

## ***Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care***

***Tuesday, 19 September 2023 at 9.00 am  
Room 3 - County Hall, New Road, Oxford OX1 1ND***

Please note that due to guidelines imposed on social distancing by the Government the meeting will be held virtually.

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

### ***Items for Decision***

The items for decision under individual Cabinet Members' delegated powers are listed overleaf, with indicative timings, and the related reports are attached. Decisions taken will become effective at the end of the working day on Tuesday 26 September 2023 unless called in by that date for review by the appropriate Scrutiny Committee.

Copies of the reports are circulated (by e-mail) to all members of the County Council.

### **These proceedings are open to the public**



Martin Reeves  
Chief Executive

September 2023

*Committee Officer:*                    **Committee Services**  
*E-Mail:* [committeesdemocraticservices@oxfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:committeesdemocraticservices@oxfordshire.gov.uk)

*Note:*    *Date of next meeting: 17 October 2023*

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

# Items for Decision

## 1. Declarations of Interest

## 2. Questions from County Councillors

Any county councillor may, by giving notice to the Proper Officer by 9 am two working days before the meeting, ask a question on any matter in respect of the Cabinet Member's delegated powers.

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

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

## 3. Petitions and Public Address

## 4. Equipment provision and installation (Pages 1 - 4)

*Forward Plan Ref: 2023/211*

*Contact: Ian Bottomley, Lead Commissioner – Age Well,  
[ian.bottomley@oxfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:ian.bottomley@oxfordshire.gov.uk)*

Report by Corporate Director: Adult Social Care (**CMDASC4**).

Statutory provision of equipment funded by the Council, ICB and NHS provider organisations.

**The Cabinet Member is RECOMMENDED to approve the extension of the Integrated Community Equipment (ICE) and Telecare service for a further three years.**

## 5. Extension of Carer Support Service Contract with Action For Carers Oxfordshire (Pages 5 - 18)

*Forward Plan Ref: 2023/212*

*Contact: Ian Bottomley, Lead Commissioner – Age Well,  
[ian.bottomley@oxfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:ian.bottomley@oxfordshire.gov.uk)*

Report by Corporate Director: Adult Social Care (**CMDASC5**).

Statutory provision of support to unpaid carer - support contract.

**The Cabinet Member is RECOMMENDED to**

- a) **Agree that the Carer Support Service contract is extended for two years from 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2026. Scope for service improvements have been identified and Commissioners will work with the Provider to deliver these.**
- b) **Agree that there should be a further review of the scope, purpose and amounts that Oxfordshire County Council and BOB Integrated Care Board commits in Carers' Personal Budgets as a separate exercise. Further recommendations will be reviewed in the Adult Social Care Directorate Leadership Team and Council and Integrated Care Board Joint Commissioning Executive and agreed for implementation from April 2024 in line with each organisation's scheme of delegation.**

**6. Home Improvement Agency Contract for SODC/VWHDC (Pages 19 - 24)**

*Forward Plan Ref: 2023/209*

Contact: Ian Bottomley, Lead Commissioner – Age Well,  
[ian.bottomley@oxfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:ian.bottomley@oxfordshire.gov.uk)

Report by Corporate Director: Adult Social Care (**CMDASC6**).

Provision of statutory service to implement Disabled Facilities Grant in South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse DCs.

**The Cabinet Member is RECOMMENDED to**

- (a) **Approve the contract award following the procurement of a new provider for the provision of Home Improvement Agency (HIA) service in South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse District Councils. The service contract is between the Oxfordshire County Council (the council), South Oxfordshire District Council (SODC) and Vale of White Horse District Council (VWHDC) (as joint purchasers) and the provider.**
- (b) **Note that the purchasing obligations and rights in the contract for the new provider of the Home Improvement Agency in South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse will be novated over to SODC from the council on 01 October 2023 at which point the Grant Funding Agreement (partnership agreement) will cover the council's contributions to fund the service.**
- (c) **Approve the council entering the funding and partnership agreement with SODC and VWHDC for the provision of HIA in those district council areas following novation of the service contract.**

**7. Partnership agreement with CDC, Oxford City and WODC for provision of Home Improvement Agency (Pages 25 - 30)**

*Forward Plan Ref: 2023/208*

Contact: Ian Bottomley, Lead Commissioner – Age Well,  
[ian.bottomley@oxfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:ian.bottomley@oxfordshire.gov.uk)

Report by Corporate Director: Adult Social Care (**CMDASC7**).

Statutory service to implement Disabled Facilities Grant in specified districts in Oxfordshire.

**The Cabinet Member is RECOMMENDED to approve the individual funding partnership agreements with Oxfordshire County Council (the council) and Cherwell District Council (CDC), Oxford City Council (OCC) and West Oxfordshire District Council (WODC) for the provision of Home Improvement Agency (HIA).**

## **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.

**Divisions Affected – N/A**

## **CABINET MEMBER FOR ADULT SOCIAL CARE**

**19 September 2023**

### **Equipment Provision and Installation.**

#### **Report by Corporate Director for Adult Services**

#### **RECOMMENDATION**

1. **The Cabinet Member is RECOMMENDED to** approve the extension of the Integrated Community Equipment (ICE) and Telecare service for a further three years.

#### **Executive Summary**

2. The Integrated Community Equipment and Telecare service is a statutory provision of equipment funded by Oxfordshire County Council (the council), Integrated Care Board (ICB) and NHS provider organisations. The council, Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West Integrated Care Board, Oxford Health NHS Foundation Trust and Oxford University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust are purchasing parties to the service contract.
3. The contract for the ICE and Telecare service is for four years with an option to extend for up to a further three years. The council and partners who make up the consortium have agreed to invoke the option to extend for a further three years.

#### **Exempt Information**

4. Not applicable.

#### **Background**

5. The ICE and Telecare service provides the gateway to independence, dignity, and self-esteem through the provision of prescribed equipment and assistive technology. The service promotes and enables a person to remain healthy, safe and maintain their independence. The service reduces pressures on health and social care and facilitates discharge from hospital.

6. NRS Healthcare is the current provider delivering ICE and Telecare service. The contract was awarded and commenced 01 April 2019 following the council's procurement process. The contract length is four years with an option to extend up to a further three years.
7. The ICE service provides a statutory service (Care Act 2014, the Children's and Families Act 2014, and the Health and Social Care Act 2012/2022) for children and adults.
  - Purchase new equipment and delivers it to Residents residing in Oxfordshire.
  - Maintains a pool of equipment in the community.
  - Recovers and recycles equipment as appropriate
  - Decommissions and disposes equipment that is no longer fit for purpose.
8. The Telecare part of the service relates to supply, installation of sensors, servicing, and emergency call outs relating to the repair or replacement of telecare equipment.
9. NRS Healthcare is expected to collaborate with the provider for the Telecare and Responder service. The Telecare part of the service is expected to comply to TEC Services Association (TSA) standards.

10. **Decision table**

<b>Board</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Decision</b>
Adult Social Care Directorate Leadership Team	20 July 2022	Agreed
Key decision at Cabinet	19 September 2023	

**Corporate Policies and Priorities**

11. The ICE and Telecare service aligns with the following local priorities
  - a. Oxfordshire County Council's Corporate Plan 2023-2025 includes prioritising the health and wellbeing of residents, support carers and social care system, and partnership working.
  - b. The Oxfordshire Way.
  - c. Oxfordshire Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2018-2023
  - d. Better Care Fund (BCF)

**Financial Implications**

12. The contract allows the service provider NRS, to request an annual inflation uplift in line with CPI. This can be applied to the activity part of the contract meaning equipment delivery and collection. In addition to this, there is a common understanding within the sector that equipment is provided at cost. External factors determine the cost of actual equipment sourced by NRS.



13. The agreed uplift for the ICE and Telecare service for 2023/24 is:

- 5.8% on activity
- 5.36% on equipment

Comments check by:

Thomas James, Finance Business Partner (Adults & Public Health),  
Thomas.James@oxfordshire.gov.uk

## **Legal Implications**

14. The ICE and Telecare service contract includes an option (as advertised in the original tender) for the consortium partners to extend it for a further three years. The proposed extension is therefore lawful under the Public Contract Regulations 2015 (as amended).

Comments checked by:

Jonathan Pool, Solicitor, Jonathan.Pool@oxfordshire.gov.uk

## **Staff Implications**

15. An independent provider delivers the ICE and Telecare service. This is an extension of the current contract, therefore, there is no new impact on the council's workforce as a result of the recommendation.

## **Equality & Inclusion Implications**

16. The equality and inclusion implications have been considered. The provision of ICE and Telecare service supports people of all ages, both children and adults, with protected characteristics who meet the required criteria.

## **Sustainability Implications**

17. The ICE and Telecare service aligns with Oxfordshire County Council strategic plan 2022 – 2025. This sets out the vision to lead positive change by working in partnership to make Oxfordshire a greener, fairer, and healthier county.

18. The service provider is expected to work towards reducing emissions in relation to their fleet of vehicles and Oxford's Zero Emission Zone (ZEZ).

19. The recruitment for staff to meet the service needs attracts local workforce. The contract includes a recycling programme for appropriate equipment.

## Risk Management

20. The ICE service is a statutory requirement and the contract for the ICE and Telecare service includes an agreed specification for the delivery and expectations of the service. Any changes to the service delivery within the specification would need to be agreed between the service provider, and the council and partners to the Consortium. Oxford Health NHS FT and Oxford University Hospitals NHS FT have agreed to the recommended extension.
21. There are minimal risks to the recommendation as these are mitigated through business continuity plans, partnership working and contract management.
22. Not agreeing to the recommendations may have a negative impact on the provision and delivery of services which are a statutory requirement. There is a risk of people who may be vulnerable not being able to access appropriate equipment to help them maintain their independence, health, and wellbeing.

## Consultations

23. As the ICES and Telecare service is commissioned by the council and four partners who make up the consortium, we engaged with professionals to gather their views on the service as developing this recommendation.

NAME

Karen Fuller

Annex: Nil.

Background papers: Nil

Contact Officer: Ian Bottomley, Lead Commissioner – Age Contact  
[ian.bottomley@oxfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:ian.bottomley@oxfordshire.gov.uk)  
 07532 132975

September 2023

**Divisions Affected – N/A**

**DELEGATED DECISIONS FOR CABINET MEMBER FOR  
ADULT SOCIAL CARE  
19 SEPTEMBER 2023**

**EXTENSION OF CARER SUPPORT SERVICE CONTRACT WITH  
ACTION FOR CARERS OXFORDSHIRE**

**Report by Interim Corporate Director of Adult Social Care**

**RECOMMENDATION**

1. **The Cabinet Member is RECOMMENDED to**
  - a) Agree that the Carer Support Service contract is extended for two years from 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2026. Scope for service improvements have been identified and Commissioners will work with the Provider to deliver these.
  - b) Agree that there should be a further review of the scope, purpose and amounts that Oxfordshire County Council and BOB Integrated Care Board commits in Carers' Personal Budgets as a separate exercise. Further recommendations will be reviewed in the Adult Social Care Directorate Leadership Team and Council and Integrated Care Board Joint Commissioning Executive and agreed for implementation from April 2024 in line with each organisation's scheme of delegation.

**Executive Summary**

2. The Carer Support Service (branded Carers Oxfordshire) is provided by Action for Carers Oxfordshire with a sub-contract with Rethink Mental Illness. The service is funded by Oxfordshire County Council (the council) and Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West Integrated Care Board (ICB). The contract is for three years plus a possible further two years extension. The first three years expire on 31 March 2024. A decision is required about whether the contract is extended. This paper provides a review of the service covering cost, demand, quality, strategic priorities, followed by options for service provision from 1 April 2024.
3. The review concludes that although there are some areas where improvement is required, the service is performing well, and the provider is engaged in the strategic priorities for carers.

4. Carers told us in the review that this service is extremely helpful. For example: *“Prior to having this assessment and support my focus was on my son who I care for. After having this assessment and support it has opened up many opportunities for me to start focussing on myself. Pointed into directions of additional support that I wasn’t aware of, given me a more positive outlook. A lot of the facilities on offer aren’t common knowledge, my caring role is fairly isolated due to my sons needs so having this assessment and support is really helpful for myself and my son.”*<sup>1</sup>
  
5. The council and ICB as joint funders of the service contract are both facing significant financial pressures in the period 2023-25. Any decision to extend the contract must recognise these pressures and seek to mitigate them where possible. Our conclusion from the review is that the service should continue, should address the improvement objectives set out below and continue to underpin the newly developed All-age Unpaid Carers Strategy 2023-26 for Oxfordshire. However, there may be opportunities to review the operation of the Carers personal budgets which are aligned to the service. These options are considered below.

**Decision table**

<b>Board</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Decision</b>
Joint Commissioning Executive	10 August 2023	Agreed
Adult Social Care Directorate Leadership Team	14 August 2023	Agreed
Key decision at Cabinet	19 September 2023	

**Contract details**

**Introduction**

6. An unpaid carer is a child, young person or adult who cares for a family member or friend who could not cope without that support, due to ill-health, frailty, disability, a mental health condition or an addiction. Many who provide unpaid care to a family member or friend do not identify themselves as an ‘unpaid carer’ but rather as a spouse/partner/son/daughter/friend. Sometimes the person being cared for does not wish to recognise that they are being cared for, which is difficult and frustrating for the carer who in turn may not be recognised as an unpaid carer. The term ‘unpaid carer’ is not about labelling people but describing what they do to help them access help and support.
  
7. Issues of inequality leading to poor health outcomes and additional financial pressures are a daily experience of unpaid carers. Caring has been announced as being a social determinant of health recently by Public Health England.

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<sup>1</sup> Carer response from Carers Oxfordshire feedback forms (anonymous)

8. According to Carers UK, unpaid carers in England and Wales contribute £445 million to the economy in England and Wales every day, which is £162 billion per year.<sup>2</sup>

**Background**

9. The council and NHS are responsible for the provision of information, advice and support to carers under the Care Act 2014.
10. In 2020, a carer pathway review was held, and a new design was co-produced. This included listening and stakeholder events with carers, localities teams and operational colleagues, voluntary and community sector organisations etc., and a co-design group with carers. The outcome was that the funding from the council and the then Oxfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group (OCCG) should be pooled, and a specialist carer support service be commissioned, with changes to the model for carer’s payments.
11. The Carer Support Service was commissioned and following a competitive tender process, the contract was awarded to Action for Carers Oxfordshire (AfCO). The contract commenced on 1 April 2021 and Action for Carers Oxfordshire deliver the service in partnership with Rethink Mental Illness. The service is branded Carers Oxfordshire.
12. The contract is for three years and is due to expire on 31 March 2024. There is an option to extend for a further two years.

**Contract value**

13. The Carer Support Service is funded jointly from the Age Well pooled budget by the council and the ICB.
14. The contract value is £837,302 per year. The council funds £428,824pa and the remainder is funded by ICB. At the time the finances for the contract were being identified, OCCG, as was, had a certain level of funding available. During 2020-21, OCCG reduced the funding by £6,000 which meant that the contract had a shortfall of £6,000. Unfortunately, this matter was not resolved at the time and the funding remains unidentified. To date it has been covered by ICB. It is noted that this funding is no longer available. It is proposed that the shortfall is covered by efficiencies from within the carer personal budget line.
15. In April 2023, the council also awarded AfCo with an additional one-off £100,000 from the Better Care Fund for carer short breaks via a contract variation.

<b>Year</b>	<b>Dates</b>	<b>Value</b>	<b>BCF</b>
Year 1	1 April 2021 to 31 March 2022	£837,302	£0
Year 2	1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023	£837,302	£0
Year 3	1 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024	£837,302	£100,000

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<sup>2</sup> [Unpaid care in England and Wales valued at £445 million per day | Carers UK](#)

16. The council and ICB also fund the carer payments (personal budgets). Following a carer assessment, carers can be given up to £300 in any 12-month period. The budget for carer payments is £525,250pa split equally between the council and ICB. The spend has been as follows:

Year	Dates	Total budget	Total spend
Year 1	1 April 2021 to 31 March 2022	£525,250	£478,021
Year 2	1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023	£525,250	£530,382
Year 3	1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024	£525,250	£118,900 (to end June 2023)

17. The Carers Personal Budget model was developed via co-production prior to the start of the current contract. It has largely been used to support respite, but with a significant increase in demand reported to use the funding against cost-of-living pressures.
18. The Carers Personal Budgets are *not* formally subject to the contract extension but clearly should be aligned in terms of timeframe.
19. Since the commencement of the current Personal Budget model, there has been significant development of a range of options that support people to identify options for self-help in the community both in terms of navigation and resource.
20. There has also been valuable learning in relation to the deployment to the additional BCF funding around respite and breaks.
21. There is an opportunity to consider:
- The scope and amount of the budget for personal budgets
  - Targeting of personal budgets in terms of purpose and thresholds
  - The interaction with other navigation support and community resource that should be equally available to carers as other groups within the population
  - The wider respite demand and offer across Adult Social Care
- And make further recommendations including scope for service efficiencies.

**The service offer**

22. The core offer of the service is to provide information, advice and support to unpaid carers over the age of 18 years who are caring for a person of any age.
23. The service supports carers to identify and manage their own needs and to plan for the future using a three-stage, strengths-based ‘guided conversation’ approach, aligned with the carers assessment.
24. The personal outcomes sought through the delivery of the service are:
- Carers have a contingency plan, and are encouraged to register as a carer with their GP

- Carers participate in strengths-based conversations and receive personalised support, and achieve the outcomes on their support plans
- Carers are able to access information and support through a wide range of community-based services
- Carers are better connected and aware of choices for improving their health and wellbeing and increasing their quality of life
- Carers receive training and have increased confidence in managing their role as a carer
- Carers are supported to link with other carers to enable peer to peer support.

### Meeting demand

25. According to the 2021 Census<sup>3</sup>, in Oxfordshire, there are 52,674 people providing unpaid care. This varies from 1 hour to 50+ with the larger number providing 1 to 19 hours unpaid care per week.

Provision of unpaid care	Value	% of population	% of population (age standardised)
No care	634,627	92.3%	92.1%
1-19 hours	29,895	4.3%	4.5%
20-49 hours	9,143	1.3%	1.4%
50+ hours	13,636	2.0%	2.1%

26. The table below provides information on the activity of the service under the current contract for 2022-23.

#### Number of carers reached 2022-23

	Apr – Jun	Jul – Sep	Oct – Dec	Jan - Mar	Totals
Referrals	502	756	598	780	2,636
Self-referrals	270	467	384	376	1,497
Carersline	717	970	628	666	2,981
Website	3,413	4,900	4,407	5,918	18,638
Contacted & engaged by email	Unknown	955	892	1,223	3,070
Care Matters publication (sent out to carers 6-monthly)	N/A	9,058	N/A	9,065	18,123

27. This means there is still further potential demand on the service with people who have identified themselves as a carer in the census and those carers who have yet to be identified.

<sup>3</sup> [Unpaid care in Oxfordshire | Oxfordshire Insight](#)

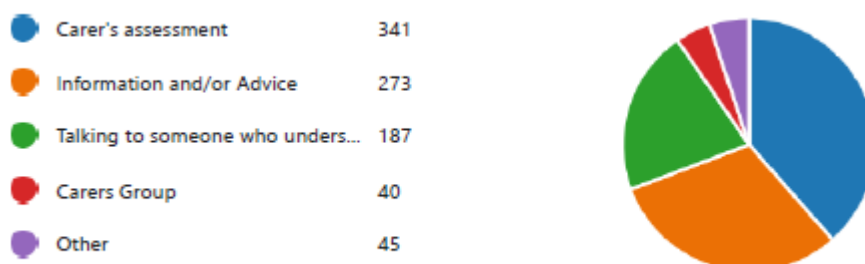
### Quality and impact

28. Targets attached to outcomes in the contract were reviewed and adjusted by commissioners in 2022. A 10% increase to the targets for continuous improvement purposes was applied and not all targets have been achieved.
- In some areas, the provider has reached the baseline but not the 10% increase, for example the number of parent carers registered with the service.
  - In some areas the provider has not reached the baseline, such as reviewing carer self-assessments within two working days. The provider exceeded/met in three quarters but were under in the final quarter due to being a staff member down.
  - In some outcomes, the provider has vastly exceeded the target such as the number of carers supported in groups which was 25% over the target.
29. The council and Action for Carers Oxfordshire and Rethink Mental Illness meet on a quarterly basis to discuss performance. The providers are confident that they can improve performance where targets have not been reached.

### Carer feedback

30. Following receipt of a service, carers are asked to complete an anonymous feedback form. Since this was introduced, there have been 402 responses and these range from carers who have received face to face support, telephone or email support or accessed the website.

#### Graphic demonstrating the type of support carers received from the service.



#### Graphic demonstrating how satisfied carers are with the support they received from the service





31. Carers said<sup>4</sup>:
- “It’s nice to have support where ultimately the support is for me as a carer when normally I’m thinking about my son who I’m caring for. Being directed and advised gives you a push to get up and try new things, change things that are not suiting you etc. It encourages me to get out more, explore new opportunities and hope for a better day.”*
- “I was totally oblivious as to what was available for me as a carer, but now relieved there is light at the end of the tunnel to try to get a life back for myself.”*
- “I found attending the Carers meeting very helpful making me realise there is much support available.”*
- “I feel that there is a lot of support available to me, which I was previously unaware of. I feel that I matter, as well as the person I care for.”*
- “The service is amazing and a lifeline as worries were quickly eased.”*

### Carer strategy

32. The council has recently co-produced an [All-Age Unpaid Carers Strategy 2023-26 for Oxfordshire](#) as agreed by the Oxfordshire Health & Wellbeing Board on 16 March 2023. The Head of Service and other colleagues from the Carers Oxfordshire service have engaged in the preparation of the strategy and have been vital partners.
33. The strategic priorities are:
- Priority 1:** To identify carers and effectively support them, improving their health and wellbeing and providing opportunities for a break from their caring role.
- Priority 2:** To safeguard adult and young carers at risk who need more support to look after themselves, particularly during times of change and transition.
- Priority 3:** To encourage and enable carers to have an active life outside their caring role, including fulfilling their education, employment and training potential.
34. In order to deliver the Strategy, actions have been identified by partners and targets have been set to improve outcomes for carers. Carer’s Oxfordshire has committed to actions and initiatives against each of the priorities.

### Quality and impact conclusion

35. Routine contract monitoring, through quarterly contract review meetings, demonstrates that the service is well-run, meeting or exceeding some performance expectations and achieving positive outcomes for carers. Work is planned with the provider to improve outcomes where they have not been

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<sup>4</sup> Carer responses from Carers Oxfordshire feedback forms

reached and these will complement the All-Age Unpaid Carers Strategy action plan. We fully expect that a good quality service will be delivered for the additional two years if the option to extend is approved.

**Options analysis (see Annex A for full options appraisal)**

**Preferred option**

- 36. The preferred option is Option 2B: **Extend the contract for two years from 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2026**. This option will maintain a successful specialist service which has demonstrated high quality delivery and will take advantage of the current provider’s planned innovations and actions from the Strategy as well as external funds leveraged by the current provider.
- 37. This approach could be easily actioned. A further two years will allow us to refine in more detail how to evaluate impact. The provider will look for greater efficiencies to improve outputs.

**Cost estimate of preferred option**

- 38. The cost for a further two years of funding this contract is shown in the table below. This has been provided for in the current budgets. There are no opportunities to make savings in this contract. There has been no uplift to the costs since the start of the contract and by taking up the option of extending, we are securing two further years at the rates tendered in 2020 before a period of significant inflation. There will be a separate set of recommendations in relation to Carers Personal Budgets.

**Carer Support Service**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Cost to OCC</b>	<b>Cost to IBC</b>
Year 4: 1 April 2024 – 31 March 2025	£428,824	£408,478
Year 5: 1 April 2025 – 31 March 2026	£428,824	£408,478
<b>Total</b>	<b>£857,648</b>	<b>£816,956</b>

**Corporate Policies and Priorities**

- 39. The continuation of the Carer Support Service for a further two years supports the council’s Strategic Plan 2023-2025. Many of the nine priorities have an impact on carers, and specifically number 4 which is to support carers and the social care system. The commissioned Carers Support Service supports carers so that they can continue in their caring role and the providers are involved in the action plan for the All-age Unpaid Carer Strategy 2023-26.

**Financial Implications**

- 40. The funding required for the two further years in the contract from 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2026 has been identified by both Oxfordshire County Council and

Integrated Care Board and will be funded jointly through the Age Well pooled budget.

Comments checked by:

Thomas James, Finance Business Partner (Adults & Public Health),  
Thomas.James@oxfordshire.gov.uk

## **Legal Implications**

41. The current contract for the Carer Support Service expires on 31 March 2024 and contains the option to extend for a further two years until 31 March 2026.

Comments checked by:

Jonathan Pool, Solicitor, Jonathan.Pool@oxfordshire.gov.uk

## **Staff Implications**

42. There are no new or additional staffing implications. The contract with Action for Carers Oxfordshire is adequately funded for the staffing resource required.

## **Equality & Inclusion Implications**

43. As stated in the report, carers experience issues of inequality leading to poor health outcomes and additional financial pressures. With equality and diversity issues at the forefront, the service model was designed and co-produced with carers. Feedback is sought from carers about how satisfied they are and how using the service has made an impact on their lives. This is monitored and evaluated to ensure that the commissioned service is making a positive difference to carers and helping them to continue in their caring role. Carers are involved in achieving the action plans for the All-Age Unpaid Carer Strategy.

## **Risk Management**

44. **Critical success factors summary table**

<b>Critical success criteria</b>	<b>Option 1</b>	<b>Option 2A</b>	<b>Option 2B</b>
Savings achieved	2	1	1
Least reputational risk	1	2	3
Least user risk	1	2	3
Strategic aims achieved	1	3	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>10</b>

NAME: Karen Fuller, Interim Corporate Director of Adult Social Care

Annex: Annex 1: Options Analysis for Carers Oxfordshire service

Background papers: Nil

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September 2023

## Options analysis

1. The following options are theoretical but have not been considered as they are not realistic:
  - Bring service in-house – discarded as an option as considered impractical and even if practical timescales would be unrealistic
  - Do nothing and allow the contract to end on 31 March 2024 – discarded as an option due to certainty of the loss of a key service, removing support for a key group and risk of significant reputational harm to the Council
2. Options Considered
3. NOTE: the options set out below relate to the Carers service contract. There will be a further options appraisal in respect to Carers Personal Budgets.

### **Option 1: Retender. Prepare and undertake a procurement exercise to transition to a new contract from 1 April 2024.**

<b>Strengths</b>	<b>Weaknesses</b>
Offers the potential to immediately review the service specification and consider different delivery models.	<p>Would necessitate a time consuming and resource-heavy process to prepare and undertake the procurement process at a time when it is not necessary.</p> <p>All indications are that the current service is meeting targets or improvements are in place to ensure this happens. There is no indication that there would be any benefits to a further immediate procurement.</p> <p>Inflationary pressures mean that it is not guaranteed the Council would realise any savings through a new tender.</p>
<b>Opportunities</b>	<b>Threats</b>
Potential to revise the scope and design of the service immediately.	<p>Unnecessary creation of uncertainty and instability during the remaining contract period and in any transition between services.</p> <p>Potential loss of a well-recognised, networked and trusted current provider.</p> <p>Potential disruption of planned service innovation and potential external funds leveraged by current provider</p>

**Option 2A: Extend the contract for one year from 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2025**

<b>Strengths</b>	<b>Weaknesses</b>
<p>The Council would retain the existing Carer Support Service which has delivered very successfully to date, and which will continue to operate, supporting carers to continue in their caring role and to live their lives as independently, successfully and safely as possible within the community and enhancing wellbeing.</p> <p>Allows the Council and partners to reconsider approach to supporting unpaid carers in the near future.</p>	<p>Would necessitate a time consuming and resource-heavy process to prepare and undertake the procurement process at a time when it is not necessary.</p> <p>All indications are that the current service is meeting targets or improvements are in place to ensure this happens. There is no indication that there would be any benefits to a further immediate procurement.</p>
<b>Opportunities</b>	<b>Threats</b>
<p>To take a partial benefit from service innovations and potential external funding leveraged by the current provider.</p> <p>Develop the pathways into community capacity and the alignment with social prescribing that are under way elsewhere in the Oxfordshire place</p> <p>Review the requirements in terms of commitments by the service to the action plan in the Carer Strategy</p>	<p>May deter the provider from continued investment in the contract if it is only for one year</p>

**Option 2B: Extend the contract for two years from 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2026 (preferred option)**

<b>Strengths</b>	<b>Weaknesses</b>
<p>The Council would retain the existing Carer Support Service which has delivered very successfully to date, and which will continue to operate, supporting carers to continue in their caring role and to live their lives as independently, successfully and safely as possible within the community and enhancing wellbeing.</p>	<p>Reduces opportunities to explore the market.</p>

Maximises the allowable extension in the contract and therefore delays the need to deploy Council resources to time-consuming and resource-intensive procurement activity.	
<b>Opportunities</b>	<b>Threats</b>
To fully benefit from service innovations, allowing commissioners to make informed decisions from data collected in strategy action plan and potential external funding leveraged by the current provider.	Future changes e.g. Care Reforms may require development of the model.

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## Divisions Affected –

### **CABINET MEMBER FOR ADULT SOCIAL CARE**

**19 September 2023**

### **Home Improvement Agency Contract for South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse District Councils.**

### **Report by Corporate Director of Adult Social Care**

## **RECOMMENDATION**

1. **The Cabinet Member is RECOMMENDED to**
  - (a) Approve the contract award following the procurement of a new provider for the provision of Home Improvement Agency (HIA) service in South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse District Councils. The service contract is between the Oxfordshire County Council (the council), South Oxfordshire District Council (SODC) and Vale of White Horse District Council (VWHDC) (as joint purchasers) and the provider.
  - (b) Note that the purchasing obligations and rights in the contract for the new provider of the Home Improvement Agency in South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse will be novated over to SODC from the council on 01 October 2023 at which point the Grant Funding Agreement (partnership agreement) will cover the council's contributions to fund the service.
  - (c) Approve the council entering the funding and partnership agreement with SODC and VWHDC for the provision of HIA in those district council areas following novation of the service contract.

## **Executive Summary**

2. Disabled Facilities Grants are available for people of all ages who meet the required criteria to help them live in their own home in a safe, secure, in and accessible environment.
3. The local housing authorities in the district councils manage the DFG which are allocated by central government. The delivery of the DFG is via a HIA service which provides the assessment of eligibility and works, the development of plans to implement the works and the implementation in the resident's home.

4. The HIA is provided in-house in CDC, WODC and Oxford City and the funding is provided by the council as part of a partnership agreement.
5. The HIA service for SODC and VWHDC is provided externally, and the council has historically led on the procurement, contract award and management of the service behalf of SODC and VWHDC.
6. The contract for the prior HIA service in SODC/VWHDC had been extended to 31 May 2023 pending the reprovision of the service via an open market tender. Approval to proceed to tender for the provision of HIA service when the previous contract ended was provided in February 2023. The council agreed with SODC and VWHDC to jointly enter into a contractual agreement with the new provider. As part of this the council negotiated that SODC and VWHDC would assume contract responsibility from the 01 October 2023 when the contract is novated over from the council to SODC. This better reflects the management of risks and responsibilities in the provision of the HIA service and reflects the expert role of the district councils in managing “bricks and mortar” providers. It will improve the delivery of the HIA and clarify and strengthen the partnership arrangements between Housing and Social Care authorities.
7. The contract is backed by a partnership agreement between the council and SODC and VWHDC. The contract with the new HIA service provider is for three years with an option to extend up to a further two years.

## **Exempt Information**

8. Not applicable.

## **Background**

9. The Home Improvement Agency (HIA) service aims to enable Oxfordshire Residents who meets the required criteria to maintain their independence, health, and wellbeing at home for the foreseeable future. This is achieved through the repair, adaptation, and improvement of Resident’s homes, so that the person can remain in their own home in a safe, secure, and accessible environment.
10. There is a statutory responsibility upon the council to deliver the service. The service enables people to remain safe and independent within their own homes for longer, which in turn reduces demand for more expensive health and social care intervention.
11. The service is delivered as part of broader Health and Social Care and Housing pathways to support people in the community. As such they are governed by a framework of national legislation, policy, and guidance.
12. The HIA service project incorporates areas and objectives alongside those mentioned in paragraph 8 including

- information, advice, and guidance
  - supporting hospital discharges where appropriate
  - preventing or reducing hospital admissions
  - accessing other associated grants available to help maintain people’s health and wellbeing within their own home
13. The council has overseen the contract management for the HIA service on behalf of SODC and VWHDC. The council agreed to procure the HIA service and jointly enter with SODC and VWHDC into a contractual agreement with the new provider. However, agreement between the council, SODC and VWHDC was obtained for the HIA contract to be novated over to SODC on 01 October 2023. This better reflects the management of risks and responsibilities in the provision of the HIA service and reflects the expert role of the district councils in managing “bricks and mortar” providers. It will improve the delivery of the HIA and clarify and strengthen the partnership arrangements between Housing and Social Care authorities.

**Contract Award**

14. The procurement for the HIA service in South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse was approved and completed in April 2023. The contract was awarded to Oxford City Council HIA Service and commenced 01 June 2023. The contract value for the HIA service in year one is £370,745.00; year two is £350,736.00; and year three is £350,758.00.
15. Procurement Process

<b>Activity</b>	<b>Date</b>
Invitation to Tender (ITT) for HIA service went live	10 February 2023
ITT closed	13 March 2023
Agreement for Contract Award from Director Leadership Team (DLT)	17 April 2023
Contract Awarded	05 May 2023
Contract started	01 June 2023

**Corporate Policies and Priorities**

16. The partnership agreement with SODC and VWHDC for the provision of HIA service and the HIA Contract with the new provider aligns with the following local priorities
- a. Oxfordshire County Council’s Corporate Plan 2023-2025 includes prioritising the health and wellbeing of residents, support carers and social care system, and partnership working.
  - b. The Oxfordshire Way.
  - c. Oxfordshire Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2018-2023
  - d. Better Care Fund (BCF)

## Financial Implications

17. The partnership agreement for provision of HIA service with SODC and VWHDC aligns alongside the new contract value for the HIA service provider. It should be noted that the funding for the three-year period from 2023 to 2026 is in line with the new contract tender price.
18. It should be noted that the funding from the council to SODC and VWHDC may be subject to an annual inflationary uplift as specified within the partnership agreement.
19. The below table sets out the financial details for the council’s contributions in relation to recommendation 1b. The council’s contribution will subsequently be transferred over to the partnership agreement in recommendation 1a when the contract is novated over 01 October 2023.

	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26
HIA service provider for SODC and VWHDC: Oxford City HIA Service	£273,446.00	£258,688.20	£258,704.43

20. The maximum funding allocated for the provision of HIA services was agreed following a paper submitted by the Interim Deputy Director for Housing on 24 January 2021. The tender price submitted during the procurement of the HIA service and the subsequent contributions towards the contract value has been agreed by the council, SODC and VWHDC.
21. It should be noted that funding is allocated for all aspects of the project within the HIA service specification.

Comments checked by:

Thomas James, Finance Business Partner (Adults & Public Health),  
 Thomas.James@oxfordshire.gov.uk

## Legal Implications

22. The service contract was procured competitively in accordance with the Oxfordshire County Council’s Contract Procedure Rules (“CPRs”) as a joint procurement with SODC and VWHDC. The council led on the procurement process. The CPRs themselves ensure compliance with the Public Contract Regulations 2015 (as amended).
23. Providers were made aware at the tender stage of the procurement of the intention to novate the purchasing obligations and rights of the council under the service contract to SODC and VWHDC.
24. The competitive and transparent nature of the procurement arrangements mean that the award of the service contract, intended novation of the service contract

and grant funding agreement to deal with the council's continuing contribution to the service is therefore compliant with the Public Contract Regulations 2015 (as amended).

Comments checked by:

Jonathan Pool, Solicitor, Jonathan.Pool@oxfordshire.gov.uk

## **Staff Implications**

25. The funding and partnership agreements are with SODC and VWHDC for the provision of HIA services. Therefore, there is no impact on the council's workforce as a result of the recommendation.

## **Equality & Inclusion Implications**

26. The equality and inclusion implications have been considered. The partnership agreements for the provision of HIA services supports all people with protected characteristics who meet the required criteria.

## **Sustainability Implications**

27. The partnership agreements have no direct impact on sustainability. However, the provision of HIA services aligns with Oxfordshire County Council strategic plan 2022 – 2025. This sets out the vision to lead positive change by working in partnership to make Oxfordshire a greener, fairer, and healthier county
28. As part of the tender for the HIA service provision providers were asked to submit information for their commitment to delivering social value over the initial term of the contract. The successful provider has committed to delivering additional social value over the initial term of the contract. The Social Value Portal will work with SODC and VWHDC following novation of the contract to monitor and report on the delivery of this social value.

## **Risk Management**

29. The partnership agreement includes an agreed specification for the delivery and expectations of the HIA Services which includes statutory requirements. Any changes to the service delivery within the specification would need to be agreed between the individual partner and the council.
30. There are minimal risks to recommendation 1a which are mitigated through business continuity plans and partnership working.

31. The agreement of contract award for the new HIA service for South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse will enable Residents who meet the criteria to access DFG, repairs, adaptations, and improvements to help them to live in their own home in a safe, secure, and accessible environment.
32. Not agreeing to the recommendation 1a and 1b may have a negative impact on the provision and delivery of services which are a statutory requirement. There is a risk of people who may be vulnerable not being able to access appropriate services to help repair, adapt or improve their homes. Therefore, impacting on them being able to live in a safe, secure, and accessible environment.

## **Consultations**

33. In relation to the maximum funding allocated for the provision of HIA services, the council previously consulted with the district councils following a report to DLT on 20 December 2021.
34. The new funding allocation for the contract and subsequent partnership agreement following the procurement of the HIA service was consulted and agreed by the council, SODC and VWHDC.
35. Prior to the commencement of the tender, 500 Residents who had accessed the HIA services delivered in South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse were invited to share their experiences of the service. 126 responses were received, and information provided was used to develop the service specification for the new contract.

### **NAME**

Karen Fuller, Interim Corporate Director for Adult Social Care

Annex: Nil.

Background papers: Nil.

Contact Officer: Ian Bottomley, Lead Commissioner – Age Contact  
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 07532 132975

September 2023

**Divisions Affected – N/A**

## **CABINET MEMBER FOR ADULT SOCIAL CARE**

**19 September 2023**

### **Partnership Agreement with Cherwell District Council, Oxford City and West Oxfordshire District Council for the Provision of Home Improvement Agency**

**Report by Corporate Director of Adult Services**

#### **RECOMMENDATION**

1. **The Cabinet Member is RECOMMENDED to** approve the individual funding partnership agreements with Oxfordshire County Council (the council) and Cherwell District Council (CDC), Oxford City Council (OCC) and West Oxfordshire District Council (WODC) for the provision of Home Improvement Agency (HIA).

#### **Executive Summary**

2. The partnership agreements for the provision of Home Improvement Agency (HIA) supports the requirement for a statutory service to implement Disabled Facilities Grants (DFG) in Cherwell, Oxford City and West Oxfordshire.
3. The HIA service facilitates with the repair, adaptation, and improvement of Resident's homes for, so that the person who meet the required criteria can remain in their own home in a safe, secure, and accessible environment. The HIA service provides information, advice, and guidance for home adaptations, keeping safe at home and grants available which may help them with home improvements. The HIA service supports with facilitating hospital discharges and where possible preventing or reducing hospital admissions.
4. The local housing authorities in the city and district councils manage the DFG which are allocated by central government. The HIA services for Oxford City, West Oxfordshire and Cherwell are delivered in-house in the city and district councils.
5. Disabled Facilities Grants are available for people of all ages who meet the required criteria to help them live in their own home in a safe, secure, in and accessible environment.

6. The partnership agreements for provision of HIA services with CDC, OCC, and WODC are for a three-year period with an option to extend for a further two years.

7. **Decision table**

<b>Board</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Decision</b>
Adult Social Care Directorate Leadership Team	24 January 2022	Agreed
Key decision at Cabinet	19 September 2023	

8. This recommendation was approved by Adult Social Care Directorate Leadership Team on 24 January 2022 and enacted from 01 April 2022. As part of a recent review of decision making it has been identified that this is a Key Decision in line with Oxfordshire County Council’s Constitution and so is presented for ratification by Cabinet.

**Exempt Information**

9. Not applicable.

**Background**

10. The Home Improvement Agency (HIA) service aims to enable Oxfordshire Residents who meets the required criteria to maintain their independence, health, and wellbeing at home for the foreseeable future. This is achieved through the repair, adaptation, and improvement of Resident’s homes, so that the person can remain in their own home in a safe, secure, and accessible environment.
11. There is a statutory responsibility upon the council to deliver the service. The service enables people to remain safe and independent within their own homes for longer, which in turn reduces demand for more expensive health and social care intervention.
12. The service is delivered as part of broader Health and Social Care and Housing pathways to support people in the community. As such they are governed by a framework of national legislation, policy, and guidance. The partnership arrangements support a number of key roles including the provision of Housing Occupational Therapists funded from the DFG by several of the district councils. This supports a seamless approach to service provision where assessment and allocation of DFG considers the individual’s wider housing and care needs in developing a person-centred plan to home adaptation to support independence. In the Oxfordshire Better Care Fund 2023-25, the council and partners identified the need further to develop the links between housing, care and health and the partnership agreements for the HIA are a key part of these relationships.
13. The HIA service project incorporates other areas and objectives alongside those mentioned in paragraph 10 including



- information, advice, and guidance
- supporting hospital discharges where appropriate
- preventing or reducing hospital admissions
- accessing other associated grants available to help maintain people’s health and wellbeing within their own home

## Corporate Policies and Priorities

14. The partnership agreements with CDC, OCC and WODC for the provision of HIA service aligns with the following local priorities
  - a. Oxfordshire County Council’s Corporate Plan 2023-2025 includes prioritising the health and wellbeing of residents, support carers and social care system, and partnership working.
  - b. The Oxfordshire Way.
  - c. Oxfordshire Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2018-2023
  - d. Better Care Fund (BCF)

## Financial Implications

15. The partnership agreements for provision of HIA services with CDC, OCC, and WODC include fixed annual funding for the three-year period from 2022 to 2025. It should be noted that the funding may be subject to an annual inflationary uplift as specified within the partnership agreement.
16. The below table sets out the financial details in relation to the recommendation.

	Funding: 2022/23
Cherwell District Council	£144,000
Oxford City Council	£160,000
West Oxfordshire District Council	£138,000

17. The funding allocated for the partnership agreements was agreed by Adult Social Care Directorate Leadership Team in a paper submitted 24 January 2022 by the Interim Deputy Director for Housing. It should be noted that funding is allocated for all aspects of the project within the HIA service specification.

Comments checked by:

Thomas James, Finance Business Partner (Adults & Public Health),  
 Thomas.James@oxfordshire.gov.uk

## Legal Implications

18. It is the intention to enter into individual grant funding agreements between the council and each of CDC, OCC and WODC (“the districts”). Each of the districts provide the home improvement agency services in-house and the council’s

funding is a contribution to the costs of such service. The council would argue that the grant funding agreements are therefore not service contracts under the Public Contract Regulations 2015 (as amended).

Comments checked by:

Jonathan Pool, Solicitor, Jonathan.Pool@oxfordshire.gov.uk

## **Staff Implications**

19. The partnership agreements are with CDC, OCC, and WODC for the provision of HIA services. Therefore, there is no impact on the council's workforce as a result of the recommendation.

## **Equality & Inclusion Implications**

20. The equality and inclusion implications have been considered. The partnership agreements for the provision of HIA services supports all people with protected characteristics who meet the required criteria.

## **Sustainability Implications**

21. The partnership agreements have no direct impact on sustainability. However, the provision of HIA services aligns with Oxfordshire County Council strategic plan 2022 – 2025. This sets out the vision to lead positive change by working in partnership to make Oxfordshire a greener, fairer, and healthier county

## **Risk Management**

22. The partnership agreements include an agreed specification for the delivery and expectations of the HIA Services which includes statutory requirements. Any changes to the service delivery within the specification would need to be agreed between the individual partner (CDC, OCC, WODC) and the council.
23. There are minimal risks to the recommendations which are mitigated through business continuity plans and partnership working.
24. Not agreeing to the recommendations may have a negative impact on the provision and delivery of services which are a statutory requirement. There is a risk of people who may be vulnerable not being able to access appropriate services to help repair, adapt or improve their homes. Therefore, impacting on them being able to live in a safe, secure, and accessible environment.

## Consultations

25. In relation to the funding allocated in the partnership agreements, the council previously consulted with the city and district councils following a report to Adult Social Care DLT on 20 December 2021. That exercise covered a wider scope than the HIA Partnership Agreement but informed the development of the current agreement.

### NAME

Karen Fuller, Interim Corporate Director for Adult Social Care

Annex: Nil.

Background papers: Nil.

Contact Officer: Ian Bottomley, Lead Commissioner – Age Contact  
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September 2023

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