partnerships delivering vital statutory and voluntary services support the need to maintain an Oxfordshire footprint for local government reorganisation using existing networks to create stronger, simpler public services.

> **In 2024, the first single coherent place narrative for Oxfordshire was jointly designed and developed across a number of partners and organisations and was endorsed by the Future Oxfordshire Partnership (now the Oxfordshire Leaders Joint Committee). It provides an excellent framework for system-wide collaboration with all those who have a vested interest in the future success of the county.**

The future of innovative, asset-based and responsive service delivery across a place has to be characterised by a coherent, sustainable voluntary and community sector working collaboratively with a single council.

The creation of small unitaries would lead to unnecessary disruption for our partners, which they have shared with us. This will require charities to readjust to new boundaries and potentially create competition between those in Oxfordshire and Berkshire.

Regional partnerships

There are also many cross boundary partnerships that work beyond Oxfordshire. Examples include Thames Valley Integrated Care Board, Thames Valley Police, Thames Valley Local Resilience Forum and Adopt Thames Valley – a regional adoption agency led by the county council at the request of the Department for Education. The agency covers seven local authorities (Oxfordshire, Swindon and five unitary authorities of Berkshire – not Slough) and two voluntary adoption agencies.

Oxfordshire's strong economy is the southern anchor of England's Economic Heartland (EEH)[27], a sub-national transport body. EEH is a partnership grouping of the principal authority leaders from Oxfordshire, Buckinghamshire, Northamptonshire, Cambridgeshire, Milton Keynes, Luton, Peterborough, Bedford and Central Bedfordshire and wider economic leaders[28]. EEH is credited with making significant and fast progress in bringing together transport authority and former local enterprise partnership areas.

The Oxford Growth Commission was established in spring 2025 by government to review how best to unlock and accelerate growth in the city and surrounding area. Its vision is to support the delivery of infrastructure, housing and employment to unleash Oxford's and Oxfordshire's economic power, accelerating growth in the Oxford-Cambridge Growth Corridor, and across the UK. The commission has been clear on the need for strategic planning on a footprint

beyond current districts and its work has been able to focus on opportunities that cross current and potential future boundaries.

In April 2025, the chancellor of the exchequer visited Siemens Healthineers in Eynsham, West Oxfordshire, to discuss the significant economic opportunity presented by the development of a growth corridor between Oxford and Cambridge. She noted that this initiative has the potential to contribute up to £78 billion to the UK economy over the next decade, primarily through the support of science and technology enterprises located along the 66 mile corridor.

Delivery of the Oxfordshire end of the growth corridor, starting with investment in transport infrastructure, stands to benefit from the presence of a single unitary authority for the county. One Oxfordshire offers a streamlined governance structure within a geographic footprint to deliver major transport and other infrastructure for the area[29]. All regional partnerships stand to benefit from the strength and simplicity of a single council for Oxfordshire.

Diamond Light Source - Harwell

2.4 Economy and connectivity

Oxfordshire is one of the UK's most economically resilient and strategically significant regions. At a local authority level, Oxfordshire is only one of four county areas nationally that is a net contributor to the UK exchequer[30]. The county boasts low unemployment, a self-contained labour market and a geographically distributed, highly-skilled resident and enterprise base. This stretches from the north to the south of the county across the Knowledge Spine – the county's central economic corridor for breakthrough businesses and innovation.

The Knowledge Spine

Oxfordshire's Knowledge Spine connects three key growth areas: Bicester (Cherwell); Oxford city; and the Science Vale (South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse), which includes the science and technology parks around Bicester, Kidlington, Oxford, Abingdon, Didcot, Wantage and Grove. This corridor is the backbone of Oxfordshire's innovation ecosystem and a key area for high-skill employment and enterprise growth.

Its internationally significant business footprint includes clusters in life sciences, space, clean energy, and advanced manufacturing, all of which are deeply embedded across the county's geography, contributing to national missions and influencing global markets and supply chains.

Oxfordshire's research and commercialisation capabilities are helping to solve global challenges from pandemic response to climate resilience, while simultaneously driving growth in other UK regions through collaborative projects and technology diffusion.

Oxfordshire's critical economic sectors, assets and growth opportunities[31]

Source: Oxfordshire Local Industrial Strategy.

Cambridge Econometrics

Economic growth

The county is vital to the government's mission to kickstart economic growth – One Oxfordshire plays a critical role in supporting this – simple governance, single strategies.

Headline economic indicators further reinforce Oxfordshire's strategic importance. The county generates £29.3 billion in gross value added (GVA) annually[32] and supports 430,000 jobs[33]. Oxfordshire has demonstrated exceptional economic resilience and growth. It recorded the fastest growing economy of any local enterprise partnership area following the 2008 recession, with GVA increasing over 26 per cent between 2009 and 2015. More recently Oxfordshire's GVA rose by a further 19 per cent between 2020 to 2023[34]. It hosts the highest concentration of science research facilities in Western Europe and has attracted over £3.1 billion in foreign direct investment since 2017[35].

Major commitments from global firms including Moderna, BMW and GIC Singapore have been made to Oxfordshire. One of the county's most established and recognised institutions, the University of Oxford, has spun out over 200 companies through its innovation arm, collectively valued at £6.4 billion and representing 16 per cent of all UK university spinouts. The university joins Oxfordshire's Knowledge Spine, with the Science Vale and science parks, for creating opportunities to strengthen the county's economic growth.

On a national level, Oxfordshire's economic coherence has long been recognised by central government. In 2011, Oxfordshire was designated as one of the few counties to have its own local enterprise partnership, forming the basis for city deals that acknowledged Oxfordshire's unique economic strengths.

A unified approach through One Oxfordshire will support the county's economic foundations and enhance its capacity to drive national growth through innovation and expertise. Evidence is already compelling that Oxfordshire's economic success, specifically through advanced research and development has created significant supply-chain, employment and growth in all other regions of the UK. This could potentially be stalled if economic coherence is lost through disaggregation and reduced scale.

Labour market and employment

Oxfordshire is, on balance, an affluent county. Like life expectancy, gross median weekly pay is above the national average in all districts with South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse being Oxfordshire's most affluent areas[36].
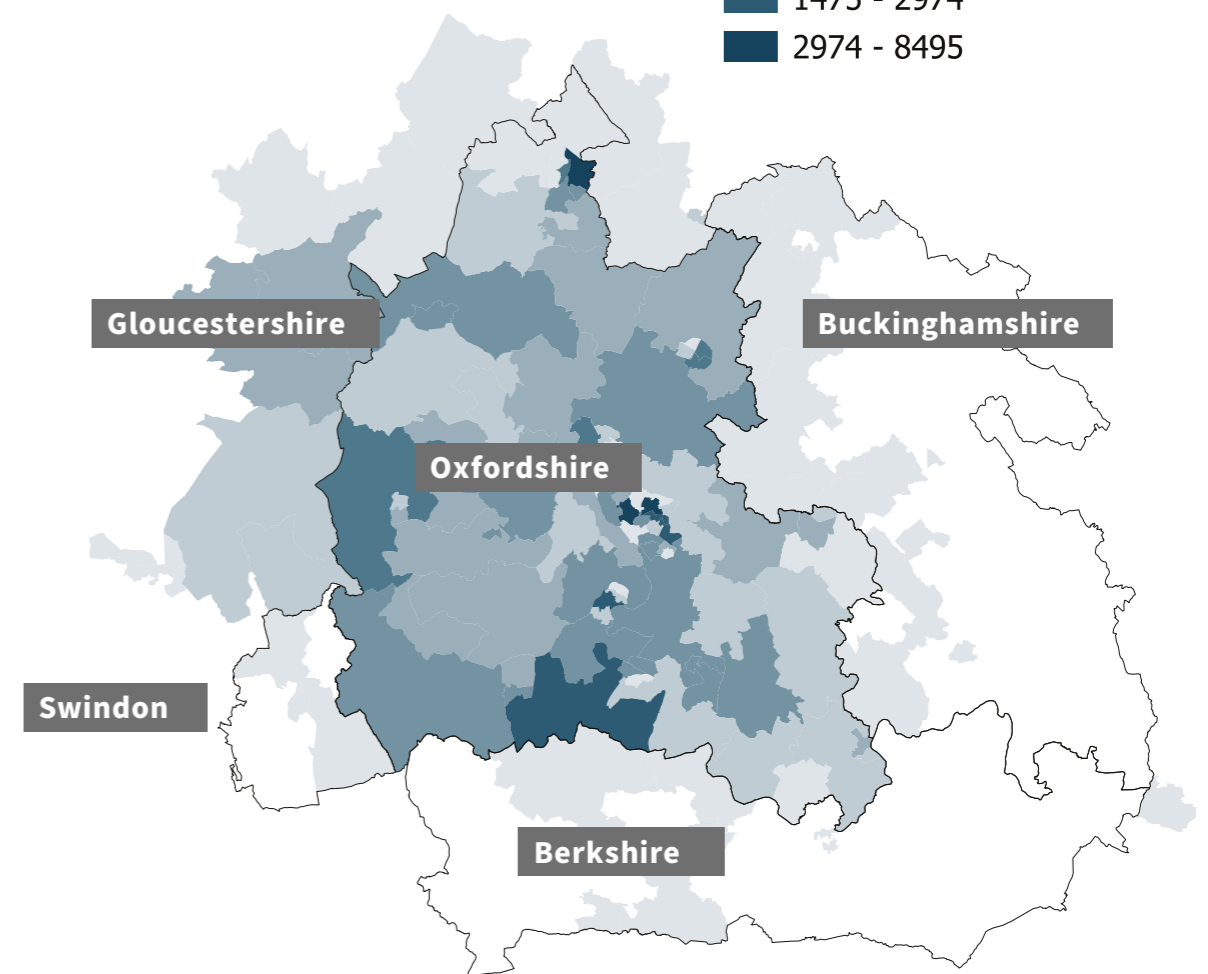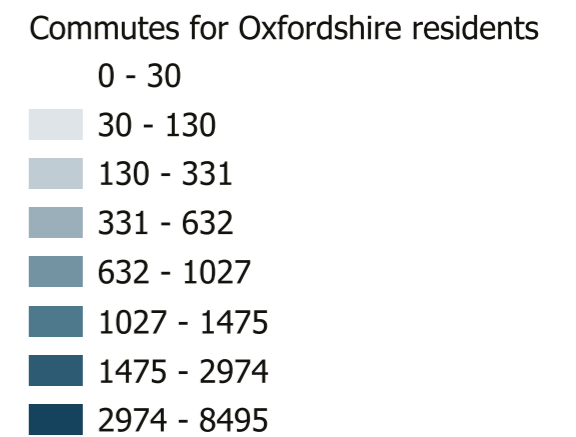
Oxfordshire's higher than average income is, in part, due to the knowledge and innovation-led ecosystem previously outlined. It is also underpinned by a highly educated workforce, of which over 56 per cent are qualified to degree level or above. The concentration of employment in research and development is four times the national average[37].

Oxfordshire's commuter patterns reveal a highly integrated and self-contained labour market, with Oxford serving as the major employment hub. Census data (2021) shows that 85 per cent of Oxfordshire residents work within the county[38] – well above the Office for National Statistics' self-containment

threshold of 75 per cent[39]. Accounting for both inbound and outbound commuting flows, Oxfordshire maintains a net commuter inflow of approximately 9,000 people[40]. These findings confirm that Oxfordshire's labour market is largely self-contained, with only marginal overlaps at its boundaries.

The county's concentration of commuting forms evidence to support a distributed and inclusive approach to growth across the county. This would be served effectively by One Oxfordshire working with a Thames Valley mayoral strategic authority to agree and deliver a single set of connected housing, transport and infrastructure strategies.

Travel to work analysis in Oxfordshire, 2021 Census[41]

Commutes for Oxfordshire residents
0 - 30
30 - 130
130 - 331
331 - 632
632 - 1027
1027 - 1475
1475 - 2974
2974 - 8495

Oxfordshire has one of the lowest unemployment rates in the UK. There is only one unemployed person for every 32 people who are working[42] (excluding people who are inactive, including those who are retired, long-term sick and students). Notably almost 50 per cent who are inactive are students.[43]

Following the direct impact of COVID on the employment market, from 2022 onwards the majority of Oxfordshire's unemployment rate has been three per cent or lower compared to the UK average at four per cent or higher. Although the Oxford unemployment rate is the highest amongst district areas, it has remained more than 1 per cent under the England average[44]. As a result of distributed growth facilitating an environment that generates employment opportunity to all residents, irrespective of geography, all areas of the county have significantly stronger employment rates than the national average.

However, labour productivity has declined post-COVID in Oxfordshire. This weakening reflects pressures seen across all local economies – rising housing and land costs, fragmented transport networks, skills mismatches and health inequalities.

Oxfordshire's strong economy is one of its greatest assets, but its value needs to spread more widely and a focus on inclusive growth seized. It also needs to re-establish an upward trend in productivity. To do this requires One Oxfordshire functioning as a single connected system. By providing clear countywide governance, joined up infrastructure delivery and ensuring that transport is embedded in a single set of plans and strategies, stronger levels of productivity can be unlocked across Oxfordshire.

This will undoubtedly turbocharge the unlocking of the productivity puzzle at a mayoral strategic authority level too. We will convert complementary strengths across the Thames Valley into cross-boundary supply chains, deeper labour markets and quicker diffusion of innovation, and with that, a return to sustained productivity growth and, therefore, revenue to UK PLC.

Oxfordshire, as outlined, is one of the UK's most economically resilient and strategically significant counties. We have an abundance of assets and skills but need a strong and viable local government structure to connect and drive further growth and opportunity for Oxfordshire. This means we need a strong, financially resilient council to deliver reform from day one. We need One Oxfordshire to deliver that council. It is the only model that will deliver a financially resilient and sustainable council.

📍 **Bicester Village**

3. Financial resilience

3.1 Financial overview

Local government reform in Oxfordshire will take place in the context of a decade of austerity, significant service demand and cost pressures, economic vulnerabilities, global uncertainties as well as the Fair Funding Review 2.0. Despite all of this, given the relative budget and proportion of services provided and very strong and consistent financial position of Oxfordshire County Council, One Oxfordshire will be able to manage the existing and future financial challenges for all predecessor councils in Oxfordshire confidently and in full, which many other parts of the country cannot.

One Oxfordshire will also provide the most strategic approach to service delivery enabling investment at scale across the whole of Oxfordshire to drive innovation, public sector reform and devolution ambitions. It is the strongest option in which to confidently manage financial risks in an uncertain future operating environment.

Based on the financial modelling undertaken independently by PwC[45], savings that will be delivered just by creating one single unitary council are estimated to be **£30.1 million** per year. The cost of transition to a new council is estimated to be a one-off sum of **£21.9 million**. There are no ongoing costs or financial asks of government associated with the proposal for One Oxfordshire. Based on the cost/benefit analysis summarised below, **the payback period for One Oxfordshire will be approximately 1.3 years.**

Transformation and future innovation are most successfully achieved when built on firm foundations. The creation of One

Oxfordshire will offer clarity and consistency in governance, eliminating fragmentation and leveraging best practices to ensure cohesive and effective service delivery.

One Oxfordshire can create the firmest foundations to develop a highly ambitious transformation and public service reform agenda to enable this place, and our people, to thrive.

Beyond transition, a single unitary council for Oxfordshire will be able to generate further annual savings through transformation of **£33.2 million** a year by year five. One-off costs of transformation are expected to be **£16.6 million**.

Savings that will be delivered by one single unitary council are estimated to be £63.3 million per year with total net savings of £162.6 million by year five.

The financial case for a single council across Oxfordshire is clear. It will provide the quickest, greatest savings from reorganisation and public sector reform without the need for complex, unnecessary and risky disaggregation and associated costs.

In comparison to the two and three unitary options proposed for Oxfordshire (and encompassing West Berkshire Council, which has received exceptional financial support from the government in 2024/25 and 2025/26) One Oxfordshire is the most financially resilient option, creating the best opportunity to deliver future transformation savings, able to withstand and manage financial shocks.

We will drive confidence among residents, stakeholders, businesses and investors across Oxfordshire, the sub-region, nationally and internationally, and enable this county to invest at scale in its people and its places.

A financially stable and economically strong council will be well placed to attract investors and harness the potential Oxfordshire has in terms of economic development, regeneration and growth.

One Oxfordshire costs and savings
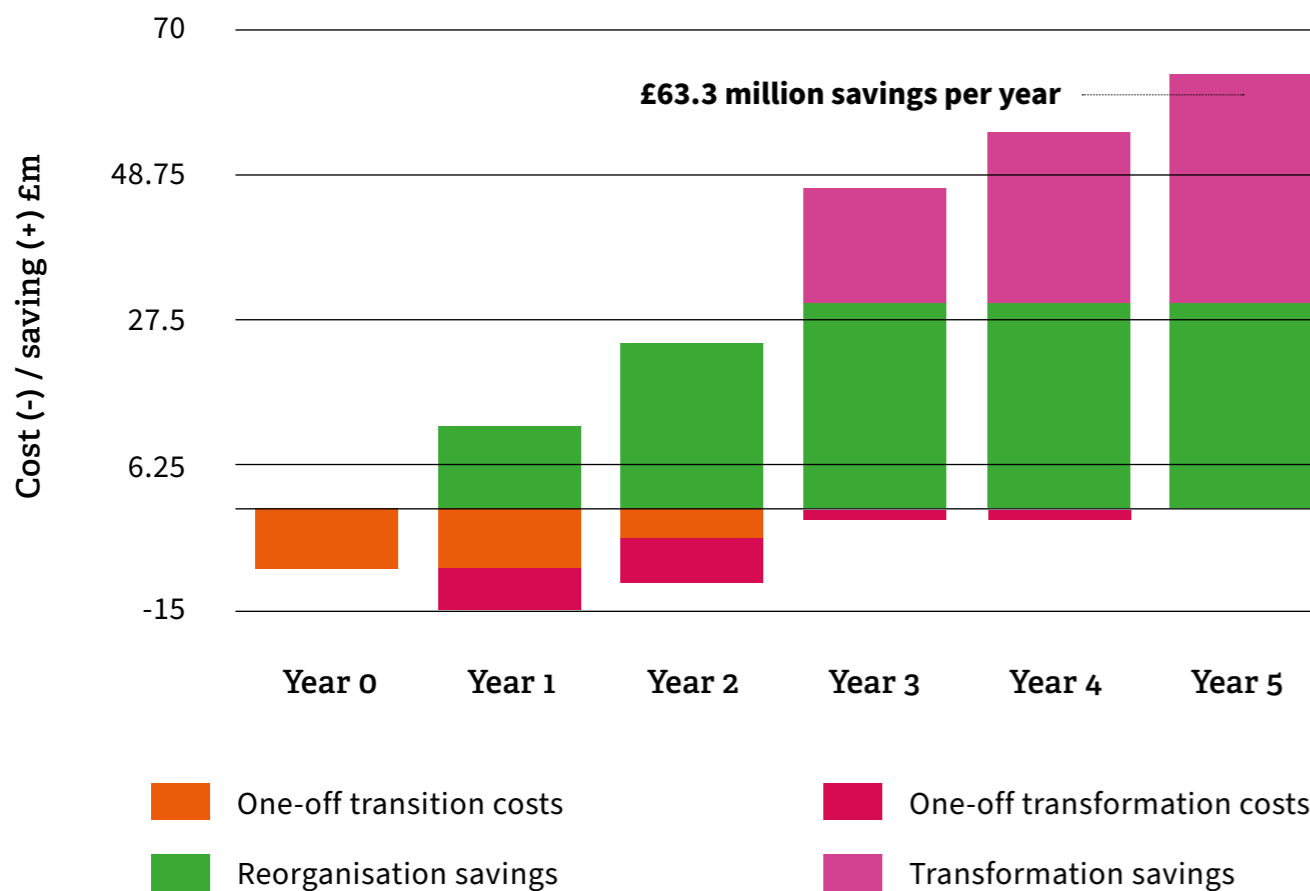
3.2 Overall approach, methodology and assumptions

The county council commissioned PwC to undertake the financial case and modelling for One Oxfordshire. PwC is a professional services consultancy experienced in major public sector transformation, including local government reorganisation. PwC used its evidence base to model a top-down review of potential costs and benefits from reorganisation and transformation, as well as assess the reasonableness of the draft financial considerations.

Challenge and assurance have been provided by an independent senior finance professional – previously the shadow section 151 officer for a council that successfully transitioned to become a unitary authority – based on their practical experience of what has been actually achieved through reorganisation. This included reviewing modelling principles, tolerances and an assessment of materiality in determining what was proportionate and should be included.

The financial case for One Oxfordshire, as well as the other Oxfordshire business cases, have used medium term financial strategies for 2025/26 as well as the 2024/25 revenue account expenditure (revenue outturn - RO data) as the basis for its financial modelling. Where relevant, other data sets have been used and these have been agreed across all councils and used consistently.

The county council's RO expenditure, medium term financial strategy and council tax baselines currently include costs and funding for Oxfordshire Fire and Rescue Service. In the longer-term these will sit with the mayoral strategic authority so third party spend and assets for the fire service are assumed to not be addressable.[45]

In line with guidance, the financial modelling has been completed at today's prices, not considering the impact of inflation and not discounting future cash flows.

Each of the individual savings, additional costs and transition costs have been phased by year, based on when it is anticipated these will be realised or incurred. Some transition costs will be incurred ahead of vesting day (these are shown in year 0) and are included in the overall costs, savings and payback period. The financial case has been modelled over a five year period from vesting day.

One Oxfordshire delivers the best value for money for the Oxfordshire taxpayer.

3.3 Financial appraisal

Financial baseline

The indicative budget for 2027/28 based on existing medium term financial strategies that will form the revenue baseline for One Oxfordshire in April 2028 is £907 million.

There is an overall anticipated deficit of £9.6 million by vesting day. Additionally, there is currently a planned use of one-off contributions from reserves or general balances of £15.5 million to balance budgets ahead of vesting day. The expectation is that action will be taken to set budgets that are balanced, robust and deliverable by each council ahead of vesting day.

Expenditure	2027/28
Pay	£275.4m
Non pay	£631.2m
Total	**£906.6m**
Funding (before funding reform)	**2027/28**
Council tax	£661.3m
Non-ringfenced grants	£83.2m
Business rates	£137.0m
Total	**£881.5m**
Deficit	**£25.1m**
Use of reserves and balances	£15.5m
Remaining deficit to manage	**£9.6m**

Reorganisation savings

Financial modelling shows that recurring revenue savings of **£30.1 million** will be achieved by a single unitary council for Oxfordshire as a direct result of local government reorganisation. These savings fall into four categories.

Savings	
Employees	£20.4m
Third party spend	£4.2m
Democracy	£2.1m
Property	£3.4m
Total	**£30.1m**

Employees:

Leadership:
A reduction in senior leadership costs as a result of reducing duplication of senior posts (savings realised in year one).

Delivery:
The benefit arising from the removal of duplication of front office, back office and service delivery roles (savings realised years one to three).

Property:

Benefits from reduced property expenditure arising from the rationalisation of office, depot and vehicle assets (savings realised years one to three).

The achievement of savings will be phased based on expected realisation as set out below.

Third party spend:

There are benefits from the reduction in addressable spend through the aggregation of contracts. This is assumed to be mainly from spend where there is duplication of existing spend across the existing councils (savings realised years one to three).

At this stage no direct savings from adult or children's social care are assumed as the existing level of expenditure for both services is relatively low compared to Oxfordshire comparator councils.

Democracy:

The largest benefit is from a reduction in election costs and member allowances as a result of needing a reduced number of overall councillors in a single unitary council (savings realised year one).

	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
Recurring reorganisation savings	£12.0m	£24.1m	£30.1m	£30.1m	£30.1m
Phasing	40%	80%	100%	100%	100%

Transition costs

One-off transition costs needed to create One Oxfordshire are expected to be **£21.9 million**, the details of which are set out in the table below.

One-off transition costs	Total
Programme management costs	-£2.7m
IT and systems costs	-£5.2m
External transition, design and implementation support costs	-£4.1m
Shadow democratic and legal costs	-£1.8m
Redundancy costs (30% of estimated employee savings)	-£6.1m
Contingency	-£2.0m
Total	**-£21.9m**

Some of the transition costs will be incurred ahead of vesting day (year 0) with further spend in year one and two. The phasing of these costs is set out in the table below.

	Year 0	Year 1	Year 2	Total
One-off transition costs	-£8.8m	-£8.8m	-£4.3m	**-£21.9m**
Phasing	40%	40%	20%	

While these one-off costs will be repaid through reorganisation savings, Oxfordshire County Council has already committed £10 million from earmarked reserves, which can be used towards the cost of local government reform and devolution (£1.2 million of which will be used for devolution). It is expected that the year 0 transition costs will be met from this reserve. Therefore, recurring savings from reorganisation will start in year one.

	Year 0	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Total
Transition costs	-£8.8m	-£8.8m	-£4.3m	•	•	•	**-£21.9m**
Use of earmarked reserves	£8.8m	•	•	•	•	•	**£8.8m**
Reorganisation savings	•	£12.0m	£24.1m	£30.1m	£30.1m	£30.1m	**£126.4m**
Adjusted reorganisation savings	•	**£3.2m**	**£19.8m**	**£30.1m**	**£30.1m**	**£30.1m**	**£113.3m**

Transformation and public service reform

The establishment of Oxfordshire Council will provide the opportunity to transform service delivery models. Transformation and economic growth opportunities will be delivered by integrating upper tier and lower tier services in a systematic way.

We will unify distinct waste services, create a person centred homelessness service and connect planning, housing and highways. We will connect leisure with public health and drive innovation by using data and insight from benefits to provide targeted early help and prevention.

Estimated recurring revenue savings of **£33.2 million** through transformation can be achieved by year five. A very prudent level of savings has been assumed to reflect the savings programmes already planned by existing councils ahead of vesting day, the expected funding reductions as a result of the Fair Funding Review 2.0 and business rates reset, as well as evidence from previous reorganisations.

There is the ability to stretch the potential savings from transformation to achieve £40.6 million per annum by year five, taking total annual savings to £70.7 million. But for the reasons set out above, this has not been assumed in this proposal.

Transformation savings are expected across the following areas:

Transformation saving	
Front office employees	£2.7m
Service delivery employees	£2.9m
Back office employees	£3.4m
Third party expenditure	£21.0m
Income generation	£2.1m
Assets – running costs	£1.1m
Total	**£33.2m**

To enable the transformation savings to be achieved, it is anticipated that there will be one-off delivery costs of £16.6 million as detailed in the table below.

Transformation costs	
Delivery resource	-£6.9m
Investment costs (eg IT and software)	-£5.5m
Redundancy costs (set at 30% of employee savings)	-£2.7m
Contingency at 10%	-£1.5m
Total	**-£16.6m**

These costs can either be met from the savings from reorganisation or offset against the future transformation savings. By year three there will be an annual net saving of £14.9 million rising to £33.2 million by year five.

> **Forming a single unitary authority by merging the county and district councils gives the greatest balance sheet stability.**

	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5 and beyond	Total 5 year cost (-) / saving (+)
One-off transformation costs	-£6.6m	-£6.6m	-£1.7m	-£1.7m	•	**-£16.6m**
Transformation savings	•	•	£16.6m	£24.9m	£33.2m	**£74.7m**
Net cost (+) / saving (-)	**-£6.6m**	**-£6.6m**	**£14.9m**	**£23.2m**	**£33.2m**	**£58.1m**

Further opportunities for savings through wider public service reform, have not been taken into consideration at this stage. However, by driving place shaping prospects and expanding transformation efforts beyond local government to include our partners such as the NHS, Thames Valley Police, our voluntary and community sector, as well as national organisations such as Homes England, additional savings could be realised. The pre-transition period will be used to explore these opportunities together with our partners.

Only One Oxfordshire has the scale to manage any further financial volatility.

Fair Funding Review 2.0

The government has recently proposed changes to the distribution of funding for local government through the Fair Funding Review 2.0 consultation. This includes proposed changes to the formulae behind the Settlement Funding Assessment for each council and adjusting for the level of resources available from council tax funding, as well as a reset of business rates funding. The proposal is to implement these changes from April 2026. The impact on individual councils and arrangements for phasing the impact, will not be known until the Provisional Local Government Finance Settlement for 2026/27 is published in December 2025.

Oxfordshire councils have relatively high resources from the council tax base. As a result they are collectively expected to lose between £35 million and £55 million annually from implementation of the Fair Funding Review. In addition to the county council, four out of the five district councils in Oxfordshire are also expected to lose funding. Cherwell District Council will be particularly impacted as it has experienced strong growth in business rates.

The statutory invitation from government is clear that new councils must be large enough to withstand financial shocks. Oxfordshire has a duty to protect all of its places as part of local government reform.

While the assumption is that all councils will manage the funding reductions and set a balanced budget each year up to vesting day, only One Oxfordshire has the scale to manage any further financial volatility.

One Oxfordshire presents the firmest foundations to protect and enhance public services across the whole of Oxfordshire for current and future generations.

Rationalisation of assets

The estimated net book value of operational assets held by the existing councils in Oxfordshire is £2,137 million. There are also surplus assets valued at £19 million.

As ongoing service delivery must be maintained, the scope for rationalising operational assets is expected to focus largely on office buildings, depot facilities, and potentially fleet vehicles. There is also an opportunity to consolidate and rationalise other assets including the sharing of premises with health and other partners.

Rationalisation of assets will generate recurring revenue savings from reorganisation of £3.4 million and one-off capital receipts totalling £11.4 million, which could be used alongside the surplus assets of £18 million to help invest in growing the local economy. In the longer run, further capital receipts will be expected as a result of transformation.

Total borrowing and debt servicing costs

At vesting day, it is estimated that combining the balance sheets of the councils in Oxfordshire will result in Oxfordshire Council holding general long-term liabilities of £1,258 million plus £586 million relating to Housing Revenue Account liabilities and £528 million short-term liabilities. Fixed assets for the new council will be £4,232 million plus Housing Revenue Account assets of £1,339 million. The annual cost of financing the general fund debt from revenue is £56.5 million which is **6.2 per cent** of One Oxfordshire's estimated budget at vesting day.

The wider debt position and the impact of financing on budgets is clearly shown through the CIPFA Financial Resilience Index 2024, set out in the table below. This demonstrates that forming a single unitary authority by merging the county and district councils gives the greatest balance sheet stability, given the variation in assets and liabilities across the councils.

Key   L   Low risk   M   Medium risk   H   High risk

Indicators of financial stress	Oxfordshire County Council	Cherwell District Council	West Oxfordshire Council	South Oxfordshire Council	Vale of White Horse Council	Oxford City Council
Level of reserves	L	L	L	L	L	H
Change in reserves	L	H	M	M	L	H
External debt	L	H	L	n/a	n/a	H
Social care	L	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Income and funding	L	H	M	L	L	H

Special educational needs and disabilities (SEND)

Like most councils with responsibility for SEND, Oxfordshire County Council has a deficit on the High Needs Block of its Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG). At the end of 2024/25 the cumulative deficit was £92 million. This is expected to increase to over £150 million by the end of 2025/26.

Since 2020/21 the CIPFA Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting has required councils with upper tier responsibilities to hold negative high needs DSG balances in an unusable reserve. The existing statutory override was due to end on 31 March 2026 but as part of the Fair Funding Review 2.0 consultation, the government announced that this will be extended until 31 March 2028.

The anticipated white paper setting out details of SEND reform is now expected to be published in early 2026. The government is expected to set out further details on supporting local authorities as they transition to a reformed SEND system as part of the Provisional Local Government Finance Settlement for 2026/27.

Oxfordshire County Council has budgeted for an annual contribution to an earmarked reserve to ensure that overall, earmarked reserves will not be negative at the point at which the statutory override ends on 31 March 2028, and the deficit returns to the local authority balance sheet.

If the high needs deficit has not been addressed before vesting day, the accumulated deficit will return to the local authority balance sheet. In the event that the decision is to create more than one unitary council for Oxfordshire, this deficit will need to be apportioned to the new constituent councils based on the number of education, health and care plans.

Financial sustainability and economic growth opportunity

The payback period for a single unitary council in Oxfordshire will be approximately 1.3 years of reorganisation from vesting day. There will be a net saving from reorganisation of £3.2 million by 2028/29 and an ongoing benefit of £30.1 million from 2030/31, which will help to manage the potential impact of funding reform.

By achieving reorganisation savings from 2028/29, One Oxfordshire will have the financial headroom to be able to invest in, and deliver, its transformation programme, which will drive further savings from 2030/31 of £16.6 million with ongoing savings of £33.2 million by 2032/33.

The overall benefit, including reorganisation and transformation costs and savings, is summarised in the table on the next page.

The forecast savings mean that One Oxfordshire will be the most financially resilient council for Oxfordshire and more able to manage future demographic changes, funding risks and financial shocks.

One Oxfordshire can better grow the council tax base and business rates through strategic planning and investment. A unified council with strong finances, relatively low levels of debt, opportunities from the release of assets and associated capital receipts, all underpinned by strong economic growth, will be well-positioned to attract investors and drive Oxfordshire's future development.

Total savings of £162.6 million will be achieved by 2032/33.

	Year 0 2027/28	Year 1 2028/29	Year 2 2029/30	Year 3 2030/31	Year 4 2031/32	Year 5 2032/33 and beyond	Total 5 year cost (-)/ saving (+)
One-off transition costs	-£8.8m	-£8.8m	-£4.3m	•	•	•	**-£21.9m**
Reorganisation savings	•	£12.0m	£24.1m	£30.1m	£30.1m	£30.1m	**£126.4m**
Net cost (-) / saving (+) from aggregation	**-£8.8m**	**£3.2m**	**£19.8m**	**£30.1m**	**£30.1m**	**£30.1m**	**£104.5m**
One-off transformation costs	•	-£6.6m	-£6.6m	-£1.7m	-£1.7m	•	**-£16.6m**
Recurring transformation savings (base)	•	•	•	£16.6m	£24.9m	£33.2m	**£74.7m**
Net cost (-) / saving (+) from transformation	•	**-£6.6m**	**-£6.6m**	**£14.9m**	**£23.2m**	**£33.2m**	**£58.1m**
Overall net cost (-) / saving (+)	**-£8.8m**	**-£3.4m**	**£13.2m**	**£45.0m**	**£53.3m**	**£63.3m**	**£162.6m**

3.4 Council tax harmonisation

A consideration for the new council will be the level of council tax it requires and how this affects what residents will be required to pay in the future. Currently, council tax band D differs between Oxfordshire's five districts. As part of local government reform in Oxfordshire, the combined current council tax band Ds for district councils and Oxfordshire County Council will need to be harmonised to a single set of charges for the new unitary authority within seven years after vesting day.

Until rates are harmonised there will be a degree of difference in the increases to council tax between the old district council areas within the new unitary area. It will be for the new authority to decide which approach it takes to harmonise council tax; however, modelling has been undertaken to illustrate the options available. This indicates that applying the harmonisation of council tax based on the weighted average approach is the most beneficial approach financially.

Using this approach in year one will ensure total council tax is materially unchanged from the baseline. This produces a harmonised Oxfordshire Band D charge of £2,415.80. This would result in council tax variations between the old district council areas, ranging from £59 more in West Oxfordshire to £186 less in Oxford.

Most newly created unitary authorities have chosen to harmonise council tax over the shortest possible period on the weighted average council tax method to ensure the maximum council tax is available to fund services. Other options will need to be considered by the new council, but this will lead to a shortfall in income compared to the base position, which means that some of the savings that have been identified will need to be set aside to cover this.

3.5 Financial risks

The overall financial case and baseline needs to be considered in the context of the following ongoing key financial and other risks ahead of vesting day:

Achieving a balanced medium term financial strategy

It is assumed that prior to vesting day, each of the existing authorities will continue to set balanced budgets that are robust and deliverable.

It is also assumed that the existing authorities will continue to effectively manage their budgets and deliver planned savings.

A failure to do so will put at risk the assumptions and savings set out in the financial case.

Management of demand for critical high-cost services

Action continues to be taken to manage demand for adult social care through the Oxfordshire Way, which aims to help people remain independent and well at home for longer.

However, demand for children's social care, sufficiency of places and cost of provision of care continue to be risks that could increase costs ahead of vesting day – although it is expected that any increase in costs will be addressed as part of the budget each year ahead of the formation of the new council.

Funding formula changes

Outcomes from the Fair Funding Review 2.0 consultation are outstanding and will impact the funding available to local authorities from 2026/27 onwards. Analysis indicates that this could result in a significant reduction in funding within the county and this is likely to not only affect funding in the longer-term but could also impact on the ability to fund significant transition costs while facing additional pressure on core spending.

Special educational needs and disabilities (SEND)

There is a risk that if a solution to the accumulated SEND high needs deficit is not in place by 31 March 2028 when the statutory override ends, the debt transfers back to the balance sheet. This will have a significant impact on the overall level of earmarked reserves at the point a new authority is created.

Shared service arrangements

It has been assumed for the purposes of the financial case that current significant shared service arrangements will continue. This includes Oxfordshire County Council's arrangements with the Hampshire Shared Services Partnership (IBC) to deliver payroll, accounts payable, accounts receivable and other transactional finance services. If this is not the case, there will be additional costs associated with disaggregation.

Achievability of future savings

A very prudent approach to reorganisation and transformation savings has been included in the financial case given the risk of significant funding reductions from the implementation of the Fair Funding Review and a reset of the business rates baseline. Therefore, there is low risk of the full savings set out in this proposal not being achieved.

Oxford Housing Revenue Account (HRA)

The Oxford HRA Business Plan to 2031 is borderline affordable and does not provide sufficient financial capacity to respond to emerging pressures. Actions are being taken to reach a healthier baseline. However, there are still risks to long-term viability.

We have provided a strong case for One Oxfordshire, for one council with a countywide footprint that is financially resilient. However, it is people that make places. We need to build a council in partnership that listens to our communities, one that they can connect with and meets their needs. So we asked people what they thought of One Oxfordshire. When every voice matters, every place thrives.

📍 **High Street, Witney**

4. One Oxfordshire engagement

4.1 Engaging on One Oxfordshire

One Oxfordshire is grounded in comprehensive engagement with both residents and stakeholders – shaped by their real, lived experiences; responding to their priorities; building on what they see as the benefits of one council and addressing their concerns.

We heard that local places matter, that people want clear and accountable decision making that is closer to communities; strong financial resilience; and simpler access to fairer, more responsive services that are cost effective and connected.

One Oxfordshire is designed to respond to these and strives to make local government in the county work better for everyone.

Delivering comprehensive engagement across Oxfordshire

Throughout the summer of 2025, we prioritised actively engaging and listening to residents, partners and businesses using a mix of approaches[46].

We ran a digital communications awareness raising campaign about local government reorganisation and One Oxfordshire; asked 1,344 residents what they thought in our countywide, statistically representative residents' survey; ran nine focus groups with adults; and four sounding boards with young people.

We also engaged partners in public services, Oxfordshire's 318 town and parish councils, the voluntary and community sector, and academia and businesses. We invited them to learn more about local government reorganisation and to share their views through targeted communications, town hall meetings, talking table events and meetings.

Our engagement programme was underpinned by robust research. This included qualitative research to inform the development of Oxfordshire County Council's strategic plan 2025 – 2028 and comprehensive stakeholder and resident research to inform the development of the 2023 Oxfordshire place narrative – highlighting the county's distinctiveness and unified identity as a leading centre for business, innovation and sustainable growth.

Legacy research such as a 2017 representative survey commissioned as part of a previous local government reorganisation bid found that 70 per cent of participating residents supported local government reorganisation and 70 per cent preferred a single council for Oxfordshire.

We heard from
1,203 people
through our commissioned countywide, statistically representative annual residents' survey.

We put residents centre stage reaching
284,128
people through our digital communications awareness raising campaign.

63
people participated across nine commissioned in-depth focus groups.

1,344
people took part in our open online survey.

81 young people
shared their views through four sounding board discussions held in secondary schools as part of our commitment to actively involving young people in shaping their future.

If you've got one council then there's not going to be the different opinions coming right, left and centre of what's more important and they can just focus on what they think needs focusing on.

(Focus group participant)

4.2 Key themes from our resident engagement

From our resident focused activity – our representative and open residents' surveys, focus groups and sounding boards – a number of common themes emerged.[46]

Clear decision making matters

Decision making was a dominant and consistent theme in our group discussions with residents and young people.

Clear and accountable decision making was rated top in both our residents' surveys as the most important attribute of any local authority created through local government reorganisation.

It achieved a mean score of 8.63 out of 10 in our statistically representative residents' survey.

One Oxfordshire opportunities:

We will simplify services for residents, businesses and investors and make them stronger with clear accountability. We will have one set of councillors, one chief executive and one senior management team. Elected councillors will operate at the heart of their communities within a new neighbourhood governance structure to support local decision making.

Local areas matter

Our annual representative residents' survey shows that 71 per cent of residents feel they belong strongly to their local area; 21 per cent feel this very strongly.

A dominant and consistent concern across all our resident engagement was that a single council for Oxfordshire would struggle to address specific local issues effectively, that their area would be overlooked as the council struggled to balance different needs, and there would be a loss of local knowledge and general disconnection from communities.

One Oxfordshire opportunities:

We will bring local government closer to communities, fostering civic participation and active involvement in shaping services. A new neighbourhood governance structure will ensure local issues are heard and acted on together with locally elected councillors who will represent their communities and places.

We can all be in unison across Oxfordshire.

(Young person in a sounding board discussion)

Local representation is important

Respondents to our surveys felt that partnering with town and parish councils to bring decision making closer to communities is a very important attribute of any local authority created through local government reorganisation.

This drew a mean score of 8.27 out of 10 in our statistically representative residents' survey.

Our discussions with town and parish councils sought to explore sector views on the devolution of services (with emphasis on local control, capacity and funding); community asset transfer; place shaping and neighbourhood governance; the importance of flexibility and tailored approaches for different councils; mechanisms for local influence and accountability; and the need for early, clear consultation and practical pilots.

One Oxfordshire's recognition of towns and parishes as central to local democracy was well received by local councils and seen as a meaningful step forward.

One Oxfordshire opportunities:

We will create strong neighbourhood governance and ensure the continuity of Oxford city's status and governance. We will bring decision making closer to communities through a stronger partnership with town and parish councils, a set of area committees, a communities unit and the development of modern charter trustees.

Residents value local government services

Our recent representative residents' survey demonstrates how highly residents' value local government services and how the work of councils impacts their quality of life daily.

A common concern from residents across our summer engagement activities was service disruption, including the potential for reduced services; services being cut or reorganised as part of local government reorganisation; and the importance of services not being disrupted through the transition to any new administration, especially if they are currently performing well.

Residents also identified that bringing areas under one Oxfordshire council could potentially positively impact on services. For example their consistency and equitability across the county in terms of service, planning and funding.

One Oxfordshire opportunities:

We will protect and improve critical services such as adult and children's social care, SEND and homelessness now and in the future. By bringing other services together under one roof we will also improve them, including waste and recycling; housing, planning and growth; community safety; and climate.

## Generating savings and financial resilience are important

Survey respondents identified reducing duplication and running costs and generating savings from streamlining services as important factors of local government reorganisation. This resulted in mean scores of 8.30 out of 10 and 7.90 out 10 respectively in our statistically representative residents' survey.

Across our engagement mix, residents spontaneously recognised the potential of One Oxfordshire to offer strong financial resilience and greater cost efficiencies. Respondents to our statistically representative residents' survey gave this a mean score of 8.31 out of 10.

They described the potential for reduced duplication, head count and time wastage, improved coordination, and a more joined-up approach to governance; and were appreciative that this should result in greater cost efficiencies, ultimately creating more budget to fund key services.

One Oxfordshire opportunities:

We will provide the fastest, cheapest, lowest transition to a new council that is available in Oxfordshire – ready to transform on day one. Bringing services together under one council offers the best value for money for residents and will save **£63 million** per year with total net savings of **£163 million** by year five – ultimately benefitting every resident at a time when every penny counts.
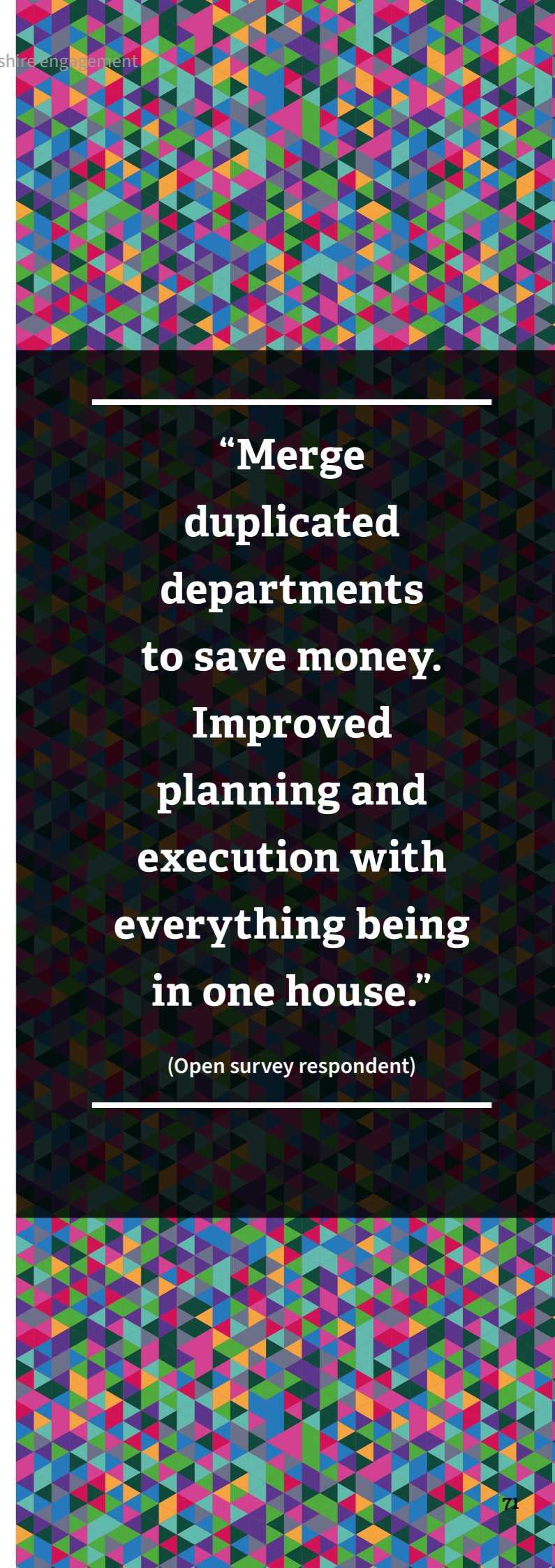
> "Merge duplicated departments to save money. Improved planning and execution with everything being in one house."

(Open survey respondent)

Minimising disruption to services is important

Minimising any disruption to services caused by separating them was rated the top most important area of focus of local government reorganisation in both our representative survey (mean score of 8.35 out of 10) and in our open survey.

One Oxfordshire opportunities:

The county council already delivers services on a countywide footprint, providing 85 per cent of local government services by expenditure in Oxfordshire. We will fully avoid disaggregation and the unnecessary fragmentation of critical services already performing well. We will protect and further improve these services – including adult and children's social care and SEND.

One Oxfordshire could deliver simpler access to services

Residents felt One Oxfordshire could deliver simpler access to services, that people would know who to contact better and would benefit from having one point of contact for services. This would streamline and simplify interactions for everyone.

Easy access for residents to council services was important to our survey respondents when considering how any further council should operate in Oxfordshire, with a mean score of 7.77 out of 10 in our representative residents' survey.

One Oxfordshire opportunities:

We will simplify services by having one front door for people to access all services and support – from social care, to housing, public health, community safety, waste, planning and everything in between. We will have one set of IT and customer contact systems and one portfolio of buildings, infrastructure and assets.

> # Much simpler to interact with one over-arching system, for things like school applications etc.
>
> **(Open survey respondent)**

4.3 Key themes from our stakeholder engagement

A wide range of stakeholder engagement has taken place with a variety of individuals, groups and organisations to share and refine One Oxfordshire.

Local businesses: Local government reorganisation business engagement session, virtual town hall, written correspondence.

Local MPs: Joint meeting for all Oxfordshire MPs, one to one meetings and written correspondence.

Local councils: Oxfordshire Association of Local Councils talking tables session; meetings with individual town councils; a workshop for larger town councils and the Oxford parishes; and letters to neighbouring councils.

Voluntary and community services: Virtual question and answer session hosted by Oxfordshire Community and Voluntary Action with representatives from all three Oxfordshire proposals present, and one to one meetings.

Public sector providers: Meetings with Thames Valley Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner; written communication with integrated care boards and local hospitals; regular briefings with Oxfordshire Fire and Rescue Service's chief fire officer and the county council's statutory directors for adult social care and children's services.

Education providers: Letters, joint briefings with heads and chairs of Oxfordshire and one to one meetings.

Oxfordshire county councillors: Three all councillor briefing sessions; two meetings of the Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee; one meeting of the Audit and Governance Committee; regular briefings of political group leaders and within political groups.

Employees: Sessions with our inclusion networks, managers forum, colleague forum and news updates using internal communication channels.

Stakeholder feedback on One Oxfordshire

Stakeholders	Priorities	Concerns	One Oxfordshire opportunities
Businesses	▶ Simplicity of one council ▶ One vision for the whole of Oxfordshire ▶ Single planning authority	▶ Ensure no loss in democratic deficit	▶ We will create a new council size to reflect additional responsibilities of councillors ▶ We will create area committees to add greater democratic participation for residents and place councillors at the heart of their communities ▶ We will create a single, effective planning authority for all of Oxfordshire
Town and parish councils	▶ Simplicity of one council	▶ Needs to have a stronger local focus ▶ Need to be able to make contact and get issues resolved ▶ Don't wish for assets and services to be 'dumped on' town and parish councils ▶ Recognise that there are distinct places and neighbourhoods within Oxford	▶ We will develop a town and parish framework building on the existing charter ▶ We will create area committees to add greater democratic participation for residents and place councillors at the heart of their communities ▶ One Oxfordshire will work with all those local councils who have the capacity and capability to do so

Stakeholders	Priorities	Concerns	One Oxfordshire opportunities
Education providers	▶ One vision for the whole of Oxfordshire	▶ Needs to protect the Oxford brand	▶ We will ensure that Oxford's city status is not lost ▶ We will agree modern charter trustees with the resources and influence to be a focal point for city issues ▶ We will consider a community governance review with Oxford stakeholders to explore robust and distinct governance arrangements for Oxford and its neighbourhoods, if needed ▶ We will continue to protect the Oxford brand locally, sub regionally and nationally, and ensure that a future mayoral strategic authority does that too
Employees	▶ Less disruption ▶ More opportunities for career development	▶ Too big ▶ Employees in people facing services work flexibly across the county to meet demand. If there's a split, there could be workforce challenges	▶ The county council already delivers services on a countywide footprint, providing 85 per cent of local government services by expenditure in Oxfordshire ▶ One Oxfordshire represents the quickest, lowest risk and lowest cost transition for local government reorganisation ▶ Oxfordshire County Council is already delivering services rated "good" and managing demand well
Trade unions	▶ Not applicable	▶ Not applicable	▶ We will maintain ongoing, transparent dialogue throughout the process

Stakeholders	Priorities	Concerns	One Oxfordshire opportunities
Councillors	▶ Simplicity of one council ▶ Geography makes sense	▶ Fewer councillors ▶ Needs to protect the Oxford brand ▶ Need to strengthen parish and town council relationship ▶ Council will be too big	▶ We will create a new council size to reflect additional responsibilities of councillors ▶ We will agree modern charter trustees with the resources and influence to be a focal point for city issues ▶ We will continue to protect the Oxford brand locally, sub regionally and nationally, and ensure that a future mayoral strategic authority does that too
Public sector providers	▶ Simplicity of one council ▶ Limited disruption ▶ Geography makes sense ▶ Maintains large pooled budget of £0.5 billion	▶ Too big ▶ Employees in people facing services work flexibly across the county to meet demand. If there's a split, there could be workforce challenges	▶ We will further strengthen and integrate our health and care services working with our NHS health and care partnership and NHS colleagues maximising our pooled budget arrangement ▶ We will work in partnership to create a prevention focused council
Voluntary and community (VCS) sector	▶ Limited disruption ▶ Cost effective council for the long-term more likely to create stable funding ▶ Clear geography ▶ Removes unnecessary competition with VCS in West Berkshire	▶ Needs to be a new council – ensuring the opportunity to reset is seized	▶ New council will have a new way of working, vision and culture ▶ The Oxfordshire Advisory Board will be established to guide transition – being a critical friend to a future council and ensuring commitments within the proposal are not just met but embedded

Stakeholders	Priorities	Concerns	One Oxfordshire opportunities
MPs	▶ Simplicity of one council ▶ Clear geography ▶ Strong financial model for new council	▶ Council will be too big ▶ Loss of focus on Oxford	▶ We will continue to protect the Oxford brand locally, sub regionally and nationally, and ensure that a future mayoral strategic authority does that too ▶ We will agree modern charter trustees with the resources and influence to be a focal point for city issues ▶ Area committees for Oxford and its neighbourhoods will be established

What we will deliver

As one council, we will set out how we will maintain and improve critical and wider public services by seizing the opportunities for public sector reform and the transformation that devolution will activate across our region.

One Oxfordshire will bring all of the county's assets together to not only meet the considerable local government challenges ahead but to significantly improve outcomes for our people, place and economy.

We will do this using the firm foundations of "good" critical service delivery already established.

One Oxfordshire offers a financially resilient council across a footprint that works to deliver better public services and improved outcomes for our people and our place.

All Oxfordshire councils, and local government as a whole, have faced significant challenges to service delivery with rising costs, inflation and energy bills – exacerbated for so many of our communities who needed us the most throughout the COVID pandemic. This has increased the volume and complexity of demand on services across our place. All councils have coped but within a sub-optimal and constrained two-tier system of governance and leadership.

We have a once in a generation opportunity to change this. By seizing the opportunities for public sector reform, Oxfordshire can bring together all of its assets – its people, its places and its economy to hit the challenges head on and create a brighter future for all.

📍 **Occupational therapy, adult social care**

5. Improved outcomes for people and place

5.1 Our people

For decades, public service policy in the UK has been attempting to 'get upstream', intervene positively and early, and give our people and our communities the tools necessary to create independent, resilient and fulfilling lives. This is never easy, but One Oxfordshire will finally enable us to do this and prove what is possible. The evidence is compelling – bringing all services and all resources together within one council is the only way to reduce the costs of high demand services and sustain improved outcomes for our residents and stakeholders over the medium to long-term.

Building a prevention council

Preventing ill health, homelessness and worklessness are complicated public policy challenges, but they present a combined threat to population health and wellbeing across the country, and Oxfordshire is not without its challenges. Transforming life chances in childhood and young adulthood is critical.

Through the continuation of critical service delivery alongside reform to integrate currently fragmented services across district councils, the alignment of the whole public service system (NHS, Department for Work and Pensions, and Thames Valley Police) with One Oxfordshire enables us to work upstream tackling the causes of ill health earlier or design them out completely. It will enable a much more comprehensive and effective approach to prevention, including addressing the drivers of demand. This will help improve outcomes for residents, including vulnerable children and adults.

The implementation of the NHS 10 Year Plan presents a significant opportunity to strengthen the integration of place-based wellbeing offers with NHS health services at neighbourhood level across Oxfordshire. By aligning our collective efforts, we can ensure that the health and social care needs of our diverse communities are addressed in a cohesive, targeted and sustainable manner.

Oxfordshire Council will be responsible for social care, public health, housing, homelessness, planning and leisure services, enabling a truly integrated approach to population wellbeing. By focusing on prevention, One Oxfordshire can effectively coordinate efforts across all sectors, ensuring that our businesses and, most importantly, communities fulfil their potential.

One Oxfordshire will:

▶ Invest long-term and at scale in community assets and initiatives such as family hubs that tackle the wider determinants of health, reduce inequalities and tackle child and family poverty head on.

▶ Bring together wider public health services such as leisure facilities, benefit support and environmental health to make it easier for people to get help early.

▶ Create more inclusive, child and dementia-friendly public spaces.

▶ Be financially resilient to plan and deliver services for the long-term – crucial for a prevention and early intervention approach. We will invest, including using our Housing Revenue Account, at scale in good quality housing and skills programmes that support sustainable inclusive growth.

▶ Deliver a single partnership strategy with the voluntary and community sector to ensure that hyper-local expertise is harnessed, not lost in a larger structure. We will ensure that services are delivered closer to communities and support the vital role these groups play in building social connection and identifying risks early.

▶ Adopt a population health management approach with our NHS partners, underpinned by the robust use of shared data and research partnerships that will identify inequalities, unmet needs and their root causes. This will enable early tailored interventions to take place. Linking multiple, currently disparate, services together builds a stronger evidence base and connections into communities to help prevent issues escalating.

▶ Maximise our pooled budgets with the NHS - enabling more strategic and effective use of resources, reducing duplication and ensuring decisions are made jointly with our partners.

▶ Harness the value of multi-disciplinary teams working side by side with partner organisations, in co-located buildings to deliver services locally that design out poor health outcomes or intervene early.

▶ Design and deliver services that are better coordinated and more responsive to residents' needs. This will improve outcomes, support earlier intervention and encourage preventative care, enabling people to live independently for longer using limited resources more effectively.

A neighbourhood NHS health and care partnership

Neighbourhood working is not new and it is a central part of One Oxfordshire's plans to build on our firm foundations to further integrate with the Thames Valley Integrated Care Board (ICB) and its existing health and care partnership.

Health and care partnerships (HCPs) bring leaders together to join up services, accelerating this integration, and find new ways to use resources collectively to offer better value and more targeted care.

HCPs focus on prevention and reducing inequalities. They make choices and prioritise actions and interventions to deliver three shifts of change, moving care from treatment to prevention; acute to community; and analogue to digital.

One Oxfordshire will streamline governance across Oxfordshire to drive better outcomes in health and care for our people. We will

leverage the pooled budget of £0.5 billion to do this as well as use the 18 integrated commissioning posts the county council and Thames Valley ICB already share. This pooled budget is the largest of any system outside of mayoral strategic authorities in England.

One Oxfordshire, together with the HCP, will ensure we will have a single conversation that meets the needs of all Oxfordshire and provides critical enablers to deliver stronger, simpler services, particularly those in clear need of greater equity such as homelessness.

These enablers include using the significant financial headroom we have to invest for the long-term, co-locating clinical, population and community health teams from a single public estate and using our shared data and insight. Put together, this will create sustainable services that support the management of long-term health conditions across the county reducing demand on acute services.

> "There is an urgent need to transform the health and care system. We need to move to a neighbourhood health service that will deliver more care at home or closer to home, improve people's access, experience and outcomes, and ensure the sustainability of health and social care delivery[47]."

Oxfordshire Way

Oxfordshire has one of the lowest costs of adult social care provision across the country. Not only are we low cost, but we deliver great outcomes as our results from working in the Oxfordshire Way demonstrate.

Oxfordshire County Council developed Oxfordshire Way, an approach that supports people to live well and independently within their communities for as long as possible. Working in partnership with health and care organisations and our voluntary and community sector, we have delivered tangible and significant results.

These outcomes are not coincidental; they are the direct result of operating at scale across the county.

The model relies on the ability to plan, invest in, and manage preventative services – such as the countywide Live Well Oxfordshire Community Links services – at a scale that makes them viable and impactful.

Since the implementation of our approach to adult social care we have achieved a **67 per cent reduction in the number of people waiting for a social care assessment since April 2021**.

Furthermore, by focusing on prevention and independence, the growth in the number of people requiring long-term care has been cut by 20 per cent against demographic projections, meaning 150 more people are living independently in their own communities than would otherwise be expected.

Not only are we delivering high levels of quality care, we are doing this as one of the most cost effective upper tier councils in England.

Counties and unitaries adult care spend 2024 - 25[48]
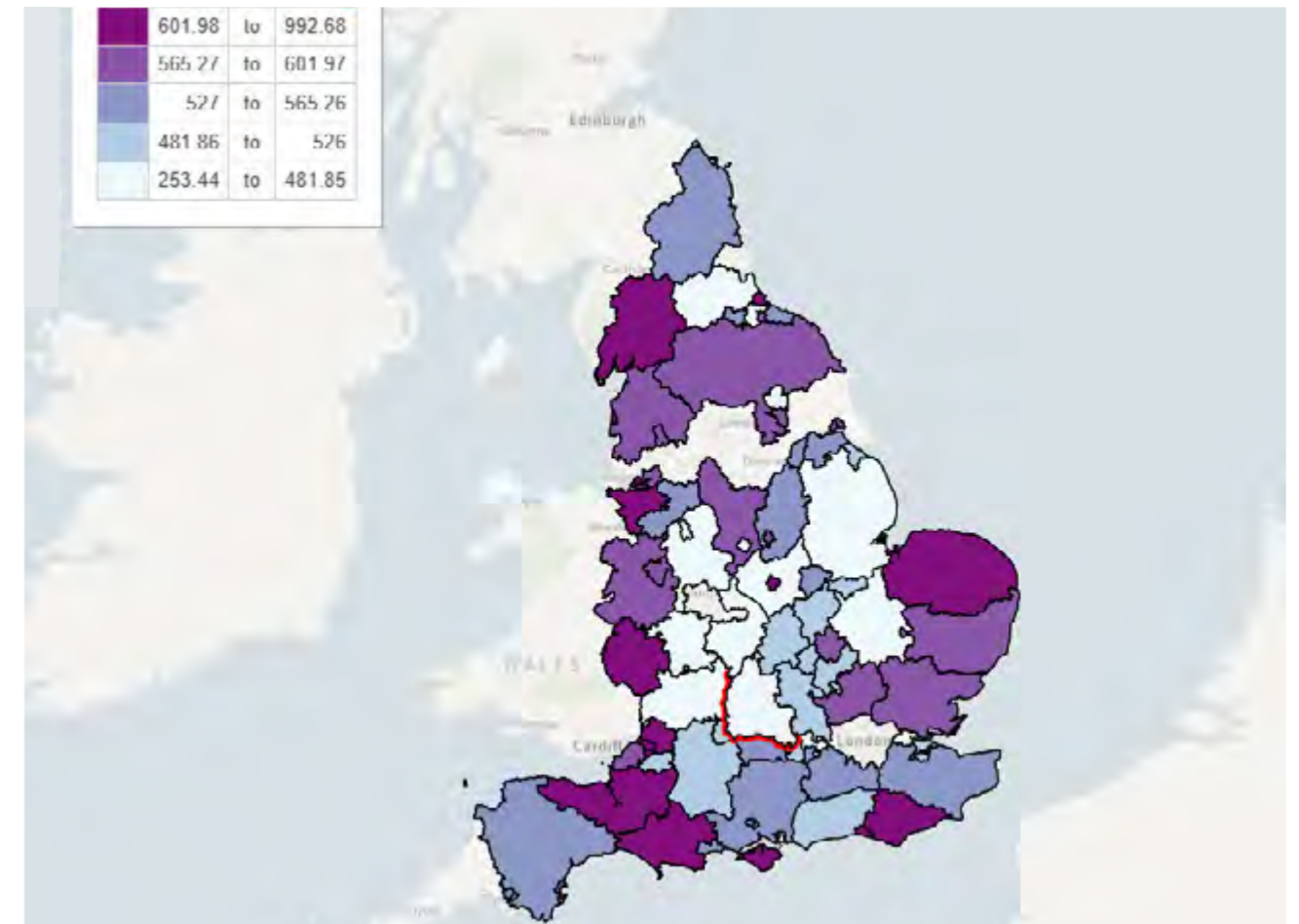
Oxfordshire Result	Oxfordshire result	England average (2022/23)	Performance vs national
Overall satisfaction of people who use services	68.5%	64.4%	Better
Permanent care home admissions (65+) per 100,000	337.8	560.8	Better
Older people still at home 91 days after discharge	86.3%	82.3%	Better
People who use services who feel safe	74.6%	69.7%	Better
Adult social care providers rated good/outstanding	90.3%	83.2%	Better

Well Together

The Well Together programme aims to address the wider determinants of health by tackling health and social inequalities at their roots.

It is delivered in partnership by Oxfordshire Community and Voluntary Action and Community First Oxfordshire (CFO) and is funded by the NHS.

To support this programme Oxfordshire County Council **allocated £1 million to CFO to work with the ten most deprived communities in Oxfordshire**.

We were able to convene a single, unified conversation with the majority of voluntary sector groups, allowing us to co-produce preventative interventions tailored to tackle the underlying drivers of health inequalities.

This work has had a significant impact, reaching nearly 12,000 vulnerable people in a short space of time[49].

It has helped those from our most deprived communities become physically active. It has significantly reduced the need for our statutory health services as a result of people becoming more active and has improved their health and wellbeing.

This achievement was recently recognised nationally, with Oxfordshire being shortlisted at the Health Service Journal national awards as exemplars for achieving substantial positive impact through partnership working. Oxfordshire County Council is planning to scale up these efforts across the county to maximise impact.

Health Inequality Forum

Community health development officers work locally to co-produce solutions and strengthen engagement by linking statutory services, voluntary organisations and community groups together.

This work is coordinated through a countywide Health Inequality Forum, supported by joint funding from multiple partners, including health services. Oxfordshire's scale for efficiency is used while retaining flexibility for local needs.

There are plans to roll this successful, partnership-driven approach out across the county's communities.

Protecting our critical services

Our work with Newton Europe has demonstrated that we are able to contain our future people based demand[50] through One Oxfordshire with a continued focus on early help, prevention and transformation.

Our critical services (or defined in the statutory invitation as crucial services) are highly complex and subject to high demand, and will be both protected and improved with One Oxfordshire.

There are critical services that follow children and adults across their life and form a significant portion of expenditure for Oxfordshire County Council.

We will continue to deliver these services without disaggregation. These are:

- **Children's social care:** safeguarding, corporate parenting for care experienced children and care leavers, early help, family support, youth offending services and the responsibility for the regional adoption agency.

- **Education:** school place planning, school improvement, admissions and legal attendance, home to school transport and access to high quality early years provision.

- **Special educational needs and disabilities (SEND):** health, education and care for children and young people with additional needs.

- **Adult social care:** support for older people, people with physical disabilities and neurodiverse people, and those with mental health needs.

- **Homelessness:** statutory service for those who need accommodation.

Special educational needs and disabilities (SEND)

Our SEND improvement journey has been a key strategic priority for Oxfordshire's Local Area Partnership and for the county council since 2023 following an inspection of services. We have worked closely with our integrated care board, local health providers, schools and settings, and our parent carer forum to develop services and improve outcomes for children and young people and in line with the regulatory framework.

We are proud of the progress we have made to improve the timeliness and quality of support for children. The county council has improved the quality and timeliness of education, health and care plans (EHCPs) and needs assessments, operating above national statutory deadlines. Our stock-take and deep-dive evaluations from the Department for Education have evidenced strong and sustained improvement across all key indicators for children and young people with SEND.

This improvement work will continue – particularly with the anticipated SEND white paper and our high needs deficit management plan. Splitting services risks destabilising this important progress.

Homelessness

As housing costs rise across England and in Oxfordshire, more families are facing housing challenges and homelessness. Rents in Oxfordshire's private market have continued to climb[51] and temporary accommodation use is also rising quickly, straining council budgets and negatively impacting households and children across Oxfordshire. Authorities in Oxfordshire owed nearly 3,000 prevention and relief duties in the last year, indicating the scale of the challenge in the area.

Oxfordshire County Council is already delivering homelessness services for vulnerable post 18 year olds – a more consistent and joined-up approach is already proving itself across Oxfordshire. Expanding this approach under One Oxfordshire will unlock the greatest benefits to all those experiencing homelessness.

The priority for One Oxfordshire will be for a safe, legal and confident transition of employees and records to ensure a seamless continuity of services for vulnerable people who use them and focus relentlessly on reducing homelessness.

Adult and children's social care

Oxfordshire County Council delivers "good" adult and children's services (as recognised by Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission). The greatest risk to these services will be fragmentation through unnecessary and / or excessive disaggregation, which will adversely impact outcomes and performance. Demand and the resources to address this have been built up countywide and are not evenly distributed.

That risk has been raised nationally by the Association of Directors of Children's Services in a letter to the minister on 23 June 2025. This letter made clear that the extent of risk to quality care for vulnerable children is not just a consequence of disaggregation, but of the degree of disaggregation below the principle of population thresholds of 500,000 set out in the government's white paper.

Similar points were echoed in the Association of Directors of Adults' Services letter to the minister dated 14 August 2025. Specifically, the "need to ensure diverse communities with a mixture of health, wealth and age profiles are needed to avoid creating highly concentrated units of need – this will help to ensure that any new councils have a good basis on which they can balance demand for services with the ability of local populations to help pay for them".

Improving critical services

One Oxfordshire will:

▶ Create a single housing authority with the ability to leverage a housing revenue account (HRA) across the county, providing great housing solutions at scale – removing all costs associated with coordinating and leading work across five district councils.

▶ Speed up decision making using single systems and streamlining engagement with partners such as the NHS, the Department for Work and Pensions and Thames Valley Police.

▶ Build a single front door for homelessness services – one website for people to access help and support; and one way of working to make the best use of resources.

▶ Work together with the Thames Valley Integrated Care Board (ICB) to create one joined-up way of planning and funding health and wellbeing services. With a single council, we can look at the bigger picture and see how things like temporary accommodation for homeless people affects other costs, such as health services and transport for children with special educational needs.

▶ Review the whole Oxfordshire one public sector estate (land and buildings). This will help make sure communities have what they need for the future. Where possible, we'll free up sites so they can be used for temporary accommodation, affordable housing, parks and leisure, and commercial space.

▶ Strengthen its confident and experienced workforce delivering "good" highly complex critical services in high demand across Oxfordshire that can flex to the needs of communities within a new unitary, at scale and at pace.

▶ Align benefit services to strategic priorities, such as early help and prevention, to support earlier identification of families who may be falling into financial difficulty.

▶ Control funding levers across all housing-related funds (Better Care Fund, Disabled Facilities Grants etc), from discretionary housing payments to funding for supported housing to enable smarter, long-term investments that benefit the whole public sector in Oxfordshire.

▶ Create one team focused on preventing homelessness early, before people reach a crisis point. By combining several housing teams into one, Oxfordshire can have more employees available to help with, for example, mediation for families with 16 - 17 year olds; working with landlords; and resolving benefit problems for people at risk of losing their homes.

▶ Guarantee everyone, regardless of where they live, has access to the same services creating fairer service delivery. We will make sure the rules for who can get help are the same everywhere in Oxfordshire so people at risk don't miss out on support when they need it most.

▶ Use our strategic partnership with Homes England to invest in infrastructure and unlock and accelerate housing delivery. As a strategic sized authority, we will be in the best position to attract and use more funding for homes working through existing and new wholly owned companies and joint ventures. We will leverage the Housing Revenue Account, grant from the Social and Affordable Homes Programme, Section 106 contributions, prudential borrowing and private sector investment.

The out of hospital team

▶ **The out of hospital team is made up of social workers, housing officers and clinical staff. Its focus is supporting hospital discharge for people who cannot be sent home due to a housing related issue. Although this group of people is far smaller than those in hospital waiting for a social care package, their discharge can be delayed for far longer.**

The multi-disciplinary team works across systems to achieve solutions, which includes helping Oxfordshire achieve one of the lowest delays in the region.

In 2017, Oxfordshire was among the worst performing local authority areas in the country for hospital discharges. However, **Oxfordshire is now in the top quartile for discharge performance nationally (2025).** This is an example of how multi-disciplinary working can solve problems that cut across different systems and organisations.

The team improves outcomes for people experiencing homelessness by providing coordinated person-centred care that addresses health, housing and social needs as a whole. It also helps people access services, maintain continuity across them and builds up trust between agencies and vulnerable people.

5.2 Our place

To invest in people, and improve outcomes, we also need to invest in places – the dividends are shared success.

Since the influential Lyons Inquiry[52], the responsibility for place shaping and place making has been felt keenly by local government across the country.

Creating the conditions for a place to flourish, to amplify its assets confidently on a regional, national and international stage is not desirable, it is essential.

The delivery of a high performing, inclusive and balanced economy in Oxfordshire is not just pivotal for output and productivity, it is the most effective way of improving the social determinants of ill-health, reducing inequalities and childhood poverty levels across the county.

The stakes could not be higher. The key is to connect these unrivalled growth opportunities that One Oxfordshire brings to all of our people, across all of our places.

Anything less than this continues the unproductive and unequal patterns and adverse impacts of the past.

"Sustained economic growth is central to this government's Plan for Change and is the only way to increase the prosperity of our country and improve the living standards of working people[53]."

Making planning work for our county and country

Growth sites in Oxfordshire[54]

Figure 3. Map of growth sites in Oxfordshire.

Growth sites in Oxfordshire

- Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project
- Housing site
- Other sites including employment, health, academic, leisure
- From adopted local pla
- From local plans in examination
- Speculative sites

≤ 350 dwellings	≤ 4 hectares
≤ 1100	≤ 13
≤ 2200	≤ 28
≤ 3500	≤ 46
≤ 8000	≤ 150

Contains OS data © Crown Copyright and database right 2025
Sites data from Cherwell Local Plan 2042 reg19 (with retained sites from Cherwell 2011-31)
South and Vale Local Plan 2041 reg19 (with retained sites from South Oxfordshire 2035 and Vale of White Horse 2031)
Oxford Local Plan 2036
West Oxfordshire Local Plan 2031

As well as delivering high quality public services we need to plan effectively for the future. Oxfordshire will play a significant role in delivering the government's Industrial Strategy with strong capabilities across six of the government's eight growth-driving sectors: digital technologies, life sciences, clean energy, advanced manufacturing, defence, and creative industries.

Great opportunity to deliver exists – for example, the first AI Growth Zone in the UK is at Culham Campus in Abingdon, part of the Science Vale area, which is an internationally recognised concentration of these industries.

Nearby Harwell brings together academia, hosting teams from over 30 UK universities, national science assets and industry to drive scientific and technological breakthroughs. But progress has been slow in other areas. One Oxfordshire will accelerate this progress.

Strategic planning and infrastructure

In 2021, all councils agreed the Oxfordshire Strategic Vision – the precursor to the Oxfordshire Joint Statutory Spatial Plan (Oxfordshire Plan 2050). The production of this plan was linked to government funding for the Oxfordshire Housing and Growth Deal in 2018 – for supporting infrastructure and affordable housing, and to accelerate delivery of 100,000 new homes in the county.

The plan failed in 2022 on the issue of agreeing housing numbers. It has impeded the ability to take a strategic approach,

such as being able to focus on development around transport corridors. The failure demonstrates that scale is essential when making decisions about growth.

The Oxfordshire Infrastructure Strategy (OxIS) identifies and prioritises the infrastructure needed to support sustainable development; the current barriers to delivery and gaps in future infrastructure provision; as well funding opportunities up to 2050.

By assessing all infrastructure needs from energy to transport, the strategy outlines the overarching approach needed to facilitate sustainable, inclusive growth for Oxfordshire.

One Oxfordshire is designed so we can still represent our communities but are capable of making strong plan-led decisions at scale. We will, with a mayoral strategic authority (MSA), coordinate and unlock infrastructure investment and economic growth opportunities to meet the Oxfordshire's needs, including housing and transport, while protecting our environment and ensuring access to green spaces for all our communities.

Supporting growth and improving vital transport connectivity requires a council to provide and deliver new and improved infrastructure.

Due to the risks and challenges with construction, including market inflation volatility, One Oxfordshire is of a scale that is capable of managing cost and programme variances and absorb financial pressures if and when required.

As the county grows, the need for cohesive transport solutions has never been greater to shape how people, goods and services flow across our county. Transport planning must consider a broad geography, ensuring that strategic transport interchanges - bus, coach, rail, and even digital platforms - are inclusive and accessible.

One Oxfordshire, with an MSA, can ensure strategic transport planning and delivery takes place across the whole of the county. We will provide a single, clear view on the

mobility needs for Oxfordshire, and the capacity and capability to manage our connected network in a seamless fashion.

Integrated transport is not simply a matter of convenience; it's key for Oxfordshire's economic success, environmental stewardship and social inclusion – unlocking opportunity while future-proofing the county against the challenges of growth, climate change and evolving patterns of movement.

OxRail 2040

The county council's ambitious OxRAIL 2040 strategy will support sustainable growth in emerging areas such as Begbroke, Culham, and Wantage and Grove. It will radically improve connectivity between high productivity sites and the wider region via the Cowley Branch Line.

Leveraging rail infrastructure in this way enables coordinated, transit-oriented growth that supports climate resilience and revitalises communities. Plans for enhanced stations and new ones (at Ardley, Bagbroke, Oxford Cowley and Littlemore, and Wantage and Grove) also create opportunities for sustainable growth around these locations and a wider, more connected Oxfordshire. Electrification will deliver more sustainable, higher capacity services and enable our Oxfordshire Metro idea for joined up connections between

rail, bus, active travel and new rapid mass transit options. This includes for the Oxford - Witney - Carterton corridor.

The county council is proposing to invest up to £7.5 million into the Cowley Branch Line, in addition to future investment in connectivity to the two new stations. Alongside the contribution of other partners, this commitment will unlock this £120 million scheme that will expedite the delivery of 6 - 10,000 homes and support the creation of up to 10,000 new jobs.

This will connect both Oxfordshire's highest performing science and innovation sites and provide a vital new transport link for our most deprived communities. It demonstrates the ability and benefits that an authority that operates at scale can offer.

Local plan making

Oxfordshire has a history of struggling to co-operate on planning across boundaries. In the current planning round, Oxford City Council has had its local plan rejected at examination stage for failing to meet the duty to cooperate. The planning inspectorate has also written to Vale of White Horse District Council and South Oxfordshire District Council recommending that their joint plan is withdrawn, again on the issue of the duty to cooperate.

As a result of slow planning and delivery, with no strategic approach, Oxfordshire and the UK is missing economic growth opportunities. Development will also come forward that is less productive and sustainable.

The challenges around plan making will likely continue with any combination of multiple unitary authorities in the county – scale is necessary for decision making in this space.

We need a fresh start for plan making – we can only do that with One Oxfordshire. It is imperative that sufficient scale is achieved in this round of local government reorganisation as history tells us it could take multiple generations to change it again.

Housing

A priority for strategic and local planning is housing. Oxfordshire has the potential to meet countywide housing needs by delivering homes near key employment sites and in connected locations - reducing travel demand and supporting vibrant, well-connected communities. The majority of journeys are internal to Oxfordshire, which emphasises Oxfordshire as a connected ecosystem – where people work and live in different parts of the county. It is critical that transport is planned on a wider geography to effectively maximise public transport, cycling, wheeling and walking opportunities.

Successful strategic planning for long-term economic and housing growth in the county will only be possible with One Oxfordshire.

The projected growth scenarios are between approximately **123,000** and **134,000** additional homes across Oxfordshire between 2024/25 and 2049/50[55].

The housing growth figures for Oxfordshire districts detailed on the next page represent an annual target of **5,300 homes per year for five years** as determined by the National Planning Policy Framework. This is a level significantly above the existing annual requirements of adopted local plans and current delivery rates and very significantly above the previous standard method planning assumptions.

The average annual delivery of homes across Oxfordshire ranges from 3,638 homes per annum (over a 15 year period) to 4,759 homes annually (based on the latest three year average delivery rate)[55]. Housing delivery peaked in 2018/19, 2019/20, and 2022/23, when more than 5,000 homes were delivered per year.

Analysis of recent delivery trends demonstrates a significant increase in housing delivery since 2016/17, with the three year average being 30 per cent higher than the 15 year average. Locally, the highest levels of housing completions have been achieved in the Vale of White Horse, followed closely by Cherwell and South Oxfordshire. Housing delivery has reduced considerably across the county in the last two monitoring years[55].

The identification of Heyford Park as a flagship new town by government is recognition of the county's potential to be a contributor to net housing growth above local housing targets. The ability to look strategically at Oxfordshire and develop a new town in a sustainable, connected area that can serve the needs of the city and county as a whole, is a strong model to follow – but infrastructure must come first.

One Oxfordshire offers a transformative solution. We can fully leverage the county's strengths in high-growth sectors such as AI and life sciences, while delivering well connected communities supported by seamless transport networks.

One Oxfordshire will enable the county to respond effectively to national infrastructure priorities, unlock stalled sites and deliver regeneration at scale. Delivery of sufficient and sustainable development is critical to the delivery of our economic success; without this, we are continuing to constrain the innovation and entrepreneurial advantages we have across the county for the benefit of UK PLC.

Area	Annual requirement of adopted local plan expressed as a yearly average	Three year average delivery	2023-24 delivery	Previous annual housing standard method (pre Dec 2024)	Housing standard method (as at Dec 2024)
Cherwell	1,362	1,104	805	706	1,118
Oxford	544	500	365	762	1,087
South Oxfordshire	981	1,104	978	579	1,242
Vale of White Horse	1,138	1,246	1,168	633	949
West Oxfordshire	797	805	683	594	905
Total	**4,822**	**4,759**	**3,999**	**3,229**	**5,301**

One Oxfordshire will:

▶ Develop a single local plan for Oxfordshire adopted on accelerated timescales by the end of 2028/29. This will be with the support of government giving us the tools such as continuing authority status; meeting existing reorganisation timescales; prioritisation with the planning inspectorate; and committing to mayoral elections in 2027 to ensure alignment with the development of a spatial development strategy.

▶ Act as a single point of contact to work with the mayor and the mayoral strategic authority to develop a spatial development strategy, which brings single strategies that cover housing, growth, infrastructure and transport together.

▶ Form a single local planning authority – streamlining decision-making, resources, plans and governance through planning committees for the whole county. This will support faster, more coordinated progress towards housing and development delivery, ensuring coordination of infrastructure and a connected and authentic approach to community involvement using area committees.

▶ Use the Ox Place[56] model of social and affordable housing delivery to its full potential – shaping a whole Oxfordshire approach, demonstrating the strengths of municipal housebuilding and active management of the local affordable and social rent housing market.

▶ Create one local authority landowner for the county – able to take a strategic review of all land and land types with a clear focus on housing.

▶ Create a single integrated digital operational system for plan making, engagement, development management and enforcement. This will deliver significant economies of scale but also a more customer friendly interface.

▶ Use its collective scale and standing to drive through strategic housing schemes, unblock stalled developments, champion inclusive growth that supports health, education and employment outcomes and ensure all communities benefit from future nationally significant infrastructure projects.

▶ Provide a single front door for investors and developers, with a standardised policy and approach across developments.

Oxfordshire Developers Forum

▶ **The Oxfordshire Developers Forum is organised and facilitated by Oxfordshire County Council and includes developers, landowners, investors, advisors and other stakeholders across the county, alongside all Oxfordshire councils.**

The forum provides open and constructive dialogue between all Oxfordshire councils, property owners and developers to facilitate more joined-up growth and development delivery in Oxfordshire.

It provides a strategic platform for dialogue on growth, housing and development across the county, to address common issues such as utilities and infrastructure, to share best practice and to champion a long-term, place led approach to development.

OX Place

▶ **In 2016, Oxford City Council established OX Place[56] as its own housing company to create high quality, genuinely affordable homes in the city. It builds homes that local people need and profits are invested back into the city for essential services, and into building more homes for people who need them.**

OX Place offers homes to buy outright and shared ownership, which gives people the chance to get onto the property ladder by buying a share of a home and renting the rest.

OX Place also builds council owned rented homes for those who need a safe, high quality, affordable rental home in the city. In some cases, these are for people who can't afford to buy, in others, providing affordable homes for key workers – nurses, doctors, university researchers and local school teachers who may need to live in the city while they're training, but then move away.

Delivering connected public services across Oxfordshire

Making planning work for our county and country will enable us to strategically plan and deliver high quality connected public services.

The move to Oxfordshire Council and how we design and deliver the full breadth of public services for our people will accelerate the effective and ongoing shaping of our place for a really bright future for everyone.

Given the county council already delivers services on a countywide footprint, providing 85 per cent of local government services by expenditure in Oxfordshire – including adult and children's social care, some education services, public health, fire and rescue, libraries and museums, roads and transport, trading standards, waste disposal and recycling – there is a strong case to maintain stability and avoid disaggregation of services.

One Oxfordshire is the only proposal that removes this risk, allowing service delivery that really changes people's lives to be prioritised and further improvements to be made. We will be able to retain the strengths of these services and build from the firm foundations they provide, deepening integration and operating at scale.

Oxfordshire Fire and Rescue Service

A key service area strongly affected by both local government reform and devolution is fire and rescue. In the Thames Valley, three fire and rescue authorities operate:

1. Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes Fire Authority (combined fire authority)

2. Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service (combined fire authority)

3. Oxfordshire Fire and Rescue Service (county council).

Those in the traditional Thames Valley footprint operate independently but have a strong programme of public sector innovation, which includes the handling of 999 calls, mobilising of fire engines, procurement, fire investigation and operational response. Oxfordshire Fire and Rescue Service delivers effective operations throughout the county, now geographically aligned with the neighbourhood police area for Oxfordshire.

If local government reorganisation results in multiple councils in Oxfordshire, a combined fire authority will need to be established to govern fire and rescue. This would be a temporary structure until a mayoral strategic authority and the mayor is in place to discharge those functions. This will create avoidable cost, including resource to implement this change, and possible risk to service delivery.

One Oxfordshire will:

▶ Retain Oxfordshire Fire and Rescue service offering a straightforward transition to a future Thames Valley Fire and Rescue Service – avoiding unnecessary structural change, ensuring operational consistency prior to devolution arrangements being put in place.

▶ Work seamlessly and in a unified fashion with our police and NHS partners to identify houses at risk of fire, delivering preventative interventions.

▶ Provide continued alignment of local government with police, fire and health – vital for the Thames Valley Local Resilience Forum, local and regional partners – and central government to enable the most efficient response to emergencies.

Public and community safety

Thriving high streets and vibrant market towns are not just about economic growth, they are also drivers of how safe and satisfied residents feel about their local area.

These assets foster a pride of place – recognised in the government's draft Local Government Outcome Framework and its Pride of Place Strategy.

Community safety in Oxfordshire is coordinated at a county level by the Safer Oxfordshire Partnership with district-led community safety partnerships providing a local coordination role.

For people to have confidence in their public services, we also need to be prepared for emergencies. The UK Government Resilience Framework calls for a whole of society approach to resilience, emphasising:

▶ Clear leadership and accountability across local and national levels.

▶ Integrated risk management, especially for emergency situations.

▶ Efficient coordination across agencies and sectors.

The county council is a category 1 responder for emergencies. Our joint Oxfordshire resilience team delivers a number of statutory duties across the county to plan, train, and run exercises for emergency response, business continuity and community resilience. We work in partnership with multiple agencies both in Oxfordshire and regionally, as part of the Thames Valley Local Resilience Forum, on emergency preparedness and response. We are experienced at operating locally and providing mutual aid at scale.

The same holds true for the longer-term emergency of climate change. According to the Climate Emergency UK's (CEUK) 2025 Scorecard, Oxfordshire County Council is the best county council in England on climate action[57]. We play a leadership role on a national and regional stage and actively share the innovative work that Oxfordshire is doing with other councils.

We have developed a climate vulnerability assessment[58], which maps the current and future risks posed by climate related hazards linked to infrastructure; health, communities and the build environment; the natural environment and assets; and business and industry at a local level across the county.

This is a powerful tool to enable a whole of society approach to resilience. It allows local communities to identify priority actions and also gives a strategic overview of the ever-increasing risks of overheating and flooding to our vulnerable residents, providing the baseline to build preventative work on.

One Oxfordshire will:

▶ Consolidate countywide and district led community safety partnerships and align regulatory services for environmental health, building control and trading standards, delivering more efficient resources to coordinate consistent action together with area committees.

▶ Use local data and intelligence to detect emerging issues in communities to predict and prevent criminal activity, coordinated and shared with multiple agencies.

▶ Work collaboratively with area committees to ensure all our communities – urban and rural – understand flood risk and support them to prepare and protect those impacted most.

▶ Build community resilience to climate impacts by linking services such as development, planning and housing within a single authority.

▶ Drive a unified emergency planning response across Oxfordshire, reducing duplication and gaps in coverage, providing national assurance.

Trading standards tackling illegal tobacco and vapes

Criminality on our high streets is undermining our neighbourhoods and acting as a symbol of national decline. This concern prompted Oxfordshire County Council to undertake targeted work to tackle illegal tobacco and vapes. The sale of such products, sold at 'pocket-money prices', drives health inequality, by keeping people smoking and smoking more, helps recruit the next generation of smokers, brings organised crime into our communities and undermines legitimate businesses.

Since 2019, our trading standards team has seized nearly 800,000 illegal cigarettes, 189 kilos of illegal rolling and shisha tobacco, and over 13,000 illegal vapes. This has led to dozens of successful prosecutions, with one recent defendant being ordered to pay £400,000.

More recently, our officers are regularly seizing illegal nicotine pouches at the same locations as those selling illegal tobacco and vapes – often hidden in sophisticated 'hides' within the premises.

Leisure, culture and heritage

The pandemic showed us how much the public value open spaces and how the limitations placed on people's freedom was a source of huge strain for many of our communities. From parks and open recreation spaces right through to culture, leisure and libraries, these services are essential to building and maintaining a sense of place. They enhance social capital and experiential learning especially for young people, and promote better health, wellbeing and community cohesion.

Council of Sanctuary

In March 2025, we became the first county council to be accredited with Council of Sanctuary status following independent assessment.

Being a Council of Sanctuary means working in partnership through the Oxfordshire Migration Partnership to ensure a warm welcome for all new arrivals, embracing integration and supporting independent living for those staying in the county.

To drive strong community cohesion, we have created inclusive opportunities to promote cultural celebration events through our libraries and the Oxfordshire Museum.

We are also part of the Warm Welcome Network, which brings communities together to share stories, while also providing shared warm spaces and drinks across the winter.

These kinds of activities encourage social mixing and help to connect people with different cultures and beliefs. This is essential for dispelling myths, creating an inclusive society and developing a more consistent approach to supporting all of our communities.

One Oxfordshire will:

▶ Join up, streamline and integrate leisure, culture and heritage services with public health, adult and children's social care and SEND, enabling better coordination and more efficient delivery.

▶ Reduce inequalities of service provision across the county, particularly for leisure, and create inclusive spaces and service access for all, reducing any stigmas for protected and vulnerable groups of people.

▶ Invest at scale and for the long-term in libraries, museums and cultural venues as vital community assets ensuring fair access to all across Oxfordshire.

▶ Promote festivals, arts, and heritage initiatives countywide to drive a culture of localism and support community cohesion.

▶ Empower area committees to have oversight of services including leisure, culture and parks, allowing decisions to reflect community priorities.

▶ Connect and complement our heritage and cultural assets across Oxfordshire including collaborating with the Arts Council England's prioritised National Portfolio Organisations in the county.

Waste management

Crucial to a sense of pride in our places, is how we look after them. Oxfordshire's residents care about waste and how it's managed. It is a cornerstone service that residents have high expectations of from a convenience, environmental and public health perspective.

The county council's recent consultation (July - August 2025) on the future of our household waste recycling centres received record high levels of engagement with just under 5,900 responses to our survey. However, waste management in Oxfordshire is confusing.

It is split across the two-tiers of local government with the city and district councils collecting waste and the county council disposing of it. Recycling responsibilities are split across the county and district councils.

The total spend on household waste management in the county[59] is around £68 million per year, about £33 million by the county council and £35 million collectively by the five districts. All district councils

operating services are delivered by the private sector, in house or through a wholly owned company of the local authority.

Serving nearly 320,000 households and handling approximately 300,000 tonnes of household waste per annum, **Oxfordshire has, for the last 11 years topped the recycling league table for counties**, with a recycling rate at over 56 per cent. These are firm foundations to build on.

Oxfordshire has a network of seven household waste recycling centres[60], which are managed by the county council mainly through a single contract. One Oxfordshire will continue to provide this efficiently for the county.

We have developed a circular economy plan, which has been adopted countywide and focuses on the power of integrated environmental strategies, strong leadership and positive changes to residents and business behaviours.

Our circular economy has the potential to deliver significant economic benefits – estimated at £400 - £500 million annually for Oxfordshire businesses and up to 7,000 new jobs, while also supporting community wealth building and local supply chains. Circular approaches foster resilience to global resource shocks, reduce waste management costs, and help protect biodiversity and public health.

Local government reorganisation offers huge potential for waste and recycling operations across Oxfordshire. It requires operational efficiency at scale.

One Oxfordshire will:

▶ Design and deliver a single waste collection and disposal service for all Oxfordshire, removing duplication, streamlining service delivery and enabling the needs of waste management to be effectively incorporated into wider plans and policies.

▶ Deliver greener waste collection routes by reducing the number of rounds by around 10 per cent (helped by the removal of internal boundaries) saving on carbon, vehicles, congestion and costs. This would also extend to litter, street cleansing and bulky waste collections.

▶ Offer improved commercial waste collections by working at scale and from multiple locations with a single set of collection schedules and standards, reducing confusion, improving compliance and generating income to help offset costs.

▶ Deliver targeted neighbourhood level campaigns (eg reduce, reuse and recycle) through area committees, community action groups, developing a clear sense of localism, civic activism and pride of place through a shared connection to our environment.

How we will deliver

To deliver One Oxfordshire, we need to have a clear way of working locally, countywide, regionally and nationally. We demonstrate how we will deliver better outcomes in a future landscape, unlocking devolution at scale through a mayoral strategic authority.

We illustrate how we will ensure the empowerment of communities and neighbourhoods through new area committees and strengthened democracy for residents and partners. We also set out how we will deliver a new council with supported and skilled councillors and through an operating framework that prioritises operational excellence, place shaping and prevention.

We clearly set out our transition plan and who should lead it. We demonstrate how One Oxfordshire offers the quickest, most cost effective and safest route to a safe, legal and confident new council, one that is ready to transform from day one.
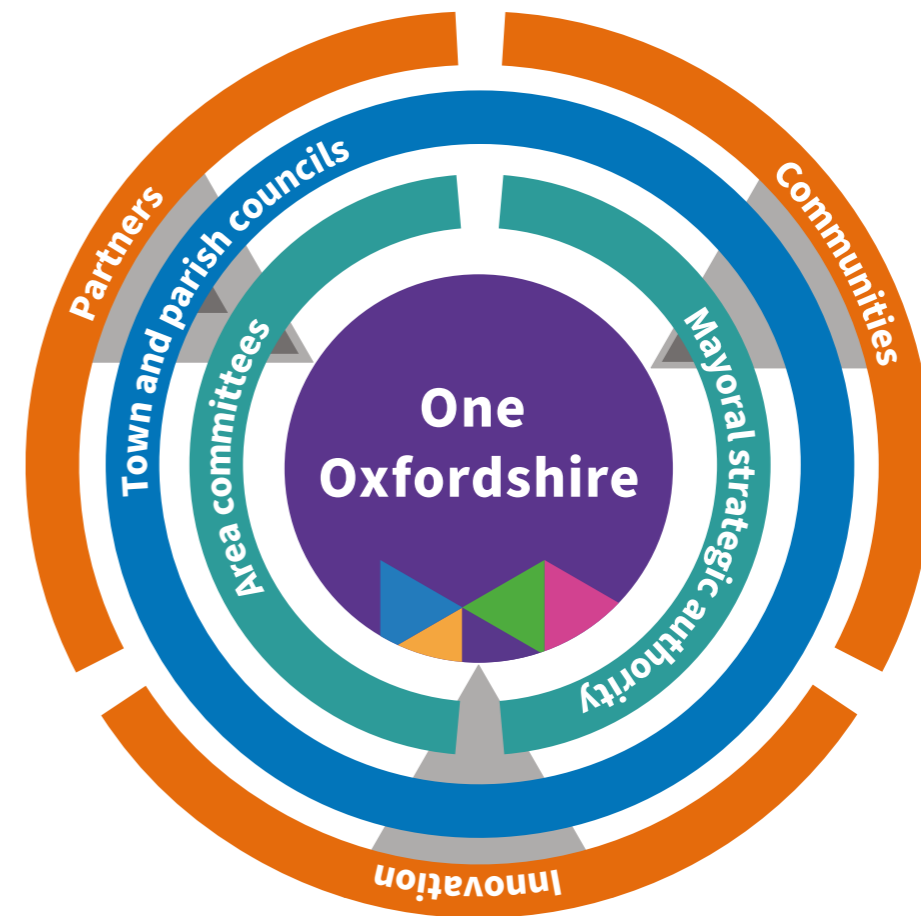
One Oxfordshire presents the opportunity to fundamentally transform outcomes for residents, and provides a single connected access point for businesses, institutions and investors in the county. These changes will not take place in isolation; a new single unitary council will be working in a wider system of public service reform – supercharged by a mayoral strategic authority, new models for working with neighbourhoods as well as wider policy changes. It will be the strongest partner to other public sector organisations in the county, such as police, health and education, and the voluntary and community sector.

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6. Our future operating framework

6.1 A new public service landscape

We have a once in a generation opportunity to grasp the benefits that our new public service landscape offers. One Oxfordshire does just that. Our framework for how we will work is underpinned by the strength of democratic representation in Oxfordshire. It puts our elected councillors at the centre, giving them a clear role from the most local to regional level as representatives of the communities and places they serve.

Delivering stronger outcomes for Oxfordshire relies on our ability to share data and insights between different organisations in this future way of working. Data and knowledge from our communities and partners will directly shape how we deliver services, as well as influence decisions taken at the mayoral strategic authority level. Together, we will turn local knowledge into countywide advantage.

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Thames Valley mayoral strategic authority

Oxfordshire is working with authorities in Berkshire on the establishment of a Thames Valley mayoral strategic authority (MSA). This aims to harness the collective strengths of the urban centres, and its wider geographies, to unlock unparalleled opportunities for inclusive and sustainable growth through devolution of functions, powers and associated funding. It provides a unique opportunity to shape the place and places within the Thames Valley – urban and rural – ensuring lasting benefits for current and future generations.

Oxfordshire has established cross border partnerships with Buckinghamshire Council to advance economic growth across our two counties, which we will use as part of ongoing discussions with Berkshire councils on the development of an MSA. We continue to have discussions with Swindon Borough Council on its possible future membership within a Thames Valley MSA.

An MSA, working in alignment with Oxfordshire Council, will unlock better outcomes by enabling more coherent policy making across strategic transport, housing, skills, economic development and investment strategies across these high-performing but disconnected areas. This simplified dual delivery model creates the clearest division of responsibilities between local and regional governance. Oxfordshire Council with all the capacity and capability for the whole county in one place creates a strong and stable partner for an MSA.

The proposed Thames Valley MSA will be able to leverage sectoral strengths – such

as digital and professional services in Berkshire; and life sciences and advanced manufacturing in Oxfordshire – into a unified and distributed growth model that connects this place, boosts housing, supports innovation and drives productivity.

By collaborating with member councils, the MSA will accelerate progress in solving the productivity challenge across the Thames Valley. **Together, we will use our complementary strengths to create integrated supply chains, expand labour market opportunities, and speed up innovation – driving a sustained return to productivity growth and increased revenue for UK PLC**.

Pan-regional plans such as a spatial development strategy and local growth plans with joint operating principles offer a structured and long-term strategic planning environment that provides stability and clarity to businesses, developers and the investment community.

Co-ordinating the transition to a new single unitary and an MSA at the same time will avoid repeated disruption to services, particularly for Oxfordshire Fire and Rescue Service. A shadow MSA and an Implementation Executive – a group that will be set up to govern the reorganisation – will play a key role in ensuring a smooth transition, developing strategic plans, governance structures and financial frameworks before powers are transferred. One Oxfordshire will significantly limit disruption at a time when the MSA is being established with Berkshire councils joining as existing unitary authorities.

MSA geography

Leaders across the region have discussed the governance model of a combined county authority. **Overall the combined population of the two areas is approximately 1,740,000 – Oxfordshire at 763,218 and Berkshire at 979,000**. This meets the government's criteria for a population exceeding 1.5 million. The precedent has been set for where a large authority is joined in an MSA alongside many smaller authorities to create a sensible population size ratio, especially in the West Midlands and Greater Manchester.

An informal member working group has formed to consider voting parity across the region and representation on a proposed Strategic Authority Board. The importance of balancing county representation against several smaller unitary councils in Berkshire has been recognised. Equally, so has the need to balance representation on the board between the urban city and rural areas of Oxfordshire.

While voting arrangements have yet to be defined by the Devolution Bill or in discussions with the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, the intention is clear that the identity of Oxfordshire should be represented at regional level.

One Oxfordshire is the only local government reorganisation proposal for the county that advocates for the whole of Oxfordshire, a recognised functional economic area. It supports the government's wider devolution goals.
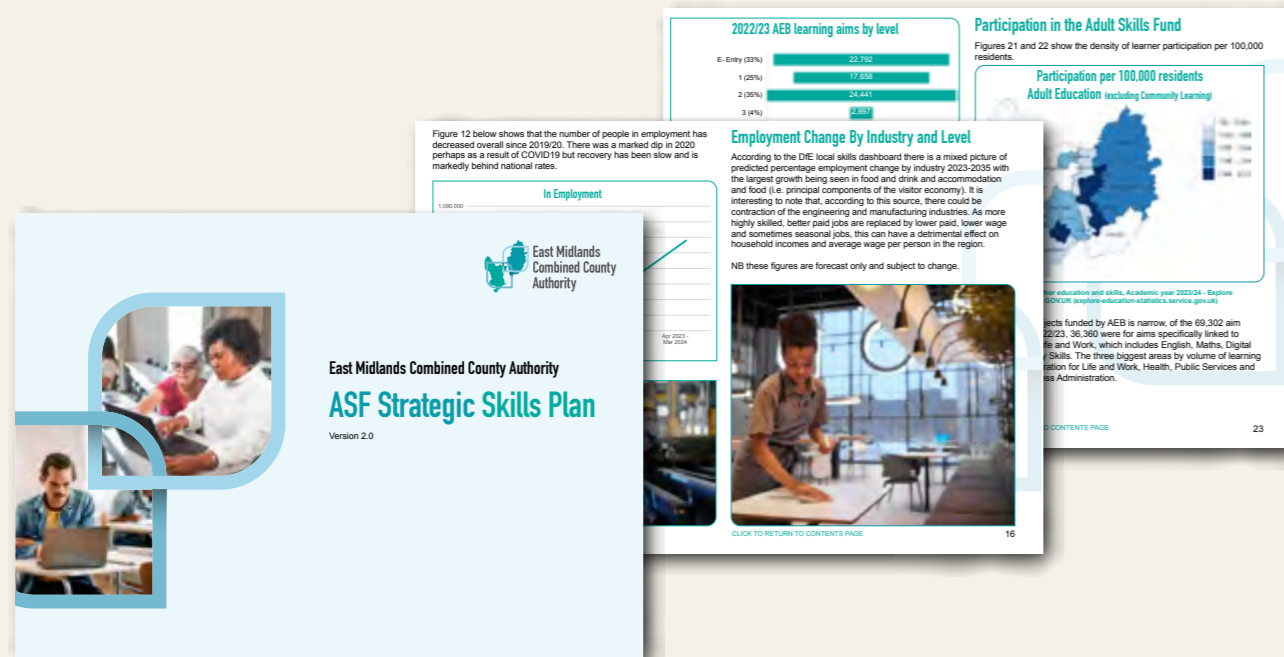
One Oxfordshire will:

- Speak and act coherently, confidently and competently at the MSA table – generating the confidence of stakeholders including the investor community and government partners such as Homes England.

- Offer the strongest and clearest possible governance to drive an increase in productivity and revenue for UK PLC through a single local growth plan and spatial development strategy, collaborating with partners for collective economic benefit.

- Offer a financially resilient and economically strong council for partners across the region, government and the commercial sector to collaborate with.

- Provide a clear and recognisable anchor institution for inter-regional initiatives such as the Oxford-Cambridge Growth Corridor and England's Economic Heartland.

- Offer a single front door for engagement with government, investors, and strategic partners – clarity is vital for MSAs, which require strong local partners to deliver devolved powers effectively.

- Be best placed to support the creation of a Thames Valley Fire and Rescue Service accountable to a Thames Valley mayor, supporting devolution arrangements.

East Midlands strategic skills plan

The East Midlands Combined County Authority Adults Skills Fund (ASF) Strategic Skills Plan[61] illustrates how the devolved ASF is being used to align national programmes with local priorities.

It demonstrates the importance of embedding skills planning across transport, housing and economic development strategies. Fragmented approaches risk undermining coherence and delivery. At a time when Oxfordshire is undergoing unitarisation, fragmenting the engagement with education providers on housing, transport and planning policy could inhibit good skills planning and impact the development of skills policy at a regional level.
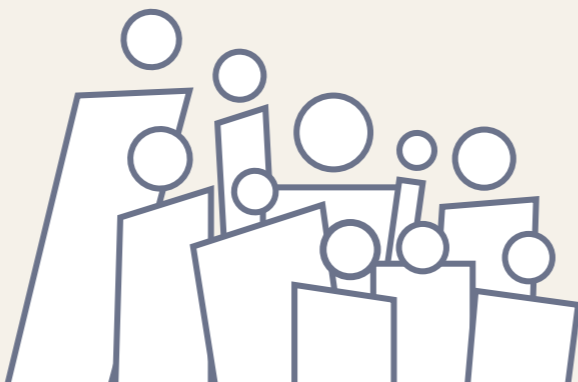
6.2 Building One Oxfordshire

One Oxfordshire presents the clearest opportunity to harness the benefits devolution offers. We will build a new and ambitious way of working from firm foundations, designing a future council delivering high quality public services that is closer to its communities, connects our people and our places and is cost effective.

Communities and partners will be at the heart of how it operates, working collaboratively to listen, learn and drive innovation for the county.

One Oxfordshire will be designed by innovation, driven and shaped by our experienced and skilled workforce, partners and communities – rural and urban – and their needs. We will optimise on the opportunities afforded by partnership working, economies of scale and technology and a strong financial base.

Innovate Oxfordshire

Innovate Oxfordshire is Oxfordshire County Council's self-funded innovation service, working in cutting edge partnerships to deliver better public sector services for residents, driven by their need and experience.

Approximately 150 projects have been delivered over a decade, supporting organisations to test, refine and scale new ways of working or ideas using advanced technology to bridge the gap between innovation and business as usual. This has helped to position Oxfordshire at the forefront of UK innovation.

One leading area is connected and autonomous vehicles, where 28 projects have been delivered, including Innovate UK-funded MultiCAV[62] – the first electric autonomous bus to operate on the public highway. Oxfordshire fosters innovation, delivering tangible economic, technological and societal benefits at scale.

Our strategic focus
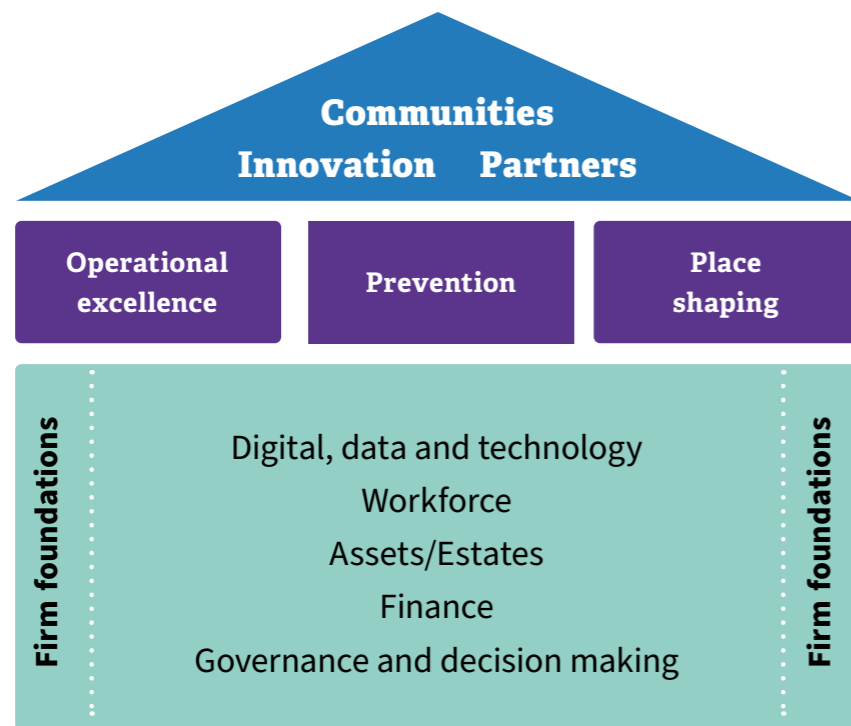
One Oxfordshire will have a strategic focus across three areas:

Operational excellence	Prevention	Place shaping
We will get the basics right for our residents and businesses. We will prioritise effective operational services – delivered on time, to expectation, every time.	We will leverage our financial position to invest in prevention across all our services. By combining local and strategic perspectives, we will create places where communities in the county thrive.	We will draw on all local government powers and partnership influence. We will adopt a long-term view, building our capabilities through data, insights and community feedback.
One Oxfordshire will use the best in class technology and ways of working to ensure processes are slick and efficient, freeing up resident, councillor and employee time to focus on where they can add the greatest value.	We will draw on operational data and strategic insights to get ahead of demand, harnessing innovation to develop different approaches that prevent needs escalating.	In partnership, we will set out a bold vision for our places, developing and delivering better and more affordable housing, transport and work opportunities for all in safe, welcoming environments.

Our commitments

Our firm foundations across our places, people and partnerships create the optimal conditions for One Oxfordshire to succeed. From these, we will make a number of commitments.

We will shape governance and decision making which puts communities at its heart.

We will:

▶ Combine local knowledge with a strategic experienced perspective to make the right decisions in a timely way based on what our communities need.

▶ Work together with our area committees to drive a culture of localism through elected councillors, residents and stakeholders.

▶ Be well governed and well led, making decisions in the public interest with a clear vision for Oxfordshire.

▶ Leverage our research and evaluation partnerships with the University of Oxford, Oxford Brookes University and University College London and others to operate a unique 'test, learn and grow' community motivated to deliver transformative public services.

▶ Listen to and actively involve residents, communities and partners in shaping services.

We will maintain strong levels of financial sustainability through a focus on good financial leadership and management.

We will:

▶ Be a financially sustainable council for all Oxfordshire, protecting the county from future financial shocks.

▶ Give confidence to our partners such as the voluntary and community sector and investors to work with us for the long-term.

▶ Be responsible with public money but seize opportunity by taking appropriate risks that drive community benefit.

We will use our assets to be closer to communities, drive collaboration with partners and support inclusive growth.

We will:

▶ Deliver a service focused asset strategy that reflects good public value, while enabling residents to access services where it makes sense for their communities.

▶ Have buildings that communities can be proud of that are warm and welcoming for employees, residents and partners.

▶ Share our buildings with communities and partners, enabling improved coordination of outcomes through the co-location of services and workforces.

▶ Be based in buildings across the county – providing visibility of employees and the council across the places of Oxfordshire.

We will have a workforce committed to public values and delivering the best for Oxfordshire.

We will:

- ▶ Be customer focused and always aim to exceed expectations.

- ▶ Be an employer of choice, attracting, retaining and engaging the best talent from within and outside of the sector that reflects our communities, offering a diverse range of career pathways and opportunities.

- ▶ Embed a values-based culture where employees work side by side with others including the NHS, Thames Valley Police and our voluntary and community sector sector to achieve common goals.

- ▶ Ensure that employees are confident and competent users of digital tools and AI to drive efficiency and productivity so that they can focus on delivering the most value for residents.

- ▶ Embed continuous improvement and best practice from other councils to continually do better.

We will invest in digital, data and technology, recognising the role this plays as the foundation for our future ways of working.

We will:

- ▶ Invest in technology and data to drive digital ways of working that increase the understanding of our people, communities and places to enable 21st century services.

- ▶ Streamline processes and deliver efficiencies that will enable investment in the human contact our vulnerable residents need.

- ▶ Promote a digital-first customer experience, with an emphasis on 'getting it right first time' and foster a culture of digital innovation and capability.

- ▶ Use data and insight to inform what we do and how we do it – meet residents' immediate and long-term needs, acting on feedback and anticipating changing requirements.

6.3 Neighbourhood governance

One Oxfordshire will be tested by its ability to engage and empower the voice of all its communities in the creation of a council that embraces local knowledge as part of designing and delivering innovation in public service delivery.

While Oxfordshire Council will be able to comfortably operate at scale, regionally and nationally, through One Oxfordshire, we will also foster a culture of localism. We will work with our partners, residents, town and parish councils and elected councillors to bring the council closer to its communities.

A localised approach to delivery

Oxfordshire's identity is rooted within all the different places that, put together, form our remarkable county. From urban spaces to historic towns, rural and semi-rural villages, these places form the basis of our communities and a sense of localism. One Oxfordshire's operating model is purposefully anchored in this sense of place, recognising that meaningful public service must be shaped by our partners and communities to ensure we design and deliver innovative public services that meet the needs of each locality.

With 763,000 residents, localised delivery is essential. It enables Oxfordshire to operate at scale while remaining deeply connected to the people and places it serves. As the council grows in its delivery, it will be hardwired to feel more present, responsive and embedded in the everyday lives of our communities.

We will build this from the firm foundations of existing delivery arrangements across our district councils, as well as in adult and children's services and public health. We will also respond to emerging national drivers

and opportunities, continuing to deliver a neighbourhood NHS health and care partnership to enable better outcomes for our people. **This will be amplified by having a strong presence across the county to visibly deliver services from – co-locating with our public sector partners making best use of our public estate, wherever possible, to share learning and drive innovation**.

This is how the new council will ensure that scale strengthens, rather than dilutes, its connection to place. A key delivery mechanism for delivering at a local level is through a network of area committees and through town and parish councils.

This localised approach is not just about governance – it is a direct expression of a preventative and place shaping approach. By unlocking the value of local assets such as green spaces and community centres, One Oxfordshire will enable the use of area committees and town and parish councils for health promotion, social connection and lifelong learning. Done collaboratively and in partnership with local stakeholders, this model supports people to live healthier and more connected lives.

Area committees

Oxfordshire has active and engaged communities – built up over hundreds of years – and spanning the length and breadth of the county. Some areas, however, have more

civic resource than others and a new council must harness this to provide the conditions to foster and deliver a strong culture of localism.

The Centre for Governance and Scrutiny undertook exploratory work[63] to outline opportunities for localising One Oxfordshire.

> **"A huge variety of arrangements exist for neighbourhood and community activity, some of it supported by principal authorities but much of it not. Arrangements will need to maintain the ecosystem of neighbourhood governance where it is already strong and bolster it where it isn't – reflecting our earlier findings on asymmetry. The focus will need to be on the strengthening of the connective tissue associated with neighbourhood-based activity rather than necessarily "doing more" of that activity – thereby increasing community resilience. This is why we see this work strengthening and deepening the commitments made by councils across the area through the Oxfordshire Charter."**
>
> (The Centre for Governance and Scrutiny, 2025)

Its work highlighted that elected councillors must play a greater role in civic life by acting as "community convenors". Councillors must bring together local residents, town and parish councils, businesses and partners to shape services locally. They will encourage community involvement and action, especially in places and for people that need extra help to thrive. Empowerment at the grassroots

means progress for all. Councillors will need ongoing support to do this consistently well.

A set of shared principles will guide the design and implementation of these committees.

One Oxfordshire's area committees will:

▶ Align with health, policing and transport units to facilitate sensible and meaningful liaison between different public sector agencies.

▶ Serve as forums to bring together stakeholders and elected councillors to develop key priorities for local service or infrastructure improvements.

▶ Develop their own priorities, recognising that different neighbourhoods will have different needs.

This neighbourhood focus will visibly empower frontline councillors, residents and communities to make local decisions through area committees. It will help residents feel more involved and have a bigger say in what happens in their local area, while also connecting our people and our places better across the county.

Structures and governance

One Oxfordshire proposes the creation of 15 area committees to share in the design, delivery and stewardship of local priorities, services and assets.

These committee geographies provide a healthy balance between being reflective of the places of Oxfordshire and offering a sustainable, cost effective method of delivery and alignment to existing public sector boundaries. They

offer the greatest opportunities for the potential alignment of future integrated neighbourhood teams with our NHS to deliver health and wellbeing services formed from established relationships, shared data and a common understanding of local needs.

The final number, name, geography and design – including any decision making, budget and grant giving functions – of area committees will be subject to early engagement and consultation with residents, town and parish councils and public sector partners. It's essential that One Oxfordshire gets this right from the start to create a lasting structure and way of working.

We expect that area committees will be built around our market towns, larger villages and neighbourhoods within the city.

A worked example of 15 area committees could be structured around the following geographies:

▶ Abingdon, Kennington and Radley
▶ Banbury
▶ Bicester
▶ Burford, Carterton and surrounding villages
▶ Chipping Norton and surrounding villages
▶ Didcot, Cholsey and Wallingford
▶ Faringdon, Grove and surrounding villages
▶ Harwell, Shrivenham and Wantage
▶ Henley, Goring, Watlington and surrounding villages
▶ Kidlington, Yarnton and Begbroke
▶ Oxford – central
▶ Oxford – east
▶ Oxford – north and west
▶ Thame, Wheatley and surrounding villages
▶ Witney and surrounding villages

We expect that on occasion, an Oxford Committee, drawn from the three area committees covering the city, may need to meet about cross-city issues. A similar arrangement can also be used for all other committees.

We have heard that our residents want to see a council that is cost effective, and our partners want to streamline engagement across councils in Oxfordshire. It is important to emphasise that through these committees we must reduce, not add to, current levels of governance across the public sector.

The work of our area committees will be run in an effective, efficient and data led way. Area profiles would be created to better understand our places and our people, which will allow for targeted work to take place on local initiatives. This will drive better outcomes for residents and secure investment.

As a result of the strong financial resilience offered by One Oxfordshire, a single council can create, embed and, above all, sustain these structures and ways of working for the long-term.

We have heard accounts of similar structures across the country reducing in size, scale and impact as a result of budget cuts – this can impact how much people trust their democratic institutions and can create a story of loss, instead of a story of localism. One Oxfordshire will change that story.

Area committees future management possibilities:

- ▶ parks and green spaces
- ▶ community development and cultural activities
- ▶ business and economic development
- ▶ tourism
- ▶ social housing estate management, where appropriate.
- ▶ community transport
- ▶ community centres
- ▶ recycling

- ▶ cemeteries and churchyards
- ▶ public toilets
- ▶ leisure
- ▶ markets
- ▶ climate change resilience
- ▶ community safety / neighbourhoods
- ▶ loneliness / volunteering
- ▶ street naming and numbering.

Communities unit

A range of officers across the county and districts currently play a role in supporting co-production, community action and locality working. One Oxfordshire will create a new communities unit that will draw on (and better coordinate) some of this existing activity, boosting it with resource to support and grow community-based activity. We will "develop the connective tissue" that the Centre for Governance and Scrutiny outlined in its research report for Oxfordshire.

Councillors and their area committees will get the support they need from the communities unit with an officer aligned to each committee. The goal is to build strong working relationships between councillors, council employees, local communities,

and other partners. The communities unit will have a visible presence within communities and on the council's website.

The communities unit will:

- ▶ Assist accessing external funds to support local activity.
- ▶ Help to link up complementary activity to support local people in different neighbourhoods and areas.
- ▶ Support town and parish councils in areas.
- ▶ Help build new user-centred services and facilities.

Relational constitution

> "There is the need, at the local level, to be able to specify what the relationships should be between traditional governance arrangements and new systems for deliberation, co-production and co-design. All councils are obliged to agree a constitution to set out the way that it will function as an institution. We have suggested an evolved model – a "relational" constitution – that seeks to explore and define how the council will work with its partners, and the local community – setting out clear, consistent and transparent rules and arrangements. A relational constitution would therefore not just be about how the council makes decisions but about how people from across the area (and public service partners) come together to deliberate and decide."

(Centre for Governance and Scrutiny, 2025)

The county council has many best practice examples of two-way empowered engagement delivered with residents and its stakeholders, including democratic involvement of Oxfordshire's residents and communities in influencing policy and decision making.

These will be built on and embedded into the design of Oxfordshire Council's new constitution. This will set out this "relational" approach with our residents and stakeholders to ensure that the new council will listen and work with people to design and shape services.

Citizens' assembly

In February and March 2025, the county council's first ever <u>citizens' assembly</u> took place to explore a complex challenge: how Oxfordshire's transport system could support people's health, the local economy and the environment by 2050.

The county council commissioned Mutual Gain to design and deliver the assembly with 34 residents recruited to be broadly representative of Oxfordshire. After over 45 hours of structured learning and deliberation, the assembly developed 20 ambitious and deeply considered recommendations. Sixteen of the recommendations secured over 80 per cent support from assembly participants (a measure used to give confidence for similar support from a wider population).

The county council agreed the assembly's recommendations in July 2025 and allocated funding to support any follow-up work. We are committed to continuing to work with assembly members in the future. We have already engaged members on proposals for a temporary congestion charge and OxRAIL 2040 (the council's plan to improve rail transport).

"Oxfordshire's citizens' assembly on travel and transport marks a significant moment in local democratic engagement. MutualGain would like to thank Oxfordshire County Council for its continued commitment to embedding the citizens' assembly process into its decision-making. This approach reflects good practice in deliberative democracy and supports more inclusive, transparent, and community-informed policymaking."

(MutualGain, 2025)

Community wealth building

Oxfordshire's approach to community wealth building focuses on rebuilding the connection between the people and the places that create wealth and those who benefit from it. Community wealth building works with local communities to make financial power work for them, encouraging fair employment and progressive procurement.

The county council has worked with partners and communities to build a deep understanding of Oxfordshire's local economy. This has included working with the Centre for Local Economic Strategies (CLES) to produce a report around spending in Oxfordshire. This report is directly influencing our work on progressive procurement, which aims to maximise the economic, social and environmental benefits associated with our spending power.

Town and parish councils

Oxfordshire's town and parish councils (local councils) are the first tier of local government. They are integral to continued democratic and community engagement and local delivery as they are now – delivering services on behalf of district councils and the county council. Building on the firm foundations of the existing co-produced Oxfordshire Councils' Charter, there is an opportunity to strengthen the relationship between the first tier and Oxfordshire Council.

Connected councils

Some of our parishes and towns are well established and have the right capacity and capability to do more, and some less so. Some are concerned that they will have assets and services 'dumped' on them. One Oxfordshire will embed deeper working with town and parish councils as a key partner to design and deliver Oxfordshire Council.

By working more closely with local councils, elected county councillors and officers can get early insights about local issues and can develop a deeper understanding of local priorities. We can also, together, act quickly to prevent problems from getting worse. Oxfordshire Council will be designed to listen – the insights from local councils are essential to this so we can together design and deliver innovative public services that connect with residents.

To do this, we will work with all parishes and towns within the new area committee arrangement to support them to participate, as much as they want to, in the success of their places. One Oxfordshire will ensure that town and parish councils have a clear, dedicated point of contact within our communities unit.

Local councils also play a critical role in shaping the future of their places. The new area committees will give them a chance to work together with neighbouring local councils, rather than competing against each other, when planning new housing developments and community programmes. Working together like this will help build a spirit of localism.

One Oxfordshire will ensure that assets and services can be devolved to a hyper-local level where it makes sense to do so. We will work more closely with Oxfordshire Association of Local Councils to share resources. This includes the design and delivery of a learning and development programme and creation of an advice hub for technical matters, such as websites and information governance.

Oxford and modern charter trustees

Oxford is a city in its own right with 166,034 residents. It has a dynamic economy with globally recognised universities. In 1974, Oxford's status was changed to a district council but was named Oxford City Council as it held the city status by royal charter.

The creation of Oxfordshire Council requires significant care and respect to ensure the city, and its identity and brand, is maintained for current and future generations.

While the majority of the city is unparished, parts of it are served by four parish councils and a network of civic and neighbourhood organisations that embed the collective spirit of the city into social action.

One Oxfordshire will ensure that the city status of Oxford is not lost and will appoint charter trustees to hold civic responsibilities. The charter trustees would elect a lord mayor for Oxford on an annual basis. However, this role needs to be more modern and more purposeful beyond its current form.

Modern charter trustees must play a strong, visible and supported role in the new council. They need to work closely with future committee chairs and the council's cabinet to provide a point for community, ceremonial, inward investment and economic issues within the city.

These arrangements will ensure Oxfordshire Council can meet the needs of the city and be custodians of it for future generations.

While government has been clear that councils must think carefully about the establishment of new town and parish councils, Oxfordshire Council, together with the modern charter trustees and the existing Oxford parishes – Blackbird Leys; Risinghurst and Sandhills; Littlemore and Old Marston; neighbourhood forums and Oxford Civic Society – will continually engage on democracy and participation at a city level. If needed, One Oxfordshire will request a community governance review for any further parishes or a town council for Oxford.

> **"The charter will help shape how Oxfordshire councils work together in partnership to support better service delivery and outcomes, and to work together to ensure thriving local democracy across the county[64]."**

6.4 Elected community representation

Council size

We currently have 288 councillors in total across all six Oxfordshire councils. The creation of a single unitary authority in Oxfordshire presents a rare opportunity to reshape local governance around the needs of residents and the realities of councillor workloads. With the consolidation of services into one authority, councillors will take on a broader portfolio of responsibilities. The size of the council must reflect this shift, ensuring that elected councillors can remain accessible, responsive and effective. And crucially, operate closer to communities at their heart through the development of area committees.

In coming to a view on the number of councillors for the new council, we have taken account of the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) guidance and had informal discussions with them.

We recognise, in full, the need to get as close as possible to the 'true' council size before a boundary review – which would be undertaken by the LGBCE in the first term of the new authority. However, as we have had a recent electoral review of Oxfordshire County Council, with new divisions elected to in May 2025, it is very challenging to achieve a fair and equal distribution of the electorate across the existing divisions until this boundary review takes place.

In the short-term, our preference is for 138 councillors representing 69 unitary wards, which would be fulfilled by the election of two councillors to each of the 69 county council divisions.

We believe it is better to accept a slightly larger council for the first term on the understanding that a boundary review will likely deliver a council represented by a little over 100 councillors at the following set of elections.

If the government was minded to ensure a council size of less than 138 for its first election, a council size of 119 is achievable, but not preferable, as some wards would only be served by one member with a larger portfolio of responsibilities. This sets out our initial thoughts only and we are committed to working with government, and with the support of LGBCE, to reach a firmer position.

This approach will guarantee continuity of service during the transition to a unitary authority and provides time to embed the new governance arrangements. It will allow the shadow authority to operate effectively from day one, with councillors able to engage with residents, manage casework and develop a greater understanding of the workload of the new council.

Council size assessment for a single unitary authority in Oxfordshire[65]

No. councillors	Electorate (2029)	Electorate per councillor
69	581,560	8,428
108	581,560	5,385
119	581,560	4,887
138	581,560	4,214

Election cycles

Council	Electoral cycle
Oxfordshire County Council	▶ All councillors, every four years
Cherwell District Council	▶ By thirds
Oxford City Council	▶ Half of all councillors, every two years
South Oxfordshire District Council	▶ All councillors, every four years
Vale of White Horse District Council	▶ All councillors, every four years
West Oxfordshire District Council	▶ By thirds

The election cycle for the new authority will play a key role in shaping its effectiveness. Currently, Oxfordshire's councils operate on a mix of electoral cycles.

The creation of a single unitary council will streamline this process and become more cost-effective, moving to whole council elections every four years. This makes local government easier for residents to understand, lowers administrative costs and enables councillors to focus on long-term planning and delivery rather than short-term issues.

To support the delivery of One Oxfordshire and to transition to a newly designed council, we are requesting continuing authority status for Oxfordshire County Council. We believe this offers the quickest, most cost effective and safest route to a safe, legal and confident council, which is ready to transform from day one.

This is especially relevant to our devolution ambitions. Managing both reorganisation and devolution programmes in an integrated way from a single point, allows for clarity of direction and control. These are highly interdependent, high risk change programmes central to the delivery of the government's policy objectives. Continuing authority status is vital to achieve these objectives, allowing for a seamless transition for residents and stakeholders.

📍 **Parsons Street, Banbury**

7. Transition plan and delivery

7.1 Overall approach

Who will deliver?

The county council already delivers services on a countywide footprint, providing 85 per cent of local government services by expenditure in Oxfordshire. We take our responsibility in this space seriously as we move through local government reorganisation. As such, we wish to be the continuing authority to lead and deliver the transition to a new and ambitious council. We will not remain static in this space but deliver transformation at pace and in partnership. Oxfordshire Council will be a new council.

We have the experience, financial resilience, "good" services and partnerships to lead One Oxfordshire. We will be able to retain the strengths of these services and build from the firm foundations they provide, deepening integration and operating at scale.

One Oxfordshire is the only proposal that removes the risk of disaggregation and fragmentation of services for Oxfordshire residents, allowing high quality service delivery to be prioritised and further improvements to be made.

One Oxfordshire offers undeniable financial resilience to do this. We will be able to absorb and withstand market and infrastructure cost fluctuations better than smaller unitary authorities, enabling the confident and continued delivery of good services, growth and investment.

The county council also has an experienced and flexible workforce, one that already operates locally, countywide, regionally and nationally. As well as critical and larger service delivery, we provide essential wraparound local services together with partners, such as personalised care, public health and schools. We have also operated within a joined up strategic partnership with Cherwell District Council.

This direct experience, knowledge and understanding of local services will be used for learning and developing a **new unified council** that can deliver both for the whole of Oxfordshire and at a hyperlocal level.

Acting as a continuing authority will provide the strongest, simplest route to delivering One Oxfordshire while maintaining service quality (especially for critical services) and mitigate system wide risk through enhanced controls and visibility.

We will build on firm foundations, using both the county council and district councils' strong service track record to successfully transition to Oxfordshire Council. We will also ensure we take full advantage of the opportunity local government reorganisation presents to transform our collective service offer for residents and together create a new council.

Our focus will be on a safe, legal and confident transition to vesting day that brings all councils across Oxfordshire together to create Oxfordshire Council.

Local government reorganisation and devolution are complex and interdependent programmes of change to deliver, especially against the backdrop of wider policy reforms across critical services. It is fully understood that an effective and collaborative set of change management programmes is essential to the successful launch of the new council and to realising the benefits outlined in this proposal.

Where needed, independent assurance will provide external scrutiny ensuring delivery remains on track and risks are identified and addressed early. By challenging assumptions and validating progress, independent assurance strengthens transparency and will build confidence among our stakeholders. This approach also supports continuous improvement and helps safeguard service continuity.

We fully recognise the scale and complexity of the challenge – delivering a fundamental transformation while maintaining high quality, uninterrupted services for residents across Oxfordshire.

Resource

We will build on the already established programme governance for both local government reorganisation and devolution – scaling as appropriate following the government's 'minded to' decision. We have already appointed a programme director for local government reorganisation and a programme director for devolution demonstrating our seriousness to move at pace and with certainty towards creating a new future for Oxfordshire.

We expect to scale up existing in-house expertise, capability and capacity for implementation, complementing this with use of a delivery partner to get to vesting day with maximum levels of certainty. We are keen to work collaboratively with district and city colleagues, change networks and structures, establishing joint programme and project management arrangements as soon as possible.

The county council has already developed an internal network of local government reorganisation and devolution ambassadors across its services. This will ensure a movement of change across the county council to understand and deliver change at all levels. We expect to replicate this across all councils so everyone is involved in the design and delivery of the new council.

Our approach will also be informed by learning from, and the experiences of, other newly established unitary councils, drawing on both best practice and lessons learned to shape a robust and resilient transition and change programme.

> **We are keen to work collaboratively with district and city colleagues, change networks and structures, establishing joint programme and project management arrangements as soon as possible.**
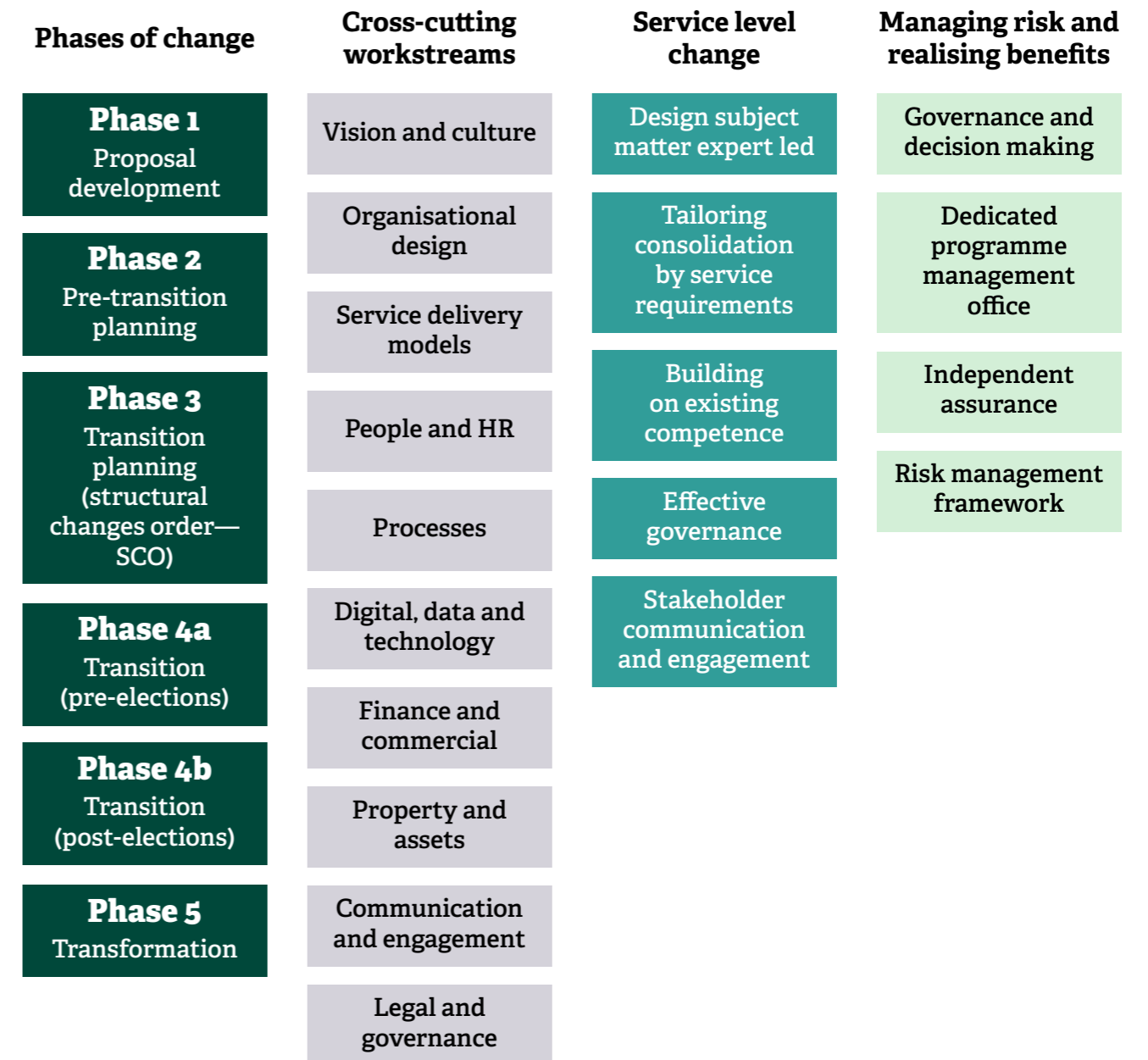
Implementation framework

To successfully transition, we will adopt a structured yet adaptive framework that lays a solid foundation for transformation. This practical framework is informed by recent government guidance, sector expertise and best practices from ongoing local government reorganisation experiences in England.

The framework will:

▶ Balance strategic oversight to guide long-term vision and effective decision making.

▶ Ensure operational continuity to safeguard critical services.

▶ Have governance alignment to ensure clarity and accountability throughout the change.

▶ Include comprehensive stakeholder management and engagement practices to build trust and consensus.

By embedding these principles from the outset, Oxfordshire can create a resilient, responsive, and future-ready council capable of delivering better outcomes for residents, businesses, employees and partners.
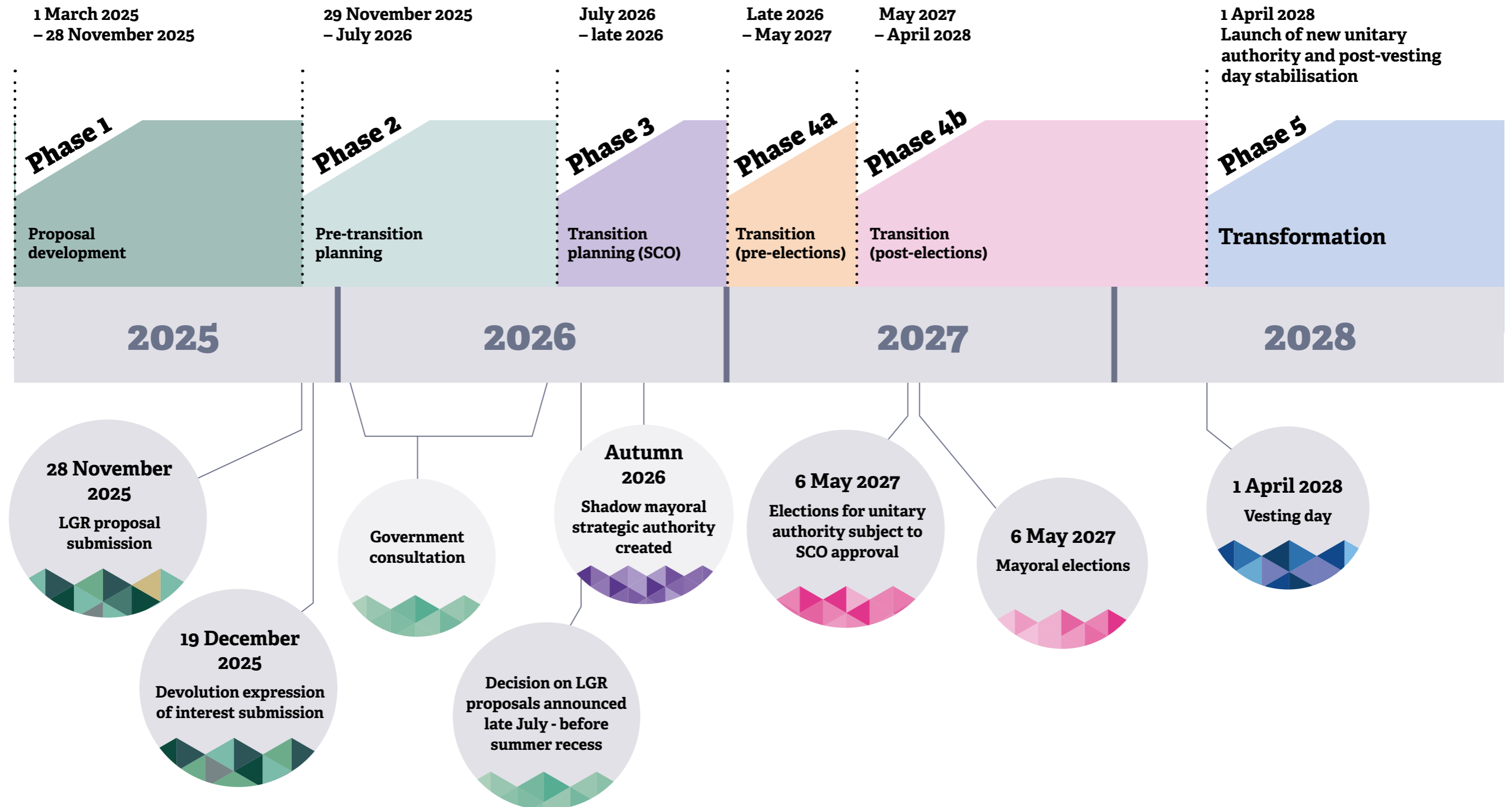
We will use the following implementation framework that illustrates four key pillars of activity for effective change:

Phases of change	Cross-cutting workstreams	Service level change	Managing risk and realising benefits
Phase 1 Proposal development	Vision and culture	Design subject matter expert led	Governance and decision making
Phase 2 Pre-transition planning	Organisational design	Tailoring consolidation by service requirements	Dedicated programme management office
Phase 3 Transition planning (structural changes order— SCO)	Service delivery models	Building on existing competence	Independent assurance
	People and HR	Effective governance	Risk management framework
Phase 4a Transition (pre-elections)	Processes	Stakeholder communication and engagement	
Phase 4b Transition (post-elections)	Digital, data and technology		
	Finance and commercial		
Phase 5 Transformation	Property and assets		
	Communication and engagement		
	Legal and governance		

7.2 Transition phases

Each phase of transition will be supported by a clear and robust governance including programme boards, gateway reviews and reporting. This means we have the ability to scale up or down as required throughout the programme and be independently assured as needed. This robustness will enable us to make the best use of our resources throughout the programme and ultimately realise the benefits of this proposal. The high level timetable for the phases of change is shown below.

1 March 2025 – 28 November 2025

Phase 1

Proposal development

29 November 2025 – July 2026

Phase 2

Pre-transition planning

July 2026 – late 2026

Phase 3

Transition planning (SCO)

Late 2026 – May 2027

Phase 4a

Transition (pre-elections)

May 2027 – April 2028

Phase 4b

Transition (post-elections)

1 April 2028 Launch of new unitary authority and post-vesting day stabilisation

Phase 5

Transformation

2025

2026

2027

2028

28 November 2025

LGR proposal submission

19 December 2025

Devolution expression of interest submission

Government consultation

Autumn 2026

Shadow mayoral strategic authority created

Decision on LGR proposals announced late July - before summer recess

6 May 2027

Elections for unitary authority subject to SCO approval

6 May 2027

Mayoral elections

1 April 2028

Vesting day

Phase 1 – Proposal development

Up to submission, 28 November 2025

During this phase, already underway, we have taken the time to understand the course of transition and transformation and started detailed mapping for the required phases.

We are using the insight, relationships and networks formed during our comprehensive stakeholder engagement that informed this proposal to foster further cooperation and engagement across Oxfordshire for all phases.

Collaboration with city and district council chief executives and officers has been good to date but requires strengthening to position us well for continued success in the future.

Phase 2 – Pre-transition planning

December 2025 to July 2026

Councils will agree the principles for working in a collaborative, open and transparent way ensuring successful continuation of services during transition. These principles will apply to all employees involved in any work associated with local government reorganisation and devolution.

The pre-transition planning phase will provide an opportunity to get ahead – understanding risks to a greater extent, exploring new ways of working / pathways with partners in time for the government's decision. This work will be done in an outcome agnostic way together with city and district colleagues.

Specifically, further data collection, baselining and the mapping of deliverables for vesting day will take place in areas including finance, staffing establishment, contracts, IT systems, estates and the wider service portfolio of our district councils.

Our focus will be on readiness and enabling a smooth shift into the transition planning phase by understanding the opportunities, risks and mitigations.

A programme and project management structure with a dedicated programme management office (PMO) will be designed and agreed. It will have the capacity and capability to lead and manage the interdependent programmes for reorganisation and devolution.

This structure will hold responsibility for overseeing and driving the future change,

providing essential assurance across both programmes. This team will be built from the talent that exists across all Oxfordshire councils ensuring the success of both programmes from day one and beyond. It will consist of change and transformation experts, project, programme managers, PMO specialists and business analysts.

Subject matter experts provide crucial institutional knowledge and expertise and will form an integral part of the design of the programme and project management structure. Colleagues seconded into the PMO or project teams will be backfilled where necessary, with a likely need for external capacity and recruitment throughout the lifecycle of the programme. Workstreams and governance arrangements will be identified and designed.

Each workstream will have a clear remit and defined lead with teams drawn from county and district councils. These workstreams will deliver essential outputs, including plans, new systems and transitional arrangements to ensure Oxfordshire Council's effective launch and ongoing transformation.

Work within all existing authorities will be reviewed to identify activities that can be paused or stopped, enabling existing resource redeployment. Additional technical capacity and a delivery partner may be required during the various elements of the programme. The implementation costs will be met through internal resources.

The work covered in this phase will conclude with the development of a transition plan.

Phase 3 – transition planning

Government decision to structural changes order expected to be end 2026

The focus in this phase will be on working with the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government to shape the structural changes order (SCO), establish parameters for the transition and confirm our desire to have continuing authority status. We will continue to work with partners on the transition plan, the design and resourcing of the PMO and its governance.

Once we know the government's decision, we will begin the process of establishing an Implementation Executive to govern the transition and make the necessary decisions associated with transition to a future council. The full membership of that committee will be determined by the SCO.

We will also establish a time limited independent Oxfordshire Advisory Board made up of key stakeholders, including representatives from businesses, civic, voluntary and community organisations and educational institutions. This will provide critical friend challenge to the Implementation Executive on the design and implementation of the new council.

This maintains continuity while addressing potential risks, particularly for partners, and activates improvement opportunities. This phase will ensure clarity on change leadership so we can move safely and at pace, laying the foundations for standing up workstreams towards the transition phase.

Phase 4a – Transition (pre-elections)

Structural changes order to elections May 2027

We will work closely with the Implementation Executive mandated by the SCO, who will be integral in setting our ambitions for vesting day and beyond. It will direct the core activities, including spending controls, laying foundations for new strategies, plans and policies, and communicating to colleagues and residents.

During this phase, we will also provide leadership in policy formulation, strategic planning and business case development to ensure the range of opportunities offered by our proposal are fully realised by the new council.

We will stand up a number of workstreams to design, plan and deliver the new arrangements. They will prioritise service continuity to ensure effective delivery of services and maintain excellent performance.

Workstreams will be split into two broad categories, corporate (cross cutting) workstreams and service specific workstreams.

Phase 4b – Transition (post-elections)

2027 election – Day prior to vesting day 2028

The planning work started in previous phases will continue but the elections will now provide an opportunity for key decisions to be taken, for example, around appointing senior officers, agreeing strategies and budgets. These will be identified, planned and delivered from within the workstreams outlined in phase 4a.

New member governance will support a smooth transition towards a safe, legal and confident vesting day and provide a clear future vision for Oxfordshire Council. The key planning strategies perfected in the previous phases will be adopted by the future authority.

Phase 5 – Transformation

Vesting day onwards

On vesting day, Oxfordshire Council will be formally established through a systematic programme, embedding new services, transforming services and developing long-term strategies to support continuity and resilience, and aligning to the new operating framework.

IT systems and workforce structures will build on existing strengths, supporting continued service delivery and realising the opportunities offered by establishing a single authority. Empowering our communities, promoting a customer-focused approach, driving service effectiveness and efficiency through digital and other forms of innovation, and developing efficient support service arrangements will help drive radical change at pace while protecting delivery of frontline services.

7.3 Workstreams

Cross cutting workstreams

The successful transition to Oxfordshire Council will depend on the coordinated delivery of a wide range of cross-cutting and enabling workstreams. These workstreams represent the core building blocks of the new organisation and must be carefully scoped, sequenced and integrated to ensure a coherent, resilient and future-ready transformation.

Each workstream is interdependent and must be managed in alignment with the overall programme roadmap.

The approach will be to treat these workstreams as strategic enablers of change, ensuring that transition and subsequent transformation is not only technically sound but also culturally embedded and operationally sustainable.

The workstreams on the following pages will guide how services are designed and delivered, how people and systems interact and how the new council defines its identity and purpose.

Vision and culture

Embedding a new unified culture and strong leadership ethos will be critical to shaping the identity and effectiveness of the new council.

Our focus:

▶ **Values and behaviours:** Co-creating shared organisational values that reflect the vision of Oxfordshire Council.

▶ **Cultural integration:** Building on the legacy, strengths and identities of the organisations coming together, while building a cohesive and inclusive culture.

▶ **Bottom-up engagement:** Empowering our employees to shape the new culture through dialogue, involvement and ownership.

▶ **Leadership development:** Equipping our leaders at all levels to inspire, guide and support teams through the changes.

Organisational design

The organisational structure will be designed to support both the immediate needs of transition and the long-term ambitions of the new council.

The creation of a new council requires the design of a fit for purpose operating model along with an organisational design and structure that supports strategic leadership, operational delivery and democratic accountability.

Our focus:

▶ **Leadership and governance model:** Defining and filling senior roles (as required) and establish governance structures to lead and oversee the new council.

▶ **Neighbourhood governance:** Establishing the new council's democratic framework and neighbourhood governance ambitions.

▶ **Functional alignment:** Grouping services into coherent directorates or portfolios based on strategic priorities and operational synergies.

▶ **Spans of control:** Establishing clear lines of accountability, decision making authority and reporting relationships.

Service delivery models

Service delivery models will be developed iteratively, with a focus on continuity, quality and innovation. Our initial focus will be on safe, legal and confident transfer of services for vesting day, with transformation taking place on day one and beyond.

Each service area will require a tailored delivery model that reflects its statutory obligations, operational complexity and community impact.

Our focus:

▶ **Map existing services:** Understanding delivery arrangements across current councils.

▶ **Assess integration opportunities:** Identifying where services can be aggregated or streamlined.

▶ **Design future state models:** Developing high level service blueprints that define scope, delivery channels and performance expectations.

People and human resources

The transition will significantly shape the workforce and organisational culture; a motivated, skilled and unified team is essential to delivering the vision of the new council.

Our focus:

▶ **Pay and reward:** Ensuring employees are paid correctly on day one.

▶ **Workforce planning:** Identifying staffing requirements, skills gaps and recruitment needs.

▶ **TUPE and employment law compliance:** Managing employee transfers in accordance with legal obligations.

▶ **Organisational development:** Supporting employees through change with training, coaching and engagement.

▶ **Employee engagement:** Creating channels for employees feedback, involvement and recognition.

Processes

Process design and optimisation are critical to ensuring that the new council operates efficiently and consistently.

Efficient processes will underpin service delivery, financial management and customer experience. Our aim will be to minimise disruption to customer experience on vesting day.

Our focus:

▶ **Process mapping and harmonisation:** Identifying and aligning key business processes across legacy councils.

▶ **Standard operating procedures (SOPs):** Developing SOPs for core functions to ensure consistency and compliance.

▶ **Workflow automation:** Exploring opportunities to automate routine tasks and improve productivity.

▶ **Process ownership and governance:** Assigning responsibility for process design, maintenance and improvement.

Digital, data and technology

Digital infrastructure and data governance are key to the success of the new council.

Digital transformation will be a key enabler of efficiency, transparency and innovation.

Our focus:

▶ **Systems integration:** Consolidating IT platforms, applications and infrastructure to support unified operations.

▶ **Information management:** Designing and implementing a new unified information governance compliance structure and rolling out appropriate training.

▶ **Data migration and quality:** Ensuring accurate, secure and compliant transfer of data from legacy systems.

▶ **Digital service delivery:** Enabling online access to services and information for residents and employees.

▶ **Cybersecurity and resilience:** Implementing robust security protocols and disaster recovery plans.

▶ **Technology strategy:** Developing a digital roadmap aligned with organisational goals and resident needs.

Finance and commercial

Financial integrity and commercial agility are vital to long-term sustainability, with planning closely aligned to service priorities, risk management and transformation goals.

Our focus:

▶ **Budget consolidation:** Merging financial plans, reserves and liabilities across councils, establishing financial controls and reporting.

▶ **One financial platform:** Establishing a common financial system for budgeting, monitoring and auditing.

▶ **Commercial strategy:** Reviewing contracts, partnerships and income-generating opportunities.

▶ **Procurement frameworks:** Designing compliant and efficient procurement processes.

▶ **Funding and investment planning:** Identifying capital requirements and funding sources for transformation.

▶ **Banking and debtors management:** Establish unified banking arrangements and develop a strategy for managing legacy and future debtors.

▶ **Purchase to pay:** Establish unified purchase to pay systems and processes.

Property and assets

The new council will inherit a diverse portfolio of physical and digital assets. Effective asset management will support service delivery, financial sustainability and community engagement.

Our focus:

▶ **Asset inventory and valuation:** Cataloguing and assessing the value and condition of assets.

▶ **Ownership and transfer arrangements:** Managing the legal and operational aspects of asset transfer.

▶ **Estate strategy:** Developing a service focused strategy for office space, depots, community facilities and other assets.

▶ **Asset optimisation:** Identifying opportunities to rationalise, repurpose or divest assets.

▶ **Facilities management:** Ensuring continuity of maintenance, security and health and safety compliance.

Communication and engagement

The transition to the new council will require comprehensive programmes of communication and engagement both internally and externally.

Our focus:

▶ **Transition communications:** Managing communications and engagement with residents, employees and stakeholders, preparing them for change.

▶ **Employee and councillor communication and engagement:** Managing communication with employees and elected councillors from day one, ensuring effective engagement across the new council.

▶ **Resident and stakeholder communication and engagement:** Managing communication with residents, and partners from day one, presenting one coherent council to the public and keeping stakeholders informed and involved.

▶ **Media management:** Developing a clear, coordinated and consistent media management approach.

▶ **Branding:** Developing a single brand identity that supports the new culture and community engagement.

Legal and governance

The establishment of the legal and governance framework for the new unitary authority is crucial to ensure a smooth and compliant transition from the predecessor councils.

Our focus:

▶ **Compliance:** Ensuring the development of all statutory compliance requirements for the new authority.

▶ **Decision making structures:** Agree the new authority's constitution to define governance and decision making structures.

▶ **Company structures:** Ensuring companies owned and operated by legacy councils are legally transferred and compliant.

▶ **Support other workstreams:** Legal will play a key role across finance and commercial workstreams, due diligence, supporting the HR and people workstream, information governance, procurement activities and advisory and assurance for the programme.

▶ **Effective decision making:** Support effective decision-making, new committee structures and delegation schemes.

▶ **Internal audit and counter fraud:** Establish a single operating model for internal audit and counter fraud services, including an internal audit plan and unified counter fraud strategy.

Service specific workstreams

Transitioning district council services to Oxfordshire Council must be managed carefully to avoid resident disruption and maintain service quality. Continuing authority status will be a key enabler for that. Effective implementation should prioritise positive outcomes for residents.

Service specific workstreams will be required to ensure continuity and integration of frontline services. These workstreams will include, but are not limited to, waste; street scene and highways; regulatory services; housing; planning and economic development; and communities. These will be in addition to workstreams for services such as adult and children's social care; public health; libraries; culture and museums.

Not all services will require the same approach to transition. The council recognises that some services, particularly those involving vulnerable populations or statutory responsibilities, carry higher risks and complexities. As such, our implementation strategy will take into account service type, operational dependencies, level of aggregation required and risk exposure.

The migration process will not be uniform. It will vary depending on the nature of the service, the capacity of existing delivery partners and the needs of local communities. For this reason, we expect to work with stakeholders to define the model and process for understanding the kinds of transitions and transformations different services will undergo. Lessons learned internally and through external networks will assist in the design and implementation of new service delivery models.

Four key considerations are essential for a successful transition:

1. Teams within services requiring consolidation will lead the design, planning and change implementation, supported by the wider programme team, governance structure and PMO. This ensures the right skills and capabilities are in place, recognising that those with the most knowledge and experience are best placed to shape the future operating model.

2. The concept of "migrating to the most competent platform" is central. This concept recognises that today, services are delivered by multiple authorities with differing levels of resource, capability, maturity and resilience. In some areas, excellence already exists and can be scaled. In others, fragmentation has led to duplication, confusion for residents and avoidable costs. The transformation process will seek to both consolidate and elevate – building on strengths, addressing weaknesses and designing services that are fit for the future.

3. Effective governance boards will provide robust challenge and oversight, aided by additional expertise as needed.

4. Clear resident and stakeholder engagement with those that might or will be affected is crucial.
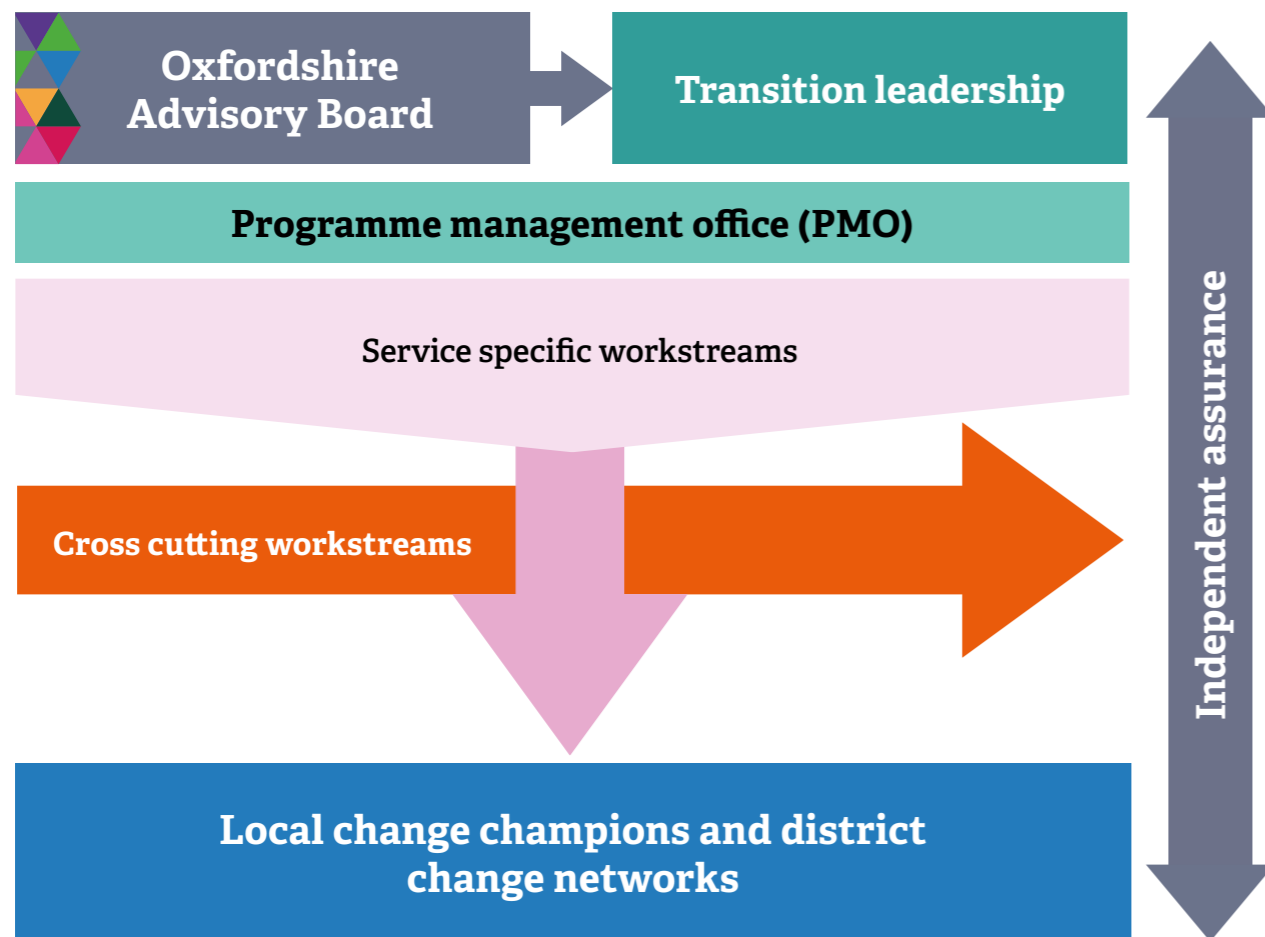
7.4 Managing risk and realising benefits

Delivering a successful transition to Oxfordshire Council requires a balanced and proactive approach to managing risk while ensuring the realisation of long-term benefits and value.

While the scale and complexity of change present inherent challenges, robust risk management and disciplined tracking will ensure the One Oxfordshire programme remains resilient, focused and capable of delivering its expected benefits.

Risk management framework

A robust risk management framework will be adopted to support the safe and effective delivery of the transition to Oxfordshire Council. This framework will include clear escalation protocols to ensure that risks are identified early, assessed consistently and mitigated proactively across all programme phases. It will be embedded within the PMO and aligned with governance structures to enable timely decision making and accountability.

Ongoing liaison with external regulators and service commissioners will be maintained to ensure statutory obligations are met and service quality standards upheld. Regular liaison will also take place with external audit. This approach will further help safeguard continuity, ensure public value and build confidence in the transition process.

We will apply the principles of effective risk management to support the transition and transformation. This approach follows the county council's risk management framework, which reviews risks at a corporate, directorate and service level while also ensuring that cross-cutting risks are captured to ensure appropriate assessment, mitigation, review and scrutiny.

Risk theme	Risk area	Mitigations
Financial uncertainty	While we have estimated the implementation costs for reorganisation in Oxfordshire there is a level of uncertainty in the detail of what needs to be delivered, meaning this may be insufficient. Additionally, key areas of concern for transition include: 1. The risk of councils running down reserves or accruing additional debt beyond existing medium-term strategies. 2. The impact of following the structural changes order, which may result in additional investment or delay realisation of savings opportunities. 3. The requirement to continue business as usual, including securing sustainable savings alongside preparing for the transition to the new unitary council.	▶ Develop robust financial plans and conduct independent cost-benefit analysis. ▶ One Oxfordshire will offer sufficient scale to manage the implementation and financial risk effectively and secure necessary upfront investment in people and resources. ▶ Strong governance and control mechanisms. ▶ Independent assurance and scrutiny. ▶ Close monitoring of costs will be conducted throughout the entire plan, with any escalation addressed promptly.
The loss of service continuity	Disruption to public services during transition would affect resident confidence and satisfaction.	▶ Phased implementation, clear service continuity plans and early and effective collaboration and resourcing will help mitigate this risk.
Data and systems integration	Misalignment of IT systems and data migration across merging councils.	▶ Conduct early application and data audits given scale; invest in integration platforms; ensure data governance and security.
Governance complexity and decision making	Over the course of the reorganisation there will be changes to decision making powers, roles and responsibilities. If there is a lack of clarity on the leadership and decision making arrangements during the transition process this may delay implementation activities and increase costs. Without due care there could be risk to current service delivery and delays to the benefits of implementing One Oxfordshire.	▶ Robust governance needs to be established early in pre-transition, be clear, effective and agreed in collaboration. It will need to adapt throughout the process as we move between phases, and we have planned 'pause and reflect' moments to assess what is working well and what needs to change for the next phase. ▶ Establish clear governance structures; appoint and involve new leaders early, ensure transparency.

Risk theme	Risk area	Mitigations
Capacity, capability and morale	Limited internal capacity and capability to manage transformation alongside business as usual activities could lead to employee morale and retention issues. If change is not managed effectively and the workforce not sufficiently engaged, this may damage employee morale, disrupt services and limit retention of the skills and roles for the new organisations.	▶ Early engagement of the workforce across all existing organisations will enable colleagues to be involved in informing and co-designing our future arrangements from the beginning. While recognising our differences, it is critical that all our people contribute to shaping the purpose, identity and culture of the new organisation. ▶ Dedicated programme teams and PMO; skills matrix; external support; backfill key roles; and harmonise HR policies.
Legal and contractual issues	Existing contracts may not align with new structures. Existing companies may not align with new structures.	▶ Legal and procurement will conduct a review of contracts and companies across all councils. Decisions will be made on renegotiation / novation strategies and how to incorporate and scale / 'wind up' companies.
Scale and complexity	Local government reorganisation is a significant change in any setting. In addition, we hope to implement devolution through a mayoral strategic authority, elections for which will take place in May 2027. District elections in 2026 will create additional uncertainty in the year before unitary elections. There will be a significant amount of change in a relatively short period of time.	▶ Government to assign Oxfordshire County Council as the continuing authority. Robust governance and programme management will ensure the right skills and capabilities are in place across the current local authorities.
Feeling of county council take over	Continuing authority status can foster a feeling of 'take over' for district councils.	▶ In the early transition phases, engagement with chief executives to agree principles of collaborative working will be vital. This will enable inclusive PMO structures to be built and encourage effective communication and engagement for all employees early and throughout the programme.
Performance, procurement and risk management	There will be a significant amount of work to standardise performance management practices, procurement and contract management capabilities that can deliver the larger scale and complex programme.	▶ Establishing a robust performance management framework linked to a refreshed culture and desired outcomes of One Oxfordshire. ▶ Upgrading procurement and contract management capabilities to suit the larger scale and complexity.

Risk theme	Risk area	Mitigations
Aggregation	While aggregation aims to streamline service delivery and improve efficiency, its implementation introduces several significant challenges such as integration of practice methods; systems and processes; cultural and organisational alignment; governance and representation; service harmonisation; financial reconciliation; and strategic planning and identity.	▶ Aggregation demands strategic oversight, strong leadership, careful planning and robust, experienced change and programme management to overcome the challenges. ▶ This will ensure not only effective change put will safeguard existing services throughout the transition.
Governance and internal control	Reduced governance and weakened internal control frameworks during the transition to Oxfordshire Council may result in increased errors, misstatements, or heightened opportunities for fraud. This risk is particularly acute as legacy processes are replaced, new systems are embedded and roles and responsibilities shift.	▶ Develop and implement a dedicated internal audit plan for the transition, ensuring regular and targeted reviews of key control areas throughout the change process. ▶ Establish a dedicated counter fraud plan to proactively identify, assess and respond to fraud risks, including employees training, enhanced reporting channels and real-time monitoring. ▶ Maintain clear documentation of new processes and controls, with robust oversight from senior leadership and the PMO. ▶ Ensure early engagement with internal audit and counter fraud teams in the design and rollout of new systems and procedures.

Conclusion

Oxfordshire's story has always been one of ambition and innovation. We now have the chance to write its next chapter – one defined by unity, resilience and shared prosperity. The case for One Oxfordshire is clear and compelling; it is grounded in evidence and driven by ambition. It will enable us not only to reform local government but unlock the full potential of our people and places, setting a new standard for what a county can achieve.

Oxfordshire stands at a pivotal moment: our county's strengths – our world-class universities, thriving innovation clusters and vibrant communities – risk being held back by fragmented governance, rising demand for services, high housing costs and the need for strategic infrastructure.

This proposal sets out a robust, deliverable plan for a single, unified council that will unlock £163 million in net savings by year five, deliver the strongest financial resilience, and protect and enhance the services our residents rely on. It will enable Oxfordshire to plan and invest at scale, drive inclusive economic growth and ensure that every community benefits from a fairer, simpler and more effective system.

One Oxfordshire is not just about structural change; it's about creating the conditions for people and places to thrive. It's about giving communities a stronger voice, protecting our most vulnerable, supporting our businesses, and building a council that is financially resilient and fit for the future.

With continuing authority status, we can move to that new future quickly, cost effectively and without unnecessary risk – ready to lead transformation on day one alongside seizing the benefits of devolution through a mayoral strategic authority across the Thames Valley.

One Oxfordshire is a model that meets and exceeds the criteria for reform, delivers value for money and sets a new standard for local government. It will ensure that Oxfordshire remains a beacon of excellence, opportunity and prosperity for generations to come.

Stronger, simpler services.

Let's build one Oxfordshire Council.

Criteria per chapter	Chapter
1 – Covers the whole area concerned	2
1a – A sensible economic area, with appropriate tax basis, which does not create undue advantage or disadvantage for part of the area	2, 3
1b – A sensible geography which will help to increase housing supply and meet local needs	2, 5
1c – Robust evidence and analysis, including estimated costs and benefits	2, 3, 4, 5
1d – Describes single tier structures and how these will achieve outcomes described	5, 6
2 – The right size to achieve efficiencies, improve capacity and withstand financial shocks	2, 3
2a – Has a population of 500,000 or more	2
2b – Why a proposal for a population less than 500,000 is appropriate	n/a
2c – Financial efficiencies identified, getting value for money for taxpayer	3
2d – Managing transition costs	3, 7
2e – Councils in best value intervention / exceptional financial support demonstrate reorganisation will put on firmer footing	n/a
2f – Council debt will not be written off as part of reorganisation	3
3 – Prioritising delivery of high quality and sustainable services	3, 4, 5, 6
3a – New structures will improve service delivery, avoiding fragmentation	4, 5, 6, 7
3b – Opportunities to deliver service reform, leading to better value for money	3, 5, 6
3c – Considers impacts for crucial services and wider public services	5
4 – Councils worked together to meet local needs, informed by local views	4, 5
4a – Local meaningful and constructive engagement undertaken	4

Criteria per chapter	Chapter
4b – Considers issues of local identity and cultural and historic importance	2
4c – Evidence of local engagement, explanation of views and how concerns will be addressed	4
5 – New unitary structures support devolution arrangements	6, 7
5a – Supported by existing CA/CCA/mayor	n/a
5b – How devolution will be unlocked	6, 7
5c – Sensible population size ratios between local and strategic authorities and LGR and devolution have compatible timelines	6, 7
6 – New structures enable stronger community engagement and neighbourhood empowerment	6
6a – Plans to engage communities	6
6b – Arrangements in place will enable strong community engagement	6
Boundary changes a – existing district areas used as building blocks	2
Boundary changes b – financial justification for changes in boundaries	n/a
Engagement a – collaborative working and info sharing across area local leaders	3, 4
Engagement b – commissioners appointed for Best Value Intervention input	n/a
Engagement c – stakeholders including members, residents, workforce and businesses engaged	4, 7
Engagement d – engagement informs proposals and builds shared understanding of improvements to delivery	4
Engagement e – views integrated from ICB, police, fire and rescue, local higher education and voluntary and third sector	4
Engagement f – forms a separate process from devolution	6

Footnotes

2: The case for an Oxfordshire footprint

1. Appendix 1 – LGR data pack

2. Office for National Statistics – Population estimates for England and Wales: Mid–2024 (30 July 2025)

3. Office for National Statistics – UK business; activity, size and location: 2024 (25 September 2024)

4. Appendix 1 – LGR data pack: Areas of strategic value to nature in Oxfordshire, figure 1

5. Department for Transport – Road traffic statistics – Local authority: Oxfordshire (2000 – 2024)

6. Appendix 1 – LGR data pack: Major infrastructure in Oxfordshire: Road, rail and settlements, figure 2

7. Oxfordshire County Council – Oxfordshire Local Flood Risk Management Strategy (January 2025)

8. Appendix 1 – Areas susceptible to risk of flooding across Oxfordshire, figure 3

9. Appendix 1 – LGR data pack: Home to school transport destinations through supported transport services travel assistance, figure 4; Home to school transport: Origin and destination (%) through supported transport services travel assistance, figure 5

10. Planning Oxfordshire's Environment and Transport Sustainability (POETS) – poets–article–on–local–government–reorganisation–september25.pdf (September 2025)

11. University of Oxford (n.d.) – Introduction and history Archived 20 October (2014). Retrieved 21 October (2025).

12. Experience Oxfordshire – Reports increased visitor spend…productive visitor economy (4 September 2025)

13. Experience Oxfordshire – Economic Impact Report 2024

14. Oxford City Council – Economic statistics

15. Experience Oxfordshire – Visitor perceptions survey summary of findings (March 2023)

16. LG Inform, Oxfordshire County Council and The Electoral Commission

17. Appendix 1 – LGR data pack: Percentage of population by age. 0 to 90 years and 90+ years, figure 6

18. Office for National Statistics population estimates – local authority based by single year of age (mid–2024)

19. Appendix 1 – LGR data pack: Average male life expectancy at birth in Oxfordshire, district council areas and England, figure 7 (2023)

20. Appendix 1 – LGR data pack: Average female life expectancy at birth in Oxfordshire, district council areas and England, figure 8 (2023)

21. Appendix 1 – LGR data pack: Ethnicity: Oxfordshire and district council areas, figure 9 (2021)

22. Oxfordshire County Council – Oxfordshire Data Hub

23. Appendix 1 – LGR data pack: Index of Multiple Deprivation: Oxfordshire LSOA deciles, figure 10

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46. Appendix 4 – Key findings from the four strands of resident engagement (summer 2025)

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60. Appendix 1 – LGR data pack: Location of waste recycling centres in Oxfordshire, figure 16

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61. East Midlands Combined County Authority – ASF Strategic Skills Plan

62. MultiCAV | Innovate Oxfordshire

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