

**CABINET**  
**17 June 2025**

**BUSINESS MANAGEMENT AND MONITORING REPORT, ANNUAL REPORT  
& PROVISIONAL REVENUE OUTTURN  
2024/25**

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

**RECOMMENDATION**

**1. The Cabinet is RECOMMENDED to:**

- a) Note the report and annexes including the council's Annual Report for 2024/25 (Annex D).
- b) Note the summary of the provisional year-end financial position for 2024/25 along with the year-end position on general balances and earmarked reserves (Annex B).
- c) Approve the following proposals relating to reserves and the use of general balances:
  - i. Add the £1.8m underspend against budgeted funding for investments in 2024/25 to the Budget Priorities reserve for use in 2025/26 (Annex B Paragraph 12).
  - ii. Agree that the £1.2m 2024/25 On-Street Parking Account surplus, that has not yet been applied to fund eligible expenditure in accordance with Section 55(4) of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984, is carried forward to 2025/26 as set out in Annex B-3c (Annex B Paragraph 64).
  - iii. Approve the use of one - off funding from General Balances to support Innovate Oxfordshire (£0.5m) and the Business and Intellectual Property Centre (£0.1m) (Annex B Paragraph 14).

**Executive Summary**

2. The business management reports are part of a suite of performance, risk and finance 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 the priority activities for the current financial year.
3. This report presents the year-end position for 2024/25 performance, risk, and finance for the council. It also provides the council's Annual Report for 2024/25. Further information is provided in the following annexes to the report:
  - Annex Ai – Performance exceptions at 31/3/25 and commentary
  - Annex Aii – Performance measures and commentary at 31/3/25

- Annex B – Provisional revenue outturn 2024/25
- Annex C - Complaints and Freedom of information requests (FOIs) / Environmental Information regulation requests (EIRs)
- Annex D – Oxfordshire County Council's Annual Report 2024/25

## Performance Overview

- The Outcomes Framework for 2024/2025 reports on the council's nine strategic priorities. A further priority relates to running the business and includes the Customer Service Centre and measures included in the council's Financial Strategy. The Outcomes Framework which sits underneath the strategic priorities comprises monthly, quarterly, termly, six-monthly and annual measures which may change as the year progresses.
- As at the end of the reporting year 2024/25 the measures were rated as follows:

March 2025	Green		Amber		Red		Monitoring Only		Data Unavailable		Total	
Monthly	12	55%	2	9%	2	9%	6	27%	0	0%	22	34 %
Quarterly	16	80%	3	15%	1	5%	0	0%	0	0%	20	31 %
Half Yearly	2	100%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	2	3%
Annual	12	57%	1	5%	4	19%	0	0%	4	19%	21	32 %
Total	42	65%	6	9%	7	11%	6	9%	4	6%	65	100%

*Table 1: Summary of end of year performance 2024/25 performance for all measures. RAG = Green = meets or exceeds target, Amber = misses target by narrow margin and Red = misses target by significant margin. This table does not include 15 measures from priority OCC11 (finance). Five complaints measures have not been included due to no complaints being received across the year.*

- Of the 68 measures shown in Table 1:
  - 42 measures were rated as Green (meeting or exceeding target).
  - 6 measures were rated as Amber (missing the target by a narrow margin), of which 4 were Amber for 2+ months.
  - 7 measures were rated as Red (missing the target by a significant margin).
  - 6 measures were monitored only with no target.
  - Data was unavailable for 7 measures.
- There are some measures where data is unavailable at the time of reporting these are:
  - **OCC02.04 Inequality in life expectancy at Birth (Female) and OCC02.05 Inequality in life expectancy at Birth (Male):** The latest data is unavailable at time of reporting. The latest data is anticipated to be published by the Office of Health and Disparities (OHID) in Summer 2025 and the performance position will be reported in Quarter 1 2025/26.

- **OCC05.02 Number of park and ride passenger journeys:** Data is not available at the time of reporting.
- **OCC06.05 Total number of community activities held as part of the Community Action Group Network:** The Community Action Group network will produce an annual report in June 2025 at which point data will be available.

8. This bi-monthly report is the sixth of 2024/25. The table (Table 2) below compares monthly measures for the 2024/2025 reporting year, noting that the number of reported measures fluctuates throughout the year. The data for March reports the end of year performance position.

Reporting month	Green		Amber		Red		Monitoring Only / No data		Total
April 2024	13	48%	3	11%	2	7%	9	33%	27
May 2024	22	58%	6	16%	2	5%	8	21%	38
June 2024	35	64%	7	12%	2	4%	11	20%	55
July 2024	22	55%	6	15%	4	10%	8	20%	40
August 2024	15	52%	5	17%	2	6%	7	24%	29
September 2024	43	64%	9	14%	7	10%	8	12%	67
October 2024	18	60%	4	13%	1	3%	7	24%	30
November 2024	22	58%	6	16%	3	8%	7	18%	38
December 2024	31	58%	5	9%	4	8%	9	18%	49
January 2025	21	62%	2	6%	5	15%	6	18%	34
February 2025	14	58%	2	8%	1	4%	7	29%	24
<b>March 2025</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>65%</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>9%</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>14%</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>12%</b>	<b>80</b>

Table 2: Comparison of monthly reporting measures for Financial Year 2024/2025, this includes 15 financial measures that are not included in table 1. \*April, June, August, October and December measures do not include measures from priority OCC11 (finance). The above table does not include the 5 complaint measures where no complaints were received throughout the year.

## Performance Highlights

9. The Annual Report 2024/25 in Annex D reflects the highlights and achievements over the last 12 months against the nine strategic priorities of the council and its vision for a greener, fairer and healthier Oxfordshire. The achievements include:
- being the top-performing county council waste disposal authority for the 11th year running;
  - becoming the first county council to be awarded local authority of sanctuary status, and the first local government employer in the south east to sign up to the UNISON anti-racism charter; and
  - partnering with University College London's Institute of Health Equity and

Professor Sir Michael Marmot to become a Marmot Place, a two-year programme to tackle health inequalities in local communities.

The Annual Report also highlights a number of key achievements in transformation and innovation. These include working with commercial and local authority partners to build 165 miles of drone superhighways, connecting airspace above major cities in the south of the UK, which improves routes for emergency response, search and rescue, and transportation of organs and medical supplies.

10. These following paragraphs concentrate on highlights achieved this period in delivering the council's strategic priorities.

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

*Link:* [New plan to help power Oxfordshire using local renewable energy](#)

Oxfordshire County Council, Oxford City Council, and several district councils have partnered under the Future Oxfordshire Partnership to create Local Area Energy Plans (LAEPs). These plans aim to address climate change and secure cleaner, more affordable energy for Oxfordshire by collaborating with local communities and businesses to identify projects that support the transition to cleaner energy. The plans will outline specific actions for each district and strategic projects at the county level, focusing on transforming local energy generation, use, and management, improving building efficiency to reduce reliance on fossil fuels, and enhancing the planning and delivery of energy from the electricity grid to ensure cleaner, more reliable power for homes and businesses.

### **Tackle inequalities in Oxfordshire**

*Link:* [Neurodiversity Celebration Week: Smashing employment barriers with resilience and determination](#)

Oxfordshire Employment supports individuals with additional needs in finding and maintaining suitable jobs. Jenny Taylor, diagnosed with Asperger's syndrome, now thrives at County Print Finishers, a company offering accessible employment for those with disabilities or long-term health concerns. Starting part-time, she has progressed to a full-time grade five workforce associate, showcasing the value and diversity individuals with unique skills bring to Oxfordshire's workforce.

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

*Link:* [Enhanced learning pathways for children with SEND approved](#)

Oxfordshire County Council has approved over £2 million per year to fund 20 new enhanced pathways and continue funding the 20 already in place for children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). This initiative, developed within mainstream schools, provides small group support and specialised curriculums tailored to meet the social, emotional, sensory, and academic needs of each child.

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

*Link:* [Nearly 10,000 cigarettes seized following trading standards operation](#)

Oxfordshire County Council's trading standards team seized nearly 10,000 counterfeit and smuggled tobacco and nicotine products during Operation CeCe on 21 January. The raids, which targeted off-licences, convenience stores, food retailers, and barbers in Banbury, Kidlington, and Oxford, involved specialist tobacco detection dogs. The operation resulted in the confiscation of 9,340 illegal cigarettes, 700g of counterfeit hand-rolling tobacco, 180 non-compliant nicotine pouches, and 42 illegal vapes, with a total street value of approximately £5,000.

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

*Link:* [£7.4 million road resurfacing programme to begin next month](#)

This spring, Oxfordshire County Council will begin a £7.4 million programme to improve nearly 100 roads across the county. Surface dressing work will be carried out in 73 towns and villages from 22 April to 16 June, treating over one million square metres of carriageway. Motorists are advised to adhere to a 20mph speed limit on newly treated roads to avoid damage and skidding. Surface dressing involves applying bituminous emulsion and chippings, which helps seal the road surface, reduce deterioration, restore skid resistance, and minimise traffic disruption.

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

*Link:* [Reimagining Oxford's streets](#)

Oxfordshire County Council sought feedback on street improvements for Oxford city centre and north Oxford. The project aimed to enhance public spaces, promote walking, cycling, and public transport, and improve access to green spaces. Key locations included Carfax junction, St Giles', Hythe Bridge Street, Little Clarendon Street, and Summertown. The improvement options were developed in collaboration with local resident groups, civic organisations, public transport operators, landowners, and transport user groups. Residents could review suggestions and participate in a survey until 23 March 2025.

## **Play our part in a vibrant and participatory local democracy**

*Link:* [Local authority of sanctuary accreditation confirmed for county council and partners](#)

Oxfordshire County Council received local authority of sanctuary status, recognising its support for refugees and asylum seekers. The council partnered with Asylum Welcome and bus companies to provide free bus passes, aiding integration. Collaborating with local organisations, the council has supported over 8,000 refugees with accommodation, employment, healthcare, education, and social integration. The Council of Sanctuary action plan (2025-2028) aims to further enhance Oxfordshire's inclusivity.

## **Performance Exceptions**

- a) Annex Ai sets out the details of the sixteen measures reporting Red or Amber status. The eleven measures reported as Red are:

Performance measures reporting Red for March 2025	
OCC01.04	Oxfordshire greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions as published annually by DESNZ with a 2-year lag
OCC01.07	Total % of household waste which is reused, recycled or composted
OCC02.09	Total number of people accepted into domestic abuse accommodation
OCC3.13	Numbers in substance misuse treatment. Children and young people, during the financial year
OCC05.07	Public satisfaction in the condition of Highways
OCC09.01	No of overdue inspections from Risk Based Inspection Programme
OCC10.11	% of Corporate Complaints (Stage 1) responded to within timescales
OCC11.02	Achievement of planned savings
OCC11.06	Total Outturn variation for DSG funded services (high needs)
OCC11.10	Debt requiring impairment - Corporate Debtors
OCC11.11	Debt requiring impairment - Adult Social Care contribution debtors

Table 3: Red RAG Status Measures March 2025 Reporting Period

- b) The change in direction of measures compared to the last update are:

Direction of travel between last reporting period and end of year position March 2025	
Red to Green	OCC03.06 Percentage of births that have received a face-to-face New Birth Visit
Amber to Green	OCC01.01 % reduction in corporate emissions within our Net Zero by 2030 target
	OCC01.05 Percentage of milestones delivered for the Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS)
Red to Amber	Not Applicable
Green to Amber	Not Applicable
Amber to Red	Not Applicable
Green to Red	OCC02.06 Digital engagement with Heritage Services
	OCC03.11 No of people directly reached with Trading Standards preventative advice and support
	OCC10.11 % of Corporate Complaints (Stage 1) responded to within timescales

Table 4: Change in Performance Change in Performance across April 2024 to March 2025

## Strategic Risk Management Overview

11. 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.
12. Strategic risks are being developed with the services for Devolution and Local Government Reform and Section 106 Agreements.
13. 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.
14. All nine strategic risks remained static in their residual risk scores from February 2025 to March 2025.







Status Indicator	Status Description
	Residual risk rating is high (Score 16 and above)
	Residual risk rating is medium (Score 10 - 15)
	Residual risk rating is low (Score 1 – 9)
	Residual risk rating has decreased
	Residual risk rating has maintained
	Residual risk rating has increased

Table 17: Strategic Risk Key for March 2025

Risk name	Risk Description	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	Amber	→
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	Amber	→
03. HIF1 & HIF2	HIF1 and HIF2 become undeliverable and/or potential financial risk to the council.	16	12	12	Amber	→
04. Managing Demand across Adults' and Children's Services	Fluctuating demand of community across Oxfordshire can result in varying requirements in resource.	15	8	8	Green	→
05. Special Educational Needs and Disabilities	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	8	8	Green	→
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	Red	→
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	Amber	→
09. Delivering the Future Together	Failure to deliver organisation wide transformation.	25	8	8	Green	→
10. Climate Impact	Increasing vulnerability to climate impacts leads to failure of key infrastructure and services with a direct impact on health, safety, environment, and businesses.	25	20	20	Red	→

Table 18: Strategic Risk Overview for March 2025



## Summary of the Council's financial position at the end of 2024/25

15. The table below summarises the net expenditure for each service area compared to the final budget and shows the movement since the report to Cabinet in March 2025. At the end of 2024/25 there was a service area underspend of £0.3m. This improved by £0.9m compared to the forecast reported to Cabinet in March 2025 and the overall position reflects actions taken to manage service expenditure during the year and strong financial management.
16. A further underspend of £12.5m relates to corporate budgets where there was an underspend against the contingency budget given the strong financial management within services and a lower than budgeted pay award along with additional interest on balances from higher-than-expected interest rates.
17. Reflecting the forecast underspend reported earlier in the financial year, Council agreed to use £10.8m of the projected underspend in 2024/25 to invest in the 2025/26 budget.

	Final Budget	Total Spend	Year End Variance	Year End Variance	Variance March Cabinet	Change in Variance
Adult Services	£249.0m	£245.1m	£3.9m	-1.6%	£4.2m	£0.3m
Children's Services	£202.1m	£202.3m	£0.1m	0.1%	£1.3m	£1.2m
Environment & Highways	£53.5m	£54.3m	£0.8m	1.5%	£0.2m	£0.6m
Economy & Place	£16.9m	£16.7m	£0.3m	-1.5%	£0.2m	£0.5m
Oxfordshire Fire & Rescue Service and Community Safety	£28.9m	£29.5m	£0.6m	2.2%	£0.6m	£0.0m
Public Health & Communities	£12.9m	£13.0m	£0.1m	0.5%	£0.2m	£0.2m
Resources and Law & Governance	£59.8m	£61.2m	£1.5m	2.5%	£1.3m	£0.2m
Transformation, Digital & Customer Experience	£8.2m	£9.0m	£0.7m	9.1%	£1.0m	£0.3m
<b>Service Areas Total</b>	<b>£631.3m</b>	<b>£631.0m</b>	<b>£0.3m</b>	<b>0.0%</b>	<b>£0.6m</b>	<b>£0.9m</b>
<b>Budgets Held Centrally</b>						
Capital Financing	£21.3m	£21.7m	£0.4m	2.0%	£3.5m	£3.9m
Interest on Balances	£10.7m	£17.4m	£6.8m	63.2%	£4.6m	£2.1m
Contingency	£0.5m	£0.1m	£0.6m	-124.0%	£3.3m	£2.7m
Pay Inflation	£4.8m	£0.0m	£4.8m	-100.0%	£4.7m	£0.1m
Un-ringfenced Specific Grants	£56.4m	£56.4m	£0.0m	0.0%	£0.0m	£0.0m
Insurance	£1.7m	£1.5m	£0.2m	-13.6%	£0.0m	£0.2m
Contribution from COVID-19 reserve	£3.8m	£3.8m	£0.0m	0.0%	£0.0m	£0.0m
Contribution from Budget Priority Reserve	£1.6m	£1.6m	£0.0m	0.0%	£0.0m	£0.0m
Contributions to reserves	£23.1m	£22.5m	£0.6m	-2.4%	£5.0m	£5.6m
<b>Total Budgets Held Centrally</b>	<b>£17.9m</b>	<b>£30.4m</b>	<b>£12.5m</b>	<b>69.8%</b>	<b>£11.1m</b>	<b>£1.4m</b>
<b>Net Operating Budget</b>	<b>£613.5m</b>	<b>£600.6m</b>	<b>£12.9m</b>	<b>-2.1%</b>	<b>£10.5m</b>	<b>£2.4m</b>
Business Rates & Council Tax funding	£613.5m	£613.3m	£0.1m	0.0%	£0.0m	£0.1m
<b>Forecast Year End Position</b>	<b>£0.0m</b>	<b>£12.8m</b>	<b>£12.8m</b>	<b>-2.1%</b>	<b>£10.5m</b>	<b>£2.3m</b>

### Contingency & Pay Inflation

18. £6.6m of the £14.4m pay inflation budget was transferred to service areas to meet the cost of the additional pay inflation in 2024/25 following the agreement of the Green & Grey Book, and Soulbury pay awards. £3.0m has been used to fund a one-off contribution to the Local Government Re-organisation and Devolution reserve. The remaining pay inflation budget was £4.8m. The on-going budget not needed to fund pay inflation in 2024/25 is available to meet the cost of pay inflation in 2025/26.
19. The underspend against £7.0m of the contingency budget has also been added to the Local Government Re-organisation & Devolution reserve increasing the total funding held for that purpose to £10.0m as at 31 March 2025.

### 2024/25 Savings & Investments

20. The 2024/25 budget includes planned service savings of £30.1m. This was offset by a budgeted risk adjustment of £4.1m added to reflect risks around the achievement of savings for Children's Services. £20.1m savings were delivered during the year. Savings that it was not possible to deliver total £6.0m and include:
- £1.1m savings related to Children's Services staffing, agency staff, contract savings and placements.
  - £2.2m arising from delays to the introduction of Lane Rental charges in Environment & Highways.
  - £0.7m Environment & Highways waste collections and other income generation targets.
  - £1.1m delivering Future together savings target implementation delays.
21. The 2024/25 budget also includes planned service area investments totalling £11.6m. £4.5m has been spent on planned programmes of work in 2024/25. £1.8m expenditure will now take place in 2025/26 so it is recommended that this funding is temporarily transferred to the Budget Priorities reserve ahead of use. Of the £5.3m released investments, £4.1m has been used to support service pressures as explained in previous reports.

### General Balances

22. The risk assessed level of one – off funding held in general balances in 2024/25 was £30.2m. A residual balance of £2.3m relating to the underspend at the end of 2023/24 was agreed to be held in balances as part of the Provisional Outturn Report for 2023/24. After taking account of the underspend of £12.8m, balances are £15.1m above the risk assessed level as at 31 March 2025. The use of £10.8m of this total was already agreed as part of the 2025/26 budget agreed by Council in February 2025. Based on the actual outturn position and agreed use, balances will be £4.3m above the risk assessed level for 2025/26 as at 1 April 2025.

23. There is a proposal to use some of the additional one – off funding held in General Balances to support the following:

- a. Business and Intellectual Property Centre: £0.1m one-off funding to enable the continuation of the BIPC service for 2025/26 while action is taken to seek self-sustainable funding streams for 2026/27 and onwards.
- b. Innovate Oxfordshire: £0.5m to enable the creation of a successful sustainable commercial model and less reliant on council tax funding by providing future savings.

24. Based on the actual outturn position and proposed use, balances will be £3.7m above the risk assessed level for 2025/26 as at 1 April 2025.

#### High Needs Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) Balances

25. The 2024/25 deficit compared to Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) funding for High Needs is £36.5m, £15.3m higher than the £21.2m deficit 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 deficit would increase the cumulative negative High Needs DSG balance held in this reserve from £55.8m as at 31 March 2024 to £92.5m at 31 March 2025.

26. Further details and commentary explaining each service area position and variations on budgets held centrally are included in Annex B.

## **Financial Implications**

27. This report sets out the financial position for the council as at 31 March 2025. The overall underspend of £12.8m mainly includes additional interest on balances and the use of contingency along with higher budget provision than was required to meet the actual cost of pay inflation. The combined service area position is £0.3m underspent and reflects sustained management action throughout the year.

28. In 2025/26 the budget for contingency and pay inflation is lower and an increased level of interest on cash balances is already built into the budget. Strong financial management and oversight, along with a focus on actions being taken to achieve savings and investments, will continue to be required to ensure that the council remains financially sustainable.

Comments checked by: Kathy Wilcox, Head of Corporate Finance

## **Legal Implications**

29. The Council's constitution at Part 3.2 (Budget and Policy Framework) 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.

30. 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 the performance and finance position for the Council as at 31 March 2025 as part of its fiduciary duty to implement budgetary controls and monitoring.

Comments checked by: Anita Bradley Director of Law and Governance and Monitoring Officer

**LORNA BAXTER**

**Executive Director of Resources and Section 151 Officer**

Further information is provided in the following annexes to the report:

- Annex Ai – Performance exceptions at 31/3/25 and commentary
- Annex Aii – Performance measures and commentary at 31/3/25
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