Oxfordshire residents' satisfaction survey 2025

Postal and online survey of Oxfordshire residents

Executive summary of survey results

Version v1.0

December 2025

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Executive Summary

Background and method
This report represents the findings of a residents' satisfaction survey which was conducted by Marketing Means on behalf of Oxfordshire County Council between 26 June and 20 August 2025. The survey was sent to a sample of households across the authority area to gauge satisfaction with the council's services and the area where they live, as well as asking about the council's priorities and budget decisions.

The survey was posted out to a random sample of 6,000 households in w/c 21 June 2025. One reminder mailing was issued to non-respondents in w/c 28 July 2025. All residents in the sample could take part in the survey online if they wished, using unique login details included in the covering letter with a link to the online questionnaire, hosted by Marketing Means. These mailings generated 1,025 responses, 243 of which were completed online.

To boost the number of responses from younger residents, the 2025 survey included a face-to-face in-street interviewing stage, conducted in various locations in Oxford, Abingdon, Banbury, Didcot, Wantage and Witney. This provided a further 178 interviews with residents aged 18 to 44 between 23 July and 10 August 2025 and brought the total number of survey responses to 1,203.

At the data analysis stage, the final respondent profile was 'weighted' by local authority area, age and gender in order to reflect Oxfordshire's population aged 18+ from the 2021 Census profile. All charts and data in this report are based on 'weighted' data.

Overall views of Oxfordshire County Council

- Just over two-fifths of those interviewed (43%) were satisfied with the way that the council runs things, with net satisfaction at +11%, both slight but not statistically significant decreases from the corresponding results of the 2024 survey.
- Just under a third of respondents (29%) agreed that the council provides value for money, a slight not significant decrease from the 2024 results, though the proportion dissatisfied has increased by a small but significant amount to 40%. These gave a significantly lower net satisfaction score of -11%, compared with -4% in 2024.
- A total of 45% were satisfied with the services provided by the council, a slight but not significant increase from the level of 43% in 2024, with the same net satisfaction score of +15%.
- The proportions of respondents who would speak negatively or positively about the council were similar to one another (30% and 27% respectively), and their views would usually only be expressed if asked.
- When asked to suggest one thing the council should improve, the leading answer theme, given by 25%, was **improving roads and paths and fixing potholes**.

Your local area

- More than two-thirds (68%) were satisfied with their local area as a place to live, slightly but significantly lower than the corresponding 2024 result of 72%.
- The issues most likely to be spontaneously named by respondents as the most important that residents in their local area faced were led by **road surfaces in poor repair/dangerous, too many potholes**, suggested by 16% of respondents. Several other themes related to roads and transport, including traffic congestion and public transport, but each was given by less than 10%. The most likely

other topics were **issues with new building/ development of new housing, lack of infrastructure/amenities** (by 8%) and the **rising cost of living** (by 6%).

- Most respondents felt safe when outside in their local area by day, 87%, (slightly but significantly lower than the 2024 result) and 61% felt safe after dark (the same level as in 2024).
- The factors most likely to be selected by respondents as important in making somewhere a good place to live were led by **health services** (54%, a significant decrease from 2024's 60%), **road and pavement repairs** (up from 36% to 41% this year) and **level of crime** (41%, as in 2024). Several other factors, though selected by a smaller proportion of the sample, had significantly increased in importance since 2024, including **parks and open spaces**, **activities for teenagers**, and **wage levels and cost of living**. The only other factor that had significantly decreased in perceived importance since 2024 was the **level of pollution**.
- The factors most likely to be selected by respondents as most in need of improvement in the local area were led by **road and pavement repairs** (by 61%, significantly higher than 2024's 56%), and **health services** (44%, not significantly different to the 2023 result). **Traffic congestion** was selected by only slightly fewer (36%), with no significant change since 2024 and the same applied to **affordable decent housing** (35%). Only two other aspects were significantly less likely to be selected in 2025 than in 2024, namely **level of pollution** (from 15% to 11%) and **education provision** (from 14% to 11%).
- Nearly three-quarters of respondents (71%) felt they belonged strongly to their local area, with 21% feeling this very strongly.
- One in three respondents (33%) felt that people in their local area can influence decisions, though only 4% definitely agreed, while 36% did not agree.

Communications

- The proportion that felt fairly or very well informed on **benefits and services provided** by the council was 48%, significantly higher than the 2024 result of 43%. Only slightly fewer (44%) felt well-informed about **what the council spends its money on**, which was similar to 2024's result.
- A smaller proportion (28%) felt that the council **acts on the concerns of local residents** a great deal/ a fair amount. This was not significantly different to the 2024 results, and nor was the net satisfaction score of -31%.

Customer Services

- Residents' most popular choice as their preferred method of contacting the council was email, chosen by 71%, followed by **telephone – direct line** (41%) and **website – online form** (36%).
- Just over one in three respondents (36%) had contacted the council in the previous 12 months. The leading reason was to **report a problem** (27%), while **applying for a service**, **requesting a service** and **asking a question** were each selected by 17%-18%.
- The most likely method that residents had used to contact the council in the last 12 months was via the **website** (32%), only slightly ahead of **telephone to the customer service centre** (24%) and **email** (23%). The leading reasons given for their choice were that it was **simple/easy** (22%), **convenient/quick/easy** (12%), and **preferring to speak to a person** (13%).

Council services

- Across 20 different council services, the degree of residents' satisfaction varied widely, as did the proportion of respondents able to rate each service at all given the lack of experience of using or receiving each service. Taking out the "Don't know" responses to give the clearest view of the results for each service, ratings varied from 77% satisfied and net satisfaction of +73% for **Libraries**, to only 20% satisfied and -52% net satisfaction for **maintenance of roads** (the latter was also the lowest-rated service in 2022, 2023 and 2024). The table below summarises the key figures for each service:

2025 Satisfaction Ratings of Services *(base totals shown after each service)*	**% dissatisfied**	**% satisfied**	***Net % Score***
Libraries (838)	4%	77%	*+72.8%*
Fire and rescue service - emergency response (780)	5%	74%	*+69.1%*
Museums and history service (770)	4%	73%	*+69.1%*
Household waste and recycling centres (tips) (1,102)	16%	72%	*+55.9%*
Fire and rescue service - public safety and road safety advice and support (778)	8%	64%	*+55.7%*
Registration of births and deaths, and ceremonies including marriages and citizenship (554)	4%	62%	*+58.0%*
Primary education (5 -11 years) (450)	11%	60%	*+49.1%*
Early years education (birth to 4 years) (448)	9%	56%	*+46.4%*
Secondary education (over 11 years) (495)	17%	54%	*+37.3%*
Countryside services (e.g., rights of way) (966)	16%	54%	*+37.8%*
Children's social care (protecting and supporting vulnerable children and families) (475)	20%	43%	*+22.5%*
Trading standards (603)	16%	43%	*+26.7%*
Support/care for older people (aged over 65) (587)	-24%	42%	*+17.5%*
Support/care for vulnerable groups such as people with disabilities, and/or mental health problems, general frailty (558)	27%	41%	*+13.1%*
Public health (helping people to stay healthy and protecting them from health risk) (769)	21%	40%	*+19.1%*
Parking (enforcement, controlled parking zones, on-street parking) (1,010)	40%	32%	*-8.6%*
Managing the road network (e.g., traffic lights, speed limits, traffic and transport) (1,132)	55%	32%	*-23.0%*
Road and transport schemes (e.g., new or improved junctions, bus lanes, cycle lanes etc.) (1,070)	49%	28%	*-21.1%*
Maintenance of pavements (1,154)	63%	23%	*-40.5%*
Maintenance of roads (1,175)	72%	20%	*-51.7%*

- 14 of the services showed significantly increased net satisfaction compared with 2024. The largest increases were for **Registration of births and deaths etc.** (18% increase), **Fire and rescue service - emergency response** (14% increase), **early years education** and **support/care for vulnerable groups** (13% increase for both). None showed a significant decline in net satisfaction.

- The services felt to be most important for local people in the area were **maintenance of roads** (62%, a decrease from 68% in 2024) and **fire & rescue service – emergency response** (35%, up slightly from 32% in 2024).

- When reviewing the same results but including only those with lived experience of each service, five of the services were by far the most likely to be selected, each by more than 40% of those with experience of them; **primary education**, **secondary education**, **support/care for older people**, **support/care for vulnerable people**, and **early years education**.

Special statistical analysis

- We have conducted two extra stages of Key Driver Analysis on the survey results to help identify opinions of which specific council services and activities seem to have the greatest impact in driving overall satisfaction, perceptions of value for money and how well residents are kept informed.
- The Correlation Analysis undertaken showed that overall perception of quality of services and value for money are the two key items most correlated with **satisfaction with how the council runs things**, but this is also strongly correlated with the new question added in 2025 on the statement that best describes how residents feel about the council.
- Perceptions of **value for money** in turn are most strongly correlated with (i) overall satisfaction with services, (ii) how the council runs things, and (iii) statement that best describes how residents feel about the council.
- The Factor Analysis attempted to identify which specific services, or groups of services, have most impact in driving perceptions of those same four key measures: overall satisfaction with how the council runs things, value for money and the statements about keeping residents informed. The results highlighted, in particular, two groups of factors that influence most of the variation in perceptions. The first group comprised aspects related to travel/roads/transport, parking and pedestrian routes, alongside the statement that best describes how residents feel about the council. The second group comprised aspects related to satisfaction with the council and the local area, including satisfaction with the area as a place to live, satisfaction with services overall, the extent to which the council acts on residents' concerns, and satisfaction with household waste/recycling. These were the key drivers of the four target questions, but most notably overall satisfaction and value for money.
  - As in previous surveys and taken together with the results from elsewhere in this report, these findings demonstrate the key role that improvements to services related to roads, travel and transport may play, but combined with driving up satisfaction with services overall, notably waste recycling, and the local area as a place to live, and acting on residents' concerns in improving overall perceptions of the council.

Budget setting

- Respondents were given a brief explanation of the financial challenges that the council faces and asked how much they agreed or disagreed with each of a list of 10 possible approaches that the council could take to make savings / generate income. The table below summarises the proportions agreeing or disagreeing with each and shows that four drew strong <u>net</u> support of nearly +50% or higher, similar to those rating so highly in 2023 and 2024. Highest agreement was for **Reduce costs by operating from fewer buildings and using those we keep to their full capacity**, which more than eight out of 10 respondents (84%) agreed with as a course of action for the council.

- By far the <u>least</u> popular ideas were generating additional income by increasing council tax and reducing spending on frontline services, with net agreement of -40% for each.

APPROACH *(base totals shown after each)*	% disagree	% agree	Net % agreement
Reduce costs by operating from fewer buildings and using those we keep to their full capacity (1,159)	5%	84%	+79%
Reduce costs by using digital technology where it improves how we work and helps us be more efficient (1,150)	8%	77%	+68%
Reduce the costs of the contracts we use to provide services (1,140)	8%	73%	+65%
Reduce staffing costs by redesigning services, using fewer agency staff and/or holding vacancies (1,152)	12%	71%	+58%
Reduce costs by collaborating more with partners in voluntary & community sector so we're not main funder & provider for every service (1,147)	16%	61%	+45%
Reduce spending on services the council is not legally required to provide (1,135)	24%	47%	+23%
Use the council's financial reserves (money set aside for unexpected events), to provide one-off funding (1,143)	26%	47%	+20%
Generate additional income from sales, fees, and charges (1,096)	32%	40%	+8% ↓
Reduce spending on frontline services (1,127)	62%	21%	-40%
Generate additional income by increasing council tax (1,133)	63%	22%	-40%

- Respondents were also asked whether they agreed or disagreed that the council should consider increases of 3.99 or 4.99 per cent to help fund adult social care and other key services. These two levels drew general disagreement and net agreement scores of -12% and -40% respectively. Just over a third of respondents (34%) agreed with the notion of a 3.99 per cent increase, but only 19% supported an increase as high as 4.99 per cent.
- Although more than a third (37%) felt their financial situation was 'about the same' as a year ago, the proportion who felt better off (4%) was far smaller than the proportion who felt worse off (57%). Although most people (56%) had never or rarely struggled in this regard in the last year, about a quarter (26%) had done so sometimes, 10% most of the time, and 3% all of the time.

Climate change

- A third of all respondents (33%) claimed to be very concerned about climate change and 78% overall were concerned, not significantly different to the 2024 results.
- 70% felt that climate change will affect them and their family moderately or a lot.
- Well over three-quarters of respondents (80%) agreed that it is very or fairly important for Oxfordshire County Council to tackle climate change, with 39% rating it very important, both significant increases from the 2024 results.
- When asked to what extent they have a role to play in protecting themselves and belongings from extreme weather, just under a third (31%) felt that that this applies a lot, while 42% felt that it applies a moderate amount. Only 7% felt that this did not apply at all.

- When asked to what extent they had already made lifestyle changes to tackle climate change, well over half (58%) had done so to either a moderate amount or a lot, 13% giving the answer a lot.

Travel in and around Oxfordshire

- **Driving a car** and **walking** were the two most likely modes of travel used in the previous 7 days, each given by close to three-quarters of respondents (77% and 73% respectively). More than half (57%) had travelled as a car passenger.
- Several active travel modes were each used by a significant proportion of respondents, **bus** by 37%, **bicycle** by 30% and **train** by 24%.
- **Driving a car** was by far the most likely main mode of transport , selected by 57%. A further 8% had mainly been a **car passenger**. 14% had mainly got around by **walking**, 8% mainly by **bus** and 6% mainly by **bicycle**.

Volunteering and digital skills

- Just over a third of respondents (34%) have provided some degree of unpaid help in the past 12 months, including 13% that had done so at least once a week.
- Well over nine out of 10 respondents (95%) use the internet at work, home or elsewhere.