

**CABINET**  
**16 July 2024**

**BUSINESS MANAGEMENT AND MONITORING REPORT**  
**May 2024**

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

**RECOMMENDATION**

1. **The Cabinet is RECOMMENDED to**
  - a) Note the report and annexes.
  - b) Approve the virement requests in Annex B-2a and note the requests in Annex B-2b.
  - c) Approve the OxLEP carry forward of funding and transfer £0.2m held in the Council's reserves to OxLEP Ltd.
  - d) Approve the increase to charges for the Home to School Transport Spare Seat Scheme from September 2024.

**Executive Summary**

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

Annex A: Performance as at May 2024.

Annex B: Finance as at May 2024.

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

**Performance Overview**

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

May 2024	Green		Amber		Red		Monitoring Only/Data Unavailable		Total
	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	
Monthly	15	58%	3	11%	0	0%	8	31%	26
<b>Total</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>58%</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>11%</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>31%</b>	<b>26</b>

Table 1: Summary of May 2024 performance for all measures. RAG = Green = meets or exceeds target, Amber = misses target by narrow margin and Red = misses target by significant margin.

- A total of 26 measures were reported in May 2024 (Table 1). All of these were monthly measures.
  - 15 (58%) of the measures were reported as Green (meeting or exceeding target) in May.
  - Three (11%) were rated as Amber (misses target by narrow margin), of which one, OCC01.07 *Total % of household waste which is reused, recycled, or composted* was Amber for 2+ months.
  - Zero (0%) were rated as Red (misses target by a significant margin).
- This bi-monthly Cabinet report is the first of 2024/2025. The table (Table 2) below compares monthly measures for the 2024/2025 reporting year. Please note that the number of reported measures fluctuates throughout the year.

Reporting Month	Green		Amber		Red		Monitoring Only		Data unavailable		Total
	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	
April 2024	14	44%	3	9%	1	3%	7	22%	7	22%	32*
<b>May 2024</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>58%</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>15%</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>7%</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>18%</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2%</b>	<b>38</b>

Table 2: Comparison of monthly reporting measures for Financial Year 2024/2025. \*April 2024 does not include measures from priority OCC11 (finance).

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

Performance measures reporting Red for May 2024	
11.02	Achievement of planned savings
11.11	Debt requiring impairment – Adult Social Care contribution debtors

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

- This table indicates the direction of travel of monthly measures compared to April 2024.

Status changes – April to May 2024	
Red to Green	Not applicable.
Amber to Green	OCC05.03 - 204.6 KM (4.4%) of the road network to be treated
Red to Amber	Not applicable.
Green to Amber	OCC04.01 - % of people who received short term services during 24/25 with no further support request.
Amber to Red	Not applicable.

**Green to Red**

Not applicable.

*Table 4: Change in Performance across April to May 2024.***Performance Exceptions**

1. This section of the report details all measures reporting Red or Amber status (consecutive for two months or more) with extracted supporting commentary from the Directorate, the full commentary can be seen at Annex A. The exception report focusses on the three exceptions, two measures have a Red rating and the one measure that has reported an Amber rating for two months or more.

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

This priority has two measures being reported in May 2024: one is reporting as Green and one is reporting as Amber.

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

Measure:	April Status:	May Status:	Director:
OCC01.07 Total % of household waste which is reused, recycled, or composted	Amber	Amber	Bill Cotton

*Table 5: Priority OCC01 Measure Exceptions - May 2024.*

On 31 January 2024 Defra published statistics for Waste Disposal Authorities for 2022/23, confirming Oxfordshire remains first for the overall percentage of waste reused, recycled, or composted for the tenth year in a row with a recycling rate of 57.2%. This compares to Devon and Surrey in joint second place at 54%, and West Sussex at 53.7%.

To meet Oxfordshire Joint Municipal Waste Management Strategy targets, a step change is needed. This can only be made by the district councils and OCC acting together, but local authorities nationally have been unable to commit investment in significant changes in waste services because anticipated government waste policy changes have been repeatedly delayed by Defra.

In January 2023 Defra published its consultation response on introducing a Deposit Return Scheme (DRS) for drinks containers from October 2025. In July 2023 Defra then announced the delay of Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) for packaging until October 2025 to avoid the risk of causing inflationary pressures.

In April 2024 Defra announced that the delay of the roll out of a DRS in the UK until 2027. In May 2024 Defra announced the timescales for implementation of Simpler Recycling reforms for businesses, hospitals and schools by 31 March 2025 and households by 31 March 2026. However, progress of the regulations through Parliament to enable this are now on hold until after the general election.

Locally, we have continued to promote messaging for residents to encourage behaviour change, including promotion of libraries of things and recycling of electricals in May.

## Priority: Priority OCC11: Running the business - Finance

This priority has 12 measures being reported in May 2024: seven are Green, three Amber, and two Red.

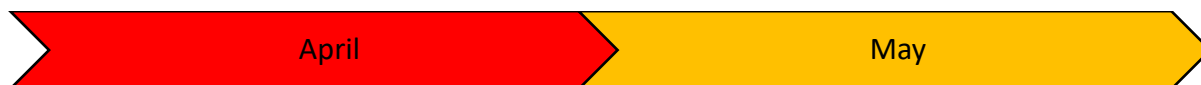


Figure 2: Priority OCC11 Monthly performance for 2024/2025 financial year.

Measure:	April Status:	May Status:	Director:
11.02 Achievement of planned savings	N/A	Red	Lorna Baxter
11.11 Debt requiring impairment – Adult Social Care contribution debtors	N/A	Red	Lorna Baxter

Table 6: Priority OCC11 Measure Exceptions - May 2024.

Please refer to 'Financial Position' Section and Annex B for additional information relating to OCC11: Running the business - Finance.

### Performance Highlights

1. This section of the report concentrates on several highlights achieved this period in delivering our strategic priorities.

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

Link: [Public health chief urges climate action for the sake of health](#)

Oxfordshire County Council's Director of Public Health, Ansaf Azhar, is calling on residents to take individual action to tackle climate change for the benefit of their health.

In his annual report Ansaf Azhar has called climate change one of most significant threats to the population both in Oxfordshire and globally.

He said: "Our environment significantly influences our health. Recent flooding in Oxfordshire brought this into the spotlight, where some suffered a loss of livelihood and we saw a negative impact on mental health and wellbeing. These events are going to be more common going forward.

"This is why I want to talk about the health impacts of climate change and the positive benefits of climate action for individuals, families and communities."

### Tackle inequalities in Oxfordshire.

Link: [Cost of living support proposed for approval](#)

Residents struggling to meet basic living costs will continue to benefit from Oxfordshire County Council's cost of living support, with a new package of measures for 2024/25 proposed for approval by the council's cabinet on 14 May.

Following an allocation of £3,361,256 from the government's Household Support Fund, the council would be able to provide support for the next six months.

Councillor Nathan Ley, Oxfordshire County Council's Cabinet Member for Public Health, Inequalities and Community Safety, said: "While the rate of inflation has reduced a great deal, the impact is still being felt by many, especially low-income households with many costs remaining very high.

"This is why it's so important that this funding from the government's Household Support Fund means we can carry on providing support to those who need it the most for the next six months."

### **Prioritise the health and wellbeing of residents.**

*Link:* [Oxfordshire County Council to help people quit smoking the 'Easyway'](#)

A free and clinically proven programme to help people quit smoking is being piloted by Oxfordshire County Council.

The council is trialling the innovative, drug-free Allen Carr's Easyway (ACE) method as part of ambitions to make the county smoke free.

Councillor Dr Nathan Ley, Oxfordshire County Council's Cabinet Member for Public Health, Inequalities and Community Safety, said: "Our smoke free ambitions are a real priority for the council, and this pilot will be complementing our current smoking cessation offer from [Stop for Life Oxon](#).

"If we can achieve our aims, we'll have helped to improve the health and wellbeing of Oxfordshire residents, while also reducing pressure and costs on social care and the NHS."

### **Support carers and the social care system.**

*Link:* [Pedal powered fun for people living with young onset dementia](#)

A cycling session has brought together people from Oxfordshire living with young onset dementia, helping them to get back in the saddle and meet new friends.

Organised by Dementia Oxfordshire – a service provided by Age UK Oxfordshire with funding support from Oxfordshire County Council – the Bike and Banter sessions welcome adults who have been diagnosed with dementia before the age of 65, supporting them to stay active and independent on their bikes.

Councillor Tim Bearder, Oxfordshire County Council's Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, said: "We're always looking for new and innovative ways to deliver social care support closer to home, enabling people to live well and independently within their own communities. It's something we call The Oxfordshire Way.

"Dementia Oxfordshire's Bike and Banter event is a great example of this in action, offering practical support as well as an opportunity to come together and share experiences with other people going through similar things."

### **Invest in an inclusive, integrated, and sustainable transport network.**

*Link:* [Park and ride combined parking and bus ticket prices frozen until April 2025](#)

The price of a joint ticket for parking and bus travel at Oxford's park and rides has been frozen for another year.

The combined ticket, which offers parking for 16 hours plus return bus travel, will stay at £4 for a car with one adult or £5 for a car with two adults until April 2025. With both options, up to three children under 16 can travel for free.

Joint ticketing, which is now a permanent feature at the five park and ride sites, was introduced by Oxfordshire County Council, Oxford City Council, Oxford Bus Company and Stagecoach [in 2022](#).

Councillor Andrew Gant, Oxfordshire County Council's Cabinet Member for Transport Management, said: "Oxford's park and rides are the cheapest and most convenient way for drivers to get into the city centre, as well as other locations such as Oxford's hospitals, Oxford Brookes University, Headington, Summertown and Wheatley.

"Joint ticketing has proved to be extremely popular and it is great news that the prices are staying the same for another year. More people on the buses means fewer cars on the road, less congestion and less pollution."

### **Preserve and improve access to nature and green spaces.**

*Link:* [Oxfordshire's Local Nature Recovery Strategy \(LNRS\)](#)

Oxfordshire County Council have been developing a Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) for Oxfordshire with close support from project partners. The main aims of the strategy are:

- Identify the most important existing areas for biodiversity in Oxfordshire.
- State the most important priorities (outcomes) to achieve for biodiversity (our range of animals, plants, fungi, and microorganisms)
- Map out any specific locations where potential actions are specifically recommended to create areas in Oxfordshire that could become of particular importance to biodiversity in the future.

We began with workshops and surveys where we heard from over 1000 people and organisations in Oxfordshire about their priorities and ambitions for a recovering and resilient Oxfordshire. We then came back to over 120 people at an online [webinar](#) to summarise the findings and plan next steps for creating an LNRS. We have asked people to tell us about any specific locations where they were already willing or planning to create, restore, or improve areas of habitat. Following this, we were told of 172 locations covering nearly 5000 hectares. In the coming months, the LNRS will be creating draft documents to view online to collect thoughts on the drafted map of areas that could become particularly important for biodiversity in Oxfordshire.

### **Creating opportunities for children and young people to reach their full potential.**

*Link:* [New childcare nursery opens in Southmoor, near Abingdon](#)

Families in Southmoor, Abingdon, are to benefit from the opening of a new children's nursery, run by the [Little Angels Childcare Group](#).

Southmoor Little Angels – which opened today, Tuesday 7 May – will provide year-round, extended day childcare for children from six months to four years of age.

Government funded places will also be available, with a range of options including term time only attendance.

Southmoor Little Angels will use a former children's centre building, which has been refurbished with the help of a £35,000 grant from Oxfordshire County Council.

Councillor John Howson, Oxfordshire County Council's Cabinet Member for Children, Education and Young People's Services, said: "The new nursery in Southmoor will provide a safe and stimulating environment for young children, delivered by an experienced Oxfordshire childcare provider.

"I am very proud of this latest nursery project, part of Oxfordshire County Council's ongoing commitment to provide the very best start for every child in the county."

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

*Link:* [Nineteen inaugural Fellows announced as part of Local Policy Lab partnership](#)

Nineteen graduate students have been announced as the inaugural Local Policy Fellows as part of the [Local Policy Lab](#), the new alliance between the University of Oxford, Oxford Brookes University and Oxfordshire County Council.

The Local Policy Fellowship programme provides an opportunity for students and researchers to engage with their local community and to better understand the public policy context of the city and local environment where they live.

The Local Policy Fellows will work in partnership with Oxfordshire County Council and its policy partners to design and conduct impact evaluations, evaluate datasets, and collect qualitative data around health and climate policy initiatives. Additional support for each Fellow will be provided by professional facilitators and academic mentors from Oxford University.



## Strategic Risk Management Overview

1. A strategic risk is a risk to the council's strategic priorities or long-term outcomes; or a risk with a significance that has an impact at the corporate level.
2. The table below provides an overview of the current strategic risk position. Strategic risks are reviewed monthly as part of the Business management and monitoring process. Risks can be added and escalated at any time during the year.

Risk Name	Risk Description	31 May 2024				
		Inherent Score	Previous Residual Risk Score	Current Residual Risk Score	Current Residual Risk Rating	Direction of Travel
01. Financial Resilience	The council is not financially sustainable in the immediate/medium term.	25	12	12	●	→
02. Cyber security	A successful and significant Cyber-attack leading to disruption, damage or compromise of any of the council's computer services, information systems, infrastructure or data.	25	15	15	●	→
03. HIF1&HIF2	HIF1 and HIF2 become undeliverable and/or potential financial risk to the council	16	12	12	●	→
04. Managing Demand across Adult's and Children's Services	Fluctuating demand of community across Oxfordshire can result in varying requirements in resource.	15	12	8	★	↓
05. Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND)	Local area SEND partnership inspection outcomes found widespread systemic failure. Delay for children having their SEND needs met. Reputational damage (locally, regionally, and nationally).	20	12	12	●	→
06. Oxford Core Schemes	Failure to deliver Oxford Core Schemes (Traffic Filters, Workplace Parking Levy, Zero Emissions Zone and associated city area schemes such as Low Traffic Neighbourhoods) with public support.	20	16	16	▲	→
07. Strategic Workforce Planning	A risk that the county council's workforce does not have capacity, capability or resilience to deliver key functions, statutory services or transformational changes required to ensure the councils objectives and long-term priorities are met. Further, that the diversity of the workforce satisfies statutory requirements.	16	12	12	●	→
08. Policy & Budget	Inability to seek agreement in relation to the policy and budget framework from a minority administration.	25	8	8	★	→
09. Delivering the Future Together	Failure to deliver organisation wide transformation.	25	12	12	●	→

Table 7: Strategic Risk Overview for May 2024. Please note that a strategic risk regarding resilience in the face of climate change will be forthcoming early in 2024.



## Financial Position

1. As shown below there is a forecast Directorate overspend of £2.9m. After taking account of additional interest receivable on balances held by the council, the overall forecast position is balanced to the net operating budget.

	Latest Budget May-24 £m	Forecast Spend May-24 £m	Forecast Variance May-24 £m	Forecast Variance May-24 %
Adult Services	249.8	249.8	0.0	0.0%
Children's Services	194.1	194.1	0.0	0.0%
Environment & Place	73.4	75.0	1.6	2.2%
Public Health	4.8	4.8	0.0	0.0%
Community Safety	27.9	28.5	0.6	0.0%
Resources	69.8	70.4	0.6	0.9%
<b>Directorate Total</b>	<b>619.8</b>	<b>622.7</b>	<b>2.9</b>	<b>0.4%</b>
<b>Budgets Held Centrally</b>				
Capital Financing	30.2	30.2	0.0	0.0%
Interest on Balances	-20.2	-21.6	-1.4	6.7%
Contingency	7.3	5.8	-1.5	-20.5%
Pay Inflation	15.4	15.4	0.0	0.0%
Un-ringfenced Specific Grants	-51.7	-51.7	0.0	0.0%
Insurance	1.7	1.7	0.0	0.0%
Contribution from COVID-19 reserve	-3.8	-3.8	0.0	0.0%
Contribution from Budget Priority Reserve	-1.4	-1.4	0.0	0.0%
Contributions to reserves	13.9	13.9	0.0	0.0%
Contribution to/from balances	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0%
<b>Total Budgets Held Centrally</b>	<b>-8.6</b>	<b>-11.5</b>	<b>-2.9</b>	<b>33.1%</b>
<b>Net Operating Budget</b>	<b>611.2</b>	<b>611.2</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0%</b>
Business Rates & Council Tax funding	-611.2	-611.2	0.0	0.0%
<b>Forecast Year End Position</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0%</b>

Table 8: Financial Overview for May 2024

2. The budget for 2024/25 agreed in February 2024 includes £30.2m new funding for inflation as well as £28.8m for demand and other pressures. New budget reductions of £12.8m were also agreed and built into budgets for 2024/25.
3. The forecast for Adult Services remains balanced to the budget. Risks within the council elements of the pooled budgets are being managed by the service.
4. The forecast for Childrens' Services is breakeven, however the underlying pressures in Childrens' Services highlighted in the Outturn report to Cabinet in June 2024 and the achievement of planned savings remains a significant challenge in 2024/25.
5. Community Safety are forecasting an overspend of £0.6m due to risks in the forecast delivery of savings.

6. Environment & Place is forecasting an overspend of £1.6m due to delays in the approval of the council's application by the Department for Transport (DfT) resulting in an underachievement of lane rental income.
7. There is a forecast overspend of £0.6m for Resources as a result of high locum costs in the Legal service.
8. £7.3m on-going budget was agreed to be held as contingency for risks as part of the 2024/25 budget. The use of £1.5m contingency has been included in the forecast position to offset the directorate pressures. As the year progresses, and there is more certainty over the forecast position, more of the contingency will be factored into the forecast along with any change in the forecast interest on balances.
9. The 2024/25 budget includes planned directorate savings of £30.1m. 34% of these savings are assessed as delivered and 66% are forecast to be delivered.
10. The risk assessed level of balances in 2024/25 is £30.2m. A further one-off balance of £2.3m was agreed to be added to balances as part of the Provisional Outturn Report 2023/24 to Cabinet in June 2024. After taking account of the use of contingency and additional interest on balances, balances are currently £2.3m above the risk assessed level.
11. The forecast 2024/25 deficit compared to Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) funding for High Needs is £21.3m in line with the budget approved by Council in February 2024. The CIPFA code of practice requires negative High Needs DSG balances to be held in an unusable reserve. The forecast deficit would increase the cumulative negative High Needs DSG balance held in this reserve from £55.8m as at 31 March 2024 to £77.1m at 31 March 2025.

## Review of Charges

12. Charges for the Home to School Transport Spare Seat Scheme were increased by 5% in February 2024 pending a further review ahead of the 2024/25 school year.
13. To align the council's charges for the scheme to keep up with the rising costs of transport contracts and with amounts charged by other external providers in the local market it is recommended to increase the charges by a further 20%. This is expected to better align the charges with the cost of the transport and contribute to meeting the cost of providing the transport. An instalment payment plan is available to help spread the cost of the transport over the year.

14. The table below sets out the existing agreed and proposed charges.

Charge	Unit	Existing Charge exc VAT 2024/25 £	Existing Charge inc VAT 2024/25 £	Proposed Charge exc VAT 2024/25 £	Proposed Charge inc VAT 2024/25 £	Change %	Proposed date effective from	Discretionary or Statutory	VAT Class
Contributions To School Transport (Spare Seat)	Over 3 Miles Pre and Post-16	846.60	846.60	1015.92	1015.92	20%	01/09/2024	Discretionary	ZR

Scheme) (Per annum)	Students								
	Under 3 Miles Pre and Post-16 Students	455.00	455.00	546.00	546.00	20%	01/09/2024	Discretionary	ZR

*Table 8: Review of Charges for the Home to School Transport Spare Seat Scheme 2024*

### **Financial Implications**

15. This report includes an update on the forecast financial position and risks for the council along with action being taken to manage the budget within the position agreed by Council in February 2024. Strong and sustained financial management, collective action and oversight continues to be required to ensure that services are managed within budgets in 2024/25.

Comments checked by: Kathy Wilcox, Head of Corporate Finance and Deputy Section 151 Officer.

### **Legal Implications**

16. The Council's constitution at Part 3.2 (Budget and Policy Framework) and Part 3.3 (Virement Rules) sets out the obligations and responsibilities of both the Cabinet and the Full Council in approving, adopting and implementing the council's budget and policy framework.
17. The Council has a fiduciary duty to council taxpayers, which means it must consider the prudent use of resources, including control of expenditure, financial prudence in the short and long term and the need to act in good faith in relation to compliance with statutory duties and exercising statutory powers. The report sets out as at May 2024 performance, risk and finance position for the Council as part of its fiduciary duty to implement budgetary controls and monitoring.

Comments checked by: Anita Bradley, Director of Law and Governance

**LORNA BAXTER**

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