

The council's directorates, priorities & planned budgets

1. The council's services are organised into five directorates who work collectively to achieve the strategic plan through focussing on the nine priorities.
2. The council's vision and priorities are as follows:



Adult Services

3. Adult Services supports people aged over 18 with physical, cognitive or age related conditions to lead independent lives with particular focus on priorities:
 1. Tackle inequalities in Oxfordshire.
 2. Prioritise the health and wellbeing of residents.
 3. Support carers and the social care system.
4. To do this the council works to provide:
 - information & advice,
 - assessments for care and support,
 - short and long-term support,
 - safeguarding for vulnerable adults.
5. We want people in Oxfordshire to live well in their community, remaining fit and healthy for as long as possible. To do that we working to build greater resilience in our communities, increased independence and personal connection for the people we serve, a better experience for people who are seeking or receiving support, greater satisfaction for people in need of support, our communities and partners, improved relationships and ways of working for all of our staff and colleagues and reduced demand on formal care services, due to proactive and preventative community outreach.
6. The council works with the NHS, private and voluntary sector to deliver effective services and use the expertise of our customers and other key stakeholders to design, procure and evaluate services.
7. The majority of the adult social care budget is pooled with health budgets held by the Integrated Care Board (ICB) for Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Berkshire West. The joint budgets support the delivery of the local priorities identified in the Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy, as well as the delivery of national targets. The intention is that working together enables better integration of health social care and housing, leading to a better experience and outcomes for Oxfordshire residents.

Adult Services	2024/25 £m	2025/26 £m
Budget rolled forward from previous year (*)	228.6	249.6
Budget increases agreed in previous budgets	22.8	11.9
Budget decreases agreed in previous budgets	-0.9	-0.6
One-off funding from COVID-19 Reserve falls out	-0.9	-0.3
Planned Budget	249.6	260.6
Increase to budget compared to previous year	9%	4%

(*) including estimated funding for 2023/24 pay inflation

Children's Services

8. The focus of Children's Services is the following priorities:
1. Create opportunities for children and young people to reach their full potential.
 2. Tackle inequalities in Oxfordshire.
 3. Prioritise the health and wellbeing of residents.
 4. Support carers and the social care system.
9. The council has an overarching responsibility to work with partners to improve the well-being of children and young people, and to reduce inequalities between them. The council's statutory duties fall into four main areas:

Safeguarding

10. The council works with partners to make arrangements to ensure that all our functions are discharged with a view to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children. In particular, the council ensures that there are clear and effective arrangements to protect children and young people from harm.
11. The independent Oxfordshire Safeguarding Children Board coordinates the effectiveness of arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people in the County.

Vulnerable children and young people

12. The council works with partners to understand local need and secure provision of services that promote prevention and early intervention and offer early help to children, young people and families so that emerging problems are dealt with before they become more serious.
13. It also acts as the 'corporate parent' for children we care for, with key roles in improving their educational attainment, and the provision of stable and high quality placements and proper planning for when they leave care. The council also works to ensure that disabled children and those with special educational needs (SEN) can access high quality provision that meets their needs and fund provision for children with statements of SEN.
14. The council ensures arrangements are in place for alternative provision for children outside mainstream education or missing education (for example due to permanent exclusion or illness) to receive suitable full-time education. We also ensure that there is coherent planning between all agencies providing services for children involved in the youth justice system (including those leaving custody), secure the provision of education for young people in custody and ensure that safeguarding responsibilities are effectively carried out.

Education

15. The council promotes the interests of children, young people, parents and families and work with local communities to stimulate and support a diversity of school, early years and 16 to 19 provision that meets local needs. We promote participation in education or training of young people, including by securing provision for young people aged 16 - 19 (or 25 for those with learning difficulties or disabilities). This includes ensuring fair access to all schools for every child in accordance with the statutory School Admissions and School Admissions

Appeal Codes and ensuring appropriate information is provided to parents, and suitable provision for suitable home to school transport arrangements.

16. We actively promote a diverse supply of strong schools, including by encouraging good schools to expand and, where there is a need for a new school, seeking proposals for an academy or free school. We also need to promote high quality early years provision, including helping to develop the market, securing free early education for all three and four year olds and for all disadvantaged two year olds. This includes providing information, advice and assistance to parents and prospective parents, and ensuring there are sufficient children's centre services to meet local need and sufficient childcare for working parents. We also promote children and young people's participation in public decision-making so they can influence local decisions about services.
17. The council works with head teachers, school governors and academy sponsors and principals to promote educational excellence for all children and young people and make sure they are ambitious in tackling underperformance. We support maintained schools in delivering an appropriate National Curriculum and early years providers in meeting the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage (as outlined in the EYFS Statutory Framework).
18. Where necessary we take rapid and decisive action in relation to poorly performing schools, including using powers of intervention with regard to maintained schools and considering alternative structural and operational solutions. We develop robust school improvement strategies and promote high standards in education by supporting effective school-to-school collaboration. We also provide local leadership for tackling issues needing attention which cut across more than one school, for example poor performance in a particular subject area across a cluster of schools.

Children's Services	2024/25 £m	2025/26 £m
Budget rolled forward from previous year (*)	171.3	180.4
Budget increases agreed in previous budgets	10.4	9.9
Budget decreases agreed in previous budgets	0.6	0.1
One-off funding from COVID-19 Reserve falls out	-1.9	-1.0
Planned Budget	180.4	189.4
Increase to budget compared to previous year	5%	5%

(*) including estimated funding for 2023/24 pay inflation

Public Health & Community Safety

Public Health

19. The majority of public health services are funded by ringfenced grant funding (**£33.6m in 2023/24**, with a provisional 1.4% uplift for 2024/25). The [conditions attached to this funding](#) set out that this must be used to meet certain responsibilities and prescribed functions:

- the improvement of the health and wellbeing of local populations and communities, including the provision of functions such as sexual health services, NHS health checks, and health visiting
- carry out health protection functions delegated from the Secretary of State
- reduce health inequalities across the life course, including within underserved populations and communities
- Have regard to need to need to improve take up of, and outcomes from, drug and alcohol misuse treatment services

The public health grant can also be used for a range of non – prescribed functions, for example tobacco control and obesity services, public mental health, and dental public health.

20. The Public health grant conditions allow for underspends against the grant funding to be carried over into the next financial year as part of a public health reserve. The use of this reserve must comply with grant conditions and the Department of Health and Social Care reserve the right to consider reducing future grant allocations in the case of significant and repeated underspends.
21. Public health services in Oxfordshire were considerably disrupted through the pandemic. Service providers often had to rapidly shift to remote provision rather than face-to-face (such as for local stop smoking services) and in some cases services were temporarily stopped (such as NHS Health Checks). Because of this, the public health grant underspend for 2020/21 and 2022/23 was greater than in previous years.
22. Accumulated underspends against the ringfenced grant funding for Public Health Funding held in the public health reserve totalled £5.9m as at 31 March 2023. This funding is being used to support a public health recovery programme based on following principles:
 - tackling public health priority areas (tobacco control, obesity, domestic abuse, and mental wellbeing);
 - addressing inequalities;
 - contributing to an inclusive COVID-19 recovery;
 - wider system influencing to improve health and create healthy spaces;
 - supporting collaboration and partnership working across Oxfordshire.

Community Safety

23. Community Safety is comprised of Oxfordshire Fire and Rescue Service, Emergency Planning, Gypsy & Traveller Services and Trading Standards. These services help to contribute to the following priorities:
 2. Tackle inequalities in Oxfordshire
 3. Prioritise the health and wellbeing of residents.
 9. Work with local businesses and partners for environmental, economic and social benefit.
24. Oxfordshire Fire & Rescue Service provides a Fire and Rescue service as set out in the Fire and Rescue Services Act and National framework document, to meet the requirements of the Oxfordshire County Council Fire Authority's

Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP). Services are delivered through a combined approach of Protection, Prevention and Response.

25. Emergency Planning ensures that the requirements of the Civil Contingency Act and other supplementary legislation are met. The team leads on ensuring plans for organisational resilience and business continuity are in place across the council and provides business continuity advice to local businesses.
26. Gypsy & Traveller Services deals with unauthorised encampments and manages six county council owned permanent sites.
27. The Trading Standards team discharges the council's statutory obligations to ensure compliance with certain consumer and environmental legislation, including in relation to weights and measures, product safety, trade representations and trademarks, unfair contract terms and unfair trading practices, animal health and welfare, price marking and price comparisons, supply of age restricted products, illegal tobacco, licensing and inspection of explosives and petroleum storage facilities and safety certification of sports grounds. Non-statutory work includes consumer advice and support, scam reduction, and road weight restriction enforcement.

Public Health & Community Safety	2024/25 £m	2025/26 £m
Budget rolled forward from previous year (*)	32.3	33.0
Budget increases agreed in previous budgets	0.5	0.5
Budget decreases agreed in previous budgets	0.2	0.0
Planned Budget	33.0	33.5
Increase to budget compared to previous year	2%	1%

(*) including estimated funding for 2023/24 pay inflation

Environment & Place

28. Environment and Place delivers and commissions a wide range of highly visible services and functions, leading and driving the delivery of three of the Council's nine priorities. These are:
 1. Put action to address the climate emergency at the heart of our work.
 2. Invest in an inclusive, integrated and sustainable transport network.
 3. Preserve and improve access to nature and green spaces.
29. Highways Maintenance, Public Rights of Way management and Household Waste Recycling Centres include the delivery of the council's duty to maintain a safe highway. Additional regulatory functions include being Lead Local Flood Authority, the Minerals and Waste Planning authority and the delivery of environmental and support services including the provision of archaeological expertise.
30. Working with district partners and key stakeholders through effective administration of policy, the directorate champions development planning that

seeks to create sustainable communities, where sustainable transport is encouraged, new jobs are created and health inequalities are reduced.

31. The directorate is responsible for delivering all major capital infrastructure schemes including the Housing Infrastructure Fund 1 & 2, Housing and Growth Deal, and Local Growth fund projects from concept to delivery and monitoring across Oxfordshire. It is also responsible for road safety, traffic and asset management, effective network management and supporting the ongoing development of active travel in addition to working with partners to deliver effective public transport services.
32. The service is also responsible for supported transport including home to school transport.

Environment & Place	2024/25 £m	2025/26 £m
Budget rolled forward from previous year (*)	75.5	75.6
Budget increases agreed in previous budgets	3.6	3.9
Budget decreases agreed in previous budgets	-3.1	-0.3
One-off funding from COVID-19 Reserve falls out	-0.4	
Planned Budget	75.6	79.2
Increase to budget compared to previous year	0%	5%

(*) including estimated funding for 2023/24 pay inflation

Resources and Law and Governance

33. The focus of the services that combine within Resources and Law and Governance is to:
- work with the council's Cabinet to set and communicate the direction of the Council and support the organisation through periods of significant change.
 - Deliver services for both internal customers, through the provision of enabling services such as Communications, Strategy & Insight and Finance and customers through the provision of key frontline and universal services such as the Customer Service Centre, libraries and the Registration Service.
34. The services contribute directly to priority 8 “play our part in a vibrant and participatory local democracy” and also support the achievement of all nine priorities through activities needed to “run the business” and support access to services.
35. The Customer Service Centre provides the initial gateway / first point of contact for all initial customer enquiries across a wide range of council services and channels including phone, email, social media and face to face. The team provides the corporate oversight to the voice of the customer activity through the administration of the complaints and Freedom of Information (FOI) activities
- 36.

37. Cultural Services provides public library services across 44 sites in the county, as well as the Oxfordshire Museum, History and Archive and Victoria County History services which have responsibility for the collection, conservation and public access to portable history, local studies, corporate and social history of the county. The Music Service engages young people in learning and participating in music through schools and music groups. The Registration Service provides services for registering births, deaths, marriages, civil partnerships and other celebratory ceremonies. The coroner's service provides essential administrative and officer support to the Coroner and the fulfilment of statutory coronial duties.
38. The Property Team provides all property related services for the Council, covering both service and residents' needs. Services include facilities management (including minor improvement works, school meals and cleaning); Service delivery (major property capital projects for schools, fire stations etc); the council's Property and Investment Strategies.
39. The Communications, Strategy and Insight team develop and deliver communications, campaigns and public consultations, enabling residents to understand and fully engage with the council's priorities and work; provide a central hub for council-wide intelligence and effective performance and project management; lead and co-ordinate the council's forward planning, strategy and policy development, and relationship with local and national stakeholders; and lead the council's business change function.
40. The IT Innovation & Digital Team maintain the Council's technology and digital infrastructure, access to business systems, improvement approaches and facilities required by internal customers to deliver the council's services.
41. The Finance team provides strategic financial planning, accounting and advice and leads on processes supporting financial management and the agreement of the budget, medium term financial strategy and capital programme. Monitoring reports are shared internally and with Cabinet throughout the year as well as reports setting out the outturn position and statutory accounts and reporting. This service area also includes Internal Audit and Insurance. The Procurement Hub support strategic procurement processes and contract management as well as market intelligence and spend data.
42. Human Resources and Organisational Development provide advice and support to the organisation in terms of employee relations and engagement, learning and development, workforce planning, recruitment, retention and all associated activities.
43. Law and Governance provide a comprehensive legal service incorporating advice and representation service to all directorates of the council and to the Council as a whole. Democratic Services lead and supports the governance of the Council and administers the democratic decision making process for the council.

Resources and Law & Governance	2024/25 £m	2025/26 £m
Budget rolled forward from previous year (*)	71.6	68.1
Budget increases agreed in previous budgets	-0.7	1.8
Budget decreases agreed in previous budgets	0.2	
Budget decreases agreed in previous budgets that will be allocated to directorates	-2.5	
One-off funding from COVID-19 Reserve falls out	-0.4	-0.1
Planned Budget	68.1	69.9
Increase to budget compared to previous year	-5%	2%

(*) including estimated funding for 2023/24 pay inflation