

CABINET REPORT – 15 March 2022

BUSINESS MANAGEMENT AND MONITORING REPORT January 2022

Report by Corporate Director for Customers and Organisational Development and Director of Finance

RECOMMENDATIONS

Cabinet is RECOMMENDED:

- a) To note the January business management and monitoring report.
- b) To agree virements set out in Annex C -2b which relate to the Covid-19 costs incurred by the directorates between October 2021 and January 2022.
- c) To note virements set out in Annex C-2c
- d) To note virements for 2022/23 set out in Annex C-2d
- e) To approve the bad debt, write off in Annex C paragraphs 25 (Adult Services) and 84 (CDAI)
- f) To approve the use of the COVID Reserve in paragraphs 29, 35, 79, 85, 91, 94 and the use of the corporate contingency for the estimated cost of the pay award in paragraph 101
- g) To note the Review of Charges 2022/23 set out in Annex C-5

Executive Summary

1. This report presents January 2022 performance, risk and finance position for the Council.
2. The Council recognises the importance of timely, accurate and accessible performance and budget management information as part of its commitment to both transparency and demonstrating efficiency and effectiveness.
3. These monthly business management reports are part of a suite of performance, leadership risk and budget documents which set out our ambitions, priorities and financial performance. The Corporate Plan sets out the Council's ambitions for the next two years, under our vision for Thriving Communities. It also shows our priority activities for the current business year.
4. Our Corporate Plan, Medium Term Financial Plan, Outcomes Framework and previous business management reports, can be found on the Council's website.¹
5. This report summarises performance and risk within these Business Management & Monitoring Reports. Further information is provided in Three annexes:
 - a. Annex A: Performance January 2022
 - b. Annex B: Risk Register January 2022
 - c. Annex C: Finance January 2022
6. The performance exceptions section (section 8) of this report concentrates on the Performance Exceptions (Indicators Red, off target, or Amber, slightly off target, for the last two consecutive months). The full performance report is at Annex A.

7. Performance Overview

This year's Outcomes Framework reports monthly on our six strategic priorities, including 23 indicators comprised of 90 measures on a monthly basis, at the end of January 2022 the indicators were rated as follows:

Green	Amber	Red
12 (52%)	4 (17%)	7 (31%)

Figure 1 – Summary of January performance for all indicators. RAG = Green – meets or exceeds the target, Amber – misses target by narrow margin and Red – misses target by significant margin. Please note the margins vary depending on set thresholds for each measure, established using national targets, forecasting and other calculation methods.

Red indicators for January (7)
OCC 04 Effective financial management and governance
OCC13 Household waste reused, recycled or composted
OCC15 We provide help early on so children are less likely to be in need
OCC16 The number of children looked after
OCC17 Number of child protection plans
OCC18 Timeliness completing Education, Health & Care Plans
OCC 22 Infrastructure delivery supports growth

Status changes – December to January	
Red to Green	OCC05 The number of people helped to live safe and happy lives OCC08 Condition of highways OCC21 People needing social care are supported to stay in their own homes
Green to Amber	OCC10 Reduction in carbon equivalent emissions from OCC's activities
Amber to Red	OCC17 Number of child protection plans

January performance summary:

January represents an improved performance since December. Since December we have seen; -

- Significantly more green indicators (52% in comparison with 43% in December)
- Same number of amber indicators (17%)
- Fewer red indicators (30% in comparison with 39% in December)

Financial year tracking of Indicators

Month	Green	Amber	Red	Total
April	13	2	6	21
May	11	4	7	22
June (Q1)	15	6	4	24
July	12	5	5	22
August	10	6	6	22
September (Q2)	15	7	4	26
October	14	2	7	23
November	14	4	5	23
December	10	4	9	23
January	12	4	7	23

Figure 2 - Please note that the total number of indicators fluctuates quarterly, hence the higher number of measures. Also, one additional measure was introduced from May 2021.

8. Performance Exceptions

This section of the report details each Red or Amber (consecutive for two months) indicators with supporting commentary from the Directorate.

OCC04: Effective financial management and governance - Director: Lorna Baxter

Financial Year to date performance		
April	May	June
July	August	September
October	November	December
January	February	March

This indicator's RAG status is the result of the sum of performance of six measures, four of them reporting Red and two Amber for January. Below table illustrates the measures performing under target.

Measure	Status
OCC04.02 Total outturn variation for the dedicated schools grant (DSG) funded services	Red
OCC04.05 % of agreed invoices paid within 30 days	Amber
OCC04.08 Debt requiring impairment - ASC contribution debtors	Red
OCC04.09 Average cash balance compared to forecast average cash balance	Red
OCC04.10 Average interest rate achieved on in-house investment portfolio	Red
OCC04.13 Invoice Collection Rate– ASC contribution debtors	Amber

Comments from directorate: Financial Management is being highlighted as Red in terms of performance; with the particular measures that are outside of target levels detailed in Annex A and Annex C. The performance across the red indicators is due to external factors, and not system or management issues. The financial implications are reflected in Annex C, but are limited in terms of impact, and there is no increased risk to the financial resilience of the council.

The Adult Social Care debt requiring impairment has increased further this period to £4.0m which is £1.3m above the target level. As reported previously the increases in bad debt levels seen this year can mainly be attributed to three causes: a higher proportion of people being defaulted to full cost which is an impact of the approach taken during the pandemic; therefore, this may not represent the true debt position; the impact of a backlog of cases accumulated during the first half of 2020/21 when formal recovery procedures were paused as part of the Councils response to Covid-19; and, delays in public bodies processing an increase in applications for support from people who lack capacity to manage their finances. The service has implemented new procedures and additional temporary staff have been recruited to the teams that undertake the financial assessments and recover funds.

High needs demand continues to impact on the DSG (Dedicated Schools Grant) Outturn Variation target. The position in Oxfordshire reflects the national picture of increasing High Needs demand. The risk LR3 covers this on the Risk Register.

Risk impact	No additional risk
Finance impact	No impact on financial risk

OCC06 Timeliness of emergency response - Director: Steve Jorden

Financial Year to date performance		
April	May	June
July	August	September
October	November	December
January	February	March

This indicator's RAG status is the result of the sum of performance of two measures, both reporting Amber. Below table illustrates the measures performing under target.

Measure	Status
OCC06.02 % of emergency call attendances made within 11 minutes	Amber
OCC06.03 % of emergency call attendances made within 14 minutes	Amber

Comments from directorate: Of the 425 emergency incidents in January 48 were over our 14-minute response time. We are investigating each of those incidents to determine if they were in an area that could have been reached within that timeframe. The average response time for this year is 8:37 which is an improvement on last year (8:56)

Risk impact	Our response standards are directly impacted by fire appliance availability which is directly impacted by the availability of the crew. 19 of our stations are crewed by On-Call staff and we have a focus on the recruitment and retention of those staff to maximise our availability. We have also reorganised our wholetime resources to be able to provide additional support to maximise our availability at our On-call stations. The performance of our response standards is constantly reviewed, and appliance availability is a service priority. We do have the ability to redirect staff from other priorities to further support appliance availability in reaction to the risk increasing.
Finance impact	There is no, current, identified financial pressure from the performance of this activity.

OCC13 Household waste re-used, recycled or composted - Director: Bill Cotton

Financial Year to date performance		
April	May	June
July	August	September
October	November	December
January	February	March

This indicator's RAG status is the result of the sum of performance of six measures, all reported Amber for January resulting overall Red RAG status.

Measure	Status
Total % of household waste which is reused, recycled or composted	Amber
% of household waste recycled	Amber
% of household waste composted	Amber
% of household waste re-used	Amber
% of household waste send to landfill	Amber
Average weight of waste produced per household in Oxfordshire	Amber

Comments from directorate: OCC has recently been named the best performing county council waste disposal authority in England with a recycling rate of 59.5% in 2020/21. Although amongst the best performing councils, Oxfordshire councils have set an ambitious target to improve further. Much of the waste currently disposed of could be recycled and there is a need to continue to strive to drive out that material to secure environmental, climate and financial benefits.

Figures for December are the forecast end of year performance and are the combined effort of OCC, the City and District Councils. Achieving the overall recycling target for this year will be challenging and will require coordinated working by all partners across the Oxfordshire Resources and Waste Partnership.

Waste tonnages overall remain above pre-Covid levels, although there are some signs that this may be stabilising. **Please note this measure is reported one month in arrears.**

Risk impact	There is a service level risk that failing to meet the Joint Municipal Waste Management Strategy targets for reuse, recycling and composting will lead to additional costs as disposal is more expensive than recycling. This does not need to be escalated.
Finance impact	At this stage this does not impact significantly on finances.

OCC15 We provide help early on so children are less likely to be in need - Director: Kevin Gordon

Financial Year to date performance		
April	May	June
July	August	September
October	November	December
January	February	March

This indicator's RAG status is the result of the sum of performance of four measures, three of them reported Red and one Green. Below table illustrates the measures performing under target

Measure	Status
Numbers of contacts into the MASH	Red
Number of early help assessments	Red
Number of early help assessments completed by health visitors	Red

Comments from directorate: In 2020/21 the number of contacts into the MASH rose by 35%. This growth has continued, albeit at a slower rate, and the figure for the first 10 months of this year, 23,953, is 20% higher than the same figure last year. The council has funded 7 additional staff members via the Covid 19 reserve to help mitigate this increase. The additional monies have meant that we have been able to deal with enquiries in a timely manner, with consistently hitting our targets for dealing with these contacts on time.

The yearly target of 2000 Early Help Assessments has been met. However, you remain between 2 and 3 times more likely to receive a social care assessment than an early help assessment. In Oxfordshire, working with local partners, we want to develop early help, so it is the first response to need wherever possible and are working with local partners to deliver a step change in the number and effectiveness of early help.

Risk impact	LR1 Demand management – Children has a residual score 20 (High Risk Score) - Risk Register reviewed, Controls and Control assessment has been changed from fully to partially, due to increase in child protection numbers and higher caseloads.
Finance impact	No variance is reported due to the additional funding of £430,000 from the Covid 19 budget for 7 workers. The deployment of the additional funding is pegged to activity levels – 1 worker per 1000 contacts per annum. At present activity levels are higher than pre covid levels by nearly 50%

OCC16 The number of children looked after - Director: Kevin Gordon

Financial Year to date performance		
April	May	June
July	August	September
October	November	December
January	February	March

This indicator's RAG status reflects the performance of one measure, which is reporting Red for January. Below table illustrates the measure performing under target

Measure	Status
Number of Children we care for	Red

Comments from directorate: The number of cared for children has increased to 805 - 21 up on the start of the year. This is in part because Oxfordshire has housed 21 unaccompanied asylum-seeking children as part of the National transfer scheme. However even if these children had not been housed, we would have been above (worse than target) as fewer children are leaving the cared for system as backlogs still exist in the court process.

The implementation of the Family Solutions Plus service is showing some early impact in preventing new entries to care. In 2020/21, 192 children under 13 entered the cared for system, after 10 months this year the figure is 155 and currently projected to be lower than last year, but delays in moving children through the system means the numbers of cared for children are not falling.

In the last 5 years the number of children cared for nationally has risen by 10,400 children. The national market pressure has led to escalating unit price for placements with the Competition and Marketing authority noting that there is a shortage of appropriate places for cared for children and that the average operating profit for care home providers is 23% and 19% from independent fostering agencies.

Risk impact	LR5 Insufficient placement availability for children we care for - Children has a residual score 20 (High Risk Score) – Risk Register reviewed, and additions were made to the Comments and Mitigating Actions, in line with the commentary above.
Finance impact	The financial impact of the small increase in the number of children in care is disproportionately high, due to more placements in more expensive external residential care and via Independent Foster Agencies (IFAs), offset by a reduction in in-house foster care. The overall unit cost of placements has significantly increased, partly due to a small number of very expensive placements in unregistered care arrangements.

OCC17 Number of child protection plans – Director: Kevin Gordon

Financial Year to date performance		
April	May	June
July	August	September
October	November	December
January	February	March

This indicator's RAG status reflects the performance of one measure, which is reporting Red for January. Below table illustrates the measure performing under target

Measure	Status
Number of child protection plans	Red

Comments from directorate: After a couple of months when the figure fell, the number of children the subject of a child protection has risen sharply and is now 24% higher than the start of the year. This is impacting on caseloads. High caseloads mean workers have less time to work with individual families; in some areas of the service caseloads are 40% higher than target levels. Work in this area is very stressful and pressures on staff can be exacerbated by national media focus on child protection social workers which can negatively impact staff morale. Retaining staff in such an environment is difficult, high levels of vacancies further impacts workload and creates a vicious circle of high demand, pressure on staff and increasing workload. This leads to an increase in the use of agency staff and higher costs.

Compared to April 2020 the number of children in pre proceedings has increased from 62 to 83 (34%) and the number of children in proceedings has increased from 136 to 232 (71%). These cases are inherently complicated and require additional worker time. In addition to the volume of work, the complexity of work is also adding to workload pressures

Risk impact	LR 4 Recruitment and Retention of Children's Social Workers has a residual score 20 (High Risk Score) – CEF overspend pressures discussed at SLT 16/02/2022, any risk impact will be captured.
Finance impact	An overspend of £1.1m in social work teams due to the need to use agency staff and an additional £0.8m allocated to this service from the Covid reserve to help meet demand.

OCC18 Timeliness completing Education, Health & Care Plans - Director: Kevin Gordon

Financial Year to date performance		
April	May	June
July	August	September
October	November	December
January	February	March

This indicator's RAG status reflects the performance of one measure, which is reporting Red for January. Below table illustrates the measure performing under target

Measure	Status
% of Education Health & Care Plans completed within 20 weeks	Red

Comments from directorate: Performance is below target and has been falling since October 2020 with a sharper drop from October 2021. This is driven by an increase in demand which is not only felt within the Special Education Needs Casework team, but across all teams who help complete the assessment and who similarly do not have capacity within their services. There is a particular pressure on the availability of educational psychologists. This is a national issue. We have contracted some external services via agency to support in the short term with the backlog of annual reviews. Additional capacity is being added to the SEND casework team in order to reduce caseload and help with staff retention and our ability to better meet statutory assessment deadlines.

Risk impact	LR1 Demand management – Children has a residual score 20 (High Score Risk). Risk reviewed, Control and Control assessment has been changed from fully to partially, due to increase in child protection numbers and higher caseloads.
Finance impact	Covid funds of approximately £200,000 have been allocated to deal with some of this demand pressure for SEND.

OCC22 Infrastructure Delivery Supports Growth – Director: Bill Cotton

Financial Year to date performance		
April	May	June
July	August	September
October	November	December
January	February	March

This indicator's RAG status reflects the performance of one measure, which is reporting Red for January. Below table illustrates the measure performing under target

Measure	Status
Percentage of the Capital Programme delivered in line with budget	Red

Comments from directorate: This indicator measures the capital infrastructure major programme spend. During January this indicator shows as reporting Red as 3% was delivered against a monthly target of 7.9%. However, the year to date result reflects that 81% of the revised programme for 21/22 has been spent or committed as at end of January 2022 against a year to date target of 79%. A number of major schemes across the programmes are forecast to enter into construction contracts in this financial year. The expected year end budget forecast position is 91% against a target of 95%, still within the agreed range.

Risk impact	LR8 - Capital Infrastructure Programme Delivery has a residual score 15 (Medium Risk Score) Risk implications of the programme are reflected on LR8.
Finance impact	No Financial Impact

9. Performance Highlights

- With effect from 31 January, Oxford City Council's face-to-face customer services will

move to Oxfordshire County Council's Westgate Central Library. In April 2021 the City Council reopened face to face customer services at St Aldates Chambers, with appropriate COVID health and safety measures in place. This will continue, but will now relocate to the Westgate Library, where Oxfordshire County Council offer a similar service. This pilot is aimed at delivering improved services to our residents by co-locating more face to face customer services provision in one place. This should be more convenient, as well as providing opportunities for more effective co-ordination between services. Residents will be able to visit one location in the city centre where they can undertake both City and County Council business. The pilot will initially run for 12 months, but if successful is intended to continue.

- Trading standards officers from Oxfordshire County Council have made their biggest seizure of illicit cigarettes yet, smashing their previous record set just weeks earlier. A joint operation with Thames Valley Police, on 29 November, saw another residential property in Banbury being raided, resulting in the record haul of 680,380 smuggled and some suspected counterfeit cigarettes being seized. Their illegal market value is estimated at between £150,000 and £200,000. Also seized were two mobile phones and a CCTV recorder, all of which will be forensically examined.
- For the eighth year in a row, residents in Oxfordshire have topped the table nationally when it comes to recycling, reusing, and composting. Oxfordshire County Council has once again been named the best performing county council waste disposal authority in England. In 2020-21, residents recycled, reused, or composted 59.5 per cent of their household waste, an increase on the previous year's figure of 58.8 per cent, according to government figures.
- Oxfordshire has housed 21 unaccompanied asylum-seeking children as part of national transfer scheme to accommodate new arrivals into the country. This was a tremendous partnership exercise across the council, with the Home Office and Health colleagues. The young people are settling well and are enjoying life in Oxford, starting their orientation programmes and will be attending college for ESOL (English to Speakers of Other Languages) courses soon.
- People are supported to live well in their communities, with 90% of people contacting the council now supported through community-based approaches, with only 10% progressing to Adult Social Care for more formal support. The team is delivering outcomes in a timelier manner, as shown by the reduction of 45% in the number of people awaiting a social care assessment, with these people are waiting up to 44% less time.

The Council is embedded the voluntary sector in the pathways to support the independence of local people by maximising the use of their personal and community assets. 37% of people, who we refer on to Age UK as part of this pathway require no further Adult Social Care input. Work with partners continue to collectively deliver the Oxfordshire Way in order to improve outcomes for people and communities. Council staff recognises the importance of working with the community, with 93% of staff agreeing that they now actively empower people and build the resilience of local communities as part of their role. As a system the services stays focused on creative preventative, collaborative approaches which allow them to support people to meet their goals in a different way. This has resulted in 11% less long term service users since April 2021 compared to the regional average, highlighting how the transformation has mitigated formal demand

10. Risk management – January summary

There were two score changes to the Risk Register during January:

- LR4 Recruitment and Retention of Children's Social Workers – From 16 to 20 (High Risk)

- LR7 Demand management – Adults – From 12 to 16 (High Risk)
- LR10 Management of partnerships (non-commercial) – From 6 to 9 (Low Risk)
- LR13 Workforce management – From 9 (Low Risk) to 12 (Medium Risk)

Also, two new risks have been added:

- LR23 HIF1 Didcot Garden Town Major Infrastructure Programme – 12 Medium Risk
- LR24 Cessation of joint working between CDC and OCC – 12 Medium Risk

Risk Ref	Risk Title	Residual Risk Score	D'tion of travel	Latest Update
LR1	Demand management - Children	20 High Risk	↔	Control Assessment Updated
LR2	Safeguarding of vulnerable children	15 Medium Risk	↔	Comments Updated
LR3	High needs block funding	15 Medium Risk	↔	Comments Updated
LR4	Recruitment and Retention of Children's Social Workers	20 High Risk	↑	Control Assessment, Probability Score, Residual Risk Level, Mitigating Actions and Comments Updated
LR5	Insufficient placement availability for children we care for	20 High Risk	↔	Comments and Mitigating Actions Updated
LR6	Safeguarding of vulnerable adults	10 Medium Risk	↔	No changes
LR7	Demand management - Adults	16 High Risk	↑	Probability Score, Residual Score, Mitigating Actions and Comments Updated.
LR8	Capital Infrastructure Programme Delivery	15 Medium Risk	↔	No changes
LR9	Local resilience, community resilience, cohesion	8 Low Risk	↔	Risk Owner, Comments and Mitigating Actions Updated
LR10	Management of partnerships (non-commercial)	9 Low Risk	↑	Residual risk level, Controls and Mitigating Actions Updated
LR11	Supply chain management	8 Low Risk	↔	No changes
LR12	Corporate governance	2 Low Risk	↔	Mitigations, Control Assessment and Comments Updated
LR13	Workforce management	12 Medium Risk	↑	Comments & Residual risk level Updated
LR14	Organisational Change and Service Design	12 Medium Risk	↔	Comments Updated
LR15	Financial resilience	10 Medium Risk	↔	No changes
LR16	Health and Safety	8 Low Risk	↔	Comments Updated
LR17	Business Continuity and recovery plans	12 Medium Risk	↔	Mitigating Actions and Comments Updated
LR18	Cyber security	12 Medium Risk	↔	Mitigation and Comments Updated
LR19	ICT Infrastructure	8 Low Risk	↔	Comments updated
LR20	Covid-19. Assurance that the Council can maintain and initiate new services and support to those impacted by the coronavirus	12 Medium Risk	↔	Impact and Inherent Score Updated
LR21	Construction, Resources and Skills Shortages	16 High Risk	↔	Comments Updated
LR22	Deprivation of Liberty Authorisations (Care Homes and Community)	10 Medium Risk	↔	No changes
LR23	HIF1 Didcot Garden Town Major Infrastructure Programme	12 Medium Risk	New	New as of 17/1/2022 – Scored decreased and Mitigating Actions Updated on 16/02/2022
LR24	Cessation of joint working between CDC and OCC	12 Medium Risk	New	New as of 17/1/2022 - No changes

11. Financial Management

Summary of the Council's financial position

11.1 This report is the sixth financial monitoring information for the 2021/22 financial year and covers the period up to the end of January 2022. This report focuses on key issues, risks, use of

funding to support pressures arising from COVID-19, as well as any areas of emerging pressure.

- 11.2 The table below sets out that there is a forecast underspend of -£1.0m or -0.2% after taking account of a £2.2m underspend against the contingency budget. Where variations to the budget are reported, management action is continuing to be taken and the forecast is likely to change by the end of the year.

Directorate	Latest Budget	Forecast Spend	Variance January 2022	Variance January 2022	Variance October 2021	Change
	£m	£m	£m	%	£m	£m
Adult Services	198.6	198.6	0.0	0.0	0.0	
Children's Services	140.1	142.3	2.2	1.6	2.6	-0.4
Public Health	0.7	0.3	-0.4	-57.1	0.0	-0.4
Environment & Place	61.2	61.8	0.6	1.0	1.7	-1.1
Commercial Development, Assets and Investments	50.7	49.5	-1.2	-2.4	-1.4	+0.2
Customers, Organisational Development & Resources	34.2	34.2	0.0	0.0	-0.3	+0.3
Total Directorate Budgets	485.5	486.7	1.2	0.2	2.6	-1.4
Corporate Measures	-485.5	-487.7	-2.2		0.0	-2.2
Total Forecast Position	0.0	-1.0	-1.0		2.6	-3.6

- 11.3 General Balances were £34.6m at 31 March 2021 and are forecast to be £35.6m by 31 March 2022, after taking account of the current forecast directorate overspend of £1.2m offset by the use of contingency. This is £6.8m higher than the risk assessed level of £28.8m.
- 11.4 To date, £3.5m of the COVID-19 reserve has been transferred to Directorates in 2021/22. Cabinet is recommended to approve a further £3.7m bringing the total use of this reserve to £7.2m. After taking account of £20.1m use of the reserve agreed as part of the 2022/23 budget and Medium Term Financial Strategy, £5.0m remains uncommitted and can be used to support future pressures.
- 11.5 See Annex C for further details and commentary.

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