## Notice of a Meeting



# Place Overview & Scrutiny Committee Wednesday, 23 April 2025 at 10.00 am Room 2&3 - County Hall, New Road, Oxford OX1 1ND

#### These proceedings are open to the public

If you wish to view proceedings, please click on this <u>Live Stream Link</u>. However, that will not allow you to participate in the meeting.

#### Membership

Chair - Councillor Liam Walker
Deputy Chair - Councillor Robin Bennett

Councillors:

Felix Bloomfield

Charlie Hicks

Nigel Simpson

Duncan Enright

Susanna Pressel

**Bethia Thomas** 

Notes: Date of next meeting: 25 June 2025

#### For more information about this Committee please contact:

Committee Officer

Scrutiny Team

Email: scrutiny@oxfordshire.gov.uk

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Martin Reeves
Chief Executive

**April 2025** 

#### What does this Committee review or scrutinise?

Climate change, transport, highways, planning and place-based services. Including the delivery of regulatory services, fire and rescue, community safety and community services such as libraries. NB This Committee will act as the Council's 'Crime and Disorder Committee'.

#### How can I have my say?

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

#### **About the County Council**

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

schools social & health care libraries and museums

the fire service roads trading standards land use transport planning waste management

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

#### **About Scrutiny**

Scrutiny is about:

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

#### Scrutiny is NOT about:

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

#### What does this Committee do?

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

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

A hearing loop is available at County Hall.



#### **AGENDA**

#### 1. Apologies for Absence and Temporary Appointments

To receive any apologies for absence and temporary appointments.

#### 2. Declaration of Interests - see guidance note on the back page

#### **3. Minutes** (Pages 1 - 10)

The Committee is recommended to **APPROVE** the minutes of the meeting held on 5 February 2025 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 9.00 a.m. four working days before the meeting, i.e., 9.00 a.m. on 14<sup>th</sup> April 2025. Requests to speak should be sent to the Scrutiny Officer at scrutiny@oxfordshire.gov.uk.

If you are speaking 'virtually', you are asked to 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 9.00 a.m. two working days before the meeting. Written submissions should be no longer than one A4 sheet.

#### 5. Committee Action and Recommendation Tracker (Pages 11 - 20)

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

#### **6. Responses to Scrutiny Recommendations** (Pages 21 - 30)

Attached are the Cabinet responses to the Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee reports on:

- Local Nature Recovery Strategy
- City Centre Accommodation Strategy Disposal of Old and New County Hall
- Infrastructure Funding Statement and s.106 Funding Review Report

The Committee is asked to **NOTE** the response.

#### 7. Committee Forward Work Plan (Pages 31 - 34)

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

The Cabinet Forward Plan can be found

here: https://mycouncil.oxfordshire.gov.uk/mgListPlanItems.aspx?PlanId=433&RP=115

The most recent BMMR, submitted to Cabinet in March 2025, can be found here: <a href="https://mycouncil.oxfordshire.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?Cld=115&Mld=7477&">https://mycouncil.oxfordshire.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?Cld=115&Mld=7477&</a>



#### Ver=4

#### 8. Section 106 Improvement Programme Update (Pages 35 - 46)

The Committee has requested an update on the section 106 a report on Section 106 Improvement Programme.

Cllr Judy Roberts, Cabinet member for Infrastructure and Development Strategy, and Robin Rogers, Director of Economy and Place, have been invited to present the report and to answer the Committee's questions. Invitations have also been extended to officers in Finance and in Information Technology.

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.

#### **9. Rail Strategy** (Pages 47 - 54)

The Committee has requested an update on the development of the Council's Rail Strategy. Cllr Judy Roberts, Cabinet member for Infrastructure and Development Strategy, and Robin Rogers, Director of Economy and Place, have been invited to present the report and to answer the Committee's questions.

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.

Slides attached but cover report to follow.

#### 10. Transport Working Group Report

The Committee's Transport Working Group has completed its work and submits its report to the Committee for its approval.

The Committee is asked to consider the report and raise any questions, and to **ENDORSE** the recommendations contained it in the report and to **SUBMIT** the report to Cabinet.

Report to follow.



#### 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'.

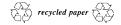
#### **Members Code – Other registrable interests**

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;
- 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.



#### PLACE OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

**MINUTES** of the meeting held on Wednesday, 5 February 2025 commencing at 10.00 am and finishing at 1.05 pm

Present:

**Voting Members:** Councillor Liam Walker - in the Chair

Councillor Charlie Hicks Councillor Nigel Simpson Councillor Peter Stevens Councillor Susanna Pressel Councillor Bethia Thomas

Other Members in Attendance:

Cllr Dr Pete Sudbury, Deputy Leader of the Council with Responsibility for Climate Change, Environment & Future

Generations

Cllr Andrew Gant, Cabinet member for Transport

Management

Cllr Daniel Levy, Cabinet Member for Finance

Cllr Neil Fawcett, Cabinet Member for Community &

Corporate Services

Cllr Judy Roberts, Cabinet Member for Infrastructure and

**Development Strategy** 

Officers: Lorna Baxter, Executive Director of Resources and Section

151 Officer (Deputy Chief Executive)

Paul Fermer, Director of Highways and Environment

Robin Rogers, Director of Economy and Place Keith Stenning, Head of Network Management Sean Rooney, Head of Highway Maintenance James Dance, Team Leader (Highways Policy and

Performance)

Vic Kurzeja, Director of Property and Assets

Michael Smedley, Head of Estates

Charles Butters, Strategic Property Advisor

Charles Rowton-Lee, Head of Commercial Agency (Savills) Sophie Holder MRICS, Surveyor in Commercial Agency

team (Savills)

Jonothan Holmes, Investment Director and Development

Funding Head (Savills)

Richard Doney, Scrutiny Officer

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.

#### 1/25 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND TEMPORARY APPOINTMENTS

(Agenda No. 1)

Apologies were received from Cllr Bennett (substituted by Cllr Stevens), Cllr Bloomfield and Cllr Enright. Cllr Sudbury sent apologies that he could not attend in person but did join online.

#### 2/25 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

(Agenda No. 2)

There were none.

#### 3/25 MINUTES

(Agenda No. 3)

The minutes for the meeting held on 13 November 2024 were **AGREED** as a true and accurate record of the meeting.

#### 4/25 PETITIONS AND PUBLIC ADDRESS

(Agenda No. 4)

There were none.

#### 5/25 COMMITTEE FORWARD WORK PLAN

(Agenda No. 5)

Paul Fermer, Director of Highways and Environment, and Robin Rogers, Director of Economy and Place, attended to offer guidance on potential scrutiny items.

The Committee **AGREED** to the forward work plan with several changes, including the addition of an item on Bus Service Funding for the April meeting, focusing on taxpayer subsidies and the Enhanced Partnership's governance.

The Director of Highways and Environment and Sean Rooney, Head of Highway Maintenance, assumed responsibility for Verge and Vegetation Management. The Rail Strategy was to be presented as a separate briefing.

It was also **NOTED** that the June meeting was to focus on crime and disorder, with the Chief Constable and the Police and Crime Commissioner to attend.

## 6/25 COMMITTEE ACTION AND RECOMMENDATION TRACKER

(Agenda No. 6)

The Committee **NOTED** the action and recommendation tracker and appreciated the update on the s.106 item.

#### 7/25 RESPONSES TO SCRUTINY RECOMMENDATIONS

(Agenda No. 7)

The Committee **NOTED** the draft Cabinet responses to the Flood Event Response and LTCP Monitoring Report items.

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

 To request a more detailed response to Recommendation 1 in the Flood Event Response.

# 8/25 NETWORK COORDINATION OF ROAD AND STREET WORKS AND LANE RENTAL FOR OXFORDSHIRE

(Agenda No. 8)

Cllr Andrew Gant, Cabinet member for Transport Management, Paul Fermer, Director of Highways and Environment, and Keith Stenning, Head of Network Management, were invited to present a report on network coordination of road and street works and the proposed Lane Rental Scheme for Oxfordshire.

The Cabinet Member for Transport Management and the Head of Network Management summarised the Network Coordination of Road and Street Works and the Lane Rental Scheme for Oxfordshire. They highlighted that managing these works included various permits and regulations affecting residents. The Lane Rental Scheme was to incentivise efficient utility work through financial measures, generating revenue for highway maintenance. Delayed twice, due to logistical challenges, it was hoped the scheme could start in October 2025.

The Committee was **alerted** to a typographical error in the report on page 33, paragraph 7: the Council deals with circa 1,450 road closure applications each year, not 450.

The Cabinet Member for Transport Management explained that the delays were due to logistical challenges and changes in government requirements. The Head of Network Management added that industry consultation and feedback from town and parish Councils had also contributed to the delay. It was confirmed that, once the scheme received approval, it would be communicated to the public, emphasising its benefits.

The Head of Network Management agreed with members on the need for effective communication, including avoiding any misconceptions that the Council sought to profit from road works, and clarified that the scheme would not be universally applied but would target the busiest roads during sensitive times.

Members examined why the Council had been slower to apply for the Lane Rental Scheme than other county Councils such as Kent. The Head of Network Management explained that a Council needed to operate a successful permit scheme for three years before applying for a lane rental scheme. Previously, Oxfordshire only recorded road work notifications with minimal control as a noticing authority but had, in recent years, moved to a permit scheme. Kent County Council had effectively been

a pilot scheme when Lane Rental was extended out of London and schemes were gradually growing.

The Committee enquired about the Council's process for dealing with developers and utility works, focusing on the application procedure for road closures, the duration of requested closures, and the Council's ability to reject applications. Developers could apply for road closures, and the Council coordinated these applications to minimise disruption. The Council had the authority to reject applications or adjust the duration of closures, ensuring developers communicated specific closure dates to the local community.

North Street, was highlighted as an issue where a developer requested a 10-month closure for minor works, causing disruption. The Head of Network Management acknowledged this problem and stressed the importance of developers informing the local community about actual closure dates. The Council was working to ensure developers provided clear communication and evidence of their engagement with the community.

The Committee explored the estimated income from the lane rental scheme, including key risks and benefits. It was explained that the estimates were conservative to avoid overcommitting, as income depended on industry behaviour. It was confirmed that Thames Water was responsible for about half of the Section 74 overruns, amounting to approximately £200,000 in penalties.

The Committee inquired about the enforcement mechanisms for ensuring compliance with road work permits, challenging the durations requested by utilities, and the potential for fines. The Council had a dedicated team for enforcement, which included challenging the durations requested by utilities and ensuring compliance with permit conditions. Non-compliance by utilities could result in fines, and, although current fines were relatively low, a consultation was underway to significantly increase them. The current fines for non-compliance were £80, however the consultation hoped to double the fines to £160 and also apply them for weekend and bank holiday working.

Financial figures indicated an estimated surplus from the Lane Rental Scheme of £4m per annum after costs, with a budget line established at £2.1m. Legislation mandated that 50% of any surplus funds be allocated to highway maintenance, such as pothole repairs, with the remaining 50% for other purposes determined by the Council It was suggested that increased fines could enhance compliance and communication, with the Head of Network Management noting that a review of fines was expected to lead to improvements in utility compliance.

Members asked if Civil Enforcement Officers (CEOs), who were responsible for enforcing Controlled Parking Zones (CPZs), could assist in enforcement around utility works. The Head of Network Management explained that the Council employed around 20 individuals within the network coordination team, with approximately 12 personnel monitoring compliance and addressing issues daily. It was acknowledged that additional investment in CEOs would be beneficial, operating similarly to parking enforcement as a fee-based system.

It was also noted that while CEOs reported observed issues, their primary focus did not include road work enforcement. Network coordinators were more mobile, addressing issues as they emerged, whereas CEOs consistently covered the same areas. Although some cross-reporting occurred, it was not standard practice for CEOs to perform both roles.

The Committee raised separate concerns about simultaneous road and tree works in one division causing significant disruption, gas works in another causing traffic issues without visible work or a permit, and difficulties in contacting the duty manager after hours.

The Head of Network Management acknowledged the coordination issue in some places and requested detailed information to improve future coordination. It was explained that emergency gas works were unpredictable and admitted the lack of a permit was concerning, promising to investigate and ensure proper permitting and management. Efforts to strengthen coverage outside regular hours were ongoing but there was a 24 hour highways customer service number.

The Committee had explored the idea of creating a system similar to FixMyStreet for reporting road work hazards. The Head of Network Management responded that issues could be reported on FixMyStreet, although responses might not be immediate. It was suggested by Officers exploring technology, such as Artificial Intelligence or instant messaging, could improve this.

Members expressed concerns about firms not completing works due to disputes, leading to prolonged issues. The Head of Network Management clarified that legal disputes were handled by the legal department while the highways team stepped back. Concerns were also raised about inadequate monitoring of temporary traffic lights on weekends, which could lead to dangerous situations and leftover road signs and sandbags. The Department for Transport had authorised fines for work during weekends and bank holidays, and preparations were being made to enforce this with fines also in place for works that overstayed, which included leaving works materials. The Head of Network Management also addressed substandard reinstatements, reporting that 76% failed and a coring programme, where tests were done to the reinstated road surfaces to check they met the required standards, was implemented to assess quality.

Members suggested that parish councillors and local networks, such as super users, could report issues more effectively due to their community involvement and it was agreed that these were invaluable.

There was also an inquiry about the fines from Botley Road overruns. The Head of Network Management clarified that no fines were issued as contractors had extended their permits. If fines had been imposed, contractors could have appealed to the Department for Transport, which might have taken control of the project or service.

The Chair inquired about the Council's confidence in securing permission for the lane rental scheme. The Head of Network Management responded with 95% confidence, citing support and guidance from the Department for Transport. The main uncertainty

was the timing, which was expected between September and November of the next financial year.

The Committee thanked the Head of Network Management for his work and wished him a happy retirement.

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

- The Head of Network Management to publish the information about the 'worst offenders' for going over the schedule agreed.
- The Head of Network Management to publish the number of fines issued over the last financial year to indicate the current enforcement mechanism's effectiveness.

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

- Enforcement and Reporting:
  - o Encourage and enforce better communication by utility companies.
  - Consider how to report urgent matters effectively, possibly using super users and parish Councils for better local reporting.
- Include in the new parking enforcement contract that Civil Enforcement Officers (CEOs) could be trained to report issues beyond parking violations, such as road works and traffic problems.

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

- Explore different models for enforcement, including the use of technology and crowdsourcing to report issues.
- Increase enforcement on street scars and ensure proper reinstatement of road surfaces after works.

# 9/25 REVIEW OF STREET LIGHTING AND ILLUMINATED ASSETS POLICY FRAMEWORK PROPOSALS FOR PART NIGHT LIGHTING (Agenda No. 9)

Cllr Dr Pete Sudbury, Deputy Leader of the Council with Responsibility for Climate Change, Environment & Future Generations, who joined online, Paul Fermer, Director of Environment and Highways, Sean Rooney, Head of Highway Maintenance, and James Dance, Team Leader (Highways Policy and Performance), were invited to present a report on the Review of Street Lighting and Illuminated Assets policy framework proposals for part night lighting.

The Deputy Leader and Head of Highway Maintenance presented the review, highlighting the need for a structured approach to part-night lighting, similar to that for the introduction of the 20-mph speed limit in various places across the county. The new proposals intended to refine and broaden the existing street lighting policy, with plans for extensive stakeholder engagement and consultation, including local

communities. The implementation framework was to be tailored to local contexts and aimed to balance energy savings and environmental benefits with safety and well-being, particularly for vulnerable groups and late-night workers.

A detailed timeline for engagement and implementation was provided, targeting a Cabinet member decision in July, with a project manager appointed to oversee the inclusive consultation process.

The Chair raised a number of concerns over the implementation and decision process leading up to this point. The Head of Highway Maintenance described how key roads and roundabouts were considered for exemption from switching off lights, prioritising safety with a case-by-case approach based on consultation feedback. Support and objection would be taken into account with individual cases reviewed and decisions made by the Cabinet member under delegated decisions powers.

Parish councillors and local communities were to be engaged in the process, initiating steps similar to the 20-mph speed limit implementation, ensuring each village or town was consulted and tailored to local needs. Changes required for LED lights varied, with part-night lighting supported by existing technology, although central management systems might have needed investment if widely adopted. Cost savings depended on the number of lights and the implementation model.

The Committee raised a number of safety concerns with the policy, especially in relation to Vision Zero and crime. The Deputy Leader and the Head of Highway Maintenance explained how the part-night lighting policy aimed to align with Vision Zero by balancing safety concerns, ensuring reduced lighting did not lead to increased accidents. Studies suggested that drivers adjusted their behaviour in darker conditions, and turning off lights did not necessarily result in more accidents.

Research on reduced lighting's impact on safety and crime was mixed. Some studies indicated no increase in accidents or crime, while others found that new lighting could reduce crime by increasing visibility. Evidence-based reviews informed the consultation process.

The policy included cyclist safety education and enforcement, making cyclists more visible and promoting adherence to regulations through campaigns. This involved distributing free lights in collaboration with partners such as Oxford Fire and Rescue.

Engagement with partners played a crucial role in enhancing safety. Collaboration with Oxford Fire and Rescue, cycling groups, and other stakeholders helped implement targeted safety campaigns and ensured a comprehensive approach to road safety.

The policy acknowledged concerns from women's groups about safety in the dark and involved a female perspective in its development. The strategy engaged relevant stakeholders, including women's groups, to gather input and address specific safety needs. A female project manager led this initiative, with contributions from female staff and stakeholders ensuring diverse perspectives were considered.

Members raised concerns about the safety of women and vulnerable members of society regarding the turning off of street lights. Evidence was presented by the Deputy Leader that academic research indicated turning off street lights did not necessarily lead to increased accidents or crime, as people tended to alter their behaviour, such as moving to other well lit areas.

The discussion highlighted the need to consider the safety and well-being of women and vulnerable members of society while implementing the part-night lighting policy, taking account of light pollution, energy consumption, and benefits to wildlife.

The data on crime and accidents were used to inform policy decisions, considering changes in citizens' habits. Modifications in street lighting were assessed for their impact on activities, such as a potential decrease in nighttime outings.

The Committee inquired about some of the technical terminology used in the report, and whether any alternative terminology which would be clearer to the public had been considered. The Head of Highway Maintenance explained that dimming referred to lowering streetlight brightness during low traffic. Instant switch over described how LED lights turned on and off instantly, unlike older lights. Dynamic real-time demand involved adjusting lighting based on real-time conditions with a central system. Retrofitting meant updating existing streetlights with new technology like motion sensors. Motion-activated lights, which turned on when motion was detected, were considered as an alternative to constant lighting. These alternatives aimed to balance safety, energy savings, and environmental impact.

The Chair thanked those who attended for the item and the Committee resolved to **NOTE** the report.

#### 10/25 CITY CENTRE ACCOMMODATION STRATEGY

(Agenda No. 10)

Cllr Daniel Levy, Cabinet Member for Finance, Lorna Baxter, Executive Director of Resources and Section 151 Officer (Deputy Chief Executive), Vic Kurzeja, Director of Property and Assets, Michael Smedley, Head of Estates, Charles Butters, Strategic property Advisor, Charles Rowton-Lee, Head of Commercial Agency (Savills), Jonothan Holmes, Investment Director and Development Funding Head (Savills), and Sophie Holder MRICS, Surveyor in Commercial Agency team (Savills), were invited to present a report on the City Centre Accommodation Strategy. Cllr Neil Fawcett, Cabinet Member for Community & Corporate Services, and Cllr Judy Roberts, Cabinet Member for Infrastructure and Development Strategy, also attended online.

The Cabinet Member for Finance reminded the Committee that the Council had been reviewing the city centre accommodation held by the Council. The Council had been working to reduce the number of county council buildings to reduce expenditure and to reflect contemporary working practices. In addition, the carbon inefficiency of the current estate meant that significant expenditure would be needed were County Hall to be retained.

The Director of Property and Assets took the Committee through a powerpoint presentation providing an overview of the background to the decision being

proposed. PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC) had undertaken a strategic review of the Council's city centre accommodation and, following its assessment of options with a recommended view, a report to Cabinet on 23 January 2024 recommended that option 2 be progressed. That option was to consolidate into Speedwell House and to dispose of New County Hall and to engage the market to inform a decision on Old County Hall.

Savills had been engaged by the Council to engage the market and to seek bids. Nineteen bids had been received with 16 of those being for both New and Old County Hall together whilst three were for either New County Hall or Old County Hall alone. The Committee was provided with the information in draft that was expected to be before Cabinet on 25 February 2025 when it will be recommended to, inter alia, "agree to the freehold disposal of New and Old County Hall, on the terms set out in exempt Annex 4."

The Committee was advised that both the disposal of County Hall and the transformation of Speedwell House provided the Council with the opportunity to use its assets, covenant and influence to be the 'place-shaper of choice' in Oxford city centre and to be at the heart of social regeneration. The capital receipt from the disposal of County House would be sufficient to fund the delivery of the refurbished Speedwell House complex and would also enable the wider regeneration and placemaking initiatives envisaged in and around Speedwell Street.

After the presentation, the Committee resolved to exclude the public for the duration of the meeting as the information provided in Annexes 2, 3, and 4 to the Cabinet report were deemed to contain exempt information and the public interest was weighted in favour of considering the information in private as the information related to a current commercial negotiation.

Topics explored by the Committee included which scrutiny committee should most appropriately have considered the proposal; the assessment of alternative options; potential socio-economic benefits; redevelopment strategies for Speedwell House; market engagement and bid processes; issues related to public access and heritage conservation; planning considerations; the implications of local government reorganisation.

The Committee resolved to **NOTE** the report and to **AGREE** the following recommendations to Cabinet:

- 1. That the Council should work to ensure that public access to New and Old County Hall is maintained insofar as is possible.
- 2. That the Council should set out its strategy and action plan for the city centre's redevelopment and regeneration.

	in the Chair
Date of signing	

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# Recommendation Tracker Place Overview & Scrutiny Committee

Cllr Liam Walker, Chair | Richard Doney, Scrutiny Officer, richard.doney@oxfordshire.gov.uk

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

KEY	Due to Cabinet	In progress	Complete
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#### **Recommendations:**

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Meeting date	ltem	Recommendation	Lead	Update/response
	City Centre	That the Council should work to ensure that public access to New and		Accepted
05 Fab 25	Accommodation Strategy –	Old County Hall is maintained insofar as is possible.	Via Kurzaia	Please refer to agenda item 6
05-Feb-25	Disposal of Old	2. That the Council should set out its	Vic Kurzeja	Accepted
	and New County Hall	strategy and action plan for the city centre's redevelopment and regeneration.		Please refer to agenda item 6
	Infrastructure	That the Council should publish an outline of the milestones identified as	Paul Fermer:	Accepted
13-Nov-24	Funding Statement and s.106 Funding	requirements for the success of the project with associated deadlines	Robin Rogers; Nicholas	Please refer to agenda item 6
	Report	That the Council should identify who is ultimately responsible for driving the	Perrins	Accepted

KEY	Due to Cabinet	With Cabinet	Complete

Meeting date	Item	Recommendation	Lead	Update/response
		success of the improvement project and by what measures they will be held accountable to ensure effective utilisation of funds.  3. That the Council undertakes the Local		Please refer to agenda item 6
		Government Association's Planning Advisory Service self-assessment toolkit – 'Improving the governance of		Accepted
		developer contributions in order to evaluate and improve current practices.'		Please refer to agenda item 6
D		That the Council commits to working closely with district councils and other		Accepted
Page		partners to ensure there are holistic plans in place for infrastructure needs.		Please refer to agenda item 6
12		5. That the Council take steps to correct any favourability biases in project		Accepted
		planning and delivery to ensure a pragmatic and realistic approach.		Please refer to agenda item 6
		6. That the Council uses the Government Office for Science's The Futures		Partially Accepted
		Toolkit in order to ensure its plans and policies are robust and realistic.		Please refer to agenda item 6
		7. That the data dashboard is launched without further delay to ensure that		Accepted
		members can monitor s.106 funds and projects.		Please refer to agenda item 6
		8. That the Council should implement a risk rating for s.106 moneys being reclaimed if they are not spent in time		Accepted
		so that issues can be addressed proactively.		Please refer to agenda item 6

KEY	Due to Cabinet	With Cabinet	Complete

Meeting date	Item	Recommendation	Lead	Update/response
Pagv-24 13-13	Local Nature Recovery Strategy	<ol> <li>That the Council should ensure the Local Nature Recovery Strategy is aligned with climate finance and natural capital work happening locally and nationally.</li> <li>That the Council should ensure that the Local Nature Recovery Strategy is aligned with the Government's five missions and their outputs.</li> <li>That the Council should ensure the Local Nature Recovery Strategy is aligned with the Local Transport Connectivity Plan and the Oxfordshire Infrastructure Strategy on the nature costs of roads and rails.</li> <li>That the Council should develop a delivery plan to ensure that teams within the County Council have integrated and adopted the Local Nature Recovery Strategy.</li> <li>That the Council should make explicit in an annex to the documentation the implications of the strategy for district councils, town and parish councils, neighbourhood groups, and other key partners as well as the actions expected of them.</li> <li>That the Council should strengthen the explanations within the strategy of the benefits to health and wellbeing of the Local Nature Recovery Strategy.</li> </ol>	Chloe Edwards; Beccy Micklem	Accepted Please refer to agenda item 6  Partially Accepted Please refer to agenda item 6  Accepted Please refer to agenda item 6

KEY	Due to Cabinet	With Cabinet	Complete

Meeting date	ltem	Recommendation	Lead	Update/response
		7. That the Council should consider how best it can publicise positive elements of nature recovery that are already happening.		Accepted Please refer to agenda item 6
		8. That the Council should ensure it sets an example maintaining its own land for nature recovery and biodiversity gain, as the Responsible Authority for the Local Nature Recovery Strategy.		Accepted Please refer to agenda item 6
P		9. That the Council should work with schools to support them to promote biodiversity and nature recovery in their grounds.		Partially Accepted  Please refer to agenda item 6
Page 14		10. That the Council should investigate the costs of collecting and/or piling mown grass to enhance wildflower growth and other biodiversity benefits.		Accepted Please refer to agenda item 6
		11. That the Council should explore the possibilities of supporting flood defences through biodiversity means, including swales, sustainable drainage systems, and rain gardens.		Accepted Please refer to agenda item 6



## **Action Tracker Place Overview & Scrutiny Committee**

Cllr Liam Walker, Chair | Richard Doney, Scrutiny Officer, <a href="mailto:richard.doney@oxfordshire.gov.uk">richard.doney@oxfordshire.gov.uk</a>

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	KEY	Delayed	In pro	gress	Complete	
Meeting date	Item	Action	Lead		Update/response	
Р	There are no outstanding action items					
B		<u> </u>			_	



# Recommendation Update Tracker Place Overview & Scrutiny Committee

Cllr Liam Walker, Chair | Richard Doney, Scrutiny Officer, richard.doney@oxfordshire.gov.uk

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

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KEY Update Pending Update in Item Updated

Response ODate	Item	Recommendation	Lead	Update
		1. That the Council should work to establish a partnership board to monitor progress on Vision Zero with Thames Valley Police being fully involved as a key partner.		Update due
	Vision Zero	2. That the Council should continue to engage with Thames Valley Police in order to encourage enforcement of speed limits.		Update due
17-Sep-24		, , , , , , , , , , , , , , , , , , , ,	Paul Fermer	Update due
		4. That the Council should engage with other local authorities particularly those with similarly diverse counties and learn from them as well as to take learning from best practice in other authorities.		Update due

KEY	Update Pending	Update in Item	Updated

Cabinet Response Date	ltem	Recommendation	Lead	Update
		5. That the Council should add greater emphasis on the five pillars as integral to the Vision Zero Key Areas		Update due
		6. That the Council should ensure that its Vision Zero ambitions should be led by evidence and not be overly focused on behaviour		Update due
		7. That the Council should continue to prioritise its infrastructure projects on the basis of data and evidence, taking account of the insights of local members.		Update due
		8. That the Council should publish the danger hotspots on its website clearly linked to the underlying evidence.		Update due
		9. That the Council should publish the numbers of road deaths of children and teenagers, and also by sex, clearly linked to Vision Zero.		Update due
Page 17		10.That the Council should add SUVs and motorcycle categories to its safer vehicles section. It should also delineate the number and proportion of collisions involve SUVs		Update due
		11. That the Council should set out, in as much detail as possible, information relating to the budget for this strategy and the costs associated with it, as well as the associated ongoing revenue costs.		Update due
		12. That the Council should ensure that existing road layouts are considered as material planning considerations in its responses to applications for new residential developments		Update due
		13. That the Council should undertake a safety audit of past road safety initiatives to learn from what has – or has not – worked previously		Update due
19-Nov-24	Circular Economy Strategy and Action Plan	That the Council should arrange for improved communications, particularly about reuse, at Household Waste and Recycling Centres and in publicity about the same.	Rachel Burns	Update due

KEY	Update Pending	Update in Item	Updated
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Cabinet Response Date	ltem	Recommendation	Lead	Update
		2. That the Council should ensure that the outworking of the Circular Economy Strategy results in reduced costs and can demonstrate the scale of savings achieved.		Update due
		3. That the Council should work to introduce cross-border arrangements with neighbouring authorities so that Oxfordshire residents can use Household Waste and Recycling Centres outside the county.		Update due
		4. That the Council should make explicit its role in the Circular Economy Strategy as a lead partner and set out how it will build partnerships both within the county and across county borders.		Update due
Page		<ol> <li>That the Council should investigate how best to retrofit sustainable drainage systems, as well as other flood prevention measures, to Council maintained properties and streets.</li> </ol>		Update due June
18		<ol> <li>That the Council should improve communications to Members, raising awareness of the up-to-date Flood Toolkit generally as well as active flood measures in the event of emergencies.</li> </ol>	Paul	Update due June
25-Feb-25	Flood Event Response	<ol> <li>That the Council should improve social media communication for residents during flooding and other emergencies.</li> </ol>	Fermer; Teresa Kirkham;	Update due June
		<ol> <li>That the Council should promote the benefits of creating of community emergency plans by parish councils and support the Resilience team to do that.</li> </ol>	Kerry Middleton	Update due June
		5. That the Council should commit to working closely with partners to ensure that s.19 reports are completed swiftly, and recommendations can be acted upon.		Update due June
		6. That the Council should investigate the role and responsibilities of OFWAT and the potential for invoking s.94 measures.		Update due June

KEY	Update Pending	Update in Item	Updated
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Cabinet Response Date	Item	Recommendation	Lead	Update
25-Feb-25	LTCP Progress Report	That the Council, for the headline LTCP targets on car use reduction, should move from a car trip to car mileage reduction measure.	Paul Fermer	Update due June

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

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#### Issue: Draft Local Nature Recovery Strategy

Lead Cabinet Member(s): Cllr Dr Pete Sudbury, Deputy Leader of the Council with Responsibility for Climate Change, **Environment, and Future Generations** 

Date response requested: 21 January 2025

#### Response to report:

Enter text here.

#### Response to recommendations:

Recommendation	Accepted, rejected or partially accepted	Proposed action (if different to that recommended) and indicative timescale (unless rejected)
That the Council should ensure the Local Nature Recovery Strategy is aligned with climate finance and	Accept	We are looking at how to present Oxfordshire natural capital mapping by Oxford University within and alongside the Local Nature Recovery Strategy prior to publication in the Autumn. We

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Date of the meeting at which report/recommendations were received

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Date of the meeting at which report/recommendations were received

natural capital work happening locally and nationally.  2. That the Council should ensure that	Dominik	are also engaging with the LEP Green Prospectus and working with the Local Nature Partnership on their Nature Finance workstream and Oxfordshire Nature Conservation Investment Fund which focuses on green finance for projects which will align with the LNRS. The LNRS is aligned with delivery of Biodiversity Net Gain and we will continue to monitor additional green finance opportunities coming forward nationally.
the Local Nature Recovery Strategy is aligned with the Government's five missions and their outputs.	Partially accept	Having reviewed the Government's 5 missions, it is hard to see a direct link to the LNRS, however, there is a clear link between the LNRS and delivery of the Government's Environmental Improvement Plan as well as achieving the national commitment to protect 30% of land and sea for nature by 2030 (30by30).
3. That the Council should ensure the Local Nature Recovery Strategy is aligned with the Local Transport Connectivity Plan and the Oxfordshire Infrastructure Strategy on the nature costs of roads and rails.	Accept	The Landscape and Nature Recovery Team are currently liaising with officers producing the Movement and Place Strategies (part 2 of the Local Transport and Connectivity Plan). The Local Nature Partnership are currently engaging on review of the Oxfordshire Infrastructure Strategy to ensure Green Infrastructure and delivery of LNRS is integrated, and we will look for opportunities for the Landscape and Nature Recovery Team to further engage.
4. That the Council should develop a delivery plan to ensure that teams within the County Council have integrated and adopted the Local Nature Recovery Strategy.	Accept	A draft of the Council's Biodiversity Action Framework and associated Action Plan have been produced for imminent internal consultation with a view to adoption in early summer. Extension of the LNRS Project Managers contract for a further year, and current recruitment of a Biodiversity Officer, will allow additional officer time to integrate LNRS delivery across Council services.
5. That the Council should make explicit in an annex to the documentation the implications of the strategy for district councils, town and parish councils, neighbourhood groups, and other key partners as well as the actions expected of them.	Accept	Work is now being taken forward by the LNRS Project Manager and partners to develop LNRS user guides for a variety of audiences to be available alongside LNRS publication in Autumn.

the ex the be	ne Council should strengthen planations within the strategy of nefits to health and wellbeing of cal Nature Recovery Strategy.	Accept	We invited the Public Health team to submit a response to our consultation to help us improve how we reflect the benefits to health and wellbeing of the LNRS; this will inform the review of the draft LNRS prior to publication in Autumn.
best it of natu happe		Accept	We will do comms around launch of the LNRS in Autumn, and also plan to do some comms as part of Big Green Week. We would like to develop a comms strategy for biodiversity and nature recovery and will add this to the service delivery plan for 25/26. Such work will require specialist comms support as well as co-ordination with partners such as the Local Nature Partnership; in developing the LNRS we have established a Comms Engagement Working Group through the Local Nature Partnership which we will look to continue
an exa for nat gain, a	ne Council should ensure it sets imple maintaining its own land ture recovery and biodiversity as the Responsible Authority for cal Nature Recovery Strategy.	Accept	This is integrated within the draft Biodiversity Action Framework which introduces policies around our own land management and is likely to be ready for adoption in early summer. We are working with the Properties and Estates Team on development of a habitat banking vehicle to enable delivery of biodiversity net gain on our land, and also promote the delivery of 20% biodiversity net gain through colleagues bringing forward Council-led planning applications.
schoo biodiv	ne Council should work with Is to support them to promote ersity and nature recovery in rounds.	Partially accept	With current resource levels and varied responsibility and relationships with schools it is considered only light reactive response is achievable. This would also be in the form of providing direction to suitable guidance and advice material only. There is some link with our community tree programme, with the Tree Service is planting 3 new community orchards on primary school sites in Oxford with a grant from the Coronation Living Heritage Fund. Much work with schools is delivered through our partners, including the Berks, Bucks and Oxon Wildlife Trust,

		Earth Trust, and Science Oxford. Promotion of sources of support for schools has been included within the draft Biodiversity Action Framework which is likely to be ready for adoption in early summer.
10. That the Council should investigate the costs of collecting and/or piling mown grass to enhance wildflower growth and other biodiversity benefits.	Accept	The introduction of cut and collect within the Highways network is currently focussed on our 52 Road Verge Nature Reserves, with an aim to introduce 6 new sites into a cut and collect regime annually, this has been incorporated into the draft Biodiversity Action Plan (due for adoption in early summer).  We'll continue to work with the Highways Team to understand costs for more extensive cut and collect and we are work with our highways contractors, Milestone on developing a biodiversity action plan for their new contract, including investigating implementing cut and collect more widely.
11.That the Council should explore the possibilities of supporting flood defences through biodiversity means, including swales, sustainable drainage systems, and rain gardens.	Accept	The inclusion of natural flood management options within Section 19 Flood Reports is integrated into the draft Biodiversity Action Plan (due for adoption in early summer). The recently adopted Flood Risk Management Strategy cross references the LNRS and identifies the role of Natural Flood Management. The new Flood Task Force provides a mechanism to engage with a range of partners including farmer clusters who can help implement natural flood management.

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Issue: City Centre Accommodation Strategy - Disposal of Old and New County Hall

Lead Cabinet Member(s): Cllr Dan Levy, Cabinet member for Finance

Date response requested: 25 February 2025

Response to report:

Enter text here.

Response to recommendations:

Recommendation	Accepted, rejected or partially accepted	Proposed action (if different to that recommended) and indicative timescale (unless rejected)
That the Council should work to ensure that public access to New and Old County Hall is maintained insofar as is possible.	Ý	As part of the sale agreement, the purchasers will be required to produce a local community strategy that will be regularly updated. This strategy will ensure public access to Old County Hall is

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Date of the meeting at which report/recommendations were received

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Date of the meeting at which report/recommendations were received

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		maintained and will include opening the building for events such as Oxford Open Doors.
That the Council should set out its strategy and action plan for the city centre's redevelopment and regeneration.	Y	A high level strategy and action plan is being developed that is focussed on the West End and Southern Gateway as key areas of redevelopment and regeneration and as areas where the Council has influence through physical ownership. The strategy and action plan will need to reflect that responsibility for planning and public realm in Oxford sits with Oxford City Council.
		Indicative timescale: 12 – 16 weeks.

Under section 9FE of the Local Government Act 2000, Overview and Scrutiny Committees must require the Cabinet or local authority to respond to a report or recommendations made thereto by an Overview and Scrutiny Committee. Such a response must be provide d within two months from the date on which it is requested<sup>1</sup> and, if the report or recommendations in questions were published, the response also must be so.

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Issue: Infrastructure Funding Statement and s.106 Funding Review Report

Lead Cabinet Member(s): Cllr Judy Roberts, Cabinet member for Infrastructure and Development Strategy

Date response requested: 25 February 2025

#### Response to report:

Enter text here.

Response to recommendations:

Recommendation	Accepted, rejected or partially accepted	Proposed action (if different to that recommended) and indicative timescale (unless rejected)
That the Council should publish an outline of the milestones identified as requirements for the success of the project with associated deadlines.	Accepted	A series of milestones are in place for delivery by the end of March - Production of pre-capital pipeline

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Date of the meeting at which report/recommendations were received

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Date of the meeting at which report/recommendations were received

		<ul> <li>Creation of first draft of dashboard for presentation to Members</li> <li>Creation of initial accelerated S106 delivery programme (clustering &amp; delivery of schemes)</li> <li>Production of end to end S106 Process Map/associated Standard Operating Procedures (Phase 1)</li> <li>A full update will be presented to the April Scrutiny Meeting</li> </ul>
2. That the Council should identify who is ultimately responsible for driving the success of the improvement project and by what measures they will be held accountable to ensure effective utilisation of funds.	Accepted	The Director of Economy and Place is the Senior Responsible Officer for the programme. Revised accountability measures will be designed into the updated corporate outcomes framework.
3. That the Council undertakes the Local Government Association's Planning Advisory Service self-assessment toolkit – 'Improving the governance of developer contributions in order to evaluate and improve current practices.'	Accepted	This will be incorporated into the process workstream within the wider s106 programme which is redesigning OCCs current s.106 processes and structure.
4. That the Council commits to working closely with district councils and other partners to ensure there are holistic plans in place for infrastructure needs.	Accepted	A revised Oxfordshire Strategic Infrastructure Strategy has been commissioned by the County Council in partnership with district councils.
5. That the Council take steps to correct any favourability biases in project planning and delivery to ensure a pragmatic and realistic approach.	Accepted	The creation and management of a pre-pipeline and pipeline of works will be overseen by a cross service delivery team (including place shaping and infrastructure delivery). This will actively remove any favourability bias by categorising and batching schemes where possible to drive efficiency. Delivery

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		team identified and potential routes to market being investigated (eg Term Service Contract) to minimise delays in engagement.
6. That the Council uses the Government Office for Science's The Futures Toolkit in order to ensure its plans and policies are robust and realistic.	Accepted	Programme Team to review and consider toolkit as part of future place shaping strategy and policy development which would then feed into the pre-capital pipeline discussions as noted above.
7. That the data dashboard is launched without further delay to ensure that members can monitor s.106 funds and projects.	Accepted	The project team is working on developing a beta 1 version of a dashboard for members to be delivered end of 2024/25.
8. That the Council should implement a risk rating for s.106 moneys being reclaimed if they are not spent in time so that issues can be addressed proactively.	Accepted	The transformed capital pipeline will enable far greater scrutiny of s.106 availability and project delivery, including flags for timeframes.

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## Work Programme Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Cllr Liam Walker, Chair | Richard Doney, Scrutiny Officer, <a href="mailto:richard.doney@oxfordshire.gov.uk">richard.doney@oxfordshire.gov.uk</a>

Topic	Relevant strategic priorities	Purpose	Туре	Lead presenters
	23 April 20	25		
Rail Strategy	Put action to address the climate emergency at the heart of our work; preserve and improve access to nature and green spaces; work with local businesses and partners for environmental, economic and social benefit	To consider progress on the proposed strategy.	Overview and Scrutiny	Robin Rogers
s.106 Funding Review	Prioritise the health and wellbeing of residents; work with local businesses and partners for environmental, economic and social benefit;	To review the Council's progress of the s.106 Funding Project	Overview and scrutiny	Robin Rogers, Paul Fermer, Alastair Read, lan Dyson
Report of the Transport Working Group	Prioritise the health and wellbeing of residents; put action to address the climate emergency at the heart of our work; preserve and improve access to nature and green spaces; work with local businesses and partners for environmental, economic and social benefit	To review the report of the Transport Working Group and to approve its submission to Cabinet	Overview and Scrutiny	Scrutiny Officer
Verge and Vegetation Management to be rescheduled	Prioritise the health and wellbeing of residents; put action to address the climate emergency at the heart of our work; preserve and improve access to nature and green spaces; work with local businesses and partners for environmental, economic and social benefit	To consider the Council's approach.	Overview and scrutiny	Sean Rooney; Paul Wilson



	25 June 20	25		
Citizens Assembly Update	Put action to address the climate emergency at the heart of our work; preserve and improve access to nature and green spaces; work with local businesses and partners for environmental, economic and social benefit	To review whether the Council's plans align with community needs and desires while promoting the wellbeing of Oxfordshire residents.	Overview and scrutiny	Carole Stow
Police and Criminal Justice Plan for Oxfordshire	Prioritise the health and wellbeing of residents; work with local businesses and partners for environmental, economic and social benefit.	As part of its Crime and Disorder Panel responsibilities, the Committee has invited the Police and Crime Commissioner and the Chief Constable of Thames Valley Police to report on progress against the Police and Crime Plan.	Overview and scrutiny — meeting as the Crime and Disorder Panel	Matthew Barber; Jason Hogg
	24 September	2025		
Report from Localities –the Council's approach to Place-making	Prioritise the health and wellbeing of residents; put action to address the climate emergency at the heart of our work; preserve and improve access to nature and green spaces; work with local businesses and partners for environmental, economic and social benefit	The Committee to consider the impact of Localities work and to recommend areas of success.	Overview and scrutiny	TBC
Oxfordshire Fire and Rescue Service Improvement	Prioritise the health and wellbeing of residents; work with local businesses and partners for environmental, economic and social benefit.	To receive the Chief Fire Officer's report on progress on fire improvement work, in the light of His Majesty's Inspectorate	Overview and scrutiny	Rob McDougall

		of Constabularies and Fire and Rescue Services report.		
12 November 2025				
4 February 2026				
22 April 2026				

	Sub-groups/Working Groups			
Name	Relevant strategic priorities	Description	Outcomes	Members
Transport Working Group	Transport, The Climate Emergency	To review lessons learnt from LTCP4 and the implementation of LTCP5. To review and feed into area transport strategies.	Task and Finish Group makes recommendations relating to the implementation of LTCP5 and the development of area transport strategies	Cllr Bennett; Cllr Haywood; Cllr Hicks; Cllr Walker

### PLACE OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 23 APRIL 2025

#### Section 106 update

#### Report by the Director of Economy & Place

#### RECOMMENDATION

- 1. The Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee is RECOMMENDED to
  - a) Note the update provided on S106 Improvement Programme.

#### **Executive Summary**

- This report provides an update on the management of Section 106 (S106) planning obligations funding and associated processes, following the last scrutiny update in November 2024. It focuses on progress made under the Phase 2 S106 Improvement Programme and outlines key developments since the previous report.
- 3. As of year-end 2023/24, the Council held £236m in S106 contributions for infrastructure projects, excluding Highways Maintenance commuted sums and Public Transport provisions. Nearly two-thirds of these funds are allocated to Education Infrastructure, such as new school developments and expansions. Over the past five years, the Council has spent more than £125m of S106 funding, with £112m directed towards education projects. However, during the same period, the Council has received over £271m in new S106 contributions. While some build-up of funding should be expected, over the medium term, income should match expenditure. The need for a step-change in the structured approach to fund management is therefore clear.
- 4. Since the November 2024 update, Phase 2 of the S106 Improvement Programme has been delivered, focusing on accelerating current delivery and a more transparent and systematic approach for the future. Following year-end processes 2024/25, a fully reconciled and accurate overview of S106 funds will be available, providing a clearer picture of both the level of available funding and future planned expenditure. Overall this marks a significant step forward in improving financial oversight and reporting. With Phase 2 now complete, Phase 3 will commence in April 2025, shifting focus to delivery and implementation of key projects.

#### **Background and Context**

- 5. In November 2024, a report to the Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee reported back on Phase 1 of the S106 Improvement Programme. It highlighted:
  - A projected increase in S106 spend in 2025/26 and an overall reduction in S106 funds reported as held, with an ongoing need to accelerate delivery
  - Deficiencies in integration between the systems that manage S106 monies, project management and finance, meaning that live data has not been available for delivery teams
  - The need for a live dashboard of information on S106, available to Members
  - The need to review the governance of associated Community Infrastructure Levy funding.
- 6. A structured, cross-organisational approach, with Director-level oversight, has been implemented to enhance fund management and spending. The programme elements within Phase 2 of the programme have included:
  - A project to accelerate delivery to address the backlog of small-scale S106 schemes
  - A detailed review of systems & processes, with new standard operating procedures to be agreed, and the delivery of a single view dashboard integrating information from planning, project management and financial systems
  - The delivery of an integrated pipeline and pre-delivery pipeline to facilitate the identification and prioritisation of capital projects across the board
  - A comprehensive review of S106 agreements to re-baseline schemes as "identified use" or "committed" and to review other agreements for flexibility from previously identified uses which are no-longer priorities
  - A longer-term project to map out strategic sites and infrastructure needs and align infrastructure planning with Local Plans and development impact
- 7. This update marks the completion of Phase 2, outlining progress to date and setting out proposals for Phase 3. Progress made within Phase 3 of the Programme is set out below.

### Summary of Phase 2 Deliverables March 2025 Acceleration of Delivery

- 8. The S106 Accelerated Delivery project aims to accelerate delivery of minor transport schemes through an accelerated programme of works during 2025/26-2027/28.
- 9. As part of Phase 2, various options to accelerate design and delivery were investigated. Of the options investigated it was determined that the most efficient and cost-effective solution would be to engage with established internal design and delivery teams to develop and deliver the works at pace to alleviate the S106 funding backlog. An initial 49 minor transport schemes were identified with £11.6m of associated S106 funding, of which £9m is held.
- 10. Noting that in some cases, under-capitalisation has held up schemes, the Capital Investment Strategy approved by Council in February 2025 includes a new prioritisation category which will allocate capital funding to schemes only partially funded by Section 106 contributions but that can be unlocked through additional funding. Cabinet proposed £4m investment against this category, which was subsequently approved by Council in February 2025.
- 11. Of the identified schemes so far, a proportion would require additional financial support, of which £1.1m capital investment funding will be funded from the £4m investment agreed in February 2025.
- 12. The table below sets out the number of projects identified for acceleration by district. As these schemes are moved into design and procurement, further review will aim to bring through a next tranche of accelerated schemes.
- 13. Accelerated spend associated with the initial 49 on minor schemes amounts to more than 10% of the total S106 held transport allocations as of April 2025

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		Projects (no.)	s106 Secured	s106 Held	Corporate Funding
North	Cherwell	17	£2,168,976.80	£3,948,087.20	£155,000.00
	West	7	£50,261.40	£1,049,852.88	£100,000.00
Central	Central	3	£0.00	£679,994.66	£0.00
South	South	9	£167,640.00	£1,736,129.14	£630,000.00
	Vale	13	£185,059.46	£1,627,739.53	£245,000.00

£2,571,937.66

Total £11,613,741.07

£9,041,803.41

£1,130,000.00

Tab. 1 S106 Accelerated Delivery Breakdown April 2025

Systems, Data and Process Review and Dashboards

- 14. From January 2025, the addition of a Business Analyst has facilitated significant progress in engaging key stakeholders across the Council in a detailed review of S106 and related processes.
- 15. The project scope has been expanded to include feeder processes related to Section 106 planning obligations and negotiations. Workshops have identified challenges across the end-to-end process, consolidating these into a list of opportunities now being integrated into detailed sub-processes. These will be reviewed during April 2025. Additionally, system demonstrations have highlighted integration gaps, necessitating retraining and reconfiguration of MasterGov (the relevant planning management system) to eliminate offline workarounds.
- 16. Progress has also been made in assessing current agreements to determine whether negotiated contributions align with real-world scheme delivery costs. Engagement with service delivery teams has uncovered opportunities for improved collaboration. This has led to a review of current negotiation rates. An initial review of index pricing has identified opportunities to better align rates with actual scheme delivery costs. Further analysis will be undertaken in April 2025, with a revised pricing model to be presented to the Programme Board in early May 2025.
- 17. Dashboards are being built for core stakeholder groups: members, senior managers and operational teams. Each dashboard will be designed with the end users' requirements in mind and content displayed based on a user group. A beta dashboard for members exists, with deployment planned through the member induction and training process following the May 2025 local elections. A demonstration will be provided to the Committee. A detailed release plan is being completed for the Senior Manager and Operational dashboards based on the learnings from the development of the Members beta dashboard
- 18. Key actions on dashboards include re-platforming dashboards onto the council's central data capacity infrastructure. This enables licence-free access, better integration and more reliable performance. The project has engaged support from the corporate data and technical architect teams and is working to develop a data eco-system aligned to the corporate approach to data design, certification and management. At time of writing, dashboards are in the process of being tested for technical design efficiency, data content accuracy and user experience before deployment.
- 19. In terms of dashboard visuals and content, the project has focused on following a data insights architecture approach. This means starting from a position of collating the questions and insights that all core stakeholder groups require to be able to make informed decisions related to their role.
- 20. The screenshots below provide early sight of approach and content.

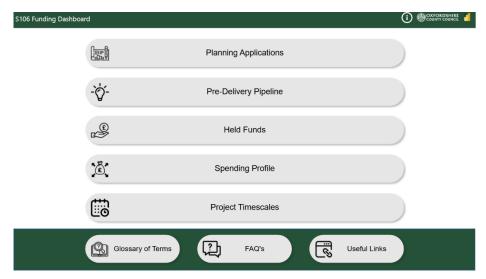


Fig.1 Members Dashboard Menu April 2025



Fig.2 Members Dashboard April 2025

21. Finally, a revised process for the prioritisation of associated Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) funding has been developed and agreed. The new CIL process sets out how the County Council will engage with South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse District Councils, and in future with any other Councils who adopt relevant CIL policies. The new process treats CIL as a potential funding source for the Capital Programme and provides increased touchpoints with stakeholders to ensure priority schemes within the district are funded. Capital proposals will be submitted as part of the Capital programme process, and CIL proposed to fund them where appropriate. Funding package options will then be developed and agreed. Priorities will also be discussed with local members and at locality meetings and other forums, before the final sign off for the use of CIL funding as per other capital funding.

In short:

- In July / August an estimate of expected CIL funding will be provided by the district council
- During early October, new capital proposals are identified as part of the capital budget setting process
- Capital proposals are then filtered against the statutory CIL criteria
- During this period the district council will confirm the CIL allocation
- Funding package options are developed with relevant stakeholder engagement
- In early January, schemes are submitted for approval and inclusion in the council's submission to the district council by the end of the January deadline

#### **Capital Pre-Delivery Pipeline/Portal**

- 22. The Capital Pre-delivery portal has been built to capture and log all capital schemes not yet in the funded capital programme and will significantly improve the delivery and monitoring of early-stage projects. It comprises a new database and front-end interface for entering and monitoring the data. To date, this information has been held in many isolated and inconsistent spreadsheets with no visibility for other affected teams or schemes. This has been identified as a critical need not just to report against \$106 schemes, but for all capital schemes not yet in delivery.
- 23. This initial phase has focussed on capturing key information relating to S106 schemes, specifically in transport infrastructure and education service areas. The data feeds into the new dashboards, providing the ability to view pipeline schemes and related data on a map of Oxfordshire which can be filtered by district or parish. Critically, the data will enable the Council to understand barriers to delivery, enabling proactive action to be taken, such as redeploying resources, agreeing delivery routes, or providing additional funding, for example. Visibility will also allow higher risk agreements to be identified and focussed on. A key element of this workstream is to ensure that processes and governance are clear and available to colleagues to ensure full adoption and embedding into business as usual.
- 24. Having a single combined portal also paves the way for automation tools to be used to help keep the information up-to-date and accurate. These will include automatically triggered messaging prompting officers to make updates as projects move through key phases.

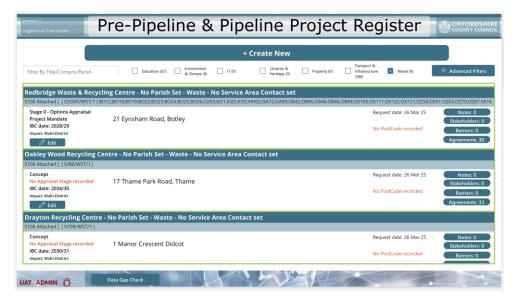


Fig.3 Pre-Pipeline Database April 2025

#### **Categorisation Review**

- 25. Significant progress has been made in the S106 Funding Review, with system updates, enhanced fund categorisation, and strengthened governance processes to improve fund management and delivery. This work aims to ensure that schemes are reviewed for ongoing relevance and deliverability and recategorized accordingly.
- 26. This review applied a structured assessment process to all agreements, ensuring a clear and transparent classification of funds. The categorisation framework is defined as follows:
  - Committed Funds allocated to a clearly defined and approved project, where barriers to delivery are either resolved or can be overcome. While the project is approved and planned proceed, this does not necessarily indicate immediate delivery.
  - Identified Use Funding earmarked for a specific purpose in line with legal agreements but not yet assigned to a fully defined project. These funds will be allocated once further details are determined.
- 27. Through this process £92m of funding has been reclassified as committed, meaning that service departments are clear on the details of the delivery project. These funds are now being moved fully into the pre-delivery pipeline with ongoing challenge from a senior panel on deliverability and timescales.
- 28. £449,000 of funding has been identified that can be applied to the Cowley Branch Line and £5.1m to support capital investment in Special Education Needs provision, both identified corporate priorities.

29. Remaining proposals identified as undeliverable or no longer required are under detailed review for alternative compliant uses.

#### **Spatial Strategy**

- 30. To provide the most strategic direction to the negotiation of developer contributions, long-term understanding of local place-development as well as short term pressures, needs to be better understood. Key foundations are therefore being put in place to enable better infrastructure and service planning. District level Local Plans form the key documents in planning growth for the next 20 years and the Oxfordshire Infrastructure Strategy (OXIS) sets out the County's infrastructure needs related to the current situation and that growth. Local Plans are all currently undergoing statutory reviews and in addition, a revision of OXIS has also been commissioned to delivery in Q3/4 2025/26.
- 31. Two further streams of work are being developed to provide a more complete long-term picture. Firstly, an integrated spatial model is being commissioned which will combine datasets that describe the county in spatial terms, and give facilitate better insight to help develop future plans. The second stream is assessing land uses across the county, working with stakeholders to develop land use principles which can be used to shape land uses and development patterns, safeguarding and protecting valuable land to support the development of an inclusive, sustainable economy.
- 32. Added to these key workstreams is ongoing work developing a suite of masterplans for areas of Oxford and towns across the County. These will look to tackle some of the key social, environmental and economic issues within these areas while also looking at opportunities for better place making public realm, access to the country-side ang green spaces, and overall optimised utilisation of space.
- 33. Taken as a package, this enhanced strategic planning framework will better enable the development of schemes and mitigations associated with growth sites to more closely match long-term, strategic need.

#### Programme Delivery (Phase 3)

- 34. As the Council moves into Phase 3 a series of actions have been requested as next steps by the S106 Programme Board including:
  - Establishing Quarterly Fund Review Meetings and a structured review process (with Planning, Finance, Infrastructure Delivery, and Legal teams) to assess:
    - o Status of committed vs. uncommitted funds
    - o Spend progress and delivery outcomes
    - o Alignment of funds with priority schemes
    - o Expiring funds and potential risks

- Opportunities for reallocation based on alternative funding sources (e.g., ClL, government grants)
- Annual Reallocation Exercise Conduct a deep-dive review to identify funds that can be repurposed within legal constraints, ensuring alignment with council priorities.
- Triggers for Fund Reallocation Develop clear criteria for when a project should be reassessed or funding should be reallocated (e.g., delays, changes in priorities, alternative funding secured)
- Implementation of Continuous Monitoring & Performance Improvement Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for Fund Management - Develop metrics such as:
  - o % of funds committed within set timescales
  - o Number of schemes delivered on schedule
  - o Overall spend vs collection rate
  - o Level of fund expiry risk
- Agreed regular reporting to the Portfolio Holder, Cabinet and Overview and Scrutiny, through the performance and risk management processes
- Automated Financial Tracking (Power BI) Implement a live tracking dashboard that integrates with finance and project delivery systems to provide real-time visibility on fund allocation, project progress, and potential risks. This will be an enhanced level of reporting to that produced in Phase 2.
- Compliance Audits & Assurance Checks Introduce bi-annual internal audits to verify fund categorisation and ensure legal compliance.
- Implement a 'Red Flag' System to automatically highlight funding at risk of expiry.
- Creation of 'Accelerated S106 Delivery Programme' / funding profile that will show the spend-down of the S106 balance over time and will allow the programme to be held to account.
- Further and ongoing detailed review of S106 funds / agreements by Programme Board to maintain challenge to deliverability and timescales.
- Release of Beta 2 Members Dashboard (spend breakdown by Service Area, delivery timescales and planning application.
- Delivery of Process Review and Procedure Recommendations.
- Development of systems approach of "making it easy to do the right thing the first time" to include:
  - o Governance and Change Management
  - o Optimised use of MasterGov
  - o Collaboration and communication
  - o Organisational Redesign

#### **Financial Implications**

- 35. As of April 2024, Oxfordshire County Council held £236m in S106 provisions for infrastructure projects, in line with legally binding agreements. This excludes Highways Maintenance commuted sums and Public Transport contributions. Nearly two-thirds of these funds are allocated to Education Infrastructure, including new schools and expansions. Over the past five years, the Council has spent over £125m in S106 funding, with £112m directed towards Education schemes. During the same period, £271m in new S106 contributions have been secured, reinforcing the Council's strong position in negotiating developer contributions.
- 36. The capital programme, as presented to Cabinet on 25 March 2025, outlines over £92m in planned S106 expenditure across 2024/25 and 2025/26, including:
  - £66m for schools to support the Pupil Place Plan, subject to the timing of school openings and admission demands.
  - 25% of held S106 funds allocated to Transport schemes, covering projects from major roadworks to local traffic calming measures.
- 37. Where possible, external grant funding is utilised alongside S106 contributions:
  - £22m in transport-related S106 funding is earmarked for schemes receiving Growth Deal Funding, to be spent by the end of 2025/26.
  - £9m allocated to the HIF 1 programme, supporting major infrastructure delivery.
- 38. The S106 Improvement Programme is enhancing fund management and reporting, offering greater clarity on allocations. However, expenditure remains subject to various constraints:
  - Education funding is tied to school expansions and openings as outlined in the Pupil Place Plan.
  - Transport projects have long lead times due to planning, design, and construction phases.
  - Resource limitations within the Council and construction sector impact project delivery timescales.
- 39. It is anticipated that, by the end of May 2025, a comprehensive year-end reconciliation will be completed.
- 40. For 2024/25, the Council has already received an additional £41m in new S106 contributions. Reinforcing our track record in securing developer funding. The Council's structured approach ensures transparent, legally compliant, and effective management of S106 funds to support Oxfordshire's infrastructure needs.

41. The Council's structured approach will provide greater transparency and assurance in the management of S106 funds, ensuring they are aligned with Oxfordshire's infrastructure needs while maintaining compliance with legal obligations.

Comments checked by: Graham Clare, Senior Planning and Reporting Accountant <a href="mailto:graham.clare@oxfordshire.gov.uk">graham.clare@oxfordshire.gov.uk</a>

#### **Legal Implications**

- 42. S106 Obligations are entered under the Town and Country Act 1990 (as amended) and are paid and/or supplied by developers to enable the council to deal with the impact of development. Planning permission can be refused where the impact of a development is not appropriately mitigated. A s106 obligation is a contract and there is a legal requirement on the developer and the council to comply with the terms of that contract.
- 43. The council is required to produce an annual Infrastructure Funding Statement in accordance with Schedule 2 of the Community Infrastructure Levy Regulations 2010 (as amended). This must include information on the amount of Section 106 contributions the council has secured, the amount of s106 contributions spent or allocated, a summary of infrastructure s106 contributions were spent on, and the amount of unspent s106 contributions it holds.

Comments checked by: Jennifer Crouch, Head of Law and LBP (Environmental) jennifer.crouch@oxfordshire.gov.uk

#### **Staff Implications**

44. There are no immediate staff implications to report at this stage, however staff implications may be identified during development of the end-to-end process mapping and redesign component being led by the Business Analyst as part of the Process workstream.

#### **Equality & Inclusion and Sustainability Implications**

45. The effective delivery of schemes that mitigate the impact of development is critical to Oxfordshire communities, with the impact of delivery / non-delivery being particularly experienced by those experiencing disability, those who are pregnant or are nursing young children, or anyone likely to be or feel more vulnerable in the public realm, including women. Rural communities and communities suffering economic disadvantage are also more likely to benefit from improved infrastructure or be impacted by non-delivery. Equally, the effective design and implementation of \$106 and CIL schemes provides the Council with a major opportunity to enhance the environment. While there is no direct impact from this report, an ECIA is therefore in progress to ensure that the transformation programme and the subsequent planning, data and

reporting processes identify and highlight equality, inclusion and sustainability implications in their delivery.

#### **Consultations**

46. None required at this stage.

Robin Rogers, Director of Economy and Place

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April 2025





## Annex 1: OxRAIL 2040 Slide Deck

# OxRAIL 2040: Plan For Rail A new Rail Strategy for Oxfordshire



# Local Transport and Connectivity Plan Context

"Our Local Transport and Connectivity Plan vision is for an inclusive and safe net zero Oxfordshire transport system that enables all parts of the county to thrive.

It will tackle inequality, be better for health, wellbeing and social inclusivity and have zero road fatalities or serious injuries. It will also enhance our natural and historic environment and enable the county to be one of the world's leading innovation economies.

Our plan sets out to achieve this by reducing the need to travel and private car use through making walking, cycling, public and shared transport the natural first choice."

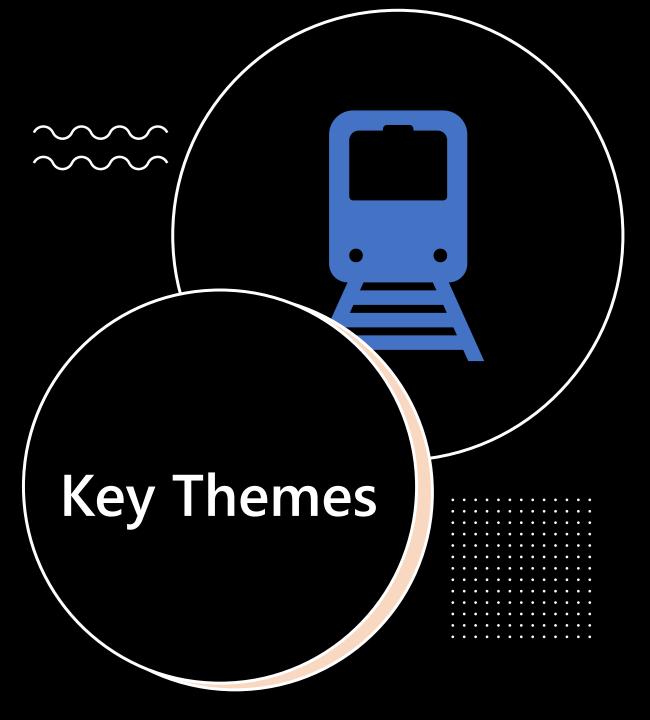


Rail as an enabler for:

- Better quality of life and visitor experience
- Improving the environment
- Driving sustainable economic growth



- (a) To provide context and background on current and future rail development in Oxfordshire; outline and articulate the County's rail development needs, ambitions and priorities
- (b) Present an evidence-based prioritised list of interventions to deliver these, agreed upon by the council and rail industry partners, aligned with Government plans for growth and decarbonisation and serving as the delivery plan for rail investment in Oxfordshire up to 2040, ensuring synergy with all objectives and enabling decisive and swift action when funding opportunities arise



The rail strategy is being planned around three key themes:

- Enhancing infrastructure and improving connectivity
- Climate action
- Rail as place-shaper

# Timeline

Date	Activity
May 2025	Contract Start
May - July	Key stakeholder engagement and briefings
June - July	Demand modelling and economic (GVA) analysis
August	Draft Rail Strategy produced
September - October	Public consultation - for six weeks - and key stakeholder briefings
November	Finalise Rail Strategy
16 December 2025	Council Cabinet decision to formally adopt Rail Strategy



# Initial key projects

- 1. Oxford Station expansion and redevelopment
- 2. 'Electrifying Oxfordshire' freight spine wiring
- 3. Oxfordshire Metro/Oxfordshire Connect network
- 4. Signalling, track and rolling stock improvements
- 5. Cowley Branch Line open for passenger services
- 6. Four new rail stations by 2040 at Begbroke, Oxford Cowley, Oxford Littlemore, Wantage and Grove, with the potential for other stations being explored
- 7. Business case development for a Carterton-Witney-Oxford connection
- 8. East West Rail phased introduction from December 2025
- 9. Rail stations embedded in the community with better active travel and bus connections

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