

Cabinet response to recommendations of the Performance and Corporate Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee Budget Scrutiny Observations and Recommendations report. Response provided by Cabinet Member for Finance, Councillor Calum Miller

Scrutiny Budget Recommendation	Response	Comments
<p>Recommendation 1:</p> <p>The Council Priorities need to be more clearly defined</p>	<p>Recommendation noted and addressed</p>	<p>The Council's new Corporate Strategy has been developed as part of a period of public and stakeholder engagement during the autumn of 2021. The vision, priorities and commitments (as set out by Cabinet at the meeting of 20 July 2021) have been reviewed and refined and are now underpinned by a series of priorities.</p> <p>The Corporate Strategy, following the engagement programme, comprises a vision for Oxfordshire, nine priorities with a narrative description of these commitments, and 41 underpinning objectives.</p> <p>Following adoption of a Corporate Strategy by Council an outcomes framework will be developed to include key measures, projects and initiatives. This will form the basis of performance management. The strategy will be reviewed annually, and a report will be published each year setting out progress.</p>
<p>Recommendation 2:</p> <p>Details of how new investment will contribute towards delivery of each priority is required to enable the public and Councillors to understand what the Council is seeking to achieve. Cabinet is recommended to ensure future budget proposals clearly set out</p>	<p>Recommendation noted and addressed</p>	<p>The 2022/23 budget investment proposals were presented in relation each of the nine strategic properties. The development of a new corporate strategy this year creates a new framework by which the budget can be viewed. As set out projects and key performance measures will be prepared after the adoption of the new strategy, and Performance and Corporate Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee have these on their forward plan (March 2022).</p>

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<p>the deliverables, targets and measures of success to be achieved through new investment. One way to do this might be to indicate how investment will affect KPIs and whether new ones will be developed.</p>		
<p>Recommendation 3:</p> <p>Cabinet sets out the impact of the public consultation exercise on its budget proposals at its January Cabinet meeting.</p>	<p>Recommendation noted and addressed</p>	<p>The results of the public engagement programme undertaken to develop the Corporate Strategy and the findings of the Budget Consultation have both been published. The engagement programme results were received by Performance and Corporate Services at their meeting on 10 December 2021.</p> <p>The budget consultation took place between 2 December 2021 and 5 January 2022 and the results have been published to support scrutiny, Cabinet and Council decision making. A total of 1392 responses were received, in comparison to 652 in the previous year. Arrangements have been made to undertake deeper dives into the findings via a series of member briefings to take place in January and February.</p> <p>The budget consultation report (published as an annex to the Scrutiny and Cabinet papers identifies public priorities and views on the proposals).</p>
<p>Recommendation 4:</p> <p>Future budget proposals should clearly set out in a publicly understandable way a clear rationale for increases in council tax and if</p>	<p>Recommendation noted</p>	<p>The importance of clear communication for the reasons driving council tax increases is accepted as set out in this recommendation. Council tax is only part of the councils funding mechanism and therefore council tax increases alone are not directly associated with 'deliverables' rather the ongoing provision of county council services. In some budget rounds the maximum possible council tax increase may still result in a budget proposal where savings are required even with a council tax increase. As</p>

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possible what deliverables will result from the rise.		such communicating deliverables in direct relation to council tax changes is not achievable in itself. The ongoing requirement to communicate effectively about budgets and the use of council tax is accepted; we believe it has been achieved through our budget consultation and will further be support by our communications sent to every Oxfordshire household as part of council tax billing.
<p>Recommendation 5:</p> <p>Cabinet ensures the Corporate Plan provides greater clarity around its environmental ambitions at a strategic and action/ measurables level, setting out fundamental investments and changes to the Councils approach that will impact tackling the climate emergency in future years.</p> <p>Additionally Cabinet considers mainstreaming its approach to Climate Change so it becomes a consideration in all policy and budget proposals.</p>	<p>Recommendation noted and addressed</p>	<p>Activities, targets and ambitions in relation to climate action are set out in the council’s climate action plan (with progress reported quarterly) and this plan continues to be developed. The corporate priorities and vision for Oxfordshire puts addressing and adapting to climate change at the heart of the new strategy. This includes commitments to nature recovery, impact assessments, supporting green innovation, the development of policies and tools for carbon assessment and management in capital projects, and work to develop greener supply chains. Investment to deliver these commitments is set out in the 2022/23 budget proposals.</p> <p>Climate action commitments are being mainstreamed through organisational development, for example, by embedding climate considerations into decision-making via climate impact assessments of new policy, projects, programmes and budget proposals; by offering Carbon Literacy training to officers, senior leadership and members; and by ensuring annual service plans demonstrate contributions to climate strategy.</p>
<p>Recommendation 6:</p> <p>A joint Working Group be set up between the People OSC and the Performance & Corporate Services OSC to undertake a review of the</p>	<p>Recommendation noted</p>	<p>Cabinet would welcome the contribution of overview and scrutiny to shape the council’s response to the funding pressures in adult social care, the changing national policy landscape in relation to this area and our local response. However, Cabinet notes the significant pressure on the adult social care service as they manage the implementation of</p>

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<p>pressures and challenges facing Adult Services in order to identify options and make recommendations to be fed into the 2022/23 budget setting process to assist Cabinet in dealing with the significant challenges Adult Services faces.</p>		<p>system reform and expect any review will not add to the workload of the service.</p>
<p>Recommendation 7:</p> <p>Cabinet commits to providing the required future funding to allow the Family Solution Plus programme to achieve its priorities including expansion of the programme.</p>	<p>Recommendation noted and addressed</p>	<p>Council has made provision for the continuation of the Family Solution Plus model in 22/23 using Troubled/supporting Families and Public Health Grant reserve. Funding for future years will be part of the planning for 23/24 both within the council and the wider system partnership funding allocation mechanisms</p>