



Notice of a Meeting

Performance & Corporate Services Overview & Scrutiny Committee

Friday, 6 December 2024 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 online, please click on this [Live Stream Link](#).

However, that will not allow you to participate in the meeting.

Membership

Chair - Councillor Eddie Reeves

Deputy Chair - Councillor Bob Johnston

<i>Councillors:</i>	Brad Baines	Kieron Mallon	Glynis Phillips
	Arash Fatemian	Ian Middleton	
	Damian Haywood	Calum Miller	

Notes: ***Date of next meeting:*** 17 January 2025

For more information about this Committee please contact:

Committee Officer	-	Scrutiny Team
		<i>E-Mail: scrutiny@oxfordshire.gov.uk</i>

Martin Reeves
Chief Executive

November 2024

What does this Committee review or scrutinise?

All corporate services and budget scrutiny, including customer services, property, assets, procurement, finance, corporate policy matters such as consultation and public engagement; takes a lead role in scrutiny of the budget and corporate plan.

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 days 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 1 - 8)

The Committee is recommended to **APPROVE** the minutes of the meeting held on 15th November 2024 and to receive information arising from them.

4. Petitions and Public Address

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

To facilitate 'hybrid' meetings we are asking that requests to speak or present a petition are submitted by no later than on 2nd December 2024. Requests to speak should be sent 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 your views are taken into account. A written copy of your statement can be provided no later than 9am 2 working days before the meeting. Written submissions should be no longer than 1 A4 sheet.

5. Indicative Budget Proposals 2025/26 to 2027/28 (Pages 9 - 186)

All Cabinet Members and Directors have been invited to attend and present their relevant areas of the indicative budget proposals 2025/26 to 2027/28.

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.

An outline schedule for this item is included below:

10:15-10:35	Budget Overview & questions (20 mins)	Cllr Leffman Cllr Levy Lorna Baxter
10:35-10:45	Community Safety (10 mins)	Cllr Ley Rob MacDougall
10:45-11:05	Resources and cross cutting proposals (20 mins)	Cllr Levy Cllr Fawcett Susannah Wintersgill, Vic Kurzeja, Ian Dyson, Cherie Cuthbertson,

		Louise Tustian
11:05 – 11:40	Environment & Highways (35 mins)	Cllr Roberts Cllr Gant Cllr Sudbury Paul Fermer
11:40 – 11:50	Law & Governance (10 mins)	Cllr Fawcett Paul Grant
11:50 – 12:25	Economy & Place (35 mins)	Cllr Sudbury Cllr Roberts Robin Rogers
12:25 – 1:00	Children's Services (35 mins)	Cllr Howson Cllr Gregory Lisa Lyons
1:00 – 1:30	Break	
1:30 – 1:45	Public Health and Communities (15 mins)	Cllr Ley Cllr Fawcett Ansaf Azhar
1:45 – 2:20	Adult Social Care (35 mins)	Cllr Bearder Karen Fuller

6. **Committee Forward Work Plan** (Pages 187 - 326)

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.

7. **Committee Action and Recommendation Tracker** (Pages 327 - 332)

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. **Responses to Scrutiny Recommendations**

No responses to Scrutiny recommendations have been submitted since the previous meeting.

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, 15 November 2024 commencing at 10.00 am and finishing at 11.55 am

Present:

Voting Members: Councillor Eddie Reeves - in the Chair

Councillor Bob Johnston
Councillor Arash Fatemian
Councillor Kieron Mallon
Councillor Ian Middleton
Councillor Calum Miller
Councillor Michael O'Connor
Councillor Glynis Phillips

Other Members in Attendance: Councillor Dan Levy, Cabinet Member for Finance

Officers: Ian Dyson, Director of Financial and Commercial Services
Vic Kurzeja, Director of Property and Assets
Michael Smedley, Head of Estates Asset and Investment
Emily Urquhart, Policy Officer – Inclusive Economy Lead
Tom Hudson, Scrutiny Manger

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.

31/24 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND TEMPORARY APPOINTMENTS (Agenda No. 1)

There were apologies from Cllr Baines, substituted by Cllr O'Connor, and from Cllr Haywood.

32/24 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS (Agenda No. 2)

Cllr Johnston declared a non-pecuniary interest in agenda item 6. He was also a member of Kennington Parish Council, which owns the building housing the Kennington Library, and the parish actively supports the library.

33/24 MINUTES (Agenda No. 3)

The minutes of the meeting held on 19 July 2024 were **AGREED** as a true and accurate record.

34/24 PETITIONS AND PUBLIC ADDRESS

(Agenda No. 4)

There was none.

35/24 COMMERCIAL STRATEGY UPDATE

(Agenda No. 5)

Cllr Dan Levy, Cabinet Member for Finance, and Ian Dyson, Director of Financial and Commercial Services, were invited to present a report on the Commercial Strategy Update.

Cllr Levy highlighted the necessity for a commercial strategy to shift the County Council's approach towards pursuing appropriate, risk-assessed commercial opportunities to enhance revenue for essential resident services.

The Director of Financial and Commercial Services provided an update on the commercial strategy's implementation, noting the completion of a commercial maturity assessment that indicated a low initial level of commercial thinking, but there was a high willingness to engage with such commercial thinking. The primary areas of focus during the implementation included strategic direction and partnerships, governance and performance management, capability, and visibility and insights. However, progress had been slower than expected due to organisational design changes and complexities in required adjustments.

Members noted the lack of examples for commercial strategies and projects in the report, and questioned what kind of commercial activities and structures the Council could take on under the commercial strategy.

The Director of Financial and Commercial Services explained that the Council could explore various commercial activities, including local authority trading companies, joint ventures, and partnership working. Specific examples mentioned were utilising land and building assets more effectively and exploring opportunities in waste management, such as reuse initiatives at housing waste recycling centres.

The strategy emphasised an outcomes-focused approach, looking at what the Council aimed to achieve and identifying the right partners and delivery models to support those goals. The Council needed to consider the most appropriate delivery models for different activities, which could include trading companies, joint ventures, or partnerships. Collaboration with partners was crucial for achieving the desired outcomes and leveraging opportunities.

It was acknowledged that the Council was not yet at a stage where specific commercial opportunities could be presented due to the need to build the foundational capabilities and improve data and contract management. The strategy emphasised the need to build strong foundations, including improving data management, contract management, and overall commercial acumen within the

organisation. This foundational work was essential for enabling the Council to be more commercial and innovative in the future.

Effective contract management was a critical component of the strategy. It involved improving skills, understanding, processes, and reporting to ensure that contracts were managed strategically and delivered value.

It was acknowledged that the report did not offer a clear timescale of commercial thinking examples, but this was reasoned by Officers because of the maturity assessment which emphasised the early stage which the organisation was in. However, concrete examples of the organisations commercial thinking would become clear over the next 12 months.

The Chair questioned whether the example of any other Local Authority was being used as they went about becoming more commercially minded, especially from similar starting point to Oxfordshire.

Coventry Council was highlighted as an example of a local authority that has successfully implemented commercial thinking. The Chief Executive had experience with Coventry Council and was pushing Oxfordshire County Council towards a similar approach of commercial thinking.

There had also been significant interest from other local authorities in how Oxfordshire County Council was approaching the process of becoming more commercial. This suggested that many councils were in a similar position and were looking to learn from each other's experiences.

Members questioned whether as an organisation, the Council was committing enough staff time to negotiating and managing contracts, and whether there was capacity within the organisation to use staff experience and knowledge to discover further efficiencies.

It was acknowledged that the Council needed to allocate more staff time for effective contract negotiation and management, especially for high-value contracts. Current resources allocated were not adequate to drive the best value for money, and a more strategic approach was required.

Big changes to how business planning, and contract management, was approached was suggested. The Council was transitioning from annual service plans to comprehensive four-year business plans to enhance commercial thinking and spending practices. The new organisational design included 12 Directors, each responsible for developing and implementing plans to identify better spending opportunities and drive commercial thinking in their areas. Each of these Directors would work with every member of their teams to discuss and bring forward new money-conscious and commercially minded ideas.

Members enquired about the role of the Innovation Hub in the Commercial Strategy and who was on the Commercial Strategy Board.

The Innovation Hub was crucial to the commercial strategy. Headed by Laura Peacock, the Innovation Hub integrated innovation into the Council's commercial activities. Laura Peacock was also a member of the Commercial Strategy Board, alongside Ian Dyson, Melissa Sage, Paul Grant, Sean Rooney, Charles Butters, and Natalie Crawford. The Board oversaw business cases, spending control, and strategic commercial opportunities within the organisation. As such the board played a significant role shaping commercial policy for the Council.

On the conclusion of the discussion on the Commercial Strategy update, the committee **NOTED** the report making the following observations:

- Frustration over the pace of progress to date, particularly in relation to developing specific commercial proposals.

The Committee **AGREED** to the following recommendations to Cabinet:

- That it develop and share with the committee on a regular basis a more detailed project plan for the Commercial strategy, outlining specific commercial opportunities in development, enabling activity, timelines, targeted savings or expected income generation, risk and RAG ratings.
- That the Council give consideration to seconding staff to exemplars of good commercial practice in the private sector.
- That the future iterations of the Strategy should clarify how it intends to help the Council make money, how money will be used more efficiently, and how it will be used more effectively.
- That the Cabinet invest in greater capacity to undertake strategic and mid-contract management of contracts.
- That representatives of Adult Social Care and Children's Social Care should attend the Commercial Board.

36/24 COMMUNITY ASSET TRANSFER POLICY AND LEASES TO THE VOLUNTARY AND COMMUNITY SECTOR TENANTS (Agenda No. 6)

Cllr Dan Levy, Cabinet Member of Finance, Vic Kurzeja, Director of Property and Assets, Michael Smedley, Head of Estates Asset and Investment, and Emily Urquhart, Policy Officer – Inclusive Economy Lead, were invited to present a report on the Community Asset Transfer (CAT) Policy and Leases to Voluntary and Community Sector Tenants. Ian Dyson, Director of Financial and Commercial Services, was also present to help answer any questions Members had in relation to the CAT report.

The Cabinet Member introduced the report, noting that the relationship with voluntary groups had become unclear, with property management and support for voluntary groups closely connected. The purpose of the CAT policy was to separate these aspects, focusing on property management while continuing support for voluntary groups.

Members underscored and reaffirmed the significance of social value, especially in the context of community services such as libraries. It was noted that these services

offer substantial benefits to the community, including improvements in reading scores within local schools, which were not easily monetised or quantified.

The discussion emphasised that while financial value was important, the non-monetary advantages provided by community services were crucial and should be factored into decision-making processes. It was proposed that local members should participate in discussions regarding community assets to ensure that the social value and communal benefits were thoroughly understood and considered.

The Director of Property and Assets highlighted the necessity of commercial acumen while also stressing the importance of assessing the social value provided by community services. This balanced perspective ensured that decisions were made with consideration of both financial metrics and the broader impact on the community.

Members inquired about the efficacy of balancing social value and financial metrics, particularly given that the report indicated the 92 leases generated an average of only £3,500 per annum. There was concern among members that such leases might be viewed unfavourably within a commercial strategy.

The Director of Property and Assets stressed that being commercially savvy means more than generating income. It involves leveraging Council's spending and ensuring smart investments. Social value from leases, though not easily monetised, was crucial. Each lease was reviewed for both financial and social benefits, with local councillors involved in evaluations. The focus should be on maximising estate use, ensuring properties were well-utilised for commercial, corporate, or community purposes. The aim was to maintain high occupancy and best use of space.

Members noted that several properties had been listed for an extended period as ready for disposal. Therefore, a clear statement regarding the intended timeline for their disposal was essential to address the concerns about the council sitting on unutilised assets.

Officers focused on effectively using the existing portfolio to meet service demands. Nearly all 13 properties from the previous provider were assigned specific purposes. Although planning permission was time-consuming, it was essential for value-maximisation. This process involved applications and preparation to market these properties efficiently.

Keeping residents informed about vacant properties was vital. Service responses to enquiries about vacant property usage and plans had been slow, but this issue was being addressed via 4-year business plans. These plans aimed to clarify future actions in each service area and property, streamlining decision-making for quicker actions. Additionally, strategic and commercial investment opportunities were evaluated to deliver services effectively within budget.

Members questioned what level of collaboration, with community groups and District/City councils, there was in relation to vacant land and properties owned across the County by the County Council and the Districts. Examples were given of known desires of the Oxfordshire Wildlife Rescue Service and the Hindu community for available sites.

Previously, the Council could not offer properties until service areas declared them surplus. Now, services must cover costs if they do not want to dispose of or lease the property. Over the past two years, the Council had actively addressed vacant property issues, resulting in fewer available properties. This meant that despite frequent inquiries from community organisations, there was limited vacant property to offer.

It was acknowledged that more work could be done with sister organisations, such as other local authorities and the NHS to ensure best value for properties was being met across the county. Property moves and bids affected everyone, so awareness and collaboration were crucial. Developing an approach to the inclusive economy partnership could help the County showcase its best practices.

Members concluded my enquiring about the process of how community asset transfers were chosen and the governance involved in decisions to lease properties to certain groups. Additionally what support was offered by the Council to ensure the community, and the council were benefiting from the transfer.

When transferring authority properties, it was crucial to ensure clear benefits for the local community. Historically, transfers often included conditions for new owners to support community development. Asset transfers were seen as opportunities to provide value, not just offload property. Councillors played a key role in these discussions to evaluate the benefits of transfers.

Support requests based on social benefits needed a business case demonstrating community value. Each charitable organisation had to produce an annual report detailing their finances and activities. These reports were reviewed to assess financial health, the level County support, and social benefits delivered. This ensured the County's commitment to community groups and verified its contribution. If concerns arose, the County offered early support with its expertise and resources.

The Committee resolved to **AGREE** to make the following observation:

- That the social benefits provided by buildings provided to VCS organisations were difficult to quantify, but nonetheless significant

The Committee also resolved to **AGREE** to make the following recommendations to Cabinet:

- That local members should be involved with next-step discussions with VCS groups and the social value provided by these organisations be considered as part of the discussions.
- That communications around empty properties are improved, including sharing with members a clear statement of the aspiration and timeline for disposing of properties listed for disposal, a quarterly report/update summarising recent events and developments with Council land/property ensuring all parties are kept up to date, and regular updates for those residents neighbouring vacant Council properties to keep them up to date with ongoing developments and plans.

- That a list of available Council land and buildings is shared with Members and sister organisations, to ensure available land is put to best voluntary and community use where possible.
- That processes for sharing lease requests by VCS organisation with sister organisations in the county be developed, land available for VCS leases, and any planned leases.

The following action was also **AGREED**:

- The Oxfordshire-wide Terrier be shared with members of the committee.

37/24 COMMITTEE FORWARD WORK PLAN (Agenda No. 7)

The Committee **AGREED** to the proposed work plan with the following amendments:

- An update on the City Centre Accommodation for December or January, dependent on the offer process, which commenced following the meeting.

Assurances were made that the budget item would take priority, with Members warned to expect a longer meeting than usual in December.

The Scrutiny Manager would also explore the viability of items on the Local Enterprise Partnership integration and any Devolution white paper to come to the April meeting.

38/24 COMMITTEE ACTION AND RECOMMENDATION TRACKER (Agenda No. 8)

The action and recommendation tracker was **NOTED**.

39/24 RESPONSES TO SCRUTINY RECOMMENDATIONS (Agenda No. 9)

The Committee **NOTED** the Cabinet Response to the report on the Draft Customer Engagement Strategy.

..... in the Chair

Date of signing

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Divisions Affected – All

Performance & Corporate Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee

6 December 2024

Budget Proposals 2025/26 to 2027/28

**Report by the
Executive Director of Resources and Section 151 Officer**

RECOMMENDATION

1. **Noting the requirement for the council to set a sustainable balanced budget for 2025/26 which shows how income will equal spending plans the Performance & Corporate Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee is invited to consider and comment on:**
 - a) **Revenue budget proposals for 2025/26 to 2027/28.**
 - b) **Proposed capital schemes for inclusion in the Capital Programme and proposed capital pipeline.**

Executive Summary

2. This report sets out information on funding and other updates announced by the Chancellor of the Exchequer in the Autumn Budget on 30 October 2024 along with new budget proposals for the period 2025/26 to 2027/28.
3. The report provides the opportunity for the Performance and Corporate Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee to comment on the proposals as part of the council's budget consultation process.
4. The following annexes are attached to this report:
 - Revenue expenditure
 - Annex 1a – planned revenue budget changes agreed in February 2024
 - Annex 1b – new revenue draft budget proposals
 - Capital expenditure
 - Annex 2a – High priority capital schemes to which indicative funding is proposed to be allocated.
 - Annex 2b – capital schemes proposed to be included in the pipeline but are pending funding becoming available

- Annex 3a – Overarching Equality Impact Assessment
- Annex 3b – Overarching Climate Impact Assessment
- Annex 4 – Executive summary of 2024 residents' survey and 2025/26 budget engagement findings.

Background

5. Oxfordshire County Council provides 80% of local government services in Oxfordshire based on expenditure, including adult and children's social care, some education services, fire and rescue, libraries and museums, roads, trading standards, waste disposal and recycling.
6. The budget and Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) support the strategic plan and are reviewed and updated each year through the budget & business planning process. Through this process the council is required to set a balanced budget for the coming year so that forecast expenditure is aligned with forecast income.

Introduction

7. The Budget and Business Planning report to Cabinet on 15 October 2024 set out background to the council's existing Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) as well as a proposing the Budget and Business Planning process which will continue through the winter. The report, which is available on the Cabinet agenda through the following link to the meeting, [Agenda for Cabinet on Tuesday, 15 October 2024](#)¹, includes on-going budget changes already agreed for 2025/26 – 2026/27 as well as the funding and assumptions behind the existing plans.
8. Based on assumptions in February 2024, Table 1 summarises that there is a shortfall of £13.9m in 2025/26 rising to £14.0m in 2026/27.

¹ See item 134/24

Table 1	2025/26 Indicative Budget £m	2026/27 Indicative Budget £m
Funding:		
Council Tax Requirement	-517.4	-537.0
Council Tax Collection Fund Surplus	-8.0	-8.0
Business Rates	-101.2	-102.9
Revenue Support Grant	-1.4	-1.4
Total Funding	-628.0	-649.3

Table 1	2025/26 Indicative Budget £m	2026/27 Indicative Budget £m
Net operating budget (previous year)	611.2	641.9
Add Service Changes		
Demographic Growth	15.7	8.5
Pressures and Investments	11.7	11.2
Savings	-9.5	-4.5
Subtotal Service Changes	17.9	15.1
Add changes to budgets & grant funding held centrally	12.8	6.3
Net Operating Budget	641.9	663.3
Budget Deficit Compared to Funding	+13.9	+14.0
Council Tax increase	1.99%	1.99%

9. It is anticipated that the Government will announce individual local authority funding allocations on 19 December 2024 as part of the Provisional Local Government Finance Settlement. The final settlement is expected to be received in early February 2025. The updated funding position and any changes to the proposals will be shared with Performance and Corporate Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee in January 2025 along with the proposed changes to fees and charges for 2025/26.
10. This report provides an updated funding position based on the information known at this stage as well as setting out new proposals to add to the existing plan.
11. Performance and Corporate Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee is invited to consider and comment on the revenue and capital budget proposals for 2025/26 – 2027/28.

12. The Committee's comments will be included in the Budget and Business Planning report to Cabinet on 28 January 2025, along with the outcome of the public consultation. This feedback will be taken into consideration by Cabinet in setting out their proposed revenue budget for 2025/26 and MTFS to 2027/28. In determining the final budget proposals to be included in the proposed budget for 2025/26, Cabinet will also consider the outcome of the Provisional Local Government Finance Settlement and other resources available through Council Tax and Business Rates.

Budget engagement and consultation

13. The council's approach to consultation and engagement is explained further in the Consultation and Engagement Strategy 2022 - 2025. This puts residents at the heart of decision-making and aims to engage with and listen to residents and other partners in a more active and inclusive way.
14. The council's approach to budget engagement for 2025/26 aims to:
- Involve, inform and engage residents, businesses, staff and partners about the financial pressures facing the council and underline our ongoing commitment to delivering against our strategic priorities.
 - Enable the council to develop a clear understanding of what is important to local people, their priorities and the challenges facing their communities and to feed that insight into the budget and business planning process.
 - Increase understanding of how the council works, the range of services it delivers and what council tax is spent on.
15. A three-phase approach to consultation and engagement to support 2025/26 business and business planning has been organised into three distinct phases:
- **Phase 1:** Representative residents' survey
 - **Phase 2:** Participatory engagement: Budget simulator, focus groups and sounding boards for children and young people
 - **Phase 3:** Public consultation on the substance of the 2025/26 budget
16. Feedback from Phase 1 and 2 was included in the [Budget & Business Planning report to Cabinet on 15 October 2024 and included in annex 4 to this report.](#)
17. Phase 3, the public consultation on the substance of the 2025/26 budget proposals, will be launched on 28 November 2024 and will run until 2 January 2025 on the council's consultation and digital engagement platform "Let's Talk Oxfordshire". There will also be an opportunity for people to comment on the council's proposed budget with feedback captured using an online form or in writing by Freepost.

Current Medium Term Financial Strategy 2025/26 to 2026/27

Planned changes to directorate budgets

18. The budget supports a range of service provision which contributes to the council's vision and nine priorities. Further information about the council's services is available in [Annex 1a to the Budget & Business Planning Report to Cabinet on 15 October 2024](#). Because most of these services continue from one year to the next the first step in building the budget for 2025/26 is to roll forward 2024/25 budgets. This starting point is then adjusted for changes for 2025/26 built into the MTFS agreed in February 2024.
19. The net council funded budget for each service and changes that are already planned to create the budget for 2025/26 based on the current MTFS agreed in February 2024 are set out in Annex 1a and summarised in Table 2 which also shows the impact on the budget for each service. New changes agreed as part of the 2025/26 Budget & Business Planning Process will be added to this starting point.

Table 2: Current MTFS agreed in February 2024

Service Areas	2024/25 Budget (*)	Add Planned Changes in current MTFS	Indicative Budget 2025/26	Change in Budget
	£m	£m	£m	%
Adult Services	251.7	10.9	262.6	4.4%
Children's Services	199.1	3.3	202.4	1.7%
Environment & Highways	70.6	1.7	72.4	2.5%
Economy & Place	2.0	-0.1	1.9	-3.7%
Public Health & Communities	12.9	0.2	13.1	1.5%
Oxfordshire Fire & Rescue Service and Community Safety	28.9	1.0	29.9	3.6%
Resources and Law & Governance	59.0	1.6	60.6	2.7%
Transformation, Digital & Customer Experience	3.5	-0.9	2.6	-25.4%
Service Total	627.7	17.9	645.6	2.85%

(*) 3.5% budgeted pay inflation for 2024/25 has been allocated to services in these totals.

Autumn Budget 2024, Spending Review & Other Funding Updates

20. On 30 October 2024, the Government announced the [Autumn Budget 2024](#), the first major fiscal announcement following the General Election in July 2024.
21. A one-year spending review for 2025/26 was included as part of the Autumn Budget. A multi-year spending review for subsequent years is expected in spring 2025.

Core Spending Power and Local Government Funding

22. Core Spending Power (which includes council tax and business rates) will increase in real terms by approximately 3.2% nationally, including at least £600m additional funding for social care; alongside a £700m un-ringfenced grant.
23. With inflation at 1.7% for the year to September 2024, 3.2% in real terms is just under 5% in cash terms, which equates to approximately £3.2bn (based on 2024/25's Core Spending Power of £64.7bn). The increase in core spending power will also need to meet new pressures such as changes to Employers National Insurance, demand increases and inflationary pressures. Whilst this is a lower increase than that in 2024/25, the additional funding is welcome given the significant financial challenges the sector faces.
24. Core Spending Power for the council will be included as part of the Provisional Local Government Settlement expected to be announced on 19 December 2024. The Government is expected to publish a Local Government Finance Policy Statement ahead of the Provisional Local Government Finance Settlement. This is likely to include notification of the maximum Council Tax increase for 2025/26 and the methodology for the distribution of the new £1.3bn grant.

Inflation and the National Living Wage

25. The National Living Wage (NLW) will increase by 6.7% to £12.21 per hour and £10.00 per hour for 18-20 year olds from April 2025.
26. The Autumn Budget assumes Consumer Price Index (CPI) inflation of 2.5% in 2024 with inflation remaining above 2% but gradually falling until 2028. As shown in Table 3 the forecast is higher in all years than set out in the Spring Budget 2024.

Table 3	Forecast CPI Spring Budget 2024	Forecast CPI Autumn Budget 2024
2024	2.2%	2.5%
2025	1.5%	2.6%
2026	1.6%	2.3%
2027	1.9%	2.1%
2028	2.0%	2.1%

27. The impact of the increase in the National Living Wage and the rate of CPI inflation on the rates the council pays for services will need to be considered and agreed as part of the final budget agreed in February 2025.
28. The increase in the National Living Wage also means that pressure relating to pay inflation (based on national agreements) for the council's employees is now

likely to be higher than the 2.5% increase assumed for 2025/26 because of the impact on national pay scales. The current assumption is in line with the average increase for 2024/25 of 3.5%. However, this expected to be able to be managed through use of existing funding for pay inflation not required in 2024/25.

National Insurance

29. Employer National Insurance contributions (NICs) will increase from 13.8% to 15% from 6 April 2025 alongside a reduction from £9,100 to £5,000 in the per-employee threshold at which employers become liable to pay National Insurance.
30. An update on the funding arrangements for public bodies for the impact of this increase on both direct staffing costs and contract costs is awaited. It is currently estimated that the impact of the changes on the council for employees and services will be in the region of £8.2m.

Council Tax

31. There remains no notification about the arrangements for council tax referendum limits for 2025/26 other than what could be inferred from national funding assumptions as part of the Autumn Budget 2024. Therefore, until information becomes available, the assumptions remain in line with the existing MTFS, that the maximum increase falls back to 1.99% in 2025/26. Each 1% increase in council tax will generate around £5.0m on-going funding for the council's services.
32. Updates on the council tax base and council tax collection fund surpluses or deficits for 2025/26 are expected to be shared by the district councils later in December and January.

Business Rates

33. In addition to council tax funding the Council receives a Settlement Funding Assessment (SFA) from Government which is the share of the local government spending based on the 'need' of a local authority. It comprises Business Rate Top Up Grant, together with the Government's assessment of the level of local Business Rates income to be retained by the Council. The SFA for 2024/25 is £78.4m and the current plan assumes that increases by 2.0% (£1.6m) to £80.0m in 2025/26. The Autumn Statement confirmed that SFAs will be increased by September 2024 CPI (1.7%) which would reduce the total SFA for the council by an estimated £0.3m compared to the existing MTFS with a total of £79.7m. The council's actual SFA will be confirmed as part of the Provisional Local Government Settlement.
34. The Autumn Statement also confirmed that Business Rates reliefs for Leisure, Retail and Hospitality businesses will be extended on a permanent basis at a reduced rate of 40% up to a cap of £110,000 per business rather than 75% relief in 2024/25. The council expects to receive further Section 31 grant funding

in 2025/26 (this will reduce from the £3.6m grant funding notified for 2024/25) to offset local business rates income not received because of these reliefs.

35. The council's actual SFA and grant funding allocations for some of the business rates reliefs will be included as part of the Provisional Local Government Settlement with further information on funding for reliefs shared by the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) in spring 2025. District councils are required to provide information by the end of January 2025 on the Business Rate Collection Fund surpluses or deficits, along with local shares of business rates to confirm business rates growth above the SFA.

Specific Grant Funding included in Core Spending Power

Social Care Grant

36. The Social Care Grant, which can be used to support either Children's or Adult Social Care was increased from £32.7m in 2023/24 to £42.5m in 2024/25. £4.8m of the increase was announced in the Final Local Government Settlement for 2024/25 in February 2024. Since it was unclear whether this additional funding was one-off or on-going this was used to support one-off investments in Adult's and Children's Social Care in 2024/25. The existing MTFS therefore assumes that the £4.8m grant funding does not continue into 2025/26. Whilst it is likely, based on what can be assumed from the Autumn Budget 2024 totals, that this will continue into 2025/26, there is currently not a clear understanding on how this could be distributed in 2025/26, which may result in the council receiving a different share of the overall funding.
37. A further £600m funding for Social Care will be available nationally in 2025/26. The council's share will depend on the distribution mechanism which is likely to take into account deprivation and could be adjusted to take account of council tax equalisation. At this stage it isn't possible to accurately estimate the impact of this announcement on funding for Oxfordshire.
38. The Adult Social Care Market Sustainability and Improvement fund and the Discharge fund were both announced for two years ceasing in 2024/25. These are ringfenced to Adult Social Care, with Oxfordshire's share being £10.0m and £2.5m respectively in 2024/25. It is currently assumed that the Market Sustainability and Improvement fund will continue in future years in some form, as it was provided to support increasing fees for care services in the sector. If it wasn't continued it would have a significant impact on authorities across the country. There is less certainty relating to the Discharge fund, however if this wasn't continued it is assumed any services funded by this would end.

New Homes Bonus

39. £1.7m un-ringfenced funding from the New Homes Bonus, which was extended by a further year into 2024/25, was expected to fall out in 2025/26. At this stage there is no information on whether this will continue or cease.
40. Confirmation of the council's actual share of these grants will be included in the Provisional Local Government Settlement. As the Autumn Budget 2024 was clear that there is expected to be a "a targeted approach to allocating additional

funding in 2025/26, ahead of a broader redistribution of funding through a multi-year settlement from 2026/27", no estimates are being included in the funding assumptions.

Other Grant Funding Updates

Household Support Fund

41. The Government has announced funding of £1bn nationally for the Household Support Fund (HSF) and Discretionary Housing Payments in 2025/26 to extend the funding to March 2026, the amount for Oxfordshire along with any grant conditions are yet to be confirmed. In September 2024, the Government announced that it would extend the HSF for a further six months, from October 2024 to March 2025, with a further £421m of funding, with Oxfordshire's allocation being £3.4m.

Roads Maintenance

42. As part of the Autumn Budget 2024, the Government announced an increase of £500m on 2024/25 funding for local roads maintenance in addition to baseline funding, the amount for Oxfordshire along with any grant conditions are yet to be confirmed.

Bus Services

43. On 17 November 2024, the Department for Transport (DfT) announced details of £1bn funding for bus services.
44. For Oxfordshire this includes £5.4m of capital, £0.1m of capacity building and £3.8m of revenue funding in relation to the Bus Service Improvement Plans grant. This is to support Local Transport authorities to deliver their bus service improvement plans, and to continue the National Bus Fare Cap at £3 until December 2025. In total, this is an increase in funding of £4.5m compared to 2024/25. The DfT also announced the continuation of the Bus Services Operators Grant at £0.8m for Oxfordshire.

Extended Producer Responsibilities

45. Local Authorities are expected to receive around £1.1bn of new funding in 2025/26 through the implementation of the Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) scheme to improve recycling outcomes. Exceptionally for 2025/26 only, HM Treasury will guarantee that if Local Authorities do not receive EPR income in line with the central estimate there will be an in-year top up, with the detail on this to be set out through the Settlement process. The Oxfordshire share of this funding is expected to be split across Districts, City and County Council, with further detail on any new requirements to be confirmed. Allocations are expected to be published at the end of November or in early December.

Dedicated Schools Grant Funding and SEND

46. The Autumn Budget allocated an overall increase of £2.3bn to the core schools' budget, equivalent to 3.7% real growth, almost £1bn of this funding will go towards supporting the SEND system.

47. The £1bn High Needs funding under Phase 1 of the spending review uplift for SEND and alternative provision funding, provides equivalent to 6% real growth. Further work to improve outcomes and return the system to financial sustainability, will be built on through Phase 2. Details on how this additional funding will be allocated are yet to be received.
48. In line with the CIPFA code of practice on Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) deficits are held in an unusable reserve since 2020/21. The forecast deficit of £26.1m in 2024/25 will increase the total accumulated negative balance for High Needs held in this reserve to £81.9m at 31 March 2025.
49. The regulations which require the negative balance to be held in an unusable reserve were due to come to an end on 1 April 2023. In December 2022 the government agreed to the extension of the DSG statutory override for a one-off period of three years (up to March 2026). There is no confirmed position on whether there is any change to this process, or extension of the override period, although there is pressure in the sector for some guidance, but it needs a cross-government approach between MHCLG and the Department for Education (DfE).
50. DSG deficits cannot currently be met from general council funding without permission from the Secretary of State. However, this deficit, both accumulated to date, and on-going, is a significant financial risk irrespective of the future arrangements for the statutory override. This will need to be taken into account in the assessment of the overall financial position for the council, including the adequacy of reserves and balances for 2025/26, that is required to be set out in the statutory Section 25 report by the Director of Finance.
51. The authority is in the last year of receiving Delivering Better Value funding from DfE and is required to complete a DSG Deficit Management Plan, as a tool for strategically managing the deficit. There are a number of mitigations planned in the DSG Deficit Management Plan that are designed to mitigate the High Needs Funding over the longer term. They include new Special Schools scheduled 2023/24 to 2029/30, new SEN Units and Resource Bases, Transfer of Resource Bases to Schools – Piloted from 2025/26, savings through contract renegotiation and review of service delivery.
52. There are other issues being reviewed in the service such as the implementation of a Banding System from April 2026 and the top up rates transitioning to funding at full cost. Both of these policies may more appropriately fund SEND establishments and also have the risk that they will put more pressure into this part of the DSG High Needs Funding.

Looking Ahead: Local Government Funding Reform

53. The Autumn Budget 2024 report states that the Government will pursue a “comprehensive set of reforms to return the sector to a sustainable position. This will include reform of the approach to allocating funding through the Local Government Finance Settlement, starting with a targeted approach to allocating

additional funding in 2025/26, ahead of a broader redistribution of funding through a multi-year settlement from 2026/27”.

54. Looking ahead, the Government is committed to “reforming the approach to funding allocations within the Local Government Finance Settlement by redistributing funding to ensure that it reflects an up-to-date assessment of need and local revenues”.
55. Since there has been no consultation over the autumn it is unlikely that there will be a significant redistribution of existing funding sources implemented in 2025/26 but it is likely that there will be a targeted approach to deprivation and greater council tax equalisation used in the distribution of the additional £1.3bn grant funding announced in the Autumn Budget 2024.
56. A Local Government Finance Policy Paper will be published ahead of the Provisional Local Government Finance Settlement on 19 December 2024. This is expected to set out more details on the plans for funding reform from 2026/27 including a timetable for engagement and consultation. The Government first launched the Fair Funding Review in 2016 to devise a new system for allocating funding between councils, which would be based on updated and improved methods for estimating councils’ differing abilities to raise revenues themselves and their differing spending needs. This was expected to affect how funding was allocated and redistributed between local authorities from 2020 onwards. The focus on ‘need’ to drive the new funding formula was using three main cost drivers of population, deprivation and sparsity, and additional cost drivers related to specific local authority services. This was alongside a planned increase in business rate retention by local authorities from 50% to 75%. Due to COVID-19, the implementation was delayed and remains outstanding.
57. It is expected that the Council will lose funding under any formula which is based on both need and ability to raise revenue. Previous reports to Cabinet and to Council since 2016 have referred to the financial risk of implementation. Assumptions on possible reductions in funding will be considered later in the budget setting process and ahead of Council setting the MTFS in February 2025.
58. It is expected that the consultation on the new formula will commence in Spring 2025, with a further engagement exercise in the Summer in light of feedback from the consultation. However, details of the multi-year settlement for 2026/27 and beyond will not be available until the Local Government Finance Settlement is announced in December 2025.

New Revenue Budget Proposals 2025/26 - 2027/28

59. Over the summer services were asked to assess the cost of their service plans and likely demand/costs. The outputs from this exercise, along with the Administration’s investment proposals are set out below.
60. The Council’s Strategic Plan (2023 – 2025) was critical to shaping all proposals for new revenue budget, investment and capital proposals and demonstrates

the connection of the budget to the overall objectives set by the Council to ensure a greener, fairer and healthier Oxfordshire for all.

Proposed Budget Changes to add to the existing plan

61. New service pressures identified as a result of this assessment are shown in Annex 1b and summarised in Table 5.

Table 5: New Services Pressures

Service Areas	2025/26 £m	2026/27 £m	2027/28 £m	Total £m
Adult Services	-0.8	1.2	17.1	17.6
Children's Services	12.4	10.6	12.4	35.5
Environment & Highways	0.6	1.2	4.1	5.9
Economy & Place	0.1	-0.1	0.2	0.2
Public Health & Communities	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.1
Oxfordshire Fire & Rescue Service and Community Safety	0.7	0.8	0.6	2.1
Resources and Law & Governance	0.7	0.5	1.6	2.8
Transformation, Digital & Customer Experience	0.2	0.0	0.1	0.3
Total	14.1	14.3	36.1	64.5

62. 2027/28 is a new year that needs to be added to the MTFS so the pressures in that year mainly reflect demographic growth for Adult Social Care, Children's Social Care and Waste Management, and the addition of estimated pay inflation at 2.5%.

Adult Services

63. Demography has been recalculated based on future population growth in relevant cohorts and recent activity trends and this is predicted to produce a reduction to the existing demography pressure of £0.4m included in the budget agreed in February 2024 from 2025/26 onwards.

Children's Services

64. Pressures for Education include the reversal of £1.2m COVID-19 funding for HN Block Pressures, this has been replaced with a £0.5m pressure to fund the SEN Inreach/Outreach programme between special schools and mainstream schools, resulting in a net reduction.
65. Additional demographic funding is forecast to be required in 2025/26 for children's services across education and social care. For home to school transport there is an on-going impact based on demographic growth of between 7% and 9% estimated to be a pressure of £0.4m from 2025/26 increasing to £3.2m by 2027/28.
66. The growth in demand for Educational Psychologists results in a pressure of £0.6m in 2025/26, and a further pressure of £1.0m in 2026/27.

67. The impact of inflation pressures in contracts with providers of care is estimated to be £2.5m in 2025/26.
68. Within the Early help/Front door service there is a £0.4m on-going pressure which relates to the continuation of funding for Supporting Families funded posts, Community Impact Zone, and LCSS staffing as the grant to support this is not expected to continue in 2025/26. The future of this funding is uncertain at this point, but it is believed it is unlikely to continue, at least in the current form beyond 2024/25.
69. A £2.8m pressure relates to the removal of undeliverable savings from 2024/25 and a risk adjustment of £4.7m has been included in relation to the delivery of existing savings, to reflect the potential challenges in delivering the savings in full.
70. Changes to future pressures relating to the Dedicated Schools Grant for High Needs will be shared later in the Budget & Business Planning process.

Environment & Highways

71. Within Network Management there are £1.1m pressures mainly associated with the delay in the Department for Transport decision on the council's lane rental scheme application. A £0.2m pressure relates to reduced income as a result of higher levels of compliance on moving traffic offences.
72. There is also a proposed pressure of £0.2m in 2025/26 for landfill site maintenance due to aging equipment and change in emissions.

Economy and Place

73. A pressure of £0.1m is proposed one-off in relation to energy staffing budgets due to a reduction in grant funding.

Public Health & Communities

74. Public Health activity will continue to be managed within the ring-fenced grant funding. £0.2m is proposed to be used for Libraries and Heritage services pressures to continue to the home library service and early years provision at current levels.

Oxfordshire Fire & Rescue & Community Safety

75. An additional £0.2m funding is proposed towards the cost of a resilience contract within the Thames Valley reflecting a change in the minimum service levels legislation.

Resources and Law & Governance

76. A £0.3m pressure in the Finance & Commercial Services Team relates to the reversal of an overpayments recovery target which was a temporary rather than permanent income source.

77. £0.2m in the Law and Governance service relates to pressures on budgeted vacancy factors, due to demands on the service.
78. £0.2m relates to previously agreed but unachievable savings in 2024/25 in the IT service.

Transformation, Digital and Customer

79. A £0.2m pressure relates the removal of helpdesk consolidation savings.

Proposals for Corporate Budgets

80. New corporate budget pressures of £9.7m are proposed for 2025/26 with an on-going impact of £14.7m by 2027/28 as set out in the table below. £8.2m of this relates to the initial estimate of the cost of Employers National Insurance costs to the council. The Government confirmed funding would be provided for the costs related to directly employed staff, details of which are expected to be confirmed in the Provisional Local Government Finance Settlement.

Capital Financing

81. Interest payments on external borrowing are lower than previously forecast from 2025/26 as a result of higher cash balances across the medium term, whilst the increase to the capital financing requirement as a result of the proposed borrowing results in an increase to the Minimum Revenue Provision from 2026/27 onwards following a reduction in 2025/26 compared to the existing plan.
82. The detailed proposals for each service as well as changes to budgets held centrally are set out in Annex 1b and summarised in the table below.

Table 6: Corporate Budgets	2025/26 £m	2026/27 £m	2027/28 £m	Total £m
Impact of increases in Employers National Insurance contribution on Employees and Services expenditure	8.2	0.2	0.3	8.7
Increase in interest on cash balances	-1.0	1.1	0.5	0.6
Capital Financing	-1.7	2.2	0.7	1.2
£65m Prudential Borrowing for priority capital schemes including Highways Maintenance	4.2	0.0	0.0	4.2
Total	9.7	3.5	1.5	14.7

Proposals for New Investments

83. New investments of £5.4m are proposed for 2025/26 with an on-going impact of £5.1m by 2027/28. The detailed proposals for each service as well as changes to budgets held centrally are set out in Annex 1b and summarised in Table 7.

Table 7: New Investments

Service Areas	2025/26 £m	2026/27 £m	2027/28 £m	Total £m
Adult Services	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Children's Services	1.1	0.1	0.2	1.4
Environment & Highways	1.5	0.0	0.0	1.5
Economy & Place	0.2	0.0	-0.1	0.1
Public Health & Communities	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Oxfordshire Fire & Rescue Service and Community Safety	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Resources and Law & Governance	1.6	-0.9	0.0	0.8
Transformation, Digital & Customer Experience	1.0	0.3	0.0	1.3
Total	5.4	-0.4	0.1	5.1

Children's Services

84. A £1.0m investment to develop services to support under 5 year olds, developing early help and early years support so that all children can get the best possible start in life. There is also a proposed £0.1m investment in Social Work Apprenticeships due to an overlap between apprenticeships being concluded and the release of agency workers.

Environment & Highways

85. A £1.5m investment is proposed to increase the cleansing of Highway Drainage assets.

Economy & Place

86. An investment of £0.1m in additional resources in 2025/26 and 2026/27 will facilitate delivery of four National Strategic Infrastructure Projects.
87. An investment of £0.1m is proposed in Climate Action relating to carbon sequestration to move the council's operational emissions towards a negative net total (i.e. beyond 'net zero'). In addition, this investment will cover the cost of forward purchasing Carbon offsets to reduce the impact of future offsetting costs.

Resources and Law & Governance

88. A £0.8m investment is proposed to continue the Councillor Priority Fund for 2025/26 and 2026/27; a £0.8m investment is also proposed on additional resource within the contracts management team to drive the delivery of best value from the council's contracts with third parties and is expected to support the achievement of savings in contracts and third party spend.

89. A £0.1m investment in Property & Assets relates to the continuation of discretionary rent concessions provided to tenants in the Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) which were scheduled to end in March 2025 for a further year.

Transformation, Digital & Customer Experience

90. A £0.8m investment in a revised data team structure is proposed as part of the transformation programme to further deliver efficiencies.
91. A further investment of £0.1m relates to additional resource in the delivery unit, and a further £0.1m to the cost of Digital Management Tools.

Proposals for New Savings

92. New budget reductions of £17.9m are proposed for 2025/26 with an on-going impact of £22.8m by 2027/28. The detailed proposals for each service as well as changes to budgets held centrally are set out in Annex 1b and summarised in Table 8.

Table 8: New Savings

Service Areas	2025/26 £m	2026/27 £m	2027/28 £m	Total £m
Adult Services	-5.1	-0.1	0.0	-5.2
Children's Services	-1.0	-0.2	-0.2	-1.3
Environment & Highways	-2.1	0.0	0.0	-2.1
Economy & Place	-0.1	0.0	0.0	0.0
Public Health & Communities	-0.8	0.8	0.0	0.0
Oxfordshire Fire & Rescue Service and Community Safety	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Resources and Law & Governance	-1.2	-0.1	-0.1	-1.3
Transformation, Digital & Customer Experience	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Cross Cutting Proposals	-7.7	-5.2	0.0	-12.9
Total	-17.9	-4.8	-0.2	-22.8

Adults Services

93. Adult Services continue to support people in Oxfordshire to live well in their community, remaining fit and healthy for as long as possible. Savings include the continuing impact of the Section 117 joint health funding of £4.2m, a £0.3m savings relating to the reduction in short stay hub beds by supporting hospital discharges and moving support into homes.
94. A £0.4m saving is proposed from a reduction in the number of packages receiving double handed care and a saving of £0.2m from an introduction of a fixed charge for setting up of a universal deferred payment agreement for the first time since 2015, as set out in Care Act 2014 to bring it in line with what other local authorities are charging.

Children's Services

95. Within the Early Help/Front door service there is a proposed £0.1m saving associated with the expected ending of supporting families funding, which is yet to be confirmed. £0.5m savings has been identified in the Provider Services and Safeguarding service, associated with providing capital loans to foster carers to increase local capacity, and a £0.3m savings from reviewing the delivery of an outdoor therapy service.

Environment & Highways

96. Savings of £1.5m within Highways Maintenance relate to the on-going impact of the council's investment in LED lamp replacements on streetlighting energy usage. In addition, there is a £0.5m saving for the drawdown from commuted sums to support the previous year's growth in highway maintenance services. In infrastructure delivery there is a saving of £0.1m for increased allocation of staff time to council projects and schemes.

Economy & Place

97. Proposed savings include a higher S106 income target and savings from a reduction in the works budget in the central Oxfordshire team.

Public Health & Communities

98. £0.8m savings relate to the release of council funding due to utilisation of government grants to fund services across the council.

Oxfordshire Fire & Rescue & Community Safety

99. £0.03m savings are proposed from the implementation of interim measures to improve fire engine availability and response times.

Resources and Law & Governance

100. £1.0m savings in the Property & Assets function include savings from vacating Abbey House, rationalisation of the estate, and Health & safety responsibilities within Facilities management. There are also £0.2m savings from the review of current contracts.

Cross Cutting Proposals

101. A saving of £7.7m has been included for cross cutting themes in 2025/26. This includes savings of £5.0m from undertaking a review of contracts and third party spend, £1.0m savings from commercial opportunities, £0.7m savings from organisational redesign, £0.3m saving from focus on confirming and clarifying corporate landlord responsibilities and budgets, a £0.2m saving from a proposing to streamline the council's approach to commissioning services through the voluntary and community sector and £0.5m savings from developing the council's integrated transport hub. These will need to be developed further as the Budget & Business Planning process continues.

Updated Position for 2025/26 compared to current Medium Term Financial Strategy

102. Based on funding assumptions in the existing MTFS and after taking account of new pressures, savings and investments there is a pressure of £25.2m. However, this is before taking account of any new funding announced in the Autumn Budget 2024.
103. Table 9 sets out the revised position for 2025/26 compared to the current plan incorporating the new changes set out in this report. Due to the level of uncertainty, new funding announced in the Autumn Budget and any possible Council Tax increases beyond 1.99% have not been included in the position at this stage. Therefore, the current budget deficit set out of £25.2m will change significantly once the Provisional Local Government Finance Settlement is announced.
104. The first column of Table 9 shows the budget for 2025/26 assumed in the MTFS agreed by Council in February 2024. The second column then shows anticipated changes that can be added at this stage and the final column shows the combined impact.

Table 9: Current MTFS and Updates to the Budget for 2025/26

	2025/26 Budget Current MTFS £m	Changes to Funding Assumptions £m	2025/26 Budget Updated £m
Funding:			
Council Tax	-517.4		-517.4
Council Tax Collection Fund	-8.0		-8.0
Business Rates	-101.2		-101.2
Revenue Support Grant	-1.4		-1.4
Total Funding	-628.0		-628.0

	2025/26 Budget Current MTFS £m	New Budget Pressures, Investments and Savings £m	2025/26 Budget Updated £m
Net operating budget 2024/25	611.2		611.2
Directorate Budget Changes			
Existing planned changes	17.9		17.9
New service pressures (Table 5)		14.1	14.1
New Investments (Table 7)		5.4	5.4
New savings (Table 8)		-17.9	-17.9
Subtotal Services Changes	17.9	1.6	19.5
Budgets held centrally			
Existing planned changes	12.8		12.8
New changes (Table 6)		9.7	9.7
Net Operating Budget 2025/26	641.9	11.3	653.2
Budget Deficit	+13.9	+11.3	+25.2

105. Table 10 shows the impact of the proposed changes for each service and for budgets held centrally in 2025/26. Further detail and the updated position for each directorate will be set out in the reports to Performance and Corporate Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Cabinet in January 2025.

Table 10: Proposed changes for each service and budgets held centrally

Service Areas	Budget Rolled Forward from 2024/25 £m	Add changes in current MTFS £m	Add new budget increases £m	Less new savings £m	2025/26 Budget £m	Cash Change in Budget %	Real Terms Change in Budget ² %
Adult Services	251.7	10.9	-0.8	-5.1	256.7	2.0%	-0.5%
Children's Services	199.1	3.3	13.6	-1.0	215.0	8.0%	5.5%
Environment & Highways	70.6	1.7	2.1	-2.1	72.4	2.5%	0.0%
Economy & Place	2.0	-0.1	0.2	-0.1	2.1	4.6%	2.1%
Public Health & Communities	12.9	0.2	0.1	-0.8	12.5	-3.3%	-5.8%
Oxfordshire Fire & Rescue Service and Community Safety	28.9	1.0	0.7	-0.0	30.6	6.0%	3.5%
Resources and Law & Governance	59.0	1.6	2.3	-1.2	61.8	4.7%	2.2%
Transformation, Digital & Customer Experience	3.5	-0.9	1.1	0.0	3.7	7.0%	4.5%
Cross Cutting Proposals - To be Allocated				-7.7	-7.7		
Services Total	627.7	17.9	19.5	-17.9	647.1	3.1%	0.6%
Budgets Held Centrally							
Capital Financing Costs	30.2	1.3	2.5	0.0	34.0		
Interest on balances	-20.2	4.1	0.0	-1.0	-17.1		
Contingency & Inflation Risk	15.1	0.1	8.2 ³	0.0	23.4		
Un-ringfenced Specific Grants	-52.0	6.9	0.0	0.0	-45.1		
Insurance	1.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.7		
Budgeted contribution from COVID-19 Reserve	-3.8	1.4	0.0	0.0	-2.3		
Budgeted contribution from Transformation Reserve	-1.5	0.6	0.0	0.0	-0.9		
Budgeted contribution from Budget Priorities Reserve	-1.4	1.4	0.0	0.0	0.0		
Other Budgeted Contributions to reserves ⁴	15.4	-3.1	0.0	0.0	12.4		
Total Budgets Held Centrally	-16.4	12.8	10.7	-1.0	6.0		
Net Operating Budget	611.2	30.7	30.2	-18.9	653.2	6.9%	4.4%
Existing Funding in MTFS (from Table 8)					-628.0		
Budget Deficit					+25.2		

106. Outstanding information which is required as part of the Budget & Business Planning process is set out at paragraph 123. Changes to budget proposals arising from the consultation plus any further updates to pressures arising from the forecast position for 2024/25, other inflationary changes, and funding for 2025/26, as well as the assessed level of reserves and balances will need to

² Assuming inflation of 2.5% (based on CPI in the year to April 2025)

³ Impact of increases in Employers' National Insurance held corporately until further information is available (see paragraph 80).

⁴ Includes £4.0m on-going contribution to Demographic Risk Reserve, a £10.2m contribution to the Prudential Borrowing Reserve and adjustment to the Budget Equalisation Reserve.

be considered and taken into account in the final budget proposed by Cabinet in January 2025.

Capital & Investment Strategy

107. Capital expenditure obtains or improves buildings, vehicles, equipment or other assets owned by the council. The capital programme shows how the Council will use capital expenditure to support the delivery of its priorities.
108. Council is required to approve the capital and investment strategy annually to demonstrate that capital expenditure and investment decisions are in line with objectives and properly take account of stewardship, value for money, prudence, sustainability and affordability. The capital and investment strategy incorporates the treasury management strategy and is supplemented by the council's property strategy and highways asset management plan.
109. The total value of capital proposals requiring funding from the Council's corporate resources is £109.2m. Funding available to be allocated for 2025/26 onwards includes an additional £65.0m of prudential borrowing., the cost of which is reflected in the revenue budget proposals in Table 6 at paragraph 82. The majority of the prudential borrowing is proposed to be allocated to maintaining Oxfordshire's Highway Network. There is also £13.1m funding to be returned to the Capital Programme as a result of savings on previous delivered schemes, as well as a further £20.0m of corporate resources, bringing the total funding available to £98.1m.
110. If all proposed investments are approved, the programme will exceed available funding by £11.1m. The total value of the Capital Programme is £1.3bn, therefore it would not be imprudent to over-programme up to a maximum level of £20m, which is 1.5% of the total programme. The Capital & Investment Strategy was agreed in February 2024. A revised strategy, outlining a new set of priorities, will be presented to Cabinet in January 2025 and then Council in February 2025. Capital schemes put forward as part of the 2025/26 budget have been prioritised as follows:

Schemes that facilitate compliance with minimum statutory duties relating to health & safety, schools, and delivery of business-critical services

Schemes that generate revenue, are self-funding or facilitate cost-avoidance strategies

Schemes that contribute to the improvement of the highway network, including road safety measures, flood prevention work and pothole prevention measures such as surface dressings

Schemes that encourage and facilitate active travel and improve market towns

Schemes that enhance energy efficiency and promote the adoption of sustainable and environmentally responsible solutions

Schemes which are partly funded by Section 106 developer contributions but require additional funding to progress

111. Programmes of work, aligning with the above, are set out in Annex 2a. £1.7m is proposed to be invested into the corporate estate to ensure that buildings are fully compliant with new fire legislation. This investment is in addition to £2.0m already agreed at Council in February 2024 and should complete the programme of work.
112. A significant investment is required for the long-term viability of Redbridge Household Waste Recycling Centre. A £4.9m proposed investment will address health and safety concerns as well as providing a modern, upgraded site that will meet residents' future needs. In addition, an investment of £0.1m is required at Dix Pit Household Waste and Recycling Centre to ensure the site meets its legal and environmental responsibilities.
113. A proposed investment of £2.5m, to be spent over two years, will enhance the Council's IT infrastructure, ensuring the continuity of business-critical activities, with a significant portion of this investment allocated towards enhancing cybersecurity measures.
114. Schemes which generate cost savings, are self-funding or facilitate cost-avoidance, include a capital investment of £0.5m to increase local capacity to support children the Council cares for, by funding home improvement loans to foster carers. In line with policy, the loans could facilitate loft conversions, extensions or other home improvements that would enable foster carers to care for more children the Council cares for, enabling them to live locally, and reducing expenditure on placements.
115. A proposed investment of £1.9m is to enable the acquisition of land, for the development of four specialised homes for individuals in long-term hospital care, or at risk of being placed out-of-area to move into supported homes in Oxfordshire. This initiative aims to improve quality of life for residents by providing bespoke, adapted housing in the community. It will enable individuals in long-term hospital care to move to supported homes in Oxfordshire, and in a cost-effective manner.
116. In response to resident feedback, a proposed investment of £47.6m (in addition to expected government funding) is to be allocated over a two-year period to implement pothole prevention measures, and strategies to prevent drains from overflowing. The investment will also ensure improved maintenance of footways and cycle ways as well as effectively managing the condition of the Highway Network. An additional £4.0m investment over two years, is proposed to be allocated to support a programme of measures to improve accessibility, connectivity and road safety. £16.2m is to be committed to repair

bridges at risk of structural failure or closure, combined with preventative maintenance, also over a 2-year period.

117. A number of schemes are proposed that enhance Active Travel as well as improving market towns. £11.1m is proposed to be invested in Watlington Relief Road, a scheme originally to be funded by the Housing and Growth Deal. The scheme will alleviate noise, congestion and air pollution in the town centre, whilst offering more sustainable modes of transport, including cycling and walking. Proposed investments in Banbury and Wantage will enhance the town centre spaces, working with partners, to transform the areas into vibrant and inclusive and accessible spaces. St Giles is also to benefit from a proposed investment to deliver an improved space for pedestrians, cyclists and improved arrangements for buses and tourist coaches. An investment of £0.2m is also proposed to progress the Thame to Haddenham Active Travel Link.
118. The Council remains committed to the adoption of sustainable and environmentally responsible solutions and its ambition of reaching net zero by 2030. Schemes include a further £10.0m proposed investment over a two-year period, which is in addition to £10.2m already invested. This investment increases funds already committed to address a backlog in repairs and maintenance, ensuring buildings are future-proofed through the adoption of sustainable and environmentally responsible solutions. A further £0.3m proposed investment will also ensure the continuation and expansion of the Energy Efficiency Recycling Fund. The scheme, already in use by a number of schools, enables investment in energy-saving measures providing students with better learning environments, as well as reducing schools' energy costs, and supports the Council's climate action goals.
119. A number of transport infrastructure schemes are proposed to be funded, which will support local communities. An investment of £4.0m is proposed which will encompass footway extensions, active travel schemes, highway layout changes, pedestrian crossings and bus stop improvements. The schemes are partly funded by Section 106 developer contributions but require additional funding to progress, releasing £22.5m of Section 106 developer contributions.
120. Table 6 summarises the proposed use of the available funding.

Table 6:

	Proposed Corporate Funding (£m⁵)
Schemes that facilitate compliance with minimum statutory duties relating to health and safety, schools and delivery of business-critical services	10.6
Schemes that generate revenue, are self-funding or facilitate cost-avoidance strategies	2.9
Schemes that contribute to the improvement of the highway network and pothole prevention measures such as surface dressings	67.8
Schemes that encourage and facilitate active travel and improve market towns	13.6
Schemes that enhance energy efficiency and promote the adoption of sustainable and environmentally responsible solutions	10.2
Schemes which are partly funded by Section 106 developer contributions but require additional funding to progress	4.0
Total Schemes Proposed to be Funded	109.2

121. Annex 2a sets out high priority capital schemes to which indicative funding is proposed to be allocated. Annex 2b lists schemes included in the pipeline pending future funding becoming available.
122. In accordance with the council's capital governance arrangements all schemes, including those assessed as high priority, will need an approved business case before they are added to the firm programme.

Outstanding Information & Next Steps

123. At the point of publication of this report, all information on funding for the Council for 2025/26 remains outstanding. This includes:
- The provisional and final Local Government Finance Settlement for 2025/26 setting out the council's Settlement Funding Assessment and confirming estimated grant funding and any other changes including any redistribution of existing and new funding.
 - Confirmation of any referendum limit on council tax precepts along with the continuation of a social care precept.
 - Updates on the growth in the council tax base for 2025/26 and surpluses on council tax collection funds, expected to be received from the City and District Councils in December 2024 and January 2025 respectively.

⁵ estimates subject to business cases.

- Notification of Business Rates income for 2025/26 and collection fund deficits/surpluses which may not be received from the City and District Councils until 31 January 2025.
- The outcome of the public consultation running from 28 November 2024 to 2 January 2025.

124. Changes arising from these updates will need to be addressed as part of the proposed budget which will be presented to Cabinet on 28 January 2025.

Business and Budget Planning Process

125. Updates to funding and any changes to proposals known by the end of December 2024 will be published on 9 January 2025 ahead of consideration by Performance and Corporate Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 17 January 2025.

126. Cabinet will propose their budget on 28 January 2025 taking into account comments from Performance and Corporate Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee in December 2024 and January 2025 as well as feedback from the public consultation. The report to Cabinet in January will include:

- Council tax and precept calculations
- Draft budget for 2025/26
- Draft MTFS to 2027/28 (incorporating proposed changes following consultation)
- Review of charges for 2025/26
- Capital and Investment Strategy incorporating the Property Investment Strategy and Treasury Management Strategy
- Capital proposals and draft ten-year Capital Programme
- Earmarked Reserves and General Balances Policy
- Financial Strategy (including Financial Management Code self-assessment)

127. Council will meet to agree the Revenue Budget 2025/26; Capital Programme 2024/25 - 2034/35; MTFS 2025/26 - 2027/28 on 11 February 2025. Any further changes to the budget proposed by Cabinet at their meeting on 28 January 2025 needed as a result of funding changes notified in late January 2025, for example, will either be incorporated into the final budget considered by Council or updated during 2025/26.

Risk Management

128. The statutory report of the Chief Financial Officer required under Section 25 of the Local Government Act 2002, which forms part of the suite of papers considered by Council in setting the budget each February, includes a section assessing the key financial risks.

129. This report sets out some significant risks and uncertainties for 2025/26 and the medium term but these are continuing to be assessed through the Budget and

Business Planning process. An assessment of the impact will be provided as information and updates become available.

130. In addition to corporate contingency general balances are also held to ensure that a major incident or emergency can be managed without impacting on other services. The level of balances held is monitored through the Business Management & Monitoring Reports throughout the year and subject to an annual risk assessment undertaken as part of the budget setting process.

Equality and Inclusion Implications

131. The Equality Act 2010 imposes a duty on local authorities that, when making decisions of a strategic nature, decision makers must exercise 'due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination... advance equality of opportunity... and foster good relations.'
132. In developing budget proposals, services have considered the potential impact of change with respect to equality, diversity and inclusion, in line with the council's refreshed framework agreed by Cabinet on 19 November 2024, "Including Everyone".
133. The refresh of the framework gives the opportunity to realign the council's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) goals with the broader strategic priorities and reconsider how the framework can be used to drive meaningful change. The council has a track record of going beyond its legal equality duty by considering groups and communities beyond the protected characteristics of the Equality Act. For example, the council considers the impact of its decisions on rural communities, armed forces communities, areas of deprivation and carers. The new Including Everyone framework goes further, recognising the council's commitment to considering future generations in decision-making, as well as refugees and asylum seekers by becoming a Council of Sanctuary. The new framework also includes reference to the socioeconomic duty and consideration of residents experiencing socio-economic disadvantage.
134. A draft overarching summary impact assessment for equalities, taking into account the overall impact of the budget proposals, is included at Annex 3a. It should be noted that a number of proposals are very early in the business case development process.
135. Following the public consultation, impact assessments will be reviewed and updated as necessary to take into account consultation responses.

Sustainability Implications

136. The Climate Action Framework sets the council's commitment to tackling the climate emergency which is underpinned by the Council's priority to put action to address the climate emergency at the heart of our work.
137. A draft overarching summary impact assessment for climate of the budget proposals is included at Annex 3b. A number of the proposals are very early in

the business case development process and therefore will be subject to fuller Climate Impact Assessment as the proposals are developed.

Financial Implications

138. The Council is required by law to set a balanced budget for 2025/26 before 1 March 2025. Alongside this, there is a requirement under Section 25 of the Local Government Finance Act 2003 for the Chief Finance Officer to prepare a statement on the robustness of the budget estimates and the adequacy of reserves. This report is part of the process to achieve these objectives.

Comments checked by:

Thomas James, Head of Finance Business Partnering

Staff Implications

139. Staffing implications are being considered as part of the Budget and Business Planning process and any proposals are consistent with the council's People and Culture Strategy.

Legal Implications

140. The Council is required under the Local Government Finance Act 1992 to set a balanced budget and a council tax requirement for the authority. This report provides information which, when taken together with the previous and future reports up to January 2025, will lead to the council tax requirement being agreed in February 2025, together with a budget for 2025/26, medium term financial strategy covering the period to 2027/28, and ten- year capital programme.
141. The Council has a fiduciary duty to council taxpayers, which means it must consider the prudent use of resources, including control of expenditure, financial prudence in the short and long term, the need to strike a fair balance between the interests of the council taxpayers and ratepayers and the community's interest in adequate and efficient services and the need to act in good faith in relation to compliance with statutory duties and exercising statutory powers.

Comments checked by:

Paul Grant

Head of Legal

Lorna Baxter, Executive Director of Resources and Section 151 Officer

Annexes:Revenue expenditure

- Annex 1a – planned revenue budget changes agreed in February 2024
- Annex 1b – new revenue draft budget proposals

Capital expenditure:

- Annex 2a – High priority capital schemes to which indicative funding is proposed to be allocated
- Annex 2b – capital schemes proposed to be included in the pipeline but not funded at this stage.
- Annex 3a – Overarching Equality Impact Assessment
- Annex 3b – Overarching Climate Impact Assessment
- Annex 4 – Executive summary of 2024 residents' survey and 2025/26 budget engagement findings.

Contact Officers: Thomas James, Head of Finance Business Partnering
Kerry Middleton, Head of Communications, Marketing and Engagement

November 2024

Planned revenue budget changes agreed in February 2024

Directorate	2025/26 £000	2026/27 £000	Total £000
Previously Agreed Budget Increases			
Adult Services	12,566	14,788	27,354
Children's Services	12,168	4,608	16,776
Environment & Highways	2,491	73	2,564
Economy & Place	436	371	807
Public Health & Communities	0	0	0
Oxfordshire Fire & Rescue Service and Community Safety	1,043	639	1,682
Resources and Law & Governance	1,701	961	2,662
Transformation, Digital & Customer Experience	112	98	210
Total Previously Agreed Budget Increases	30,517	21,538	52,055
Previously Agreed Budget Reductions			
Adult Services	-1,358	0	-1,358
Children's Services	-8,877	-5,620	-14,497
Environment & Highways	-751	991	240
Economy and Place	-509	0	-509
Public Health & Communities	200	0	200
Oxfordshire Fire & Rescue Service and Community Safety	0	0	0
Resources and Law & Governance	75	75	150
Transformation, Digital & Customer Experience	-1,000	0	-1,000
Total Previously Agreed Budget Reductions	-12,220	-4,554	-16,774
Previously Agreed Changes to COVID-19 Funded Pressures			
Adult Services	-261	0	-261
Children's Services	0	-1,200	-1,200
Resources and Law & Governance	-160	-500	-660
Transformation, Digital & Customer Experience	0	-175	-175
Total Previously Agreed Changes to COVID-19 Funding	-421	-1,875	-2,296
Combined Previously Agreed Pressures and Savings			
Adult Services	10,947	14,788	25,735
Children's Services	3,291	-2,212	1,079
Environment & Highways	1,740	1,064	2,804
Economy and Place	-73	371	298
Public Health & Communities	200	0	200
Oxfordshire Fire & Rescue Service and Community Safety	1,043	639	1,682
Resources and Law & Governance	1,616	536	2,152
Transformation, Digital & Customer Experience	-888	-77	-965
Total Existing Planned Changes	17,876	15,109	32,985

Adult Services: Planned revenue budget changes agreed in February 2024

Ref	Description	2025/26 £000	2026/27 £000	Total £000
	Previously Agreed Budget Increases			
	Demographic Growth			
	Funding for demographic growth (increases related to population changes)	8,500		8,500
2025ASC590	Demand increases resulting from population growth	0	8,500	8,500
	Subtotal Demographic Growth	8,500	8,500	17,000
	Inflation			
	Pay Inflation (2.5%)	826		826
	Indicative pay inflation	84	788	872
	Contract Inflation	920		920
	Income Inflation (2.0%)	-796		-796
2025ASC601	Increases to the cost of care packages funded by the council.	0	5,500	5,500
24AD1	Changes to the cost of care packages funded by the council	2,470		2,470
2025ASC597	Changes to the cost of care packages funded by the council	1,937		1,937
	Subtotal Inflation	5,441	6,288	11,729
	Investments			
2025ASTBC1	Digital acceleration - removal of Social Care Grant from 2024/25 Digital innovation to assist customer pathways and user experience in information finding and advice, pathways to services and contact points, with additional ability for practitioner to make better use of data and agile working.	-500		-500
2025ASTBC2	Oxfordshire Way - removal of Social Care Grant from 2024/25 Develop the Oxfordshire Way approach further for all ages to develop community resilience and at-home services and to reduce inequalities in accessing care and support	-175		-175
2025ASTBC3	Adults Transport - Additional budget - removal of Social Care Grant from 2024/25 Improve data and systems to drive efficiencies in systems and manage service assessment, officer time and services levels.	-100		-100
2025ASTBC4	Adult Services Transport - Investment - removal of Social Care Grant from 2024/25 Independent living skills and enablement via travel training and accessibility, working with bus operators and other key stakeholders	-100		-100
2025ASTBC5	Shared Lives - removal of Social Care Grant from 2024/25 Investment in actions to encourage more people to become shared lives carers	-500		-500
	Subtotal Investments	-1,375	0	-1,375
	Total Previously Agreed Budget Increases	12,566	14,788	27,354

Adult Services: Planned revenue budget changes agreed in February 2024

Ref	Description	2025/26 £000	2026/27 £000	Total £000
	Previously Agreed Budget Savings			
24AD4	The council is committed to supporting people to live independent healthy lives in their own homes. The council's programme of reviewing care packages will ensure that residents are supported to maximise all the opportunities that are available to them in the community to achieve better outcomes.	-385		-385
24AD12	Continue to work with residents, the voluntary sector, health partners, and community groups to deliver The Oxfordshire Way. This means that people will be enabled to live healthy lives in their own homes for as long as possible. We will ensure that people do not enter into residential care when there is a better outcome that they could achieve by accessing equipment, technology, or Extra Care Housing.	-175		-175
2025L&CO23	Refocus activity on action to reduce outstanding unsecured debt, increasing the target reduction from 10% to 12% by the end of 2024/25. New saving in 2024/25	104		104
24AD7	Shared Lives - increase the number of people who can find a home through the shared lives scheme. Build further on the success of the service to provide options for respite for a wider range of individuals.	-74		-74
24AD15	Reduction in the cost of social care assessments contribution due to public health (drug and alcohol provider) providing a more efficient, integrated, and holistic assessment falls out in 2025/26.	72		72
2025ASC682	Reviews of care packages for service users with mental health needs linked to health funding.	-900		-900
	Total Previously Agreed Budget Savings	-1,358	0	-1,358
	Previously Agreed Changes to Pressures funded by the COVID-19 Reserve on a one - off basis			
24COVID5	Previously agreed funding of £325k for additional commissioning and contract activity for social care arising as a result of the on-going impact of COVID-19 falls out in 2025/26.	-261		-261
	Total Previously Agreed Changes to Pressures funded by the COVID-19 Reserve	-261	0	-261
	Total Adult Services	10,947	14,788	25,735

Children's Services: Planned revenue budget changes agreed in February 2024

Ref	Description	2025/26 £000	2026/27 £000	Total £000
	Previously Agreed Budget Increases			
	Demographic Growth			
	Demographic Growth	5,494		5,494
23CS5	Children's Placement Demography and Price Inflation - increase to existing planned demography of £4.0m. COVID-19 has had an impact in this area due to more children being in placements than expected, for longer periods of time, along with an unusually large increase in the unit price for a placement. The demographic increases link to delays in courts and changes in individual circumstances resulting in children spending longer in care than they may have done.	100		100
24CS32	Home to School Transport: There is a significant increase in the number of students needing an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP). 33% of students with an EHCP require transport and the student increases are estimated at 11% in 2024/25 and 9% in 2025/26.	1,200		1,200
	Subtotal Demographic Growth	6,794	0	6,794
	Inflation			
	Pay Inflation (2.5%)	1,463		1,463
	Indicative pay inflation	460	4,317	4,777
	Contract Inflation	255		255
24CS6	Inflation: funding for estimated inflationary increases to the cost of care.	1,600		1,600
CEF1	Education & Learning			
24CS30	On-going impact of increases in the cost of mainstream bus tenders over the medium term as cohorts of contracts are tendered.	213		213
24CS31	Inflation: funding for estimated inflationary increases to the cost of transport for children with SEND.	305		305
2025CS-HN713	Home to School Transport Future increases in the number of EHCPs and Post 16 travel and price increase impacting on demand and cost of transport.	400	2,500	2,900
	Subtotal Inflation	4,696	6,817	11,513
	Demand and Other Pressures			
CEF1	Education & Learning			
23CS1	Special Educational Needs (SEN) Casework Team - an increase in demand for Education Health & Care Plans (EHCPs) and the number of approved EHCPs which require an annual review has created a pressure across the SEN service including case workers, educational psychologists, quality and advocacy support. Additional capacity is needed to ensure quality and timeliness are in line with expected standards.	281		281
CEF2	Early Help, Front Door and Social Care			
24CS1	Continuation of £0.970m funding for adult facing services within family safeguarding (family solutions plus), relating to contracts supporting domestic abuse, adult mental health & substance misuse. The increases are after taking account of the Supporting Families grant of £0.485m in 2024/25 plus funding from the Public Health reserve of £0.200m in 2024/25.	685		685
CEF5	Children's Services Central Costs			
2025CS787	Social Care Demand and inflation pressures continuing from 2023/24 (full year effect)	2,274	-4,237	-1,963
	Subtotal Demand and Other Pressures	3,240	-4,237	-997

Children's Services: Planned revenue budget changes agreed in February 2024

Ref	Description	2025/26 £000	2026/27 £000	Total £000
	Investments			
2025CS790/1/3	New Service Investments (supporting the Financial Strategy) Recruitment & Retention Strategy	832	708	1,540
2025CSTBC1	Digital acceleration - removal of Social Care Grant from 2024/25 Digital innovation to assist customer pathways and user experience in information finding and advice, pathways to services and contact points, with additional ability for practitioner to make better use of data and agile working.	-500		-500
2025CSTBC2	Oxfordshire Way - removal of Social Care Grant from 2024/25 Develop the Oxfordshire Way approach further for all ages to develop community resilience and at-home services and to reduce inequalities in accessing care and support	-699		-699
2025CSTBC3	Home to School Transport - Additional budget - removal of Social Care Grant from 2024/25 Improve data and systems to drive efficiencies in systems and manage service assessment, officer time and services levels.	-400		-400
2025CSTBC4	Home to School Transport - Investment - removal of Social Care Grant from 2024/25 Independent living skills and enablement via travel training and accessibility, working with bus operators and other key stakeholders	-400		-400
2025CSTBC5	Family Safeguarding - removal of Social Care Grant from 2024/25 Extend the family safeguarding model to work more closely with schools to build additional resilience into the model in order to reduce demand and resolve family issues at the earliest possible opportunity. This will include working with schools to build capability as well as with families and other stakeholders.	-900		-900
2025CSTBC6	Foster Care - removal of Social Care Grant from 2024/25 Investment into retention and support of foster carers via a no detriment policy/ skills and fees levels review and strategy to support kinship carers as per new DfE guidance in December 2023.	-500		-500
2025L&CO4	Social Care Invest in Family Help Team to reduce the future demand and cost of care. Assumes team would be in place from July 2024 onwards.	125		125
2025L&CO5	Revenue borrowing costs associated with adding three new children's homes from 2026/27 (including one focused on older children) to the capital programme.		120	120
	Education			
2025L&CO3	Revenue costs involved with increasing early intervention work in Early Years and primary school settings to respond to SEND needs and proactively support the transition into mainstream education. £0.5m investment in 2024/25, partly falling out in 2025/26	-120		-120
	Subtotal Investments	-2,562	828	-1,734
	Extend COVID-19 Funding that falls out in 2026/27			
2026COVID	The modelling approach to COVID-19 within Oxfordshire across all services has been to compare expected, annual growth patterns to growth seen through the pandemic. The excess growth is deemed to be as a result of the pandemic. Using this method there were an extra 74 plans issued, and applying costs based on the normal pattern of provisions, this results in an additional cost to High Needs. Funding removed from 2026/27		1,200	1,200
	Total Previously Agreed Budget Increases	12,168	4,608	16,776

Children's Services: Planned revenue budget changes agreed in February 2024

Ref	Description	2025/26 £000	2026/27 £000	Total £000
	Previously Agreed Budget Reductions			
CEF1	Education and Learning			
2025CS-HN707	Education Adjust growth funding already in budget	-281	0	-281
CEF2	Early Help, Front Door and Social Care			
24CS20	The Supporting Families grant will continue for a further two years. Total budgeted grant expected to fall out in 2025/26	110		110
2025CS721	Social Care Agency Staff In Social Care - replacement with permanent Staff	-1,600	-1,200	-2,800
2025CS723	Social Care Manage Demand for Children We Care For (CWCF) - Maintain CWCF at the current number	-3,400	-700	-4,100
2025CS724	Social Care Bring Children We Care For (CWCF) currently placed out of the county back into Oxfordshire	-1,300	-300	-1,600
2025CS725	Social Care High Cost Placements - Obtain better value care for children living in high-cost residential placements	-600	0	-600
2025CS726	Social Care Exits from Care - Ensuring children cease to be Children We Care For (CWCF) in line with their plan in a timely way	-2,500	-2,800	-5,300
2025CS1063	Social Care Offset savings with re-instatement of previous savings or replace COVID-19 funding that drops out of Medium Term Financial Strategy with base budget.	944		944
2025L&CO24	Social Care Invest to save' returns resulting from reducing numbers of private placements for children we care for through increase in internal care provision (see 2025L&CO5)		-120	-120
2025L&CO25	Social Care Investment in Family Help Team (see 2025L&CO3) reduces future demand for and cost of care.	-250	-500	-750
	Total Previously Agreed Budget Savings	-8,877	-5,620	-14,497
	Previously Agreed Changes to Pressures funded by the COVID-19 Reserve on a one - off basis			
	<u>COVID-19 - Additional Demand Pressures</u>			
COVID11	The modelling approach to COVID-19 within Oxfordshire across all services has been to compare expected, annual growth patterns to growth seen through the pandemic. The excess growth is deemed to be as a result of the pandemic. Using this method there were an extra 74 plans issued, and applying costs based on the normal pattern of provisions, this results in an additional cost to High Needs. Funding removed from 2026/27		-1,200	-1,200
	Total Previously Agreed Changes to Pressures funded by the COVID-19 Reserve (replaced by additional funding in row 2025CS1063)	0	-1,200	-1,200
	Total Children's Services	3,291	-2,212	1,079

Environment & Highways: Planned revenue budget changes agreed in February 2024

Ref	Description	2025/26 £000	2026/27 £000	Total £000
	Previously Agreed Budget Increases			
	Demographic Growth			
	Demographic Growth (growth in waste tonnages)	430		430
2025EPDG	Add new year of demographic growth for Waste Management		400	400
	Subtotal Demographic Growth	430	400	830
	Inflation			
	Pay Inflation (2.5%)	281		281
	Indicative pay inflation	63	594	657
	Contract Inflation	2,353		2,353
	Income Inflation (2.0%)	-112		-112
	Business Rates Inflation	16		16
24EP4	Home to School transport - increase in the cost of school transport (directly provided and contracted) due to increases in fuel and other costs.	350		350
	Subtotal Inflation	2,951	594	3,545
	Demand and Other Pressures			
EH3	Transport Policy			
2025EP654	Create Sustainable Travel to School strategy.	-200		-200
2025EP744	Pressures associated with policy development for area travel plans, HGV studies and Multi Modal transport model (offset by saving EP745)	405	-568	-163
EH2	Environment			
23EP5	Increased contribution to the Regional Flood Co-ordination Committee Levy	22		22
24EP8	Household Waste Recycling Centres - anticipated increase in the cost of new contracts from 2025/26.	625		625
24EP10	Impact of implementation of Controlled Waste Regulation	100		100
2025EP645	Take action in 2024/25 to reduce the future cost of closed landfill site monitoring	-20		-20
2025EP647	Resource to write circular economy strategy. One off funding falls out in 2025/26.	-30		-30
2025EP692	Various pressures associated with service areas within Environment & Circular Economy 2024/25 (offset by saving EP693). Funding partly falls out in 2025/26 and 2026/27.	-115	-123	-238
2025EP694	Household Waste Recycling Centres (HWRC): unsorted waste and essential site repair pressures 2024/25 (offset by saving EP695). Funding partly falls out in 2025/26.	-114		-114
EH4	Highways & Maintenance			
24EP3	Additional temporary resources and expertise to support the exploration and delivery of a new highways maintenance contract from the end of March 2025. Funding expected to fall out in 2025/26 after the contract is agreed.	-250		-250
2025EP622	Increased highway maintenance activity (additional funding for potholes)	100	50	150
2025EP588	Increased Parking Service operational and maintenance costs	380	200	580
2025EP598	Increased drawdown from Parking Reserve to support increased maintenance and operational costs	-380	-200	-580
2025EP583	Home to School Transport Digital Contract Management System - Previously Agreed Savings Not Achievable	150		150
	Subtotal Demand and Other Pressures	673	-641	32

Environment & Highways: Planned revenue budget changes agreed in February 2024

Ref	Description	2025/26 £000	2026/27 £000	Total £000
	Investments			
EH3	Transport Policy			
2025L&CO13	Phase four of the school streets scheme.	77	-30	47
2025L&CO14	Funding for a feasibility study into the introduction of new Demand Responsive Transport (DRT) bus services in urban/suburban and rural settings 2024/25. The study will also look into the application of DRT services to support Home to School transport. One off funding falls out in 2025/26.	-70		-70
2025L&CO10	Feasibility study and implementation strategy for bus franchising. One off funding falls out in 2025/26.	-150		-150
2025L&CO15	Seed funding for supporting pilot Demand Responsive Transport (DRT) bus services, building on business case developed through 2025L&CO14.	250	-250	0
EH5	Network Management			
2025L&CO8	Introduce four new Controlled Parking Zones (see 2025L&CO27). One off funding falls out in 2025/26.	-200		-200
2025L&CO11	Revenue costs for additional investments in Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) enforcement of moving traffic offences of existing Traffic Regulation Order restrictions (see 2025L&CO29). One off funding falls out in 2025/26.	-180		-180
2025L&CO12	Feasibility Study into practicalities and opportunity in emissions and vehicle category based charging. Early investigatory work to identify potential policy and income benefits. One off funding falls out in 2025/26.	-30		-30
	New Investments (Budget Priority Reserve one - off funding)			
EH4	Highways & Maintenance			
2025EPTBC2	Gully and ditch clearing and repairs in areas recently flooded. One off funding falls out in 2025/26.	-300		-300
2025EPTBC3	Boost capacity to work with landowners and Parishes for them to clear ditches and implement Sustainable Drainage Schemes. One off funding falls out in 2025/26.	-300		-300
2025EPTBC4	A second cut of urban verges around footways and cycleways. One off funding falls out in 2025/26.	-150		-150
2025EPTBC5	Reclaim footpaths and cycleways – vegetation clearance and siding-out. One off funding falls out in 2025/26.	-510		-510
	Total Investments	-1,563	-280	-1,843
	Total Previously Agreed Budget Increases	2,491	73	2,564

Environment & Highways: Planned revenue budget changes agreed in February 2024

Ref	Description	2025/26 £000	2026/27 £000	Total £000
	Previously Agreed Budget Reductions			
EH3	Transport Policy			
2025EP658	One - off capitalisation of staff time through recharging costs associated with School Streets project. One off saving in 2024/25 reinstated in 2025/26.	25	0	25
2025EP774	Utilise Bus Service Operators Grant (BSOG) to support spend in 2024/25 and 2025/26		400	400
2025EP745	Manage various pressures associated with policy development under existing budget allocation (offsets pressure EP744)	-405	568	163
2025EP772	Release uncommitted element of on-going investment 24EP27 Countywide Community Transport Initiatives agreed in February 2023 on one - off basis in 2024/25. One off release from 2024/25 reinstated in 2025/26.	260		260
EH2	Environment			
2025EP638	Reinstate reduction in bespoke Lead Local Flood Authority planning consultations 2024/25 (2025EP638). One off funding falls out in 2025/26.	-40		-40
2025EP693	Various pressures associated with service areas within Environment & Circular Economy - to be managed within the existing budget allocation 2024/25 (offsets pressure EP692)	115	123	238
2025EP695	Manage Household Waste Recycling Centre pressure through reduction in waste costs 2024/25 (offsets pressure EP694)	114	0	114
EH4	Highways & Maintenance			
2025EP620	Increase the use of commuted sums held in reserves to maintain new infrastructure as a result of new developments and changes to the highway	-100	-100	-200
24EP15	Anticipated increases in on street parking income.	-150		-150
2025L&CO27	Income from new Controlled Parking Zones (see 2025L&CO8).	-150		-150
2025L&CO29	Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) income (see 2025L&CO11).	-270		-270
22EP11	Home to School contract management - Use of technology and improvements and automation of processes to reduce costs and effort required.	-150		-150
	Total Previously Agreed Budget Reductions	-751	991	240
	Total Environment & Highways	1,740	1,064	2,804

Economy and Place: Planned revenue budget changes agreed in February 2024

Ref	Description	2025/26 £000	2026/27 £000	Total £000
	Previously Agreed Budget Increases			
	Inflation			
	Pay Inflation (2.5%)	265		265
	Indicative pay inflation	27	251	278
	Income Inflation (2.0%)	-28		-28
	Subtotal Inflation	264	251	515
	Demand and Other Pressures			
EP4	Climate Action			
23EP11	£0.066m funding to increase capacity to develop pipeline and contract delivery of projects to support the Zero Carbon Infrastructure was added to the budget in 2022/23. This reduced to £0.064m in 2023/24 and falls out in 2025/26.	-64		-64
23EP14	Funding for short term capacity to ensure Oxfordshire is "Grid ready", developing Energy System planning and flexibility trials falls out by 2025/26.	-64		-64
	Subtotal Demand and Other Pressures	-128	0	-128
	Investments			
EP5	Place Making			
2025L&CO16	Revenue borrowing costs for pipeline of capital projects to tackle congestion in built up areas (£3m capital spend in 2024/25 and 2025/26).	180		180
2025L&CO17	Revenue borrowing costs for pipeline delivery of capital projects identified as part of the East Oxford Mini-Holland Project (£2m capital spend each year of MTFS).	120	120	240
	Total Investments	300	120	420
	Total Previously Agreed Budget Increases	436	371	807
	Previously Agreed Budget Reductions			
EP5	Place Making			
2025EP659	Consolidated savings for: - Introduction of standing advice for Transport Development Management - Combining Highways agreement and Engineering and assurance teams - Increase income from Planning Performance Agreement charges - Optimising the commissioning of modelling - Use of Section 106 funding held to develop schemes or the interest pot	-180	0	-180
EP4	Climate Action			
2025EP634	Climate Action: one - off income relating to greenhouse gas reporting. One off income falls out in 2025/26.	12	0	12
EP8	Business Performance & Services Improvement			
2025EP633	Increased recharging of staff time for projects	-20	0	-20
EP6	Innovation			
2025ITI&D TBC	Innovation Service (iHub): use contribution from reserve in 2024/25 and move to being self funding from 2025/26	-321	0	-321
	Total Previously Agreed Budget Reductions	-509	0	-509
	Total Economy and Place	-73	371	298

Public Health & Communities: Planned revenue budget changes agreed in February 2024

Ref	Description	2025/26 £000	2026/27 £000	Total £000
	Previously Agreed Budget Reductions			
PH2	Public Health (Domestic Abuse)			
2025PH555	Utilisation of government grant to fund domestic abuse services means £0.200m of council funding can be released on a one - off basis in 2024/25. Funding reinstated in 2025/26.	200		200
	Total Public Health & Communities	200	0	200

Oxfordshire Fire & Rescue Service and Community Safety: Planned revenue budget changes agreed in February 2024

Ref	Description	2025/26 £000	2026/27 £000	Total £000
	Previously Agreed Budget Increases			
	Inflation			
CDA3	Community Safety			
	Pay Inflation (2.5%)	466		466
	Indicative pay inflation	55	519	574
	Subtotal Inflation	521	519	1,040
CDA3	Community Safety			
2025CSafety670	Vehicle Renewals - increase revenue contribution for replacement of Fire Vehicles	572	120	692
2025CSafety754	Cultural Development Work. One off funding falls out in 2025/26.	-50	0	-50
	Subtotal Demand and Other Pressures	522	120	642
	Total Previously Agreed Budget Increases	1,043	639	1,682
	Previously Agreed Budget Reductions			
	Total Previously Agreed Budget Reductions	0	0	0
	Total Oxfordshire Fire & Rescue Service and Community Safety	1,043	639	1,682

Resources and Law & Governance: Planned revenue budget changes agreed in February 2024

Ref	Description	2025/26 £000	2026/27 £000	Total £000
	Previously Agreed Budget Increases			
	Inflation			
	Pay Inflation (2.5%)	1,117		1,117
	Indicative pay inflation	100	933	1,033
	Contract Inflation (RPIX - 4.2%; RPI - 4.1%; CPI - 2.5%)	139		139
	Income Inflation (2.0%)	-47		-47
	Business Rates Inflation	53		53
PADIR	Property & Assets			
24CCCS1	Increases in utility costs for the council's buildings	55		55
24CCCS31	Property Facilities Management - additional contract inflation based on the OBR inflation forecast set out in the Autumn Statement 2022.	50		50
24CCCS33	Property Catering - additional food and utilities inflation resulting in an increase cost for school meal which can't be recovered due to restriction on price increase on school meal. This follows the increased inflation forecast set out by the OBR in the Autumn Statement 2022.	50		50
24CCCS34	Landlord & Tenant - additional contract inflation of 10% in 2024/25 and 2025/25 based on the OBR inflation projection in the Autumn Statement 2022.	370		370
	Subtotal Inflation	1,887	933	2,820
	Demand and Other Pressures			
CORPDIR	Corporate Services			
2025Corp973	Revised structure and pay scales for the council's Strategic Leadership Team (pending approval by Council on 7 November 2023). Additional contributions will be sought from existing council budgets so that the pressure is reduced as far as possible.	28	28	56
LGCRDIR	Law & Governance			
2025C&CE529	Appointment of an Area Coroner in accordance with a recommendation from the UK Chief Coroner	96	0	96
PADIR	Property & Assets			
24CCCS5	Staff shortages mean there is increased dependency on agency staff which has increased costs of cleaning the council's buildings. Action is being taken to reduce these costs in 2024/25 and 2025/26.	-100		-100
2025PI&FMTBC	Continued one off contribution to Children's Centre rents. One off funding falls out in 2025/26.	-113		-113
2025PI&FMTBC	Fund one-off Children's Centre rents from the Budgets Priorities reserve. One off funding falls out in 2025/26.	113		113
	Subtotal Demand and Other Pressures	24	28	52
	Investments			
PAPPDIR	Public Affairs, Policy & Partnership			
2025L&CO22	Citizens Assembly on transport in Central Oxfordshire. One off funding falls out in 2025/26.	-150		-150
2025L&CO21	Resource to support the development and initial delivery of a Social Value and Community Wealth Building Strategy, including relevant training and external expertise, focusing on all relevant aspects of social value generation and community wealth building. One off funding falls out in 2025/26.	-60		-60
	Subtotal Investments	-210	0	-210
	Total Previously Agreed Budget Increases	1,701	961	2,662

Resources and Law & Governance: Planned revenue budget changes agreed in February 2024

Ref	Description	2025/26 £000	2026/27 £000	Total £000
	Previously Agreed Budget Reductions			
PADIR	Property & Assets			
2025PI&FM691	Delay in the occupation of a new library facility in the Banbury to 2025/26. £150k saving from 2024/25 falls out in 2025/26 and 2026/27.	75	75	150
	Total Previously Agreed Budget Reductions	75	75	150
	Previously Agreed changes to Pressures funded by the COVID-19 Reserve on a one - off basis			
LGCRDIR	Law & Governance			
24COVID3	Coroners - funding for additional activity in 2023/24 and 2024/25 falls out in 2025/26	-96		-96
PAPPDIR	Public Affairs, Policy & Partnership			
COVID18	Local Council Tax Support Scheme: anticipation of future emergency welfare demand in 2022/23 falls out in 2025/26		-500	-500
FCSDIR	Financial & Commercial Services			
24COVID5	Previously agreed funding of £325k for additional commissioning and contract activity for social care arising as a result of the on-going impact of COVID-19 falls out in 2025/26.	-64		-64
	Total Previously Agreed Changes to Pressures funded by the COVID-19 Reserve	-160	-500	-660
	Total Resources and Law & Governance	1,616	536	2,152

Transformation, Digital & Customer Experience: Planned revenue budget changes agreed in February 2024

Ref	Description	2025/26 £000	2026/27 £000	Total £000
	Previously Agreed Budget Increases			
	Inflation			
TDCE2	Pay Inflation (2.5%)	83		83
	Indicative pay inflation	10	98	108
	Subtotal Inflation	93	98	191
TDCE5	Transformation, Digital & Customer Experience			
23CODR9	Increase to the cost of maintaining Performance Management Business Systems	19		19
	Subtotal Inflation	19	0	19
	Total Previously Agreed Budget Increases	112	98	210
	Previously Agreed Budget Reductions			
2024DTFT	Delivering the Future Together staffing saving - reduce and delayer staffing structures and costs	-1,000		-1,000
	Total Previously Agreed Budget Reductions	-1,000	0	-1,000
	Total Previously Agreed Budget Changes	-888	98	-790
	Previously Agreed changes to Pressures funded by the COVID-19 Reserve on a one - off basis			
TDCE2	Customer Experience			
24COVID4	Additional resource for the Social & Health Care Team in the council's Customer Service Centre from 2023/24 to 2025/26		-175	-175
	Total Previously Agreed Changes to Pressures funded by the COVID-19 Reserve	0	-175	-175
	Total Transformation, Digital & Customer Experience	-888	-77	-965

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New Draft Budget Proposals 2025/26 - 2027/28

	2025/26 £000	2026/27 £000	Add New Year to Plan 2027/28 £000	Total £000
New Pressures				
Adult Services	-774	1,205	17,130	17,562
Children's Services	12,426	10,641	12,439	35,506
Environment & Highways	617	1,247	4,054	5,918
Economy and Place	50	-89	231	192
Public Health & Communities	148	-12	-12	124
Oxfordshire Fire & Rescue Service and Community Safety	721	778	583	2,082
Resources and Law & Governance	710	493	1,615	2,819
Transformation, Digital & Customer Experience	158	-6	99	252
Total New Pressures	14,056	14,258	36,140	64,454
New Investments				
Adult Services	0	0	0	0
Children's Services	1,127	137	183	1,447
Environment & Highways	1,500	0	0	1,500
Economy and Place	185	0	-75	110
Public Health & Communities	0	0	0	0
Oxfordshire Fire & Rescue Service and Community Safety	0	0	0	0
Resources and Law & Governance	1,625	-875	0	750
Transformation, Digital & Customer Experience	975	318	0	1,293
Total Investments	5,412	-420	108	5,100
New Savings				
Adult Services	-5,091	-112	0	-5,203
Children's Services	-977	-202	-167	-1,346
Environment & Highways	-2,100	0	0	-2,100
Economy and Place	-70	0	40	-30
Public Health & Communities	-772	772	0	0
Oxfordshire Fire & Rescue Service and Community Safety	-30	0	0	-30
Resources and Law & Governance	-1,167	-60	-60	-1,287
Transformation, Digital & Customer Experience	0	0	0	0
Cross Cutting Savings	-7,663	-5,190	0	-12,853
Total New Savings	-17,870	-4,792	-187	-22,849

New Draft Budget Proposals 2025/26 - 2027/28

	2025/26 £000	2026/27 £000	Add New Year to Plan 2027/28 £000	Total £000
Combined New Pressures, Investments and Savings				
Adult Services	-5,865	1,093	17,130	12,359
Children's Services	12,576	10,576	12,455	35,607
Environment & Highways	17	1,247	4,054	5,318
Economy and Place	165	-89	196	272
Public Health & Communities	-624	760	-12	124
Oxfordshire Fire & Rescue Service and Community Safety	691	778	583	2,052
Resources and Law & Governance	1,168	-442	1,555	2,282
Transformation, Digital & Customer Experience	1,133	312	99	1,545
Cross Cutting Savings	-7,663	-5,190	0	-12,853
Total New Service Pressures, Investments and Savings	1,598	9,046	36,061	46,705
Changes to Budgets Held Centrally				
Impact of increases in Employers' National Insurance contribution on employee and services expenditure	8,230	185	259	8,674
Increase in interest on cash balances	-1,020	1,136	476	592
Capital Financing	-1,737	2,191	736	1,190
Cost of borrowing to fund £65m capital investment	4,200	0	0	4,200
Total Changes to Budgets Held Centrally	9,673	3,512	1,471	14,656
Increase to Existing £13.9m Budget Deficit	11,270	12,558	37,532	61,361

Adult Services

Proposal Reference	Description	2025/26 £000	2026/27 £000	2027/28 £000	Total £000
	New Budget Increases				
	Demography				
2025ASC1	Projected increase in demand resulting from population growth. 0.3% of the total Adult Social Care budget for 2024/25.	-774	-2,532	6,429	3,123
	Subtotal Demographic Growth	-774	-2,532	6,429	3,123
	Pay Inflation				
	Pay inflation - indicative	0	-110	737	628
	Inflation				
2025ASC4	Forecast increases to the cost of care packages due to inflation. No inflationary increase in 2025/26 beyond that agreed previously in the MTFs approved by Council in February 2024.	0	3,847	9,964	13,811
	Subtotal Inflation	0	3,737	10,701	14,439
	Demand and Other Pressures				
	Total Demand and Other Pressures	0	0	0	0
	Total New Budget Increases	-774	1,205	17,130	17,562
	Pooled Budget Contributions				
2025ASC13	Review of system contributions from the NHS Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West Integrated Care Board to fund mental health aftercare services in line with legal responsibilities for older adults. 1.4% of the total Adult Social Care budget for 2024/25	-3,500	0	0	-3,500
2025ASC14	Review of system contributions from the NHS Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West Integrated Care Board to fund aftercare in mental health services for people with a physical disability. 0.3% of the total Adult Social Care budget for 2024/25.	-700	0	0	-700
2025ASC19	As more people receive care at home thanks to the success of Home First Discharge to Assess programme, the need for a bed-based discharge pathway is reduced and can be focussed on people with high levels of frailty and complex dementia presentations (subject to Cabinet and NHS ICB approvals). 0.1% of the total Adult Social Care budget for 2024/25.	-333	0	0	-333
2025ASC21	The charge for setting up of an universal deferred payment agreement have been reviewed for the first time since 2015 and updated to cover the setting up costs of these agreements, as set out in Care Act 2014. This is 0.1% of the total Adult Social Care budget for 2024/25.	-150	0	0	-150
2025ASC23	Reduction in the number of packages that include double handed care (the need to have two carers to help support the individual) thanks to the successful implementation of reablement programme and assistive technology solutions. 0.2% of the total Adult Social Care budget for 2024/25.	-388	-112	0	-500
2025ASC24	Arrangement fees for people who fund their own care have been reviewed and brought in line with other local authorities.	-20	0	0	-20
	Total Pooled Budget Contributions	-5,091	-112	0	-5,203
	Total New Budget Savings	-5,091	-112	0	-5,203
	Total Adult Services	-5,865	1,093	17,130	12,359

Children's Services

Proposal Reference	Description	2025/26 £000	2026/27 £000	2027/28 £000	Total £000
	New Budget Increases				
	Demography				
2025CS10	Demand increases resulting from population growth	0	1,140	1,510	2,650
2025CS11	Strategy savings risk (50% of historic 2025/26 savings, 100% of historic 2026/27 savings)	4,700	5,000	0	9,700
	Education				
2025CS15	Budget pressure resulting from re-allocating the original £1.3m demographic growth earmarked for Home to School transport to other CEF services for 2024/25 and 2025/26.	2,600			2,600
2025CS16	Update to Home to School demographic growth. This figure assumes the same annual growth of 7% (Post 16 SEN) and 9% (SEN) and factors in the volume cost impact of increasing Out of County provision.	400	700	3,200	4,300
2025CS33	Education Psychology - Demand for Education, Health and Care Needs Assessments (EHCNA) is expected to increase and there is a statutory requirement to provide information from an Education Psychologist for every EHCNA agreed.	641	1,027	0	1,668
	Subtotal Demographic Growth	8,341	7,867	4,710	20,918
	Inflation				
	Pay inflation - indicative	0	-600	4,037	3,437
	Contract Inflation (RPIX - 4.2%; RPI - 4.1%; CPI - 2.5%)	245	780	836	1,861
	Income Inflation (2.0%)	-34	-34	-34	-102
2025CS12	Inflation - funding for estimated inflationary increases to the cost of care. This figure is based on the National Living Wage published October 2024 and CPI+ adjustment	1,459	2,628	2,890	6,977
	Subtotal Inflation	1,670	2,774	7,729	12,173
	Demand and Other Pressures				
	Education & Learning				
2025CS34	Reversal of prior funding agreed from Covid-19 to fund High Needs Block Pressures. This funding will now be used to support our schools to become more inclusive.	-1,200	0	0	-1,200
2025CS35	SEN Inreach Outreach - disapplication request to be submitted. This funding will be used to support schools to become more inclusive.	500	0	0	500
	Total Education & Learning	-700	0	0	-700
	Early Help, Front Door + Social Care				
2025CS17	Supporting Families Government grant - confirmation has not been received from Government on whether this grant will be continued from March 2025. Continuation of funding is required for Supporting Families funded posts, Community Impact Zone and Locality Community Support Service staffing so that key services can continue to be delivered.	360	0	0	360
	Total Early Help, Front Door + Social Care	360	0	0	360
	Children's Services Central Costs				
2025CS18	Remove undeliverable previously agreed savings	2,755	0	0	2,755
	Total Children's Services Central Costs	2,755	0	0	2,755
	Subtotal Demand and Other Pressures	2,415	0	0	2,415
	New Investments				
2025CS19	Social Work Apprenticeships - Additional funding to align with 2025CS793 Recruitment & Retention Strategy (apprenticeships). This investment will enable us to recruit at least 25 new social work apprentices, contributing to our long-term goal of reducing reliance on temporary social work staff.	127	137	183	447
2025CS37	Investment in developing services to support under 5 years olds. This will include developing our early help and early years support so that all children can get the best possible start in life.	1,000	0	0	1,000
	Subtotal Investments	1,127	137	183	1,447
	Total New Budget Increases	13,553	10,778	12,622	36,953

Children's Services

Proposal Reference	Description	2025/26 £000	2026/27 £000	2027/28 £000	Total £000
	New Budget Savings				
	Early Help, Front Door + Social Care				
2025CS25	Supporting families grant. We are awaiting confirmation from Government as to whether this grant and national initiative will be continued after March 2025. If the grant is not continued, we will review the resource associated with administering and managing the grant.	-120	0	0	-120
	Total Early Help, Front Door + Social Care	-120	0	0	-120
	Provider Services & Safeguarding				
2025CS23	Introduction of a no detriment policy for Special Guardianship Orders, to increase local capacity to support children we care for	-14	-202	-167	-383
2025CS24	Capital loans to foster carers to increase local capacity to support children we care for	-500	0	0	-500
2025CS30	Review of alternative delivery mechanisms for Outdoor Therapy services.	-273	0	0	-273
2025CS27	Review of sundry spend and budget rationalisation.	-70	0	0	-70
	Total Provider Services & Safeguarding	-857	-202	-167	-1,226
	Subtotal New Budget Savings	-977	-202	-167	-1,346
	Total Children's Service	12,576	10,576	12,455	35,607

Environment & Highways

Proposal Reference	Description	2025/26 £000	2026/27 £000	2027/28 £000	Total £000
	New Budget Increases				
	New Demography and Inflation				
2025EH10	Demand increases resulting from population growth relating to waste tonnes being disposed of, ranging from 2.9% to 3.2% per annum			400	400
2025EH11	Increase in street lighting and lit signs as a result of asset growth.	145	145	0	290
2025EH19	Increase in highway assets as a result of the maintainable network growing.	300	270	250	820
2025EH20	Increase in the number of traffic signals that need to be maintained as a result of asset growth.	120	120	0	240
2025EH28	Commuted Sums draw down to fund highways maintenance and network Management growth	-565	-535	-250	-1,350
	Subtotal Demographic Growth	0	0	400	400
	Pay Inflation				
	Pay inflation - indicative	0	-83	556	473
	Contract Inflation (RPI - 2.2%; CPI - 1.6%; EPI 1.7% and other fixed rates)		2,517	2,910	5,427
	Income Inflation (2.0%)	-325	-437	-437	-1,199
	Subtotal Inflation	-325	1,997	3,029	4,701
	Demand and Other Pressures				
	Environment				
2025EH12	New carbon tax applied to fossil fuel carbon generated from waste incinerated from April 2028. Need for pre-implementation activity in the run up to the scheme starting in April 2026.	0	200	0	200
2025EH14	The Waste contract was extended until October 2027, as such expected associated costs with new contract can be delayed. so this budget increase can be pushed back to 2027/28.	-625	0	625	0
2025EH15	Dean Pit leachate management and Dix Landfill long term management and Landfill Tax increased by 21% from April 2025	217	50	0	267
	Total Environment	-408	250	625	467
	Network Management				
2025EH21	Income from moving traffic offences less than assumed within previous year budget assumptions.	200	0	0	200
2025EH22	Additional maintenance & management costs associated with increasing number of Park and Rides.	75	75	0	150
2025EH23	Delay in achieving Department of Transport approval of Lane Rental Scheme. Further work required and as such part year impact only (6months) anticipated.	1,075	-1,075	0	0
	Total Network Management	1,350	-1,000	0	350
	Subtotal Demand and Other Pressures	942	-750	625	817
	New Investments				
	Highways & Maintenance				
2025EH39	Move to an annual highway drainage gully emptying & jetting cycle	1,500	0	0	1,500
	Total Highways & Maintenance	1,500	0	0	1,500
	Subtotal Investments	1,500	0	0	1,500
	Total New Budget Increases	2,117	1,247	4,054	7,418
	New Budget Savings				
	Infrastructure Delivery				
2025EH25	Increased booking of staff time to council projects and schemes.	-100	0	0	-100
	Total Infrastructure Delivery	-100	0	0	-100
	Highways & Maintenance				
2025EH26	Reduction in streetlighting energy usage as a result of LED lamp replacement investment (previously a pressure under Ref 24EP1)	-1,500	0	0	-1,500
2025EH30	Drawdown from commuted sums to support previous year's growth in highway maintenance services	-500	0	0	-500
	Total Highways & Maintenance	-2,000	0	0	-2,000
	Total New Budget Savings	-2,100	0	0	-2,100
	Total Environment & Highways	17	1,247	4,054	5,318

Economy and Place

Proposal Reference	Description	2025/26 £000	2026/27 £000	2027/28 £000	Total £000
	New Budget Increases				
	Pay Inflation				
	Pay inflation - indicative	0	-34.963	235.094	200
	Income Inflation (2.0%)	0	-4	-4	-8
	Subtotal Inflation	0	-39	231	192
	Demand and Other Pressures				
	Climate Action				
2025EP5	Pressure in energy and retrofit staffing budget owing to gap between grant funding	50	-50	0	0
	Total Climate Action	50	-50	0	0
	Subtotal Demand and Other Pressures	50	-50	0	0
	New Investments				
	Strategic Planning				
2025EP1	Additional temporary resource to support the development of four nationally significant infrastructure projects over the next two financial years	75	0	-75	0
	Total Strategic Planning	75	0	-75	0
	Climate Action				
2025EP2	Invest in carbon sequestration to move the council's operational emissions towards a negative net total (i.e. beyond 'net zero')	80	0	0	80
2025EP4	Carbon Management Plan - forward purchase of Carbon offsets to reduce impact of future offsetting costs	30	0	0	30
	Total Climate Action	110	0	0	110
	Subtotal Investments	185	0	-75	110
	Total New Budget Increases	235	-89	156	302
	New Budget Savings				
	Strategic Planning				
2025EP9	Strategic Planning Increasing S106 income target to reflect higher income in recent years	-30	0	0	-30
	Total Strategic Planning	-30	0	0	-30
	Place Making				
2025EP7	Reduction in works budget in central Oxfordshire team	-40	0	40	0
	Total Place Making	-40	0	40	0
	Total New Budget Savings	-70	0	40	-30
	Total Economy and Place	165	-89	196	272

Public Health & Communities

Proposal Reference	Description	2025/26 £000	2026/27 £000	2027/28 £000	Total £000
	New Budget Increases				
	Communities				
	Income Inflation (2.0%)	-12	-12	-12	-36
	Subtotal Inflation	-12	-12	-12	-36
	Total Public Health & Communities	-12	-12	-12	-36
	Libraries & Heritage				
2025PH9	Home Library Service - This is a provision designed for vulnerable adults who may have difficulty visiting a physical library. Through a large team of volunteers, the service will visit vulnerable residents at their homes to deliver books and audio visual items. The funding will help to sustain and develop this service to meet the recent increase in demand.	80	0	0	80
2025PH10	Early Years Library - This service is designed to help early childhood education and supports cognitive and social-emotional development of children at key stages. They include effective, yet low budget activities, such as Bookstart, rhyme-times, stay and play sessions, and a wide range of books and other resources to help with child development and literacy. This funding will support this work and help meet growing demand, through purchasing various reading materials.	80	0	0	80
	Total Libraries & Heritage	160	0	0	160
	Total New Budget Increases	148	-12	-12	124
	New Budget Savings				
	Public Health				
2025PH1	Utilisation of government grant to fund domestic abuse services means £0.200m of council funding can be released on a one - off basis in 2025/26. Funding reinstated in 2026/27.	-200	200	0	0
2025PH6	Utilisation of Public Health Grant to support Family Solutions Plus	-250	250	0	0
2025PH7	Utilisation of Public Health Grant to help fund Community Capacity Grants	-250	250	0	0
2025PH8	Savings for ASC through reduced charges for social care assessments	-72	72	0	0
	Total Public Health	-772	772	0	0
	Total New Budget Savings	-772	772	0	0
	Total New Budget Changes	-784	760	-12	-36

Fire & Rescue and Community Safety

Proposal Reference	Description	2025/26 £000	2026/27 £000	2027/28 £000	Total £000
	New Budget Increases				
	Inflation				
	Pay inflation - indicative	419	421	421	1,261
	Income Inflation (2.0%)	-3	-3	-3	-9
2025FRCS1	Contract Inflation	155	160	165	480
	Subtotal Inflation	571	578	583	1,732
	Oxfordshire Fire & Rescue Service				
2025FRCS2	Emergency Services Mobile Communication Programme (Operational Radios) There is an ongoing government led central project to replace the mobile communications platform for emergency services. It is expected to cost us an additional £200k a year once implemented.	0	200	0	200
2025FRCS3	Emergency Response Resilience Contract The council must have plans in place to continue to provide a fire and rescue service even when large numbers of firefighters are unavailable such as during industrial action/pandemic. This resilience will be provided by a third party provider	150	0	0	150
	Subtotal Demand and Other Pressures	150	200	0	350
	Total New Budget Increases	721	778	583	2,082
	New Budget Savings				
	Oxfordshire Fire & Rescue Service				
2025FRCS10	Implementation of interim measures to improve fire engine availability and response times. Reprioritising fire cover by geographical area (rather than total numbers) will reduce the need for additional hours payments.	-30	0	0	-30
	Total Oxfordshire Fire & Rescue Service	-30	0	0	-30
	Total New Budget Savings	-30	0	0	-30
	Total New Budget Changes	691	778	583	2,052

Resources and Law & Governance

Proposal Ref	Description	2025/26 £000	2026/27 £000	2027/28 £000	Total £000
	New Budget Increases				
	Pay Inflation				
	Pay inflation - indicative	0	-130	872	743
	Subtotal Inflation	0	-130	872	743
	Demand and Other Pressures				
	HR & Cultural Change				
2025RLGHR1 / 2025RLGHR2	Contract Inflation	10	10	10	30
	Total HR & Cultural Change	10	10	10	30
	Financial & Commercial Services				
2025RLGFC1	Contract Inflation	10	155	160	325
2025RLGFC3	Removal of an income budget no longer achievable as it related to a one off exercise for investigating and recovering historic duplicate payments and credit balances on vendor accounts that concludes in 2024/25.	300	0	0	300
	Total Financial & Commercial Services	310	155	160	625
	Property & Assets				
Multiple	Contract/Business Rates Inflation: Reduction in previously agreed inflation increase for Business Rates.	-140	388	403	651
2025RLGFM4	Increase in volume of Digital Post and County Print cost increases	50	0	0	50
2025RLGFM7a	Delay in the occupation of a new library facility in Banbury to 2025/26. £150k saving from 2024/25 falls out in 2025/26 and 2026/27. Will be subject to a new Business Case and revised budget requirement submission.	-75	-75	0	-150
	Total Property & Assets	-165	313	403	551
	Law & Governance				
2025RLGL1	Legal & Coroners - Contract Inflation	70	75	80	225
2025RLGG1	Governance - Additional May 2025 election costs (mail & ID checks)	55	0	0	55
2025RLGL2	Legal - Removal of Vacancy factor as roles in the legal service are immediately filled	200	0	0	200
2025RLGL3	Legal - Case Management System Cloud licence	30	0	0	30
	Total Law & Governance	355	75	80	510
	Corporate Services				
2025RLGIT1	IT - Contract Inflation	0	70	90	160
2025RLGIT2	IT corporate savings target 2023/24 not achieved.	200	0	0	200
	Total Corporate Services	200	70	90	360
	Subtotal Demand and Other Pressures	710	623	743	2,076

Resources and Law & Governance

Proposal Ref	Description	2025/26 £000	2026/27 £000	2027/28 £000	Total £000
	New Investments				
	Financial & Commercial Services				
2025RLGFC2	This investment is to increase the capacity in the Procurement Service by 8 - 10 permanent staff to enhance contract management capability in accordance with the Councils Commercial Strategy. This capacity is required to support the cross cutting savings plan from contract and third party spend CORPRES102	750	0	0	750
	Public Affairs, Policy & Partnership				
2025PAPP05	Continuation of the Councillor Priority Fund for 2025/26 and 2026/27. The fund enables councillors to support local projects in their communities.	775	-775	0	0
	Property & Assets				
2025RLGFM8	The discretionary rent concessions currently provided to tenants in the Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) are scheduled to end in March 2025. Plans are in place to extend this support for an additional year.	100	-100	0	0
	Subtotal Investments	1,625	-875	0	750
	Total New Budget Increases	2,335	-382	1,615	3,569
	New Budget Savings				
	Property & Assets				
2025RLGFM6	Facilities Management - Review of Health & Safety Team: Currently, health and safety responsibilities are spread across various departments within the council. By centralizing these efforts, we stand to achieve financial savings and enhance service quality through improved collaboration and resource sharing.	-75	0	0	-75
2025RLGEST7	Estates - Abbey House rent & service charge: The county council had been utilizing Abbey House in Abingdon for office purposes. It had longstanding intentions to vacate, which were successfully realized ahead of schedule in the summer of 2024, resulting in the cost saving 2025/26.	-620	0	0	-620
2025RLGEST8	Estates - Utility saving - Estate rationalisation: Including saving in connection to the Abbey House closure.	-50	0	0	-50
2025RLGEST9	Estates - Strategic asset cost control (No External consultants)	-50	0	0	-50
2025RLGFM7b	Facilities Management - In-house delivery solution: At present, we engage an external service for roof repairs on council properties. Analysis shows that by directly hiring specialized staff members to handle these repairs internally, we can achieve cost savings.	-125	0	0	-125
2025RLGBS2	Business Support - Review of current expenditure and minor adjustment to working patterns - A variety of small savings.	-40	0	0	-40
	Total Property & Assets	-960	0	0	-960
	Law & Governance				
2025RLGR1	Registration Income Inflation - see Inflation section	-7	-60	-60	-127
	Total Law & Governance	-7	-60	-60	-127
	Corporate Services				
2025RLGIT7	IT - Review and consolidation of multiple current contracts to achieve potential saving.	-200	0	0	-200
	Total Corporate Services	-200	0	0	-200
	Total New Budget Savings	-1,167	-60	-60	-1,287
	Total New Budget Changes	1,168	-442	1,555	2,282

Transformation, Digital & Customer Experience

Proposal Reference	Description	2025/26 £000	2026/27 £000	2027/28 £000	Total £000
	New Budget Increases				
	Pay Inflation				
	Pay inflation - indicative	0	-14	91	78
	Income Inflation (2.0%)	-2	-2	-2	-6
2025TDCE3	Contract Inflation	10	10	10	30
	Subtotal Inflation	8	-6	99	102
	Demand and Other Pressures				
	Customer Experience				
2025TDCE4	Remove 23/24 Corporate Helpdesk Consolidation savings	150	0	0	150
	Total Customer Experience	150	0	0	150
	Subtotal Demand and Other Pressures	150	0	0	150
	New Investments				
2025TDCE6	Investment in Revised Data Team Structure	795	298	0	1093
	Digital				
2025TDCE9	Enterprise Shared Management Tool to facility consistency approach and methodology (Corporate roll-out & implementation)	100	0	0	100
	Total Digital	100	0	0	100
	Delivery Unit				
2025TDCE1	Funding for additional Project Manager	50	0	0	50
2025TDCE2	Programme Management Office - Cohort 2 Inhouse training provision funding	30	20	0	50
	Total Delivery Unit	80	20	0	100
	Subtotal Investments	975	318	0	1,293
	Total New Budget Increases	1,133	312	99	1,545
	New Budget Savings				
	Total New Budget Savings	0	0	0	0
	Total New Budget Changes	1,133	312	99	1,545

Cross Cutting Proposals

Proposal Reference	Description	2025/26 £000	2026/27 £000	2027/28 £000	Total £000
CORPRES102	Reduction in Contract and Third Party Spend The Council spends approx. £600m a year on contracts and third party spend. A saving of £5m will be achieved through contract management and a review of all third party spend.	-5,000	0	0	-5,000
CORPRES103	Commercial Opportunities The council will be looking for revenue generating opportunities utilising assets to generate revenue streams.	-1,000	0	0	-1,000
2025HRC101	Organisation Redesign As part of the council's redesign to be smaller and leaner in terms of the number of people who are employed by the council the aim is to save a £2m in 2025/26 rising ultimately to £5.9m by the end of 2026/27. £1.3m of staffing savings are brought forward, with this representing the additional saving. The overall employee pay bill from the areas of the council in question is approximately £220m so this is about 2.7% of that total.	-713	-3,900	0	-4,613
2025RLGEST10	Supported Transport programme Several projects are being transitioned into the New Ways of Working with an amalgamation activities/contracts, with a review of both Children's and Adults Transport services.	-500	-1,000	0	-1,500
2025RLGEST11	Corporate Landlord Initiative A review has identified a number of opportunities to improve ways of working, with a particular need to focus on confirming and clarifying corporate landlord responsibilities and budgets, strengthening strategic interfaces with services, increasing strategic capacity, and bringing P&A closer to services contracts and the place shaping agenda.	-250	-290	0	-540
2025RLGIT8	Voluntary & Community Sector Commissioning The council is proposing to streamline its approach to commissioning services through the voluntary and community sector to make the process simpler and ensure best value for money. The proposed £200,000 saving represents c.2.5% of the total value of our contracts and grants.	-200	0	0	-200
	Total New Budget Savings	-7,663	-5,190	0	-12,853

Budgets Held Centrally

Proposal Reference	Description	2025/26 £000	2026/27 £000	2027/28 £000	Total £000
CORP110	Impact of increases in employers National Insurance contribution on Employee and services expenditure	8,230	185	259	8,674
	Capital Financing				
CORP102a	- Principal	418	2,191	736	3,345
CORP102b	- Interest	-2,155	0	0	-2,155
CORP103	Cost of borrowing £65m for Structural Highways Maintenance (£56m) and other capital (£9m)	4,200	0	0	4,200
	Total Capital Financing	2,463	2,191	736	5,390
	New Budget Savings				
	Interest on balances				
CORP106	Interest receivable	-1,024	1,930	102	1,008
CORP108	Interest on developer contributions	4	-794	374	-416
CORP109	Prudential Borrowing recharges	0	0	0	0
	Total Interest on balances	-1,020	1,136	476	592
	Total New Budget Increases	9,673	3,512	1,471	14,656

High priority capital schemes to which indicative funding is proposed to be allocated

Prioritisation criteria		OCC Funding (estimates subject to business case)
Schemes that facilitate compliance with minimum statutory duties relating to health & safety, schools, and delivery of business-critical services		£10.575m
Schemes that generate revenue, are self-funding or facilitate cost-avoidance strategies		£2.900m
Schemes that contribute to the improvement of the highway network, including road safety measures, flood prevention work and pothole prevention measures such as surface dressings		£67.845m
Schemes that encourage and facilitate active travel and improve market towns		£13.620m
Schemes that enhance energy efficiency and promote the adoption of sustainable and environmentally responsible solutions		£10.265m
Schemes which are partly funded by Section 106 developer contributions, but require additional funding to progress		£4.000m
Total		£109.205m

Compliance with minimum statutory duties relating to health and safety, schools and delivery of business critical services	OCC Funding (estimates subject to business case)	Previously approved allocations	Other funding sources	Current status/comments
Stabilisation measures and future capacity of Redbridge Household Waste Recycling Centre	£4.900m	£1.400m	£0.154m of S106 funds has been identified	Remedial works have already been carried out however further investment is required to ensure the future viability of the site. The investment will provide a long-term solution to the stability of the site and will also provide a modern, upgraded facility that will meet the future needs of residents.
Health and safety measures at Dix Pit Landfill	£0.135m			Leachate tanks, used for collection of hazardous liquids at landfill sites to prevent contamination of nearby water courses, have reached the end of their operational life. This investment will ensure that the Council meets its legal and environmental responsibilities.
Energy saving measures required for schools' continued use of sports facilities	£1.300m			This investment facilitates energy saving measures so that secondary schools can continue to access 'dryside' facilities for the delivery of the secondary PE curriculum and for primary schools to use swimming facilities.
Fire Safety Remedials	£1.700m	£2.750m		The investment will ensure health and safety compliance across the Council's corporate property estate.
IT and Cybersecurity	£2.540m	£1.930m		The investment over two years will improve our IT infrastructure, ensuring the continuity of business-critical activities, with a significant portion of this investment allocated towards enhancing cybersecurity measures.
Total	£10.575m			

Schemes that generate revenue, are self-funding or facilitate cost-avoidance strategies	OCC Funding (estimates subject to business case)	Previously approved allocations	Other funding sources	Current status/comments
Fostering Loan Scheme	£0.500m	£0.250m		The investment will increase local capacity to support children we care for by funding home improvement loans to existing foster carers, enabling a greater number of children we care for to live locally, reducing expenditure on children's placements.
Residential Development for Complex Needs Accommodation	£1.900m	£5.000m		The scheme will provide bespoke, adapted housing within the community, enabling those in long-term hospital care or at risk of being placed out-of-area to move into supported homes in Oxfordshire. This initiative aims to improve quality of life and outcomes for the individuals involved, in a more cost-effective manner for the county's residents.
Oxfordshire Nature Catalyst Investment Facility	£0.500m			Oxfordshire Nature Partnership and Trust for Oxfordshire's environment will create a circulating funding pot to help unlock and mobilise £1bn of private sector funding. Oxfordshire County Council will be one of the investors and, along with the advent of Oxfordshire Local Nature Recovery Strategy, there is an opportunity to deliver a step change in the restoration of Oxfordshire's lost habitats. This is the Council's contribution to this initiative.
Total	£2.900m			

Schemes that contribute to the improvement of the highway network, including road safety measures, flood prevention work and pothole prevention measures such as surface dressings	OCC Funding (estimates subject to business case)	Previously approved allocations	Other funding sources	Current status/comments
Improving the Highway Network	£47.605m	£80.000m Prudential Borrowing	Current expected annual funding is £15.300m. In previous years, the Council received £9.300m pothole funding and £2.600m from Network North (HS2) The previous 3 year funding announcement was £24.600m per year.	This is a two-year programme of work. The investment will prevent potholes from occurring and drains from overflowing across the highway network, along with improved maintenance of footways and cycle ways. These measures will effectively manage the maintenance and condition of the highway network.
Bridges	£16.240m	£2.750m	Provision is made through the Highway Network Allocation	This investment will be committed to repairing bridges at risk of structural failure or closure, combined with preventative maintenance, also over a two-year period.
Road Safety Measures	£4.000m	£5.000m		This investment will support a programme of measures to improve accessibility, connectivity and road safety.
Total	£67.845m			

Schemes that encourage and facilitate active travel and improve market towns	OCC Funding (estimates subject to business case)	Previously approved allocations	Other funding sources	Current status/comments
Public Rights of Way	£0.250m			This is an ongoing replacement programme for Public Rights of Way infrastructure primarily focussed on foot and bridle bridges, of which there are over 2,900 bridges on the 2,700 mile public rights of way network in Oxfordshire.
St Giles' - Public Realm Improvements	£0.870m			The investment will deliver an improved space for socialising, greening, improved access for pedestrians and cyclists, including an improved arrangement for buses and tourist coaches.
A fund to encourage active travel in rural areas	£0.500m			This investment will be allocated to schemes specifically designed to encourage active travel in rural areas of Oxfordshire through delivery of actions identified in Local Walking & Cycling Improvement Plans (LCWIPs) in particular.
Banbury Market	£0.200m			This scheme will be part of a package of measures to transform Banbury Market Space into a vibrant, inclusive, and bustling space at the heart of the community. The improved public realm will create a space that residents will be proud of. The scheme will be delivered in partnership with Cherwell District Council, Banbury Town Council and the Banbury Business Improvement District.
Wantage Market	£0.500m		£0.030m Capability Ambition Funding (CAF)	A scheme, to be delivered with partners, to enhance Market Place Wantage by creating a safe, accessible and vibrant town centre space that puts people at the heart of the community.
Watlington Relief Road	£11.100m		Combined S106 funds and Growth Deal funds totaling £8.201m	The Watlington Relief Road aims to alleviate congestion, noise and air pollution in the town centre. The relief road aims to connect a series of existing and proposed developments around the northern and western sides of Watlington, with some sections being delivered by developers and some directly by Oxfordshire County Council.
Thame to Haddenham Active Travel Link	£0.200m			This investment is Oxfordshire's contribution to the feasibility of providing an active travel link between Thame and Haddenham & Thame Parkway, which crosses Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire boundary.
Total	£13.620m			

Schemes that enhance energy efficiency and promote the adoption of sustainable and environmentally responsible solutions	OCC Funding (estimates subject to business case)	Previously approved allocations	Other funding sources	Current status/comments
Energy Saving Measures	£10.000m	£10.200m	PSDS4 Bid of £0.360m submitted November 2024. Previous allocation includes grant award of £3.100m	This two-year investment is in addition to funds already committed to decarbonise our buildings and ensure the adoption of sustainable and environmentally responsible solutions. This programme of work is a key priority required to meet the Council's net zero target by 2030 and to remove fossil-fuelled heating whilst replacing a number of broken and end-of-life building components.
Energy Efficiency Recycling Fund	£0.265m	£1.600m		This investment is to further expand the existing loan scheme which provides interest free loans to schools to invest in energy-saving measures such as solar PV, battery storage and LED lighting. This enables better learning environments for students, as well as reducing energy costs for schools.
Total	£10.265m			

Schemes which are partly funded by Section 106 developer contributions, but require additional funding to progress	OCC Funding (estimates subject to business case)	Previously approved allocations	Other funding sources	Current status/comments
Transport Schemes	£4.000m		£22.500m S106	This investment will support local improvements that make a big difference to communities and will cover a number of different types of schemes such as footway extensions, highway layout changes, pedestrian crossings and bus stop improvements. These schemes have section 106 funding allocations but additional funds are required to progress and deliver the projects.
Total	£4.000m			

Proposed Additions to future Capital Pipeline (pending funding becoming available)

Proposals which align to Priority Framework Categories	OCC funding required	Funding sources	Current status/comments
Expansion of Oxfordshire Special School Capacity (phase 3)	£50.0m	OCC	Two new 150 pupil place schools. Need will be reassessed once new schools are open.
Carterton School	£45.0m	OCC	School is in disrepair and is not fit for purpose. Alternative funding sources are being investigated.
IT & Cybersecurity	£4.6m	OCC	Investing in business-critical systems and investment in cyber-security from 2027/28 onwards.
Mobility Hub - Bladon (North of Oxford Airport)	£1.5m	OCC	Forward funding for design and delivery of the mobility hub at Bladon Roundabout.
Banbury Master Plan	£0.3m	OCC	A regeneration and Place Masterplan to support the Banbury 2050 work which will look at the long-term planning of Banbury to support the economic, health, social and transport issues facing the market town.
Energy Saving Measures	£10.0m	OCC + potential external bid	Additional funding required to complete the programme of work to meet the Council's ambition of Net Zero by 2030.

Proposals which align to Priority Framework Categories	OCC funding required	Funding sources	Current status/comments
Highways Maintenance 2027/28 onwards	£278.4m	OCC + DFT funding	Estimated funding required from 2027/28 to 2033/34.
Bridge Structures	£76.9m	OCC	Estimated investment for programme of works to address structures from 2027/28 to 2033/34.
Road Safety Measures	£11.0m	OCC + DFT funding	Estimated investment from 2027/2028 to 2033/34.
Library Strategy	£11.0m	OCC + potential s106 funding	Funding to prioritise the top 9 libraries for remedial works as well as energy upgrades.
Heritage Storage	£4.0m	OCC + potential s106 funding	Investment required to store records and historical artefacts as current provision is at capacity.
Fire Crew Housing	£0.6m	OCC	Investment required to bring fire crew housing to a minimum expected standard following condition surveys.
Oxfordshire Fire & Rescue Strategy Phase 2	£11.7m	OCC	Investment required to upgrade Oxfordshire County Council's fire estate to ensure appropriate management of contaminants, suitable facilities for diverse workforce and to meet climate standards.

Proposals which align to Priority Framework Categories	OCC funding required	Funding sources	Current status/comments
Bicester A4095 Strategic Link Road	£18.0m	S106	Delivery of strategic elements of improvements along the A4095. Oxfordshire County Council would be required to forward fund the scheme.
Thame to Haddenham Active Travel Link	£5.0m	OCC	An active travel link between Thame and Haddenham & Thame Parkway, which crosses Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire boundary.
Milton Heights Bridge	£9.0m	OCC	This scheme could not be delivered by the Housing and Growth deal due to pressures but is a key travel infrastructure scheme which will connect businesses, housing and schools across the A34.
Household Waste Recycling Centres	£20.0m	OCC + potential s106 funding	Investment into Household Waste Recycling Centres in line with the Household Waste Recycling Centre Strategy.
Household Waste & Recycling Centre (Design & Build)	£1.7m	OCC + potential s106 funding	Investment required to increase capacity at the Household Waste Recycling Centres in line with the Household Waste Recycling Centre Strategy.
Investment into carbon sequestration initiatives	£1.6m	OCC	Investment into carbon sequestration initiatives such as Biochar. Biochar is a generally used as a soil enrichment product produced from processing materials like green waste / wood chip / other biomasses, which the Council currently deals with at a cost.

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Oxfordshire County Council

Budget Proposals 2025/26

Overarching Equality Impact Assessment

Context and Purpose

Oxfordshire County Council's vision is to lead positive change by working in partnership to make Oxfordshire a greener, fairer and healthier county. This includes working to ensure that our policies and services support equality and inclusion.

This assessment sets out the equalities impact of our budget proposals for 2025-26.

We can look to legislation to support our understanding of the council's equalities impacts. The Equality Act (2010) states that all public bodies need to take extra steps to stop discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations: this is known as the Public Sector Equality Duty.

The Act defines discrimination as the less favourable treatment of a person because of a protected characteristic, as compared to others who do not share that characteristic. The legislation also applies where there is a belief that the person who is disadvantaged has a particular protected characteristic, even if it is not the case.

These protected characteristics are:

- age
- disability
- gender reassignment
- pregnancy and maternity
- race – this includes ethnic or national origins, colour or nationality
- religion or belief – this includes lack of belief
- sex
- sexual orientation
- marriage and civil partnership

Including Everyone – an inclusive Oxfordshire

The council has set out its approach to equalities, diversity and inclusion, including how we meet the Public Sector Equality Duty, in the [Including Everyone framework](#), which was refreshed in October 2024.

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Including Everyone sets out how the council goes further than the protected characteristics in the Equality Act by also considering the impact our decisions might have on:

- People living with social deprivation
- Rural communities
- Those leaving care
- Carers
- Those in our armed forces community

This Overarching Equality Impact Assessment shows how our budget proposals might impact the nine protected characteristics and the five additional areas above, and what we are doing to reduce or remove any potential negative impacts.

Equality Impact Assessments

All council decisions are reviewed for equality impact at the appropriate level of detailed analysis, depending on the potential service impact of the proposed change. This allows for the review of the potential impacts of new and updated policies and service delivery decisions on those with protected and/or additional characteristics. Where there is potential for material service impact, a formal Equality Impact Assessment is completed.

This Overarching Equality Impact Assessment is made in support of the council's overall budget proposals for 2025/26. It provides summary information on the equalities impacts which the council's budget proposals might have if the proposals are approved and implemented. It also gives an indication of how we might mitigate any potential negative impacts.

Assessing equality impacts does not guarantee that a change will never have a negative impact. Rather it is intended to ensure that our policies are designed and implemented to meet the diverse needs of individuals, groups and communities in Oxfordshire. Equality Impact Assessments also help to ensure that the outcomes of a proposal are carefully considered, with the potential benefits maximised and possible challenges mitigated, within the overall funding available.

Overarching Equality Impact Assessment – approach

The following pages show how we have approached the assessment of impacts on equalities and diversity, setting out at a summary level what impacts our budget proposals might have on the protected characteristics listed above.

If potential impacts are assessed as significant, individual Equalities Impact Assessments are completed to aid understanding and outline mitigations.

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Following the public consultation, impact assessments will be reviewed and updated as necessary to take into account consultation responses, and to further develop strategies to minimise material negative impacts on protected groups.

Proposals

Our current budget proposals are not expected to have significant negative impacts on equalities. Consequently, no detailed Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs) have been published with the budget proposals at this time.

Some impacts have been identified for capital proposals, which are outlined in the summaries below:

- **Public Rights of Way Infrastructure Programme**

The proposal demonstrates significant benefits for all communities in the county and benefits from having very few negative equalities impacts. Where rights of way are scheduled to close, there may be some negative impacts in the short to medium term. Mitigations have been identified, and these will be implemented based on the factors laid out in the EIA.

- **Redbridge Household Waste and Recycling Centre (HWRC) Redevelopment**
Redbridge Hollow Gypsy and Traveller site is extremely close to the recycling centre and additional mitigations should be considered to communicate and engage with this community before and during any proposed temporary closure of the Redbridge HWRC e.g. road closures, construction noise/traffic. If the plans progress, further detailed work is required on identifying impacts and mitigations.

- **Energy Saving Measures**

There may be physical impacts on those with disabilities, on mature employees and possibly those who are pregnant. Where infrared lamps are installed, they should be done so in a way that doesn't discriminate unfairly against any specific group, so common spaces, as well as areas reserved for changing, and gendered toilets must all be treated in the same way. If the plans progress, further detailed work is required on identifying and mitigating against the impacts. This would likely involve the appropriate station manager, and or Health & Safety lead for Oxfordshire Fire and Rescue.

Public Consultation

Public consultation on specific proposals is one of the tools which OCC can use to help understand and mitigate the potential impacts of proposed savings on equalities (the nine protected characteristics) or wider community areas (rural communities, areas of deprivation, carers, care leavers, armed forces community, social value).

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Section 1: Summary details

Service Area	All Service Areas
What is being assessed (e.g. name of policy, procedure, project, service or proposed service change).	This assessment sets out the overall impact that the budget proposals have on a range of equality and diversity characteristics, including the nine protected characteristics defined under the Equality Act 2010. The assessment also summarises any mitigations that have been planned or put in place to reduce or remove any potentially negative impacts.
Is this a new or existing function or policy?	This impact assessment provides an overview of the 2025/26 budget proposals and so comments on existing programmes as well as new proposals.
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>This assessment covers the budget proposals for Oxfordshire County Council for 2025-26. It is an opportunity to highlight key evidence and intelligence that the council has used to assess the impact of its budget proposals on the nine protected characteristics set out in the Equality Act 2010.</p> <p>In line with our equalities, diversity and inclusion (EDI) framework, the council has also assessed the impact on those living in rural areas, those living with social deprivation, armed forces communities, carers and those leaving care, and social value.</p> <p>This assessment has not identified any bias, unfair advantage or disadvantage to any groups or individuals. Where potential negative impacts have been identified, mitigations have been put in place to reduce impact.</p> <p>A summary of the impacts of the budget proposals on climate change outcomes have been set out in a separate overarching Climate Impact Assessment.</p>
Completed By	Jamie Kavanagh
Authorised By	Susannah Wintersgill
Date of Assessment	November 2024

Section 2: Detail of proposal

Context / Background Briefly summarise the background to the policy or proposed service change, including reasons for any changes from previous versions.	<p>Oxfordshire County Council's vision is to lead positive change by working in partnership to make Oxfordshire a greener, fairer and healthier county.</p> <p>We want to make sure that everyone in Oxfordshire can take advantage of what the county has to offer. Our strategic plan explains our cross-cutting priorities and commitments to achieve our vision and sets out our areas of focus.</p> <p>In recent years Oxfordshire County Council has delivered significant savings both in response to reductions in government funding and to release funds to reinvest in meeting rising demand. This budget planning round has been affected by increased pressure as a result of estimated inflationary increase to the cost of social care, and government change to employers national insurance, as well as contract inflation.</p> <p>The council also continues to experience demand-led pressures and the effects of the growing nationwide costs of supporting children and young people; the rising cost of social care and care placements for both children and adults; and a national shortage of social care workers leading to a reliance on agency staff and higher costs.</p> <p>The last Census confirms Oxfordshire has a growing and ageing population, which will continue to increase demand on services.</p>
Proposals Explain the detail of the proposals, including why this has been decided as the best course of action.	<p>This impact assessment covers all savings proposals across:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Adult Social Care• Children's Services• Environment & Highways• Economy & Place• Oxfordshire Fire & Rescue Service and Community Safety• Public Health & Communities• Resources and Law & Governance• Transformation, Digital and Customer Experience

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	<p>Details of proposals are set out in the main budget papers.</p>
<p>Evidence / Intelligence 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</p>	<p>In considering the impact of budget proposals before they are formally agreed, the council undertakes a detailed process of democratic and community engagement. For equalities this includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Using the Oxfordshire Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA 2023) of health and wellbeing needs, and the associated Equalities Briefing, to consider the impact of proposals as they are drawn up and in the development of this overarching assessment. The council's JSNA can be found here. • Census 2021 data analysis and insight, which is used to understand the demography of Oxfordshire and benchmarked statistics in relation to national and county level data, which can be found here. • Using data and intelligence gathered through developing our refreshed Including Everyone Framework on equalities, diversity and inclusion, which can be found here. • Services follow the council's approach to undertaking Equalities Impact Assessments (EIA). This can include considering at an early stage what impacts each proposal might have on the nine protected characteristics or on wider inequalities, and subsequently setting out greater detail, including any actions identified to mitigate negative impacts. If potential impacts are assessed as significant, individual Equalities Impact Assessments are completed and published to aid understanding and outline mitigations. • A democratic process including agreement of proposals by Cabinet, analysis and comment on those proposals by the Performance Scrutiny Committee, and adoption of a budget by Full Council.

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	Each of these stages provides an opportunity to invite comment and engagement from the public and representatives of particular organisations or population groups.
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Section 3: Impact Assessment

Assessing the evidence and impact on those with the protected and additional characteristics

The 2021 Census records that Oxfordshire has a population of 725,290. Demographic data below has been taken from the Oxfordshire Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) 2023 and through analysis of Census 2021 data.

The summaries below outline where a proposal has a positive or negative impact on those with protected and additional characteristics.

Cross-benefits

- Investment in procurement services: The proposed investment in additional resources for procurement services will help improve procurement practices in the council, including ensuring that procurement processes are fair, transparent, and inclusive. By driving social value through procurement, the council can support initiatives that benefit diverse communities and promote equal opportunities. Overall, this investment is designed to not only improve operational efficiency but also to support the council's commitment to equality and social value.

Age: The median age of Oxfordshire increased slightly from 38 years as of 2011 census to 39 years at 2021 census. In 2021 census, the median age was lowest in Oxford City (31 years) and highest in West Oxfordshire (44 years). At a small area level, wide areas of rural Oxfordshire had a median age above 47. Over the past 20 years (between 2001 and 2021), there was an increase in the population of Oxfordshire from 605,400 to 725,200, a growth of 119,800 (+20%). The younger age group, aged 0-15, increased by 10%. The older age group, aged 65 and over, increased by 48%. Rural districts have a much higher proportion of older people than Oxford City. In 2021, older people aged 65+ made up 20% of the estimated population of Oxfordshire's four rural districts, compared with 12% of the population of Oxford City. Oxford City had a much higher proportion of people in younger age groups (including students) and a higher number of people aged 20-24 than living in Oxfordshire's four rural districts.

- Public Rights of Way Infrastructure Proposal: Replacing stiles with gates, installing bridges 'at grade' and installing ramps where appropriate to replace steps will make the public rights of way network more accessible to all in the long term. However, while the proposed works are being completed, this may increase disadvantage in the short term to those who use mobility aids or have difficulty with movement because of their age. Mitigations will be put in place based on location and the time that individual rights of way are out of operation.
- Energy Saving Measures: There may be impacts on those with disabilities, for mature employees and possibly those who are pregnant. Mitigations will be discussed with the relevant Station Manager and / or Health and Safety Lead for the fire service.

Disability: 14.5% of people in Oxfordshire consider themselves disabled as defined in the Equality Act 2010, compared to 17.5% of people nationally. Of those 14.5%, approximately 35% feel limited 'a lot' by their disability in day-to-day activities, with 65% limited 'a little'. Since 2011, the proportion of disabled people in Oxfordshire has increased by 0.7%. The most common types of disability for older people are mobility, breathing/stamina issues and hearing. The main type of disability experienced by working age adults relates to mental health, with children experiencing the most social/behavioural and learning disabilities. As of March 2021, there are 20,000 blue badge holders in Oxfordshire, 2.9% of Oxfordshire residents (source: Department for Transport), compared with 4.2% of England's population. In November 2022 there were 52,169 disability-related benefits claimed in Oxfordshire.

- Public Rights of Way Infrastructure Proposal: As above, there may be an impact in the short term to those with mobility issues. However, in the long term the proposed work should aid accessibility.
- Energy Saving Measures: There may be impacts on those with disabilities, for mature employees and possibly those who are pregnant. Mitigations will be discussed with the relevant Station Manager and / or Health and Safety Lead for the fire service.

Gender Reassignment: 0.6% of Oxfordshire residents over the age of 16 identify with a gender which differs from their sex registered at birth, compared with 0.5% of over 16s in England. Of this population,

16% identify as a trans woman, 17% as a trans man and, 17% identified as non-binary and 49% as other gender identities. Oxford City has the largest trans and non-binary population outside of London.

- No specific issues relating to gender reassignment have been identified as a result of these budget proposals.

Pregnancy and maternity: There were 7,380 live births in Oxfordshire in 2021. The general fertility rate (GFR) for Oxfordshire (51.2) is lower than in England (54.3), and the birth rate among mothers aged 30-39 is higher than the England average. The biggest increases in birth rates from 2020-2021 are in South Oxfordshire (11% increase) and Cherwell (9%), with a 2% decrease in live births in Oxford. 4.2% of Oxfordshire maternities took place at home, higher than the UK average of 2.4%.

- **Public Rights of Way Infrastructure Proposal:** As above, there may be an impact in the short term to those who have mobility issues as a result of pregnancy or when using strollers for babies and infants. Mitigations will be identified based on location and the time that individual rights of way will be out of operation. However, in the long term the proposed work should aid accessibility.
- **Energy Saving Measures:** There may be impacts on those with disabilities, for mature employees and possibly those who are pregnant. Mitigations will be discussed with the relevant Station Manager and / or Health and Safety Lead for the fire service.

Marriage and civil partnership: At the time of the 2021 Census there were 132,060 households of married couples or couples in a civil partnership (47% of the Oxfordshire population, 3% higher than national average). 0.8% of Oxfordshire married couples or those in a civil partnership are same-sex couples.

- No specific issues relating to marriage and civil partnership have been identified as a result of these proposals.

Race including ethnic or national origins, colour or nationality: JSNA records that the largest ethnic group in Oxfordshire is White “English/Welsh/Scottish/Northern Irish/British” at 83.63% of the population. Aside from that group the largest ethnic groups in Oxfordshire are “Other White” (6.16%), “Indian”

(1.25%), “Pakistani” (1.20%) and “African” (1.08%). Oxford City is proportionately more ethnically diverse than England and Wales, whereas all other Oxfordshire districts are less ethnically diverse than England and Wales. West Oxfordshire is the least ethnically diverse Oxfordshire district.

56% of school pupils in Oxford are of an ethnic minority, double the rate of Oxfordshire as a whole, and 33% have a first language which is not English. 18.7% of Oxfordshire residents were born outside of the UK, of which those born in Poland are the largest group, followed by India and Romania. As of 2021 there were 652 ‘White: Gypsy or Irish Traveller’ residents and 1,229 ‘White: Roma’ residents in Oxfordshire. The majority of Roma residents reside in Oxford and Cherwell, with the highest proportion of Gypsy and Irish Traveller population residing in West Oxfordshire. Nearly a quarter of Oxfordshire residents are of an ethnic group other than White British (and almost half the population in Oxford). Oxfordshire has a higher proportion of residents that are of a mixed-race or of multiple ethnicities than the England and Wales average (3.1% compared to 2.9%).

- Redbridge Household Waste and Recycling Centre (HWRC) Redevelopment

Redbridge Hollow Gypsy and Traveller site is extremely close to the recycling centre and additional mitigations should be considered to communicate and engage with this community before and during any proposed temporary closure of the Redbridge HWRC e.g. road closures, construction noise/traffic. As the plans progress, further work is required to identify the impacts and mitigations.

Religion or Belief: JSNA data on religion and belief is based on the 2021 Census where this question was voluntary. 65% of Oxfordshire residents chose to disclose a religion. Of those stating a religion, 47% of Oxfordshire residents are Christian, 3% (23,500) are Muslim, 1% (6,332) are Hindu, 1% (3,257) are Buddhist, 1% (2,716) Other Religion, and less than 1% of residents are Jewish (1,893) or Sikh (1,192).

- No specific issues relating to religion or belief have been identified as a result of these proposals.

Sex: As of mid-2020 there were 347,569 (49.9%) males and 349,311 (50.1%) females living in Oxfordshire. Females in Oxfordshire have a higher life expectancy (84.9) than males (81.5).

- No specific issues relating to sex have been identified as a result of these proposals.

Sexual Orientation: The 2021 Census shows that 3.4% of Oxfordshire residents (21,428) describe their sexual orientation as something other than Straight or Heterosexual. Of this group, 47% are bisexual, 41% are gay or lesbian, 7% are pansexual, 2.5% are asexual, 1.3% are queer and 0.7% other sexual orientation.

- No specific issues relating to sexual orientation have been identified as a result of these proposals.

Rural Communities: Oxfordshire is a rural county, with 2.8 people per hectare, and is the most rural county in the South East. Rural areas have a higher proportion of elderly (aged 85+) residents than urban areas: higher rates of over 65s live in one of four rural districts (20%) compared to 12% in Oxford City. 40% of Oxfordshire residents live in small towns and villages. 85 out of 407 Lower Super Output Areas (LSOAs) in Oxfordshire are ranked within the most deprived 10% nationally on the geographical access to services (defined as road distance to a post office, primary school, GP and supermarket).

- Public Rights of Way Infrastructure Proposal: This is likely to have a positive impact on rural communities by improving access for residents to the surrounding countryside for recreation, access to nature and health and wellbeing.

Armed Forces: In April 2022 there were 9,350 regular armed forces personnel stationed in Oxfordshire and there are a number military bases in Oxfordshire including Vauxhall Barracks, Dalton Barracks, RAF Brize Norton, RAF Benson and Bicester Garrison. There are 23,541 armed forces veterans in Oxfordshire and as of March 2022 there were 6,718 recipients of pensions/compensation under the Armed Forces Pension Scheme, War Pension Scheme and Armed Forces Compensation Scheme in the county. There are an estimated 3,500 military families in the county, of which there are 3,043 school-aged children.

- No specific issues relating to the armed forces have been identified as likely to arise as a result of these proposals.

Care leavers: As of March 2021, Oxfordshire has 129 care leavers aged 17-18 and 301 care leavers aged 19-21. Care leavers face many challenges as they move into adulthood, such as those relating to careers, education and training, accommodation, finances and personal change. Our Care Leavers Local Offer explains the services which can be accessed by those who have been in OCC's care.

- No specific issues relating to care leavers have been identified as likely to arise as a result of these proposals.

Areas of Social Deprivation: Oxfordshire is one of the 10 least deprived counties in England, However, four of Oxfordshire's wards are in the most 10% deprived nationally. Oxfordshire's ten most deprived areas have higher rates of children (under 16s) in poverty than across England (24.6%), while increasing numbers of households experience fuel poverty, with more households in Oxford experiencing fuel poverty than the rest of Oxfordshire. Nearly 20,000 children and 12,000 older people in Oxfordshire live in poverty.

The overall budget proposals have been developed with the objective of effectively targeting services so that we continue to meet the needs of the most vulnerable, including those living with deprivation, and fulfil our statutory duties. All proposals that will have an impact, positive or negative, on any protected characteristic or on rural communities, armed forces, carers or areas of social deprivation, will have an individual Equality Impact Assessment completed alongside policy development to ensure full compliance with our commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion.

Oxfordshire County Council

Budget and Business Planning 2025/26

**Overarching climate impact review of
2025/26 budget proposals**

Context & Background

1. This document provides an overview of the potential climate action impact of proposed changes to the budget.
2. As many schemes are in early development, further climate assessment will be undertaken as more detailed business cases are developed through the capital governance process.
3. The [strategic plan 2023 - 2025 \(pdf format, 3.6Mb\)](#) sets out the council's vision to lead positive change by working in partnership to make Oxfordshire a greener, fairer and healthier county. This commitment is strengthened further by the Councils' priority to 'put action to address the climate emergency at the heart of our work'. The council's adopted climate action framework also commits the council to:
 - Being carbon neutral in its operations by 2030
 - Enabling a zero-carbon Oxfordshire well ahead of 2050
4. The council has a cross-organisational work programme to deliver on these commitments. The latest report on this programme can be found at [Decision - Climate Action Programme Six Month Update | Oxfordshire County Council](#)
5. In July 2024 a new government took power proposing new policies for the delivery of the national Net Zero target. This includes the introduction of a new Mission on Clean Power, to be followed by a Local Power Plan putting a proportion of energy into municipal and local ownership and the announcement of Warm Homes Grant funding. This is outside the scope of this report, but central government funding will be a key factor in enabling the delivery of local climate objectives. Decisions made by central government in this context will also influence private sector investment in this area.

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Revenue Proposals Climate Impact Review

6. A number of proposals are included in the budget that impact the delivery of the council's Climate Action commitments including:

- **Increased capacity and capability of procurement Service.** Procurement is proposing to invest in 2025/26 to enhance its department's capacity and capabilities to develop a strategic approach to contract management (budget item 2025RLGFC2), this proposed investment will in turn deliver larger savings in 2025/26 (item CORPRES102). This strategic approach to procurement has synergies with the implementation of the council's supply chain sustainability actions including the implementation of its supply chain carbon emissions policy and the adoption of principles of carbon governance in procurement such as PAS2080.
- **Increase in highway assets to be maintained as a result of network growth.** Increasing population trends across Oxfordshire are driving the growth in transport networks and related assets (e.g. signals, streets lights and furniture footprint) putting pressures associated with the funding required for their maintenance. This proposal is requesting additional funding for maintenance of an increasing network (items 2025EH11, 2025EH19 and 2025EH20). To avoid climate impacts associated with increasing maintenance operations resulting from this additional budget the council needs to enhance mitigation through the continual improvement of carbon governance best practices and principles for emissions reductions such as PAS2080 standard. Work is taking place to look at how the council can progress further in embedding PAS2080 in the organisation and this may have some resource demands.

In addition, in this budget the council will continue to realise the carbon emissions reductions and economic savings derived from previous years' carbon emission reduction projects, such as the LED replacement program which will deliver in this budget further savings (item 2025EH26). The council's highways team is proposing to invest additional funding in transport policy related with highways drainage, which will contribute positively to the adaptation to the potential impacts of climate change, particularly the risks of flooding of Oxfordshire's highways (item 2025EH39).

- **Energy from waste to be included in UK's Emissions Trading Scheme.** Energy from waste incineration will be brought into the UK Emissions Trading Scheme from 2028 to incentivise decarbonisation of the sector. It is expected that the costs of carbon trading arising from the fossil carbon element of residual waste delivered to Ardley Energy Recovery Facility, such as plastic waste, will be passed to the council. The council is proposing provisions for this purpose (item 2025EH12). There remain uncertainties about how the scheme will be implemented. Ways of mitigating the additional cost by bringing down are being considered with the contractor, including working in partnership with the district councils to reduce residual waste through more recycling, the

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contribution that might be made by implementation of national waste policy changes.

- **Offsetting 2030 residual emissions.** The Carbon Management Plan is the Council's plan for reducing operational emissions from council's buildings, highway assets, fleet, and staff business travel and achieving 2030 carbon neutral target. The council anticipates there will be between 1200-3300 tCO_{2e} residual carbon emission after delivering all carbon reduction programmes. The variation is dependent on how quickly central government can move on its commitment to decarbonise electricity grid by 2030. As offsets are a key part of a credible strategy to meet carbon neutral 2030 target, making an initial investment now to minimise the costs of offsetting in early years of the targets gives the council much greater certainty of reaching the target. This reduces reputational risk and financial risk in a market where offset is constrained and assumed to rise in price towards 2030. The budget is proposing to allocate funding (item 2025EP4) for 4 years to allow forward purchasing of up to 1000 tCO_{2e} of offset through credible nationally accredited schemes such as Woodland Carbon Code (WCC).
- **Carbon removals and going beyond net zero.** The budget also proposes to include funding for early investment in carbon sequestration offset projects from 25/26 to move the council's operational emissions towards a negative net total (ie beyond 'net zero') once the council reaches 2030 (item 2025EP2) and to stimulate the market for credible offsets.
- **Council's Estate rationalisation.** The council had been utilizing Abbey House in Abingdon for office purposes. It had longstanding intentions to vacate, which were successfully realized ahead of schedule in the summer of 2024, resulting in the cost saving 2025/26 in rent (2025RLGEST7) and utility costs (2025RLGEST8). The rationalisation of the council's estates contributes to reducing the emissions through reduced energy consumption.

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Capital Proposals

7. A number of proposals are included to directly support the council's 2030 Carbon Neutrality target.

- **Energy saving measures for Property.** Provisions in budget of £10m are proposed in this budget for the two following years (2025/26 and 2026/27) to support the council's target to achieve high energy efficiency and carbon neutrality in its estate by 2030. This funding proposal leaves a gap of £10m in total funding requirements for property that will need to be found in future years to avoid having to purchase a larger volume of carbon offsets.

8. Proposals have been made within the programme that have potential to impact the council's commitment to **a net zero county by 2050**:

- **Watlington Relief Road Scheme.** The proposed scheme comprises a planned new road (inclusive of active travel infrastructure) that aims to provide an alternative route to passing through the historic and narrow town centre and, in doing so, help to reduce congestion and improve air quality within the central area. A Forecast Modelling report (dated June 2024) that was prepared by AtkinsRealis on behalf of the County Council to look at the risk of induced demand stated: *"the trip numbers are such that induced traffic effects are minimal in the model, as the percentage variation in traffic flows is negligible, with no change at all for 12-hour flows."* The proposed scheme will accommodate pedestrians and cyclists, as well as deliver a new coach drop-off and pick-up facility that will serve Icknield Community College – and, in doing so, remove twelve two-way college-generated coach movements from the local highway network within the central area of Watlington during the morning and afternoon periods. Subject to the granting of planning consent, discussions will be held with relevant bus operators at an appropriate point in time (and ahead of scheme opening) regarding the potential future operation of bus services along the route. Galliford Try, a construction contractor with a carbon management accreditation (PAS2080), is the County Council's proposed design and build contractor for the scheme. The proposed project will be making use of electric vehicle chargers during the construction phase that were used by Galliford Try on the recently completed Wantage Eastern Link Road scheme on behalf of the County Council. The electric vehicle chargers are owned by the project, and the project team will be exploring the potential to donate the electric vehicle chargers to a Parish Council and/or a different local community group at the end of the proposed project (i.e. once the scheme has been opened).
- **Revitalising Banbury's Market Place.** This project proposal aims to create a town centre that is connected, green, resilient and people-focused. It will support cycle parking and alternatives to private car use.

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- **Revitalising Wantage's Market Place:** this project proposal aims to enhance Market Place Wantage. Particular measures that promote the council's Local Transport and Connectivity Plan include reallocating parking to public space, giving bus priority in the market place. Addition of planters, cycle parking, benches and other street furniture will protect people on foot and bike from vehicles in the space.
- **St. Giles' Public Realm improvements:** this project proposal aims to improve space for socialising and greening. It proposes improved access for pedestrians and cyclists, improved arrangement for buses and tourist coaches.
- **Rural areas active travel fund:** this proposal entails a fund to specifically support schemes designed to encourage active travel in rural areas of Oxfordshire.
- **Thames to Haddenham Active travel link:** this proposal entails an active travel link including a cycle path.
- **Major infrastructure development portfolio (\$106 funding).** Five out of eight infrastructure proposed projects have references to active travel and/or bus routes (Access to Carterton, Bicester SEPR western section, Banbury western active travel corridor, Banbury Hennef way, Milton Heights Bridge Design and Planning). One proposed sixth project has the potential to unlock house growth and has plans for conducting a carbon assessment/feasibility design of the structure (Witney West End Link Bridge Street). The two remaining proposed projects (Bicester Eastern Corridor, Bicester Queens avenue central corridor) have no references to active travel or any type of public transport. Potential carbon reduction contributions/impacts of the full portfolio (eight projects) will be brought forward as full business cases are developed.
- **Woodstock/Kidlington Mobility hub proposal (\$106 funding).** This project proposal offers the following benefits including decreasing the need for car travel/distance travelled by car, increasing use of public transport (modal shift), improves wider movement connections. Potential carbon reduction contributions/impacts need to be evaluated further as full business cases are developed.
- **Minor infrastructure development portfolio (\$106 funding):** 19 minor proposed infrastructure schemes are related with active travel and bus improvements: Bicester Churchill Road cycle improvement, Heyford Park village mitigation schemes, East Hanney signalled pedestrian crossing on A338 Crown Meadow, Wallingford pedestrian crossing on Wantage Road, Wallingford to Cholsey cycleway, Clifton Hampden contraflow cycling Forge Lane, Improvements to Windmill Road/Nelson Street/Southern Road junction Thame, Milton Heights pedestrian crossing on A4130, Crowmarsh Gifford Benson Lane/A4074 highway bus improvements, Benson crossing and traffic calming, Milton Park to Abingdon cycle route, Witney to Hanborough station cycle lane (missing gap), Witney improvements to Colwell Brook Path, Witney Witan Way zebra crossing, Witney Bishop Farm hill active travel, Eynsham

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Bitterell improvements active travel, Culham pedestrian/cycling crossing at Tollgate/Abingdon road, Witney - B4022 Oxford Hill / Jubilee Way signals, Mini Holland active travel. Potential carbon reduction contributions need to be assessed at a later stage.

9. **Proposals have been made in this budget to enabling a net zero county by 2050 and promote nature recovery:**

- **Energy efficiency measures for schools continued use of sports facilities:**
This investment proposal facilitates energy saving measures so that secondary schools can continue to access 'dryside' facilities for the delivery of the secondary PE curriculum and for primary schools to use swimming facilities.
- **Energy efficiency recycling fund, expanding decarbonisation finance to schools:** a funding proposal has been included to extend the interest free loan scheme to schools to fund energy efficiency improvements and renewable energy installations, contributing to net zero goals and a reduction in electricity consumption and costs. The scheme contributes to green job creation.
- **Catalysing finance to fund nature recovery in Oxfordshire.** This proposal aims to provide initial funds to attract private, corporate and social investors for supporting nature projects capable of creating self-sustaining revenues. The Oxfordshire Local Nature Partnership (OLNP) and Trust for Oxfordshire Environment (TOE) proposes the Oxfordshire Nature Catalyst Investment Facility (ONCIF) to catalyse new sources of financing to support nature recovery, bringing in new private, corporate and social investors interested in supporting nature projects capable of creating self-sustaining revenues. This is in effect a circulating pot of funding to support landowners bringing to market carbon capture and biodiversity net gain schemes.
- **Supporting the Public Right of Way infrastructure program.** The Public Right of Way program requires the maintenance and repairs of about 3000 bridges. There is an ongoing programme of inspection, repair & replacement of the bridge stock. However, the council has an aging bridge stock which is deteriorating fast and current investment and delivery levels mean only those failing are replaced. Based on a 15-year lifecycle plan for wooden kit structures 227(15%) are overdue replacement and a further 159 (7%) are listed as unsatisfactory. This funding proposal is for the replacement of these bridges. Part of any future investment will be targeted at introducing professional inspection of larger bridge assets (non-kit structures) in partnership with the structures team. This funding proposal also has an overall positive climate impact in supporting active travel, healthier lifestyles and community resilience by keeping access to green spaces. Additional climate positive practices already in place in this program include: the main material of choice for smaller bridges is timber, usually a carbon neutral material, sourced from local suppliers and avoiding the use of materials that come from large distances (such as tropical timbers); reuse of old materials from bridges are reused/recycled. For

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larger bridges that require carbon intensive materials, the program is proposing the support of a contractor with high credentials on carbon governance which can support the selection of low carbon material choices/operations. There may be some negative carbon emission impacts from the use of better resilient materials for climate adaptation, but the program will aim to balance these trade-offs with the support of the contractor.

- **Improving the Highway network.** The main purpose of this funding proposal is to improve the conditions of Oxfordshire highways through the deployment of planned maintenance schemes. In doing so the highways team has already implemented the reduction of hazardous road waste, containing coal-tar, being sent to landfill through design, requiring less excavation and in situ road recycling. Increased investment, as detailed within this proposal, will ensure that this work may continue. The service has made a commitment to transform service delivery to having the lowest possible environmental impact, with a particular emphasis on developing the circular economy of reusing resources already abundant in the network wherever possible. They will do this by delivering environmental, carbon and sustainability improvement plans focussing on four key business areas of the service: a) Scheme design, b) Plant & Fleet, c) Materials, d) Depots and Buildings. In addition, drainage maintenance supports the resilience to flooding, an increasing risk with ongoing climate change. Without the funding required, it is likely that less sustainable and more traditional maintenance techniques would instead be opted for to ensure the limited resources were sufficient to service the minimum statutory obligations of maintenance.
- **Redevelopment of Redbridge Household Waste Recycling Centre to address increasing waste derived from population growth.** A provision is being proposed in this budget for the redevelopment of Redbridge site, this aligns with the emerging HWRC Strategy, which supports HWRC expansion to meet population growth and the associated need for an increase in reuse and recycling capacity. Redevelopment rather than building a new site will reduce embodied carbon emissions. As the HWRC is being built on a developed site, re-use of materials from the site can be incorporated as materials for the new build for example, earth, soil and other materials can be repurposed for foundations or landscaping. Having the proposed redeveloped HWRC close to the population it serves in Oxford City and surrounding areas, reduces transportation-related emissions. Shorter travel distances for residents and collection vehicles will help minimize fuel consumption and greenhouse gas emissions. The proposed redeveloped HWRC will be built to ensure energy efficiency, and subject to final design it would look to incorporate passive design elements, such as natural ventilation, daylighting, to reduce the need for heating, cooling, and artificial lighting. It also intends to incorporate solar PV systems, staff EV charging stations and other low carbon features that will be confirmed at a final design stage.

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10. Some proposals aim to deliver positive social impacts with potential positive climate impacts.
- **Funding house expansion to localise fostering in Oxfordshire.** Currently part of foster care is taking place outside the boundaries of Oxfordshire and therefore the council incurs in larger trips (increasing carbon emissions) for officers to monitor the conditions of fostering. This project proposes to finance the expansion of houses in Oxfordshire for incentivising the fostering of children locally. This proposal can potentially reduce the mileage carbon emissions of the council's children team staff. Any new construction entails emissions from the construction operations and the materials used. There is potential of these construction emissions to be offset by the reduced emissions resulting from council officers' shorter trips, however the detailed calculations and monitoring would need to be implemented to confirm such reductions.
 - **Repurposing buildings for adults with complex needs.** This proposal entails the conversion of existing buildings into flats for adults with complex needs. Repurposing one existing building rather than constructing a new one represents avoided carbon emissions from the construction phase, however these reductions would need to be confirmed.

Part: 1

Oxfordshire residents' satisfaction survey 2024

Executive summary of survey results (including a budget focus)

August 2024

Prepared by: **Marketing Means (UK) Ltd**

For:



**OXFORDSHIRE
COUNTY COUNCIL**



Executive Summary

Background and method

This report represents the findings of a residents' satisfaction survey which was conducted by Marketing Means on behalf of Oxfordshire County Council between 27 May and 17 July 2024. The survey was sent to a sample of households across the authority area to gauge satisfaction with the council's services and the area where they live, as well as asking about the council's priorities and budget decisions.

The survey was posted out to a random sample of 6,000 households in w/c 27 May 2024. One reminder mailing was issued to non-respondents in w/c 17 June 2024. All residents in the sample could take part in the survey online if they wished, using unique login details included in the covering letter with a link to the online questionnaire, hosted by Marketing Means. These mailings generated 978 responses, 211 of which were completed online.

To boost the number of responses from younger residents, the 2024 survey included a face-to-face in-street interviewing stage, conducted in various locations in Oxford, Abingdon, Banbury, Bicester, Didcot, Wantage and Witney. This provided a further 167 interviews with residents aged 18 to 44 and brought the total number of survey responses to 1,145 by the closing date of 17 July 2024.

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

Overall views of Oxfordshire County Council

- Just under than half of those interviewed (47%) were satisfied with the way that the council runs things, with net satisfaction at +17%, both significant increases from the levels recorded in the 2023 survey.
- Nearly one in three respondents (32%) agreed that the council provides value for money, a significant increase from 25% as in 2023, though the proportion dissatisfied has decreased by only a small amount. These gave a significantly higher net satisfaction score of -4%, compared with -13% in 2023.
- A total of 43% were satisfied with the services provided by the council, a slight increase from the level of 39% in 2023, with a corresponding rise in net satisfaction from +9% to +15% in 2024.

Your local area

- Nearly three-quarters (72%) were satisfied with their local area as a place to live, similar to the 2023 result of 74%.
- Most respondents felt safe when outside in their local area, 90% feeling safe by day (similar to 2023) and 61% feeling safe after dark (significantly down from 2023's result of 71%).
- The issues most likely to be spontaneously named by respondents as the most important that residents in their local area faced were led by **road surfaces in poor repair/dangerous, too many potholes**, suggested by more than a quarter of respondents (26%). Several further themes related to roads and transport, such as poor pavements/pedestrian routes, public transport and traffic management, were mentioned by respondents, but each by less than 10%. The most likely other topics were **issues with new building/ development of new housing, lack**

of infrastructure/amenities (by 7%) and **the need for better health services/social care/mental health support** (by 7%).

- The factors most likely to be selected by respondents as important in making somewhere a good place to live were led by **health services** (60%, a significant increase from 2023's 51%) and **level of crime** (46%, up from 41% in 2023). Several other factors, though selected by a smaller proportion of the sample, had significantly increased in importance since 2023, including **clean streets, job prospects, level of pollution, cultural facilities, and facilities for young children**. None had significantly decreased in importance since 2023.
- The factors most likely to be selected by respondents as most in need of improvement in the local area were led by **road and pavement repairs** (by 56%, significantly lower than 2023's 61%), and **health services** (46%, not significantly different to the 2023 result). **Traffic congestion** was selected by only slightly fewer (36%), with no change since 2023 and the same applied to **affordable decent housing**. Only one other aspect was significantly less likely to be selected in 2024 than in 2023, **wage levels and the local cost of living** (18%, down from 23% in 2023).

Communications

- The proportion that felt fairly or very well informed on **benefits and services provided** by the council was 43%, similar to the 2023 result. Only slightly fewer (42%) felt well-informed about **what the council spends its money on**, again similar to 2023's result.
- A smaller proportion (30%) felt that the council **acts on the concerns of local residents** a great deal/ a fair amount. This was not significantly different to the 2023 results, and nor was the net satisfaction score of -27%.
- Just over a quarter (27%) were very or fairly satisfied with the **number of opportunities the council offers to local residents to have their say**, but 35% were dissatisfied, giving a net satisfaction score of -10%. These were not significantly different to the 2023 results.

Council services

- Across 20 different council services, the degree of residents' satisfaction varied widely, as did the proportion of respondents able to rate each service at all given the lack of experience of using or receiving each service. Taking out the "Don't know" responses to give the clearest view of the results for each service, ratings varied from 68% satisfied and net satisfaction of +62% for **libraries**, to only 14% satisfied and -62% net satisfaction for **maintenance of roads** (the latter was also the lowest-rated service in 2022 and 2023). The table below summarises the key figures for each service:

2024 Satisfaction Ratings of Services (base totals shown after each service)	% dissatisfied	% satisfied	Net % Score
Libraries (796)	6%	68%	+61.5%
Museums and history service (679)	4%	65%	+60.7%
Household waste and recycling centres (tips) (1,063)	15%	71%	+56.1%
Fire and rescue service - emergency response (719)	9%	63%	+54.6%
Fire and rescue service - public safety and road safety advice and support (698)	11%	56%	+44.4%
Primary education (5 -11 years) (450)	11%	53%	+42.1%
Registration of births and deaths, and ceremonies including marriages and citizenship (520)	8%	48%	+39.9%
Early years education (birth to 4 years) (403)	14%	46%	+32.8%
Secondary education (over 11 years) (444)	15%	46%	+30.9%
Countryside services (e.g., rights of way) (904)	22%	50%	+28.3%
Children's social care (protecting and supporting vulnerable children and families) (432)	20%	38%	+17.7%
Trading standards (541)	16%	32%	+16.7%
Support/care for older people (aged over 65) (587)	26%	34%	+7.7%
Public health (helping people to stay healthy and protecting them from health risk) (769)	27%	34%	+7.1%
Support/care for vulnerable groups such as people with disabilities, and/or mental health problems, general frailty (558)	30%	31%	+1.5%
Parking (enforcement, controlled parking zones, on-street parking) (972)	40%	27%	-12.3%
Road and transport schemes (e.g., new or improved junctions, bus lanes, cycle lanes etc.) (1,000)	50%	27%	-22.3%
Managing the road network (e.g., traffic lights, speed limits, traffic and transport) (1,062)	56%	28%	-28.7%
Maintenance of pavements (1,088)	64%	20%	-43.7%
Maintenance of roads (1,099)	76%	14%	-61.8%

- 12 of the services showed significantly increased net satisfaction compared with 2023. The largest increases were for **children's social care** (16% increase), **early years education** (13% increase), **support/care for older people** and **support/care for vulnerable groups** (12% increase for both). Only **libraries** showed a significant decline in net satisfaction.
- The services felt to be most important for local people in the area were **maintenance of roads** (68%, similar to 2023), **maintenance of pavements** (33%, up from 22% in 2023) and **fire & rescue service – emergency response** (32%, down from 40% in 2023).
- When reviewing the same results but including only those with lived experience of each service, five of the services were by far the most likely to be selected, each by more than 40% of those

with experience of them; **primary education, secondary education, support/care for older people, support/care for vulnerable people, and early years education.**

Special statistical analysis

- We have conducted two extra stages of Key Driver Analysis on the survey results to help identify opinions of which specific council services and activities seem to have the greatest impact in driving overall satisfaction, perceptions of value for money and how well residents are kept informed.
- The Correlation Analysis undertaken showed that overall perception of quality of services and value for money are the two key items most correlated with satisfaction with how the council runs things, though this is also moderately correlated with the extent to which the council keeps residents informed on benefits and services.
- Perceptions of value for money in turn are most strongly correlated by overall satisfaction with services, with how the council runs things, and the extent to which the council keeps residents informed on benefits and services.
- The Factor Analysis attempted to identify which specific services, or groups of services, have most impact in driving perceptions of those same four key measures: overall satisfaction with how the council runs things, value for money and the statements about keeping residents informed. The results highlighted, in particular, a group of services related to roads/transport, parking and pedestrian routes, alongside overall service satisfaction, acting on residents' concerns, and giving opportunities for residents to have their say, as a key driver of the four target questions, most notably overall satisfaction and value for money.
 - As in previous surveys and taken together with the results from elsewhere in this report, these findings demonstrate the key role that improvements to services related to roads, travel and transport may play – together with overall service satisfaction, acting on residents' concerns and giving them an opportunity to have their say – in improving overall perceptions of the council.

Council priorities

- After reading summary notes on the council's existing nine priority themes, and being asked to select two as most important for the council to concentrate on, no single theme was selected by a majority of respondents, but the most likely were **prioritising the health and wellbeing of residents** (48%), well ahead of **creating opportunities for children and young people reach their full potential** (29%), **investing in an inclusive, integrated and sustainable network** (28%), and **supporting carers and the care system** (24%).
 - There were no statistically significant increases in the proportions choosing the priorities compared with the 2023 results.
 - The only priorities selected by significantly fewer in 2024 than 2023 were **put action to address the climate emergency at the heart of our work** (down to 18% from 22% last year), and **tackle inequalities in Oxfordshire** (down to 7% from 10% last year).
- When asked which two of the same nine themes would be least important for the council to concentrate on, the most likely choice was for the council to **play its part in a vibrant and participatory local democracy** (42%, similar to the 2023 results), followed by **tackling inequalities** (33%, the same as in 2023), and **put action to address the climate emergency at the heart of our work** (29%, also similar to the 2023 result).

Budget setting

- Respondents were given a brief explanation of the financial challenges that the council faces and asked how much they agreed or disagreed with each of a list of 10 possible approaches that the council could take to make savings / generate income. The table below summarises the proportions agreeing or disagreeing with each and shows that five drew strong net support of nearly +50% or higher. These were the same four most likely to draw agreement in 2023 plus the new approach added - **Reduce costs by collaborating more with partners in voluntary & community sector**. Highest agreement was for **generate additional income by maximising the use of buildings and land the council owns**, which more than eight out of 10 respondents (85%) agreed with as a course of action for the council.
- By far the least popular ideas were generating additional income by increasing council tax and reducing spending on frontline services, with net agreement of -41% and -34% respectively.

APPROACH (base totals shown after each)	% disagree	% agree	Net % agreement
Reduce costs by operating from fewer buildings and using those we keep to their full capacity (1,095)	3%	85%	+82%
Reduce costs by using digital technology where it improves how we work and helps us be more efficient (1,086)	7%	79%	+72% ↑
Reduce staffing costs by redesigning services, using fewer agency staff and/or holding vacancies (1,093)	12%	69%	+57% ↑
Reduce the costs of the contracts we use to provide services (1,084)	7%	68%	+61% ↑
Reduce costs by collaborating more with partners in voluntary & community sector so we're not main funder & provider for every service (1,084)	12%	63%	+51%
Reduce spending on services the council is not legally required to provide (1,075)	19%	46%	+28% ↑
Use the council's financial reserves (money set aside for unexpected events), to provide one-off funding (1,085)	23%	44%	+21%
Generate additional income from sales, fees, and charges (1,048)	23%	44%	+21% ↑
Generate additional income by increasing council tax (1,088)	58%	24%	-34% ↑
Reduce spending on frontline services (1,081)	60%	19%	-41% ↑

- Respondents were also asked whether they agreed or disagreed that the council should consider increases of 2.99, 3.99 or 4.99 per cent to help fund adult social care and other key services. These three levels drew general disagreement and net agreement scores of +4%, -33% and -45% respectively. 42% of respondents agreed with the notion of a 2.99 per cent increase, but only 19% supported an increase as high as 4.99 per cent.
- Although nearly half (48%) felt their situation was 'about the same' as a year ago, the proportion who felt better off (5%) was far smaller than the proportion who now felt worse off (46%). Although most people (56%) had never or rarely struggled in this regard in the last year, a quarter (25%) had done so sometimes, 15% most of the time, and 4% all of the time.

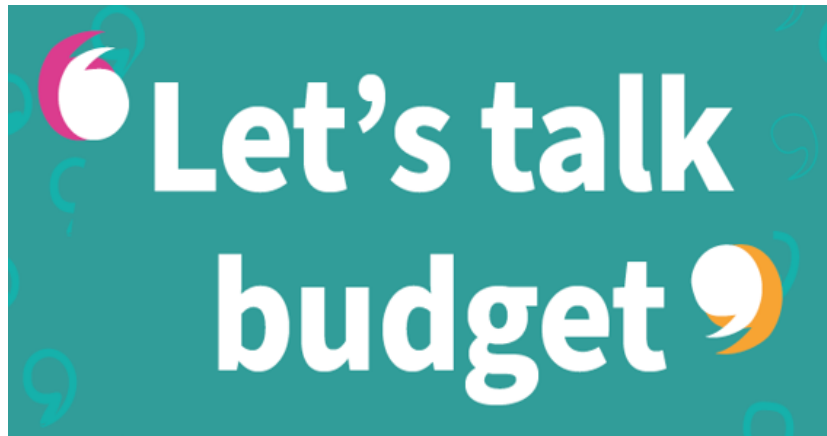
Climate change

- Just under a third of all respondents (30%) claimed to be very concerned about climate change and 76% overall were concerned. The proportion very concerned had fallen significantly from 37% in 2023.
- 80% felt that it is important for Oxfordshire as a place to adapt to the impacts of climate change.
- Although 75% agreed that it was important for the council to tackle climate change, this has declined from 78% in 2023 and 83% on 2022. The proportion considering it very important that the council acts has reduced significantly year-on-year from just over half (51%) in 2022 to 37% in 2023 to 31% in 2024.
- A clear majority of respondents would support each of a list of nine actions that the council could take to tackle climate change, especially **encouraging people to be more eco-friendly** (supported by 90%), **increasing biodiversity in the area** (93%), and **increasing the use of renewable energy and improving insulation in buildings in the area** (88%). All were supported by very similar proportions as had done so in 2023, small decrease in the proportion feeling that the council should **encourage people to be more eco-friendly**.
- Just under a third of respondents (32%) claimed that they had already made 'a lot' of changes to their lifestyle to help tackle climate change. This was not significantly different to the 2023 result (35%).
- In 2023, only 8% claimed that they had already visited climateactionoxfordshire.org.uk, but this increased to 16% in 2024.

Volunteering and digital skills

- 42% of respondents had provided unpaid help to a local community group, club or organisation in the previous 12 months, including 11% that did so at least once a week (the latter a slight decline from 15% in 2023).
- More than nine out of 10 respondents (93%) use the internet at work, home or elsewhere.

Part: 2



Budget simulator engagement 2025/26 **Key findings**

Report by: Consultation and engagement team
Date: September 2024

1. Introduction and methodology

- 1.1 Between Wednesday 19 June 2024 and Sunday 21 July 2024 we ran an interactive tool, encouraging residents and stakeholders to take on the role of councillors and create a balanced budget for 2025/26.
- 1.2 The budget simulator was specifically designed to give residents and stakeholders the opportunity to:
 - learn more about the services we provide and the financial challenges we face
 - have their say on where we should focus savings and spending, by adjusting core service budgets and council tax income, weighing up choices and making trade-offs
- 1.3 Using the simulator, residents and stakeholders were prompted to think about:
 - What services matter to you most?
 - Which services do you think we should protect?
 - Which services do you think we could reduce?
 - Would you raise council tax?
- 1.4 The budget simulator was advertised to a wide range of audiences using a range of channels. This included organic and paid for social media advertising, eNewsletters, internal communications for council staff and councillors and targeted stakeholder communications. It was also cross promoted to people who engaged with our young people's sounding boards.
- 1.5 Figures show that 1,060 visitors to the budget simulator site went on to submit a budget, this does not include those people who chose to look at the simulator but did not progress to submitting a budget. The simple, gamification approach certainly engaged a wide range of residents and for some it helped them to understand more about the council *"I really liked this simulator - it is not an easy task you have to balance the budget!"* and *"It's really hard to balance this, I'm glad I don't have to do it for real. It has taught me a lot about what the council does though"*

Respondent profile

- 1.6 In all 1,060 people submitted a budget using the simulator. Whilst a sizeable proportion of people chose not to provide their demographic details, for those we do have information for, overall:
 - More men (56%) responded than women (36%), Oxfordshire's population is more evenly balanced.
 - There was a good spread of ages, except for young people and young adults aged (aged 16-24 years).
 - Budget simulator respondents were more likely to identify their ethnic group as 'white' (82%), a slight underrepresentation compared to Oxfordshire's population.

- One in five respondents (20%) stated that they had long-term illness or disability, which impacted them either a little or a lot, again a slight overrepresentation (14%) compared to Oxfordshire's population.
- 37 people (4%) said they worked for Oxfordshire County Council.
- People from across Oxfordshire responded to the simulator, with significant spikes in response in OX2 (47) in Oxford city, and OX11 (51) and OX12 (48) in South Oxfordshire.

1.7 The map below shows the distribution of responses geographically and the following table, the respondent profile, against Oxfordshire's population.

Map 1: Geographical distribution of responses

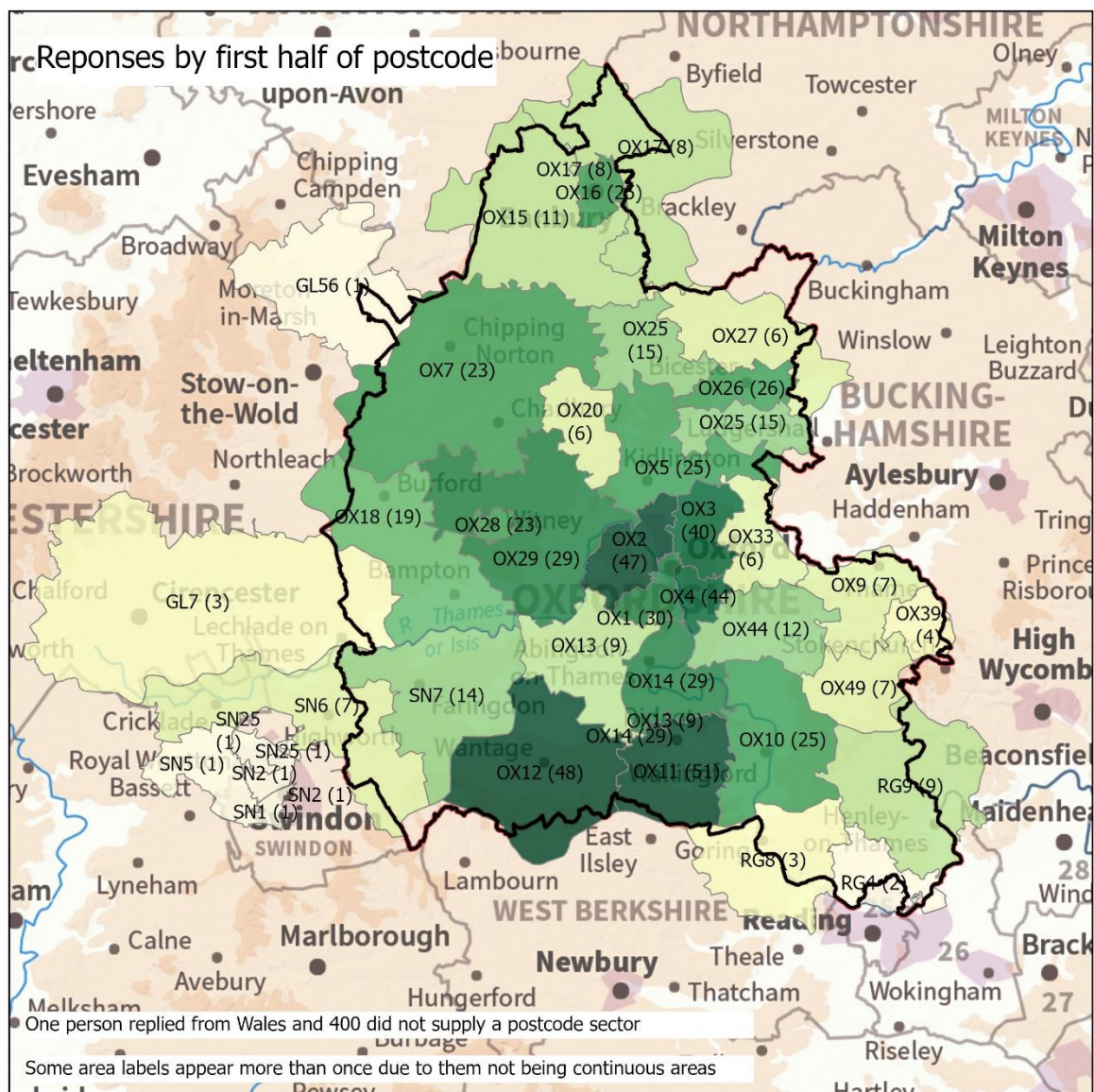


Table 1: Respondent profile

	Number of budget simulator respondents	% of response budget simulator respondents	Actual % in Oxfordshire's population
Age band			
16 - 24	65	8%	12%
25 - 34	116	14%	14%
35 - 44	161	19%	13%
45 - 54	141	16%	13%
55 - 64	169	20%	12%
65 - 74	111	13%	9%
75 - 84	58	7%	6%
85 or over	5	1%	3%
Prefer not to say	34		
Not answered	200		
Sex			
Female	305	36%	51%
Male	472	56%	49%
I use another term	6		
Prefer not to say	63		
Not answered	214		
Ethnic group			
Asian or Asian British	15	2%	5%
Black or Black British	7	1%	2%
Chinese	5	1%	1%
Mixed or multiple ethnic groups	23	3%	3%
White	680	82%	87%
Other ethnic group or background	11	1%	2%
Prefer not to say	86		
Not answered	233		
Long term illness or disability			
Yes - a lot	117	14%	5%
Yes - a little	53	6%	9%
No	608	73%	85%
Prefer not to say	56		
Not answered	226		

Main findings

- 1.8 The budget simulator organised core council services under 10 service groups and gave people 20 service items (sliders), on which to make choices and a further slider to consider an increase in council tax for 2025/2026.
- 1.9 Each of the service items sliders provided information and aimed to give people a broad understanding of what each service area does and the 'consequences' of reducing, maintaining or increasing spending. The sliders were not, however, designed to set out actual savings proposals or pressures.
- 1.10 The financial figures used in the simulator were based on the forecast budget for 2025/2026 at the time of its launch, taking account of pressures and proposed savings and were indicative figures only.
- 1.11 For each of the 20 service items (sliders) in the simulator four standard choices were given:
 - increase the allocated service item budget by 5%
 - maintain the allocated service item budget (0%)
 - decrease the allocated service item budget by 5%
 - decrease the allocated service item budget by 10%
- 1.12 It should be noted however, that moving the sliders had different consequences for each service item. For example, for most service areas, moving the slider positively would mean an increase in budget to improve or actively develop a service. However, for highways maintenance and home to school transport this would only maintain services at their current level. Specifically for home to school transport, the simulator stated that even with an increase in funding there would be remaining pressures.
- 1.13 The image below shows the budget simulator as it was presented on a laptop/desktop computer. The top right of the page shows the council's total budget, the top left shows the funding gap to be closed and below this the current status of your choices, ie if you are over or under budget to the nearest million or if you have exactly balanced the budget.

Image of budget simulator

<p>Your goal is to balance your budget and bring the funding gap as close to £0 as possible</p>		<p>Funding gap £13.90m Over Budget 2.2%</p>		<p>Total Expenses £651.40m</p>		
		-10%	-5%	0%	5%	Consequences
Adult social care	>	<p>i Adult social work</p> <p>We could continue to provide our current level of service. More</p>				
Children's services	>	<p>i Age well – care and support for older people</p> <p>We could continue to provide our current level of service. More</p>				
Highways operations	>	<p>i Live well – care and support for vulnerable adults</p> <p>We could continue to provide our current level of service. More</p>				
Place, transport and infrastructure	>	<p>Your comments on Adult social care (Optional)</p>				
Planning, environment and climate change	>	<input type="text"/>				
Public health	>					
Safety services	>					
Cultural services	>					
Running the council	>					
Council tax	>					
« Back		Review and Finish »				

1.14 The following tables summarise how people made choices when submitting their own budget and the consequences of this in terms of overall percentage budget changes.

Table 1: slider choices

		Slider options			
Service group	Service item	-10%	-5%	0%	5%
Adult social care	Adult social work	74	287	560	139
	Age well - care and support for older people	54	208	627	171
	Live well - care and support for vulnerable adults	62	247	653	98
Children's services	Children's social care	46	112	721	181
	Family help	60	213	601	186
	Education and schools	32	71	600	357
	Special educational needs and disabilities (SEND)	39	102	605	314
	Home to school transport	108	215	621	116
Highways operations	Highways maintenance	31	101	496	432
	Street lighting	161	388	421	90
Place, transport and infrastructure	Place, transport and infrastructure	113	278	447	222
Planning, environment and climate change	Strategic planning	166	330	452	112
	Environment and climate action	249	230	354	227
	Waste disposal	29	165	701	165
Public health	Public health	74	186	557	243
Safety services	Fire and rescue	24	76	821	139
	Trading standards	102	308	552	98
Cultural services	Libraries	114	253	537	156
	Museums and history services	161	331	461	107
Running the council	Running the council	272	440	311	37

Table 2: slider movements

Service group	Service	% of people who move the slider to decrease budget (-5% or -10%)	% of people who made no change (selected 0%)	% of people who moved the slider to increase budget (+5%)
Adult social care	Adult social work	34%	53%	13%
	Age well - care and support for older people	25%	59%	16%
	Live well - care and support for vulnerable adults	29%	62%	9%
Children's services	Children's social care	15%	68%	17%
	Family help	26%	57%	18%
	Education and schools	10%	57%	34%
	Special educational needs and disabilities (SEND)	13%	57%	30%
	Home to school transport	30%	59%	11%
Highways operations	Highways maintenance	12%	47%	41%
	Street lighting	52%	40%	8%
Place, transport and infrastructure	Place, transport and infrastructure	37%	42%	21%
Planning, environment and climate change	Strategic planning	47%	43%	11%
	Environment and climate action	45%	33%	21%
	Waste disposal	18%	66%	16%
Public health	Public health	25%	53%	23%
Safety services	Fire and rescue	9%	77%	13%
	Trading standards	39%	52%	9%
Cultural services	Libraries	35%	51%	15%
	Museums and history services	46%	43%	10%
Running the council	Running the council	67%	29%	3%

1.15 When considering and weighing-up choices, the service area items which respondents most frequently selected for an increase in budget were:

- Highways maintenance (41%) * (to maintain service not to improve it)
- Education and schools (34%)
- SEND (30%)
- Public health (23%)
- Place, transport and infrastructure (21%)
- Environment and climate action (21%)

These were all selected by 20 per cent or more of respondents.

1.16 Conversely, the service items which respondents most frequently selected for a decrease in budget (selected by at least 40 per cent of respondents) were:

- Running the council (67%)
- Street lighting (52%)
- Strategic planning (47%)
- Museums and history services (46%)
- Environment and climate action (45%)

1.17 The budget simulator responses indicate that there are divergent views across Oxfordshire's communities on environment and climate action, with this service item appearing in both the list of those most frequently selected for an increase in funding and the list for those most frequently selected for a decrease funding.

1.18 Some service items presented in the budget simulator, did not see any significant movement positively or negatively, with people choosing to maintain the current level of budget. Those service items most likely to be selected to remain at 0 were:

- Fire and rescue (77%)
- Children's social care (68%)
- Waste disposal (66%)
- Live well – care and support for vulnerable adults (62%)

For all these service areas, this equated to maintaining the service at their current level.

1.19 Focussing now on the impact of slider choices, table 3 shows the impact of people's choices on service item budgets, by presenting the average budget percentage change. This ranges from 1.27% to -4.47%.

Table 3: average budget percentage change

Service group	Service item	Average budget change as%
Highways operations	Highways maintenance	1.27%
Education and learning	Education and schools	1.05%
Education and learning	Special educational needs and disabilities (SEND)	0.63%
Safety services	Fire and rescue	0.07%
Children's services	Children's social care	-0.11%
Planning, environment and climate change	Waste disposal	-0.27%
Public health	Public health	-0.43%
Adult social care	Age well – care and support for older people	-0.68%
Children's services	Family help	-0.69%
Adult social care	Live well – care and support for vulnerable adults	-1.29%
Place, transport and infrastructure	Place, transport and infrastructure	-1.33%
Adult social care	Adult social work	-1.40%
Education and learning	Home to school transport	-1.49%
Cultural services	Libraries	-1.53%
Safety services	Trading standards	-1.95%
Planning, environment and climate change	Environment and climate action	-2.36%
Cultural services	Museums and history services	-2.58%
Planning, environment and climate change	Strategic planning	-2.59%
Highways operations	Street lighting	-2.92%
Running the council	Running the council	-4.47%

1.20 Four service items, (highlighted in red) have a positive average budget percentage change:

- Highways maintenance (1.27%)
- Education and schools (1.05%)
- Special education needs and disabilities (SEND) (0.63%)
- Fire and rescue (0.07%)

1.21 These were followed by a further five services items (highlighted in orange), with an average percentage change in budget between zero and minus one per cent:

- Children's social care (-0.11%)
- Waste disposal (-0.27%)
- Public health (-0.43%)
- Age well, care and support for older people (-0.68%)
- Family help (-0.69%)

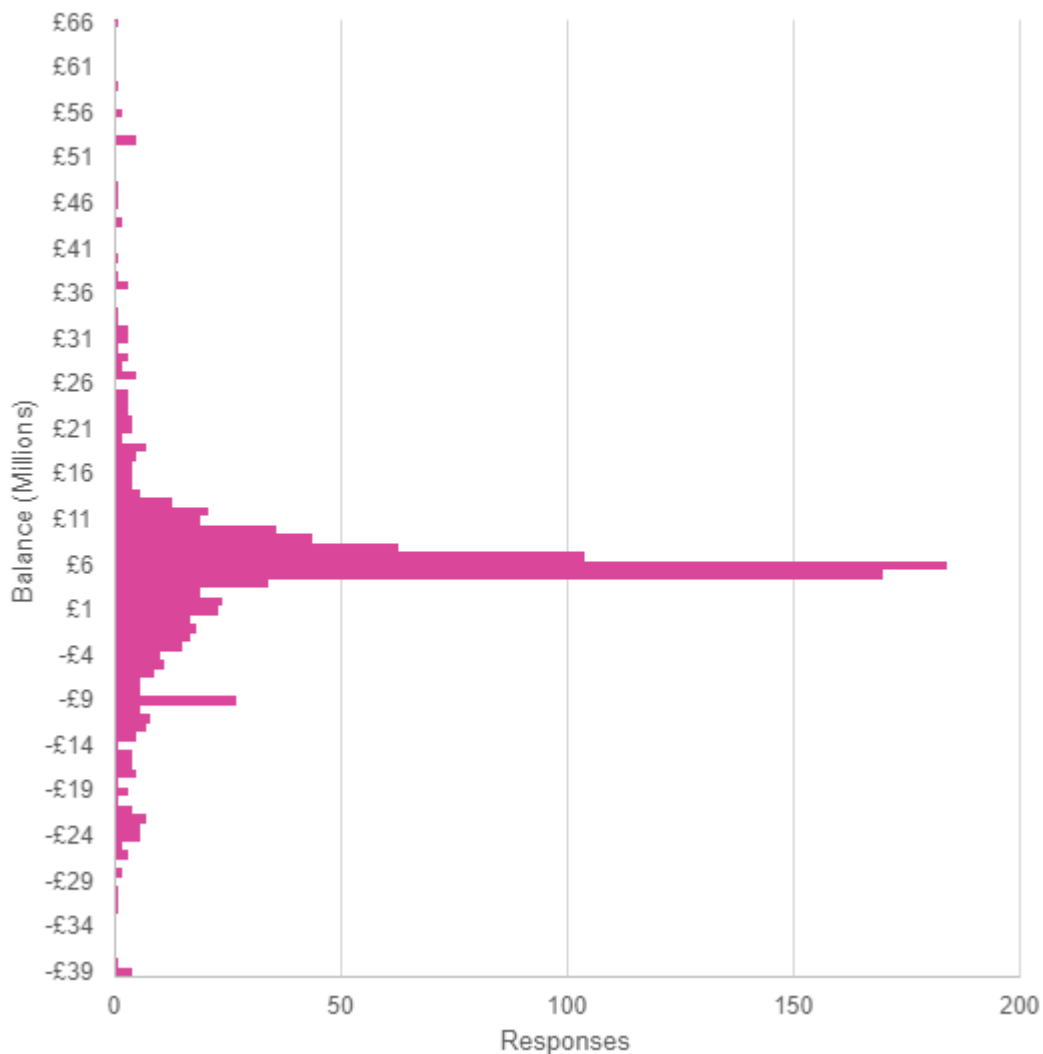
- 1.22 The five service items (highlighted in green) with, on average, the greatest negative percentage changes of between -2.36% to -4.47% were:
- Back-office support services (Running the council) (-4.47%)
 - Street lighting (-2.92%)
 - Strategic planning (-2.59%)
 - Museums and history services (-2.58%)
 - Environment and climate action (-2.36%)
- 1.23 These were followed by a further six services items (highlighted in yellow), which had an average negative percentage changes of between -1.29% and -1.95%:
- Trading standards (-1.95%)
 - Libraries (-1.53%)
 - Home to school transport (-1.49%)
 - Adult social work (-1.40)
 - Place, transport and infrastructure (-1.33%)
 - Live well – care and support for vulnerable adults (-1.29%)

Closing the funding gap

- 1.24 Our starting budget was £651.4 million with a funding gap of £13.9 million. The simulator was not designed to especially close the funding gap exactly, rather to explore how people make choices when faced with difficult decisions (as the councillors to need to). However, that said:
- 17 people (1.6%) managed to close the £13.9million funding gap exactly
 - a further 841 people (79.3%) made budget reductions over and above the £13.9 million funding gap. This included people choosing to increase council tax to create additional expenditure budget.

The chart below shows the distribution in 'balance' of the budgets submitted, where £0 is an exact balance.

Budget Balance by Responses



1.25 Before submitting their final budget, respondents were asked if they had any further comments to share with the council. 77 people gave written feedback, which included 105 different comments. Comments, were wide and diverging, however two equally significant areas of comment were:

- Review services for efficiencies / identify waste spending (11 mentions)
- A belief that the county council is responsible for decisions which actually lie with national government (11 mentions)

1.26 Other notable themes were:

- Various mixed comments about the budget simulator (10 mentions)
- A belief that the county council is responsible for services/decisions that lie with others (9 mentions)
- Acceptance of a rise in council tax given the need for additional funding (8 mentions)
- A need for increased funding from national government (6 mentions)
- Negative comments about traffic measures (6 mentions)

- General negative comments about the quality of services (6 mentions)
- Reduce services (6 mentions)

2. Detailed findings

- 2.1 The next section of the report sets out how budget simulator respondents chose to adjust each of the service item budgets, within service groups. The section is ordered, as per the simulator.
- Adult social care
 - Children's services
 - Highways operations
 - Place, transport and infrastructure
 - Planning, environment and climate change
 - Public health
 - Safety services
 - Cultural services
 - Running the council
- 2.2 The budget simulator descriptions and consequences for the slider choices were written with input from service areas and approved by service directors. It also includes an analysis of all the accompanying qualitative comments by service group, which bring to life how people made their decisions for the service item budgets when asked to weigh-up choices and make trade-offs. A coding framework was created to analyse this rich written feedback and all comments across the entire simulator were read and coded against this.

Adult social care

Budget simulator descriptions

- 2.3 Adult social work
We help people who are vulnerable or at risk of harm to live safely and independently. We work with people and organisations to protect their rights and prevent abuse and neglect. We also assess their needs and provide or arrange services to support them. This is our legal duty under the Health and Social Care Act 2018. In the last financial year (April 2023 - March 2024) we undertook 22,306 initial adult social care assessments.

Age well – care and support for older people

We help older people in Oxfordshire to live independently and stay safe and well. We also provide information and advice, support for unpaid carers and a range of services to meet people's needs. This can include care services and specialist housing. This is our legal duty under the Health and Social Care Act 2018. Currently we care for and support 3,866 older people.

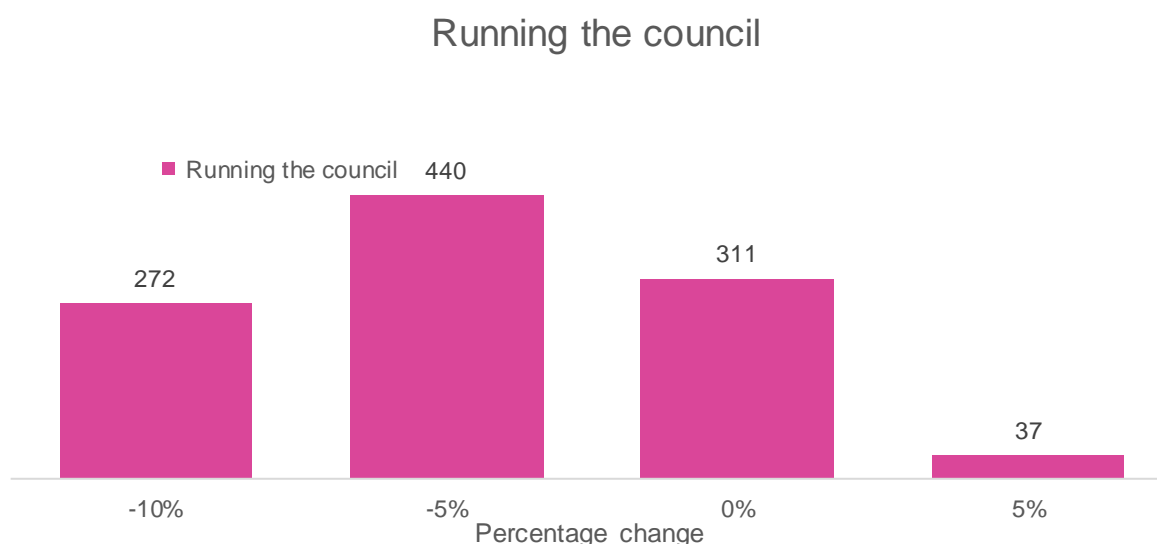
Live well - care and support for vulnerable adults

We help adults aged 18+ in Oxfordshire who have a disability or physical or mental illness to stay well and safe. We provide information and advice, assess their needs and provide or arrange a range of services to support them. This can include care services and specialist housing. This is our legal duty under the Health and Social Care Act 2018. Currently we care for and support 2,978 vulnerable adults.

The adult social care service group contained three sliders: adult social work, age well - care and support for older people and live well - care and support for vulnerable adults.

- Around two fifths of respondents (range 38% to 47%) chose to move one or more sliders in the adult social care group to either increase or decrease funding in this area.
- Around one in ten respondents chose to increase the budget (range 9% to 16%) to improve/develop services.
- 25% to 34% chose to decrease funding across all service areas
- In terms of the average percentage budget change, these were in the mid-range of all services presented on the simulator: age well (-0.68%), live well (-1.29%) and adult social work (-1.40%).
- The chart below shows how people responded for all three service items (sliders) presented in the simulator.

Budget simulator choices for adult social care grouping



Written feedback

- 2.4 In all, 101 people gave written feedback to support their choices on the 'adult social care' section of the simulator, which included 100 different comments. More detailed analysis has been undertaken for themes (codes) which received 10 per cent or more comments in section and these are as follows:

- Reduce spending (32 mentions)
- Importance of service (18 mentions)
- The council should not provide this service (16 mentions)
- Do not reduce spending (14 mentions)
- Increase income (11 mentions)

2.5 In relation to reducing spending the majority of comments expressed concerns about perceived inefficiency and high spending on social care, with suggestions to reduce budgets and increase self-reliance. *'Find more efficient and joined up ways of working to generate cost savings.'*

The importance of the service was highlighted, with many comments focussing on the need for good care and support for vulnerable and elderly adults and emphasising the importance of community access and independent living. *"So important to give vulnerable adults the care to allow them to gain access the community and to have independent living."*

Many respondents did not want to see a reduction in budget for this service, with comments reflecting frustration with the current social care system and a lack of support for those in need. *"A lot of older people are lonely and struggling with finding care services."*

Suggestions for maintaining the budget included integrating services, promoting early intervention to reduce future spend, and increasing income. *"You ought to be having more spending herein the light of a steady increase in average older rate payers."*

A recurring theme (reflected in both comments about reducing spend and increasing income through higher fees) is the call for individuals and families to take more responsibility for their care, rather than relying on public resources. *"Far too much of council budget is spent on adult social care. People need to be more self-reliant and look after themselves and their families."*

2.6 Other themes for written feedback regarding adult social care related to:

- Service quality (7 mentions)
- Climate action (1 mention)
- Misunderstanding of the county council's power or responsibilities (1 mention)

Children's and family services

Budget simulator descriptions

2.7 Children's social care

We help children and young people in Oxfordshire who are vulnerable or at risk of harm to be safe and well. We work with families and other organisations to protect their rights and prevent abuse and neglect. We also

assess their needs and provide or arrange services to support them. This is our legal duty under the Children Act 1989, 2004 and 2017 and the Health and Social Care Act 2018.

We support children to stay safely with their families or family networks when they need help and protection. Working with parents and children we help make changes and improve outcomes by tackling the things that cause concerns and the family distress. Currently we support 1,738 individuals.

We provide services for 765 children and young people who can't live with their own families, finding them loving foster families and good homes and making sure that they are healthy and happy. When young people are leaving our care, we make sure they have a safe place to live and a plan for their goals for the future.

We provide social care services for 403 children and young people with very complex disabilities and health needs, who need high levels of practical physical care and support.

We welcome children and young people who come to our country alone as asylum seekers and need our help. We give them care, support, education and a chance for a better future

Family help

We help families, children and young people in Oxfordshire who are facing difficulties to overcome them and prevent future problems.

Children and family hubs are places where you can get advice and support on various topics, such as parenting, health, education and more. Currently there are 1,007 individuals being supported by this service.

The targeted youth support service helps young people who are at risk of getting into trouble or harm. It helps them deal with issues such as drugs, alcohol, crime, violence, mental health and more.

Our education, employment and training service supports young people who are not in school, work or training. It helps them find opportunities to learn new skills, get qualifications and find jobs.

We also work with local groups and organisations to provide activities and programmes for families, children and young people. Working with these groups also helps them to connect with other people in their area and access other services.

Education and schools

We provide access to education and training for Oxfordshire's children, including those who are excluded from school or in the criminal justice system. We also oversee the school admissions process, make sure there is enough early years' provision for children under five and provide specialist services to support schools to improve. We also support children and young

people with their education and health and care plans, allowing them to get the support they need to thrive in our schools.

Special educational needs and disabilities (SEND)

We work with partners to meet the needs of children and young people aged 0 - 25 with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) and their families. We assess their needs and provide or arrange appropriate support according to their individual needs. Currently 6,639 children and young people in Oxfordshire have an education and healthcare plan.

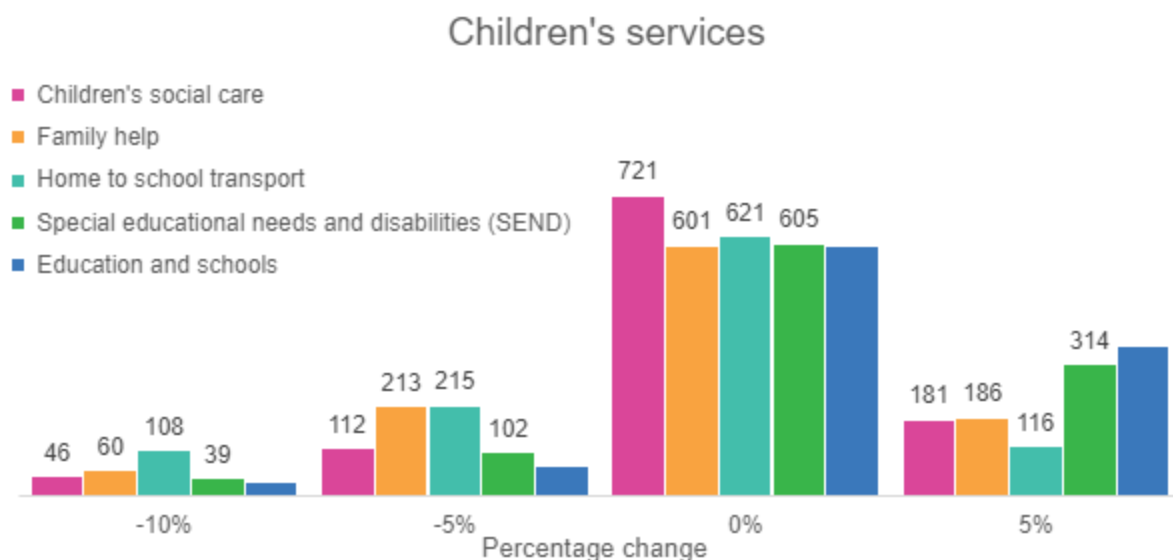
We also provide an impartial information and advice service, as well as support some SEND pupils in schools with educational psychologists, speech and language therapy and occupational therapists. This is our legal duty under the Code of Practice 2014.

Home to school transport

We help eligible children from reception to year 11 get to school by providing them with transportation assistance. Usually they get a free pass to use on public buses or trains but sometimes we arrange for them to travel on a special bus, coach, or minibus. There are just over 6,000 young people who are eligible to use mainstream school transport in Oxfordshire. Some children with extra needs may travel by taxi to help them access school and education.

- 2.8 The children's and family service group contained five sliders: children's social care, family help, education and schools, special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) and home to school transport.
- Around four in ten respondents (range 32% to 43%) chose to move one or more sliders in the children's services group to either increase or decrease funding in this area.
 - Between 11% (home to school transport) and 34% (education and schools) of respondents chose to increase the budget.
 - Between 10% (education and schools) and 30% (home to school transport) chose to decrease funding across all service areas
 - In terms of the average percentage budget change, these were very mixed. Education and schools (1.05%), and SEND (0.63%) services saw increases in investment, while others saw varied decreases: children's social care (-0.11%), family help (-0.69%) and home to school transport (-1.49%).
 - the chart below shows how people responded for service items (sliders) presented in the simulator.

Budget simulator choices for children's services grouping



Written feedback

2.9 In all, 84 people gave written feedback on the 'children's and family services' section of the simulator, which included 98 different comments. More detailed analysis has been undertaken for themes (codes) which received 10 per cent or more comments in section and these are as follows:

- Reduce spending (28 mentions)
- Importance of service (19 mentions)
- Council should not provide this service (18 mentions)
- Do not reduce spending (13 mentions)

2.10 Comments showing a desire to reduce spending overwhelmingly related to home to school transport. Many comments emphasised that parents should be responsible for their children's transport and care, with mixed views on whether it should be provided at no cost to families, fully funded by parents, or only available for those on benefits or low incomes. *"It is the parents of the children who should take them to school, look after them etc. It's not my money which should be going to them."*

People also felt that a lack of local primary school places increased the need, and therefore cost, of home to school transport. *"Not enough primary school places and children can no longer go to school in their own village this needs to be the top priority. It's failing families."*

Many respondents highlighted the importance of services for children and indicate a belief in the long-term benefits of investing in children. There is a sentiment that money spent on children's services is generally saved in the future. The importance of children's mental health and the need for early family help to reduce the need for further services later on are also mentioned. *"I think investing more in young people is an efficient use of*

money, because problems that are not supported in childhood often have more expensive long term consequences.”

Some comments express concerns about the impact of reduce spending on these services, particularly on SEND services. The timeliness of assessments for ADHD/autism was a concern. *“SEND needs to expand to cope with need and demand.”*

2.11 Other themes for written feedback regarding children’s services related to:

- Increase income (6 mentions)
- Service quality (6 mentions)
- Roads and transport (4 mentions)
- Stop diversity work (2 mentions)
- Climate action (1 mention)
- Misunderstanding of the county council’s power/responsibilities (1 mention)

Highways operations

Budget simulator descriptions

2.12 Highways maintenance

We have to keep the roads in Oxfordshire safe for everyone. We look after 3,000 miles of roads, as well as paths, bridges and trees. We fix potholes, resurface roads, make roads safer, clear snow and ice in the winter, unblock drains and cut grass on the sides of the roads.

Street lighting

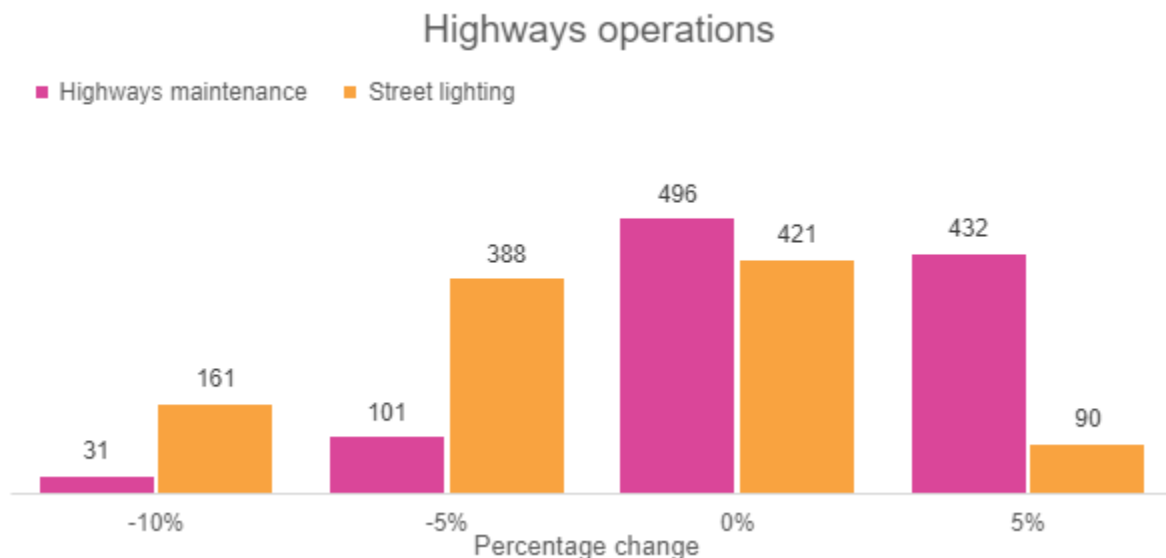
We maintain over 60,000 street lights, signs and bollards that light up the roads and paths in Oxfordshire. Most of them are LED lights, which use less energy and last longer. Our streetlights are managed (what times they are on and when they are brighter or dimmer) to save energy.

2.13 The highways operations grouping contained two sliders: highways maintenance and street lighting.

- Just over half the respondents (57%) chose to move one or more sliders in the highways operations group to either increase or decrease funding in this area.
- Just over half of respondents (52%) reduced funding for street lighting and 12% reduced it for highways maintenance.
- Approximately four in 10 respondents (41%) increased funding for highways maintenance, this was presented as maintaining the service at its current level not improving the services. Eight per cent of respondents chose to increase the funding for street lighting to improve the service.
- Highways maintenance saw the greatest positive average percentage budget change for all service items on the simulator (1.27%), in the red section of the previous table

- In contrast street lighting was ranked 19 out of 20, with an average change of -2.92%.
- The chart below shows how people responded for both items (sliders) presented in the simulator.

Budget simulator choices for highways operations



Written feedback

- 2.14 In all, 123 people gave written feedback on the 'highways operations' section of the simulator, which included 178 different comments. Comments in this section focussed on roads and transport (69 mentions) and reducing spending (66 mentions). Feedback was largely negative in tone, especially around perceived poorly maintained highways. *"The state of roads in Oxfordshire is appalling and needs improving."*
- 2.15 Many comments emphasise the need for better road repair and maintenance, particularly fixing potholes and improving road conditions. *"Maintenance. This is poorly carried by those doing repairs and clearly done to the minimum standard and budget by outside companies."*

Respondents expressed frustration with the council's handling of roadworks and maintenance, describing it as inefficient and wasteful. *"Pay once for quality work on the highways instead of paying the same people to patch it up constantly."* *"Ensure work carried out on roads is actually done and to the correct standard before you pay the bill."*

Several comments suggest reducing street lighting to save costs and reduce light pollution. Some comments also propose using solar lighting and LED bulbs. *"Switch the lights off after midnight, less light pollution, more environmentally friendly and a lower bill for running them."*

Many respondents are critical of traffic measures introduced in recent years, such as low traffic neighbourhoods, traffic filters and 20mph speed limits.

Comments recommend ceasing these projects and redirecting the funding into road maintenance. *“Reduce expenditure on LTNs and Filters to zero. Stop unnecessary and costly 20mph schemes. Spend that saved money in the BASICSs - pothole and road surface repair.”*

- 2.16 Other themes for written feedback regarding highways operations related to:
- Service quality (11 mentions)
 - Increase income (4 mentions)
 - Misunderstanding of OCC power/responsibilities (3 mentions)
 - Do not reduce spending (2 mentions)
 - Importance of service (2 mentions)
 - Council should not provide this service (1 mention)

Place, transport and infrastructure

Budget simulator description

2.17 Place, transport and infrastructure

We support and encourage thriving communities in Oxfordshire, mainly by managing travel and connectivity so that people can easily get to important places (such as health services, education, shops and workplaces) and goods can be moved in Oxfordshire. We have a plan for the county that respects the individual needs of different areas in Oxfordshire, and more local travel area plans to help us understand what transport might be needed to support communities in the future.

We encourage people to travel by walking, cycling and using public transport. We work with other groups and organisations to provide services and make changes that improve travel and transport. We also build roads, bridges and other transport facilities that are funded by government, work with businesses who build new housing and business properties, and by working with others in partnership to deliver services.

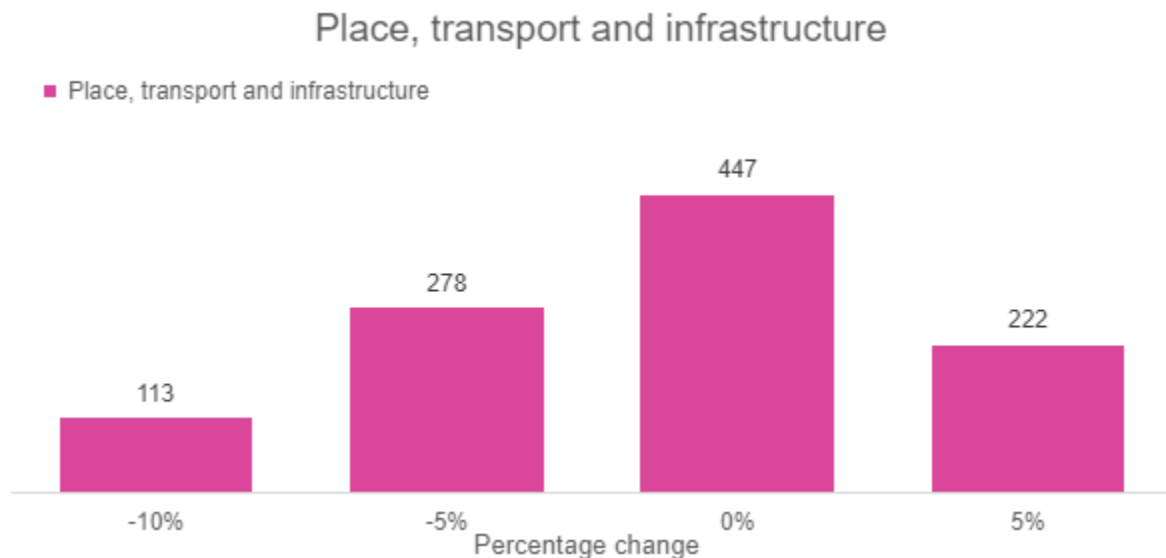
We want to make Oxfordshire a better place to live and work, where people can benefit from types of transport that help prevent climate change and improve air quality improving the health and wellbeing for residents.

We support bus services and provide free bus passes for older people and disabled people and their companions. We ensure that new housing and commercial developments and new cycleways, walking routes, bus lanes and roads meet our communities' needs and the overall vision for Oxfordshire as a greener, fairer and healthier county.

- 2.18 The place, transport and infrastructure group had just one slider.
- Just over half of the respondents (58%) chose to move the slider to either increase or decrease funding in this area.

- Around one in three (37%) respondents reduced the budget for place, transport and infrastructure and around one in five (21%) increased it.
- This service options saw a negative average budget percentage change of -1.33%, ranked 11 of the 20 service items.
- The chart below shows how people responded for place, transport and infrastructure as presented in the simulator.

Budget simulator choices for place, transport and infrastructure



Written feedback

2.19 In all, 100 people gave written feedback on the 'place, transport and infrastructure' section of the simulator, which included 112 different comments. More detailed analysis has been undertaken for themes (codes) which received 10 per cent or more comments in section and these are as follows:

- Roads and transport (68 mentions)
- Reduce spending (13 mentions)

2.20 Respondents highlight a need for more buses and better coordination between bus companies, along with concerns about the cost of bus services and the need for subsidies. Suggestions include using smaller buses in less frequented areas and providing more frequent services in rural areas. Additionally, there are calls for investment in public transport to reduce traffic and carbon emissions. *"Less buses in large towns. Re- direct transport services to rural areas. It crazy you can get 10 different buses every 10 minutes out of oxford but only 1 and hour to semi rural areas."*

There is strong opposition to traffic filters, LTNs (Low Traffic Neighbourhoods), and 20mph speed limits, along with frustration with roadworks and traffic 'experiments'. Many believe that significant savings could be made by halting or reversing these measures. *"You're currently wasting money wrecking Oxford with wildly unpopular traffic filters and LTNs. Your transport projects actively make the city (and county) worse."*

Comments show strong but mixed feelings about cycle lanes; some see them as a waste of money, while others call for better maintenance and protection. Additionally, there are suggestions to reduce spending on cycle paths and focus on road maintenance. *“Stop sacrificing bus lanes to cycle lanes that no one uses!” “More cycle ways and EV charging”.*

There is frustration with council spending and perceived inefficiencies. People suggest that there are opportunities to reduce costs, such as by employing offenders to do maintenance work and reducing unnecessary street signage. Additionally, there are calls for better planning and prioritisation of resources, along with suggestions to optimize resources and involve community groups and businesses in environmental efforts. *“Far too much spent on vanity projects that are unwanted and unnecessary.”*

2.21 Here is a high-level thematic summary of the other comments made for ‘place, transport and infrastructure’:

- Misunderstanding of the county council’s power/responsibilities (10 mentions)
- Do not reduce spending (9 mentions)
- Increase income (3 mentions)
- Service quality (3 mentions)
- Importance of service (3 mentions)
- Climate action (2 mentions)
- Feedback on the budget simulator (1 mention)

Planning, environment and climate change

Budget simulator description

2.22 Strategic planning

We are in charge of planning for minerals and waste in Oxfordshire. We also give advice on planning for infrastructure, such as roads, schools and health services. We do this by responding to consultations on planning applications and on local area plans.

Environment and climate action

Reducing our impact on the environment is important to us and is part of all the work that we do. This part of our budget is about the work of our environment and climate action teams, who play an important part in improving the natural environment and people's access to it, reducing pollution and making sure we are ready to deal with more severe weather.

We are responsible for fixing drainage and flooding issues on highways and roads across Oxfordshire, including blocked drains and gullies on the road. We are also responsible for co-ordinating the emergency response to flooding and managing the flood risk from surface water, groundwater and ordinary watercourses. We work with a range of organisations including the Environment Agency, Thames Water, the city and district councils, farmers and landowners to do this.

We also work with the city and district councils (and local communities) to protect and improve nature and access to green and open spaces. We work with the Local Nature Partnership to protect our heritage, wildlife and landscapes in Oxfordshire, as well as increasing the number of trees.

We help people enjoy the countryside by looking after and expanding the paths and trails that people can walk, cycle or ride horses on. We work to keep these paths clear, mapped and sign-posted, as required by law. We work with volunteers and community groups to make our environment better and safer for everyone.

We work to reduce pollution and make Oxfordshire more energy efficient by:

- Supporting people on very low incomes to make their homes more energy efficient. This helps to reduce their bills as well as keeping them warmer and healthier.
- Working with other organisations to make sure Oxfordshire's energy system can support communities and homes to have more chargers for electric cars and use more renewable energy.
- Reducing how much energy council buildings use, and switching to vans, cars other vehicles that create less pollution. We also support schools to make these changes.
- Working with companies that supply things to the council to help them reduce their environmental impact.
- Reducing traffic congestion and encouraging people to walk, cycle or use public transport (where possible) instead of driving.
- Supporting communities to do things that are good for their local area and the environment. For example, having repair cafes, planting community orchards and giving people advice on how to lower their energy bills.

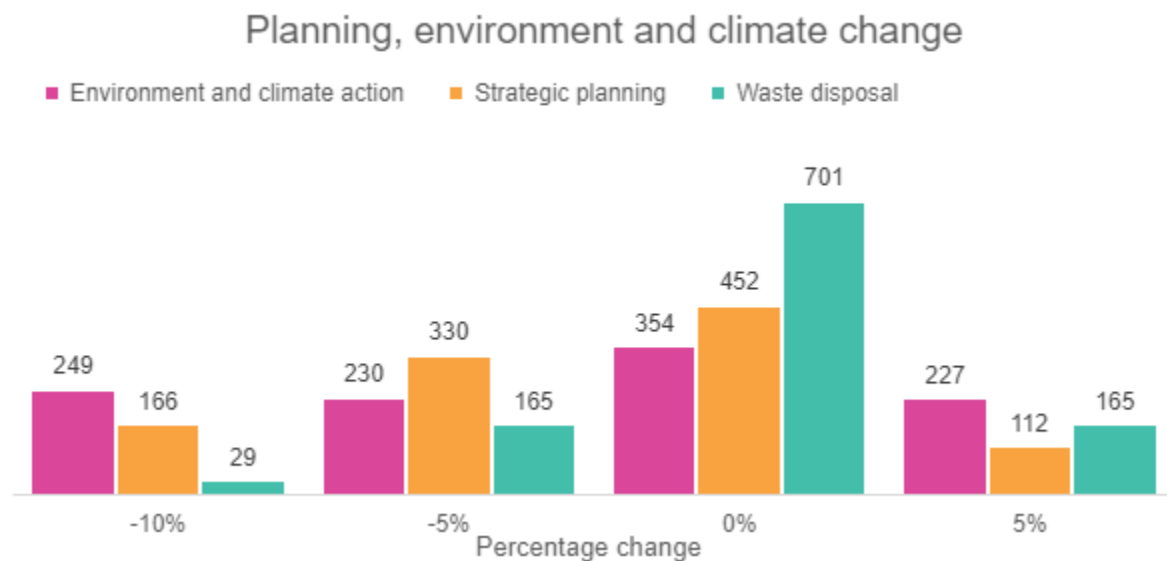
Waste disposal

We are responsible for getting rid of household waste in Oxfordshire. This includes recycling, green waste and black bin waste. However, we don't do bin collections; they are arranged by your local district or city council.

We also have to provide places where people can take their household waste to be recycled. These are called household waste recycling centres. We have seven of these in Oxfordshire. They are visited by about one million people every year and they take in about 40,000 to 45,000 tonnes of waste every year.

- 2.23 The planning, transport and climate change grouping contained three sliders: strategic planning, environment and climate action and waste disposal.
- Just over half of the respondents (53%) chose to move one or more sliders in the planning, transport and climate change group to either increase or decrease funding in this area.
 - Around one in five (21%) respondents increased the budget for environment and climate action compared to for waste disposal (16%) and strategic planning (11%).
 - Sizeable numbers of respondents chose to decrease the budget for strategic planning (47%) and environment and climate action (45%) compared to waste disposal (18%).
 - All three service options saw negative average budget percentage changes: waste disposal (-0.27%, ranked 6 out of 20), environment and climate action (-2.36%, ranked 16 out of 20) and strategic planning (-2.59%, ranked 18 out of 20).
 - The chart below shows how people responded for all three service items (sliders) presented in the simulator.

Budget simulator choices for planning, environment and climate change



Written feedback

2.24 In all, 91 people gave written feedback on the 'Planning, environment and climate change' section of the simulator, which included 119 different comments. The key themes were:

- Climate action (26 mentions)
- Misunderstanding of OCC power/responsibilities (25 mentions)
- Reduce spending (21 mentions)
- Roads and transport (15 mentions)

2.25 Several comments reflect scepticism about climate change initiatives, with some calling them a waste of money and others questioning their effectiveness. Others criticise the council for prioritising environmental issues over immediate needs. *"People today are more important than climate action which is not scientific."*

Other comments emphasise the importance of climate action, as well as maintaining green spaces and wildlife habitats. *"This is, for me the absolutely most important area to focus on. If we don't get this bit right, we may as well not bother with the rest."*

Concerns were raised about new housing developments and a perception that there is inadequate infrastructure to support them. *"You're creating - or wanting to create - thousands of new homes - yet the infrastructure to support is not available eg schools and health care especially GP practices. You can't simply keep increasing the housing available without sorting out infrastructure (which also includes public transport eg trams or more frequent bus services)."*

Many respondents express opposition to changes in road networks, such as low traffic neighbourhoods and traffic filters, and criticise the council's strategic planning. *"Your planning causes chaos on our roads, best not done."*

“LTNs and traffic filters in one city aren’t going to solve climate change—they’re going to increase congestion and make residents miserable.”

- 2.26 Other themes for written feedback regarding environment and climate change related to:
- Waste (11 mentions)
 - Increase income (9 mentions)
 - Service quality (7 mentions)
 - Do not reduce spending (3 mentions)
 - Importance of service (2 mentions)

Public health

Budget simulator description

1.53 Public health

We provide services to improve people’s health and help them to avoid getting sick. This includes work to tackle health inequalities (for example, where people in one area of Oxfordshire have worse health or don’t live as long as people in another area) so that everybody can live longer, healthier lives.

We provide services that help to stop illnesses that can be passed from one person to another and we help local health services to meet the needs of people in Oxfordshire. This includes making sure that services are easy to access, effective and good value.

We work with other council services, communities and organisations to reduce the differences in health between different groups of people and to make places healthier.

Services that we pay for include:

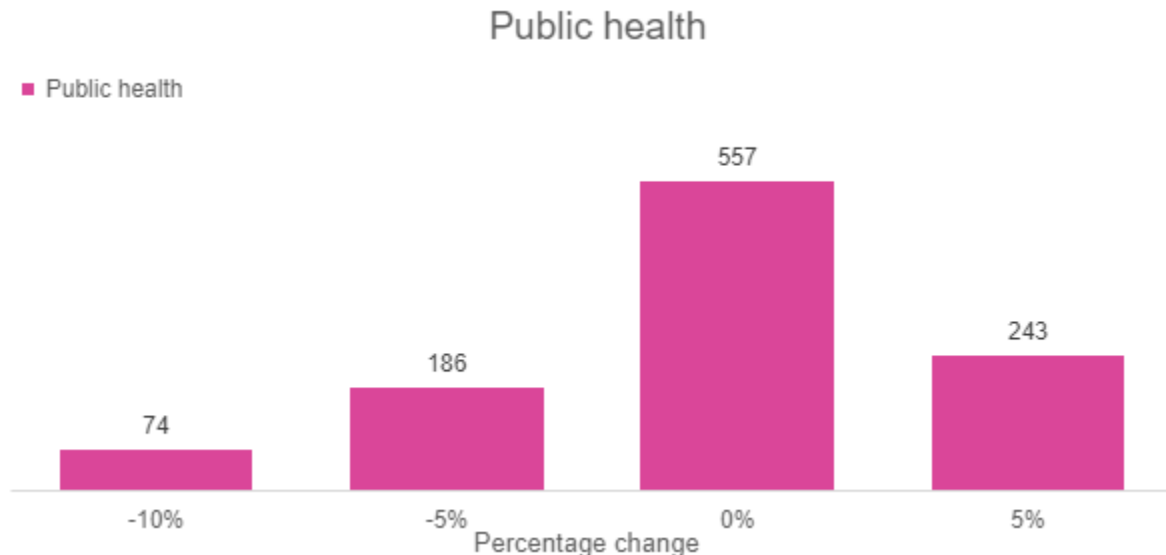
- childhood health visitors and school nurses
- NHS health checks for adults over 40 years old
- reducing the harm caused by smoking, drugs, alcohol and obesity
- sexual health services.

Most of the money for these services comes from a special grant that we can only use for public health. The simulator slider for public health represents what is paid for with the council’s money and other grants, mainly services that reduce health inequalities and help people who are affected by domestic abuse or drug and alcohol problems.

- 1.54 The public health group had just one slider.
- Just under half (47%) chose to move the slider to either increase or decrease funding in this area.
 - Near equal proportions (around one in five) of respondents increased the budget for public health (23%) and decreased it (25%).

- This service option saw a small negative average budget percentage change of -0.43%, ranked 7 of the 20 service items.
- The chart below shows how people responded for public health as presented in the simulator.

Budget simulator choices for public health



Written feedback

- 1.55 In all, 52 people gave written feedback on the Public Health section of the simulator, which included 55 different comments. Key themes were:
- Reduce spending (19)
 - Misunderstanding of OCC power/responsibilities (10 mentions)
 - Do not reduce spending (7)

- 1.56 Many comments focussed on reducing spending in this area. Some comments suggest that public health services should be more efficiently managed, with a focus on reducing bureaucracy and cutting costs. *“Efficiencies could produce better results.”*

Some respondents recommended that services be reduced and emphasised the need for individuals to take responsibility for their own health. Others view public health initiatives as overreaching and unnecessary, suggesting that they can be cut back. *“People need to take responsibility for their own weight etc... this help me society is ridiculous”.*

Several comments suggest that savings could be made if the service had alternative funding, and that public health should be funded and managed by central government rather than local councils. *“Public health material is more efficiently produced at a national level - councils should lobby for greater proportionate central spending so that they can reduce their own expenditure and prevent duplication.”*

The importance of improved public health and preventative services was emphasised, with respondents fearing that a reduction in spending would increase the burden on the NHS, mental health, and social care services. *“I*

think prevention is key across the board and this has minimal impact on budget here but should positively impact other things like social care use.”

While not issues that can be determined by the council, a number of respondents wanted to see an increase in the availability of local NHS services and reduced waiting times. *“Really need more GP surgeries and a minor injury centre also more NHS dentists.”*

1.57 Other themes for written feedback regarding public health to:

- Increase income (5 mentions)
- Service quality (5 mentions)
- Council should not provide this service (5 mentions)
- Feedback on the budget simulator (2 mentions)
- Stop diversity work (2 mentions)

Safety services

Budget simulator description

2.27 Fire and rescue

Oxfordshire Fire and Rescue Service is part of the county council and our firefighters operate from 25 fire stations across the county. We protect communities, reduce harm and save lives through education and advice about fire safety. We also respond to emergencies, such as fires, road accidents, chemical incidents, flooding and extreme weather. We work with partners to plan and prepare for major incidents.

We are the statutory fire authority for Oxfordshire. That means that it is our job to check buildings for fire safety, give advice to businesses on fire safety responsibilities and make sure they follow the rules. If they don't, we can take action to make sure everyone stays safe. This is our legal duty under the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004 and the Civil Contingencies Act 2004.

Trading standards

Trading Standards works to protect residents and businesses and takes action, including enforcement, when needed.

This covers things like weights and measures; product safety; food standards; unfair trading practices; animal health and disease control; environmental requirements; and price marking and comparison.

In addition, it covers rules around the sale of products that have age limits, such as tobacco and vapes; the licensing and inspection of sites storing explosives and petroleum; and the safety certification of sports stadiums. Trading Standards also works to protect people from financial abuse, like scams, and enforces weight restrictions on roads.

- 2.28 The safety services grouping contained two sliders: fire and rescue and trading standards.
- Just under half of the respondents (48%) chose to move the slider to either increase or decrease funding for trading standards, while just under a quarter of respondents moved the slider for fire and rescue (23%).
 - Around one in ten (11%) respondents increased the budget for safety services.
 - Sizeable numbers of respondents chose to decrease the budget for trading standards (39%) compared to fire and rescue (9%).
 - Fire and rescue saw a small positive average budget change (0.07%, ranked 4 out of 20), while trading standards had a negative average budget percentage changes (-1.95%, ranked 15 out of 20).
 - The chart below shows how people responded for the two service items (sliders) presented in the simulator.

Budget simulator choices for safety services



Written feedback

- 2.29 In all, 33 people gave written feedback on the 'safety services' section of the simulator, which included 55 different comments. Key themes were:
- Reduce spending (11 mentions)
 - Do not reduce spending (10 mentions)
 - Increase income (5 mentions)
 - Misunderstanding of the county council's power/responsibilities (4 mentions)
- 2.30 Several comments express frustration with the council's handling of safety services and highlight the need for the council to become more efficient and stop wasting money. There are suggestions to reduce unnecessary expenditures and focus on practicalities. *"Become more efficient stop wasting money."*

While some comments suggest that fire and rescue services could be made

more efficient and that there might be room for minimal cuts, many emphasise the importance of fire and rescue services, stating that they should not be cut back. Some suggest paying firemen more and improving fire standards in buildings to reduce fires. *“Whilst the fire and rescue service is a valuable resource and should be supported, there are many ways that improvements can be made to reduce running costs and wasted money within the service.”*

Views on trading standards are varied, with some viewing the service as overreaching and suggest cutting unnecessary bureaucracy, while others emphasise the importance of protecting people from scams and suggest that trading standards should be prioritised. There are also suggestions to recoup costs through fines and insurance claims. *“Room for some savings on the trading standards, but saves so little it's not really worth it - seems to be a reasonable cost-efficient service.”*

- 2.31 Other themes for written feedback regarding safety services related to:
- Climate action (1 mention)
 - Importance of service (1 mention)

Cultural services

Budget simulator descriptions

2.32 Libraries

We have to provide a library service for everyone who lives, works and studies in Oxfordshire by law. Our 45 libraries are open to everyone and they offer many things such as books, information, free wi-fi and computers and social activities. We know that some people cannot come to the libraries so we also have an app, online resources and a home library service for people who need it.

Museums and history services

We run five places where you can learn about Oxfordshire's history and heritage:

- The Oxfordshire Museum (Woodstock), where you can see our permanent collections, exhibitions and activities.
- The Museums Resource Centre (Standlake), where we keep our reserve collections, and where people can learn about Oxfordshire's history and see important historical information.
- Swalcliffe Barn (near Banbury) is a medieval barn where we display large vehicles used for farming and trade. The barn is a Graded 1 listed building, which means that we have to protect it and not change it.
- The remains of the Bishop's Palace (Witney), which was built more than 800 years ago.
- The Oxfordshire History Centre (Cowley), where we keep the county's public archives, records and core local history collection.

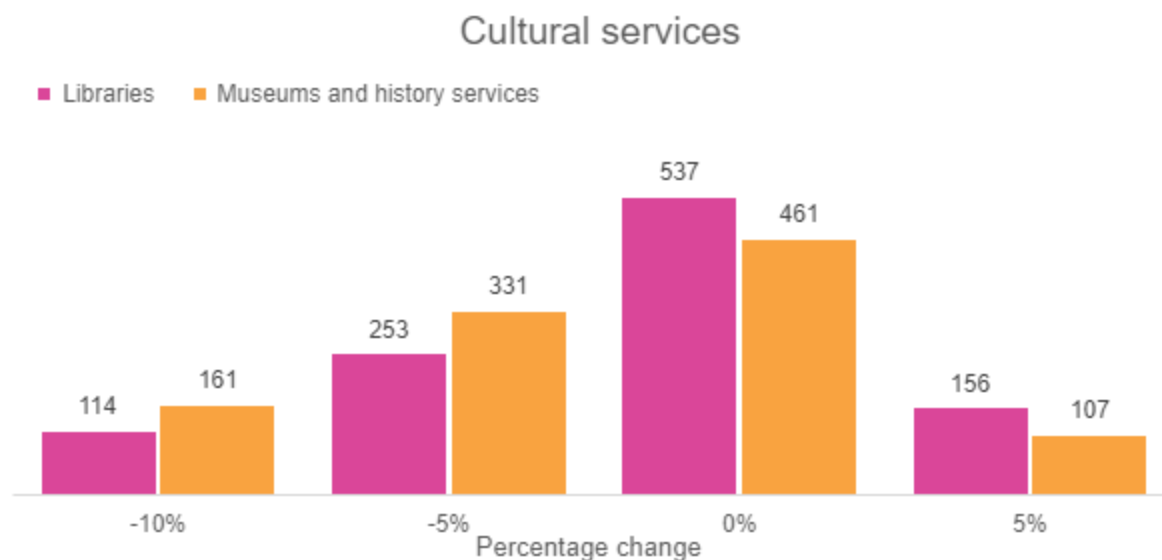
We offer these services to everyone in communities. We also have some legal responsibilities to look after these places and collections.

As well as running our own places, we also help other organisations that provide access to heritage across the county, including Oxford City Council (who run the Museum of Oxford) and the Victoria County History of Oxfordshire.

2.33 The cultural services grouping contained two sliders: libraries, and museums and history services.

- Approximately half of the respondents chose to move one or more sliders in the cultural services group to either increase or decrease funding in this area. 49% moved the slider for libraries and 57% moved the slider for museums and history services.
- Similar proportions of respondents (around one in ten) increased the budget for libraries (15%) as for museums and history services (10%).
- Sizeable numbers of respondents chose to decrease the budget service items in this grouping, with notably more for history services (46%) than for libraries (35%).
- Both service options saw sizeable negative average budget percentage changes: libraries (-1.53%, ranked 14 out of 20) and museums and history services (-2.58%, ranked 17 out of 20).
- The chart below shows how people responded for both items (sliders) presented in the simulator.

Budget simulator choices for cultural services



Written feedback

- 2.34 In all, 77 people gave written feedback on the 'cultural services' section of the simulator, which included 82 different comments. From reviewing the comments, the key themes emerging were:
- Do not reduce spending (26 mentions)
 - Increase income (20 mentions)
 - Importance of service (17 mentions)
 - Reduce spending (9 mentions)

- 2.35 Many comments emphasise the importance of libraries, particularly for young people and those learning English. They highlight their role in education and community engagement. There are suggestions to keep libraries open, improve their services, and even extend their hours. *"These resources ought to be freely available and accessible to all as important places to learn and enjoy culture of various forms."*

Several comments suggest introducing charges for museums and other cultural services to generate additional revenue. This includes charging tourists and implementing small fees for entry. *"I hate this but it seems like a necessity for now. I'd especially support any opportunities you have to increase fees in a vaguely means-tested way, so e.g. students, pensioners, and low incomes don't pay higher fees but most working-age adults do."*

There are also some critical comments, suggesting that cultural services are outdated and not essential in the current climate. Some suggest closing libraries and museums, while others propose reducing their hours or focusing on more essential services. *"It's 2024... Close the libraries. Second hand books can be bought and sold on Amazon extremely cheaply."*

Some comments propose making cultural services more efficient by using volunteers, implementing self-checking systems in libraries, and partnering with colleges for museum support. *"Use volunteers and those on community service to provide extra staff."*

- 2.36 Other themes for written feedback regarding cultural services related to:
- Council should not provide this service (5 mentions)
 - Roads and transport (2 mentions)
 - Misunderstanding of the county council's power/responsibilities (1 mention)
 - Service quality (1 mention)

Running the council

Budget simulator description

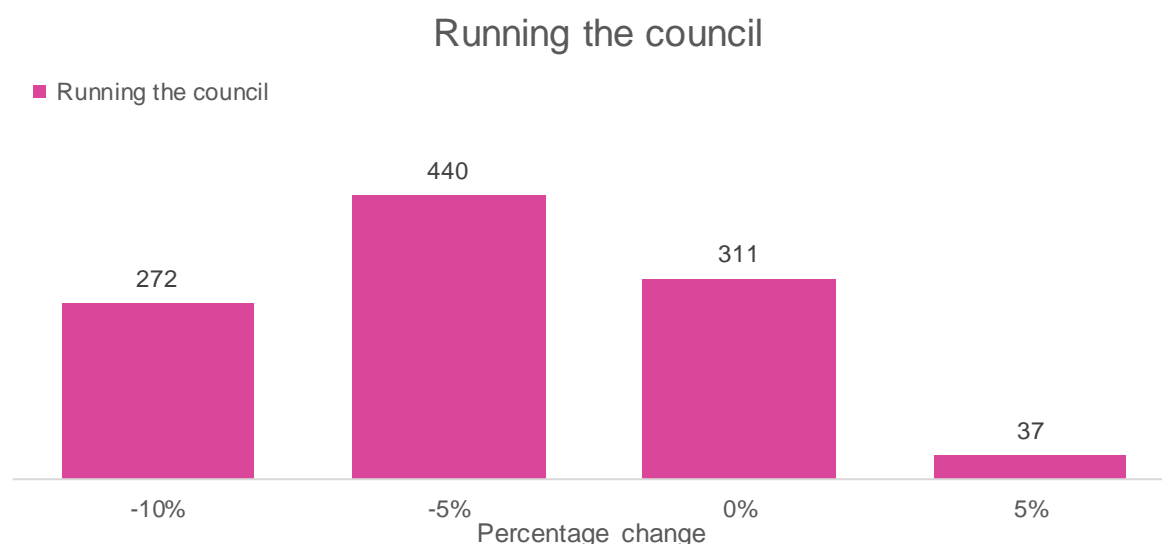
2.37 Running the council

The county council needs services that help us to do our work for Oxfordshire's residents and communities and meet our legal responsibilities. These services include finance, HR, IT support, law and governance, communications, customer services, policy and performance, procurement and property services.

2.38 The running the council group had just one slider.

- Over seven in ten respondents (71%) chose to move the slider to either increase or decrease funding in this area
- Over two thirds of all respondents chose to decrease the budget for running the business (67%) and only 3 per cent increased it.
- This service option saw the largest negative average budget percentage change of -4.47%, ranked bottom (20) of the 20 service items
- The chart below shows how people responded for running the business as presented in the simulator.

Budget simulator choices for running the council



Written feedback

2.39 119 people gave written feedback on the 'running the business' section of the simulator, which included 123 different comments. From reviewing the comments, the key themes emerging were:

- Reduce spending (99 mentions)

2.40 Responses showed a desire for reducing spending in two key ways, by improving efficiency and reducing staff costs.

There are multiple mentions of the council being inefficient and having too much wastage, with suggestions to reduce bureaucracy and streamline

processes. *“There is still a huge perceived waste of money at the council, from top down this needs reviewing and action taken.”*

Several respondents felt that top council staff are paid too much, with suggestions to cut salaries and bonuses to save costs. *“Maybe the council should look at there wages especially those at the top and reduce any bonus if you can manage you budget.”*

There are suggestions to adopt a work culture similar to the private sector, emphasising more efficient working by fewer staff. *“Working smarter with fewer people is the answer and is what you see in the private sector.”*

Some respondents express a desire for the council to focus on essential services and cease work on projects seen as non-essential. *“Perhaps the council could concentrate on the important things and not spend so much time trying to provide areas that are no go areas for car drivers.”*

- 2.41 Other themes for written feedback regarding running the business related to:
- Misunderstanding of the county council's power/responsibilities (6 mentions)
 - Stop diversity work (5 mentions)
 - Service quality (5 mentions)
 - Roads and transport (4 mentions)
 - Increase income (2 mentions)
 - Climate action (1 mention)
 - Feedback on the budget simulator (1 mention)

Council Tax

- 2.42 Budget simulator users were informed that in Oxfordshire, council tax bills are made up of several different amounts of money that go to different organisations and that Oxfordshire County Council's element of their council tax bill is made up of two parts:

- The 'core' or general council tax used for all county council services, including highway maintenance; children and adult social care; waste management and recycling; fire and rescue, and libraries.
- An adult social care 'precept', which is an additional charge on top of core council tax that can only be spent on adult social care services.

Budget simulator users were also informed that:

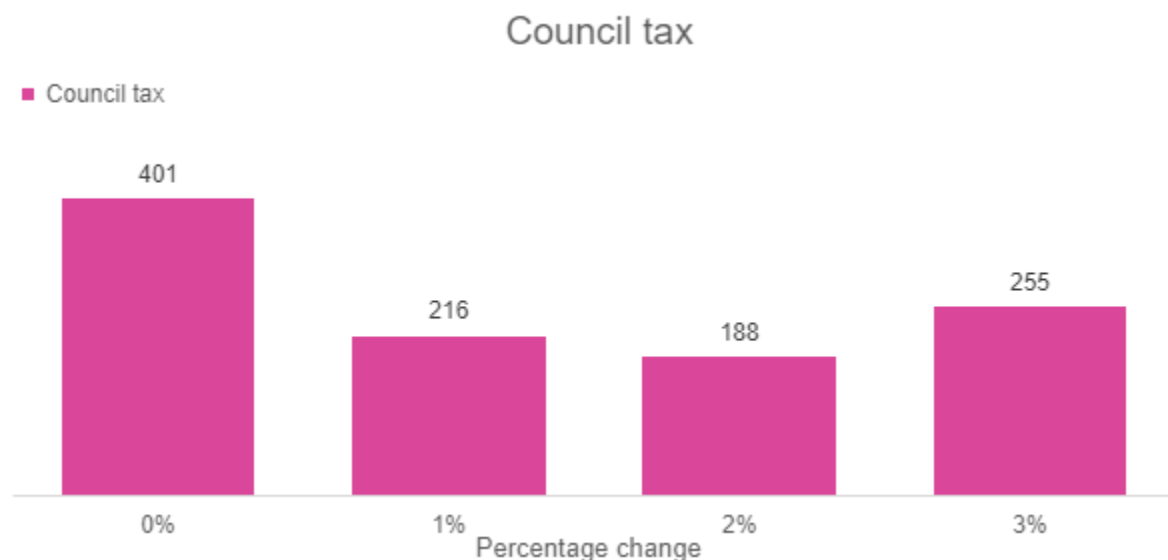
- Funding for the financial year 2025/26 is currently uncertain for all local authorities because of the general election. This includes money from government, grants and our ability to raise council tax.

- The government tells local authorities how much we can raise council tax by without needing a referendum; this is called the referendum limit. If we want to raise council tax higher than the limit, we would have to ask people in Oxfordshire to vote on it, and could only do it if they voted yes. We don't yet know what the referendum limit will be for the financial year 2025/26. The government will tell us later in the year.

2.43 The council tax slider had three options as follows:

- 0%: Our current medium term financial strategy includes a 1.99 per cent rise. This is shown as 0 per cent in the simulator.
- 1%: Increasing this by one per cent is equal to an overall 2.99 per cent council tax rise, would give an additional £5m for services.
- 2%: Increasing this by two per cent is equal to an overall 3.99 per cent council tax rise, would give an additional £10m for services.
- 3%: Increasing this by three per cent is equal to an overall 4.99 per cent council tax rise, would give an additional £15m for services.

Budget simulator choices for council tax



- Overall, 659 people chose to increase council tax on top of the 1.99% already proposed
- On average, the budget simulator shows that people were willing to increase by 1.28 per cent.
- 216 people (20 per cent of respondents) chose to increase council tax by an additional one per cent (to 2.99%)
- 188 people (18 per cent of respondents) chose to increase council tax by an additional two per cent (to 3.99%)
- 255 people (24 per cent of respondents) chose to increase council tax by an additional three per cent (to 4.99%)

Written feedback

- 2.45 138 people gave written feedback on the council tax section of the simulator, which included 152 different comments. The primary theme was around increasing income (123 mentions), including:
- Increase in council tax is acceptable (51)
 - Increase in council tax is not acceptable (27)
 - Reduce council tax (18)
 - Review council tax banding so that higher value properties pay more (11)
- 2.46 Several comments indicate a willingness to support an increase in council tax, provided the additional revenue is used wisely and transparently. Some suggest that people would accept an increase if there were clear improvements in services. *"It's worth asking to put the council tax up - I know I would generally support it so long as it was communicated what the money would be spent on and that was well explained."*

Many comments express frustration with the current level of council tax, describing it as too high and not providing good value for money. Some suggest that council tax should be reduced, particularly for those on low incomes or living alone. *"Council tax should be reduced, it's my highest bill and provides the poorest service."*

Many comments suggest that council tax should be adjusted to reflect the current value of properties, with higher rates for second homes and high-value properties. Some also propose redistributing council tax to ensure fairness. *"Make the wealthier residents help fund things, especially people owning multiple properties, not the people who are struggling to pay rent."*

Some comments suggest alternative methods for raising revenue, such as setting up a local bank, charging for certain services, or increasing parking fees. *"I think there is a key issue in Oxford specifically - so many students using services that are not paying into the council. I think the universities should be required to give a percentage of student tuition to the councils on behalf of students."*

- 2.47 Here is a high-level thematic summary of the other comments made for council tax:
- Reduce spending (14 mentions)
 - Misunderstanding of the county council's power or responsibilities (6 mentions)
 - Feedback on the budget simulator (4 mentions)
 - Roads and transport (3 mentions)
 - Do not reduce spending (2 mentions)

Part 3:



Children and young people's budget engagement 2025/26 Key findings

Report by: Consultation and engagement team
Date: September 2024

Executive Summary

Introduction

This report summarises the findings from the council's three different participatory activities involving children and young people that were specifically designed to engage young people with the county council's 2025/26 business and budget planning. It is in three sections to reflect the different activities undertaken:

- Section 1: Findings from the budget simulator for children and young people.
- Section 2: Feedback from two focus groups designed to engage young people with the budget simulator and to seek feedback on the council's strategic priorities.
- Section 3: Feedback from the two sounding board events designed to engage young people in citizenship conversations, help them understand more about money management and to seek feedback on the council's strategic priorities.

Key findings

- In all, 30 young people submitted a budget using the simulator, with all but one of these completing it during a focus groups setting.
- All the young people who completed the simulator managed to close the £13.9 million funding gap through their slider choices, with many choosing to increase council tax.
- When considering and weighing-up choices across the 20 service area slider options presented in the budget simulator, young people were most likely to select the following service areas for an increase in budget: 'environment and climate change' (21 young people), education and schools' (20 young people), 'public health' (19 young people) and special educational needs and disabilities' (15 young people).
- Conversely, the service items which young people most frequently selected for a decrease in budget (selected by at least half of all respondents) were: 'libraries' (17 young people), 'museums and history services' (16 young people) and 'street lighting' (16 young people).
- The young people's budget simulator responses indicate that there are divergent views on 'place, transport and infrastructure' sliders, with approximately a third choosing to reduce, maintain and increase this service's budget.
- Some service items presented in the young people's budget simulator did not see any significant movement positively or negatively, with young people choosing to maintain the current level of budget to either keep service provision as it is, or to

accept a decline in service provision (home to school transport only). Those service items most likely to be selected to remain at zero were: fire and rescue (18 young people), home to school transport (17 young people) and adult social work (16 young people).

- Focussing now on the impact of slider choices on service item budgets, the average budget percentage change ranged from 1.27 per cent to -4.47 per cent.
- Overall, 23 young people chose to increase council tax on top of the 1.99% already proposed. On average, they were willing to increase it by 1.33 per cent.
- At both of the two sounding boards events and at one of the budget simulator focus groups, young people were asked to consider the council's nine strategic priorities. Specifically, they were asked to deliberate in group format on which two priorities were most important to them as young people and which two were the least important to them.
- 'Creating opportunities for children and young people to reach our full potential' and 'prioritise the health and wellbeing of residents' were more likely to be selected than any others in the young people's top two strategic priorities selected by six out of eleven groups. These were selected by participants at both the sounding boards and budget simulator focus group, however the second ranking strategic priority at the focus group was 'put action to address the climate emergency at the heart of our work' selected by two of the three groups.
- For 'create opportunities for children and young people to reach our full potential', most of the comments were about needing a good education so young people have better life chances and to fulfil their potential; *"if we don't build their future, who will lead the world?"*
- For 'prioritise the health and wellbeing of residents', a majority of comments focused on everyone had the right to feel healthy, in mind and physically. Many comments said that the negative impact of this has a greater 'knock on effect' from pressure on the NHS, contributing to society and potential for death. *"Health and wellbeing is most important because without it people are unable to have good futures or contribute to the community"*.
- The strategic priority most likely to be chosen as the least important by the young people when combining the views expressed in the sounding boards and the focus group was: 'play our part in a vibrant and participatory local democracy' chosen by over half of the groups (seven out of the eleven groups). There were a fair number of comments about young people not being able to vote, so felt they were not able to be part of the participatory democracy. There were also comments, stating there were systems in place for a participatory democracy already *"In my opinion we already have a good system set up for voting and democracy, so everyone has a say"*.

- This was followed by 'invest in an inclusive, integrated and sustainable transport network' (five out of the eleven groups – with all five chosen from the eight groups at the sounding boards, making it their 'top' least important strategic priority out of the nine). Most comments shared the idea that there were more important issues, and that people could walk if they needed to get somewhere. It was felt that there were already some good aspects to transport that already existed, such as public transport, it was well organised and it aided people too. However, a few comments did state cost, access in rural areas and getting to school did need to be improved, as well as its sustainability credentials.
- *It should be noted that 'invest in an inclusive, integrated and sustainable transport network' was not selected by any of the three tables in the budget simulator focus groups. These groups were more diverged in their opinions, with three of the nine strategic priorities each receiving one vote.*

1. Budget simulator

Respondent profile

- 1.1 In all, 30 young people submitted a budget using the simulator, and all of these provided their demographic details.
- More young people responding identified as female (60 per cent) than male (37 per cent).
 - Only three (ten per cent) of participants young people were aged 15-17. Eight 12 year olds and eight 14 year olds participated, and eleven respondents were 13 years old.
 - Most Budget simulator respondents were more likely to identify their ethnic group as 'white' (87 per cent), with the remaining four participants identifying as Asian or Asian British.
 - Approximately three quarters of the young people responding (77 per cent) stated that they did not have a long-term illness or disability, with a further six having a disability or illness which impacted them a lot, and one preferring not to say.

Key findings

- 1.2 The budget simulator organised core council services under 10 service groups and gave people 20 service items (sliders), on which to make choices and a further slider to consider an increase in council tax for 2025/2026.
- 1.3 Each of the service items sliders provided information and aimed to give people a broad understanding of what each service area does and the 'consequences' of reducing, maintaining or increasing spending. The sliders were not, however, designed to set out actual savings proposals or pressures.
- 1.4 The financial figures used in the simulator were based on the forecast budget for 2025/2026 at the time of its launch, taking account of pressures and proposed savings and were indicative figures only.
- 1.5 For each of the 20 service items (sliders) in the simulator four standard choices were given:
- increase the allocated service item budget by 5 per cent
 - maintain the allocated service item budget (0 per cent)
 - decrease the allocated service item budget by 5 per cent
 - decrease the allocated service item budget by 10 per cent
- 1.6 It should be noted however, that moving the sliders had different consequences for each service item. For example, for most service areas, moving the slider positively would mean an increase in budget to improve or actively develop a service. However, for highways maintenance and home to school transport this would only maintain services at their current level.

Specifically for home to school transport, the simulator stated that even with an increase in funding there would be remaining pressures.

- 1.7 The image below shows the budget simulator as it was presented on a laptop/desktop computer. The top right of the page shows the council's total budget, the top left shows the funding gap to be closed and below this the current status of your choices, ie if you are over or under budget to the nearest million or if you have exactly balanced the budget.

Image of budget simulator

Your goal is to balance your budget and bring the funding gap as close to £0 as possible

Funding gap **£13.90m**
Over Budget **2.2%**

Total Expenses **£651.40m**

-10% -5% 0% 5% Consequences

Adult social care	<p>i Adult social work</p> <p>We could continue to provide our current level of service. More</p>
Children's services	
Highways operations	<p>i Age well – care and support for older people</p> <p>We could continue to provide our current level of service. More</p>
Place, transport and infrastructure	
Planning, environment and climate change	<p>i Live well – care and support for vulnerable adults</p> <p>We could continue to provide our current level of service. More</p>
Public health	
Safety services	
Cultural services	<p>Your comments on Adult social care (Optional)</p> <input type="text"/>
Running the council	
Council tax	

« Back Review and Finish »

Key findings

- 1.8 The following tables summarise how young people made choices when submitting their own budget and the consequences of this in terms of overall percentage budget changes.

Table 1: Young people's slider choices

The slider option choices are shown as the number of young people who selected them.		Slider options			
Service group	Service item	-10%	-5%	0%	5%
Adult social care	Adult social work	3	9	16	2
	Age well - care and support for older people	3	5	14	8
	Live well - care and support for vulnerable adults	2	10	14	4
Children's services	Children's social care	0	4	15	11
	Family help	0	3	14	13
	Education and schools	0	2	8	20
	Special educational needs and disabilities (SEND)	0	1	14	15
	Home to school transport	2	7	17	4
Highways operations	Highways maintenance	1	9	13	7
	Street lighting	3	13	10	4
Place, transport and infrastructure	Place, transport and infrastructure	0	11	9	10
Planning, environment and climate change	Strategic planning	3	10	13	4
	Environment and climate action	0	3	6	21
	Waste disposal	0	9	13	8
Public health	Public health	0	1	10	19
Safety services	Fire and rescue	0	7	18	5
	Trading standards	5	9	9	7
Cultural services	Libraries	3	14	9	4
	Museums and history services	6	10	9	5
Running the council	Running the council	6	7	13	4

Table 2: Young people's slider movements

Service group	Service	No. of people who move the slider to decrease budget (-5% or -10%)	No. of people who made no change (selected 0%)	No. of people who moved the slider to increase budget (+5%)
Adult social care	Adult social work	12	16	2
	Age well - care and support for older people	8	14	8
	Live well - care and support for vulnerable adults	12	14	4
Children's services	Children's social care	4	15	11
	Family help	3	14	13
	Education and schools	2	8	20
	Special educational needs and disabilities (SEND)	1	14	15
	Home to school transport	9	17	4
Highways operations	Highways maintenance	10	13	7
	Street lighting	16	10	4
Place, transport and infrastructure	Place, transport and infrastructure	11	9	10
Planning, environment and climate change	Strategic planning	13	13	4
	Environment and climate action	3	6	21
	Waste disposal	9	13	8
Public health	Public health	1	10	19
Safety services	Fire and rescue	7	18	5
	Trading standards	14	9	7
Cultural services	Libraries	17	9	4
	Museums and history services	16	9	5
Running the council	Running the council	13	13	4

1.9 When considering and weighing-up choices, the service area items which young people most frequently selected for an increase in budget were:

- Environment and climate change (21 young people)
- Education and schools (20 young people)
- Public health (19 young people)
- Special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) (15 young people)

These were all selected by 50 per cent or more of the young people responding.

1.10 Conversely, the service items which young people most frequently selected for a decrease in budget (selected by at least half of all respondents) were:

- Libraries (17 young people)
- Museums and history services (16 young people)
- Street lighting (16 young people)

1.11 The budget simulator responses indicate that there are divergent views across on 'place, transport and infrastructure', with approximately a third choosing to reduce, maintain and increase this service's budget.

1.12 Some service items presented in the budget simulator did not see any significant movement positively or negatively, with people choosing to maintain the current level of budget. Those service items most likely to be selected to remain at 0 were:

- Fire and rescue (18 young people)
- Home to school transport (17 young people)
- Adult social work (16 young people)

1.13 Focussing now on the impact of slider choices, table 3 shows the impact of young people's choices on service item budgets, by presenting the average budget percentage change. This ranges from 1.27 per cent to -4.47 per cent.

Table 3: Young people's average budget percentage change

Service group	Service item	Average budget change as%
Education and learning	Education and schools	3.00%
Public health	Public health	3.00%
Planning, environment and climate change	Environment and climate action	3.00%
Education and learning	Special educational needs and disabilities (SEND)	2.33%
Children's services	Family help	1.67%
Children's services	Children's social care	1.17%
Planning, environment and climate change	Waste disposal	-0.17%
Place, transport and infrastructure	Place, transport and infrastructure	-0.17%
Safety services	Fire and rescue	-0.33%
Adult social care	Age well – care and support for older people	-0.50%
Highways operations	Highways maintenance	-0.67%
Education and learning	Home to school transport	-1.17%
Adult social care	Live well – care and support for vulnerable adults	-1.67%
Safety services	Trading standards	-2.00%
Planning, environment and climate change	Strategic planning	-2.00%
Adult social care	Adult social work	-2.17%
Highways operations	Street lighting	-2.50%
Running the council	Running the council	-2.50%
Cultural services	Libraries	-2.67%
Cultural services	Museums and history services	-2.83%

1.14 Six service items, (highlighted in red) have a positive average budget percentage change:

- Education and schools (3 per cent)
- Public health (3 per cent)
- Environment and climate action (3 per cent)
- Special education needs and disabilities (SEND) (2.33 per cent)
- Family help (1.67 per cent)
- Children's social care (1.17 per cent)

1.15 These were followed by a further five services items (highlighted in orange), with an average percentage change in budget between zero and minus one per cent:

- Waste disposal (-0.17 per cent)

- Place, transport and infrastructure (-0.17 per cent)
 - Fire and rescue (-0.33 per cent)
 - Age well, care and support for older people (-0.50 per cent)
 - Highways maintenance (-0.67 per cent)
- 1.16 The seven service items (highlighted in green) with, on average, the greatest negative percentage changes of between -2 per cent to -2.83 per cent were:
- Trading standards (-2.00 per cent)
 - Strategic planning (-2.00 per cent)
 - Adult social work (-2.17 per cent)
 - Street lighting (-2.50 per cent)
 - Back-office support services (Running the council) (-2.50 per cent)
 - Libraries (-2.67 per cent)
 - Museums and history services (-2.83 per cent)
- 1.17 These were followed by a further two services items (highlighted in yellow), which had an average negative percentage changes less than -2 per cent:
- Home to school transport (-1.17 per cent)
 - Live well, care and support for vulnerable adults (-1.67 per cent)

Closing the funding gap

- 1.18 Our starting budget was £651.4 million with a funding gap of £13.9 million. The simulator was not designed to especially close the funding gap exactly, rather to explore how people make choices when faced with difficult decisions (as the councillors need to). All the young people who completed the simulator managed to close the £13.9 million funding gap through their slider choices, with many choosing to increase council tax.
- 1.19 Before submitting their final budget, the young people were asked if they had any further comments to share with the council. 10 gave written feedback, which included 10 different comments. The most significant area of comment was feedback on the budget simulator (5 mentions), with participants feeling positive about the exercise but in some cases finding the amount of information overwhelming. *“Makes sense, helps me (as a kid) understand budgeting. Information bits are a bit wordy.”*
- 1.20 The next section of the report sets out how budget simulator respondents chose to adjust each of the service item budgets, within service groups. The section is ordered, as per the simulator.
- Adult social care
 - Children's services
 - Highways operations
 - Place, transport and infrastructure
 - Planning, environment and climate change

- Public health
- Safety services
- Cultural services
- Running the council

- 1.21 It also includes an analysis of all the accompanying qualitative comments by service group, which bring to life how people made their decisions for the service item budgets when asked to weigh-up choices and make trade-offs. A coding framework was created to analyse the written feedback and all comments across the entire simulator were read and coded against this.

Adult social care

Budget simulator descriptions

1.22 Adult social work

We help people who are vulnerable or at risk of harm to live safely and independently. We work with people and organisations to protect their rights and prevent abuse and neglect. We also assess their needs and provide or arrange services to support them. This is our legal duty under the Health and Social Care Act 2018. In the last financial year (April 2023 - March 2024) we undertook 22,306 initial adult social care assessments.

Age well – care and support for older people

We help older people in Oxfordshire to live independently and stay safe and well. We also provide information and advice, support for unpaid carers and a range of services to meet people's needs. This can include care services and specialist housing. This is our legal duty under the Health and Social Care Act 2018. Currently we care for and support 3,866 older people.

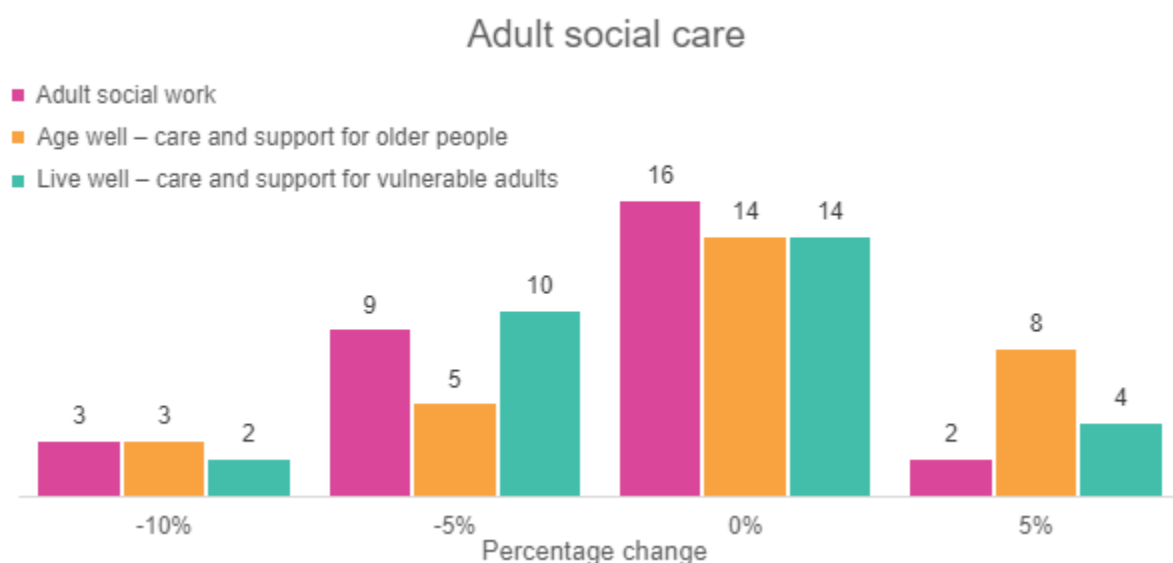
Live well - care and support for vulnerable adults

We help adults aged 18+ in Oxfordshire who have a disability or physical or mental illness to stay well and safe. We provide information and advice, assess their needs and provide or arrange a range of services to support them. This can include care services and specialist housing. This is our legal duty under the Health and Social Care Act 2018. Currently we care for and support 2,978 vulnerable adults.

The adult social care service group contained three sliders: adult social work, age well - care and support for older people and live well - care and support for vulnerable adults.

The chart below shows how people responded for all three service items (sliders) presented in the simulator.

Young people's budget simulator choices for adult social care grouping



Written feedback

- 1.23 In all, 18 young people gave written feedback to support their choices on the 'adult social care' section of the simulator, which included 20 different comments. More detailed analysis has been undertaken for themes (codes) which received 10 per cent or more comments in section and these are as follows:

- Importance of service (7 mentions)
- Reduce spending (6 mentions)
- The council should not provide this service (4 mentions)

- 1.24 Comments emphasised the importance of services for older people, with a feeling that they deserve support in their later years. *"I think older people should get more support if they need/want it so they can enjoy their life for as long as possible and don't have to spend it somewhere that they don't like."*

The importance of providing help for vulnerable adults was also highlighted, with a desire to see them supported in their daily activities and to be active members of their communities. *"Care for vulnerable adults is very important."*

Suggestions for reducing spending included prioritising services for younger children to prevent future problems and reliance on services as adults. *"If we prioritise younger children, we could try and help them and provide support there, and there might be less problems as adults."*

Some comments suggest reducing spending on adult social care to encourage self-sufficiency. Additionally, some suggest that families should take on more responsibility for caring for relatives. *"I also think that some responsibilities fall on financially able families I think the same applies for elderly people I think sons or daughters could look after parents"*

- 1.25 Other themes for written feedback regarding adult social care related to:
- Do not reduce spending (2 mentions)
 - Increase income (1 mention)

Children's and family services

Budget simulator descriptions

1.26 Children's social care

We help children and young people in Oxfordshire who are vulnerable or at risk of harm to be safe and well. We work with families and other organisations to protect their rights and prevent abuse and neglect. We also assess their needs and provide or arrange services to support them. This is our legal duty under the Children Act 1989, 2004 and 2017 and the Health and Social Care Act 2018.

We support children to stay safely with their families or family networks when they need help and protection. Working with parents and children we help make changes and improve outcomes by tackling the things that cause concerns and the family distress. Currently we support 1,738 individuals.

We provide services for 765 children and young people who can't live with their own families, finding them loving foster families and good homes and making sure that they are healthy and happy. When young people are leaving our care, we make sure they have a safe place to live and a plan for their goals for the future.

We provide social care services for 403 children and young people with very complex disabilities and health needs, who need high levels of practical physical care and support.

We welcome children and young people who come to our country alone as asylum seekers and need our help. We give them care, support, education and a chance for a better future

Family help

We help families, children and young people in Oxfordshire who are facing difficulties to overcome them and prevent future problems.

Children and family hubs are places where you can get advice and support on various topics, such as parenting, health, education and more. Currently there are 1,007 individuals being supported by this service.

The targeted youth support service helps young people who are at risk of getting into trouble or harm. It helps them deal with issues such as drugs, alcohol, crime, violence, mental health and more.

Our education, employment and training service supports young people who are not in school, work or training. It helps them find opportunities to learn new skills, get qualifications and find jobs.

We also work with local groups and organisations to provide activities and programmes for families, children and young people. Working with these groups also helps them to connect with other people in their area and access other services.

Education and schools

We provide access to education and training for Oxfordshire's children, including those who are excluded from school or in the criminal justice system. We also oversee the school admissions process, make sure there is enough early years' provision for children under five and provide specialist services to support schools to improve. We also support children and young people with their education and health and care plans, allowing them to get the support they need to thrive in our schools.

Special educational needs and disabilities (SEND)

We work with partners to meet the needs of children and young people aged 0 - 25 with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) and their families. We assess their needs and provide or arrange appropriate support according to their individual needs. Currently 6,639 children and young people in Oxfordshire have an education and healthcare plan.

We also provide an impartial information and advice service, as well as support some SEND pupils in schools with educational psychologists, speech and language therapy and occupational therapists. This is our legal duty under the Code of Practice 2014.

Home to school transport

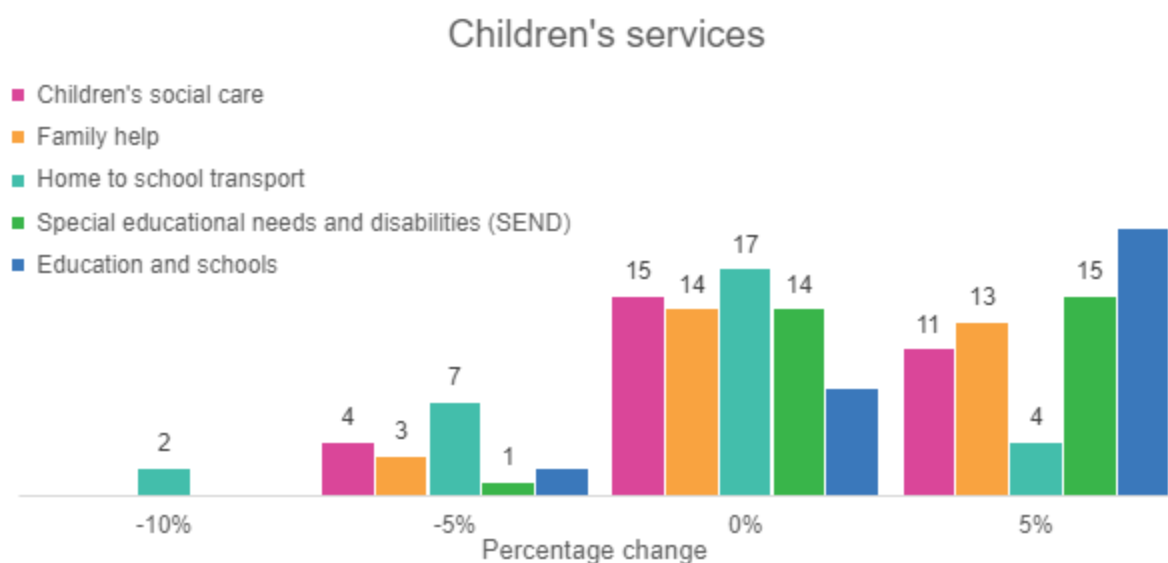
We help eligible children from reception to year 11 get to school by providing them with transportation assistance. Usually they get a free pass to use on public buses or trains but sometimes we arrange for them to travel on a special bus, coach, or minibus. There are just over 6,000 young people who are eligible to use mainstream school transport in Oxfordshire.

Some children with extra needs may travel by taxi to help them access school and education.

- 1.27 The children's and family service group contained five sliders: children's social care, family help, education and schools, special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) and home to school transport.

The chart below shows how people responded for service items (sliders) presented in the simulator.

Young people's budget simulator choices for children's services grouping



Written feedback

1.28 In all, 22 young people gave written feedback on the 'children's and family services' section of the simulator, which included 24 different comments. More detailed analysis has been undertaken for themes (codes) which received 10 per cent or more comments in section and these are as follows:

- Importance of service (9 mentions)
- Service quality (5 mentions)
- Reduce spending (4 mentions)
- Do not reduce spending (3 mentions)

1.29 Many comments emphasised the importance of supporting young children as they are seen as the future contributors to the economy. There is a strong sentiment that children deserve to be supported and provided with opportunities. *"Children's lives are very important because you need happy and smart children to build a good future."*

Comments also highlighted the importance of helping children with special educational needs and disabilities. There are concerns about the quality of SEND services, including a lack of places in SEND schools. *"SEN children are often ignored and if we help them as children there could be less strain on the adult services."*

Home to school transport received the majority of comments relating the reducing spending, with suggestions that public transport schemes and car sharing could be better for the environment as well as helping to reduce the cost of providing home to school transport. *"I decreased this because there*

are other transports that are public which is better for the environment.”

Comments against reducing spending on children's services emphasised the impact on, and importance of, children's mental health. There are concerns about children struggling with school and mental health problems, and the need for support services. *“children social care we do need... as most kids struggle with school and mental health problems”*

1.30 Other themes for written feedback regarding children's services related to:

- Misunderstanding of OCC power/responsibilities (2 mentions)
- The council should not provide this service (1 mention)

Highways operations

Budget simulator descriptions

1.31 Highways maintenance

We have to keep the roads in Oxfordshire safe for everyone. We look after 3,000 miles of roads, as well as paths, bridges and trees. We fix potholes, resurface roads, make roads safer, clear snow and ice in the winter, unblock drains and cut grass on the sides of the roads.

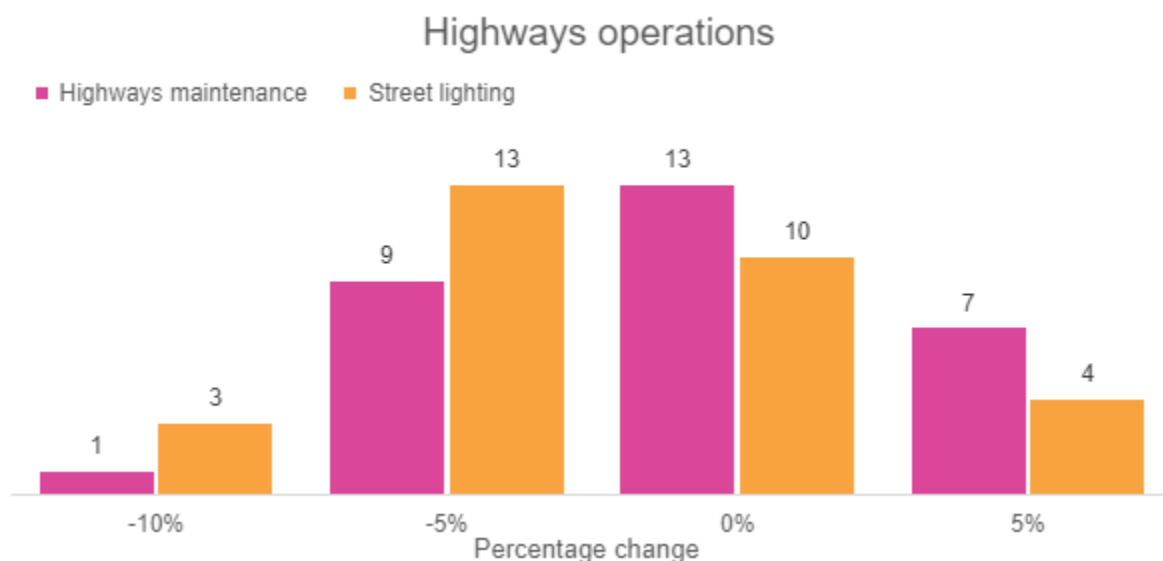
Street lighting

We maintain over 60,000 street lights, signs and bollards that light up the roads and paths in Oxfordshire. Most of them are LED lights, which use less energy and last longer. Our streetlights are managed (what times they are on and when they are brighter or dimmer) to save energy.

1.32 The highways operations grouping contained two sliders: highways maintenance and street lighting.

The chart below shows how people responded for both items (sliders) presented in the simulator.

Young people's budget simulator choices for highways operations



Written feedback

1.33 In all, 16 young people gave written feedback on the 'highways operations' section of the simulator, which included 23 different comments. More detailed analysis has been undertaken for themes (codes) which received 10 per cent or more comments in section and these are as follows:

- Reduce spending (6 mentions)
- Roads and transport (5 mentions)
- Do not reduce spending (5 mentions)
- Importance of service (4 mentions)

1.34 Several comments suggest reducing street lighting to save costs whilst reducing light pollution. There are suggestions to reduce cost and energy use by using solar lighting and LED bulbs. However, there are also comments emphasising the importance of street lighting for safety, especially in darker times of the year. *"Increasing street lights can increase the safety of areas because some people feel scared to enter areas which are dark."*

Many comments emphasise the need for road repair and maintenance, particularly fixing potholes and improving road conditions. Some feel that highway maintenance funding should not be reduced, and is especially important in rural areas of Oxfordshire. *"...other things are more important like highway maintenance which lower the accident rate on the highway."*

- 1.35 Other themes for written feedback regarding highways operations related to:
- Service quality (2 mentions)
 - Increase income (1 mention)

Place, transport and infrastructure

Budget simulator description

1.36 Place, transport and infrastructure

We support and encourage thriving communities in Oxfordshire, mainly by managing travel and connectivity so that people can easily get to important places (such as health services, education, shops and workplaces) and goods can be moved in Oxfordshire. We have a plan for the county that respects the individual needs of different areas in Oxfordshire, and more local travel area plans to help us understand what transport might be needed to support communities in the future.

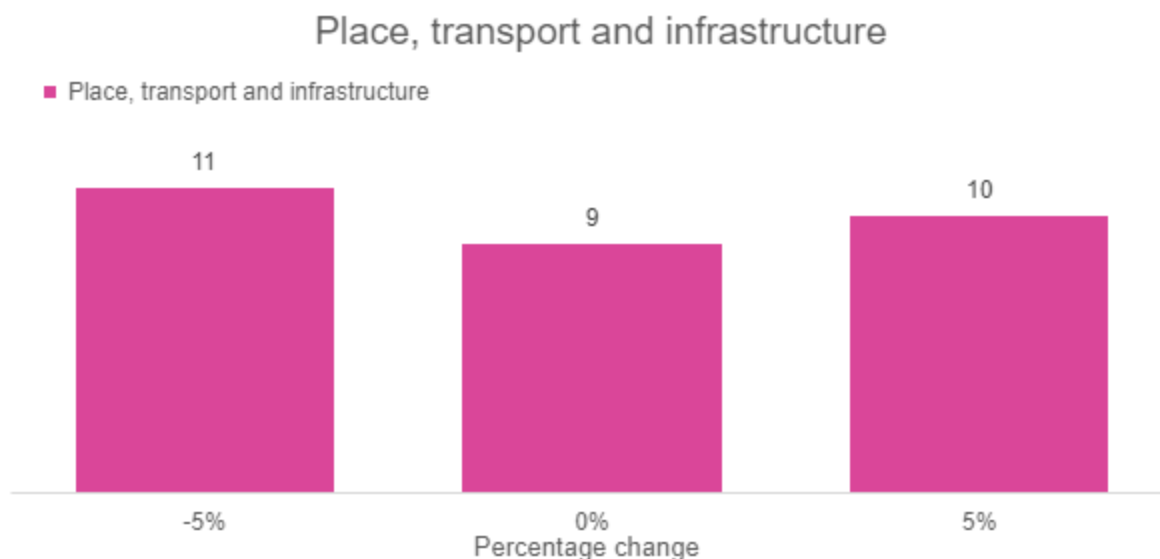
We encourage people to travel by walking, cycling and using public transport. We work with other groups and organisations to provide services and make changes that improve travel and transport. We also build roads, bridges and other transport facilities that are funded by government, work with businesses who build new housing and business properties, and by working with others in partnership to deliver services.

We want to make Oxfordshire a better place to live and work, where people can benefit from types of transport that help prevent climate change and improve air quality improving the health and wellbeing for residents.

We support bus services and provide free bus passes for older people and disabled people and their companions. We ensure that new housing and commercial developments and new cycleways, walking routes, bus lanes and roads meet our communities' needs and the overall vision for Oxfordshire as a greener, fairer and healthier county.

- 1.37 The place, transport and infrastructure group had just one slider. The chart below shows how people responded for place, transport and infrastructure as presented in the simulator.

Young people's budget simulator choices for place, transport and infrastructure



Written feedback

- 1.38 In all, 15 young people gave written feedback on the 'place, transport and infrastructure' section of the simulator, which included 22 different comments. More detailed analysis has been undertaken for themes (codes) which received 10 per cent or more comments in section and these are as follows:
- Roads and transport (9 mentions)
 - Importance of service (5 mentions)
 - Do not reduce spending (4 mentions)
- 1.39 Comments were primarily focussed on public transport services, highlighting their use by young people and emphasising the need for continued investment public transport. It is suggested that if the council takes over transport costs and fares might go down, encouraging more people to use public transport. "Travel is important and should be cheaper."
- 1.40 Here is a high-level thematic summary of the other comments made for 'place, transport and infrastructure':
- Feedback on the budget simulator (2 mentions)
 - Reduce spending (1 mention)
 - Service quality (1 mention)

Planning, environment and climate change

Budget simulator description

1.41 Strategic planning

We are in charge of planning for minerals and waste in Oxfordshire. We also give advice on planning for infrastructure, such as roads, schools and health services. We do this by responding to consultations on planning applications and on local area plans.

Environment and climate action

Reducing our impact on the environment is important to us and is part of all the work that we do. This part of our budget is about the work of our environment and climate action teams, who play an important part in improving the natural environment and people's access to it, reducing pollution and making sure we are ready to deal with more severe weather.

We are responsible for fixing drainage and flooding issues on highways and roads across Oxfordshire, including blocked drains and gullies on the road. We are also responsible for co-ordinating the emergency response to flooding and managing the flood risk from surface water, groundwater and ordinary watercourses. We work with a range of organisations including the Environment Agency, Thames Water, the city and district councils, farmers and landowners to do this.

We also work with the city and district councils (and local communities) to protect and improve nature and access to green and open spaces. We work with the Local Nature Partnership to protect our heritage, wildlife and landscapes in Oxfordshire, as well as increasing the number of trees.

We help people enjoy the countryside by looking after and expanding the paths and trails that people can walk, cycle or ride horses on. We work to keep these paths clear, mapped and sign-posted, as required by law. We work with volunteers and community groups to make our environment better and safer for everyone.

We work to reduce pollution and make Oxfordshire more energy efficient by:

- Supporting people on very low incomes to make their homes more energy efficient. This helps to reduce their bills as well as keeping them warmer and healthier.
- Working with other organisations to make sure Oxfordshire's energy system can support communities and homes to have more chargers for electric cars and use more renewable energy.

- Reducing how much energy council buildings use, and switching to vans, cars other vehicles that create less pollution. We also support schools to make these changes.
- Working with companies that supply things to the council to help them reduce their environmental impact.
- Reducing traffic congestion and encouraging people to walk, cycle or use public transport (where possible) instead of driving.
- Supporting communities to do things that are good for their local area and the environment. For example, having repair cafes, planting community orchards and giving people advice on how to lower their energy bills.

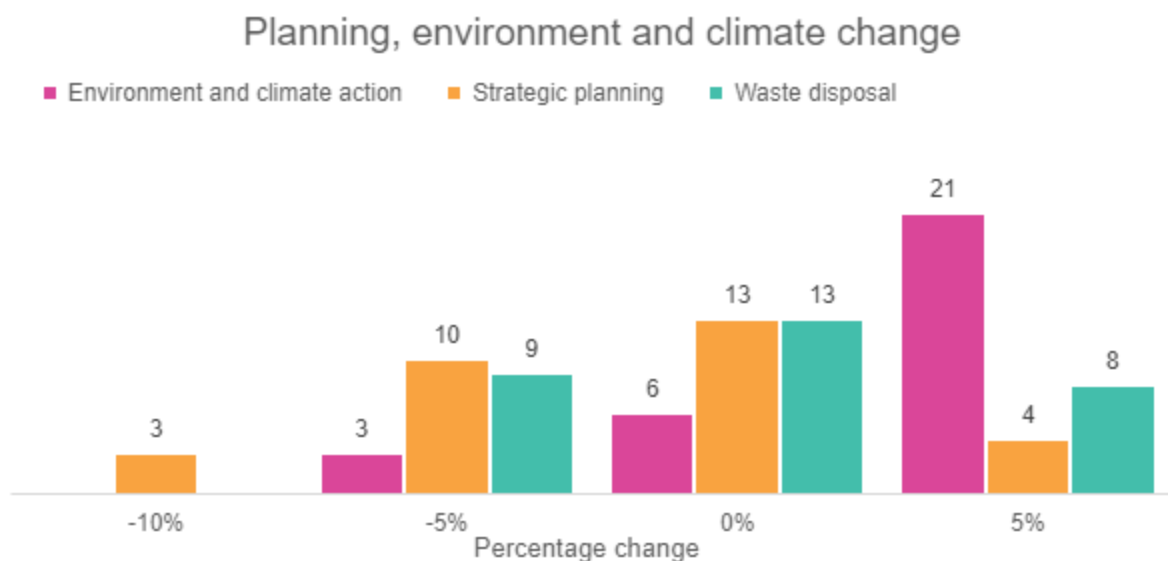
Waste disposal

We are responsible for getting rid of household waste in Oxfordshire. This includes recycling, green waste and black bin waste. However, we don't do bin collections; they are arranged by your local district or city council.

We also have to provide places where people can take their household waste to be recycled. These are called household waste recycling centres. We have seven of these in Oxfordshire. They are visited by about one million people every year and they take in about 40,000 to 45,000 tonnes of waste every year.

- 1.42 The planning, transport and climate change grouping contained three sliders: strategic planning, environment and climate action and waste disposal. The chart below shows how people responded for all three service items (sliders) presented in the simulator.

Young people's budget simulator choices for planning, environment and climate change



Written feedback

- 1.43 In all, 19 young people gave written feedback on the 'Planning, environment and climate change' section of the simulator, which included 27 different comments. The key themes were:
- Climate action (18 mentions)
 - Reduce spending (4 mentions)
- 1.44 There is a strong sentiment that the environment is crucial for future generations and that immediate climate action is needed before it is too late. There is a belief that future spending can be reduced by addressing climate change now. "We really need to work on the environment and the climate as future generations will have to suffer from our actions."
- There is a sentiment that spending on other services, such as planning, can be reduced to prioritise the environment. "Planning is important but saving and preserving our environment is vital to survive."
- 1.45 Other themes for written feedback regarding environment and climate change related to:
- Waste (2 mentions)
 - Importance of service (2 mentions)
 - Do not reduce spending (1 mention)

Public health

Budget simulator description

- 1.46 Public health
- We provide services to improve people's health and help them to avoid getting sick. This includes work to tackle health inequalities (for example, where people in one area of Oxfordshire have worse health or don't live as long as people in another area) so that everybody can live longer, healthier lives. We provide services that help to stop illnesses that can be passed from one person to another and we help local health services to meet the needs of people in Oxfordshire. This includes making sure that services are easy to access, effective and good value.

We work with other council services, communities and organisations to reduce the differences in health between different groups of people and to make places healthier.

Services that we pay for include:

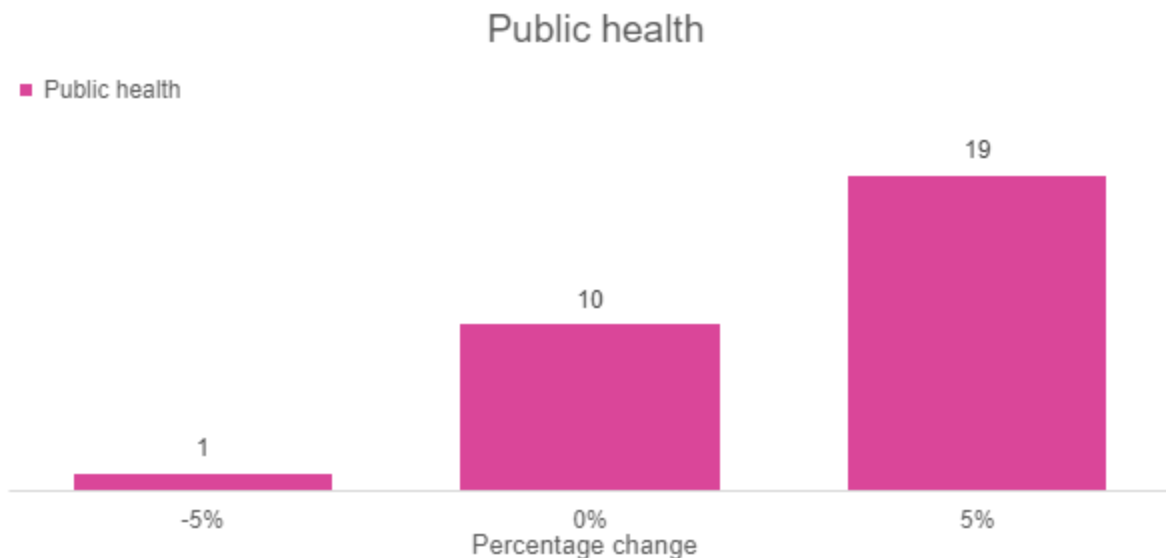
- childhood health visitors and school nurses
- NHS health checks for adults over 40 years old
- reducing the harm caused by smoking, drugs, alcohol and obesity
- sexual health services.

Most of the money for these services comes from a special grant that we can only use for public health. The simulator slider for public health represents what is paid for with the council's money and other grants, mainly services that reduce health inequalities and help people who are affected by domestic abuse or drug and alcohol problems.

1.47 The public health group had just one slider.

The chart below shows how people responded for public health as presented in the simulator.

Young people's budget simulator choices for public health



Written feedback

1.48 In all, 19 young people gave written feedback on the Public Health section of the simulator, which included 22 different comments. Key themes were:

- Importance of service (10)
- Misunderstanding of OCC power/responsibilities (4 mentions)

1.49 Comments emphasise the importance of public health, stating that it saves lives, helps people live longer, and is essential for a functioning council. There is a strong sentiment that health should always be a high priority, especially in light of recent contagious diseases like COVID-19. *“Health is the upmost priority as there is no point making a perfect future if there is no one to live in it.”*

Some comments express frustration with long waiting times for doctors and the perceived unfairness that those who can afford private doctors receive quicker treatment. Recommendations for improving this include higher wages to increase staffing. *“lots of the times there is a big wait for the doctors and some people might not be able to wait that long.”*

1.50 Other themes for written feedback regarding public health to:

- Increase income (2 mentions)
- Service quality (2 mentions)
- Reduce spending (1 mention)
- Do not reduce spending (1 mention)

Safety services

Budget simulator description

1.51 Fire and rescue

Oxfordshire Fire and Rescue Service is part of the county council and our firefighters operate from 25 fire stations across the county. We protect communities, reduce harm and save lives through education and advice about fire safety. We also respond to emergencies, such as fires, road accidents, chemical incidents, flooding and extreme weather. We work with partners to plan and prepare for major incidents.

We are the statutory fire authority for Oxfordshire. That means that it is our job to check buildings for fire safety, give advice to businesses on fire safety responsibilities and make sure they follow the rules. If they don't, we can take action to make sure everyone stays safe. This is our legal duty under the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004 and the Civil Contingencies Act 2004.

Trading standards

Trading Standards works to protect residents and businesses and takes action, including enforcement, when needed.

This covers things like weights and measures; product safety; food standards; unfair trading practices; animal health and disease control; environmental requirements; and price marking and comparison.

In addition, it covers rules around the sale of products that have age limits, such as tobacco and vapes; the licensing and inspection of sites storing explosives and petroleum; and the safety certification of sports stadiums. Trading Standards also works to protect people from financial abuse, like scams, and enforces weight restrictions on roads.

1.52 The safety services grouping contained two sliders: fire and rescue and trading standards.

The chart below shows how people responded for all three service items (sliders) presented in the simulator.

Young people's budget simulator choices for safety services



Written feedback

- 1.53 In all, 16 young people gave written feedback on the 'Safety services' section of the simulator, which included 14 different comments. Key themes were:
- Importance of service (10 mentions)
 - Reduce spending (2 mentions)

- 1.54 There is a sentiment that trading standards are important, particularly addressing issues such as vaping among young people. Underage sales are highlighted as a significant problem, with several comments mentioning issues at schools. *"Vaping has become a large issue for younger people and being able to control it would hopefully reduce the easiness of being able to get products like this."*

Comments also emphasise the importance of the fire and rescue service and how they are keeping people safe. *"Fire and rescue are very important to save peoples lives."*

Some respondents felt that spending could be reduced, with a suggestion that some responsibilities could be transferred to businesses. *"I think that personally we could spend a little less on safety services"*

- 1.55 Other themes for written feedback regarding cultural services related to:
- Climate action (1 mention)
 - Importance of service (1 mention)

Cultural services

Budget simulator descriptions

1.56 Libraries

We have to provide a library service for everyone who lives, works and studies in Oxfordshire by law. Our 45 libraries are open to everyone and they offer many things such as books, information, free wi-fi and computers and social activities. We know that some people cannot come to the libraries so we also have an app, online resources and a home library service for people who need it.

Museums and history services

We run five places where you can learn about Oxfordshire's history and heritage:

- The Oxfordshire Museum (Woodstock), where you can see our permanent collections, exhibitions and activities.
- The Museums Resource Centre (Standlake), where we keep our reserve collections, and where people can learn about Oxfordshire's history and see important historical information.
- Swalcliffe Barn (near Banbury) is a medieval barn where we display large vehicles used for farming and trade. The barn is a Graded 1 listed building, which means that we have to protect it and not change it.
- The remains of the Bishop's Palace (Witney), which was built more than 800 years ago.
- The Oxfordshire History Centre (Cowley), where we keep the county's public archives, records and core local history collection.

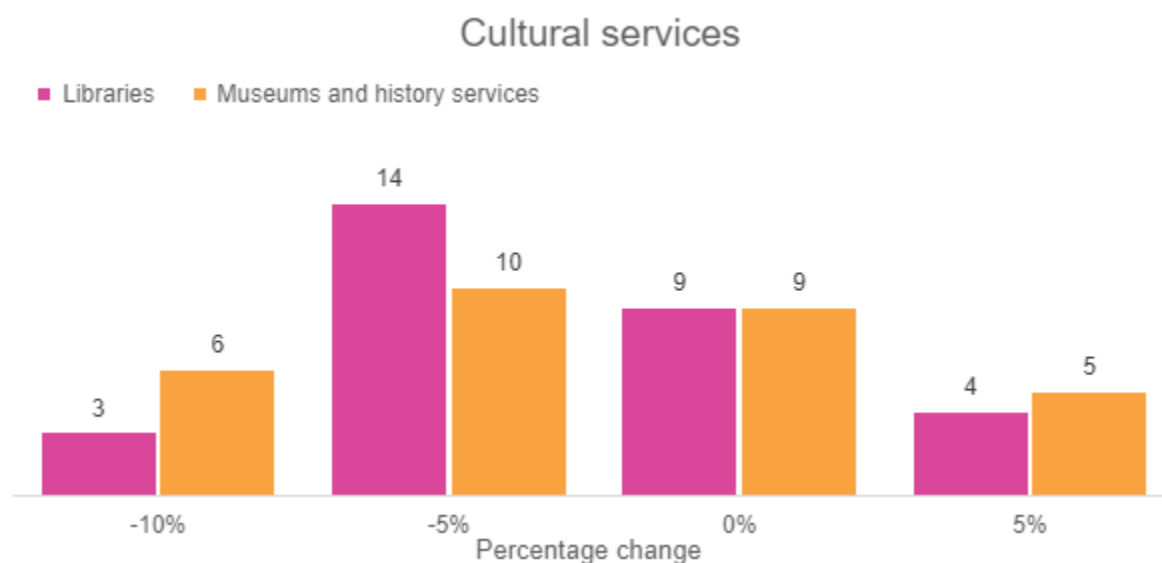
We offer these services to everyone in communities. We also have some legal responsibilities to look after these places and collections.

As well as running our own places, we also help other organisations that provide access to heritage across the county, including Oxford City Council (who run the Museum of Oxford) and the Victoria County History of Oxfordshire.

1.57 The cultural services grouping contained two sliders: libraries, and museums and history services.

The chart below shows how people responded for both items (sliders) presented in the simulator.

Young people's budget simulator choices for cultural services



Written feedback

1.58 In all, 22 young gave written feedback on the 'cultural services' section of the simulator, which included 29 different comments. From reviewing the comments, the key themes emerging were:

- Reduce spending (13 mentions)
- Importance of service (12 mentions)
- Do not reduce spending (3 mentions)

1.59 There are conflicting sentiments on the importance of cultural services. Some comments suggest that these services are not essential and that the budget could be better allocated to more important services like education, housing, and healthcare. "libraries aren't used much because schools have libraries and book are cheaply available at charity shops."

However other comments emphasise the importance of cultural services for education and community engagement, particularly for young people, and highlight the need to protect their funding. Libraries and museums are seen as valuable resources for learning and personal growth, providing safe and warm spaces for people. "The information helps teach us so much and will make us happier people. These places aren't just a source of education for all ages, they are a safe, warm place that people can somehow find support."

1.60 Other themes for written feedback regarding cultural services related to:

- Service quality (1 mention)

Running the council

Budget simulator description

1.61 Running the council

The county council needs services that help us to do our work for Oxfordshire's residents and communities and meet our legal responsibilities. These services include finance, HR, IT support, law and governance, communications, customer services, policy and performance, procurement and property services.

1.62 The running the council group had just one slider.

The chart below shows how people responded for running the business as presented in the simulator.

Young people's budget simulator choices for running the council



Written feedback

1.63 15 young people gave written feedback on the 'running the council' section of the simulator, which included 13 different comments. From reviewing the comments, the key themes emerging were:

- Reduce spending (6 mentions)
- Service quality (4 mentions))
- Importance of service (2 mentions)

1.64 Many respondents expressed the belief that the council spends too much money on things that are not noticeable, while others mention that having good staff would mean that not so many staff are needed. Commenters suggest that a reduction in spending here could be used to fund front line

services. *"I think their could be cuts made into running the council that would further benefit other services."*

A positive perception of the council is shown in some comments, with a sentiment that the council is run well and is in a stable condition. *"I think the council are doing a great job."*

Some commenters highlight the importance of this service in supporting council functions. *"Its very important otherwise everything else doesn't work."*

- 1.65 Other themes for written feedback regarding running the business related to:
- Do not reduce spending (1 mention)

Council Tax

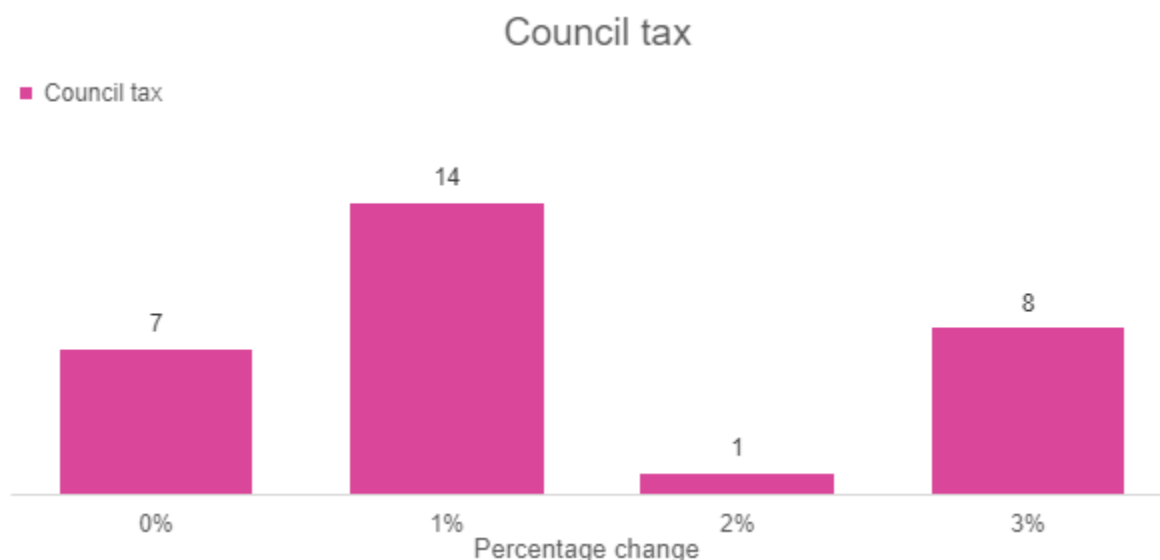
- 1.66 The young people were informed that in Oxfordshire, council tax bills are made up of several different amounts of money that go to different organisations and that Oxfordshire County Council's element of their council tax bill is made up of two parts:
- The 'core' or general council tax used for all county council services, including highway maintenance; children and adult social care; waste management and recycling; fire and rescue, and libraries.
 - An adult social care 'precept', which is an additional charge on top of core council tax that can only be spent on adult social care services.

Budget simulator users were also informed that:

- Funding for the financial year 2025/26 is currently uncertain for all local authorities because of the general election. This includes money from government, grants and our ability to raise council tax.
 - The government tells local authorities how much we can raise council tax by without needing a referendum; this is called the referendum limit. If we want to raise council tax higher than the limit, we would have to ask people in Oxfordshire to vote on it, and could only do it if they voted yes. We don't yet know what the referendum limit will be for the financial year 2025/26. The government will tell us later in the year.
- 1.67 The council tax slider had three options as follows:
- 0%: Our current medium term financial strategy includes a 1.99 per cent rise. This is shown as 0 per cent in the simulator.
 - 1%: Increasing this by one per cent is equal to an overall 2.99 per cent council tax rise, would give an additional £5m for services.

- 2%: Increasing this by two per cent is equal to an overall 3.99 per cent council tax rise, would give an additional £10m for services.
- 3%: Increasing this by three per cent is equal to an overall 2.99 per cent council tax rise, would give an additional £15m for services.

Young people's budget simulator choices for council tax



- Overall, 23 young people chose to increase council tax on top of the 1.99% already proposed
- On average, the budget simulator shows that people were willing to increase by 1.33 per cent.
- 14 young people (47 per cent of respondents) chose to increase council tax by an additional one per cent (to 2.99%)
- 1 young person (3 per cent of respondents) chose to increase council tax by an additional two per cent (to 3.99%)
- 8 young people (27 per cent of respondents) chose to increase council tax by an additional three per cent (to 4.99%)

Written feedback

- 1.68 22 young people gave written feedback on the council tax section of the simulator, which included 19 different comments. The primary theme was around increasing income (17 mentions), including:
- Increase in council tax is acceptable (14)
 - Increase in council tax is not acceptable (1)
 - Reduce in council tax (1)
 - A need for increased funding from national government (1)
- 1.69 Many comments suggest that increasing council tax could help fund services that benefit everyone. There is a sentiment that those who can afford to pay more should do so to improve the quality of life for others. *"It would do well for*

everyone to help but it has to be from those who can afford it, otherwise it worsens the situation and not helps it.”

Several comments express concerns about the cost-of-living crisis and the impact of higher taxes on struggling families. *“Lots of people are already struggling, no one family should have to pay more than they have to. I think families with more children, poorer housing, disability or in foster care should be able to pay less.”*

2. Budget simulator focus groups

Introduction

- 2.1 On Thursday 20 June and Friday 19 July 2024 we held two in-person focus groups for secondary school-aged young people, so they could try out our budget simulator and tell us their priorities.
- 2.2 Both focus groups were held between 5.30pm – 8.00pm at County Hall and were facilitated by members of the council’s engagement and consultation team. Equipment was provided (laptops and/or iPads) for attendees to use. A set £20 thank you payment was offered, alongside reimbursement of travel expenses. Additionally, hot food, snacks and refreshments were provided and a certificate of participation for all attendees was awarded.

Approach

- 2.3 The aims of the focus groups were to:
 - engage young people with the council’s budget simulator
 - explore what additional support or changes may be needed to the budget simulator to empower young people to use it
 - seek feedback on young people’s priorities for the council and its services
- 2.4 The first focus group was a tester session to enable young people to pilot, and feedback on, the budget simulator tool itself and as well to have a go at submitting a balanced budget. As this was a pilot, we deliberately did not provide much in the way of an introduction, as we wanted young people to test out using the simulator based on only the information provided on the simulator pages. Following the first group, some changes were made to the budget simulator to make it easier to use. We also recognised that it is still a complex tool and for young people it is best suited to being used in a supported environment such as in a group, classroom environment etc.
- 2.5 With this in mind, to give more young people the opportunity to take part in the budget simulator we organised a second focus group. This focused on giving

more introductory information about the county council, the services we provide, and how decisions are made. We did not specifically seek feedback in this group on the young people's views on the budget simulator tool itself. Instead, we used it as an opportunity for young people to provide feedback on the council's nine strategic priorities to add to the views of other young people collated at the budget sounding boards.

Recruitment and attendees

- 2.6 To recruit participants for the first focus group, information was provided, along with a combined 'register your interest' and consent form on the county council's consultation platform, Let's talk Oxfordshire. Emails with a link to this page were sent to young people on the engagement and consultation team's mailing list (and/or their parents/carers) for which young people have previously signed up to stay in touch and learn about future opportunities to get involved and share their views.
- 2.7 For the second focus group, information about the opportunity was again provided, on the county council's consultation platform, Let's talk Oxfordshire. Again, emails were sent to the young people on the Engagement and Consultation Team's mailing list (and/or their parents/carers) and in addition, information was shared with residents across the county through the 'Your Oxfordshire' newsletter. This was with a focus on encouraging parents/carers to get their children to participate. Schools who'd registered their interest in the sounding boards but were unable to attend were also actively targeted with information about the opportunity for their pupils to get involved. Finally, councillors who expressed an interest were also given the information to promote where possible through their local secondary schools or local youth groups.
- 2.8 Overall, the two focus involved a total of 29 young people from across Oxfordshire (13 at the first focus group and 16 at the second focus group). They were all aged between 12 – 17 years old and their demographic profile reflects the details given in the budget simulator section of the report.

Key findings

Feedback on the council's strategic priorities

- 2.9 As specified above, this task was only completed by the 16 participants at the second focus group. The young people attending the focus group were divided into three groups and were asked to choose their two most important and two least important of the council's nine strategic priorities from a young person's perspective, and write individual post it notes for each saying why they made these choices. As the three groups each had two choices, this meant there were six 'votes' in total for both the most important and least important strategic priorities.

Table 4: Young people's choices for most important strategic priorities

2. Strategic priority	3. Number of tables where the priority was mentioned	4. Ranking
		5.
6. 1. Put action to address the climate emergency at the heart of our work.	7. 2	8. 1
9. 3. Prioritise the health and wellbeing of residents.	10.2	11.1
12.7. Create opportunities for children and young people to reach their full potential.	13.1	14.2
15.9. Work with local businesses and partners for environmental, economic and social benefit.	16.1	17.2

The strategic priorities not chosen by any tables as the most important were:

- 2. Tackle inequalities in Oxfordshire
- 4. Support carers and the social care system
- 5. Invest in an inclusive, integrated and sustainable transport network
- 6. Preserve and improve access to nature and green spaces
- 8. Play our part in a vibrant and participatory local democracy

Table 5: Young people's choices for least important strategic priorities

18. Strategic priority	19. Number of tables where the priority was mentioned	20. Ranking
		21.
22.8. Play our part in a vibrant and participatory local democracy.	23.3	24.1
25.6. Preserve and improve access to nature and green spaces.	26.1	27.2
28.4. Support carers and the social care system.	29.1	30.2
31.9. Work with local businesses and partners for environmental, economic and social benefit.	32.1	33.2

The strategic priorities not chosen by any tables as the most important were:

- 1. Put action to address the climate emergency at the heart of our work
- 2. Tackle inequalities in Oxfordshire
- 3. Priorities the health and wellbeing of residents
- 5. Invest in an inclusive, integrated and sustainable transport network
- 7. Create opportunities for children and young people to reach their full potential

Written feedback

Group 1

Group 1 consisted of five young people, who chose as their two most important strategic priorities:

- 1. Put action to address the climate emergency at the heart of our work.
- 7. Create opportunities for children and young people to reach their full potential.

The young people gave the following reasons for choosing these as their most important priorities:

1. Put action to address the climate emergency at the heart of our work.
 - *"Number 1 is important because it covers a lot of the stuff that we need to change in our community."*
 - *"#1 linked in with a lot of other things like #5 and #6. It is important because if we don't go extinct, we can fix everything else."*
 - *"Number one is important because climate change kills animals and destroys homes."*
 - *"Number one is important because if the climate emergency is not addressed soon then the climate will continue to get hotter. If we fix it, 9, 5 and 6 will also be fixed."*
 - *"To tackle our climate emergency before we run out of time and it's too late."*
7. Create opportunities for children and young people to reach their full potential.
 - *"To help those who may need extra support or help."*
 - *"#7 also links to a lot of other things, like #2. There are a lot of mental health issues in young people and schools are horribly underfunded."*
 - *"Number 7 is important because children need to be well educated and so that when they are older they will be able to make important decisions."*
 - *"Number 7 is important because children are the world's future leaders."*
 - *"7 is important because many children's full potential is wasted by lack of teachers facilities and they won't be able to have a bright future."*

Group 1 chose the following as their two least important strategic priorities:

- 6. Preserve and improve access to nature and green spaces.
- 8. Play our part in a vibrant and participatory local democracy.

The young people gave the following reasons for choosing these as their least important priorities:

6. Preserve and improve access to nature and green spaces.

- *"I don't think number #6 is as important because it closely links to #1 and we said #1 was very important."*
- *"I thought 6 was important but everyone else disagreed with me."*
- *"I think 6 is the least important because it is a less impactful version of 1."*
- *"It links in with number one but doesn't [?] have much support."*
- *"I think 6 is not important because it's like 1 just worse."*

8. Play our part in a vibrant and participatory local democracy.

- *"8 is not as important because locals are not as well-informed as experts."*
- *"I think that 8 isn't that important because I think that it is better to have people in charge who know what they are doing than to ask people who don't know much."*
- *"I don't think #8 is as important because it is, in my opinion, less of a priority."*
- *"Isn't that important or urgent [?]."*
- *"I think 8 is not as important as the others."*

Group 2

Group 2 consisted of five young people, who chose as their two most important strategic priorities:

- 9. Work with local businesses and partners for environmental, economic and social benefit.
- 3. Prioritise the health and wellbeing of residents.

The young people gave the following reasons for choosing these as their most important priorities:

9. Work with local businesses and partners for environmental, economic and social benefit.

- *"I think 9 and 3 are the most important... 9 can help local business which will help our community out."*
- *"Because it will help the economy, business owners, and establish closer bonds between businesses, taxpayers and the government."*

- *"This is good because it can help with global warming as businesses contribute to global warming."*
- *"Local businesses because they run the local economy."*

3. Prioritise the health and wellbeing of residents

- *"I think 9 and 3 are the most important... 3 because it will also contribute to the wellbeing of our communities and social manner."*
- *"Because everyone should have access to health and health affects everyone in some way."*
- *"Prioritising the health and well-being of residents can cause people to flourish not just physically but mentally. As well as this can make people feel better/confident in wherever they are [?]."*
- *"Health and well-being because I enjoy health and makes communities happier."*
- *"The most important - to prioritise health and well-being of residents because it is important [?] to have a healthy country and it also saves money in other sectors."*

Group 2 chose the following as their two least important strategic priorities:

- 8. Play our part in a vibrant and participatory local democracy.
- 4. Support carers and the social care system.

The young people gave the following reasons for choosing these as their least important priorities:

8. Play our part in a vibrant and participatory local democracy.

- *"Democracy does not always get what people want as well as if the majority choose a group and there is a downfall everyone has to suffer the consequences."*
- *"I think democracy because making it less of a forefront issue won't make it a communist country."*
- *"Democracy isn't fair, the voting system is often corrupt and easily manipulated or subject to change."*
- *"We chose democracy (and social care and carers) as our least important because we do not believe they need to be prioritised in a financial manner."*
- *"Democracy because is kind of unsafe [?] since some people overpower others."*

4. Support carers and the social care system.

- *Carers are important however if we improve general health services for everyone.*
- *We chose social care and carers (and democracy) as our least important because we do not believe they need to be prioritised in a financial manner.*

Group 3

Group 3 consisted of six young people, who chose as their two most important strategic priorities:

- Put action to address the climate emergency at the heart of our work.
- Prioritise the health and wellbeing of residents.

The young people gave the following reasons for choosing these as their most important priorities:

1. Put action to address the climate emergency at the heart of our work.

- *"Number 1 is important as it ensures the next generation can thrive."*
- *"Climate change is underestimated threat we desperately need to address."*
- *"If we don't have good climate then we will have to possibly move houses away from the beaches and like sea levels might rise and kill people and in the less fortunate countries they might struggle."*
- *"1 is important because climate change is very urgent and if we don't quickly deal with it there will be severe consequences on a global and local scale."*
- *"We need to preserve our future and without our planet, there is no life, no future."*
- *"Because climate change is serious and we need to act now before it's too late"*

3. Prioritise the health and wellbeing of residents.

- *"There are not enough mental health services or health services in general."*
- *"Number 3 is important because it means people are fit and healthy to be helpful and happy in society."*
- *"Wellbeing (mental and physical) should be priority otherwise we'll all really suffer."*
- *"We all have a body and a life [?]. We all get unwell or need an extra bit of care. We all have a mind. We all want to be happy."*
- *"If we don't have good health of people then we will have a lower population which is bad and there will be lower life expectancy."*

- *“Health and wellbeing is very important because people must be happy for a good community.”*

Group 3 chose the following as their two least important strategic priorities:

- 8. Play our part in a vibrant and participatory local democracy.
- 9. Work with local businesses and partners for environmental, economic and social benefit.

The young people gave the following reasons for choosing these as their least important priorities:

8. Play our part in a vibrant and participatory local democracy.

- *“We already have a democracy so instead of spending on parties advertising, save money.”*
- *“We already have a democracy so we don't need this as much.”*
- *“We live in a country of democracy. We can scale back on everything to create a more gentle approach and not so full on.”*
- *“We already live in democratic society.”*
- *“We already live in a democracy country and they wasted a lot of money in the last vote that could have been put into something more important.”*
- *“I think 8 is not so important because we live in a country where democracy is a value [?] and people pick the government anyway.”*

9. Work with local businesses and partners for environmental, economic and social benefit.

- *“Local businesses can support themselves they made need support but more important services first.”*
- *“Local businesses already get a lot of support.”*
- *“Local businesses can adequately [?] support themselves and independently be successful.”*
- *“Businesses can support themselves and already are being friendly and eco.”*
- *“I think 9 is not so important because people can still invest in businesses.”*
- *“We do have lots of very important businesses that already deal with all of this.”*

3. Budget Sounding Boards

Introduction

- 3.1 On Wednesday 3 July and Thursday 11 July 2024, we held two in-person sounding boards for secondary school aged children. The aim of the sounding boards was to gather insight from a student's perspective, of the council strategic priorities and spending. Young people were also invited to submit a response into the budget simulator after the event, should they wish to.

Attendees

- 3.2 The two events brought together 35 young people across the two days, aged between 11 to 15. The Oxford budget sounding board was held at County Hall and involved students from Greyfriars Catholic School, the second event was held at Warriner School near Banbury and involved its students.

Methodology

- 3.3 Schools were invited to bring students to an event that would meet curriculum needs as well as meeting the council's engagement expectations for the budget. With a captive audience from schools, there was no requirement to pay or 'entice' an audience to the event. The aims of the sounding boards were to:
- engage young people in citizenship conversations and specifically how the council and local politics work, the role of the council, its services and priorities and how it is financed
 - help young people to understand more about money management, using a simulated exercise
 - seek feedback on their priorities for the council and its services
- 3.4 The sounding boards were hosted by one of the council's engagement and consultation specialists. The table discussions were facilitated by a mix of staff from the engagement and consultation team and youth workers. An agenda was created to ensure the council could not only gain insight, but so the day was engaging and informative for the students. It was important to set the scene and to ensure that all the young people equally understood what the council does and were ready for what was expected of them later in the day. Therefore, we delivered tasks 1, 2 and 3 to enable the young people to understand what the council does, how it spends its money, how budgeting works and how difficult it can be.
- Task 1: How decisions are made and what the council does
 - Task 2: How Oxfordshire County Council manages the budget
 - Task 3: Budgeting skills - activity: Solve Sam's budget

3.5 After lunch we focused on the final task which was delivered in 3 parts

Task 4: Council's strategic priorities: what are your most and least important

- Part 1: Discuss the service priorities and consider questions you have about them
- Part 2: Council's Strategic priorities; what are your two most and least important and why
- Part 3: Raise questions with the directors and other officers

3.6 Young people were asked to note down their questions, thoughts and reasons at each stage allowing us to gain insight into their decision making. The three directors and other senior staff who attended the two events listened, discussed and answered questions directly with the young people.

Key findings

3.7 The afternoon session was 'council's strategic priorities: what are your most and least important'. The session focused on what the young people thought of the strategic priorities. For this task the tables of young people had to decide which two of the council's nine strategic priorities were most important to them and which two were least important to them. With eight groups both having two choices, this meant that there were up to 16 'votes' for the strategic priorities. Whilst all the groups managed to choose their top two priorities, many found it difficult to identify their least important. Some individuals found it hard to agree on a group decision and were offered an opportunity to share a different priority, however individuals' choices are not reflected in the charts below.

Most important strategic priorities

Table 6: Young people's choices for most important strategic priorities

34. Strategic priority	35. Number of tables where the priority was mentioned	36. Ranking 37.
38. Create opportunities for children and young people to reach their full potential.	39. 5	40. 1
41. Prioritise the health and wellbeing of residents.	42. 4	43. 2
44. Tackle inequalities in Oxfordshire.	45. 3	46. 3
47. Support carers and the social care system.	48. 2	49. 4
50. Put action to address the climate emergency at the heart of our work.	51. 2	52. 4
53. Strategic priorities that were not chosen		

54. Invest in an inclusive, integrated and sustainable transport network.
55. Play our part in a vibrant and participatory local democracy.
56. Preserve and improve access to nature and green spaces.
57. Work with local businesses and partners for environmental, economic and social benefit.

- 3.8 Five groups out of the eight chose 'Create opportunities for children and young people to reach our full potential' as one of their top two priorities. Most of the comments were about needing a good education so young people have better life chances and to fulfil their potential; *"if we don't build their future, who will lead the world?"*
- 3.9 Some comments also cited having a good job was important for their future but also for society. Other comments stated there was a need for improvements regarding their educational experience, such as having a wider choice of topics and qualifications as well as better transport to school.
- 3.10 'Prioritise the health and wellbeing of residents' was the second highest chosen priority and chosen by four out of 8 groups. Majority of comments said everyone had the right to feel healthy, in mind and physically. Many comments said that the negative impact of this has a greater 'knock on effect' from pressure on the NHS, contributing to society and potential for death. *"Health and wellbeing is most important because without it people are unable to have good futures or contribute to the community".*
- 3.11 Young people felt it is important to address the priority 'Tackle inequalities in Oxfordshire' so that fairness could be provided for all which was chosen by 3 groups. Two groups felt very strongly about this, stating that racism and difference needed to be addressed and it is important so that everyone could feel safe and all cultures could be respected. Additional comments raised that whilst this was an important issue, other issues were even more important. Some young people felt this priority was addressed in school lessons.
- 3.12 Two groups chose 'Support carers and the social care system'. Their comments were mostly around helping those who need it the most, they should have somewhere safe and supportive and that other people should understand why caring is important.
- 3.13 Two groups put 'Action to address the climate emergency at the heart of our work' amongst their most important issues. Although, not a priority to many young people, there was consistent mention that this issue was important although not as important as looking after people. Mostly citing the impact was going to affect people, animals and planet now, as well as future generations. One comment also mentioned the impact across the world. *"Climate change is the most important because it has the biggest impact on*

everyone and our future depends on it because if it keeps getting hotter thousands of lives will be destroyed.”

- 3.14 There was one person who felt very strongly and disagreed with their groups priority neither did it come up in any of the groups. This was ‘Preserve and improve access to nature and green spaces’. Their comment was about wanting to be a farmer in the future and how wildflowers were important to soil and this having an impact potentially causing a food struggle.

Least important strategic priorities

Table 7: Young people’s choices for least important strategic priorities

58. Strategic priority	59. Number of tables where the priority was mentioned	60. Ranking
61. Invest in an inclusive, integrated and sustainable transport network.	62. 5	63. 1
64. Play our part in a vibrant and participatory local democracy.	65. 4	66. 2
67. Preserve and improve access to nature and green spaces.	68. 2	69. 3
70. Put action to address the climate emergency at the heart of our work.	71. 2	72. 3
73. Work with local businesses and partners for environmental, economic and social benefit.	74. 2	75. 3
76. Tackle inequalities in Oxfordshire.	77. 1	78. 4
79. Strategic priorities which were not chosen		
80. Create opportunities for children and young people to reach their full potential.		
81. Prioritise the health and wellbeing of residents.		
82. Support carers and the social care system.		

- 3.15 Five out of eight groups chose ‘Invest in an inclusive, integrated and sustainable transport network’ as their least important issue. Therefore, making it the top least important strategic priority out of the nine. Most comments shared the idea that there were more important issues, and that people could walk if they needed to get somewhere. It was felt that there were already some good aspects to transport that already existed, such as public transport, it was well organised and it aided people too. However, a few comments did state cost, access in rural areas and getting to school did need to be improved, as well as its sustainability credentials.

- 3.16 Half of the eight groups chose the strategic priority, 'Play our part in a vibrant and participatory local democracy', making it the second top in the least important list. There were a number of comments about young people not being able to vote, so felt they were not able to be part of the participatory democracy. There were also comments stating there were systems in place for a participatory democracy already. *"In my opinion we already have a good system set up for voting and democracy so everyone has a say"*.
- 3.17 Whilst two groups chose 'Put action to address the climate emergency at the heart of our work', only one group's comment was positive towards addressing this issue saying, during the pandemic they saw change was possible because of the lack of transport and that rivers were cleaner. The other group cited the financial cost of addressing climate change as well as electricity needing fuel, were their reasons for this priority to be in their least important list.
- 3.18 Two of the eight groups chose 'Preserve and improve access to nature and green spaces' as their least important issue. However, one of the groups could not decide on a second priority, so they chose this priority and consequently struggled with their reasons why it was their choice. Consequently they wrote many positive factors for their choice. For example *"[It's] important to look after the green space because it can help the plants grow..."*. They also said the priority aligned with the climate change priority and should be within that. Their choice has still been recorded in the chart above. The other group's only given reason for this priority was because green spaces should be built on for the need of housing homeless people.
- 3.19 Two groups chose 'Work with local businesses and partners for environmental, economic and social benefit' as their least important strategic priority. Just under half of the collated comments were from one group who felt distrust when using local businesses. The other comments were that this priority only benefits a small group of people.
- 3.20 One group out of the eight chose 'Tackle inequalities in Oxfordshire' as their one of their least important priorities saying that, inequality was 'fading away', it wasn't something the council could help with, and schools are addressing it.

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Work Programme
Performance and Corporate Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Cllr Eddie Reeves, Chair | Tom Hudson, Scrutiny Manager
tom.hudson@oxfordshire.gov.uk

Topic	Relevant strategic priorities	Purpose	Type	Lead Presenters
6 December 2024				
Draft Budget Scrutiny	All	To consider the robustness and suitability of the Council's draft budget, and to make any observations or recommendations accordingly.	Overview and Scrutiny	All service directors and Cabinet members
17 January 2025				
Amended Budget Scrutiny	All	To consider the robustness and suitability of the Council's budget following any updates arising from changes to funding or consultation feedback, and to make any observations or recommendations accordingly.	Overview and Scrutiny	All service directors and Cabinet members



County Hall Disposal Proposals	All	To consider further details over the disposal of the County Hall site.	Overview and Scrutiny	Cllr Dan Levy, Cabinet Member for Finance Lorna Baxter, Executive Director (Resources) Vic Kurzeja, Director of Property and Assets
4 April 2025				
Local Enterprise Partnership Integration	Work with local businesses and partners for environmental, economic and social benefit.	To receive an update on the progress of the Council's LEP integration	Overview	Cllr Leffman, Leader of the Council Robin Rogers, Director of Economy and Place
Devolution	All	To receive an update on the current position with regards to devolution, actions taken to date, and future planned activity.	Overview and Scrutiny	Cllr Leffman, Leader of the Council Directors TBC

Sub-groups				
Name	Relevant strategic priorities	Description	Outcomes	Members
Democratic Processes Working Group	Local Democracy	To review the key elements of support for democratic processes at Oxfordshire County Council.	Reviews the support for the council's democratic processes and makes recommendations.	Cllr Reeves Cllr Simpson Cllr Baines Cllr O'Connor Cllr Van Mierlo Cllr Bennett

Briefings/Other					
Date	Topic	Relevant strategic priorities	Description	Outcomes	Presenters
16 Jan 2025 14:00 til 16:00	Local Government Finance Settlement	All	Impact of Local Government Finance Settlement and other funding updates.	Clarity on as many sources of uncertainty within the budget process to date.	Lorna Baxter, Executive Director (Resources)

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Division(s): N/A

CABINET – 19 NOVEMBER 2024

FORWARD PLAN AND FUTURE BUSINESS

Items identified from the Forward Plan for Forthcoming Decision

Topic/Decision

Portfolio/Ref

Cabinet, 17 December 2024

<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Capital Programme and Monitoring Report - October 2024 Financial Report on capital spending against budget allocations, including any necessary capital programme approvals.	Cabinet, 2024/224 - Cabinet Member for Finance
<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ City Centre Strategy Review options and officers recommendations with a view to deciding how to proceed on the next stage of the City Centre Strategy, including a Key Decision	Cabinet, 2024/294 - Cabinet Member for Finance
<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Approval to Begin Re-Procurement for our Microsoft Enterprise Agreement (MEA) Our current MEA expires on 28 February 2025. We want to re-procure the agreement to ensure we continue to benefit from fixed prices for Microsoft Licences for the length of the new agreement.	Cabinet, 2024/332 - Cabinet Member for Community & Corporate Services
<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Beyond Net Zero - Growing the Market for Carbon Dioxide Removals Agree policy to support growing market for carbon dioxide removals.	Cabinet, 2024/330 - Deputy Leader of the Council with Responsibility for Climate Change, Environment & Future Generations
<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Infrastructure Funding Statement Approval to publish the statement to the Council's website.	Cabinet, 2024/322 - Cabinet Member for Infrastructure and Development Strategy
<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Workforce Report and Staffing Data - Quarter 2 - July to September 2024 Quarterly staffing report providing details of key people numbers and analysis of main changes since the previous report.	Cabinet, 2024/336 - Cabinet Member for Community & Corporate

	Services
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Delegated Decisions by Deputy Leader of the Council with Responsibility for Climate Change, Environment & Future Generations, 12 December 2024

<p>▪ Household Waste Recycling Centres (HWRC) - New CCTV provision with ANPR cameras To approve installation of new enhanced CCTV system across all HWRC's. including new ANPR (Automated Number Plate Recognition)</p>	<p>Delegated Decisions by Deputy Leader of the Council with Responsibility for Climate Change, Environment & Future Generations, 2024/056 - Deputy Leader of the Council with Responsibility for Climate Change, Environment & Future Generations</p>
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Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for Transport Management, 12 December 2024

<p>▪ Nuffield: Proposed 20mph Speed Limits Part of Phase 3 of Countywide 20mph Speed Limit Project</p>	<p>Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for Transport Management, 2024/193 - Cabinet Member for Transport Management</p>
<p>▪ Letcombe Regis: Proposed 20mph Speed Limits Part of Phase 3 Countywide 20mph Speed Limit Project.</p>	<p>Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for Transport Management, 2024/151 - Cabinet Member for Transport Management</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A4260: Vision Zero Speed Limit Review Proposed changes along the A4260 corridor include reductions to 50, 40 and 30mph on various lengths between Banbury and Shipton-on-Cherwell. Includes adjoining sections of B4030 at Hopcrofts Holt, and B4027 and A4095 at Bunkers Hill. 	Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for Transport Management, 2024/298 - Cabinet Member for Transport Management
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Armstrong Road, Oxford - Proposed Waiting Restrictions To seek a decision on the proposed introduction of waiting restrictions on Armstrong Road, associated with a development. 	Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for Transport Management, 2024/319 - Cabinet Member for Transport Management
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Proposed Raised Table - Denchworth Road, Grove To seek approval for the introduction of a raised table traffic calming feature on Denchworth Road, Grove. 	Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for Transport Management, 2024/317 - Cabinet Member for Transport Management
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A44 Begbroke - Proposed 20 & 40mph Speed Limits To seek a decision on proposals for 20mph in the village and 40mph speed limit on the A44, Begbroke. 	Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for Transport Management, 2024/316 - Cabinet Member for Transport Management
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Westwell: Proposed 20mph Speed Limits To seek approval for the introduction of a 20mmph speed limit in Westwell. 	Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for Transport Management, 2024/311 - Cabinet Member for Transport Management
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Asthall Leigh & Field Assarts: Proposed 20mph Speed Limits To seek approval for the introduction of 20mph speed limits in Asthall Leigh & Field Assarts. 	Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for Transport

	Management, 2024/310 - Cabinet Member for Transport Management
<p>▪ Proposed Controlled Parking Zone (CPZ) - Littlemore North, Oxford</p> <p>Under the County Council's policy to rollout new CPZs across Oxfordshire, a new scheme is being promoted to reduce opportunities for commuter parking and to reduce car use within the city.</p>	Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for Transport Management, 2024/276 - Cabinet Member for Transport Management
<p>▪ Highmoor: Proposed 20mph Speed Limits</p> <p>Part of Phase 3 Countywide 20mph Speed Limit Project</p>	Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for Transport Management, 2024/187 - Cabinet Member for Transport Management
<p>▪ Proposed Controlled Parking Zone (CPZ) - Hightown Road Area, Banbury</p> <p>To seek approval for the introduction of a new Controlled Parking Zone, for the Hightown Road area, Banbury</p>	Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for Transport Management, 2024/327 - Cabinet Member for Transport Management
<p>▪ Proposed Controlled Parking Zone (CPZ) - Cooper's Gate, Banbury</p> <p>To seek approval for the introduction of a new Controlled Parking Zone, for the Cooper's Gate, Banbury.</p>	Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for Transport Management, 2024/326 - Cabinet Member for Transport Management
<p>▪ CPZ Parking Permit Eligibility (Various Locations, Oxford - September 2024)</p> <p>Periodically, the County Council carries out consultations to make changes to permit eligibility for individual dwellings which are associated with planning conditions, often through change of use or HMO's.</p>	Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for Transport Management, 2024/297 - Cabinet Member for Transport

	Management
<p>▪ Westbury Crescent, Oxford - Highway Improvements Scheme 2024/25</p> <p>Scheme has been developed following earlier informal consultation with residents to address local concerns with traffic speeds on Westbury Crescent as well as a higher volume of traffic using the southern half of the Crescent. Scheme includes the introduction of One-Way Streets and traffic calming.</p>	Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for Transport Management, 2024/296 - Cabinet Member for Transport Management
<p>▪ Lower Wolvercote, Oxford - Proposed Controlled Parking Zone (CPZ) 2024/25</p> <p>The County Council is planning to introduce a CPZ in Lower Wolvercote as part of wider strategy to manage on-street parking in the City, which aims to reduce traffic in Oxford.</p>	Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for Transport Management, 2024/295 - Cabinet Member for Transport Management
<p>▪ Hardwick with Yelford: Proposed 20mph Speed Limits</p> <p>A decision is sought on the proposed 20mph speed limits.</p>	Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for Transport Management, 2024/262 - Cabinet Member for Transport Management
<p>▪ Kingston Bagpuize: Proposed 20mph Speed Limits</p> <p>A decision is sought on the proposed 20mph speed limits.</p>	Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for Transport Management, 2024/261 - Cabinet Member for Transport Management
<p>▪ Eye & Dunsden: Proposed 20mph Speed Limits</p> <p>Part of Phase 3 Countywide 20mph Speed Limit Project.</p>	Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for Transport Management, 2024/188 - Cabinet Member for Transport Management
<p>▪ East Challow: Proposed 20mph Speed Limits</p> <p>Part of Phase 3 Countywide 20mph Speed Limit Project.</p>	Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member

	for Transport Management, 2024/184 - Cabinet Member for Transport Management
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Shenington with Alkerton: Proposed 20mph Speed Limits Part of Phase 3 Countywide 20mph Speed Limit Project. 	Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for Transport Management, 2024/178 - Cabinet Member for Transport Management
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Rotherfield Peppard: Proposed 20mph Speed Limits Part of Phase 3 Countywide 20mph Speed Limit Project. 	Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for Transport Management, 2024/177 - Cabinet Member for Transport Management
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Wheatley: Proposed 20mph Speed Limits Part of Phase 3 Countywide Speed Limit Project. 	Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for Transport Management, 2024/175 - Cabinet Member for Transport Management
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Holton: Proposed 20mph Speed Limit Extension Part of Phase 3 Countywide 20mph Speed Limit Project. 	Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for Transport Management, 2024/174 - Cabinet Member for Transport Management
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Shutford: Proposed 20mph Speed Limits Part of Phase 3 Countywide 20mph Speed Limit Project 	Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for Transport Management, 2024/169 - Cabinet Member

	for Transport Management
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Proposed 20mph & 30mph Speed Limit - Bloxham, Grove Rd / Ells Lane, Bloxham To seek a decision on proposed speed limit changes in Bloxham. 	Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for Transport Management, 2024/292 - Cabinet Member for Transport Management
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Proposed Puffin Crossing - A417 Reading Road, West Hendred As a result of road safety concerns raised regarding access for residents, and in particular school children, to and from the bus stops located on either side of the A417 Reading Road in the vicinity of the junction with The Greenway, it is proposed to provide a Puffin (signal controlled) crossing. 	Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for Transport Management, 2024/302 - Cabinet Member for Transport Management
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Goddington: Proposed 20mph Speed Limits Part of Phase 3 Countywide 20mph Speed Limit Project. 	Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for Transport Management, 2024/161 - Cabinet Member for Transport Management
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Charlbury Proposed Parking Scheme (2024) To seek approval for the introduction of parking measures in the centre of Charlbury with an aim of managing commuter parking. 	Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for Transport Management, 2024/334 - Cabinet Member for Transport Management

Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for Infrastructure & Development Strategy, 12 December 2024

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Infrastructure Delivery: Professional and Technical Services Framework To seek approval to enter into a professional and technical services framework and to delegate authority for the award of the professional and technical services framework to the Director of Environment and Highways. 	Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for Infrastructure & Development Strategy,
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	2024/321 - Cabinet Member for Infrastructure and Development Strategy
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**Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, 17
December 2024**

<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Technology Enabled Care Procurement of new TEC service from April 2025.	Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, 2024/288 - Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care
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CABINET
19 November 2024

BUSINESS MANAGEMENT AND MONITORING REPORT
September 2024
Report by the Executive Director of Resources & Section 151 Officer

RECOMMENDATION

1. **The Cabinet is RECOMMENDED to**
 -) Note the report and annexes.
 - a) Approve the virement requests in Annex B-2a and note the requests in Annex B-2b.
 - b) Approve an introduction of a new charge in 2024/25 for monitoring of biodiversity net gain compliance.
 - c) Approve the increased charges in 2024/25 for the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS)

Executive Summary

1. The business management reports are part of a suite of performance, risk and budget documents which set out the council's ambitions, priorities, and financial performance. The [2022 – 2025 Strategic Plan](#) sets out the Council's ambitions. It also shows our priority activities for the current financial year.
2. This report presents the September 2024 performance, risk, and finance position for the council.
3. Further information is provided in the following annexes to the report:

Annex A – Performance

Annex B – Finance

Annex C – Climate Action Programme Qtr2 update

Annex D – Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Plan Qtr2 update

4. The performance section of this report concentrates on performance exceptions (measures reporting Red (off target), or Amber, (slightly off target, Amber for the last two consecutive months or more). The full performance report is included at Annex A.
5. Amendments to Measures

Measure **OCC10.04 Customer enquires resolved via telephony contact channel at first contact** has been removed and replaced by upgrading the below service level measure:

OCC10.04 - Answer 80% of calls to the Customer Service Centre within 30 seconds (exclude Social and Health Care Team (SHCT)): With the introduction of the new omnichannel contact centre platform in early November 2024, this gives

us the opportunity to look wider across the customer journey and experience received across multiple channels once implemented.

Measure **OCC04.04 % Adults aged 65+ (per 100,000) whose support needs met by residential and nursing care home** has been revised to:

OCC04.04 Adults aged 65+ (per 100,000) admitted to residential and care homes: This measures the number of adults aged 65 and over whose long-term support needs are met by admission to residential and nursing care homes (per 100,000 population). The target has been set to monitor how we are performing against the rest of the country.

Removed measure **OCC04.05 % of people transferring from homecare to care homes** has been replaced with:

OCC04.05 - Adults aged 65+ (per 100,000 population) admitted to residential and care homes (stretched target): This measure is in addition to measure **OCC04.04**

This stretched target is provided as part of the Better Care Fund (BCF), where the council agrees an improvement target with the Department of Health and Social Care, which must show improvement on the previous year.

Measures where the data is unavailable.

OCC03.06 Percentage of births that have received a face-to-face New Birth Visit:

A new contract with the service provider started on the 1 April 2024, we anticipate data will be available for Quarter 3 reporting.

OCC07.01 % of 2-2½ year review showing children at or above the expected level of development: A new contract with the service provider started on the 1 April 2024, we anticipate data will be available for Quarter 3 reporting.

Performance Overview

- The Outcomes Framework for 2024/2025 reports on the council's nine strategic priorities. A further priority relates to running the business and includes the customer contact centre and measures included in the council's Financial Strategy. The Outcomes Framework which sits underneath the strategic priorities is comprised of monthly, quarterly, termly, six-monthly and annual measures which may change as we progress through the year. At the appropriate period, relevant measures will be included in the report.

- As at the end of September 2024 the indicators were rated as follows:

September 2024	Green		Amber		Red		Monitoring Only		Data Unavailable		Complaints measures – where no complaint received		Total	
Monthly	19	58%	4	12%	0	0%	6	18%	0	0%	4	12%	33	59%
Quarterly	14	70%	1	5%	3	15%	0	0%	2	10%	0	0%	20	36%
Biannual	0	0%	1	100 %	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	1	2%

Annual	1	50%	0	0%	1	50%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	2	3%
Total	34	61%	6	11%	4	7%	6	11%	2	3%	4	7%	56	100%

Table 1: Summary of September 2024 performance for all measures. RAG = Green = meets or exceeds target, Amber = misses target by narrow margin and Red = misses target by significant margin. This table does not include measures from priority OCC11 (finance).

8. A total of 56 measures reported in September 2024 (Table 1), consisting of:
- 34 measures rated as Green (meeting or exceeding target).
 - Six measures rated as Amber (missing the target by a narrow margin), of which five were Amber for 2+ months.
 - Four measures rated as Red (missing the target by a significant margin).
 - Six measures rated as Monitoring only (No target).
 - Two measures as Data unavailable.
 - Four measures as no data due to no complaints being received.

9. This bi-monthly Cabinet report is the third of 2024/2025. The table (Table 2) below compares monthly measures for the 2024/2025 reporting year, please note the number of reported measures fluctuates throughout the year.

Reporting month	Green		Amber		Red		Monitoring Only / No data		Complaints measures where no complaints were received		Total
April 2024	14	44%	3	9%	1	3%	7	22%	Not applicable		32
May 2024	22	58%	6	15%	2	7%	7	18%	Not applicable		38
June 2024	32	56%	7	12%	2	4%	9	16%	Not applicable		57
July 2024	22	57%	6	15%	4	10%	7	18%	Not applicable		39
August 2024	17	52%	5	15%	1	3%	6	18%	Not applicable		33
September 2024	43	61%	9	12%	7	10%	8	11%	4	6%	71

Table 2: Comparison of monthly reporting measures for Financial Year 2024/2025. *April, June and August measures do not include measures from priority OCC11 (finance).

10. There are seven measures reporting as Red for the reporting period. Table 3 lists the performance measures reporting as Red at the end of September 2024. Full details can be found in Annex A.

Performance measures reporting Red for September 2024
OCC01.04 Oxfordshire Greenhouse gas emissions as published annually by DESNZ with a 2-year lag
OCC03.08 Average response time to emergency incidents within Oxfordshire
OCC03.10 Money saved or recovered for the victims of scams, doorstep crime & other forms
OCC03.12 Number of accidental dwelling fires per 100,000 population within Oxfordshire
OCC11.02 Achievement of planned savings
OCC11.06 Total outturn variation for DSG funded services (high needs)
OCC11.11 Debt requiring impairment - Adult Social Care contribution debtors

Table 3: Red RAG Status Measures September 2024 Reporting Period.

11. This table indicates the direction of travel of measures compared to August 2024.

Status changes – August to September 2024	
Red to Green	OCC09.02 Participation in innovation funding bids or new projects in support of living Oxfordshire
Amber to Green	OCC05.03 204.6 KM (4.4%) of the road network to be treated, OCC10.06 Overall customer satisfaction rates for standard Registration Service
Red to Amber	Not applicable
Green to Amber	OCC10.04 Answer 80% of calls to the Customer Service Centre within 30 seconds (exclude SHCT)
Amber to Red	Not applicable
Green to Red	OCC03.10 Money saved or recovered for the victims of scams, doorstep crime & other forms

Table 4: Change in Performance across August to September 2024.

Performance Exceptions

This section of the report details all measures reporting Red or Amber status (*consecutive for two months or more*) with extracted supporting commentary from the Directorate, the full commentary can be seen at Annex A. The exception report focuses on fourteen exceptions, seven measures have Red ratings, and seven measures have Amber ratings for two months or more.

Priority OCC01: Put action to address the climate emergency at the heart of our activities.

This priority has five measures being reported in September 2024: three (60%) are reporting as Green, one (20%) is reporting as an Amber exception, and one (20%) is reporting as Red.



Figure 1: Priority OCC01 Monthly performance for 2024/2025 financial year

Measure	August Status:	September Status:	Director:
OCC01.04 Oxfordshire Greenhouse gas emissions as published annually by DESNZ with a 2-year lag	No previous data available to enable comparison	Red	Robin Rogers
OCC01.07 Total % of household waste which is reused, recycled or composted	Amber	Amber	Paul Fermer

Table 5: Priority OCC01 Measure Exception - September 2024

OCC01.04 Oxfordshire Greenhouse gas emissions as published annually by DESNZ with a 2-year lag

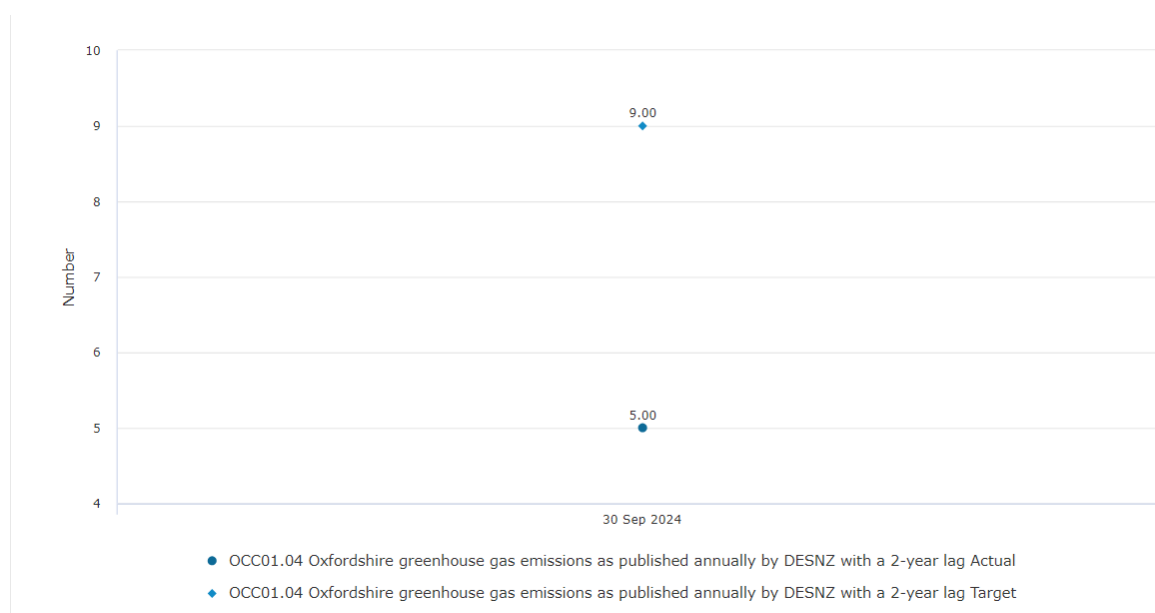


Figure 2: OCC01.04 Annual performance for 2024/2025 financial year

Oxfordshire's Greenhouse gas emissions reduced by 5% compared to the previous year. The 9% annual reduction is needed to stay within the five-year cumulative carbon budget set by the Oxfordshire Net Zero Route Map and Action Plan (ONZRMAP) and to keep the county on track to meet its net zero emissions target by 2050. While Oxfordshire did not meet the ambitious pathway to a zero carbon Oxfordshire (PAZCO) trajectory for Oxfordshire Leading the Way, it did meet the Climate Change Committee carbon budget.

The council is prioritising investment in climate initiatives to drive emissions reductions and is making efforts to collaborate closely with various partners to enhance the effectiveness of these actions.

OCC01.07 Total % of household waste which is reused, recycled, or composted

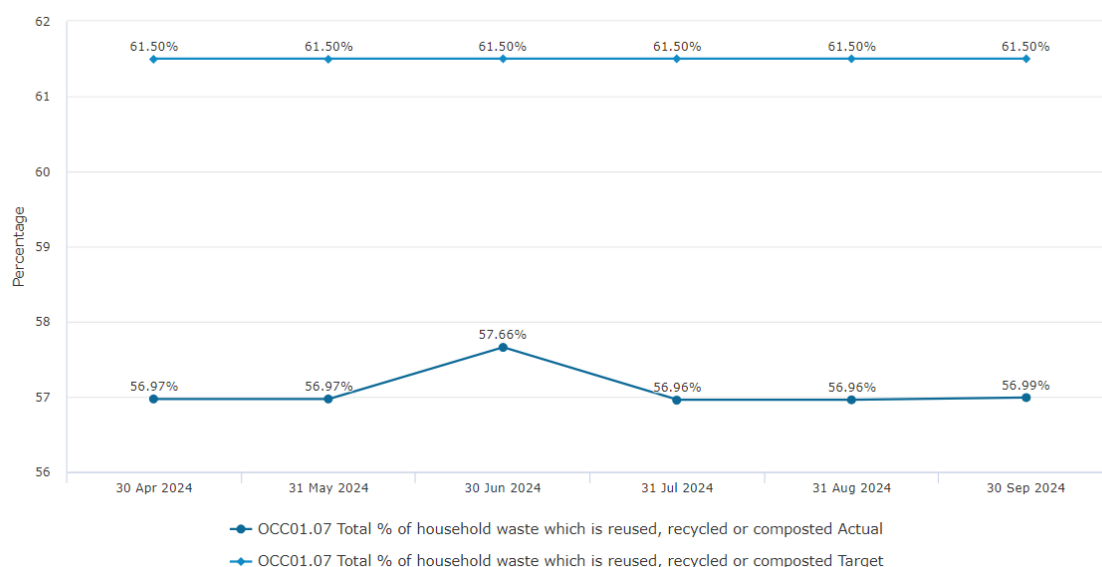


Figure 3: OCC01.07 Monthly performance for 2024/2025 financial year

The Service continues to await policy guidance from DEFRA regarding the national approach.

Priority OCC03: Prioritise the health and wellbeing of residents

This priority has nine measures being reported in September 2024: four (45%) are reporting as Green, one (11%) is reporting as an Amber exception, and three (33%) are reporting as Red. One (11%) measure is reported as data unavailable.



Figure 5: Priority OCC04. Monthly performance for 2024/2025 financial year

Measure	August Status:	Sept Status:	Director:
OCC03.08 Average response time to emergency incidents within Oxfordshire	Green	Red	Rob MacDougall
OCC03.10 Money saved or recovered for the victims of scams, doorstep crime & other forms	Green	Red	Rob MacDougall
OCC03.11 No of people directly reached with Trading Standards preventative advice and support	Amber	Amber	Rob MacDougall
OCC03.12 Number of accidental dwelling fires per 100,000 population within Oxfordshire	Green	Red	Rob MacDougall

Table 6: Priority OCC03 Measure Exceptions - September 2024

OCC03.08 Average response time to emergency incidents within Oxfordshire

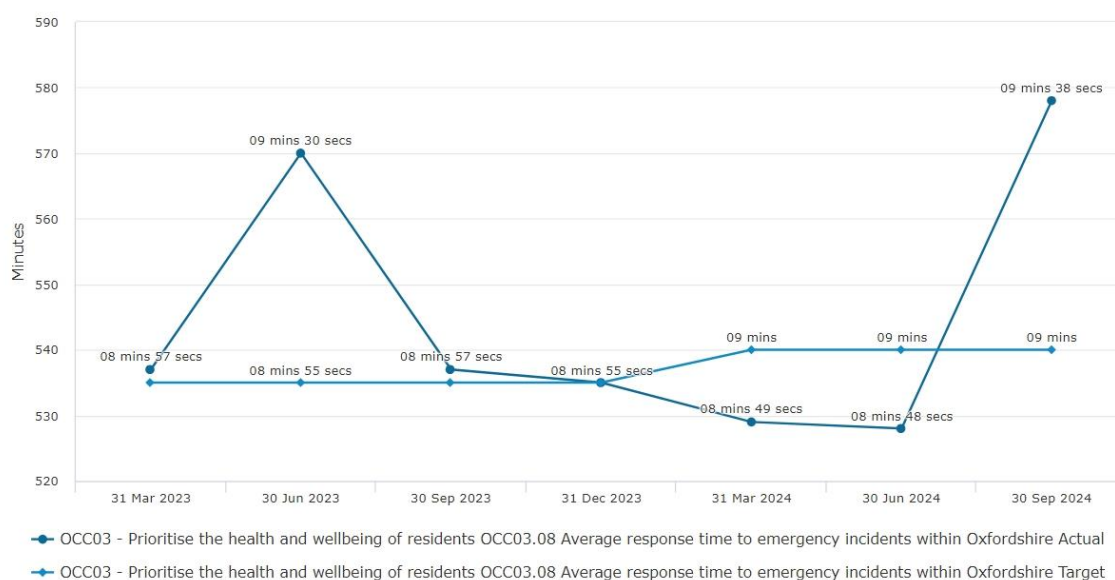


Figure 6: OCC03.08 Quarterly performance for 2024/2025 financial year

The service aims for an average response time of 9 minutes, the current performance is 9 minutes and 38 seconds. This 38-second deviation, representing a 7.04% increase, highlighting the impact of on-call station availability on response times. To address this.

OCC03.10 Money saved or recovered for the victims of scams, doorstep crime & other forms

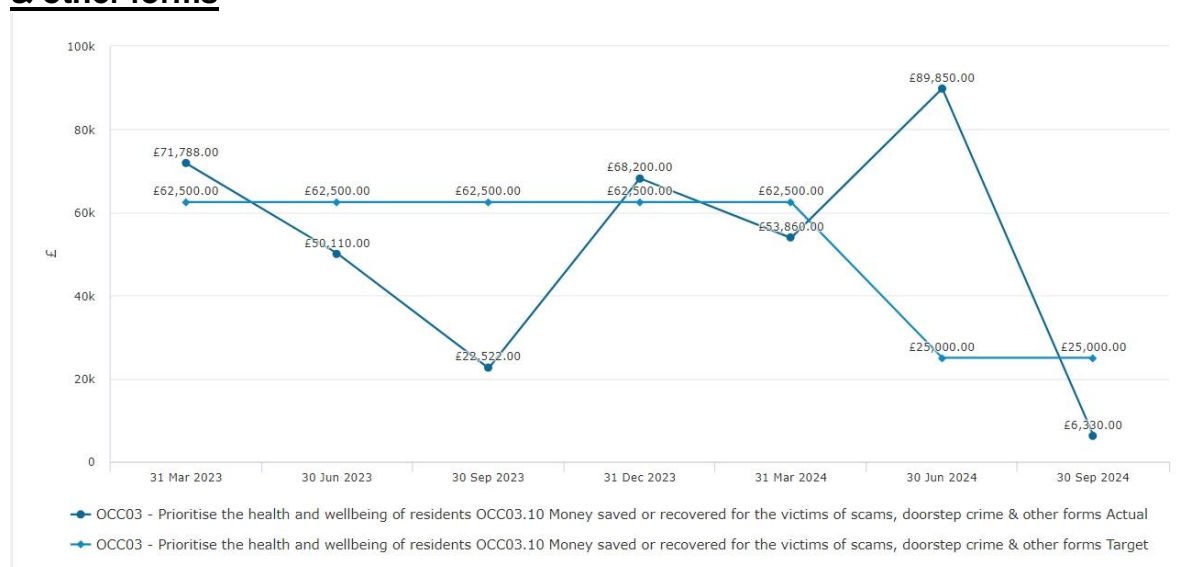


Figure 7: OCC03.10 Quarterly performance for 2024/2025 financial year

This measure aims to recover or save money for victims of crime, with an aspirational target set at £25,000. However, the actual performance in Quarter 2 stands at £6,330, which is approximately 25% of the target.

Performance in Quarter 1 was well above the target and the year-to-date performance is Green. The service has managed to save residents nearly £96,180 this financial year, showcasing its effectiveness and the importance of timely intervention.

OCC03.11 No of people directly reached with Trading Standards preventative advice and support

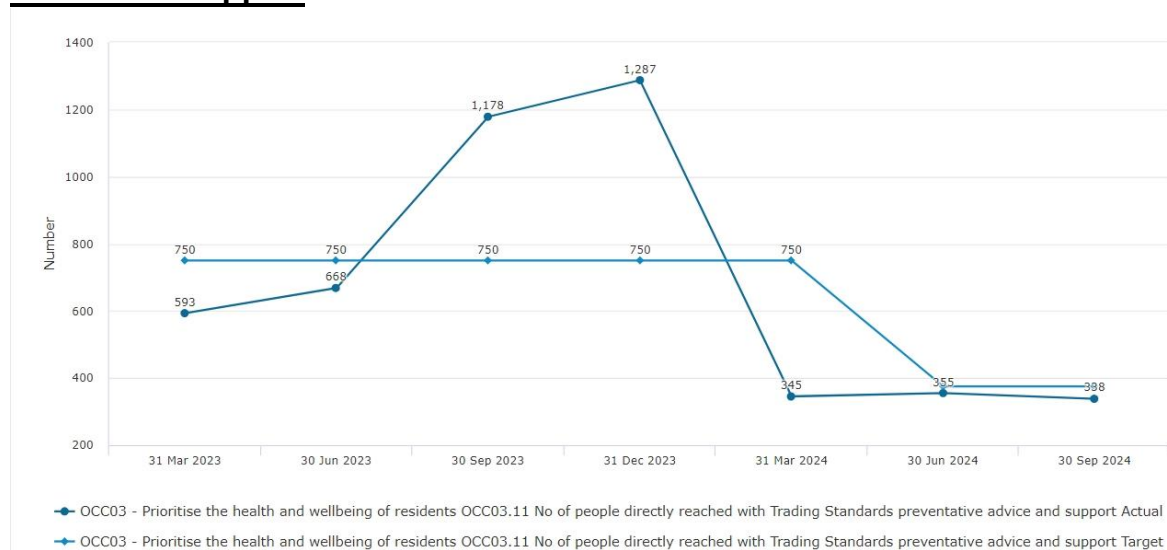


Figure 8: OCC03.11 Quarterly performance for 2024/2025 financial year

In Qtr2 338 people were directly reached, 30 residents received one-on-one scam and fraud intervention support, and 16 call blockers were installed to protect residents from scam and nuisance calls.

The primary focus of the preventative advice and support activities is on scam prevention, scam interventions, with sub activities such as the number of electric

blankets tested for safety.

OCC03.12 Number of accidental dwelling fires per 100,000 population within Oxfordshire

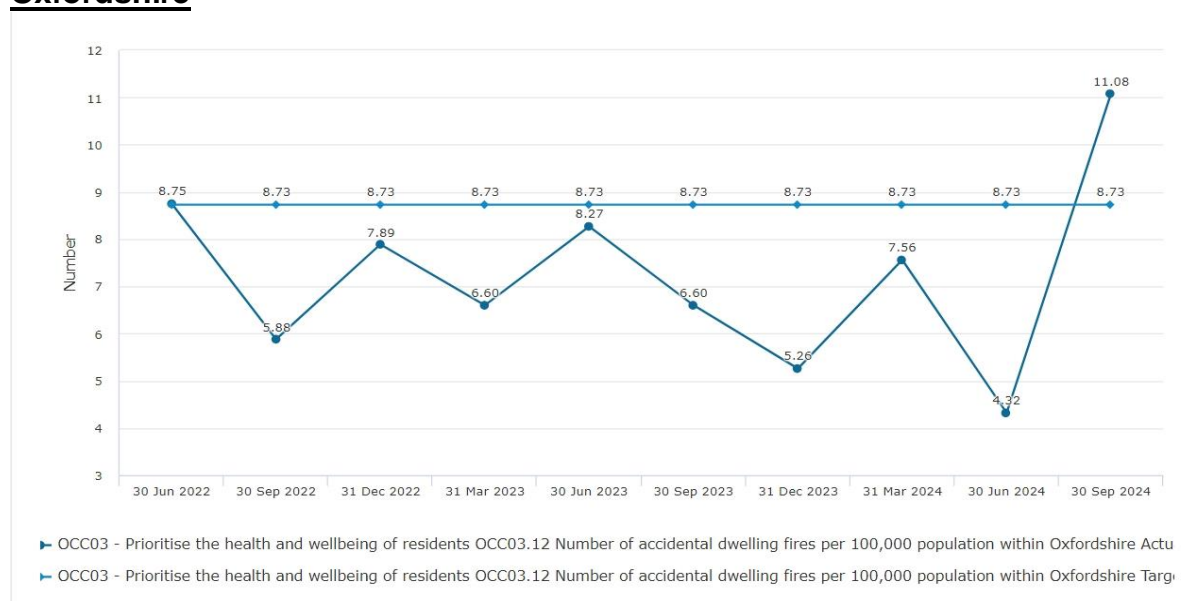


Figure 9: OCC03.12 Quarterly performance for 2024/2025 financial year

The service aims to keep the number of accidental dwelling fires per 100,000 population within Oxfordshire at or below 8.73, the actual figure for Quarter 2 is 11.08, which is above target and below the previous three-year average of 15.6 for this time of year and below the Great Britain average of 44.7 in 2022/2023.

For 2024/25, the service is focusing on proactive fire prevention by agreeing on performance measures with Community Risk and Response Managers. Stations will receive community risk profiles to target those most at risk of fires. Fire prevention activities include a multi-agency approach, social media awareness campaigns, and Safe and Well visits that provide referrals to other health and wellbeing services.

The service remains committed to protecting the community, Reducing harm, and saving lives through targeted prevention and protection efforts.

Priority OCC04: Support carers and the social care system

This priority has five measures being reported in September 2024: two (40%) are reporting as Green and two (40%) are reporting as Amber exceptions. One measure is reported as monitoring only.



Figure 10: Priority OCC04 Monthly performance for 2024/2025 financial year

Measure	August Status:	Sept Status:	Director:
OCC04.01 % of people who received short-term services during 24/25 with no further support request	Amber	Amber	Karen Fuller
OCC04.05 Adults aged 65+ (per 100,000) admitted to residential and care homes (stretched target)	Amber	Amber	Karen Fuller

Table 7: Priority OCC04 Measure Exceptions - September 2024

OCC04.01 % of people who received short-term services during 24/25 with no further support request



Figure 11: OCC04.01 Monthly performance for 2024/2025 financial year

The reablement service in Oxfordshire aims to help individuals regain their independence after an illness. In September, the service achieved a 76% success rate, slightly below the national average target of 77.5%. This is an improvement from the August position of 75.58%.

In the first six months of this year, 1,239 people completed reablement, a 14% increase from last year. While 750 people became completely independent, 150 had reduced care needs. So far in 2024/25 85.3% of service users have seen a decrease in their care needs, and the number of residents supported to become more independent has risen by over 4%.

Performance demonstrates ongoing progress and a strong commitment to helping residents maintain their independence. The service will continue to work with system partners and residents to ensure that people are able to access reablement support in the community as well as via the hospital discharge pathways.

OCC04.05 Adults aged 65+ (per 100,000) admitted to residential and care homes (stretched target)

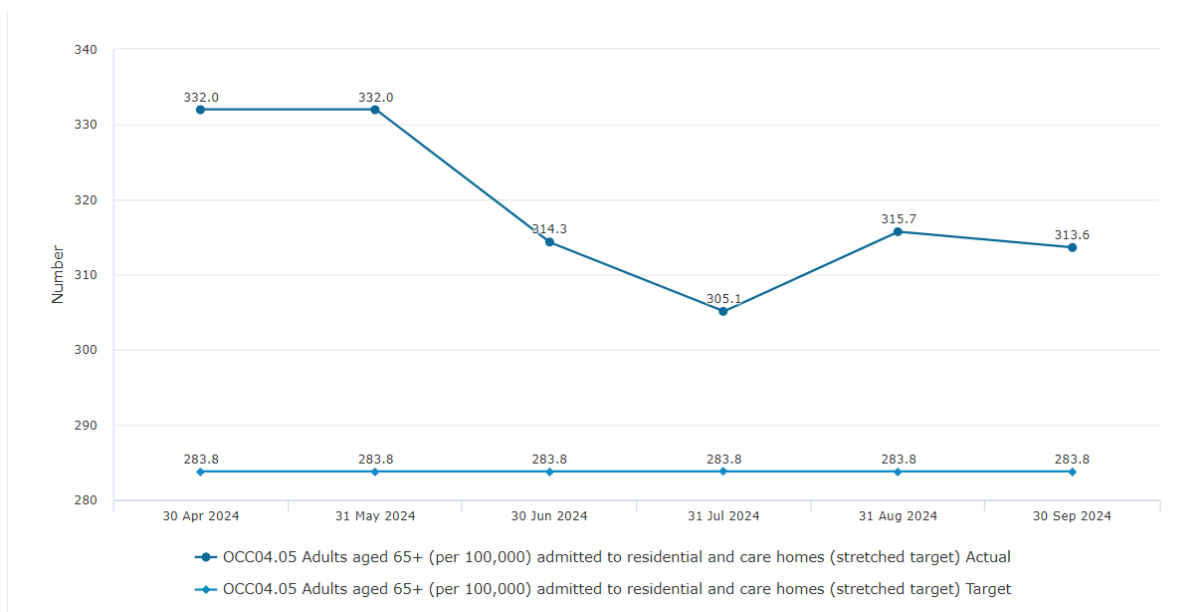


Figure 12: OCC04.05 Monthly performance for 2024/2025 financial year

The actual rate of admissions for adults aged 65+ decreased from 315.7 per 100,000 population in August to 313.6 per 100,000 in September.

This national measure tracks the number of people whose support needs are met by permanent care home admissions. While most people prefer to live at home, sometimes a care home is the best option. The goal is to reduce the number of permanent care home admissions. Last year (2023/24), 453 people were admitted, a rate of 346.2 per 100,000, which is better than the national average of 560.8 per 100,000 population. In the last 12 months, 442 people were admitted, a reduction from 2023/24, placing Oxfordshire in the top 10% nationally.

For 2022/23, Oxfordshire's rate was 357.7, ranking 16th out of 151 authorities. As part of the Better Care Fund, the Council agreed an improvement target with the Department of Health and Social Care, which must show improvement on the previous year. The stretched target for 2024/25 is 400 admissions or a rate of 294 per 100,000 population. Last year our BCF target was 326 per 100,000 population, compared to our current target of 283.8 per 100,000.

Efforts to support people at home include increasing home care services and extra care housing, with a 6% increase in home care hours purchased.

Priority OCC06: Preserve and improve access to nature and Green spaces

This priority has three measures being reported in September 2024: two (67%) are reporting as Green and one (33%) is reporting as an Amber exception.



Figure 13: OCC06: Preserve and improve access to nature and Green spaces. Monthly performance for 2024/2025 financial year.

Measure	August Status	Sept Status	Director
OCC06.04% [by length] of Public Rights of Way network free from serious issues or obstruction	Amber	Amber	Paul Fermer

Table 8: Priority OCC06 Measure Exceptions - September 2024

OCC06.04% [by length] of Public Rights of Way network free from serious issues or obstruction

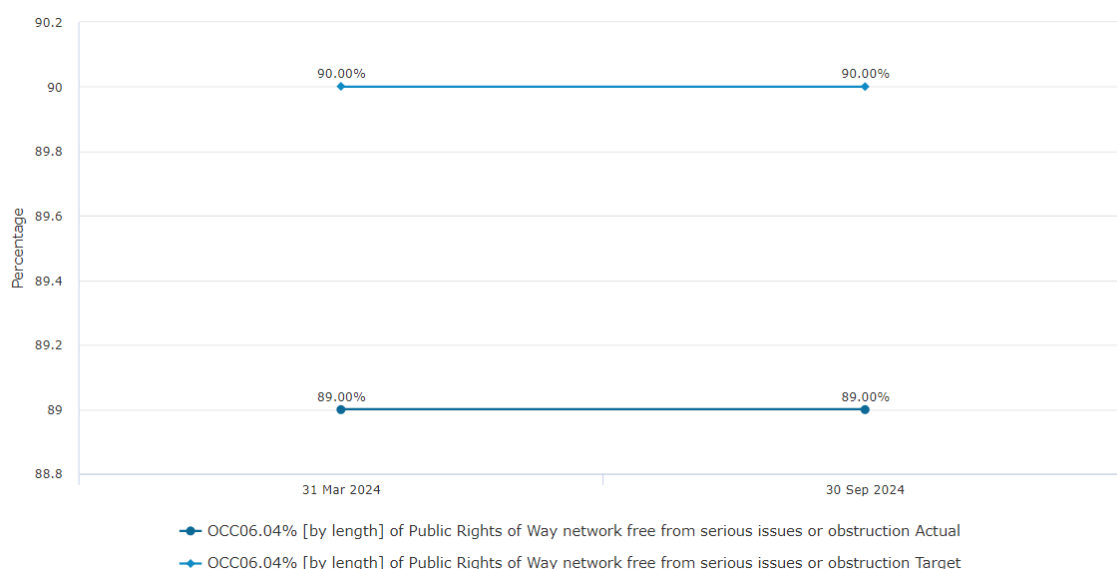


Figure 14: OCC06.04 Biannual performance for 2024/2025 financial year

The performance for the percentage of the Public Rights of Way (PRoW) network free from serious issues or obstructions is 89%, just below the target of 90%. This figure has remained consistent since March.

The council is responsible for 4266 km of PRoW network, and so despite an increase of 4.8 km (0.1% of the total network) in the length of links free from significant issues this quarter, the overall percentage did not change. The Countryside Access GIS system (CAMs) splits PRoW into 'links,' and the percentage is calculated by identifying all significant unresolved issues on the network, such as barbed wire fences, locked gates, unauthorised structures, unauthorised excavation, and buildings on the path. The total length of links associated with these issues is then determined to calculate the percentage of PRoW free from serious issues or obstructions. It is important to note that a link can be several kilometres long, even if the issue only affects a short section.

Many public right of way projects requires extended time to complete, but efforts are being made to promptly address issues identified during inspections or reported by residents.

Priority OCC11: Running the business

This priority has 12 bi-monthly and three quarterly measures being reported in September 2024: nine (60%) are Green, three (20%) Amber, and three (20%) Red.



Figure 15: OCC011 Finance: Bi-Monthly performance for 2024/2025 financial year

Measure:	July Status:	Sept Status:	Director:
OCC11.02 Achievement of planned savings	Red	Red	Lorna Baxter

OCC11.05 Total outturn variation DSG funded services (Schools / early years)	Amber	Amber	Lorna Baxter
OCC11.06 Total outturn variation for DSG funded services (high needs)	Red	Red	Lorna Baxter
OCC11.10 Debt requiring impairment – Corporate debtors	Amber	Amber	Lorna Baxter
OCC11.11 Debt requiring impairment – Adult Social Care contribution debtors	Red	Red	Lorna Baxter

Table 9: Priority OCC11 Measure Exceptions - September 2024.

Please refer to 'Financial Position' Section and Annex B for additional information relating to OCC11: Running the business - Finance.

Performance Highlights

- This section of the report concentrates on several highlights achieved this period in delivering our strategic priorities.

Put action to address the climate emergency at the heart of our work.

Link: [Energy efficient classrooms for Whitchurch Primary School](#)

Pupils at Whitchurch Primary School are set to benefit from environmentally friendly classrooms after successfully applying for a schools' energy efficiency loan from Oxfordshire County Council. The school applied to the council for £22,000, out of an £800,000 fund, to finance the installation of solar photovoltaic (PV) technology, designed to convert sunlight into electrical energy.

Tackle inequalities in Oxfordshire

Link: [More success for Oxfordshire's innovative employment service](#)

Oxfordshire County Council has been graded "good" under new European accreditation guidelines for its support of adults with additional needs in finding and retaining stable employment. The council's Oxfordshire Employment service, part of its adult social care services, provides crucial work experience and support. This rating, awarded through the Supported Employment Quality Framework (SEQF), highlights the council's nearly 80 years of dedication to supported employment and its role as one of the first to undergo this new assessment.

Prioritise the health and wellbeing of residents

Link: [Eligible groups encouraged to get their flu and COVID boosters](#)

People in Oxfordshire eligible for annual winter flu and COVID jabs are encouraged to get vaccinated promptly. The flu vaccine is free for pregnant women, children aged two to three or in primary and secondary education, individuals in clinical risk groups (e.g., those with diabetes, heart disease, or weakened immune systems) and their close contacts, care home residents, carers, frontline health and social care workers, and everyone over 65.

Support carers and the social care system

Link: [Robots being used in Oxfordshire to help research the importance of touch](#)

Robots are being used in Oxfordshire as a training tool for the council's occupational therapists, helping them to gain a greater understanding of the impact of touch during physical and seated assessments. Occupational therapists from County Council's adult social care team are working with experts from University College London (UCL) and the Oxford Robotics Institute (ORI), University of Oxford, on the innovative research which uses robots to take the place of a person being assessed, programmed to take on different life like characteristics and health concerns.

Invest in an inclusive, integrated, and sustainable transport network

Link: [North Oxford travel improvements complete](#)

Residents in and around Cherwell and north Oxford are now benefitting from easier travel as construction work is complete on Oxfordshire County Council's Kidlington roundabout project. The project has improved footways and cycleways, added much needed pedestrian crossings and extended bus lanes. This completes the county council's North Oxford corridor improvements programme, which provides transport infrastructure to support the expected housing growth across Cherwell district.

Preserve and improve access to nature and Green spaces.

Link: [Reclaiming nature: taking inspiration from a rare and extraordinary Oxfordshire meadow that's barely changed for 1,000 years](#)

Oxfordshire County Council is transferring the lease of a meadow it owns in Swinford to the owners of the nearby Thames Valley Wildflower Meadow Restoration Project in Long Mead. The aim is to allow local experts in biodiversity to bring the meadow back to its full potential and help create a nature recovery network and habitat corridor linking a series of ancient meadows together. Some of the people involved in the project explain why it's taking place and how it will work.

Creating opportunities for children and young people to reach their full potential

Link: [Oxfordshire's Adopt Archie campaign needs 'forever families'](#)

Oxfordshire County Council and Adopt Thames Valley have launched a campaign to dispel myths about adoption and encourage more residents to consider adopting. The campaign features Archie, a lively two-year-old boy in need of a loving home. Archie enjoys racing toy cars, messy play, and sensory toys. The campaign aims to show that anyone with experience in caring for children can be a great candidate for adoption.

Work with local businesses and partners for environmental, economic, and social benefit

Link: [Food labelling and safety tests helping to keep residents safe](#)

Businesses that produce or sell food are being urged to ensure they are not putting customers at risk after over half of recently assessed food samples were found to be incorrectly labelled. Oxfordshire County Council's Trading Standards team regularly undertakes testing on food products to ensure that labelling is accurate, and products do not contain any harmful materials or Undeclared allergens such as peanuts or milk.

13. Strategic Risk Management Overview

1. A strategic risk is a risk to the council's strategic priorities or long-term outcomes; or a risk with a significance that has an impact at the corporate level.
2. The table below provides an overview of the current strategic risk position. Strategic risks are reviewed monthly as part of the business management and monitoring process. Risks can be added and escalated at any time during the year.
3. Of the ten strategic risks, eight remain static, with the same scoring as reported in August 2024 and two risks have seen improvement.

Risk Name	Risk Description	30 Sep 2024				
		Inherent Score	Previous Residual Risk Score	Current Residual Risk Score	Current Residual Risk Rating	Direction of Travel
01. Financial Resilience	The council is not financially sustainable in the immediate/medium term.	25	12	12	●	➡
02. Cyber security	A successful and significant Cyber-attack leading to disruption, damage or compromise of any of the council's computer services, information systems, infrastructure or data.	25	15	15	●	➡
03. HIF1&HIF2	HIF1 and HIF2 become undeliverable and/or potential financial risk to the council	16	12	12	●	➡
04. Managing Demand across Adult's and Children's Services	Fluctuating demand of community across Oxfordshire can result in varying requirements in resource.	15	8	8	★	➡
05. Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND)	Local area SEND partnership inspection outcomes found widespread systemic failure. Delay for children having their SEND needs met. Reputational damage (locally, regionally, and nationally).	20	12	8	★	↕
06. Oxford Core Schemes	Failure to deliver Oxford Core Schemes (Traffic Filters, Workplace Parking Levy, Zero Emissions Zone and associated city area schemes such as Low Traffic Neighbourhoods) with public support.	20	16	16	▲	➡
07. Strategic Workforce Planning	A risk that the county council's workforce does not have capacity, capability or resilience to deliver key functions, statutory services or transformational changes required to ensure the councils objectives and long-term priorities are met. Further, that the diversity of the workforce satisfies statutory requirements.	16	6	4	★	↕
08. Policy & Budget	Inability to seek agreement in relation to the policy and budget framework from a minority administration.	25	8	8	★	➡
09. Delivering the Future Together	Failure to deliver organisation wide transformation.	25	12	12	●	➡
10. Climate Impact	Increasing vulnerability to climate impacts leads to failure of key infrastructure and services with a direct impact on health, safety, environment, and businesses.	25	20.00	20.00	▲	➡

Table 10 Strategic Risk Overview for September 2024.

14. Climate Action Programme Quarter 2 update

Table 10 provides an overview of the status of projects included in the 2024/25 Climate Action Programme, across its three pillars:

- Becoming a climate active council
- Decarbonising our estate and operations by 2030
- Enabling Oxfordshire's transition to net zero.

The Quarter 1 reporting focused on the 19 measures which are being taken forward by the Climate Action service, while this Quarter 2 update also includes the nine projects being taken forward by other services. From Quarter 3 onwards, it is proposed that all 28 projects will be reported on a quarterly basis.

Plan	Green		Amber		Red		Data unavailable		Total
Quarter 1	15	79%	4	21%	0	0%	0	0%	19
Quarter 2	20	71%	7	25%	1	4%	0	0%	28

Table 11: RAG status of Climate Action Programme projects for Quarter 1 and 2 2024/25

Annex C provides additional information on the Climate Action programme Quarter 2 progress.

15. Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Action Plan Quarter 2 update

Table 11 provides an overview of the status of measures included in the 2024/25 EDI action plan.

EDI Action Plan	Green		Amber		Red		Data unavailable	Total	
Quarter 1									
Employer of Choice	9	75%	1	8%	0	0%	2	17%	12
Partner of Choice	2	50%	0	0%	0	0%	2	50%	4
Place shaper of choice	8	89%	1	11%	0	0%	0	0%	9
Total	19	76%	2	8%	0	0%	4	16%	25
Quarter 2									
Employer of Choice	11	92%	1	8%	0	0%	0	0%	12
Partner of Choice	4	100%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	4
Place shaper of choice	9	100%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	9
Total	24	96%	1	4%	0	0%	0	0%	25

Table 12: RAG status of EDI action plan for Quarter 1 2024/25

EDI Measure 24 - Better Housing Better Health services offer support to residents living in poor quality housing in all areas – this measure is now completed.

Annex D outlines the progress of the Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Action Plan for Quarter 2 2024/25.

Financial position

16. As shown below there is a forecast service area overspend of £6.1m, an increase of £1.0m from the position reported to the September Cabinet. After taking account of additional interest receivable on balances held by the council and anticipated capital financing costs, the overall position is a forecast underspend of £1.3m.

	Latest Budget Sept-24 £m	Forecast Spend Sept-24 £m	Forecast Variance Sept-24 £m	Forecast Variance Sept-24 %	Forecast Variance July-24 £m	Change Since July-24 £m
Adult Services	250.2	250.2	0.0	0.0%	0.0	0.0
Children's Services	200.4	204.0	3.5	1.8%	2.3	1.3
Environment & Highways	69.7	70.3	0.6	0.9%	0.9	-0.3
Economy & Place	1.8	1.8	0.0	0.0%	0.0	0.0
Oxfordshire Fire & Rescue Service and Community Safety	28.7	29.3	0.7	2.3%	0.6	0.0
Public Health & Communities	12.6	12.6	0.0	0.0%	0.0	0.0
Resources and Law & Governance	57.8	59.1	1.3	2.3%	1.3	0.0
Transformation, Digital & Customer Experience	7.7	7.7	0.0	0.0%	0.0	0.0
Service Areas Total	628.9	635.0	6.1	0.0	5.1	1.0
Budgets Held Centrally						
Capital Financing	20.7	17.3	-3.5	-16.6%	-3.1	-0.4
Interest on Balances	-10.7	-14.6	-3.9	37.0%	-2.5	-1.4
Contingency	7.4	7.4	-0.0	0.0%	0.0	-0.0
Pay Inflation	14.4	14.4	0.0	0.0%	0.0	0.0
Un-ringfenced Specific Grants	-55.3	-55.3	-0.0	0.0%	0.0	-0.0
Insurance	1.7	1.7	0.0	0.0%	0.0	0.0
Contribution from COVID-19 reserve	-3.8	-3.8	0.0	0.0%	0.0	0.0
Contribution from Budget Priority Reserve	-1.4	-1.4	0.0	0.0%	0.0	0.0
Contributions to reserves	11.5	11.5	0.0	0.0%	0.0	0.0
Total Budgets Held Centrally	-15.4	-22.8	-7.4	48.1%	-5.6	-1.8
Net Operating Budget	613.5	612.2	-1.3	-0.2%	-0.4	-0.9
Business Rates & Council Tax funding	-613.5	-613.5	0.0	0.0%	0.0	0.0
Forecast Year End Position	0.0	-1.3	-1.3	-0.2%	-0.4	-0.9

Table 13 Finance overall forecast position

17. The breakeven position for Adult Services reported to the September Cabinet remains unchanged.

18. The forecast overspend of £3.5m for Children's Services has worsened by £1.3m and is due to pressures within Home to School Transport and risks in the delivery of previously agreed savings built into the 2024/25 budget.
19. The overspend for Environment & Highways has reduced by £0.3m since July 2024. The £0.6m pressure includes a £2.2m overspend in Network Management relating to the underachievement of lane rental income savings, offset by a £1.6m underspend in Highways maintenance from a reduction in energy costs from lower energy activity.
20. The breakeven position for Economy and Place reported to the September Cabinet remains unchanged.
21. Public Health & Communities are forecasting a breakeven position. Within that a forecast £0.2m underspend against the Public Health grant funding is assumed to be transferred to reserves at year end.
22. The forecast overspend of £0.7m for Oxfordshire Fire & Rescue Service and Community Safety has remained unchanged from the July position and is due to risks in the delivery of previously agreed savings built into the 2024/25 budget.
23. The forecast overspend of £1.3m for Resources and Law & Governance has remained unchanged from the position reported to Cabinet in September, the pressure is mainly driven by high locum costs in the Legal service.
24. Transformation, Digital & Customer Experience are reporting a breakeven position.
25. £7.4m on-going budget was agreed to be held in contingency as part of the 2024/25 budget. This will be held to meet potential risks around pay inflation and anticipated winter pressures in Adults and Children's Services later in the financial year. The current forecast assumes that there is no underspend against the contingency budget on the basis of these potential risks. However, as the year progresses and there is more certainty over the forecast position, any variances against the contingency budget will be factored in.
26. The 2024/25 budget includes planned service areas savings of £30.1m. 43% of these savings are assessed as delivered and 71% are forecast to be delivered.
27. The risk assessed level of one – off funding held in general balances in 2024/25 is £30.2m. A residual balance of £2.3m relating to the underspend at the end of 2023/24 was agreed to be held in balances as part of the Provisional Outturn Report for 2023/24. After taking account of the forecast underspend, balances are currently forecast to be £3.6m above the risk assessed level at 31 March 2024.
28. The forecast 2024/25 deficit compared to Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) funding for High Needs is £26.1m, £4.9m higher than the budget approved by Council in February 2024. The CIPFA code of practice requires negative High Needs DSG

balances to be held in an unusable reserve. The forecast deficit would increase the cumulative negative High Needs DSG balance held in this reserve from £55.8m as at 31 March 2024 to £81.9m at 31 March 2025.

Financial Implications

29. This report includes an update on the forecast financial position and risks for the council along with action being taken to manage the budget within the position agreed by Council in February 2024. Strong and sustained financial management, collective action and oversight continues to be required to ensure that services are managed within budgets in 2024/25 and on-going into 2025/26.

Comments checked by: Ian Dyson, Director of Financial and Commercial Services

Legal Implications

30. The Council's constitution at Part 3.2 (Budget and Policy Framework) and Part 3.3 (Virement Rules) sets out the obligations and responsibilities of both the Cabinet and the Full Council in approving, adopting and implementing the council's budget and policy framework.
31. The Council has a fiduciary duty to council taxpayers, which means it must consider the prudent use of resources, including control of expenditure, financial prudence in the short and long term and the need to act in good faith in relation to compliance with statutory duties and exercising statutory powers. The report sets out as at July 2024 performance, risk and finance position for the Council as part of its fiduciary duty to implement budgetary controls and monitoring.

Comments checked by: Paul Grant, Head of Legal and Deputy Monitoring Officer

LORNA BAXTER

Executive Director of Resources & Section 151 Officer

Contact Officers:

Louise Tustian, Director Transformation, Digital and Customer Experience
Ian Dyson, Director of Financial and Commercial Services

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Annex A - Performance - September 2024

Contents

Priority	Page
Priority 1	2
Priority 2	6
Priority 3	9
Priority 4	16
Priority 5	20
Priority 6	23
Priority 7	26
Priority 8	29
Priority 9	30
Priority 10	32
Priority 11	37

Page 219

Key

Status Indicator	Status Description
	Misses target by significant margin
	Misses target by narrow margin
	Meets or exceeds target
	Data missing
n/a	Monitoring only

Put action to address the climate emergency at the heart of our work

We will lead by example, setting ambitious targets to reduce our own carbon emissions and aligning our carbon net zero commitments to the principles of the Climate and Ecology Bill. Our environmental and planning ambitions will prioritise climate action and community resilience.

Status of Indicators	30/09/2024
OCC01 - Put action to address the climate emergency at the heart of our work	★

Measure	Director	Portfolio Holder	Comment	Improvement Plan	Timeframe	Finance Impact	Risk Impact	Period Actual	Period Target	Status	YTD Actual	YTD Target	YTD
OCC01.02 Total No. of streetlights fitted with LED Lanterns	Paul Fermer	Cllr A Gant	During the month of September 2024, the target delivery has been exceeded.					213	119	★	898	582	★
OCC01.04 Oxfordshire green house gas emissions as published annually by DESNZ with a 2-year as	Robin Rogers	Cllr A Gant	This latest data from DESNZ shows that Oxfordshire tracked the national trend in GHG reduction between 2021 and 2022 and showed a similar % reduction as the South East region and comparator authorities. While Oxfordshire met the Climate Change Committee carbon budget it did not meet the ambitious PAZCO trajectory for Oxfordshire Leading the Way. 2022 is the first full year post pandemic when normal economic activity resumed. During this period, transport emissions which are hard to decarbonise continued to dominate for the			The latest GHG data highlights the need to continue to invest in climate action and work with partners to stay on course for our county net zero ambitions. The majority of financing for the net zero transition will come from private sources and the council is seeking to create policy and partnerships that enable that investment. The cost of climate impacts such as from recent floods will be increasingly felt as national and global emissions are not reducing fast enough	This is the first time that Oxfordshire has not been on track to deliver against the Oxfordshire Leading the Way trajectory. The county is tracking regional and national emissions reductions, showing that national policy is the key driver. Therefore there is a risk that insufficient government action will prevent Oxfordshire meeting its net zero ambitions, and our new public affairs function is key to continue pressing for a more ambitious	5.00	9.00	▲	5.00	9.00	▲

Page 221			<p>county. The carbon intensity of the grid also increased in 2021 due to more coal and gas in the mix has been gradually reducing since.</p> <p>The 9% year on year reduction target from the PAZCO Oxfordshire Leading the Way scenario applies to CO2 only and excludes some transport sources, waste and land use changes.</p>			to prevent climate breakdown.	<p>policy framework nationally. There is a risk that Oxfordshire will not meet its ambitious carbon budgets as set out in the Net Zero Route map, however it is also possible that the county will recover its position given that the grid is decarbonising again since a peak in 2021 and that action is being taken at local and national level to tackle emissions. Further data will be available from DESNZ in summer 2025 relating to 2023 GHG emissions.</p>						
OCC01.05 Percentage of milestones delivered for the Local Nature Recovery Strategy	Paul Fermer	Cllr P Sudbury						100.00	100.00	★	200.00	200.00	★

Measure	Director	Portfolio Holder	Comment	Improvement Plan	Timeframe	Finance Impact	Risk Impact	Period Actual	Period Target	Status	YTD Actual	YTD Target	YTD
OCC01.06 Number of fully-funded retrofit measures delivered to low income/fuel poor homes	Robin Rogers	Cllr A Gant	Whilst this quarter covered the warmer, summer months, an impressive number of measures were installed, primarily through the delivery of capital grants from OCC's HUG2 programme, but also through Clean Heat Streets project where OCC is a delivery partner (this is part of the Heat Pump Ready programme, and is the only scheme that has successfully progressed through to capital installation stage).			For the HUG2 programme, Officers are about to assess if there is an opportunity to request additional capital funds for delivery to residents through that retrofitting project - this would be really positive for the programme and residents assisted as well as providing positive climate action.	There is a low risk impact here - whilst the change of direction is downwards, this is to be expected due to the warmer summer months.	86	50	★	190	100	★
OCC02.07 Total % of household waste which is reused, recycled or composted	Paul Fermer	Cllr A Gant	Waste performance is reported a month in arrears and is the forecast end of year performance for 2024/25. The forecasts are variable and show minor fluctuations through the year as seasonal factors are taken into account. Most local authorities including Oxfordshire have seen recycling rates decrease from 2021/22, and Oxfordshire's forecast recycling rate for 2024/25 is below the target of 65% recycling by 2025 in the Joint Municipal Waste			The financial cost of waste disposal can be reduced by increasing reuse, recycling and composting. Currently the main way of mitigating increased costs is through encouraging behavioural change to make more effective use of kerbside and HWRC recycling facilities until a step change can be achieved through partnership working and national waste reforms.	Target of recycling and composting at least 65% of household waste by 2025 in the Oxfordshire Joint Municipal Waste Management Strategy is unlikely to be achieved. The continued lack of clarity in some areas from Government about some elements of national waste reforms continues to make investment decisions by local authorities in significant service change	56.99%	61.50%	●	57.09%	61.50%	●

			<p>Management Strategy. However, Oxfordshire's performance remains one of the best in the country based on national data.</p> <p>Government plans for implementing Extended Producer Responsibility for packaging waste in 2025 and Simpler Recycling reforms for households by 31 March 2026 are expected to assist in increasing recycling nationally. Locally the Oxfordshire Resources and Waste Partnership are considering local approaches to boosting reuse and recycling.</p>			<p>Payments to local authorities for managing packaging waste under the EPR scheme will now not be received until after October 2025.</p>	<p>very difficult. This is a national issue.</p>						

Tackle inequalities in Oxfordshire

We will work with our partners and local communities to address health, social and educational inequalities focusing on those in greatest need.

We will seek practical solutions for those most adversely affected by the pandemic.

We will support digital inclusion initiatives that give our residents the skills, connectivity and accessibility to our services and provide alternative options for those who cannot access our services digitally.

Status of Indicators	30/09/2024
OCC02 - Tackle inequalities in Oxfordshire	★

Measure	Director	Portfolio Holder	Comment	Improvement Plan	Timeframe	Finance Impact	Risk Impact	Period Actual	Period Target	Status	YTD Actual	YTD Target	YTD
OCC02.01 Digital Inclusion through libraries (number of hours of use of library public computers)	Ansaf Azhar	Cllr N Fawcett	This figure remains above target and last month saw the highest usage since April. This month's figure includes usage from new devices as part of the pilot for a PN replacement programme. This pilot is being run at our 3 busiest libraries for computer use (Westgate, Abingdon and Cowley), and sees the pilot devices available for use alongside traditional PN computers..					7,886	6,000	★	45,580	34,500	★
OCC02.02 % of premises in Oxfordshire below legal Universal Service Obligation of 10Mb/s	Ansaf Azhar	Cllr N Fawcett						0.39	0.44	★	0.39	0.44	★

Measure	Director	Portfolio Holder	Comment	Improvement Plan	Timeframe	Finance Impact	Risk Impact	Period Actual	Period Target	Status	YTD Actual	YTD Target	YTD
OCC02.03 Number of physical visits to Libraries	Ansaf Azhar	Cllr N Fawcett	Visits have returned to a normal seasonal level after the busier summer period, but still represent an increase on last year. So far in 2024/25, the first six months have seen over a million visits to libraries (1,024,274) which is a 7.2% increase on the first six months of 2023/24.					162,329	120,000	★	1,022,082	745,000	★
OCC02.06 Digital engagement with Heritage Services Page 225	Ansaf Azhar	Cllr N Fawcett	We believe that this upturn in performance is largely due to the efforts of the local service teams and promotion of key summer events. The Quentin Blake exhibition at the Oxfordshire Museum was particularly well attended and a diverse range of engagement activity and social media connections were delivered over the last quarter.					242,591.0	222,000.0	★	398,427.0	333,000.0	★

Measure	Director	Portfolio Holder	Comment	Improvement Plan	Timeframe	Finance Impact	Risk Impact	Period Actual	Period Target	Status	YTD Actual	YTD Target	YTD
OCC02.08 Number of physical visits to Heritage sites (i.e. Museums, History Centre and VCH events)	Ansaf Azhar	Cllr N Fawcett	As per the digital engagement target performance (OCC02.06), the Heritage Service has been prioritising engagement activities and diversifying/developing audience reach and these efforts are paying off. The family-centred activity programme at the museum over the summer attracted record visits and the popular Quentin Blake exhibition has helped boost these figures.					35,456.00	19,500.00	★	69,915.00	38,000.00	★

Prioritise the health and wellbeing of residents

We will work with the health and wellbeing board and our partners to deliver and support services that make a vital contribution to our residents' physical and mental wellbeing.

We will support the wellbeing of those in our community who have been affected, physically and mentally, by the COVID-19 pandemic and will continue to support our volunteers and the voluntary sector.

Status of Indicators	30/09/2024
OCC03 - Prioritise the health and wellbeing of residents	★



Measure	Director	Portfolio Holder	Comment	Improvement Plan	Timeframe	Finance Impact	Risk Impact	Period Actual	Period Target	Status	YTD Actual	YTD Target	YTD
OCC03.01 % of successfully treated opiate users not requiring treatment again within 6 months	Ansaf Azhar	CIlr L Leffman	Period Q1-24 The Community Alcohol and Drug Service continues to achieve very high opiate successful completion rates. The service's performance is currently top of the group of 33 similar local authorities and significantly above the national average of 5.1%. At the same time, the service is working to meet the national drug strategy requirements to increase the number of people in treatment per annum, with an increasing focus on increasing opiate users in treatment.					12.0%	7.0%	★	12.0%	7.0%	★



Measure	Director	Portfolio Holder	Comment	Improvement Plan	Timeframe	Finance Impact	Risk Impact	Period Actual	Period Target	Status	YTD Actual	YTD Target	YTD
OCC03.02 % of the eligible population aged 40-74 who have been offered NHS Health Check	Ansaf Azhar	Cllr L Leffman	Period Q1-24 The combined NHS Health Check invitations by Primary Care and the Supplementary NHS Health Check Service in Q1 2024/25 represents a positive start to 2024/25, with the vast majority of GP Practices offering health checks in the quarter.					4.10%	5.00%	★	4.40%	5.00%	★
OCC03.04 Reduce the % of women smoking in pregnancy to contribute towards OCC smoke-free strategy	Ansaf Azhar	Cllr L Leffman	Period Q4-23 The new maternity in-house tobacco dependency advisor service (via NHS Long Term Plan funding) is live and supporting pregnant women to quit smoking. The local stop smoking service will also continue to support pregnant women to quit smoking. Younger pregnant women who smoke are offered an incentive to quit via the Family Nurse Partnership. An expression of interest was submitted in September 2024 by the ICB LMNS to the national incentive quit scheme for pregnant women via NHS England.					4.3%	6.0%	★	4.7%	6.0%	★

Measure	Director	Portfolio Holder	Comment	Improvement Plan	Timeframe	Finance Impact	Risk Impact	Period Actual	Period Target	Status	YTD Actual	YTD Target	YTD
OCC03.06 Percentage of births that have received a face to face New Birth Visit	Ansaf Azhar	Cllr N Ley	Q1 24/25 data - A new contract started on 1st April 2024 and data will be available at the end of October and will be reported in the next update						95%	?		95%	?
OCC03.08 Average response time to emergency incidents within Oxfordshire	Rob MacDougall	Cllr J Hannaby	The service is working hard to improve the availability of our on-call stations and has plans to implement measures that are aimed at improving and maintaining a stable, minimum level of fire cover. At present the increase in our response time is directly linked to the issue of availability and, until this is resolved, it is unlikely that our average response time can be positively impacted by other factors. Additionally however we are looking at how the metric is measured: there are concerns that crews are not booking "in attendance" at incident addresses they are sent to if they cannot immediately locate an actual incident. This then means that they continue "responding" until they actually locate	On-call availability is the focus of a set of "interim measures" being launched in 2025 which aims to place the focus and responsibility for this back on local stations and managers, whilst support from central teams will aim to ensure a minimum level of fire cover is provided. These measures will last until the launch of a new response model, which is the culmination of the CSS Review programme.	Initially there is a cultural and systemic change needed as part of these interim measures. This will take time for staff to adjust to, but will result in improved accountability for on-call availability and a greater level of oversight and management by local and senior leaders. As such, small, positive improvements should be seen within Q4, with more improvements seen in Q1 of 2025-2026.			09 mins 38 secs	09 mins	▲	09 mins 38 secs	09 mins	▲

			<p>an incident, resulting in a lengthy recorded time. We have addressed this through a service-wide communication and will review this via dip-sampling next month to check whether crews are booking in when they should be (i.e. once they have arrived at the address they were sent to). Due to reductions in our on-call availability, incidents on certain station grounds are often being attended by crews from further afield. Additionally there has been a lack of guidance around when crews book themselves "in attendance" at incidents, which has led to a negative impact in the average response time calculations.</p>										
OCC03.09 No of people contacted via Making Every Conversation Count	Ansaf Azhar	Cllr N Fawcett	MECC interactions remain well above target and continue to be an area of focus for library staff.					651	450	★	4,762	2,700	★

Measure	Director	Portfolio Holder	Comment	Improvement Plan	Timeframe	Finance Impact	Risk Impact	Period Actual	Period Target	Status	YTD Actual	YTD Target	YTD
OCC03.10 Money saved or recovered for the victims of scams, doorstep crime & other forms	Rob MacDougall	Cllr J Hannaby	<p>This is an aspirational target with several variables outside of the services control. Performance can also vary significantly, as a small number of high value savings can impact on the total amount saved, or not. Performance in the first half of the year is above target, due to the service supporting a fraud victim through a financial institution's complaints process / Financial Ombudsman Service complaint. This resulted in a refund of approximately £76,000. New rights exist for victims of fraud to seek quicker redress from their banks in certain situations, however this is capped at a maximum limit and we know victims unfortunately lose sums much greater than this.</p>					£6,330.00	£25,000.0	▲	£96,180.0	£50,000.0	★

Measure	Director	Portfolio Holder	Comment	Improvement Plan	Timeframe	Finance Impact	Risk Impact	Period Actual	Period Target	Status	YTD Actual	YTD Target	YTD
OCC03.11 No of people directly reached with Trading Standards preventative advice and support	Rob MacDougall	Cllr J Hannaby	This measure is slightly below target but expected to see an increase in Q3 as some of our annual one-off activities take place, such as electric blanket safety testing. In this quarter, 29 residents were supported on a 1-to-1 basis as part of scam/fraud intervention and support, with a further 10 call blockers fitted to protect residents from scam and nuisance calls.					338	375		693	750	



Measure	Director	Portfolio Holder	Comment	Improvement Plan	Timeframe	Finance Impact	Risk Impact	Period Actual	Period Target	Status	YTD Actual	YTD Target	YTD
OCC03.12 Number of accidental dwelling fires per 100,000 population within Oxfordshire	Rob MacDougall	Cllr J Hannaby	Whilst the year to date figure of 11.08 is above target, it is below the previous three-year average for this time in the year (15.6). Our purpose remains that of protecting the community, reducing harm and saving lives and we will continue to look to reduce the number and severity of emergencies that happen through our targeted prevention and protection work We have unfortunately seen a number of accidental dwelling fires across Oxfordshire, taking the number per 100,000 population to 11.08 above the target set which was 11.08. However the year to date figure is below the previous three-year average for this time in the year and also below the Great Britain average of 44.7 in 2022/2023.	Many factors can impact on the likelihood or risk of an accidental dwelling fire occurring, some of these are outside of our control – directly or indirectly. However, we undertake a range of prevention activities, such as Safe and Well visits, to reduce risk and save lives. Work is being undertaken to ensure that these activities are as effective as possible and directed to those most at risk	Due to the annual target, this performance indicator will continue to report as red, but we still expect to be below previous years and below the Great Britain average at year end.			11.08	8.73		15.40	17.46	

Support carers and the social care system

We will engage nationally to push for a fair deal for the funding of social care.
Locally, we will support carers, including young carers and help those who want to live independently.
We will work with communities and the voluntary sector to explore new ways to provide services and focus on preventative services, helping people to stay active and supported at all stages of their lives.
We will support intergenerational programmes to build strong and resilient communities.
We will work in collaboration across the health and social care system.

Status of Indicators	30/09/2024
OCC04 - Support carers and the social care system	★

Measure	Director	Portfolio Holder	Comment	Improvement Plan	Timeframe	Risk Impact	Finance Impact	Period Actual	Period Target	Status	YTD Actual	YTD Target	YTD
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Measure	Director	Portfolio Holder	Comment	Improvement Plan	Timeframe	Risk Impact	Finance Impact	Period Actual	Period Target	Status	YTD Actual	YTD Target	YTD
OCC04.01 % of people who received short-term services during 24/25 with no further support request	Karen Fuller	Cllr T Bearder	This is a national measure which aims to monitor the effectiveness of reablement support. Reablement is a short term service which aims to help people regain their independence following a hospital admission or in the community. This measure monitors of the people who have completed a reablement episode the proportion that need no on-going care. Performance has increased in recent years - improving from 57% in 2020/21; to 76% in 23/24. This is slightly below the latest reported national figure of 77.5%	Whilst the number of people not requiring ongoing support is currently at 72.5% in year it must be noted that so far this year 85.3% of people who have used this service have seen a decrease in their care needs and the actual number of residents supported to become more independent via this service has risen by over 4% from 869 to 907. The service will continue to work with system partners and residents to ensure that people are able to access reablement support in the community as well as via the hospital discharge pathways.		If people do not receive effective reablement where a need for it is identified there is a risk that the opportunity to recover from illness and regain their independence will not be fully utilised.	Supporting people to regain and maintain their independence wherever possible is widely associated with better health and wellbeing outcomes and also ensures that unnecessary costs to residents and the council are not incurred.	76.00	77.50		76.00	77.50	
OCC04.02 % of residents 18-64 with Learning Disability support who live on their own or with family	Karen Fuller	Cllr T Bearder						89.63%		n/a	89.63%		n/a

Measure	Director	Portfolio Holder	Comment	Improvement Plan	Timeframe	Risk Impact	Finance Impact	Period Actual	Period Target	Status	YTD Actual	YTD Target	YTD
OCC04.03 % Section 42 safeguarding enquiries where identified risk was reduced or removed	Karen Fuller	Cllr T Bearder						93.11	93.00	★	93.11	93.00	★
OCC04.04 Adults aged 65+ (per 100,000) admitted to residential and care homes	Karen Fuller	Cllr T Bearder						313.60	437.70	★	313.60	437.70	★
OCC04.05 Adults aged 65+ (per 100,000) admitted to residential and care homes (stretched target)	Karen Fuller	Cllr T Bearder	<p>This is a national measure that looks at the number of people whose support needs are met by a permanent care home admission. Most people want to live in their own home and we work to help people stay at home as long as possible. However there are occasions where a person is best supported in a care home. The aim is to therefore reduce the number of people needing a permanent care home admission. Last year (2023/24) 453 people were permanently admitted to a care home or a rate of 346.2 people per 100,000 population. This is lower (i.e. better than the national average). The latest comparative data which is for</p>					313.6	283.8	●	313.6	283.8	●

Page 237			<p>22/23, Oxfordshire's rate was 357.7 and the 16 best of 151 reporting authorities. As part of the Better Care Fund the Council agrees an improvement target with the Department of Health and Social Care, which must show improvement on the previous year. This stretched target for 2024/25 is 400 admissions or a rate of 284 per 100,000 people 65+.</p> <p>In the last 12 months 442 people have been permanently admitted to a care home, whilst this is a reduction on last year and in the top 10% in the country it is below the stretched target. People are supported to live at home through increasing the availability of services such as home care and extra care housing. In the last 12 months we have purchased over 6% more hours of home care.</p>										

Invest in an inclusive, integrated and sustainable transport network

We will create a transport network that makes active travel the first choice for short journeys and invest in public transport to significantly reduce our reliance on car journeys. In areas of planned housing growth, we will prioritise active and public transport over road capacity for cars.

Status of Indicators	30/09/2024
OCC05 - Invest in an inclusive, integrated and sustainable transport network	★

Measure	Director	Portfolio Holder	Comment	Improvement Plan	Timeframe	Risk Impact	Finance Impact	Period Actual	Period Target	Status	YTD Actual	YTD Target	YTD
OCC05.03 204.6 KM (4.4%) of the road network to be treated Page 238	Paul Fermer	Cllr A Gant	The annual target for the 2024/25 total surfacing program has been set at 4.4% of the network (excluding patching). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 7.06 km were treated during September (0.15 % of the network). As at 30th of September, 198.33 km (4.30% of the network) has been treated. This means we are on track against the final target. 					7.06	2.00	★	198.33	194.20	★
OCC05.04 % of Annual change in average nitrogen dioxide concentrations in AQMAs	Paul Fermer	Cllr A Gant	There are currently 13 air quality management areas (AQMA) in Oxfordshire declared in relation to nitrogen dioxide concentrations. The highest levels in each of the 13 AQMA areas within Oxfordshire were recorded by the District and City			Delivery is on target and there are no impacts on risk at this stage.	There is no impact on finance at this stage.	11.00%	10.00%	★	11.00%	10.00%	★

Page 239			<p>Councils. The average of the highest levels was 32.33 µg/m which is less than the UK's statutory limit value of 40 µg/m. The 2023 figure is an 11% reduction in the average of highest nitrogen dioxide levels recorded in each of the 13 AQMAs in Oxfordshire compared to last year and a 35% reduction compared to the baseline year of 2019. Every year air pollutant levels are likely to fluctuate due to weather conditions and other local conditions such as road closures near monitoring sites. However, the downward trend is apparent across the UK, with most monitoring sites showing reductions in NO levels. This is likely to be due to newer road vehicles having to meet stricter emission standards and the uptake of electric road vehicles. A national move away from coal usage in power generation has also impacted nitrogen dioxide levels.</p>										

Measure	Director	Portfolio Holder	Comment	Improvement Plan	Timeframe	Risk Impact	Finance Impact	Period Actual	Period Target	Status	YTD Actual	YTD Target	YTD
OCC05.08 % of delivery against Countywide 20mph plan	Paul Fermer	Cllr A Gant	Good overall progress with fairly high confidence that the project will be very substantially complete by 31/03/2025.					35.00%	23.53%	★	57.69%	46.22%	★

Preserve and improve access to nature and green spaces

We will work with partners to provide safe and clean green spaces across the county that support the physical and mental wellbeing of our residents.

We will take action to protect and increase biodiversity, supporting nature recovery, in both rural and urban environments.

Status of Indicators	30/09/2024
OCC06 - Preserve and improve access to nature and green spaces	★

Measure	Director	Portfolio Holder	Comment	Improvement Plan	Timeframe	Risk Impact	Finance Impact	Period Actual	Period Target	Status	YTD Actual	YTD Target	YTD
OCC06.02 Percentage of newly planted trees still alive on land OCC own & manage	Paul Fermer	Cllr P Sudbury	No change since last month. Watering has now been completed for the year.			No impact identified.	No financial implications	94.90%	90.00%	★	94.90%	90.00%	★
OCC06.03 Volunteer hours on the PRoW network through established groups	Paul Fermer	Cllr A Gant	Q2 - July to October 2024 Chiltern Society - 1547 Cotswolds Wardens - 225 Thame & Wheatley Ramblers group - 71 Vale Ramblers - 160 Total: 2003					2,003.00	1,750.00	★	3,756.00	3,500.00	★
OCC06.04% [by length] of Public Rights of Way network free from serious issues or obstruction	Paul Fermer	Cllr A Gant	This figure has remained at 89%. However, it should be noted that there was an increase of 4.8km in length of links free from significant issues but as this is just a small fraction of the network the overall figure did not change. The Countryside Access GIS system CAMs splits public rights of way (PRoW) into 'links' which all have					89.00%	90.00%	●	89.00%	90.00%	●

length data associated with them. A link is a section of path that runs from one path or road to where it connects/intersects with another path or road. In order to generate the % figure we find all significant issues recorded on the entire network that are 'unresolved'. This includes issues such as barbed wire fences, locked gates, unauthorised structures, unauthorised excavation, buildings on path. These are issues that would generally have an impact on people using the paths although in some cases there may be alternative routes used to get around them. We then find all the 'links' that these issues are associated with and can then find the total length of these links. From this we can work out the % by length of PRow that are free from these serious issues or obstructions. It should be noted that a link can be a few kilometres in length while the													

			issue only affects a short section.										

Create opportunities for children and young people to reach their full potential

We will support all our children and young people, and their families, to achieve their very best and to prepare them for their future, including safeguarding, and supporting those more vulnerable and with additional needs.

We will continue to work with partners to provide help early so children and families are less likely to be in need.

Status of Indicators	30/09/2024
OCC07 - Create opportunities for children and young people to reach their full potential	★

Measure	Director	Portfolio Holder	Comment	Improvement Plan	Timeframe	Risk Impact	Finance Impact	Period Actual	Period Target	Status	YTD Actual	YTD Target	YTD
OCC07.01 % of 2-2½ year review showing children at or above the expected level of development	Ansaf Azhar	Cllr L Leffman	Q1 24/25 data - A new contract started on 1st April 2024 and data will be available at the end of October and will be reported in the next update						85.10	?		85.10	?
OCC07.02 No of children we care for who are Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children	<div><div></div><div>Lisa Lyons</div><div></div><div>Stephen Chandler</div></div>	Cllr J Howson						101		n/a	583		n/a


Page 245

Measure	Director	Portfolio Holder	Comment	Improvement Plan	Timeframe	Risk Impact	Finance Impact	Period Actual	Period Target	Status	YTD Actual	YTD Target	YTD
OCC07.03 % of children we care for placed out of county and more than 20 miles away from home	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Lisa Lyons ■ Stephen Chandler 	Cllr J Howson	At the end of September 275 people out of 791 were placed out of Oxfordshire and more than 20 miles away from their home address	Through the Oxfordshire Way we continue to develop community assets to keep people independent for as long as possible. Where people need care we continue to develop services that will allow them to stay in their own homes such as increasing the availability of home care, providing aids and adaptations, and developing additional extra care housing	The aim is to deliver the stretch target by the end of the year, but current we remain in the top 10% nationally	Most residents want to live in their own home for as long as possible. Supporting this supports Oxfordshire as a place of choice	There are no clear financial risks	35.00		!	34.17		!
OCC07.04 Number of Children and Young People accessing the Music Service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Kate Reynolds ■ Lisa Lyons 	Cllr N Fawcett						8,129.00	8,500.00	★	8,129.00	8,500.00	★
OCC07.05 The number of children subject of a child protection plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Lisa Lyons ■ Stephen Chandler 	Cllr J Howson						509.00	618.00	★	517.83	618.00	★
OCC07.06 Number of Oxfordshire children we care for	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Lisa Lyons ■ Stephen Chandler 	Cllr J Howson						690		n/a	690		n/a
OCC07.07 % of Education Health & Care Plans completed within 20 weeks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Lisa Lyons ■ Stephen Chandler 	Cllr J Howson						40.0%		n/a	41.9%		n/a

Measure	Director	Portfolio Holder	Comment	Improvement Plan	Timeframe	Risk Impact	Finance Impact	Period Actual	Period Target	Status	YTD Actual	YTD Target	YTD
OCC07.08 The number of Education Health Care Plans maintained by the local authority	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Lisa Lyons ■ Stephen Chandler 	Cllr J Howson						7,046.00		n/a	6,812.50		n/a

Play our part in a vibrant and participatory local democracy

- We are committed to taking decisions in an open and inclusive way.
- We will engage and listen to Oxfordshire residents.
- We will be open to scrutiny and regularly provide progress updates.
- We will put the impact on the climate and future generations at the heart of decision making.
- We will manage our own resources carefully.

Status of Indicators	30/09/2024
OCC08 - Play our part in a vibrant and participatory local democracy	

This report does not contain any data

This priority has no measures to report in this reporting period

Work with local businesses and partners for environmental, economic and social benefit

We will help Oxfordshire become a recognised centre of innovation in green and sustainable technologies.

We will use our purchasing power for environmental, social and economic benefit and ensure that our pandemic recovery planning supports sustainable job creation.

Status of Indicators	30/09/2024
OCC09 - Work with local businesses and partners for environmental, economic and social benefit	★



Measure	Director	Portfolio Holder	Comment	Improvement Plan	Timeframe	Risk Impact	Finance Impact	Period Actual	Period Target	Status	YTD Actual	YTD Target	YTD
OCC09.01 No of overdue inspections from Risk Based Inspection Programme Page 248	Rob MacDougall	Cllr J Hannaby	At the end of September we have zero inspections overdue on our Risk Based Inspection Programme. Concentrated hard work, across the team, has ensured that we are up to date with inspections of our highest risk premises					0	0	★	19	0	●
OCC09.02 Participation in innovation funding bids or new projects in support of Living Oxfordshire	Lorna Baxter	Cllr N Fawcett						12.00	1.00	★	23.00	6.00	★
OCC09.03 No of Trading Standards interventions conducted with businesses	Rob MacDougall	Cllr N Ley						454	375	★	973	750	★
OCC09.04 % of Gigabit capable (DOCSIS 3.1 or Full Fibre) Broadband	Lorna Baxter	Cllr N Fawcett						85.60	78.50	★	85.60	78.50	★

Measure	Director	Portfolio Holder	Comment	Improvement Plan	Timeframe	Risk Impact	Finance Impact	Period Actual	Period Target	Status	YTD Actual	YTD Target	YTD
OCC09.05 % of Full Fibre To The Premises broadband (FTTP) premises in Oxfordshire.	Lorna Baxter	Cllr N Fawcett						59.70	52.00	★	59.70	52.00	★

Running the Business - Customer Experience

Status of Indicators	30/09/2024
OCC10 - Customer Service	★

Measure	Director	Portfolio Holder	Comment	Improvement Plan	Timeframe	Risk Impact	Finance Impact	Period Actual	Period Target	Status	YTD Actual	YTD Target	YTD
OCC10.01 % of Adult Social Care complaints (Stage 1) responded to within statutory timescales	Louise Tustian	Cllr N Fawcett	6 Adult Social Care statutory stage 1 complaints have been received in September 2024. 2 cases are closed within timescale and 4 are still open within timescale.					100.00	80.00	★	500.00	480.00	★
OCC10.02 % of Adult Social Care complaints (Stage 2) responded to within statutory timescales	Louise Tustian	Cllr N Fawcett	No Adult Social Care statutory stage 2 complaints were received in September 2024.						80.00	?		480.00	?
OCC10.03 Overall customer satisfaction rate for the Customer Service Centre – telephony	Louise Tustian	Cllr N Fawcett	Latest satisfaction survey: In September 2024, 22% of calls answered were surveyed which is a decrease of 3% compared to the previous month. 100% of customers surveyed were satisfied or very satisfied					100%	80%	★	100%	80%	★

Measure	Director	Portfolio Holder	Comment	Improvement Plan	Timeframe	Risk Impact	Finance Impact	Period Actual	Period Target	Status	YTD Actual	YTD Target	YTD
OCC10.04 Answer 80% of calls to the Customer Service Centre within 30 seconds (exclude SHCT)	Louise Tustian	Cllr N Fawcett	In September the number of calls answered increased by 2,305 to 10,483 calls and 8,234 of these were answered within 30 seconds equalling 79%. This compared to August where 8,178 were presented and 6,646 calls were answered within 30 seconds (81%) For this area of the contact centre, we have tracked 47,6 days to unforeseen absence	The move to Zoom (from the 8x8 software) and a review of meaningful KPIs will enable us to better understand the individual customer journeys. This includes the introduction of improved workforce management software that enables us to better align staffing to arrival patterns.	This metric is does not accurately reflect the customers experience of the Contact Centre as we are currently unable to understand the number of customers that this actually affects. The introduction of Zoom from November onwards as the Contact Centre platform will enable greater insight into the customers experience. A review of all KPI's is underway to be implemented in the new service delivery plan.	The risk of not answering calls in a timely manner leads to a risk of reputational damage to the Council	Not answering 80% of calls within 30 seconds, does not have a direct financial impact, but can lead to increased waiting times, increased stress and therefore higher staff sickness and turnover.	79.00%	80.00%		79.00%	80.00%	

Measure	Director	Portfolio Holder	Comment	Improvement Plan	Timeframe	Risk Impact	Finance Impact	Period Actual	Period Target	Status	YTD Actual	YTD Target	YTD
OCC10.05 Percentage of FOIs responded to within timescales	Louise Tustian	Cllr N Fawcett	<p>A total of 127 requests for information were received during, with an additional 7 requests redirected to the other organisations, mainly the local district councils. This is an increase of 22% compared to August (104), and a decrease of 4% compared to September 2023 (132).</p> <p>A total of 48 requests were responded to on-time (100%), and 79 requests remain open and on-time (100%). Even with the rise in requests throughout September compared to August, we continue to achieve an impressive response rate for 8 consecutive months.</p>	We consistently support and motivate colleagues throughout the organisation to highlight the importance of meeting statutory timeframes.	In the initial six months of the 2024-25 financial year, we successfully responded to 98% of initial requests within the statutory timeframe. We are committed to maintaining this high level of performance for the remainder of the financial year.			100.00	90.00	★	600.00	540.00	★
OCC10.06 Overall customer satisfaction rates for standard Registration Service	Anita Bradley	Cllr N Fawcett						97%	95%	★	95%	95%	●
OCC10.07 Overall customer satisfaction rate for Coroners Inquest Service	Anita Bradley	Cllr N Fawcett						100%	99%	★	100%	99%	★

Measure	Director	Portfolio Holder	Comment	Improvement Plan	Timeframe	Risk Impact	Finance Impact	Period Actual	Period Target	Status	YTD Actual	YTD Target	YTD
OCC10.08 % of Children Social Care complaints (Stage 1) responded to within statutory timescales	Louise Tustian	Cllr N Fawcett	9 Children Social Care statutory stage 1 complaints were received in August 2024. 2 cases are closed within timescale and 7 are still open within timescale.					100.00	80.00	★	200.00	480.00	▲
OCC10.09 % of Children Social Care complaints (Stage 2) responded to within statutory timescales	Louise Tustian	Cllr N Fawcett	No Children's Social Care statutory stage 2 complaints were received in September 2024.						80.00	?		480.00	?
OCC10.10 % of Children Social Care complaints (Stage 3) responded to within statutory timescales	Louise Tustian	Cllr N Fawcett	No Children's Social Care statutory stage 3 complaints were received in September 2024.						80.00	?		480.00	?
OCC10.11 % of Corporate Complaints (Stage 1) responded to within timescales	Louise Tustian	Cllr N Fawcett	33 Corporate stage 1 complaints have been received in September 2024. 8 were closed within timescale, 2 closed outside of time scale(1 Highways and Environment directorate and 1 Children services) , 19 are still open within timescale and 4 are overdue. Of these, 3 falls into the Highways and Environment directorate,1 into the Children's corporate directorate.					80.00	80.00	★	80.00	80.00	★

Measure	Director	Portfolio Holder	Comment	Improvement Plan	Timeframe	Risk Impact	Finance Impact	Period Actual	Period Target	Status	YTD Actual	YTD Target	YTD
OCC10.12 % of Corporate Complaints (Stage 2) responded to within timescales	Louise Tustian	CIlr N Fawcett	3 Corporate stage 2 complaints were received in September 2024. All the cases are still open within timescale.						80.00	?		80.00	?
OCC10.13 The percentage of customer telephone calls abandoned at the Customer Service Centre	Louise Tustian	CIlr N Fawcett	In September 2024, the Customer Service Centre was offered 13,136 calls across all services. Of these, 712 were abandoned equating to 5.4% of calls. Compared to the previous month, there was an increase of 2,393 calls offered. Compared to September 2023, there is a 3.3% decrease in the abandonment call rate					5.00%	10.00%	★	5.40%	10.00%	★

Running the business - Finance

Status of Indicators	30/09/2024
OCC11 - Finance	▲

Measure	Director	Portfolio Holder	Comment	Improvement Plan	Timeframe	Risk Impact	Finance Impact	Period Actual	Period Target	Status	YTD Actual	YTD Target	YTD
OCC11.01 Overall forecast revenue variance across the Council	Lorna Baxter	Cllr D Levy	This measures the overall forecast revenue variance across the Council. The target is to breakeven or underspend. September position is -0.2% (ie underspend)					-0.20	0.00	★	-0.10	0.00	★
OCC11.02 Achievement of planned savings	Lorna Baxter	Cllr D Levy	The target for the achievement of planned savings is 90%. September position is 71% of savings are on track to be delivered by year end.					71.00	90.00	▲	70.67	90.00	▲
OCC11.03 General balances are forecast to remain at or above the risk assessed level	Lorna Baxter	Cllr D Levy	General balances are forecast to remain within 85% of the risk assessed level for 2024/25 (£30.2m). September position is 112% as balances are forecast to be £33.8m at year end.					112.00	85.00	★	109.67	85.00	★

Measure	Director	Portfolio Holder	Comment	Improvement Plan	Timeframe	Risk Impact	Finance Impact	Period Actual	Period Target	Status	YTD Actual	YTD Target	YTD
OCC11.04 Directorates deliver services and achieve planned performance within agreed budget	Lorna Baxter	Cllr D Levy	This measures service areas delivering services and achieving planned performance within budget. The target is 1% variance. September performance is 1% overspend.					1.00	1.00	★	0.77	1.00	★
OCC11.05 Total Outturn variation for DSG funded services (schools/early years)	Lorna Baxter	Cllr D Levy	Total Outturn variation for DSG funded services (schools and early years). Target is breakeven or underspend. September position is 0% variance.					0.00	0.00	●	0.00	0.00	●
OCC11.06 Total Outturn variation for DSG funded services (high needs)	Lorna Baxter	Cllr D Levy	Total Outturn variation for DSG funded services (high needs). Target is overspend no higher than £21.3m. September position is £26.1m overspend.					£26,148,0	£21,300,0	▲	£22,890,6	£21,300,0	▲
OCC11.07 Use of non-DSG revenue grant funding	Lorna Baxter	Cllr D Levy	Use of non-DSG revenue grant funding, target is at least 95% is spent by the year end. September position is on track to spend 95%.					95.00	95.00	★	95.00	95.00	★
OCC11.08 % of agreed invoices paid within 30 days	Lorna Baxter	Cllr D Levy						97.10	95.00	★	96.48	95.00	★

Measure	Director	Portfolio Holder	Comment	Improvement Plan	Timeframe	Risk Impact	Finance Impact	Period Actual	Period Target	Status	YTD Actual	YTD Target	YTD
OCC11.09 Invoice collection rate - Corporate Debtors	Lorna Baxter	Cllr D Levy	This measure identifies the percentage of invoices issued that have been paid within 120 days. In this period, we measured invoices issued in April 2024. The collection rate was 97.18%, above the target of 95%.					97.18	95.00	★	97.39	95.00	★
OCC11.10 Debt requiring impairment - Corporate Debtors	Lorna Baxter	Cllr D Levy	Debt requiring impairment is the value of invoices with potential to become unrecoverable. The potential loss requires recording in the accounts at year end. If at year end there is an overall increase in the value of invoices at risk, we are required to top up the impairment balance. Consequently, this figure is tracked through the year. Debt requiring impairment this month is £0.515m. The top five cases, including two which are in liquidation, account for 37% of the total bad debt and is being actively worked on by Legal Services and Debt Recovery Officers.					515,000	300,000	●	506,397	300,000	●

Measure	Director	Portfolio Holder	Comment	Improvement Plan	Timeframe	Risk Impact	Finance Impact	Period Actual	Period Target	Status	YTD Actual	YTD Target	YTD
Page 258	OCC11.11 Debt requiring impairment - Adult Social Care contribution debtors	Lorna Baxter	ClIr D Levy	The 2023-24 year-end adults care contribution impairment for bad debt was £4.52m. At 30 September 2024 it is £5.16m, an increase of £0.65m. As reported previously, wider economic factors have had a significant effect on means tested social care contribution debt levels, as have delays with the court of protection and related activity. This tracks with other local authorities' experience. We are revising our approach to overdue debt and bringing together a debt reduction and recovery plan.									
								5,163,000	3,500,000	▲	4,919,788	3,500,000	▲
OCC11.12	Average cash balance compared to forecast average cash balance	Lorna Baxter	ClIr D Levy										
								£535,784,	£462,628,	●	£508,270,	£462,628,	★
OCC11.13	Average interest rate achieved on in-house investment portfolio	Lorna Baxter	ClIr D Levy										
								4.51	4.25	★	4.68	4.25	★
OCC11.14	Average annualised return achieved for externally managed funds	Lorna Baxter	ClIr D Levy										
								3.75	3.75	★	3.75	3.75	★

Measure	Director	Portfolio Holder	Comment	Improvement Plan	Timeframe	Risk Impact	Finance Impact	Period Actual	Period Target	Status	YTD Actual	YTD Target	YTD
OCC11.15 Invoice Collection Rate - Adult Social Care contribution debtors	Lorna Baxter	Cllr D Levy	In this period, we measured invoices issued in April 2024. The 120-day invoice collection rate was 92.20% for this period, above the 92% target.					92.20	92.00	★	91.93	92.00	★

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Introduction

1. This annex sets out the third financial monitoring information for the 2024/25 financial year and is based on information to the end of September 2024. Key issues, as well as risks relating to inflation, demand and other factors, plus areas of emerging pressure are explained below.

The following information is also provided within the annex:

Annex B – 1 (a) to (e)	Detailed service areas positions
Annex B – 2a	Virements to approve
Annex B – 2b	Virements to note
Annex B – 3	Earmarked reserves
Annex B – 4	Government grants
Annex B – 5	General Balances

Overall Financial Position

2. As shown below there is a forecast service area overspend of £6.1m, an increase of £1.0m from the position reported to the September Cabinet. After taking account of additional interest receivable on balances held by the council and anticipated capital financing costs, the overall position is a forecast underspend of £1.3m.

	Latest Budget Sept-24 £m	Forecast Spend Sept-24 £m	Forecast Variance Sept-24 £m	Forecast Variance Sept-24 %	Forecast Variance July-24 £m	Change Since July-24 £m
Adult Services	250.2	250.2	0.0	0.0%	0.0	0.0
Children's Services	200.4	204.0	3.5	1.8%	2.3	1.3
Environment & Highways	69.7	70.3	0.6	0.9%	0.9	-0.3
Economy & Place	1.8	1.8	0.0	0.0%	0.0	0.0
Oxfordshire Fire & Rescue Service and Community Safety	28.7	29.3	0.7	2.3%	0.7	0.0
Public Health & Communities	12.6	12.6	0.0	0.0%	0.0	0.0
Resources and Law & Governance	57.8	59.1	1.3	2.3%	1.3	0.0
Transformation, Digital & Customer Experience	7.7	7.7	0.0	0.0%	0.0	0.0
Service Areas Total	628.9	635.0	6.1	1.0%	5.1	1.0
Budgets Held Centrally						
Capital Financing	20.7	17.3	-3.5	-16.6%	-3.1	-0.4
Interest on Balances	-10.7	-14.6	-3.9	37.0%	-2.5	-1.4
Contingency	7.4	7.4	-0.0	0.0%	0.0	-0.0
Pay Inflation	14.4	14.4	0.0	0.0%	0.0	0.0
Un-ringfenced Specific Grants	-55.3	-55.3	-0.0	0.0%	0.0	-0.0
Insurance	1.7	1.7	0.0	0.0%	0.0	0.0
Contribution from COVID-19 reserve	-3.8	-3.8	0.0	0.0%	0.0	0.0
Contribution from Budget Priority Reserve	-1.4	-1.4	0.0	0.0%	0.0	0.0
Contributions to reserves	11.5	11.5	0.0	0.0%	0.0	0.0
Total Budgets Held Centrally	-15.4	-22.8	-7.4	48.1%	-5.6	-1.8
Net Operating Budget	613.5	612.2	-1.3	-0.2%	-0.4	-0.9
Business Rates & Council Tax funding	-613.5	-613.5	0.0	0.0%	0.0	0.0
Forecast Year End Position	0.0	-1.3	-1.3	-0.2%	-0.4	-0.9

3. The breakeven position for Adult Services reported to the September Cabinet remains unchanged.
4. The forecast overspend of £3.5m for Children's Services has worsened by £1.3m and is due to pressures within Home to School Transport and risks in the delivery of previously agreed savings built into the 2024/25 budget.
5. The overspend for Environment & Highways has reduced by £0.3m since July 2024. The £0.6m pressure includes a £2.2m overspend in Network Management relating to the underachievement of lane rental income savings, offset by a £1.6m underspend in Highways maintenance from a reduction in energy costs from lower energy activity.
6. The breakeven position for Economy and Place reported to the September Cabinet remains unchanged.
7. Public Health & Communities are forecasting a breakeven position. Within that a forecast £0.2m underspend against the Public Health grant funding is assumed to be transferred to reserves at year end.
8. The forecast overspend of £0.7m for Oxfordshire Fire & Rescue Service and Community Safety has remained unchanged from the July position and is due to risks in the delivery of previously agreed savings built into the 2024/25 budget.
9. The forecast overspend of £1.3m for Resources and Law & Governance has remained unchanged from the position reported to Cabinet in September, the pressure is mainly driven by high locum costs in the Legal service.
10. Transformation, Digital & Customer Experience are reporting a breakeven position.
11. £7.4m on-going budget was agreed to be held in contingency as part of the 2024/25 budget. This will be held to meet potential risks around pay inflation and anticipated winter pressures in Adults and Children's Services later in the financial year. The current forecast assumes that there is no underspend against the contingency budget on the basis of these potential risks. However, as the year progresses and there is more certainty over the forecast position, any variance against the contingency budget will be factored in.
12. The 2024/25 budget includes planned service areas savings of £30.1m. 43% of these savings are assessed as delivered and 71% are forecast to be delivered.
13. The risk assessed level of one – off funding held in general balances in 2024/25 is £30.2m. A residual balance of £2.3m relating to the underspend at the end of 2023/24 was agreed to be held in balances as part of the Provisional Outturn Report for 2023/24. After taking account of the forecast underspend, balances are currently forecast to be £3.6m above the risk assessed level at 31 March 2024.
14. The forecast 2024/25 deficit compared to Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) funding for High Needs is £26.1m, £4.9m higher than the budget approved by Council in

February 2024. The CIPFA code of practice requires negative High Needs DSG balances to be held in an unusable reserve. The forecast deficit would increase the cumulative negative High Needs DSG balance held in this reserve from £55.8m as at 31 March 2024 to £81.9m at 31 March 2025.

Service Areas Forecasts

Adult Services

15. Adult Services are reporting a breakeven position against a budget of £250.2m.

Service Area	Latest Budget Sept-24 £m	Forecast Spend Sept-24 £m	Forecast Variance Sept-24 £m	Forecast Variance July-24 £m	Change Since July-24 £m
Adult Social Care	27.2	27.5	0.3	0.3	0.0
Health, Education & Social Care Commissioning	5.5	5.2	-0.3	-0.3	0.0
Housing & Social Care Commissioning	1.4	1.4	0.0	0.0	0.0
Business Support Service	1.1	1.1	0.0	0.0	0.0
Pooled Budgets	214.9	214.9	0.0	0.0	0.0
Total Adult Services	250.2	250.2	0.0	0.0	0.0

16. The position assumes that all savings are delivered. Further detail is provided in the savings section of the report.

Pooled Budgets

Age Well Pooled Budget

17. The Age Well pool combines health and social care expenditure on care homes, activity relating to hospital avoidance and prevention and early support activities for older people.
18. Budgets within the pool are managed on an aligned basis with the Integrated Care Board (ICB) for Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire, and Berkshire West (BOB) so each partner is responsible for the variation against their element of the funding.
19. The council elements of the Age Well pool as at the end of September are forecast to breakeven.
20. The council's share of the Better Care Fund (BCF) being utilised within the pool is £31.1m in 2024/25, an increase of 5.7% from 2023/24.
21. There are significant risks and assumptions within the forecast where certainty is not possible at this stage. These include:
 - Growth in placements, particularly residential, through the year. Although there is a seasonal trend, it is difficult to predict accurately how activity will move. The forecast includes an element of growth held to mitigate this risk.

- Requests for fee uplifts for unit costs over and above ceiling rates are still being requested and this is being managed through a fee uplift panel. A deadline for requests to be put forward for consideration is to be communicated to providers. Funding is held to cover further requests any unallocated budget will be released to the wider system or cover future risks within the service.
- The ICB have begun a programme of package reviews, resulting in a number of packages being assessed as no longer having a health need and therefore becoming a social care commitment. To date the increase in costs to the council within older people is £1.0m in 2024/25. This has potential to increase depending on the outcomes of any further assessments taking place by the ICB.

Live Well Pooled Budget

22. The Live Well pool supports a combination of health and social care needs for adults of working age with learning disabilities, acquired brain injury or mental health needs and adults with physical disabilities.
23. Budgets within the pool are managed on an aligned basis with the Integrated Care Board (ICB) for Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire, and Berkshire West (BOB).
24. The council elements of the Live Well pool are forecast to spend to budgets.
25. Risks or uncertainties in both service groups relate to:

- The ICB have begun a programme of package reviews, resulting in a number of packages being assessed as no longer having a health need and therefore becoming a social care commitment. To date the increase in costs to the council within learning and physical disabilities is £1.1m in 2024/25. This has potential to increase depending on the outcomes of any further assessments taking place by the ICB.
- Transport costs are forecast to overspend by £0.7m. This is due to market conditions rather than increased demand. Work is ongoing to reduce these costs in future years via a transport working group.
- Growth in care packages, particularly for supported living and home support, through the year. It is difficult to predict accurately how activity will move throughout the remaining four months of the year.
- A paper is going to the ICB's Executive Management Committee on the 11th November to formally agree to their share of the costs for adults with Section 117 aftercare support under the Mental Health Act for service users with a physical disability.

Non-Pool Services

26. A breakeven position is forecast across all other services.

Reserves

27. £1.0m held in the Budget Priorities reserve for Adult Social Care at 1 April 2024 will be used to fund known pressures in 2024/25.
28. £0.6m held in reserves because of additional contributions made by the ICB in

previous years will be allocated in 2024/25 and 2025/26 as agreed with the Joint Commissioning Executive.

29. As the Supervisory Body the council has a statutory obligation to assess and authorise Deprivation of Liberty Safeguarding (DoLS) requests. The number of requests the council receives has increased so £0.4m has been held in the Budget Priorities reserve to help meet its statutory obligation. This funding will be utilised in 2024/25.
30. £0.1m held in the Government Initiative Reserve relates to ongoing costs associated with charging reforms prior to implementation which is now scheduled for autumn 2025.
31. £0.3m of Apprenticeship funding is held within the grants and contributions reserve, funding was awarded to the council late in February 2024 to increase social work capacity within adult social care, the funding will be used before March 2025. Noting the positive impact of the recruitment campaign, 300 applications were received for social work apprenticeships from which 30 were appointed.
32. £0.2m Accelerated Reform Fund funding awarded in January 2024 will be used to address barriers to adopting innovative practices and build capacity and capability within adult social care.

Ringfenced Grants

33. As set out in Annex 4, ring-fenced government grants expected to be received by Adult Services in 2024/25 total £23.2m.
34. The Improved Better Care Fund Grant is £10.7m, with no change since 2023/24. The conditions attached to the grant funding require it to be used for the purposes of meeting adult social care needs, including contributing to the stabilisation of local care markets and supporting the NHS in addressing pressures such as delayed discharges.
35. The Market Sustainability and Improvement Fund is £10.0m and is being used to support the provider fee uplift in 2024/25 in line with the terms of the grant, to enhance the uplift, and to maintain uplifts from 2023/24 funded through the Market Sustainability and Fair Cost of Care grant which now forms part of this grant.
36. The Adult Social Care Discharge Fund is £2.5m. This will be used to provide interventions that improve discharge of patients from hospital to the most appropriate location for their ongoing care.

Virements

37. There are a number of virements to note reflecting budget movements within the pools linked to inflationary uplifts, and allocation of Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards funding.

Savings

38. The 2024/25 budget includes planned savings of £4.3m. 98% of savings are expected to be delivered and 2% are currently unconfirmed and have an element

39. The unconfirmed savings relate to an action to reduce the outstanding unsecured debt. This will not be confirmed until the end of the financial year but while action continues to be taken early reports indicate that this will not be achieved. Updates will continue to be provided in future reports.
40. There are also £0.3m of savings brought forward from 2023/24 to be delivered in 2024/25. 100% of this is expected to be delivered.

Investments

41. Planned one – off investments of £1.4m were agreed as part of the 2024/25 budget. Initial plans have been discussed to spend £0.6m of the investment with further work being carried out to utilise the remaining investment. To maximise the effect of this funding an element may be required to be carried forward into the following year, an update will be provided within the next report. £0.2m of the investment linked to the Oxfordshire Way is to be managed by the Partnership Delivery Service.
42. Options are being worked through to fully understand the benefits to the council as a result of the investment in digital technologies. The scoping exercise linked to these projects and any implementation flowing from this may require some of the funding to be moved into to an earmarked reserve for use in 2025/26.
43. The digital acceleration allocation is likely to be oversubscribed and the ambition would be to reallocate part of the investment set against shared lives which is unlikely to fully utilise this allocation.
44. Any investment opportunities to be funded from the shared lives investment budget is not identified until quarter three of the current financial year following recommendations to be made from project work beginning in September 2024. Opportunities need to be identified to ensure the benefit of the investment to be spent against transport is maximised county wide.

Children's Services

45. Children's services are forecasting an overspend of £3.5m against a budget of £200.4m.
46. For High Needs DSG there is a forecast in year deficit of £26.1m, £4.9m higher than the budget approved by Council in February 2024.

Service Area	Latest Budget Sept-24 £m	Forecast Spend Sept-24 £m	Forecast Variance Sept-24 £m	Forecast Variance July-24 £m	Change Since July-24 £m
Education & Learning	52.9	53.9	1.0	0.0	1.0

Annex B
Business Management and Monitoring Report September 2024

Schools ¹	0.2	0.2	0.0	0.0	0.0
Subtotal Education	53.1	54.1	1.0	0.0	1.0
Early Help, Front Door & Social Care Provider Services & Safeguarding	87.0	84.9	-2.1	1.4	-3.5
Subtotal Childrens' Social Care	138.6	136.6	-2.0	1.4	-3.5
Children's Services Central Costs	8.8	13.3	4.5	0.8	3.7
Total Childrens' Services	200.4	204.0	3.5	2.3	1.3
Overspend on High Needs DSG that will be transferred to the unusable reserve	88.4	114.6	26.1	21.3	4.9

Education

47. Within Education & Learning, Home to School Transport continues to be high risk. At this point in the year expenditure is forecast to exceed the budget by £1.0m based on the pupils and transport requirement for the new academic year from September.

Children's Social Care & Central Costs

48. There is a forecast overspend of £2.5m for Children's Social Care and Central Costs.

49. The forecast overspend is as a result of risks to the delivery of previously agreed reductions to budgets or savings built into the budget for 2024/25 mitigated by funding to cover increasing demand and underspends noted in investments.

50. In relation to staffing, several initiatives are planned to support the reduction of agency social workers. For 2024/25 this is currently expected to be managed within the budget, however there could be risks in future financial years should the number and cost of agency social workers not reduce in line with expectations.

51. The latest activity for Children's Social Care is as below:

	Q2 2022/23	Q3 2022/23	Q4 2022/23	Q1 2023/24	Q2 2023/24	Q3 2023/24	Q4 2023/24	Q1 2024/25	Q2 2024/25
Oxfordshire born children	778	755	735	709	677	651	624	623	643
Disabled Children	61	62	58	56	51	50	49	48	43
Subtotal	839	817	793	765	728	701	673	671	686
Unaccompanied	69	73	108	100	94	108	95	99	99
Total	908	890	901	865	822	809	768	770	785

52. The downward trend in the number of children we care for during 2023/24 has in recent months broadly stabilised and is in line with the numbers forecast for the budget at this point in the year.

Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG)

¹ *Maintained Schools are funded by Dedicated Schools Grant

53. The forecast overspend against High Needs DSG funding is a deficit of £26.1m, £4.9m higher than the budget approved by Council in February 2024.

Summary of DSG funding	2024/25 Budget £m	2024/25 Projected Outturn £m	Variance £m
Schools block	129.1	129.1	0.0
Central Services Schools block	5.2	5.2	0.0
High Needs block	88.4	114.6	26.1
Early Years block	74.8	74.8	0.0
Total	297.5	323.6	26.1

54. The CIPFA code of practice requires negative High Needs DSG balances to be held in an unusable reserve. The forecast deficit would increase the cumulative negative DSG balance held in this reserve from £45.6m as at 31 March 2024 to £71.7m at 31 March 2025.

Savings

55. The 2024/25 budget includes planned savings of £12.3m. Although some of the savings have already been secured or are expected to be delivered, there remains £6.1m of savings to deliver through activities during the year to manage demand and the cost of care. The savings also include a reduction in agency costs which is at risk of delivery.

Investments

56. Planned investments of £6.7m agreed as part of the 2024/25 budget include:

- £1.5m investment for additional capacity in the SEND service.
- £1.0m investment to extend the Family Safeguarding model to reduce demand.
- £1.0m investment on Recruitment & Retention Strategy.
- £0.8m investment on Home to School Transport to improve data and systems and increase independent travel.
- £0.5m investment in Digital innovation to assist customer pathways and user experience in information finding and advice.
- £0.7m to develop the Oxfordshire Way approach.

Virements

57. A temporary virement is requested to reallocated £1.3m of the children's demography from social care to transport. The budget agreed in February 2024 reflected the demographic pressure being used for both services and this reflects the actual position in year.

Environment & Highways

58. Environment & Highways is forecasting an overspend of £0.6m against a budget of £69.7m.

Annex B
Business Management and Monitoring Report September 2024

Service Area	Latest Budget Sept-24 £m	Forecast Spend Sept-24 £m	Forecast Variance Sept-24 £m	Forecast Variance July-24 £m	Change Since July-24 £m
Infrastructure Delivery	1.2	1.2	0.0	0.0	0.0
Environment	37.1	37.1	0.0	0.0	0.0
Transport Policy	13.2	13.2	0.0	0.0	0.0
Highways & Maintenance	20.7	19.1	-1.6	-1.3	-0.3
Network Management	-6.4	-4.2	2.2	2.2	0.0
Supported Transport	1.9	1.9	0.0	0.0	0.0
Senior Management Team	0.3	0.3	0.0	0.0	0.0
Data Intelligence & Business Support	1.7	1.7	0.0	0.0	0.0
Total Environment & Highways	69.7	70.3	0.6	0.9	-0.3

Infrastructure Delivery

59. The Infrastructure Delivery service area is forecasting a breakeven position.

Environment

60. The Environment service area is forecasting a breakeven position.

61. Waste Management are forecasting a breakeven position. The service is confident that the risks identified around waste pressures can be managed throughout the year.

62. The table below summarises budgeted and actual waste activity.

**	Budget				Outturn Forecast*			
Waste Stream	Annual	Tonnage		Price/ Tonne	Annual	Tonnage		Price/ Tonne
	£m	K'Tonnes	%	£	£m	K'Tonnes	%	£
Recycling/ Composting	8.362	175	60%	47.86	8.078	151	56%	53.24
ERF	16.167	105	36%	154.41	17.114	111	41%	154.71
Landfill	1.624	11	4%	149.30	1.304	7	3%	167.58
Total	26.153	291	100%	90.09	26.497	269	100%	98.09
*September figures presented as the latest dataset.								
** Please note that budget, outturn & variance figures are rounded to the nearest 1000								

63. Other services within Environment & Circular economy are also forecasting a break-even position. All investments in flood management activity are currently on

Transport Policy

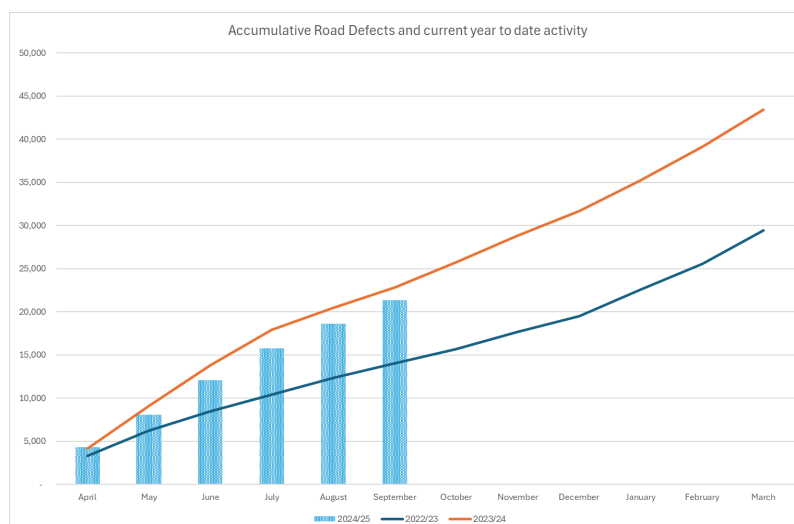
64. The Transport policy service area is forecasting a breakeven position

Highways & Maintenance

65. Highways & Maintenance are forecasting an underspend of £1.6m. This reflects a reduction in energy consumption for street lighting and the ongoing effect of a price update received during 2023/24 setting out more favourable energy prices.

66. Although there is currently an underspend position, it has been reported that the price for energy is likely to rise in October thus potentially reducing the overall forecast underspend. However, services have not had an updated price point from Crown Commercial Services.

67. Current level of defects remains lower than last year and in line with the current budget.



Network Management

68. Network Management is forecasting an overspend of £2.2m. This is due to a delay in approval of the council's application to implement charging for Lane Rental by the Department for Transport. Although the full level of income will not be achieved options and risks are being assessed to mitigate the impact, such as delays in other planned expenditure, income trends and additional drawdown of the parking account reserve.

Supported transport

69. The Supported transport service area is forecasting a breakeven position.

Senior Management Team

70. The Senior management team area have incurred £0.6m associated with early pension and redundancy costs from the layering of the Tiers 1 and 2 management structure, this will be funded through the Redundancy reserve.

71. The services have also noted that there is a risk of not fully achieving the Agency, Delaying and Commercial savings proposed for 2024/25.

Data Intelligence & Business Support

72. The Data Intelligence & Business Support service area is forecasting a breakeven position.

Virements

73. There are number of virements that predominantly realign and correct internal budgets as detailed in Annex B-2b.

Savings

74. The 2024/25 budget includes planned savings of £8.1m. 57% are forecast to be delivered. Savings at risk of delivery include:

- Lane rental an introduction of charges for all works on the business roads at the busiest times to minimise disruption: the service anticipates that the full £2.2m income expectation is unlikely to be achieved. As noted in paragraph 67 this is due to delay at DfT of approving the application. Pending a decision being made, there is a forecast overspend of £2.2m.
- Income of £0.2m from introduction of a new Controlled Parking Zones (CPZs): Income realisation is likely to be between December 2024 and March 2025 through a mix of permit fees and fines. An update on additional CPZ income will be reported later in the monitoring cycle.
- Prevention of unsorted waste at Household Waste Recycling Centres. A saving of £0.2m is now unlikely to be delivered this year due to implementation delays.
- £0.5m commercial savings to be achieved through contractual negotiation is not likely to be fully delivered by the end of this financial year.

Investments

75. The 2024/25 budget includes planned investments of £2.5m. 94% are on track to be delivered and include:

- £0.2m to improve the collection of fees, charges, and penalties.
- £0.5m for gully and ditch clearing and repairs in areas recently flooded.
- £0.5m to reclaim footpaths and cycleways and manage vegetation.
- £0.1m investment in improved enforcement of Controlled Parking Zones.

76. Investments that are at risk of being delivered include:

- £0.2m to introduce new Controlled Parking Zones: the Network and Co-ordination service is currently working on CPZ programme prioritisation to identify, design and consult four new schemes. New CPZs could go live by December 2024 at the earliest depending on the complexity/consultation

- £0.2m investment in Automatic Number Plate Recognition to improve enforcement of moving traffic offences. Additional sites are being identified with an expectation that they will be live from October 2024.

Reserves

77. The parking account is managed to allow for variances in income across the years.

78. The parking account is forecasting a reduction in the net contribution to reserve, due to a 20% reduction in income received in 2024/25, when compared to the same period last year. Although this will not have an in-year impact on the revenue account, the reduction in income, if it continues, could put at risk the longer-term financial viability of the reserve. This will be monitored closely throughout the remainder of the year.

Review of Charges

79. A new charge is being introduced in 2024/25 for the monitoring of biodiversity net gain compliance. This charge is for the costs of the council's Biodiversity Officers undertaking assessments and making site visits to monitor biodiversity net gains. The charges proposed are £772 for a Principal Officer and £605 for an Officer.

80. The table below sets out the proposed charges.

Service Area	Charge	Unit	Proposed Charge exc VAT 2024/25 £	Proposed Charge inc VAT 2024/25 £	Proposed date effective from	Discretionary or Statutory	VAT Class
Environment & Heritage	NEW CHARGE in 2024/25 - Monitoring of biodiversity net gain compliance by Biodiversity Officer	Daily rate for Senior Biodiversity Officer undertaking report review and site visits for biodiversity net gain monitoring (for inclusion in the biodiversity monitoring calculator)	643.50	772.20	01/12/2024	Discretionary	SR
		Daily rate for Biodiversity Officer undertaking report review and site visits for biodiversity net gain monitoring (for inclusion in the biodiversity monitoring calculator)	504.90	605.88	01/12/2024	Discretionary	SR

81. The Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) are recommending an increase in the Home to School Transport - DBS application charge due to parliamentary approval to increase costs of an enhanced DBS application by £11.50. This increase in cost is expected to be passed onto service providers as part of the DBS vetting process. The charges proposed are:

- Increase the charge from £132.79 to £133.10 effective from 19th November 2024
- Further increase the charge from £133.10 to £144.40 effective from 2nd

82. The table below sets out the existing agreed and proposed charges.

Service Area	Charge	Unit	Current Charge exc VAT 2024/25 £	Current Charge inc VAT 2024/25 £	Proposed Charge exc VAT 2024/25 £	Proposed Charge inc VAT 2024/25 £	Change %	Proposed date effective from	Discretionary or Statutory	VAT Class
Supported Transport	Home to School Transport - DBS Vetting and Safeguard Training	Per application	132.79	132.79	133.10	133.10	0.23%	19/11/2024 to 01/12/2024	Discretionary	NB
Supported Transport	Home to School Transport - DBS Vetting and Safeguard Training	Per application	133.10	133.10	144.40	144.40	8.5%	02/12/2024 to 31/03/2025	Discretionary	NB

Economy & Place

83. Economy & Place is forecasting an overspend against a budget of £1.8m.

Service Area	Latest Budget Sept-24 £m	Forecast Spend Sept-24 £m	Forecast Variance Sept-24 £m	Forecast Variance July-24 £m	Change Since July-24 £m
Economy	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Strategic Planning	0.7	0.7	0.0	0.0	0.0
Climate Action	1.2	1.2	0.0	0.0	0.0
Place Making	-1.9	-1.9	0.0	0.0	0.0
Innovation	0.3	0.3	0.0	0.0	0.0
Senior Management Team	1.0	1.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Business Performance & Services Improvement	0.5	0.5	0.0	0.0	0.0
Total Environment & Place	1.8	1.8	0.0	0.0	0.0

84. All services in Economy & Place are forecasting a breakeven position.

85. The Senior management team area have incurred £0.6m associated with early pension and redundancy costs from the layering of the Tiers 1 and 2 management structure, this will be funded through the Redundancy reserve.

Savings

86. The 2024/25 budget includes planned savings of £1.0m. 100% are forecast to be delivered.

Public Health and Communities

87. Public Health and Communities are forecasting a breakeven position against a budget of £12.5m.

Service Area	Latest Budget Sept-24 £m	Forecast Spend Sept-24 £m	Forecast Variance Sept-24 £m	Forecast Variance July-24 £m	Change Since July-24 £m
Public Health Functions	40.0	39.8	-0.2	0.0	0.0
Public Health Recharges	0.6	0.6	0.0	0.0	0.0
Other Income	-1.4	-1.4	0.0	0.0	0.0
Grant Income	-34.4	-34.4	0.0	0.0	0.0
Transfer to Public Health Reserve	0.0	0.2	0.2	0.0	0.0
Total Public Health	4.8	4.8	0.0	0.0	0.0
Total Libraries & Heritage	7.8	7.8	0.0	0.0	0.0
Total Public Health and Communities	12.6	12.6	0.0	0.0	0.0

88. A £0.2m underspend in services funded by the Public Health ringfenced grant will be transferred to the Public Health reserve at year end.

89. Sexual health services are reporting a £0.1m underspend due to activity levels being lower than anticipated.

90. Tobacco Control are reporting a £0.1m underspend due to an increased Section 31 grant to support the increase in tobacco control and stop smoking activity.

Ringfenced Government Grants

91. The ringfenced Public Health grant totals £34.4m in 2024/25.

92. A ringfenced Stop Smoking Services Grant £0.8m has been awarded to the council to increase the number of smokers engaging with effective interventions to quit smoking.

Use of Un-ringfenced Government Grant Funding

93. Un-ringfenced grants held centrally and agreed to be used to support expenditure budgets within Public Health include:

- £1.2m Domestic Abuse Duty Grant supporting the provision of accommodation-based support to victims of domestic abuse and their children.
- £0.6m Substance Misuse Treatment & Recovery Housing Grant being used to deliver the Government's aim that by 2024/25 there will be more people recovering from addiction in stable and secure housing.
- £1.2m Supplementary Substance Misuse Treatment and Recovery grant. This is the second year of a three-year scheme where the Office for Health Improvement and Disparities (OHID) is working alongside other government departments to support a process of investment in a whole system approach to

tackling illicit drug use, including enforcement, diversion and treatment and recovery interventions.

- £0.2m Employment Individual Placement Support in community drug and alcohol treatment grant, to improve quality of life for people with alcohol and 'other drug' dependence.
- £1.1m Rough Sleeping Drug and Alcohol Grant is being used to provide specialist support for rough sleepers and those at risk.

Reserves

94. Public Health earmarked reserves were £4.5m at 1 April 2024. £1.4m is earmarked to be spent in 2024/25, £1.1m in 2025/26, £0.4m in 2026/27 and £0.4m in 2027/28, leaving a balance of £0.8m. The use of the reserve is continuously being reviewed and it is anticipated that there will be further commitments against this funding agreed throughout 2024/25.

95. £0.1m is being held to expand the Making Every Contact Count work programme in Oxfordshire; this will be spent in 2024/25.

96. The History Service donations reserve of £0.02m is earmarked to be spent in 2024/25

97. The Museum Service donations reserve of £0.1m is earmarked to be spent equally over the next 3 years.

Virements

98. There is one small virement to note reflecting increased expenditure on stop smoking services funded by grant.

Savings

99. The 2024/25 budget includes planned savings of £0.5m. 100% are forecast to be achieved due to uncertainty about the delivery of full savings early in the financial year.

Oxfordshire Fire & Rescue Service and Community Safety (OFRSC)

100. Oxfordshire Fire & Rescue Service and Community Safety are forecasting a £0.7m overspend position against a budget of £28.1m, unchanged from the July position.

Service Area	Latest Budget Sept-24 £m	Forecast Spend Sept-24 £m	Forecast Variance Sept-24 £m	Forecast Variance July-24 £m	Change Since July-24 £m
Community Safety Management	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Fire & Rescue	27.0	27.7	0.7	0.7	0.0
Emergency Planning	0.3	0.3	0.0	0.0	0.0
Trading Standards	1.4	1.4	0.0	0.0	0.0

Total Oxfordshire Fire & Rescue Service and Community Safety	28.7	29.4	0.7	0.7	0.0
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101. All services are forecasting a breakeven position with the exception of Fire and Rescue which is forecasting an overspend of £0.7m due to staffing savings that are not expected to be achieved.

Use of Un-ringfenced Government Grant Funding

102. Un-ringfenced grant funding held centrally and agreed to be used to support expenditure budgets within Oxfordshire Fire & Rescue Service includes:

- £0.1m Firelink Grant - The council has been notified of a 20% reduction in this grant from the previous year and that this grant will continue to reduce by 20% in each of the next two years.

Reserves

103. £3.2m is held in reserves for the renewal of fire and rescue vehicles and breathing apparatus equipment. A fleet replacement strategy has been developed and several vehicles have been ordered and expected to be received in 2024/25.

104. The Fire Uplift Grant reserve held £0.5m at 1 April 2024. This is being held to fund employee costs expected to be incurred over the next three to five years.

105. £0.5m is being held to cover the cost of the replacement of Airwave for Oxfordshire Fire and Rescue Service and the implementation of the new national Emergency Service Mobile Communications Programme.

Resources and Law & Governance

106. The services within Resources are forecasting an overspend of £1.3m against a budget of £57.8m, unchanged from the July forecast.

Service Area	Latest Budget Sept-24 £m	Forecast Spend Sept-24 £m	Forecast Variance Sept-24 £m	Forecast Variance July-24 £m	Change Since July-24 £m
Corporate Services	10.7	11.6	0.9	0.9	0.0
HR & Cultural Change	5.1	4.9	-0.2	-0.2	0.0
Financial & Commercial Services	9.5	9.5	0.0	0.0	0.0
Property & Assets	19.3	19.3	0.0	0.0	0.0
Public Affairs, Policy & Partnership	4.3	4.3	0.0	0.0	0.0
Law, Governance, Coroner & Registration Services	8.9	9.5	0.6	0.6	0.0
Total Resources	57.8	59.1	1.3	1.3	0.0

107. There is a forecast overspend of £0.9m within **Corporate Services** due to previously agreed savings of £0.9m which were held corporately but expected to

be achieved through reductions in costs related to IT expenditure across the organisation. Since further work has identified that these are not achievable there is a forecast pressure in 2024/25 and the on-going impact will need to be considered as part of the 2025/26 budget process.

108. **Human Resources & Organisational Development (HR&OD)** are forecasting an underspend of £0.2m due to in year savings from staff seconded to transformation projects. All savings are expected to be fully delivered.
109. **Financial & Commercial Services** are forecasting a breakeven position, all savings and investments are expected to be fully delivered.
110. **Property & Assets Services** are forecasting a breakeven position, however some risks identified by the service will require mitigation. All savings are expected to be fully delivered.
111. **Public Affairs, Policy & Partnership services** are forecasting a breakeven position. All savings and investments are expected to be fully delivered.
112. **Law, Governance, Coroners & Registration Services** are forecasting an overspend of £0.6m as a result of high locum costs in the Legal service where recruitment continues to be a challenge.

Savings

113. The 2024/25 budget includes planned savings of £1.9m. 98% are forecast to be achieved.

Transformation, Digital & Customer Experience (TDCE)

114. The services within TDCE are forecasting a breakeven position against a budget of £7.7m.

Service Area	Latest Budget Sept-24 £m	Forecast Spend Sept-24 £m	Forecast Variance Sept-24 £m	Forecast Variance July-24 £m	Change Since July-24 £m
Delivery Unit	3.4	3.4	0.0	0.0	0.0
Customer Experience	3.4	3.4	0.0	0.0	0.0
Insight & Corporate Programmes	0.7	0.7	0.0	0.0	0.0
TDCE Management	0.2	0.2	0.0	0.0	0.0
Total Resources	7.7	7.7	0.0	0.0	0.0

115. **Delivery Unit** is forecasting a breakeven position.
116. **Customer Experience** service are forecasting a breakeven position, 100% of savings are expected to be delivered.
117. **Insight & Corporate Programmes and TDCE Management** are forecasting breakeven positions.

Overview of Medium Term Financial Strategy Investments and Savings

118. The 2024/25 budget includes planned services savings of £30.1m. 43% of these savings are assessed as delivered with 71% are forecast to be delivered by the year end. Work is continuing to ensure that these savings are achieved.

Service areas	2024/25 Planned Savings	Actual Delivery to Date	Actual Delivery to Date	Forecast delivery	Forecast delivery
	£m	£m	%	£m	%
Adult Services	4.3	2.9	67%	4.2	98%
Children's Services	12.3	4.6	37%	7.3	59%
Environment & Highways	8.1	2.7	33%	4.6	57%
Economy and Place	1.0	0.3	36%	1.0	100%
Public Health & Communities	0.5	0.2	53%	0.5	100%
Oxfordshire Fire & Rescue Service and Community Safety	0.5	0.1	15%	0.4	83%
Resources and Law & Governance	1.9	1.8	94%	1.9	98%
Transformation, Digital & Customer Experience	1.5	0.4	23%	1.5	100%
TOTAL	30.1	12.9	43%	21.4	71%

119. The 2024/25 budget includes planned service areas investments of £11.6m, 4% are assessed as delivered and 85% are forecast to be delivered by the year-end.

Service Areas	2024/25 Planned Investments	Actual Delivery to Date	Actual Delivery to Date	Forecast delivery	Forecast delivery
	£m	£m	%	£m	%
Adult Services	1.4	0.0	0%	0.6	42%
Children's Services	6.7	0.1	2%	5.9	88%
Environment & Highways	2.5	0.3	11%	2.4	94%
Economy and Place	0.3	0.0	0%	0.3	100%
Resources and Law & Governance	0.6	0.0	7%	0.6	100%
TOTAL	11.6	0.5	4%	9.8	85%

Adult Services

120. The 2024/25 budget includes planned savings of £4.3m. 98% are forecast to be delivered, the £0.1m saving to reduce outstanding unsecured debt is at risk of being delivered.

Children's Services

121. The 2024/25 budget includes planned savings of £12.3m. 59% of these savings are forecast to be delivered, there remains £6.1m of savings to deliver through activities during the year to manage demand and cost of care which includes agency costs which are at risk of delivery. 88% of planned investments of £6.7m are forecast to be delivered, there is a risk to the delivery of a £0.5m investment

Environment & Highways

122. The 2024/25 budget includes planned savings of £8.1m. 57% are forecast to be delivered. The savings at risk of being delivered include the £2.2m lane rental income underachievement, £0.2m to reduce the amount of waste that is sent to the Energy Recovery Facility, £0.1m reduction in fleet management costs, and £0.5m contracts savings. 94% of planned investments of £2.5m are on track to be delivered.

Economy and Place

123. The 2024/25 budget includes planned savings of £1.0m. 100% are forecast to be delivered. 100% of planned investments of £0.3m are on track to be delivered.

Public Health & Communities

124. The 2024/25 budget includes planned savings of £0.5m. 100% are forecast to be delivered.

Oxfordshire Fire & Rescue Service and Community Safety

125. The 2024/25 budget includes planned savings of £0.5m. 46% are forecast to be delivered, £0.3m staffing savings is at risk of being delivered.

Resources and Law & Governance

126. The 2024/25 budget includes planned savings of £1.9m. 94% of these savings have been delivered and 98% are forecast to be delivered. 100% of planned investments of £0.6m are expected to be achieved.

Transformation, Digital & Customer Experience

127. The delayering staffing savings of £1.5m has been reallocated from service areas to the Transformation service. Budgets for senior managers have been adjusted to reflect the new structure. £0.4m of the £1.5m saving has been achieved so far and it is anticipated that this will increase later in the year as the programme progresses.

Debt Management

Corporate Debtors

128. The combined collection rate, based on invoice volumes up to September 2024 is 97%, 2% above the 95% target. The collection rate based on value of invoices for the same period is 94%.
129. Debt requiring impairment at the end of September is £0.5m, £0.2m above the year-end target of £0.3m. The top five debt cases account for 37% of all bad debt; two of those cases relates to companies in liquidation so will remain through the year.

Adult Social Care Debtors

130. The combined 120-day invoice collection rate up to September 2024 is 92%, equaling the target collection rate of 92%. The collection rate based on value of invoices for the same period is 82%.

131. The 2023/24 year-end adults care contribution impairment for bad debt was £4.5m. The current projected 2024/25 year-end bad debt position is £5.2m, £0.7m higher. In addition, there is a 2024/25 £0.1m saving linked to reducing social care debt, as reported in the Adults' service section this is not expected to be delivered. The cumulative impact this period is a total projected pressure of £0.8m. Financial services continue to work with the service to support activity to reduce the debt.

Budgets Held Centrally

132. After taking account of the use of contingency and additional interest on balances to support the forecast service areas overspend, there is a combined underspend of £7.4m against budgets held centrally.

Capital Financing Costs

133. The borrowing costs and minimum revenue provision (MRP) for capital projects funded by Prudential Borrowing are either recharged to service areas where savings arising from the scheme are expected to meet them or met corporately from the budget for capital financing costs. It is anticipated that after taking account of recharges to service areas costs will be in line with budget.
134. Interest payable is currently forecast to be £11.9m, £3.4m below budget. This reflects the early repayment of two LOBO loans and actual interest costs being lower than budgeted. This is expected to be one – off in 2024/25 as interest payable is expected to increase in 2025/26.

Interest on Balances

135. The forecast for in house interest receivable is £25.7m, £6.5m above the budget. The additional interest is a result of higher than forecast cash balances coupled with higher than forecast deposit rates. Of the £6.5m, an estimated £2.6m of this will be applied to developer contribution balances.
136. Cash balances for the year are forecast to be £81.9m lower than they would otherwise have been as a result of negative DSG balances. The impact of this is an estimated opportunity cost of £3.4m in unearned interest during 2024/25.

Pay Inflation and Contingency

137. Ongoing funding for pay inflation in 2024/25 total £14.4m and the contingency budget for 2024/25 totals £7.4m. This is held to meet potential risks around pay inflation and potential winter pressures in Adults and Children's services later in the financial year.
138. The pay inflation budget includes funding for an estimated pay award equivalent to 5.0% for all green book staff.
139. Agreement to the green book pay award applicable from April 2024 was reached on 22 October 2024. The increase is £1,290 on all pay points up to SCP 43 and 2.50% for all other pay points Agreement has also been reached for a 2.5%

140. After taking account of the number of staff employed on different points on the pay scale the current pay offer is estimated to cost £6.5m which equates to an overall estimated increase equivalent to 3.5%. As a result of the pay award being lower than budgeted, there will be an underspend of at least £3.0m which will be confirmed and reflected in the forecast in the next report.
141. Cabinet is recommended to approve the transfer of budgeted funding for inflation held centrally to directorates as set out in Annex 2a to meet the additional cost relating to staff in post.
142. Further virements will be transacted to add funding for the pay award to vacant posts when those are recruited to.

Reserves

143. As set out in Annex B - 3 Earmarked Reserves are forecast to be £174.0m at 31 March 2025.

Transformation Reserve

144. £10.0m funding was agreed to be added to the Transformation Reserve as part of the budget agreed in February 2024. £2.3m of this funding is being used to support revenue budget investments, with £1.5m supporting the 2024/25 budget and a further £0.8m in 2025/26.
145. As stated in the monitoring report to Cabinet in September, £5.3m of this funding is expected to be used in 2024/25. To date £4.5m has been transferred to the Transformation service to support Transformation priorities.

Redundancy Reserve

146. The balance held in the Redundancy Reserve was £2.4m at 31 March 2024. Reflecting the need to reduce the size of the council to be sustainable in future £5.0m was agreed to be added to the reserve as part of the 2024/25 budget. To date the redundancy costs to be funded from this reserve are £1.4m.

Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) Unusable Reserve

147. An unusable reserve was created in 2020/21 to hold **negative High Needs DSG balances** in line with a change to the CIPFA code of practice on DSG High Needs deficits. The net deficit of £26.1m for 2024/25 will increase the total High Needs deficit held in the reserve to £81.9m as at 31 March 2025. The regulations which require the negative balance to be held in an unusable reserve will come to an end on 31 March 2026. The impact of the unusable reserve on the council's ability to set a balanced budget over the medium term will need to be considered through the Budget & Business Planning Process for 2025/26.

Grants

148. As set out in Annex B - 4 government grants totalling £513.1m are expected to be received by the Council during 2024/25. This includes £18.9m in schools' grants for additional mainstream funding, early years funding and pupil premium,

Homes for Ukraine

149. Following the launch of the Homes for Ukraine (HfU) scheme by the UK government in March 2022, upper tier councils have been in receipt of a tariff fund for individual arrivals in their area of responsibility as well as funding for thank you payments for hosts. Funding for the tariff element was originally provided as a one-off payment at the level of £10,500 per guest, falling to £5,900 for all new arrivals from 1 January 2023. For eligible minors the tariff continues at £10,500.
150. Based on the position as at the end of September 2024, £27.7m of the grant funding received to date has now been allocated and £3.3m remains unallocated. A further £0.8m funding is expected to be received following the quarter 1 claim and the quarter 2 2024/25 claim has been submitted.

General Balances

151. The risk assessed level of balances for 2024/25 is £30.2m.
152. As set out in the Provisional Outturn Report for 2023/24, a one-off balance of £2.3m has been held in balances pending a decision about future use.
153. After taking account of the forecast underspend and the additional £2.3m, balances are currently forecast to be £3.6m above the risk assessed level at 31 March 2025.

Business Management & Monitoring Report
Position to the end of September 2024
Budget Monitoring

Directorate	Net Budget (Latest Estimate)	Projected Full Year Spend	Projected Year End Variance	Projected Year End Variance	Variance Last Reported (July Position) Reporting Month	Change in Variance	Projected Year End Traffic Light
	£000	£000	underspend- overspend+	%	£000	£000	Red > 1.5% Amber >1.1% <1.5% Green on track
Adult Services	250,201	250,201	0	0.00%	0	0	G
Children's Services	200,448	203,963	3,515	1.75%	2,254	1,261	R
Environment & Highways	69,707	70,307	600	0.86%	900	-300	G
Economy and Place	1,778	1,778	0	0.00%	0	0	G
Oxfordshire Fire & Rescue Service and Community Safety	28,676	29,326	650	2.27%	650	0	R
Public Health & Communities	12,600	12,600	0	-1.03%	0	0	G
Resources and Law & Governance	57,769	59,089	1,320	2.28%	1,320	0	R
Transformation, Digital & Customer Experience	7,704	7,704	0	0.00%	0	0	G
Directorate Total Net	628,883	634,968	6,085	0.97%	5,124	961	G

Business Management & Monitoring Report
Position to the end of September 2024
Budget Monitoring

Directorate	Net Budget (Latest Estimate)	Projected Full Year Spend	Projected Year End Variance	Projected Year End Variance	Variance Last Reported (July Position) Reporting Month	Change in Variance	Projected Year End Traffic Light
	£000	£000	underspend- overspend+	%	£000	£000	Red > 1.5% Amber >1.1% <1.5% Green on track
Budget held Centrally							
Capital Financing							
Capital Financing - Principal	14,933	14,933	0	0.00%	0	0	
Prudential Borrowing Recharges	-9,557	-9,557	0	0.00%	0	0	
Capital Financing - Interest	15,351	11,900	-3,451	-22.48%	-3,051	-400	
Interest on Balances	-10,673	-14,620	-3,947	36.98%	-2,507	-1,440	
Contingency	7,364	7,364	0	0.00%	0	0	
Pay Inflation held corporately	14,375	14,375	0	0.00%	0	0	
Unringfenced Specific Government Grants	-55,264	-55,264	0	0.00%	0	0	
Insurance	1,737	1,737	0	0.00%	0	0	
Contribution from COVID-19 Reserve	-3,756	-3,756	0	0.00%	0	0	
Contribution from Budget Priorities Reserve	-1,396	-1,396	0	0.00%	0	0	
Contributions to (+)/from (-)reserves	11,487	11,487	0	0.00%	0	0	
Total Budget held Centrally	-15,399	-22,797	-7,398	48.04%	-5,558	-1,840	
Net Operating Budget	613,484	612,171	-1,313	-0.21%	-434	-879	
Business Rates & Council Tax Funding	-613,483	-613,483	0	0.00%	0	0	
Forecast Year End Position	0	-1,312	-1,313	-0.21%	-434	-879	

Business Management and Monitoring Report: Adult Services
Position to the end of September 2024
Revenue Budget Monitoring

		Net Budget (Latest Estimate)	Projected Full Year Spend	Projected Year End Variance	Variance Last Cabinet Reporting Month	Change in Variance
		£000	£000	underspend- overspend+	£000	£000
SCS1	Adult Social Care	27,209	27,509	300	300	0
SCS2	Other Adult Social Care Services	5,531	5,231	-300	-300	0
SCS3	Housing & Social Care Commissioning	1,378	1,378	0	0	0
SCS4	Business Support Service	1,141	1,141	0	0	0
SCS5	Pooled Budget Contributions	214,942	214,942	0	0	0
Total Adult Services		250,201	250,201	0	0	0

Business Management & Monitoring Report: Children's Services
Forecast Position at the end of September 2024
Revenue Budget Monitoring

		Net Budget (Latest Estimate)	Projected Full Year Spend	Projected Year End Variance	Variance Last Cabinet Reporting Month	Change in Variance
		£000	£000	underspend-overspend+	£000	£000
CEF1	Education & Learning	52,891	53,891	1,000	0	1,000
CEF2	Early Help, Front Door + Social Care	87,023	84,934	-2,089	1,439	-3,528
CEF3	Provider Services & Safeguarding	51,557	51,622	65	0	65
CEF4	Schools	215	215	0	0	0
CEF5	Children's Services Central Costs	8,762	13,301	4,539	815	3,724
CEF9	Children's Services Corporate Overheads	0	0	0	0	0
Total Children's Services		200,448	203,963	3,515	2,254	1,261
MEMORANDUM: DEDICATED SCHOOLS GRANT - DSG Funded Expenditure (Gross)						
	Schools DSG	129,099	129,099	0	0	0
	High Needs DSG	88,440	114,588	26,148	21,262	4,886
	Early Years DSG	74,767	74,767	0	0	0
	Central DSG	5,154	5,154	0	0	0
Total DSG Funded Expenditure		297,460	323,608	26,148	21,262	4,886

Business Management & Monitoring Report : Oxfordshire Fire & Rescue Service and Community Safety
Position to the end of September 2024
Revenue Budget Monitoring

		Net Budget (Latest Estimate)	Projected Full Year Spend	Projected Year End Variance	Variance Last Cabinet Reporting Month	Change in Variance
		£000	£000	underspend- overspend+	£000	£000
CDA3	Community Safety					
COM4-1	Community Safety Management	0	0	0	0	0
COM4-2	Fire & Rescue	26,987	27,637	650	650	0
COM4-3	Emergency Planning	309	309	0	0	0
COM4-5	Trading Standards	1,381	1,381	0	0	0
Total Community Safety		28,676	29,326	650	650	0

Business Management & Monitoring Report : Public Health & Communities
Position to the end of September 2024
Revenue Budget Monitoring

		Net Budget (Latest Estimate)	Projected Full Year Spend	Projected Year End Variance	Variance Last Reported	Change in Variance
		£000	£000	underspend- overspend+	£000	£000
PH1	PH - Mandatory Functions	19,470	19,370	-100	-100	0
PH2	PH - Non Mandatory Functions	19,180	19,080	-100	-100	0
PH3	Public Health Recharges	577	577	0	0	0
PH4	Grant Income	-34,401	-34,401	0	0	0
	Transfer to Public Health Reserve	0	200	200	200	0
	Total Public Health	4,826	4,826	0	0	0
COD1-2	Homes for Ukraine	0	0	0	0	0
COD5-3	Libraries & Heritage	7,774	7,774	0	0	0
COD9-3	Migration	0	0	0	0	0
	Total Libraries & Heritage	7,774	7,774	0	0	0
	Total Public Health & Communities	12,600	12,600	0	0	0

Business Management & Monitoring Report: Economy and Place
Position to the end of September 2024
Revenue Budget Monitoring

		Net Budget (Latest Estimate)	Projected Full Year Spend	Projected Year End Variance	Variance Last Cabinet Reporting Month	Change in Variance
		£000	£000	underspend-overspend+	£000	£000
EP1	OXLEP	0	0	0	0	0
EP2	Economy	0	0	0	0	0
EP3	Strategic Planning	696	696	0	0	0
EP4	Climate Action	1,184	1,184	0	0	0
EP5	Place Making	-1,881	-1,881	0	0	0
EP6	Innovation	303	303	0	0	0
EP7	Senior Management Team	980	980	0	0	0
EP8	Business Performance & Services Improvement	496	496	0	0	0
Total Economy & Place		1,778	1,778	0	0	0

Business Management & Monitoring Report: Environment & Highways
Position to the end of September 2024
Revenue Budget Monitoring

		Net Budget (Latest Estimate)	Projected Full Year Spend	Projected Year End Variance	Variance Last Cabinet Reporting Month	Change in Variance
		£000	£000	underspend-overspend+	£000	£000
EH1	Infrastructure Delivery	1,243	1,243	0	0	0
EH2	Environment	37,066	37,066	0	0	0
EH3	Transport Policy	13,170	13,170	0	0	0
EH4	Highways & Maintenance	20,740	19,140	-1,600	-1,300	-300
EH5	Network Management	-6,361	-4,161	2,200	2,200	0
EH6	Supported Transport	1,875	1,875	0	0	0
EH7	Senior Management Team	279	279	0	0	0
EH8	Data Intelligence & Business Support	1,695	1,695	0	0	0
Total Environment & Highways		69,707	70,307	600	900	-300

Business Management & Monitoring Report: Resources and Law & Governance
Position to the end of September 2024
Revenue Budget Monitoring

		Net Budget (Latest Estimate)	Projected Full Year Spend	Projected Year End Variance	Variance Last Cabinet Reporting Month	Change in Variance
		£000	£000	underspend-overspend+	£000	£000
HRCCDIR	HR & Cultural Change	5,076	4,896	-180	-180	0
FCSDIR	Financial & Commercial Services	9,506	9,506	0	0	0
PADIR	Property & Assets	19,318	19,318	0	0	0
PAPPDIR	Public Affairs, Policy & Partnership	4,330	4,330	0	0	0
CORPDIR	Corporate Services	10,661	11,561	900	900	0
LGCRDIR	Law & Governance	8,878	9,478	600	600	0
Total Resources and Law & Governance		57,769	59,089	1,320	1,320	0

Business Management & Monitoring Report: Transformation, Digital & Customer Experience
Position to the end of September 2024
Revenue Budget Monitoring

		Net Budget (Latest Estimate)	Projected Full Year Spend	Projected Year End Variance	Variance Last Cabinet Reporting Month	Change in Variance
		£000	£000	underspend- overspend+	£000	£000
TDCE1	Delivery Unit	3,415	3,415	0	0	0
TDCE2	Customer Experience	3,437	3,437	0	0	0
TDCE3	Digital	0	0	0	0	0
TDCE4	Insight & Corporate Programmes	676	676	0	0	0
TDCE5	TDCE Management	176	176	0	0	0
Total Transformation, Digital & Customer Experience		7,704	7,704	0	0	0

Business Management Report
Position to the end of September 2024

CABINET IS RECOMMENDED TO APPROVE THE VIREMENTS AS DETAILED BELOW:

Directorate (CD = Cross Directorate)	Month of Cabinet meeting	Month of Directorate MMR	Narration	Budget Book Line	Service Area	Permanent / Temporary	Expenditure + increase / - decrease £000	Income - increase / + decrease £000
CD	Nov	Sept	Green Book Pay Award 2024/25 (back dated to 1 April 2024)	SCSMGT	Adults	P	1,496	
				CEFMGT	Children's	P	1,853	
				EHMGT	Environment & Highways	P	841	
				EPMGT	Economy & Place	P	297	
				FRCSMGT	OFRS & Community Safety	P	184	
				PHMGT	PH & Communities	P	332	
				RLGMGT	Resources, Law & Governance	P	1,273	
				TDCMGT	Transformation, Digital & Cust Exp	P	236	
				VSMMGT	Strategic Measures	P	-6,512	
CD	Nov	Sept	Reallocation of Children's Services demography to reflect current demand pressures between social care and transport	CEF1-4	Access to Learning	T	1,300	0
				CEF2-3	Childrens Social Care	T	-1,300	0
				EH6	Supported Transport	T	1,300	-1,300
Grand Total							1,300	-1,300

Business Management Report
Position to the end of September 2024

NEW VIREMENTS THAT HAVE BEEN ACTIONED FOR CABINET TO NOTE

Directorate (CD = Cross Directorate)	Month of Cabinet Meeting	Month of Directorate MMR	Narration	Budget Book Line	Service Area	Permanent / Temporary	Expenditure + increase / - decrease £000	Income - increase / + decrease £000
CS	Nov	Aug	Social Work Apprentices - Budget realignment - Move investment budget from holding code	CEF2-3	Childrens Social Care	P	-300	0
				CEF3-2	QA Safeguarding + Recruit + Retention	P	300	0
		Sept	Early Years SEN Intervention Team salaries	CEF1-2	SEND	P	124	-124
				CEF4-2	Early Years Funding Formula	P	-124	124
			To fund "Evaluate My School" for extending our Oxfordshire PRO licence to include EY settings	CEF1-2	SEND	T	10	-10
				CEF4-2	Early Years Funding Formula	T	-10	10
			YJB grant and PCC funding budget realignment	CEF3-1	Provider Services	P	-154	154
			NRM Grant 24.25	CEF3-1	Provider Services	T	48	-48
			A4C Contract - Reserve drawdown	CEF3-1	Provider Services	T	-77	77
AS	Nov	Aug	ASC Inflation Budget Reallocation 24/25 (Panel)	ACSNPOOL	Live Well Pool	P	190	-190
				BCFPOOL	Age Well Pool	P	11	-11
				SCS5	Pooled Budget Contributions	P	0	0
			DOLs assessment Adjustment	SCS1-2	Safeguarding & Mental Health	P	150	0
				SCS5	Pooled Budget Contributions	P	-150	0
			Panel Meeting Inflation reallocation	ACSNPOOL	Live Well Pool	P	117	-117
				BCFPOOL	Age Well Pool	P	56	-56
				SCS5	Pooled Budget Contributions	P	0	0
			Uplift to 24/25 budget for ECH Central costs	BCFPOOL	Age Well Pool	P	86	-86
				SCS5	Pooled Budget Contributions	P	0	0
		Sept	Panel Meeting Inflation reallocation & HIA uplift	ACSNPOOL	Live Well Pool	P	172	-172
				BCFPOOL	Age Well Pool	P	30	-30
				SCS5	Pooled Budget Contributions	P	0	0
EP	Nov	Aug	Realign budgets based on Accountable Officer assessment of activity.	EP5	Place Making	P	-407	407
SM	Nov	Sept	Strategic Measures Un-ringfenced grant budgets	VSMMGT	Strategic Measures	T	41	-41
CD	Nov	Aug	Head of Change move from CSI A21011 to HR BCE001	PAPPDIR	Public Affairs, Policy & Partnership	P	-94	0
				TDCEdir	Transformation, Digital & Customer Service	P	94	0
			Transformation projects and programs to cost centres from V00025 as agreed as part of the 24/25 budget setting	TDCEdir	Transformation, Digital & Customer Service	T	4,448	0
				VSMMGT	Strategic Measures	T	-4,448	0
		Sept	Allocate 25hrs post3259889 G8/9 scp26	CEF3-1	Provider Services	T	-30	0

Business Management Report
Position to the end of September 2024

NEW VIREMENTS THAT HAVE BEEN ACTIONED FOR CABINET TO NOTE

Directorate (CD = Cross Directorate)	Month of Cabinet Meeting	Month of Directorate MMR	Narration	Budget Book Line	Service Area	Permanent / Temporary	Expenditure + increase / - decrease £000	Income - increase / + decrease £000
				SCS2	Health Ed. & Social Care Commissioning	T	30	0
			Teacher Pay Award 2024-25	CEF1-2	SEND	P	6	0
				CEF1-9	Attendance	P	1	0
				VSMMGT	Strategic Measures	P	-7	0
			Top up of 22/23 pay award for Cleaning & Catering Staff	PADIR	Property & Assets	P	164	0
				VSMMGT	Strategic Measures	P	-164	0
EH	Nov	Aug	Budget Tidy NTH370	EH4	Highways & Maintenance	P	-640	640
		Sept	Move of OxTog team	EH2	Environment	T	-57	0
				EH4	Highways & Maintenance	T	57	0
PH & C	Nov	Aug	Local stop smoking services and support update	PH2	Public Health - Non-Mandatory Functions	P	5	-5
RLG	Nov	Aug	24-25 Virement CSI A21011 to HR ICOM001 - £5k Training	HRCCDIR	HR & Cultural Change	P	5	0
				PAPPDIR	Public Affairs, Policy & Partnership	P	-5	0
			Membership Subscription for New Local as agreed by Lorna & Martin to fund from A23000	CORPDIR	Corporate Services	P	-20	0
				PAPPDIR	Public Affairs, Policy & Partnership	P	20	0
Grand Total							-521	521

Business Management & Monitoring Report
Position to the end of September 2024
Earmarked Reserves

	2024/25			Description
	Balance at 1 April 2024	Forecast Movement	Forecast Balance at 31 March 2025	
	£m	£m	£m	
Revenue Grants Unapplied				
Grants and Contributions Reserve	33.7	-13.4	20.2	This reserve holds unspent ring-fenced grants and contributions committed to be spent in future years. This includes Public Health ringfenced grant and funding for the Homes for Ukraine Scheme in Oxfordshire.
Covid-19 Reserve	7.9	-3.8	4.1	This reserve is set up to meet ongoing and emerging pressures and longer term service demands arising from the COVID-19 Pandemic. The use of £6.1m funding from the reserve is built into the council's Medium Term Financial Plan agreed in February 2024. After taking account of the position at the end of 2023/24 £1.4m is uncommitted and available to support pressures.
Government Initiatives Reserve	3.2	-0.5	2.7	This reserve is used to hold underspends on budgets funded by unringfenced grants held that relate to specific agreed outcomes or the implementation of Government initiatives.
Subtotal Revenue Grants Unapplied	44.7	-17.6	27.1	
Corporate Priorities				
Budget Priorities Reserve	10.7	-9.2	1.6	This reserve is being used to support the implementation of the Council's priorities and the Medium Term Financial Strategy.
Transformation Reserve	1.8	3.2	5.0	This reserve is needed to fund the implementation costs of the Council's Transformation programme.
Zero Emissions Zone (ZEZ)	1.2	0.0	1.2	This reserve holds surpluses generated by Network Coordination for the development and expansion of the ZEZ in the future years.
Youth Provision Reserve	0.0	0.0	0.0	Funding for locality based youth provision
Commercial Pump Priming Reserve	0.0	2.0	2.0	This reserve is being used to support the Council's Commercial Strategy
Subtotal Corporate Priorities	13.8	-4.0	9.8	

Business Management & Monitoring Report
Position to the end of September 2024
Earmarked Reserves

	2024/25			Description
	Balance at 1 April 2024	Forecast Movement	Forecast Balance at 31 March 2025	
	£m	£m	£m	
Funding for Risk				
Insurance Reserve	10.3	0.0	10.3	This reserve covers the County Council for insurance claims that, based on the previous experience of the County Council, are likely to be received, as well as a number of insurance related issues.
Demographic Risk Reserve	17.0	4.0	21.0	In light of the significant pressures relating to High Needs DSG and other budgets with demographic volatility this reserve is being held to help manage demographic risk. The MTFS includes a budgeted contribution of £4.0m in each year.
Council Elections	0.6	0.2	0.8	This will be used to fund future elections. In years where no County Elections take place any underspend on the Council Elections budget will be transferred to this reserve.
Redundancy Reserve	2.4	2.5	4.8	This reserve is available to fund redundancy costs arising from Transformational Change.
Trading Accounts	0.1	-0.1	0.0	This reserve holds funds relating to traded activities to help manage volatility year to year or future investments.
Council Tax Collection Fund Reserve	3.0	-3.0	0.0	This reserve holds any surplus/ deficit as a result of income from council tax being more or less than originally estimated. This reserve has been replaced with the Collection Fund reserve in 2024/25.
Business Rates Reserve	11.7	-11.7	0.0	This reserve is to smooth the volatility of Business Rates income and to mitigate risk around future changes to Business Rates. This reserve has been replaced with the Collection Fund reserve in 2024/25.
Collection Fund Reserve	0.0	8.4	8.4	Create one new collection fund reserve and remove balances from Business Rates and CT reserves. Total includes £4.0m planned balance + additional Business Rates funding of £2.0m received in 2023/24 and a further £2.2m forecast additional funding in 2024/25.
IFRS 9 (Changes in the Value of Treasury Management Pooled Funds)	0.0	5.0	5.0	New reserve created as part of the 2024/25 budget to smooth the potential impact of IFRS9 (changes in the value of Treasury Management Pooled Funds at year end) which may otherwise impact on the revenue account if the statutory override which removes changes in their value from the accounts ends on 1 April 2025.
Subtotal Risk	45.0	5.3	50.2	

Business Management & Monitoring Report
Position to the end of September 2024
Earmarked Reserves

	2024/25			Description
	Balance at 1 April 2024	Forecast Movement	Forecast Balance at 31 March 2025	
	£m	£m	£m	
Capital & Equipment				
Capital Reserves	80.8	-16.2	64.7	<p>This reserve has been established for the purpose of financing capital expenditure in future years. Drawdown will be confirmed later in the year.</p> <p>This reserve is to fund future replacements of vehicles and equipment.</p> <p>Funding held to meet the costs of self-financing schemes which require pump priming until the funds are returned. Agreed to be used to support the following schemes as part of the 2023/24 budget: Low Carbon Business Travel Project (grey fleet) £0.8m, Energy Efficiency Recycling Fund for OCC Maintained Schools £0.8m, Initial funding to develop plans for the workplace charging levy £0.2m.</p>
Vehicle and Equipment Reserve	4.1	-1.0	3.1	
Investment Pump Priming Reserve	0.1	0.0	0.1	
Subtotal Capital & Equipment	85.1	-17.2	67.9	
Other Reserves				
Schools' Reserves	13.0	0.0	13.0	<p>In accordance with the Education Reform Act 1988, the scheme of Local Management of Schools provides for the carry forward of individual schools surpluses and deficits. These reserves are committed to be spent on schools.</p> <p>Other School Reserves cover a number of miscellaneous education activities, including amounts loaned to individual schools against school reserves, and School Partnership Accounts which are operated in respect of inter-school activities.</p> <p>This relates to funding for the Growth Deal</p> <p>This surplus has arisen under the operation of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 (section 55). The purposes for which these monies can be used are defined by statute.</p>
Partnership Reserves	2.1	-0.3	1.7	
On Street Car Parking Reserve	6.5	-2.2	4.3	
Subtotal Other Reserves	21.6	-2.5	19.0	
Total Earmarked Reserves	210.1	-36.2	174.0	

Business Management & Monitoring Report
Position to the end of September 2024
Earmarked Reserves

	2024/25			Description
	Balance at 1 April 2024 £m	Forecast Movement £m	Forecast Balance at 31 March 2025 £m	
DSG Unusable Reserve *	-45.6	-26.1	-71.7	* total excluding postive balances (eg. new schools set up fund offset by High Needs Deficit)
DSG High Needs deficit within Unusable Reserve *	-55.8	-26.1	-81.9	
Total Earmarked Reserves after DSG Unusable Reserve	164.5	-62.3	102.3	

Business Management Report
Position to the end of September 2024
Government Grants 2024/25

Ringfenced	Directorate	Issued By	Estimate 2024/25	In year Adjustments / New Allocations previously reported	In year Adjustments/ New Allocations reported this time	Latest Allocation
			£000	£000	£000	£000
R	Adult Services					
	Improved Better Care Fund	DHSC	10,705	0	0	10,705
	Adult Social Care Market Sustainability and Improvement Fund	DHSC	10,026	0	0	10,026
	Adult Social Care Discharge Fund	DHSC	1,501	1,000	0	2,501
	TOTAL ADULT SERVICES		22,232	1,000	0	23,232
R	Children's Services					
	Dedicated School Grants					
	Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) - Schools Block	DfE	132,163	-3,721	0	128,442
	Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) - Central Block	DfE	5,153	1	0	5,154
	Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) - Early Years Block	DfE	73,221	386	0	73,607
	Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) - High Needs Block	DfE	89,405	81	0	89,486
	Subtotal DSG Grants		299,942	-3,253	0	296,689
	School Grants					
	Pupil Premium	DfE	8,194	-122	0	8,072
	Education Funding Agency - Sixth Form Funding and Threshold	DfE	321	0	0	321
	PE and Sport Grant	DfE	2,217	0	0	2,217
	Universal Infant Free School Meals	DfE	4,047	0	0	4,047
	Teacher's Pay Grant	DfE	0	0	0	0
	Teacher's Pension Grant	DfE	10	0	2,342	2,352
	Recovery Premium Grant	DfE	0	0	137	137
	National Tutoring Grant	DfE	0	0	96	96
	Teacher's Pay Additional Grant	DfE	0	0	1,684	1,684
	ESFA Training Grant	DfE	0	0	19	19
	Early Years Supplement Grant	DfE	0	0	0	0
	Subtotal School Grants		14,789	-122	4,278	18,945

Business Management Report
Position to the end of September 2024
Government Grants 2024/25

Ringfenced	Directorate	Issued By	Estimate 2024/25	In year Adjustments / New Allocations previously reported	In year Adjustments/ New Allocations reported this time	Latest Allocation
			£000	£000	£000	£000
	Other Children's Services Grants					
	<u>Education</u>					
R	Role of Virtual School Heads to children with a social worker	DfE	0	0	88	88
R	Multiply	DfE	0	0	717	717
R	Music Service	AC	844	0	0	844
R	<u>Social Care</u>					
R	Youth Justice Grant	YJB	704	0	9	713
R	Asylum (UASC and Post 18)	HO	4,636	1,335	0	5,971
R	Extended Personal Adviser Duty Grant - Care Leavers Staffing	DfE	112	0	0	112
R	Staying Put Implementation Grant - Fostering Main	DfE	288	0	0	288
R	Remand Framework	YJB	37	0	0	37
R	Reducing Parental Conflict Workforce Development Grant	DWP	0	60	0	60
R	Matching project - Adoption Grant	DfE	0	114	0	114
R	Holiday Activities and Food Programme	DfE	0	1,547	0	1,547
R	Family Group Conferences	DfE	0	178	0	178
R	Turnaround Programme	YJB	0	150	20	170
R	Child Decision Making Pilots (NRM)	HO	0	48	0	48
R	Fostering Recruitment Support Hub Mobilisation	DfE	0	42	0	42
R	Employer Support Fund - Social Work Apprenticeships	DfE	0	2	0	2
U	Implementation of Supported Accommodation Reforms	DfE	299	691	-990	0
	Subtotal Other Children's Services Grants		6,920	4,167	-156	10,931
	TOTAL CHILDREN'S SERVICES		321,651	792	4,122	326,565

Business Management Report
Position to the end of September 2024
Government Grants 2024/25

Page 302

Ringfenced	Directorate	Issued By	Estimate 2024/25 £000	In year Adjustments / New Allocations previously reported £000	In year Adjustments/ New Allocations reported this time £000	Latest Allocation £000
R	Economy & Place					
R	Zero Emissions Transport City		0	0	187	187
R	LEP		0	0	615	615
R	OBS		0	0	205	205
	TOTAL ECONOMY & PLACE		0	0	1,007	1,007
R	Environment & Highways					
R	Bus Service Operators Grant	DfT	309	0	0	309
R	Natural England	DEFRA	227	0	0	227
R	PMO	H&GD	70	0	0	70
R	LNRS Natural Environment	NE	0	111	0	111
R	Active travel	ATE	0	90	0	90
R	Capability & Ambition Fund	ATE	0	1,136	0	1,136
R	Bus Service Improvement Plan	DfT	0	0	3,564	3,564
	TOTAL ENVIRONMENT & HIGHWAYS		606	1,337	3,564	5,507
R	Public Health & Communities					
R	Public Health Grant	DHSC	34,401	0	0	34,401
R	Local Stop Smoking Grant	DHSC	790	5	0	795
R	Homes for Ukraine	DLUHC	0	0	0	0
	TOTAL PUBLIC HEALTH & COMMUNITIES		35,191	5	0	35,196

Business Management Report
Position to the end of September 2024
Government Grants 2024/25

Ringfenced	Directorate	Issued By	Estimate 2024/25	In year Adjustments / New Allocations previously reported	In year Adjustments/ New Allocations reported this time	Latest Allocation
			£000	£000	£000	£000
R	Fire & Rescue Service and Community Safety					
	Fire Fighter's Pension Fund Grant	DLUHC	1,061	0	0	1,061
	Fire Fighter's Pension Fund Admin Grant	DLUHC	75	0	0	75
	Fire Protection Uplift Grant	DLUHC	303	-51	0	252
	Fire Fighter's New Dimensions Grant	DLUHC	40	0	0	40
	TOTAL FIRE & RESCUE and COMMUNITY SAFETY		1,479	-51	0	1,428
	Resources and Law & Governance					
						0
	TOTAL RESOURCES and LAW & GOVERNANCE		0	0	0	0
	Transformation, Digital & Customer Experience					
						0
	TOTAL TRANSFORMATION, DIGITAL & CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE		0	0	0	0
	Strategic Measures					
U	Lead Local Flood Authority	DEFRA	45	-45		0
U	Extended Rights to Free Travel	DfE	278	707		985
U	Firelink	DLUHC	213	-126		87
U	New Homes Bonus	DLUHC	1,700	-26		1,674
U	Local Reform & Community Voices Grant	DfE	328	0		328
U	Social Care in Prisons Grant	DfE	183			183
U	War Pensions Disregard Grant	DfE	4			4
U	Social Care Support Grant (including Independent Living Fund)	DLUHC	42,443			42,443
U	Services Grant	DfE	444	58		502
U	Supplementary Substance Misuse Treatment & Recovery Grant	OHID	635	501		1,136

Business Management Report
Position to the end of September 2024
Government Grants 2024/25

Ringfenced	Directorate	Issued By	Estimate 2024/25	In year Adjustments / New Allocations previously reported	In year Adjustments/ New Allocations reported this time	Latest Allocation
			£000	£000	£000	£000
U	Supplementary Substance Misuse Treatment & Recovery Housing Grant	OHID	622			622
U	Supplementary Substance Misuse Inpatient Detox & Rehabilitation	OHID	80			80
U	Rough Sleeping Drugs & Alcohol Grant	DLUHC	1,140			1,140
U	Domestic Abuse Duty Grant	DLUHC	1,151	38		1,189
U	Individual Placement and Support in community drug and alcohol treatment	OHID	228			228
U	Supporting Families - previously Troubled Families	DfE	1,048	245		1,293
U	Leaving Care Allowance Uplift Grant	DfE	0	136		136
U	Rough sleeping strategy - Care Leavers	DfE	0	95		95
U	Implementation of Supported Accommodation Reforms	DfE	0	0	990	990
U	Wraparound Childcare Programme	DfE	0	0	2,110	2,110
U	Financial Reporting Grant	DLUHC	0		41	41
	Subtotal Strategic Measures		50,541	1,583	3,140	55,264
	Business Rates					
U	Section 31 Grant for Business Rate Compensation	DLUHC	19,945	1,289		21,234
U	Business Rates S31 Grant Top-Up	DLUHC	42,128			42,128
U	Revenue Support Grant	DLUHC	1,394	141		1,535
	Subtotal Business Rates		63,467	1,430	0	64,897
	Grants held on behalf of Local Enterprise Partnership					
R	Dept for Business & Trade funding	BEIS	261		-261	0
R	DfE Skills Bootcamp funding	DLUHC	2,696		-2,696	0
	Subtotal Grants held on behalf of Local Enterprise Partnership		2,957	0	-2,957	0
	TOTAL STRATEGIC MEASURES		116,965	3,013	183	120,161
	Total All Grants		498,124	6,096	8,876	513,097

Business Management Report
Position to the end of September 2024
Government Grants 2024/25

Ringfenced			Esimate 2024/25	In year Adjustments / New Allocations previously reported	In year Adjustments/ New Allocations reported this time	Latest Allocation
	Directorate	Issued By	£000	£000	£000	£000

R Ringfenced grant
U Un-ringfenced grant

Issued by

HO Home Office

DHSC Department of Health & Social Care

DfT Department for Transport

DfE Department for Education

DLUHC Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities
BEIS Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy
OHID Office for Health Improvement and Disparities
DEFRA Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
AC Arts Council
YJB Youth Justice Board
NDTi National Development team for Inclusion

Business Management & Monitoring Report
Position to the end of September 2024
General Revenue Balances

	Forecast 2024/25	
	£m	£m
General Balances: Outturn 2023/24	42.026	
County Fund Balance		42.026
Planned Contribution from Balances (February 2024)		-3.700
Planned Contribution from Balances (June 2024)		-5.800
Original forecast outturn position 2023/24		32.526
Additions		0.000
Calls on balances deducted		0.000
Automatic calls on/returns to balances		0.000
Additional Strategic Measures		0.000
Net General Balances		32.526
Calls on / returns to balances requested in this report		0.000
Forecast Variation at Year End		
Less forecast (overspend)/underspend (as set out in Annex 1)		1.313
Forecast Outturn position		33.839
Risk Assessed Level of Balances for 2024/25		30.200
Surplus/(deficit) balances compared to risk assessed level		3.6

Annex C – Overview of Climate Action Programme 2024/25 Delivery Plan

The table below provides an overview of the actions included in the 2024/25 delivery plan for the Climate Action Programme, across its three pillars:

- Becoming a climate active council
- Decarbonising our estate and operations by 2030
- Enabling Oxfordshire's transition to net zero.

Climate Action Programme 2024/25 delivery plan		
Becoming a climate active council		RAG
Expand Carbon Literacy training – targeting silver status	Head of Climate Action / Organisational Development	A
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • OCC is currently behind in its ambition to reach Silver Accreditation as a Carbon Literate Organisation. • 367 staff have now completed the nationally recognised Carbon Literacy Training since 2021. • 8 staff are now trained to deliver Carbon Literacy Training, up from 7 in 2023/24. • A scoping paper has been prepared to chart a pathway to attaining Silver Accreditation. • Staff capacity has been allocated following filling a vacancy and 12 training sessions will be delivered in Q4. 		
Decarbonising our estate and operations by 2030		RAG
Deliver Carbon Management Plan 2022-30: planned actions for 2024/25 (estate, fleet, highway assets and staff travel)	Director of Property and Assets / Head of Climate Action	A
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Carbon Management Plan 2022-30 is being reviewed following conversation with portfolio member to update projections of residual emissions. • The majority of carbon savings to date have come from the streetlighting LED conversion programme which is now complete. • The property decarbonisation works – delayed in 23/24 - have now entered a design and build contract to deliver nearly all of the works. These are currently in the design stage with substantial activity taking place across the summer and output for the first 19 sites expected to be coming to the relevant governance process in October and November, with delivery to start following relevant approval. • £30 million of capital investment is agreed in the capital programme (this includes external capital grant funding) to support the decarbonisation and resilience of the council's fleet and property. This investment will reduce emissions by a further 64% compared to 2019/20 over the next three years. • Currently a second phase of property decarbonisation works of £20 million is in the capital pipeline (unfunded) and will be requested to come forward into the capital programme. This cost is now around £25.5 million, as we have more detailed information from energy audits. It is predicted to help reduce corporate emissions by a further 38% compared to 2025/26. • Options to fast-track delivery for property and fleet decarbonisation works by 2028 are being explored. This will not increase the overall funding envelope for the programme but would require front loading of funding allocations from 2025-2027. • Electrification of our fleet vehicles has continued and there are now 55 fully electric vehicles in the fleet. 99 vehicles are due to be exchanged in year. 		

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The key risks identified include delays in the property decarbonisation and fleet replacement programmes (which is currently reporting an amber status against the 99 vehicle deliveries in 24/25) and the need for additional funding. 		
Developing a carbon insetting/offsetting strategy and action plan for the council's own estate	Head of Climate Action	G
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work is underway to assess the council's offsetting requirements. This has identified a range of offset options with significant variability in pricing. It has also identified that the market around offsets is very constrained. A number of options including commercial investments in schemes such as biochar, solar generation and our ability to allocate these credits to our estate will be investigated. An early budget proposal for 2025/26 has been submitted for limited forward purchasing of offset credits through a nationally accredited schemes like the Woodland Carbon Code (WCC). The key risks identified are the limited availability of accredited offsets in the market and underdeveloped options for insetting using carbon reduction schemes. Mitigation of these factors will be central to the completed Strategy and Action Plan. There is also work taking place with the Local Nature Partnership to look how partners can catalyse more woodland carbon code accredited schemes coming to market in Oxfordshire. 		
Support schools through providing Action on Carbon and Energy in Schools (ACES) programme and deliver and evaluate success of loan scheme	Head of Climate Action	G
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The ACES programme funded by the Council is now in its third year. It continues to provide valuable support to schools in implementing energy-saving measures to reduce carbon emissions. Since April 2024, the programme has completed 8 energy assessments, with 3 more scheduled for November, working toward the annual target of 15. Additionally, ACES has completed 1 detailed energy assessment, with 2 more planned, aiming to reach their target of 5 for the 2024/25 period. For the coming school year, ACES will focus on providing 1-to-1 support for 12 schools to further improve energy efficiency efforts. The Schools Energy Efficiency Loan Scheme has seen strong demand, with all funding (£800k) now allocated in principle. This funding will support energy efficiency improvements and energy generation projects across 14 schools. During the summer of 2024, 5 schools completed installations of photovoltaic (PV) panels and LED lighting to boost energy efficiency and provide energy generation. The remaining 9 schools are scheduled to carry out similar projects in Q3 and Q4 of the 2024/25 period, further contributing to carbon reduction efforts. A capital budget proposal to expand the energy efficiency schools loan scheme has been submitted, which would allow roll out across the majority of maintained schools providing energy efficiency upgrades and renewable energy installations. The key risks identified are limited school staffing capacity, which may prevent schools from utilising ACES support or completing loan scheme projects. ACES is due to be retendered this year. 		

Expand Scope 3 greenhouse gas reporting (supply chain emissions) and develop emissions reduction roadmaps with key suppliers (Scope 3)	Head of Procurement Contract Management	G
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We are working to increase the number of suppliers within the greenhouse gas reporting for OCC. Four suppliers have been included in 2023/24 year's report Annex 3. An activity-based data approach has been taken. An initial supply chain emission estimation was made for 2020/21 expenditure data, which allowed for the identification of emissions hotspots within the supply chain, and higher emitting suppliers. Top emitting suppliers are being targeted to provide actual emissions, which then replace the expenditure-based estimation. Our ability to progress in including more suppliers in our reporting largely depends on the relative readiness different suppliers (and sectors) have for collecting the required data and the capabilities they have to calculate the corresponding emissions. One particular success has been the acquisition of activity-based data from the Oxford Bus Company. This has allowed the team to reflect the transition of the Oxford Bus Company's fleet over to fully electric, which reduces emissions, rather than using emissions data from an average bus company in the UK as a proxy. A more efficient way of collecting this activity-based data is being developed (e.g. an online questionnaire) and reporting is also being encouraged among SMEs within Oxfordshire that are part of the OCC supply chain (approximately 12% of OCC suppliers are registered in Oxfordshire). 		
Develop process and toolkit to manage carbon in infrastructure projects	Director of Environment and Highways / Head of Climate Action	G
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Since June we have conducted a series of workshops with transport infrastructure, highways, property, procurement, planning, policy and leadership teams to understand OCC's position in relation to PAS2080 (framework principles of whole life carbon management in OCC's capital programme) which have been summarised in a PAS2080 Gaps report. An implementation plan will be developed as part of the gap analysis exercise, which will be finalised and submitted for OCC leadership approval by December 2024. 		
Enabling Oxfordshire's transition to net zero (linked to PAZCO)		
Transport and connectivity		RAG
Implement Local Transport and Connectivity Plan (LTCP), including embodied carbon policy	Director of Environment and Highways	A
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Following adoption of the LTCP in July 2022 work has been ongoing to progress and implement the policies in the LTCP. This has included the following since Q1 of 2024: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Approval of the Strategic Active Travel Network Progressing Phase 2 School Streets at 5 schools Adoption of the Vision Zero Strategy and Action Plan Adoption of the New Bus Service Improvement Plan Launch of the new countywide, multi-operator MyBus ticket Ongoing work to deliver a Horizon Europe funded project (Green-log) for a freight consolidation pilot in Oxford, with demonstration commencing in Winter 2024 		

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Central Oxfordshire Movement and Place Framework and development commenced. • Ongoing delays to the reopening of the Botley Road have impacted the rollout of traffic filters and other central Oxford schemes within the LTCP. • Overall, the LTCP monitoring report shows that there has been some positive progress against KPIs compared to last year. This includes an increase in bus and rail usage and a reduction of car trips and road fatalities or serious injuries. • However, cycle trips have declined, and cycle, bus and rail usage all remain lower than the 2019 baseline. Similarly, private car related measures such as vehicle miles have continued to increase following the COVID-19 pandemic. This has been accompanied by a small increase in road transport emissions. • The LTCP monitoring report also notes challenges around government's approach to funding delivery, which requires significant work to identify and bid for individual opportunities, thus impacting OCC's ability to deliver on the LTCP. 		
Evaluate and extend car-share schemes enabling reduced vehicle ownership, subject to receiving grant funding	Lead Technologist – EV Integration	A
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • OCC launched an Electric Vehicle (EV) car club pilot in April 2024 with 10 shared EVs based at Park and Charge hubs in towns and villages around the county (plus one in Oxford) • The project received no council or grant funding and car clubs have been delivered at the risk and cost of car club operators Co Wheels, Zimbl, Enterprise CarClub and Thame EV Hire • Some cars saw little usage and were removed during the pilot, others have seen significant usage and have remained in place, and EVs have also been added at new locations. • Overall, the first year saw 1,000 new car club members/users join, more than 3,000 individual hiring sessions take place and over 165,000 electric miles driven. As a result, pilot was extended by 6 months. • Recent conversations with partner councils and car club providers suggest that 11 of the car club vehicles will continue beyond the pilot end date in October, with 4 new locations also being added. • The main stumbling block with the project is a lack of funding and dedicated resource to continue work on this beyond the pilot and scale up an equitable roll out of car clubs across the county. • As the pilot has proven demand for car clubs outside of the city, next steps should be that we put a project/programme of works together and identify resources and funding to further expand the car club network as part of achieving our Net Zero goals and LTCP target of reducing 1 in 4 car trips. 		
Delivery of Oxfordshire Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Strategy through the OxLEVI programme	Team Leader – EV Integration	A
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The OXLEVI programme is set to deliver at least 1,200 public EV chargers and 500 cable gullies across Oxfordshire by the end of 2026 • Procurement is underway with final ITT documents near completion and awaiting final sign off from all partners and the funders, the Office for Zero Emission Vehicles (OZEV) • Pending OZEV approval, we are due to tender for two chargepoint operator (CPO) concession contracts and a cable gully supplier in October 2024, leading to contract award in February 2025 and contract start in March 2025 • Procurement of CPOs has been delayed due to the need to use open tender approach rather than the Oxford DPS, due to a legal challenge around the legitimacy 		

<p>of using frameworks to procure high value concession contracts. This has affected many other local authorities and their LEVI plans.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The greatest risk at present is a delay in getting sign off from OZEV and the tender having to go out under new procurement regulations after 28 October. 		
Buildings		RAG
Delivery of retrofit innovation programmes – Clean Heat Streets, Oxfordshire Energy Insights Project	Head of Climate Action	A
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> OCC's Energy Systems & Investment team has been working on the Alternative Energy Markets programme, funded by DESNZ. The Energy Saver App was launched in July 2024, offering energy insights to residents across Oxfordshire with a smart meter, plus the offer of smart technology to a select group of app users later in the year. The project is built on an innovative Intelligent Smart Energy Engine that is able to assess and recommend a combined tariff and technology offer, personalised for app users to their energy profile. The project aims to see c. 500 households be offered heat pumps, batteries, and solar PV, testing the impact of modelled tariffs not currently available on the market on the take up of energy smart appliances. The offer will be on a monthly fee basis, removing a significant barrier to adoption. The app has surpassed 1,000 downloads, however, we require many more active users in order to drive the other innovative elements of the trial. This therefore continues to be promoted both internally and externally to increase uptake. On the Clean Heat Streets project, part of the Heat Pump Ready programme, funded by DESNZ, a celebration event was held at Rose Hill community centre to update the local community and stakeholders with progress one year on from the start of the programme. Clean Heat Streets is the only one of the original four projects in the programme which is continuing to successfully deliver heat pumps to local communities. 150 homes registered for a free survey, of which 130 qualified. Heat pumps have been installed in 20 homes to date. 		
Expand retrofit delivery to homes in fuel poverty – complete Home Upgrade Grant 2 and apply for Local Authority Retrofit Scheme	Head of Climate Action	G
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> OCC was awarded over £6 million of capital retrofit grants through a government-backed scheme, Home Upgrade Grant phase 2 (HUG2). The purpose of this scheme is to tackle fuel poverty by upgrading the worst performing off-gas grid domestic properties. We are currently in the second, and final year of the HUG2 scheme. Delivery has scaled in year two and we have distributed £1.2 million since April. The next phase of funding from central government the 'Local Warmth fund' has now been announced with further detail expected in the autumn statement. Officers intend to put in an Expression of Interest to this scheme which is due to run for 3-5 years. 		
Input into the development of strong local planning policy driving environmental outcomes	Head of Strategic Planning	G
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> OCC is currently responding to the emerging District and City Local Plans, and also providing advice to strategic sites and Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects. Since September 2024 the Climate Team has responded to the National Planning Policy Framework Consultation and the South East Strategic Reservoir Option 		

<p>consultation, and worked with the Strategic Planning team to promote the inclusion of climate action in the delivery of various strategic sites.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> OCC is responsible for the production of the Local Nature Recovery Strategy for Oxfordshire by July 2025. The Biodiversity & Nature Recovery team has taken the lead in its production. The document is at an advanced stage and we are preparing to undertake a final consultation with partners prior to full public consultation. The Biodiversity & Nature Recovery team continues to work through the planning process on an ongoing basis to ensure positive outcomes for biodiversity, protected spaces and Biodiversity Net Gain. The Strategic Planning team coordinated submission of OCC's statements to the Oxford City Local Plan Examination Hearing Sessions. This reiterated our position that the Examination needs to carefully review the proposed spatial strategy to ensure the most sustainable patterns of development are brought forward, which will have positive implications on climate action. The Strategic Planning team also submitted responses to highlight the need for improved governance with the City's Community Infrastructure Levy allocations to support delivery of OCC projects such as active travel and other sustainable transport modes. 		
Energy		RAG
In partnership, delivery of Local Energy Oxfordshire Neighbourhoods (LEO-N) expanding our work on smart community energy systems	Head of Climate Action / Consortium	R
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This is currently rated as red as the partners submission for a follow up programme to LEO programme: LEON, to the Strategic Infrastructure Fund of OfGEM was not successful. Deliverables intended to be funded by LEON that are critical to the Oxfordshire Local Area Energy Plan (OxLAEP), such as the integration of neighbourhood-level energy plans and community energy focus were strengthened in the LAEP tender specifications prior to going to market. The LEO-N project partners remain committed to the project, and OFGEM has confirmed that a resubmission is possible. This will be explored in line with feedback received from the bid submission. OCC and Oxford City Council have carried out a gap analysis to determine alternative pathways for the delivery of strategic LEO-N outputs, including opportunities under council service planning, and alternative funding sources. This work is ongoing. 		
Development and delivery of Local Area Energy plan for County	Head of Climate Action / FOP Infrastructure Advisory Group	G
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Future Oxfordshire Partnership agreed to allocate OxLAEP a budget of £600,000, in alignment with OxLAEP Outline Business Case Option 4: five district level LAEPs plus County-wide report, to be delivered by December 2025. Following the FOP decision at the end of July 2024 and permission to go to market through the Oxfordshire Commercial Board, OCC hosted two pre-procurement Open Days, attended by over 20 organisations. Officers from the OCC Climate Action Team worked with the County Procurement and Legal teams to issue the tender documentation on 21 August 2024. The ITT will close on 30 September 2024, and the contract is expected to start in mid-December 2024. 		

Development of green finance workstreams including Oxfordshire green prospectus, finance strategy, Green Bond and 2025 100together green finance conference	Head of Finance / Various	G
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> OCC has been working with Abundance Investment to explore green bonds. The development of a Green Prospectus is also underway, led by OxLEP. 31Ten have been appointed as the leaders of a small consortium which will support with the development of the prospectus. The 100together programme is continuing, with a networking event hosted by Lady Margaret Hall taking place in early September 2024. A date has been confirmed for the next conference, which will be held in June 2025. 		
Waste and consumption (circular economy)		RAG
Develop Oxfordshire circular economy strategy	Head of Environment and Circular Economy	A
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work on the Circular Economy Strategy was stalled for a while due to a lack of resource, although restarted in October 2024. A final strategy is expected to be ready for approval in May 2025 		
Delivery of strong climate outcomes in the Minerals and Waste Local Plan	Head of Strategic Planning	G
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The adopted Minerals and Waste Local Plan, and its policies have been used in the determination of 17 Minerals and Waste planning applications which includes policies to ensure strong climate outcomes A review is underway to assess progress alongside a proposed new system for plan making. The team have been successful in bidding for Central Government funding for a new Sustainability Officer role within the team A Climate Impact Assessment tool is being explored which can be used to strategically assess minerals and waste sites. 		
Adaptation and resilience		RAG
Convene multiagency underwater summit to review 2023-24 Oxfordshire flooding to scope pre-emptive action to reduce harm from future recurrence	Director of Public Affairs, Policy and Partnerships	G
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We are organising a round table with stakeholders in late November on water and flood resilience. It follows on from the water summit hosted by the county council in November 2022 and is designed to develop a shared understanding across different sectors about approaches to flood resilience in Oxfordshire, including how we can reduce incidents of flooding through nature-based and landscape-scale solutions. 		
Develop an adaptation strategy which incorporates the role of people, nature and technology in adapting and building resilience	Head of Climate Action	G
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sustainability West Midlands was commissioned in May 2024 to support the development of the Oxfordshire Climate Adaptation Route Map. The specification for the Route Map was agreed with the FOP Environment Advisory Group which is part-funding the Route Map. Two workshops were held as part of the Route Map development process both in terms of capacity building, and to engage stakeholders directly on the issues facing the county and the content of the Route Map 		

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Approximately 20 one-to-one interviews with internal and external stakeholders were also held to obtain information on adaptation activities which are already underway across the county, and candid views of the scope of the Route Map. A survey was also shared with a wider stakeholder group. The draft Climate Adaptation Route Map has been received and reviewed internally and by stakeholders. A risk on the effects on Climate Change has been added to the council's Strategic Risk Register A Storymap has been developed to summarise the Extreme Value Analysis carried out by Atkins, and provides a visual indication of the hazard exposure and risks facing communities across Oxfordshire under different future warming scenarios. This tool will be used to help local groups understand the risks they face in their areas (extreme heat, flooding, and what mitigation steps they can take. An Adaptation Summit is scheduled for February 2025, with the intention of discussing and disseminating the actions from the Adaptation Route Map among a wider range of stakeholders. 		
Extend pilot flood wardens' engagement programme	Principal Officer – Flood Risk Management	G
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A flood warden pilot scheme was established by the Flood Risk Management Team following approvals from the Steering Group and ran for 6 months up to the end of March 2024. This involved three areas across the county that identified groups that could be trained to undertake flood warden duties. The three areas were Witney, Ascott Under Wychwood and Sunningwell. At the end of the pilot scheme a survey was sent to all the flood wardens to provide feedback. 100% positive feedback was received, and in July 2024 approval was given to move the scheme to business as usual and roll the scheme out to other areas across the county. Following this a list of potential areas for initial rollout was developed, the first being Abingdon. This will involve approaching parish/ town councils/ local flood groups in the areas to help advertise for volunteers. Training will then be arranged with the volunteers and link into any other community-based work. Advertisements for volunteers in Abingdon have already been released, and a training session will run September – October 2024. 		
Natural environment		RAG
Develop Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) for Oxfordshire, integrating with adaptation strategy	Principal Biodiversity Officer	G
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> From February to March 2024 the team held 12 workshops, 2 engagement events, and 1 online survey covering a 40-day period, involving over 1,000 people. The responses from this engagement have been analysed to get an understanding of top priorities from nature recovery in the county. In May 2024 a public webinar was held to present a summary of the outcomes from the survey and workshops. Over 120 people joined the call and more watched the recording. LNRS launched a mapping tool to identify local places where landowners and organisations were willing to improve or create habitats so the strategy can align with 'willingness' to increase the likelihood that the future recommendations are delivered. Over 170 individual locations were added and 15-20 emails were sent to us with mapped areas that covered larger areas of the county. 		

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The LNRS partnership has developed the maps, and statutory documents based on local priorities and strategies and these are being prepared to be sent to local authorities, Natural England, and OCC for approval to go online for public consultation between October – November 2024. 		
Develop biodiversity net gain policy	Principal Biodiversity Officer	G
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This work stream has been on hold since April 2024 due to insufficient staff resource. Work has begun again from September 2024 onwards. Next steps are to report against Biodiversity Actions in 2024, finish drafting the Biodiversity Action Framework and to develop a Biodiversity Action Plan for 2025 these work areas will be the focus up to December 2024. 		
Working with Natural Capital Investment Group for LNP to develop offset model for Oxfordshire	Oxfordshire Local Nature Partnership Manager	G
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Draft nature market principles and framework draft are substantially progressed, drawing on British Standards Institution (BSI) nature markets framework and existing Oxford Offset Principles; currently assessing inseting strategy (whether to create in-house or utilise potential future BSI/market standard). Expecting to be in near final form (subject to stakeholder review) by end of October 2024. Two potential sites identified and discussions progressing with landowners; one site to test application of nature-based Wilder Carbon standard and another for potential woodland creation project delivering carbon benefits alongside biodiversity and flood protection benefit. Developing an investment fund that would stimulate revenue-generating, financially self-sustaining projects that deliver measurable benefits to biodiversity in alignment with the LNRS. 		
Deliver tree replacement programme, including development of County-wide partnerships and collaborations to increase tree cover.	Head of Environment and Circular Economy / Principal Officer - Arboriculture	G
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As of April 2024 all Tree Aftercare & Planting Service (TAPS) posts have been fully recruited. The Sutton Farm workshop refurbishment has been completed, providing a viable storage and workspace for the TAPS team. Between May and August 2024, in-house aftercare and watering visits were undertaken by TAPS (>700 trees) and Tree Guardians / Community Groups (>80 trees). The Tree Planting feedback form was launched and promoted, and shows that 95% of respondents were pleased to see that OCC is planting trees, and that 96% of respondents who have seen trees being planted give the quality of planting a 4+ rating out of 5. Tree planting locations have been identified for this season (December 2024 – March 2025) and shared with internal stakeholders (OCC staff) and external stakeholders (parish councils, town councils, and OCC councillors). Letter drops have been made to residents with more than 10 trees planted on their street to raise awareness of the scheme. 		
Community support and engagement		RAG
Develop new climate engagement and comms strategy and activity	Head of Climate Action	G
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Climate Engagement Route Map is currently in development. A desktop/literature review has been completed to understand existing policies, partnerships and climate engagement/ survey results. 		





<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We are currently in the participatory phase of information gathering to provide an evidence-base for the route map. This phase consists of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A Knowledge, Attitudes and Practices (KAP) survey which was produced and circulated, and now has over 1,000 responses. Policy Lab research on minority groups in climate action Internal Geographical Information Systems mapping of second language data Embedding ourselves within the community at events and meetings with the Community Action Groups (CAG) and Oxfordshire Local Nature Recovery Partnership Oxfordshire Local Nature Partnership (OLNP) to listen and understand. This will launch us into the route map drafting in early 2025. 		
Continue to support scale up of Community Action Group (CAG) network	Head of Environment and Circular Economy	G
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The CAG annual report for 2023/24 has been delivered. The report showed doubling of events and volunteer hours, indicating that the network continues to grow from strength to strength. 		
Partnership and Strategy		RAG
Support the creation of a Zero Carbon Oxfordshire Climate Partnership	Head of Climate Action	G
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work is underway to expand the Zero Carbon Oxford Partnership to a county-wide partnership. A Steering Group meeting was held in October 2024 to make key decisions about the formation of the new partnership, including name, branding and governance structure. 		
Play an active role in networks to promote OCC's work and lobby government	Various	G
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> OCC was nominated for the National Council or Local Authority of the Year at the Energy Efficiency Awards 2024. Members of the Climate Action Team have attended and spoken at a number of different external events, including the Heat Pump Summit, Local Authority Retrofit Forum, UK Real Estate Investment and Infrastructure Forum and the Installer Show. The team have also run a number of workshops to support various programmes including climate engagement, adaptation and off-setting/in-setting with attendees from the district councils and other local organisations. The potential for locally led Climate Action has been a core theme in the council's engagements with central government on devolution. The council continues to work jointly in a number of formal and informal forums on activity to tackle the climate emergency, including through the Greater South East Net Zero Hub, Local Nature Partnership, Future Oxfordshire Partnership, LEO and the Low Carbon Hub, and actively leading a number a workstreams under the Zero Carbon Oxford Partnership (ZCOP). Partnership with Oxfordshire businesses has continued through the Oxfordshire Greentech network, with the council supporting their Climate Solutions Conference in March 24. The council is an active member of the following key national networks through which it shares best practice with other local authorities and lobbies government on national climate policy: UK100, Association of Directors of Environment, Planning and Transport Climate Change and Environment Boards (ADEPT), Local Government Association Sustainability Action Network, Association of Public Service Excellence Energy (APSE) network. 		

Annex D - Equality, Diversity and Inclusion - September 2024


Contents

Commitment	Page
Employer of Choice	2
Partner of Choice	6
Placeshaper of Choice	7

Key

Status Indicator	Status Description
	Misses target by significant margin
	Misses target by narrow margin
	Meets or exceeds target
	Data missing
n/a	Monitoring only

Employer of Choice

Status of Indicators	30/09/2024
EDI01 - Employer of Choice	

Measure	Measure description	Directorate	Measure Owner	Portfolio Holder	Period Actual	Period Target	Status	Comment	YTD Actual	YTD Target	YTD
02. Ensure our workforce is representative of the population and attract diverse candidates	Review the diversity of our workforce and engage with corporate activity to ensure that our workforce is representative of the Oxfordshire population and take more direct action to attract a diverse range of potential candidates	Adult Social Care	Karen Fuller		Delivering to plan	Delivering to plan	★	A corporate action plan is in place to increase our attraction of diverse candidates.	Delivering to plan	Delivering to plan	★
03. Promote programmes that promote diversity in leadership in social care	Promote programmes such as Skills for Care's Moving Up that promote diversity in leadership in social care	Adult Social Care	Karen Fuller		Delivering to plan	Delivering to plan	★	4 candidates are undertaking the Moving Up programme and we are considering a further cohort for next year - DLT to consider. The Principia OT and Principal SW are exploring EDI training for the workgroup.	Delivering to plan	Delivering to plan	★
04. Continue to recruit from diverse ethnic backgrounds including foster carers and volunteers	We aim to recruit a diverse workforce. This will also apply to foster carers and volunteers. We will continue to target recruitment on employees from diverse ethnic backgrounds (currently 10.8 of staff across CEF.	Children's Services	Lisa Lyons		Delivering to plan	Delivering to plan	★	There is a long lead in time with recruitment of foster carers (about nine months) but the action is on track. 25 new social workers have recently been recruited internationally and will be joining the team soon.	Delivering to plan	Delivering to plan	★
11. DTFT Champions & Team Leaders to promote e-learning re: awareness of EDI	DTFT Champions & Team Leaders to promote e-learning re: awareness of EDI	Transformation Digital and Customer Experience	Clare Martin		Delivering to plan	Delivering to plan	★	The need for new starters in the Customer Service Centre has been low, however we have embedded e learning and ongoing training in our induction training. Our CSC staff Focus Group recently celebrated National Customer Services week (7th - 14th October) which included topics such as Service with Respect and Celebrating Success.	Delivering to plan	Delivering to plan	★

Measure	Measure description	Directorate	Measure Owner	Portfolio Holder	Period Actual	Period Target	Status	Comment	YTD Actual	YTD Target	YTD
12. More DTFT champions engagement in relevant awareness events highlighting in huddles and VMBs	More DTFT champions engagement in relevant awareness events (e.g. south Asian week, EID etc) highlighting in huddles and VMBs	Transformation Digital and Customer Experience	Clare Martin		Delivering to plan	Delivering to plan	★	We continue to encourage DTFT champions to work across the CSC to promote engagement and awareness. The recent National Customer Services week focused on Service with Respect and Customer Success. We continue to hold daily huddles to discuss and communicate relevant events	Delivering to plan	Delivering to plan	★
13. Advertise vacancies to wide diverse audiences to attract diverse applicants	Advertise vacancies to wide diverse audiences to attract diverse applicants	Resources	Cherie Cuthbertson		Delivering to plan	Delivering to plan	★	We are continuing to review our EDI recruitment audit and develop actions plans to increase advertising vacancies to a wider audience. Part of this will be to seek Disability Leader status and the finalisation of procurement of Diversity Jobs Group and links with advertising with our new in-house ATS.	Delivering to plan	Delivering to plan	★

Measure	Measure description	Directorate	Measure Owner	Portfolio Holder	Period Actual	Period Target	Status	Comment	YTD Actual	YTD Target	YTD
14. Ensure diversity in our apprenticeship cohorts	Ensure diversity in our apprenticeship cohorts	Resources	Cherie Cuthbertson		Delivering to plan	Delivering to plan	★	<p>Apprenticeships</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supported apprenticeships – allows candidates with an EHCP Plan the flexibility to achieve the lower qualification of entry level 3 functional skills as part of the apprenticeship Ring fenced apprenticeship posts for Children in Care or Leaving Care <p>Work Experience</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tailored OCC work taster days for children and young people up to the age of 18 with complex special educational needs and disabilities. <p>Internships</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supported Internships – we provide unpaid work placements for young people aged 16 to 24, whose disability could be a barrier to employment. Change 100 – we offer paid summer internships for university students and recent graduates with any disability or long-term condition this expands our awareness and experience of how we provide inclusive working environments to people with disabilities.. Targeted Internships – paid internships for candidates from but not limited to the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Care leavers. Young people not in education, employment, or training (NEET). Armed forces families. People with disabilities, learning disabilities, EHCPs, or special educational needs. People in our 10 priority wards. People returning to work after long-term unemployment. 	Delivering to plan	Delivering to plan	★
15. Deliver EDI training and learning across the council	Deliver EDI training and learning across the council	Resources	Cherie Cuthbertson		Delivering to plan	Delivering to plan	★		Delivering to plan	Delivering to plan	★
16. Ensure recruitment advertising processes is extended to include BAME & LGBTQ	Ensure recruitment advertising processes is extended to include BAME & LGBTQ	Environment and Highways	Paul Fermer		Slightly behind schedule	Delivering to plan	●	Continue to be proactive on recruitment channels to be inclusive and reach as wider audience as possible.	Ahead of schedule	Ahead of schedule	★

Measure	Measure description	Directorate	Measure Owner	Portfolio Holder	Period Actual	Period Target	Status	Comment	YTD Actual	YTD Target	YTD
19. Ensure we have a representative workforce and opportunities reach all potential candidates	Review the diversity of our workforce and engage with corporate activity to ensure that our workforce is representative of the Oxfordshire population and that our employment opportunities within the sector are reaching all potential candidates.?	Law and Governance	Anita Bradley		Delivering to plan	Delivering to plan	★	Working with corporate centre on actions related to diverse recruitment	Delivering to plan	Delivering to plan	★
25. Creation of improvement actions for EDI following the findings from our reviews and inspections	Creation of improvement actions following the findings from our independent cultural review in March 2024 and the HMI inspection in early 2024 we will be considering any findings or recommendations relating to inclusion, equality and diversity to ensure improvement in this area.	Community Safety	Jo Bowcock		Delivering to plan	Delivering to plan	★	actions relating to EDI have formed part of our Fire improvement Pipeline and we have considered impact and opportunities for each area. We are now developing the timescales for the work to enable a clear implementation program	Ahead of schedule	Ahead of schedule	★
26. Creation of a reach and attraction framework for Wholetime Firefighter recruitment	Creation of a reach and attraction framework for Wholetime Firefighter recruitment to ensure that we are able to reach potential candidates that represent our communities. Review of Wholetime Firefighter recruitment assessments and undertaking EIA's for each assessment.	Community Safety	Jo Bowcock		Delivering to plan	Delivering to plan	★	We have a draft reach and attraction framework for Firefighter recruitment and now looking to consult with a wider group of stakeholders including our Talent Acquisition officer for further input.	Ahead of schedule	Ahead of schedule	★

Partner of Choice

Status of Indicators	30/09/2024
EDI02 - Partner of choice	★

Measure	Measure description	Directorate	Measure Owner	Portfolio Holder	Period Actual	Period Target	Status	Comment	YTD Actual	YTD Target	YTD
01. Include social value requirements when tendering contracts	Include social value requirements when tendering contracts such as creating apprenticeship opportunities to maximise benefit for local community?	Adult Social Care	Pippa Corner		Delivering to plan	Delivering to plan	★	Any contract over £100,000 will either be subject to social value, or have an exemption agreed through the formal process. This is now managed by Procurement so the action is complete.	Ahead of schedule	Ahead of schedule	★
05. Work with our partners to increase the number of SNAs	We will work with our partners to increase the number of Strengths & Needs Assessments (SNAs) particularly in areas of relative deprivation.	Children's Services	Lisa Lyons		Delivering to plan	Delivering to plan	★		Delivering to plan	Delivering to plan	★
07. Build partnership links and contacts for the single database, to share assets and information	Build partnership links and contacts for the single database, to share assets and information	Public Affairs, Policy and Partnerships	Susannah Wintersgill		Delivering to plan	Delivering to plan	★	Stakeholder database maintained. Team managing relationships with key EDI cohorts across county, and uses this to make introductions to other council services.E.g. as with the Autism Strategy. Also looking at opportunities for introducing SLT to community groups.	Delivering to plan	Delivering to plan	★
20. Engage with The Network and learn from best practice across UK and further afield	Engage with The Network and learn from best practice across UK and further afield.	Law and Governance	Anita Bradley		Delivering to plan	Delivering to plan	★		Delivering to plan	Delivering to plan	★

Placeshaper of Choice

Status of Indicators	30/09/2024
EDI03 - Placeshaper of choice	★

Measure	Measure description	Directorate	Measure Owner	Portfolio Holder	Period Actual	Period Target	Status	Comment	YTD Actual	YTD Target	YTD
06. Support the council's commitment to addressing inequality with hard to reach communities	Help support the council's commitment to addressing inequality through greater engagement with hard to reach communities and those who are excluded from the main council communications channels (evidencing inclusion in engagement and consultation practice).	Public Affairs, Policy and Partnerships	Susannah Wintersgill		Delivering to plan	Delivering to plan	★	When designing engagement exercises, ensure stakeholder mapping undertaken to inform this. Putting EDI at the front of the work, rather than at the end.	Delivering to plan	Delivering to plan	★
08. Using Oxfordshire conversation events for residents to ask questions of cabinet	Using Oxfordshire conversation events that will offer opportunities for residents to hear from and ask questions of members of the cabinet, including outreach activities to ensure the inclusion of seldom heard groups and those who are digitally excluded.	Public Affairs, Policy and Partnerships	Susannah Wintersgill		Delivering to plan	Delivering to plan	★	Focus of this work is on SEND and creating opportunities for senior leaders across the wider system to engage with seldom heard and target groups.	Delivering to plan	Delivering to plan	★
09. Support services to complete EIAs alongside budget and business planning	Support services to complete EIAs alongside budget and business planning		Susannah Wintersgill		Delivering to plan	Delivering to plan	★	EIA's were completed during budget and business planning, offering comments and feedback during the process. We have also provided equalities statements for capital budget proposals. Whilst that period has come to a close, we will continue to offer EIA advice and steer across the organisation, as well as creating the overarching EIA.	Delivering to plan	Delivering to plan	★

Measure	Measure description	Directorate	Measure Owner	Portfolio Holder	Period Actual	Period Target	Status	Comment	YTD Actual	YTD Target	YTD
17. Policy team create accessible documentation	The policy team carry out consultation on key stages of the plan and consultees can respond electronically or on hard copy. The documents we produce are checked for accessibility. We also carry out face to face meetings with organisations and residents for the areas in which preferred sites are proposed to be located. We also try to involve hard to engage groups.	Environment and Highways	Paul Fermer		Delivering to plan	Delivering to plan	★	Continue to use corporate systems for consultation making an effort to use accessible material/documents. It is not always possible to carry out face to face engagement but this is promoted where possible.	Ahead of schedule	Ahead of schedule	★
21. Ensure the design of school buildings consider accessibility so that buildings are inclusive	Ensure the design of school buildings consider accessibility; medical and therapy support; sensory needs; flexibility and adaptability; health and well-being and safety and security so that buildings are inclusive and pupils are not disadvantaged by facilities or services.	Resources	Vic Kurzeja		Delivering to plan	Delivering to plan	★		Ahead of schedule	Ahead of schedule	★
22. Completion of annual domestic abuse needs assessment	Completion of annual domestic abuse needs assessment	Public Health and Communities	Kate Holburn		Delivering to plan	Delivering to plan	★	Following the needs assessment, quarterly contract monitoring of commissioned Domestic Abuse Services includes a review data about service access and use of safe accommodation by individuals with protected characteristics. This allows us to monitor who is or is not engaging with the service to promote access.	Ahead of schedule	Ahead of schedule	★
23. Deliver phase 3 grants for community profiles	Deliver phase 3 grants for community profiles		David Munday		Delivering to plan	Delivering to plan	★	Following the setting up of grant schemes for phase 3 profile areas, the majority of grant funds have now been disbursed with just £5k remaining to be disbursed in one of the areas. The scheme is on track to have disbursed the remaining funds by the end of the financial year.	Ahead of schedule	Ahead of schedule	★
24. BHBH services offer support to residents living in poor quality housing in all areas	Better Housing, Better Health services offer support to residents living in poor quality housing in urban and rural areas	Public Health and Communities	Rosie Rowe		Delivering to plan	Delivering to plan	★	Measure Completed	Ahead of schedule	Ahead of schedule	★

Measure	Measure description	Directorate	Measure Owner	Portfolio Holder	Period Actual	Period Target	Status	Comment	YTD Actual	YTD Target	YTD
27. Continue to develop innovations and technologies with inclusion at the heart of our work	We will continue to develop innovations and technologies with inclusion at the heart of our work, to benefit all residents of Oxfordshire.	IT Operations	Laura Peacock		Delivering to plan	Delivering to plan	★	This approach has been embedded into business a usual processes. Please note that this responsibility now sits in Economy and Place, following the restructure.	Delivering to plan	Delivering to plan	★

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Action and Recommendation Tracker

Performance & Corporate Services Overview & Scrutiny Committee

Councillor Eddie Reeves, 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	No progress reported (R)	In progress (Y)	Complete (G)
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Recommendations:

Meeting date	Item	Recommendation	Lead	Last reviewed	R/Y /G	Update/response
28/04/23	Consultation and Engagement Strategy	That at its next annual refresh of the Communications and Engagement action plan the Council strengthens its roadmap for how it will leverage its partnerships to increase the breadth of engagement by including (but not limited to) a) Creating SMART targets for partnership working b) Committing to undertake engagement processes which are representative by design	Susannah Wintersgill	11/04/24	Y	Partially Accepted <i>The council already undertakes some representative engagement activity, such as the annual residents' survey. Further representative exercises will be commissioned where appropriate.</i> <i>For budget consultation and engagement exercises, the council has for a number of years used a range of participatory and representative methods to increase the breadth of engagement, from deliberative discussion days and representative surveys to market stall events, large scale public debates and open online feedback forms. Deliberative techniques are also used to engage</i>

KEY	No progress reported (R)	In progress (Y)	Complete (G)
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Meeting date	Item	Recommendation	Lead	Last reviewed	R/Y /G	Update/response
Page 328						<p>children and young people, such as our full-day sounding board events.</p> <p>The consultation and engagement team work closely with partners on a range of activity. However, as part of the next annual refresh of the action plan, we will look to strengthen targets around partnership working</p> <p>Update: Over the course of the year we have extended the range of partners we work including the university, voluntary and community sector capitalising on relationships formed elsewhere in the organisation. The following are just a selection of: multiple examples SEND local area partnership Oxfordshire Conversations events for parents and carers, the Health and Wellbeing two phase consultation and engagement, budget consultation outreach discussions, upcoming EDI focus groups . The creation of SMART targets around consultation and engagement difficult, owing to their subject-dependent nature.</p>
	21/07/23	Workforce Strategy	That the Council develops specific workstreams within its Workforce Strategy, backed by targets, around attracting and supporting spouses and partners of military personnel to work for the Council, including steps taken to reinvigorate its existing commitments.	Cherie Cuthbertson	11/04/24	<p>Accepted Oxfordshire County Council is committed to supporting our Armed Forces and the Armed Forces Covenant. Together, we acknowledge and understand that those who serve or have served in the Armed Forces, and their families, should be treated with fairness and respect in the communities, economy and society they serve with their lives.</p> <p>As part of our workforce strategy action plan, we have identified initiatives which support the Armed Forces.</p>

KEY	No progress reported (R)	In progress (Y)	Complete (G)
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Meeting date	Item	Recommendation	Lead	Last reviewed	R/Y /G	Update/response
Page 329						<p><i>Plans are being produced which will involve project teams with appropriate stakeholders with robust timelines for delivery and where appropriate, agreed targets. We have also committed to undertaking a comprehensive review of our current initiatives to ensure we understand what is working well and what we could do differently. This includes a review of our 'buddying' system and training on the Armed Forces Covenant as well as how we advertise and engage partners of military personnel for short- and long-term contracts of employment within OCC.</i></p> <p>Update: This review is ongoing and seeks to ensure that whatever is implemented adds the most value to services personnel.</p>
	29/09/23	Social Value	That the Council clarifies the objectives it wishes to achieve through its social value policy, choosing measures and weightings which support those objectives.	Melissa Sage	11/04/24	Y

KEY	No progress reported (R)	In progress (Y)	Complete (G)
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Meeting date	Item	Recommendation	Lead	Last reviewed	R/Y /G	Update/response
Page 330						<p><i>make up their overall social value bid response. Measures have been selected for prioritisation because they are aligned with the Council's key priorities, aims and strategic frameworks such as Climate Action and Including Everyone. This means that we are already supporting the Council's stated objectives in an appropriate, fair and proportionate way.</i></p> <p><i>Specification remains the key element for ensuring that contracts place social value at the heart of their delivery.</i></p> <p><i>In addition to the procurement social value policy, a wider organisational policy will be designed that will establish an agreed definition of social value to inform agreed measures in all decision making.</i></p> <p>Update: As can be seen above, the majority of this has been covered off through actions taken. In relation to the wider social value policy, a report from work undertaken with the Centre for Local Economic Strategies is expected in September and will outline next steps.</p>
		That the Council provides as part of its response to this recommendation a written outline of the next steps it intends to take develop and finesse its social value policy.		11/04/24	Y	<p>Accepted</p> <p><i>There will be a regular review of the procurement social value policy to ensure still appropriate and applicable. This includes a regular review of the TOMs as they are updated and refreshed nationally.</i></p> <p><i>Further work is to be completed with an organisational wide approach to social value that goes beyond procurement and aims to support decision making at all levels. The policy will seek to provide an agreed</i></p>

KEY	No progress reported (R)	In progress (Y)	Complete (G)
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Meeting date	Item	Recommendation	Lead	Last reviewed	R/Y /G	Update/response
						<p><i>definition of social value so that there is consistency in our expectations of social value with agreed measures for monitoring and evaluation purposes.</i></p> <p>Update: As referenced in the recommendation above, the work on wider social value is expected to reach its next step in September with the production of a report arising from the Council's work with the Centre for Local Economic Strategies.</p>

KEY	No progress reported (R)	In progress (Y)	Complete (G)
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Actions:

Meeting date	Item	Action	Lead	Last reviewed	R/Y/G	Update/response
29/09/23	Social Value	Members to be provided the data on the number/value of contracts run by the Council which are subject to social value weightings vis a vis those which are not. Similar data around the number and value of contracts above and below £100k also to be provided.	Melissa Sage	11/04/24	Y	Update: Owing to the nature of the data collected this is proving more challenging than anticipated. However, it is still being worked on, though it is likely to require greater use of assumptions than previously envisaged.