

**Cabinet
Tuesday, 21 October 2025**

ADDENDA 1

7. Reports from Scrutiny Committees (Pages 1 - 10)

Cabinet will receive the following Scrutiny report:-

Performance and Corporate Services Overview and Scrutiny Report on Strategic Plan 2025-28

24. For information only: Cabinet response to Scrutiny items (Pages 11 - 18)

Strategic Plan 2025-28

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Divisions Affected – All

CABINET **21 October 2025**

Draft Strategic Plan 2025-28 **Report of Performance and Corporate Services Overview & Scrutiny** **Committee**

RECOMMENDATION

1. The Cabinet is **RECOMMENDED** to —
 - a) Note the recommendations contained in the body of this report and to consider and determine its response to the Performance and Corporate Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee, and include those responses as part of any report provided to Council when it is asked to adopt the Strategic Plan
 - b) Agree that relevant officers will continue to update Scrutiny for 12 months on progress made against actions committed to in response to the recommendations, or until they are completed (if earlier).

REQUIREMENT TO RESPOND

2. In accordance with section 9FE of the Local Government Act 2000, the Performance and Corporate Services Overview & Scrutiny Committee requires that, within two months of the consideration of this report, the Cabinet publish a response to this report and any recommendations. However, in view of the constitutional requirement that the Cabinet publish its response as part of the Council papers, it is advised that the Cabinet agree its response at its meeting on 21 October 2025.

INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

3. The Performance and Corporate Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee considered a report on the draft Strategic Plan 2025-28 at its meeting on 12 September 2025.
4. The Committee would like to thank Cllr Dan Levy, Cabinet Member for Finance, Property and Transformation, Susannah Wintersgill, Director of

Public Affairs and Policy Partnerships, and Carole Stow, Engagement and Consultation Manager for attending the meeting and responding to questions.

SUMMARY

5. The Cabinet Member for Finance, Property and Transformation introduced the draft strategic plan as a replacement for the previous, more complex version, explaining that the new plan aimed to simplify objectives, better align council actions with strategic goals, and improve communication with the public. The Director of Public Affairs, Policy and Partnerships added that the plan focused on three core themes: Greener, Fairer, and Healthier, with clear headline projects shaped by public feedback. It would be accompanied by an outcomes framework that included the new national measures being developed as part of the Local Government Outcomes Framework.
6. In response to the introduction, the Committee began its questioning. Topics explored by the Committee included: aspects of nomenclature, monitoring, the process of engagement and consultation, the achievability of net zero ambitions, and queries over why certain projects were not included within the draft plan.
7. The Committee makes 11 recommendations, which cluster around the 'greener' and 'fairer' aspects of the proposed plan. These seek to highlight a number of activities which the Committee considers should form part of the Council's core mission, or to request points of clarification where necessary. The Committee also makes a number of general recommendations.
8. In addition to the recommendations, discussion of the Strategic Plan inevitably raises issues which the Committee wishes to feed back, but are not directly linked to the Strategic Plan itself. These are passed on to the Cabinet by way of observations, to which the Cabinet is not under a duty to respond.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Greener

9. Ostensibly, there is a difference in priorities between the Council, as expressed in the draft Strategic Plan, and residents. The draft plan outlines the Council's wish to make Oxfordshire greener by 'reducing traffic congestion and investing in public transport, cycling and walking; protecting our natural environment; and helping Oxfordshire respond and adapt to a changing climate.' The summary report on the public consultation on the other hand states that being greener is 'not top of mind for residents given perceptions of more pressing issues and cost of living.'
10. Looking more deeply, however, this disconnect is far less significant than might initially appear. Many of the priorities identified by residents – such as road quality, access to public transport, and safety – are all clear outcomes of policies seeking to deliver a greener Oxfordshire. Improved road quality encourages

cycling, a fuller and more reliable public transport network reduces congestion, and the implementation of 20mph speed limits seeks to improve the safety of pedestrians, particularly vulnerable ones such as children and the elderly. This disconnect, insofar as it does exist, appears to be one of presentation, with the Council describing higher-level outcomes and residents seeking more tangible outputs. The Committee recommends that to achieve greater public buy-in for the Council's green agenda that it draws out more clearly the tangible outputs it expects to achieve through its green policies, particularly those which relate to stated resident priorities.

Recommendation 1: That the Cabinet more clearly draws out the links between its green agenda and local resident concerns, using clearer language and relatable examples.

11. In defining what the Council means by 'greener' the draft Strategic Plan states that 'We want our communities to enjoy clean air, access to green space, and safe and sustainable ways to move around. This means... protecting our environment'. As part of its plans to deliver a fairer Oxfordshire, the draft plan says that the Council will work 'with health partners, businesses, voluntary and community sector organisations and the city and district councils to tackle the root causes of health inequalities, including housing, education and employment.'
12. A tension exists between two aspects of these ambitions: the wish to protect the environment and access to green space, whilst also building housing. Although brownfield development does occur, it is typically more difficult and expensive than greenfield development, meaning that developers have a commercial incentive to choose the latter if it is available. In Oxford, where housing affordability is arguably most acute, large scale developments such as Oxford North, South Oxford Science Village and Barton Park, have all led to the loss of green spaces.
13. The Committee does not necessarily disagree with the cost-benefit of these developments and recognises that there will inevitably be trade-offs between its ambitions over housing and protecting green spaces. It recommends that the Council is more open and transparent about the criteria it will use to balance these two important but competing ambitions.

Recommendation 2: That the Cabinet clarifies how it wishes to balance its competing desires to protect green spaces whilst also providing housing

14. The Committee queries two statements made in the draft Strategic Plan in relation to net zero. According to the draft plan, the Council has cut its carbon emissions by over a third since 2008. It also states that it is the Council's ambition 'to be net zero in our council operations by 2030'. In light of the fact that it took the Council 17 years to reduce its emissions by a third, reducing it by a further two thirds over five years requires an acceleration in reductions almost seven times the rate delivered to date. The Committee appreciates

that, for example, the Council's fleet is being decarbonised, and the sale of County Hall will help reduce its carbon emissions significantly. However, before members can be expected to endorse these ambitions they must be assured that the impressive acceleration of carbon reduction is viable. It is asked, therefore, that members of the Council are provided with further details to illustrate how this ambition is planned to be achieved.

Recommendation 3: That Council members are provided with quantitative data and a plan to illustrate the deliverability of the Council's net zero ambitions when they are asked to adopt the draft Strategic Plan

15. Related to the Council's plans for decarbonisation in its own activity by 2030 and for the county as a whole by 2050, the Committee suggests that a crucial element of the process is being under-prioritised: renewable energy infrastructure. Decarbonising transport requires increases in adoption of electric vehicles, but that will only happen at scale if people can reliably and quickly charge their vehicles. The widespread adoption of heat pumps requires sufficient (clean) electricity to run them. Mitigations are required to manage the greater unpredictability of renewable energy's output; not only is too little energy at the point of need a concern, but, as evidenced in Spain recently, surges and over-supply can also lead to widespread power outages.¹ It is the view of the Committee that the Council should be working with partners to get ahead of these challenges now as a priority, and thus it should be included in the Council's Strategic Plan.

Recommendation 4: That the Cabinet includes a commitment to improve access to renewable energy infrastructure as part of the Strategic Plan

16. Active travel is an area which traverses all aspects of the Council's strategic ambitions: modal shift away from motor vehicles is greener, there are manifold physical and mental health benefits of active travel, and creating the conditions where people may choose active travel is a matter of fairness. It is an aspect of this last point the Committee highlights: the quality of existing footways.
17. Whilst the Council intends to deliver active travel improvements, both cycling and walking, the point is made by the Committee that maintenance of existing footways is more cost-efficient. Those using prams or wheelchairs can be prevented from using a path by defects which are often fairly easy – and cheap - to fix. The ability of residents to engage in active or low-carbon travel relies on full accessibility from end to end; a new bus route will be useless to a resident if they are unable to get the 100 yards to the bus stop from their house. It is the view of the Committee that there is a particularly high return on investment when allocating resources to footway maintenance, and that the benefits are accentuated by the fact that those who will benefit most are likely to be those with specific high-needs, such as the elderly, disabled, or those with young children. Consequently, the Committee recommends that this be adopted as a strategic priority.

¹ [Blackout in Spain and Portugal 'first of its kind', report finds - BBC News](#)

Recommendation 5: That the Cabinet commits to improving footways to facilitate walking within the Strategic Plan

18. Finally under Greener, the Committee makes a simple point. The summary of resident feedback on the draft plan highlights ‘a need for more integrated, dependable, and cost-effective public transport, particularly bus services’ as a priority. The Committee agrees, and considers this aim to entirely consistent with the Council’s broader strategic ambitions for Oxfordshire to become greener, fairer and healthier. The more comprehensive and reliable the bus network, the more residents will want to use it. This will take cars off the road, improve air quality, and provide a cost-effective alternative to taxis for those who do not have access to private vehicles. The Committee recommends that the expansion of access to buses should be a core priority for the Council and included within its Strategic Plan.

Recommendation 6: That the Cabinet commits to expanding access to bus services within the Strategic Plan

Fairer

19. One of the headline projects identified as a means of delivering a fairer Oxfordshire is the roll-out of ‘a network of family and community hubs across the county during 2026 and 2027 in areas of need.’ It suggested by the Committee that the Council should more directly align with and reference the Best Start initiative in the Strategic Plan to draw on the links with and the positive public perception of its successor, Sure Start.

Recommendation 7: That the Cabinet raises the profile of Best Start as a successor to Sure Start within the Strategic Plan

20. In April 2025, Council passed a motion stating ‘Council requests the relevant Cabinet member for Community and Corporate Services and the Cabinet Member for Finance to take a lead from forward-thinking colleagues at Buckinghamshire Council and, working with its Town Council, and District Council partners, invite banks and building societies that have left – or are due to leave – our high streets to explore opportunities to work with this Council to set up similar banking hubs within appropriate Council libraries.’
21. The Committee fully supports this motion: banking facilities are one of the core services upon which a viable high street depends. The Committee reminds Cabinet that this is the most rural county in South East England and that Oxfordshire is more than its urban conurbations. If the Council intends to support its market towns and reduce the need to travel to the major urban centres in the county, safeguarding banking facilities is an absolute must. Equally, ensuring access to banking facilities is also a matter of inclusion: those who are least likely to be using internet banking are also those who may struggle to travel long distances to a bank. So central is this access that the Committee considers that it should be a strategic priority for the Council and referenced in the Strategic Plan.

22. In addition to this, however, the Committee also recognises that there is cross over between banking and another core service: post offices. It suggests that, whilst the Council is exploring the establishment of banking hubs, it should also give consideration as to how it can increase access to post office services.

Recommendation 8: That the Cabinet commits to increasing access to community banking and post office services as part of the Strategic Plan.

General Recommendations

23. A point of feedback from the Committee is its disappointment at the inaccessibility of certain parts of the report it received. Whilst it is clear that efforts had been made to use plain language, the use of local authority vocabulary which presupposes a high degree of familiarity with the topics being discussed is a pitfall which must be avoided. The Committee highlights the use of 'mobility hubs' as a good example of a phrase commonly used within the local authority – and in the draft Strategic Plan – but not understood outside that context.
24. Of even greater concern was that a number of members of the Committee were left unable to read comments made by residents owing to the formatting of the report submitted, with the text being in a small and faint font even when viewed on a screen. In view of the fact that the Council is under a legal duty via the Public Sector Bodies (Websites and Mobile Applications) (No. 2) Accessibility Regulations 2018 to ensure that its reports are accessible this is disappointing. The Committee suggests that a good way to make Oxfordshire fairer and more inclusive would be to ensure that this issue of accessibility is remedied by the time the report asking Council to adopt the Strategic Plan is published.

Recommendation 9: That the Cabinet improves the accessibility of its report by the time it is published for consideration by Council, both in terms of terminology and the presentation of feedback from residents.

25. The Committee appreciates that the content of the Strategic Plan is a delicate balance between a realistic assessment of how things are at present on one hand, and producing a viable but pithy outline of the improvements the Council intends to make and the steps that will require on the other. Part of being realistic is recognising need and the pressures the Council faces, which the Strategic Plan does. For instance, highlighting the number of areas falling within the poorest 20% nationally in the indices of multiple deprivation and, also, the challenges of an ageing population. It is, however, also important when being realistic that the Council can point to its track record and previous achievements as a means of establishing credibility for its future plans. To bolster public acceptance it is important to underline that the Council is not starting from zero, and that it has already taken significant steps to make

Oxfordshire greener, fairer and healthier. The view of the Committee is that the draft plan does not highlight the Council's existing momentum sufficiently.

Recommendation 10: That the Cabinet focuses not only on local need or deficits, but that it also recognises and celebrates its successes to date.

26. The process of identifying the Council's intended destination in 2028 and the route by which it intends to get there is a necessary, vital in fact, step. However, on its own it is not sufficient and it is crucial that progress is monitored to ensure the Council remains on track. The Committee, therefore, welcomes plans to develop a Citizens Portal which will monitor and transparently share with the public the Council's performance. The Committee's request is simply that members, who have the ear of resident concerns and have a democratic mandate to represent them, are fully engaged with the development of the Citizens Portal to ensure that the information it shares addresses the concerns of residents.

Recommendation 11: That members are engaged in the development of the Citizens Portal.

OBSERVATIONS

27. As the consultation and engagement summary on the Strategic Plan states, there is 'notable consistency amongst Oxfordshire residents when identifying priorities for future focus'. The first listed of these is 'coordinated and higher quality road repairs.' One aspect of frustration fed back from residents via the Committee was over a perception that the Council's highways repairs were not always likely to be long-lasting. To address this, it would be of great help if the Council were to make available, either to members or to the public at large, information on the cost-benefits of different road repair types, to explain the Council's approach and its justification.
28. Another area of particular frustration highlighted was the quality of road repairs after utility works. If the Council is able to influence this as the Highways Authority to drive up standards, significant deterioration of the road network could be avoided without significant financial outlay.

Observation 1: That the state of the highways is of particular importance to residents, and that there is particular value in explaining the Council's approach to different types of repair, and focusing on improving the state of roads following utility works.

29. The Committee appreciates that demographic changes, with reductions in the number of school-age children, poses a challenge to the Council of managing reductions the concomitant reduction in school places efficiently and equitably. The Education and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee did consider a report on School Place Planning and Delivery in March 2025

without making any recommendations. However, given the great consequence of decisions made in this arena, the Committee asks that the Council continues to treat good monitoring and planning of demand for school places as a priority area.

Observation 2: That it is important that the Council continues to monitor and plan reductions in school places as demand reduces

30. In discussing schools, the point was made that some schools in impacted areas have expressed concern over the Council's congestion charge plans and the potential negative impacts on staff recruitment and retention. Whilst the decision is now made, the Committee hopes that the Council will remain open to discussions over additional mitigations should these fears be fully realised.

Observation 3: That there is concern amongst some schools impacted by the congestion charge of difficulties in recruitment and retention.

31. The Committee welcomes the Council's recent commitment to being a Marmot county, which brings with it a commitment to address social inequalities which cause poorer health outcomes for the less affluent. Of these, the Committee is of the view that policies supporting activity and healthy-eating, particularly for the young, are of especial importance as lack of access to these tends to have lifelong impacts on children and young people's health and wellbeing. The Committee lauds the inclusion of the YouMove programme within the draft Strategic Plan, but asks that particular attention is given to issues around activity and nutrition within the Council's policy development more broadly.

Observation 4: That the Council recognises the fundamental importance of improved diet and exercise, particularly for young people, if a healthier Oxfordshire is to be delivered

FURTHER CONSIDERATION

32. The Committee is unlikely to review the complete Strategic Plan again. However, the Committee and other Overview and Scrutiny committees will consider different aspects of the Plan in addition to it forming part of the wider context of its ongoing Scrutiny.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

33. Under Part 6.2 (13) (a) of the Constitution Scrutiny has the following power: 'Once a Scrutiny Committee has completed its deliberations on any matter a formal report may be prepared on behalf of the Committee and when agreed by them the Proper Officer will normally refer it to the Cabinet for consideration.
34. Under Part 4.2 of the Constitution, the Cabinet Procedure Rules, s 2 (3) iv) the Cabinet will consider any reports from Scrutiny Committees.

Anita Bradley
Director of Law and Governance and Monitoring Officer

Annex: Pro-forma Response Template

Background papers: None

Other Documents: None

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October 2025

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Overview & Scrutiny Recommendation Response Pro forma

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

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

Issue: **Draft Strategic Plan 2025-28**

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

Date response requested:² **21 October 2025**

Response to recommendations

Recommendation	Accepted, rejected or partially accepted	Proposed action (if different to that recommended) and indicative timescale (unless rejected)
1. That the Cabinet more clearly draws out the links between its green agenda and local resident concerns, using clearer language and relatable examples	Partially accepted	This is ongoing work and is broader than the Strategic Plan. The council's approach to communicating the green agenda is continuously evolving, building on best practice and trialling new ways of getting messages across which relate to residents' concerns. These include developing a website - climateactionoxfordshire.org.uk - to provide practical examples of

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

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

Overview & Scrutiny Recommendation Response Pro forma

		<p>how to save energy and money; and launching the energy saving app to provide advice and money-saving tips, and the BetterPoints Oxfordshire app, which offers people rewards for doing things that are good for them and the planet.</p>
<p>2. That the Cabinet clarifies how it wishes to balance its competing desires to protect green spaces whilst also providing housing</p>	<p>Partially accepted</p>	<p>This level of detail is not suitable for the Strategic Plan but a response to the committee’s recommendation is set out below.</p> <p>The Planning and Infrastructure Bill is currently passing through the House of Lords. Once the bill has Royal Assent, the council will have even greater responsibility for strategic planning. This new responsibility is an opportunity to work closely with our current and future partners and stakeholders to create effective strategic policies.</p> <p>The evidence and data we have on Oxfordshire's environment, and its Local Nature Recovery Strategy will be a key starting point. With this information, we will be able to identify future development areas away from sensitive green spaces and in sustainable locations that are not constrained by boundaries. This wider geographical approach will allow us to make well-informed decisions that benefit both our communities and the environment.</p> <p>The council will use this opportunity to embed environmental priorities such as protecting habitats, enhancing biodiversity and maintaining green infrastructure in its new strategic planning responsibility. Work has already started on collecting the evidence base for this new responsibility.</p>
<p>3. That Council members are provided with quantitative data and a plan to illustrate the deliverability of the Council's net zero ambitions when they are asked to adopt the draft Strategic Plan</p>	<p>Accepted</p>	<p>The information below will be set out in an annex to the draft Strategic Plan for Council.</p> <p>The council is committed to become carbon neutral by 2030. The Carbon Management Plan sets out how the council plans to</p>

Overview & Scrutiny Recommendation Response Pro forma

reduce emissions from our operations and estate which includes the council's buildings, streetlighting and highways assets (streetlighting, traffic signals and signage), fleet and staff business travel.

The plan identifies emissions reduction actions, combined with the decarbonisation of the electricity supply, that if delivered would put the council on a trajectory to reduce emissions to around 2,700 t CO₂e annually by 2030/31. This would be equivalent to a 90% reduction from our 2010/11 baseline.

There is an upcoming policy on carbon offsetting going to Cabinet in November 2025 to manage the residual emissions, primarily from the diesel fire service fleet, mileage claims from colleagues using internal combustion engine vehicles, and the grid which will still be decarbonising.

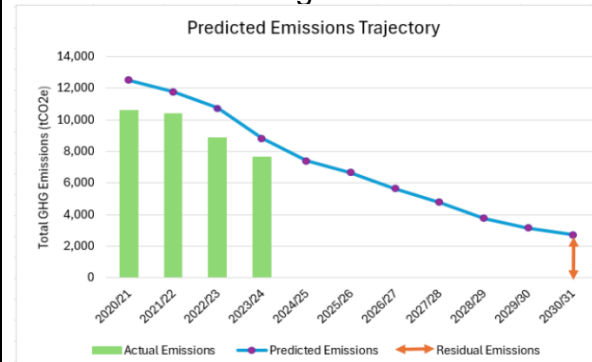


Figure 1: Decarbonisation trajectory for OCC's estate and operations as defined in the CMP assuming complete funding of works.

1. Progress to date: We have delivered buildings, fleet electrification and streetlighting energy efficiency projects which coupled with the decarbonisation of the electricity grid have led to

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		<p>annual emissions decreasing by 5,673 tCO₂e between 2019/20 and 2023/24 (most recent complete data).</p> <p>2. Current programme: We are now delivering a £30.11 million programme up until 2030/31 to improve energy efficiency for highway assets, replace fleet and end-of-life OFRS vehicles with EVs, complete retrofit works with PSDS4 funding, and electrify vehicles used by colleagues with high mileage for council business. Delivery of aspects of these programmes has been delayed in previous years. However, timely completion would mean these measures in combination with grid decarbonisation and private EV uptake would result in a 2030/31 residual of approximately 4000 tCO₂e, whereas a fully funded programme would take this down to approximately 2700 tCO₂e.</p> <p>3. Further work: Due to the cancellation of the Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme there is £19 million worth of building retrofit work that is unfunded, though two capital bids worth £5 million and £1.5 million for essential maintenance work with decarbonisation benefits are being submitted for 2026/27. There is also circa £1.5 million in further LED conversions for traffic sites that is unfunded.</p> <p>The government's Clean Power 2030 programme will significantly determine the council's annual emissions by reducing the carbon factor for grid electricity. This will be one of the main determinants of the 2030 residual to be offset. There is currently a £30,000 and £80,000 annual budget for the purchase of carbon credits in advance of 2030 and to support the carbon removal market, respectively. Further investment will be required to meet the councils offset needs.</p>
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Overview & Scrutiny Recommendation Response Pro forma

<p>4. That the Cabinet includes a commitment to improve access to renewable energy infrastructure as part of the Strategic Plan</p>	<p>Accepted</p>	<p>In the wider objectives for ‘greener’, there is now a commitment to installing 1,400 electric vehicle charging sockets across 250+ locations by 2027/28.</p> <p>The council agrees the annual focus of its climate programme through reports to Cabinet. The council’s climate programme includes ongoing activities to increase renewable energy generation, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A loan scheme to support maintained schools in investing in energy efficiency and renewable technologies. • A decarbonisation programme for the council’s estate, including the installation of renewable energy systems. • Collaboration with district councils to support the development of their local plans that set renewable energy targets, as well as the creation of Local Area Energy Plans to identify further potential for renewables. • Delivery of capital funding programmes to support home retrofitting. • Engagement with communities through innovation programmes including the Community Action Group network and the Low Carbon Hub to promote community energy and community-led retrofit projects.
<p>5. That the Cabinet commits to improving footways to facilitate walking within the Strategic Plan</p>	<p>Partially accepted</p>	<p>The council’s Local Transport and Connectivity Plan (LTCP) is referenced multiple times in the Strategic Plan including in the wider objectives for ‘greener’.</p> <p>The LTCP sets out clear policies to achieve a net zero transport system, including a chapter focusing on increasing walking and cycling.</p>

Overview & Scrutiny Recommendation Response Pro forma

		<p>Through the delivery of the Active Travel Strategy the council is committed to an action ensuring improvements to active travel infrastructure are integrated into wider road maintenance and repair interventions by consulting schemes on a case-by-case basis across the council and with walking and cycling groups.</p> <p>In addition, one of the Strategic Plan's nine priority projects is the development of dedicated response teams to address highways enquiries and expedite repairs in towns and villages (including footway repairs) in close collaboration with local councils.</p>
<p>6. That the Cabinet commits to expanding access to bus services within the Strategic Plan</p>	<p>Partially accepted</p>	<p>The council's Local Transport and Connectivity Plan (LTCP) is referenced multiple times in the Strategic Plan including in the wider objectives for 'greener'.</p> <p>The LTCP sets out clear policies to achieve a net zero transport system, including a chapter focusing on increasing public transport trips.</p> <p>Through the council's Bus Service Improvement Plan and the Enhanced Partnership the council is working with local bus operators to deliver better bus services in Oxfordshire, including making buses easier to access.</p>
<p>7. That the Cabinet raises the profile of Best Start as a successor to Sure Start within the Strategic Plan</p>	<p>Partially accepted</p>	<p>One of the Strategic Plan's nine headline projects is the development of a network of family hubs. These are funded through the government's Best Start in Life programme. Family hubs are designed to provide families with access to early help and support, including services from health, education and community sector partners.</p>

Overview & Scrutiny Recommendation Response Pro forma

		<p>The focus of the Strategic Plan is on setting out what the council will do, rather than promoting the names of particular government schemes.</p>
<p>8. That the Cabinet commits to increasing access to community banking and post office services as part of the Strategic Plan</p>	<p>Rejected</p>	<p>Although the council is keen to support access to local post office and community banking services, the council is unable to deliver such an outcome without active cooperation from the Post Office and banks.</p> <p>As resolved by Cabinet on 15 July 2025, the council will continue with its efforts to provide community services within library facilities and other suitable locations for areas lacking banking services.</p>
<p>9. That the Cabinet improves the accessibility of its report by the time it is published for consideration by Council, both in terms of terminology and the presentation of feedback from residents</p>	<p>Partially accepted</p>	<p>The development of the strategic plan has been informed by feedback from resident focus groups and the Performance & Corporate Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee, with particular attention to the accessibility of its content in both drafting and design.</p> <p>Following feedback from the overview and scrutiny committee, the research agency has provided an updated resident research report, and a summary of resident research is available in word format. The updated report is included as an annex to the Cabinet report.</p> <p>Communications activity is planned to communicate the council's strategic direction and key priorities. This will use clear and simple messaging focused on the three main themes, the benefits of the nine headline projects and the delivery of activities associated with these.</p>

Overview & Scrutiny Recommendation Response Pro forma

		<p>The council's communications, marketing and engagement team is also exploring a new way of presenting the strategic plan on the council's website, which will provide further opportunities for telling its story.</p>
<p>10. That the Cabinet focuses not only on local need or deficits, but that it also recognises and celebrates its successes to date</p>	<p>Partially accepted</p>	<p>This recommendation extends beyond the Strategic Plan.</p> <p>Celebrating the council's successes is an integral part of the council's ongoing communications and engagement strategy. The communications, marketing and engagement team, in collaboration with service areas, consistently highlights positive outcomes and initiatives. In 2024/25, the council issued 270 media releases and successfully pitched stories and features to national news outlets, trade journals, local parish newsletters, and websites.</p> <p>Our newsletters reach 47,901 subscribers, and we engage with 108,792 followers across the council's main social media platforms, sharing good news and updates. Additionally, we deliver targeted local communications to ensure communities are informed about positive interventions, such as improvements to highways and other local services.</p>
<p>11. That members are engaged in the development of the Citizens portal.</p>	<p>Accepted</p>	<p>Some member engagement has already taken place, and this will continue during the ongoing development of the portal.</p>