

Public Document Pack

To: Members of the Cabinet

Notice of a Meeting of the Cabinet

Tuesday, 24 May 2011 at 2.00 pm

County Hall, Oxford, OX1 1ND



Joanna Simons
Chief Executive

May 2011

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Councillors	Membership
Keith R. Mitchell CBE	- <i>Leader of the Council</i>
David Robertson	- <i>Deputy Leader of the Council</i>
Arash Fatemian	- <i>Cabinet Member for Adult Services</i>
Lorraine Lindsay-Gale	- <i>Cabinet Member for Growth & Infrastructure</i>
Jim Couchman	- <i>Cabinet Member for Finance & Property</i>
Kieron Mallon	- <i>Cabinet Member for Police & Policy Co-ordination</i>
Louise Chapman	- <i>Cabinet Member for Children, Education & Families</i>
Melinda Tilley	- <i>Cabinet Member for Schools Improvement</i>
Rodney Rose	- <i>Cabinet Member for Transport</i>
Mrs J. Heathcoat	- <i>Cabinet Member for Safer & Stronger Communities</i>

The Agenda is attached. Decisions taken at the meeting will become effective at the end of the working day on 2 June 2011 unless called in by that date for review by the appropriate Scrutiny Committee.
Copies of this Notice, Agenda and supporting papers are circulated to all Members of the County Council.

Date of next meeting: 21 June 2011

Declarations of Interest

This note briefly summarises the position on interests which you must declare at the meeting. Please refer to the Members' Code of Conduct in Part 9.1 of the Constitution for a fuller description.

The duty to declare ...

You must always declare any "personal interest" in a matter under consideration, ie where the matter affects (either positively or negatively):

- (i) any of the financial and other interests which you are required to notify for inclusion in the statutory Register of Members' Interests; or
- (ii) your own well-being or financial position or that of any member of your family or any person with whom you have a close association more than it would affect other people in the County.

Whose interests are included ...

"Member of your family" in (ii) above includes spouses and partners and other relatives' spouses and partners, and extends to the employment and investment interests of relatives and friends and their involvement in other bodies of various descriptions. For a full list of what "relative" covers, please see the Code of Conduct.

When and what to declare ...

The best time to make any declaration is under the agenda item "Declarations of Interest". Under the Code you must declare not later than at the start of the item concerned or (if different) as soon as the interest "becomes apparent".

In making a declaration you must state the nature of the interest.

Taking part if you have an interest ...

Having made a declaration you may still take part in the debate and vote on the matter unless your personal interest is also a "prejudicial" interest.

"Prejudicial" interests ...

A prejudicial interest is one which a member of the public knowing the relevant facts would think so significant as to be likely to affect your judgment of the public interest.

What to do if your interest is prejudicial ...

If you have a prejudicial interest in any matter under consideration, you may remain in the room but only for the purpose of making representations, answering questions or giving evidence relating to the matter under consideration, provided that the public are also allowed to attend the meeting for the same purpose, whether under a statutory right or otherwise.

Exceptions ...

There are a few circumstances where you may regard yourself as not having a prejudicial interest or may participate even though you may have one. These, together with other rules about participation in the case of a prejudicial interest, are set out in paragraphs 10 – 12 of the Code.

Seeking Advice ...

It is your responsibility to decide whether any of these provisions apply to you in particular circumstances, but you may wish to seek the advice of the Monitoring Officer before the meeting.

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, but please give as much notice as possible before the meeting.

AGENDA

1. Apologies for Absence

2. Declarations of Interest

- guidance note opposite

3. Minutes

To confirm the minutes of the meeting held on 19 April 2011 (**CA3** circulated separately) and to receive for information any matters arising from them.

4. Questions from County Councillors

Any county councillor may, by giving notice to the Proper Officer by 9 am on the working day before the meeting, ask a question on any matter in respect of the Cabinet's delegated powers.

The number of questions which may be asked by any councillor at any one meeting is limited to two (or one question with notice and a supplementary question at the meeting) and the time for questions will be limited to 30 minutes in total. As with questions at Council, any questions which remain unanswered at the end of this item will receive a written response.

Questions submitted prior to the agenda being despatched are shown below and will be the subject of a response from the appropriate Cabinet Member or such other councillor or officer as is determined by the Cabinet Member, and shall not be the subject of further debate at this meeting. Questions received after the despatch of the agenda, but before the deadline, will be shown on the Schedule of Addenda circulated at the meeting, together with any written response which is available at that time.

5. Petitions and Public Address

6. Culham Parochial Primary School (Pages 1 - 28)

Cabinet Member: Schools Improvement

Forward Plan Ref: 2011/014

Contact: Roy Leach, Strategic Lead – School Organisation & Planning Tel: (01865) 816458

Report by Director for Children, Education & Families (**CA6**).

The closure of Culham Parochial Primary School was proposed in November 2010 and was the subject of an extensive public consultation. The responses to the consultation

were reported to Cabinet in February 2011 where a decision about whether or not to publish a statutory closure notice was deferred until March 2011 Cabinet to give the school's governors more time to address, through a recovery plan, a number of key issues. Although progress had been made by the time Cabinet met in March, a robust recovery plan was not fully in place and a decision was taken to publish the statutory notice whilst 'leaving the door open' to governors. This report relays the representations made to the statutory notice; assesses progress made towards addressing the key issues; and considers the implications of closing the school with effect from the end of August 2011.

The Cabinet is RECOMMENDED to:

- (a) Consider the governors' recovery plan and evaluate it against the three conditions detailed in paragraphs 2 (a) – (c) and decide whether it provides sufficient assurance to continue to maintain Culham Parochial School, and is therefore grounds to reject the closure proposal.***

Should Cabinet be of the opinion that the 'recovery plan' is inadequate in one or more respects then,

The Cabinet is RECOMMENDED to:

- (b) consider the representations made in response to the statutory closure notice with particular reference to the issues detailed in paragraphs 17 - 26 and the Statutory Guidance; and***
- (c) approve the closure of Culham Parochial School with effect from midnight, 31 August 2011.***

7. Outcomes of the Recent OFSTED Inspection of Safeguarding and Looked After Children Services and Consequential Action Plan (Pages 29 - 42)

Cabinet Member: Children, Education & Families

Forward Plan Ref: 2011/102

Contact: Annie Callanan, Performance, Improvement & Development Manager Tel: (01865) 815697/Sian Rodway, Strategic Lead, Performance Tel: (01865) 815142

Report by Director for Children, Education & Families (**CA7**).

This report summarises the outcome of the Ofsted inspection of Safeguarding and Looked After Children's Services in Oxfordshire. The inspection was conducted in February / March 2011, the final report was published on 6 May 2011.

The Cabinet is RECOMMENDED to

- (a) receive this report and acknowledge the findings of the inspection report (Annex 1).***
- (b) note the recommendations in the inspection report, and***
- (c) approve the proposed actions and timescales to address the recommendations in the report.***

8. Big Society Fund - May 2011 (Pages 43 - 48)

Cabinet Member: Police & Policy Co-ordination/Safer & Stronger Communities

Forward Plan Ref: 2011/064

Contact: Claire Phillips, Partnership Officer Tel: (01865) 323967/Alexandra Bailey, Corporate Performance & Review Manager Tel: (01865) 816384

Report by Head of Strategy & Communications (**CA8**).

The council's proposed changes to services for children, young people and families include the creation of a new Integrated Early Intervention Service. The Early Intervention Service model, mean significant changes to the way that youth services are provided in Oxfordshire. In future youth work will no longer be provided in a number of locations.

Young People's Centres that are no longer required for service provision are being made available for transfer to the community as part of the council's Big Society Offer. A number of these centres are on school sites. Where there is a recognised educational need for the building on a school site bids these will be given priority to transfer to the school.

This report sets out the position with regard to young people's centres on school sites and where there are requests to transfer them to the school.

The Cabinet is RECOMMENDED to :

- a. agree transfer of buildings to the school on the following sites:***
 - Sweatbox young people's centre at King Alfred's School east site and to include this building within the transfer of ownership to the school that is already underway;***
 - Eynsham young people's centre at Bartholomew School;***
 - Existing young people's centre space at Chipping Norton School on completion of the project;***
- b. request a sustainable business case to come forward for the future management and use of the Wheatley Young People's Centre led by the Children's Centre;***
- c. encourage proposals to come forward for the remaining young people's centres on school sites for Cabinet consider as part of the Big Society Fund.***

9. Didcot Parkway Station Interchange (Pages 49 - 68)

Cabinet Member: Growth & Infrastructure

Forward Plan Ref: 2011/066

Contact: Adrian Saunders, Rail Development Officer Tel: (01865) 815080

Report by Deputy Director of Environment & Economy – Growth & Infrastructure (**CA 9**).

The Didcot Parkway Station Interchange project was recommended by the Didcot Integrated Transport Strategy and is included in the current Local Transport Plan. It has been identified as priority infrastructure in the Oxfordshire Local Investment Plan.

Strategic transport infrastructure is essential to the delivery of new housing and jobs. This project aims to improve the attractiveness of public transport in Didcot and Science Vale UK by tackling the issues of poor layout and congestion at the station. It will deliver new facilities that will ensure the station has the capacity to meet future travel demand as the number of people living and working in the locality increases.

In accordance with the Financial Procedure Rules of the Council's Constitution, approval from the Cabinet is required for capital projects exceeding £5 million in value, and this project is valued at £6.6 million.

This report gives an update on progress with the project and seeks authority to proceed with the award of a contract so that construction can begin this year. A detailed project appraisal is provided as an annex to the report.

Cabinet is RECOMMENDED to approve the detailed project appraisal..

10. Oxfordshire Minerals and Waste Development Framework: Core Strategy - Preferred Strategy for Consultation (Pages 69 - 122)

Cabinet Member: Growth & Infrastructure

Forward Plan Ref: 2011/035

Contact: Peter Day, Minerals & Waste Policy Team Leader Tel (01865) 815544

Report by Deputy Director of Environment & Economy – Growth & Infrastructure (**CA10**).

The Minerals and Waste Core Strategy will set out the vision, objectives, spatial strategy, core policies and implementation framework for the supply of minerals and management of waste in Oxfordshire to 2030. The County Council must carry out consultation on a preferred strategy before the Core Strategy is submitted to the Secretary of State for independent examination. This consultation is to be undertaken in June/July 2011, in accordance with the timetable previously agreed by Cabinet. Draft preferred strategies for minerals and waste were considered by the Minerals and Waste Working Group on 9 May 2011. The Working Group has recommended to Cabinet that these should form the basis of a preferred minerals and waste core strategy for consultation.

The report summarises comments that have been received on the report by Atkins on

Local Assessment of Aggregates Supply Requirements for Oxfordshire and sets out actions to address the key points raised. A preferred strategy for minerals is put forward, including a vision and objectives for minerals and core minerals policies, which incorporate the aggregates supply figures and the strategy for the location of mineral workings agreed by Cabinet on 16 February 2011.

The strategy must also make planning provision for the management of all wastes in Oxfordshire, including municipal waste; commercial and industrial waste; construction and demolition waste; hazardous waste; and radioactive waste. Management of waste in Oxfordshire is moving away from landfill towards increased recycling and resource recovery treatment. The strategy needs to make provision for the additional facilities that will be needed to enable this to continue. These facilities will mainly be needed at or near to the main urban areas. A draft preferred strategy is put forward which includes a vision and objectives for waste; the need for additional waste facilities; options for meeting these requirements; a draft preferred planning strategy for the location of new waste management facilities; and draft policies for waste.

The Cabinet is RECOMMENDED to:

- (a) Agree that the County Council's draft Preferred Minerals and Waste Core Strategy be based on the proposed strategies and policies in Annexes 2, 3 and 4.***
- (b) Agree that public consultation be carried out on the preferred strategy and policies for minerals and on the strategy options and draft preferred strategy and policies for waste.***

Delegate authority to finalise the consultation document to the Deputy Director (Growth and Infrastructure) in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Growth and Infrastructure.

11. Future Arrangements for Call Receipt, Mobilising and Incident Management for Oxfordshire County Council Fire & Rescue Service (Pages 123 - 142)

Cabinet Member: Safer & Stronger Communities

Forward Plan Ref: 2011/052

Contact: Colin Thomas, Deputy Chief Fire Officer Tel: (01865) 855206

Report by Deputy Chief Fire Officer (**CA11**).

On the 21st December 2010 following 7 years of work on "FiReControl," the mandatory government project to regionalise Fire and Rescue Service call receipt, mobilising and incident management arrangements, the government announced its cancellation.

Oxfordshire's Control Room had throughout this time remained resilient, with County Council funded essential maintenance and selective upgrading and continued management support to staff who were facing future employment uncertainty. However, due to the previous project, which would have made the existing facility redundant, medium and long term development of the existing arrangements had not been undertaken. As a result of the government cancellation of the project, whilst current arrangements remain resilient, there is an urgent need to review options for

medium and longer term arrangements.

A government consultation regarding potential future approaches and financial and technical details has been released and Oxfordshire have responded. The government response to the consultation is awaited.

A set of Oxfordshire requirements for a medium to long term approach has been identified. In addition a set of options for future arrangements has been drafted.

In response to an approach from Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service, a joint scoping study with other Thames Valley Fire and Rescue Services is being undertaken. This is examining a range of options which will be measured against the above Oxfordshire requirements.

The Cabinet is RECOMMENDED to:-

- (a) endorse the progression of the collaborative scoping study and creation of the Strategic Outline Business Case being undertaken by Oxfordshire, Buckinghamshire and Royal Berkshire FRSS***
- (b) approve the above list (para 18) of Oxfordshire requirements as benchmarks against which future options will be assessed***
- (c) approve the list of options (para 20) included within the options appraisal***
- (d) require the CFO to instigate appropriate actions in relation to the asset management and capital strategy dependant on the outcomes of the scoping study***
- (e) require the CFO to report back to the Cabinet Member on a regular basis covering:-***
 - a. the CLG consultation response***
 - b. progress on the scoping study and strategic outline business case***
 - c. progress on other third party activities***

12. Progress Report on CLA and Leaving Care (Pages 143 - 170)

Cabinet Member: Children, Young People & Families

Forward Plan Ref: 2010/186

Contact: Fran Fonseca, Strategic Lead CLA Tel: (01865) 323098

Report by Director for Children, Education & Families (**CA12**).

This report is one of a number of regular updates for Cabinet on performance and outcomes for Children Looked After and Care Leavers (CLA).

The report provides a progress report on the continued implementation of the Corporate Parenting Strategy adopted by Cabinet in May 08.. The report also includes an amended Placement strategy.

The Cabinet is RECOMMENDED to:

- (a) continue to support the Corporate Parenting Strategy and to work to the current objectives of the strategy;***
- (b) endorse the amended Placement Strategy***

13. Establishment Review - May 2011 (Pages 171 - 176)

Cabinet Member: Deputy Leader

Forward Plan Ref: 2011/005

Contact: Sue Corrigan, Strategic HR Manager Tel: (01865) 810280

Report by Head of Human Resources (**CA 13**).

This report gives an update on activity since 31 March 2010. It gives details of the agreed establishment figure at 31 March 2011 in terms of Full Time Equivalents, together with the detailed staffing position at 31 March 2011. These are shown in the report by directorate and service area.

The report also provides information on current activity and in addition there is information on grant funded posts and those vacancies which are being covered by agency staff and at what cost.

The Cabinet is RECOMMENDED to:

- (a) note the report;***
- (b) confirm that the Establishment Review continues to meet the Cabinet's requirements in reporting and managing staffing numbers.***

14. Cabinet Scheme of Delegation (Pages 177 - 180)

Cabinet Member: Leader

Forward Plan Ref: 2011/085

Contact: Glenn Watson, Principal Governance Officer Tel: (01865) 815270

Report by County Solicitor & Monitoring Officer (**CA14**).

This report proposes a change to the Scheme of Delegation for Individual Cabinet Member Decisions to allow greater flexibility for the Leader to nominate any other member of the Cabinet to take the place of an appointed member, if the relevant delegated decision maker is unavailable. It also proposes that the current circulation of hard copies of the Council's Constitution be ended in favour of a single electronic master copy on the Council's website.

Cabinet is RECOMMENDED to recommend Council:

- (a) to amend Part 4.4 of the Council's Constitution to effect the changes to the 'Delegated Decisions by Individual Cabinet Members' referred to in paragraph 7 above;***

- (b) *to agree that the website copy of the Constitution should be the master copy, that the routine circulation of hard copies should cease and that the Monitoring Officer be asked to amend the Constitution to make clear that the website copy is the definitive version.*

15. Forward Plan and Future Business (Pages 181 - 182)

Cabinet Member: All

Contact Officer: Sue Whitehead, Committee Services Manager (01865 810262)

The Cabinet Procedure Rules provide that the business of each meeting at the Cabinet is to include “updating of the Forward Plan and proposals for business to be conducted at the following meeting”. Items from the Forward Plan for the immediately forthcoming meetings of the Cabinet appear in the Schedule at **CA15**. This includes any updated information relating to the business for those meetings that has already been identified for inclusion in the next Forward Plan update.

The Schedule is for noting, but Cabinet Members may also wish to take this opportunity to identify any further changes they would wish to be incorporated in the next Forward Plan update.

The Cabinet is RECOMMENDED to note the items currently identified for forthcoming meetings.

CABINET – 24 MAY 2011

CULHAM PAROCHIAL PRIMARY SCHOOL – DECISION ABOUT WHETHER TO CLOSE THE SCHOOL

Report by Director for Children, Young People & Families

Introduction

1. In response to concerns about the future viability of Culham Parochial School, a consultation about the school's future was undertaken during November and December 2010. The consultation prompted a large volume of contributions and correspondence which was overwhelmingly against closure of the school but which generally failed to provide the means whereby the future of the school could be secured. An exception was the response from the reinvigorated governing body which had sought to address the underlying reasons for the initial closure proposal.
2. Although the governors were unable to present an adequately robust 'recovery plan' to assure the Cabinet that the school should continue to be maintained by the Council, Cabinet resolved: to defer the decision on whether to publish a statutory notice for the closure of Culham Parochial Primary School to the March Cabinet meeting to allow time for the following conditions to be met:
 - (a) a suitable Headteacher appointed for 1 September 2011 or earlier, or, a "hard federation" agreed with another primary school offering long term continuity of leadership;
 - (b) to demonstrate over a 3 year period that they can deliver a sustainable and balanced budget; and
 - (c) to demonstrate sustained demand for consistent pupil numbers above 40.
3. At the 15th March Cabinet the school's governors presented evidence of progress towards addressing (a) to (c) above. However, at that stage, the 'recovery plan' did not yet provide sufficient assurance of success and so it was decided to proceed with the publication of a statutory notice to close Culham Primary Parochial School with effect from 31st August 2011. Cabinet emphasised that the opportunity remained open for the three conditions previously set by the Cabinet to be fulfilled prior to the production of the report to Cabinet in May.

Background

4. Culham Parochial School is a small rural primary school and, as such, there is a presumption against closure. In taking any decision to close such a school the Cabinet needs to explicitly consider a number of prescribed matters and these are dealt with below.
5. The publication of a Statutory Notice affords interested parties and members of the public an opportunity to make 'representations' which need to be considered as part of any decision to close a school and these are summarised below.

Exempt Information

6. None.

Assessment of governors' 'recovery plan'

7. Since the March Cabinet meeting governors have worked, with support from Council officers, to produce a robust 'recovery plan' which will satisfy Cabinet that the school has a secure future and that the conditions which led to the initial closure proposal no longer pertain. An assessment of the plan is made against each of the conditions set out in paragraph 2 (a), (b) and (c), above.

(a) *Long term continuity of leadership*

8. Since the initial closure proposal two attempts have been made to recruit a substantive headteacher for the school. On each occasion applications were received, a short list of apparently suitable candidates drawn up and interviews held. Two Council officers attended each interview and offered advice to governors on the suitability of candidates. In neither case did the interviewing governors feel that they could recommend to the whole governing body a candidate for appointment.
9. In the meantime the school has been competently led by two acting Headteachers, the most recent of who has been approached by governors with a view to his continuing to lead the school for the duration of the implementation of the 'recovery plan' upon which governors have been working. He has agreed to remain at the school, should it be decided not to close it, and to undertake the necessary training and assessment to obtain the National Professional Qualification for Headship (NPQH) which is an essential prerequisite for being appointed as substantive headteacher. The governors have engaged, at the school's expense, an experienced headteacher (who is currently the School Improvement Adviser) to act as mentor.
10. This arrangement clearly does not meet the letter of the condition prescribed by the Cabinet in February 2011 and, if implemented, would constitute a further period of interim arrangements. There can be no guarantee that the acting headteacher will achieve NPQH nor that he will remain with the school

for the 3 year duration of the recovery plan. It is officers' assessment that he is capable of providing the school with the leadership that it needs. This view is endorsed by the recent Ofsted inspection which noted that "the present acting headteacher, with the considerable support of the local authority, has ensured that the school has made all possible efforts to maintain its strengths and seek improvement in areas of priority."

(b) A sustainable and balanced budget over a three year period.

11. Council Finance officers have worked with the Chair of Governors on the construction of a three year budget covering the period 2011/12 to 2013/14, using the 2010/11 actual out turn figures as a starting point. Assuming pupil numbers rise to 46 (a figure slightly in excess of the September 2009 peak of 44 pupils and the more typical 40 or so seen in September 2006 and 2007) it is possible to produce a broadly balanced budget. The overall out turn is very sensitive to variations in pupil numbers with each one worth approximately £2,500 per annum.
12. Unfortunately for the school, anticipated increased funding from higher pupil numbers is partially offset by assumed reductions in grants and the 'minimum funding guarantee' and low levels of 'pupil premium' linked to the very low numbers of pupils entitled to free school meals. In producing the budget, expenditure has been pared back as much as possible leaving little or no flexibility to deal with any unforeseen expenditure that may arise.
13. However, although an in-year balanced budget based on 46 pupils looks achievable, this would still leave a carry forward deficit of c.£25,000 even if the Oxford Diocese's previous offer of £20,000 is forthcoming (i.e. a cumulative deficit of c.£45,000). Unless it can be demonstrated that the school is able to raise an additional £25,000, there is very little evidence to suggest that the school will be able to return an overall balanced budget within the three year period. To date the governors have received written commitments for c.£16,000 which are thought to be contingent upon confirmation of the school's future beyond August 2011.

(c) Sustained demand for school places in excess of 40

14. Since the possibility of closure was first mooted in Autumn 2010, the number of pupils on the school roll had fallen from over 40 to 23 with disproportionately high losses from older year groups. The numbers have subsequently risen to 26 (as of 9th May). The school has also been approached by parents of two children allocated places at other schools for September 2011 starts (Reception Year) and of two others who have expressed interest in places in older year groups. If there are any additions to the school roll prior to the Cabinet meeting these will be reported orally.
15. As part of the 2011-12 admissions process, eight places at Culham Parochial School have been allocated: six to parents expressing a preference for the school and two as the nearest school with places available. Parents have up

until the 20th May to accept places offered and their responses to the offers will be reported to the meeting.

16. If all eight places are accepted and taken up this will give the following school roll (based on pupil numbers as of 9th May 2011):

Year group	R	1	2	3	4	5	6	Total
Number	8	7	6	7	4	1	1	34

17. The governors have solicited written indications of parents' intentions to send their children to the school in future years if the threat of closure is lifted. For September 2012 admissions there are eight written intentions, and for September 2014 six. At the time of writing none had been confirmed for September 2013. However, it is likely that the school will be able to sustain an intake of eight children per year which is the school's Published Admission Number.
18. The challenge, therefore, is two-fold: improve retention into the older year groups and to attract 'mid-year' admissions into Years 1 – 6 in order to boost the January 2012 pupil count to a minimum of 39. Both would be made easier by greater certainty about the school's future combined with a strong focus upon improving pupil outcomes by the end of Year 6.
19. If the Cabinet does not believe that the 'recovery plan' presented by governors and assessed by officers is sufficiently robust then, prior to reaching a decision to close Culham Parochial School, a number of prescribed actions and specific issues must be considered. These are laid out and discussed below.

Summary of representations made to the Statutory Notice

20. Representations by category of respondent and support or opposition to the proposal are summarised in the table below.

9 responses, 8 of which objected to the proposal.

Category of respondent	Number of responses
Parent of child at Culham Parochial Primary School	2
Parent of child at another school	2
Parent of child at Culham Parochial Primary School and another school	1
Parent of child not yet at primary school	0
Staff/governor at Culham Parochial Primary School	1
Staff/governor at another schools	1
Staff/governor at another school and parent/carer of a child at another school	1
CE Diocese	1

Community value of the school	
The school is vital to its local community	5
Young families will leave/not move to the village	1
Value of local schools in general	1
Educational value of the school	

Culham provides a high quality of education	5
Culham meets demand for a small school – value of small schools	1
Shortage of good schools / alternative schools are not as good	2
Collapse of academy proposal removes alternative option	1
Traffic and travel	
Difficult for parents to transport children to other schools	1
Need for school places	
Population rising locally and beyond	2
Housing development in the area	1
Alternative solutions	
More effort needed to secure a headteacher	3
Current problems can be overcome by new governing body	2
Sufficient progress has been made against council's criteria	1

The full comments made are available to Cabinet Members as a background paper.

Financial and Staff Implications

21. The school currently employs eight substantive members of staff on a mixture of permanent and temporary contracts. In the event of a decision to close the school the County Council, as employer, would use its best endeavours to secure suitable alternative employment for all of the staff. Although the Council can put forward staff to be considered for redeployment by other schools, it is the responsibility of the governing bodies of other schools to decide whether or not to make an appointment. Therefore, continuous employment cannot be guaranteed and any staff not securing alternative employment by the end of August 2011 (whether through redeployment by the Council or otherwise) would be entitled to a redundancy payment.
22. The maximum total cost of redundancy payments to be met by the Council is £48,783.85.
23. As discussed below, closure of the school might result in some Culham Village pupils becoming eligible for free home to school transport. This would be dependent upon them attending either their 'designated area' school (which will be Sutton Courtenay) or the nearest school with vacancies, if either is more than the statutory walking distance of 2 miles for children up to the age of 8 years and 3 miles for children aged 8 years and over. The gross cost of running a 15 seat minibus from Culham village to Sutton Courtenay would be approximately £90 per day (£17,100 per annum) based upon average tender costs over the past three years. However, there might be opportunities to offset some of this cost through charging concessionary fares for village children (those aged 8 years and over) who are not entitled to free home to school transport.

Equality and Inclusion Implications

24. An Equalities Impact Assessment has been undertaken and there are not considered to be any significant equality and inclusion implications arising from this proposal.

Legal Background

25. Closures of schools are subject to statutory procedures, as established by The Education and Inspections Act 2006 (EIA 2006) and The School Organisation (Establishment and Discontinuance of Schools)(England) Regulations 2007 (as amended).
26. Local authorities also have a duty to have regard to statutory guidance, in this particular case '*Closing a Mainstream School: A guide for Local Authorities*', ("the Guidance").

Stage 4 – Decision

27. The Guidance states there are 4 key issues which the decision maker (The Cabinet) should consider before judging the merits of the proposal:
 - a. Is any information missing?
 - b. Has the statutory consultation been carried out prior to publication of the notice?
 - c. Does the published notice comply with statutory requirements?
 - d. Are the proposals "related" to other published proposals.

Consultation

28. The regulations do not prescribe how statutory consultation is carried out. Details of the stage 1 consultation carried out prior to the publication of the notice are included in the proposal (Annex 2), and the results were summarised in the report to Cabinet 16th February 2011 (Annex 3). On 24th March 2011 the statutory notice (Annex 2) was published on the OCC website and in the Oxford Mail, and displayed at the entrances to Culham Parochial Primary School and in the local library. The representation period lasted the statutory 6 weeks until 5th May 2011.
29. Statutory consultation was therefore carried out in accordance with the recommended time limits and prior to publication of the statutory notice.
30. If some parties submit objections on the basis that consultation was not adequate, the Cabinet may wish to take legal advice on the points raised. If the requirements have not been met, the Cabinet may judge the proposal to be invalid and should consider whether they can make a decision on the proposal. Alternatively the Cabinet may take into account the sufficiency and quality of the consultation as part of their overall judgement of the proposal as a whole.

Publication of Statutory Notice

31. As reported above, the statutory notice (attached as Annex 2) and statutory proposal were published on 24th March 2011 with a 6 week period allowed for representations which closed on the 5th May 2011.

32. The Cabinet should consider whether the notice complies with the statutory requirements as set out in the regulations. The notice was sent to the School Organisation and Competitions Unit at the Department for Education for checking, and confirmed as compliant.

Related notices

33. There are no other notices related to the closure of Culham Parochial School.

Views of interested parties

34. The Cabinet should consider the views of all those affected by the proposals or who have an interest in them. This includes statutory objections and comments submitted during the representation period. These are summarised in paragraph 9, and contained in full in the annexes and background papers. The Cabinet should not simply take account of the numbers of people expressing a particular view when considering representations made on the proposal. Instead the Cabinet should give the greatest weight to representations from those stakeholders most directly affected by the proposal.
35. In addition to the 4 key issues referred to above, the Guidance on considering proposals for school closures sets out a list of factors to be considered by decision makers, which should not be taken to be exhaustive (paragraphs 4.17 to 4.63 of the Guidance). A summary of the factors is detailed below along with officers' responses to each in respect of Culham Parochial School and establishes the case for closure:
36. **a The effect on standards, school improvement and diversity.** The government's stated aim is to create a dynamic system shaped by parents that delivers excellence and equality, closing weak schools and encouraging new providers and popular schools to expand. The Cabinet should be satisfied that the proposal will contribute to raising local standards of provision and attainment and consider the impact on choice and diversity. It should pay particular attention to the effect on groups that tend to under-perform including children from certain ethnic minorities, children from deprived background and children in care.
37. Officer response: When Culham Parochial School was inspected by Ofsted in 2008 it was rated as "good". It was inspected most recently in March 2011 and had an overall judgement of 'satisfactory' with 'satisfactory' capacity for sustained improvement. The very small number of pupils at the school makes year-on-year comparisons based on KS2 results statistically unreliable although the Ofsted report judges "attainment by the end of Year 6 is average in English and mathematics". However, since 2008, the school has been without a permanent headteacher in post, and despite repeated efforts has been unsuccessful in recruiting a headteacher. The lack of a full-time permanent headteacher, and the budgetary difficulties resulting from falling pupil numbers, are not conducive to maintaining or improving standards.

The closure of Culham would reduce by one the number of Church of England schools in the area. However, as at the January 2011 pupil census the school had 27 children on roll (currently 26 having fallen at one stage to 23), this impacts on a relatively small number of pupils (1.5% of pupils at schools within a 3 mile radius).

38. The surrounding schools within a 3 mile radius, to which pupils are likely to be dispersed, are:
 - Carswell Community Primary School (COM) – Satisfactory (2009)
 - Sutton Courtenay CE Primary School (VC) – Satisfactory (2010)
 - St Nicolas CE Primary School (VC) – Good (2009)
 - St Edmund's Catholic Primary School (VA) – Good (2009)
 - Clifton Hampden CE Primary School (VC) – Good (2010)
 - Thomas Reade Primary School (COM) – Good (2009)
 - Caldecott Primary School (COM) – Good (2010)
 - Dunmore Primary School (COM) – Satisfactory (2009)
39. If it is concluded that Culham Parochial School is not sustainable it cannot be considered to be contributing to diversity of provision nor of offering parents a viable 'choice'. There are equally or better performing church schools within a reasonable distance. In the case of closure additional pupils could be accommodated in Sutton Courtenay School and there would be no reduction in the number of pupils accessing a church school education. The current pupil population is predominantly white and there are none from economically deprived backgrounds (proxy measure = entitlement to Free School Meals).
40. **b. The need for places.** The Cabinet should be satisfied that there is sufficient capacity to accommodate displaced pupils in the area.
41. Officer response: There is sufficient capacity in the local area to accommodate all displaced pupils. Across the schools within a 3-mile radius, as of the January 2011 pupil census there were 123 spare primary places (approx 7% of total capacity). However, due to rising pupil numbers in recent years, these spare places are disproportionately concentrated in older year groups. In year 2 there are 9 spare places available for the 6 Culham pupils; in Year 1 there are 6 spare places for the 6 Culham pupils. The only year where there currently appear to be insufficient spaces for displaced pupils is the Foundation Year, but sufficient places could be added to the nearest school (Sutton Courtenay CE Primary School) if required. This school is recruiting additional staff to accommodate already anticipated increases in pupil numbers and has accommodation which could be brought into use at short notice should there be a need for additional classroom accommodation.
42. **c Impact on community cohesion and race Equality.** In considering proposals for the closure of schools, the effect on families and the community should be considered. Community cohesion, race equality, accessibility and equal opportunities issues should be considered.

43. Officer response: It is recognised that the school is an important part of its local community, as the village has no other (non-church) meeting place, such as a village hall. The nearest other villages with village halls are Sutton Courtenay (2 miles), Clifton Hampden (2.7 miles) and Drayton (3 miles).
44. The Local Authority recognises the contribution that schools make to their local communities and this is reflected in the 'Primary Strategy for Change' where the aim is for a 'good school at the heart of the community'. Whilst consideration has been given to the impact closure would have upon the community, the Council cannot continue to maintain schools primarily for non-educational reasons. Community commitments to make greater use (and thereby financial contributions) to the school would help to address one of the key issues, the budget deficit, but have not been forthcoming.
45. Oxfordshire County Council has established a "Big Society Fund" against which communities can bid in order to help them establish viable alternative uses and/or funding streams for existing premises. If there is sufficient demand for a non-school community facility then it is possible that the school buildings could be used for this purpose. However, the buildings are the property of the Diocese of Oxford, and future use of the buildings will be a matter for the Diocese to determine.
46. **d Travel and Accessibility for All.** In considering proposals The Cabinet should be satisfied that alternative facilities should be accessible and that there should be no unreasonable extension to either travel to school times nor transport costs.
47. Officer response: Alternative provision for all pupils can be made available within 3 miles of the current school. It is recognised that parental choice may lead to some children travelling further.
48. Of the 24 children at Culham Parochial Primary School (as of March 2011):
- 14 live within Culham and would face longer journeys to an alternative school although these may be within the 'statutory walking distances' of 2 miles for children up to 8 years and 3 miles for 8s and over.
 - 2 live within Sutton Courtenay village but live closer to Culham Parochial Primary School than Sutton Courtenay Primary School, and would therefore face a longer journey to their nearest school (approximately 1.4 miles instead of 0.6 miles).
 - 4 live within Sutton Courtenay village (2 miles from Culham), and would be able to attend Sutton Courtenay Primary School, which would reduce their journey length.
 - 2 live within Drayton village (3 miles from Culham) slightly closer to Sutton Courtenay Primary School than Culham Parochial Primary School. Alternatively they may be able to attend Drayton Primary School, approximately 0.6 miles from their home.
 - 1 each lives within Abingdon and Aylesbury, and would be able to attend schools in their towns of residence, which would reduce their journey lengths.

49. Overall, 16 children will need to travel further if Culham Parochial Primary School closes, and 8 children will be able to attend a school closer to their home. The net effect will depend on parental choice as well as residences of pupils.
50. OCC's Home to school transport policy 2011-2012 states that '*Children attending the designated (catchment) school for their address are eligible for free transport if the distance from home to school is over the "statutory walking distance" of 3 miles if 8 or over or 2 miles if less than 8 and of statutory school age... It is measured along the shortest route along which a child, accompanied by a responsible adult, may walk with reasonable safety. The route may include footpaths, bridleways, and other pathways, as well as recognised roads. All such routes need to be open to the public. When there are issues raised over the possible safety of a walking route the Admissions Team will arrange for an initial assessment by the Integrated Transport Unit and if necessary a full risk assessment by Road Safety.*'
51. In accordance with this, free transport will be provided for children currently at Culham Parochial Primary School who, as a result of the decision to close the school, now need to attend a school beyond the statutory walking distance from their home. This is likely to include approximately 10 children who live in the Culham catchment area, while they are still aged under 8, but there will need to be detailed assessments based on actual addresses and journeys and whether parents express preferences for places at the nearest school to their home address.
52. **e. Alternatives to closure.** The Cabinet should consider whether, for instance, there is scope for federation with another local school or provision of alternative facilities for the local community which would contribute to the sustainability of the school.
53. Officer response: Prior to the proposal that Culham Parochial School be closed the governing body, supported by Council officers, sought on more than one occasion to agree federation with a local school. One proposal got as far as consideration by the two schools' governing bodies and, whilst endorsed by the governors of Culham Parochial School, was rejected by those of the proposed partner school. During the period since the initiation of the closure consultation in November 2010, governors made renewed efforts to identify a federation partner and, whilst it would have been possible to agree collaborative arrangements with one or more schools, a full federation was not possible.
54. **Special Educational Needs provision.** Culham Parochial School is a mainstream primary school without specialist SEN facilities (for example an attached unit). The proposals therefore do not change provision for special educational needs. For pupils with identified SEN, their needs, and any specified provision including that detailed in a Statement of SEN, would be met through placement in a suitable alternative mainstream school. At the January PLASC there was one child on roll with a statement of special educational needs.

CASE FOR CLOSURE

55. The presumption against closure of rural primary schools, as per the 'Designation of Rural Primary School (England) 2007), is only a recommendation and not a requirement in legislation. The Cabinet is referred to paragraphs 4.42-4.44 of the Guidance which sets out factors for decision makers to consider with regard to proposals to close a rural school. The case for closure *should* be strong and the proposals clearly in the best interests of educational provision in the area. As set out above, the Local Authority has provided evidence with regard to alternatives to closure (paragraph 17(e)), the transport implications (paragraph 17(d)) and the overall impact on the community (paragraphs 17(a) to (c)).
56. Provided the relevant factors, above, are carefully considered, a lawful decision to close a small rural primary school can be taken.

Next steps

57. If Cabinet agrees to the closure of Culham Parochial School this will take effect from 1st September 2011. If the decision is to continue to maintain the school it will be important to closely monitor its performance against the governors' 'recovery plan', in particular to ensure that forecast increases in pupil numbers materialise and that the budget plan is delivered.

DECISION

58. In considering the proposals for a school closure Cabinet can decide to:
- Reject the proposals;
 - Approve the proposals;
 - Approve the proposals with a modification (e.g. the implementation date); or
 - Approve the proposals subject to them meeting a specific condition (see the Guidance).

RECOMMENDATION

59. **The Cabinet is RECOMMENDED to:**
- (a) **Consider the governors' recovery plan and evaluate it against the three conditions detailed in paragraphs 2 (a) – (c) and decide whether it provides sufficient assurance to continue to maintain Culham Parochial School, and is therefore grounds to reject the closure proposal.**

Should Cabinet be of the opinion that the 'recovery plan' is inadequate in one or more respects then,

60. **The Cabinet is RECOMMENDED to:**

- (b) consider the representations made in response to the statutory closure notice with particular reference to the issues detailed in paragraphs 17 - 26 and the Statutory Guidance; and**
- (c) approve the closure of Culham Parochial School with effect from midnight, 31 August 2011.**

Meera Spillett
Director for Children, Young People & Families

Contact Officer: Roy Leach, Strategic Lead School Organisation & Planning
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May 2011

**MATTERS TO BE SPECIFIED IN SECTION 15 PROPOSALS TO
DISCONTINUE A SCHOOL**

**Extract of Schedule 4 to The School Organisation (Establishment and
Discontinuance of Schools)(England) Regulations 2007 (as amended):**

Contact details

1. The name of the LA or governing body publishing the proposals, and a contact address, and the name of the school it is proposed that should be discontinued.

Proposal published by Oxfordshire County Council, County Hall, New Road, Oxford, OX1 1ND

Proposal to close Culham Parochial Church of England Primary School, High Street, Culham, Abingdon, Oxfordshire OX14 4NB

Implementation

2. The date when it is planned that the proposals will be implemented, or, where the proposals are to be implemented in stages, information about each stage and the date on which each stage is planned to be implemented.

31 August 2011

Consultation

3. A statement to the effect that all applicable statutory requirements to consult in relation to the proposals were complied with.

All applicable statutory requirements to consult have been complied with.

4. Evidence of the consultation before the proposals were published including:

- a) a list of persons and/or parties who were consulted;
- b) minutes of all public consultation meetings;
- c) the views of the persons consulted; and
- d) copies of all consultation documents and a statement of how these were made available.

a) Consultation was carried out with staff, governors and parents at Culham Parochial Primary School; local residents; local councillors (parish, district and county) and MPs; trade unions representing staff at the school; other local primary and nursery schools; CE and RC dioceses; and other interested parties.

b) A meeting was held at the school on 7 December 2010, attended by 60-70 members of the public, Roy Leach (OCC) and Gordon Joyner (Oxford Diocese).

The following points were raised :

- The number of children who had recently left the school
- Cost of providing alternative provision
- Steps taken to recruit a Headteacher.
- Whether there had been sufficient prior information about the school's difficulties.
- Praise for quality of education (in years past) and at present.
- Previous years' budgets.
- Traffic issues, especially re Culham to Sutton Courtenay.
- Loss of village amenities and facilities would be compounded by loss of school.
- Importance of school to the community. OCC has let the community down.
- Concerns about leadership/governance of the school had not been addressed.
- Role of Governing body (placed school in this situation).
- Impact of possible closure on potential recruitment of headteacher.
- Success of small schools versus large.
- Insufficient time to put forward other proposals. Extension to consultation period requested.
- Quality of care in small school.
- Fate of buildings if school closed?
- Should prospective parents continue to apply for Culham?
- Failure of management.
- Academy option/free school.
- Parish council – supportive keeping school open.
- LA advice always taken by governors, implies culpability
- Is top up funding possible if number on roll increased post pupil census?

c) 175 responses were received. 95% of responses objected to the proposal. The reasons for objection are summarised in the table below:

Community value of the school	31%
The school is vital to its local community	22%
The village has no other (non-church) meeting place	9%
Young families will leave/not move to the village	3%
Local schools help children become members of their community	4%
Value of local schools in general	5%
Educational value of the school	25%
Culham provides a high quality of education	19%
Culham meets demand for a small school – value of small schools	3%
Alternative schools are not as good	1%
Closure would harm transition from the pre-school	1%
Traffic and travel	12%
Difficult for parents to transport children to other schools	10%
Increased traffic	5%
Need for school places	10%

Population rising locally and beyond	6%
Forecasts/numbers of young children in village indicate school will be full/have rising numbers	5%
Causes of current problems	19%
Weaknesses in recent leadership and management have undermined the school	7%
Pupil numbers have fallen because of concern at current situation	4%
Current problems are short term and can be overcome by new governing body	5%
Not enough time allowed/ effort made at recruiting head; flaws in HT recruitment process/requirements	7%
Not enough time was allowed/effort made for federation	2%
Lack of headteacher insufficient reason to close school	2%
European Academy proposal has harmed viability of Culham School	1%

A small proportion of contributions (6%) to the consultation included specific proposals about how the school's future could be secured:

Alternative solutions	
Allow more time to find a headteacher/reconsider previous candidates	6%
Close Key Stage 2 until numbers rebuild	1%
Close the school and reopen it on the same site	1%
The European School to provide leadership for the school	1%

Detailed responses were also received from the Oxfordshire Rural Community Council and Culham Parish Council, requesting that more time be made available to the governing body to secure a permanent headteacher for the school.

A detailed response from the recently appointed Chair of Governors on behalf of the "governors and local support group ['Save Culham School', SCS]" was produced with the support of county council officers (who provided financial and other information, along with guidance about what might constitute a viable 'recovery plan').

d) The consultation leaflet is attached as Appendix 1. These were sent via the school to parents. Consultation leaflets were also sent to local primary and nursery schools, the three local secondary schools, local councillors and MPs, and other stakeholders. The leaflet was also available on the county council's website.

Objectives

5. The objectives of the proposal.

The viability of Culham Parochial Primary School has been called into question due to a combination of factors: inability of the governing body to

recruit a headteacher, falling pupil roll and deficit budget. Efforts have been made by the governing body, supported by the council and the Oxford Diocese, to address these issues, including through attempts to federate with other schools, but it has not been possible to put in place a viable recovery plan. Reluctantly, council officers, the Diocese and governors in post at the start of the 2010-11 academic year, concluded that the school does not have a future and the council is proposing to close the school with effect from the end of the current academic year.

The closure of Culham Parochial Primary School will ensure that all current and prospective pupils are educated in local schools with secure leadership and sustainable budgets.

The decision to publish a statutory proposal was initially taken to OCC Cabinet on 16 February 2011, at which the school's governors requested a delay to allow the decision to be informed by interviews for a new headteacher on 1 March. Cabinet agreed to move the decision to 15 March 2011, and set out the following conditions to be met by that date to evidence the future security and sustainability of the school:

- a. Appointment of permanent headteacher *or* a full federation agreed with another school. [Interviews were subsequently held on 1st March, and no candidate was appointed.]
- b. Finances: Whilst a surplus is anticipated at the end of the 2010-11 financial year, a deficit of c.£50,000 [approximately 25%] is forecast for 2011-2012 due to the fall in pupil numbers. A 3-year balanced budget to be produced, with evidence of fundraising efforts to address the 2011-12 deficit.
- c. School roll: Evidence of how the school will secure sufficient pupils to allow a balanced budget (calculated by the governors as being a roll of 40).

At the meeting of 15 March 2011, Cabinet decided to publish a statutory notice to close Culham Parochial Primary School. However, it was made clear that the final Cabinet decision (planned for 24 May 2011) would take into account any developments in the meantime, for example whether permanent leadership for the school is secured before this time, and the financial and pupil demand evidence is confirmed by council officers.

Standards and Diversity

6. A statement and supporting evidence indicating how the proposals will impact on the standards, diversity and quality of education in the area.

Culham Parochial Primary School was last assessed by Ofsted in 2008, and rated as "good". The very small number of pupils at the school makes year-on-year comparisons based on KS2 results statistically unreliable. However, since 2008 the school has been without a permanent headteacher in post, and despite repeated efforts has been unsuccessful in recruiting a

headteacher. The lack of a full-time permanent headteacher, and the budgetary difficulties resulting from falling pupil numbers, are not conducive to maintaining or improving standards.

The closure of Culham would reduce the number both of schools rated as “good” by Ofsted, and also of CE schools in the area. However, as at the January 2011 pupil census the school had 27 children on roll (since fallen to 24), this impacts on a relatively small number of pupils (1.5% of pupils at schools within a 3 mile radius).

The surrounding schools within a 3 mile radius, to which pupils are likely to be dispersed, are:

Carswell Community Primary School (COM) – Satisfactory (2009)

Sutton Courtenay CE Primary School (VC) – Satisfactory (2010)

St Nicolas CE Primary School (VC) – Good (2009)

St Edmund’s Catholic Primary School (VA) – Good (2009)

Clifton Hampden CE Primary School (VC) – Good (2010)

Thomas Reade Primary School (COM) – Good (2009)

Caldecott Primary School (COM) – Good (2010)

Dunmore Primary School (COM) – Satisfactory (2009)

Provision for 16-19 year olds

7. Where the school proposed to be discontinued provides sixth form education, how the proposals will impact on:

- a) the educational or training achievements;
- b) participation in education or training; and
- c) the range of educational or training opportunities,

for 16-19 year olds in the area.

n/a

Need for places

8. A statement and supporting evidence about the need for places in the area including whether there is sufficient capacity to accommodate displaced pupils.

There is sufficient capacity in the local area to accommodate all displaced pupils, as detailed in section 11. Across the schools within a 3-mile radius, as of the January 2011 pupil census there were 123 spare primary places (approx 7% of total capacity). However, due to rising pupil numbers in recent years, these spare places are disproportionately concentrated in older year groups. In year 2 there are 9 spare places available for the 6 Culham pupils; in Year 1 there are 6 spare places for the 6 Culham pupils. The only year where there are currently insufficient spaces for displaced

pupils is the Foundation Year, but sufficient places could be added to the nearest school (Sutton Courtenay CE Primary School) if required. In addition there is currently before the Department for Education a proposal to open a Free School on the site of the current European School in Culham (0.6 miles from Culham Parochial Primary School) with a proposed admission number of 50. However, the earliest this could happen would be 2012.

9. Where the school has a religious character, a statement about the impact of the proposed closure on the balance of denominational provision in the area and the impact on parental choice.

Culham Parochial is a CE voluntary controlled school; 3 other CE voluntary controlled schools will remain within the 3 mile radius. The nearest alternative school, Sutton Courtenay Primary School, which has been identified as having potential to expand sufficiently to accommodate displaced pupils, is also a CE voluntary controlled school. Should such an expansion be justified by parental demand, this would therefore balance the reduction in CE places at Culham, leaving the proportion of denominational places in the area unchanged.

Current School Information

10. Information as to the numbers, age range, sex and special educational needs of pupils (distinguishing between boarding and day pupils) for whom provision is made at the school.

As of 9 March 2011 the school had 24 children on roll: 9 girls and 15 boys. There are 6 children in each of F1, Year 1 and Year 2; 4 children in Year 3; and 1 in each of Years 4 and 5. At the January 2011 pupil census, one child had a statement of special educational needs.

Displaced Pupils

11. Details of the schools or FE colleges which pupils at the school for whom provision is to be discontinued will be offered places, including:

- a) any interim arrangements;
- b) where the school included provision that is recognised by the LA as reserved for children with special educational needs, the alternative provision to be made for pupils in the school's reserved provision; and
- c) in the case of special schools, alternative provision made by LAs other than the authority which maintains the school.

It is expected that parental choice will lead to displacement to a number of other schools. The following schools lie within a 3-mile radius and are expected to take the majority of pupils:

Surrounding schools	Miles	PAN	Type	Capacity	On roll	Spare places
Sutton Courtenay All Saints' Church of England Primary School	2	20	VC	90	83	7
Carswell Community Primary School	2	30	COM	225	154	71
St Nicolas Church of England Primary School, Abingdon	2.4	60	VC	349	361	-12
St Edmund's Catholic Voluntary Aided Primary School, Abingdon	2.6	30	VA	180	200	-20
Clifton Hampden Church of England Primary School	2.7	10	VC	48	58	-10
Thomas Reade Primary School	2.7	30	COM	180	177	3
Caldecott Primary School	2.8	45	COM	270	240	30
Dunmore Primary School	2.8	60	COM	383	329	54
Total for 3 mile radius				1725	1602	123

(Pupil numbers as of the January 2011 pupil census.)

However, it has been identified that accommodation at the nearest alternative school (Sutton Courtenay), which is also a CE voluntary controlled school, could be adapted to accommodate all the displaced pupils if required. The county has recently consulted on adding Culham village to the catchment area of Sutton Courtenay as well as Culham School, thus ensuring that 2012 applicants will have a designated school even if Culham School closes in the meantime.

12. Details of any other measures proposed to be taken to increase the number of school or FE college places available in consequence of the proposed discontinuance.

If additional places need to be created, these are expected to be provided at Sutton Courtenay CE (VC) Primary School, 2 miles from Culham. In the first instance this will not require any additional buildings, as existing accommodation can be adapted to take greater numbers. If pupil numbers remain high, alternative options for increasing capacity will be assessed in due course, but this will need to be decided on in light of patterns of parental preference.

Impact on the Community

13. A statement and supporting evidence about the impact on the community and any measures proposed to mitigate any adverse impact.

It is recognised that the school is an important part of its local community,

as the village has no other (non-church) meeting place, such as a village hall. The nearest other villages with village halls are Sutton Courtenay (2 miles), Clifton Hampden (2.7 miles) and Drayton (3 miles).

The Local Authority recognises the contribution that schools make to their local communities and this is reflected in the 'Primary Strategy for Change' where the aim is for a 'good school at the heart of the community. Whilst consideration has been given to the impact closure would have upon the community, the Council cannot continue to maintain schools primarily for non-educational reasons. Community commitments to make greater use (and thereby financial contributions) to the school would help to address one of the key issues, the budget deficit, but have not been forthcoming.

Oxfordshire County Council has established a "Big Society Fund" against which communities can bid in order to help them establish viable alternative uses and/or funding streams for existing premises. If there is sufficient demand for a non-school community facility then it is possible that the school buildings could be used for this purpose. However, the buildings are the property of the Diocese of Oxford, and future use of the buildings will be a matter for the Diocese to determine.

14. Details of extended services the school offered and what it is proposed for these services once the school has discontinued.

The only extended service based at the school is a breakfast club - this is presently run by the pre-school staff in the pre-school room. This also caters for children from the pre-school, and would be expected to continue if Culham Parochial Primary School closes, subject to the continuation of the pre-school's lease. Children attending alternative schools would benefit from the extended services offered by those schools.

Travel

15. Details of the length and journeys to alternative provision.

Alternative provision for all pupils will be available 2 miles from the current school, as shown in section 11 above, although it is recognised that parental choice may lead to some children travelling further.

Of the 24 children at Culham Parochial Primary School (as of March 2011):

- 14 live within Culham and would face longer journeys to an alternative school.
- 2 live within Sutton Courtenay village but live closer to Culham Parochial Primary School than Sutton Courtenay Primary School, and would therefore face a longer journey to their nearest school (approximately 1.4 miles instead of 0.6 miles).
- 4 live within Sutton Courtenay village (2 miles from Culham), and would be able to attend Sutton Courtenay Primary School, which would reduce their journey length.
- 2 live within Drayton village (3 miles from Culham) slightly closer to

Sutton Courtenay Primary School than Culham Parochial Primary School. Alternatively they may be able to attend Drayton Primary School, approximately 0.6 miles from their home.

- 1 each lives within Abingdon and Aylesbury, and would be able to attend schools in their towns of residence, which would reduce their journey lengths.

Overall, 16 children will need to travel further if Culham Parochial Primary School closes, and 8 children will be able to attend a school closer to their home. The net effect will depend on parental choice as well as residences of pupils.

16. The proposed arrangements for travel of displaced pupils to other schools including how they will help to work against increased car use.

OCC's Home to school transport policy 2011-2012 states that 'Children attending the designated (catchment) school for their address are eligible for free transport if the distance from home to school is over the "statutory walking distance" of 3 miles if 8 or over or 2 miles if less than 8 and of statutory school age... It is measured along the shortest route along which a child, accompanied by a responsible adult, may walk with reasonable safety. The route may include footpaths, bridleways, and other pathways, as well as recognised roads. All such routes need to be open to the public. When there are issues raised over the possible safety of a walking route the Admissions Team will arrange for an initial assessment by the Integrated Transport Unit and if necessary a full risk assessment by Road Safety.'

In accordance with this, free transport will be provided for children currently at Culham Parochial Primary School who, as a result of the decision to close the school, now need to attend a school beyond the statutory walking distance from their home. This is likely to include approximately 10 children who live in the Culham catchment area, while they are still aged under 8, but there will need to be detailed assessments based on actual addresses and journeys.

Related Proposals

17. A statement as to whether in the opinion of the LA or governing body, the proposals are related to any other proposals which may have been, are, or are about to be published.

n/a

Rural Primary Schools

18. Where proposals relate to a rural primary school designated as such by an order made for the purposes of section 15, a statement that the LA or the governing body (as the case may be) considered:

- a) the likely effect of discontinuance of the school on the local community;
 - b) the availability, and likely cost to the LA, of transport to other schools;
 - c) any increase in the use of motor vehicles which is likely to result from the discontinuance of the school, and the likely effects of any such increase; &
 - d) any alternatives to the discontinuance of the school,
- as required by section 15(4)

- a) At the 2001 census Culham village had a population of 415. The school is an important part of its local community, and the village has no other (non-church) meeting place, such as a village hall. There are village halls in the neighbouring villages of Sutton Courtenay, Drayton and Clifton Hampden. Whilst consideration has been given to the impact closure would have upon the community, the Council cannot continue to maintain schools primarily for non-educational reasons. (See 13 above)
- b) As detailed in section 15, some, but not all, of the children who live in the Culham catchment area are likely to qualify for free transport. If a significant number qualify then the local authority is likely to provide a minibus from Culham to Sutton Courtenay Primary School, at a daily cost of £80-100.
- c) 8 children from outside the Culham catchment, who are currently transported to school by car, would be able to move to schools closer to their homes and within walking distance, reducing the need to use motor vehicles. 14 children who live within Culham village, and 2 who live between Culham and Sutton Courtenay, will need to travel further to an alternative school, but if the majority transfer to Sutton Courtenay Primary School, the provision of a minibus from Culham to Sutton Courtenay would minimise the traffic impact of this. The net effect could be a reduction in the use of motor vehicles, but this will depend on parental choice. (See also 15-16 above)
- d) For three years the Culham Parochial Primary School's Governing Body, with the help of Oxfordshire County Council and the Oxford Diocese, tried to secure permanent leadership and a long-term future for the school. Despite several attempts to appoint a new Headteacher, they were unable to appoint a suitable candidate on a permanent basis. In the meantime, the school has been led by acting headteachers on a temporary basis, shared with other schools. During this time of uncertainty about the school's future, concerns over long-term staff absence and social limitations for pupils in Key Stage 2 have caused some parents to move their children to other schools. This has had a great effect on the school budget, which has had to be supported with additional funding from the local authority in order to ensure necessary school improvement activities were undertaken. The Governing Body, supported by the Local Authority and the Diocese, has explored in detail the idea of federation with three different schools, but without success. Other possibilities, such as a tie in with the European Academy to work as its feeder school, have been explored, but have not been fruitful. In response to the closure proposal the governing body was reformed with a new chair

and members. A further attempt was made to recruit a headteacher and, despite a shortlist of three, it was not possible to appoint a suitable candidate at interview on 1 March 2011. The governing body has re-advertised again, and the local authority has confirmed that if a permanent headteacher is secured during the statutory representation period, this will be taken into account when making the final decision.

Maintained nursery schools

19. Where proposals relate to the discontinuance of a maintained nursery school, a statement setting out:

- a) the consideration that has been given to developing the school into a children's centre and the grounds for not doing so;
- b) the LA's assessment of the quality and quantity of alternative provision compared to the school proposed to be discontinued and the proposed arrangements to ensure the expertise and specialism continues to be available; and
- c) the accessibility and convenience of replacement provision for local parents.

n/a

Special educational provision

20. Where existing provision that is recognised by the LA as reserved for pupils with special educational needs is being discontinued, a statement as to how the LA or the governing body believes the proposal is likely to lead to improvements in the standard, quality and/or range of the educational provision for these children.

n/a

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Full representations to the statutory notice to close Culham Parochial Primary School (as of 4 May; representation period closes 5 May)

Parent/carer of a child at Culham Parochial CE Primary School	My son attends Culham Parochial school & is testament to the fantastic learning environment that this wonderful village school offers. He has thrived both educationally & emotionally. The atmosphere is one of a caring, fun & stimulating school where all the pupils are extremely happy & eager to learn. The standard of education is excellent & the close links with the village church means this is a true Church of England primary school, which as parents we chose for our children based on location, size & standard of education amongst other personal reasons. The school is now the hub of the village since the shop & pub have closed. Many of the village residents were educated at the school & have generations through their families who have been, or who they wish to have the opportunity to be in the future. To close this wonderful school would be disastrous to the children who attend, their families & to the village community. With the plans for many more houses to be built in the area & the shortage of good schools available it seems absolute madness that we find ourselves in this predicament of having to fight to keep Culham school open. We are convinced there is a suitable headteacher out there & as this is the final hurdle we would hope that all avenues would be explored & help would be forthcoming from OCC in helping to secure a suitable candidate into post. We cannot give up the fight to keep the school open, we owe it to the present pupils & the children who in the future will benefit from having the opportunity to attend & thrive.
Parent/carer of a child at Culham Parochial CE Primary School	Considering the very recent news where by Oxfordshire (as well as nationally) primary schools face even more pressure on places than previously feared, after population experts forecast the birth rate would continue to rise, shows that it is vitally important that this school remains open. Culham school is a very well maintained school, has excellent teaching, happy children, dedicated parents and a committed and pro-active group of governors. With there being no shop, village hall or pub, this just leaves the church with the school being a highly important focal point of the village. Events held at school are very well attended by the local community and I and many others strongly object to the proposed closure.
Staff/governor at Culham Parochial CE Primary School	I have written at an earlier stage of the consultation and wish to register that I continue to believe that closure would be the unfair destruction of a good school, which has been through troubled times, but is now in an excellent position to recover. We have a new Head teacher and a rejuvenated Governing body, with strong local support.
Staff/governor at Culham Parochial CE Primary School	I strongly object to the closure of this school, there are very limited places available to the children in other schools (only it seems those with poor Ofsted ratings and many pupils on register with behavior problems). I do not understand with this distinct lack of places in the area why a school as good as this one should be closing. As for appointing a Head Teacher - i feel that having 2 LA people on the interview panel who will have the VETO on whether a candidate is suitable or not is absolutely appalling, especially when the same body of people have sent out tenders to taxi companies for quotes to transport 14 children from Culham to Sutton Courtenay from September - rather makes one think that the decision is already made. On this note i also find it rather disturbing that Sutton Courtney school has published their newsletter stating that from September they will be appointing a new teacher and creating a new classroom for the rise in pupil numbers. I assume they are talking about pupils from Culham, as it is common knowledge that parents do not normally drive any distance to take their child to this school, in fact the opposite is true, many parents living in Sutton Courtenay drive their children to other areas. So why are the children of Culham school being left with this as their only option??? A lot of questions I realise, but i think they should be investigated and answered. I thank you for your consideration of this matter.
CE Diocese	Much has happened since the proposal to close Culham School became public. Despite the pressure of a falling roll caused by the consultation uncertainty, the Governing Body has been reinvigorated and probably would not be in its current position, had they been in office a year earlier. The school now has the widespread support of the village and they are fully committed to supporting the school. We would clearly like to see this school to remain open. The continuation of village schools is vital to their communities and the Diocese wishes to support all of its schools. The school remains the key public building for the village of Culham. Since the proposal was published we have seen the collapse of the proposed Academy at the European School, which has removed the possibility of alternative provision

	<p>for the village and this is significant. The school has found itself in its current predicament through a series of unfortunate circumstances and not any strategic need to close the school. Understandably, a set of criteria was set by the Council to enable the school to continue, including the appointment of a Headteacher, secure pupil numbers and a balanced budget. The school has made significant progress in all of these areas and we feel it has now earned the chance to re-establish itself as a thriving institution. Therefore, we would strongly urge the Council not to approve the closure notice.</p>
Parent/carer of a child at another school	<p>Although the distance to the next nearest primary school in Sutton Courtney is 2 miles away it is a busy route with only a narrow footpath across the bridge which would not be easy if you were walking with a pram and an older sibling. Once the school is gone it will not be replaced and what would happen if more children moved into the village in the future?</p>
Parent/carer of a child at Culham Parochial CE Primary School and another school	<p>I strongly object to the closure of Culham School, my son attends the school and my daughter went to the school and has now moved to Didcot Girls. I have objected in writing before, I've attended protest meetings outside County Hall, supported fundraising and many other things in order to get the message across about the brilliant Culham School. The school is a focal point of the community well supported by the vicar and Culham Church. The teaching staff are excellent and standards are high. Ofsted reports are good. The children care about other children, are willing to learn in a lovely environment. Former pupils return to the school year after year and express a real belief that they have received a good learning experience at the school. Government stats state that by 2018 over 500,000 more children will require primary school education at the very school that the Oxford City Council plan to close. This is short term thinking by people that have no understanding of this school and how it sits in the community. Last Friday the school was packed in the evening for a quiz night. Why? because this useless Oxford City Council will now stop the funding for the children to attend swimming classes in Berinsfield every Tuesday. The evening raised nearly £500 with food and refreshments provided. This will now ensure that swimming continues. Oxford City Council and the LEA has failed this school and has now galvanised the village into action. I am truly disgusted with OCC and the LEA. I quote Roy Leach from the LEA who said at the meeting last year when he announced the closure of the school and I quote "I have failed to secure the future of this school". He said that twice. I'm delighted to know I'm paying for his failure. I've gone past the point of writing polite letters to Keith Mitchell and his sidekicks, I'm actually quite angry that so many parents have had to work so hard on 'save culham school' websites, meetings, fundraising, protest meetings etc because of the incompetence of the forementioned. (here I am again giving up my time during business hours - I run my own business - to write another letter). Under no circumstances should this 160 year old school close. There has been an investment in computers, new play equipment and fencing and has been recently decorated. I simply cannot believe that the OCC is considering closing this school. I'd like to think that you will listen to my comments and all the other positive replies you will receive but I'm quite sure you won't; OCC knows the price of everything and the value of nothing. I and all parents will fight on to Save Culham School, see our website: www.saveculhamschool.co.uk/</p>
Staff/governor at another school and parent/carer of a child at another school	<p>There is no need to close this school. There needs to be small schools in villages because: 1) they make for a decent and vibrant place to live for families and to stop villages becoming dormitory; 2) to give a suitably good education to children (small schools are much better for young children - there is no doubt about this, there is a huge amount of evidence to support this); 3) to give an education to the children of the village that is in and for their village 4) to deliver the statutory requirements of a LEA without forcing families to go outside their village. This is a good still a good school, despite all its issues with the headteacher and a temporary head who alienated a large number of parents. Think carefully about the legacy you will be leaving by closing this school. This is a good school, and the LEA needs to be lobbying to change the requirements for heads that make it more difficult to recruit heads to smaller schools, not lying down and accepting this and closing small schools with the phrase 'we can't find a headteacher'. To close this school would be a massive failure on the part of the County Council in its statutory and moral duty to the children and families of this village and to future generations. It is a lazy, short sighted, ignorant and unimaginative decision. Look around at the world, and see how valuable small schools are; then see what can be done to solve the short term problems of the school - yes, this will be more challenging than closing the school - but rise to the challenge and show yourselves worthy of the responsibility invested in you!</p>

Staff/governor at another school	I am reluctant to agree with the closure as I am a firm supporter of village schools, but this one does seem to have become untenable despite many and various efforts to find a solution. That there is another village school so close makes a big difference to my response, however this school, Sutton Courtney, should receive extra input and advice to help it to cope with the new arrivals and to raise standards to those that many of them were experiencing before.
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Summary of responses

9 responses, 8 of which objected to the proposal.

Category of respondent	Number of responses
Parent of child at Culham Parochial Primary School	2
Parent of child at another school	2
Parent of child at Culham Parochial Primary School and another school	1
Parent of child not yet at primary school	0
Staff/governor at Culham Parochial Primary School	1
Staff/governor at another schools	1
Staff/governor at another school and parent/carer of a child at another school	1
CE Diocese	1

Community value of the school	
The school is vital to its local community	5
Young families will leave/not move to the village	1
Value of local schools in general	1
Educational value of the school	
Culham provides a high quality of education	5
Culham meets demand for a small school – value of small schools	1
Shortage of good schools / alternative schools are not as good	2
Collapse of academy proposal removes alternative option	1
Traffic and travel	
Difficult for parents to transport children to other schools	1
Need for school places	
Population rising locally and beyond	2
Housing development in the area *	1
Alternative solutions	
More effort needed to secure a headteacher	3
Current problems can be overcome by new governing body	2
Sufficient progress has been made against council's criteria	1

*There are three current planning applications in the area, all pending decision:

- a) Outline application for 140 dwellings on the Amey's site, Appleford Road(10/01907/OUT - re-submission of withdrawn application SUT/19470/8-X)
- b) 15 dwellings on the adjacent Amey's site (10/02032/FUL).

CA6

- c) 15 dwellings in Hobby Horse Lane (Christ Church site). Application to extend planning permission already granted for 15 dwellings on appeal. (11/00086/RENEWAL and 10/02230/FUL).

All of these lie south of the river and are therefore within the current catchment area for Sutton Courtenay Primary School, although (a) & (b) are nearer to the Culham School site (approximately 0.6 miles compared to 1.6 miles).

Division(s): N/A

CABINET – 24 MAY2011

OUTCOME OF OFSTED INSPECTION OF OXFORDSHIRE SAFEGUARDING AND LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN SERVICES

Report by Meera Spillett, Director for Children, Education & Families

Introduction

1. This report sets out the findings of the recent inspection by Ofsted of Oxfordshire's Safeguarding and Looked After Children's Services. The purpose of the inspections was to evaluate the contribution made by all relevant services including those provided by the county council in Oxfordshire and partners particularly those involved through the Oxfordshire Children and Young People's Trust (OCYPT) and Oxfordshire's Safeguarding Children's Board (OSCB) towards ensuring that children and young people are properly safeguarded and to determine the quality of service provision for looked after children and care leavers. The inspection was carried out under the Children Act 2004. The Care Quality Commission (CQC) inspected Health at the same time as our inspection and the Lead Inspector co-ordinated both inspections.

Context and Background

2. Safeguarding services for children are subject to two different inspection processes undertaken by Ofsted.
3. The first is an annual unannounced inspection of Contact, Referral and Assessment services. The last one in Oxfordshire was conducted in November 2010, and a report on this inspection was presented to Cabinet on 15 March 2011. A further unannounced inspection will take place at some point during 2011.
4. The second type of inspection (to which this report relates) is an announced inspection of Safeguarding and Looked After Children's Services conducted every three years. This is a joint inspection with Health and is conducted by Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission (CQC) and examines the work of all partner agencies in planning and delivering safeguarding services and services for looked after children.
5. The inspection fieldwork took place between 7 and 18 March 2011. A team of five inspectors consisting of three of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI), a social care additional inspector and one inspector from the CQC, spent two weeks inspecting 76 case files for children and young people; visiting eight services; and they conducted over 65 focus groups. Over 550 people, including parents, carers, children and young people were interviewed as part of the process. Our partner agencies were also heavily involved and the Care

Quality Commission was part of the inspection with our PCT and health colleagues.

They also met with the lead members, the Chief Executive and reviewed the Children's Trust arrangements and work of the Oxfordshire Safeguarding Children Board. The final report was published on the 6 May 2011 and is available electronically via the Ofsted website

[http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/oxcare_providers/la_view/\(leaid\)/931](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/oxcare_providers/la_view/(leaid)/931).

Findings of the Safeguarding and Looked After Inspection

6. All inspection judgements are made using the following four point scale:
 - Outstanding (Grade 1): A service that significantly exceeds minimum requirements. Currently only one Council in England or Wales has been judged as 'outstanding' in all domains.
 - Good (Grade 2): A service that exceeds minimum requirements.
 - Adequate (Grade 3): A service that only meets minimum requirements.
 - Inadequate (Grade 4): A service that does not meet minimum requirements.
7. Ofsted concluded that in Oxfordshire:
 - Overall effectiveness of safeguarding services is **good**.
 - Capacity to improve is **good**.
 - Overall effectiveness of services for looked after children is **good**; and
 - Capacity to improve is **good**.

(Full details of the main findings can be found in the attached report – see Annex 1).

It is important to note that the judgement for “Making a positive contribution, including user engagement” for looked after children and care leavers was **outstanding**.

Safeguarding Services

8. The inspection identified the following area of strengths in Oxfordshire:
 - The effectiveness of services to ensure that children and young people are safe and feel safe, is good.
 - The quality of our safeguarding provision is good.
 - The contribution of health agencies to keeping children and young people safe is good.
 - Ambition and prioritisation are good. The council and its partners provide strong and effective leadership in safeguarding and promoting

the welfare of children and young people. The well-established Children's Trust offers strong and effective leadership to the partnership.

- The Children and Young People's Plan effectively reflects the needs and aspirations of the county and is based on robust evidence and consultation with service users.
- Leadership and management are good. Effective systems are in place to ensure that children and young people are adequately protected and are kept safe.
- Performance management and quality assurance arrangements are good. The merging of the performance boards of the Children's Trust and the LSCB to become a joint planning, performance and quality assurance group, has increased the focus on key performance target areas and on avoiding duplication.
- Performance management is also well embedded throughout the council.
- Partnership working is good. Oxfordshire has maintained its long history of effective working between partners at both a strategic and operational level.

9. The inspection report made the following recommendations:

Immediately

Review the participation and attendance of adult services at child protection conferences.

Within three months

- Ensure that all reports for child protection conferences are distributed in advance.
- Improve the quality of child protection plans.
- Improve the timeliness of the convening of core groups following initial case conferences.
- Improve the attendance of key agencies at Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) meetings.
- Ensure that all children who return home after being reported missing to the police are offered the chance to talk to someone independent.
- Improve systems of recording to ensure all relevant documentation is easily accessible.

Services for Looked After Children

10. Inspectors found the following areas of strength in looked after children services:

- Health outcomes for looked after children and young people are good.

- The arrangements for ensuring that looked after children and young people are safe are good.
- Children and young people who are looked after have outstanding opportunities to make a positive contribution.
- The impact of services to support and improve the economic well-being of looked after children, young people and care leavers is good because of considerable efforts made by the care leaving service to engage young people in planning for independence and to develop successful adult lives.
- The quality of provision for looked after children and young people is good.
- Ambition and prioritisation for looked after children and young people is good. Aspirations for children, young people and care leavers are high.
- The leadership and management of services for looked after children and young people are good.
- The quality of performance management, management oversight and quality assurance is good. Overall, performance against national indicators is in line with or exceeds that of similar councils or that found nationally. In particular placement stability is improving well.

11. The inspection report made the following recommendations:

- Increase the pace of improvement in educational attainment and attendance.
- Ensure that the assessment of risk posed, to or by the child or young person, is clearly outlined in one specific document.

Within three months

- Review the capacity of independent reviewing officers.
- Improve the quality of recording in care plans and assessments to ensure that targets set for child or young person are clear and progress is monitored.
- Improve access to independent visitor provision for children and young people placed outside Oxfordshire.
- Ensure that reports on complaints made by looked after children and care leavers are regularly reported to the corporate parenting panel and action resulting from these complaints is clearly recorded.
- Improve the quality of reporting on the needs of looked after children to the LSCB.

Action Plan

12. A detailed action plan has been established and work to implement the recommendations is in hand. This forms part of the action plan for year two of the Oxfordshire Children and Young People's Plan and will be monitored via the Children, Education & Families Directorate Leadership Team and the

Quality, Performance and Planning sub-group of the Oxfordshire Children and Young Peoples Trust Board. The action plan is attached at Annex 2.

Financial and Staff Implications

13. These actions will be completed using existing resources. Any additional resources that might be needed for training and development will be addressed within the context of existing training initiatives or will be funded from existing resources within the directorate.

RECOMMENDATION

14. **The Cabinet is RECOMMENDED to**
 - (a) receive this report and acknowledge the findings of the inspection report (Annex 1).
 - (b) note the recommendations in the inspection report, and
 - (c) approve the proposed actions and timescales to address the recommendations in the report.

MEERA SPILLET
Director for Children, Education & Families

Background papers:

None

Contact Officer: Siân Rodway, Strategic Lead – Performance, Children, Education & Families; Tel: 01865 816142

May 2011

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Action Plan Following Announced Safeguarding & LAC Inspection: March 2011

Area for Development	Analysis from the Ofsted report. Numbers refer to paragraphs	Outcome	Action	Lead	Partners	By When	Evidence of Progress
Safeguarding Review the participation and attendance of adult services at child protection conferences to ensure that they actively contribute to the planning process where they are involved with the adults in the case Page 35	25. Adult mental health and substance misuse services are not sufficiently engaged in offering information to conferences or attending when they are actively involved with the adults in the case.	Full engagement of adult mental health and substance misuse services in relevant conferences either by attendance, or by timely contribution of a report.	CEF Safeguarding Manager and Dpty Director, S&CS to establish work programme to support Think Family across adult and children's services	Safeguarding manager (DG)	S&CS, Oxford Health, PCT, DAAT, TV Probation, Oxfordshire Domestic Abuse Strategy Group	Immediate	3.5.11 Agencies have been notified and advised to ensure staff attendance: Oxford Health DAAT S&CS TV Probation, Domestic Abuse provider agencies. 6.5.11 Oxford Health established system to manage all health invitations to case conferences to ensure appropriate adult and children's professionals' attendance.

Area for Development	Analysis from the Ofsted report. Numbers refer to paragraphs	Outcome	Action	Lead	Partners	By When	Evidence of Progress
Ensure that all reports for CP conferences are distributed in advance so all participants are able to read them prior to the meeting	25. Reports by social workers are distributed in advance, but reports from other agencies are not distributed prior to the case conference and, as a result, parents and carers are unable to consider the content, take legal advice or get the help of an advocate if necessary.	Reports by all agencies discussed with and distributed to parents, carers and agencies in advance of case conferences.	Multi-agency working group set up to develop reports templates; target timescales; specialist training in good practice; publicity. Consultation via Area Safeguarding Panels. All agencies' policy and procedures to be reviewed to ensure compliance and actions to be taken by managers and practitioners to ensure implementation	OSCB Development Officer (DH)	CEF services including Business Support, Schools, Oxford Health.	3 months: July 2011	6.5.11 OSCB Exec approved actions 11.5.11 Children's social care agreed target: reports to be shared with parents at least 48hrs prior to conference
Improve the quality of child protection plans to ensure that all the risk factors are appropriately recorded with clear action plans and timescales for addressing them.	27. CP plans are always in place, but not sufficiently clear about the outcomes expected from them or the timescales in which these should	Case audits and dip samples indicate that high percentage of plans have clear outcomes and timescales.	Partners working group to undertake service improvement plan	Safeguarding Service Manager (SH) OSCB development officer (DH)	CEF: Ind Chairs, Conference admin, Key social workers and managers,	July 2011	6.5.11 Service improvement plan approved by OSCB Exec

Area for Development	Analysis from the Ofsted report. Numbers refer to paragraphs	Outcome	Action	Lead	Partners	By When	Evidence of Progress
Improve the timeliness of the distribution of plans and minutes to all participants.	be achieved. 25. In some cases, the circulation of the outline plan and full minutes is too slow. (Current performance: <50% within 28 days. SCRs have recommended 10 days)	Improve performance and achieve local target	Included above		Core group attendees: Health practitioners, adult services		
Improve the timeliness of convening core groups following initial case conferences to ensure that the CP plan is properly implemented.	27. In a small number of cases core groups are not convened quickly enough after the case conference to develop and implement the CP plan.	All first core group meetings taking place within 10 days.	To be included in service improvement plan above.	Area Social Care Service Managers (KP, PB)	Agencies attending core groups	July 2011	
Improve the attendance of key agencies at OSCB meetings so that they can contribute fully to ensuring that all children in Oxfordshire are safe.	60. Attendance by some key members is poor and this does not allow them to contribute fully to the development of OSCB (5/18 reps attended <40% last 5 full Board mtgs)	Full attendance at Board meetings by all representative agencies	20.5.11 Chair leading exercise to review Board members' contribution to safeguarding in their agencies. Attendance to be reviewed at every Full Board meeting. Chair's letters to be sent on two	OSCB Chair and Development Officer (AH,DH)	All agencies	July 2011	

Area for Development	Analysis from the Ofsted report. Numbers refer to paragraphs	Outcome	Action	Lead	Partners	By When	Evidence of Progress
			absences.				
Ensure that all children who return home after being reported missing to the police are offered the chance to talk to someone independent about their experiences.	18. Although return interviews are undertaken, not all CYP are offered the opportunity to speak with an independent adult	Access to an independent adult for all CYP who return after being reported missing	Establish monitoring arrangements for return interviews. Identify and establish suitable independent resources which can meet needs of different groups of CYP	Area Social Care Manager with lead for Missing Children (KP) Lead officer for advocacy/ind visitor service (JV)	Members of Missing Children Panel Residential Homes manager (LT)	July 2011	11.5.11 FWi monitoring report for return interviews developed
Improve systems of recording to ensure that all relevant documentation is easily accessible	28. Risk not clearly recorded in one accessible document New systems are planned but have yet to be rolled out across the service.	Clarity of risk assessment and planning Improved documentation that is user-friendly to both authors and readers	Single multi-agency risk assessment form to be developed and adopted by all agencies	Service Manager, Strategy, Performance & Development (HF) Area Service Manager (SL)	Social care managers, Oxford Health CEF Business Support	July 2011	9.5.11 Model risk assessment and risk management plan drafted for consultation with social care and health. New FWi recording forms implemented
Looked After Children Increase the pace of improvement in the educational attainment and attendance of LAC to ensure better achievement and	87. Improvements in attainment are being made but local targets are not yet met.	Improved performance at KS2 and GCSE in 2011 Improved	Review actions under school development plan	Virtual School Head Teacher (NM) Access & Inclusion Strategic Lead (IW)	CEF attendance and inclusion services, Schools,	Immediate	Organisational re-design includes re-focussing of management accountability

Area for Development	Analysis from the Ofsted report. Numbers refer to paragraphs	Outcome	Action	Lead	Partners	By When	Evidence of Progress
outcomes to enhance their life chances	91. Despite improvement in 2010, the number of LAC missing a large proportion of schooling and absence rates remain above the national average. The VS is taking action, but it is too soon to see the impact.	performance in attendance		Looked After Children, Strategic Lead (FF)	Social Care, Oxford Health		for LAC attendance and attainment within Early Intervention to support Virtual School.
Ensure that the assessment of risk posed to or by the child or young person is clearly outlined in one specific document	106. Although risks are suitably assessed and managed, recording is not effective as it is contained within different sections of the case record.	Risks recorded in one specific risk assessment and plan (see Safeguarding areas for improvement, above: improve systems of recording etc.)	Development of single risk assessment and plan. Revise procedures and implement in FWi	Service Manager, Strategy, Performance & Development (HF)	Social care managers	Immediate	9.5.11 Model risk assessment and risk management plan drafted for consultation with social care and health.
Review the capacity of IROs to ensure that they see all CYP prior to planning and review meetings.	105. A lack of IRO capacity means that conversations with CYP in advance of their review is not possible for those who do not attend.	Sufficient IRO capacity to ensure CYP are seen in advance, whether or not they attend their review.	Review capacity and make recommendations	Service Manager, QA (AS)	Social Care managers	3 months: July 2011	Report in progress: due for completion 27.5.11
Improve the quality of recording in care plans and assessments to	106 Although some care plans and core	Case audits show high percentage of good and up-to-date	Undertake programme of targeted audits	Area Social Care Service Manager (LM)	CEF Business Support	July 2011	

Area for Development	Analysis from the Ofsted report. Numbers refer to paragraphs	Outcome	Action	Lead	Partners	By When	Evidence of Progress
ensure that the targets set for the child or young person are clear and progress is monitored.	assessments contain a good analysis of needs and risks and are regularly updated, others lack detail and core assessments are not routinely updated. Not all case records contain an up-to-date chronology or genogram.	analysis of needs and risks in care plans and core assessments. All case records contain an up-to-date chronology and genogram.	to monitor quality of care plans, core assessments and chronologies	Service Manager, QA (AS)			
Improve access to independent visitor provision for CYP who are placed outside Oxfordshire	109. Access to independent visitors is good for those who are placed locally but there is currently no facility to offer the service to those placed externally.	Independent visitors available to CYP placed externally.	Expand TOR and membership of LAC Health steering group to include IV service (Viva). Scope potential solutions and identify actions	Service Manager, Residential Homes (LT) Service Manager lead for disabled children (SA)	Viva Oxford Health	July 2011	
Ensure that reports on complaints made by LAC and care leavers are regularly reported to the corporate parenting panel and action resulting from these complaints is clearly recorded.	117. Outcomes from complaints are not reported to the corporate parenting panel.	Regular reports made to corporate parenting panel.	Add to regular Corporate Parenting reports summary of complaints received and resolutions, actions taken	Strategic Lead for CLA (FF)	Complaints & Resolutions Officer (JV)	July 2011	
Improve the quality of	120.	Regular reports made	OSCB Exec to	OSCB Chair (AH)	OSCB	July 2011	

Area for Development	Analysis from the Ofsted report. Numbers refer to paragraphs	Outcome	Action	Lead	Partners	By When	Evidence of Progress
reporting on the needs of LAC to OSCB, ensuring that this specifically addresses their safeguarding needs.	Although OSCB does receive some regular information about LAC, this does not systematically cover all the needs of LAC.	to OSCB on the full range of safeguarding needs of LAC.	decide LAC reporting arrangements	Strategic Lead for CLA (FF)	member orgs		

Please note: Designations and named leads will change on implementation of Children, Education & Families' re-designed structure. Amendments will be made to this action plan at this point.

Glossary:

CEF Children, Education & Families Directorate of Oxfordshire County Council
 CLA children looked after
 CP child protection
 CYP children and young people
 DA domestic abuse
 DAAT Drug & Alcohol Action Team
 FWi Frameworki: social care recording system
 IRO independent reviewing officer
 IV independent visitor
 KS2 Key Stage 2
 LAC looked after children
 OCC Oxfordshire County Council
 OSCB Oxfordshire Children Safeguarding Board
 Oxford Health new organisation comprising community health and mental health services
 PCT Primary Care Trust
 QA quality assurance
 SCR serious case review
 S&CS Social & Community Services
 TV Probation Thames Valley Probation Service
 Viva Oxfordshire's independent visiting and advocacy service
 VS Virtual School for looked after children

Division(s): N/A

CABINET – 24 MAY 2011

BIG SOCIETY FUND - YOUNG PEOPLE'S CENTRES ON SCHOOL SITES

Report by Head of Strategy and Communications and Deputy Director for Growth and Infrastructure

Introduction

1. On 19 April 2011 Cabinet agreed the model for the new Early Intervention Service; to join up and redesign several existing services to create a single integrated service focused on prevention and early intervention. The Early Intervention Service includes youth services which will in future be delivered from the hubs and satellites.
2. Young People's Centre premises not included in the Early Intervention Service hubs and satellites are being made available to communities as part of the council's Big Society offer. Six of these centres are on school sites.
3. This report sets out the position with regard to Young People's Centres on school sites and where there are requests to transfer them to the school. These transfers do not constitute a change in legal ownership so would be internal only (with the exception of Foundation or Academy schools – see paragraphs 14, 37 & 38).
4. Big Society proposals for Young People's Centres not on school sites will be brought to Cabinet alongside other Big Society Fund applications.
5. Where there is a recognised educational need for the building on a school site and proposals include development of community use of these buildings it is recommended that they are transferred to the schools concerned.

Background

6. The council announced its proposals for changes to services for young people in November 2010. Formal consultation on the proposals took place between February and May 2011 and Cabinet agreed the proposed redesign on 19 April 2011.
7. The Big Society Fund was launched in February 2011. The £600,000 fund is available for communities to make bids for start-up funding for service provision they may wish to undertake in their local area.
8. The closing date for the first 'wave' of applications to the Big Society Fund is 31 May 2011. Locality groups of councillors will consider applications in their area and will recommend which bids to fund at the July Cabinet meeting.

9. There are currently six Young People's Centres on school sites which will no longer be funded or managed by the council. These schools have been asked to confirm whether they are interested in taking on the building on their site and the local delivery of youth provision and whether there is an educational need for the space.

Site by site proposals

Sweatbox, King Alfred's Wantage

10. The Sweatbox Youth Centre is currently located within the main building of King Alfred's School. The school already works very closely with the Sweatbox and is committed to the continuing provision of youth services from this site.
11. The school has asked the county council to transfer ownership of the Sweatbox Young People's Centre to the school. The school has identified an educational need for the building, and this need has been confirmed by the Schools Organisation and Planning Team.
12. King Alfred's School is developing a detailed business case to enable the Sweatbox to become a self sustaining facility enhancing the range of activities currently provided with support of local partners and councillors. The school also intends to bid for some initial start up funds from the Big Society Fund to get the project going. These proposals will be brought to Cabinet alongside other first wave bids to the Big Society Fund in July 2011.
13. It is considered that the school has appropriate financial management processes in place manage the financial implications of an additional function outside of the usual activities of the school.
14. King Alfred's School is currently a foundation school and is currently seeking academy status which means ownership of the site is with the school rather than the council. If Cabinet agrees to transfer the Sweatbox space to the school this will be included in the legal transfer of ownership of the whole site to the school's governing body. Any conveyance cost arising from the transfer of Sweatbox space would be managed within existing budgets.
15. **Recommendation: Cabinet is recommended to transfer the Sweatbox Young People's Centre on the King Alfred's School east site to the school and include this building within the transfer of ownership to the school that is already underway.**

Eynsham Young People's Centre

16. Eynsham Young People's Centre is on the site of Bartholomew School. Bartholomew School has been working closely with local partners including councillors to develop a sustainable proposal for the future of youth provision in Eynsham.

17. Bartholomew School has asked the council to transfer ownership of the Eynsham Young People's Centre to the school. The school has identified an educational need for the building, and this need has been confirmed by the Schools Organisation and Planning Team.
18. Bartholomew School is developing detailed proposals to maximise use of the building for school use in the day with youth provision in the evenings. Local partners, including the parish council, are involved in developing a sustainable business case for the site and intend to bid for initial start up funds from the Big Society Fund to get the project going. These proposals will be brought to Cabinet alongside other first wave bids to the Big Society Fund in July 2011.
19. It is considered that the school has appropriate financial management processes in place manage the financial implications of an additional function outside of the usual activities of the school.

20. Recommendation: Cabinet is recommended to transfer the young people's centre on the Bartholomew School site to the School

Wheatley Young People's Centre

21. Wheatley Young People's Centre is on the site of Wheatley Primary School. Wheatley Primary School has confirmed that it does not wish to take over the building.
22. The Maple Tree Children's Centre (provided by Great Milton School) have co-ordinated discussions between the children's centre and local groups interested in taking over the Young People's Centre with a view to creating a multi use space which would be accessible to children, young people and their families. The building would be managed by the children's centre. Discussions are ongoing and a bid to the Big Society Fund is expected.

23. Recommendation: Cabinet is recommended to request a sustainable business case to come forward for the future management and use of the Wheatley Young People's Centre led by the Children's Centre.

Chipping Norton Young People's Centre

24. The Chipping Norton Young People's Centre is on the site of Chipping Norton School. There is also a second site being built on the school premises which was intended to co-locate a Young People's Centre with an Adult Learning Centre. The project to build the new centre is near completion. Prior to the commencement of the new build it was agreed that the space currently occupied by the existing Young People's Centre would revert to the school on completion of this project.
25. Chipping Norton School has confirmed that it does not wish to take over the new building, but it does wish to continue with the transfer of the space currently occupied by the existing Young People's Centre.

26. With regard to the new Young People's Centre building Cabinet should be aware that there are ongoing discussions between groups in the community interested in developing proposals for future youth and community activities to be delivered from this space. These proposals are expected to come forward to the Big Society Fund to be considered by Cabinet in July 2011.

27. Recommendation: Cabinet is recommended to transfer the space currently occupied by the young people's centre to the school on completion of the new building project and to encourage proposals to come forward for the use of the new building for the benefit of young people and the wider community.

Chiltern Edge and Thame Young People's Centres

28. To date we have not received confirmation from Chiltern Edge or Lord Williams' schools if they have an interest in taking over the Young People's Centres on their sites. However we have received expressions of interest from community groups interested in the future of youth provision in both these communities. We hope to be able to work with them and the schools to bring proposals to Cabinet at a later date.

Transfer process

29. Where Young People's Centres are transferred to a school the council's asset register will be updated and written confirmation will be sent to the school and all relevant departments.

30. The school will enter into a memorandum of understanding with the council stating that the asset is being transferred on the understanding that it will be used for the benefit of young people and the wider community.

31. On transfer to the school, the school will meet the cost of delegated repair and maintenance as with other school buildings. The council will remain responsible for non-delegated repairs and maintenance.

Financial and Staff Implications

32. There are no staff implications in these proposals.

33. Young People's Centres that are transferred to schools with an agreed educational need will receive a small increase in their budget allocation to reflect the increased floor area of their site which would need to pay for additional running costs.

34. It is likely that a revaluation will be required for any site that is subject to a freehold transfer. Revaluation would give rise to an additional cost which would be managed within existing budgets.

35. If transfers to schools are agreed, the county council will work closely with the schools to establish appropriate accounting arrangements.

36. By transferring the Young People's Centres premises to schools or communities, potential capital receipts from the sale of these properties will be foregone.

Legal Implications

37. Following any transfer of ownership the school site still remains with the county council. However should a school change its status, such as becoming an academy or foundation school, ownership of the school site would transfer to the school's governing body. In any transfer of this kind the Young People's Centre building would be treated as part of the school site.
38. King Alfred's School is already a foundation school and is scheduled to become an academy. Therefore if Cabinet agree to transfer the Sweatbox to the school, the ownership will transfer to the governing body and subsequently the Academy Trust.

RECOMMENDATION

39. The Cabinet is RECOMMENDED to :

- a. agree transfer of buildings to the school on the following sites:**
 - **Sweatbox young people's centre at King Alfred's School east site and to include this building within the transfer of ownership to the school that is already underway;**
 - **Eynsham young people's centre at Bartholomew School;**
 - **Existing young people's centre space at Chipping Norton School on completion of the project;**
- b. request a sustainable business case to come forward for the future management and use of the Wheatley Young People's Centre led by the Children's Centre;**
- c. encourage proposals to come forward for the remaining young people's centres on school sites for Cabinet consider as part of the Big Society Fund.**

Guy Swindle

Head of Strategy and Communications

Martin Tugwell

Deputy Director (Growth and Infrastructure)

Background papers:

Contact Officers: Alexandra Bailey and Mark Tailby

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Division(s): Didcot South, Didcot Ladygrove

CABINET – 24 MAY 2011

DIDCOT PARKWAY STATION INTERCHANGE

Report by Deputy Director (Highways & Transport)

Introduction

1. This report:
 - (a) provides background to the Didcot Parkway Station Interchange project and summarises recent progress with the project; and
 - (b) seeks approval of the detailed financial appraisal shown in Annex 3, in accordance with the Council's Financial Procedure Rules. This updates the preliminary project appraisal approved by Cabinet on 20th January 2009 (agenda item CA10); and
 - (c) outlines the approach to procurement and seeks approval to award a contract to the contractor submitting the most economically advantageous tender on the basis of quality, cost and project delivery; and
 - (d) seeks the retention of Jacobs Engineering UK Limited as the Designer for the duration of the project.

Background

2. The population of Didcot will increase to over 35,000 residents by 2016, and it is one of two New Growth Points in Oxfordshire. Didcot will be the location of 11,500 new homes by 2030, with the first of those at Great Western Park now being built. A further 9,360 new homes are proposed within the catchment of the station, around Grove and Wantage. In total, 8,000 new houses are due to be completed before 2016.
3. Didcot Parkway is the gateway to Science Vale UK. Milton Park is the largest business park in Oxfordshire, employing 6,500 people, and the Harwell Science & Innovation Campus employs 4,500. Most new jobs will be at these two locations, with an expectation that up 11,500 jobs will be created by 2026.
4. Strategic transport infrastructure is essential to the delivery of new housing and employment and is needed to ensure that Didcot and Science Vale is a sustainable and thriving community where people want to live and work.
5. The Didcot Parkway Station Interchange project was a recommendation from the Didcot Area Integrated Transport Strategy in 2004, and is identified in the

Local Transport Plan recently adopted by the Council. It has been identified as a priority in the Oxfordshire Local Investment Plan to 2030, produced by the Spatial Planning & Infrastructure Partnership.

6. The layout of the existing forecourt creates conflict and confusion between the different modes of transport using the forecourt as all users share the same space outside the building. This causes congestion and gridlock on a daily basis because the forecourt is not designed for the number of people now using the station.
7. This project will transform the layout to create a welcoming gateway to Didcot and Science Vale, provide additional space to accommodate new bus services and more cycles, improve safety and make travel by train more attractive for those living and working in the area. See Annexes 1 and 2 for a layout plan and visualisations of the new interchange.
8. The project has been the subject of extensive public dialogue over the past five years, with exhibitions and presentations held for stakeholders, station users, general public and local groups, such as the Didcot Community Forum. The feedback has been very positive and the work is eagerly awaited.

Programme and Progress

9. Good progress has been made since the last report on this project to Cabinet in January 2009. The design has progressed through preliminary and detailed stages, and was finalised last October. Officers have worked closely with a number of specialist suppliers on specific design issues.
10. There was a delay in 2010 due to contractual issues with Network Rail which arose when the asset protection agreement came up for renewal but these are now resolved. During the delay, the opportunity was taken to bring forward detailed design work which has had the advantage of giving greater cost certainty to the project, and ensured the time was used effectively to progress the project.
11. It is currently expected that construction will get underway in September 2011 and will last for up to 18 months, but this assumes there are no delays in obtaining consents as the work will be carried out in several phases to ensure the station remains operational throughout.

Planning Consent

12. A planning application was prepared and submitted to Oxfordshire County Council by Atkins in March 2009, and consent was given by the Planning & Regulation Committee on the 20th July 2009, subject to a number of conditions.
13. These planning conditions relate to various detailed design aspects that had not, at the time of the application, been fully finalised, including landscaping, ecology, drainage and waste management.

14. The Environment Agency lodged an objection as the detail they needed was not available but Jacobs have worked with them to meet their requirements for sustainable drainage and they withdrew the objection in March 2011. Officers are currently in the process of discharging the remaining conditions in conjunction with the Deputy Director.

Rail Industry Approvals

15. The project obtained *Station Change* approval in October 2010 following industry-wide consultation and was subsequently submitted to the Department for Transport for their consent under the Network Modification (Closures), *Minor Modification* process required by Sections 34 and 35 of the Railways Act 2005. Their approval notice was issued in February 2011.
16. Technical approvals for the whole project and the drainage, electrical supply upgrade and CCTV works will be submitted to Network Rail this summer, and work package plans will then be submitted for each delivery phase during the construction period.

Enabling Works

17. Dismantling of redundant buildings on the site will commence in May 2011, and a separate contract was awarded during 2010 to carry out these works. Officers have worked closely with the Great Western Society (Didcot Railway Centre) to identify items of historic importance, and these will be salvaged so they can be re-used in the expansion of this popular local attraction.
18. Work is also due to take place in May to provide some additional car parking spaces to absorb some of the spaces that will be lost during the construction period. Work will also be carried out to relocate a Network Rail trackside access gate within a new small compound.

Selection of the Project Contractor

19. The construction contract is being awarded under the EU Restricted Tender Procedure and was advertised in the Official Journal of the European Union (OJEU) on 19th March 2010. Expressions of Interest were received from 44 applicants and a pre-qualification questionnaire was issued to each of them.
20. Completed pre-qualification questionnaires were received from 27 contractors by the return date of 5th May 2010. These ensured the applicants met the core requirements for County Council procurement and assessed their technical competence, relevant experience of similar projects, health & safety record, integrity and responsibility. References were taken up for all the contractors.
21. Each submission was also assessed by a panel comprising representatives from the County Council, Jacobs, Network Rail and First Great Western. A shortlist of six contractors was then identified who were invited to submit a tender for the project.

22. The works will be carried out under the NEC Engineering and Construction Contract, Third Edition, using Option C Target Contract with Activity Schedule. Invitations to Tender were issued on 7th February 2011 and contractors were required to submit their tender by 21st March 2011.
23. Each contractor was asked to make a 'quality submission' concentrating on their approach to delivering this particular project, including organisation and site management, programme, site health & safety and communication, and a "financial submission" based on a priced activity schedule for stage 1 (early contractor involvement) and stage 2 (construction) along with fee percentages.
24. The quality and financial submissions have been assessed independently by three representatives from the County Council and Jacobs before the scores were aggregated and weighted to provide an overall ranking. The contract award will be made on a combination of 30% quality and 70% price, with incentivisation to encourage the contractor to deliver the project on time and within budget. They will share any cost saving but are penalised for any cost increase.
25. This report seeks approval to award a contract to the contractor submitting the most economically advantageous tender on the basis of quality, execution and cost.

Supervision during the Works

26. Supervision of the construction of the project will be carried out by staff from the Highways & Transport Service. Jacobs Engineering UK Limited will be retained in the Designer role.
27. The biggest challenge during construction will be the need to keep the station open throughout, and pedestrian and traffic management will need careful planning and require phasing of the works over an extended 15-18 month period. The planning will need to take into consideration major railway engineering closures, such as those planned for December 2011.
28. Early contractor involvement during the summer will ensure that a robust but achievable programme of work is agreed to the satisfaction of all our partners, which balances the need to minimise disruption whilst achieving the quickest construction time.

Retention of Project Designer

29. Since taking over the initial design from Atkins in January 2009, Jacobs Engineering UK Limited has led the design development of the project through both preliminary and detailed stages, initially from their office in Haddenham and latterly from Coventry. Because of their in-depth knowledge of the project, and to avoid loss of continuity over all design aspects which would have occurred had the design been moved to a different design team, they were

retained after the highways term contract transferred from Jacobs to Atkins in June 2010.

30. Jacobs submitted a fee proposal that has seen them involved in the project to the point of contract award (i.e. now). Under the NEC contract roles and responsibilities Jacobs are identified as the Designer, and will be required to liaise with the contractor throughout the construction of the project on any design issues.
31. A new commission is therefore required in order to retain the services of Jacobs until the completion of the project. The cost of continued involvement has been included in the project appraisal in Annex 3 of this report.

Environmental Implications

32. One of the main aims of the project is to encourage the use of public transport by providing modern high quality interchange facilities at the railway station. This will have a positive effect on the environment and lead to a reduction in private car journeys to the station. There will be more spaces for buses and cyclists and electric vehicle charging points will be installed.

Recycling

33. The County Council is about to enter into a short term tenancy for a works compound in Station Road, Didcot from South Oxfordshire District Council for the duration of the project. This will provide staff welfare facilities and allow material to be taken off-site and stored so it can be re-used later in the project. This will reduce the amount of waste material removed from the site and avoid the cost and environmental impact of bringing in new materials by road.

Landscaping

34. The station is a major gateway to Science Vale UK and public realm is a key consideration for the project. Paving has been carefully selected for appearance and easy maintenance and the new pedestrian piazza will provide space for pedestrians and special events outside the station building, with new areas of landscaping being provided.
35. Some mature trees will be removed from the front of the station, but none are of sufficient quality to merit retention. They will be replaced by a greater number of semi-mature trees and shrubs. The tree species have been carefully selected for their appearance and longevity, and to meet the specification of Network Rail.

Drainage

36. The station forecourt and subway are prone to flooding because the foul water and surface water flow into the same sewer which has inadequate capacity during heavy rain. As part of the project, a surface water drainage system will be installed, with sub-surface storage tanks to allow controlled discharge of water to a local watercourse, and the design/capacity has been agreed by the Environment Agency.

Financial Implications

37. The total cost of the project is £6.690m which is set out in the detailed financial appraisal in Annex 3. Expenditure of £1,581m has been incurred on developing the project since its inception.
38. Funding has been allocated in the Capital Programme and comprises Supported Capital Expenditure and index-linked Developer Funding. On 20th July 2010 the Cabinet recommended that funding for this project was 'released' from the capital funding review and this was endorsed by the Council on 27th July 2010.
39. Under the Government's 'Partnership for Growth' initiative, South Oxfordshire District Council gained New Growth Point status for Didcot and successfully bid for funding towards this project. This funding has been used towards developing the project.
40. The District Council is also providing its own capital funding and this was approved by their Executive on 4th November 2010. A Funding Agreement is currently being prepared setting out this obligation and the schedule of payments.

RECOMMENDATION

41. **The Cabinet is RECOMMENDED to:**
- (a) approve implementation of the project shown on the layout plan and visualisations in Annex 1 and 2 of this report, with a target construction start in September 2011; and
 - (b) approve the detailed financial appraisal in Annex 3 of this report; and
 - (c) approve the retention of Jacobs Engineering UK Limited as the Project Designer for the duration of the project; and
 - (d) authorise the Deputy Director (Highways & Transport), in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Transport, to appoint the contractor based on the Project Sponsor's recommendation, and to award the contract before the OJEU 90-day deadline of Friday 17th June 2011.

STEVE HOWELL
Deputy Director (Highways & Transport)
Environment & Economy

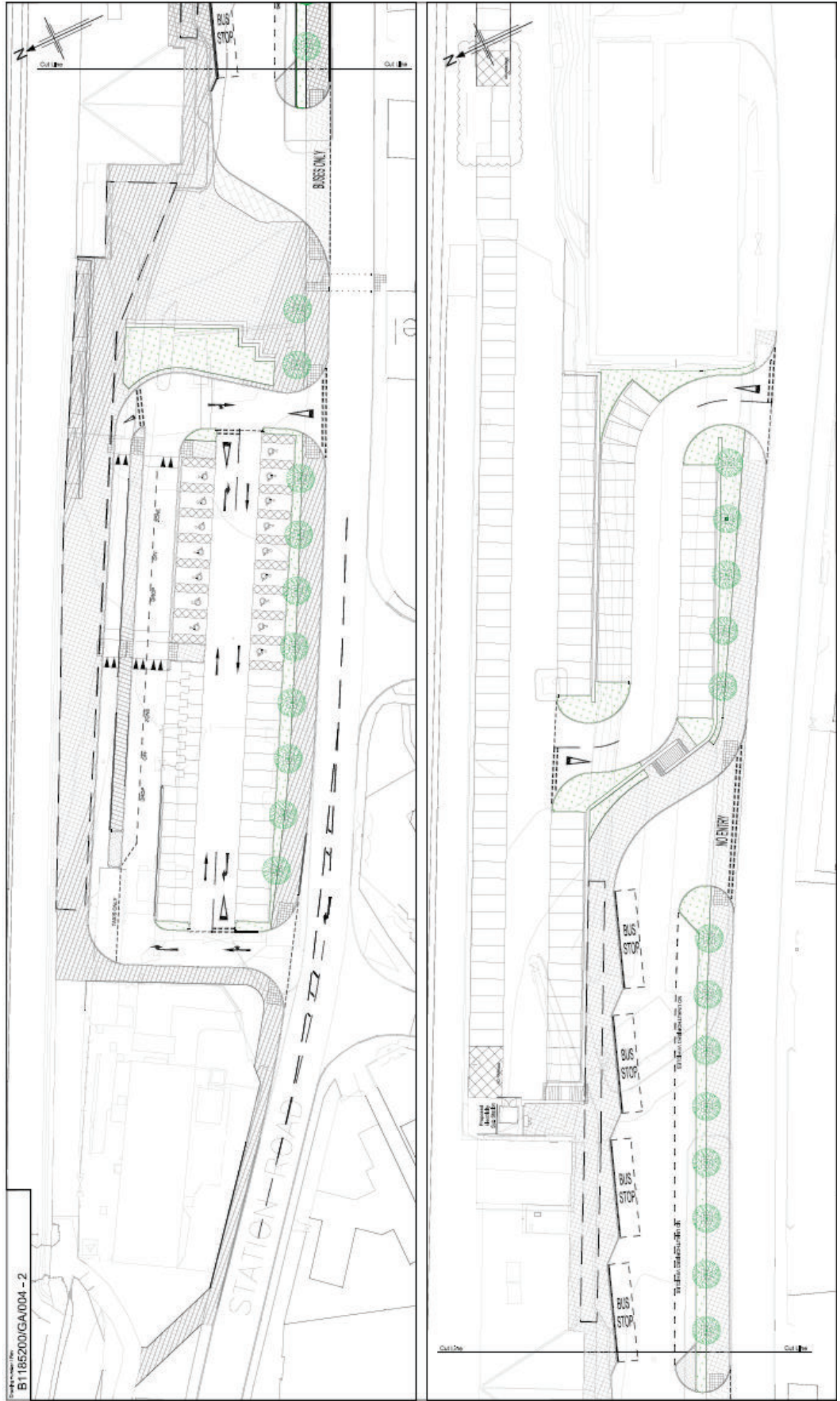
Background papers: Nil

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May 2011

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DIDCOT PARKWAY STATION INTERCHANGE – NEW LAYOUT



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DIDCOT PARKWAY STATION INTERCHANGE – VISUALISATIONS



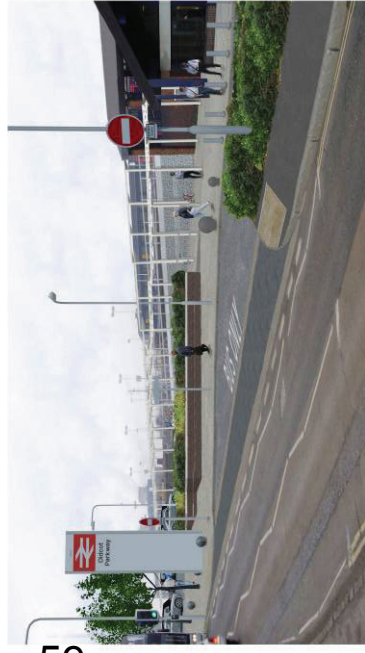
Before



Before



Before



After



After



After

JACOBS
DESIGN VISUALISATION STUDIO

broxap
design & build

JACOBS
DESIGN VISUALISATION STUDIO

broxap
design & build

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DESIGN VISUALISATION STUDIO

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DETAILED PROJECT APPRAISAL**APPRAISAL NO: H194****Name of the Scheme:** Didcot Parkway Station Interchange**Basis of Estimate:** Pre-tender cost estimate**Start Year:** 2011**1. DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT**

1. The objective of the project is to improve the attractiveness of public transport, and it will transform the layout to create a welcoming gateway to Didcot and Science Vale UK. This will include providing more space to accommodate new bus services and more cycles, improve safety and make travel by train and other modes sustainable and attractive for those living and working in and around Didcot.
2. The project will see significant changes to the existing forecourt, with the following positive benefits to users of the station:
 - Removal of vehicle, pedestrian and cycle conflicts and consequential major improvement in passenger safety and ease of accessibility;
 - Wider footways and clear walking routes;
 - A pedestrian piazza for improved safety and circulation;
 - Covered walkway from main car park, taxi rank and drop-off area;
 - More disabled parking;
 - More cycle parking;
 - Completion of Sustrans National Cycle Network route;
 - Additional bus stops with real-time bus information;
 - A larger taxi rank;
 - Designated drop-off and pick-up areas;
 - Short-stay 20 minute waiting bays;
 - Motorcycle parking;
 - Better provision for rail replacement buses;
 - Delivery and service vehicle bays;
 - Improved security with new lighting and CCTV;
 - Public realm improvements;
 - Environmental improvement through hard and soft landscaping, with shrubs and trees creating a welcoming appearance to the station;
 - Design allows for the future extension of car parking, including potential to deck some of Foxhall Road car park;
 - Passive provision for accessible pedestrian link from Foxhall Road (main) station car park;
 - New drainage system will resolve an on-site flooding problem.
3. The project will incorporate the “Brilliant Didcot” branding developed by South Oxfordshire District Council on some of the new signage.

2. NEED FOR PROJECT

4. Didcot Parkway is the second busiest station in Oxfordshire and is used by around 3 million people every year. The number of people using railways through the Thames Valley is predicted to increase considerably over the next 5-10 years as set out in Network Rail's Route Utilisation Strategy published in 2010. Plans for new East West Rail services from Didcot to Milton Keynes and Bedford will also generate new travel demand from the internationally important Science Vale UK area within the Oxford-Cambridge 'high-tech' arc.
5. The layout of the forecourt at Didcot Parkway creates various conflicts between the different users of the railway station. Buses, taxis, deliveries, cyclists and private cars all use the same area outside the station building. Buses and taxis setting down and picking up passengers and private cars heading for the two car parks at either side of the forecourt, as well as bringing people to and from the station. There is only a small area to wait and cars reverse into the path of incoming traffic.
6. Pedestrian routes to the station entrance are poor and some main routes have no defined footways. The lack of wide, step-free footways means that pedestrians are forced to share the road space with traffic to reach the station from the pedestrian crossing and the station car parks. The overall result is congestion and gridlock at busy times on a daily basis and this limits the potential to increase the use of sustainable public transport in the future as the resident and workforce population increases.
7. The station is also a transport hub for the town where users can interchange between local bus routes. With each transport mode jostling for the same limited space, this can delay bus services and can affect their attractiveness as an alternative to using the car.
8. There is no sense of arrival in Didcot with only a narrow paved area outside the station building for people to move around or congregate safely. The station is the main arrival point in Science Vale UK, an international centre for innovation and technology, and its four main areas – Harwell Science and Innovation Campus, Milton Park Estate, Didcot and Grove, all have good transport links with the station.

3. CONSISTENCY WITH SERVICE STRATEGY

9. The need to promote and encourage the use of sustainable modes of transport is an integral part in helping to achieve the four corporate objectives of:
 - (a) "*World Class Economy*" in the context of accessibility to new homes and employment within Science Vale UK by making public transport more attractive;
 - (b) "*Healthy & Thriving Communities*" by making Didcot a vibrant place to live and work with an emphasis on walking and cycling;

- (c) “*Environment & Climate Change*” by helping to reduce congestion and encourage longer-distance travel by train with a low rate of carbon emissions.
 - (d) “*Better Public Services*” by integrating supported bus services with train services and encouraging greater use of local bus services.
10. The project supports the E&E Business Strategy 2011-2015 and is compliant with the Highways and Transport Service Business Plan for the same period, where we aim to “*to be a leading transport authority...*”, “*...with a strong customer focus and high level of satisfaction*”.
11. Objective 8 of the Local Transport Plan states a need “*to develop and increase the use of high quality, welcoming public transport*” and contributes to and fits within the Premium Route Network Strategy for increasing bus reliability and patronage.

4. OTHER REASONABLE OPTIONS

12. Initial design work took place in 2001 and was reviewed as part of the Didcot Integrated Transport Strategy (*Phase 1 Final Report, Halcrow*) in March 2004. Eleven alternative proposals were considered by the strategy steering group before a preferred layout was agreed in December 2005. All the options were based on the objective of separating the conflicting modes of transport.
13. This preferred layout has been developed in greater detail, informed by site engineering surveys and studies and ongoing stakeholder consultation. A number of changes were made at the request of South Oxfordshire District Council, taxi operators and First Great Western, the station operator.
14. A Transport Assessment was carried out to support the planning application and this proved the need for new entrances and exits onto Station Road as the best means of managing traffic flow to and from the station.
15. A series of exhibitions have been held at the station since 2008 to show the public and station users what the redevelopment of the forecourt will achieve. These have been received very positively by all attendees.

5. LAND

16. The project is being built on land owned by Network Rail and it will transfer to them on completion. The County Council has an asset protection agreement in place with Network Rail to facilitate delivery of this project.
17. New drainage gullies will be installed along Station Road, requiring temporary traffic management. Discussions are ongoing within the Highways & Transport service regarding the potential to renew the existing carriageway along Station Road at the same time.
18. Upon completion of the project, Network Rail will dedicate some of their land as highway to ensure there is a coherent boundary between the

footway/cycleway and the station lease area. A land dedication agreement is currently being drawn up between the County Council and Network Rail to formalise this arrangement.

6. ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS

19. The project will have positive environmental benefits as it seeks to reduce the amount of car traffic to the station in favour of more sustainable modes, such as walking, cycling and public transport.
20. In creating a modern high-quality interchange the project will remove some of the redundant buildings and give a sense of arrival and improve the overall appearance of this key gateway to Science Vale UK.
21. It is intended to recycle much of the material removed from the site, especially when installing the new surface water collection tanks, and to re-use this later in the project rather than bring in new material by road.
22. Some mature trees will be removed from the front of the station, but none of the trees are subject to a tree protection order and they will be replaced by a greater number of semi-mature trees and shrubs.
23. The project will provide a managed surface water drainage system that will ensure the risk of flooding on the highway and within the station is removed with the outfall to a local watercourse is controlled.
24. Ecology surveys have been carried out at regular intervals throughout development of the project and there are no protected species or resident wildlife.

7. TIMING/PHASING

25. The first stage of the contract, between May and August 2011, involves early contractor involvement where the contractor will engage with all stakeholders to put together their delivery programme, ensuring that the station remains operational throughout. This will require a phased approach. They will also contribute towards a communications strategy and obtain final technical approvals from Network Rail.
26. It is intended that the main construction should start in September 2011 and will take up to 18 months.

8. FINANCIAL AND STAFF IMPLICATIONS

27. This is a large and complex project estimated at a total capital cost of £6.690m. This includes £1.581m already spent on fees and consultation since 2005. This means that the approval sought in this report is £5,109,000 spread over four financial years between 2011/12 and 2015/16.

28. The funding package consists of an allocation within the Capital Programme that is mainly made up from section 106 developer funding but with some contributions from the County Council and South Oxfordshire District Council.
29. On 20th July 2010 Cabinet recommended that funding for this project should be 'released' from the moratorium on capital funding and this was endorsed by the Council on 27th July 2010.
30. Capital Investment Board on 6th December 2010 approved the conditional allocation of an additional £960,000 OCC funding to cover an increase in the estimated project cost between preliminary design and end of detailed design. This has now been met from unallocated section 106 monies that are held from the Didcot area, along with interest that will be accrued during the project timeline. However, it is anticipated that the cost of construction will come in under budget and the £550,000 contingency currently allowed for in the budget may not be needed.
31. As part of a joint funding package between the County Council and South Oxfordshire District Council, the County Council's Capital Steering Group on 21st December 2007 agreed to allocate £609,000 of capital funding to the project. A further £500,000 was allocated from the Transport "Preparation Pool" project development fund, therefore the total capital funding allocation from the County Council is £1,109,000. South Oxfordshire District Council committed £812,000 and this was approved by their Executive on 4th November 2010. A funding agreement is currently being prepared setting out the schedule of payments.
32. Under the Government's 'Partnership for Growth' initiative, South Oxfordshire District Council was successful in gaining New Growth Point status for Didcot in October 2006. This resulted in a total of £877,000 being allocated to this project which has contributed towards developing the project since 2008.
33. Project development has continued to the point of tender award and a pre-tender cost estimate and a breakdown of the project funding is given in the financial project appraisal.
34. Assuming Cabinet approves the recommendations in the main report, it is expected that delivery of this project will commence in June 2011, with construction activities getting underway in September 2011. It is expected that construction will take up to 18 months and the formal project close-down will be a further twelve months after that.
35. The County Council has two officers involved in this project. One acts as the Project Sponsor within Highways & Transport, Policy & Strategy and the other is within Highways & Transport, Delivery. Supervision of construction will be carried out by staff brought in from Atkins to undertake the Project Manager and Project Supervisor roles required under the NEC Engineering and Construction Contract. An allowance has been made for staffing costs within the financial project appraisal.

STEVE HOWELL
Deputy Director (Highways & Transport)
Environment & Economy

Contact Officer: Adrian Saunders, Rail Development Officer, Tel: 01865 815080

May 2011

Financial Project Appraisal

Name of the Project: Didcot Parkway Station Interchange

Appraisal No: H194

Status: Pre-tender cost estimate

Date: May 2011

Capital Expenditure and Financing

Project Expenditure	Previous Years	2011 2012	2012 2013	2013 2014	2014 2015		Total
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
<i>Main contract (stages 1 and 2)</i>		1,300	2,100	84			3,484
<i>Demolition</i>		43					43
<i>Site preparation works</i>		45					45
<i>Utilities (electricity, telecoms)</i>		12	21				33
<i>Electrical Supply</i>		6	60				66
<i>CCTV</i>		18	42				60
<i>Network Rail Fees</i>	80	96	65	6			247
<i>Designer Fees</i>	1,496	60	28	7			1,591
<i>Project Staff</i>		146	271	62	5		484
<i>Other Fees</i>		30	32	11			73
<i>Works Compound Tenancy</i>		3	5	1			9
<i>Planning Charge</i>	5						5
<i>Risk and Contingency¹</i>		-150	150		550		550
Total Estimated Payments	1,581	1,609	2,774	171	555		6,690

Project Funding	Previous Years	2011 2012	2012 2013	2013 2014	2014 2015		Total
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
<i>Developer Funding</i>	615	427	2,199	101	550		3,892
<i>SCE Capital</i>	89	1,020					1,109
<i>Government Grant</i>	877						877
<i>South Oxfordshire District Council</i>		162	575	70	5		812
Total Financing	1,581	1,609	2,774	171	555		6,690

¹ Delivery risk adjustment made to Capital Programme to anticipate potential slippage. Now more in line with February 2011 Capital Programme.

Revenue Implications

Corporate Costs	Previous Years	2011 2012	2012 2013	2013 2014	2014 2015		Total
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
<i>Capital Financing (Cost of Borrowing)</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Service Implications	Previous Years	2011 2012	2012 2013	2013 2014	2014 2015		Total
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
<i>Employees</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<i>Running Costs</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<i>Income</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Net Cost/(Savings) to Service							

Staffing	Previous Years	2011 2012	2012 2013	2013 2014	2014 2015		Total
	F.T.E	F.T.E	F.T.E	F.T.E	F.T.E	F.T.E	F.T.E
<i>Additions/(Savings) resulting from the project</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Division(s): N/A

CABINET – 24 MAY 2011

OXFORDSHIRE MINERALS AND WASTE DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK: MINERALS AND WASTE CORE STRATEGY – PREFERRED STRATEGY

Report by Deputy Director (Growth & Infrastructure)

Introduction

1. The Minerals and Waste Core Strategy will set out the vision and strategic objectives together with the spatial strategy, core policies and implementation framework for the supply of minerals and management of waste in Oxfordshire over the period to 2030. Detailed site allocations will be identified in a subsequent document.
2. In preparing the Core Strategy the County Council must carry out consultation before a proposed document is published for formal representations and then submitted to the Secretary of State for independent examination by an inspector. This should include consultation on the options that have been considered and the Council's preferred strategy.
3. On 16 February 2011, Cabinet adopted locally derived figures for Oxfordshire's aggregates supply requirement, based on work done by consultants Atkins; and agreed a preferred spatial strategy approach for mineral working for consultation. Cabinet also agreed that consultation on the preferred minerals strategy should be combined with consultation on a preferred planning strategy for waste, in June/July 2011.
4. A set of proposed minerals policies based on this preferred strategy, together with a set of planning strategy options for waste and a suggested preferred strategy and policies for waste were considered by the Minerals and Waste Plan Working Group on 9 May 2011. Subject to a number of comments being addressed, the Working Group agreed to recommend that Cabinet agree a preferred minerals and waste core strategy for consultation based on these proposed strategies and policies; and that authority to finalise the consultation document be delegated to the Deputy Director (Growth and Infrastructure) in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Growth and Infrastructure.

Proposed Preferred Minerals Planning Strategy

5. The report by Atkins on Local Assessment of Aggregates Supply Requirements for Oxfordshire was published on the County Council's website in February 2011 and comments were invited. Comments have been received from the minerals industry and local environmental organisations. These are available in the Members' Resource Centre and are summarised in Annex 1. This annex also includes proposals for addressing key points raised. These proposals were endorsed by the Minerals and Waste Plan Working Group on 9 May 2011.
6. Annex 2 sets out the proposed vision and objectives and preferred strategy for minerals in Oxfordshire. The strategy comprises a set of core minerals policies. Policy 1 proposes a stretch target of 0.9 million tonnes a year for secondary and recycled aggregates. Policies 2 and 3 incorporate the aggregates supply figures and the strategy for the location of mineral workings previously agreed by Cabinet. Other policies cover aggregates rail depots; safeguarding of mineral resources and facilities; and restoration of mineral workings. In addition, Annex 4 sets out proposed common core policies for both minerals and waste on climate change; environmental protection; flooding; and transport and rights of way.

Proposed Preferred Waste Planning Strategy

7. The waste strategy must make planning provision for the facilities that will be required for the management of all wastes in Oxfordshire over the period to 2030. This includes not only municipal waste, which is collected and managed by the District and County Councils, but also wastes that are produced and managed by the private sector, including: commercial and industrial waste; construction, demolition and excavation waste; hazardous waste; and radioactive waste. A total of approximately 2 million tonnes of waste is produced in Oxfordshire each year. In addition, waste is brought into the county from elsewhere for disposal at landfill sites, under commercial arrangements that are not within the control of the County Council.
8. The management of waste in Oxfordshire has changed markedly in recent years. From a past position of most waste being disposed by landfill, approaching half of all waste is now being recycled or recovered for other use. This change is expected to continue as a result of investment in new waste facilities, in line with the waste hierarchy: prevention; preparing for re-use; recycling; other recovery; disposal. National policy is for waste management to move up this hierarchy, with disposal being the option of last resort.
9. The amount of waste produced in Oxfordshire is expected to grow as the population and economy increase. Production of waste is expected to be concentrated at the main urban areas of Oxford, Banbury, Bicester, Witney, Abingdon Didcot and Wantage and Grove, and the need for new waste management facilities is expected to be mainly at or near these locations. An assessment of the need for new waste management facilities has been carried out, and is available in the Members' Resource Centre.

10. Annex 3 sets out the draft preferred planning strategy for waste. The initial part of this annex provides the context for the strategy. The vision and objectives for waste are listed at paragraphs 23 – 25. The next section details for each type of waste the existing waste management facilities and the requirements for additional facilities. The options that have been identified for meeting these requirements are set out at paragraphs 61 – 84. These options have only been the subject of limited assessment and technical consultation, but an initial draft preferred planning strategy for waste is put forward at paragraphs 85 – 104.
11. For municipal waste, the strategy is already largely established through existing and planned facilities, apart from requirements for:
 - A new household waste recycling centre at Banbury, to replace the site at Alkerton (a proposal for a new household waste recycling centre at Kidlington to serve Oxford and surrounding area is already at the planning application stage);
 - Two transfer stations in the western and southern areas of the county for the transfer of residual municipal waste to the permitted Ardley energy from waste plant.
12. For the other waste types, the main elements of the suggested strategy are:
 - 7 or 8 additional recycling plants for commercial and industrial waste close to towns in the northern and southern areas of the county and Oxford and nearby areas;
 - A treatment plant for treatment of and recovery of resources from residual commercial and industrial waste (which is not recycled) in the Abingdon / Didcot / Wantage & Grove area;
 - 6 or more permanent recycling plants for construction, demolition and excavation waste (to produce recycled aggregates and soils) and smaller temporary recycling facilities located at landfill and quarry sites;
 - Additional landfill capacity from around 2020 for inert (construction, demolition and excavation) waste which cannot be recycled, at quarries that require infilling for restoration;
 - Storage of intermediate level radioactive nuclear legacy waste at Harwell and Culham, pending removal to a national disposal facility;
 - Disposal of low level radioactive nuclear legacy waste from Harwell and Culham at suitable landfill sites within Oxfordshire or (if none is available) elsewhere.
13. Draft policies to support the draft waste strategy are set out in Annex 3 at paragraphs 105 – 114. These include policies on: waste management targets; amounts of waste to be provided for; self sufficiency and waste imports; provision of additional waste management capacity; safeguarding of waste management facilities; location of waste management facilities; Green Belt; Areas of

Outstanding Natural Beauty; landfill; and hazardous and radioactive wastes.

Next Steps

14. Public consultation on the preferred minerals strategy and policies, and on both the waste strategy options and the initial preferred waste strategy and policies, will be undertaken in June/July 2011, in accordance with the timetable agreed by Cabinet on 16 February 2011. That will in turn shape the content of the Core Strategy document to be submitted to Government for independent examination. This is timetabled for early in 2012. Depending on responses to the consultation, further consultation may be necessary, particularly on the waste strategy. This could be undertaken later this year, in which case submission of the Core Strategy would be in mid 2012.

Sustainability Implications

15. Sustainability appraisal is being carried out as an integral part of preparation of the Core Strategy. A sustainability appraisal of the preferred strategies for minerals and waste is being prepared and will be made available alongside the consultation document.

Corporate Policies and Priorities

16. The Council has a statutory duty to produce the Minerals and Waste Core Strategy. It will contribute to the Council's strategic objectives of world class economy, healthy and thriving communities and environment and climate change.

Financial and Staff Implications

17. The programme of work for the Minerals and Waste Core Strategy is included within the Directorate work priorities. This report does not raise any additional financial or staffing implications.

Risk Management

18. The Minerals and Waste Development Framework is a high risk project. The complexity of the Minerals and Waste Development Framework process and the potential implications for major mineral working and waste management proposals emphasise the importance of good project management and regular reporting on risk management.

RECOMMENDATION

19. **The Cabinet is RECOMMENDED to:**
 - (a) **Agree that the County Council's draft Preferred Minerals and Waste Core Strategy be based on the proposed strategies and policies in Annexes 2, 3 and 4.**

- (b) **Agree that public consultation be carried out on the preferred strategy and policies for minerals and on the strategy options and draft preferred strategy and policies for waste.**
- (c) **Delegate authority to finalise the consultation document to the Deputy Director (Growth and Infrastructure) in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Growth and Infrastructure.**

Martin Tugwell
Deputy Director (Growth & Infrastructure)

Background papers:

Responses received in February and March 2011 to Local Assessment of Aggregates Supply Requirements for Oxfordshire, Atkins, January 2011.
Oxfordshire Minerals and Waste Development Framework, Draft Waste Needs Assessment, May 2011.

Contact Officer: Peter Day, Tel 01865 815544

May 2011

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Local Assessment of Aggregates Supply Requirements for Oxfordshire Summary of comments on report by Atkins

Introduction

1. In October 2010 the County Council commissioned the consultants Atkins to carry out a local assessment of aggregates supply requirements for Oxfordshire. The consultants delivered the final version of their report on 1 February 2011. This report was published on the County Council website with an invitation for comments on the analysis and conclusions in the report to be made by 31 March. Eight responses have been received, which are summarised below. Proposals for addressing key points made in these comments are set out at the end of this annex.

Responses

Mineral Products Association (MPA)

2. The MPA is not convinced that the alternative methodologies proposed by Atkins provide a robust evidence base on which to diverge from using the apportionment in the proposed changes to Policy M3 of the South East Plan.
3. The MPA notes that Atkins proposed four methodologies and that they recommended that option 4, based on per capita consumption, was the most robust. The MPA believes that the County Council's selection of a figure midway between the figures proposed in option 2 and option 4 is not a robust basis for proceeding.
4. The MPA notes that, although the Council has already adopted these figures, the data used in the Atkins report may need to be reviewed in light of the results of the 2009 aggregates monitoring survey, which will provide up to date information on imports and exports of aggregates. The data on cross boundary movements in the report, which assumes parity between imports and exports, are inadequate at present.
5. The MPA recommends that, if national forecasting and guidelines are abolished, all counties should use an average of 10 years past sales data (taking 12 years but removing the highest and lowest values to reduce distortion). This would give a figure of 1.49 million tonnes per annum for sand and gravel, which is close to the figure of 1.58 million tonnes per annum previously agreed by the County Council.

Lafarge Aggregates Limited

6. Lafarge supports and endorses the Mineral Products Association response.

Cemex UK Materials Limited

7. Cemex considers that the County Council's adoption of a figure from the Atkins report is premature in the light of current discussions regarding the future of the national Managed Aggregates Supply System, the outcome of which has not yet been determined.
8. Cemex joins the MPA in noting that the Atkins report has not been able to use the 2009 annual monitoring survey data on inter-regional movements of primary aggregates and that the current data provides a 'distorted view' of movements. It also notes that the report does not adequately address cross boundary sales.
9. Cemex comments on the complex nature of the methodologies proposed by Atkins and notes that monitoring the correlation between housing or population statistics and aggregate use could be onerous.
10. Cemex considers that recycled aggregates should not be viewed as a substitute for primary aggregates, but as complementing the role of primary aggregates through their suitability for lower specification construction projects.

Hills Quarry Products Ltd

11. Hills reiterates the points made by the MPA that the evidence provided by Atkins is not sufficiently robust to warrant a departure from the proposed changes to Policy M3 of the South East Plan; and that the lack of recent data on cross boundary movements, pending the publication of the results of the 2009 aggregates monitoring survey, means that the figures provided by Atkins are not sufficiently robust.
12. Hills recommends that the County Council checks the aggregates use per head of population using the MPA's minerals consumption figures. In 2009, this figure was 3.3 tonnes per head; Oxfordshire's population is 635,000, which equates to an annual level of provision of 2.1 million tonnes per annum. Prior to the recession, the equivalent figure was 2.7 million tonnes per annum.
13. The report notes that the decline in sales of aggregates in Oxfordshire in recent years has been greater than the national decline in sales, but inadequate explanation for this disparity is given. The report notes that falling sales do not necessarily reflect reduced demand; operators may choose to import aggregates rather than to try to seek planning permission for new quarries in the county. But, in their report, Atkins appear to link the reduction in sales with a perceived reduction in need for aggregates.

14. Hills notes the significant cross boundary movements of aggregates from other counties in the South East, and also from counties in the West Midlands and the South West; these have not been adequately taken into account in the report, although Hills acknowledges the general paucity of data on these movements.
15. Hills suggests that if Oxfordshire does not plan for sufficient quarries to meet local need, aggregates will be imported into the county to meet that need and the distances minerals are transported will therefore increase. This would go against a national policy objective of mineral planning in MPS 1, to reduce the carbon footprint of transportation of minerals. Hills questions whether this approach is sound.

Grundon Waste Management

16. Grundon considers the preparation of the report to be premature before the results of the 2009 aggregates monitoring survey are known, resulting in a lack of up to date data on cross boundary movements.
17. The report takes into account a steady reduction in sales but Grundon notes that sales have been affected by the closure of three major production units. The proposal to use a lower figure for sand and gravel provision should not be justified on the basis of the temporary closure of some units.
18. Grundon considers that none of the methodologies presented by Atkins are robust nor do they represent an exceptional circumstance to warrant a departure from the proposed changes to policy M3 of the South East Plan.

Stephen Bowley Planning Consultancy

19. Mr Bowley acknowledges the work done by the consultants but highlights the difficulties of providing a local assessment for one county which is part of a larger market area and where there are significant cross boundary movements of aggregates.
20. Mr Bowley notes that sales of hard rock and soft sand have held up well while sand and gravel has reduced over the past few years and considers that this should be reflected in future levels of provision.
21. Mr Bowley believes that the statistics on recycled aggregates in the report are unreliable and that there is little scope to significantly increase production of recycled aggregates from the current level, which is in the order of 300–400,000 tonnes per annum.

Parishes Against Gravel Extraction (PAGE)

22. PAGE broadly supports the adoption of an aggregate demand forecasting methodology related to population, although they believe that the figure of 1.23 million tonnes per annum for sand and gravel is still too high in the context of current production levels. They note the decline in sand and gravel sales in Oxfordshire but ascribe this to a greater use of recycled aggregates, construction methods which use aggregates less intensively, and more efficient use of aggregates in the construction process.
23. PAGE encourages the County Council to set challenging goals for recycling aggregates and is disappointed that Atkins has not encouraged this in their report. They note that the Atkins' report does not take into account the ash which will be produced at the Ardley energy from waste incineration plant, which will be a source of future production of secondary aggregates. (It is expected that this will produce approximately 75,000 tonnes per annum).
24. PAGE notes the general lack of timely information available on production, consumption, imports, exports etc and urges the County Council to improve its data collection processes.

Mr Arnold Grayson (CPRE)

25. Mr Grayson is concerned that the report does not adequately set the historic context of aggregate supply and demand, and does not provide an explanation of the recent fall in consumption of aggregates per head. He notes that this decline could partially be explained by decreasing intensity of aggregate use in construction projects.

Proposed actions to address key points raised

26. In light of the comments received, the following actions are proposed:
 - i. In the event that the national Managed Aggregates Supply System is abolished, the County Council should review the findings of the Atkins report in the light of any new arrangements for aggregates planning put in place by the Government; at that time, consideration could be given to the MPA's proposal that all counties should base their supply of aggregates on the mean of 10 of the last 12 years' sales, excluding the highest and lowest values.
 - ii. When the full data from the 2009 aggregates monitoring survey is published by the Government, the County Council should review the findings of the Atkins report; in particular, the assumption of parity between imports and exports should be checked against the more recent data and, if necessary, amendments should be made to the figures for aggregates provision that result from the different assessment methodologies.

- iii. The County Council should aim to make provision to enable supply of secondary and recycled aggregates at least at the South East Plan Oxfordshire apportionment level of 0.9 million tonnes per annum, which exceeds the provision figures in the Atkins report; but it should be noted that actual production levels will depend on availability of suitable materials for secondary and recycled aggregates production, industry development of facilities in suitable locations, and construction industry demand for secondary and recycled aggregates.
- iv. The County Council should liaise with other mineral planning authorities and the minerals industry to consider whether and how aggregates data collection processes can be improved to provide more timely and accurate data in future years, particularly on sales and movements of aggregates.

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OXFORDSHIRE MINERALS & WASTE CORE STRATEGY

PROPOSED PREFERRED MINERALS PLANNING STRATEGY

Vision and Objectives for Minerals Core Strategy

- 1 This vision for Oxfordshire's minerals planning strategy is informed by the character of and growth and development aspirations for the county, the policy context and the issues for waste planning in Oxfordshire that have been identified. It addresses the need to support Oxfordshire's economy but also to protect its environment.
- 2 **Vision for Minerals**
 - a) In the period to 2030, the supply of aggregate materials to meet the development needs of Oxfordshire and help sustain it's world class economy will be met by an increased use of secondary and recycled aggregate materials; a reduced proportion of locally produced sand and gravel, soft sand, limestone and ironstone; and the continued import of materials such as hard crushed rock that are not available locally.
 - b) Mineral working will be located and managed to minimise the distance that aggregates are transported by road, the use of unsuitable roads through settlements and other harmful impacts of mineral extraction and transportation on Oxfordshire's environment and communities.
 - c) The restoration of mineral workings will enhance the quality of Oxfordshire's natural environment, particularly the Conservation Target Areas, and the quality of life for Oxfordshire residents by contributing to the creation of habitats and protection of biodiversity and the provision of access to the countryside and opportunities for recreation.

Objectives for Minerals

3. The Oxfordshire Minerals Vision Statement is supported by the following nine objectives.
 - i. Enable Oxfordshire to meet the locally determined requirements for supply of sand and gravel, soft sand, crushed rock and secondary and recycled aggregates over the plan period to meet planned economic growth and social needs.
 - ii. Enable a continued supply of limestone and ironstone for building and walling stone from small scale quarries for the maintenance,

repair and construction of locally distinctive buildings and structures.

- iii. Provide a framework for investment and development by mineral operators and landowners through a clear and deliverable spatial strategy which is sufficiently flexible to meet future needs and which is based on existing and planned infrastructure provision.
- iv. Facilitate the economically and environmentally efficient supply of minerals in Oxfordshire and encourage the maximum practical recovery of aggregate resources from secondary and recycled aggregate materials for use in place of primary aggregates.
- v. Minimise the impact of mineral development on climate change by identifying areas for mineral extraction which reduce the need to transport minerals and which minimise the impact of mineral working on areas vulnerable to flooding.
- vi. Minimise the distance minerals need to be transported by road and encourage where possible the movement of aggregates by conveyor, rail and on the River Thames in order to reduce adverse impacts of mineral transportation on local communities and the environment.
- vii. Protect Oxfordshire's important landscapes and ecological, geological and heritage sites, and archaeological and heritage assets from harmful impacts of mineral development and transportation.
- viii. Provide benefits to Oxfordshire's natural environment and local communities through the restoration of mineral workings by contributing to nature conservation, enhancing the quality and extent of Conservation Target Areas, contributing to landscape character, improving access to the countryside, safeguarding local amenity and providing opportunities for local recreation.
- ix. Safeguard resources of sand and gravel, crushed rock, building stone and Fuller's Earth to ensure that these resources are potentially available for future use and are considered in future development decisions; and safeguard permanent facilities for producing secondary and recycled aggregate and for importing aggregates into Oxfordshire by rail.

Preferred Strategy for Minerals

4. Policy M1: Provision for Secondary and Recycled Aggregates

Priority will be given to the production and supply of secondary and recycled aggregates in preference to land won aggregates; and provision will be made for facilities sufficient for the production of at least 0.9 million tonnes of secondary and recycled aggregates a year, comprising:

- Permanent facilities; and
- Temporary recycling facilities at aggregate quarries and inert waste landfill sites.

This provision will be made primarily through recycling of construction, demolition and excavation waste but also through recovery of ash from combustion processes.

5. Policy M2: Provision to be made for Mineral Working

The mineral planning authority will maintain a landbank of reserves with planning permission of at least 7 years for soft sand and sharp sand and gravel; and 10 years for crushed rock, based on the following rates of extraction:

- Sharp sand and gravel at an average rate of 1.01 million tonnes a year;
- Soft sand at an average rate of 0.25 million tonnes a year; and
- Crushed rock at an average rate of 0.63mtpa million tonnes a year.

Provision will be made for extraction of building stone from extensions to existing or new quarries where a local need for the material has been demonstrated and provided that the quarrying is at a scale appropriate to the locality and will not harm the environment or local amenity.

6. Policy M3: Strategy for the Location of Mineral Working

The principal locations for sharp sand and gravel working will be:

- Lower Windrush Valley;
- Eynsham/Cassington/Yarnton;
- Sutton Courtenay;
- Caversham; and
- Cholsey.

Provision will be made through extensions to existing quarries and new quarries to replace exhausted quarries at Lower Windrush Valley, Eynsham/Cassington/Yarnton, Sutton Courtenay and Caversham; and through new working at Cholsey.

The principal locations for soft sand working will:

- South east of Faringdon;
- Tubney/Marcham/Hinton Waldrist; and
- Duns Tew.

The principal locations for crushed rock working will be:

- North of Bicester to the east of the River Cherwell;
- South of the A40 near Burford; and
- South east of Faringdon.

For soft sand and crushed rock, preference will be given to extensions to existing quarries and new quarries will only be permitted if sufficient provision cannot be made through extensions.

Additional working of ironstone for aggregate use will only be permitted in exchange for an agreed revocation, without compensation, of an existing permission containing workable resources.

The working of clay will normally be permitted only from areas where sand and gravel is being worked in the following locations:

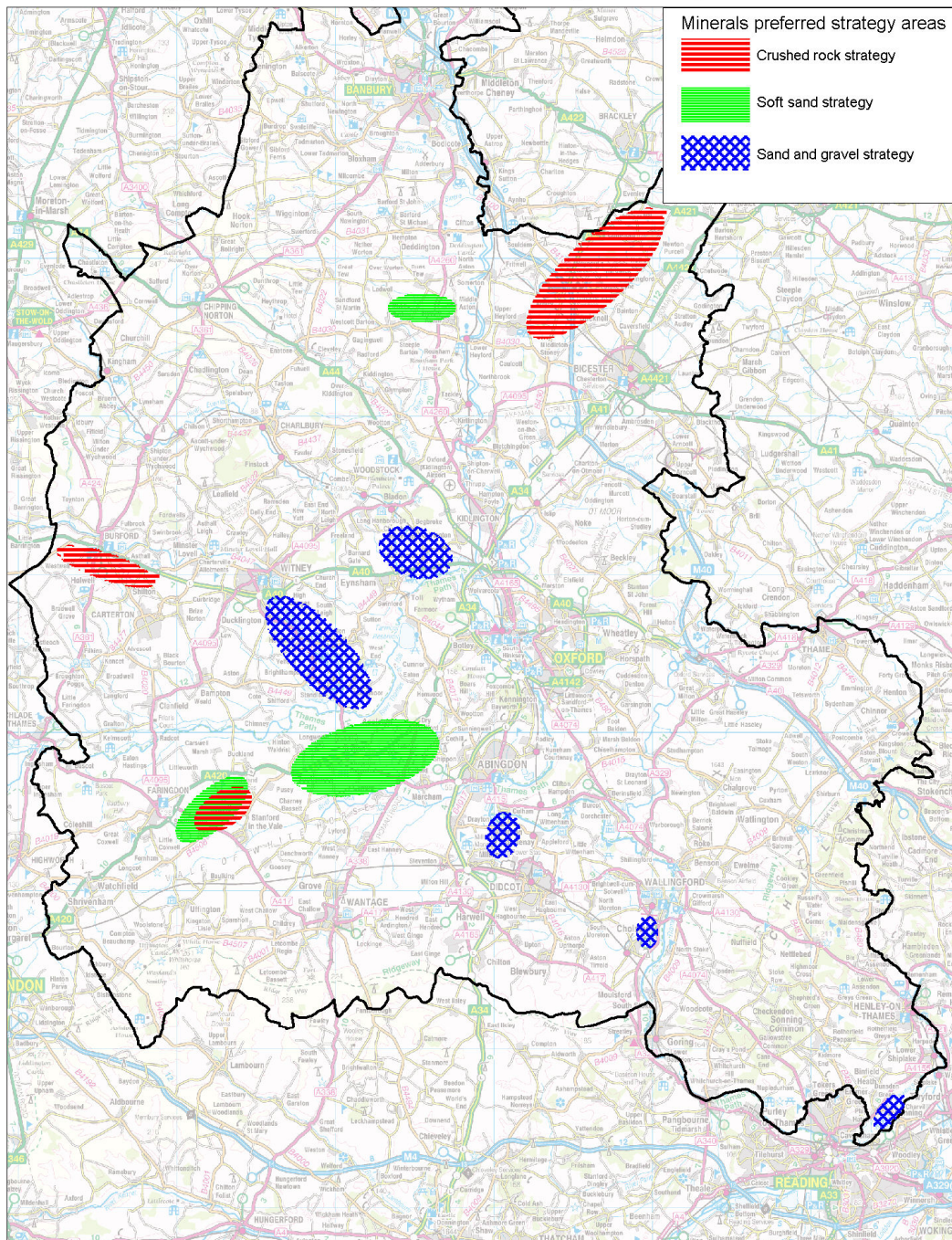
- Lower Windrush Valley;
- Eynsham/Cassington/Yarnton; and
- Sutton Courtenay.

Planning permission will not be granted for mineral working outside the locations identified above unless the required provision cannot be met from within these areas.

Applications to work fullers earth, oil, gas, coal or any other minerals not currently worked in the county will be considered in the light of national and development plan policies.

Locations for mineral working are shown on Figure 1.

Preferred strategy for crushed rock, soft sand and sharp sand and gravel



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Figure 1 The preferred strategy for mineral working

7. Policy M4: Aggregates rail depots

Existing and permitted rail depots will be safeguarded for importing aggregates at:

- Banbury (Hennef Way);
- Kidlington;
- Sutton Courtenay (Appleford Sidings); and
- Shipton on Cherwell Quarry.

Where proposals for development would result in the loss of a rail depot site, a suitable alternative site should be provided.

The development of further aggregates rail depots will be encouraged at suitable locations outside the Green Belt.

8. Policy M5: Mineral safeguarding

Mineral Safeguarding Areas will be defined, and identified in detailed maps, and will include the following mineral resources:

- Sand and gravel in the main river valleys and in other areas where the resource is proven;
- Soft sand, limestone and ironstone in existing areas of working, including the areas included in the proposed strategy for mineral working;
- Fullers earth.

These mineral resources will be safeguarded for the future and development which could sterilise or otherwise hinder the possible future working of minerals will not be permitted.

Development which would prejudice the operation or establishment of existing or permitted aggregates rail depots identified in or subsequently permitted under policy 4, will not be permitted. Development that is sensitive to disturbance and could be adversely impacted by the operation of a rail depot will not be permitted in proximity to an existing or permitted rail depot.

Permanent secondary and recycled aggregate production facilities will be safeguarded.

9. Policy M6: Restoration of mineral workings

Minerals workings should be restored to a high quality in a phased manner as quickly as possible following extraction, to an after-use appropriate to the location and the capacity of the transport network and which is sympathetic to the character of the surrounding landscape and the amenity of local communities. Proposals for restoration, after-care and after-use should be submitted with applications for mineral working; and they should provide for long-term maintenance and enhancement of the environment after mineral working has ceased; and should accord

with District LDF policies, including environmental protection, countryside and access enhancement and noise management. Planning permission will not be granted for mineral working unless satisfactory proposals have been made for the restoration, aftercare and after-use, including the means of securing them in the long term.

Where restoration could assist or achieve the creation of priority habitats and/or Oxfordshire Biodiversity Action Plan targets, the relevant biodiversity after-use should be incorporated within the restoration scheme.

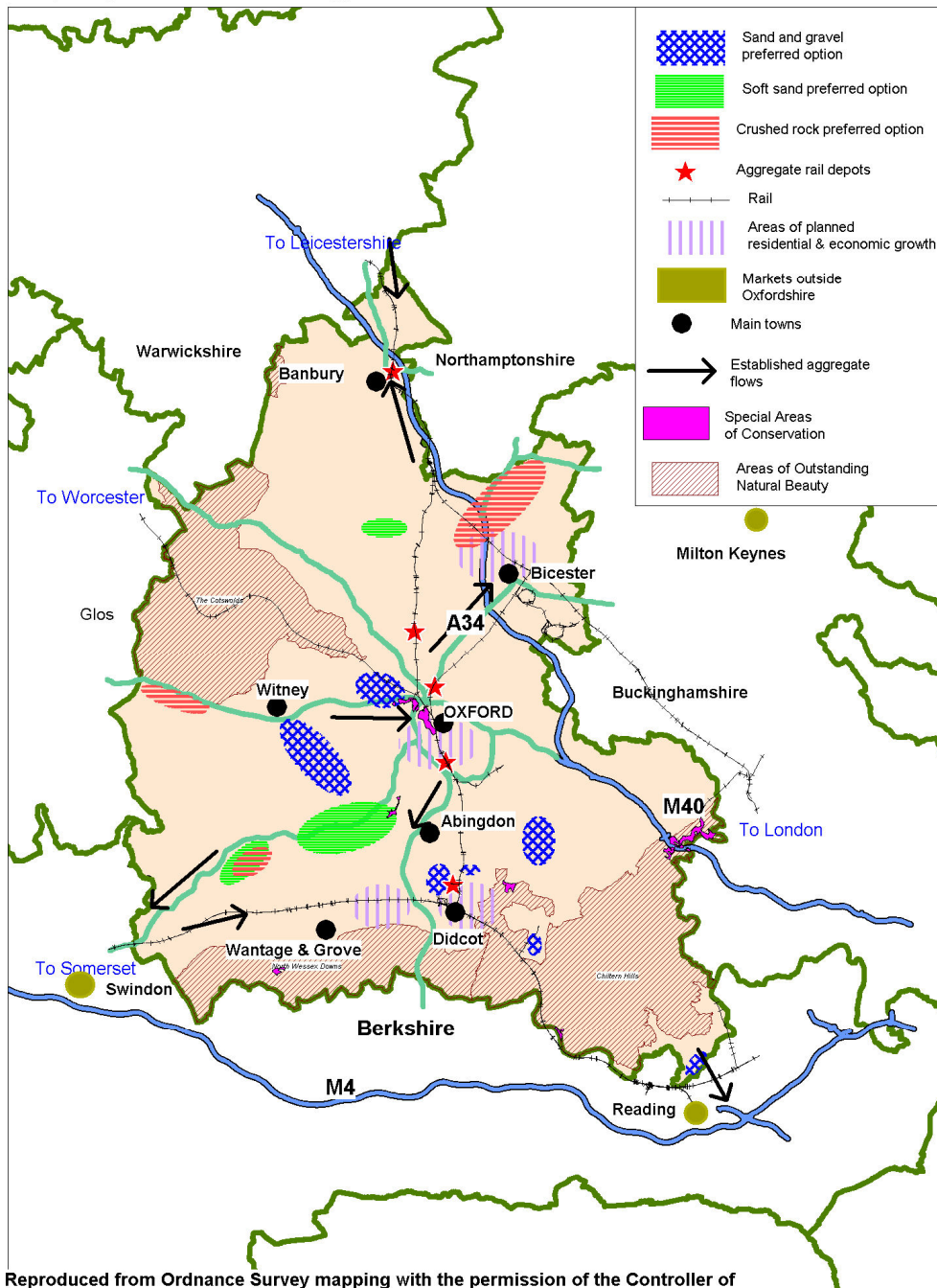
Where restoration could protect geodiversity and improve educational opportunities this should be incorporated into the proposed restoration scheme, such as by providing for important geological faces to be left exposed and enabling access to the faces.

Where mineral working is proposed on best and most versatile agricultural land, the restoration should be back to agricultural land if this is practicable.

Where a mineral working site has the potential to provide for local amenity uses, including appropriate sport and recreational uses, these uses should be incorporated into the restoration scheme.

Where appropriate, operators and landowners will be expected to contribute towards the management of restored mineral workings for an extended period beyond any formal aftercare period.

Key Diagram - Minerals Strategy



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OXFORDSHIRE MINERALS & WASTE CORE STRATEGY

PROPOSED PREFERRED WASTE PLANNING STRATEGY

Purpose of the Waste Strategy

1. The Waste Planning Strategy must make planning provision for the facilities that will be required for the management of all wastes in Oxfordshire over the period to 2030. This reflects the role of the County Council as waste planning authority, with responsibility for planning all waste developments. The County Council is also the waste disposal authority and as such has responsibility for the management of household waste and other municipal waste collected by the five district councils. The county and district councils work together on municipal waste management as the Oxfordshire Waste Partnership. This planning strategy is separate from, but is consistent with and compliments, the municipal waste management strategy of the Oxfordshire Waste Partnership (see paragraph 17 below). Other (i.e. non-household) types of waste are managed by private sector companies.
2. This planning strategy makes provision for the waste management capacity that is expected to be needed in order to effectively manage the waste produced in Oxfordshire. In doing so, it anticipates the requirements of the waste disposal authority and the private sector waste management industry within the context of changes in the quantities of waste produced and the effects of other policy and financial drivers on the way waste is managed. But, in facilitating new waste management facilities, though making provision for development, this strategy itself seeks to promote changes in waste management practice in line with European, national and other relevant policy and the objectives of this Core Strategy.

Context for Waste Development in Oxfordshire

Current Waste Production and Management in Oxfordshire

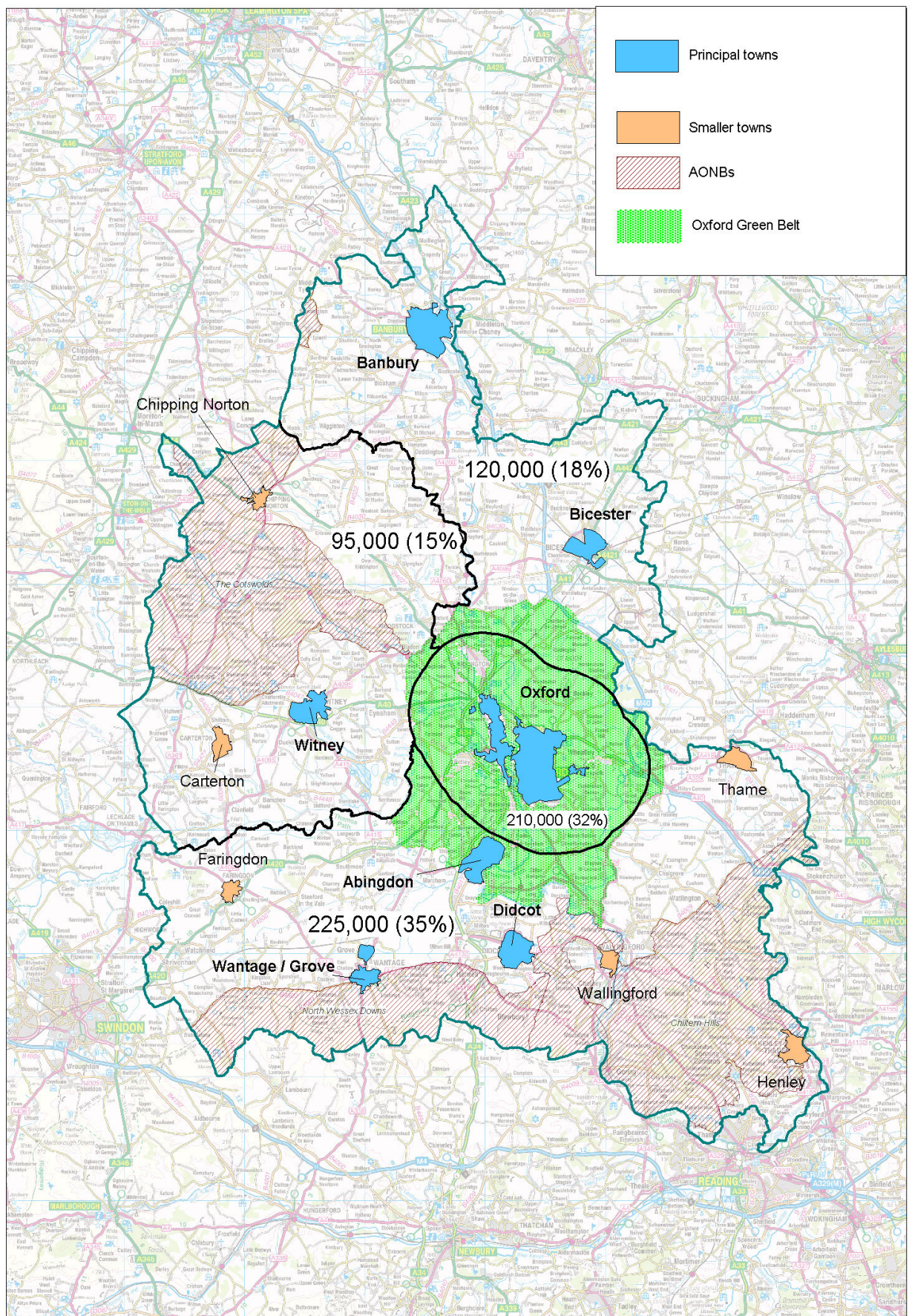
3. It is estimated that over the last 10 years Oxfordshire has produced approximately 2.2 million tonnes of waste each year, principally made up of:
 - Municipal Solid Waste (MSW) – approximately 0.3 million tonnes a year – this is waste that is collected and managed by the District and County Councils; it mainly comprises household waste and some commercial waste;
 - Commercial and Industrial (C&I) waste – approximately 0.6 million tonnes a year – this is waste produced by businesses, much of which is similar to municipal waste; this waste is managed by private sector companies;

- Construction, Demolition and Excavation (CDE) waste – approximately 1.2 million tonnes a year – this is waste produced from demolition and construction activities, much of which is inert material such as soils, brick and concrete; this waste is managed by private sector companies.
4. Other wastes are produced in smaller quantities:
 - Metal waste – approximately 50,000 tonnes a year – this is end of life vehicles and other scrap metal;
 - Sewage Sludge – approximately 20,000 tonnes a year – this is the waste that results from the treatment processes at waste water treatment works;
 - Hazardous waste – approximately 40,000 tonnes a year – this comprises a variety of materials which are hazardous in nature, including oils and solvents, chemicals and asbestos;
 - Radioactive waste – see paragraph XX below.
 5. It is estimated that the total amount of waste produced fell to approximately 1.6 million tonnes in 2010, largely due to an estimated halving in production of CDE waste resulting from a decline in building activity with the economic recession.
 6. Some waste produced in Oxfordshire is sent out of the county. Approximately 0.7 million tonnes of waste a year is imported into Oxfordshire; this is mainly MSW and C&I waste for disposal to landfill. (see paragraphs 18 – 22 below).
 7. In the past the majority of waste was sent to landfill, but the management of waste in Oxfordshire has changed markedly in recent years. In 2009/10, 43% of MSW was recycled or composted. Figures for C&I waste are less certain, but it is estimated that between 30% and 50% of C&I waste is recycled. For CDE waste, no more than 15% is now landfilled with the majority being recycled as aggregate or soil or recovered for other use (including quarry restoration and landfill engineering). Metal waste is collected for recycling at scrapyards. The majority of sewage sludge is spread on agricultural land, with the remainder being taken to London for incineration. Hazardous wastes are dealt with at a variety of specialist facilities, mostly outside the county.

Population and Economic Growth in Oxfordshire

8. The population of Oxfordshire in 2008 was estimated to be 640,000, and is forecast to grow by a further 12% by 2026. This growth will require the construction of a large number of new dwellings and related development. The largest concentration of housing and businesses in the county is Oxford, which together with nearby places like Kidlington, Botley, Kennington and Wheatley contains a third of the county's population. Outside Oxford, there are large towns at Banbury and Bicester to the north, Witney to the west, and at Abingdon, Didcot and Wantage and Grove (the Science Vale area) to the south.

9. Future growth in Oxfordshire is planned to be focused around Bicester, Oxford and Science Vale (Didcot and Wantage and Grove). The Science Vale area (including Harwell, Culham, Milton Park and Grove) has a concentration of globally competitive science and technology businesses and provides 13% of all research and development employment in the South East. A key objective of the Oxfordshire Local Economic Partnership and the Oxfordshire Sustainable Community Strategy is to encourage further economic growth so that Oxfordshire retains its global competitiveness.
10. The following map shows the location of Oxford and the large towns of Banbury, Bicester, Witney, Abingdon, Didcot and Wantage and Grove, together with the small towns of Chipping Norton, Carterton, Faringdon, Wallingford, Henley and Thame. It also shows the county divided into four areas, with the proportion of the county population within each area:
 - Oxford and nearby areas (as described in paragraph 8 above);
 - Northern area, around Banbury and Bicester;
 - Western area, around Witney;
 - Southern area, around Abingdon, Didcot and Wantage and Grove.The population figures give an indication of the likely distribution of waste production across the county. The majority of the county's waste is expected to be produced within the Bicester – Oxford – Science Vale area, but with significant amounts also arising from Banbury and Witney / Carterton. The small towns and surrounding rural areas will produce much smaller quantities of waste.



Provision for Waste Management

11. A waste needs assessment has been produced as a separate document. This sets out in more detail the amounts of waste produced and managed in Oxfordshire; estimates of the quantities of waste that will need to be managed in Oxfordshire over the period to 2030; the existing capacity at waste management facilities in the county; and the additional capacity that it is estimated could be required over the plan period and for which provision needs to be made.
12. It is estimated that the amounts of waste produced in Oxfordshire could increase over the period to 2030, as shown in the following table for the three main waste types.

Estimates of Oxfordshire waste to be managed 2010 – 2030

(tonnes per annum)

	2010	2015	2020	2025	2030
MSW	310,000	330,000	340,000	350,000	370,000
C&I	570,000	580,000	600,000	620,000	640,000
CDE	650,000*	1,300,000	1,300,000	1,300,000	1,300,000
Total	1,530,000	2,210,000	2,240,000	2,270,000	2,310,000

Figures rounded to nearest 10,000 tonnes

* Reflects reduction in normal construction activity due to current economic position.

13. The annual quantities of other types waste are also estimated to increase over the period 2010 to 2030:
 - Hazardous Waste – from approximately 40,000 tonnes to 60,000 tonnes;
 - Metal Waste – from approximately 50,000 tonnes to 60,000 tonnes;
 - Sewage Sludge – from approximately 20,000 tonnes to 25,000 tonnes.

How wastes should be managed in future

14. European and national policy for waste management (EU Waste Framework Directive, 2008 and Planning Policy Statement 10 'Planning for Sustainable Waste Management') set out the following waste hierarchy, in which prevention of waste is the most desirable option and disposal is the option of last resort:



By moving the management of waste up the hierarchy, the Government aims to achieve more sustainable waste management and to break the link between economic growth and the environmental impact of waste.

15. Landfilling biodegradable waste produces methane gas which is a powerful greenhouse gas. European and national legislation and policy has put in place financial and policy drivers to reduce the amount of biodegradable waste that is sent to landfill, and increase the recovery of resources from waste. The European Landfill Directive sets challenging targets for the reduction of biodegradable municipal waste sent to landfill and the National Waste Strategy includes targets for recycling and diversion of waste from landfill. There are strong financial drivers towards achieving these targets in landfill tax, which applies to all wastes and has been increasing year on year; and the Landfill Allowance Trading Scheme, which applies to municipal waste. These measures are increasing the costs of landfill so that it will no longer be the cheapest means of dealing with waste, with the objectives of diverting waste away from landfill, moving up the waste hierarchy to more sustainable ways of waste management and increasing the recovery of resources from waste.
16. In line with the waste hierarchy, this strategy provides for the management of waste produced in Oxfordshire to move as quickly as is practical to a situation of maximising recycling and composting and minimising the disposal of waste to landfill. In assessing the provision to be made for waste management facilities, the waste needs assessment works from targets that reflect this approach, as set out in the following table. These take account of targets in the South East Plan, but are modified to reflect the higher recycling and composting targets for MSW that are considered achievable in Oxfordshire and maximum diversion of MSW and C&I waste from landfill being achieved from 2015. These targets assume that from 2015 any MSW and C&I waste that is not recycled or composted will, so far as is practical, be treated in an energy from waste or other resource recovery facility, and that only approximately 2% of these wastes will be sent direct to landfill.

Oxfordshire waste management targets 2010 – 2030

Waste Management / Waste Type	Target Year				
	2010	2015	2020	2025	2030
MSW:					
Composting & food waste treatment	29%	30%	31%	31%	31%
Recycling	25%	31%	31%	31%	31%
Treatment of residual waste	0%	37%	36%	36%	36%
Landfill	46%	2%	2%	2%	2%
C&I:					
Composting& food waste treatment	0%	5%	5%	5%	5%
Recycling	50%	50%	55%	60%	60%
Treatment of residual waste	0%	43%	38%	33%	33%
Landfill	50%	2%	2%	2%	2%
CDE:					
Recycling	50%	50%	60%	60%	60%
Landfill/Restoration	50%	50%	40%	40%	40%

17. The Oxfordshire Joint Municipal Waste Management Strategy (2007) is being reviewed by the Oxfordshire Waste Partnership; consultation is expected later in 2011. It is unlikely that this review will raise significant planning issues (e.g. radical changes to targets for MSW recycling and diversion of waste from landfill or needs for new waste management facilities) that have not already been anticipated. Nevertheless, the waste spatial strategy should include flexibility to allow for any changes in municipal waste management requirements in Oxfordshire.

Waste imports and exports

18. Oxfordshire is largely self sufficient in waste management, with about 90% of its waste currently being managed within the county. Approximately 140,000 tonnes of waste were exported out of the county in 2008.
19. Oxfordshire is a net importer of waste. It receives large amounts of waste from elsewhere, particularly from London (much of it by rail) and Berkshire, most of which goes to landfill. In 2008, more than 700,000 tonnes were imported into Oxfordshire, with Sutton Courtenay being the biggest receiving landfill site. Oxfordshire has a large remaining non-hazardous landfill capacity (suitable for MSW and C&I waste) compared with London or much of the rest of the South East. South East Plan

policy W3 recognises this and specifies the landfill provision that Oxfordshire should make for waste from London.

20. It is expected that waste will continue to be brought into Oxfordshire for disposal by landfill, but in declining amounts over the period to 2030 as waste is increasingly diverted to new recycling and residual waste treatment facilities in London and elsewhere. The rate of decline is difficult to predict but, based on South East Plan policy W3, it is estimated that imports into Oxfordshire could be as shown the following table.

Oxfordshire: estimates of waste imported for disposal to landfill 2010 – 2030
(million tonnes)

	Total imports for 5 year periods			
	2010-15	2016-20	2021-25	2026-30
London	1.33	0.84	0.42	0.42
Elsewhere	2.25	1.42	0.71	0.71
Total	3.58	2.26	1.13	1.13

London Waste Imports to 2025 are as for South East Plan Apportionment

London Waste for period 2016-2025 assumes that 66% of the apportionment for that period is taken up in first 5 year period

Waste from elsewhere is based on an assumed current import rate of 450,000 tpa

Waste from elsewhere for period 2016-20 is in same proportion to period 2010-15 for London (63%)

London waste and waste from elsewhere for 2026-30 is assumed to be as for period 2012-30

21. These figures show a decrease in imports over time, reflecting the expected development of new waste recycling and treatment capacity and diversion of waste from landfill in London and elsewhere. But the rate at which this change will take place is uncertain. Also, as landfill sites elsewhere in the South East are filled up, there could be an increase in the residual waste that is sent to remaining landfills in counties like Oxfordshire.
22. Apart from deliveries by train to Sutton Courtenay, it is expected that waste will be transported by road. Movements into the county are expected in particular to be via the A34, M40, and A43, from sources of waste production to the south and east of Oxfordshire.

Vision and Objectives for Waste Planning Strategy

23. The vision for Oxfordshire's waste planning strategy is informed by the character of and growth and development aspirations for the county, the policy context and the issues for waste planning that need to be addressed. It responds to the need to support Oxfordshire's economy but also to protect its environment.

24. Waste Planning Vision

- a) By 2030 there will have been a transformation in the way Oxfordshire manages its waste, with increased recycling and

composting of waste, treatment (so far as is practicable) of all residual waste that cannot be managed in those ways, and only the minimum amount of waste that is necessary being disposed of at landfill sites. The county will remain largely self-sufficient in dealing with the waste it generates. An economically and environmentally efficient network of clean, well-designed recycling, composting and other waste treatment facilities will have been developed to recover material and energy from the county's waste and help sustain its world class economy.

- b) Waste management facilities will be distributed across the county, with larger-scale and specialist facilities being located at or close to large towns, particularly the growth areas, and close to main transport links, and smaller-scale facilities at or close to small towns. This network will have helped to build more sustainable communities that increasingly take responsibility for their own waste and reduce the distance waste needs to be moved within the county.

Waste Planning Objectives

25. The Oxfordshire Waste Planning Vision is supported by the following eight waste planning objectives.
 - i. Provide for waste management capacity that enables Oxfordshire to be self-sufficient in meeting its own waste needs.
 - ii. Provide for delivery as soon as is practicable of waste management facilities that will drive waste as far up the waste hierarchy as possible, in particular recycling and composting facilities that are at least sufficient to meet the targets set and facilities for treatment and diversion from landfill of Oxfordshire's remaining (residual) waste.
 - iii. Provide for waste to be managed as close as possible to the source of arising and minimise the distance waste needs to be transported by road, to reduce the adverse impacts of mineral transportation on local communities, and allowing communities to take responsibility for their own waste and generally providing for a broad distribution of facilities, but recognising that some types of waste management facility are uneconomic or not practical below a certain size and therefore will need to serve a wider area.
 - iv. Recognise that waste management is an integral part of community infrastructure and take opportunities for facilities to be located in or close to the communities they serve, including in conjunction with planned growth, and for recovery and local use of energy (heat and power) from waste.
 - v. Prioritise the use of previously developed land, including land within the Green Belt if appropriate, and ensure that new waste

management facilities are sensitive to the amenities of local communities and do not cause unnecessary harm to the County's distinctive natural and built environment.

- vi. Promote sustainable waste practice in new construction work based on the principle of keeping waste to a minimum, managing waste on site where possible, recycling construction waste as aggregate, and creating buildings and layouts that facilitate the recovery of resources from waste and opportunities for combined heat and power.
- vii. Secure the satisfactory restoration of landfill sites and other temporary waste management sites where the facility is no longer required or acceptable in that location, in keeping with the surrounding area.
- viii. Recognise that waste will continue to be imported into Oxfordshire from London and elsewhere for disposal by landfill and seek to limit this to residual waste following recycling and treatment elsewhere and for the quantity to decrease over time as new facilities are provided where the waste is produced.

Development of the Spatial Strategy for Waste

26. The Core Strategy needs to set out how much additional capacity for different types of waste management is expected to be needed over the period to 2030, and how, where and when it should be provided, including a clear framework for the identification of suitable sites for waste management facilities. This can be through the specific allocation of sites in the Core Strategy, the identification of broad areas within which such facilities may be acceptable or a combination of the two. Options have been identified that give a broad indication of the areas where new waste facilities might be located. Other, small facilities could be delivered through criteria based policy. It is clear from the waste needs assessment that the strategy should in particular support the provision of additional facilities for the following:
 - Recycling of C&I waste ;
 - Recycling of CDE waste;
 - Residual treatment of C&I waste;
 - Transfer of residual waste to treatment facilities.
27. For clarity and ease of explanation, the different types of waste are considered separately. But, in practice, MSW and C&I waste recycling and treatment facilities can and will cater for both of these waste streams, and it may be appropriate for some existing facilities to be extended to help meet the additional requirements that are identified.
28. The chosen strategy must be deliverable. Sites have been nominated by waste companies and landowners for recycling and residual waste

treatment. But in terms of the needs to be met this does not necessarily mean there is plenty of choice, particularly in the case of residual waste treatment. So, regardless of whether the Core Strategy makes specific site allocations, site deliverability should be considered in developing the strategy, particularly where there is an urgent need for new facilities to be provided in the short term.

29. The strategy also needs to have flexibility to enable it to respond to future changes in waste management. There have been huge changes over the last 10 – 20 years and it is likely there will be further changes over the period to 2030. This plan should be reviewed within 10 years, when any changes in requirements can be taken into account.
30. Earlier consultation (Minerals & Waste Core Strategy Issues and Options Consultation Paper, June 2006; Minerals & Waste Core Strategy Preferred Options Consultation Paper, February 2007) indicated general support for locating waste facilities close to urban areas, where waste is produced. PPS10 includes an objective for planning strategies to provide a framework in which communities take more responsibility for their own waste, and enable sufficient provision of waste management facilities to meet the needs of communities. In line with this objective, the location of waste management facilities should be related as far as possible to the large towns, which are likely to be the main areas of waste generation in the county, as shown on the map above. This points to a strategy for locating facilities close to the Oxford and Abingdon, Didcot and Wantage and Grove (Science Vale) areas and Bicester, with possible additional strategic provision at Banbury and Witney. But the small towns may also have a role to play in meeting some of Oxfordshire's waste management needs.
31. Areas could be identified around each of the large towns that might be considered to be close to an urban area and within which larger waste facilities might be accommodated. These could for example be 2 kilometre or 5 kilometre bands around the towns or they could be more specifically related to the main road network. The availability of potentially deliverable sites will also be important, particularly where the requirement for new facilities is urgent, and needs to be taken into account.
32. For the main waste streams, there are two broad strategy options:
 - concentration at large/medium facilities focused on the large towns, particularly the Bicester/Oxford/Science Vale area;
 - a more dispersed pattern of smaller facilities related to both the large and small towns.

The most appropriate option will vary between waste streams and waste types of waste management facility.

Municipal Solid Waste (MSW)

Existing Facilities

33. Existing facilities that handle MSW include:
- three open windrow composting sites (two permanent and one temporary), and a further temporary site (Sutton Courtenay) which takes waste from London;
 - one in-vessel composting site (Ardley);
 - one anaerobic digestion plant (Cassington);
 - three recycling facilities (Witney, Enstone and Culham), which take in kerbside collected recyclable waste and separate it into individual materials to be sent on to reproprocessors (although the Culham facility is a transfer station that bulks up recyclable waste and send it on to a recycling plant in the West Midlands); and
 - eight household waste recycling centres, where members of the public can take waste for recycling – under a strategy agreed by the County Council in April 2011 these will be reduced to six (two serving Oxford and one each in the other four Districts).

There are also planning permissions for a second anaerobic digestion plant (Crowmarsh) and a further (temporary) in-vessel composting facility (Sutton Courtenay).

34. Residual MSW is currently landfilled in Oxfordshire (apart from a small amount which goes to Buckinghamshire.) From mid 2014 it is planned that the vast majority of this waste will instead be treated at the permitted energy from waste facility at Ardley. It is estimated this will take up approximately 120,000 tpa of the total 300,000 tpa capacity of the plant. Residues from the Ardley plant will comprise: bottom ash (25% of the weight of the waste input), which will have ferrous metals recovered and the remainder will be recycled as a construction material (aggregate); and hazardous fly ash, which will be disposed at a hazardous waste landfill outside Oxfordshire (it is proposed to be taken to a site in Gloucestershire).
35. There is just over 13 million cubic metres of non-hazardous landfill capacity in Oxfordshire, mostly at 5 landfills which can take both MSW and C&I wastes: Sutton Courtenay; Dix Pit; Ardley; Alkerton; and Finmere.

Additional Requirements

36. Taking into account the permission at Crowmarsh, there is sufficient provision to meet expected food waste treatment requirements for MSW. For green waste there will be a need to replace (or extend the life of) the capacity at the temporary composting site at Hinton Waldrist (2024). The temporary site at Sutton Courtenay (2019) would only need to be extended or replaced if it was decided it would be appropriate to continue to take green waste from London for composting.
37. Under the new Household Waste Recycling Centre Strategy two new facilities need to be provided:
- on the north side of Oxford by 2012, for which a site has been identified at Kidlington and a planning application has been submitted; and

- at Banbury by 2014, to replace the existing facility at Alkerton. The existing facilities at Stanton Harcourt (Dix Pit), Drayton, Oakley Wood and Redbridge will continue to operate, but four others will close (Alkerton, Ardley, Dean, and Stanford in the Vale).
38. The existing provision for recycling of MSW is otherwise sufficient to meet expected requirements. But replacement of the transfer station at Culham by additional recycling capacity for the southern part of Oxfordshire (whether at Culham or at a new location) could reduce the distance waste is transported. The provision of such a facility would be dependant on the recycling contractor for South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse Districts.
 39. The Ardley energy from waste facility is expected to meet all Oxfordshire's requirement for residual MSW treatment from mid 2014. In view of the location of this plant in the north east of the County, a need has been identified for bulking up and transfer of residual MSW from the southern and western parts of the County for efficient transportation to Ardley, and the County Council (as waste disposal authority) intends to let a contract for to provide these. It seems most likely that this will involve two transfer stations, but other solutions may be put forward by private sector bidders.
 40. There will be a small (approximately 7,000 tpa) on-going requirement for landfill of MSW that cannot be composted, recycled or treated at the Ardley plant. The existing permitted non-hazardous landfill capacity is estimated to be sufficient to meet this to 2030.

Commercial & Industrial (C&I) Waste

Existing Facilities

41. The relatively small quantities of C&I green and food waste are handled at the same facilities that handle MSW.
42. Recycling of MSW and C&I requires similar types of facilities for taking bulked up waste delivered by lorry and separating it into individual materials to be sent on to reprocessors. Some of the existing facilities handle both waste streams. Current combined MSW and C&I recycling capacity is approximately 400,000 tpa (not including household waste recycling centres), but about 40% of this is at temporary facilities. The most significant permanent facilities are at Banbury, Enstone, Chipping Norton, Witney (2 sites), Cassington, and Grove. The Banbury facility currently operates as a transfer station, but planning permission has been granted for a new recycling plant.
43. From mid 2014 the energy from waste facility at Ardley is expected potentially to have capacity to treat up to approximately 180,000 tpa of C&I waste. Residual C&I waste is currently landfilled, at the same 5 non-hazardous landfill sites that are currently available for MSW (see paragraph 13 above). These sites have a combined capacity of just over

13 million cubic metres. Some 1.2 million tpa (from both within and outside Oxfordshire) have been disposed at non-hazardous landfills in recent years. This is expected to decrease as increased recycling, composting and recovery diverts both MSW and C&I waste away from landfill. But there is uncertainty over future amounts of waste from outside the county (see paragraph 21 above) and this decrease could partly be off-set by a decline in landfill capacity in other areas (particularly elsewhere in the South East).

Additional Requirements

44. The relatively small requirement for C&I composting and food waste treatment could be met by the same facilities that provide for MSW. But further opportunities for treatment of commercial food waste may arise in conjunction with farm waste or sewage sludge, as in the on-farm anaerobic digestion plant proposed at Warborough which the County Council has resolved to permit. Such facilities would provide benefits in terms of recovery of energy from waste.
45. For C&I waste recycling, there is an estimated gap of approximately 170,000 tpa between the capacity forecast to be required and capacity at existing facilities, mainly due to the temporary nature of many existing facilities. This requirement mainly arises from 2015 onwards. Provision of this capacity could range from 3 or 4 large facilities to 6 to 8 medium or small facilities. The additional provision is mainly expected to be needed to serve Banbury (where there is planning permission for a new facility), Bicester, Oxford and Southern Oxfordshire, particularly Didcot and Abingdon. There are permissions for new large permanent recycling facilities at Banbury and near Oxford (Gosford), although there are doubts that this will be built, and for a large temporary facility at Finmere.
46. The location of the Ardley plant, just off the M40/A43 junction and close to the county boundary, means it is likely to attract waste from outside Oxfordshire. It is therefore assumed that only half (90,000 tpa) of the potential C&I waste capacity will be available for non-municipal waste from Oxfordshire. This leaves an estimated gap in required provision of approximately 160,000 tpa by 2015. The need for this additional capacity will be mainly in Southern Oxfordshire but also in the Witney area. Provision of this capacity could range from 1 large facility to 4 small facilities. A current planning application proposes a large mechanical biological treatment plant at Sutton Courtenay which, if approved, could meet the requirement. Also, the County Council has resolved to grant temporary planning permission for a gasification plant of 90,000 tpa at Finmere.
47. As with MSW, it is expected that from 2015 there will be a small (approximately 10,000 tpa) on-going requirement for landfill of C&I waste that cannot be composted, recycled or treated. The existing permitted non-hazardous landfill capacity is estimated to be sufficient to meet this to 2030, even allowing for continued landfilling of waste from London and elsewhere.

Construction, Demolition and Excavation (CDE) Waste

Existing Facilities

48. Current recycling capacity is nearly 600,000 tpa, across 22 sites, but about 40% of this is at temporary facilities. The main permanent facilities are at Bloxham, Eynsham and Playhatch (Caversham).
49. There is approximately 3.7 million cubic metres of inert landfill void currently available, at 19 sites, providing space for about 5.7 mt of waste. But much of this is at just two sites (Shellingford Quarry and Shipton on Cherwell Quarry).

Additional Requirements

50. There is currently a surplus of CDE recycling capacity but this is expected to change to a deficit by 2015, as demand for recycling increases with economic recovery and planning permissions for temporary facilities expire. The maximum requirement is estimated to be approximately 420,000 tpa. There are potential benefits, through operating synergies and reduced transportation of waste, from locating temporary recycling facilities at landfill and quarry sites. If it is assumed that about 240,000 tpa of CDE recycling capacity will continue to be provided in this way, the capacity required in additional, permanent facilities is estimated to be 180,000 tpa. Provision of this capacity could range from 2 or 3 large facilities to 15 small facilities.
51. It is estimated that the existing permitted inert landfill void is sufficient to provide for CDE waste landfill until at least 2020. Over the period to 2030 It is estimated there will be a need for an additional 2 – 3 million m3 of landfill capacity. But there will be an ongoing requirement for inert waste for infilling and restoration of quarries which could accommodate this. Therefore no additional separate provision needs to be made for inert waste landfill.

Metal Wastes (including end of life vehicles)

52. Existing permanent waste metal sites (scrapyards) have capacity to manage approximately 160,000 tpa of waste. This is sufficient to meet estimated requirements over the plan period.

Sewage Sludge

53. Oxfordshire lies almost entirely within the operational area of Thames Water and has 6 sludge treatment centres, at Banbury, Bicester, Oxford, Witney, Didcot and Wantage & Grove. These treat sludge from both their immediate treatment works and from smaller treatment works and have a combined capacity of approximately 27,000 tpa (dry solids). This is sufficient to meet estimated requirements over the plan period.

Hazardous Waste

54. Many of the hazardous waste management facilities in Oxfordshire are small and specialised. The more significant facilities are: the hazardous waste transfer stations at Ewelme and Banbury; the oily waste transfer facility at Standlake; and the Ardley landfill, which currently can accept non-reactive hazardous waste (mainly asbestos). In view of the specialist nature of hazardous waste management facilities, hazardous wastes often have to be transported much longer distances to suitable sites than do other waste types. The nearest hazardous waste landfills to Oxfordshire are at Swindon, Cheltenham and East Northamptonshire; and the nearest hazardous waste incinerators are at Slough and Fawley (Southampton).
55. Production of hazardous waste in Oxfordshire will increase with construction of the Ardley energy from waste incinerator, which will produce hazardous fly ash, but the operator proposes this will be taken to a hazardous waste landfill in Gloucestershire. It is estimated that additional capacity could be required for approximately 50,000 tpa of hazardous waste. But this will comprise different waste materials that require different types of treatment or disposal facility. The specialised nature of most hazardous waste facilities is such that they need to serve a larger than single county area and absolute county self-sufficiency is not practical.

Radioactive Waste

56. Radioactive waste in Oxfordshire mainly comprises the nuclear legacy wastes which already exist, principally at Harwell, with smaller quantities at Culham (JET project). The decommissioning of these nuclear sites is important for future economic development within the Science Vale area. This will require the storage, removal and disposal of radioactive wastes from these sites. The County Council, as waste planning authority, would deal with planning applications for any facilities for storing, managing or disposing of radioactive waste in Oxfordshire. Policies and provision for management of this waste should be included in the Minerals and Waste Development Framework.
57. The Nuclear Decommissioning Authority is responsible for decommissioning and site clearance at Harwell, through the site licence company Research Sites Restoration Limited. Decommissioning is expected to be carried out over a long period; the current target date for final site clearance at Harwell is 2064, but much of the decommissioning is planned to be carried out by 2031.
58. There is no waste of high level radioactivity remaining at Harwell, but some of the waste is of intermediate level radioactivity. This will need to be disposed at the proposed national facility (deep geological repository), but that is not expected to be available during the period to 2030. In the meantime there will be a requirement for treatment and storage of an estimated 10,000 m³ of intermediate level waste from Harwell and a

smaller amount from Culham. The site waste management plan for Harwell envisages provision of a new on-site storage facility, with the possibility of this also accommodating some waste from Winfrith in Dorset. The Nuclear Decommissioning Authority is also considering an alternative option of moving intermediate level waste from Harwell to a storage facility elsewhere (outside Oxfordshire), but is thought to be less likely.

59. Most of the nuclear waste at Harwell and Culham is of low level radioactivity and mainly arises from demolition and clearance of buildings which have a small amount of radioactive contamination. Small quantities of this will have to be taken for disposal to the existing specialist facility in Cumbria (near Drigg), or may possibly need to be disposed at the proposed national deep geological repository. But the remainder of this waste is classified as very low level waste and could be disposed in a suitable landfill facility rather than unnecessarily taking up valuable space at the facility in Cumbria. Some low level waste may need to be stored for a time to allow radioactive contamination levels to reduce to the appropriate level for safe disposal by landfill. It is estimated there is a requirement for storage and/or disposal of approximately 100,000 m³ of low level radioactive waste from Harwell and a smaller amount from Culham. Disposal could be in a small bespoke facility, most likely at or near the source of the waste, or at a technically suitable conventional landfill. .
60. In addition, small quantities of low-level activity radioactive wastes are produced in Oxfordshire from non-nuclear sources, mainly from medical, research and educational establishments. These are currently taken to specialist disposal facilities outside Oxfordshire. The small quantities of non-nuclear low level waste arising in Oxfordshire could continue to be managed through existing arrangements.

Spatial Strategy Options for Waste

A. Municipal Waste (MSW)

61. The need for additional facilities specifically for MSW is for a few specific facilities, and the spatial options for these are limited.
62. Option A1: Municipal Waste (MSW) Recycling
Under the County Council's new Household Waste Recycling Centre Strategy, the only reasonable option is for two new household recycling centres at:
 - Oxford area;
 - Banbury.

A new facility has been proposed and a planning application submitted for a site at Kidlington which was previously identified in the Oxfordshire Minerals and Waste Local Plan. A site needs to be identified at Banbury to enable provision in 2014 (to replace the existing site at Alkerton).

63. Whilst there is otherwise sufficient existing provision for MSW recycling, the distance waste is transported for recycling could be reduced by provision of a new recycling facility in the Abingdon/Didcot/Wantage & Grove area (to replace the transfer station at Culham, either at the same site or another location). But there is no requirement for this facility in the short term and provision would be dependent on the recycling contractor for South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse Districts and therefore it is not identified as a separate option. Instead, a criteria policy could be included, against which any proposal could be considered.

64. Option A2: Municipal Waste (MSW) Transfer Stations

In line with assumptions about the likely outcome of the procurement of these facilities, a single option has been identified to meet the need for transfer of MSW to the Ardley energy from waste facility from 2014; this is for two transfer stations at:

- Abingdon/Didcot/Wantage & Grove;
- Witney/Carterton

Sites need to be identified for these facilities to enable provision in 2014. However, a contract has yet to be let by the County Council (as waste disposal authority) for this provision and it is possible that other solutions may be put forward by bidders. Flexibility is therefore needed.

B. Commercial & Industrial (C&I) Waste Recycling

65. Option B1: 3 or 4 additional large recycling facilities at or close to large towns in:

- Northern Oxfordshire (Banbury/Bicester);
- Oxford and nearby areas;
- Southern Oxfordshire (Abingdon/Didcot).

66. Option B2: 6 to 8 additional medium or small recycling facilities at or close to large and small towns in:

- Northern Oxfordshire (Banbury and Bicester);
- Oxford and nearby areas;
- Southern Oxfordshire (Abingdon, Didcot, Faringdon, Henley, Thames).

67. These facilities would not need to be exclusively for C&I waste, and could take MSW as well, but the identified need is specifically for C&I recycling. It mainly arises from 2015, particularly from 2020 onwards, and therefore there is not an immediate need to identify sites. Facilities should be sized in relation to the quantity of waste expected from that locality. Large facilities would be over 50,000 tpa; medium facilities would be 20,000 – 50,000 tpa; small facilities would be less than 20,000 tpa. Small facilities may be acceptable on suitable sites in rural parts of the county. There are permissions for new large permanent recycling facilities at Banbury and near Oxford (Gosford), although there are doubts that this will be built, and for a large temporary facility at Finmere.

C. Construction, Demolition and Excavation (CDE) Waste Recycling

68. Option C1: 3 or 4 large permanent facilities at or close to large towns in:
- Northern Oxfordshire (Banbury/Bicester);
 - Oxford and nearby areas;
 - Southern Oxfordshire (Abingdon/Didcot/Wantage & Grove);
- and
Medium or small temporary facilities at landfill and quarry sites across Oxfordshire.
69. Option C2: 6 or more medium or small permanent facilities at or close to large or small towns;
and
Medium or small temporary facilities at landfill and quarry sites across Oxfordshire.
70. Option C3: a range of permanent facilities at or near the large and small towns across Oxfordshire.
71. The requirement for additional provision mainly arises from 2015. Facilities should be sized in relation to the quantity of waste expected from that locality. Large facilities would be over 50,000 tpa; medium facilities would be 20,000 – 50,000 tpa; small facilities would be less than 20,000 tpa. Small permanent facilities may be acceptable on suitable sites in rural parts of the county.

D. Commercial & Industrial (C&I) Residual Waste Treatment

72. Option D1 1 large facility in the Abingdon/Didcot/Wantage & Grove area.
73. Option D2: 3 or 4 smaller facilities at:
- Oxford;
 - Didcot/Abingdon/Wantage & Grove;
 - Witney/Carterton)
74. There is an urgent need for site(s) to be identified to enable this provision by 2015. A current planning application proposes a large mechanical biological treatment plant at Sutton Courtenay.

E. Hazardous Waste Landfill

75. Option E1: No additional provision
Continue to rely on hazardous landfill sites outside Oxfordshire, apart from disposal of non-reactive hazardous waste (mainly asbestos) in existing non hazardous landfills in Oxfordshire where acceptable.
76. Option E2: Existing landfill

Change one of Oxfordshire's existing non-hazardous landfills to hazardous landfill (Alkerton, Ardley, Finmere, Dix Pit or Sutton Courtenay).

77. Option E3: New landfill
New hazardous waste landfill in Oxfordshire.
In the absence of any site nominations for hazardous landfill, no particular location is put forward at this stage.

F. Intermediate Level Radioactive Waste Storage

78. Option F1: Storage at source of waste
Treatment and long-term storage of intermediate level nuclear waste at:
- Harwell (waste arising from Harwell only);
 - Culham (waste arising from Culham only);
- pending removal to a national disposal facility.
79. Option F2: Concentrate Oxfordshire waste storage at Harwell
Treatment and long-term storage of intermediate level nuclear waste (waste arising from Harwell and Culham) at Harwell, pending removal to a national disposal facility.
80. Option F3: Concentrate Oxfordshire and Dorset waste storage at Harwell
Treatment and long-term storage of intermediate level nuclear waste from Oxfordshire (waste arising from Harwell and Culham) and storage of waste from Dorset (waste arising from Winfrith) at Harwell, pending removal to a national disposal facility.

G. Low Level Radioactive Waste Management

81. Option G1: Disposal at source of waste
Storage and disposal in a bespoke facility at source of waste at:
- Harwell (waste arising from Harwell only);
 - Culham (waste arising from Culham only).
82. Option G2: Concentrate waste disposal at Harwell
Storage of waste at source of waste and disposal in a bespoke facility at Harwell (waste arising from Harwell and Culham)
83. Option G3: Disposal at off-site landfill in Oxfordshire
Storage of waste at source of waste and disposal in a suitable off-site landfill in Oxfordshire.
84. Option G4: Disposal at off-site landfill outside Oxfordshire
Storage of waste at source of waste and disposal in a suitable off-site landfill outside Oxfordshire.

How we Propose to Provide for Waste Management in Oxfordshire

85. A key objective of the Plan is to manage waste as close as possible to the source of arising. This generally points to a broad spread of facilities in order to minimise transport distances. However, different sizes of facility are appropriate to different types of waste management and technology.
86. The overall emphasis is to make provision for a range of additional waste management facilities (taking into account the locations of existing facilities) within or close to the large and small towns in Oxfordshire, but with more concentrated provision for the treatment of residual waste and more specialist requirements such as for hazardous and radioactive waste.
87. Detailed assessment of the options, including sustainability appraisal and strategic environmental assessment has not yet been carried out, and where a view is given on preferred strategy this is an initial view only.

Municipal Waste (MSW)

88. MSW Composting and Food Waste Treatment
 - Anaerobic digestion plants at Cassington (in operation) and Crowmarsh (planning permission granted);
 - In-vessel composting at Ardley (in operation);
 - Open-windrow composting at existing network of 3 sites with the temporary site at Hinton Waldrist being extended or replaced by 2024.
89. MSW Recycling

Network of 6 household waste recycling centres: 4 existing facilities (Dix Pit, Redbridge, Drayton and Oakley Wood) (Dix Pit is temporary to 2028 but the issue of replacement could be addressed in a future review of the plan); and 2 new facilities: one in the Oxford area (planning application submitted for site at Kidlington); and one at Banbury (site required by 2014);

Existing waste recycling facilities at Enstone, Witney and Culham, with possible replacement of the Culham transfer facility by new recycling capacity in Southern Oxfordshire (Abingdon/Didcot/Wantage & Grove) (which could be at the Culham site); and potential additional recycling capacity in conjunction with provision for C&I waste.
90. MSW Residual Waste Treatment

All residual MSW will be treated at the Ardley energy from waste facility (planning permission granted and contract awarded) (apart from a small fraction that will be disposed direct to landfill);

Provision is proposed to be made for 2 transfer stations at Southern Oxfordshire (Abingdon/Didcot/Wantage & Grove) and West Oxfordshire (Witney/Carterton) (sites required by 2014).

91. MSW Residual Waste Disposal

Disposal of residual waste which cannot be treated at the Ardley facility to one or more of the existing non-hazardous) landfill sites in Oxfordshire (Alkerton, Ardley, Finmere, Dix Pit and Sutton Courtenay – only Sutton Courtenay has a permitted life to 2030 but Ardley and Dix Pit are permitted to 2027/2028);
Disposal of hazardous fly ash from the Ardley plant to a hazardous waste landfill outside Oxfordshire (in Gloucestershire).

Commercial and Industrial Waste (C&I)

92. C&I Composting and Food Waste Treatment

Provision is proposed to be made through treatment at facilities provided for municipal waste and at other anaerobic digestion facilities which may be provided in conjunction with farm waste or sewage sludge treatment (e.g. the on-farm anaerobic digestion plant proposed at Warborough which the County Council has resolved to permit).

93. C&I Recycling

Provision is proposed to be made for up to 7 or 8 additional recycling facilities located within or close to the towns in north, central and southern Oxfordshire.

These facilities could take MSW as well, but the identified need is specifically for C&I recycling. It mainly arises from 2015, particularly from 2020 onwards, and therefore there is not an immediate need to identify sites. Facilities should be sized in relation to the quantity of waste expected from that locality. Small facilities may be acceptable on suitable sites in rural parts of the county.

94. C&I Residual Waste Treatment

Treatment of commercial and industrial waste from the northern part of the county will be provided for by the Ardley energy from waste facility. Provision is proposed to be made for treatment of commercial and industrial waste from the southern part of the county by one other large facility in the Abingdon/Didcot/Wantage & Grove area. A site needs to be provided for this facility by 2015.

95. C&I Residual Waste Disposal

As for municipal waste (above).

Construction, Demolition and Excavation Waste (CDE)

96. CDE Recycling

Provision is proposed to be made for 6 or more additional permanent facilities from 2015 at Banbury, Bicester, Witney, Oxford, and Abingdon/Didcot/Wantage & Grove; and
Continued provision of medium or small temporary recycling facilities at landfill and quarry sites.

97. CDE Residual Waste Disposal

Provision is proposed to be made for 3 million m³ of additional inert landfill capacity for beyond 2020 at quarry sites that will require infilling to achieve restoration; this provision should be made in conjunction with identification of sites for mineral working, rather than as separate landfill sites.

Hazardous Waste

98. Provision for management and disposal of hazardous waste is proposed to be made through:
- Continued use of existing hazardous waste management facilities in Oxfordshire, including the transfer facilities at Ewelme, Banbury and Standlake;
 - Continued landfill of non-reactive hazardous waste (mainly asbestos) at the existing facility at Ardley Landfill and/or at other existing non hazardous landfills in Oxfordshire where this is acceptable; and
 - Management and disposal of other hazardous wastes at appropriate hazardous waste facilities outside Oxfordshire.

Radioactive Waste

99. A primary aim of a strategy for radioactive waste should be to enable the decommissioning and clearance of the Harwell and Culham sites at the earliest practicable date. Further work on and assessment of waste management options is required, but the following is put forward as an initial view on proposed provision for this waste.
100. Intermediate Level Radioactive Waste:
Treatment and storage of intermediate level nuclear waste from Harwell and Culham on site?, pending removal to a national disposal facility. Any proposal also to store intermediate level waste from Winfrith at Harwell should be considered on its merits, taking into account relevant national and development plan policy, and should only be allowed if there are clear overall social, economic and environmental benefits.
101. Low Level Radioactive Waste
Storage (if required) of low level radioactive waste arising from Harwell and Culham on site and disposal at a suitable landfill(s) off-site within Oxfordshire or (if none is available) at one or more of the nearest appropriate installations elsewhere.
102. Non-Nuclear Low Level Radioactive Waste:
Continued disposal at specialist disposal facilities outside Oxfordshire.

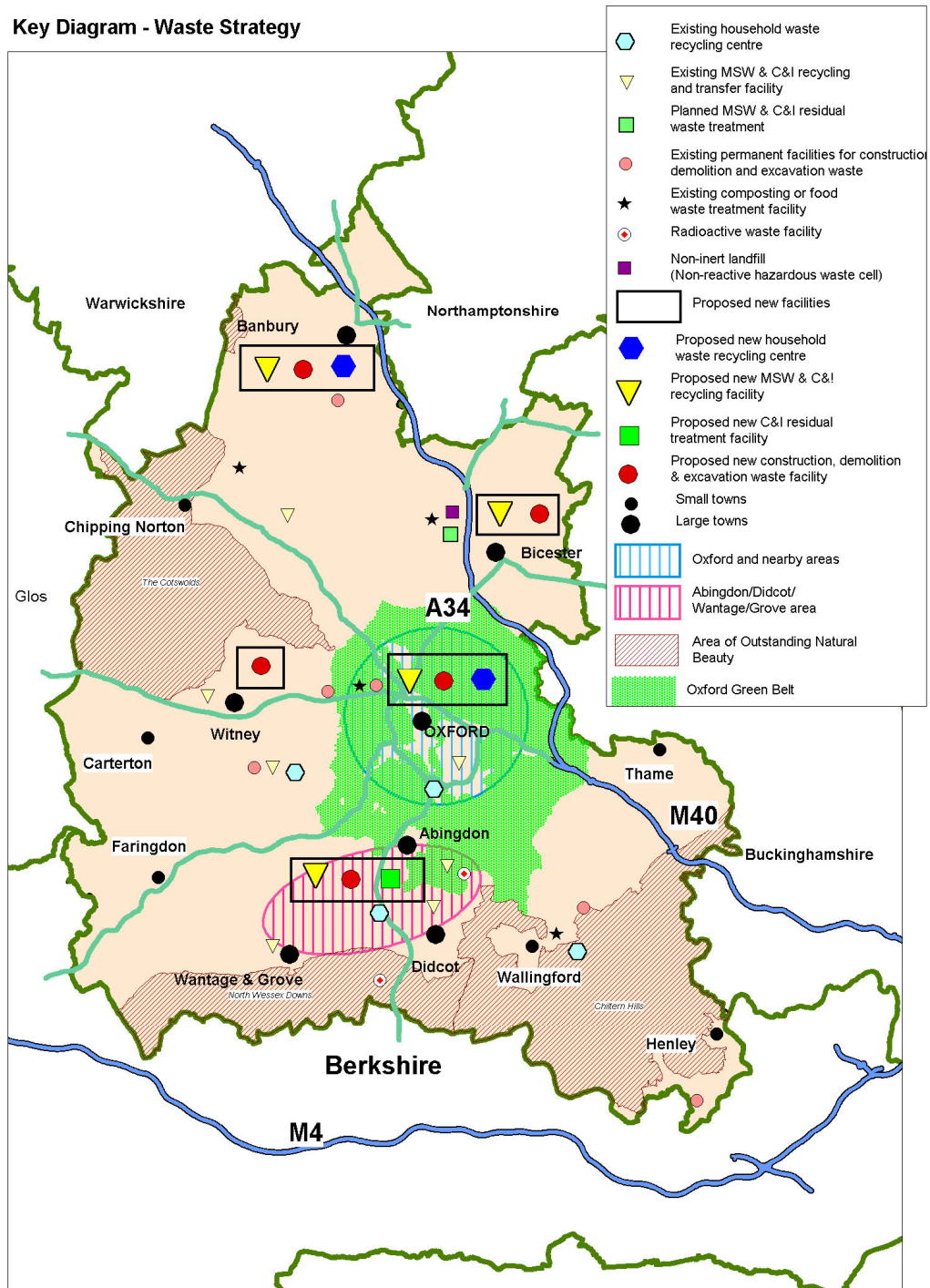
Metal Waste (including end of life vehicles)

103. Continued use of existing permanent waste metal recycling sites in Oxfordshire.

Sewage Sludge – initial preferred strategy

104. Continued use of existing sludge treatment centres (Banbury, Bicester, Oxford, Witney, Didcot and Wantage & Grove); and allow for further development at these facilities, if required.

Key Diagram - Waste Strategy



Proposed Waste Planning Policies

105. Policy W1: Waste management targets

Provision will be made for waste management in Oxfordshire in accordance with the following targets, to provide for the maximum diversion of waste from landfill and the management of waste in accordance with the waste hierarchy.

Oxfordshire waste management targets 2010 – 2030

Waste Management / Waste Type	Target Year				
	2010	2015	2020	2025	2030
MSW:					
Composting & food waste treatment	29%	30%	31%	31%	31%
Recycling	25%	31%	31%	31%	31%
Treatment of residual waste	0%	37%	36%	36%	36%
Landfill	46%	2%	2%	2%	2%
C&I:					
Composting& food waste treatment	0%	5%	5%	5%	5%
Recycling	50%	50%	55%	60%	60%
Treatment of residual waste	0%	43%	38%	33%	33%
Landfill	50%	2%	2%	2%	2%
CDE:					
Recycling	50%	50%	60%	60%	60%
Landfill/Restoration	50%	50%	40%	40%	40%

106. Policy W2: The amount of waste to be provided for

Provision should be made for waste facilities sufficient to manage the following amounts of waste over the period to 2030:

- Municipal Solid Waste – 403,000 tpa;
- Commercial and Industrial Waste – 707,000 tpa;
- Construction Demolition and Excavation Waste – 1,430,000 tpa.

The following figures should be used as a guide to the amount of provision to be made for each type of waste management.

Oxfordshire: estimated waste to be managed 2010 – 2030 (including +10% contingency) (tonnes)

	2010	2015	2020	2025	2030
Composting					
MSW	98,500	107,300	115,200	119,900	124,800
C&I	-	32,200	33,200	34,300	35,400
Total	98,500	139,500	148,400	154,200	160,200
Recycling					
MSW	84,900	110,800	115,200	119,900	124,800
C&I	311,800	321,700	365,100	411,100	424,100
Total	396,700	432,500	480,300	531,000	548,900
Resid. Treatment					
MSW	-	132,300	133,800	139,300	144,900
C&I	-	276,700	252,300	226,100	233,300
Total	-	409,000	386,100	365,400	378,200
Landfill					
MSW	156,200	7,200	7,400	7,700	8,100
C&I	311,700	12,900	13,300	13,700	14,100
Total	467,900	20,100	20,700	21,400	22,200
CDE Recycling	357,500	715,000	858,000	858,000	858,000

Composting includes capacity for food waste

Landfill estimates do not include for hazardous waste to be disposed of from residual treatment

Landfill estimates for 2010 reflect the fact that residual waste targets will not be met

CDE recycling based on South East Plan targets (50% to 2019; 60% to 2025).

107. Policy W3: Self sufficiency and waste imports

Provision will be made to enable Oxfordshire to be self-sufficient in the management of MSW, C&I and CDE waste. Provision will be made for disposal of a declining amount of waste from London and elsewhere at existing landfill sites. Facilities which provide substantially for the treatment of waste from outside Oxfordshire will not be permitted unless there would be clear benefits within Oxfordshire.

108. Policy W4: Provision of additional waste management capacity

Provision of the additional waste management capacity required to meet targets will be made in accordance with the spatial strategy for waste (as set out in paragraphs 88 – 104 and shown on the key diagram). Sites for waste management facilities will be identified in a separate Sites Development Plan Document.

The following figures should be used as a guide to the amount of additional provision to be made for each type of waste management.

Oxfordshire: additional waste capacity required (tonnes per annum)

	2010	2015	2020	2025	2030
Composting					
MSW/C&I	-67,500	-21,500	27,400	33,200	41,400
Recycling					
MSW/C&I	-57,200	22,600	96,800	222,500	268,900
CDE	-240,500	214,000	412,000	502,500	502,500
Residual Treatment					
MSW/C&I	- 2,000	190,700	167,000	143,500	153,500

Figures based on waste arising estimates with +10% contingency

109. Policy W5: Safeguarding

Existing and proposed waste management sites will be safeguarded for waste management use. Proposals for other development that would prevent or prejudice the use of a safeguarded site for waste management will not normally be permitted unless appropriate provision for new waste management capacity is made at a suitable alternative location.

110. Policy W6: Location of waste management facilities

a) Broad locations

Broad locations that are proposed for strategic waste facilities are identified in the key diagram. Waste management facilities will be permitted on suitable sites within these broad locations. Small scale facilities to serve local needs will be acceptable outside these locations where they meet general locational criteria.

b) Specific locations

Sites to provide additional waste management capacity will be identified in the Sites Development Plan Document in accordance with the waste spatial strategy. Priority will be given to land that

- is already in permanent waste management or industrial use;
- is previously developed, derelict or underused;
- involves existing agricultural buildings and their cartilages;
- adjoins sewage works or other uses compatible with waste management development.

The release of green field land will only be considered where there is an established over-riding need and it has been demonstrated that there are no more suitable sites available.

111. Policy W7: Green Belt

The need for waste management facilities to serve the needs of Oxford City may be a very special circumstance for allowing waste development in the Green Belt where it can be demonstrated that there is an established over-riding need and there is no reasonable prospect of an alternative site becoming available.

112 Policy W8: Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty

A primary consideration for waste development proposals within an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty will be the effect of the development on the special character and visual amenity of the area, as described in the objectives of designation for the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. Only small-scale development to meet local waste needs will normally be acceptable.

113. Policy W9: Landfill

Permission will not be granted for new landfill sites for non-hazardous waste. Permission will normally only be granted for landfill of inert waste at sites where it is required for the restoration of mineral workings or where there would be overall environmental benefit. Landfill sites should be restored in accordance with the policy for restoration of mineral workings.

114. Policy W10: Hazardous and radioactive waste

Permission will be granted for specialist facilities for the management of hazardous and radioactive wastes where they accord with the spatial strategy for waste and:

- they are designed to meet a requirement for the management of waste produced in Oxfordshire; or
- they are reasonably required to meet a need for waste management that is not adequately provided for elsewhere.

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OXFORDSHIRE MINERALS & WASTE CORE STRATEGY**PROPOSED COMMON CORE POLICIES FOR MINERALS AND WASTE****Policy C1: Climate change**

Minerals and waste development proposals, including operational practices and restoration proposals, must take account of climate change for the lifetime of the proposed development. This will be through measures to minimise generation of greenhouse gas emissions, and by measures to allow flexibility for future adaptation.

Proposals should set out how this will be achieved, including:

- Identifying the likely generation of CO₂ emissions from the development and other greenhouse gases and measures to monitor this over the lifetime of the development;
- Demonstrating how the location, design and transportation related to the development will limit greenhouse gas emissions;
- Setting out how the proposal will make use of renewable energy, eg opportunities for energy from waste (waste proposals only), use of energy generated on site and renewable or low carbon energy;
- Incorporation of sustainable drainage schemes to minimise flood impacts;
- Creation of flood water storage capacity through mineral restoration schemes where appropriate;
- The creation of carbon sinks through the development of habitat creation through mineral restoration or landscaping schemes.

Policy C2: Environmental protection

a. Proposals for minerals and waste development will be considered in the light of the following criteria:

- The likely impact of development (both individually and cumulatively with other development) on local communities and highway safety, including impact on sensitive receptors (including residential property, schools, offices and institutional uses) from noise, dust, odour, other air emissions, vibration, vermin and litter.
- The protection of and potential for enhancement of sites designated internationally, nationally and locally for their nature conservation importance, including the Oxfordshire Conservation Target Areas, and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and the setting of those areas.
- The likely impact of the development on the local landscape character and the measures proposed to mitigate adverse visual impact through siting, design and landscaping.

- The protection of surface and ground water quality and resources and of watercourses and canals of significant landscape, nature conservation or amenity value.
 - The protection and conservation of Oxfordshire's historic assets and the setting of those assets, including Blenheim Palace, scheduled ancient monuments, listed buildings, conservation areas, historic battlefields, and registered parks and gardens.
- b. Sites of nature conservation importance should not be damaged. Proposals for development which would affect an area designated for its nature conservation interest will be assessed by taking into account their impact on the integrity of the site, the proposed significance and duration of the impact on the site and the extent to which mitigation measures can provide a robust alternative for the nature conservation interest.
- c. Mineral working should not damage or destroy irreplaceable habitats or biodiversity, including ancient woodland and species rich grassland, even if these are only significant in a local context. Proposals which would affect such habitats will be assessed by taking into account the importance of the habitat economically, ecologically and for its contribution to the landscape; the local abundance or scarcity of the habitat; the extent of any replacement proposed; and the time it is expected to take for replacement habitat to make a positive contribution to the landscape.
- d. The County Council will seek the enhancement of Conservation Target Areas to implement Oxfordshire Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) targets within and close to areas of mineral workings. Mineral extraction will not be permitted unless the long term maintenance of BAP Priority Habitats and appropriate contributions to Oxfordshire BAP targets through the Conservation Target Area approach have been secured.
- e. Scheduled Ancient Monuments, other archaeological remains of national importance and their settings should be preserved in situ. For all other remains of regional or local importance preservation in situ will be preferred. Where this is not appropriate, and for all other remains, adequate provision should be made for their excavation and recording.
- f. Before determining an application for mineral extraction the County Council will normally require the applicant to carry out a preliminary, desk-based archaeological assessment to determine the nature and significance of any archaeological assets. The County Council may, subject to the results of this initial assessment, require an archaeological field evaluation of the site to determine the appropriate means for mitigating the impact of extraction on the archaeological assets.

Policy C3: Flooding

Where possible, new minerals and waste development should take place in areas that are not liable to flooding. Development may take place in an area at risk of flooding where all reasonable alternative locations have been explored and discounted.

Appropriate flood risk assessment should demonstrate that buildings, plant, screen bunds, stockpiles or any other form of engineering works associated with minerals and waste development will not;

- impede the flow of floodwater;
- displace floodwater;
- increase the risk of flooding elsewhere;
- reduce the capacity of existing flood storage capacity;
- adversely affect the functioning of existing flood defence structures.

Proposals for the restoration of quarries located in areas liable to flood should consider and, where possible, incorporate measures for the storage of floodwater.

Policy C4: Transport and rights of way

Minerals and waste development will only be permitted where provision is made for convenient access to and along the primary road network in a way that maintains or improves:

- the safety of all road users including pedestrians;
- the efficiency and quality of the road network;
- residential and environmental amenity.

Proposals for mineral working should

- a) wherever possible, transport minerals by rail, water, pipeline or conveyor, rather than by road
- b) minimise the number of miles that have to be travelled to reach markets if this can be achieved using roads suitable for lorries

The rights of way network should be maintained and individual rights of way retained in situ. Diversions should be safe, attractive and convenient and should be reinstated as soon as possible. Improvements and enhancements to the rights of way network will be encouraged and public access will be sought to restored mineral workings, especially if this can be linked to wider provision of green infrastructure.

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CABINET – 24 MAY 2011

FUTURE ARRANGEMENTS FOR CALL RECEIPT, MOBILISING & INCIDENT MANAGEMENT FOR OXFORDSHIRE FIRE & RESCUE SERVICE

Report by Deputy Chief Fire Officer – Fire & Rescue Service

Introduction

1. Arrangements for call receipt, mobilising and incident management, commonly referred to as the “Control Room”, are an integral part of all Fire and Rescue Services. The effectiveness of these arrangements dictates the quality of services offered to the public measured by speed and weight of response to incidents. They also have a significant bearing on the creation of a safe system of work framework for responding fire-fighters and other emergency services.
2. This central importance is reflected in the Fire and Rescue Service Act 2004 (FSA 2004) which specifically highlights Fire Authority’s statutory duty to make effective arrangements for dealing with calls for help and for summoning personnel for fires, road traffic incidents and other emergencies.
3. In addition to the core activities, Fire Control staff also provide a wider suite of supporting actions including out of hours points of contact, performance reporting and administrative duties. Any future arrangements must also re-engineer these activities.
4. Under the previous government’s mandatory national FiReControl project, Oxfordshire Fire & Rescue Service expected Control Room functions to be replaced by a regionally provided service. Whilst politically opposed to the project, unless all reservations could be addressed, Oxfordshire Fire Authority Members permitted Officers to work constructively with the project so as to secure as much benefit as would be possible and address areas of concern. Extensive work had been undertaken since 2004 and recently some of the early deliverables have been provided. Funding for most of this activity was provided by the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG)
5. The original timeline of 2007 was superseded following several national delays¹ with a final transfer of function date planned of 2012/13.
6. On 21st December DCLG formally announced the cancellation of the FiReControl project, resulting in the loss of the nationally provided function.
7. The existence of the FiReControl project had resulted in the cessation of medium and long term planning to replace local control room functions.

¹ Initially to 2009 then to 2011 and then finally to 2012/13

However, proactive management actions were taken in Oxfordshire to extend the lifespan of its equipment to meet the requirements of the repeatedly delayed timetable². This approach was clearly the most cost effective under the circumstances as they arose.

8. However, recognising the statutory duty to deliver effective arrangements for dealing with calls and summoning personnel and the critical nature of the control room function, this approach was not appropriate universally. Where critical components were assessed at significant risk of failure, County Council funding has been deployed for targeted renewals which themselves were procured with consideration for potential opportunities for their redeployment after the transfer to the regional solution.
9. This approach can be reasonably expected to sustain the current lifespan of the existing Control function to 2013/14. At that time a significant component of the current system is likely to become unsupported by the manufacturer. This represents an unacceptable risk to the organisation in carrying out its statutory duties.
10. It is therefore essential that the organisation urgently considers options for the future provision of the control room function including its technical systems.
11. It should also be noted that in addition to work on systems, continued information provision and support to staff was provided throughout the lifespan of the FiReControl project. This resulted in the retention of a competent and experienced workforce which is a prerequisite of continued efficiency and resilience. It is essential that this approach continues whilst future options are being considered.
12. It should be stressed that despite a need to plan for replacement, the current system is considered resilient. The systems components are regularly monitored, the hardware replaced on a regular basis and the software continues to be supported by the manufacturer under contract. Fallback arrangements, including the use of a secondary control facility is available within Oxfordshire with a further level of support available from our “buddy” Fire and Rescue Service (Gloucestershire).

Information

DCLG Consultation

13. DCLG has undertaken a consultation exercise to determine what, if any, Government involvement there should be in the future solution for the provision of control room services. The initial impression is that the Government supports collaborative solutions which have significant benefits in reducing continued DCLG financial liabilities for which they remain responsible, even though the project is cancelled. It also intimates that by

² The main system components were originally procured in 1996 with an expectation of a 10 year lifespan. Selective renewals and creation of ancillary support systems allowed progressive lifespan extensions to meet the 2012/13 anticipated timeframe resulting in a system that is now 15 years old.

reducing national liability there may be consequential funding available for Fire and Rescue Authorities to use in delivering replacement solutions.

14. The consultation covers the potential for individual or collective FRS use of the 9 buildings already provided as part of the project. Fortunately Oxfordshire County Council (OCC), as part owner of the South East Fire and Rescue Control Centre Limited Company, did not accept transfer of the property lease to the Company and therefore there is no ongoing responsibility for the building which remains with DCLG. The facility in Fareham Hampshire is not considered of any interest or material benefit to Oxfordshire or any potential collaborative venture that can be reasonably envisaged. This does have an impact on the DCLG financial position as it is understood that the 25 year contracts have no break clause facility.
15. The consultation also covers technical details of the transfer arrangements for early deliverables and the continued provision of the Airwave, the digital radio system, which will require extensive integration into current or future control rooms.
16. Oxfordshire took opportunities to enhance its systems and resilience by adopting the early delivery of Mobile Data Terminals (MDTs) allowing risk information to be provided to operational fire-fighters en-route or at incidents and renewing all of its “alerting” and “turn out” equipment located in its 24 fire stations. Work will continue to transfer contracts, instigate ongoing maintenance arrangements and determine financial effects. Meanwhile, the benefits of these early deliverables are tangible and continue to provide real value to the OFRS and the public.
17. Oxfordshire County Council, acting as the Fire and Rescue Authority (FRA), responded to the consultation following Member endorsement, highlighting expectations that DCLG will act responsibly in assisting FRAs to deliver replacement functionality to meet their statutory responsibilities. In addition a joint consultation response, approved by respective Members, was submitted by the three Thames Valley Fire and Rescue Services (Oxfordshire, Buckinghamshire and Royal Berkshire). The DCLG response to the consultation returns is currently awaited but anticipated imminently³.

Oxfordshire requirements

18. In considering future options it is essential that defined outcomes are identified to measure potential options against. These have been determined from the early stages of the FiReControl project and include:
 - The ongoing provision / utilisation of competent, experienced and professional staff
 - Improved efficiency in day to day operations including fall back arrangements and interoperability with other partners such as Thames

³ It is understood that the Local Government Elections have delayed publication

Valley Police, Southern Counties Ambulance Service and other Category 1 responders under the Civil Contingencies Act 2004 (CCA 2004)

- Increased ability to deal with peaks in demand such as those encountered in the July 2007 Oxfordshire flooding event
- Cost effectiveness measured by overall costs and by cost per incident dealt with
- Opportunities for exploiting future developments including expansion of activities such as wider OCC Emergency Planning functions and out of hours arrangements for urgent calls to the Customer Service Centre
- Opportunities for exploiting future developments in providing services to third parties including other Fire and Rescue Services
- The provision and use of modern technology such as:
 - Competence/asset based mobilising
 - Automatic vehicle location and optimum resource mobilising
 - Enhanced information service for fixed line and mobile emergency calls, to identify the geographic location from which an emergency call has been made.
 - An improved and nationally standardised “Gazetteer”⁴
 - Integrated Command & Control System making full use of the functionality offered by Airwave (the digital radio system)
 - Improved resilience against significant disruptions, such as pandemic flu or malicious attack

19. In addition it is intended to make assessments against a broader range of considerations such as a Political, Economic, Social, Technological, Environmental and Legal framework (PESTEL).

Options appraisal

20. There are a number of options that can be identified and then considered. Some initially appear more complex than others but it is important at this stage that the widest possible range is considered and their relative merits evaluated. The options covered in this report are to:

1. Maintain our existing Fire Control room (including the necessary technical upgrade of existing systems) this is the ‘do minimum’ approach
2. Maintain our existing Fire Control room (including the necessary technical upgrade of existing systems) but increase its range of activities to encompass wider organisational areas of responsibility e.g. out of hours Customer Services demands
3. Maintain our existing Fire Control room (including the necessary technical upgrade of existing systems) but integrate in a “virtual control” with other FRSs to enhance resilience and reduce procurement and operating costs

⁴ The Gazetteer is used for locating and sharing incident data with other responders

4. A combination of items 2 and 3 above
 5. Enter a collaboration with other emergency services
 - a. Fire and other emergency services
 - b. Fire / Fire collaboration
 6. Outsource function to a 3rd party.
21. At this early stage much of the detailed information, particularly on the shape of any collaboration and what is involved in achieving it, is either not available or tentative thus the above is simply an indication of the potential options available to Oxfordshire at this time.
22. An initial assessment of the options against the Oxfordshire requirements shows that a collaborative approach with other partners has considerable merits as it has potential to meet requirements identified above.
23. Interoperability and joint working with other Category 1 partners under the CCA 2004 is becoming central to the function of Fire Control rooms. Their actions in operational pre planning and addressing the key risks and intelligence threats identified both Nationally and by the Local Resilience Forum⁵ is part of the wider effectiveness and safety critical aspects mentioned in para 1 above.
24. However, at this stage, none of the above options are considered unacceptable and all will be evaluated.

Current activities

25. In January 2011 Royal Berkshire FRA initiated discussions with a number of other Fire and Rescue Authorities with a view to establishing a collaborative project to identify and deliver a joint Control Room Mobilising and Resource Management facility that included, but was not necessarily limited to the three Fire and Rescue Services in the Thames Valley Area.
26. Subsequently this approach was endorsed by Thames Valley elected Members and their respective Chief Fire Officers against a project mandate document. This and a supporting document are attached as appendix 1 & 2.
27. Discussions and a series of fact finding and scoping meetings have taken place with a view to preparing a Strategic Outline business Case (SOC) that would be made available to Members and the DCLG as part of the lobbying of government to continue to support the replacement of FRS mobilising systems.
28. This process will undertake a full options appraisal approach encompassing the above identified options. Initial work has commenced regarding technical aspects and measuring the options against a PESTEL framework.

⁵ Local Resilience forums are based on Policing areas

29. An initial assessment of a Thames Valley combined FRS approach in relation to the Oxfordshire requirements is considered to have several identifiable benefits that other options are unlikely to meet in full. In particular this relates to co-terminosity and interoperability with our Local Resilience Forum partners under the Civil Contingencies Act.
30. This initial scoping study is being progressed alongside three other Thames Valley FRS collaborative projects which have received Member endorsement. These concern potential for joint arrangements for operational health and safety, fire safety enforcement and aligning of operational officer cover rotas. It is already apparent that future arrangements for Fire Control could significantly enhance such projects.
31. The collaborative approach is considered effective in pooling expertise and reducing individual workloads. All findings will be shared and no commitments have been formally entered into. This approach has perceived benefits by DCLG as indicated in the consultation.
32. In addition this approach links to Oxfordshire County Council Strategic priority of "Efficient Public Services" in that this initial approach, irrespective of final determinations, creates the opportunity to work with others to deliver services more effectively and develops innovative approaches to common issues.
33. Other actions are underway in parallel with the above approach, one of these is an agreement to work with London Fire Brigade in defining requirements for future systems and ensuring future procurement frameworks are accessible, if appropriate, to Oxfordshire and our other potential partners.
34. In undertaking this work it has become apparent that when compared to many other FRAs, this collaborative work is further progressed and more realistic than many comparators. This may have a positive impact on the funding provisions potentially available from DCLG.

Financial and Staff Implications

35. At this stage financial and staff implications of the scoping study are being met from existing resources and this can be sustained to the delivery of the SOC / scoping study which is expected by September 2011.
36. Subject to the SOC / scoping study, if an option is taken forward it will identify the staff and financial implications for both the project initiation and management and the provision of the eventual solution.
37. Dependant upon the methods chosen to meet the options identified there will be both capital and revenue implications. Potential partners have varying availability and approach to capital funding.
38. Oxfordshire have recently been notified of approximately £1M of non ring fenced Capital funding being made available by CLG and further funding is

potentially possible depending on their approach to the consultation responses and the potential schemes being drawn up by FRS's either individually or collectively. Any addition to the capital programme will need to follow the processes defined in the capital strategy.

39. In addition to the above, £0.5M revenue funding has been identified and either earmarked in the 2011/12 budget or placed in OCC Reserve. This has been created in part by early management recognition of the potential cancellation of the original FiReControl project and managerial actions to create planned under spend to meet the project management and initiation costs. These actions have been identified in the monthly monitoring report and subsequent carry forward requests.

Legal Implications

40. As yet there are no direct legal implications but any partnership or outsourcing option will have legal implications which will be considered in the scoping study.
41. Three options have been identified in any collaborative approach:
- Lead Authority
 - Joint Board
 - Local Authority Controlled Company (as was previously used to manage the FiReControl project and is now being formally wound up)

These have received initial assessment and it is probable that a Joint Board would be the preferred method of providing governance of a new function.

42. It should be noted that there is no ability for a FRA to discharge its statutory obligations contained in the FSA 2004 in relation to call receipt and mobilising by outsourcing or working collaboratively. Therefore it is essential that any chosen option is critically examined so as to ensure that any responsibilities are being discharged effectively. This includes wider legal obligations that OCC may hold, for example it's wider Emergency Planning responsibilities which are in part facilitated by actions undertaken in the current OFRS Control Room.

Equality and inclusion Implications

43. There are no directly identifiable implications in terms of the initial scoping study.
44. There are no directly identifiable implications in relation to eventual service delivery should one of the options being taken forward.

45. There are potential equality implications relating to staff transfers, should one of the options be taken forward. If this were the case a full equality impact assessment would be undertaken in relation to the chosen option.

Risk Management

46. The options appraisal / SOC will undertake a risk assessment as an integral element. Enhancing resilience and reducing risks associated with spate conditions are considered central to the identification and adoption of the preferred option.
47. There are identifiable risks in the delivery of any project and these are compounded by the complexity of any collaborative working arrangements. As yet there are no defined protocols for managing these risks but it is jointly recognised that strong, effective and timely project governance will be required.
48. Project risks will be further managed in Oxfordshire by the use of OCC project management protocols with the project reporting formally to the Change Management Board.

RECOMMENDATION

The Cabinet is RECOMMENDED to:-

- (a) Endorse the progression of the collaborative scoping study and creation of the Strategic Outline Business Case being undertaken by Oxfordshire, Buckinghamshire and Royal Berkshire FRSs
- (b) Approve the above list (para 18) of Oxfordshire requirements as benchmarks against which future options will be assessed
- (c) Approve the list of options (para 20) included within the options appraisal
- (d) Require the CFO to instigate appropriate actions in relation to the asset management and capital strategy dependant on the outcomes of the scoping study
- (e) Require the CFO to report back to the Cabinet Member on a regular basis covering:-
 - the CLG consultation response
 - progress on the scoping study and strategic outline business case
 - progress on other third party activities

Colin Thomas

Deputy Chief Fire Officer

Contact Officer: Colin Thomas – 01865 855206

May 2011

PRINCE2™ - Project Mandate

Project Name:	TVFRS Control Scoping & Feasibility Study		
Date:	March 2011	Release: 1.0	Draft/Final
Author:	Olaf Baars		
Owner:	Olaf Baars		
Client:	Chief Fire Officers – Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Services		
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Revision History

Date of next revision:

Revision Date	Previous Revision Date	Summary of Changes	Changes Marked

Approvals

This document requires the following approvals. A signed copy should be placed in the project files.

Name	Signature	Title	Date of Issue	Version
Olaf Baars		Deputy Chief Fire Officer	24 March 2011	1.0
Jason Thelwell		Assistant Chief Fire Officer	24 March 2011	1.0
Colin Thomas		Deputy Chief Fire Officer	24 March 2011	1.0

Distribution

This document has been distributed to:

Name	Title	Date of Issue	Version
Iain Cox	CFO RBFRS	28 March 2011	1.0
Dave Etheridge	CFO OFRS		1.0
Mark Jones	CFO BFRS		1.0

Overview

Purpose The Project Mandate is the first document required to initiate a project. The Project Mandate is considered to be a pre-project document; it encapsulates the ideas and basic information that is available at this point.

This project, being of extremely short duration and of closely defined scope, will not be managed within a formal project management framework. However, this project mandate has been prepared to provide a defining document to which partners can sign up, and under which the project (up to and including the production of a Strategic Outline Case (SOC)) may be delivered.

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2. Authority Responsible
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Authority Responsible

The Chief Fire Officers of the three fire and rescue services within the Thames Valley area, being Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service are jointly and collectively responsible for approving the project, budget and resources.

Project Definition

The project will undertake a comprehensive scoping and feasibility study and produce a Strategic Outline Case (SOC), the precursor to an Outline Business Case (OBC), for a formal collaborative project to develop and deliver a shared fire and rescue service emergency call handling, mobilising and resource management function for the Thames Valley area or whatever larger configuration may be justified on the basis of a full business case. The project will deliver the SOC for consideration by the relevant partners by the end of April 2011 in order to coincide with the publication of the outcomes of the DCLG consultation on "The future of fire and rescue control services in England".

Background

Since late 2003 the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) and predecessor departments have been undertaking a project known as the FiReControl project that was to have delivered a resilient national (England) network of nine regional control centres implementing common, enhanced technology and delivering efficiencies. The project was "mandated" through the Fire and Rescue Service National Framework which has the status of statutory guidance. The project was cancelled by the Minister for Fire on 20 December 2010 having failed to deliver against its objectives. During the life of the project most fire and rescue authorities, including those in the Thames Valley have limited investment in their emergency call management, mobilising and resource management functions to what has been absolutely necessary to ensure operational continuity and the discharge of statutory functions. The notable exception being Buckinghamshire, which has through necessity, re-located their Control and introduced a new mobilising and resource management system (MRMS) in 2009.

Following cancellation of the FiReControl Project, the DCLG have published a 12 week statutory consultation on "The future of fire control services in England" which concludes on 8th April 2011. Pending the outcome of this consultation it is already clear that fire and rescue services will, to a large extent, determine the future requirements necessary to discharge their statutory functions under the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004.

Irrespective of the outcomes of the DCLG consultation, the government's Comprehensive Spending Review 2010, subsequent Local Government Finance Settlement 2011-12 and the current review of Formula Grant create a challenging economic environment for fire and rescue authorities. It has become essential to identify and deliver efficiencies in the way in which services are managed whilst maintaining or improving the service that the public receive.

The efficient operation of the emergency call handling, mobilising and resource management activity within the fire and rescue service has been subject to review and scrutiny for more than ten years since the government commissioned consultants Mott MacDonald to undertake a study 'The Future of Fire Service Control Rooms and Communications in England and Wales' (April 2000)". It is indisputable that, taking into account the primary activity of a fire and rescue service control room alone, there is currently an extremely wide range of relative efficiency (based on recognised metrics of calls and incidents per head of control room staff). This suggests scope for efficiency arising from the combination of a number of control rooms handling relatively few calls into larger operational units. In all but the largest of fire and rescue service control rooms there is scope to achieve greater efficiency through the integration of non-core activities that can be undertaken by control room staff whilst remaining immediately available to respond to core activity demands when required.

Unlike the Police and Ambulance Services, the fire and rescue service is experiencing an established and continuing downward trend in demand for emergency response services with a corresponding reduction in the call volumes and incidents being managed by our control

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rooms. It is not uncommon for fire and rescue services to be dealing with in excess of 40% less demand than five years ago. Much of this reduction can be attributed to successful strategies for fire prevention and the reduction of unwanted fire signals. It would seem unlikely that the current downward trend can be continued indefinitely, there would equally seem to be no reason to believe that current or even lower levels of demand could not be maintained in the future.

Traditionally, emergency call management and mobilising systems and infrastructure were kept entirely separate from non-mission critical ICT systems and infrastructure for resilience and business continuity reasons. Advances in technology now mean that, with appropriate safeguards, the two can safely be combined leading to real business benefits, efficiency and optimum return on investment.

The greatest weakness in the traditional model of fire and rescue call handling, mobilising and resource management systems originate from their stand alone nature, falling back to secondary facilities within the same organisation. This creates difficulties in overflow call management during peak or spate conditions and limitations in the resilience of fallback arrangements. Fewer, joint control rooms, whilst more efficient, also increase the scale of the potential impact of these weaknesses. Additionally there is a longstanding recognition that an absence of intraoperability (fire – fire) and interoperability (fire – police – ambulance) has created barriers to overcoming these issues. These barriers now need to be overcome in order to deliver resilient and efficient control room services.

Project objectives

The Project will:

- Explore the scope for initiating a collaborative emergency call handling, mobilising and resource management function.
- Ascertain the feasibility of establishing a collaborative emergency call handling, mobilising and resource management function.
- Explore resilience issues and options for providing resilience in emergency call management capacity and fallback arrangements.
- Produce a Strategic Outline Case (SOC) for approval for establishing a collaborative project to develop future emergency call handling, mobilising and resource management function.
- Complete and present the deliverables by the end of April 2011.
- The costs of the project will rest where they fall and be met from within existing budgets.
- The resources required to complete the project will be satisfied from within existing FRS resources and will be allocated on the basis of the priority and timeframe of this project. Each FRS will provide personnel with the necessary skills, knowledge, experience and access to information to facilitate the delivery of the project.
- The deliverables will be sufficiently comprehensive and of a quality necessary to inform strategic decision making in relation to establishing a formal collaborative delivery project.

Project deliverables

- Strategic Outline Case (see attached reference document “The Strategic Outline Case”)
- Presentation pack to support the Strategic Outline Case – a presentation pack to support the presentation of the SOC to the relevant management teams and fire authorities.
- Joint, speculative response to the DCLG Consultation “the future of fire and rescue control services in England” (to be properly approved as required by each fire and rescue authority by 7th April 2011) – a speculative response to the CLG consultation registering our collective interest in receiving government support for a subsequent collaborative delivery project to provide a joint emergency call management,

mobilising and resource management function within the Thames Valley or larger area.

Project scope and exclusions

The scope of the collaboration is based, as a minimum, on collaboration between the three fire and rescue services within the Thames Valley Area

The scope will include the investigation of other potential collaborative partners from:

- Other fire and rescue services beyond but adjoining the Thames Valley area
- Other blue light emergency services operating within the Thames Valley area

Explore the scope of appropriate activities, beyond the core activities (those involved in emergency call management, mobilising and resource management) that could be undertaken alongside the core activities:

- On behalf of the partners in the collaboration
- On behalf of others on a client/provider basis

Explore the potentially viable options within the market for technology solutions that will support the project objectives.

Explore the extent to which the technology and infrastructure required to facilitate the core activities can provide the basis for wider business improvements, efficiencies and shared services within and between the collaborating partners.

Constraints and assumptions

This project is purely exploratory/investigative in nature leading to the production of a Strategic Outline Case (SOC) for a larger, formally constituted business change project.

In order to be in a position to benefit from any additional funding or assets available from central government that might be announced at the conclusion of the consultation "The future of fire and rescue control services in England", this project must report by the end of April 2011

There is no separate budget for this project and all costs must be met from within currently agreed budgets

There are no staff resources dedicated to the delivery of this project. All project work must be prioritised against and carried out alongside the normal work commitments of those involved

This scope of this project falls short of that required in order to develop an Outline Business Case (OBC). It is limited to the development of a Strategic Outline Case (SOC) on which an OBC could be developed at the outset of any business change project initiated as a result of this project.

The SOC is a scoping and planning document, designed to:

- establish the strategic context and need for the project
- identify key dependencies between the project and other developments
- identify the view of main stakeholders and gatekeepers and the position of potential public sector partners and other potential partners
- identify a wide range of viable options for meeting the service objectives
- appraise the relative efficacy of the options and their affordability and, where feasible, identify a short-list for more rigorous assessment at the OBC stage
- identify the critical success factors for developing and implementing the project with emphasis on risk management and benefit realisation
- identify what further work needs to be undertaken to inform the development of the OBC and the procurement process.

Quality expectations

The deliverables must be of a quality that will underpin and facilitate strategic decision making and if appropriate, financial commitment to a full business change project

Interfaces

By the very nature of this project the key interfaces for this project will be between the partner's strategic representatives and key contacts in other, potential partners

Business Case Summary and Outline

The three fire and rescue services within the Thames Valley area each operate their own control rooms with in house fallback arrangements, each providing limited resilience. The level of emergency calls taken and incidents managed by any one of the three control rooms falls a long way short of what could be considered to be optimal or efficient use of resources. It is anticipated that the combined cost to the tax payer of providing these control rooms is in excess of £3.5m per annum. Also within the Thames Valley area there are two police control rooms and two ambulance control rooms also taking emergency calls and managing incidents for their respective organisations. Whilst Buckinghamshire has recently replaced its mobilising and resource management system (MRMS) and associated technologies, both Oxfordshire and Royal Berkshire fire and rescue services are continuing to support outdated MRMS and some of the associated technology and equipment. There is scope across all three fire and rescue services to implement enhanced control room functionality and introduce more efficient ways of working that will enhance performance. There is clear potential through a collaborative project to realise significant efficiency savings, optimise return on investment and deliver performance enhancements. A collaborative control room would provide the basis for significantly enhanced operational interoperability, aligned operational procedures and greater shared use of operational assets; it would also provide a platform for further collaborative initiatives including procurement, asset management and training.

Associated Documents

DCLG Consultation – “The future of fire and rescue service control services in England”

SE FiReControl Post Project Report

‘The Future of Fire Service Control Rooms and Communications in England and Wales’ (April 2000)

The Future of Fire & Rescue Service Control Rooms in England & Wales - Update 2003

Proposed Executive and Project Manager

The Project Executive will be jointly held by DCFO Olaf Baars for RBFRS, DCFO Colin Thomas for OFRS and ACFO Jason Thelwell for BFRS.

The project will be jointly managed by Bryan Morgan and Jon Ball for RBFRS, Mat Carlile and Tony Lewis for OFRS and Marie Crothers for BFRS.

Project Management Team Structure

Due to the limited lifespan of the project the above nominees will comprise the project team at this stage.

The customer, user(s) and any other known stakeholders

The Customer: The Chief Fire Officers of the respective Services, Fire Authority Members, Cabinet Officers and Portfolio Holders for Oxfordshire Fire and Rescue Service.

The User: The fire and rescue services of Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Royal Berkshire.

Project Mandate TVFRS Control Scoping & Feasibility Study Created/updated 28/03/11

Other Stakeholders: Relevant staff, relevant trade unions, partner agencies (particularly Cat 1 responders as defined by the Civil Contingencies Act 2004) the Thames Valley Local Resilience Forum.

Full stakeholder analysis will be mapped as part of the SOC.

References

The Strategic Outline Case" – A technical note that explains, defines and provides guidance on the production of a SOC.

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THE STRATEGIC OUTLINE CASE

The purpose of the Strategic Outline Case (SOC) is to provide the necessary Information in a format that will enable the authority and any public sector partners to assess the scope of the project and any investments in service improvement. In a multi-authority scheme a combined SOC should be considered but in doing so the outline case must be cognisant of the project's overall impact and also the impact and implications for the individual authorities. In particular, the SOC will need to ensure that it explains the projects linkage with the service strategy.

A number of areas should be specifically addressed in the preparation of a SOC. These are:

- the strategic context
- the service need
- the formulation of options
- affordability
- timetable and deliverability

Strategic context

The local authority/authorities should set out their strategy for service provision and demonstrate how the proposed scheme is consistent with this. It is important that the SOC considers not only the services to be dealt with in the project but also the wider impact of the project upon the authority and other stakeholders, for example, employees. Proposals should have been discussed in outline with wider stakeholders.

Service need

The service need for the proposed scheme should be demonstrated by detailing the service issues that the scheme is intended to address.

Formulation of options

A shortlist of options which satisfy service need, are within the strategic context, and are affordable, should be developed. If the analysis establishes a clear preference for a particular option, this should be identified.

Affordability

The affordability ceiling for a scheme should be defined and accepted by the local authority/authorities. Local authorities should take account of any changes in costs elsewhere in the local health economy resulting from the scheme.

Timetable and deliverability

The proposed project timetable for achieving contract signature should be set out. Key milestones that must be reached before a scheme can be formally advertised in the Official Journal of the European Union (OJEU) include the completion of any necessary formal public consultation, and – where possible and appropriate – outline planning permission for any site likely to be developed.

HOW DOES THE SOC RELATE TO THE OUTLINE BUSINESS CASE (OBC)?

The SOC is the first stage in the business case development process. It precedes the OBC.

The general purpose of OBC and the criteria for judging their quality are well established and are set out in the HM Treasury 's *"Green Book "Appraisal and Evaluation in Central Government (2002).*

The OBC builds on the SOC. Its primary purposes are to:

- identify and validate the preferred option for meeting the project objectives,
- demonstrate that this preferred option is likely to represent value for money, be affordable and is achievable,
- inform the procurement process.

It would be a mistake to see the SOC as an extra stage to the business case development process. Much of the work done at the SOC stage would still need to be performed as part of the process of constructing a successful business case. All properly conceived projects should be set in a clear and well-established strategic context and should be guided by an awareness of all the critical success factors, including strategies for managing risk.

WHY ARE SOCS NEEDED?

The experience of those developing projects shows that the use of SOC can help to improve the planning and execution of projects. SOC are particularly useful in situations where there are:

- a large number of disparate stakeholders involved in a project;
- showing how a project relates to the needs of each participating public sector partner;
- the project is novel, risky and complex;
- the parameters of the project are ill defined (particularly the objectives and scope).
-

They are a useful vehicle for allowing key stakeholders an early opportunity to influence the direction of projects, avoiding abortive effort and securing better value for money from the considerable sums of money which are sometimes spent on ill specified projects. If the SOC is properly implemented it will lead to better decision-making and quicker decisions.

WHAT IS A STRATEGIC OUTLINE CASE?

It is important to understand what a Strategic Outline Case is. Regardless of the nature of the project, the main purpose of a SOC is to establish the business need for the proposed project and any resulting investment in resources. It should clearly explain the service drivers for the project and how it satisfies the authorities and other governmental policy priorities. When the project is recommended to be continued, the SOC provides direction to the project sponsors on how best to develop and implement it.

The SOC gives the stakeholders an overview of key issues that will be addressed in more detail in an Outline Business Case (OBC). It makes it possible to:

- clarify the scope and objectives of the project
- identify options for satisfying the objectives
- decide how best to proceed based on a high-level assessment such as a qualitative assessment of the strengths and weaknesses of each option.

The possible outcomes after the SOC has been produced are to:

- abandon the project, perhaps on grounds of affordability, unacceptability to stakeholders or inability to manage the risks successfully
- redefine the project to make it more manageable and improve the likelihood of a successful outcome
- undertake a pilot or prototype exercise and use the results to inform how best to proceed with the project

- proceed with the project as originally conceived with a set of broad recommendations on how to proceed, including a short-list of options for more rigorous assessment at the OBC stage –this will not include identification of a preferred option since the analysis undertaken as part of the SOC will not be sufficiently robust to support an unequivocal conclusion.

CONTENT AND DETAIL

A SOC will generally address the same issues as an OBC but at a higher level and in far less detail. The main focus is on strategic issues and the identification of options for detailed assessment at the next stage. Too much detailed assessment at the SOC stage may serve to cloud judgements about the merits and demerits of the available options for delivering the project objectives.

The length of the SOC should be driven by its fundamental purpose, rather than by any ideal length. Much will depend on how novel or inherently risky the project is and the number of stakeholders who are involved. The availability of information, personnel and other resources will also influence the length of the document. A pragmatic approach should be adopted: if the information is available, it should be used subject to any time constraints on the decision-making process. In most cases a ten-page report covering the relevant issues is likely to suffice.

The SOC should be viewed as a scoping and planning document, designed to:

- establish the strategic context and need for the project
- identify key dependencies between the project and other developments
- identify the view of main stakeholders and gatekeepers and the position of potential public sector partners and other potential partners
- identify a wide range of viable options for meeting the service objectives
- appraise the relative efficacy of the options and their affordability and, where feasible, identify a short-list for more rigorous assessment at the OBC stage
- identify the critical success factors for developing and implementing the project with emphasis on risk management and benefit realisation
- identify what further work needs to be undertaken to inform the development of the OBC and the procurement process.

A SOC should contain the five components that characterise all soundly developed business cases, but in less detail than would be found in an Outline Business Case (OBC) or Full Business Case (FBC). The screening that is done at this stage is often based on qualitative approaches. More rigorous assessments are done at the OBC and FBC stages.

The five components of the Strategic Outline Case

1. The Strategic case

- the strategic context
- fit with service strategy and related projects, government policy imperatives, existing arrangements
- what is wrong with the status quo?
- drivers for change
- Prospects for joint working
- key stakeholders
- desired service outcomes
- business need
- investment objectives
- scope

2. The Economic case

- Options for meeting the Project objectives (including doing nothing)
- assessment criteria
- long-listing and short-listing of options
- high-level options appraisal or value-for-money analysis
- high-level risk analysis
- recommended short-list of options for more detailed assessment at a later stage (where feasible)

3. The Project Management case

- achievability and critical success factors
- project management arrangements
- risk management
- benefit realisation
- change management
- training strategy
- evaluation
- timetable
- key milestones
- nature of any further work required to inform development of the project and the resulting procurement
- resource requirements

4. The Commercial case

- assessment of the likely attractiveness of the project to suppliers
- assessment of whether the project is suitable for government funding.
- assessment of potential for gain sharing
- nature of further work required to sound out the market and inform the procurement process

5. The Financial case

- high-level affordability analysis
- ability and willingness of budget holders to meet the resource implications of the project statement of support from key stakeholders

The key focus of a SOC is the strategic case, economic case and project management case. Details about the commercial case generally do not become available until after the project has been advertised and tenders have been submitted, ie, after the OBC.

A SOC should be judged in terms of whether it addresses the issues outlined above. It should contain the relevant information in order to allow decision-makers to form a view of whether to proceed with or reject a project.

Division(s): N/A

CABINET – 24 MAY 2011

PROGRESS REPORT ON CHILDREN IN AND LEAVING CARE: TO NOTE PROGRESS AND ISSUES IN RELATION TO THE CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE IN COUNCIL'S CARE.

Report by Director for Children, Young People & Families

Introduction

1. This report reviews the performance and outcomes of CLA (children looked after and care leavers) over the last six months, and of the Corporate Parenting Strategy, introduced in 2008 in partnership with its Children in Care Council (CICC). The report highlights areas where it has been successful and areas where amendments should be considered because of new challenges or where the approach needs to be reviewed. Attached to the report is a revised strategy.
2. Since the last cabinet report, OFSTED have inspected Children's Services with a major focus on CLA. The results of this inspection, along with an action plan, will be notified to cabinet as soon as they are confirmed.
3. An amended Placement Strategy (see annex1) has been introduced to address new duties outlined in the 2008 Children Act (amended 2010 and 2011), particularly the Sufficiency Duty under which Local Authorities are obliged to provide a range of placements that address the needs of CLA locally, where appropriate. To a certain extent, this has already been addressed through the previous (2007) Placement Strategy with its emphasis on local partnerships, more effective commissioning and a prevention and support approach, keeping CLA from escalating through the care trajectory to out of county placements. Aspects of this have been reported to cabinet through a series of reports, e.g. CLA progress reports, the Housing Strategy, Rt 2 Be Cared 4 and the Cross Regional Commissioning Strategy

The Council's Corporate Parenting Strategy

4. Our Corporate Parenting Strategy sets out the key priority actions required by partners across the Children's Trust, including our CICC, to tackle the critical issues that impact on children in care. These include: the need for stable and consistent care; the support necessary to minimise time spent in care; access to the best possible appropriate education and healthcare, and to ensure all children and young people (CYP) feel valued and listened to.
5. Our Corporate Parenting role currently (at end of February, 2011) extends to 418 CYP who are looked after, 25% of whom are from BaME. Of these, 245 are males and 173 females, 156 are aged 0 – 9, 151 aged 10 – 15 and 111 are aged 16+. These numbers are very volatile and there is some indication that the total may be increasing. There are also 315 care leavers, including 157 Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASCs). The

strategy also includes children on the edge of care and those who have left care for permanent placements, e.g .adoption.

6. Staff across the Council and Children's Trust, including Health and Police, continue to be made aware of CLAs' needs and of Corporate Parenting. The key message at all events is *looked after children are everyone's business* and all participants are challenged to consider their professional and community role in supporting CLA as if they were their own child.
7. Members of the Corporate Parenting Panel have visited Thornbury on a regular basis (Regulation 33 visits) and have taken a very active and helpful interest in the construction of the new home, which is due for completion in April 2011. Visits to Maltfield have not been as frequent and action to address this has been agreed. Although written accounts are sometimes sparse, there are usually clear action points arising from these visits, which are discussed at Corporate Parenting Panel, a clear example being the provision of the new Thornbury.
8. Councillors, Officers and partner agencies have recently met adopters to review progress in this area and plan for future provision.

Review (Grouped Under Strategy Objectives)

All professionals, statutory services and the voluntary and private sectors to work in effective partnership.

9. The newly commissioned housing provision has shown a reduction in evictions, an improvement in Education, Employment and Training (EET) and 150% increase in numbers of 16/17 yr olds in supported housing (as opposed to B&B). Further units have been commissioned to cope with increased demand after the Southwark Judgement, which made 16/17 year old homeless people our responsibility. The Strategy has led to a reduction from over 3,000 bed nights in B&B in 08-09 to 622 in 2010-11.
10. The Cross Regional Commissioning projects to provide additional residential placements for children with complex needs has started taking referrals and will eventually deliver for us up to 9 residential and educational placements at a saving of between £500-£1300/ week, 6 by 2012. The same model is being used to commission Independent Fostering Agency (IFA) placements and will be extended to all residential placements over the next five years.
11. A new agreed plan with Health has resulted in the numbers having their health needs assessed rising from 85% to 94.6% in 2010 against a Statistical Neighbours (SNs) figure of 85.6; dental checks remained at 86% and immunisations held at 84% (compared with an average of 47% coming into care having had them). 6.52% of CLA were assessed as having a substance misuse problem in 2010 compared with 10.5% in 08/09 and of those, 78%, compared with 52.3%, accepted an intervention. Additionally, in conjunction with Community Health and Children's Centres, OCC is delivering training to Leaving Care workers and partners to enable the award winning work on Mother and Baby groups for care-leavers to develop further. OCC and Health have improved the joint funding of placements for CYP with complex needs.

12. The OCC Employability Programme has been set up by the Lead Member as a direct response to CYP and won the National Care Advisory Service Quality Mark, a national award, in Jan 2011. To date, 26 young people have benefited from this in the last 18 months.
13. Changes in partnership working with adult services have improved transitions for those with learning difficulties. The setting up of the vulnerable adults' panel along with the mental health review and new mental health housing strategy is designed to improve service delivery for those vulnerable adults, including care leavers, who formerly have not met the criteria for adult services and/or are too chaotic to engage.

Challenges

14. There are still significant challenges in providing sustainable supported housing for a small cohort of young people with chaotic behaviour, often resulting in them being placed in unsuitable B&B or nightly charge accommodation.
15. There is more work needed to smooth the transition to adult services due to different assessment criteria.
16. Closer tracking of dental services is necessary.

Attaining best possible outcomes for CLA

17. The Virtual School, in conjunction with RAISE (the Leaving Care Education team), has contributed to improved long term achievements in educational attainment.
18. Achievement at Key Stage 2 was difficult to measure in 09/10 because of the partial boycott of SATs. A combination of SATs results and teacher assessment placed 46.2% gaining level 4 in English, 30.8% in Maths and 63% in Science, an improvement on the previous year in Maths and Science.
19. At Key Stage 4, those obtaining 5A*-Gs rose from 52% to 55%. Roughly a quarter who were not level 2 qualified on finishing Key Stage 4 in 2006 were level 2 or above by the end of their third year following year 11 (19 at September 2010). In addition, progression to a positive destination following year 11, at the 30th of September 2010 (result for 2011), was at 88% up from 75% the previous year. This was achieved by improving the way young people were individually targeted and supported through an intensive multi-agency approach.
20. It is expected that 17% of our post-18s will go on to Higher Education in September. Most of those who enter Higher Education do so at a later age than their non-looked after peers and rightly have support up to age 25.

Challenges

21. Improving educational attainment as measured in years 6 and 11 continues to be a priority, in order to address the disadvantages between CLA and their peers, and, whilst evidence from tracking CYP through the system suggests more of them are catching up, performance is still behind national and SNs and suggests the need for a review of our approach.

22. Despite similar evidence of “catch-up” at later stages and a slightly older group coming into care, Key Stage 4 results remain a concern with only 6.4% getting 5A* - Cs with English and Maths .
23. Although there has been significant improvement in numbers of CYP with up to date PEPs, the standard of these is variable and needs to be more consistent.
24. The Department also measures EET across the whole cohort of those who qualify for services (i.e. those post statutory school age). At 10th December 2010, the figure was 62%, a drop from 68% the previous December, reversing the previous trend. The drop is partially due to the New Asylum Model for UASCs and the inclusion of homeless 16/17 year olds following Southwark, both of which are now responding to intensive support, which needs to be sustained. However, the current economic climate is a challenging environment in which to increase EET numbers although, whilst this was down on last year, it remains a relatively high score and is well above SNs and towards the top of national achievement.

Ensuring stable relationships

25. Between 90 and 97% have their reviews on time (SNs = 87.7% for 09/10).
26. CYP exiting to permanent placements is up from 36 in 09/10 to 48 (22 adoptions, 23 SGOs and 3 to Residence Orders). In addition, 3 were made subject to Residence Orders and a further 16 supported in Kinship placements outside of the care system, making a total of 67.
27. A variety of evidence-based practice support services - e.g Multi Treatment Foster Care (MTFC), Dialectical Behavioural Therapy (DBT) and Fostering Attachments, Brief Solution Therapy etc - have all contributed to improvements in stability
28. Long term stability is projected to rise again from 74.8 to 79% (SE average for 09/10 = 70%).
29. Placed for adoption within a year of the decision to adopt is projected to rise slightly to 88% at year end (SNs = 73.3%)
30. 99% of care leavers are in contact with the service with the numbers in suitable housing remaining from 92% to 96%.

Challenges

31. Whilst the end of years figures are still being confirmed the numbers of children with three or more moves in a year is projected to have risen from last year with a large number of children moving placements during March (11.5 cf SNs of 10.7). Work to redress this is underway.
32. **All** CLA need to have quality reviews on time.
33. The rising numbers of CYP exiting to permanent placements, whether or not these placements are in the care system, all need robust support systems including in most cases regular financial support.
33. The MTFC in full programme has now been mainstreamed and extended to include adolescents. Resources are now being targeted at recruiting and supporting sufficient carers.

Listening to CLA

34. CICC has continued in active engagement in local, regional and national events. They are currently involved in helping us develop our guidance for the implementation of the new Children's Act and have recently confirmed the continued relevance of the Council's pledge to them.
35. 97% of CLA participated in their reviews.

Challenges

36. CICC is seeking a review of opportunities to engage in activities with each other and is considering ways of reaching out to those who do not attend
37. We also need to find other ways to ensure the small minority of CYP who do not participate in reviews are engaged.

Valuing and celebrating the uniqueness of each CLA

38. The Directorate has a contract through care planning that all children should have the right to participate in at least one activity of their choice per week.
39. Over 400 CYP and their carers participated in a variety of activities last year, designed to support placements, raise self esteem and prevent offending. Activities included foster and adoption picnics, arts weekends, holidays and a conference. Although the service has not been able to provide residential events at Hillend this year, other popular activities have been and will be maintained through fundraising by the Oxfordshire Foster Care Association, the CYP themselves and a donation by the Schools Forum.

Obtaining best value

40. Using the full range of Family Placement Support Services to ensure stability is considerably less expensive than having to respond when the placement disrupts, a prime factor in CYP escalating along the care trajectory to the most expensive options. Targeted family support delivered in a range of multi-agency activities has reduced our rising numbers of CLA, which peaked during the summer at 460, but have now fallen. Oxfordshire has a relatively low number of CLA (30.4 /10,000) compared with its SNs (37/10,000).
41. Latest (2010/11) net costs for CLA per capita of population are 21% lower than our benchmarking group and 49% lower than the English average (figures from CIPFA benchmarking). This is because of the excellent preventative services (see attached strategy).
42. We provide very good value for money in our placements with a weekly unit cost (gross) of **£ 749 compared to average of £894**. Our costs have also gone down in the last year from £837. (Figures from CIPFA Benchmarking)
43. The percentage in residential care is 12.8% against 15.8% for SNs. The average cost of a residential placement is about £3,500 per week as opposed to, for example, in-house fostering at £362.
44. The successful pilot of Multi-Treatment Foster Care (MTFC) has led to improved outcomes for children with particularly disturbing histories, been recognised nationally for the effectiveness of our implementation, improved outcomes for the children and saved placement costs. The Council has taken the decision to extend the funding for MTFC to provide placements for adolescents since this had a demonstrable impact on educational outcomes

with children catching up 17 IQ points in 6 months and in-year savings on placements for children estimated at £340,160 (see Placement Strategy)

45. By investing staff time to work intensively with them and their families, there are lower numbers of CYP seeking accommodation services under the Southwark Judgement. At the same time, the fact that Oxfordshire has preserved its supported housing and invested in FGCs, has meant that families have been able to facilitate solutions for themselves, thereby mitigating the 20% reduction in the Supporting People grant (£526,152)
46. A successful new recruitment strategy has increased numbers of in-house foster carers with additional efforts being directed to the recruitment of short break carers and BaME carers.
47. The Community Parenting Programme in partnership with the Elmore Team, which uses Parents Under Pressure, an evidence based method of assessing capacity to change, continues to be piloted to provide support in the community for parents at risk of losing their children.

Challenges

48. The financial climate makes further streamlining of support services crucial. Oxfordshire is well-placed to address this because it has already adopted a strategy on commissioning to achieve better value for money, has relatively low numbers in agency placements and a relatively high proportion of CLA in in-house foster care.
49. Services to UASCs who have exhausted all their rights to services have had to be re-established following a recent court ruling.

Conclusions

50. The Corporate Parenting Strategy has proved effective at helping our CLA and achieving best value, and is endorsed by them through the CICC and other forums, such as the Sounding Boards and the Virtual School Governing Body etc. Clearly, Education and Stability remain our priorities and continue to present challenges
51. New challenges are coming from or expected to come from capacity issues surrounding the implementation of the new Care Planning regulations and particularly the new IRO roles; the need to deliver increased services to care leavers; independently chaired reviews of relevant CYP; foster carers' annual reviews, and the Sufficiency Strategy (a legal requirement to provide stable local placements based on timely and effective care plans). Additionally, the continuing need for Cost Savings (particularly regarding Leisure and Cultural Activities for our CYP); the need for CYP to remain in care for longer and the increase in complex needs of those entering care later as a result of the Southwark Judgement all add to these pressures.
52. Working in closer partnerships with all agencies, voluntary and statutory, to support our CLA is the best way to ensure that the most effective services are delivered at the earliest point to prevent escalation. To do this, we need to:
 - Build our knowledge of the vulnerable individuals and groups within our care population so that we continue to focus performance management and resources at children and young people's identified and assessed need

- Review and invest in what we have learned really works and brings about significant positive results
- Respond to the financial constraints on local government by continuing to ensure value for money and obtaining better outcomes are linked with appropriate management of risk.
- Continue to involve CLA the review and design of services so that our approaches to the work and the pattern of provision is robust and flexible to meet future challenges
- Continue to work on achieving placement sufficiency through recruitment and retention of foster carers.

Financial and Staff Implications

53. There are no new financial assessments arising from this report. The report contains examples of how we have delivered both cashable savings or avoided costs and achieved better value in our commissioning of placements for CLA, which also ensures they are closer to the communities they come from. It is currently forecast that services for children in and leaving the authority's care will spend in line with the approved budget for 2010-12.

Recommendations

54. **The Cabinet is RECOMMENDED to:**

(a) continue to support the Corporate Parenting Strategy and to work to the current objectives of the strategy;

(b) endorse the amended Placement Strategy

MEERA SPILLET

Director Children, Young People & Families

Background Papers: Nil

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Annex 1

OCC PLACEMENT STRATEGY FOR CHILDREN IN AND ON THE EDGE OF CARE

Updated April 2011.

1. INTRODUCTION

This document amends the 2007 Placement Strategy in order to respond to subsequent developments, in particular the requirement to deliver a local Sufficiency Strategy plan as contained in the Children Act, 2008 (CA2008).

CA2008 defines Sufficiency as “a whole system approach which delivers early intervention and preventative work to help support children in their families where possible, as well as providing better services for children if they do become looked after. For those who are looked after, local authorities and their Children’s Trust partners should seek to secure a number of providers and a range of services, with the aim of meeting the wide-ranging needs of looked after children and young people within their local area.”

Since Oxfordshire’s 2007 Strategy to a large extent anticipated this approach, focusing on earlier intervention, strengthened support services and closer partnership working, the proposals in this document are designed to build on rather than replace it.

The emphasis on local provision has also been addressed to a large extent by Oxfordshire’s giving priority to supporting CYP in their own home; using Family Group Conferencing and Kinship placements where possible; increasing the numbers of local authority foster carers, and developing local support services so that fewer CYP need to be placed out of County.

Like its predecessor, this Strategy is therefore designed to

- Prevent entry to the looked after system where possible (recognising that this is a much more wide-ranging task now – entailing not only family-based interventions, but also the provision of local accommodation);
- Where this is not possible, place children and young people (CYP) ideally in family and friends based care or other foster care
- minimise time in care based on evidence-based practice so as to return Children Looked After (CLA) home or move them on to permanent placements as soon as is practicable, in order to increase stability
- manage the market to provide the variety of placements required to the best possible price, and locally where possible/appropriate

This document also addresses other issues that have arisen subsequent to the 2007 Strategy.

2. CONTEXT

2.1 PRINCIPLES

Three overriding principles, set down in Oxfordshire’s CYP Plan and Corporate Parenting Strategy, underpin this document: keeping all CYP safe;

raising achievement, and narrowing the gap for our most disadvantaged and vulnerable groups.

2.2 SERVICE AREA

The scope of this strategy is:

- Support for children and families on the edge of care, including community based intensive assessment and intervention packages, and those exiting care
- Care placements, along with the support needs for all of Oxfordshire's children in care, including Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASCs)
- Disabled children in care and those requiring short break foster care (but excluding those requiring residential care placements and residential short breaks).
- Care Leavers over 18 and/or those requiring semi-independent accommodation provided by Independent Agencies or other forms of independent accommodation.
- CLA exiting the care system on SGOs, ROs and adoptions, or cared for in Kinship placements, including post placement support
- Specialist placements for parents and babies (including assessment placements)

2.3 CONSULTATION

Oxfordshire is committed to consulting its CLA, and their parents and carers, concerning the design and monitoring of services we provide for them. A Children in Care Council (CICC) was established in November 2007 and has worked extensively with members, officers, carers and other agencies locally and nationally to ensure that appropriate services and support are provided to CLA. The Council's Pledge was launched by the young people themselves in November 2008 and is reviewed on a regular basis by the CICC and Corporate Parenting Panel at their regular meetings.

OCC takes partnership work very seriously and can evidence the involvement of all relevant services and users. Recent examples are the cross regional residential project, the recommissioning of housing, the new build of Thornbury, the new financial policy for care leavers and the new arrivals programme for UASCs, all of which were co-developed with users. CLA can also express their views through sounding boards and/or a revamped advocacy service. There are also sounding boards for families and carers.

3. SERVICE MAPPING

3.1 CYP SUPPORTED IN THEIR OWN HOME

Supporting CYP with their parent(s) enables Oxfordshire to have lower numbers of CLA than their statistical neighbours (SNs), which provides better outcomes at a lower cost than taking them into care. The full range of prevention and support services is described in Section 4.

3.2 KINSHIP CARE

Where CYP cannot be supported with their own parent(s), Kinship Care (care by members of their wider family and friends network) provides the best outcomes and allows CYP continuity of relationships. It is also relatively cost effective but comes with a significant responsibility to ensure Kinship Carers are appropriately supported and those registered as foster carers meet the same standards as approved foster carers.

Challenges

Under the 2011 amendment to the CA2008, this attentiveness to the needs of Kinship Carers needs to be adopted across the Children's Trust and include more resources to support early intervention within families and to empower them to make their own decisions through Family Group Conferences (FGCs). Both courses of action are being promoted.

In addition, various court rulings have blurred the distinction between Kinship and Foster Care, reinforcing the right of kinship carers to similar remuneration as foster carers and increasing the requirement for Councils to publicise their support, including financial, to a broader group of carers, e.g. some private fostering arrangements, with the county financially supporting an additional 5,000 days in 2010-11 .

3.3 IN-HOUSE FOSTER CARERS

Oxfordshire's own foster carers are the next level in the care trajectory in terms of outcomes and cost effectiveness. A more pro-active recruiting policy was introduced in February 2009 and approvals have increased by over 20% during both subsequent years. Year end figures for 2011 show a significant increase in in-house foster care days with a growth of 7308 days, an 8% rise for the second year running along with a 25% decrease in the use of IFAs. This has been sufficient to ensure the Department's budgets for CLA have been met. A revised structure to further sharpen the focus on recruitment has been agreed to take advantage of the impending jobless situation and develop more local resource. As is true nationally, recruitment of BaME carers remains disappointing.

Feedback exercises and exit interviews have repeatedly indicated that the Family and Placement Support Service (F&PSS), ATTACH and KEEP (see Section 4) all play a vital role in retaining in-house foster-carers.

Challenges

- The increasing age profile of OCC's foster carers and increasing needs of the young people placed, mean carers choose to provide fewer placements. In stark contrast to previous years, in 2010/11 no carers had an exemption required for carers seeking to care for more than 3 CYP.
- CYP being encouraged to stay on beyond 18 in line with the 1989 CA (revised 2008/11) are acting as "blockers". The local authority has devised a required "Staying Put" policy which gives those CYP who are in education and those vulnerable CYP 18+ who do not meet adult services' thresholds the right to continue in care.
- Carers' allowances have been held at the same level for the second year running and they are requesting a review to relook at rates given the rise in inflation and more generally to look at a payment for skills model.

3.4 MTFC (MULTIDIMENSIONAL TREATMENT FOSTER CARE) PILOTS

Since 2008, Oxfordshire has been piloting MTFC programmes for 3-12 year olds, an evidence-based intensive approach using specially trained foster carers, which has been shown to be effective in treating CYP who would otherwise end up in expensive specialist residential or IFA placements. MTFC involves support from multi-disciplinary teams comprising specialist carers, social workers, psychologists, family therapists, skills educators, teachers and specialist administrators, along with a 24 hour on call system.

It works with all aspects of a CYP's life, targeting behaviours systematically and providing support to professionals, carers and birth parents. CYP spend between 6 months to, in rarer cases, 18 months in the MTFC programme with additional assessment placements for adolescents, lasting a maximum of three months.

Related Behaviour Management projects that have also been introduced are a Specialist Group for carers of under 5s and adolescents, based on attachment-related intervention to help deal with behavioural problems, and The Keep Project for 5-12s

There is considerable evidence to support both the care and financial benefits of the programme and it has further "below the line" benefits. The DfE are also convinced of the effectiveness of the programme and are now encouraging the roll out of MTFC & KEEP programmes nationally. (See appendix 2 for details of benefits in Oxfordshire)

Challenges

Building on the early success of MTFC for 3-12 year olds, this Strategy includes mainstreaming the service and extending it to adolescents.

3.5 IN-HOUSE RESIDENTIAL

Oxfordshire has two children's homes, one offering 6 beds for girls and the other 5 to boys. A pilot project to intensify the management of in-house children's homes has resulted in significant reductions of sickness levels. The unit costs of in-house residential care have reduced as part of this work to £2,927/week. The new home commissioned at Thornbury, completed in April 2011, gives us an extra bed at no extra cost and hence brings the cost down to £2,724/ week. The imminent move to the new home is also anticipated to return the inspection outcome to "Good".

3.6 INDEPENDENT PROVISION - Fostering Agencies (IFAs)

The number using IFAs has reduced. The table below illustrates the reduced dependence on independent foster care.

IFAS	NO PLACED WITH IFAS	NO OF FTE PLACEMENTS	UNIT COST /WEEK
2006	57	30	772
2007	54	43	809
2008	70	51	853
2009	111	67	843
2010	123	82	816
2011	110	61	829

In addition, more robust commissioning and monitoring processes have been introduced to ensure greater compliance with Oxfordshire's requirements and a Joint Commissioning programme with eleven other LAs is in progress.

Challenges

As can be seen from the table, average unit costs are rising. This is largely because the lower numbers of CYP using IFAs are by definition those with the most intractable problems. The roll out of Joint Commissioning should give Oxfordshire more leverage to reduce costs and opportunities to increase local provision.

3.7 INDEPENDENT PROVISION – Residential

RESIDENTIAL	Children placed	FTE	Unit cost/week
2006	40	21	2,825
2007	45	22	2,900
2008	45	21	3,169
2009	47	27	2,889
2010	48	50	3,168
2011	51	40.6	3,438

Although the number of CYP placed in Independent Residential has increased, the FTE number has been reduced, following a substantial increase in 2009/10.

Challenges

- CYP with complex needs are currently often placed a long way from their communities because of unavailability in health, education and/or placements – this has large implications in outcomes, cost, and their capacity to access services at all stages. The requirement of the Sufficiency Strategy is to further increase interagency partnerships to deliver services locally in a more integrated way to meet their needs.

- Despite an overall reduction in the use of residential days throughout the year, there is a worrying trend developing over the last four months which if continued would result in an extra 2,892 days required next year. This is caused by the numbers of CYP with significantly challenging behaviour and again reinforces the need to develop support strategies to secure CYPs stability at earlier point in their care career.

- In addition to CYP choosing to remain in in-house foster care, there is a small group exercising their right to remain in IFAs and Residential, which has an enormous impact on costs. Thus, the extension of rights to care into 16+ and 18+ make it even more essential that cost effective solutions and investment in placement stability are implemented at an earlier stage in the trajectory of care.

3.8 INDEPENDENT PROVISION – Joint Commissioning

The CA2008 suggests LAs should look at the feasibility of joint commissioning, particularly when addressing those with the most complex needs. Again, Oxfordshire has anticipated this approach. OCC is party to the Pan London arrangements which achieve economy of scale in relation to quality assuring places, negotiating prices and agreeing reasonable inflationary rises. In addition, since 2006, OCC has developed the use of

block contracting arrangements to improve best value and develop local services.

More recently, OCC has led a cross-regional commissioning project of six authorities to jointly commission services for CLA with the most complex needs, starting from January 2011. A contract for 20 beds and 4 day places rising to 30 local units has been awarded, providing up to 30 residential places and around 10 day places with the help of Improvement and Efficiency South East (IESE) and the National Centre for Excellence in Residential Care (NCERC). Potential savings are estimated at £500 -1000/bed p.w.

This model is designed to be Stage 2 of a series of joint-commissioning projects for other relevant services, starting with the cross regional project above and now progressed to IFAs. The six Berkshire unitaries have also now joined the Consortium, making 11 authorities in all.

3.9 DISABILITY/COMPLEX NEEDS

The % of CLA with disabilities/complex needs such as ADHD, autism and language/ speech difficulties rises with age. CLA are also more likely to have mental health problems as measured by SDQs (Strengths & Difficulties Questionnaires, internationally accredited measures of emotional and behavioural difficulties) and SEN.

The Aiming High programme has significantly increased the amount of relief care on offer to families with children with disabilities, offering access to relief and leisure for families.

Local projects, e.g. with McIntyre, have been very successful in helping us to develop local services and a new autism strategy has, amongst other developments, highlighted the need to develop a specialist unit for CYP with autism.

In addition to this there are 5 homes (4 run by Barnado's), one offering full time care.

There are currently 42 families receiving respite and 7 non-disabled children receive regular respite.

Challenges

- There are five disabled CYP and another five with complex needs who are unnecessarily in residential care due to lack of intensive fostering provision. The IFA (see above) and Recruitment Strategy are designed to address this. In addition, there are 21 families with children with disabilities who are waiting for one weekend's respite per month.

- Over 75% admitted to residential care have serious school issues, regarding attendance, part time programmes or fixed term exclusion or no provision. These remain significant issues which impact on life chances for CYP and all placement provision, since very few of our carers do not work. Finding effective ways of engaging and supporting CYP's education is fundamental to the success of any strategy.

3.10 PERMANENCY – Recruitment and Assessment

The Department has a responsibility to recruit or commission placements for CYP requiring permanent placements. Searches for permanency again start from within the CYP's family and friends' network, usually through Special

Guardianship and Residence Orders (SGOs and ROs) and include responsibility to assess all interested parties, which means that, even with the use of FGCs, there need to be multiple assessments. Where no suitable placements can be found, other placements have to be recruited and/or commissioned, then supported.

Through membership of consortia, the Department is now able to balance the buying in with the selling of placements but, as with foster-carers, there is a particular problem with BaME and disabled children. Oxfordshire also has a contract with Parents and Children Together (PACT), a registered voluntary agency, to train, assess and prepare those people who are seeking to adopt overseas.

Birth parents and relatives have access to independent support and counselling with encouragement to use this service as soon as a plan for adoption becomes a possibility.

Oxfordshire also provides an advisory service which oversees the training, recruitment and management of 3 adoption panels which each meet once a month.

Adoption placements offer the best chance of stability for CYP but without appropriate support, their breakdown often leads rapidly to the most drastic and expensive consequences. To ensure the best start, all prospective adopters meet with one of the medical advisers to ensure they understand the implications of caring for the children.

Challenges

- The exponential growth of SGOs (Special Guardianship Orders) from 14 in 2008 to 63 in 2011, means a significant growth in work assessing multiple possible placements within extended families. It is not unusual to undertake 3-4 assessments to find a suitable carer.
- SGOs are a growing area of financial responsibility because of a recent court ruling linking rates of remuneration to foster allowances with all special guardians qualifying for some allowance if they are taking responsibility for a child who has been in care.
- Sudden increases in care proceedings, as has happened recently, puts a great strain on the assessment process, particularly when multiple assessments are required.

3.11 PERMANENCY - CYP Supported In Adoption, SGOs, ROs And Real Costs

CYP not in the care system but for whom OCC still have financial responsibility increased from 192 in 2008/09 to 234 in Feb 2010/11 (n.b. only about 1 in 20 adopters receive an allowance). It is vital to build robust support systems around these groups and avoid placement breakdowns and the consequent rapid spiral towards more expensive options.

In 2010/2011, 48 CYP left care for permanent placements, 23 subject to SGOs, 22 for adoption and 3 on Residence Orders (ROs). A further 3 SGOs were made as an alternative to care and 16 more were supported to live within their extended family and friends network.

Of the 48 children who may need adopting, the needs of 8 are unlikely to be met from within our own resources and from an early stage. Family Finding has been conducted on as broad a stage as possible, with very close working with the Adoption Register and voluntary agencies. Oxfordshire is currently involved in a pilot with the Register to increase placement choice. As soon as adoption is identified as a possibility, independent counselling is offered to birth parents and this year 47 parents have used these services.

Of the approximately 685 adopted children in Oxfordshire, there are an estimated 232 adoptive families going through mild to severe difficulties. Based on research, an estimated one in five of these (or 47 families) are likely to have severe difficulties and represent a high risk of disruption. To date in 2010-11, there have only been six disruptions; of these six, three had prior contact with the service and two have returned back to the adoptive home after a short stay in care with support.

A range of specialist services are commissioned to permanent carers and their children to give the best support possible to adopters and children. 197 adoptive families accessed help from the post-adoption service help desk.

The letter box service provided 838 contacts for 287 children, an increase of 13%. Through a service level agreement with NORCAP, 92 relatives were able to seek advice and counselling to contact relatives made subject to adoption.

3.12 RESIDENTIAL PARENTING ASSESSMENTS

These take place in either in-house fostering placements or independent residential units. The amount being spent on these latter because of Court Orders (and usually against Social Care recommendations) increased by 300% in 09-10, despite a very poor success rate, and Social Care now has to pick up the entire cost. Significant successful work over the last year has been undertaken to reduce the demand from the courts for these ineffective assessments, including meetings/seminars with judges to encourage them to consider the financial implications and research findings, and use more effective community-based alternatives. Based on research, we have developed A Community Parenting Project, including Parents Under Pressure (PUP) an intensive community-based assessment and intervention service, in partnership with a local lottery funded adult mental health scheme. Because of these initiatives, residential parenting assessments have reduced by 2,225 days over the year, and so far no new residential placements have been made in 2011.

3.13 SUPPORTED INDEPENDENT ACCOMMODATION

Care leavers and UASCs, along with other vulnerable homeless young people, are housed in one of nine placement types, varying in terms of the type of housing and the level and focus of the support available to young people while they are there.

The Southwark Judgement in 2010 shifted responsibility for homeless 16 and 17 year olds from District Councils to Social Care. In financial year 2010-11, 24 young people were accommodated plus 16 under Section 17. However, the guidance now also deters the use of Section 17 and an estimated 36 will have to be accommodated in 2010/11, possibly more in 2011-12. In total there

were 201 CYP seen, 131 were in need of a Young Person's Housing Assessment, 53 returned home within two weeks and 32 were accommodated. Whilst this is fewer than anticipated, the needs of those coming into the system are much higher, as are the support requirements to maintain them in the community. This again reinforces the need for strengthened preventative/support services (since the majority of CYP who become homeless are known to services by mid-adolescence).

Until the Southwark Judgement, despite a rise in numbers, the need for independent accommodation at 16 and 17 was reducing, thanks largely to the inception of the Joint Housing Team (JHT), as a result of which in 2009/10 only 8 care leavers were statutory homeless. Having conducted a needs analysis, the service re-commissioned homeless services from April 2010 for young people aged between 16 and 25, to deliver better quality for 15% less cost, since needed to cover a 20% reduction in the Supporting People grant.

As part of the new services, 178 beds were recommissioned to supplement children's services, comprising 66 beds in Key 2, 46 for UASCs and 22 for CYP with high needs, all in the City from Key 2 with 2 in Bicester from Stonham, and we are currently in the process of commissioning 4 in Banbury (see Housing Strategy). This excludes the newly commissioned service in West. In November 2010, there were 43 16 & 17 year olds in the projects, an overall increase of 79%.

Children Services commissions 22 supported lodgings placements from Stonham, in conjunction with Supporting People. Supporting People have increased their funding to further test the efficacy of this placement type.

Supported housing days and costs for YP Children's Social Care have responsibility for, including care leavers. The information in the table excludes UASCs information

Legal status	Support days 09-10	Budget 09-10	Support days 10-11	Budget 10-11
Relevant	8,922	1,101,372	11,827	766,386
- Former Relevant	9,725	23,695	7,576	194,863
Southwark S17	335	300,000	385	40,000
- Southwark S20	5,908	0	7,694	300,000
-Total	24,891	1,425,067	27,482.00	1,301,249

* This is not the actual number of young people placed, but the average full-time occupancy for the year

Challenges

- OCC has also had to use B&B placements pending the full implementation of the new commissioning strategy and this bad practice may have to continue in the short term.

- However, it should be noted that there were only 622 bed nights used, a drop from 3,325 in 2008 for U18 yr olds. Looking at those who did use them, five have had repeated evictions from supported housing projects.

- In relation to those aged 19+, there are about 20 CYP at any one time whose needs are such that the supported housing commissioned does not appear to meet their needs, as judged by their repeated evictions from projects.

- The priority since Southwark is to commission more supported housing, in particular some that are staffed 24/7, and emergency accommodation (plus

necessary staffing) to allow family re-unification work to take place. We must also ensure that the provision we have is subject to close scrutiny with projects given additional help to enable young people to access the right level of supported housing so as to minimise the time they have to stay in it. In order to do this, a joint appointment with Supporting People and CYPF has been made to facilitate closer working with the Districts.

3.14 UNACCOMPANIED ASYLUM SEEKING CHILDREN (UASCs)

Oxfordshire currently has 155 UASCs, a reducing number, and has a duty to assess and accommodate anyone entering the County as an UASC. These children need specialist services: separated from their families, often traumatised by their experiences, unable to speak English, they often find it difficult to adjust to cultural differences. They need the full services of a placement, support to catch up educationally and close monitoring to ensure they have not been trafficked. Care is also needed about placing them where there is a dispute about their ages.

Specialist educational and housing services are commissioned from the local college and a supported housing company. In addition, specialist services are contracted to support them as part of the Connexions contract. The PCT also commissions specialist counselling services and the school with the most UASCs ensures they have a learning mentor to support their education.

Challenges

Recent case law has meant that Local Authorities have now had to re-introduce services for UASCs with all rights exhausted. However, maintaining the mental health of these CYP can be a problem, since they are not allowed to work or attend college. Our strategy makes provision for them to work voluntarily.

3.15 CARE LEAVERS

There are just over 400 young people eligible for care leaving services: 108 eligible; 48 relevant (i.e. having left care under 18 and living independently in supported accommodation); 257 former relevant, of which 100 are UASCs and 10 Section 24 young people

“Relevant” care leavers

These are 16 and 17 year olds who have left care and are entitled to care leaving services under the Leaving Care Act, 2000, and CA2008. They are totally financially dependent on OCC. As part of the R2beCared4 pilot, we have managed to reduce this group by delaying their exit from care. This increases their participation in EET but is extremely expensive, especially for those wanting to remain in residential until 18.

Care leavers 19+ in full-time FE and not entitled to benefits

Numbers of care leavers already aged 19 beginning full-time FE courses (i.e. not eligible for benefits) have risen steeply over the last 3 academic years. Numbers in both the UASC and the indigenous mainstream (i.e. not learning disability) population are rising.

Additionally, there are increasing numbers in Higher Education: 15 YP embarked on Higher Education courses in September 2010, up from 7 in

2009. The total engaging in higher education programmes is 27, including one on a post graduate course.

In June 2010, five YP graduated with 2:1 classifications and one a 2:2. There are 13 YP potentially beginning HE programmes in September 2011, bringing the total to 36 (excluding 2011's graduates) with another 13 expected to start in 2011. The average age of entering university is 21. YP are given bursaries and money for holiday accommodation and a number return to their carers.

4. SUPPORT TO CARERS

The development of prevention and support services has been at the heart of Oxfordshire's strategy to reduce numbers in the care system. These services include the **Placement Duty** service; the **Health** service for CLA and care leavers; the **Family Group Conference service, Family and Placement Support Service**, including **Attach**, who work very closely with the **post adoption service** and **YOS Prevention service; Tier 4** (an intensive education support provision), **Family Intervention project** and the closely linked **Oxford Youth Arts** partnerships.

In addition, further support is provided by the **Virtual School** (supporting statutory school age CYP), the **Raise service** (supporting EET provision for post year 11 students), **Designated Nurses** for CLA and care leavers and, most recently, **Parents Under Pressure (PUP)**, a joint venture between OCC and Elmore Community Services, providing evidence-based assessment and intensive intervention to children from pre-birth to 3 years and their families. All of these services work closely with each other and with all mainstream services within the county.

4.1 PLACEMENT DUTY SERVICE

Placement Duty was set up to:

- ensure that alternatives for CYP to becoming looked after are explored and that families are fully involved in this activity
- promote systems that will ensure appropriate placements/packages of support are found for those children and families
- identify appropriate supports for CLA to prevent placement breakdown
- assist the Fostering Recruitment Service in their function, by providing accurate information relating to the type of care required to meet children's needs.
- monitor the care plans of CYP whose need is for short term care and reunification, plus those of all CYP placed in residential and agency placements

Between April 2010 and January 2011, Placement Duty received 412 referrals for short term care: 321 were placed (i.e. 91 were avoided) and 29 were to new residential placements. 15% of placements were same day emergencies c/w 70% three years ago. However, 17% were re-referrals, so whilst significantly more successful with short term stability also improving, there are still challenges.

12.25% (50 CYP) were placed in residential care, a slight rise on 09/10

Challenges

Only 20 per cent of the CYP who needed a placement had been referred to Family and Placement Support, although 76 out of 168 were subject to a family support/ CP plan and had more than 3 significant risk factors. This suggests the need for closer working with Family and Placement Support Services.

4.2 PLACEMENT PANELS.

These support practitioners in making safe choices for their clients. The Priority Panel allocates relief care to families with disabled children, the Placement & Commissioning Panel allocates joint funding with health colleagues The Legal Panel offers countywide consistency for cases in need of pre or legal proceedings. Finally a new panel, the Complex Needs Panel offers an inter-agency response to cases of serious concern.

4.3 FAMILY AND PLACEMENT SUPPORT SERVICE (F&PSS)

This service has offered intensive support to 17 families at risk of losing their children. In addition to this, 176 cases have been worked with since April 2010. The majority of referrals (73%) are children aged 10 years and over. 42 of the cases were subject of child protection plans (23%) and in 76 (42%) of the cases, the children were subject to a family support plan.

4.4 ATTACH (Attaining Therapeutic Attachments For Children)

The ATTACH team is a nationally recognised service promoting placement stability through the facilitation of attachment relationships between CYP and their carers. It offers treatment for emotional and behavioural difficulties and promotes adoption and fostering through training as part of the preparation process. ATTACH is also active in preventing adoption breakdowns, which can be very expensive.

4.5 MTFC

As well as the main services (see above), these have, along with the ATTACH programmes, proved a more effective way of delivering training to carers

4.6 FAMILY GROUP CONFERENCES (FGCS)

Of the 39 cases designed to find alternative family based solutions rather than CYP becoming looked after, 37 CYP remained within their extended family.

4.7 TRAINING

Support Services also play a crucial part in training staff and carers and have been focused on integrating therapeutic training for carers with the need for them to complete their standards and other training qualifications.

5. KEY TRENDS (see also appendix 1)

- The number of children in care in Oxfordshire has consistently been lower than Statistical Neighbours (SNs)

- Numbers across the country and in Oxon rose in 2009-10 by 8% and have continued to fluctuate
- The number of placement days used has risen for the second year running, although there is recent evidence that they may be dropping again
- The age profile of children in Oxfordshire is slightly higher than SNs
- There have been more male entrants into the care system with the most significant numbers falling into the 10+ group. These figures are significantly impacted by asylum seekers, almost all of whom are male. These now represent a reducing proportion of our care system, reducing from 10 to 8%
- The use of IFAs has reduced, whereas the use of residential care increased towards the end of the year
- There has been a significant increase in the number of care proceedings
- There has been a significant increase in the numbers placed for adoption

. The majority of our CLA are placed in in-house foster care:

- We have 334 registered foster carers (including kinship carers). We do well at recruiting and retaining foster carers (in the last year we have had a net gain of 39)
- 55% of our CLA are placed in foster care (both agency & ours)
- 14% are placed with family and friends carers (Kinship Care)
- 12% are in residential care
- 7% are placed for adoption awaiting court orders for their adoption order
- 7% are in independent living – with the support of our SW team
- 5% are placed with parents under a placement of children with parents agreement
- There are two CYP in secure or youth offending institutions
- We have increased the number of children over the last year who have been made subject to Special Guardianship Order, Residence Order or Adoption Orders from 36 last year to 45 this year to date.

Service Costs

Traditionally, Oxfordshire's spending on children in care has been low and this remains true. In-house provision is considerably cheaper in unit costs and in-house foster care more so, even when factoring in on-costs and the high cost of programmes such as MTFC.

The latest information from the CIPFA Benchmarking Club, which includes 65 LAs, including 8/10 of our SNs shows that we provide very good value for

money in our placements with a weekly unit cost (gross) of **£ 749 compared to average of £894**. This has reduced in the last year from £837.

6. STRATEGIC NEEDS ANALYSIS – Summary of Current Challenges, Action Taken and Planned Further Action

6.1 NATIONAL CONTEXT

There are two factors that must be considered in the background to this strategy:

- The current economic climate, spending review and budget have forced Councils to find efficiency savings, whilst still delivering high quality services and improving outcomes for client groups.
- This there has been a marked rise in the number and rate of CLA in the last year, nationally and across the South East region (see appendix 1).

6.2 INCREASED STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS

Since the inception of the 2007 Strategy, the landscape has shifted substantially with ever-increasing statutory responsibilities being placed on Local Authorities and whilst some of these undoubtedly improve outcomes for CYP, they also put pressure on the County Council' s resources. These include:

- More care proceedings due to the Baby P case.
- Court ordered residential assessments, which are now the sole responsibility of Local Authorities and significant increases in other court ordered assessments.
- Special Guardianship Orders (SGOs), which give some “kinship” carers equal status as foster-carers, with increased allowances and training requirements.
- A growing trend towards costly private law disposals.
- Human rights legislation.
- CA2008 intends that CLA remain in care until at least 18, particularly those vulnerable young people who do not meet adult services thresholds and those in the middle of their education.
- Leaving Care responsibilities extending to 25 for those in FE and HE with CYP with the eligibility gap between children and adult services widening and some young people wanting to remain in high cost placements.
- The Southwark Judgement, which means that CYP who are housed under the Homeless Act are entitled to Local Authority Care and are the financial responsibility of the Council up until aged 25, if they remain in Education.
- Responsibility to develop a Sufficiency Strategy by 2011 to address the needs of CLA locally, where appropriate.

The prevention/support strategy adopted by Oxfordshire has, compared to SNs, mitigated both the impact and costs of these challenges. However, inevitably, stronger preventative services mean that those who do still slip through the net will be fewer in number but more intractable, for which intensive regimes are necessary. This will involve some re-organisation of services in order to strengthen frontline delivery and ensure that this is underpinned by a robust assessment, planning and review framework.

6.3 COURT ISSUES

There has been a 64% rise in court proceedings which have, as well as the rise in the use of highly expensive residential parenting assessments, raised concerns about practices during proceedings. These have included an exponential rise in contact from an average of 2-3 times to 5-7 times a week (despite research demonstrating negative effects on babies from too much contact), the use of specialist assessments and the built-in delay caused by the use of pre-proceedings.

Action taken to address these concerns over the last year have included the following:

- Seminars for staff and court stakeholders, including the judges, to update them on the latest research and best practice in neglect and abuse cases.
- Staff Conference on effective interventions
- Training for managers on supervising cases where there is abuse and neglect
- Tightening gate-keeping practices on assessments presented to legal panel
- Streamlining referrals to the Family and Support Service in CAMHS to ensure better use of our resources
- Development of community based parenting assessments.
- Development of additional supported housing projects for parents and opportunities to enhance relevant staff skills

Further proposals include:

- Further training for staff on assessment regarding specialist aspects of the DoH Assessment Framework, including predicting people's capacity to change and the Home Inventory,
- Participation in Bristol University's study on the Impact of Pre-proceedings
- Participation in a sub group reporting to the Family Courts business committee to look at delays in care proceedings with a view to improving and sharing good practice across the region
- Tightening of procedures to ensure all cases presented to Legal Panel have a chronology and a core assessment signed by the Service Manager

6.4 THE NEW CARE REGULATIONS

These increase the responsibilities on the LA and partners to work in partnership with CLA and care leavers. Work is underway to use the introduction of the new legislation to address both assessment and planning issues, which accentuate the care and placement plan as key commissioning tools for ensuring that carers understand the needs of the children they look after before they take on the commitment to look after them. Significant action has been taken over the last year to address both issues of quality and quantity. Electronic forms have been designed with carers and young people to support planning processes. The performance data shows an encouraging trend with a strong and experienced IRO service to push this through (see IRO report).

There are new requirements for carers' annual reviews to be chaired independently. These and other requirements published at the end of February will be subject to a separate report.

6.5 THE RIGHT OF CYP IN CARE TO ACCESS SERVICES UNTIL 25

The current usual age for our CYP in care to start attending university is 21 and this has resource implications. We are drawing up plans to bring this age forward so they are still eligible for benefits but also attend college with their peers.

6.6 KEY STAGE 4 RESULTS

These remain an area of concern with only 6.6% getting 5A* - Cs with English and Maths. To address this, there has to be a whole system approach with stable placements and plenty of catch-up help, along with appropriate school placements and some behaviour management training for carers. A review of educational support is also being considered.

6.7 THE VOLUME OF NEED FOR PLACEMENTS

This rose during 2009-10 and during the first half of this year and continues to fluctuate markedly. There was a peak in the use of IFA placements of 75 in March 2010 despite an increase in the number of OCC carers being recruited as a result of our recruitment campaign. With a further increase in the number of carers this year significant savings are becoming evident, although there is still unpredictable demand which makes precise planning difficult (see Appendix 1).

6.8 THE PRESSURE TO DEVELOP MORE FOSTER PLACEMENTS CONTINUES

The pilot scheme for MTFC highlighted the potential in caring for very challenging CYP in foster homes with the right support around them. Building on the success of the MTFC pilots, which have delivered successful outcomes for significant savings, a decision has been made to develop and mainstream the scheme and extend it to adolescents.

7. PLACEMENT STRATEGY

7.1 MANAGING THE MARKET

Children's placements are very high cost and management of the market to commission cost effective placements and achieve best value is crucial. The

CA2008 puts placement stability, particularly the better commissioning of placement services, at the heart of the government's plans to speed up improvement in outcomes and reduce costs by halting the escalation of children towards more expensive placements.

The children's care market is a mixed economy of in-house and independent providers of foster care, residential care and independent supported accommodation for young people aged 16+. In-house foster care is the preferred placement for nearly all children, with kinship care being the first choice. Placement types vary according to the task the foster carer is expected to undertake, for example emergency reception, short term, bridging placements to adoption, regular respite care for families caring for children with disabilities.

A CIPFA benchmarking analysis of Oxfordshire's comparative costs shows that Oxfordshire's average cost per child in care is lower overall due to the a) lower unit costs of our own homes and carers and b) lower percentages in IFAs. However, this is partly offset by the higher unit costs Oxfordshire is paying for its CLA in non-LA Homes and IFAs. This is partly owing to our success, through enhanced support programmes, in keeping a greater proportion of our high maintenance CYP in our own fostering placements. However, there are still potential savings to be made with better commissioning of in-house Services.

OCC's policy for U16s is that its own in-house services receive all new referrals since they provide best value for money, tend to be local and are judged by OFSTED to be good/outstanding (apart from Thornbury). It is only when we are unable to provide a placement that independent providers are considered. The Fostering Network (FN) estimates there is a shortage of 10,000 foster carers nationally, and both in-house and independent providers struggle to recruit sufficient carers locally. Even with our new recruitment strategy, the need for some high cost IFA places will continue.

Commissioning the right in-house service with appropriate payment for skills, training and support is an integral part of achieving any reduction in the use of this expensive option. Commissioning enough local placements is also part of this challenge in order to ensure CYP are near enough for effective work to take place and so they can access their own communities and families. Travel costs and staff time are also a factor here. Part of Oxfordshire's Strategy is to extend the Cross Regional Commissioning model it has developed for Independent Residential Accommodation into this area.

7.2 OUTCOMES

- where possible, ensure CYP are prevented from coming into care (recognising that this is a much more wide-ranging task now – entailing not only family-based interventions, but also the provision of local accommodation);
- where appropriate to assessed needs, placements and post-care support, achieve outcomes for children and move them quickly to rehabilitation or permanent placements, thus breaking the cycle of deprivation;

- manage the market to provide the variety and quality of placements required to the best possible price, and locally where possible/appropriate in order to comply with the Sufficiency Strategy.

7.3 ACTIONS

The actions needed to achieve these outcomes can be categorised into the five strategic priority areas listed below:

7.3.1 Assessment & Planning

- Multi-agency holistic assessment and planning for CYP coming into/on the edge of care
- FGC service working more closely with Placement Duty and Leaving Care.
- Locality working maximising the availability of local services to support CYP and their families within their community.
- Placement referrals to receive a high level of scrutiny and QA from Team and ASMs
- Subjecting long term requests for agency budgets to scrutiny to ensure all local services have been considered. ASMs to QA core assessments.
- Streamlining the business processes

7.3.2 Prevention & Support

- Redesign Family and Placement Support Services.
- Develop Parents Under Pressure programme (PUP)
- Improve support for CYP in schools
- Continue to develop placements wherever possible with Family & Friends

7.3.3 Best Value Commissioning

- Pilot the Cost Calculator, a commissioning tool used in Adult Services to determine placement costs.
- Develop pooled budgets with Education and Health.
- Review possibilities of integrating all placement finding within OCC
- Establish enough local suppliers in the context of the Sufficiency Strategy. Continue to develop bulk-buying and framework agreements
- Utilise extra room at Thornbury
- Explore Boarding School project, building on successful pilot.
- More partnership agreements to jointly commission services e.g.
 - joint commissioning with four other LAs for IFAs
 - commission more supported housing for those with complex needs (post-Southwark) to prevent CYP becoming homeless.
- Develop existing in-house foster placements (capacity and skills) as a priority since on direct cost comparisons OCC foster care is cheaper than independent care.

- Review fostering allowances and re-examine the possibility of a payment for skills payment system
- Charging policy for all families accessing children's placements, including SGOs and ROs

7.3.4 Service Structure & Workforce Development

- Review delivery of adolescent services
- Develop commissioning skills for Placement Duty Development.
- Training for managers and staff on care planning
- Training for carers on behaviour management, attachment etc
- Training for all staff on the new care planning regulations

7.3.5 Impact Measurement

- Systems development
- Benchmarking costs.
- Benchmarking quality of service
- Monitor joint commissioning
- Feedback and appropriate challenge from stakeholders.

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CABINET – 24 MAY 2011
ESTABLISHMENT REVIEW
Report by Head of Human Resources

Introduction

1. This report provides an update on establishment and staffing activity during the period 1 April 2010 to 31 March 2011.

Current numbers

2. The establishment and staffing numbers (FTE) as at 31 March 2011 are 5314.34 Establishment (4906 FTE in post). These figures exclude the school bloc, but include cleaning and catering staff based in schools employed within Food with Thought and QCS Cleaning and Facilities.
3. Since Quarter 1 there have been a number of changes to structures within directorates. In order to make it easier to track changes from 31 March 2010, figures have been adjusted to these new structures.
4. During Quarter 3 there was a review of all vacancies which resulted in a decrease of 236.45 FTE posts. Further reviews will take place periodically to ensure that posts which have been held vacant for more than six months are taken off the establishment.
5. We continue to monitor the balance between full time and part time workers to ensure that the best interests of the Council and the taxpayer are served. For information, the numbers as at 31 March 2011 were as follows - Full time 3188 and Part time 3714. This equates to the total of 4906 FTE.
6. The main changes between Quarter 4 2009-10 and Quarter 4 2010-11 are shown in the table below. A breakdown of movements by directorate and service area is provided at Appendices 1 and 2. Overall the Establishment numbers have reduced by 9% over the full year with actual FTE employed down 7%

	FTE Employed	Establishment FTE
Reported Figures at 31 March – Non-Schools	5283	5836
Changes	-377	-522
Reported Figures at 31 March – Non-Schools	4906	5314

Agency/Advertising costs

7. The cost of agency staff for Quarter 4 2010/11 was £800,704. Advertising spend has reduced by more than £200,000 compared to 2009/10 and more than £400,000 compared to 2008/9.

Advertising Spend Non-Schools 2008/9 to 2010/11		
2008/2009	2009/2010	2010/2011
£467,107	£247,102	£44,431

Business Strategy

8. In support of the Business Strategy, the following measures have already been put in place which will impact on staff numbers and costs in the coming months.
- A moratorium has been placed on the Green Book Job Evaluation Scheme. This means that where jobs change due to an increase in duties and responsibilities there will be no review of grading for the foreseeable future;
 - Internal first advertising was implemented during July 2010 together with a simplified application process for internal staff. The aim is to encourage flexibility for staff and managers to move to different jobs around the organisation and to avoid redundancies where possible. Only jobs which we are unable to fill internally will be advertised leading to a reduction in spend on recruitment.
 - As part of the Council's Business Strategy, a review of management posts across the organisation has commenced.

Accountability

- 8.. Heads of Service are required to check and confirm establishment data for their service area on a quarterly basis with appropriate challenge provided by the relevant HR Business Partner .

Recommendation

The cabinet is RECOMMENDED to:

- (a) note the report
- (b) confirm that the Establishment Review continues to meet requirements in reporting and managing staffing numbers.

STEVE MUNN

Head of Human Resources

April 2011

Contact Officer: Sue James, Strategic HR Officer, 01865 815465.

DIRECTORATE	SERVICE AREA	Established Posts at 31 March 2010	Established Posts at 31 March 2011	Changes in Establishment from 31 March 2010	Employed FTE at 31 March 2010	Employed FTE at 31 March 2011	Changes in Employed FTE from 31 March 2010	Vacancies 31 March 2011
CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE & FAMILIES	Central Area	498.33	415.59	-82.74	419.30	380.66	-38.64	34.95
	Northern Area	380.34	407.28	26.94	342.46	367.73	25.27	33.90
	Southern Area	654.63	663.30	8.67	579.53	603.89	24.36	42.53
	Commissioning, Performance and Quality Assurance	214.28	113.38	-100.90	180.84	103.68	-77.16	10.95
COMMUNITY SAFETY	Gypsy & Traveller Services	7.00	10.00	3.00	7.00	9.00	2.00	1.00
	Safer Communities	8.41	6.41	-2.00	6.41	6.80	0.39	0.00
	Emergency Planning	5.49	5.49	0.00	4.49	5.49	1.00	0.00
	Fire & Rescue Service - uniformed	267.57	268.71	1.14	275.07	274.57	-0.50	0.00
	Fire & Rescue Service - non-uniformed	59.46	60.36	0.90	55.44	56.81	1.37	2.41
	Trading Standards	53.32	50.93	-2.39	49.55	43.95	-5.60	6.00
OXFORDSHIRE CUSTOMER SERVICES	Management Team	15.00	18.00	3.00	16.00	12.96	-3.04	4.00
	Finance	181.56	169.73	-11.83	150.06	158.41	8.35	8.00
	HR Operations	155.39	140.66	-14.73	141.67	133.36	-8.31	6.22
	FwT+OCS&QuEST	344.76	266.31	-78.45	302.51	258.09	-44.42	17.18
	Customer Service Centre	0.00	59.92	59.92	0.00	49.12	49.12	10.72
	Procurement	16.50	14.00	-2.50	15.00	14.00	-1.00	0.00
	ICT	203.69	151.08	-52.61	183.90	148.96	-34.94	0.68
	Adult Learning	118.96	114.74	-4.22	110.62	102.67	-7.95	3.49
CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S OFFICE	Chief Executive's Personal Office	11.00	9.00	-2.00	11.00	9.00	-2.00	0.00
	Law & Governance	108.42	101.16	-7.26	101.78	89.64	-12.14	7.02
	Policy & Partnership Working	41.46	30.50	-10.96	38.97	29.85	-9.12	0.00
	Communications	20.54	15.54	-5.00	15.77	10.97	-4.80	4.00
	HR	29.23	25.91	-3.32	25.33	20.51	-4.82	5.00
	Corporate Finance	38.97	31.22	-7.75	34.30	27.01	-7.29	2.60
ENVIRONMENT & ECONOMY	Director's Office	13.73	16.67	2.94	14.31	16.67	2.36	0.00
	Growth & Infrastructure	53.66	89.08	35.42	50.57	84.24	33.67	3.81
	Sustainable Development	120.08	116.44	-3.64	116.29	105.91	-10.38	8.00
	Transport	402.66	371.44	-31.22	387.35	347.85	-39.50	18.64
SOCIAL & COMMUNITY SERVICES	Adult Social Care	1249.00	1103.05	-145.95	1138.19	1013.08	-125.11	82.20
	Community Services	384.37	364.08	-20.29	348.95	331.13	-17.82	22.38
	Strategy and Transformation	178.38	104.36	-74.02	160.90	90.44	-70.46	12.41
TOTAL		5836.19	5314.34	-521.85	5283.56	4906.45	-377.11	348.09

NB: Growth & infrastructure within Environment & Economy includes Property and Facilities Management;

Due to the varying numbers and locations of the structures for Growth & Infrastructure and Customer Services prior to this change, it has not been possible to this change it has not been possible to adjust the figures back to March 2010.

24.7 FTE Connexions employees transferred in under TUPE arrangements to Children, Young People & Families from 1 March 2011.

DIRECTORATE	Total Established Posts at 31 March 2011	Changes to Establishment since 31 March 2010	FTE Employed at 31 March 2011	Changes in FTE Employed since 31 March 2010	Vacancies at 31 March 2011	Grant Funded Posts	Cost of Agency Staff * £
CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE & FAMILIES	1599.55	-148.03	1455.96	-66.17	122.33	485.07	91,782.75
COMMUNITY SAFETY	401.90	0.65	396.62	-1.34	9.41	2.60	26,522.00
OXFORDSHIRE CUSTOMER SERVICES	934.44	-101.42	877.57	-42.19	50.29	12.66	79,565.00
CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S OFFICE	213.33	-36.29	186.98	-40.17	18.62	0.00	1,469.00
ENVIRONMENT & ECONOMY	593.63	3.50	554.67	-13.85	30.45	23.93	225,467.38
SOCIAL & COMMUNITY SERVICES	1571.49	-240.26	1434.65	-213.39	116.99	6.38	375,898.20
TOTAL	5314.34	-521.85	4906.45	-377.11	348.09	530.64	800,704.33

Please note: The vacancies plus the FTE employed will not always be equivalent to the Establishment. Where employees are absent eg on maternity leave or long term sick and have been temporarily replaced, both the absent employee and the temporary employee will have been counted.

* This figure does not necessarily bear a direct relationship with vacant posts.

Division(s):

CABINET – 24 MAY 2011

CABINET SCHEME OF DELEGATION AND CHANGES TO THE CIRCULATION OF THE CONSTITUTION

Report by the Monitoring Officer

Introduction

1. This report addresses two issues related to the Council's Constitution, as considered recently by the Council's Political Group Leaders.
2. Firstly, it proposes a change to the Scheme of Delegation for Individual Cabinet Member Decisions to allow greater flexibility for the Leader to nominate any other member of the Cabinet to take the place of an appointed member, if the relevant delegated decision maker is unavailable.
3. Secondly, it proposes that the current circulation of hard copies of the Council's Constitution be ended in favour of a single electronic master copy on the Council's website.

Cabinet Scheme of Delegation – Individual Cabinet Member Decisions

4. Part 4.4 of the Constitution specifies that only the Leader or Deputy Leader of the Council may take the place of an individual Cabinet member at a delegated decisions meeting if that member is unable to attend once an agenda is published. Otherwise, the decision would stand referred to the next scheduled meeting of the Cabinet unless the relevant Cabinet Member could be present to take a decision on a date before that next scheduled meeting of Cabinet.
5. Therefore, if a Cabinet member is at short notice unable – for example through illness - to take decisions once an agenda had been published then only the Leader or Deputy Leader could take the decision. However, it is very possible that other members of the Cabinet may already be sufficiently briefed about the issues to be able to take the relevant decision, if the Constitution permitted this.
6. This example highlights an area where the Constitution could perhaps be amended to allow greater flexibility in the interests of the public, allowing decisions to be taken as published, by appropriately briefed members, without any undue delay.

Suggested amendment

7. It is therefore suggested that Part 4.4 (2) (b) be reworded by the introduction of the following underlined words into the current text:

“Should a Cabinet Member not be able to be present to take decisions within her/his portfolio for which an agenda has already been published, the Leader or the Deputy Leader (or an alternative member of the Cabinet nominated by the Leader) shall be permitted to attend in her/his place. If, however, neither the Leader nor the Deputy Leader (nor any alternative Cabinet Member nominated by the Leader) can be present, the decision shall be made by the Cabinet at its next scheduled meeting unless the original Cabinet Member can be present to take a decision on a date which is before the next meeting of the Cabinet.”

Electronic copy of the Council’s Constitution

8. Not all County Councillors find a hard copy useful and it possible that personal hard copies are not always updated. Nevertheless, access to a personal copy may well be valuable to some.
9. In the changing local government environment, it is also possible that amendments to the Constitution will be a regular occurrence and although the standards regime and Code of Conduct are to be repealed under the Localism Bill, adherence to the local Constitution will still be a requirement for councillors.
10. It is therefore recommended by Political Group Leaders that the Council moves to a position whereby a single up to date electronic copy is maintained and to which councillors, the public and officers all refer.
11. This would free councillors from maintaining their own copy and potentially create a modest saving. However, personal copies could still be produced for those who wished them and perhaps for those holding special responsibilities within the decision-making process e.g. Cabinet members, committee chairmen etc. who have particular need to understand their obligations. A single hard copy for the members’ resource centre and/or for each group room could be provided.
12. This must be balanced against the need to encourage councillors to maintain their responsibility to be familiar with the Constitution and their requirements under it.
13. Currently, it costs approximately £1,000 for the one-off costs of the (over 150) sets of binders and dividers (for councillors and staff) and approximately £950 for a print run of the entire contents for that number of copies.
14. Political Group Leaders therefore recommend that in the interests of efficiency and cost savings this change is made.

RECOMMENDATION

15. Cabinet is RECOMMENDED to recommend Council:

- (a) to amend Part 4.4 of the Council's Constitution to effect the changes to the 'Delegated Decisions by Individual Cabinet Members' referred to in paragraph 7 above;**
- (b) to agree that the website copy of the Constitution should be the master copy, that the routine circulation of hard copies should cease and that the Monitoring Officer be asked to amend the Constitution to make clear that the website copy is the definitive version.**

NAME: Peter Clark
County Solicitor and Monitoring Officer

Contact Officer: Glenn Watson
May 2011

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Division(s): N/A

CABINET – 24 MAY 2011

FORWARD PLAN AND FUTURE BUSINESS

Items identified from the Forward Plan for Forthcoming Decision

Topic/Decision

Portfolio/Ref

Cabinet, 21 June 2011

- **Appointments 2011/12** Cabinet, 2011/033
To consider member appointments to a variety of bodies which in different ways support the discharge of the Council's executive functions.
- **Performance Management 4th Quarter Progress Report Against Priorities and Targets** Cabinet, 2011/026
Quarterly Performance Monitoring Report.
- **Outcome of the Recent Inspection of the Youth Offending Service** Cabinet, 2011/096
To note the outcome and confirm response to the inspection.
- **Financial Monitoring - June 2011** Cabinet, 2011/025
Monthly financial report on revenue and capital spending against budget allocations, including virements between budget heads.
- **Provisional 2010/11 Revenue and Capital Outturn** Cabinet, 2011/027
To consider the 2010/11 outturn report and agree carry forwards and virements.
- **Property and Facilities Procurement: Project Review** Cabinet, 2011/088
To seek Cabinet approval and endorsement of the project direction.
- **Soldiers of Oxfordshire (SOFO) - Development in the Grounds of The Oxfordshire Museum** Cabinet, 2011/101
To determine the terms of the lease and to consider granting permission to develop the site for the new SOFO building in the grounds of the Oxfordshire Museum, Woodstock.
- **St Christopher Primary School, Cowley** Cabinet, 2010/194
If objections are received, to consider the expansion of St Christopher Primary School, Cowley and approve issue of statutory notice.

Cabinet Member for Adult Services (Supporting People Commissioning Body), 17 June 2011

- **Supporting People Strategy 2011-16** Supporting People Commissioning Body, 2011/087
To seek approval of the Supporting People Strategy 2011-16 after redrafting taking into account comments made at the Supporting People Commissioning Body meeting held on 25 March 2011.

Cabinet Member for Children, Young People & Families, 7 June 2011

- | | |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Chill Out Fund 2011/12 - June 2011
To consider applications received (if any) from the Chill Out Fund. | <p>Cabinet Member
for Children,
Young People &
Families,
2011/062</p> |
|---|---|

Cabinet Member for Transport, 2 June 2011

- | | |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Foxcombe Road, Boars Hill - Reduction in Speed Limit
To seek approval for speed reduction depending on decisions of consultation. | <p>Cabinet Member
for Transport,
2011/070</p> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A41 Bicester - Various Traffic Regulation Orders
To consider any objections and approve traffic regulation order to:- <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) remove motorised vehicles, except for access, from the Chesterton slip roads; (b) introduce a new 40mph speed limit; (c) introduce U-turn ban at new traffic signalled junction. | <p>Cabinet Member
for Transport,
2011/084</p> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A4074, Port Way Crowmarsh Gifford - 40mph Speed Limit and No Right Turn
To seek approval of the order. | <p>Cabinet Member
for Transport,
2011/021</p> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Proposed Changes to Parking in Cheney Lane and Warneford Lane, Headington West CPZ, Oxford
To seek approval for amendments to parking restrictions. | <p>Cabinet Member
for Transport,
2011/036</p> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Proposed Reintroduction of Evening and Sunday Pay & Display Charges, Oxford
To seek approval for amendments to parking controls. | <p>Cabinet Member
for Transport,
2011/037</p> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Proposed Exclusion from Eligibility for Residents and Visitors Permits of 45 Hill View Road, West Oxford
To exclude the property to reflect change to multi occupation. | <p>Cabinet Member
for Transport,
2011/060</p> |