



## ***Notice of a Meeting***

### **Performance & Corporate Services Overview & Scrutiny Committee**

**Friday, 10 November 2023 at 12.00 pm**

**Room 2&3 - County Hall, New Road, Oxford OX1 1ND**

**These proceedings are open to the public**

If you wish to view proceedings online, please click on this [Live Stream Link](#).

However, that will not allow you to participate in the meeting.

#### **Membership**

Chair - Councillor Eddie Reeves

Vice Chair – Councillor Brad Baines

*Councillors:*

Donna Ford

Bob Johnston

Kieron Mallon

Ian Middleton

Liz Brighthouse OBE

Calum Miller

Glynis Phillips

**Notes:** *Date of next meeting: 8 December 2023*

**For more information about this Committee please contact:**

Committee Officer

- *Scrutiny Team*

*E-Mail: [scrutiny@oxfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:scrutiny@oxfordshire.gov.uk)*

Martin Reeves  
Chief Executive

November 2023

## **What does this Committee review or scrutinise?**

All corporate services and budget scrutiny, including customer services, property, assets, procurement, finance, corporate policy matters such as consultation and public engagement; takes a lead role in scrutiny of the budget and corporate plan.

## **How can I have my say?**

We welcome the views of the community on any issues in relation to the responsibilities of this Committee. Members of the public may ask to speak on any item on the agenda or may suggest matters which they would like the Committee to look at. **Requests to speak must be submitted to the Committee Officer below no later than 9 am 4 working days before the date of the meeting.**

## **About the County Council**

The Oxfordshire County Council is made up of 63 councillors who are democratically elected every four years. The Council provides a range of services to Oxfordshire's 678,000 residents.

These include:

schools	social & health care	libraries and museums
the fire service	roads	trading standards
land use	transport planning	waste management

Each year the Council manages £0.9 billion of public money in providing these services. Most decisions are taken by a Cabinet of 9 Councillors, which makes decisions about service priorities and spending. Some decisions will now be delegated to individual members of the Cabinet.

## **About Scrutiny**

Scrutiny is about:

- Providing a challenge to the Cabinet
- Examining how well the Cabinet and the Authority are performing
- Influencing the Cabinet on decisions that affect local people
- Helping the Cabinet to develop Council policies
- Representing the community in Council decision making
- Promoting joined up working across the authority's work and with partners

Scrutiny is NOT about:

- Making day to day service decisions
- Investigating individual complaints.

## **What does this Committee do?**

The Committee meets up to 4 times a year or more. It develops a work programme, which lists the issues it plans to investigate. These investigations can include whole committee investigations undertaken during the meeting, or reviews by a panel of members doing research and talking to lots of people outside of the meeting. Once an investigation is completed the Committee provides its advice to the Cabinet, the full Council or other scrutiny committees. Meetings are open to the public and all reports are available to the public unless exempt or confidential, when the items would be considered in closed session.

**If you have any special requirements (such as a large print version of these papers or special access facilities) please contact the officer named on the front page, giving as much notice as possible before the meeting**

**A hearing loop is available at County Hall.**

# AGENDA

## 1. Apologies for Absence and Temporary Appointments

To receive any apologies for absence and temporary appointments.

## 2. Declaration of Interests - see guidance note on the back page

## 3. Petitions and Public Address

Members of the public who wish to speak at this meeting can attend the meeting in person or 'virtually' through an online connection.

To facilitate 'hybrid' meetings we are asking that requests to speak or present a petition are submitted by no later than 9am four working days before the meeting i.e., 9am on 06 November 2023. Requests to speak should be sent to Tom Hudson, Scrutiny Manager, at [scrutiny@oxfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:scrutiny@oxfordshire.gov.uk).

If you are speaking 'virtually', you may submit a written statement of your presentation to ensure that your views are taken into account. A written copy of your statement can be provided no later than 9am 2 working days before the meeting. Written submissions should be no longer than 1 A4 sheet.

## 4. Cost of Living Update (Pages 1 - 12)

The Committee previously received a report concerning the Council's Cost of Living response. This report provides an update on the activity in this area.

Cllr Nathan Ley, Cabinet Member for Public Health, Inequalities and Community Safety, Robin Rogers, Programme Director, Partnerships and Delivery, and Paul Wilding, Programme Manager, Partnerships and Delivery have been invited to present this item.

The Committee is recommended, having considered the report and responses to questions, to **AGREE** any recommendations it wishes to make to Cabinet arising therefrom.

## 5. Business Services Transformation Update (Pages 13 - 22)

At its meeting on 21 July 2023 the Committee considered a report providing an update on progress of the Business Services Transformation programme. The Committee requested an update report at the point Cabinet was asked to make a further decision regarding the programme.

Cllr Neil Fawcett, Cabinet Member for Community and Corporate Services, and Lorna Baxter, Director of Finance, have been invited to attend and present this report.

The Committee is recommended, having considered the report and responses to questions, to **AGREE** any recommendations it wishes to make to Cabinet arising therefrom.

NB Members should be aware that they are being provided with the report being provided to Cabinet as the source material for their scrutiny. Following Scrutiny's feedback during its previous consideration, the risk register is being provided. However, no additional Scrutiny-specific cover report has been requested.

## 6. **Directorate Budget Pressures & Approach to Savings 2024/25 to 2026/27** (Pages 23 - 36)

As the first step in its Budget Scrutiny the Committee is to be provided an introduction to the broader budget-setting context, specifically in relation to the pressures and the Council's approach to savings. Cllr Dan Levy, Cabinet Member for Finance, Lorna Baxter, Director of Finance, and Kathy Wilcox, Head of Financial Strategy have been invited to present this item.

The Committee is recommended, having considered the report and responses to questions, to **AGREE** any recommendations it wishes to make to Cabinet arising therefrom.

## 7. **BMMR Update** (Pages 37 - 136)

At its last meeting the Committee agreed to defer consideration of this item. To ensure consideration is focused on the most recent available data this report only includes the BMMR data from September. The November BMMR data will not have been published by the time of this meeting. Invited to present this item are Cllr Levy, Cabinet Member for Finance, Lorna Baxter, Director of Finance, Kathy Wilcox, Head of Financial Strategy, and Louise Tustian, Head of Insight and Corporate Programmes.

The Committee is recommended, having considered the report and responses to questions, to **AGREE** any recommendations it wishes to make to Cabinet arising therefrom.

## **Councillors declaring interests**

### **General duty**

You must declare any disclosable pecuniary interests when the meeting reaches the item on the agenda headed 'Declarations of Interest' or as soon as it becomes apparent to you.

### **What is a disclosable pecuniary interest?**

Disclosable pecuniary interests relate to your employment; sponsorship (i.e. payment for expenses incurred by you in carrying out your duties as a councillor or towards your election expenses); contracts; land in the Council's area; licenses for land in the Council's area; corporate tenancies; and securities. These declarations must be recorded in each councillor's Register of Interests which is publicly available on the Council's website.

Disclosable pecuniary interests that must be declared are not only those of the member her or himself but also those member's spouse, civil partner or person they are living with as husband or wife or as if they were civil partners.

### **Declaring an interest**

Where any matter disclosed in your Register of Interests is being considered at a meeting, you must declare that you have an interest. You should also disclose the nature as well as the existence of the interest. If you have a disclosable pecuniary interest, after having declared it at the meeting you must not participate in discussion or voting on the item and must withdraw from the meeting whilst the matter is discussed.

### **Members' Code of Conduct and public perception**

Even if you do not have a disclosable pecuniary interest in a matter, the Members' Code of Conduct says that a member 'must serve only the public interest and must never improperly confer an advantage or disadvantage on any person including yourself' and that 'you must not place yourself in situations where your honesty and integrity may be questioned'.

### **Members Code – Other registrable interests**

Where a matter arises at a meeting which directly relates to the financial interest or wellbeing of one of your other registerable interests then you must declare an interest. You must not participate in discussion or voting on the item and you must withdraw from the meeting whilst the matter is discussed.

Wellbeing can be described as a condition of contentedness, healthiness and happiness; anything that could be said to affect a person's quality of life, either positively or negatively, is likely to affect their wellbeing.

Other registrable interests include:

- a) Any unpaid directorships
- b) Any body of which you are a member or are in a position of general control or management and to which you are nominated or appointed by your authority.

- c) Any body (i) exercising functions of a public nature (ii) directed to charitable purposes or (iii) one of whose principal purposes includes the influence of public opinion or policy (including any political party or trade union) of which you are a member or in a position of general control or management.

### **Members Code – Non-registrable interests**

Where a matter arises at a meeting which directly relates to your financial interest or wellbeing (and does not fall under disclosable pecuniary interests), or the financial interest or wellbeing of a relative or close associate, you must declare the interest.

Where a matter arises at a meeting which affects your own financial interest or wellbeing, a financial interest or wellbeing of a relative or close associate or a financial interest or wellbeing of a body included under other registrable interests, then you must declare the interest.

In order to determine whether you can remain in the meeting after disclosing your interest the following test should be applied:

Where a matter affects the financial interest or well-being:

- a) to a greater extent than it affects the financial interests of the majority of inhabitants of the ward affected by the decision and;
- b) a reasonable member of the public knowing all the facts would believe that it would affect your view of the wider public interest.

You may speak on the matter only if members of the public are also allowed to speak at the meeting. Otherwise you must not take part in any discussion or vote on the matter and must not remain in the room unless you have been granted a dispensation.

## Divisions Affected - ALL

### **Performance & Corporate Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

**10 November 2023**

#### **Cost of Living Programme Update**

#### **Report by Programme Director (Partnerships & Delivery)**

### **RECOMMENDATION**

The Performance & Corporate Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee is invited to consider and comment on:

- a. The measures Oxfordshire County Council have put in place to mitigate the effect of the cost-of-living crisis on residents across Oxfordshire.
- b. Planned work to tackle deprivation.

### **Executive Summary**

1. Residents across Oxfordshire continue to feel the impact of increases in the cost of living not met by increases in income. Inflation remains concentrated in areas which have a disproportionate impact on those on the lowest incomes. The Government has provided financial support to local authorities to mitigate some of this pressure, and the council has made additional funding available for this purpose.
2. This report summarises how Oxfordshire County Council has applied these resources locally through the Cost-of-Living programme and how it is working in partnership with other organisations, to help mitigate the effect of this crisis on Oxfordshire residents. The report also sets out longer term work to address the causes of deprivation in Oxfordshire.

### **Matters for Consideration**

#### **The Cost-of-Living Crisis**

3. The UK has been experiencing a cost-of-living crisis for more than two years. This began with increases in wholesale energy costs which formed one of several inflationary pressures. Combined with low wage growth this has seen mounting pressure on household finances. For those on the lowest incomes, the situation is exacerbated by freezes in some benefit rates (such as the Local Housing Allowance) in recent years, although most benefits have been uprated in line with inflation for the current year. It is also well documented that

inflation has an unequal impact with those on the lowest incomes experiencing the most detrimental impact. This includes a disproportionately high number of people from ethnic minorities, and people with disabilities.

4. Despite a fall in inflation since October 2022, many components of inflation remain very high, and continue to have a disproportionately negative impact on low-income households. In August this year the inflation rate for food and non-alcoholic drinks was 13.6%<sup>1</sup>. An Office of National Statistics (ONS) survey from this year found that 1 in 20 adults said they had run out of food in the past two weeks and been unable to afford more<sup>2</sup>.
5. There has been a small reduction in the cost of energy. However, the ONS report that almost half (47%) of adults in Great Britain are using less fuel such as gas or electricity in their homes because of the rising cost of living<sup>3</sup>. This year there is no £400 subsidy from government for energy bills and people's resources are likely to be further depleted compared to this time last year due to persistently high living costs. As such the impact of energy costs may be greater this year than last year.
6. Appendix One contains further details of the national economic drivers affecting household budgets.

#### **Impact of deprivation – local indicators**

7. On many key indicators, Oxfordshire is one of the least deprived areas in the country. However, this masks pockets of significant deprivation across the county. The impact of deprivation can be seen in several ways, not least in the local data on health and wellbeing.
8. There are clear inequalities in life expectancy across Oxfordshire. Males living in more affluent areas of the county are expected to live around 11 years longer than those in poorer areas. For females, this gap is around 12 years.
9. Most children in Oxfordshire, assessed as part of the Healthy Child Programme development review around their second birthday, reached a good level of development in five key areas. However, children living in areas with higher income deprivation had a lower (worse) than average good level of development.
10. There are clear inequalities for childhood obesity by deprivation, sex, and ethnic group. Data shows that children were more likely to be obese in more deprived areas of Oxfordshire. Similar to the national trend, Oxfordshire has an increasing percentage of children with social, emotional, and mental health needs, with a higher prevalence in boys (4.8%). The number of mental health referrals for young people has increased, especially for those aged 10-19.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.ons.gov.uk/economy/inflationandpriceindices/articles/costoflivinginsights/food>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.ons.gov.uk/economy/inflationandpriceindices/articles/costoflivinginsights/food>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.ons.gov.uk/economy/inflationandpriceindices/articles/costoflivinginsights/energy>

<sup>4</sup> <https://insight.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/joint-strategic-needs-assessment>

11. HealthWatch Oxfordshire conducted a survey in September 2023 and spoke to 1,114 people about their health and wellbeing. When asked about challenges to their wellbeing, the most common response (250 people) was the high cost of living, which has a detrimental impact on people's ability to stay healthy and well. This included high housing costs, cost of food, and cost of access to facilities such as gyms and classes. People were feeling the pressure, especially those on low wages, single parents, and families.<sup>5</sup>
12. HealthWatch also engaged with representatives of the voluntary and community sector. Participants comments reflected the themes raised by the public. In addition, they agreed that cost of living was a big challenge in the communities they served, and noted affordability and access, adding that people were cutting back on other basic necessities including household cleaning products, with an impact on wellbeing.

### **Government support**

13. The government is making a number of Cost-of-Living payments during 2023/24 to support people with increased living costs. This year they are making the following payments:
  - Three payments totalling £900 to those on some means-tested benefits
  - £150 for people in receipt of benefits related to a disability
  - Either £150 or £300 for pensioners to be paid with the Winter Fuel Payment
14. The government has also provided funding to reduce Council Tax bills for current working age and pension age Local Council Tax Support (LCTS) claimants by up to £25.
15. In order to target financial support effectively the government has made an additional round of funding available through the Household Support Fund (HSF4) this year. This provides £842 million to top tier and unitary authorities to support households with rising household costs. Oxfordshire's funding allocation is £6.72 million.

### **Oxfordshire Cost of Living programme**

16. On 21 March 2023, Cabinet agreed the Cost-of-Living programme for 2023/24 and allocated the £6.72 million HSF4 funding as well as agreeing a further £2.8 million of expenditure from local resources for the same period.
17. This section of the report summarises the overall programme and commitments made so far. It is followed by more detailed explanations of each programme element. Table 1 below sets out the funding that was agreed by Cabinet as well as two new areas of expenditure agreed in year. The following section addresses the impact of the funding for each item as well as outlining any challenges with delivery.

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<sup>5</sup> <https://healthwatchoxfordshire.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/09/Healthwatch-Oxfordshire-Health-and-Wellbeing-views-Sept-2023-final-2.pdf>

Table 1.

Project	Budget	Funding Source*	Committed Expenditure
Resident Support Scheme	£1,000,000	HSF/OCC	£192,058
Housing Benefit	£1,760,000	HSF	£0
Free School Meals & Early Years	£3,550,000	HSF	£2,861,831
Education Support Grant	£200,000	HSF	£200,000
Hospital Discharge Support	£15,000	HSF	£0
Administration and Evaluation	£200,000	HSF	£200,000
City and District HSF Delegation	£500,000	HSF	£13,935
Schools Sustainable Food Programme	£160,000	OCC	£0
BHBH Extension	£152,000	OCC	£240,000
Support to VCS Advisory Service	£300,000	OCC	£300,000
Council Tax Support Fund	£780,000	OCC	£778,230
Discretionary Housing Payments	£810,000	OCC	£805,352
<b>New Projects (Agreed in-year)</b>			
Contribution to OCF Cost of Living grant round	£110,000	OCC	£110,000
Community Wealth Building	£25,000	OCC	£25,000
<b>Totals</b>	<b>£9,562,000</b>		<b>£5,726,406</b>
Budget	£9,520,000		

\*HSF is funding from the DWP's Household Support Fund. OCC refers to funding the council has made available.

18. The programme is managing a high degree of variance in take-up and changing numbers in terms of eligibility. Most significantly, the cost of holiday support for families of children eligible for free school meals (FSM) changes with the school and early years population and the circumstances of their families. The latest school census was conducted at the start of October, and this is expected to lead to an increase in children eligible for FSM.
19. The second area with a significant potential for variance is the Cost-of-Living payment which we are making to people in receipt of Housing Benefit and no other qualifying benefits (see further detail and eligibility below). The projected expenditure is based on an 85% take up of this support, based on 5% increase in take up than the uptake for a payment made to this group in February 2023.
20. Given the scale of potential commitment in these support programmes, £700,000 is being held in reserve for allocation during Q3 and Q4, as actuals become clear. Options for committing this funding include an additional support payment for carers, extending Free School Meal provision to the Easter Holiday 2024, and rolling outstanding funding into an increased

Resident Support Scheme allocation for 24/25 (within the rules of the several funding streams).

### **Resident Support Scheme (RSS)**

21. A new support scheme was launched in June this year to provide emergency funding for vulnerable people in financial crisis. The scheme provides support in the form of food vouchers, energy pre-payment credit, and essential household items (e.g. washing machine, beds). As awareness of the scheme is built up, expenditure is increasing month on month and the scheme is being promoted through a range of partners who are signed up to help their clients access the scheme. This includes local authorities, advice agencies, housing associations and other third sector providers. It is expected that demand will increase during the colder months, and this will be closely monitored in order to maximise expenditure.
22. Expenditure was expected to be lower to begin with as the scheme would take time to become familiar with partners and become a key part of their toolkit for supporting people in crisis. We have been careful in how the scheme is promoted to avoid applications from those who are unlikely to qualify, and to ensure we are able to maintain support for those most in need for the whole year.
23. The council has made £500,000 per year available for the scheme for 2023/24 and 2024/25, whilst for 2025/26, £353,741 has been allocated.<sup>6</sup> An additional £500,000 has been allocated from HSF4 for 2023/24. The scheme has been designed so that in the event government provides new hardship funding beyond HSF4, these can be absorbed by our RSS. The scheme is delivered by NEC Software Services who were awarded a two-year contract following a full tendering exercise and provide similar services for the Welsh Government, the London Borough of Tower Hamlets and Rochdale
24. The first four months of the scheme have seen 1,470 applications made, with 843 being successful, and 101 pending a decision at the reporting point. The successful awards have seen the following items provided:
  - Food vouchers - 703
  - Energy credit for prepayment meters - 656
  - Essential household items - 296
25. The main reasons for refusing an award are that it is not possible to verify a customer's circumstances (104) or it is determined that the request support is affordable for the resident (137). Where an award is turned down an appeal can be made against the decision which is looked at by a different member of staff. More than half of appeals have been successful, and the Council is

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<sup>6</sup> Funding was brought forward from the final year of the programme to recognise the urgent pressures facing residents during 2022/23.

reviewing with the contractor the circumstances of refusal to reduce the need for appeal.

### **Cost of Living Housing Benefit payment**

26. The government have made several Cost-of-Living payments to people whose main income is from means tested benefits. In 2023/24 the value of this payment is £900. However, people who are only in receipt of Housing Benefit and no other qualifying benefits are not eligible for this support. Through the guidance for HSF3 and HSF4, DWP have requested that local authorities were requested to consider this group as a priority for support in local programmes, alongside other priority residents. During 2022/23 the County Council was able to design and deliver a new process for contacting the relevant residents, collecting and verifying their bank details and making payments and delivered a first payment in February and March 2023.
27. A second payment will be made in November to these residents of £450. Residents who did not respond to the Council during 2023 will be recontacted and the Council will work with VCS colleagues and other agencies to promote take-up. There are expected to be 4,100 households eligible for this payment.

### **Free School Meal support in the holidays**

28. All families eligible for Free School Meal (FSM) support are provided with £15 per week, per eligible child, in food vouchers or equivalent ahead of school holiday periods. This is for all children in school or in an early-years setting (with similar eligibility criteria for children too young to be eligible for FSM). The council has supported families of 16,960 children in this way this year.
29. In benchmarking with 22 other councils, Oxfordshire along with six other authorities provides the most generous support to FSM families in the holidays, providing £165 per child over the year.
30. FSM support is funded from the national HSF4 funding and costs in excess of £3 million per year. There is currently no expectation of further funding beyond March 2024 from government and in those circumstances, this scheme will come to an end after operating for three years.

### **Education Support Grant**

31. The funding of £200,000 has been provided to schools on a pro rata (weighted with a deprivation factor) to use at their discretion. It is anticipated that it will be used to fund fees for breakfast and after school clubs, warm clothing, school trips, to waive school meal fees for struggling families not in receipt of FSM and similar items for children from low-income families. Schools report on expenditure in arrears but after the first term of operation of the scheme which will run to March 2023, £20,000 had been spent by schools.

### **Hospital Discharge Support**

32. An allocation of £15,000 was made in order to fund energy related expenditure which would facilitate the discharge of patients from hospital. The programme team are engaged with relevant social care teams to agree how to manage disbursement of this funding across the winter period of 2023/24.

### **Administration and Evaluation**

33. This allocation is to provide resource for management of the Cost-of-Living programme and has allowed for increased engagement with VCS agencies and other partners as well as the client function for the RSS scheme and customer service and finance support for the delivery of direct support.

### **City and District council HSF delegation**

34. An allocation of £500,000 is distributed between the city and district councils to target support in their areas. The councils' focus for this funding is to ensure support is available during the colder months, when people will be facing higher energy bills. Their plans include expenditure in the following areas:

- Targeted financial support delivered by trusted partners
- Energy efficiency vouchers for older people receiving Council Tax Support
- Support to community food groups
- Support for advice centres
- Food support for families in temporary accommodation

### **Schools Sustainable Food programme**

35. An initial allocation of £160,000 was made to provide a post and initial seed funding to identify opportunities for supporting food provision in schools. As the project was initially developed it became clear that there was significant cross-over with anti-obesity work in schools funded through Public Health and the implementation plan in support of the Food Strategy. Alternative use of this funding is being planned to include support for increasing take-up of FSM provision with related income benefit to schools via by increasing Early Years Pupil Premium income and increasing the impact of other interventions in the overall programme or alleviate cost-of-living pressures elsewhere.

### **Better Housing Better Health (BHBH)**

36. The Better Housing Better Health (BHBH) service is a long-standing intervention commissioned by the local authorities in Oxfordshire. The partners collaborate across the council engaging with both the voluntary and health sector.
37. Good quality housing is an important building block to good health. Its objective is to support older residents, those with health conditions or lower incomes and those in receipt of care, with support to stay warm, well, and independent in their homes. An additional £240,000 has been made available from the Cost-of-Living programme to support this work. Funding of £152,000 has been committed so far, which will enable an additional 120 home visits and 750 telephone assessments to be carried out as well as providing funding for support with energy costs and small to medium energy efficiency measures. The remainder of the funding will be allocated over winter in response to emerging need.

### **Support to advice services**

38. The programme has provided £300,000 of grant funding this year to help local advice services meet the increased demand they are facing as a result of the Cost-of-Living crisis. The funding has been distributed following expressions of interest to the following centres:

- All Oxfordshire Citizens Advice offices
- Agnes Smith Advice Centre
- Barton Advice Centre
- Rose Hill and Donnington Advice Centre
- Vale Community Impact

39. The advice centres are using the funding to maintain additional skilled staffing to help reduce debt among people who are socially excluded and vulnerable, improve money management, increase income from employment and address fuel poverty. It is estimated that the funding will enable more than an additional thousand people to be supported.

### **Council Tax Support fund**

40. Council Tax Support is a locally agreed discount to Council Tax bills, which replaced the national Council Tax Benefit scheme in 2013. It reduces the amount of Council Tax that households on low incomes have to pay, in some cases to zero.

41. As set out above in paragraph 15 the government provided funding this year to enable anyone receiving Council Tax Support who still had some Council Tax to pay, to receive an additional £25 discount to their bill. The council has provided £778,230 to the city and district councils to enable them to provide an additional £25 reduction to this group. In most cases, this will have eliminated the impact of the County Council's precept increase for this year, for the lowest income households who are still paying an element of Council Tax. It is expected that over 12,000 households will benefit from this additional reduction to their Council Tax bill.

### **Discretionary Housing Payments**

42. The government provides funding to all unitary and lower tier authorities to enable them to make discretionary payments to people who are entitled to Housing Benefit or the housing element of Universal Credit, but still have some rental costs left to pay. There are a growing number of people in this situation as private sector rents have increased, whilst the rate of benefit paid to people renting privately (called Local Housing Allowance) has been frozen since 2020.

43. Taking Cherwell as an example, the lowest quartile of private sector rents have increased from £750 to £873 per month in the last three years, an

increase of 16.4%<sup>7</sup>. However, the Local Housing Allowance (LHA) rates that can be paid in Cherwell are £648.22 for a one-bedroom property and £772.89 for a two bedroom property. A recent analysis of properties available for rent in Oxfordshire found that only 2 out of 50 were available within LHA rates.

44. In the same period, funding from government for Discretionary Housing Payments (DHP's) has reduced. The total funding provided to Oxfordshire has reduced from £1,425,335 in 2021/22 to £805,352 in 2023/24. As such the council has made matched the government funding for 2023/24 with an additional £805,532 so that the city and district councils can double their DHP budgets to increase their ability to meet the increased demand for this support. The amount of DHP awards varies greatly from case to case but it is estimated that this funding will enable an additional 375 awards to be made.
45. Each council maintains its own DHP policy which follows government guidance in this area. Typically payments are usually made for fixed periods of three to twelve months, with the scope to make further payments based on a review of circumstances, and subject to the availability of funding.
46. Within the Cost-of-Living programme, no expenditure is currently showing in this area as it makes sense for local authorities to exhaust their government allowance first as any surplus must be returned. However, the City and District Councils have the flexibility to spend the County Council allocation through to 2024/25.

#### **Oxfordshire Community Foundation Cost of Living grants**

47. In order to maximise the impact of programme spend, in 2022/23 an allocation of £100,000 was made to the Oxfordshire Community Foundation's (OCF) voluntary sector cost of living grant scheme, leveraging a total fund of £286,000. This supported grass roots organisations supporting the community experiencing financial pressures. A further contribution of £110,000 was agreed in 2023/24 in the first quarter of the year, increasing the total grant fund to £245,000.
48. The grant programme was informed by consultation conducted with the Voluntary and Community Services sector conducted early in 2023. This followed a round of grant funding in late 2022 and asked organisations to reflect on the challenges they were facing in supporting of people with the Cost-of-Living crisis. Key findings were as follows:
  - Organisations were facing their own challenges as fixed costs were taking up a larger proportion of funding
  - The cost-of-living crisis is leading to longer term issues such as mental health problems, embedded debt and increased isolation

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<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/housing/datasets/privaterentalmarketsummarystatisticsinengland>

- The need for food and debt advice are the most pressing needs, but these are connected to people's ability to manage their health, housing and general wellbeing
- More people are becoming dependant on the support provided by community organisations

49. The grant round was run over the summer so that funding was available for projects ahead of the coming winter. Over 200 applications were received, with 32 community organisations receiving funding of up to £10,000. Funded activity included Cost of Living support for vulnerable groups, community cohesion and social integration, and support for physical and mental health.

### **Longer term deprivation work**

50. The Partnerships and Delivery team are undertaking work to develop how the council can further support those experiencing deprivation in the medium and longer term, beyond the existing services already delivered by the Council and its partners. The Performance and Corporate Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee have engaged on many of these issues in recent months and therefore activity currently in development is summarised below to support the committee's work planning.

51. Firstly, research and design is underway to develop a fuller understand of the impact on, and experience of residents experiencing deprivation. This is being used to ensure that financial wellbeing and tackling deprivation is core to strategic initiatives including the revised Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy and the work of the Oxfordshire Inclusive Economy Partnership.

52. Data on deprivation will be collated to create a number of insight profiles which show how deprivation is experienced in different settings, building on the ward profile activity. The intention is to gain better understanding the drivers of deprivation to drive interventions and changes to service delivery. This work sits alongside and informs initiatives such as the Well Together Programme and the recommissioning of Advice Services.

53. Secondly, the Council has recently commissioned a short piece of work from the Centre for Local Economic Studies to develop insight and options for how we can more actively support local communities to build wealth and to share more widely the benefit of Oxfordshire's very strong economy. High impact approaches taken elsewhere have included promoting and supporting different ownership forms for business, progressive procurement of goods and services, making financial power work for local places (for example through ensuring the availability of social credit and banking services for all), socially productive use of assets and fair employment practices and labour market development. This approach is intended to build-on and accelerate work already in progress, for example through the Social Value policy and the Council's participation in the Oxfordshire Inclusive Economy Partnership.

54. Finally, in common with other large organisations with long-term presence in the county, the Council is reviewing its own role as an 'Anchor Institution' on how we contribute to prosperity and well-being in communities.

## **Financial, Legal, Equality & Inclusion and Sustainability Implications**

55. Financial, Legal, Equality & Inclusion and Sustainability implications of the 2023/24 Cost of Living Programme are set out in a report to Cabinet from March 2023 (see Background papers). There are no additional implications arising from the recommendations of this report.

ROBIN ROGERS, Programme Director (Partnerships & Delivery)

Appendix: National data on Cost-of-Living crisis (see below)

Background papers: [Cost of Living Support Measures](#), Measures, Report to Cabinet, 21 March 2023:

Contact Officer: Paul Wilding, Cost of Living Programme Manager, 07756 772085, paul.wilding@oxfordshire.gov.uk

November 2023

## **Appendix One – National data on Cost-of-Living crisis**

1. CPI peaked at 9.6% in Oct 22, but at 6.3%, remains much higher than the 1% figure from March 2021, and the Bank of England target of 2%. Although reducing, inflation is continuing to put additional pressure on resident's budgets, month on month.
2. Inflation for food and non-alcoholic drinks is much higher at 13.6%, though also falling from peak of 19.2% in March 2023 (the highest for 45 years)
3. The latest survey (Sept 23) also reveals that more than 4 in 10 (45%) of adults said they were buying less food when food shopping in the past two weeks.
4. According to more detailed analysis from the survey covering the period 8 February to 1 May 2023, 1 in 20 adults (5%) said they had run out of food in the past two weeks and been unable to afford more.
5. In October the energy price cap fell from £2,074 to £1,834 for the average household. This is the first time since April 2022 that the cap has been below £2,000. Part of the reason for the reduction is that Ofgem are basing the cap on reduced consumer consumption (7% for electricity and 4% for gas). Under the old methodology, the cap would be £1,923, and for customers using prepayment meters it is slightly higher at £1,949.
6. Among those who pay energy bills, around 4 in 10 (43%) reported that they were very or somewhat difficult to afford. This is the same as during a similar period last year (29 September to 9 October 2022).
7. Almost half (47%) of adults in Great Britain are using less fuel such as gas or electricity in their homes because of the rising cost of living.
8. However there is no £400 subsidy from government this year and people's resources are likely to be further depleted compared to this time last year due to persistently high living costs.

## Divisions Affected - All

### Cabinet 21<sup>st</sup> November 2023

## Business Services Transformation Programme Refocus

### Report by the Director of Finance

## RECOMMENDATION

1. **Cabinet is RECOMMENDED to:**
  - a. Approve the refocusing of the programme on the delivery of improvements to existing human resources (HR), finance, payroll and procurement functions and processes.
  - b. Approve that the programme does not progress the development of detailed requirements and a full business case to review delivery options for corporate support services and underpinning technology.
  - c. Approve the repurposing £1.23m of the existing approved £1.57m programme funding to deliver the refocused programme and return the remaining £345k to the Transformation Reserve.

## Executive Summary

2. This report provides an update on the progress of the Business Services Transformation Programme and seeks approval for a proposal to refocus, deliver improvements to existing HR, finance, payroll and procurement functions and processes and remain with Hampshire County Council's Integrated Business Centre (IBC).
3. This report also seeks approval for the repurposing of £1.23m of the existing Cabinet approved £1.57m programme funding for delivery of the programme to date and to plan and deliver an Improvement Stage. The £1.57m was previously agreed at Cabinet in April 2023 for programme resources to prepare detailed requirements for a transformation and procurement process.
4. Prior to completion of the Improvement Stage a review will be completed to assess progress and determine next steps, including delivery of further identified improvements and / or required Council preparations and involvement

in the IBC's planned upgrade to SAP S/4HANA (the up-to-date version of SAP), which is planned to complete by September 2025.

## Background

5. In 2015 the council entered a shared service arrangement that effectively outsourced its HR, finance, payroll and procurement support including the technology infrastructure via a partnership agreement with Hampshire County Council's IBC, which had already been established supporting other public sector bodies.
6. A Case for Change review was undertaken in Q4 2021/22. The analysis identified opportunities and drivers to move from the existing shared services partnership and informed a high-level options appraisal and outline business case, which was completed in March 2023.
7. In April 2023 Cabinet approved the development of detailed requirements and a business case to review delivery options for corporate support services and underpinning technology including HR, finance, payroll and procurement in order to deliver services more efficiently, modernise business processes and upgrade current IT systems. Funding of £1.57m was approved for programme resources to prepare requirements for a transformation and to deliver a potential procurement process.
8. Following Cabinet approval, the programme launched a Requirements Stage to review operating model options, capture requirements and develop a business case to inform a decision at Cabinet in November to commence a procurement process. During this activity factors emerged which led to a proposal to refocus the programme, remain with IBC for the time being, and to deliver improvements to existing functions and processes.
9. The emergent factors that resulted in the proposal to refocus the programme include:
  - Hampshire County Council indicated and have subsequently confirmed that their upgrade to the latest version of their corporate system (SAP S/4HANA) will be delivered much earlier than previously stated and will complete by September 2025. The earlier upgrade and the IBC's management of another partner's exit, both over the same period as this council's implementation project, would add considerable delivery risk for this programme.
  - Progressing the programme on its planned path would make the Council fully reliant on the IBC to complete their upgrade on time and to fully support required exit activities. Any slippage by the IBC would risk significant delay and additional costs for this programme.
  - Work completed on the business case so far indicated that:
    - (1) There is work to be completed in the longer term to establish a clear financial benefit from proceeding with a change and the implementation programme, which would require significant capital investment.

- (2) There are significant frustrations, inefficiencies and limitations with data and reporting, but the fundamentals of the system are sound (i.e staff and suppliers are being paid, customers are being invoiced and their payments received).
  - (3) Although the Council has a strong appetite to change, there needs to be a strong baseline of clear roles and responsibilities in use of the system and compliance with these before any new system is implemented.
10. A proposal to refocus the programme is now proposed with a closure of the Requirements Stage and, for the period until the end of November, on setting-up and planning an Improvement Stage.
11. Despite the refocus of the programme, the Council's ambition to improve HR, finance, payroll and procurement processes remains unchanged and continues to be reflected by the following Business Services Transformation programme vision statement.

*“Empowerment and accountability of the workforce through ownership and control of our data using best practice workflow self-service. Allowing the HR, finance and procurement services to focus on their key professional areas working with reliable and trusted data to inform decisions and reduce risk”.*

## **Programme Refocus**

12. As part of Delivering the Future Together, this programme will have a significant impact on the organisation and will help the Council become an Employer, Partner and Place Shaper of Choice. The programme's current focus is on validating, prioritising and planning the delivery of improvements, which were identified through the requirements analysis and from a managers' self-service time and satisfaction survey. The opportunities fall into three themes: People Change, Process Improvement and Data and Reporting and are summarised in Annex 1.
13. Following prioritisation and planning the programme will deliver the agreed scope of improvements within a 10-month Improvement Stage, which will complete by September 2024. At a high-level, the objectives of the Improvement Stage based on the scope of improvements currently under review will be:
  - To review and optimise the level of self-service and clarify the roles and responsibilities of managers, HR and Finance to increase productivity, drive consistency and best practice across the organisation.
  - Drive behaviour change and provide the required learning and support to enable managers to fulfil their responsibilities, improving the quality of financial, people management and data across the organisation.
  - Implement optimised standard solutions to increase productivity by replacing siloed directorate off-system manual workaround processes, for example approval workflows and managers' workarounds, which are used to track information off-system using spreadsheets.

- Improve access to management information and insights through dashboards and reports.
  - Cleanse agreed priority data and ensure its ongoing maintenance through effective data governance.
  - Through the above improvements, prepare the organisation for future change by developing its knowledge and ownership of processes and data.
14. The following high-level non-financial benefits are expected from the delivery of the improvements. Specific benefits will be identified, measured and tracked as part of the delivering the Improvement Stage.
- Increased manager productivity through time savings in navigating existing self-service processes.
  - Improved workforce experience and resilience as staff understand their self-service responsibilities and are supported in fulfilling them.
  - Better risk management through improved and standardised workflow controls across the organisation.
  - Increased quality of financial and people management enabled by improved data and management information.
15. Towards the end of the Improvement Stage, a review of improvements delivery status will be completed and next steps agreed. At that point it will be possible to assess the progress and likely timescales for completion of the other partner's IBC exit and IBC's own SAP upgrade project. For the latter project it will also be possible to determine this Council's required involvement.

## Financial Implications

16. Cabinet approved funding of £1.57m in April 2023 for resources to deliver the Requirements Stage of the programme, to be funded from the Transformation Reserve. Total forecast costs to deliver the programme so far and to continue delivery up to the end of November 2023 are £0.470m as shown in Table 1. The £97k costs shown in Table 1 were incurred in prior years and together with £32k revenue cost in 2023/24, relate to delivery of the initial outline business case.
17. Total forecast revenue costs to deliver the Improvement Stage from December 2023 to end of September 2024 are £0.756m as shown in Table 2, comprising £0.291m in 2023/24 and £0.465m in 2024/25.
18. The grand total forecast costs for the whole life of the programme until the completion of the Improvement Stage are £1.23m as shown in Table 3. The remaining £0.345m from the approved £1.57m programme budget will be returned to the Transformation Reserve.

Table 1 - Total Forecast Programme Costs to end November 2023 - £'000s

Item	Prior Years	2023/24	2024/25	Total
Programme staff costs	-	249	-	249
Supplier costs	-	124	-	124
<b>Total Revenue Costs</b>	-	<b>373</b>	-	<b>373</b>

Item	Prior Years	2023/24	2024/25	Total
Programme staff costs	56	-	-	56
Supplier costs	40	-	-	40
<b>Total Capital Costs</b>	<b>97</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>97</b>

	Prior Years	2023/24	2024/25	Total
<b>Total Costs</b>	<b>97</b>	<b>373</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>470</b>

Table 2 - Total Forecast Revenue Costs for Improvement Stage (December 2023 – September 2024) - £'000s

Item	Prior Years	2023/24	2024/25	Total
Programme staff costs	-	265	424	688
Contingency (10%)	-	26	42	68
<b>Total</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>291</b>	<b>465</b>	<b>756</b>

Table 3 – Grand Total Forecast Programme Costs - £'000s

Item	Prior Years	2023/24	2024/25	Total
Revenue costs to November	-	373	-	373
Revenue costs for Improve. Stage	-	291	465	756
<b>Total Revenue Costs</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>664</b>	<b>465</b>	<b>1,129</b>
<b>Total Capital costs</b>	<b>97</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>97</b>
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>97</b>	<b>664</b>	<b>465</b>	<b>1,226</b>

Comments checked by:  
Ian Dyson, Assistant Director of Finance (ian.dyson@oxfordshire.gov.uk)

## Legal Implications

19. There are no legal implications arising from this report.

Comments checked by:  
Bede Murtagh – Contracts Solicitor

Lorna Baxter  
Director of Finance

Annex 1: Summary of Improvement Opportunities

Background papers:

Outline Business Case Cabinet Report (April 2023) – A Programme for Transforming the Council's Enterprise Business Systems and Processes

Contact Officer:

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Transformation, 01865 816825,  
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October 2023

## Annex 1 – Summary of Improvement Opportunities

Requirements analysis and findings from a managers' IBC self-service time and satisfaction survey identified a range of improvement opportunities, which are summarised in the table below. These improvement opportunities are high-level and grouped into three themes: People Change, Process Improvement and Data and Reporting.

The programme is currently validating and prioritising these opportunities to develop a confirmed scope and delivery plan. The opportunities will then be delivered over the course of the Improvement stage.

Theme	Improvement Opportunities
People Change	<p>Deliver a holistic approach to driving behavioural change and providing the required learning and support to drive the following improvements:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Improve learning and guidance to support managers with simply and efficiently navigating finance and HR processes and systems, enabling them to be successful in fulfilling their responsibilities from initial induction and throughout their careers with the Council.</li> <li>2. Improve the quality of financial management with cost centre managers fully able to fulfil their responsibilities as part of optimising the end-to-end budget monitoring process (relates to opportunity 8).</li> <li>3. Improve organisational data quality with managers following the right standards and controls when making organisation structure changes in the system (relates to opportunity 11).</li> <li>4. Improve the consistency and effectiveness of the end-to-end customer journey for accessing support. Review the current support model of multiple separate channels (including local informal 'super-user' arrangements) for dealing with IBC, including the OCC finance and HR support arrangements. Options could include a central model to triage queries and deal directly with IBC, reducing the burden and unproductive time for managers.</li> </ol>
Process Improvement	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5. Review and optimise the level of manager self-service and clarify the roles and responsibilities of managers, Finance and HR to improve productivity and drive consistency and best practice across the organisation.</li> <li>6. Identify and implement improved standard solutions to replace existing siloed directorate workarounds, which are in place to compensate for limitations with the existing IBC processes (e.g. cost centre manager approvals off-system), to ensure appropriate controls are in place and to improve and deliver benefits for all directorates.</li> <li>7. Identify and implement improved standard solutions to deliver productivity benefit to managers and replace the current inefficient off-system manager self-service practices using spreadsheets, e.g. to manage purchase order approvals, track PO spend, track team availability, manage organisation data, keep track of training etc.</li> </ol>

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>8. Improve the quality of financial management through a review of the current budget planning and forecasting process end-to-end, identifying opportunities for greater automation and to enhance front-end reporting using tools to reduce managers' reliance on off-system spreadsheets.</li> <li>9. Increase efficiency through reviewing and exploring the opportunity to automate the current manual process for reconciling contracts with spend data.</li> <li>10. Improve the recruitment process by implementing a new replacement service to address the issues with the current provision.</li> <li>11. Improve controls around post creation and approval in making organisation structure changes. Review post creation process in context of planned recruitment process changes.</li> <li>12. Review the current workforce planning process and determine whether workforce planning can be implemented as a strategic initiative across the organisation using data and reports available from existing systems. Develop a solution to strategically plan resourcing and organisational development needs across the organisation.</li> <li>13. Develop a more formalised approach to performance management across the organisation as a strategic initiative to gain a better understanding of the talent pool and to feed into organisation development and workforce planning.</li> </ol>
Data & Reporting	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>14. Improve management information through access to dashboards and reports. Review requirements for improved HR and financial management information, including compliance reports to enable effective stewardship of the organisation. Assess tools available and the organisation's capabilities to deliver (e.g. Power BI), develop and agree an approach and plan.</li> <li>15. Improve the proactive management of the organisation's resources through the development of exception reports to provide insights on where actual performance deviates significantly from expected performance.</li> <li>16. Review and work through data cleanse items identified as high priority in advance of migration to S/4HANA and to deliver benefit for BAU (e.g. purge of incorrect vacant posts, duplicated suppliers).</li> <li>17. Implement a data governance model, improving and maintaining the quality of existing data and putting in place a structure for future data projects.</li> </ol>

Business Services Transformation Risk Register

No.	Risk	Mitigation
1	If there is a lack of resource capacity and competing priorities, there is a risk that Finance and HR leads / process owners are not available to fulfil their Improvement Stage responsibilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Service process owner responsibilities formalised and agreed.</li> <li>- Resource requirements including any backfill agreed as part of improvement plan.</li> </ul>
2	If there is a lack of service ownership of the change, there is a risk that improvements are not owned and led by Finance and HR in delivery and following transition into business as usual	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Finance and HR fully engaged in the change with clear roles and accountabilities.</li> <li>- Resource requirements to be agreed as part of improvement planning.</li> </ul>
3	If there is a lack of in-house knowledge for some functions (e.g. Purchase to Pay, HR Administration, Payroll), there is a risk that the Council's ability to work with IBC to improve transactional processes is limited.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Transformation Leads recruited with subject matter expertise.</li> <li>- Further mitigating actions to be agreed as part of improvement planning.</li> </ul>
4	If service managers do not have the influence to be able to change IBC processes, there is a risk that it is not possible to deliver change successfully in IBC processes in a timely fashion or at all	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Re-engagement required with IBC senior stakeholders to review governance arrangements to enable the Council to influence change.</li> </ul>
5	If there is a lack of understanding of the importance and use of data within processes, there is a risk of a lack of data quality and effective governance to maintain data quality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Clarify manager responsibilities, driving and supporting behaviour change to improve data quality.</li> <li>- Deliver agreed data cleansing and data governance through improvement stage.</li> </ul>
6	If there are competing priorities for IBC transactional teams, there is a risk that it is not possible to secure required support from IBC to support data cleansing activity in the required timescales	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Early communication of requirement for support from IBC during Improvement Planning.</li> </ul>
7	If there is a lack of communication and engagement to sell the new improvement plan, there is a risk of stakeholder disengagement due to dissatisfaction at the decision not to leave IBC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Positive and ongoing communication emphasising the improvements planned, delivery successes and their benefits.</li> </ul>

Business Services Transformation Risk Register

8	If there is a lack of dependency management at the portfolio level, there is a risk that there will be a lack of alignment between this programme and other change initiatives	Programme to be part of Employer of Choice portfolio. Dependency management at portfolio level with effective communication between programmes.
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## Divisions Affected – All

### Performance & Corporate Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee

10 November 2023

### Directorate Budget Pressures & Approach to Savings 2024/25 to 2026/27

### Report by the Director of Finance

#### RECOMMENDATION

1. The Performance & Corporate Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee is invited to consider and comment on:
  - Directorate revenue budget pressures 2024/25 to 2026/27.
  - The approach to savings for 2024/25.

#### Executive Summary

2. This report sets out budget pressures and the approach to savings that is expected to be taken for the period 2024/25 to 2026/27. It provides the opportunity for the Performance and Corporate Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee to comment on these.
3. The following annexes are attached to this report:
  - Annex 1 – directorate revenue budget pressures 2024/25 – 2026/27

#### Introduction

4. The Budget and Business Planning report to Cabinet on 17 October 2023 set out background to the council's existing Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) as well as a proposing the Budget and Business Planning process which will continue through the winter.
5. The report, which is available on the Cabinet agenda through the following link to the meeting, [Agenda for Cabinet on Tuesday, 17 October 2023](http://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk) (www.oxfordshire.gov.uk), includes on-going budget changes already agreed for 2024/25 – 2025/26 as well as the funding and other assumptions behind the existing plans. It also includes information about how the council intends to seek feedback through budget engagement and consultation and a timetable for the 2024/25 process.

6. Following the Autumn Statement which is expected to be announced on 22 November 2023, it is anticipated that the Government will announce individual local authority funding allocations in late December 2023 as part of the Provisional Local Government Finance Settlement. Information from the district councils about council tax and business rates funding will also be confirmed later in the process.
7. Performance and Corporate Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee is invited to consider and comment on the revenue budget pressures for 2024/25 – 2026/27. There will be a further opportunity to consider and comment on these, and any further changes made before then, at the next meeting on 8 December 2023 when detailed revenue savings and capital proposals and proposed changes to fees and charges will also be shared along with any updates on funding following the Autumn Statement.
8. The Committee's comments will be shared with Cabinet in January 2024, along with the outcome of the public consultation and engagement. This feedback will be taken into consideration by Cabinet in setting out their proposed revenue budget for 2024/25 and Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) to 2026/27.
9. In determining the final budget proposals to be included in the proposed budget for 2024/25 Cabinet will also consider the outcome of the Provisional Local Government Finance Settlement and other resources available through Council Tax and Business Rates notified by the district councils.

## **New Budget Proposals: Directorate Pressures for 2024/25 - 2026/27**

### **Background**

10. The Business Management & Monitoring Report to Cabinet in September 2023 set out that as at the end of July 2023 directorates were forecasting an overspend of £17.4m (3.0%) in 2023/24. After taking account of additional interest on balances and the use of funding held in contingency and the COVID-19 reserve, the overall forecast expenditure would be £8.5m higher than the budget. The next Business Management & Monitoring Report, based on the forecast position at the end of September 2023, will be considered by Cabinet in November 2023.
11. The forecast overspend reflects a more challenging position for 2023/24 than anticipated when the budget was set in February 2023 as well as the continuing impact of the activity that contributed to the overspend of £13.4m in 2022/23. Combined with issues in the local and national economy, including inflation and workforce shortages, this has increased the risk to the financial position for the council. At the same time, these factors have made it much more challenging to forecast activity and expenditure particularly where services are demand led.
12. The on-going impact of underlying pressures in Children's Services which

contributed to the overspend in 2022/23 remains a significant challenge in 2023/24. These pressures are driven by a combination of care placements costs, staffing (particularly the reliance on agency staff to cover vacancies) and Home to School Transport.

13. The report to Cabinet in October 2023 explains that planned directorate expenditure budgets were matched to anticipated funding in 2045/25 assuming the maximum council tax increase of 4.99% and estimated changes to grant funding.
14. The net council funded budget for each directorate and changes that are already planned to create the budget for 2024/25 based in on the current MTFS agreed in February 2023 are summarised in the table below. The changes agreed as part of the 2024/25 Budget & Business Planning Process, including the pressures set out below, will be added to this starting point.

	2023/24 Budget (*)	Add Planned Changes in current MTFS	Indicative Budget 2024/25	Change in Budget
	£m	£m	£m	%
Adult Services	228.6	21.0	249.6	9%
Children's Services	171.3	9.1	180.4	5%
Environment & Place	75.5	0.1	75.6	0%
Public Health & Community Safety	32.3	0.7	33.0	2%
Resources	71.6	-3.5	68.1	-5%
Inflation to allocate		2.9	2.9	
<b>Directorate Total</b>	<b>579.4</b>	<b>30.2</b>	<b>609.6</b>	<b>5%</b>

(\*) 4.5% budgeted pay inflation for 2023/24 has been allocated to directorates in these totals. This will be confirmed once the award is agreed nationally and will be increased using funding held in contingency if the award agreed is higher than 4.5%.

15. Over the summer directorates were asked to assess the cost of service plans and likely demand/costs, taking into account the on-going impact of activity and pressures in 2023/24 and anticipated changes to inflation, and compare anticipated costs to the planned budget available for 2024/25. As a result of this exercise directorates have identified pressures of £24.5m. These increase by a further £5.3m in 2025/26. An indicative budget for 2026/27 will be created as part of the Budget & Business Planning process.

### Proposed Budget Pressures

16. The detailed changes making up the proposed increases for each directorate are included in Annex 1 and summarised in the table below. 2026/27 is a new year that will be added to the Medium Term Financial Strategy as part of the Budget & Business Planning Process.

Directorate	2024/25 £m	2025/26 £m	2026/27 (New Year) £m	Total £m
Adult Services	4.2	1.2	12.1	17.5
Children's Services	14.6	3.5	-1.0	17.0
Environment & Place	3.5	0.2	-0.6	3.1
Public Health & Community Safety	0.3	0.3	0.0	0.6
Resources & Law & Governance	1.9	0.1	0.0	2.0
<b>Directorate Total</b>	<b>24.5</b>	<b>5.3</b>	<b>10.5</b>	<b>40.3</b>
Pay Inflation	2.4			2.4
Contingency	4.0			4.0
<b>Total Pressures</b>	<b>30.9</b>	<b>5.3</b>	<b>10.5</b>	<b>46.7</b>

17. In addition to the directorate increases set out above pay inflation will also impact on directorate budgets. Based on the anticipated increase in the National Living Wage from 1 April 2024 it is unlikely that the 2.5% increase assumed in the existing plan will be sufficient so funding to increase the assumed increase in pay inflation to at least 4.0% will need to be added to the budget for 2024/25. The estimated pressure of £2.4m after taking account of £2.1m funding for inflation from 2024/25 will also need to be funded along with a requirement to top – up the contingency budget held for risk by at least £4.0m.

#### Adult Services

18. The inflationary effect of the increase in the National Living Wage from April 2024 and the Consumer Price Index, which remains higher than anticipated when the budget was set, is estimated to be £2.3m higher than the existing funding built into the budget for 2024/25. The actual increase in the National Living Wage is expected to be announced by the government in late 2023.
19. The recent Census also confirms Oxfordshire has a growing and ageing population, which will continue to increase demand on services. £1.5m additional funding is proposed to be added to the budget to reflect additional demographic and demand pressure.

#### Children's Services

20. Pressures for different elements of the services within the directorate are summarised in the table below.

	2024/25 £m	2025/26 £m	2026/27 (New Year) £m	Total £m
Education	1.5	0.0	0.0	1.5
Home to School Transport	3.4	0.4	2.5	6.3
Social Care: On-going impact of 2023/24 demand and inflation pressures	8.2	2.3	-4.2	6.3
New service investments	1.5	0.8	0.7	3.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>14.6</b>	<b>3.5</b>	<b>-1.0</b>	<b>17.0</b>

21. Pressures for Education include £1.0m on-going funding for additional capacity in the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities service. A further £0.4m on-going funding is needed to support school improvement and replace grant funding which is expected to end. Funding of £0.1m will be used to support the implementation of the Education Commission recommendations.
22. Home to School transport is forecast to overspend by £2.8m in 2023/24. This has arisen from higher activity for Special Educational Needs and Post 16 transport than was budgeted for and the impact of rolling annual tenders for bus routes and the impact of a local contractor entering administration during the year. The on-going impact is estimated to be a pressure of £2.8m from 2024/25 with a further increase of £0.6m relating to anticipated growth in the number of pupils with Education Health & Care Plans and price increases.
23. The on-going impact of demand and inflation pressures continuing from 2023/24 is estimated to be £8.2m in 2024/25. This increases by a further £2.3m in 2025/26 and is then expected to reduce as a result of the actions being undertaken to manage demand over the medium term.
24. Changes to future pressures relating to the Dedicated Schools Grant for High Needs will be shared later in the Budget & Business Planning process.

#### Environment & Place

25. As noted in the Business Management & Monitoring Report to Cabinet in September 2023, the cost of disposing of Persistent Organic Pollutants is higher than the £0.2m estimated cost built into the budget from 2023/24 and there is an on-going additional pressure of £0.2m. Other waste pressures relating to unsorted waste and site repairs are estimated at £0.6m and there are also further pressures of £0.5m within Environment & Circular Economy.
26. Within Transport & Infrastructure there are £0.7m pressures associated with policy development for area travel plans, Heavy Goods Vehicle (HGV) studies and the development of a multi modal transport model.
27. There is also a proposed one – off pressure of £0.2m in 2024/25 to develop a sustainable travel to school strategy.

### Public Health & Community Safety

28. Public Health activity will continue to be managed within the ring-fenced grant funding.
29. An additional £0.3m funding towards the cost of replacing Oxfordshire Fire & Rescue vehicles, which increases to £0.6m on-going from 2025/26, is proposed to be added to the existing annual revenue contribution of £0.8m.

### Resources and Law & Governance

30. Subject to agreement by Council on 7 November 2023 there is an anticipated pressure of up to £0.2m relating to the revised structure and pay scales for the council's Senior Leadership team. Additional contributions will be sought from existing council budgets so that the pressure is reduced as far as possible.
31. Pressures in the Communications Strategy & Insight Team relate to funding for capacity to support business change and the redevelopment of the council's website. Most of the pressure will be met through removing existing posts which are currently vacant.
32. A £0.1m pressure relates to the appointment of an area coroner in accordance with a recommendation from the United Kingdom Chief Coroner.
33. £0.6m relates to an increase in external audit costs and an increase in the capacity and cost of the Finance team that is required to support the organisation and to satisfy the requirement for the Chief Financial Officer to lead and direct a finance function that is resourced to be fit for purpose. It is anticipated that most of this pressure can be met through additional interest on balances generated as a result of higher interest rates.
34. £0.4m relates to the net cost of the Schools' Catering Service where inflationary pressures means the cost has increased compared to the income received. A review of the service to assess how this can be managed is being undertaken and the outcomes will be included in updates later in the process.

### **Approach to new budget savings**

35. Given the scale of the £19.1m overspend for Children's Social Care in 2022/23, the time needed for the actions taken to date to have an impact on demand and the urgent need to address the shortfalls in market capacity, the outcomes from a comprehensive review of the vision and strategy for Children's Services will be set out in a new Financial Strategy. The focus of the Strategy will be to set out how the improvements achieved in 2023/24 are continued and grown while also applying the same rigor and focus to managing the market, the availability of social work staff, the escalation in rates, the challenge of greater complexity and encouraging joint partnership work to address Continuing Healthcare (CHC) needs and resources.
36. Adult Services are continuing to support people in Oxfordshire to live well in their community, remaining fit and healthy for as long as possible. Through taking the Oxfordshire Way approach the aim is to manage future demand for care and costs.
37. Where possible funding held in reserves will be used to support activity in Environment & Place. Other pressures will be managed by re-prioritising within existing budget provision. While the aim is to use existing budgets to support pressures this will require active management and reduce flexibility so there is a risk that the ability to do this may be impacted by other pressures that arise during the year or changes to current assumptions.
38. As well as the on-going impact of the savings that will be proposed for 2024/25, further savings including a requirement to manage staffing capacity and contract activity within the available resources are expected to be needed from 2025/26 to balance to the funding available and to ensure that the council is sustainable in the medium term. The scale of the savings required will require the council to transform and do things differently in future. Options, which will include the outcomes from actions to transform the council to become employer, partner and place shaper of choice are being developed and will be shared as part of the Budget & Business Planning Process for 2025/26.

### **Business and Budget Planning Process**

39. Detailed revenue savings and capital proposals, along with any updates to the pressures included in this report will be considered by Performance and Corporate Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 8 December 2023 along with any updates on funding following the Autumn Statement.
40. Updates to funding and any changes to proposals known by the end of December 2023 will be published on 11 January 2024 and considered by Performance and Corporate Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 19 January 2024. Comments from scrutiny as well as feedback from the public engagement and consultation will be considered by Cabinet ahead of proposing their budget in late January 2024.

41. The Council meeting to agree the 2024/25 revenue budget, medium term financial plan and capital programme will take place on 20 February 2024.

## **Risk Management**

42. The statutory report of the Chief Financial Officer required under Section 25 of the Local Government Act 2002, which forms part of the suite of papers considered by Council in setting the budget each February, includes a section assessing the key financial risks.
43. Risks and uncertainties for 2024/25 and the medium term will be assessed and updated as part of the Budget and Business Planning process.

## **Equality & Inclusion Implications**

44. The Equality Act 2010 imposes a duty on local authorities that, when making decisions of a strategic nature, decision makers must exercise 'due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination... advance equality of opportunity... and foster good relations.'
45. A high level assessment of the broad impact of the revenue budget proposals will be included as part of the published information for Performance & Corporate Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 8 December 2023. More detailed impact assessments, which will take account of feedback from the public consultation and from scrutiny, will accompany Cabinet's proposed budget in January 2024.

## **Financial implications**

46. The Council is required by law to set a balanced budget for 2024/25 before 1 March 2024. Alongside this, there is a requirement under Section 25 of the Local Government Finance Act 2003 for the Chief Finance Officer to prepare a statement on the robustness of the budget estimates and the adequacy of reserves. This report is part of the process to achieve these objectives.

Comments checked by:  
Lorna Baxter, Director of Finance

## **Legal implications**

47. The Council is required under the Localism Act 2011 to set a council tax requirement for the authority. This report provides information which, when taken together with the future reports up to January 2024, will lead to the council tax requirement being agreed in February 2024, together with a budget for 2024/25, two-year medium term financial strategy and ten - year capital programme.

48. The Council has a fiduciary duty to Council Tax payers, which means it must consider the prudent use of resources, including control of expenditure, financial prudence in the short and long term, the need to strike a fair balance between the interests of the Council Tax payers and ratepayers and the community's interest in adequate and efficient services and the need to act in good faith in relation to compliance with statutory duties and exercising statutory powers.

Comments checked by:

Anita Bradley

Director of Law & Governance and Monitoring Officer

**Lorna Baxter, Director of Finance**

**Annex:**

Annex 1 – revenue budget pressures 2024/25 – 2026/27

Contact Officer: Kathy Wilcox, Head of Corporate Finance

November 2023



## Summary

<b>New Budget Pressures by Directorate</b>	<b>2024/25</b>	<b>2025/26</b>	<b>2026/27</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>2024/25 Pressures as % of Net Budget</b>
	<b>£000</b>	<b>£000</b>	<b>£000</b>	<b>£000</b>	
Adult Services	4,183	1,237	12,100	<b>17,520</b>	1.7%
Children's Services	14,572	3,506	-1,029	<b>17,049</b>	8.1%
Environment & Place	3,553	176	-641	<b>3,088</b>	4.7%
Public Health & Community Safety	323	309	0	<b>632</b>	1.0%
Resources & Law & Governance	1,860	124	28	<b>2,012</b>	2.7%
<b>Total Directorate Budget Pressures</b>	<b>24,491</b>	<b>5,352</b>	<b>10,458</b>	<b>40,301</b>	<b>4.0%</b>
Pay Inflation	2,400			<b>2,400</b>	
Top up Contingency	4,000			<b>4,000</b>	
<b>Total Budget Pressures</b>	<b>30,891</b>	<b>5,352</b>	<b>10,458</b>	<b>46,701</b>	<b>5.1%</b>

### Adult Services

Ref	Description	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	Total
		£000	£000	£000	£000
2025ASC587	Demographic and Demand Pressure - based on estimated population growth	1,500	-700	0	800
2025ASC597	Changes to the cost of care packages funded by the council	2,343	1,937	0	4,280
2025ASC680	Pressure related to retaining additional capacity in Social Care Finance provided to support improvements in debt recovery, financial assessment and payment timeliness. See also 2025F&P972 additional funding for capacity in the Income Team in Finance.	340	0	0	340
	<b>Demography and Inflation (Add new year to MTFS)</b>				
2025ASC590	Demand increases resulting from population growth	0	0	6,600	6,600
2025ASC601	Increases to the cost of care packages funded by the council.	0	0	5,500	5,500
	<b>Total New Budget Pressures</b>	<b>4,183</b>	<b>1,237</b>	<b>12,100</b>	<b>17,520</b>

### Children's Services

Ref	Description	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	Total
		£000	£000	£000	£000
	<b>Education</b>				
2025CS701	Investment in additional capacity in the SEND service	1,000	0	0	1,000
2025CS711	School improvement - additional capacity and replacement of grant funding	400	0	0	400
2025CS700	Funding to support implementation of Education Commission recommendations	100	0	0	100
	<b>Total Education</b>	<b>1,500</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1,500</b>
	<b>Home to School Transport</b>				
2025CS-HN712	On-going impact of increases in the number of Education Health & Care Plans (EHCPs) and post - 16 travel & price increases following on from 2023/24.	2,800	0	0	2,800
2025CS-HN713	Future increases in the number of EHCPs and Post 16 travel and price increase impacting on demand and cost of transport.	600	400	2,500	3,500
	<b>Total Home to School Transport</b>	<b>3,400</b>	<b>400</b>	<b>2,500</b>	<b>6,300</b>
	<b>Social Care</b>				
2025CS787	Demand and inflation pressures continuing from 2023/24 (full year effect)	8,223	2,274	-4,237	6,260
	<b>Subtotal Demand and Inflation</b>	<b>8,223</b>	<b>2,274</b>	<b>-4,237</b>	<b>6,260</b>
	<b>New Service Investments (supporting the Financial Strategy)</b>				
2025CS790/1/3	Recruitment & Retention Strategy	949	832	708	2,489
2025CS792	Funding for technological improvements enabling data analysis and insight to help manage demand	500	0	0	500
	<b>Subtotal New Service Investments</b>	<b>1,449</b>	<b>832</b>	<b>708</b>	<b>2,989</b>
	<b>Total New Budget Pressures</b>	<b>14,572</b>	<b>3,506</b>	<b>-1,029</b>	<b>17,049</b>

## Environment & Place

Ref	Description	2024/25 £000	2025/26 £000	2026/27 £000	Total £000
	<b>Highways &amp; Operations</b>				
2025EP583	Home to School Transport Digital Contract Management System - Previously Agreed Savings Not Achievable	650	150	0	<b>800</b>
2025EP588	Increased Parking Service operational and maintenance costs	295	380	200	<b>875</b>
2025EP598	Increased drawdown from Parking Reserve to support increased maintenance and operational costs	-295	-380	-200	<b>-875</b>
2025EP622	Increased highway maintenance activity (additional funding for potholes)	650	100	50	<b>800</b>
	<b>Total Highways &amp; Operations</b>	<b>1,300</b>	<b>250</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>1,600</b>
	<b>Planning, Environment &amp; Climate Change</b>				
2025EP641	Persistent Organic Pollutants - a change in the law means the council has to fund the cost of shredding, transporting and incinerating domestic soft seating as landfill disposal is no longer permitted.	200	0	0	<b>200</b>
2025EP647	Resources to write circular economy strategy	30	-30	0	<b>0</b>
2025EP692	Various pressures associated with service areas within Environment & Circular Economy	495	-115	-123	<b>257</b>
2025EP694	Household Waste Recycling Centres (HWRC): unsorted waste and essential site repair pressures	623	-114	0	<b>509</b>
2025EP645	Take action in 2024/25 to reduce the future cost of closed landfill site monitoring	10	-20	0	<b>-10</b>
	<b>Total Planning, Environment &amp; Climate Change</b>	<b>1,358</b>	<b>-279</b>	<b>-123</b>	<b>956</b>
	<b>Transport &amp; Infrastructure</b>				
2025EP654	Create Sustainable Travel to School strategy	200	-200	0	<b>0</b>
2025EP744	Pressures associated with policy development for area travel plans, HGV studies and Multi Modal transport model	695	405	-568	<b>532</b>
	<b>Total Transport &amp; Infrastructure</b>	<b>895</b>	<b>205</b>	<b>-568</b>	<b>532</b>
	<b>Total New Budget Pressures</b>	<b>3,553</b>	<b>176</b>	<b>-641</b>	<b>3,088</b>

### Public Health & Community Safety

Ref	Description	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	Total
		£000	£000	£000	£000
	<b>Community Safety</b>				
2025CSafety670	Vehicle Renewals - increase revenue contribution to reflect increases in the cost of vehicles.	273	359	0	632
2025CSafety754	Cultural Development Work	50	-50	0	0
	<b>Total Community Safety</b>	<b>323</b>	<b>309</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>632</b>
	<b>Public Health</b>	0	0	0	0
	<b>Total New Budget Pressures</b>	<b>323</b>	<b>309</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>632</b>

### Resources and Law & Governance

Ref	Description	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	Total
		£000	£000	£000	£000
	<b>Corporate Services</b>				
2025Corp973	Revised structure and pay scales for the council's Strategic Leadership Team (pending approval by Council on 7 November 2023). Additional contributions will be sought from existing council budgets so that the pressure is reduced as far as possible.	209	28	28	265
	<b>Total Corporate Services</b>	<b>209</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>265</b>
	<b>Communications, Strategy &amp; Insight</b>				
2025CSI531	Recruitment for a new Head of Business Change post	94	0	0	94
2025CSI532	Reorganise existing structure to fund two new posts for forward planning and business support for the council's leadership meetings	93	0	0	93
2025CSI533	Reorganise existing structure to fund two new posts in the Digital Content team to lead and support the redevelopment of the council's website	145	0	0	145
	<b>Total Communications, Strategy &amp; Insight</b>	<b>332</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>332</b>
	<b>Culture &amp; Customer Experience</b>				
2025C&CE529	Appointment of an Area Coroner in accordance with a recommendation from the UK Chief Coroner	140	96	0	236
	<b>Total Culture &amp; Customer Experience</b>	<b>140</b>	<b>96</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>236</b>
	<b>Finance &amp; Procurement</b>				
2025F&P698	Increase in external audit costs	135	0	0	135
2025F&P717	Additional Finance capacity needed to support the organisation to transform and to ensure that the S151 officer is able to lead and direct a finance function that is resourced to be fit for purpose.	450	0	0	450
2025F&P972	Additional capacity for Adult Services debt recovery	60	0	0	60
	<b>Total Finance &amp; Procurement</b>	<b>645</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>645</b>
	<b>Human Resources &amp; Organisational Development</b>				
2025HROD677	Funding for lone working safety software & app	52	0	0	52
2025HROD796	Recruitment: Cost of applicant tracking system	70	0	0	70
	<b>Total Human Resources &amp; Organisational Development</b>	<b>122</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>122</b>
	<b>Property, Investment &amp; Facilities Management</b>				
2025PI&FM549	Schools Catering Service inflationary pressures	412	0	0	412
	<b>Total Property, Investment &amp; Facilities Management</b>	<b>412</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>412</b>
	<b>Total New Budget Pressures</b>	<b>1,860</b>	<b>124</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>2,012</b>

## **PERFORMANCE & CORPORATE SERVICES OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 10 NOVEMBER 2023**

### **Business Management & Monitoring Report**

#### **Report by the Director of Finance**

#### **RECOMMENDATION**

1. **The Performance & Corporate Services Overview & Scrutiny Committee is RECOMMENDED to**

Consider the position on performance, finance and risk set out in the Business Management and Monitoring Report as at the end of July 2023 considered by Cabinet on 19 September 2023.

#### **Executive Summary**

2. The Business Management & Monitoring Report sets out updates on the performance measures contained in the council's Outcomes Framework for 2023/23 as well as strategic risk and budget information for the council. The report also includes periodic updates on strategies and action plans contributing to the council's priorities and [Strategic Plan](#).
3. The report to Cabinet in September 2023, which is based on the position at the end of July 2023 is attached as Annex 1 and includes:
  - Business Management & Monitoring Report (July 2023)
  - Performance as at July 2023
  - Finance as at July 2023
  - Digital Inclusion Strategy
  - Food Strategy Action Plan
4. The report to Cabinet in September 2023 provides the latest position; the next date of data publication is on 13 November 2023, after this meeting. The report includes an overview in the change in the forecast compared to May 2023 and the movement in the performance measures since June 2023.

#### **Financial Implications**

5. There are no financial implications arising directly from this report. Any implications arising from the position set out in each of the reports have been

considered by Cabinet and updates will be provided in future reports or through the Budget & Business Planning process for 2024/25.

Comments checked by:

Kathy Wilcox, Head of Financial Strategy  
Kathy.Wilcox@Oxfordshire.gov.uk

## Legal Implications

6. There are no legal implications arising from this report.

Comments checked by:

Paul Grant, Head of Legal  
[Paul.Grant@oxfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:Paul.Grant@oxfordshire.gov.uk)

Lorna Baxter  
Director of Finance

Annex 1 Business Management & Monitoring Report to Cabinet in  
September 2023

Background papers: Nil

Contact Officer: Kathy Wilcox, Head of Financial Strategy  
Louise Tustian, Head of Insight and Corporate Programmes

November 2023

## **CABINET REPORT**

### **BUSINESS MANAGEMENT AND MONITORING REPORT**

**July 2023**

**Report by the Director of Finance**

#### **RECOMMENDATION**

**1. The Cabinet is RECOMMENDED to**

- a) note the report and annexes.
- b) approve the virement in Annex 2a.
- c) note the use of £0.5m one – off funding (over the next two years) held in the COVID-19 reserve to further extend capacity needed within the Complaints and Freedom of Information (FOI) team within the Customer Service Centre.

#### **Executive Summary**

2. The business management reports are part of a suite of performance, risk and budget documents which set out our 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.
3. This report presents the July 2023 performance, risk, and finance position for the council.
4. Further information is provided in the following annexes to the report:

Annex A: Performance as at July 2023

Annex B: Finance as at July 2023

Annex C: Digital Inclusion Strategy

Annex D: Food Strategy Action Plan

5. The performance section of this report concentrates on performance exceptions (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**

6. The Outcomes Framework for 2023/24 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.

7. As at the end of July 2023 the indicators were rated as follows:

Reporting Period	Green		Amber		Red		Monitoring only/Data Unavailable		Total
Monthly	27	57%	8	17%	7	15%	5	11%	47

Table 1: Summary of July 2023 performance for all measures. RAG = Green = meets or exceeds target, Amber = misses target by narrow margin and Red = misses target by significant margin.

8. A total of 47 measures reported in July 2023 (Table 1):  
 27 (57%) of the measures were reported as Green (meeting or exceeding target) in July.  
 Eight (17%) were rated as Amber (misses target by narrow margin), of which six were Amber or Red for 2+ months.  
 Seven (15%) were rated as Red (misses target by a significant margin).
9. This bi-monthly Cabinet report is the second of 23/24. The table (Table 2) below compares monthly measures for the 2023/2024 reporting year, please note the numbers of reported measures fluctuates throughout the year.

Reporting Month	Green		Amber		Red		Monitoring Only/ Data Unavailable		Total
April 2023	12	38%	5	16%	4	12%	11	34%	32*
May 2023	27	61%	6	14%	4	9%	7	16%	44
June 2023	17	52%	6	18%	4	12%	6	18%	33*
July 2023	27	57%	8	17%	7	15%	5	11%	47

Table 2: Comparison of monthly reporting measures for Financial Year 2023/24. \*April and June 2023 do not include measures from priority OCC11 (finance).

10. Table 3 lists the six measures reporting as Red at the end of July 2023. Full details can be found in Annex A.

Performance measures reporting Red for July 2023 (Six Measures)
OCC05.03 91Km (2%) of the highway to be treated.
OCC11.01 Overall forecast revenue variance across the Council
OCC11.02 Achievement of planned savings.
OCC11.03 General balances are forecast to remain at or above the risk assessed level
OCC11.04 Directorates deliver services and achieve planned performance within budget.
OCC11.11 Debt requiring impairment – Adult Social Care Contribution debtors.

Table 3: Red RAG Status Measures July 2023 Reporting Period

11. This table indicates the direction of travel of measures compared to June 2023.

Status changes – June 2023 to July 2023	
Red to Green	None
Amber to Green	OCC10.04 First contact resolution for customer enquiries received by the Customer Service Centre. OCC11.09 Invoice Collection rate – Corporate debtors.
Red to Amber	OCC07.05 The percentage of children in residential care.
Green to Amber	OCC09.02 Participation in innovation funding bids or new projects in support of Living Oxfordshire.
Amber to Red	None
Green to Red	OCC05.03 91 KM (2%) of the highway to be treated.

	<p><b>OCC11.01</b> Overall forecast revenue variance across the Council</p> <p><b>OCC11.03</b> General balances are forecast to remain at or above the risk assessed level</p> <p><b>OCC11.04</b> Directorates deliver services and achieve planned performance within agreed budget.</p>
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Table 4: Change in Performance across June 2023 to July 2023.

## Performance Exceptions

**12.** 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 13 exceptions, six measures that have a Red rating and the seven measures that have reported an Amber rating for 2+ months.

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

This priority has two measures being reported in July 2023: one is measured as Amber the other is reporting as Green.



Figure 1: Priority OCC01 Monthly performance for 2023/24 financial year

Measure:	June Status:	July Status:	Director:
OCC01.07: Total % of household waste which is reused, recycled or composted	Amber	Amber	<b>Bill Cotton</b>

Table 5: Priority OCC01 Measure Exceptions - July 2023

**OCC01.07:** Waste performance is reported a month in arrears and the figure reported is the forecast end of year performance for 2023/24. Defra's most recent published statistics for Waste Disposal Authorities for 2021/22 confirmed Oxfordshire first for the overall percentage of waste reused, recycled or composted with a recycling rate of 58.2%, compared to Devon in second place at 55.1%, and Surrey 3rd at 54.4%. However, the indicator is below target because recycling rates have plateaued for some time despite continued behavioural change campaigns and encouraging residents to use the exiting recycling collections better. A step change is needed to meet Oxfordshire Joint Municipal Waste Management Strategy targets, which can only be made by the district councils and OCC acting together. Government waste policy changes are expected that could have a significant impact, but these have been repeatedly delayed by Defra. The District Councils are unable to commit investment in significant changes in collection services until they have clarity on what the Government will mandate. This is a national issue affecting all local authorities. There has been some progress. In January 2023 Defra published its consultation response on introducing a Deposit Return Scheme (DRS) for drinks containers from October 2025. However, in July Defra announced the delay of Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) for packaging until October 2025 to avoid the risk of causing inflationary pressures. This will allow more time for preparation and Defra are continuing to engage with the public sector and manufacturers on the scheme details. Defra also confirmed that implementation of consistent collections changes are deferred until after the introduction of EPR. There has been no announcement of what changes will be required. In the meantime, the national waste industry bodies continue to lobby on this issue, and locally campaign work to inform residents and encourage behaviour change is continuing including this summer a door knocking campaign on food waste recycling

across the county.

#### 14. Priority OCC04: Support carers and the social care system

This priority has eight measures being reported in July 2023: The performance RAG ratings are as follows; One measure is reporting as Red, One as an Amber, four as Green and two as monitoring only.



Figure 2: Priority OCC04 Monthly performance for 2023/24 financial year

Measure:	June Status:	July Status:	Director:
OCC04.04 % of residents aged under 65 receiving ASC who manage their care by using a direct payment	Amber	Amber	Karen Fuller
OCC04.05 % of older residents who receive long term care and are supported to live in their own home	Amber	Amber	Karen Fuller

Table 5: Priority OCC04 Measure Exceptions - July 2023

**OCC04.04:** Performance remains in line with the national position. Fewer than 20 people would need to transfer to direct payments in the year to be on target. There are 3 key actions to stabilise this measure; Review of individual team performance at the monthly performance board, The Adult Social Care forum asks if a Direct Payment has been considered for each new service recipient and we use this data to understand barriers to uptake of direct payments. Increased communications to teams to actively promote direct payments.

**OCC04.05:** The number of older people supported to live at home continues to increase, as does the number of hours of support provided overall. Performance is marginally below the 60% target, but this is not a significant concern as some fluctuation is expected. The number of older people supported to live at home has grown by 3% in the year so far.

#### 15. Priority OCC05: Invest in an inclusive, integrated, and sustainable transport network

This priority has one measure being reported in July 2023: the measure has a Red performance rating.



Figure 2: Priority OCC05 Monthly performance for 2023/24 financial year

Measure:	June Status:	July Status:	Director:
OCC05.03 91 KM (2%) of the highway to be treated	Green	Red	Bill Cotton

Table 6: Priority OCC05 Measure Exceptions - July 2023

**OCC05.03:** This is reporting as red for July however Green (on track) forecasted for the YTD position. Total planned surfacing for the year remains sufficient to meet the target and this is

supported by YTD actuals being broadly consistent with the YTD Target. In period target shortfall is due to refinement of programme delivery dates for operational reasons.

### 16. Priority OCC07: Create opportunities for children and young people to reach their full potential

This priority has seven measures being reported in July 2023: The RAG ratings are reported as follows; three Green measures, two Amber measures and two monitoring only.



Figure 4: Priority OCC07 Monthly performance for 2023/24 financial year

Measure:	June Status:	July Status:	Director:
<b>OCC07.03</b> Number of multi-agency strength & needs assessments completed in Oxfordshire	Amber	Amber	Anne Coyle
<b>OCC07.05</b> The percentage of children in residential care	Red	Amber	Anne Coyle

Table 7: Priority OCC07 Measure Exceptions - July 2023

**OCC07.03:** A target of 7,500 has been agreed by the children's trust for the year. Last year 3,599 early help assessments were shared with the council. The 7,500 target will need this figure to double. The figures in the four months of this year are 2.4% higher than the same period last year. A new Assistant Director post is being recruited to lead on this work with partners.

**OCC07.05:** The proportion of children supported in residential care home placements has decreased by 1% in the month, against a backdrop of 46 fewer children we care for since March 2023. Our priorities for the year include converting OCC building to provide 11 beds of supported accommodation for 16-17 Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASC) Launching a 16+ supported housing framework in July 2023. Uplift fostering fees in line with government recommendations of 12%. To increase number of in-house foster carers through targeted campaigns. Commissioning the following services for Children & Young People (CYP) with complex needs. 4 solo beds within Oxfordshire or surrounding LA areas. Setting up two solo / small homes under the DfE programme to be run by OCC. Changing an existing children's home with Homes 2 Inspire to a solo / small children's home. Increasing in-house children's homes placements by 16. Increasing the cross regional block contract by 3 beds. Commissioning new solo bed contract in Oxfordshire or surrounding LA areas.

### 17. Priority OCC10: Running the business - Customer Contact

This priority has nine measures being reported in July 2023: The RAG status are as follows; seven Green measures, one Amber measure and one Red measure.



Figure 5: Priority OCC10 Monthly performance for 2023/24 financial year

Measure:	June Status:	July Status:	Director:
<b>OCC10.05</b> The percentage of customer telephone calls abandoned at the customer service centre.	<b>Amber</b>	<b>Amber</b>	<b>Mark Haynes</b>

Table 8: Priority OCC10 Measure Exceptions - July 2023

**OCC10.05:** It is pleasing to note that the percentage of abandoned calls reduced to the lowest figure this year. A reduction from 17% in June to 11% in July was a noticeable improvement. The number of calls offered (total demand including those calls that we did not answer) in July 2023 decreased by 13.5% compared to June 2023. When compared to July 2022, they are down 6.6%. A total of 30,157 contacts was received during July, which was down 12% compared to June (34,265). This consists of 5,296 outbound calls, 28 webchat and social media enquiries, and 12,624 emails. Across the Neighbourhood and Communities area of the Customer Service Centre, we have successfully filled three vacancies. In addition a lot of multi-skill training has happened during the month which has increased our capacity on the number of adviser's taking calls.

Other improvements implemented during July 2023:

We have also enhanced the self-service offer to our residents to improve their blue badge renewal journey, which has reduced the number of contacts received. As a result, we have seen a decrease in phone contacts for the services affected by the enhanced online offering. July has been the first full month Licensing and dropped kerb applications has been in the Customer Service Centre as part of the Environment & Place re-design programme. Work continues with the Continuous Improvement Team to review the process and make recommendations for change. Across the Social & Health Care area of the Customer Service Centre we have been able to increase the number of staff trained to handle incoming calls. Changes were also made to the (IVR) messaging signposting callers to self-serve via our website and also Live Well Oxfordshire directory. As a result, we have seen a 10% decrease in phone contacts. A new online equipment ordering form has also been introduced during the month allowing customers to self-serve on our website.

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

This priority has fifteen measures being reported in July 2023: Ten are reporting as Green, two are Amber and three are Red

Annex B provides further explanation of the finance measures in the following table.



Figure 6: Priority OCC11 Monthly performance for 2023/24 financial year

Measure:	June Status:	July Status:	Director:
<b>OCC11.01</b> Overall forecast revenue variance across the Council	<b>Green</b>	<b>Red</b>	<b>Lorna Baxter</b>
<b>OCC11.02</b> Achievement of planned savings.	<b>Red</b>	<b>Red</b>	<b>Lorna Baxter</b>
<b>OCC11.03</b> General balances are forecast to remain at or above the risk assessed level	<b>Green</b>	<b>Red</b>	<b>Lorna Baxter</b>

<b>OCC11.04</b> Directorates deliver services and achieve planned performance within agreed budget.	<b>Green</b>	<b>Red</b>	<b>Lorna Baxter</b>
<b>OCC11.10</b> Debt requiring impairment – Corporate Directors	<b>Amber</b>	<b>Amber</b>	<b>Lorna Baxter</b>
<b>OCC 11.11</b> Debt requiring impairment – Adult Social Care Contribution debtors.	<b>Red</b>	<b>Red</b>	<b>Lorna Baxter</b>

Table 9: Priority OCC11 Measure Exceptions - July 2023

Please refer to Section 6 and Annex B for additional information relating to OCC11: Running the business - Finance.

### **Performance Highlights**

**19.** 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**

More Oxfordshire residents are set to benefit from cheaper bus fares as a ninth county bus provider has joined the £2 fare cap, just in time for the latest extension of the scheme.

Pulhams Coaches, which runs the 15, 15A, 19, 802 and X9 services, will charge passengers just £2 per journey from tomorrow when the next extension to the national fare cap comes into effect.

The government's £2 cap on adult single fares began on 1 January for three months to help people with the cost of living crisis but proved so popular it was extended until the end of June. Now it has been extended again until 31 October, after which fares will be increased to £2.50 until November 2024.

### **Tackle inequalities in Oxfordshire**

Oxfordshire Employment and County Print Finishers has passed its first annual reaccreditation as a RNIB Visibly Better Employer through providing evidence of the positive difference the team has made to workers experiencing sight loss over the past year.

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

Oxfordshire Trading Standards have taken part in a London and Southeast project which received **£22,500 funding to install doorbell cameras to deter rogue traders and help people feel safer from doorstep crime**. In total 79 products were purchased. The doorbell cameras were offered to the most vulnerable, and those who had already been victims of doorstep crime. Key findings of the project identified the cost benefit ratio of the project was 48:1 i.e., every £1 spent saved £48. Initial findings have shown a dramatic improvement in wellbeing, confidence and general happiness. The average wellbeing score prior to installation was 24.1, after installation respondents reported an average wellbeing score of 27, an increase of 12%. 82% of respondents reported feeling more confident in answering the door.

### **Join in The Summer Reading Challenge 2023, Ready, Set, Read! At Oxfordshire libraries this summer.**

Over 1.5 million visits were made to Oxfordshire libraries in the past year, and the

summer holidays have been a great time for families to come join in the fun at one of the county's 44 libraries.

The Summer Reading Challenge 2023, Ready, Set, Read! aims to keep minds and bodies active over the summer break, empowering young people to forge new connections with others and unleash the power of play, sport and physical activity through reading. It is produced by The Reading Agency in partnership with the Youth Sport Trust.

The free challenge launched on 8 July and runs until 9 September 2023.

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

**Abbie Clayton, 44 and her husband Sam, who's 46**, have been highlighted as prime examples of the county council's successful share lives scheme.

Sam grew up sharing his family home with people with additional needs through the shared lives scheme.

The innovative programme, run by Oxfordshire County Council, carefully matches adults with long term conditions with a caring household who can support them to live independently, often giving their full-time carers a chance to take a break.

And having seen what a positive experience the programme brought to his life, Sam and his wife Abbie, who are based near Wallingford in south Oxfordshire, wanted the same for their children.

**Abbie said:** "It's great to have more people in the family. Rather than detracting from the children, it makes them appreciate diversity. It's nice to see them growing up in an environment where they can provide that caring role as well. It really gives something back."

Abbie and Sam have been shared lives carers for 17 years, helping to support eight people during that time. The paid position comes with regular ongoing support and training, enabling them to feel confident that they're providing an environment for their guests to flourish.

**Abbie continues:** "The most rewarding thing is seeing people grow and develop into the people they become, pushing them that extra mile to really be independent and experience life as part of the family.

"We get as much training as we need, especially around recognising each person as an individual. We have really open communication with the shared lives team when we need it and other carers as well, so support is always available."

As part of **shared lives week, which ran from Monday 26 to Friday 30 June**, Oxfordshire County Council hosted an event for people involved in the programme, celebrating the special relationships that have formed because of the scheme. If you are considering becoming a shared lives carer please visit the webpage [Shared Lives | Oxfordshire County Council](#)

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

Oxfordshire County Council has tested seven different repair methods on same stretch of road to compare results and improve process

After a winter that saw the number of potholes reported in Oxfordshire double compared to the same period last year, a trial has taken place – believed to be the first of its kind in the UK – aimed at improving the repair process.

On Monday and Tuesday, 26 - 27 June, Oxfordshire County Council and its highways contractor Milestone Infrastructure used the road between Steventon and East

Hanney as a test site to trial seven different methods of filling in potholes or repairing minor defects requiring 'patching'. Some of these methods are already used in Oxfordshire – including the Milestone [dragon patcher](#) – while the others were new ones sourced by Milestone.

The Hanney/Steventon Road was closed and a 1km stretch was divided into sections. Each section had a different type of pothole or patch repair carried out to get a direct comparison of the various methods.

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

Staff at Oxfordshire County Council have been recognised for their work to inspire young entrepreneurs by winning a prestigious award.

The national Libraries Connected Award celebrates the achievements of library workers who have had an exceptional impact on their library service, users or their local communities.

The county council's Oxfordshire Business and Intellectual Property Centre (BIPC) team, based in Oxford Central Library in Westgate, won the children's award at the ceremony on 20 June 2023 for its work engaging hundreds of new youth participants aged eight to 25 in enterprising activities.

Oxfordshire [Business & IP Centre \(BIPC\)](#), **County Library** is working with **Oxford University Saïd Business school** to promote their international climate change competition to local young people aged 15-18. That will see finalists invited to present their climate change solutions in Dubai during COP28 and furthermore take part in a tailored Oxford University climate change programme in 2024, all fully funded [Full details](#)

On **Tuesday 29th August** OCC hosted an introduction event at BIPC Oxfordshire, where Oxfordshire young people heard more about the competition, met potential teammates and heard from Oxfordshire County Council Climate Action team professionals, in addition to being introduced to all of the BIPC and library resources to support any entry (creative boards, video recording equipment and more). The event also had Saïd Business school representatives in attendance.

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

Oxfordshire's community action groups' annual report.

It has been another incredibly busy and productive year for Oxfordshire's community action groups (CAGs), who receive their core funding from Oxfordshire County Council. This year, groups reported engaging more than 84,000 people in activities, events and outreach – nearly 12 per cent of the county's population. Volunteers contributed more than 96,000 hours of time – a 47 per cent increase on last year – to initiatives such as repair cafes, tree plantings, draught busting, community markets, bike repair training, growing food, ensuring food is not wasted but redistributed instead, and so much more. [Read the full report](#) online.

## **Strategic Risk Management Overview**

**20.** 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.

21. The table below provides an overview of the current strategic risk position. Strategic risks are reviewed on a monthly basis 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	Inherent Score	June Residual Risk Score	July Residual Risk Score	July Residual Risk Rating	Direction of Travel
01. Financial Resilience	The council is not financially sustainable in the immediate/medium term.	25	15	20	▲	↗
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. Major Infrastructure - Capital Projects	Major Infrastructure Portfolio schemes become undeliverable.	16	16	16	▲	→
04. Demand Management - Adult	The council is unable to provide the appropriate level of support for people to live well and independently in their community, remaining fit, and healthy for as long as possible.	16	12	12	●	→
05. Demand Management - Children	Level of statutory activity required by the council in relation to meeting children's needs results in significant overspend.	25	16	16	▲	→
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.	16	8	8	★	→

Table 10: Strategic Risk Overview for July 2023 Update

## Financial Position

22. As shown below the Directorates are currently forecasting an overspend of £17.4m (3.0%). After taking account of additional interest on balances and the use of funding held in contingency and the COVID-19 reserve, the overall forecast expenditure would be £8.5m higher than the budget.

	Latest Budget 2023/24 £m	Forecast Spend 2023/24 £m	Forecast Variation July 2023 £m	Forecast Variation July 2023 %	Forecast Variation May 2023 £m	Change Since May 2023 £m
Adult Services	227.3	230.3	3.0	1.3%	0.0	3.0
Children's Services	169.0	180.0	11.0	6.5%	3.1	7.9
Environment & Place	74.6	75.6	1.0	1.3%	0.6	0.4
Public Health	3.9	3.9	0.0	0.0%	0.0	0.0
Community Safety	27.6	27.6	0.0	0.0%	0.0	0.0
Resources	69.7	72.1	2.4	3.4%	1.6	0.8
<b>Directorate Total</b>	<b>572.2</b>	<b>589.6</b>	<b>17.4</b>	<b>3.0%</b>	<b>5.3</b>	<b>12.1</b>
<b>Budgets Held Centrally</b>						
Capital Financing	28.4	28.4	0.0	0.0%	0.0	0.0
Interest on Balances	-16.7	-17.2	-0.5	3.0%	-0.5	0.0
Inflation (pending agreement of 2023/24 pay award)	6.5	6.5	0.0	0.0%	0.0	0.0
Contingency	12.4	5.4	-7.0	-56.5%	-3.3	-3.7

	Latest Budget 2023/24 £m	Forecast Spend 2023/24 £m	Forecast Variation July 2023 £m	Forecast Variation July 2023 %	Forecast Variation May 2023 £m	Change Since May 2023 £m
Un-ringfenced Specific Grants	-43.3	-43.3	0.0	0.0%	0.0	0.0
Insurance	1.4	1.4	0.1	5.3%	0.0	0.1
Contribution from COVID-19 reserve	-7.4	-8.8	-1.4	-1.5	-1.5	0.1
Contribution from Budget Priority Reserve	-2.4	-2.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Contributions to reserves	20.0	20.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Contribution to balances	7.6	7.6	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
<b>Total Budgets Held Centrally</b>	<b>6.6</b>	<b>-2.3</b>	<b>-8.9</b>	<b>-135%</b>	<b>-5.3</b>	<b>-3.6</b>
<b>Net Operating Budget</b>	<b>578.8</b>	<b>587.3</b>	<b>8.5</b>	<b>1.5%</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>8.5</b>
Business Rates & Council Tax funding	-578.8	-578.8	0.0	0%	0.0	0.0
<b>Forecast Year End Position</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>8.5</b>	<b>8.5</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>8.5</b>

Table 11: OCC Forecast Financial Position July 2023

- 23.** The forecast overspend reflects a more challenging position for 2023/24 than anticipated when the budget was set in February 2023 as well as the continuing impact of the activity that contributed to the overspend of £13.4m in 2022/23. Combined with issues in the local and national economy, including inflation and workforce shortages, this has increased the risk to the financial position for the council. At the same time, these factors have made it much more challenging to forecast activity and expenditure, placing some uncertainty around this forecast position.
- 24.** The forecast overspend for Adult Services reflects an unexpected increase in the number of residential placements expected during 2023/24. The focus for the service remains to manage within the budget available but this will require all savings to be delivered and a favourable level of demand during the remainder of the year.
- 25.** The on-going impact of underlying pressures in Children's Services which contributed to the overspend in 2022/23 remains a significant challenge in 2023/24. Children's Services have implemented a number of organisational, governance and business process controls as well as market management actions to address the underlying pressures but it is taking time for these to have an impact while the overall position is worsened by further inflationary and demand increases.
- 26.** There are forecast overspends across most of the services within Corporate Services. These reflect the anticipated achievement of savings, and a mix of

staffing and inflationary pressures.

27. It is anticipated that around £5m of the £12.4m contingency budget will be needed to meet the cost of additional pay inflation in 2023/24 in addition to the £6.5m remaining budget available to support this after taking account of the Fire Pay Awards. After taking account of the use of £7.0m contingency and funding from the COVID-19 reserve to support the overall forecast position, the remaining net £8.5m overspend against the operating budget would reduce balances to £21.5m. That is £8.7m below the £30.2m risk assessed level. Were this to materialise, the level of balances for 2024/25, and funding for any top-up to that level, would need to be considered through the Budget and Business Planning process.
28. 40% of the 2022/23 savings of £10.2m which were not achieved as planned in the last financial year are currently assessed as delivered or are expected to be delivered. 60% are still assessed as amber or red. 63% of the 2023/24 savings are assessed as delivered or are expected to be delivered. Action is being taken to ensure that the delivery of both existing planned savings and new budget reductions is maximised in 2023/24.
29. The forecast 2023/24 deficit compared to Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) funding for High Needs is £18.3m and is in line with the budget agreed by Cabinet in May 2023. The CIPFA code of practice requires negative High Needs DSG balances to be held in an unusable reserve. The forecast deficit would increase the negative balance held in this reserve from £41.1m as at 31 March 2023 to £59.4m at 31 March 2024.
30. The Council's Management Team are working with directorates to identify actions to manage expenditure so that any overspend by year end is mitigated as far as possible and does not require any call on balances. Updates on the latest forecast position, which is expected to continue to be impacted by volatility in demand and inflation and evolving assessments of the ability to achieve planned savings, will be provided as the year progresses.
31. Annex B sets out further details and commentary on the Finance position.

### **Digital Inclusion Strategy**

32. Oxfordshire County Council's [Digital Inclusion Strategy](#) was approved by Cabinet in summer 2022. The strategy sets out the council's framework to enable a digitally inclusion Oxfordshire, shaped by three key priority areas (the action plan follows the same structure):

- Digitally Inclusive Communities
- Digitally Inclusive Service Delivery
- Digitally Inclusive Workforce

The Digital Inclusion Strategy is now integrated with the service planning cycle, and the action plan includes actions derived from service delivery plans from across the organisation which have been further developed through conversations with colleagues. The actions support the strategy's aims and

deliver meaningful outcomes, enhanced partnership working and alignment with our overarching strategic priorities, such as tackling inequalities and the health and wellbeing of residents. All actions are aligned with one of the strategy's priority areas, though many of the actions span multiple priority areas. All actions aim to deliver benefits for the council, the sector, and residents. This action plan for the strategy, is for 2023-24, and will be reported on and reviewed at the end of the business cycle in spring 2024. Reporting on progress and outcomes will be managed within the Policy and Strategy Team. As this is early on into a five-year strategy, a review at the end of 2023/24 will enable the action plan to evolve and keep it dynamic, allowing for longer-term actions alongside more granular short-term objectives.

**33.** Further information is available in Annex C.

### **Food Strategy Action Plan**

**34.** The Oxfordshire County Council Food Strategy Action Plan was created to follow the Oxfordshire Food Strategy, which was drafted in partnership with Good Food Oxfordshire and other stakeholders in the food system around Oxfordshire and was approved by Cabinet in May 2022. The Action Plan gathers council-owned actions in various directorates which help deliver tangible outcomes to the food strategy ambitions of fairer, greener, healthier food for all across the county, enabling better partnership working and monitoring of these actions. The action plan will be managed internally and included in the annual performance report; this will assist in maintaining momentum on food actions, ensuring that our priorities are met and evolving according to Oxfordshire's needs. It will also foster joined-up, productive working, both within the Council and in conjunction with District Action Plans, which can give us ideas about Council initiatives in the future.

**35.** Further information is available in Annex D.

### **Financial Implications**

**36.** 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 2022. On-going impacts have been considered through the Budget & Business Planning process for 2023/24. Strong financial management and oversight will be required to ensure that services are managed within budgets for 2023/24.

Comments checked by: Lorna Baxter, Director of Finance

### **Legal Implications**

**37.** 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.

**38.** 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 July 2023 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**

Director of Finance

Contact Officers: Louise Tustian, Head of Insight and Corporate Programmes  
Kathy Wilcox, Head of Financial Strategy

# Annex A - July 2023

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## Key

Status Indicator	Status Description
	Misses target by significant margin
	Misses target by narrow margin
	Meets or exceeds target
?! n/a	Data missing
	Monitoring only

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

We will lead by example, setting ambitious targets to reduce our own carbon emissions and aligning our carbon net zero commitments to the principles of the Climate and Ecology Bill. Our environmental and planning ambitions will prioritise climate action and community resilience.

Status of Indicators	31/07/2023
OCC01 - Put action to address the climate emergency at the heart of our work	★

Measure	Director	Portfolio Holder	Period Actual	Period Target	Status	Comment	Finance Impact	Risk Impact	YTD Actual	YTD Target	YTD
OCC01.02 Total No. of streetlights fitted with LED Lanterns	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Bill Cotton</li> <li>▪ Paul Fermer</li> </ul>	Clr A Gant	126	100	★	We have exceeded our monthly target and still on target for the end of the year.			1,578	3,200	▲

Measure	Director	Portfolio Holder	Period Actual	Period Target	Status	Comment	Finance Impact	Risk Impact	YTD Actual	YTD Target	YTD
OCC01.07 Total % of household waste which is reused, recycled or composted	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Bill Cotton</li> <li>■ Rachel Wileman</li> </ul>	Cllr P Sudbury	57.48%	61.50%		<p>Waste performance is reported a month in arrears and the figure reported is the forecast end of year performance for 2023/24. Defra's most recent published statistics for Waste Disposal Authorities for 2021/22 confirmed Oxfordshire first for the overall percentage of waste reused, recycled or composted with a recycling rate of 58.2%, compared to Devon in second place at 55.1%, and Surrey 3rd at 54.4%. However, the indicator is below target because recycling rates have plateaued for some time despite continued behavioural change campaigns and encouraging residents to use the exiting recycling collections better. A step change is needed to meet Oxfordshire Joint Municipal Waste Management Strategy targets, which can only be made by the district councils and OCC acting together. Government waste policy changes are expected that could have a significant impact, but these have been repeatedly delayed by Defra. The District Councils are unable to commit investment in significant changes in collection services until they have clarity on what the Government will mandate. This is a national issue affecting all local authorities. There has been some progress. In January 2023 Defra published its consultation response on introducing a Deposit Return Scheme (DRS) for drinks containers from October 2025. However, in July Defra announced the delay of Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) for packaging until October 2025 to avoid the risk of causing inflationary pressures. This will allow more time for preparation and Defra are continuing to engage with the public sector and manufacturers on the scheme details. Defra also confirmed that implementation of consistent collections changes are deferred until after the introduction of EPR. There has been no announcement of what changes will be required. In the meantime the national waste industry bodies continue to lobby on this issue, and locally campaign work to inform residents and encourage behaviour change is continuing including this summer a door knocking campaign on food waste recycling across the county.</p>	<p>The financial cost of waste disposal can be reduced by increasing reuse, recycling and composting. The main way of mitigating increased costs is through encouraging behavioural change to make more effective use of kerbside and HWRC recycling facilities until a step change can be achieved through partnership working and national waste policy changes. Payments to local authorities for managing packaging waste under the EPR scheme will now not be received until after October 2025.</p>	<p>Target of recycling and composting at least 65% of household waste by 2025 in the Oxfordshire Joint Municipal Waste Management Strategy is unlikely to be achieved. The continued lack of clarity from Government about service changes that will be mandated following consultation on consistent collections prevents local authorities from making investment decisions in significant service changes. This is a national issue.</p>	57.23%	61.50%	

## Tackle inequalities in Oxfordshire

We will work with our partners and local communities to address health, social and educational inequalities focusing on those in greatest need.

We will seek practical solutions for those most adversely affected by the pandemic.

We will support digital inclusion initiatives that give our residents the skills, connectivity and accessibility to our services and provide alternative options for those who cannot access our services digitally.

Status of Indicators	31/07/2023
OCC02 - Tackle inequalities in Oxfordshire	★

Measure	Director	Portfolio Holder	Period Actual	Period Target	Status	Comment	Finance Impact	Risk Impact	YTD Actual	YTD Target	YTD
OCC02.01 Digital Inclusion through libraries (number of hours of use of library public computers)	Mark Haynes	Cllr K Gregory	7,203	6,000	★	This figure remains well above target and demonstrates a clear demand for access to free public computers and internet.	Aside from printing, there are no fees and charges linked to digital access and content delivery, so will have minimal, direct (positive or negative) impact on finances.	Emphasises sustained/growing need for digital inclusion provision and activity; also borne out by record levels of e-borrowing in July 2023.	7,203	6,000	★
OCC02.03 Number of physical visits to Libraries	Mark Haynes	Cllr K Gregory	166,490	130,000	★	The number of physical visits to Libraries remains well above target. This continuing success is a result of the high number of activities (including school visits) that library staff have organised, and may also be a reflection of the growing demand on library services as the costs of living crisis deepens and customers seek free reading materials, free computers/internet access, and warm spaces (plus the full range of other library services).	More visitors should equate to greater income, and team have been working on re-energising our approach to room hire, which should also help income generation.	Worth noting that visitor levels at the larger library sites is now surpassing pre-pandemic levels and gives confidence that the service can maintain above target performance.	614,778	500,000	★

## Prioritise the health and wellbeing of residents

We will work with the health and wellbeing board and our partners to deliver and support services that make a vital contribution to our residents' physical and mental wellbeing.

We will support the wellbeing of those in our community who have been affected, physically and mentally, by the COVID-19 pandemic and will continue to support our volunteers and the voluntary sector.

Status of Indicators	31/07/2023
OCC03 - Prioritise the health and wellbeing of residents	★

Measure	Director	Portfolio Holder	Period Actual	Period Target	Status	Comment	Finance Impact	Risk Impact	YTD Actual	YTD Target	YTD
OCC03.09 No of people contacted via Making Every Conversation	Mark Haynes	Cllr K Gregory	611	450	★	This figure remains significantly above target. This highly successful partnership with Public Health has seen training for library staff in order to facilitate informal and accessible discussions with customers about health issues, including recommendations, signposting, and referrals as part of libraries' Health and Wellbeing offer (Books on Prescription, healthy living, Reading Well for mental health etc). Anecdotally, this programme has also had an extremely high impact on a small number of individuals, with one customer reporting that he had sought a GP appointment as a direct result of his conversation with library staff, following which was diagnosed with (and successfully treated for) early stage cancer.	Public Health are strategically funding Libraries for 3 years and this gives sustainability and appropriate 'resource recognition' for this associated activity.	Strong sustained performance and speaking to Public Health and enhanced programming in this area and a more targeted approach to audience insight/development.	699	450	★

## Support carers and the social care system

We will engage nationally to push for a fair deal for the funding of social care.

Locally, we will support carers, including young carers and help those who want to live independently.

We will work with communities and the voluntary sector to explore new ways to provide services and focus on preventative services, helping people to stay active and supported at all stages of their lives.

We will support intergenerational programmes to build strong and resilient communities.

We will work in collaboration across the health and social care system.

Status of Indicators	31/07/2023
OCC04 - Support carers and the social care system	★

Measure	Director	Portfolio Holder	Period Actual	Period Target	Status	Comment	Finance Impact	Risk Impact	YTD Actual	YTD Target	YTD
OCC04.01 No of people supported with on-going care	Karen Fuller	Cllr T Bearder	6,542		n/a				6,542		n/a
OCC04.02 % of residents 18-64 with Learning Disability support who live on their own or with family	Karen Fuller	Cllr T Bearder	88.00%	86.00%	★				88.20%	86.00%	★
OCC04.03 % of residents aged 65 plus receiving ASC who manage their care by using a direct payment	Karen Fuller	Cllr T Bearder	17.90%	15.50%	★				17.90%	15.50%	★
OCC04.04 % of residents aged 65+ receiving ASC who manage their care by using a direct payment	Karen Fuller	Cllr T Bearder	37.77%	38.40%	●	<p>Performance remains in line with the national position. Fewer than 20 people would need to transfer to direct payments in the year to be on target. There are 3 key actions to stabilise this measure</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Review of individual team performance at the monthly performance board</li> <li>2. The Adult Social Care forum asks if a Direct Payment has been considered for each new service recipient and we use this data to understand barriers to uptake of direct payments</li> <li>3. Increased communications to teams to actively promote direct payments</li> </ol>	There is no financial risk associated with this measure.	Increasing use of direct payments is seen as improving performance by the Care Quality Commission. Falling numbers could reflect a reputational risk	37.77%	38.40%	●
OCC04.05 % of older residents who receive long term care and are supported to live in their own home	Karen Fuller	Cllr T Bearder	58.60%	60.00%	●	<p>The number of older people supported to live at home continues to increase, as does the number of hours of support provided overall. Performance is marginally below the 60% target but this is not a significant concern as some fluctuation is expected. The number of older people supported to live at home has grown by 3% in the year so far.</p>	The financial risk associated with this would be placing people in more expensive care home placements. There is no evidence of this, but current levels of activity across the service are creating financial pressures.		58.93%	60.00%	●

Measure	Director	Portfolio Holder	Period Actual	Period Target	Status	Comment	Finance Impact	Risk Impact	YTD Actual	YTD Target	YTD
OCC04.06 No of residents who have received a formal assessment of their role as a Carer	Karen Fuller	Cllr T Bearder	751	197	★				2,546	788	★
OCC04.07 No of Carers who have received a direct payment	Karen Fuller	Cllr T Bearder	593		n/a				1,291		n/a
OCC04.08 No of visits to Live Well Oxfordshire	Karen Fuller	Cllr T Bearder	12,755	6,000	★	The number of sessions on Live Well Oxfordshire for July 2023 has increased to 12,755. The number of page views has also also increased to 27,818.			47,320	24,000	★

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

We will create a transport network that makes active travel the first choice for short journeys and invest in public transport to significantly reduce our reliance on car journeys. In areas of planned housing growth, we will prioritise active and public transport over road capacity for cars.

Status of Indicators	31/07/2023
OCC05 - Invest in an inclusive, integrated and sustainable transport network	▲

Measure	Director	Portfolio Holder	Period Actual	Period Target	Status	Comment	Finance Impact	Risk Impact	YTD Actual	YTD Target	YTD
OCC05.03 91 KM (2%) of the highway to be treated	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Bill Cotton</li> <li>▪ Paul Fermer</li> </ul>	Cllr A Gant	1.60	5.80	▲	Total planned surfacing for the year remains sufficient to meet the target and this is supported by YTD Actuals being broadly consistent with the YTD Target. In period target shortfall is due to refinement of programme delivery dates for operational reasons.	No finance impact.	Not risk impact as this low value should be corrected in the future months	73.33	76.40	★

## Preserve and improve access to nature and green spaces

We will work with partners to provide safe and clean green spaces across the county that support the physical and mental wellbeing of our residents.

We will take action to protect and increase biodiversity, supporting nature recovery, in both rural and urban environments.

<b>Status of Indicators</b>	<b>31/07/2023</b>
OCC06 - Preserve and improve access to nature and green spaces	?

Measure	Director	Portfolio Holder	Period Actual	Period Target	Status	Comment	Finance Impact	Risk Impact	YTD Actual	YTD Target	YTD
OCC06.02 Percentage of newly planted trees still alive on land OCC own & manage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Bill Cotton</li> <li>▪ Rachel Wileman</li> </ul>	Cllr P Sudbury	93.60%		n/a	Following a full audit, a few more trees (3) have been found to have been stolen since they were first planted, hence the drop in numbers. The end of August there may be some more losses due to some trees struggling with drought stress identified during July's audit.	Small loss of investment as a result of tree theft.	No specific risk at this point.	93.60%		n/a

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

We will support all our children and young people, and their families, to achieve their very best and to prepare them for their future, including safeguarding, and supporting those more vulnerable and with additional needs.

We will continue to work with partners to provide help early so children and families are less likely to be in need.

Status of Indicators	31/07/2023
OCC07 - Create opportunities for children and young people to reach their full potential	●

Measure	Director	Portfolio Holder	Period Actual	Period Target	Status	Comment	Finance Impact	Risk Impact	YTD Actual	YTD Target	YTD
OCC07.03 Number of multi-agency strength & needs assessment completed in Oxfordshire	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Anne Coyle</li> <li>▪ Stephen Chandler</li> </ul>	Cllr L Brighouse	361	556	●	A target of 7500 has been agreed by the children's trust for the year. Last year 3599 early help assessments were shared with the council. The 7500 target will need this figure to double. The figures in the four months of this year are 2.4% higher than the same period last year. A new Assistant Director post is being recruited to lead on this work with partners.	There are no direct financial impacts from not hitting this target, but there are indirect costs associated with more children being pulled into statutory services.	The risk of not hitting this target is that more children are pulled into statutory services, putting pressures on both staff workload (and ultimately recruitment and retention) and budgets	1,248	1,722	●
OCC07.01 Total number of children with an Education, Health and Care Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Anne Coyle</li> <li>▪ Stephen Chandler</li> </ul>	Cllr L Brighouse	6,148		n/a				6,148		n/a
OCC07.02 No of children we care for who are Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Anne Coyle</li> <li>▪ Stephen Chandler</li> </ul>	Cllr L Brighouse	91		n/a				388		n/a
OCC07.04 Increase the % of children in Foster Care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Anne Coyle</li> <li>▪ Stephen Chandler</li> </ul>	Cllr L Brighouse	63.00%	63.00%	★				63.00%	63.00%	★

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Measure	Director	Portfolio Holder	Period Actual	Period Target	Status	Comment	Finance Impact	Risk Impact	YTD Actual	YTD Target	YTD
OCC07.05 The percentage of children in residential care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Anne Coyle</li> <li>▪ Stephen Chandler</li> </ul>	Cllr L Brighthouse	15%	14%	●	<p>The proportion of children supported in residential care home placements has decreased by 1% in the month, against a backdrop of 46 fewer children we care for since March 2023.</p> <p>Our priorities for the year include</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Converting OCC building to provide 11 beds of supported accommodation for 16-17 Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASC)</li> <li>• Launching a 16+ supported housing framework in July 2023</li> <li>• Uplift fostering fees in line with government recommendations of 12%</li> <li>• To increase number of in-house foster carers through targeted campaigns</li> <li>• Commissioning the following services for Children &amp; Young People (CYP) with complex needs               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ 4 solo beds within Oxfordshire or surrounding LA areas</li> <li>◦ Setting up two solo / small homes under the DfE programme to be run by OCC</li> <li>◦ Changing an existing children's home with Homes 2 Inspire to a solo / small children's home</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Increasing in-house children's homes placements by 16</li> <li>• Increasing the cross regional block contract by 3 beds</li> <li>• Commissioning new solo bed contract in Oxfordshire or surrounding LA areas</li> </ul>	Residential placements cost more than foster placements. Unnecessary use of placements can increase costs. A focus is also needed on ensuring the most efficient and effective use of internal placements.	There is a risk that insufficient foster care provision can mean children and young people are unnecessarily put into residential placements	15%	14%	●
OCC07.06 Number of Oxfordshire children we care for	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Anne Coyle</li> <li>▪ Stephen Chandler</li> </ul>	Cllr L Brighthouse	732	770	★				732	770	★
OCC07.07 % of Education Health & Care Plans completed within 20 weeks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Anne Coyle</li> <li>▪ Stephen Chandler</li> </ul>	Cllr L Brighthouse	59.20%	50.70%	★	We are maintaining around a 60% average (above national average from SEN2 census), despite rising requests and an Ofsted SEND inspection in July.			56.63%	50.70%	★

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

We are committed to taking decisions in an open and inclusive way.

We will engage and listen to Oxfordshire residents.

We will be open to scrutiny and regularly provide progress updates.

We will put the impact on the climate and future generations at the heart of decision making.

We will manage our own resources carefully.

Status of Indicators	31/07/2023
OCC08 - Play our part in a vibrant and participatory local democracy	

This priority has no measures to report in this reporting period

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

We will help Oxfordshire become a recognised centre of innovation in green and sustainable technologies.

We will use our purchasing power for environmental, social and economic benefit and ensure that our pandemic recovery planning supports sustainable job creation.

<b>Status of Indicators</b>	<b>31/07/2023</b>
OCC09 - Work with local businesses and partners for environmental, economic and social benefit	▲

Measure	Director	Portfolio Holder	Period Actual	Period Target	Status	Comment	Finance Impact	Risk Impact	YTD Actual	YTD Target	YTD
OCC09.02 Participation in innovation funding bids or new projects in support of Living Oxfordshire	Tim Spiers	Cllr G Phillips	1.00	2.50	●	Amber status reflects current period only where only 1 new project / bid has been submitted. The nature of iHUB projects and bids is variable and so there will be some months with more projects and bids, and others with less.	No financial impact.	Amount of bids is dependent on number of funding streams available -July and August are often quieter months.	11.00	10.00	★

## Running the Business - Customer Experience

Status of Indicators	31/07/2023
OCC10 - Customer Service	★

Measure	Director	Portfolio Holder	Period Actual	Period Target	Status	Comment	Finance Impact	Risk Impact	YTD Actual	YTD Target	YTD
OCC10.03 Overall customer satisfaction rate for the Customer Service Centre – telephony	Mark Haynes	Cllr G Phillips	99%	80%	★	Latest satisfaction survey – July 14.3% of calls answered were surveyed. 99% customers surveyed were satisfied or very satisfied, whilst 1% were unsatisfied			99%	80%	★
OCC10.04 First contact resolution for customer enquiries received by the Customer Service Centre	Mark Haynes	Cllr G Phillips	76%	75%	★	<b>8,305</b> of inbound phone contacts were resolved at first point of contact. With 9% of inbound phone contacts deemed avoidable.			76%	75%	★

Measure	Director	Portfolio Holder	Period Actual	Period Target	Status	Comment	Finance Impact	Risk Impact	YTD Actual	YTD Target	YTD
OCC10.05 The percentage of customer telephone calls abandoned at the Customer Service Centre	Mark Haynes	Cllr G Phillips	11%	10%		<p>It is pleasing to note that the percentage of abandoned calls reduced to the lowest figure this year. A reduction from 17% in June to 11% in July was a noticeable improvement.</p> <p>The number of calls offered (total demand including those calls that we did not answer) in July 2023 decreased by 13.5% compared to June 2023. When compared to July 2022, they are down 6.6%. A total of 30,157 contacts was received during July, which was down 12% compared to June (34,265). This consist of 5,296 outbound calls, 28 webchat and social media enquiries, and 12,624 emails.</p> <p>Across the Neighbourhood and Communities area of the Customer Service Centre, we have successfully filled three vacancies. In addition a lot of multi-skill training has happened during the month which has increased our capacity on the number of adviser's taking calls. Other improvements implemented during July 2023: We have also enhanced the self-service offer to our residents to improve their blue badge renewal journey, which has reduced the number of contacts received. As a result, we have seen a decrease in phone contacts for the services affected by the enhanced online offering.</p> <p>July has been the first full month Licensing and dropped kerb applications has been in the Customer Service Centre as part of the Environment &amp; Place re-design programme. Work continues with the Continuous Improvement Team to review the process and make recommendations for change.</p> <p>Across the Social &amp; Health Care area of the Customer Service Centre we have been able to increase the number of staff trained to handle incoming calls. Changes were also made to the (IVR) messaging signposting callers to self-serve via our website and also Live Well Oxfordshire directory. As a result, we have seen a 10% decrease in phone contacts.</p> <p>A new online equipment ordering form has also been introduced during the month allowing customers to self-serve on our website.</p>	<p><b>Increased abandoned calls leads to increased turnover, increased recruitment costs, training times etc. this puts pressure on budgets.</b></p>	<p>If a higher number of calls are abandoned whilst waiting to be answered in the CSC, this can lead to reputational damage to the organisation, decreased advisor motivation therefore leading to greater turnover of staff and then increased abandoned calls. We have worked to have a greater focus on call handling, by removing the administration to a different team which has seen a positive reduction in abandoned calls. This is however due to a reduced number of offered calls and contacts over the summer period but this is in line with our staffing levels.</p>	14%	10%	

Measure	Director	Portfolio Holder	Period Actual	Period Target	Status	Comment	Finance Impact	Risk Impact	YTD Actual	YTD Target	YTD
OCC10.06 Overall customer satisfaction rates for standard Registration Service	Mark Haynes	Cllr G Phillips	100%	95%	★	<p>Customer satisfaction of Registration Services remained high in July at 99.6% customer satisfaction. Below is a snapshot of comments received from customer surveys:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We were really pleased with the service we received. From the initial Zoom meeting which was offered to meet our registrar, this supported us and made us feel comfortable &amp; any questions we had were answered and made us feel at ease. The registrar was lovely and made us feel relaxed, she made our guests feel very welcome and really made the ceremony feel special. We had a few requests to tailor make our ceremony and the registrar was able to fulfil these, was very respectful to our ideas and embedded these in the ceremony well. Thank You!</li> <li>• Responsive and friendly staff in the lead-up to the wedding and very friendly and professional staff on the day itself. They really helped to ease nerves and everyone commented on how lovely the ceremony was. Thank you very much.</li> <li>• The staff on the day were incredible, they were both friendly, helpful, calming and re assuring, they allowed us to ask all out questions and helped keep the big bridal reveal, we had children in the ceremony and they were well equipped to deal with the children and had a lot of experience and knowledge which helped us as the bride and groom but also the parents of the children too, the ceremony was perfect and upbeat. we really wat to thank the two ladies who held our ceremony.</li> <li>• Nice and easy to book, deputy registrar was very professional and friendly.</li> <li>• The lady that registered the birth was the best. She made the process diligent and enjoyable</li> <li>• I really appreciated being offered a place to feed my baby. I felt very welcome</li> <li>• The registrar was wonderful. A difficult job delivered with professionalism and compassion. Thank you</li> <li>• The registrar was friendly, empathetic and helpful. She made a difficult process as easy as it could be and I am very thankful to her for that</li> <li>• The Registrar made the process of registering the death of a close family friend respectful but also joyous in a way as she asked questions about our friend and his life.</li> </ul>			100%	95%	★

Measure	Director	Portfolio Holder	Period Actual	Period Target	Status	Comment	Finance Impact	Risk Impact	YTD Actual	YTD Target	YTD
OCC10.07 Overall customer satisfaction rate for Coroners Inquest Service	Mark Haynes	Cllr G Phillips	100%	99%	★	Once again, we have received overwhelmingly positive feedback following inquests with families expressing their gratitude for the support offered by our team. Some comments include: Thank you very much for the way in which you conducted the Inquest yesterday into the death of my dear wife Jane McClory. It addressed all my concerns. Just wanted to say thank you to all at the coroners office for making a very sad occasion as good as it could possibly be with the kindness and compassion shown to us all when we attended our loved one's inquest last week. From the volunteer lady who showed us the way, to the assistant coroner to the coroner you each made such a difference. Thank you.			100%	99%	★

## Running the business - Finance

Status of Indicators	31/07/2023
OCC11 - Finance	▲

Measure	Director	Portfolio Holder	Period Actual	Period Target	Status	Comment	Finance Impact	Risk Impact	YTD Actual	YTD Target	YTD
OCC11.01 Overall forecast revenue variance across the Council	Lorna Baxter	Cllr C Miller	1.50%	0.00%	▲	Overall forecast expenditure for July is £8.5m higher than budget and available funding (after taking account of use of funding held in contingency and COVID-19 reserve).			0.50%	0.00%	★
OCC11.02 Achievement of planned savings	Lorna Baxter	Cllr C Miller	63.00%	95.00%	▲	£17.8m (63%) of the 2023/24 savings are assessed as delivered or are expected to be delivered. £4.4m (16%) are currently assessed as amber and £6.0m (21%) are assessed as red. Work is continuing to ensure that these savings are achieved.			54.33%	95.00%	▲
OCC11.03 General balances are forecast to remain at or above the risk assessed level	Lorna Baxter	Cllr C Miller	£21,465,000	£30,200,000	▲	Balances are forecast to reduce to £21.5m (after taking account of the use of £7.0m contingency and funding from the COVID-19 reserve and the overall £8.5m overspend). This is £8.7m below the £30.2m risk assessed level.			£21,465,000	£30,200,000	▲
OCC11.04 Directorates deliver services and achieve planned performance within agreed budget	Lorna Baxter	Cllr C Miller	3.0%	1.0%	▲	There is a forecast Directorate overspend of £17.4m (3.0%) for July. This has increased from £5.3m last reported to Cabinet for May 2023.			1.6%	1.0%	▲
OCC11.05 Total Outturn variation for DSG funded services (schools/early years)	Lorna Baxter	Cllr C Miller	0.00%	0.00%	★				0.00%	0.00%	★
OCC11.06 Total Outturn variation for DSG funded services (high needs)	Lorna Baxter	Cllr C Miller	0.00%	0.00%	★				0.00%	0.00%	★
OCC11.07 Use of non-DSG revenue grant funding	Lorna Baxter	Cllr C Miller	95.00%	95.00%	★				95.00%	95.00%	★
OCC11.08 % of agreed invoices paid within 30 days	Lorna Baxter	Cllr C Miller	94.04%	95.00%	★	This measure tracks invoices paid within 30 days of receipt and includes invoices paid via the self-service purchase order process, as well as invoices processed via the social care finance systems. Invoices paid on time is 1% below target this month, the drop is the result of Children's Social Care invoices dropping by over 5% this month, in addition a number of Property Service invoices were also delayed.			94.94%	95.00%	★
OCC11.09 Invoice collection rate - Corporate Debtors	Lorna Baxter	Cllr C Miller	98.87%	95.00%	★	This measure identifies the percentage of invoices issued that have been paid within 120 days. In this period, we are measuring invoices issued in April 2023. The collection rate was 98.87%, above the target of 95%.			96.92%	95.00%	★

Measure	Director	Portfolio Holder	Period Actual	Period Target	Status	Comment	Finance Impact	Risk Impact	YTD Actual	YTD Target	YTD
OCC11.10 Debt requiring impairment - Corporate Debtors	Lorna Baxter	Cllr C Miller	£568,548	£300,000		Debt requiring impairment this month is £0.569m. The top four cases account for 51% of the total bad debt and is being actively worked on. The top debtor is £0.158m and has gone into liquidation. A claim has been placed with the liquidators.			£568,548	£300,000	
OCC11.11 Debt requiring impairment - ASC contribution debtors	Lorna Baxter	Cllr C Miller	£4,942,558	£3,500,000		The 2022-23 year-end adults care contribution impairment for bad debt was £4.60m, bad debt at the end of July is £4.94m, £0.35m higher. As reported previously the trailing impacts of Covid-19 and wider economic factors have had a significant effect on means tested social care contribution bad debt levels since 2020-21, this tracks with other local authorities' experience. A bad debt task team has been operational since July 2022 with the objective to resolve £3.7m of historic debt. Resourcing challenges within both the debt task group and business as usual teams impacted performance during 2022-23. The service has recently implemented new performance reporting measures and additional oversight within this area.			£4,942,558	£3,500,000	
OCC11.12 Average cash balance compared to forecast average cash balance	Lorna Baxter	Cllr C Miller	£463,803,000	£480,000,000					£449,584,667	£480,000,000	
OCC11.13 Average interest rate achieved on in-house investment portfolio	Lorna Baxter	Cllr C Miller	3.13%	3.00%					3.07%	3.00%	
OCC11.14 Average annualised return achieved for externally managed funds	Lorna Baxter	Cllr C Miller	3.75%	3.75%					3.75%	3.75%	
OCC11.15 Invoice Collection Rate - ASC contribution debtors	Lorna Baxter	Cllr C Miller	90.77%	92.00%		The 120-day invoice collection rate was 91% this period, below the 92% target, but an improved position compared with the average for 22-23 which was 89% through 22/23. As reported previously, a joint end to end review of the invoice to enforcement process for Adult Social Care contributions has concluded; delivery of developments and outputs are planned through 23/24. Target will be to reach 92% by the end of the FY 23/24.			90.27%	92.00%	

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## Introduction

1. This annex sets out the second financial monitoring information for the 2023/24 financial year and is based on information to the end of July 2023. Key issues, as well as risks relating to inflation, demand and other factors, plus areas of emerging pressure are explained below.

The following additional information is provided to support the information in this Annex:

Annex B – 1 (a) to (e)	Detailed directorate positions
Annex B – 2a	Virements to approve
Annex B – 2b	Virements to note
Annex B – 3	Earmarked reserves
Annex B – 4	Government grants
Annex B – 5	General Balances

## Overall Financial Position

2. As shown below the Directorates are currently forecasting an overspend of £17.4m (3.0%). After taking account of additional interest on balances and the use of funding held in contingency and the COVID-19 reserve, the overall forecast expenditure would be £8.5m higher than the budget.

	Latest Budget 2023/24 £m	Forecast Spend 2023/24 £m	Forecast Variance July 2023 £m	Variance July 2023 %	Forecast Variance May 2023 £m	Change Since May 2023 £m
Adult Services	227.3	230.3	3.0	1.3%	0.0	3.0
Children's Services	169.0	180.1	11.0	6.5%	3.1	7.9
Environment & Place	74.6	75.6	1.0	1.3%	0.6	0.4
Public Health	3.9	3.9	0.0	0.0%	0.0	0.0
Community Safety	27.6	27.6	0.0	0.0%	0.0	0.0
Resources	69.7	72.1	2.4	3.4%	1.6	0.8
<b>Directorate Total</b>	<b>572.2</b>	<b>589.6</b>	<b>17.4</b>	<b>3.0%</b>	<b>5.3</b>	<b>12.1</b>
<b>Budgets Held Centrally</b>						
Capital Financing	28.4	28.4	0.0	0.0%	0.0	0.0
Interest on Balances	-16.7	-17.2	-0.5	3.0%	-0.5	0.0
Inflation <sup>1</sup>	6.5	6.5	0.0	0.0%	0.0	0.0
Contingency	12.4	5.4	-7.0	-56.5%	-3.3	-3.7
Un-ringfenced Specific Grants	-43.3	-43.3	0.0	0.0%	0.0	0.0
Insurance	1.4	1.4	0.1	5.3%	0.0	0.1
Contribution from COVID-19 reserve	-7.4	-8.8	-1.4	19.0%	-1.5	0.1
Contribution from Budget Priority Reserve	-2.4	-2.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0

<sup>1</sup> Funding for pay inflation assumed at 4.5% will be allocated when the pay award for 2023/24 is agreed. Further funding from contingency would be needed if the increase is higher than 5.5%.

Annex B  
Business Management & Monitoring Report July 2023

	Latest Budget 2023/24 £m	Forecast Spend 2023/24 £m	Forecast Variance July 2023 £m	Variance July 2023 %	Forecast Variance May 2023 £m	Change Since May 2023 £m
Contributions to reserves	20.0	20.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Contribution to balances	7.6	7.6	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
<b>Total Budgets Held Centrally</b>	<b>6.6</b>	<b>-2.3</b>	<b>-8.9</b>	<b>-135%</b>	<b>-5.3</b>	<b>-3.6</b>
<b>Net Operating Budget</b>	<b>578.8</b>	<b>587.3</b>	<b>8.5</b>	<b>1.5%</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>8.5</b>
Business Rates & Council Tax funding	-578.8	-578.8	0.0	0%	0.0	0.0
<b>Forecast Year End Position</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>8.5</b>	<b>8.5</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>8.5</b>

3. The forecast overspend reflects a more challenging position for 2023/24 than anticipated when the budget was set in February 2023 as well as the continuing impact of the activity that contributed to the overspend of £13.4m in 2022/23. Combined with issues in the local and national economy, including inflation and workforce shortages, this has increased the risk to the financial position for the council. At the same time, these factors have made it much more challenging to forecast activity and expenditure, placing some uncertainty around this forecast position.
4. The £3.0m forecast overspend for Adult Services reflects an unexpected increase in the number of residential placements expected during 2023/24. Although there is a seasonal trend, it is difficult to predict what activity levels during the rest of the year will be. The focus for the service remains to manage within the budget available but this will require all savings to be delivered and a favourable level of demand during the remainder of the year.
5. The on-going impact of underlying pressures in Children's Services which contributed to the overspend in 2022/23 remains a significant challenge in 2023/24. As reported previously these pressures are driven by a combination of care placements costs, staffing (particularly the reliance on agency staff to cover vacancies) and Home to School Transport. Home to School Transport has been affected in the last two months by the collapse of one local bus provider and increases in costs from some other providers. Children's Services have implemented a number of organisational, governance and business process controls as well as market management actions to address the underlying pressures but it is taking time for these to have an impact while the overall position is worsened by further inflationary and demand increases.
6. The forecast overspend for Environment & Place reflects additional costs relating to the disposal of Persistent Organic Pollutants and unachieved savings built into the budget for Supported Transport.
7. There are forecast overspends across most of the services within Corporate

Services. These reflect the anticipated achievement of savings, and a mix of staffing and inflationary pressures.

8. It is anticipated that around £5m of the £12.4m contingency budget will be needed to meet the cost of additional pay inflation in 2023/24 in addition to the £6.5m remaining budget available to support this after taking account of the Fire Pay Awards. After taking account of the use of £7.0m contingency and funding from the COVID-19 reserve to support the overall forecast position, the remaining net £8.5m overspend against the operating budget would reduce balances to £21.5m. That is £8.7m below the £30.2m risk assessed level. Were this to materialise, the level of balances for 2024/25, and funding for any top-up to that level, would need to be considered through the Budget and Business Planning process.
9. 40% of the 2022/23 savings of £10.2m which were not achieved as planned in the last financial year are currently assessed as delivered or are expected to be delivered. 60% are still assessed as amber or red. 63% of the 2023/24 savings are assessed as delivered or are expected to be delivered. Action is being taken to ensure that the delivery of both existing planned savings and new budget reductions is maximised in 2023/24.
10. The forecast 2023/24 deficit compared to Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) funding for High Needs is £18.3m and is in line with the budget agreed by Cabinet in May 2023. The CIPFA code of practice requires negative High Needs DSG balances to be held in an unusable reserve. The forecast deficit would increase the negative balance held in this reserve from £41.1m as at 31 March 2023 to £59.4m at 31 March 2024.
11. The Council's Management Team are working with directorates to identify actions to manage expenditure so that any overspend by year end is mitigated as far as possible and does not require any call on balances. Updates on the latest forecast position, which is expected to continue to be impacted by volatility in demand and inflation and evolving assessments of the ability to achieve planned savings, will be provided as the year progresses

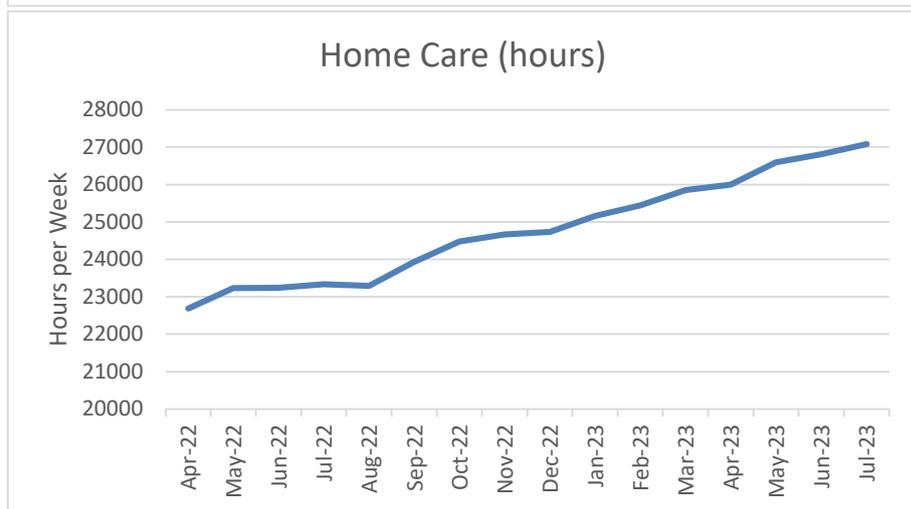
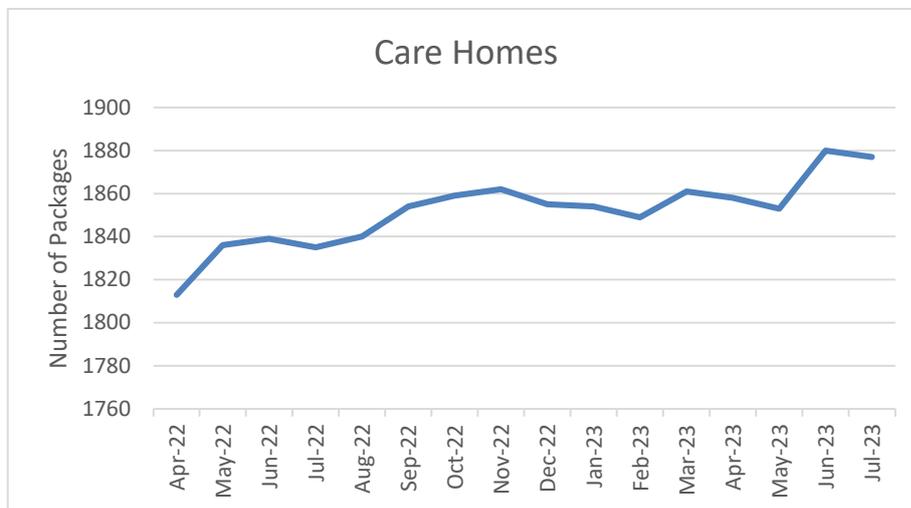
## Directorate Forecasts

### Adult Services

12. Adult Services is forecasting a £3.0m overspend against a budget of £227.3m.

Service Area	Latest Budget 2023/24 £m	Forecast Spend 2023/24 £m	Forecast Variance July 2023 £m
Adult Social Care	23.9	23.9	0.0
Health, Education & Social Care Commissioning	5.4	5.4	0.0
Housing & Social Care Commissioning	1.4	1.4	0.0
Business Support Service	1.0	1.0	0.0
Pooled Budgets	195.6	198.6	3.0
<b>Total Adult Services</b>	<b>227.3</b>	<b>230.2</b>	<b>3.0</b>

13. The main cause of the forecast overspend is an increase in the number of care packages during the year to date, and since the budget estimates were set out in Autumn 2022. This has been particularly noticeable within care homes and home support as shown in the graphs below. Expenditure will increase further if demand continues to rise over the remainder of the year.



14. To address demand pressures, a number of actions have already been taken. These include ensuring that all spend is aligned to the “Oxfordshire Way” approach through supporting people to remain in their own homes for as long as possible. Within the draft August activity data it is possible to see these actions starting to have an impact on care home activity, however there needs to be a sustained impact on the number of placements over the coming months to be confident that the forecast will be affected.

**Pooled Budgets**

Age Well Pooled Budget

15. The Age Well pool combines health and social care expenditure on care homes, activity relating to hospital avoidance and prevention and early support activities for older people.

16. Budgets within the pool are managed on an aligned basis with the Integrated Care

Board (ICB) for Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire, and Berkshire West (BOB).

17. The council elements of the Age Well pool are forecasting a breakeven position in 2023/24, on the assumption that all savings are delivered. This position is after using the new Market Sustainability and Improvement Fund (MSIF) one-off grant of £3.4m.
18. There are significant movements in risks within the forecast where certainty is not possible at this stage, these include:
  - Delivery of £4.1m savings through continued implementation of the Oxfordshire Way and changes to the unit cost of services. These will be delivered through commissioning, and service user reviews looking at opportunities for prevention, technology, and increased independence.
  - Growth in placements, particularly residential, through the year. Although there is a seasonal trend, it is difficult to predict accurately how activity will move. There is also a risk relating to improvements in the timeliness of assessments which may increase the number of new placements made in year.
19. The council's share of the Better Care Fund (BCF) held within the pool is £29.4m in 2023/24. This has increased by 5.7% compared to 2022/23.

#### Live Well Pooled Budget

20. The Live Well pool supports a mix of health and social care needs for adults of working age with learning disabilities, acquired brain injury or mental health needs and adults with physical disabilities.
21. Budgets within the pool are managed on an aligned basis with the Integrated Care Board (ICB) for Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire, and Berkshire West (BOB).
22. As at the end of July 2023, the council elements of the Live Well pool are forecast to overspend by £3.0m in 2023/24. This is an increase from the breakeven position reported in the last report. This is driven by:
  - A £0.9m overspend within Learning Disabilities, relating to transport provision and packages of support. The transport spend is being reviewed to understand the causes providing possible solutions to the increasing spend with the possibility of bringing this forecast down over the year.
  - A £2.1m overspend within Physical Disabilities relating to an increase in demand for both care homes and home support during 2022/23 creating a pressure in 2023/24. Over the last 12 months, up to June 2023, there has been a 12% increase in care home placements (10 placements) and a 9% increase in the number of homecare hours delivered per week (340 hours).

The risks or uncertainties in both service groups relate to:

- £2.6m savings yet to be delivered through the continued implementation of the

Oxfordshire Way and changes to the unit cost of services throughout the rest of 2023/24. These will be delivered through commissioning, and through service user reviews looking at opportunities for prevention, technology, and increased independence.

- Growth in care packages, particularly supported living and home support, through the year. Although there is a seasonal trend it is difficult to predict accurately how activity will move throughout the remaining eight months of the year. There is also a risk relating to the timeliness of assessments which may increase the number of new packages made in year.

23. Having overspent in 2022/23 it is anticipated that following changes to the budget and contracts for 2023/24, the Mental Health services provided through the Outcome Based Contract with Oxford Health will spend in line with budget this year.

#### **Non-Pool Services**

24. A breakeven position is forecast across all other services. A one-off saving of £1.0m is included in the budget for staffing for 2023/24, and at present this is on track to be delivered.

#### **Reserves**

25. £0.4m held in the Budget Priorities reserve for Adult Social Care as at 31 March 2023 will be used to support mental health transformation activity and intensive support costs in 2023/34.

26. £2.1m held as a result of additional contributions made by Oxfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group over the last three financial years is also committed to be used in 2023/24.

27. £0.3m added to the Government Initiative Reserve in 2022/23 related to charging reform, reflecting elements of the Trailblazer programme where costs will continue to be incurred in 2023/24 and 2024/25 ahead of the revised date for charging reform in autumn 2025.

#### **Ringfenced Grants**

28. As set out in Annex 4, ring-fenced government grants expected to be received by Adult Services in 2023/24 total £21.1m.

29. The Improved Better Care Fund Grant is £10.7m in 2023/24, with no change since 2022/23. The conditions attached to the grant funding require it to be used for the purposes of meeting adult social care needs, including contributing to the stabilisation of local care markets and supporting the NHS in addressing pressures such as delayed discharges.

30. The Market Sustainability and Improvement Fund is £5.4m and is being used to enhance provider fee uplifts in 2023/24 in line with the terms of the grant. It is also being used to maintain uplifts from 2022/23. These were funded through the Market Sustainability and Fair Cost of Care grant which now forms part of this

grant.

31. The Market Sustainability and Improvement Workforce Fund is £3.5m and is being used to increase social care capacity through increasing social care workforce capacity and retention, reducing social care waiting times and increasing fee rates paid to social care providers.
32. The Adult Social Care Discharge Fund is £1.5m. This will be used to provide interventions that improve discharge of patients from hospital to the most appropriate location for their ongoing care.

### **Virements**

33. There is one virement to note reflecting the allocation of the inflation budget held centrally to the pooled budgets.

### **Children's Services**

34. Children's Services is forecasting an overspend of £11.1m against a budget of £169.0m.
35. The underlying pressures in Children's Services highlighted in the 2022/23 Outturn overspend reported to Cabinet in June 2023 remain a significant challenge in 2023/24. They are driven by a combination of care placements costs, staffing, particularly the reliance on agency staff to cover vacancies, and Home to School Transport.

Service Area	Latest Budget 2023/24 £m	Forecast Spend 2023/24 £m	Forecast Variance July 2023 £m
Education & Learning	40.3	43.1	2.9
Children's Social Care	37.9	39.7	1.8
Children's Social Care Countywide	85.8	92.5	6.7
Schools <sup>2</sup>	0.2	0.2	0.0
Children's Services Central Costs	4.8	4.5	-0.3
<b>Total Children's Services</b>	<b>169.0</b>	<b>180.1</b>	<b>11.1</b>
<b>Overspend on High Needs DSG that will be transferred to unusable reserve</b>	<b>266.3</b>	<b>284.6</b>	<b>18.3</b>

### **Education & Learning**

36. Within Education & Learning, the Home to School Transport and the Special Educational Needs (SEN) service continue to be high risk in terms of budget variance.
37. Home to School transport is now forecast to overspend by £2.4m. This has arisen

<sup>2</sup> \*Maintained Schools are funded by Dedicated Schools Grant

from higher activity in the service than was budgeted for and the impact of rolling annual tenders for bus routes. The forecast will need to be revised once transport arrangements for the new academic year in September 2023 are fully established.

38. Additional unfunded expenditure of £0.1m is expected for the temporary senior management posts within Education.
39. The service is working on the implications of the new attendance regulations in September 2023; this may require additional resource to meet the new requirements. In addition, the Department for Education (DfE) has announced additional Early Years funding from September 2023. There is limited information at this stage but it is likely that there will be additional costs in implementing and administering this.
40. Within the Special Education Needs service there are considerable ongoing pressures on the SEN casework team and Educational Psychologists due to the continued high number of Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) requests. An additional on-going investment of £0.5m was included in the 2023/24 budget to fund additional staff to manage demand for EHCPs.

### **Children's Social Care & Children's Social Care Countywide**

41. Given the scale of the £19.1m overspend for Children's Social Care in 2022/23, the lead-lag impact of the actions taken to date and the urgent need to address the shortfalls in market capacity, the service is undertaking a comprehensive review of its vision and strategy which will be set out in a new Financial Strategy. This will set out a new baseline and financial investment, cost reduction and timeline to bring spend within current budget and recover the overspend.

#### Social Care & Countywide Placement Services – Current Position, Drivers and Action Plan

42. The underlying pressures remain despite additional budget added in 2023/24 and actions to prevent and reduce costs. This is due to a combination of:
  - The 2022/23 overspend increased in the last quarter of the year so was not fully anticipated in the Budget & Business Planning process for 2023/24.
  - The lead-lag time delay in changing practice, intervening to prevent unnecessary referrals and reducing the number and cost of cases is taking longer than anticipated.
  - The financial volatility in the market for care together with the impact of spiralling inflation and shortages in local capacity are undermining the service Sufficiency Strategy to manage the market. As a consequence, the service continues to experience an accelerating increase in placement fees especially 'Spot' rates
43. The drivers remain the same as in 2022/23 and include:
  - Continued workload pressure, increased vacancies and recruitment difficulties within front-line services especially Family Solutions Plus.

- Though the number of children in care is reducing the rate of decrease is slower than anticipated and is being offset by increases in underlying unit cost rates especially the growing number of very complex cases.

44. The most significant variances include:

- Children with Disabilities - £1.0m due to a combination of increased more complex level of care for 2 children and higher rates
- Children we care for - £2.6m due to a combination of increased more complex level of care and higher rates
- Reduction in forecast cost of unregistered care by £2.1m – based on a combination of reduction in complexity of care required and confirmation of Health contribution
- £0.3m relating to the payment of historic legal claim.

### **Actions to Turn the Position Around and Evidence of Improvement**

45. The service has implemented a number of critical organisation, governance, business process controls and market management actions to address the underlying pressures. These include:

- New executive management team put in place.
- Streamlining of referrals at the 'front door' (MASH) - revising thresholds & practices.
- The Family Solutions Plus (FSP) teams are working to reduce the backlog of assessments and intervention measures.
- Development of a robust recruitment and retention policy.
- Reducing the number of children in care and identifying those due to cease.
- Ongoing reduction in the number of children living in high-cost placements.
- Brokerage action plan to ensure timely, suitable, cost-effective placements are sourced.
- A 'LEAN' review of the placement process and identification of efficiencies.
- Move to the target number of Unaccompanied Children and Young People.

46. Evidence that the actions are having an impact is reflected in the continued downward trend in the number of Children We Care For (CWCF). The numbers are set out in the table below.

	Q1 2022	Q2 2022	Q3 2022	Jan 2023	Feb 2023	March 2023	April 2023	May 2023	June 2023	July 2023
Mainstream	757	778	755	752	735	719	722	704	700	687
Disabled Children	61	61	62	57	57	59	57	57	54	49
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>818</b>	<b>839</b>	<b>817</b>	<b>809</b>	<b>792</b>	<b>778</b>	<b>779</b>	<b>761</b>	<b>754</b>	<b>736</b>
Unaccompanied	66	69	73	115	105	104	104	102	93	91
<b>Total</b>	<b>884</b>	<b>908</b>	<b>890</b>	<b>924</b>	<b>897</b>	<b>882</b>	<b>883</b>	<b>863</b>	<b>847</b>	<b>827</b>

47. Following a 14% increase from December 2021 (742) to August 2022 (849) the service, through the actions above, has reversed the previous upward trend and the number has reduced to 736 at the end of July 2023 (13.3% reduction). The downward trend is expected to continue through the rest of the financial year. This is due to the above actions and in particular the new assessment procedures, resulting in a greater number of families and their children being supported in their own homes and fewer children entering into care.
48. In addition emphasis is also being placed on permanence planning and finding other more suitable (and usually more cost-effective) placements, including re-unification to the family home and adoption.
49. Though the activity is reducing the underlying costs continue to rise and are offsetting and undermining the improvement in activity.
50. The focus of the Financial Strategy will be to set out how the improvements are continued and grown while also applying the same rigor and focus to managing the market, the escalation in rates, the challenge of greater complexity and encouraging joint partnership work to address Continuing Healthcare (CHC) needs and resource. Any additional capital requirements to support the strategy will need to be considered through the Budget & Business Planning process for 2024/25.

#### **Schools' Costs (other than DSG)**

51. There is an overspend of £0.2m expected in respect of a school with a forced academisation, whilst the school has a deficit budget.

#### **Children's Services Central Costs**

52. There are no significant variances to report.

#### **Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG)**

53. The current position on DSG is a forecast deficit of £18.3m, consistent with the budget agreed by Cabinet in May 2023.

Summary of DSG funding	2023/24 Budget	2023/24 Projected Outturn	Variance July 2023
	£m	£m	£m
Schools block	131.2	131.2	0.0
Central Services Schools block	5.0	5.0	0.0
High Needs block	84.4	102.7	18.3
Early Years block	44.3	44.3	0.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>264.9</b>	<b>283.2</b>	<b>18.3</b>

54. Key risks to the forecast are the number of additional placements in September (over and above those currently planned), tribunal challenges to placement decisions and the impact of inflation on providers' fees.

55. There is no change forecast on Central and Schools DSG.
56. The Chancellor announced significant changes to childcare arrangements in the Spring Budget 2023. This included an uplift to rates for the current 2023/24 financial year, which is to be paid for the period September 2023 to March 2024. The funding for this is received via a specific grant which will be subsumed within DSG from April 2024. The grant is in the region of £3m, and the exact amount will be known in June 2024, after the census return. There is no impact on the Council's budget, as the Council is passing the grant to providers in full.
57. The DfE have announced support for the September 2023 Teachers Pay Award via the Teachers Pay Additional Grant. Of the 6.5% pay award, the DfE are providing 3%, based on the assumption that there is 3.5% within school budget. The grant will be passed on in full to establishments and will be subsumed within the DSG from 2025/26.

### **Environment & Place**

58. Environment & Place is forecasting an overspend of £1.0m against a budget of £74.6m.

Service Area	Latest Budget 2023/24	Forecast Spend 2023/24	Forecast Variance July 2023
	£m	£m	£m
Transport & Infrastructure	12.8	12.8	0.0
Planning, Environment & Climate Change	37.3	37.7	0.4
Highways & Operations	23.6	24.2	0.6
Directorate Support	0.9	0.9	0.0
<b>Total Environment &amp; Place</b>	<b>74.6</b>	<b>75.6</b>	<b>1.0</b>

### **Transport & Infrastructure**

59. Transport & Infrastructure comprises Transport Policy, Place Making and Infrastructure Delivery. A breakeven position is currently forecast.
60. Infrastructure Delivery reported a pressure arising as a result of the Housing Infrastructure Fund (HIF1) scheme relating to costs of the planning enquiry and compulsory purchase orders enquiry. The services are currently exploring potential ways to mitigate some of the pressures.

### **Planning, Environment & Climate change**

61. The Planning, Environment & Climate change service area is made up of Strategic Planning, Climate Change and Environment & Circular economy. The service area is forecasting an overspend of £0.4m.
62. Strategic planning are highlighting a risk of an overspend position at the year-end

due to staffing pressures and activity related to the delivery of the Minerals & Waste plan. Teams are currently working on the plans to mitigate the pressures within their budgets.

63. Climate Change may underspend if recruitment is unsuccessful due to a challenging recruitment market.

64. Waste management data is currently available to the end of July 2023. The table below shows the budgeted and forecast tonnages and forecast variation for each waste stream as well as actual tonnages to the end of July 2023.

Waste Stream	Under(-) /Over(+) spend £m	Forecast outturn tonnage	Budgeted Tonnage
Recycling/composts	-0.3	150,983	155,634
Energy recovery	+1.1	110,260	103,050
Landfill	-0.4	6,477	11,025
<b>Total</b>	<b>+0.4</b>	<b>267,720</b>	<b>269,709</b>

65. Factors contributing to the forecast are:

- a. The waste budget was reduced by £0.8m in 2023/24 to align with anticipated activity. This has reduced the ability of the service to absorb pressures relating to waste tonnages fluctuations.
- b. Implementing the new legislative requirements for the Persistent Organic Pollutants waste stream has been more expensive than anticipated.
- c. Further legislative change around DIY charges at recycling centres currently expected to come into effect on 1 January 2024 will create an additional pressure for the last quarter of the year. DEFRA are yet to release this legislation or detailed guidance.

66. Key risks will be the amount of waste produced as the year progresses and the volume of Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs) waste where a change in the law means the council needs to fund the cost of storing, shredding, and burning soft furnishings, as an alternative to landfill. An additional budget allocation of £0.2m to support this was included in the budget for 2023/24 but the actual cost that the service is anticipating is currently around £0.6m.

67. The Waste team is continuing to work on waste prevention campaigns with the district and city councils. They are also monitoring the market particularly around POPs to ensure current prices are the best achievable and is planning as far as possible with the information available to mitigate the increased costs arising from changes to DIY charges.

### **Highways & Operations**

68. Highways & Operations is forecasting an overspend of £0.6m against a budget of £34.1m.

69. Within the Highway Maintenance service there has been a significant increase in highways defects that needed repair in the first quarter of the financial year, primarily attributable to the consequence of the bad weather on roads that are not in particularly good condition and is similar to higher levels of activity seen across the country. Additional personnel continue to be deployed to manage the current defect volumes. The increase in defect numbers and the cost increase of associated repairs is currently being managed within the service area budgets through reduction on other operational spend where possible.

Month	Defects 2022/23	Defects 2023/24	% Increase/Decrease
April 2023	3,320	4,143	+25%
May 2023	2,927	4,944	+69%
June 2023	2,212	4,695	112%
July 2023	1,979	4,134	209%
<b>Total</b>	<b>10,438</b>	<b>13,773</b>	<b>+104%</b>

70. The service has highlighted that there may be an impact on energy costs based on significant increases in energy prices. The full impact will be confirmed in future monitoring cycles.

71. Network Management is currently reporting a small pressure; however, the service has received higher than anticipated income in the first quarter of the year. This may result in an underspend, but it is not yet clear if this trend will continue throughout the year.

72. Supported transport is currently forecasting a £0.6m overspend. The key drivers of the pressures within the service include:

- a. Unachieved savings of £0.4m from 2022/23 plus a further saving of £0.2m in 2023/24 that are not expected to be delivered. Both savings relate to the anticipated use of technology and changes to processes to reduce costs and effort required and the implementation of automated processes for home to school contract management.
- b. Savings achievable within the original proposal were overstated. Development work has identified higher costs than expected with less savings than hoped, and challenges with product availability for local authority market.

73. Other opportunities to improve service provision and deliver potential efficiencies are now being reviewed from a different perspective with various smaller actions/systems being considered.

### **Directorate Support**

74. The Directorate Support service area is currently forecasting a breakeven position.

### **Public Health and Community Safety**

75. Public Health and Community Safety are forecasting a breakeven position.

Service Area	Latest Budget 2023/24	Forecast Spend 2023/24	Forecast Variance July 2023
	£m	£m	£m
Public Health Functions	37.6	37.6	0.0
Public Health Recharges	0.6	0.6	0.0
Other Income	-0.7	-0.7	0.0
Grant Income	-33.6	-33.6	0.0
Transfer to Public Health Reserve	0.0	0.0	0.0
<b>Total Public Health</b>	<b>3.9</b>	<b>3.9</b>	<b>0.0</b>
<b>Total Community Safety</b>	<b>27.6</b>	<b>27.6</b>	<b>0.0</b>
<b>Total Public Health &amp; Community Safety</b>	<b>31.5</b>	<b>31.5</b>	<b>0.0</b>

### **Public Health**

76. A break-even position is forecast for services funded by the Public Health grant.

### **Community Safety**

77. The Fire and Rescue Service are forecasting a break-even position at this stage of the financial year.

### **Ringfenced Government Grants**

78. The ringfenced Public Health grant totals £33.6m in 2023/24 with an indicative 1.4% uplift expected for 2024/25.

### **Use of Un-ringfenced Government Grant Funding**

79. Un-ringfenced grants held centrally and agreed to be used to support expenditure budgets within Public Health include:

- £1.2m Domestic Abuse Duty Grant supporting the provision of accommodation-based support to victims of domestic abuse and their children.
- £0.6m Substance Misuse Treatment & Recovery Housing Grant being used to deliver the Government's aim that by 2024/25 there will be more people recovering from addiction in stable and secure housing.

- £0.6m Supplementary Substance Misuse Treatment and Recovery grant. This is the second year of a three-year scheme where the Office for Health Improvement and Disparities (OHID) is working alongside other government departments to support a process of investment in a whole system approach to tackling illicit drug use, including enforcement, diversion and treatment and recovery interventions.
- £1.1m Rough Sleeping Drug and Alcohol Grant is being used to provide specialist support for rough sleepers and those at risk.
- £1.3m Firefighter’s Pension Fund Grant and £0.1m from the New Dimensions Fund

### Reserves

80. The Public Health reserve held £5.9m at 1 April 2023. £1.7m is forecast to be spent in 2023/24, £1.2m in 2024/25 and £0.7m in 2025/26, leaving a balance of £2.3m. Options to utilise all the funding by 2026/27 in line with the grant requirements are being considered.
81. £2.7m is held in reserves for the renewal of fire and rescue vehicles and breathing apparatus equipment. A fleet replacement strategy is being agreed which will use all of this funding in the medium term.
82. £0.9m is being held to cover the cost of the replacement of Airwave for Oxfordshire Fire and Rescue Service and the implementation of the new national Emergency Service Mobile Communications Programme.
83. £0.2m is being held to expand the Making Every Contact Count work programme in Oxfordshire; £0.5m is being held to fund employee costs expected to be incurred over the next three to five years.

### Virements

84. Cabinet are asked to note the virements covering the financial effect of the fire service pay awards, the funding of community capacity grants and two trading standards posts linked to tobacco control from the public health reserve, and the receipt of the fire protection uplift grant.

### Resources

85. The services within Resources are forecasting a combined overspend of £2.4m against a budget of £69.7m.

Service Area	Latest Budget 2023/24	Forecast Spend 2023/24	Forecast Variance July 2023
	£m	£m	£m
Corporate Services	3.0	3.1	0.1
Human Resources & Organisational Development	3.0	3.6	0.6
Communications, Strategy & Insight	3.3	3.3	0.0
IT, Innovation & Digital	10.2	10.6	0.4

Service Area	Latest Budget 2023/24	Forecast Spend 2023/24	Forecast Variance July 2023
	£m	£m	£m
Culture & Customer Experience	11.9	12.2	0.3
Finance & Procurement	8.6	8.9	0.3
Property, Investment & Facilities Management	19.1	19.4	0.3
Law & Governance	7.7	8.1	0.4
Delivery & Partnership	2.9	2.9	0.0
<b>Total Resources</b>	<b>69.7</b>	<b>72.1</b>	<b>2.4</b>

86. **Corporate Services** is forecasting to overspend by £0.1m due to increased apprenticeship levy and higher subscription costs.

87. **Human Resources & Organisational Development** is forecast to overspend by £0.6m. This reflects a delay in the anticipated delivery of a £1.5m reduction in agency costs across the council.

The following controls have been agreed:

- a. Restriction on all new agency orders to a maximum months duration unless there is an agreed exemption;
- b. Agreed contractual arrangements need to be used for all temporary agency requirements.
- c. Review and simplification of the process for new supplier set up to ensure that agency rates are set through the agreed contractual route.

There is other work already underway in terms of converting agency staff to permanent contracts in addition to moving individuals onto rates which attract less commission. The overspend has also been partially mitigated by the savings from the associated delay in the implementation of the Resourcing Team and through vacancy management.

In addition to the mitigations referred to above, the newly appointed Workforce & Organisational Development Director will be prioritising the organisations' workforce strategy and action plan. Whilst reduced costs and improved efficiencies are anticipated through the introduction of new ways of working, improved candidate and employee experiences, this is a three-year strategy where benefits will take time to be realised.

88. **Communications, Strategy & Insight** are forecasting break even. The service is actively managing the budget envelope, taking mitigating action where required in order to absorb additional costs and respond flexibly to new requests.

89. **IT, Innovation & Digital** are forecasting an overspend of £0.4m. Action to achieve £0.9m cross directorate savings agreed as part of the 2023/24 budget is at risk due to change management challenges. Half of the savings are currently forecast to be delivered but this will be updated as the year progresses.

90. **Culture and Customer Experience** are forecasting an overspend of £0.3m. This is mainly in the Libraries Service where saving targets are particularly challenging due to the need to ensure the demand for services are matched by adequate resourcing levels and in the Customer Service Centre where additional demand / pressures on complaints have caused additional costs for Independent Officer and Independent Person investigators. A further developing pressure is in corporate onboarding where financial savings are not yet fully understood and will be updated as the year progresses.
91. **Finance and Procurement** are forecasting a £0.3m overspend due to increased costs in agency staff being utilised to cover hard to fill vacancies, and an increase in staff costs following a job evaluation review.
92. **Property Services** are forecasting an overspend of £0.3m. The School Catering service is forecasting to overspend due to inflationary pressure on costs and income streams, but this will be mitigated by savings in other areas. Anticipated savings from vacating one of the council's office buildings will be offset by estimated dilapidation costs in 2023/24.
93. **Law and Governance** are forecasting an overspend of £0.4m. 2023/24 is a transition year for the new structures which, subject to consultation, are planned to be implemented in Governance in the second quarter of 2023/24 and Legal in quarter four of 2023/24. As a result higher locum costs in Legal Services are still expected to be incurred for most of the year.
94. **Delivery & Partnership** includes the delivery of cost-of-living measures and the council's migration and asylum programmes, including Homes for Ukraine. The budget is mainly funded from earmarked reserves and specific government grants and is forecast to break even.

#### **Medium Term Financial Strategy Savings**

95. After taking account of new and previously agreed savings the 2023/24 budget agreed includes planned directorate savings of £28.2m.
96. £10.2m of the 2022/23 savings were not achieved as planned in the last financial year. £4m (40%) of these savings are assessed as delivered or are expected to be delivered. £4.9m (48%) are assessed as red. Any planned savings not delivered in 2022/23, where the on-going impact was not adjusted through the 2023/24 Budget & Business Planning Process, will need to be achieved in 2023/24 as well as new savings agreed in February 2023.
97. £17.8m (63%) of the 2023/24 savings are assessed as delivered or are expected to be delivered. £4.4m (16%) are currently assessed as amber and £6.0m (21%) are assessed as red. Work is continuing to ensure that these savings are achieved.

	2023/24 Planned Savings	2022/23 Savings that need to be delivered in 2023/24	Total
	£m	£m	£m
Adult Services	-18.1	-4.0	-22.1
Children's Services	-3.4	-1.9	-5.3
Environment & Place	-1.4	-2.3	-3.7
Community Safety	-0.2	0.0	-0.2
Resources & Cross Directorate	-5.1	-2.0	-7.1
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>-28.2</b>	<b>-10.2</b>	<b>-38.4</b>

### Adult Services

98. The 2023/24 budget includes planned savings of £18.1m. 58% of these savings have been delivered, 15% are expected to be delivered and 26% are currently unconfirmed and have an element of risk in the delivery.

99. The savings which pose the greatest risk are those which will be the result of implementing the Oxfordshire Way through care reviews where the opportunity for increased independence is possible, and those which relate to managing demand, particularly in care homes. These savings account for £8.3m of the total. With reviews, complexity and intensity of support varies so some will result in increased packages of care due to the nature of supporting people which adds additional pressure.

100. There are also £4.0m of savings brought forward from 2022/23 to be delivered in 2023/24. 13% of these are expected to be delivered, 31% have an element of risk to delivery, and 56% of the savings are proving very challenging to deliver, however £2m of this is offset by savings in other areas which were not forecast.

### Children's Services

101. The 2023/24 budget includes planned savings of £3.4m. 51% of these savings are forecast to be delivered and include £0.7m one – off contributions from reserves and a reduction of £0.3m relating to the removal of the Health & Social Care Levy. £0.1m (3.5%) are currently assessed as amber. £1.6m (46%) of the savings are assessed as red.

### Environment & Place

102. The 2023/24 budget includes planned savings of £1.4m. £1.0m (72%) are expected to be achieved. £0.3m (18%) are assessed as red and include a saving to reduce costs by the use of technology to implement automated processes for home to school contract management.

103. A £0.6m investment in flooding and drainage, to support and tackle the worst areas for flooding around the county will not be fully realised by the end of 2023/24. This is due to time taken to build partnerships with districts and other

partners in order to establish key priority areas. However, this will be managed within overall budgets for the directorate.

104. A £1.2m Countywide Community Transport initiative is currently assessed as amber due to a lack of interested operators for the new transport services in rural areas. The services are currently exploring the use of existing fleet services and are engaging with stakeholders on proposed schemes.
105. £1.7m of the £2.3m savings not achieved in 2022/23 is related to street lighting and is expected delivered in 2023/24. £0.6m are at risk of not being delivered in 23/24.

#### Public Health & Community Safety

106. A £0.1m saving relating to a review of mid and supervisory leadership levels is currently assessed as amber.

#### Resources

107. The 2023/24 budget includes planned savings of £5.0m. £1.6m (31%) of these savings are forecast to be delivered. £2.4m (48%) savings currently assessed as red and include a £0.6m saving from reduction in property costs through moving out of a leased office building, a £1.2m saving from a reduction in agency staff which isn't materialising because the resourcing team isn't yet established. Updates on progress will be included in future reports as the year progresses.
108. £1.8m of the £2.0m savings not achieved in 2022/23 is expected to be delivered in 2023/24.

### **Debt Management**

#### **Corporate Debtors**

109. The combined collection rate, based on invoice volumes, for June and July was 96%, 1% above the 95% target. In terms of collection based on the value of invoices the figure for the same period was 96.8%.
110. Debt requiring impairment is currently £0.6m, £0.3m above the year-end target of £0.3m; the top five cases account for 50% of all bad debt. Four of the five invoices have been disputed and are being actively progressed between corporate income recovery and the issuing service.

#### **Adult Social Care Debtors**

111. The combined 120-day invoice collection rate for June and July was 90.4%, compared to the target collection rate of 92%. The service is in the process of implementing an income improvement plan which is expected to address 'up stream' issues impacting invoices being paid on time. Changes to automated reminders are due to be implemented in September, which should see an improvement to collection rates by the last quarter of the year.
112. The 2022/23 year-end adults care contribution impairment for bad debt was

£4.6m, bad debt at the end of July is £4.9m, £0.3m higher. As reported previously the trailing impacts of COVID-19 and wider economic factors have had a significant effect on means tested social care contribution bad debt levels since 2020/21, and this is consistent with other local authorities' experience. A bad debt task team has been operational since July 2022 with the objective to resolve £3.7m of historic debt. Resourcing challenges within both the debt task group and business as usual teams impacted performance during 2022/23. The service is implementing new performance reporting measures and oversight within this area which is just recently operational.

## **Budgets Held Centrally**

113. After taking account of the use of one – off funding and contingency to support the forecast directorate overspend, there is a combined underspend of £8.9m against budgets held centrally.

### Capital Financing Costs

114. The borrowing costs and minimum revenue provision (MRP) for capital projects funded by Prudential Borrowing are either recharged to directorates where savings arising from the scheme are expected to meet them or met corporately from the budget for capital financing costs. It is anticipated that after taking account of recharges to directorates the actual costs of the capital financing will be broadly aligned with the budget in 2023/24.

### Interest on Balances

115. The current forecast outturn position for in house interest receivable is £11.5m, which is £2.5m above budget. Of the additional £2.5m interest, approximately £2.0m is currently expected to be applied to developer balances. The additional interest reflects an increase in the forecast of the average base rate for the year of 4.80%, compared to the rate assumed in the budget of 4.31%.

116. Interest payable is currently forecast to be £13.1m, which is in line with the budget.

117. The forecast outturn position for external fund returns is £3.8m, in line with the budget.

118. Cash balances for the year are forecast to be £51.9m lower than they would otherwise have been as a result of negative DSG balances as per section 47 of this report. The impact of this is an estimated opportunity cost of £1.5m in unearned interest during 2023/24.

### Inflation and Contingency

119. The contingency budget for 2023/24 totals £12.4m. This includes £4.2m one-off council tax and business rates funding also agreed to be added to contingency as part of the Provisional Outturn Report 2022/23 to Cabinet in June 2023.

120. The agreed budget for pay inflation included funding for an estimated pay award equivalent to 4.5% in 2023/24. The claim lodged by UNISON, GMB and Unite on 30 January 2023 included a request to increase pay by RPI (10.70%) + 2.0% on all pay points. On 23 February 2023, national employers responded with the following offer:

- With effect from 1 April 2023, an increase of £1,925 (pro rata for part-time employees) to be paid as a consolidated, permanent addition on all NJC pay points 2 to 43 inclusive.
- With effect from 1 April 2023, an increase of 3.88 per cent on all pay points above the maximum of the pay spine but graded below deputy chief officer.

121. After taking account of the number of staff on different pay points the current pay offer is estimated to equate to an overall estimated increase equivalent to 5.5%, 1.0% more than budgeted. Any increase that is larger than the budgeted funding for inflation will need to be met from contingency.

122. All three unions have rejected the offer and Unison balloted for strike action in the summer. While Unison have subsequently decided that it would not be effective to take industrial action at this time, GMB has confirmed it will conduct disaggregated industrial action ballots and that the organisations to be targeted for strike ballots will be notified in the next few weeks, in line with the requirements of the legislation. The ballots will open on 12 September and close on 24 October 2023.

123. National Employers continue to advise very strongly against imposing any pay offer before the collective bargaining process has concluded.

124. The forecast assumes that £7.0m that is estimated to remain in contingency after funding Fire and Green Book pay awards will be utilised to support the directorate position.

### **Reserves**

125. As set out in Annex B - 3 Earmarked Reserves are forecast to be £181.6m at 31 March 2024.

126. **COVID-19 Reserve** - The balance held in the reserve as at 1 April 2023 was £15.4m. The use of £13.4m to support planned expenditure from 2023/24 – 2025/26 is built into the Medium Term Financial Strategy. £0.1m of the remaining £2.0m balance that was uncommitted at the end of 2022/23 will be used to further extend capacity needed within the Information Management team within Governance to support the council's ability to respond to Subject Access Requests (SARs). £1.4m of the remaining balance is included in the forecast position and will be used to support pressures in Children's Social Care in 2023/24. £0.5m is now committed to further extend capacity needed within the Customer Service Centre to support the council's ability to respond to Complaints/FOI and deliver a wide ranging set of improvement actions.

127. **Budget Priorities reserve** – As per the September 2022 Cabinet report up to £0.380m from this reserve was agreed to be used as match funding to support Council tax hardship schemes for the residents of Oxfordshire. The actual match funding required for the schemes was £0.326m so the balance of £0.054m can be released back into the COVID-19 reserve to support cost of living measures in 2025/26. The Capital Programme Approvals report elsewhere on the agenda includes a recommendation to forward fund £0.551m of the cost of developing the Zero Emissions Zone from the Budget Priorities Reserve.
128. **Transformation reserve** – £0.1m will be used to appoint a specialist Place brand consultancy, to help produce a Place Narrative for Oxfordshire that can be used to bring partners and stakeholders together to work to a shared and common purpose for place across the county.
129. An unusable reserve was created in 2020/21 to hold **negative High Needs DSG balances** in line with a change to the CIPFA code of practice on DSG High Needs deficits. The net deficit of £18.3m for 2023/24 will increase the total High Needs deficit held in the reserve to £59.4m as at 31 March 2024. The regulations which require the negative balance to be held in an unusable reserve will come to an end on 31 March 2026. The impact of the unusable reserve on the council's ability to set a balanced budget over the medium term will need to be considered through the Budget & Business Planning Process for 2024/25.

### **Grants**

130. As set out in Annex B - 4 government grants totalling £460.6m are expected to be received by the Council during 2023/24. This includes £10m in schools grants for additional mainstream funding, early years funding and pupil premium, plus Adult Social Care Market Sustainability and Improvement Fund - Workforce Fund (£3.5m).

### Homes for Ukraine

131. At the end of 2022/23 £16.9m unspent grant funding for the Homes for Ukraine scheme and £2.1m unspent funding for education costs relating to the scheme was held in the Grants & Contributions Reserve.
132. Funding was initially provided as a one-off payment of £10,500 per guest and then reduced to £5,900 for arrivals from 1 January 2023 onwards. For eligible minors the tariff will continue at £10,500
133. A further claim was submitted at the end of June 2023, £16.9m has now been allocated. Based on the position as at the end of 2022/23, £6.3 remains unallocated. The outcome of the quarter 1 claim in 2023/24 is awaited.

### **General Balances**

134. The risk assessed level of balances for 2023/24 is £30.2m, this has been reduced to £30.02m to take into account the supplementary estimate of £0.18m for staffing costs to support development of One - Fleet approach to the council's

vehicles.

135. After taking account of the use of contingency and funding from the COVID-19 reserve to support the overall forecast position, the remaining net £8.5m overspend against the operating budget would reduce balances to £21.5m. That is £8.7m below the £30.2m risk assessed level. Were this to materialize, the level of balances for 2024/25, and funding for any top-up to that level, would need to be considered through the Budget and Business Planning process.

**Business Management & Monitoring Report**  
**Position to the end of July 2023**  
**Budget Monitoring**

Directorate	Net Budget (Latest Estimate)	Projected Full Year Spend	Projected Year End Variance underspend- overspend+	Projected Year End Variance	Variance Last Month	Change in Variance	Projected Year End Traffic Light
	£000	£000	£000	%	£000	£000	Red > 1.5% Amber >1.1% <1.5% Green on track
Adult Services	227,251	230,232	2,981	1.31%	0	2,981	A
Children's Services	168,980	180,054	11,074	6.55%	3,094	7,980	R
Environment and Place	74,642	75,642	1,000	1.34%	600	400	A
Public Health	3,931	3,931	0	0.00%	0	0	G
Community Safety	27,638	27,638	0	0.00%	0	0	G
Resources	69,725	72,125	2,400	3.44%	1,600	800	R
<b>Directorate Total Net</b>	<b>572,167</b>	<b>589,622</b>	<b>17,455</b>	<b>3.05%</b>	<b>5,294</b>	<b>12,161</b>	<b>R</b>

**Business Management & Monitoring Report**  
**Position to the end of July 2023**  
**Budget Monitoring**

Directorate	Net Budget (Latest Estimate)	Projected Full Year Spend	Projected Year End Variance underspend- overspend+	Projected Year End Variance	Variance Last Month	Change in Variance	Projected Year End Traffic Light
	£000	£000	£000	%	£000	£000	Red > 1.5% Amber >1.1% <1.5% Green on track
<b>Budget held Centrally</b>						0	
Capital Financing	28,402	28,402	0	0.00%	0	0	
Interest on Balances	-16,664	-17,164	-500	3.00%	-500	0	
Inflation	6,499	6,499	0	0.00%	0		
Contingency	12,400	5,400	-7,000	-56.45%	-3,300	-3,700	
Unringfenced Specific Government Grants	-43,278	-43,278	0	0.00%	6	-6	
Insurance	1,436	1,436	0	0.00%	0	0	
Contribution from COVID-19 Reserve	-7,380	-8,780	-1,400	18.97%	-1,500	100	
Contribution from Budget Priorities Reserve	-2,370	-2,370	0	0.00%	0		
Contributions to (+)/from (-)reserves	19,951	19,951	0	0.00%	0	0	
Contribution to (+)/from(-) balances	7,600	7,600	0	0.00%	0	0	
<b>Total Budget held Centrally</b>	<b>6,597</b>	<b>-2,303</b>	<b>-8,900</b>	<b>-134.91%</b>	<b>-5,294</b>	<b>-3,606</b>	
<b>Net Operating Budget</b>	<b>578,764</b>	<b>587,319</b>	<b>8,555</b>	<b>1.48%</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>8,555</b>	
						0	
Business Rates & Council Tax Funding	-578,763	-578,763	0			0	
<b>Forecast Year End Position</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>8,555</b>	<b>8,555</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>8,555</b>	

**Business Management and Monitoring Report: Adult Services**  
**Position to the end of July 2023**  
**Revenue Budget Monitoring**

		Net Budget (Latest Estimate)	Projected Full Year Spend	Projected Year End Variance	Variance Last Month	Change in Variance
		£000	£000	underspend- overspend+	£000	£000
				£000		
SCS1	Adult Social Care	23,988	23,988	0	0	0
SCS2	Other Adult Social Care Services	5,357	5,357	0	0	0
SCS3	Housing & Social Care Commissioning	1,369	1,369	0	0	0
SCS4	Business Support Service	1,036	1,036	0	0	0
SCS5	Pooled Budget Contributions	195,501	198,482	2,981	0	2,981
<b>Total Adult Services</b>		<b>227,251</b>	<b>230,232</b>	<b>2,981</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2,981</b>

**Business Management & Monitoring Report: Children's Services**  
**Forecast Position at the end of July 2023**  
**Revenue Budget Monitoring**

		Net Budget (Latest Estimate)	Projected Full Year Spend	Projected Year End Variance	Variance Last Month	Change in Variance
		£000	£000	underspend- overspend+	£000	£000
<b>CEF1</b>	<b><u>Education &amp; Learning</u></b>					
CEF1-1	Management & Central Costs	1,140	1,474	334	7	327
CEF1-2	SEND	7,311	7,311	0	0	0
CEF1-3	Learning & School Improvement	1,258	1,258	0	0	0
CEF1-4	Access to Learning	30,322	32,722	2,400	0	2,400
CEF1-5	Learner Engagement Service	264	380	116	0	116
	<b>Total Education &amp; Learning</b>	<b>40,295</b>	<b>43,145</b>	<b>2,850</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>2,842</b>
<b>CEF2</b>	<b><u>Children's Social Care</u></b>					
CEF2-1	Management & Central Costs	5,618	5,792	174	0	174
CEF2-2	Social Care	32,308	33,957	1,649	1,825	-176
	<b>Total Children's Social Care</b>	<b>37,926</b>	<b>39,749</b>	<b>1,823</b>	<b>1,826</b>	<b>-3</b>

**Business Management & Monitoring Report: Children's Services**  
**Forecast Position at the end of July 2023**  
**Revenue Budget Monitoring**

		Net Budget (Latest Estimate)	Projected Full Year Spend	Projected Year End Variance	Variance Last Month	Change in Variance
		£000	£000	underspend- overspend+	£000	£000
<b>CEF3</b>	<b><u>Children's Social Care Countywide Services</u></b>					
CEF3-1	Corporate Parenting	69,853	74,321	4,468	1,260	3,208
CEF3-2	Safeguarding	3,587	3,415	-172	0	-172
CEF3-3	Services for Disabled Children	11,438	13,750	2,312	0	2,312
CEF3-4	Youth Offending Service	883	970	87	0	87
	<b>Total Children's Social Care Countywide Services</b>	<b>85,761</b>	<b>92,456</b>	<b>6,695</b>	<b>1,260</b>	<b>5,435</b>
<b>CEF4</b>	<b><u>Schools</u></b>					
CEF4-1	Delegated Budgets	0	0	0	0	0
CEF4-2	Nursery Education Funding (EY)	0	0	0	0	0
CEF4-3	Non-Delegated School Costs	216	216	0	0	0
CEF4-4	School Support Non-Negotiable Recharges	0	0	0	0	0
CEF4-5	Capitalised Repairs & Maintenance	0	0	0	0	0
	<b>Total Schools</b>	<b>216</b>	<b>216</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>

**Business Management & Monitoring Report: Children's Services**  
**Forecast Position at the end of July 2023**  
**Revenue Budget Monitoring**

	Net Budget (Latest Estimate)	Projected Full Year Spend	Projected Year End Variance	Variance Last Month	Change in Variance
	£000	£000	underspend- overspend+	£000	£000
<b>CEF5 Children's Services Central Costs</b>					
CEF5-1 Management & Administration	971	677	-294	0	-294
CEF5-2 Premature Retirement Compensation	3,211	3,211	0	0	0
CEF5-3 Commissioning Recharge	600	600	0	0	0
<b>Total Children's Services Central Costs</b>	<b>4,782</b>	<b>4,488</b>	<b>-294</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>-294</b>
<b>Total Children's Services</b>	<b>168,980</b>	<b>180,054</b>	<b>11,074</b>	<b>3,094</b>	<b>7,980</b>
<b>MEMORANDUM: DEDICATED SCHOOLS GRANT - DSG Funded Expenditure (Gross)</b>					
Schools DSG	131,169	131,169	0	0	0
High Needs DSG	84,373	102,673	18,300	18,300	0
Early Years DSG	44,341	44,341	0	0	0
Central DSG	4,992	4,992	0	0	0
<b>Total DSG Funded Expenditure</b>	<b>264,875</b>	<b>283,175</b>	<b>18,300</b>	<b>18,300</b>	<b>0</b>

**Business Management & Monitoring Report: Environment and Place**  
**Position to the end of July 2023**  
**Revenue Budget Monitoring**

		Net Budget (Latest Estimate)	Projected Full Year Spend	Projected Year End Variance	Variance Last Month	Change in Variance
		£000	£000	underspend- overspend+	£000	£000
EP1	Transport & Infrastructure	12,796	12,796	0	0	0
EP2	Planning, Environment & Climate Change	37,337	37,737	400	0	400
EP3	Highways & Operations	23,583	24,183	600	600	0
EP4	Directorate Support	926	926	0	0	0
<b>TOTAL ENVIRONMENT AND PLACE</b>		<b>74,642</b>	<b>75,642</b>	<b>1,000</b>	<b>600</b>	<b>400</b>

**Business Management & Monitoring Report : Public Health & Community Safety**  
**Position to the end of July 2023**  
**Revenue Budget Monitoring**

		Net Budget (Latest Estimate)	Projected Full Year Spend	Projected Year End Variance	Variance Last Month	Change in Variance
		£000	£000	underspend- overspend+	£000	£000
<b>PH 1 &amp; 2</b>	<b>Public Health Functions</b>					
PH1-1	Sexual Health	6,440	6,440	0	0	0
PH1-2	NHS Health Check Programme	645	645	0	0	0
PH1-3	Health Protection	8	8	0	0	0
PH1-4	National Child Measurement Programme	150	150	0	0	0
PH1-5	Public Health Advice	150	150	0	0	0
PH1-6	0 - 5 year olds	8,848	8,848	0	0	0
PH2-1	Obesity	1,324	1,324	0	0	0
PH2-2	Physical Activity	420	420	0	0	0
PH2-3	Public Health General	2,536	2,536	0	0	0
PH2-4	Smoking and Tobacco Control	561	561	0	0	0
PH2-5	Children's 5-19 Public Health Programmes	2,297	2,297	0	0	0
PH2-6	Other Public Health Services	2,091	2,091	0	0	0
PH2-7	Drugs and Alcohol	10,080	10,080	0	0	0
PH2-8	Domestic Violence	1,437	1,437	0	0	0
	<b>Total Public Health Functions</b>	<b>36,987</b>	<b>36,987</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>PH3</b>	<b>Public Health Recharges</b>	<b>576</b>	<b>576</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>PH4</b>	<b>Grant Income</b>	<b>-33,632</b>	<b>-33,632</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
	<b>Transfer to Public Health Reserve</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
	<b>Total Public Health</b>	<b>3,931</b>	<b>3,931</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>

**Business Management & Monitoring Report : Public Health & Community Safety**  
**Position to the end of July 2023**  
**Revenue Budget Monitoring**

		<b>Net Budget (Latest Estimate)</b>	<b>Projected Full Year Spend</b>	<b>Projected Year End Variance</b>	<b>Variance Last Month</b>	<b>Change in Variance</b>
		<b>£000</b>	<b>£000</b>	<b>underspend- overspend+</b> £000	<b>£000</b>	<b>£000</b>
<b>CDA3</b>	<b>Community Safety</b>	<b>27,638</b>	<b>27,638</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
	<b>Total Community Safety</b>	<b>27,638</b>	<b>27,638</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>

**Business Management & Monitoring Report: Resources**  
**Position to the end of July 2023**  
**Revenue Budget Monitoring**

		<b>Net Budget (Latest Estimate)</b>	<b>Projected Full Year Spend</b>	<b>Projected Year End Variance</b>	<b>Variance Last Month</b>	<b>Change in Variance</b>
		<b>£000</b>	<b>£000</b>	<b>underspend- overspend+</b> <b>£000</b>	<b>£000</b>	<b>£000</b>
COD1	Corporate Services	3,029	3,129	100	0	100
COD2	Human Resources & Organisational Development	2,985	3,585	600	600	0
COD3	Communications, Strategy & Insight	3,295	3,295	0	0	0
COD4	ICT & Digital	10,225	10,625	400	300	100
COD5	Culture & Customer Experience	11,881	12,181	300	200	100

**Business Management & Monitoring Report: Resources**  
**Position to the end of July 2023**  
**Revenue Budget Monitoring**

		Net Budget (Latest Estimate)	Projected Full Year Spend	Projected Year End Variance	Variance Last Month	Change in Variance
		£000	£000	underspend- overspend+	£000	£000
COD6	Finance	8,616	8,916	300	100	200
COD7	Property, Investment & FM	19,059	19,359	300	200	100
COD8	Law & Governance	7,705	8,105	400	200	200
COD9	Delivery & Partnership	2,930	2,930	0	0	0
<b>Total Resources</b>		<b>69,725</b>	<b>72,125</b>	<b>2,400</b>	<b>1,600</b>	<b>800</b>

**Business Management Report  
Position to the end of July 2023**

**CABINET IS RECOMMENDED TO APPROVE THE VIREMENTS AS DETAILED BELOW:**

Directorate (CD = Cross Directorate)	Month of Cabinet meeting	Month of Directorate MMR	Narration	Budget Book Line	Service Area	Permanent / Temporary	Expenditure + increase / - decrease £000	Income - increase / + decrease £000
CS	Sep	Jun	Create recharge budget for the YPSA NTS staff	CEF2-2	Social Care	P	569	0
				CEF3-1	Corporate Parenting	P	0	-569
Grand Total							569	-569

**Business Management Report**  
**Position to the end of July 2023**

**NEW VIREMENTS THAT HAVE BEEN ACTIONED FOR CABINET TO NOTE**

Directorate (CD = Cross Directorate)	Month of Cabinet Meeting	Month of Directorate MMR	Narration	Budget Book Line	Service Area	Permanent / Temporary	Expenditure + increase / - decrease £000	Income - increase / + decrease £000
CD	Sep	Jun	Community Capacity Grants 23/24	PH1 & 2	Public Health Functions	T	0	0
				SCS5	Pooled Budget Contributions	T	500	-500
			To support climate action tree replacement schme	EP2-3	Environment & Circular Economy	P	182	0
				VSMMGT	Strategic Measures	P	-182	0
		Fire Service pay award - 2022/23 - back dated from July 2022 to March 2023	COM4-2	Fire & Rescue	T	887	0	
			VSMMGT	Strategic Measures	T	-887	0	
		Jul	Gold Book Pay Award 22/23 backdated	COM4-2	Fire & Rescue	T	10	0
				VSMMGT	Strategic Measures	T	-10	0
			Gold Book Pay Award 22/23 & part year 23/24	COM4-2	Fire & Rescue	P	25	0
				VSMMGT	Strategic Measures	P	-25	0
			Gold Book Pay Award 23/24	COM4-2	Fire & Rescue	P	14	0
				VSMMGT	Strategic Measures	P	-14	0
			Contingency to OUFC23	COD7	Property, Investment & FM	T	120	0
				VSMMGT	Strategic Measures	T	-120	0
		Music Service Budget	COD5	Culture & Customer Experience	P	101	0	
			VSMMGT	Strategic Measures	P	-101	0	
		CS	Sep	Jun	Reallocate staff posts - 4 X strengthening families posts from Children's to social care	CEF2-2	Social Care	P
CEF3-1	Corporate Parenting					P	-176	0
Recode Previously agreed pressures/savings	CEF1-4				Access to Learning	P	-500	0
	CEF3-1			Corporate Parenting	P	500	0	
Jul	School grants budget tidy			CEF1-3	Learning & School Improvement	T	259	-259
				CEF4-1	Delegated Budgets	T	4,301	-4,301
	School Grants Budget Tidy 23.24			CEF1-3	Learning & School Improvement	P	212	-212
				CEF4-1	Delegated Budgets	P	-1,861	1,861
	Brokerage support CSC Improvement prog, 2 seniors,2 brokers & agency to August 2023.			CEF3-1	Corporate Parenting	T	-355	0
				SCS2	Other Adult Social Care Services	T	355	0
	Early Years DSG 23-24 to match Cabinet report.			CEF1-2	SEND Service	P	3	-3
				CEF1-4	Access to Learning	P	-5	5
				CEF4-2	Early Years Funding Formula	P	2	-2
	Agreed Contribution - Family solutions North for KF&AF Trevi Hse residential fees			CEF2-2	Social Care	T	11	0
CEF3-1				Corporate Parenting	T	-11	0	
Care Homes Recruitment Campaign	CEF3-2			Safeguarding	T	50	0	
	CEF5-1			Management & Admin	T	-50	0	

**Business Management Report**  
**Position to the end of July 2023**

**NEW VIREMENTS THAT HAVE BEEN ACTIONED FOR CABINET TO NOTE**

Directorate (CD = Cross Directorate)	Month of Cabinet Meeting	Month of Directorate MMR	Narration	Budget Book Line	Service Area	Permanent / Temporary	Expenditure + increase / - decrease £000	Income - increase / + decrease £000
AS	Sep	Jun	BCF Uplift alignment	BCFPOOL	Age Well Pool	P	-93	93
			Tidy M79900 Inflation Budget	SCS1	Adult Social Care	P	145	0
				SCS5	Pooled Budget Contributions	P	-145	0
			Reinstate amount miscoded in 22/23	ACSNPOOL	Live Well Pool	P	-28	0
				BCFPOOL	Age Well Pool	P	28	0
			Demography re-allocation	BCFPOOL	Age Well Pool	P	-771	771
			Contributions adjustments to reflect Cares Budget virement	ACSNPOOL	Live Well Pool	P	0	28
				BCFPOOL	Age Well Pool	P	0	-28
			SCS5	Pooled Budget Contributions	P	0	0	
		Live Well ICB Budget Update 23/24	ACSNPOOL	Live Well Pool	P	367	-367	
		Jul	ASC Inflation Budget Realloc 23/24	ACSNPOOL	Live Well Pool	P	234	-234
				BCFPOOL	Age Well Pool	P	10	-10
				SCS5	Pooled Budget Contributions	P	0	0
			ICB Budget Uplift for Age Well	BCFPOOL	Age Well Pool	P	10,340	-10,340
			OSJ 23.24 Inflation Budget Realloc 23/24	BCFPOOL	Age Well Pool	P	2,078	-2,078
				SCS5	Pooled Budget Contributions	P	0	0
			Health Reserves Drawdown	ACSNPOOL	Live Well Pool	T	166	-166
				SCS5	Pooled Budget Contributions	T	0	0
			23AS6 National Autism Strategy	ACSNPOOL	Live Well Pool	P	100	-100
				SCS2	Other Adult Social Care Services	P	-100	0
SCS5	Pooled Budget Contributions			P	100	0		
PH&CS	Sep		Jun	Protection Uplift Grant	COM4-2	Fire & Rescue	P	304
		Jul	Partial funding for x2 Trading Standards Post for Tobacco Control and E-Cigarette work	COM4-5	Trading Standards	T	54	0
				PH1 & 2	Public Health Functions	T	-54	0
RES	Sep	Jun	reallocate budgets to align with expenditure	COD7	Property, Investment & FM	P	-62	62
			Movement of monies following re-design of CSC teams	COD5	Culture & Customer Experience	P	51	-51
			Allocate Budget to relevant costs rather than one lump sum to one code for better monitoring of budget	COD7	Property, Investment & FM	P	2	-2
			Allocate Budget to current expected levels	COD7	Property, Investment & FM	P	-91	91
			Allocate Budget to reflect the reduction for removing Knights Court full year	COD7	Property, Investment & FM	P	-36	36

**Business Management Report**  
**Position to the end of July 2023**

**NEW VIREMENTS THAT HAVE BEEN ACTIONED FOR CABINET TO NOTE**

Directorate (CD = Cross Directorate)	Month of Cabinet Meeting	Month of Directorate MMR	Narration	Budget Book Line	Service Area	Permanent / Temporary	Expenditure + increase / - decrease £000	Income - increase / + decrease £000
EP		Jul	Tidying up staffing costs for my budget	COD3	Communications, Strategy & Insight	P	0	0
			Registration Service contribution to Cultural Service Improvement Team	COD5	Culture & Customer Experience	T	25	-25
			Aligning income budget	COD5	Culture & Customer Experience	P	68	-68
			The content team is moving from ITID to Comms and Marketing. This is 3/4 of their annual salary.	COD3	Communications, Strategy & Insight	T	223	0
				COD4	ICT & Digital	T	-223	0
			To align Innovation Hub cost centres with new team and project structures and tidy up the financial structure.	COD4	ICT & Digital	P	-40	40
			Reallocation of funds	COD5	Culture & Customer Experience	P	-102	102
EP	Sep	Jun	EP1-3 Budget redistribution	EP1-3	Infrastructure Delivery	P	2,333	-2,333
			move PPA income from strategic measures to PPA team	EP1-2	Place Making	P	0	-100
				EP2-1	Strategic Planning	P	0	100
	Jul	Budget Tidy N10200 NQ1007	EP3-1	Highway Maintenance	P	-250	0	
			EP3-4	Senior Management Team	P	250	0	
		Create temporary budgets to manage BSIP funding in 23/24	EP1-1	Transport Policy	T	2,394	-2,394	
		Budget Tidy 24EP6 - NAT100 to NP0050	EP3-1	Highway Maintenance	P	-200	0	
	EP3-2	Network Management	P	200	0			
<b>Grand Total</b>							<b>20,687</b>	<b>-20,687</b>

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**Business Management & Monitoring Report**  
**Position to the end of July 2023**  
**Earmarked Reserves**

	2023/24		
	Balance at 1 April 2023	Forecast Movement	Forecast Balance at 31 March 2024
	£m	£m	£m
<b>Revenue Grants Unapplied</b>			
Grants and Contributions Reserve	37.2	-6.3	30.9
COVID-19 Reserve	15.4	-9.0	6.4
Government Initiatives Reserve	2.3	-0.1	2.2
<b>Subtotal Revenue Grants Unapplied</b>	<b>54.9</b>	<b>-15.4</b>	<b>39.5</b>
<b>Corporate Priorities</b>			
Budget Priorities Reserve	11.4	-8.6	2.9
Transformation Reserve	1.5	2.3	3.8
Zero Emissions Zone	0.5		0.5
Youth Provision Reserve	0.3		0.3
<b>Subtotal Corporate Priorities</b>	<b>13.7</b>	<b>-6.3</b>	<b>7.4</b>

<p>This reserve holds unspent ring-fenced grants and contributions committed to be spent in future years. This includes the Public Health ringfenced grant and funding for the on-going cost of the Homes for Ukraine Scheme.</p> <p>This reserve is set up to meet ongoing and emerging pressures and longer term service demands arising from the COVID-19 Pandemic. The use of £13.4m funding from the reserve is built into the council's Medium Term Financial Plan agreed in February 2023. After taking account of the additional £1.6m use of the reserve in 2023/24 £0.4m remains uncommitted.</p> <p>This reserve is used to hold underspends on budgets funded by unringfenced grants held that relate to specific agreed outcomes or the implementation of Government initiatives.</p> <p>This reserve is being used to support the implementation of the Council's priorities and the Medium Term Financial Strategy.</p> <p>This reserve is needed to fund the implementation costs of the Council's Transformation programme.</p> <p>This reserve holds surpluses generated by Network Coordination for the development and expansion of the ZEZ in the future years. Funding for locality based youth provision</p>

**Business Management & Monitoring Report**  
**Position to the end of July 2023**  
**Earmarked Reserves**

	2023/24			
	Balance at 1 April 2023	Forecast Movement	Forecast Balance at 31 March 2024	
	£m	£m	£m	
<b>Funding for Risk</b>				
Insurance Reserve	12.9		12.9	This reserve covers the County Council for insurance claims that, based on the previous experience of the County Council, are likely to be received, as well as a number of insurance related issues.
Demographic Risk Reserve	13.0	4.0	17.0	In light of the significant pressures relating to High Needs DSG and other budgets with demographic volatility. This reserve will help to manage demographic risk.
Council Elections	0.4	0.2	0.6	This will be used to fund future elections. In years where no County Elections take place any underspend on the Council Elections budget will be transferred to this reserve.
Redundancy Reserve	2.4		2.4	This reserve is available to fund redundancy costs arising from Transformational Change.
Trading Accounts	0.2	-0.2	0.0	This reserve holds funds relating to traded activities to help manage volatility year to year or future investments.
Council Tax Collection Fund Reserve	3.0		3.0	This reserve holds any surplus/ deficit as a result of income from council tax being more or less than originally estimated
Business Rates Reserve	9.5		9.5	This reserve is to smooth the volatility of Business Rates income and to mitigate risk around future changes to Business Rates. The use of the reserve will be considered through the Budget & Business Planning Process for 2024/25.
<b>Subtotal Risk</b>	<b>41.3</b>	<b>4.0</b>	<b>45.3</b>	

**Business Management & Monitoring Report**  
**Position to the end of July 2023**  
**Earmarked Reserves**

	2023/24		
	Balance at 1 April 2023	Forecast Movement	Forecast Balance at 31 March 2024
	£m	£m	£m
<b>Capital &amp; Equipment</b>			
Capital Reserves	67.8	-1.7	66.1
Vehicle and Equipment Reserve	3.4	0.0	3.4
Investment Pump Priming Reserve	2.0	-2.0	0.0
<b>Subtotal Capital &amp; Equipment</b>	<b>73.2</b>	<b>-3.7</b>	<b>69.5</b>
<b>Other Reserves</b>			
Schools' Reserves	12.9	0.0	12.9
Partnership Reserves	1.9	0.0	1.9
On Street Car Parking Reserve	4.9	0.0	4.9
<b>Subtotal Other Reserves</b>	<b>19.8</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>19.8</b>
<b>Total Reserves</b>	<b>203.0</b>	<b>-21.4</b>	<b>181.6</b>

<p>This reserve has been established for the purpose of financing capital expenditure in future years. Drawdown will be confirmed later in the year.</p> <p>This reserve is to fund future replacements of vehicles and equipment.</p> <p>Funding held to meet the costs of self-financing schemes which require pump priming until the funds are returned. Agreed to be used to support the following schemes as part of the 2023/24 budget: Low Carbon Business Travel Project (grey fleet) £0.8m, Energy Efficiency Recycling Fund for OCC Maintained Schools £0.8m, Initial funding to develop plans for the workplace charging levy £0.2m.</p>
<p>In accordance with the Education Reform Act 1988, the scheme of Local Management of Schools provides for the carry forward of individual schools surpluses and deficits. These reserves are committed to be spent on schools.</p> <p>Other School Reserves cover a number of miscellaneous education activities, including amounts loaned to individual schools against school reserves, and School Partnership Accounts which are operated in respect of inter-school activities.</p> <p>This relates to funding for the Growth Deal</p> <p>This surplus has arisen under the operation of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 (section 55). The purposes for which these monies can be used are defined by statute.</p>

**Business Management Report**  
**Position to the end of July 2023**  
**Government Grants 2023/24**

Ringfenced	Directorate	Issued By	Esimate 2023/24	In year Adjustments / New Allocations previously reported	In year Adjustments/ New Allocations reported this time	Latest Allocation
			£000	£000	£000	£000
P A g e 7 8	<b>Adult Services</b>					
	R Improved Better Care Fund	DHSC	10,705	0	0	10,705
	R Adult Social Care Market Sustainability and Improvement Fund	DHSC	5,366	0	0	5,366
	R Adult Social Care Discharge Fund	DHSC	1,501	0	0	1,501
	R Adult Social Care Market Sustainability and Improvement Fund - Workforce Fu	DHSC	0	0	3,485	3,485
	<b>TOTAL ADULT SERVICES</b>		<b>17,572</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>3,485</b>	<b>21,057</b>
	<b>Children's Services</b>					
	<b>Dedicated School Grants</b>					
	R Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) - Schools Block	DfE	131,641	0	31	131,672
	R Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) - Central Block	DfE	4,992	0	0	4,992
	R Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) - Early Years Block	DfE	44,340	0	94	44,434
	R Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) - High Needs Block	DfE	85,288	0	-564	84,724
	<b>Subtotal DSG Grants</b>		<b>266,261</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>-439</b>	<b>265,822</b>
	<b>School Grants</b>					
	R Pupil Premium	DfE	7,663	0	531	8,194
	R Education Funding Agency - Sixth Form Funding and Threshold	DfE	280	0	39	319
	R PE and Sport Grant	DfE	2,266	0	-49	2,217
	R Universal Infant Free School Meals	DfE	3,938	0	109	4,047
	R Teacher's Pay Grant	DfE	95	0	-95	0
	R Teacher's Pay Additional Grant	DfE	0	0	1,404	1,404
R Teacher's Pension Grant	DfE	274	0	-264	10	
R Mainstream Schools Additional Grant	DfE	0	0	4,285	4,285	

**Business Management Report**  
**Position to the end of July 2023**  
**Government Grants 2023/24**

Ringfenced	Directorate	Issued By	Esimate 2023/24	In year Adjustments / New Allocations previously reported	In year Adjustments/ New Allocations reported this time	Latest Allocation
			£000	£000	£000	£000
R	National Professional Qualification Grant	DfE	0	0	15	15
R	Early Career Framework - Off Timetable	DfE	0	0	161	161
R	Early Career Framework - Mentor	DfE	0	0	93	93
R	Early Year Supplement Grant	DfE	0	0	2,978	2,978
R	Coronavirus (COVID-19) Recovery Premium	DfE	0	0	275	275
R	Coronavirus (COVID-19) School Let Tutoring Grant	DfE	0	0	330	330
R	Coronavirus (Covid-19) Schools Fund	DfE	0	0	0	0
	<b>Subtotal School Grants</b>		<b>14,516</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>9,812</b>	<b>24,328</b>
	<b>Other Children's Services Grants</b>					
R	School Improvement Monitoring & Brokering Grant	DfE	0	0	0	0
R	Youth Justice Board	YJB	674	0	30	704
R	Asylum (USAC and Post 18)	HO	3,997	0	1,531	5,528
R	Extension of Virtual School Heads - children with social worker	DfE	0	0	135	135
R	Extension of Virtual School Heads - previously looked after children	DfE	0	0	66	66
R	Extended Personal Adviser Duty Grant	DfE	103	0	9	112
R	Staying Put Implementation Grant	DfE	288	0	185	473
R	Remand Framework	YJB	72	0	-36	36
R	Supported Internships for Young People with SEND	DWP	54	0	0	54
R	Holiday Activities and Food Programme	DfE	296	0	0	296
R	Multiply	DfE	899	0	0	899
R	Home for Ukraine Education	DfE	0	0	0	0
R	Turnaround Programme	YJB	64	0	0	64
	<b>Subtotal Other Children's Services Grants</b>		<b>6,447</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1,920</b>	<b>8,367</b>
	<b>TOTAL CHILDREN'S SERVICES</b>		<b>287,224</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>11,293</b>	<b>298,517</b>

**Business Management Report**  
**Position to the end of July 2023**  
**Government Grants 2023/24**

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Ringfenced	Directorate	Issued By	Estimate 2023/24 £000	In year Adjustments / New Allocations previously reported £000	In year Adjustments/ New Allocations reported this time £000	Latest Allocation £000
	<b>Environment &amp; Place</b>					
R	Bus Service Operators Grant	DfT	559	0	0	559
R	Natural England	DEFRA	227	0	0	227
R	COVID BSSG	DFT	0	0	48	48
R	Biodiversity Net gain Grant	DEFRA	0	0	27	27
R	Woodland Creation Accelerator Fund (WCAF)	DEFRA	0	0	75	75
R	Zero Emission Zone Pilot	DEFRA	0	0	0	0
	<b>TOTAL ENVIRONMENT &amp; PLACE</b>		<b>786</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>150</b>	<b>936</b>
	<b>Public Health</b>					
R	Public Health Grant	DHSC	32,569	0	0	32,569
	<b>TOTAL PUBLIC HEALTH</b>		<b>32,569</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>32,569</b>
	<b>Community Safety</b>					
R	Fire Fighter's Pension Fund Grant	DLUHC	1,361	0	0	1,361
R	Fire Fighter's New Dimensions Grant	DLUHC	40	0	0	40
	<b>TOTAL COMMUNITY SAFETY</b>		<b>1,401</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1,401</b>
	<b>Resources</b>					
R	Music Service	AC	1,045	0	0	1,045
R	MaaS:CAV	Innovate UK	313	0	0	313
R	Park & Charge	Innovate UK	206	0	0	206
R	Virgin Park & Charge	Innovate UK	7	0	0	7

**Business Management Report**  
**Position to the end of July 2023**  
**Government Grants 2023/24**

Ringfenced	Directorate	Issued By	Esimate 2023/24	In year Adjustments / New Allocations previously reported	In year Adjustments/ New Allocations reported this time	Latest Allocation
			£000	£000	£000	£000
R	Data Driven Safety Tool	Innovate UK	91	0	0	91
R	Quantum Gravimeter	Innovate UK	69	0	0	69
R	Resilient CAV	Innovate UK	25	0	0	25
R	Heart Park Project	DfT	90	0	0	90
R	GTC DfT Congestion Tool	DfT	59	0	0	59
R	CAVL4R	DfT	11	0	0	11
	<b>TOTAL RESOURCES</b>		<b>1,917</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1,917</b>
	<b>Strategic Measures</b>					
U	Lead Local Flood Authority	DEFRA	45			45
U	Extended Rights to Free Travel	DfE	278	531		809
U	Firelink	DLUHC	213	-83		130
U	Supporting Families - previously Troubled Families	DLUHC	1,048		31	1,079
U	New Homes Bonus	DLUHC	1,700			1,700
U	Local Reform & Community Voices Grant	DfE	515			515
U	Social Care Support Grant (including Independent Living Fund)	DLUHC	32,669			32,669
U	Services Grant	DfE	2,800			2,800
U	Domestic Abuse Duty Grant	DLUHC	1,141	26		1,167
U	Supplementary Substance Misuse Treatment & Recovery Grant	OHID	0	635		635
U	Supplementary Substance Misuse Treatment & Recovery Housing Grant	OHID	0	621		621
U	Charging Reform Implementation Grant	OHID	0			0
U	Rough Sleeping Drugs & Alcohol Grant	DLUHC	0	1,140	229	1,369
U	Trailblazer Funding	DHSC	0			0
	<b>Subtotal Strategic Measures</b>		<b>40,409</b>	<b>2,870</b>	<b>260</b>	<b>43,539</b>

**Business Management Report  
Position to the end of July 2023  
Government Grants 2023/24**

Ringfenced	Directorate	Issued By	Esimate 2023/24	In year Adjustments / New Allocations previously reported	In year Adjustments/ New Allocations reported this time	Latest Allocation
			£000	£000	£000	£000
Page 88	<b>Business Rates</b>					
	U Section 31 Grant for Business Rate Compensation	DLUHC	14,427	4,671		19,098
	U Business Rates S31 Grant Top-Up	DLUHC	42,662	-2,686		39,976
	<b>Subtotal Business Rates</b>		<b>57,089</b>	<b>1,985</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>59,074</b>
	<b>Grants held on behalf of Local Enterprise Partnership</b>					
	R Oxford Innovation Business Support	BEIS	205			205
	R European Regional Development Fund		900			900
	R DCLG (Local Enterprise Partnership Funding)	DLUHC	500			500
	<b>Subtotal Grants held on behalf of Local Enterprise Partnership</b>		<b>1,605</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1,605</b>
	<b>TOTAL STRATEGIC MEASURES</b>		<b>99,103</b>	<b>4,855</b>	<b>260</b>	<b>104,218</b>
<b>Total All Grants</b>		<b>440,572</b>	<b>4,855</b>	<b>15,188</b>	<b>460,615</b>	

R Ringfenced grant  
U Un-ringfenced grant  
Issued by  
HO Home Office  
DHSC Department of Health & Social Care  
DfT Department for Transport  
DfE Department for Education

DLUHC Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities  
BEIS Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy  
OHID Office for Health Improvement and Disparities  
DEFRA Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs  
AC Arts Council  
YJB Youth Justice Board  
NDTi National Development team for Inclusion

**Business Management & Monitoring Report**  
**Position to the end of July 2023**  
**General Revenue Balances**

	<b>Forecast 2023/24</b>	
	£m	£m
General Balances: Outturn 2022/23	22.556	
County Fund Balance		<b>22.556</b>
Planned Contribution to Balances (February 2023)		6.800
Additional Contribution to Balances (June 2023)		0.844
<b>Original forecast outturn position 2023/24</b>		<b>30.200</b>
<b>Additions</b>		
		0.000
<b>Calls on balances deducted</b>		
Staffing costs to support development of One - Fleet approach to the council's vehicles (Supplementary Estimate agreed May 2023)		-0.180
		-0.180
<b>Automatic calls on/returns to balances</b>		
		0.000
<b>Additional Strategic Measures</b>		
Forecast Strategic Measures Overspend /Underpend		0.000
		0.000
<b>Net General Balances</b>		<b>30.020</b>
<b>Calls on / returns to balances requested in this report</b>		
		0.000
<b>Forecast Variation at Year End</b>		
Less forecast overspend (as set out in Annex 1)		-8.555
<b>Forecast Outturn position</b>		<b>21.465</b>
<b>Risk Assessed Level of Balances for 2023/24</b>		<b>30.200</b>
<b>Surplus/(deficit) balances compared to risk assessed level</b>		<b>-8.735</b>

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**Digital Inclusion:  
Oxfordshire County Council 2023-24 Action Plan**

This document sets out the action plan for 2023-24 that supports Oxfordshire County Council's Digital Inclusion Strategy.

The Strategy is divided into three sections.

- Section One – Digitally Inclusive Communities
- Section Two – Digitally Inclusive Service Delivery
- Section Three – Digitally Inclusive Workforce

**Section One: Digitally Inclusive Communities**

Long-Term Ambition	Action	Directorate and Lead Officer
Digital access is not a barrier to education in Oxfordshire.	Collaborate with holiday activity providers to implement Digital Inclusion projects as part of wider holiday delivery, including using Libraries as venues.	Children, Education, and Families (CEF)
	Liaise with the Education Endowment Fund (EEF) for guidance on impactful research-based approaches so the right equipment, access and programmes can be promoted to families.	CEF

<p>Vulnerable children and families have access to support to raise household digital capacity and address digital disadvantage.</p>	<p>Continue to provide a digital offer for 0-19 services, through single point of access and e-platforms and ensuring access for vulnerable families.</p>	<p>Public Health</p>
	<p>Support families with making applications from charities such as 'Aspire' for laptops as part of communicating with families about their internet access and equipment, seeking to ensure families are not disempowered if they do not have these.</p>	<p>CEF</p>
	<p>Continue to promote the use of the Mind Of My Own (MOMO) app with children and young people to enable them to use their voice and speak their own words via a digital platform.</p>	<p>CEF</p>
	<p>Continue to support Community Action Groups (CAGs) to host repair cafes across the county potentially helping to prevent residents from becoming digitally excluded by aiming to keep electronic devices (including internet enabled devices) in use for longer. This will be measured through the number of repair cafes held each year (reported annually).</p>	<p>Waste</p>
	<p>Investigate funding options for digital inclusion to get laptops or mobile interactive devices in supported housing or for those facing homelessness so people can claim benefits, apply for jobs, and stay in touch with families and friends through online chat, reducing social isolation.</p>	<p>Adult Social Care</p>

No one in Oxfordshire will be isolated from essential services by digital-by-default barriers, or a lack of connectivity.	Promote any relevant support of pillars of the strategy through our networks – e.g., Promoting laptop donation to Get Oxfordshire Online (GOO) via the Greentech network.	Climate Action
	Develop a new website for domestic abuse services in Oxfordshire to provide improved access to services, clear referral pathways including for people with protected characteristics to improve visibility and access to information, advice, and referral pathways into services.	Public Health
	Provide advice and support to enable people to access digital opportunities safely, and avoid frauds, particularly in community engagement and education work with schools and older people.	Trading Standards
	Deliver scam awareness training in a non-digital way, to be measured through the number of people reached through prevention activities, including information on online scams.	Trading Standards
	Research, identify and promote support around digital literacy for carers, including young carers.	Adult Social Care
	Encourage supported housing providers to provide support and training for older people or people with a disability to access and use online services.	Adult Social Care
	Work with local partner to securely recycle 50 OCC devices a year to be used by residents needing laptops.	Digital and IT

Oxfordshire businesses and organisations can recruit, train, retain and support their workforce with the necessary digital skills.	Develop digital inclusion pages on Oxfordshire County Council's (OCC) website. The webpages are to include advice, guidance and information on digital scams, Live Well Oxfordshire, and link in with online sources of information that can assist residents and businesses in Oxfordshire.	Policy
	Build on the Digital Inclusion Charter to regularly bring together local partners to avoid duplication of effort across Oxfordshire and share best practice.	Policy
Broadband connectivity across Oxfordshire is one of the best in the country.	Promote social tariffs from broadband suppliers via OCC's Social Media channels and track the engagement with posts: share this information with district and parish councils so they can promote widely, and with other OCC digital inclusion activities.	Digital and IT

**Section Two: Digitally Inclusive Service Delivery**

Long-Term Ambition	Action	Directorate and Lead Officer
Innovative solutions to problems of digital exclusion are collaboratively developed and delivered in our services.	Use Office for Health Improvement Disparities (OHID) grants to provide technology to substance misuse service users, supporting them to progress towards recovery e.g., with job applications, housing applications, education, and training	Public Health
	Explore asking appropriate service providers to evidence their commitment to tackling inequalities in Oxfordshire through improving digital inclusion in public health commissioned services(grants, contracts, frameworks), such as outlining their approaches to addressing digital inclusion in tenders.	Public Health
	Include digital inclusion in impact assessments, to ensure that policies do not increase the digital divide.	Policy
	Promote internal collaboration around digital inclusion through restarting the Digital Inclusion Working Group, to monitor progress against the Digital Inclusion action plan.	Policy
	Use any social value provision from supplier contracts within the Digital and IT directorate to improve digital inclusion and track the total value of such contributions.	Digital and IT

	Ensure that all Digital and IT projects involving a procurement include the technical requirements for accessibility.	Digital and IT
	Investigate and understand new National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) guidelines on homelessness and Digital Inclusion, to ensure that people experiencing homelessness can access online health, universal credit, and social care information and are supported to use online services.	Adult Social Care
Citizens of Oxfordshire are provided with a comprehensive, affordable, and accessible assistive technology offer that meets their needs.	Build on existing collaboration between Adult Social Care and iHub to develop and test innovative approaches to delivering and improving outcomes for vulnerable people, including investigating and promoting availability of Assistive Technology and technology enabled care equipment.	Adult Social Care iHub
	Feature digital technology in accommodation development to increase independence.	Adult Social Care
Our Libraries and Heritage Service provides digital opportunities for people to connect and create, learn, and grow together.	Refresh public library IT provision (The People’s Network) in all branches, to ensure local communities have high quality online access, printing facilities, and WiFi available in their local library.	Libraries
	Review and enhance Libraries’ Makerspace and digital engagement activity offer, so that new technology and digital resources are open to all.	Libraries

	Continue to grow the range of content and resources (including eBooks, eAudio, eMagazines and Newspapers, and e-Learning) that are free to access anytime at home, on the move, or through local libraries, via free library membership.	Libraries
	Assess the current range of support and training provided by Libraries to help customers get online and function in a digital world, and develop that offer and signposting activity as community needs and the digital landscape changes.	Libraries
	Develop the Heritage Search platform (launched in May 2023) to enhance access to, and understanding of, Oxfordshire's past and the wide range of heritage resources that the Council manages for future generations.	Heritage

**Section Three – Digitally Inclusive Workforce**

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Long-Term Ambition	Action	Directorate and Lead Officer Timescale
Technology that supports agile ways of working will facilitate communication and the ability to work well anywhere, any place, and at any time.	Embed digital inclusion in our facilities provision and ensure that new buildings are designed and built with the appropriate infrastructure in place for digitally inclusive service delivery and workplaces.	Property
	All team leaders and business development officers to work alongside IT Business Partner when delivering, designing, on-boarding, or improving processes and services. Details should be included in the project scope document and the benefits realisation plans.	Customer Services
Our staff, managers, and volunteers have the learning and development opportunities to develop digital skills.	Ensure training and support for operational Facilities Management (FM) team on new IT systems rolled out within Property including frontline engineers	Property
	Work alongside Organisational Development colleagues to identify or procure relevant digital training for all Customer Service Centre staff. This should be delivered by the end of March 2024 to existing staff and included in induction for new staff.	Customer Services

	Investigate digital skills training for social care and frontline staff including social prescribers.	Adult Social Care
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## Annex D - Food Strategy Action Plan - July 2023

Ambition	Directorate	Service Area	Topic	Actions	Lead	Timescale
Food for the planet	E&P	Planning, Environment and Climate Change	Waste Management	Continue to monitor our capture tonnages of food waste from households and identify areas for improvement	Rachel Burns (Waste Strategy Manager)	Annual
Food for the planet	E&P	Planning, Environment and Climate Change	Waste Management	Commission research on what food waste is being thrown in household waste bins	Rachel Burns (Waste Strategy Manager)	2023/24
Food for the planet	E&P	Planning, Environment and Climate Change	Waste Management	Use data from research to develop appropriate communication and educational campaigns around reducing avoidable food waste and composting unavoidable food waste/using food recycling caddies rather than household waste bins	Rachel Burns (Waste Strategy Manager)	2023/25
Food for the planet	E&P	Planning, Environment and Climate Change	Waste Management	Provide ongoing support to Community Action Groups to run the Love Food Hate Waste campaign, to reduce avoidable household food waste	Rachel Burns (Waste Strategy Manager)	Annual
Food for the planet	E&P	Planning, Environment and Climate Change	Waste Management	Provide ongoing support to Community Action Groups and other organisations with local growing and eating campaigns, such as the Pumpkin Festival in autumn	Rachel Burns (Waste Strategy Manager)	Annual
Food for the planet	E&P	Planning, Environment and Climate Change	Waste Management	Explore circular economy solutions in the Oxfordshire food sector and identify gaps in community education and support for local organisations	Rachel Burns (Waste Strategy Manager)	2023/24

Food for the planet	CODR	Libraries and Heritage	Oxfordshire Museum Services	Investigate options for hot composting to manage the food waste produced by the café	Jemma Davey/Claire Cadwalladr (Museum Service Manager/Visitor Services Supervisor)	2023/24
Food justice	Public Health	Start Well/Live Well	Whole Systems Approach to Healthy Weight	Improve awareness and uptake of the Healthy Start scheme across the County	Public Health	2023/24
Food justice	Public Health/CEF	Live Well, Promote & Prevent	Whole Systems Approach to Healthy Weight	Develop a School Food and Physical Activity Advisor role to manage a suite of work for a 'whole school approach' to healthy weight in identified targeted areas/schools	Sal Culmer (Public Health Principal) Hayley Good/Martin Goff (Deputy Director of Education/Head of Access to Learning)	2023/24
Food justice	CODR	Partnerships and Delivery	Cost of Living Crisis	Provide Free School Meal Vouchers during school holidays to families eligible for benefits-related Free School Meals, with equivalent support to Early Years children, using the Household Support Fund	Robin Rogers (Director of Partnerships and Delivery)	2023/24
Food justice	CODR	Partnerships and Delivery	Cost of Living Crisis	Work with City and District councils to review support available for local food provision	Robin Rogers (Director of Partnerships and Delivery)	2023/24
Food justice	CODR	Partnerships and Delivery	Cost of Living Crisis	Launch a new crisis fund for Oxfordshire, providing emergency support with household essentials, including food, energy and replacement white-goods	Robin Rogers (Director of Partnerships and Delivery)	2023/24
Food justice	CODR	Partnerships and Delivery	Cost of Living Crisis	Deliver a programme of cost of living interventions in targeted schools	Robin Rogers (Director of Partnerships and Delivery)	2023/24

Food justice	CODR	Libraries and Heritage	Oxfordshire Museum Services	Maintain affordable pricing in the café, continuing to provide a warm space with healthy local food for the community	Jemma Davey/Claire Cadwalladr (Museum Service Manager/Visitor Services Supervisor)	Annual
Good Food Movement	Public Health	Live Well, Promote & Prevent	Whole Systems Approach to Healthy Weight	Complete gap analysis of existing community cooking activity and needs to inform future approaches to interventions	Sal Culmer (Public Health Principal)	2023/24
Good Food Movement	Public Health/Comm s	Live Well, Promote & Prevent	Whole Systems Approach to Healthy Weight	Promote national and local campaigns and programmes on healthy eating to partners and the public	Derys Pragnell (Public Health Consultant)	2023/24
Good Food Movement	Public Health/CEF	Live Well, Promote & Prevent	Whole Systems Approach to Healthy Weight	Establish baseline level of knowledge, skills and capacity in relation to nutritionally balanced food provision amongst Early Years and Childcare Providers and develop plan to improve	Sal Culmer/Claire Gray (Public Health Principal/Health Improvement Practitioner) Martin Goff (Head of Access to Learning)	2023
Good Food Movement	Public Health	Live Well, Promote & Prevent	Whole Systems Approach to Healthy Weight	Support the achievement of the Sustainable Food Places Silver award for the County	Derys Pragnell (Public Health Consultant)	2023
Good Food Movement	CEF	Social Care	Holiday Activities and Food	Use the Nutritional Education scoring system to assess the quality of food-related educational activities delivered by camps, and use as a metric when considering future funding	Luke Mattam (EET and Targeted Youth Support Tracking)	2023/24
Good Food Movement	CEF	Social Care	Holiday Activities and Food	Engage local schools on interest in a young ambassadors programme in which students help plan and test nutritional activities to be delivered in camps	Luke Mattam (EET and Targeted Youth Support Tracking)	2023/24

Good Food Movement	CODR	Libraries and Heritage	Oxfordshire Museum Services	Improve the front area of the museum to allow for more covers and set up planters to grow produce for café catering	Jemma Davey/Claire Cadwalladr (Museum Service Manager/Visitor Services Supervisor)	2023
Good Food Movement	CODR	Libraries and Heritage	Oxfordshire Museum Services	Provide opportunities for local volunteers to help in the café and gardens	Jemma Davey/Claire Cadwalladr (Museum Service Manager/Visitor Services Supervisor)	Annual
Governance and strategy	Procurement/HESC	Live Well, Promote & Prevent	Whole Systems Approach to Healthy Weight	Work towards embedding a requirement to meet Government Buying Standards for food and to comply with latest Oxfordshire schemes to promote healthy eating (current sugar smart) into commissioning contracts where there is food provision for staff or customers (except schools who have their own standards)	Derys Pragnell (Public Health Consultant)	2024
Sustainable food economy	CODR	Libraries and Heritage	Oxfordshire Museum Services	Increase usage of recyclable or compostable food and drink service products (such as plates and cups), and encourage visitors to use reusable cups	Jemma Davey/Claire Cadwalladr (Museum Service Manager/Visitor Services Supervisor)	Annual
Sustainable food economy	E&P	Planning, Environment and Climate Change	Oxfordshire Local Nature Recovery Strategy	Ensure the upcoming Oxfordshire Local Nature Recovery Strategy is produced collaboratively with the Oxfordshire farming community to ensure sustainable food production is integrated within the strategy	Beccy Micklem (Principal Biodiversity Officer)	2023/25
Sustainable supply chains	CODR	Libraries and Heritage	Oxfordshire Museum Services	Use local suppliers where possible to maximise Oxfordshire food on offer in the café	Jemma Davey/Claire Cadwalladr (Museum Service Manager/Visitor Services Supervisor)	Annual

Sustainable supply chains	CDAI	Property	School Catering	Work towards the Food for Life Accreditation (run by the Soil Association) for our school catering	Gail Witchell (Operational Manager - Catering)	2023/24
Sustainable supply chains	CDAI	Property	School Catering	Discuss dynamic purchasing with suppliers to maximise sustainable supply chains for our school catering	Gail Witchell (Operational Manager - Catering)	2023/24
Sustainable supply chains	CODR	Libraries and Heritage	Oxfordshire Museum Services	Increase on-site baking to reduce the use of suppliers from outside Oxfordshire	Jemma Davey/Claire Cadwalladr (Museum Service Manager/Visitor Services Supervisor)	Annual

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