



Notice of a Meeting

Performance & Corporate Services Overview & Scrutiny Committee

Friday, 16 January 2026 at 10.00 am

Room 2&3 - County Hall, New Road, Oxford OX1 1ND

These proceedings are open to the public

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

Membership

Chair: Councillor Glynis Phillips
Deputy Chair: Councillor Ian Middleton

Councillors: Brad Baines Dr Nathan Ley Roz Smith
Will Boucher-Giles Kieron Mallon
Tom Greenaway John Shiri

**Date of Next
Meeting:** 17 April 2026

For more information about this Committee please contact:

Committee Officer: *Scrutiny Team*
Email: *E-Mail: scrutiny@oxfordshire.gov.uk*

Martin Reeves
Chief Executive

January 2026

What does this Committee review or scrutinise?

The purpose of the Performance and Corporate Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee is (i) To review and scrutinise the performance of the Council and to provide a focused review of: (a) Corporate performance and directorate performance and financial reporting (b) Budget scrutiny (ii) To monitor the performance of the Council by means of effective key performance indicators, review of key action plans and obligations and through direct access to service managers, Cabinet Members and partners; (iii) To exercise the statutory right to call-in, for reconsideration, decisions made but not yet implemented by or on behalf of the Cabinet;

How can I have my say?

We welcome the views of the community on any issues in relation to the responsibilities of this Committee. Members of the public may ask to speak on any item on the agenda or may suggest matters which they would like the Committee to look at. **Requests to speak must be submitted to the Committee Officer below no later than 9 am 4 working day before the date of the meeting.**

About the County Council

The Oxfordshire County Council is made up of 63 councillors who are democratically elected every four years. The Council provides a range of services to Oxfordshire's 678,000 residents. These include:

schools	social & health care	libraries and museums
the fire service	roads	trading standards
land use	transport planning	waste management

Each year the Council manages £0.9 billion of public money in providing these services. Most decisions are taken by a Cabinet of 9 Councillors, which makes decisions about service priorities and spending. Some decisions will now be delegated to individual members of the Cabinet.

About Scrutiny

Scrutiny is about:

- Providing a challenge to the Cabinet
- Examining how well the Cabinet and the Authority are performing
- Influencing the Cabinet on decisions that affect local people
- Helping the Cabinet to develop Council policies
- Representing the community in Council decision making
- Promoting joined up working across the authority's work and with partners

Scrutiny is NOT about:

- Making day to day service decisions
- Investigating individual complaints.

What does this Committee do?

The Committee meets up to 4 times a year or more. It develops a work programme, which lists the issues it plans to investigate. These investigations can include whole committee investigations undertaken during the meeting, or reviews by a panel of members doing research and talking to lots of people outside of the meeting. Once an investigation is completed the Committee provides its advice to the Cabinet, the full Council or other scrutiny committees. Meetings are open to the public and all reports are available to the public unless exempt or confidential, when the items would be considered in closed session.

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

A hearing loop is available at County Hall.

AGENDA

1. Apologies for Absence and Temporary Appointments

To receive any apologies for absence and temporary appointments.

2. Declaration of Interests

See guidance note on the back page.

3. Minutes (Pages 7 - 20)

The Committee is recommended to **APPROVE** the minutes of the meeting held on 05 December 2025 and to receive information arising from them.

4. Petitions and Public Address

Members of the public who wish to speak on an item on the agenda at this meeting, or present a petition, can attend the meeting in person or 'virtually' through an online connection.

Requests to speak must be submitted no later than 9am three working days before the meeting, i.e. Tuesday, 13 January 2026.

Requests should be submitted to the Scrutiny Officer at scrutiny@oxfordshire.gov.uk.

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

5. Budget Proposals for 2026/27 to 2030/31

All Cabinet members and directors have been invited to present a report on the Budget Proposals for 2026/27 – 2030/31

The Committee is asked to consider the report and raise any questions, and to **AGREE** any recommendations it wishes to make to Cabinet arising therefrom.

NB This report is to follow.

The expected order (and rough timings) are expected to be as follows:

Item	Estimated start time (and best estimate duration)
Standing items	10.00 (10 mins)
Budget introduction & cross-cutting questions (this includes Resources/Law and Governance)	10:10 (30 mins)
Transformation, Digital, Customer Experience	10:40 (15 mins)

Public Health and Communities	10:55 (20 mins)
Environment and Highways	11:15 (40 mins)
Economy and Place	11:55 (30 mins)
Fire/Community Safety	12:25 (15 mins)
	Lunch
Adult Social Care	14:00 (40 mins)
Children, Education and Families	14:40 (40 mins)

6. **Social Value Policy** (Pages 21 - 50)

Cllr Levy, Cabinet Member for Finance, Ian Dyson, Director for Financial and Commercial Services, and Max Button, Commercial Excellence Lead have been invited to present a report on a draft of the refresh of the Council's Social Value policy.

The Committee is asked to consider the report and raise any questions, and to **AGREE** any recommendations it wishes to make to Cabinet arising therefrom.

7. **Committee Action and Recommendation Tracker** (Pages 51 - 54)

The Committee is recommended to **NOTE** the progress of previous recommendations and actions arising from previous meetings, having raised any questions on the contents.

8. **Committee Forward Work Plan** (Pages 55 - 58)

The Committee is recommended to **AGREE** its work programme for forthcoming meetings, having heard any changes from previous iterations, and taking account of the Cabinet Forward Plan and of the Budget Management Monitoring Report.

The Council's latest Forward Plan can be found here: [Forward plan - February 2026 | Oxfordshire County Council](#)

9. **Responses to Scrutiny Recommendations** (Pages 59 - 62)

Attached is the Cabinet response to the Performance and Corporate Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee recommendations made in relation to Devolution. The Committee is asked to **NOTE** the response.

Councillors declaring interests

General duty

You must declare any disclosable pecuniary interests when the meeting reaches the item on the agenda headed 'Declarations of Interest' or as soon as it becomes apparent to you.

What is a disclosable pecuniary interest?

Disclosable pecuniary interests relate to your employment; sponsorship (i.e. payment for expenses incurred by you in carrying out your duties as a councillor or towards your election expenses); contracts; land in the Council's area; licenses for land in the Council's area; corporate tenancies; and securities. These declarations must be recorded in each councillor's Register of Interests which is publicly available on the Council's website.

Disclosable pecuniary interests that must be declared are not only those of the member her or himself but also those member's spouse, civil partner or person they are living with as husband or wife or as if they were civil partners.

Declaring an interest

Where any matter disclosed in your Register of Interests is being considered at a meeting, you must declare that you have an interest. You should also disclose the nature as well as the existence of the interest. If you have a disclosable pecuniary interest, after having declared it at the meeting you must not participate in discussion or voting on the item and must withdraw from the meeting whilst the matter is discussed.

Members' Code of Conduct and public perception

Even if you do not have a disclosable pecuniary interest in a matter, the Members' Code of Conduct says that a member 'must serve only the public interest and must never improperly confer an advantage or disadvantage on any person including yourself' and that 'you must not place yourself in situations where your honesty and integrity may be questioned'.

Members Code – Other registrable interests

Where a matter arises at a meeting which directly relates to the financial interest or wellbeing of one of your other registerable interests then you must declare an interest. You must not participate in discussion or voting on the item and you must withdraw from the meeting whilst the matter is discussed.

Wellbeing can be described as a condition of contentedness, healthiness and happiness; anything that could be said to affect a person's quality of life, either positively or negatively, is likely to affect their wellbeing.

Other registrable interests include:

- a) Any unpaid directorships
- b) Any body of which you are a member or are in a position of general control or management and to which you are nominated or appointed by your authority.

- c) Any body (i) exercising functions of a public nature (ii) directed to charitable purposes or (iii) one of whose principal purposes includes the influence of public opinion or policy (including any political party or trade union) of which you are a member or in a position of general control or management.

Members Code – Non-registrable interests

Where a matter arises at a meeting which directly relates to your financial interest or wellbeing (and does not fall under disclosable pecuniary interests), or the financial interest or wellbeing of a relative or close associate, you must declare the interest.

Where a matter arises at a meeting which affects your own financial interest or wellbeing, a financial interest or wellbeing of a relative or close associate or a financial interest or wellbeing of a body included under other registrable interests, then you must declare the interest.

In order to determine whether you can remain in the meeting after disclosing your interest the following test should be applied:

Where a matter affects the financial interest or well-being:

- a) to a greater extent than it affects the financial interests of the majority of inhabitants of the ward affected by the decision and;
- b) a reasonable member of the public knowing all the facts would believe that it would affect your view of the wider public interest.

You may speak on the matter only if members of the public are also allowed to speak at the meeting. Otherwise you must not take part in any discussion or vote on the matter and must not remain in the room unless you have been granted a dispensation.

PERFORMANCE & CORPORATE SERVICES OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

MINUTES of the meeting held on Friday, 5 December 2025 commencing at 10.00 am and finishing at 1.29 pm.

Present:

Voting Members:

Councillor Glynis Phillips - in the Chair
Councillor Ian Middleton (Deputy Chair)
Councillor Brad Baines
Councillor Will Boucher-Giles
Councillor Laura Gordon
Councillor Tom Greenaway
Councillor Kieron Mallon
Councillor Roz Smith
Councillor Bethia Thomas

**Other Members in
Attendance:**

Cllr Liz Leffman, Leader of the Council
Cllr Kate Gregory, Cabinet Member for Public Health & Inequalities
Cllr Dan Levy, Cabinet Member for Finance, Property and Transformation
Cllr Andrew Gant, Cabinet Member for Transport Management

Officers:

Martin Reeves, Chief Executive
Kim Sawyer, Programme Director: Devolution
Ansaf Azhar, Director of Public Health
Paul Fermer, Director of Environment & Highways
Carys Alty, Head of Migration Policy and Partnership
Kate Holburn, Deputy Director of Public Health
Kathy Wilcox, Head of Corporate Finance
Matthew Timms, Team Leader (Engagement) – Highway Maintenance
Paul Wilson, Operations manager (Operations)
Phil Whitfield, Head of Network Management
Sam Read, Public Health Programme Manager
Sean Rooney, Head of Highway Maintenance and Road Safety
Tom Hudson, Scrutiny Manager

The Council considered the matters, reports and recommendations contained or referred to in the agenda for the meeting and decided as set out below. Except insofar as otherwise specified, the reasons for the decisions are contained in the agenda and reports, copies of which are attached to the signed Minutes.

39/25 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND TEMPORARY APPOINTMENTS

(Agenda No. 1)

Apologies were received from Cllr Shiri, substituted by Cllr Thomas, and from Cllr Ley, substituted by Cllr Gordon.

40/25 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

(Agenda No. 2)

There were none.

41/25 MINUTES

(Agenda No. 3)

The Committee **APPROVED** the minutes of the meeting held on 12 September 2025 as a true and accurate record.

42/25 PETITIONS AND PUBLIC ADDRESS

(Agenda No. 4)

There were none.

43/25 BUSINESS MANAGEMENT MONITORING REPORT - PUBLIC HEALTH

(Agenda No. 5)

Cllr Kate Gregory, Cabinet Member for Public Health & Inequalities, Cllr Dan Levy, Cabinet Member for Finance, Property and Transformation, Ansaf Azhar, Director of Public Health, Kathy Wilcox, Head of Corporate Finance, Kate Holburn, Deputy Director of Public Health, Sam Read, Public Health Programme Manager, and Carys Alty, Head of Migration Policy and Partnership, were invited to present a report on the Business management Monitoring Report focusing on Public Health.

The Director of Public Health clarified that his remit included statutory public health, communities and asylum and migration. The report covered the ring-fenced public health grant budget and related functions including asylum, domestic abuse, and additional grants for drug, alcohol and smoking cessation. Performance across these areas was outlined, with amber-rated issues identified for discussion.

The Head of Corporate Finance reported that, as of October, there was no forecast variation for public health against a gross budget of just under £43 million, which included the £37 million ring-fenced public health grant and other grants such as domestic abuse duty and drug and alcohol treatment. An underspend of £0.9 million for 2024/25 had been transferred to the public health reserve, now totalling £4.6 million, with a forecast drawdown of £2.7 million for 2025/26. The scale of public health funding within the council's overall budget was emphasised.

The Deputy Director of Public Health introduced the children and young person's substance misuse service, describing it as a small team with dedicated workers in family centres. The service provided psychosocial interventions for prevention, early intervention, and treatment, supporting both young people using substances and

those affected by others' use. Interventions ranged from brief advice and drug diversion schemes to structured treatment, with clinical support rarely required. National reporting focused only on structured treatment, which represented just part of the service's work.

Victims of domestic abuse assessed for refuge accommodation were required to agree to the move, with decisions influenced by factors such as proximity to an ex-partner, children's schooling, or financial circumstances. Data on those declining a space existed and could be provided, with reasons often linked to personal and practical considerations.

The County Council had established a domestic abuse partnership with district councils, including a dedicated safe accommodation working group involving housing officers and service providers. This group met regularly to address challenges in securing suitable housing for families leaving refuge. Difficulties persisted, particularly for larger families and in finding appropriate move-on accommodation, sometimes resulting in families remaining in refuge longer than ideal and affecting the availability of spaces for new arrivals.

The 12-month health visiting check, a statutory requirement, had a local target of 87%, with Oxfordshire achieving around 84%. Performance had improved since the pandemic and was comparable to statistical neighbours. Including parents who declined or did not attend would raise the figure to 96%. Efforts continued to understand and address non-attendance, especially in deprived areas.

Smoking prevalence in Oxfordshire had fallen significantly to about 7.5%, down from 11%. The reduction was particularly notable among routine and manual workers, though rates remained high among people with mental health conditions. The ambition to become smoke-free by 2025 had been disrupted by the COVID-19 pandemic, but national legislation and targeted local strategies had supported the decline. Persistent high rates in some groups remained a focus for further work.

The council focused on three of the eight Marmot principles: best start in life, employment, and healthy standard of living. Work with the Institute of Health Equity had highlighted the need to address gaps, such as attainment for children on free school meals. While it was too early to specify financial implications, investment in tackling inequalities had already been made, with an aim to maintain momentum and partnership funding despite financial pressures.

The NHS health check programme operated on a five-year recall cycle, aiming to offer checks to 20% of the eligible population each year, with an 18% annual target. This approach ensured that all eligible adults would be offered a check over five years, with the target reflecting the recall system rather than an inability to reach certain groups.

The public health grant was ring-fenced and mainly spent on five mandated services, leaving little discretionary funding. The council's role included delivering statutory functions and influencing the broader health system. Additional NHS and partner resources were mobilised for prevention and tackling inequalities, such as through

Marmot Place and joint forums. Regular collaboration with NHS partners aimed to align budgets and strategies for maximum population impact.

Vaping played a positive role in helping routine manual workers quit smoking, but there was concern about young people starting to vape without prior smoking history. These were considered separate issues: vaping was beneficial for smoking cessation but problematic as an entry product for non-smokers, especially youth. National efforts were underway to regulate advertising and packaging, and local trading standards were also addressing the issue.

The next phase of work on Marmot Place principles involved engaging other council directorates and the wider health and care system. A cultural shift was required, but enthusiasm for Marmot principles was growing. The council was reviewing the social value aspect of contracts, with public health working alongside procurement teams to ensure a focus on health inequalities, including using contract social value to address local or service-related inequalities.

The national 10-year drug strategy had recently evolved its indicators, introducing a new “treatment progress” measure about 18 months prior. There was not yet a full year of data for 2023–24, hence the reported figure of zero for the proportion of opioid users in treatment making substantial progress. Data was expected to be released soon. Local drug and alcohol services performed very well nationally on successful completion rates.

Addressing health inequalities was a long-term goal, but the immediate focus was on engaging people with the concept, building a social movement, and ensuring staff were trained to consider health inequalities in their work. The Marmot principles provided an evidence-based lens for reviewing data and identifying local inequalities. By the end of the two-year programme, system-wide recommendations would be produced, with shared responsibility for delivery across all partners.

Preparations for a government move towards a sponsorship-focused approach for asylum seekers and refugees had included engagement with community sponsorship, but accommodation challenges in Oxfordshire had prevented some cases from proceeding. The Homes for Ukraine scheme was host-based with a specific financial system, but lessons would be considered for future plans. The council’s “council of sanctuary” status meant proactive support for migrants, using services like libraries, and the approach would continue to evolve as national policy changed.

The Committee **AGREED** to recommendations under the following headings:

- The committee recommended taking forward lessons learned from the Homes for Ukraine scheme to inform future approaches to asylum and immigration policy.
- They suggested a follow-up on the inequality agenda, requesting consolidated data and a progress update in about a year, recognising the work as ongoing.

- It was proposed to establish a clear timeline for agreeing common approaches and follow-up actions on Marmot principles across the system.
- The committee recommended adding targets related to vaping use, especially among people who had not previously smoked, to complement existing smoking reduction targets.

The Committee **AGREED** to the following action:

- The Deputy Director of Public Health to send over data concerning treatment progress 2024/25 drug data when available

44/25 DEVOLUTION (Agenda No. 6)

Cllr Liz Leffman, Leader of the Council, Cllr Dan Levy, Cabinet Member for Finance, Property and Transformation, Martin Reeves, Chief Executive, and Kim Sawyer, Programme Director: Devolution, were invited to present a report on Devolution.

The Leader introduced the devolution agenda, outlining progress towards submitting an expression of interest to government for a Mayoral Strategic Authority (MSA) covering Oxfordshire and Berkshire. The region's economic significance and the need for a strategic approach to transport, energy, and water were highlighted, with regional collaboration seen as essential. All council leaders from Oxfordshire and Berkshire had expressed support, aiming to promote inclusive growth and improved opportunities for residents. Despite recent government announcements delaying devolution elections, the Leader recommended that preparations continue, including the establishment of a board to define regional priorities ahead of any mayoral election.

The Programme Director clarified the distinction between Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) and devolution. LGR involved consolidating county and district council services into unitary authorities to simplify governance and deliver daily services, such as children's and adults' services and waste collection. Devolution, by contrast, entailed the creation of new powers and the transfer of existing ones to a new regional body, a Mayoral Strategic Authority. The MSA's purpose would be to provide a strategic framework for the region, enabling investment and granting local control over funding decisions.

The Programme Director explained that the expression of interest served as an invitation to government to discuss how devolution might work for Oxfordshire, with the process still at an early stage. The MSA would focus on strategic growth, planning, transport, skills, and public sector reform, supporting the business ecosystem and improving infrastructure for residents. Oxfordshire's strong innovation ecosystem, where universities, entrepreneurs, and risk capital combined to drive growth, was cited as an example. The MSA would not deliver local services directly but would create an investment framework to support them, aiming to enable inclusive and sustainable regional growth.

Discussion turned to the absence of a list of councils in the report and expression of interest, with members seeking clarification on why councils were not explicitly mentioned and how this related to the membership of the devolution board. It was explained that the letter would be signed by the Leader, representing Oxfordshire, and the Leader of Bracknell Forest Council, Councillor Mary Temperton, representing Berkshire, rather than by all individual council leaders. The letter would refer to the Oxfordshire joint leaders and the equivalent Berkshire group, thereby covering all relevant councils.

Members enquired whether the Expression of Interest (EOI) would be amended in light of the government's recent announcement to postpone the first round of devolution. The Chief Executive responded that, as the EOI had already been substantially approved by various councils, there was a desire to avoid making material changes out of respect for those decisions. However, it was advised that, given the government's announcement, the EOI should still be submitted, and councils should proceed as if they were already acting as a strategic authority. Emphasis was placed on continuing cross-council collaboration and focusing on acting as a region in the spirit of devolution, rather than becoming preoccupied with the timing of mayoral elections.

Clarification was sought regarding the wordings of the recommendations to Scrutiny and Cabinet, where one referred to the "potential" benefits of an MSA, while the other used the term "substantial" benefits. Members questioned whether the use of "potential" indicated any reticence by the administration and whether the language could be made more positive. It was clarified that the recommendation had not yet come to Cabinet and therefore did not reflect the administration's final view. The point about consistency of language was acknowledged, and it was stated that this would be considered when the matter came before Cabinet, with an emphasis on ensuring clarity and alignment throughout the documents.

Concerns were expressed that some of the language in the expression of interest, such as references to economic decline and stagnation, appeared unnecessarily pessimistic. While it was important to highlight the risk of missed opportunities, members suggested the letter could be more optimistic and express greater confidence in local businesses and residents. In response, it was explained that there had been a decline in productivity since the pandemic, and the risk of businesses relocating if infrastructure and support were lacking was real. However, the importance of balancing the narrative was acknowledged, and feedback on the tone would be taken on board to ensure the message to government was both realistic and appropriately positive.

The committee considered how the public and councillors would be kept informed throughout the governance board process, especially given the open-ended timetable and the risk that uncertainty could undermine staff and business confidence. It was noted that the devolution board would likely meet in private, raising concerns about the sharing of minutes and ongoing communication. The process was not yet fully defined, but there was agreement on the importance of keeping everyone, particularly businesses and residents, updated on developments. A commitment was made to ensure regular and transparent communication as the process progressed.

The Committee **AGREED** to recommendations under the following headings:

- That the Leader seeks agreement from other Councils to list append a list of member councils at the bottom of the Expression of Interest letter to the Secretary of State and Cabinet amends its report to detail the names of Councils who will form the Devolution Board
- That the Cabinet amends its report to ensure consistency across the report and Expression of interest letter of the significant benefits accruing from devolution.
- That the Leader seeks clarity from partners over how stakeholders - including elected members, businesses, and the public – will be informed of outcomes and progress relating to devolution.
- That the Cabinet recognises the high degree of uncertainty within the devolution process for staff, businesses and other key stakeholders and commits to clarifying details as soon as they are announced.

The Committee adjourned for a short break at 11:23 and reconvened at 11:32.

45/25 PARKING PERMITS (Agenda No. 7)

Cllr Andrew Gant, Cabinet Member for Transport Management, Paul Fermer, Director of Environment & Highways, and Phil Whitfield, Head of Network Management, were invited to present a report on Parking Permits.

The Cabinet Member opened the discussion on parking permits, noting that the committee had previously reviewed the issue in September and was now returning for a more substantive discussion. He explained that main parking permits had been digital for three years, with the visitor system moving online the previous December.

Paul Fermer and Phil Whitfield presented the item, highlighting that the report addressed all previously raised concerns, particularly the proposal to extend the current contract by two years. This extension would allow time for due diligence and a thorough procurement process for a new system. Improvements had already been made to the system based on committee and user feedback, focusing on user-friendliness and efficiency. Ongoing discussions aimed to review and challenge the system's performance, ensuring it met expectations for the remainder of the contract. Both officers stressed the importance of continuous improvement and responsiveness to user concerns.

Concerns were expressed about the Council's travel permit websites, which were described as unintuitive, text-heavy, and confusing in terms of login steps. Members questioned the use of email notifications instead of SMS and suggested that a more intuitive website would reduce the need for guides and drop-in sessions. Officers responded that improvements had been made based on feedback, but some limitations stemmed from integration with the main civil enforcement back-office system. While emails were currently used for notifications, the system's capabilities

and user experience remained under constant review. Officers confirmed that a more user-friendly system would be a priority in future procurement and that ongoing discussions aimed to address these issues for the remainder of the contract.

The possibility of shortening the contract extension for the digital permit system to one year, rather than two, was discussed. Officers explained that the contract allowed for a 1+1 year extension, so a shorter extension was possible. However, a longer extension would provide sufficient time for market engagement, encourage competition, and ensure a better system could be procured. Officers emphasised the need for due diligence and market engagement but confirmed that a shorter extension could be considered if circumstances allowed.

The removal of physical paper permits raised concerns about how residents could check if a vehicle's registration had a valid permit for the correct controlled parking zone (CPZ). Officers explained that, under the digital system, the public could check if a vehicle had a permit, but not whether it was valid for a specific CPZ, due to data protection (GDPR) considerations. Enforcement officers could be called to check permits, and officers indicated they would explore whether trusted community volunteers could be given special access to help address this issue.

Members requested data on the number of permits issued in each category, the number of paper scratch cards issued, ease of obtaining them, revenue generated, and the contract's cost or profit margin. Officers acknowledged these requests and committed to providing the details in the minutes or in writing after the meeting, ensuring councillors would receive the requested breakdowns and financial information for further scrutiny.

Risks associated with having two major systems, such as the parking permit system and another key service, delivered by the same provider were discussed. Officers noted that while there were risks in relying on a single provider, using one system could offer consistency for residents and avoid confusion. The balance between risk and user experience was acknowledged, and officers confirmed that these considerations were being managed as part of ongoing procurement and service delivery.

Clarification was sought on the breakdown of where Penalty Charge Notices (PCNs) were being issued, as the report stated that 26% were issued in CPZ areas and 12% in contravention of shared bays, accounting for only 38% of the total. Officers committed to supplying the full breakdown in writing after the meeting to allow councillors to understand the distribution of PCNs across different categories and locations.

The extent to which the current software's capability was being fully utilised was questioned, with some criticisms attributed to either software limitations or the council's implementation. Officers responded that some issues had resulted from the council's implementation, and improvements had been made where possible. The software still had more potential, and the team was confident it could support additional or different permit types if required, though some architectural limitations remained.

Anecdotal evidence suggested that email enquiries about permits had decreased considerably and calls to the customer service centre were now being met within service level agreements, with the complexity of queries also reducing. Improvements in speed for visitor permits had led to more straightforward queries and fewer complaints. Officers noted that official statistics would be needed to confirm these trends and offered to provide figures after the meeting.

Members sought a statistical breakdown of the reasons for PCNs, noting that current reporting tools did not allow for detailed quantitative assessment and relied on qualitative information from enforcement officers. Officers explained that the system provided some breakdown, but its configuration limited the level of detail available, particularly for PCNs issued in CPZ areas. For future contracts, it would be possible to require a greater level of breakdown, such as using drop-down lists for enforcement officers to select reasons, improving data collection and reporting. Further information would be provided after the meeting.

GDPR's impact on residents' ability to check whether a vehicle was legitimately parked in a CPZ was discussed, as paper permits had been replaced by digital ones. Officers explained that, after consulting with data protection colleagues, the public did not have a legitimate need to access this information due to GDPR. However, options such as giving certain community volunteers access would be explored.

The procurement process was described as muddled and not joined up, with issues arising from different procurement timelines for the back-end database and the permit system. Officers explained that the congestion charge had not influenced the timing, and the permit system had always been planned to support traffic filters. Challenges became more apparent after the introduction of visitor permits, and the complexity of aligning multiple contracts and incremental extensions contributed to the lack of synchronisation.

Future procurement would prioritise customer interaction and usability, with officers endorsing the committee's recommendation to make quality a key criterion. Lessons learned indicated that quality, particularly user experience, should be prioritised over price, and the intention was to explore the market for better solutions to address current usability concerns.

The scheme's financial position was clarified, with the council aiming for a break-even point rather than generating a significant surplus. Income and costs were roughly balanced, with any revenue generated primarily used to cover operational costs.

Consideration of the application system in decision-making was questioned, given known complexities and potential difficulties. Officers rejected the suggestion that decisions were made knowing they would cause problems, emphasising that the move to a digital system was necessary as the previous paper-based approach was unsustainable. While difficulties existed, it was asserted that the system worked overall and decisions were not made to worsen known issues.

The Committee **AGREED** to recommendations under the following headings:

- Extend the current contract by one year instead of two.

- Involve committee members in reviewing the IT system to identify and resolve faults.
- Explore the potential for super users to check on CPZ permit areas.
- Review the timing and interaction of enforcement contracts, especially regarding resident impact.
- Ensure residents without email receive letters about permit expiry. Engage with GPs about their role in supporting unregistered carers.
- Prioritise quality over price in future procurements.
- Review and share quality measures for front-end software.
- Embed software decisions into policy design from the earliest stage.
- Revisit the CPZ and parking strategy.

The Committee **AGREED** to the following actions:

Written answer to questions raised by the Committee in relation to statistical breakdown of number of permits issued, type of permits issued, and the financial impact of the cost and revenue of the permit system.

46/25 FIXMYSTREET (Agenda No. 8)

Cllr Andrew Gant, Cabinet Member for Transport Management, Paul Fermer, Director of Environment and Highways, Sean Rooney, Head of Highway Maintenance and Road Safety, Paul Wilson, Operations manager (Operations), and Matthew Timms, Team Leader (Engagement) – Highway Maintenance, were invited to present a report on FixMyStreet.

The Head of Highway Maintenance and Road Safety introduced the FixMyStreet item, explaining that the platform enabled the public to report highway defects and issues, and had seen around 41,000 reports since January. While acknowledging the system's imperfections, he emphasised its role within a wider transformation programme aimed at improving customer experience, with several workstreams underway to address known issues. Ongoing collaboration with colleagues was highlighted, alongside recognition that not all users were satisfied with the service.

Reports from residents about submissions disappearing, allegedly due to a system "cleanse," were discussed. The Head of Highway Maintenance and Road Safety confirmed that a cleansing exercise had taken place, typically closing older reports that had been inspected multiple times or were no longer relevant. He clarified that closures could also occur if issues were moved to planned works or deemed not immediate safety concerns but acknowledged confusion over language and process.

The committee discussed the report's reference to "disproportionate reporting by high active users." Officers clarified that active reporting by residents was encouraged and valued, and that the phrase referred to data analysis for benchmarking and understanding usage patterns, not to discourage participation. The aim was to ensure satisfaction and usage statistics were interpreted in context, recognising that some individuals or areas might report more frequently.

The process and uptake of becoming a FixMyStreet super user were examined. Members noted that some individuals completed training but did not become active super users and requested figures on this. Officers indicated that the exact numbers would be checked and reported back, but noted a significant increase in super users, with around 220 across the authority. The need for clarity and improvement in the process and follow-up for trained super users was acknowledged.

Suggestions were made to authorise other authorities in the county to act as "super users" under Section 42 agreements, as Oxford's Street cleansing teams currently do. Officers explained that Oxford City Council's ODS operated under a legacy Section 42 agreement for maintaining unclassified roads, and that similar arrangements with other districts would require those authorities to approach the county. ODS used a slightly different version of the FixMyStreet platform, and any expansion of delegated reporting or inspection roles would depend on legal agreements and district willingness.

Cllr Mallon left the meeting at this stage.

The use of aerial mapping and the WhatThreeWords system to improve defect reporting accuracy was discussed. Officers confirmed that WhatThreeWords had been used for some time and was valuable for pinpointing locations. Ongoing work with the platform provider aimed to integrate new technologies, including mapping and geotagged photos, as part of broader efforts to enhance reporting accuracy and efficiency.

Concerns were raised about potholes being repaired multiple times, with specific examples cited. Officers acknowledged the issue, explaining that repeated repairs were sometimes necessary due to location, network usage, or the need for interim fixes before permanent solutions. Inspection rates had been increased, and different repair techniques were used depending on the situation to improve long-term outcomes.

The committee explored whether officers routinely assessed surrounding areas for additional safety-related defects when repairing known problems. Officers explained that a "find and fix" approach was used where appropriate, but repairs were prioritised based on risk and contractual criteria. Expanding the scope of repairs could impact efficiency and resources, and contractors were instructed to fix only those defects meeting intervention criteria.

A case was described where a resident's defect report was closed on FixMyStreet but resolved within 24 hours after calling the emergency line, highlighting a communications gap. Officers acknowledged the need for improved communication and stated that efforts were underway to enhance updates and explanations for

residents, including better use of FixMyStreet notifications and clearer messaging about report closures.

Cllr Thomas left the meeting at this stage.

The prioritisation process for FixMyStreet reports and reasons for delays before works were carried out were explained. Defects were triaged according to risk, with urgent hazards assigned a two-hour or 24-hour response, while most repairs fell under a 28-day contractual timeframe. Reports were inspected within ten days, and if marked for repair, the total turnaround could be up to 38 days. Not all reported defects qualified for immediate action, as repairs depended on intervention criteria and available resources.

The possibility of giving highways crews more latitude to fix additional defects noticed while on site was discussed. Officers responded that some flexibility existed for urgent or dangerous defects, but generally, crews were not given free rein due to resource constraints and risk-based policies. New methods and technologies were being explored to improve efficiency, and the contract allowed for some expansion in the size of repairs undertaken in a single visit.

Improvements to the process for submitting FixMyStreet tickets were considered, including requiring photos for certain categories. Officers explained that while photo submissions were encouraged, they could not be made mandatory for all categories due to safety concerns. Conditional requirements for photos could be explored for safer categories, and ongoing improvements were being considered, including digitalising inspection routes and enhancing communication with residents.

Cllr Baines left the meeting at this stage.

Concerns were raised about the frequency and quality of inspections, particularly in the city, and difficulties in training as a super user. Officers responded that Oxford Direct Services (ODS), under a Section 42 agreement, were responsible for inspections and maintenance in the city, working to county policies and specifications. Concerns were acknowledged and would be taken up with city colleagues, though performance monitoring of ODS was beyond the immediate remit of the meeting.

Communication with local councillors regarding major issues, such as flooding caused by a fractured county pipe, was discussed. Officers explained that ODS operated under county policies and inspection regimes, with performance managed through a legal agreement with the city. Officers agreed to follow up with city colleagues about monitoring ODS's performance and encouraged councillors to contact the head of service directly for major concerns. Specific issues would be taken away for further review and response.

The Committee **AGREED** to recommendations under the following headings:

- Explore greater "find and fix" powers, including considering a trial similar to Devon County Council's approach.

- Increase the percentage of works that are quality assured, reviewing the current 20% level.
- Set a target to increase the use of FixMyStreet as a reporting tool, as the current 25% usage was considered too low.
- Improve communication with the public about the criteria for pavement repairs, as residents often do not understand why some pavements are not fixed.
- Use FixMyStreet to update residents, especially regarding temporary repairs, and keep notifications active until permanent repairs are completed.
- Provide clarity on the process for becoming a trained super user and what happens after training.
- Consider requiring photos for certain categories of reports where it is safe and practical, to improve the quality of initial submissions.
- Consider marking additional defects with spray paint to show residents that issues have been noted, even if not immediately fixed.

47/25 COMMITTEE ACTION AND RECOMMENDATION TRACKER

(Agenda No. 9)

The Committee **NOTED** the action and recommendation tracker.

48/25 COMMITTEE FORWARD WORK PLAN

(Agenda No. 10)

The Committee **AGREED** to its work programme with the following amendments:

- To invite Adult Social Care to be the focus on the BMMR report in April
- To take a report on the new Social Value Policy after the budget in January

49/25 RESPONSES TO SCRUTINY RECOMMENDATIONS

(Agenda No. 11)

The Committee **NOTED** the Cabinet responses to the Performance and Corporate Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee reports on the Oxfordshire Strategic Plan, Hire Bike and Scooters, and Our People and Culture.

..... in the Chair

Date of signing

PERFORMANCE AND CORPORATE SERVICES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

16 January 2026

Social Value - New in-house approach.

Report by Director of Financial and Commercial Services

RECOMMENDATION

1. **The Committee is RECOMMENDED to**
 - a) Consider the report and provide recommendations to Cabinet to inform decision-making.
 - b) Recommend that Cabinet approve the Oxfordshire County Council Social Value Policy (Annex 1).
 - c) Recommend that Cabinet agree to move the council's social value approach in-house, transitioning away from third-party delivery and/or platforms, to enable a more streamlined approach that better aligns to the council's Strategic Plan 2025–2028 priorities.

Executive Summary

2. This report seeks endorsement of a new Social Value Policy that will move the council's social value approach in-house, away from third-party delivery. Subject to Scrutiny Committee comments, the policy will progress through the council's decision-making pathway, including Informal Cabinet and then Cabinet.
3. The Public Services (Social Value) Act 2012 requires contracting authorities to consider how relevant contracts might improve the economic, social and environmental wellbeing of the area, and how they will take action to achieve this. This added benefit is usually achieved through a social value clause within the contract.
4. Stakeholder feedback indicates that the current third-party approach (which assesses social value proposals and captures proxy values of social impact on behalf of OCC) has been perceived as costly and administratively burdensome, particularly for small and medium-sized enterprises, and uptake has been low. The new in-house approach removes the annual third-party cost of £19,200 (including Value Added Tax (VAT)) and will use existing Council tools, Officers and processes, requiring no new software licences.

5. The policy establishes five local social value priorities and a proportionate mechanism for applying social value in qualifying procurements, including a default 10% tender weighting for contracts above £100,000 total value, by selecting two priorities (5% each). It also strengthens contract management, transparency and annual reporting through an annual Social Value Statement.

Background Context

6. The Council seeks to maximise the wider economic, social and environmental benefits that can be delivered through procurement activity, alongside core contractual delivery. These wider benefits are commonly referred to as social value.
7. Previously the Council has used the Social Value Portal, a third-party tool used for assessment of supplier proposal and the collection of social value data. Whilst this system has enabled the development of the Council's social value way of working, OCC would like to move these operations in house to better align social value with the Council's strategic priorities.
8. The Council's Strategic Plan 2025–2028 sets out a vision for a greener, fairer and healthier Oxfordshire. The updated Social Value Policy is intended to align procurement activity to these strategic priorities and support delivery of local outcomes.
9. The approach also aligns to the Council's Climate Action Framework, the Including Everyone: Equalities, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Framework, and supports the Council's ambition to become a Marmot Place by contributing to action that reduces health inequalities.

Proposal: New Social Value Policy and In- House Operating Model

10. Approval is sought for the Oxfordshire County Council Social Value Policy (Annex 1). The policy updates the Council's way of working with suppliers by taking the social value approach in-house.

Key elements of change include:

- Removal of third- party fees associated with the current social value platform.
 - A more streamlined evaluation approach that is proportionate and focused.
 - Reduced administrative burden for contract managers and suppliers, decreasing time and cost across the procurement and contract management lifecycle.
11. The policy sets out five default local social value priorities. For each qualifying procurement, two priorities will be selected to ensure they are achievable for the supplier/sector and material impact can be measured:

1. **Early Careers Opportunities:** Create pathways for young people aged 16–24 who are not in education, employment or training (NEET) and new entrants into the workforce.
2. **Supported Employment:** Enable residents facing barriers to employment to access meaningful work, supporting a fairer and more inclusive county.
3. **Local Area Regeneration:** Invest in places and spaces, enhancing community wellbeing and supporting environmental sustainability.
4. **Youth Engagement and Support:** Inspire and empower school- aged children (5–16), ensuring they have the support and opportunities to thrive.
5. **Healthy Lives; Healthy Future:** Promote the health and wellbeing of residents, supporting both physical and mental health, and preventative approaches.

Mechanism: When and How Social Value Applies

12. For procurements with a total value above £100,000, tenders will include two selected social value priorities weighted at 5% each, providing a combined social value weighting of 10%.
13. Suppliers will be required to submit a Social Value Delivery Plan (SVDP) as part of their tender response. The SVDP will set out commitments, milestones and SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Time-bound) measures for the life of the contract. The SVDP will also set out the estimated cost of implementing the social value within the contract.
14. The policy provides defined exemptions where applying the standard weighting may not be appropriate, including where procurements are limited to voluntary, charity or social enterprise (VCSE) organisations, or where contract duration is less than 12 months.

Contract Management, Non- Compliance and Service Credits

15. Social value delivery will be monitored through regular contract management. Reporting frequency will be determined on a contract-by-contract basis, proportionate to contract value, duration and the nature of commitments.
16. Where delivery falls behind schedule, the council will agree reasonable adjustments through a Social Value Delivery Plan review and record changes through normal change control.
17. Where suppliers fail to improve following remediation, the council may apply contractual service credits. Service credits relating to social value will be capped so that they do not exceed 10% of the contract's total value. Service credits will be pooled and ring-fenced and shared across the five Social Value Priorities. Responsibility for administering and allocating pooled credits will sit with the Commercial and Procurement team.

Governance, Transparency and Reporting

18. The council will periodically review the Social Value Policy, particularly to reflect relevant changes in legislation or public procurement policy. It will also be possible to update the five criteria relating to the Council's strategic priorities to ensure that social value delivery remains current to the needs of the county.
19. To communicate progress and performance, the council will publish an annual Social Value Statement, with information gathered by a light-touch annual supplier survey completed with contract managers.

Corporate Policies and Priorities

20. The proposal supports delivery of the Strategic Plan 2025–2028 by aligning procurement and commissioning activity to local priorities that contribute to a greener, fairer and healthier Oxfordshire.
21. The proposal supports climate and sustainability ambitions through priorities that can drive environmental sustainability and local regeneration outcomes, consistent with the council's Climate Action Framework.
22. The proposal supports the Including Everyone: Equalities, Diversity and Inclusion Framework by reducing barriers to supplier participation and enabling targeted outcomes that support inclusive communities and opportunity.
23. The proposal supports the council's Marmot Place ambition by enabling procurement-led contributions to addressing the wider determinants of health, including employment, early years and healthy living interventions.

Financial Implications

24. The in-house approach removes the current annual third-party cost of £19,200 (including VAT). No new tools or software licences are required, as the new approach will use existing council systems and resources included with Commercial and Procurement redesign.
25. Any pooled service credits applied under the policy will be ring-fenced to support projects aligned to the five Social Value Priorities.

Comments checked by:
Drew Hodgson
Strategic Finance Business Partner
drew.hodgson@oxfordshire.gov.uk

Legal Implications

26. The Council has duties and responsibilities under the Public Services (Social Value) Act 2012, the Procurement Act 2023, the Health Care Services (Provider Selection Regime) Regulations 2023 and the Local Government Act 1988 when it seeks to gain social value from the award of public contracts. The Council must consider how what is being procured might improve the economic, social and environmental well-being of the area and how to secure that improvement.
27. Where the Council sets social value award criteria, the criteria must be related to the subject matter of the contract and be proportionate. The Council must have regard to the National Procurement Policy Statement which sets delivering social and economic value as a priority.
28. Under Section Local Government Act 1988, section 17 (1) The Council must not take into account non-commercial considerations in relation to its public supply or works contracts. However, by virtue of s17(11), s17(1) does not prevent the Council from exercising any function regulated by section 17 with reference to a non-commercial matter to the extent that the authority considers it necessary or expedient to do so to enable or facilitate compliance with a duty imposed on it by the Procurement Act 2023 or section 1 of the Public Services (Social Value) Act 2012.
29. The Council's Contract Procedure Rules, Rule 8.1 requires officers to consider all factors relevant to their requirement, including environmental and social considerations, including social value benefit where appropriate, so far as this is lawful.
30. The proposed policy supports compliance with the Public Services (Social Value) Act 2012 by embedding consideration of economic, social and environmental wellbeing into relevant procurements. Implementation will be undertaken in accordance with the Council's obligations under the above mentioned legislation and associated regulations and guidance, ensuring award criteria remain relevant and proportionate to the subject matter of each contract.
31. Relevant contract clauses will be prepared by Legal Services and included in contracts to ensure that all parties fully understand the new social value approach and the obligations of each party.

Comments checked by: Jayne Pringle, Principal Solicitor (Contracts)
jayne.pringle@oxfordshire.gov.uk

Staff Implications

32. Implementation will complement the recently completed Commercial and Procurement Redesign. Officers from the Commercial Excellence and Contract Management teams will support the rollout of the policy and the new way of working, including templates, guidance and proportionate assurance. This

resourcing approach also supports risk mitigation by enabling consistent application and improved support for contract managers.

33. Communications and guidance will be published and maintained via the Hive intranet platform, helping colleagues to access up-to-date information as quickly as possible.

Equality & Inclusion Implications

34. An Equalities Impact Assessment has been completed for the Social Value Policy and updated way of working (Annex 2). The assessment identifies no adverse impacts and anticipates positive impacts, including enhanced employment opportunities for residents facing barriers to work. The assessment will be reviewed in November 2027.

Sustainability Implications

35. The policy includes priorities that can support environmental sustainability and local regeneration. This complements the council's wider climate commitments and Climate Action Framework.

Risk Management

36. Key risks and mitigations include:

- Implementation risk: inconsistent application across procurements. Mitigation: rollout support through the Commercial Excellence and Contract Management teams, standard templates and guidance, wide scale comms plan and proportionate 121 assurances.
- Supplier delivery risk: suppliers over- commit or under- deliver. Mitigation: require SMART commitments within Social Value Delivery Plans, proportionate reporting, and remediation steps before using service credits.
- Measurement risk: difficulty evidencing outcomes. Mitigation: use a balanced set of qualitative and quantitative measures and consistent reporting through an annual Social Value Statement.

Consultations

37. Development of the policy has been informed by engagement with internal stakeholders, including commissioning teams for Adults and Children's services, Legal, Climate Action, Senior Policy Leads, current contract managers, and the Commercial and Procurement team.

Conclusion

38. Approval of the Social Value Policy will enable the council to deliver social value in-house, reduce barriers for suppliers, and better align procurement activity to strategic priorities. The approach is intended to improve uptake, strengthen contract management and support targeted local outcomes for Oxfordshire residents.

Annexes: Annex 1 – Draft Refresh of Social Value Policy
Annex 2 – Equalities Impact Assessment

Background papers: Nil

Other Documents:

- Our Strategic Plan 2025–2028 | Oxfordshire County Council – <https://m.oxfordshire.gov.uk/council/our-vision>
- Strategic Plan 2025–2028 (PDF) | mycouncil.oxfordshire.gov.uk – <https://mycouncil.oxfordshire.gov.uk/documents/s78513/CC251104R10%20Strategic%20Plan%20Annex%201%20OCC%20Strategic%20Plan%202025-2028.pdf>
- Carbon Neutral by 2030 / Climate Action Framework | Oxfordshire County Council – <https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/residents/environment-and-planning/energy-and-climate-change/carbon-neutral-2030>
- Equality, diversity and inclusion (Including Everyone framework) | Oxfordshire County Council – <https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/council/about-your-council/plans-performance-and-policies/equality-diversity-inclusion>
- Marmot Place Programme | Oxfordshire County Council – <https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/residents/social-and-health-care/public-health-and-wellbeing/oxfordshire-marmot-place/marmot-place-programme>
- Public Services (Social Value) Act 2012 | Legislation.gov.uk – <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2012/3>
- Procurement Act 2023 | Legislation.gov.uk – <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2023/54/contents>
- Young people not in education, employment or training (NEET), UK | Office for National Statistics – <https://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peopleinwork/unemployment/bulletins/youngpeoplenotineducationemploymentortrainingneet/latest>
- Creating a logic model for an intervention | GOV.UK – <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/evaluation-in-health-and-wellbeing-creating-a-logic-model>

Contact Officer: Richard Scarlett - HO Commercial and Procurement
richard.scarlett@oxfordshire.gov.uk

January 2026

This page is intentionally left blank

Oxfordshire County Council Social Value Policy

Commercial & Procurement Service

January 2026



**OXFORDSHIRE
COUNTY COUNCIL**

Contents

Introduction 4

What is Social Value?..... 4

 Legislative Context..... 5

Social Value Local Priorities..... 5

Social Value Mechanism..... 8

 Questions and Evaluation..... 8

 Exemptions..... 8

 Contract Management 9

 Non-Compliance 9

 Service Credits..... 9

Governance 10

Appendix 1: Social Value Delivery Plan Template..... 11

Appendix 2: Social Value Non-Delivery Calculations 12

Introduction

Oxfordshire County Council (“the Council” and “OCC”) is committed to creating a greener, fairer and healthier county. The Council recognise that every decision it makes, particularly in how it procures goods, works, and services, has the potential to deliver benefits beyond the normal delivery of the contract and financial value. These additional benefits, known as *social value*, enables the authority to strengthen the local economy, enhance the Oxfordshire ecosystem, and improve the wellbeing of communities.

This policy sets out the Councils approach to embedding social value into all relevant procurement and commissioning activities, ensuring OCC is a key partner, employer and place-shaper of choice for the county. It explains what social value means in practice and how the Council will work collaboratively with suppliers and partners to achieve it. A key aim of this policy will be to increase spending with local suppliers, which would support the local economy and job market.

Adoption of this policy will provide benefits that meet the Council’s Strategic Priorities, as detailed in the Council’s Strategic Plan 2025-2028, the Climate Action Framework and the Including Everyone: Equalities, Diversity and Inclusion (“EDI”) Framework. Additionally, social value supports the County’s ambition to become a Marmot Place by reducing health inequalities. More information about these initiatives can be found on the Council website.¹

What is Social Value?

Social value refers to any additional economic, social, or environmental benefit generated through Council activities, including the procurement of goods, works, or services from the Council’s suppliers and their supply chains. To maximise these added-value benefits and enhance current practice, OCC and its suppliers will plan how contracts and projects can deliver social value outcomes in a flexible, proportionate, and relevant manner, as outlined in this policy.

As the outputs of this policy focus on social impact, the metrics used to measure these impacts may vary. Both qualitative and quantitative measures will be used to provide a balanced assessment of the social value outcomes.

Examples include:

- **Qualitative:** case studies, testimonials, narrative reports, and stakeholder feedback.
- **Quantitative:** number of local people employed, apprenticeships created, or volunteer hours contributed.

All metrics should be SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-bound) to ensure clarity, accountability, and comparability. This approach allows the Council to capture not only the scale of delivery but also the depth and quality of the impact on communities.

¹ www.oxfordshire.gov.uk

Legislative Context

The Public Services (Social Value) Act 2012² (“the Act”) came into force in January 2013, cementing the responsibilities of a contracting authority when procuring contracts that are subject to the public procurement regulations (Procurement Act 2023³). The Act requires and encourages councils to take into account the ‘economic, social and environmental wellbeing of the relevant area’ in its procurement activity.

Social Value Local Priorities

The following 5 Social Value priorities form the default questions for all tenders at OCC. Only two criteria can be selected from the priorities to ensure Social Value is not unduly diluted and still has a material impact on our award decisions. When selecting two of the priorities, Service Areas must consider which of the criteria would be best delivered upon by their supplier base. This reasoning must be documented in the Procurement Strategy and should be tested through market engagement. Questions must be wholly related to the criteria selected and be able to demonstrate the social added value at the end of the contract term. Example questions will be included in guidance.

1. Early Careers Opportunities

Objective: Create pathways for young people, aged 16-24, currently not in education, employment or training (NEET)⁴ and new entrants into the workforce, supporting Oxfordshire’s ambition to be a place where everyone can reach their full potential.

Key aspects of this objective:

- How will the supplier provide apprenticeships, internships, graduate schemes, or work experience placements for Oxfordshire residents?
- How will the supplier ensure opportunities are accessible to those in areas of deprivation or high unemployment, as identified in community health profiles and the Marmot framework?
- Suppliers must quantify commitments, which could be done via number of individuals supported, duration of placements, or employment outcomes.

This objective supports OCC’s priorities to create opportunities for children and young people, tackle inequalities, and work with local businesses for economic and social benefit.

² [Public Services \(Social Value\) Act 2012](#)

³ [Procurement Act 2023](#)

⁴ [Young people not in education, employment or training \(NEET\), UK - Office for National Statistics](#)

2. Supported Employment

Objective: Enable Oxfordshire residents facing barriers to employment to access meaningful work, fostering a fairer and more inclusive county.

Key aspects of this objective

- How will the supplier support people with disabilities, care leavers, carers, veterans or those with health or social challenges into employment?
- What tailored training, mentoring, or support will the supplier provide throughout the life of the contract?
- Suppliers must quantify commitments with measurable outcomes such as number of supported employees, retention rates or number of hours spent with disadvantaged individuals.

This objective directly addresses OCC's commitment to tackle inequalities, support carers, and prioritise health and wellbeing for all residents.

3. Local Area Regeneration

Objective: Invest in Oxfordshire's places and spaces, enhancing community wellbeing and supporting environmental sustainability⁵.

Key aspects of this objective:

- How will the supplier contribute to the regeneration of local areas—such as improving green spaces, community facilities, or public infrastructure?
- How will the supplier support and work with partners to deliver against the objective above – augmenting or expanding existing programmes of work for greater impact?
- Will the supplier make company assets, land or buildings available for community use at or below market rate?
- Suppliers are requested to describe the scale and impact of the proposed activities, proportionate to contract value (bearing in mind this makes up 5% of the overall social value criteria).

This objective aligns with OCC's priorities to preserve and improve access to nature and green spaces, address the climate emergency, and support community resilience.

4. Youth Engagement and Support

⁵ It is expected that suppliers look to meet or exceed council objectives on improving environmental sustainability. Details on council environmental objectives can be found in the [Environment and Planning](#) pages along with supplier expectations being outlined in the [Ethical Procurement Policy](#).

Objective: Inspire and empower Oxfordshire's school aged children (aged 5-16), ensuring they have the support and opportunities to thrive.

Key aspects of this objective:

- How will the supplier engage with local schools and youth groups such as Scout or Cadet groups and local charities (e.g., career talks, STEM demonstrations, site visits, work experience or preparing for the future such as personal finance talks or interview technique)?
- How will the supplier target areas of high deprivation, as outlined on the [Oxfordshire Data Hub](#)⁶, or need such as SEND in this age bracket?
- In order to measure the engagement the supplier must provide the type of engagement and milestone goals.

This supports OCC's commitment to help children and young people reach their full potential and to tackle inequalities in education and opportunity.

5. Healthy Lives; Healthy Future

Objective: Promote the health and wellbeing of Oxfordshire residents, supporting both physical and mental health.

Key aspects of this objective

- How will the supplier support community health and wellbeing initiatives such as community activities to support mental health, support healthy lifestyle options, such as stop smoking, physical activity, substance use, healthy eating or create healthy and safe environments, such as homes, communities and workplaces.?
- How will the supplier support and work with partners, including VCSE groups based in Oxfordshire, for example through sponsorship, volunteering, mentoring related to health and wellbeing
- The supplier must outline their approach (potentially referencing theory of change and logic model⁷) and expected outcomes. Reference should be made to, areas of inequalities suppliers are able or intend to focus on. The [Oxfordshire Data Hub](#) should be used to provide accurate metrics.
- Suppliers must quantify their impact on the local area through a trackable metric in order for effective management of this objective.

This objective directly supports OCC's priorities to prioritise health and wellbeing, address health inequalities as a Marmot Place, and invest in preventative approaches and services.

⁶ This free resource is managed by Oxfordshire County Council and provides location specific information on the local Economy, Environment, Health and Social indicators.

⁷ <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/evaluation-in-health-and-wellbeing-creating-a-logic-model>

Social Value Mechanism

When procuring contracts above £100,000 in total value, Council contracts will be required to include two criteria from the five listed priorities above, each weighted at 5%, giving a combined social value weighting in a tender of 10%.

Questions and Evaluation

Procurement leads will work with service areas to choose the priorities best suited to their supplier base and design questions that suppliers must answer in their bid. These will be assessed in the same manner as quality questions in the supplier bid.

As part of their response suppliers will be required to produce a Social Value Delivery Plan (SVDP) which outlines how the supplier will meet the social value priorities selected by the Council. This should include a timeline of actions that will be taken, including key milestones, how these actions will be delivered and what SMART metrics will be used to measure the success of the implementation throughout the lifetime of the contract. Upon contract award this plan will be clarified with the supplier within the implementation phase of the contract.

A template for a SVDP can be found in Appendix 2.

Exemptions

In certain circumstances, applying the standard 10% social value weighting will not be appropriate. Commercial & Procurement Leads may deem (in consultation with the service) Social Value inappropriate for a procurement due to one of the below scenarios:

- i. The project is seeking quotes solely from Voluntary, Charity, or Social Enterprise (VCSE) organisations who, by their nature, deliver inherent social value to the local communities that they serve.
- ii. The planned contract duration is less than 12-months which limits the opportunity to deliver social value initiatives. In this situation there will be no expectation for suppliers to deliver incremental social value however we would still take a supplier's inherent social value into account during the evaluation process.

Inherent social value is defined as “the natural, positive contribution that micro, small, and medium sized enterprises, as well as VCSEs, make to their local communities simply by operating as they are. This value arises from their embeddedness in the local economy, their support for local employment, and their role in sustaining community networks — benefits that cannot be replicated solely through additional financial investment.”

Unlike larger organisations, these businesses and VCSEs are often deeply rooted in their communities and already deliver social benefits through their everyday activities. Therefore, they will not always be expected to provide additional commitments on social value within their contracts, as their core operations inherently generate these positive outcomes.

For short term contracts (less than 12 months in length) social value will still be expected from a supplier in line with the stated priority. However, due to the short delivery window incremental delivery is not expected, meaning that a suppliers can deliver their social value at any point in the

contract. This also extends to call of contracts to ensure that suppliers do not overcommit to social value initiatives. For short term contracts a supplier's inherent social value will be taken into account.

The governance process for approving any exemptions is through the existing Commercial Strategy template and approvals. Social Value will be considered on a case-by-case basis for each project. Even in cases where the above exemptions apply, it is OCC's legal and regulatory duty to maximise value for Oxfordshire residents, our environment, and our economy. In the case of social value, this extends to the qualitative impact and suppliers offering additional value beyond their inherent social value will score more highly in the evaluation process.

Contract Management

Assessment of social value delivery will be performed as part of regular contract management with assistance from the Commercial & Procurement service in line with OCC's Contract & Supplier Management Framework.

Contract managers should regularly review the suppliers SVDP to ensure that the deliverables are reasonable and on track, with any issues from a supplier being raised to the contract manager in the first instance.

The frequency of reporting will be determined by the contract manager and can vary depending on the spend, length of contract or the nature of the Social Value commitments. For example, reporting may be annual, quarterly or monthly.

Non-Compliance

It is recognised that unlike deliverables as part of the contract specification social value may not be delivered at regular intervals. This may be due to funding cycles, practical limitations (such as school leavers being available around September every year) and aspects outside of a supplier's control. Suppliers will be advised through the tender documentation to factor this into their SVDP.

Should a supplier fall behind their agreed schedule of delivery or is unable to complete a delivery due to change in circumstances a meeting should be held promptly with the relevant contract manager and Commercial & Procurement lead to complete a SVDP review. Minor reasonable adjustments to the deliverables should be considered and made where appropriate, aiming to stay within the original social value priority where possible. This review should be documented through the normal contract change control process to capture the new agreed deliverables.

In the case that suppliers fail to improve following a SVDP review, the decision may be made by Commercial & Procurement to apply the contractual service credits. The value of these service credits will be assessed on a case-by-case basis to ensure that the value is proportional to the contract value and will be set as part of the tender exercise.

OCC reserves the right to audit any social value deliverables throughout and at the end of a contract to ensure that social value has been delivered to the agreed standard (as outlined in the SVDP).

Service Credits

Service credits will be applied to suppliers if there is clear evidence that they have not delivered the agreed social value after appropriate remediation steps, or if they have been found, through audit, to report their social value delivery inaccurately.

The value of service credits will be fairly matched to the extent of the supplier's non-delivery, and will be determined individually for each situation. These values will be calculated using the approach set out in Appendix 2 of this document, and in every case, the total amount of service credits relating to social value will not exceed 10% of the contract's total value.

All service credits will be ringfenced and shared equally across the five Social Value Priorities. The funds from these credits will be used for projects proposed by service areas, providing those projects directly support a social value priority.

Governance

Oxfordshire County Council will periodically review this Social Value Policy in line with any relevant changes in legislation or public procurement policy.

To further communicate this Policy's performance and progress to all stakeholders, the Council will release an annual Social Value Statement to outline key areas of focus, future targets, successes and to communicate key messages to staff, partners, suppliers and other locally based organisations impacted by the Council's social value performance.

As part of the social value commitment undertaken by OCC and the supplier, an annual survey will be sent out to suppliers, completed with the contract manager. This will allow the Council to obtain accurate and current information for the Social Value Statement.

Appendix 1: Social Value Delivery Plan Template

Below is an example of a Social Value Delivery Plan Template (SVDP) which includes key elements which need to be detailed by the supplier. Whilst it is encouraged to use the standardised template for bidding, suppliers may wish to provide this Delivery Plan in another format for contract management (such as Excel or a dashboard)

Ref	Priority	Action	By When?	Impact Measure	Committed Value (£)
1	Which of OCC's Social Value Priorities are you responding to?	What specific action(s) will you be taking?	What milestones will exist / when will you complete your action?	How will we measure the successful social impact you will have through delivery of this action(s)?	Please outline how much this action will cost over the life of the contract.
2					
3					
4					

Appendix 2: Social Value Non-Delivery Calculations

For each contract two social value priorities should be selected, these are weighted at equal importance, 5% each. If both priorities are fully delivered, no service credits are due. If there is partial or non-delivery, each social value priority will be calculated separately.

The supplier provided metric (from the SVDP) will be used to measure the delivery percentage for each priority.

Calculation Equation

$$\text{Service Credit (£)} = \text{Agreed Action Value} \times (1 - \text{Delivery \%})$$

Where:

Agreed Action Value = The cost/value agreed in the SVDP.

Delivery % = Delivered Value ÷ Promised Value × 100.

(1 – Delivery %) = Proportion of undelivered commitment.

Worked Example

Contract Value: £1,000,000

80% delivery on apprenticeships and 60% delivery on community health. % gained from contract management metrics and metrics provided by the supplier.

Actions and Agreed Values from SVDP:

Social value action	Agreed value (£)
Apprenticeships	£12,000
Community health workshops	£8,000
	Total £20,000

Delivery Performance:

Action	Promised	Delivered	Delivery %	Non-Delivery %	Service credit (£)
Apprenticeships	10	8	80%	20%	20% of £12,000 = £2,400
Community health workshops	200 hrs	120 hrs	60%	40%	40% of £8,000 = £3,200
					Total Service Credit Due: £5,600



Oxfordshire County Council Equalities Impact Assessment

Social Value Policy

11/11/25

Contents

Section 1: Summary details..... 3

Section 2: Detail of proposal..... 4

Section 3: Impact Assessment - Protected Characteristics..... 7

Section 3: Impact Assessment - Additional Community Impacts 8

Section 3: Impact Assessment - Additional Wider Impacts 9

Section 4: Review 10

Section 1: Summary details

Directorate and Service Area	Commercial and Procurement
What is being assessed (e.g. name of policy, procedure, project, service or proposed service change).	New Social Value Policy and way of working
Is this a new or existing function or policy?	Existing policy, with major update
Summary of assessment Briefly summarise the policy or proposed service change. Summarise possible impacts. Does the proposal bias, discriminate or unfairly disadvantage individuals or groups within the community? (following completion of the assessment).	<p>The new social value policy updates our way of working with suppliers by taking our social value offering in house. This allows OCC to better customise its social value offering to better suit its corporate objectives and deliver the best for Oxfordshire residents.</p> <p>Key aspects of change include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Removal of fees to use Social Value Portal Platform -More streamlined evaluation approach -Removal of admin for contract managers and suppliers, decreasing admin time and cost of procurement involvement.
Completed By	Max Button
Authorised By	Richard Scarlett
Date of Assessment	11/11/25

Section 2: Detail of proposal

<p>Context / Background</p> <p>Briefly summarise the background to the policy or proposed service change, including reasons for any changes from previous versions.</p>	<p>The social value mechanism will be</p> <p>The measure we would like suppliers to deliver on are as follows:</p> <p>Early Careers Opportunities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Objective: Create pathways for young people, aged 16-24, currently not in education, employment or training (NEET) and new entrants into the workforce, supporting Oxfordshire's ambition to be a place where everyone can reach their full potential. <p>Supported Employment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Objective: Enable Oxfordshire residents facing barriers to employment to access meaningful work, fostering a fairer and more inclusive county. <p>Local Area Regeneration</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Objective: Invest in Oxfordshire's places and spaces, enhancing community wellbeing and supporting environmental sustainability. <p>Youth Engagement and Support</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Objective: Inspire and empower Oxfordshire's school aged children (aged 5-16), ensuring they have the support and opportunities to thrive.
--	--

	<p>Healthy Lives; Healthy Future</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Objective: Promote the health and wellbeing of Oxfordshire residents, supporting both physical and mental health.
<p>Proposals</p> <p>Explain the detail of the proposals, including why this has been decided as the best course of action.</p>	<p>Key aspects of change include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Removal of fees to use Social Value Portal Platform -More streamlined evaluation approach -Removal of admin for contract managers and suppliers, decreasing admin time and cost of procurement involvement.
<p>Evidence / Intelligence</p> <p>List and explain any data, consultation outcomes, research findings, feedback from service users and stakeholders etc, that supports your proposals and can help to inform the judgements you make about potential impact on different individuals, communities</p>	<p>Feedback from internal and external stakeholders identified the need to change our approach, as many found the existing social value approach too onerous and costly (especially for SMEs).</p> <p>Internal stakeholders found the online platform difficult to use and therefore uptake was low. Only 53 of our suppliers are/ or have been on the portal which is a very small in comparison to our total supplier base.</p>

or groups and our ability to deliver our climate commitments.	
Alternatives considered / rejected Summarise any other approaches that have been considered in developing the policy or proposed service change, and the reasons why these were not adopted. This could include reasons why doing nothing is not an option.	We have previously worked with a third party which we decided against for this update due to the complexity of agreements, added cost and lack of flexibility when considering social value deliverables.

Section 3: Impact Assessment - Protected Characteristics

Protected Characteristic	No Impact	Positive	Negative	Description of Impact	Any actions or mitigation to reduce negative impacts	Action owner* (*Job Title, Organisation)	Timescale and monitoring arrangements
Age	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Disability	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Enhanced employment opportunities through SV measures			
Gender Reassignment	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Marriage & Civil Partnership	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Pregnancy & Maternity	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Race	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Sex	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Sexual Orientation	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Religion or Belief	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				

Section 3: Impact Assessment - Additional Community Impacts

Additional community impacts	No Impact	Positive	Negative	Description of impact	Any actions or mitigation to reduce negative impacts	Action owner (*Job Title, Organisation)	Timescale and monitoring arrangements
Rural communities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Armed Forces	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Carers	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Areas of deprivation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				

Section 3: Impact Assessment - Additional Wider Impacts

Additional Wider Impacts	No Impact	Positive	Negative	Description of Impact	Any actions or mitigation to reduce negative impacts	Action owner* (*Job Title, Organisation)	Timescale and monitoring arrangements
Staff	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Other Council Services	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Providers	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Social Value ¹	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Overhaul of SV measures to ensure ease of delivery for supplier and better aligned outcomes to OCC strategic priorities.			

¹ If the Public Services (Social Value) Act 2012 applies to this proposal, please summarise here how you have considered how the contract might improve the economic, social, and environmental well-being of the relevant area

Section 4: Review

Where bias, negative impact or disadvantage is identified, the proposal and/or implementation can be adapted or changed; meaning there is a need for regular review. This review may also be needed to reflect additional data and evidence for a fuller assessment (proportionate to the decision in question). Please state the agreed review timescale for the identified impacts of the policy implementation or service change.

Review Date	November 2027
Person Responsible for Review	Max Button
Authorised By	Richard Scarlett

Recommendation Tracker

Performance & Corporate Services Overview & Scrutiny Committee

Councillor Glynis Phillips, Chair | Tom Hudson, Principal Scrutiny Officer, tom.hudson@oxfordshire.gov.uk

The action and recommendation tracker enables the Committee to monitor progress against agreed actions and recommendations. The tracker is updated with the actions and recommendations agreed at each meeting. Once an action or recommendation has been completed or fully implemented, it will be shaded green and reported into the next meeting of the Committee, after which it will be removed from the tracker.

KEY	Due to Cabinet	Presented to Cabinet	Complete
------------	-----------------------	-----------------------------	-----------------

Meeting date	Item	Recommendation	Lead	Update/response
12-Sept-25	BMMR – CEF Focus	That in its forthcoming Youth Strategy the Cabinet should ensure a more equitable distribution of voluntary sector youth services, particularly making sure that funding is allocated based on need rather than simply supporting existing services.	Lisa Lyons	Sent to Cabinet on 18-Nov-25
05-Dec-25	Devolution	1. That the Leader seeks agreement from other Councils to list append a list of member councils at the bottom of the Expression of Interest letter to the Secretary of State and Cabinet amends its report to detail	Kim Sawyer	Partially Accepted See response in agenda item 9

Recommendation Tracker
Performance & Corporate Services Overview & Scrutiny Committee

KEY	Due to Cabinet	Presented to Cabinet	Complete
-----	----------------	----------------------	----------

Meeting date	Item	Recommendation	Lead	Update/response
Page 52		the names of the Councils who will form the Devolution Board.		
		2. That the Cabinet amends its report to ensure consistency across the report and Expression of interest letter of the significant benefits accruing from devolution.		Accepted See response in agenda item 9
		3. That the Leader seeks clarity from partners over how stakeholders - including elected members, businesses, and the public – will be informed of outcomes and progress relating to devolution.		Accepted See response in agenda item 9
		4. That the Cabinet recognises the high degree of uncertainty within the devolution process for staff, businesses and other key stakeholders and commits to clarifying details as soon as they are announced.		Accepted See response in agenda item 9

Action Tracker

Performance & Corporate Services Overview & Scrutiny Committee

Councillor Glynis Phillips, Chair | Tom Hudson, Principal Scrutiny Officer, tom.hudson@oxfordshire.gov.uk

The action and recommendation tracker enables the Committee to monitor progress against agreed actions and recommendations. The tracker is updated with the actions and recommendations agreed at each meeting. Once an action or recommendation has been completed or fully implemented, it will be shaded green and reported into the next meeting of the Committee, after which it will be removed from the tracker.

KEY	Delayed	In progress	Complete
-----	---------	-------------	----------

Meeting date	Item	Action	Lead	Update/response
There are no outstanding action items.				

Recommendation Update Tracker

Performance & Corporate Services Overview & Scrutiny Committee

Councillor Glynis Phillips, Chair | Tom Hudson, Principal Scrutiny Officer, tom.hudson@oxfordshire.gov.uk

The recommendation update tracker enables the Committee to monitor progress accepted recommendations. The tracker is updated with recommendations accepted by Cabinet. Once a recommendation has been updated, it will be shaded green and reported into the next meeting of the Committee, after which it will be removed from the tracker. If the recommendation will be update in the form of a separate item, it will be shaded yellow.

KEY	Update Pending	Update in Item	Updated
-----	----------------	----------------	---------

Cabinet Response Date	Item	Lead	Update
25-Feb-25	Commercial Strategy Update	Ian Dyson	Report scheduled for April
25-Feb-25	Community Asset Transfer Policy	Vic Kurzeja; Michael Smedley	Update Pending
18-Nov-25	Hire Bike & Scooter	Paul Fermer	Update Pending
18-Nov-25	Our People and Culture Strategy	Cherie Cuthbertson	Update Pending
21-Oct-25	Oxfordshire Strategic Plan	Susannah Wintersgill	Update Pending

Work Programme

Performance and Corporate Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Councillor Glynis Phillips, Chair | Tom Hudson, Scrutiny Manager
tom.hudson@oxfordshire.gov.uk

Topic	Relevant strategic priorities	Purpose	Type	Lead Presenters
16 January 2026				
Budget Proposals (all members invited)	Underpins all	To consider the robustness and suitability of the Council's draft budget.	Overview	All Cabinet members and directors
Social Value	All	To comment on the draft of the new Social Value policy	Overview	Cllr Levy, Ian Dyson
17 April 2026				
Business Management Monitoring Report, with a focus on Adult Social Care	All	To review performance, assess progress against strategic priorities, and hold decision-makers accountable for effective service delivery and resource use. The review will take a focused look at Adult Social Care	Scrutiny	Cllr Leffman; Cllr Levy; Cllr Bearder; Karen Fuller
Commercial Strategy Progress Update	Underpins all	To review the progress of the Council's Commercial Strategy	Scrutiny	Cllr Higgins; Cllr Levy; Lorna Baxter; Ian Dyson
AI benefits	Underpins all	To review the Council's use of AI: its cost, its usage, the mitigations against dangers, the monitoring	Overview	Cllr Fawcett; Lorna Baxter; Other leads to be confirmed



		of value. An in-depth look at the use of AI within the customer service centre is requested.		
--	--	--	--	--

Sub-groups				
Name	Relevant strategic priorities	Description	Outcomes	Members
There are currently no sub-groups				

Briefings/Other					
Date	Topic	Relevant strategic priorities	Description	Outcomes	Presenters
There are no scheduled member briefings					

This page is intentionally left blank

Overview & Scrutiny Recommendation Response Pro forma

Under section 9FE of the Local Government Act 2000, Overview and Scrutiny Committees must require the Cabinet or local authority to respond to a report or recommendations made thereto by an Overview and Scrutiny Committee. Such a response must be provided within two months from the date on which it is requested¹ and, if the report or recommendations in questions were published, the response also must be so.

This template provides a structure which respondents are encouraged to use. However, respondents are welcome to depart from the suggested structure provided the same information is included in a response. The usual way to publish a response is to include it in the agenda of a meeting of the body to which the report or recommendations were addressed.

Issue: **Devolution**

Lead Cabinet Member(s): **Cllr Liz Leffman, Leader of the Council**

Date response requested:² **09 December 2025**

Response to report:

Enter text here.

¹ Date of the meeting at which report/recommendations were received

² Date of the meeting at which report/recommendations were received

Overview & Scrutiny Recommendation Response Pro forma

Response to recommendations

Recommendation	Accepted, rejected or partially accepted	Proposed action (if different to that recommended) and indicative timescale (unless rejected)
1. That the Leader seeks agreement from other Councils to list append a list of member councils at the bottom of the Expression of Interest letter to the Secretary of State and Cabinet amends its report to detail the names of the Councils who will form the Devolution Board.	Partially accepted	<p>The Cabinet report has been amended to reference those Councils signing the expression of interest.</p> <p>On the basis that other Councils have already signed off the existing Expression of Interest letter, it would be necessary those Councils to re-agree any amendment and so will not be pursued. However, the Leader will seek to ensure there is greater clarity over membership in future joint communications.</p>
2. That the Cabinet amends its report to ensure consistency across the report and Expression of interest letter of the significant benefits accruing from devolution.	Accepted	The Cabinet report has been amended to make the changes requested at the Scrutiny meeting.
3. That the Leader seeks clarity from partners over how stakeholders - including elected members, businesses, and the public – will be informed of outcomes and progress relating to devolution.	Accepted	<p>Regular updates will be provided to members through member briefings and Scrutiny attendance, as has been done in advance of decisions being made by Cabinet.</p> <p>A communications strategy is being developed to inform stakeholders how they will be kept up to date with progress towards devolution.</p>

Overview & Scrutiny Recommendation Response Pro forma

4. That the Cabinet recognises the high degree of uncertainty within the devolution process for staff, businesses and other key stakeholders and commits to clarifying details as soon as they are announced.	Accepted	The Cabinet recognises the importance of its decisions to the staff, businesses and other stakeholders and commits to being open and transparent regarding its decisions.
--	----------	---

This page is intentionally left blank