

Oxfordshire County Council

Budget and Business Planning 2024/25

Overarching Climate Impact Review of Conservative Independent Alliance Proposed Budget Amendments

Context & Background

1. This document provides an overview of the potential climate action impact of the Conservative Independent Alliance group's proposed budget amendments.
2. Further climate assessment will be required should business cases move through the capital or revenue governance process.

Proposed Revenue Amendments Climate Impact Review

3. A number of proposals are included in the proposed amendments that support delivery of the council's Climate Action commitments. These include:
 - 2025CIA08: Targeted additional cuts of verges in urban and rural priority areas may support active travel but may also represent habitat loss for wildlife in some areas.
 - 2025CIA09: A drainage and flooding fund will support flood prevention and potentially the creation of aquatic habitats for wildlife.
4. Two proposals are included in the proposed amendments that may have negative impacts on the delivery of the council's Climate Action commitments. These are:
 - 2025CIA10: Combine the Climate Emergency Team with the Innovation Hub to create a new 'Future Challenge Team'. The proposal halves the funding to the climate action service over 2 years. This significantly reduces the council's overall capacity to work internally and into Oxfordshire on areas such as climate adaptation, homes retrofit, energy systems and work with communities and businesses.
 - 2025CIA15: Redesign the Communications, Marketing, Engagement & Consultation team and Policy Teams to facilitate the prioritisation of statutory services. The proposal equates to removing 3 policy officers and 11 communications, marketing and engagement officers. This may reduce capacity to engage Oxfordshire residents, communities and businesses in climate action activity.
5. The following amendment would remove the remainder of investment 24EP30 agreed by the Council in February 2023 that supports sustainable transport objectives:
 - 2025CIA12: Remove revenue funding for transport hubs. A key priority in the Local Transport and Connectivity Plan (LTCP) approach is to test transport hubs

as a means to achieving modal shift. Removal of funding would prevent this and could have an impact on achieving the LTCP targets.

Proposed Capital Amendments & Revenue Forward Funding Climate Impact Review

6. The proposed amendments to capital schemes and the Workplace Parking Levy scheme outlined below seek to postpone key schemes designed to mitigate climate change. These delays would reduce the ability to deliver the Local Transport and Connectivity Plan and meet climate commitments.
 - Postpone the traffic filters scheme. The scheme is currently operating and is designed to reduce traffic, make bus journeys faster, improve air quality and make walking and cycling safer. Withdrawing funds to support the scheme will reduce the ability to meet the council's climate commitments within the necessary timeframe.
 - Postpone the development of Zero Emission Zone. The scheme is currently operating and is designed to improve air quality, cut carbon emissions, and move towards zero emission travel in the city. Delaying the next phase of the scheme will reduce the ability to meet the council's commitments within the designed timeframe.
 - Postpone the implementation of a work-based parking levy. This would delay the potential benefits of this scheme such as easing congestion and improved air quality.

The removal of the revenue funding for the Transport/Mobility hubs scheme in 2025CIA12 means that scheme is proposed to be removed from the capital programme. As noted above this could have an impact on achieving the LTCP targets.